Conservation Through Community

CONSERVATION VOICES: WA State Rep Debra Lekanoff

Washington Wild’s Biggest Brewshed Collaboration!

WILD PROFILES: (Lux) Pot Shop & Ridwell
Notes from the Board

Working together as a community to protect and defend our wild places here in Washington has been a core value since Washington Wild's founding in 1979. And looking back at the organization’s many victories, it has proven an effective strategy. When you bring people into your work, give them a voice, and work collaboratively, you can really make a lasting impact. Washington Wild serves a niche of being a coalition builder, connecting our staff and board with other conservation organizations, corporate partners big and small, tribal members, congressional champions, outdoor recreation groups, and local communities. This ability to build consensus among diverse groups is often overlooked.

As an avid skier and hiker, I look to my community to help keep these areas as healthy as possible, striking a balance between access for everyone with a minimal footprint. I joined the Washington Wild board three years ago because I believe our approach to conservation serves a crucial role in keeping Washington wild and green for generations to come. I want my children and grandchildren to know the conservation history of this state so they can appreciate where we have been and take the lead on where we are going. This all comes back to community and working together for something bigger than us. Washington Wild appreciates the contribution you, our supporters, make to our success as an organization. And by believing in our work, we know our conservation community will continue to be strong for many, many years to come.

Colin Kikawa
Washington Wild Board Member

A Rare Win-Win in Public Policy

In May of this year, Washington Wild played a key role as a member of the Trust Land Transfer Coalition in passing legislation that provided $19.5 million to protect more than 4,400 acres of state forest lands in six locations statewide. Fellow members of the coalition included Trout Unlimited, Sierra Club, North Cascades Conservation Council, and The Nature Conservancy. Throughout Washington, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages more than three million acres of state trust land. Revenue generated by these trust lands (primarily through timber harvest) supports a variety of institutions from K-12 schools and libraries to essential services such as local fire districts, EMS, and ports. When certain trust lands either do not include productive timber land or provide greater ecological benefits, the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program allows for funding for DNR to conserve those lands while purchasing more economically profitable replacement lands elsewhere.

Each biennium, DNR identifies a list of trust lands as candidates for inclusion in the TLT program. Whether these lands enter the program is ultimately dependent upon funding approved by the state legislature and governor. Since its inception in 1989, the TLT program has preserved more than 128,000 acres of state trust lands, including some of the state’s most treasured places, such as Mt. Si, Oyster Dome, and Deception Pass State Park.

As one of Washington’s most valuable conservation tools, the TLT program is a rare win-win; it allows the state to improve recreational access to public land and protect important fish and wildlife habitat while also maximizing economic returns for the state trust.

“Despite epitomizing great public policy, funding for proposed Trust Land Transfer projects is not a sure thing each year, and that is where grassroots advocacy comes in. Washington Wild’s ability to build diverse coalitions has been essential to securing funding year after year.”

Jim Freeburg, WA Trust Land Transfer Coalition Coordinator

CONSERVATION & BREWSHED

Christopher Newton for the cover photo, Friends camping at Goat Rocks Wilderness courtesy of Chris Bauer.
ALL THE GLITTERS
ISN’T JUST GOLD

Suction dredge mining is a form of recreational mining that uses gas-powered dredges to vacuum up rocks, gravel, and sediment from the bottom of creeks and rivers to search for gold. Scientific studies have demonstrated how this practice degrades water quality and destroys riparian habitat, posing a significant threat to the salmon and steelhead populations invaluable to our region.

Passage of Washington’s suction dredge reform legislation in 2020 (ESHB 1261) was a decade-long, hard-fought win by a coalition including Washington Wild, Fish Not Gold, Trout Unlimited, Sierra Club, and the Snoqualmie Tribe. The law finally introduced commonsense regulations regarding motorized suction dredge mining in any stream or river designated as critical salmon or steelhead habitat under the Endangered Species Act. Washington Wild played a critical role in growing the diverse list of supporters around the state to more than 160 by coordinating several letters of support.

But a law is only as strong as the regulations and enforcement enacted by the state agencies in charge of implementation.

In June, we were made aware that the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) issued a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permit to a miner seeking to use a motorized mining method in Peshastin Creek outside Leavenworth. Not only is the Peshastin Watershed designated as critical salmon habitat, but available water has already been over-allocated and this miner does not hold a water right issued by the WA Department of Ecology (Ecology). This approval by WDFW acts contrary to the intent and requirements of the suction dredge mining reform law and exposes a loophole that if exploited will severely undermine these essential protections for our beleaguered salmon and steelhead.

Unfortunately, the petition was denied, but the coalition is currently moving to take administrative steps to uphold the law and regulations and will consider litigation or further legislative changes if need be.

DISCOVERING AND
RECOVERING PUGET SOUND

A sparkling inland sea teeming with life surrounded by snow-capped mountains and towering cedars, Puget Sound is the crown jewel of the Pacific Northwest. But behind this picturesque façade lies the devastating reality that the health of Puget Sound is rapidly deteriorating. What took thousands of years of geology and nature to create has been decimated by a century and a half of unsustainable growth.

In the name of ‘progress’, our waters have been over-fished, our forests cut down, pollution allowed to flow freely, and now we face a rapidly changing climate. Recovering what we have lost will require all of us who call this place home to recalibrate our relationships with our local ecosystems and communities, redefine success, and implement innovative solutions.

We Are Puget Sound is a book, multimedia touring exhibit, and campaign created by Braided River and Washington Conservation Action that takes folks on a visual journey to discover the wonder of Puget Sound through the unique wildlife and living cultures that call the Salish Sea home. The newest exhibit, which premiered at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle on June 3rd, 2023 and will be on display until the end of the year, aims to inspire immediate action by prompting people to prioritize ten essential actions.

Looking to make a splash with this latest iteration of the touring exhibit, Braided River and Washington Conservation Action reached out to Washington Wild to partner with our Brewshed®. The We Are Puget Sound Hazy Pale Ale featured 100% salmon-safe ingredients, including spelt from Cold Stream Malt and hops generously donated by Yakima Chief Hops. A perfect summer beer, the We Are Puget Sound Hazy Pale Ale was as crisp and refreshing as a jump in the Sound. Released at a Burke Museum member preview party, Washington Wild joined a diverse group of other conservation organizations to celebrate the opening of the exhibit and followed up with a collaboration celebration later in the month at Lucky Envelope’s taproom.

BE YOUR OWN LOCAL
LEGEND AND KEEP IT WILD

As a company rooted in the Pacific Northwest, the entire team at Schilling Hard Cider feels a deep responsibility to protect and preserve our environment. In 2021 one of Schilling’s passionate sales reps pitched the idea of the ‘Keep It Wild’ campaign and the rest is history. After a wildly successful inaugural year in 2022, Schilling’s ‘Keep It Wild’ campaign returned for this year’s Earth Month. Even bigger than before, ‘Keep It Wild’ expanded beyond Washington and Oregon to support conservation organizations across eight different states, including Alaska, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, and California.

Here in Seattle, we enjoyed a wildly fun kick-off party with Erika Lundahl, Deputy Director at Braided River

“We were delighted to collaborate with Washington Wild’s Brewshed® Alliance—we love their mission to protect watershed health from peak to pint, so it was a natural connection to the We Are Puget Sound campaign. We were excited to be able to tap into this group of local businesses that have found such an innovative way to protect the Sound, while also creating a fun addition to the campaign through the We Are Puget Sound Hazy Pale Ale brewed by Lucky Envelope Brewing.”

Erika Lundahl, Deputy Director at Braided River

“After learning of WDFW’s neglect, our coalition partner Fish Not Gold filed a petition for rulemaking to close the loophole in regulations regarding motorized suction dredge mining. At the same time, we reached out to Washington Wild to activate their statewide grassroots network to lend the power of a diverse chorus of voices calling for the same thing.”

Crystal Eliot Perez, Washington State Director of Trout Unlimited
Washington Wild occupies a unique niche within the conservation community by building coalitions to rally behind a unified front. A rarely acknowledged, but incredibly effective strategy, this provides capacity for diverse partners to support protections for Washington’s wild lands and waters.

- **2023**: Advocated for Trust Land Transfer Revitalization Bill and funding to protect more than 4,000 acres of state forest land which was signed into law by Governor Inslee.
  - Letter Signers: 55

- **2022**: Coordinated letters from general stakeholders, hunter and angler groups and recreation organizations supporting the first ever Outstanding Resource Waters designations in Washington State for the Cascade, Green and Napeequa Rivers.
  - Letter Signers: 137

- **2021**: Called for reinstatement of Legacy Roads and Trails Program, which was signed into law by President Biden as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
  - Letter Signers: 101

- **2020**: Advocated for a statewide ban on motorized suction dredge mining in designated critical salmon habitat, which was signed into law by Governor Inslee.
  - Letter Signers: 142

- **2018-2022**: Coordinated an international campaign of Tribes and First Nations, local businesses, elected officials and stakeholders to successfully oppose mining in the British Columbia headwaters of the Skagit River.
  - Endorsements: 380

- **2012-Now**: Founding member of the Wild Olympics Campaign, working to protect more than 126,000 acres of new Wilderness and over 460 miles of Wild & Scenic River designations on the Olympic Peninsula.
  - Endorsements: 801

Providing a "one-stop-shop" for decision makers, in any given year, we send upwards of 15 sign-on letters, each averaging 50 supporters.
CONSERVATION VOICES

Telling the Story of Washington State by Honoring Billy Frank Jr.

By Washington State Representative Debra Lekanoff (D-40)

It has been my honor to serve in the Washington State Legislature since 2019, representing the 40th legislative district of Washington State, which includes parts of Whatcom, Skagit, and San Juan Counties. While I have sponsored several bills that have become law, none are more personally satisfying than HB 1639, which was signed into law on May 9 by Governor Jay Inslee. That legislation will memorialize the late Billy Frank Jr. by erecting a statue of him in National Statuary Hall in Washington D.C. The National Statuary Hall Collection in the U.S. Capitol Building features 100 statues, with each state contributing statues of two notable deceased residents; currently, Washington’s honorees are Marcus Whitman and Mother Joseph. HB 1639 includes approximately $1.1 million to replace the Whitman statue with one of Billy, a dedicated advocate for equality, justice, and environmental protection.

When people asked Billy how to make a difference and bring about change, Billy was known to say “tell your story.” Through Billy’s story and his decades of activism, we learn the story of Washington State—not just the easy narrative, but the hard and challenging parts. We learn about the importance of standing up for what is right and just, even when facing persecution. A statue of this great leader among other national heroes is the right way to honor his legacy, elevate his story, and inspire future generations to tell their own.

Billy was known for his commitment to protecting endangered salmon and the treaty rights guaranteed to Washington tribes. He chaired the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for nearly 30 years. He helped organize “fish-ins” and demonstrations, which led to the formation of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Billy was also known for bringing people together, regardless of their background or occupation, and finding the common ground needed to move forward.

Billy was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and received numerous awards and honors for his advocacy. For example, he earned the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism, the American Indian Distinguished Service Award, the Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award, and the Washington State Medal of Merit. In 2015, he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor that can be bestowed on a private U.S. citizen.

It took three years to gain legislative and funding approvals for the statue project. It could not have happened without the support of tribal leaders and stakeholders such as Washington Wild. As former Governmental Affairs Director for the Nisqually Tribal Chairman Willie Frank III, to honor his father’s life-long passion for telling the stories of Indian Country and sharing them with all. This Indigenous Climate Impacts Oral History project has captured oral histories and traditional ecological knowledge from 25 Pacific Northwest tribal leaders...so far. As Billy would have, these leaders do not just talk about the impacts of climate change; they are taking action to meet this existential challenge head-on.

I look forward to the results of a recent partnership between Washington Wild and THIS IS INDIAN COUNTRY, an organization led by Billy Frank Jr.’s son, Nisqually Tribal Chairman Willie Frank III, to honor his father’s life-long passion for telling the stories of Indian Country and sharing them with all. This Indigenous Climate Impacts Oral History project has captured oral histories and traditional ecological knowledge from 25 Pacific Northwest tribal leaders...so far. As Billy would have, these leaders do not just talk about the impacts of climate change; they are taking action to meet this existential challenge head-on.

I look forward to finding additional opportunities to tell all of our story together. 

WA Wild’s Biggest Brewshed® Collaboration

(And maybe the biggest beer collab...ever?!) 

“it has been very easy to be a part of the Brewshed®. I don’t ever feel pressured to add Lumberbeard’s logo to a label or comment letter unless it’s for an issue I really want to be a part of. I would tell other brewers curious about the Brewshed® that you can be a part of this and support as much or as little as you want, but I do think it’s important for all of us to come together and show a united front.”

Bret Gordon, President and Head Brewer of Lumberbeard Brewing

“While working Washington Wild does to protect our natural ecosystems, like old-growth forests, that will ensure watershed health from peak to pint. Reaching across both sides of the Cascades, east met west in this hazy IPA brewed by Lumberbeard Brewery of Spokane and Here Today Brewery & Kitchen of Seattle. With Salmon-Safe ingredients donated by Yakima Chief Hops and Cold Stream Malt, every sip of this beer was a reminder of our responsibility to safeguard our wild places.

Dave Riddle, Here Today’s Marketing and Operations Director, explains how brewers recognize watershed health matters beyond just the quality of the water that goes directly into a beer, “we are exceptionally lucky to be in Washington State from an agriculture standpoint because it’s not just water that makes good beer. It’s the grain, the hops, and any other adjuncts to lend a unique flavor. We enjoy access to an abundance of high-quality, locally sourced ingredients, and we’re only a couple of hours from Yakima Valley, which is the hops capital of the world. But as the climate shifts, we’re going to have more issues sourcing these great ingredients. We value the work Washington Wild does to protect our natural ecosystems, like old-growth forests, that will ensure watershed health and a more climate resilient future for Washington State.”

Between two separate brew days, release parties, and chatter across social media, producing Clean Water for Great Beer IPA was also a celebration. “Washington Wild’s Brewshed®” has facilitated networking and community within our industry by giving us moments just like this—working alongside over 70 partners to brew a single beer and support the same cause,” explains Chanel Williams and Brandon Wiley of Bottleworks. “That’s something incredibly special to us and our bottle shop at Bottleworks. We appreciate the community and that is why we are here.”

Whether you’re sipping on a robust porter or raising a glass of a crisp pilsner, the popular saying “save water, drink beer” takes on a whole different, much deeper meaning when it’s a Washington Brewshed® partner’s beer. 

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This past spring, Washington Wild began a new partnership with the innovative, Seattle-based recycling company, Ridwell. What began in 2018 as a father and son looking to responsibly recycle some old batteries and help their neighbors do the same, has since grown to eight major cities around the country and thousands of members.

Ridwell’s mission is to divert recyclable materials that often end up in the landfill if placed in your typical curbside bin. They make it simple to get rid of your stuff while investing in new options for old things and support sustainable consumption by helping companies close the loop. Ridwell makes a point of being transparent with their members about where their items end up and how much they are keeping out of our landfills. To date, 97% of the materials they pick up are reused or recycled, and they have kept over 15 million pounds of material out of our landfills.

In April, Ridwell chose Washington Wild as the beneficiary of their new ‘Save the Land, Fill the Bin’ campaign. “We’ve proven that we can achieve amazing things when we come together! To further our mission of preserving the planet, this Earth Month we supported Washington Wild, an organization committed to conserving our state’s natural habitats and waters. Their cause is urgent, and their work is critical,” says co-founder Ryan Metzger.

By sharing our mission with their members, Ridwell’s ‘Save the Land, Fill the Bin’ campaign enabled us to reach a new audience that already cares deeply about keeping Washington clean and green while demonstrating the impact our organization has in ensuring our state remains wild for generations to come. With $10 from every new member during the month of April, Ridwell ended up donating $3,000 to Washington Wild! This partnership was successful because both Washington Wild and Ridwell understand the importance of community and supporting each other to achieve a larger goal. “Our members are our heroes!” says Metzger. “We are committed to building better, stronger communities through our efforts to waste less.”

Among the 25 most populous cities in the U.S., Seattle boasts having the most protected Wilderness within a 100-mile radius. And as one of the first states to legalize weed in 2012, being green is kind of our thing here in Washington. It is certainly why our friends at (Lux) Pot Shop love to call Seattle home. “There isn’t a single day where it doesn’t cross our mind at least once: we are incredibly grateful to be in Washington,” shares Veronica White, head of Content and Merchandising at (Lux). “And it’s not just because our lovely state has the best cannabis in the nation. The real reason we wake up every morning feeling so fortunate to live here—just look around you!—even in Seattle proper, you don’t have to walk far to catch glimpses of our state’s majesty. Our quintessential evergreen forests and pebbly shorelines are sprinkled throughout the city like M&Ms in trail mix. When you bring cannabis into the equation, Washington’s natural wonders go from magnificent ... to downright magical.”

But what do we find anything but magical?—the trash we spot far too often whilst on our outdoor wanderings—which is why (Lux) reached out to Washington Wild at the beginning of the summer. “As a company whose mission is to curate and provide the highest-quality cannabis while engaging our community, this sparked a conversation amongst our team,” says White, “we asked ourselves how we could use our platform to help ensure Washington remains wild and green for generations to come.”

Launched in July, (Lux)’s Ganja Gone Wild campaign in partnership with Washington Wild worked to empower our communities to “Blaze Responsibly” and take action to protect Washington’s wild lands and waters. Partnering with six product designers focused on their sustainable production practices and adventure-apt offerings, (Lux) also donated a portion of their total sales during the campaign, totaling $1,800 in support of Washington Wild’s mission! And to really encourage folks to follow the quintessential Leave No Trace principle, pack-out, pack-in, they also teamed up with Kavu to create a line of Ganja Gone Wild merch. “We designed a variety of styles and colorways named after our favorite strains for outdoor activities,” explains White, “these versatile bags were thoughtfully designed to comfortably hold all your reefer refuse during your outdoor escapades.” Still available for purchase at all three of (Lux)’s pot shops (although quantity is limited!), 100% of proceeds from the sale of Ganja Gone Wild merch will be also donated to Washington Wild.

In September the public comment period regarding the proposed Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) designations for the Cascade, Green, and Napeequa Rivers systems closed. ORW designation is a critical, proactive layer of protection to safeguard what we have before it is lost. Nominated because of their exceptional water quality, ecological importance, and unique recreational value, ORW designation would ensure that the water quality of these three rivers is protected in perpetuity for current and future generations. Building a coalition of 240 diverse stakeholders, generating nearly 300 public comments from our supporters alone, and with the release of Brewshed® partner Icicle Brewing’s Napeequa Pilsner in support of the designations, Washington Wild is optimistic the Department of Ecology will approve ORW designations by the end of the year.
Help us reach our end of year campaign goal of raising $90,000 to protect and defend our wild places!

Donate now at wawild.org/donate

Support Washington Wild Today!

Photo courtesy of Michael Freedman