

Rise of the Feathered Dragons Assemblies

December 31, 2015



"Did the dinosaurs really all go extinct?" In December more than 700 students, teachers and others from Fredonia, Orderville and Kanab participated in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Paleontologist Dr. Alan Titus' *Rise of the Feathered Dragons* presentation, which explores this question. There are over 10,000 species of modern birds, making them arguably one of the most diverse and successful animals of our time. What many people don't realize is that they are not merely descended from dinosaurs, but are actually highly specialized dinosaurs, in the way that bats are still also mammals. Dr. Titus aims to provide evidence during his presentation allowing the students to decide if the dinosaurs really have all gone extinct. Sponsored by Grand Staircase Escalante Partners' Frontier Science School (FSS), students were also treated to the opportunity to examine and explore many different types of fossils.

This exciting presentation was tied to the 2015 Christmas Bird Count. Hosted by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is a yearly bird census conducted nationwide during the holiday season. Here in Kanab, the BLM provides lots of fun activities for people of all ages, helping to collect data crucial to the study of the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America.

Established in 2015, FSS helps students, teachers, and people of all ages explore Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the public lands and rural communities of southern Utah and northern Arizona. Scientifically and historically invaluable, our region is ideal for examining efforts to live sustainably in remote, arid country, and it's a life-changing classroom for an emerging generation of Westerners.