



NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2022

brought us positive and progressive steps towards post pandemic programming. While it was a year full of challenges that would have once been inconceivable, it was also full of unique opportunities and deep learning. During this time of continued recovery from the disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, Institute staff worked extra hard to make our transformative programs happen. We might not have done all that we had planned, but what we accomplished was full of hope, healing and community!

At the beginning of 2022 we had high hopes that we'd be back to pre-pandemic program levels. However, challenges like unprecedented staffing shortages, wildfire smoke, unhealthy AQI levels, and unplanned road construction projects, forced us to change and adapt sometimes on a moment's notice.

North Cascades Institute is learning to bend and be resilient to meet the future. We have an exceptionally strong and flexible core team, and incredible support from our partners, participants, donors and friends. Some of the ways we're creatively leaning into current challenges and preparing for potential new ones include:

- Actively participating in the Skagit Hydropower Relicensing Project, which has a lot going on behind the scenes and is slowly moving forward. This process has the potential for great positive outcomes for the Environmental Learning Center.
- Striving to become a carbon-neutral organization and working with Peak Sustainability Group to measure our carbon footprint and help us on this important path.
- Piloting and learning from new staffing models with the goal of increasing flexibility, resilience and equity.

From our Leadership Team to our Board of Directors, from operations staff to front-line educators, **we are strengthening our roots and building resilience.** This theme is touched on almost daily as we continue to fulfill our mission of inspiring environmental stewardship!

It is inspiring to be a leader at a time when the world is rethinking how we work and what our society values. This report demonstrates what the Institute accomplished with the support and partnership of many people and groups in 2022. Thank you for making this work possible!



Bec Detrich

Bec Detrich
Executive Director

2022 PROGRAM IMPACTS

Mountain School

Mountain School is an immersive environmental education program that has served regional 5th graders since 1990. Through hands-on interdisciplinary activities, students are connected to the natural and cultural history of our region, form connections with their classmates and the environment, and sharpen their understanding of their own identities.

In Spring 2022, we continued "Mountain School: Choose Your Own Adventure," a COVID-conscious hybrid program offering 25 schools a virtual session followed by a day trip to either the Environmental Learning Center or Whatcom Falls Park in Bellingham. In Fall 2022, we returned to the overnight program for the first time since the pandemic began and piloted our newly-redesigned curriculum, a project that began in 2018.

1,190 students from 25 schools in Whatcom and Skagit counties participated in Spring 2022.

Late-season wildfires and the resulting poor air quality due to smoke forced us to cancel several weeks in Fall 2022. Despite these challenges, more than 600 students from more than 12 schools participated in full residential Mountain School (and we were able to reschedule every cancelled class in Spring 2023).

Learn more in the 2022-23 Mountain School Report (coming to ncascades.org/reports this summer).



1,828

PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

3,051

LEARNER
DAYS

“ My favorite thing about Mountain School is probably the games, the food, and the snow. It has been a good and new experience. I was very nervous and anxious but I'm happy that I got to have the experience. I learned so much about wildlife and plants in the winter time.

—Mountain School student

Youth Leadership Adventures

YLA engages local teens in 9-day backpacking and canoe camping trips in North Cascades National Park. In addition to outdoor skills, YLA focuses on leadership skills, team building, and climate change solutions, giving students the knowledge and tools they need to become stewards of the natural world and engage in community advocacy.

In 2022, we offered six trips for 44 participants (three canoe-camping, three backpacking).

Opportunities for engagement after the summer include Youth for People and the Environment (YEP!) in partnership with RE Sources.

Learn more in the 2022 Youth Leadership Report at ncascades.org/reports.



44

PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

436

LEARNER
DAYS

“ I gained a much better understanding of community and what it means to connect with others. I started out the trip alone and uncomfortable. However, with time I began to cultivate connection with my peers. It was a really special experience hearing others' stories and getting to see how multi-dimensional each person is.

—YLA participant

Whatcom Coalition for Environmental Education's Connections

Connections started in 2020 when nonprofits banded together to address academic inequities magnified by the pandemic, and continues to address community needs as in-person learning returns. Through providing locally-focused outdoor education for all K-6 students in the rural Mount Baker and Blaine school districts, Connections fosters environmental stewardship and outdoor exploration, both of which are strongly linked to academic and social emotional learning. Connections



evolved in 2022 with our partners at Wild Whatcom, Common Threads Farm, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, and Camp Saturna.

Special thanks to Representative Alicia Rule and the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for securing state funding for this program.

Learn more in the 2021-22 Connections Report at nccascades.org/reports.

“An invaluable impact on my students' well-being. I have watched a selectively nonverbal first grader light up and begin to speak while she worked in the school garden.”

—Kendell Elementary Teacher

Adult and Family Programs

Our suite of Family Getaways, Base Camp Learning & Lodging, Field Seminars, Online Classes and Stewardship Weekends continue to bring diverse audiences to the North Cascades to learn, recreate and be inspired. We also reached people of all ages through online presentations including educational videos and streaming literary readings as well as four in-person presentations in Bellingham.

The number of planned adult programs we offered in 2022 was greatly reduced due to challenges around the re-opening of the Environmental Learning Center post-pandemic. These included staffing shortages, smoke, and extensive highway construction which resulted in cancelled and reduced programs including Skagit Tours.



“We loved our time during Base Camp. It was such a serene and positive place and experience—such a different feel when we return to an urban setting. It just shows how important being part of nature is to being a healthy and spiritual person.”

—Suzanne, participant

Conferences and Retreats

Custom educational programs, lodging and meals at the Environmental Learning Center inspire reflection and connection to the natural world as well as to each other. We welcome conferences, events, retreats, workshops, trainings, reunions and other gatherings. In 2022, we hosted 13 programs ranging from wellness retreats to business and academic conferences to family reunions.



“It was truly a pleasure to visit the Learning Center for my training. It is an exceptionally unique and wonderful place, and the staff and food were top notch!”

—Scott, Remote Medical attendee

Bookstores

We operate seven retail stores around North Cascades National Park and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. In 2022, we had new visitation and sales records, even with some stores temporarily closed due to paving projects and wildfire issues. This partnership reaches larger, broader audiences to deepen their experience with nature, introduces new community members to our work and helps fund our programs.

2022 Unaudited Financial Statements

The audited 2022 Financial Statements will be posted at ncascades.org/reports when complete.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$325,913
Short-term investments	\$247,496
Receivables, net	\$84,881
Inventory and other	\$196,074
Long-term investments	\$6,212,316
Property and equipment, net	\$955,759
	\$8,022,439

Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$22,528
Accrued expenses	\$131,090
Deferred revenue and other	\$87,727
Lease Liability	\$227,249
	\$468,594

Net Assets

Operating Reserve	\$2,145,000
Unrestricted & temporarily restricted funds	\$2,179,388

Designated Funds:

Conservation Education Fund	\$1,580,561
Nugent Family Fund	\$592,919
Youth Leadership Fund (Ginny Darvill)	\$170,000
Darby Foundation Scholarship Fund	\$80,000
North Cascades Conservation Council Founders Fund	\$40,000
Andrew Goodwill Murphy Memorial Fund	\$45,976
John Miles Scholarship Fund	\$41,225
Weisberg Family Fund	\$58,742
Gary Peterson Memorial Fund	\$26,207
Jean Gorton Memorial Fund	\$20,181
Cook & Sullivan Fund	\$29,048
Brian Scheuch Memorial Fund	\$26,741
Campbell-Dalton Fund	\$57,028
Saul Weisberg Catalyst Fund	\$460,829
	\$7,553,845

Total Liabilities and Net Assets **\$8,022,439**

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Support and Revenues

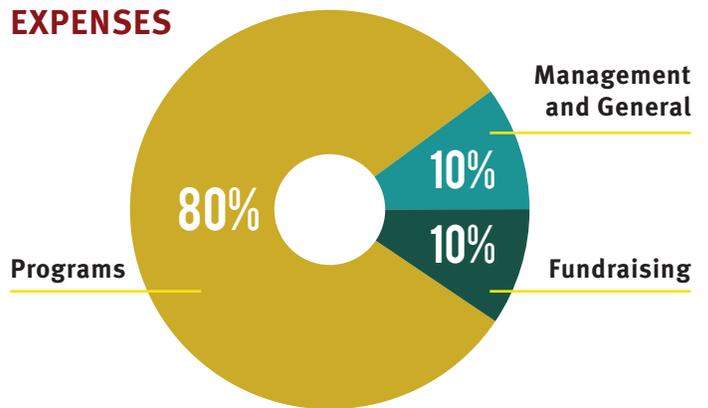
Contracts, tuition and fees, net	\$646,258
Investment income	(\$1,349,778)
Contributions	\$541,261
Government grants	\$491,372
In-kind contributions	\$93,094
Learning Center Fund - Seattle Foundation	\$295,000
Foundation grants	\$401,194
Rental Income	\$60,200
Bookstores (retail/outreach), net	\$488,625
	\$1,667,226

Expenses

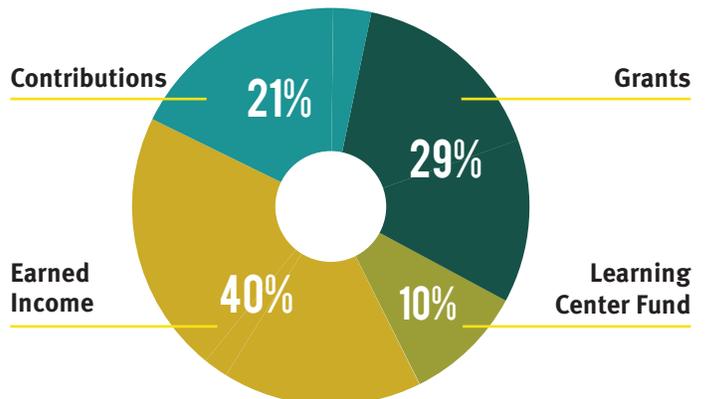
Programs	\$2,879,962
Management and general	\$360,111
Fundraising	\$339,242
	\$3,579,315

Change in Net Assets **(\$1,912,089)**

EXPENSES



REVENUE Percentages do not include investment losses



North Cascades Institute has received **FOUR-STAR** ratings from *Charity Navigator* **17 YEARS IN A ROW.**

Call **Jodi Broughton** at **(360) 854-2596** or visit ncascades.org/support to learn how you can make a difference with your gift!