KEEN Winter Camp Counselor

With Potential for Ongoing Part-Time Work in Environmental Education

Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN)

Location: Helen McCabe Park / Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center, five miles south of Ellensburg, WA
Employment Type: Temporary, part-time, seasonal, with potential for continued part-time employment
Positions Available: Up to 2 (conditional on camper registration)
Winter Camp Pay: $17.13 per hour

About KEEN

The Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN) is a nonprofit organization providing nature-based environmental education and stewardship opportunities in the shrub-steppe and surrounding ecosystems of Central Washington.

Through programs at the Yakima Canyon Interpretive Center and Helen McCabe Park, KEEN connects children, students, families, and community members with the natural world through hands-on learning, outdoor exploration, and environmental science.

KEEN is seeking enthusiastic, dependable people to help deliver our 2026 Winter Camp program. We are also interested in identifying candidates who may be a good fit for additional part-time work with KEEN beginning in the new year.

Winter Camp

Winter Camp gives children an opportunity to stay active, explore the outdoors, learn about nature, and enjoy the winter season through games, crafts, nature walks, hands-on science activities, and outdoor exploration.

This year, KEEN is expanding its environmental education programming to include clean energy education through our Powerful Partner relationship with Puget Sound Energy (PSE). Campers will explore where energy comes from, how we use it, renewable energy, energy conservation, and the connections between energy and the environment through engaging, age-appropriate activities and demonstrations.

Counselors will work alongside KEEN's camp leads, Jen and Jessie, to supervise and engage campers, assist with educational activities, and help create a safe, welcoming, and memorable camp experience.

Camp Dates and Schedule

KEEN is offering two three-day sessions:

- **Session 1:** December 21–23, 2026
- **Session 2:** December 28–30, 2026

Camp runs from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. Counselor schedules will include additional time for preparation, camper arrival, and end-of-day cleanup. Approximately eight hours per day are anticipated.

Applicants may indicate their availability for one or both sessions.

Conditional Hiring: These positions are contingent on camper registration. KEEN requires a minimum of 12 campers per day to operate each session. The registration deadline is December 11, 2026. Selected candidates will receive conditional employment offers and will be notified following the registration deadline whether their position and scheduled camp dates are confirmed. A session that does not meet its registration goal will not require additional counselor staffing.

Key Responsibilities

Camper Supervision and Safety

- Help supervise children throughout the camp day, including outdoor activities, games, meals, transitions, and free-choice time.
- Maintain an attentive, positive presence and help ensure campers follow camp rules and safety expectations.
- Support campers of varying ages, abilities, and interests, helping everyone feel included and engaged.
- Monitor weather conditions and help ensure campers stay warm, dry, and appropriately equipped.
- Communicate safety concerns, injuries, behavioral issues, or camper needs promptly to the camp leads.

Environmental and Energy Education

- Assist with hands-on clean energy education activities provided through KEEN's Powerful Partner relationship with Puget Sound Energy.
- Help campers explore topics such as electricity, renewable energy, energy use, conservation, and the relationship between energy and the environment.
- Facilitate age-appropriate demonstrations, games, crafts, and interactive learning activities using provided curriculum and materials.
- Encourage curiosity, questions, discovery, and connections between energy education and campers' everyday lives.

- Support nature-based science activities and outdoor exploration throughout the camp program.

Activity Leadership and Daily Operations

- Assist with nature walks, winter games, crafts, hands-on science activities, and outdoor exploration.
- Help set up and facilitate activity stations and themed programming.
- Assist with camper arrival, check-in, transitions, lunch, snack breaks, and dismissal.
- Help prepare and serve snacks and hot beverages.
- Assist with setting up and cleaning activity areas and camp equipment.
- Help maintain a clean, organized, and welcoming camp environment.

Potential for Ongoing Part-Time Employment: KEEN Field Science Program

In addition to Winter Camp, KEEN is exploring opportunities to expand its school-based Field Science Program beginning in January 2027. We would be interested in considering qualified Winter Camp applicants for a separate, ongoing part-time position helping coordinate and deliver this program.

KEEN's Field Science Program provides hands-on outdoor learning experiences for school groups, connecting students with local ecosystems, wildlife, habitat restoration, and environmental science.

Depending on experience and program needs, responsibilities may include:

- Planning, coordinating, and delivering outdoor field science experiences for K–12 students.
- Working with teachers to schedule school visits and tailor activities to grade levels and learning objectives.
- Leading hands-on field investigations, nature observations, and place-based science activities.
- Preparing educational materials and equipment and coordinating the logistics of school visits.
- Helping develop and refine engaging, curriculum-connected outdoor learning experiences.
- Building relationships with schools and educators to grow participation in KEEN's programs.

We are particularly interested in candidates who enjoy teaching and working with young people, have an interest in environmental science, and are comfortable leading groups outdoors.

The potential Field Science Program position would be part-time, beginning in the new year**.** It would be a separate employment opportunity, with hours, compensation, and responsibilities

discussed with selected candidates. Continued employment is not guaranteed and will depend on program needs, funding, qualifications, and mutual interest.

Applicants interested in either or both opportunities are encouraged to indicate that in their application.

Qualifications

- Enjoy working with children and have a positive, patient, and flexible approach.
- Dependable, responsible, and comfortable taking initiative and working as part of a team.
- Interested in nature, science, environmental education, or clean energy.
- Comfortable learning and helping deliver educational activities and curriculum.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Comfortable spending extended periods outdoors in cold, snowy, and potentially wet winter weather.
- Able to actively participate in outdoor games, nature walks, and recreational activities.
- Previous experience working with children, in camps, education, recreation, environmental science, or outdoor programs is preferred but not required.
- Experience teaching, leading groups, developing educational activities, or working with school-age children is particularly valuable for candidates interested in the Field Science Program.
- First Aid/CPR certification is a plus.
- Must be willing to complete KEEN's required background screening and follow all organizational child-safety policies.

No prior energy education experience is necessary. KEEN will provide activity guidance and educational materials.

Working Conditions

Winter Camp is a primarily outdoor program at a rustic park facility. There are no indoor facilities or electricity available during camp. Activities may take place in cold, snowy, or wet conditions.

Counselors must provide their own appropriate winter clothing and footwear and be prepared to spend the day outdoors.

How to Apply

Interested applicants should send a brief introduction describing:

- Their experience working with children, if any.
- Why they are interested in working at Winter Camp.
- Their interests or experience in outdoor education, environmental science, or energy education.

- Their availability for December 21–23 and/or December 28–30.
- Whether they would also be interested in being considered for ongoing part-time work with KEEN's Field Science Program beginning in January 2027.

Please submit applications or questions to:

Jen Smith
jennifersmith@keenetwork.org

AND

Jill Scheffer
keen@keenetwork.org

KEEN anticipates hiring up to two additional Winter Camp Counselors. Selection and final employment confirmation will depend on camper enrollment following the December 11 registration deadline.