



Geology Camp gives kids view into rocks, seismology

By [Odessa American](#) - June 21, 2024



Kids in University of Texas Permian Basin's Geology Camp have spent this week learning about maps, seismology, hydrology and dams as well as going on hikes exploring the geology around them. (Photo Courtesy of UTPB)

Making maps, hiking, exploring the geology around them and making a seismometer are among the things kids in University of Texas Permian Basin's Geology Camp have learned about this week.

Assistant Professor of Geology Miles Henderson had 10 campers initially and two left.

"They've spent some time learning about different rocks and minerals. They spent some time using the microscopes and looking at optical properties of minerals under the microscope. We spent some time talking about mapping and cartography. We made maps. We've gone on some hikes around campus to look at what our local geology looks like just here on campus. We went out and checked out the rocks that make up the Stonehenge monument on campus, which is the limestone from down near Garden City and looked at the fossils that are present there," Henderson said.

On June 20, they spend most of the day talking about earthquakes, tectonic plates, and how the Earth's crust forms through time.

"Right now, we're getting ready to make our own seismometers because we just got back from viewing the seismic station that's located here on the UTPB campus. It's over on the western side of campus ... That station is part of the TexNet seismic monitoring array that the Bureau of Economic Geology at UT Austin is operating," Henderson said.

Seismometers measure how much seismic activity is happening in the subsurface. They had just put up on a projection screen the United States Geological Survey map that shows earthquakes that have happened within the last 24 hours.

"There were four earthquakes in the last 24 hours and three of them were here in the Permian Basin. The other one was in California," Henderson said.

Led by Assistant Professor of Geology Miles Henderson kids in geology camp at UTPB learned about tectonic plates represented by Oreos. (Abraham Franco|UTPB)

He said he just recently got involved in the camp. He said it was spearheaded by Mario Kiran, professor of art and chair of the Department of Arts at UTPB.

The university offers a series of camps throughout the summer from fine arts and theater to engineering, geology and sports.

Henderson said some of the kids are pretty engaged, but a lot of them are middle school age and that's when they study earth science at school, so it's kind of fresh in their minds.

"Everybody likes rocks, right? We have a water table that we use to simulate river systems. We played around with hydrology and water yesterday (June 19), and they came back today and wanted to do that again. They built a dam and we're looking at how the dam could possibly fail if the water started to seep through. Their dam held up. It didn't didn't break through and leak the water out," Henderson added.

Brothers Connor and Brennyn White, 12 and 16, respectively, attend STEM Academy.

Their mom got them into the camp and Brennyn said they saw a "bunch of nice rocks" so it was interesting.

Brennyn said the camp was really fun so far and the activities "seem really fun and cooperative."

Connor agreed saying the camp was pretty nice.

"I like all the activities we do. I think they're really fun and encouraging. I like the places we get to go, and then the sights we get to see and we get to interact with stuff," Connor said.

He added that geology is something he might want to pursue.

"I think so ... I think I would like to study rocks and everything. I think it's pretty fascinating," Connor said.

Brennyn said he would not pursue geology as a goal, but would like to study it as a side interest.

Students also used a sand table to simulate river systems. They built a dam and looked how water moves through the sand even though it's dammed up and also what dams are used for. The camp was led by Assistant Professor of Geology Miles Henderson at UTPB. (Abraham Franco|UTPB)

Kids in University of Texas Permian Basin's Geology Camp have spent this week learning about maps, seismology, hydrology and dams as well as going on hikes exploring the geology around them. (Photo Courtesy of UTPB)

Fox Anzaldua, 12, is going into seventh grade at Alamo Junior High in Midland or Bowie Middle School in Odessa.

He tried geology camp because he likes rocks and caves and finds them fascinating.

News, straight to your inbox!



Sign up for our Odessa American Morning Headlines newsletter.

email

subscribe

The best part is when they got to look at a replica of dinosaur footprints.

Asked if he was interested in geology as a career, Anzaldua said, "If I was to go into geology, I would like it."

[Odessa American](#)