



Programs & Places Spotlight

Camp Tamarack Outdoor School



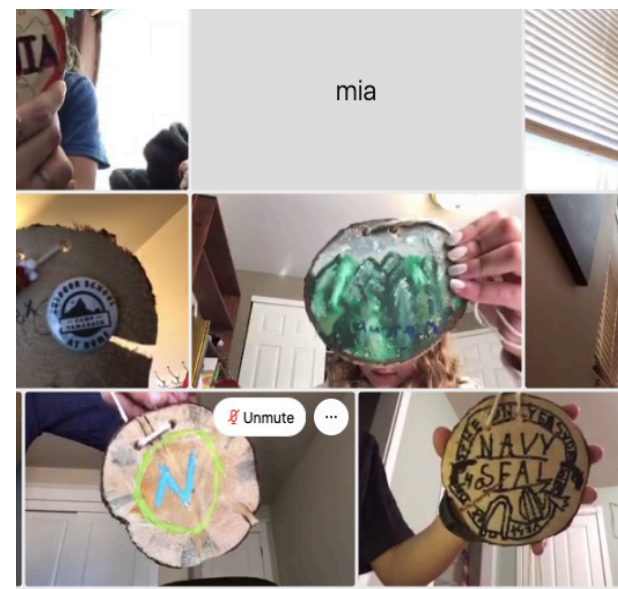
Over the last few years, it has been a joy working with the new and enduring Outdoor School programs and sites around the state. With this new Outdoor School Programs & Places Spotlight, we will share stories focused on the important initiatives of the people doing great work for Oregon kids. I hope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



Camp Tamarack in Sisters Oregon, like many other Outdoor Schools throughout the state, has spent the last 10 months adapting Outdoor School to be done wherever students are. While spending time at an Outdoor School site is much preferred to spending time behind a computer screen, the Camp Tamarack Outdoor School staff has been making the best of what the pandemic has thrown at them. Last spring they started by creating virtual lessons ranging from decomposition cycles to exploratory investigation. Check out their virtual lessons here: <http://bit.ly/35tUhLC>.

This fall Tamarack staff took many of the lessons and incorporated them into their Outdoor School at Home sessions with students. Now, the staff is meeting with students in virtual classrooms over the course of a school week creating a community of practice where students are learning together not only about the outdoors but about themselves and their classmates. Students received fun Outdoor School kits including a wood cookie, a field journal, Camp Tamarack sticker, pencil, beads, and Outdoor School pin. Students decorated wood cookies and used field journals to document their observations about leaves.

While virtual Outdoor School focuses heavily on learning about the environment where students live, it also strives to develop the celebrated sense of community famous to Oregon Outdoor Schools. Although some experiences may seem difficult to translate to the virtual setting, Camp Tamarack Outdoor School has done an incredible job building personal connections and a sense of community into their Outdoor School at Home program. Every day, students focus on one of four values: be here; be honest; care for self and others; let go and move on. Exploring these values often helps



students who might be struggling during the pandemic. Teachers have found that students get more comfortable throughout the week and often engage more in the Outdoor School at Home lessons than in their other virtual schoolwork.

Fifth grade students are not the only ones benefiting from Camp Tamarack's Outdoor School programming during the pandemic. The Tamarack staff has also been hosting programming for their high school volunteers. During this time of adjusted programming, high school students have been able to participate in day camp at Tamarack one day a week, virtual professional development programming one night a week, and leadership expeditions on the weekends.

Camp Tamarack Outdoor School has worked hard to keep the Outdoor School magic alive and keep students engaged in learning about themselves and the world around them. You can visit Camp Tamarack Outdoor School's website to learn about all of their wonderful programs at <https://bit.ly/3qeTgi6>.