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(Neb.)-Middle School Students Participate In Wind Cave Trip



By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 05/09/2013 10:24 AM

(Chadron)-Chadron Middle School 7th grade students took part in an educational field trip on Tuesday, as they spent the day at Wind Cave National Park north of Hot Springs. The students were led by teachers Barb McCartney and Mike Kaus, as well as several parents who accompanied the group.

Students were separated into four different groups, and led by four different rangers, in different activities after an initial gathering and information session with all of the rangers. The students participated in an activity which demonstrated what happened to deer if they were allowed to live without any hazards, what happened to deer when a flood hit, and what happened to a herd if a coyote was introduced. The students played the part of the deer, shelter, water, and even coyotes.

The rangers then led the students off-road into the trees and to the prairie to use other activities as demonstrations. One group participated in the "Picky Eater" activity, where the students were assigned an animal, and given "colors" of food they could eat, and rangers scattered pieces of paper in various colors that the students would gather for food. They discovered the black-footed ferret was the pickiest eater, and the "ferrets" had the least amount of paper pieces.

Moving back toward the busses, students were asked to observe trees in the area, and another activity educated the students on how trees had to share the essentials needed for life, which sometimes didn't pan out well for all of the trees. The topics of fire and mountain pine beetles were discussed, and pitch tubes were observed on several trees which had been attacked by the beetles. One of the many prairie dog communities was observed, and some students were even able to see a badger hole in the middle of the community.

After lunch, the students were able to tour parts of Wind Cave itself, and another activity took place in the cave, showing how bats can find food in the darkness, with the students taking turns being the bat or the moth. Each year, students partake in the Wind Cave field trip, which is not only a wonderful educational experience, but is also a lot of fun for the students, teachers, and parents.

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