Greetings Oregon outdoor school family,

As you are likely aware, COVID-19 (commonly referred to as the CORONA virus) is a growing concern here in Oregon and across the globe. On Thursday, Governor Kate Brown announced several statewide responses which included the closure of K-12 schools through the end of March. Additionally, many universities including OSU have recommended strategies to help contain and mitigate the spread of the disease including moving classes to online platforms and canceling large gatherings. While these actions are designed to protect our most vulnerable populations, we fully recognize the burden these decisions have on districts, families, and outdoor school providers across Oregon, including the financial challenges that program cancellations can cause.

The Oregon State University Extension Service Outdoor School Program’s (ODS) response to the pending COVID-19 threat is based on three primary objectives:

1. We aim to do everything possible to keep students, staff, educators, and families safe from the illness.

2. We aim to help reduce the negative impact of cancelations or reduction in outdoor school programming on districts, providers, and students.

3. We aim to ensure students impacted by cancelations still have a similar or replacement outdoor school or outdoor education learning experience.

Specifically, we recognize that districts and providers have already incurred significant staffing, food, transportation, site reservation, planning, and supply costs. We also recognize that a disruption in programming would potentially harm the seasonal outdoor school educators and staff and cause irreparable harm to the statewide outdoor school capacity, potentially rolling back the progress made over the last three years.

To help reduce the potential impact of cancelations or reduction in spring outdoor school programming, the OSU Extension Service Outdoor School Team has worked in close consultation with our Advisory Committee to develop the following response strategies for the 2019-2020 school year.

**Response Strategy 1 (for districts still planning outdoor school programming this spring after schools reopen)**: For any district participating in outdoor school programming in spring 2020, districts will be eligible to receive $5.00 per student to help reimburse any sanitizing and cleaning costs associated with COVID-19. For districts
utilizing a provider or site, $1.50 per student would be retained by the district for its own sanitizing costs (for example, cleaning a bus or purchasing hand sanitizer for outdoor school) and $3.50 per student to be added to the provider fee per student to reimburse the provider or site for any cleaning, sanitizing, or related supplies. Note, if a district or educational service district is its own provider, it would retain the entire $5.00 credit per student. This strategy is based on the resumption of outdoor school programming after schools reopen on April 1st. Providers and sites should add $3.50 per student to their invoices for any spring 2020 outdoor school programming that is not canceled.

**Response Strategy 2 (for districts/schools who cancel spring outdoor school programming):** In the event a district or school cancels a spring outdoor school activity, or the scheduled outdoor school program was scheduled to occur during the K-12 school closures and cannot be rescheduled for later in the school year, the OSU Extension Service Outdoor School program will reimburse the district for costs as follows

A) If a district contracted with a provider/site for outdoor school:
   i. the OSU Outdoor School program will reimburse the district for the provider/site costs as outlined in the provider's contract as related to cancellations

   OR

   ii. the OSU Outdoor School program will reimburse the district up to 60% of the provider/site's per student costs for the scheduled attendance number.

When a district implements Response Strategy 2Aii, the Outdoor School program will encourage the district and their providers/site to work collaboratively to create/provide an outdoor education learning experience for the students who are impacted by this outdoor school cancelation. For example: A provider/site may invoice a district for up to 60% of the originally contracted outdoor school costs (to cover deposits and other expenses) AND to deliver a mutually agreed upon environmental education event/activity in lieu of the originally agreed upon outdoor school programming. This could include but is not limited to:

- A school visit by the provider to deliver outdoor school programming at the school.
- Curriculum guides and lesson plans for classroom teachers to use.
- Kits, activities, or online resources for classroom teachers or provider staff to use.

These deliverables should be designed to benefit students with regard to outdoor education and align to the OSU Outdoor School program's Instructional Resource Self-Assessment Tool. This option should NOT include fees associated with Response Strategy 1. Please contact us for more details regarding this option or if you would like further guidance.

B) Districts or Education Service Districts who are their own outdoor school provider/site may invoice the OSU Outdoor School program for the actual incurred costs related to their self-delivered outdoor school program. For example, a district may submit a detailed invoice for incurred and non-
recoverable costs (including cancelation fees, planning, supplies and materials, staff pay, etcetera). Note, the invoice should state that outdoor school programming was canceled and reflect the adjusted actual costs. The OSU Outdoor School program office may request additional documentation for invoiced costs.

**Response Strategy 3:** As funding permits, the OSU Outdoor School program will grant waivers for 7th grade ODS students to attend outdoor school during the 2020/2021 school year if their school did not attend in spring 2020 due to COVID-19. Note, this waiver will only be granted as funding allows; 2020/2021 priority of measure 99 funding will be to 5th and 6th grade students. Instructions on adding 7th grade students will be communicated once reporting for the current school year is completed. We hope this will help address concerns that students may miss the transformative outdoor school experience and ensure the intent that ALL Oregon students be given this experience.

**Response Strategy 4:** Over the next few weeks, the ODS team will be developing outdoor school and outdoor education curricular resources and activities designed to be used by classroom 5th and 6th grade teachers to help ensure students have some sort of outdoor education activity this spring. We encourage any providers who wish to assist with this process contact us. We anticipate adding these resources to our web site over the next few weeks.

We fully recognize these strategies are not perfect, nor will they replace the benefits of outdoor school; however, we hope they will help reduce the impact to students whose outdoor school programming is cancelled while helping ensure providers/sites and their staff are able to continue the important work of outdoor school long into the future. The OSU Outdoor School program is committed to doing all we can to help the outdoor school community continue to thrive in Oregon. We thank you for your support and commitment to Oregon students. For questions regarding these solutions, please check our website for continued updates or reach out to us via email at outdoorschool@oregonstate.edu. Please be patient as we are experiencing a large volume of emails. We will continue to do all we can to help each of you work toward a solution that works for your students and your providers/sites.

We encourage everyone to stay informed as the situation develops. For more information on COVID-19, please visit Oregon State University’s COVID-19 update web page and the Centers for Disease Control, where resources and fact sheets are available in multiple languages. We further recommend that you stay connected by subscribing to our email list on the bottom of our web page and follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Our team wishes good health and wellness to all of you during this difficult time.

Warmest Regards,

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