Celebrating a Decade of Brewshed®

Clean water for Fish, Communities, and Great Tasting Beer

Over 200 Chefs, Fishermen, and Food Professionals Support Salmon Restoration in the Snake River

Mining Halted in the Skagit Headwaters
Notes from the Board

My business partner Barry and I are both of Chinese descent, making Lucky Envelope Brewing one of just a handful of Asian-owned breweries in the country. One of our favorite things to do is share fond memories of our cultural upbringing. Our beers have regularly featured ingredients and stories influenced by our personal experiences. Lucky Envelope’s brewing philosophy is centered around “Culturally Inspired Beer,” whose recipes draw from modern and historic brewing styles and techniques.

Back in 2014, before Lucky Envelope Brewing had even opened our doors to the public, we were approached by the founding manager of Washington Wild’s Brewshed® Alliance about joining this brand new community of brewers interested in watershed conservation. It didn’t take long for us to get on board and see how we could make an impact on conservation efforts in Washington.

To be able to produce the type of quality beer we are proud of, we must have good water. It’s the main ingredient! The ongoing protection of our state’s watersheds means we have one of the best supplies of water to aid our brewing process. While breweries in other states need to treat their water sources with multiple filtration systems and additives, we’re lucky to have fewer complex needs because organizations like Washington Wild are actively protecting our water sources.

As a member of the Brewshed® Alliance, we bring attention to Washington Wild’s conservation efforts to our patrons while also sharing our unique brewing practices with Washington Wild supporters. We have supported Washington Wild over the years by signing onto 19 comment letters, hosting numerous fundraising events, and most recently releasing “Public Lands Pilsner” in support of Washington Wild’s work to protect salmon habitat, our local watersheds, and our public lands.

The next time you are in the Ballard neighborhood, please stop in for a culturally inspired pint!

Cheers!

Raymond Kwan
Board Member and Co-Owner of Lucky Envelope Brewing

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working with unexpected partners has always been a driving ethos in the conservation work of Washington Wild. As a statewide coalition building nonprofit dedicated to protecting and defending wild lands and waters, we find common ground in groups with varied interests, bringing together people with different beliefs, perspectives, and political affiliations in the name of advancing a shared conservation goal.

A decade ago, an opportunity to engage with a new community emerged as a simple, powerful idea from previous staff member, Christine Scheele: clean water makes better beer. The beginnings of the Brewshed® program were born.

Soon after, Lyndsay Gordon joined the Washington Wild team as a staff member after several years as a volunteer. Having lived in Germany, Lyndsay learned about just how critical water and water quality was to producing quality beer. Purity beer laws limit what breweries can do to recover from a damage water supply, which was a large contributing factor to why half of Germany’s 1,300 breweries came out against fracking in 2013. Having worked at two different breweries and earning Cicerone Certification, Lyndsay took the reins of this unique program, which is designed to bring the conservation and craft brewing industry together to advance our shared interest in protecting clean water sources.

From humble beginnings of just eight participating breweries, the Washington Brewshed® Alliance now boasts nearly 80 dedicated brewing industry partners across the state. Brewshed® members play a critical role in protecting wild lands and waters by raising funds through collaboration beers, increasing awareness of conservation issues to their customers, and adding their voice to comment letters on issues that Washington Wild is leading.

THE BREWSHED® CONNECTION

The Brewshed® Connection is simple: protected wild lands and waters lead to better downstream beer. This concept is at the heart of our Brewshed® Alliance. Our Brewshed® Alliance members understand that quality craft beer should be supported by healthy waters.

“My familiarity with both Washington Wild’s unique coalition building approach and the brewery industry gave me two pieces of a puzzle that just naturally fit together. This was an untapped community of supporters, both the businesses and their patrons, that had a vested interest in Washington Wild’s vision of a wild and green Washington for generations to come.”

Lyndsay Gordon, former Washington Wild volunteer and employee

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Special thank you to Chris Chappell for the cover photo.
Graphic Design by Kristen Proctor.

Washington Wild protects and restores wild lands and waters in Washington State through advocacy, education and civic engagement.
starts upstream. Intact ecosystems provide a natural filter that maintains high quality water at the headwaters and as water flows through a landscape. On its journey downstream, water absorbs natural minerals, which contribute to the unique regional flavor of a beer. Water also can collect pollutants produced by human activities, which must be removed or treated before brewing. Washington state has some of the best water in the world, which in many cases requires little to no treatment prior to brewing. This means we also have some of the best craft beer in the world. Beer is 90% water. The plant-based ingredients — like hops and barley for malt — require water, and the process of brewing itself is incredibly water intensive. Only a fraction of the water required for growing ingredients and the brewing process is represented in the final glass.

Icicle Brewing in Leavenworth — the Bavarian-styled village in the Cascade Mountains — takes its name from its water source, the pristine Icicle Creek which has its source in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. They know that protecting their watershed is critical for the quality of their beer. When Icicle Brewing Company’s owner Pamela Brulotte learned that Washington Wild has protected nearly three million acres of federally designated wilderness areas statewide, she became one of our strongest supporters and one of the inaugural Brewshed® Alliance members.

CONSERVATION ENGAGEMENT

When brewers like Icicle advocate for wild rivers and clean water, it’s an example of the Brewshed® Connection in action. In the decade since the Brewshed® Alliance started, the program has seen an increase in conservation engagement from brewery industry partners. As an organization focused on building winning coalitions, a key part of Washington Wild’s advocacy work is coordinating comment letters on conservation issues, like supporting the Wild Olympics legislation, opposing logging and mining threats in the Skagit headwaters, and advocating for National Forest Roadless Area protections for our last remaining ancient forests. Our letter-senders represent a broad range of perspectives, from fellow outdoor conservation and recreation groups to hunters and anglers. AIPA, elected officials, small businesses, and members of the brewing industry.

In 2015, three members of our Brewshed® Alliance signed onto six letters coordinated by Washington Wild. By 2018, that number had grown to 40 signs on 18 letters. In 2021, we saw an all-time high for Brewshed® participation including 120 sign-ons by Brewshed® partners on 11 letters coordinated by Washington Wild. This advocacy caught the attention of Farmstrong Brewing Co., located in Mount Vernon and known for making delicious lagers and ales with barley grown and malted in the Skagit Valley. In 2021, Farmstrong was a relatively new Brewshed® Alliance member and had signed on to a few stakeholder letters. But they wanted to do more. Over the next several weeks, Washington Wild worked with Farmstrong, Skagit Valley Malting, Chuckanut Brewery, and others to send a letter signed by 13 Skagit Valley brewing partners opposing mining in the Skagit Headwaters. As the impacts of climate change worsen and threats to hard-won conservation efforts mount, Brewshed® members have taken an increasingly active role in supporting the sources of clean water and their surrounding forested ecosystems.

BREWSHEDS AROUND THE NATION

With the success of the Washington Brewshed® Alliance led by Washington Wild, groups across the Pacific NorthWest and beyond began to take notice of the important connection between the conservation and brewing industries. At the request of then Board President Mark Walters, a patent lawyer in Seattle, Washington Wild secured a Registered Trademark on the term Brewshed®. Oregon Wild, the leading wild lands and conservation nonprofit in Oregon, approached Washington Wild and secured the first Brewshed license. “In 2014, Oregon Wild licensed the first Brewshed® and launched the Oregon Brewshed® Alliance to amplify the collective voice of the brewing community to advocate for clean water and forest protection,” said Jonathan Jelen, Development Director at Oregon Wild. “In the 7+ years since, the Oregon Brewshed® Alliance has helped us connect with thousands of Oregonians and advance several conservation campaigns, including an historic opportunity to secure Wild & Scenic River protections for up to 4,700 miles of Oregon’s waterways.”

Now, seven Brewsheds are licensed across the country including Oregon, Colorado, and Vermont. The original Washington Wild Brewshed® Alliance serving as a national model on how the conservation and brewing industries can work together in our shared interest in protecting watersheds and forested ecosystems for people, fish and wildlife, and great tasting beer.

BUILDING A BREWSHED® COMMUNITY

The Brewshed® program has grown beyond just brewers who know the value of clean water. A passionate community of agricultural producers, hop growers, maltsters, and consumers who enjoy the unique, exceptional flavor of Washington’s craft beers have rallied around the simple but powerful concept of a Brewshed®. Events like Pöké and Pints, Beers Made by Walking, Beer Fest, and Hops ‘n Water provide educational outreach opportunities to reach new audiences.

“When the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, reaching existing and new Brewshed® audiences was made possible through the expansion of our collaboration benefit beers. Brewshed® member Bale Breaker Brewing Company prides itself on making “fresh-off-the-farm” beers at their hop field and brewery in Yakima, WA. For the last three years, they’ve brewed Brewshed® IPA, made with Salmon-Safe® ingredients and brewed with locally grown and malted barley and wheat. The Salmon-Safe® seal means the farming practices used are certified and recognized for their efforts to protect water quality, maintain watershed health, and restore habitat. With statewide distribution, including in PCC Markets, Brewshed® IPA helped elevate the need to protect watersheds for salmon, communities, and of course, excellent Washington-grown craft beer.

What started as a simple idea one decade ago has now flourished into a unique community between the conservation and brewing industries united in our shared interest of clean water. Washington Wild looks forward to expanding our Brewshed® program as we embark on our second decade. Learn more at www.brewshed.org.

“For high-quality beers, you need to start with high-quality water. Keeping our rivers clean and pure is important to us so that we can continue to make amazing beers for our community. Working with Washington Wild and their Brewshed® Alliance for many years has helped to expand this work throughout the state to keep our natural resources pure.”

Pamela Brulotte, Founder, Icicle Brewing Company

“Joining the Brewshed® Alliance was a natural fit for us because beer brings people together and sparks conversation. Collaboration beers help us raise money and bring awareness to the importance of protecting our healthy watersheds for our salmon, Southern Resident orca, and us.”

Kevin Quinn, owner of Bale Breaker Brewing Co.

“Working with Washington Wild to protect the Skagit River from a mining threat was an opportunity for us to take action on an issue that is central to our business. Being a part of the Brewshed® Alliance allows Farmstrong to connect with other local breweries on a deeper level and work together to keep our watersheds healthy for our communities and our craft.”

Todd Owsley Partner/Owner of Farmstrong Brewing Company

Photo courtesy of Pamela Brulotte

Photo courtesy of Todd Owsley

Photo courtesy of Bale Breaker Co.
I am a founding owner of Georgetown Brewing company where we need good water to make good beer. I am also a committed fisherman and outdoorsman. My family and I eat fish that live in water. We eat animals that drink water. And it just so happens that both we and those animals eat plants, both agricultural and foraged, that drink water. I was fortunate to grow up on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. My exposure from an early age to the beauty of our natural world made a strong impression on me. I think having access to wild lands is essential to their protection and conservation. I strongly believe that both are necessary. Without access, people will not be able to experience nature, and our lands and water will not have advocates.

In our region (even in a big city like Seattle), we are fortunate to have pretty terrific water—some of the best in the world. That is great for all of our health and quality of life. It is also great for us as brewers. It makes it relatively easy to make great beer without having to manipulate our water much, if at all! It also helps us be very water efficient, with a very low water use to beer yield ratio.

That said, we are staring down the barrel of some daunting challenges. Rapid population growth and the rapid onset of climate change related impacts have already started to stress the environment, as well as our brewing systems. In an effort to reduce our impact and to reduce the impacts on us, we have brought on a Sustainability Coordinator, Caitlin Singer, to lead this work and research the available options and help determine which are most feasible for our brewery. Caitlin also serves on Washington Wild’s Brewshed® Committee.

While it is true that we can use fancy technology to clean our brewing water, it is neither optimal nor efficient. Technology doesn’t help get pure water to the hops and barley we brew with. We must be aware that everything around us, including the things we eat like our plants, fish, birds, and mammals do not have the ability to purify the water. When that water they consume is polluted, they become polluted. Even if that doesn’t kill them, they pass that pollution on to whatever consumes them, even us. Georgetown Brewing Co. is proud to work with Washington Wild’s Brewshed® Alliance to work towards cleaner healthier water for our wild places and our communities. It is the least we can do. The longer we kick the can down the road and do nothing, the more is lost and the harder it will be to recover what remains. Now is the time! ✅

Roger Bialous is the co-founder of Georgetown Brewing Co., along with Manny Cha. Georgetown Brewing is the largest independent brewery in Washington state and a member of the Washington Brewshed® Alliance since 2021.

Mining Halted in the Skagit River Headwaters

On January 19, an international coalition, led by Washington Wild, cheered a major victory: A settlement to halt mining in the Skagit Headwaters. In 2019, Imperial Metals Corporation filed a permit to begin mining in the “donut hole” of the unprotected Canadian headwaters of the Skagit River. After a nearly three-year decision process, the British Columbia government, Imperial Metals, and the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) announced a signed Memorandum of Agreement that stipulates the return of all mining and related rights in the Skagit Headwaters held by Imperial Metals back to the Province of British Columbia.

The international coalition coordinated by Washington Wild grew to nearly 300 Tribes, First Nations, elected officials, local businesses, and conservation, recreation, and wildlife organizations united in opposition to Imperial Metals’ proposal to pursue a mining permit at the source of the Skagit River, which flows through Washington State before providing 30% of the freshwater to the Puget Sound.

Since March 2019, when Imperial Metals filed its request for a mining exploration permit from the B.C. Ministry of Mines, more than 50 media stories from British Columbia and Washington State have focused on this controversial proposal. To date, more than 6,000 individuals have sent letters or emails to the British Columbia government and other entities opposing the granting of the mining exploration permit.

Downstream and local community fears are not unfounded. Imperial Metals was responsible for the infamous Mount Polley mine disaster of 2014, which spilled more than 2.4 billion gallons of toxic tailings into the Fraser River watershed, one of the biggest environmental disasters in Canadian history. Surounding the unprotected donut hole are Manning and Skagit Provincial Parks, both major outdoor recreation destinations — located just a day trip from the greater Vancouver metro area — that draw more than a million visitors each year.

The Skagit headwaters are unceded Indigenous lands. Stó:lo, Syilx and Nlaka’pamux people have accessed the Skagit headwaters forests, meadows, and streams since time immemorial for essentials such as clean water, wild foods, old-growth wood, and other cultural materials needed for medicines and spirituality. The B.C. Government conducted formal consultation with 16 First Nations over concerns about the mining proposal. U.S. Tribes in Washington State — including the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Sauk-Suiattle Tribe and Samish Nation who rely on downstream values like salmon, clean water, and wildlife for their Tribal treaty rights and/or lifeways — also weighed in opposing the mining threat.

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This is an extraordinary conservation success that will benefit current and future generations of Coast Salish People, and we express our gratitude to all our conservation partners who advocated with us to protect our salmon and ecosystem forever. ✅

Steve Edwards, Swinomish Tribal Community Chairman

The halt to current and all future mining threats is a positive resolution to concerns that had been raised on both sides of the border. Now, Washington Wild is committed to continuing to lead the international coalition to support permanent protection of the “donut hole” in the Skagit Headwaters. ✅
Sitting in Silver City Brewery's Bremerton Taproom on a Friday afternoon, there is an immediate sense of community. It's clear that almost everyone is a regular as the staff greet folks by name. This sense of community extends beyond the Kitsap Peninsula, where Silver City has two locations — the Bremerton Taproom and their flagship Restaurant and Alehouse in Silverdale.

In 2021, Silver City launched their “Silver Linings Series.” These limited-edition canned releases are crafted to bring awareness and generate funds for charitable organizations in the community, supporting causes their team is passionate about. This passion for community and an enthusiasm for conservation led Silver City to join the Washington Brewshed Alliance in 2021. Soon after, Silver City suggested brewing a collaboration beer as part of their Silver Linings series to support Washington Wild’s efforts to conserve our watersheds and surrounding forested ecosystems was a no brainer for Silver City. As a brewer and an angler, I spend a lot of time thinking about water. What minerals can be added or reduced to support a perfect foundation for the hatches of an IAP? I think about the source of the water (in our case, the Cedar River), and how it travelled to get to our brewery and helped to mash our malt, converting starches to fermentable sugars. How was the snowpack this year and how is it going to affect the amazing growers we work with for hops and malt? And with the water’s journey, I think about the fish. Are they thriving in their habitat and have everything they need to spawn? What secrets do those rivers and watersheds hold?

I've spent a fair amount of time exploring, wading and rowing the fabled rivers of the Olympic Peninsula and estuaries of the Puget Sound. This is my time to shut up, shut off. Fly fishing demands you to be present in your surroundings and connected to everything that is happening on the water and around you. To be a successful angler, you need to be able to read the water and the life around it.

In this state of awareness, I find inspiration for art and recipe design. There is a spirituality in all of it and something mystical that takes you to another place. That is something we try to convey in our offerings at Holy Mountain.

Holy Mountain joined the Brewshed® Alliance in 2020 because it's important for us to keep this beautiful balance of our watersheds and ecosystems intact. It's important for us to make people aware of the beauty that lies everywhere in our state, and what a gift it is and how it is becoming more fragile by the minute.

As a brewer in Washington, I'm extremely grateful to be able to make beer and fish from the water that provides a sanctuary for me and forms the foundation for the food on our tables. As a brewer and an angler, I spend a lot of time thinking about water. What minerals can be added or reduced to support a perfect foundation for the hatches of an IAP? I think about the source of the water (in our case, the Cedar River), and how it travelled to get to our brewery and helped to mash our malt, converting starches to fermentable sugars. How was the snowpack this year and how is it going to affect the amazing growers we work with for hops and malt? And with the water’s journey, I think about the fish. Are they thriving in their habitat and have everything they need to spawn? What secrets do those rivers and watersheds hold?

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Support Washington Wild’s efforts to protect wild lands and waters in Washington State.

We build effective coalitions to protect your public lands for generations to come.

Donate now at wawild.org/donate