

Evaluation of Project WILD: The State of Washington 1984-1992

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Summary statements:

Project WILD has value as a tool and a curricular resource for the Dept. of Wildlife. However, concern for direct link to department's current priority goals. Project WILD instructional workshops focus on a narrow audience of teachers, aiming to change teacher practice. Department's goals are primarily to protect wildlife and habitat and provide wildlife-related recreation. Link is not clear.

Anecdotal evidence suggests individuals have taken positive action following Project WILD workshops; difficult to assess extent and impact.

Project WILD provides "window" for dept. -- provides valuable access to Dept. of Wildlife.

Anecdotal evidence suggests a habitat education program by the dept., using Project WILD as a resource, linked to habitat grants protected or enhanced 3000 acres.

Teachers generally reuse the activities they experienced at the workshops and used less than 10 activities per year.

Teachers reported a change in attitude in their students (although no measurable evidence exists -- difficult to measure -- other factors).

Teachers rated materials as useful.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers and students are ready to take action if given an opportunity. Teachers and students, armed with knowledge and skills of issue investigation and action taking, will take action with support from a government or other agency. The Department of Wildlife has already provided this opportunity to teachers and students through other education programs to impact the desired agency end result. In this manner a connection has been made between the goals of Project WILD and the Dept. of Wildlife.

Teachers did indicate a change in teaching practice, which included incorporating wildlife concepts into the curriculum. --avg. 10 or less activities. (my note: could this be a catalyst to using other environmental education materials?)

Project WILD introductory workshops lead teachers to a broader understanding of environmental education, and the Department of Wildlife benefits from the wildlife content and its potential to raise awareness. Project WILD carefully injects a wildlife message into the ecological/environmental picture. There is no other conceivable opportunity to offer this strong emphasis on wildlife in formal pre-service and in-service teacher education programs.

2/Tudor -- State of Washington, 1992

Concern for results based on Project WILD use -- taking action -- direct link to Dept. goals. Project WILD must establish program goals, reflected in measurable outcomes, which directly link to the Department of Wildlife goals.

Project WILD is used more by elementary than HS teachers (and attended workshops).

According to a 1990 national Project WILD survey (Standage Accureach) of use, in Washington State 73% of participants randomly chosen, used the elementary guide, and 35% used the secondary guide.

Workshop participants request more actual hands-on activities 60% and more background information to increase their knowledge 22%.

In a 1990 national survey of Project WILD use (Standage and Accureach) 96% of Washington state teachers agreed that attending a Project WILD workshop was one of the most valuable sources of support for teaching about wildlife and the environment.

Majority (78%) of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that it was easy to incorporate Project WILD activities into the curriculum.

84% of respondents felt Project WILD provides a balanced approach to environmental wildlife activities

Anecdotal comments largely reflected the opinion that Project WILD offered content and information, a means to enlist student involvement, and provided enjoyment in teaching. Teachers perceived that their students gained respect for the environment through these activities while having fun.

Responses showed that participants left Project WILD workshops with improved knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations and that students gained in awareness, knowledge, and skill as a result of teacher practice change.

In 1990 national Project WILD survey (Standage and Accureach) 53% of Washington state teachers reported a greater awareness of wildlife and 58% of the teachers reported that three-quarters of the students had acquired more responsible attitudes toward wildlife. In the same survey:

- 92% of Washington teachers encouraged others to participate in Project WILD.
- 65% loaned guide to other educators.
- 92% selected and included activities where appropriate in the curriculum.
- 73% moderately and 23% greatly increased the amount of time spent teaching about wildlife.

3/Tudor -- State of Washington, 1992

Actions taken by teachers following Project WILD workshops:

- Teachers called coordinator to report on projects they had initiated in schools and requested help.
- Teachers called coordinator to request speakers, materials, or a loan of wildlife artifacts.
- Facilitators noted a difference in demeanor between the two days of workshops, when the participants arrived for the first 3 hours "daring to be persuaded," and returned for the second 8 hours, excited and anticipating real value for their time.

Practice changes based on Project WILD workshops and use:

- Networking within schools, between school districts, and across the state
- In eastern Washington, a Project WILD participant succeeded in having Project WILD accepted by the school board as a part of the 6th grade science curriculum.
- Washington Dept. of Wildlife and Idaho Fish and Game jointly ran the "Adopt-A-Caribou" Program as an extension of project wild. The students developed wildlife management skills and actively participated in developing awareness for habitat protection and control of poaching.
- Teachers attended other training programs and university courses in environmental education and wildlife as an extension of their Project WILD experience.
- Habitat enhancements
- Schoolyard grants