

Work House

Science Education Program

**By Terry Welder
with
the Division of Interpretation
Glacier National Park**

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Designed by Bill Hayden

A Glacier National Park
Environmental Education Guide

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The creation of *Work House* has truly been a team effort. Many people within the National Park Service, the tribal cultural committees, and the reservation school systems have given freely of their time, advice, and editing skills to make this program possible.

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Terry Welder
January 16, 1992

Preface

The staff of Glacier National Park, in cooperation with the Blackfeet and Confederated Salish/Kootenai Tribes and the Glacier Institute prepared this packet of environmental education activities for Native American students and their teachers. Our goal was to develop environmental education materials relevant to the way of life, attitudes and cultural heritage of the Blackfeet, Salish and Kootenai who live in the vicinity of Glacier National Park.

As is often the case when you begin to teach, you learn more than the students. We learned many valuable lessons during the development of this education program. One of the most important lessons was that if you wish to develop a successful and culturally sensitive curriculum, you must not only establish good contacts in the local schools, but you must also work hard to establish and foster involvement of tribal representatives and cultural leaders in the project. Without such involvement your project will fail. It will lack both sensitivity and integrity. I feel that the greatest contribution of our Education Specialist and author of *Work House*, Terry Welder, was his ability to unlock these important informal communication pathways.

We also learned about serendipity and the creative process. Our decision to use both traditional stories and scientific explanations of natural phenomena grew out of a late afternoon discussion of the Blackfeet story *Napi Punishes a Rock* -- an explanation of glacial erratics. This proved to be an effective and popular approach; one which recognized the rich oral traditions of many Native Americans, and one which added life and color to our classroom activities. The visual arts are important in this education process as well. The students who participated in the pilot tests of this curriculum used personal art to interpret the stories and to assimilate the new lessons they learned about change in the environment, glaciation, wildlife habitat and natural succession. Their drawings illustrate this workbook.

Change or succession in the natural world is the major theme of all the lessons in this workbook. We welcome your suggestions for change to this workbook. It is a living document which we will continue to develop in the years to come by adding additional learning tracks, some already requested by teachers involved in the pilot program.

In the end,
We will conserve only what we love,
We will love only what we understand,
We will understand only what we are taught.

Baba Dioum, African Ecologist

Cindy Nielsen,
former Chief Naturalist, Glacier National Park, 1992