



## Tulalip Charitable Contributions Funds Distribution Report

**NAME OF AGENCY:** Service - Education - Adventure

**ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 362, Freeland, WA 98249

**CONTACT:** (360) 929-2606; <http://www.serviceedadventure.org>

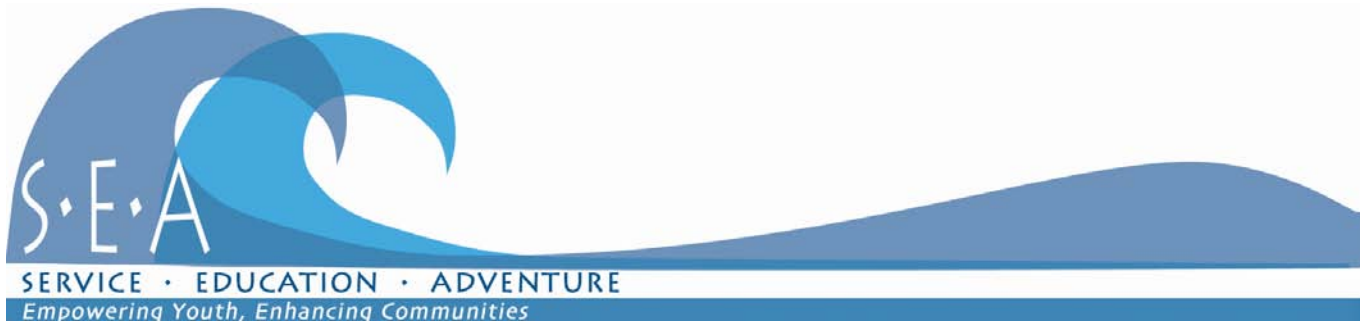
**GENERAL GOALS:** SEA program participants engage in real-world learning, hands-on citizen science, meaningful service to protect and restore our environment, personal exploration, and conversations that leave participants informed, inspired, nourished and connected.

### **SPECIFIC USE FOR THIS AWARD:**

On behalf of Service, Education & Adventure (SEA), I am very pleased to once again share a report describing our successful delivery of Bringing Learning to Life programs to students with the support of a grant from the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund. All funds were expended as described in our budget. The support of the Fund enabled us to deliver community-based environmental programming to Everett and Mukilteo students who would not otherwise have had this opportunity.

We are very grateful for the support you provide to SEA and so many other local organizations. The Fund's generosity, heart and spirit truly expand the circle of care and support for our larger community.

For more information, see the attached report from Service - Education - Adventure.



August 25, 2015

Marilyn Sheldon  
The Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund  
8802 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271-9694

Dear Ms. Sheldon:

On behalf of Service, Education & Adventure (SEA), I am very pleased to once again share a report describing our successful delivery of Bringing Learning to Life programs to students with the support of a [REDACTED] grant from the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund. All funds were expended as described in our budget. The support of the Fund enabled us to deliver community-based environmental programming to Everett and Mukilteo students who would not otherwise have had this opportunity.

We are very grateful for the support you provide to SEA and so many other local organizations. The Fund's generosity, heart and spirit truly expand the circle of care and support for our larger community.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susie M. Richards'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Susie Richards, Co-Executive Director  
Email: [seaprograms@gmail.com](mailto:seaprograms@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.ServiceEdAdventure.org](http://www.ServiceEdAdventure.org)

### **Program Summary**

Young people today, especially those from urban settings, have very limited opportunities to engage in learning based in the natural world. With the support of the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund, SEA was able to provide meaningful nature-based educational experiences to students in the Mukilteo and Everett School Districts during the 2014-2015 school year. As one 4<sup>th</sup> grade student noted on a self-reflection survey, "I want to keep learning like this and understand more about nature and how I can help keep it healthy and strong."

Our Bringing Learning to Life (BLL) programs, based at South Whidbey State Park, supported students in becoming engaged learners, environmentally aware community leaders and Puget Sound stewards. In BLL programs, young people engage in community-based learning that connects curriculum to real-world issues. Place-based experiences introduce students to environmental issues, employ STEM perspectives and project-based learning, cultivate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and identify service opportunities focused on local environmental needs. These experiences also enable students to form or deepen their personal, immediate connection with the natural world.

With the available funding, we were able to deliver three half-day expeditions, serving a total of 225 students in grades 4-12. We also provided no-cost professional support to participating teachers, giving them the skills, perspectives and tools needed to carry the field-based lessons back into the classroom for further exploration. We engaged in planning on-site for each participating teacher, as well as extensive sharing of materials and resources with teachers. A description of our program activities are outlined below:

### **EVERETT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

In early Spring 2015, State Park officials made the difficult decision to permanently close all overnight camping at South Whidbey State Park, due to “heart rot” disease that had infected the majority of the trees in the campground. Still based at South Whidbey State Park, SEA worked closely with the Washington State Parks and Area Manager Jon Crimmins to educate the community about the decision and the impacts and causes of this disease. Educating young people on community issues is a powerful way to reach the whole community as children share what they have learned with family and friends.

SEA partnered with Cascade High School teacher Brian Churniak and his environmental studies students to dive in to this issue and engage in both classroom and Park-based learning activities. Over 125 environmental studies students at Cascade were reached through classroom and site-based programs coordinated by SEA. We asked: What is an environmental issue? What are the key components of an environmental issue? What are the components necessary for stakeholders to make decisions related to public lands? Pre-expedition classroom preparation integrated environmental analysis worksheets with school visits by SEA educators to explore environmental decision-making. SEA educator Sue Ellen White helped students understand the range of community impacts that the South Whidbey State Park closure would have. Students weighed the negative impact of campsite closure against safety issues arising from internal tree rot.

During our initial classroom visit we invited students to think of a natural place that they care about and reflect on how they would feel if told it was going to be destroyed or developed. We then discussed ways in which community members can take part in decision-making and looked at ways that this learning experience would help them to understand those opportunities.

Providing students the opportunity to work with experts in a decision-making process in a natural park setting was a powerful teaching tool. Students were deeply engaged with our educators and asked thoughtful, compelling questions throughout the expedition. Many students had never been to Whidbey Island or a State Park. Part of the experience involved helping students to identify parks in their own communities and understand the role of parks as available to all people. We made students aware that there is free transit from the Clinton Ferry dock directly to SW State Park if they ever wanted to come back on their own.

Noted Pacific NW biologist Dyanne Sheldon once again served as an on-site educator for this project, as did Sue Ellen White (founder of Save the Trees in the 1970s). Sue Ellen had this to say about her participation: *Thanks so for including me in these events; it was a wonderful and uplifting time to see all these engaged and thoughtful students – and to watch all of you masterful teachers this year and last. I have great respect for those of you who teach – often under trying circumstances. We are fortunate to have local organizations like SEA and the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund to support the schools and community non-profits to engage in unique and meaningful nature based learning.*

### *Service, Education & Adventure (SEA)*

Cascade teacher Brian Cherniak offered this feedback: *WOW! My students and I feel have a better understanding of how complete, interdependent and unfortunately fragile the PNW ecosystem really is. We are all responsible for ensuring this great land of ours is around for future generations. What a great opportunity to explore the South Whidbey Island ecosystem. Everett is so close, yet so different. Taking the ferry to Clinton was like taking a step back in time. Big thanks to SEA and the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund for providing this powerful learning experience to my students.*

## **Mukilteo School District**

Students from Lake Serene Lake Elementary School represent a wide range of culturally diverse backgrounds and have teachers committed to sharing new and unique learning opportunities with them. Jennifer Johnson, 4<sup>th</sup> grade special education teacher coordinated over 100 Serene Lake 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> graders in a combination of in-class pre-expedition learning experiences with SEA staff, on-site expeditions at South Whidbey State Park – and in-class post-expedition lessons that brought the field-based learning back to the classroom.

For the pre-expedition Native Tree Identification classroom project, SEA staff guided teams of students in learning to ID native trees through bark, needle, leaf and other techniques. This is a fun and engaging activity that helps students prepare for the expedition-based SW State Park forest activity, while they get to know SEA staff prior to meeting them at the Park.

**Park-based learning rotations. Service-Learning – Invasive Species Removal:** SW State Park has a serious problem with the highly invasive Yellow Archangel plant which has taken over native species in a low-lying area of the Park. During this rotation, students learn about the impact of invasive species as they learn how to identify major invasive species. They also learn about their role as stewards of our public lands while engaging in invasive species removal. In collaboration with SEA rotation leaders, students make a plan to learn about and help remove invasive species growing on their school grounds. Students are given a Washington State publication that provides color photos of common invasive species to bring home and share with their families, so they can engage in an “invasive species audit” of their home, local parks, etc... We end this rotation with the question “Who owns our Parks?” and after their time in this rotation – students give a resounding “We own our parks!!!”

**Nearshore Beach Rotation:** Students hike to the SW State Park beach, learning about species growing on the beach trail, then study the nearshore environment on the beach. Students are given and taught how to use identification guides. They engage in ID activities as they explore what birds, seaweeds and other life exists on the beach. We also discuss issues that impact the health of our waters and help students understand that everyone, young and old, has a role in protecting the health of Puget Sound.

**Forest Rotation:** As a continuation of the classroom-based native tree identification activity, students engage in a forest rotation at the Classic U Old Growth Forest at SW State Park. Small teams of students hit the trail to put their new identification skills to work. In addition to tree identification, SEA leaders invite students to use their math skills by initially estimating the circumference of the trees, then engaging in hands-on tree measurement. Students also use graph paper to plot trees on in a specific grid and then engage in post-expedition math activities back in the classroom – assessing the health of the forest in terms of the percentage of trees within a certain area that they measured and other key indicators.

**Program Evaluation**

**Student Looking Back Survey Results**

Our desired student outcomes were: 1) Deeper understanding of regional and local environmental issues (including STEM perspectives), 2) Improved communication and critical thinking skills, 3) Increased sense of empowerment and self-efficacy, 4) Increased perception of connection between academic learning and real-world issues, and 5) Increased commitment to civic engagement and Puget Sound stewardship. To assess program impact toward these outcomes, our Student Looking Back Survey (LBS), administered post-program, uses a retrospective pre-test format. It presents an item such as “*I care about the natural environment.*” and asks respondents to rate the item twice on a scale of 1-5 (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree). The first rating represents respondents’ level of agreement with the statement as it had been BEFORE participating in the Bringing Learning to Life program, and the second rating represents their level of agreement with the statement now, AFTER participating in the Bringing Learning to Life program. Research has found that retrospective pre-tests control for response shift bias as participants apply program knowledge in forming self-reports, leading to a more accurate outcome measurement.

We utilized age-appropriate versions of the survey for the high school and elementary groups. Teachers determined that the survey would not be viable for the special education class, and for that reason our Serene Lake number of respondents is limited. The tables below show the LBS items and average participant responses on a scale of 1-5 for both *before* and *after* (1=Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree). All items are positively worded so that a rating of 5 indicates the most desirable response. The final column shows average *change in response*, representing *how much more strongly* respondents agreed with the items *after* the program. The two tables present the different survey items that we utilized with the high school and elementary school groups respectively.

<b>Cascade High School (n=33)</b>	<b>Average - Before Participating in SEA program</b>	<b>Average - After Participating in SEA program</b>	<b>Average Change in Response</b>
<b>1. I <i>care about the natural environment</i> and feel a personal connection with it.</b>	3.55	4.00	<b>+0.45</b>
<b>2. I <i>have a good understanding</i> of local environmental issues.</b>	3.00	4.22	<b>+1.22</b>
<b>3. I can <i>communicate well with others</i> about environmental issues.</b>	2.85	4.00	<b>+1.15</b>
<b>4. I <i>believe that I can make a difference</i> to help our environment.</b>	3.00	4.55	<b>+1.55</b>
<b>5. I see ways that my <i>school learning is connected</i> to real-world environmental issues.</b>	2.77	4.20	<b>+1.43</b>
<b>6. I am <i>committed to taking action</i> to protect the environment.</b>	2.90	4.22	<b>+1.32</b>

*Service, Education & Adventure (SEA)*

<b>Serene Lake Elementary School (n=41)</b>	<b>Average - Before Participating in SEA program</b>	<b>Average - After Participating in SEA program</b>	<b>Average Change in Response</b>
<b>Looking Back Survey Item</b>			
<b>1. I <i>care about</i> the natural environment.</b>	2.02	3.53	<b>+1.51</b>
<b>2. I <i>know about environmental issues</i> facing Puget Sound.</b>	1.77	2.63	<b>+0.86</b>
<b>3. I <i>am able to tell others</i> about protecting the environment.</b>	2.50	2.98	<b>+0.48</b>
<b>4. I <i>believe I can make a difference</i> to help the environment.</b>	2.21	3.77	<b>+1.56</b>
<b>5. I see ways that <i>my school learning connects</i> to the real world.</b>	2.00	3.25	<b>+1.25</b>

These survey results show a positive shift in average response for all survey items among both groups, indicating movement toward our desired outcomes. For Cascade students, the three largest positive shifts were seen in *belief that they can make a difference to protect the environment, awareness of ways that school learning connects to the real world, and commitment to taking action to protection the environment*. For Serene Lake students, the two largest positive changes related to *belief in their ability to make a different to help the environment, and increased care about the natural environment*.

For Cascade students, the item with the lowest positive shift was *care about the environment*. It is noteworthy that the average rating in the BEFORE condition for this item was the highest of any survey item, and that the average rating in the AFTER condition for this item was the second-highest of any survey item. The smaller positive shift for this item, then, does not indicate a lack of care for the environment. Rather, it suggests that care for the environment was the strongest factor pre-program and may have shifted less as a result of these program activities.

Overall, these results are encouraging and point to the powerful impact this program can have in a short time on awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment. It is noteworthy that for Cascade students, average responses for all items shifted from their starting point to an average of over 4.0 on the 1-5 scale. Post-program, on average, Cascade participants located themselves somewhere between “agree” and “strongly agree” for every outcome measure, which is a very positive result. While increases from Serene Lake students did not produce post ratings of the same level, they were positive for every item. The positive results from teacher verbal feedback and student survey data affirm effective program delivery leading to meaningful shifts toward our desired goal: that young people would become engaged learners, environmentally aware community leaders and Puget Sound stewards.

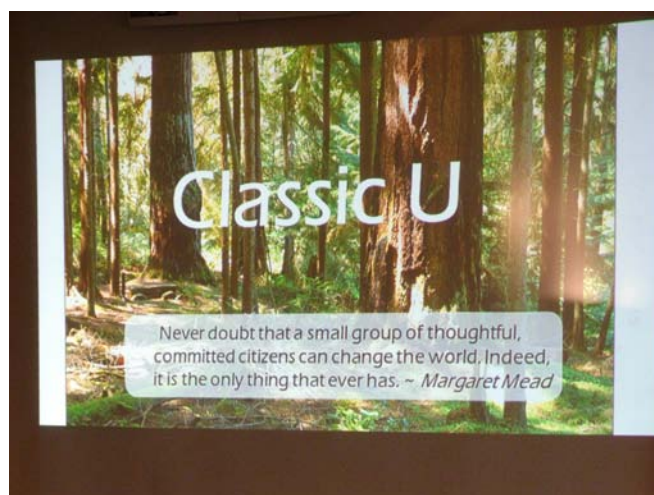
*Prepared by: Peter Blaustein, SEA Director of Grants and Evaluation*

# Bringing Learning to Life

## Cascade High School



Washington State Park Staff show students from Cascade High School the trees that have been impacted by Heart Rot and why the Parks decided to close camping permanently due to the impact on the trees



*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” – quote from the slide show presented to Cascade High School Students by SEA staff prior to expedition to SW State Park*

Students engage in questions to State Park Staff related to camping closure and impacts of that closure on the local community.

## Serene Lake Elementary



Students work together to engage in a tree measurement and ID activity on the Classic U Old Growth Forest at SW State Park

Students study the Invasive Species ID guide provided by Weed Control Board to help them identify the invasive Yellow Archangel they removed as a part of their service at SW State Park



Students at the Park!





**SEA Americorps member Natalie captures the spirit of learning  
in nature!**