2021 ANNUAL REPORT



WITH GREAT EXCITEMENT.

I started my tenure as the new Executive Director of North Cascades Institute in May 2021. I was fortunate to overlap with Saul Weisbergthe widely-admired co-founder and Executive Director of the Institute for 35 years -through June. During this time I was able to listen, learn, and deepen my understanding of the history and heart of the Institute. On July 1, Saul enjoyed his first day of retirement and I fully stepped into my new role. After nearly a year, I can truly say I am so impressed by this tremendous organization and by the exceptional staff and community who make the mission come alive.

While the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021 and impacted our programming, I was regularly impressed by the resourcefulness and adaptability of our team. Highlighted in these pages are wonderful

ways we were able to still bring 5th graders to Mountain School, engage in a full summer of Youth Leadership Adventures, facilitate learning in Base Camps and Family Getaways and even reach hundreds through the virtual programs that emerged during the pandemic and will likely continue well into the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to upend our staffing and challenge Learning Center operations. In addition to the retirements of Saul and of our long-time

Two efforts that will have deep impacts on our future work are also priorities for me. We are engaged in the relicensing of Seattle City Light's Skagit Hydroelectric Project with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) which includes how the Institute and the Environmental Learning Center will be supported through the next license period (up to 50 years). And we're a strong partner in the Outdoor Schools for All effort to gain opportunities for every 5th grader in our state to have an outdoor educational experience.



I am grateful to work in service of a meaningful mission to inspire environmental stewardship, and I am equally thankful for the privilege of working with an amazing staff and board.

Learning Center Director Kristofer Gilje, the Institute has experienced significant staff turnover—what some are calling the "Great Resignation"—as individuals pursue different roles for many reasons. We are grateful for the dedicated employees who are shouldering these transitions and coming up with creative solutions.

Since I began, one of my priorities has been building our Leadership Team, which includes new Program, Learning Center, and Inclusion & Community Partnerships Directors. We also welcomed new Board members with a diversity of experiences: Michael Liang, Priya Nanjappa and Brad Tuininga. We are a strong team and are working to effectively lead the Institute through these unprecedented times while also keeping an eye on the future.

In large part due to your generous support, we were able to finish 2021 in a strong financial position. THANK YOU! The Institute was fortunate to receive additional COVID-related funding, which was critical. We're also excited to have surpassed our goal for the Saul Weisberg Catalyst Fund.

North Cascades Institute entered 2022 with cautious optimism, as well as excitement for the impact, exploration, joy and connections the year will hold.

Dec Vitrich

2021 PROGRAM IMPACTS

Mountain School

Mountain School is our 31-year-old residential education program for 5th graders in the heart of North Cascades National Park.

- Spring Mountain School was canceled as schools, teachers and students continued to be impacted by the pandemic.
- ▶ We introduced a hybrid model for Fall called "Mountain School Choose Your Own Adventure." This updated version provided area schools a combination of an online orientation conducted with a North Cascades National Park Ranger and our program staff along with an in-person day trip to either the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center or a park close to the students' school. Students and teachers from Bellingham, Methow Valley, Mount Vernon and Burlington-Edison participated.

It was really rainy today, BUT we still had a lot of fun! I found a lobster mushroom and lots of other plants and life in the forest.

Camille

▶ Our instructional staff continued to create free online "Mountain School @ Home" content, including new lessons in Spanish and a series of videos on animal skulls.



Tag along on a day in

Mountain School on our blog:

My First Day at Mountain School

16
SCHOOLS FROM
SKAGIT, WHATCOM AND
OKANAGAN COUNTIES







958 LEARNER DAYS



70 PARTICIPANTS

Whatcom Coalition for Environmental Education's Connections

Whatcom County kids explore, learn, and connect with each other outdoors near their school. Connections started during the 2020 school closures with nonprofits banding together to address academic inequities. In 2021, we worked primarily with the Mt. Baker School District in partnership with Camp Saturna, Whatcom Land Trust, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and Common Threads.

- Camp Saturna was added as a learning site.
- ▶ 2 more schools in the Mt. Baker School District were added.
- A few responses from teachers surveyed about "the biggest benefit I observed in my students as a result from the Connections program was ..."
 - an appreciation for nature and science
 - building friendships with students from other schools in the district

I found three mole jaws, a pelvis bone and a few claws in my owl pellet. It was super cool. ... I thought I would be grossed out and not like it at all, but then it became the best part of the day.

- Hazel

Youth Leadership Adventures

Through immersion in an alpine environment shaped by glaciers, Youth Leadership Adventures (YLA) inspires local high schoolers to manifest a hopeful, joyful, and sustainable future for the North Cascades ecosystem and the people who are part of it.

- ➤ Through support from individual donors and grants, YLA was able to offer over \$63,000 in scholarships in 2021.
- ▶ In 2021, YLA partnered with Burlington-Edison High School's chapter of GEAR UP, a national program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. In order to connect Latinx students from BEHS to the YLA program, a GEAR UP mentor connected families to YLA and served as a trip leader on one of our backcountry courses, allowing YLA to have a Latinx affinity trip.
- ▶ YLA alumni are invited to join the Youth for the Environment and People (YEP!) program, a youth empowerment after-school program offered in partnership with RE Sources. This gathering gives local teens a place to come together and talk about environmental issues they are seeing in their own lives, design and implement an environmental project in their local community and gain skills in civic engagement. In 2021, we hosted the first-ever Skagit cohort of YEP!





496
LEARNER DAYS

57PARTICIPANTS



This trip is and will probably be the best thing I've done in my life. It had everything I wanted, from amazing views to creating never-forgetting bonds. This has formed me into a better person. It had its challenges and that was a great way to grow mentally and physically. The fun is endless and bonds are forever.

—YLA participant

3,583
LEARNER DAYS



2,298
PARTICIPANTS

Adult and Family Programs

Our suite of Family Getaways, Base Camp Learning and Lodging, Field Seminars, Skagit Tours, Online Classes, and Stewardship Weekends bring new audiences to the North Cascades to learn, recreate and be inspired.

- ▶ We were able to safely return to in-person instruction in Summer 2021 including reduced-capacity Diablo Lake Boat Tours in partnership with Seattle City Light and North Cascades National Park. Nearly every program we offered filled to capacity, demonstrating the hunger people have to return to guided, communal experiences in nature!
- ▶ We continued to grow the audience for our suite of Online Classes, which we began when in-person teaching was curtailed due to the pandemic. Online classes are more affordable and convenient for our constituents, and allow us to reach more people across a larger geographical area. Offerings included the Natural History of Owls, Diversity in the Outdoors, Wolves in Washington, and The People of the Sacred River: The History of the Upper Skagit.

I have been on two field classes this summer with NCI and both were fabulous. Highly recommended for anyone who likes doing their learning outdoors in beautiful places with friendly folks!

Michael

Multimedia

Confronting the challenge of the pandemic, we continued to utilize video and interactive Zoom classes to engage with people across the country. View these projects at YouTube.com/ncascades.





"So Long, Saul" online celebration



Poetry from the Porch readings



Confluence Property
Conservation Easement



Skagit Tours



Mystery Skulls with Alexa



Youth Leadership Adventures

- An online celebration of Saul Weisberg's 35year legacy of leadership at the Institute featuring testimonials from his colleagues around the country, former staff and graduate students, family members and a surprise appearance by Sally Jewell.
- ▶ Our ongoing Poetry from the Porch video series featured new readings from Kim Stafford, Lyanda Lynn Haupt and Bill Yake. These writers also were presenters in the Nature of Writing Speaker Series produced each Spring and Fall in partnership with Village Books.
- A video co-produced with Skagit Land
 Trust highlighting our partnership on the
 Conservation Easement at our property in Marblemount at the confluence of Diobsud Creek and the Skagit River.
- A new Skagit Tours video created for Seattle City Light.
- ► Three new "Mystery Skulls" educational videos in "Mountain School @ Home" series with Alexa
- A Youth Leadership Adventures recruitment video made available in English and Spanish.

Conferences and Retreats

Custom educational programs, lodging and meals at the Environmental Learning Center—including conferences, events, retreats, trainings, reunions and other gatherings—inspire reflection and connection to the natural world as well as to each other.

- In 2021, 17 of 30 programs were cancelled or moved to 2022 due to pandemic restrictions.
- ► Groups included a Bellingham Schools directors retreat, an Eastside Preparatory School field science program, a Sierra Club National Outing, a Front and Centered nonprofit staff retreat and Remote Medical Training's Wilderness EMT courses.

260
PARTICIPANTS

1,375LEARNER DAYS

Retail

Our seven gift shops in and around North Cascades National Park are a valuable way for us to help educate people about the ecosystem, introduce new community members to our work and help fund our programs.

▶ Even with most stores being closed or under limited operations, we had our best sales year yet as the park received unprecedented visitation during the pandemic.



15,000

PEOPLE ENGAGED IN-PERSON
AT THE SKAGIT INFORMATION CENTER

▶ We also set a new record in Online Shop sales and saw a 27% increase in visitors perusing and purchasing curated North Cascades merchandise.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TRANSITION

AFTER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE, Executive Director Saul Weisberg retired on June 30, 2021. Weisberg was one of the North Cascades Institute's co-founders in 1986 and he stewarded the Institute through tremendous growth and expansion over the past decades. Finding the next leader for was a significant milestone as Saul has served as the organization's Executive Director since the beginning.

"Rebecca (Bec) Detrich was chosen by the Board of Directors as the Institute's next Executive Director after after a six-month, rigorous worldwide search process facilitated by Potrero Group, a leading consulting firm for environmental nonprofit organizations," remarked Sterling Clarren, Chair of the Institute's Board of Directors. "Among the qualities that the Board admired in Bec were her leadership experience and deep knowledge of Residential Environmental Learning Centers, experience working successfully with federal and state partners, and her career-long emphasis on community engagement and inclusion."



"Passing the paddle" on Diablo Lake

Bec most recently served as Executive Director for Trips for Kids Marin in San Rafael, CA. She has also worked in various other roles as an environmental educator for organizations throughout the United States. Bec received a BA in Environmental Science from Willamette University, a MA in Biology from Miami University and MBA from Sonoma State University.

Read more about Bec on our blog.



Celebration at the Environmental Learning Center

The Institute celebrated Saul Weisberg's accomplishments and legacy as a visionary nonprofit leader, educator, naturalist and writer with several events, including an online celebration that featured voices from across the Institute's history sharing stories and well-wishes, plus music, poetry and a toast. From Institute co-founder Tom Fleischner to former staff,

board members and graduate students, from partners at the National Park Service and US Forest Service to poets and artists, "Saulapalooza" was a fitting tribute to an extraordinary career of leadership, generosity and service.

I intend to stay open to change and look forward to new adventures and new learning; continue to work and serve, but on my own terms; and, spend more time with family and friends to walk and paddle in wildness, watch birds and write in subalpine meadows. And of course, I plan to stay involved with North Cascades Institute and this special part of the world.

In short—more poetry, less administration.



Shelley and Saul Weisberg postretirement in Alaska

Carrying Saul's Legacy Into the Future

To honor his 35 years of leadership, North Cascades Institute created the **Saul Weisberg Catalyst Fund** to spur innovative new ideas and lead the Institute into the future, all while honoring Saul's legacy and working to protect the shared places we love and depend upon.

Through the Catalyst Fund, the Institute will allocate \$35,000 of seed funding annually to pilot new initiatives, assess community needs and create new programs, increase access for new audiences by removing economic barriers to nature and other innovative efforts. For more information, contact Catherine Endicott at give@ncascades.org.

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Our sincere thanks to almost 900 individuals, families, and organizations whose contributions helped make North Cascades Institute programs possible. You energized and inspired us to remain nimble, creative and resilient, and offer transformative learning experiences in nature for people of all ages. Thank you so much!

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Cindy Wakefield Deb Waldal Smith Jennifer Waldref Elizabeth Walker Maggie Walker Sam Walker Annie Walters Gail and Robert Walters Steve Wang and Kathryn Hamilton-Wang Jenny Warwick

Washington State Recreation and **Conservation Office** Sara Waterman and Curtis DeGasperi Patricia Waterston Rebecca Watson and Darwin Nordin

John Watts Dr. Reitha and Mr. Russell Weeks

Bob Weisberg

Maggie Weisberg Mark Weisberg and Barbara Rutecki

Saul and Shelley Weisberg Andrea Weiser **Ianet Welch** Ruthy Porter and Shawn Welch Janet Wells

Wells Fargo Bank Barry Wenger and Mary Humphries Laurie Werner Mona West Molly Westring Rebecca Wetzler Whatcom Community Foundation Katie and Jared White Ravila White

Lee Whitford Tim and Ann Whitney Don Wick Cristy Wickman and Raini Helmstadter

Andy Wickstrand Peter and Karen Wickstrand Brian Williams and Mary Raines Lawrie and Curt Williams

Ian Wilson

Polly and Randy Wilson Robyn Wilson **Bev Wiltshire** Michael Winkelhorst Cathy Wissink Chyerl Wolfe-Lee Martha Wood Patricia Wood Stephanie and Adam Woods Susan Woodside Susan Woolf and Steve Price Michael Wotring and Jenn Seva Linda Wright **Doris Wunsch**

Y-Z ▶

Deb Yandala

Celicia Yeoman David and Peggy Yost Kathy Young Paul Yunker Lilibeth Zafico Polly Zehm Yingye Zheng and Xiaoyong Liu Steven Zick James Zito and Martha Dyck

Dr. Susan Zwinger



Please let us know if you see any errors or omissions in this list: give@ncascades.org. Thank you for your support!

2021 Unaudited Financial Statements

The audited 2021 Financial Statements will be posted at **ncascades.org/reports** when complete.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$461,412
Short-term investments	\$247,333
Receivables, net	\$81,358
Inventory and other	\$217,251
Long-term investments	\$8,210,591
Property and equipment, net	\$ 805 , 539
	\$10,023,484
Liabilities	
Accounts payable	\$67,441
Accrued expenses	\$118,789
Deferred revenue and other	\$85,703
Line of Credit (staff housing purchase)	\$285,615
Net Assets	\$557,548
Operating Reserve	\$2,000,000
Unrestricted & temporarily restricted funds	\$3,411,684
Designated Funds:	
Conservation Education Fund	\$2,103,658
Nugent Family Fund	\$773,170
Youth Leadership Fund (Ginny Darvill)	\$170,000
Darby Foundation Scholarship Fund	\$80,000
N. C. Conservation Council Founders Fund	\$40,000
Andrew Goodwill Murphy Memorial Fund	\$46,97 3
John Miles Scholarship Fund	\$46,144
Weisberg Family Fund	\$57,021
Gary Peterson Memorial Fund	\$26,268
Jean Gorton Memorial Fund	\$22,057

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$10,023,484

Cook & Sullivan Fund

Campbell-Dalton Fund

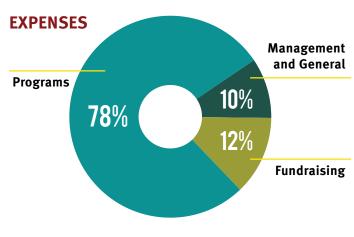
Brian Scheuch Memorial Fund

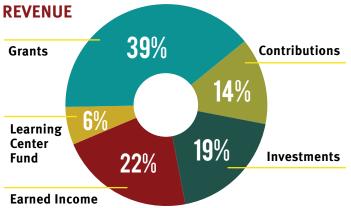
Saul Weisberg Catalyst Fund

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Support and Revenues

Contracts, tuition and fees, net	\$644,088
Investment income	\$920,980
Contributions	\$588,671
Government grants	\$1,581,203
In-kind contributions	\$87,294
Learning Center Fund - Seattle Foundation	\$295,000
Foundation grants	\$333,994
Rental Income	\$42,656
Bookstores (retail/outreach), net	\$365,201
	\$4,859,087
Expenses	
Programs	\$2,444,924
Management and general	\$303,912
Fundraising	\$398,025
	\$3,146,861
Change in Net Assets	\$1,712,226





\$26,500

\$27,505

\$45,639

\$589,317 **\$9,465,936**