

*Moving toward a clean
energy economy*

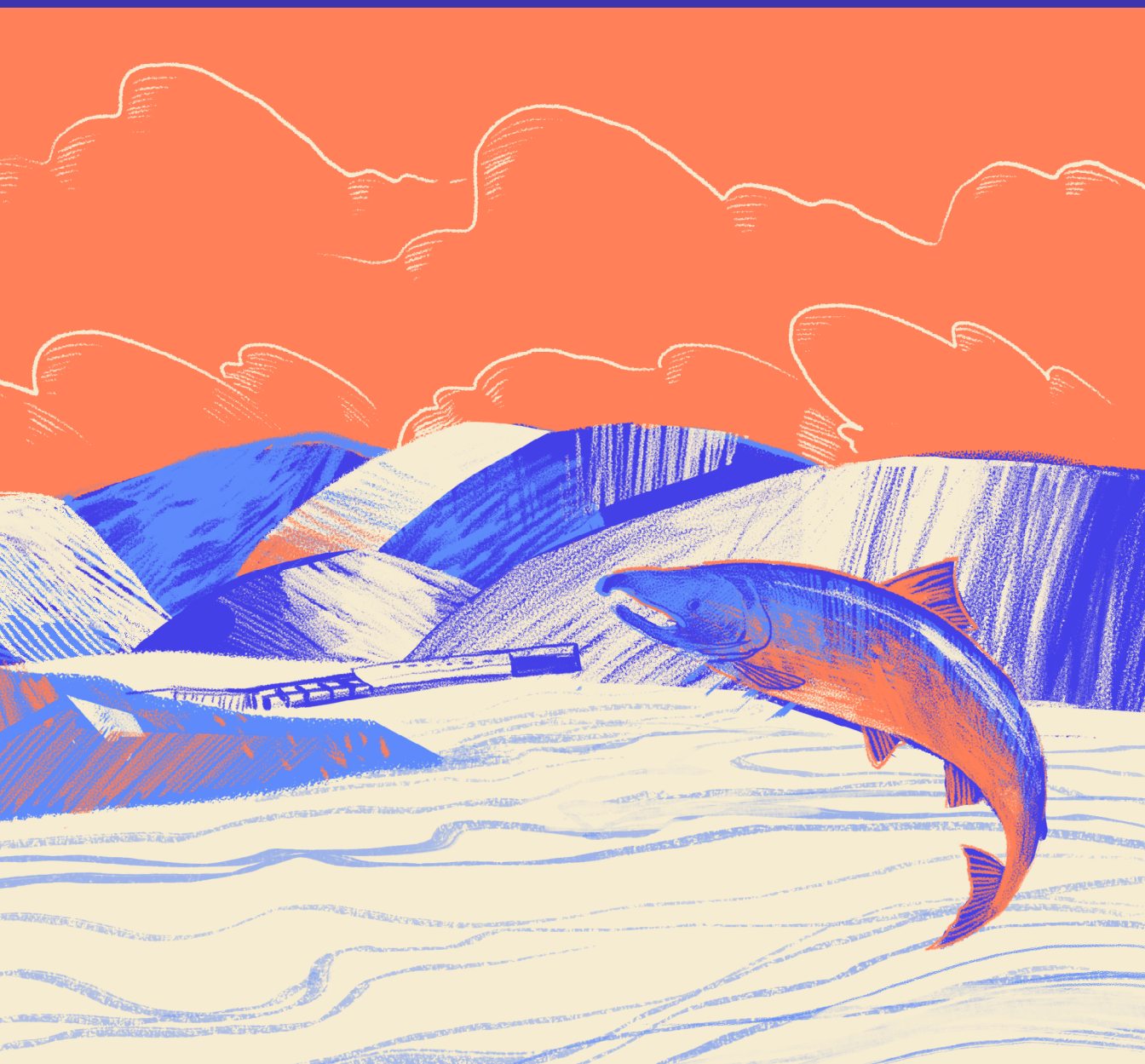
*Making environmental justice
real through land use*

*The legacy of the
Snake River dams*

2021 WINTER ISSUE

CONVENE

WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Christina Billingsley, Sr. Program Manager, Environmental Engagement
Dave Bricklin, Partner, Bricklin & Newman, LLP
Julie Colehour, Partner, C+C
Linda Cornfield, Philanthropist & Environmentalist
Peter Goldman, Founder, Washington Forest Law Center
Deb Hagen-Lukens, Lecturer, University of Washington
Ubaldo Hernandez, Senior Organizer at Columbia Riverkeeper
Ken Lederman, **Board Chair**, Principal, Foster & Garvey PC
Kaiwen Lee, Consultant and Co-founder, Outdoor Asian
Chandra Lewnau, Attorney at Law, Law Firm of Johnson & Nagaich, P.S.
Melissa Mager, Conservationist & Retired Attorney
Sydney Miyahara, Attorney
Justin Parker, Executive Director, NW Indian Fisheries Commission
David Sarju, Principal, Crew Leadership
Amy Scott, Associate Director, Planned Giving at University of WA
William Stelle, Natural Resources Consultant

STAFF

Rein Attemann, Puget Sound Campaign Manager
Paul Balle, Donor Relations Director
Rachel Baker, Evergreen Forests Program Director
Lennon Bronsema, Chief Campaigns Officer
Alec Brown, Forests & Fish Project Manager
Michelle Chow, Stormwater and Toxics Policy Manager
Zachary DeWolf, Communications Director
Grace Drechsel, Communications Associate
Charlotte Dohrn, Puget Sound Habitat Policy Manager
Anna Doty, Fossil Fuel Campaign Manager
Sarah Farbstein, Field Manager
Katie Fields, Forests & Communities Program Manager
Brooke Galberth, Development & Data Associate
Julie Gonzales-Corbin, HR & Administrative Manager
Kat Holmes, Field Director
Lauren Kastanas, Foundations Manager
Caitlin Krenn, Climate & Clean Energy Campaign Manager
Emily Krieger, Civic Engagement Manager
Rae Lee, Visual Communications Manager
Alyssa Macy, CEO
Kathy Malley, Development Director
Johanna Mannisto, Event & Outreach Associate
Maria McClausland, Administrative Associate
Lucy Middleton, Salesforce Admin & Data Systems Manager
Tina Montgomery, Business Relations & Events Manager
Meralina Morales, Administrative Associate
Darcy Nonemacher, Government Affairs Director
Esteban Ortiz, Tri-Cities Community Organizer
Sally Paul, Evergreen Forests Program Manager
Sean Pender, Administrative Director
Miguel Pérez-Gibson, State Forest Policy Advisor (*contractor*)
Rebecca Ponzio, Climate & Fossil Fuel Program Director
Lisa Remlinger, Chief Policy Officer
Mindy Roberts, Puget Sound Program Director
Mariana Sanchez Castillo, Field Organizer
Dre Say, Field Organizer
Kamna Shastri, Content Manager
Danielle “Skippy” Shaw, Local Government Affairs Manager
Griffin Smith, Development Manager
Joy Stanford, Civic Engagement Director
Clifford Traisman, State Lobbyist (*contractor*)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Feature Article: Breaching Dammed Legacies
12	Say No to Fossil Fuels... ...And, Say Yes to a Clean Energy Future
15	Making Environmental Justice Real Through Land Use
20	Organizational Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WEC Bulletin• Carbon Friendly Forestry Conference Recap• New additions to our team

Staff Contributors:

Kamna Shastri
Rae Lee
Zachary DeWolf
Rebecca Ponzio (“Say No to Fossil Fuels...”); Rein Attemann and Mindy Roberts (“Breaching Dammed Legacies”); Danielle “Skippy” Shaw and Grace Drechsel (“Making Environmental Justice Real...”); Darby Williams and Sally Paul (Carbon Friendly Forestry)

Thank you to our partners at Futurewise!

Photo Credits:

Rae Lee (illustrations; photos on p. 8, 13, 14); James Wengler (p.9, Glines Canyon Dam); Flickr user @ bacovia (p. 9, restored floodplain); Resource Media (p. 14 solar energy worker); Grace Drechsel (p. 21, Taacoma library exhibit).

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Itukdi kadox,

I take the wisdom and guidance of our elders and ancestors — past and present — as we make critical policy decisions that support healthy communities and a healthy environment.

What contributes to healthy communities and a healthy environment is a focus on land.

My reservation, the Warm Springs Reservation is defined in the 1855 Treaty with the Tribes of Middle Oregon and consists of 1,019 square miles. Much like many of the regions in Washington, Central Oregon is breathtakingly beautiful — with Jefferson Mountain, mighty rivers like the Deschutes, endless sagebrush, towering timber stands, magical waterfalls and remnants of explosive volcanic activity. These beautiful lands are dotted by rural communities, ranchers and farmers, tribal nations and resilient, hardworking people. I count myself as one of them.

Like life, land is sacred to Native American people. The land has an intrinsic spiritual and cultural value and does not require manmade infrastructure or improvements to give it value. Tribal land also has political relevance because a land base helps tribes exercise tribal self-governance and self-determination.

In our Winter 2021 Issue of Convene, we are focusing on land use in action: the policies and decisions about how we use our land, which are at the heart of environmental justice, health, community resilience, identity, and tribal treaty rights. Land use work orients our pursuits toward making the world better for all people and the planet. We do this by working on policies around fossil fuel facility siting, housing, transportation, and industrial land use.

The stories in this issue are about the complexity of land use decisions and how change is possi-

ble in a way that uplifts communities and the environment. We highlight the work happening around the lower Snake River dams. You'll read an overview of why it's time to remove the lower snake river dams to save our salmon, and how it is important to find a comprehensive solution for all communities who rely on the river.

We also revisit our Pacific Northwest's legacy of crude oil refineries and coal terminals and the ongoing fight to end land use loopholes that allow for polluters to site their facilities in Washington and contaminate air, water, and soil, not to mention the health of neighboring communities. We argue that while we find policy-based solutions and bans, we simultaneously need to champion clean energy solutions.

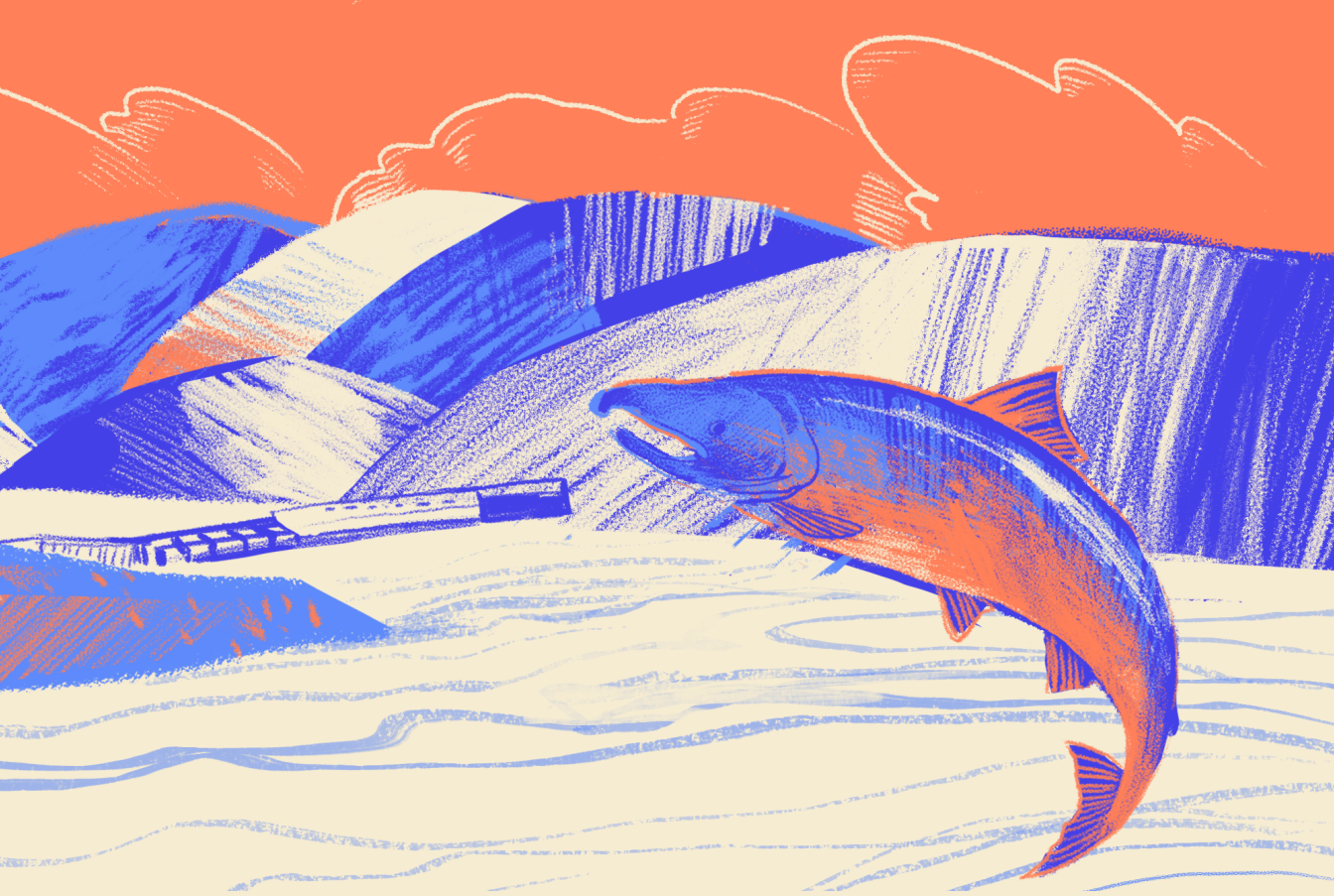
In advance of the 2022 legislative session, we share more about our state's Growth Management Act (GMA), a foundational set of policies that allows jurisdictions to plan for growth. The GMA is ready for an update in 2022. It's an important piece of legislation to follow if you care about land use that is equitable for all our communities.

Land use provides us a concrete, tangible way to think about equitable approaches to safeguarding our environment and the health of all our communities.

We hope you enjoy this issue! Perhaps these stories can inspire reflection and discussion as we move into the new year.

Alyssa Macy
CEO of WEC





Breaching Dammed Legacies

Once, the salmon runs of the Snake river were the most abundant in the Pacific Northwest

The river begins in the Palisades in Idaho and then meanders down into southeastern Washington to finally flow westwards after meeting the Columbia once teeming with chinook and steelhead. The bounty nourished tribes who lived along the rivers; the salmon was not only a source of food and subsistence but considered a cherished relative and imbued with deep connection.

Salmon runs are an integral part of the ecological cycles of the Pacific Northwest. The dead carcasses of adult salmon that line river beds and shores after spawning season provide important nutrients to the forests, enriching the soil and sustaining the wildlife that share this land.

Southern Resident orcas rely on Chinook salmon, which are integral to their diet. With little food to feed them, these endangered species struggle to produce offspring. Even when they do, calves face the odds of malnourishment and starvation.

Salmon are our keystone species. When they suffer, the effects cascade like falling dominoes.

With dwindling salmon resources in our state, the Snake River has become a crucial area to concentrate efforts to revitalize our state's salmon population. A history of overfishing, damming, and stagnant reservoirs have impacted salmon resilience.

***In this corner of the world, we are only as strong as our salmon runs.** They are the compass needle swinging between two futures: one where climate change results in incalculable loss and one where we can build towards resilience.*

Part 1: The Problem

Since the four Lower Snake river dams were built in the 1960's, wild Snake River chinook and sockeye runs have decreased by 60%. A study by the Northwest Energy Coalition cites a 90% decline in overall salmon runs because of the dams.

This summer, temperatures soared into the hundreds, broiling river waters that were warmer than they should have been. Hundreds of salmon died. Some began developing a sinister fungus caused by unwelcome temperatures. Extreme heat events like these are increasing and will only become more common as the earth warms from climate change.

But the temperature of the Snake River waters had already been heating up. That is what happens when a river has a dammed legacy. Dams, and accompanying reservoirs, disturb the natural flow of a river, creating segments of water that collect and retain heat by remaining stagnant or slow moving. The temperature of the Snake river is beyond a safe threshold for endangered salmon.

The US Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District owns and operates the four Lower Snake River dams. Online, they tout their efforts to make fish passage easier, through ladders, cooling systems, spill operations, and surface level passage. The agency says "these improvements are making a positive impact on salmon and steelhead returns."

In 2020 the Army Corps of Engineers and partners conducted an environmental impact assessment of infrastructure in the Columbia River Basin and came to the same conclusion many advocates had been pushing for. Salmon were not doing well. Additionally, these dams were no longer cost effective. **They produced less energy with sinking profit margins that made maintenance and upkeep of the infrastructure cost more than the revenues amassed by the dam's operations.**

The electricity generated by the dams and distributed by the Bonneville Power



Administration (BPA) since the early 1940's now costs more than renewable energy sources like solar and wind. BPA is also undergoing its own financial strain as renewable energy sources increasingly come into the energy market and the surplus electricity they once sold to California has lost value as California fortifies its own local energy grids.

Removing the dams makes financial sense, and would open up 70% of the Snake river salmon's natural habitat making it the largest salmon restoration project ever undertaken.

Beyond the hydropower industry the Snake River dams are also conduits of economic growth and cooperation. Growers and farmers are dependent on irrigation from the dams to grow crops that support their livelihoods; and the shipping industry relies on the dams for locks that allow for barges to transport goods between Idaho and Washington.

These industries have relied heavily on the river's dammed status. Dismantling the dams, especially without an alternative solution to replace the services provided by the dammed river, feels like a risky change. Yet there is an increasing consciousness across industries that the full functioning of the river ecosystem is necessary to support the longevity of farming, outdoor recreation, and a future for their communities.

A recent Seattle Times headline reports some irrigators in the Lower Snake Rivers support drawing down two of the dams in light of disappearing salmon. The article quotes Dewey Holliday, president of the irrigators association, who recognizes integral aspects of rural life are at stake without a solution for salmon health.

"I've earned my living most of my life from agriculture. I love fly-fishing for steelhead on the Grande Ronde River in Eastern Washington, and I want my grandkids to be able to do that, and I want to be sure my kids and grandkids will be able to farm, too," Hol-liday said to the Times.

Meanwhile in Idaho, outdoor recreation and fishing industries have taken a financial hit due to salmon and steelhead populations. An article from the National Resources Defense Council details how the state's communities have faced million dollar losses; the Nez Perce and Clearwater counties generally receive over 8.5 million dollars in revenue from steelhead fishing. However, this past September all fishing was closed on the Clearwater River, and limits on fishing were imposed on the Snake and Salmon rivers. The losses from these restrictions have business owners deeply worried.

Part 2: The Politics

In early 2021, Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson, a Republican and an avid fisherman, proposed a plan and accompanying budget to aid salmon restoration on the Snake River after convening over 300 meetings with stakeholders during the course of several years to better understand the situation. This 33.5 billion dollar implementation fund would go toward dam removal, recreation, energy and transportation solutions, honoring Tribal treaty rights, to transform the Snake river that works for both people and salmon. Years before, Simpson said "You cannot address the salmon issue without addressing dams...they are interwoven," during a lunchtime event in the spring of 2019.

"...there is an increasing consciousness across industries that the full functioning of the river ecosystem is necessary to support the longevity of farming, outdoors recreation, and a future for their communities."

This year, Washington governor Jay Inslee made clear that Snake River dams is an important state-wide issue and that a comprehensive plan was necessary to move forward. In October, Inslee, and Senator Murray jointly announced next steps for a joint federal-state process on salmon recovery in the Columbia River Basin and the Pacific Northwest. They intend to conclude their stakeholder engagement and consultation with the tribes, and release their recommendations no later than July 31, 2022. This initiative will analyze the replacement of services provided by the lower Snake River dams.

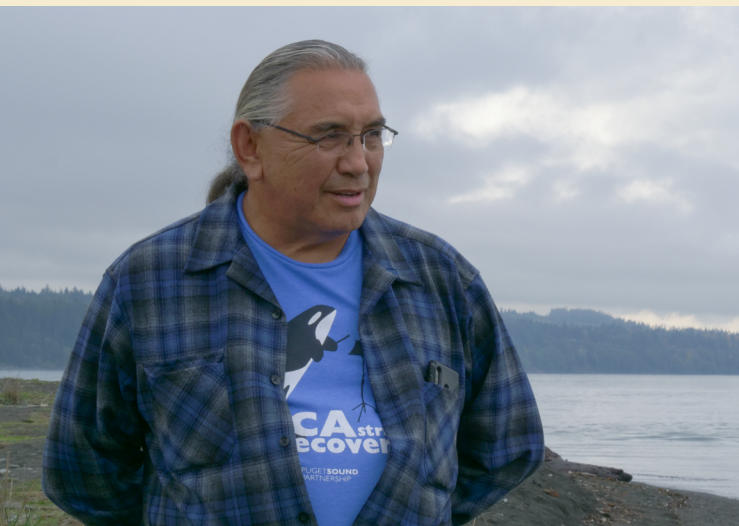
There is evidence that services provided by the dams can be recouped in new ways that bring more opportunities to the community, while also considering the health of our environment and ecosystems. According to a 2018 study by the Northwest Energy Coalition, the lower Snake River dams only provide 4% of Washington's electricity. Their study found that the energy generated by the dams can be replaced through a "balanced portfolio" of new wind, solar, and "demand-side resources" which

include energy efficiency and energy storage. Not only is this feasible, but it could happen in a relatively short timeline - 10 years - and would aid a regional drop in greenhouse gas emissions.

At WEC, our involvement officially began in October 2020, and our intent has been to act as a support, building power together, and adding value where needed with those leaders who have been at the helm of the fight to remove the Snake river dams long before we got involved. Many organizations and tribes have already been in this fight for decades. **Similar to the successful dam removal efforts on the Elwha River and the White Salmon River, it will take time, a public upswell of support, and a unified voice.**

Part 3: The Possibility

“There is evidence that services provided by the dams can be recouped in new ways that bring more opportunities to the community, while also considering the health of our environment and ecosystems.”



Russell Hepfer, a Lower Elwha Klallam councilmember, looks out over the restored Elwha River Estuary.

Russell Hepfer stands looking out at the mouth of the Elwha River where fresh-water and saltwater from the strait of Juan de Fuca meet. A seal bobs up and down, its dark head peeking through the gray water to reach for a passing seagull. “Hey!” Hepfer calls out to shoo away the predator, his voice cutting through the quiet gray afternoon.

From this point on the Northern edge of the Olympic Peninsula and five miles inland, Hepfer explained, was the Elwha dam, built in 1910. About seven miles more from that point stood the Glines Canyon dam, which began operation in 1927. Together these dams held back so much sediment that the river spilled out onto ancient shores, turning them into watery depths.

Once a commercial diver, Hepfer had plunged into those waters “and we would dive for sea urchins in 20-30 feet of water off the mouth of the Elwha,” he said. “And now, where I was diving, you can stand on land.”

Removing dams is not a novel idea. The Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, all of 1,000 people, managed to remove the Elwha dams after over twenty years of planning and negotiations. **Their treaty rights had been violated as salmon populations dwindled and they stood to lose not only their beloved salmon,**

but their sense of identity and connection to their ancestors — priceless resources that monetary value cannot capture.

The dams had stolen over 120 acres of land from the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, in addition to all the ancestral lands that had been ceded to the US government through treaties. Dams had also devastated salmon runs. Hepfer remembers that in his youth, you could catch 100 fish a day. Now a good day means catching maybe 18. Usually the catch is even less.



It took over twenty five years to get to the day when deconstruction began in September, 2011. The Lower Elwha Klallam tribe led this fight, and had a lot at stake, yet they worked to breach the dams with a number of different government and industry partners. Navigating federal and state regulation and resource agencies added to the decades-long process. And much like the current Snake River controversy, not everyone was on board.

(left) Glines Canyon Dam (otherwise known as the Upper Elwha Dam) was built in 1927 without fish passage. (right) Removal of the Glines Canyon Dam was completed in 2014, beginning the restoration of the floodplains.

Getting to an agreement with various community and industry stakeholders took many meetings and what began as a 100 million dollar project to remove the dams tripled by the time an agreement was reached. People are so afraid of change, Hepfer says, that it was hard to imagine a future without the dams. All the players weren't always happy, but they did have to agree on how to move forward.

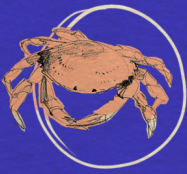
The undertaking brought economic benefit to Port Angeles as much as it rejuvenated the ecosystem. Construction jobs brought people into town. Biologists and scientists were needed. People had to find living arrangements which injected the community with money.

When the dams came down, salmon began to return almost immediately, swimming through Indian Creek which runs between the two dismantled dam sites. The fish would be tagged so that scientists could track their routes. By September 2013, steel-

When the Elwha dam was removed...



sandpipers



dungeness crab



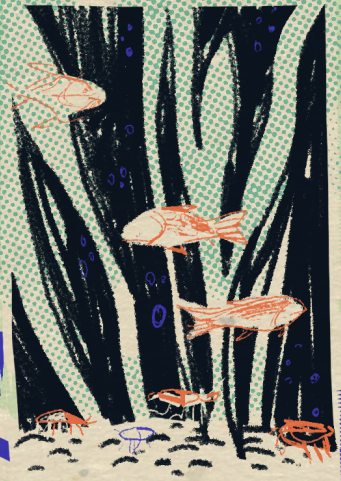
shrimp



surf smelt

...sand and nutrient-rich sediment eventually settled by the sea, restoring the estuary and inviting back coastal neighbors.

Restored floodplains take up and store water during floods, and recharge streams and groundwater.



The slow return of the river floodplain also brings a multitude of microhabitats that can provide nutrients and shelter for wide range of wildlife



For instance, woody debris could now travel and create shelters for small fish and invertebrates.

The salmon returned, thanks to these shelters where they could rest,

the water cooled to a bearable temperature,

7600 chinook returned in 2019, the most since late 1980's

native salmon and steelhead have come back to 70 miles of prime river habitat

summer steelhead that were presumed to be extinct in the river have returned to its upper reaches

...and with the removal of the massive barrier to their passage to upstream spawning grounds.

When we restore cold clean, free-flowing rivers, not only does it re-establish a more resilient and healthy ecosystem, we can enjoy the benefits, whether that is clean water, recreation, or cultural touchstones.

“Salmon are the axis of our ecosystems and our Pacific Northwest culture; if they aren’t doing well, neither is our land or our people.”

head had returned, and sockeye would soon follow. **The river ecosystem began to take up its rightful space without obstruction.**

As the river reclaims its shape, the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe has also been able to reclaim traditions and stories that had been lost for over one hundred years. Hepfer shares that, when the waters receded, a sacred site bearing the markers mentioned in their creation story was uncovered.

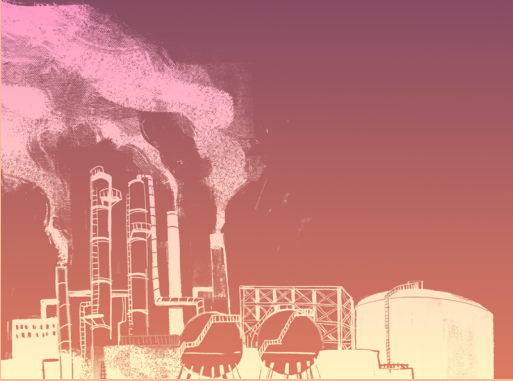
Fishing is still not allowed in the river as it recovers and heals from one hundred years of changing course. The long and arduous effort to remove the dams is a source of pride and great affirmation for the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, and for Hepfer. “We’re salmon people,” he says. “If you treat salmon well, they will come back. It took us 100 years to do that. But they’re coming back.”



The story of the Elwha and the Snake rivers are not the same, though there are parallels. There are many interests and considerations to balance between different players who are tied to the river and the dams. Each has a unique intersectional history with the land and with the benefits or drawbacks of our current economic system. While communities around the Snake River — including Native Nations, industry, and the agricultural sector — will have to find a solution that works for them, the Elwha is a reminder that salmon can and will return and that rivers have an intelligence and ability to re-calibrate if given a fair chance.

Salmon are the axis of our ecosystems and our Pacific Northwest culture; if they aren’t doing well, neither is our land or our people. Solutions come in many forms and removing the Snake River dams is one of them. How we will choose to work together and harmonize a solution that benefits our rivers, our fish, and our rural communities will decide Washington’s future now and for generations to come.

Say No to Fossil Fuels... ...And, Say Yes to a Clean Energy Future



Runged distillation towers spiral into the sky at BP's Cherry Point oil refinery. It stands next to a state-managed aquatic reserve and Puget Sound waters where endangered Southern Resident orca gather to eat endangered Chinook salmon on one side, and by the Lummi Nation reservation and the communities of Ferndale and Birch Bay on the other.

Refineries like this one impact our daily lives and pose real dangers and health impacts. There's the risk of explosions and spillage from volatile material and noxious greenhouse gas emissions, and safety risks posed by the pipelines and rail lines transited by unit trains carrying crude oil through countless communities on their way to Washington's industrial ports.

There are many other fossil fuel plants like BP's Cherry Point refinery in our state. Washington is currently home to five oil refineries along with many other petrochemical and bulk fossil fuel facilities. Pollution and potential for spillage and explosions pose dangerous risks to surrounding communities and waterways.

The fossil fuel industry is ever growing, eyeing our region to expand. In response, communities across the Pacific Northwest have stopped terminals from being built. **Through the leadership of Native Nations and the work of countless people, we stopped seven coal export terminals, eight oil-by-rail terminals, and three fracked gas facilities.** This is something to celebrate and learn from.

Several communities remain vulnerable to the fossil fuel industry because of infrastructure like deep water ports, rail lines and distribution networks.

These communities include the Cherry Point area within Whatcom County, March's Point in Anacortes, the Tideflats in Tacoma, the Ports of Kalama and Longview in Cowlitz County, the Port of Grays Harbor in Hoquiam and Aberdeen, and the Port of Vancouver in the City of Vancouver, Washington. **These communities are beacons of both the risks of fossil fuel infrastructure and the hope for a new clean energy economy.**

The Tools We Have Now

Holding the fossil fuel industry accountable doesn't happen with just one approach. In all these communities, the fight began when fossil fuel companies proposed massive new terminals and/or significant expansions of existing facilities without considering the impact it would have on the communities and health of our region. Projects ranged from the world's largest oil-by-rail oil terminal in Vancouver, Washington, to a proposed coal export terminal at Cherry Point, and the transition of an oil storage and a biofuel facility in Grays Harbor into oil-by-rail facilities. Armed with their unique expertise, Native Nations led these efforts and community members, legal and advocacy organizations, faith leaders, labor unions, health professionals, showed up in the hundreds to public hearings to expose



the risks. Their voices made what is at stake clear: tribal treaty rights and community health.

This revolving door of bad ideas has to be closed. So communities like Whatcom County, Vancouver, and Tacoma focused on fortifying against the next polluting project. They passed temporary moratoriums, but over time these have had the effect of being double-edged swords; at times providing protections, while also diluting a sense of urgency for long lasting solutions. This is why getting the moratoriums right in the first place is so crucial.

Our coalition learned this lesson in Tacoma, where the moratorium left open a loophole that allowed existing industries on the Tideflats — which includes an oil refinery and several fossil fuel facilities — to expand their operations. **Although the City had a moratorium on new facilities, expansions of existing fossil fuel facilities pose the very same risks to the surrounding community.**

Tacoma shows that the details matter. And when strong land use codes are in place they can be an effective industries accountable to protect community health and safety.

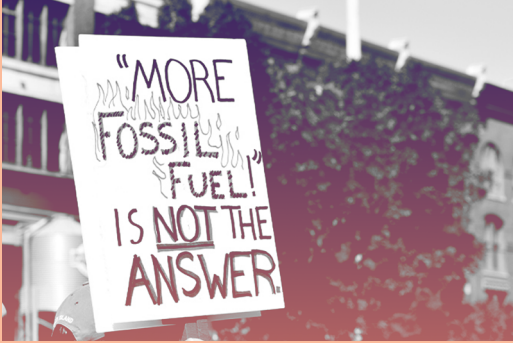
Simultaneously we also need to lay out clear guidelines for the sustainable energy solutions we want to see in our transition to a clean energy world. But these solutions need to be tailored to the needs of each community's infrastructure, industry, and economic development vision.

Developing Durable Solutions

This summer, the long term work of community building and fortification paid off when Whatcom County demonstrated a way forward. After a decade, Whatcom became the first refining community in the country to not only ban new fossil fuel facilities, but also the expansion of existing fossil fuel facilities. They did this by amending the County's land use code to ban new fossil fuel refineries and transshipment facilities, and require rigorous environmental review for upgrades to existing facilities.

Whatcom County isn't alone in these changes. In November, the City of Tacoma — home to one of Washington's refineries — also passed similar permanent land use code updates which place limits on expansions to existing facilities. Clean energy developments are the only exception.

While this code is stronger than what it replaced, the Puyallup Tribe — whose treaty territory includes the Tacoma's port industrial area — and community members have raised concerns about loopholes for some fossil fuel expansions that still remain in their recently amended land use code. Vancouver is also on their way towards establishing codes to ban bulk fossil fuel terminals.



When we update land use codes to ban bulk fossil fuel facilities, local jurisdictions have a chance to clarify the types of economic investments they are seeking on their land. This approach also unburdens the community from engaging in long review processes of dirty and dangerous projects.

The work that Native Nations, communities, and coalitions, have been engaging in at the local level — whether Whatcom, Tacoma, Vancouver or elsewhere — doesn't live in a silo. It might be concentrated locally but is connected to the state level work of passing and actualizing climate laws that will usher us into a future of clean energy.

The Vision We Need for Tomorrow

The legacy of victories against major fossil fuel terminals is at the backbone of the work to fortify against fossil fuel fights. Our work at WEC balances an urgent need to ensure the fossil fuel industry does not deepen its hold on our economy while simultaneously advancing systemic change towards a clean energy economy. This is only possible because of the leadership of Native Nations and the deep collaboration across our coalitions such as *Stand Up To Oil*, *Power Past Coal*, and *Power Past Fracked Gas*.

Defining what kind of clean energy we want in our communities remains an ongoing effort. We have learned time and again in fighting terminals that project details matter, and even some projects that don't emit greenhouse gas emissions can have devastating community impacts.

Our work to stop terminals and fortify communities goes hand in hand with our environmental and community protection laws. This momentum will turn the tide towards a more just and equitable clean energy economy. And it is crucial that those most impacted have a say and a role in what happens across the landscape and in their communities.

This is where statewide policy comes in. With the work of Native Nations, communities and coalitions across the state, the state legislature passed groundbreaking laws like the Clean Fuel Standard and the Climate Commitment Act in 2021 and the Clean Energy Transformation Act in 2019. These laws reflect the turning tide towards a clean energy economy, addressing inequities, and building a robust future.

Ultimately the impact of public policy and economic change is local. This underscores the need to focus and support local action. **It is a critical feedback loop: the learning we are doing within these communities informs the passage of climate laws and action plans at the state level.** In turn state-level policies will impact and protect communities that are consistently targeted by the fossil fuel industry.

We are in a moment of urgency but also opportunity. With community power and lessons from the past in our collective toolbox, we can forge a clean energy future — together.





Making Environmental Justice Real Through Land Use

Land use policies inform how and where we live, determining the physical landscape of our communities, who we live next to and, critically, what services and resources we can access. The way we plan our communities lays bare the inequity in housing, transportation, and climate resilience.

Everything from redlining to the siting of toxic waste sites near communities of color are determined by land use policies. Land use policies are used as a lawfully sanctioned method to oppress Black, Indigenous, immigrant and refugee communities of color. While we may be experiencing a cultural shift in acknowledging intersections of racial, environmental, and economic justice, the divisive scaffolding of this system still exists through policy. **Transforming our land use policies is a**

key tool in making sure we systematically address racial and environmental justice in our state's decision making processes.

Here is how land use impacts the parts of our lives we often take for granted.

Transportation

Some communities are designed to include car, train, and plane traffic, and others are not, leading to disparities in pollution exposure and health impacts. Not only do we need to update our land use policies to promote cleaner transportation options, we also need to update them to design healthier communities.



When we invest in multiple transportation options while planning for growth we can reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles and reduce carbon emissions. Considering all modes of transport, from walking, cycling, cars, to public transit like busses and light rails, can provide equal opportunities for communities to move about regardless of race, income, or ability.

Housing

Economic and systemic racial barriers create the conditions for communities of color to live near airports, highways and hazardous waste sites. In addition to the increased health risks, they face decreased property values. This type of design is neither just nor a smart use of land.

Our state's affordable housing supply is lagging behind urgent needs. Exclusionary



zoning laws limit diverse types of housing that could increase supply and prevent displacement. Transforming our land use policies can ensure that communities are not being displaced and can afford housing near their work and school.

Protecting Natural Resources

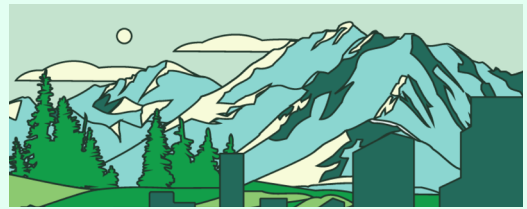
Planning for new housing, roads, and businesses outside of already developed urban and residential areas can encroach on natural assets and working lands. This affects the productivity and balance of ecosystems and their ability to store carbon. Sprawling development also affects food sovereignty, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of rural communities.

Forests: Forests cover approximately 50% of our state, and are core to our identity, wellbeing, and economy. Strategic land use planning can promote development while retaining forests and other natural and working lands near our communities. Land use planning can help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change in the forested landscape — especially uncharacteristic wildfires that threaten vulnerable populations.

Water: Rivers, streams, lakes, and marine waters including Puget Sound are downstream of forested and developed areas. We see a consistent pattern of degradation that impacts some communities more than others. Local plans developed as a result of the GMA are value statements that weave together natural and human-made systems to serve needs for transportation, drinking water, and more.

The Beginnings of Growth Management

In Washington, the state legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1991, a law that forms the skeleton of our land use decisions. Before its introduction, development regulations were all over the place. A 1989 document from the Washington City Planning Directors Commission and Washington State Association of County and Regional Planning Directors put it this way: “Unlike Florida, Oregon, and California, state law in Washington does not require that local plans make sense with those of neighboring jurisdictions or take into account regional needs.” Washington had no cooperative strategy for growth, opting instead for a patchwork of plans to accommodate a burgeoning population.



The adoption of the GMA resulted in a comprehensive statewide growth strategy that would require counties and cities to plan for their own growing needs while coordinating with others.

Impact

The GMA requires that rural and urban cities and counties plan ahead for the growth they anticipate. This means that each jurisdiction must come up with a comprehensive plan, complete with maps and visual aids. The plan should detail the city or county’s vision for everything from land use, housing, public utilities, transportation, economic devel-



opment, parks and recreational resources, neighborhood amenities, and essential facilities. Ideally this would mean that jurisdictions have masterminded a blueprint with everything but the kitchen sink.

In an urban context, the GMA's guidance encourages a vision for a dense, thriving space where diverse housing options are plenty and affordable. These new developments should be walkable, easily accessible

of the industries they support. Additionally, counties have to protect critical areas, which can include wetlands, areas that replenish aquifers, vulnerable fish and wildlife habitat, flood prone areas and geologically fragile areas.

If the GMA can make these visions come to life in a way that benefits and incorporates the needs of communities of color and working class communities, it will prove a powerful



and transit-oriented. Think about urban villages in the Seattle area, where mixed-use buildings include apartments and retail space, walkable grocery stores and access to busses and light rail stations. Currently these same attractions are driving up rents and it is crucial that the next iteration of the GMA considers requirements for affordable housing so that people of all socioeconomic levels can live, work, and play close to home.

When it comes to rural areas, the GMA's requirements for a comprehensive plan means counties have to consider lands with commercial benefit, such as agricultural land, working forests, and mineral-rich land. Not only is it important that counties incorporate plans to support these industries, they must also include plans to conserve these resource-rich areas to ensure the longevity

means of achieving environmental justice. Intentional zoning and land use codes fenced in communities of color in the past. We can intentionally rectify those harms with an approach to growth management that centers these communities.



Call To Action

While the GMA has succeeded in preventing urban sprawl and managing growth, many of the same issues that brought on its inception remain: our urban centers are struggling with homelessness, displacement, and a shortage of affordable housing. Communities who relied on previously abundant natural resources — like salmon — are

for the issues that matter most and impact your life. Look up your city and county commissioners. Find out how you can get involved and when your city or county's next update will take place.

The GMA is up for a rehaul during the 2022 legislative session so we can better integrate climate change, environmental justice,



struggling. We have an overreliance on infrastructure unfit for a changing climate and our growing population demands, underfunded transportation infrastructure and limited multi-modal options, environmental injustice related to toxins and pollution exposure.

Now that you know more about how growth is actually managed in our state, you can get involved in your local comprehensive planning process to make sure you can speak up

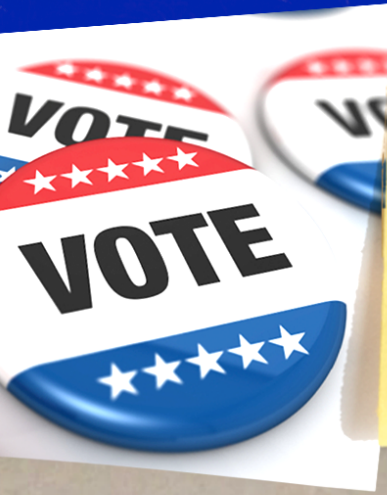
and the long-term health of our communities into the fabric of our land use policies. These updates will determine the future for communities who are at the frontlines of our climate crisis.

This upcoming 2022 legislative session will be pivotal in the evolution of the GMA. There are plenty of opportunities to speak up and get involved so that we can plan for a Washington that includes the needs and considerations of all our communities.

Join the *Washington Can't Wait Campaign* to ensure counties and cities are planning for climate change, housing equity, and our most vulnerable communities.

Learn more at: <http://www.futurewise.org/projects/washington-cant-wait-campaign>

WEC Bulletin



Tacoma LNG Update

We always knew that the fight against PSE's Tacoma LNG facility was going to be hard, long and absolutely worth it. With the leadership of the Puyallup Tribe, local community members, and our lawyers at Earthjustice, the legal fight to stop the project continues. At the same time, the work we just completed to pass a ban on bulk fossil fuel terminals in Tacoma allows for PSE to apply for an expansion at the facility. We remain committed to working in coalition to both stop the project and any attempt to expand the facility. Stay tuned for more information on next steps.

Join the 350 WA Network
Climate, Re-Sources, C
Reality Project, Environ
tal Priorities Coalition
hundreds of activists t
key environmental he
justice legislation in 2

Learn how to be get
with Environmental
at: <https://tinyurl.com/5d4mwtwh>

Redistricting

Washington's Redistricting Commission was unable to draw new congressional and legislative maps by November 15th deadline and instead offered new maps shortly after the midnight cut off. The Washington Supreme Court has ruled that the Commission met its deadline and will accept the late submissions.

The **Climate Commitment Act** and the **Clean Fuel Standard** are important legislation passed during the 2021 legislative session. The rules for how these laws will be implemented are being written now on both of these laws, with both laws formally starting in 2023. Keep an eye out for opportunities to provide public comment and engage in these critical process to ensure these laws equitably achieve climate results.

CHECK IT OUT!

rk, Our
imate
men-
and
to push for
ealth and
2022.

involved
Lobby Day
com/

EC continues to work with Braided River on the We Are Puget Sound campaign and book. This fall, the WAPS traveling exhibit moved from the Seattle Aquarium to eight Tacoma public library locations and the Hanford Virtual Library through December 15, after which it will transition to the Port Townsend Marine Science Center. The in-person and virtual exhibits inspire residents, new and old, to take meaningful action from the campaign's list of "10 Things You Can Do For Puget Sound." Learn more at www.wearepugetsound.org and check out the exhibit today!



On October 21st, WEC, Conservation Northwest, Olympic Forest Coalition, and eight individuals made our case before the Supreme Court: **we need to manage our state lands for a diversity of values.** We filed a lawsuit in 2020 urging the courts to interpret state constitution language, which says public state lands are held in trust for "all the people," confirming the State's responsibility to manage lands for public benefit rather than solely revenue. A decision is expected in mid-2022.

Wastewater

From closing beaches to polluting shellfish, sewage has impacts if not managed properly. We need to clean up sewage today before this burden is handed down to future generations. Nitrogen from sewage treatment creates algae blooms. When algae decays, it robs water of oxygen and worsens ocean acidification. Fish need oxygen, and shellfish need less corrosive waters. Science has confirmed that our sewage harms Puget Sound. *The Department of Ecology issued a new Clean Water Act discharge permit that requires sewage treatment plants to reduce nitrogen and other pollution into Puget Sound.* Many plants across the state have already transitioned to advanced treatment, and this new permit will apply the same rules to the biggest dischargers to Puget Sound.





CARBON-FRIENDLY FORESTRY

On October 26th & 27th, WEC hosted the fifth annual Carbon Friendly Forestry Conference on forest management and the climate crisis. For the second year, the conference was held virtually, with a record number of registrants joining us to learn about new models of forestry.

Our featured speakers — policymakers, community leaders, sustainable building experts, environmentalists, land managers and scientists — emphasized multi-faceted elements of forestry in the context of the climate crisis. Attendees learned about community wildfire resilience, climate-smart wood, watershed forestry, urban & community forestry, carbon offsets, natural climate solutions, community-focused restoration, and Washington's historic Climate Commitment Act.

Speakers shared exciting approaches to climate-smart forestry, ranging from green building to reintroducing “good fire” to the landscape. The importance of forests in mitigating climate change was underscored by Jamie Robertson of The Nature Conservancy, who presented a study quantifying the carbon impacts of natural climate solutions in Washington. This research demonstrates that letting trees grow longer between harvests has the greatest potential for reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide. Meeting this full potential, however, requires changing how we do forestry and how we value our natural resources.

To achieve climate-smart forest stewardship, we not only need strong data and policy, but also thoughtful engagement and outreach — especially with communities historically excluded from decision making. This is true across the landscape of topics, from increasing community involvement in wildfire preparedness, to shaping the Climate Commitment Act, and creating equitable access to urban greenspace.

As Belinda Brown of the Lomakatsi Project, a community-focused forest restoration group based in Southern Oregon and Northern California, explained, **“99.9% of [our work] is communication and how**



Joy Stanford is WEC's new Civic Engagement Director. Known as “Ms. Joy” by students in her community, she is a mother, housing and health care advocate, and, prior to joining WEC, a substitute teacher in the West Sound

(Gig Harbor) region where she has lived for over twenty years. She is a fierce activist for women, children, education, homelessness, housing, health-care, equity and diversity. She graduated from the University of Phoenix with a degree in Business Administration and currently sits on a number of boards and advisory councils. Joy loves a good red wine, scrapbooking with friends and fly fishing in her spare time.

we work together; everything we have is built on trust between people so we can work on the land.” In order to create lasting change, Belinda urged us to prioritize how we connect to each other and collaborate.

When we think about climate-smart forestry, we must think about both the impacts that humans have on forests and the reciprocal impacts that forests have on humans. Humans and forests have been in relationship since time immemorial, and continue to shape each other. These connections come with great responsibility. Joel Moffett of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians described the importance of caring for the natural world: *“The tribes will be at the forefront, just as we always have been in being stewards of the land and honoring the sacred agreement we have with the animals, with the plants, with our brothers and sisters in the natural world. They take care of us, they always have, and in turn, it is our obligation and responsibility to take care of them.”*

More information and recordings of the conference sessions can be found on our website.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR TEAM!



Katie Fields centers her work as the Forests and Communities Program Manager around the principle that developing strong, trusting relationships is fundamental to achieving enduring forest health. Prior to joining WEC, Katie worked

with the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative engaging with agency partners and rural stakeholders on forest restoration, recreation, and economic development projects. She holds dual master's degrees in Public Administration and Conflict and Dispute Resolution with concentrations in environmental policy and collaborative governance from the University of Oregon. In her free time, she is an avid hiker, an occasional kayaker, and an amateur painter.



Caitlin Krenn joins WEC as the Climate and Clean Energy Campaign Manager. She's passionate about building people power and has organized with grassroots community groups, ballot initiatives, and candidate campaigns. Caitlin is a former staffer

for the WA House of Representatives' Environment & Energy Committee and had the privilege of working for the Nisqually Indian Tribe for nearly a decade, collaborating on programs addressing community-defined needs and partnering with Native-led food sovereignty efforts across the region. She earned her B.A. from The Evergreen State College. In her free time, Caitlin can be found hiking with her partner and dog, learning piano chords to pop songs, and trying to do one more pushup.



**WASHINGTON
ENVIRONMENTAL
COUNCIL**

Washington Environmental Council
1402 Third Ave, Suite 1400
Seattle, WA 98101

This paper is 100% Post-Consumer Recycled Fiber
FSC Certified | Green-e



UNION BUG

Washington Environmental Council

is a nonprofit, statewide advocacy organization that has been driving positive change to solve Washington's most critical environmental challenges since 1967. Our mission is to protect, restore, and sustain Washington's environment for all.

As we approach the close of an impactful year for Washington's environment, the holiday season gives us an opportunity to reflect and give thanks.

We at Washington Environmental Council are especially grateful for your support, as our members helped accomplish so much in 2021.

With your support we continued to build an environmental movement calling for equitable, effective climate action and fighting against new and expanded fossil fuel terminals. We also continued to work to expand our democracy and voting access, protect our evergreen forests, and keep our waterways healthy. This year we have been able to advance strong environmental policies, care for our communities, and bolster our economy.

If you haven't already, please make a tax-deductible year-end gift to WEC today so that we can continue to make an impact in 2022. You can make your gift online at <https://wecprotects.org/giving/one-time-gift/> or you can use the remit envelope in this magazine.

You can also make gift-giving easy by making a gift in honor of a family member or friend. When you honor someone with a gift to WEC, they will receive a letter thanking them for their environmental commitment and letting them know who made a gift in their honor (Please make sure to provide the honoree's name and address).

If you have a question or need help, please feel free to call our Development and Data Associate, Brooke Galberth at 206.981.3896.