



Deschutes National Forest Media Release

For Immediate Release: May 12, 2010

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Students Explore the Outdoors Through Art

On Thursday and Friday of this week students from local schools will explore a new outdoor “field classroom” with the assistance of a professional artist. Following this exploration and with professional guidance they will create a public art piece that interprets their outdoor experience.

The Deschutes National Forest, Bend La Pine School District, and Discover Your Northwest are partnering to establish Ryan Ranch, south of Bend near Dillon Falls on Deschutes National Forest land, as a “field” classroom for students in Central Oregon. On Thursday and Friday, Debra Robasky, an artist from the Painted River Studio in Portland, will work with middle school and high school students at Ryan Ranch to create a 60 ft. square collage inspired by the landscape of the Dillon Falls, Deschutes River, and Ryan Ranch Meadow. When completed, the collage will be displayed at the Bend La Pine School District Board Room in downtown Bend.

In addition, selected art work will be used for future interpretative materials for Ryan Ranch such as informational panels and brochures. Other students will be filming the project for a documentary about Ryan Ranch.

Schools participating in the project on Thursday morning beginning at 9 a.m. are Bend High School Life Skills students, River Bend Middle School, and Chamberlain High School. On Friday, also at 9 a.m., art students from Bend High School will be at the site and at 12 p.m. art students from High Desert Middle School will be exploring and developing their art. A total of 60 students will be engaged with the guest artist over the two days.

The Guest Artist Workshop is funded by a “More Kids in the Woods” Forest Service grant. The “More Kids in the Woods” efforts developed, in part, because of Richard Louv’s, book “Last Child in the Woods.” Louv is visiting Bend today and tomorrow. The High Desert Museum is also partnering to put on the Guest Artist Workshop with the Deschutes National Forest, Bend La Pine School District, and Discover Your Northwest.

Debra Robasky, the artist, has worked on student projects for over 20 years and has worked with the Forest Service on conservation education and interpretation programs for the past 14 years.

The Guest Artist Workshop is one of the first activities to occur at the newly established Ryan Ranch Field Classroom.

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