

Dear Fourth Grade Class,



Come along with me to the rainforest! As you know, this is a unique, special year for me. I was fortunate to be chosen to participate as a JASON XV Teacher Argonaut to the Rainforests of Panama for the January 2004 expedition. Even though you can't actually travel there with me, I would like you to come along with me through an "online" journey!

You will take on the role of a college research assistant to the researchers in the JASON XV Project. Who are you? Where are you attending college? What are you studying?

You will transform our classroom into the tropical rainforest of Barro Colorado Island. Can you imagine what plants and animals you will need to create? You are thinking...wow...a tropical rainforest in our high desert classroom in Central Oregon. Yes! You can do it!

You will learn all about rainforests and will send questions with me that I will answer from Panama during the two-week expedition. I will ask the experts and post answers to your questions on our classroom website, hopefully every day!

Here is list of questions you will need to learn:

- 1) Where is Panama and where is Barro Colorado Island?
- 2) Who are the native people of Panama?
- 3) What is a tropical rainforest?
- 4) What are green and brown food webs and how are they connected?
- 5) How do tropical plants and animals defend themselves from being eaten?
- 6) What plants and medicines does the rainforest provide for us?
- 7) Why do scientists study rainforest animals and what mammals live there?
- 8) How do scientists learn about tropical rainforests and how are rainforests like forests right here in the Pacific Northwest?
- 9) What is global environmental change?
- 10) How do humans affect tropical forests?
- 11) How do our activities affect Earth's climate?
- 12) What makes the Panama Canal watershed unique?
- 13) How do the Panama Canal locks work?
- 14) Why is it important for us to monitor and preserve the health of our watersheds?

You and your team will learn about a topic and will create a "JASON Poster Session" which you will take with you to your OMSI live broadcast field trip.

Good luck! I know you are up to the task. This promises to be an exciting journey for you!

Sincerely,

Your teacher and JASON XV Teacher Argonaut,
Mrs. Renz ☺

