

Project Group #3

Project Title: Mosquito Hill Nature Center “Reading Tree” and Reference Library

Team Members: Jim Ecker, Billie Jo Higgins, Lynn Nett, John Phillips, Sherry Van Dyn Hoven and Barb Wenninger

Project Goal/Objective: To promote an interest and appreciation of our earth's environment and raise awareness of related issues, especially our need to protect and preserve it; to facilitate literacy; and to improve children's knowledge of and encourage further education in biological and environmental sciences. Our project has two parts: A Reading Tree and Material Check Out. We constructed a Reading Tree that is conducive for children and their families to sit and read in a fun and “natural” environment. The second part of our project involves making the Mosquito Hill Library more user-friendly for children and adults by creating a reference and check out system for the various media available at the Center. Both projects would allow Mosquito Hill to be a resource for area educators as well as an opportunity to expand our programming to younger audiences.

Project Description: We accomplished our objective of constructing a “Reading Tree” by working with two resources who have already volunteered to be part of the project - a retired art teacher, Joe Kafer and a carpenter, Dean Peterson. Financial resources for the project were available through a donation from the family of a deceased volunteer naturalist. The reading tree has places for children to sit inside the tree and outside the tree. We have created the tree to resemble a “real” tree; including the rings of a tree and the texture of bark.

The second part of our project objective was to develop a computerized checkout system for the more than 500 items available at the Library, including books, DVDs, VHS, Audio Cassettes, etc. We had access to a librarian, Wendy Hartman and an IT Director, Joe Wenninger. We purchased new software, Library System, and a “used” computer was donated to them. We categorized the materials in accordance with the UW-Stevens Point Conservation Library. Each item was entered into the system and a reference number was attached to the item.