



Impact Report

Fiscal year 2020-2021

Impacting the Community

The Environmental Science Center (ESC) is a nonprofit organization offering many experiential environmental education programs at beaches, streams, gardens, and forests in south King County of Washington.

ESC was founded in 2000 and supports environmental stewardship for thousands. Engagement continues with growing numbers of school districts, community groups, organizations, municipalities and individuals.



Focusing our programs in south King County means many of our participants speak English as a second language, are new to the United States, and live in communities of color. These communities have systemically been excluded from safe, positive outdoor experiences. We strive to change this by offering free or low-cost programs, building and maintaining meaningful partnerships, and by creating safe and affirming spaces within our programs and the broader community.

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the format of our programs, but expanded our goals and reach to provide more equitable and accessible nature opportunities. As we adapt to change, our core values and the needs of our communities will guide us toward more novel forms of environmental stewardship.

8,404 PARTICIPANTS



1,313

free science kits
helped students
learn from home

3,008

students virtually
visited a waterway
or shoreline

9,343

contact hours in
community and
school programs

A Boost of Technology

In typical years, ESC Naturalists guide thousands of students in outdoor field studies. Water quality investigations occur along salmon streams and observations of marine adaptations are held on low-tide shorelines. The pandemic challenged us to operate differently and bring the outdoors to students' home classrooms.

ESC received two technology grants, which helped boost our equipment and adapt our popular Salmon and Beach Heroes programs to a virtual format. An actual signal booster, microphones, cameras, iPads, and many, many hours of troubleshooting allowed us to have live virtual teaching from salmon streams and intertidal habitats.

This fiscal year, nearly 4,500 students became a Salmon Hero or Beach Hero. They asked live questions of naturalists in the field, assisted in observation of species and habitats, and offered ways to help these vital natural systems.



MISSION & CORE VALUES

The Environmental Science Center promotes environmental stewardship and academic achievement through science-based education. If our interactions align with our core values, we'll know we truly CARED.



Community
engagement

Academic
achievement

Respect for the
environment

Equity &
access

Discovery &
exploration

C **ommunity engagement**

Everyone can have positive impacts on their community.



743

participants in

13 live online
public nature
programs

Online Programs with Interactive Elements

When we couldn't meet in nature, we met people where they were, at home and online. Community members joined us in a dozen virtual events for all ages. Beach walks, cleanups, bird counts, toddler times and lectures helped them learn how to make positive impacts in their watershed. In winter, nearly 200 folks stayed warm and dry on virtual Moonlight Beach Walks at Seahurst Park. They pointed to sea stars on their screens and chatted live with naturalists, who joyfully juggled tripods, iPads, flashlights and headsets on cold, windy nights.

Replays of these, and other, intimate experiences, are available to watch. They include webinars on how to improve conditions of plants, birds, the shoreline, local waterways, and mental health. Even online, 110 people joined live for the Protecting our Watershed Series, and 118 for Bird Fest. Many left helpful feedback on what they learned and how the online format was more accessible to them. Participants were eager for more interactions throughout the year, so we created new seasonal online Nat Chats and in-person Bird & Plant Walks that occur into 2022.



“Seawalls can have a negative impact on diversity, plants are the lungs of our world and learning to count birds is cool!”

-Participant of Protecting Our Watershed Series

Academic achievement

Education improves quality of life and career opportunities.



468

hours teachers
invested in outdoor
science lessons to
share with students

Expanding Teacher Tool Kits

Safety restrictions prohibited us from working directly with students. This made it imperative to offer teachers ways to create intimate experiential experiences for their classes outdoors.

Our new workshop series From Salmon Heroes to Schoolyard Heroes gives instructors the tools and the confidence to teach students outside, and to empower them to make positive changes to their school grounds.

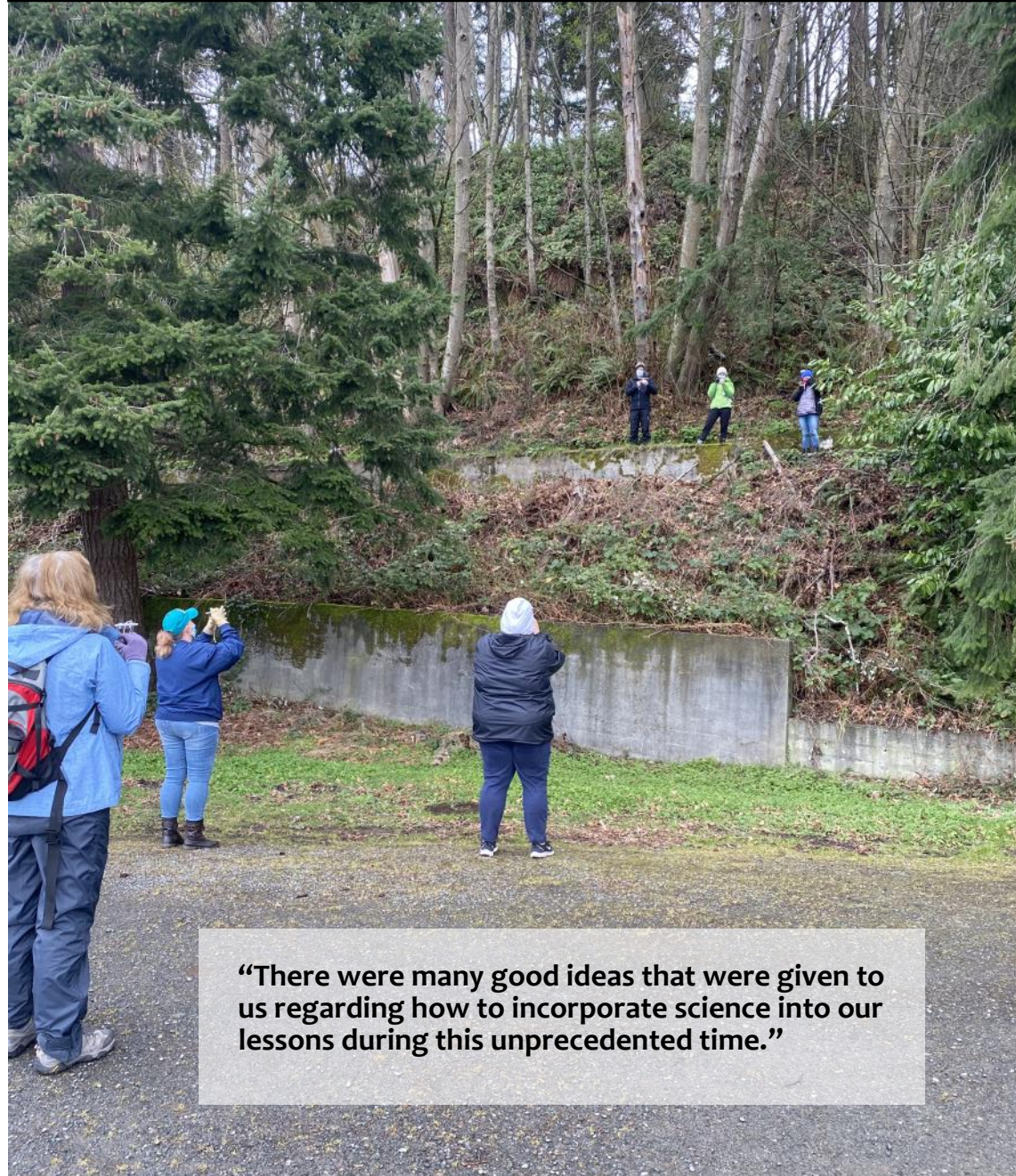
Reaching teachers during this critical time supported the ongoing process of turning schoolyards into safe, accessible green spaces for all in the neighborhood.

Last spring, 26 teachers dedicated 18 hours to learn tips and tricks for outdoor lessons. This included guiding and supporting students in creating their own nature stewardship action projects on campus and beyond.

Outfitted with a bucketful of materials and a variety of lessons, teachers completed the workshop inspired to lead outdoor lessons and habitat improvements.



“The content was extremely appropriate for local use. I feel more equipped to utilize hands-on materials and lessons. I feel like this can be used in other places as well as the skills are transferrable. I appreciate the utilization of newer concepts without the ‘we’ve always done it this way’ attitude. It was fresh, fun, and inspiring.”



“There were many good ideas that were given to us regarding how to incorporate science into our lessons during this unprecedented time.”

Respect for the environment

Our environment benefits from choices rooted in respect for the natural world.



310
hours of teen
interpretation
and restoration

Respect Comes Natural to Youth Leaders

ESC was lucky to work with and learn from the dedicated students and staff of Waskowitz Environmental Leadership School. In the fall, ten Junior Naturalists had virtual trainings and presented online lessons of Salmon Heroes to younger students. They focused on topics of watershed pollution, native plants, and sense of place and site history. In the spring, seven leaders supported our virtual Beach Heroes program at Seahurst Park. They shared unique adaptations of marine animals and ways to protect them.



In the spring, ESC was excited to assist New Start High School students again in their restoration work of Burien community green spaces. A pilot program in 2022 will encourage students to become New Start “Shark Garden” Stewards on campus and includes stipends for their efforts.

Insights from Salmon Heroes Junior Naturalists

“It is important to teach the students conservation and protection of animals and land, especially with such a sought-after fish like salmon.”

“I loved hearing all the students answer my questions.”

“It was really fun seeing all the kids enjoying and participating in the program.”

“It helps the students understand more about nature and how to enjoy nature! It’s a really special program.”



E

quity & access

Everyone should have access to quality science education and exploration.



1,313

free science kits
were delivered to
families throughout
the school year

Reaching Students Where They Are

ESC listened closely to community needs during this disconnected time and adapted our programs to improve accessibility. When Covid-19 first hit south King County, we began translating and delivering science kits to our community partners. Our goal was to help families continue making nature observations safely, and to conduct experiments from home that inspire further stewardship actions. These kits continued to enhance engagement during the school year programs.

All components of our school programs were made available as either live lessons or pre-recorded videos in both English and Spanish. This supported teachers who had less instruction time, but felt it was valuable to incorporate our programs. Our annual Seattle Aquarium tour was also made virtual with interpretation in Spanish and Amharic.

We received generous funding to translate all written materials for our popular school programs into Spanish, Somali and Vietnamese. Field journals were translated and delivered to each school to enrich online field trips for students, and our bilingual naturalists offered live virtual lessons from the field in English and Spanish. Downloadable translated family flyers were also shared with teachers to help students continue conservation discussions with their friends and families.



Anatomía del salmón (Dissección) con Naturalista Vale



Macroinvertebrate Sampling at Mill Creek



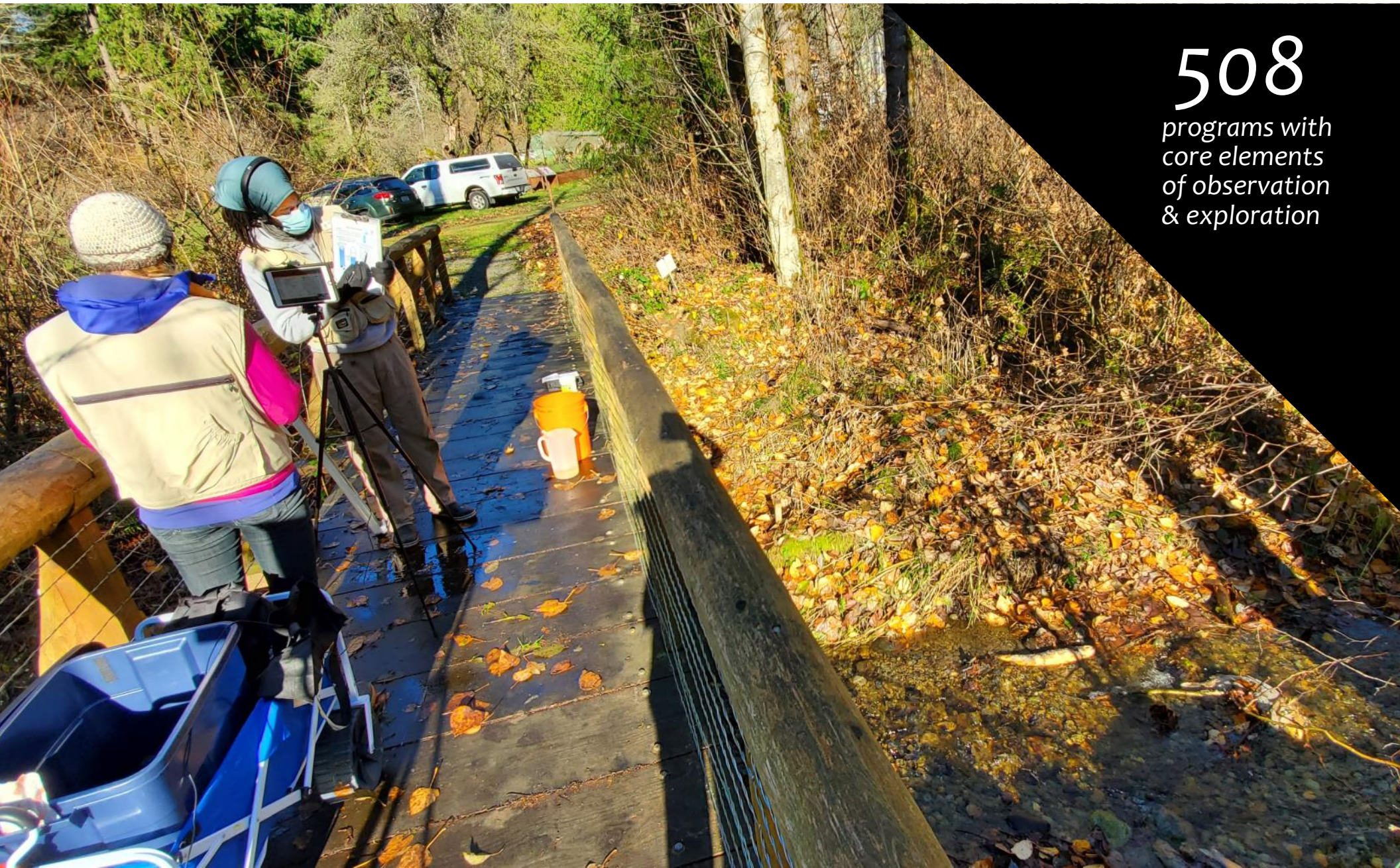
“The event last week was absolutely INCREDIBLE! The engagement, curiosity, etc. was so awesome to see! The students and families provided us with such positive feedback after the event. Many said it was a highlight of their year. I just thought every aspect went so smoothly, from the facilitation, to the behind-the-scenes, the translation support, and answering all the questions.”

-New Futures partner

D

Discovery & exploration

Mindful hands-on learning opportunities produce intimate, impactful experiences.



508
programs with
core elements
of observation
& exploration

Streaming from Streams for Salmon Heroes

When schools continued virtually, so did our watershed education, and 2,558 students became Salmon Heroes in the fall! Thousands of students typically bus to salmon habitats for evaluations with water quality tests, salmon dissections, and habitat surveys. These were adapted to be virtual, and students still enjoyed the thrill and excitement of seeing spawning salmon live from the field.

Introductory ecology lessons included salmon life cycles, habitat challenges, and their important role in marine food webs. Naturalists then live-streamed from local streams and rivers, and virtual formats allowed them to teach from new sites that were closer and more meaningful to Students. Students analyzed their field data and discussed personal actions to help protect salmon habitat.

All components were offered in English and Spanish to accommodate learners in real time or for those viewing recordings. We were grateful to tailor experiences for teachers and students who continue to adjust to online learning. Even afterward, they can visit many sites through a new lens.



“Now I know what to do, and what not to do, to keep the salmon safe. I never knew anything about salmon except that people eat them before the Salmon Heroes field trip, so thank you for teaching us about salmon.”

-Rainier Prep Elementary 5th-grader

“I was unsure of what a virtual field trip would mean for us, but you all did an amazing job and I deeply appreciate the opportunity for students to think and learn, and connect with local ecosystems.”

-Rainier Prep Elementary Teacher



2,558
Salmon
Heroes

Shoreline goes Online for Beach Heroes

Discovery, connection, empathy and stewardship are integral elements to the Beach Heroes program, online or in-person. After a complete cancellation the prior year from Covid-19, 92 kindergarten through third-grade classes learned about Salish Sea intertidal habitats and unique species during spring tides.

Naturalists guided 1,867 students on a live virtual field trip at Seahurst Park to reveal beach animals at low tide, support observations, and answer their excited questions in real time. Naturalists also modeled how to interact kindly with the beach and the animals that live there, and students discussed ways to protect marine creatures and the landscape itself. Multilingual lessons and personalized field journals provided these new Beach Heroes varying ways to identify aquatic species, and to continue their observations beyond the school year.



“My kids loved the virtual field trip and I think they were excited to see the naturalist at the actual beach.”

-Southern Heights Elementary Teacher

“The videos in Spanish were outstanding! Thank you for your work! The students and parents appreciated it.”

-Mount View Elementary Teacher

“It gave the kids a chance to access information virtually and feel a part of something bigger... like being a BEACH HERO. Every naturalist was very kind & inclusive!”

-Des Moines Elementary Teacher



1,867
Beach
Heroes

We are grateful to adapt and weather the storm through many Covid-19 challenges.

The communities we reach continue to grow and expand because of the support and commitment from our volunteers and donors.

THANK YOU for helping us see new opportunities on the horizon.



A Community of Caring

\$5,000 +

Anonymous
 Kristine Ashcraft and Gorm Brunso
 Brenda Sullivan
 Nancy Tosta & Robert Ewing
 Georgette Valle

\$1,000 - \$4,999

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 Barbara Petersen
 Jean and Tom Spohn
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\$500 - \$999

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 Rita Mattulat-Done
 Annie Mae Palermo
 Karyn Pasquier
 Melessa Rogers
 Jamie Scatena and Ray Desmarais
 Nancy Stodden



Thank you! 😊

I really enjoyed the video I learned alot about salmon and what they need to live like cerves in the river they need cold water so they have more oxygene and the water has to be clear so if prediterse are coming the fish can see them



10 + consecutive years of giving!

Kristyn Clayton
 Charles and Becky Cox
 Jackie and Steve Drumheller
 Patti Gifford and Thor Edman
 Chris and Betsy Jansen
 Nicole Killebrew
 John and Nanci Leonard
 Joy and Roger Neubauer
 Larry Reymann
 Jean and Tom Spohn
 Brenda Sullivan
 Georgette Valle
 Barb Williams

Giving Options

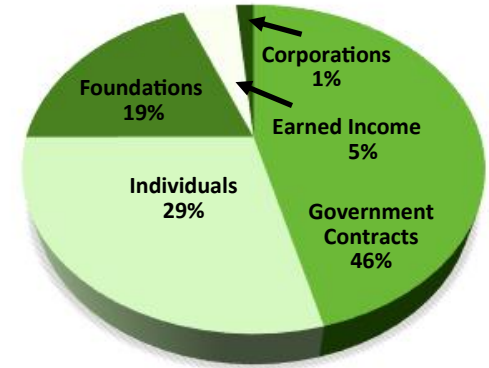
ESC offers sustainable and comfortable ways for community members to impact their natural surroundings.

People can give one time or monthly, as well as through employee matches, consumer matching, or –new this year– considering ESC during estate planning.

All pathways help our team protect local forests, waterways and our future.

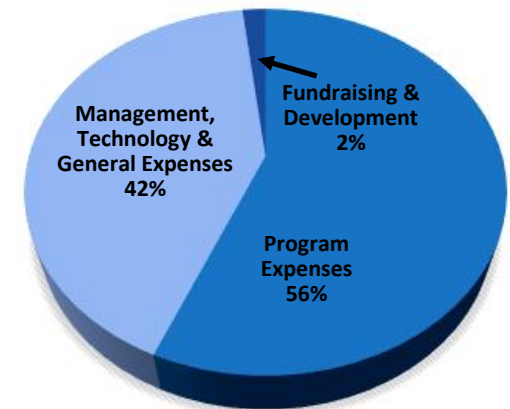


July 2019 - June 2020 ESC Financials



Revenue

Government Contracts	\$205,047
Individuals	\$129,370
Foundations	\$85,150
Earned Income	\$20,000
Corporations	\$6,500
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$446,067



Expenses

Programming	\$218,190
Management & Generalized	\$124,289
Fundraising & Development	\$9,195
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$351,674



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SCIENCE CENTER**

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