



Date: August 20, 2004
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Even though the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Interpretive Center in Ft. Benton won't be completed until 2006, center director Connie Jacobs and two Ft. Benton science teachers have already been thinking about an educational curriculum to complement the center and the monument. Their ideas earned the Bureau of Land Management and the Ft. Benton schools a \$5,000 grant from the Hands on the Land network of field classrooms.

The money will be used to develop a free curriculum in the form of an educational trunk that can circulate throughout the state of Montana and even other states if requested. Part of the curriculum will be a self-guided field trip for classroom teachers. Using either vehicles or boats, students and teachers can visit selected sites in the monument where various science or cultural topics will be highlighted. An exploration of the topics of history, geology, ecology, and biology will help students understand how their lives are connected with the natural world and their past.

According to Jacobs, "A big thanks goes to Ft. Benton science teachers Shannon Walden and Renee McDonald who had the idea for this curriculum. The school district and the River and Plains Society also provided letters in support of the grant application. We're really excited that we'll have this educational program ready to go when the center opens."

Hands on the Land (HOL) is sponsored by Partners in Resource Education, a collaboration of five federal agencies, including the BLM; a non-profit foundation; schools; and other private sector partners. Through the HOL network of field classrooms, federal agencies are providing a diverse array of hands-on learning opportunities for teachers and students.

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