

March and April 2013 Tours

The Crater Renaissance Academy and Crater High School Environmental Studies Program Visits the Denman Wildlife Area and Table Rock, Located Near Central Point, Oregon.

A Project made possible through a Grant

From the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Connecting People with Nature Program

To the Central Point School District (School District #6).



Photo of Students discussing vernal pool vegetation during March 20, 2013 field trip to ODFW's Denman Wildlife Management Area. Photo taken by Craig Tuss.

April 15, 2013



Photo of students preparing to conduct soil drainage experiment. Photo taken by Craig Tuss.

Description of the Events:

Denman Wildlife Management Area

On March 20, 2013, 43 students, from the Environmental Studies Program at Crater Renaissance Academy and Crater High School in Central Point, Oregon, participated in a field trip focusing on water quality, soil characteristics and wetland habitats (see attached class assignment for further details). The 43 sophomores and juniors spent 2 hours during the early afternoon session, at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Denman Wildlife Management Area, near Central Point, Oregon.

The two-hour visit was made possible through funding provided to the Central Point School District by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Connecting People with Nature Program (CPWN).

Teacher Haven Combs, responsible for the Environmental Studies Curriculum, along with Craig Tuss, Service volunteer and part-time staff from the Rogue Valley Council of Governments; provided information during the classroom sessions and field trips describing wetland characteristics and actions taken to control invasive species.

As a result of the “hands-on” approach during the field visit, the CPWN grant is enabling the students to engage with restoration practitioners and contribute to conservation efforts. The teachers are also looking for student projects (such as adopting lower Bear Creek as a water quality monitoring area) to contribute to future conservation, restoration and monitoring in the local area.

Lower Table Rock

On April 10, 2013, 45 students, from the Environmental Studies Program at Crater Renaissance Academy and Crater High School in Central Point, Oregon, participated in a field trip focusing on wildlife flowers and vernal pools on a unique geologic formation in southern Oregon. The 43 sophomores and juniors spent 4 hours during the early afternoon session, hiking to the top of Lower Table Rock.



Photo of granary tree at Tou Velle State Park. Photo taken by Craig Tuss.

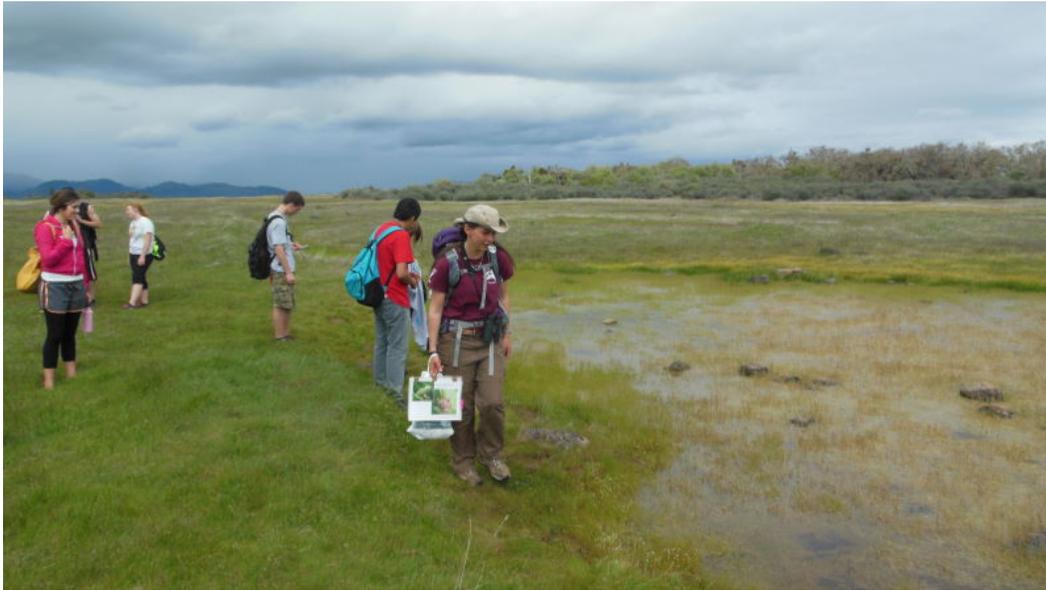


Photo of BLM guide and students looking for vernal pool fairy shrimp on Lower table Rock. Photo taken Haven Combs

Upper and Lower Table Rocks are two of the most prominent topographic features in the Rogue River Valley. These flat-topped buttes rise approximately 800 feet above the north bank of the Rogue River in southwestern Oregon. *Upper* and *Lower* refer to their positions relative to each other along the Rogue River; *Lower* Table Rock is located downstream, or *lower on the river*, from Upper Table Rock.

The Table Rocks were designated in 1984 as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to protect special plants and animal species, unique geologic and scenic values, and education opportunities. The remarkable diversity of the Table Rocks includes a spectacular spring wildflower display of over 75 species, including the dwarf woolly meadowfoam (*Limnanthes floccosa* ssp. *pumila*), which grows nowhere else on Earth but on the top of the Table Rocks. Vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), federally listed as threatened, inhabit the seasonally formed vernal pools found on the tops of both rocks. The 4,864-acre Table Rocks Management Area is cooperatively owned and administered by the Medford District Bureau of Land Management (2,105 acres) and The Nature Conservancy (2,759 acres).



Photo of BLM guide telling students about native plants on Lower Table Rock. Photo taken Haven Combs

The event provided the students, some of which had not been to the top of the formations, an opportunity to see, hear and ask questions about the area, its history and its unique values.

This trip, along with the March 20 trip allowed the students to see two types of vernal pool formations. The vernal pools on the Table Rocks are set on a basalt formation while the vernal pools in the valley below are set on a duripan layer. The basalt and duripan perform the same function, to collect precipitation during the fall and winter forming shallow pools that last till early spring.



Photo of dwarf woolly meadowfoam on Lower Table Rock. Photo taken Haven Combs