

# NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES

# 2017

PROGRAM REPORT

## Goal: Inspire a lifelong conservation ethic in the next generation of leaders

Youth Leadership Adventures is a progression of transformational learning experiences, designed for local underserved youth to jump-start lifelong engagement with nature, stewardship, and community. Primary activities are 8-day Outdoor Leadership and 12-day Science and Sustainability Summer Courses in North Cascades National Park and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Next-step opportunities allow participants to put newly gained skills into action.

## Program Outcomes:

Develop **SENSE OF PLACE & COMMUNITY** by connecting underserved students to public lands

**52,000** Hours of outdoor learning



“When we hiked up to Desolation Peak I thought I was never going to reach the top. Reaching our goal and touching the fire lookout was one of the most powerful, empowering experiences I've ever had.”

— Illiana

Deepen **ECOLOGICAL LITERACY** through first-hand experience with field science



“My favorite lesson was about grizzly rehabilitation in the Park from Ranger Andy. I'm more aware of how my choices affect the environment, and able to educate others about making a difference.”

— Ava

Cultivate **LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATION** skills through personal exploration & public speaking



“I came here thinking that I knew a lot about me, but there was something missing. I was able to find out who I am as a person and a leader.”

— 2017 Participant

Empower youth to make a difference through **STEWARDSHIP** and workforce opportunities



**1,995** Hours volunteered

“My favorite moments were doing stewardship work with the Forest Service. I learned how to fix trails and why public lands are so important.”

— 2017 Participant

## Participant Snapshot

Participants are underserved, low-income, and students of color. Tuition is based on a sliding-scale and we provide clothing, gear, transportation, meals, family orientations, and gender-inclusive camp options

**60%** **FIRST TIME**  
in National Park  
or National Forest

**50%** qualify for  
**FREE &  
REDUCED**  
lunch

**60%** **PEOPLE  
OF COLOR**

**77%** live near the  
**NORTH  
CASCADES**  
ecosystem

**78** **YOUTH  
PARTICIPANTS**

**23%** **BORN  
OUTSIDE**  
of the US

**81%** **FIRST TIME**  
participating in an  
outdoor program

**86%** **RECEIVED  
SCHOLARSHIPS**

**\$80** Median price  
**PAID BY  
STUDENT**

## Pathways for Youth: Next-Step Opportunities to Put Skills Into Action



▲ **Youth Ambassadors Program** provides college workshops, recreation, mentorship, leadership skills, and stewardship. Participants volunteered 150 hours in public lands and received 70 hours preparing for college. Trips included: Skagit Land Trust work party, birding with Park Rangers, and a Western Washington University visit. The 6-month program is free and we provide transportation, meals, and a stipend. Read trip stories by Ambassadors on our Blog ([goo.gl/TmpdZM](http://goo.gl/TmpdZM))

**Interns** assist in leading summer courses while gaining work experience. Participants are inspired by interns who are of similar ages and backgrounds. Interns receive stipends, housing, meals, and Wilderness First Aid training.

▼ **Northwest Youth Leadership Summit** equips students personal and professional development skills to serve the environment and communities. The free, day-long Summit includes skill-building sessions, a career fair, group reflection, and outdoor adventures.



**14** **YOUTH  
AMBASSADORS**

**120** **SUMMIT  
Participants**

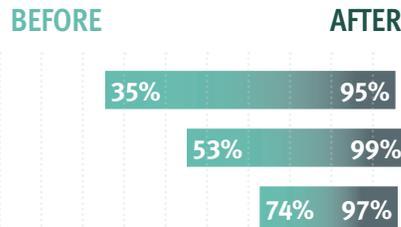
**2** **SUMMER  
INTERNS**

# Evaluating Program Outcomes

Pre- then post-program surveys demonstrate emotional and physical transformations as a result of their participation.

## Sense of Place & Community

- I am confident in my outdoor skills
- I will visit public lands with friends & family
- Self-awareness and empathy for others



## Ecological Literacy

- I enjoy learning science
- I know ways I can reduce climate change impacts



## Stewardship

- I am confident in working with tools
- I am interested in environmental careers



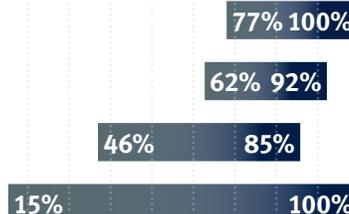
## Leadership & Communication

- I see myself as a leader
- I see opportunities to create a better future for my community and the environment



## Youth Ambassadors Outcomes

- I understand the benefits of outdoor recreation
- I am interested in environmental careers
- I see myself as a leader
- I understand college & financial aid resources



“This program takes us a step closer to being the best versions of ourselves. We take each other's stories with us wherever we go.”

— Desirae



“I always believed contributing to the environment and community was important. I now have fire, skills, and ideas for action.”

— 2017 Participant



“As the oldest sibling, I want to set a good example by being the first in my family to go to college. During Ambassadors, I found the right colleges for me, learned about financial aid, and created my career pathway. My goal is to be an Elementary Teacher in Skagit County. I can't wait for what my future holds!”

— Ana is a Mount Vernon High School senior. She has been accepted to 4 colleges already!

# Pathways for Youth—Mia's Story

“My name is Mia. I’m a small town girl and member of the Swinomish Tribe. My dad taught me how to hunt before I could walk and I hold the record for the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest elk taken out of Western Washington. Since 2015, I’ve participated in a Youth Leadership Adventures trip, the Summit, and Ambassadors. Before YLA, I had a close-minded view on people. My first thoughts when I arrived were: this place is beautiful, and what did I get myself into? The woods aren't new to me, but these activities with 9 strangers, felt awkward.”

During our trip, we hiked over 90 miles, completed stewardship projects, studied wildlife and glaciology, and helped each other grow. I pushed myself and came to know myself in a new way. After my trip, the Youth Ambassador program taught me useful college skills.

These programs shaped my environmental consciousness by changing my actions. I used to not think twice about the ground I walk on. Now, I've seen the effects on an environmental area when we complete a project together. Even more, YLA shaped the way I view people. I realized that we all share commonalities. I formed connections with peers who are now my friends, with National Park Service mentors, and most of all, with people who care about me. Thanks to the people at North Cascades Institute, I know that I'll always have someone in my corner.

Today I'm at Skagit Valley College, working toward a degree in environmental conservation. **I am pursuing my dream job to be a wildlife biologist, so that I can preserve our wildlife for future generations to come.**



“Because of you, we learned about glaciers before us at 7,500 ft. We pushed ourselves to the limit hiking 20 miles. We expanded our minds, learning about leadership, communication, insects, and climate change. Thank you for creating a better world with us.”

— Lizzy, 2017 Scholarship Recipient

## 2017 Partners and Supporters

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