

# HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 29, 2019

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## Ensworth Elementary Students to Open Exhibit at the High Desert Museum

BEND, OR — *Kids Curate*, an exhibition created by fourth- and fifth-grade students from Ensworth Elementary School in Bend, opens Friday, May 10. *Kids Curate* is a yearlong program that integrates art and science into existing curriculum and culminates in an exhibition at the Museum, this year on display through June 9.

The Museum partners with a different Central Oregon school every year, providing hands-on arts learning for students at schools with limited art programs. The program integrates art, science, history and writing into classroom curriculum, giving students an opportunity to learn about arts and cultural career possibilities while simultaneously exploring the natural world.

The Ensworth Elementary students are part of the sixth annual *Kids Curate* and this year, the project explores the three main ecosystems of Smith Rock State Park including rimrock, shrub-steppe and riparian habitats. The exhibit will include a large-scale mural painting that depicts food webs in the three Smith Rock ecosystems, photographic landscape collages and three large erosion sculptures. Working collaboratively, the students have learned to combine their knowledge of ecology and geology with the two- and three-dimensional artmaking skills they've gained during the course of the project.

"This program began in November with a field trip to Smith Rock," said Bonnie Lee and Oliver P. Steele III Curator of Education Carolyn Nesbitt. "Many students had visited the iconic landmark, but this project gives them the opportunity to see Smith Rock through a new lens and gain an uncommon knowledge of that area that can be shared with their communities."

Following the field trip, the students continued to study the unique geologic history and resident wildlife of the state park, how humans influence the place, and how the place, in turn, influences art. The students took photographs, sketched the cliffs and brought back the concepts that translated into the exhibition.

"The *Kids Curate* program is as unique every year as the students involved in the program," said Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. "We are proud to do this work giving students learning opportunities outside of the classroom, fusing art and science as well as connecting community and place."

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In addition, *Kids Curate* creates strong relationships between the Museum and Central Oregon students and provides participating students with the pride of publicly and prominently displaying their artwork.

More information about the High Desert Museum and Kids Curate program can be found at [highdesertmuseum.org/kids-curate](http://highdesertmuseum.org/kids-curate).

This year, *Kids Curate* is made possible by the Chambers Family Foundation, The Clabough Foundation, the Oregon Arts Commission, The Bloomfield Family Foundation and The Reser Family Foundation and with support from the Pacific Power Foundation, Dogs Limited, the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation and U.S. Bank Foundation.

## ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in 1982 and brings regional wildlife, culture, art and natural resources together to promote an understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of North America's High Desert country. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats, and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate the High Desert environment. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a Smithsonian Affiliate. [highdesertmuseum.org](http://highdesertmuseum.org)

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