



The Bear Claw



The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center Newsletter

October 2007

SMNHC Begins Planning for the 2007-2008 Outreach Season

The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center has begun Outreach for the 2007-2008 school year. The SMNHC was awarded a Sierra Club grant to conduct this year's Outreach and it has opened some new avenues for the Center. For the first time ever, we have targeted the whole state and sent out over 200 outreach packets to schools all over New Mexico.

Last year's Outreach Coordinator, A.J. Lapré, has returned for a second year and is looking forward to the larger task ahead of him this season. We have already scheduled programs in Raton, Hager-

man, Roswell, and Logan, with new requests for programming coming in daily. This year we are offering our Ecology Road Show, as well as our Traveling Ecology Field Program, which utilizes natural areas located near the schools visited.

For more information on our Outreach Program contact A.J. Lapre or Chris Modelski at (505) 281-5259.

FUN FACT: THE MOUSE IS THE MOST COMMON MAMMAL IN THE U.S.

Leave No Trace and the SMNHC

In the last few years, the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center has moved towards a greater emphasis on Leave No Trace outdoor ethics. Leave No Trace started as a national movement and has grown into an international organization. The Center now has one Master Leave No Trace trainer, A.J. Lapre and two Leave No Trace trainers, Paul Mauermann and Chris Modelski. They have also added many of the Leave No Trace principals

to their daily curriculum. The SMNHC has always advocated minimal impact hiking and outdoor conservation education, but we have recently decided that the emphasis of these concepts coupled with the strong Leave No Trace message should be an integral part of our educational message. Over the next six months, the SMNHC will have a bi-monthly feature on Leave No Trace principles and the SMNHC.

In the spotlight...



Catherine Rosul

Growing up, Catherine skied, hiked and snowshoed in Michigan. After graduating from Michigan State, she headed west. For the past 20 years, Catherine has lived down the road from the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center. She and her dog enjoy exploring the east side of the Sandia's all year round. When she was able to take an early retirement from Sandia labs, she knew she wanted to volunteer at the Center. Catherine usually assists on trails with our fifth grade ecology program as the "caboose". When students change places in line along the trail, She makes sure the kids at the back of the line enjoy the outdoor experience as much as those at the front. We are excited to have Catherine as part of the SMNHC team and enjoy having her with us on our hikes!

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED AT SMNHC:
SINCE JULY 1ST: 4855
THIS MONTH: 1854

Upcoming Events at SMNHC:

March 1, 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. March will offer an hour-long **Leave No Trace** education session at 10:00 a.m.

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 education session on **Mammals** at 10:00 a.m.

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.

For more information about the Center, visit our website at: www.nmnaturalhistory.org/SMNHC

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Ecosystems Everywhere Teacher Workshop a success!

On Wednesday, October 10th, 16 teachers gathered at the Museum of Natural History and Science. The teachers ranged from 3rd through 7th grade, as well as multi-age classrooms. Much informative fun ensued as teachers learned about the resources available to them through the SMNHC and participated in some of the ecology activities found in our curriculum. The hands-on learning style was much appreciated, as were the materials (participants got a Curriculum CD and the materials for the “Energy Game”). Teachers also liked tips given for adapting the activities to different levels or extending them. Overall, the workshop was a great success and the SMNHC is planning another on January 30th.

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Activity of the month: **Energy Game**

Overview: Students gain an understanding of the flow of energy between the sun, producers, consumers, and decomposers in an ecosystem by playing a freeze tag game. Students can then summarize the different paths of energy flow by diagramming a food web.

Time: 40 minutes – 1 ½ hours

Game procedure: Each player is either the Sun, a Producer, an Herbivore, a Carnivore, or a Decomposer. The object is to survive by obtaining energy beans from the appropriate source. After three minutes play stops and players count their beans to see which players survived. The number of players surviving at the end of a round is recorded in a table.

Conclusion: The class makes line graphs to represent the number of players to survive each round and discusses the activity and the ecological concepts it represents.

[The complete lesson plan is posted on our website.]

Teacher resource spotlight...



Teacher Workshops

The SMNHC offers several teacher workshops throughout the year. Workshops are free (some have a \$10 refundable deposit required) and usually include materials – activities, information, and sometimes materials needed for the activities. Participants are given a certificate of completion, as well. Workshops can also be scheduled at your school with 10 or more teachers attending. All of our workshops, like our programs, are interactive. Contact Susie Davis at the SMNHC 281-5259 with questions or call August Wainwright at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science to register, 841-2861.

Scheduled for this year are:

- Ecosystems Everywhere Curriculum Workshop; Wednesday, January 30th; NMMNHS, 4:30-6:30
- Wild Sandias Ecology Mini-Course; Saturday, March 8th; SMNHC, 9:30-3:00
- Project Wild Workshop; SMNHC; Date TBA (late winter / early spring)



ECOLOGY TEACHING TIP
DECOMPOSERS BREAK DOWN ORGANIC (USUALLY DEAD) MATERIALS BY MEANS OTHER THAN EATING; EXAMPLES OF DECOMPOSERS INCLUDE FUNGI & BACTERIA.