



Success  
Story

# Outdoor School Washington Spring Training

April 23-26, 2024

In April, 54 educators from 17 different K-12 schools came together for a week at Camp Koinonia in Cle Elum to learn how to develop overnight outdoor school programming for 5th and 6th-grade students by participating in the 2024 Outdoor School Washington Spring Training.



*Facilitator and teacher participant examine a pond soil sample and collect data to use in their comparative investigation of habitat characteristics*

*"(I found it interesting) thinking about outdoor school from the perspective of students with different learning styles, and... from an inclusion and SEL perspective"*

*-- participating educator*

PEI's team facilitated many of the sessions along with staff from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Outdoor Schools Washington, and GRuB.



*Participants met each day with the same cabin group to engaged in nature based SEL activities for small groups and build comradery. Each night all the cabin groups met around a campfire to sing, act, and have a ball.*

It was a full and active week for the participants. Among other things, they went on a three-hour 'discovery hike' to learn about wildlife habitat requirements and humans' relationship with the environment, which included a comparative investigation of pond and forest habitat characteristics.

They also explored activities and resources from Project WET, Project WILD, and Project Learning Tree (PLT), one of which involved growling and lumbering across a field to forage for food and water. Along the way they reflected on mathematical connections, strategies for survival and the ecological principle of limiting factors.



"(I found it interesting) thinking about outdoor school from the perspective of students with different learning styles, and... from an inclusion and SEL perspective," said one participant.



*OSPI NGSS instructor Lori Henrickson and Program Director of Cedar Outdoor School Patrick Kissinger collect data from a forest soil sample*

The team from OSPI facilitated learning sessions focused on NGSS alignment, social-emotional learning, Environmental and Sustainability State Standards, and inclusive teaching and learning and tribal sovereignty as it applies to outdoor school.

PEI staff also shared standards-aligned activities modified from Project Learning Tree. To apply what they were learning, teachers investigated the area through multi-disciplinary mapping, using their sense of touch, culture, and indigenous mathematics.

That focus on standards inspired one of the participants, who shared, "I had taken the time to identify NGSS standards that might align well with outdoor ed at camp and came up with some fun activities and the cross-cutting concepts today helped me see what concepts paired well with each lesson/activity and how the activity could be tailored to drive that point home. I'm legit so excited about this. I feel like my lessons are really coherent."