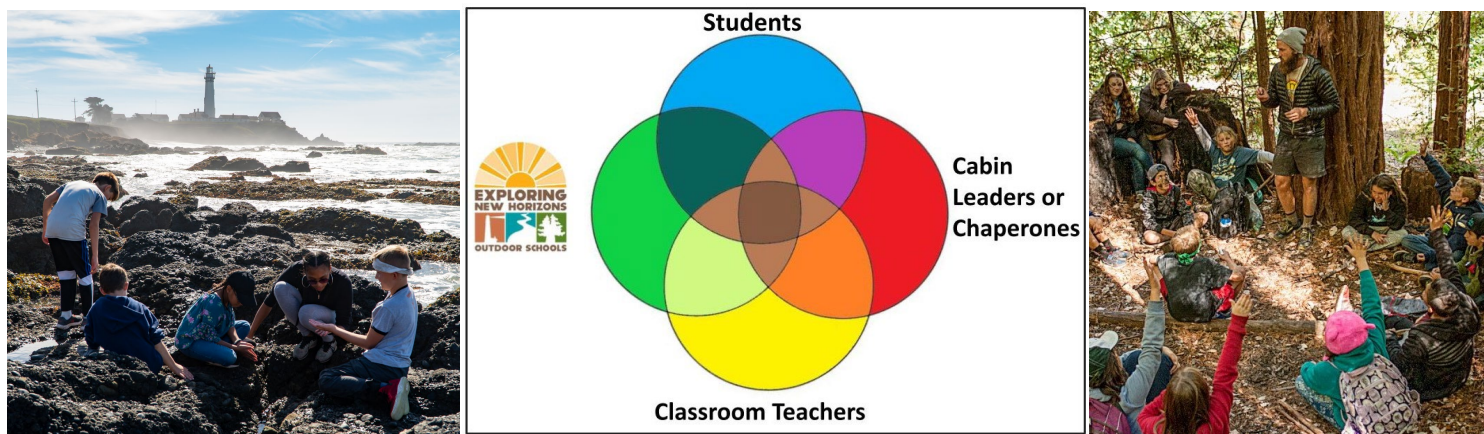



Exploring New Horizons Outdoor Schools 2025

[Exploring New Horizons](#) (ENH) engages school groups in outdoor education programs that empower students, build environmental literacy, and strengthen school communities. Founded as a nonprofit in 1979, ENH partners with over 100 schools each year, and in our 44-year history we have engaged over 223,000 students in 3 to 5-day residential outdoor education programs in the Santa Cruz Mountains and Pigeon Point Lighthouse. Each week, from September through May, ENH creates a once in a lifetime experience that participants will remember for the rest of their lives.



Our Impact: During the 2022-23 school year, 7,500 students, 1,079 high school cabin leaders and parent chaperones, and 285 classroom teachers participated in our program. Demographics of participating schools includes:

- 38% Title 1 (over 40% of students eligible for Free & Reduced Priced Lunch)
- 27% Contra Costa County, 21% Alameda 21%, 17% Santa Clara, 8% Monterey, 6% beyond
- 33% Hispanic, 31% White, 23% Asian, 10% 2 or more races, 3% Black, 1% Native American & Pacific Islander



Over 90% of the 1,000 classroom teachers surveyed in the last 10 years agree that participating students:

- Express more self-esteem & work better as a team (95%)
- Have strengthened relationships with peers and teachers (97%)
- feel more connected to the environment (96%)
- better understand the ecosystems of coastal California (97%)
- are more interested in learning about science (90%)
- better understand their role as environmental stewards (94%)

In follow up surveys 2-4 months after attending the program, the 525 students agreed that going to outdoor school still:

- Made them more interested in learning more about science (70%)
- Inspired them to do something to help the Earth (74%) - recycling, picking up trash, saving water, composting, stop carbon pollution



Our 2025 Goal is to open a 3rd site in order to reach over 9,000 students a year while increasing:

- the percentage of participating lower-income schools to 50%
- the number of participating Black and Latino students

Participating in hands-on learning in the outdoors during the critical period of middle childhood will increase students' academic performance and their social and emotional well-being, empowering them and their communities to better succeed in college and career, and to work together to create a healthier and more sustainable world.

When asked 'What do you see your students doing differently after coming to outdoor school?' teacher responses included:

- "They are more excited about science and asking a lot more questions about things they observe and have more empathy for the organisms in our environment."
- "We have greater cohesion as a class, with stronger relationships with each other, and working together in a more respectful way."
- "Being bonded together more as a class, with their peers and teachers, appreciating the environment around them and taking care of it and talking about science more."

When asked to comment on the experience, student responses included:

- "This was the best day of my life."
- "Wow! I'm having so much fun without my phone!"
- "The creek study was amazing. We found so many critters."
- "I enjoyed being outside in nature with my class. I want to implement that more in my everyday life."

When asked to comment on the impact of the experience, teacher responses included:

- "Outdoor science camp is a great opportunity for students to learn ways to be more independent, build friendships and learn about their impact on the world."
- "I witnessed at least five students who are very timid, come out of their shell. On the last day of camp, one of our students who is very shy speaking English, was able to share his favorite memory with all of the schools on stage."
- "Our kids learned things during their trip that they were unable to learn from the comfort of the classroom. This trip is the single most important school activity of my students' school experience so far!"

In surveys 2-4 months after attending

When asked, 'What academic, social, or emotional gains do you still see?' teacher responses included:

- "The students found new ways to work together and support each other. They have more of an interest in science and the natural world and believe in their own impact."
- "I noticed more of an interest being taken in Science and the environment. Socially the students that attended camp have built a much stronger sense of community and emotional bond. The students are more willing to take-on responsibilities in the classroom as well."
- "The experience helped them grow as individuals. For many of our students, Science Camp was their first time being away from home. They have gained more independence and more confidence. The students are also more aware and concerned about their local environment."

When asked what they learned about nature, the most common student answers were:

- that animals can live anywhere
- that being outdoors and not having a phone is really fun and felt more relaxing
- that constellations are real
- that everything comes from the dirt

When asked what they learned about themselves, the most common answers were:

- That I really like being outdoors and exploring
- that I love nature
- that I can survive without my parents
- I am more social outdoors
- I can get along with other people better than I think
- I have more stamina than I thought
- that I am very creative
- that I can take a walk by myself
- that I am a better person without screens
- that I am more independent than I thought
- being in outdoor school made me express my feelings
- that I can get along with other people
- I am more confident, patient, and more responsible