You spoke up to protect Crater Lake

31,000 Oregonians call for protection

Last October, Environment Oregon stood together with businesses, outdoor enthusiasts and advocates of wild places to deliver more than 31,000 of your public comments to Sen. Ron Wyden in support of permanently protecting Crater Lake and the surrounding forests, mountains and streams. Our plan is to create a 500,000-acre, 75-mile wilderness corridor around Crater Lake National Park.

We held a press conference outside of Sen. Wyden’s Portland office that was covered broadly in news outlets like OPB and KGW. Following the press conference, many of you helped us celebrate by attending our “30,000 Cheers for Crater Lake” event, where Rikki Seguin, our state director, gave a presentation on the campaign’s progress over recent months.

Pushing for federal action

Despite Crater Lake itself being protected by its National Park designation, the surrounding areas face threats that would dramatically alter the health of the ecosystem, which is home to black bears and wolves and includes the headwaters of the Rogue and Umpqua Rivers. The threats to Crater Lake include logging proposals, such as the U.S. Forest Service’s Bybee logging project, which includes clearcutting along the western boundary of the national park.

To protect Crater Lake from these threats, we are calling on Sen. Wyden to introduce a bill in Congress that would designate 500,000 acres of forest surrounding Crater Lake as a wilderness area.

Over 200 businesses show support

Crater Lake National Park attracts over half a million visitors annually, and according to a 2014 National Park Service study, visitors to the park made more than $44 million in economic contributions to nearby communities. With your support, we worked to engage with local business owners and encourage them to join our call to action. Last fall, we enlisted more than 200 local businesses and organizations to show Sen. Wyden that a protected Crater Lake is good for the local economy.

To learn more and see the map of the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness Corridor, visit: www.EnvironmentOregon.org
To our members

As a member of Environment Oregon, you're helping us win tangible results for our environment. We all want the next generation to be able to enjoy the same great parks we treasure, clean air and water, and a safer world free from the threats of climate change.

That’s why in the face of discouraging setbacks in Washington, or opposition from powerful special interests here at home, I'm counting on members like you, who share these values, to stand with us as we work for a greener future.

The advances we make for our environment are defined by people like you who translate their hope for a better future into action and advocacy. So, even though at times the road feels riddled with obstacles, I feel hopeful. Together, we’re making strides to tackle global warming, clean up our water, and protect the places we love by building people power. Through this, we’re amplifying the call on our elected officials to rise to the task and advocate for our environment.

Thanks for standing with us.

Rikki Seguin  
State Director

Recent action

Community solar program design determined

In the 2015 Legislative Session, Environment Oregon helped pass House Bill 2941 which, among other things, requires that Oregon’s Public Utility Commission (OPUC) determine the key elements of a community solar program for Oregon. Since the bill’s inception, we have been working hard to advocate for a community solar program that allows Oregonians to own solar panels in an array located somewhere other than their homes and receive credit on their electricity bill for the power that their solar panels produce—essentially the same experience a customer would have if the solar panels were on his roof.

Through multiple months of public hearings and workshops with the OPUC and large utility companies, we worked to ensure that community solar in Oregon will be able to function as our design had suggested. In November, the OPUC finalized their community solar program design and sent it to the state Legislature for final review. We will be working hard in the coming months to turn this suggested design into law.

We won! President Obama rejects Keystone XL

Your support helped us win a monumental victory last November when President Obama rejected the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline—a pipeline designed to transport tar sands from Canada across the United States. Together, Environment Oregon and our members fought alongside our allies for years against this project, which State Department officials estimated would produce 26 million metric tons of carbon pollution each year—the equivalent of 5.7 million cars.

“The Keystone XL pipeline would slam the accelerator on global warming, so we’re thrilled that President Obama is applying the brakes,” said Charlie Fisher, Environment Oregon’s clean energy advocate. “The victory belongs to all the Oregonians and Americans across the country who have been fighting for years for their water, their communities, and their kids’ futures, and it’s a crucial step toward the 100 percent clean energy future the climate crisis demands.”

Invest fossil fuel free. Because her future matters.

Environment Oregon  www.EnvironmentOregon.org/newsletters

Credit: Gage Skidmore via Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0
Your action is paving the way for statewide solar

Right now, Oregon gets less than one percent of its energy from the sun. We have the potential to generate 140 percent more solar power than our current energy use, but to make that a reality we need state and local governments to make solar a priority. That’s why Environment Oregon worked to pass proactive solar policies in five targeted cities around the state last year. We made significant progress in putting more solar on the grid and built momentum to push for statewide solar policies in years to come.

Five cities set the bar
We worked with city councils in Milwaukee, Lake Oswego, Corvallis, Eugene and Ashland to make these cities solar leaders. To show city officials their communities support solar, we mobilized individuals and organizations to take action.

Throughout the campaign, community members signed petitions and made phone calls to their city halls to let their city councils know they want more solar on the grid. With widespread public support, we asked each city to take two big steps towards meeting their goal by taking an active role in promoting solar to the community.

Organizing solar tours for residents
To jumpstart city-led solar promotions, Environment Oregon organized a series of fun events to educate and engage the community. Members of the public, city officials and community leaders came out to local businesses to tour solar installations.

These solar site visits offered guests a hands-on experience with solar power and started some important discussions about what cities have done—and have yet to do—to make solar more accessible and affordable.

Cities explore cost-cutting policies
The high, though ever-dropping, cost of solar is a barrier for many people. Implementing policies that reduce these costs encourages more homeowners and businesses to go solar, and brings economic benefits to the city.

More than 20 solar companies and 50 small businesses submitted letters to their cities speaking to these economic benefits, like employing more than 2,000 people across the state of Oregon. For some cities, cutting the cost of solar involved collaborating with a solar installer to offer limited time discounts in exchange for marketing solar to residents.

For other cities, it involved promoting efforts already being taken by local grassroots organizations to ramp up solar power. With five more Oregon cities on the cusp of doing more to promote solar, and with new cost-cutting initiatives now in place, we expect solar power to surge across the state in the coming year.

Environment Oregon is using this growing support at the local level to push for strong statewide solar policies in the upcoming legislative session, as well as those in years to come.

Solar Success Story: Corvallis leads the way
Of Environment Oregon’s five targeted “Solar Cities,” Corvallis is one that went the extra mile. The involvement of community members and exceptional effort of local organizations to repower Corvallis with clean, renewable solar energy deserves to be highlighted.

We gained the overwhelming support of solar installers, small business owners, local environmental organizations and Corvallis residents. With the community backing our campaign, we urged the city council to include a goal of doubling solar energy in the city’s climate action plan.

Mayor Biff Traber, several city councilors and more than 50 Corvallis residents joined us for a “solar-powered happy hour” at Sky High Brewing, a Corvallis-based brewery with solar panels installed on the roof. Solar experts and advocates spoke about opportunities for people to go solar, either by taking advantage of new financing options, connecting with local solar organizations, or encouraging their elected officials to support solar initiatives.

Julie Williams, Corvallis resident and high school teacher, spoke about Seeds for the Sol, a program she founded that allows participants to either offer or receive zero-interest loans for solar installations. Our solar-powered happy hour helped spread the word about this community-based funding option.

In Corvallis, the solar energy movement is going strong, and we believe the city is obligated by their constituents to be part of that effort. By putting the spotlight on solar and demonstrating widespread community support, we’ve given Corvallis an opportunity to shine.

Standing Stone Brewery’s Stuart Warren speaks at one of Environment Oregon’s solar site visits across the state.

Solar-powered happy hour at Sky High Brewing & Pub (above)
Last October, Environment Oregon joined with a coalition of more than 120 organizations from around the state to push for aggressive action on global warming in the coming year. We’re supporting efforts to get Oregon completely off coal-generated power by the end of the next decade and ensure that half of Oregon’s energy comes from renewable sources like wind and solar by 2040. In combination with the hydropower we currently get, this would mean that more than 90 percent of Oregon’s total energy usage would be fossil fuel-free.

Not surprisingly, dirty energy companies have been lining up to stop commonsense proposals, and will undoubtedly be spending millions of dollars to keep us hooked on coal and gas. But with your help, we can move Oregon toward a truly renewable energy future and further prove that clean energy solutions work.

Our mission
We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That’s the idea behind Environment Oregon. We focus exclusively on protecting Oregon’s air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.