

RADICAL HOPE AND THE PATH TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

I don't know about you, but I could use a dose of radical hope these days.

As I write, one Senator from West Virginia is blocking meaningful federal action on climate change. He is using his new found power to resist what the science tells us we must do: phase out coal as quickly as possible to avoid the worst case climate scenarios. Apparently the short-term interest of a dying industry that still dominates his state (and his source of campaign funds) is more important than the long-term well-being of our

planet and its people, even the people of his state. Sigh.

Here at the local level, we've seen similar resistance to science and doing what's right for the common good. Small but loud parts of our community have been calling on our school boards to ignore the proven efficacy of masks and vaccines to protect teachers and students. They've also called for an end to teaching the full story of how racism has shaped our state and nation. Worse yet, their tactics include catcalling and intimidation.

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONT'D

At an August board meeting, I watched them shout down an exhausted nurse who came straight to the meeting from her 12-hour shift at our local hospital. Double sigh.

Much to my delight, this past week I found two sources of radical hope. The first came from a new place for me: the queer community. I participated in a training with my Board led by a local consultant who spoke about the strengths and knowledge of the queer community. Near the top of their list: radical hope.

The consultant made the point that despite countless forms of oppression and exclusion over many, many years, queer people persist and thrive and contribute. Doing so has required of them a radical hope for a better future, a stance that is clear eyed about the full truths of today and simultaneously open, inquisitive and creative about what could be tomorrow. Like others who have been oppressed by the dominant culture, queer people can help us imagine and then find our way to a better future together, if we have the courage to listen and learn from their experiences.

The other source of hope came from much closer to home: the staff of The Environmental Center. As you will read in this newsletter, they are working their magic every day to translate the big idea of sustainability into local action that makes a difference. Kicking the City of Bend's climate action plan into a higher gear. Training teachers about healthy soils and gardening. Helping the Bend-La Pine School District develop and implement a new sustainability plan. Read on for details.

All this reminds me of the importance of our motto here at TEC: "Local change. A world of difference." Meaningful change starts at home. That change requires that we do our part locally to reduce emissions, and then demand the additional, system-scale action needed from higher up the food chain. That change requires organizations like TEC to get uncomfortable, to include and learn from all voices--queer people, Native people, people of color, people with disabilities--so we can collaborate on new paths to a just and sustainable future. And that change requires us to work with and learn from those we may at times disagree with, for they too are part of our community.

Thank you for supporting us as we do this work. Together, I am radically hopeful that we can imagine and create a just and sustainable future.

Mike Riley, Executive Director

SCHOOL DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY UPDATES

Kudos to Bend-La Pine School District for starting this school year off strong!

The 2020-21 school year was a challenge to say the least. Sustainability took a back seat role in classrooms as teachers focused on students and safety protocols, but big picture planning was still in session. A sustainability committee of 12 district members, led by The Environmental Center's Education Director Jackie Wilson, worked for seven months to update a new Sustainability Plan for the district. The plan outlines 15 goals in the following focus areas: Education; buildings and operations; transportation; and materials management. This plan will guide the district to develop measurable goals, accountability tools, and new sustainability initiatives.

Since school resumed in September, we are glad to report many successes. A new high school opened with well-designed waste stations located throughout, and we've resumed composting at two schools and started composting at the Bend High Commissary kitchen.

Construction is underway for a new cafeteria at Jewell Elementary School which will have grant-funded solar panels. And we're excited to share that a new electric school bus is on its way to the transportation department — the first of its kind in Oregon, east of the cascades!

Learn more about Bend-La Pine Schools' sustainability plan at: www.bend.k12.or.us. (Search for *sustainability* in the search bar.)

WELCOME TO THE TEAM

We continue to grow! Please join us in welcoming three new faces to The Environmental Center team this fall.

Mackenzie Foley (she/her), Membership and Corporate Giving Manager

Mackenzie brings a passion for environmental and social justice work in this new role at The Environmental Center. She served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana, an Americorps VISTA Team Leader in Duluth, and most recently worked as a Wilderness Therapy Field Instructor just outside of Bend. In her free time, Mackenzie can be found exploring wilderness trails with her dog, paddling one of the local waterways, or playing cribbage on one of her homemade boards.



Grace Andrews (she/her), Energy Program Coordinator and RARE AmeriCorps Member

Grace is an AmeriCorps member with Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE), a program that increases capacity for cities and counties across Oregon to tackle community-based projects. She recently graduated from Colby College, where she enjoyed working with the writing center and the outdoor orientation program for first year students. When not at work, Grace can be found hiking, paddling, skiing, or curled up with tea and a book.



Adrienne Atkins (she/her), FoodCorps Service Member

FoodCorps is an AmeriCorps organization that connects kids to healthy food through hands-on learning, healthy school lunches, and a schoolwide culture of health. Through her placement at The Environmental Center, Adrienne is busy teaching kindergarten, fourth and fifth grade students; supporting school garden development plans; and delivering weekly fruit and vegetable tastings at M.A. Lynch Elementary School in Redmond.



FIRST STEPS TOWARD A DESCHUTES COUNTY ENERGY PLAN



We're excited to share that Grace, introduced above, is helping to develop a community energy plan for Deschutes County! There are a variety of steps involved in this process, including researching the types of energy Deschutes County uses and in what ways. Grace is listening to and learning from other communities in Oregon, which will inform a plan for Deschutes County and the development of a best practices toolkit for energy planning in rural Oregon.

This is important work, considering 27% of households in Deschutes County are energy burdened — meaning six percent or more of household income is spent on energy costs. Recognizing this, Grace's outreach will focus on

identifying energy problems and potential solutions. As Grace begins to coordinate community-led discussions about local energy production and resilience in Deschutes County, you can get involved by emailing grace@envirocenter.org.

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2021 WINNERS ANNOUNCED!



an environmental center event @

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS WHO WERE RECOGNIZED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH.

Bend Bikes, Well Rooted Farms, and Kôr Community Land Trust.

Every two years, The Environmental Center hosts this event as a way to celebrate businesses, organizations and individuals who are helping to shape communities that meet human needs equitably, live within our planet's ecological limits, and build a prosperous economy for all — without compromising the ability for future generations to do the same.

This year, we also featured an engaging discussion with Central Oregon youth leaders who are helping to advance a healthier future.

Did you miss the live event? A recording of the 2021 Sustainability Awards is now available. Learn more about this year's award recipients and view the recording at envirocenter.org/SustainabilityAwards.

NOVEMBER GREEN DRINKS CELEBRATES NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

November is a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. This month, also referred to as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month, is an opportune time to learn about and support our tribal communities in present-day Central Oregon. To start, visit the Museum at Warm Springs. Our staff learned a lot by visiting the museum this summer.

On November 14th, we held a Green Drinks outing at Smith Rock State Park to learn about and reflect on Indigenous stories. If you missed it, here are a few ways you can participate at any time:

- Read Legends of the Northern Paiute: As Told by Wilson Wewa. This book shares 21 Northern Paiute legends, as told by Wilson Wewa, a spiritual leader of the Warm Springs Paiute.
- Support local business Sakari Farms/Sakari Botanicals, owned by Spring Alaska Schreiner. You can purchase food, tea, skin care items, and more at sakarifarms.com.



EDUCATORS LEARN ABOUT SOIL HEALTH THROUGH HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

In October, we teamed up with the Deschutes Soil & Water Conservation District and Bend Pollinator Pathways to run a Soil Health for School Gardens workshop.

Seventeen teachers from Redmond, Terrebonne, Prineville, Sunriver and Bend joined us in Redmond for this workshop. We learned about the four principles of soil health, native pollinator plants and how to engage students in soil studies. Then we walked over to the StepUp school garden for dinner and finished up by doing some hands-on soil amendment work.

Thanks to grant funding, teachers left with native pollinator plants, cover crop seeds, and a \$200 stipend to purchase soil amendment materials for their school gardens.

Check out a recording of the presentation on our blog!



RETHINK WASTE

Deschutes County has over 4.3 million visitors annually! That's a lot of extra people who produce waste and may have different recycling habits. There are many things you can do to reduce waste in your space and we can help.

Rethink Waste Project is recruiting hotels, AirBnbs, resorts and any other visitor lodging sites interested in participating in our Tourism Pilot. Participating sites will receive consultation and implementation support from our team to enhance recycling, composting, and other waste related education and infrastructure. Interested? Email udara@envirocenter.org to participate in this pilot project!

The Tourism Pilot is informed by several focus groups with folks in the tourism industry as well as key takeaways from the Multifamily Housing Pilot we wrapped up earlier this year.

Interested in improving sustainability at a property you manage, but unable participate in the pilot? Visit rethinkwasteproject.org/propertymanager for tips and ideas you can implement today!

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Exciting news! The City of Bend's Environment and Climate Committe, co-chaired by staff member Neil Baunsgard, has selected the following six implementation priorities for Bend's Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP):

- Provide 100% renewable electricity to the community through the grid
- Create revolving loan funds to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency projects
- Participate in code update processes and vote for advancing energy efficiency in codes
- Develop a home energy score program
- Develop an outreach and educational program about food waste prevention and diversion
- Improve recycling at multifamily residences

Adopting the CCAP was a community-driven process, and your involvement today is just as important as ever to make sure these priorities and strategies get implemented. Keep emailing Bend City Councilors urging them to staff and fund these priorities. And tune in to future committee meetings to learn more about this process!

ACTION ALERT: Do you want to see improvements to biking, walking and transit infrastructure?

Bend voters approved a Transportation Bond in the last election to help fund many new transportation projects we support over the next 20 years. The Transportation Bond Oversight Committee (TBOC) is now bringing a prioritized list of projects to Bend City Council to schedule in the first five years of implementation.

If you want to see safety, walking and biking projects prioritized, send comments to council@BendOregon.gov. Learn more about the projects at bendoregon.gov (search for *TBOC* when you land on the homepage).

Local elected officials, community leaders and advocates gathered earlier this month for an informative electric bike ride throughout Bend. The ride highlighted the many benefits of e-bikes, while emphasizing the importance of good infrastructure for safe bicycling.

Thanks to Oregon Environmental Council, Bend Electric Bikes, Bend Bikes, and Commute Options for partnering with us to organize this meaningful event.





December 1, 11:00 am Working in Indian Country

Training for non-tribal members to glean helpful tips on culturally responsive ways to engage with tribes in the Pacific Northwest. Hosted by Willamette Partnership.

December 2

Essential, a Film Premiere

A new film from Oregon Natural Desert Association and an update on their conservation progress this year.

December 2, 11:45am

Empowering Families Luncheon

Support Latino Community Association's mission to empower immigrant families to thrive.

December 2, 3:30pm

Project Learning Tree Workshop

A free workshop for formal and non-formal Oregon educators! Participants will look at examples of how Project Learning Tree activities can support students' learning of the Tribal History/ Shared History Curriculum (SB13).

December 3, 12:00pm

Cost Effective HVAC Solutions

A virtual lunch and learn session from Earth Advantage. Explore cost effective solutions to meet the new Oregon codes in the area of HVAC. Designed for builders and contractors.

December 4 and 18, 10:30am Winter Wonderland Family Program

Join Sunriver Nature Center & Observatory for a nature hike and crafts to kick off winer.

VIEW MORE EVENTS AT ENVIROCENTER.ORG.

February 18-19 Mountainfilm on Tour in Bend

We're excited to welcome you back to The Tower Theatre for Mountainfilm on Tour in Bend - a fundraiser for The Environmental Center!

Featuring two unique shows with different films, an amazing raffle with local prizes, AND a virtual viewing option for folks who aren't able to attend in person.

Keep an eye out in January for ticket information. Members will receive a discount code to this inspiring event.

You guessed it! The inperson event is subject to cancellation based on the trajectory of COVID-19. If this occurs, ticket-holders will receive virtual access.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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This list reflects donors from July 2020 to October 2021 and does not include contributions to The Environmental Center's Eco Central Capital Campaign

We are currently in the quiet phase of our Eco Central Capital Campaign to support the growth and evolution of our facility and programs.

A total of 54 donors have contributed more than \$2.3 million to support longer term investments in our work to advance climate action and sustainability for Central Oregon. Our Board of Directors and staff are deeply grateful to all who have participated in the campaign to date, and we will recognize those gifts at a later time.