

# THE OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER

By Leah T.

THE FOURTH GRADE HAD A GREAT TIME AT THE OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER. WHEN WE GOT THERE A MAN NAMED MR. TAYLOR TOLD US WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO. WE SPLIT UP INTO TWO GROUPS, ONE INSIDE AND ONE OUTSIDE. I WENT OUTSIDE FIRST. MY GROUP'S GUIDE'S NAME WAS MR. BONSER. AT FIRST, WE TALKED ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO THE BLACK LAND PRAIRIE MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO. I LEARNED THAT CAME HERE BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO CUT DOWN TREES. THEN, WE TALKED ABOUT THINGS THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN ALIVE. SOME EXAMPLES WE CAME UP WITH WERE: ROCKS, DIRT, WATER, AIR, AND THE SUN. WE ALSO TALKED ABOUT ANIMALS WE SAW AND EVIDENCE OF ANIMALS WE DID NOT SEE. SOME ANIMALS WE DID SEE WERE SQUIRRELS AND A BUTTERFLY. SOME CLUES OF ANIMALS THAT WE SAW WERE FOOTPRINTS, SCAT, AND AN ARMADILLO HOLE. WE IN ADDITION FOUND SOME ATTENTION-GRABBING PLANTS. SEVERAL OF THEM WERE THE MEXICAN HAT, THE SUNFLOWER, THE MOON BERRY, AND PECANS. MR. BONSER SAID THAT TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THERE WERE MANY, MANY BUFFALO. THEY KEPT THE TREES AND THE GRASS LOW, BUT SOON THE POPULATION OF BUFFALO DIED DOWN. NEXT, WE WENT DOWN BY A STREAM TO DIG FOR FOSSILS. THE INOCERAMUS FOSSIL IS EASIEST TO FIND. IT WAS A LARGE CLAM LIKE ANIMAL ABOUT THE SIZE OF A TRASH CAN LID. WE GOT TO KEEP THREE OF THE FOSSILS THAT WE FOUND. THAT IS ALL ABOUT WHAT I LEARNED ON OUR HIKE.

INSIDE THE BUILDING WAS JUST AS FUN AS OUTSIDE! WHEN I GOT INSIDE I WENT TO THE ROCKS AND MINERALS LAB. IN THERE OUR TEACHER'S NAME WAS MRS. RACHELS. SHE TOLD US WHENEVER WE ARE THINKING ABOUT ROCKS AND MINERALS THAT WE SHOULD THINK

**ABOUT THE WORDS: ORE, LUSTER, MAGMA, AND IGNEOUS. THE WORD LUSTER MEANS A SUBSTANCE REMOVED FROM THE EARTH'S CRUST WITH A PROFIT. I DISCOVERED LOTS OF YOUR EVERY DAY THINGS ARE MADE WITH COPPER. FOR INSTANCE REFRIGERATORS ARE MADE WITH COPPER IN THEM. THERE IS ONE MINERAL YOU CAN EAT, IT IS CALLED HALITE, OR BETTER KNOWN SALT. OTHER THINGS WE GET FROM ROCKS ARE ALUMINUM AND GRAPHITE. THE THINGS YOU USE TO IDENTIFY LUSTER ARE METALLIC, NONMETALLIC, EARTHY, OR GLASSY. THAT IS ALL ABOUT WHAT WE LEARNED IN THE ROCKS AND MINERALS LAB.**

**AFTER THE ROCKS AND MINERALS LAB, WE WENT TO THE ANIMAL ROOM. FIRST, WE TALKED ABOUT WHAT A PRAIRIE LOOKED LIKE. WE SAID IT WAS MOSTLY FLAT WITH AN OCCASIONAL TINY HILL. WE SUPPOSED THE HERBIVORES ON A PRAIRIE MIGHT BE BUFFALO, RABBITS, HORSES, DONKEYS; DEER, MOOSE, PIGS, COWS, BUGS, AND SQUIRRELS. THE CARNIVORES WE THOUGHT MIGHT BE WERE BOBCATS, SNAKES, ALLIGATORS, AND HAWKS. SOME OMNIVORES YOU WILL FIND ON A PRAIRIE ARE HUMANS, COYOTES, WOLFS, AND TURTLES. SOME SCAVENGERS ARE VULTURES, POSSUMS, RACCOONS, AND SKUNKS. I HAD A GREAT TIME AT THE OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER.**