

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a dirt trail leads from the bottom left towards the center. Several hikers are walking along the trail; one person in a brown jacket is in the immediate foreground, while a group of others is further back. The trail is flanked by low-lying vegetation and some fallen logs. To the right, a steep mountain slope rises, covered in green and yellowish plants and patches of evergreen trees. In the distance, a deep valley opens up, showing more mountain ranges under a sky filled with large, white and grey clouds. The overall scene is a beautiful representation of a wilderness area.

2025 IMPACT REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025 is another year for the record books. As the Glacier Institute continues to pursue our mission, I'm amazed at the opportunities that continue to show up at our door. Or in this case, the new door was the opportunity. We're beyond excited to have been able to sell our previous office building in downtown Columbia Falls and purchase our new headquarters just a few miles down the road towards Glacier National Park. We are planning to turn this 141-acre slice of heaven into a nature center for our community, and are looking forward to welcoming thousands, maybe even millions of people to visit us here over the next decades.

With that, however, comes its own set of challenges, or growth opportunities. We moved into the new site in March, just as we were starting to welcome in our new seasonal staff. We did our best to quickly get settled, but operating in a new space always comes with new challenges. Ultimately, we ended up navigating all of those challenges as a team, and we're excited to be completing a lot of ground work now to be better prepared for the summer of 2026.

Not only did we move locations, but we also served 17% more guests than in 2025, which is 146% more guests than we served in 2021. Each year we are seeing steady growth in our programming, which is allowing us to reach more people with our mission. As we look forward to 2026, we are anticipating another year of growth, not just in numbers, but also in impact. We have a wide range of new offerings on the docket, and we can't wait to unveil them for you all.

As we celebrated the finishing of our Restoration Big Creek Project and are now moving into another massive endeavor, I'm humbled and honored to think about all of you who have been with us through it all. Thank you for your continued support; financially, with time, and with talents. We couldn't do this without you.

Most sincerely,

ANTHONY NELSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE OFFICIAL EDUCATION PARTNER OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK AND FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

For more than four decades, the Glacier Institute has served as a critical partner in advancing education, stewardship, and connection to place throughout Glacier National Park and the surrounding region.

Founded in 1983, the Glacier Institute specializes in field-based learning experiences that bring science and nature to life. Through youth camps, guided hikes, field seminars, and community programs, the Institute transforms Glacier's landscapes into a living classroom, where participants don't just learn about ecosystems, they experience them firsthand.

OUR MISSION:

Strengthening connections to the natural world through outdoor education.

2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BIG CREEK OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER

The Glacier Institute's primary campus for youth education, Big Creek provides immersive, place-based learning experiences in the heart of the North Fork. Through school field trips, youth summer camps, backpacking programs, and custom group experiences, students build confidence, curiosity, and a lasting connection to the outdoors. The completion of the Restoration Big Creek Project marks a major milestone, expanding the campus's capacity to serve more learners in a safe, inspiring environment as it evolves toward a year-round hub for outdoor education.

KEY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES:

- School Field Trips
- Youth Summer Camps
- Backpacking programs (expanded in 2025)
- Custom Group Experiences
- Leadership retreats and workshops

POPULATION SERVED

1,346 participants total

662 students through school field trips

220 youth campers

52 backpacking participants

412 participants through custom groups



FIELD CAMP

The Glacier Institute's original campus, operating seasonally from May through October. It serves as a gateway for deeper exploration, offering immersive educational experiences for adult learners and groups. Participants engage directly with Glacier's ecosystems, gaining a deeper understanding of the natural world and their role in its stewardship.

KEY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES:

- Multi-day overnight field courses
- Single-day in-depth educational seminars
- Exploring Glacier
- Educational experiences for groups

POPULATION SERVED

497 participants total

387 field course participants

110 custom group participants

NATURE CENTER

The Glacier Institute's newest and most exciting expansion. As the organization's first owned space, it serves as a welcoming hub for connecting people to outdoor learning. In just its early years, the Nature Center has already engaged thousands of participants and is poised to become a cornerstone of Glacier Institute's long-term impact and future growth.

KEY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES:

- Educational Day Hikes
- Personalized Educational Tours
- Field trip experiences for local schools
- Community events

POPULATION SERVED

5,785 participants total

4,532 in Educational Day Hikes

1,253 in Personalized Educational Tours

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

7,628

People connected to the Outdoors

282

Programs delivered
(Field courses, camps, tours, and field trips)

\$74,901

Invested in access
(Scholarships + community support)

0

Kids turned away
because of inability to pay

189

Guided educational tours,
connecting people to Glacier's landscapes

146

Volunteers who are essential to
everything we do

1,108

Volunteer hours served, providing event
support, trail building, site maintenance
and more!



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

2025 CHALLENGES

- Launching programs while transitioning to a new campus
- Managing a significant property investment
- Scaling operations to support rapid growth

OUR RESPONSE

- Activated the new campus with a strong, dedicated team
- Implemented strategies to retire property debt
- Strengthened leadership systems, planning, and communication

KEY LEARNING

- We're not a small organization, and there are a lot of lessons with managing a larger and more diverse team of humans. We have restructured in a way to accommodate growth and expansion into the future.

2026 GOALS

- Site Improvement plan for the Nature Center
- Complete on-site staff housing project
- Expand lodging and learning program partnerships
- Year-round programming at Big Creek
- Launch Nature Exploration Day Camps (ages 7–11) through summer
- Debut Pilot episode of Glacier Institute Nature Show (YouTube)

THANK YOU!

ORGANIZATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Glacier National Park Conservancy
- Library of Congress & National Council for History Education
- M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust
- Whitefish Community Foundation
- Nature of Collaborations
- GEAR UP
- Girl Scouts of America
- Hiking My Feelings
- National Parks Conservation Association
- Waypoint Vets
- Salish Kootenai College
- LGBTQ+ Outdoors
- American Association of Colleges and Universities

CORPORATE SPONSORS

- Daily Inter Lake
- David Fetveit Pure West
- First Interstate Bank
- Glacier Bank

“We did a private day hike up to Firebrand Pass, with Megan. I cannot recommend this experience enough! She had such rich knowledge about the park’s geology, flora, fauna, and legends. Truly a spectacular day that was enhanced so much by having a guide!!”



MAJOR DONORS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
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| Lance and Melissa Fahrney | Whitefish Community Foundation |
| Larry and Becky Williams | William Goodwin |
| Laura Moeller | Xandra Constan |

WAYS TO SUPPORT

DONATE

MAKE A ONE-TIME DONATION, and help Glacier Institute connect people to the natural world through hands-on education.

JOIN BASECAMP MONTHLY GIVING, and provide steady, reliable funding that keeps programs running all year round.

BECOME A MEMBER

MEMBERS RECEIVE exclusive benefits, early access to programs, and opportunities to engage more closely with our work.

BOOK A PROGRAM

STEP INTO THE FIELD and experience Glacier through guided hikes, field courses, and immersive educational programs.

LUMBERJACK BALL FUNDRAISING EVENT

FRIDAY JUNE, 12, 2026 AT THE GLACIER INSTITUTE NATURE CENTER.

Join us in bringing together community, supporters, and partners for an unforgettable evening in support of outdoor education.



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GLACIERINSTITUTE.ORG

The Glacier Institute is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) corporation and your contribution is deductible to the extent allowed by the law and reduced by any discounts in course fees or book purchases that you receive. Our federal tax ID# is 36-3345632 and our Montana state tax ID# is 073990.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“The Glacier Institute was an amazing way to see the park, they guided us through and also taught us so much more than we could have learned in our own. Mark was amazing!”

Glacier Institute provides phenomenal, local guided hiking services for our 1-week MT Sobek tours through Glacier NP. Our tour company entrusts their informative guides, who have a wonderful breadth of knowledge, especially of the flora & fauna.

Glacier Institute not only offers spectacular tours and excursions in Glacier National Park but has also been a cornerstone of outdoor education for visitors and local communities alike.

Insane trip! Super grateful for Glacier Institute to organize and get our group to go to Glacier National Park. They were very accommodating to our group and made suggestions on where to go and what to do with our large vans.”



YOU CAN BE A PART OF OUR MISSION!

Strengthening connections to the natural world through outdoor education.

For more information, to donate, or to get involved, visit:

www.glacierinstitute.org

