



# Hands on the Land

A National Network of Field Classrooms Linking Students, Teachers, and Parents to their Public Lands and Waterways

## Featured Site

### Sand Canyon Environmental Education Program

As a Bureau of Land Management site, Sand Canyon Environmental Education Program (SEEP) is a community-based program in Ridgecrest and the Indian Wells Valley, California. Based primarily in an arid ecosystem, SEEP aims to give students an appreciation of natural ecosystems and to emphasize the importance of water conservation in the desert environment. Each educational program focuses on water and living within a sustainable arid ecosystem,



Students record their observations in Sand Canyon.

and involves a hands-on approach for the students and members of the community. The educational program serves approximately 500 local 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. SEEP's community partnerships help to ensure the success of the educational programs. Program staff are volunteers from the area who work to empower students to get involved as citizens in making environmental decisions. The field experiences are all-day events in Sand Canyon where groups visit the different learning stations: Aquatics, Birds, Plants, History, Archaeology, and Art. Students observe the variety of life in the canyon today, as well as hearing about the primitive living conditions of the family who lived in Sand Canyon in the 1930s and 1940s.



At Sand Canyon, students learn about riparian zones in the field.

The Audubon Society volunteers who instruct at the Bird Station pass out binoculars and lead student on a bird-watching hike. At the Aquatics Station, students pull on rubber boots, gently step into the stream, and scoop up aquatic invertebrates in their nets. The nets are emptied into tubs of water, and students observe the differences between fly larvae, as well as many other organisms.

California Native Plant Society members volunteer at the Plant Station where they emphasize adaptations to intense heat and drought by contrasting desert plant species to the nearby aquatic and riparian and aquatic plants, including shady cottonwood trees and lush green water cress. At the Archaeology Station students learn about Native American crafts and how different plant materials were used. At the Art Station students creatively express themselves through drawings of the fascinating features in Sand Canyon. The volunteers enjoy sharing their knowledge, and the students enjoy being out in nature. Through the help of volunteers and the commitment from area teachers, the SEEP program is helping students develop life-long interests from these new experiences.

To learn more about the educational programs and community partnerships at Sand Canyon, please contact Shelley Ellis, [Shelley\\_ellis@ca.blm.gov](mailto:Shelley_ellis@ca.blm.gov) or 760-384-5426 or visit the HOL website.

## Member News

### Petrified Forest National Park

Petrified Forest National Park has an exciting year ahead. Each month this year will feature a scientific lecture through the park's new Learning Center. Lectures are held the first Wednesday of each month on a variety of topics including geology, paleontology, archaeology, and biology. They are free and open to the public. For more information visit [www.nps.gov/pefo/planyourvisit/learning-center-lecture-series.htm](http://www.nps.gov/pefo/planyourvisit/learning-center-lecture-series.htm) or contact the park's vertebrate paleontologist, Bill Parker at [William.Parker@nps.gov](mailto:William.Parker@nps.gov).



Bill Parker teaches about some of the fossils in the fossil preparatory laboratory.

## Upcoming Events

### National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) National Conference

March 29-April 1, 2007, St. Louis, Missouri



The PRE booth at the 2006 NSTA conference.

Partners in Resource Education (PRE) will sponsor three workshops at the upcoming national NSTA convention. We hope to see you there!

#### **Burning Issues – Living With Fire**

March 29, 2007 --- 9:30 a.m.-11 a.m.

America's Center—Washington F

#### **Energy and Our Lands**

March 31, 2007 – 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

America's Center –Room 152

#### **Silent Invaders**

March 31, 2007 – 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

America's Center – Room 152

Participants will receive materials to assist in meeting learning standards at these 90-minute workshops. For more information about the national NSTA convention, please visit [www.nsta.org](http://www.nsta.org).

## Web Corner

### Using and Updating Contacts

Hands on the Land offers many ways to network with other sites, teachers and students around the country. To gain access to over 100 HOL contacts, simply click on the Contacts link from the HOL homepage. In order to maintain the most accurate and updated information, we rely on you! Please take a moment this month to ensure that your contact information is correct. To update it, do the following:

1. Click on the Contacts link from the HOL homepage;
2. Click on your name in the Contacts list;
3. Login to the Admin Hub;
4. Make any changes necessary to your contact information;
5. Click on the Update button;
6. Your contact information should be updated!

Please contact Ellen Reid or the webmaster, Dave Zelenka ([davez@interactive\\_earth.com](mailto:davez@interactive_earth.com)) with any questions.