OUTDOOR SCHOOL
OSU EXTENSION SERVICE

2018–19
Annual Report

Learning in the World’s Best Outdoor Classroom

Oregon State University
WHAT IS OUTDOOR SCHOOL?
Outdoor school is a transformative outdoor education experience for Oregon’s fifth and sixth graders in the world’s greatest classroom. Immersed in Oregon’s natural landscape, students learn about themselves, their peers, the environment and natural resources, and leave with new skills to prepare them for their future. Outdoor School is different by design. Kids get out of the classroom to hear, taste and touch nature in a safe, interactive environment. Outdoor School benefits students long after they leave camp, igniting a passion for learning, teaching critical thinking and inspiring possibilities for their futures, including careers in natural resource fields. Outdoor School is designed to uniquely fit each learner and community. Outdoor School is a proven, high-quality educational experience that is life-changing for students. Teachers can connect with students in ways beyond what is possible in the classroom.

The opportunity to provide every fifth or sixth grade student in the state of Oregon with an outdoor school educational experience became a reality in July 2017, when the Oregon Legislature formally approved $24 million for the statewide Outdoor School program over the next two years. This followed Oregon voters’ approval of Ballot Measure 99 in November 2016, which designated funding and adoption of Senate Bill 439 codified into law as ORS327.390 by the 2015 Oregon Legislature. This law directed the OSU Extension Service to assist Education Service Districts (ESDs) and school districts to provide a statewide outdoor school program. Along with OSU Extension Service, a group of dedicated volunteers worked diligently to provide resources to outdoor school providers, school districts, ESDs, and teachers to implement outdoor school programs. In June 2019, the Oregon Legislature approved $46.8 million for outdoor school programs statewide over the next biennium.

OSU EXTENSION SERVICE
OUTDOOR SCHOOL TEAM
Dr. Kristopher Elliott
Program Leader
Rita Bauer
Assistant to the Program Leader
Andrea Johnson
Administrative Assistant
Priscilla Johnson
Grants Coordinator
Charissa Jones
Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator
Renee O’Neill
Curriculum and Professional Development Coordinator
Dr. Spirit Brooks
Research, Evaluation and Assessment Coordinator
Amy Hoffman
Southern Oregon Regional Coordinator
Sarah Cuddy
Eastern Oregon Regional Coordinator
Benno Lyon
Northern Oregon Regional Coordinator
WHY
THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL WHY
With the passage of Measure 99, voters in Oregon made outdoor school possible for all fifth and sixth graders in the state. We believe outdoor school program staff, curriculum, activities, and attitudes must be culturally responsive and inclusive and reflect the needs of ALL participants, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability, or socio-economic status. While institutional change to outdoor school programs will be incremental, we are committed to supporting schools and districts in providing a high quality learning experience and the equitable inclusion of all participating students.
Many of our students are ELL students and being able to see, touch, and smell content-specific vocabulary is huge for their learning.”

—Medford School District

OUTDOOR SCHOOL STATEMENT ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The Oregon State University Extension Service–Outdoor School program values equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). EDI is essential to who we are, and what we do. We acknowledge the historical and institutional barriers that have kept youth from participating in an outdoor school experience and strive to foster positive experiences for all students by exposing and eliminating institutional policies and structures that uphold systems of power and privilege, as well as by providing continuous opportunities for outdoor education and self-reflection to our staff and stakeholders.

Oregon voters overwhelmingly passed legislation to fund outdoor school for ALL students. The recognition that no outdoor school participant brings just one aspect of their identity to an outdoor school experience is critical to understanding the intersectionality of identities. We strive to create an environment where everyone can feel welcome, safe, respected, and free to participate in all aspects of outdoor school as their authentic, whole self.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are foundational to our work as the Oregon State University Extension Service–Outdoor School program. We know this will change the structure of outdoor school. We are engaged in an ongoing process of active learning and growth, understanding that this work requires a sustained commitment. When we make mistakes along the way, we will adapt and continue to learn.
MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

WHAT IS OUTDOOR SCHOOL?
Outdoor school is a transformative outdoor education experience for Oregon’s 5th and 6th graders in the world’s greatest classroom. Immersed in Oregon's natural landscape, students learn about themselves, their peers, the environment and natural resources, and leave with skills to prepare them for their future.

WHO WE ARE
We are a diverse and passionate team of educators and learners committed to the success of youth and outdoor education in Oregon. We work diligently to serve, connect, and empower the people of Oregon through collaboration and high quality outdoor school resources.

WHAT WE STRIVE FOR (OUR VISION)
Oregon outdoor school will be the most successful, high quality outdoor education program in the nation.

HOW WE DO IT (OUR MISSION)
Together, we empower and support inclusive, impactful, and high quality outdoor school experiences for Oregon’s youth.

OUR CORE VALUES
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Relationships, Innovation, Integrity, and Quality are central to how we approach our work. Learn more about our Core Values and Beliefs on the next page.
WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe every student has the right to an inclusive and transformative outdoor school experience.

We believe Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is the lens through which we approach all of our work.

We believe outdoor school should be adapted and customized to meet the needs of each unique community in Oregon.

We believe local communities and schools rights to participate in decisions that affect them and in interactions that are based in respect and cooperation toward a sustainable future.

We believe understanding culture is an important factor in how we empower people to engage in nature.

We believe in supporting the important work of formal and informal educators around outdoor education.

We believe outdoor school is a conduit to preparing students for future careers in and related to the outdoor industry.

We believe in sharing the full history of place and the history of the people who have lived there.

We believe in acknowledging and honoring the tribes and native people who have cared for the land for thousands of years and continue to do so.

We believe in strengthening community ties and connecting organizations, families, and people who share our vision and represent the diverse populations of Oregon.

We believe this work extends beyond primary and secondary education students.

We believe in preparing formal and informal educators to provide students with meaningful outdoor experiences through high quality professional development.

We believe in exceptional learning experiences that inspire lifelong stewardship.

We believe in culturally responsive and inclusive practices in environmental education.

We believe that all people deserve a healthy and sustainable environment.

We believe in increasing environmental literacy in Oregonians.

We believe in meaningful and inspiring classroom and outdoor experiences.

We believe in the power of education.

We believe outdoor school can inspire students and educators to be citizens and architects of a better world.
BUDGET AND PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

Outdoor school has a long tradition in Oregon, having existed in some areas of the state for over 60 years. In 2016, Oregon voters passed Measure 99, allowing for all Oregon 5th and 6th graders to have “the opportunity to attend a weeklong outdoor school program or comparable outdoor education program.” The measure created an Outdoor School Education Fund and directed Oregon State University Extension Service to support, administer and fund an outdoor school program as set forth in Senate Bill 439 (Senate Bill 439, §§ Section 1-Section 3, 2015)). Oregon State University Extension Service—Outdoor School continues to provide guidance to the state’s districts in providing transformational outdoor education experiences for a large number of 5th and 6th grade students.

I feel that outdoor school being free to all students has opened the door to serve a wider range of students... it affects students of all races and all types of learners.” –Medford School District

2017-2019 FISCAL REPORT

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In 2018-19, 156 of the 197 school districts in Oregon received funding, compared to 128 in 2017-18.

1. Out of 504 schools funded in 2018-19, 197 offered outdoor school for the first time, compared to 2017-18, when out of 385 funded schools, 82 offered outdoor school for the first time.

2. Schools from all 36 counties in Oregon participated. 37,965 students (81% of eligible 5th and/or 6th grade students) attended, compared to 2017-18, when 30,739 students (76% of eligible 5th and/or 6th grade students) attended.

Oregon’s 5th and 6th graders cumulatively spent 148,887 days outside, compared to 2017-18, when they spent 115,131 days outside.

In 2018-19, three of the four state-sponsored charter schools in Oregon were funded for outdoor school.

We anticipate 43,362 students will attend outdoor school in 2019-20, increasing the participation rate to 94%, and the cumulative number of days spent outside to 173,515.
PRIVATE SCHOOL PATHWAYS TO OUTDOOR SCHOOL

Friends of Outdoor School, the Gray Family Foundation, and the OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School Program are committed to ensuring outdoor school experience for every Oregon 5th or 6th grade student.

Measure 99 funds are limited to students who reside in Oregon and are enrolled in a public school or charter school. Many public schools currently allow temporary enrollment for homeschool and/or private school students in order to access services such as special education, sports programs and foreign language courses. Similarly, families of private school or homeschooled students may, at the discretion of the local district, temporarily enroll their students in their local public school for the duration of outdoor school programming offered by that district. Any student enrolled as a public school student at the time of outdoor school would be able to attend the district’s public school outdoor school programming through Measure 99 funds.

Enrollment decisions are determined by individual districts. As a result, local public school districts’ policies may vary. Families are encouraged to work with their current schools to seek guidance on enrolling their students (dual enrollment) for the purpose of outdoor school for the 2019-20 academic year.

Quick Facts:

- Students must be enrolled (or dually enrolled) in and attend a public school district’s official outdoor school programming to be eligible for Measure 99 funding.
- Private schools may not apply for Measure 99 funds directly.
- Back payments or reimbursements for private school students who previously attended outdoor school through a public school program are not available for the 2017-18 year.
- Private schools that wish to conduct their own outdoor school programming may continue to apply for funding through the Gray Family Foundation.
WHAT
WE ACHIEVE TOGETHER WITH
OUR PARTNERS
PARTNERSHIPS

The OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School is proactive about gathering stakeholder input and tapping into expertise within communities statewide. We are committed to supporting state and local businesses, as outdoor school drives local economic development through increased accessibility to the outdoors. Examples include:

- Engaging representatives from across the state to participate in quarterly advisory committee meetings to ensure public and stakeholder input on program implementation, strategic planning, standards, and budget allocation.
- Maintaining a stakeholder mailing list and social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, to share information.
- Engaging dozens of subject-matter experts from across Oregon who volunteer their time as resource group members to guide implementation and operation of the outdoor school program, provide input to the advisory committee, and support program staff. For example, the Curriculum Resource Group helped guide the revision of the High Quality Instructional Resource Rubric 2.0 this year so that it became a more useful tool for educators.
- To engage leaders, educators and community members across the state, the Outdoor School team has hosted and participated in several workshops and presentations, including events with the Intertwine Alliance, Straub Outdoors, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, the annual Educational Service District conference, Extension Service gatherings and school district meetings.
- The Outdoor School team worked with community stakeholders to create our “Organizational Why” and statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- The OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School continued its strong partnerships with the Oregon Lottery, Gray Family Foundation and Friends of Outdoor School, working together to include private school students in outdoor school, supporting an outdoor school provider conference planned for early 2020, and developing best practices concerning non-residential outdoor school programming.

Outdoor school has been an Oregon tradition for over 50 years, and we know that engaging students in applicable, relevant and engaging experiences in the outdoors contributes to academic success and environmental literacy. However, there has been limited quantifiable measure of these outcomes statewide. A common measurement system enables...
programs to track their outcomes, looking at change within their individual programs over time, among themselves and consider statewide trends. Outdoor School for All! Diverse Programming and Outcomes in Oregon is a collaborative evaluation project which began in 2014 with support by the Gray Family Foundation. Stakeholders across the state came together to build understanding and knowledge about current outdoor school programming and its intended outcomes. A common measurement system was built based on legislative requirements, a wide variety of data sources, existing literature/knowledge base and substantial input from stakeholders. A Pilot Study was released in early 2019. We continue to partner with Dr. Steven Braun of EERise, supporting the full statewide Common Measures evaluation project. For more information about the Outdoor School for All! Diverse Programming and Outcomes in Oregon project see: https://outdoorschool.oregonstate.edu/about-us/research-evaluation-assessment/outdoor-school-evaluation-and-assessment/

In partnership with Oregon State Parks, we were excited to launch the “Get Out There Together” program in Spring 2019. Students who participated in outdoor school through Measure 99 funds were eligible to receive three Oregon State Parks passes to be used with their family. Upon completing registration, families were mailed three Oregon State Parks vehicle passes along with educational guides, location information and suggested activities for the whole family. Families that visit three state parks become eligible for a full annual Oregon State Parks pass at no cost. To be eligible, families simply needed to return to the state parks webpage, name which parks they visited together, and request an annual parks pass. Oregon State Parks and OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School are dedicated to helping families engage in the outdoors and extend the amazing opportunities that outdoor school provides. The logical next step to a student’s transformative outdoor school experience is to “Get Out There Together” as a family.
When asked to reflect on their experiences at outdoor school, students were excited, eager to share, and most of all grateful for the unique experience. Hearing them express this gratitude out loud and in writing is priceless.”

—Central Point
REGIONAL UPDATES

Our regional program staff have now been on board for a year and continue to serve Oregon’s unique communities and outdoor school programs. Three regional faculty—Sarah Cuddy in Eastern Oregon, Amy Hoffman in Southern Oregon, and Benno Lyon in the Northern region—complement the OSU Corvallis team, who coordinate the central Willamette Valley and Central Oregon, in order to tailor our outreach to each Oregon community. OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School has local offices in Baker City, Portland and Ashland to serve and connect with individual needs in each community. Regional faculty help ensure full participation of schools and students within each school, communicate with districts and parents, and assist with providing support and training for educators in their respective regions.

SOUTHERN REGION

Outdoor school in the Southern Oregon region is growing and gaining support. Participation has increased in the seven counties (Coos, Curry, Douglas, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath and Lake) that make up this region. Thirty out of 42 districts participated in outdoor school during the 2018-19 academic year. Five new districts applied for funding for the first time this year and schools that were not participating in other districts have begun to join outdoor school. Two charter schools have joined in and we are working to support private schools in the area.

Many schools have been doing outdoor school for decades and others just started this year. Programs are being planned and run by teachers and providers. Notable programs include Eastwood Elementary in Douglas County, which plans and runs its program on its own school grounds. They have a 50-acre campus with wetlands, forest and trails. Schools such as Orchard Hill Elementary in Jackson County require that students travel further to attend programs in different environments, such as OMSI Camp Gray in Newport, while also offering a local three-day trip for students unable to attend the overnight program.

Partnerships between OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School, local providers and local natural resource agencies continue to thrive. The Southern region coordinator has partnered with many agencies and providers this year, including: Southern Oregon University’s Environmental Education Graduate Students, Bureau of Land Management, Curry Watersheds Partnership, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Ashland Forest Resiliency, Science Works Museum, Siskiyou Field Institute, Pacifica Gardens, Klamath Science Outdoor School, Talk About Trees, and Willow-Witt Ranch. Additionally, communities supported five OSU Extension Service-Outdoor School informational sessions across the seven counties including two curriculum director meetings. Several providers welcomed our partner, Friends of Outdoor School, as they spent three days touring the southern region.

EASTERN REGION

The Eastern Oregon region has made significant progress with outdoor school participation. In addition to supporting the ten most eastern counties and six education service districts with their unique needs, we provided additional support and outreach to Malheur, Harney and Grant County, the three counties with the lowest participation rates in this region. With targeted outreach, participation rates in outdoor school increased in all three counties. Malheur County went from 40% to 70% of districts participating. In Malheur County, the Eastern Region coordinator worked closely with Ontario School District in developing and implementing its first outdoor school experience for their approximately 180 students. The Ontario School District serves a high percentage of students from low-Socio Economic Status households.

In very rural parts of Eastern Oregon, some schools may have only one eligible student. In these areas, the time investment and
logistics of planning outdoor school for very few students can be a barrier to participation. Finding and working closely with a coordinator or administrator who combines the rural schools throughout the county into one outdoor school experience has been instrumental in increasing participation for rural Eastern Oregon. For example, we are working closely with Harney County ESD as they plan an outdoor school experience for the handful of eligible 5th and 6th grade students in the county. A resource was created for eastern region schools that have never participated in outdoor school and are unfamiliar with the process. The document was designed for teachers and administrators to ease the onboarding transition to outdoor school participation by providing the necessary information and ideas to get them started.

Due to the lack of outdoor school providers in the Eastern Region, schools are often faced with either long distances to travel or providing their own programming in order to participate. With help from our partners, Friends of Outdoor School and Gray Family Foundation, we worked closely in supporting new providers in the region with resources and informational sessions. At least three new providers have started outdoor school programming, which provides additional options and eases the onboarding transition for new participating schools.

Three interdisciplinary workshops, intended to improve the quality of outdoor school programming across the region were offered. Two workshops were targeted to 5th and 6th grade teachers around pre and post outdoor school activities for the classroom. These preparation and debrief activities helped maximize the student learning experience of outdoor school. The third workshop was designed to equip natural resource professionals who are instructors in outdoor school programming with the teaching skills to deliver their expertise to students.

Students have used the experiences from outdoor school to be more engaged and invested in what we are learning in the classroom. Students are more team orientated and working well together in class.”

—Ontario School District

**NORTHERN REGION**

Of the 47 school districts in the Northern region, 43 applied for and received Measure 99 funding for the 2018-2019 school year (91.5%). For the coming 2019-2020 year, 44 districts have already applied for outdoor school funding. One success this year was reaching out to schools within districts without a history of participation. One example was collaborating with Pioneer Special School Program, which serves special-education students with social/emotional needs, fragile mental health, and developmental disabilities. Because a traditional residential outdoor school program was not going to be the right fit for Pioneer’s first experience, we connected Pioneer with Ecology in Classroom and Outdoors (ECO), which created a three-day non-residential outdoor school program at Milo McIver State Park. The newly created program was steeped in curriculum from a professional development training ECO attended that was hosted by OSU Extension—Outdoor School.

Because the Northern Region has such high participation rates at the district level, the focus of regional outreach has been to engage in conversations with districts around equity and inclusion as much as possible. Some students opt out of attending outdoor school, so gaining better understanding of why some families do not allow their children to attend is a very important question now being explored. We have met with numerous teachers, district administrators and community organizations to collaborate on understanding this issue as well as begin establishing best practices for outreach. One example of this equity work was supporting the Centennial School District’s inclusion efforts by providing a bus to transport first-generation immigrant families to visit an open house event at an Multnomah ESD Outdoor School site, allowing families a chance to become familiar with the staff, physical location and overall program before sending their children to outdoor school.

Another great collaboration was a program organized by Migrant
Students return from ODS with stronger relationships to one another and their counselor. Many students express an interest in returning as a high school counselor. Several students exhibited leadership roles not previously seen in the classroom.”

—Canby School District
INSTRUCTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

As of the date of this report, 504 schools had completed reporting, 385 completed reporting last year.¹

We continue to work on making the application and reporting process for schools easy to navigate and user-friendly. After working with a temporary application and reporting system for our first two years, the Outdoor School team worked with the Oregon State University Graduate School to develop and implement a permanent, online application and reporting system using the Salesforce platform. This new Salesforce-based system has the security of OSU hosting and gives the Outdoor School team a single data repository for:

- customer relationship management (CRM)
- data collected during (and analyzed to evaluate) the outdoor school application process
- outdoor school results reported by each district.

The new application system was implemented in May 2019 for the 2019-20 outdoor school year application period. The new reporting system is expected to open in December 2019 to accept reports from those districts that complete outdoor school in the 2019-20 school year.

Schools that receive Measure 99 funding via the OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School are required to submit an application in which they estimate their program costs. After schools attend outdoor school they complete the following reports:

- An invoice and fiscal report
- A copy of each school’s curriculum or daily agenda/schedule showing a breakdown of school activities.
- A data report in which schools are asked to rate topics and concepts according to the prevalence or significance within their curriculum (using a 0-5 scale with 0 being of no significance and 5 equal to great significance). The following graphs represent how schools rated topics and concepts in 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 according to the prevalence and/or significance in their curriculum.

Note on the following graphs: there is a small reduction in the importance of the identified themes/issues between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. However, last year’s reported numbers were final as of publication date, and this year’s data do not include full data reported after August 31, 2019. We also changed the report questions, which could account for the slight decrease.

¹ Schools are required to complete reporting June 15 to receive reimbursement funds, however, as of October 16th, two schools have not reported.

WEB SITE REMODEL

The Outdoor School program team, with assistance from several outstanding student employees, successfully completed a rebuild of our original website. Using a new content management system (CMS), we now have a more user-friendly site that contains detailed and easily updated information regarding the application and reporting process and information and resources regarding the implementation of equity, diversity, and inclusion actions in outdoor school programs. The new website also provides the latest workshop and curriculum information for district administrators and formal and non-formal educators, as well as the latest results of our completed and ongoing research activities. In the coming year, we hope to implement a new version of our CMS that will permit us to have our website available in Spanish.

Students were able to make connections between their classroom study of genetics and cell structure to the organisms they examine at ODS.”

—Scappoose School District
As in 2017-2018, over 80% percent of schools rated the importance of the state’s environment and natural resources a 4 or a 5.

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Soil, Water, Plants, and Animals

As compared to 2017-2018, again, nearly 75% of schools rated this category of great significance in outdoor school curriculum.

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72.2
Over 95% of schools reported that their outdoor school curriculum and content significantly addressed science in 2018-2019.

When asked to rate the development of students’ leadership, critical thinking, and decision-making skills, over 80 percent of schools rated this a 4 or a 5.
EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN OUTDOOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS STATEWIDE

Outdoor schools in Oregon are working to become more inclusive and equitable educational spaces for students. Schools were asked how their outdoor school programs addressed the inequity of outdoor educational opportunities for underserved children in Oregon, and specifically how their programs served historically underrepresented student populations. We wanted to document what actions were taken to make the outdoor school experience one in which all students thrived, including rural students, racial and/or ethnic minorities, English language learners, special education students, learners with disabilities and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Some families do not feel comfortable sending their children to overnight residential outdoor school programs, particularly families of color. Oregon, a predominantly white state, has a long history of racialized exclusionary laws and policies.1 Programs that serve students of color are elevating equity work as a top priority. They are working at many levels to make their programs fully inclusive, and places where students of color and their families feel safe. Examples include:

- redesigning curriculum to be more culturally responsive and inclusive
- hiring staff who reflect their student demographics
- recruiting high school volunteers who reflect their student demographic.

Leadership teams from some of the largest programs in the state have participated in multiple equity trainings with experts in their communities, building foundations for their leadership teams to engage in difficult conversations. The Multnomah Education Service District Outdoor School Program equity team began an “Equity Engagement Strategy Planning” process with the Center for Diversity and the Environment “to develop a process and a vision for moving our program forward in the DEI realm” (MESD, 2019).

Many schools also indicated that they are not only offering their program in a bilingual format if needed, but they are also working directly with camps to make sure their bilingual students are supported with bilingual staff and student leaders. Programs that had bilingual students provided translated materials, including materials for parents. In addition to providing translation of curriculum and materials, programs also worked to meet the needs of all students regardless of race, socioeconomic status or ability.


“Outdoor school definitely improved students’ sensitivity and respect for diversity.”

—6th Grade Teacher, Southern OR

“We have students in high trauma and childhood stress... this program is so accessible for all these students and gives them opportunities they may never have in life.”

—5th Grade Teacher, Central OR

“After attending the Indigenous Studies workshop and being unable to secure a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, we decided that we need to revamp our TEK lesson to ensure that it is both meaningful and respectful. This is a priority for the 2020 outdoor school program.”

—Outdoor School Coordinator, Willamette Valley
SPECIAL EDUCATION

Schools reported positive experiences for their special education students when communication with providers was clear and concise. For one of Oregon’s largest districts, Multnomah Education Service District, the special education department provides outdoor school staff with specific training to support students who need specific learning or behavioral supports, including strategies to assist students on the autism spectrum. There is clear communication between an outdoor school student services staff member and district support staff to identify students with special needs and ensure there are dedicated staff to support those students during their outdoor school participation. Coordination with schools is essential to ensure that students’ Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) and other supports are continued at outdoor school. In some cases, staff visit special education classrooms to meet students prior to their outdoor school experience. Each site has staff whose primary duties include support for students with specific needs. Many outdoor school programs statewide are also offering alternatives to overnight participation for students and families who may need that option, working closely with alternative schools to provide a tailored experience for students who may have significant needs.

“Our special education students were well prepared for outdoor school. In many cases, we had separate meetings with parents to make sure that we all felt the student had what he/she needed to be successful. We had four students who rode a bus home each night so that they could have the Outdoor School experience, but could also sleep at home with their families.”
–Bethel School District

All students are welcome. Cascade accommodates for students on IEPs and 504 plans. Our ODS program has a “Day Tripper” option for students who are unable to spend the night. Each student on an IEP that has need for one-on-one care has an IA who shadows them when assistance is needed.”
–Cascade Middle School Teacher

MOBILITY/ACCESSIBILITY:

Most districts and schools reported that every student was able to attend outdoor school, even if they had physical or cognitive disabilities.

“Every student had the opportunity to go to outdoor school if they chose too. We had two students with mobility/accessibility constraints and adapted our program and locations to fit their needs so they were able to participate and learn the same as other students.”
–5th grade teacher, Willamette Valley

“The outdoor school experience tends to provide access for all learners and bring out strengths many times not previously seen in the classroom. This opens the door of accessibility for all learning styles. Juniper students with various levels of physical and cognitive needs were able to access outdoor school due to the support of the staff and our students.”
–Juniper Teacher

“All students with both high levels of physical and cognitive special needs were able to fully access outdoor school due to the support of the Tamarack staff and our school district.”
–Three Rivers Elementary Teacher
SUPPORTING STUDENTS FROM LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

The availability of Measure 99 funding has enabled Title 1 schools and those with a large population of students eligible for free and reduced lunch the opportunity to attend outdoor school programs. Prior to the passage of Measure 99, schools that offered outdoor school often required families to pay a fee for their students to attend, or schools fundraised to pay for the experience. In addition to providing funding for students to attend outdoor school programs, we are able to reimburse schools for any additional supplies or equipment students may need to attend outdoor school, such as tents, sleeping bags or warm clothing. Districts are required to retain and inventory the supplies or equipment for future outdoor school use.

“In this school district 45% of middle schoolers are categorized as being economically disadvantaged. The program was free to all students, preventing finances from being a direct barrier to program participation.”

–5th grade teacher, Portland Metro

“Everyone is included. We have a high rate of poverty in our district and this grant allowed all of our students to participate at no cost to their families. It also allowed us to purchase tents and sleeping bags for those who did not have them.”

–6th grade teacher, Southern OR
HOW THE PROGRAM PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

Individual outdoor school programs are as diverse as Oregon’s many communities. Local districts and schools make decisions about where their 5th or 6th graders will attend, and what kind of curriculum will be taught. The guidance in Senate Bill 439 provides a framework and standard of excellence for the content, but local communities remain in control of how their programs address the requirements. An important aspect of outdoor school programming that many programs address is the interdependence of urban and rural areas of Oregon.

“The interdependence of urban and rural areas was taught to our students by explaining and demonstrating how food and resources are brought to the OMSI camp’s isolated and rural location. During each mealtime, students were instructed in the use of conservation and conscientious consumption by minimizing their food waste. The camp facilities (pit toilets, cabins, etc.) also provided learning and encouraged students to conserve water.”

–6th grade teacher, Northern Oregon

“The outdoor school program in Baker County serves students who live in a rural area. Interdependence of urban and rural areas is addressed during several components of our ODS program. In particular, this interdependence is called out in specific sessions presented by our community and organizational partners: Watershed, Fire, Habitat and Leave No Trace.”

–Outdoor School Coordinator

“Students engaged in soil erosion and forestry rotations, both of which emphasized the dynamic between urban and rural areas, and the interplay between natural ecosystems and built areas. Also, students learned about how forestry impacts the riparian area, and the relationship between watersheds and urban water systems.”

–6th grade teacher, Willamette Valley

“We are considered rural in Roseburg and the surrounding community, but this opportunity allows our students to experience the outdoors and to make connections to how natural resources are also used in an urban setting.”

–5th grade teacher, Douglas County

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:

The legislation passed by Oregon voters argued that fully supporting outdoor school for all Oregon students would help students meet state standards in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics through direct, hands-on experience, which is shown to strongly influence learning and career choices. SB 439 outlines how outdoor school programs should be integrated with local school curricula in a manner that assists students in meeting state standards related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and international standards related to science. A total of 78% of outdoor school programs report that their programs are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards. We anticipate, with continuing professional development opportunities through our partnership with the Oregon Natural Resources Education Program, that there will be continued curricular alignment with state and national standards related to science and other standards.

“Each class or activity provided at the Coastal Discovery Center at Camp Gray has a different scientific concept that it focuses on. Since this entire camp was designed using the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) framework, students are encouraged to show their learning and do science as opposed to just learning it. Students are able to
show their learning in multiple ways: hands-on survival skills, group problem solving, using observations to make claims, etc. This variety of NGSS performance tasks will help each student gather scientific knowledge using their own learning style.”
-Beaverton Teacher

“We work to offer clear step-by-step lessons which can be adjusted for different students, and connections to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Lessons are aligned with the vision of NGSS to provide students with 3-dimensional instruction (combining science practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas) in science learning experiences in the outdoors.”
-Weston Middle School Teacher

“This was a great experience for our students as it tied together many of the NGSS standards and allowed in-depth hands-on learning.”
-Bethel Teacher

“The Twin Rocks ODS curriculum is designed by their education staff to support Oregon standards and NGSS, while learning specifically about the Pacific NW ecosystems. These goals align with our curriculum providers’ content. This ODS program gave our students the chance to experience the standards-based learning hands-on. They had to design, construct, observe, measure, hypothesize, utilize limited resources, and participate in a dissection.”
-Twin Rocks Elementary Teacher

This ODS program aligns well with our classroom instruction in science, technology, research and writing. Students learn and then get to apply their learning specifically in the areas of Earth Science, Research and Writing. Students return to the classroom to create presentations regarding their experience at ODS and their learning of science-based concepts.”
-Ashland Teacher
**TEST SCORES**

We ask schools to report whether they observe higher scores on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, as well as greater self-sufficiency and leadership skills, discipline and classroom management, student engagement, problem solving and strategic thinking. With the implementation of the Common Measures Evaluation tool, programs will be able to measure these outcomes more reliably as well. We are continuing to work with the Oregon Department of Education to determine ways to better assess the impact of outdoor school on student achievement across Oregon.

“We have seen an increase in number of students who have shown an increase on summative tests in reading and math, according to district assessments.” – 6th grade teacher

“The outdoor school sparks a greater interest in Science, overall increasing our SBAC scores. Due to the fact the program is so well rounded it helps with scores across the board.” – 6th grade teacher

“Students in 6th grade show higher than average growth as measured on iReady math and reading assessments as well as ELA SBAC scores.” – 6th grade teacher

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

Outdoor School programs are often places where many kinds of instructional strategies are employed, and we ask schools to identify whether they used project-based learning, cooperative learning strategies, service learning, interdisciplinary instruction and inquiry-based instruction. Additionally, we asked if schools embedded social-emotional learning strategies and socio-scientific issues into curriculum.

Schools reported employing the following instructional strategies:

- Peer Teaching
- Observation and Perspective (nature art/nature photography/whittling)
- Recreational aspects of outdoor environment
- Hands-on learning, experiential learning
- Interpretive learning
- Place-based education
- Hands-on activities, games, songs and team building
- Direct teaching
- Large group and small group instruction used strategically
- Active play- games, hiking
- Arts and crafts, singing, skits, leisure activities (archery, canoe, hiking), team building with a reward system
Community and organizational partnerships form the bedrock of the Baker School District’s Outdoor School Program. Their generous involvement has allowed us to run a sustainable, full-coverage outdoor education program for over 20 years. Throughout the four-day program, students will participate in 16 different stations, most of which are led by partners. District staff and numerous parent volunteers provide support during the lessons and manage student needs so that partners can focus on content delivery. Partners include the Powder Basin Watershed Council, Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Baker City Fire Department, Baker County Search and Rescue, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, OSU Extension Service, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Baker Valley Soil and Conservation District, Baker County Weed Control, Marvin Wood Products, and numerous local volunteers. These partners run educational stations, donating staff time and in some cases materials, for the four-day program.

—Baker Outdoor School Coordinator
RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT UPDATE

OUTDOOR SCHOOL THROUGHOUT SCHOOL: HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN OUTDOOR SCHOOLS IN OREGON PILOT STUDY

In the inaugural year of Measure 99 funding, educators and outdoor school providers across the state of Oregon communicated to us a need for research that documents the impact of outdoor school involvement on high school volunteers. To that end, we first needed to know which programs used high school volunteers, what the students’ roles were and how they were trained. Moreover, we wanted to understand the impacts and outcomes for high school students involved long term, particularly in relation to the development of career technical and leadership skills. We began phase one of data collection in the spring of 2019 in partnership with EERise and Dr. Steven Braun.

For many outdoor school programs, using high school student leaders to help deliver outdoor school to 5th and 6th grade students is critical to the delivery of the program. The study documents the variety of ways that high school students have been involved in outdoor school delivery in the state: how they are recruited and trained, their responsibilities while at outdoor school, and the impact of the experience on both 5th and 6th grade students as well as high school volunteers.

Phase one data collection included:

- 2018-2019 EOY outdoor school reports
- 5th and 6th grade teacher survey
- High school student survey
- Interviews with high school students, teachers, providers, school administrators and field instructors
- High school leader training observation

Preliminary findings include:

- One-third of all outdoor school programs statewide utilize high school student leaders, with varying degrees of responsibility, from cabin leaders to field study instructors.
- When high school student program outcomes are compared to 5th and 6th graders, they show greater growth in environmental learning, motivation to learn, meaning and self-identity, place connection, environmental attitudes, post-outdoor school self-efficacy, 21st-century skills, environmental stewardship, cooperation and collaborative actions, and positive school behaviors.

While we are still evaluating the data collected in spring of 2019, we plan to move forward with phase two of the project in the spring of 2020, and this will

“The student leaders represented a variety of cultural backgrounds and came from schools all around the Portland/Metro region. It was nice to see my students making connections with others from outside our community.”

—Scappoose School District
include interviewing high school leader alumni across the state. The data will inform the planning and implementation of a high school, volunteer and college student internship program. This program will be designed to help reconnect students with their 5th or 6th grade outdoor school experience and expose them to possible careers related to the outdoors, environmental education, natural resources, and outdoor recreation industries in connection to Oregon’s career clusters and career pathways in Career and Technical Education (CTE).

CRITICAL ORIENTATIONS: INDIGENOUS STUDIES AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROJECT

OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School collaborated with Leilani Sabzalian, professor of Indigenous Studies in Education at the University of Oregon, to develop a workshop that focused on identifying problematic stereotypical representations of Indigenous peoples of Oregon in outdoor school curriculum. We offered the workshop in various locations statewide and reached over 150 formal and non-formal educators. The workshop presented a curriculum evaluation tool to work in concert with the High-Quality Instructional Resource Rubric 2.0. The workshop taught outdoor educators how to identify problematic representations of Native people in outdoor education curriculum and co-curricular activities. It also worked with educators on ways to reframe their curriculum in ways that responsibly infused indigenous studies concepts into their programs without cultural appropriation. Participants who attended the workshops had the opportunity to opt-in to a continued critical participatory action research project and learning community. Members of the team had the opportunity to attend the weeklong Public Science Project’s Critical Participatory Action Research Symposium in New York to explore and develop the continuing research project associated with the workshops.

Photo by Joe Kline
The Oregon State University Extension Service—Outdoor School Program team came together in the summer of 2019 to create an Organizational Why Statement to accompany the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Statement. With support and encouragement from the Outdoor School Advisory Committee, the Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator reached out to a small number of community members to get feedback on both statements and how marginalized communities understood the statements. This small group of community partners provided invaluable feedback around systems of power and privilege as they pertain to access (real or perceived) to high-quality outdoor educational experiences. Some questions that came out of the conversations include:

How do these statements support marginalized communities?

How are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), cognitively and physically disabled, and Queer youth supported?

How do the statements, if they do at all, hold providers and the OSU Team accountable?

What is the purpose of the EDI Statement and the Organizational Why Statement?

A suggestion that arose from the conversations was to change the last line of the Organizational Why from “This will be an incremental (but institutional) change. Everyone wins—no one is giving up anything,” to “This systemic-level change to outdoor school programs will be incremental, but it is required to ensure the equitable inclusion of all participating students.” The other suggestion was to review both statements on a regular basis and continue to have focus groups to allow for feedback and continued growth of the program.

In order to further develop partnerships that would enhance Oregon’s outdoor school, the Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator shared our ongoing equity work at the following events:

- Environmental Youth Leadership 2019 Workshop for Watershed Councils and Environmental Education on strategies for creating an inclusive culture
- MESD 2019 Consortium on Inclusion and Belonging at Outdoor School
- 2019 Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Forest Service Annual Meeting on Promoting an Inclusive Program Culture
- Linn-Benton County Natural Resources Educator Group meeting about Inclusive outdoor programming
- OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School staff

Our population is 89% ELL; we have three Native Languages in the school. The curriculum is being developed to merge Native Language and Science. At the 5th grade we are working to develop STEM and Native American Language Curriculum with two other tribes (Washington and Idaho). The curriculum is a science focus around the outdoors, plants, natural resources.”

-Warm Springs K-8 Academy
continued to participate in and facilitate trainings focused on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Staff and our Advisory Committee attended 2 day racial equity workshop in November 2018 facilitated by the Racial Equity Institute (REI) and Queta González from the Center for Diversity and the Environment (CDE).

OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School team members continue to be involved in the Diversity Champions program.

Co-facilitated a panel presentation on Welcoming LGBTQ+ Youth and Families in general youth programming.

Co-facilitated a webinar on Queer 101: Terminology & Allyship about general youth programming.

Co-Facilitate Portland Metro STEM Equity workshops in Portland Metro region.

Facilitated DEI training at the Winter 2018 ONREP Annual Facilitator Training

Partnered with Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde to provide their History & Education and Traditional Ecological Knowledge trainings for Natural Resource Providers.

All 6th grade students were given the opportunity to attend ODS. Spanish interpretation and translated materials were provided for our parents in order to make sure we provided information to all of our families.”

-North Wasco SD
The OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School program team coordinated, led and supported workshops for teachers, outdoor school providers, natural resource professionals; helped to train and mentor new outdoor school workshop facilitators; and coordinated a week-long Institute with the Better Environmental Education, Teaching, Learning, and Expertise Sharing (BEETLES) program. These workshops were conducted in partnership with a variety of organizations that are identified below.

Professional development events took place throughout the state and were based on identified needs within regions. Community partners/ facilitators and ODS regional coordinators determined local needs and were involved in the development and implementation of the workshops.

All workshops included community partners, such as a representative from a local outdoor school program, shared local resources, and modeled how to connect and extend outdoor school experiences to the classroom through standards-based instruction. Participants were introduced to the High-Quality Instructional Resource Rubric 1.0 and learned how to use it as a planning tool for intentional programming in the field and classroom. Each workshop modeled strategies for integrating Social Emotional Learning into outdoor learning and creating a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.

Through our partnership with the Oregon Natural Resources Education Program (ONREP) we provided nine educator workshops throughout the state. These daylong trainings focused on how educators could better prepare students in their classrooms before outdoor school and followed up after the event. Workshops took place in the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and the mid-Willamette Valley regions of the state and were presented in collaboration with outdoor school providers. In these workshops, Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, and Aquatic WILD curriculum were shared with participants as well as OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School program resources and guidelines.

150 participants—5th and 6th grade teachers and outdoor school educators—participated.

Through our partnership with the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), two workshops for natural resource professionals were provided. These took place in two regions—Corvallis and La Grande—and used the BEETLES curriculum. Natural resource professionals from agencies such as Oregon Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, watershed councils, etc. are often called on to share their expertise with students, but do not always have a background of working with youth. The workshops

CURRICULUM AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ODFW provided 2 fish biologists for our water station, STEP provided poles and volunteers to teach fishing, the Girl Scouts provided instruction on the low ropes course, the Siuslaw National Forest provided rangers for our hiking station, Western Lane Ambulance provided 2 EMTs and an ambulance to run a field study station and to be on site in case of an emergency, and the Florence Police provided overnight supervision.”

-Siuslaw School District
HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL RUBRIC 2.0

After sharing and field-testing the High Quality Instructional Rubric with a variety of 5th and 6th grade classroom teachers and outdoor school providers over the past year, our team was able to gather extensive feedback on and observe some of the ways we could improve the usability of this tool. There were two major areas of improvement identified:

- Inconsistencies in the indicators of high quality curriculum (some were check boxes while others required in-depth review), and
- Incomplete descriptors, which made the review of curriculum subjective.

Our team determined that in order to best support outdoor school programs in reviewing and revising their curriculum, this tool would need to undergo a revision.

The High Quality Instructional Rubric version 1.0 successfully identified best practices for outdoor school as well as the requirements of Measure 99. Our goal for the revision was to capture these identified best practices in version 2.0, but to reframe them with indicators that were more measurable and observable in curriculum. Because equity and inclusion are foundational to our program, we began by grounding version 2.0 in culturally responsive principals and strategies as well as social emotional learning core competencies. These are included in the newly added “Pedagogy and Instruction” section as well as embedded in an “exemplary” rating.

One of the struggles that our team encountered was sufficiently including equity, diversity and inclusion without doing a full review of curriculum through this lens. We found extensive tools...
specifically designed for this purpose, however, because the ODS rubric must also encompass measure 99 requirements and other best practices for outdoor school, we made the decision to embed culturally responsive practices into all high ratings while linking users to existing resources for doing an in-depth curriculum review through an EDI lens. The following is a snapshot of the new tool.

### CONTEXT AND SETTING FOR LEARNING

Context and settings for instruction can promote Equity, Inclusion, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) opportunities, 21st Century Skills (4Cs) and Environmental Literacy. This involves location of the learning activities and considers both historical and current perspectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate to the Ecology of the Region</strong></td>
<td>References ecology and organisms not present in the region.</td>
<td>Mostly aligned to ecoregion of the outdoor experience.</td>
<td>Aligned to ecoregion of the outdoor experience. Instructional resource(s)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>utilizes the outdoor learning environment, the attributes of the land and the</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>organisms that live there (e.g. specific bodies of water/ features, age/stage of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>habitats, elevation, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reflects Local Community Issues and Needs</strong></td>
<td>The only issues and needs presented are not reflective of where students live, nor their backgrounds or experiences.</td>
<td>Some of the issues and needs presented may be reflective of the students' communities of but there is limited perspective (e.g. presents one point of view).</td>
<td>Most of the issues and needs presented are reflective of the communities of the students being served (e.g. fire management and the effects of smoke on a community) or explicit connections made.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>There is bias towards advocating for a specific cause, view, policy, etc.</td>
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<td>Presents and celebrates multiple values and perspectives, encouraging students to think critically about a problem or issue and determine their own viewpoint.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Culturally Relevant to History of Land, Place and Space</strong></td>
<td>Absent of indigenous knowledge.</td>
<td>Narrow in focus, indigenous knowledge presented is reflective of modern lifeways and may be specific to the region, but resources are created with little or indirect input from local Indigenous community (e.g. general online sources, adapting materials developed for another site or content area, etc.).</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for students to learn about the culture, experiences, perspectives, and languages of Indigenous peoples in their region.</td>
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<td>When indigenous knowledge is presented it is generalized, not specific to the region, and/or presented in past tense, stereotypical, romanticized terms.</td>
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<td>Resources are created without input from local Indigenous communities, or materials are co-opted without reference or compensation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culturally Responsive to the Context and Setting for Learning</strong></td>
<td>Does not recognize historical or current culture, language or perspectives of the region nor those which are representative of the students.</td>
<td>Recognizes some historical or current culture, language, or perspectives of the region, but scope is narrow and may not align with or represent student experiences.</td>
<td>Historical and current narratives describe experiences, perspectives, and accomplishments of diverse communities and acknowledge the negative impacts of colonization on families and communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narratives are confined to experiences, perspectives, and accomplishments of only one group or demographic.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides opportunities for students to share and/or learn about the culture, experiences, perspectives, and languages within their families and/or communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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GOALS FOR THE SECOND BIENNium

The OSU Extension Service Outdoor School team will continue to work with internal and external partners to address topics including, but not limited to, rubric features: high school participation; indigenous studies; diversity, equity and inclusion; and cultural responsiveness in outdoor school.

As education service districts and school districts continue to learn about outdoor school funding, attendance and participation will continue to increase.

OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School is currently collaborating with Friends of Outdoor School to develop a comprehensive outdoor school site and provider cost and pricing model. The project has two main objectives. First, it will investigate appropriate and sustainable pricing models for the wide array of outdoor school providers that are fair, equitable, and help programs improve quality and accessibility. Second, the project will help develop reliable pricing forecast models for the next several budget cycles, allowing OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School to more accurately predict future budget requests to submit to the legislature. This will also help sites and providers become more coordinated in their pricing models, further simplifying the selection process for districts as they choose the outdoor school provider that best meets the needs of their students and community.

Additionally, we continue to refine our data collection from outdoor school facilities and providers across the state, with the goal of using the data to build a searchable provider database for schools and districts to access.

The year ahead will also bring more curricular and professional development resources for both formal and non-formal educators. Regional coordinators across the state continue to work with local schools and districts to assess need for continuing professional development.

As overall outdoor school participation increases, in terms of both student numbers and duration, the OSU Extension Service—Outdoor School team will continue to assist existing providers, new providers and alternative program providers to enhance and increase capacity to serve the growing demand of the program statewide. For example, some facilities are making winterization improvements to expand their seasons; new providers are being assisted with planning and developing new programs; and work continues to increase the capacity of alternative programs for students who cannot attend a residential program. We have convened a non-residential outdoor school program task force to develop recommendations and best practices. We hope to see an increase in alternative outdoor school programs for those students who may not be able to attend outdoor school overnight.
CONCLUSION

As we close this report and reflect on the amazing success of the first biennium of Measure 99 funded outdoor school in Oregon, we begin our transition from startup to a building, growth and improvement phase. Working cooperatively with our partners, educators and administrators, providers, researchers, and parents and community members, we have expanded the Oregon outdoor school network and reduced attendance barriers to students, families and schools through better resources and direct support. We share our continued gratitude with everyone involved in making outdoor school a reality in Oregon—past, present and future. As we transition into the second biennium and full state funding, our continuing evolution increases our focus on equity for all students, providing support and accountability for high quality programming regardless of where a student lives or attends outdoor school, and increasing the capacity of outdoor school providers and schools to better serve every community in our great state. Working together, we continue our calling to bring an equitable, high quality outdoor school experience to every eligible student in Oregon.

Photo by Joe Kline
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