



# Eastern Region 2010

## People & Communities

The Eastern Region embraces many unique ways of connecting people to the land. Whether it's through—outreach to constituents in urban areas, encouraging youth to Get Outdoors through innovative programs, or providing a plethora of recreational opportunities – we are engaging the public in natural resource management. We are also making an impact on local communities. For example, we once again exceeded targets for working with small and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses in fiscal year 2010. We also expanded our commitment to recruiting and retaining employees by the work that we do and atmosphere we promote.



(top) Local constituents gather Forest Service information at Milwaukee's National Get Outdoors Day event. (middle) Forest Service Conservation Education interns share natural resource information with local youth. (bottom) Youth participating in Boston's Nature Explorer Program.

### URBAN CONNECTIONS

The Eastern Region's Urban Connections program mission is to build and foster relationships with urban stakeholders. This involves sharing information and encouraging understanding and involvement in the stewardship of our nation's forests. In 2010, Urban Connections collaborated with Eastern Region forests/prairie, Research, State and Private Forestry, and over 120 partners in Detroit, Boston, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Chicago, to directly reach over 37,000 urban constituents. Messages shared with these constituents included natural resource management, outdoor recreation opportunities, and the value of public lands and stewardship.

In addition to ongoing Urban Connections programs, such as Greenfield Village in Detroit, the Urban Tree House Program in Milwaukee, and the Center for Youth and Families program in Boston, many new projects were initiated this year. Highlights include:

- **Detroit:** along with the Northern Research Station, organized an Emerald Ash Borer presentation for Detroit residents and partners, which resulted in the Northern Research Station utilizing one of the Detroit locations as a study site for Ash tree recovery.
- **Boston:** reached over 5000 youth through the Nature Explorer Program and the Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl Reading Program, developed with the Boston Center for Youth and Families, Boston Public Library, White Mountain National Forest, Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forest, and Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry. The Nature Explorers collaboration transformed kids into explorers by providing them with binoculars, telescopes, and bug jars during field trips to the Boston Harbor Islands, arboretums, and other local green spaces. Reading program participants collectively read over 2,000 books on nature and science from the Boston Public Schools Summer Reading Guide, and was rewarded with a variety of Smokey and Woodsy items from the National Symbols Cache.
- **Milwaukee:** shared information on the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest, outdoor recreation, water conservation, climate change and natural resource careers at Gathering Waters Fest, a National Get Outdoors Day event on Milwaukee's Lakefront. Over 30 partners participated in the event attended by over 3,000 people.
- **Minneapolis:** worked with Minnesota National Forests, Research, State and Private Forestry, the U.S. Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wilderness Inquiry, and hundreds of local organizations to connect urban families to the natural world through the Wilderness Inquiry Program. The program works with urban families to erase fears of the outdoors and builds skills to grow future stewards of our public lands.

### VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers in the East contributed a total of 114,719 hours to regional projects. The work accomplished by these dedicated people equals a cost savings to the Region of \$2,391,060. A large part of our volunteer program is youth-hosted work groups, including crews from the Department of Corrections, Student Conservation Association, State Conservation Corps, and the American Hiking Society. An example of one successful effort was:

- In April 2010, 38 Missouri Science & Technology students assisted the Mark Twain National Forest to get the popular Red Bluff Recreation Area ready for spring visitors and recreationists. The volunteers contributed 480 hours valued at \$9,700.

Volunteers assisted in restoring watersheds, providing quality recreation, improving wildlife and fisheries habitats, and sustaining healthy ecosystems and communities. Across the Region, volunteers stepped up and made a difference!

(top) Volunteers at Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center's National Public Lands Day event. (bottom) Volunteers on the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.



## STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

### Job Corps

We are working with 14 Job Corps Centers in both Regions to transition qualified graduates into permanent Forest Service positions. Program highlights for 2010 include: nine students were added to the Forest Service's workforce as permanent employees; Recognition from the National Jobs Corps and African American Strategy Group for the Region's role in placing students in career positions; and partnering with the Rocky Mountain Research Station to hold the first "Natural Resources Science Camp," introducing students to careers in Research & Development.

### SCEP & STEP

The Eastern Region continued its commitment to building a skilled and diverse workforce through its Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and Student Temporary Experience Programs (STEP). SCEP and STEP assist college students with employment opportunities within the Forest Service in positions related to their academic fields of study. In these positions, they gain valuable hands-on work experience. In 2010, 20 SCEP students and four STEP students were selected. Eight students received their degrees and are now in permanent full-time positions within the agency.



Blackwell Job Corps Students pose by stairway they constructed at the JW Toumey Nursery.



Native American Youth participating in Project Venture North on the Superior NF.

## MORE KIDS IN THE WOODS

In an effort to reconnect youth with the outdoors and promote a healthier lifestyle, the Forest Service has a program called, "More Kids in the Woods." This program provides youth with meaningful hands-on experiences on public lands.

In 2010, the Superior National Forest received \$20,000 in More Kids in the Woods funding for the local, "Project Venture North." Project Venture North is an initiative that enhances and expands ongoing efforts to get Native American youth (ages 11-13) outdoors in Northeastern Minnesota. Although these youth live near public lands – they lack the skills and support to use them. The hope of this program is to develop a renewed commitment to the land, to their culture and community, and initiative to stay in school. The Superior partnered with Project Venture North, YMCA Camp Widjiwagan, St. Louis County Indian Education Consortium, Bois Forte Band of Ojibewam and the local school district in order to make this program a success.

## TRIBAL RELATIONS

The Eastern Region's tribal relations program saw significant advancements in 2010; including:

- A Programmatic Agreement - years in the making - on Heritage Resources Management on the Chippewa National Forest was signed by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, the Forest, and other signatories. This and other agreements allowed the Forest to facilitate a total of \$708,482.92 in funding to the Ojibwe Tribe to implement projects and deliver services on the Forest.
- The Shawnee National Forest and WSIU, the broadcasting arm of Southern Illinois University, hosted the first volunteer workday aimed at cleaning and maintaining trail segments used by the Cherokee Nation during the Trail of Tears. Nineteen volunteers, four Forest Service employees, and two WSIU employees spent time cutting logs and picking up branches and litter from the site. When the crew finished, a little under one mile of woody debris had been cleared from the trail.
- The Zaagkii Wings & Seeds Program celebrated the culmination of three successful years in 2010. Specific program accomplishments include: planting and distribution of over 26,000 native plant seeds; transplant of hundreds of native plant seedlings; construction and painting of 36 bee houses and 18 butterfly houses; and assistance in building a native plant greenhouse near Lake Superior. The Zaagkii project has been a huge success for the Ojibwe youth, Forest Service employees, and the area's natural resources.



(top) Partners in the Zaagkii Wings & Seeds Program pose in front of the completed native plant greenhouse. (bottom) Ojibwa youth paint mason bee houses they built as part of the Zaagkii project.



## RECREATION

The Eastern Region is the most geographically, ecologically, and socially diverse region in the country. Most of the Region's forests and prairie are within a day's drive of half the country's population. Throughout the Region are unique places to recreate, with activities including viewing wildlife, hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing, camping, and bicycling.

The visitation estimate for the Eastern Region was 16.1 million in 2010. We invite you to come explore your national forests & grassland and see what we have to offer! For more recreation information, visit: [www.fs.fed.us/recreation/](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/).