

BioQuest!



Pasque flowers are blooming in full force on the hills around Helena. If you have not been out for a hike recently, go and see what you can find.

April 26, 2024

Dear PEAK Students, Parents, and Teachers,

For the next two weeks, we will meet Tuesday evenings in the Bryant Elementary Library, located at the top of the stairs. If you arrive late and find the doors locked, please call me so we can let you in. It is a nice room with good wi-fi! (This week as we tried to work on the presentations at Helena College, some students could not log onto the college wi-fi. Therefore, we moved our meeting across the street to Bryant Elementary School.)

Bring your laptops on April 30!!! Students need to finish their presentations and share them with me before we meet on April 30!!! We are wrapping up our independent study investigations and building PowerPoints to present at Montana Wild on May 14. Students need their PowerPoints ready to share on April 30 so we can plan and practice the public presentation. The presentations can be about five minutes long. See the attached outline for what to include on the PowerPoint about your independent study project.

Members of Last Chance Audubon and the public look forward to the PEAK presentations May 14 at Montana Wild. Check out the publicity at this link:

<https://www.lastchanceaudubon.org/2024/04/22/may-2024-program/>

As part of our BioQuest unit, we have a special treat planned for 6-8 PM on Tuesday, May 7: *Return of the Grizzly*, a powerful new documentary film will be presented by Nick Gevok from the Sierra Club. Mr. Slead will be there to help students practice their presentations.

I will be traveling out of state and mostly out of touch May 2-13 while I am camping and birding around Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. Someday, it would be awesome to take PEAK students there—I know you would love the paleontology, anthropology, and art projects there! I will not send a newsletter on May 10. However, I will be able to communicate by email occasionally, so let me know if you have questions or concerns.

For those of us who wonder what animals are thinking and feeling, I encourage you to read this new research. It posits that animals are much more self-aware and emotionally complex than humans have previously believed. Here is a link to a good article:

[Scientists push new paradigm of animal consciousness \(nbcnews.com\)](http://www.nbcnews.com/science/animals/scientists-push-new-paradigm-of-animal-consciousness-1c091100-1100-11e0-8000-000114000000)

Here are the Independent Study topics we are working on:

Leatherback Sea Turtles

Raine: Black Swifts

Tristan and Reese: Costa Rican monkeys

Willow (and possibly Dawson): Poison Dart Frog

Jacob: Eyelash Viper

Oliver and Joshua: Jesus Christ Lizard (find out how it got the name)

Melissa: *Chrysaora Fuscescens* Jellyfish (Pacific Sea Nettle)

Keely: Luna Moth

Sophia: Puffins

Weston: *Canis Lupis*

Beth: Cougars

Railey and Grey: *Homo Sapiens*

Cate and Raine: How can visual art inspire people to care more about endangered species?

We anticipate learning so much more about diverse creatures as well as the human dimensions: the researchers who study them, and the ecologists who protect them. Students should also design their own hypothetical experimental research project to answer an interesting question about the species.

PEAK GT 8-12 Schedule:

6-8 PM, April 30 at Bryant Elementary Library: Send your PowerPoint link to Ms. Knight before we meet. Rehearse presentations for Montana Wild. Record narration soundtrack.

May 1: CR Anderson 8th grade advisor and lunch meeting. Bring laptops.

6-8 PM, May 7 at Bryant Elementary Library: *Return of the Grizzly*, a new film presented by Nick Gevock. Also, present your independent study project to Mr. Sleed.

May 8: No meeting at CR Anderson. SBAC testing week at CR Anderson.

6:30-8:30 PM, May 14: Montana Wild Presentations. NOTE SLIGHTLY LATER THAN USUAL TIME!

May 21: Last PEAK 8-12 Meeting for the school year! Details TBA.

May 28, All Day: PEAK Leadership Conference

BioQuest UNIT ACTIVITIES	RESEARCH— I CAN STATEMENTS
Meet with biology researchers and wildlife managers.	I can listen actively, take effective notes, ask deep questions, and utilize expert information at a professional level in my own work.
Study selected fauna in Montana, Costa Rica, and elsewhere.	I can recognize, understand, and use the 5 Areas system autonomously.
Conduct research or learn about specific studies based on the scientific method. Independent study of specific species or ecosystems.	I can recognize, understand, and use the scientific method autonomously.
Conduct research into the human dimensions of the species chosen for research. Investigate the species role in a larger ecosystem.	I can investigate and describe the ecological significance of a species, as well as the human dimensions that influence it.
Interview research scientists.	I can autonomously generate professional-level interview questions tailored specifically to the interviewee.