



KATIE WILSON — EO Media Group

Two Ocean Park Elementary students and a chaperone investigate a circle of trees at Camp Kiwanilong in Warrenton April 28. At a session on wilderness survival an OMSI outdoor school instructor told the fifth-grade students to figure out ways to build shelters using only materials found in the woods around them.

OMSI SURVIVAL CAMP

Students bound for new Ilwaco Elementary bond

By KATIE WILSON
EO Media Group

OCEAN PARK, Wash. — There was a terrible plane crash and now they are alone in the wild.

Children walked in tight groups of two or three down a winding dirt path. As they walked, they discussed their predicament. One girl asked a smaller boy, “Why are you scared of bears?”

He thought about the question as they passed by a marsh and entered the woods. Mosquitoes hummed around their legs and arms. Finally, with some bewilderment, he replied, “I don’t know.”

They kept walking, now ducking under overhanging branches that formed a green tunnel. If the children had been adult-sized and not paying attention to what was in front of them, these branches would have clocked them under the chin.

In a clearing, they formed a circle and discussed what they would need to survive. How long *could* they go without food and water?

“Fifteen hours,” one fifth-grader promptly proclaimed. A boy next to him shook his head. “Three weeks,” he said.

“Hmmm,” said Hannah Scholes, an outdoor school instructor for the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, who set them to building shelters.

In the last week of April, two Ocean Park (Wash.) Elementary teachers, several chaperones and 27

fifth-graders stayed for several days at Camp Kiwanilong in Warrenton.

They were at the camp for an outdoor school program focusing on coastal ecology offered through OMSI. They were there to learn, but also to have fun and work on cooperation and team building because big changes are coming their way.

Changes

In September, these fifth-graders will be sixth-graders and will attend a new elementary school the Ocean Beach School District has decided to form inside the Ilwaco Middle School building. This elementary — tentatively called Ilwaco Elementary — will serve all of the district’s fifth- and sixth-grade classes. It is hoped the new school will alleviate overcrowding issues at Long Beach Elementary as well as address what ended up being a troubled transition for sixth-graders entering the middle school last September.

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An Ocean Park Elementary fifth-grade student slices through a squid’s mantle during a dissection workshop at an outdoor school led by OMSI at Camp Kiwanilong in Warrenton April 29.



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