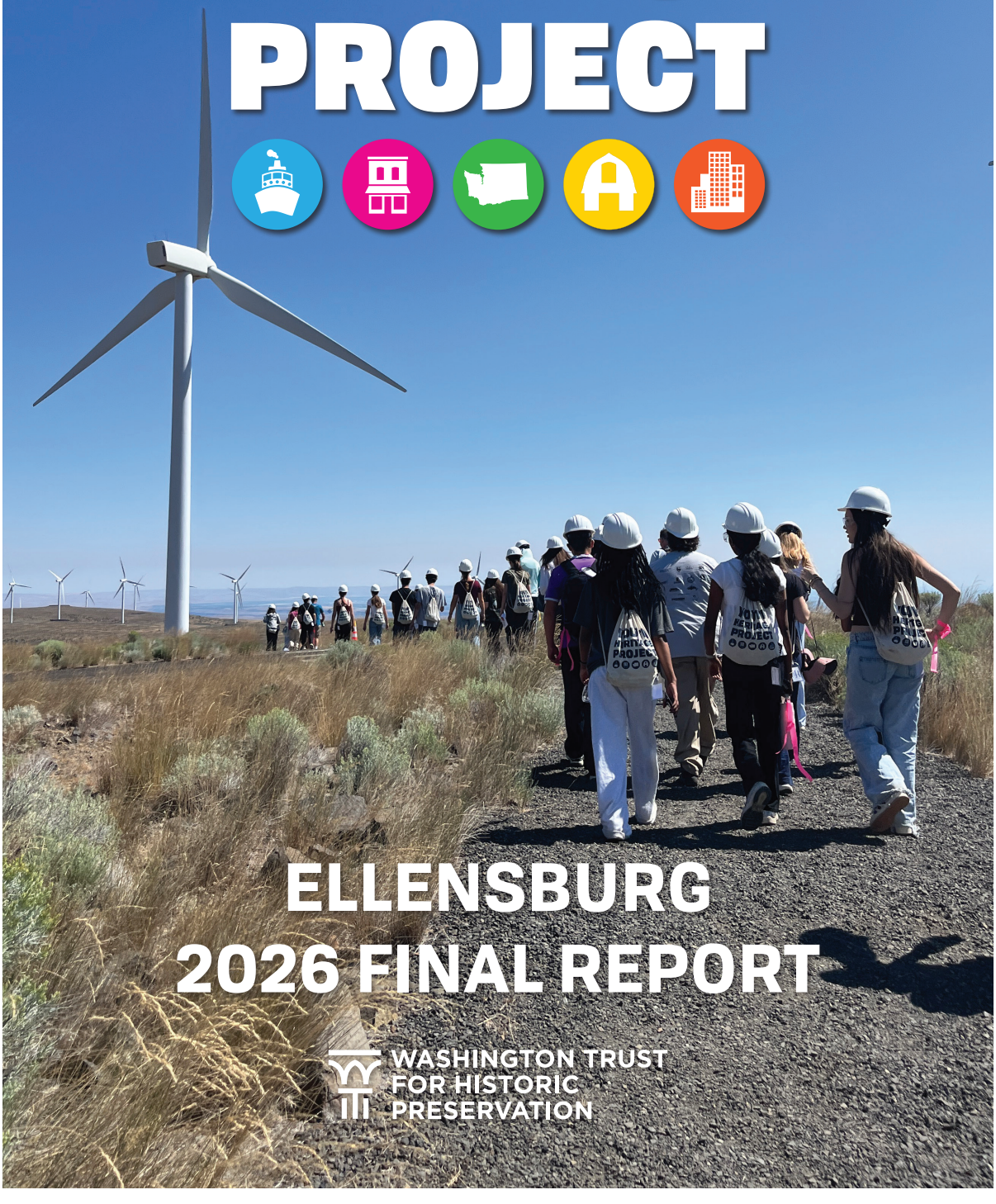
# YOUTH HERITAGE PROJECT



## ELLENSBURG 2026 FINAL REPORT

WASHINGTON TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION




# SPONSORS

A huge thanks to our partners for their significant financial and programmatic support for this year's Youth Heritage Project!

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# ELLENSBURG

This year, the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation held our 13th annual Youth Heritage Project (YHP) in Ellensburg! YHP is an immersive overnight summer field school for high school students. Through a place-based program, students are introduced to a breadth of professional opportunities in the fields of history, culture, and nature. YHP is a central piece of the Washington Trust's work to engage younger and more diverse audiences in historic preservation.

The location and topics for YHP change each year, allowing students to explore new areas and address real-world, place-specific issues. In past years, YHP has traveled to some of the state's most vibrant communities, including:

- Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area (2025)
- Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (2024)
- Hanford and the Tri-Cities (2023)
- Port Townsend (2022)
- Olympic National Park (2019)
- North Cascades National Park (2018)
- Tacoma and Gig Harbor (2017)
- Mount Rainier National Park (2016)
- Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (2015)
- Chinatown-International District in Seattle (2014)
- Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (2013)
- Yakima Valley (2012)

This year, students explored Ellensburg and the surrounding area. For thousands of years, the Kittitas Valley has served as a gathering place and travel corridor for Indigenous peoples; the Yakama Nation continues to live, thrive, and shape this landscape today. Ellensburg is also home to many historic buildings and neighborhoods, including two districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places. While rich in Tribal and historic sites, the valley is a major backdrop for renewable energy development, utilizing solar, wind, and now even some geothermal energy. At this year's YHP, students learned about the unique relationship between historic and cultural preservation and renewable energy in central Washington.







# PROGRAM

During this year's YHP, students explored sites across Ellensburg and the Kittitas Valley, meeting with many partners engaged with the area's history, landscape, or renewable energy production. Students worked to understand how these different aspects of the area's identity intersected and how to balance energy needs, preservation, cultural respect, environmental concerns, and the ongoing story of this special place.



## MONDAY

On the first day of YHP, students and teacher/mentors gathered at Lazy F Camp and Retreat Center, our home base for the week. At Lazy F, students met each other and their teacher/mentors, got settled into their rooms, and received an orientation to the week's schedule. Later in the afternoon, students traveled to downtown Ellensburg and the Kittitas County Historical Museum, where they watched the "These Sacred Hills" documentary, which follows members of the Yakama Nation as they confront a green energy project threatening one of their Tribal sacred sites. They also met Kittitas County Historical Museum Executive Director Sadie Thayer, explored the museum's exhibits, and familiarized themselves with the history of Ellensburg and the Kittitas Valley.

After dinner back at Lazy F, the students traveled to the nearby Thorp Mill. Built in 1883, the Thorp Mill produced flour and livestock feed and served as an important place not only for milling but for social interaction for the local community for decades. Students met with one of the Thorp Mill's volunteers, Lisa Ely, who toured them around the site, shared its history, and discussed current efforts to preserve the mill and its stories.




## TUESDAY

We started off the day with a trip to Springwood Ranch, a site that is co-owned by the Yakama Nation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Kittitas County, and Kittitas Reclamation District, in Washington State's first co-ownership and co-management land agreement between a Tribe and the state. There, led by Urban Eberhart and Sara Vickers from the Kittitas Reclamation District and David Blodgett from Yakama Nation Fisheries, students visited the Yakima River Pressure Tunnel, reservoir, and geotechnical drilling sites, while learning about how Springwood Ranch's co-owners work together to balance water supply activities, land stewardship, and honoring the site's cultural importance to the Yakama Nation.

After lunch, we visited the community solar array at Rotary Park in Ellensburg, one of the nation's first community-scale solar projects. Here, local residents who don't own homes or lack sunny roofs can buy in to solar energy and receive utility bill credits. City of Ellensburg employees toured students around the site. Afterwards, we traveled to nearby Central Washington University, where a new geothermal plant has been developed which will provide energy efficient heating and cooling to two new campus buildings while significantly reducing their carbon footprint.








## WEDNESDAY

The next morning, students visited Puget Sound Energy's Wild Horse Wind Farm and Visitor Center, where they marveled at the facility's 148 wind turbines, while taking in 360-degree views of Mount Rainier, Mount Adams, Mount Hood, and the Columbia River Basin. They explored outdoor trails on which were situated various pieces of renewable energy equipment as educational displays, including a solar array, blade, turbine generator, and gearbox. They also considered the benefits and drawbacks of using wind turbines to produce electricity and learned about Puget Sound Energy's remediation work across the wind farm. Lastly, they visited an exhibit honoring the B-17 Flying Fortress airmen who died in 1943 when their plane crashed at the site during training activities.

Later that afternoon, the students returned to Lazy F Camp and Retreat Center to work on their group presentations. That evening, after dinner, the group had a fun night out at Central Axe, where they tested their axe-throwing skills and played virtual reality games.





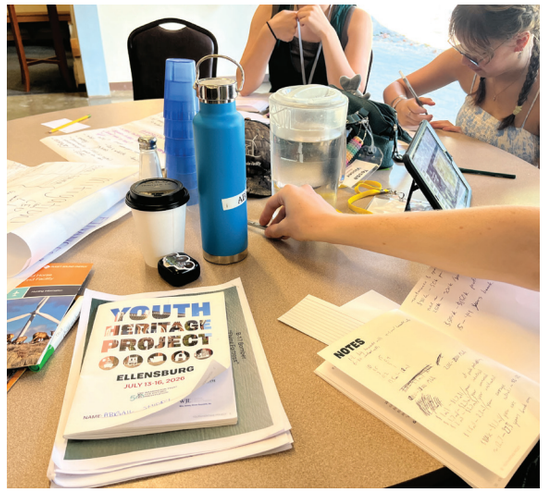





## THURSDAY

On the final day of YHP, students finished their presentations. Each group spent time giving peer reviews of each other's presentations, and teacher/mentors coached students on public speaking. All gathered at the historic Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Lodge in downtown Ellensburg for the Town Hall event which served at the culmination of the week.

Students took the stage for an audience of their peers, families, community members, Washington Trust board members, and organizational partners. There was also an expert panel in attendance: State Historic Preservation Officer Dr. Allyson Brooks, Puget Sound Energy Wild Horse Wind Farm's Andrea Crawford, and In Perpetuity's Noah Oliver. Given a prompt relating renewable energy development with historic preservation, environmental conservation, and Tribal cultural resource management, students presented their project ideas and recommendations, and the panel had enthusiastic responses to the students' proposals.







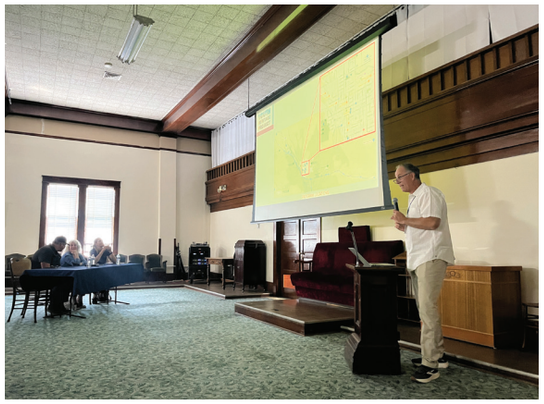

# STUDENT PROJECTS

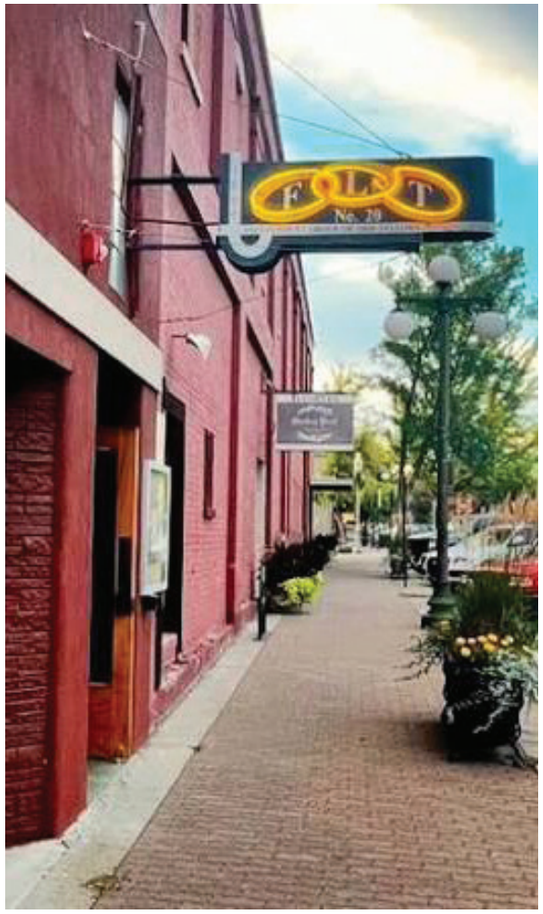
For this year's presentations, each student group focused on a different renewable energy type (solar, wind, or geothermal) and were asked if and where to locate it on an imaginary parcel with characteristics much like some of the places in the Ellensburg area that we had been visiting that week (including historic sites, Tribal cultural resources, and environmental considerations).

Using their specific renewable energy type as a sample project, students were then asked to consider the following questions:

- How would you figure out if this land has historic, cultural, or archaeological significance?
- What (if any) partners would you engage in for this project?
- Would you recommend using [solar, wind, geothermal] energy in this landscape? Why or why not?
- Would this project have any impacts to historic resources that would need to be mitigated? If so, what are your ideas for potential mitigation?
- How would your recommendation balance energy needs, preservation, cultural respect, environmental concerns, and the ongoing story of this place?














“I really liked learning about how these energy projects are affecting our Native population. I think it will help the younger generation understand this and consider a project’s effects in the future.

**—student**

“This was a super fun experience, and I would love to do it again.

**—student**






“I loved getting to know other people my age who had similar interests and passions. I also enjoyed learning about our differences and having the opportunity to see new perspectives through those other students.

**—student**




“Going to YHP was an awesome experience that I will remember for a lifetime!

**—student**

“It was a wonderful and eye-opening experience. Thank you all who make it happen!

**—student**





“Your thoughtfulness, careful planning, and fun energy really made this HANDS DOWN one of the most AMAZING experiences I have ever had!!

**—student**

# ROSTER

## STUDENTS

**Bellevue**
Amelia Hamacher
Satvika Kannappan
Luna Lopez
Abigail Smiddy
Jacquelyn Smiddy
Gianna Zhan

**Bremerton**
Amelia Casey

**Camas**
Justin Fisher
Avi Lee

**Coupeville**
Marin Winger

**Issaquah**
Tessa Visser

**Kent**
Aelaf Abebe

**Mercer Island**
Emma Moore

**Olympia**
Brody Magaro

**Poulsbo**
Emery Clegg

**Renton**
Aidan Gilchrist
Dashel Walker

**Seattle**
Benjamin Basinski
Dorothy Hansen
Lukas Lee
Amelia Oakley
Dhara Parikh
Flint Schoonover
James Tweedie-Welland
Anna Urelius

**Shoreline**
Avonlea Hostetler
Brady Hostetler
Cooper Hostetler

**Skamokawa**
Abigail Tsybikova















## TEACHERS/MENTORS

**Jason Cooper,** Washington State Department of Transportation

**Tanner Dotzauer,** Wenatchee High School

**Michael Houser,** Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

**Carmen Kardokus,** Olympia School District

**Chris Moore,** Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

**Moira Nadal,** Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

**Renee Phelps,** West Seattle High School

**Ximena Smith,** Land Surveyors + Engineers










## PRESENTERS

**Nichole Baker,** City of Ellensburg Energy Services Department

**David Blodgett,** Yakama Nation Fisheries

**Jeff Bousson,** Central Washington University

**Andrea Crawford,** Puget Sound Energy Wild Horse Wind Farm

**Urban Eberhart,** Kittitas Reclamation District

**Lisa Ely,** Thorp Mill Museum

**Brittany Holmes,** City of Ellensburg Energy Services Department

**Emily Jacobs,** Story Quilters

**Buddy Stanavich,** City of Ellensburg Energy Services Department

**Sadie Thayer,** Kittitas County Historical Museum

**Sara Vickers,** Kittitas Reclamation District

## TOWN HALL PANELISTS

**Dr. Allyson Brooks,** State Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

**Andrea Crawford,** Environmental Education Coordinator, Puget Sound Energy Wild Horse Wind Farm

**Noah Oliver,** Founder/Executive Director, In Perpetuity







# THANK YOU

Each year, we are fortunate to work with incredible national, statewide, and local partners to plan and host engaging, place-based learning experiences for YHP participants. This year, we were honored to work with a fantastic group of partners to bring 29 students to Ellensburg for a truly unique and memorable week—free of cost to all participants.

The Washington Trust would like to extend a special thank you to the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for their ongoing support of YHP. DAHP has served as an anchor partner and funder since the Youth Heritage Project was established in 2012, allowing hundreds of students to attend the program free of cost. We would also like to acknowledge Emily Jacobs of StoryQuilters for her tremendous help in designing this year's YHP curriculum and activities.

We would like to thank our sponsors and funders, without whom YHP would not be possible: 4Culture, Enderis Company, Frontier Door & Cabinet, Legacy Renovation Products & Services, the Lodge at St. Edward State Park, the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Washington, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Northwest Masonry Institute, Pacifica Law Group, Puget Sound Energy, SHKS Architects, the Suquamish Tribe, the Tulalip Tribes, and Willamette Cultural Resources Associates.

In addition to our funding partners, we extend our gratitude to the speakers and partners who contributed so much of their time and expertise to our YHP programming this year: Jeff Bousson of Central Washington University; Nichole Baker, Brittany Holmes, and Buddy Stanavich of the City of Ellensburg Energy Services Department; Sadie Thayer of the Kittitas County Historical Museum; Urban Eberhart and Sara Vickers of the Kittitas Reclamation District; Andrea Crawford of the Puget Sound Energy Wild Horse Wind Farm; Lisa Ely of Thorp Mill Museum; and David Blodgett of Yakama Nation Fisheries.

We would also like to thank the City of Ellensburg for its hospitality throughout the week. We thank our distinguished Town Hall panelists, who provided encouragement and feedback on student presentations. Lastly, we especially thank our fantastic teacher/mentors, who guided students through the week and provided invaluable support in making this year's YHP a success.



# YHP 2027

The location for next year's YHP—our 14th annual program—will be announced this fall! Be sure to check our website for updates and sign up for our YHP email list:

**preservewa.org/yhp**







Youth Heritage Project
is a program of the

WASHINGTON TRUST
FOR HISTORIC
PRESERVATION

1204 Minor Ave
Seattle, WA 98101

preservewa.org/yhp