

Mandy Noel: New youth education coordinator

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IVN Contributing Writer

New youth education programs (YEP) coordinator Mandy Noel started working at The Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) the first week of March. Many programs were already scheduled for the spring and summer, so she hit the ground running. Noel had her first field trip for 70 six-graders from the Valley School in Medford March 18 where they investigated the water quality of Deer Creek, Squaw Creek and the reservoir. "They were a great first group," Noel said.

Noel was born and raised in Hannibal, Missouri along the Mississippi River (Mark Twain's boyhood town). She first moved to the Rogue Valley in 2012 when she was hired by the Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

After graduating from Southern Oregon University in the spring of 2015, Noel continued to work for the BLM through the fall of 2015 and then moved to Wisconsin where she worked as a membership services associate for the Aldo Leopold Foundation. "I was very pleased when I found out about the job opening as YEP instructor for the Siskiyou Field Institute. After landing the job, I relocated back to Oregon this March. I am currently residing in Grants Pass, but plan to move to Selma in April," Noel said.

Noel is responsible for coordinating and instructing programs for school groups on a variety of subjects. Topics include memorable mammals for third and

fourth grade; songbirds, science and outdoor school for fifth grade, geobotany for seventh and eighth grade, and watershed science for fifth-graders and up.

Noel said, "My favorite part of my job is being outside! I chose this career path because I knew I couldn't stand being at a desk all day. I love people and I love nature. I had the luxury of spending my childhood exploring the woods behind my parent's home in rural northeast Missouri where I developed my sense of wonder and strong connection to the natural world. I want every child to feel comfortable in the outdoors and have the opportunity to disconnect from technology and explore their natural surroundings.

"I feel that time spent in nature is essential to the health and well-being of our youth who will be managing our resources in the future. Children must be educated about the natural world to be successful future land managers who will be faced with increasingly difficult problems of how to deal with the impacts of climate change and develop renewable energy to sustain our lifestyles as populations continue to grow worldwide," Noel continued.

There are options for both overnight and day field trips at SFI. There are two yurts that can house up to 30 students and jumbo tents to accommodate larger groups. Along with the educational opportunities provided by the natural resources at the site including the creeks, fen, mountain and serpentine soils, there is also an outdoor challenge.

In addition to the programs held during the school year, camping

and backpacking trips are also offered during the summer. The summer outdoor programs include:

A middle school wilderness expedition which is a three day, two night backpacking trip into the Siskiyou Wilderness for students entering sixth – eighth grade. This year's trip will be June 17 – 19.

SFI is also offering three high school backpacking trips for both Ashland and Illinois Valley high schools. All of the backpacking trips are limited to 13 participants for each trip. Students must fill out applications to be selected to join on the backpacking trips. Limited scholarships are available.

The Ashland High School backpacking trip along the Illinois River Trail in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness will be June 21 – 29. The same trip for both Ashland High School and Illinois Valley High School will be offered again July 1- July 9.

For the first time this year, an alumni backpacking trip into the Marble Mountains for students and graduates is being offered for students who have participated in the backpacking trips in the past. This trip will be held July 22-30.

In addition to the backpacking trips, there will be at least two camps this summer: an overnight middle school outdoor adventure camp July 11 – 15 and a nature discovery day camp for third-fifth-graders from July 18-21.

Noel said, "I feel so blessed to be in this beautiful part of the world and I am excited to continue to build relationships with teachers, children, and parents within our local community. Please, do not let

the cost of our programs inhibit you from signing your class or child up for an outdoor learning experience. We want to make our programs accessible to all and break down barriers that may exist for low-income individuals, students with special needs and English-language-

learners." For any more information about either the school or summer programs, please contact Noel at youthprograms@thesfi.org or 541-597-8530.



(Courtesy photo for The Illinois Valley News)

Students journal during the 2015 watershed science class.

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<p><i>Kate's</i> REDWOOD Bar & Grill</p> <p>Starting April 3 Open Sundays Noon - 6 p.m.</p> <p>12235 Redwood Hwy, Wonder</p>	<p><i>Mike</i> Brons</p> <p>Friday, April 1 @ 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>From Taylor's Country Store</p>	<p><i>Wild River</i> HANDCRAFTED FOOD & ALE</p> <p>Guppy Saturday, April 2 @ 6 p.m.</p> <p>Every Wednesday Open MIC Night 6 - 8 p.m.</p>	<p><i>Karaoke</i> w/ Steve</p> <p>Fri., April 1, 9 p.m.</p> <p>Free Pool Games on Sundays</p> <p>@ Sportsman Tavern</p>	<p>The G Spot</p> <p>Hump Day Karaoke with Jammer Dave 8 p.m. - midnight</p> <p>OPEN MIC THURSDAYS 7-11 PM</p> <p>CARDS AGAINST HUMANITY Game Night Saturdays, 8-11 p.m.</p>	<p>Party of Fools Dawna Crocker & Rosie Wittman</p> <p>Friday, April 1 \$3 @ 8 p.m.</p> <p>Jammer Dave's Karaoke w/ Ashley & Angel Sat., April 2, 8 p.m.</p> <p>@ McGrew's!</p>
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