

Fern Ridge Outdoor School

May 18 - 21, 2026



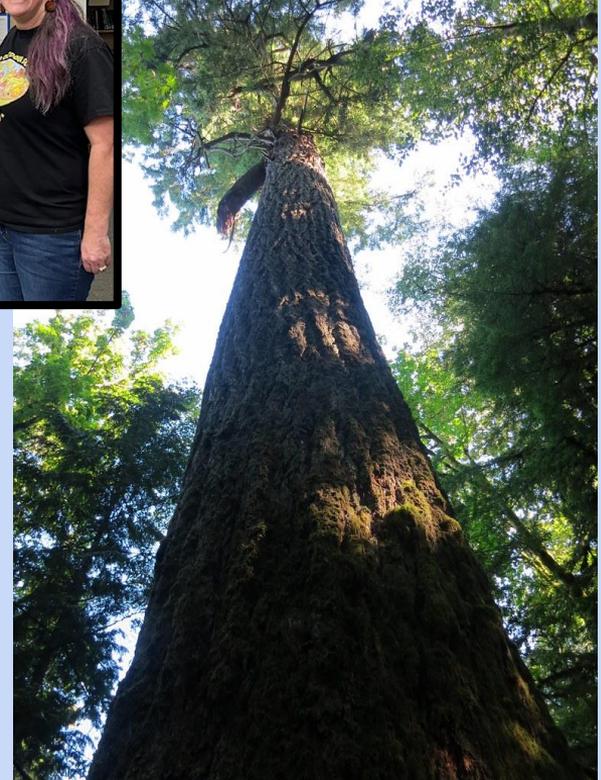
The History

We have history.

- Started in 1988
- Independently run since 1994
- Long term directors

We are unique.

- Self contained in our district
- Counselors from EHS run the lessons
- Most other districts in Oregon contract out with independent organizations that run ODS for them.
- Fern Ridge Outdoor school has been studied and praised from Outdoor School state directors for our exceptional camp, especially the way we use high school counselors.



Outdoor School Funding



- **Funding**

- Comes from the state and is managed through the OSU extension office.
- Outdoor School has 100% inclusion. The state aims to have Outdoor School available to all Oregon 5th or 6th grade students across the state.
- The state cut the Outdoor School budget this year. We are doing some fundraising and PTA & PALS are supporting us to reduce the impact. We will run a great camp!
- **You're Invited: Thursday, March 19th - Outdoor School Fundraising concert at Sweet Cheeks.** Jen Sennett is performing an evening of songs and some former ODS students will share the impact that Outdoor School had on them.

The Numbers

- About 100 campers - 5th graders from both schools
- 40 counselors - EHS juniors and seniors
 - 10 weeks of training before camp, 5 days of work
- 4 days of camp at Sky Camp
- 5 directors (and several other adults)
- 6 student chalets with 3 bunk rooms each.



Policies & Logistics

Note: we are always improving our policies and logistics.

- All 5th graders are encouraged to attend and we make a strong effort to support families as needed. Full inclusion is the goal.
- Counselors apply, are interviewed, teacher input and admin approval is required. Then they train for 10 weeks before camp. Ongoing check-ins with EHS staff happen weekly before camp.
- Directors work with teachers and administration to ensure all FRSD students are successful at camp.
- Directors have first aid cards and are trained to give meds.
- An EMT developed an emergency plan for Sky Camp for us.



New Policies & Logistics - Gender Expansive Students

- A committee was formed that had representatives from all schools to update and improve our policies about privacy and gender-expansive students.
- Members included: Angie Pebworth, Becca Moeller, Cyd Vandercar, DesiRae Wright-Rendon, Clare Fowler (EES parent), Katherine Rice (VES & EHS parent), Jake VanDamme (EHS student rep)



New Policies & Logistics - Gender Expansive Students

- Updated Outdoor School Information Packet for parents -
 - New and improved informational packet to support parent communication and clarify all things camp related.
- Privacy Policies
 - Rule of 3 (always 3 or more campers or counselors together)
 - Swimsuits required in showers. Counselors shower separately.
 - Changing in changing tents will be required. Every bunk room will have 2 changing pods.
- All-Gender Bunk rooms available
 - All gender bunk rooms could support cousins, siblings, best friends and/or gender expansive students.
 - New form in parent packet will include options for parents to check what they feel comfortable with. They can check girls, boys or all-gender bunk room.
 - Parents would choose preferences.



Questions?

“OUTDOOR SCHOOL, AND SPECIFICALLY OUR OUTDOOR SCHOOL, IS A FANTASTIC PROGRAM THAT IS MEANINGFUL AND IMPACTFUL FOR THE CAMPERS AND COUNSELORS ALIKE. THE WORLD IS BETTER PLACE WITH THIS PROGRAM IN IT.”

“I LOVED SKY CAMP!!! LOVE REC TIME, CABIN TIME, FIELD STUDY, FOOD WAS REALLY GOOD.”

“I LOVED OUTDOOR SCHOOL. THE FOOD, THE THINGS WE DID, THE COUNSELORS, AND THE NEW PEOPLE I MET. I LOVE HOW WE ALL GOT THE CHANCE TO MEET NEW FRIENDS.”



“I HAD THE BEST EXPERIENCE THIS YEAR AND I'M SAD IT'S OVER.”

“I WANT TO DO JAVELIN THROW BECAUSE OF PENGUIN”

“I WILL BE A COUNSELOR WHEN I'M OLDER.”

Anonymous student quotes from OSU feedback form survey from 2025.