



Great Basin Outdoor School 2018 Annual Report

Great Basin Outdoor School's 20th year success was a cause for celebration, so we hosted a summer party at our beautiful program site on the shore of Lake Tahoe. We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations which have helped us touch the lives of thousands of children and teachers since our founding in 1998. This year 1500 students and teachers participated not counting those at public events such as Children's Environmental Science Day.

New this year: A team of two from Great Basin Outdoor School was selected to participate in a prestigious week-long international workshop hosted by UC Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science BEETLES program for "Better Environmental Education Teaching and Learning Sharing". The focus included students' personal direct experiences and observations in nature, welcoming diverse populations into nature, and meeting Next Generation Science Standards with hands-on learner-centered lessons.

Children from the Family Shelter in Reno joined us for the first time in programs designed especially for them. In a three-part series children learned from Bugs & Butterflies guest presenters we arranged with related crafts and activities. Then we provided school bus transportation and forest activities at

Galena Creek for shelter families. Finally we secured nutritious vegetables to plant and planting materials for children to install in the small outdoor play area adjacent to the shelter.



Family shelter children loved hiking at Galena Creek.

Our classic winter, spring, and fall programs continued throughout the year and are currently being booked for 2019. January started with a week of winter break day camp followed by overnight and day winter ecology and snowshoe trips into early March. April, May, and June were a whirlwind of staff training and single day and multi-day overnight science camps on the shore of Lake Tahoe with nearby excursions for hiking, activities, and lessons aboard a Tahoe research boat. Similar fall programs got students' school year started with an outdoor science focus. Our annual



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summer Project WET teacher professional development workshop gave teachers more ways to share watershed education with their students, and we reached the families in the public at Children's Environmental Science Day. All the same programs plus summer day camps are being scheduled and booked for 2019.



Happy at-risk students at Tahoe science camp

What do students say about outdoor school?

These quotes are from fifth graders at one of the very low income schools we are continuing to work with who are only able to participate thanks to community support.

The best thing about Great Basin Outdoor School is: being in the outdoors with friends, learning about the environment and the

animals, nature because it's beautiful, meeting new people, we get to have fun and learn, doing amazing activities and to talk about nature, you learn new things about the earth.

The most important thing I learned is: to protect our water source/watershed, if we don't take care of the watershed, we won't have that much water, how humans can affect the earth, to keep Tahoe clean, to keep our watershed clean, how to care for bodies of water, there is a trash island in the Pacific Ocean, I can learn new things, about how to protect nature.

The most interesting thing I learned about myself is: that I am more of an outdoor person than what I knew, I love nature, it's fun with no technology, I like nature and how interesting it is, to respect the environment, I as a human can help the environment, I like to take quiet walks observing, that I can make lots of friends.

Great Basin Outdoor School is: amazing! the best thing ever! one of the best places to go! it's fun! really, really cool! the best experience! the fun place to go, the best! awesome, fun, I love it! a great place to learn new things, the best place in the world! the best place you can ever go to learn about Tahoe, unforgettable, incredible, truly amazing! Exciting, exhilarating!



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What Do Children Experience?

Great Basin Outdoor School provides hands-on lessons during multi-day Tahoe science camps in the fall, winter, and spring. Standards-based curriculum is shared with the students in engaging and exciting ways as we take them to Spooner Lake for an all-day hike with forest and wildlife field studies and to Zephyr Cove as we board the research vessel *Prophet* and do water quality testing on Lake Tahoe. Children learn how to keep Tahoe blue and participate in projects using science to help solve local issues.

Natural resource professionals visit and present and serve as science career role models. Our evening programs expose the students to worlds most have not encountered before during our astronomy sessions, night-hikes, songs, and skits.

Winter ecology and snowshoe programs teach about our Sierra snowpack and safe enjoyment of Tahoe's winter environment. Students learn snow science and winter plant and animal adaptations and are excited to explore on snowshoes and look for animal tracks.

Day field trips offer a sampling of our life science and earth science activities and are often a way to introduce new schools to our programs.



Students get healthy exercise and are excited to explore our Sierra snowpack on snowshoes.

Our History

Great Basin Outdoor School grew from a belief in the vital role of active outdoor learning for a child's physical, intellectual, and emotional health. Pilot programs in the mid-1990's targeted at-risk Washoe County School District 4th-6th grade classes mentored by students from Proctor Hug, Reno's most socio-economically challenged high school. Teen leaders were trained in local ecology and cooperative activities and helped lead overnight field studies for classes of underprivileged children.

Great Basin Outdoor School became an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1998. Our



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educators are college graduates with backgrounds in science or education, and all programs are conducted in Nevada. Our office is in Reno, we use various sites for day programs, and our multi-day science camps are held at beautiful Camp Galilee on the Nevada shore of Lake Tahoe.



Boys help keep Tahoe blue by limiting erosion with mulch spread over bare soil.

Our Vision

Great Basin Outdoor School's vision is that "Experiential education in the natural world will nurture children and young adults and empower them to make positive choices in their own lives, productive contributions to their communities, and sustainable decisions for the Earth."

Measuring Results

Students respond to pre- and post-assessment questions to demonstrate knowledge gain and to document attitudes and new experiences. Teachers complete evaluations of the program and also assess gains made by their children who receive scholarships or fee reductions.

2018 Finances

To keep program affordable and to provide scholarships and fee reductions for children in need, we always aim to fundraise to cover at least half of all our expenses to keep student fees well below actual cost. In 2018 student fees covered 49% of costs and our fundraising covered about 51%. 88% of funds raised went directly to program, and 12% of our expenses were for administration and development.

Program Fees	\$ 90,732
Grants	\$ 72,169
<u>Donations & Fundraising</u>	<u>\$ 20,749</u>
Total Income	\$183, 650

Program	\$126,085
<u>Admin. & Dev.</u>	<u>\$18,770</u>
Total Expenses	\$144,855



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Cooperating Organizations

- Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
- Trout Unlimited
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
- UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center
- Galilee Camp and Conference Center
- Marine Research and Education, Inc.
- The Sugar Pine Foundation
- Nevada Fish & Wildlife Office
- Otis Bay Ecological Consultants
- GREENevada

We sincerely appreciate all community support for including marginalized children and the program development needed to stay current, relevant, and educationally sound.

