

Washington Environmental Council

Protecting our land, air and water

SUMMER 2009

Puget Sound in crisis: How we can bring it back from the brink

By Mo McBroom, Policy Director

Puget Sound is being pushed to the brink of disaster by an invisible enemy: polluted runoff from our roads and urban areas. This contaminated runoff, called stormwater, is the number one water pollution problem in the state and the most pressing threat that must be addressed if we are to restore Puget Sound.

And restore Puget Sound we must. Not only is it an intrinsic part of Washington's natural heritage, it's also foundational to our state's economy. State Lands Commission Peter Goldmark recently cited studies that calculated the economic and natural-resource benefits derived from Puget Sound to be at least \$61 billion a year. This is all threatened by an environmental challenge hard to see or pinpoint, the steady build up of pollution that is running into the Sound.

As rainwater travels over our streets, yards, and rooftops, it collects urban grime and chemicals and washes them down storm drains that flow into Puget Sound, and rivers and streams across the state. Because of our aging infrastructure, most of

this stormwater is not treated – and pours directly into our waterways. Nearly 150,000 pounds of toxic chemicals enter Puget Sound each day from stormwater.

There are many different sources of stormwater contamination – fertilizers we use on our lawns, heavy metals from paints and automobiles, and trash. However, petroleum products are by far the most significant contributor to stormwater pollution levels: fossil fuel combustion, leaking oil and grease, and degrading asphalt materials emit hydrocarbons, zinc, arsenic and other toxic substances. Every time it rains, these pollutants are washed off our roads and into our water.

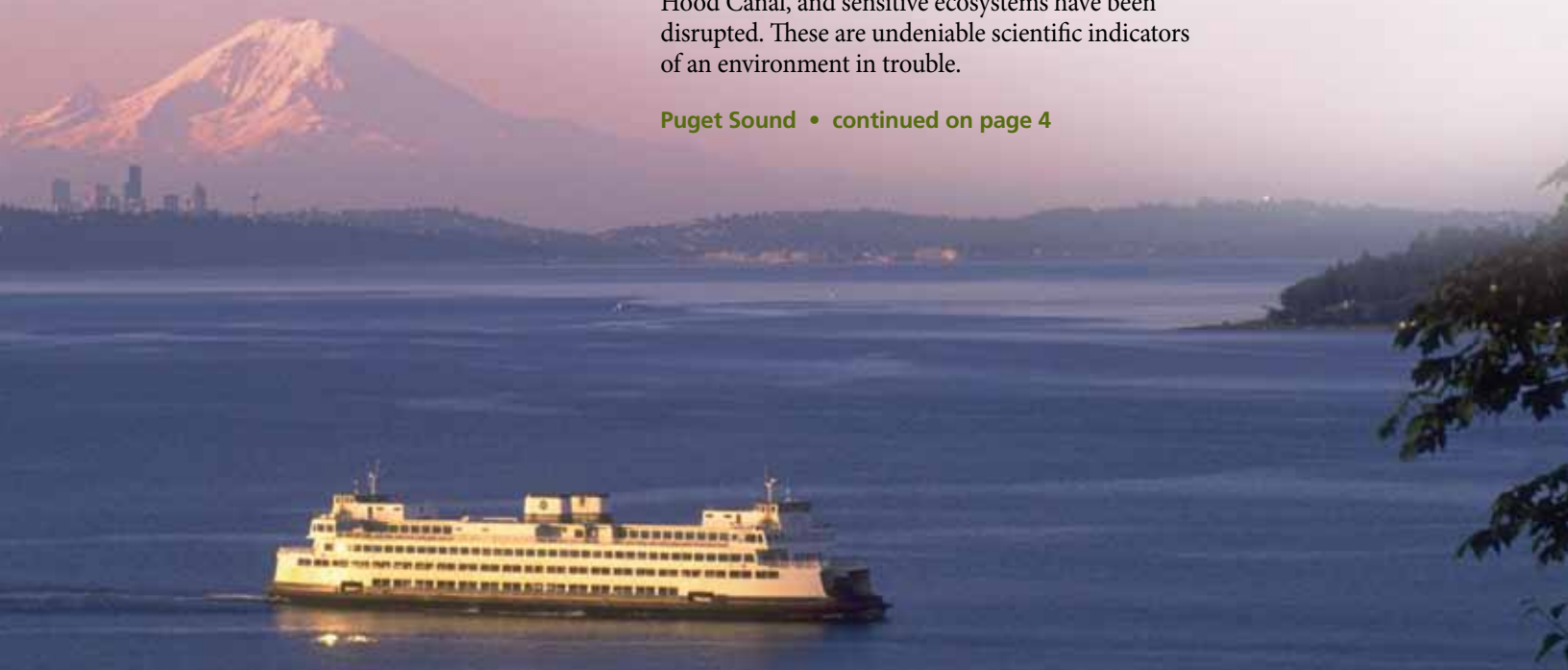
So while we have all enjoyed the beauty of Puget Sound this summer, the sparkling blue water and beautiful beaches hide a tragic secret. The Sound may look pristine, but it is badly stressed by the continued flow of pollutants that have been building up over time. As a result, 21 species are listed as threatened or endangered, massive fish kills plague Hood Canal, and sensitive ecosystems have been disrupted. These are undeniable scientific indicators of an environment in trouble.

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Big news on
Maury Island –
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Stormwater is the number one water pollution problem in the state.



Executive Director's Message

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Long Beach, Washington

Photo by Flickr user Dreamsjung

As summer draws to a close, it's hard not to be amazed by the place we're privileged enough to call home. Summer has a way of highlighting the things I love most about Washington: the accessible, spectacular natural beauty and the way people who live here dive and enjoy it.

It also gives me an added sense of urgency when thinking about the Washington we will pass on to the next generation. We face threats like stormwater, which is polluting the rivers that crisscross our state, as well as Puget Sound. Threats like climate change, which imperil the mountains and snowpack. Challenges I know we're ready to tackle.

In Washington, we have a state motivated to do the right thing for the future. People from across the state are making changes to the way they live their life, voting for green candidates, and asking those in office to stand up for issues that matter to our future.

Meeting these challenges is something we can and must do together. It's what matters most to the next generation and it's the work WEC has been doing for over 40 years. We have solutions at hand. Solutions as simple as asking school officials, "Why can't we have locally-grown food in the cafeteria?" And solutions as complex as the American Clean Energy and Security Act winding its way through the U.S. Congress.

Reading through this newsletter, I hope you get a sense of the breadth of the issues WEC is tackling right now. And I hope you share my sense of optimism when it comes to our state's chances at solving them.

Finally, WEC's annual fall event, *Live It: Celebrating our land, air, and water*, is just around the corner. It's a time when people come together to share what they've been working on and just have a good time. We're excited about our new location, the Hyatt at Olive 8, which is expected to be Seattle's first LEED-certified hotel (see back cover for more information). I hope you'll be able to join us.



Joan Crooks,
Executive Director



Cast your ballot this November

By *Brendon Cechovic, Voter Education Program Director*

The 2008 elections were some of the most important and exciting races that we've ever seen. It seemed like every voter was aware and engaged last year, and the numbers back it up: almost 85% of all registered voters in Washington cast a ballot last November.

The 2009 elections are just as important for our environment at the local level. City, county, and port officials make decisions about protecting environmentally-sensitive areas, implementing Puget Sound restoration, protecting farmland, and much more. Unfortunately many voters don't know this and ignore these "off year" elections.

The WEC Voter Education Program works to elevate environmental issues during campaign season to make sure that the candidates are paying attention to the issues that a majority of Washington voters care about: clean air and water, finding local solutions to climate change, and improving alternative transportation. This year we hosted a forum for King County Executive candidates to help voters learn more about where each one stood on environmental issues.

You can help stand up for the environment this fall by casting a ballot in the 2009 elections. Ballots will arrive the third week of October, and must be mailed in by Election Day. You can learn more



Candidates debate environmental issues in front of a crowd of over 300 at the King County Executive Debate. *Photo by Andy Grow.*

about your local candidates by reading your voter's pamphlet, visiting the candidates' websites, or taking a closer look at their endorsements. WEC does not endorse candidates, but we do weigh in on initiatives that impact our state's environment (please see below).

Vote NO on Initiative 1033

The Tim Eyman supported Initiative 1033 will appear on Washington's November 2009 ballot. If passed, this ballot initiative will have major negative effects on Washington's environmental protections at the state, county, and local levels. WEC has identified I-1033 as a serious threat to our state's land, air, and water and urges a "no" vote.

This year Washington faced a devastating budget deficit that forced state legislators to make very tough cuts to basic services, as well as to essential environmental protection programs. I-1033 would lock in this year's budget as our baseline. As the economy recovers, the state would not be allowed to invest in education, health care, or environmental protections. Instead, the worst of times would become the best that we can hope for. Puget Sound restoration, conservation programs, and natural resource agencies will all be in jeopardy if this misleading initiative passes.

A similar initiative passed in Colorado in 1992 and the effects have been devastating. A coalition of civic groups, business leaders, and Republican Governor Bill Owens joined together in 2005 to help pass a referendum to suspend it for five years. Over 30 other states have rejected similar proposals.

We don't need this kind of mess here in Washington. Please vote "NO" on Initiative 1033 this November. To learn more, please visit www.no1033.com.

VOTE NO INITIATIVE **1033**

Puget Sound • continued from page 1

Washingtonians have been working to clean up Puget Sound for decades. But if we don't address stormwater head on with bold actions, the progress we have made, and the money we have spent, will have been in vain. While many cities and agencies are making some progress, as a state we have not stepped up to solve the problem in a lasting way.

We have known for years that polluted stormwater poses the greatest threat to the Sound's health. And we know how to fix it: upgrading the city and county infrastructure that catches and cleans stormwater, promoting low impact development, retaining more tree and plant-covered land, and making modest changes in the way we drive, garden and live.

But so far, no one has had the political nerve or money to match the threat.

WEC is working with our partners in the environ-

mental community, with cities, counties and businesses across the state to build the support for real solutions and real dollars to tackle this monumental challenge. We are promoting a polluter-pays approach. By putting a modest fee on each barrel of petroleum consumed in the state, we provide a fair way to tie the problem-causing substances to the much-needed solutions.

Cleaning up our Sound and our environment isn't the only benefit of meeting this problem head on. We also preserve an engine that drives our state's economy. And by funding efforts to reduce stormwater impacts, we create new green jobs across the state in the construction and skilled trade industries.

Now is the perfect time for action. As we face unprecedented environmental and economic challenges in Washington, WEC is advocating for answers that grow a green economy and preserve clean water at the same time. Learn how you can help at wecprotects.org.

A Win for Puget Sound

On Aug 13th, a ruling by Federal District Court Judge Ricardo Martinez stopped any further construction of an industrial dock facility in the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve under the current permits.

This ruling is great news for Maury Island, great news for our state's aquatic reserves and great news for Puget Sound. Fundamentally, it signals a more rational approach to how we grow and prosper. Explaining that "[n]o single project or human activity has caused the depletion of the salmon runs or the near-extinction of the Orca ... [y]et every project has the potential to incrementally increase the burden upon the species and the Sound," Judge Martinez ruled that existing law clearly requires cumulative impacts of human activity be fully considered when evaluating any single project. The judge concluded that the prior approval of the dock facility was not supported by the science.

Washington Environmental Council is a plaintiff in the case along with our partners Preserve Our Islands and People for Puget Sound. We are represented by attorney Dave Mann, who has doggedly fought to ensure that any decision on the dock facility be based upon a full environmental analysis.

This ruling upholds our state's values. It ensures that we take a broad and long term approach to making smart decisions that will protect Puget Sound as we grow and prosper into the future.

Special thanks to Dave Mann for his excellent work on this case.

Policy Director Mo Mc-Broom speaks at a press conference on Maury Island. Photo by Kerri Cechovic



Back to School...with Local Food

By Kerri Cechovic, Outreach Director

Isn't it amazing how quickly the summer months fly by? Now is the perfect time to start thinking about a farm-to-school project at your family's school. It's a great way to get people working together to protect our environment and our children's health. Projects that have succeeded range from starting a salad bar in the lunch room, taking a field trip to a local farm, or inviting family members to school for a harvest dinner. There isn't a one-size-fits-all formula. Instead, what's been most successful is when parents and schools work together to find projects that work for individual schools.

Here are some tips to help you get started:

- **Identify an advocate within your school.** This could be the nutrition director or principal. Some examples of questions to ask: What is our school's current food and wellness policy? How can I most effectively work with you to help start a farm to school project?
- **Contact the newly-created Washington Department of Agriculture's Farm-to-School Program.** They help schools connect with local farmers and share resources to teach students about the nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits of eating local food. Contact: Tricia Sexton Kovacs at TKovacs@agr.wa.gov.

- **Find out what food is available throughout the year in your area.** Produce and farm guides such as Puget Sound Fresh (pugetsound-fresh.org) and Heart of Washington- Get It Fresh Guide (heartofwashington.com) are great places to start.

All successful examples of farm-to-school projects involve collaborative partnerships. They often serve as the beginning for exciting conversations between parents, school officials, and local farmers. Connecting local farmers with schools means our farms are more viable, we save energy on food transport, and people across the state get greater access to healthy, nutritious food.



To download WEC's booklet on how to get a local food project started at your school, visit wecprotects.org or contact Kerri Cechovic at kerri@wecprotects.org.

Students at Van Asselt Elementary School enjoy a healthy snack.

National Action on Climate Change

By Kerry McHugh, Communications Manager

Washington Environmental Council doesn't often weigh in on policy at the national level. Our mission is to protect Washington's land, air, and water, and we accomplish this by focusing on action at the state level. However, once in a while, an issue is so important to the health of our state and our future for us that we engage with Congress.

Right now, WEC is working to help strengthen and pass the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES), which establishes enforceable limits on global warming pollution and builds a clean energy economy for our country. The bill is making its way through Congress, having passed out of the House of Representatives earlier this summer.

People around Washington state have spoken out in favor of the legislation. Leading up to the vote in the House of Representatives, Congressman Dave Reichert's phone lines were so jammed with constituents calling in support of the bill that President

Obama was unable to get through to him. His staff estimated that he received 2000 calls in one day alone. These grassroots efforts made a difference and Congressman Reichert was one of eight Republicans nationwide to vote in support of the bill.

The bill is now being considered in the Senate where it faces a tough fight for passage, but one that we can and will win with your help. ACES is not without controversy, but its strengths vastly outweigh its weaknesses.

A broad coalition, including faith, labor, health, and business interests are calling on Senators Cantwell and Murray to help pass the legislation before the international climate negotiations in Copenhagen this December.

For information on how you can get involved, please contact WEC's Outreach Director, Kerri Cechovic at kerri@wecprotects.org.

WEC welcomes new board members

WEC board members come from all over the state and from all different backgrounds. They each bring their own perspective and experience to bear on furthering WEC's mission of protecting Washington's environment. WEC is pleased to announce the three new members of our board: Marc Daudon, Carrie Dolwick, and Darren Gray. All three bring their own special expertise and enthusiasm – we're looking forward to working with them.

Marc Daudon



Marc has served on the Washington Conservation Voters board for 10 years (three as board chair). He brings a strong understanding of and appreciation for the leadership role WEC has played in the environmental community, particularly in setting priorities and forging a strong coalition among

diverse environmental groups. Marc looks forward to finding ways to create similar partnerships with the business community to achieve shared sustainability goals. His work as a consultant focuses broadly on helping public and private sector clients achieve resource conservation outcomes such as eliminating waste, increasing recycling, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving water, and conserving biodiversity. Marc is excited to be joining the WEC board and working with a great staff and fellow board members in the years ahead.

Carrie Dolwick



Carrie currently works as a Policy Associate for the NW Energy Coalition. Her background includes a variety of experiences with public, private and non-profit entities including management consulting, biodiesel infrastructure development, solar development in Nicaragua, and commu-

nity organizing around local land and energy issues. She holds a Master's degree in public administration from the Evans School at the University of Washington and a graduate level certificate in Environmental Management. Carrie currently serves as the Board Chair of NW Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (NWSEED) and is a co-founder of Sustainable South Seattle.

Darren Gray



As a partner with the Donnelly Gray Group at Merrill Lynch, Darren has been involved with sustainable businesses and investing for more than 10 years. The Donnelly Gray Group at Merrill Lynch provides wealth management and investment consulting services to individuals, companies and non-

profit organizations based in the United States, the Americas and Europe. His experience there provides Darren with an appreciation of the needs of organizations like WEC to build financial strength through long range planning. A native Washingtonian, Darren is excited about the opportunity to work with WEC members to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan and strengthen the capacity of WEC to deliver results for the environment.

A big thank you

to outgoing board members **CY BERRYMAN**,

AMY SOUERS KOBER, **TYRONE NOBLE TOWNSEND**,

and **ERIC WILSON**. Their hard work and dedication to

WEC were very appreciated. We look forward to

continued work with them into the future.

Board Treasurer Bill Donnelly: A Life of Intrigue and a Lasting Legacy to WEC

By Tarrell Wright, Development Director

At WEC, we know longtime Board Treasurer Bill Donnelly as a sharp-witted numbers guy (or “bean counter” as he likes to refer to himself), unflagging in his passion for the environment and preaching the gospel of financial stability through long-range planning. An avid outdoorsman, Bill is one of our region’s foremost experts on environmentally-sensitive investing.

Given his long-term vision, it’s not surprising Bill had thought ahead and included WEC in his estate. What is surprising is the road he took to get to WEC.

Bill’s former jobs include: truck driver, electrician, professor, think tank researcher, environmental law school drop-out, and cold war era spy (yes, you read that correctly). He also holds a PhD. in Sociology. It wasn’t until after many incarnations that Bill found the perfect fit: a melding of interests in the then new field of socially-responsible investing.

In the 1970s, Bill moved to the Northwest to pursue

his love of the outdoors as a cyclist, hiker, climber, and cross country skier. He remembers watching the eruption of Mount Saint Helens from the Nisqually Glacier and a personal encounter with a Canada Lynx and her cubs in the Pasayten Wilderness as high points in his outdoor adventures. What also struck him was the need to protect these vital places for the future.

Bill became a WEC member in 1990 and joined the board in 2002. He talks about the sense of personal satisfaction he feels to “be part of a group of intelligent, committed people working for clear goals and a common purpose.”

As Treasurer, Bill has a unique understanding of our organization’s fiscal health. “WEC is a fiscally prudent and efficiently-run organization – they stretch the dollar about as far as it can be stretched,” he says.

Bill chose to remember WEC in his will, and you can too. Remembering WEC in your estate plans is a thoughtful way to ensure that our work will continue for future generations.



“I have no doubt that WEC will be around long after I’m gone. By remembering WEC in my estate plans I get to do the right thing, save taxes, and still leave a legacy to my heirs.” — Bill Donnelly

When planning your estate, please consider a gift to WEC. If your plans already include WEC, please let us know. We would like to thank you for your support and welcome you as a Charter member in our newly forming Legacy Club. Please contact Tarrell Wright, Development Director at 206.631.2640 for more information.

Photo by Sandy Alto





WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

PROTECTING OUR LAND, AIR AND WATER

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Washington 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.

LIVE IT: CELEBRATING OUR LAND, AIR, AND WATER

Please join WEC and hundreds of our supporters for our annual event, *Live It: Celebrating our land, air, and water*. We'll have silent and live auctions, a delicious dinner featuring local ingredients, and great company.

Hyatt at Olive 8 • Friday, November 6, 2009 • 6:00 – 10:00 pm

Tickets are \$100, premier tickets (VIP seating) are \$150. Due to our new venue, the event is expected to sell out, so get your tickets early.

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

