



YAKONA NATURE PRESERVE & LEARNING CENTER

A stylized, light green tree logo with a wide canopy and visible roots, positioned behind the word 'YAKONA'.

YAKONA

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

FOUNDERS' STATEMENT

As we look back on the past twelve months, we're seriously awed by all that's been accomplished.

We've hired an Executive Director who's engaged a multitude of new partners, established an education program, written and received grants, and works tirelessly in all these areas. We've hired a Community Arts & Engagement Manager whose artistic eye has brought to fruition our dream of a commissioned symphonic piece accompanied by a slideshow of Yakona photography; a nature journal for our educational programs (a realization of long-held dreams); and completed a major overhaul of our website.

We've achieved non-profit status for a separate entity, the Yakona Learning Center, which is a public charity qualified to receive funding from a wide variety of funders. This was no small task and was earned in record time thanks to our very competent non-profit lawyer, Saskia de Boer.

Our Forest & Lands work continues apace to keep our many forest stands and trail system in order. Last autumn we undertook our first major invasives abatement program and it was an unqualified success. This will be an ongoing effort until the trees in the former clear-cut can shade future Himalayan blackberry. Controlling Scotch broom and English ivy will be ongoing.

Our Forest Masterplan, under the leadership of Shavonne Sargent, is nearing completion and is the first step in a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an arm of the US Department of Agriculture. We hope to continue this partnership for many years as they will cost-share in multiple programs of forest stewardship. Shavonne is also consulting on the conservation easement and the carbon credits program in progress.

The jury is still out on a carbon credit program that may provide passive income for Yakona. This is a nascent and somewhat controversial industry with still-changing guidelines and parameters. We continue to work toward the multifaceted conservation easement with McKenzie River Trust as well as planning for an endowment.

It's been a very full, ever-changing and exciting year, and we're still growing into all the developments. We deeply appreciate the Board's engagement and generosity of time, talent and resources, and are grateful for the support of our donors.

JoAnn and Bill Barton



ADMINISTRATION

Yakona Nature Preserve hired its first Executive Director, Dr. Natalie Schaefer, in February. In collaboration with the board of directors, we completed our Vision/Mission/Values statements, and embarked upon our Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (JEDI) journey. We also on-boarded four new board members, bringing us to a total of 10. Board committees for Strategic Planning and JEDI were implemented, and action plans developed for Education, Community Arts & Engagement, Forest & Lands Management, and JEDI provide the framework for our programs and activities through 2025.

Jared Hyde was hired in May as Yakona's Forest & Lands Manager, and was responsible for managing the land, implementing habitat improvement and restoration activities, and overseeing construction of the new Yakona Learning Center. Rena Olson-Snyder, Yakona's Community Arts & Engagement Manager, started in June, and has been busy developing Yakona's art and docent programming, and managing our communications outlets.

Two high school student interns – Jayden Carroll and Anthony “Tony” Gonzalez - were hired over a 10-week period this summer to work on education and lands management projects, thanks to funding from the Oregon Coast STEM Hub. Jayden was able to continue with Yakona through the fall months with support from the Community Services Consortium, greatly increasing the capacity of our forest and lands management operations.

The Oregon Wildlife Foundation agreed to be our fiscal sponsor during the time period when we did not have a public charity arm. During the summer months, we worked diligently to apply for nonprofit charity status, and in October, were granted that request. In December, the board formally recognized the Yakona Learning Center as the public charity arm for the Preserve, which will oversee all administrative, managerial, operational and fundraising objectives for both organizations. We now have two boards and two sets of financials, but the same vision/mission/values are shared by both organizations.



Yakona Nature Preserve

JoAnn Barton, Board Chair
Monique Barton-Riveness, Vice Chair
Bill Barton, Secretary
Liz Fuller, Treasurer

Yakona Learning Center

JoAnn Barton, Board Chair
Jesus Hernandez, Vice Chair
Wayne Belmont, Secretary
Michael Clark, Treasurer
Robert Kentta, Member
Dr. Cynthia Resendiz, Member
Dan Lara, Member

VISION

To honor the past and secure the future by inspiring the present through partnerships in education, stewardship, and preservation.



MISSION

Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center is a living laboratory that serves to protect, preserve, and enhance the natural ecosystems and cultural history of Oregon's central coast spruce habitat and its wildlife through the arts, education, and stewardship.

VALUES

- **Habitat and Wildlife Protection:** Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center is representative of Oregon's remnant spruce-dominated coastal rainforest. This habitat and wildlife have inherent value to current and future generations.
- **Education:** Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center is a living laboratory for natural and cultural history, sciences and the arts. Partnerships with local K-12 and higher education institutions and the general public enable connections for people of all ages to explore nature.
- **Restoration and Stewardship:** Portions of Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center were historically logged, which segmented habitats and caused the disruption of natural ecosystems. Our goal is to restore the land to its native habitat with minimal impact and maximal results.
- **Partnerships:** Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center thrives because the community believes in its mission and executes on a passion to make our world a better place. We believe our strength and success is realized through community involvement and relationships built with organizations and individuals who share our values and offer unique expertise.
- **Sustainability:** Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center is managed to ensure environmental and financial acumen.
- **Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center encompasses a portion of the region once populated by the Yaqo'n, a people decimated by colonization and racial injustice. With respect to those who have gone before, Yakona will ensure that all who visit are welcomed, educated in the history of the land, and embraced as partners and stewards in our mission. Yakona is committed to supporting and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the organization and its programs.

JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION

The effectiveness of Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center is enhanced when justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are practiced and protected throughout our organizational governance, culture, and staffing. We are committed to leadership in and serving as a catalyst for promoting JEDI. The organization does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, military, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, age, citizenship, or any other basis prohibited by law in any of its policies, programs, or operations. We welcome everyone.



A group of children are sitting on the ground in a field of tall grass and yellow wildflowers. They are engaged in an activity, with some holding up white sheets of paper. The children are smiling and appear to be enjoying the outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

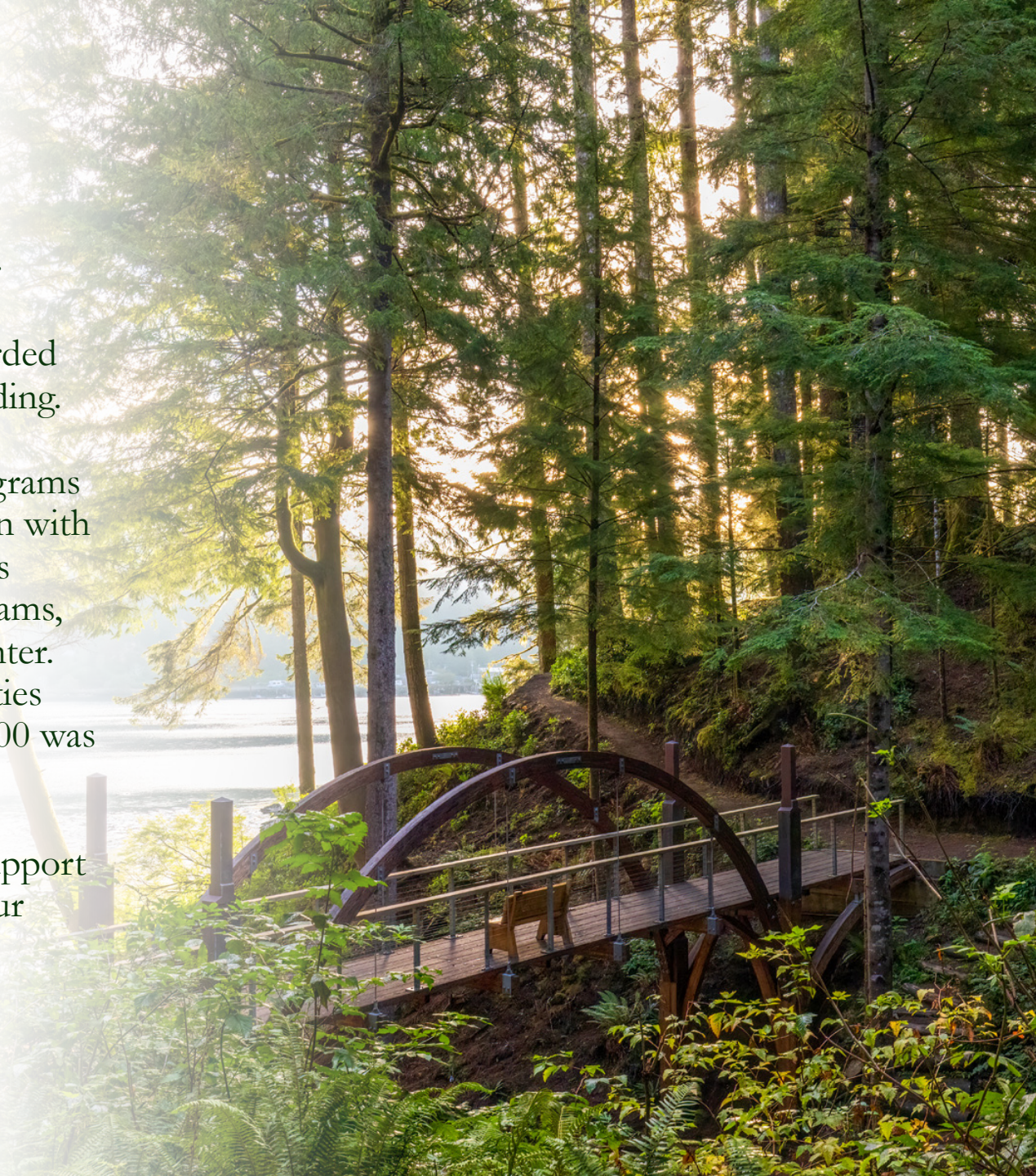
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center works to promote and facilitate formal and informal educational opportunities that allow people of all ages and abilities to experience and learn about local cultural history and natural ecosystems. We work in partnership with several local school districts, Oregon Coast Community College, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and multiple nonprofit organizations to link curricular objectives to the land, with student activities reinforcing concepts and knowledge attainment at each grade level. The overarching goal is to restore and preserve native forests and wildlife while educating youth and the community about the importance of the Sitka-spruce mixed forest ecosystem and its role in mitigating the climate crisis.

Students engage in history lessons teaching them about the native Yaqo'n people, European colonization, and the subsequent impact of the past 150 years' harvest and industrialization of coastal forests on land and in waterways. Students participate in community science, conducting age-appropriate studies that teach them about the important work they as scientists can do by gathering data for climate science analysis. They learn ecological concepts, such as adaptation, limiting factors, and carrying capacity while playing cooperative games. The sciences, art, and history are the driving curricular objectives, and all lessons are based in Oregon state content standards. With support from the Oregon Coast STEM Hub, we were able to kick off curriculum integration with local schools in summer.

FUNDRAISING

Fourteen grants totaling over \$340,000 were written, with approximately \$102,000 awarded last year and several still pending. This support is evenly split between the educational programs we developed in collaboration with our partners, and the facilities needed to house those programs, aka the Yakona Learning Center. By June of 2023, those facilities will be built! Another \$629,000 was received by many generous individuals and families who believe in our mission and support Yakona. We are grateful to our funders for their support.





COMMUNITY ARTS & ENGAGEMENT

Visual and performing arts provide people a different way to learn about and appreciate nature. Over the past year, Yakona infused arts within its educational programming, and partnered with the Newport Symphony Orchestra for a performance of a commissioned piece written by Dr. Sara Graef.

Yakona is building opportunities for everyone in 2023 -

- Working with the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts, students engage through classroom studies to craft a weather-resistant nature journal for their Yakona studies.
- Summer art activities for youth and families at Yakona, conducted in partnership with the Sitka Center for Arts & Ecology, engage the community in multi-generational learning.
- Multiple sessions with renowned local artists, such as Nora Sherwood, offer the community opportunities for engagement with nature in multiple ways.

On the engagement front, Yakona launched its docent program in June. By the end of the year, we had 10 individuals trained to serve our lands, education and public access programs. Docents built trails and structures, created and installed directional signs, and helped with Yakona's educational programming and public tours. Docents volunteered more than 440 hours, representing over \$12,500 of in-kind support! We are grateful to the following individuals for their efforts:

- Charmaine LeClair
- Mike Clark
- Doris Posner
- Bill Posner
- Elaine Holcomb
- Tamara Baumberger
- Kathryn Doksum
- Ona McFarlane
- Rebecca Lianne
- Julie Roth-Carter

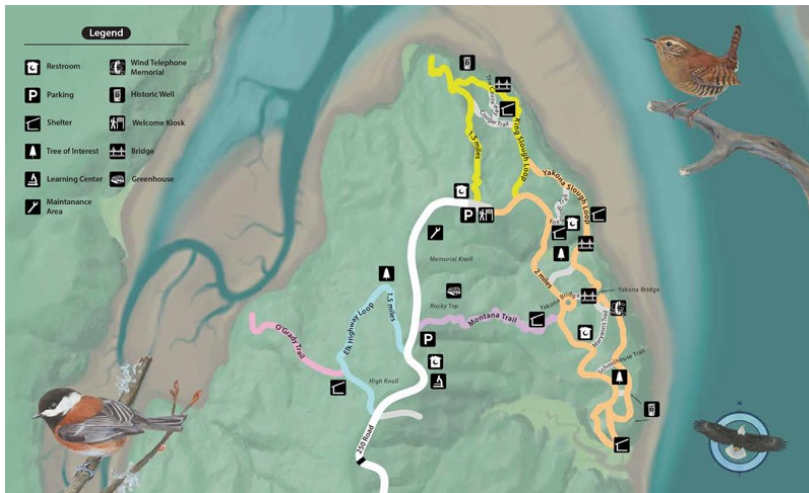


FOREST & LANDS MANAGEMENT

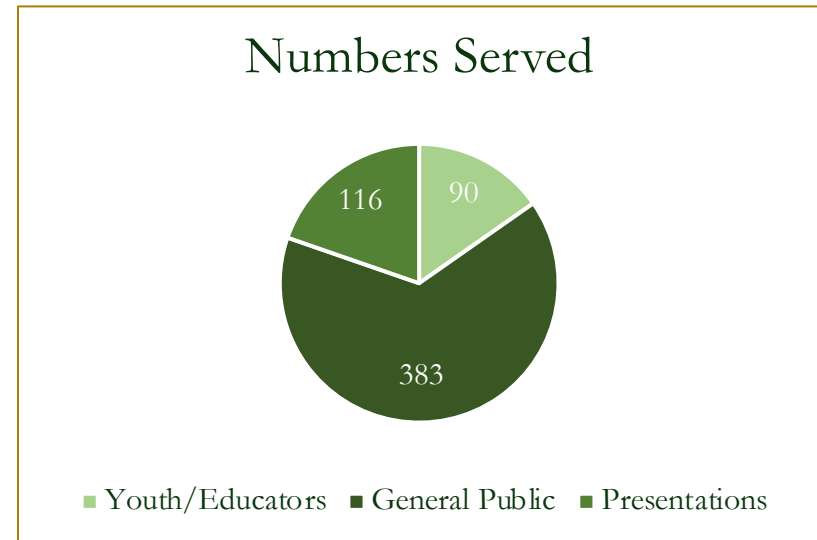
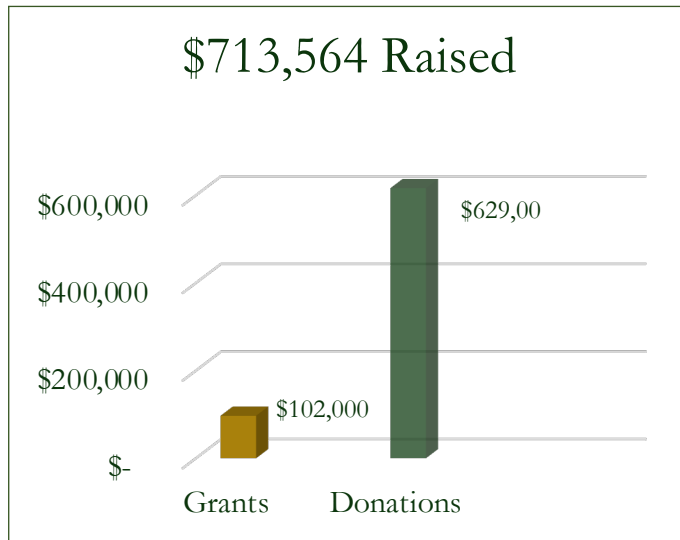
Yakona Nature Preserve comprises 341 acres ranging from old-growth and mature forest, to a 40-year-old plantation and a recently planted clear-cut. The challenge (and the opportunity) presented by this forest mosaic represents multiple generations of forest enhancement and restoration projects, with the ultimate goal of returning the peninsula to its former old-growth glory. While managing the forest for its inherent value, Yakona is also a living laboratory for local K-12 and postsecondary students. Being located two miles behind a locked gate necessitates escorted access by vehicle, but visitors are welcome to walk in or ride their bicycles to Yakona's farm gate, where a bike rack signifies the place to park and hike from there.

In 2022, we accomplished so much –

- Directional signs on Yakona's five miles of developed trails
- A beautiful trail map, available in both English and Spanish
- Bilingual interpretive signage
- Oregon's designation of the West Yaquina Heritage Tree
- Armoring of three wells dug in the 1880's
- Two new trails – Montana and O'Grady
- Activation of climate monitoring sites
- Creation of several pollinator meadow plots
- Eradication of invasive Himalayan blackberry, Scotch broom and English ivy (this work continues!)
- Thinning, burning and site restoration
- Construction of Yakona's Pavilion, and site preparation for the Yakona Learning Center



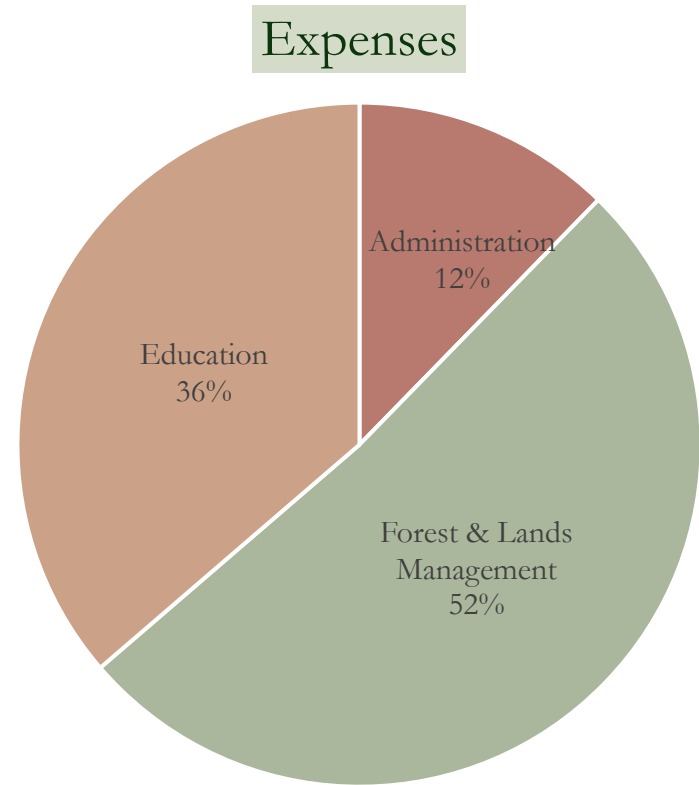
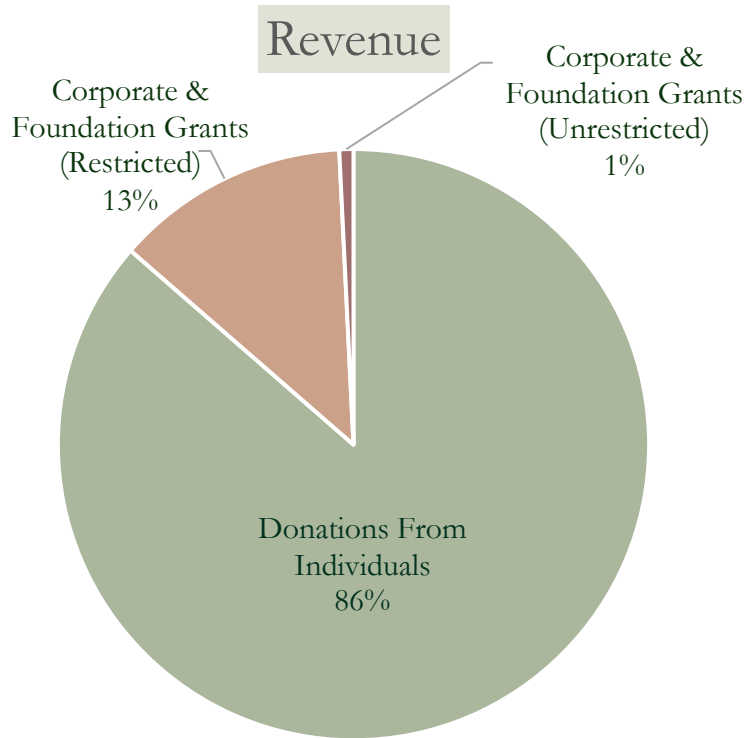
BY THE NUMBERS



Partnerships – 81 Meetings

- LCSD
- OCCC
- OSU
- Oregon Coast STEM Hub
- Oregon Coast Council for the Arts
- Sitka Center for Arts & Ecology
- Olalla Center – Walden Project and Arcoiris Program
- Community Services Consortium
- Oregon Wildlife Foundation

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2022



- Donations From Individuals
- Corporate & Foundation Grants (Restricted)
- Corporate & Foundation Grants (Unrestricted)

- Administration/General
- Forest & Lands Management
- Education



My goodness, we accomplished a LOT in our first year! We couldn't have done it without a strong staff, a supportive board, fully engaged partners, and incredibly generous donors. My thanks to everyone who had a part in making this year so momentous.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In planning to serve hundreds of K12 and community college students each year through Yakona Learning Center's unique arts and science education programming, our vision necessitates the construction of facilities to store educational materials and supplies while serving to shelter participants from inclement weather. The design for this facility is a shipping container with lean-to structures built on each side and forming a pitched roof over the top to channel rainwater into a catchment system. Several tanks and rain barrels will provide water for fire suppression, plus store irrigation water for the plants students grow while serving Yakona Learning Center's habitat restoration efforts. An enclosed plant nursery will ensure native seedlings are protected from the hungry elk that roam freely on the property until they are mature enough for planting. Two fully accessible pit toilets will be built, as well.

We will accomplish this vision in 2023! Donations will help us complete the construction we've started and purchase scientific equipment to round out the educational experience. Your support of the Yakona Learning Center is welcome and appreciated. Thank you for your consideration.



The following organizations and individuals believed in our vision and mission early on, and are our founding funders:

Healy Foundation, Gray Family Foundation, Barton Family, Posner Family, Oregon Coast STEM Hub, Peter and Cathy Tronquet Fund of Oregon Community Foundation, Oregon Wildlife Foundation, Dan Gleason Fund of Oregon Community Foundation, Roundhouse Foundation, NW Natural, Bijou Theatre.

...and numerous individuals.

Many thanks to Penny McDermott and Deborah Gwynn from Sam Case Elementary; Anna Rodgers from Toledo Elementary; Nicole Scheidler from Siletz Valley Charter School; and Stacy Ames, Ben Williams, and Jessica Denio from Olalla Center for their guidance and suggestions integrating Yakona into local elementary curriculum!

Dr. Cynthia Resendiz, Oregon Coast STEM Hub Director, has served as a great brainstorming partner, funded Yakona's summer interns, and covered the cost of teacher stipends for Yakona's first summer training session.

Alex Llumiquinga from the Arcoiris Program of the Olalla Center helped us engage with the Hispanic community by promoting family-oriented hikes.

Jesus Hernandez and Dr. Cynthia Resendiz offered translation services.

Charmaine LeClair has been a steady presence at Yakona since June, helping build a footpath, clear trails, and install signage.

Mike Clark designed and cut the directional trail signage and helped to build the Pavilion.

It's been great working with dream STEAM team – Dr. Karen Gray, Lincoln County School District Superintendent; Dr. Katie Barrett, LCSD Elementary Curriculum Director; Majalisse Tolan, LCSD Secondary Curriculum Director; Dr. Brigitte Ryslinge, Oregon Coast Community College President; Dan Lara, OCCC Vice President Academic Affairs; and Dr. Cynthia Resendiz, Oregon Coast STEM Hub Director.

WITH GRATITUDE