

# LIVING THE GREEN



MEMBER NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIKE RILEY

## **NEW YEAR, NEW LEADERS** **NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND JUSTICE**

It's a relief to have adults back in The White House. It's hard to imagine a more disturbing start to a new year than an armed insurrection incited by a sitting president and carried out by a mob that paraded the Confederate flag through the halls of Congress.

After the last four years, it should be clear just how much leadership matters. What leaders say, what they do and who they serve matters. It's exciting to have elected leaders at all levels of government who are committed to achieving an inclusive and just future for

our country rather than a future of carnage, destruction and division.

And it's not just new leadership in DC. We have four new members of the Bend City Council. We have a

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## LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONT'D

new State Representative. And we have a new County Commissioner.

This new crop of leaders won't always get it right; they'll inevitably make mistakes. And the division of the last four years means that governing will remain very challenging and that the outcomes our leaders achieve will be far from perfect. But as poet Amanda Gorman said on January 20, our goal should not be "to form a union that is perfect . . . but a union with purpose." And that is what I find most exciting about this new set of leaders: they share a common purpose of a sustainable and just future.

Our job at The Environmental Center is to persistently remind our leaders of that purpose and to ensure they take meaningful action to make it a reality. We must all recommit to hold elected leaders accountable, remain attentive and engaged, and to participate in policy and budget making processes. We are doing that work in a number of ways. We're supporting bills in the legislature that will accelerate the transition of Oregon's electricity supply to 100% renewable, advance electric vehicles and modernize Oregon's reuse and recycling

laws. We're advocating for a new set of goals for the Bend City Council that will continue to prioritize a safe, walkable and bikable transportation system that serves all community members, including those who do not drive.

We're also learning how our work connects to and supports social justice. We know that our mission--to embed sustainability into daily life in Central Oregon--is inherently connected to the health, safety and wellbeing of all community members. We will continue to support local policies and actions that protect and support people of color and those who have historically been oppressed and left behind.

Our purpose remains clear: to help shape a future that's good for all people and for the planet. We are excited to keep leaning into that purpose, in partnership with leaders and our community. Thanks for joining us.



Mike Riley, Executive Director

**DUE TO COVID-19, OUR FACILITY REMAINS CLOSED TO RENTERS. CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES!**

## YOUTH VOICES ADVANCE EQUITY AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.

The Environmental Center is collaborating with Vámonos Outside and the Children's Forest of Central Oregon on an exciting new project to create a more inclusive environmental movement: **The Youth Leadership Project**. Our goal is to elevate the voices of youth in our local communities and support them in becoming environmental leaders.

We are working together to connect high school students to long-term mentors, paid job training opportunities, and youth-led projects in the environmental and natural resources sector. Students will learn advocacy and communication skills and explore career paths in environmental education, clean energy, waste manage-

ment, and more! This new program is led by community leaders of color, including our team member Priscilla Calleros, and welcomes students from all walks of life.



Despite a few setbacks in our timeline due to COVID-19, we are so excited to move forward with this partnership. If you are a high school student (or know one) who may be interested in participating in the Youth Leadership Project, **please email [priscilla@envirocenter.org](mailto:priscilla@envirocenter.org) to learn more.** There will be a virtual information session on March 16th, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

**LEARN ABOUT INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN AT [ENVIROCENTER.ORG](http://envirocenter.org).**



## MOUNTAINFILM ON TOUR

A FUNDRAISER FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

2021 will be a new virtual experience featuring two weekends of incredible films:

**February 26 to March 1 and March 5 to 8 with different films each weekend.**

Check out Mountainfilm's inspiring program from the comfort of your own home — wherever you are, at a time that works best for you! There is also an online raffle with prize packages from your favorite local shops. View the film selections and **get your tickets today at [envirocenter.org](http://envirocenter.org).**

**AS A MEMBER, USE THE COUPON CODE MEMBERS10 AT CHECKOUT TO RECEIVE A 10% DISCOUNT.**



## SIGN UP FOR YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our youth education team successfully connected kids to nature in the fall and winter 2021, and we will continue getting kids outside this spring! Sign up your students for engaging outdoor adventures, where we will search for animal tracks, build forts, learn about plant and animal adaptations, study hibernation, and simply have fun outside! We're taking every precaution to keep families safe and healthy, and hope you'll join us.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Spring Break Forest Explorers** at Skyliner Lodge on March 22-25th (K-5th); application process opens March 1st

**Forest Explorer Wednesdays** at Skyliner Lodge on May 5th-26th (3rd-5th); application process opens after spring break

COMING SOON: **Summer camp programs** to facilitate outdoor recreation and service projects for K-5, middle school, and high school students

Stay up-to-date by signing up for our e-newsletter. We will have more announcements in the coming weeks!.



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# OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS CRITICAL DURING COVID-19

The Environmental Center is thrilled to award a record number of school garden grants this year — \$13,000 to 13 local schools and youth programs! The increase in funding requests confirms that local educators see garden-based education and outdoor learning as vital to students' physical and mental wellbeing, especially during the pandemic. Many educators shared that these grant-funded projects will aid in both the health and human connection that students so desperately crave right now.

Projects range from outdoor seating, to shade and warming structures, to new and expanded raised garden beds. Recipient schools and organizations collectively serve over 1,500 youth across Central Oregon. **To view the list of recipients and projects, visit [envirocenter.org/blog](http://envirocenter.org/blog).**



## BUILDING A MORE JUST & SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN CENTRAL OREGON

Over the last few years of learning and reflecting, we've come to better understand the urgency of social justice issues and their connection to our mission. We are actively listening and learning how The Environmental Center can help to dismantle systemic oppression. As we take steps toward advancing our equity goals, we will share what we learn and invite you to participate! One commitment we've made is to support and uplift the voices of Black, Indigenous and all people of color. And because **February is Black History Month**, we wanted to share a few local happenings.

- COCC is hosting several virtual events and book discussions to celebrate Black triumph. [cocc.edu](http://cocc.edu)
- Scalehouse Gallery's current exhibit features Shabazz Larkin's *Fragile Black Man*. [scalehouse.org](http://scalehouse.org)
- Local leaders are sharing videos & resources on social media. *Follow Central Oregon Black Leaders Assembly on Facebook*



## 4 QUICK TIPS TO REDUCE WASTE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Supporting local restaurants with takeout? Great! If you don't want them, say "no, thanks" to the single-use extras that may come with your meal. Can you use the bottle of mustard in your fridge, and the silverware in your drawers? That's the way to go.

Instead of using disposable masks, have two washable reusables: one to wash and one to wear.

Check out The Pantry (brand new shop, good for food staples) and The People's Apothecary (new ownership, good for teas and herbs): two shops in town where you can still buy in bulk.

Take the time to focus on wasted food. Buy only what you need, and use up what you buy. Did you know wasted food accounts for 8% of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions?

## ELECTRIFYING CENTRAL OREGON

Electrifying transportation is an essential action to combat climate change. That's why we're excited to get to work on three Central Oregon electric mobility projects this year with support from Pacific Power and the Oregon Clean Fuels Program. These projects will help share the benefits of electrification with communities across the state. Here is a summary of our role in each of these important projects:

We are leading the charge (pun intended!) on **engaging school districts and transit districts in electric bus projects** and supporting the fundraising to bring local projects to life.

We are **developing curriculum about electric school buses for students** in the Bend- La Pine School District to complement the district's new electric bus that is coming online soon.

We are **hosting a mobile EV showcase in Central Oregon** later this year where community members can check out multiple electric vehicles and connect with experts.



## ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE IN SALEM

Oregon's legislative session is underway and there are a number of bills related to waste, energy, climate and environmental justice that we are supporting and following. Stay connected through our e-newsletter and social media to learn more about these bills and how you can support them in the coming weeks.

### WASTE THAT'S WORTHY OF ATTENTION.

HERE ARE TWO BILLS THAT WE SUPPORT.

**Right to Repair (HB 2698):** If you can't repair your own things, do you really own them? In a time of planned obsolescence where stuff is made to be broken, this bill will empower repair rather than disposal by requiring manufacturers to provide us with the tools and manuals we need to fix our broken things. We support repair because it:

- reduces environmental damage by decreasing toxic e-waste;
- increases access to affordable technology; and
- supports small businesses and the local economy.

**Modernizing Oregon's Recycling System (HB 2065 / SB 582):** Oregon has an outdated recycling system that leads to public confusion about what can and cannot be recycled and, consequently, high rates of contamination. The system also places too large a burden on local communities for the end-of-life costs of materials. This bill would finally apply "extended producer responsibility" principles to Oregon's waste system and require producers to finance much of the cost of system improvements. This bill would also:

- require truthful, easy-to-understand recycling labels;
- develop a state-wide recyclables collection list and educational programs to increase public understanding; and
- improve recycling opportunities in rural areas by equalizing the cost of transporting recyclable materials to markets.

### ENERGY & CLIMATE BILLS TO KEEP AN EYE ON

We are following several bills that will set Oregon on a path to generating 100% of its electricity from clean, renewable sources. The best elements of each bill will likely be combined into one later in the session.

We are supporting two bills that address energy and climate justice. **House Bill (HB) 2475** will allow customers with low incomes to pay less for their energy. And **HB 2842** will fund energy and air quality retrofits for the same households.

**HB 2398** will allow local communities to improve their building codes. There are several other bills that will improve electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the state.



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## EVENTS IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

Learn more at [envirocenter.org](http://envirocenter.org).

**February 23 : 12:30pm**  
**Celebrating Black History  
Month with Dr. Doug  
Luffborough**

COCC is honored to welcome Dr. Doug Luffborough to share stories of Black triumph. Dr. Doug Luffborough (Dr. Luff) overcame fatherlessness, homelessness, and unjust systems to be the first in his family to attend college.

**February 23 : 5pm**  
**Power Hour: Community Solar**

Learn how you to sign up to get the benefits of solar energy on your electric bill regardless of if you rent or own your residence.

**March 10 : 2pm**  
**Garden Educator Network  
Event (Virtual)**

Hear from two local educators who, through

in-person and virtual learning, used garden-based education with their students throughout the pandemic. Email [denise@envirocenter.org](mailto:denise@envirocenter.org) to join.

**March 17 : 6pm**  
**OSU Science Pub: Climate  
Change Impacts Around Bend**

Larger and more frequent fires, severe smoke, and drought. How will a changing climate impact us here in Central Oregon?

**March 17 : 7pm**  
**Nature Night: Reciprocity  
with the Natural World**

Join the Deschutes Land Trust and Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer for a talk on our connections with the natural world.

**March 30 : 5:30pm**  
**Geological Journey of Desert  
Rivers**

Join ONDA for the second event in the 2021 High Desert Speaker Series, featuring Dr. Elizabeth Safran, Associate Professor of Geological Science at Lewis & Clark.

## UP NEXT:

**April 10**  
**Salmon Run**

Half marathon, 10K and 5K race at Pronghorn Resort. A benefit for The Environmental Center! Volunteers needed. Visit [bendraces.com](http://bendraces.com) to learn more.

**April 19-23**  
**Earth Day  
Celebration**

We're planning a series of online and hybrid events featuring art, film and music to celebrate and engage our community around Earth Day. Stay tuned for the full schedule — and start planning your costume for the virtual parade!