

Outdoor Education Center Feasibility Study

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The process of conducting this feasibility study was directed by an Advisory Committee of community members representing themselves and their organizational affiliations. In addition to representatives of the Sheridan community, the Advisory Committee also included representatives from the Crow community and a few other Wyoming communities. In addition, many of the findings in this report are the result of interviews conducted with stakeholders, who were identified based on their position in the Sheridan community either because of their organization affiliations or their contributions made at large.

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Executive Summary

This feasibility study was commissioned to investigate the opportunity for developing and sustaining an Outdoor Education Center (OEC) to serve learners of all ages from communities in Sheridan County as well as other nearby communities located in Montana and Wyoming.

What is an Outdoor Education Center?

An Outdoor Education Center (OEC—interchangeable with Environmental Learning Center, or ELC) uses place-based learning to teach students of every age life skills and leadership with the outdoors serving as the primary learning environment. While each OEC can vary with a unique mission and focus, OECs typically strive to foster connections with the natural world through experiential learning and positive outdoor experiences encouraging personal growth, social responsibility, active citizenship, and lifelong learning. To put it more simply, think of an OEC facility serving as a school, camp, and nature center all in one campus with a focus on being outside as much as possible.

The overarching questions this feasibility study set out to explore are as follows:

- 1) **What environmentally-focused educational facilities and campuses currently exist that are fulfilling a local or regional need?**
 - a. What is currently being offered relative to environmentally-focused education in terms of content and other program characteristics (target audience, location, time of year, duration, cost, enrollment, etc.)?
 - b. How do current offerings and availability compare to needs? Are there gaps in terms of programming, target audiences served, geographical areas, and so forth?
- 2) **What does it take to create and sustain a local OEC?**
 - a. What are different funding models and structures that have been utilized elsewhere for planning, facility development, ongoing funding, staffing, partnerships and governance?
 - b. What are the ways in which other similarly focused organizations have gone about this?
 - c. What are the key factors that need to be present in order to successfully launch and integrate an environmentally focused educational campus into the community? What are common challenges and pitfalls to be aware of? What are the strengths in our community that can be built upon?
 - d. What campus/facility needs are required for a successful local OEC?
- 3) **What interested partnerships are there in a local OEC?**
 - a. Who also serves target audiences who could benefit from programming offered by an environmentally-focused educational facility? (e.g., K-16 educational agencies, foundations, government agencies, social services, juvenile justice, early childhood, etc.)
 - b. How does this complement the offerings and mission of other agencies in the community?

4) **How can SCLT address OEC opportunities within current, prospective, and future conservation projects?**

- a. Are any of SCLT's current conservation projects and opportunities well-situated or otherwise suitable for a prospective OEC campus?
- b. What suitability factors should be prioritized when contemplating a prospective OEC campus?

The Sheridan Community Land Trust (SCLT) would like to recognize that this study was made possible through a grant from the Land Trust Alliance in partnership with the LOR Foundation. We are deeply appreciative of their vision, trust, and commitment to seeing western communities thrive into the future by recognizing and understanding our inextricable ties to the landscape.

We would like to thank Mariam Azin with PRES Associates for her guidance and assistance with framing this feasibility study and helping to facilitate initial community dialogues.

We would also like to thank Bill Yellowtail for his ardent enthusiasm, vision, and willingness to be a bridge for our communities here in northern Wyoming and communities in southern Montana on the Crow and Cheyenne reservations.

We hope that this feasibility study will be used to guide the next steps of investigation for developing an OEC to serve our area and that the study can inform and focus any future investments of time, talent, and resources from those who recognize the role an OEC can play in achieving our communities' educational and civic responsibilities.



Colin Betzler
Executive Director



Grace Cannon
OEC Project Coordinator



Katie Belton
Creative Director

"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught."

Baba Dioum





Description of Project Concept

Local/Regional Facilities Introduction

In order to understand what kind of outdoor and place-based education is available in the Sheridan area, information on facilities and programming has been gathered in this report. Data on buildings and campuses in the local and regional area were collected to help create a complete picture of the potential educational uses that may emerge from existing structures on our landscape. The development of an Outdoor Education Center (OEC) that could use existing facilities would be more efficient and less costly than trying to construct a physical space along with programming curriculum from the ground up.

Table 1 lists the facilities that were surveyed, creating a descriptive map of spaces in the area that already house—or could potentially house—educational, recreational, or creative programming. Some of the facilities listed house relevant programming, a description of which can be found in the next subsection. Other facilities in the table serve as informational models for what kind of capacity certain organizations must possess to be able to successfully serve their stated function.

In most cases, representatives of each facility were contacted and invited to complete site attribute surveys of the properties. In a few cases, short interviews were conducted over the phone to retrieve the same type of information. Data collected through these surveys include information on property ownership, location, season(s) of operation, acreage, description of structures, day-use capacity, overnight capacity, and community availability. The collection of this information demonstrates the current and potential uses for each space.



Using an existing facility to house a new OEC would maximize efficiency and minimize cost.

See Table 1. Local/Regional Facilities

Local Programming Introduction

In order to capture the offerings available for youth and community members of all ages to engage with local environmental surroundings in an educational context, information on science-based programs was collected first (for example: offerings from Science Kids, Spear-O-Wigwam, Wyoming Wilderness Association, and the YMCA). Then, the scope of offerings was expanded to include recreational and artistic programming that focuses in some way on taking advantage of outdoor and region-specific resources. Examples within the latter category include Sheridan County Museum—which offers several opportunities for students of different ages to engage with local history—and the Ucross Foundation, which opens its doors to the public and scheduled groups of students to learn about art that is created there at the Artist Residency Program.

The information that appears in Table 2 was collected from online sources, through interviews, and correspondence with program leaders. In the case of larger organizations like the YMCA, Tongue River Valley Community Center, and Science Kids, the specific offerings that are listed should stand as examples of programming that may change topics from year to year. These examples, however, are representative of what is available to certain age groups and during certain times of year.



Jill Langer

Several organizations in the Sheridan area offer outdoor recreational and educational programming for youth in the community.

See Table 2. Local Outdoor, Environmental, and Region-Specific Educational Programming





Facility Opportunities

One of the main reasons for undertaking this feasibility study is tied to the mission of the Sheridan Community Land Trust in that SCLT works in partnership with landowners, individuals, families, and entities in Sheridan County to protect natural areas and agricultural lands using perpetual restrictions limiting certain types of development on these lands. These private properties can be sold just like any other piece of property, though any development restrictions remain in place transferring with the title in the form of a Deed of Conservation Easement. SCLT looks to local and regional planning documents and community assessments to make sure that all conservation work is completed in agreement with long-term visions of how the local communities would prefer to develop. However, no planning document or community insight exists when it comes to the concept of future interest in community education campuses. SCLT will consult with involved partners while looking to the narratives, conclusions, and potential next steps from this feasibility study to help vet potential conservation projects for possible current and future community education uses, granted such reserved rights are supported by the property owner at the time of placement of the conservation easement.

Currently, SCLT is independently engaged in project work on several properties that may be potentially-suited for future development of an OEC. Gathering community input and assessing needs, interests and opportunities at this point in time will assist SCLT in examining how to best accomplish its long-term mission with an aim on instilling a greater understanding of the role conservation plays in maintaining the rich character and quality of life experienced in the Sheridan area.

The following are properties that have been given initial vetting for potential suitability as a location for a possible OEC campus. They are discussed in narrative fashion, reflecting upon examination criteria highlighted in Table 1 and the discussion found in this report. Names have been altered for confidentiality.



The Acme power plant is located north of Sheridan along the Tongue River.

Acme Power Plant Site

The Acme Power Plant Site is located along the Tongue River north of Sheridan at an elevation of 3,600'. The property is comprised of roughly 7 acres, with the Tongue River bisecting the parcel. The property is within walking distance to State lands and adjacent to private lands, which currently allow year-round access for hunting and other forms of recreation. There is a heavily dilapidated four-story brick shell of roughly 30,000 square feet that has asbestos throughout and is not in any condition for safe use at this time. In addition, there are two garage/storage-type facilities and several trailers of no value on the property at this time.

The site is easily accessible year-round for all types of vehicles including large buses. This is a logical site for year-round use of the property, though July and August can be hot and dry, and the area is well known for having rattlesnakes. Fall use may prove difficult due to the high hunter numbers using adjacent public and private lands ranging from mid-October through the end of December.

From a program perspective, Acme Power Plant presents an interesting place-based education opportunity with riparian cottonwood and sagebrush grassland environments on-site—and in close proximity with access to mountain ecology roughly 30 minutes away.

At this time, the property is being considered for its location and active project aspects only, as there is no potable water, no functioning septic and no power on-site at this time. While the power plant may be salvageable for some type of redevelopment, the costs would likely be extreme, and an OEC may find a redeveloped facility more expensive to maintain and run due to the age and style of construction. The additional structures on the property would be unlikely candidates to serve any function in support of an OEC. If and when redevelopment and reclamation of the site moves forward, it is likely that all structures could be torn down during the reclamation process—though opportunities for community feedback would be part of any process.

At this time, the property is not available for community use or specific rental, though this could potentially change in the future after reclamation and possible redevelopment takes place on this property.

If redevelopment of the Power Plant structure appeared financially feasible and physically possible, it might present an interesting opportunity for further discussion of this site for an OEC.

The location of the property and vicinity area presents several education themes, including riparian ecology and regional history. In addition, when reclamation or redevelopment take place, not only would the site present an opportunity to learn about the environmental reclamation processes, but an OEC could be a possible outcome and should be examined by the community to gauge potential support. That said, the physical location of the site does seem to limit its attractiveness for a fully developed, year-round OEC with the site being better suited for a smaller-scale community education and flexible-use space at best.





FM Ranch

The FM Ranch is located in the foothills of the Bighorns at an elevation of 7,200'. The property is comprised of several hundred acres adjacent to the Bighorn National Forest as well as within day-trip distance of the Cloud Peak Wilderness. There are nearly two-dozen existing structures on the site, which formerly functioned as a guest ranch.

Access for 2-wheel drive vehicles is limited to the summer season—at best, and high clearance and 4-wheel drive vehicles would be recommended for this time period. Summer access is impossible for anything larger than a mid-size passenger van. Winter access would be limited to snow coach or snowmobile. Due to the elevation, the summer access season ranges from roughly June 1 through September 15 remaining dependent on storm events and weather patterns.

While the possibility exists for year-round use of the property and facilities, the facilities are limited to spring/summer/fall use, at best, due to structure condition, lack of insulation, lack of power, deficient septic system, and lack of year-round potable water systems.

There are 23 structures on the property, comprised of a kitchen/dining hall, recreation cabin, and two equipment storage garages with the remainder of structures being residential cabins. The facilities are in various states of disrepair and would require varying levels of investment to bring them up to acceptable standards for the concept of an OEC. At this time, only four of the cabins appear to have any real use value, as the remainder are in such a state of disrepair that it would seem cost-prohibitive to make the necessary investments for potential OEC use.

Purely from a programming perspective, FM Ranch presents an ideal place-based learning situation with rich and diverse mountain ecology, not to mention four-season opportunities. The hundreds of acres of private land present further freedom for on-site educational studies and uses—and just beyond are thousands of acres of public land.

If investments were to be made, the FM Ranch property could potentially have between 20 and 40 beds for a residential-style OEC facility. However, kitchen and dining facilities would prove to be more of a bottleneck, and food storage, cooking and seating more than 20 people for any one meal would prove difficult if not impossible without sizeable expansion through additional facilities.

At this time, the property represents an excellent potential day-trip location for programs that are comfortable utilizing 4-wheel drive, high clearance vehicles on steep and winding mountain roads. While it is not currently available for community use, this could change in the future given the right opportunity. However, with the exception of Sheridan College, it does not appear that any community entities that conduct routine programming are equipped or comfortable to be in a position to utilize the FM Ranch property due to the difficult and intimidating access. Ultimately, the limitations on year-round use and significant cost of investment do not outweigh the complicated access. As a result, the FM Ranch property appears to be ill-suited for a residential OEC campus.

North Gateway Park

The North Gateway Park is the newest city park located along the Goose Creek within the city limits of Sheridan at an elevation of 3,700'. The property is comprised of roughly 31 acres and adjacent to another 40 acres of parkland also owned by the City of Sheridan. Goose Creek runs along the eastern boundary of the parcel for roughly 1/3 mile. The property is within walking and biking distance of several other urban parks in Sheridan, though no other public lands are within similar distance.

At this time, there are no structures on the property with the exception of a small municipally owned sewer lift station to house mechanical systems.

The site is easily accessible year-round for all types of vehicles including large buses. Its location within Sheridan city limits and adjacency to the city's pathway system do allow for easy non-motorized access and connection to parks and downtown as well as many neighborhoods. As a result, the property would seem to be an appropriate potential site for year-round OEC use. There are some development limitations on the property due to the nature of how it was acquired by the City but a year-round OEC concept is possible, particularly when one considers the potential associated with the adjacent 40-acre city park.

From a program perspective, North Gateway Park presents an interesting place-based education opportunity with riparian cottonwood and floodplain grassland environments on-site and in close proximity with access to mountain ecology roughly 40 minutes away. The property is protected by a conservation easement and slated to see stream restoration work in the years ahead, which adds to the unique education themes.



The North Gateway Park is located along Goose Creek within the city limits of Sheridan.





Programming Opportunities

Review of the local outdoor, environmental, and region-specific educational offerings in Table 2 reveals several opportunities for supporting existing programs and for further building upon the currently available resources. There are many offerings for youth during the summer, particularly those that are focused on recreation. However, the number of offerings decreases as the age of participants increases toward high school age and beyond, with the high school demographic seeming particularly underserved. Additionally—as these programs are offered as extracurricular—the number of the offerings increases in the summer months to fill the extra time that young students have when they are out of school and decreases during the school year. Through conversations with community members, it has become clear that there is a strong desire to have year-round programming that is open to a diverse range of ages—even including adults—and that has a focus on academic topics as well as outdoor recreation. Within the city of Sheridan, there is a single high school where students of all socioeconomic backgrounds are educated together. Sheridan is large enough that its population is diverse in economic makeup, but it is small enough that residents of all backgrounds coexist and interact on a regular basis. A community this size has the opportunity to reach and support its underserved population alongside its more privileged residents.

Although resources for non-profit organizations in a small community like Sheridan are inevitably finite and program leaders can be protective of funding sources and program content, there is a strong desire from several organizations to adopt a more collaborative approach to their work. Table 3 outlines a list of organizations that may be interested in building partnerships with a future OEC. There have been requests for shared multi-use working space and shared professional staff members. This collaborative spirit extends to the blending of curricular disciplines. There are several instances of science programs coordinating with local artists and employing artistic methods to fully engage and activate students. Within a region so rich in history and a community that values the arts next to the hard sciences, there is ample opportunity to provide interdisciplinary programming in an OEC that fosters deep learning. Interdisciplinary and collaborative methods have the potential to make a new center unique both among existing programs in the Sheridan community as well as among other OECs across the country.



There are exciting opportunities to enhance existing outdoor educational offerings in the Sheridan area.

Sheridan's small size and close proximity to the Crow and Cheyenne communities across the Wyoming/Montana state border provides further opportunity for an OEC to be active and productive in its community outreach. There are currently few opportunities for Sheridan county residents to meaningfully and creatively interact with students and members of the Crow and Cheyenne communities. Including Crow and Cheyenne leaders in the planning and preparation for an OEC in the Sheridan area has the potential to bridge cultural gaps that would benefit everyone involved.

There was early recognition during the feasibility study of the value and potential collaboration that might exist through developing an OEC in partnership with our neighbors to the north - the Crow and Cheyenne communities. This theme was further developed during the initial and subsequent meetings with Advisory Committee members and was widely supported by those participants as a potential cornerstone for developing an OEC in our region. As multiple participants pointed out, an OEC built upon a foundation of place-based learning can't help but be heavily influenced by the cultural stories woven into the fabric of the landscape.

The Wyoming/Montana border area of the Bighorn mountain foothills would naturally lend itself to this intercultural focus for a prospective OEC. The opportunity that such a location, facility, and intercultural programming represent would be singular and entirely unique among other OECs in the country. It would present an authentic opportunity for residents of Sheridan County and others to meaningfully interact with members of the Crow and Cheyenne communities within a framework of mutual respect and admiration for each other's respective histories. This intercultural theme has the potential to bridge cultural gaps, providing an opportunity for people across the country and around the world to invest in developing a new narrative with Native American people and their culture.



There is robust community interest in further developing year-round, interdisciplinary programming for underserved and diverse groups, such as for high school students and adults of the Sheridan, Crow, and Cheyenne communities.





Creating and Sustaining a Center

Investigating Funding Models

There are hundreds of OECs in operation throughout the United States—each with their own unique niche and service area within the place-based outdoor learning landscape. Many operate in partnership with universities, National Parks, State Parks, YMCAs, 4-H groups, nonprofit organizations, and other youth-related organizations. While the missions and programming of each center vary widely, their business models tend to be more congruent with the majority of OECs realizing revenue from three main income streams to achieve sustainability: charitable contributions, program earnings, and interest from endowments.

The Rainier Institute, located south of Seattle, was launched in 2015 as a hybrid OEC in partnership with the National Park Service and the University of Washington. Prior to launching, they completed a business plan, which included a thorough examination of financial statistics for a handful of OECs to better understand the array of business approaches for OECs that achieved sustainability. With the permission of John Hayes, Director of the Rainier Institute, figures from two of these OECs that most directly reflect the type of OEC contemplated in this feasibility study are represented below.

Both Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and Island Wood Environmental Learning Center are independent nonprofit OECs. Wolf Ridge is located in the arrowhead region of Minnesota while Island Wood is located on Bainbridge Island in Washington.



Across the country, OECs operate using funding models to meet the particular needs of their communities. Several of these models are helpful in considering a model that would be right for an OEC near Sheridan.

Chart A. Financial Comparison

Chart A is a summary of financial information from these two centers. Three years of financial information was gathered from the 990 tax forms and averaged for each organization. Neither of the centers' program income (i.e. tuition paid for by participants) accounts for 100% of the total revenue. Percentages of program revenue varied from 51% to 79%. Most centers that are operating above 60% earned revenue have the capacity to serve well over 100 students at time. Scalability of capacity and program income go hand in hand and the higher the capacity of an OEC, the higher their program revenue will be as a percent of their overall revenue. Smaller OECs can expect to see starting program income of under 50%. These figures are indications of significant economies of scale likely associated with administrative and support service costs.

Chart A

	Wolf Ridge	Island Wood
Revenue	3-Year Average	3-Year Average
Contributions	\$378,831.67	\$2,725,070.67
Programming	\$2,026,033.00	\$3,017,003.00
Investment	\$46,959.00	\$228,232.67
Other	\$125,926.00	-\$71,991.33
Total	\$2,577,749.67	\$5,898,315.01
Expenses		
Tuition Grants	\$73,933.00	\$281,074.67
Salaries	\$1,382,773.33	\$3,522,283.67
Other	\$1,205,446.33	\$3,006,801.33
Total Expense	\$2,662,152.67	\$6,810,159.67
Net	-\$84,403.00	-\$911,844.67
Endowment Funds	\$63,770.67	\$13,867,158.00
% Programming	79%	51%
# of Beds	365	143





Creating and Sustaining a Center

Investigating Funding Models *continued*

All of the OECs analyzed offer tuition assistance (scholarships) to schools in addition to an already subsidized tuition figure. The amount of scholarships offered to schools is most often based on a metric, such as a school's free and reduced lunch rate. It is difficult to compare the amount of scholarships offered by other centers because there does not appear to be a consistent way by which scholarships are accounted.

Most OECs use a combination of supplementary revenue streams to support programs. Many raise a significant amount of money through donations, grants, and corporate contributions. The fundraising capacity of these different organizations is largely a function of the organizations' history and the geographic region. It is also important to note that structure of nonprofit organizations is dependent upon a board of directors with the responsibility of helping raise funds. In addition to fundraising, some OECs generate revenue through facility rentals and retail store operations.

For an alternative funding method to these more traditional and independent OECs, we reached out to the Casper Mountain Science Program (CMSP). The CMSP is unique in both its development and operation and presents a solid alternative option to the Sheridan community for contemplating an OEC.

CMSP was established as a partnership outdoor education program by Natrona County School District and Casper College in 2008 with the concept of using college students as instructors for K-12 in exchange for class credits. CMSP began as a pilot project with fall and spring weeklong sessions and remained in "pilot" phase for 3 years. Initial funding was provided by Natrona County B.O.C.E.S. (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) and later augmented and fully funded the program with some in-kind provided by Natrona County School District. It runs from the end of August through December and then March through May. CMSP utilizes an existing facility: a Girl Scout summer camp located 20 minutes from Casper that had previously sat empty during the off season. CMSP targets middle school students first, then fills remaining openings with elementary and high school students from Natrona County School District before opening up availability to outside groups.

A unique aspect of the CMSP program is that both day and overnight programs are standards-based and explicitly tied to school district curricula, making it relatively easy for teachers to incorporate the programs into their existing schedules and lessons. CMSP exists to augment and support student growth in the Natrona County School District. It primarily works with the Student Conservation Association, as most Casper College students are unable to take an entire semester off to instruct.

CMSP just completed its 6th year of full-time programming serving 2,400 students with a budget of \$400,000.

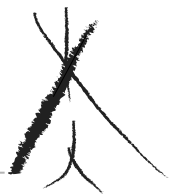
Key Factors for Success and Sustainability

Below is a list of suggestions gathered from correspondence with Wolf Ridge, Island Wood, and Mount Rainier OECs as well as a number of more regional OECs (Casper Mountain and Teton Science Schools) about their respective operations, programming, and business approach.

In speaking with these OECs, they shared many OEC conclusions and insights in regard to creating a healthy income model for sustaining programs and operations.

Shared Keys to Financial Sustainability:

- Annual program income between 60%—75% of total revenue is critical.
- Annual fundraising income between 25%—40% of total revenue is critical.
- Bricks and mortar facilities are expensive, and the ability to use existing facilities creates immediate value and scalability.
- Prioritize building a diverse donor base and keeping them well stewarded.
- Communicating the true cost of OEC programming to clients is imperative.
- Assisting clients with fundraising for program tuition assistance is imperative.
- Graduate student partnerships are actually an added expense to an OEC.
- Assume a “full program” of clients represents 80% true facility capacity.
- Every organization will have its own unique approach to sustainability.
- Community engagement and buy-in is vital for financial support.
- Many more OECs are surviving vs. thriving—sustainability is difficult.





Target Program Audiences

The development of a year-round OEC in the Bighorn mountain foothills region could benefit from targeting specific audiences through its programming. As has already been discussed in this report, there is interest within the community for programs that would be aimed at a variety of age groups, high school ages in particular. Offering programs during weekends and other leisure times that is open to youth and adults alike has the potential to attract families. Given the investment of young families in the area's strong school system, this could be a very important audience to engage. Furthermore, there is a network of families who homeschool their children in Sheridan and the surrounding area. Homeschooling families are often on the lookout for programmatic opportunities for their children.

The benefits of an OEC could also extend to the school districts themselves. The implementation of Next Generation Science Standards and the prospect of adopting Indian Education for All, which began in Montana has been promoted in Wyoming, present challenges and opportunities for many teachers in the schools. Programming at an OEC could help meet these types of standards by offering resources both to teachers and students. Curriculum aimed at students could directly fulfill certain standards while other curriculum aimed at teachers could support them by providing them with tools and strategies to continue meeting standards in innovative and successful ways in their own classrooms.

There are other opportunities within Sheridan's school districts of which an OEC could take advantage. Firstly, Sheridan County School District #1 operates on a Monday through Thursday schedule with students. That means that students in this district are out of school each Friday. Big Horn and Tongue River Schools offer extracurricular programs to their students on these days, as does the Tongue River Valley Community Center. Secondly, Sheridan High School in Sheridan County School District #2 has launched an initiative to help increase graduation rates that is called Next Level. The goal is to engage students on a deeper level to motivate them to make it all the way to graduation day. The benefits of outdoor education align with the goals of this initiative, and an emphasis on shared goals could be beneficial in targeting the local school districts.

The Sheridan community is well known for its investment in quality education. From parents and students to school teachers and administrators, there are many audiences in the greater Sheridan community that could benefit from and contribute meaningfully to OEC programming.



Tim Doolin Photography

Strategically engaging specific audiences would set a new OEC up for success. Important audiences may include families throughout the community, homeschooling families, and teachers and students within school districts.

Conclusions

Select Findings

Evaluation of community assets reveals that there are multiple programs available for engaging youth in outdoor learning in the Sheridan area. However, several patterns and opportunities become clear in looking at the target age of participants and season of the current offerings. It is evident that the community values these kinds of programs, but the majority of the programs are focused on young children under the age of 12, and they are run as extracurricular activities—mostly in the summer season. These gaps in program offerings do not exist for lack of interest.

There is similar interest in the extended community for lifelong, year-round, outdoor-based learning opportunities. Existing programs are willing and eager to forge alliances and collaborate to share resources. Making additional flexible classroom space available to program leaders would provide them with more opportunities for consistency and growth, increase their level of investment and foster collaborative support for a new OEC. Furthermore, the shortage of access for students to routine outdoor education leaves the door open for an OEC to find meaningful partnerships with the local school districts.

Representatives from two of the three school districts in Sheridan County have been key participants in this feasibility study. They made it clear that they would support the development of an OEC given that any curriculum or facility would augment traditional offerings and not detract from their schools—as a charter school would. An OEC would be further attractive to the districts if there were offerings in teacher training and curriculum enrichment or programming that met existing teaching standards.

While a traditional OEC experience would struggle to succeed strictly based on the number of students within a 300-mile radius, a larger impact area could be considered by developing a unique curriculum focus that is interdisciplinary and multicultural. The development of an OEC with this approach would be greatly benefited by the involvement of Crow and Cheyenne tribes. Through this study, it has become clear that there is interest and support from the Crow community for an OEC concept serving their students.

This feasibility study demonstrates that there is definitive community interest in further examining residential OEC opportunities within a realistic mindset for our region. Within that realistic mindset, there is a real possibility to create a unique center of learning that encourages stewardship of the natural resources in the region, develops a connection to nature and the environments across all ages of the community, and creates a space for cultural exchange to better understand the natural heritage and cultures of indigenous people groups. Programming that implements place-based curriculum and highlights intercultural exchange in the region, will promote stronger bonds and friendships within education systems and communities.

In moving forward beyond the scope of this study, there are a number of steps that can be taken to continue to pursue the feasibility and potential construction of an OEC in the Sheridan area. While making progress toward larger goals, this study has also revealed that there are many existing facilities that could be well-positioned for soft-startup use. Recommendations for next steps can be found in the next section.





Recommended Next Steps

Step 1.

Determine how best to continue community dialogue for an OEC.

Benchmarks

- Determine who should take an organizing, convening, and leadership role—both from an entity and individual perspective.
- Determine and analyze potentially immediate and low-cost options for creating flexible outdoor education base camp structures in Sheridan and Crow Agency.
- Develop, pilot, and assess unique and scalable intercultural curriculum within existing regional programs. Programs could include Science Kids, YMCA, SCLT Unplug, and others that are interested. Priority would be to build a cultural partnership with tribal representatives, historians, and educators.
- Reach out and convene a focus group of interested teachers to discuss, lead and develop next steps from a teaching professional standpoint for the possible creation of an OEC. Particular areas of focus could include creating standards-based, district aligned curriculum that features place-based learning techniques and prioritizing intercultural exchange.
- Identify a specific group to pursue development of an intercultural curriculum for flexible community use while also prioritizing state educational standards.

Step 2.

Complete a strategic plan or business plan for a potential pilot project to potentially take place in Fall 2017, Winter 2018, Spring 2018.

Benchmarks

- Identify and negotiate terms for the best available existing facility for pilot use.
- Explore partnership opportunities with Teton Science Schools and Casper Mountain Science Program to assist with curriculum, instruction, or instructional training for pilot use.
- Partner with regional, intercultural historians to develop a focused intercultural curriculum intended for pilot use.
- Request and collect letters of support from coordinating entities and those involved in the feasibility study for grant and fundraising purposes.
- Identify accurate costs, determine complete logistics, identify funding partners and submit grants and fundraising requests to meet costs of pilot program.
- Formally request an ANCA (Association of Nature Center Administrators) professional team to visit Sheridan and assist with the development and initial session of this pilot project.

Step 3.

Arrange for a visit to similar and applicable OECs for a group of active Sheridan OEC supporters.

Benchmarks

- Identify group of 4-8 representatives with diverse and applicable backgrounds.
- Have these representatives further vet the existing list of similar OECs to select at least one regional for a visit as well as one that best represents where a program should strive to be in the first 3-5 years. See Table 4 for some unique institutions that stand out for a signature reason.
- Identify best timing for visit(s) and cost estimates, incorporating any budget shortfalls into pilot funding requests.

Step 4.

Pursue Satellite and Main Campus OEC concepts.

Benchmarks

- Develop a formal rating matrix to continue researching potential foothill campus locations including lands in both Wyoming and Montana.
- Continue exploring and developing potential “urban” satellite campuses to develop collaboration among existing programming organizations for Sheridan, Ranchester, Dayton, Lodge Grass, Crow Agency and others that may be interested.



Interdisciplinary and multicultural outdoor educational programming that is offered year-round for diverse age groups would bolster existing local offerings and make an OEC in the Sheridan region unique among other OECs across the country.





Community Research Data Tables

Table 1. Local and Regional Facilities

FACILITY	OWNER/ OPERATOR	LOCATION	SEASON	ACREAGE	STRUCTURE	DAY-USE CAPACITY	OVERNIGHT CAPACITY	COMMUNITY AVAILABILITY
Acme	Sheridan County Conservation District	Former Acme town site north of Sheridan	Year-Round	7 acres with additional state nearby	30,000 sq ft currently usable	Not currently available	Not currently available	Not currently available
Antelope Butte Mountain Recreation Area	Antelope Butte Foundation	US HWY 14 @ FS Rd 244--Bighorn National Forest	Year-Round	500 permitted acres, with access to forest	Lodge (~10,500 sq ft) with restrooms and restaurant, Garage (~2,800 sq ft), 2 chair lifts	Skiing, Snowboarding, Hiking, Biking, Camping. Lodge seats about 300 people on three floors.	Tent camping available, or "locking" in Lodge	Available to be rented: Special Events, Festivals, Meetings, Weddings, Camps
Black Canyon Youth Camp	Crow Tribe	Crow Reservation	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>
Burgess Junction Visitor Center	USDA Forest Service / Bighorn National Forest— but looking for new operator	Bighorn National Forest on HWY 14, 45 miles from Sheridan	Not in use	53 acres	Main Building (5,000 sq ft): Vestibule, Lobby, Reception, Offices, Sales, Storage, Theater, Projection Room, Exhibit Hall, Shop	Paved Hiking Trail	RV Trailer Court Site	Not in use
Camp Bethel	Camp Bethel Inc. / 2 Full-time employees	Big Horn Mountains, 6103 W. US HWY 14, Dayton, WY 82836 (4 miles S.E. of Burgess Junction, across from Prune Creek National Forest Campground)	Year-Round	12 acres	11 Structures total: 5 cabins (each will sleep 12-16), Pine lodge (will sleep 68), Chapel/ Conference Educational Building (Seats 150), Dining Hall (Seats 150), misc buildings and two private homes for the two full-time employees.	Bathrooms, two classrooms, and can also provide meals if needed or they can rent the kitchen and cook for themselves	There will be 150 beds by the end of 2017 (Currently 133 beds), bathroom with showers	Available to be rented when not in use. Have rented to community groups like Sheridan County School District #1, RENEW, Celebrate Recovery, etc.

FACILITY	OWNER/ OPERATOR	LOCATION	SEASON	ACREAGE	STRUCTURE	DAY-USE CAPACITY	OVERNIGHT CAPACITY	COMMUNITY AVAILABILITY
Camp Roberts	YMCA (Property leased from Forest Service)	50 mi from Sheridan, 15 mi east of Buffalo off HWY 16	Summer: Mid-May through September	3 leases with separate acreage: 20 acres to develop with buildings, 180 acres of horse pasture, outfitters' lease to acres on the mountain	Dining Hall, bath hall, 3 bunkhouses (20+ pp), 5 cabins, yurt used as classroom space (sometimes also as bunkhouse), camp store, other cabins used for rentals and specialty staff	Dining Hall, bath hall, 3 bunkhouses (20+ pp), 5 cabins, yurt used as classroom space (sometimes also as bunkhouse), camp store, other cabins used for rentals and specialty staff	50-60 people	Yes
Eatons Dude Ranch	Eatons	Wolf, WY	Summer: June - Sept	7,000 acres	51 individual cabins, Main Ranch House, etc.	Howard Hall (80-100 max.), Dining Room (45 ppl), Sun Room (20-30 ppl), Elliot (15-20 ppl)	Can accommodate 125 guests	Can be rented for weddings and special events.
FM Ranch	Sheridan Community Land Trust	Bighorn foothills west of Sheridan	Summer	Several hundred acres	23 buildings (4 buildings in good condition)	Hiking, biking, equestrian, fishing opportunities—not currently available	Not currently available	Not currently available
HF Bar Dude Ranch	HF Bar	Saddlestring, WY	Summer: June – Sept	7,500 acres	Ranch house, Barn, Club House, Office building, ~25 cabins, Pit Field, etc.	<i>unspecified</i>	Can accommodate 100 guests	Can be rented for weddings and special events.
Poulson Griffith Youth Camp	Youth Inc.	Big Goose Rd, 5 miles from Sheridan	Spring, Summer, Fall	20 acres	6 structures total: Metal building with kitchen (1,500 sq ft), building with restrooms (400 sq ft), 4 gazebos	Open area with tables and chairs, kitchen, restrooms w/ showers, new deck on front of building	Tent camping available, 20-30 people camping could move indoors if necessary	Sheridan, Johnson, and Cambell Counties: Girl Scouts, Boys Scout, Youth Air Patrol. Also: Sheridan School District Summer School programs
Sheridan College	Northern Wyoming Community College District	Main Campus: 3059 Coffeen Ave, Sheridan	Year-Round	120 acres	<i>unspecified</i>	Yes, but students and classes are the priority.	430 beds on campus	As available



Table 1. Local and Regional Facilities *continued*

FACILITY	OWNER/ OPERATOR	LOCATION	SEASON	ACREAGE	STRUCTURE	DAY-USE CAPACITY	OVERNIGHT CAPACITY	COMMUNITY AVAILABILITY
Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library	SheridanCounty	335 W Alger, Sheridan WY	Year-Round	n/a	Library buliding (29,000 sq ft) includes 4 meeting rooms: Inner Circle (seats 70), Fulmer Room (seats 12), Carnegie Room (seats 6-7), Loucks Room (seats 4)	Mon-Thur 9am- 9pm, Fri-Sat 9am- 5pm	No	Yes
Sheridan Senior Center	City of Sheridan/Sheridan Senior Center	211 Smith Street, Sheridan	Year-Round	n/a	Day Break (3,600 sq ft); Senior Center (21,000 sq ft) includes dining room with stage, community room, creative art studio, exercise space, billiard room, conference room, kitchen, coffee bar and lobby; Transit Facility (8,000 s ft)	Provide opportunities and possibilities for older adults to engage in social, learning, and wellness activities	No	Spaces may be rented for classes, presentations, meetings, and activities
Spahn's Big Horn Mountain Bed and Breakfast	Ron and Bonnie Spahn/looking for new owner	74 Upper Hideaway Lane, near Red Grade Rd	Mostly Summer	40 acres	Main house: 3 guest bedrooms, kitchen, private bathrooms on each room, powder room, living room, dining room	Yes: available to guests of the bed and breakfast	About 10 people with every bed in main house filled	Some weddings, but not much
Spear-O-Wigwam Mountain Campus	Northern Wyoming Community College District (Sheridan, Gillette, Buffalo Colleges)	28 miles from Sheridan off NF 293, SE Edge of Park Reservoir	Summer: June 1-- Oct 1	63,000 acres: Educational Permit	Main Lodge (Office, Living Room with fireplace, Dining Hall, Kitchen, Bedroom, 2 Bathrooms), 7 Sleeping Cabins	Classroom space and outdoor space for Educational Programming, Research, Camps, Retreats, etc	Cabins sleep approx. 40, and area for tent camping	Yes

FACILITY	OWNER/ OPERATOR	LOCATION	SEASON	ACREAGE	STRUCTURE	DAY-USE CAPACITY	OVERNIGHT CAPACITY	COMMUNITY AVAILABILITY
Tensleep Preserve	The Nature Conservancy	15 miles South East of Ten Sleep	Spring, Summer, Fall	9,200 acres	Learning Center/ Lodge (3000 sq ft) and Tent Camp with 12 canvas army style tents with two beds each	Thurs-Sundays during daylight from May 15 through Oct 15. Classrooms and bathrooms on site.	Tent camping for groups of 12-24	Learning Center/Tent Camp and Lodge available by appointment for groups of 12 or more, open to the public for visitation and hiking
Thorne-Rider Youth Camp	Youth Inc.	Story, WY	Year-Round	53 acres	Lodge (2,800 sq ft), Caretaker Cabin (1,200 sq ft), Chapel is outside, Garage (600 sq ft)	80 people max, "Great Room," kitchen.	Open sleeping area, restrooms with showers	Sheridan, Johnson, and Campbell Counties: Youth Camp during Summer, Adult functions during Fall/Winter
Thunder Child	Cheyenne Tribe	1000 Decker Rd, Sheridan	<i>unknown</i>	~518 acres	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>
Tongue River Valley Community Center (Dayton)	TRVCC	Dayton, WY (former Tongue River High School)	Year-Round	n/a	Building (24,000 sq ft): conference room, library/media room, commons area, gymnasium, exercise room, locker rooms w/ showers, licensed kitchen.	500 + people	Possible if participants slept on gym floor	Yes: Education programs, activities, community events, recreation, and exercise center.
Tongue River Valley Community Center (Ranchester)	TRVCC	Ranchester, WY	Year-Round	n/a	Main Building (5,500 sq ft): conference room, activity room, bathrooms, kitchen; Activity Park (7,000 sq ft); Warehouse for storage	150 people	No	Yes: Education programs, activities, community events, recreation, and exercise center.



Table 1. Local and Regional Facilities *continued*

FACILITY	OWNER/ OPERATOR	LOCATION	SEASON	ACREAGE	STRUCTURE	DAY-USE CAPACITY	OVERNIGHT CAPACITY	COMMUNITY AVAILABILITY
Ucross Foundation	Ucross Foundation	30 Big Red Lane, Ucross WY (10 mi from Clearmont)	Year-Round	9 acre park, 200 acre retreat campus, 20,000 acre ranch	2 Barns: Big Red Barn (2,500 sq ft) and Raymond Plank Center at the Park (2,000 sq ft), School House, Buck's Cabin, Depot, 4 large visual arts studios (400 sq ft), 2 composer's studios, House with administrative offices, Garage	Yes	Artist residency can accommodate 10 people overnight-- not available to the public.	YES: Gallery, Chapel, Park, Raymond Plank Center NO: Residential
Volunteers of America	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wolf Mountain Lodge	Padlock Ranch	Padlock Ranch	Year-Round	n/a	Lodge that sleeps 10	Executive home: little commercial use	5-10 people	Private but may consider program- related lease opportunities
Wyoming Girls School	State of Wyoming/ Department of Family Services	3500 Big Horn Ave, Sheridan WY	Year-Round	90+ acres	12+ structures: Residential, Education, Medical, Shop, Barns, Administrative, Storage, etc.	Yes: education, vocational, and rehabilitative services for adolescent, delinquent girls, ages 12-21	Residential facility, not available to public	Limited

Table 2. Local Outdoor, Environmental, and Region-Specific Educational Programming

ENTITY	OFFERINGS	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME OF YEAR	ADDITIONAL NOTES
Bighorn Audubon Society	Birding at the Brinton	Monthly birding adventure led by ornithologist Jackie Canterbury	Ages: All	Year-round, once/month	
Bighorn Native Plant Society	Wildflower Hike	Easy to moderate hikes in different locations	Ages: All	Summer, 3-5 hikes per season	Free
Joey's Fly Fishing	Rod Building, Fly Tying	Classes	Ages: 5 - 18	unspecified	
	Little Camp for Little Fishermen	Intro Mentoring Program	Ages: 5 - 8	Summer	
	4-Day Summer Camp	Custom Mentoring Camp	Ages: 9 - 19	Summer	
	Just For Girls	Promotes fishing among girls and community involvement	unspecified	Summer	
	Adrenaline Camp	Earned camp, advanced techniques	Ages: 12-18	Summer	
	After School Program	3 six-week sessions at Coffeen Elem	Elem Schools	School year	Last year: Woodland
Penrose Pacers	Various local running events	Running Club	Ages: All	Year-Round, weekly	
Sagebrush Community Art Center	Workshops & Classes	Topics in the past have included: Life drawing, leather working, watercolors, photography, stained glass, and more.	Ages: All, targeted at adults	Year-round, more offerings in Summer	
Science Kids	Earth Heroes	Heal and enrich habitats for plants and animals	Ages: 6 - 8	Summer, 4 days	
	Creeks and Critters	Search for and learn about animals that live near and in water	Ages: 6 - 8	Summer, 4 days	
	Audobon Adventures	All about birds	Ages: 6 - 8	Summer, 2 days	
	Young Naturalists	Explore woods, meadows, and streams	Ages: 6 - 8	Summer, 2 days	
	Rock Talk	Rock identification and geological processes in local scenery	Ages: 9 - 11	Summer, 4 days	
	Bug Out	Identify insects and invertebrates	Ages: 9 - 11	Summer, 4 days	
	The Art of Birding	Explore ornithology	Ages: 9 - 11	Summer, 4 days	
	SCLT Presents: Young Explorers	Canoeing, history, and agriticulture	Ages: 9 - 11	Summer, 3 days	Partnership with Sheridan Community Land Trust
	Science Saturday	Subjects span many disciplines: paleontology, astronomy, stream ecology, chemistry, physics, etc.	Ages: All	Year-Round, monthly	Parents encouraged to accompany their children



Table 2. Local Outdoor, Environmental, and Region-Specific Educational Programming *continued*

ENTITY	OFFERINGS	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME OF YEAR	ADDITIONAL NOTES
Sheridan Community Land Trust	Unplug	Outdoor education programs for kids and their families. Past programs include: Kendrick Park Campout, Banding Cliff Swallows, Picnic on the Pathway, and more.	Ages: All	Year-Round, semi-monthly	Partnership with Science Kids
Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library	Tween Program	Hands-on fun: topics include stop motion animation, genealogy, robots, Legos, and activities outdoors when weather permits	Grades: 4-7	Year-Round, Weekly	Free and open to public
Sheridan College	Continuing Education	Various courses offered	Ages: 18 +	Year-round	
Sheridan County Museum	Tidbit Tuesday	Popular children's program combines historical learning with hands-on activities around a theme	Ages: 4 - 10	Summer	
	History Express	New program to serve an older age group.	Ages: Tweens and Teens	Year-round	
	Monday @ the Museum	Lunch at Museum, special speakers	Ages: Adults	Summer	
	Evening Program Series	Wide range of speakers related to local and regional history	Ages: All	Fall/Winter/Spring	
	Casual Conversations in History	Helen Laumann as she explores different facets of Sheridan Co. History	Ages: Adults	Fall/Winter/Spring, once/month	Held at Senior Center
	Tidbit Saturdays	Popular children's program combines historical learning with hands-on activities around a theme	Ages: 4 - 10	Fall/Winter/Spring	
	Cemetery Tours	Learn more about the history of Sheridan County through the lives of the people who have called it home.	Ages: All	Fall/Winter/Spring	Ticket fee
	Behind the Scenes Saturdays	Chance to meet museum staff and learn how SCM preserves history and brings it to life	Ages: All	Fall/Winter/Spring	
	Historical Treks	Special excursions to historic sites	Ages: All	Special Program	Ticket fee
	School Tours	Arranged tours of the Museum	Pre K–Grade 12	School Year	
Sheridan County School District 1	Adventure Club	Allows students to experience education in a new way and engage them in their surroundings. Trips include Xcountry skiing, Rapid City, Cody, Thermopolis.	Ages: 8 - 10	School-Year, Fridays	
Sheridan County School District 2	Summer String Program	4 to 5 instructors lead three levels of orchestras that rehearse and hold their concert outdoors.	Elementary through high school	Summer, week in June	Run by Razmick Sarkissian, \$60 tuition fee

ENTITY	OFFERINGS	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME OF YEAR	ADDITIONAL NOTES
Sheridan Recreation District	Hunter Safety	Twelve-hours of instruction, day on the range, culminating in a test	Ages: 10+	Various sessions throughout year	Partnership with Wyoming Game and Fish
	Let's Go Fishing	Fishing days at 3-4 local sites in Bighorns	Ages: 9 - 13	Summer	
	Day Pack Trips	Monthly Day Trips during the week in the Big Horns that will include outdoor education and emphasis on environmental education	Ages: 9 - 18	Summer, one/month	Partnership with the Forest Service
	Learn to Fly Fish	Participants learn how to tie various kinds of knots, set up a rod, and other basics of fly fishing.	Ages: 10+	Various sessions throughout year	Partnership with Fly Shop of the Bighorns
	Kayak Classes	Learn to kayak for all ages	Ages: All	Summer	
Spear-O-Wigwam	Mountain Lectures	Various topics across disciplines	Ages: All	Summer, monthly	Free and open to community
	Pack Trips	Custom or Themed	Ages: All	Summer	
	Retreats	For groups from SC	Ages: College	Summer	
	Research	Yale, U of Illinois, Yale, Wisconsin, UW	Ages: Various	Summer	
Tongue River Valley Community Center	Amphibian Project	Investigate local wetland areas	Grades: 3rd-5th	Summer, 1 day	\$10 /\$15 fee
	Tie Flume Hike	Hike in the TR Canyon	Grades: 6-12	Summer, 1 day	\$10/ \$15 fee
	Climb the Bighorns	Belay practice on climbing wall, then head outdoors!	Grades: 6-12	Summer, 4 day	\$40 / \$50 fee
	FANS Day Camp	FANS: Fun with Art, Nature, Science, outdoor adventures to places like Acme Ponds	Grades: 3-5	Summer, 4 day	\$60/ \$80 fee
	Kayak Trip	Spend the day kayaking Tongue River	Grades: 5-8	Summer, 1 day	\$10/ \$20 fee
	Movie in Park	Bring popcorn to Scott Park	Ages: All	Summer, 1 day	
	Fishing Derby	Fishing at Ranchester Rotary Pond	Ages: under 12	Summer, 1 day	
	Outdoor Camp	Learn to identify trees, animal tracks, and explore the Bighorns	Grades: 4-6	Summer, 4 day	\$30/ \$40 fee
	TRACK	Tongue River After School Care Kids	Grades: K-5	School Year	M-Th after school
	Friday Fun Days			School Year	
	Home School Classes	PE and Art classes		School Year	Tuesdays
	Christmas Break Trip	Sledding or skating Trip		Christmas Break	
	Open Climb	TRVCC staff on hand at climbing wall	Ages: All	Year-round	Free/ \$4 fee



Table 2. Local Outdoor, Environmental, and Region-Specific Educational Programming *continued*

ENTITY	OFFERINGS	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME OF YEAR	ADDITIONAL NOTES
Ucross Foundation	Gallery Talks	Misc programming in gallery open to public and specific groups like Girl School, Little Big Horn College, etc.	Ages: All	Year-round, intermittent	
University of Wyoming Outreach School	Saturday University	Lectures from professors hosted at locations around the state including at Ucross and Spear-O-Wigwam Mountain Campus.	Ages: All (mostly aimed at 18+)	Year-Round	Free
Wyoming Wilderness Association	Young Ambassadors for Wilderness	Learn about wilderness in an outdoor setting to become the next generation's wilderness leaders	Ages: 12 - 18	6-month curriculum, Summer +	No Tuition Costs
YMCA	Leader-in-Training	Promotes leadership development, service to community, teamwork, and nature appreciation	Ages: 13 – 15	Summer	
	Sticks and Stones...	Field geology class	Ages: 9 – 11	Summer, 4 days	
	Scalpels, Guts, ...	Dissection class	Ages: 9 – 12	Summer, 4 days	
	Thunderbird Day Camp	Canoeing, hiking, rock climbing, archery, teams course and arts & crafts	Ages: 6 – 11	Summer, 1 week	
	Discover Outdoor Adventure	Builds confidence, strength and resourcefulness.	Ages: 10 – 12	Summer, 1 week	
	Up a Notch...	Traditional skills, activities at high level	Ages: 12 – 13	Summer	
	Art Nomads	Local artists provide guide discovery of several genres of art at Camp Roberts.	Ages: 9 – 15	Summer, 4 days	
	Basic Backpacking	Aimed at the younger, perhaps less experienced hiker	Ages: 12 – 13	Summer, 4 days	
	Wilderness Backpacking	Explore high mountain meadows, huge clear lakes and stunning mountain peaks.	Ages: 13 – 15	Summer, 6 days	
	Trout Masters	Learn basic spin fishing and fly fishing	Ages: 9 – 15	Summer, 6 days	
	Hunter Safety	A riflery/archery camp	Ages: 12 – 15	Summer, 4 days	
	Mountain Bike Adventure	Learn how to ride your mountain bike with confidence	Ages: 12 – 15	Summer, 5 days	
	Camp Frontier	Enjoy activities such as stories around the campfire, dutch oven cooking, blacksmithing, gold panning and more.	Ages: 10 – 13	Summer, 4 days	
	Off to Camp Stayover		Ages: 8 – 11	Summer, 2 days	

Table 3. Community Entities with Potential Interest in Next Steps

ORGANIZATIONS			
4-H	Forest Service/ Bureau of Land Management	Science Kids	Tongue River Valley Community Center
Bighorn Audubon Society	Game and Fish	Sheridan County	Ucross High Plains Initiative
Bighorn Mountain Coalition	Girl Scouts	Sheridan County Chamber of Commerce	WYO Theater
Boy Scouts	Joey's Flyfishing	Sheridan County Museum	Wyoming State Parks
City of Sheridan	KLife	Sheridan Recreation District	Wyoming Tourism
City of Sheridan Public Works	LDS Church	Sheridan Travel and Tourism	Wyoming Wilderness Association
Destination Imagination	Plank Stewardship Initiative	Teton Science School	
Future Farmers of America	Sagebrush Arts Center	The Brinton	
SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS			
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Compass	Sheridan Veterans Affairs Medical Center	Wright Place
CHAPS Equine Assisted Therapy	Fort Mackenzie	Volunteers of America	Wyoming Girls School
FACILITIES			
Acme	Eatons Dude Ranch	Sheridan Senior Center	Tongue River Valley Community Center
Antelope Butte Mountain Recreation Area	FM Ranch	Spahn's Big Horn Mountain Bed and Breakfast	Ucross Foundation
Black Canyon Youth Camp	HF Bar Dude Ranch	Spear-O-Wigwam Mountain Campus	Volunteers of America
Burgess Junction Visitor Center (USFS)	Poulson Griffith Youth Camp	Tensleep Preserve	Wolf Mountain Lodge
Camp Bethel (YMCA)	Sheridan College	Thorne-Rider Youth Camp	Wyoming Girls School
Camp Roberts	Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library	Thunder Child	





Table 4. Established OECs

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	NOTES	WEBSITE
Casper Mountain Science School	Casper, WY	School District extension	http://hathawayscholarship.org/program-detail/25
Four Corners School	Monticello, UT	Incorporates Native American perspective	http://www.fourcornersschool.org/
Keystone Science School	Keystone, CO	Successful model for outdoor science learning	https://www.keystonescienceschool.org/
Montgomery County Public Schools Outdoor Environmental Education	Montgomery, MD	County-wide Publicly Operated facility	http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/outdoored/
Oglebay Institute	Wheeling, WV	Unique focus on nature and art	http://oionline.com/about/
Selkirk Outdoor Leadership & Education (SOLE)	Sandpoint, ID	Unique focus on snow science	http://www.soleexperiences.org/
Spring Creek Prairie	Lincoln, NE	Partnership with Audubon Society	http://springcreekprairie.audubon.org/conservation/education
Straub Environmental Center	Salem, OR	Unique focus on life-long learning	http://straubenvironmentalcenter.org/
Tin Mountain Conservation Center	Albany, NH	Possible parallel campus/facility model.	http://www.tinmountain.org/
Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center	Finland, MN	Veteran accredited ELC w/valuable insight.	http://wolf-ridge.org/

Thank you!

