“From the air we breathe to the water we drink, we depend on our environment for our health. But nature provides more than that. As Shakespeare said, ‘One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.’”

As we reflect on another year, I find myself thinking about the places I love in Oregon, places like . . .

. . . Cannon Beach, with Haystack Rock towering over the surf, making me feel tiny, like I’m stumbling across a giant’s beach,

. . . Crater Lake, where I can look down nearly 2,000 feet to a perfect cup of incredibly blue water, with the impossible-looking sheer caldera walls all around.

From the air we breathe to the water we drink, we depend on our environment for our health. But nature provides more than that. As William Shakespeare said, “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.”

That’s why we want a beautiful Oregon. We want our beaches to be free from oil spills and plastic pollution. We want wildlife to live free as nature intended. We want our rivers and streams to be clean and safe. And we want to lead our own lives in ways that lessen our impact on nature, especially when it comes to the energy we use to power our lives and where that energy comes from.

In 2010, our staff and members took steps toward all of these goals. In March, we helped convince Oregon to extend the moratorium on offshore drilling near our coast. We helped persuade Portland to agree to ban those annoying plastic bags that litter our parks, wash into our coastal waters, and ultimately harm ocean wildlife. We promoted solar power, energy efficiency, public transit and other energy- and pollution-saving measures.

With your support, we’ll keep at it: making the case to our leaders to protect the places we love, defend the environmental values that so many of us share, and help us build a cleaner, greener, healthier future for Oregon.

Thanks, as always, for your support.

Anna Aurilio
Federal Legislative Director
No oil rigs here

From Coos Bay to Cannon Beach, from Brookings-Harbor to Astoria, we visit Oregon’s coast to explore the rocky cliffs, watch seals and other wildlife play in the waves, or just take in the sheer power and scale of the natural world. Home to more than 120 bird species, 200 fish species and thousands of migrating whales, the Oregon coast is an ecological and cultural treasure. That’s why in 2010 Environment Oregon successfully advocated an extension of our state’s offshore drilling moratorium.

Oregon extends offshore drilling ban for 10 years

It was a seesaw year for those of us advocating strong protections for our coast. On Jan. 2, 2010, the moratorium on offshore drilling in Oregon’s state waters expired. A month later, the Oregon Legislature extended the ban for another 10 years. In April, BP’s Deepwater Horizon rig exploded and triggered the largest oil spill disaster in American history. Finally, in December, the Obama administration announced it would allow no new drilling off the Pacific, Atlantic and Florida’s Gulf coasts for seven years.

Through it all, Environment Oregon worked to show support for our coast in a variety of ways:

• We released “Too Much At Stake,” a report that found an oil spill off the Oregon coast would jeopardize more than 36,000 coastal jobs, including jobs in the tourism industry and the fishing industry.

• We worked with a powerful coalition of fishermen, coastal residents and environmental advocates, including the Surfrider Foundation.

• In the days leading up to the vote, our staff met with dozens of legislators to shore up their support for extending the moratorium.

As the BP disaster unfolded in the Gulf of Mexico, our staff and members built support for holding BP accountable for the cleanup, improving rig safety, strengthening coastal protections.


After the disaster in the Gulf, Environment Oregon joined our allies across the country to show support for a national drilling ban at “Hands across the sand” events—held in Brookings, Cannon Beach and six other beaches in Oregon, and on beaches worldwide.
Great Pacific Cleanup

Off the Oregon coast is a swirling soup of 100 million tons of plastic, Styrofoam and other trash known as the Pacific Garbage Patch. Each year, marine plastic pollution kills as many as 1 million sea birds, fish, turtles and other aquatic life. In order to reduce the pollution, we need to stop wasting so much. We can start with plastic throwaway bags.
Portland agrees to local bag ban

Every year, Oregonians use 1.7 billion plastic bags, about 500 per person. Very few of these bags are recycled, and nearly all of them end up in landfills, littering streets, clogging drains or heading out to sea. Plastic bags can resemble jellyfish underwater, and sea turtles and other animals eat them thinking they are food—and sometimes choke to death as a result.

On July 28, the City of Portland took the first official action to support the state ban, and resolved to ban bags in Portland if state action is not taken.

Leading up to the vote, our advocates testified before city officials about the contribution of plastic bags to the brewing environmental disaster in the Pacific. We worked with our allies to bring hundreds to rally in front of City Hall to call for action.

400 businesses, 20,000 residents join our call to action

Building momentum towards our campaign goal—a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags and a small fee on paper bags—we worked to generate support all across the state.

We knew that opposition to our plan to get rid of plastic throwaway bags would be intense. The 1.7 billion bags Oregon uses each year represents big business for the petrochemical industry, which has aggressively fought similar bans across the country and has a number of lobbyists in Salem. That’s why we increased our outreach:

- Countering the argument that a ban on plastic bags is anti-business, we worked to enlist support from more than 400 businesses, including the Grocers Association.

- After Portland, we worked with officials in Lake Oswego, Newport, Beaverton, Tillamook, Cannon Beach and Metro Counties to pass local resolutions in favor of bag bans.

- Our staff spoke to more than 150,000 Oregonians, our members sent in more than 2,500 e-mails, and we collected more than 20,000 signed postcards in support of a statewide bag ban.

To educate and activate the public about the threat posed by plastic bag waste to ocean wildlife, we took a 25-foot inflatable turtle on tour. “Bag monsters” helped get our message out by wearing 500 bags—the number of bags an average Oregonian uses each year. Portland Mayor Sam Adams announced his support for a plastic bag ban.
Preserving Crater Lake

With its 2,000-foot tall rim walls and crystal-clear, deep-blue waters, Crater Lake is Oregon’s crown jewel and our only national park. For hundreds of years, Oregonians have hiked up the mountain and down the caldera to the banks of the deepest lake in America. Crater Lake is what remains of the volcanic end of Mount Mazama, and is part of the pristine Cascade Mountain Range, which provides habitat for Roosevelt elk, black bears, bald eagles and spawning salmon.
Campaign launched to create 75-mile Crater Lake wilderness corridor

The woods and waters that surround Crater Lake are home to bald eagles, northern spotted owls, black bears and Roosevelt elk. However, much of the habitat is under threat from bulldozers, backhoes and chainsaws. Around the park, logging companies are pushing to clearcut thousands of acres of forest—land that shelters the headwaters of the Rogue and Umpqua rivers, which are critical for maintaining healthy runs of Steelhead, Coho and Chinook salmon. Every year, half-a-million visitors come to see the lake, which at 1979-feet deep, is the country deepest.

A nearly half-million acre wildlife corridor

In response to these threats, Environment Oregon is calling on Congress to create the Crater Lake Wilderness, a 75-mile, nearly half-million acre wildlife corridor that would connect existing wilderness areas, enhance protection for Crater Lake, and prohibit logging, mining and other forms of destructive development. Consider this:

• There are currently two proposed clear-cutting projects that could wipe out thousands of acres of critical forested habitat for wildlife, some right up to the borders of Crater Lake National Park.

• At-risk forests shelter the headwaters to the Rogue, Umpqua and Deschutes rivers—critical waters for spawning salmon.

Sens. Merkley and Wyden urged to act

Congress has the authority to create a new fully protected area under the Wilderness Act of 1964. Wilderness areas are off-limits to any kind of activity that diminishes the natural environment. In the language of the Act, wilderness designations create “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”

In order to highlight the risks to the Crater Lake ecosystem and galvanize public support, Environment Oregon launched a new effort calling on Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden to back the Crater Lake Wilderness proposal.

• We released a report, “The Best of America,” documenting the decline in funding for parks like Crater Lake, even as the numbers of visitors rise.

• We joined with Oregon Wild and Oregon Natural Desert Association to provide a unified environmental call for this new wilderness area.

• We activated our grassroots network, alerting thousands of our members and supporters to the opportunity to better protect Crater Lake and inviting them to join our call for action.

Creating this 75-mile long, 450,000 acre wildlife corridor would protect critical habitat. Environment Oregon’s Eva Birk calls for adequate funding and protections for Crater Lake.
Restoring the Willamette

From clean water to drink, to a place to kayak or fish, we depend on Oregon’s rivers and streams, and none more than the Willamette, which is part of daily life for two-thirds of Oregonians. But we know that the Willamette is not as clean as it should be, and that more can be done to restore and protect it.
Action taken to close a new loophole in the Clean Water Act

In the wake of two controversial Supreme Court decisions that called into question Clean Water Act protections for 53 percent Oregon’s streams, including those that feed the Willamette, Environment Oregon and our allies took action. We urged Congress to confirm that the Clean Water Act is designed to protect all of our waters. And when the issue stalled in Congress, we urged the Environmental Protection Agency to step into the breach. At year’s end, the EPA had taken initial steps to restore protections to our waters.

150 leaders endorse call to restore protections
The fallout from the loss of Clean Water Act protections to Oregon’s streams could impact nearly every corner of the state. As much as 53 percent of Oregon streams have lost protections—including those that feed and clean the Willamette—essentially giving polluters license to dump with impunity.

- To document the increasing pollution risks to our waterways, our staff released a report entitled “Courting Disaster,” which also highlighted the steps we need to take to protect our drinking water.

- Our research found that 2,847,886 pounds of pollution was dumped into Oregon rivers in 2007 (latest data available).

- We signed more than 150 mayors, commissioners and businesses onto letters in support of legislation to restore Clean Water Act protections.

Our efforts began to pay off when a bill was introduced in the Senate that would restore the Clean Water Act’s original meaning and scope.

EPA agrees to take steps in the right direction
Later, U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson announced a draft proposal to strengthen her agency’s enforcement of the Clean Water Act. We joined the other members of our national federation, known as Environment America, in helping to rally the public to support the policy as the agency invited public comments on the policy.

In just 48 hours, our members sent in 1,468 e-mail comments to Administrator Jackson in favor of strong action.

Work to protect the Columbia River Gorge
As part of our campaign to restore lost Clean Water Act protections, we worked to highlight increased risks to the Columbia River Gorge. In the months to come, Environment Oregon will continue to work with our allies to encourage our members of Congress and the EPA to restore Clean Water Act protections.
Livable communities

The way we live impacts our environment in ways we can scarcely imagine. Yet lightening our footprint on the planet can also mean taking steps—whether it’s better sidewalks, better public transit, better bike paths—that leave our communities safer, healthier and easier to navigate. In 2010, Environment Oregon successfully supported policies to help us make our communities more livable.

Making it easier to walk, bike or ride

Transportation accounts for more than a third of our carbon footprint. It also leaves its mark on our bank accounts, since it’s the second biggest household cost for a typical family.

Meanwhile, a quarter of Oregonians can’t drive due to age or infirmity, yet nearly 50 percent of state roads through cities lack sidewalks. In 2010, Environment Oregon supported a range of policies that would spur communities to build more or better bike lanes and sidewalks, and invest in the next generation of public transportation.

$600 million for Northwest high-speed rail

President Obama awarded Oregon and Washington $600 million in funding for high-speed rail plans and track upgrades, and state officials are developing better regional plans to make sure new homes and businesses have access to transit and rail.

State officials passed legislation that requires the Portland metro region to reduce its global warming pollution 50 percent by 2035. In 2010, Environment Oregon worked to get our state’s five next-largest city regions (Salem, Corvallis, Eugene, Medford and Bend) to join Portland and plan their transportation infrastructure around reducing air pollution.
Driving beyond oil

From offshore spills to the steady stream of pollution from tailpipes, from the hefty price we pay at the pump, to the looming threat of global warming, we all have plenty of reasons to ditch our dirty, dangerous dependence on oil. With plug-in hybrids, plug-in electrics and other zero-emission vehicles, we can begin to kick our oil addiction.

New emission standards will save 11.6 billion gallons
In April, President Obama adopted new auto emission standards, which will boost national fuel economy standards to 35.5 miles per gallon (mpg) by 2015 and cut national fuel use by 40 percent and cut oil use 11.6 billion gallons by 2016—an amount equal to half of the oil we import from Saudi Arabia each year. In Oregon, this will mean 124 million gallons of gas saving in 2016 alone.

Oregon’s leadership helped make this historic move possible. The new national standards are based on standards passed in Oregon and 13 other states.

Next step: Cars that go 60 miles per gallon.
As we prepare to update our landmark Clean Cars Program for the next decade, Environment Oregon is working to raise the bar again. This time, we’re calling for standards that require cars to get 60 mpg by 2030.

Ramping up fuel efficiency in cars would have a profound impact:

• Every day, Oregonians spend about $13.7 million on gasoline and diesel; and 97 percent of our transportation relies on oil.

• The new standards would save Oregonians $1.6 billion every year by 2030. Our report “Gobbling Gas for Thanksgiving,” found that a 60-mpg standard would have saved Oregonians $2,984,000 on Thanksgiving weekend alone.
Citizen support is the cornerstone of Environment Oregon. Thousands of Oregon citizens supported Environment Oregon and the Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center by making membership contributions in 2010. The members listed below were particularly generous in backing the organizations’ research and advocacy. Names that appear in italics denote Monthly Supporters. These members provide stability to the organizations’ resources through our monthly giving program.
Planning for a cleaner, greener, healthier future

Environment Oregon and Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work. Your gift will assure that we can continue to protect Oregon’s air, water and open spaces for future generations. For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: plannedgiving@EnvironmentOregon.org.
The Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center
The Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center is a 501(c)(3) organization, and conducts research and public education on emerging environmental issues. Contributions to the Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center are tax-deductible. To find out more, contact us at (503) 231-1986. The Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center would like to thank the Wiancko Charitable Foundation for supporting our work in 2010.
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