

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.

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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

Outdoor Classrooms: Guidelines and Features.

- www.in.gov/dnr/nrec/files/OutdoorLabRevised0604.pdf

Schoolyard Habitat Guide. Jefferson County Public Schools, Kentucky.

- www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/departments/environmentaled/schoolyardhabgd/schoolydhabgd.html

Off-Site Outdoor Classrooms

Rogers State University Conservation Education Reserve - www.rogerscountyconservationdistrict.org/reservepage.htm

Oxley Nature Center - www.oxleynaturecenter.org/

Martin Park Nature Center - www.okc.gov/parks/martin_park/index.html

State Park Nature Centers - www.travelok.com/state_parks

Quartz Mountain Nature Park - www.quartzmountain.org/

National Wildlife Refuges in Oklahoma - www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/okrefuges.html

National Park Service in Oklahoma - 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

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