

Lab Notes

March 2026



AOEA Hosts Salamander Discovery Night



We were delighted to host the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists for a Salamander Discovery Night on March 6. Past Lab director Neil Heinekamp and teacher Jessica Leslie facilitated a terrific continuing education session for more than 30 master naturalists to observe our native salamanders.

Salamanders emerge from below ground on the first rainy nights in spring, and we were able to observe multiple spotted salamanders in Hunsucker Spring, as well as two-lined salamanders and numerous wood frogs who are also busy laying eggs in our springs and vernal pools.

Outdoor Lab Summer Camp

The Outdoor Lab Summer Camp is a fantastic opportunity for students who have a passion for nature, love spending time outdoors, or have an interest in animals.

- ▣ Session A: July 6-10 (Students entering 7th, 8th, or 9th grade)
- ▣ Session B: July 13-17 (Students entering 7th, 8th, or 9th grade)
- ▣ Session C: July 20-24 (Students entering 5th or 6th grade)



[Registration is open](#) until April 30th or until all spots are filled.

Spring Open House and Annual Meeting April 18th

The Outdoor Lab welcomes all Arlington families to the Spring Open House on April 18 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Come explore our 313 acres of mountain trails, meadows, streams and pond. While at the Lab, your family can:

- fish in the pond (cane poles & worms provided)
- paddle our boats (canoes and kayaks available)
- hike numerous trails (over 5 miles, various hiking abilities)
- observe critters in the Animal Lab (turtles, snakes and more)
- find a perfect spot for a family picnic (bring your lunch)

[Open House Tickets are available here!](#) We request families register in advance to help us plan for and manage visitor numbers and parking.

You can Volunteer at the Open House!

Great for families or teens who love the outdoors (and need community service hours). Come out and help with the Open House. Gather your friends, Scout Troop, Environmental Club or Neighbors. We need volunteers to get guests into/out of canoes, get worms onto hooks/fish off hooks, and help get s'mores off the fire and into mouths of guests.

[Volunteer registration is open now!](#)

Annual Meeting

We'll hold our Annual Meeting at 11a.m. in-person at the Lab on April 18. During the Annual Meeting, AOEA members will vote on nominations to the AOEA Board of Directors. Voting is open to members in good standing who have paid dues or made a donation during the current school year.

AOEA Seeking Treasurer - Election April 18

AOEA has a critical need for a volunteer with a background in accounting or finance to join our Board and serve as Treasurer. The Treasurer provides oversight of accounting activities performed by our outside accounting firm, including bill payment, monthly reconciliations, and revenue tracking, and makes monthly reports to the Board. We meet monthly, primarily via Zoom, with occasional workdays at the Lab.

Please [visit our website](#) for more information on current Board needs and send an email to secretary@outdoorlab.org to express interest. Potential candidates will be nominated for a three-year term, to be elected at our annual meeting on April 18.

[Student board member applications](#) are due March 30th.

Proposed APS 2026-27 Budget

In late February, the Superintendent presented a proposed APS budget for the next school year, which fully funds current Lab staff and transportation for day and overnight field trips. In a challenging budget climate, this is good news for hands-on environmental education at the Lab. Over the next few months, the School Board will consider the proposal and vote on a final budget in May. The AOEA has written to the School Board expressing strong support for the request and urging the Board to approve it in the final budget.

Although we're off to a good start, it is always beneficial for the School Board to hear from members of our community about the importance of environmental education at the Outdoor Lab. To share your support with the Board, visit the [School Board website](#) and complete the contact form, call the School Board office or send a letter via U.S. Mail.

Your message of support can be as simple as: "I strongly support the Superintendent's proposed FY 2027 budget for the Outdoor Lab. The proposed funding would maintain current programming and staff ensuring every third, fifth and seventh grade student in Arlington Public Schools (APS) has the opportunity to experience hands-on environmental and STEM education at the Lab."

Please copy or forward a copy of your messages to secretary@outdoorlab.org so we can track our impact. Thank you!

[DONATE NOW](#)

Give With Confidence



Arlington Outdoor Education Association
www.outdoorlab.org



Arlington Outdoor Education Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that owns and conserves the 313-acre property and facilities of the Outdoor Lab. You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website, made a gift or signed up for one of our events.

Arlington Outdoor Education Association | PO Box 5646 | Arlington, VA 22205 US

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