



ENVIRONMENTAL  
SCIENCE CENTER

# LET NATURE TEACH

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023

# Your Impact 2022-2023

## 8,682 People Reached



**1,435**

Hours teens spent restoring forests in our local parks



**60**

Days students spent collecting water quality data to determine stream health



**300**

Birds counted in community science programs

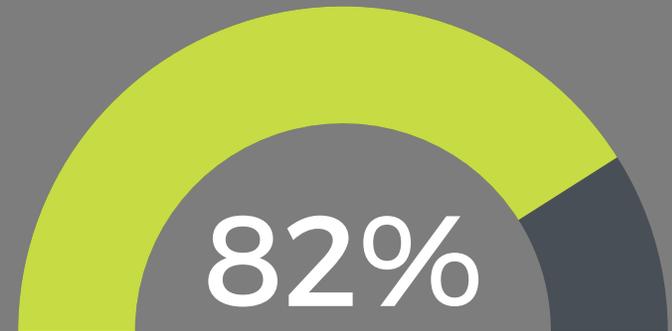


# Our Mission

**The Environmental Science Center promotes environmental stewardship and academic achievement through science-based education.**

The Environmental Science Center (ESC), offers experiential environmental education programs at beaches, streams, gardens, and forests in south King County.

Many people in our community have been systematically excluded from safe, positive outdoor experiences. We strive to change this with free or low-cost programs, continual partnerships, and by creating safe and affirming spaces within our programs and the broader community.



of students demonstrated an increase in knowledge about protecting healthy habitats after their field trip

**ESC Core Values:** As long as our interactions align with our core values, we will know that we **C.A.R.E.D.**



**C**ommunity Engagement

**A**cademic Achievement

**R**espect for the Environment

**E**quity and Access

**D**iscovery and Exploration

# C ommunity Engagement

## Family Exploration Kits

This brand NEW resource debuted summer 2023 for families. Ten exploration kits offered families a chance to inspect the health of the downtown Renton ecosystem. Activities included multiple scavenger hunts, water quality testing, insect exploration, and more!

On checkout days, we invited our community into ESC's new space at Liberty Park for hands-on science activities and crafts that complemented activities in the exploration kits. Many families were excited to take advantage of this unique opportunity and expressed their gratitude for the resource.

Renton Library and the Renton History Museum were critical partners who hosted activities to enhance the experience for families.



# 70

people attended  
the first Family  
Exploration Day

**“I am so happy that you all are here to offer these activities to the community. We don't have anything else like this.”**

**-Parent of 2 young scientists**



**5,815 volunteer hours recorded**

## Volunteer Program

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, ESC lost almost all of its volunteer base, similar to most organizations during this time. In 2022, we revamped our volunteer program adding New Volunteer Orientations, volunteer training opportunities, volunteer teams, and more.

“Volunteering with ESC has proven to be a most rewarding experience. I have especially treasured the joy of discovery that is shared by all ages on the low tide walks and bird walks. ESC is especially effective at turning people on to nature’s wonder.”

## Fun at the Library!

“Did you see my sunflower seeds? I am so excited for it to grow into a flower!”  
-4 year old story time participant

ESC partnered with the King County Library System to offer a variety of free community programs including presentations, toddler story times, and drop-in activity time. Meeting our community where they are already gathering is one of our priorities to ensure more equitable access to environmental education for all.



**80 participants attended a library program**

# ESC Expands to Renton

In the fall of 2022, the Environmental Science Center expanded its operations from Seahurst Park to a second location in King County. In partnership with the City of Renton's Renton Parks and Recreation Division, ESC moved into Renton's Liberty Park Community Building in downtown Renton.

This allowed us to expand community programs with Renton's diverse communities, particularly salmon education as this location is adjacent to the Cedar River. ESC delivered a series of water quality focused programs to reach all ages and abilities in the greater Renton community from young children, to families, to seniors.



**5,825**  
hours engaging  
the Renton  
community

# Academic Achievement



“It’s almost like the classroom is such a rigid structure but outside they flourish. It was super cool to see and a relief that these kids were finally getting a chance to express themselves.”

- Middle School Science Teacher

“It opened up a whole other world of learning where they were actually going off on what their interests were.”

- Middle School Science Teacher

## Teacher Professional Development

This was ESC’s third year offering free teacher professional development. These workshops provide teachers with lessons and materials to take their students outside and use their schoolyards for science investigations. Teachers practiced using water quality testing kits, nature journaling techniques, and plant identification skills to create exciting outdoor exploration activities for their students. Teachers who completed the trainings received STEM clock hours, participation stipends, and funds for a schoolyard stewardship project.

In fall 2022, ESC piloted a new program taking what we learned from our previous teacher workshops and applying it to a district-wide professional development opportunity for Highline School District teachers. This focused on salmon and orcas in partnership with NOAA.

# 276

hours of in-depth  
professional  
development time

## Beach Heroes

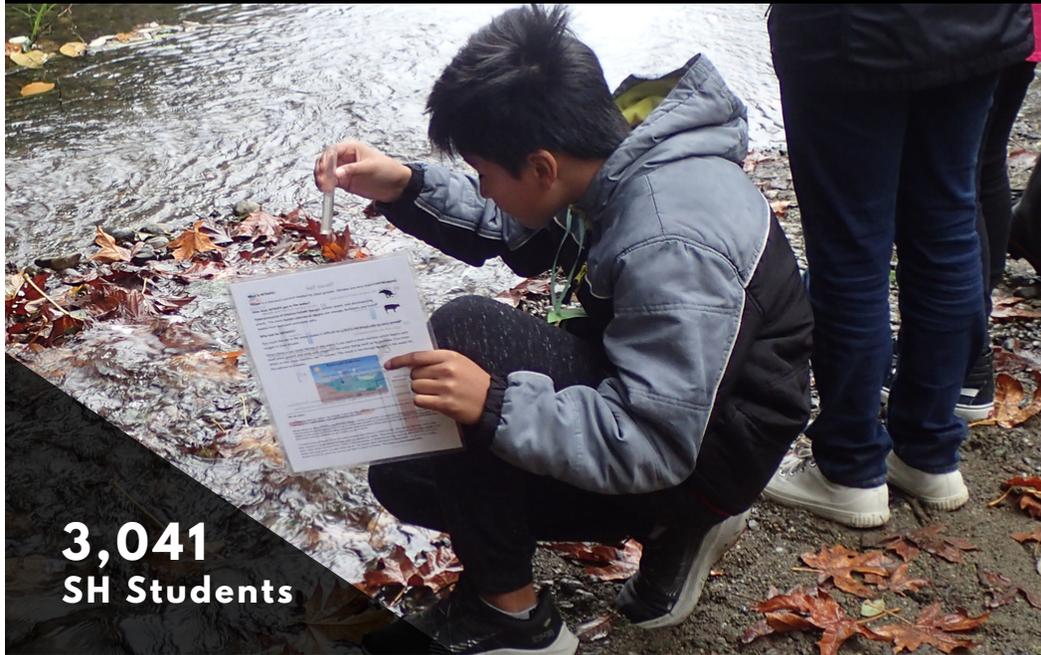
Beach Heroes brings K-3rd grade students to Seahurst Beach to explore and discover the intertidal zone and learn about ocean conservation.

This year we improved the classroom component by adding movement breaks and increasing hands-on activities. To continue our efforts, we created a digital feedback form to increase access for chaperones and caregivers to provide feedback in addition to teachers.

“Beach Heroes is by far the best field trip experience for K-2 that I've been on!”  
-Sartori 1st grade teacher



**2,473**  
BH Students



**3,041**  
SH Students

## Salmon Heroes

Salmon Heroes brings students to salmon and salmon to students through both in-school lessons and a field trip to a stream habitat. This program utilizes five different field sites across four cities in an effort to connect students with their local watersheds.

During the 22-23 school year, we enhanced the classroom lessons based on teacher feedback. This included building in more time for student discussion and the creation of a Spanish-English bilingual version of the Student Field Journal.



**134**  
hours spent  
teaching  
younger  
students

## Youth Development - Summit Atlas

“I didn’t realize how many species were on the beach. Like the nudibranchs were something completely new.”

“It brings me joy to pass on this experience to the next generation.”

-Quotes from youth leaders

This year ESC worked with Summit Atlas High School for our Youth Naturalist Program. Fourteen students learned interpretation techniques during Salmon Heroes and Beach Heroes field trips. These youth naturalists observed ESC staff and identified teaching methods they would like to try out with younger students. They then had the opportunity to lead parts of the programs themselves inspiring future stewards. Youth naturalists were excited about the content, especially increasing their knowledge on marine and aquatic animals.

# R

# espect for the Environment



## Schoolyard Stewardship

Over 500 Salmon Heroes students extended their experience this past year by participating in projects to help improve their schoolyard habitats. Projects ranged from litter pick-ups to poster creations to native plant installations. These projects made them true heroes for salmon!



**140+**  
native plants  
installed

In addition, all teacher workshop participants also got their students outside to work on projects. Some planned mini projects while others dreamed big for future plans!

While removing invasive blackberry rootballs, students at North Hill Elementary became very invested in "saving the worms!"

## Big Picture

Youth from Big Picture Middle School conducted bi-monthly restoration work at Seahurst Park with ESC staff. Students maintained the trail near our center and planted new native trees and shrubs. To enhance their understanding of the health of the park they engaged in a variety of outdoor exploration activities. These included testing water quality, collecting plankton, nature journaling, basket weaving from the ivy they pulled, and observing their hard work from the year while paddling in the Salish Sea!



**465 hours**  
restoring  
**Seahurst Park**



**517 hours** teens spent in  
restoration internships

## New Start

ESC partnered with the City of Burien and Dirt Corps to work with five New Start High School students in two six-week paid after school internship programs. Students worked to remove invasive blackberry, plant native conifers, and become stewards of Salmon Creek Park. This project culminated with the students leading a City of Burien Earth Day restoration event with more than 50 community members!

**"I feel closer to the soil after learning  
about the plants that rely on it"**  
-New Start student

# Equity and Access

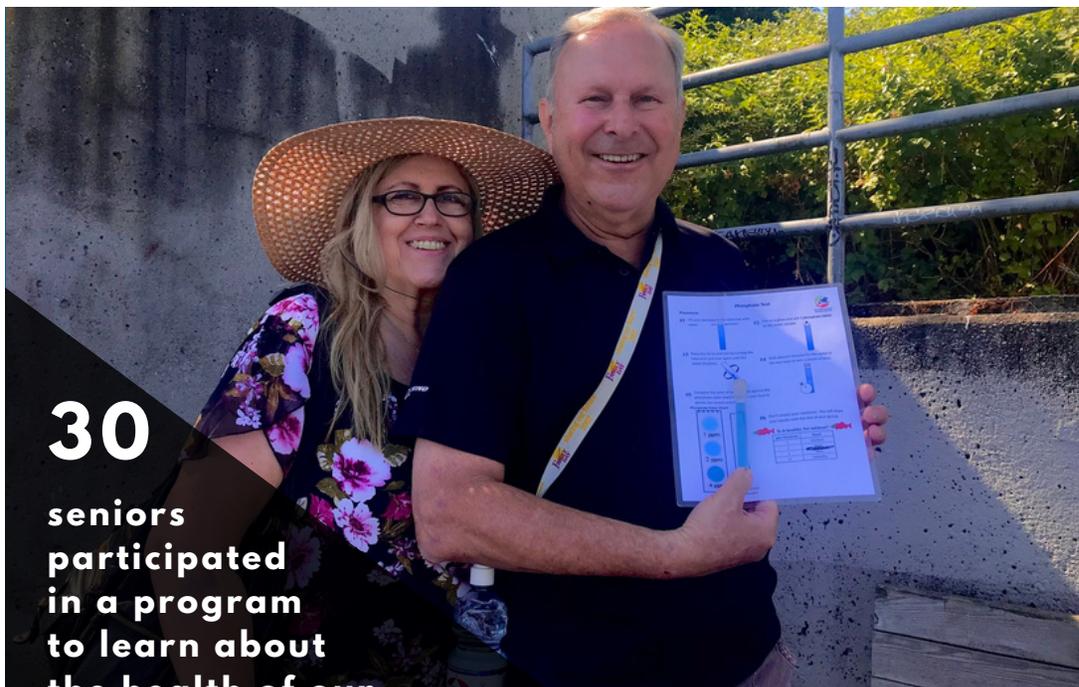


## Renton Senior Center Watershed Series

In Summer 2022, ESC began partnering with the Don Persson Renton Senior Activity Center to offer stormwater education programs for participants ages 50+. There are not many adult only environmental education opportunities in our area, particularly for our community elders. These programs helped our community build a connection to our local ecosystem and learn how to be good stewards.

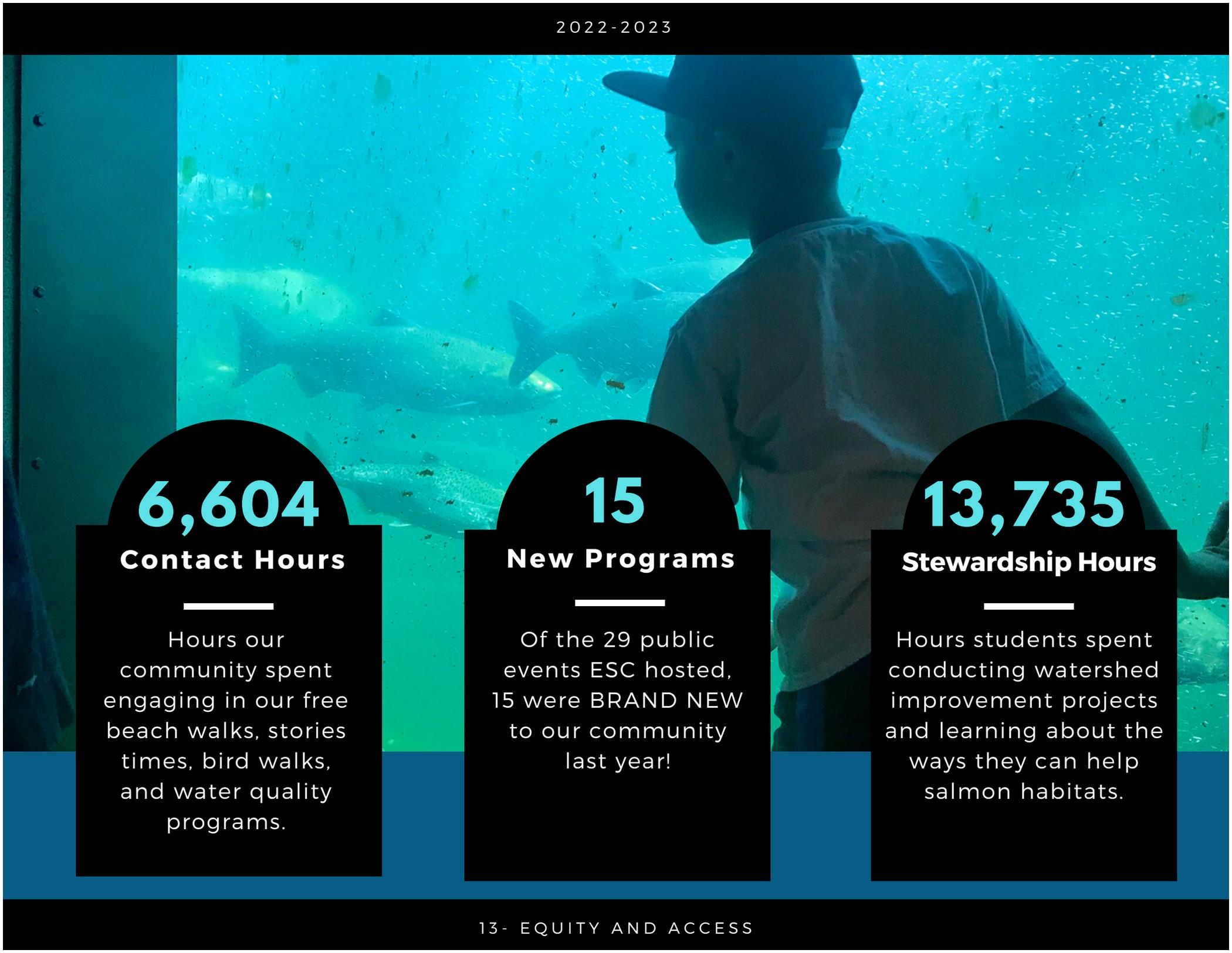
Participants explored the health of the Cedar River by looking at water quality and insects, following salmon upstream to view different spawning sites, touring the hatchery with scientists, and learning how to identify local birds by both sight and sound.

**“I thought I was well educated [about salmon] but found I knew very little. I learned a lot today.”**  
**-Renton Senior participant**



**30**

**seniors participated in a program to learn about the health of our river and salmon.**



**6,604**

**Contact Hours**

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Hours our community spent engaging in our free beach walks, stories times, bird walks, and water quality programs.

**15**

**New Programs**

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Of the 29 public events ESC hosted, 15 were BRAND NEW to our community last year!

**13,735**

**Stewardship Hours**

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Hours students spent conducting watershed improvement projects and learning about the ways they can help salmon habitats.

# D iscovery and Exploration



**200**  
hours of  
afterschool  
STEM  
programming

## Afterschool Program

North Hill Elementary and Cascade Middle School students engaged with ESC in afterschool enrichment programs. Students learned about habitats, wildlife adaptation, stewardship practices, and revitalized their schoolyard gardens to get hands-on experience tending to nature.

North Hill Elementary created a functional rain garden to improve local water quality and create habitats for wildlife. Students learned how to assess the landscape and came up with their own ideas for the design.

At Cascade Middle School, students expanded their garden and planted fruits and vegetables that were harvested and used during cooking lessons.

**“We must respect the plants or they will bite you.”**  
-3rd grade student



**115 people  
attended**

## Salmon Fest!

In fall 2022, ESC partnered with Mary Olson Farm to host a new salmon festival! This historic farm on the border of Kent and Auburn is one of the last stops for spawning salmon and a unique habitat. Participants had the ability to do hands-on science, pet donkeys, learn about indigenous uses of nettle from members of the Muckleshoot Tribe, create family fun, and more!

**“This was a really awesome festival. I learned so much about salmon and feel inspired to take better care of our environment.”**  
-Salmon Fest participant

## BirdFest

**“What a great resource and event for our community. I was able to learn about our local birds while supporting local businesses and organizations!”** -BirdFest participant

This was the first year fully back in person of this beloved festival in downtown Burien celebrating the Great Backyard Bird Count. Participants took part in guided bird walks, presentations, hands-on science, family nature hikes, and networked with 12 different local organizations and businesses.



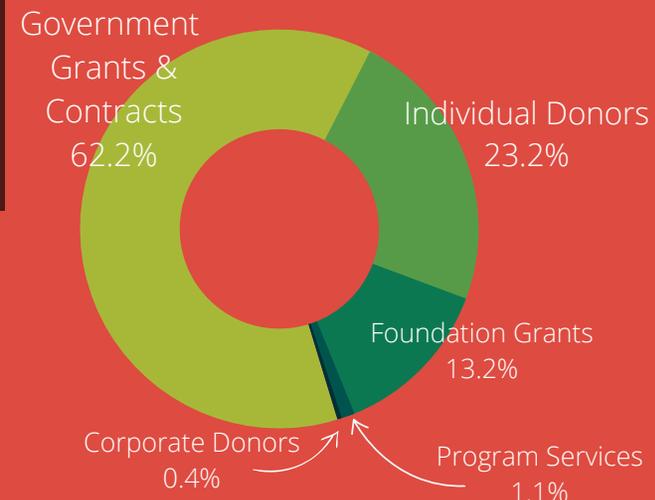
**180 people  
attended**

# 2022-2023 Financials



## Revenue

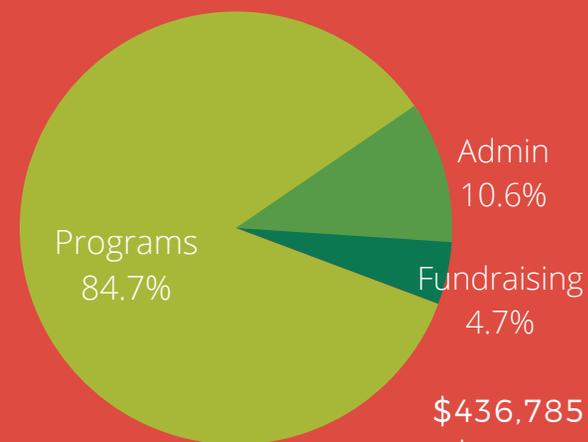
Total  
\$577,246



Government Grants & Contracts	\$359,194
Individual Donors	\$133,690
Foundation Grants	\$75,994
Program Services	\$6,169
Corporate Donors	\$2,169

## Expenses

Total  
\$515,394



Programs	\$436,785
Admin	\$54,548
Fundraising	\$24,061

# Thank you to all our donors for supporting science education!

## Special thanks to these dedicated donors:

### \$5,000+

*Anonymous*  
*Brenda Sullivan*  
*Brian Bozlinks*  
*Estate of Sheri Barr*  
*Neighbors of Seahurst Park*  
*Kristine Ashcraft*

### \$1,000-4,999

*Anonymous*  
*Doug and Sharon Andrews*  
*Barbara Bruell*  
*Steve Buchsbaum*  
*Karl Mejia*  
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*Peter and Coco Valle*



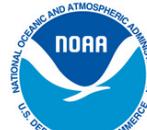
## We'd love to stay in touch!

Check out our exciting public program offerings,  
volunteer opportunities, board openings, and other  
ways to get involved at:

[www.EnvironmentalScienceCenter.Org](http://www.EnvironmentalScienceCenter.Org)



# Partners





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