

ENVIRONMENT WASHINGTON Your Winter Report

A chance to restore our environment

Wendy Wendlandt, acting president of our national partner Environment America, talks about what we've lost under the Trump administration—and how to get it back.

Under the new Biden-Harris administration, we're eager to get back to the work of building a better world, instead of fighting to fend off backsliding. And we're looking forward to a president who will engage in that campaign with us.

Yet we also need to repair the damage done under the previous administration: undoing the Clean Power Plan; weakening fuel economy efficiency standards; allowing commercial fishing in marine preserves; lifting a ban on oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The list includes at least 100 protections for the environment that the Trump administration either ended or worked to undermine. Reading through the list is like flipping through a scrapbook of favorite photographs—which someone has defaced with a Sharpie.

Thousands of Americans—advocates, attorneys, biologists, epidemiologists, engineers, socially conscious entrepreneurs, elected leaders, government regulators, organizers and, last but not least, ordinary citizens with extraordinary spirit and perseverance—have worked together to put these protections in place, abide by them, and defend them.

A couple of examples: Together, over many years, our national network's clean air advocates and climate activists helped fight for and win laws requiring cleaner cars in more than a dozen states, one hard-won campaign after another. Then we



We rallied to the defense of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the wildlife—including caribou—that live there.

promoted and won increased fuel economy standards to match those state laws at the federal level.

For a second example, in the years before online petitions, we collected a million actual signatures from Americans who wanted to keep still-wild areas in our national forests protected from mining, drilling and logging, and convinced then-President Clinton to adopt the Roadless Rule.

Continued on page 3 ►

Thanks
for making it
all possible

The West is on fire. We're taking action.

Across the American West, many of us faced two options in September: stay inside to avoid dangerous air conditions, or—in more dire circumstances—flee.

On Sept. 9, with wildfires raging across the state, Environment Washington Research & Policy Center compiled and shared wildfire resources, including where to find or contribute to emergency relief efforts and

transportation.

On Sept. 23, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order calling for all new cars and passenger trucks in California to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035. The order came as wildfires continued to rage across Western states, bringing the urgency of climate change and the necessity of policies that will mitigate its worst effects into stark relief.

“Once again, California has taken the driver’s seat when it comes to cleaning up our cars and trucks and is paving the way for other states to follow,” said Dan Jacobson, state director of Environment California Research & Policy Center.

Environment Washington has helped win policies that incentivize electric vehicles—such as Washington’s entry into the Zero-Emission Vehicle program that, each year, requires an increasing number of cars and trucks sold in our state to be low- or zero-emission vehicles.

Environment Washington joins lawsuit challenging the Trump administration’s push to drill in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

One of the Trump administration’s last actions could end up spoiling one of America’s last wild places. We took action to save it.

On Aug. 24, Environment Washington, a coalition of environmental organizations, and the Gwich’in Steering Committee sued the administration over its plans to begin an oil and gas leasing program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Home to polar bears, wolves, herds of caribou and 200 species of migratory birds, the refuge has been in the crosshairs of fossil fuel companies for decades.

“The Trump administration’s plan threatens one of the world’s most untamed wildlife areas and ignores the reality that extracting fossil fuels from the ground is a fool’s errand when clean, renewable energy is on the rise,” said Steve Blackledge, senior director for our national network’s Conservation Program.

The suit alleges that the government’s decision violates several federal statutes, including the National Environmental Policy Act.

Get more updates on our work online at <http://environmentwashington.org>.

SvedanaSF via Shutterstock



The sky in parts of California and Oregon turned orange in September due to the nearby wildfires.

how to assess the air quality in your area. To address the climate-changing pollution that is making wildfire season longer and more dangerous, we also expanded our Climate Defenders campaign.

“The devastating wildfires across our state have been stark reminders of what the future holds with our changing climate,” writes Environment Washington Research & Policy Center State Director Pam Clough.

“We have to do everything we can to ensure that we take meaningful steps to tackle climate change here in Washington and across the country by transitioning away from fossil fuels, embracing clean energy, and building a cleaner, greener future for our kids.”

As California calls for all new cars to be zero-emission by 2035, electric transportation accelerates nationwide

Thanks in part to our national network’s research partners in the Golden State, California is now home to the country’s most ambitious plan for electrifying our





Page 1 story continued: A chance to restore our environment

Those snapshots of environmental progress belong to all Americans.

In debates about water, air, land use, open spaces and oceans, Environment Washington and our national network have researched problems and constructed solutions, taken our campaigns to the American people, collected public comments, and led groups of citizen lobbyists to Washington, D.C. We've lost more battles than we've won. But over the years, up against legions of well-funded lobbyists, we've beaten a lot of odds and notched some crucial victories for the environment.

Why? Because, like most Americans, we could see that America the Beautiful was in danger of becoming less open, more covered with asphalt, more polluted, more barren of animal life, more dependent on dirty fossil fuels and life-threatening chemicals, more overrun by the waste that those materials produce, and more bereft of wonder. And we could see, with our own eyes, glimpses of

the dire future that lies ahead if we do not act immediately to curtail global warming.

From the first days of the Trump administration, the president sought to un-protect the American environment—to throw the nation into reverse when it comes to the quality and sustainability of our land, water, air, oceans and open spaces. Making cars cleaner, preserving wilderness, and dozens of other important ways we've collectively protected our environment—and our children—were unravelled by the administration in four years.

Whether it's in the courts, in Congress or in the executive branch, we are resolved to restore these protections.

We've got a scrapbook with a lot of pages left to fill.

By Wendy Wendlandt, acting president, Environment America

From sea to shining sea, there are so many special places Americans love—and over the past four years, far too many were threatened by actions the Trump administration took.



Image contributions from activists with our national network



Kimball Nelson

Thank you for supporting and sustaining our work—still done at a safe social distance—to keep our air and water clean, to defend our public lands, and to protect our climate and environment for future generations.

Your action and support allows us to keep up the work you'll read about in these pages. Thank you for standing with us.

Pam Clough
Acting Director

505 Broadway Ave. E #129
Seattle, WA 98102
(206) 568-2850

Environment Washington

NON-PROFIT
ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 430



Your Winter Report

VOLUME 13 | NO. 2 | 2021

Our mission:

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Washington, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Washington's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Polluting companies quick to exploit Trump administration's 'Dirty Water Rule'

Companies have been asking the government whether waterways they'd like to pollute or pave over are still protected under the Clean Water Act. In short, the answer is "no."

On Sept. 10, a report from Bloomberg Law found that polluting businesses are taking advantage of the Trump administration's "Dirty Water Rule" to gain federal exemptions for their destruction of our nation's

streams and wetlands. In effect since June, the rule has narrowed federal protection of water bodies under the Clean Water Act, and companies have won rulings that no federal protection applies for 758 out of 1,085 waterways examined by federal officials—including, more recently, much of Georgia's wildlife-rich Okefenokee Swamp.

"Wetlands and streams are crucial to the health of our iconic waters—from the Okefenokee to the Puget Sound," said John Rumples, senior director of our national network's Clean Water for America Campaign. "Yet the Dirty Water Rule wiped out protections for countless streams and wetlands—a move that was rebuked by the Environmental Protection Agency's own science advisors."

Environment Washington is working to overturn the Dirty Water Rule in Congress and the courts.

A White Heron in Okefenokee Swamp.



Deborah Ferrin via Shutterstock