



Vashon Wilderness PROGRAM

Annual Report 2022-2023

Land & Water Acknowledgement

We honor and acknowledge the s̓x̓wəbabs - known today as part of the Puyallup Tribe - and their traditional, unceded lands upon which we gather, work, and learn. Vashon and Maury Island are within the tribe's accustomed area for fishing and shellfish, and still today remain a vital part of the tribe's cultural sovereignty. We recognize that playing and learning in Nature would not be possible without access to these lands and waters, and acknowledge our responsibility to learn about their histories and the ongoing harm carried out against their communities. We invite you to join us to listen, learn and actively work in solidarity to repair harm and co-create a more just and equitable future.



Mission & Vision

Vashon Wilderness Program provides nature immersion experiences that cultivate a deep relationship between self, community and the natural world.

Our teachings nourish the growth of a community devoted to sharing the gifts of compassionate connection, belonging, and harmonious living, thereby contributing to a culture in which individuals experience themselves as integral to the natural world, and richly woven into the place we all call home.



Commitment to Justice

Nature connection is a birth rite and all humans deserve access to the healing and wholing benefits of a nature-rooted childhood nested within kincentric cultures. Our commitment to decolonization, justice, equity, accessibility and shared leadership touches all aspects of our Organizational Culture, Programming, Participation, Professional Development and Hiring Practices. Please read our website for [more information](#) on what we've been doing to transform our community so that all children and families find a sense of belonging at VWP.



Letter from the ED

Dear Friends,

The cycles of planting, tending, growing and harvesting have much to teach us about our living ecosystems. Plants, flowers, and trees (and all wild ones, for that matter) invite a deep sense of intimacy with the living land when we actively participate in their cycles of life. In truth, **our mutual thriving exists inside these reciprocal relationships.**

But what about other messier parts of the cycle, like composting? With consistent effort and time, a smelly pile of food scraps, animal manure, grass clippings and coffee grounds can transform into a great heap of fertility.

In our 16th year, VWP embraced our own process of composting, of creating regenerative ground for future generations.

For us, this meant continuing to release the forms, structures, habits and practices that perpetuate harm toward Indigenous and all bodies of culture. It meant making space for greater mutual thriving.

- We let go the foundation of our curriculum known as “8 Shields” in service of an authentic, place-based expression to emerge;
- We let go teaching “skills” in service of uplifting and honoring our Indigenous and other teachers, including those who have given permission to share specific lifeways;
- We let go white dominant mindsets in service of creating a vibrant community woven of multiple lineages, languages and cultural expressions.

Letter from the ED continued..

We let go in order to create a more meaningful community of belonging.

As we continue to share with youth and their families how to honor trees for their gifts of fire and shelter; plants for their gifts of food and medicine; mammals and birds for their gifts of understanding the stories of the land; and each other as humans in a more-than-human world, we will continue to learn to thrive together in reciprocity.

Thank you for joining us in this heart-centered work. Your unwavering support transforms the lives of hundreds of children and their families each year. Together, we are creating a more just and resilient community, woven in nature, for the health of our collective future.

With gratitude,
Stacey Hinden
Executive Director



Current Leadership

Elders

Nan Draper

Linda Moore

Estavan Roache

Mary Shackelford

Mark Smythe

Mark P. Timken

Board of Directors

Shanna Clinton, President

Laura DiZazzo, Secretary

Jeff Stevenson, Treasurer

Staff

Stacey Hinden, Executive Director

Nathan Kuan Uhlmeyer, Program Director

Caelan Angell, Field Director

Kristy Friend, Field Director

Yasmin Ravard-Andresen, Field Director

Vanessa Williams, Operations & Marketing Coordinator

Amy Kitchener, Administrator/Bookkeeper

Mentors

Caelan Angell

Mélou Brooks

Kristy Friend

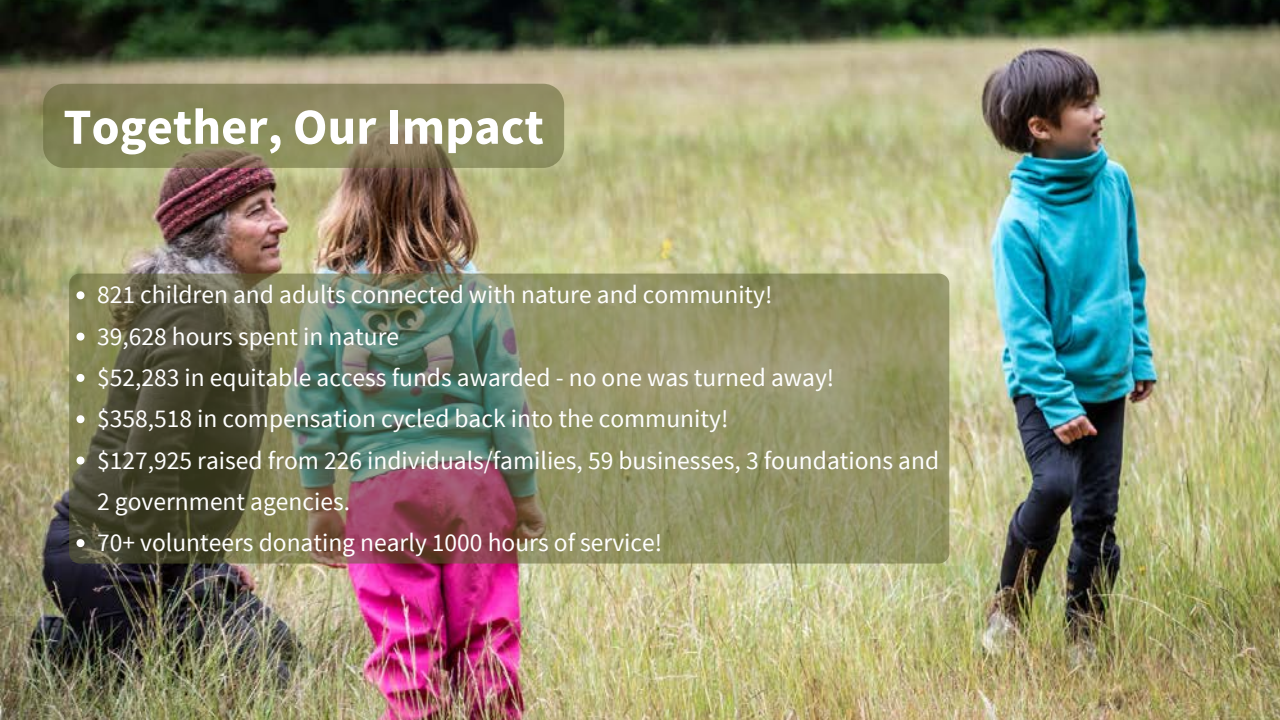
Georgia Golden

Joanne Jewell

Greyson Lee

Jacqui Lown

April Ulinksi

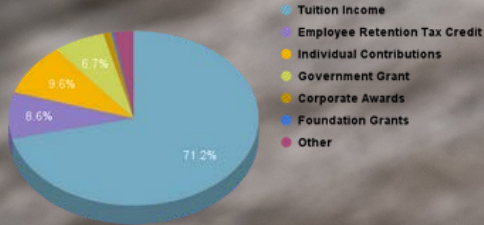
A photograph of a woman and two children in a field of tall grass. The woman is on the left, wearing a brown headband and a dark jacket, looking towards the children. A young girl in a green hoodie and pink pants is in the center, facing away from the camera. A young boy in a blue hoodie and black pants is on the right, looking towards the right. The background is a vast field of tall grass under a bright sky.

Together, Our Impact

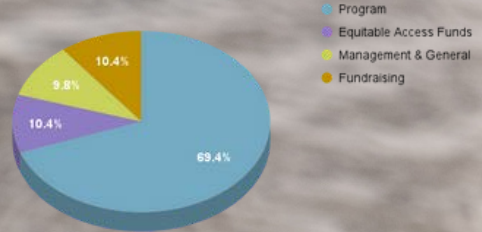
- 821 children and adults connected with nature and community!
- 39,628 hours spent in nature
- \$52,283 in equitable access funds awarded - no one was turned away!
- \$358,518 in compensation cycled back into the community!
- \$127,925 raised from 226 individuals/families, 59 businesses, 3 foundations and 2 government agencies.
- 70+ volunteers donating nearly 1000 hours of service!

By the Numbers

Where Our Funds Come From



Where We Spent Our Funds



Tuition Income	\$451,371
Employee Retention Tax Credit	\$54,791
Individual Contribution	\$60,809
Government Grant	\$42,220
Corporate Awards	\$6,782
Foundation Grants	\$1,965
Other	\$16,199
Total	\$634,137

Program	\$349,780
Equitable Access Funds	\$52,283
Management & General	\$49,378
Fundraising	\$52,447
Total	\$503,888

A person in a dark jacket is shown from the side, with their arms raised high in the air, palms facing forward. They are in a lush green forest. In the background, another person is visible, looking towards the camera. The scene is outdoors with dense foliage.

From the Heart

“VWP has been a place where I can go to be free. For the past 10 years it has been a safe place where I can immerse myself in the natural world, and learn how to interact with it in a healthy way. I have learned how to make things with materials found in the forest, move silently, and harvest from nature with as little harm as possible. To me, VWP means community, nature, and most importantly, lots of fun.” **Oliver, Earth Walker Teen Program student**

“We are still digesting just how wonderful our time was with you all. I have had parents tell me that their students had the BEST time on our VWP adventure and that they feel it brought the class together in an unprecedented way. What you facilitated was a powerful experience for these young people and I cannot thank you enough. With gratitude, KP” ~ **Teacher, Cedar Park Elementary School**

“Our home is full of songs and stories from the week. My son is learning so much about how to be in this world from VWP, and through him, so am I.” ~ **Parent of an Overnight Summer Camper**

Equity in Action - Salish Sea Fund

In spring 2023, we were gifted with seed money to establish the new “Salish Sea Fund”, and committed to matching this gift, for a total of \$10,000 this first year. We’re thrilled to let you know that we surpassed our goal and over \$15,000 in Salish Sea Funds were distributed!

Families from various Indigenous tribes and nations are with us: those whose ancestors or living kin are woven with the land and waters of the Salish Sea, those who call Vashon-Maury Island home, and those from farther reaches of Turtle Island. We are listening and learning, and growing together as VWP walks our talk in right relations.



Gratitude

... to the land and waters of the Coast Salish Indigenous peoples; to our partners and business sponsors; to all our donors and volunteers; to the thousands of families - past and present; and especially to the children - we wouldn't be here without each of you and we thank you with all our hearts for saying yes to this vision Together, we are creating a more just and regenerative world for all beings..

Vashon Wilderness PROGRAM

vashonwilderness.org

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VWP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit | EIN: 42-1625469