

Project Get Outdoors Experience Explore & Get Outdoors

June 2010

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Looking Back at 2009

2009 was a fantastic year for the Project Get Outdoors (GO) effort underway in SE Minnesota. Project GO received official 501c3 approval from the IRS in February 2009. Throughout the year, programs were offered at 13 different sites in 9 communities in the region. These programs served over 1,029 youth, of whom more than 250 were non-Caucasian. Over 179 adults from these 9 communities volunteered more than 1000 hours. Presentations were held at 39 different sites, reaching approximately 403 people while outreach activities at 9 special events in the region served 480 additional people. These numbers combined reflect around 3120 separate individuals attending Project GO

activities in 2009.

Keep in mind that these numbers reflect separate individuals, most of whom participated in Project GO programs that met weekly throughout the school year and summer months. If program attendance were tracked in a way that re-counted each person every time they attended a different activity, as is the way of most parks, nature centers and EE programs, our numbers would be in the hundreds of thousands. Pretty impressive!!!

To read the full 2009 Annual Report, please visit the Project GO website at

www.mnprojectgetoutdoors.org.



"The mission of Project Get Outdoors is to facilitate outdoor recreation experiences that build healthy kids and increase environmental stewardship behaviors."



Project Get Outdoors handbook and activity backpacks.



GO Toolkit Update

In early 2010, the Project GO Handbook was completed with the help of our friends at the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (RSDP). RSDP helped to fund the creation of the handbook as well as provided staff to design and edit the handbook. In Fall 2010, this handbook will be part of a toolkit along with a CD- Rom, DVD and Activity Backpacks that will be

provided for free to 50 interested communities in the region. These toolkits will help communities design and sustain their own unique GO programs.

Working with our partners at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, planning began in 2009 to share funds from the newly implemented Legacy Tax Amendment. In 2010, approximately \$75,000 of these funds will be appro-

priated by the DNR to help fund two Project GO positions; the Statewide Coordinator position out of Whitewater State Park and a Regional Coordinator position for SW Minnesota that will be housed out of Minneopa State Park. This collaboration will allow us to expand our program reach to 50 communities across the southern region of Minnesota by the end of 2011.

Volunteers Needed

In effort to locate more volunteers, Project GO is teaming up with the MN Master Naturalist Volunteer Program and various colleges in the Se region of the state. Over the course of eleven Wednesday evenings from March through May, twenty-two adult volunteers were trained at Whitewater State Park on the natural history of the bluffs region and introduced to hands-on nature activities through the MN Master Naturalist Volunteer program. It is hoped that many of those who attended the training will invest their required 40 hours of volunteer service

each year with a Project GO program near their towns of residence. Several students at Winona State University are working to charter a Project GO student organization that would help plan and lead outdoor activities at local GO sites near Winona. These students would have access to college vans and busses and would be able to assist with the transportation barriers many GO clubs face. We hope to model this type of college club throughout Minnesota as our programs expand statewide and look for more volunteers to help with this effort.

We are also offering our first Naturalist-In-Training course for teenagers in Se Minnesota as an attempt to train teens to lead nature activities with their local Project GO after school programs. Teens in six counties of the bluffs region will be trained at Whitewater State Park on the basics of natural resources interpretation and will learn how to lead six core nature activities such as Beginner Bird Watching, Introduction to Fishing, Camping 101 and Geocaching. We hope to mobilize our teens to help lead local Project GO programs.

"Naturalist-In-Training course...to train teens to lead nature activities at a local Project GO after school program site."



Area teen volunteers received appreciation certificates at the Plainview Project GO program last summer.

Volunteer Showcase

Carol Jacobs, Winona GO Leader

Carol Jacobs is a Winona resident with a passion for the outdoors. She has been overseeing the Winona Project GO effort since 2008. Carol brings



Carol Jacobs collecting permission slips from participants at the Maplewood Project GO site.

her enthusiasm for nature to the Maplewood Housing Complex once a week to introduce the 200 plus children who live there to the outdoors. Some of her favorite outdoor hobbies include kayaking on the backwaters of the Mississippi River and learning the fascinating lore of native plants.

Thanks!

To our recent partners, volunteers, donors, and sponsors...

- Alliant Energy Foundation
- Byron Community Education
- MN DNR
- Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
- MN Master Naturalist Volunteers
- Olmsted Medical Center
- Rochester Community Education
- Rushford Community Education
- Sheltering Arms Foundation
- Sam's Club
- St. Mary's University
- Think Mutual Bank

Support the Project Get Outdoors Program

_____ Yes! We want to help!

We Pledge \$_____ for 2010.

Checks must be made payable to: Project Get Outdoors, Inc.

Mail to: Project Get Outdoors, Inc., c/o Whitewater State Park, 19041 Hwy 74, Altura MN 55910

Name of Sponsoring Group: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____



Project GO is a 501c3 organization and all donations are tax-deductible.