Annual Report

A recap of our work for our members in 2013
I am proud and excited to update you on a busy year for Environment Washington, filled with accomplishments made possible by your support.

In the last year, Environment Washington played a critical role in protecting 1,000 acres of land in the San Juan Islands from overdevelopment by convincing the Obama administration to designate them a national monument. In addition, we continued our fight against plastic pollution in Puget Sound, which endangers marine wildlife like orcas, seals, and sea birds, by working with communities like Shoreline and Issaquah to enact local bag bans. Eight Washington cities have banned the bag so far, and we’ll be working to win more bans in the months ahead.

We also spoke with nearly 40,000 Washingtonians across the state about expanding the borders of North Cascades National Park to protect the headwaters of the Skagit River and some of the last healthy salmon populations in the state.

I’m so grateful for members like you who make these accomplishments possible. We have a lot of work to do to protect our incredible state. But I know that with the public behind us and our members at our side, we can stand up to powerful special interests—and win. The fossil fuel industry continues to pollute our air and water and contribute to global warming, but we’ve already gathered more than 78,000 public comments from Washingtonians in favor of limiting carbon pollution from power plants. And we’re leading the charge on clean, renewable energy solutions, like wind and solar power.

I am honored and grateful for all that we have accomplished, and I’m ready to take on the next challenge as we fight together for clean energy, work to protect the North Cascades, and clean up Puget Sound. Thank you for standing with us as we fight for a cleaner, greener Washington.

Sincerely,

Katrina Rosen
Environment Washington Field Director
Keep Plastic Out of Puget Sound

Nothing we use for a few minutes should endanger Puget Sound wildlife for hundreds of years. That’s why we’re working with communities across the state to ban disposable plastic bags—and building support for a statewide ban on these wasteful, unnecessary bags, which too often end up as pollution in Puget Sound. In the past year, we helped ban the bag in Shoreline, and made progress toward bans in Thurston County, Bothell and elsewhere.

Shoreline banned the bag

Plastic pollution poses a serious threat to whales, seals, turtles, salmon and all of Puget Sound’s wildlife. Too much of the trash comes from single-use plastic bags, which can choke, suffocate or kill whales, birds and other marine wildlife. Luckily, the solution is simple: Ban the bag. So far, eight Washington cities have banned plastic bags. The most recent was Shoreline, which passed a ban in May, after months of hard work by local activists and Environment Washington staff and volunteers.

Momentum building for statewide ban

- Environment Washington worked alongside citizen activists to pass Shoreline’s plastic bag ban. Our staff testified at hearings, met with city council members and mobilized public support to win the ban. In addition to Shoreline, eight other cities in the state have banned plastic bags. Nearly 900,000 people in Washington have bag bans in their cities—meaning that more than one in eight Washingtonians have said “yes” to protecting the orcas, seals, turtles and other wildlife of Puget Sound from plastic trash.

- Now, we’re getting closer to winning a countywide ban in Thurston County, and we’re working with local activists to win bag bans in Anacortes, Lake Forest Park and Bothell. It’s all leading up to a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags. It won’t be easy to overcome the plastics industry, but we’ve got the momentum, and with your support, we can ban the bag in Washington.
Protect the San Juan Islands

Over the past few years, Environment Washington and local islanders have led the charge to protect 1,000 acres of key habitat in the San Juan Islands, which were at risk of being sold for development or logging. And on April 1, we finally succeeded: The Obama administration established the San Juan Islands National Monument, permanently protecting this treasured area for future generations.
San Juans declared a National Monument

The San Juan Islands are a Washington treasure. Yet until this spring, 1,000 acres on the islands didn’t have long-term protection from possible abuse or sale—including beaches, reefs and pristine forests. This means that these parcels of land were in danger of development, logging and other extractive practices. But now, thanks in large part to the efforts of Environment Washington staff, members and allies, these pieces of land will be protected forever.

Culmination of years-long campaign

To convince the Obama administration to declare these lands within the San Juan Islands a national monument, Environment Washington staff and members joined with local islanders to wage a broad grassroots campaign.

• We organized more than 200 businesses to call upon President Obama to protect the islands.

• We mobilized more than 5,000 Washingtonians to voice their support for a national monument.

• Hundreds of San Juan Islanders wrote to the president in support of establishing a national monument.

• We worked closely with Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and Reps. Rick Larsen and Suzan DelBene, all of whom have been steadfast champions in urging the Obama administration to act.

• Last year, we even distributed hundreds of specially designed tattoos across the state so that Washingtonians could show their support for the San Juans. The tattoos, which read, “I support San Juan Islands National Monument,” were sported by citizens from Bellingham to Olympia.

Hard-fought victory celebrated

On April 1, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar joined local leaders, activists and others in Anacortes to establish the San Juan Islands National Monument. The newly protected land includes pristine stands of old-growth forest, shorelines where visitors can spot passing seals and orcas, and rare habitat for endangered wildlife such as bald eagles.

• Environment Washington staff, supporters and allies were in attendance at Secretary Salazar’s announcement, and we joined Sen. Cantwell, Rep. Larsen and other environmental champions in celebrating the victory. It wouldn’t have been possible without the unwavering support and activism of our members.

• Following the event in Anacortes, Rep. Larsen joined Environment Washington and others on Lopez Island to continue celebrating the new national monument by kayaking and hiking. We had a blast kayaking to Iceberg Point with Rep. Larsen—and now that the area is protected for good, we plan on enjoying the San Juan Islands National Monument for many years to come.
Protect the North Cascades

With jagged peaks, old-growth forests and pristine wildlife habitat, the North Cascades are one of the wildest and most rugged landscapes in the country. While some of these ecologically sensitive areas are protected in North Cascades National Park, there are too many fragile places outside of the park boundaries that are not protected from logging and mining. That’s why Environment Washington is working to protect more than 200,000 acres in the Cascades.
Campaign launched to protect wilderness

This past summer, Environment Washington launched a major campaign to protect more than 200,000 acres in the North Cascades. The North Cascades are one of Washington’s last wild places. But right now, there’s virtually nothing to stop timber and mining companies from clear-cutting, drilling and otherwise spoiling this unprotected land.

Old-growth forest, endangered wildlife

The land that Environment Washington is working to protect in the North Cascades is precious and irreplaceable. It includes:

• The Baker Rainforest, a rare American temperate rainforest with old-growth trees 15 feet in diameter.

• The Skagit River and its headwaters, where hundreds of salmon, including the endangered Chinook salmon, come to spawn.

• Critical habitat for grizzly bears, elk, spotted owl, and the Marbled Murrelet.

Thousands of Washingtonians took action

Development, logging, mining or other destructive activities in the North Cascades could be disastrous for the forests, the water and the wildlife. But we have the opportunity to protect these 200,000 acres forever.

• We’re calling on our members of Congress to protect the Cascades, and mobilizing massive public support to convince them to do so.

• This past summer, Environment Washington staff pounded the pavement and talked to more than 38,000 people, educating them about the threat to the North Cascades and the urgent need to take a stand. And more than 12,000 people signed petitions to their members of Congress, urging them to protect the North Cascades.

• With your support, we know we can protect this natural treasure—because we’ve done it before. Thanks to our members and supporters, we convinced our leaders to protect the Carbon River Valley Rainforest within Mount Rainier National Park, one of the last inland rainforests in North America. And this year, we won our campaign to protect 1,000 acres within the San Juan Islands. Now, with your activism and our advocacy, we can protect the North Cascades for good.
It’s the 21st century. We should be less dependent on polluting energy like oil and coal and rely more on clean, renewable sources like solar power. Yet right now, Washington gets less than 1% of our energy from the sun. Environment Washington has a goal of reaching 150,000 solar roofs in Washington by 2020, and this year, we urged Gov. Jay Inslee to adopt our goal and put the state on the path to a solar-powered future.

**Report calls for ambitious solar goal**

In April, Environment Washington Research & Policy Center released a report showing that solar energy is a viable, yet underutilized, energy source for Washington. According to the report, “Solar Works for Washington: How Expanding Solar Power Will Protect Our Environment and Benefit Our Economy,” the state could be doing much more to deploy and develop solar energy systems. Key findings from the report include:

- The Puget Sound region gets as much sunshine as Germany, which is the world’s leader in solar energy. East of the Cascades in cities such as Yakima and Kennewick, this potential is over 60% greater than that of Germany.

- Policies such as expanding third-party financing for solar, renewing and expanding incentive programs, strengthening the state’s renewable electricity standard and more would substantially boost the market for solar in Washington.

- With the help of more expansive policies, the state can replace 5.5% of its total electricity use in 2025 with solar energy through a combination of rooftop solar power, solar water heating and utility-scale solar power.

- Meeting these energy goals would prevent more than 2.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide pollution annually. This is the equivalent of taking 460,000 cars off the road.
Stopping Global Warming

More than 3.2 million Americans, including thousands of Environment Washington members, supporters and allies, submitted public comments last year in support of cutting the carbon pollution that fuels global warming. And in June, President Obama responded by announcing a far-reaching plan to address climate change. The plan will set limits on carbon pollution from power plants, advance energy efficiency, and increase the nation’s commitment to renewable energy.

After push, Obama announced climate plan

Left unchecked, global warming is projected to bring to Washington more intense storms, more severe droughts and more unhealthy air days. Scientists have warned that the window is rapidly closing for making the necessary cuts in carbon pollution to protect future generations from the worst consequences of global warming. To respond to this threat, the president’s plan contains several key components. It will:

- **Limit carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.** The president directed the Environmental Protection Agency to set limits on carbon pollution from power plants—the single largest source of global warming pollution in the country.

- **Invest in energy efficiency.** New efficiency measures for buildings will cut carbon pollution by reducing our overall energy demand.

- **Build more renewable energy.** The plan focuses on expanding production of clean energy sources like wind and solar.

- **Support affected communities.** The plan will help ensure that communities are better equipped to prepare for and recover from the impacts of global warming.

- **Rebuild U.S. leadership internationally.** The president’s plan calls for the U.S. to actively engage in international efforts to address global warming.

Top: President Obama announced a strong new plan to address climate change. Bottom: Installing energy efficiency measures.
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