



Monday, April 17, 2017

Dear Parents of Grade Ten Students,

From Monday, May 8 to Friday, May 12, students in Grade Ten will travel south of Mountain Home, to the Bruneau River watershed to hike and camp along one of the Bruneau's major tributaries, Sheep Creek. Jim Harper, Jen Schmutzler, Holly Ponath and I will lead the trip.

The Sheep Creek Spring Trip will take students along some of the most spectacular sheer-walled rhyolite basalt canyon systems in the U.S. and will expose students to some truly amazing and unknown country we are lucky enough to have in our own backyard.

Because much of this trip will take place where there are no preexisting trails, tenth grade students will receive instruction pertaining to off-trail travel and navigation and they will have the opportunity to navigate on their own several times during the trip. As the tenth grade has focused on orienteering during their time in PE, I'm confident that they will rise to the challenge of navigating in unfamiliar terrain. With numerous trips under their belt, students will also be comfortable with their other responsibilities on the trip including setting up low-impact camps, helping in the kitchen, pumping water, carrying various group gear including tents, stoves, and food and breaking camp in the morning. Students on past trips have even felt comfortable getting creative with the daily schedule, electing to spend a day in camp, swimming during the heat of the day and then hiking in the cool of the evening.

Being as close as it is to Riverstone, students will have five full days to complete the twenty-mile point-to-point hike along the rim of the Sheep Creek drainage. During the day, students will have unobstructed views across the sagebrush plateaus to the Jarbidge Mountain Wilderness in Nevada to the south, and to the Boise, Trinity, and even the Pioneer Mountains to the north. At night, students will drop down off the plateau to camp by the creek and explore the canyon, which is home to bighorn sheep, mountain lion, deer, and coyote. The class will be divided into two groups which will pass each other in the middle.

I have included the Equipment List with this letter. Please begin inventorying your camping equipment to make sure everything still fits. In particular, students will need very good footwear for the Sheep Creek trip. Students will be traveling off-trail, and will need footwear that provides good ankle support for uneven terrain. Though it is one of the driest areas of the country, spring can be wet; students will need good rain gear. A waterproof pack-cover or pack-liner is also a very good idea. Riverstone has backpacks available for students who do not own their own; let me know if you will need to borrow a pack. I will review specific packing instructions and group gear needs in trip meetings during the weeks prior to the trip. Permission slips and health-update forms will also be distributed during those meetings.

This is one of the most challenging trips that the school conducts, but students will come home even more confident in their abilities in the wilderness, and with a little better idea of what it really means to be from Idaho. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me at school or at home. It should be a great trip...it is one of my favorites!



Ben Brock

Itinerary for the week of May 8:

Monday May 8– Meet in front of the High School Building and depart Riverstone by 8:30am.

Drive to trailheads, south of Mountain Home and begin hiking

Tuesday through Thursday - Hike along Sheep Creek Canyon

Friday, May 12– Finish hiking and return to Riverstone by 3:00pm.