



Invitation to the first meeting

Kent FEI Cluster Group

Friday 21st May 2010 2.00pm

**EarthCraftuk Forest Schools in Kent Visitor Centre,
Mount Ephraim Gardens, Hernhill, Kent ME13 9TX**

The FEI (Forest Education Initiative) is a national organisation supported by eight partners, of which the Forestry Commission is one. See www.foresteducation.org for more info.

The aim of FEI is to ***increase the understanding and appreciation, particularly among young people, of the environmental, social and economic potential of trees, woodlands and forests, and of the link between the tree and everyday products.***

The work of the FEI is achieved through local cluster groups around the UK, which bring together people whose work involves trees, timber, forestry and education including social forestry and Forest Schools.

For many years, there hasn't been an active cluster group in Kent. We know there are a lot of interested people within the county and our aim is to bring everyone together, enabling the provision of forest education to move forward in Kent – after all, we do have the highest proportion of Ancient Woodland in the country!

This invitation is open to staff in local schools, environmental organisations and those involved in the timber industry. Indeed anyone who has an educational interest in trees, woodlands, forestry related employment, social forestry and Forest Schools.

The initial goal for the Kent FEI cluster group would be to encourage local schools to make more use of Kent woodlands and to show how it can be used in teaching and learning across the county, in social forestry programmes.

We also be looking at the development of the county wide provision of Levels 2 and 3, Forest Schools Practitioner Training and the delivery of **Forest Schools** – the long term woodland education programme headed by qualified Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioners. Forest Schools are very active in many counties across the country and we now need to bring the provision to Kent – we owe it to our children!

At the first meeting, we will decide how much interest there is in setting up a group, and start to make plans for how we can attract funding for local projects to get our children out into the forest.

Susannah Podmore (England FEI Co-ordinator) will be coming to the meeting to explain the role of the FEI and what sort of things we will be able to achieve through the group (eg funding for local projects, networking, sharing good ideas for using the woods in teaching and learning). Susannah will also be discussing the Forest Schools Quality Improvement Framework set up to ensure quality and good practice across Forest Schools

Please try to come to the meeting or send a representative – the more people who attend the better! Also, please feel free to forward this email to anyone else who you think should be invited to the meeting.

Please email us to confirm your acceptance by May 14th and we look forward to seeing you on
Friday May 21st at 2pm.

"Knowledge was inherent in all things. The world was a library and its books were the stones, leaves, trees, grass, brooks... We learned to do what only the students of Nature ever learn, and that was to feel beauty and peace."

Luther Standing Bear (1868-1939)

Clair & Scott
EarthCraftuk Forest Schools in Kent
"The Classroom without Walls"
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