



You Are Invited

Share The Vision: The Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center

Kids won't remember their best day of television.

A butterfly landing on a nose, a fish caught with a handmade pole, or a first overnight in a tent away from home. These are the stories and experiences that will be told to friends, spouses, and children for a lifetime. Memories made at the [Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center](#) will last a lifetime, and you can be part of making that vision a reality. With a backdrop graced with restored native grasslands, colonies of quaking aspen, stately Ponderosa pine, and miles of trail, the [Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center](#) will be a destination for bringing people together to learn about and immerse themselves in nature.

Be Prepared to Fall in Love

Though Washington is known as the evergreen state, the Yakima River Canyon is nestled lovingly in the shrub-steppe ecoregion with rainfall so scarce that trees are hard-pressed to persist. The native habitats in this region are subtle, diverse, and highly endangered. With the highest density of passerines in the state and wandering big horn sheep, it is a wildlife-watchers dream. Nesting birds of prey, a vitally important salmonid nursery, ancient basalt lava flows, and timeless Native American history all make the Canyon a remarkable place.

The [Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center \(The Center\)](#) will celebrate and share this special place with the world.

The [Center](#) is the gateway to the 26-mile-long Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway. [The Center](#) is inextricably tied to the Canyon with its endangered shrub-steppe habitat, wildlife communities, stunning landscapes, and vital recreational opportunities.

Approximately 10 million years ago the ridges and valleys of the Yakima Canyon fold belt started to form. This area was pressured simultaneously from the north and south causing it to be wrinkled like a table cloth being pushed together. As the ridges rose at the rate of a few inches per millennium, the Yakima River kept down-cutting its channel to maintain its established course. After a million years of uplift and simultaneous erosion, the river's meandering course is now deeply entrenched. The shrub-steppe habitat that arose on the hillsides with a combination of acidic soils and low rainfall, is one of the world's richest ecosystems and supports a wide variety of animal and plant life.

The future home of the [Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center](#) rests on the ancestral lands of the fourteen Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The people of the Yakama Nation inhabited more than 12 million acres across Central Washington. We honor those native peoples who are tied to the land through history, legends, and culture. We acknowledge their descendants who live in the world today. We thank the caretakers of this land, who have lived here and continue to live here since time immemorial.

As the gateway to the Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway, [The Center](#) will invite lifelong learners to become active informed citizens and provide a sense of place for this land we love.

Encouraging Passion & Awe

Serving thousands of life-long learners each year, [The Center](#) will encourage passion and awe for outdoor education and experiences that promote a healthy respect and appreciation for the natural world. School field trips, evening lectures, special events, and summer camps will inspire a generation of people to make wise and informed decisions about how our environment sustains us.

Adults may find they enjoy the tranquility of cross-country skiing through towering Ponderosa Pines or simply reading a book in the fresh air with a light breeze. Seniors can easily access the trails, join in on science activities, and volunteer at [The Center](#) as docents and leaders for school groups. [The Center](#) will take care to ensure everyone of all ages, all stages, and all abilities can enjoy nature. Our community calendar will be filled with opportunities for everyone to join us in education, recreation, and conservation activities.

The Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN)

For 22 years KEEN has inspired a nature-based ethic in our community with unique outdoor educational programs, hands-on habitat restoration, and creating a sense of place for learners of all ages. Hundreds of thousands of dollars of grant funding and volunteer sweat equity committed to habitat restoration and recreation improvements at the future home of [The Center](#) reflects two decades of KEEN's commitment and passion for our region.

KEEN believes that it is our ethical and moral duty to educate and engage our community in its own environmental future. Having a restored area with ecosystem services, offering stepping-stone connectivity within the Yakima corridor, is a big part of that future. We believe that having protected and rehabilitated areas on the edge of town are critical to connecting our community to nature, effecting change, and eliciting behavioral changes.

Ensuring Your Legacy

Over 1.5 million drivers experience the beauty and serenity of the Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway every year. We believe that [The Center](#), located in the center of the state and at the mouth of the byway, will attract even more visitors and will be a destination for locals and travelers alike. With high visibility from Interstates 90 and 82, [The Center](#) has the potential for 100,000 or more visitations each year.

The Center represents an unparalleled opportunity to engage visitors and community members of all ages in outdoor education, draw tourists to Central Washington, undertake environmental stewardship and habitat restoration, and accomplish protection of the endangered shrub-steppe biome.

Our Capital Campaign Committee has a vision that includes Legacy Donors to be involved in design, programming, vision, and more. Our fundraising goal is \$2.5 million for design, permitting, construction, and initial operations.

Leave your legacy permanently, honor a family member’s memory, or become a corporate partner by naming elements of the *Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center*. All donations to the Legacy program above the cost of design and construction will be invested in a permanent operations endowment for YCIC.

Legacy Opportunity	Number of Opportunities	Amount
YCIC Building	1	\$2.5 million
Main Hall	1	\$1 million
Display Areas	Multiple	\$500,000
Science Lab/Classrooms	2	\$500,000
Education Rooms	1	\$250,000
Entry Areas	2	\$150,000
Wildlife Viewing Areas	Multiple	\$100,000
Trail System/Loops	Multiple	\$100,000
Outdoor Classrooms	Multiple	\$75,000
Dock and Viewing Platforms	Multiple	\$50,000
Bird & Butterfly Native Plant Gardens	Multiple	\$45,000
Picnic Areas	4	\$35,000
Habitat Restoration Areas	10	\$10,000
Outdoor Benches and Seating	20	\$1,000
Basalt Stones with Engraved Names	500	\$500
Outdoor Interpretive Signage	500	\$200 each

How To Give

The Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center welcomes donations and discussions of legacy opportunities at any time. Please reach out to Jill Scheffer at 509-551-8807 or via email jill.scheffer@keenetwork.org. We also gratefully accept donations by mail at 414 South Willow Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926 or online at our website at www.ycic.org.

Our Leadership

KEEN Board of Directors

Jill Scheffer

Gerald Scoville

Tim Bow

Dale Beeson

Allyson Rogan-Klyve

Teo Biccheiri

Ashley Callan

Delayna Breckon

Allison Carpenter

KEEN Staff

Carlyn Saunders – Environmental Education Director

Jennifer Smith – Programming Director

Capital Campaign Committee – Join Us!

We are currently inviting community members to join our Capital Campaign Committee. If you would like to know more about how to help get the Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center fully funded and operational, please let us hear from you at keen@keenetwork.org.

Contact Us

Kittitas Environmental Education Network

414 South Willow Street

Ellensburg, WA 98926

keen@keenetwork.org

www.ycic.org

509-551-8807