

# Washington Environmental Council

Protecting our land, air and water

SPRING 2010

## Fight Against Big Oil Interests Continues

Disaster after disaster has brought national attention to the problem of Big Oil and their impact on our waters, our land, and our livelihoods. Their disregard for worker safety and the environment is evident in events from the tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico, the explosion that killed five workers at an Anacortes refinery, and the slowly unfolding environmental devastation in Puget Sound.

Every year, at least 14 million pounds of toxic pollution drains into Puget Sound, poisoning the waters. More than half of that pollution comes from petroleum products. Most of the oil and other toxic materials comes via contaminated stormwater – water that runs off the streets, through a storm drain, and into our waterways. Polluted stormwater is the biggest water pollution problem in our state. Puget Sound is one striking example, but waterways from the Spokane River to the Columbia are impacted by this stream of pollution.

For the past two years, Washington Environmental Council, along with our partners at Washington Conservation Voters, People for Puget Sound, and the Nature Conservancy, has been working on legislation to address contaminated stormwater runoff. Our efforts are founded on the simple principle that polluters should pay their fair share of clean up costs.

The Working for Clean Water bill (also known as the Clean Water Act of 2010) was one of the most significant pieces of environmental legislation in the past decade. Had it passed, this proposal would have taxed hazardous substances to provide over \$100 million a year for stormwater clean-up projects. This would have been a major step forward to returning the Sound to health. And because the stormwater projects are labor-intensive by nature, it would have created good, family-wage jobs statewide.

However, the oil industry, reluctant to dip in their profits to shoulder some of the clean up costs, pulled out all the stops against the bill. They flew in oil executives from Texas, funded a sophisticated and well-financed opposition campaign, bused in workers who were paid to lobby against the bill, and employed some of the most highly paid lobbyists.

**Clean Water • continued  
on page 4**

Learn how the environment fared in the 2010 State Legislative session — see page 4



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Lake Wenatchee

Photo by flickr user starmist1

## President's Message

Spring is a time of renewal, especially here in the Northwest, when longer days and more sunlight inspire all of us to get outside and enjoy this beautiful state we call home.

It's also a time of renewal here at Washington Environmental Council, as we lay the groundwork for progress over the next several years. We're building on the successful foundation we have in place and determining ways we can improve what we do to protect Washington's environment. This work will be guided by our new strategic plan, which we adopted last December and are implementing now.

The hallmark of our new plan is to take the long view of environmental progress, to think about how best to place the building blocks that will allow us to win the biggest campaigns in environmental protection. The problems we now face – from cleaning up Puget Sound to climate change – won't be solved in a day, or a year. But we can solve them with long-term campaigns, and we can solve them in ways that improve the health of our environment and our economy.

What we can't do is solve these pressing problems without your help. Your commitment – through your donations of time, experience, and dollars - to WEC's work is essential to achieving the solutions that will move our state forward.

As you'll read in the rest of the newsletter, this legislative session was a challenging one for the environment. We made some good progress, but we also faced a major budget deficit and the opposition of Big Oil to our Working for Clean Water bill. Your voices and actions were crucial to making the progress we did, and to setting us up for an even bigger campaign next year. Thank you for all you did in standing up for Washington's environment.

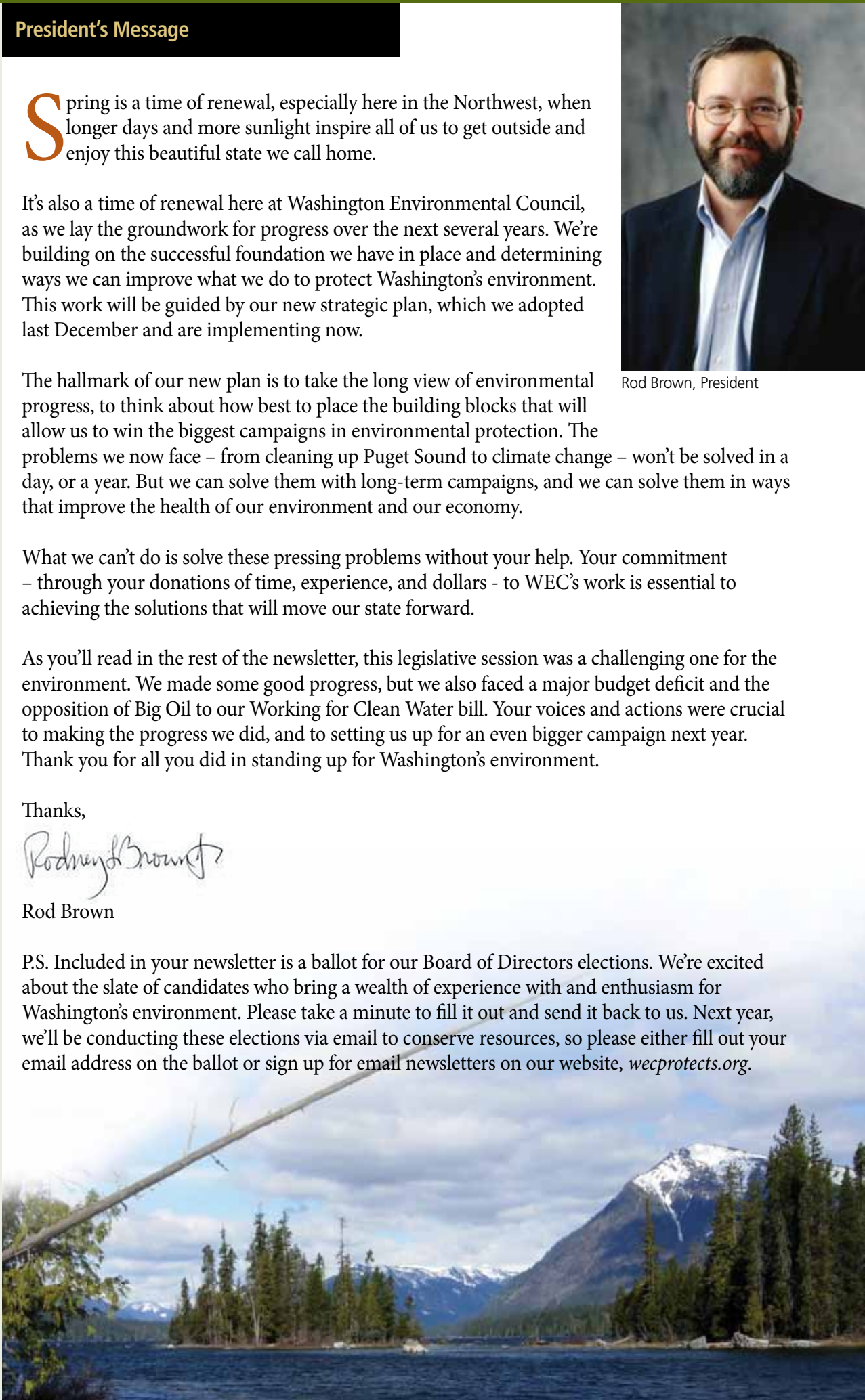
Thanks,

Rod Brown

P.S. Included in your newsletter is a ballot for our Board of Directors elections. We're excited about the slate of candidates who bring a wealth of experience with and enthusiasm for Washington's environment. Please take a minute to fill it out and send it back to us. Next year, we'll be conducting these elections via email to conserve resources, so please either fill out your email address on the ballot or sign up for email newsletters on our website, [wecprotects.org](http://wecprotects.org).



Rod Brown, President



# JOBES Bill Heads to the Ballot

The 2010 Legislative Session ended with a welcome surprise - the passage of the JOBS Act of 2010 (Job Opportunities for Better Schools, EHB 2561). The JOBS Act was the first bill to pass out of the House of Representatives this session, but it didn't make it over the finish line until the last day of the extended special session. And the story's not over yet - the law requires voter approval to be put into action and will be on the ballot in November of this year.

The JOBS Act takes on a slice of one of the biggest immediate opportunities for reducing climate pollution - retrofitting buildings to save energy - and gets started on work at public schools and higher education buildings across the state.

A voter approved \$505 million bond measure will serve as seed money - from our initial investment, Washington gets \$2 billion worth of projects around the state, almost 30,000 new jobs (and the benefits of those paychecks going into local communities), and we save almost \$126 million in lower energy bills. The reduction in climate pollution is estimated to be equal to taking 130,000 cars off the road every year.

This bond measure will put people to work repairing schools across the state - on projects like replacing the roof on an elementary school. At the same time, the school will undertake energy-efficiency projects, such as installing insulation or a new heating system

that will pay for themselves in energy savings—improving our school buildings, saving money, and reducing our state's carbon footprint.

Energy savings means cost savings. Schools and universities are projected to save \$126 million a year - money that can then be reinvested in our local schools. And with 65% of Washington schools built before 1969, doing needed upgrades to schools now can extend their life, saving taxpayers even more money.

These projects will help rebuild our economy, while investing in our future. Our state has a tradition of self-reliance when it comes to finding ways out of tough economic times. In the 1970s Governor Dan Evans put a public works bond measure on the ballot that was used to build schools, parks, and even a sewer plant - jobs creation when we needed it most that built a lasting legacy of public works projects.

However, the fall ballot looks to be crowded with all sorts of initiatives, so it will take a coordinated voter outreach campaign to let Washingtonians know about the potential for economic and environmental progress presented by the JOBS Act. WEC will be integrally involved in this effort and will be asking for your help in getting the word out. To learn more about how WEC engages voters around environmental ballot issues, turn to page 7.

The JOBS Act would help schools across the state, like Hoquiam High School pictured here, replace old roofs and outdated heating systems, while making energy efficiency improvements.



Despite a hard-fought campaign, which brought out an incredible amount of support from people around Washington, the Legislature did not pass the Clean Water Act.

The Legislature did make a one-time \$50 million allocation for stormwater cleanup in 2010. These funds are a meaningful down payment for stormwater infrastructure in the short term, but also highlight the need for a sustained funding source.

WEC and our partners are committed to finding a way to prevent the flow of contaminated stormwater into our waterways and making sure that Big Oil's voice doesn't outweigh those of Washingtonians. Your help will be essential in making this happen.

## 2010 Legislative Recap: Tough Leg Missed Opportunity for the Enviro

The 2010 State Legislative Session saw some good progress for the environment, with steps forward on getting toxic chemicals out of everyday products and keeping essential environmental protections in the state budget. However, the Legislature missed the opportunity to pass the Clean Water Act of 2010 (page 1), legislation that would have been a significant step forward for our environment and our economy.

### Environmental Protections in the Budget\*

For the first time, the Environmental Priorities Coalition made sustaining environmental protections in the state budget a top priority. It was a risky move in a very tough budget year. However, funding for environmental programs took major hits in 2009 and we knew another year of severe cuts would undermine the core functions of key programs. Due to the dire budget forecast, things as essential as programs to ensure clean drinking water and clean air were under threat.

Working together, the Environmental Priorities Coalition identified a list of key programs to protect in the state budget. Most of the identified priorities in core areas like toxic contamination cleanup, air quality, water quality, water resources and habitat protection programs were retained in the final state budget.

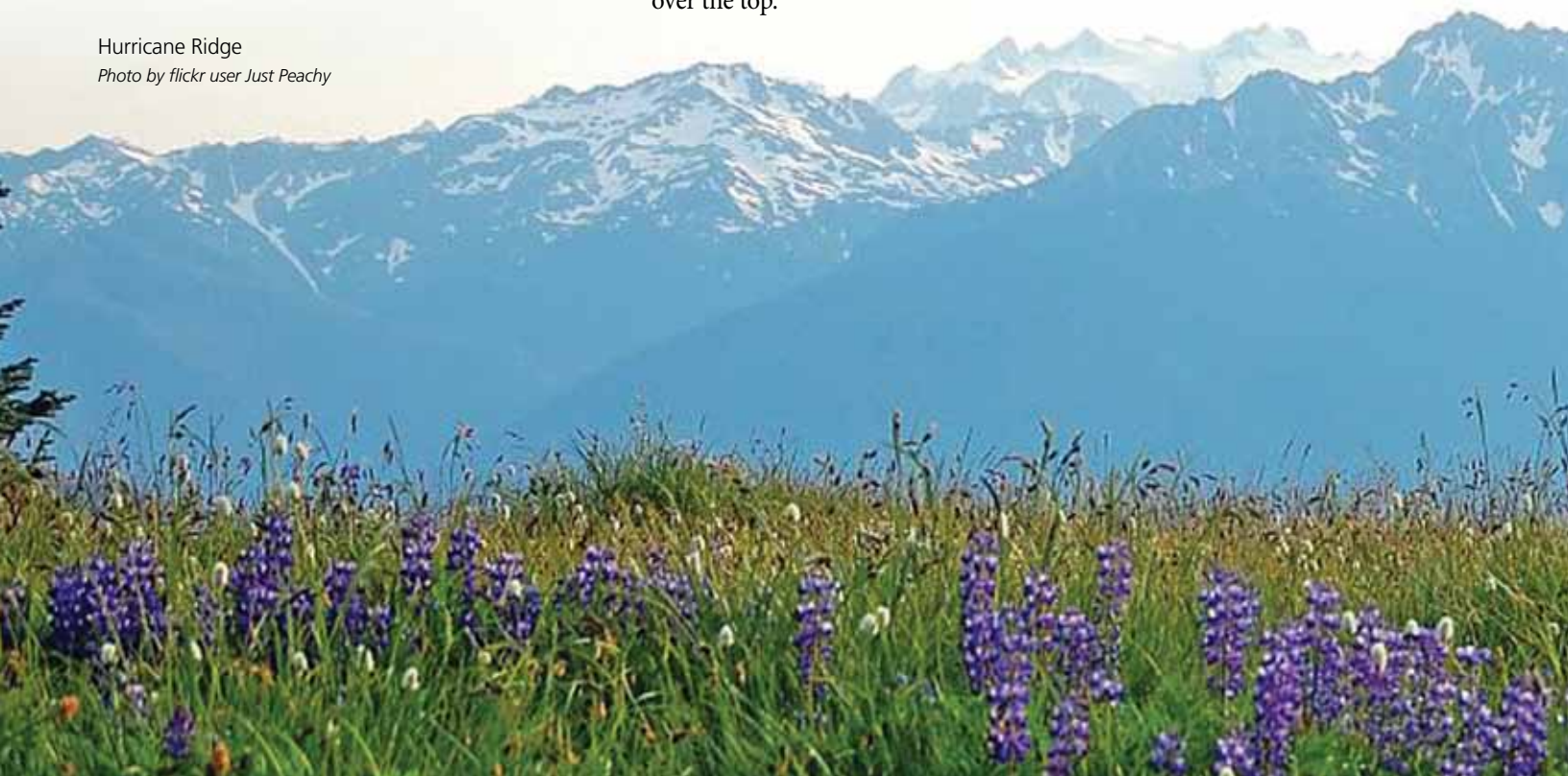
### Safe Baby Bottle Act\*

The Safe Baby Bottle Act banned bisphenol A (BPA) in children's dishware and sports water bottles. BPA has been linked to a host of health problems – from problems with brain and reproductive development to increasing the risk of cancer. Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law in March, making Washington one of the earliest states in the nation to take action on this dangerous chemical.

The success of the Safe Baby Bottle Act was also a testament to perseverance. Last year, Washington Toxics Coalition got very close to passing similar legislation, but it took another year, a lot of hard work, and the power of the Priorities to push it over the top.

Hurricane Ridge

Photo by flickr user Just Peachy



# Legislative Session Yields Some Progress and Environment

## Clean Energy Initiative

In addition to the three Priorities, the environmental community maintained the strength and integrity of Washington's Clean Energy Initiative, I-937, for the second year in a row. Passed by voters in November of 2006, the initiative sets minimum requirements for the state's major utilities to invest in clean energy and energy efficiency.

## More Environmental Progress

The Legislature also passed a number of other bills benefiting the environment. Passed on the final day of session, the JOBS Act sends a referendum to the voters this fall that, if approved, would provide \$505 million in state bonds to make energy efficiency upgrades to public schools (see more on Page 3). Lawmakers also enacted a requirement that producers of mercury-containing lighting fund recycling programs for their light bulbs, created long-term planning policies for our ocean resources, and established future limitations on the use of copper in brake pads, a significant stormwater pollutant. In addition to these reforms, WEC supported the allocation of funds to purchase land owned by Glacier Northwest gravel company for the permanent preservation of lands adjacent to the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve.

This was a challenging year in the state capitol – the state budget woes took up the vast majority of legislative attention, making it challenging to advance big solutions. However, people from across the state stepped up to the plate to let legislators know how important environmental issues are – from phone calls, to emails, to face to face meetings. All these actions added up to a strong, clear message and made gains possible.

If you'd like to get more involved, please sign up for our email alerts at [wecprotects.org](http://wecprotects.org).

\* 2010 Environmental Priority

**"In the face of tough economic challenges, essential environmental protections were preserved in the budget. For Ecology that means we will continue our work to protect people's health from toxic diesel emissions, to conduct more hazardous waste inspections that prevent toxics from getting into the environment, to clean up additional toxic sites in Puget Sound, to monitor long-term environmental trends, and to protect instream flows, water quality and habitat in critical watersheds. The environmental community's effort to ensure the state budget sustained core environmental programs was critical in avoiding deep cuts and maintaining important conservation work at Ecology and other natural resource agencies." – Ted Sturdevant, Director, Washington State Department of Ecology**



Environmental Priorities Lobby Day attendees on their way to meet with their district legislators.

# Why Don and I Chose to Remember WEC in Our Estate Plans

*By Joan Crooks, Executive Director*

**M**y 8 year old son, Ryan, thinks I'm a super hero of sorts for the work I do. Even at this early age, some of his most joyful memories have taken place in the outdoors, going bug hunting in a local park, splashing with his little brother and sister at the lake, or biting into a sweet locally-grown strawberry. He probably doesn't know how essential these things are to a healthy future, but he knows they make him happy.

Though Ryan probably thinks I could fix all of Washington's environmental woes single-handedly, I know this couldn't be further from the truth. WEC has been driving positive change to address Washington's most critical environmental challenges for over forty years now. And the successes we've seen and that we're still working towards wouldn't be possible without the hard work, dedication, and perseverance of WEC members.

I've been here as WEC's Executive Director for 15 years, a long time in the non-profit world, but a short time in terms of our environmental future. And I know, long after I am gone, WEC will be here, working to bring people together and get things done for Washington's environment.

That's why my husband Don and I have chosen to remember WEC in our estate plans. We know that a planned gift to WEC is a sound investment in an organization that will be here for the long haul, doing the things we care about well past the time when our children and their children have grown.

**Next month, longtime WEC members will receive an informational mailing about our Legacy Club.**

We hope you will join us as Charter Members of this group. If your estate plans already include WEC, please let us know. It allows us to prepare for the future and extend our thanks to you today.

Helping provide for WEC's future is easy and no gift is too small. Most options can provide tax benefit to you and/or your heirs. It can be as easy as designating WEC as the beneficiary in your will, life insurance, or retirement plan. You can also choose to give a gift of stock or create a trust that supports our work now or in the future.

For more information about remembering WEC in your estate plans, please contact your financial advisor, your estate lawyer, or call Tarrell Wright, WEC's Development Director at 206.631.2640.

WEC Executive Director  
Joan Crooks with her  
husband Don Davies and  
their children Justin, Ryan,  
and Adelle.

*WEC's Legacy Club – Protecting, restoring, and sustaining  
Washington's environment now and for future generations*



# 2010 shaping up to be a big year for WEC's Voter Education Program

By *Brendon Cechovic, Program Director*

We have a philosophy that guides our work at the Voter Education Program: an educated, engaged electorate is the key to lasting environmental protection in Washington. So what does that mean? Essentially, the environmental challenges we have ahead of us – tackling climate change, building a clean energy future, and cleaning up Puget Sound – can only happen if Washington's environmental majority demands more from our elected officials and if we make the link between being an active and engaged voter and making environmental progress.

Our nonpartisan voter education work will take on new importance this year. 2010 is expected to be a lower-turnout election, meaning that many people who care about environmental protection will not send in their ballots in the fall elections. Likewise, thousands of voters who were energized by the historic 2008 presidential elections will stay home on Election Day. So how can we make a difference?

This fall, the Voter Education Program will begin a nonpartisan campaign to "Get out the vote" for state legislative races and key ballot measures. We'll be contacting tens of thousands of voters by mail and telephone, urging them to mail in their ballots. It is not enough to care about environmental issues; we need to demonstrate the power of our issues at the ballot box.

We also work to educate voters and officials during the state legislative session. This year, WEC sponsored a telephone town hall with Governor Chris Gregoire on the issue of toxic stormwater pollution. Over 5,000 people with no prior contact to our organization joined the call. We were able to educate these new supporters on the issue, the status of our Working for Clean Water bill in the state legislature, and provided ways for them to become more involved. Just as importantly, we were able to demonstrate the widespread public support for action on this issue to Governor Gregoire and legislative leaders.

The Voter Education Program helps strengthen local democracy and advance environmental protection by educating and empowering environmental voters. We have a unique voice during election season that can change the debate about the issues we all care about.

# International Conservation Photography Exhibit

Washington Environmental Council is delighted to again sponsor the International Conservation Photography (ICP) Awards, a program begun by Art Wolfe in 1997. Nature photographer, Seattle native, and long-time WEC partner Art Wolfe created the conservation-themed photo contest as, "an event for the advancement of photography as a unique medium capable of bringing awareness and preservation to our environment through art." Each year the ICP Awards strives to increase its reach and influence to photographers from around the world as well as to diverse audiences who will be inspired by the work. The program received 1500 images this year submitted by more than 300 photographers worldwide.

More than eighty of the juried photographs will be exhibited at The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture this summer. Please visit WEC's website, [wecprotects.org](http://wecprotects.org), for a coupon for \$2 off admission to the museum.

**What:** International Conservation Photography Award Exhibit

**Where:** *The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, NE 45th St & 17th Ave NE, University of Washington Campus, Seattle*

**When:** June 19th – September 9th



Photo by Sue Flood, 2nd Place Natural Environment at Risk Category 2009

"I took this shot on a voyage to the North Pole in 2007, travelling by Russian icebreaker. As the pole itself (90N) is sea ice, rather than land, we took a sign with us which we fixed in the ice to mark the spot. I wanted a simple shot to convey the concept of climate change and how it's affecting the polar regions in particular."

## Save the Date!

# *Live It: Celebrating our land, air, and water*

Please mark your calendars for Washington Environmental Council's annual dinner and auction. It features a three-course dinner made with fresh, local ingredients, the great company of people committed to the health and future of our state, fabulous silent and live auctions, and dancing into the night!

**Friday, November 5th,  
from 6-10 pm**

Hyatt at Olive 8, 1635 8th Avenue, Seattle  
*Seattle's first LEED certified hotel*

Tickets are \$100, premier tickets (VIP seating) are \$150. Online registration opens July 15<sup>th</sup>. Due to space restrictions, tickets are expected to sell out early.



*Photo by David Adam Edelstein*

Please contact Allison Schulte at 206.631.2609 or [allison@wecprotects.org](mailto:allison@wecprotects.org) for information on becoming a table captain, sponsorships, donations, or how you can get involved.

**W**ashington Environmental Council protects what Washingtonians care about — our land and water, fish and wildlife, and our special way of life. We engage citizens and decision makers to improve and enforce protections for the health and well-being of our communities. Our work ensures that we will all enjoy natural areas, clean air and clean water for generations to come.



**WASHINGTON  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COUNCIL**

PROTECTING OUR LAND, AIR AND WATER

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