



Vamonos Outside Family Recreation Programs
Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund
Project Status Final 8-30-24

The overall goal of our project is to improve engagement of Latinx and BIPOC communities in outdoor recreation and stewardship by providing a variety of outings that instill an appreciation and greater awareness of Central Oregon ecosystems.

Project Accomplishments (January 2023-August 2024):

To date, our project has reached 371 Latinx participants through Vamonos Outside day trips. This includes 29 separate outings with a variety of audiences. Programs include:

- 14 whitewater rafting days in partnership with Sun Country Tours. 6 days were with families, and 8 days were with youth.
- 1 5-day rafting trip on the Lower Deschutes River with 6 high school youth.
- 11 days of canoeing and kayaking at different lakes and rivers in Central Oregon with high school participants.
- 1 family day at Camp Tamarack, including a picnic, swimming, and canoeing.
- 1 fishing day, Vamonos a Pescar, where families received fishing equipment and instruction on free fishing day.
- 1 3-day family camping trip at The Cove Palisades.
- Additional Family Fishing Day cancelled due to weather.
- 3 additional camping trips planned in summer of 2023 and August 2024, but all were cancelled due to either smoke or weather (forecasted wind, rain, and cold temperatures).

The goals for these activities were to:

- Provide skill-building opportunities for water-based activities and camping for families who are new to these activities, focusing on safety.
- Provide informal place-based education about the rivers and places we visited, increasing participants' sense of place and conservation ethic.
- Share information about regulations associated with public lands, including necessary passes, fishing regulations, and camping regulations, in an approachable and inclusive setting.
- Introduce Latinx community members to new places to visit that are on public lands in their community.

Planning for these events and reaching new audiences required significant planning and outreach, which occurred from during the spring of each year. The Vamonos Outside team

formed and/or deepened partnerships with Latinx-serving groups to co-develop outings with their families. These groups included Juntos Aprendemos, Juntos (a program of Oregon State University), Migrant Education Program (a program of High Desert ESD), and Discover the Outdoors (a program of Bend Park and Recreation District). The team also attended many outreach events to recruit for events that were open to the broader Latinx community. Most of our programs filled to capacity and we received an abundant amount of positive feedback about the programs.

Lastly, we offered a Spring Into Nature Festival on Saturday, May 6, 2023 and Friday, June 14, 2024 at Sahalee Park in Madras. This was an alternative to our Birds Without Borders event, where we expanded the theme to focus broadly on the outdoors and caring for the land. The goal of the event was to celebrate the many ways that we all connect with nature and included nature arts and crafts, STEM activities, outdoor recreation, music, food, and more. Over 15 community partners provided activities, with over 300 people attending each year.

Activities included:

- Bird House Building with Oregon State Parks
- Fire Prevention Obstacle Course with Ochoco National Forest
- Early Literacy with Jefferson County Library District
- Nature Art Activities with Latino Community Association
- Pine Cone Bird Feeders and a Compass Course with Camp Fire Central Oregon
- Monarch Butterfly Activities with Deschutes Land Trust
- Bee Hotels with Think Wild
- Flight in Nature with the Central Oregon STEM Hub
- Water Safety with Madras Aquatic and Recreation District
- Mammals of Central Oregon with Discover Your Forest
- Seed Starts with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries
- Bird Activities with East Cascade Audubon Society
- Insect Activities with Juntos Aprendemos
- Fly Casting with Trout Unlimited
- Nature Treasure Hunt with the Children's Forest

The event also featured music performances by Latinx and Native American performers in 2023 and storytelling with Jefferson Greene, an indigenous knowledge holder in 2024.

Overall, we feel that we have accomplished or exceeded our project goals and objectives, with the exception of having to cancel camping trips due to weather and/or smoke. Our project enhanced access to water-based activities and camping for Latinx families and youth in our community and made these activities more inclusive by offering them in affinity spaces with Latinx community members. The project helped strengthen relationships with community partners who serve Latinx families, and also build community awareness about Vámonos Outside. These programs serve as an entry point to continued outdoor recreation, and also to engaging with VO's longer-term youth programs (including Jugamos Afuera and Camp Chica). The Spring Into Nature Festival brought an abundance of organizations and resources to

Madras, a small town, through a fun family event. These types of events are offered frequently in Madras, and families commented on having something positive and free that they could bring their kids to. This is an event that we will continue to offer in future years.