



## The Monterey County Herald

### Monterey teachers pair up for paddleboard adventure

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Diane Evans paddleboards on String Lake in the Grand Tetons in Wyoming. (Courtesy of Deanne Maschmeyer and Diane Evans)

Monterey >> Two veteran Monterey Peninsula elementary school teachers spent part of their summer in a Wyoming wilderness school, learning about nature, survival skills and paddleboarding on mountain lakes and rivers.

For Diane Evans and Deanne Maschmeyer, the experience gave them an appreciation for the outdoors and new ideas for teaching their students about the environment.

The two received scholarships to attend the weeklong American Leadership School in the Bridger-Teton National Forest outside Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in June. Evans and Maschmeyer are avid standup paddleboarders, so they decided to make the trip a paddleboarding journey as well while driving to and from the school.

It was an unusual choice for the pair who previously spent their summer breaks staying home and reading and, of course, paddleboarding.

Evans is starting her 31st year teaching this fall. She's a second-grade instructor at Foothill Elementary School. Maschmeyer is starting her 25th year in the classroom. She will teach this year at Tularcitos School in Carmel Valley.

The educators first drove to Lake Tahoe, then to Twin Falls, Idaho, and finally, String Lake in the Grand Teton Mountains, paddleboarding at each stop before checking into camp.

The American Leadership School includes lectures, walkabouts, field trips and a survival unit. Formed in 1976, it has taught more than 5,400 teachers new skills.

"Being a survivor enthusiast — I love the show 'Survivor' — it really opened my eyes," Maschmeyer said. "We learned how to make fire. We learned how to filter water and to make shelter, only with a small backpack, learning how to be self-sufficient. ... It was truly awesome to work with a small group of people (four women) and share ideas," she said.

"We also learned to do archery, and we're now both certified archery instructors. We also learned about the conservation of animals," Maschmeyer said.

On one of their field trips, Evans said, they looked at the migratory paths of prong horned antelope and how they have been disrupted by fracking in Wyoming. She said the school didn't try to convince them whether fracking was good or bad.

"There's still this need for oil and, in California, this need for water, and people still have to survive," Evans said. "But we still have to protect this environment. Conservation is a big part of the camp."

The biggest lesson she brought back home, she said, was "to educate students that they are going to grow up and become stewards of the planet."

Another exercise was determining the health of Granite Creek, which runs through the camp. It was the same stream used in the movie, "A River Runs Through It." The students donned waders and jumped into the project. They had to determine the speed of the stream, its temperature and depth and the stream's general health.

"For a second-grade teacher, this was something I had never done, and I found it fascinating and frightening at the same time," Evans said. "It made me relate to how students are feeling when they come into a new classroom with a new teacher and they don't know anybody."

When the school ended, Evans and Maschmeyer drove to Yellowstone Park, where they toured and paddleboarded on Yellowstone Lake. From there they traveled to Red Lodge, Montana.

Then it was a 23-hour drive back to Monterey. They wanted to get home before the Fourth of July.

To incorporate what she learned at the wilderness school into the classroom this year, Maschmeyer is planning field trips to the Santa Lucia Preserve. She also wants to work with parents who have areas of expertise that will relate to environmental lessons.

“I have a whole new environment to be learning about out there, that’s for sure,” she said.

Evans is planning field trips to Jacks Peak with her students.

“I would like to visit the same site four times a year to document how it’s changed and see it in different seasons,” she said.

While their summer journey opened their eyes to the beauty of other areas in the West, both teachers said the beauty of Monterey Bay is the best.

“It’s incredible,” Maschmeyer said. “After all the places we traveled ... there’s nothing like paddling out in Monterey Bay. It’s by far the most beautiful. The environment is changing constantly and there is something new every time to look at. Coming home to Monterey was really the best.”



**Deanne Maschmeyer, left, and Diane Evans, on their paddleboarding adventure in the Grand Tetons in Wyoming. (Courtesy of Deanne Maschmeyer and Diane Evans)**

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