

# FOREST SPOTLIGHT

## Modoc NF – Pacific Southwest Region

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### *Children's Forest*

**Alturas, Calif.** – The Modoc National Forest was the place to be for three days of “Children’s Forest”.

Following up on classroom sessions leading up to the May field trips, local students met in the Warner Mountains to experience their forest first hand.



Forest Environment with Modoc National Forests' Michelle Hommerding. USFS

One of the organizers, Cathy Carlock of Modoc National Forest said “We work with Plumas Rural Services who search for and write our grants to help fund the program.”

Modoc National Forest employees led the interaction on the dynamic nature of the forest environment, tree species, tree life cycles, and what factors affect tree survival and growth. Students received an introduction to the importance of forest management for a variety of objectives and benefits.

The children learned about reforestation and were happy to plant pine trees in a recently harvested area near Stough Reservoir, high in the scenic Warner Mountains. Students also planted their own willow cuttings rooted back in their classrooms.

Action continued with a scavenger hunt, bringing notice to the smaller things in the forest environment. Some simply lay down in the grass and used each of their senses to notice the forest surroundings. They sensed their forest environment by; hearing wind in the trees, watching the swaying of branches, tracking the soaring of raptors, noting the various songs of forest birds, and the scent and feel of the cool fresh earth and the many species of fragrant plants.

Local geology, including landforms and the processes of weathering and erosion was explored. By the end of the course students could understand the rock cycle and talk about the types of rock in the Warner Mountains.

Another highlight and a very engaging discussion was with Tina Hodge, a Modoc County resident who specializes in birds of prey and wildlife rescue/rehabilitation. Live raptors were on hand for close inspection, and it was a time for students to ask questions.

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Children conduct Pine tree planting with Glenn Martin of the Modoc National Forest. USFS

Students dissected owl pellets and continued the conversation about the forest ecosystem and wildlife. Binoculars and bird identification books assisted with the bird watching.

The children participated with employees to implement a mock timber marking prescription (Rx) using specialized measurement tools. Learning about Timber Management, the students were introduced to various forest disease and insect problems. Including more in-depth discussions on; canopy position and growth characteristics that assist in the selection of potential leave trees within thinning prescriptions.



“Fire, Tools of the Trade”. USFS

At “Fire Tools of the Trade” students were asked, “So you want to be a firefighter?” With the goal of providing a general feel as to what a firefighter will experience in a career, students were given a taste of the real thing. Using a simulated fire, students cut some fire line using project hand tools. A Modoc National Forest

Fire Engine and crew were on hand for demonstrations of their equipment and trade.

“Over the course of three days we engaged 209 kids from Alturas and Surprise Valley,” said Reforestation Culturist, Cathy Carlock. “There were 13 parent volunteers, two High School Students from New Day Academy, seven volunteers working the various stations, a teacher for each class and over 20 Forest Service employees. That is over 250 people/children who were involved with the outdoor activities. There are a few others who worked behind the scenes that were unable to attend the outside activities but contributed to making the program a success.”



Smokey makes a connection with children in the Modoc National Forest. USFS

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