McCall Outdoor Science School Finishes Fifth Season

The McCall Outdoor Science School (MOSS), a partnership between the University of Idaho and the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, has finished its fifth successful year. Over 550 students from across Idaho have spent 3-5 days exploring science and the natural environment in McCall, Idaho. MOSS is the only publicly operated residential outdoor school in Idaho. The school has served over 1500 students since being founded in 2001, focusing on 5th and 6th grade classrooms. The 3-5 day residencies use the outdoor environment as an integrated context for learning. A hands-on approach to scientific discovery is used to highlight the relationships between biological, physical, and social systems.

The Mobile Environmental Education Corps (MEEC) is a one-year AmeriCorps service opportunity in its first year at MOSS. MEEC members serve as Environmental Educators and Interpretative Specialists providing high quality, field-based environmental education and interpretation programs to the youth and citizens of Idaho. One-third of their experience will take place at MOSS, one-third in various schools around the state, and one-third at public agencies and nonprofit organizations across Idaho.

For more information about either MOSS or MEEC please visit PCEI’s website at <www.pcei.org> or contact Greg Fizzell at <fizzell@pcei.org>.

Women’s Second Annual Mountain Bike Clinic a Success!

Over 40 women participated in either a maintenance clinic in early August or a riding clinic later that month. The youngest participant was 14 and the eldest was 66. PCEI is pleased to thank our committed volunteers:

**Maintenance Clinic** - Isabella Whitfield, Tanya Pater, Kelly Maer, Debbie Wilson, Kelly Riley, Ciara Cusack, Michelle Hazen, Heather Crawford-Carlson and Tiffany Cooper.

**Riding Clinic Volunteers** - Marci Stevens, Anna Fortner, Rhonda Pinto, Tanya Pater, Ciara Cusack, Jen Farley, Dominique Clothiaux, and Tiffany Cooper.

**Behind the Scene Volunteers** - Caryl Bauwens, Sarah Morra, Bruce Hoff, Phillip Cook, Tom Lamar, Sean Prentiss, Renee Sita, and Sassa Ivy.

Over $2,000 in time, service and goods were donated by local businesses to make this a success. PCEI would like to especially thank Northwestern Mountain Sports, Follett’s Mountain Sports, Paradise Creek Bicycles, Wheatberries, North Idaho Athletic Club, Starbucks, Hyperspud, Dominique Clothiaux, Bookpeople, Casa Lopez, and One World Café, Moscow Yoga Center.

For more info on upcoming women’s events or to see a photo library of the bike clinic, please visit <www.pcei.org/aly.htm> or contact Aly Bean at <aly@pcei.org>.
What’s Up with the PCEI Watersheds Program?

By Tracy Brown

Since early September of this year, Robinson County Park has undergone a major face-lift. In cooperation with Latah County Parks and Recreation Department and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), PCEI has been working to rehabilitate the reach of the South Fork Palouse River that flows through the park. PCEI was awarded 319 Nonpoint Source Funding administered through IDEQ, as part of US Environmental Protection Agency requirements of section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

PCEI’s primary goal is to improve the water quality of this highly degraded river. The project will reduce sediments, nutrients, and temperature and will address flow and habitat alteration. The steep, eroding slopes of the park have been transformed into gentle sloping, meanders. Excavation activities took over three weeks and stabilization efforts are currently underway. To date over 3,000 linear feet of erosion control fabric has been installed. Erosion control fabric will help decrease the flushing of sediment during high flows, while allowing for native grass seed to become established.

Robinson County Park was the location of this year’s 5th Annual Watershed Festival. Over 200 Moscow area 4th graders helped us begin our native revegetation plan for the site. In the mud and rain over 200 plants were put in the ground and protected with blue tubes. The blue plant protectors help increase our plant survival rate by decreasing vole and deer browse impacts, while increasing microclimatic conditions by improving plant vigor.

Once the project is complete in 2007, over 3,500 native woody and herbaceous plants will be planted on the site. Species to be used for revegetation include plant species represented in the South Fork Palouse River watershed: thinleaf ader, redosier dogwood, Douglas hawthorne, and ponderosa pine. Establishing a riparian buffer will filter overland flows and reduce in-stream erosion. The developing multistory riparian canopy will provide shade to the creek, helping to reduce and stabilize summer temperatures, and creating a more suitable environment for wildlife species. Reducing the slopes have decreased safety concerns for park visitors and will provide accessibility to explore and enjoy the deep pools of the park (although swimming is not recommended).

Restoration activities are scheduled to continue next spring and summer with volunteer planting events. We have several weekends scheduled this year to work at the park. So if you find yourself with nothing to do one Saturday, put on your work clothes and boots and join us for fun in the mud! For an ongoing photo history of the South Fork Palouse River Upper Watershed Project visit our web database at <http://www.pcei.org/water/project.htm?ID=0063>.

The PCEI Watershed staff has been busy this season. We are also working with a private landowner upstream from Robinson County Park. The small-scale rehabilitation project involves reducing bank slope in areas that were actively eroding, installing an electric fence to exclude horses from the creek, and installing a hardened stream crossing to reduce impacts on the channel by the horses. By reducing impacts from horse activity in the creek, we hope to increase our effectiveness of improving water quality on the South Fork Palouse River. Construction activities are complete and all that is left is the revegetation of the riparian buffer. Thanks to the October rains, grass is already visible.

For more information and great photo history of the South Fork Palouse River Riparian Enhancement Project visit our web database at <http://www.pcei.org/water/project.htm?ID=0066>.

Special thanks to Mark Bledsoe of Professional Operators Inc. for their expertise and ongoing dedication to a job well done, to Yvonne Howard for her support, and enthusiasm, and Andy Grant for his flexibility and vision.
It Seems Like Only Yesterday

By Tracy Brown

The Watersheds AmeriCorps members finish their service here at PCEI and by early December our bustling and often messy Watersheds office will be quiet once again. Not only will the busy fall season be complete, but our AmeriCorps members, Emily Poor, Mike Danahy and Ciara Cusack will be on their way to their next adventure. Randy Stevens will be sticking around to help lead our next AmeriCorps Team, which are due to start in January of 2006.

It has been a fun and exciting year here at PCEI and these folks have contributed endless hours of dedicated service improving the water quality of Idaho’s streams. The Watersheds staff and all of us here at PCEI wish them the best and thank them for their dedication and hard work. Thank you, good luck and keep in touch!

The Vanpool needs a driver! Ride to work for free!

By Cece Connors

PCEI serves as a local catalyst and matchmaker for individuals wishing to carpool to work or school within the Palouse-Clearwater region. In 1993, we established a regional VanPool system with funding from the Idaho Transportation Department, the University of Idaho, and others, to reduce commuter traffic between Moscow and Lewiston. Early studies show that in one year our vans saved 4,000 gallons of fuel by reducing vehicle miles traveled by only 12 University of Idaho employees!

Right now, our route from Lewiston to Genesee and Moscow has a waiting list. Our, longtime, wonderful driver, Bart Bramwell is no longer driving for us. We need an additional driver to start using a second van. Drivers ride for free! If you are interested in saving money on gas and reducing vehicle emissions, consider joining the VanPool folks and have someone else do the driving! The price is $90 per month. UI employees can take advantage of the pretax payroll deduction. Save on gas and taxes!

We are also looking for commuters that travel daily from Moscow and Genesee to Lewiston. Cece has a short waiting list for this route and would like to get this route started. We need at least 6 more people to make the route pay for itself. This route is, also, $90 per month.

In the words of our beloved driver, Bart “That’s all the news from Lake Vanbegone, where the roads are never closed, the drivers are all eagle-eyed, and the riders pay in cash.” If you are interested or would like to volunteer to drive, please call our office manager, 882-1444.
The Village Bicycle Project Fall Report

By Dave Peckham

A Shipment of Bikes
The next shipment of bikes is scheduled for December 3 and 4, from Seattle. We have more than 200 bikes in Moscow ready to go, and a place (finally after more than a year!) to collect and store them in Seattle prior to shipment. Trucks and drivers are needed to shuttle bikes over, at various times between now and the loading date. We can help (a little) with fuel costs. Call 208-892-2681 or write <vbp@pcei.org>. Also needed is help breaking down bikes for shipment, (we call it flattening). Total Reclaim, (a Seattle recycler handling TVs, refrigerators, computers, etc.) has donated warehouse space for storage and loading, diversifying a little into bike recycling. We've now shipped more than 10,000 bikes to Ghana, from various sources, including Boston, New York, England, Seattle, the Palouse, and new partners in Chicago and Virginia.

News from Ghana
The project is running smoothly, that we're conducting four more workshops this year than last. One thousand people will receive a day of maintenance training and a discounted bike, more than all previous years combined. Project Managers George and Samson continue to be excited about the program. When I asked George how he felt about doing so many programs, he said “If we don’t, who will?” One reason the workshops are becoming so popular is that transport prices have more than tripled in five years. Bikes are increasingly attractive to workers already struggling to pay 25-50 percent of their income to get to their jobs.

All these additional workshops were made possible by generous donations of shipped bicycles by Working Bikes Co-operative in Chicago and Wheatley School of Old Westbury, New York.

The advanced class, introduced last fall is an opportunity for people serious about maintaining their bikes to learn more AND to buy tools at half-price. We’re helping them obtain skills for life, knowledge that they will pass to their children. We’re subsidizing lots of pumps, patch kits, light oil, and spanner sets. The tools are the key to the empowerment and sustainability of adults.

More on Tools
We just placed our second $5,000 wholesale order for tools. We’ve been supplying the Accra area for more than five years, and I think the tools are reaching saturation levels there. With better tools, mechanics are more competent at repairing bikes, making them last longer, and run better. A bicycle that is mechanically sound is a more efficient and attractive transport mode. So improving supplies outside of Accra and in neighboring countries will be the next focus. Lots of fun travel for a volunteer!

Updates at pcei.org/vbp
I posted curricula for all three training programs: "One-day workshop," "Advanced Class," and "Earn-a-Bike." In the blog, you’ll never know what might come up. You’ll find an abstract I submitted to VeloMondial for their conference in March ‘06. Sadly, my pictures were lost, except for a few from my visit to Gabon. So while there are almost no photos from the project, I got a photo essay on keeping bikes running in remote areas, posted on the web site: <http://www.pcei.org/vbp/mbouyiessay.htm>.

A load of bikes in Moscow before they are transported to Seattle. Photo: Dave Peckham

Volunteer Needs
• Someone savvy with overlaying maps for the website. I’d love to post maps showing how the project is spreading across Ghana, and the tools into neighboring countries.
• People to help prepare bikes for shipping, and of course, trucks and drivers.
• Someone adventurous to market our tools to Ghana’s neighbors. Il faut parler francais!
• Send your tax-deductible donations to Village Bicycle Project, PCEI, Box 8596, Moscow, ID 83843.

A load of bikes in Moscow before they are transported to Seattle. Photo: Dave Peckham

A shipment of bikes is scheduled for December 3 and 4, from Seattle. Photo: Dave Peckham

PCEI Holiday or Anytime Gifts
PCEI has wonderful Christmas gifts for your family and friends. Our 2006 5th Annual Watershed calendars with local children’s artwork make a beautiful gift for a person of any age. We also have re-useable travel mugs and shopping bags, as well as PCEI logo t-shirts. Our 16-ounce travel mugs have a stainless steel liner and closeable lid in a deep cobalt blue with the PCEI logo. Our canvas shopping bags are made of 100 percent organic cotton and are perfect for shopping, library books, or a trip to the river. The money raised from these products supports PCEI programs. Call the office, place your order with Cece and she can arrange a pick up at PCEI or drop off at your home. For the month of December, all these gifts will also be for sale at One World Cafe, 533 S. Main St.
Welcome Erin!

By Michelle Hazen

This summer, PCEI’s Community Outreach Program was granted funding to run another AmeriCorps program. We were ecstatic to receive this grant, and realized we’d need to add a new staff person to our then two-person team. We knew this person would have to be smart, flexible, committed to the community, organized, and have a sense of humor. Luckily we found all that and more in our new Program Assistant, Erin Rishling.

Erin was raised traveling the world with her diplomat father and stepmother. She graduated high school in Virginia and decided to attend college close to her mother and stepfather at the University of Idaho. Upon graduating with a degree in English and a certificate to teach secondary education, Erin began working at Kendrick High School.

Seeking a new challenge, Erin chose to apply for the job at PCEI. She likes the sense of community at PCEI, and supports the mission. Her enthusiasm for the AmeriCorps program is infectious. When asked about why she believes in AmeriCorps, Erin responds brightly, “AmeriCorps allows people to grow while spending a significant amount of time serving a need in their communities. I like helping to enable a student to dedicate a year of their life to something they believe in.”

A sample conversation with Erin might include an exchange of favorite book titles, with Power of One, by Bryce Courtney currently topping her list. A lover of words, Erin enjoys writing as much as reading. At this point in time, Erin’s favorite color is green, although she reserves the right to change her mind as her mood dictates. Erin always has a funny story about her two dogs, Ukaya and Colter, and her two cats, Maggie Bean and Mr. Hanshaw.

Erin has been on staff for three months, and everyday we ask ourselves how we ever survived without her. Her diplomacy, fine-tuned editing skills, organization and friendliness complement the still new Community Outreach Program. It’s been great to have a new perspective on this growing program as we continue into our second year.

Environmental Education Program Welcomes Two New AmeriCorps Members

By Sara Lynd

The Environmental Education (EE) Program at PCEI has the incredible honor of welcoming two new AmeriCorps members, Kirsten Hawley and Denim Jochimsen. Each brings a variety of experiences and expertise to the team.

Kirsten was born in Marquette in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Shortly thereafter she and her parents moved to the small town of Hammond, Wisconsin, just 30 miles east of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. She earned a B.S. in Elementary Education with a minor in general sciences from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire in 2004. This year-long position will allow Kirsten to combine her passion for teaching and love of the outdoors together.

Denim earned a B.S. in ecology from the University of Wisconsin - Madison in 1999. This winter she will be earning her Masters degree in Biology from Idaho State University. During the 04-05 school year Denim assisted an 8th grade classroom by developing inquiry based learning activities, including planning field trips and lab experiments. Denim will spend her year at PCEI leading a strategic planning process to develop a nature center at PCEI’s new Rodeo Campus. She also brings an expertise in amphibians to our school-based programs. Kirsten and Denim have spent the last few weeks learning about PCEI and the EE Program as well as helping to organize our successful 5th Annual Watershed Festival.
5th Annual Watershed Festival!

By Kirsten Hawley

Sponsored by Make a Splash and Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) this year’s 5th Annual Watershed Festival was just that – WET! In spite of the rainy chilly weather, Moscow’s 4th graders came out in mass on Monday October 3rd to Robinson Park to learn about our local watershed. Students rotated between five tented stations where they experienced first hand the precipitation portion of the water cycle coming down all around them as rain. The half-hour long stations included water cycle art, riparian wildlife, macroinvertebrate monitoring, ground water, and watershed restoration. While at these stations students participated in painting pictures that will be featured in a 2006 calendar*, identifying macroinvertebrates collected from the South Fork of the Palouse River running through the park, investigating ground water, learning about animals that live near streams, and helping restore the stream bank by planting trees. Students kept warm at many of the stations by playing interactive games that demonstrated aspects of our watershed and by planting trees! Although the weather was a wash the festival was a hit!

The success of our 5th Annual Watershed Festival is due in large part to our highly qualified presenters. A big thank you is due to Cece Connors for facilitating the water cycle art station, Jake Smulkowski for teaching about ground water, Ken Hobson and Tracy Brown for helping with watershed restoration, John Pfeiffer for leading an exploration of macroinvertebrates, and Tiffany Cooper and Denim Jochimsen for teaching participants about riparian wildlife. We were also lucky to have many others volunteer their time and help at various stations. Thanks to everyone who helped make the day a great success!

Organized by PCEI’s environmental education staff (primarily Sara Lynd) the watershed festival was an excellent opportunity for Moscow’s 4th graders to get out of the classroom for hands-on experiential learning. To learn more about the Watershed Festival and PCEI and to see pictures check out our website at <www.pcei.org>!

*To purchase a 2006 calendar featuring the artwork of students who participated in the 5th Annual Watershed Festival or for more information contact Kirsten Hawley at (208)882-8129 or visit <www.pcei.org/education>.

Expanding EE Program Hires New Staff Member

By Greg Fizzell

The Environmental Education (EE) program at PCEI is working on some exciting new projects, and this growth has required that we expand our staff.

PCEI has hired Lewis-Clark Service Corps alumnus, Jake Smulkowski as a full-time environmental education specialist. Jake joined PCEI as a service-learning assistant in 2003, and served two years with AmeriCorps in that position.

Jake will focus on building capacity for Idaho K-12 GIS efforts by conducting a needs assessment and developing a database of resources for educators. He will also work to support the City of Moscow’s Water Conservation Public Information and Education program by providing water conservation consultation, developing the K-12 curriculum he incepted last year, and designing newsletters, brochures, and other materials.

We are excited to have Jake work on other projects as well, including a fishing and aquatic ecology education program, and “Science and Service,” a service learning program designed to engage 6th grade students in scientific inquiry and community service.
More Acronyms = More Statewide AmeriCorps Opportunities = More Volunteers in Idaho

By Tiffany Cooper

This August, the Community Outreach Program was awarded our second AmeriCorps grant through Serve Idaho and the Corporation for National Service to support environmental education efforts statewide and create the Idaho Environmental Education Corps. Part of this grant was used to establish the Mobile Environmental Education Corps (MEEC), a new residential AmeriCorps program which put ten new individuals at service in McCall, Idaho. As part of the grant, we are also offering 35 AmeriCorps Education Awards to interns and volunteers serving across the state. See our "EAPing Lizards" article for more information below.

The MEEC members began their service at the McCall Outdoor Science School (MOSS), a partnership between the University of Idaho, PCEI, and Idaho State Parks and Recreation, in September. They are part of a professional residency program, that helps them gain teaching experience while they take part in three graduate level environmental education classes. After the residency concludes in late fall, MEEC members will outreach to schools that were involved or are interested in MOSS, helping to further science education efforts statewide. At the conclusion of the school year, MEEC members will be placed with a variety of land management and natural resource agencies, and non-profits, where they will be involved in further education and interpretation activities.

This is an opportunity to expand the MOSS program, which is in high demand statewide, and will allow the campus to operate year round to continue to bring quality, non-partisan, science-based environmental education to the schools of Idaho. We are so excited about the creation of this new program, and hope that this benefits many members of the community.

If you are interested in having the MEEC team come and teach at your school, e-mail <mossoutreach@pcei.org>.

EAPing Lizards

By Erin Rishling

Now for the new program.....introducing the Idaho Environmental Education Corps, or IEEC. This is a State AmeriCorps program from the Governor’s Commission on Service, Serve Idaho!. With this grant, one of PCEI’s Community Outreach Program’s goals is to place 35 part-time (300-900 hour) Education Award Only members throughout our great state of Idaho. They will be placed with different non-profit organizations, schools, and government agencies. These members are called EAPs (Education Award Program). There’s always a fun acronym associated with our programs—don’t even get me started on our MEECs, PEAPs, and SWEAPs!

The Education Award Program (EAP) encourages and rewards dedicated volunteers for committing an extended service period with an organization. The amount of the education award is directly related to the length of time served with a sponsoring organization. The usual process is this: sponsors apply to host an EAP, then find the volunteers, we track the hours and grant their ed awards when they have completed their declared time of service. There is no cost associated with hosting an EAP member. It is a win-win situation for volunteers and the sponsors; we are thrilled to be an integral part of such a worthwhile and rewarding program! If you would like more information contact Erin at 882-1444.
Calendar of Events (for updates, visit www.pcei.org/calendar.htm)

**December, all month**- PCEI holiday gifts available at One World Cafe, 533 S. Main St., downtown Moscow. On sale will be our beautiful Watershed Festival calendars, travel mugs and shopping bags.

**December 14, Wednesday**- PCEI’s board meeting will be held at 6:30 pm at 1040 Rodeo Drive.

**December 15, Thursday**- PCEI Member Thank You Holiday Party 5:30-8:30pm, 610 East "B" Street, Moscow. Food will be prepared by PCEI Board and Staff, with wine donated by Wine Company of Moscow. We will also give out member and volunteer appreciation awards.

"Some people have asked what the relationship is between peace and environment, and to them I say that many wars are fought over resources, which are becoming increasingly scarce across the Earth. If we did a better job of managing our resources, sustainable conflicts over them would be reduced. So, protecting the global environment is directly related to securing peace.”

-Wangari Maathai, PhD, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner Founder of the Green Belt Movement Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya. She divorced by her husband in 1980 because she was “too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn and too hard to control”