

## Outdoor Learning Grants Awarded 2023-2025

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### Projects in Adams County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Benton County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Chelan County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Clallam County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Clark County

#### **Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership** **Grant Awarded: \$299,761** **Supporting Outdoor Education in Southwest Washington**

The Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership will use this grant to offer its Explore Local: Encounters & Connections program to more than 800 fourth- and fifth-grade students in southwest Washington. The program includes six outdoor science lessons and three field trips for a total of fifteen hours of outdoor learning. In addition, sixteen high school students will receive credit for summer restoration work in a six-week program for more than 100 hours of outdoor learning. All students will learn directly from Native American educators, who will share local indigenous knowledge connected to land and river stewardship. The students will come from five schools—Fruit Valley, Peter S. Ogden, and Sarah J Anderson Elementary Schools and Mountain View High School, all in Vancouver, and Columbia River Gorge Elementary School in Washougal. The Vancouver schools have more than 53 percent minority and low-income students and the rural Columbia River Gorge Elementary has 44 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced meals. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1339)



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### Projects in Douglas County

#### Foster Creek Conservation District

**Grant Awarded: \$15,453**

#### Creating the North Central Washington Environmental Outdoor Learning Program

The Foster Creek Conservation District will use this grant to create the North Central Washington Environmental Outdoor Learning Program. The learning program will be part of Envirothon, a hands-on, environmental, problem-solving competition for high school students in the United States and Canada. The conservation district is hosting Envirothon in April 2024. The learning program will feature two events—one will spotlight land use, agriculture, traditional ecological knowledge, and environmental issues and one will focus on learning objectives including aquatic ecology, forestry, and wildlife. These learning programs will engage about 400 students in Aurora Alternative, Bridgeport, Mansfield, and Waterville high schools. The goal is to supplement both Envirothon and Since Time Immemorial curriculum by engaging students in hands-on, outdoor learning events led by experts. Visit RCO’s online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1340)

See more grant descriptions in the “[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)” section.

### Projects in Franklin County

See grant descriptions in the “[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)” section.

### Projects in Grant County

See grant descriptions in the “[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)” section.

### Projects in Grays Harbor County

#### Coastal Interpretive Center

**Grant Awarded: \$130,536**

#### Teaching Kids about Tidepools and Beach Erosion

The Coastal Interpretive Center will use this grant to expand its Pacific Ocean Outdoor Learning program (POOL) that offers outdoor learning experiences focused on tidal pools and beach erosion. The Center will expand that to include an Intertidal Explorations program that will include four focal projects targeting grades three, seven, and ten. Activities, which will take place

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in Ocean Shores and Westport, will include field-based observations, data collection and surveys of tidepools and beaches, and analyzing findings. Currently, the center works with partners to offer outdoor experiences for more than 500 students in the Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Lake Quinalt, North Beach, Ocosta, and Taholah School Districts. The POOL program's goals are to educate, inspire, and empower kids to become passionate explorers of the world around them while increasing their confidence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1465)

### Projects in Jefferson County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in King County

#### Post 84

**Grant Awarded: \$149,710**

#### Expanding a Student-led Outdoor Education Program

Post 84 will use this grant to expand its student-led Outdoor Education Programs to 800 students in additional south Seattle high schools and to provide technical training opportunities for student participants. Post 84 offers twenty single- and multi-day field trips, which total more than 600 program hours for participants to spend time outside, learn outdoor skills, and develop leadership abilities. These trips take place in state parks and other natural areas around the state, covering a range of activities such as backpacking, biking, camping, climbing, hiking, kayaking, and snowshoeing. The students, of which 25 percent are low-income, learn about the environment surrounding them, outdoor leadership, survival skills, and social and emotional skills during two school years. The program's goal is to make outdoor learning more accessible to Seattle high school students, fostering leadership and self-reliance. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1375)

#### Youth Experiential Training

**Grant Awarded: \$50,000**

#### Supporting the South King County Experiencing Nature Project

The Youth Experiential Education Institute (Y.E.T.I.) will use this grant to provide outdoor education activities during more than 100 trips to Washington state parks and nature areas for more than 300 underserved youth as part of its Experiencing Nature: South King County Youth Outdoor Education Project. The activities will include topics such as watershed health, native



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species, and outdoor ethics. All trips will incorporate rigorous physical exercise, opportunities for peer and adult bonding, and leadership opportunities. The majority of participants will be youth of color from low-income communities, between five and eighteen years old, who attend south King County public schools with a large portion being recent immigrants and English language learners. The institute goals include educating students about the environment, human impacts on natural landscapes, and climate change; increasing nature awareness and outdoor skills in areas such as observing and respecting wildlife and how to recreate on public lands responsibly; and understanding indigenous history and perspectives on nature with guidance from members of the Snoqualmie Tribe. Visit RCO’s online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1409)

See more grant descriptions in the “[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)” section.

### Projects in Kitsap County

#### **Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District**

#### **Offering a Neurodiverse Student Conservation Corps**

**Grant Awarded: \$49,570**

The Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District will use this grant to offer a Neurodiverse Student Conservation Corps, which gives high school-age teens an employment learning opportunity while doing conservation work in Bainbridge Island parks. Eight neurodiverse teens and eight teen mentors will work with park district staff during a twelve-day session next summer. The teens will complete conservation projects such as removing invasive species, mulching native plants, and maintaining trails. Lunchtime speakers from the community will share career advice with crews. The goal of Neurodiverse Student Conservation Corps is to link hands-on outdoor education with job training for neurodiverse teens. Teens will leave with applicable job skills, greater social and emotional skills, and a deeper understanding of careers in their community in natural resources and conservation. Visit RCO’s online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1402)

#### **Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe**

**Grant Awarded: \$251,720**

#### **Expanding S’Klallam’s a Sense of Place Program**

The Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe will use this grant to create a program, called S’Klallam Sense of Place: From Nature to Nurture. The program will take up to eighty students, in kindergarten through third grade, from the David Wolfle Elementary School on field trips to places of cultural



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importance. With direction from tribal cultural bearers, students will participate in activities involving indigenous practice and curriculum such as phenology (learning how to detect season change), the Time Immemorial curriculum, song, dance, art, harvesting, and storytelling. The program’s goal is supporting a student's ability to explore a "sense of place" through the lens S'Klallam elders referred to as the "art of noticing." Visit RCO’s online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1325)

### Projects in Kittitas County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Klickitat County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Lewis County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Mason County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Okanogan County

#### **Methow Conservancy Providing a Schoolyard Science Program**

**Grant Awarded: \$48,721**

The Methow Conservancy will use this grant to offer a free, monthly, outdoor education program to all fourth graders on the 110-acre campus of Methow Valley Elementary. The school has 37 percent low-income students. The Schoolyard Science with the Methow Conservancy program will teach students to understand and appreciate the landscape of their schoolyard as a microcosm of the greater Methow Valley, to see themselves as scientists, and to care for the land. The program also will cover the valley's indigenous human history and the scientific process of observation, research, hypothesis, experimentation, analysis, and conclusion. Students

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will learn about migration, hibernation, adaptation, wildlife tracking, natural resource management, scientific observation and field journaling, energy and food chains, local agriculture, snowshoeing, map and compass skills, and other aspects of outdoor education. At the end of program, students will receive a Discover Pass, which reduces financial barriers to accessing Washington's public lands, and a field guide to continue outdoor learning. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1321)

### **Methow Field Institute Supporting the Nature Immersion Program**

**Grant Awarded: \$299,999**

The Methow Field Institute will use this grant to launch two new programs, Cultural Pathways and Forest Ambassadors, as part of its Nature Immersion program. In the new programs, 200 students will experience traditional food systems, crafts, and knowledge, as well as learn about careers in forestry, fire management, and conservation through field trips, classroom lessons, and camps. The Nature Immersion program provides culturally responsive, place-based learning for fourth through twelfth grade students of color in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Okanogan County. The overarching program goals are to provide consistent and immersive youth engagement with elders and cultural knowledge keepers; develop and expand social and emotional resilience and coping skills; develop and enhance ecological literacy, connectedness to nature, and conservation-oriented thinking; and engage youth in place-based, experiential learning that helps them meet grade-level standards and show academic growth in science. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1347)

See more grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### **Projects in Pierce County**

#### **Foss Waterway Seaport Bringing Salmon in the Classroom**

**Grant Awarded: \$149,930**

Foss Waterway Seaport will use this grant to continue and to expand its outdoor learning program, Salmon in the Classroom-Swan Creek. The program places salmon-rearing tanks in twenty-four elementary schools, teaches outdoor-based lessons for up to forty-six classrooms, trains twenty high school students as interns, and provides a day of instruction and salmon release at Swan Creek Park for more than 1,300 students annually. Students will come from Chief

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Leschi Tribal School, where less than 8 percent of students met the grade-level science standard in 2022, and from Tacoma Public Schools, where less than 35 percent met the standard, and from an alternative school. The program's goal is to provide science-based experiences both in the classroom and outdoors that improve students' understanding of the health and stewardship of rivers and outdoor spaces. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1370)

See more grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in San Juan County

#### **Lopez Island Family Resource Center** **Grant Awarded: \$148,610** **Offering the Coast Salish: Sea, Land and Place Program**

The Lopez Island Family Resource Center will use this grant to offer its Coast Salish: Sea, Land and Place program to 120 students in grades seven through twelve. The program offers students peer mentoring in the outdoors in the fall and winter and five day-retreats at Camp Moran and an overnight trip to the outer islands in the spring and early summer. The majority of students participating are low income. Outdoor educators, Washington State Parks interpretative specialists, and tribal teachers co-facilitate each session. The primary goal of this program is to provide students land-based education led by tribal educators as opposed to trying to fit Indigenous knowledge into a classroom. Other programs goals are cohort and leadership skills, academic engagement, self-esteem building, and access to public lands. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1376)

### Projects in Thurston County

See grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Walla Walla County

#### **Blue Mountain Community Foundation** **Grant Awarded: \$24,652** **Providing a Farm Experience for Third and Fourth Graders**

Partnering with the Walla Walla Public Schools Foundation, the Blue Mountain Community Foundation will use this grant to offer farm field trips for 1,080 third and fourth graders. All



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Walla Walla Public Schools’ third graders will visit the organic Welcome Table Farm in the spring and then repeat the visit for more in-depth learning in the fall when they are fourth graders. Many students' parents work in agriculture, and yet farming is rarely put forward as a viable and honored career. The goals of this program are to share the importance of farming and farmers to society, let students taste fresh produce (as a majority poverty district, fruits and vegetables are rare for many students), share where food comes from, and teach about beneficial insects, insect and plant life cycles, and seasonal and water cycles. Visit RCO’s online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1337)

See more grant descriptions in the “[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)” section.

### Projects in Whatcom County

#### **Lummi Indian Business Council Supporting the Waters of the Lummi Program**

**Grant Awarded: \$147,617**

The Lummi Indian Business Council will use this grant to offer its Waters of the Lhaq'temish (Lummi) to 350 students in grades five through twelve in the Lummi Nation School and native youth in the Ferndale School District. The program brings youth to the traditional waterways of the Lummi people through outdoor experiences designed to connect youth to their Shelangen (way of life). The Lummi people are the original inhabitants of the San Juan Islands, and this program strives to bring youth home to the water. The students will experience the water throughout the watershed, as snow at Mount Baker, through connected braided waterways on the Nooksack River, and on boats and beaches of the salty marine waters in the Nooksack River delta and the San Juan Islands. The students will experience life on the water, a core memory that all Lummi people embody. Through this shared experience, students will learn the flow of their home water and develop the skill and confidence to pursue careers in natural resources with the Lummi Nation, if they so choose. Visit RCO’s online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1377)

#### **Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association Supporting the Students for Salmon Program**

**Grant Awarded: \$149,820**

The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association will use this grant to support its Students for Salmon Program, which provides 3,000 students in Whatcom County with outdoor educational experiences integrated into their school days. Students visit a salmon-bearing stream in their



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schools' watersheds to investigate stream health. Then, they conduct a series of investigations by rotating through stations about water quality, macroinvertebrates, and native plants. These stations serve as hands-on laboratories, where students collect data in field journals. Students then gather in small groups to design restoration projects to address imperfections discovered through their investigations. Teachers host a freshwater rearing tank throughout the program, having students revisit their streams to release baby salmon. The program's goals are to connect students to place, increase their ecological science literacy, and inspire a sense of personal responsibility and stewardship for nature. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1328)

### **Wild Whatcom Including Special Needs Youth in Outdoor Learning**

**Grant Awarded: \$226,374**

Wild Whatcom will use this grant for three programs that provide outdoor education for special needs students and their teachers. First, Wild Whatcom will deliver its Student Environmental Education and Discovery (SEED) program to special education classes in the Bellingham, Blaine, Lynden, and Mount Baker School Districts, and expanding to the Nooksack Valley School District in 2024. SEED provides outdoor experiences to students with disabilities who otherwise rarely have opportunities to use nature-based experiences as a tool for growth and development. Second, Wild Whatcom will deliver its EdVentures program to integrated second-grade classes at Title I schools in Bellingham, with curriculum to include special needs students. Third, Wild Whatcom will develop and deliver a workshop on how to implement outdoor learning for students with special needs to other outdoor education organizations. In all, Wild Whatcom will serve 674 students. When spending time outside, the students develop comfort exploring the outdoors, physical endurance, sensory-motor integration, and social and emotional growth. The teachers receive field practice in teaching environmental science and outdoor skills to their students. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1314)

### **Projects in Yakima County**

#### **Yakima Family YMCA Camp Dudley Providing a Director for the Yakima Outdoor School at Camp Dudley**

**Grant Awarded: \$48,350**

The Yakima Family YMCA Camp Dudley will use this grant to help support a director for its Outdoor School. Partnering with the Yakima School District, the YMCA will bring all fifth graders

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to its Outdoor School and have high school juniors and seniors serve as counselors. In this pilot year, fifth graders will attend a day trip in the fall and return in spring for an overnight trip. In the 2024-25 school year, the YMCA will expand the program to all elementary schools in the district and reach 1,100 fifth-grade students and 200 high school students in a two-night program. While at outdoor school, students will be engaged in hands-on science lessons woven with history, literature, math, and western and indigenous science. The goal is to create an impactful learning environment that will improve science outcomes and classroom behavior through the experiential and social-emotional learning that takes place at camp. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1310)

See more grant descriptions in the "[Projects in Multiple Counties](#)" section.

### Projects in Multiple Counties

#### Adams, Benton, Franklin, Grant, and Walla Walla Counties

##### Educational Service District 123

**Grant Awarded: \$190,986**

##### Offering Outdoor Art Expression to Build Resilience

Educational Service District 123 will use this grant to incorporate outdoor learning curriculum into its Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs in southeast Washington. Through this project, more than 1,000 children ages three to five, in twelve school districts will participate in outdoor exploration and art projects during two years. In the first year, Educational Service District staff will work with teachers to integrate four environment-themed units into their classroom curriculum. Each unit will include outdoor art activities, intentional outdoor exploration consistent with the unit theme, and take-home activities for families and children to complete together. Students also will participate in four field trips a year. In the second year, Educational Service District staff will advise teachers on integrating outdoor education principles and topics into their classroom curriculum and planning quarterly field trips. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1427)



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### **Benton, Franklin, Grant, Jefferson, King, and Thurston Counties**

#### **Washington Native Plant Society Providing Youth Ecology Education Through Restoration**

**Grant Awarded: \$49,940**

The Washington Native Plant Society will use this grant to expand the Youth Ecology Education through Restoration (YEER) program at six middle schools across the state. In the fall, while learning about ecology in the classroom, students spend two days outdoors. First, they visit and learn about a healthy ecosystem. Then, they design a restoration plan for degraded land near their school and carry out that plan by removing invasive plants and planting native plants. Most students will return in the spring to water and weed their sites. The primary goal of this project is to provide hands-on outdoor ecology education that aligns with science standards and creates a sense of pride and accomplishment, elements that are shown to have lifelong learning outcomes. The program will accommodate 800 sixth- through eighth-grade students in Griffin Middle School in Olympia, Paterson Middle School in Paterson, Quilcene Middle School in Quilcene; Ray Reynolds Middle School in Pasco, Rose Hill Middle School in Redmond, and Wahluke Junior High School in Mattawa. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1419)

### **Chelan, Douglas, and Grant Counties**

#### **Cascade Fisheries Expanding the WOW (Watching Over the Watershed) Program**

**Grant Awarded: \$147,236**

Cascade Fisheries will use this grant to expand its year-round community science, stewardship, and education program, Watching Over the Watershed (WOW) to 456 students in grades two to twelve from seven schools in Cascade, Entiat, Orondo, Quincy, and Wenatchee School Districts. On average, 60 percent of the students are low-income and 81 percent receive free or reduced meals. The students will restore habitat on the Lower Sleepy Hollow Preserve, the last remaining functioning floodplain on the lower Wenatchee River. By partnering with local natural resources professionals and tribal members, the program offers real-world science. The students will learn about indigenous culture and ecological knowledge and experience, in-depth, seasonal phenomena related to local salmon and watershed ecological systems. The program's goals are for students to lead salmon habitat stewardship projects, learn in the field, see leaders representing themselves, have hands-on career connections, and build social and emotional skills. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1422)

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### Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties

#### Wenatchee River Institute

**Grant Awarded: \$200,089**

#### Adding Native Voices to Outdoor Learning in Eastern Washington

The Wenatchee River Institute will use this grant to bring the voices of members of the Confederated Tribes of the Coville Reservation to outdoor environmental education programs in seven rural school districts in eastern Washington. This two-year project has three parts. First, the Wenatchee River Institute Traveling Naturalist Program will provide outdoor education, infused with indigenous ecological knowledge, to more than 1,100 fourth and fifth graders in six rural school districts: Brewster, Eastmont, Lake Chelan, Manson, Orondo, and Quincy. Second, the Cascade School District, Home Link Alternative Learning Environment, Discovery School, and Beaver Valley School will use place-based classes and indigenous perspectives to enhance Washington State history, social and emotional learning, and outdoor education lessons for 130 students. Third, the Wenatchee River Institute and Cascade School District staff will be offered outdoor-based local ecological knowledge and collaborative learning time. The primary goal of the project is to integrate learning standards by amplifying indigenous voices through hands-on, place-based programming. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1425)

### Clallam and Jefferson Counties

#### North Olympic Salmon Coalition

**Grant Awarded: \$129,042**

#### Offering Real Learning Real Work: Restoration Engineering Program

The North Olympic Salmon Coalition will use this grant to offer its Real Learning Real Work education program, which gives students in Clallam and Jefferson Counties opportunities to develop a better understanding of healthy ecological systems and an intimate relationship with their local salmon streams. Nearly 800 students from Blue Heron, Chimacum, Clallam Bay, and Sequim Middle Schools will walk away after two years of programming with applied skills in both critical-thinking and problem solving that are uniquely developed through fieldwork at a local restoration site. The program challenges students to evaluate habitat, engineer solutions, and respond to the complexities of restoring wild salmon to local rivers. Middle school students will design habitat restoration actions in their region's watersheds and eventually plant the trees they specify in their action plans in nearby restoration sites. This program also links academic work with careers that these often-underserved students can imagine on the peninsula,

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specifically in the natural resources sector and the growing restoration economy. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1361)

### **Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima Counties**

#### **Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group** **Grant Awarded: \$127,392** **Expanding the Careers in Conservation Summer Program**

The Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group will use this grant to expand its Careers in Conservation Summer Program, a six-week, field-based program that engages high school students in natural resources work. The fisheries enhancement group will expand its program from serving two Yakima high schools to at least twelve high schools in Grant, Kittitas, and Klickitat, and Yakima Counties. As a requirement of participation, the students will share their new knowledge with 500 classmates and younger students. Participants will spend two to three days each week outdoors engaged in natural resources work, including maintaining restoration sites, tagging and releasing coho salmon at fish hatcheries, shadowing a state firefighter, and working alongside fish biologists to assess stream health and survey fish. The primary goals of the project are to build students' skills, awareness, and appreciation for natural resource jobs; help underserved youth earn credits toward graduation; provide students with documents of competency in job skills and knowledge; and provide professional development opportunities for teachers. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1417)

### **King and Pierce Counties**

#### **IslandWood** **Grant Awarded: \$149,197** **Supporting Urban Outdoor Learning Programs**

IslandWood will use this grant to support its Urban Outdoor Learning Programs, which are local, nature-based, outdoor environmental education programs for nearly 7,200 elementary school students in Seattle and Tacoma Public Schools. The program includes four distinct outdoor experiences delivered annually: a Duwamish River boat-based investigation, two park-based field trips related to releasing salmon into a river, an outdoor field trip for Seattle students studying restoration of ecological systems, and a field trip for Tacoma students studying stormwater. The program's goals are to get kids engaged and learning outside during their school day, making the outdoors accessible and making science, social studies, and other in-class learning relevant to their everyday lives, and to enable them to connect with their local

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environment. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1316)

### King and Pierce Counties

#### **Institute for Community Leadership** **Grant Awarded: \$194,475** **Supporting the Changing Ourselves through Outdoor Connections Program**

The Institute for Community Leadership will use this grant to provide 120 high school and 250 elementary students with outdoor environmental education, sovereignty education, and outdoor leadership experiences. In the Changing Ourselves Through Outdoor Connections program, high school students participate in weekly Saturday leadership and outdoor education classes and monthly environmental stewardship sessions along two salmon-bearing streams, in a forest, and in animal and plant husbandry projects. In addition, the students participate in three cultural exchanges where natural resource educators at the Quinault Indian Nation teach traditional ecological learning. The program's final element is an ambassador component, where high schoolers host field trips for elementary students. Students come from, Crestwood Elementary School, Kent Meridian and Lincoln High Schools, and the Quinault Indian Nation. The high schoolers area 92 percent students of color, 93 percent low-income, 65 percent from immigrant households, and 48 percent from families who do not speak English at home. This ambassador program increases self-esteem, relationships with peers and adults, academic performance, and physical and mental health. Students leave electronic devices behind, and jump hands and feet first into soil, water, gardens, a forest, and a private tribal ocean beach. Students learn about native sovereignty and ecological stewardship of water, salmon, and nature. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1442)

### King, Pierce, Thurston, and Yakima Counties

#### **University of Washington's Mount Rainier Institute** **Grant Awarded: \$150,000** **Expanding the Climate Science Program**

The Mount Rainier Institute will use this grant to expand its climate science programs. The programs will provide 400 upper-middle and high school students with overnight and day-long outdoor learning experiences focusing on forest climate science, wildfire mitigation, and climate resilience. This program works with several schools around the state, which collectively, have an average of 60 percent students of color and 60 percent low-income students. Students explore

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and learn about climate change and Pacific Northwest forests. Program activities will take place on public lands at the University of Washington's Pack Forest and Mount Rainier National Park. The program's goals are to inspire curiosity, foster an appreciation for science and nature, build confidence in being outdoors, build climate hope and resilience, and illuminate potential career paths in outdoor and environmental science fields. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1331)

### **Lewis and Thurston Counties**

#### **Nisqually River Foundation**

**Grant Awarded: \$149,690**

#### **Offering Outdoor Learning Experiences About South Sound Watersheds**

The Nisqually River Foundation will use this grant to provide three outdoor learning experiences for more than 14,000 students in Lewis and Thurston Counties in its Waters That Connect Us: South Sound Watersheds program. The Watershed Explorers experience will have students monitor the health of a river near their schools and present their findings in culminating projects. The Salmon, Cedar, Canoe experience will have students traveling to the Nisqually Indian Tribe's Culture Center and engaging with tribal teachings. The Nearshore experience will bring students to Puget Sound beaches to focus on plankton sampling and environmental careers. Local waterways are home to diverse habitats and wildlife that support and enrich communities and cultures. A lack of access to these waters is a barrier to developing an understanding of their importance. The student students will come from the North Thurston, Olympia, and Rochester School Districts, Wa He Lut Indian School, and juvenile detention centers in Lewis and Thurston Counties. The program's goal is to provide equitable, career-connected opportunities that are culturally relevant and rooted in local phenomenon and outdoor learning. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1428)

### **Mason and Thurston Counties**

#### **South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group Expanding the Salmon in the Schools Program**

**Grant Awarded: \$44,651**

The South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group will use this grant to expand its Salmon in the Schools program from eight elementary schools to eleven in Mason and Thurston Counties. In the fall, the salmon enhancement group delivers a salmon life cycle lesson. In January, each school receives 125 to 200 chum salmon eggs to raise. Aquariums are placed in school common



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areas to allow the entire school to witness the salmon life cycle firsthand every day. In the spring, students visit a local creek to assess the habitat, discuss salmon as a keystone species, create salmon artwork, play a salmon survival math game, then name and release their fish into the wild. The program will expand from 488 third- through fifth-grade students to 700 students in each of two years in high-poverty schools. The new schools added are Lacey Elementary and Mountain View Elementary in North Thurston Public Schools and Pioneer Elementary in Pioneer School District. The program integrates science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) and Since Time Immemorial curriculum. Visit RCO's online Project Snapshot for [more information and photographs of this project](#). (23-1437)