

# Wilderness Investigation #5

## *Our Wilderness Heritage*



Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness (NM); Image #2423; Photographer: Chris Barns

**Essential Question: *How can I be part of our country's wilderness heritage?***



Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center's  
***Wilderness Investigations***  
A Subject-Integrated Curriculum for Grades 5 - 8

***Wilderness What's Up?***  
***Investigation #5 Note to Parents***

**Note to Parents**

Dear Parents,

Your child continues their involvement in Wilderness Investigations. They are beginning their fifth and final investigation now. Listed below are all five investigations. The current investigation is in **bold** print.

1. *Preservation and Protection in their Natural Condition*
  - An exploration of the wild/wilderness continuum with a special focus on the Wilderness Act of 1964 and what wilderness designation means as *...an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man...*
2. *For the American People of Present and Future Generations*
  - As U.S. citizens we all enjoy wilderness rights, privileges, and responsibilities because it has been preserved *for the American people of present and future generations.*
3. *Outstanding Opportunities*
  - Wilderness as a place of *outstanding opportunities* to experience things that can only be experienced there.
4. *Preservation of their Wilderness Character*
  - Places where *preservation of wilderness character* is first and foremost.
  - Priceless *benefits* for individual people, communities, and ecosystems.
5. ***Our Wilderness Heritage***
  - **Preservation and protection of wilderness are selfless and patriotic acts for the benefit of others (human and non-human; biotic and abiotic) and is *one sign of a maturing democracy.***

Read on to find out what's going on during Wilderness Investigation #5 and thanks again for supporting *Wilderness Investigations!*

Sincerely,

The Creators of *Wilderness Investigations*  
(Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center)

## **Wilderness Investigation #5 Overview**

Wilderness Investigation #5 is the last in this series. In it students look at wilderness preservation as the act of a maturing and patriotic government and citizenry. Particularly, students investigate:

- The historical and cultural circumstances that allowed wilderness preservation to take place;
- The altruistic actions that U.S. citizens have taken on behalf of living and non-living elements of wilderness;
- Wilderness heroes in their own communities.

## **Upcoming educational experiences related to this topic:**

- Students will review and reinforce wilderness knowledge they have gained during Wilderness Investigations and create *Wilderness Preservation is Patriotic* projects.
- They will learn about long-time Mission Mountain Wilderness ranger Kari Gunderson during the *Wilderness Hero* segment.
- The students will spend time with local wilderness heroes in a local wilderness or place with wilderness elements. They will take photographs and keep notes and then produce books about these local heroes.
- The *Wilderness Profile* will be the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness in western Montana. This is the first tribal wilderness ever set aside.

Many projects and assignments will be completed as part of these educational experiences.

## **Invitation to Wilderness Show & Tell**

This space reserved for teachers to place their specific *Wilderness Show & Tell* information.

## **Discussion Ideas**

- In-Class Investigation
  - What are some of the things you learned about wilderness during Wilderness Investigations?
  - Why do you think our country was ready to preserve wilderness in 1964 and not before that?
  - What can you and I do to support wilderness preservation?
- Kari Gunderson-Wilderness Hero
  - Who is Kari Gunderson and why is she a wilderness hero?
  - Would you like to be a wilderness ranger? Why or why not?
- Local Investigation
  - Where did you go on your wilderness outing?
  - Who were the local wilderness heroes you met?
  - What is the most patriotic thing the wilderness heroes talked about?
- Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness Profile
  - Where is the Flathead Indian Reservation and what tribe or tribes live there?
  - Why did the tribes decide that they were going to create a wilderness on their Reservation?
  - Let's see if we can find the Flathead Reservation on a map.

## **Outdoor Activity Ideas**

- Arrange to visit an Indian Reservation near your home.
  - Go to a tribal museum or cultural center and see if they have preserved any land as wilderness, roadless, etc.
  - Find out if the tribe offers guided nature hikes with a cultural awareness piece and participate if possible.
- Explore your own cultural heritage and see how, where and when they were especially connected to wilderness.
  - Take a hike together and discuss your cultural and/or family connection to wilderness and wild places.

## **Project Ideas**

- Volunteer to work on a trail, pull weeds, or pick up trash in areas near your home.

## **Resources for a More In-depth Topic Exploration**

- *The Geography of Childhood*; by Stephen Trimble and Gary Paul Nabham.
  - An excellent book that makes a strong case for *why children need wild places* (the sub-title of the book).



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## Classroom Investigation #5 *Our Wilderness Heritage*

### Investigation Goals

The teacher will address:

- ...how wilderness preservation by government and individuals is a selfless and patriotic act that demonstrates a maturing democracy;
- ...the care and attention that a healthy democracy gives to both its biotic and abiotic community members;
- ...individual actions young citizens can participate in as they support our wilderness heritage.

### Time Requirement

Part 1: 1 hour or less

Part 2: To be determined by the teacher

### National Standards Addressed

**Environmental Education:** Strand 2.3A & C *Learners understand that people act as individuals and as group members and that groups can influence individual actions and that political and economic systems exist to support human needs.*

**History:** All U.S. history standards may be touched on as students *understand a basic timeline of U.S. history and how the country has evolved since its inception.*

**Language Arts:** NL-ENG.K-12.5 *Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate ideas about wilderness and wilderness actions.*

**Technology:** NT.K-12.3 *Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity as they educate others about wilderness.*

## **Materials/Resources Needed and Pre-Investigation Tasks**

- Posterboard or similar-sized sheet of blank paper for each student
- Materials/resources for culminating classroom projects (Part 2)

## **Teacher Background**

Throughout Wilderness Investigations we have witnessed the vision and dedication of many people as they helped bring forth the Wilderness Act of 1964. Through a wilderness lens, let's revisit the wilderness story from an ancient past to a distant future. We have discovered that wilderness is an indispensable part of the American story. For thousands of years Native People depended on the bounty of wilderness for survival and held earth and its wild places as sacred. The great western explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark (and many before and since) were inspired by the untamed beauty of wilderness that became the forge upon which our uniquely American national character was created. But after just 200 years, the essential wildness of America virtually disappeared. Americans realized that the long-term health and welfare of the nation were at risk, a vision for conservation emerged.

In 1964, our nation's leaders formally acknowledged the immediate and lasting benefits of wild places to the human fabric of our nation. That year, in a nearly unanimous vote, Congress enacted landmark legislation that permanently protected some of the most natural and undisturbed places in America. The Wilderness Act established the National Wilderness Preservation System to *secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness* (from the Wilderness Act; Section 2(a)).

A uniquely American idea, wilderness is part of our heritage and is passed as a legacy to our children. Indispensable to the American past, the legacy that is wilderness will remain indispensable to the American future.

But the United States is young. At just over 235 years old we are just now hitting our stride. Like a maturing child that has moved beyond caring only about its immediate needs, the U.S. can now envision and act to do things that have benefits beyond the immediate. We can view wilderness designation and preservation as a selfless act of a maturing democratic society.

In this last classroom investigation students will review what they've learned about wilderness, explore the notion of wilderness preservation



as a patriotic act, and investigate how they, as young citizens, can enjoy and sustain our wilderness heritage.

It is important to remember that not all students (and/or their families) will be supportive of participation in what may be perceived as pro-wilderness actions. Wilderness Investigations is informational not confrontational. Students should be allowed to express diverse opinions at appropriate times. Respect for their opinions and feelings is critical and should be part of this and every Wilderness Investigation.

## **Step-by-Step Presentation Instructions**

### **PART 1**

**Quickly** remind students about elements of their Wilderness Investigations experience: In-class lessons, field experiences, focused attention on a variety of wilderness areas, getting to know a few wilderness heroes, presentations, etc.

**Pass** out a large sheet of blank paper to each student.

- A full posterboard-sized sheet would work well.

NOTE: This is not meant to be a big project that consumes a lot of time to envision or complete. That comes in Part Two of this investigation.

**Instruct** students to use the sheet to communicate what they know about wilderness.

NOTE: This project could be completed by individual students, two-person teams or in small collaborative groups.

- Reinforce the idea that this communication could take many forms or combinations of forms (i.e. poetry, drawings, words, paragraphs, lists, etc.).
- Have students begin by *reflecting* on their wilderness memories.
- After an appropriate amount of reflection time has passed, allow students to use notes, handouts, projects, etc. that have been gathered as part of their Wilderness Investigations experience.

**Make sure** students have enough time to complete meaningful projects.

**Facilitate** a period for students to display their sheets and to look at those produced by others.

**Briefly review** a timeline of historical events leading up to the establishment of the United States as a nation (began in Investigation #1).

- Don't forget to include some discussion of the fact that for thousands of years there have been many people and cultures in the area that makes up today's United States.
- Add other events that bring the timeline to present.
  - You may want to present a barebones timeline and have students research events and dates to add.

**Place** or refer to establishment of the Wilderness Act of 1964 on the timeline.

**Review:** Why do you think it took so long for our country to recognize and establish designated wilderness areas?

**Bring out** that pressing issues like establishing a nation, dealing with conflicts, solidifying an economic system, bringing diverse regions and cultures together as a nation, etc. required immediate attention.

- Sometimes when we're very busy it is easy to ignore or altogether miss changes (i.e. a diminished wilderness) happening around us.

**Ask:**

- What may have taken place around 1964 that allowed the idea of wilderness preservation to be on a lot of citizen's radar screens?
  - Possible responses:
    - The behind-the-scenes work of those supporting wilderness was finally getting attention;
    - Improving and expanding media used by wilderness supporters to make their case for wilderness preservation;
    - Economic status of many improved after World War II which gave them time and resources to get out and explore wilderness themselves;
    - Realization that the *frontier* that so many envisioned as important to the U.S. was shrinking rapidly and that some preservation was needed;
    - Success of previous preservation efforts (National Parks, Monuments, etc.).

**Point out** that like a maturing child (moving from a focus on self to an awareness of a larger world) the United States had matured and was now

able and willing to expand its selfless actions for the benefit of others including members of the non-human community (biotic and abiotic).

- Be sure that students appreciate the many selfless acts undertaken by the government and individuals during challenging world and national times of need (i.e. during times of war, famine, natural disaster, etc.).
- Students should understand that the United States has been a supporter of people and places since its inception and they should be proud of that legacy.
- A few examples of an expansion of our evolving democracy:
  - 1906: Antiquities Act (President may establish National Monuments)
  - 1936: Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act
  - 1944: G.I. Bill
  - 1946: Employment Act
  - 1961: Peace Corps established
  - 1963: Clean Air Act of 1963
  - 1964: Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - 1970: Environmental Protection Agency established
  - 1973: Endangered Species Act

NOTE: Have students research these and other ACTS, POLICIES and GOVERNMENT ACTIONS so that they have a better understanding of this interesting period.

**Bring** the period around to what individual young people can *do in support of wilderness*:

- Discuss what young people can do when they are *in* wilderness to support its healthy wilderness status (You may want to begin with small group discussions that then moves to a larger group interaction).
  - Ideas may include: Staying on trails, Leave No Trace camping, obeying wilderness restrictions, reporting negative wilderness actions, participating in approved wilderness service projects, etc.
- Nudge the discussion to things students can do *in support of wilderness* when they are not there.
  - Examples: Keep abreast of wilderness in the news (“Knowledge is power.”); read current and historic works about wilderness in order to be an educated spokesperson; invite friends and family to join you on wilderness trips; volunteer to help younger people, senior citizens, and/or

special needs neighbors to have wilderness experiences;  
participate in a *Leave No Trace* training

## PART 2

**Challenge** students to create a project (visual, audio, electronic, etc.) that shares the patriotic message of wilderness preservation in a positive way.

- This can be done by individual students or in groups of two or more.
- To be displayed/viewed/presented at Wilderness Investigation #5 *Show & Tell* event as well as other appropriate venues.

## **Service-Learning Opportunities**

Use student projects (from Part 2) plus Wilderness Investigation experiences and have students participate in local or regional wilderness or wilderness-related conferences.

## **Resources for a More In-depth Topic Exploration**

- Go to [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) to learn more about legislative actions in support of the environment that have taken place since 1970.

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## Wilderness Hero #5 ***Kari Gunderson***



**Kari Gunderson; Mission Mountain Wilderness Ranger**  
(from Wilderness.net; Submitted by Janene Lichtenberg Image #1185)

### **Instructions for the teacher:**

Wilderness Heroes tackle many different tasks as they go about the work of preserving and protecting our nation's wild places. Some are visionaries that write and speak out on behalf of wilderness. Some advocate behind-the-scenes and others jump right into the political waters. All have a personal connection to wilderness.

Kari Gunderson, the focus of this segment, spent her early years on a large dryland grain farm in north central Montana. In 2011 she began her 32<sup>nd</sup> year as a wilderness ranger in the Mission Mountain Wilderness. Kari, like so many other wilderness rangers, has accomplished heroic deeds as she hiked and worked her way across roughly 1,500 wilderness miles each year. Choosing to defend wilderness values through education rather than confrontation Kari has helped countless individuals come to know, appreciate, and understand their wilderness heritage and responsibilities. Kari represents the best attributes of a citizen in *a maturing democracy* and gives tirelessly of her time, energy, vision and talents so that wilderness is *unimpaired, preserved, and enjoyed* now and into the future.

To help students get to know this wilderness hero, choose one or more of the following:

- Photocopy and hand out *Wilderness Hero Sheet #5* to each student.
  - Based on the information found there, have them write a short biographical essay about Kari Gunderson.
    - Use the *Writing a Wilderness Hero Biography (Prompt Page)* located in the Appendix if students are just learning to write biographies and need a little assistance.
- Kari's wilderness work has been primarily on the ground in Montana's Mission Mountain Wilderness. Have students research this wilderness so that they can get a feel for her wilderness home.
- Use the handout as the basis of a short mini-lesson about Kari Gunderson.
  - *The Missoulian*, a daily newspaper out of Missoula, Montana, did an interesting article about Kari in their August 19, 2010 edition. You can find that article by going to [missoulian.com](http://missoulian.com) and clicking on *Archives*. The article is entitled *Mission Mountain Ranger Meets Hikers, Rehabs Trails*.
- Have students interview one or more veteran and active wilderness rangers in your area. Using Kari's stories, as well as other stories they collect, have students write, film, edit, and produce a podcast about the important work wilderness rangers do.
  - Have students use information found on *Wilderness Hero Sheet #5*.

- After studying Kari and other wilderness rangers send students to find out whatever they can about wilderness rangers by searching websites that describe their various duties (these will be differ from place to place). Next, have them write a *Wilderness Ranger Job Description* for a wilderness of their choice.
- Several of Kari's wilderness mentors also wrote about their wilderness experiences. Kari has been profoundly influenced by what her mentors had to say. Have students read excerpts from the writings of Mardy Murie (*Two from the Far North* or *Wapiti Wilderness*) and John Muir (*The Mountains of California* or *The Yosemite* to name two of many).
  - Start a collection of wilderness quotes using the following ideas to get started:
    - As students read, have them find inspirational passages about wilderness that might catch Kari's attention and inspire her to do her wilderness work.
    - Find quotes that, although written a long time ago, still inspire students to take care of wilderness.
- After learning about Kari Gunderson and other wilderness rangers, have students create a *Day in the Life of a Wilderness Ranger* journal entry, write a story about why they would like to be a wilderness ranger, or draw/paint/illustrate a scene from a wilderness ranger's day.
- Kari Gunderson is first and foremost a wilderness educator. That is where her most heroic work has taken place. Create scenarios where a wilderness user could use a little educating and write a script of the conversation going back and forth between the two as Kari *educates*.
  - Example: Kari rounds a corner on a wilderness trail and coming towards her, on dirt bike motorcycles, are two happy but noisy riders. Kari needs to teach them that this isn't the correct way to recreate in the wilderness but she wants to stay positive and respectful.
- Create a Kari Gunderson--Wilderness Hero bulletin board.
  - Feature projects and information about her.
- Have students study and then place their copy of *Wilderness Hero #5* in their Wilderness Investigations Folder.

**Wilderness Hero #5**  
***Kari Gunderson***  
**Wilderness Ranger**



***Kari Gunderson***

(Mollman Meadows, Mission Mountain Wilderness, 1986; Photo by Susan Stephens )

**Introduction to a Hero**

As a young girl Kari Gunderson's mind couldn't have been further away from wilderness than it was. Growing up on a dryland farm in north central Montana, Kari's world consisted of crops, family, hard work, school, and all the other things young people think of and do in rural places all over the world. When she finally left it was to go to school to become a teacher.

Sometime after she received her bachelor's degrees in elementary and special education, Kari began teaching. One of her first teaching



assignments was to a small one-room schoolhouse in the Swan Valley. The year was 1978. After a year of being the only teacher in the Montana school, Kari wondered how she might spend her summer. She had spent time with friends being introduced to the magnificent wilderness areas that surrounded her new home. Kari was hooked on the solitude, the scenery, the wildness... Then the opportunity to be a recreational crew leader for the local YCC (Youth Conservation Corp) became available. Her job--to lead these hardworking young people into the Mission Mountain Wilderness on their days off! Kari's professional wilderness life had begun.

In 1980 Kari's YCC position was phased out but she was invited to be a volunteer wilderness ranger instead. After some reflection time Kari accepted the offer. Working with the U.S. Forest Service and helping keep the wilderness wild appealed to this young wilderness hero. The next year Kari moved from volunteer to paid seasonal employee. Her love for wilderness deepened and her educating abilities matured. Rather than confront wilderness users who failed to exercise legal wilderness behaviors, Kari developed an approach that allowed the violator to maintain their dignity, learn appropriate actions, and find out the wilderness options available to them. Her motto might have been to *respectfully disagree, educate and motivate*.

Through the years her job evolved and her bosses changed. What has never changed has been her dedication to supporting wilderness values through education and personal actions. Kari's days might find her clearing trail, offering trail use advice, restoring an impacted campsite, teaching about proper campsite placement, removing restricted campfire rings, or even monitoring human/wildlife interactions. Kari has and continues to do this work tirelessly as do thousands of other wilderness rangers.

In addition to Kari's ranger activities she teaches classes about wilderness at the university level, helped found and has been a long time board member of the Montana Environmental Education Association, co-authored the original *Wilderness Curriculum* for the Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Center, led teacher workshops on the topic of wilderness and so much more.

Kari's wilderness mentors include Mardy Murie, John Muir, Cal Tassinari (an early wilderness ranger and Kari's first wilderness boss), Howard Zahniser (author of the Wilderness Act), and Sally Blevins (her personal friend and fellow wilderness ranger).

Kari's wilderness work is not something of the past--rather, it continues today. Here's a wilderness math problem for you: If Kari has hiked approximately 1,500 miles each summer as a wilderness ranger, beginning in 1980, how many miles has she hiked up to now? That's a big number but we know that Kari has done super-hero things in order to help keep wilderness wild!

### **Learn more about *Wilderness Hero* Kari Gunderson**

- Kari isn't a schoolteacher anymore but she always makes sure her teaching certificate is current. Why? She wants to continue honing her teaching skills!
- Kari works closely with the Salish and Kootenai Tribes as they work to manage wilderness that connect in the Mission Mountains. She loves the friendships that she has made through this partnership.
- One year there was no money available to fund Kari's wilderness ranger position. The citizens of the Swan Valley banded together to raise money to fund over half of her position and have continued to support wilderness protection.
- Kari has spearheaded efforts to restore "over-loved" wilderness use areas through restoration efforts and by restricting use while areas heal. She makes it clear that she is just one of many people who give their time and energy to these wilderness restoration efforts.
- Kari is humble and balks at the term *wilderness hero* being applied to her. Too bad because she *is* a wilderness hero!

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## Local Investigation #5 *Our Wilderness Heritage*

### Investigation Goals

The teacher/leader will:

- ...arrange for students to interact with local wilderness *heroes* in a wilderness area or place with wilderness elements;
- ...make sure students learn about local wilderness preservation efforts and all of the patriotic actions required in these efforts from some of those involved.

### Time Requirement

1 full school day is preferred although adaptations can be made for lesser time periods.

### National Standards Addressed

**Environmental Education:** Strand 3.2

- Throughout this field investigation students will learn from local wilderness heroes how they used *decision-making and citizenship skills* to support wilderness.

**Language Arts:** NL-ENG.K-12.7

- After students take notes from wilderness heroes they will *evaluate data* and determine which is relevant to reach their educational and service-learning project goals.

**Technology:** NT.K-12.3

- Students will use *technology productivity tools to construct and produce creative works*.

**Visual Arts:** NA-VA.5-8.1

- As students construct *Wilderness Hero Story Books* they will *take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas*.

## **Materials/Resources Needed and Pre-Investigation Tasks**

- Find out who some of your local *wilderness heroes* are and arrange to have them join you and your students in a wilderness or wilderness-elements-location to share their actions on behalf of wilderness. A diverse group (rangers, packers, fishermen, artists, etc.) is desirable so that students meet many different kinds of wilderness users/supporters.
- Photographic equipment
- Note-taking supplies
- Outdoor gear for a day in a wilderness setting

## **Teacher Background**

Throughout the Wilderness Investigations series students have learned a great deal about the Wilderness Act, been introduced to various wilderness areas, and during In-Class Investigation #5 they learned about the patriotic actions involved in supporting wilderness. They have also learned about a number of *wilderness heroes*. In this *Local Investigation* students will meet local wilderness heroes and learn about the patriotic actions involved in their wilderness activities.

## **Safety Heads-Up**

Whenever going into wilderness settings it is important to be aware of current conditions and safety issues. Before taking students into designated wilderness, be aware of limitations to group size. Perhaps this investigation is best facilitated near wilderness boundaries rather than in wilderness in order to accommodate larger groups. Local wilderness heroes may want to take smaller groups in after their more formal presentations.

## **Local Investigation Ideas**

**Meet** local wilderness heroes at or near a local wilderness/place with wilderness elements trailhead.

**Introduce** the guests and explain everyone's roles.

- Students should have received assignments and any training needed (photography, note-taking, etc.) at school.

**Move** to the pre-arranged meeting place and have students continue to take photos and notes as guests discuss the wilderness, their connections to it, and their actions to protect it.

- Encourage students to ask direct questions about joys, challenges, successes, personal sacrifices, motivation, etc.

**Enjoy** a large part of the day simply investigating and experiencing wilderness with these mentors.

- This is an especially good time to focus student attention on the value of solitude, the beauty of the wilderness soundscape, the qualities of clean water and air, and so forth.
- Another good element of the wilderness experience is that of *earning* ones way in order to reach a destination.
  - Worn-out students (perhaps grimy, sweaty, tired) on this wilderness day may well indicate a day well-spent.
  - Wilderness days like this tend to be burned into ones memory to be revisited time and time again!

**Remind** students, at the conclusion of their wilderness experience, that they are the recipients of the good work so many have done in the past.

- Help them look to the future and consider their wilderness legacies.
- Inspirational readings from wilderness users (Annie Dillard, Mary Austin, Terry Tempest-Williams, Gary Ferguson, Robert Michael Pyle, and others) and/or quotes from *Wilderness Quotes* (included with the Wilderness Investigations) are almost always appropriate during wilderness transitions (before a solo period, end of the day, etc.).
  - Example (from *Wilderness Quotes*): *As we traversed the seemingly endless jumble, we became aware of a sensation new to us: at a time and in a part of the world where opportunity to do so was rapidly vanishing, we knew that this was the way it felt to be pioneers, bound for a land so little visited that it was as if no man had come this way before.* (Pheoebe Anne Sumner; page 17)

### **Service-Learning Opportunities**

Students should take turns capturing still images of local wilderness heroes and the local wilderness visited during the local investigation. Others should take notes that capture quotes about local wilderness preservation efforts.

- Using collected images and quotes, have students create books for younger students that tell the local *wilderness hero/patriot* story.
- Arrange with school and/or local libraries to have students share books at story times for younger students.

### **Extension Ideas**

Invite a local journalist along to record the experience. Have students work with the journalist to turn it into a local interest news story or article.

### **Resources for a More In-depth Topic Exploration**

- Go to local and regional news outlet websites and search for stories about local/regional wilderness. Share these stories with students to reinforce the concepts focused on as part of WI #5.
- Share *Chased by the Light* (Jim Brandenburg; 2001) with students. This is a photo collection/written journal (excerpts) of famed photographer Jim Brandenburg as he rediscovered the art of photography as he explored the wilderness world around his north woods Minnesota cabin.

## Wilderness Profile #5 ***Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness***

### **Teacher background:**

This incredible mountain landscape, within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation in western Montana, is the first Tribal Wilderness ever set aside. While the ordinance that created the wilderness in 1982 (as well as its management plan) follows federal wilderness guidelines, the focus on wilderness as a place to sustain cultural values is unique. Students will be interested in its wilderness features but will also find the story of its creation to be inspiring and interesting.

### **Instructions for the teacher:**

To help students become familiar with the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness choose one or more of the following:

- Use information from *Teacher Background* and the *Student Information Sheet* to prepare and present a mini-lesson about this wilderness.
- If students have already started their *U.S. Wilderness Area Field Guide* (started in Wilderness Profile #1) have them add entries for the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness by choosing items from the list below:
  - Photocopy the *Student Information Sheet*, have students go through it and then conduct a discussion about the information found there.
  - Using the *Student Information Sheet*, have students choose one of the following creative projects:
    - The Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness is the first tribal wilderness ever set aside. Have students research the history and culture of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille Tribes.
      - Have students prepare an oral presentation focused on one or more of the tribes.
    - Write a persuasive proposal to parents, teachers and/or school administrators that outlines why you

would like to visit the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness.

- Use the wilderness map, included with *Wilderness Investigations*, and have students locate Montana, the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, the Mission Mountains Wilderness, and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Provide blackline maps of the state. Have students identify and label important state features and draw in/label this wilderness.
- Have students choose one of the common animals of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness (found on the *Student Information Sheet*) and have them research information about the animal. Next, using their research findings have them prepare a podcast or short film to share what they've learned.
- There are 9 developed trailheads and 12 major trails in the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness. Backpacking and horse packing are two ways of using these trails for extended visits. Have students choose one method and then come up with an equipment list for items needed using that mode of wilderness transportation.
  - Plan a trip into the wilderness. Include itinerary, menus, equipment needs, travel arrangements, costs, etc.
- If you've already started your *U.S Wilderness Area* bulletin board (see *Wilderness Profile #1*) then add information about this wilderness. If not, start your bulletin board now.
  - Good bulletin board items include maps, photos, written information, recreation ideas, and so forth.
- For more information about the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness:
  - Go to [www.cskt.org](http://www.cskt.org).
  - *Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness: A Case Study*; Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes; 2005; available for free download at [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).



Historic photo from near the wilderness  
(Salish Culture Committee; *MMTW A Case Study* page 3)



**Wilderness Profile #5**  
***Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness***  
**Student Information Sheet**



Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Scene  
(from *MMTW: A Case Study*; page 1)

**What's the story?**

- The first place in the United States where an Indian nation designated lands to be managed as wilderness.
- Managed by the Tribal Council as the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness since being set aside in 1982 under the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan.
- This wilderness set aside to preserve and protect wilderness values that include the need for wilderness as a component of cultural preservation.
  - The Tribal Wilderness Ordinance states:

*Wilderness has played a paramount role in shaping the character of the people and culture of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes; it is the essence of traditional Indian religion and has served the people of these Tribes as a place to hunt, as a place to gather medicinal herbs and roots, as a vision seeking ground, as a sanctuary, and in countless other ways for thousands of years.*

- The Tribal Wilderness covers approximately 91,778 acres with an additional 22,833 acres in a designated wilderness buffer zone.
- Wilderness covers an area that is approximately 34 miles long and about 5 miles wide.
- Located on western slopes of the Mission Mountain Range with elevations between 4,000 to over 10,000 feet above sea level.
- Landscape features include high mountain valleys, rocky peaks, forested slopes, lakes (113 greater than 1 acre in size) and creeks, as well as some small glaciers.

- Some of the wilderness wildlife are grizzly bear, black bear, white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, mountain lion, bald eagle, and mountain goat.
- Forests consist mainly of Douglas fir and subalpine fir but also include cedar, larch, spruce, ponderosa pine and lodgepole pine.
- The wilderness can receive snow any month of the year especially at higher elevations. Spring rain/snow and summer thunderstorms round out the precipitation picture. Hot days and cool nights are common in summer.
- Because it is a Tribal Wilderness, tribal members have wilderness access rights before non-tribal members.
- Some of the main players in the effort to set aside and manage the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness were:
  - Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes;
  - Thurman Trosper (Tribal member, retired U.S. Forest Service employee; past president of the Wilderness Society);
  - The Three Yayas (Grandmothers): Annie Pierre, Christine Woodcock, and Louise McDonald (see story that follows);
  - Doug Allard (Tribal businessman and leader of the *Save the Mission Mountains Committee*);
  - The University of Montana Wilderness Institute (under the direction of the Tribal Council developed a draft boundary and management plan);
  - David Rockwell (first wilderness manager);
  - Tom McDonald (longest serving wilderness manager);
  - Les Bigcrane (current wilderness manager--2011);
  - Many other tribal members and supporters.
- The Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness uses similar management guidelines as those applied to federally designated wilderness.

### **Tribal Wilderness Heroes--A story**

A plan to log in the Ashley Creek area of the Mission Mountains in 1974 stimulated three tribal Grandmothers to speak out in opposition to the logging. These three Elders, joined by friend and supporter Germaine White, met with the Tribal Council to voice their concerns. One after another the three women spoke of the need to *care for the earth and pass it on to the children in good condition*. They made a case for not logging the precious Mission Mountains.

When finished the women waited respectfully and unexpectedly for the Council to vote. Finally the Council did vote and the logging plan was cancelled. These three determined Grandmothers helped preserve a piece of what would soon become the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness.

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center's  
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## **Wilderness Investigation #5** ***Show & Tell***

### **Instructions**

At the conclusion of Wilderness Investigation #5 (*Our Wilderness Heritage*) work with students to set-up displays and presentations that showcase learning, skills, and experiences related to the investigation. Use this sheet as a planning template.

### **Projects, Presentations & Displays** (Related to the Investigation)

Choose student projects from any or all of the segments of Wilderness Investigation #5 (and include items from WI #1, #2, #3 and #4 if appropriate).

1. Classroom Investigation: Show *Wilderness Review Sheets* and *Wilderness Preservation is Patriotic* projects.
2. Wilderness Hero Kari Gunderson: *Wilderness Hero Sheet #5*; *Wilderness Hero* bulletin board; misc. *Wilderness Hero* projects.
3. Local Investigation: *Local Wilderness Hero/Patriot Story Books*.
4. Wilderness Profile--Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness: Various *Wilderness Profile* projects.

**Location of Event**

**Date(s)**

## **Invitations**

Note: Parents will have already been invited if you sent home the *Wilderness What's Up?* note at the beginning of this investigation. A reminder may be in order. Others to consider: school administrators, grandparents, other classes, resource people from agencies, nature center personnel, etc. Include thank you notes for those who have helped during Wilderness Investigation #5 and invite them to celebrate student learning about wilderness.

## **Equipment/Material/Resource Needs**

Make a list of needs based on presentations and displays being featured.

## **Refreshments and other Logistical Details**