

directions

Journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

Design Principles for Nature Play Spaces

Ken Finch
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Childhood
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In this two-part series, Ken Finch shares ideas and principles for the design of nature play spaces.

In recent years the conservation field has learned that children's unstructured, nature-based play is a powerful influence on the development of life-long conservation values — especially when such "nature play" occurs frequently. Simultaneously, research has clearly shown that kids' frequent, spontaneous outdoor play has largely vanished from American culture.

Given this convergence, many nature centers are now trying to restore nature play to childhood. One of the most common strategies for these efforts is the creation of specific areas

for active nature play — by designating existing habitat for that role, by creating sometimes-elaborate "nature playgrounds," or through a combination of the two.



photo courtesy of Stokes Nature Center

Nature play can be as simple as hiding out in a ready-made fort.

This is a valuable effort, but we are probably several years away

from having a well-tuned set of best practices for the creation of nature play spaces that effectively bond children to the natural world. Many nature play space efforts are under-

way across the country — some unique, while others are being done in more of a "cookie-cutter" format. As we have analyzed many of these spaces and helped design others, Green Hearts has developed a set of principles and practices to guide our work. These are not scientifically proven, absolute, or etched in stone. Rather, they represent Green

Hearts' best judgment and analysis,

(continued on page 4)

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Founded in 1989, the Association of Nature Center Administrators is a private non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting best leadership and management practices for nature and environmental learning centers.

Serving nearly 500 organizations, ANCA is the leader in the profession.



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Directions is a quarterly publication of the Association of Nature Center Administrators, distributed to members of ANCA as a membership benefit.

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2 Director's Notes:
Plans for 2010
by Jen Levy

3 Member News:
**New Member Benefit
Call for Nominees**

10 From the Field:
**Stokes Nature Center -
Wild About Utah**
by Holly Strand

12 Book Review:
by Gordon Maupin
**The Big Burn - Teddy
Rooseveltdt and the Fire
that Saved America**
by Timothy Egan

**13 ANCA's Founders
Then and now**

**14 Peer Consults
Schedule yours today!**



photo courtesy of Stokes Nature Center

Director's Notes

2010 Happenings

Jen Levy
Executive Director
Association of Nature Center
Administrators
Logan, UT

happy New Year ANCA Members! I hope your 2010 is off to a great start. We are looking forward to another busy year, and I want to take this opportunity to share some of our plans and goals for 2010.

I attended the Social Media Marketing workshop at the Granite State Summit in August and was completely blown away by the tools presented for social networking – Facebook, Twitter, Yammers, Wig-gio, Flock, Google, Flickr, Ning, etc. just to name a few! I was already on Facebook and had added ANCA as a “Cause” to receive donations online (and we have raised \$305 so far, not bad).

At the workshop we discussed the opportunity social networking sites offer to connect and further develop your community. New in 2010 we have added an ANCA Fan Page on Facebook to do just that. We invite you to become a fan and share interesting photos, news, and happenings at your nature centers.

This coming August we will be holding our 16th Annual Summit and we have decided to return to the site of the very first Summit, Treehaven Environmental Learning Center in Tomahawk, WI. The North Woods Summit will take place August 18-21, 2010. I traveled to Treehaven in November and met with executive director Corky McReynolds and his staff and once again, we have a fantastic team to work with.


The site is beautiful and will offer wonderful opportunities to explore the north woods in addition to the workshops and sessions. We are still



putting the agenda together and we need your input! Please email or call with your ideas and suggestions for topics.

The ANCA Board will be meeting in mid-February at the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont in Tennessee. This two-day meeting will include time spent reviewing ANCA's financial health, endowment policies, and Strategic Plan as well as Summit planning.

We are happy to announce that the 2010 ANCA Peer Consult Scholarships have been awarded to Endless Mountain Nature Center in Tunkhannock, PA and the Margaret and H.A. Rey Center in Waterville Valley, NH. I want to thank the ANCA Peer Consult Scholarship Committee, Larry Richardson, Dave Catlin, Saul Weisberg, Francis Velasquez, and Ann Rilling, for making the selections. So far this fiscal year (July-June), we have conducted Peer Consults in Indiana, Michigan, Texas, and Utah, and we are in the planning stages with two other centers interested in consults in 2010. If you would like more information on the ANCA Peer Consult Program, please contact the ANCA office.

I wish you all a successful and rewarding 2010 and hope you find the time to get out in nature and enjoy! 

Member News

New Member Benefit!

We're proud to announce that ANCA's webmaster, Puffinworks, has partnered with us to provide an exclusive opportunity for ANCA members only!

For a limited time, Puffinworks is offering 30% off all websites—that's a savings of \$450-\$600 on an average-size website which normally costs \$1,500-\$2,000.

Puffinworks is owned by Bruce Hampton, who specializes in web solutions for environmental and community service nonprofits. Bruce's clients have included The Wilderness Society, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and American Rivers, among many others.

Bruce has been making websites for over ten years. He's also a former wildlife biologist, flyfishing guide, wilderness ranger, and the author of four nationally acclaimed books, specializing in environment and natural history. He taught for many years at the National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander, Wyoming, where he resides with his wife and two adopted daughters of Korean and Chinese descent.

ANCA discovered Puffinworks several years ago and never looked back. Bruce created a great website for us that we manage (from any computer - even while on the road), and he's always quick to answer our questions or provide assistance when we need it. He is fast, friendly, very affordable, and extremely enjoyable to work with.

Puffinworks offers self-managed websites and hosts them on dedicated, carbon-neutral servers for the utmost in secure, environmental-friendly websites. Once your new website is launched, it comes with free consul-

tation/updates (up to one hour per month).

So if you need a website or you've been planning to redesign your old one, check out Puffinwork's exclusive ANCA offer by visiting <http://www.puffinworks.com/solutions/anca.php>
Just tell Bruce we sent you!

Call To Action!

This is not just another informational blurb! This is one of those CALLS FOR ACTION of great significance to the entire ANCA Membership!


It's time for you to consider nominating someone for the 2010



photo by Tom Hisson

Recipients of ANCA's Nature Center Leadership Award pictured left to right are Charity Krueger, Bob Thomas, Gordon Maupin, Pat Welch, Tracy Kay, and Corky McReynolds.

ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award. Do you know a person you consider a true mentor and someone you have admired and respected for their leadership? Now you can show your appreciation to that hard working and dedicated leader who gives so much to our profession by nominating them for the ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award. This recognition is the highest honor bestowed in this country upon an individual in the nature center profession.

Go to <http://www.natctr.org/index.php?id=21> and click on "Leadership Award Form" and submit your materials by April 1, 2010 to the ANCA Office. 



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based on our experience. We are happy to share them in order to help our colleagues to similarly think through key principles and design issues for nature play spaces that are tailored to their own organizations' specific missions and circumstances.

Core Principles for the creation and use of nature play spaces as a conservation strategy.

- **Trust in the inherent play value of nature.** The best places for nature play have already been designed by nature: rich, healthy, diverse, natural habitats that are accessible to children. If your site has such areas, first consider their potential for children's play without major physical changes or enhancements.

- **Mimic nature closely.** If you intend to create or significantly augment a site for nature play, use designs that closely replicate local habitats. Aim to develop a natural area for play, not a playground with a nature theme! Try to create a "density of diversity": multiple micro-habitats in close proximity to each other, thus adding both ecological richness and play value. Always use plants and features (e.g., rocks) that are native to your area, or — if essential — carefully choose only those non-native plants that are ecologically well-adapted to your region and are not invasive.

- **Focus on conservation outcomes.** Frequent nature-based play is good for a broad range of children's developmental needs — a fact to be celebrated and shared with your visitors. However, nature centers should emphasize, first and foremost, that nature play is a powerful conservation strategy intended to help create a larger, stronger constituency for the environment. Nature centers' missions are different from child development centers or schools, even though their benefits can overlap. Use and promote nature play as a vital part of your conservation commitment!

- **The heart comes first.** Nature play is not about cognitive learning, and it is not just a "tweaking" of traditional environmental education. Nature play is about kids falling in love with nature — and falling in love is not a left-brain process! Nature play will inevitably involve learning, but it will be spontaneous and unpredictable — not the kind of learning that fits neatly into curriculum standards and

grade levels. By contrast, most school-based environmental learning is too infrequent, too controlled, and/or too objective-based to allow the creation of deep, individual bonds with nature. So aim for the heart with your nature play initiative. If kids fall in love with nature, they will want to learn about it, and that learning will be likely to endure. John Burroughs said it well: "Knowledge without love will not stick. But if loves comes first, knowledge is sure to follow."



photo courtesy of Mohonk Preserve

Nature play involves direct hands-on activities with plants, animals, sticks, and dirt.

- **Play with nature, not just in nature.** Not all outdoor play is created equal! Many forms of outdoor play will support children's developmental needs without creating strong bonds between the kids and nature. For example, throwing a Frisbee in a park is a great kids' activity, but it involves nature in only the most passive of ways. Some nature play area designs promote the outdoor use of features or activities that could just as well be used inside. This is outdoor play, not nature play! Real nature play actively engages kids with nature: catching fireflies, digging holes to China, building dens, climbing trees, finding mini-beasts under rocks, curling up in a secret niche to watch the clouds, etc. Every major component of your nature play area should facilitate these sorts of authentic interactions with real nature.

- **Don't fear the reaper.** Active nature play will cause damage or even death to some organisms. Plants will be uprooted, tree limbs will be broken, butterflies will be caught and injured, ants will be fried with magnifiers, foxes will be scared away, etc. So what? These actions will not threaten the world's ecology. In fact, they will cause less ecological harm than did the creation of your building site, parking lot, entry road, and trails. Realize that kid-caused damages to nature are an inherent part of nature play — and that nature play is a vital conservation strategy. Most such harm is not evil in intent, but rather is more akin to children performing spontaneous science experiments. Kids need to learn how much impact they can have on nature, pro and con. Green Hearts believes this is a common part of developing personal empathy for other life forms. Don't encourage it, but don't worry about it too

(continued on page 6)



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- **Frequency is vital.** Children who visit a “destination” nature play area once or twice a year may have a transformational experience, and they certainly will have fun! But lasting impacts on a child’s emerging conservation values are more likely to arise from frequent nature play. The goal is to create a powerful personal bond with the outdoors, and this is best achieved through frequent, intimate experiences. Daily or weekly play in a mundane but handy outdoor area — even just a vacant lot — will be more powerful than an annual visit to a rich and wonderful nature play site. It’s analogous to physical fitness: you can go to the right place (e.g., a gym) and do all the right activities, but it will do you little good unless you do so on a regular basis. Ditto for nature play.

- **Provide a “take-out menu.”** Unfortunately, nature centers do not often have the same children visiting on a daily or weekly basis — so frequency is hard to attain. As an alternative, provide parents with motivation and instructions for easy “kidscaping” improvements they can implement at home, or perhaps on their local school grounds. To support this home-based approach, be sure that many of your nature play features are easily replicable, both in design and cost.

- **Chill out.** Most nature centers have the same rules: don’t go off the trails, don’t pick or collect anything, don’t climb trees, don’t throw rocks in the pond, don’t catch animals, don’t dig any holes, don’t walk in the creek, etc. Yet when you ask nature

center staff what experiences steered them into this profession, these are exactly the kinds of activities they commonly recall! So do your visitor rules protect your land in the short term, but discourage the development of lasting conservation values in local children? Obviously, some ecologically sensitive areas need strong protection from all visitors, but many nature centers are not so unique. Often their land’s ecological value is only as a remnant of what used to be in the area, not as a reservoir for truly endangered species or habitats.



photo by Ann Rilling

Nature play is at its best when it is unstructured and unregulated.

So consider relaxing your rules — perhaps by “zoning” your property for different levels of impact. After all, our strategies should promote ecological protection for centuries or millennia — and that can only happen if we succeed in instilling conservation as a primary core value of our culture. That is the purpose of re-created nature play!

- **Room to roam.** As children grow older, they often seek more challenge and adventure. Historically, this commonly meant outdoor roaming: following streams, trails, roads, and boundaries farther and farther away from their home. These adventures

deepened kids’ knowledge and relationship with nature, and also created a stronger sense of place. Most nature play spaces do not provide for this older stage of outdoor play, and thus are most effective only with younger children. So consider how you can facilitate roaming for older kids — perhaps by relaxing your rules (per above) or by scattering nature play features throughout a larger portion of your property.

- **The test of remembered childhoods.** Among conservationists, the experience of childhood nature

play is nearly ubiquitous. So draw on your own memories to help determine the best activities and features for your site. For example, do you remember having delineated and signed areas for different types of outdoor play (e.g., “messy play,” or “dramatic play”)? Or \$5,000 play houses? Or very expensive outdoor musical instruments? Not likely. These sorts of things are not essential for today’s kids, either!

Think of the simple nature play activities that you

remember most vividly — the ones that really sparked your love of the outdoors — and try to re-create them at your center.

- **Embrace risk, thoughtfully.** This is a tough one. We live in a litigious society, and many nature centers view lawyers and insurance agents as near kin to Darth Vader. Intentionally created nature play is a new concept for nature centers and insurance companies alike. There is little if any real data about how safe or dangerous it is, but there is plenty of room for common sense — and you should be the champion of it! One key is the concept of comparative risk. For

instance, many natural areas have deep and potentially dangerous water bodies, open to visitors and lacking six-foot safety fences — even though drowning is the second most common cause of accidental children’s death. Yet typically a nature center’s staff (and their insurance agents) accept this deadly danger, while worrying obsessively over the possibility of a child breaking an arm by falling out of a tree, or getting the occasional cut, scrape, or bruise. In fact, the number one cause of children’s accidental death is automobiles — i.e., the way 99% of your visitors arrive at your site! Are you creating a deadly attractive nuisance by encouraging families and school groups to drive to your center? Common sense is crucially needed in these considerations!

Dealing with risk is an essential part of child development. Kids must learn to judge risks, gauge their own physical limits, and practice personal responsibility. Until very late in the 20th century, children routinely did that by jumping over creeks, balancing on logs, climbing trees, scrambling over boulders, and poking into holes. Yes, there is inherent danger in those activities, and injuries will occur — but will they be any more severe or common than what your visitors experience in other areas and activities within your property?

None of us should blithely ignore risk, but we need to lower the fear factor, not raise it. Talk candidly about comparative nature play risks with your staff, your Board, your insurance agent, your visitors, and your members. Educate them about it, and appeal to their common sense. Liability laws and insurance practices are not writ on stone tablets carried down from a mountain; they can be changed by an informed and motivated public. Do your part in that

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process, and don't let irrational fear control your design work. As landscape designer Robin Moore has said, you should aim to make your nature play site as safe as it needs to be, not as safe as it possibly can be.

• **Throw away the clock.** Nature play is at its best when it's unstructured and unregulated, so give kids as much time as possible to explore and play. Allow plenty of free-play time in your camps and public programs, and trust the children's ability to make up play amidst a rich environment. And if drop-in visitors use your play area, be sure

to make the parents comfortable. It is not essential for parents to play alongside their children; in fact, it may be better if they don't (though don't try to mandate that!). Studies have shown that parents' comfort determines how long young kids are allowed to play in a playground. So provide comfy seating, plenty of shade, water (or sodas and snacks), and perhaps even wireless internet for parents' use — all within watching distance of your play area. Also, provide parents with educational signage or printed material about the value of nature play, and how they can facilitate it at home (e.g., Green Hearts' *A Parents' Guide to Nature Play*).

• **Schools don't cut it.** Nature play is rarely a good fit with school groups. It is certainly possible for school classes to enjoy your nature play space before or after a structured program, but time constraints, worries

about clean clothing, and teachers' inclinations towards control are often barriers to high quality nature play. Many environmental educators are now trying to integrate nature play into their structured programs, but the results are usually only a weak compromise, sometimes in quality, but almost always in the dimension of frequency. Nature play and standards-driven learning are just simply different beasts. Green Hearts believes that nature play is best done during kids' free time, not during school. After all, how many of you remember your childhood nature play as occurring during school hours? So why try to

to watch birds and butterflies, to have an intimate chat with their best friend, and to listen to the wind in the leaves. These experiences have always been a part of nature play, and should be included in any designed natural play space. 🌿

(In the next issue of *Directions*, Part 2 of this article will focus on more specific design issues and play features.)

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To reprint all or portions of this article, please contact Ken first.



photo courtesy of Stokes Nature Center


Quiet and contemplative activities are just as important to nature play as vigorous and boisterous pursuits.

make it so, today?

• **Sssshhh — child at play!** Amidst the active, boisterous fun of much nature play, it is easy to overlook the value of quiet play and more contemplative activities. Green Hearts believes that secluded little niches and retreats for kids are just as important to a quality nature play area as are more vigorous pursuits and features. Kids need the time, the shelter, the comfort, and the privacy to daydream,

Ken Finch has been working in the environmental education profession for more than 36 years, serving as the director of three nature centers and as a senior manager in two children's museums. He has been active with ANCA since 1991, including two years as President and seven years on the Board of Directors. In 2005 Ken founded Green Hearts Institute for Nature in Childhood, an Omaha-based nonprofit conservation organization

dedicated to restoring and strengthening the bonds between children and nature (www.greenheartsinc.org). Green Hearts works across the country, writing, speaking, training, and consulting about nature play. Green Hearts is also developing its first facility: a children's nature center in the Omaha suburb of Papillion. Ken can be reached at kfinch@greenheartsinc.org.

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From The Field:

Stokes Nature Center – *Wild About Utah*

Holly Strand
Executive Director
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Stokes Nature Center is housed in a renovated American Legion cabin located on the Cache Wasatch National Forest near Logan, UT. To get to our Center, visitors must park their cars almost half a mile away, cross a state highway, and hike or bike up a limited access dirt road. Needless to say, this limits our number of visitors, especially during the cold and icy, northern Utah winters.

Since few people get to us, I knew we needed to go to them. So in early 2008, I approached Utah Public Radio (UPR) to see if they would be interested in a weekly or biweekly show about Utah nature.

Cathy Ives, the station manager, was enthusiastic from the start. She had spent many years with New Hampshire Public Radio and they had produced such a show (*Something Wild*, <http://www.nhpr.org/somethingwild>) successfully for more than 10 years. Cathy and I asked Bridgerland Audubon Society to join us since a weekly broadcast might be an overwhelming task for the nature center to tackle alone.

“Wild About Utah” has now been on the air for nearly two years, playing at peak listening periods four times a week. UPR station surveys show it to be one of the most highly regarded of all locally produced fea-

tures! The program features three to four minute science-based segments on Utah flora, fauna, weather, geology, and other nature-oriented themes with topics corresponding to the appropriate seasons of the year.

Wild About Utah allows Stokes Nature Center and Bridgerland Audubon to regularly reach out to a

lege of Natural Resources. Partnering with Stokes Nature Center and Bridgerland Audubon gets professional research and information that is respected and valued while also shining a light on those organizations. This is truly a win-win-win project.” stated Cathy Ives, General Manager of UPR. ““Something Wild’



photo from tsandra.worldpress

Stokes Nature Center and Bridgerland Audubon Society, in cooperation with Utah Public Radio, produce Wild About Utah – a weekly nature series program which covers topics such as flying squirrels, wild turkeys, bird songs, and other flora and fauna specific to northern Utah.

statewide Utah radio audience and to connect them with the wonders of the Utah landscape.

“Wild About Utah is a way for Utah Public Radio to provide excellent locally produced programming of interest to our statewide audience without a financial investment. We even get a small production grant from our Utah State University Col-

that I started at New Hampshire Public Radio is a partnership with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the New Hampshire Audubon Society and is still on the air after 13 years” she continued.

As program host, I am responsible for content and recording together with Linda Kervin, Jim Cane, and Lyle Bingham of the Bridgerland Audubon Society. While we invest a significant amount of time in the production of Wild About Utah – ap-

proximately eight hours per week in research, writing, vetting, editing, and recording time – it has been well worth the investment.

We learn a lot and the scripts we produce are recycled for other uses. Once broadcast, material is placed on the Wild About Utah website (www.wildaboututah.org). Every other week, the stories are published in

the Logan Herald Journal Outdoor section. We are planning a Wild About Utah teacher's edition that will feature recorded programs and text reformatted to correspond to Utah's core curriculum standards. Best of all, each week offers the chance to engage listeners and even supporters from all over the state.

The following story was broadcast on December 3, 2009.

"Hi, I'm Holly Strand from Stokes Nature Center in beautiful Logan Canyon.

"There's a large paper wasp nest on display on a bookcase at the Nature Center. Last week, Anna and I noticed some strange noises emanating from it. It even seemed to move a little on the shelf. We carefully – and a bit nervously – approached to investigate. I picked up the nest and it began to shake vigorously. Then a live missile shot out of the opening. It was a chubby little squirrel with huge dark eyes. He jumped from the bookcase and went scurrying across the floor with Anna and I in hot pursuit. Then he scampered up to the top of a door frame. We tried to catch him with a cardboard box, but he spread his little legs out wide and went sailing over our heads, landing smoothly on the floor across the room. And then he ran under the couch. We stood there in amazement. He wasn't your normal squirrel – he was a flying squirrel!

"The northern flying squirrel is one of two flying squirrels found in the United States, the other being the southern flying squirrel. Northern flying squirrels occur in many of Utah's mountainous areas, primarily in mature coniferous forests and riparian zones.


"According to Mike Wolfe at the Utah State University's College of Natural Resources, they aren't exactly rare in Logan Canyon. In fact, they are active here throughout the year,

but they're completely nocturnal. So many people never see them and are surprised to find that we have them.

"Flying squirrels don't really fly. They glide. They have a loose fold of skin known as a patagium that runs along each side of the body from the ankle of the hind leg to the wrist of the foreleg. When they stretch this membrane and launch they instantly become a furry paraglider, capable of covering great distances using a small fraction of the energy it would take to run.

"Rocky, as we called the Nature Center visitor, proved very difficult to catch. In the end, we used a live trap baited with apples and sunflower seeds. On Thanksgiving morning, my husband and I found him sitting in it, wishing he were somewhere else. We took him up the canyon and released him. He scampered up a tree and seemed to regard us thoughtfully. On the way back to the car, I looked back once more and was lucky enough to see one last beautiful 20 foot glide from tree to tree.

"Thanks to the USU College of Natural Resources for supporting research and development of this Wild About Utah topic.

"For Wild About Utah and Stokes Nature Center, I'm Holly Strand." 

Holly received her master's degree from the University of Colorado and studied biogeography at University of California in Santa Barbara. Before coming to Stokes Nature Center in 2007, Holly spent 10 years with World Wildlife Fund as a technical advisor to overseas offices in Eurasia, Africa, and South America. She led numerous tours to nature reserves in Russia, Mongolia, and Ecuador for World Wildlife Fund and other non-profits. She loves foreign languages, spicy food, esoteric films, and vows to become a gardener in spite of the fact that plants wilt when she walks by.



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Book Review

The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire That Saved America by Timothy Egan

Gordon Maupin
Executive Director
The Wilderness Center
Wilmot, OH

Who in our profession has not swung a Pulaski while doing trail work or building a fire line?

However, few people working in forestry or conservation realize a real life hero designed the tool. Ed Pulaski, who along with other rangers in the new, struggling U.S. Forest Service, saved the lives of their fire crews at gunpoint when panic was taking over in the face of wildfire driven by hurricane force winds.

The Big Burn documents the largest forest fire in recorded history.

When you speak of huge western forest fires, most people think of the 1988 fires in Yellowstone National Park and surrounding National Forests. The Big Burn of 1910 in northeastern Idaho and neighboring Montana was far bigger in size and far more destructive of life and property.

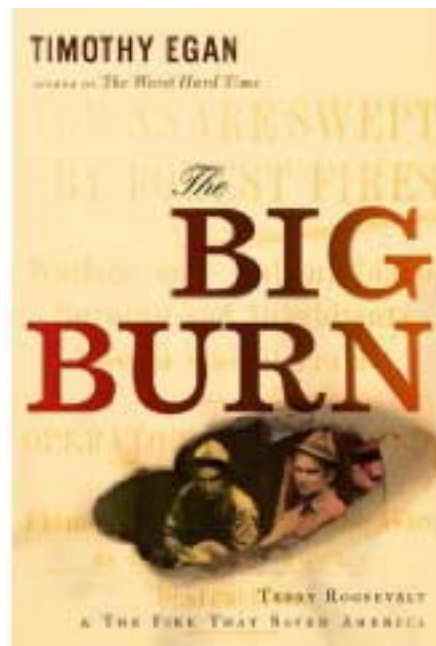
It is also a fire that saved the National Forests by rallying public opinion in favor of the fledgling U.S. Forest Service.

In crafting this book, Timothy Egan weaves two separate and related stories.

First is the story of the burn. It is a disaster epic. Egan traces efforts to control an uncontrollable wild fire. At times, the fire moved so rapidly crews were unable to escape. Between 100 and 200 people lost their lives. However, more lives were saved by rangers, who controlled panic stricken crews at gunpoint and lead them

to the relative safety of mines and streams.

The second story traces Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot as they created the National Forest system in an epic struggle with the robber barons who controlled much of America's wealth, media, and political apparatus in the early 20th Century. (Unfortunately, the more these things change, the more they stay the same.)



The Big Burn by Timothy Egan
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2009

The debt Americans owe to Roosevelt and Pinchot is immeasurable.

The Big Burn was voted Amazon Best of the Month, October 2009. Their review is as follows: "When Theodore Roosevelt vacated the Oval Office, he left a vast legacy of public lands under the stewardship of the newly created Forest Service. Immediately, political enemies of the nascent conservation movement

chipped away at the foundations of the untested agency, lobbying for a return of the land to private interests and development. Then, in 1910, several small wildfires in the Pacific Northwest merge into one massive, swift, and unstoppable blaze, and the Forest Service is pressed into a futile effort to douse the flames. Over 100 firefighters died heroically, galvanizing public opinion in favor of the forests—with unexpected ramifications exposed in today's proliferation of destructive fires. Just as he recounted the Dust Bowl experience in *The Worst Hard Time* (a National Book Award winner), *The Big Burn* vividly recreates disaster through the eyes of the men and women who experienced it (though this time without the benefit of first-hand accounts). It's another incredible—and incredibly compelling—feat of historical journalism."

This book is well worth a read. It is a gripping tale of courage and disaster and a history lesson all Americans should learn. 🌿

Gordon Maupin is half Ozark Hill-billy and half prairie sodbuster with a touch of Cherokee.

He studied biology and plant ecology at Missouri State University earning bachelors and master's degrees. He became executive director of The Wilderness Center in 1981. Prior to joining the Wilderness Center he worked for the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

ANCA's Founders – Then & Now



ANCA's Founders and members from the early days pictured here at Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids, IA in October 1989 at ANCA's first official member workshop.



A few of ANCA's Founders attended ANCA's 15th annual Summit at Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in Holderness, NH in August 2009. Pictured here are Corky McReynolds, Bob Thomas, Pat Welch, Tracy Kay, and Bob Mercer. (photo by Tom Hissong)

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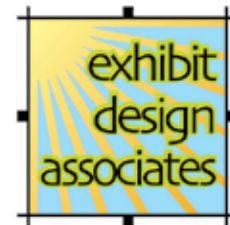
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To find out more about ANCA's Peer Consults contact:

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Please contact Ann Rilling, Marketing & Communications Director for more information:

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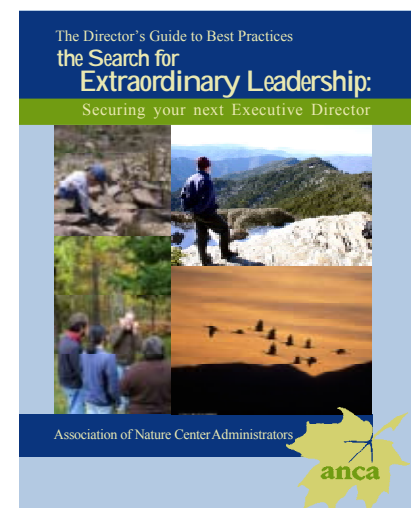
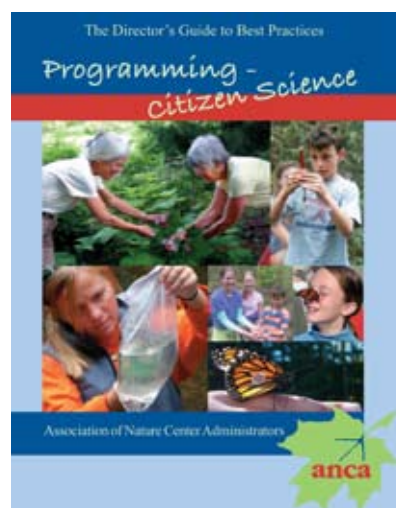
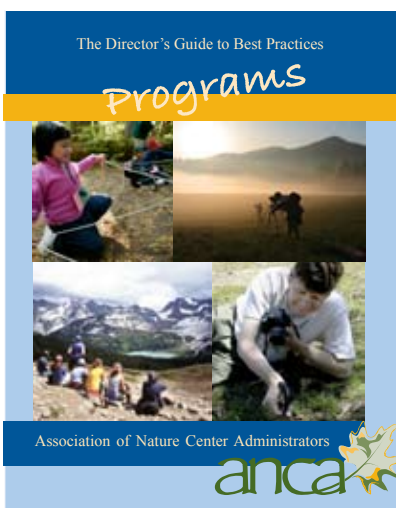


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