

Press Release  
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From: Children and Nature in Our Parks  
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## High Plains Science Adventures 2011 *H<sub>2</sub>Oh!*

High Plains Science Adventures is looking for 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grade students who enjoy science and high school students to serve as camp mentors

**What:** An inquiry-based, hands-on science camp designed for students who have completed 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Students will be working with scientists and resource specialists exploring all the aspects of our most important natural resource – WATER!

**When:** June 20-24, 2011. Generally 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. daily, including one overnight at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center.

**Where:** The camp activities will take place at various water-related sites throughout the Panhandle.

Monday, June 20:	Wildcat Hills Nature Center Scotts Bluff National Monument
Tuesday, June 21:	Farm And Ranch Museum
Wednesday, June 22:	Winter's Creek National Wildlife Refuge Nine Mile Creek
Thursday, June 23	Riverside Discovery Center City of Scottsbluff Water Treatment Plant Overnight at Wildcat Hills Nature Center
Friday, July 16:	Educational Service Unit 13 The students will present their <i>H<sub>2</sub>Oh!</i> program for the public at 1:30 p.m.

**Sponsors:** High Plains Science Adventures is developed and presented by Children and Nature In Our Parks, which is composed of the following partners – Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Wildcat Hills Nature Center), Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, North Platte Natural Resources District, Educational Service Unit 13, Riverside Discovery Center, City of Scottsbluff Stormwater Department, Platte River Basin Environments, Inc., and Western Nebraska Community College.

Children and Nature in Our Parks (CNP) is a partnership of federal, state and municipal agencies and non-profit organizations which collaborate to provide outdoor educational opportunities utilizing the wealth of natural sites and parks for youth in Educational Service Unit 13. According to CNP President, Amanda Filipi, Western NE has a wealth of state, federal and non-profit locations and HPSA provides a chance to showcase these

great places for hands-on environmental education. High Plains Science Adventures is one of the premier programs sponsored by CNP.

**Story:** Children and Nature in Our Parks (CNP) announces the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> annual High Plains Science Adventures camp (HPSA) for June 20-24, 2011. Students who are interested in science and have completed 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades may register. “H<sub>2</sub> Oh!” will begin at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center and travel to additional water-related sites including, Winter’s Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Nine Mile Creek, Educational Service Unit 13, Riverside Discovery Center, Farm And Ranch Museum and a really fun overnight at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center. According to Anne Wilson, of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, “We are really excited to be offering the 5<sup>th</sup> year of High Plains Science Adventures for students with this great network of partners dedicated to quality educational opportunities that expand the classroom experience. Over the years we have seen how much the students learn and grow during the week of camp and can use that educational knowledge as a boost for the coming school year.”

During the camp, students will become citizen scientists doing inquiry-based investigations on the science of water: meteorology, hydrology, astronomy, the environment and wetland animals. Students will take part in activities that include learning about the water cycle, designing a wetland creature, managing a water budget, setting irrigation tubes, answering delving questions about water, test water quality, investigate aquatic species, learn the historic uses of water, study environmental impacts, do water color painting and crafts, and have lots of fun with water. They will be working with a variety of water resource professionals including a meteorologist, stormwater educator, National Park Rangers, and other education specialists. The students will keep journals of their citizen scientist explorations, photographic journals, and write blogs about their adventures. Western Nebraska Community College will provide transportation.

Each year HPSA focuses on service learning (an educational component tied to school curriculum) with the students conducting a service project for the community. As the 2011 service learning projects of the camp, the students will produce public service announcements about water and label storm drains for environmental protection.

Students receive a backpack, water bottle, journal, t-shirt with a cool water logo, snacks, a craft, 3 meals, water materials and have great fun learning during camp.

Parents and the public are invited to the students’ presentation the last day of camp, June 24, 1:30 pm at ESU 13, 4215 Ave I, Scottsbluff, to witness the students’ water discoveries made during the camp. The students will compete in H<sub>2</sub> Oh! Jeopardy and show their photos of their water adventures.

Registration for the camp is \$150 (\$75 is payable upon registration with the remainder due before camp begins). Scholarships of \$75 are available for students who qualify for free-reduced lunch. Scholarship funding is provided by Panhandle Rock & Gem Club and North Platte Natural Resources District. Applicants must have their science teacher recommend the students on the registration application and school principals must sign the scholarship applications. Application forms are available by contacting Riverside Discovery Center, Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument or the North Platte Natural Resources District. The registration deadline is May 31. Registration is limited.

Each year HPSA offers a unique hands-on approach for students who wish to advance their interest in science by becoming citizen scientists. 2007's theme was *Water, Water, Everywhere* and found students investigating the importance of water and all aspects of the water cycle, In 2008's *Paleontology: Can You Dig It*, students were excavating fossils under the direction of Shane Tucker, paleontologist from the University of Nebraska State Museum. In 2009, *Buggin' Out on the Prairie*, students studied entomology and botany of the short-grass prairie ecosystem. Last year *Walking on the Wild Side* involved the study of wildlife and their connection to the local environment.

Anne James of Riverside Discovery Center, said "By offering four rotating topics students can attend four years and study many aspects of science. Over the years we have found that once students come to High Plains Science Adventures, they sign up year after year and go on to become mentors for the program. This is a great program to excite students about science and have them experience science opportunities that are not often available in the classroom. Learning outdoors is great fun!"

Students are encouraged to be sure to have their teachers recommend them for High Plains Science Adventures before school dismisses. If they qualify for low income scholarships, their school principal must sign the scholarship application. High Plains Science Adventures is a great way to enjoy science and have fun this summer. (This is not the same as the 4-H summer program, H<sub>2</sub>O, being conducted in Chadron.)

(Please put the following story under another heading.)

## High School Mentors Needed for High Plains Science Adventures

During the week's camp, the students attending High Plains Science Adventures are grouped into small groups to conduct their science investigations. Each group has a high school mentor, under the direction of the camp director. The mentors develop their leadership skills by taking part in leadership and first aid training. Students wishing to apply as camp mentors must complete a written application and interview process. Contact Amanda Filipi, Wildcat Hills Nature Center, 308-436-3777, [amanda.filipi@nebraska.gov](mailto:amanda.filipi@nebraska.gov), to apply as a mentor. HPSA mentors are paid positions. The deadline to apply is May 31.