

# 2012 NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE >> 2012 CASCADES CLIMATE CHALLENGE



## PURPOSE >>

Cascades Climate Challenge seeks to create civically engaged and scientifically literate young leaders who will be passionate about conservation of the the natural world for years to come. This is the Institute’s most rigorous program for youth and it is offered to students regardless of their ability to pay. It appeals to high school students who are self-directed enough to apply in teams, and who want to develop their leadership skills in a program that infuses academics in the backcountry. Cascades Climate Challenge requires a service component to extend its impact and reach a broader community.



## FORMAT >>

Participating youth spend three weeks **hiking, canoeing** and **camping** in the North Cascades while learning about the science of climate change, how scientists measure climate change impacts, how to communicate climate change to others, and what individuals can do to address this global issue. Students become empowered to communicate about issues that are relevant to them with confidence through an outdoor leadership progression of experiential challenges, social support and reflection.

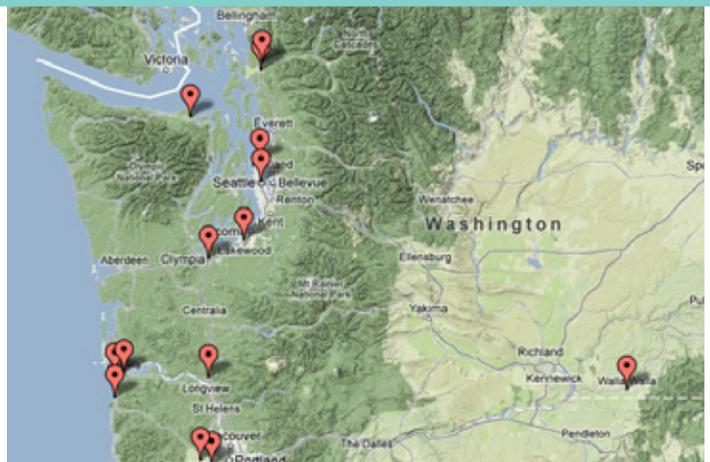
Each student team is mentored to help them reach a minimum of twenty others in their home community through meaningful service projects completed within a year of graduating.



## AT A GLANCE >>

- 70: Applications received
- 38: Enrolled
- 15-18: Age range
- 58%: Low income and/or ethnically diverse
- 15: Communities benefiting in WA and OR

Cascades Climate Challenge engaged 38 students from 15 high schools in 2012, including eight new schools. Washington communities benefiting include Burlington, Kelso, Lakewood, Mount Vernon, Olympia, Seattle, Sequim, Shoreline, and Walla Walla. Oregon communities include Astoria, Seaside, Hillsboro, Aloha and Warrenton.



## FROM THE STUDENTS >>



“ I never expected this experience to be so life changing. I never really had a good understanding of climate change and how in danger the world is. Like most people I love beautiful scenery. Hiking up to many places like Mt. Baker, Desolation and Hidden Lake gave me a chance to see many of these beautiful places. This gave me the chance to fall in love with something I couldn't even imagine before starting this trip.

–McKenna, Walla Walla, WA

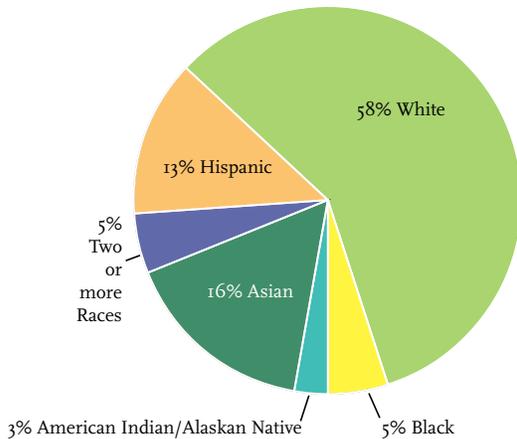
This program has had a great effect on my life. I feel that now I know exactly where to go next. Having the opportunity to live in the wilderness has helped me realize that my passion in life is to help protect this planet.

–Grace, Warrenton, OR

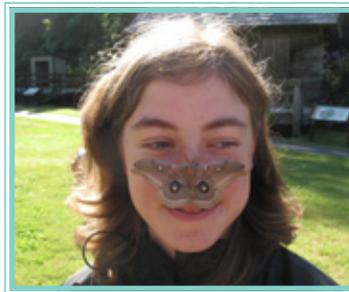
CCC showed me the importance of not only appreciating nature and doing my part to conserve the environment, but to enlighten people around me. I can be a leader, I do have connections with people that care, and those around us would care more if only we took the time to guide them in the right direction.

–Indira, Mount Vernon, WA ”

## PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY >>



Forty-two percent of students represented an ethnic/racial minority including those identifying as African, Mexican, Vietnamese, Chinese, Iranian, Korean and Ukrainian.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS>>

Cascades Climate Challenge addresses the global and locally relevant issue of human-caused climate change by empowering young leaders to take action. Service projects are completed in the spring following the summer field program. In early 2012, eight teams from the summer of 2011 invested more than 450 hours to engage nearly 1700 students and adults. Many projects involved teaching younger students in a classroom setting, often on multiple occasions.

### Projects included:

- Presenting at the Salmon Summit in Ashford, Washington in partnership with Mount Rainier National Park
- Presenting at the City of Portland's Sandy River Restoration Expo
- Teaching monthly environmental education lessons at a large apartment complex

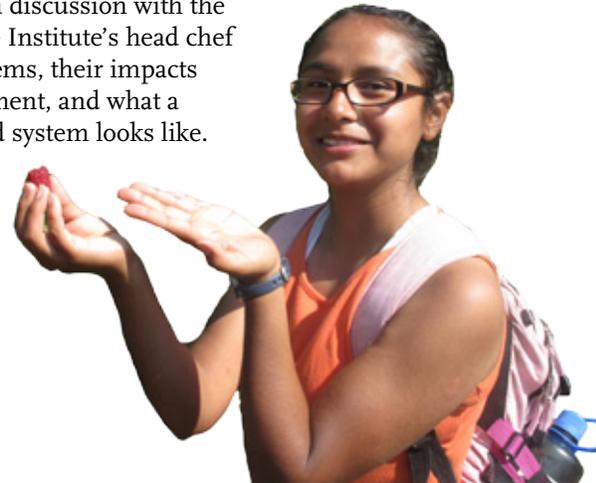
### 2012 participants are well on their way to implementing similar projects, but let's not forget what they've accomplished so far:

- Each student provided 25 hours of hands-on restoration projects prioritized by North Cascades National Park and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
- Demonstrated presentation and public speaking skills at a National Park Ranger Program benefiting 200 members of the public
- Represented 20 of all participants at the Institute's Henry M. Jackson Youth Leadership Conference

## NEW>>



The addition of a food systems curriculum component offers students a very tangible perspective on what climate change means for their daily lives. Students visited a local organic farm, helped harvest, and participated in a discussion with the farmers and the Institute's head chef about food systems, their impacts on the environment, and what a sustainable food system looks like.



## EVALUATION>>

The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation awarded the Institute a grant to perform a formal evaluation that was completed in August 2012. Statistically significant change in behavior was made in all short-term outcomes. After one year, and in addition to their service projects, students also made meaningful progress toward measures including increases in environmental conservation behaviors, civic engagement, and demonstrating ongoing leadership.

## PARTNERS>>



THE PAUL G. ALLEN  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

SUMMARY REPORT

2012 NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE>>  
CASCADES CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Dear donors and supporters of the Cascades  
Climate Challenge,

Thank you.

Words cannot adequately express my gratitude for  
this program.

I have learned so much about climate change and  
our natural environment that I can take back to my  
community.

I can use the leadership skills I have gained on  
this trip to lead my community in "greener" thinking.

You have helped to make a tribe of warriors.  
Warriors of the Earth. This trip has changed each  
and every one of us. Using what we have gained  
here, we will go on to fight for this earth.

You have personally changed my life on this  
trip. I have learned who I am and what I value  
from this trip. I have seen the power of a small  
group of people. We can do great things.

All I can say is "Thank you."

From the bottom of my heart, with all the  
breath in my lungs, and every ounce of energy  
in my body, Thank you.

Sincerely,  
*Emily*

Emily