ROOT OUR CHILDREN IN NATURE
and we’ll grow lifelong stewards ready to care for our beautiful Oregon home.
We start by getting kids outside.
NATURE GROWS GOOD CITIZENS
Root our children in nature and we’ll grow lifelong stewards ready to care for our beautiful Oregon home.

We start by getting kids outside.
The week that changes lives

They step off the bus and into the woods, and something magical happens.

Problem kids become leaders. Cliques disappear around the campfire. Nature’s wonder surrounds them in three dimensions, dissolving a fear of science.

That’s the power of Outdoor School.

We believe that every Oregon fifth or sixth grader deserves a full week of immersive, science-based learning outside—an Oregon tradition since the 1950s. But funding cuts allow only about half of our students to go.

That’s poised to change. In July 2015, the Oregon Legislature approved a sweeping, statewide commitment to Outdoor School—the first such bill in the nation. We cheered this milestone with our partners in the Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition, aligned since 2014 to champion this effort.

Next, we must secure stable funding to deliver this promise-on-paper to each Oregon student.

Visit www.outdoorschoolforall.org to learn more and help preserve Outdoor School in Oregon.

Removing barriers

“How much does it cost?” asked one concerned fifth grader, who had never heard of Outdoor School before. The teacher couldn’t help but smile as he answered: “Thanks to a very generous gift from the Gray Family Foundation…” We’re pleased to provide grants that help offset the cost of buses, lodging, food and programs so that more students can attend Outdoor School—regardless of their situation or background.
Grantee: Audubon Society
Upgrades to Marmot Cabin in Portland improved fire safety and made the buildings ADA accessible.

Homes away from home

CAMP MAINTENANCE

Camp is where the magic happens, but it’s also where pipes leak, paint peels and mattresses sag. We invest more than $450,000 each year to care for Oregon’s rustic camps, because when guests feel comfortable and safe, it opens them up to incredible encounters with nature, their peers and even themselves.

"The Gray Family understands what camps need and makes the [grant] process easy.”
— Jane Petke, Co-Director, Suttle Lake Methodist Camp

Grantee: Alder Creek Community Forest
Southern Oregon students compare land-use maps from 1939 and 2005 to see how the forest has changed over time.

Know your place, care for your place

GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION

We support programs that infuse geography into K-12 learning across Oregon. When you expand a child’s sense of place beyond his or her neighborhood to include the surrounding farms, forests, mountains and waterways, he or she begins to grasp the complex connections between Oregon’s land and its people—a first step toward becoming a lifelong steward.
Oregon’s teachers have precious little time to teach sustainability, let alone take kids outside. We support place-based, outdoor workshops across the state that give teachers space to collaborate, learn and reimagine how nature can be part of their daily classroom—and help them reach benchmarks—in any subject.

Grantee: Upper Deschutes Watershed Council
Day trips to Whychus Creek allow hundreds of students to care for their backyard stream just as the steelhead return.

Taking class outside
COMMUNITY FIELD TRIPS
For all of Oregon’s wild beauty, sometimes the best way to experience nature is right nearby. We provide grants for thousands of fifth through eighth graders to step outside their classroom for memorable day trips that provide a hands-on connection to their community and promote a sense of place and responsibility.

Grantee: The Environmental Center
Teachers practice an outdoor science lesson during a three-day workshop near Bend.

Nature-inspired lessons
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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“I feel connected to nature again, and I want to share that with my students.”
— Teacher, after a retreat in Central Oregon
As Oregon’s largest funder for environmental education, the Gray Family Foundation is working to ensure that every Oregonian has the opportunity to experience our state’s natural wonders and learn to care for their place and community over a lifetime.

In 2015, we delivered

127 grants totaling

$1,573,359

$12,388
Average grant size

2015 grantee locations

Find out more at grayff.org

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