

**2014-2015 Pilot Year:
Lake City High School Outdoor Studies Program (OSP)**

The Lake City High School OSP successfully completed its first semester as a new pilot program for 11th grade students interested in interdisciplinary learning in the outdoors! Thanks to the generous support of the 2014 KEA Morgan Environmental Education Grant, this pilot program literally came to life and students were able to connect learning experiences in the classroom to outdoor field trips at:

- The Bureau of Land Management Blackwell Island Recreation Area,
- the KEA Gathering Garden,
- the CDA Wastewater Treatment Facility,
- the North Idaho Museum,
- the Lake CDA Gem Symposium,
- the USFS Nursery, and
- other local natural settings close to school grounds (Skyway Forest, etc.).



The program's first semester curriculum and field trips challenged students to investigate the interdisciplinary links between science, history, math, and language arts for the topics of "Water" and "Food". Students collected local water quality data from shoreline and via kayak, graphed exponential growth of hypothetical algae blooms in local lakes, measured leaf litter biodiversity in local forest woodlands, immersed themselves in the historical uses of our local lakes and rivers, and applied the science of soil and agriculture to their reading of The Grapes of Wrath and other environmentally-related articles through the OSP's subscription to High Country News.

Students are currently involved in a service learning project with BLM and USFS botanists and horticulturalists to design and construct a native plant and pollinator species garden at the Blackwell Island Recreation site. They are growing the plants in the classroom and will head back to the garden site in March to get the starts in the ground!



Second semester curriculum is going to challenge students to make connections between the program's four content areas under the themes of "Energy" and "Change". We have a wonderful list field trips lined up to make these themes come to life both in the classroom and out in the field:

- Snowshoeing and snow science at Lookout Pass
- Historical mine tour in the Silver Valley
- Post Falls Hydroelectric Facility and Rathdrum Natural Gas Electric Facility
- English Point Recreation Site
- BLM Blue Creek Bay Recreation Site (in conjunction with the KEA Lake CDA Water Keeper Program)
- Tubbs Hill
- BLM Blackwell Island Recreation Site
- Farragut State Park



Upcoming improvements to our program design and transportation plan for second semester, as well as the 2015-2016 OSP next school year, are going to give OSP teachers and students much more freedom to leave campus on a more regular basis:

- OSP teachers are working with SD271 administration to approve independent student travel to our learning sites for the day which will alleviate the necessity for school bus logistics and costs. This will also allow the program to spend more time on site and less time en route.
- Increasing the number of sections per school day for the OSP from one to three. This will allow substantial savings on substitute costs by removing the necessity for substitute teachers while OSP teachers are out in the field with OSP students.
- OSP teachers are working with University of Idaho Water Resource Education Center staff to obtain grant funds for an outdoor classroom near the Harbor Center. This classroom would be used by the OSP as a "home base" with easier and closer access to outdoor learning sites.
- Including Experiential Community Leadership curriculum into the program to help OSP students use what they have learned in the program to become environmental leaders in our community. This improvement will help the OSP grow a new and younger generation of active, empowered, and environmentally-literate LEADERS right here in North Idaho!

The OSP is hopeful for continued financial support from the community. Relationships are being established with many stakeholders that have similar interests for providing area youth with high quality, interdisciplinary, outdoor learning experiences!