

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN MID-MISSOURI: NEEDS AND CONSTRAINTS INFLUENCING FIELD TRIP PARTICIPATION OF K-8 TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined barriers and constraints facing mid-Missouri school teachers involving field trips, such as the need for environmental education (EE) services and training opportunities. The primary objective was to focus on rural school teachers who live near Prairie Fork Conservation Area (PFCA), an underutilized educational resource near Williamsburg, Missouri. A questionnaire was distributed to 401 public school teachers in seven counties of Mid-Missouri, yielding a response rate of 64%. The majority of respondents were well-educated females that taught kindergarten through second grade. Their overall attitude regarding field trips was positive. Teachers participated in about 1.5 field trips per year, but only 5.7% of respondents had used PFCA as a field trip destination. Structural constraints were found to be important and might limit field trip participation at PFCA. However, some of the constraints facing teachers could be negotiated with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). Some management implications are discussed.