Youth Leadership Adventures blends leadership training, hands-on stewardship, science education and outdoor skills. In 2016, students spent eight days canoeing, backpacking and working on service projects in the North Cascades backcountry, participating in a reunion and a Summit where they received mentorship and training.

The Northwest Youth Leadership Summit featured 18 skill-building breakout sessions, a Student Success Panel, an Opportunity Fair and surprise appearance by Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell.

Recruitment Successes
We received a record number of applicants for summer courses in 2016 — 229 applications for 81 spots.

Youth Leadership Ambassadors
Youth Leadership Ambassadors is a school-year extension that engages students and alumni from Skagit and Whatcom Counties in outdoor adventures, service work and college preparedness training. In 2017, Ambassadors will meet as a group twice a month — once for an excursion into nearby public lands or to visit local colleges and universities and once for a workshop focusing on college access.

Three Youth Leadership Apprentices
Apprentices assisted with summer backcountry courses, outreach and development. Apprentices provide critical support and enable participants to learn from peer leaders who are close to students in age, cultural and socio-economic background and experience levels.
AT A GLANCE

2016 Tuition: $1,185
Average scholarship award: $1,014

103 students attended the NORTHWEST YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

96% students from WASHINGTON & OREGON

86% received scholarships

77 students completed backpacking & canoeing courses

64% people of color

56% qualified for FREE & REDUCED lunch programs

40% non-English languages spoken at home

15+ languages spoken during summer courses

15% first time participating in an outdoor summer program

SERVICE PROJECTS

Participants completed environmental stewardship projects that improved ecological health and infrastructure on US Forest Service and National Park Service lands. Students spent 1,092 hours on service projects.

2016 accomplishments included:

- 26 campsites maintained
- 9 illegal fire rings removed
- 700 feet of unauthorized “social” trails closed
- 11 miles of trail built or maintained
- 6 new signs installed
- 23 drainage culverts cleared
- 1 pit toilet dug
- 35 feet of turnpike built or maintained
- 80 pounds of exotic, invasive plants removed
- 500 native plants planted
- 36 pounds removed
- 1 picnic table built
- 1 tent pad built
- 1 hitch rail built

81% first time participating in an outdoor summer program
OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

We conduct pre-then post-program surveys that assess students’ development. Students consistently report emotional and physical transformations as a result of their participation.

Shown below are the percentage of students who reported feeling confident in the following areas before and after 2016 Youth Leadership Adventures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group leadership</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk management/safety in the backcountry</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness and empathy for others</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shown below are the percentage of students who agreed with the following statements before and after 2016 Youth Leadership Adventures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel motivated to help create a better future for my community and the environment</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel connected to the North Cascades</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in pursuing other opportunities to protect or restore the environment as a volunteer</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in learning about plants, animals, geology and other aspects of the natural world</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see opportunities to be involved in creating a better future for my community &amp; the environment</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in learning more about the impacts of climate change</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think of myself as a leader</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like/enjoy public speaking</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Before this trip I was a shy girl from a small town. Now I know that I shouldn’t be afraid to use my voice. I should act on issues that matter to me, like climate change.”

“I’ve learned so many useful skills to better myself in ways I never thought possible. I had the chance to listen to others, watch them grow and find confidence.”

“I am so thankful that I achieved my goals of hiking and camping for the first time in my life. I was the first person in my family to go hiking and camping in the woods.”
Thank you so much to the many individuals and organizations who have generously supported 2016 Youth Leadership Adventures.

Special thanks to Northwest Youth Leadership Summit sponsors and Opportunity Fair partners, and for in-kind support from: Burlington Coleman Factory Outlet, Columbia Sportswear, Feathered Friends, Kavu, REI, Smartwool, Zumiez and Ross Lake Resort.

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Village Books  
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Wild Streak  
Youth Leadership Fund

I came in as an apprentice with very little experience, but that changed quickly. I received Wilderness First Aid certification, learned how to create lesson plans and gained valuable experiences as an educator. I also learned how to be a leader and make decisions in tough situations.

There aren’t many opportunities for low-income or people of color to get this kind of experience. I never imagined that I could be an outdoor educator because I never had the opportunity to go camping, much less encounter a park ranger. I didn’t know jobs like this existed until now. I suspect that is true for many kids coming on courses.

Youth Leadership Adventures means so much to me and to so many students. For a lot of kids in the program, the North Cascades become a second home, and they saw us apprentices as role models - people who they could be one day if they work hard and pursue their outdoor interests.

This apprenticeship allows students to pursue outdoor education as a realistic career; it helps create the next generation of outdoor educators!”