



# WHISKEYTOWN ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY



Keeping Environmental Education Alive in Shasta County

July 2023



## \$ 1 MILLION TO WES COMMUNITY

WES Community is the grateful recipient of a \$1 million allocation arising from the PG&E Zogg Fire settlement. The \$1M granted to us on May 31st from the settlement will support the “Grow Back Stronger” campaign to rebuild student housing at the Whiskeytown Environmental School. News of the allocation arrives as team partners (the Shasta County Office of Education and Whiskeytown NRA/NPS) proceed with plans for student housing, the Administration-Safety Building and campus rehabilitation.

Nothing can undo the heartache caused by the Zogg Fire. Families lost loved ones, and our neighbors lost homes and property. We are thankful for the allocation and the opportunity to return our community’s children to WES with new housing.

## NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION AT WHISKEYTOWN

WES Community, together with members of the National Park Service’s leadership team at Whiskeytown, hosted a two-day visit to the park and the WES campus on June 22nd and 23rd for Garrett Maltzan of the National Park Foundation. The purpose of the tour was to share the impacts of the Carr Fire (which burned 97% of the park in 2018) upon forestlands, facilities, and housing. He viewed the park’s rebuilding progress, efforts to rehabilitate trails, campgrounds and learned about ongoing park needs. The WES tour included an explanation of the programs provided for children and a presentation on the rebuilding progress and plans.



NPS Staff and WES Community Visit Brandy Creek with Garrett

The visit to both the park and school at Whiskeytown is significant because of the many programs the National Park Foundation supports. Among the Foundation's many focus areas is an emphasis on youth engagement. The Foundation also supports efforts to increase accessibility for all and revitalizing campgrounds in national parks. These are areas of need and interest for both Whiskeytown NRA and WES. WES Community gratefully received a NPF grant in 2022 and looks forward to continued support from the National Park Foundation.



WES Community Board and Garrett at WES

## WES SUMMER COORDINATOR REFLECTS



Kate Bates

Project SHARE Coordinator Kate Bates believes everyone should “get outside,” which is why she loves to conduct meetings (including this interview!) in the great outdoors. An environmental educator, Bates has been involved with the Whiskeytown Environmental School (WES) for 12 years and now serves as a Coordinator with Project SHARE/Shasta County Office of Education (SCOE).

This summer, under Bates' leadership, over 125 students per week will have the opportunity to engage in enrichment activities at WES. The participating 13 schools have high rates of underserved students. Project SHARE programs are designed to positively affect the academic, social, and emotional development of each child.

“Humans are innately curious,” says Bates. “When kids are given the opportunity to explore, they become interested in things and people that they previously did not know or care about. We want students to hike in the woods, play in the creek, and learn about the plants and animals that live there.”

Students are also learning about natural history at WES. For example, they find and learn about wavy-leaf soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), which can be used as soap, and Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon californicum*) which can also be prepared as a tea for colds and sore throats. Both of these plants are found in wooded areas at WES. And because WES is a technology-free zone (“there's no cell service!” Bates exclaims with joy), kids are more inclined to engage with each other, their teachers, and the natural world.



Wavy-leaf Soap Plant

“WES is a treasure—it's a shared resource that benefits everyone in Shasta County,” says Bates. “I'm thankful our community is committed to re-building the residential programs at WES through the Grow Back Stronger Campaign. Future generations will thank us for our investment!”

### Online News Service Features WES Community

Shasta Scout published an “Underground Good” column about WES Community and board president, Melinda Kashuba on July 5, 2023. Shasta Scout is a non-profit, independent, civic news organization. Find the feature at [Shastascout.org](https://shastascout.org)

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT FROM ACE HARDWARE



EUREKA WAY, REDDING  
MARX WAY, ANDERSON  
CASCADE BLVD., SHASTA LAKE

Helping our community rebuild  
WHISKEYTOWN ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOL

Our friends at ACE Hardware sponsored the “Round Up at the Register” for the month of June. The three participating stores in Redding, Anderson, and Shasta Lake helped promote this fundraiser. Thank you, shoppers, employees, and management, for increasing the rebuild account by \$6,000! The generosity of the GBK Corporation and these three stores is appreciated.

## METALS DIRECT, INC. A STAUNCH SUPPORTER

Imagining an improved school site for the next 100 years at WES has led the rebuild team down many paths, with multiple options explored. Last year we approached our friends at Metals Direct, Inc. They were immediately enthusiastic about the idea of imagining new buildings for WES. Company owner Mark Williams and supervisors Erick Elison and Shane Shannon attended WES as students and believe it to be a singularly important asset for our community.

With their imagination, skills, and patience (through many meetings!), preliminary plans for modern, fire-resistant buildings have been developed. These preliminary plans have allowed the National Park Service and Shasta County Office of Education to evaluate costs and push the project forward within their organizations. It couldn't have happened without Metals Direct, Inc. and their vision. Their team, which included William H. Verhey of VHV Design, were responsive and collaborative with the rebuild team. Their belief in the project led them to discount their work and the rebuild team is grateful beyond words!



## "THE HARDEST JOB I'VE EVER LOVED"

“The coolest thing about nature is that you never know what you’re going to find,” says former WES Hike Instructor (Naturalist) “Jellyfish John” Waldrop. “One day our hiking group stopped to watch a bear cub being coaxed out of a tree by a mama bear—I couldn’t have staged a better lesson than that!” Waldrop served as a member of the WES camp staff between 1992-1995. As an environmental educator, he had the privilege of leading students on hikes and directing activities to help them appreciate nature.



He remembers one child in his group with special needs—the student was quiet all week, but on the last day he shouted, “Jellyfish John, come look!” “We all ran over—he had discovered a bush with thousands of ladybugs on it—it was amazing,” recalls John.

John’s experience at WES influenced his own career path by helping him appreciate the natural resources of the North State. He went on to work towards improved air quality in Shasta County, eventually serving as the Air Quality District Manager for Shasta County.

“WES matters because it is a rite of passage for local kids,” says Waldrop. “For many students, WES is their first voyage away from their families. The WES experience builds confidence in kids and teaches them about the environment. It’s a tragedy that so many kids have missed out on the WES experience. Let’s invest in our kids and environment and get WES open again for overnight programs!”

John and his family at Lassen Volcanic National Park



## LEGISLATIVE INTEREST



Brenda Haynes, District Representative for Congressman Doug LaMalfa toured WES on June 9th. Josh Hoines, WNRA Superintendent and WES Community representatives escorted Brenda around the campus with explanations of the Carr Fire damage and rebuilding progress.

Brenda’s three sons attended WES with their classmates as children, but she had never had a chance to visit until now. Brenda is supportive of the mission, and provided helpful suggestions to push the project forward.

Melinda Kashuba, Kathy Hill, Brenda Haynes, and Josh Hoines

### OUR MISSION

Whiskeytown Environmental School Community (WES Community) exists to support educational goals through immersive outdoor experiences for learners at Whiskeytown Environmental School (WES). WES Community contributes to the school’s mission through advocacy and relationship building with communities, businesses and public agencies to generate funds and further shared goals.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS & LIAISONS

Melinda Kashuba - President  
Cassie Simons - Vice President  
Kathy Hill - Treasurer  
Francesca Huntsman - Secretary  
Ellen Petrick - Director at Large  
Nathan Fairchild - SCOE  
Tyler Compton - NPS  
Tammy Reynolds - FOW, Inc.

### DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Donate online, [wescommunity.org](http://wescommunity.org) or by check, WES Community, PO Box 3, Whiskeytown, CA 96095
- Facebook Birthday Fundraisers
- Benevity Corporate Matching program
- Asset and non-cash gifts: Gordon Flinn, 530.945.8351

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