

Outdoor School Updates & Information

January 10, 2017¹

On November 8, 2016 Oregon voters approved Ballot Measure 99, which designated funding for outdoor school programming for every 5th or 6th grade student in Oregon. This measure followed the adoption of Senate Bill 439 by the 2015 Oregon Legislature, and which directed Oregon State University Extension Service to assist school districts and educational service districts to provide an Outdoor School Program.

In preparation for launching this statewide Outdoor School Program, OSU Extension Service Director Scott Reed convened a group of stakeholders in Salem on January 4th, to begin a conversation on the administration and implementation of the program. Prior to the meeting the group reviewed questions and comments, submitted by individuals from across Oregon, which are being collected through an on-line form (<http://oelp.oregonstate.edu/outdoorschool>), and contributed additional questions and comments for consideration.

Highlights

Legislative Update

- Measure 99 is statutory, not constitutional, which means the next steps and funding decisions regarding this measure will be made by the legislature.
- The Governor's recommended budget included the \$44 million per biennium. It is still not known what the budget of the Ways and Means committee will include.
- Regional hearings on the budget will likely be held around the state in February or early March. This is an opportunity for the public to provide input regarding OSU Extension work and Outdoor School.
- Funding appropriated for Outdoor School is anticipated to be available July 1, 2017. OSU cannot spend funds for outdoor schools prior to that date.
- OSU is engaging in conversations and planning in preparation for the July 1, 2017 funding. Susan Sahnaw, leader of the Oregon Environmental Literacy Program, is supported through external funding to coordinate these efforts.

Tentative Timeline (January 2017 – October 2017)

- January/February: Establish monthly communication with stakeholders and partners to provide updates on progress; draft roles and responsibility of Advisory Committee (as identified in ORS390.327) and selection process; identify potential working committees (suggestions include communication and outreach, curriculum, facilities, research and evaluation); identify options for granting process through OSU and that will work for School Districts, ESD's and private schools.
- March/April: Establish Advisory Committee; solicit working group members; develop OSU Outdoor School Director Position Description; Identify year 1 application process with target of funding for fall outdoor schools (dependent on July 1 funding).
- June/July: ODS Director interviewed and selected; funding available for fall outdoor school is identified and communicated to stakeholders and grant applicants.
- September – October: Students attend Outdoor School.

¹ *Outdoor School Updates and Information* will be produced approximately monthly or as progress is made in development of the program. To receive such email directly, send your email address to susan.sahnaw@oregonstate.edu

Guiding Principles

- Draft Guiding Principles were discussed as a way to ensure foundational Outdoor School core values would guide all aspects of planning, design and implementation.

Questions and Concerns

- Review of the questions and concerns expressed by stakeholders, partners, and individuals across the state led to discussions about the need for diversity in committees and groups being formed, flexibility in program design, communicating regularly and soliciting feedback, and the importance of collaboration and partnerships.
- Important to continue to communicate and engage the network of Outdoor School supporters around the state.

Advisory Committee and Working Groups

- Draft documents defining Advisory Committee and Working Group roles, responsibilities, operational logistics, and selection will be available for review and comment on the Outdoor School webpage by January 23rd. (<http://oelp.oregonstate.edu/outdoorschool>) You can also submit questions or comments to Susan Sahnou at outdoorschool@oregonstate.edu