

# Students dive deep in trash to learn recycling, reusing

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MILAN - Dusty Roadrunner, the state cleanup mascot, paid a visit to Veronica Sanders' fifth grade students at Milan Elementary School on Friday. The giant bird was there to lend support to Molly Madden of the Keep New Mexico Beautiful program as she conducted a waste audit and shared a lesson about recycling with the students.

After asking the class to guess how many pieces they thought they had accumulated, and how much they thought it might weigh, Madden and the class dumped all their trash for the last week onto a tarp in the center of the room and then began to separate the pile according to five categories, cardboard, paper, food, plastic, and wood.

The guesses ranged from 120 to 290 pieces of trash and guesses about the weight ranged from ten to 65 pounds.

The students took each container of separated trash to a scale where classmates assisted with a weigh-in. The final weight of all five groups totaled 7.78 pounds for 350 pieces of trash.

Analyzing the chart they had made together, class members decided that the food could be put into a compost bin, the paper could be reduced by using both sides and the aluminum could be recycled.

Madden gave everyone in the class a pencil made from recycled denim, a bookmark made from recycled cardboard and an activity book about national monuments by the state Tourism Department.

Dusty Roadrunner presented Sanders with a certificate for a free tree to plant to "help keep New Mexico beautiful."

By Kathryn Marmon, Beacon staff writer



*Students, under the supervision of Sanders and Madden, dove right into the task of separating the different types of trash they had accumulated. Beacon photos by Kathryn Marmon*