

Wild Whatcom

EXPLORING / SERVING / CONNECTING



2019 IMPACT REPORT
AUG 2018-SEPT 2019

WILD WHATCOM FOSTERS LIFELONG CONNECTIONS TO NATURE



Wild Whatcom connects kids to nature in lasting and meaningful ways, developing engaged youth who care about the earth and know how to lead collaboratively towards positive change. Our mission is realized through outdoor adventures that facilitate learning key life skills and building naturalist knowledge.

OUR GOALS:

- Awaken and strengthen in youth a profound connection to the natural world
- Instill an enduring ethic of service to the community
- Reinforce character traits that sustain the capacity for healthy relationships with self, others, and the earth.

THIS PAST YEAR WE:

- Served **more than 1,500 toddlers, youth, and adults** through a variety of programs
- Provided **more than 50,000 "nature hours"** for youth -- time spent outdoors roaming and romping, learning and growing.
- Offered **more than \$16,000 in scholarships**, free programming in Title 1 schools and life skills classrooms, and a variety of free programming in the community to reach families in need and ensure broad access
- Provided **free loaner gear** to our participants, offered free transportation, and facilitated on-site programming to continue to reduce barriers to access.
- Contributed **4,000 community service hours** -- kids giving back in meaningful ways



EXPLORERS CLUB

Explorers Club is a unique program designed to provide outdoor exploration and long-term mentorship to a cohort style of 'Explorers.' Children begin in second grade by exploring together, connecting with one another, and learning basic naturalist skills. They stay together as a group, deepening their local knowledge and creating bonds of kinship until they graduate in eighth grade.

Here's what our 2018-2019 Explorers Club season looked like:



391

PARTICIPANTS

This year we expanded our offerings to include 18 boys groups, 16 girls groups and two gender-inclusive groups

\$10,000

FINANCIAL AID

We awarded more than \$10,000 in financial aid this past year to allow for participants to join outings at minimal cost. Free loaner gear is also provided to all participants.

343

OUTINGS

On rocky beaches, in dense forests, at gushing waterfalls, our Explorers scrambled over rocks, investigated tide pools, and honed plant ID skills.



23,366

NATURE HOURS

Nearly 25,000 hours were spent outdoors among our Explorers Club this past year.

Note from an Explorers Club parent:

"Pretty much every single aspect of watching you wonderful ladies in action inspired and awed me. From the way you managed the girls' "squirreliness", to the way you let the girls set the tone/pace, to the way you empowered them to make their own decisions as a group, and perhaps most especially to the way you talked about gratitude and inclusion....it was all just incredible, and I found myself teary at numerous moments throughout the day. Know that I just feel so blessed that you are in my daughter's life. I can't imagine better role models than you."



“

“I have really valued the authentic connections I make with the other girls. There is so much social pressure in middle school - this is a place where we can just be ourselves.”

- GEC participant

”



SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

EDVENTURES

Three to four outings for 2nd and 3rd grade students in Title 1 schools (schools with large concentrations of low-income students). Wild Whatcom raises funds to offer this program for free to schools and participants.

600
students

74
outings

5,649 nature hours

100% of teachers reported an increased connection to and awareness of nature in their students
73% reported an increased sense of stewardship in their students

"We believe our students need a 'sense of belonging and significance' to **mitigate some of the effects of poverty and trauma**. Edventures has become a valuable partner in our mission to provide students with meaningful learning experiences and opportunities to build strong relationships with mentors. We also believe that the **peace and joy found in nature helps our students heal and grow healthy habits.**"

-- Carl Cozier Elementary Teacher

STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & DISCOVERY (SEED)

Weekly or bi-weekly, sensory-rich outings for students of all ages in Life Skills classrooms (students with moderate to severe disabilities). Wild Whatcom raises funds to offer this program for free to schools and participants.

100% of teachers reported a positive connection to nature fostered through student participation
90% of teachers reported increased comfort in nature

87 students
149 outings
2,129 nature hours

"I have students who are profoundly impacted by their disabilities. Many of them do not have opportunities to take time to just be in nature experience and experience all of the sights and sounds. **Through this program, my students were able to interact with and learn about the world around them which truly impacted the way they see the world and their place in it.** I am so grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of Wild Whatcom."

-- Lifeskills Teacher at Carl Cozier Elementary

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURE

Weekly after-school outings that encourage kids to connect with their surrounding ecosystem through exploration, play, art and nature activities in most Bellingham Public Schools. This program is offered at reduced cost fees for qualifying participants.

100% of parent responses noted that Wild Whatcom's mentors provided a welcoming space for students to learn and grow

90% of parent responses noted their child came away from the program with new skills

271 students | **180** outings
4,509 nature hours

"Exploring, especially in 'our own backyard', offers a special connection between our kids and nature. Wild Whatcom does a wonderful job teaching and mentoring the kids! **We have seen self reliance and confidence grow in our child with every season.** Our child loves it!"

-- Neighborhood Nature Parent

TEACHER TRAININGS

Outings co-led by teachers or collaborative training sessions outside of school hours offered to public school teachers. Currently we offer two programs: Forest Friends, a co-led outdoor education experience for teachers at Lowell Elementary; and ClimeTime, a climate-science-focused teacher training offered to a cohort of teachers from a variety of schools (facilitated through a collaborative of community organizations).

56
teachers

52
co-led outings
& trainings

100% of teachers surveyed responded that Forest Friends has been a useful learning experience for them

100% of teachers reported they would recommend the ClimeTime training to other teachers

"It has been great to see students thrive in a different environment, and **has helped me begin to become more comfortable with taking them outdoors.**"

-- Lowell Elementary Teacher

Our summer programs are big adventure days immersed in exploring the Northwest's mossy forests, wild rivers, mountain meadows, tumbling waterfalls, and pebbled beaches. We go deep and wide with meaningful connections and joyful discovery!

Our summer programs include

- Three to five all-day adventures – sometimes with an overnight for kids in grades 1-6 and
- Three to seven day backpacking trips for kids in grade 5-12.



In 2019 our Summer Adventures saw:

159 day campers

70 backpackers

\$6,238 in financial aid

Locations included: Goat Rocks Wilderness, Necklace Valley, Baker Lake, and more!



SUMMER ADVENTURES

IN THE COMMUNITY

WILD WHATCOM OFFERS A VARIETY OF FREE AND DONATION-BASED PROGRAMMING TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

WILD THINGS

For parents and little ones, this donation-based program is offered every Friday morning at parks around Bellingham



LADIES NIGHT OUT

Monthly outings at dusk on the full moons February-November. These outings are for women and female-identifying adults.



SEASONAL FAMILY OUTINGS

Once-a-season outing for the whole family center around a seasonal theme.



From a Wild Things parent:

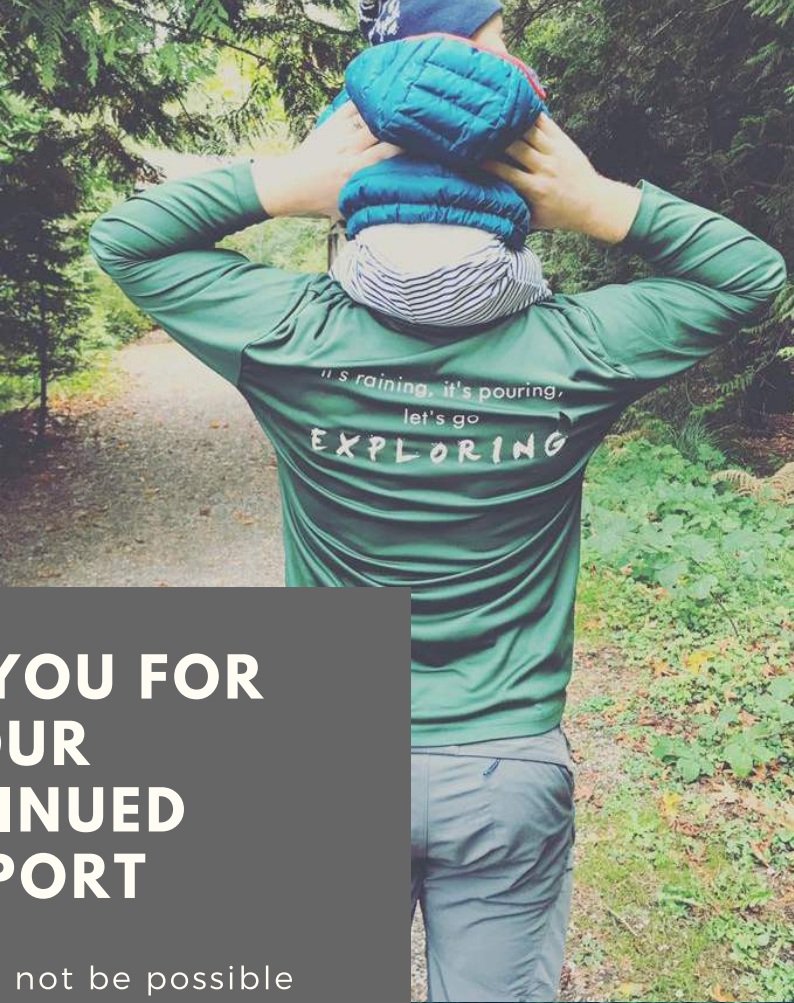
“

Not only do I have a growing appreciation for nature, but I get to be a role model for my children and the other children that come out for the Wild Whatcom walks. It is a time to connect with my kids that I would not otherwise have.

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PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with other community organizations allow us to bring outdoor education and positive mentor relationships to even more families! Our one-time or recurring outings with partners are often free to participants and include outings for lower-income families, farmworker communities, and individuals healing from traumas such as a loss of housing or abusive relationships.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our donors, funders, volunteers, families, and participants. We cannot express how grateful we are to be able to spend time outside with you - exploring, learning, growing, and giving back together. Thank you! We hope to see you on the trails soon!

