



Beyond Basecamp

The Newsletter of Montana Yellowstone Expeditions

www.myeconnect.org

► From Basecamp



Ellen Sagmyr
MYE Program Manager

Hi Everyone, hope you had a fun spring break and that the weather where you are is starting to show promise of the summer to come. We just had 3 inches of snow at basecamp, so it is still feeling a bit wintery here.

The good news is that we are well down the track in preparing for our summer programs. We have employed all our summer staff and are excited at the skills, experience and enthusiasm they will bring with them to share with our students. We have 7 Wilderness Challenge Courses and an intern program with 5 participants running during the summer. This is an increase in courses and student numbers from last year.

For MYE alumni we also have CA Retreats continuing through the summer and two scholarships available to attend a summer program at the School Of Embodied Leadership in CA. It's still all happening. Read on.....

Food For Thought - by Jerry Lawrie

Have you ever been to a natural place that was beautiful to look at? Describe it. Is there a special place that you go to when you want to be out in nature? Where is that place? What is it like?

►► Hello from the Orfalea Foundations! - Laurel Anderson



Just a couple of highlights of what we've been up to...

In January we launched an Emergency Preparedness initiative. We have partnered with other funders to accept proposals by organization trying to prepare of large scale emergencies (such as earthquakes, floods, terrorist attacks or flu pandemic) so as a community we can have a plan and established communication between service agencies to be prepared as possible before tragedy strikes. We are reviewing our first round of applications and have already heard about increased inter-agency communication and planning!

Our s'Cool Food Initiative has hosted a couple of events to raise awareness regarding healthy eating and the current nutritional value of the lunches served in schools. Last month Morgan Spurlock (documentary maker – "Supersize me") and author Marian Nestle ("Food Politics") held a talk, moderated by Kate Adamick (chef and attorney), which drew a crowd of over 700 people. Several MYE alumni helped us out at this event. You can read about that in the previous newsletter.

For more information regarding s'Cool Food, please see the website www.scoolfood.org.

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His email is: jerry@myeconnect.org

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▶ March CA Retreat Report - by Jerry Lawrie

To all those who participated in the March retreat I would like to say thank you.

The retreat went off without a hitch and we all had a wonderful weekend. We started Saturday off with a hike along Cold Springs trail, located behind Montecito. We did this with Charlie Coupal from Wilderness Youth Project. After the hike we finished the day doing a workshop with the Community Environmental Council interns.



On Sunday, we went to the Getty Museum and then finished the day with horseback riding in Griffith Park.

Alumni Upcoming Events - Earth Day with MYE and CEC



▶▶ **WHEN:** Sunday April 20th 2008

▶▶ **MEETING PLACE:**

**Santa Barbara Court House - Sunken Gardens
Community Environmental Council Tent
(in the NE part of the Gardens)
1100 Anacapa St
Santa Barbara, CA 93101**

▶▶ **MEETING TIME:**
Saturday 9am (finish at 4pm)

EARTH DAY THEME: "Reducing My Eco-Footprint"

WHAT can I do to reduce my eco-footprint?

This is a question than hundreds of folks will be asking themselves when they participate in the Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival on April 20th. MYE alumni are already ahead of the game and know some ways to reduce our eco-footprints.

MYE is joining the **Community Environmental Council** on April 20th to help teach other people easy ways to reduce their eco-footprints.

MYE alumni and staff will help folks take the Eco-Footprint Quiz and guide them to the "Get Energized Pledge." Through-out the day we will also facilitate group activities with younger children.

As well as helping out with these activities you will get the chance to roam around the gardens, look at all the different booths and listen to amazing music.



There is still lots of room for you to come to the April retreat. Come and join at the Sunken Gardens on April 20th. For more information either call Jerry on (805) 698-6450 or go to our website: www.myeconnect.org



▶ March Retreat - The 'Green Side Of MYE

This past retreat was one that really reflected the greener side of MYE. Everything we did whether it be hiking, getting prepared for Earth Day, looking at art in the Getty, or horseback riding, had a connection with our ecological foot print. For example, the artwork at the Getty were not just a paintings, but marks, or footprints, left behind for us to find and enjoy.

By Ryan Marquez MYE6/Intern

Every thing we did was related in some way to how we are making an impact on our planet, and the focus of the day was the importance of us being aware of the consequences of that impact.

The horseback riding also had a connection to the ecological foot print. Even though we where in the city of Los Angeles we were still able to riding horses in a nice place. The founder of that park wanted to leave something behind for people like us to use and enjoy for years to come.

Since the retreat I have been more aware and appreciative about everything around me.



Welcome to our latest newsletter column:

'Wild, Wonderful and Weird Websites'

(they can just be plain interesting and/or informative as well).

Our first contributor is Andy (Leider). We invite people to contribute and share your favorite websites with the MYE community. Contact us at :

newsletter@myeconnect.org We would love to hear from you!



Ideal Bite - "A Sassier Shade of Green"
www.idealbite.com

Ideal Bite is a website and daily email newsletter "bite" about living sustainably and green. Each daily email is one page of short bites about simple things we can all do to lessen our impacts on the planet, our communities, and each other.

It is not preachy or idealistic, but rather a practical 'how to' with tips for everyday life. Plus, it's colorful, funny, and produced and sent by a small start-up company right here in Bozeman!

If it seems like a lot of work to research and try to figure out the best sustainable practices for your area and your life, do it anyway! And let Ideal Bite come directly to your Inbox to help.



Staff Page - Where Are They and what are they doing now?



► Culture and Mountaineering in Ecuador

This winter I was lucky enough to travel to Ecuador for a few months with Irene Bailey and another friend from California. It was my first true international traveling experience and I was excited at the opportunity to learn about Ecuadorian culture and customs and practice my very rusty Spanish skills.

Ken Gates - MYE Instructor and Mountaineer

The only set plans I had when I left the States were to work on an organic farm in the Amazon for a few weeks and take a 24-day mountaineering course through an Alaskan company. Of all the things I wanted to do in Ecuador, I think the prospect of learning how to climb 20,000ft peaks was the most exciting to me at the time.



Over the winter I began to prepare myself for the physical challenges ahead by going to the gym or running a few miles as part of my daily routine. A few months later I flew down to Ecuador and met up with Irene. We traveled for a month together and then I went off to my mountaineering course and Irene went to the Galapagos.

I was excited at the prospect of being a student again and also learning how to run an International mountaineering expedition.

Having spent a month traveling through Ecuador, I felt I was coming to the course with a strong knowledge of Ecuadorian customs and a grasp of the language. When I met the Instructors, I quickly learned that they had limited international experience and didn't speak any Spanish. No group members spoke the language and they seemed disinterested in learning anything about Ecuadorian culture.



As we traveled through we traveled through Andean cities on our way to different mountains, I became the translator, for a group that continually had cultural conflicts. This caused difficulties and required many discussions with the group to try to reach some sort of understanding.

The villages we stopped at were situated on extraordinarily steep mountain sides with lush green farmland rising up on all sides, until you reached an altitude where ice and rock took over. These remote mountain villages have yet be exploited because the steep dirt roads are too dangerous to support large scale commercial use.

On the course I learned the basics - avalanche safety, rope travel and crevasse rescue. On summit days we'd leave camp at 11pm and climb continuously until we reached the top of the mountain 8-10 hours later, just in time to see the sun rise. The views from the top and the lack of oxygen were unforgettable. After a quick picture we would hustle back down the mountain as fast and safely as possible to avoid rock fall/avalanche as the day heated up.

Having had so many diverse experiences during my time in Ecuador, I continue to reflect what I've learned as an observer of such a different and unique culture. I enjoyed my brief stint as a mountaineer and plan to continue climbing next winter, but when I look back on my mountaineering experience in light of my cultural experience, I cant help but think of a quote I read in a book recently:



"It's the sides of mountains which sustains life, not the top. That's where things grow."
(Zen and The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance).



Staff Page - Where Are They and What Are They Doing Now?



► Spring Break in an Island Paradise

I hope everyone had a fun and safe spring break. Did you go anywhere and if so where did you go? Did you get outside or did you stay at home the whole time?

If you would like to share what you did for spring break in the newsletter, please write about it and send that to Ellen. We would all love to hear what you did. If you have pictures, send those too.

Heather and I went to the big island of Hawaii for our spring break. We were there for 9 days and relaxed for every minute of them. One of our highlights was watching lava enter the ocean in Volcano National Park and the greatest part about that experience is we got to walk on earth that was no more than 5 years old. There is something pretty magical about that.

Another one of our highlights is that we drove up to Mauna Kea which is considered the largest mountain in the world. Now I bet you're saying "that's not right, Mt. Everest is the tallest mountain in the world."

Actually MT. Everest (29,028 feet) is the tallest mountain on land, but Mauna Kea is the tallest Mountain in the world when measured from the base to the summit. Most of it is below sea level though. The visible part is a little over 13,000 feet above sea level. The mountain in it's entirety is over 33,000 feet.



Well we got to hike around on the summit and the scenery was like the moon. I couldn't believe that there was even snow on the summit, I even got to touch it.

We also hiked a fair amount on the north side of the island where some of the beaches are only accessible by foot. The north part of the island is very lush and green as opposed to the west side of the island which is dry and brown (this is where the best beaches are).

The hiking was unreal. There were waterfalls cascading right into the ocean. One of the hikes in Waip'o Valley was down a steep road that dropped over 900 feet in less than a mile. The only way down was either 4-wheel drive, or by foot. We opted to go by foot and it was very rewarding. In the back of the valley there was waterfall that cascaded over 1,200 feet. To see water fall from that height is awesome.



Lastly, we went snorkeling and at the risk of repeating myself, I have to say it was amazing. There are spots off one island where the under water visibility is over 60 feet. We saw loads of fish, turtles, moray eels, octopus, and dolphins.

Over all the trip was inspiring and a great way to spend spring break. I could probably write 10 pages on it, but I will spare you the reading time. If you want to know more come to one of our retreats and I will fill you in on the rest.

Please let us know what you did for spring break and we will put it in the newsletter. We would love to hear from you. Write to: newsletter@myeconnect.org

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His email is: jerry@myeconnect.org

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