



# NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE MT. BAKER SNOW SCHOOL

# 2018

PROGRAM REPORT

**Mt. Baker Snow School** fosters connections between mountain snowpack and our watershed health. The alpine heights of Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest become a living laboratory—blending citizen science, environmental education, and recreation. Local middle school classes explore on snowshoes, led by Western Washington University (WWU) interns, Institute M.Ed. students, and climate scientists. Students receive two sessions:

1. A classroom visit introducing weather monitoring, public lands, and healthy watersheds.
2. A field trip to Mt. Baker Ski Area where students conduct hands-on experiments—gathering samples, monitoring conditions, and analyzing data on snowpack, snow algae, and snow-water equivalency. This unique citizen science opportunity contributes to cutting-edge research at WWU’s Kodner Lab.

## Program Outcomes

APPLIED SCIENCE LEARNING of watersheds, weather and climate



Increase ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS for local kids and families



Encourage HEALTHY LIFESTYLES through winter recreation



Increase OBSERVATION and INQUIRY skills



Foster a greater SENSE OF PLACE and CONNECTION to community



Expose kids to STEM EDUCATION and CAREER PATHWAYS



## 2018 Highlight: Expansion Pilot

This year, Mount Baker Jr. High School students conducted a real life lab from start to finish, preparing them for success in high school science. WWU interns and Northwest Avalanche Center scientists visited classes after trips to help students analyze data and draw conclusions. Students presented findings to peers, parents and the Mt. Baker community at a symposium.

“ Students took what they’d learned in the classroom to a deeper level—analyzing specimens under a microscope (many for the first time) and thinking about organisms in novel ways.

— Eric Henry,  
Mount Baker Jr. High Teacher



## Participant Snapshot

Our priority audience is rural and underserved communities surrounding Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Schools pay just \$10 per student. With philanthropic support, the Institute subsidized fees by \$55,000!

**556** YOUTH  
served from  
16 schools

**105** TEACHER  
& PARENT  
participants

**18** VOLUNTEER  
& INTERN  
instructors

**45%** LOW-  
INCOME  
students

**69%** RURAL  
UNDERSERVED  
schools

**8** NEW  
SCHOOLS  
served

## Evaluating Outcomes

**80%** of teachers reported  
improved attitudes  
toward science

**90%** reported increased  
academic success in  
key science concepts

**80%** reported improved  
critical thinking about  
environmental issues

“Our students live along Mt. Baker Highway, which ends at the stunning Artist Point vista. Yet, most have never seen the viewpoint, played at the ski area, or hiked the trails. Hands-on experiments with inspiring instructors enhance students’ academic experience and instills connection to the natural world.”

— Neal Schlegel, Mount Baker Jr. High Teacher



## 2018 Partners & Supporters

Mt. Baker SnowSchool is made possible thanks to support from individuals and organizations, including:



Thank you to these funders whose grant support made Snow School possible:

National Environmental Education Foundation  
Hands on the Land

Whatcom Community Foundation Youth  
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Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

And to all of the individuals and families who made generous contributions, *thank you!*

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