Program Report
Recapping our work in 2014 for our members
To our members

“With your support, we’ll keep working to translate our simple formula into positive change in our lives, in the quality of our environment, and in the world we leave to future generations.”

At Environment Washington, we live by a simple formula: Mobilize grassroots action, build strong and diverse coalitions, and conduct tough-minded advocacy that yields tangible results for our environment and in our lives.

This past year was full of action and more than a few signs of real progress. We still have work to do, though, to protect our environment and our families.

One of our top priorities this year has been restoring Clean Water Act protections to all our waters. In 2014, we celebrated when the Environmental Protection Agency proposed a rule to close loopholes in the law that have left 38,000 miles of streams across Washington—and the drinking water for 117 million Americans—at risk for a decade. On the heels of the announcement we worked to build support for the rule, mobilizing 200,000 people and hundreds of local farmers and small businesses to take action. At the same time, lobbyists for major agribusinesses and their friends in Congress ramped up their efforts to maintain the status quo. We’ll keep at it as long as it takes to ensure the Clean Water Act protects all our waterways.

Of course, nothing is more important than doing our part to help solve global warming. This past year, we’ve been focused on limiting carbon pollution from dirty power plants—the nation’s number one source of the pollution that leads to climate change. The EPA is on the case as well. But we need to organize more citizen climate defenders, more solar businesses, and more local elected officials to counter the congressional climate deniers and their fossil fuel industry backers, who are fighting to block the Obama administration’s plan. Getting this plan over the finish line and implemented by states will make a dramatic difference in our nation’s carbon footprint, our ability to negotiate climate action with other countries, and the future of our planet and our families.

In the year to come, we’ll strive to make a difference on these issues and more. With your support, we’ll keep working to translate our simple formula into positive change in our lives, in the quality of our environment, and in the world we leave to future generations. Thank you!

Yours,

Katrina Rosen  
Environment Washington Director  

Margie Alt  
Environment America Executive Director

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2014 was a breakout year for solar power across the country. Another home or business in the United States goes solar every four minutes, and the rate keeps getting faster. In the first half of 2014, solar accounted for more than half or all new electric generation capacity installed in the country. By crafting and promoting state and local policies, Environment Washington has played a major role in the clean energy boom and continues to work to defend and expand pro-solar initiatives.

Fueled by strong policies, solar power tripled in three years

Too much of our energy comes from dirty sources that wreak havoc on our environment. But by tapping the power of the sun, we can break our dependence on fossil fuels and move to clean energy that’s virtually limitless. In 2014, Environment Washington called on our decision-makers to embrace solar power and enact policies and programs to help repower our state.

Environment Washington Research & Policy Center’s report, “Lighting the Way: The Top Ten States that Helped Drive America’s Solar Energy Boom in 2013,” found that in the past three years solar power tripled across the country, thanks to strong policies that Environment Washington helped win. Washington ranked 27th in our list. While we’ve made strong progress in recent years, we still have a long way to go. The report found that states with the most installed solar shared policies such as net-metering programs, strong interconnection policies, and strong renewable energy standards, with solar carve-outs and accessible financing.

On June 21, Environment Washington organized a “Solar Day of Action” with our national federation to expand solar power in communities across the country. In response to our outreach efforts, more than 17,000 people emailed President Obama urging him to put solar on federal buildings.

Top 10 States in Solar Electricity Capacity Installed During 2013 per Capita

1. Arizona
2. Hawaii
3. California
4. Massachusetts
5. North Carolina
6. New Jersey
7. New Mexico
8. Vermont
9. Nevada
10. Delaware

WA’s Ranking: #27
Our online outreach efforts helped generate thousands of comments to restore Clean Water Act protections to our waterways. Our rivers, lakes, and streams are where we take our kids to swim, fish and boat, or just enjoy the scenery.

Clean Water for America: Protect the Puget Sound

Polluters shouldn’t be allowed to treat the Puget Sound like their own personal sewer. That’s the message Environment Washington and our state affiliates took to more than 400,000 people in 2014, as part of a renewed call to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act. Together, we collected more than 200,000 public comments and built a coalition of businesses, elected officials and farmers to restore protections to all America’s waterways.

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The EPA agreed to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act

After a chemical spill in West Virginia, a coal ash spill in North Carolina, drought plaguing the West, a toxic algae bloom in Ohio and other pollution disasters, it's clearer than ever that restoring protections to America's waterways is crucial. On March 25, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act that have left more than half the nation's streams, and the drinking water for 117 million Americans, at risk for more than a decade. Environment Washington enthusiastically applauded the proposal and went to work to get it over the finish line.

800,000 people joined our call to action

From the Puget Sound to all our smaller streams, Washington's waterways are part of our heritage and make Washington a great place to live. We shouldn't have to worry about letting our kids go swimming in the summer, or about the water we drink.

More than 800,000 people sent public comments to the EPA backing the clean water proposal, with 200,000 coming from supporters of Environment Washington and our national federation. We also sought to engage influential constituencies, including local elected officials, small business owners and family farmers.

On the heels of the EPA's announcement, opposition from some polluting industries intensified. Some agribusinesses launched a “Ditch the Rule” campaign, based in part on claims the EPA was engaged in a massive “land grab” designed to regulate “puddles in driveways.” The exaggerations were wild and often false, but they had their intended effect, giving some members of Congress all the reason they needed to support efforts to block the EPA. As 2014 drew to a close, we worked to refute the industry's fanciful claims and show senators who were on the fence that the public wants our country to move forward on clean water, not backward.

2.7 million pounds of toxics chemicals dumped

In 2014, Environment Washington Research & Policy Center released, “Wasting Our Waterways,” a report underscoring the urgent need to take action to protect our rivers and streams, many of which feed the Puget Sound.

The report revealed that 2.7 million pounds of toxic chemicals were dumped into Washington waterways in 2012 alone, some of which are known to cause cancer or developmental harm in children. To curb this massive release of toxic chemicals into our nation’s water, we must step up Clean Water Act protections for our waterways and require polluters to reduce their use of toxic chemicals. The report earned coverage in more than 160 media outlets across the country.
EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy announced a precedent-setting plan to curb carbon emissions from power plants in the U.S.

Environment America Executive Director Margie Alt (left) testifies opposite Hal Quinn, President & CEO of the National Mining Association (right) at an EPA hearing.

Global Warming Solutions

Together, we’ve made hard-won progress in the race to protect our children from the worst consequences of global warming. In June, after 6 million Americans urged President Obama to limit carbon pollution from dirty power plants, the Environmental Protection Agency finally proposed a bold Clean Power Plan. Environment Washington defended the EPA’s plan from attacks by those in Congress who deny the science of climate change, as well as their fossil fuel industry backers.

Environment America Executive Director Margie Alt (left) testifies opposite Hal Quinn, President & CEO of the National Mining Association (right) at an EPA hearing.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy announced a precedent-setting plan to curb carbon emissions from power plants in the United States.
A groundbreaking step to tackle global warming

From severe storms to worsening wildfires and drought, the consequences of global warming are becoming increasingly clear. This summer, we made huge strides to tackle this threat when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants. America’s power plants are the number one source of the dangerous carbon pollution that is fueling global warming, and cleaning up power plants is the most important step the United States can take to reduce this threat.

Historic plan released to cut pollution from power plants

In 2014, Environment Washington worked to build support for the EPA’s Clean Power Plan, which would limit, for the first time, carbon pollution from power plants, reducing this pollution by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

It’s a huge deal—but it’s not a done deal. The fossil fuel industry lobby and other polluters are spending millions to oppose the EPA’s commonsense action.

Following the announcement, our Global Warming Solutions campaign, waged by Environment Washington together with our national federation, sought to connect the dots between the consequences of global warming that are already being felt across America and the meaningful impact of the Clean Power Plan.

Staff, supporters turned out to back Clean Power Plan

In June, the EPA held hearings on the Clean Power Plan in Denver, Pittsburgh, Atlanta and Washington, D.C. Environment Washington and our national federation’s staff testified and helped turn out citizen climate defenders to show support for the plan.

During the summer, we also distributed literature making the case for global warming solutions to nearly 1 million households across the country.

In September, Environment Washington Research & Policy Center released an update of a report entitled, “America’s Dirtiest Power Plants,” that found our country’s coal-fired power plants produced more carbon pollution than the entire economies of Russia, India, Japan, or any other nation besides China.

**CO2 emissions from the nation’s five most polluting power plants, 2011**

- **21.3 million metric tons of CO2 emissions**
  Scherer, Georgia Power Co.
  Fuel source: Coal

- **20.7 million metric tons of CO2 emissions**
  James H. Miller, Jr., Alabama Power Co.
  Fuel source: Coal

- **18.8 million metric tons of CO2 emissions**
  Martin Lake, Luminant Generation Co., LLC
  Fuel source: Coal

- **18.5 million metric tons of CO2 emissions**
  Labadie, Union Electric Co.
  Fuel source: Coal

- **17.8 million metric tons of CO2 emissions**
  W.A. Parish, NRG Texas Power, LLC
  Fuel source: Coal

**TOTAL OUTPUT FROM THE NATION’S FIVE MOST POLLUTING POWER PLANTS**

- **20.2 MILLION**
  Emissions equivalent in passenger vehicles
  (that’s 97.1 million metric tons of CO2 emissions)

*Source: America’s Dirtiest Power Plants report, 2013*
With the Land and Water Conservation Fund facing funding cuts year after year, and set to expire altogether as early as 2015, we worked this past year to show decision-makers that the public wants to protect our state’s parks and other open spaces from pollution and development. In 2014, Environment Washington and our national federation rallied more than 50,000 people to join our call on Congress to make preserving special places a priority.

50,000 joined our call to restore critical funding

From Mount Rainier to the Olympics, our public lands are where we go to hike, take our families on vacation and enjoy natural beauty and wildlife, and they contain critical ecosystems. But right now, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), our country’s most successful conservation program, is on the chopping block. With the LWCF plagued by funding cuts and set to expire next year, some of our best places will be vulnerable to pollution, logging and overdevelopment. This year, Environment Washington urged our leaders to save and strengthen the LWCF.

- In a recent poll, 74 percent of Americans opposed funding cuts to our national parks.

- In 2014, we partnered with our national federation to collect nearly 50,000 signatures and more than 250 photo petitions of supporters holding messages calling for full conservation funding. We also mobilized small business owners, outdoor enthusiasts and conservationists to take action.

- At our urging, more than 200 state legislators also called on President Obama to fulfill his State of the Union promise to use his authority to protect America’s public lands—and he did.

- Despite inaction in Congress, this past year the president took decisive action to permanently protect some of our country’s special places by declaring the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks in New Mexico a national monument, and expanding the California Coastal National Monument to include Stornetta Public Lands.