

NEWS RELEASE
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Organizations Kick Off New Artist-in-Residence Program

The Bob Marshall Foundation, Flathead National Forest, Hockaday Museum of Art and Swan Ecosystem Center selected two Montana artists—visual artist, Myni Ferguson, and writer Annick Smith -- to participate in the first artist-in-residence program. The Artist*Wilderness*Connection program connects artists and the public with our wild lands. In September each artist had an opportunity to live in a cabin for a week on the Flathead National Forest to focus on their art. Within the next six months, the artists will select a format to share their talents and residency experience with the community.

Flathead Valley artist Myni Ferguson specializes in carved and etched glass pieces. Montana author Annick Smith is well known for her essays and co-editing of the Montana anthology, The Last Best Place.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, signed by Lyndon Johnson in September, 1964 establishing the National Wilderness Preservation System. Nearly 50% of the Flathead National Forest is designated wilderness, part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

“The Artist*Wilderness*Connection Program offers an opportunity to share and help protect the legacy of clean air and water, wildlife habitat, unequaled settings for recreation, reflection and solitude offered by wilderness areas,” said Teresa Wenum, Flathead National Forest’s artist-in-residence coordinator.

“Art and literature played an important role in wilderness protection, she continued. Artwork and literature inspired lawmakers and others to protect wild areas.”

“The artist-in-residence program benefits the artist, offering a remote setting to focus on their art and benefits the public through the presentations the artists will offer,” said Linda Engh-Grady, Executive Director of the Hockaday Museum of Art.”

Beginning December 1, Montana artists are invited to apply for the 2005 Artist*Wilderness*Connection program. The program will host three artists in cabins on the Flathead National Forest during the months of August and September. For information about the 2005 program or to download an application, visit the Hockaday Museum of Art web site, <http://www.hockadayartmuseum.org>.

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