

Gila National Forest Conservation Education Program

Plan and Strategy, FY00-FY03



Super Stewards



Nature Walks



Teacher Workshops



Community Events



Displays

Submitted by Alice R. Cohen
and the Forest Education Committee
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Introduction

The Forest Conservation Education Program, started in 1995, has proven to be a successful and important program for the Gila National Forest. Significant partnerships have been established with numerous schools and organizations surrounding the Forest leading to a positive rapport with, support from, and cooperation with segments of the local communities. Target objectives have been met, including programs in all of the local communities and establishment of the Forest Education Program and the Forest at large as a community resource on Forest related topics. As a community resource, the Program is able to provide opportunities for the dissemination of accurate information, increase opportunities for in-house trainings on Forest issues and topics, and address in other ways Forest resources and issues as identified by the Forest.

The following Plan and Strategy is a structured approach to the next three years of conservation education on the Gila NF. The Plan and Strategy includes input from all units on the Forest regarding issues and topics, as well as a view of how each aspect of the Program may be expanded. The Plan includes objectives, guidelines, and topics to be addressed. The Strategy includes a listing of programs and services to be conducted and offered and when and where they will be offered. The Strategy assures all units and their communities will be addressed. The following is the combined Plan and Strategy.

Input into the Plan and Strategy was offered by representatives from each District and other Forest employees involved in education efforts, making up the Forest Education Committee.

Gila N.F. Conservation Education Plan

The following is a process used when establishing programs within the Conservation Education Program.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS

1) Why do you want to do this program?

Reason, purpose, goal, objective. How will this effort help a manager achieve his/her goals? What do you want the target audience to know or do that they don't now?

2) Who specifically is the intended audience?

Be very specific, extending to a group and associates of that group if and where appropriate.

3) What is the message, concept, or big idea you want people to leave with or what action do you want them to take?

3-4 ideas maximum per program/product.

4) What resources do you have to work with to get your ideas across? Can the audience see the issue firsthand? What financial and staff reassurance do you have available to develop and operate this program?

5) What facilities, media, programs, or combinations of these are best suited to deliver the message to the specific target audience in order to bring about the change you seek?

Where is the best place to deliver the message? What implementation options do you have?

6) How will you know if you are successful? How will you show your manager that it works, helps achieve forest management goals, and is worth the money you spent?

7) What is the cost range? Can you afford it?

8) What are your funding strategies and options? Can the product be used to generate recreation fees? Can you partner with someone?

9) What are the political realities? Will the program/product lead to a political problem for management? Is it worth it? If so, warn someone!

Conservation Education (CE) Program Guidelines

The Role of the CE Program:

1. Utilize the Education Program as a proactive approach to changes within the Forest, keeping in mind the role of the Forest Service as stewards or managers of public lands.
2. Prioritize CE as a consideration when dealing with the public on new policies and management plans.
3. Include the CE Program in the Forest planning and management to address the social marketing aspects of resource management and in keeping with the above principles.
4. Establish the Forest as a reliable resource for CE in the tri-county area, providing services, expertise, and assistance to the public.
5. Emphasize education of all Forest employees, our internal audience, to facilitate the dissemination of accurate information, assist in the ultimate goals of the Forest, and for better public service.

Themes of the programs and services offered:

6. Incorporate national and regional priorities into Program Strategy.
7. Incorporate current issues, policies, and concerns of the public into the Program.
8. Emphasize the unique aspects of the Forest, including the Gila Wilderness, habitat and species diversity, local mountain ranges and river systems, climate, etc., as they relate to the Forest priorities and to the benefits received by local communities in terms of jobs, tourism, and other economic benefits.
9. Use the long-term positive effects of education relating to Forest issues and the economic advantage of minimizing the need for regulation and enforcement.
10. Include a representative from each unit on the Forest Education Committee; to assure all Forest issues and needs are represented.

Audiences:

11. Define the diversity of audiences from office visitors to school groups, with specified audiences for each individual program or service.
12. Focus on the local communities in the tri-county area due to their proximity to the Forest and as the most likely population to focus Forest-level efforts. Attempt to instill an understanding for and pride in the Forest directly adjacent to and affecting their communities. Particular programs may reach an extended service area including southeast Arizona, New Mexico, and southwest Texas.
13. Advertise and market the availability of the CE programs to the tri-county area, promoting use of the materials and dissemination of the information.

Conservation Education (CE) Program Implementation

Methods:

1. Provide consistent information and format throughout the Forest for effectiveness and to lend structure and predictability to all Forest programs, to increase the assimilation of the information by the visitors and/or participants.
2. Ensure a professional image of the Forest by using state-of-the art materials and processes in all programs.
3. Test market programs for effectiveness before expanding a program throughout more than one community or target audience.
4. Monitor and evaluate all programs to assure the attainment of the specified goals of the program. Modify programs as needed to meet the goals.

Audience:

5. Consider the cultural make-up of target audiences and design programs to meet the needs of the culturally diverse.
6. Make each program as readily accessible to the public as possible to encourage increased use and address diverse audiences.
7. Include interaction between Forest Service personnel and target audiences as an important part of program planning, and to increase familiarity and positive rapport between the Forest and its constituents.

Resources:

8. Utilize expertise on the Forest and in the communities to assure the most accurate information and to encourage partnerships.
9. Encourage and incorporate public input on all levels of program development and implementation to assure appropriateness of programs and services to public needs and requests.
10. Encourage a cooperative effort between the Forest Service and the public by promoting cost-share agreements and partnerships.

Gila N.F. Conservation Education Strategy

Topics currently covered through existing programs and services: (see tables below for listing of programs and services)

Archaeology	Forest Health/Ecology
Wilderness	Insects
Fire	Noxious Weeds
Leave No Trace	Ecosystems
Stewardship	Land Ethics
Customer Service (internal)	Timber/Forestry
Wildlife Ecology	Bat Ecology

Additional topic to incorporate regularly into all programs and services:

- Forest Service Mission and History, including how the USFS differs from other Federal agencies.

Continued emphasis area:

- Noxious Weeds

Primary Topic for FY00-01:

- Land Ethics

Will address road issues, recreation use impacts, ORV impacts, Forest ecology, assist with the new Forest Plan process, and other topics identified by the Forest as important and prevalent to current Forest management and health.

Objective: To increase the level of land ethics among Forest users and local communities to increase appreciation for and decrease impacts on Forest resources, with the long-term objective of behavior change.

Methods: Utilize existing materials to include the Leopold Education Project materials, related materials by Aldo Leopold, Tread Lightly

materials, and Leave No Trace materials. Also provide hands-on/field experiences for participants. Identify additional available materials.

Methods for Addressing Primary Topics

Actual programs and techniques will be determined according to objectives to be accomplished, age-appropriateness, and other aspects of the primary topic of the year.

1) Incorporate into Ongoing Programs:

- a. Super Stewards- dedicate a program, in part or whole, to the topic.
- b. Gila Wilderness Trunk- include the topic in teacher workshops, relating it to Wilderness, and pointing out any related lessons in the curriculum. Give information on any related programs offered to the public in which they may want to participate.
- c. Nature Walks- focus one or more walks on the topic.

2) Incorporate into Ongoing Services:

- a. Traveling Displays- create a traveling display (2 or more copies) on the topic, to be circulated through the Districts and communities.
- b. District Displays- create a new district display on the topic.
- c. In-House Training- offer an "Information Sharing Session" on the topic to the SO and all Districts. May be part of scheduled family/safety meetings.
- d. Public Request Programs- emphasize programs on the topic whenever a particular theme is not requested.
- e. Community Events- emphasize the topic whenever possible. Examples:
 - Gila Bird and Nature Festival- provide a program on the topic as part of the student programs, reaching all 6th graders in the area.

3) Emphasize the topic in any programs, requests, or events that may present themselves and are not listed in the above Programs and Services.

NOTE: To increase the probability of an individual or audience retaining the information provided, it must be presented to them on at least 3 separate occasions.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Program	FY00	FY01	FY02
<p>Gila Wilderness Trunk Topics: Wilderness, LNT, biodiversity, social and cultural, federal agencies and missions, others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue Teacher Workshops around the Forest, including one on the North end of the Forest. ➤ “Train the Trainers” wkshp. for ed committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue Teacher Workshops around the Forest. ➤ Formally evaluate the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue Teacher Workshops around the Forest.
<p>Annual Nature Walk Series Topics: forest resources including general interest and forest issues. New Topics: FS mission/history, Land Ethics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue on D7 and D4. ➤ Expand to D3. ➤ Evaluate program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue. ➤ Add districts as requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue. ➤ Add districts as requested.
<p>Super Stewards Topics: stewardship, forest resources, LNT, others New Topics: FS mission/history, Land Ethics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue on D7 and D4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expand to D6 and D3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expand to D5. ➤ Evaluate program.
<p>4th Grade Wilderness Program Topics: Wilderness, cultural history, Leopold and Land Ethics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Train the Trainers” in the use of the program and materials for ed committee. ➤ Continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue.

Defensible Space Workshops Topics: Fire, public safety, others	➤ Loretta continuing program.	➤ Loretta continuing program.	➤ Loretta continuing program.
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ONGOING SERVICES			
Service	FY00	FY01	FY02

<p>Traveling Displays Existing topics: Noxious Weeds, Smoke Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utilize existing display from other Forest/Region on Forest History. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create display on Leopold and Land Ethics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TBA
<p>District Displays (IBM printout) Existing topics: Noxious Weeds (bilingual)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop new Noxious Weeds Display for R3. ➤ Create display on FS mission and history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create display on Land Ethics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TBA
<p>In-House Trainings Topics: forest resources, forest issues, customer service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Add Information Sessions on FS mission and history. ➤ Add Information Sessions on Land Ethics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TBA
<p>Public Request Topics: varies, all related to Forest resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Special programs by request from civic groups and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Special programs by request from civic groups and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Special programs by request from civic groups and schools.
<p>Public Information/Meetings Topics: varies, all related to Forest resources and management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide information and/or contacts for information on various FS topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide information and/or contacts for information on various FS topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide information and/or contacts for information on various FS topics.
<p>Community Educational Events Topics: varies. Include pre-visit student activities and a well-developed display and hands-on opportunities at booth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gila Bird and Nature Festival (GBNF) ➤ SilverFest ➤ Catron County Heritage Days ➤ TorC Fiesta; County Fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GBNF ➤ SilverFest ➤ Catron County Heritage Days ➤ TorC Fiesta; County Fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GBNF ➤ SilverFest ➤ Catron County Heritage Days ➤ TorC Fiesta; County Fairs

CE Program Strategy Projected Average Contacts and Cost

The number of contacts for a program is calculated by multiplying the number of students by the number of contacts. For example, the Silver City Super Stewards program addresses an average of 60 students 5 times per year equaling 300 contacts. Contacts through the display programs are calculated by the average number of visitors to district offices per month.

FY00	Projected Number of Contacts	Projected Cost per Contact	Potential Partner(s) Contribution
Ongoing Programs: Gila Wilderness Trunk, Teacher Workshops (4 workshops)	80 teachers; 1320 student contacts thru trained teachers (4 schools)	\$10/teacher; 60 cents/student	100%
Annual Nature Walk Series (13 total walks on 3 districts)	260	\$4.18	50%
Super Stewards (12 total programs on 2 districts)	385	\$1.63	(in-kind contribution= site clean-up)
4 th grade Wilderness Program (5 programs)	100	\$1.57	0%
Defensible Space Workshops			
Ongoing Services: Traveling Displays (3 displays at SO, RDs, and events)	5200	\$0.00 (no new displays in FY00)	0 (for FY00)
District Displays (SO=500/month; RD=300/month; x12)	31,200	.06 cents (2 new displays in FY00)	50%
In-House Trainings (8 sessions Forest-wide)	160	\$3.20	0
Public Request (10 programs)	200	\$2.40	0
Public Information/Meetings (20 requests)	100	\$3.20	0

Community Educational Events	1000	\$2.00	50%
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