

2025 Education and Climate Plan Report

[Based on 2025 Education and Climate Plan](#)

The Education and Climate team's 2025 overall goal was to “**provide experiential and inclusive programs which reflect the interconnectedness and diversity of nature to inspire action**”.

This goal addressed the strategic focus area of [Convening and Outreach](#) because we used innovative educational approaches to gain more impact locally, regionally, and beyond to inspire community and individual action. Additionally, the Education and Climate staff focused on [Organizational Capability/Capacity](#) as well as meeting many of our 2025 goals through creating a [Vibrant and Experiential Campus](#) experience for all.

Strategy 1: Engage a diverse public audience with innovative and experiential-learning experiences that connect them to nature through science, technology, and art to inspire action

Core weekly programs reached a significant scale in 2025, driven by high-frequency animal programs and daily interpretive experiences. Programs helped visitors foster empathy, wonder, connection to nature, and motivation to explore, learn, and act.

- **Animal Programs:** The highest volume program with 928 offerings held 4x's daily.
- **Community / Science Programs & Walks:** Had the largest recorded participant impact with 1,500 people attending 90 programs (Drop in science programs, Pollinators, and Water themes)
- **Interpretive Experiences:** Maintained a constant presence with 63 programs (averaging 8-10 sessions per day) utilizing tools like Tinkering, SOS, Trunks, and Microscopes.
- **Canoeing:** Facilitated 62 trips during the summer season, resulting in 196 boats sold and 490 people getting on the water.

Public events/programs in 2025 were primarily onsite and featured seasonal festivals, lectures, and some virtual members programs. These seasonal public programs increased visitor appreciation and understanding of the interconnectedness of the four natural systems.

- **Engagement and Impact:** Festivals like Shanty Shenanigans, Watts and Wheels(1,300 attendees) and the 4 day Get Outside Festival (2,438 attendees) served as significant attendance drivers. Wild Light welcomed 16,227 attendees from Jan - Feb and Nov- Dec. of 2025 over 37 nights.
- **Member Loyalty:** Targeted programs like Animal Club maintained high member engagement, with 100% of its 72 attendees being members.
- **Science Speaker Series:** Series focused on environmental health, climate change, and human connections to nature. Total Attendance: 203 people attended the series. The series engaged approximately 6.4% of the total daily museum visitors on event days. Bridget Lyons drew the largest crowd (61 attendees), "Entwined: Dispatches from the Intersection of Species" on July 29th.

Youth and school-based engagement in 2025 was primarily driven by in-person field trips, supplemented by specialized offerings for homeschoolers and independent youth learners. School relationships show how TWC is a trusted community science resource resulting in repeat visitation, increased inquiries, and ongoing collaboration.

- **Impact:** The vast majority of school engagement occurred on-site, with 4,482 youth and 1,282 adults participating in 163 trips. Virtual school programs reached 170 youth across 2 virtual trips.
- **Revenue Generation:** Field trips generated a total of \$35,532.60 in revenue
- **Homeschool Days:** Programs specifically marketed for homeschoolers were offered over 4 days, attracting 543 attendees, \$2,640.00 in revenue.

Strategy 2: Convene and engage people with the purpose and intent to learn, explore, discuss, dialogue, collaborate, solve challenges, and address issues important to science and society.

Hosted and implemented inclusive, nature-inspired convenings that empowered people to engage in dialogue and take meaningful community action.

- **Science Convenings:** Successfully engaged 103 participants in the Fire in the Adirondacks convening, which explored fire resilience through both Western and Indigenous perspectives.

- **Regional Resilience:** Through the Adirondack Climate & Outreach Resilience Network (ACORN), conducted 7 listening sessions across 8 counties reaching 153 people, plus over 100 additional meetings, 4 conferences, and produced the Adirondack Rural Resilience Road Map.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborated with the Adirondack Explorer to host a Climate Solution event featuring activist Bill McKibben, attracting 165 attendees.
- **Community Impact:** Reached an additional 546 individuals through specialized events, including the Food Justice Summit (143), Adirondack Climate Conference (160), and Adirondack North Country Association conference (75).
- **Youth Climate Summit:** Reached 150 students, 20 teachers, 100 workshop leaders, NGOs and observers over 2 day event with close to 5000 contact hours.
- **Youth Climate Retreat:** Over 4 days reached 31 students and 8 staff over 1500 contact hours.

Expanded support for educators through professional development and science resources, increasing understanding and dialogue around climate change education, justice and climate solutions.

- **Strategic Outreach:** Developed a database of 700+ NYS public school and BOCES contacts to streamline educator engagement and program delivery.
- **Research & Analysis:** Completed a comprehensive landscape analysis of teacher professional development programs within museum and climate education settings.
- **Leadership Convenings:** Conducted ongoing meetings with local, state, and national leaders, including NYSED, NOAA, NYC DOE, and regional BOCES to align climate education efforts.
- **Policy & Advocacy:** Represented the Center on the NYSED Climate & Environmental Education Steering Committee and the Empire State Climate Education Coalition to support the K-12 climate education rollout under NY Inspires.
- **Professional Development:** Participated in Climate Week NYC and partnered with the American Museum of Natural History, Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, Smithsonian, and National Wildlife Federation to deliver educator training. Co-led with Phipps Conservatory IMLS Climate Communication and Action for Museum Professionals reaching 5 museum teams; Partnered with Climate Generations Virtual National Summer Climate Institute and led the NYS Cohort; Climate Solutions workshops for educators;

These efforts are positioning The Wild Center as a **statewide hub for climate and STEM education**, strengthening educator capacity, deepening regional networks, and supporting the implementation of NYS climate education standards across K-12 classrooms. The Climate Program achieved significant professional outreach by presenting at regional, national, and international events

- **Regional Engagement:** Presented at the NYS Adaptation Conference (Oct 16-17), the Mid-Atlantic Museum Conference (Oct 30), and to the APA Board of Directors regarding ACORN (Mar 13).
- **National & Specialized Workshops:** Participated in the Phipps Climate Toolkit Conference (Oct 26-29) and delivered a presentation on the Climate Ready Workforce (Oct 23).
- **International Leadership:** Expanded global influence through a presentation at the Thai Climate Action Planning Event (Apr 27) in coordination with the Summit Network and ongoing mentoring support for the Youth Climate Summit - Southeast Asia, Bermuda, and Taiwan.

Advanced national and international leadership in climate change education by engaging with existing networks and elevating our Youth Climate Program model, sustaining our trusted reputation as leaders.

- **Global & National Scale:** The Summit initiative expanded its reach to represent a total of 11 countries and 29 U.S. states. Successfully added 7 new summits and established a presence in 5 new states: Montana, Illinois, Rhode Island, Alabama, and Maine.
- **2025 Performance:** Hosted 41 summits at 39 different sites during the year, including 8 summits within New York State. Since 2009, the network has successfully executed 265 summits across 89 unique sites.
- **Collaboration:** Maintained high levels of network engagement through 10 monthly Summit Network Meetings.

- **Digital Outreach:** Leveraged the *Climate Newsflash* as a primary communication tool, delivering 11 editions to approximately 1,400 monthly readers.

Climate Change Education Leadership: Position and sustain The Wild Center as a trusted national and international leader in climate change education by actively engaging with existing networks and partnerships to elevate and amplify our work.

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Elevated the youth climate program model through high-level collaborations with the National Park Service, AMNH, UNESCO Biosphere Initiatives, and the Smithsonian.
- **Resource Development:** Refreshed critical program materials, including the Climate Action Project Guide, and associated websites and branding.
- **Network Mentorship:** Sustained the global Youth Climate Summit (YCS) network through monthly meetings, active coaching for summit sites, and comprehensive database documentation.
- **Global Representation:** Participated in and supported international youth climate summits through strategic funding and partnerships.
- **Thought Leadership:** Presented youth climate initiatives at major global events, including the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC), North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), and the World Congress of Biospheres.
- **Institutional Growth:** Strengthened Smithsonian Affiliate ties to unlock new opportunities for funding, guest speakers, and professional development.

Strategy 3: Create and implement mission aligned programs that support career/professional development. These integrated aspects are a key part to our comprehensive programs that mentor, support, and deepen participant knowledge, understanding, skills, and professional development.

Expanded impact through delivering high-impact professional development and career-building initiatives that strengthened its leadership in workforce training and connections within our community.

- **Workshops:** Successfully trained 11 tribal members of the Haudenosaunee community in Akwesasne through a 32-hour Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course.
- **Workforce Readiness:** Logged 9,469 service hours from 8 AmeriCorps members between January and September, providing vital operational and educational support. Work with teens in the Climate Program logged over 3000 hours of direct leadership support through a variety of programs and retreats.
- **Skill Diversification:** Conducted over 110 total hours of specialized training for staff and AmeriCorps, covering critical areas such as Visual Thinking Strategies (12 hrs), Teaching Engagement Strategies (9 hrs), and First Aid & CPR (5 hrs).
- **Pathways to Excellence:** Engaged 68 students in the Timbuctoo Institute site visits The Wild Center and John Brown Farm for indepth workshops and museum tours.
- **Thought Leadership:** Staff demonstrated expertise by presenting at 8 major conferences, including ASTC in San Francisco, Mid-Atlantic Museum, and the Phipps Climate Toolkit Conference, directly advancing the center's reputation as a national leader in climate education

Career Development & Mentoring Pathways promoted career development and mentoring pathways that provide multiple entry points into The Wild Center, supported positive youth development, and built participant confidence, leadership, public engagement, and professional skills.

- **Education Volunteers:** Managed a team of 21 education volunteers who contributed a total of 807 service hours to promote educational messaging across campus. Education Volunteer efforts were concentrated on the Fen Trail (430 hours), indoor and outdoor Trunks (190 hours), and various Events (187 hours).
- **Career-Ready Programming:** Delivered workforce-centered curriculum including Wild Center tours, Climate Solutions workshops, and Climate Justice workshops to prepare students for professional environments.

Fostered cross-departmental collaboration through specialized teams that enhanced staff professional skills and organizational impact.

- **Collaborative Programming:** Developed the Fen Trail and Raquette River Roll, participation in the Board/Staff book club for *Braiding Sweetgrass*.
- **Professional Growth:** Cultivated critical skills in project management, communication, and team-building through rotating staff roles on various initiative-focused teams.

Strategy 4: Community engagement designed to develop positive reciprocal relationships between the community and The Wild Center through sharing resources and supporting events/programs.

The Wild Center deepened its roots within the local community by leading high-visibility engagement programs and traditions that connected hundreds of Tupper Lake residents to nature and TWC.

- **Community Maple:** Produced 147 gallons of syrup through the Community Maple program in March and April, engaging 40 local families.
- **Large-Scale Community Events:** Reached over 800 community members through marquee events including Tupper Lake Field Day (250 participants), Party on Park (250 participants), and Halloween on Park (300 participants).
- **School & Youth Integration:** Engaged 333 students during LP Quinn Adirondack Day with specialized grade-level programming and maintained a weekly presence at the Tupper Lake Library, serving 40 students.
- **AmeriCorps Service:** Leveraged a strong service presence with up to 8 AmeriCorps members supporting events, providing essential staffing for community-facing education and outreach.

Expanded reach and influence by leading regional networking initiatives and high-impact partnerships that strengthened the climate change education ecosystem.

- **Regional Collaboration:** Solidified a leadership role within the Northeast Climate Change Education Collaborative, engaging 110 participants from various organizations and agencies.
- **Scientific Partnerships:** Collaborated with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute as part of a network of 12 science centers through the Learning Ecosystems Northeast (LENE) partnership.
- **Support:** Secured \$25,500 in NASA funding to support regional climate initiatives.
- **Networks:** Actively participated as a member of the Northeast Resiliency Consortium (NERC), collaborating with 22 participants from other organizations to build regional capacity.
- **Policy Influence:** Served on the NYSED Statewide Steering Committee, contributing to the development of new New York State guidelines for climate literacy with 18 other members.

NOTE: This report represents select examples from our significant accomplishments and impacts in 2025. Please reach out to Kerri Ziemann kziemann@wildcenter.org or Jen Kretser jkretser@wildcenter.org for additional information about Education and Climate Programs. Additional program statistics from program year 2025 [2025 Ed & Climate Stats sheet FINAL](#)