

NATURECONNECT CENTRAL OREGON

IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026

YEAR IN REVIEW



Promoting nature access...together.

At NatureConnect, we believe that a transformative connection to nature should be a foundational part of growing up - not a privilege that is unattainable for some. That vision drives our work every day at NatureConnect Central Oregon. Working together with a coaltion of diverse partners, we expand outdoor learning, address barriers to access, and deliver culturally responsive youth programs across our community. Together, we are ensuring that the benefits of nature reach every kid.

2025-2026 Impact at a Glance

NatureConnect Central Oregon

PROGRAMS

2,759
Rural and Title I students reached through free NatureHoods & Forest Day programs for K-2nd grades

15
Free family programs offered across Central Oregon, reaching 688 participants

SERVICES

70
Field trips funded through transportation scholarships, reaching 4,579 students

125
Youth program days at Skyliner Lodge, providing 6,950 participant days

PATHWAYS

10
Paid internships in the green sector for high school youth, averaging 232 hours each

223
Unique participants reached through Vámonos Outside, a culturally-specific program of NatureConnect.

Field Trips & School Services

NatureConnect and our network of partners work to uplift the role that outdoor learning plays in education in Central Oregon. Across our region, we are fortunate to have 11 partners who offer over 40 unique programs for K-12 students. These programs connect classroom curriculum to place-based learning, fostering greater awareness and appreciation of the natural world in students.

But NatureConnect's work extends far beyond offering outdoor programs. We analyze regional data annually to pinpoint access gaps and partner directly with educators to eliminate barriers. We provide resources and supports including funding for field trip transportation, targeted outreach and special programs for low-user schools, teacher workshops, and lending libraries of field equipment.

Together, we are working to ensure that every student, regardless of circumstance, can access all of the benefits of outdoor learning in our region.





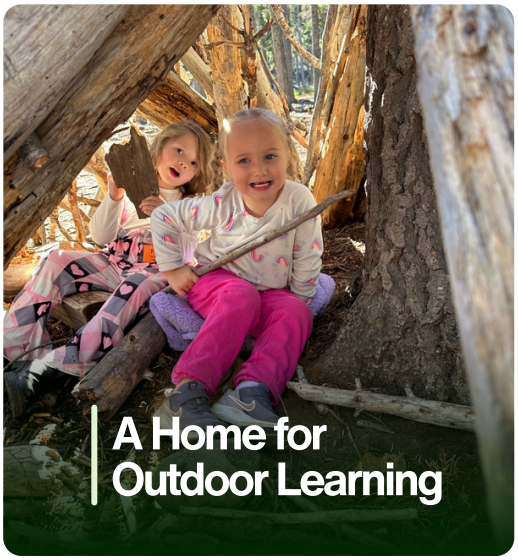
45,652 Student Days in nature-based programs with network partners

Elementary students in Central Oregon school districts participated in 2.7 days of nature-based programs with the partner network on average

While our network has driven vital progress in outdoor learning, serious challenges remain - from federal and school budget cuts to growing demands on educators and economic pressures on families. Regional data reveals that student participation has not yet fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Your partnership directly bridges this gap. By removing financial and transportation barriers for Central Oregon schools, you empower us to bring the transformative power of nature to as many students as possible each year.

Skyliner Lodge: A Continued Legacy of Outdoor Learning

In July 2025, NatureConnect took over operations for Skyliner Lodge, helping to ensure that this historic location could continue to be accessible for field trips, summer camps, and other gatherings. A year into playing this new role, we continue to be grateful that this special place is available to so many schools and organizations to use throughout the year. In addition to hosting dozens of field trips like Kindergarten Forest Days and middle school science investigations, the lodge is home for Boy and Girl Scout retreats, family programs, non-profit celebrations, plus a summer packed full of youth camps. Our goal is to ensure that this space continues its legacy of being open and welcoming to the community.



Vámonos Outside

Vámonos Outside's mission is to create opportunities by and for youth of color and their families to connect with nature, experience personal transformation, and deepen a sense of belonging. Their programs range from nature-based connection and exploration for elementary students to skill-based outdoor recreation programs for middle and high school students. Designed to be accessible, programs are free for participants and offer a wide range of supports including transportation, food, gear, mentorship, and more.

All of Vámonos Outside's programs are grounded in their values of *relationship, imagination, wellness, justice,* and *cultura*. Their strong and uplifting program culture has resulted in many participants returning year after year, and deep family connections. This year, they also launched a new bike lending library and offered community bike events to help build confidence and skills for bikers of all ages.





98 youth reached in multi-week youth development programs

"As someone who was afraid of the water - having to paddle with all my strength in the middle of the chaos taught me that fear doesn't disappear, you learn to overcome it. And, the laughter and smiles are memories that I will never forget".





David and Jonathan, prior Green Jobs interns, who both have year-round positions with Vámonos Outside

Green Jobs

Our fourth year of the Green Jobs Summer Program deepened our belief in the power of youth voice and the importance of investing in development opportunities for youth in our community. This year, with youth input, we added more leadership opportunities for interns, including an intern-led camp in partnership with Vámonos Outside.

IMPACT DATA: POST-PROGRAM SURVEYS

4.5/5: Because of Green Jobs, I believe that I can make a difference in my community
4.4/5: The program has helped me feel proud of my skills and strengths

ALUMNI REPORT

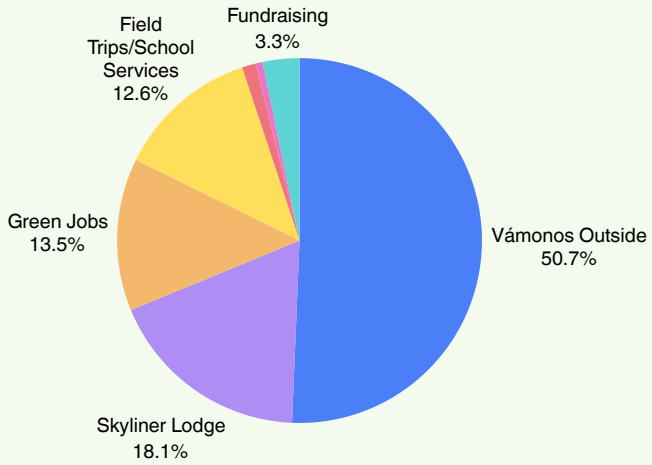
The Green Jobs program has made ripples and waves into the green sector, as alumni have continued pathways with program partners. Of the 22 unique interns hired between 2023-2025:

- 36% have participated in multiple internships (up to 3 years)
- Over 30% transitioned into paid green-sector roles with program partners
- 1 intern volunteers and serves on the Advisory Board with Vámonos Outside

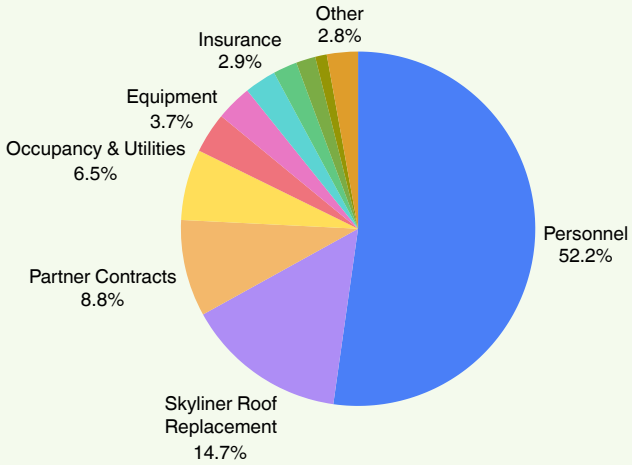
Financials

JULY 1, 2025-JUNE 30, 2026

Expenses by Program



Expenses by Category



Total Expenses = $688,899

Thank You for Making This Possible

SUPPORTERS

Oregon Department of Education
Oregon Department of Transportation
Gray Family Foundation
Pattie Gonia
Oregon Community Foundation
U.S. Forest Service
Henrietta Aigner & Joy Baldwin
Family Foundation
Scott's Roofing
Share Winter Foundation
Outride
Oregon Community Foundation:
Trailblazers Foundation Fund
Oregon Community Foundation:
Latino Partnership Program
Mt. Bachelor LLC
Cow Creek Umpqua Indian
Foundation
Herbert Templeton Foundation
Les Schwab Tire Centers
City of Bend
St. Charles Health System
Judith Rowe
American Endowment
Deschutes Public Library
Autzen Foundation
Columbia Sportswear
Luno
The Gear Fix
Ronald Fritz
Fidelity Charitable
Pacific Power Foundation
Trout Unlimited
Cog Wild
Bend Park & Recreation District
Bend Visitor & Convention Bureau
Oregon Wild
Think Wild
Putnam Foundation
Shaun Martin
Noah Harwood
Bevel Craft Brewing
The Environmental Center
Fairfield Inn
Elaine Cole & Todd Mabee
Nancy Geller
First Interstate Bank
Catalyst Environmental Solutions
Corporation
Sunnyside Sports
Papi LLC
and many more!

PARTNERS

U.S. Forest Service
Oregon State Parks
High Desert ESD
All Central Oregon School Districts
Bend Parks and Rec
Bend Forest School
Boys & Girls Club of Bend
Camp Fire Central Oregon
Camp Tamarack
Central Oregon STEM Hub
Deschutes Land Trust
Discover Your Forest
The Environmental Center
Friends of the Children
Heart of Oregon Corps
High Desert Museum
Juntos (OSU)
Juntos Aprendemos
Middle Deschutes Watershed Co.
Mini-Mavericks Preschool
Nighthawk Naturalist
Oregon Adaptive Sports
Oregon Wild
R.A.D Camps
Sunriver Nature Center
Think Wild
Trout Unlimited
Upper Deschutes Watershed Co.
Wildheart Nature School

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