



GPI and Extension Partnership

We empower youth to build resilient and sustainable rural communities and healthy ecosystems across the Glacier Peak region of Western Washington through innovative, action-based education programs integrating STReAMs (Science, Technology, recreation, Engineering, art, Mathematics, skill-building).

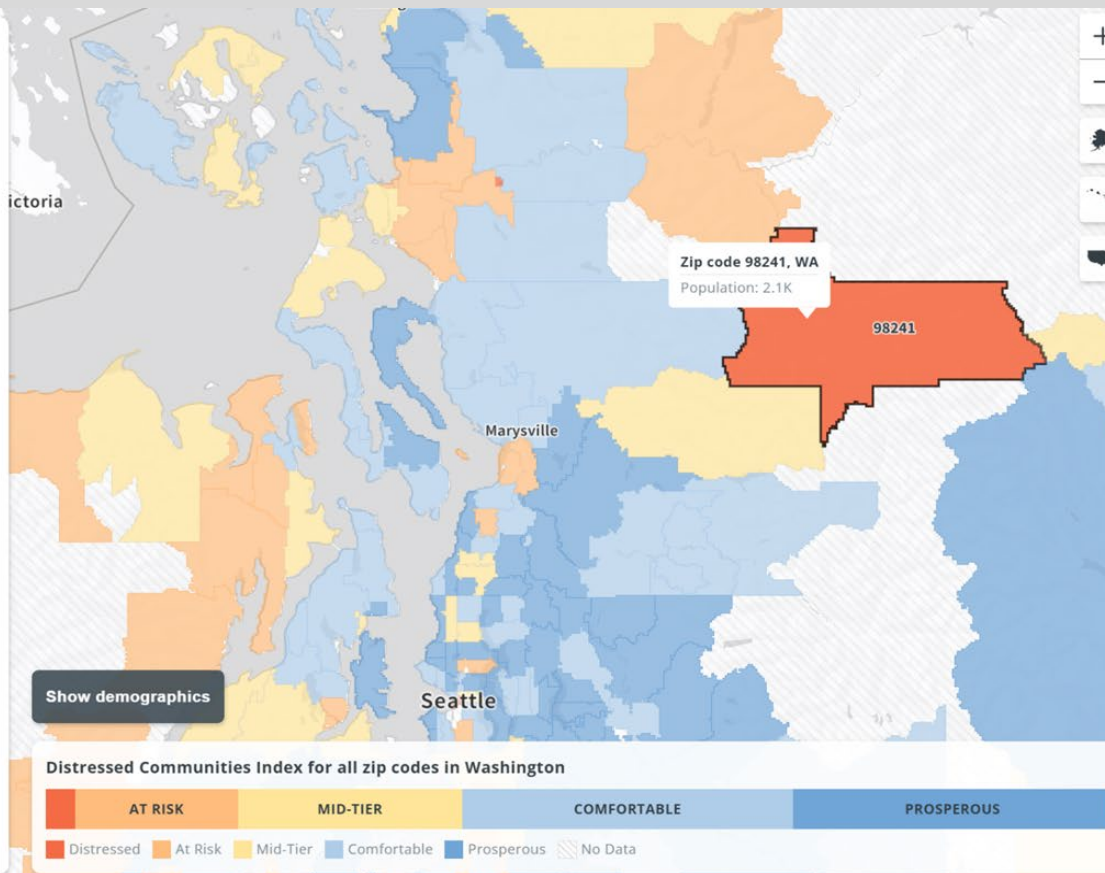


Nature: A powerful tool address youth risk factors

Search

Zip code 98241 (Darrington, WA) is **distressed** with a distress score of **93.2** and ranks 469 out of 474 zip codes in Washington.

- 1:25 youth mortality rate before age 30 (3x the national rate)
- Childhood poverty 30% vs. 8% SnoCo and 12% WA State average
- 82% HS graduation rate, lowest in the county
- Schools budgets cut by roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ over 30 years.
- Facing additional cuts of 20% of elementary teachers in 2025-2026



GPI & Extension Delivers UpStream Approaches to Intercept Negative Outcomes



- Limited after school programming or 1st job experiences available.
- Limited rural transportation, social services, medical, or mental health resources for youth and families.
- 0 Daycare options
- 0 Pharmacies

Our History

Born out of shared adversity

- On March 22nd, 2014, the deadly SR 530 Mudslide took 43 lives and devastated the Darrington Community which was (and is) still in hardship from the collapse of the forest economy of the 90s.
- In the wake of disasters, the community came together to heal and create a vibrant future leveraging youth, community and ecosystems.
- In the summer of 2014, Glacier Peak Institute began our first programs in outdoor recreation and career introductions.
- Snohomish County Extension is a critical partner

Vision

We imagine a world where:

- Our communities build resilience.
- Everyone has access to the outdoors and to care for it
- Youth and Community are empowered to grow and advocate for the landscapes they call home
- The Glacier Peak region has developed meaningful and mutually respectful partnerships across diverse peoples from urban and rural

Values

Place-Based: GPI connects youth to landscapes fostering stewardship rooted in the region's distinct ecological and cultural heritage.

People-Centered: GPI empowers young people through inclusive programs cultivating growth, resilience, and diverse perspectives.

Science-Focused Inquiry: GPI promotes evidence-based understanding and critical thinking through hands-on exploration and scientific methods in nature.

Diversity = Resilience: Across ecosystems, genetics, species, ideas, politics, peoples, economics and more, our differences give us grit to allow us to thrive.

A background photograph showing several people, including children and adults, working in a raised garden bed. They are planting small green seedlings into dark soil. The garden bed is bordered by wooden planks. In the background, there is a chain-link fence and some outdoor equipment.

Core Program Areas

Rural Outdoor Education

Rural-Urban Partnerships

Rural Workforce Development

Using Outdoor Education to empower Rural Youth & Leadership

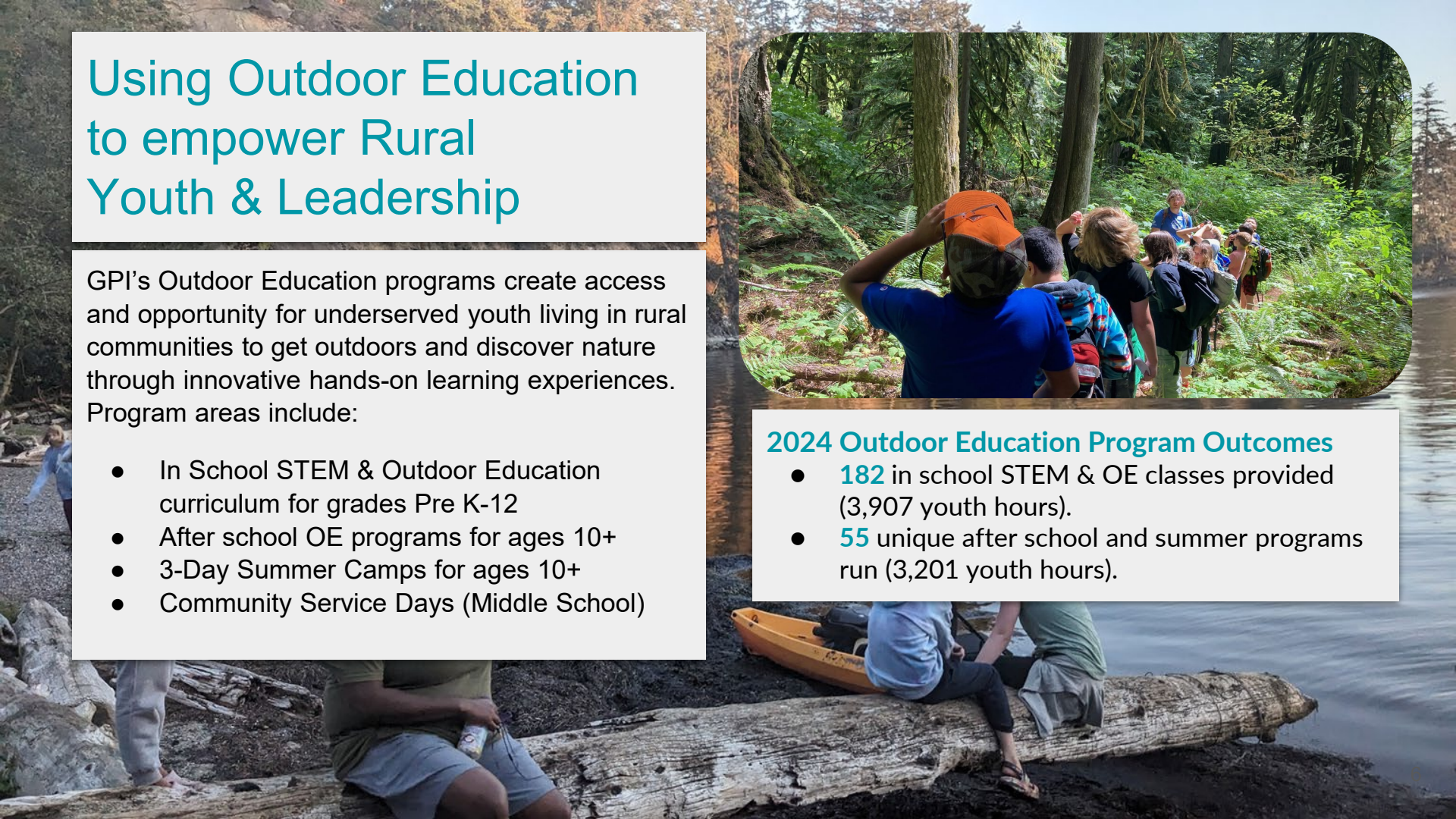
GPI's Outdoor Education programs create access and opportunity for underserved youth living in rural communities to get outdoors and discover nature through innovative hands-on learning experiences. Program areas include:

- In School STEM & Outdoor Education curriculum for grades Pre K-12
- After school OE programs for ages 10+
- 3-Day Summer Camps for ages 10+
- Community Service Days (Middle School)



2024 Outdoor Education Program Outcomes

- **182** in school STEM & OE classes provided (3,907 youth hours).
- **55** unique after school and summer programs run (3,201 youth hours).



Outdoor Education Empowers Rural Youth

GPI provides underserved youth in rural communities access to innovative hands-on STEM curriculum and OE learning experiences.

- In school classes for Pre K-12
- After school programs for ages 10+
- Summer camps for ages 7+
- Community Service Days (Middle School)



2024 OE Program Benefits & Impact Numbers

- Builds resilience, self-reliance, and fosters positive self-image.
- Gain skill and comfort with getting outdoors.
- Fosters positive social connections & team building.
- Supports positive academic performance.
- Raising up the next generation of environmental advocates.

In School STEM & OE Class

- **182** classes in rural schools
- **3,907** total hours of learning provided.

After School & Summer Camps

- **55** program events offered.
- **3,201** additional hours of outdoor education learning in rural communities









Using Outdoor Education to amplify BIPOC Youth Voices

GPI's Rural-Urban partnership programs create access and opportunity for BIPOC youth in urban communities to get outdoors. A few of our partners include:

- Project Girl - Lynnwood
- Connect Casino Road - Everett
- Korean Community Service Center - Edmonds
- Kulshan Creek Neighborhood - Mount Vernon
- Stillaguamish Tribe & Sauk-Suiattle Tribe

Bridging cultural gaps between rural & urban communities is core to our vision of diverse and inclusive communities where all people are empowered to enjoy nature and create sustainable futures.



2024 Rural - Urban Partnership Outcomes

- 214 youth served
- 63 hours of programs delivered
- 14 community partner organizations





STILLAGUAMISH
TRIBE OF INDIANS

Kulshan Creek



한인생활상담소

K C S C

Korean Community
Service Center



2024 Rural Urban Partner Benefits and Impact

Benefits

- Builds resilience, self-reliance, and fosters positive self-image.
- Gain skill and comfort with getting outdoors.
- Bridges cultural gaps between youth from rural and urban communities.
- Encourages the inclusion of BIPOC voices in environmental stewardship conversations.

Partnership Program Outcomes

- **14** Day adventure trips offered.
- **928** total hours of learning experiences provided.
- **214** underserved BIPOC youth participants.
- **8** community partnerships in Snohomish, Skagit, and King Counties.

Workforce Development Drives Economic Recovery & Sustainability

GPI provides opportunity for rural high school and young adult (18+) for paid hands-on training and career exploration in forestry, ecology, fire-mitigation and maintenance.

- **High School:** Forestry Institute & Trail Ambassadors (*under Extension from 2015-2022*)
- **Young Adult (18+):** Darrington Workforce Development Internships (2024)



GPI Youth Forestry Crew



Outdoor Work Crew (18+)



Using Workforce Development to drive Economic Recovery

GPI's creates access and opportunity for rural youth and young adults to explore careers in forestry, ecology, fire-mitigation, and basic maintenance through paid hands-on learning programs.

- Darrington Workforce Development Cohort
- Forestry Institute & Trail Ambassadors

WF programs drive economic recovery as local workers are equipped to perform essential forestry, ecology, and restoration work to keep those wages flowing into businesses in rural communities.



2024 Workforce Development Outcomes

- **181** workforce development class & project work days (7,559 experience hours)
- **19** youth and young adult participants
- **20** community partners provided mentors and work projects
- **21%** of cohort participants self-identified as LGBTQIA+

GPI Work Crew Partners and Projects

- US Forest Service
 - Trail and campground maintenance
 - Historic building renovation and facilities maintenance
 - Culvert surveys and timber pre-sale work
 - Wildlife monitoring
- Snohomish County Conservation District
 - Chipping Program
 - Firewise property assessments
- Skagit Land Trust (invasives control)
- Pacific Tonewoods (native plantings maintenance)
- Darrington School District (school garden and fencing)
- Skagit River System Cooperative (restoration site thinning)
- Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe (garden and campground maintenance)
- Concrete Bike Park



GPI Regional Partners & Impact



Thank You!!

Anthony Gromko Director
WSU Snohomish County Extension
Assistant Professor Community & Economic Development
anthony.gromko@wsu.edu
(971) 732-4155



Oak Rankin, Executive Director
Glacier Peak Institute
oak@glacierpeakinstitute.org
(206) 817-4665

