



# FIELD NOTES

## Summer 2024

### A Note from Canuche



This issue of Field Notes is themed: “what’s your why?” As the summer heat settles in on Leavenworth, I am struck by how important community is. I want to recognize our shared responsibility for that community. Our community includes our family, neighbors, and visitors.

We all share the water and mountains with the plants and animals. I wandered the trails one evening in the afterglow of our Volunteer Appreciation dinner and saw abandoned floats and trash left over from thousands of people’s day on the river. I realized how important WRI’s work is for our community. **Connecting people, communities and the natural world is the mission. Creating a community who cares for, and engages in the natural world is the vision.** Our work is not finished until we help folks who engage with the natural world and see their part in caring for it. When folks visit WRI, they learn about the beauty and balance of the ecosystem. We hope they discover their part in protecting that balance and join that engaged community. It’s not a quick job– but it’s such an important one. That’s my why... **What’s yours?**



Canuche Terranella  
Executive Director

### Volunteers are our Backbone

As the sun set on the River Haus Lawn, over 40 volunteers gathered to share a meal. The group took shelter from the heat in the shade of a Ponderosa Pine. Spirits were high while volunteers across all areas of WRI reunited and connected on their shared love of this work.

***"This is my why. Volunteers make WRI. Seeing you all here makes the work feel so much more valuable. We can't do it without you."***

- Mason Powers, WRI Outreach Coordinator

The backbone of WRI’s programming is our awesome team of volunteers. Our most dedicated volunteers have seen WRI through years of staff changes and watched our community grow. **Volunteers! You are our roots.**



***WRI Volunteers connect over a BBQ dinner.  
Thanks for all you do!***

Are you interested in joining WRI’s community of volunteers? There are so many ways to get involved! Get in touch with Mason at the contact info below to learn more.

## Everyone Deserves to Learn

On a warm summer day, a gaggle of campers used loppers to trim the trails of our local ski and mountain bike hill. Dee, WRI's Youth Programs Coordinator, reflects on the day's activities. "We want them to know the trails aren't magically there," Dee says. "They're learning to be stewards of the land that gives us so much."

When building a community that cares for and engages with the natural world, creating gratitude and connectivity with nature from a young age is important. By helping with trail work at camp, students learned what it means to care for the land.

***"We want learning to open the door to gratitude and connection."***

*-Dee Butcher, WRI Youth Programs Coordinator*

Spending time caring for the land during camp teaches students that they can do good things in the natural world, and have fun while doing it! As a supporter of WRI, you help create chances for children with different backgrounds to learn about nature. **The legacy of learning you support lives through the students you empower.**



*A camper learns about their role in caring for the land by helping with trail work at Ski Hill.*



*Participants connect with the local flora by making cyanotype prints using found plants and techniques involving sun-activated dyes.*

When imagining a community that cares for the natural world, it involves people of all ages. That's where Community Programs come in! "Adults are decision makers," says our Community Programs team, thinking on why they do their work.

***"The goal is to create a community of engaged people who make educated choices."***

*-Rebecca Ryan, WRI Education Director*

Education can look like a long-time Leavenworth resident learning a new way to connect with plants by making cyanotype artwork. Sometimes, it's a tourist seeing a Belted Kingfisher for the first time on a Naturalists on the River float. You create these experiences that expose people to the natural world and inspire them to care for it.

You are creating opportunities for people to learn to care about the waters, land, animals, and people that make up our wonderful community. This is the work that inspires us!



## Community Through Stewardship

WRI is fortunate to have responsibility of 13 acres of land on the banks of the Wenatchee River. The programming you support relies on the health of this land for educating our community. However, the landscape you see doesn't happen on its own! Without the stewardship of humans, a few plant species will overrun all the rest.

***"It's about what we can do for the river, and for the land. I want to give the plants a voice and access to the land they belong to."***

*-Tiffany (Tiffa) Theden, WRI Land Steward*

"In terms of plants, Chelan County is one of the most diverse counties in the state," says Tiffa. They hope that, with the community's help, they can show visitors this diversity right here at WRI.



***Thanks to Cascade High School students, WRI has a new, student-led Native Plant Garden!***

Giving back to the land is not a one person job, and it never has been! You create opportunities for community building where people come together to take care of the plants, and the rest of the organisms, that live here. Caring for the land becomes a way to educate, while also creating a setting for future learning.

Between our Facilities Team, the Cascade Garden Club, our wonderful campus maintenance volunteers, and the recent garden help from Cascade High School, WRI's campus is the result of hours of work from a dedicated community.

An engaged community must involve the land, and we think there's no better way to do that than to care for the land that gives us so much. Thank you for your support in this engagement!

## From a Volunteer - What's your Why?

It's always a special day when we get to chat with Karen Haire, a dedicated WRI volunteer of over two decades. Karen is a Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest founder, serves on the Bird Fest Planning Committee, and helps out across all areas of WRI education programming. She kindly shared her "why" with us.

"Leavenworth has such phenomenal habitat. I love sharing what's there with people." Karen recalls her days guiding birding walks for Bird Fest attendees and teaching students on their Field Days.

***"You can learn about the environment in the classroom, but you learn to care about it in nature. That's our future."***

*-Karen Haire, WRI Volunteer*

When asked about her passions with volunteering, Karen said, "If people are going to care about the environment, they need to care about something that's there. Whether it's a bird, a bear, or a plant."

We couldn't agree more! Thank you, Karen, for sharing your love of the natural world with your community.



***Karen (right) and her fellow volunteer (and friend), Linda, do recon for a Bird Fest trip. Hopefully it was birdy out there!***

**STAFF:**

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Deanna Butcher  
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# WRI's Nature Journal

## Entry No. 4: Spreading Dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*)

This perennial can be found in open forests, but you can spot it in many of WRI's gardens. Keep reading for some fun facts!

- Danger danger! Every part of this plant is toxic if eaten, but it still has medicinal uses. The sap of a broken branch can cause a rash, but it can also treat warts!
- The dried bark of this plant can be used to make cordage. The p'squosa and other Indigenous peoples use this cordage to make cord, rope, and nets.
- Tons of different butterfly and moth species use this plant for nectar.
- Spot this plant by its red bark, pairs of oval shaped leaves, and clusters of small pink/white bell shaped flowers.



*Disclaimer: Please refer to an official guide while foraging for edible materials. Eat foraged items at your own risk.*

Connecting  
People,  
Communities  
and the  
Natural World

- A Note from Canuche
- Program Reflections
- Stewardship Intentions
- Hear from a volunteer

What's your why?

**What's inside?**

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Leavenworth, WA 98826

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