



Wenatchee River INSTITUTE

Connecting People, Communities, and the Natural World

FIELD NOTES



Fall 2016

No Child Left Inside

The Wenatchee River Institute has been inspired by the work of Richard Louv and his book *Last Child in the Woods* (2005), which proclaimed that

"direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults."

Since 2007 your support makes this possible for thousands of kids and adults!. Now with your help, we are expanding our reach and bringing our unique brand of learning about nature and science to five new schools in Wenatchee. Read more inside about our Wenatchee Schoolyard Science program.

Focus on the future

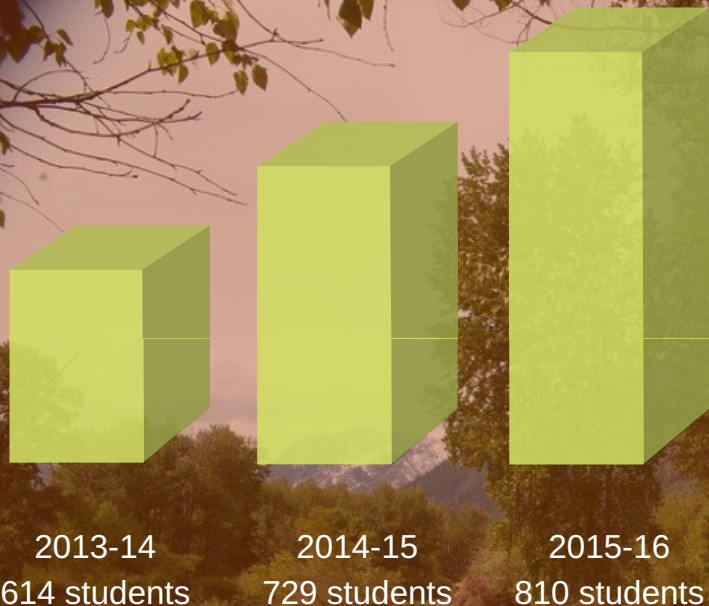
Patrick Walker, Executive Director

It is hard to believe that I have been in this position for nearly two years now. Long enough to have seen two Spring Bird Fests, two cycles of summer camp programs, more community programs than I can recall and now we are starting on my third season of Youth Field days with our amazing staff. **Because of you this work is possible**, your support has been amazing and is allowing us to focus further ahead than we have ever been able to do before, **thank you**.

This summer has been a real eye opener for me on how important our work with kids is. There are so many kids in our region who live right next to this amazing backyard of ours yet they don't get the chance to experience, explore, learn and value it's beauty, diversity, and majesty. WRI has been getting kids out in nature for a long time now, but we are just starting to reach those kids who need this most. We are starting to see the fruits of our labor, but there is more work to be done.

Our board and staff are working on sharpening this focus so that we can affect greater change in our community and our world. How can we ensure that our lands are protected, species saved and natural resources are still available for generations to come? By making sure our kids get out there see it, feel it and understand it. That's How!

You make this possible. And I will be reaching out to you personally to ask for some specific help this year to make sure we can continue to offer the highest quality experience for our kids and our community. Our work is more than a 'cause' it's a necessity, and it starts with getting kids out in nature. I hope you'll continue to join us in this effort.



Participating Schools 2015-16

Osborn Elementary, Leavenworth
Beaver Valley Elementary, Plain
Vale Elementary, Cashmere
St. Joseph's Elementary, Wenatchee
The River Academy, Wenatchee
Valley Academy, Wenatchee
Columbia Elementary, Wenatchee
Lincoln Elementary, Wenatchee
Upper Valley Christian, Leavenworth
Icicle River Middle School, Leavenworth
Pioneer Middle School, Wenatchee
The Bridge School, West Seattle
Grant Elementary, Ephrata
Cascade High School
Wenatchee High School
Wenatchee Valley College

Youth Field Days

"The experiences and education you provide is immeasurable in advancing responsible stewardship of this critical natural heritage."

--Tony Angel, Author & Bird Fest Keynote Speaker 2016

No Child Left Inside

The Washington State Legislature created the No Child Left Inside (NCLI) grant program to "**provide under-served students with quality opportunities to experience the natural world.**"--According to the State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) website.

In early spring we received our first NCLI grant award from the RCO. This grant will allow us to connect hundreds more kids to the natural world through summer camps and after school programs.

This summer 150 of these kids came to WRI to learn about, explore, and experience the natural world in a new and exciting way. If you were to encounter one of these field groups on the trail (see cover photo) it would be full of campers brimming with enthusiasm for the outdoors, knowledge of local plants, skills for using a map and compass and talk of how to be prepared for a hike.

Will Crowley, our Youth Program Manager, remembers one particular experience--"*Members of team 'Red Tailed Hawk' had just finished their solo walk – a truly unique experience where campers are given a safe trail to hike, all alone, while making observations with all their senses.*

While the members regrouped conversations of awe and excitement could be heard describing all the interesting things that they witnessed.

Campers were asked to write a poem about their experience and when I asked for volunteers to share their poem the smallest and youngest girl of the group, a camper who had barely uttered a word during camp, raised her hand.

As she read, the other campers were respectful and listened intently. Her poem was full of keen observation and description of the wonders of nature.

Here was a timid girl who had never gone hiking before, and she was confidently sharing with a group of older kids her experience of hiking alone in the woods."

WRI is honored and thankful to be selected as a grant recipient for the No Child Left Inside grant. There couldn't be a better fit between our mission and the goals of this funding program. It is because grant support like this, **and donors like you** that we will continue to be able to bring kids into nature, and get kids excited about learning. **Thank you!**



Reaching out...to YOU!

You Can Be the Difference

More people than ever want to schedule time at Barn Beach Reserve, but it can only handle so much. This has created a problem that I hope you can help solve. Currently we don't have the ability to move our programs, or people from BBR to another offsite location. This is a serious problem for us because it limits the number of people we can serve on an ongoing basis.

One way to solve this problem is to purchase a passenger van. A van will allow us to expand our programs and locations from which we operate from. This means we could create teen programs, improve adult workshops, and develop multi-day field experiences. The type of van we need costs \$25,000. The good news is that a generous donor has come forward with a \$12,500 1:1 match! Can I count on you to make a generous gift to help purchase this van? Every dollar given will be matched up to \$12,500. Your \$50 turns into \$100. Your \$250 turns into \$500. Every dollar matters.

You can be the difference, please donate today.

See You in Wenatchee, soon!

WRI is a proud sponsor of the **Wenatchee Valley Environmental Film & Lecture Series** hosted by the Wenatchee Valley Museum. This year WRI has committed itself to this program and you will find us at every film being presented.

We have already participated in the first film "The Era of Mega-Fires" which was a treat for WRI to be a part of. Dr. Paul Hessburg and the team from North 40 productions asked WRI to provide a focus group for the pre-screening of this event to fine tune their message and presentation. From what I saw Paul nailed it, and WRI was glad to help!

We will be the primary sponsor for the April 18th lecture **The Buzz on Native Bees**, where local naturalist, Don Rolfs, will share his passion and research on native bee populations.

You've asked us to bring programs to Wenatchee for a long time, this is just a first step. Please stop and say hi when we are in town, we are excited to see you!

You can "Make A Difference" with us!

Mark your calendar for **Saturday October 22**, Make a Difference Day. We will spend the morning (9:00-11:00 am) cleaning up some areas around the Barn Beach Reserve and prepping for winter and then finish the day with our **First Annual Community Cider Squeeze** (2:00-4:00 pm). Bring your family and a clean quart or gallon container and squeeze some apples! We will have all sorts of fun and things to do. Check the website for details.

Become a board member

As WRI continues to grow and improve so too do the needs of our organization. We are currently seeking passionate, motivated and skilled individuals to help shape the future of our organization and our community as a volunteer Board Member. If you would like more information please contact us, we would be happy to sit down and talk about how we can work together to build a better, stronger, more well connected Wenatchee River Institute.



Board Members Gro Buer, Martin Straub

Upcoming Events

September 28th

Jam Session! Canning 101
@ Hope Mountain Farm

October 13th Film

"Return of the River" Film
@ Snowy Owl Theater

October 22nd

Make A Difference Day
Community Cider Squeeze!
@ The Barn Beach Reserve

October 29th

Pine Needle Basket Weaving
@ The Red Barn Learning Center

November 4th

The Myth of Bull Trout
@The Red Barn Learning Center

November 18th

The Roots of Music
@The Red Barn Learning Center

November 1st- 29th

Climate Change
Scientist Speaker Series
@Milepost 111 Brewing

Info & registration at our website
www.wenatcheeriverinstitute.org