

Follow the fearless fifth grade fossil hunters



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of six, each with adults who volunteered to make the day-long trip. Many of the escorts seemed as excited as the kids about searching for fossils.

Once on the road, the buses headed south to the first stop, the Wallace Museum, where the kids had a chance to look at fossils that have been found in northwest Kansas.

The second stop was at the site of the German family massacre, north of Russell Springs, where in 1874 a band of Southern Cheyenne killed John German, his wife and three of their children. Four daughters were taken captive, prolonging an outbreak known as the Red River War.

Then the buses headed to the fossil hunting area, but a quick phone call from Bill Frazier, Mary's husband, found they were heading the wrong way. Once the convoy was turned around, it wasn't long before they could be seen coming over the hills north of the canyons.

There was another delay as one of the buses had some difficulty getting through the gate, but finally all was moving again and the busses, with accompanying suburban and pickups, arrived at the site. Kids poured out into the field.

The landowner, Larry Haverfield, who lives south of Russell Springs, gave permission for the

field trip, and has given permission to other people to search in the canyons on his land.

The kids spread out over the canyons, searching for signs of fossils, and Sweatt, the Whitson's and Harper's were consulted frequently to check out newfound treasures.

Kaleb Keith had one of the finds of the day when he spotted a shark tooth about one and one-half inches across. Sweatt said it was one of the largest he had seen in that area.

Cameron Morris and his mother Donna were happy with the piece of spear point they found.

Sweat said he was surprised at the things the kids found, including an ancient seed pod that had floated out into the ocean and had been preserved in the chalk.

After about three hours of hunting, the kids gathered to show what they had found, and to share special cheers and handshakes they had invented to go with the individual Indian names given to each group.

The fifth-grade teachers involved were Frazier, De Burkett and Myron Tedford.

The adults who volunteered were Colleen Dautel, Theresa David, Travis Foster, Al Slusher, Gene and Paula Geist, Diane Stefan, Connie Russell, Ariane Barber, Mary Brady, Rob Tomsic, Jeanne Irvin, Lora and Mike Lake, Richelle and Danny Whalen, Loren and Kristy

Strait, Kim and Rich Bateman, Kelly Hillman, Jennifer Smith, Monica Albers and Brenda Ross.

The fifth graders included Teather Dautel, Ismael Garcia, Matt Foster, Gary Slusher, Lexi David, Jay Cotter, Jessica Geist, Precious and Harvey Gonzales, Eduardo Romero, Brandi Bahe, Chance Davis.

Kyle Stefan, Cisco Medrano, Colton Nelson, Jennifer Pennington, Katie Clancy, Kuter Isaac, Freda Barber, Amber Douglas, Alyssa Brady, Tim Roeder, Ashley Garza, Kaleb Keith.

Taylor Tomisc, Landon Brenner, Tamara West, Tanicia Arnold, Ryan Irvin, Rosa Sandoval, Ben Waugh, Kevin Amthor, Robbyn Juleson, Naomay Mosely, Jessica Lake, Brook Redlin.

Corbin Townsend, Paul Starr, Kala Sharp, Stephanie Becvar, Eric Whalen, Angie Medrano, Marisa Lopez, Angie Hillmer, Loren Strait, Allen Alanis, Ed Martinez, Tyler MacDonald.

J.P. McCool, Gabriel Gonzales, Jonathan Gomez, Chris Reed, Alexis Bateman, Kamisha Nonamaker, Natasha Hillman, Elaine Reiter, Zach Prine, Harrison Ford, Lorenzo Delgado, Erik Roeder, Heidi Lawson, Alexis Albers, Eric Ross, Michael Johnson, Quinten Ragels and Ross Townsend.



Ismael Garcia and Jay Cotter (above) examined the wall of one of the canyons in the Smoky Hill Chalk area south of Russell Springs for signs of ancient fish fossils. Ross Townsend (top right) carefully scraped chalk away from several fish vertebra he found. Kaleb Keith (bottom right) talked to Greg Sweatt (right) and Bill Frazier about the large ancient shark tooth he found. Elaine Reiter scratched at the chalk and Jennifer Smith looked for fossils in the chalk cliffs.

Photos by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star-News

