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From: **MEEA Grants** <[grants@meeassociation.org](mailto:grants@meeassociation.org)>

Date: Fri, Nov 4, 2022 at 3:11 PM

Subject: Mini-Grant Award Notification

To: <[koldenburgh@rsu26.org](mailto:koldenburgh@rsu26.org)>

Congratulations Kim Oldenburgh,

You are receiving this letter because you have been selected to receive one of the Maine Environmental Education Association's 2022-2023 Mini-Grants for Outdoor Learning in the amount of \$1500.

We are so grateful for the incredible work you are doing at your school to connect young Mainers to their local environment and to get youth outside learning!

In order to receive your grant funding, please fill out the form [here](#)

The form outlines the terms and conditions of accepting our grant. Please read all the terms and conditions carefully, sign, and return along with this signed contract letter no later than **November 16, 2022**. After we receive your signed contract, we will mail you a check within two weeks.

The funds from this grant award must be used specifically for the designated purpose(s) in your grant application unless otherwise specified. You must submit a written request to us in advance if you wish to change the purpose of the grant. If you receive funding and your plans have to change we can work with you to find the ways to best support your outdoor learning and environmental education efforts!

The form also gives MEEA your permission to use photographs, logos, published/printed information, and any other materials you supply, without further notice, in press releases and/or publications. Make sure that you have permission from any individuals shown in any photos you submit for this use.

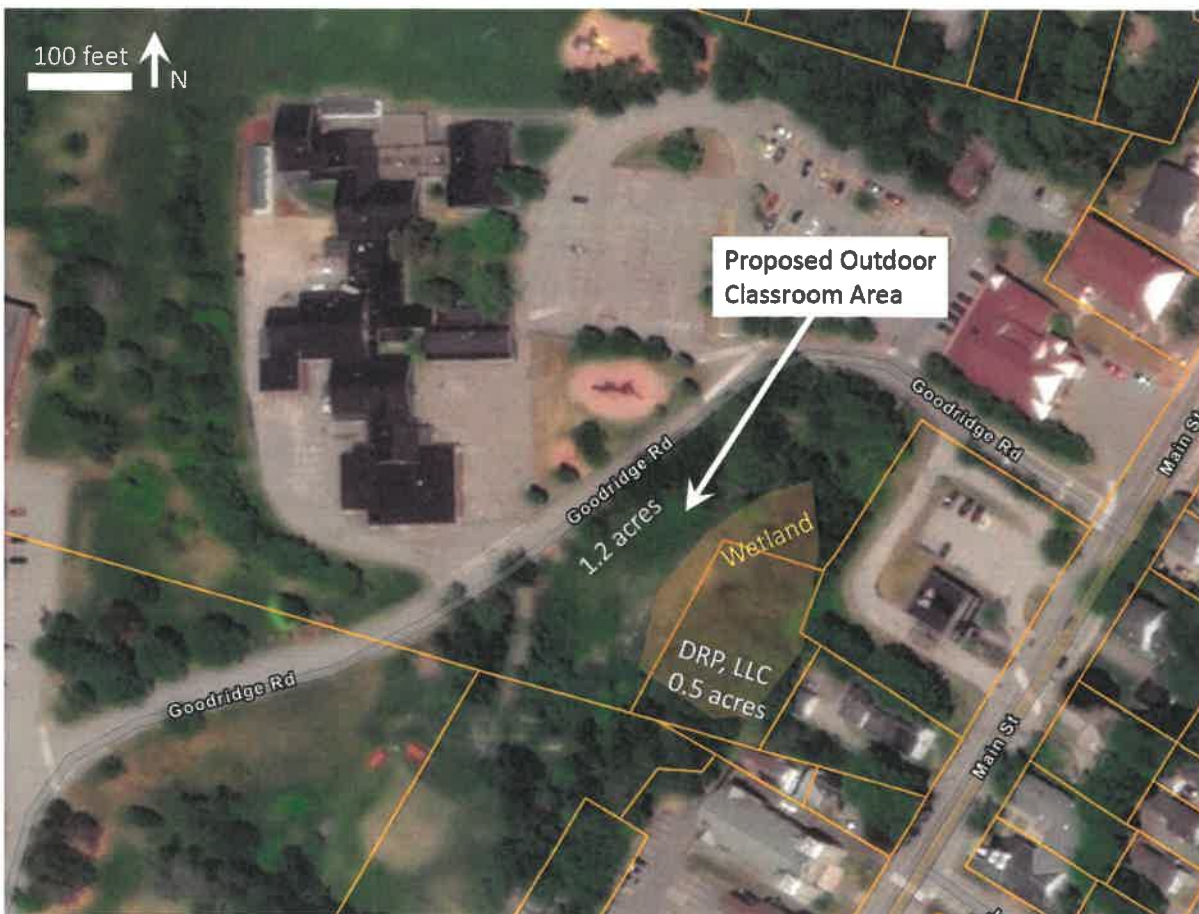
Congratulations on this recognition of your important efforts. We look forward to working with you during the coming year. Please reach out to Anna Sommo ([anna@meeassociation.org](mailto:anna@meeassociation.org)) with any questions or if you would like additional support.

-Maine Environmental Education Association Staff

**Proposed new use of outdoor space on town land by RSU-26.**

November, 2022

Regional School Unit 26 is proposing to use part of the adjacent town land as new outdoor classroom space. The space is 1.2 acres of land adjacent to Goodridge Rd, across from Asa Adams, containing a mix of dry meadow (primarily goldenrod), wetland, and young forest. Use of the space would involve primarily nature exploration, enriching science, writing, and art curricula and would require minimal modification of the landscape in the short term. We envision establishing small trails using a string trimmer, creating short primitive log or plank bridges across wet areas, clearing vegetation within a meeting area, cutting and placing a circle of logs or benches for seating, and installing two picnic tables for workspace. In addition, we would like to evaluate potential hazards by testing the soil and inspecting and possibly removing a standing dead tree. As we develop the longer-term plan for the space, we may seek permission to establish additional features.



Please provide a brief description of your intended use of these funds (2-3 paragraphs)

The funds from this grant would be used to prepare an area for use as an outdoor classroom for our elementary school. The area we have identified is 1.2 acres of wetland, dry meadow (primarily goldenrod), and forest adjacent to the school building. Historically overlooked, this land sits in a depression in between a baseball field, town buildings, and the elementary school driveway, and is part of the same parcel as the school grounds.

This semester, teachers have begun to explore this space with their students during class, and we are in the early stages of planning and preparing the area for expanded use. In the short term, to make the space more functional, we need to establish small trails, create primitive bridges for crossing the wet areas, clear a meeting area, cut and place a circle of logs or benches for seating, and install two picnic tables for work space. In addition, we would like to evaluate potential hazards by testing the soil and inspecting and possibly removing a standing dead tree. As we develop the longer term plan for the space, we may aim to establish nearby outdoor bathroom facilities, shelter, swings, and areas for climbing.

We envision using money from this grant for the following purposes:

Trimmer String for Trail Establishment: \$30

Food for volunteer work day: \$100

Lumber for wetland crossing, benches, and picnic tables: \$980

Soil Testing: \$390

Total cost: \$1,500.00

Will this funding support an immediate or future planned need? (1-2 paragraphs)

This funding will support an immediate need. Although teachers have already taken students into the space, our current ability to more fully utilize it is limited by inaccessibility and lack of meeting and working areas. As soon as we are able to

acquire the materials and organize volunteers, we will put it to use in improving the functionality of the space and increased student use of the space will begin immediately. Completing this first phase of outdoor classroom establishment will allow us to plan for longer term goals in this particular space, as well as a long term school-wide goal of creating multiple differentiated outdoor classrooms, including wetland, field, forest, and garden spaces.

How would these funds support your efforts to incorporate outdoor learning in your classroom or school community? (2-3 paragraphs) \*

This funding will support classroom teachers by creating an outdoor learning environment with some basic features for work spaces and the ability to navigate our way around the wetland areas. The space has a natural beauty – wildflowers in the goldenrod meadow, red fruits on staghorn sumac, a view of large-trunked maples and birches across the open wetland – that feels quite apart from the nearby buildings because it is hidden in a basin. When exploring the space, we have seen woodcocks in the wetland, warblers in the shrubs, and wasp galls on the goldenrod. Weaving like a maze through the goldenrod and like tunnels through the sumac, the trails will take students to secret places in the woods.

Teachers will integrate these features into lessons in science, art, writing, and other subjects as they learn and play outside. Several teachers already include a regular outdoor learning segment into their weekly routine, and we will work with other teachers to expand use of this new outdoor resource.