



Institute for Climate,
Water, and the Environment

2026 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

The 2025-2026 academic year was a year of trial, transition, stabilization, and celebration. Unfortunately, the federal government was successful in terminating our \$19.9M grant to advance community resilience in Spokane. Combined with severe cuts at the state level, the Institute was forced to eliminate three full-time positions. Though a combination of cost cutting, new grants, and generous supporters has helped stabilize, we are left in a situation where our staff has shrunk, while our work has grown. Longterm, this is not sustainable.

This academic year also marked the Institute's fifth anniversary. The report below demonstrates how much we've grown in that time. Not only do we continue to host a respected annual lecture series attended by people from across the globe, each year we are now reaching hundreds of young people with climate education and preparing dozens of college students for careers in climate-related research, organizing, and education. We've established the Gonzaga Climate Institute as the Inland Northwest's leader in community-engaged climate research, while simultaneously aiding in the creation of a regional network of resilience hubs and facilitating the development of the region's first in-depth resilience plans. With the collaborative launch of the new Environmental & Climate Law Clinic with the Law School, we are increasingly supporting the creation and passage of critical new laws that are effecting the systemic change we need.

In the end, the Climate Institute exists to build capacity for ourselves and others to address the most difficult challenge our species has ever faced. We know that this work, if it is successful, will take place across generations. We are grateful to be laying the cornerstones that will serve as the foundation of this multi-generational endeavor.

Onward,

Brian G. Henning, Ph.D.

Founding Director

Professor of Philosophy

Professor of Environmental Studies and Sciences



An aerial photograph of a river with a wooden bridge. The river flows from the top right towards the bottom left, with white rapids visible. The bridge is made of wooden planks and has a railing. The surrounding area is lush green with trees and vegetation. In the top left corner, there is a sandy area with some rocks and a small wooden structure. Overlaid on the right side of the image are numerous golden, oval-shaped patterns of varying sizes, some of which contain a textured, organic pattern.

Our Mission

Informed by an abiding commitment to a just society and care for the planet, the Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment engages in regional capacity building, scholarship, and teaching to promote the flourishing of Inland Northwest communities, waters, and lands in the face of a changing climate.

We envision a transition to integral Earth-human relations characterized by thriving, equitable human societies within flourishing ecological communities.

University Impact



29

student employees
representing 12
majors



4

course partnerships



16

faculty across all
academic units on
the internal
advisory board

"This job has honestly been my favorite thing I was involved with at GU. I have gotten invaluable experience in so many different skill areas. I can totally see myself doing something like this full time in the future."

-Community Outreach & Research Assistant

"The most fulfilling part of being a CORA was getting to interact with the city of Spokane and its community members in a meaningful way. This experience shaped not only my intellectual and professional development but also my sense of responsibility as an engaged member of my community."

-Community Outreach & Research Assistant

2025-2026 Lecture Series by the Numbers

In the 2025-2026 academic year, the Climate Institute hosted 13 events.

Highlights from this years' speakers included a conversation with renowned author Terry Tempest Williams, an exploration of water concerns and climate change through dance and movement, and an opportunity to learn about lightweight architecture and sustainable structures in our built environment.

The Climate Institute also hosted the 8th annual Spokane Candidates Climate Change Forum. This impactful event allows Gonzaga students to hear directly from candidates running for local office and to challenge them on what actions they would take to tackle climate change if elected.



3,656

An orange circle containing the number 3,656 in a bold, dark blue font.

people registered, representing



39

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states and



18

An orange circle containing the number 18 in a bold, dark blue font.

countries

For Our Common Home Lecture Series

Climate Literacy Project

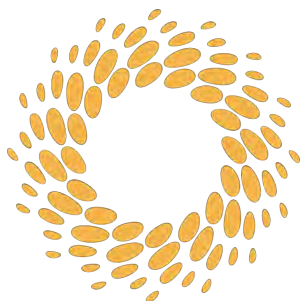


The Climate Literacy Project nourishes equitable human societies within flourishing ecological communities by providing climate education resources, workshops, and learning experiences with a focus on place-based and hope-filled experiential learning to expand the understanding of and response to the climate crisis.

Make it local, keep it hopeful

Rooted in place-based education, the Climate Literacy Project creates educational resources and learning opportunities to help our community understand and adapt to the changing climate.

Our work reaches K-8 classrooms, university faculty, Gonzaga undergraduates, life-long learners, and pre-service and in-service teachers.



2,240

K-8 students
reached through
the Fellows
program

135

hours of faculty
professional
learning

98%

of teachers
surveyed agree
that their climate
instruction
improved

19

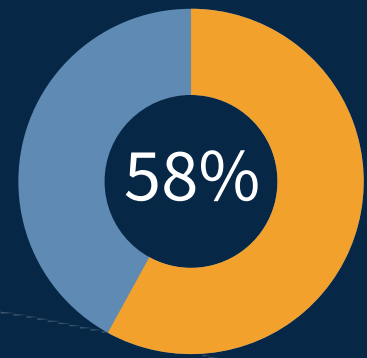
students enrolled in
the Professional
Certificate in
Climate Action
Planning

"For me, the most fulfilling part of being a Climate Literacy Fellow is making a tangible impact in the realm of environmental education for each of the schools we visited (and the district as a whole). Knowing that I'm impacting students who may not have otherwise gotten this education otherwise was really impactful and made me feel like any stress, etc. was all worth it for the benefit of this work."

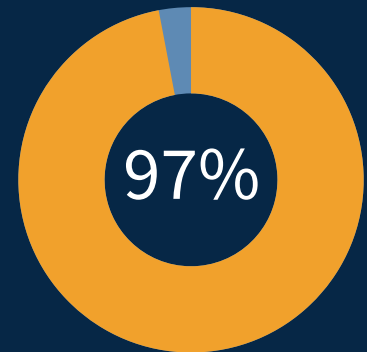
-Gonzaga Climate Literacy Fellow

Climate Literacy Fellows

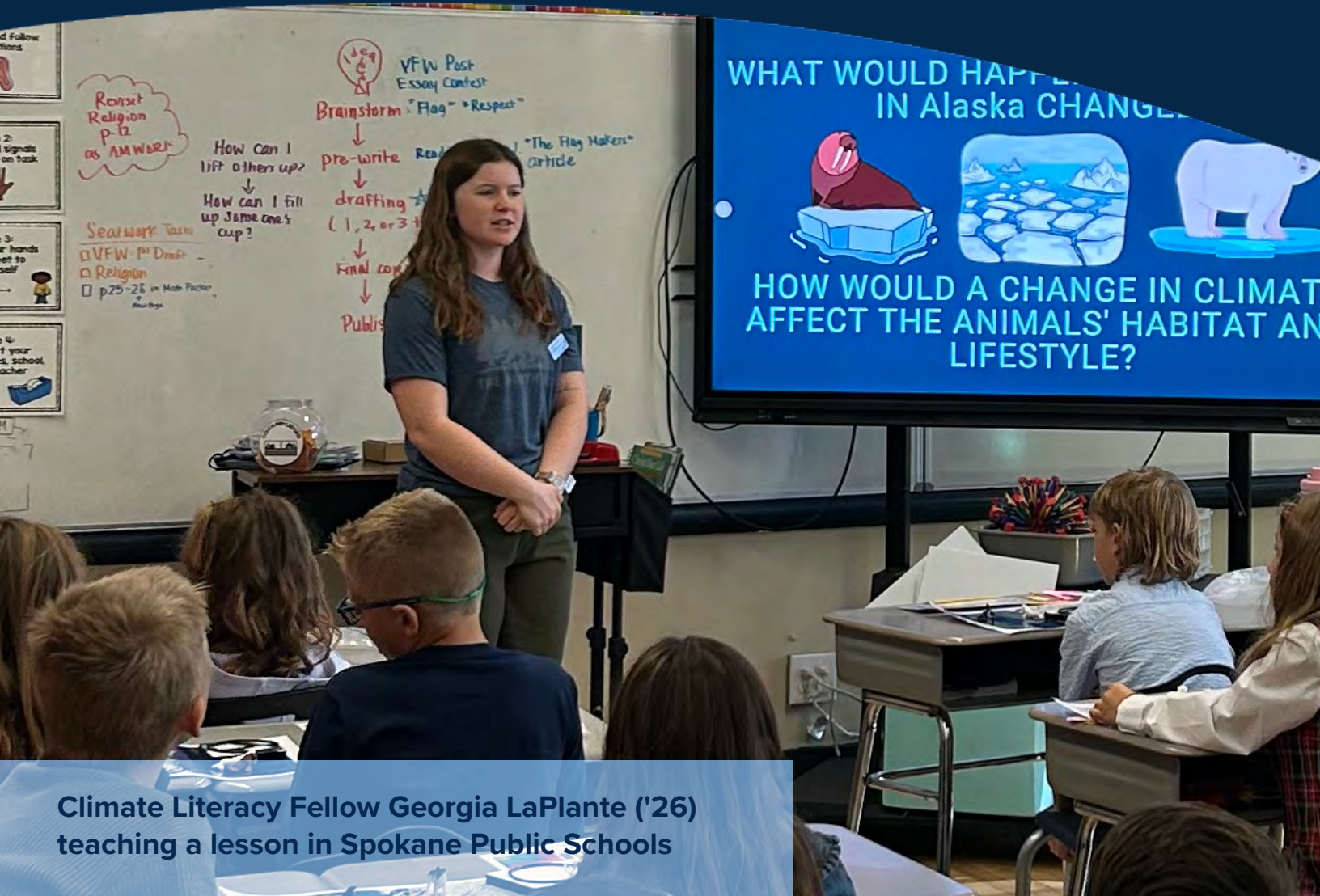
The Climate Literacy Fellows program hires exceptional Gonzaga undergraduates to deliver climate literacy lessons in local elementary and middle school classrooms. The lessons are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and Essential Principles for understanding and addressing climate change. Since its inception, this well-respected program has helped over 6,000 students in the region engage with high-impact climate content.



of schools visited were title I



of teachers would recommend the program to other teachers



Climate Literacy Fellow Georgia LaPlante ('26) teaching a lesson in Spokane Public Schools

In the Curriculum

The Climate Institute partnered with the Registrar's office to develop the Climate-Sustainability-Environmental Justice Course Attribute. This attribute acts as a tool to track and document the integration of climate education across Gonzaga's curricula and to provide a framework for institutional assessment and improvement.

200

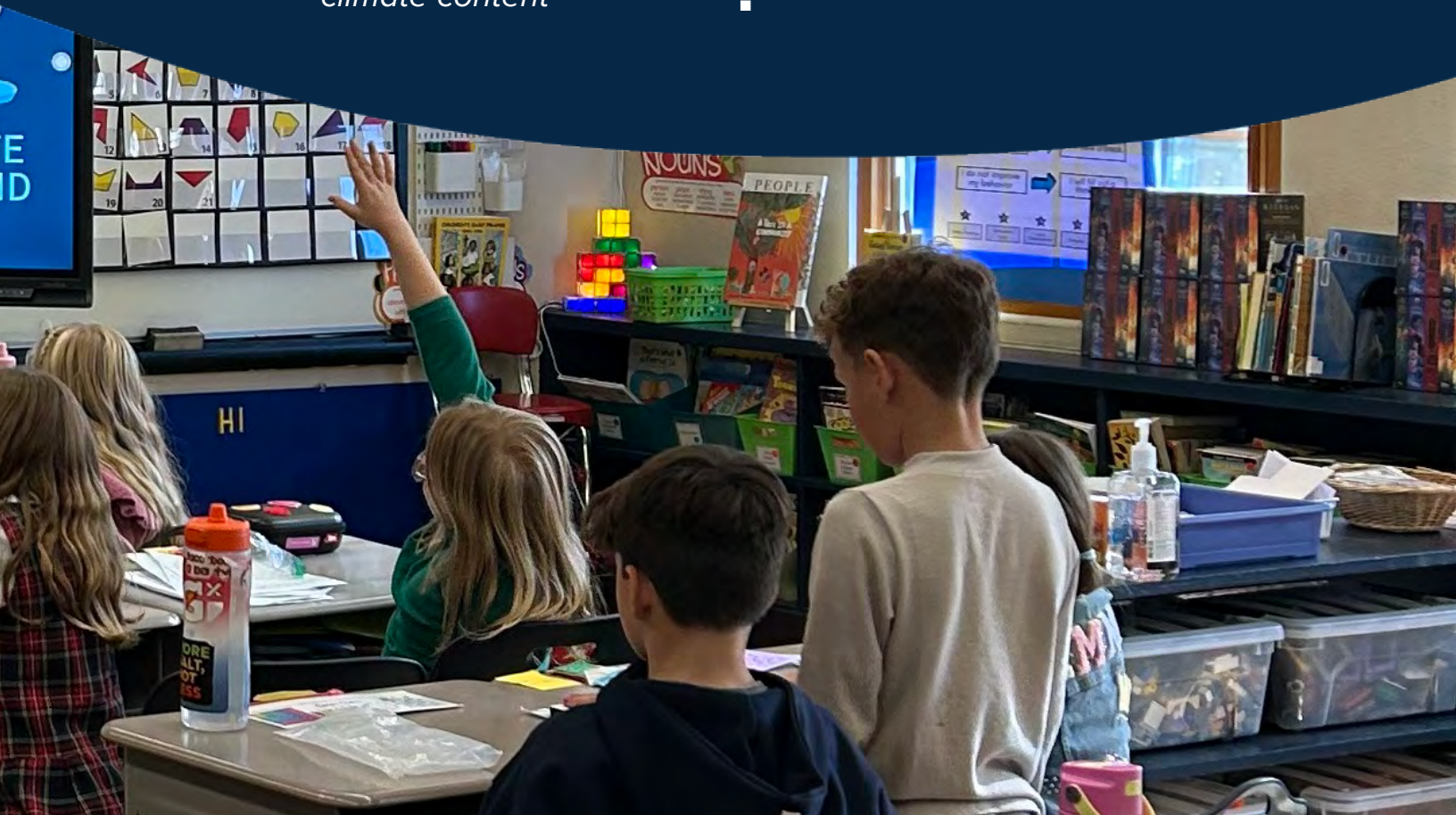
Gonzaga courses include climate content

Supporting life-long learning

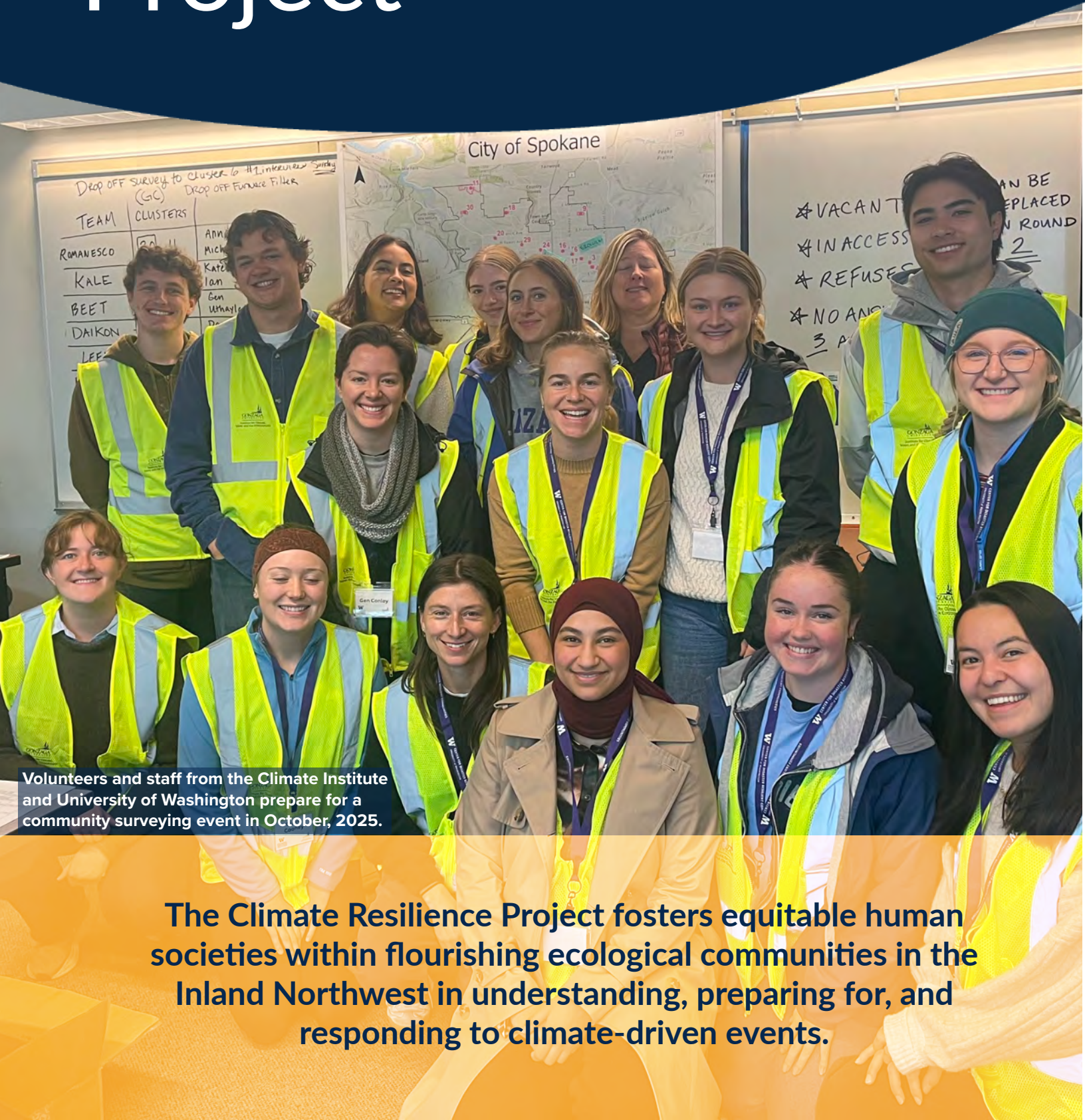
Offered in collaboration with the Center for Lifelong Learning, the Climate Institute offers a Professional Certificate in Climate Action Planning. This year, 19 students from 8 different states were empowered to reduce emissions and build resilience in their communities after completing the program.

Community Collaborations

In addition to collaborations on campus, the Climate Literacy Project continued to deepen its partnership with Spokane Public School District's Climate Literacy Task Force to integrate climate into elementary ELA curricula.



Climate Resilience Project

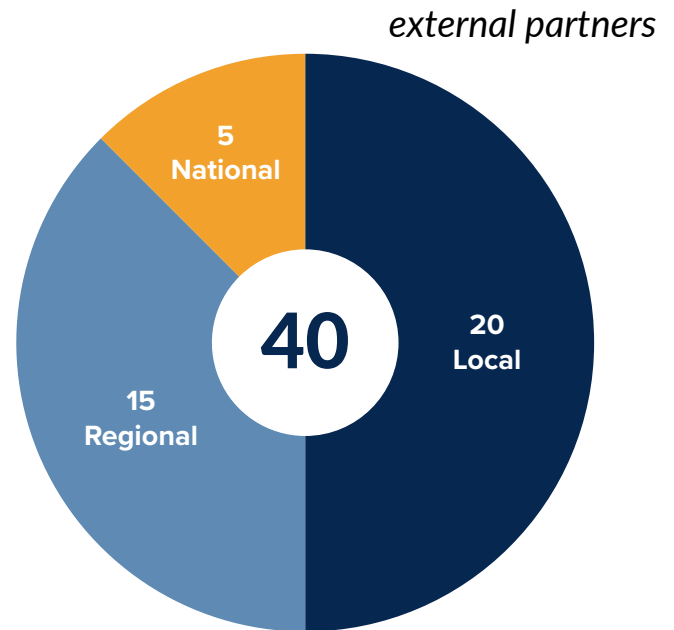


Volunteers and staff from the Climate Institute and University of Washington prepare for a community surveying event in October, 2025.

The Climate Resilience Project fosters equitable human societies within flourishing ecological communities in the Inland Northwest in understanding, preparing for, and responding to climate-driven events.

For the community, with the community

The Climate Resilience Project takes a multifaceted approach to growing resilience, interweaving the empowerment of grassroots organizers with academic research and engagement of local agencies. Despite unlawfully losing \$19.9M in funding from the federal government this year, the Climate Resilience Project was able to forge ahead and make progress towards accomplishing our goals of keeping our community members safe from the impacts of climate-driven extreme heat and wildfire smoke.



Level 1
Community
Resilience Hubs
certified



35

community
presentations
and workshops

"The most fulfilling part of being a CORA has easily been being able to contribute to my hometown in a meaningful way. There are always opportunities for volunteering or showing up, but this job provided much more directed and tangible contributions. I like knowing that my work here will be felt by my family, friends, and all the people who I love and care about here (as well as all other citizens!), regardless of their 'belief' in climate work. It is important to me to be an advocate and go-between for the citizens who we do our work for and the community/students of Gonzaga."

-Community Outreach and Research Assistant

Rooted in Partnership

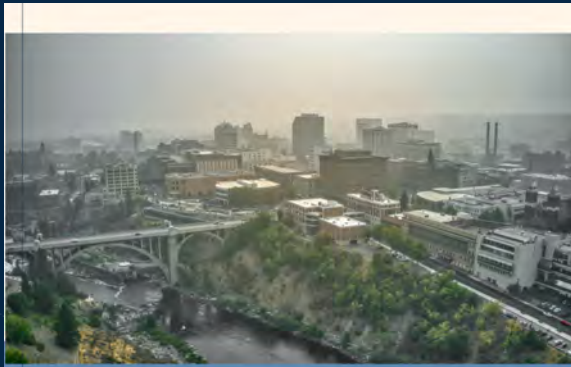
The Climate Resilience Project sees its primary role in the community as a supporting force for established local organizations, empowering them to further the diverse work they are uniquely situated to do.

Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative

The Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative is a group of 18 local organizations who contribute to community resilience in Spokane, including healthcare providers, government agencies, nonprofits, and more. The work of the collaborative in the 2025-2026 academic year included publishing the City's first extreme heat and wildfire smoke resilience plans.



Leaders from local organizations gather for a "Defining Resilience" workshop coordinated by the Climate Institute and the WA State Department of Commerce



Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan

2025-2030

A Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative project

Version 1.0 published August 4, 2025



Spokane Extreme Heat Resilience Plan

2025-2030

A Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative project

Version 1.0 published June 18, 2025



Local solutions for local challenges

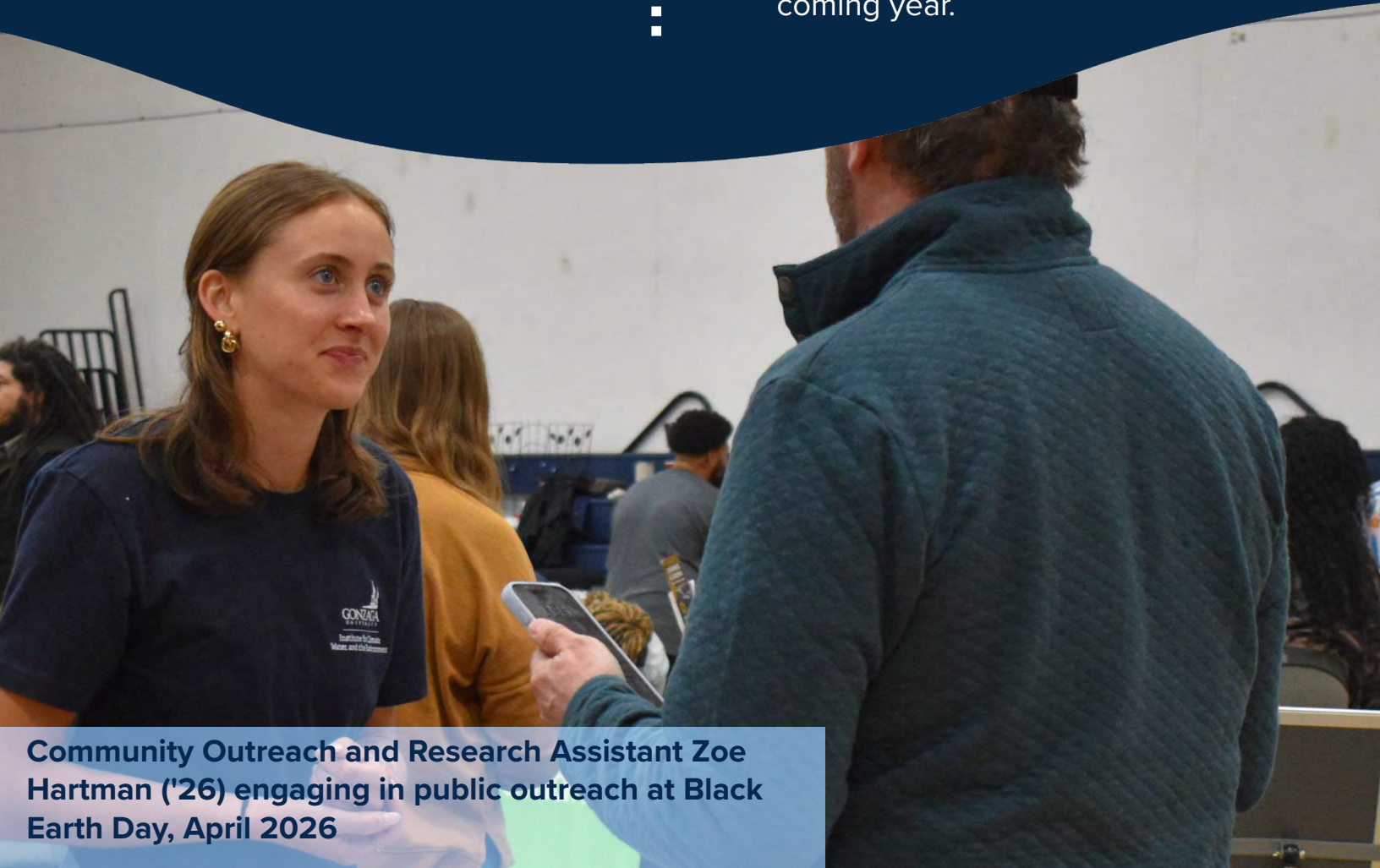
Preparing for Wildfire Smoke & Extreme Heat

Coeur d'Alene Tribe

The Climate Resilience Project co-developed a survey tool with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to gather perspectives and experiences with heat and smoke. These important data will help to inform future climate resilience action planning for the tribe. This partnership also supports the installation of air-quality sensors and information dashboards at three tribal facilities to help increase air quality awareness.

Community Resilience and Preparedness Workshops

In partnership with the Red Cross, Gonzaga faculty member Dr. Molly Parker, and four Gonzaga Nursing students, the Climate Resilience Project designed a public health-focused workshop for heat and smoke safety using a combination of resources from the Be Red Cross Ready campaign and research from the Climate Institute, the Department of Ecology, and the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. The team plans to pilot the workshops in the coming year.



Community Outreach and Research Assistant Zoe Hartman ('26) engaging in public outreach at Black Earth Day, April 2026

Smoke Ready Spokane Public Safety Campaign

A collaboration between the Climate Institute, Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency and Spokane Regional Health District, the Smoke Ready Spokane campaign ran its first wildfire smoke safety educational campaign during smoke season of 2025. The website and materials were developed in synergy with the community input.

10,200

visits to the SRS
website



**SMOKE
READY
SPOKANE**

SmokeReadySpokane.org

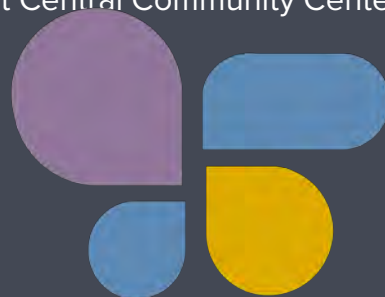


Resilience Hubs

After a successful pilot this year, the Climate Resilience Project certified the inaugural cohort of 11 resilience hubs. The Spokane Community Resilience Hub Network is a coalition of trusted local community facilities strengthened to serve their communities in periods of crisis. Hubs provide support and services to members of the Spokane community to keep them informed about, prepared for, and protected from dangerous events, with specific attention to extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

Level 1 Engagement Hubs

- Carl Maxey Center
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center
- Northeast Community Center
- Spokane Public Library-Central
- Spokane Public Library- Hillyard
- Spokane Public Library- Indian Trail
- Spokane Public Library -Liberty Park
- Spokane Public Library- Shadle Park
- Spokane Public Library- South Hill
- St. Andrews Episcopal Church
- West Central Community Center



Spokane
Community Resilience
Hub Network

Environmental Law Clinic



In Fall 2025, in partnership with the Climate Institute, the Gonzaga School of Law re-launched the Environmental and Climate Law Clinic. Led by former U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington, Vanessa Waldref, and former DOJ Environmental Crimes Coordinator, Dan Fruchter, the clinic brings together students, faculty and legal experts to address climate, environmental, public health and justice issues in the Inland Northwest.



Renters' Right to Install State Law

The Climate Institute collaborated with a coalition of partners across the state to pass ESSB 6200 "Concerning renters' and mobile home occupants' ability to install portable cooling devices," also known as the Renters' Right to Install bill. This bill was modeled after the renters' right to install Spokane City ordinance that the Institute helped to draft and pass in 2024.



Progress through policy

Renters' Right to Cooling Ordinance

In July 2026, the City of Spokane became the first city in the Northwest to pass an Ordinance recognizing a Renters' Right to Cooling. Property owners must now provide adequate cooling to their tenants.

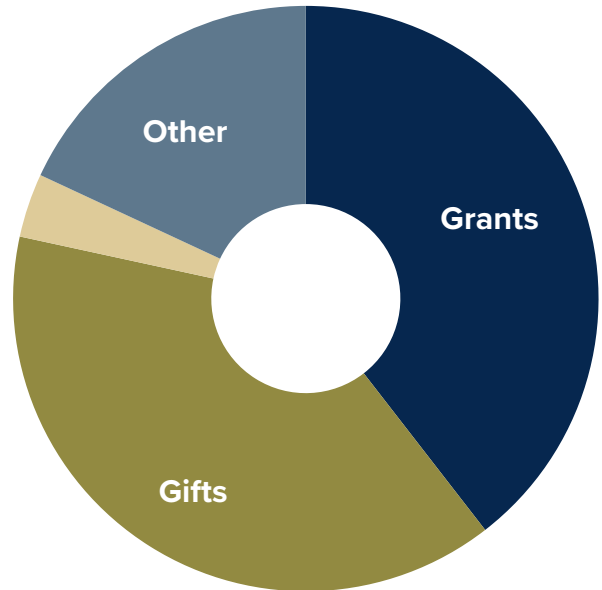
The Climate Institute and the Environmental & Climate Law Clinic played an integral role in this historic moment by drafting the initial legislation, helping to amend it to gain support, and advocating strongly for its passage.



Financial Report

Revenue

<i>Grants*</i>	\$263,000
<i>Gifts</i>	\$259,000
<i>Gonzaga Direct Funding</i>	\$23,500
<i>Other revenue**</i>	\$120,283
TOTAL	\$665,783



Expenses

<i>Wages and benefits</i>	\$317,986
<i>Other expenses</i>	\$25,689
<i>Pass-through to Partners</i>	\$94,789
TOTAL	\$438,464



Ways to give

We can receive donations from workplace giving, business, real estate, tribute gifts, and more. We welcome gifts of all sizes. Thank you!

Monthly Giving Program

Automatic monthly gifts are convenient for you and provide us with reliable support year-round.

Assets

Gifts of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

Planned Giving

Name the Climate Institute in your will, trust, or other estate plans and leave a lasting legacy to Inland Northwest communities, waters, and lands.

Charitable Remainder Trusts & Charitable Gift Annuities

Payments are made to beneficiaries during their lifetime and the remainder is added to our endowment fund.

Support Our Work

Our accomplishments over the past 5 years would not be possible without the support of generous donors. Taking action in the fight against climate change comes in many forms

Help address the climate crisis at Gonzaga.edu/ClimateGiving



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**Institute for Climate,
Water, and the Environment**