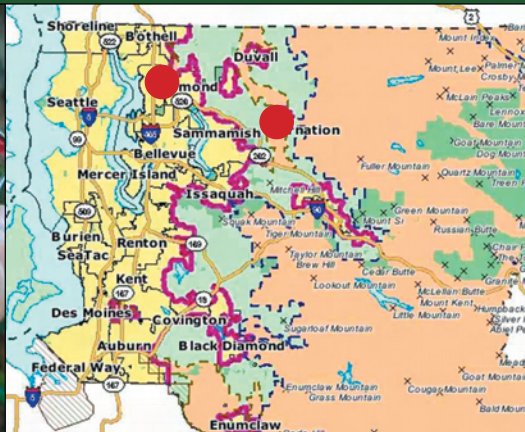


URBAN RURAL CONNECTIONS – A WHOLE KING COUNTY



Kids Caring for Our Watershed

Nature Vision Inc, Redmond

A student sits by the side of the trail, his head bent over his journal. Originally reluctant to sit and make contact with the ground, he artistically reproduces intricate lines of a tree snag, the needles of the Douglas-fir with pencil to page. After fifteen minutes of journaling, it is time for lunch. “Dang! It can’t be time yet!” says the boy, part of a forest ecology program for high-risk sixth graders.

The guiding naturalist shared this account with the boy’s classroom teacher at lunchtime. The teacher relates that it is truly remarkable that this student became so engrossed in sketching his observations, since this is a student who has difficulty focusing on his work. In addition, this urban child has had little to no experience in an outdoor wooded setting. Being outdoors, the teacher said, has changed him.

There are countless such anecdotes shared among Nature Vision naturalists. Living in urban areas, often in apartment complexes, many of these students have never had the opportunity to leave their sidewalks, much less explore the forest.

A nationwide study, Closing the Achievement Gap, published by the WA State Office of Superintendent of Public Education, reveals the use of teaching outdoors in natural settings improved standardized test scores, fostered enthusiasm, and engagement in the learning process, promoted inquiry-based critical thought and developed reflective thinking and stewardship values.

Nature Vision works to connect kids with nature. We believe we can truly bring about positive change that sets the course for improved health for our environment and its citizens for generations to come.



Nature Vision
www.naturevision.org

Riverview School District, Carnation Elementary

“Is Griffin Creek healthy now?”

“YES!” shouted Carnations Elementary’s 3rd graders.

“Does Griffin Creek need to be healthy 10 years from now?”

“YES!” they exclaimed again looking at results of the water tests.

“Does Griffin Creek need to be healthy 100 years from now?”

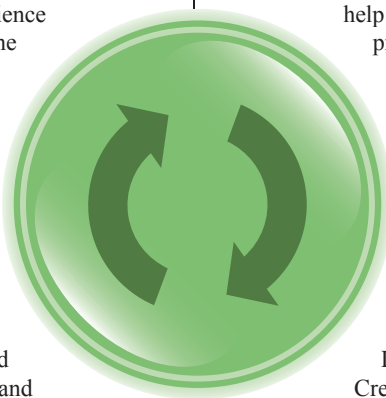
“YES!”

“Great!” said the guiding naturalist, “then let’s get to work, Water Warriors!”

These students are in Blue Teams, groups of local students involved in watershed action projects. Teams receive Nature Vision’s help in planning, preparing for, and executing their projects at school or at an off-campus project site.

The Carnation Elementary students call themselves the “Water Warriors” to express their fight for a healthy watershed. They first studied stream ecology to understand what a healthy creek looks like and appreciate its role in the larger watershed ecosystem. Then they tested Griffin Creek for water quality indicators such as dissolved oxygen, pH, and freshwater invertebrate counts. Armed, with this new knowledge base, they decided to pull a large-spreading crop of English Ivy that was threatening an area around Griffin Creek. In just a short time, they had cleared the ivy from several large Doug-fir trunks, and uncovered an area where native ferns were being choked out. They plan to continue their mission throughout the spring and are even talking about taking on more watershed projects as 4th graders.

We are proud of our Blue Teams in King County because it is a group of kids that are leading the way to a healthier future of our watershed



 **PRKC**
Partnership for Rural King County



Building Bridges to the Future