

LIVING THE GREEN



SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIKE RILEY

SHOWING UP

Equity's Place in Our Work

One way I describe what we do here at The Environmental Center is this: we translate the big idea of sustainability into practical, local action that makes a world difference, today and for future generations.

Currently our work is focusing more and more on action that addresses the climate crisis, the sustainability issue of our time. We are also focusing more of our attention on an integral pillar of sustainability: equity. While a healthy environment and a thriving economy remain essential to a sustainable future, so too is equity, the third "pillar" that we and others in the environmental movement have at times overlooked. As we move forward, we are striving to consider equity in both the outcomes we seek to achieve as well as how we approach those outcomes.

I'm excited to share two new projects that are in the works that exemplify our evolving approach within our Climate Solutions program:

cont'd inside

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONT'D

1. Deschutes Energy Future This initiative will develop a grassroots action plan to reduce Deschutes County's reliance on fossil fuels and deliver the benefits of a low-carbon energy future to our whole community. The action plan will include very specific, practical things we can do as well as bigger picture policy changes that need to be made to support a low-carbon future and ensure everyone benefits from it. And the action plan will prioritize engaging a wide range of people and perspectives, especially the Black, brown, queer and rural people too often left out of community planning efforts. Why? Because we know that the strongest solutions come from the full diversity of our community. (Want to join the Deschutes Energy Future team? See the article on page four to learn more!)

2. Home Energy Efficiency for Low and Moderate Income Families There are quite a few incentives—from cash rebates to tax credits—to make energy efficiency improvements in homes. Too often these incentives have not reached low and moderate income families, so we are looking hard at launching a new program to do so. In this new program, our home energy assessor will identify ways for families to reduce their energy use—and thus their energy bills—while also improving the

comfort and resilience of their homes. We'll also help them access available incentives to radically reduce the cost of home improvements, we'll connect them with a contractor to do the work, and, when necessary, we'll provide an interest-free loan to help them manage the cash flow during the project. It's a great win for a healthy environment and healthy, thriving families. If you are curious about any aspects of the project before we launch, feel free to reach out to Lindsey Hardy, Climate Solutions Program Director (lindsey@envirocenter.org) and ask! Your feedback and ideas are valuable to us.

It's no small task to give equity and justice the long overdue attention they deserve in our sustainability work. We've begun, and we know that we still have lots to learn and a long way to go. Thanks for supporting us on the journey to a sustainable future for all. Have a great holiday season!



- Mike Riley
Executive Director

UDARA WON A SUSTAINABLE OREGON AWARD!



Congratulations, Udara!

This year, our own Rethink Waste Project Program Manager Udara Abeysekera Bickett is the recipient of a Sustainable Oregon Award from the Association of Oregon Recyclers!

The Sustainable Oregon Awards recognize individuals and

organizations who have made exceptional contributions in the field of materials management in Oregon. The awards were presented at the annual conference on October 10th at the Salishan Coastal Resort in Gleneden Beach, OR.

We are very proud of Udara's work at the helm of the Rethink Waste Project and throughout the region! Over the past few years especially, Udara has put in significant time and effort to increase engagement with waste-related programming, from a pilot project to recycle plastic film within the beverage industry to a new guide for visitor lodging destinations, as well as the expansion of the Community Innovation Fund that supports reduce, reuse and recycle infrastructure.

ROOTED IN PARTNERSHIP

In spring of 2022, our team was approached by a Redmond landowner in the process of creating a succession plan for their century-old farmhouse and large lot. The landowner, whose two children experienced our Kansas Avenue Learning Garden within walking distance of their school, saw the potential at this property for both a community garden space as well as school garden programs with Hugh Hartman Elementary nearby. Honored that they thought of The Environmental Center as a viable caretaker of the property for future generations, we realized navigating the transaction and taking on the large property was ultimately not feasible for us alone. We looped in our friends at RootedHomes (formerly Kôr Community Land Trust), who had been steadily growing their presence in the region and expanding affordable housing options using an innovative and equitable model.

Fast forward to now, RootedHomes has officially announced their newest project: Rooted in Redmond— a 23-home community located at 345 NW 19th St. The community will include new construction of two- and three-bedroom duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes and the preservation of a single-family four-bedroom, 100+-year-old farmhouse. In partnership with The Environmental Center, the community will include a large community garden that will be used by homeowners and as an outdoor classroom for Redmond public school students! Check out the rendering below for the most current site plan.

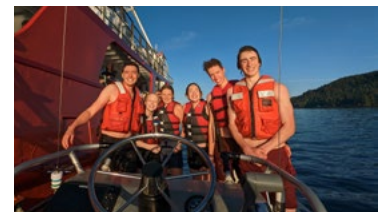


We're thrilled to grow a partnership that interweaves the missions of our organizations, while meeting urgent community needs for affordable housing and equitable access to gardens and garden-based education. If you would like to know more about Rooted in Redmond, information is available at rootedhomes.org/communities/redmond.

FIELD NOTES FROM ALASKA

By Neil Baungard

This summer, The Environmental Center and Bend-La Pine School District staff brought three local High Schoolers to southeast Alaska on an impactful trip where their mission was to clean up the ocean plastics around Ketchikan. The group included high schoolers, Alaska locals, TEC advocacy staff, students and professors studying plastics recycling and experts in the recycling industry. They collected ~20,000 pounds of ocean plastics and marine debris which will be sorted and recycled where possible!



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CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH, SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 16

By Janet Sarai Ilerandi Gonzalez

Last month brought significant celebrations for most Latine people. Among the multi-cultural celebrations, Mexicans celebrate “El Grito” on September 16th - an audible proclamation of our proud heritage and independence from Spain. While other countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica celebrate on the 15th, others such as Chile and Belize celebrate on the 18th.

In my years of working alongside so many beautifully diverse Latine people, one thing is clear, there is a lot to celebrate about our heritage - be it Hispanic, Latine, Chicana, or Originario (originals).

The phrase “Hispanic Heritage” brings up mixed emotions for me being U.S. born to migrant parents. Knowing my DNA consists of Spanish blood, my ancestral guides steer me to my root identity as a Mexicana Originaria (me-shee-ka original).

No other people have been homogenized so profoundly as Latine people. During these celebratory events it's important to recognize the complexities around shared identities while honoring individual autonomy. And while there is a lot to celebrate, there is yet a lot more to dismantle, repair, and heal from as a people removed from our ancestral homelands, families and traditional cultures in sometimes inhospitable places.

In case you missed it, I invite you to check out our new Farmworker's Justice display debuted at Latino Fest 2023 to learn more about the intersections of race and climate change (to view, scan the QR code below or visit envirocenter.org/latino-fest-2023). Creating this display was one way we at The Environmental Center felt we could help shed some light on an important intersection of environmental and social justice issues that impacts families right here in the region we serve.



“El grito corre en nuestras venas (the cry runs in our veins), this is what I celebrate in you, in me, and in us.”



Photo credit: E2 Solar

JOIN THE DESCHUTES ENERGY FUTURE TEAM TODAY!

Deschutes Energy Future relies on community members like you to shape an action plan to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels in the County.

Enrollment is OPEN for the Deschutes Energy Future Leadership Team, which will initiate and lead development of a grassroots, community-driven energy action plan.

“It's our county, full of diversity, rural and urban, farms to start ups. The need for change is being forced upon us and it's calling on us to put our best foot forward, to be compassionate and understanding of those around us. We've got to do it. We've got to change. It's the idea of change that's most scary, but once it happens it usually turns out to be not that bad. We can do it, we can change.”

-Tim Smith, TallTreeTrust
(campaign matching sponsor)

Details about the initiative, leadership team role, and time commitment are available at the link:
tinyurl.com/3tbrayuj

DISH KITS ARE A HIT!

Since last fall, our free reusable dishware program has **reduced over 2,000 units of single use waste!** Community members borrowed dishware kits for over 40 low-waste gatherings, including lively birthday parties to relaxing picnics, productive staff trainings, and heartwarming family reunions.



Photo courtesy of John and Amber Moore. "It worked perfectly for us," they said, for their child's birthday party.

Each dishware kit is equipped with 25 plates, cups, bowls, utensils, and signage reminding guests to return the reusables after their meals.

Reuse is one of our favorite ways to Rethink Waste because it keeps valuable resources in use much longer and reduces the need to extract additional resources for new stuff. That's why in 2024, we are excited to make more reusable dishware available in our community!

Join the reuse revolution

Are you interested in getting involved with the growth of reusables in the region? A new interest form is coming soon to our website, where you can share your thoughts and ideas on reusable dishware in our community. Stay tuned!

2023 SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

The evening of November 2nd was one to remember, filled with friends new and familiar, delicious beer on tap from Kobold Brewing, and tasty appetizers and desserts. The 2023 Sustainability Awards took place at the High Desert Music Hall in Redmond, which fit the occasion well; their slightly elevated yet still down-home, repurposed church vibe offered the perfect setting to host an awards ceremony to honor local leaders in sustainability. Throughout the evening, attendees mingled, sharing lamentation over the end of summer while equally looking forward to the winter ahead. We at The Environmental Center were pleased to have the opportunity to be together as a staff outside of regular office hours, seeing our months of work come to fruition wonderfully.

Of the many highlights of the evening, viewing the film created by **Caldera High School's Green Team** students (pictured) and local filmmaker Eduardo Romero was a major one. Students in the film were also in attendance, and took to the stage to share their thanks to their Green Team teacher Megan Mooney. Their film reminded us that this generation of young people is watching us older folks, calling for us to take the climate crisis seriously, and letting us know that they're here to hold us accountable. Their plea for those in charge? *Listen.*



With fourteen nominees to choose from, the selection team had their work cut out for them! It's not an easy task to choose the recipients, but after much deliberation **four were chosen based on their contributions to environment, equity, and economy** while also demonstrating leadership in the region.



2023 Recipients (pictured left):

Sakari Farms - Spring Alaska Schreiner (Business Category), Noelle Bell Copley (Individual Category), Rooted-Homes (Non-profit Category), STEELE Associates Architects - Scott Steele (Enduring Impact Award).

Congratulations to all the nominees, applicants, and recipients this year. Without your leadership, we are certain Central Oregon would not be the same! It is truly an honor to award the following recipients with a token of our appreciation for the work they do each and every day!



Handmade awards were designed and crafted by local artists Kenny Adams and Jake Roberts.

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LIVING THE GREEN

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

EVENTS IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

November 14

Climate Change and Human Migration with Dr. David Wrathall

Hosted by COCC, Dr. David Wrathall will share the findings from his role as a lead author of the UN's latest climate assessment and learn how the changing climate will alter migration patterns and impact societies around the world.

November 15

America Recycles Day

Raise your and your community's awareness about recycling with us! We'll have a virtual learning opportunity using Instagram Live for you to engage with and share with your friends.

November 17

Green Drinks w/ Oregon Humanities and BENDITAS

Featured Documentary: Lorena de los Pies Ligeros. "Tertulias... de película!" Is a program that seeks to provide Spanish speaker communities

a space to connect. This program is offered only for people who speak Spanish, it is not a program for English speakers who are learning Spanish. Thank you in advance for respecting the space.

November 18

Family Fiesta! with Justin Favela

Artist Justin Favela brings his signature event to the High Desert Museum. Family Fiesta celebrates the exhibition Vistas del Cielo as well as the Latinx communities of Central Oregon with food, music, piñatas and artmaking.

January 19

Winter Storytime in the Garden

Join us in the Kansas Avenue Learning Garden from 10:30-11:30am in partnership with the Deschutes Public Library downtown branch! We'll read seasonally appropriate books and follow with some garden exploration time.

VIEW MORE EVENTS AT [ENVIROCENTER.ORG](http://envirocenter.org).



February 23 & 24

Mountainfilm on Tour: Bend

Mark your calendars-- Mountainfilm is returning to Bend in February 2024!

It's our biggest fundraiser of the year! We look forward to another excellent lineup of inspiring films, plus our signature raffle with prizes from local businesses.

Tickets will go on sale in January, and are sure to sell out! Stay tuned for film trailers, raffle prize sneak peeks, and more leading up to the event.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

This year, we are highlighting donors who have a Legacy of Giving. Your support, year on year, for so many years have made the Environmental Center what it is today. From all of us here at The Environmental Center, THANK YOU!

Note: This list contains donors who have given from July 2022-September 2023, and is grouped based on the date of the first donation we have a record of.

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Earth Advantage Institute
East Cascades Audubon Society
Energy Trust Of Oregon
Habitat For Humanity
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon League of Conservation
Voters, Education Fund
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Sierra Club- Juniper Group
Sunriver Nature Center &
Observatory
Trout Unlimited (Deschutes
Chapter)
Upper Deschutes Watershed
Council
Veg Net Bend

NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Central Oregon Health Council
Children's Forest of Central Oregon

IN MEMORY OF

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