

OUTDOOR

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The birds and their caregivers staffed one of 21 stations where lessons about the outdoors were presented during the revamped 2018 version of the Baker School District's Outdoor School.

Other class topics ranged from a Monday only presentation from a representative of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla (one class each from the Tribes and the Wildlife Center accounted for the odd number of 21), to bird box building and lessons on the life cycle of salmon.

Rather than rotating students through the entire slate of classes during the week, 10 classes were offered on Monday and Tuesday and another 10 were offered on Wednesday and Thursday, said Dorothy Mason, who is in her eighth year as Outdoor School coordinator.

Mason spent a lot of time coming up with a schedule that would put presenters, who include community volunteers, retirees, teachers and representatives from agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service, at camp for two days rather than all four to better accommodate their schedules.

"I was mystified about how we might pull this all together," Mason said Tuesday. "This was the only way to make this matrix work."

All students had completed the first 10 stations Tuesday and would begin going through the next 10 on Wednesday. The second two-day sessions included classes ranging from fire to geology, forestry and noxious weeds.

This year's Outdoor School brought sixth-graders to the residential camp for four days and three nights. The \$225-per-student cost was paid for by Oregon Lottery money thanks to statewide approval of Ballot Measure 99 in the November 2016 general election.

South Baker Intermediate sent 102 sixth-graders to the Camp Elkanah program this year. Five attended from Keating Elementary and 21 from Haines Elementary.

Joining Sage, the great horned owl who's been with the Tomkinses for 24 years and is blind in his right eye, were Niki, a Barbary falcon who was injured in an accident; Helen, a barn owl that fell from the nest as a baby eight years ago and was blinded in the fall; and Ruby, the red-tailed hawk, who came to Blue Mountain Wildlife after being hit by a car 25 years ago. Ruby is about 27, said Bob Tompkins, Lynn's husband.

Bob said the birds used in the educational display



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

After lunch, students follow paths through the camp to afternoon classes.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Bunkhouses are full of bunk beds. This is an example of half of a boys' cabin that sleeps 11 students and a chaperone.

cannot be returned to the wild, but they are invaluable in helping people learn more about them and the need to protect raptors from harm.

In cautioning the children to stay a safe distance from the seemingly tame birds, Lynn explained, "In their world there are two things: something they might eat and something that might eat them."

Bob added that the raptors have retained their wild instincts.

"They don't like us so well," he said. "They're not pets and we don't treat them as such."

Blue Mountain Wildlife's headquarters and primary center is in the foothills of the Blue Mountains near Pendleton. Its mission, according to the agency's website is "To preserve local native wildlife through rehabilitation, research and education." Its main focus is on raptors.

Students gathered in the Camp Elkanah dining hall — a relatively new addition completed in 2002 — for breakfast at 8 a.m. each day after their 7 o'clock shower

time. They returned to the center for lunch and dinner.

A quick sampling of opinions of the overnight outdoor experience and the lessons students had learned the first two days got a thumbs up from most during Tuesday's lunch break.

"I like it, but I miss my parents," South Baker student Tessa Feeley admitted. "It's getting better — it's OK."

"I'd rather actually go home every night like they did last year," she said.

Her lunchtime table mates were more enthusiastic.

"It's amazing," said Lillie Zellars.

And Mary-Ann Jules and Eva Anderson chimed in simultaneously: "I love it."

Students were housed in cabins built from boxcars that have been part of the camp, first established in 1956, since its early years.

In most cases, the cabins were home to 11 sixth-graders and at least one supervisor. Students were separated into co-ed groups during the day for classes and were segregated by cabins for girls



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Lynn Tompkins of Blue Mountain Wildlife talks about owl skulls during her presentation Tuesday at Outdoor School. She brought live birds, including a great horned owl, barn owl, a Barbary falcon and a red-tailed hawk.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Lunchtime offers meals like pizza and strawberry shortcake for Haines Elementary students, Kady Child, left, and Sahailee Gibson.

only and boys only at night. Cabin mates prepared skits to present at the nightly campfires.

Teachers and other camp participants, including Mason, had cabins to themselves.

Among those supervising the students overnight, with a 10 p.m. lights-out requirement, were seven students enrolled in the undergraduate education program at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande.

Katie Silvestri, of Palos Verdes, California, who is a junior at EOU and a student teacher at South Baker Intermediate this fall, joined sixth-grade teacher Jonathan Baer to supervise a group of

boys and girls through the camp stations during the day. Silvestri joined a group of girls in their cabin at night.

The student teacher said she sees great value in the overnight outdoor school program as opposed to a day camp.

"It brings them away from their homes and they gain an understanding of how to be with others in a huge group setting and to be able to actually work with one another — kids with kids, kids with camp directors and kids with teachers — and it brings them outdoors," she said.

Silvestri has fond memories of her own five-day residential outdoor school camp experience as a fifth-grader

"I'm actually really enjoying it here, learning all about nature and how not to disturb it. I love the outdoors."

— Sixth-grader Sheylin Karolski

at Silver Spur Elementary School back home.

Parent Sara Lyon joined her South Baker sixth-grade daughter, Cierra VanDyke, for the week as a volunteer cabin chaperone with one of the other EOU students.

Lyon said she was enjoying the week, but her cabin of girls had a little trouble complying with the 10 o'clock bedtime deadline on Monday.

"They were up till 11 last night," she said on Tuesday. "The girls were talking and laughing after lights out."

Still, Lyon said she was enjoying the experience.

Sixth-grader Sheylin Karolski claimed no homesickness during her first two days of camp as she finished up her pizza lunch.

"I'm actually really enjoying it here, learning all about nature and how not to disturb it," she said.

She especially liked the games that were included as part of several of the lessons.

"I love the outdoors," she said.

And, she added, there's another benefit to being gone for the week: "My brother's stuck doing my chores."

Sports

PORTLAND TIMBERS SOCCER

Timbers down Columbus

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND — Andy Polo's first goal in Major League Soccer put the Timbers in front before the end of the first half and Portland went on to defeat the Columbus Crew 3-2 on Wednesday night.

Polo also had an assist on David Guzman's tying goal after the short-handed Crew went up in the open-

ing minutes.

"He had a great performance and he's been looking for the goal for a while," Timbers coach Giovanni Savarese said about Polo. "Today he looked a little more free, he went forward, he found the spaces that he needed. ... It was an important goal for us."

Niko Hansen scored both goals for the Columbus (12-9-8), including one that

narrowed Portland's margin in stoppage time.

Portland, which won the MLS Cup championship in 2015, doesn't have much time to make up ground in the Western Conference with just five games remaining.

But with the win, and boosted by Seattle's 1-0 loss at home to Philadelphia on Wednesday, the Timbers moved into fourth in the standings for the six playoff spots in the West.



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Adoptable Pet Of The Week

Ticker

Ticker is a young Bluetick Coonhound, approximately ten months old. Ticker was rescued from the impound facility because he did not have a secure fence to keep him home and safe. Ticker is a very friendly and socialized dog, but needs lots of work on manners and walking on a leash. He is currently living at a foster home with lots of other dogs to meet, greet and play with and doing very well with his social skills with animals. He is also being taught basic manners and walking on a leash and other important house manners. Ticker needs to learn to ride inside a car instead of riding in the bed of pickups like most hounds do. Ticker will make someone a great family pet with lots of love, attention and patience as he learns and practices his newly learned manners!



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