

Gorge Ecology Outdoors
PO Box 1104
Hood River, OR 97031
May 1, 2021

Senator Chuck Thomsen
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Thomsen:

Subject: Support for Oregon Outdoor School

As our organization celebrates 25 years of offering science based education to the students of Hood River County, it is a pleasure to write you about the many benefits of Oregon Outdoor School.

We thank the Oregon Legislature for its investment in Outdoor School over the last two biennia, resulting in the opportunity for many children to experience outdoors for the first time, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability or socio-economic status.

Outdoor school is an integral, transformative experience for K-12 instruction and Oregon's youth. Oregon's economy—and future—relies on supporting our natural resource industries, such as timber, tourism, outdoor recreation, farming and more. Outdoor School is a great way to teach future generations that they don't need to choose between our economy and our environment.

Outdoor school programs are places where students gain confidence, relationship skills, and self-awareness. As the emotional impact of COVID-19 still lingers, students continue to struggle with distance learning; therefore, there is heightened importance of getting students to outside and physically participating in education.

It appears that both Hood River Middle School and Wyeast Middle School seventh graders will be able to participate in our outdoor school program in early June. We request that you support outdoor school funding as part of the statewide budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bill Weiler
Founder and Board Member