

Connecting People with Nature (CPWN) Project Report Beaver Education Kits 2017 (CPWN #6) USFWS Roseburg Field Office

Photos credits: Allison Manwaring, USFWS Biologist, with Barbara Post's 6th – 8th grade Science class, at Cobb School in Roseburg. Photo releases on file at the school.

The USFWS (Service) partners with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other government agencies/non-profit organizations in the Umpqua Basin Beaver Working Group (UBBWG) to promote beaver conservation in Douglas County, Oregon. The UBBWG has been collaborating with the South Umpqua Community Partnership's Beaver Advocacy Committee (SURCP-BAC) and the Umpqua Valley Arts Association (UVAA) to support beaver education by providing "beaver education kits" to school groups across the Roseburg School District. In 2016 alone, 4,729 students from 15 different schools were involved with the program, and volunteers who provide instruction logged 372 hours! With CPWN funding for another kit, the UBBWG is expanding their outreach by incorporating additional schools throughout Douglas County during the 2017-18 school year.



Just a few of the items in a kit: beaver chips and chew sticks, track molds, and skull.



Sidney Post, Hydrologist with the Roseburg BLM, presents a beaver education kit to the class.

The kits were developed to meet content standards for the Oregon Department of Education as well as the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) initiative, and contain a variety of items: beaver and other aquatic animal (otter, muskrat, and nutria) pelts and replica skulls, beaver chewed sticks and logs, track molds of front and back feet to make plaster reproductions, a tray and supplies to engineer a simulated beaver dam, resource books, games, and other educational materials.

Trained volunteer instructors take the kits, one at a time, into classrooms and deliver a forty-five minute to an hour-long interactive presentation on beavers and their role in the ecosystem. The kit then stays with that class for a week, where the classroom teacher and aides can use the materials for multiple lessons and activities. Materials in the kit are used to describe beaver biology and promote the North American beaver as a surrogate species for wetland habitats and the wide variety of plants and animals that benefit from these habitats.

The kits are specifically designed for youth engagement and education, to connect students with nature, and promote conservation and biodiversity. Students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds are included in the program. Service biologists, when available, accompany a kit into the classrooms and assist with instruction. CPWN funds are instrumental to increasing program capacity and youth outreach in Douglas County.



Students feel the two types of hairs in beaver fur. Beatrice Beaver stands nearby.