



# FIELD NOTES

## 2025 Annual Report

### A Note from Canuche



2025 was a total whirlwind of heart and connection! It was a year truly defined by the power of showing up for one another and leaning into deep community collaboration.

The heart of our year was the **Traveling Naturalist in the Classroom Program**. June 2025

marked the end of our 2-year **Indigenous Voices in the Traveling Naturalist Program** grant, funded by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. While we reached hundreds of students, the kids weren't the only ones learning, our staff grew right alongside them. When a funding gap arose, our community rallied to fund the current school year. We're so proud that Traveling Naturalist programming continues to bring these vital lessons to schools across North Central Washington (NCW) with thanks to you!

We also hit a major milestone at the **Moving Beyond Land Acknowledgments** conference. Joining the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, p'squosa tribal members, and regional partners allowed us to move beyond words into real action. Deepening our collective understanding of this land's history and future remains a priority for us as we head into 2026.

Back on campus, we completed significant accessibility improvements to ensure WRI is welcoming to everyone, along with a website refresh. Behind the scenes, our Board gathered to dive deep into what "community" really means to us. Those insights directly shaped our **2026-2028 Strategic Goals**, setting a clear course for our outreach across the entire Wenatchee River Watershed.

None of this happens without your support. Read on to see more of what you helped us accomplish in 2025!



Canuche Terranella  
Executive Director



Accessible pathway leading up to the main entrance of the River Haus that was created in 2025, with thanks to Mike Bedard and WRI Staff.

# Youth Programs

At the Wenatchee River Institute (WRI), we believe the most impactful classrooms have no walls. WRI's Youth Programs saw a 27% increase in student contacts and one of our highest numbers of Field Days to date. Through programs like Earth Explorers and Habitat Detectives, we provide students across NCW with a front-row seat to the complex regional ecosystems. By bringing hands-on STEAM education directly to participating classes, we are ensuring equitable access to outdoor learning for students across NCW.

WRI is a critical community resource. WRI's Youth Camps and After School Program (ASP) in Leavenworth offer unforgettable outdoor adventures while providing essential, reliable options for working families. WRI is proud to support both the developmental growth of our youth and the economic stability of our neighbors.

*"ASP has grown so much, and I've loved the projects our son has done."*

WRI ASP Parent

Fifth grade students from Brewster Elementary participated in a Field Day at Lake Chelan State Park through WRI's Traveling Naturalist in the Classroom Program.



In 2025, WRI's After School Program was kickstarted! In the spring, 18 students visited WRI 2 to 4 times each week and enjoyed exploring the grounds and reading the featured StoryWalk® book.

## In the 2024/2025 School Year...



**8** WRI Educators connected with students



**12,384** times in



**33** schools in



**5** counties in Washington.

# Community Programs

WRI's mission thrives on the strength of our community partnerships. Through the hybrid **Red Barn Events** and **Science on Tap** events in Wenatchee, WRI offers a hub for local organizations and experts, fostering an environment where we can all learn from one another. These programs prove that when we learn together, we grow stronger as a community.

WRI's Community Programs are designed to spark curiosity across every generation. A young boy joined a local Bird Walk practically leading it with his eagerness to share his mastery of identification and birding knowledge. These experiences build more than just knowledge, they build confidence and deep-rooted connections.

During a Snowshoe Stroll, a father and son reflected on their River Discovery Tour from the previous summer, noting that the experience inspired the family to purchase their own paddleboards this past Christmas. As they look forward to another season on the water, we are reminded that these programs do more than teach skills. Nature connects us all, leaving an impression on participants and staff alike.



Leavenworth Bird Walk participants viewing an osprey along the Wenatchee River.

A father and son sharing a kayak paddle during a River Discovery Tour.



## In the 2025 Calendar Year...

 **3,744** people attended

 **126** programs and

 **95%** of them were free or Pay What You Can.

# The Essence of Service

In 2025, WRI saw a record-breaking surge in volunteerism. From the fierce energy of our storm clean-up crew to the dedicated hands in our trash pick-up and weeding parties, our community showed up in a big way to preserve the place we all love. This momentum isn't just a statistic, it is a living tribute to our dear friend, emeritus board member, and the very embodiment of service: **Lisa Therrell**.

As the former Chair of our Facilities Committee, Lisa didn't believe in idle words. If a fence needed mending or a garden needed weeding, she simply did it. "Service was her love language," her friend, Terri Butler, recalls. "She was quiet but present, and fierce in her passion." Whether she was kickstarting our Native Plant Garden or leading a program, Lisa led by example.

A veteran Forest Service Wilderness Ranger with a teacher's heart, she spent her life merging the grit of protecting wild places with a passion for educating the community—a perfect connection with WRI. In a way, her passions were more like "two sides of the same coin: a love of both the natural world and of people, and a desire to see human culture treat wild nature with respect," says her partner, Rich Haydon.

As our work parties continue to clear trails, tend gardens, and maintain our campus, they are walking in Lisa's footsteps. She showed us that while we all navigate different eddies, we share the same channels. Every volunteer hour recorded in 2025 is a ripple from the stones she cast, proving that one person's "busy hands" can create an impact that lasts for generations.



*Lisa never let obstacles slow her down. One summer she continued solo patrols in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in an arm cast, testing the bounds of what could be done, literally, single-handedly.*



*To Lisa, the mountains weren't just a job; they were a place of profound connection that she carried with her throughout her life.*

## In the 2025 Calendar Year...

 **231** volunteers contributed

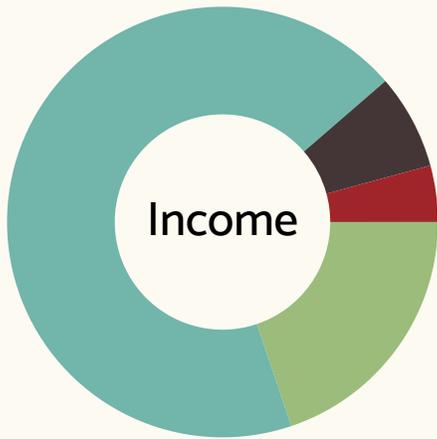
 **3,284** hours to WRI.



*Over 80 volunteers showed up at WRI ready to work, chainsaws in hand, to help WRI dig out following December's atmospheric river storm event. No storm is a match for WRI volunteers!*

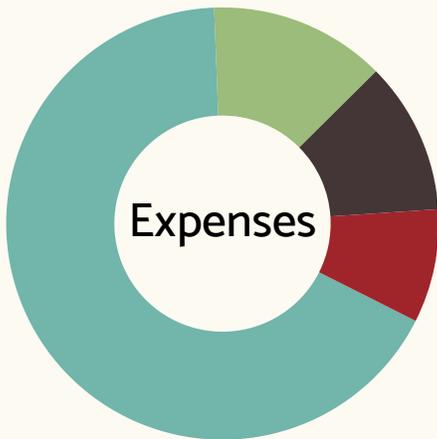
# Finances

## Fiscal Year 2025 - January 1st-December 31st



Fundraising - \$807,190	69%
Programs - \$232,644	20%
Investments - \$83,587	7%
Rentals - \$49,665	4%
<b>Total - \$1,173,087</b>	

Fig 1. Total WRI income for the 2025 fiscal year.



Personnel - \$805,684	67%
Facilities - \$158,581	13%
Program Support - \$136,957	11%
Core Mission Support - \$102,178	9%
<b>Total - \$1,203,399</b>	

Fig 2. Total WRI expenditure for the 2025 fiscal year.

We are so grateful for the support that community members like you show WRI. In 2025, 69% of our total income came from fundraising efforts. These efforts include donations, sponsorships from local businesses, and grants. You keep this work alive by believing in and supporting the mission that connects people with nature and one another.

WRI is thrilled to celebrate a record-breaking year with **472 Member Households** currently enrolled as of February 2026. This is a significant leap from the **388 households** on record at the end of the last membership year. As we move through the current membership cycle (**June 1st to May 31st**), we want to express our sincere gratitude for your support. This milestone is a testament to WRI's growing community, and we could not have reached it without you.

THANK YOU!



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# FIELD NOTES

## 2025 Annual Report



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## What's inside?

- A Note from Canuche
- Youth & Community Programs Reflections
- Volunteer Appreciation
- 2025 Finances - Thank You, Donors!



Read more about WRI's impact on the website:  
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## WRI's Nature Journal

### Entry No. 9: COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser americanus*)

Common Mergansers are a duck commonly seen cruising along the Wenatchee River or Icicle Creek in Leavenworth. You might even see them shoot the rapids!

- They are known as "sawbills" because their long, thin bills are lined with serrated teeth that help them grip slippery fish.
- Unlike most ducks, Common Mergansers are cavity nesters that sometimes lay their eggs in tree holes up to 100 feet above the ground.
- A single female can sometimes be seen leading a "crèche" of over 40 ducklings, acting as a babysitter or even adopting ducklings who have been separated from their mothers.
- These birds are remarkably fast flyers, capable of reaching speeds up to 130 km/h (81 mph) in level flight.

