A Natural Science School of Academy District 20
Colorado Springs, Colorado
SITW began with a dream, a vision of a place where nature would be the foundation of learning.

“A place where children can learn in, about, and from the natural world.”
School in the Woods opened its doors to the first class of naturalists in 1999.

“Nature is only real... when you can reach out and touch it with your hands.”

~ John Burroughs
School in the Woods
Mission Statement
To enhance, nurture, and develop well-equipped, lifelong learners and responsible citizens who value and become stewards of our communities and world in an academically-challenging program with a unique science-integrated curriculum for 4th grade naturalists with expanding interests in nature within a trusting, emotionally healthy, and safe field-based environment.
Our Staff

**Principal and Assistant Principal**
Bob Wedel and Robin Lowery

**Coordinator**
Jonathan Wuerth

**Teachers:**
Patrick Perry    DeLene Hoffner
Meg Zaranek      Emilie Frei

**Instructional Support / TAG:**
Crystal Teger

**School Secretary, Registrar, and Bookkeeper:**
Karla Powers

**Instructional Paraprofessional:**
Melissa Seidenberg
What is School in the Woods about?

Instruction inspired by nature
Experience-oriented learning
Science-integrated curriculum
School community focused
Building responsibilities
Getting outdoors!
Using the land to connect us and teach us
Team teaching approach with entire staff

“In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.”

~ Aristotle
Instructional Program

Science and Social Studies:
Natural sciences- abiotic and biotic
Colorado life zones and ecosystems
Astronomy and meteorology
Electricity and magnetism
In-depth field work and experiences
Spring field projects
Colorado history
Colorado state government

“The mountains are calling and I must go.”
~ John Muir
English and Language Arts:

High level realistic fiction novels
Naturalist biographies, chautauquas
Native American storytelling
Nonfiction articles
Critical thinking
Oral speaking and presenting
Strong emphasis on writing
Cursive handwriting and Keyboard skills

“(What is the) extinction of a condor to a child who has never seen a wren.” ~ Naturalist Robert Michael Pyle
Instructional Program

Mathematics:
Differentiated content addressing 4th grade math standards
Emphasis on in-depth problem solving
Readiness-based groupings within SITW community
Curriculum resources include: Go Math!, Math’s Mates, Continental Math League, and a host of others

“The power of imagination makes us infinite.”
~ John Muir
**Student Support Model**

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“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” ~ John Muir
Student Support through Differentiation

Student growth is pursued toward the whole person rather than only through isolated academic areas.

Individual needs are met through differentiation within the classroom across all content areas.

We have part-time TAG and interventionist support.

Our counselor and special education teacher are housed at Edith Wolford Elementary.

“The sun shines not on us, but in us.”

~ John Muir
Unique Aspects of School in the Woods

Parent volunteers welcomed and vital
Field trips (5 in fall semester)
Outdoor physical activity
Outdoor lunch – most days of school year
Overnight onsite – sleeping under the stars
Close quarters indoors
Regular movement to indoor and outdoor learning spaces
Wikitown and other exploratory recess play

“Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.” ~ Rachel Carson
Unique Aspects (cont’d)

Foreign languages not offered
No *formal* physical education, music, art
No cafeteria, gymnasium or playground facilities
Limited technology use; no BYOD
No on-site SPED, counselor, nurse
Competitive sports not allowed at recess

“As long as I live, I'll hear waterfalls and birds and winds sing. I'll interpret the rocks, learn the language of flood, storm, and the avalanche. I'll acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart of the world as I can.”

~ John Muir
Our social environment encourages:

Respect - starting with oneself

Students demonstrating responsibility

Compassionate peer interactions

Group work

Individual accountability

Students advocating for themselves and others

“To me a lush carpet of pine needles or spongy grass is more welcome than the most luxurious Persian rug.”

~ Helen Keller
What about some specific details?

78 students in a CommUnity
Choice transportation (D20 Transportation: 234-1410)
Normal school calendar, snow days, vacations
Spot saved at home school for fifth grade (NOT TCA) *(Fourth grade spot given up after lottery drawing)*
Hours: 8:35-3:35 (subject to change)
Home-packed lunch, hot water, Pizza Fridays

“If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow...”
“Natural spaces and materials stimulate children’s limitless imaginations and serve as the medium of inventiveness and creativity...”

~ Robin Moore

“... in more natural settings children invent whole sagas...”

~ Richard Louv

“I played around the yard some and talked to the fence posts, sung songs and made the weeds sing...”

~ Woody Guthrie
Naturalists Doing What We Do
SITW Open House!
Map: From EWE to SITW
Questions?

Please help by putting chairs away. Thank you!

“I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in tune once more.” ~ John Burroughs