

OPAL CREEK ANCIENT FOREST CENTER Celebrating and Cultivating Resilience

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



OPAL CREEK
ANCIENT FOREST CENTER



Letter from the Executive Director

In the years since the 2020 Beachie Creek fire, the Opal Creek ancient forested watershed and our organization have weathered tremendous challenges. What has come fully into focus is the resilient nature of both people and the Jawbone Flats landscape, the place we call home.

We celebrate the fortitude of Opal Creek Board members, staff, and community supporters of all kinds! You've ensured our organization remains viable and strong in the face of adversity. Jawbone Flats and the surrounding landscape now flourish with vibrant and colorful growth of native plants and trees, and a diversity of wildlife.

Four and a half years ago, I joined Opal Creek AFC determined to not be the person tasked with winding down this legendary organization. In 2025, we developed six core values including growth, curiosity, inclusivity, resilience, stewardship and respect. They are all relevant, but for me, the one that rings most true is Resilience: We lean in to tough challenges and become stronger as a result.

The following pages provide an overview of our impact in 2025 that made a meaningful difference to youth in Outdoor School, backpackers of all ages, and aspiring young college scientists. Every outcome was made possible by being in community and belonging in relationship with Opal Creek. It is compelling that we work so hard to provide challenges to others, while enduring challenges of our own.

Today, our team continues to advance this work with deep gratitude for collaborative relationships. We draw strength, knowledge, and a tremendous clarity for how Opal Creek sustains and supports a diverse community of passionate people. My goal is that we continue to cultivate resilience in future generations by providing the exact right kind of challenge, at the exact right time, so that our many next generation leaders become stronger as a result.

Thank you for being part of the Opal Creek community!

Nathan Reynolds
Executive Director



Financials

Your Generosity Matters!

Your generosity ensures many next generations engage with their peers and learn from nature in ways that inspire them emotionally and intellectually.

Thank you for your partnership and all we can accomplish together for youth, aspiring scientists and families today and in the years ahead.

FINANCIAL SUMMARIES

Total Current Assets	\$4,946,577
Net Assets w/o Donor Restrictions	\$3,722,396
Fixed & Other Assets	\$1,224,181
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$4,946,577
Total Liabilities	\$1,141,949
Total Net Assets	\$3,804,629
Revenue	\$1,880,073
Program Revenue	\$1,513,327
Operations	\$366,746

69%	26%	4%
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- Programs: \$911,864 - 69%
- Management and General: \$347,177 - 26%
- Fundraising: \$59,180 - 4%

Total expenses: \$1,318,221

“...this forest, even after the fire, continues to teach me to keep growing, changing, rising.”

Katerina Mikula
Lessons in Resilience



2025 A Year of Resilience



Outdoor School

More than 936 students from 20 schools engaged with nature at Silver Falls State Park for an immersive Outdoor School experience where they gained knowledge of local ecology and built lasting, personal relationships with the natural world. Bilingual instruction, delivered in English and Spanish, provided all participants full access to lessons. 2025 represented our highest student attendance per school to date.



Backpacking Expeditions

Oregon's wilderness areas served as the backdrop for transformative backpacking experiences for 75 youth and 20 adults. Five affinity group trips emphasized backcountry skills, local ecology, Leave No Trace, and cross-cultural collaboration. Our staff engaged Spanish-speaking immigrants and partnered with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde on tribally significant lands.



Researching the Recovery

More than 40 scientists, university professors, students, and volunteers completed five research trips to survey post-fire recovery at 18 dedicated plots across the Beachie Creek fire landscape. Participants documented stark differences in regeneration between severe and mosaic burn areas, comparing these findings to nearby ancient forest stands. These comprehensive datasets will guide future conservation planning and inform adaptive responses to increasing fire regimes across West Cascade forests.



Jawbone Flats

Five years after the 2020 Fire, recovery at Jawbone Flats continues to gain momentum. Over Labor Day weekend 2025, our "Burniversary," Opal Creek volunteers restored power production, retaining our water rights and marking a major milestone toward full hydroelectric replacement. Five FEMA-funded projects were completed with four more planned ensuring we advance eligible campus rebuilding and prioritize hydroelectric replacement.



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IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Because Nature is the Best Classroom

936 **20**
Students Schools

learned from nature in
Outdoor School at Silver Falls
State Park

75 **20**
Youth Adults

donned backpacks to
experience Oregon's
backcountry wilderness area

7
Volunteers

restored power and
water to Cabin 4 at
Jawbone Flats

40+ **18**
Scientists Plots

completed five research trips to
survey post-fire recovery at 18
plots in Jawbone Flats

65 **6**
Guests Weekends

made their first return to the Opal
Creek Wilderness since the 2020
Beachie Creek fire



Board of Directors

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Holley Shepard, Vice Chair
Rich Hannah, Treasurer
Clint Johnson, Secretary
Dan Bauer
Amanda Cooper
Adam Mims
Arlo Voorhees

Staff

Nathan Reynolds, Executive Director
Megan Selvig, Programs Director
Augustus Gleason, Facilities Director
D'Mario Mooney, Outdoor School Manager
Kenzi Merrill-Olsson, Expeditions Manager
Laura Ford, Finance & Administration Director
Justin Misner, Food Service Manager
Sarah Stuart-Sikowitz, Finance & Administration Director

Seasonal Staff

Pablo van Renterghem	Elizabeth Lay
Rosemary Riley	Diana Burgos
Ellie Yamamoto	Sy Sosa Medina
Andre Rivera	Andrew Conn
Henry Zinck	Jesse Garcia
Bobbi Kok	

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