

“Forest for a Living” DVD March 2009 Final Report

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This year the forest education program for intermediate elementary school students focused on extending student knowledge about how a forest works by going on forest field trips. (supported by previous lessons, the forest education kit and “Into the Forest” DVD)

The two field trips we were able to take were both at Spirit Lake Trail. Linda Tollas accompanied us on both trips. While there was snow on the ground both times, we were able to choose a route that meant there wasn't too much snow. We walked to the island and played, “Eagle Eyes” there. On the second trip we saw two swans on the lake. There were signs of spring and we were able to point out types of trees and plants and CMT's on the way. We took out Jenn Laing's grade 5/6 class and Brent Romas' grade 6/7 class.

The focus for high school students was to learn about jobs in the forest by seeing a forest jobs DVD and discussing the content. The purpose was to increase students' understanding of forest stewardship and for them to learn about potential jobs they could do in the forest.

Goals of Forest for a Living:

- Respect for the ecosystem
- Empowerment to make positive contributions to their forest ecosystem
- Responsibility for the health of their environment
- To incorporate learning outcomes that link to the high school Planning 10 IRP or grade 9 Health and Career Planning IRP
- Understand what work people do in the forest

Evaluation Process

Students and teachers were asked to evaluate the DVD instead of having students take a pre and post test. This saved time and offered more detailed feedback about the DVD. The results of the teacher and student evaluations are compiled on a separate sheet.

An informal survey was conducted to see if teachers in the elementary schools were implementing the lesson plans, forest resource kits and “Into the Forest” DVD. The teachers do know where the kits are and I made more copies of the DVD so teachers could have their own copies. Some of the teachers in each of the elementary schools have used the DVD or kit. I checked with the District Resource Centre (DRC) Librarian, Marion Pierce and she told me that the Forest Resource Kit and the “Into the Forest” DVD have both been taken out.

The DRC is an excellent place for the DVD's and kits because teachers must sign them out and return them so they are available for others to use. Also because there is a high turnover of teachers in this district at least we know that the resources will be accessible

when they are in the DRC. There are also DVD's and kits in each of the elementary schools. The new "Forest for a Living" DVD will be distributed to teachers at each high school and to the DRC. I continue to informally network with teachers and let them know the resources are available and where to find them.

Challenges

Working on projects that are weather dependent is challenging! You will notice some snow falling in some shots. We couldn't film when there was too much rain or snow.

I was very disappointed in the number of field trips we were able to take. I had hoped to take 11 field trips and that didn't happen for a number of reasons. One reason was because of the 11 elementary teachers that I had arranged field trips with ahead of time, 4 of them were no longer there the next school year. Getting the funding in June instead of April meant that I had to try to schedule field trips in October and February rather than May and the weather was often not very good for a field trip. Some teachers were new to the district or hadn't committed to going on a field trip the previous year. When I did arrange 2 field trips, teachers cancelled them at the last minute because they didn't have enough supervisors. Luckily 2 field trips did go ahead and went well.

None of the 3 high school teachers I had contacted last year were teaching this year. Luckily the new teachers were interested in having me go into the planning class and forestry class.

Conclusion

I remain committed to teaching students on Haida Gwaii about the local environment and I hope to continue to make DVD's about Haida Gwaii. I am thankful to John and the Gwaii Forest Society for their support of the "Into the Forest" DVD, the Forest Resource kits and the "Forest for a Living" DVD and I hope that they will continue to be used by teachers in local schools.