



Thank You!!

Jeff Mell

USDA Ottawa National Forest

If you know Jeff, you know his smile and boundless enthusiasm. That is what Jeff contributed, along with his valuable time and expertise, to writing the first Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative (LSSI) proposal in Fall 2007. The U.S Forest Service was one of the initial partners on the successful grant proposal submitted to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust in October 2007 which established LSSI.



Once LSSI was funded, Jeff Mell made a point of attending every Dinner & Dialogue that first year, bringing with him two young Forest Service employees who were just learning the ropes. Jeff believed in the mission of LSSI and wanted to share LSSI's innovative and inspiring vision of engaging young people in caring for the Lake Superior watershed with these new professionals just beginning their Forest Service careers. While many teachers and community members also attended these LSSI events...none of us had to make the 150+ mile roundtrip that Jeff and his employees had to make from Ironwood, Watersmeet and Ontonagon.

Jeff has encouraged his USFS staff to assist schools in implementing their LSSI projects. Jeff engaged Christy Mackuck and a half dozen USFS staff to help with field trips for CJ Sullivan Elementary School students on the Baraga Plains---there were many engaged and smiling students. Most recently, Jeff has offered the Hancock High School P.E.A.K. class the exciting opportunity to develop a new management plan for the Sturgeon River Gorge.

This past fall, Jeff threw his energy into planning the Get Outdoors Summit on November 5, 2009, in Silver City that brought together 80+ residents of the western UP to discuss the declining time that today's children spend outdoors and to consider what educators, professionals, and local decision-makers can do.

In February 2010, Jeff facilitated the Get Outdoors session for the Gogebic-Ontonagon ISD teacher in-service workshop. Twenty-five teachers learned about the resources available to them from the Forest Service, Porcupine Wilderness State Park, 4-H, and Western UP Math/Science Center. The GOISD teachers were also inspired by the "can do" spirit of the LSSI teachers who presented.

We are fortunate to have Jeff's optimism, spirit of gaiety, and belief in a better tomorrow contributing to LSSI now and in the future.

###