

FIELD NOTES

Fall 2023

A Note from Canuche



This fall, classes full of kids are coming back to the WRI campus to splash and stumble around the rocks on our riverbank and build memories of a fun natural landscape that will stick with them for life. I am thrilled to welcome them and to know the

experiences they are having on our campus will link them into a chain of other folks who have experienced the joy and awe of nature in which we live.

The staff, board, and community members have been working on a self-reflective process to determine the next chapter for WRI. The work is not completed yet, but the shape of the Strategic Plan includes increasing our impact with all the communities of our watershed. I look forward to sharing the Strategic Plan with you once it's finalized! When we share the experiences of understanding more about the natural world broadly across the community, our impact will make nature more welcoming, and thus more important, to all of us.



Canuche Terranella
Executive Director



Grounding in Core Values

While on the long journey of creating our new 3-year Strategic Plan, the entire staff and board got the opportunity to gather and talk about the values of WRI. Values ground us in purpose and meaning, keeping us rooted in who we are and why we are doing this work. We are excited to announce our revised values:

Respect

We believe respect is the foundation of relationships between the natural world, people, and communities. We respect the rights of nature and of all people.

Responsibility

We commit to advocating for the natural world, people, and communities. We are accountable for our actions and attitudes, and their impact now and for future generations.

Relevance

We are committed to staying relevant within the community and the environmental programs we teach by evolving and reflecting current events, changing demographics, and environmental challenges.

Connection

We believe our social and environmental interconnectedness is essential. When we live in reciprocity with nature and each other, we create a better future.

Summer Camp Lottery



Fishing, climbing, wading in the river, making art, being outside, learning about nature, and making friends... those are just a few of our campers' favorite things about WRI Summer Camps!

This summer, WRI offered **14 Summer Camps over the course of 7 weeks**. From learning survival skills to rock climbing, campers were outside and connecting with the natural world. The majority of this program takes place outside, giving more freedom for campers to explore the world around them.

"My kid came home every day with new things to share on the drive home. He tried new things and learned so much!"

- Summer Camp Parent

Over the years, the demand for Summer Camps in the Wenatchee Valley has skyrocketed.

85%

of campers were from the Wenatchee Valley in 2023.

This increase in demand means constantly finding ways to improve the registration process and provide more camps. Up until this year, registration was on a first come, first served basis and all spots were released at one time. Last year, the majority of camp spots were filled within one day. This often led to disappointed youth and parents, and having some campers attend multiple camps while many could not attend at all.



One camper's parent said they **"appreciate creating opportunities for more kids"** and that **"the lottery made it possible to attend camp."**

"I love the idea of a lottery and keeping access available for people who cannot necessarily be online the minute programs open."

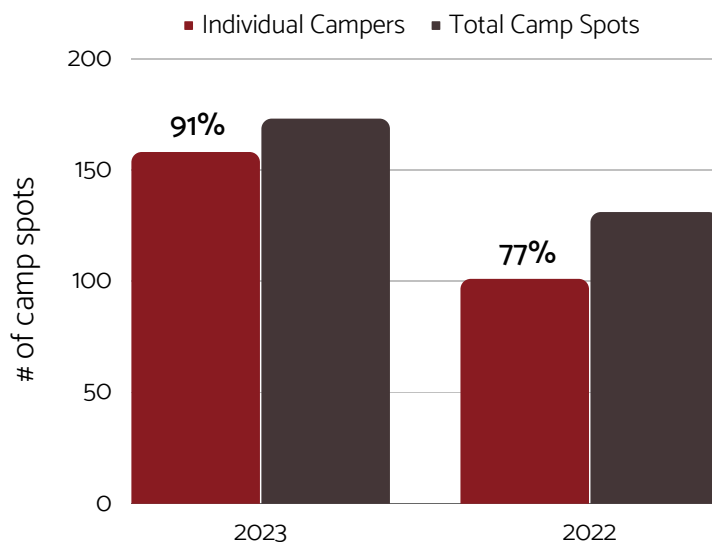
- Summer Camp Parent

This year, WRI **prioritized equity** in the Summer Camp registration process. We wanted to find a way to leave space for more youth to participate and make it an easier process with limited stress on parents... and we did!

In March, WRI piloted the Summer Camp Lottery. A lottery form became available to fill out over 12 days, with all form entries treated equally no matter the day it was submitted. This eliminated the stress on parents to register at a specific time. Once the form closed, campers were sorted randomly into their first or second choice for camp. Any remaining spots would open for general registration.

We had **222 form submissions** and **only 144 spots in camp** offered at the time. We had no idea that all Summer Camps (but one) would fill up just with the lottery. The good news is that it worked!

Increased Access to WRI Summer Camps



This summer, there were 158 individual campers served out of 173 total camp spots. That means more happy campers spent time outside this summer with WRI!

This new system was a learning curve for all of us, and we appreciate you sticking with us! We are planning to continue the Summer Camp Lottery in 2024 and you'll hear more about it in the spring. Thank you so much for your patience and support!

Climbing New Heights

Imagine heading off to Summer Camp, filled with new faces and heaps of outdoor challenges. It's a recipe for excitement and nerves, right?

Rock On! Camp is a WRI Summer Camp that is famous for pushing campers to their limits with thrilling indoor and outdoor climbing adventures. Say goodbye to the comfort zone and hello to a summer of unforgettable fun!



Not only did Ella get out of her comfort zone during Rock On! Camp, she also made new friends and memories to last a lifetime. The power of shared experiences in nature!

For many campers, tackling a big challenge can feel like a mountain to climb, just like it did for Ella when she joined Rock On! Camp. She was nervous and shy about learning this new skill, paired with not knowing many other campers. But, with time, the group warmed up to each other and became fast friends.

By the end of the week, Ella was confidently climbing with her new friends she made in camp. Her mom said,

"Ella conquered her fear of climbing and instead became excited to do more climbing!"

This year's Summer Camps were like no other! With the lottery, there were many new faces brimming with excitement and a touch of nerves. But guess what? That's where the magic happened! Those fresh faces turned into new friends, bonding over their outdoor adventures. It's amazing how nature can bring people together. Thanks to your support, more people are getting to experience it!

The Salmon Returns...

The land that WRI sits on is part of the ancestral homelands of the šnṑṑšqʷáṑšəxʷ (p'squosa or Wenatchi) people. To honor the Indigenous people of this land, WRI commissioned a salmon sculpture by Indigenous artist, Swede Albert of Omak, WA.

This summer, WRI hosted an unveiling of the new salmon sculpture. Swede, his family, the Salmon Chief, Darnell Sam, as well as other members of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation joined us to perform a ceremony and blessing of the sculpture. Elders spoke about the meaning of the salmon to their people and culture...

"The salmon and all of our first foods are a part of that circle of life that connects us to the land, water, and each other."

- Darnell Sam, Salmon Chief

You can find the salmon sculpture near Barn Beach, along the Waterfront Park Trail. Make sure to come take a look on your next visit to the WRI Campus!



Over 70 people gathered at WRI in celebration of the new salmon sculpture, including staff, board members, community members, and tribal members.

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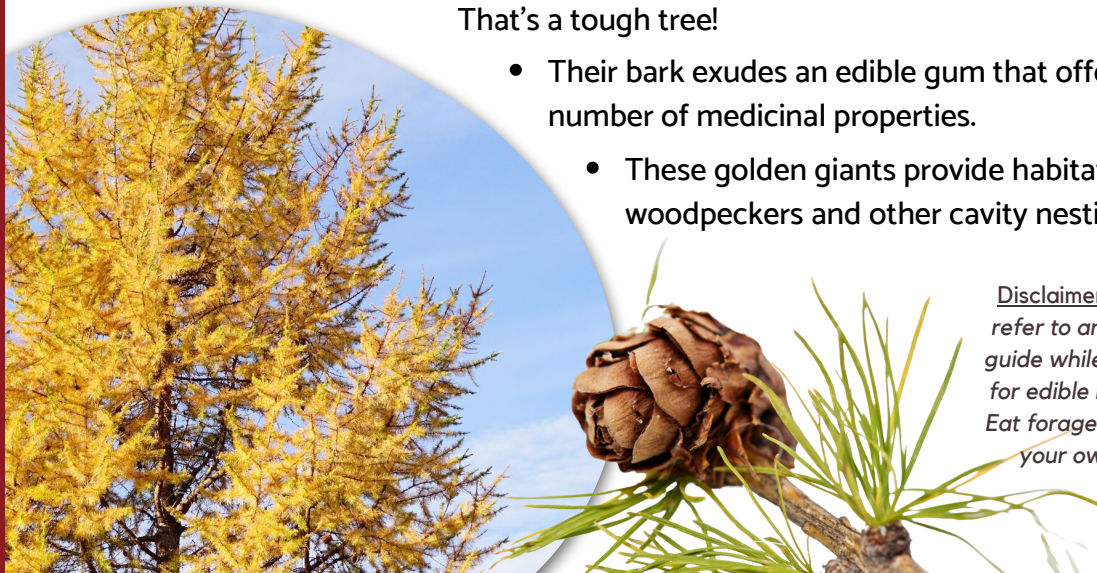
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WRI's Nature Journal

Entry No. 2: Western Larch/Tamarack (*Larix occidentalis*)

Have you seen this tall tree turn golden amongst the evergreens? Here are some fun facts about one of Washington's native conifers.

- The Tamarack is one of the only deciduous coniferous trees in the world. In other words, they're not really evergreens!
- Mature Larches are fire-resilient with 3-6 inch bark. That's a tough tree!
- Their bark exudes an edible gum that offers a number of medicinal properties.
- These golden giants provide habitat for woodpeckers and other cavity nesting birds.



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

Natural World
and the
Communities
People,
Connecting



PO Box 2073
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at BARN BEACH RESERVE

Wenatchee River
INSTITUTE



What's inside?

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