

Dear Friend of the Institute,

Do you remember what first sparked your curiosity for the natural world? How old were you when you fell in love with wild places? What personal experiences in nature led you to greater involvement?

I've been a naturalist all my life, from camping with my family when I was six years old, falling in love with birds in high school, then studying field biology in graduate school. But it was the rugged North Cascade mountains that led me to action.

As a climbing ranger in North Cascades National Park, I discovered the high country with friends and dreamt of sharing the wonders of this magical place with others.

We were passionate conservationists during the tumultuous and adversarial timber wars of the 80s. We realized that education could be a powerful tool to protect the land that we loved. We were drawn to field-based education and we knew that we needed to engage all parts of our brains and bodies to succeed: science and art, facts and feelings, notebooks and hiking boots.

That led to the creation of North Cascades Institute in 1986, and for 30 years we've been walking and learning together in the mountains. Thanks to each of you who have journeyed with us thus far and to those that have recently joined us to learn, explore and protect your wild nearby. Your support is essential to reach more people and help them discover, share and care for this amazing place. **Please make a gift today by using the envelope provided or at ncascades.org/give.**

Your child may have attended Mountain School, which has introduced the magic of the North Cascades ecosystem to more than 27,000 students since 1990. You may be supporting high school students as they practice leadership and stewardship in the backcountry through Youth Leadership Adventures. Or perhaps you were part of one of the 16 cohorts of graduate students getting their M.Ed. through our partnership with Western Washington University.

You may be familiar with our work because of the wildflower or art classes you took with us in the field. You may have joined us for a Family Getaway or attended a conference at the Environmental Learning Center on the shores of Diablo Lake.

Whatever your connection to North Cascades Institute, you are an integral part of our community – helping people of all ages and backgrounds experience, understand and fall more in love with the natural world. Thank you!

Here we are, three decades later, with tens of thousands of people reached. You have helped us develop into a dynamic conservation organization with field-based learning still at the core of everything we do. After 30 years we've come to see that the power of our work is as much about how it inspires and empowers people as much as it benefits the landscape.

That's why we've updated our mission statement:

*North Cascades Institute inspires and empowers
environmental stewardship for all through
transformative educational experiences in nature.*



What does this look like on the ground and how are you making change with your support? Here are a few examples:

Inspire “I attended Mountain School both as a 5th grade student and as a 5th grade teacher. My early experience opened my eyes to the importance of caring for the amazing natural world around us. My memories are strong: Seeing waterfalls, massive trees and spectacular mountain peaks; and the night hike where your senses are heightened in a unique way. I’m now inspired as an educator to teach students the responsibility of caring for our planet,” said Jordan Lee, Little Mountain Elementary School teacher.

Empower “Coming back as an apprentice for Youth Leadership Adventures motivated and transformed me on so many levels. I got to share my enthusiasm for learning in the outdoors, learned about my teaching style and found my voice through making decisions and bouncing ideas off others. Now in college I can express myself and know my opinion is relevant and essential,” said Lucia Guido, Youth Leadership Adventures student and apprentice.

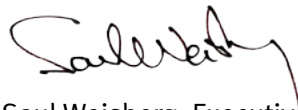
Educate “This program has been the most formative experience of my personal and professional life. The community living, learning and working in this residency fosters truly holistic learning that goes beyond the classroom. I chose to attend North Cascades Institute for the field-based experiential education and the ability to immediately implement what I’ve learned by teaching Mountain School and Youth Leadership Adventures,” said Adam Bates, graduate M.Ed. student.

Experience “This is a wonderful way for our family to spend time together. As parents we get to watch our children engage in activities led by mentors other than ourselves... We had a fabulous experience,” wrote a 2016 Family Getaway participant.

Transform “Youth Leadership Adventures has transformed my individual students and our whole school as well. All stories are unique, yet there is the common theme of self-confidence and growth. Alicia was afraid to speak out loud in biology class, returned from YLA with a newfound voice and sense of self. Vanessa hid in her hoodie then returned transformed, with head held high, job at clothing store, and presented her senior project about her YLA trip with total confidence. Crystal loved YLA so much she returned to her senior year with new leadership skills as our High School Secretary and then became a YLA apprentice the next summer,” said Laurelynn Brooks, high school teacher.

After 30 years of innovative programming, these personal stories are what keep me inspired and committed to our mission. I know that you have your own North Cascades Institute experience and stories. **I hope that you will continue your journey with us and help others experience their own by making a generous year-end gift using the envelope provided or at ncascades.org/give.**

Thank you so much,



Saul Weisberg, Executive Director

P.S. Thirty years ago I joked that our mission was to save the world. People just looked at me and smiled. Now I’m serious. If you’re going to have a mission, it should be something worth working for. **Thanks for creating powerful, place-based learning experiences for all in the next 30 years with your generous donation today!**

