



Insider's Look at Grand Canyon

Webisode #24 – A message for teachers and students Transcript

Ranger Patrick Gamman: Welcome to another webisode of Insider's Look at Grand Canyon. I'm Ranger Patrick and you know, there are many types of rangers in the Park Service. As stewards of your National Parks, sometimes we are here for protection, sometimes we are here to help if people are injured, but we are also in charge of educating folks, sharing with the public all the wonders of the park. And we have different type of ranger that does that and joining me today is Environmental Education Ranger Andy Peirce. Andy, welcome to the show.

Ranger Andy Peirce: Thank you Pat. It is a pleasure to be here and I look forward to speaking with you and letting people know what it is we offer, especially for teachers and for kids.

Patrick: Can you give the folks out there an overview of the Environmental Education Programs that you offer?

Andy: Absolutely, we have a variety of programs available throughout the year. We have our curriculum based education programs that involve; field trip programs, where students actually come from schools mostly around Arizona. However, we get schools from Florida, Louisiana, California, that come here to do one of our in park programs. We have programs related to geology, ecology, and human history. We also offer "in-class" programs where we travel to schools and do programs in classrooms. Again, mostly throughout Arizona, but also in neighboring states of Utah and Nevada. And then we have our "distance learning" programs that we can do for schools throughout the entire country. Where, via the internet, we connect with schools and do two-way broadcast. We can talk to the students, they can talk and see us, and we see them as well. So these distance learning programs, a fantastic opportunity for anybody anywhere in the country.

Patrick: So, everything you offer is curriculum based. Can you tell the folks out there a little more about the field trip programs?

Andy: Yes. We do make all of our programs curriculum based. Mostly on the Arizona state standards, but we also look at the national standards too, so that we are addressing schools that are from outside Arizona. Yes! So, all of our programs are curriculum based, we base them on the Arizona state standards and the national standards, therefore even if a school is from outside Arizona it address's the national teaching standards as well. The field trip programs we offer, they are anywhere from 2-5 hours in length, cover a variety of topics as I mentioned earlier. We have programs on the geology of Grand Canyon, programs on ecology, so looking at plants and animals. Learning something about the interrelationships between them and the non-living things in the environment. And also we have programs on human history, both more recent pioneer history as well as the history of Native Americans that have lived throughout this Grand Canyon region and northern Arizona.

Patrick: So Andy, you mentioned; "distance learning", that sounds pretty neat, but how does that work?

Andy: Well, via the internet, we are able to connect with schools that have video conferencing equipment. So long as a school has video conferencing equipment, which teachers can check with their technology specialist in their district. Because many districts have this ability and as long as they have video conferencing equipment we can do two-way broadcast. Live broadcast with schools throughout the entire country. And we do programs on both geology and ecology. And again, because of this two-way interaction the students can see us and ask questions, we can do activities with the students. We sometimes do interactive activities as best we can via the internet. And there is a pre-visit/ pre-program lesson plan that we ask the teachers to complete with their students, so that when we do the program they are prepared, they are ready to learn something more about geology or ecology using Grand Canyon as the classroom, so to speak, to learn these really neat science topics.

Patrick: You also said that you visit schools in Arizona and surrounding states. When do you do this and what type of programs do you offer?

Andy: We generally do most of these programs in January and February, mostly because here at Grand Canyon on the south rim we tend to have a lot of snow and cold weather at that time of the year. So, schools don't tend to want to come here so we go out and visit the schools. We provide a variety of programs.

Again, somewhat related to the field trip programs that we offer. So we have a geology program, we have an ecology program, we have several history programs that we can offer and we come right to the classroom. Do these live for the students in the classroom. We bring lots of fun props, so we might have skulls, or maybe rock samples, fossils, historic artifacts. Things like that that we bring to the students in the classroom. So if a teacher cannot afford to bring their class to the canyon, we bring the canyon right to their classroom. And we offer those, again, mostly in January and February.

Patrick: So Andy, the stuff you have sharing is really great! I think any child that came here as part of a school group would have a wonderful experience, but how do teachers find out more and if they are going to contact us, who would they actually talk to in the Environmental Education Office?

Andy: Yes, the way teachers can find out more is through several different avenues, 1) teachers are welcome to go to the national park website, which is; www.nps.gov/grca/forteachers . And at that "forteachers" site we have information on all the programs I have been talking about and through this teachers can find out more. 2) Another way they can find out more is actually to attend one of the teacher workshops that we offer every fall. Generally October and November we offer teach workshops. And again, that information is at our website. 3) Or if they prefer to talk to somebody, on they phone, they can also contact us by calling; (928)638-7931, and find out some information from one of us right in the office. Every program does require pre-registration. So they do need to register ahead of time and our programs can definitely be very popular so we recommend teachers get on it as quickly as they can at the beginning of the school year.

Patrick: Well Andy, this is a big call out, not just for teachers but if there is any parents or students listening share this with your teachers and maybe you can end up learning a lot about Grand Canyon. So, Andy thanks for joining us on the show today.

Andy: You're welcome and you make a good point. Any students that are listening to this, if you are interested in Grand Canyon and what to learn more about this amazing place, this amazing resource let your teachers know that we have these programs available to you whether or not you are in the state of Arizona or anywhere throughout the entire country. So these programs are out there, we love to work with students, Grand Canyon is an incredible outdoor classroom, fantastic way to learn something about the sciences, and we hope to work with as many students and teachers that are out there.

Patrick: Well, that was great! Folks, we'll catch you next time on Insider's Look at Grand Canyon.