

# YOUTH & COMMUNITY Engagement

2011



MT. BAKER-SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST

## FUNDING

Youth & Community Engagement: \$70,000

Wilderness Challenge: \$20,000

MBS & R6 Civil Rights: \$105,000

Partner match totals \$350,000 (includes 2,370 volunteer hrs x \$21.36= \$50,623)

17 MBS staff funded for YES project planning and implementation.

8 STEPS funded by regional dollars.

## OUR PARTNERS

### Agreements & contracts

EarthCorps

International District Housing Alliance

Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

National Forest Foundation

North Cascades Institute

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Tulalip Tribe of Washington

Washington State University 4-H

Wing Luke Museum

## Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Partnership Coordinator, Aleta Eng

Cover image: Phi Ngo plays in the snow the first week of March after a long snowshoe hike by Stevens Pass Nordic Center. This is Phi's second year with WILD.



Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie  
National Forest



Seattle Parks and Recreation Special Population students, Evan Going 12 and Asher Brown 16, race up and down the Clear Creek Campground during the “Hike, Bike and Boat” event.

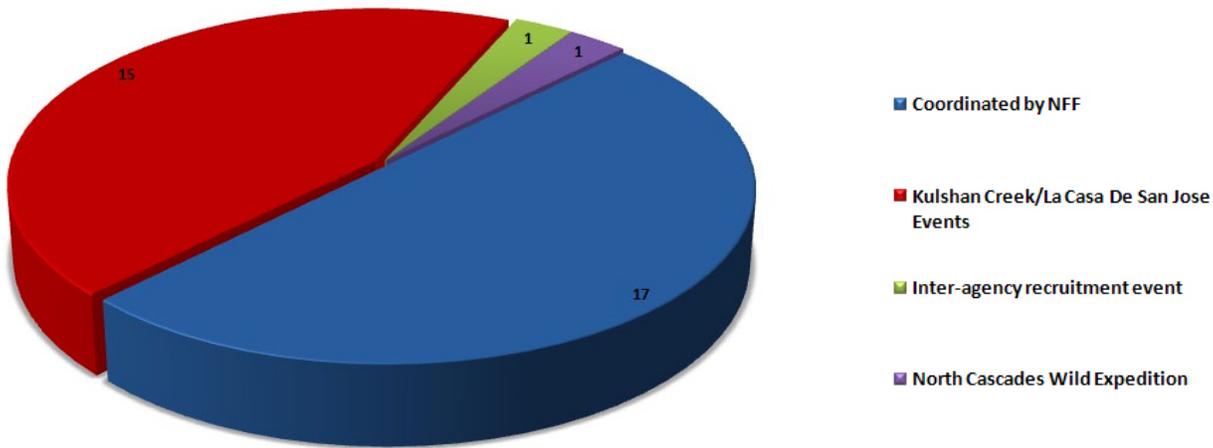
## BUILDING THE FUTURE

### Puget Sound

The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest has successfully expanded youth and community engagement activities 42 percent from last year within the Puget Sound metropolitan area. More than 30,000 youth and adults visited USFS festival outreach booths, were educated by USFS and partner groups and completed stewardship activities on public lands. We target youth who are urban, diverse, economically disadvantaged and those with special needs. Our focus is on kids who would not otherwise have a chance to access national forest lands. We expose youth to the outdoors, engage them so they will return, and if we are truly successful, a few will pursue careers in natural resources. This year we recruited and placed eight in the Student Temporary Employment Program, three more than last year.

We funded these accomplishments by leveraging fiscal 2011 dollars, additional USFS funds and partner matches. A National Forest Foundation partnership enabled us to increase our capacity, which was critical to our success, by placing AmeriCorps intern Stella Torres in a year-long position as the youth and volunteer programs coordinator. Stella led 17 one to multi-day projects and supported another four events. She increased our educational programming, integrating presentations and demonstrations into event management. We are pleased to report that our youth engagement program has improved qualitatively and quantitatively this year. (Review exhibit A: Forest-Wide Outreach, Volunteer, Education Events spreadsheet for more in-depth descriptions of more than 80 YES projects.)

## Stewardship & Education Projects



**34 Total** \* not including festivals or fire outreach events

## What We Accomplished

### Stewardship/Education Projects = 34\*

- 17 - Events coordinated by NFF
- 15 - Kulshan Creek/La Casa De San Jose Events
- 1 - Inter-agency Recruitment Event
- 1 - North Cascades Wild Expedition

### Types of Activities/Projects = 38

- 12 - Stewardship
- 20 - Conservation education
- 2 - Stewardship
- 6 - North Cascade WILD and recruitment event

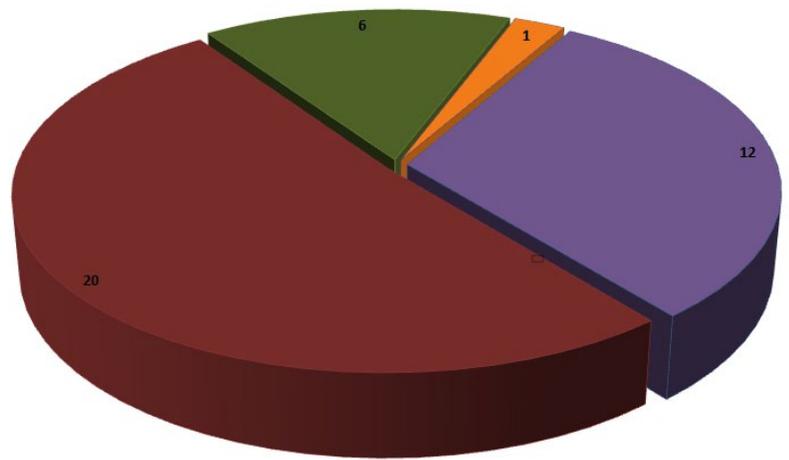
### Total Youth Served = 1,358\*

- 151 - Special needs youth
- 1,207 - Urban, diverse youth

### Hours Contributed = 7,366

- 3,476 - Education hours (+152 Recruitment, 288 NC Wild)
- 3,890 - Stewardship hours (includes 2,370 volunteer hours)

## Types of Activities & Projects



**39 Total Activities & Projects**

- Stewardship
- Conservation Education
- North Cascades Wild
- Recruitment Event

\*(Numbers do not including festivals, public or fire outreach events.)

# Applying Stewardship

## Restoring Watersheds

- 30,890 - Square feet of non-native plants cleared
- 200 - Plant protections removed

## Enhancing Habitat

- 2 - Wildlife habitat structures reinstalled
- 6 - New wildlife structures built
- 40 - Linear feet of wildlife fence built

## Site Improvements

- 1 - Fire lookout interior painted, rails replaced
- 3 - Campgrounds brushed
- 28 - Barricade posts installed
- 12 - Illegal fire rings removed
- 112 - 40-gallon bags or 2,000lbs of trash removed

## Land Management

- 7,640 - Linear feet of trail maintained
- 1,320 - Linear feet of trail built
- 7 - Culverts reset
- 4 - Rock structures installed



*Elida Reeves, a Tulalip youth, helps clear an area for a fire treatment to enhance the growth of huckleberries.*

## Enhancing Experiences



*Koreena Haynes from the Forest Service leads Kulshan Creek youth in a search for rare and threatened frog species.*

### **April**

#### **Earth Day Event at Horizon Elementary**

This is the first year the MBS participated in this event. Aleta Eng and Stella Torres taught more than 200 children in kindergarten through second grade about the benefits of trees, the importance of salmon and the dangers of invasive plant species.

### **May**

#### **Hike, Bike, Boat at Clear Creek Campground**

The MBS and several other outdoor nonprofit organizations provided a day of hiking, biking and boating to children with developmental disabilities, terminal illnesses and physical ailments. More than 50 children were able to get on a raft, ride a bicycle and enjoy an interpretive hike led by Forest Service staff. Sarah Prince of the MBS and Stella Torres led environmental activities, told stories and taught youth about the importance of stewardship of public lands.

### **June**

#### **Gold Creek Pond Youth Stewardship**

One memorable two-day event took place at beautiful and inspirational Gold Creek Pond. Ten youth from Seattle Parks and Recreation trained on the history, wildlife and restoration efforts at this site so they could then teach 25 elementary-aged children the following day. The children hailed from a local non-profit day care center aimed at providing affordable services to recent immigrants and refugees from Ethiopia and Somalia. Biological control expert Jen Andreas of the WSU extension introduced the children to a beetle that feeds on St. John's Wort, an invasive weed that is taking over sections of Gold Creek Pond. Groups of kids huddled over the bins filled with the beetles and marveled at its metallic colors before releasing it to do its job.

# Enhancing Experiences

## July

### 2nd Annual Friends of the Forest Day at Stevens Pass

The National Forest Foundation's Friends of the Forest® Days are always complete with lasting work efforts and lifelong volunteer memories. This year's event at the Stevens Pass Ski resort was no exception. More than 100 volunteers from Chelan County 4-H and Seattle Parks and Rec Outdoor Opportunities, along with families from all over the Puget Sound area armed with gloves and garbage bags scoured the slopes for trash. In only two hours, over 2,000 pounds of garbage were removed from the slopes. One volunteer who brought her kids mentioned, "I can't believe how much fun we had picking up garbage." The event made front page headlines on the Everett Herald and was covered by King 5 TV News.

## August

### Ryther Youth Stewardship at Gold Creek Pond

The MBS partnered for the second time with Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust to bring 60 youth with Asperger's Syndrome, a mild form of Autism, to learn about the wildlife, history and restoration at Gold Creek Pond. The youth spent most of the day pulling oxeye daisy, an aggressive invader, and enjoying interpretive talks led by Forest Service staff. The Ryther staff leaders expressed gratitude for providing a unique opportunity. One said, "It is rare to have a day in which we don't have to deal with any issues or resolve any conflicts among the youth, they are so focused out here and truly having a great time."

### Monte Cristo Town Site Heritage Project with YouthCAN

The Wing Luke Museum's youth program, YouthCAN, conducted innovative research at the old Monte Cristo town site and are creating artwork depicting the lives of early Japanese laborers.



*Alondro Segio Guille, 5, looks for snow geese.*

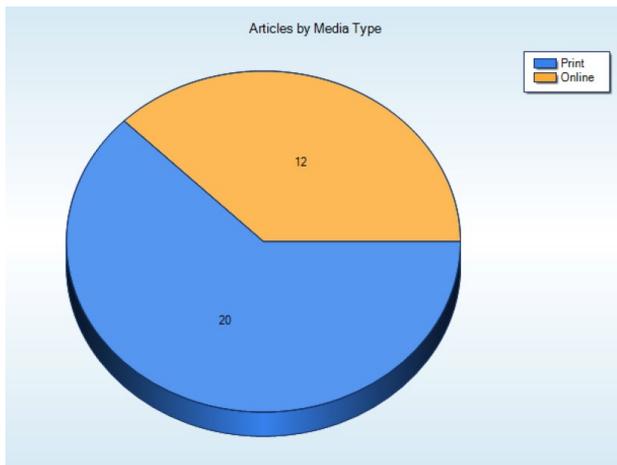
Eleven inner-city youth set off on a four-mile trek along the original railroad to the old Monte Cristo town site. After spending the day roaming through the town, learning about its history and collecting sounds and data, they camped overnight; for many a completely new experience. One 17-year-old on his way back to his tent stopped, gazed up at the sky and yelled "Whoa! Are those stars?!"

The images, sounds and information they collected will depict Japanese laborers in mining, cannery and railroads in Tatebanko style: 3-D Japanese paper dioramas complete with Karakuri engines to give them movement. Their exhibit is expected to be showcased next spring at The Wing Luke Museum in Seattle, Wash.

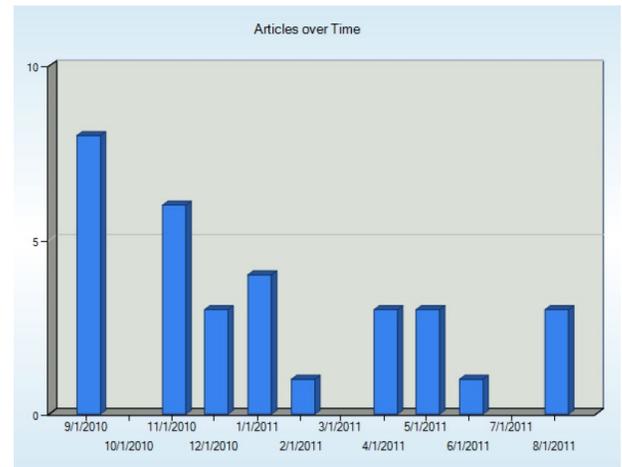
## In The News

The Seattle-Tacoma Arbitron media market national ranking is 12. The closest major market in the Pacific Northwest is Portland, Ore., which ranks 26th. (Arbitron market research and ranking is the national standard upon which advertising and marketing agencies base their strategies and pricing.) The Puget Sound regional and national media outlets provide coverage on youth and stewardship issues because of audience demand, giving us an opportunity to tell our story regionally as well as nationally through this market.

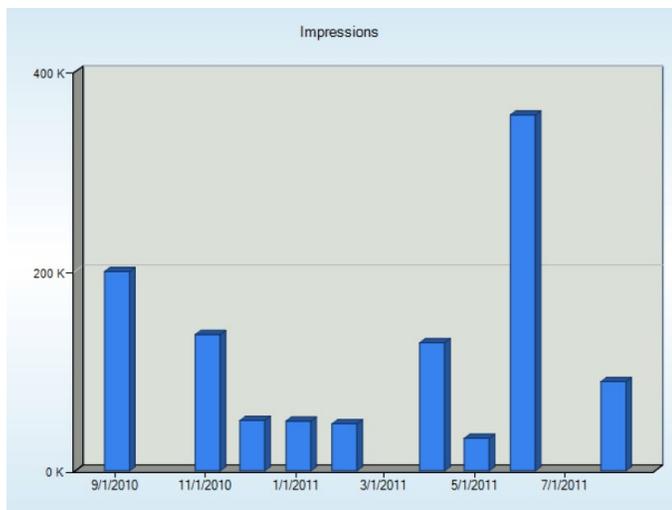
Our youth engagement events received substantial coverage. The National Forest Foundation posted three blogs and photos from all the activities that were linked with partners' websites and posted on facebook accounts. KING 5 television covered several events, and Burrelles Luce clip service shows 31 stories picked up by newspapers and online. The charts show the articles by media type, over time, impressions and media value.



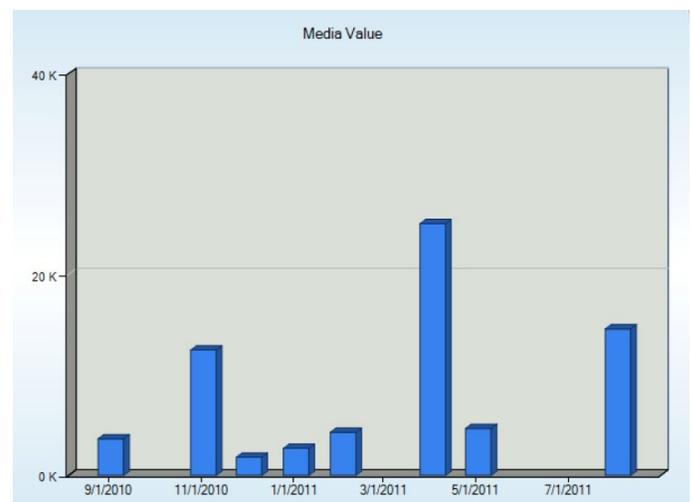
This shows our events covered by printed publications and online media.



This chart shows media coverage matching the times of our youth engagement events.



Media impressions are tallied by the number of people who subscribe or visit websites/online media where the events were covered. Our youth engagement events made a total of 1,090,909 impressions.



The media value is based on the amount that would have been charged for advertising in that location in that media. The value of the media coverage for our youth engagement events is \$69,348.

## What We've Learned

This year we developed an evaluative tool to gauge areas of success as well as areas where our program could improve.

We began with a survey intended for every participant at each event. This method was unsuccessful, as youth gave one-word or minimal responses. We sought input from Dale Blahana, research social scientist with the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Laboratory, Kathy Wolfe of the USFS and Weston Brinkley of the Cascade Land Conservancy. They recommended using focus groups, reasoning that it takes at least five days of experiencing an event before an individual is able to adequately reflect upon it.

A second attempt developed an evaluation tool comprised of a set of focus group questions aimed at youth who had experienced at least five days of events. A facilitator led the discussion with youth 14 to 18 years about their experiences and recorded their responses. This year's results are a baseline as our programs grow and change.

45 youth surveyed by questionnaire and focus groups:

### Ages and previous involvement

- 74% youth had never visited a national forest or participated in a stewardship project on the forest prior to this year's experience
- 26% had participated in our projects before (returning volunteers)

### Reason for joining projects

- 55% chose to participate in a project for job skills training/stipend
- 35% joined because they are interested in nature and care about the environment
- 10% joined for affiliation (meeting new people/making new friends)

### What they enjoyed most

- 55% enjoyed the sense of pride and accomplishment in getting work done
- 30% enjoyed learning/doing something entirely new
- 15% simply enjoyed being outside

### What they would change/improve

- 59% stated they would like to see more of a variety of projects and locations
- 15% would like to see more interactive educational lessons
- 6% would like the trips to be longer than one week
- 10% would not change or improve anything

### Employment interest in the natural resources field (As a result of their involvement)

- 44% would be interested employment opportunity with the Forest Service
- 36% might consider an employment opportunity with the Forest Service
- 20% would not consider an employment opportunity with the Forest Service if it involves strenuous manual labor



IDHA Wild students do stewardship work at the Skykomish Ranger District Weeklong.



*YouthCAN pose at the Monte Cristo site where they research the history of Japanese laborers.*

“I like being outside because it’s calm here. In the city, where I live, there is a lot of noise and air pollution. I like that I can breathe fresh air out here.”-- Male, African American, Age 18

“I’ve never been camping with my family. If it weren’t for these trips I would never experience this.”-- Female, Asian/Pacific Islander, Aged 14

“I see this as a summer job opportunity. I like that you get paid to be out here. I need to buy things for school and the stipend will help me do that.”-- Female, Hispanic Age 17

“I didn’t think I would be able to do this type of work. Building trails made me feel stronger.”  
-- Female, Asian/Pacific Islander , Age 15

“Being out here made me realize that it is possible to live without technology. I felt free.”  
-- Male, Asian/Pacific Islander, Age 17

“In school we learn that we should recycle and not take long showers, but it’s hard to connect with the environment without seeing it yourself.” --Female, Asian Pacific Islander, Age 18

“It’s nice to build something that you know people will continue to enjoy for many years.”  
--Male, African American, Age 15

“I joined the project this week because I did this last year and I wanted to see what the work we did last year looks like now.”-- Female, Asian-Pacific Islander, Age 18

## Learning A Job

With support from the R6 YES and Civil Rights Office, the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest worked with four youth program partners to place eight diverse Student Temporary Employee Program candidates from the greater Seattle metropolitan area in summer positions. This is an increase of three from 2010.

Students who did not grow up with the accessibility or knowledge to visit their public lands had been introduced to free outdoor opportunities made possible by partnerships between the Forest Service and four amazing organizations: International District Housing Alliance, North Cascades Institute, Seattle Parks and Recreation Outdoor Opportunity Program, and Student Conservation Association. These students took a risk to leave the comforts of their metropolitan area to live in much smaller communities for the duration of the jobs. Each student grew from their experience – whether it was feeling more comfortable communicating with people from all backgrounds to discovering a career pathway, each finished with a greater appreciation for how public lands are managed.

Many of the STEPs were hired at a multi-agency recruitment event led by the MBS in February, 2011. Students were introduced and competed for positions with the MBS, North Cascades National Park and Klondike National Historic Site. Selected candidates were recommended highly by program partners.



*Thach Ngoc Phan, IDHA WILD student, uses loppers along the trail in the Mt. Baker Ranger District.*



*Skykomish Wreck Crew poses left to right: Henry Situ, Miles Stipek, Daniel Ashley Lindsay Moore and Nam Voong.*

### **Annalisa Rodriguez-Boehme**

Annalisa's experience with Seattle Parks and Recreation's Outdoor Opportunity Program has been one of the biggest influences in her life. Introduced to the program from her sister, she has gone on numerous outdoor trips that exposed her to camping, climbing, mountain biking and stewardship activities. She wants to find a career that combines her interest in botany and outdoor outreach with youth. She was hired onto the Skykomish trail crew. She would like to return in 2012 to a trail position or try a different one within the Forest Service.

**Highlight of summer:** Being closer to nature and learning all the different things that I have.

**Education:** I'm starting my first year at Seattle Community College and plan to study botany and horticulture – specifically the medicinal and edible factors of plants.

**Career Aspiration:** Help the younger generation have similar opportunities and strive to be better individuals.

### **Justine Nishitani**

Justine was excited to join the Student Conservation Association high school program when staff presented at her school. She found her calling. She spent her summers completing SCA and North Cascade Wild volunteer activities focused on recreation maintenance. Her volunteer experience made her an ideal candidate for the MBS trail crew at Mt. Baker Ranger District. She plans to return to the crew next summer.

**Highlight of summer:** Do what I really enjoy and get paid to do it! I love to volunteer but was excited to get paid.

**Education:** I'm currently applying for a technician position at a Forest Service lab in California. I will complete my B.S. in environmental science at Humboldt State University in 2014.

**Career Aspiration:** Work for the Forest Service to pave the pathway for more young people to discover their national forests.

# Life Changing Discoveries

## Phung Vuong

As a freshman in high school, Phung knew she wanted to be a firefighter. She first learned about the fire program as a junior in high school at a USFS recruitment event for the WILD program. After completing her freshman year at Everett Community College, her dream became a reality when she was hired as a fire engine crew member. Phung will return to the South Zone Engine crew next summer. Phung joined the WILD program in 2007 after hearing about it from a friend. She later became a youth leader in her senior year of high school.

**Highlight of summer:** I received valuable advice from staff on career development.

**Education:** I'm studying computer, fire and environmental sciences at Everett Community College and intend to transfer to the University of Washington.

**Career Aspiration:** A career in structural or wildland firefighting.

## Henry Situ

Henry's grandparents prompted him to join International District Housing Alliance's WILD program in 2005. As an 8th grader, he was exposed to numerous outdoor activities with the MBS. He eventually became a youth leader while a senior in high school. Henry sought a position with the Forest Service because he wanted to try something different, become independent and live on his own – outside of the city. Henry plans to return next summer as a dispersed recreation crew member and take forest protection officer training.

**Highlight of summer:** Living in a small community, where I had a chance to meet new people.

**Education:** Entering my second year with Seattle Central Community College where I'm studying economics and plan to work towards a bachelor degree in business.

**Career Aspiration:** A career in business management.

## Nam Voong

Nam joined IDHA Wild in 2009 and since then has completed three stewardship and education trips in the Skykomish Ranger District and Heather Meadows. Nam wanted to push his limits and improve his communication skills by working away from home, so he applied for a developed recreation position which required continuous communication with the public. "I loved my work" sums it up. Nam would like to return to the developed recreation crew in 2012.

**Highlight of summer:** I enjoyed working with a great manager and other staff. I learned to interact with all people and was happy to get to know the staff.

**Education:** I will begin my first year at Seattle Central Community College.

**Career Aspiration:** Still deciding, but thinking of a career as a chef or mechanic.

## Manika Bhandari

Manika completed her second summer on the MBS Initial Attack (IA) crew. In 2006, she joined Seattle Parks and Recreation Outdoor Opportunity Program after a class presentation at her high school. As a recent immigrant from Nepal, Manika was eager to meet new people and try exciting things. She looks forward to working hard, challenging herself, seeing new places and plans to return to the fire program in 2012.

**Highlight of summer:** This second year I had the opportunity to practice leadership skills, learn more about the planning process and complete some burning!

**Education:** I will return to the University of Washington majoring in electrical engineering, graduating in 2014.

**Career Aspiration:** I joined Air Force ROTC and plan to be a pilot. I would also consider a career with the USFS after the military.

