



Wild Whatcom
**2022
IMPACT
REPORT**

**Wild Whatcom's mission is
to foster lifelong
connections to nature.**



OUTDOOR EDUCATION FOR ALL

Taking the time to tally up our collective impact in the community always gives me so much joy and hope. It's hard not to smile when looking through the photos that come from Wild Whatcom's outings: you can see the wonder and curiosity in kids' eyes as they are connecting with the world around them. You can see the silliness at play during a game of Hide or Spiders Web. And you can witness the resilience building after a day in the rain (you just sometimes have to peek under a few layers of wet gear).

We do this work together, not only because it's oh-so-fun, but also because we are trying to foster the culture we'd like to see in our community. It is a culture that is inclusive; one that creates space for play, self-reflection, and gratitude; one that recenters and reconnects to nature; and one that raises a generation of young people who care about each other and the planet.

As we continue to face uncertainty and heartbreaking change—whether that be in the form of a pandemic, drought, or floods—we recognize the opportunity this brings for transformative shifts in our society; and these shifts are already emerging. This past legislative session, state lawmakers passed a bill, House Bill 2078, that will fund additional integration of outdoor education into Washington State public schools. The bill stated,

The legislature finds that time outdoors helps children thrive physically, emotionally, and academically, yet over the past few generations, childhood has moved indoors...From stress reduction to improved focus and engagement, and better academic performance, outdoor-based learning helps kids thrive. Research shows participants in outdoor educational activities have higher graduation rates, improved behavior in school and relationships with peers, higher academic achievement, critical thinking skills, direct experience of scientific concepts in the field, leadership and collaboration skills, and a deeper engagement with learning, place, and community.

It's so incredible to see this written into our state law and affirmed by lawmakers! Thank you to all of the advocates who brought this priority to the legislature and have turned these sentiments into capacity and funding to bring outdoor experiences to more youth in our state, with a focus on underserved populations.

This past year we contributed to realizing this change in Whatcom County by providing more than 40,000 hours outside for youth, families, and classrooms in our community! I'm inspired by our team's commitment to prioritizing collaboration; this year we worked with youth and adult volunteers, public schools, local nonprofits, city and county parks departments, and state lawmakers.

We hope that you'll continue to join us in building a more just, sustainable future together and creating lifelong memories for youth and families in our community.

With gratitude and inspiration,



LICIA SAHAGUN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



OUTINGS & ADVENTURES

Programs open to the broader community to get you and your family outside, including summer camps, after school, and Explorers Club



1,494

PARTICIPANTS

Reached across our Explorers Club, Neighborhood Nature, Community Programs, Summer Camps, and Trips



33,500+

NATURE HOURS

Or hours spent outside together in community across these programs. You make our outings wonder-ful



\$33,000+

SCHOLARSHIPS

Provided to participants to break down barriers to participation

"This has been (and will continue to be) an amazing experience for our kiddo! The range of things she has learned, and knowledge she then imparts to us, is phenomenal. We LOVE Wild Whatcom!!!!" — Neighborhood Nature parent





Finding slugs during our Friday morning Wild Things outings with little ones (birth-5+) and their adults (left). Playing forest games in Big Rock Garden in our after school program Neighborhood Nature (right).



Late night exploring and community building at Squires Lake for Ladies Night Out (left). Practicing fire building in one of our Explorers Club groups at Birch Bay (right).



Identifying tide pool critters during our Beach Buddies camp in summer 2021 (left). Learning about local mushrooms at our Fungus Among Us Community Field Trip with the NW Mushroomers Association (right).



PARTNER PROGRAMS

Each year we raise funds to offer programs for free to public school districts and in partnership with community organizations to reach underserved youth.



"Wild Whatcom gives my students the opportunity to see the world around them in new ways, it also teaches them how to be stewards of the natural environment and empowers them to be investigators and scientists in their observations and explorations of nature." — Alderwood 2nd Grade Teacher



1,284
STUDENTS SERVED



9,600+
NATURE HOURS



100+
PUBLIC SCHOOL
TEACHERS REACHED

Partnerships are central to much of the work we do. This year we expanded EdVentures in partnership with Bellingham, Blaine, and Mount Baker School Districts to reach even more students with standards-aligned outings. We continued our partnership with Bellingham Public School's Life Skills and BRIDGES classrooms with our bi-weekly SEED outings. For the fourth year in a row we partnered with Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Common Threads, RE Sources, Lummi Nation, and Northwest Indian College in a state-funded ClimeTime collaborative to train public school teachers how to teach climate science and indigenous ways of knowing outdoors. We also partner with a variety of other organizations, businesses, and tribes throughout the year on field trips, outdoor Summer School programs, and more!



Making bird nests and practicing wingspan in our EdVentures program at Cordata Elementary (left). Learning about pollinators in our SEED program for Life Skills and BRIDGES students (right).



Looking for bugs in a decomposing log during an EdVentures outing with Kendall Elementary (left). Practicing outdoor teaching at a ClimeTime teacher-training workshop (right).



Crawdada (crayfish) fishing at Whatcom Falls Park during our Summer School partnership with Vamos Outdoors (left). Exploring Marine Park in Blaine after school thanks to support from the Recreation and Conservation Office and Representative Alicia Rule (right).



STEWARDSHIP & SERVICE

For more than 10 years, Wild Whatcom's programs have been providing youth the opportunity to give back to their community through stewardship and service projects.

2,180

volunteer hours provided

103

native plants planted

95

pounds of trash removed

11

service sites improved



VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS

Our community partners and volunteers bring so much to our programs and organization! We partner with other organizations for service and stewardship outings, on themed outings such as our Low Tide Community Field Trip, and on projects such as Teaching for the Climate. This year we increased our capacity to support and work with volunteers in the field and on our Board of Directors committees. Our Explorer Mentor Apprentice (EMA) program gives Explorers Club participants the opportunity to volunteer as mentors for younger Explorers, learn leadership skills, and give back to their community!



Marine Life Center staff provides a training for Wild Whatcom staff on tide pools and marine life

2,765 Hours volunteered in our programs

104 Teacher and paraeducator partners

61 Volunteers and EMAs

15+ Non-profit partners



Explorers Clubs groups working at Happy Valley Park where Wild Whatcom groups have been planting natives, pulling invasive plants, and laying mulch with the City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation for nearly 10 years!



Cleaning up Locust Beach as part of the International Coastal Cleanup Project (left). Partnering with Bellingham Parks and Recreation and other groups for an Earth Day Stewardship event with more than 100 volunteers (right).



Learning all about birds during our partnership with Blaine-Birch Bay Parks and Recreation Wings Over Water event (left). 2022 retreats with Board of Directors members (right) and staff (next page).



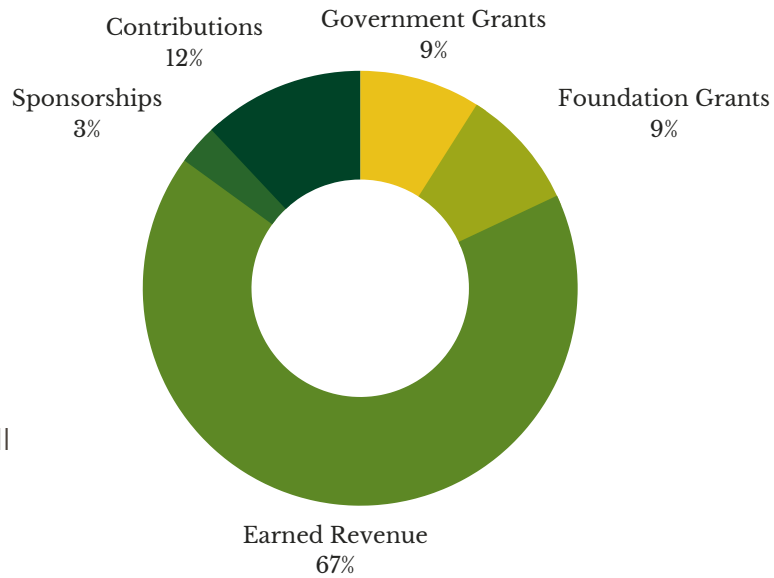


FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

These are projected numbers for our fiscal year from September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021

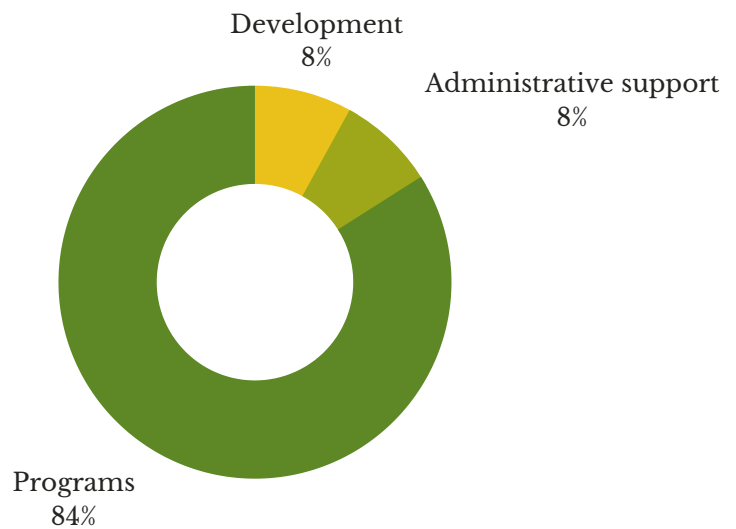
REVENUE

We were incredibly excited this year to expand to the Blaine and Mount Baker School Districts with our EdVentures program thanks to support from the Recreation and Conservation Office, championed by Representative Alicia Rule. We continued our four-year collaborative project Teaching for the Climate through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) ClimeTime initiative. We're also gearing up for a second year of outdoor summer school with Mount Baker School District. We received grants from new funders such as the WECU Education First grant as well as funders we've known for some time such as the Whatcom Community Foundation, The Cairn Project, and McEachern Charitable Trust. We also saw demand for all of our fee-based programs, such as Explorers Club, Neighborhood Nature, and Summer Camps, while also providing more than \$30,000 in scholarships!



EXPENSES

The vast majority of our expenses go directly to supporting our programs. This year, we also expanded our office space to make room for more staff, more free loaner gear for participants, and more meeting space for all of our collaborative work! While we all learned more about COVID safety, we were very excited to re-integrate activities that included more supplies, outings where we could cook and share food safely, and campouts! We also invested in a new Development and Outreach role (welcome, Amye!) and in our outreach and marketing to spread the word and raise awareness about our work in the community.





**THANK
YOU**

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

A1DesignBuild
Adventures Northwest
Agate Pond Preserve
Barron Smith Daugert PLLC
Bellingham Ear Nose and Throat
Bellingham Parks & Recreation
Bellingham Public Schools
Brandon Nelson Partners
Blaine School District
Candela Technologies
Camp Saturna
Common Threads
Consilium Financial
DV & Ida J McEachern Charitable Trust
Erin Baker's
Garmo Family
The Helen Martha Schiff Foundation
Kulshan Brewing Company

Marine Life Center
Mount Baker School Dist.
Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Assoc
North Cascades Audubon Society
North Cascades Institute
Northwest Mushroomers Assoc.
Nuu-Muu
OSPI
Pacific Education Institute
Pacific Rim Tonewoods
Peak Design

People's Bank
Puget Sound Energy
RE Sources
Recreation and Conservation Office
Representative Alicia Rule
Rosenfels Fund
Seeking Health, LLC
Steven Widman Endodontics
The Cairn Project
Whatcom Community Foundation
WECU
Vamos Outdoors Project
Washington State Parks
Washington Trails Association
Whatcom County Parks
Whatcom Land Trust

And so many community members who helped us connect people to nature!

We can never say thank you enough to all of our donors, funders, sponsors, supporters, and partners in the community! You help us bring youth, students, teachers, and families outdoors to foster new relationships, connect with nature, learn in the outdoor classroom, and give back through service. We hope to see you outside soon, and please reach out to learn more or get involved with our wonder-full Wild Whatcom community!