

project WILD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 15, 2003

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Project WILD Celebrates 20 Years of Wildlife Education at the Local, State, and National Levels

The Most Widely-Used Conservation Education Program in the Nation Announces its 20th Anniversary!

Houston, TX – Since 1983, over 900,000 educators have benefited from Project WILD workshops, which translates into over *48 million K-12 students* who have participated in the program! Project WILD has grown significantly in the past 20 years, from its start in 13 Western states to its current reach in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and six additional countries. From Toledo to Tokyo, students of all ages are engaged in learning about wildlife in their area and around the world. In its 20 year history, the program has gone wild!

Project WILD materials are provided to educators through hands-on, interactive and interdisciplinary workshops conducted by representatives of sponsoring state wildlife, natural resources and education agencies. Thanks to ongoing dedication, commitment and volunteer time of teachers, wildlife biologists, interested citizens, school administrators and others, Project WILD is available at little or no cost to educators—something that has remained unchanged since the outset of the program. The program is easily integrated into teaching science, language arts, social studies, math, art and other curriculum areas, and is utilized by resource specialists, naturalists, rangers, youth leaders and other nonformal educators. In this era of educational reform, Project WILD enables educators to address educational standards through lively, interactive instructional strategies.

The goal of Project WILD is to assist learners of any age in developing awareness, knowledge, skills, and commitment resulting in informed decisions, responsible behavior and constructive actions concerning wildlife and the environment. In the face of competing needs and pressures affecting the quality and sustainability of life on earth, the program addresses the need for individuals to develop as responsible citizens of the planet. "As with all good education materials, Project WILD is concerned with providing information, as well as helping students to evaluate choices and to make reasonable decisions," stated Rudolph J.H. Schafer, Founder, Western Region Environmental Education Council (WREEC) and Board Member, Council for Environmental Education (CEE).

"In short, Project WILD's mission is to help students learn *how* to think, not *what* to think."

The Project WILD program has enjoyed a history of receiving recognition and numerous awards, including the 1984 Conservation Education Award from The Wildlife Society, the President's Environment and Conservation Challenge Award in 1991 and the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation's National Environmental Education Achievement Award in 1997. In addition to accolades from environmental groups, the education community also recognize the significance of the program, which has been endorsed by the National Council for the Social Studies, is consistent with recommendations of the National Science Teachers Association, and has earned the endorsement of the California Board of Education.

Building on the success of the original curriculum guides, Project WILD continues to develop new programs and materials to meet modern educator and student needs. Several key additions have included the *Aquatic Curriculum and Activity Guide*, *WILD About Elk*, *Taking Action* and *WILD School Sites*. In response to the needs of audiences whose primary language is Spanish, Spanish-language materials allow for even more students to participate in Project WILD. *Science and Civics: Sustaining Wildlife* is the most recent addition to the Project WILD family. This high-school level curriculum is intended for science and social studies classes to gain content knowledge as well as become engaged in service-learning opportunities that benefit wildlife in their community.

Project WILD continually monitors and evaluates its programs in order to maintain a current and effective program. Since 1983, at least 30 studies have evaluated Project WILD activities and materials. Educators consistently give Project WILD the highest marks for excellence, educational value, overall quality, usefulness and effectiveness in meeting educational goals.

Project WILD, a K-12 supplementary conservation and environmental education program emphasizing wildlife, is administered by the Council for Environmental Education and is co-sponsored by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The Council for Environmental Education (CEE) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization formed in 1970 by representatives of natural resource and education agencies. CEE's mission is to provide environmental education programs and services that promote stewardship of the environment and further the capacity of learners to make informed decisions. At the national level, CEE administers Project WILD, Project WILD Aquatic, WET in the City, and Team WET Schools and is a founding co-sponsor of Project Learning Tree and Project WET. The policy and direction of the Council is governed by a Board of Directors comprised primarily of natural resource agency and education professionals.

For more information, please call 713-520-1936 or visit www.projectwild.org.

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