

Youths engage with science, technology, engineering and math

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Local youths tuned up their interest in science, technology, engineering and math with participation in STEM Week, May 8-16.

The Greater Oregon STEM Hub at Eastern Oregon University put together local events as part of the statewide seventh annual STEM Week to provide rural families with learning opportunities. Executive Director David Melville leads the GO STEM Hub after years of experience with educational outreach projects through environmental education centers and grant-funded projects. The GO STEM hub worked with a network of 13 other hubs across the state to put on STEM Week.

“We’re able to pull resources and support from STEM hubs in the western part of the state as well as central and here in Eastern Oregon,” Melville said. “It’s a great way to spread statewide awareness and to celebrate all things STEM.”

Through events such as STEM Week, GO STEM carries out its mission of fostering value in science, technology, engineering and math among the youth in the community and creating avenues for careers in the field.

GO STEM Hub Program Coordinator Donna Rainboth described an in-person event in which children in the La Grande School District worked on a reverse engineering project. From taking apart sewing machines to gaming controllers, the activity



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Young bug catcher Walker Barnes leads the charge on Friday, May 14, 2021, at Pete’s Pond in La Grande, to collect some insects as part of a STEM Week event.

encouraged students to think outside the box in a number of ways.

“It’s just great to watch the kids be engaged,” Rainboth said. “It was lunchtime and nobody wanted to stop.”

Third grade students in Jenn Forrester’s class at Central Elementary in La Grande presented their results and findings in a slide show at the end of the week.

According to Forrester, the classes

are practicing COVID-19 protocols by having the children work individually or socially distanced, as opposed to the group work of previous years.

“It prepares them for jobs that might not even exist yet,” Forrester said. “They can use these skills across all subjects.”

ReMake Learning Days Across America also funded several local events throughout Oregon to enlist caregivers, parents and children in

STEM activities. Meghan Ballard hosted two such events, on May 11 and May 14, in La Grande.

One was a visit to Pete’s Pond on Miller Drive, where Ballard and Boy Scout Troop 515 planted native trees and shrubs with the goal of strengthening the water quality and stimulating the local ecosystem.

“For young learners, and all ages really, getting that hands-on experience really helps cement the concepts

in their brain,” Ballard said. “Being able to see it visually and learn about it through talking and discussions while seeing your peers do it helps out a lot.”

The local scouts planted upward of 20 trees and shrubs, including Oregon’s state flower, the Oregon grape. GO STEM Hub and Plantworks in Cove donated the plants for the event.

On May 14, a younger crowd gathered to take part in an aquatic insect and water quality survey at Pete’s Pond. The preschoolers in attendance sampled for macroinvertebrates in the pond and created arts and crafts.

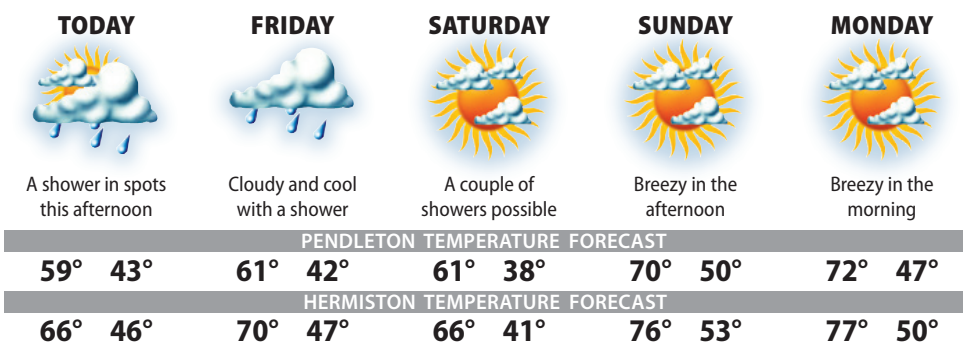
While COVID-19 limited the scope of in-person events, the largely virtual STEM Week went on smoothly throughout Oregon.

“We’ve really focused on being able to provide the resources we would have done in person,” Melville said. “We are holding sessions and different events in person, but making sure that we’re following protocols and providing those opportunities online as well.”

Among the online resources, GO STEM Hub purchased the license for an online showing of “Picture a Scientist,” a 2020 Tribeca Film Festival selection that documents a new age of women in STEM exploration and careers.

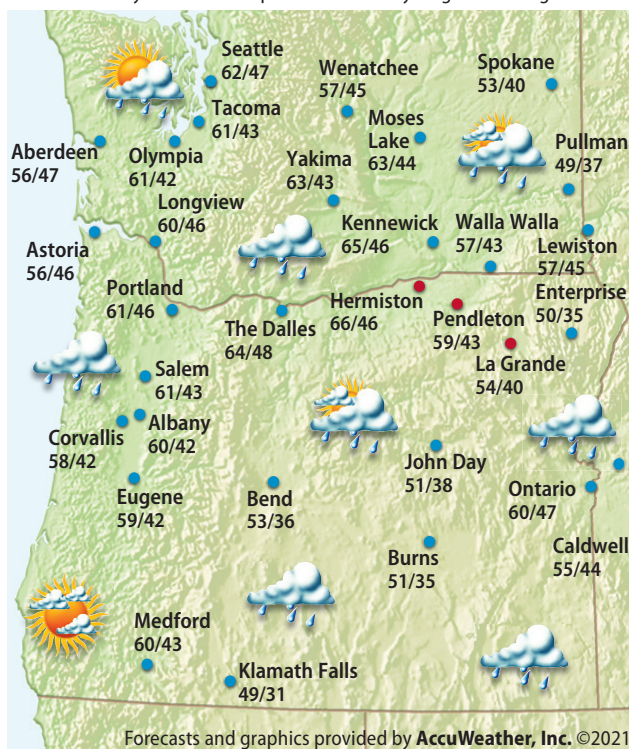
“I hope they find that they can enjoy science, math and engineering,” Rainboth said of those who participated in STEM Week. “Experiencing what they’re good at leads to critical thinking, problem solving and career connections.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	61°	46°
Normals	72°	48°
Records	90° (1929)	31° (2003)

PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.26"	
Normal month to date	0.75"	
Year to date	3.82"	
Last year to date	6.37"	
Normal year to date	5.86"	

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	66°	49°
Normals	74°	48°
Records	96° (1954)	30° (2003)

PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.18"	
Normal month to date	0.69"	
Year to date	1.46"	
Last year to date	1.18"	
Normal year to date	4.68"	

WINDS (in mph)	Today	Fri.
Boardman	NNW 7-14	NNE 7-14
Pendleton	WNW 8-16	NNW 8-16

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:19 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:25 p.m.
Moonrise today	1:18 p.m.
Moonset today	2:43 a.m.



Oregon Legislature passes bill to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day

By **SAM STITES**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — The state of Oregon will recognize the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples' Day in a new bill passed this week by the Oregon Legislature.

Beginning with Monday, Oct. 12, Oregon will recognize that Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of the Americas is historically inaccurate and unworthy of celebration due to his voyage opening the door to "heinous crimes against humanity."

House Bill 2526 passed the Oregon Senate on Tuesday, May 18, with a vote of 22-7. It was approved by a 50-5 vote of the House late last month.

The bill, which was brought forth by the Legislature's only Indigenous lawmakers, Rep. Tawna Sanchez, D-Portland, and Rep. Teresa Alonso-Leon, D-Woodburn, aims to set the record straight on the historical representation of Colum-

bus and join 10 other states in recognizing the significant contributions that Native Americans have made to the U.S., and more specifically the contributions of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes to the culture of this state.

“Back in 1937 Columbus Day became a federal holiday. While Oregon does not formally observe Columbus Day as a state holiday, it has been celebrated nationwide since 1971,” Sen. Majority Leader Rob Wagner said. “The state of Oregon will become the 11th state to formally recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Our Indigenous people, language and cultures contribute incredible richness and vitality to the tapestry of the place we now call Oregon. It is time that we honor those contributions with formal recognition.”

While Wagner expressed that he felt this type of honor was long overdue, Sen. Minority Leader Fred Girod rose to speak against the bill.

Girod said while this is a tough bill to vote no on, he felt it unnecessary to “trash” Columbus in the process.

“I happen to like history. That was a very brave individual that got in a boat to prove a theory that the world was round, and I just don’t think you needed to do that,” Girod said. “I wanted to remove that part of this bill, and that wasn’t done. Therefore, I’m going to vote no.”

Girod was joined by five of his Republican colleagues in voting against the bill, including Dallas Heard and Dennis Linthicum, who have been voting no on all bills in protest of the closure of the Capitol to the public this legislative session.

However, four Republicans — Sens. Dick Anderson, Tim Knopp, Bill Kennemer and Bill Hansell — did join all 18 Democrats in voting to approve the bill.

The bill now heads to Gov. Kate Brown’s desk for her signature.

IN BRIEF

First wolf kill of livestock confirmed in Grant County

JOHN DAY — A Grant County rancher became the first in the rural Eastern Oregon county to lose livestock to a confirmed wolf depredation.

An Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife report confirmed wolves killed a cow in the early morning hours of May 8 within the Northside area of known wolf activity.

“The location of injuries and severity of trauma was similar to other confirmed wolf attack injuries on cattle,” the report stated. The report noted that multiple bite marks and severe muscle trauma were present on the upper thighs of both hind legs, groin and left elbow.

ODFW investigated five cow carcasses at a ranch in Fox Valley. While the report confirmed one of the cows had been killed by wolves, ODFW officials deemed another death as a “probable” wolf attack and two as “possible” wolf attacks. The cause of the fifth death “is unknown, but was not wolf-related,” the report stated.

In the killing that was determined as “probable,” the report stated trauma to the hind legs and elbows was similar to other confirmed wolf

attacks. However, the report said the “severity and size” of the wounds did not have significant bite marks and scrapes like those of a wolf.

“The scrape marks and associated trauma to the front right elbow indicate a predator attack but lack evidence to conclude wolf,” the report read. The report noted that, because wolves killed livestock in the same pasture, wildlife officials determined that wolves could have killed that one.

The report stated the “possible” cases lacked evidence of a wolf attack. However, due to a lack of a carcass to test, they could not rule out the likelihood of a wolf attack.

Rancher Roy Vardenaga said his grandchildren found five dead cows on a 400-acre pasture on the east side of Highway 395.

“I’ve never had anything like this happen before,” he said.

ODFW identified the Northside wildlife unit and Long Creek as an area of known wolf activity on April 21. According to the agency, a breeding male and female of the Northside wolves bred for the first time last year.

A breeding pair is an adult male and an adult female with at least two pups who survived to Dec. 31 the year of their birth, and a pack is four or more wolves traveling together in winter.

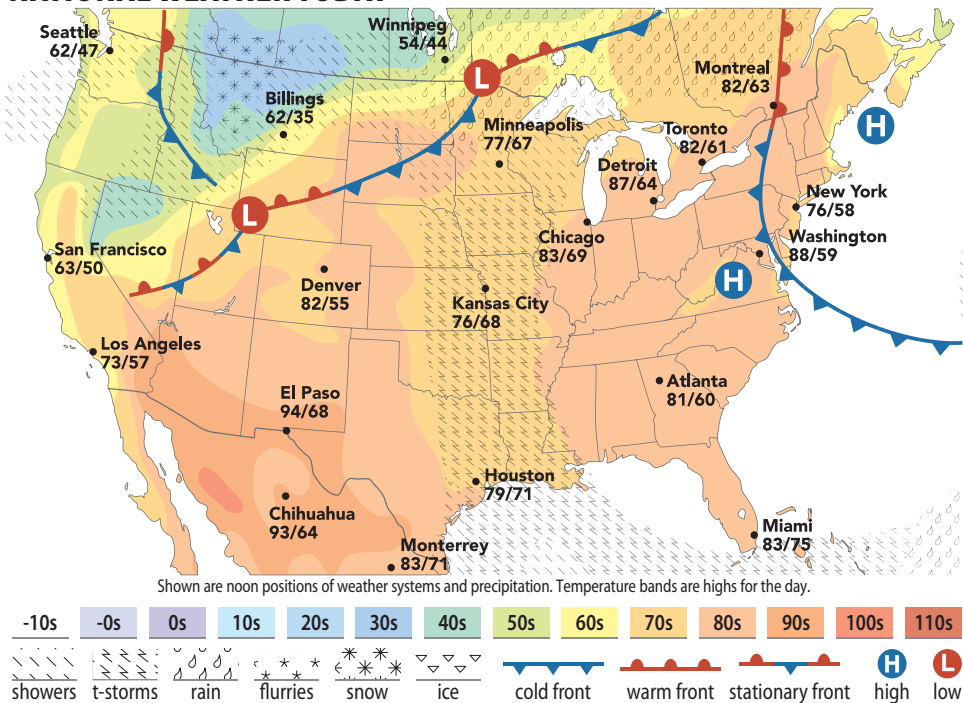
—EO Media Group

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 104° in El Centro, Calif. Low 26° in Kalispell, Mont.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



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