Annual Report

Recapping our work in fiscal year 2015 for our members
To our members

“We want clean air and clean water. We want to protect and preserve the places we care about, from majestic Crater Lake to our local swimming hole. And we want to ensure a clean and healthy future for our families.”

Sometimes, after spending time in Salem or even just reading the paper, every issue seems contentious. But as I traveled across Oregon this past year, I found that once I got outside the capitol, most Oregonians have a lot in common when it comes to environmental values. We want clean air and clean water. We want to protect and preserve the places we care about, from majestic Crater Lake to our local swimming hole. And we want to ensure a clean and healthy future for our families.

That’s why, as a new year begins, I am eager for the challenges and opportunities that 2016 will present. We’ve seen a lot of conflict in Oregon this past year: utility companies blocking progress on commonsense clean energy legislation; oil companies trying to roll back existing laws that reign in global warming pollution; and partisan bickering that led to stalemates on numerous critical issues.

But I’m proud to say that in this year of divisiveness, Environment Oregon brought people together around the places we love and the deeply held environmental values so many of us share. As you’ll see in the pages of this report, we have made real progress in our fight to defend Oregon’s environment, thanks to your continued support. We won a fight to close decade-old loopholes in the Clean Water Act; we organized support for a bill to permanently protect Crater Lake; we built champions in Salem who are ready to fight for cleaner energy in Oregon; and we fostered public support to urge the Obama administration to finalize the Clean Power Plan.

Despite what the papers may suggest, it’s been a tremendous year. Thanks to your support, we will keep doing our part to make sure Oregon is as special tomorrow as it is today. Thanks for all you do.

Sincerely,

Rikki Seguin
State Director
The biggest victory for clean water in a decade

This past year, Environment Oregon celebrated the biggest victory for clean water in a decade! In May, President Obama restored Clean Water Act protections to waterways across the country. Our advocacy and grassroots organizing, bolstered by action taken by our members and coalition partners, built the momentum necessary to get the Clean Water Rule past polluter opposition and over the finish line.

61,000 miles of Oregon streams at stake

More than half the nation’s streams—and more than 61,000 miles of streams in Oregon—which feed drinking water sources for one in three Americans, were vulnerable to pollution for a decade thanks to polluter-inserted loopholes in the Clean Water Act.

Grassroots advocacy built the momentum to win

In 2015, Environment Oregon kept a media spotlight on iconic waterways, recruited a diverse and powerful coalition, and rallied the grassroots to demand action. You and 40,000 Oregonians spoke up for clean water, joining the call of nearly 800,000 Americans. And with the rule under threat in Congress, our national team held meetings with more than 50 congressional offices. Disappointingly, at press time, a federal appeals court blocked the new protections across the country. We’ve put together a strong legal strategy to defend the Clean Water Rule, and the courts should ultimately reject all efforts to weaken it.

Top: EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy (sitting, right) and U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo Ellen Darcy (sitting, left) signed the Clean Water for America rule on May 27, 2015, with Margie Alt, Environment America executive director (second from left).

Bottom: The rule will preserve the river habitats of many species, such as salmon.
Go Solar, Oregon

In 2015, Environment Oregon worked with local communities to build support for bold solar goals and policies that make solar power more affordable and accessible for everyday Oregonians. And you stood with small businesses owners, local officials and members of the public to urge state leaders to make Oregon a solar leader.
Solar campaign shines on

This year saw progress for solar energy in Oregon as well as opportunities for further action in the future. In the legislature, Environment Oregon helped pass HB 2941, the first step toward bringing community solar gardens to Oregon. And in cities across the state, we organized solar-focused community meetings and solar site visits to educate the public on solar options in their communities and to show legislators the breadth of support for solar in their districts.

Local organizing efforts to promote strong solar policies

Environment Oregon brought together environmental groups, business interests and community leaders to call on the state legislature to support strong solar policies. In May, Environment Oregon released a letter signed by over 100 businesses—including Keen Footwear and Tofurky—and 40 local elected officials in support of pending solar legislation.

In March and April of 2015, Environment Oregon hosted solar-focused community meetings in 11 cities. These events were opportunities for members of the community to hear from solar companies, local elected officials and solar advocates about the logistics of installing solar and how they could support pro-solar legislation.

Later in the year, we organized solar site visits at businesses with solar arrays and local solar manufacturing and distribution facilities. At 7 Devils Brewery in Coos Bay, more than 40 people—including State Sen. Arnie Roblan and State Rep. Caddy McKeown—toured the brewery’s new solar powered taproom and rooftop solar array.

Citywide solar campaigns launched

At the end of the fiscal year, Environment Oregon prepared to launch local solar campaigns in five cities. These campaigns are intended to convince city councils to set citywide solar installation goals and partner with local solar companies to offer discounts to their residents.
Protect Crater Lake

Crater Lake is Oregon’s crown jewel—it’s deep blue waters and 2,000-foot rim walls attract half a million visitors each year. In 2015, Environment Oregon worked to introduce a bill in Congress that would permanently protect over 500,000 acres of forest in and around Crater Lake National Park as wilderness, the gold standard for protection in this country.

State Director Rikki Seguin speaking at a breakfast forum about the opportunity to permanently protect Crater Lake.

Oregonians from across the state raised their voices to protect Crater Lake from clearcuts.
Opportunity to preserve Crater Lake with permanent protections

Crater Lake’s surrounding forests and mountains are home to bald eagles, black bears, and now, even newly-established wolf packs. These forests also shelter the headwaters of the Rogue and Umpqua Rivers, where Chinook and Coho salmon spawn. Yet year after year, logging companies push to clearcut the old-growth forest surrounding our only national park, threatening this critical ecosystem.

In 2015, you helped us take an important step forward in our campaign to permanently protect Crater Lake.

Building support for wilderness

For years, we’ve been fighting to make sure the logging companies don’t trample our pristine wilderness and cause irreparable harm to Crater Lake’s delicate ecosystem. Now, we’re working with Sen. Ron Wyden to champion a new wilderness proposal in Congress that will do just that. We’ll win by showing Sen. Wyden that tens of thousands of Oregonians want to permanently protect Crater Lake and the surrounding area, so that this vital habitat is never threatened again.

25,000 Oregonians call for protection

Environment Oregon mobilized overwhelming grassroots support from all corners of the state, amplifying the voices of thousands of Oregonians like you, who called for permanent protections for Crater Lake.

- We had more than 75,000 face-to-face conversations with Oregonians about the threats to Crater Lake.
- We worked with more than 25,000 Oregonians to call and email Sen. Wyden.
- We organized a series of breakfast forums with our members to more deeply engage them on the issue.
- We organized more than 150 businesses to speak to the economic benefit of a protected Crater Lake.

Photo credits: (left page, clockwise from top) Wollertz/Shutterstock; staff; staff

Environment Oregon  |  6

Environment Oregon

Establishing a 75-mile, 500,000-acre protected wilderness corridor would ensure that logging companies do not cause irreparable harm to the wildlife, watershed and forests surrounding Crater Lake.
Global Warming Solutions

In 2015, after years of effort, our nation took the largest step ever to address the growing threat of global warming. Working with a broad coalition, Environment Oregon and Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center helped present the facts, educate the public, engage elected leaders, and present an overwhelming 8 million comments of support for limiting power plant carbon emissions, paving the way for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to finalize the historic Clean Power Plan.
You provided the support to push the Clean Power Plan over the finish line

From record-breaking heat to extreme wildfires around the state, Oregonians are already feeling the impacts of global warming. Scientists predict that without drastic cuts in global warming emissions, these effects will become catastrophic. In 2015, President Obama took decisive action to address this threat by moving forward with the first-ever plan to limit carbon emissions from dirty power plants—America’s #1 source of global warming pollution.

You came together with Environment Oregon to help build the momentum necessary to finalize the Clean Power Plan, and push past strong opposition from the fossil fuel industry and climate deniers.

Millions of supporters like you took action

- Environment Oregon and our national citizen outreach team had face-to-face conversations with more than 100,000 people about the threat of global warming and the solutions the Clean Power Plan provides.
- We helped collect 8 million comments of support for limiting carbon pollution from dirty power plants, which we delivered in December 2014, at the end of the public comment period for the Clean Power Plan.
- A coalition of more than 40 local elected officials and solar businesses also joined Environment Oregon’s call for a strong Clean Power Plan.

A historic step to limit carbon pollution

In 2015, the Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center report, “Dangerous Inheritance,” found that the current generation is experiencing hotter temperatures and more intense storms than their predecessors did 40 years ago—and without urgent action to curb carbon pollution, things will only get worse.

By reducing carbon pollution by 550 million metric tons each year by 2020, the Clean Power Plan is the single biggest step the United States has ever taken on climate, and sets the precedent for the creation of a strong international agreement to stave off the worst of the climate crisis.
Across the country, fracking is booming, leaving a trail of contaminated drinking water, sickened families, and torn up parks and forests in its wake. In 2015, big victories were won in New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania to stop fracking, and with your support Environment Oregon and Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center moved our state toward a frack-free future.

10-year moratorium introduced in Salem
Over the 2015 legislative session, we worked to introduce a bill in the Oregon House of Representatives that would impose a 10-year moratorium on fracking in Oregon. The bill received a favorable hearing in the House Committee on Energy and the Environment before meeting staunch opposition from the oil and gas industries. While the bill did not pass this year, your support will build the public backing necessary to get a moratorium over the finish line in coming legislative sessions.

While there is currently no fracking activity in our state, a recent study by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shows that this may change at any time. With your support, we can end this dirty drilling practice altogether.

Report: fracking rules are routinely broken
In early 2015, Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center released the report, “Fracking Failures,” which found that many oil and gas companies break regulations meant to protect the environment and human health on a daily basis. The analysis suggests that, when it comes to fracking, the rules are made to be broken.
Getting Oregon Off Coal

From far-below-average mountain snowpack to raging wildfires, we saw last year what the new normal could look like in a warming world. Even though Oregon is slated to retire its last in-state coal-fired power plant by 2020, we still get energy from coal plants located in states like Montana, Wyoming and Utah that could continue running for decades. We’ve seen the consequences—now it’s time to act.

Coal-to-clean legislation introduced

Senate Bill 477, introduced before the State Senate last year, aimed to tackle the problem by moving Oregon entirely off coal by 2025, and replacing it with clean energy like wind and solar. While the bill was being debated in Salem, thousands of Oregonians like you joined Environment Oregon to make phone calls, send emails, and meet directly with your state or local representatives, urging them to get Oregon off coal. Unfortunately, due to aggressive and well-funded lobbying by utility companies, SB 477 failed.

Organizing grassroots momentum

Although the bill didn’t make it across the finish line, your enthusiasm for getting Oregon off coal is a good indicator that this and other legislation aimed at tackling global warming pollution aren’t far off. With 71 percent of Oregonians in favor of a coal-free Oregon, it’s only a matter of time before our elected leaders respond to your calls. We’ll continue pushing until Oregon takes meaningful steps to limit carbon pollution to the levels required to protect our natural places and our children’s health.