Outdoor Education in Oregon
Oregon’s Natural Environment is our . . .

- Living history
- Cultural roots
- Social & Emotional well-spring
- Economic foundation
Mounting Pressures

Over the next three decades, Oregon's total population is expected to increase by 1.2 million people.

Pressures on our natural systems, including waterways, range and pasture lands are expected to amplify.

U.S. Census Bureau data (estimate of 1 million additional people in Oregon by 2025), see: http://www.census.gov/population/projections/state/9525rank/orprsrel.txt
A Complicated Challenge

From 1997-2003, the number of children ages nine to twelve engaging in outdoor activities declined 50%.

Our youth spend less time outside than at any time in our nation’s history.

Three Statewide Programs

• **Environmental Education Association of Oregon (EEAO)**
  
  Oregon’s professional network for formal and non-formal environmental education providers host of annual EE conference, and affiliate of the North American Assoc. for Environmental Education.

• **Oregon Environmental Literacy Program (OELP)**
  
  Implementation of Oregon's framework for K-12 environmental literacy. Develops resources; promotes best practices; advances research; and coordinates collaborative partnerships. Administered by OSU Extension oelp.oregonstate.edu

• **Outdoor School Program (ODS)**
  
  Administers statewide funding for 5th or 6th graders to attend Outdoor School. Develops resources; promotes best practices; advances research; and coordinates collaborative partnerships. Administered by OSU Extension oelp.oregonstate.edu/outdoorschool.
Oregon’s Story
No Oregon Child Left Inside

• Gets kids outside to learn
  Authentic learning, academic achievement, college & career, healthy lifestyles, community

• Protects Oregon’s legacy
  Stewardship, sustainability, citizenship

• School-friendly
  Supports existing educational requirements, research-based & interdisciplinary, non-political

“A back-to-nature movement to reconnect children with the outdoors is burgeoning nationwide.”
— USA Today, Nov. 2006
Environmental Education Association of Oregon (EEAO)

- Membership Organization
- E-news and bi-monthly news
- Annual Conference
- Advocate for EE
- Affiliate of NAAEE
- Led the No Oregon Child Left Inside Effort
The Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan: Toward a Sustainable Future (OELP)

An individual's understanding, skills and motivation to make responsible decisions that consider his or her relationships to natural systems, communities and future generations.
5 Strands of Environmental Literacy

1. Systems thinking
2. Physical, living and human systems
3. Interconnectedness of people and the environment
4. Personal and civic responsibility
5. Investigate, plan and create a sustainable future
The Goal

• To ensure that Oregon students become lifelong stewards of their environment and community

• Are willing and able to exercise the rights and responsibilities of environmental citizenship

• Choose to interact frequently with the outdoor environment
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Administration

Program Coordinator – Susan Sahnow
Project Coordinator – Jenna Mendenhall

OSU Leadership Team

Program Council 12-17 members representing regional, programmatic and cultural diversity

Regional Leader Teams: 2-8 members, mostly non-formal educators representing different agencies and organizations.

http://oelp.oregonstate.edu
Projects through the Oregon Environmental Literacy Program

ODS Common Measure Project

ODS Teacher Professional Development

K-12 Outdoor Education Framework
OUTDOOR SCHOOL
For all Oregon 5th and 6th Grade Students
It started as early as 1957 with first pilot Outdoor School.

1970’s approximately 80% of Oregon School Districts participated in Outdoor School.
Today?

Outdoor School and Outdoor Education as part of the School Curriculum Has Diminished Significantly
Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition (OOEC)

July 2014: A passionate and committed group of community leaders, deeply concerned about the legacy of Oregon’s investment in outdoor education and stewardship of our natural resources, joined together to found the Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition (OOEC).
Secure and expand outdoor education so that every Oregon student has the knowledge and perspectives to make responsible choices about natural resources.
The Recognized the Significant Role of Outdoor School in Promoting:

• Academic Achievement and Engagement
• Health and Well-Being: Physical, Social and Emotional
• Career and Workforce Readiness
The Oregon State University Extension Service shall assist school districts and education service districts in providing outdoor school programs.

The Oregon State University Extension Service shall provide assistance by administering a grant program, providing program leadership and providing program maintenance.

Note: No Funding Included
The next phase: Outdoor School for All
Campaign formed to pursue funding through ballot initiative.

On November 8, 2016, Oregon voters approved Measure 99: Outdoor School for All. Dedicates up to $22 million of lottery dollars annually, establishing a permanent, stable source of funding for Outdoor School.
What’s Next

- Measure goes through legislative process.
- Ballot measure was statutory not constitutional – legislature can change (could differ from the ballot measure).
- OOEC and Friends of Outdoor School are actively engaging to support ODS measure
- Won’t know definitive results until the end of the legislative session.
What we know --------

• Funding will be for **ALL 5\textsuperscript{th} or 6\textsuperscript{th} grade** students
• $$ \rightarrow $$ School District or ESD
• Not Mandatory
• Program Flexibility: Not prescriptive
• K-12 representation in program development
• “Opt In” strategy – keep it simple
• Will be resources, assistance, and professional development
• Reporting requirements
What we do not know

- When funding will be available
- Amount available per student
- Details on What expenses funds will cover
- Framework for curriculum
- How many will participate
- Start date for funding Outdoor School
- Exactly what reporting requirements will be
Get Involved

• Join EEAO and attend conferences
• Become a member of the OELP regional leader team in your area. Start one if needed
• Enter information about your program on the OELP website. Encourage others to do the same.
• Host a meeting of partners and invite the OELP Project Coordinator to attend.
• Follow the ODS Program progress. Help School Districts, ESD’s and Camps as they prepare to engage students.
Questions -- Comments

Contact Information

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