

# Weekend trip results in 'wild' time

## ■ Students venture on a Geology field trip to Malheur.

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Malheur - The Final Frontier. These are the voyages of the geology taskmasters, whose four-day mission was to seek out new birds, new basalt flows, to boldly drive where many have driven before...

**Thursday, May 12 - 9:00 a.m.** - We packed the trailer with sleeping bags and luggage, packed the vans with bodies and headed toward that elusive place known as Harney County.

**1:05 p.m.** - We spotted the rare *Cropus dustus* in flight. Our fearless van leader, Botany Bob Misley, declared: "It's a male!"

P.S. Wilbur put your teeth in!

**3:30 p.m.** - We entered the Great Basin, noting that if one urinates to the west, it will eventually pollute the ocean. An eastward flow will remain in the Great Basin until it evaporates and urinates back on you in the form of rain.

**6:45 p.m.** - Black Muslim Rancher Biker Downhill Skiers. 'Nuff said.

**7:00 p.m.** - Saw 12 different species of birds including several kinds of ducks, Canadian geese and Sandhill cranes. At the top of Wright's point, Marianne Frahm spotted, through her binoculars, the remarkable Great White Long-faced Four-hoofed Horsebird.

**8:15 p.m.** - We FINALLY reached our luxurious four-star accommodations, also known as the Malheur Field Station, a set of multi-colored dorms with a dead mouse provided in each closet. The service was, in a word, divine!

**Friday, May 13 -**

**9:15 a.m.** - Got out the spotting scopes to view a Great Horned Owl mommy and her two widdo baby chickies (that's the technical name).

**10:00 a.m.** - Went to the Museum at Refuge Headquarters. Saw lots of stuffed birds to help us hone our birding skills. It's easier to identify them when they're dead and have name tags.

**11:45 a.m.** - Decided on some names for the grazing species not indigenous to the pluvial lake zone:

The Rufus-sided Grass Catcher; Long-faced Biscuit Maker; Woolly Pellet Pincher; White Faced Pie Maker; collectively known as Grass Maggots.

**1:15 a.m.** - Stopped at Buena Vista Point. Sunny Ward, Geologist extraordinaire, gave one of her many interesting and informative talks about rock formations. Sunny can't lecture without some form of visual aids, which is a good thing because some of us can't learn without some form of visual aids. Give the blue-bellied lizards some privacy, for goodness sake!

**2:00 p.m.** - Misley "It's not the squirter, it's the squirtee."

**2:45 p.m.** - Went to Page Springs Campground where we saw the biggest Junipers and a big snake. Fortunately, it was not poisonous

**Saturday May 14 -**

**8:45 a.m.** - Saw some beetles. Looked at a stream valley cut in bedrock (twist, twist). Thank you, Sunny. Decided that "the committee" was creative beyond

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**I didn't want to stop at the edge of nowhere; I wanted to go to the middle.**

-Anita Cate

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repair.

**10:15 a.m.** - Learned everything one could possibly know about Crested Wheatgrass. Stopped to find some "hideable behindables" and located Rattlus roadkillius (Mmm, Mmm, good). We skinned the snake and took the meat home for some good old-fashioned Roadkill Helper.

**12:30 p.m.** - Arrived at the Alvord Desert. It was basically a big, flat salt pancake called a "playa". In the poignant words of Anita Cate, "I didn't want to stop at the edge of nowhere; I wanted to go to the middle." She got her wish...

**1:30 p.m.** - The Alvord Desert Hot Springs was an interesting experience. Have you ever spotted the Tan Double-Breasted Mattress Thrasher?

As John Barichello said, "I met the bird of my dreams."

**2:15 p.m.** - Found our way to Pike Creek where a large tree was growing out of a large boulder. Some beautiful pieces of rock in the creek. The water was very cold (ask me how I know). Botany Bob (shroomer par excellence) found some choice edibles (Morsels) to add to the snake stew.

**9:30 p.m.** - After dinner and an enjoyable slide show, we gathered in the meetin' hall for a good,



photo contributed by Andrea Smith

Geology students take a field trip to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge where they explored the country-side for the weekend.

ol' fashioned barn bash, complete with guitar, banjo and fiddle-playing fools. Song books in hand, we rivaled the gathering at Woodstock.

**Sunday, May 15 -**

**4:00 a.m.** - "What?? Four o'clock? You mean in the morning?!!!" exclaimed Sharon Scheel. Some brave souls struck out in search of the elusive sage grouse, which performs a mating

move em out. In the immortal words of Don Conn, "We came, we saw, now let's go," to which Richard Marx (not the singer) replied, "ZZZZZZ..."

The trip home was less eventful than the previous three days, nevertheless, a pleasant journey. Some of the taskmasters told of their wanderings:

Richard Marx: "I always love to see the big wide open Eastern Oregon Country; the diversity of its life, farms and the communities they compose is truly a source of wonder."

Bob Misely: "I never want to see another gummi-bear: ever." (Note: He was eating ANOTHER one pound bag soon after this comment was made.)

Sunny Ward: "Yes, this IS a big pluvial lake!"

Lilly Mayer: "We had a wonderful, enthusiastic group this year. They're always enthusiastic."

Will Stitt: "The astronomy was especially cool. There was some awesome viewing. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Brad Zinn: "It was excellent. I learned a lot more in three days than in two terms [at school]."

Karen Crouchley: "An extraordinary opportunity to expand on our knowledge... in an environment of clean air and warm sunshine, seeing, hearing and smelling the real thing."

Greg Anderson: "I saw a cow with one milker. It was not a female."

Laurie Hoffman: "You can see forever..."

Kelly White: "Lake, ...big lake."

Char Quinones: "...we learn a little about ourselves and gain a deep respect for true natural beauty in its original habitat."

Ann Johnson: "Check out the nice pluviods!"

Noelle Sander: "No doubt, Ann."

Julee Barton: "...it was an awe-inspiring, rip-roaring roller coaster of a ride..."

Marianne Frahm: "Quit spittin' your innards at me!"

And finally, from the guy who collected a few quills in his hand, John Barichello said, "Porcupines suck!"

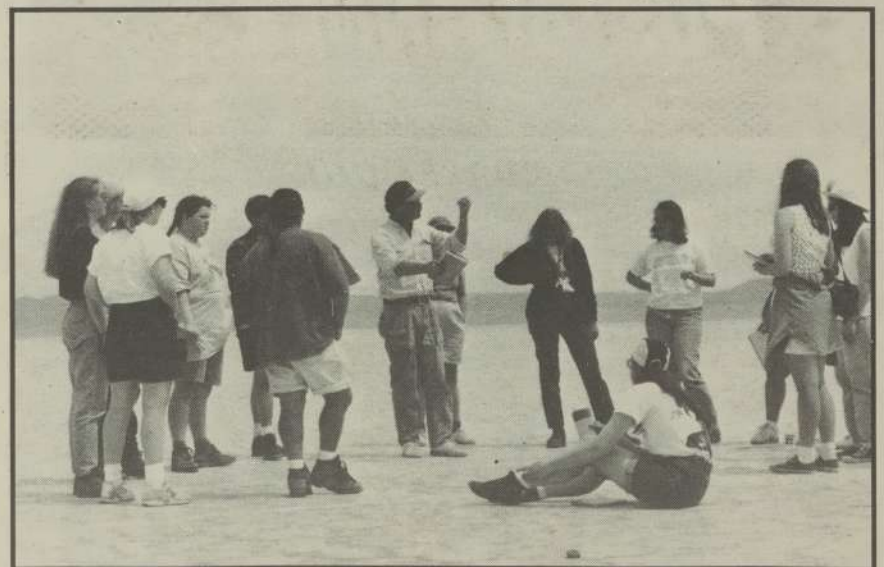


photo contributed by Andrea Smith

Bob 'The Botanist' Misley describes desert life to the students who attended the Malheur trip.