

Feather River Land Trust **LEARNING LANDSCAPES**



Nurturing a child's relationship to land and learning

LEARNING LANDSCAPES



OUR MISSION

To conserve riparian, meadow, and forest lands adjacent to every school in the Upper Feather River Watershed, while supporting teachers to independently use these learning landscapes effectively and sustainably

OUR VISION

All students in all schools in the Upper Feather River Watershed are engaged in quality outdoor learning and the stewardship of their local environment

Photo by The National Audubon Society

Nurturing a Child's Relationship to Land and Learning

Learning Landscapes is the Feather River Land Trust's conservation and education program designed to enhance children's contact with the natural world, place-based learning, and hands-on stewardship experiences. We partner with public schools and visionary landowners to conserve and enhance natural areas as "outdoor classrooms" within a 10-minute walk of every public school in the Feather River Watershed and support teachers to "teach from the land."

A land conservation and stewardship ethic is grown by minutes, hours, days, and years. By conserving lands near public schools where rich, daily outdoor education experiences can occur, we create the opportunity for every schoolchild in the region to forge their own lasting relationship with the ground at their feet. No matter where they eventually settle, children from the Feather River region will have learned how to get to know a place, to love a place, and to take care of it.

CONSERVATION



Landowners Help Conserve Nature's "Classrooms"

Rick and Tiffany Leonhardt partnered with FRLT to conserve the 46-acre Leonhardt Ranch Learning Landscape for Quincy's school children, forever. Looking back, Rick, a local rancher, shared, "I wasn't sure what to expect when FRLT first approached me about doing a Learning Landscapes project on our property in 2012. It has turned out to be a great relationship between our family, the school district, and the Feather River Land Trust." With 14 visionary landowners like Rick & Tiffany, Learning Landscapes has helped set aside riparian, meadow, forest, and agricultural lands as outdoor classrooms throughout the Feather River region.

Each school in the Feather River Watershed has access to one or more natural outdoor classrooms with a variety of habitats. Each outdoor classroom has a unique landowner agreement, from ownership by FRLT, to school district property, to ownership by private ranchers, public agencies, businesses, or individuals. These landowner-partners are a critical part of the Learning Landscapes model and are creating opportunities for students to study and steward their home landscapes year after year—building a culture of care that students will carry with them for a lifetime.

PROGRAM IMPACT

13

SCHOOLS

3

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

2,500

KIDS PER YEAR

Environmental self-efficacy describes the sense of responsibility and ability to take action for a person's environment. If a child has high environmental self-efficacy, they care for their local nature and feel empowered to steward the land. One of the core goals of the Learning Landscapes program is to deepen this sense of self-trust, motivation, and connection to place.

Teachers build environmental self-efficacy too! Teachers in schools where science mentors are actively involved on a regular basis report higher confidence in their ability to plan and carry out land-based projects with their students.



MENTORS MATTER

6

COMMUNITIES

14

LANDOWNERS

16

PROPERTIES



Over 3/4 of students indicated very high environmental self-efficacy

High school students involved in stewardship projects with local scientists report higher feelings of environmental self-efficacy



“This program has had a great impact on my attitude toward an understanding of the local environment...because it took place in our backyard and we really learned about what was going on.”

~Quincy High School 9th grader

OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS



Learning Landscapes Takes Class Outside

Wonder. Curiosity. Play. Exploration. Hands-on learning. Vitamin D. Love of place. Study and stewardship. These are a few ingredients in the recipe of making a Feather River Mountain Kid—healthy kids and healthy land! That's why we believe in making it easy for teachers to take their students outside to learn, play, and steward this very special place. We have installed trails, signage, outdoor seating areas, and covered whiteboards on each school campus and adjacent Learning Landscapes site in the region. These improvements create a more ideal outdoor learning environment for kids.

Trails are a big part of Learning Landscapes as pathways to exploration and discovery. Our Trail Tuesdays get kids throughout the region involved in trail stewardship each fall and spring. Trail partner Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship has helped to construct and maintain over 14 different trails. The completion of the High Loop on Kids Creek Forest Learning Landscape in 2021 brings the total distance to almost 8 miles. While we're proud of the quantity and length of trails available, we continue to identify opportunities to improve the accessibility of trails and outdoor classrooms for all students.

TEACHER SUPPORT



Teachers Make Outdoor Education a Daily Reality

Teachers are the key to the success of the Learning Landscapes model. With them everything is possible. Without them, nothing is. Inspiring K-12 teachers' connection to the land and supporting them as outdoor education leaders is key to getting kids outside. Teachers are involved in all aspects of FRLT's Learning Landscapes program. We support teachers through hands-on, field immersion workshops, curriculum planning sessions, and outings with local natural resources professionals. We equip every school with field kits that include field guides, binoculars, hand lenses, field journals, and restoration tools.

Inspired and equipped, teachers lead their students in frequent outdoor learning and annual hands-on restoration projects on their school campuses and Learning Landscapes properties. Since its inception in 2004, FRLT's Learning Landscapes has grown teacher participation in outdoor learning from 20% to 100%. We're supporting teachers toward growing both the quality and quantity of outings, with an ultimate goal of weekly outings for every child in the region throughout their K-12 education.

STEWARDSHIP



Learning Landscapes Grows Future Stewards

“Kids are capable of great action to take care of what they care about. Knowledge alone is not power. Action is what turns knowledge into power, and that action changes them and the land.” Rob Wade, Learning Landscapes Coordinator, says this often and especially in the Spring when teachers and students design their stewardship projects. The annual program cycle naturally leads kids into action, where they work with local stewardship professionals to design and implement a project to make their campus or Learning Landscapes site a better habitat for the organisms they share it with.

Every teacher and class has a dedicated science and stewardship mentor, who comes from a local agency, industry, or non-profit organization. These mentors help guide every student to take action every year in a unique and local way. They join us from the Plumas and Lassen National Forest, Collins Pine Lumber Company, Point Blue Conservation Science, Feather River Trout Unlimited, Plumas Audubon Society, Plumas Corporation, Feather River College, and of course our own Feather River Land Trust. Together we are creating stewardship habits and a long-lasting culture of care among the children of the Feather River region.

A LASTING IMPACT



A Culture of Care: Generation to Generation

In land conservation we're committed to perpetuity, so that what we conserve is protected forever. Learning Landscapes holds a similar promise—nurturing a connection to nature and place that is valued and passed down through generations.

FRLT is building perpetuity into our local Learning Landscapes model, and also cultivating a K-12 “Community of Practice” with land trusts across the nation. The goal of this K-12 network is to build the very best—and lasting—environmental education programs. We believe inclusivity and equity are key—programs designed with perpetuity in mind will only be successful if all children have equal access and opportunity. By supporting this network and hosting an annual national K-12 Leadership Summit, FRLT and Learning Landscapes are helping to foster a lasting connection to land in children beyond the ridges of the Feather River Watershed—from sea to shining sea.



Rob Wade, Learning Landscapes Co-founder and Coordinator





Cover photo by Vanessa Vasquez/FRLT

Photo by Winter Wildlands Alliance

FRLT & YOU

a great team

Across the Feather River region, thousands of schoolchildren are outside exploring and learning how to take care of the land. This is only possible because we're all working together: the Feather River Land Trust, public schools, dedicated teachers, enthusiastic students, visionary landowners, countless skilled community partners and volunteers, and generous supporters like you. Thank you.

To learn more about Learning Landscapes and how you can help, visit frlt.org.



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