



## Exploring New Horizons Curriculum

### Organization Mission

Exploring New Horizons (ENH) empowers students, builds environmental literacy, and strengthens school communities through outdoor education.

### Our Focus

- 1. Environmental Literacy:** Ecological understanding, interest in science, nature appreciation, natural history, being comfortable in nature
  - a. Hands on learning in the outdoors
  - b. Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
  - c. Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- 2. Empowerment & Teambuilding:** Improved self-esteem, confidence, responsibility, collaboration, teamwork, community
  - a. Low ropes course challenges, communal meals, participation in cabin and trail groups, time away from home, overcoming obstacles
  - b. SEL
- 3. Environmental stewardship:** Understanding how one's actions impact the environment and how to be a steward
  - a. Tracking food waste in dining hall, trail activities around conservation, how people are connected to nature, and cycles, town hall meeting, meatless day, short showers

### Focus Area 1: Environmental Literacy

**Nature Understanding:** Knowledge of 5 basic ecological concepts is crucial to the learner's overall comprehension of the natural world. ENH curriculum helps students better understand processes in nature. All lessons connect back to one of our **5 learning concepts:** Adaptations, Cycles, Energy, Diversity, and Interdependence. These learnings in the field will spark an interest to learn more about nature, cycles and science back in the classroom and encourage students to seek out more experiences in nature.

**Nature Appreciation:** Time spent in nature and knowledge of the diversity and cycles in nature create a deeper appreciation for it and a desire to protect it and learn more about it. Students learn to feel more comfortable and appreciate nature through exploration of creeks, tidepools, and the redwood and mixed oak forest. Learnings are reinforced through nature journaling and art, poetry and stories, songs about the environment, and short dramas illustrating feelings and knowledge of the environment. Students also learn about the importance and connection to nature through the study of local Native American culture and history, including present and traditional uses of flora and fauna.

### Focus Area #2: Empowerment and Team Building

**Team Building:** Students will experience the benefits of a supportive team and will feel capable, appreciated, safe and trusted within the team while overcoming individual and group challenges throughout the week. Students will experience how the rules of active listening apply to formalized team interaction, including: one person speaks at a time; no put downs; and everyone has the right to pass. Groups will participate in team problem solving including developing solutions to environmental problems and ways to implement these solutions. Cooperative learning roles will be implemented in challenging situations.

**Self Esteem and Self Concept:** Students will have the opportunity to act as a team leader and be encouraged and praised by the team. Students will each be called upon to contribute creative ideas to team endeavors and will be valued as part of the team and as individuals. Students will be encouraged by the naturalists and cabin leaders to protect and build each other's self-esteem and to accept diverse values of individual members. A week out of the

classroom in a new and emotionally-safe space builds students' self-confidence, empowering them to disrupt their classroom identities, behavior patterns, and solidify relationships with teachers and peers.

Focus Area #3: Environmental Stewardship

**Knowledge of problems and solutions:** Students will learn about local, regional and global environmental problems and potential solutions, including simple adjustments to lifestyles (composting, solar energy and recycling). Students will link examples of a balanced and healthy ecosystem between what they see in nature, what they learn at the outdoor school and their impacts at school and home.

**Learning Action-Taking through Role Modeling:** Students will learn about individuals who have been successful in solving environmental problems. Students will study historical and contemporary action takers. Students and teams will analyze environmental problems and attempt to generate solutions through the perceptions of role models.

**Community and Social Responsibility:** Trail and cabin groups will discuss environmental dilemmas through role-playing in a mock town hall meeting. Cabin and trail groups will learn about successes with problems previously solved and brainstorm creative answers to difficult environmental problems. Students will identify potential environmental problems in their home community and strategize methods of organization to address these problems. Students will be given the opportunity to graduate from the outdoor school.

How ENH Supports Social Emotional Learning

ENH's educational approach promotes student's social and emotional learning through hands-on learning in the outdoors, teambuilding, communal living, and lessons in environmental stewardship. Our program contains aspects that cover the five social and emotional learning core competencies.

**5 core competency clusters for students**

**In action at ENH**

<p><b>Self-Awareness:</b> The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior; includes assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.</p>	<p>Students are given the opportunity to challenge by choice and are not forced to partake in an activity that pushes them beyond their comfort zone. They are encouraged to try new things with the support of ENH staff, teachers, cabin leaders, and their classmates.</p>
<p><b>Self-Management:</b> The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations; includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and achieving personal and academic goals.</p>	<p>Students are away from home, often from their parents/guardians. They are responsible for taking care of their personal belongings and hygiene in the cabin. On trail, they are responsible for packing their day pack with water, lunch, extra layers, etc.</p>
<p><b>Social Awareness:</b> The ability to take perspectives of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources/supports.</p>	<p>Students learn about a diversity of ways people choose to approach environmental issues, including participation in a town hall meeting. Students learn about local Native American culture and history and are continually encouraged to understand and discuss learnings through multiple racial and social perspectives.</p>
<p><b>Relationship Skills:</b> The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups; includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.</p>	<p>Students are given a variety of settings to develop positive relationship skills through spending time learning with their trail group, living communally in their cabins, and eating together in the dining hall.</p>
<p><b>Responsible Decision Making:</b> The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns,</p>	<p>Throughout the program students can feel the effects of responsible decision making through being away from parents/guardians; being outdoors; communal living and dining; team building exercises; town hall meeting; night</p>

social norms, realistic evaluation of consequences, and the well-being of self and others.	hike
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### How ENH Supports NGSS Standards

ENH's educational approach is designed to supplement the NGSS standards schools are working towards in their classrooms. This is done through hands-on, interactive lessons in the redwood and mixed oak forest, tidepools, and creek.

#### **5th Grade**

5-PS1 Matter and its Interactions	Students learn and observe cycles and changes such as water, rock, and life cycle
5-PS2 Motion and Stability	Students observe how water moves through a watershed at the creek and ocean and rain/fog.
5-PS3 Energy	Students observe food webs in tidepools and the redwood forest and understand that all energy once derived from the sun.
5-LS1 From Molecules to Organisms	Students learn about Redwood trees and their adaptations.
5-LS2 Ecosystems	Students visit 3 distinct ecosystems: Redwood Forest, tidepools, and creek. Students observe food webs for ecosystems and the different roles organisms play.
5-ESS1 Earth's Place in the Universe	During night hike students learn about different constellations and the galaxy.
5-ESS2 Earth's Systems	Students spend time by creek (freshwater) and ocean (saltwater) and learn that water changes states in water cycle
5-ESS3 Earth and Human Activity	Students discuss the protection of Forests, Oceans, and Rivers

#### **6th Grade**

MS-LS2-(1-5). Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics	Students observe food webs and interdependence of organisms at 3 distinct ecosystems. Students observe the flow of energy from the sun, to producers, consumers, and decomposers. Students observe the importance of biodiversity in each ecosystem
MS-ESS1. Earth's Place in the Universe	Students observe and learn about cyclic patterns of lunar phases.
MS-ESS2. Earth's Systems	Students observe cycles (rock, water, life, ect.) at different stages throughout the week. Students learn and observe how Earth's surface is constantly changing on ocean/sandhills, etc.
MS-ESS3. Earth and Human Activity	Students learn about natural disturbances that occur in California and how human activity and climate change have affected things like forest fires. Students observe areas impacted by humans and observe the resilience of a secondary growth forest. Students discuss the major role that human activities play in causing climate change.