

Seattle Parks and Recreation's

CITYWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

YEAR IN REVIEW: 2023

REDUCING THE NATURE DEFICIT



572

TOTAL
PROGRAMS

103

ACTIVE
VOLUNTEERS

35

COMMUNITY
PARTNERS

15

INTERNAL
PARTNERS

9

COMMUNITY
FESTIVALS

TOTAL TOUCHES

20,334 people (youth and adults)

Through Seattle Parks and Recreation's (SPR) Environmental Education Programs, staff and highly trained volunteers, Seattle Urban Nature Guides, provide a variety of ways to connect with Urban Nature in Seattle parks. Programs are held year-round and located in parks, green spaces, community centers, schools, community gardens and many neighborhood-based locations.

Our work is dedicated to reducing the Nature Deficit, getting youth and families outside to enjoy their local parks and creating healthy communities.

In this report our work is divided into four types of Environmental Education Programming: School Programs, Community Partnerships, Public Programs, and Volunteerism. Our 2023 budget consisted of \$682,092 from the City General Fund - this covers the staff costs for 6 SPR permanent staff (the full-time equivalent of 4.85 staff, because 3 are part-time) and two summer temp staff who help expand programming in our busiest months. \$18,512 from the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) - generated by program fees and donations and supports one part time naturalist, volunteer program snacks and the purchasing of props and uniforms. \$23,000 from the No Child Left Inside grant awarded in 2021 (and ended in 2023) to run a youth mentorship and job training program.

If you would like to support the work of our team - please visit our fundraising page: <https://arcseattle.org/Citywide-Environmental-Education-Programs>

Follow us on [Facebook](#) to learn about up-coming public programs.

And remember our team might be small but we do a lot - please read below to see the amazing work we did in 2023.

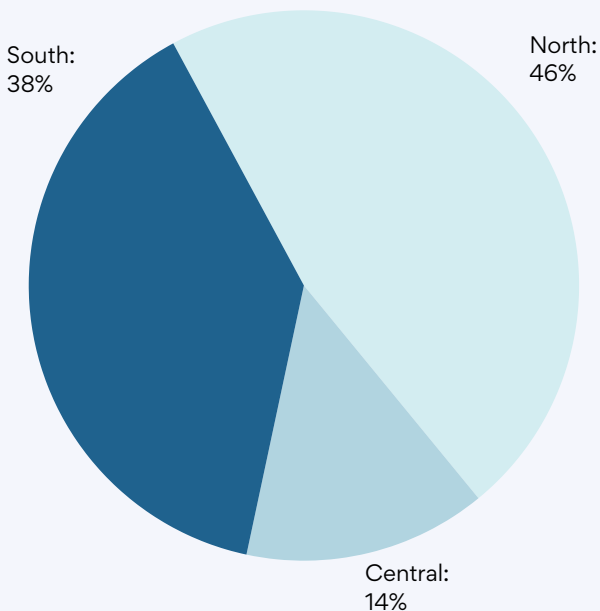


SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Environmental Education staff and volunteers provide pre-school through fifth grade field trips in Seattle parks (or nearby green spaces) for school classes and organized groups. Schools can choose from a variety of programs, from ponds and freshwater ecology to forests, bird or insect classes as well as other seasonal offerings such as spider programs, in the fall, and low tide beach explorations in the spring and summer.



School Programs by Region



65

total schools that participated in EE school field trip programming

29

schools that received free or reduced-price programming

8

free buses

335

school programs taught

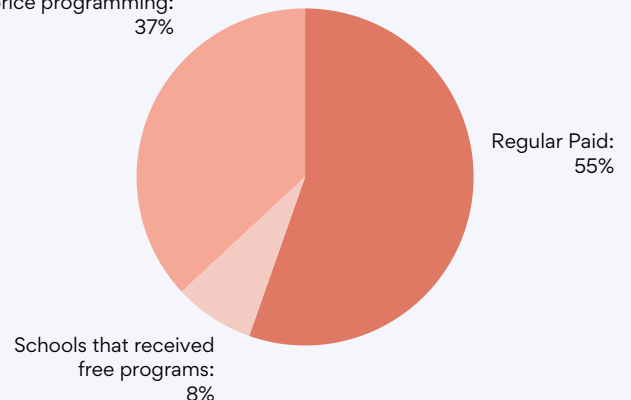
5034

attendees on school field trip programs
(618 adults, 4416 students)



School Programs by Scholarship

Schools that received reduced-price programming: 37%



SCHOOL PROGRAMS



HIGHLIGHT: SEATTLE WORLD SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

In 2023, there were 5 field trips reaching a total of 75 students.

This summer school partnership with SPR Environmental Education staff provides five outdoor field trips for newcomers and returning 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students at Seattle's World School. The goal of this program is to provide free, low-ratio, positive instruction to increase English language proficiency and retention, through engagement with the natural world and science.

HIGHLIGHT: TREE EQUITY AND EDUCATION (TrEE)

27 class days – broken into 85 different student sessions in the Maple School Ravine site.

344 High Schools Students participated.

2 SPR Environmental Education staff and 7 volunteers supported this partnership.

This partnership program between SPR's Environmental Education staff and Cleveland High School has integrated project-based environmental education for tree equity in the Lower Beacon Hill Neighborhood. 11th grade students (and teachers) learned about the history of tree cover inequities, collected data on the local canopy cover, bird species, soil composition and plant species of the nearby Maple School Ravine site, put in hours of habitat restoration work, removing species such as Himalayan Blackberry, Common Ivy, and excessive Italian Prunes as well as truck loads of garbage from the site before beginning to plant. In the fall of 2023 students and teachers planted hundreds of native plants to create a pollinator garden and orchard.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

215 programs

2560 participants

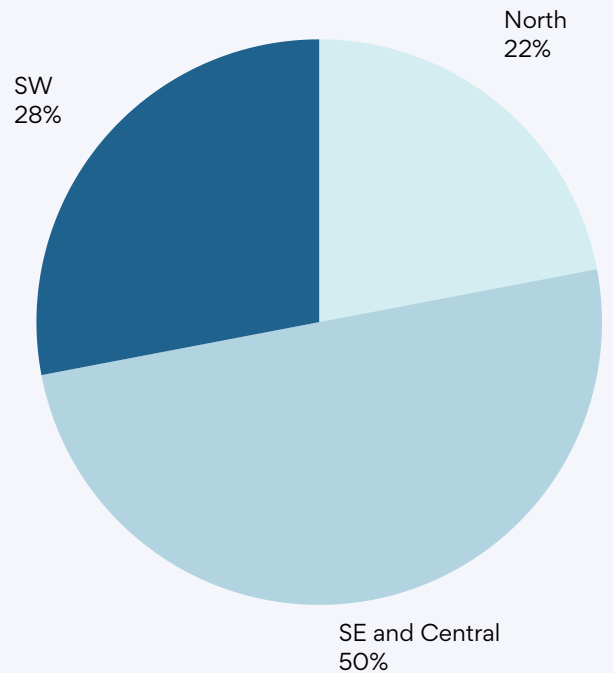
Using the Equity and Environment Agenda as our framework, Seattle Parks and Recreation Community Naturalists work across Seattle to partner with community-based organizations, connecting people with engaging and meaningful experiences in nature. We strive to collaborate with our partners to provide relevant outdoor and nature programming, within communities which historically have not had access to these resources. All community programming is 100% free.

35 community partners

Thank you to our community partners:

Seattle Housing Authority (Jackson Park Village, Cedarvale House, High Point, New Holly, Rainier Vista, Yesler) Kids & Paper afterschool programs, North Seattle Hunger Intervention Program, Duwamish River Community Coalition, Read-a-Rama, African Community Housing & Development, Beavers Northwest, Cascadia Museum, Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, Duwamish Alive Coalition, EPA, Haida Youth Dance, Islandwood, National Wildlife Federation, Seattle Aquarium, Sound and Fury Morris, Tilth Alliance, Twisted Pretzel Yoga, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Woodland Park Zoo, Art Maranth, Basilica Bio, Bronze Chapter, Casa Latina, Changing Habits And Motivating Personal Self-Esteem (CHAMPS), Holistic U, Latino Outdoors, Melanated Moon Mystics, University of Washington - Doris Duke Conservation Scholars, Odessa Brown Children's Clinic, Outdoor Asians, Parent Education Lab - PEL, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Seed of Life Center for Early Learning and Preschool, UW Botanic Gardens, Washington Education Association, Villa Comunitaria.

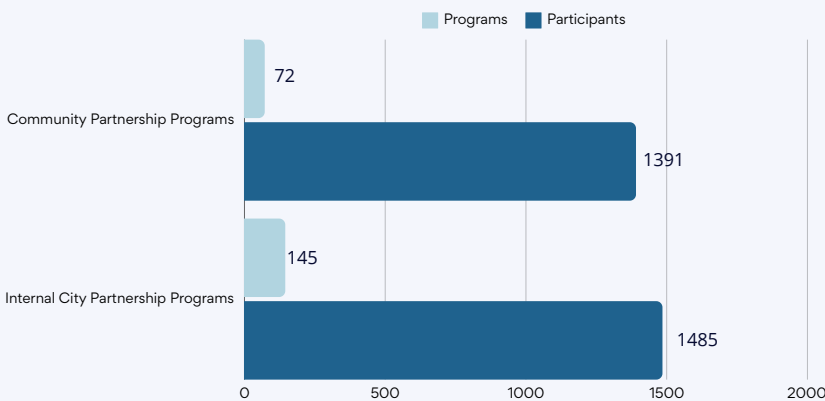
Community Programs by Region



15 internal partners

Thank you as well to our internal recreation programs and Community Center partnerships:

Garfield Community Center, High Point Community Center, High Point Library, Rainier Beach Community Center, Rec'N the Streets, South Park Community Center, South Park Library, SPR Specialized Programs, Van Asselt Community Center, Yesler Community Center, Camp Long ELC, Discovery Park ELC, SPR Lifelong Recreation (Sound Steps and Rainbow Rec), Seattle Public Utilities.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

9 community festivals

3924 nature interactions with the public at festivals

LIST OF FESTIVALS

- *Earth Day (High Point and Carkeek Park)*
- *Duwamish River Fest at South Park*
- *West Seattle Bee Fest*
- *Big Day of Play event at Rainier Playfield*
- *Juneteenth Celebration at Seward Park*
- *Trail or Treat event at Camp Long*
- *Mountain Fest at Camp Long*
- *Salmon Celebration Day at Carkeek Park*



HIGHLIGHT: SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY JOINT PROGRAMMING

Seattle Public libraries are an important entry point for community services and programs provided can range from English language classes to basic computer skills training. In 2023 SPR Community Naturalists partnered with South Park and High Point public libraries to bring environmental education classes to 258 people at 12 program days.

In the South Park neighborhood, Nicolasa worked with the community in their outdoor space and planting boxes and this led to the creation of the **South Park Sprouts Garden Club** which met Tuesday afternoons to learn the basics of gardening. Children from the neighborhood, ages 3-12, worked alongside parents and librarians to plant flowers and vegetables for the community to enjoy.

In the High Point neighborhood, Nicole partnered with the High Point SHA, and High Point Library to offer a program they called **Wildlife Wednesdays**. This program was centered on Indigenous stories and voices in order to honor the original caretakers of the land and to discuss Pacific Northwest animals and ecology from this perspective. Participants also received free books and the library gave away 250 books by Indigenous authors and storytellers.



VOLUNTEERISM

\$108,374
National Volunteer Value

103 total volunteers supporting EE programs

3408 volunteer hours donated

Our volunteers do everything from fundraising to teaching, they gain skills in customer service, public speaking, working with and teaching youth, guiding tours for families, and much more. Volunteers help support the environmental education staff and we could not do the work we do without our amazing volunteers.

HIGHLIGHT: DENNY AWARD

Seattle Urban Nature Guide of 17 years - Antja Mueller was awarded the 2023 Denny Award for Outstanding Volunteer Stewardship in the Healthy People category. Antja has led over 180 programs in the time she has volunteered with our team and she rides her bike to them all.



PUBLIC PROGRAMS



102 total programs

432 general participants

ARC Environmental Educators offer a variety of public nature programs. Enjoy learning about native plants, geology, bird identification, our urban forests, the beach at low tide and so much more. To register go to [Activity search | Seattle Parks and Recreation \(activecommunities.com\)](https://www.seattle.gov/activecommunities.com) and look for programs with the key words Nature and the Environment.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

HIGHLIGHT: SUMMER IN THE PARKS

10 parks

57 program days

1486 participants

Summer in the Parks is a nine-week drop-in nature program that visited 10 different parks, identified as free lunch sites for their communities in 2023. Environmental Education staff work with the Outdoor Recreation unit to offer free weekly nature activities for the families attending the Summer Food Service. The most popular activities this year were arts and crafts (build a spider and fish prints), insect catching, and nature scavenger hunts in groups or with parents. This is a 100% free program.



HIGHLIGHT: SALMON STEWARDS

10 program days

6040 participants



Salmon Stewards are volunteers trained by the Environmental Education team and staff from SPU to engage, educate, and inspire park visitors, drawn by the annual Piper's Creek salmon run at Carkeek Park. Volunteers can be found at Carkeek Park to answer your questions about salmon, Saturdays and Sundays 11am - 2pm, November - early December every year. This is a 100% free program.

