



# Funds Distribution Report

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**Recipient Organization:**  
**North Cascades Institute**

**Address:**  
810 State Route 20  
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284

**Contact:**  
(360) 854-2599  
<https://ncascades.org>

**Organization's General Goals:**  
Our mission is to inspire environmental stewardship through transformative learning experiences in nature.

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<b>Date of Award:</b>	<b>Level:</b>
2025 Q1	\$2,501 to \$5,000

For more information, please read the attached report from North Cascades Institute.

8802 27th Ave NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271  
**TulalipCares.org**

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## **Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions Grant Report: Q1 2025 14.2** ***North Cascades Institute's Youth Leadership Adventures Program 2025***

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**THANK YOU** to Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions for your support of Youth Leadership Adventures (YLA) in 2025! Your contribution (code Q1 2025 14.2) supported scholarships for low income and/or students of color to experience deeply immersive wilderness recreation in the North Cascades.

Through entry-level backcountry trips, Youth Leadership Adventures (YLA) offers opportunities for high school students from diverse backgrounds to learn first-hand about the benefits of spending time in nature. During five- and eight-day backcountry trips, participants gain skills in outdoor recreation and leadership, develop their sense of identity, and learn about climate change and solutions.

We offered nine YLA trips in 2025, including three five-day and six eight-day trips. The season started with canoe-focused itineraries in North Cascades National Park before moving over to Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest for backpacking and hybrid itineraries (backpacking as well as canoeing on Baker Lake). While immersed in the beauty of the North Cascades, participants learned how to safely and confidently recreate in the wilderness while taking part in interactive lessons and activities focused on equitable access to outdoor engagement, our interdependence with the natural world, leadership, climate change/solutions, and more.



*"I was hoping to try new things, be challenged, and meet new people. I definitely met those goals! I enjoyed disconnecting with technology and really spending time with the people I'm with. Learning to canoe and operate in the backcountry was new and exciting. I definitely felt challenged physically and emotionally."* – 2025 YLA Trip Participant

Participants also engaged in stewardship work during their backcountry trips. While service work is a longstanding component of YLA, the funding and staffing shortages faced by the National Park and Forest this year made the YLA participants' work even more meaningful. Students and instructors contributed 470 volunteer hours to give back to our public lands, including through trail maintenance, trash collection, campsite cleanup, and digging a new pit toilet.

In total, 76 teens participated in YLA backcountry trips this summer. Participant demographics included:

- 51% from low-income households
- 54% identified as race other than white
- 47% identified as female (*may overlap with % non-binary/transgender*)
- 16% identified as non-binary and/or transgender (*may overlap with % female*)
- 36% reported having a mental or physical disability

- 39% from a household that speaks a language other than or in addition to English
- 32% prospective first-generation college students

On post-program surveys, 94% of participants reported growth in one or more of the program's targeted outcome areas. A majority of participants indicated that they had grown in:

- Feeling that their relationship with nature is an important part of who they are
- Having confidence in their own identity and awareness of the unique strengths they have
- Ability to empathize and connect with people who are different from themselves
- Belief in themselves as a leader
- Excitement to talk to people they know about climate change and protecting the environment



*"My favorite part of YLA was watching group members reach beyond where they thought their limits were, and the group pride that we took from each other's achievements." – 2025 YLA Trip Participant*



Through narrative-form survey prompts and reflective impact statements, participants also shared that they had learned a wide range of outdoor skills, felt stress relief from spending time in nature, valued finding connection with peers and conquering challenges together, were inspired to plan future wilderness recreation, and more.

Funding from Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions and other generous funders/donors makes it possible for us to offer extensive scholarships and subsidies for YLA, drastically reducing the financial barriers to outdoor recreation that many youth face. This year, 86% of students received financial assistance on top of general program subsidies and 57% paid \$20 or less for their backcountry trip. This financial support is vital to providing access to YLA for youth from underserved communities and giving them the opportunity to experience the benefits of backcountry recreation.

Additional information about Youth Leadership Adventures can be found on our website, [www.ncascades.org](http://www.ncascades.org). More photos are available on our [Flickr page](#), including individual albums for each trip as well as a ["Best of YLA 2025"](#) compilation album. Hear directly from some of this summer's students on our YouTube channel in ["YLA Student Voices 2025: Angel, Julie, & Jonna."](#) Finally, stay tuned for our annual program report, available in early 2026, for additional details on this year's backcountry trips as well as the other programming and complementary work done under the Youth Leadership Adventures umbrella.

**THANK YOU to Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions for your support of Youth Leadership Adventures in 2025!** In this year of immense turmoil, there is even greater value in introducing youth to the healing benefits of spending time outdoors and encouraging their connection to the natural world. Our deepest thanks for helping make these programs possible!