

# 2024-2025 Annual Report



# Snow to Sea

# PROGRAM



Snow to Sea is a three-year outdoor learning journey that follows the path of a water molecule across the Nooksack watershed—from the snowy headwaters of Mount Baker to the saltwater of the Salish Sea. Along the way, every Nooksack Valley Middle School student explores the landscapes that sustain our community—mountains, forests, farms, lakes, creeks, and bays—through hands-on field experiences led by seven community partners in collaboration with the Nooksack Valley School District.

Each step in the pathway builds knowledge, confidence, and connection. Students don't just study ecosystems—they find their place within them, discovering how human choices shape the health of the river, the sea, and their own futures. Snow to Sea sparks curiosity, belonging, and career inspiration, cultivating the next generation of watershed stewards.

## IN 2024-2025...



**472**

**Students Served**



**3679**

**Contact Hours**



**3424**

**Nature Hours**

“Thank you for letting us go on the field trip to your farm. My favorite part was picking out the blackberry hearts. I learned that the water from the rivers and the creek is very important to the watershed and is full of life and used for many things.”

**-7TH GRADE STUDENT  
NOOKSACK VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL**



## 6TH GRADE



Snow School



Whatcom Explorer:  
Mobile Watershed



Camp Saturna

## 7TH GRADE



Farm Tour



Garden of the Salish Sea  
Curriculum

## 8TH GRADE



Community Boating Center



“Our students thoroughly enjoyed every moment of the trip. The activities were not only engaging but also educational, providing them with a unique opportunity to connect with nature and learn in a hands-on environment.”

**- 6TH GRADE MATH & SCIENCE TEACHER  
NOOKSACK VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

# FIELD TRIPS



## WHATCOM EXPLORER: MOBILE WATERSHED

Whatcom Conservation District

Students get an introduction to the Nooksack River Watershed through a hands-on mobile watershed model and demonstration.



## SNOW SCHOOL

Mt. Baker Ski Area

Students visit the Mt. Baker Ski Area, traveling on snowshoes and working together in small teams to carry out a field investigation surrounding the current snow and weather conditions.



## CAMP SATURNA

Camp Saturna

Students investigate how Silver Lake and the surrounding creeks are connected to the Nooksack River watershed through interactive and hands-on activities. Additionally, students learn basic rock climbing and archery skills as part of the outdoor recreation program.



## FARM TOUR

Whatcom Conservation District

Students connect with local agriculture and explore the relationship between healthy water, healthy soil and healthy communities.



## GARDEN OF THE SALISH SEA CURRICULUM

Affiliate of the Pacific Shellfish Institute

Students learn marine science and stewardship using shellfish as a vehicle. Through the Salish Sea Challenge they learn to practice watershed healthy and climate friendly habits.



## COMMUNITY BOATING CENTER

Community Boating Center

Students set sail on Bellingham Bay and discover how the Nooksack Watershed affects the health of the Salish Sea through water sampling around the bay.



## VAMOS OUTDOORS CO-TEACHING

Vamos Outdoors Project

Instructors support field experiences across the Snow to Sea pathway program, providing co-teaching and additional support for Latine, Migrant, Multilingual and Newcomer students.

# WHEN THE CURRENT SHIFTS



## RESPONDING TO FUNDING IMPACTS

Just as rivers change course when currents shift, Snow to Sea now faces a moment of recalibration. The loss of nearly 85% in state funding through the Outdoor Learning Grant and the No Child Left Inside Grant threaten to cut off vital opportunities for Nooksack Valley students – experiences that nurture wellbeing, belonging, academic success, and career connected learning.

Snow to Sea is seeking gap funding to sustain our momentum in 2025-2026. We are seeking donations, funding partners, and new funding opportunities to continue to deliver our transformational pathway program. We continue to work towards securing multi-year grants and support for sustainable growth. We appreciate any contributions to address the funding cuts and strengthen our case for sustainable funding partnerships for many years to come.

The Whatcom Community Foundation has played a vital role in supporting the Whatcom Coalition for Environmental Education (WCEE) and the Snow to Sea pathway from the very beginning, and we are deeply grateful for their investment in getting WCEE off the ground and sustaining our work over the past five years.

With community support, we can adapt to these new conditions and ensure the current of outdoor learning continues to flow strong. By funding the Snow to Sea pathway program, you help safeguard a program that is not only transforming lives today but also setting a statewide model for equitable, collaborative education for generations to come.



**DONATE  
TODAY!**

# RIPPLES OF IMPACT

## Testimonials from Nooksack Valley School District Leaders



“The Snow to Sea program has been a transformative experience for our students at Nooksack Valley Middle School. Thanks to this opportunity, our students participated in the five outdoor field trips—from Camp Saturna and Mt. Baker to Birch Bay, local farms, and sailing on Bellingham Bay. For many of our students, these were first-time experiences in nature, particularly sailing, which was both thrilling and deeply impactful.

Beyond the excitement, these trips fostered student growth by encouraging them to take on new challenges, step outside their comfort zones, and connect with each other through shared adventures. We saw firsthand how these experiences built stronger peer relationships, increased engagement, and enriched learning in ways that can’t be replicated in a classroom. Each year, the curriculum becomes more intentional and better aligned, ensuring that the program continues to provide meaningful, standards-based outdoor education.”

**~Joel Vanderyacht**  
**Principal, Nooksack Valley Middle School**

# RIPPLES OF IMPACT

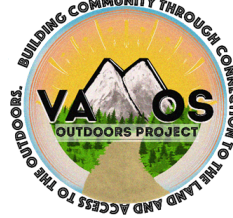
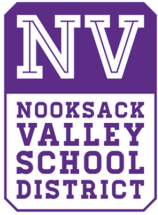
## Testimonials from Nooksack Valley School District Leaders



“Snow to Sea gives every Nooksack Valley middle school student the opportunity to explore the Nooksack watershed as both a classroom and a career pathway. From the snowfields to the Salish Sea, students engage in hands-on science, cultural learning, and environmental stewardship that connect their curiosity to real-world STEM and community careers. At Nooksack Valley Middle School, this program reflects our district’s commitment to equity, belonging, and relevance—helping students see themselves as capable scientists, caretakers of our place, and future leaders and positive contributors in their community.”

**~Megan Vigre**  
**Director of Teaching & Learning,**  
**Nooksack Valley School District**

# SNOW TO SEA IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF



"I think my favorite part of the field trip was all of it! It was absolutely amazing fun and I loved it there. It reminded me a lot of my grandma & grandpa's woods."

-7TH GRADE STUDENT,  
NOOKSACK VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



Snow to Sea has been supported through Washington State funds administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Representative Alicia Rule worked to secure funding for this pathway the past two years, as well as championed House Bill 2078: Outdoor Learning Grants, to expand outdoor education statewide. We are working together to ensure these lifelines of support return in the next biennium.



[www.whatcomenvironmentaleducation.com/snow-to-sea-program](http://www.whatcomenvironmentaleducation.com/snow-to-sea-program)