



NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES



Welcome to a summer of adventure!



Welcome to the North Cascades

Dear Youth Leadership Adventures Participant and Family,



Congratulations on being accepted into the **2026 Youth Leadership Adventures** program! Youth Leadership Adventures has been leading trips in the North Cascades since 2006, and we are thrilled to work with you this summer.

We are excited to welcome you to the North Cascades! All students will come together on the first day of their trip at a campsite near Diablo Lake to meet each other, meet their instructors, and learn about their itinerary. That night we will have dinner and test out our tents and sleeping bags. The next morning, students will be shuttled to their trailhead to begin their canoe-camping or backpacking adventure. Courses take place in North Cascades National Park or Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

This **Welcome Packet** includes much of the information that will prepare you for your course. Please familiarize yourself with the information in this packet and fill out and **return the required paperwork by May 26th**. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us. Get ready to join a community of awesome students who have explored the North Cascades with Youth Leadership Adventures!

Sincerely,



Kate Little
Youth Leadership Coordinator



Neal Smeltzer
Youth Leadership Manager



Eva Araujo
Youth Leadership Specialist





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Preparing for Youth Leadership Adventures

Required Forms Checklist - Must be returned!

- Participant Info & Release Form
- Travel Form
- Statement of Commitment & Payment Form

To complete your enrollment in the program, these forms must be **completed and returned** to us by the **Paperwork Deadline in the table below**. You are not fully enrolled until your completed forms and tuition fees have been received. Return your forms to us in one of the following ways:

Scan/Email

youth@ncascades.org

Mail

North Cascades Institute Attn: YLA
 810 State Route 20
 Sedro-Woolley, WA 98282-1263

Deadlines:

May 26th	All paperwork due
June 17th	All payment due (unless you worked out a payment plan with NCI Staff)

Participant Information and Release Form

This is standard procedure for any field-based outdoor program. Please read the entire form thoroughly and let us know if you have any concerns or questions about the program or this form. Our staff and instructors will review these forms before the trip begins. Please see the **Health, Safety, and Risk Management** section for more details.

Travel Form

Please fill out the attached **Travel Form** to reserve your spot on the free NCI shuttle. Information on shuttle stop locations and times can be found on the attached **Shuttle Schedule**. Transportation is provided for all Youth Leadership Adventures trips from designated locations. If you have difficulty arranging a ride to your pickup location, please contact us.

Statement of Commitment & Payment Form (if applicable)

Your full balance due must be paid by June 17th. Instructions about how to pay are included on the **Statement of Commitment & Payment Form**. We are able to set up payment plans as needed. Please let us know how we can help.





General Program Information

Mandatory Pre-Trip Check-in

You will receive an email and a phone call from us a few days before your trip. This will be an opportunity for you to ask any questions and give your instructor a list of the gear and clothing that you will be borrowing for your trip. Please have this list ready for your phone call. See **Packing List**.

Youth Leadership Adventures Course

During this 5 or 8-day course, you will learn how to backpack or canoe camp while receiving hands-on training in outdoor leadership, communication skills, and cultural and natural history of the North Cascades wilderness.

Service Projects

Eight day trips will participate in a stewardship project with the National Park or Forest Service. The stewardship project might include trail work, native plant restoration projects, campsite maintenance, and more. Students will receive a certificate after the trip to document their 8 hours of service work.

Community Day

On their last evening, a number of community members (including Youth Leadership Adventures staff) will join the group to hear what students have to say about climate change and other environmental justice topics they discussed on their trip. Each student will have an opportunity to make requests of adults in their community, and share how they plan to transfer their outdoor and leadership skills back into their own communities. Students have the option to have their takeaways recorded and broadcast to a larger audience as well!

Emergency Contact Information for Families

If there is an emergency and you need to reach a participant during their course, please call the following number. Students **will not** have phone or internet access during the majority of the program. There is no cell phone service at any of the remote campsites.

General Phone: (360) 722-1082 **Email:** youth@ncascades.org

If you need to get in contact with a specific staff member:

Eva: (360) 612-8616 Kate: (360) 358-7565 Neal: (360) 614-7097

Please leave a message if you call after hours, and we will return your call as soon as possible. **Please provide the name of the student you are trying to reach**





Health, Safety and Risk Management



Risks during Youth Leadership Adventures:

This program is conducted in the wilderness and therefore involves inherent risks that are ordinarily associated with moderate to vigorous physical activity in high altitude or wilderness terrain. Please see the **“Assumption of Risk and Agreement”** section of the **Participant Information & Release** form for specific details about risks and let us know if you have any questions. Our program has strict safety guidelines and policies to mitigate risks as much as possible. Our instructors are also certified Wilderness First Responders in case of an emergency.

Photo by Benjamin Drummond / iLCP

Personal Responsibility:

While every effort is made by the instructors to exercise caution to prevent incidents, participants must assume full responsibility for their individual safety and are responsible for their own health and accident insurance. We ask that all students take the responsibility to keep themselves and their peers safe by following the rules and guidelines.

Physical and Emotional Health:

Please be as thorough as you can on your **Participant Information and Release** health form. We make every effort to accommodate your needs but can only do so once you have provided us with your information. If any medical information changes, please be sure to contact us with any updates. If you have any health concerns, let us know, and **please visit your doctor before your trip.**

Emergencies:

Each group has instructors with Wilderness First Responder medical training. Every course will have a radio and satellite messenger by which the groups can contact the National Park or Forest Service to initiate an emergency response. This is also the way that North Cascades Institute staff can contact groups in case of an emergency at home. Our instructors have years of experience and are well trained in leading youth on wilderness camping trips.





The Wilderness Menu

Over the years, we have refined our menu to keep our students happy and well fed. During the trips, students learn how to cook on camp stoves and take turns cooking meals for the group with the help of an instructor. There's no need to bring any food with you as we provide three full meals a day plus many snacks. **Special dietary needs can be accommodated but we must know well in advance (include information on the Participant Information and Release form).**

Breakfast

Granola
Oatmeal
Breakfast Burritos

Lunch

Bagels & Cream Cheese
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Cheese, Crackers &
Salami

Dinner

Pad Thai
Curry
Burritos
Domoda (Peanut Stew)
Black Bean Chili
Pasta

Snacks

Trail Mix
Cookies
Fruit
Beef Jerky

Beverages

Gatorade
Hot Cocoa
Tea
Cider





General Course Itinerary

Day 1:

On the first day, participants will meet fellow trip members and instructors, go through trip orientation, pack gear, eat dinner, and sleep at a campground in North Cascades National Park. Students can sleep in individual tents, or multi (3-4) person tents depending on their preference. You can discuss your preference with instructors when they call before your trip.

Day 2:

Depart for the wilderness with your group. Arrive at a hike or boat-in campsite and learn camping skills.

Next few days:

Paddle/hike, explore, learn, volunteer, lead!

Last Evening:

Arrive back in Newhalem, spend the night car-camping, unpacking, and having final group activities including Community Day

Last Day (Day 5 or 8):

Return borrowed gear, eat breakfast, and depart at 9:00 am. Please see **Shuttle Schedule** for drop off locations and times.





Packing for Youth Leadership Adventures



Packing Information

Below you will find a list of the gear and clothing that you will need for your course. We have a gear-lending library and are happy to loan you any equipment that you do not already have. **We ask that you bring what you have and we will provide the rest.** An instructor will call you shortly before your trip to talk about what you need to borrow.

Medications

Please bring two sets of your medications, if applicable, so we can safely store a backup in case something happens to the first set. The first set of medications **MUST** be in the original containers with the medication and dosage written on the bottle. The second set should be stored in a waterproof bag or container with the medication and dosage information. North Cascades Institute instructors hold and administer all medications. Exceptions to this medical policy are asthma inhalers, epipens for severe allergies and/or diabetic medications--students carry the first set and their instructor will carry the backup.

Cell Phones

We encourage you to bring a cell phone to contact your family on your way home from the trip, but **we do not allow cell phones on the trip**. The cell phones will be collected by our staff and locked up safely for the entirety of your trip. There is no cell phone reception at the Environmental Learning Center or in the wilderness.

Digital Cameras

If you have an inexpensive digital camera, you may bring it on your trip. Make sure you pack extra memory cards and batteries. We do take along a group camera, and photos will be shared digitally after each trip.

Alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs

We have a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. Students who bring these items to North Cascades Institute will be sent home immediately.





Packing List

Must bring from home

Underwear: 4-5 pairs; 2 sports bras, if applicable

Swimsuit: shorts/trunks; quick-dry shorts & sports bra (no bikinis)

T-shirts: 2-3, ideally not cotton

Athletic shorts: 2-3 pairs, ideally not cotton

Toiletries: toothbrush and toothpaste (small), menstruation supplies. Only bring other toiletries if you need them. **Do not bring** razors, deodorant, make-up, shampoo, body wash etc.

Prescription Medication: if applicable; bring 2 sets

Prescription Glasses: If applicable; if you wear contacts make sure you also bring glasses

Available to loan from North Cascades Institute. Bring what you have, and we will provide the rest:

Sun shirt (long sleeve button up, can be cotton)

Hiking pants: 1 pair, nylon/synthetic

Fleece jacket: Medium Weight

Long underwear: top and bottom

Socks: 3-4 pairs; wool or synthetic

Water/camp shoes: close-toed shoes (Crocs or Keens) or old pair of gym shoes

Hiking boots: leather, ankle high

Raincoat / Rain pants

Warm hat

Sun Hat: Baseball cap or bucket hat

Sunglasses: with a strap or case

Bandana: 2

Water bottles: 2 (1 Liter)

Small flashlight or headlamp

Eating kit: cup and bowl (plastic or aluminum), fork and/or spoon, in a bag

Sleeping bag: 30 degrees Fahrenheit or below in a stuff sack; packable

Sleeping pad

Optional items:

Book: small, paperback

Drawing/sketching materials (We carry some)

Wristwatch

Camera (we do carry a group camera)

