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(Neb.)-Students Enjoy Fall Science Day At Agate Fossil Beds



By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 11/08/2013 08:45 AM

(Harrison)-This is the 7th year that elementary students from Sioux County spent Fall Science Day learning and presenting examples of what they have learned at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. This year the focus was on paleontology.

On Thursday, 72 elementary students and their teachers from Harrison Elementary, Pink School, Panhandle, and Chalk Butte spent Fall Science Day with Agate Fossil Beds rangers as well as Shane Tucker, Highway Paleontologist for the Nebraska Department of Roads. Split into groups, the students participated in a program with Tucker, painted fossil casts that they had cast beforehand with Ranger Anne in their classrooms, hiked the Fossil Hills trail, and used Paleo Kits as a basis for learning how paleontologists not only "dig" the fossils but also document and curate the findings.

One of the highlights of the day for students and rangers alike are the presentations that the students had prepared in their classrooms for science day. The methods of presentation varied from poems to drawings to skits to rap music featuring the scientific process. After a snack provided by Oregon Trail Museum Association, the students headed back to their classrooms knowing much more about the subject of paleontology. Other topics for Fall Science Day have been Birds, Prairie, and Geology.

For many years, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument has offered field trips to schools around the area, not only Sioux County but much of the Panhandle of Nebraska and western Wyoming. With crunched schedules and tight budgets some teachers invite the park rangers to their classrooms to speak on subjects they are studying. Others turn to distance learning with rangers in the parks, near and far, talking to children in their classrooms through electronic media. The "For Teachers" tab on park websites gives teachers options that fit their classrooms.

(Story courtesy Agate Fossil Beds)