

Earth Day at McNary Dam

More than 600 students attend

By JENNIFER COLTON
Staff Writer

Children in tie-dyed T-shirts walked the trails below the McNary Dam on Thursday as Earth Day came to life for almost 700 students.

All classes from McNary Heights Elementary, clad in color-coded T-shirts, trekked down to the dam for a full day of hands-on experiments and exploring nature trails, all designed to give young students a fun and interesting way to look at the world around them.

Students from the advanced biology class at Umatilla High School led eight different stations scattered around the property, teaching younger students about everything from peacock plumage to pollution.

Elijah Pine and Ethan Holiday, for example, taught about snakes through puzzles, lessons,

and the opportunity to pet Alfred, a boa constrictor.

"I was worried, but it's going pretty good so far," Pine said. "They (the younger students) thought it was awesome. I was really impressed they enjoyed it as much as they did."

On the other side of the ponds, juniors Arely Ortiz and Yesenia Flores taught about pollution and recycling.

"It's a big topic in the world, and it's affecting everybody in their daily lives," Ortiz said, adding it is important to introduce the topic to elementary students. "I hope that they understand that cleaning up after themselves is going to make a huge difference in our world. It may not seem like much with one person, but if everyone does it, it will change everything."

Professional organizations, such as Blue Mountain Wildlife rehabilitation and education, also participated in the event, which was open to all students at McNary Heights Elementary.



STAFF PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLTON

Second-grader Kendra Chaves meets Alfred the snake Thursday at McNary Dam. More than 600 students participated in Earth Day activities at the McNary Dam.



STAFF PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLTON

Junior Ellery Jones tends to plants Monday in the greenhouse at Hermiston High School. The student-raised plants will be on sale to the public this Friday and Saturday.

Growing a profit

Hermiston students sell plants for fundraiser

By JENNIFER COLTON
Staff Writer

Thousands of plants will be up for grabs this weekend for the annual Hermiston FFA Plant Sale.

Flowers, herbs, vegetables and even cacti will be on sale for the fundraiser, and each plant represents weeks or months of work from Hermiston High School students.

The process begins in January, when students begin to start products from seed. About 60 students — 20 in each of Hermiston High's horticulture and propagation classes — maintain the greenhouse,



STAFF PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLTON

Flowers fill the greenhouse at Hermiston High School in preparation for a fundraiser sale to the public this Friday and Saturday.

and two greenhouse managers, also students, take care of the weekend watering and fertilizing.

"In an average week, we spend about 70 percent of our classroom time out here watering, fertilizing, pinching, transport(ing) and just taking care of plants," ag-

riculture educator Alyssa Davies said.

This week, student have put finishing touches on the plants and hanging baskets to make sure products are ready when the sale opens on Friday.

"Students put in a lot of hard work and effort

for these plants, and it's a visual representation of what we've learned and what we've accomplished," said Ellery Jones, a junior. "We're learning skills for the future."

Thirteen different types of flowers and six different types of vegetables will be available in the sale. Most plants cost about \$2, and hanging baskets cost \$30.

"I think our community takes a lot of pride in the fact students have grown these," Davies said. "This is a great learning tool for these students, and the community supports that."

All proceeds from the sale will go toward the Hermiston FFA program.

The sale runs from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

VENUE:

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town at 1 p.m. on Sunday. A stage with live dancing and music will be set up on Second Street in front of City Hall and food vendors will be in the parking lot across from City Hall until sundown.

De la Cruz said there will be more vendors, more entertainment and more parade entries this year, as the event continues to grow. He said it has also gained more sponsors over the years, including many in the agricultural community.

This year's parade grand marshal will be Hermiston High School Principal Tom Spoo.

De la Cruz said while Spoo was still principal



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Musicians with Mariachi de los Temerosos serenade the crowd at a previous Cinco de Mayo celebration in Hermiston.

at Armand Larive Middle School he was instrumental in starting several initiatives to involve Hispanic parents in the school. Since he became the high school principal, de la Cruz said, Spoo has been a regular

attendee at Hispanic Advisory Committee meetings and has helped put together district-wide programs such as the one that brings in volunteers to provide Spanish translation during parent-teacher conferences.

"We thought, 'Here is a person who has extend-

ed his hand to the Hispanic community, who cares about the Hispanic community,' and so we wanted to have him there," de la Cruz said.

Last year, the Cinco de Mayo celebration included a Cinco de Mayo court made up of young women chosen to represent the Hispanic community at events like the Umatilla County Fair for the rest of the year.

Clara Beas Fitzgerald, who organized the pageant last year, said a string of bad luck with medical issues meant there was no one available to organize the pageant this year. Last

year's winners — Sara Lomas, Hillary Fernandez, Jennifer Garcia, Maribel Marin and Brissa Gutierrez — will serve as the Cinco de Mayo court for an additional year and those that are not away at school will participate in community events.

De la Cruz called the Cinco de Mayo event (technically on Primero de Mayo this year) a "multicultural" celebration that was meant for the entire city to enjoy, regardless of their own cultural heritage.

"Everyone is invited to come and have fun," he said.

Mother's Day!

May 8th

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Publishes in the Hermiston Herald May 4th
Publishes in the East Oregonian May 7th

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EAST OREGONIAN

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