



**STRAUB**  
OUTDOORS

# NATURE ACADEMY

RESIDENTIAL OUTDOOR SCHOOL



2019-20

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

# NATURE ACADEMY

“Nature Academy” is a three-day, two-overnight outdoor school option for 5th- and 6th-graders. Students explore native habitats through engaging inquiry-based lessons and activities. This option also includes a night hike, yoga, nature journaling, orienteering, outdoor games, heritage crafts, and time for solo reflection. It culminates with team-based natural science presentations.



The 2019-20 Straub Outdoors Nature Academy sessions will take place at several scenic locations at Silver Falls State Park: the Youth Camp (pending), The Ranches, and South Falls.

At Nature Academy, food service is included and prepared by professional staff. Students receive two lunches, two breakfasts, and two dinners plus healthy snacks. Meals are served buffet style and include gluten-free, dairy-free, and vegan options.

Overnight lodging can be co-ed or segregated according to your school’s policies and priorities. Small to mid-sized school groups may be scheduled for a session with another school. Each group has a separate outdoor school experience with its own sleeping facilities, meal times, educational itineraries, and field instructors.

## ► THE RANCHES + SOUTH FALLS

Amidst rolling meadows and forests, the New Ranch (pictured above) can accommodate up to 50 students and the Old Ranch up to 65 students. Picnic tables and central fireplaces adorn the great rooms; bunk beds line the open lofts above. Includes optional day trips to the South Falls area.

**Minimum: 25 students | Maximum: 115 students**



## ► THE YOUTH CAMP

The Youth Camp is a special part of Silver Fall’s history. The historic buildings are nestled in a forest surrounding an open meadow and have a rustic charm. The central camp features a dining hall, recreation hall, craft building, shower house and administrative offices. Cabins are divided into four loops—each with two field instructor cabins, six camper cabins, a restroom, and a meeting hall.

**Minimum: 70 students | Maximum: 220 students**

**Cost: \$198 per student | \$45 per chaperone  
Free for teachers and school staff/assistants**

► See our 2019-20 Outdoor School Dates flyer for sessions available on a first-come, first-served basis.

At Nature Academy, your students will experience Oregon’s ecology and cultural history first-hand through interactive, hands-on activities designed to engage their observational skills, critical thinking, creativity, and sense of wonder.

There are three main areas of study: Forest Ecology, Freshwater Ecology, and Cultural Ecology. Students are divided into three field groups with each group focusing on different aspects of the study areas each day. Lessons and activities support and build upon each other, regardless of the order in which they occur. Learning is student-centered and scientific inquiry is encouraged.

## ► FIELD STUDIES

### **Forest Ecology**

Forest ecology is the study of wooded areas, including the temperate rainforests of Western Oregon. It includes air and soil quality, tree life cycles, animal species, fungi, terrestrial insects, understory plants, the food web, silviculture, forest succession, and conservation practices.

### **Freshwater Ecology**

Freshwater ecology is the study of rivers, lakes, ponds and wetlands. It includes water quality, the water cycle, watershed geography, aquatic insects and plants, fish and other water-dwelling animals, interactions with adjacent terrestrial ecosystems, invasive species, erosion, and habitat restoration.

### **Cultural Ecology**

Cultural ecology is the study of human adaptations to social and physical environments. By studying the peoples who lived in Oregon in different eras and in the present time, we can understand their relationships to each other and to the natural world. Our cultural studies include the ecological knowledge of the Kalapuya and other indigenous peoples from time immemorial to the present day.

## ► LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

For many of the lessons and activities below, the three field groups are subdivided into Discovery Teams of 5-10 students. Each team is led by a Straub Outdoors field instructor and facilitated by a classroom teacher, chaperone, plus one or more school instructional assistants for students with special needs (if applicable).

At Nature Academy, morning and evening activities—indicated by “M” and “E”—are led by Straub Outdoors instructors. Classroom teachers can facilitate learning throughout the day by monitoring behavior, assisting with outdoor classroom management, asking inquiry-based questions, and learning alongside your students!

- Stretching & Guided Movement (M)
- Sunrise Nature Walk (M)
- Creating Wildlife Trading Cards (M)
- Matching Animals and Their Tracks (M)
- Nature Journaling (M)
- Creating a Nature Sound Map
- Looking for Animal Clues
- Habitat Landscape Drawing & Painting
- Lichenology & Air Quality
- Underground Ecology & Soil Science
- Critter Catch & Release - Terrestrial Insects
- Getting to Know a Tree (Forest Succession)
- Creating a Nature Sensory Poem
- “Food Web” & “Water Cycle” Yoga
- Critter Catch & Release - Aquatic Insects
- Who Lives Here? Transects & Fixed Area Plots
- Going with the Flow (Water Quality)
- Time Traveler Visualization (Cultural History)
- Kalapuya Seasonal Rounds (Cultural History)
- Helpful Plants & Botanical Illustration
- Siletz Dentalium Shell Beading
- Traditional Crafts with Native Plants (E)
- “Eat or Be Eaten” Food Chain Game (E)
- Dendrochronology & Tree Cookie Pendants (E)
- Owl Pellet Dissection (E)
- Owl Prowl Night Hike (E)
- Campfire Songs, Drumming Circle & S’mores (E)

# ECOLOGY + CULTURAL STUDIES

# SAMPLE ITINERARY



- 7:00 Rise & Shine | Get dressed | Good Morning! Stretching
- 8:00 Breakfast | Clean-up | Personal Hygiene
- 9:00 Morning Activity | Teacher & Chaperone Personal Time
- 10:00 Field Lesson 1
- 11:00 Field Lesson 2
- 12:00 Lunch | Outdoor Games | Nature Yoga
- 1:00 Field Lesson 3
- 2:00 Field Lesson 4
- 3:00 Scientific Inquiry Project
- 4:00 Free Time & Solo Reflection | Showers | Dinner Prep
- 5:00 Dinner | Clean-up
- 6:00 Evening Activity 1 | Teacher & Chaperone Personal Time
- 7:00 Campfire Songs, Drumming & S'mores
- 8:00 Evening Activity 2 | Teacher & Chaperone Personal Time
- 9:00 Personal Hygiene | Read-aloud Story | Lights Out

Classroom teachers, chaperones, and instructional assistants are assigned to a camper cabin or Bunk Buddies group and asked to read a bedtime story or lead a quiet bedtime activity and spend the night with the students. We also ask that teachers and chaperones support their students during the Rise & Shine period and accompany them to breakfast each morning.

Camper cabins and sleeping lofts are rustic and don't have electricity. A designated area with electrical power, desks, and chairs is available for classroom teachers and chaperones during personal times in the morning and evenings.

▶ Looking for a non-residential outdoor school option? We also offer Nature Scouts sessions with three day-trips to natural areas.

*Many students in my class are kinesthetic learners and being outdoors enriched their learning more than being in the classroom. Many of my students also come from families experiencing poverty and don't know about natural places like this.*

*The strength of this program, in my opinion, is the curriculum. It supported my classroom educational objectives by focusing on NGSS [science standards] and by making learning engaging and fun.*

**- Uriel Torres, Four Corners Elementary**

Straub Outdoors is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For more information about our programs, visit [StraubOutdoors.org](http://StraubOutdoors.org). To reserve a 2019-20 outdoor school session, contact Catherine Alexander at [ExecutiveDirector@StraubOutdoors.org](mailto:ExecutiveDirector@StraubOutdoors.org) or give us a call 503-779-5227.

