

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 26, 2018

Contact: *Heidi Hagemeyer, director of communications*

541-382-4754 ext. 166, hhagemeyer@highdesertmuseum.org

BEND, OR — *Kids Curate*, an exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, opens Thursday, May 3. Created by fifth-grade students from Crooked River Elementary School in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management and the High Desert Museum, the exhibition explores the natural and cultural history of the Crooked River Canyon through the eyes of the students.

The students worked side-by-side with Museum curators throughout the school year, merging science and art as they investigated how the Crooked River is connected to the watershed surrounding it. Through hands-on lessons, field trips and lectures, they developed an understanding of the area and in turn, learned how to communicate their findings, integrating written information with visual, artistic representation on each of four interpretive panels. The panels, which are featured in the Museum's exhibition through June 3, will be permanently placed by the BLM along the Wild and Scenic portion of the Lower Crooked River in the fall.

"This program is unique in that it spans the entire school year and that it integrates art and science, encouraging interdisciplinary study," said Museum Curator of Art and Community Engagement Andries Fourie. "People often think of art and science as being diametrically opposed, but they actually have a lot in common. With this project, the students were able to see the connection not only between art and science, but also between other subjects such as geology and cultural history."

Once the students began to see the connections between different parts of the ecosystem, they were able to understand how even a small change can have a broad impact. "These kids live near here so you want them to realize how special this place is and to become invested in it. If they have a sense of pride in ownership, they are likely to grow up to be stewards and guardians of the place," Fourie said.

Fourie taught the students how to draw animals and landscapes based on what they learned through research, investigation and observation, beginning with basic outlines and progressing to fine details and painting techniques. "Teaching someone how to draw is as much about teaching them how to see," Fourie said.

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

One of the early drawing exercises he taught challenged the kids to draw without looking at their paper and to focus instead on looking at what they were drawing. “That process is counterintuitive, but they learn observation and hand-eye coordination.”

In addition to the interpretive panels, the students worked together to create large charcoal landscape drawings, which will be featured in the exhibit along with a selection of individual art pieces.

“The *Kids Curate* program is an exciting way for the Museum to work with local teachers to integrate arts education into their classroom curriculum,” said Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw. “This year’s collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management and Crooked River Elementary was a tremendous opportunity to build community connections and provide the students with the pride of publicly and prominently displaying their artwork.”

Kids Curate 2018 has been made possible by Avion Water Company, Bloomfield Family Foundation, Facebook, Oregon Arts Commission, Reser Family Foundation and with support from Deschutes Brewery, Dogs Ltd and Training, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, Fairfield Inn and Suites Downtown Bend, and US 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.

<https://www.highdesertmuseum.org>

###