

Washington Outdoor Women



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

www.washingtonoutdoorwomen.org





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Introduction

We are pleased to present our 25th annual report for your review. Washington Outdoor Women (WOW) continues to find that women are eager to reconnect with the outdoors. Increasingly, they are open to learning about the philosophy behind good stewardship, and WOW welcomes the opportunity to provide this leadership.

WOW's Mission

To help women achieve confidence and self-reliance in the outdoors through traditional and relevant skills taught in hands-on workshops.

WOW's Vision

To encourage women to feel actively connected to the outdoors, become good stewards of our environment, and to pass on these values to the next generation.

Values

- A participant-centered educational program.
- Access to leadership, confidence and ability through personalized instruction.
- Non-competitive educational atmosphere.
- Certified, experienced instructors and female role models.
- Teamwork, networking and partnerships.

Washington Wildlife Federation's Mission

The mission of the Washington Wildlife Federation is to preserve, enhance, and perpetuate Washington's wildlife and wildlife habitat through education and conservation programs supported by a diverse membership. As an affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, we actively support its mission and goals.

WOW is an educational outreach program of the Washington Wildlife Federation, a 501c3.

2025 In Review

Each year carries its own spirit, and 2025 was marked by a contagious enthusiasm as WOW, under new leadership, hosted its popular Fall Weekend Workshop for the first time in five years.

Now celebrating its 25th year under the sponsorship of the Washington Wildlife Federation, Washington Outdoor Women (WOW)—led by new Program Director Lori Johnson—experienced exceptional growth, welcoming a record number of first-time participants along with a dynamic team of new volunteers and instructors. Building on a strong tradition of experience and mentorship, planning for the 2025 season began in January, with every new team member having once been a workshop participant.



WOW promoted its Fall Workshop comeback at multiple events, including a Ruffed Grouse Society annual banquet in March, an April Fishing Derby held at Filson's Seattle headquarters, the REI Lynnwood store Grand Opening, the 50th Anniversary Sale at Outdoor Emporium, and a Wenatchee Sportsman's Association event.

A highlight of the year was the successful one-day Shellfish Workshop held in June, supported by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. Rendsland Creek in Mason County became an outdoor classroom for more than 40 women who learned about bivalves—their habitats, ecological importance, responsible harvesting practices, and the art of oyster shucking.

The 2025 Fall Weekend Workshop took place at Camp Waskowitz in North Bend, Washington, from September 12–14. The event was filled with energy and excitement, bringing together more than 100 participants from 21-counties—70% of whom were attending WOW for the first time. Twenty-four instructors, supported by a nine-member coordinating team, helped make the weekend an outstanding success.

This year, WOW also honored the lasting dedication of two team members and two instructors who have contributed to multiple workshops. In recognition of their commitment, Karin Cook, Sarah Lange, Courtney Sullivan, and Cathy Bell were each presented with specially framed certificates during the weekend.

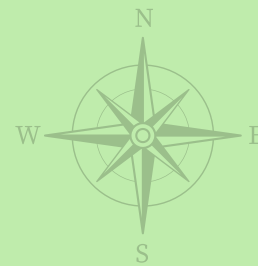
2025 also began with 9-new instructors and invitations to teach a handful of new classes that included: Harvest Basket Making, Foraging First Aid, and an Introduction to Wool Carding. WOW offered 14-other classes to include: After the Harvest, Backpacking, Archery, Fire Building & Knot Tying, Fix It in the Field, Fly Fishing, Gardening for Wildlife, Map & Compass, Native Plant ID, Survival Skills, Nature Reflections (journaling & painting), and Wildlife Awareness.

This year, many participants chose to camp in tents, while others stayed in the camp dorms. For the first time, WOW partnered with Paparepas, a small family-owned catering company, to provide delicious meals for the workshop



Leadership

Ronni McGlenn is the founder of Washington Outdoor Women (WOW). Beginning her groundwork in 1997, she launched what she calls her most memorable project in 1998, founding WOW and serving as its Director for 23-years. In December 2024, Ronni passed the Director role to Lori Johnson. Lori first participated in WOW weekend workshops in 2005, attending for four years before joining the volunteer coordinator team in 2009. She contributed as scholarship administrator, supported digital and on-site logistics, and taught courses including Soap Making and co-instructed Kayaking. Lori's primary mission is to ensure that the same enriching opportunities she experienced through WOW remain available for other women.



The WOW Team members are proud alumni of WOW! They are the dedicated force that creates a well-organized environment for instructors and participants at WOW events. Volunteering their time and skills, they ensure every workshop is a success.

From Left to Right:

Claire Surbeck, Cathy Bell, Sarah Lange, Faith Roland,
Laura Grayum (center), Cathy Taflin, MaryPat Sullivan,
Lori Johnson and Sharon Gregg.

Fall Weekend Workshop Course Descriptions

Archery

Participants start out learning basic form, parts of a bow, how it works and how to shoot and score arrows while having fun learning the correct timing and posture with standing targets at differing distances. Karin Cook is a level 3 certified coach and brings years of experience to this skill.



Backpacking

This course was “packed” with instruction on essential backpacking equipment, “Leave No Trace” practices, trip planning, weather coping, other backcountry tips, and was taught by Jeanie Murphy, a seasoned Pacific Crest Trail through-hiker.



Fire Building & Knot Tying

Women were taught the most efficient fire building techniques, wood choices, safety tips, and how to build a fire with and without matches. They also learned 3-essential and useful survival knots. Each successfully built a personal fire first using only one match and then using only flint and steel.

Fix it in the Field

Participants were taught how to cleverly use what they might already have with them to make gear repairs so it is still usable in the field. Sharon Gregg gave examples on how to repair failing zippers, broken straps and other valuable tips on how to keep outdoor gear from failing in the first place.

Fall Weekend Workshop Course Descriptions Cont'd

Fly Fishing

The South Fork of the Snoqualmie River served as the classroom for the fly-fishing course, where participants learned essential skills such as tying basic knots, understanding rod weights and types, mastering casting techniques, and practicing the principles of "catch and release." Time spent on the river deepened their appreciation for reading the water, selecting the right flies, and adapting casting methods to changing weather conditions.



Gardening for Wildlife

Course participants were taught how to start planting to improve the environment by creating a native plant garden to support birds, butterflies, and other pollinators.



Map and Compass

Classroom time in this course was spent learning to read a topographic map, take a bearing with a compass, how to factor in declination and finding magnetic north. Participants then headed outdoors to test their new skills in the field by striking out on their own to maneuver and find waypoints.



Native Plant Identification

Participants explored a variety of herbs and flowers, learning about the ethnobotanical and ecological roles of local plants. The class introduced both native and invasive species, highlighting their unique traits, natural history, and environmental impact. An outdoor trail session offered hands-on plant identification, and the experience concluded with participants crafting and sampling a custom tea blend made from edible plants to take home.



Fall Weekend Workshop Course Descriptions Cont'd

Harvest Basket Making

Participants in this course learned a bit of basket weaving lore, history and culture, and took home a completed reed harvest basket made of rattan. The techniques taught could also be applied to willow, grapevine, grasses and other natural materials.



Intro to Wool Carding

Carding or combing wool is a traditional process, making it easier to spin fibers smoothly, and is essential for transforming wool into a material ready to be woven.

Participants learned about a variety of fibers, were taught how to use various types of wool carders, and how to turn freshly sheared wool fibers into a knitted hat, scarf and more.



Survival Skills

Participants discovered that mindset is the key to survival, with preparedness following close behind. The session focused on short-term outdoor survival techniques, including wilderness awareness, mental and physical readiness, shelter building, fire starting, and water purification. The class also provided an opportunity to review and update each participant's "10- Essentials."

Foraged First Aid

Treating the most common hiking maladies using trailside plants as first aid, was the focus of this class. Participants learned: how to identify some common medicinal plants, multiple methods of preparing plants for medicinal use and blended some botanical products to take home as the beginnings of an herbal first aid kit.

Fall Weekend Workshop Course Descriptions Cont'd

Nature Reflections

In this class, participants awakened their inner artist through activities designed to inspire creativity and mindfulness. Guided journaling, expressive writing, and intuitive painting offered opportunities to connect more deeply with the natural world.



Wildlife Identification & Awareness

This course was designed for anyone interested in exploring the backcountry. Participants learned about Washington's diverse wildlife, their behaviors, and how to respond safely during wilderness encounters, which is essential knowledge for backpacking, hiking, hunting, fishing, birdwatching, or orienteering. A guided trail walk allowed participants to observe signs of animal activity and uncover the stories of who, what, and why in the wild.



Wilderness First Aid

Participants learned that Wilderness First Aid can be essential when hiking, camping, hunting, birding, or fishing in remote areas. The class covered creative ways to manage common minor injuries such as wounds, sprains, strains, and fractures. Participants also practiced applying a tourniquet as part of their hands-on training and everyone took home a new first aid kit.



Tails & Trails

This class offered hands-on learning for in-the-field injuries and ailments with multiple dogs on hand for practice. The instructor, who is also a pheasant hunter and dog trainer focused on canine counseling and teaching trail skills, safety, and etiquette to dogs and owners.



Shellfish Workshop

Digging for Dinner

On Saturday, June 13, 2025, women from across Washington gathered to learn about bivalves—mollusks with hinged shells. The class explored where these creatures live, their vital role in maintaining healthy coastal ecosystems, how to harvest them responsibly, and the proper way to shuck oysters.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Puget Sound Intertidal Bivalve Manager, Camille Speck, and her team shared expert guidance on harvesting techniques, answered coastal ecology questions, and wrapped up the day with a delicious tasting of butter-sautéed oysters.



Washington Department of
FISH & WILDLIFE

Big thanks to the WDFW women: Camille Speck, Kris Costello, Katie Gehrig, Kessa Ogle, Hanna Petersen and Silke Bachhuber for their time and expert instruction!

Instructors

The volunteer instructors at WOW are the backbone of the program, combining resilience with exceptional expertise. Certified where required and honed through years of experience, they bring both credibility and practical knowledge to every class. With a natural talent for teaching and inspiring, they share a contagious passion for the outdoors and live the experiences they teach. Their dedication, skill, and enthusiasm are the pillars of WOW's success and the driving force behind the authenticity of its mission.



Shelly Ament - Wildlife ID & Awareness

Cathy Bell - Knots & Fire Building

Dollie Boyd - Harvest Basket Making

Sarah Lange - Wilderness First Aid

Karin Cook - Archery

Laura Grayum - Wool Carding

Faith Roland - Fly Fishing

Sharon Gregg-Ellis - Fix in the Field

Camille Speck - After the Harvest & Shellfish

Kris Costello - After the Harvest & Shellfish

Tamara Stanley - Tails & Trails

Courtney Sullivan - Gardening for Wildlife

Liz Crain - Survival Skills

Cathy Taffin - Fire Building & Knots

MaryPat Sullivan - Fire Building & Knots

Katie Laushman - Map & Compass

Lea Dyga - Native Plant ID

Mari Hunter - Wool Carding

Jeanie Murphy - Backpacking

Katie Surbeck - Fly Fishing

Lissa Kramer - Foraging First Aid

Rachel Paquet - Foraging First Aid

Chloe Donaldson - Nature Reflections

Outreach & Publicity

In addition to new volunteer team members and instructors, WOW expanded its networking to include new donors who provided equipment, gear donations and gifts for our volunteers.



Prepsential, located in Oregon, provided steep discounts on first aid kits that were supplied to the Survival Skills and Wilderness First Aid participants, along with "Go Bags" as gifts for the team & instructors. These bags were made custom to include water filtration systems, emergency blankets, a knife, rope, carabiners, a compass and more!

REI provided a tent and backpack used as raffle gifts.

Outdoor Research provided an all-weather jacket and it was made available to the raffle participant who could choose both the color and size.

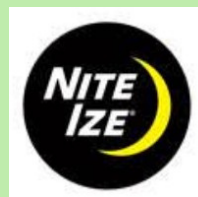


Danner Boots donated a large value gift card.

Exped provided 2- backpacks, a camping mattress, a waterproof pack and multiple trailhead pillows.



Nitelze provided a raffle gift bundle that included: a pack, lights, carabiners, and a headlamp.



Kula Cloth provided 150-cloths for participants and instructors.

Filson provided 4 tin zippered totes in various colors plus 150-participant gift bags.



Outreach & Publicity



SHOOTING PERSONAL PROTECTION HUNTING FISHING ARCHERY ADVENTURE LIFESTYLE COLUMNS INFORMATION PRESS RELEASES

Registration open for Washington Outdoor Women fall workshop

Registration is now open for Washington Outdoor Women's annual fall workshop, dedicated to bringing together women and girls for a weekend of fishing, hunting and outdoor-skills education.

ing, backpacking, native plant identification, and many other workshop. (WOW) has been to teach women traditional and relevant outdoor and self-reliance while feeling actively connected to the



YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC News Sports Explore Opinion Obituaries Puzzles Classifieds Jobs Newsletters Help All Sections Read

Outdoors notes: Register now for Washington Outdoor Women's fall workshop

Yakima Herald-Republic Aug 14, 2025 0

Sponsor Support



The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) continues to help WOW “Pass It On” by supporting outdoor skills education for women through generous scholarship grants.

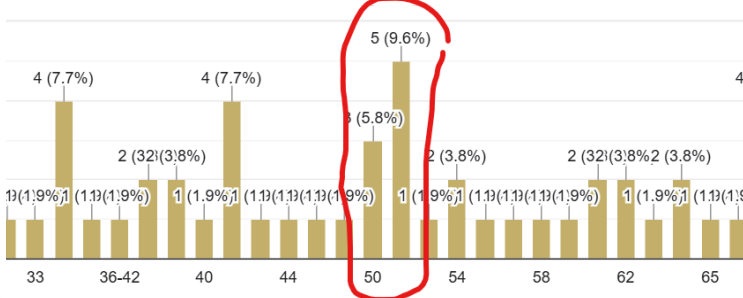
WOW extends heartfelt thanks to RMEF for its ongoing commitment. The 2025 grant enabled ten women to attend WOW’s Annual Fall Weekend Workshop, an experience that built new confidence in their outdoor abilities, and also funded essential items including survival multi-tools, first aid kits, and navigation & wildlife awareness guides.



2025 RMEF scholarship recipients.

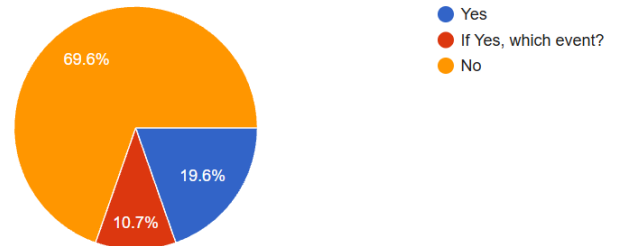
Data & Assessments

What is your age?



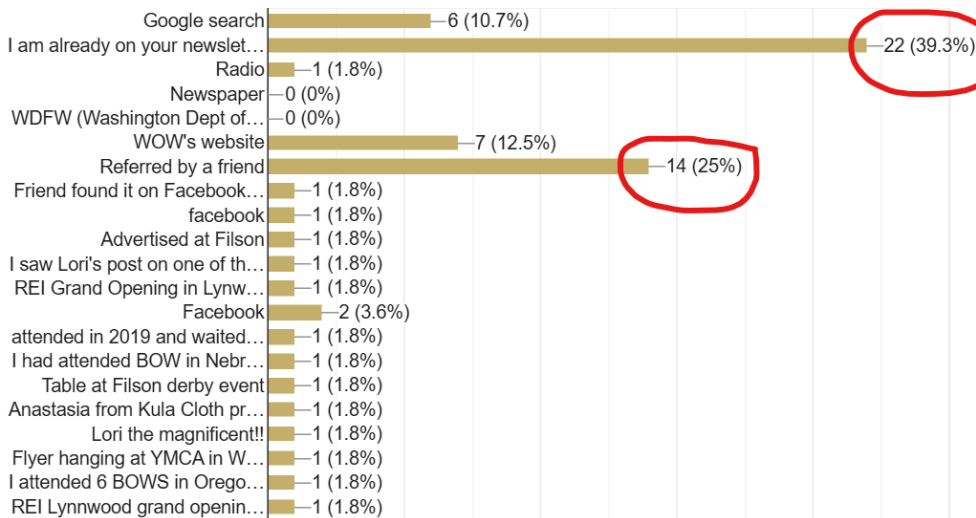
Average Participant Age is 51.

Have you attended a WOW workshop before?



69% are new to WOW this year.

How did you hear about the Fall Workshop?



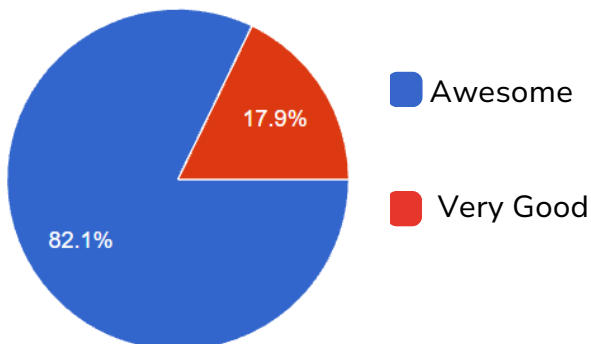
WOW Newsletter 39%

WOW website 12%

Referred by Friend 25%

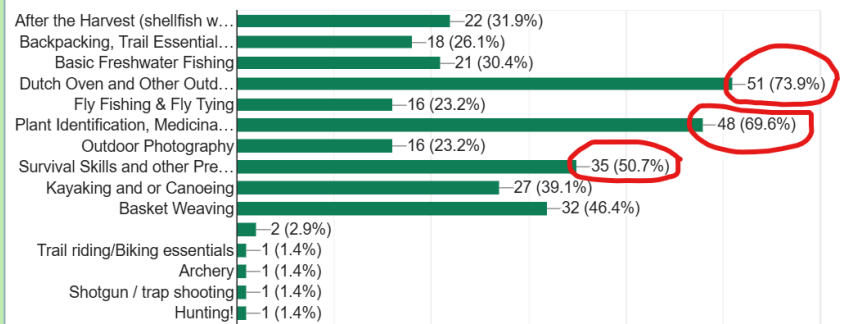
Internet Search 11%

How well were WOW's expectations of teaching met?



Overwhelming majority is positive.

What courses are you most interested in for 2026?



Helps guide our workshop planning for the upcoming year.

Report Summary

Washington Outdoor Women will conduct periodic surveys throughout the year and use participant evaluations to guide future programming. These insights help us understand which skills and experiences our audience values most, ensuring WOW continues to provide relevant, meaningful, and inspiring outdoor education opportunities.



Since 1998, WOW has empowered women to build confidence and self-reliance in the outdoors through hands-on workshops. As a program of the Washington Wildlife Federation, WOW's mission is to help women gain practical outdoor skills while fostering stewardship and a connection to nature.

WOW offers annual weekend and one-day workshops covering a wide range of traditional and modern skills—from fishing, shooting, and wildlife awareness to shellfish harvesting and trail stewardship. Supported by generous sponsors, WOW continues to expand opportunities for women across Washington to learn, connect, and “pass it on” to the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.

This report was created by: Lori Johnson
Photographs by: Krista Flemming