



Forest FEATURES



WALLOWA-WHITMAN NATIONAL FOREST

Blue Mountain Crossing Educational Hike

Bandits, school children and archeologists abound! On a sunny Thursday in May, 300 students from the Cove Charter School were treated to a four mile hike at the Blue Mountain Crossing Oregon Trail Interpretive site near La Grande. The event was organized by Wallowa-Whitman National Forest South Zone Archeologist, Eric Harvey. Other attendees included Eastern Oregon University Professors Linda Jerofke and Rebecca Hartman, 20 EOU anthropology students and Bill Gamble, Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

As the K-12 Cove students progressed along the four mile, wooded trail, EOU students and local community members stationed themselves alongside the trail to greet the younger students and present educational topics. There were nine learning stations on the trail. Topics included historic and prehistoric artifacts, life on the Oregon Trail, the role of trading posts, push carts, and wagon trains. At one location, students witnessed a re-enactment of a sheriff arresting a runaway bandit. At another station, an EOU anthropology student and her daughter pretended to be travelers who wanted to trade a horse saddle for a good husband.

The day was rounded out by lunch of hot dogs, hot off the grill, and other goods prepared by the kitchen staff of Cove school. A good time was had by all and many new facts were learned as witnessed by an impromptu quiz given by Wallowa-Whitman Archeologist Sarah Crump. Both children and adults went home with a better understanding of life on the Oregon Trail. Thanks to Eric for organizing the event. We are already looking forward to doing it again next year!



EOU students and daughter, left to right: Allison Arnason, Adelyn Evers and Casey Evers.



Cove students receive instruction from Wallowa-Whitman Archaeologist, Sarah Crump on making cordage (string from natural fibers).