Creating a Third Regional Outdoor Experience – the First in a Century

For more than a century the YMCA has created life changing outdoor experiences for young people and their families. We acknowledge that the environment is under threat. Climate change is most negatively impacting the communities with the lowest carbon footprint, and those furthest from opportunity. We understand that BIPoC youth, who experience marginalization due to race and other oppressed intersections, have faced multiple barriers in accessing culturally responsive outdoor education. Building on our historic strength, the new Mineral Lake Camp and Outdoor Environmental and Education Center will enable the Y to expand our impact to communities not currently served while developing future generations of youth and families more deeply connected to the great outdoors.

Why Now?

▷ Demand for outdoor experiences year-round and school-based outdoor education is at an all-time high with waitlists for both Camps Orkila and Colman
▷ Mineral Lake has been selected to complement our beach and salt-water based camps with a mountain, freshwater, and forested environment
▷ A new camp and outdoor education center will serve as a catalyst for the Y to intentionally create programming for those furthest from opportunity to engage in the outdoors

At the Y, we know that young people thrive in an outdoor environment and that the environment will benefit from expanded and equitable youth outdoor leadership. We must redouble our efforts and continue to do what we do best.

A Plan for Realizing our Vision

Purchasing 500 acres on the shores of Mineral Lake, near Mt. Rainier, in fall of 2021, secured the central camp. Now we need to secure the remaining 1600 acres expanding from the original 500, committing the full 2100 acres to Y stewardship.

▷ Ensure a natural, forested buffer surrounding the central camp property, and protect the land from logging and future development
▷ Enable expansion of youth leadership development through Y wilderness exploration, develop deeper understanding and appreciation of indigenous cultures, and create environmental education programming for youth of all ages
▷ Allow the Y to expand outdoor programming to youth, families, and school districts not currently well served by the existing resident camp properties

| PHASE 1 | Acquire Initial Land of 500 Acres | Completed 9/2021 | $5M |
| PHASE 2 | Acquire additional 1600 acres | Funds needed by 9/2022 | $7M | $14M |
| PHASE 3 | Master Plan Development | Fall 2022-2023 | $2M |
| PHASE 3 | Launch Initial Program Use | Spring/Summer 2023 | $1M |
| PHASE 4 | Infrastructure Investment | 2023 to 2032 | $10M | $36M |
| PHASE 5 | Central Camp Facilities Developed | | $25M |
| PHASES 1–5 | TOTAL FUNDING REQUIRED | | $50M |
Our Solutions Begin with Thoughtful Planning and Strong Partnerships

Vision 2025, the YMCA of Greater Seattle’s Strategic Plan (seattleymca.org/vision2025), requires us to advance equity and justice for all through whole person health with a trauma-informed wellness approach, considering a person’s past and present life experiences, to promote healing and belonging.

This new camp and outdoor education center at Mineral Lake will serve as the catalyst for additional generations of youth and families engaging with the natural environment through the Y.

Our three focus areas youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility – are more relevant today than ever before. Today we must redouble our dedication to our youth; our allegiance to healthy living for all, and to social responsibility through our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. More than ever, youth and families in our region need access to the benefits of high-quality programs in the natural environment. Outdoor experiences promote healthy human development. Spending time outdoors isn’t just enjoyable — it’s necessary.

Partnerships

The Y is most impactful when we work in community with like-missioned partners who share our passion for youth development and environmental education through outdoor engagement.

惫 We are proud to be working in partnership with the Nisqually Indian Tribe as we envision the use and stewardship of this beautiful land. While specific opportunities have yet to be defined, we share a common desire to honor the Tribe’s history on this land and work together to educate future generations through an environmental education center located on the property.

惫 The YMCA of Greater Seattle has a long history of successfully partnering with regional school districts to provide outdoor education opportunities. The Y will work with partner Ys throughout Lewis, Pierce, Thurston Counties and beyond to increase opportunities for youth and families in these communities.
SEATTLE

MINERAL LAKE

PORTLAND

Mt. Rainier

90 MILES

MINERAL LAKE CASE FOR SUPPORT
Today’s Growing Challenges

Youth who play outside are happier, better at paying attention, and less anxious. Spending time in nature builds confidence. In nature, there can be less structure than most types of indoor play, allowing youth to choose how they interact with nature around them. This gives them practice managing their own actions and encourages creativity and imagination. Consider these recent statistics:

- 25% of youth in Washington are overweight or obese and 51% reported three or more hours a day of screen time on school days.
- Across the United States, the number of young people getting outside every day has dropped in half over the last generation, creating a nature-deficit in youth and especially youth of color.
- According to Washington State’s 2021 Study on Outdoor Education, access to outdoor school is not currently distributed equitably by race and income.

The Y Develops Youth to Become Healthy Adults

For more than 100 years, generations of young people have explored the outdoors through the Y at Camp Orkila on Orcas Island and Camp Colman in south Puget Sound, and outdoor expeditions across Washington State.

Through the Y, youth and young adults:

- Interact with positive role models
- Learn to work together in a culturally diverse environment
- Make choices, take responsibility, develop creative skills, build independence and self-reliance
- Gain confidence
- Develop into the next generation of adults who will steward the land and give back to community

Through the Y We Can Do More

While the Y continues to stretch to serve more youth through existing residential camps, as well as utilize existing, underutilized day camps and facilities, we are unable to meet the growing demand – and increasing urgency – of outdoor and environmental education experiences. With hundreds of young people on the Y’s waitlists for summer camps and many schools on waitlists for state mandated environmental education, our region needs more dedicated youth and family-focused outdoor facilities to build on our own proud tradition. Our region has long been defined as a leader in outdoor recreation and environmental education.
Invest in the Future of our Youth and Our Natural Environment

Camp and outdoor education makes a difference in the lives of youth and families. From promoting independence and critical thinking to developing social-emotional intelligence and healthy habits, being outdoors with the Y offers experiences that young people will carry into adulthood.

Youth benefit in an outdoor environment and the environment will benefit from youth being outdoors. Please join us in realizing this significant opportunity that will serve youth, families, and the environment for generations to come.

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Mineral Lake
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FOR COMMUNITY
Welcome to the YMCA of Greater Seattle! We’re an inclusive organization of all kinds of people with a shared commitment to nurture the potential of youth, promote healthy living, and foster social responsibility.

OUR CAUSE & COMMUNITY PRESENCE
At the Y, strengthening community is our cause. We work side-by-side with our neighbors throughout King, Pierce, and south Snohomish counties to help kids and families thrive – and apply their positive behaviors and goals at home, school, the workplace, and beyond.

OUR MISSION
Building a community where all people, especially the young, are encouraged to develop their fullest potential in spirit, mind, and body.

OUR CORE VALUES
Honesty, Caring, Respect, Responsibility, and a Passion for Success

EQUITY STATEMENT
The Y actively promotes a culture free from bias and injustice. We are dedicated to removing institutional and systemic barriers that result in oppression and racism. We will be accountable to marginalized communities for creating equitable and sustainable environments where social justice is woven into every facet of our programs, and by caring for our communities in a culturally versatile and respectful manner.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME
The Y is a membership organization open to all people. We welcome women, men, non-binary people, girls, and boys of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, sexual orientations and financial circumstances. Our programs and branches embrace diversity, reflecting the people and needs of our communities.
Complete land acquisition in 2022:

- Parcels A: Purchased by the Y, Sept. 2021
- Parcels B, C, and D: Seeking pledge of $7M to secure before Sept. 2022
- The estimated cost of the initial phases to build sufficient camp infrastructure after the initial land purchase is $36M, based on the actual costs of other Y camp property improvements realized in the last decade.
- More accurate estimates of true costs will be informed by the creation of our master plan.
- This work will begin in earnest as soon as we have entered a purchase agreement for the 1600 acres of land in phase 2.

Utilize acquired land beginning in 2023:

- Community-centered approach to developing master plan and site binding plan. This includes Tribes, youth, local community, families, and other key stakeholders.
- Launch Overnight Leadership Expeditions
- Launch Volunteer Work Weekend Projects

Teen Outdoor Leadership and Overnight Expeditions

Youth ages 11 to 18 are inspired to be their most courageous and confident selves as they explore some of the most beautiful and natural places in the Pacific Northwest. Through BOLD & GOLD expeditions, and other outdoor expedition opportunities, young people spend days or weeks in the wilderness, learning life skills, strength, teamwork and more.

Mineral Lake will offer significant opportunities for these programs to youth in the Pacific Northwest region and from across the country.
Develop Camp Infrastructure and Programming 2023–2032:

- Connect all youth to the outdoors initially serving an estimated 100 youth and increasing with full camp facilities to 400 youth per summer.
- Expand outreach and participation to diverse populations creating an equitable and sustainable environment for all to learn and grow.
- Build relationships with Indigenous Tribes and application of traditional Indigenous knowledge in service to the community.
- Focus on relationship building where conversations are facilitated to promote learning, leadership, and advancing equity and social justice for all.
- Expand outdoor leadership impact with expanded programming, Indigenous education, conservation collaborations, and environmental education.

Steward the Land, Educate Generations – in Perpetuity:

Once secured, the 2,100 acres of pristine forest, with the Nisqually River watershed running through it, will be conserved and protected for generations to enjoy.

Under Y ownership, we envision the following benefits:

- The Y plans to protect the natural environment at Mineral Lake in the decades ahead by leaving the forest substantially intact and undeveloped.
- The Y will work to minimize the collective carbon footprint and explore potential carbon offsets this property may offer.
- The full Y Mineral Lake property will serve as a working outdoor laboratory to educate youth about sustainable forestry, carbon emissions, carbon offsets, and more.
OUR VISION FOR MINERAL LAKE CAMP & OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

The Y approach to the outdoors is centered on good stewardship of the land and nurturing the potential of youth through experiences that build life skills and a sense of belonging and fostering future environmental leaders.

THE Y COMMITS TO:

Protect over 2,100 Acres of Forest

The Y will protect the natural environment at Mineral Lake in the decades ahead by leaving the forest substantially intact and undeveloped, providing an outdoor classroom for generations of young people to foster environmental stewardship and instill a love of the great outdoors.

Provide Outdoor Education

Y outdoor programs encourage examination, curiosity, and critical thinking through play and exploration. At Mineral Lake young people will have the opportunity to tent or cabin camp, backpack, and more, growing their outdoor skills as they develop a sense of belonging, learn to care for the land, and become good stewards of the environment.

Promote Y Core Values

The Y strives to create welcoming and inclusive environments to empower all campers to discover their unique inner strengths and put the Y values of Caring, Honesty, Responsibility and a Passion for Excellence, in all aspects of their life.
In 1904, the YMCA of Greater Seattle published its first outdoor camping program brochure inviting young boys to experience outdoor adventures on the shore of Hood Canal. Y Camping and Outdoor Leadership programs expanded throughout the early turn of the century as families sought opportunity for their young people, and regional leaders donated land well suited to Y programs. By the late 1920s, the YMCA of Greater Seattle had established two regional outdoor camping programming centers.

YMCA Camp Colman, located in south Puget Sound, and YMCA Camp Orkila on Orcas Island, have been serving youth and families for more than 100 years. These camps have grown into thriving epicenters for outdoor education, environmental stewardship, and community building on a year-round basis. Each summer more than 6,000 youth and teens learn, grow, and thrive with the support of caring adult YMCA staff and volunteers during week-long overnight camping programs. During the school year, another 12,000 students from 130 regional schools head to our overnight camps for environmental education programs, learning about nature and the unique ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest. Throughout the year, an additional 600 young people explore the outdoors through backpacking, climbing, and kayaking expeditions in the Y Outdoor Leadership programs. Both camps offer annual family camping programs as well as specialized retreat programming for adults.
PROTECTING OVER 2,100 ACRES OF FOREST

The Y’s current plan is to protect the natural environment at Mineral Lake in the decades ahead by leaving the forest substantially intact and undeveloped.