



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Hanford Reach National Monument
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge
... protecting the last of the free-flowing Columbia River



May 8, 2004

Rattlesnake Mountain Field Trip

Kennewick Community Education and Hanford Reach National Monument sponsored the second annual Rattlesnake Mountain class and field trip May 5th and 8th. Eighty participants enjoyed an evening of biology and cultural history presentations to prepare for Saturday's field trip to the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve Unit of the National Monument. The class hosted young and old learners in the discovery of sagebrush-steppe ecology, habitat restoration and local flora and fauna. The highlight of the trip was an excursion to the 3600 foot summit of Rattlesnake Mountain where they were greeted by the sweeping vistas of the Pasco Basin and the tundra-like flowering forbs making their brief spring appearance.



Monument staff presented a variety of educational sessions focusing on the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve's unique natural and cultural resources. Cultural Resources Manager Jenna Gaston explained the history and spiritual connection that Native Americans hold with the Rattlesnake Hills. Lead Planner Dan Haas brought students up-to-date on the planning process for the future management of the Monument. Wildlife Biologist Heidi Newsome gave an overview of the many indigenous species



of plants and animals that reside on the Monument or stop by on their seasonal migrations. Natural Resource Specialist Dave Smith highlighted the efforts of the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation plan set in place to restore the damage done by the "24 Command" wildfire of 2000. Feedback from students was extremely positive and indicated a deeper understanding of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission to conserve and protect the fragile habitats set aside for future generations.