

Oregon Nature & Environmental Discovery Center Update

Dear Angels, Members, Helpers, Volunteers, Foundations, Sponsors and Community ~

Missing Links Discovery Trail

It's been a long journey but we can see the horizon now! Our new Discovery Trail matches hands-on games and mini-golf with the theme of the interdependent connections in nature. The first half of the trail was completed in fall of 2024 with help from the Four Way Community Foundation and the Carpenter Foundation. We hosted a fun group of teens from the Kalmiopsis Community Arts charter school in October to give feedback on the exhibits. Data shows that our location, on a major Oregon highway, will offer the annual 1M visitors to the area the fun family experiences they are seeking. We have had many interested inquiries and we are seeking funds to complete the remaining 5 holes and 4 connecting exhibits. We can't do this without you! Please go to our **Go Fund Me** site and help us make this happen!

<https://gofund.me/0fcaccac>



Events

June 20 & 21, Friday & Saturday - SKY GAZING events! Night sky family event and Sundials workshop.

July 26, Saturday - MOTHATHON V celebration of Lepidoptera will take place during National Moth week! While dancing the night away, we raise money to help support the center.

October 25, Saturday - HALLOWEEN FUN!



New Children's Programs

Pollywog Play The new Playgroup for Kids age 0 - 5 and their parent or care taker, happens in the Frog Town greenhouse at the Children's Natural Playground. Plenty of fun wooden toys, Fairy Town friends and even pollywogs! The covered area is an outdoor play space with carpeting and plants. Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am -12 noon. FREE.

Nature Club Nature crafts, outdoor exploration and permaculture activities for kids, uses recycled materials, hands-on games like **The Interconnections Cards**. Kids have fun inside and outdoors while learning about sustainability, regeneration, observation, and nurturing support of nature. FREE.

Giant Silk Moths Every spring we distribute Giant Silk Moth (Ceanothus moth) cocoons to local schools so elementary age children can watch them emerge and learn about this wonderful local phenomenon. FREE.

These free or sliding scale kids programs offer enrichment and connection to nature for our valley kids, (K - 6th grades), that would otherwise not be available. Children who experience the joy of discovering nature remember that joy all of their lives and grow to value the natural world in a deep and meaningful way that does not happen with only digital or book learning. Families who participate keep coming back year after year.



The Nature Center

Again in early spring the center features the beautiful Ceanothus Silk Moths.

In 2024 the center offered up close and personal experiences with Painted Ladies, Cabbage Whites, Red Admirals and Monarch butterflies, two Western Pond Turtles, Oscar and Butternut bunnies and two visiting lizards.



The Living Soil Ecosystem and The Living Forest Ecosystem interactive walls inside the Visitor Center proved to be a continuing enjoyment to both adults and kids. Lots of exploration occurred, looking under flaps, behind "secret" doors and following magnetic connections.

Nature Service & Immersion Program

In the Nature Service & Immersion Program, members can stay at the nature preserve, pay to serve and help with work such as gardening, tree planting and trail maintenance. This program offers people the opportunity to share in the excitement of regenerating and sustaining the wildlife preserve portion of the organization's property.

Organization Support

Since 2021 the organization has served over 4000 children, set up the Nature Service & Immersion program, created a camp kitchen, recovered two greenhouses, installed the new Turtle exhibit, opened the Living Soil Ecosystem and Living Forest Ecosystem exhibit walls, created the new Pollywog Play space for toddlers and completed half of the outdoor trail for the ONE Discovery Center.

We are deeply grateful to the [Oregon Community Foundation](#), [Four Way Community Foundation](#), [the Carpenter Foundation](#), [Meyer Memorial Trust](#) and [Evergreen Federal Bank](#) for their support in building our Nature Service Glamping facilities, building the new trail, upgrades to the front of the property, general operation support and with underwriting our Children's Programming.

We simply could not do what we do without our wonderful Angel group of donors, who have made this progress possible, and we love them!

The Volunteers and Staff who help with events, being docents, doing building, planting, weeding, and so much more, are a testimony to the "can-do" nature of our community. Thank you so much Volunteers and Staff!

The remainder of the support for the organization and its programs has come from individual donations and visitors to the Rusk Ranch Nature Center and from the new Nature Service and Immersion program.

We thank you so very much for all of your kindness, your support and your belief in our community!



Mother Tiger Moth and her eggs on Milkweed. Milkweed supports many other critters besides Monarch butterflies!

Warmest regards,

*The Board of Directors for
Rusk Ranch Nature Center*

*Erica, Diane, Geri, Divonna,
Susan, Kaci and Patty*



Kids at summer camp!

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Please visit our Go Fund Me page and help us make it happen! <https://gofund.me/0fcaccac>