



SELWAY BITTERROOT
FRANK CHURCH
FOUNDATION

Press Release:
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Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation awards seven wilderness education grants

Boise, Idaho -- The Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is pleased to announce the second round of Connie Saylor Johnson Wilderness Education Grant awards to seven organizations.

The Connie Saylor Johnson Wilderness Education Fund (CSJWEF) will provide support to the following projects focused on wilderness stewardship:

- 1) Salmon Valley Stewardship, Salmon, ID - "*Salmon Valley Experts in the Field: Wilderness Connections*"- A one-day field experience that leverages the background and knowledge of local historians, wildlife biologists, ecologists, Indigenous leaders, and environmental advocates with field trips in the Salmon-Challis National Forest.
- 2) Sawtooth Interpretive and Historical Association, Stanley, ID -- "*2023 Sawtooth Wilderness Trailhead Portals Project*"- A naturalist is stationed at one of several popular trailheads that access the Sawtooth Wilderness. They share area information, location-specific Wilderness regulations, and Leave-No-Trace practices with an emphasis on disposal of human waste, food storage, and campfire regulations.
- 3) Opt Outdoors School, Bozeman, MT – "*Opt Out Wilderness Stewardship Project*"- The project will formally integrate Leave No Trace practices into the curriculum and experiences of Opt Out students with the mission of cultivating lifelong, skilled, and passionate stewards of the wilderness.
- 4) Polk County Conservation Youth Corps, Granger, IA - "*Polk County Youth Corps - Finding Wilderness*"- Underserved teens from Des Moines will participate in a land stewardship project in partnership with the Black Hills National Forest and the Black Elk Wilderness Area. Participants will learn Leave No Trace ethics, natural and cultural history of the area, etc.

The Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is a community of wilderness-minded and hardworking individuals dedicated to bringing citizens and youth to wilderness to work, live, and play. Since 2006, SBFC has helped steward the 4-million-acre Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, across Idaho and Montana. Visit SBFC online at www.selwaybitterroot.org.

5) University of Montana, Missoula, MT - *"Wilderness Pack Trip"* - The Wilderness pack trip is a 5-day, two credit experiential learning course for ten University of Montana students in the summer of 2023. This class includes one day to learn horse and mule packing at the USFS Ninemile Ranger station, a trail maintenance day, and many other hands-on wilderness skills such as cross cut, first aid and leave-no-trace camping.

6) Waterloo Schools, Waterloo, IA - *"Driftless Wilderness in Iowa"* - This project will allow students to learn about and visit the "Driftless" Area of northeast Iowa. Students will learn about geology and ecology, cliff vegetation, and talus slopes within the Yellow River State Forest and Effigy Mounds (a National Monument).

7) B.E.A.R., Hamilton, MT - *"Wilderness Connection Days"* - Outdoor-based mentoring and summer programming for 4th and 5th graders and 6th-12th graders that incorporates wilderness education and stewardship.

The grant program honors the late Connie Saylor Johnson, a life-long educator and champion of Idaho and Montana Wilderness. After moving to Idaho from Iowa after a career as a high school teacher, she sustained a decades-long effort to introduce Midwestern teachers and students to the Idaho wilderness through hands-on service projects. The expansion of this year's program to include Iowa Schools is in honor of that legacy. The CSJWEF Fund was established in 2019 by Connie's friends and family to honor her commitment to hands-on wilderness education experiences to people of all ages. The fund has grown steadily since Connie's death in 2018 through contributions from supporters of wilderness education. The fund is administered by the Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, where Connie served as a staff and board member from 2009 to 2018.

Applications for next year's CSJWEF grants will be open from April 1 through October 31, 2023. The program is open to any non-profit organization, institution, individual, or ad-hoc group working to further wilderness education. Grants are awarded up to \$ 1,000 per year. More information can be found at <https://www.selwaybitterroot.org/csjwef-grant>.

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