Dr. Martha Monroe

Research

Dr. Monroe’s work in conservation behavior includes understanding perceptions and human dimensions of wildland-urban interface issues. She is currently working with Wood to Energy, a Community Woody Biomass Outreach Program, to assess the potential of using stakeholder discussions and workshops to improve public understanding of the possibility of using wood for electricity generation.

(http://www.interficesouth.org/products/Technical%20Summary_biomass%20project.pdf)

Work with communities at risk of wildland fire has generated several interesting projects in community preparedness, social capital and education (Agrawal dissertation 2006), and using neighborhood groups to create a social contract for encouraging residents to reduce their risk (see Monroe and Nelson 2004; Nelson et al. 2005). These studies are funded by the North Central Research Station of the US Forest Service.

In the realm of environmental education and communication, Martha worked with co-authors Susan Jacobson and Mallory McDuff to produce a compilation of strategies: Conservation Education and Outreach Techniques from Oxford University Press, 2006.

Several graduate students have explored the area of critical thinking by measuring skills among high school students who participate in community environment-based education programs (Ernst dissertation 2003) and undergraduates in a forest issues course (Hofreiter thesis 2005). Evaluation of environmental education programs is critical. We assessed how teachers use Project Learning Tree and learned that 75% of those who are trained to use PLT use it with youth, and 75% of these educators have used PLT in the classroom in the 2000-2001 school years. Most teachers use less than 6 activities per year in the classroom or on school grounds. They believe that the Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS) and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reduced their use of PLT (Easton thesis 2002).

Environmental curriculum that has been developed to meet Sunshine State Standards in writing, for example, has increased students’ writing test scores significantly (Randall thesis 2000). The curriculum introduces students to museums, collection databases, and biodiversity while conducting activities that use the Linking Florida’s Natural Heritage Interface and practicing effective writing skills. The curriculum guide combines five language arts and five science Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS). A study of 132 high school students in Gainesville, Florida in 2000-01 using the curriculum shows that students made a significant improvement in their writing scores for assignments in the curriculum scored using the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) rubric. Funding to support this project came from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the School of Forest Resources and Conservation.