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1. ECOS Florence-Carlton's Our Outdoor Classroom
Florence-Carlton School
Florence, Montana
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2.

The Florence-Carlton School ECOS project, 2004/2005 focused on Our Outdoor Classroom, working with classes in elementary, middle and high schools. The Outdoor Classroom design, planning and use by classes was the center piece of our work in an attempt to offer the entire school avenues for learning based in ecology. A landscape architect completed long term design elements for the outdoor classroom, the site was surveyed, invasive weeds were pulled and some native plants were installed on site. Numerous classes were held on the site, including science, math, geology, art and English classes. Curriculum was developed based on the outdoor classroom and other aspects of ecological inquiry.

3.

Our ECOS team proposed to hire a landscape architect to design and school and community outdoor classroom and meeting space and to build a shed to house tools and equipment for use in the outdoor classroom. The shed was proposed as a project by the high school shop class and could later be used for other inquiry based storage. The landscape architect was charged with designing the space incorporating native plants, an amphitheatre, trail systems and learning points for interpretation.

4. Schoolyard Demonstration Project Description – We accomplished all goals set out as above.

- a. The science theme was restoration and native plants.
- b. The target grade level included the entire school.
- c. Materials for a 'garden' shed were purchased and the shed built.
- c. The demonstration project was based on the design and restoration of the outdoor classroom, activities based there and classroom work related to local ecology. This included all class levels and evolved over the year by each ECOS participant.

The current status of the outdoor classroom is ongoing need for weed eradication, native plant installation and care and construction of paths, interpretation and amphitheatre.

5. Tens of parents contributed time and energy into this project as well as a handful of teachers from Florence-Carlton. Hundreds of students participated in weed pulls and path clearing. The school board participated by protecting the outdoor classroom from any development for ten years. The county commission participated by donating a \$5,000 grant for the outdoor classroom development. A parent donated time for surveying the site. Nobody has given explicit permission to use their address, although these can be accessed through ECOS participant teachers for 2006 if necessary.

6. This project has a high probability of sustainability because of the support and enthusiasm generated at Florence-Carlton and in the community. The next cohort of fellows should follow the lead and interest of the teachers as they define their desires for development of the classroom both for physical changes and curriculum instigation.

7. Summary – National Wildlife Federation named the outdoor classroom in their series and a plaque is to be installed. Over ten classes were accessed by fellows and curricula developed and taught to these classes. A cascade effect of interest moved through the school, so that by school's end, teachers were requesting time with fellows for field trips and outdoor classroom inquiries. The outdoor classroom is a protected area with a county grant for further development.

Appendix 1 - Curricula: attached.

Appendix 2 - Photos: There is a file on the ECOS site that contains photos from the outdoor classroom, as well as photos already submitted by Sarah Keller.