From Everest to Yellowstone: A Model for Connecting our Communities to Field Research

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The original outreach expedition....When a Montana State University professor and student traveled to Mount Everest for geological research, more than 2,000 schoolchildren and adults followed the expedition via classroom kits, STEM curriculum materials and dispatches from Everest.

Montana State University’s motto is Mountains & Minds, and a series of expedition-themed outreach projects have engaged schools, alumni and community members by adding a personal connection to university field research.

Key Components
- Youth participate in inquiry-based science by replicating university research
- Participants get to know MSU faculty and students on a personal level through photos, videos, blog posts and e-mail interaction
- Social media enables all stakeholders to follow along
- Participating university students gain valuable science communications and outreach experience
- Materials are evergreen and remain available after expedition

Galapagos: Following in the Footsteps of Darwin

- MSU students traveled to the Galapagos Islands for an Honors Class
- Students received science communications training, then made videos on topics related to the trip
- Students sent blog updates back from Ecuador

Mongolian Wolverine Expedition

- MSU researcher and local non-profit trekked through Mongolia on cross-country skis to search for wolverines
- MSU created STEM lesson plans for schools
- Researchers sent videos and audio updates
- Resources were hosted by National Geographic Education and disseminated globally

Extreme Yellowstone Expedition

- Activities and NGSS-based lesson plans focus on astrobiology and thermal biology in Yellowstone National Park
- Content based on a research expedition into Yellowstone’s backcountry
- High school student participated on expedition and in research
- Middle school students mimic experiments, work with actual data sets, and get to know STEM role models

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