Annual Report
Recapping our work in fiscal year 2015 for our members
From the director

“There’s a lot to be proud of in 2015. We took the biggest step for clean water in a decade: Since 2006, a pair of polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions left 2 million miles of streams without guaranteed protection under the Clean Water Act. After nine years of advocacy, and 800,000 comments from people like you, we saw these protections restored. And, finally, as a nation we acted on climate: After ordinary Americans submitted 8 million comments of support for limiting carbon pollution from power plants, President Obama finalized the Clean Power Plan, which will do just that for the first time ever. Your voices helped advance the policy and build the political will to win this victory, which will make a major dent in our country’s contribution to global warming pollution and sets a precedent for other nations to follow. As you’ll read in the following pages, behind each accomplishment were engaged and committed people like you, who joined us in fighting for a cleaner, greener and healthier future. I’m grateful for the energy you bring to these fights, and the staying power you give our efforts.

America’s environment will always need defending. But with our determination, strategy, and above all our members and supporters joining us in the fight, I am optimistic about our prospects for the future. Let’s keep up the great work together.

Thanks,

Margie Alt
Environment America Executive Director
From the president

“We’re proud to support the Clean Power Plan. It’s the latest addition to a list of crucial steps toward slowing global warming that Environment America has championed, including renewable energy initiatives in at least 20 states, clean car initiatives, and the nation’s first statewide and regional cap-and-trade programs.”

For the past three years, Environment America’s top global warming priority has been the Clean Power Plan, President Obama’s plan to limit carbon pollution from power plants.

Why the Clean Power Plan?

First, it sends a global signal that our country is ready to lead. The Clean Power Plan is the linchpin to the president’s global climate agenda, boosting his credibility as he prods other world leaders to do their part.

Second, it sets a precedent, asserting our government’s authority to limit carbon pollution under the Clean Air Act. The Clean Power Plan is a step in the right direction and a template for stronger action in years to come.

Finally, it sets in motion a transformation in how Americans produce and consume electricity. Businesses, homeowners and others will have new incentives to quit using power we don’t need, and to turn to clean renewable energy—the sun and the wind—for the power we do need.

We’re proud to support the Clean Power Plan. It’s the latest addition to a list of crucial steps toward slowing global warming that Environment America has championed, including renewable energy initiatives in at least 20 states, clean car initiatives in more than a dozen states and at the federal level, and the nation’s first statewide and regional carbon cap-and-trade programs.

In these pages, you can learn what we’ve done to build support for the Clean Power Plan—and what we’re doing now to rally the public behind our call for 100 percent renewable power.

There’s still much to do to win over, neutralize or push past leaders who are still in denial and fossil fuel companies that are still powerful.

So we’ll keep to the task at hand and remain grateful for your action and support along the way.

Thanks,

Doug Phelps
President and Executive Director
The Public Interest Network
Global Warming Solutions

You helped Environment America and Environment America Research & Policy Center win the greatest step the United States has ever taken to address the climate crisis. Working with a broad coalition, we helped present the facts, educate the public, engage elected leaders, and deliver an overwhelming 8 million comments of support for limiting power plant pollution—paving the way for President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to finalize the historic Clean Power Plan.
You helped push the historic Clean Power Plan over the finish line

From record-breaking snowfall this last year, to extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy, Americans are feeling the impacts of global warming now. Scientists predict that without drastic cuts in global warming emissions, these effects will become catastrophic. In 2015, President Obama took decisive action to address this threat by moving forward with the first-ever plan to limit carbon emissions from power plants—America’s largest source of global warming pollution.

More than 700,000 took action with us

Environment America and our members came together to help build the momentum necessary to finalize the Clean Power Plan and push past strong opposition from the fossil fuel industry and climate-deniers in Congress.

- Environment America’s citizen outreach team had face-to-face conversations with more than 47,000 people about the threat of global warming and the solutions the Clean Power Plan offers.
- During the public comment period for the Clean Power Plan, Environment America’s members and supporters submitted more than 713,000 comments in support of a strong plan.
- Hundreds of elected officials and solar businesses, and nearly 1,000 health professionals, joined the chorus of support for limits on power plant pollution.

Environment America Research & Policy Center showed need to limit carbon pollution

In 2015, Environment America Research & Policy Center analyses shone a spotlight on the threat of global warming and the meaningful impact of limiting carbon pollution from power plants.

- The report “America’s Dirtiest Power Plants” found that coal-fired power plants are America’s number one source of global warming pollution. Curbing this pollution will be essential to tackling the threats of climate change.
- The report “Dangerous Inheritance” revealed that the current generation is experiencing hotter temperatures and more intense storms than their predecessors did 40 years ago—and without urgent action to curb carbon pollution, global warming will continue to contribute to dangerous heat waves, severe storms, rising sea levels and more.
In 2015, Environment America and Environment America Research & Policy Center celebrated the biggest victory for clean water in a decade! In May, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule to restore Clean Water Act protections to thousands of waters across the country. Our public education and outreach efforts, bolstered by action taken by our members, allies, and a diverse coalition of businesses, elected officials and farmers, built the momentum necessary to get the Clean Water Rule past polluter opposition and signed into law.

▲ EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy (sitting, right) and U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo Ellen Darcy (sitting, left) signed the Clean Water for America rule on May 27, 2015, with Margie Alt, Environment America executive director (second from left).

▲ Canvassers celebrated the EPA's announcement of the Clean Water Rule.
Winning the biggest step forward for clean water in a decade

For nearly a decade, Environment America has gone toe-to-toe with powerful polluters and their allies in Congress to restore the Clean Water Act and permanently protect our waters. And in 2015, our efforts finally paid off when President Obama restored federal protections to more than half the nation’s streams, which feed drinking water sources for one in three Americans.

2 million miles of streams across the country regained protections

The Clean Water Rule closed loopholes in the Clean Water Act, returning protections to 2 million miles of streams across the country. You gave Environment America the resources to advocate in Congress, recruit and mobilize a diverse and powerful coalition, and rally the grassroots for action.

- We helped gather more than 800,000 comments and held more than half a million face-to-face conversations about the need to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act.
- With the rule under threat, our national team held meetings with more than 50 congressional offices, urging them to champion the voice of the public and stand up for clean water.
- Disappointingly, at press time, a federal appeals court blocked the new protections we just won for our waters. We’ve put together a legal strategy to defend the Clean Water Rule, and given its strong legal and scientific basis, the courts should ultimately reject all efforts to weaken it.

Research highlighted legacy of Clean Water Act

Our waterways provide drinking water, essential habitat for wildlife, and treasured destinations for fishing, swimming and boating. Environment America Research & Policy Center’s research last year on the threats facing America’s waterways and the impact of the Clean Water Act earned nearly 1,000 media hits.

- The report “Wasting Our Waterways” documented toxic pollution entering our waterways and threatening our health and drinking water supplies. It found that 206 million pounds of toxic chemicals were dumped in America’s waterways in 2012 alone.
- The report “Waterways Restored” presented 15 case studies that show how the Clean Water Act restores and protects waterways—like the Cuyahoga River, which was once so polluted it caught fire, but today, is clean enough for canoeing.
Environment America Research & Policy Center released “Shining Cities” across the country in September 2015.

Solar power is growing so fast across the country that goals once considered ambitious are now seen as readily achievable. Spurred by pro-solar policies, we’re getting more of our energy from the sun, putting us on the road to 100 percent clean energy. In 2015, Environment America and Environment America Research & Policy Center presented hard-hitting research and made the case for setting bold solar goals.
Solar power tripled in three years, with no signs of slowing

It’s time for America to go big on solar power. The amount of solar capacity in the United States is growing rapidly, tripling in just the past three years. By tapping into the power of the sun, we can break our dependence on fossil fuels and move to clean energy that is essentially limitless and pollution-free.

Strong policies fuel solar’s success

With another panel or project installed every four minutes in 2013 and the rate only getting faster, solar power is on the rise across the country.

• Environment America Research & Policy Center’s report “Lighting the Way” found that the top 10 states for solar, which hold 87 percent of the nation’s total installed solar electric capacity, have implemented strong policies that are enabling increasing numbers of homeowners, businesses, communities and utilities to “go solar.”

• “Shining Cities,” a report we released in March, found that cities are also playing a crucial role in growing national solar capacity: Just 20 cities accounted for 6.5 percent of total installed solar. Los Angeles ranked number one in our list, with 170 solar PV—as much as the entire nation had installed in 2000.

• Unfortunately, solar’s rapid growth has alarmed some dirty energy companies, and utilities campaigned in many leading solar cities and states to increase fees for solar. Our report “Shining Rewards,” released in June, debunked the industry’s myths and found solar delivers even more benefits than panel owners are receiving.

Let’s set bold goals for solar, locally and nationally

To continue solar’s growth, the whole nation must follow the lead of cities and states that have prioritized solar in their energy policies and set bold goals for solar.

• Across the country, nearly 600 civic leaders, 500 businesses and more than 20,000 citizens signed onto a goal of 10 percent solar by 2030.

• If this goal were achieved nationally, the United States would generate enough clean energy to replace half our coal-fired power plants.
Across the country, fracking is booming, leaving a trail of contaminated drinking water, sickened families, and torn up parks and forests in its wake. In 2015, you helped Environment America organize and win big victories in New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania to stop this dirty drilling process, and put the pressure on federal officials to safeguard our public lands and public health from the dangers of fracking.

**Fracking bans won in NY, MD and PA**

In the past fiscal year, your support built the grassroots momentum to win three inspiring victories:

- In December 2014, New York became the first state in the nation to ban fracking. Our team in New York helped pave the way for the win, speaking with 100,000 New Yorkers about the issue and shining a media spotlight on the dangers fracking poses.
- Following New York’s example, and thanks in part to public support you helped build, Maryland enacted a ban on fracking for two and a half years in June.
- In January, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf reinstated the moratorium on fracking in Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests. Our state affiliate, PennEnvironment, recruited hundreds of Pennsylvanians to hearings and rallies, and mobilized 25,000 people to call, write and email their legislators to oppose drilling on our public lands.

On the federal level, we also called on President Obama and Congress to keep fracking away from all our national forests and parks, and to close loopholes that exempt fracking from key provisions of our nation’s environmental laws.
No Bees, No Food

Millions of bees are dying off, with alarming consequences for our environment and our food supply. This past fiscal year, Environment America mobilized grassroots support for protecting these vital pollinators. With your support, we called on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to declare a nationwide moratorium on neonicotinoids—a class of bee-killing pesticides.

Fighting to give bees a chance

We rely on bees to pollinate everything from almonds and strawberries to the alfalfa used to feed dairy cows. Yet, beekeepers report losing on average 30 percent of all honeybee colonies annually in recent years.

Scientists point to several causes behind the problem, including a class of bee-killing insecticides known as neonicotinoids, or neonics. Your support helped us call on the EPA to ban this dangerous class of pesticides.

4 million urged President Obama to save the bees

In March 2015, Environment America, along with a coalition of beekeepers, farmers and others, delivered more than 4 million petitions calling on the Obama administration to issue strong protections for pollinators.

In May, the White House issued a new plan to stem the deaths of pollinators, but it fell short of banning neonics. Now, we’re calling on federal officials to ban the use of neonics on farms and in garden stores.
No Offshore Drilling

Our coasts and wildlife are too precious to risk with an oil spill—but that’s exactly what’s at stake if we open our oceans to oil and gas drilling. In 2015, you supported Environment America’s work to call attention to these threats and build the public support necessary to stop reckless proposals to open huge swaths of the Atlantic Ocean and the Arctic Ocean to offshore drilling.

Calling attention to offshore drilling risks

In 2015, you helped us send a clear message: Our coasts and wildlife are too precious to put at such high risk. In March, as federal officials vetted the Obama administration’s Atlantic Coast drilling plan, Environment America released an analysis and published a letter in the New York Times that demonstrated that offshore drilling puts birds at risk, disrupts the food chain, endangers whales and dolphins and makes oceans and coasts vulnerable to pollution.

Together with our affiliates in other states, we helped turn out hundreds to a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management meeting on offshore drilling on North Carolina’s Outer Banks. More than 250 businesses in coastal states also signed on to our campaign to oppose the drilling plan.

Stopping the reckless Arctic drilling proposal

We also called on President Obama to halt plans to allow Shell Oil to drill in the Arctic Ocean, where bad weather and floating ice increase the risk of accidents. In September, in the face of mounting opposition from Environment America and our allies, Shell announced it would halt its plans. But the fight isn’t over. In the coming year, we’ll continue shining a national spotlight on the risks associated with offshore drilling to show strong opposition to the practice.

Top: Oil spills, one of the risks of offshore drilling, threaten marine life like brown pelicans.

Bottom: Members and supporters submitted “photo petitions” to show they oppose offshore drilling.
Conservation America

From the Grand Canyon to the George Washington National Forest, America’s parks, forests and public lands are a big part of what makes this country so great. In 2015, your support helped us continue the fight to renew critical funding for our parks, defend the Grand Canyon from the threat of mining and win two new national monuments.

Defending funding for our public lands

Environment America’s grassroots work in 2015 rallied public support for permanently protecting our country’s iconic public lands from pollution, development and other threats.

With America’s most successful conservation program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, set to expire on Oct. 1, 2015, we held rallies in New Mexico and New Orleans, engaged our members online and mobilized elected officials to support renewing this critical funding for our public lands.

Two new national monuments won

In 2015, Environment America won two campaigns when President Obama designated Brown’s Canyon in Colorado and Berryessa Snow Mountain in California as new national monuments. More than 100 businesses in California and tens of thousands of Coloradans joined our efforts.

We also ramped up our work to protect the Grand Canyon, which is threatened by a reckless proposal to mine just six miles from the national park. We’re working to win a Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument and protect this natural wonder for future generations.

In 2015, President Obama signed national monument designations (top) for Berryessa Snow Mountain in California (bottom) and Brown’s Canyon in Colorado, among other special areas.