

Submitter: Hannah Borgerson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4112

Restored funding for Outdoor School is essential for Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) to continue offering high-quality Outdoor School experiences to students across our region. Over the past several years, we have built strong partnerships with local schools and districts, and we deeply value those relationships. In response to recent budget reductions, SFI has had to provide significant scholarships to ensure that Outdoor School remains free and accessible to students. While we are proud to have stepped up for our schools, doing so has placed considerable strain on our organization's annual budget and is not financially sustainable long-term. The defunding of these programs cause severe economic harm to the rural community that we serve.

We cannot continue operating at this level under the current monetary constraints. Rising operational and staffing costs, combined with reduced state funding, have significantly impacted our capacity. These cuts will make outdoor learning—and the academic growth, social-emotional development, and crucial youth leadership experiences that happen at Outdoor School—unavailable to many students, particularly those in rural and underserved communities. Like many Southern Oregon providers, we are facing difficult decisions that could limit access for the very students who benefit most.

Research consistently shows that outdoor education improves academic outcomes, strengthens science literacy, builds confidence and teamwork, and supports mental and physical health. At Siskiyou Field Institute, students engage in hands-on, place-based learning that transforms classroom concepts into meaningful, real-world experiences. Outdoor School is more than a field trip—it is a foundational educational opportunity that shapes students' connection to their community, future education, and career pathways. I respectfully urge you to do everything possible to restore full funding for Outdoor School so that students in our region can continue to access this transformative program.

Sincerely,

Hannah Borgerson
Education Manager
2/3/2026