



# Osprey Wilds

## Environmental Learning Center

## Osprey Wilds EE Update

February 19, 2025

Hi EE Coordinators,

Mark your calendars: Osprey Wilds Charter School Division will be hosting a virtual “EE Office Hour” on **Wednesday, March 12** from 3:00-4:00pm. This will be an opportunity to connect with OW staff and peer EE Coordinators in the OW portfolio to lift up questions and challenges, or share resources and successes. You can access the zoom link for the meeting [here](#).

Did you know February 24-28 is National Invasive Species Awareness Week? Check out [this blog](#) from Project Learning Tree for some basic information and classroom games to explore the topic, or [this](#) EE-focused STEM lesson plan for students in Grade 6 from ORISE.

Also, a reminder as you plan field trips and experiences for this year:

Per MN §124E.10, Subd. 2(b): "An authorizer must not condition granting or renewing a charter on the charter school being required to contract, lease, or purchase services from the authorizer." In compliance with statute, OW does not contractually require its schools to visit the Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (OW ELC) campus in Sandstone. In addition, if the school decides to purchase services from the authorizer (in other words, OW ELC), it must be through an open bidding process. Per MN §124E.10, Subd. 2(a): "A school must disclose to the commissioner any potential contract, lease, or purchase of service from an authorizer. The contract, lease, or purchase must be accepted through an open bidding process and be separate from the charter contract. The school must document the open bidding process." It is incumbent on the school to ensure they have followed this area of statute, not Osprey Wilds as the provider of that service. However, OW

provides notice of this requirement on its website in order to support its authorized schools in fulfilling this requirement: [ospreywilds.org/schools/k12-required-forms](https://ospreywilds.org/schools/k12-required-forms).

## School Spotlights

- Aurora Waasakone Community of Learners shared that they are at least half-way to their goal of 40 hours of outdoor instruction per student in the 24-25 school year in their [Winter Newsletter!](#)
- Several schools received funding for EE!
  - East Range Academy of Technology and Science: [Grants bring agricultural literacy to classrooms](#)
  - AFSA K-12 also received funding from MN Agriculture in the Classroom
  - Crosslake Community School received Farm to Table funding to increase fresh, nutritious options for students and expand EE programming
- North Shore Community School: [Phenology Talks on KAXE](#)
- Glacial Hills Elementary School: 2024 Innovation [Award for Increasing Learning Opportunities for All Students](#)

Got an EE success story or effective practice you'd like to share? Email [Addie Mazza](#)

## Upcoming Professional Development Events

### [Duluth K-2 Climate Change Workshop](#)

*Saturday March 22, 2025 | 9:00-3:00pm*

Are you a Duluth area educator? Join Climate Generation and other excited K-2 educators in Duluth to explore resources related to climate change action for kindergarten through second grade!

### [School Garden Conference 2025](#)

*Friday March 21, 2025 | 9:00-3:00 PM*

*Cost: \$35 per participant*

*Location: Minnesota Department of Education 400 Stinson Blvd NE Minneapolis, MN 55413*

School gardens offer a unique, practical way for students to achieve academic goals, engage with community partners, explore agriculture and healthy eating, and connect with the environment. Whether you're new to school gardens or experienced, come join us in March to learn strategies for building, maintaining, and engaging learners in a successful school garden.

### [Climate and Equity Institute Application](#)

*Applications are due by March 3, 2025.*

TERC and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation are seeking to bring together 12 teachers from a variety of backgrounds who are currently teaching Climate and Equity with high school students to participate in a one-week Institute and join a growing national network of colleagues. The expenses-paid Institute will take place from July 20-26, 2025.

### [Recycling Ambassador Course \(Dakota County\)](#)

Become a Recycling Ambassador to learn all things reduce, reuse and recycle and educate your community. You'll build skills needed to inspire others to reduce waste in Dakota County. Participants hear presentations from experts on waste reduction, recycling, composting and solid waste and go on field trips to relevant sites.

### [Outdoor Learning Online Courses](#)

The Outdoor Learning School & Store is a charitable social enterprise offering excellent outdoor learning training, tools, resources & equipment with 100% of proceeds going back to supporting outdoor learning non-profit initiatives!

1. [School Gardening for Educators](#) - starts Feb 19 with Megan Zeni
2. [Nêhiyawêwin \(Cree\) Language Course](#) - starts March 12 with Rollin Baldhead
3. [Teaching in the Outdoor Classroom](#) - starts April 2 with Lauren MacLean
4. [Anishinaabemowin \(Ojibwe\) Language Course](#) - starts April 3 with Sarah Wood

# Resources

## [Waste Education for Schools](#)

- School recycling programs educate future generations about the importance of waste reduction and recycling. Dakota County offers a variety of resources to help schools enhance student and staff recycling knowledge.

## [A Complete Guide to Developing Experiential EE Programs](#)

- Over 25 years of experience at dozens of facilities around the country has gone into creating this intuitive guide to experiential environmental education. Learn why this is the best method of teaching outdoor education, how experiential environmental education grows students into global citizens that have confidence and empathy, and the logistics of running a successful outdoor education program. Sample lesson plans and a dissecting guide are included so you can have a template for writing your own lesson plans. You'll be guided every step of the way from philosophy to finishing and sustaining your program by a real person who has designed and run real programs.

## [Nature-Based Educator Trainings](#)

- Nature-based learning is a growing phenomenon. The evidence is strong that kids who learn outdoors have significantly less stress, reduced ADHD symptoms, more resourcefulness and creativity, enhanced sensory perception, and lower rates of physical and emotional illness. So how can nature-based education be a part of your programming? How can you, as a homeschooler or traditional educator, learn how to bring nature into your lessons? Here is a list of workshops, courses, and programs to learn the basics of nature-based education.

## [Transforming EE from Knowledge to Action Podcast Episode](#)

- Delve into how environmental education programs have evolved from lessons of awareness to calls to action. Join host Gerry Ellis in this thought-provoking conversation with Kathy McGlaufflin and Gus Medina, examining how these shifts, along with the changes in methods and technology, have shaped the field and what it means for connecting people to nature in a modern world.

## Some Things We're Reading

- [Inspired Journeys: 2 Years of Black Faces in Green Spaces: The Journeys of Black Professionals in Green Careers](#)
- [Joy and Anger and Hope: Youth Climate Activism](#)

## Grants

### [2025 Gloria Barron Prize](#)

*Applications are due by April 15, 2025*

The 2025 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes is open to youth ages 8-18 who are currently working individually on an inspiring service project or have done so within the past 12 months. Winners each receive \$10,000 to apply towards their higher education or their service project.

### [Children's Environmental Health Network: NOW Youth Leadership Award](#)

*Nominations are due by March 16, 2025*

The 2025 Nsedu Obot Witherspoon (NOW) Youth Leadership Awards honors a young person who has demonstrated exceptional environmental health leadership towards protecting human health. Nominees must be US residents aged 10-21, and if selected, will have expenses covered to attend the CEHN Child Health Advocate Awards Reception in Washington, DC, in October 2025 with one parent/guardian.

### [Whole Kids Garden Grant](#)

*Applications are due by March 5, 2025*

Earn up to \$3,500 to support or create an edible educational garden at your school.

### [School Nutrition Foundation Equipment Grants](#)

Applications are due by March 12, 2025

### [Hennepin County School Recycling Grants](#)

*Applications are due by 4:00 pm February 27, 2025*

Grants are available for schools to start or improve programs to reduce waste and keep recycling and organic materials, including food and non-recyclable paper, out of the trash. Eligible organizations include preschools, K-12 schools, colleges and universities in Hennepin County. Grant funding can be used to fund staff time for project implementation

as well as to purchase equipment and supplies including recycling and organics recycling containers, sorting stations, reusable food service ware, and bulk condiment dispensers.

- See the [grant flyer \(PDF, 500KB\)](#) for an overview of the program.
- Review the [grant guidelines \(PDF, 540KB\)](#) for more information about the program, eligible project activities and allowable expenses.

The first round of funding will be available to two-year colleges, Head Start, and preschools and K-12 schools with at least 50% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Applications are due by 4 p.m. on Thursday, February 27. Schools may apply for up to \$20,000 in the first round.

Applications of up to \$15,000 from any K-12 school, preschool, college, or university in the county will be accepted in the second round from March 18 through October 15, or until available funds are depleted.

A virtual information session will be held via Zoom Wednesday January 29 from 9 to 10 a.m. [Register](#).