

History class is in session at Silvies School wayside

Replica schoolhouse is maintained by Silvies Valley Ranch

By Cheryl Hoefler
GO! Magazine

SILVIES VALLEY — The students are long gone and the school bell quiet, but history lessons are alive and well at the Silvies School Historic & Picnic Area.

At the centerpiece of this rest spot is a replica one-room schoolhouse, where visitors can peer through the windows for a glimpse back to school days long ago. Wooden desks, metal lunch pails, chalkboards, an American flag, posters and les-



Cheryl Hoefler/Go! Magazine

Silvies School Historic & Picnic Area is on Highway 395, 32 miles south of John Day and 36 miles north of Burns. This photo was taken in the fall of 2021.

sons on the walls, plus a stove at the center to ward off chilly high desert weather — all that's missing are the students and teacher, whom you might think just stepped out of the room for recess.

While the school is the main feature, there are plenty more reasons for visitors to pull off for a bit at this peaceful, shady wayside. A playground, spacious grass area, picnic tables and large bathrooms with flushing

toilets and even baby-changing tables offer enough amenities and comforts to please travelers.

A big old barn behind the schoolhouse is where students riding horses to school secured their animals during the school day.

Interpretive signs help tell the story of the area and the Silvies Valley Ranch.

Silvies — town, valley, ranch and river — owes its name to beaver trapper Captain Antoine Sylvaillie, who arrived in the region in 1826. The Silvies post office opened in February 1892, under postmaster Adelaide Cross. A school was built shortly after and operated until about 1940. At one time there were three schools serving more than 70 ranches throughout the expansive valley.

This roadside gem is owned and maintained by Silvies Valley Ranch.

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Submissions Open: Women's Exhibit deadline January 16