

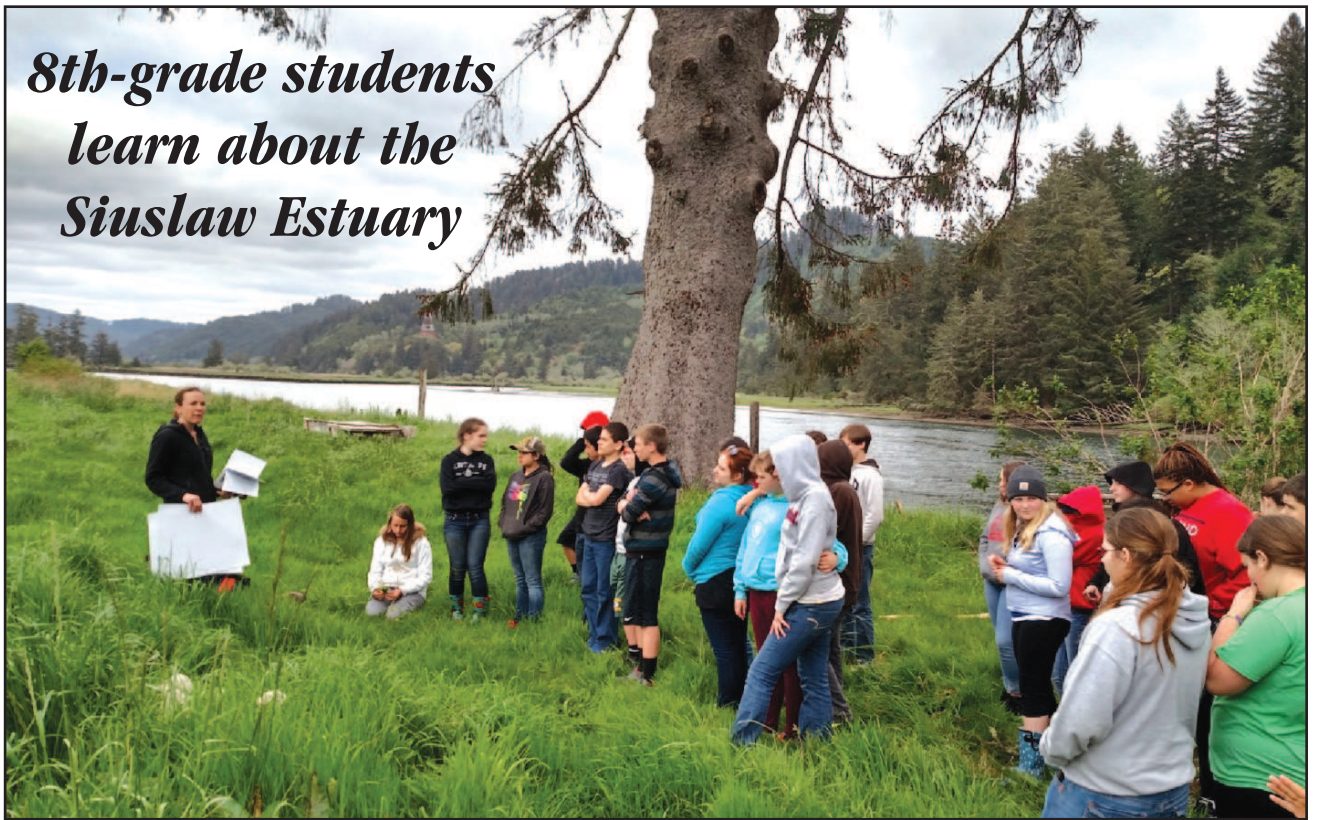
SCHOOL ZONE

A Monthly Newsletter for the Siuslaw and Mapleton Schools and Florence Community PTA

Hands-on exploration



8th-grade students learn about the Siuslaw Estuary



COURTESY PHOTOS

Siuslaw eighth graders explore facets of the Siuslaw Estuary with representatives from Siuslaw Watershed Council, City of Florence, Public Works, STEP, U.S. Forest Service and current and retired school staff on April 7.

The Siuslaw Estuary offered a wealth of learning opportunities for eighth grade science students this month.

On April 7, local estuary experts presented in-class workshops to the students covering topics including: Introduction to the Siuslaw Estuary, Aquatic Invasive Species, Siuslaw Estuary management, Tsunami and Earthquake Preparedness and the Proper Use of Tools and Gear when Entering the Estuary.

Then, on April 11 and 12, students received hands-on lessons through exploration of the Siuslaw Estuary near the Port of Siuslaw Campground and Waite Ranch on Highway 126.

Mizu Burruss, with the Siuslaw Watershed Council, introduced students to estuaries. Students learned what an estuary is and where one is found in our community.

Burruss demonstrated the tidal cycles of the estuary with a water density tank. Students were able to predict what happens when saltwater and freshwater mix, and then observed the more dense saltwater settling to the bottom and the less dense freshwater floating on top of it.

They noted the significance of this to organisms and how they must adapt to the ever-changing salinity levels in an estuary.

Using an Aquatic Invasive Species Kit on loan from Oregon State University's Sea Grant program, Andy Marohl, Siuslaw Elementary and Middle school assistant principal, led an activity introducing students to aquatic invasive species.

Students were able to see samples of organisms invading our local estuary and learned that invasive species compete with native species for food and habitat. This changes native populations and the estuary ecosystem, leading to reduced biodiversity.

Brenda Cervantes from the City of Florence presented students with actions the city has taken to conserve and manage the Siuslaw Estuary. This included the recent addition of the rain garden in Old Town as a stormwater management system to prevent debris and pollution from the city streets from making its way into the Siuslaw River. In addition, Cervantes provided students with information about the city's natural disaster plan including tsunami and

earthquake preparedness.

In preparation for the field trip into the estuary, Jim Grano, retired science teacher, provided a hands-on lesson on how to properly get into the hip waders needed to walk into the mud and how to properly use tools,

including Uprooters, for the removal of Scotch broom (an invasive plant).

Students then removed a small amount of Scotch broom from the middle school campus using their bare hands, loppers, hand-saws and Uprooters. They learned the best way to permanently rid an area of Scotch broom is to pull up by the roots.

Once in the estuary, students traveled to five different stations. Jack Akin, a bio-engineer, discussed the causes of the embankment sloughing off into the river at the Port of Siuslaw's campground. The students offered ideas on ways to fix the erosion problem.

See **ESTUARY** page 3

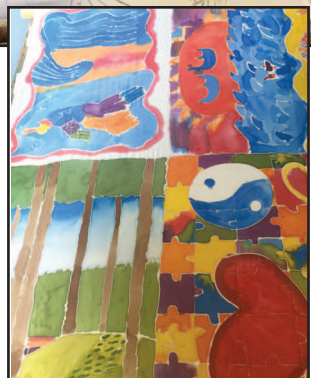
A DETAILED LIFE

Lane Arts Council grant teaches silk painting

Mapleton Elementary and Middle school students met with Lane Arts Council Artist Merideth Ferrell to produce amazing silk paintings. Kindergarten students created two six-foot paintings of ocean life and pets, first through fourth grade students produced two 20-foot paintings of the life cycle of a salmon and animals of Oregon and fifth through eighth grade students created individual paintings that detailed life in Mapleton. This amazing opportunity was made possible by a grant through the Lane Arts Council for rural schools. —Submitted by Jodi O'Mara



COURTESY PHOTOS



Celebrate teachers and staff May 2 to 6

The teachers and staff of the area school districts are phenomenal. Expressions of appreciation can build mutual respect and open the door to better communication about expectations, student performance and more.

Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week is the perfect time to say thanks to those who work with your children. Join the Florence Community PTA in recognizing the imperative and inspiring work our teachers and staff do every day of the school year. Here are some ways that you can honor the dedicated men and women who lend their passion and skills to educating our children:

- Have your child come up with a list of five nice things they can do for their teachers. They could pick one to do each of the remaining weeks of school.
- Ask the teacher what his or her favorite book is and buy a copy for them.
- Give the gift of time and volunteer at

your child's school.

- Write a thank you note to your child's teacher and aide. Have your child decorate it and sign it also.
 - Say thanks the next time you talk to your child's teacher.
 - When you're at the school, be sure to thank the custodians, secretaries, kitchen staff, counselors, etc., for being part of your child's educational experience.
 - Contribute classroom materials, such as paper, chalk, books, Kleenex, pens, stickers, etc.
 - Give a gift certificate so teachers can purchase items for their classroom.
 - Give a gift certificate for a local coffee shop or restaurant.
 - Give a token of your appreciation: apples, bookmarks, teacher mugs, etc.
- Working together, teachers, parents, and communities can make every child's potential a reality. —Submitted by Diane McCalmont