



Klamath Outdoor Science School Newsletter - Spring 2011

**KLAMATH
OUTDOOR
Science School**

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Note from the Executive Director

After spending almost 38 years involved with outdoor education/ recreation programs, who would have thought that I could (or would) still be so excited doing what I do? Hopping onto the Klamath Basin scene from the Rogue Valley 2 years ago as the new director for KOSS, I was blessed by the number of driven and talented people in the Basin that were already involved with connecting kids to nature. Government agencies, schools, non-profits, private individuals and companies all were making projects and programs available. (To assist with the rest of the article I am going to refer to this amazing and dedicated group as “The Partners.”) After standing by the dance floor wall checking out the scene for a while, the opportunity arose for KOSS to become more of a dancer. The Stewardship Initiative Project gets instructors and naturalists to work directly with the schools to promote opportunities for students to connect to nature. This process is allowing KOSS and the rest of The Partners to grow together as a tighter group. We aim to remove competition and replace it with a higher level of communication and cooperation, which has sparked some excitement amongst people who have taken a look. Being in a position to be part of getting more kids and adults outside learning, understanding and appreciating nature –and how it connects to them personally - makes me wish I had another 38 years...

Two years ago we were excited if we could connect 2000 students to nature over a year. Today we shoot for 2000 a month. To reach these new goals it has taken support and dedication from many people: all of our partners, the naturalists and instructors, supportive school staff, our board of directors and the generous funders. I thank all of them. It is a forgotten and special thanks to all the supportive family members who have let us commit the many extra hours needed to make outdoor education opportunities in our Basin come alive!

Don't be caught standing by the wall; join the dance and help us “Connect Kids to Nature.”

Who We Are

Klamath Outdoor Science School (KOSS) is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization created in 2004 aiming to provide students with residential outdoor school, exploration, and educational programs to teach appreciation of natural sciences, resources, and environment. We want students to grow through understanding of their world, and also help students gain self-confidence and personal skills to be dynamic members of their community.



KOSS Board of Directors

Marjorie Glass (TAG Coordinator/Teacher) - President
John Pellissier (Oregon Dept Forestry) - Vice President
Jonna Enman (Teacher & Farmer) – Secretary
Hallie Rassmussen (USF&W Refuges)– Director
Volunteer
Molly Russell – Accountant

A Look Inside KOSS

A lot of growth has occurred within the Klamath Outdoor Science School this year. The Stewardship Initiative Project has begun, which introduces liaisons into the schools to promote various outdoor educational programs to teachers. Our liaisons have been working hard to get more students connected with their natural surroundings. Ellen Minichiello-Boles, Jackie Holm, and Marlena Wietlisbach have all joined the KOSS liaison team in the Klamath Basin. Their efforts have increased the number of kids exploring and learning in nature, connecting students with partner programs as well as conducting KOSS led field trips and class activities.

Funded by a grant from Gray Family Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation, the liaisons have been a key part of KOSS's ability to connect kids to various outdoor programs. So far, liaisons have reached more than 6,000 students over the course of the 2010-2011 school year.

How are the KOSS liaisons connecting schools to natural resource partners? Here are some recent examples:

Conger School 4th graders have engaged in hands-on, minds-on wetland activities using a felt board made with the help of Klamath Basin Audubon Society and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Students traveled to Sun Pass State Forest and examined macroinvertebrates at the headwaters of Wood River.

Fairview 6th graders learned to use binoculars and field guides available at Oregon State University Extension Office. Students observed birds on their school grounds, and booked a field trip to Tule Lake NWR for continued studies.

Ferguson 3rd and 4th graders also explored wetlands and made use of wetland materials and activities at Tule Lake NWR. Multiple field trips to bird and learn have taken place, and an educational wetland display was created by students to join other displays at the South Portal Wetland Interpretive Display. 5th graders will be going to KOSS for residential outdoor school late May.



Mills School 1st graders were introduced to a variety of activities.

Students made nature journals from recycled materials, recorded winter notes and went on a field trip to the Fish Hatchery. They have visited Tule Lake NWR and have planned their travels to Sun Pass State Forest.

Pelican School 3rd graders created a display for South Portal and visited Link River Trail to observe and learn about wetlands.

Roosevelt has had many classes participate in a variety of in-class activities and field trips to learn about wetlands, water quality, birds, planting trees and other science curriculum.

Shasta's 3rd grade has also begun wetland education and will be creating a display to be featured at South Portal.

A variety of schools' 4th-6th graders will participate in fish dissections provided through the US Fish & Wildlife Service and aided by KOSS liaisons. Many classes hatched trout fry earlier this year through the USFWS "fish eggs to fry" program with delivery and interpretation from KOSS.

These are only some examples of what classes have been up to in the Basin. In addition, our greater community benefits from children's educational activities at events such as Winter Wings Festival, World Wetland Days and International Migratory Bird Day.

Upcoming Summer Camps

Summer is a beautiful time to be out at Sun Pass State Forest! We have 4 different camps planned this summer: Nature Science Investigators, Young Naturalists, Forest Stewardship, and Art & Drama.

Nature Science Investigators (NSI) is a great program for inquiring minds. Campers will become scientists, asking questions and seeking answers. They will discover conclusions and confusions along the way, learning valuable lessons in solid scientific practices, and experiencing how inquiry often leads to more inquiry. NSI is a 4-day, 3-night program, with three separate weeks to allow varying age groups to participate.

June 20th-23rd (age 9-11)

June 27th-30th (age 11-13)

July 11th-14th (age 13-15) \$195* per student

The **Young Naturalists** camp will be a 3-day, 2-night program for our younger campers (age 6-8.) The campers will play and learn in the forest, earning new understanding for the outdoors and an appreciation for the Klamath Basin's natural resources.

July 6th-8th (age 6-8) \$75* per student



**Cost includes meals, lodging, supervision, and instruction. Scholarships are available for those in need of financial aid. Call or email for details. Transportation is not provided to KOSS, which is located near Ft. Klamath, across from Kimball State Park.*



Partnered with the Oregon Department of Forestry, the **Forest Stewardship** camp will teach high school students (13-16) about resource management, forestry, wetlands, wildlife, and sustainability. This 4-day, 3-night program is a great opportunity for young aspiring researchers.

July 18th-21st (age 13-16) \$195* per student

For those who want nature as inspiration but are artists at heart, there is the **Art & Drama** camp. Professional artists will teach a variety of techniques while using the inspiration of the outdoors. Campers will also get a chance to put their acting faces on, performing skits inspired by their surroundings. Like NSI, this camp will be offered over a few weeks to allow different age levels to hone their skills and interact with similar age groups, and is 4-days, 3-nights.

July 25th-27th (age 6-8)

August 1st-4th (age 9-12)

August 8th-11th (age 13-17) \$195* per student

If any of these interest you, see our website for more details and registration, or contact Bill Hunt at koss@qwestoffice.net or call 541-850-8218

Building a Vision

You are invited to become a partner with Klamath Outdoor Science School, helping us to provide outdoor education to the youth of the Klamath Basin. KOSS is currently expanding on two fronts, providing the perfect opportunity for broadening our base in the Klamath community.

On one front, our “Stewardship Initiative Project” is expanding our partnerships to provide greatly increased outdoor education opportunities in the Klamath Basin and Southern Oregon. Outdoor education has a powerful and lasting impact, providing a new appreciation for natural sciences and resources, the environment, and our community. It also instills self-confidence and builds personal relationships. We believe that every child should have the opportunity to attend a residential outdoor school at least once in his or her educational career.

On the second front, KOSS is building the infrastructure needed to accomplish the goals of the Stewardship Initiative. With the help of many funders and volunteers, we have built two large dormitory yurts and a small first aid/instructor yurt, completed a mile-long loop trail with interpretive signs, brought electricity to the site, drilled a well, and built a pump house, storage facilities, and a campfire circle.

Our next priority is the construction of an octagonal dining/classroom pavilion complete with an enclosed commercial kitchen. We have engineered plans and have secured the permits necessary to begin construction. It will be built using local wood poles and energy-efficient techniques, blending with the existing yurts and the natural environment.

Despite the intentionally minimalist design, the pavilion project will cost an estimated \$150,000. Will you help us build by making a monetary or material donation towards the pavilion construction? Your donation will help us leverage further grant funding to complete the project, and will make you a partner in providing outdoor education opportunities to all Klamath Basin students. We thank you, and the children thank you.