

The Bulletin

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NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE

Latest teaching tactic: Plug kids into nature, not iPods

By Sheila G. Miller
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Dragging shovels and delicately carrying small plants, fifth-graders from High Lakes Elementary School ran back and forth along the banks of the Deschutes River last week, perhaps unaware that they were studying science.

It may have been fun, but they were learning as they dug into the soil at the edge of Bend's Riverbend Park and listed trees and shrubs they were planting: wood's rose, red osier dogwood and spirea.

Having spent months studying the history and health of the Deschutes, testing its water quality and learning

about riparian areas there as part of a Healthy Waters Institute program, the trip outside was almost a treat.

"This is where it all comes together," said Kolleen Yake, education coordinator for the Healthy Waters Institute. "They get outside, get hands-on experience, and they learn more and care more about their home waters."

The High Lakes students' experience is part of a growing trend of trying to get students outside in an effort to connect them to their environment, turn off their iPods and cell phones, and learn a little in the process.

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Fifth-graders Sarah Alice Jones, 11, left, and Sarah Sall, 11, plant trees last week at Bend's Riverbend Park while Kolleen Yake of the Healthy Waters Institute looks on.

