



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Environment, Sustainability, and
Outdoor Education

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Cross-Quarter Days - Celebrating the Seasons



Halloween, Day of the Dead, All Souls Day, and Samhain - Cultural Connections to the Fall Season

Cross-Quarter days are astronomical events and mark the halfway point between a solstice and equinox. Cultural celebrations like Halloween, Día de los Muertos, and Samhain are connected to the Cross Quarter Days, and provide opportunities for place-based learning by connecting students to seasonal changes, local ecosystems, and cultural traditions.

Through project-based activities, students can explore how these traditions relate to their local environment and understand the interplay between ecological, social, and economic systems.

Check out this [EarthSky](#) Article to learn more about the cross-quarter days and their role in the astronomical calendar.

Instructional Routines like sit-spot routines and observing phenomena such as changing leaves, daylength, or monarch butterfly migration support hands-on learning and deepen students' understanding of their surroundings. Observing natural phenomena, such as the migration of monarch butterflies, supports an understanding of how ecosystem components interact. This aligns with standards that emphasize understanding environmental systems and the role of different species within those systems. These activities align with Environmental and Sustainability Education standards that encourage using local environments for investigations and analyzing how natural settings and human-built structures influence each other. Such approaches help students connect to nature, observe local scientific phenomena, and foster a sense of personal and community responsibility for sustainable practices.



[More ideas for standards integration with activities are available here.](#)

Registration Ends Soon for the Growing Together Conference, Fish Wars Screening Announced, Professional Learning and Career Pathways



Registration ends November 3, so please register soon to join us at the upcoming [E3 Washington/Outdoor Schools Washington Growing Together Conference](#) at the Cispus Learning Center near Mt. Rainer in Randle, Washington on November 15–17.

Indigenous speakers will headline throughout the conference, and on Sunday afternoon we will wrap up the conference with an invitation for participants to join a screening of the critically acclaimed FISH WAR movie involving the 'renegade six.' The screening will be followed by a conversation hosted by Willie Frank III, son of Billy Frank Jr and Hweqwidi Hanford McCloud; grandson of Don McCloud one of the renegade six of the Fish War. The film and conversation are designed to provide context for a portion of Washington state's *Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty* curriculum. We encourage conversation on tribal sovereignty and environmental justice through your shared insights, questions, comments and open avenues for collaboration with Nisqually Indian Tribal community leaders to enrich your teaching and advocacy efforts. Don't miss this chance to inspire future generations to advocate for sustainability and engage collaboratively with Nisqually Indian Tribe Members Willie Frank III and Hweqwidi Hanford McCloud.

Join us for the continued reflection and discussion of **Washington's environmental and outdoor education career pathways and certification options**. We invite all environmental/outdoor educations to support the implementation of new and/or improvement of existing programs to

train and prepare educators statewide at the conference. In order to support environmental literacy, formal and nonformal educators from all corners of Washington will convene at the Environmental/Sustainability and Outdoor Education Certification Workshop session to examine the strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats (SWOT) in Washington’s environmental and outdoor education programs in Washington State. We will engage participants in continued reflection and discussion to support and build Washington’s environmental and outdoor education certification programs for all.

Student Environmental & Sustainability Literacy Summit Teacher Applications Due Soon



Do you have a group of students passionate about the environment and climate? If so, apply to bring them to the capital to share their ideas about the environment and sustainability with their state leaders and legislators! K–12 student teams from Washington State Public Schools and Tribal Compact Schools are invited to participate.

Important Dates

- September 17, 2023: Application Opens
- November 1, 2024: Final Application Deadline
- November 8, 2024: Notification sent to selected teams
- January 28 & 29, 2024: Environmental & Sustainability Literacy Student Science Summit and Day at the Capitol

[Learn more here.](#)

[Apply here.](#)

Environmental and Sustainability Education Resources

Are you seeking local resources for Environmental and Sustainability Education? Start here!

- [Washington Hub of the Open Educational Resources Commons](#) & the [WA OER Environmental Education Collection](#)
- US-ED Green Ribbon Schools program [WA OSPI nominates schools and districts. Applications coming soon.](#)



- [ClimeTime](#) NGSS and Climate Science Education: Check out the workshop calendar for items with free clock hours, including an air quality unit training from IslandWood, and so much more.
- [FieldSTEM](#) Integrated STEM with the Pacific Education Institute.
- [Bilingual Environmental Education](#) Equitable STEM with EarthGen.

Join the Washington Climate Educator Book Club



The 2024–25 Washington Climate Educator Book Club is part of the [ClimeTime](#) community. The Book Club’s book study is designed to flexibly support teams of interdisciplinary K–12 educators from schools and districts across Washington in exploring ways to integrate climate learning into all classrooms.

All Washington educators are climate educators! Exploring climate literacy and climate change can happen in **all** classrooms. Climate is not exclusive to science-specific standards. All K–12 educators can integrate locally relevant, community-focused climate literacy to support the diverse learners in their classrooms.

- Cost: This professional learning opportunity is FREE for Washington Educators (including books and Clock Hours)
- Clock Hours: 15 Clock Hours available (9 Equity, 6 STEM)
- Dates: Three Whole Group Sessions mid-November, February and May. Small groups meet asynchronously. All course work is due May 16, 2025.
- [2024-2025 Book Options](#): Each team will have the opportunity to choose from various books available for each book study term. Books are available on a first-come, first-served basis. OSPI will mail books to school locations of educator teams. Educators will be allowed to keep their books after the book study is concluded.
- How to Join: Have a team of at least two educators already? [Sign up here with your team’s information](#). Need help to find a team? [Sign up here to have OSPI help find you a team](#).
- Questions? Contact Lori Henrickson at lori.henrickson@k12.wa.us.

Community Education In Action: Collective Action through Co-design and Co-learning



Get ready for an exciting adventure with [Front and Centered](#), [ClimeTime](#), and our dynamic community partners. [Join Community Education in Action](#) to unleash your creativity to address climate change through the lens of environmental and climate justice!

****K–12 teachers in Washington State who complete the virtual or in-person workshops will receive clock hours.*

These workshops are intergenerational, with content appropriate for students from middle school to grandparents. We will have materials and prizes in all workshops, as well as

interpretation+translation English-Spanish. Food will be provided during the in-person workshops in Tacoma and Pasco.

Mini-grants for youth-based/led groups in Washington State available in January 2025 to co-create learning resources and apply to present during the in-person workshops!

Join virtually or in-person. Dates and locations:

- **Virtual: November 14, 2024** (4:30–6:00 PM): Understanding climate change through a just transition
- **Virtual: December 3, 2024** (4:30–6:00 PM): Exploring community, ecological, and climate resilience
- **Virtual: January 16, 2025** (4:30–6:00 PM): Cultivating Co-Design for Thriving Climate-Resilient Communities
- **In person: March 1, 2025** (8:30 AM–3:30 PM): Tacoma, WA
- **In person: March 22, 2025** (8:30 AM–3:30 PM): Pasco, WA

Save the Date...Be a host site...Share your work at the upcoming NISE-T workshops in March

OSPI will travel to the Seattle area in February, central, and eastern Washington in March to co-facilitate Nonformal/Informal Science Educator Teachers (NISE-T) workshops in partnership with the regional educational service district (ESD) for the area and local tribal nations. We are seeking tribal, school district/school personnel, and community-based collaborators who would like to highlight their programs during the workshops.



Save the Date to participate in one of the upcoming workshops.

- February 26, 2025, Puget Sound ESD 121
- March 13, 2025, around Walla Walla or anywhere in ESD 123
- March, date TBD, in ESD 171
- March 25, 2025, around Yakima or anywhere in ESD 105

If you are interested in partnering as a host site or to share your program highlights, please contact Sheila.Wilson@k12.wa.us and cc Elizabeth.Schmitz@k12.wa.us.

Apply for the US-ED Green Ribbon Schools Award!

Be highlighted by the US Department of Education as a national model for sustainability and environmental education. Learn how your PK12 school or district can apply for the 2025 US-ED Green Ribbon Schools Program. Honorees get cash prizes and may attend the US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Awards in Washington, DC.



Public and private schools and districts, along with early learning centers, are invited to apply. Rural schools and districts, nature-based pre-schools, and schools or districts serving above state average student populations of migrant and multilingual students or students with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Washington's applications will be released in mid-November 2024.

OSPI partners with honorees to celebrate successes at the state level, as well.

To learn more, email [Elizabeth Schmitz](mailto:Elizabeth.Schmitz@k12.wa.us) or drop in for Office Hours, 3:30–5 PM.

Topical Focus (3:30–4:30), Q&A + technical assistance (4:30–5 PM)

- [Wednesday, 11/13 Introduction to the Awards Program](#)
- [Wednesday, 11/20 Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact/Case Studies](#)
- [Thursday, 11/21 Pillar II: Improved Health and Safety/Case Studies](#)
- [Monday, 12/2 Pillar III: Integrated Environmental and Sustainability Education/Case Studies](#)
- [Tuesday, 12/3 Application: Student Engagement and Partners](#)
- [Monday, 12/9 Application: Technical Assistance](#)
- [Wednesday, 12/11 Application: Technical Assistance](#)

Cash awards are provided by the program's state sponsor, the Washington State Principals Education Foundation. Awards may be used to support Honoree travel to the US Department of Education Awards Event in Washington, DC, or to support further green school efforts. \$10,000 is divided equally among the number of confirmed honorees, which can range from 1 honoree to 5.

Call for Reviewers - Open Educational Resources for ESE and Science

The OSPI Open Educational Resource project seeks reviewers for materials submitted to the portal. Reviewers should be experienced in materials review and standards alignment for science and environmental/sustainability education. Please contact Barbara.Soots@k12.wa.us for more information.



[View and download the application here.](#)

National Park Service: Migration Friendly School Lesson Plan



This [Migration Friendly School lesson plan](#) for students in Grades 6–12 focuses on the question, “How can we make our school campus more bird friendly to support migratory birds?” Students learn to identify positive and negative factors affecting bird migration and will create an action plan for their school campus.

2025 President’s Environmental Student and Teacher Awards



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Education is requesting applications for the 2025 President's Environmental Youth Awards (PEYA) and Presidential Innovation Awards for Environmental Educators (PIAEE). These awards recognize outstanding environmental stewardship projects from students in Grades K–12 that promote environmental awareness and encourage community involvement and outstanding Grade K–12 educators who integrate environmental education and place-based learning into school curricula and school facility management across the country.

Applications for both awards are due no later than Monday, January 15, 2025.

Application and eligibility information is available on [EPA's PEYA page](#) for students and [EPA's PIAEE page](#) for teachers. For more information on the youth awards (PEYA), please email PEYA@epa.gov. For more information on the teacher awards (PIAEE), please email PIAEE@epa.gov.

Grant Opportunities for School Gardens and Outdoor Learning



- [Community Food Projects Grant RFA](#) **Due: 11/7/24**. The USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program released its annual Request for Applications (RFA). \$4.8 million is available for projects that build community food self-reliance and address food insecurity. Grants may range in amount from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for planning grants, and \$125,000 to \$400,000 for implementation grants. Eligible organizations include public food program service providers, tribal organizations, or private nonprofit entities, including gleaners are eligible to apply.
- [Karma for Cara Microgrants](#) Award Amount: \$250 to \$1k–K4C helps young citizen leaders execute and magnify their initiatives to help repair our world. Students 18 years of age and under may apply for funds between \$250 and \$1,000 to complete service projects in their communities throughout the United States. Applications can be submitted at any time but are reviewed quarterly following these deadlines: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Eligibility at a glance: Students 18 years of age and under in the US
- [Project Learning Garden](#) – Deadline: Rolling basis. Award Amount: \$6k supplies package including beds, cooking cart, and more. Captain Planet Foundation's Project Learning Garden Program is replete with opportunities to support inquiry-based, immersive

learning experiences in STEAM education for elementary students in the Seattle / Tacoma Metro Areas.

- [Shade Structure Grant](#) Deadline: December 15, 2024. Award Amount: Up to \$8k for the cost for shade structure materials and installation. The American Academy of Dermatology's (AAD) Shade Structure Program awards funds to schools, day-cares, parks, and other non-profit organizations for installing permanent shade structures where children 18 and younger learn and play.
- [Fruit Tree Planting Foundation Orchard Grant](#) - Deadline: Rolling basis. Award Amount: Donation of fruit trees and shrubs, equipment, on-site orchard design expertise and oversight, horticultural workshops, and aftercare training and manuals. Orchards are donated where the harvest will best serve communities for generations, at places such as community gardens, public schools, city/state parks, low-income neighborhoods, Native American reservations, international hunger relief sites, and animal sanctuaries. Open to nonprofits, NGOs, public schools, or government entities serving a charitable purpose.
- [High Mowing Organic Seeds Fundraiser](#): Are you planning a fundraiser for your school or non-profit? Selling seeds is a great way to integrate fundraising with lesson plans about sustainability, biology, economy and/or gardening and agriculture. In addition to a wide selection of individual seed packets, we also offer a variety of thoughtfully curated boxed collections. Schools get 50% on every sale.

NAAEE Conference in November

Join NAAEE, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators ([PAEE](#)), in Pittsburgh as we all come together to advance environmental literacy and civic engagement to create a more just and sustainable future. The NAAEE Annual Conference & Research Symposium kicks off with [field trips](#) ranging from a visit to Frank Lloyd Wright's masterwork, Fallingwater, to the LEED Platinum cutting-edge Frick Environmental Center.



[Register today!](#) *If you are a member of NAAEE, you'll receive an email with a code for your discounted registration rate. Please check your inbox*

Learn your Trees with Washington State Parks



Tree IDing can be a challenge! Indeed, there's a lot to untangle, like confusing jargon and terms, unpronounceable Latin names (it's a dead language for a reason, folks!) and similar-looking species.

Over the coming months, Washington State Park's Arbor Crew will write blog posts to highlight favorite tree species, interesting tree specimens in Washington State Parks, memorable tree stories and natural history. They will share fun facts, children's tales and other cool methods to learn about trees in our parks.

[Start with this first blog post on the Douglas Fir](#) — and stay tuned for more throughout the fall and winter.

Join Washington's Team to Celebrate America's 250th Anniversary



How does the history of our country, region, and state impact your work in outdoor and environmental education? What significant events would you like to elevate? Plans are already underway for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Washington State has established an official state committee to plan events and activities, and recently launched the official America250 WA website.

Visit America250WA.org to get the latest news and helpful resources to plan and participate in commemorative activities.

They are asking organizations around the state (education, libraries, history, arts, cultural, government, Tribal, businesses, community, etc.) to join the America250 WA team and sign up as a partner to help us truly make this a statewide observance.

For more information about plans for the 250th in Washington, please contact info@america250wa.org.

Education for Environment and Sustainability supports academic success and life-long learning and develops a responsible citizenry capable of applying knowledge of ecological, economic, and socio-cultural systems to meet current and future needs.

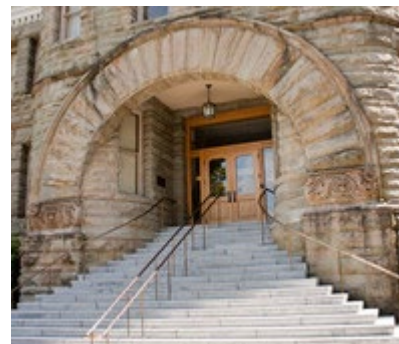
Environmental education is a mandatory area of study in Washington:

[K-12 Integrated Environment and Sustainability Learning Standards](#)



ALL STUDENTS PREPARED FOR POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS, CAREERS, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

Led by State Superintendent Chris Reykdal, OSPI oversees K-12 public education in Washington state. Our mission is to provide funding, resources, tools, data and technical assistance that enable educators to ensure students succeed in our public schools, are prepared to access post-secondary training and education, and are equipped to thrive in their careers and lives.



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