

# THREE YEARS OF CLIMETIME

Inspiring teachers to use the outdoors and teach climate change

Initiated in 2018, Washington State Legislature created a proviso to support climate science in education. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in partnership with the University of Washington offered grants to host “ClimeTime” professional development for teachers focused on Next Generation Science Standards, climate science, outdoor education strategies and an increased emphasis on traditional ecological knowledge through indigenous partnerships.

Four partner organizations, **Common Threads, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, RE Sources, and Wild Whatcom**, have joined together three years in a row to provide teacher professional development opportunities focused on bringing local climate change phenomena-based lessons to teachers of Whatcom County. Teachers have reported positive changes about their knowledge, behavior and attitudes about putting outdoor learning and climate science into action in their classrooms. The data compiled here was gathered from teacher post workshop surveys (2019) and pre- and post-workshop surveys (2020, 2021).

## 2018-19

- 40 participants
- 600 total hours (15 clock hours per teacher)
- Grades K-12 teachers
- 98% planned to incorporate climate science into their classroom after the training

Partners: NWESD 189, Garden of the Salish Sea, North Cascades Institute

## 2019-20

- 32 participants
- 480 total hours (15 clock hours per teacher)
- Grades K-5 teachers
- 94% planned to incorporate climate science into their classroom after the training

Partners: NWESD 189, Lummi, NWIC, WWU - SMATE

## 2020-21

- 36 participants
- 342 total hours (8-10 clock hours per teacher)
- Grades 3-5 teachers
- 97% planned to incorporate climate science into their classroom after the training

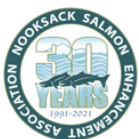
Partners: NWESD 189, Lummi, NWIC, various BPS teachers



## What motivates teachers to sign up?

Over three years of data, most teachers signed up because of a combination of an interest in teaching and understanding climate science, a need to earn STEM/clock hours, and a desire to connect or collaborate with their colleagues. In later years, many also signed up because it was recommended by a peer.

This project, through the ClimeTime network, maximized the strengths and expertise of several community-based organizations while utilizing existing programming and relationships with school districts and teachers. Our unique approach provided teachers a multi session opportunity to build their science teaching practices during supported interactions outdoors on school grounds working with area tribal partners.



# TRENDS OVER THREE YEARS OF CLIMETIME

**1** EACH YEAR, 94-98% of TEACHERS SAID THEY WOULD INCORPORATE CLIMATE SCIENCE INTO THEIR CLASSROOMS AFTER ATTENDING TRAINING



**2** NEARLY ALL TEACHERS PLAN TO USE THE OUTDOORS IN THEIR LESSONS AFTER CLIMETIME

97.5% of teachers in 2021 said they planned to use the outdoors more

53% of teachers in 2020, and 58% in 2021 had increased comfort levels in using the outdoors for lessons

**3** 53% (2021) and 58% (2020) OF TEACHERS REPORTED FEWER BARRIERS IN TEACHING OUTDOORS AFTER ATTENDING TRAINING

One teacher who thought they needed lesson ideas, volunteer experts or organizations, and money/grants for buses said after the workshop: *"You can teach climate change in ANY setting!"*

**4** AN AVERAGE OF 61% OF TEACHERS OVER THREE YEARS FELT MORE COMFORTABLE AFTER THE TRAINING TO CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SET UP LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

*"It was great to meet folks from local organizations and learn many strategies for engaging kids outside."*  
- teacher participant

**5** 97% OF TEACHERS IN 2021 HAD AN INCREASED DESIRE TO CONNECT CLASSROOM CONTENT TO EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AFTER ATTENDING TRAINING



**6** WE HAVE SEEN MULTIPLE YEARS OF SUCCESS IN TEACHING HOW TO MITIGATE RISKS WHEN TAKING STUDENTS OUTSIDE

90% (2021) and 84% (2020) of teachers reported increased comfort with using a Risk Assessment Matrix (RAM).

In 2019, 62.5% said learning about a RAM made them feel more comfortable teaching outdoors.

**7** CLIMETIME IS RECOMMENDED BY NEARLY EVERY TEACHER PARTICIPANT!

In 2021, 97% of teachers recommended ClimeTime!

Many of the 2021 teacher participants signed up based on recommendations by previous years' teacher participants.

**8** 67% OF TEACHERS WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

*"This course really helped me develop an understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing. I am so excited to continue the work in my classroom and also continuing to learn about the Coast Salish ways of knowing that I can integrate into my units of instruction."* - teacher participant

**9** TEACHERS' COMFORT LEVEL WITH NGSS ALIGNMENT INCREASED BY 25% AFTER CLIMETIME



## Now what? Next steps

To build on the past successes of ClimeTime, we propose to offer training that will:

- Continue to incorporate indigenous ways of knowing and provide more opportunities for cultural connections with our local tribes.
- Provide resources teachers can utilize in a classroom or outdoor setting that leaves them confident and prepared to teach place-based climate science and social justice.
- Scaffold courses so returning teachers can build on their prior experience and training and as well as deepening their knowledge in preferred areas..
- Prioritize historically underserved schools
- Draw on the expertise of all our community partners.

