

# LIVING THE GREEN



SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, LAUREN WILLIAMS

## **YOU BELONG IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT**

In February 2014, I visited my sister-in-law who lived (and still lives) here in Bend. She took us hiking along the Deschutes River and skiing at Mt. Bachelor. We shared meals with her close community of friends, and she even took us to a film event called Mountainfilm on Tour at the Tower Theatre one evening. The whole weekend made me feel connected in so many ways. Not just to the special places my feet touched, but to the people.

It's no coincidence that my husband and I moved to Bend shortly after that visit. But it did surprise those closest to me when I took a job at a local environmental organization – a far departure from my career path in advertising.

I've been in Central Oregon and at The Environmental Center for 9.5 years now. I arrived at the job not with formal education in the field, but with a lot of privilege and curiosity. I remember during the interview, I was asked to share how I live a sustainable lifestyle. And to be honest, I stumbled over that response because I thought

*cont'd inside*

## LETTER FROM ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR *CONT'D*

there was likely one right answer the hiring committee wanted to hear.

I'm still trying to think more expansively and with humility about what it looks and feels like to care for the earth and the people around me. I am grateful to be surrounded by an abundance of wisdom, experience and leadership amongst the TEC team, and that which is held within the communities where we work and hope to deepen our work in the future. I am learning from peers and community members what sustainability means to them; how the environmental movement I'm now a part of is at the same time beneficial and oppressive; and what a vision for the future could be, with more leaders at the center who are on the frontlines of environmental injustices.

My parents are visiting Bend (as I write this) in town from St. Louis where I spent most of my childhood. Over pizza one evening, my dad asked me something along the lines of: If you weren't hired by The Environmental Center, do you think you'd have such strong values around caring for the environment?

This question pulled at the same thread from years ago.

Everyone I meet through my role at TEC — colleagues, interns, volunteers, students, families, community partners, leaders, activists, and others — enters this space with their own story, priorities, contributions, and questions. *Environment* and *sustainability* are in our name and mission statement, but how you draw meaning and connection from these words may be different from my own, or your parents, friends, or neighbors. At its best, this is a collective movement with shared action, accountability, and care. As a supporter, as someone who helps weave this web... I hope you feel that however you choose to engage with our mission is good, and right, and enough.

Thanks for continuing to read on about all the great work this team is up to. I wish each of you a very happy summer!



- Lauren Williams, Associate Director

## FUNDING AVAILABLE TO RETHINK WASTE

The Rethink Waste Project will be accepting applications until August 1st for the last round of the year of the Community Innovation Fund (CIF). The CIF awards up to \$5,000 to community-led projects that demonstrate an effort to reduce waste in some way; for instance, through improved recycling infrastructure, composting capacity, or swapping disposable materials for reusables. This year, we've awarded funds to various projects after the first two funding rounds, which showcase a diverse range of ideas, materials, and scope.

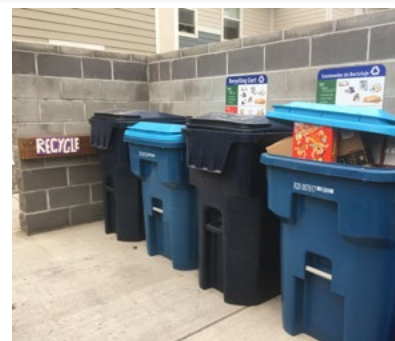
One particular area we hope to address through the CIF is improvements occurring at multifamily residential developments— think apartment complexes,

condominium units, and other densely populated areas managed by the same entity.

Whether you live in this type of housing, or are a multifamily property manager or owner, your ideas are wel-

come! If you have an idea for a project, we especially encourage you to apply for the next round.

Not sure where to start? Reach out to Kavi Chokshi, our Rethink Waste Program Manager: [kavi@envirocenter.org](mailto:kavi@envirocenter.org).



# SOLARIZE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES THIS FALL



**ONE MORE REASON TO BE THANKFUL FOR A SUNNY DAY!**

This summer, The Environmental Center is collaborating with Energize Bend, a partner organization that is working with a group of volunteers to launch a community-led Solarize campaign. The Solarize concept, originally developed in Oregon, has become popular nationwide and is a proven model for increasing solar participation. We will work with dedicated volunteers to simplify the process and reduce the cost of going solar by providing education and installation services in one place.

This campaign aligns with strategies in the City of Bend's Climate Action Plan and the Envision Bend Action Plan. Both plans highlight the importance of connecting more people with the benefits of solar as a key strategy. In addition to residential rooftop solar, we will assist residents without good solar roof access to join the Oregon Community Solar Program, which allows participants to invest in large-scale off-site solar projects and receive the benefits on their utility bill. In conjunction with our free Home Energy Assessment program, we are developing interest-free loans and hope to make a limited number of loans available for this campaign for households with low to moderate incomes. Our goal is to expand the solar conversation and resources so that more Central Oregonians can be represented in clean energy opportunities.

The Solarize campaign will launch mid-August and you will have the opportunity to receive the group discount by signing up for a free assessment by the end of October.

For more information and updates on upcoming events and workshops, visit [envirocenter.org/solarize](http://envirocenter.org/solarize).

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## WELCOME OUR NEW GREEN JOBS INTERN, KYLA!

Help us welcome our new team member for the summer, Kyla G. (pictured above, wearing blue overalls). We're partnering for the second year in a row with the Children's Forest of Central Oregon for their Green Jobs Summer Program. This program places high school youth into summer internships with outdoor and environmental organizations. They specifically recruit a diversity of students who are interested in green careers and want to give back to their community. As a job host, The Environmental Center provides opportunities for the intern to learn and grow their skills in their areas of interest.

We're thrilled to have Kyla on our team, who comes in with existing experience with TEC both in and outside of school including Girl Scouts, DECA, environmental club, and the Green Leadership Coalition. Kyla will be tasked with a variety of projects this summer, from events and outreach assistance to summer camp delivery!

When asked about why she picked The Environmental Center, Kyla said "I like TEC because of the networking opportunities and how involved they are in the community. Learning about all the events happening this summer is exciting. I imagine myself going into an environmental business one day."

"Getting experience in marketing and outreach will help me apply my business skills to the real world. I was also hoping to be a camp counselor. So it's a little bit of everything I was looking for! This is a great way to go into my senior year." We couldn't agree more!



## SAVE THE DATE: SUPPORTER CELEBRATION ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

You're invited to our annual supporter appreciation celebration! Join us at The Environmental Center on Thursday, August 8 for appetizers, desserts and beverages in celebration of YOU! Plus, we'll award prizes to the winners of the Climate Movement Challenge.

Each year, we look forward to seeing familiar faces as well as meeting new supporters at this event. Stop by to say hello, grab a drink, and learn more about what our organization has been working on over the past year.

5:30-7:30pm  
16 NW Kansas Avenue, Bend

Please RSVP in advance at [envirocenter.org/rsvp](https://envirocenter.org/rsvp) or scan the QR code below!



# THE GREEN BUILDING TOUR GLOW UP



**SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

We are thrilled to invite you to our 22nd Green Building Tour on Saturday, September 28th! This event is a highlight for us every other year, showcasing real-world solutions that address the climate impact of buildings in Central Oregon. It's a day filled with inspiring conversations and community engagement.

## 2024 Focus Areas

This year, we're focusing on four key themes where we see both significant advancements and challenges in our region:

- Building Dense Livable Cities
- Electrification
- Water Resiliency in the High Desert
- Healthy Materials/Life Cycle Analysis

These themes will give attendees the chance to dive deep into specific areas or gain a broader understanding of the solutions impacting our built environment.

## What's New This Year?

We're excited to introduce a new format for this year's tour. The day will start with a learning summit at The Environmental Center, featuring speaker sessions, workshops, and educational booths. Following the summit, the in-person tour opens, where you'll visit up to four community sites that showcase local climate solutions related to our themes.

This new format combines in-depth knowledge from the summit with practical, real-world examples on the tour. Whether you attend the summit, the tour, or both, we hope you'll leave inspired to take action on your sustainability journey.

## How to Get Involved

Event registration will open later this summer, but we encourage you to sign up using the general interest form on our website if you'd like to get alerts. We also rely on community support and volunteers to make this event possible. If you're interested in volunteering, or other forms of involvement, please email us at [greentour@envirocenter.org](mailto:greentour@envirocenter.org). We'll provide information on both day-of and pre-event volunteer opportunities.

Thank you for your support and participation in our previous 21 Green Building Tours – I don't know about you, but I'm feeling 22 might be our best one yet!



## SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

In 2024, we're aiming to cultivate 35 NEW monthly supporters in celebration of our 35th anniversary as a non-profit! Here's a wonderful testimony from one of our recurring supporters, Sara Schwab:

***"I am thrilled to support the Environmental Center because of their vital role in educating people on how to be responsible stewards of our resources. I also especially appreciated their recent involvement in the City's tree code committee meetings and their overall advocacy efforts to help protect our natural assets."***

***Supporting the Environmental Center means investing in the future of Bend. It means backing an organization committed to ensuring our growth does not come at the expense of our natural surroundings. By advocating for and implementing sustainable practices, the Environmental Center is helping to create a community that is resilient, vibrant, and environmentally conscious."***

Thank you, Sara!

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## EVENTS IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

### July - October 2024 Happy Hour in the Garden

We welcome volunteers with any level of gardening experience, from beginner to expert, to join us in the Kansas Avenue Learning Garden! We'll have tools, instructions, and beverages for all attendees. Happy Hour in the Garden takes place from 4-6pm on the first and third Tuesday of the month; check out our events calendar for dates and monthly beer sponsors.

### July 27 Annual Deschutes River Cleanup

The Upper Deschutes Watershed Council is hosting the 28th annual Deschutes River Cleanup! Cleanup activities will take place at six different sites on the Deschutes River where volunteers will help pull invasive weeds and remove litter from the river and its streambanks. The cleanup sites are Farewell Bend Park, First Street Trail, La Pine State Park, Riverbend Park, Sunriver, and Tumalo State Park. Register at [upperdeschuteswatershedcouncil.org](http://upperdeschuteswatershedcouncil.org).

### August 9 Summer Stories in the Garden

In collaboration with Deschutes Public Library, this event takes place at the Kansas Ave. Learning Garden from 10:30-11:30am. Enjoy a story time and explore the wonders of gardening! Space is limited- registration is required. This event is suggested for children ages kindergarten and younger, and all children must be accompanied by a caregiver.

### Week of September 14-22 Latino Conservation Week

Join us in celebration of Latino Conservation Week for activities and hikes with local partners to learn all about monarch butterflies! These family-friendly events will focus on the environmental and cultural importance of this magnificent keystone species. More details to come-stay tuned!

### October 5 Solar Oregon Go Zero! Tour

This is a great event to add to your lineup following the Green Building Tour! In-person sites will be featured throughout the Portland Metro area, while other sites will be featured virtually! Learn more at [solaroregon.org](http://solaroregon.org).

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



### Wednesday, July 17 Redmond Repair Café

Got a broken something? We're coming to Redmond for our next Rethink Waste Repair Café!

Join us Wednesday, July 17 from 5:30-7:30pm at SCP Redmond, located at 521 SW 6th St Ste 100.

Please RSVP online using the event link at [envirocenter.org/events](http://envirocenter.org/events).