



## Earth Stewardship Program

During the 2009-2010 school year, the Earth Stewardship Program (ESP) engaged 240 7<sup>th</sup> graders from 5 Ravalli County schools in learning about and being stewards of their local environment. Students participated in monthly lessons about local environmental issues and in two public lands stewardship projects that addressed these issues. The lessons were co-taught by the Healthy Kids ~ Healthy Forests Coordinator and local resources professionals whose work related to each month's topic. Students were involved in choosing their class stewardship projects based on the topics that interested and motivated them. Participating schools included Lone Rock, Victor, Corvallis, Valley Oak Homeschool Co-op/Hamilton Christian Academy, and Darby. During January, sixteen professionals in the education and recreation fields attended a one-day *Project Learning Tree* Workshop to gain skills in teaching environmental education lessons and receive this K-8 curriculum.

The focus topics were:

September	Watershed Health
October	Noxious Weeds and Native Plants
November	Forest Health: Fuels Build-up
December	Forest Insects and Tree Disease
January	Air Quality
February	Human and Wildlife Conflict
March	Recreational Ethics and Etiquette
April	Stewardship Project
May	Stewardship Project

The resource professionals were a very vital part of this program. Thirty individuals gave their time and knowledge to teach students in the classroom portion of the program and 31 individuals led students in stewardship projects and activities during the field days. Resource professionals from the following agencies and organizations were involved in this program: Bitterroot National Forest, Bitter Root RC&D, Bitter Root Water Forum, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Ravalli County Environmental Health, Ravalli County Extension, Ravalli County Off Road Users Association, Ravalli County Weed District, USDA Forest Service: Forest Health Protection, Bitterroot Conservation District, Montana-Idaho Airshed Group, Bitterroot Ecological Area Resources (BEAR), and Wind River Bear Institute.

Healthy Kids ~ Healthy Forests is a project of the Bitter Root RC&D in partnership with the Bitterroot National Forest. For more information or **to receive a copy of the Earth Stewardship Program 2009-2010 Curriculum**, contact Janeen Curtis, HKHF Field Coordinator at (406) 381-2951 or [janeen\\_rcd@yahoo.com](mailto:janeen_rcd@yahoo.com).

[www.bitterrootrcd.org/hkhf.html](http://www.bitterrootrcd.org/hkhf.html)

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*These institutions are equal opportunity providers.*