



Glacier Peak Institute

5-Year Strategic Plan

2021-2026

July 20, 2021

We are called Glacier Peak Institute because:

We are place-based. The region near Glacier Peak in Western Washington is globally unique. Its active geology, dynamic rivers, vibrant ecosystems, and people are integral components of a landscape that was shaped by this mountain. We believe that environmental education is most effective if it aligns with natural boundaries. Glacier Peak Institute focuses its work in the region whose natural history and community identity have been influenced by Glacier Peak.



OUR VISION

GPI grew from the idea that our biggest assets are our youth and our natural resources. We imagine a world where:

- Our community builds resilience.
- People have many opportunities to participate in healthy, socially-meaningful outdoor exploration and recreation.
- Youth learn to think creatively, work collaboratively, and develop sustainable lifestyles and careers.
- Community members are engaged in the study of the science, history, and economy of the region and participate as well-informed stakeholders in decisions that affect the public interest.
- People living in the Glacier Peak region regularly share their knowledge, perspective, and experience regarding the outdoors with a diverse range of people.

OUR MISSION

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).



OUR VALUES We are a Place-based, People-centered, Science-focused Organization.

Place-based: Rural is Cool! The region near Glacier Peak in Western Washington is globally unique in its peoples, culture, traditions, and geography.

- **Shaped by a Mountain** - Active geology, dynamic rivers, vibrant ecosystems, and human communities are literally shaped by Glacier Peak.
- **Natural Boundaries** - Our environmental education is crafted with respect to naturally occurring boundaries, focusing on the Skagit and Stillaguamish watersheds.
- **Inclusivity** - As a 4-H partner we wholeheartedly support their inclusion statement:
“For more than 100 years, 4-H has been the nation’s leading youth organization to welcome young people of all beliefs and backgrounds, giving youth a voice to express who they are and how they make their lives and communities better.”
- **Sustainability** - Healthy ecosystems and sustainable communities are inextricably linked. Healthy forest management leads to healthy communities. Sustainable landscapes are working landscapes. People lived here 10,000 years ago, and will live here in 10,000 years.
- **Grassroots Resiliency** - Nature teaches people about resiliency and challenges us to go beyond personal limitations.

People-centered:

- **Growth Mindset** - Anyone can grow through focused dedication of time, effort and energy.
- **Inclusive Approach** - We all grow better when all voices are included.
- **Grit** - Embracing challenge and hard work fosters resilience.
- **Diversity** - We actively seek underrepresented perspectives, including but not limited to rural voices and Black, Brown, and Indigenous voices.
- **Empathy**- We prioritize the youth who are most at-risk. We create supportive environments where they can collaborate, develop, and succeed.

Science-focused:

- **Evidence-Based** - We value evidence-based practices and scientific methods.
- **Inquisitive Exploration** - We believe in careful observation, asking questions and engaging critical thinking to understand and appreciate nature.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To achieve our vision we have the following strategic priorities that will define our direction over the next five years. **Our strategic priorities are the following:**

1) **Strengthen** Existing Programming:

- Coordinate with school districts to further align in-school programming with the Next-Generation Science Standards (NGSS) curriculum.
- Review lesson plans and curriculum so that programs can be efficiently and effectively repeated.
- Develop a system to measure the effectiveness of our own program outcomes.

2) **Grow** New Programming

- Broaden programs to include ages preK—grade 13 (one year post-high school)
- Strengthen relationships with school districts and teachers to support alignment with curriculum needs.
- Create programming opportunities that are accessible to and meaningful for underserved urban communities.
- Develop programs for partner organizations including tribes.

3) **Build Capacity** in Rural Youth and Communities

- Provide opportunities to help rural youth develop careers and advocate for policies that support the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the region.
- Advocate to improve youth, school districts, and communities by creating access to transportation, gear, equipment, and mentorship.
- Training and programming center for youth development in trail crew, restoration, traditional skills, ecotourism, and outdoor recreation.

4) **Develop as Regional Hub**

- Support opportunities for rural youth to support the environmental, social, and economic viability of the region.
 - Support opportunities for youth participation in regional environmental research.
 - Facilitate public input in local decision-making.
 - Actively connect scientists to local communities through:
 - Building collaboration with teachers in local schools.
 - Creating curriculum and programming for experiential, science-based learning.
 - Facilitating regional communication with stakeholders
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IMPLEMENTATION

We have identified 10 initiatives to implement the strategic priorities.

#	Strengthen Existing Programming
1	Expand urban/rural/tribal exchanges: Create outreach plan Expand PreK/Family programs Launch accreditation task force Increase urban school partnerships & offerings (5th grade)
2	Document & define curriculum in connection with professional networks
3	Outcome measurement
4	Improve teacher/school communication
Grow New Programming	
5	Incorporate Life Skills into Greenhouse programs.
6	Expand GPI Gear Library
7	Permanent Facility
Build Capacity in Youth & Community	
8	Create a training center & Social Enterprise Develop "13th Grade" pilot program in Darrington
9	Include youth in advocacy & career development
Regional Hub	
10	Outreach plan for scientific community develop science speaker series partner on regional environmental research

This is an ambitious plan, and dependent on resources and capacity. We will prioritize those initiatives that increase our impact. When resources are limited, we choose activities that increase either the number of youth we contact or the amount of time we spend with them.



TIMELINE (who, what, when?)

YEAR 0 (2021)

Finalize Strategic Plan, continue work on in-process initiatives.

Start those initiatives that can be handled by current resources (staff, funding, facility)

Year 0	Document & define curriculum in connection with professional networks	Current VISTA curriculum developer
Year 0	urban/rural/tribal exchanges: Launch accreditation task force	Recruit volunteers for committee Committee coordinator TBD
Year 0	Permanent Facility - define needs and start planning Goal: launch capital campaign 2024	Current Housing Committee becomes the "Facilities Committee"

YEAR 1 (2022)

Education Coordinator starts (full-time, permanent staff position)

Start work on the following initiatives:

Year 1	Expand PreK/Family programs	Education Coordinator
Year 1	urban/rural/tribal exchanges: Create outreach Plan	VISTA Capacity Building
Year 1	urban/rural/tribal exchanges: Improve Teacher/school communication	Education Coordinator
Year 1	Life Skills into Greenhouse program.	Programming Team
Year 1	Expand GPI Gear Library	VISTA Resource Developer
Year 1	Include youth in advocacy & career development	1-2 interested teens shadow ED
Year 1	Outreach plan for scientific community	ED and Board Ed Chair

YEAR 2 (2023)

Economic Development Coordinator starts (full-time, permanent staff position)

Expand WSC AmeriCorps roles - add 2 positions (to be supervised by Education Coordinator)

Start work on the following initiatives:

Year 2	Develop "13th Grade" Pilot Program	Economic Development Coordinator
Year 2	urban/rural/tribal exchanges: Increase Urban School Partnerships (5th grade)	Accreditation Task Force & Programming Team
Year 2	Outreach plan for scientific community develop science speaker series partner on regional environmental research	ED and Board Ed Chair

YEARS 3 THROUGH 5 (2024-2026) Continue work on long-term goals

Finalize permanent facility plans and launch Capital Campaign

Start work on the following initiative:

Year 3	Start plans for Training Center & Social Enterprise	Economic Development Coordinator
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