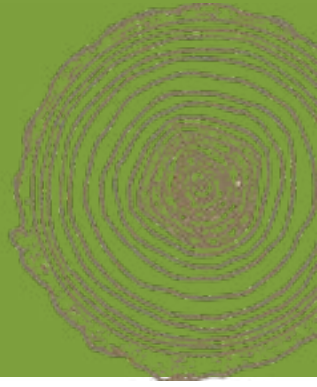




## Programs & Places Spotlight Straub Outdoor School



Over the last few years, it has been a joy working with the new and enduring Outdoor School programs and sites around the state. The Outdoor School Programs & Places Spotlight shares stories focused on the important initiatives of the people doing great work for Oregon kids. I hope you enjoy getting to know them.



The Friends of Outdoor School team recently learned that Straub Outdoor School has an incredible partnership with the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville. Straub Outdoors is located in Salem and served over 400 Oregon students last school year. Here's more about their exciting partnership as told by Catherine Alexander, CEO and Director of Education at Straub Outdoors.

*A few years ago, our Outdoor School educators were brainstorming ideas for inexpensive cross-body bags in which participating students could keep their nature journals, pencils, and magnifying lenses during their field-study sessions.*

*After our staff members created several makeshift prototypes (including an unsuccessful one that involved a ziploc bag and three feet of yarn), Chad Naugle, the Sustainability Manager for the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) and one of our board members, mentioned that female adults in custody at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville could possibly sew bags for our students using the remnant denim fabric from ODOC's inmate jean-making enterprise.*

*A few months later, the first shipment of bags arrived - with our logo stitched on the front flap. We photographed the first Outdoor School group to use them and sent the photos to the Oregon Correctional Enterprises manager who shared them with the incarcerated women. This was her reply:*

*"Making the field bags for your students was a very special project for these women. Many of them are mothers who can't see their children very often. Making the bags is one way they can give back to their community and help children at the same time."*

*Although the kids in our Outdoor School program don't know where their field bags came from, they do feel special when they receive one. It's an illustration of how Outdoor School is more than just an educational program; it's a statewide endeavor that builds a sense of community in large and small ways that are both powerful and positive!*

Thank you Catherine Alexander for sharing this incredible story with us. We love hearing and sharing all of the wonderful ways that Outdoor School programs around the state are growing and evolving to provide Oregon students with enriching Outdoor School experiences.

