



**NATURAL
RESOURCES**

HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

YOUTH EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



CONTENTS

4 MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

6 BACKGROUND

9 GOAL 1

Formal and non-formal educators have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to teach about the complexities of natural resource management.

10 Objective 1.1

12 Objective 1.2

13 Objective 1.3

15 GOAL 2

Washington youth have place-based, experiential learning opportunities on public land to explore careers in natural resources and develop the skills used by natural resource professionals.

16 Objective 2.1

18 Objective 2.2

19 Objective 2.3

20 Objective 2.4

21 Objective 2.5

23 GOAL 3

Collaborate with educators, industry leaders, non-profits, and state agencies to inspire interest in and improve recruitment into natural resource sector careers for all youth, with a focus on demographic groups that have been historically excluded from the field of natural resource management.

24 Objective 3.1

25 Objective 3.2

26 Objective 3.3

27 Objective 3.4

29 Objective 3.5

31 GOAL 4

DNR staff have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to conduct successful outreach and education work with youth from diverse backgrounds across Washington.

32 Objective 4.1

33 Objective 4.2

34 Objective 4.3

35 Objective 4.4

36 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

37 CONTACT DNR



YOUTH EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF
**NATURAL
RESOURCES**

HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS



CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR



MISSION

DNR's Youth Education and Outreach Program supports and delivers outdoor learning opportunities for Washington's youth to build environmental literacy and prepare for natural resource sector jobs.

VISION

Through place-based, career-connected education on Washington's state lands, students develop the skills and knowledge to manage lands and waters sustainably, empowering them to serve as effective stewards in their communities and pursue employment in the natural resource sector for the benefit of future generations.

VALUES

Safety & Well-Being

Promote physiological and social emotional health through outdoor learning and responsible recreation on public land in both urban and rural environments.

Public Service

Extend DNR's public outreach to meet the needs of Washington's educators and students, and adaptively manage the program to ensure alignment with mission, vision, and values.

Innovation & Creative Problem Solving

Create programming where students tackle real world, authentic problems in natural resource management, teaching them about the complex challenges our state faces and encouraging creative solutions.

Leadership & Teamwork

Serve as a leader in building robust and sustained collaborative partnerships with the organizations, agencies, and community leaders who have decades of expertise in environmental education and outreach.

Environmental Justice

Engage youth from a diversity of backgrounds in the development and implementation of land management objectives in the service of a future where everyone enjoys the same healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

Equity

Actively identify and oppose all forms of oppression at the individual, institutional, and structural level, and remove barriers by providing natural resource career exploration and preparation activities for youth from demographic groups that have been historically excluded from the sector.

Access

Create and advance barrier-free design, standards, systems, and processes to provide all individuals, regardless of ability, background, identity or situation, an effective opportunity to take part in, use, and enjoy the benefits of education and outreach programs.

Respect for Indigenous Knowledge

Partner with tribal communities to ensure that programming accurately reflects and honors the role of indigenous stewards in land management since time immemorial and supports tribal priorities.

Relationship Building

Ground all efforts in methods that acknowledge our shared humanity, create opportunities for authentic connection, and serve to deepen our relationships with each other and with the land.

Storytelling

Improve public awareness and knowledge of the history of the management of natural resources in Washington and the role of the DNR.



Executive Summary

Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages 5.6 million acres of land across the state including forests, farmlands, rivers, and intertidal zones. The agency also employs more than 1,400 people who are experts in forestry, aquaculture, ecology, geology, horticulture, habitat restoration, wildfire, engineering, trail design, geospatial information, policy, and archaeology. As such, DNR is in a perfect position to bolster ongoing environmental education efforts across Washington and to engage youth in critical career exploration and preparation in the natural resources sector.

However, DNR has not had dedicated staff for education and outreach work with youth since the recession in 2008. As an agency, we have been relying on a few passionate individuals to engage with young people without programmatic or budgetary support. Despite the dedication and effort of our staff across the state, we struggle to meet the demand for ad hoc requests like career fairs or guest speaking, and currently lack capacity to engage with youth in a more strategic, sustained, and meaningful way.

Youth care about issues that are central to DNR—climate, watershed and wildfire resilience, protection of ecological and cultural resources, responsible recreation, sustainable natural resource management, and environmental justice—but many feel hopeless about their ability to affect positive change. Racial and economic disparities in access to natural areas further alienate youth from the environment and contribute to feelings of despair around the challenges our state faces. By investing in education and outreach, DNR can empower youth in decision-making processes and cultivate stewardship behaviors that are based in connection to and care for Washington’s public lands and treasured resources.

Additionally, most young people are not aware of the types of jobs that DNR and other state agencies offer or of the many natural resource companies and conservation organizations eager to recruit them. This lack of awareness is one factor in the alarming shortage of workers in vital forest health and natural resources management positions; an especially pronounced crisis in Washington.

DNR’s mission is to “Manage, sustain, and protect the health and productivity of Washington’s lands and waters to meet the needs of present and future generations.” The Youth Education & Outreach Program (YEOP), which focuses on hands-on, place-based experiential learning will support DNR’s mission in two essential ways: by teaching youth how individuals, government, and industry “manage, sustain, and protect” lands and waters in their communities and by cultivating a new, and more diverse, generation of natural resource professionals who are prepared to take on management challenges in our state’s future.

In its first six years, from 2024 to 2029, YEOP will:

- Build DNR’s internal capacity for outreach and education work with youth statewide
- Design and develop authentic projects to elevate student voice in decision-making
- Facilitate educator trainings on natural resource topics
- Curate and create curriculum resources for use by DNR staff and a diversity of educators
- Launch an educator natural resource conference and youth natural resource camp
- Support career and technical education and workforce training programs to create pathways into natural resource employment
- Establish systems for tracking outcomes and evaluating the efficacy of programming

Through this work, YEOP will not only advance DNR’s mission and strategic priorities, but also build environmental literacy, address systemic inequities in educational outcomes, and support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of young people through outdoor experience.



Background

E

Establishment of an outreach and education program for work with K-12 youth is aligned with numerous statutory requirements and strategic priorities and is consistent with momentum across state agencies to be more proactive in engaging the public on issues of importance in their communities.

DNR'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The mission, vision, and values of DNR serve as the basis of YEOP design. YEOP can also assist the agency in its delivery on the following specific strategies:

Strategy A 3.1 "Provide leadership and learning opportunities and support the growth of our employees:" expanding professional learning opportunities for staff to develop new skills for education and outreach, especially in historically underserved communities.

Strategy A 3.2 "Develop and implement a targeted recruitment plan that builds a workforce that reflects the diversity of Washington's workforce:" prioritizing direct connection with diverse youth to inspire and prepare the next generation of natural resource professionals and contributing to DNR's larger workforce development strategy.

Strategy A 4.3 "Ensure all DNR employees have the tools, resources, training, and communication skills to successfully engage in their communities:" facilitating training for DNR staff on working with youth from diverse audiences and developing ready-to-use materials for engagement with K-12 audiences.

Strategy B 3.3 "Educate the public about opportunities to access DNR's lands in ways that are compatible with the land's purpose, cultural resources, and natural resources:" creating curriculum guides for publicly accessible, DNR-managed lands to promote responsible recreation and leverage public land as a living classroom.

Strategy B 3.4 "Engage and educate the public about the environmental, social, and economic benefits of DNR lands, including DNR's trust mandate:" facilitating educator professional development and student learning about DNR's work across the state.

Strategy B 4.1 "Partner to promote natural resources careers with Tribal members, indigenous people, youth, adults, veterans, and those most impacted by environmental disparities:" working alongside the Agriculture and Natural Resources Center for Excellence, Career Connect Washington, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and other organizations to develop and promote career exploration and preparation in the natural resource sector.

Strategy B 4.3 "Conduct community engagement strategies across Washington to ensure programs and policy are informed by the people we serve:" connecting with students and solicit opinions on important issues and incorporating student voice into decision-making.

Strategy C 4.3 "Grow K-12, technical, and college natural resource education programs by establishing and expanding public-private partnerships, intergovernmental agreements, and NGO collaborations:" facilitate relationships and collaborative efforts between organizations seeking to support natural resource education and workforce development.

DNR'S WATERSHED RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN (WRAP)

Action 10.4: "Establish a robust, statewide outdoor education and training program at DNR:" YEOP delivers on this action through the development and delivery of a statewide vision for youth outdoor education and the establishment of new pathways into natural resource careers.

Goal 4, Outcome 22: "Provide outdoor education and career-connected learning opportunities that reach at least 6,000 K-8 and high school students with a focus on girls and youth of color by 2031:" YEOP's regional coordinators will provide career-connected outdoor learning opportunities for youth living and attending school in the WRIA-7 watershed, with a particular focus on demographic groups that have been historically excluded from the field of natural resource management, including girls and youth of color.



HB 1168: FOREST HEALTH AND WILDFIRES

Section 5, “Workforce Development” calls for development of educational programs for “elementary, secondary and higher education students that: (i) Inform people about the role of forestry, fire, vegetation management, and ecological restoration; (ii) increase the awareness of opportunities for careers in the forest sector and exposure of students to those careers through various work-based learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom; (iii) connect students in pathways to careers in the forestry sector; and (iv) incorporate opportunities for secondary students to earn industry recognized credentials and dual credit in career and technical education courses.” YEOP will address all four areas of focus for elementary and secondary education students through engagement in authentic project-based learning and development of curriculum on land management and natural resource careers. YEOP will also directly support relevant Career Technical Education (CTE) courses and develop explicit pathways into natural resource sector careers.

SB 5141: HEAL ACT

The HEAL Act requires that DNR incorporate principles of environmental justice into strategic plans and adopt a community engagement plan that “describes how [DNR] will engage with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.” YEOP invests in sustained and meaningful engagement with students of color, tribal youth, girls, non-binary youth, low-income youth, and youth in rural communities, aiding agency-wide efforts to form stronger relationships with diverse communities. Outreach to populations underrepresented in natural resource careers will support equity and inclusion in DNR’s workforce, strengthening capacity for creative problem solving and enhancing our ability to address environmental justice in meaningful ways.

DNR’S PLAN FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Within the section on “Statewide Systems-Level Needs and Opportunities,” the Plan for Climate Resilience highlights the need to “Support and facilitate community-level resilience planning and implementation” and “Enhance education, outreach, and engagement on resilience needs and opportunities.” YEOP’s authentic, project-based learning will engage local youth in decision-making processes relevant to the ongoing health and resilience of their communities and create direct lines of communication between DNR subject-matter experts and the public on topics related to climate change and resilience.

DNR’S NATURAL HERITAGE PLAN

The priorities for 39 Natural Resources Conservation Areas and 58 Natural Areas Preserves that DNR manages include “increasing environmental education opportunities at natural areas.” YEOP will support targeted outdoor education through development of site-specific curricular resources and authentic student projects at natural areas.

DNR’S URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY (UCF) STRATEGIC PLAN

The UCF plan aspires to cultivate and retain a skilled urban forestry workforce, and includes two strategies in Objective 3.4—“introduce youth to the full range of education, employment, and community development opportunities available in the urban forestry sector” and “increase workforce development opportunities and green jobs in UCF with attention to underserved communities”—that will be served by YEOP’s educational programming for K-12 youth, especially those in underserved communities

DNR-MANAGED COMMUNITY FORESTS

A continued goal for the management of community forests is to “provide better education opportunities to connect students and the public with these lands.” This program will leverage community forests as an asset for environmental and natural resource education.



LARA TUKARSKI / PACIFIC EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Skagit and Whatcom County teachers visit an active logging site during a 2-day training facilitated by DNR, the Pacific Education Institute, Skagit Conservation District, Sierra Pacific Industries, and Hampton Lumber.





GOAL
1

Formal and non-formal educators have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to teach about the complexities of natural resource management.



Statewide efforts to expand and fund environmental and sustainability education

are motivating educators to grow their knowledge of environmental science and build skills and confidence in facilitating outdoor learning. DNR has an opportunity to capitalize on this momentum by providing tools and experiences to improve educator understanding of natural resource management and the role of agencies in managing, sustaining, and protecting the health and productivity of Washington’s lands and waters. YEOP’s delivery of high-quality professional development in all geographies across Washington will prepare educators to translate what they have learned back to students, both in and out of the classroom.



Making the jump from theoretical curriculum to applied educational experiences in the outdoors can inspire students to ask questions, start developing passion for natural resources and seek out opportunities for the many fulfilling careers in the natural resource and agriculture professions.”

STEVE OGDEN
ASSISTANT REGION MANAGER,
STATE LANDS OPERATIONS / DNR

▼ **LONG-TERM TARGET**

INTERIM PATHWAY

Work with OSPI and other leaders in the education community to develop and distribute a survey tool similar to the 2008 Report of Washington State K-12 Environmental Education to assess educator knowledge, skills and confidence in topics related to natural and cultural resource management, conservation, sustainability and environmental education. Use the baseline data from the tool’s first implementation to identify 25-year goals for growth by 2029.



OBJECTIVE 1.1

By 2026, DNR's YEOP facilitates or co-facilitates workshops for formal educators in 50% of Education Service Districts and at least two workshops targeting non-formal educators annually.

STRATEGIES	1.1.1	Build program capacity through establishment of YEOP regional coordinators to develop and deliver workshops that are experiential and place-based, with an emphasis on topics of local importance in natural resource management.
	1.1.2	Partner with the Washington Association of Educational Service Districts regional science and career-connect coordinators, the Pacific Education Institute (PEI), conservation districts, fisheries enhancement groups, city and county parks departments and other organizations to collaborate on the design and delivery of educator workshops.
	1.1.3	Partner with OSPI to ensure professional learning opportunities for educators are aligned to the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) guidelines for excellence, responsive to teaching needs, connect to learning standards, and provide curriculum resources.
	1.1.4	Partner with the OSPI Office of Native Education and tribes to incorporate tribal sovereignty and traditional ecological knowledge into educator workshops to support RCW 28A.320.170 requiring instruction on tribal history, culture, and government.
	1.1.5	Articulate DNR-supported workshops with ongoing statewide professional learning efforts, including implementation of ClimeTime, integration of Environmental and Sustainability K-12 Learning Standards, and expansion of Outdoor School programming.
	1.1.6	Incorporate training in social emotional learning, trauma-informed practice, culturally responsive teaching, and modifications and adaptations to support equitable access for all students into workshop design and delivery.
	1.1.7	Coordinate and support DNR program staff, industry partners, and other organizations to teach workshops as subject-matter experts.
	1.1.8	Identify and establish appropriate incentives to motivate formal and non-formal educator participation in workshops, including funding for release time, clock hours, stipends, long-term support, and recognized certifications in natural resources and education sectors.

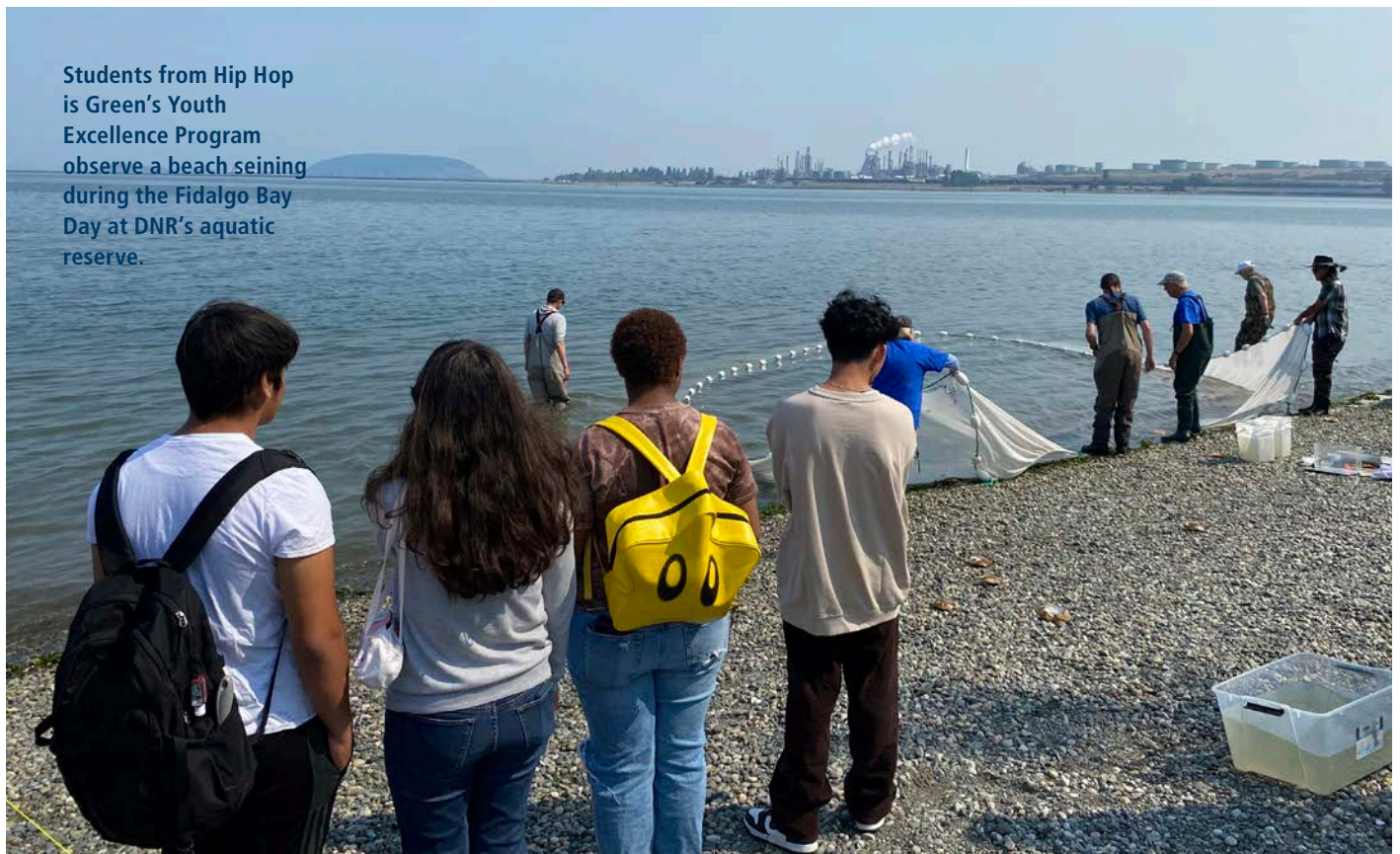


STRATEGIES	1.1.9	Adaptively manage by surveying educators who participate in DNR workshops to improve program delivery, identify program gaps, and develop further resources.
	1.1.10	Where applicable, adapt educator training materials into additional formats for use in asynchronous instruction and professional development.
	1.1.11	Seek additional opportunities to support educator professional learning through partnership with pre-service programs for both formal and non-formal educators.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% of Education Service Districts have received workshops facilitated or co-facilitated by DNR each biennium.
- DNR facilitates or co-facilitates at least two workshops for non-formal educators annually.
- 80% of participating educators indicate DNR-provided training will inform their teaching practice.

Students from Hip Hop is Green's Youth Excellence Program observe a beach seining during the Fidalgo Bay Day at DNR's aquatic reserve.





OBJECTIVE 1.2

By 2029, accessibility of DNR-supported or produced online youth education resources improves by 50% as indicated through online visitation and use.

STRATEGIES	1.2.1	Work with the education community to support implementation of the Open Educational Resources Hub for curriculum and content related to environmental science, sustainability, natural resources, and traditional ecological knowledge, and establish a baseline of use from which to measure change and improvement.
	1.2.2	Design and launch new DNR Youth Education webpages to host DNR-produced curriculum resources and share information about ongoing YEOP programming.
	1.2.3	Distribute a quarterly electronic educator newsletter that highlights available online resource libraries, opportunities for educator professional development, student career exploration and preparation, and outdoor education success stories.
	1.2.4	Launch a marketing campaign targeting formal and non-formal educators to promote YEOP's resources hosted on DNR's Youth Education webpage.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% overhaul and rebranding of DNR's Youth Education webpage.
- 50% increase in monthly unique page views of DNR's Youth Education webpage.

Interim target: Launch the new DNR Youth Education webpage by 2027.

Interim target: At least 100 members in the Washington Environmental Education and DNR groups on OSPI's Open Education Resources Hub.

▼ Footnote 1 below is for Objective 1.3 (following page).

¹Educator Natural Resource Conference

Following the model of other states like Michigan and Maryland, this weeklong summer conference provides hands-on, experiential learning on the practices and professions in natural resources. The ENRC brings together partners including: local Tribes, Education Service Districts, OSPI, Pacific Education Institute, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Parks, Association of Washington School Principals, local non-profits, local government, and private industry. The goal is to "graduate" teachers with a deeper and more complex understanding of local land management practices and the tools they need to translate that learning to their classrooms.



OBJECTIVE 1.3

By 2026, DNR launches its annual Educator Natural Resource Conference (ENRC),¹ serving at least 15 participants, over half of which work in schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.² By 2029, at least one third of educational service districts (ESDs) are represented at ENRC annually.

STRATEGIES	1.3.1	Develop institutional support necessary for facilitation of ENRC, including working agreements with property managers, sustainable funding sources, and related policies and procedures.
	1.3.2	Convene a work group to develop a shared vision for the ENRC and to design and facilitate programming.
	1.3.3	Coordinate and support subject-matter experts to facilitate components of ENRC.
	1.3.4	Develop a recruitment strategy and applicant review process to ensure equitable participation based on OSPI’s equity tool and other indicators.
	1.3.5	Conduct equity analysis annually to evaluate geographic areas, school districts and student populations served by the ENRC.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- **Successful completion of inaugural ENRC.**
- **30% of Education Service Districts represented in annual ENRC.**
- **50% of participating educators who work in schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.**

► See footnote 1 in previous page.

² The Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool was developed by OSPI to drive equity-based decision-making in the distribution of funds from SHB 2078 (2021-22): Outdoor School for All. The tool considers both student- and school-based metrics to create a ranking for each school in comparison to all others across the state. There are six student-based subcategories, all of which look at the percentage of the total student population: Migrant, Free and Reduced Price Lunches, Alternative Learning Environments (ALE), BIPOC, English Language Learners/ Emergent multilingual learner students, Special Education Students. School-based metrics include whether the school is Rural/remote, Tribal, and Title I. The tool continues to evolve and may incorporate other metrics in the future.



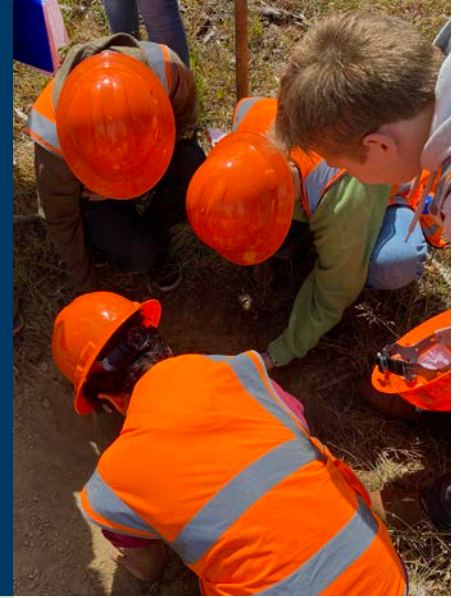
CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR



4th grade students participate in the forestry station during the Students in the Watershed event at Tahuya State Forest. Each station was led by high school interns who participated in an eight week internship program with DNR and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group.

GOAL
2

Washington youth have place-based, experiential learning opportunities on public land to explore careers in natural resources and develop the skills used by natural resource professionals.



Place-based, experiential learning opportunities are highly impactful and memorable, often serving as the point of inspiration for lifelong career-path choices. Outdoor learning makes content from the classroom come to life and provides opportunities for young people to develop and practice the skills that are essential to lasting stewardship of environmental assets and foundational to career preparation for jobs in conservation, recreation, and cultural and natural resource management. By facilitating these types of learning experiences, DNR can inspire and mentor a new generation of natural resource professionals, seek input and feedback on decision-making from a demographic group that is often overlooked, and teach young people how to recreate responsibly on Washington's beautiful and varied public lands.

Outdoor education is critically important. Inviting students outside to learn in our state's natural landscapes empowers the next generation of natural resource managers to see how human actions can help and harm the natural processes that keep all of us alive and healthy."

DOUG KENNEDY
ASSISTANT REGION MANAGER,
RECREATION AND NATURAL
AREAS / DNR

▼ **LONG-TERM TARGET**

INTERIM PATHWAY

Participate in DNR's Outdoor Access and Responsible Recreation planning process to develop metrics to evaluate use of state lands in educational programming for youth and utilize baseline data to identify 25-year goals for growth by 2029.

Above: Tumwater students investigate a soil pit as a part of the development of their model Forest Stewardship Management Plan.



OBJECTIVE 2.1

By 2026, each of DNR's six regions engages students in at least one authentic project,³ which culminates in a student product with real-life implications for local land management activity; by 2029, DNR regions serve at least 60% of ESDs annually through student project partnerships.

STRATEGIES	2.1.1	Partner with the Washington Association of Educational Service Districts science and career-connected regional coordinators to identify priority schools for participation in locally relevant projects.
	2.1.2	Provide leadership opportunities for Washington's youth to engage with and aid DNR in the implementation of management strategies and delivery of programmatic goals based on the issues they identify as important to their communities.
	2.1.3	Utilize YEOP regional coordinators to create partnerships between schools, DNR regional staff, Tribal governments, and other local natural resources and conservation organizations to engage in a process of co-design for project development and implementation.
	2.1.4	Create a reimbursement system for schools and districts to support student-learning experiences on public land, including funding for transportation, substitute teachers, supplies, aides, and resources to improve accessibility.
	2.1.5	Partner with post-secondary college and career training programs to provide mentorship of K-12 students and communicate about pathways into natural resource sector.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% of DNR regions engaged in authentic projects by 2026.
- 60% of Education Service Districts served annually through student project partnerships.
- 50% of DNR-supported authentic, place-based projects support schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI's Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.
- 50% of DNR-supported authentic, place-based projects support schools or school districts located in communities that score 7 or higher on the DOH Environmental Health Disparities Map.
- 60% of surveyed student participants expressed increased knowledge of and connection to the environment after programming.



3Project-based Learning (PBL)

PBL “is a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects” (PBL Works, 2022). It begins with the introduction of a challenging problem or question that students solve over the course of a unit, and is compatible with phenomena-based instruction under the Next Generation Science Standards. Projects are authentic when student products are used by the audience organization in their real work.

By investing in PBL, DNR can deliver on three of our primary objectives: 1. Develop a natural resources workforce through career preparation; 2. Engage historically underserved communities in decision-making processes to advance environmental justice; 3. Implement management objectives to improve the health and resilience of Washington’s lands and waters.

Example projects: Creating interpretive signage, Generating ArcGIS Story Maps, Planning and executing a restoration or tree planting project, Gathering and interpreting civilian science data, Reintroducing culturally-significant plants.

WILL RUBIN / DNR



Participants in an education event at Woodard Bay with targeted outreach to Spanish-speaking community members observe aquatic organisms under a microscope. The event was coordinated by DNR, the Pacific Education Institute, and the Department of Fish & Wildlife.



OBJECTIVE 2.2

By 2026, at least one class of students annually uses a YEOP-produced curriculum guide to visit DNR-managed land in each of our six geographic regions.

STRATEGIES	2.2.1	Develop a template for regional curriculum guides that is inquiry-based, emphasizes adapting to student voice and agency, and includes culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices in program design and delivery.
	2.2.2	Using the template described in strategy 2.2.1, design curriculum guides to DNR-managed lands that are aligned to learning standards and include modifications for different grade bands (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12).
	2.2.3	Partner with OSPI to ensure alignment to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Common Core State Standards (CCSSO), Social Emotional Learning Standards (SEL) and the NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence.
	2.2.4	Collaborate with the OSPI Office of Native Education and tribal representatives to co-design curriculum guides that incorporate tribal history and stewardship and deliver on education objectives of tribal communities, including the implementation of RCW 28A.320.170.
	2.2.5	Run regional educator workshops on how to locate and utilize the curriculum guides for their local area and provide ongoing support for implementation.
	2.2.6	Develop a secondary indicator to evaluate use of curriculum guides in educational programming.
	2.2.7	Develop an adaptive management approach that facilitates educator feedback on use and accessibility of curriculum guides; continually update and improve available materials.
	2.2.8	Work with city and county parks departments to identify locations for curriculum guides using DNR's template in urban centers.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% of DNR regions with an available curriculum guide for educational programming on DNR-managed lands.
- Positive trends in annual online access and download of DNR curriculum guides.
- Positive trends in visitation for DNR-managed lands for which curriculum guides are available.



OBJECTIVE 2.3

By 2028, 70% of Education Service Districts are served by community events designed to teach youth about natural resource management facilitated or co-facilitated by DNR's YEOP annually.

STRATEGIES	2.3.1	Build regional learning communities through relationship building with key partners in education and outreach to youth to develop a shared vision for community events.
	2.3.2	Create ready-to-use agendas, fliers, social media announcements, and activities to engage youth from a broad age range at public events and train DNR staff on how to access and use the available resources.
	2.3.3	Leverage YEOP regional coordinators to plan and facilitate half-day events in partnership with other organizations.
	2.3.4	Gather feedback from event attendees to inform adaptive management and improve program delivery.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% of Education Service Districts are served by community events on topics in natural resources facilitated or co-facilitated by DNR each biennium.
- 50% of community events are accessible to schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI's Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.



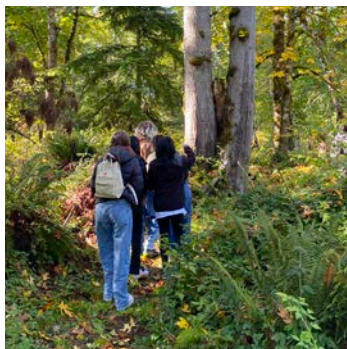
OBJECTIVE 2.4

By 2026, 30% or more of 5th and 6th grade outdoor school programs supported under Outdoor School For All (SSHB 2078, 2021-22) annually utilize career exploration activities created with support from YEOP.

STRATEGIES	2.4.1	Influence inclusion of career exploration in the Guidelines for High Quality Outdoor School.
	2.4.2	Work collaboratively with other organizations guiding the implementation of Outdoor School for All (SSHB 2078, 2021-22) to create curriculum materials for career exploration in natural resources, conservation, environmental education, and recreation geared at both elementary school participants and high school counselors.
	2.4.3	Integrate questions regarding implementation of career exploration activities into Outdoor School surveys distributed by the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP).
	2.4.4	Participate in educator workshops about outdoor school programming to advocate for the importance of career exploration and introduce curriculum materials.
	2.4.5	Through the leadership of YEOP regional coordinators, connect regional DNR staff with outdoor school programming happening in their geographic area and facilitate guest educator opportunities at outdoor school.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- **30% of educators surveyed by AWSP indicate that they utilize career exploration activities co-produced by the YEOP as a component of their outdoor school programming.**



⁴Youth Natural Resource Camp

Similar to the Educator Conference, this weeklong summer camp for high school students would provide hands-on, experiential learning on the practices and professions in natural resources. The Camp brings together a multitude of partners to facilitate outdoor learning experience and career exploration. Interpreting civilian science data, Reintroducing culturally-significant plants.



OBJECTIVE 2.5

By 2027, DNR will launch its inaugural Youth Natural Resource Camp (YNRC),⁴ serving at least 15 participants, over half of which are from schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool; by 2029, at least one third of Educational Service Districts are represented at YNRC annually.

STRATEGIES	2.5.1	Develop the institutional supports necessary for the facilitation of the YNRC, including working agreements with the property manager of the desired site, sustainable funding sources, and related policies and procedures.
	2.5.2	Articulate the YNRC with other career-connected learning opportunities for high school students in Washington, including internship, supervised agricultural experiences, and corps programs.
	2.5.3	Convene a work group to develop a shared vision for the YNRC and to design and deliver programming.
	2.5.4	Coordinate and support subject matter experts to facilitate components of the YNRC
	2.5.5	Develop a recruitment strategy and applicant review process to ensure equitable participation in the YNRC based on OSPI’s equity tool and other indicators.
	2.5.6	Conduct equity analysis annually to evaluate geographic areas, school districts and student populations served by the YNRC.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- **Successful completion of inaugural YNRC.**
- **30% of Education Service Districts are represented in annual YNRC.**
- **50% of participating students are enrolled in schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.**



CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR

4th grade students from Shelton School District visit with DNR wildland firefighters during the Students in the Watershed event coordinated by DNR and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group.



GOAL
3

Collaborate with educators, industry leaders, non-profits, and state agencies to inspire interest in and improve recruitment into natural resource sector careers for all youth, with a focus on demographic groups that have been historically excluded from the field of natural resource management.



The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) reports that in fiscal year 2023, just 7% of DNR’s staff self-identified as people of color, making DNR the least racially diverse state agency. The other natural resource state agencies—the Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Parks, and the Department of Ecology—were the state agencies with the second, fourth and eighth lowest percentages of people of color respectively. In that same year, only 29% of DNR’s staff identified as female and 4 individuals identified as non-binary. Census data from 2020 indicates that the Washington state population is approximately 34% people of color and 50% female. It is apparent that these demographic groups have been historically excluded in our state natural resource agencies.

Federal data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics further indicates that people of color, women, and non-binary individuals have been historically excluded from the natural resource sector as a whole. Through youth outreach and education efforts, YEOP aims to inspire interest in natural resource sector careers, improve communication about the pathway into these jobs, and bolster recruitment of the next generation of the natural resource professionals. In conjunction with other diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts, prioritizing outreach to demographic groups that have been historically excluded will hopefully, over time, diversify state natural resource agencies and the sector as a whole.

▼ **LONG-TERM TARGET**

By 2048, at least 20% of new hires to Washington state natural resource agencies self-identify as people of color and at least 40% self-identify as women or non-binary.



OBJECTIVE 3.1

By 2024, facilitate a 100% increase in formal advisory processes on the development and delivery of YEOP programming methods and outcomes.

STRATEGIES	3.1.1	Identify key participants for representation on both the student and adult advisory committees, with an emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion.
	3.1.2	Secure funding to compensate community members for sharing lived experience.
	3.1.3	Convene founding meetings in 2023 to define the role and objectives of student and adult advisory committees.
	3.1.4	Facilitate twice-annual meetings of advisory committees to review the progress, evaluate outcomes, and seek opportunities for future programming.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% increase in YEOP affiliated advisory committees.
- 100% YEOP advisory committees operating on a functional meeting timeline.

Young folks are our future staff. They will think about and prepare for careers in natural resources if they have positive experiences with natural scientists and land managers they can identify with."

MEGAN ANDERSON
EARTHQUAKE GEOPHYSICIST / DNR

Nothing beats hands on learning in the natural environment to inspire students: they ask "how can I do what you do?"

BIRDIE DAVENPORT
AQUATIC RESERVES PROGRAM
MANAGER / DNR



OBJECTIVE 3.2

By 2029, at least 50% of students served by YEOP programming efforts annually are from schools or school districts that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.

STRATEGIES	3.2.1	Through YEOP regional coordinators, proactively build relationships with schools and districts serving low-income youth, youth of color, tribal youth, emergent multilingual language learners, rural youth, and populations with an above average proportion of students with disabilities and/or students receiving special education services.
	3.2.2	Develop accountability tools for use agency-wide to track the demographics and geographic diversity of the students served by YEOP programs and initiatives.
	3.2.3	Develop a tool for use by headquarters and regional staff to identify schools that meet criteria for equity indicators for YEOP programming.
	3.2.4	Engage in an annual data review process to evaluate the equity of students served by YEOP programming and alignment to program vision, mission, and values.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 50% of community events are accessible to schools that score higher than the median value in school level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.
- 50% of participating students in YNRC are enrolled in schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.
- 50% of participating educators in ENRC work in schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.
- 50% of DNR-supported authentic, place-based projects engage schools that score higher than the median value in school-level total points from the most recent school year on OSPI’s Outdoor Education Equitable Distribution Tool.



OBJECTIVE 3.3

By 2029, DNR is a leading contributor to advance and promote the Career Connect Washington vision to create a statewide system for career-connected learning to support young people in the attainment of natural resource certifications, degrees, and careers.

STRATEGIES	3.3.1	Review and develop robust metrics for evaluating progress towards implementation of statewide natural resource sector workforce initiatives, in conjunction with the sector intermediary strategy developed by the Agriculture and Natural Resources Center for Excellence.
	3.3.2	Identify and prioritize engagement in initiatives organized through Career Connect Washington and Washington STEM.
	3.3.3	Facilitate relationships between high school teachers, industry partners and post-secondary education programs in natural resources, conservation, and environmental education.
	3.3.4	Work with agencies and organizations to support expansion of paid internships for K-12 students that combine skill development and career exploration in natural resources.
	3.3.5	Support expansion of corps programs to promote skills development and career preparation; advance efforts to increase hiring of corps graduates into entry-level positions.
	3.3.6	Support DNR attendance at career fairs for K-12 audiences, with particular emphasis on communities that have been historically excluded.
	3.3.7	Work with partners to identify industry-recognized certifications for integration into CTE course frameworks.
	3.3.8	Support grant writing efforts to increase staff capacity for youth outreach and education initiatives and programs within partner organizations.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- **INTERIM METRIC: 100% completion of evaluation methodology for assessing implementation of statewide natural resource sector workforce initiatives.**
- **100% of prioritized initiatives for engagement accomplished.**



OBJECTIVE 3.4

By 2029, DNR has played a key role in the expansion of Career Launch⁵ and Core Plus⁶ programs that provide pathways out of high school and into natural resource management careers.

STRATEGIES	3.4.1	Research existing Career Launch programs in Washington that may serve as a model for new programming in forestry.
	3.4.2	Identify opportunities for DNR to serve as an employer-partner in existing apprenticeship preparation and Career Launch programs.
	3.4.3	Work with OSPI and Career Connect Washington to identify the resources necessary to expand Career Launch and Core Plus offerings and explore integration into existing systems including Skills Centers and the Forest Management Learning Laboratory model.
	3.4.4	Collaborate with industry leaders and educational institutions to develop the necessary course frameworks and curriculum that integrate technical knowledge and skills with core course requirements in social studies, math, science, and English.
	3.4.5	Work with natural resource to identify or develop an industry-recognized certification that represents the foundational skills and knowledge for natural resource professionals and complete necessary processes for registration through OSPI.
	3.4.6	Develop a funding model for Career Launch and/or Core Plus programming, which may include Career Connect Washington and other grants, legislative requests, and industry contributions.
	3.4.7	Work with appointing authorities and in consultation with Human Resources to develop strategies to support hiring agreements for participants in Career Launch and Core Plus programs and support on ramps into careers at DNR.
	3.4.8	Develop methods for tracking students who participated in Career Launch and Core Plus programs to evaluate efficacy in improving recruitment into and retention in natural resource careers.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- Number of natural resource-focused career launch and core plus program openings for high school students increases.
- Number of entry-level positions in natural resource management filled in Washington state by Career Launch and/or Core Plus program participants increases every year after 2029.



CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR



5 Career Launch

Career Launch programs are more intensive Career and Technical Education programs, beyond Career Explore or Career Prep, that combine meaningful, high-quality, on-the-job experience with classroom learning. Career Connect Washington has set a goal that 60% of young adults ages 16-30 will have participated in a Career Launch program by 2030. There are currently no Career Launch programs in Washington for forestry.

CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR

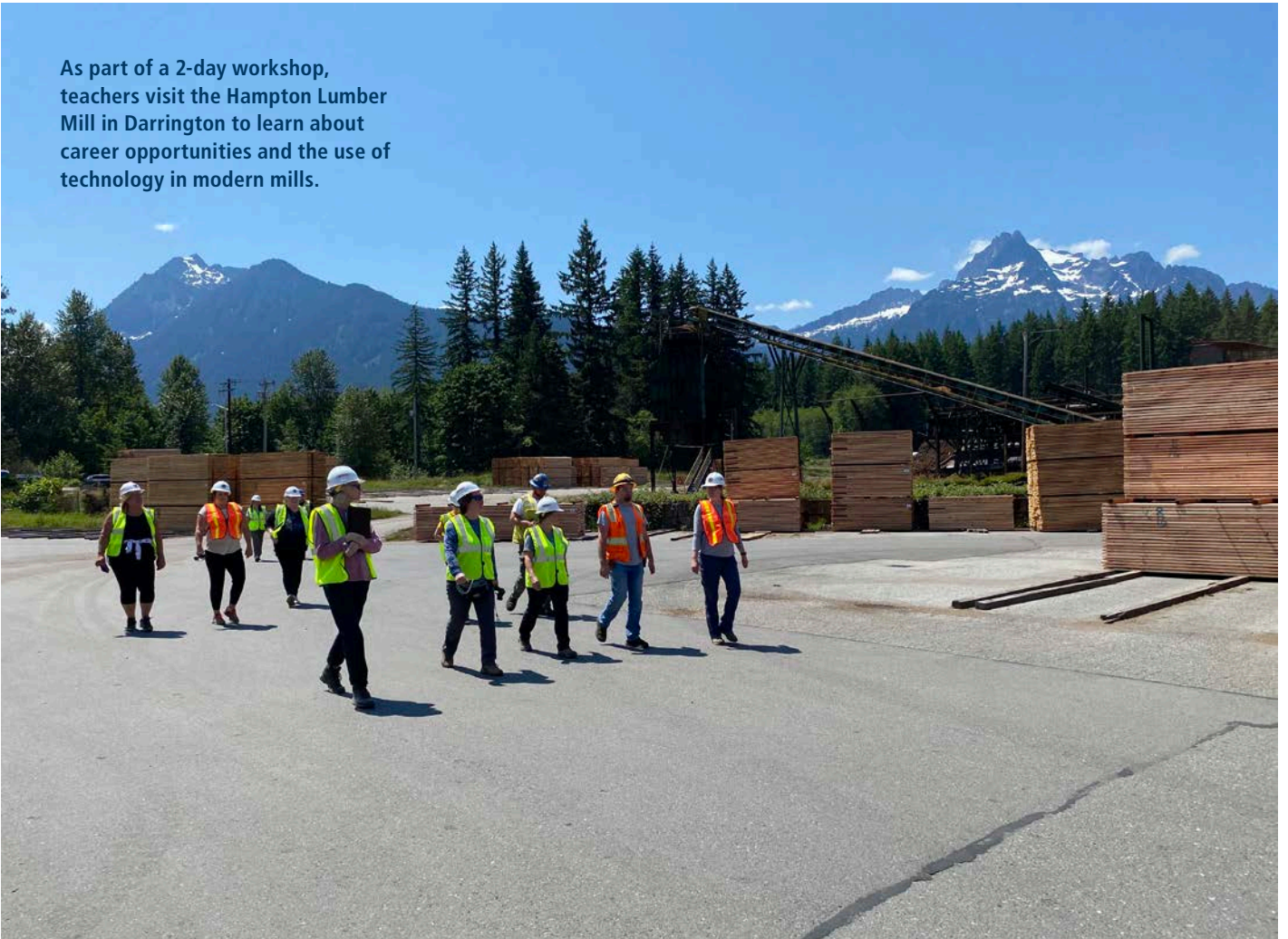


6 Core Plus

Core Plus is an industry-validated, skills-based manufacturing curriculum with a standardized certificate system to document attainment of learning goals and objectives. The curriculum is created by industry for Washington CTE instructors and is hosted by OSPI. Core Plus programs currently exist for Aerospace, Construction and Maritime.

CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR

As part of a 2-day workshop, teachers visit the Hampton Lumber Mill in Darrington to learn about career opportunities and the use of technology in modern mills.





OBJECTIVE 3.5

By 2029, DNR’s career exploration resources are utilized by more than 20% of CTE teachers in the agriculture and natural resources career cluster across the state of Washington.

STRATEGIES	3.5.1	Conduct research to identify the types of curriculum resources teachers need for career exploration in the natural resources sector.
	3.5.2	Design and develop a module for exploring natural resource careers, with modifications for 6-8, 9-10, and 11-12 grade bands, for use in formal and non-formal education.
	3.5.3	Integrate career exploration activities with natural resource competitions, including Envirothon, 4-H Forestry and Natural Resources, and FFA Forestry and Environmental and Natural Resources Career Development events.
	3.5.4	Spotlight natural resource careers by developing activities for use in formal and non-formal education settings to highlight the breadth of jobs and diversity of people in those career paths, with particular emphasis on historically excluded demographic groups.
	3.5.5	Attend conferences for Washington CTE and science teachers to build relationships with educators, circulate YEOP-produced resources, and identify additional career-connected curriculum needs.
	3.5.6	Host available materials on OSPI’s Open Education Resources Hub and DNR’s Youth Education webpage.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 20% of surveyed CTE Agriculture & Natural Resources teachers use materials produced by YEOP.
- 50% increase in monthly unique page views of DNR’s Youth Education webpage.



CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR



A high school intern in the Youth Engaged in Sustainable Systems (YESS) internship program through the Pacific Education Institute uses an increment borer to age a tree during a plot survey.



GOAL
4

DNR staff have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to conduct successful outreach and education work with youth from diverse backgrounds across Washington.



CLARE SOBETSKI / DNR

Growing DNR’s capacity to deliver high quality, place-based, outdoor education requires that we support our staff in all aspects of youth engagement—from relationship building with schools, districts, and non-formal education programs, to curriculum and activity development, to the strategies used to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. Creating ready-to-use materials, providing resources to meet learner needs, and facilitating professional development opportunities will reduce barriers that currently preclude DNR staff from working with youth. As we cultivate these internal resources, the annual employee engagement survey should reflect a positive perception of available institutional support at DNR for youth outreach and more DNR staff should be working with youth each year.

“DNR staff have a tremendous depth of natural resource expertise and passion for sustainably managing natural resources. Providing mentorship to youth audience not only provides a wealth of information but connects this great agency to our communities and educational partners. Continuing to foster these relationships will increase our agency connections with the communities we serve”

STEVE OGDEN
ASSISTANT REGION MANAGER,
STATE LANDS OPERATIONS / DNR

▼ **LONG-TERM TARGET**

By 2048, 100% of DNR staff participating in the annual DNR employee engagement survey respond positively that they have the institutional support and resources necessary to engage with youth audiences about the work of our agency, the importance of environmental stewardship, and the career opportunities in the natural resources sector.



OBJECTIVE 4.1

By 2029, the number of permanent DNR staff who engage with K-12 youth at least once each year increases by 30%.

STRATEGIES	4.1.1	Review and update policies and procedures for youth engagement and outreach events, including documentation and risk assessment.
	4.1.2	Develop and conduct an annual agency-wide youth engagement.
	4.1.3	Using the findings of the agency-wide baseline assessment, establish a biennial growth rate for DNR staff engagement with K-12 youth.
	4.1.4	Develop documentation for use agency-wide to track K-12 engagement by staff.
	4.1.5	Work with appointing authorities and in consultation with Human Resources to incorporate education and outreach duties into position descriptions for at least 20% of work plans in each division or region for new jobs posted by DNR.
	4.1.6	Work to secure sustainable funding for DNR staff to do education and outreach work with youth, including administrative support.
	4.1.7	Work with external affairs and communications to create clear and transparent processes for requesting a guest speaker or other form of engagement from DNR staff.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- **30% increase in DNR staff participating in K-12 youth engagement, as demonstrated by annual YEOP survey results.**



OBJECTIVE 4.2

By 2029, 100% of YEOP learning opportunities and online-published resources are accessible to Washington students by anticipating necessary learner accommodations and prioritizing equity for participants with financial, physical, linguistic, or other individual learning needs.

STRATEGIES	4.2.1	Clarify and simplify processes for permitting and access agreements for educational uses of DNR-managed lands.
	4.2.2	Establish physical gear libraries for use in outdoor and natural resource education in each of DNR's six regions and at the Natural Resources Building in Olympia.
	4.2.3	Publish all DNR-produced educational materials in the seven most common languages used in Washington, with capacity to translate materials into additional languages.
	4.2.4	Ensure all educational materials produced by the DNR meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
	4.2.5	Include accommodations and modifications in YEOP-produced educational materials for students with Individualized Education Programs, 504 Plans, and individual needs.
	4.2.6	Develop an inclusion checklist to assist educators and coordinators in program and curriculum design for multiple abilities, perspectives, and needs.
	4.2.7	Collaborate with cultural affinity groups to identify additional barriers to participation in DNR's education and outreach efforts and ensure that programming is designed with a focus on promoting safety and belonging in the outdoors.
	4.2.8	Create a plan to support the social emotional needs of youth participating in YEOP programs, including unstructured time to support play in outdoor environments.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% of new materials produced in all seven languages.
- 100% of educational materials meet web content accessibility guidelines.
- 100% of new educational materials supplemented with appropriate accommodations and modifications to support students with specialized needs.



OBJECTIVE 4.3

By 2026, 100% of DNR staff in programs with outreach and education initiatives report that they know where to access education resources and how to receive professional development on outreach strategies and instructional methods.

STRATEGIES	4.3.1	Create an online platform that provides ready access to outreach and education resources for all DNR staff.
	4.3.2	Work with Workplace Culture and Development (WCD) Program to co-develop an internal training program and convene a community of practice to grow confidence and competencies around outreach and engagement.
	4.3.3	Publish an internal memo series that highlights available materials and support for education and outreach work.
	4.3.4	Work with WCD Program to incorporate best practices for outreach and education into the training series for new DNR employees, including an orientation to the Community Engagement Plan created as part of the HEAL Act (SHB 5141, 2021-2022).

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 100% of participating staff report positively on agency-wide YEOP assessment on questions related to accessibility of information and professional development resources.



OBJECTIVE 4.4

By 2026, more than 80% of DNR's youth engagement activity utilizes YEOP-produced curriculum resources.

STRATEGIES	4.4.1	Create a toolkit with resources for DNR staff to assist in developing presentations for youth audiences of different ages in a variety of contexts.
	4.4.2	Create a series of ready-to-use presentations on common topics for guest speaking events in classrooms.
	4.4.3	Work collaboratively with different divisions and programs to create ready-to-use lesson plans for in-the-field presentations to youth.
	4.4.4	Generate interactive materials and guides for tabling events that are specific to the target audience and age group.
	4.4.5	Create tools and resources to support DNR staff participation in career fair events and more clearly communicate job opportunities and qualifications.

MEASURE(S) OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 80% of participating staff report positively on agency-wide YEOP assessment on questions relating to the use of YEOP resources and materials.



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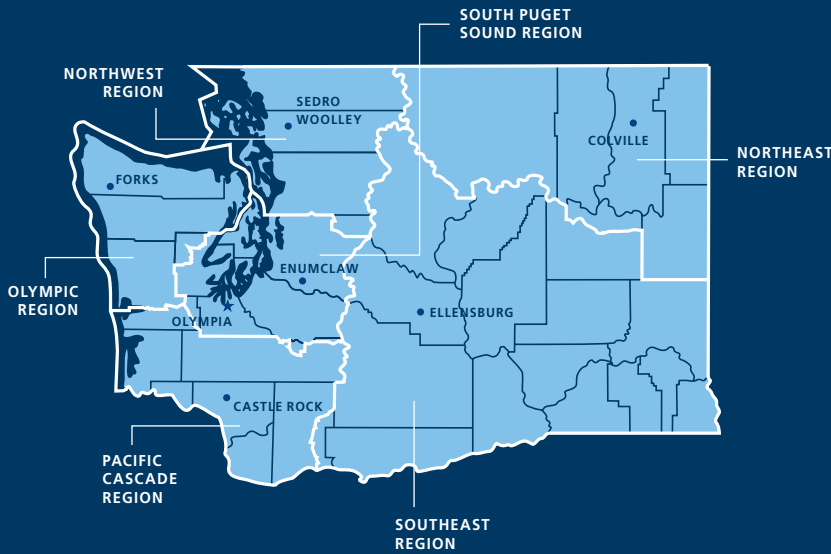
- **Agriculture and Natural Resources Center for Excellence**
- **Association of Washington School Principals**
- **Big Brothers, Big Sisters**
- **Career Connect Washington**
- **Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation**
- **Conservation District Educator Workgroup**
- **Department of Ecology**
- **Department of Fish & Wildlife**
- **E3 Washington**
- **Glacier Peak Institute**
- **Golden Brick Events**
- **Hip Hop is Green**
- **Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group**
- **Midsound Fisheries Enhancement Group**
- **Mountains to Sound Greenway**
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service**
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- **Outdoors for All**
- **Outdoor Schools Washington**
- **Pacific Education Institute**
- **Port of Seattle**
- **Puyallup Tribe of Indians**
- **Schools Out Washington**
- **Sea Potential**
- **South Sound GREEN**
- **State Parks**
- **Washington Association of Educational Service Districts**
- **Washington STEM**
- **Washington Trails Association**
- **Wenatchee CAFÉ**
- **Young Women Empowered**
- **Youth Experiential Training Institute**

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For more information regarding this strategic plan, contact the Youth Education and Outreach Program: yeop@dnr.wa.gov.

Cover: Snohomish students in the Youth Engaged in Sustainable Systems summer internship program through the Pacific Education Institute visit with DNR foresters to learn about sustainable timber harvest on state trust lands. Photo by Clare Sobetski / DNR.

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