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1. 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS AND SPORTFISHING LEADER TRAINING (2/25)
4-H Sportfishing, Air Rifle, Archery, and Shotgun Leader training and certification sessions will be offered February 25 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. at the 4-H Center. These are special tracks at the 4-H Volunteer and Parent Forum. Participants must pre-register for one of the classes and stay with it all day. They will be reimbursed up to \$60 to help with expenses.

Individuals must register for the Volunteer Forum (Fri PM & Sat cost: \$62.50 or Saturday only: \$25). A two hour "Youth Development" training is a requirement to receive shooting sports and sportfishing certifications. This training will be offered Friday evening at 7:00-9:00 p.m. If participants cannot attend the Friday evening training, they must make arrangements through their County Extension Office to receive this training from their 4-H Regional Extension Agent. Individuals who have attended either of these trainings in previous years have already had the "Youth Development" training. They should indicate the discipline, date and location on the Forum registration form.

The registration deadline has been extended to Friday, February 17!

2. SCHOOL RECYCLING AWARD

Deadline: February 17, 2006

The 2006 American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) School Recycling Awards will recognize schools that have implemented successful recycling programs with a monetary prize and framed original artwork, given to a

classroom recycling program and a school-wide recycling program.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82340>

3. LEWIS AND CLARK ESSAY CONTEST

The Lewis and Clark Youth Rendezvous is an event for students who will be high school juniors or seniors during the 2006-2007 school year. It is centered around the 200th anniversary of the Corps of Discovery and the exploration of the west and will take place August 13-18, 2006 in North Dakota.

Ten students from each state and territory will be selected to participate in the Youth Rendezvous based upon a Lewis and Clark essay competition. The event, including transportation, will be free of charge for those students with the winning essays along with two chaperones from each state and territory.

The essay will be evaluated on original thought about the Lewis and Clark expedition. It must be a minimum of 1,000 words, but not more than 1,500 words. Entries will be accepted until midnight February 28, 2006. For more information, go to <http://www.lcyouthrendezvous.com/>.

4. 2006 ESRI GIS GRANT PROGRAM FOR 4-H

ESRI announces two grant options for the ESRI GIS Grant Program, designed for 4-H in cooperation with National 4-H Headquarters, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)/U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support its geospatial outreach, education, and community involvement efforts. The goal of this program is to foster and support the integration of geographic information system (GIS) software in 4-H clubs across America.

Grant categories include an introductory grant for 4-H clubs new to GIS and global positioning systems (GPS) and an intermediate grant for those 4-H clubs that received previous ESRI 4-H grants and completed the grant requirements.

Eligible Applicants: Any 4-H community or in-school clubs, 4-H Afterschool programs, 4-H special interest groups, 4-H school enrichment groups, 4-H camps, or similar 4-H units across America that meet regularly and is recognized as an authorized 4-H group within its state's 4-H program.

Application Period: January 1-March 31, 2006

To learn more about the 2006 4-H Grants, go to

http://www.esri.com/grants/esri/06003_4-h_fy06.html.

5. GIRLS ON ICE

Deadline: April 1, 2006

August 6-15, 2006 ~ Washington

North Cascades Institute will offer a one-week leadership program "Girls on Ice" Glaciology Program for teenage girls that combines leadership,

mountaineering, and science. The one-week program is open to girls 15-19 years old who have shown keen interest in science and the outdoors. The program is free to young women who qualify via a merit-based application process.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82337>

6. DOE AMERICAN STARS OF TEACHING

Deadline: April 15, 2006

The U.S. Department of Education is seeking nominations for the 2006 "American Stars of Teaching" to honor outstanding classroom teachers who are improving student achievement, using innovative strategies in the classroom, and making a difference in the lives of their students. One teacher will be recognized from each state.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82336>

7. "NATURE OF LEARNING" GRANTS

Application Deadline: April 17, 2006

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation invites applications from organizations seeking to start or expand the Nature of Learning program in their communities. Grants to be awarded on a competitive basis of up to \$5,000 to support start-up expenses associated with new programs, and grants of up to \$3,000 to provide continued support to existing Nature of Learning programs.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82338>

8. NOMINATE A YOUNG ECO-HERO FOR THE BARRON PRIZE

Deadline: April 30, 2006

The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes seeks nominations for its 2006 awards. The Barron Prize honors young people ages 8 to 18 who have shown leadership and courage in public service to people and our planet. Each year, ten national winners each receive \$2,000 to support their service work or higher education. Half of each year's winners are chosen for their work to protect the environment.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82339>

9. YOUNG NATURALIST AWARDS

Deadline: May 1, 2006

The American Museum of Natural History 2006 Young Naturalist Awards are for students in grades 7-12 to participate in a research-based essay contest to promote participation and communication in science. Two winners from each grade will be selected to receive cash scholarship awards and an expense-paid trip to New York City for the awards ceremony.

Contact: Christine Economos at yua@amnh.org or 212-496-3498

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82334>

10. 2008 4-H CALENDAR STORY CONTEST - GET YOUR ENTRIES IN NOW
Have Your Story Featured in the 2008 National 4-H Calendar!
The submission deadline is April 30, 2006.

National 4-H Supply Service wants to hear about your favorite 4-H project and why it is meaningful. Your story could be used in the 2008 National 4-H Calendar. Sending in a submission may even get you a free gift certificate towards your next purchase of merchandise from the 4-H Source Book!

The 2008 calendar theme is "My Favorite 4-H Project". It will be up to 4-H members, volunteers, parents, staff and partners to furnish the stories that will be featured. These personal testaments must tell the what, when, where, why, and how; so everyone can understand how 4-H projects are meaningful.

One story for each month will be featured in the calendar and the author will receive one \$10 gift certificate towards a future purchase in the 4-H Source Book. Please limit your entry to 125 words due to the space restrictions of the calendar. Don't forget to include your contact information.

Please e-mail, fax or mail your stories to: Maria Cascioli, National 4-H Supply Service, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
<<mailto:mcascioli@fourhcouncil.edu>> mcascioli@fourhcouncil.edu
Phone: 301-961-2948 or Fax: 301-961-2937

11. "UNSUNG HEROES" AWARDS

Deadline: May 1, 2006

The Ing Unsung Heroes Awards are given to K-12 educators pioneering new methods and techniques that improve student learning. 100 finalists will receive an award of \$2,000. 1st place receives \$25,000; 2nd place \$10,000; and 3rd place \$5,000.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82341>

12. CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (CEE ONLINE)

Integrating EE into all aspects of the K-12 experience. Teachers and students around the world can access reviews of EE curriculum, find reliable reference information on environmentally HOT Topics, read about current innovative EE projects and how to fund new initiatives (Grapevine), read profiles of schools going green, and find resources for bringing sustainability to campus (Educating for Sustainability).

Please take the user survey by February 15th!

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82358>

13. EARTH DAY 2006 ACTIVITIES

This Earth Day, join a chorus of voices sharing a message of hope with the world. Learn how public figures like celebrities, politicians, conservationists, and people like you view the future of the planet.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82359>

14. PLANET H2O AIRS IN APRIL TO MARK EARTH DAY

PLANET H2O, a two-part special from Thirteen/WNET New York will premier on public television in April to mark Earth Day. Both episodes, "The Secret Life of Water" and "Water World," focus on fresh water systems around the world and their impact on land, air, and living things.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82364>

15. EXPLORATORIUM ECLIPSE WEBCASTS

Check out the next Exploratorium Solar Eclipse Webcast from Turkey on March 29, 2006. Includes information on what to watch for during an eclipse, how to view, and more. Other Exploratorium Webcasts available:

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82360>

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82361>

16. FISHERIES LEARNING ON THE WEB

Fisheries Learning on the Web (FLOW) is a comprehensive curriculum about the Great Lakes ecosystem, geared toward upper elementary and middle school. Lessons are aligned with science and social studies standards.

<http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/82362>

17. NATIONAL OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE CONSERVATION COUNCIL WEBSITE

The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) is proud to announce their all-new website to OHV enthusiasts and activists everywhere. The organization has a long history of utilizing electronic communication to share their many "tools" and resources with folks who are interested in "Creating a Positive Future for Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation". www.nohvcc.org

18. SPECIES FOCUS: BIG BROWN BAT

Family: Vespertilionidae Genus: Eptesicus Species: fuscus

Pronunciation: ep-tess-a-cus fuss-cuss

Common name: Big brown bat

The big brown bat is found in virtually every American habitat ranging from timberline meadows to lowland deserts, though it is most abundant in deciduous forest areas. It is often abundant in suburban areas of mixed agricultural use.

This species ranges from extreme northern Canada, throughout the United States and south to the extreme southern tip of Mexico. Traditionally, these bats have formed maternity colonies beneath loose bark and in small cavities of pine, oak, beech, bald cypress and other trees. Common maternity roosts today can

be found in buildings, barns, bridges, and even bat houses. Small beetles are their most frequent prey, yet big brown bats will consume prodigious quantities of a wide variety of night-flying insects.

They are generalists in their foraging behavior and habitat selections, seemingly showing little preference for feeding over water vs. land, or in forests vs. clearings. Like all insect-eating bats, big brown bats contribute mightily to a healthy environment and are vital players in the checks and balances of insect pests. Numerous feeding studies of big brown bats exist indicating that they consume significant crop and forest pests including ground beetles, scarab beetles, cucumber beetles, snout beetles and stink bugs, in addition to numerous species of moths and leafhoppers. Like many bat species, reproductive females often can consume their body weight in insects each night. In fact, a colony of 150 big brown bats can consume enough adult cucumber beetles in one summer to prevent egg-laying that would produce 33 million of their root-worm larvae, a major pest of corn (Whitaker, 1995).

Big brown bats clearly rank among America's most beneficial animals. And, as they are forced out of traditional forest habitats due to encroaching human populations, logging, and habitat modification, they will move into increasingly close human contact, taking up residence in buildings and other man-made structures. But, humans and bats can coexist peacefully. Sometimes designing bat-specific artificial roosts are the best options to keep bats out of our homes, yet near enough so that we can continue to benefit from their insect-eating capabilities. Though many species, like the big brown, still rank among our most abundant and widespread bats, they nevertheless deserve attention from conservation and education initiatives for healthy environments.

Source: February Bat Conservation Times

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