



Wilderness Quilt Project

The idea of a Wilderness Quilt is to create a giant quilted wilderness that would occupy the inner floor space of a "recent room" in a museum or another public space, fifty years after the signing of the 1964 Wilderness Act. It would be suspended from the floor, lifted at places with short poles, etc. (Think of when you were a child, tipped chairs and tables over, and threw blankets over them to make a tent to play in.) But this quilt wilderness would be looked at from the top.

Once the quilt tent is constructed in one big piece, but unadorned, it is cut into many, smaller, flag-size pieces (4' X 4') that are marked and can be reattached to each other (maybe with grommets at the corners). That way, the 'divided' sections can be recombined into a whole.

The flag size pieces can be distributed among schools, school classes, Sunday or bible school classes, scout groups or other youth groups to adorn with wilderness characteristics. These characteristics are marked and drawn, in simple ways, ahead of time on the muslin, canvas, or other scrap cloth. For instance, over here, the outline of a stream passing over the cloth, with a riparian side, and alluvial fan; over there, the edge of a cliff and the beginning of a forest. The cut edges will therefore have lines leaving them that connect to the adjacent pieces being decorated by another class or group. These edges will have symbols and wording that tell each class or group how the edges will connect to another flag piece. Some communication between teachers or group leaders may be useful then—so the edges do relate when they are reconnected—but the students won't know this exactly, so their individual class or group creativity isn't influenced too much. The classes or groups decorate, adorn, build, draw, and paint on their flag piece to create a small, symbolic piece of "wilderness". They deliver it to the coordinator who takes it to the museum or display area for reconnection to the larger "wilderness" quilt tent.

The wilderness quilt is put on display in a museum or public area. Here are the steps of the project template again:

- 1) Construction of suspended, unadorned "quilt tent" in a shape to fill the central floor space of a museum or public area, according to their rules.
- 2) The "quilt tent" is cut into many flag size pieces, with grommets in the corners to enable it to be reconnected after as many classrooms or groups have adorned it with wilderness features.
- 3) The classes or groups creatively adorn and decorate their flag piece of wilderness.
- 4) The flags are reconnected into the whole wilderness and reconstructed in the museum, or other space, for display.