



The Bear Claw



The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center Newsletter

February 2008

SMNHC First Saturdays Begin in March

First Saturdays is a series of public programs that were started by the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center to provide public access to our property and all that it has to offer.

Last year's programs were such a success that the Center has decided to make First Saturdays a regular part of our public programming. The programs will run March through September the first Saturday of the

month from 9:00 AM till 3:00 PM, offering an hour-long education session beginning at 10:00 AM. For more information on our First Saturdays programming see the Upcoming Events section of your monthly Bear Claw Newsletter or visit our website at www.nmnaturalhistory.org/smnhc.

FUN FACT: THE ANIMAL WITH THE LARGEST BRAIN IN RELATION TO ITS BODY IS THE ANT.

SMNHC Visits Maxwell CDC

On February 11, Sandia Mountain Natural History Center visited Maxwell Child Development Center on Kirtland Air Force Base and learned that you are never too young to be interested in all that the Sandia Mountains have to offer.

The SMNHC was invited to speak to children ranging from ages one through five about animals that live in the Sandia Mountains. Participants were read stories about animals and were given the opportunity to visit a touch table, which allowed them to look at

and touch various animal artifacts.

The children were excited and took advantage of the chance to be up-close and personal with these animals.

The SMNHC is pleased to be providing programming to participants of all ages.

For more information about our programming, visit our website.

**NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED AT SMNHC:
SINCE JULY 1ST: 8183
THIS MONTH: 1145**

In the spotlight...



Alycia Knutson grew up in wonderment of nature and enjoys being under the sky and among trees. She has lived in many places, Colorado being the most recent. She graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Wildlife Biology with emphases in conservation, animal behavior, and environmental education. Alycia has volunteered and worked in wildlife research and rehabilitation, humane education, and non-profit animal shelter fundraising.

Alycia spent more than a year in Europe traveling light and volunteering in ecologically conscious places of agriculture and hospitality. She is currently a field technician at the Great Basin Institute in Nevada with the Desert Tortoise Conservation program. Understanding that knowledge is power, she loves sharing and teaching about the natural world around us.

Alycia will be joining the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center as an intern and will be working with NMMNHS Young Explorer's Summer Camp this summer.

Upcoming Events at SMNHC:

March 8, 9:30-3:00

Wild Sandias! Short Course- Come experience the Sandias! Hike with us and learn about the natural history and ecology of the area. Take home hands-on activities and facts that you can share with your students. (Most activities are aimed at a 5th grade audience)
Level: All teachers, pre-teachers, non teachers.
Cost: Free!

April 5, 9-3:00

Spend the day in the Mountains hiking our trails, visiting two hands on exhibit rooms and observing birds and animals from our wildlife observation deck. April will offer an hour-long *Mammals of the Sandias* education session at 10:00 AM.

May 3, 9-3:00

Spend the day in the Mountains hiking our trails, visiting two hands on exhibit rooms and observing birds and animals from our wildlife observation deck. May will offer an hour-long *Birds of the Sandias* education session at 10:00 AM.

For more information on our upcoming programs call us at (505) 281-5259 or visit our website:

www.nmnaturalhistory.org/SMNHC

The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center (SMNHC) is a natural history and environmental education facility located on the east side of the Sandia Mountains in Cedar Crest, New Mexico. The SMNHC is owned by Albuquerque Public Schools and operated by the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science.

Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, C/O NMMNHS, 1801 Mountain Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104

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Project WILD Workshop: Literacy and Outdoor Classrooms

Educators stand quietly talking and drinking coffee in the crisp clean air of the Sandias. Looking for new ways to engage their students, 17 educators gathered at the SMNHC for a Project WILD workshop on February 16th. The workshop, taught by Kevin Holiday of the NM Department of Game and Fish, focused on using the schoolyard to teach science, language arts, art, and other subjects. Many of Project WILD's excellent, national award-winning ecology activities were also modeled. One of the early contributors to the Project WILD curriculum, Dan Shaw, of the Bosque

Ecosystem Monitoring Project, talked about wildlife monitoring and the Bosque (a sample bug-trap was made). Susie Davis of the SMNHC hosted the program.

Participants went home with a variety of materials including local wildlife posters, four different activity guides, correlations to the national science standards, and a multitude of handouts on teaching, ecology, and the outdoors! Educators went home more prepared to use the outdoors as an effective teaching tool. *If you missed this one keep your eye out for next year's Project WILD!*

Activity of the month:

Where Does Your Lunch Come From?

Overview: Students trace the resources that go into making their lunch items and act out a poem about the process.

Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Procedure: Discuss natural resources (including renewable and non-renewable). Spread out the contents of a bag lunch and discuss each part's transformation from raw materials to lunch item. Divide the class into groups. Each group presents a poem (from the activity) as a skit: for example, "Doing the Can-can" is about the life of a pop can.

Closure: Discuss the effect of these items on the environment, limited resources, and how to help (including recycling, re-using, and technological innovations).

Note: In a similar Project WILD activity students research the path of a lunch item back to the natural resources it came from ("What did your lunch cost wildlife?").

The complete activity can be found in the Ecosystems Explorations Curriculum on our website.

Teacher resource spotlight...



Ecology Field Program

Are your students feeling spring fever? Re-engage them in the learning process using wildlife! Everyone loves the mountains; kids are fascinated by seeing a squirrel eat a mushroom or catching a glimpse of a bird!

Bring your class to the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center. Standards-linked, multi-disciplinary, and interactive, our program encourages critical thinking and literacy skills. It involves the whole body in learning and includes a two-hour guided hike, picnic lunch, and ecology activity. Throughout the day fifth graders learn ecological concepts through tangible hands-on activities.

There is still some room in our schedule! Give us a call! Tell your friends! 281-5259, susan.davis@state.nm.us.

Conservation corner:

Elmer's glue bottles and glue sticks can be recycled this year. Just clean, box and label as directed and take them to any Wal-Mart between April 22nd and the end of the school year! For instructions and additional information visit <http://www.elmersgluecrew.com>. Prizes and curriculum available!

Ecology teaching tip:

Crushed, blunt, multi-colored glass can be used for landscaping—The median on Eubank (near I-40) is an example of this attractive way to conserve natural resources! ☺