

A Short History of Outdoor Education in Stanislaus County

Compiled by Jessica Hewitt

1956	Mr. Willis T. Boyarsky organizes the first outdoor education program in Stanislaus County for Grayson Elementary students at Jones Gulch Camp in La Honda. After Boyarsky's success, Stanislaus County Office of Education sponsors a week of Outdoor Education for the following May.
1958	Old Oak Youth Camp in Sonora becomes the program site. Outdoor Education is now coordinated by SCOE.
1959	400 sixth graders from Grayson, Hickman, Empire, Milnes, Gratton, Hickman, Newman, Stanislaus, Waterford, Knights Ferry, La Grange and Patterson attend outdoor education. Richard Brians becomes coordinator of Outdoor Education.
1973	All school districts in Stanislaus County participate, except Turlock. 3,800 youngsters attend during the 29 weeks of program.
1977	The Neal E. Wade Outdoor Education Center is ready for occupancy by sixth graders and staff. The county office purchased the land for \$80,000 in 1975 from the San Mateo Girl Scout Association. Construction of the new facilities began in 1976 at 1.5 million dollars.
1980	The Stanislaus County Outdoor Education program is renamed Foothill Horizons Outdoor School after soliciting names from students across the county.
1981	Jim Cupp started construction of the Me-wuk Village. During their week of outdoor education, students from Turlock Elementary assist with early efforts.
1984	Pam Diggle (later Pam Ivie) selected to direct Foothill Horizons Outdoor School.
1984	The Outdoor Education Foundation seeks to financially support all county students to attend Foothill Horizons Outdoor School.

1985	SCOE purchases 36 more acres for Foothill Horizons Outdoor School. The strip along the eastern side campus adds stream access, a meadow and an historic trash site. The land was purchased from Bob and Doris Summers, who also donated an additional 18.51 acres.
1985	The completed Skytower and two groves of trees are dedicated to Dick Brians.
1988	Suju, an injured Red Tailed Hawk, joins our program. After 20 years of educating thousands of children, teachers and visitors, she dies in 2008. She is buried in Mullein Meadow.
1991	"Outdoor Education in Trouble" reads the title of a Modesto Bee article. Foothill Horizons hosts 39 weeks of program, \$100/student for 5-day program.
1996	6,000 students attend Foothill Horizons Outdoor School. 20% of schools attending are from Contra Costa County.
1998	Kristine (Cramer) acquires a Screech Owl from Stanislaus County Wildlife Care Center. After 13 years of educating, he escapes.
2003	Many districts impacted by reduced state funding and cannot participate. 30 weeks of program.
2009	Osi, an injured Swainson's Hawk, joins our program.
2011	Education Foundation allocates \$38,000 in grants for student to attend Foothill Horizons Outdoor School.
2012	Horus, a juvenile Screech Owl, joins our program.