

2011 Oklahoma Environmental Education Expo  
February 11, 2011  
Panel Discussion on Outdoor Learning Experiences

---



## GET 'EM OUTSIDE

*The best way for students to learn about nature and the environment is to GET 'EM OUTSIDE!  
In this session, participants will discover some of the options for outdoor learning experiences  
including spaces on schoolgrounds, off-site facilities, and field days.*

Moderator: Karla Beatty  
Education Coordinator  
Oklahoma Conservation Commission  
[karla.beatty@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:karla.beatty@conservation.ok.gov)  
405/521-6788

Panelists: Robert Gibbs  
Conservation Education Coordinator  
Rogers County Conservation District, Claremore  
[rogersccd@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:rogersccd@conservation.ok.gov)  
918/341-4147

Patricia Johnson  
Grove Valley Elementary  
Deer Creek Public Schools  
[johnsonp@deercreek.k12.ok.us](mailto:johnsonp@deercreek.k12.ok.us)  
405/359-3195

Candace Montgomery, Dianne Caldwell,  
Kelly Swanson, Peggy Matlock  
Red Oak Elementary  
Moore Public Schools  
405/735-4440

Every school has an outdoor classroom. The Outdoor Classroom comes in different sizes and shapes, hosts a diversity of resources, and is used by students and teachers for a variety of purposes. So where is yours, you ask? It's right outside your windows and doors. You walk through it each day as you enter the building and then leave it at the end of the day. So basically, **an outdoor classroom is any site outside of the school building that is used by teachers and students as a place for learning.** Have you ever noticed how students seem to gaze frequently out the windows or try to be first in line to get outside for recess? Students simply enjoy being outdoors, whether it's physically or mentally.

If teachers regard the school grounds as a three-dimensional reference library, many of their fears about going outside will be dispelled. We all use encyclopedias without knowing the total content of the volumes or even paying attention to more than one article. The same thing should be true of teaching outdoors.

*"A Teacher's Guide to Using the School Grounds for Environmental Studies."*—Helen Ross Russell from *Ten-Minute Field Trips*

## **On-Site Outdoor Classrooms**

Developing an Outdoor Classroom to Provide Education Naturally.

- [www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/wfiles/w113.pdf](http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/wfiles/w113.pdf)

Outdoor Classrooms: Guidelines and Features.

- [www.in.gov/dnr/nrec/files/OutdoorLabRevised0604.pdf](http://www.in.gov/dnr/nrec/files/OutdoorLabRevised0604.pdf)

Schoolyard Habitat Guide. Jefferson County Public Schools, Kentucky.

- [www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/departments/environmentaled/schoolyardhabgd/schoolydhbgd.html](http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/departments/environmentaled/schoolyardhabgd/schoolydhbgd.html)

## **Off-Site Outdoor Classrooms**

Rogers State University Conservation Education Reserve - [www.rogerscountyconservationdistrict.org/reservepage.htm](http://www.rogerscountyconservationdistrict.org/reservepage.htm)

Oxley Nature Center - [www.oxleynaturecenter.org/](http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org/)

Martin Park Nature Center - [www.okc.gov/parks/martin\\_park/index.html](http://www.okc.gov/parks/martin_park/index.html)

State Park Nature Centers - [www.travelok.com/state\\_parks](http://www.travelok.com/state_parks)

Quartz Mountain Nature Park - [www.quartzmountain.org/](http://www.quartzmountain.org/)

National Wildlife Refuges in Oklahoma - [www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/okrefuges.html](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/okrefuges.html)

National Park Service in Oklahoma - [www.nps.gov/applications/parksearch/state.cfm?st=ok](http://www.nps.gov/applications/parksearch/state.cfm?st=ok)

Camp Classen - <http://itsmycamp.org/>

## **Natural Resource Days**

Local Conservation Districts - [www.ok.gov/conservation/documents/CD-numbered-map-list.pdf](http://www.ok.gov/conservation/documents/CD-numbered-map-list.pdf)

OSU Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service - <http://countyext2.okstate.edu/>