

*Managing state forests for
multiple benefits: timber, people,
ecosystems, culture*

*Broad representation means better
solutions for all communities, &
the environment*

*Tribal Nations Program: Why
we need to listen to the earth,
and to each other*

2022 WINTER ISSUE

CONVENE

WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Healing the Planet Takes All of Us



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A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

It’ukdi wigwa! Qngi mait’a?
(Good day. How are you?)

Across the state, we had more than 63 percent turnout in the 2022 general election; at WEC we worked hard to encourage members and neighbors to plan to vote.

Since our last issue, we’ve continued enduring a global pandemic, witnessed the erosion of privacy protections and a woman’s right to choose, held contentious primary and general elections, experienced a difficult economic outlook, andhad the hottest year on record and real-world examples of the climate crisis —like wildfires, drought and smoke.

It has been a lot but I haven’t emerged from the last six months without my own challenges. This last summer, I was diagnosed with breast cancer which altered my life and put me on a new journey.

While my cancer story is personal, it is very much connected to the bigger story of the times we are in. Cancer is a disease of abnormal cell growth with the potential to invade or spread to other parts of the body.

When I think of the cancer in my body, I reflect on the cancer that is impacting Mother Earth -colonization, capitalism, fossil fuel extraction, racism, environmental exploitation, and the pursuit of oppressive power... all of these have grown and spread throughout this planet, making the earth, the animals and the people sick.

The past few years I’ve spent considerable time in ceremony, in prayer, and in reflection, thinking about the state of the world, what I can do to help change the course that we are on.

What I believe is that this is a story of our health. My health, your health, community health and health of mother earth. We are a part of this living planet, just like the trees, the birds and the animals. We are intrinsically connected. And right now, this planet is sick and in many ways, so are we.

We cannot and will not heal our environment without healing ourselves. This is not a story of survival that we are writing. This is a story of healing and thriving. It’s a story about our collective faith to overcome, to reconnect with the planet, our faith and one another. It’s about ceremony, celebration, joy, laughter and love.

Our collective future needs our healthy minds and body, love and determination. Healing the planet is going to take all of us, and that’s exactly what this issue of Convene is about.

We have so many exciting stories related to our work, a preview of the 2023 legislative session priorities, and a look back at some of the meaningful work our teams have donesince the last issue.

Alqalma ayamglglaya, (see you later)



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A Forest Story: WHAT IT COULD MEAN FOR ALL STATE LANDS

In July 2022, the Washington State Supreme Court, while denying our challenges to the specific plans, went on to unanimously affirm our understanding of the state constitution, recognizing that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must integrate the many diverse public benefits of forests into the management of state forestland.

That means that DNR must look beyond maximizing revenue from timber harvests. With this new ruling, DNR must also take into account local concerns about safety and water quality, the cultural and ecological value of forests, and many other issues. This gives DNR and Commissioner Franz an opportunity to lead like never before. This is why we wanted to examine what this new way of framing forest stewardship might mean for one small bit of our state forests, and why we went to talk to a landowner near Summit Lake, in Thurston County:

J.C. Davis, 42, flicks his hand at a length of pink plastic marking tape tied around the branch of a 100-foot red cedar, one of many that create a fluttering line that reaches up a steep slope. At the base of the slope, the strips of fluorescent tape first mark alders now valuable for making veneer, then Douglas firs and then the red cedars long used for lumber. It's shady where we stand, about a third of the way up, but it's possible to make out brightness at the ridge-line. On the opposite flank of this ridge, the trees were clearcut recently.

Beyond the plastic border, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has proposed a clear cut on this side of the ridge, a forest above Summit Lake about 20 minutes West of Olympia, on **the original and traditional homelands of the Squaxin Island Tribe.** The proposal has sparked controversy as neighbors and community groups claim that not only would this proposed harvest damage their quality of life, it would increase the risk of landslides, and damage the lake's water quality.

Davis' family settled here 65 years ago. In the

spring of 2021, a DNR representative knocked on Davis' door, telling him about the **planned timber sale**, because it borders his land, and is an approximately **17-acre subset of the sale called "Sprinter."**

Davis started reaching out to neighbors. One of the first to join the cause was Tom Anderson, an artist who lives in a log cabin that he built near the lake more than four decades ago. Anderson says that previous DNR harvests of a nearby stand **denuded the land, leaving nothing to stabilize the soil and water, causing floods that nearly washed out his cabin.**

The two started knocking on doors, and eventually inspired 71 neighbors to post official comments to the DNR, opposing the clearcut of this portion of the proposed sale. In November 2021, Davis arranged a meeting between locals and DNR officials. They posted a petition on Change.org. More than 500 signed, opposing the sale. But still, the tract remained on the list of lands that would be sold for logging in 2022.

That's when people started to get angry. On September 6, several environmental and community groups organized more than 200 people, including two Thurston County commissioners, to gather outside the capitol in Olympia to protest DNR practices, including logging of older forests like this unit of the Sprinter sale.

"DNR stated their profit margin would be about \$300,000 [on this 17-acre tract]. To lose this natural forest in our community for such a little amount seems out of balance with what is best now and in the future for our community," Anderson, the artist, said in a letter to DNR.

A few days after the Olympia protest, the Thurston County Commission informed the state it did not support the cut of the Sprinter tract, citing concerns about flooding, property damage and water quality. DNR withdrew the tract from

the list of proposed timber sales. For now.

Davis, the kind of flannelled guy who looks as if he's always ready for an impromptu hike near Tahoma or Palouse Falls, is already planning to again fire up the Summit Lake Alliance to fight to preserve this bit of forest. As of now, the tract is likely to be included in DNR's timber sales next spring.

"This is just unnecessary,"

Davis says, sweeping his arm along the line of markers as Maya, his giant Anatolian shepherd, bounds up the hill. Davis lives a few hundred yards away from where we're standing on spongy moss and leaf litter among 4-foot-tall sword ferns.

The early morning fog has just cleared and sunlight lances down to the mossy ground. We're on lands that the Squaxin Island Tribe roamed since



time immemorial. The asphalt road that circles the lake lies about 100 yards down the hill, but the place still feels wild. The air lightly touches us, cool and moist, suggestive of chicken-of-the-woods mushrooms and huckleberry just out of sight.

These slopes are tucked into a flank at the north end of **Summit Lake, one of only two lakes**

in Washington that provide all the water to the houses that surround it. Eventually, the lake drains into what the Squaxin called “The Place of the Singing Fish,” now Kennedy Creek on maps, which empties into the Totten Inlet on the South Sound.

“Kennedy Creek is a lifeblood for our community,” says Joseph Peters, the salmon harvest manager and natural resources policy representative for the Squaxin Island Tribe. “Kennedy Creek has one of the largest chum salmon runs on the Puget Sound. That area is culturally significant to Squaxin Island people.”

If the trees are gone, what will that do to the water quality in the creek, in the lake? How will those changes affect the fish? A clear-cut will cause mud and silt to run into the lake. It will destroy a complex ecosystem.”

Davis says. “Why not improve the trails where we already walk our dogs? Why not create a little educational center about the Kokanee salmon that spawn in the creek over there?”

These are precisely the kinds of questions raised by the Washington Environmental Council, Conservation Northwest, Olympic Forest Coalition and individual plaintiffs in a lawsuit asserting that the nearly 2 million acres of state forest lands managed for trust beneficiaries such as schools, universities and counties should be managed with multiple goals in mind, not only to maximize revenue from timber harvest.

When these trust lands were first granted to the state, the timber money made up a huge part of the beneficiaries’ budgets. That is no longer the case. Part of this sale is part of the Common School Trust. “The share of total school construction (state and local) that is funded with Common School Trust has fallen from 3.35% to 1.38% over ten years,” says Chris Reykdal, the Washington superintendent of public instruc-

tion. “It is time to finally sever urban school construction from timber harvests.”

In July, the Washington State Supreme Court denied our appeal, but in their opinion unanimously agreed with our and our fellow plaintiffs’ understanding of the state constitution that DNR has a constitutional mandate to **manage state lands “for all the people,” including monetary and non-monetary public benefit.**

This new discretion paves a clear path for commonsense decisions not to harvest land like the uniquely important parts of Sprinter, when doing so risks flooding and erosion, or loss of significant cultural and social value, biodiversity, or carbon storage. In the wake of this decision, the Commissioner of Public Lands and DNR must now consider how state trust lands might be managed to benefit all residents and their myriad needs, like cultural outlets and environmental health. That means considering not just timber companies and trust beneficiaries, but also neighbors, fishers, and tribal nations.

“The state supreme court requires us, as a state, to grapple with the most challenging questions:

How do we value our forests?

When is it appropriate to harvest timber?

And how can we do so in a way that provides more ecological and social benefit than a clearcut?

says Rachel Baker, WEC’s forest program director.



Of course, like the majority of land in Washington, none of the acres in these trust lands can be called pristine. The place where Davis points out the pink DNR survey markers is right next to a stump that is easily 8 feet in diameter.

Since time immemorial, Native peoples have seen trees as relatives. Before the old growth trees became stumps, Native peoples would meander through cathedral-like forests creating paths to hunting grounds or fishing spots like the lake just down the hill. **Native tradition considered forests sacred because they were, and continue to be, places for religious, social, and healing ceremonies.** Resources from the forest are central to many aspects of Indigenous life: cedar bark for weaving hats, mats and baskets, wood for carving canoes, tools and ritual objects, palm wine used in many ceremonies.

When European settlers came to this region, they only saw dollar signs in the forests, the western red cedars near the coast grew 100 to 200 feet tall, with base trunks commonly more than 9 feet in diameter. **The trees that once grew near Summit Lake were whole ecosystems unto themselves.** Moss ledges developed in the

crooks of their large branches, creating roosts for marbled murrelets, a species that doesn’t build their own nests. Flying squirrels, northern spotted owls, and other animals lived entire life cycles in the tree canopy.

Below the biggest trees, western hemlock and Douglas fir created habitat for deer, elk, and the cougar who hunted them. Bears and panthers roamed the understory filled with alders and salmonberries, and fished for the trout and Kokanee salmon from the lake. **The underground ecosystem was just as complex as that above ground:** a mycelial network linked trees and other plants, myriad microorganisms helped to store more carbon and nutrients in the soil. When trees died becoming snags, they provided nests for birds and squirrels. When the dead trees finally fell, the decay of the trunks fed the whole system. Nothing was wasted.

In the late 1800s, as white immigrants began colonizing Washington, they began calling this oasis Pray’s Lake (named for a businessman who built an ice house nearby) and Crooked Lake, probably just because of its shape, until agreeing on the current name around 1900. Settlers from

nearby towns came to fish and to picnic. The relatively deep lake was, and is, full of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, brown bullhead and pumpkinseed sunfish. An 1878 edition of The Olympia Transcript called the area a **“hunting and fishing gem” in the “everlasting woods.”**

But alas, the woods did not turn out to be everlasting. The Sprinter tract was logged 92 years ago, in 1930. While the forest that has regenerated since then may not have trees as large as those in the original forest, some stands have reached an age, complexity, and uniqueness that many neighbors and activists say deserves to be saved.



Whole communities of fungi, lichens, and invertebrates have covered the giant stumps. Big leaf maple trees rustle in the wind. Deer, bear and marmots have returned to the forest. Davis has caught glimpses of a cougar who's made this forest its territory.

Beginning in the middle of the 20th century, more people began to build cabins around Summit Lake, JC Davis' grandfather was one of them. Many who live here, from the old-timers in log cabins to the newcomers who commute into

the capitol, worry about what clearcutting 700 feet from the lake will do to water quality. Houses around the lake draw their water from it. The fish that live in the lake depend on clean water, and also upon cool temperatures in the shade of trees. Residents don't understand the push to cut down a healthy, rejuvenated forest.

“This forest means so much to me. I have been walking through it my whole life,” Davis says. “I'm not totally against logging. I recognize that people use wood. But we need to get beyond this notion that the forest is only for making as much money as possible. Let's optimize our forests as a whole, for carbon, for wildlife, for people.”

“We hunt there. We fish there. We collect and gather berries and roots there,” says Peters, of the Squaxin Island Tribe. “As a tribal member and member of the community, we want the water quality to be good, not only for us, but for the fish and wildlife there.”

Max Duncan and Holly Koon live on a hill in Kendall, Washington in a house mostly built from trees they logged themselves, and heated with wood they split. In the winter, when the leaves of the big leaf maple and birch trees have fallen, they have a clear view of the stream that runs through their property and ends in a wetland in the valley below, and finally, empties into the Nooksack River.



“I think what makes where we live special is that grounding in the forest and the watershed, the topography of the North Cascades,” Max says. Another thing that makes it special is that their home is below steep forested slopes that LiDAR (3-D laser images) shows are the site of a deep-seated, dormant landslide.

Max and Holly have long worried about the danger of landslides from above, especially as storms have intensified, and instances of “rain on snow,” which heightens the risk of slides, have become more common. When the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposed logging on those slopes, Max and Holly decided to join a lawsuit filed by Washington Environmental Council, Conservation Northwest, the Olympic Forest Coalition and seven other individual plaintiffs.

Max and Holly, schoolteachers with deep roots in the area, make it clear that they're not against logging. Holly's Dad was a logger. But they also feel that the overriding pressure to manage state lands only for timber has led to decisions to harvest in places where it may no longer make sense, especially in an era of climate change.

“It was that LiDAR map, and our lived experience of being in this place, we were just a perfect archetypal example of the larger situation: prioritizing ‘getting out the cut’ as equal to, or greater than, public safety and other priorities,” Holly says. “We present this textbook case, an archetypal case. This is happening in hundreds of other places across the state. If we weren't willing to step up under those circumstances, then who can be asked to, really?”

“This is happening in hundreds of other places across the state. If we weren't willing to step up under those circumstances, then who can be asked to, really?”

- Holly Koon

“I wanted to get involved because I spent a lot of time with our local DNR staff, walking the ground behind here. I respect them,” Max says. “But when the mandate is to log, their hands are tied. I think this historic ruling opens the door for other ways that our state forest lands can benefit all the people of the state of Washington.”



Representation IS GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Why does WEC spend so much time on issues like social justice and racially equitable representation? It might help to remember a quote from writer Terry Tempest Williams, “To be whole. To be complete. Wildness reminds us what it means to be human, what we are connected to rather than what we are separate from.”

As we work to restore the planet that we have damaged, the same might be said of our human societies and communities. Everything affects everything else. For instance, you can’t solve a social issue like homelessness with just one program, such as building tiny homes, or moving trailer encampments around. You have to address the complexities that make homelessness so pervasive: racial and economic inequality, drug addiction, skyrocketing housing prices, family abuse and instability; the list goes on. Likewise, **we can’t solve the climate crisis and the degradation of our biosphere by cleaning up one beach or saving one endangered bird, as important as those things are.**

To truly heal the planet, we must first heal ourselves and our society. That means shifting how we see the world, how we structure our economy, how we help the weakest among us, how we address history that has disenfranchised and harmed large groups of us.

Like homelessness, **our environmental challenges have their roots in deep societal divisions, blind spots, structural inequality and injustice.** At WEC, we believe that one of the first steps to fixing these things is to increase representation of those in leadership. We work to support environmental champions from many backgrounds. If everyone in power has the same

point of view, white, cisgender and male say, then there are issues, problems and solutions that will go completely unseen. If you’re white and affluent, how would you even know about the challenges of living in a neighborhood next to a Superfund site? If you live in a city and have never visited a Tribal Nation, how can you understand the pain of the Olympic Peninsula’s Quinault, who must face moving their ancestral village of Taholah because of sea level rise?

To illustrate how representation in public office results in better environmental policies, we reached out to a variety of legislators and public officials, asking them how their lived experience informs the work they do. Here are their stories:



State Sen. Rebecca Saldaña
37th Legislative District, Seattle
Seattle Sponsor of the HEAL Act, Washington’s first environmental justice bill.

Washington State Sen. Rebecca Saldaña grew up in the Delridge area of Seattle, a group of neighborhoods tucked between the industrial area along the Duwamish River and a series of ridges and hills that divide it from the rest of West Seattle. Saldaña’s father immigrated from Mexico and worked in the fields of the Rio Grande Valley of Texas before moving to the Pacific Northwest for better opportunities. He worked most of his career in a glass factory in South Seattle.

Saldaña earned a degree in humanities and theology from Seattle University before working as a union organizer, as a community liaison for U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott, and as executive director of Puget Sound Sage, a research and advocacy non-profit that works to promote equitable development and environmental justice. **She joined the state senate in 2017**, taking the seat vacated when Pramila Jayapal joined the U.S. House of Representatives.

Representing the 37th district, **Saldaña has prioritized voting rights, environmental justice and a more equitable economy. She sponsored the HEAL Act, Washington’s first law to create a collaborative framework that requires state agencies to make environmental justice a priority.** Passed in 2021, the act requires the Department of Ecology and the state departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Health, Natural Resources, Transportation, and the Puget Sound Partnership to identify and address environmental health disparities in overburdened communities and underserved populations.

“Everything in my life and my work informed why I worked on the HEAL Act, and efforts like the worker bill of rights and healthcare regardless of immigration status,”

says Sen. Saldaña. “I am the daughter of a migrant. My father is from Mexico. He grew up in segregated southern Texas, working in the fields. At 14, he decided that there would be no opportunity for him in Texas, so he moved to Oregon where he worked in a labor camp. By the time he met my mom and I came around, **my father worked in a glass factory in Georgetown, in South Seattle. It’s been declared a Superfund site. My Dad retired early after he got prostate cancer.**”

When I was a kid, we’d go back to Texas to visit my relatives who still lived there. I remember sitting outside at my godmother’s house there, surrounded by orange groves and sugar cane. We’d have parties outside. They lived right by the fields, and **we’d be sitting there and a sharecropper plane would go by, spraying pesticides. All my Texas uncles died early, in their 40s. Some of my aunts had to have their uteruses removed because of malignancies.**

“I don’t have a direct correlation between their illnesses and the pesticides, or between the polluted factory and my father’s cancer. Even in

the state of Washington, there’s no way for professionals to collect data when pesticides are sprayed. These kinds of studies just haven’t been done.

“Environmental justice means a lot of things. We need to think about what our economy values. And if the economy is not valuing the right things, what do we do to adjust that so it does? That’s the idea of the HEAL Act.”

“Who pays the price? Our whole economy and all of us are complicit. We are all addicts of carbon; it’s not like some of us are better than others. But some of us pay a higher price with our bodies.”



State Sen. T’wina Nobles
28th Legislative District, Tacoma and surrounding communities

Spearheaded ParksRX, pilot programs that recognize the health benefits of getting out in nature and seek to expand access to the outdoors for overburdened communities.

In 2020, T’wina Nobles was elected to represent Washington state’s 28th Legislative District. As a state senator, she represents the communities of University Place, Fircrest, DuPont, as well as Joint Base Lewis-McCord. She also **serves as president of the Tacoma Urban League and as CEO of the Black Future Co-op Fund, Washington’s first cooperative philanthropy created by and for Black people.**

As a legislator, Sen. Nobles has prioritized social justice, education, environmental justice and access to transportation. **She’s particularly passionate about Parks Rx, a series of pilot programs that seek to broaden access to nature and green spaces.** With the success of these efforts, she hopes in the next session to introduce legislation to expand Parks Rx.

“As a kid, I wasn’t paying attention to what we now call ‘environmental justice,’” says Sen. Nobles. “But I was paying attention to the environments that we lived in.”

The environment in housing projects and shelters was very different from that of the affluent and middle-class area my foster family lived in.”

Sen. Nobles experienced homelessness and foster care in her youth. This led to years of bouncing back and forth across the country between Alabama, Philadelphia, and California. Once in foster care, she finished high school and began college. At 19, she got married and moved to Washington state for her partner’s military career. She continued college at University of Puget Sound, eventually earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees. **She has lived in the 28th District for nearly 20 years.**

“We must consider what happens to a person’s health when they don’t have access to green spaces and clean air,” says Sen. Nobles. “When I think about my childhood, and all the times I didn’t have intentional access to the outdoors or recreation, it becomes more important to me as an adult that we provide a healthy environment and a more vibrant experience of nature for kids today than I had when I was young.” **Sen. Nobles has sought to raise her family in green spaces and to provide similar opportunities to youth in her community.**

“I have friends who grew up here in the Pacific Northwest, and they definitely have more experience with camping and outdoor activities. But culturally, growing up in the South, I didn’t grow up doing outdoor things. And for many, it isn’t due to a lack of interest, but a lot of those spaces

don't feel approachable or welcoming and lack diversity.

"During orientation at University of Puget Sound, I was told, **'We're going to take you camping in the woods.'** It went against everything that I'd considered safe up to that point, but it was life changing and incredible.

"It made me think about the outdoors in a different way. It wasn't scary, it was beautiful. I built relationships with a team of students also participating in orientation. I learned that taking a shower in a campground is A-OK. I remember being afraid on the bus on the way there and then coming back overjoyed, ready to start college with relationships that had begun in those woods.

"The idea for Parks Rx was brought to me by Metro Parks. They said,

'Wouldn't it be cool if doctors could prescribe parks and rec activities?'

It's not a new idea--that nature is good for your physical and mental health. What really helped me get behind this was wanting to replicate that experience I had at college orientation. My support for this was also strengthened by environmental justice camps that I've run, taking young people hiking, sailing, camping."

For much of her early life, Sen. Nobles grew up in places where environmental equity was not valued and where access to green spaces and nature was not as accessible.

A large scientific literature now supports the idea that time outdoors helps people heal, as well as promoting intellectual and emotional development. Sen. Nobles' work expands those opportunities and benefits to communities that have not had them.

"We've now got data from the success of the first Parks Rx programs and can use it to build support for legislation to expand it. I hope my colleagues will see this as an opportunity for access to the outdoors for all communities."



State Rep. Debra Lekanoff

40th Legislative District, parts of Skagit, Whatcom and San Juan counties

She has sponsored bills to link salmon recovery to the Growth Management Act, to prevent the abandonment of polluting derelict vessels, to enhance oil transportation safety, among other. She advocates for Tribal sovereignty, and has worked for Native voting rights, Tribal-controlled colleges and bilingual education.

Debra Lekanoff grew up in the small Tlingit village of Yakutat, in southeast Alaska. She first ran for office in 2018. Her campaign emphasized Tribal sovereignty, the reality that the 29 federally-recognized Tribes in Washington are sovereign governments, with the power to determine their own laws and economies.

"I believe that bringing Tribal and other governing bodies together in relationship is better for all," Rep. Lekanoff says.

Service and community have always been touchpoints in her life. "I didn't know any other way of being,"

she explains. "Growing up in a small village of 300, our way of being and surviving was always to serve one another. The people of Yakutat have been there beyond 10,000 years of knowing. My aunties and uncles were active in Native American politics. I had the love and breath of my community to raise me. School was academic, and I appreciate that education. But **a lot of the real teaching went on at the river, fishing and cleaning salmon, picking berries, listening to our traditional language.**

"I served not only in my native village but the village economic corporation. Then I worked for 20 years with the Swinomish Tribe here in Washington.

"When I first came to the lower 48, I couldn't conceive of life without salmon, without seaweed, without our traditional foods. I was keenly aware of who I was, and where I came from. Tribal leaders here taught me about their culture and their way of life. And every pathway led back to salmon. One of my mentors here said, 'If we have healthy salmon, then in the state of Washington, we have a healthy way of life, a clean environment, clean natural resources and clean energy, human health protected, community economies protected.'

"When I first met with the Democratic caucus at the capitol, they said, 'Debra, we've never heard anyone talk as much about salmon as you do. We value that'

"And from this little idea of using salmon to create holistic priorities, they made salmon a priority of the Democratic caucus. When you center salmon, everything leads back to a healthy way of life.

"I'm coming into my third term. I've worked on policies from incarceration reform to the value of small business to understanding clean energy to going through COVID to reform of Indian education and what does that mean? Developing the wingspan to serve in state government has been an extraordinary learning experience."



State Rep. Bill Ramos

5th Legislative district, Issaquah, Maple Valley, North Bend, Snoqualmie and nearby communities.

Supported the Wildfire Funding Bill (2021), as well as the update of the Evergreen Communities Act.

Ramos spoke at WEC's Carbon Conference last year:

"I was born and raised in East Oakland, CA, in the flatlands, the inner city, there was environmental injustice...But as you got up into the Oakland and Berkeley hills, you had whole contiguous forests and ecosystems, redwood trees and so forth. I would find myself escaping there, from the lowlands...I found myself getting interested in these issues, to see what I could do to get more into the environment...Got my first job out of high school with the National Park Service, and then

I had a 30-year career with the US Forest Service, just because I found a way to access trees when I was a kid...

"This point of urban forestry being critical is a really personal thing for me, this bill states up front that 50 percent of the resources have to go to areas that have what I refer to as 'environmental injustices,' that historically don't have access to a better environment as some neighborhoods do. **"There's a difference of 10 years in lifespan between some neighborhoods in Seattle. A 16-degree difference in average temperature** [between affluent and less affluent Seattle neighborhoods] in the summer. That's outrageous."



Former State Rep. Beth Doglio

Doglio gave up her seat in the 22th Legislative District to run for the U.S. House of Representatives in 2020. She lost that race. In November 2022, she won back her old seat and will take office in January.

In 2019, in testimony before the state House Environment and Energy Committee, Doglio brought a personal perspective to speak in support of the Safer Products Act, a bill which WEC helped to pass.

"Fifteen years ago, I was here with my two-month, three-month old baby, breastfeeding at the time, lobbying...So I have a long history with this issue, and chemicals. And this summer, I was gazing at my now 15-year-old, watching as the story of the orca with a baby on her back unfolded before our eyes. And day after day, she carried that calf, that dead calf on her back."

"And you know, it makes me think back to that time when I was breastfeeding my child, and the potential of this nourishing breast milk that I was feeding him, and also fearful about what was in that breast milk because of the proliferation of chemicals in our world today. **So this bill sets up a process by which Ecology can address these issues in an ongoing way, to deal with chemicals as science becomes available and as we learn more and more about what they are doing to humans, to orcas, to the fish and the food they rely on** for their own survival, how we can move toward taking them out of the consumer stream."



Tacoma Port Commissioner Kristin Ang

Has opposed new liquid gas terminals in Tacoma, supported electrifying our ports, and programs that address the needs of those who live near the port.

Ang spoke at WEC's gala in October 2022:

"Historically, there have been people denied access to the table, land stolen from them, their voices denied. **They are the ones who are impacted by pollution, but get none of the ben-**

efits from extraction. “The city of Tacoma was built because of the port, where the rails meet the sails. The Chinese built those rails, and as soon as they built them, they were violently kicked out. **There was redlining, Blacks denied opportunities, and a legacy of Superfund sites. Many of the struggling seafarers are Filipino like myself. I have all this in mind when making decisions at the Port of Tacoma.**

I consider our history and environmental justice issues when thinking about what does an equitable transition look like for people in my community? How can we be more inclusive, provide more opportunities and investments for all?

As a port commissioner, I work with many groups, with tribes, with communities of color. But I also have to deal with industry to make an equitable clean energy transition possible. Industry has to be part of this. Wealthy people have to be part of this. **The shift in mindset has to be for our whole economy, and for our whole culture.”**



State Rep. Davina Duerr
1st Legislative District, Bothell

Duerr has sponsored a bill that would add climate change as an issue that must be considered in the Growth Management Act, which requires the state's fastest-growing communities to complete plans and develop regulations to guide future growth. Rep. Duerr emphasizes how housing and environmental justice relate to her legislative goals. She is the daughter of a Taiwanese immigrant, growing up influenced by a culture that emphasizes the profound bonds between generations.

Rep. Duerr spoke at WEC's gala in October 2022, at which she was named “Legislator of the Year.”

“Everything I do is for my kids. I'd throw myself in front of a bus for my kids. Would you throw yourself in front of a bus for your kids? What if I told you that bus was climate change?”



Rep. Vandana Slatter
48th Legislative District, Bellevue
Rep. Slatter puts climate change and inter-generational commitments front and center, and helped to pass a bill that increases Washington emission goals to better align with the latest science.

“I am the daughter of immigrant parents from India. My Dad grew up on a farm that I loved to visit and where I learned how vital the land was to health and livelihood. As a young Indian girl growing up in a timber town in northern British Columbia, Canada, I witnessed the deterioration of the beautiful and majestic evergreen forests that surrounded me my whole life---the economic life-blood of my community--due to the cycle of warming that caused a dramatic increase in mountain pine beetles. This increase caused many trees to die and become fuel for wildfires that released soot into the air and darken glaciers to fast-absorb the sun's heat.

“That is why I was proud to sponsor legislation that updated our state's greenhouse gas emissions targets to meet the demands of modern climate science —emissions levels we must meet to prevent irreversible warming of the planet.

Using science and focusing on those most vulnerable must remain central to our efforts.”

All these legislators and leaders have brought projects to the table that have their origins in their personal stories: growing up in foster care with little access to the outdoors, discovering a love of nature by hiking in urban forests, fighting for immigrant communities like their own, having relatives whose health was damaged by working and living near polluted factories and farms, being a mother and empathizing with the struggles of mothers in nature, being inspired to fight against climate change by growing up in cultures that emphasize legacy. Their varied points of view have resulted in policies that center problems too long ignored: the lack of tree cover in urban, industrial neighborhoods, the need for everyone to have access to green space, the toll that pollution has on communities near factories and farms, the importance of realizing that we are only on this earth for a short time, and that we should leave it better than we found it.

More voices make us stronger. When we all do well, it's better for all of us, and for the planet.



Related LEGISLATION:



CCA

Climate Commitment Act

Caps and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from Washington's largest emitting sources and industries. Takes effect January 1, 2023

GMA

Growth Management Act

Series of state statutes, first adopted in 1990, that requires fast-growing cities and counties to develop a comprehensive plan to manage their population growth.

HEAL Act

Healthy Environment for All Act

Requires seven state agencies to draft community engagement plans that address environmental justice.

MTCA

Model Toxics Control Act

Washington's environmental cleanup law. MTCA funds and directs the investigation, cleanup, and prevention of sites that are contaminated by hazardous substances.



You spend a lifetime working and saving so you can retire comfortably.

If you're like most of us, you have some of your money in a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA). What may not be top of mind is that you can't leave funds in an IRA forever. Starting at age 72, the Internal Revenue Service requires that you begin taking distributions from your IRA each year, and that you pay taxes on those distributions.

One way around paying those taxes is to make a charitable contribution to WEC directly from your IRA. You even have the option to do this after the age of 70 and a half – a year and half before distributions are required.

"Tom and I support WEC because we are passionate about the environment, ensuring that our state's tribal nations are recognized and involved in making environmental decisions, and we applaud their efforts to educate voters and help get out the vote,"

says Kristi Weir, of Bellevue. "We have been making qualified charitable contributions through our IRA for several years to support this important work, and we find it's a very efficient way to reduce our annual tax liability, too."

By making a donation from your IRA, you can preserve more of your nest egg. The gift is called a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), and you don't have to pay taxes on it!

It's a win-win-win, as you also get the satisfaction of knowing you helped support WEC's work to protect Washington's environment for future generations.

"Don and I made first-time charitable distributions from our IRAs this year," says Berenice Hardy of Seattle. **"It's a straightforward process, and a great way to reduce our tax bill and support causes we really care about.** We were excited to designate WEC because they are very effective in their efforts to help address climate change. We truly believe that the health of our environment is the most important issue facing all of us today."

Be sure to consult your financial advisor before making IRA distribution decisions.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Paul Balle, Donor Relations Director at paul@wecprotects.org, or at 206.631.2621.

You can also scan the QR code below or check out:

wecprotects.org/planned-gifts





Tribal Nations Program CULTIVATES LISTENING

We live in noisy times in which everyone seems to be jockeying to be heard. In all our efforts to be heard, we sometimes forget that we must also listen.

Speaking and listening are twinned endeavors. You need both for understanding.

In July 2023, pending necessary approvals, Washington Environmental Council will launch the Tribal Nations Program to strengthen our relationships with tribal nations throughout Washington State, 29 of which are federally recognized. In the spirit of free, prior, informed consent (FPIC), this means building mutual understanding with these sovereign nations, each with their own governance structures, each with their own treaty rights, concerns, and hopes. **WEC wants to explore how we might work together, build partnerships, and try to heal our wounded planet. So far, a big part of this work has been listening.**

And why is this important? Historically, large

environmental organizations have been led by white people, most of them men. And when established groups have involved Native peoples—whether the environmental establishment, the state or federal government, or other institutions—it often has been an afterthought. They’ve told Indigenous people what they need, rather than taking the time to learn first about challenges and opportunities that they face in their nations.

We have much to learn from Indigenous peoples. Since time immemorial, Native people have managed to meet their needs while maintaining a balance with nature. As European culture has become dominant on the continent, it

has pushed ecosystems to the brink in just a few centuries. Despite all this, Indigenous peoples have maintained traditions that center nature, such as the First Salmon Ceremony in which many Salish peoples give thanks for the return of the spawning fish that have sustained them for millennia. **Indigenous practices emphasize listening, not only to people, but to wildlife, to seas and streams, to forests, commonly referred to as “relatives.”**

Tribal Nations must be included as we all craft solutions to the climate crisis, pollution, and other environmental issues. As we work to move beyond consultation to consent, we welcome members to take a look at these resources for additional information:

Learn more at:
goia.wa.gov or bit.ly/UNFPIC



As WEC’s Tribal Government Liaison, Jody Olney is preparing the ground for this new initiative in an ancient way. Jody is a citizen of the Muscogee Creek Nation, and is of Karuk, Nez Perce and Yakama descent. Growing up, she spent summers and her high school years on the homelands of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation in south-central Washington, the lands of her father and grandfather. She remembers fishing for trout, picking huckleberries, and camping with her family in the mountains of the Tribe’s land.

“The way my elders taught was really subtle, they showed us by example,” she says.

“There was an expectation that you would listen, that you would not be brash. If you’re saying things, it should be from a place of knowledge or genuine curiosity.”

Jody earned a BA and a law degree from University of Washington, focusing on environmental law and federal Indian law. “I served on a couple of diversity committees, because the academic environment felt subtly hostile. Students of color didn’t always feel supported or welcome and they’d opt to transfer. The committee work was a way to create space for these discussions among students. It was impactful for me to realize people could go their entire lives knowing nothing about tribal sovereignty. It’s been a part of my life for as long as I can remember.”

“Another time, a law classmate asked, ‘If there was one thing I could do for Indigenous people, what would that be?’ And I said, ‘There isn’t just one thing, it’s inter-related, it’s systemic and by design. It can be jarring for folks hearing the history - even from a legal perspective - for the first time.”

Jody went on to work as legislative assistant for state Sen. John McCoy (Tulalip), and then with urban Indian organizations in Seattle, where she worked on housing issues and service programs.

Jody is now working to organize a three-part series to help other non-governmental organizations **looking to build working relationships and engage in meaningful collaborations with Tribal Nations to understand this work is fundamentally different.** She’s meeting with tribal leaders. She’s attending conferences brought together by the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) and the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA).

“We’re trying to interact in a new way,”

Jody explains. “As I’m trying to establish this

new role, I find myself often thinking of my time working with state Sen. McCoy. His agenda was built collaboratively, based on what he heard.”

Active listening like that is central to many Indigenous cultures. **Most Tribal Nations passed on culture through oral tradition. In that sort of environment, people had to develop listening and memory skills in order to pass on cosmology, history, and knowledge.** As Indigenous peoples were forced from their ancestral lands onto reservations, these oral traditions, this craft of speaking and listening, became an essential method of remaining connected to each other, and to their stolen homelands.

The Tlingit of southeast Alaska traditionally did not speak immediately when entering a neighbor’s village or home. Instead, both newcomer and host would sit quietly for a while, listening to each other’s body language, just being. Once the time seemed right, one would speak out loud.



When faced with a conflict or a problem, many First Nations developed the tradition of a talking circle, in which people gather in a circle and then pass around a ritual object like a feather, a shell

or a talking stick. While one speaker holds that object, everyone in the circle is called to listen. The closest Western analog to this is a debate, with back and forth, a “winner” and a “loser.” In contrast, **talking circles make the focus connection and community. The point is not victory, but sharing, reflecting, and learning.**

As she works to build deeper bonds between WEC and Tribal Nations, Jody is focusing on those goals. She says leaders have been largely receptive, **“They say, ‘This is the right way, not just having an initiative, but talking and listening.’”**

For instance, at the Affiliated Tribes gathering in September, Jody decided to simply be present, listening with respect. That contrasts with the dominant culture’s need to be linear, to always have a list and a deliverable.

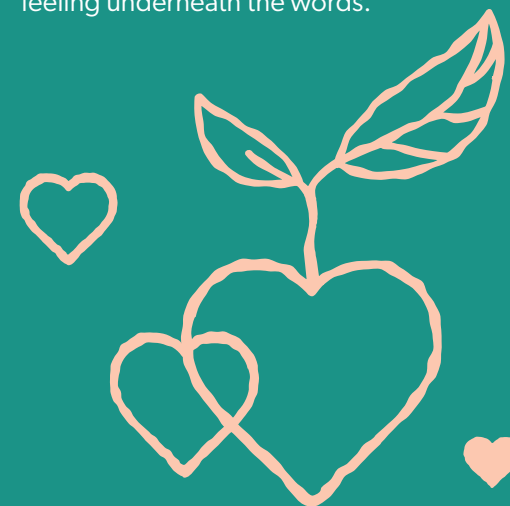
“You can learn a lot about somebody by just letting them occupy the same space as you, without framing what you want them to do. I could pull them out of meetings, or interrupt their lunch, but that doesn’t honor what they’re doing there. I see the value in sitting with people and their priorities, learning just by being.

“The open-endedness is part of the challenge, but also part of the point,” Jody explains. **“One of the hardest things is to be open-ended, to go in with curiosity.** To connect folks where that makes sense. To not come in where it doesn’t make sense. To say, ‘This is what we’re doing. Are there parts of that that connect with what you’re doing?’”

Practice Listening



It might seem that listening is passive. But deep listening involves body, mind, emotion, history. We listen with our bodies as well as our minds. All of us take in expression, behavior, movement and context as we listen. Of course, we also listen with our brains. But no one listens with intellect alone, we respond to emotions as well. All communication operates on these several levels: the content and facts, and then the tug of feeling underneath the words.



What we do and say, how we act during a conversation, has a huge impact on what people hear. We all have histories, biases and preferences that also shape what we hear. To a large extent, people do not hear where others are coming from but from where *they themselves are coming from*.

To truly understand what another person is trying to communicate, we need to be aware of the complexity of listening. Don’t feel guilty about your personal filter, just be aware of it. If you find yourself bristling at another’s comment, reflect on whether it’s the words you’re hearing, or the emotions and memories stirred up by those words.

Also, hearing and listening are components of everything we do. In this noisy, sometimes scary world, taking a moment just to listen quietly to build connection, to yourself, to others, and to the earth.

Try this exercise alone:

1. Find a quiet place that makes you feel peaceful.
2. Close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths to center yourself in the moment.
3. When you open your eyes, focus on listening to the things around you.
4. What do you notice?
5. What is the weather like? Is the wind whistling? Are birds singing or calling? Do you hear water nearby? Do you hear people?
6. Continue to sit for at least five minutes, to be alive to everything around you, to listen.

Try this exercise with someone else, or when you feel a disagreement brewing.

1. Let the other person speak first.
2. Don’t be afraid of silence. Before you respond, take the time to think.
3. Remember that listening is selective; be aware of this tendency. What was your initial reaction to the other person’s words? Do you think it was the words that caused that reaction, or was it something else, like a bad memory or an emotion? When you do respond, use “I” statements. While we can listen to many others, we can only truly speak for ourselves.
4. Cultivate curiosity. Often, we share much more with others than we think. If you’re rankled by something that someone says, ask for clarification. How did they come to believe what they just said?



Vancouver PROFILE

The best things take time. Think of a garden. It takes planning: analysis of light and soil and water to choose the best things to grow. Starting plants from seed demands patience and attention. Once seedlings are in the ground, it can take years for plants to mature.

Similarly, it takes time to win big for a cleaner, healthier, fossil-fuel free Washington. It also takes persistence, organization, power-building, and collaborative coalitions. All these things came together over years of work that culminated in October 2022, when **Vancouver, the state's fourth largest city, voted to ban new fossil fuel terminals in its city.**

WEC, through the Stand Up To Oil coalition, along with our partner WCV, began working with the people and leaders of Vancouver on this issue nearly a decade ago, in 2013.

Our region sits between the booming energy markets of Asia and large fossil fuel deposits in North America's interior, volatile Brakken oil in the upper Midwest and tar sands in Canada.

When oil pipelines like the Keystone XL became controversial and faced fierce opposition, big oil companies like Tesoro, BP, and Shell began to plan to ship oil by train to refineries and storage depots located along the Pacific Northwest.

These oil trains pose a grave public health threat to each neighborhood and vulnerable community along the rail route, and to the Indigenous peoples whose lands are traversed by the oil trains.

One of those facilities was proposed for Vancouver, at the mouth of the Columbia River: the Tesoro Savage oil terminal. If built, it would have been the largest oil storage complex in the nation.

"While we were working as part of the Power Past Coal Coalition to block seven coal terminals in

our region, the fossil fuel companies began targeting those same communities, this time with proposals to build oil train terminals all around the region," explains Rebecca Ponzio, WEC's climate and fossil fuel program director.

At one point, industry proposed eight terminals around this iconic landscape, four along the Columbia River, three along the coast around Grays Harbor, and one on Puget Sound. **The projects, along with the trains required to make them function, would create great risks: toxic pollution and noise from the trains, more oil at the refineries, oil spills, increased carbon emissions, and the ever-present danger of explosions.**

This wasn't a theoretical risk. In 2013, an oil train derailed in Quebec, creating a fireball and killing 47. In 2015, another oil train derailed in West Virginia and oil burned there for several days. And, in 2016, an oil train derailed, spilled oil, and required the community of Mosier, OR to evacuate.

"Nobody thought we could win," Ponzio says. "But losing was not an option because the threat to our public health, to the waterways, to our communities, to the climate—was too great."

WEC began working with important partners like Columbia Riverkeeper, Earthjustice, and a growing coalition of local and regional organizations to oppose the expansion of the oil industry in our region. In 2014, this group formed Stand Up to Oil (SUTO), to fight the Tesoro Savage proposal and others like it.

"Early on, we knew we had to build our collective power," Ponzio says. "That meant using every tool in our toolbox, from legal analyses,

to doorbelling and phone banking to protesting and even finding candidates to run for offices."

"WCV brings another piece," says Kate Murphy, a community organizer with Columbia Riverkeeper. "That means that when it comes time to get people elected to office to listen to the community, WCV is there to help."

Early in the fight, WEC and our partner organization WCV stood with hundreds of Vancouver residents who showed up to a hearing to voice their opposition to Tesoro Savage proposal.

"I was standing in line at that rally, and I saw a WEC person in line with me. It warmed my heart," says Don Steinke, a retired school teacher.

WEC's partner organization, **WCV, helped to elect two Port of Vancouver commissioners sympathetic to environmental issues, Eric LaBrant in 2015 and Don Orange in 2017.** WCV also helped elect current Vancouver Councilmembers Diana Perez and Kim Harless in 2021.



In 2018, the permits were denied to Tesoro Savage and the Port of Vancouver rescinded its lease with the company. That officially stopped the project. And, Stand Up To Oil, WEC and our partner organization WCV continued to stay present in the Vancouver community, looking ahead to what might fill that space where the oil terminal was proposed.

“After several years of continued effort on the Tesoro Savage terminal, the Port of Vancouver now has a climate action plan. The city has developed a strategic climate framework,” Ponzio says.

Following continued pressure from residents, the Stand Up to Oil coalition, and organizations like WEC, the Vancouver City Council voted on October 3, 2022 to ban all new fossil fuel terminals from the port.

“The passage of this ordinance puts Vancouver squarely in the leadership role of protecting the health and safety of not only its own community, but of those who live along the railway and waterway it is so connected to,” Ponzio says.

“And instead of a dirty oil terminal, the waterfront where that proposal would have been, is now a welcoming and inviting area for visitors and for neighbors,” she says. “The community has staying power; it has people power.”

And, like a garden, the progress in Vancouver will need tending, maintenance. WEC will be there to help.



Legislative PREVIEW



With the Environmental Priorities Coalition, a group of 26 statewide organizations working to protect the environment the health of our communities, we have identified four priorities for the 2023 legislative session:

Investing in Climate Action

The climate crisis means we need to cut pollution fast and while investing wisely to expand clean energy solutions as quickly as possible. In early 2023, Washington State will begin generating revenue from The Climate Commitment Act, our comprehensive, economy-wide carbon reduction program. Our Legislature must make smart investments in climate solutions that cut pollution and transition communities to a clean and equitable economy at the speed and the scale required to align with climate science. ***This session, the Legislature will start making the largest investments in clean energy, air quality, natural resource resiliency, and benefits to tribal nations and overburdened communities in state history.*** It is critical for our legislators to invest these funds equitably and strategically to provide the greatest benefits to all Washington residents.

Investing in Salmon Habitat

Salmon runs are dwindling throughout the state – across the Columbia Basin, throughout southwest Washington, and around the Puget Sound region. Fortunately, experts know what it takes to protect and improve habitat for salmon – streamside vegetation to preserve cool water, decrease stormwater and sewage pollution, absence of

fish passage barriers, healthy nearshore and estuarine areas. However, every year, locally vetted and regionally prioritized salmon recovery projects stall due to lack of funding. ***For the past several budget cycles, only 15 percent of the need has been funded. Now is the time to right-size salmon investments for the future.***

Planning for a Climate Friendly Future

Planning for a Climate Friendly Future requires the largest and fastest growing counties and cities within them to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled through land use planning. It requires all counties planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to plan for resiliency and address the impacts of climate change in land use plans. In addition, it updates the transportation element of the GMA by incorporating transit and bike/pedestrian planning.

The Washington Recycling and Packaging Act (The WRAP Act)

More than 50 percent of Washington consumer packaging and paper goes to landfills, rather than being recycled. Across the planet, plastic waste litters our shorelines and open spaces. The WRAP Act tackles these problems by ***creating a set of graduated fees on packaging manufacturers based on the recyclability/sustainability of their packaging. The funding generated from this fee will then be used to fund our recycling system in Washington,*** including improvements in infrastructure, uniform access to recycling for residents across the state, and a harmonized list of what people can recycle. Recycling and reuse targets will be set. This bill will have the added benefit of shifting costs for the recycling system off ratepayers and on to the manufacturers.



WEC Bulletin

Too many nutrients, nitrogen fertilizers, sewage discharge and other pollutants flow into Puget Sound.

Partnering with the Suquamish Tribe and the Squaxin Island Tribe, we filed two related legal briefs that we hope will result in better water quality. Eight municipalities, including Tacoma and King County, filed a lawsuit in Thurston County claiming the Department of Ecology did not have the authority to issue "Nutrient General Permits." These permits, under the authority of the federal Clean Water Act, require all facilities that discharge into the Sound to take steps to reduce nutrient pollution. We appealed the permit to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB) with the Suquamish Tribe. In our PCHB briefs, we held that the nutrient levels were set at a level that's too lax, and that dischargers should be required to take specific steps in the first five years. In the separate, but related, Thurston County lawsuit, we joined with the Suquamish and the Squaxin Island Tribe to file an amicus brief in support of Ecology's authority to regulate sewage pollution and opposing the dischargers' claims that scientific studies constitute illegal rulemaking, which would hamper the work of all state agencies that use science to regulate natural resources.

In the 1950s, the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Deschutes River to form a reflecting pool that became Capitol Lake in Olympia. Almost immediately, water quality declined and algae blooms became a problem in the lake. Later studies show that the lake has 10 times the negative impact on dissolved oxygen as compared with all sewage plants around the Sound. Large pulses of water and nutrients from Capitol Lake reduce the dissolved oxygen that aquatic life need to survive. The Squaxin Island Tribe has advocated for more than 30 years to remove the dam and restore the estuary that was original to this landscape. After much controversy and several years of study, the Department of Enterprise Services recently recommended that indeed an estuary would be best for the area. **WEC submitted comment letters in support of Deschutes Estuary Restoration.**

The Forest Practices Board put forward a proposal for rulemaking analysis that will eventually protect water quality along more than 10,000 miles of forested streams in western Washington. **WEC worked with the Department of Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Western Washington Tribes, and Eastern Washington Tribes to draft a strong, proposed rule.** While it may take a year or two for the rule to be finalized, our draft has the potential to help ensure trees continue to shade more than 10,000 miles of streams in western Washington, maintaining the water quality and the cool temperatures that salmon and other wildlife need to survive.

We have been working to ensure that the administration of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) takes into account environmental justice and Tribal Treaty Rights. For instance, the draft rules proposed by the Department of Ecology would only consider treaty rights within reservations. But the treaties established that Tribes have the right to hunt, fish and gather in their usual and accustomed areas, which go far beyond reservation boundaries and include whole ecosystems. **Working closely with the Duwamish River Community Coalition, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, and Communities for a Healthy Bay, WEC and our partners submitted comments to Ecology strengthening the draft rule language. The public comment period will open February 2023.**

In July 2022, the Washington State Supreme Court, while denying our challenges to the specific plans, went on to unanimously affirm our understanding of the state constitution, recognizing that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must integrate the many diverse public benefits of forests into the management of state forestland. That means that DNR must look beyond maximizing revenue from timber harvests. With this new ruling, DNR must also take into account local concerns about safety and water quality, the cultural and ecological value of forests, and many other issues. This gives DNR and Commissioner Franz an opportunity to lead like never before.

The state has been busy developing the rules and policies that will determine how Washington's new Climate Commitment Act (CCA) will be implemented. The Department of Ecology is charged with setting up this program – ranging from how the market will function to keeping corporate polluters accountable to developing the approach and engagement around expanded air quality monitoring and reduction of air pollution in overburdened communities. **Thank you to our members who this year responded with enthusiasm to our email appeals by generating more than 1,200 comments to the state that sent a clear message: The CCA must advance environmental justice, honor tribal sovereignty, and ensure public accountability.** With the program rules completed and Ecology's policies around air pollution being built, the state is on its way to turning the country's most ambitious greenhouse gas pricing program into reality. Stay tuned in 2023 for more engagement opportunities as this law takes effect.

WEC became a founding member of the Climate Smart Wood Group—a coalition of environmental organizations, forest managers and the construction industry—that seeks to create and verify supply chains for wood that has been produced using climate smart practices. Using part of a \$25 million grant from the US Department of Agriculture, we will be working on a pilot project in Pierce County, working with Tribes and local governments, exploring cost-sharing with small landholders and ways to produce lumber that has a smaller carbon footprint.

New STAFF



Gabi Esparza
Events and Outreach Associate

Gabi (she/her) was born in what is now known as Washington state and has Mexican, European, and unknown heritage. She spent a year living in France and two

semesters studying sustainability in Australia. In 2018, she graduated from Linfield University with a Bachelor of Science in environmental studies and minors in mathematics and biology. Gabi enjoys spending time with her partner and cats, taking care of animals who don't yet have homes, having philosophical discussions, attending concerts, practicing Tae Kwon Do, watching reality tv, and camping.



Heather Millar
Content Manager

Heather Millar (she/her) grew up in San Francisco, hiking, skiing, backpacking, camping and canoeing in the redwoods and the Sierras. She joins WEC after three decades as an indepe-

dent journalist covering science and the environment for national publications. She's had many adventures as a reporter, such as spending the night with tree-sitters in an old growth Douglas fir forest. She's excited to begin a new adventure fighting for the environment in the Pacific Northwest. She graduated from Stanford University with a double degree in history and Asian lan-

guages. She loves giving dinner parties, fussing in her garden, skiing, kayaking, hiking, and cycling. She started playing piano several years ago and should be much better at it by now.



Jody Olney
Tribal Government Liaison

Jody Olney (she/her) is a citizen of the Muscogee Creek Nation and grew up spending summers and her high school years on the homelands

of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. She is of Karuk, Nez Perce, and Yakama descent. Capacity building through education about the importance of upholding tribal sovereignty, advocacy, and civic engagement map the way to stronger and more responsive policy--This is the focus of her work as the Tribal Government Liaison as we build out the Tribal Nations Program. Before joining WEC, Jody worked as a legislative assistant to Senator John McCoy (LD 38) and with urban Indian organizations in Seattle. Jody has a bachelor's degree and JD from the University of Washington, where her focus was federal Indian law and environmental law. Jody enjoys time with family, reading, playing board games, hiking in local parks, and aspiring to be a more attentive gardener.



Kady Titus
Native Vote WA Senior Organizer

Kady Titus (she/her) is Koyukon Athabascan and was raised in Fairbanks, AK. She has worked in social and behavioral health services in Alaska, and workforce devel-

opment organizations in Eastern Washington. Most recently she worked with Tribes on a national level to identify, develop and implement solar power projects that meet community needs. Kady is also an artist, and her creativity and love for color can be seen in her Indigenous beadwork. Ana Baasaa' (Thank you)



Lauren Tamboer
Foundations Manager

Growing up in Michigan near the Great Lakes fostered Lauren's motivation to protect and defend natural resources. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees

in communication from Michigan State University and dedicated her graduate research to environmental justice. Lauren believes environmental progress is only effective when it centers on the perspectives of the people most impacted by pollution. As the Foundations Manager, Lauren is thrilled to help support and fund meaningful environmental work at Washington Environmental Council. Outside work you can find Lauren searching for a well-spiced chai latte or hiking with her dogs, Freyja and Juniper.



Halleli Zacher
Administrative Associate

After graduating from Drexel University with a BA in Sociology Halleli (she/her) moved to Seattle to be closer to nature and to continue working

in policy-based non-profits. She cares deeply for the environment and is passionate about discussing the climate crisis with others. In her free time, she enjoys rescuing plants, veganizing recipes, and climbing outside.

Save The Date

MAY 5, 2023

AT THE BURKE MUSEUM
ON THE UW CAMPUS

