

# NORTH COAST COMMUNITIES FOR WATERSHED PROTECTION

*a growing grassroots group since 2010*

## ***We're still here!***

Welcome to the Spring 2020 Newsletter. We have been working more than ever, all while staying home to keep everyone safe from COVID-19. Read on to find

- video updates from some of our recent public events
- a short film about our recent light plane ride over the coast
- call for volunteers to do pesticide-free trail maintenance at local treasure Soapstone Lake
- details of our continuing efforts to modernize Oregon forestry practices
- and so much more! Enjoy.

## ***Gratitude for Continued Support***

NCCWP is excited to announce that we received two generous gifts that will give us more capacity to continue our work. The first was a collaborative gift from Oregon Wild, Patagonia, and a generous anonymous donor. These funds enabled the hiring of a new Assistant to the NCCWP, Jordan Gulaskey of Nehalem. The second gift was from the Board of Directors of CARTM in Manzanita. We are also grateful for the many donations from individuals and families. Thank you for helping us to continue to speak truth to power.



## **Yes, you can do something to end clearcut logging and aerial spraying.**

*Join North Coast Communities for Watershed Protection!*

During this novel coronavirus public health emergency, many people who live in rural communities near the Oregon Coast are also concerned about their ongoing potential exposure to smoke and pesticide spray. Smoke and pesticide spray caused by outdated industrial forestry practices put the health of the public at risk at all times, but particularly now, since we are supposed to be "sheltering in place" to avoid spreading this disease of the respiratory system. NCCWP continues to receive reports ranging from Astoria to the southern part of Tillamook County about large scale clearcutting and pesticide spraying taking place in our coastal forestlands... our cloud forests that gather moisture... on both private and State land.

*cont'd*

For about nine years, NCCWP has focused on bringing to public attention how current forestry practices endanger public health, drinking water, and wildlife habitat. Many Oregonians are now becoming aware that deforestation plays a major part in climate change, drought, and the deteriorating health of the habitat, all of which have a detrimental effect on human life. NCCWP, through "speaking to truth to power," continues to be an active voice in bringing education on forest water issues to coastal communities. We have been writing letters to the editor and "in my opinion" pieces, providing information to print and over-the-air reporters, testifying at public meetings, speaking out in our communities, and holding town hall events and rallies. We salute all the people involved in our efforts... our friends and neighbors. Let's continue our advocacy. A healthy forest watershed benefits all life, and a healthy habitat is a vital benefit for our coastal communities. Our organization continues to grow; we have now over 670 subscribers to our alerts and newsletters.

***“Most important, remember we still have our voice! We continue to be recognized as a strong grassroots movement, thanks to everyone's work.”***

See below for reports about what is happening to nearby public and private forestland. There you can read about recent research linking deforestation to climate change, dwindling fish runs, and unhealthy watersheds. [Learn how you can get involved.](#)

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## Links to more reading

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### 1. [No More Water](#)

“I saw this article and thought of all the work we've done. The same loss of water this New York Times article documents is happening here on the Oregon Coast, as Nancy and others have pointed out, but in this article it is confined to an island country so we can see the degree of devastation these practices cause in an isolated manner. We are losing /have lost our cloud forests and ability to keep the rainwater we receive. Looking at the back side of Neahkahnie mountain, it is clear where the moisture congregates, as well as where it evaporates. If we don't get our cloud forests back, permanent climatic shifts will make it impossible to do so in the future.”

- Carl Whiting, Wheeler

### 2. [Climate Change as seen through the Lens of Coronavirus](#)

“While we're isolating at home it's a good time to read, and what better to read about than how we managed to get ourselves into this situation? While we're transfixed on what this pandemic is and how it affects us personally, a good mental exercise might be to instead turn outward and look at how human activity is implicated in the origin of what are called zoonotic diseases.

If you'd like to do further research a simple online search for 'climate and zoonotics' will produce many more articles. We would wish you 'happy reading,' but unfortunately it is not. Spread the word, not the virus, and stay well!”

- Jack & Jane Anderson, Garibaldi



## Watch Dr. Deke Speak on Toxicity

[watch online](#)

Filmed by Ephraim Payne, staff member of Beyond Toxics at the request of North Coast Communities for Watershed Protection.



## Since the Wheeler Rally on Jan 11, 2020

[watch online](#)

Since last seeing many of you at the January event in Wheeler, we have continued to document and organize against the continued onslaught on our forests, public and private. This includes the steep, landslide-prone stretch above Wheeler. Read on to help us resist the burning of slash piles and spraying of pesticides that are undoubtedly planned for these lands.

# LightHawk Flight Short Film

*flight on May 26, 2019*

[Watch online](#)

On May 26, 2019 Miel Macassey and Nancy Webster flew on a light plane from Tillamook to Long Beach, Washington and back as guests of the Wild Salmon Center. Brian Kelley, a video producer, created a documentary that includes scenes from that flight. LightHawk arranged for the volunteer pilot and his plane.

Looking from the air to the east over all those clearcuts made a profound impression on me. All my life, I have seen clearcuts; however, seeing from above the current extent and magnitude of them made me realize how profoundly our environment has been damaged. The cover of the August 3, 2019, edition of *The Economist* magazine reads: "Deathwatch for the Amazon; The Threat of Runaway Deforestation." Today, looking out at the damaged condition of much of our coastal landscape, many people I know are very concerned, feeling that this is also a deathwatch for our forests, drinking water, wildlife and fish. Recently, we have learned about the important role forests play in storing carbon. With industrial logging practices, has a tipping point been reached that has serious long-term consequences for all life?

*written by Nancy Webster*



## Forest Waters Coalition, MOU Update

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North Coast Communities for Watershed Protection has been very concerned that Oregon's current forest practices regulations are woefully inadequate to protect drinking water and habitat, including native fish populations. We believe current practices, including clearcutting, pesticide spraying, and slash and prescribed burning, are not sustainable practices. These industrial forestry practices are public health concerns for people who live at the Coast. For the past two years, NCCWP has been participating in the Forest Waters Coalition (FWC), a coalition of environmental organizations that has been working towards placing ballot measures before the voters in November 2020 to address these issues. Termed the Forest Waters Protection Act, these ballot measures would bring about significant changes to insure increased protections of forest waters in Oregon. NCCWP enthusiastically endorsed these ballot measures and, therefore, in the fall of 2019 participated in preliminary signature gathering (We lead the state in volunteer-collected signatures). Unfortunately, since the fall of 2019, a number of problems have occurred, causing the ballot measures to be withdrawn. First, the ballot measures faced lengthy and costly legal challenges, then, the time left to gather signatures narrowed, and, finally, the novel coronavirus pandemic made signature gathering impossible. The good news is that these ballot measures, or updated versions, can be reintroduced in the future. NCCWP continues to actively participate in the Forest Waters Coalition, working jointly on public outreach and education related to these issues. Find out more about this work by going to <https://forestwaters.org/>

*In 2019, both timber industry companies and environmental organizations (associated with the Forest Waters Coalition) submitted competing ballot measures that were intended to be on the ballot in November 2020. Instead, several months ago, with the help of Governor Brown's office, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was negotiated and signed between the timber industry and the environmental organizations. Yes, this MOU is a compromise; however, it does offer significant steps forward right now for improved protection of forest water. Please read the statement below from Bob Van Dyk of the Wild Salmon Center for a more complete explanation of the MOU.*

### **Memorandum of Understanding Update, prepared by Bob Van Dyk, Ph.D. | Oregon and California Policy Director, Wild Salmon Center**

The historic MOU between fishing and conservation groups on one hand and leading timber companies on the other remains alive, but temporarily dormant. The COVID-19 crisis has put a pause on efforts, but the Governor released a [press release](#) on March 31 that expressed her continued commitment to see the deal through. The MOU signatories are committed to passing the pesticide legislation and related stream buffer protections as soon as the legislature reconvenes, perhaps in June. May legislative days have been cancelled.

The agreement starts with an effort to pass legislation now - in the short session - that would improve stream buffers in the Rogue-Siskiyou region; increase aerial pesticide spray buffers on homes, schools, and water intakes; and for the first time put aerial spray buffers on small non-fish streams, which make up 70% of the stream network. The agreement also requires a new real-time notification system that neighbors can sign up for that will let them know the day before spray happens. But the real promise lies ahead, in a common commitment to pursue a Habitat Conservation Plan for fish on private forest lands. The goal is to work over the next 18 months to develop a set of forest law revisions adequate to meet federal regulators' standards to protect our salmon runs.

# MOVING FORWARD

GET INVOLVED! Together we are strong.

## Soapstone Lake Trailkeepers

Remember our meeting at Wolf Moon on Feb 23? Roughly 20 people put their names on a list to work on vegetation management on the trail to Soapstone Lake off Hwy 53.

This effort emerged after Victoria Stoppiello and her husband Anthony wanted to hike there in April 2019. They encountered ODF Natural Resource Specialist Matt Grantham, who said they couldn't hike that day because an ODF crew planned to spray the trail with glyphosate to control weeds. This led to a dialog about Roundup/ glyphosate being a carcinogen. Matt was quite aware of the recent lawsuits against Monsanto, but was required to do the spraying (while also seeming sympathetic to our concerns).

The NCCWP has thus chosen to do the trail maintenance in collaboration with Oregon Trailkeepers. We will create a Memorandum of Understanding with ODF, get a sign crediting our work at the trailhead, but ODF has no funding for other support. That's why collaboration from Oregon Trailkeepers is so important—rumor has it that Trailkeepers has money but scant volunteers from the coast. This will be a great collaboration; NCCWP and TKO are a natural fit. Brandon Tigner is North Coast Stewardship Coordinator for Oregon Trailkeepers. He frequently provides music background during NCCWP's "meet and greets" before our educational presentations. -Victoria Stoppiello, Nehalem



## Burn Ban — Spray Ban

*57% of voters OPPOSE aerial spraying*

Just a few months ago our group raised their voices with concerns about the continuance of some logging practices, including pesticide spraying and burning, shortly before the rest of the world sheltered-in-place to avoid a pandemic. In consideration of those who find themselves unable to avoid burning activities near their home, Governor Kate Brown agreed to issue a [statewide voluntary burning ban](#) during the COVID-19 crisis- whether it be industrial, commercial, or private. This successful effort only addresses part of the problem though, since we know that landowners plan to spray pesticides from helicopters, often so close to our homes and watersheds that they are within range for chemical drift. Therefore, we must come together again to demand an end to aerial spraying. This effort is in collaboration with parallel efforts by groups including Beyond Toxics, Spray Free Coast, Oregon Wild, the Crag Law Center, as well as a number of other grassroots groups.

*We will continue to bear witness to, and fight, the destruction of our planet, and keep you updated accordingly. Join us, for the future!*

## Get Involved ~ Practice Science

We need your eyes on the ground to help us protect the land! Many of our initiatives begin with an email from a concerned local citizen. If you witness troubling spraying, logging, landslides, or burning activities PLEASE REACH OUT. Take pictures of what you observe and write a description. We are able to maintain strict confidentiality around any tips we receive. Help us continue to strive to protect our communities and local lands from harmful industry practices- email your stories or sightings to [rockawaycitizen.water@gmail.com](mailto:rockawaycitizen.water@gmail.com).

In our next newsletter, we will feature stories and photographs from members of the community who are concerned about industrial forestry practices going on between Astoria and the south end of Tillamook County. Our goal is to document what is happening to the forests of our local region.

*We recently learned about steep-slope clearcutting taking place on State land in the East Foley Creek area. Foley Creek has an active chum salmon run which may be adversely affected by this. Stay tuned; more information to come.*

### ◆ *Citizen Science Smoke Reporting Project*

Many of us have been concerned about the health impacts of the burning of slash piles after timber companies have harvested the trees. At times, our communities have been enveloped by smoke, making it difficult to breathe. The Timber companies have said that they only burn when conditions are safe for the local towns, but we know that winds shift and, therefore, people, schools, and even hospitals may be adversely affected. In order to document the impact of this smoke, we're starting a citizen science project where we'll gather data on the dates, times and impact of the smoke on communities. We're inviting as many people as possible to participate. All you need to do is email [timbersmoke2020@gmail.com](mailto:timbersmoke2020@gmail.com) with the location of the burn, the date/time, the duration of the smoke, whether it has been reported and to whom, if visibility has been affected, any symptoms (eyes burning, cough), and if any sensitive populations were affected, such as schools or day cares. We also have a list of additional resources to report smoke pollution and to learn more about the health consequences of environmental smoke. We are hoping the data will provide enough evidence of impacts to enable us to lobby for improved air quality for coastal residents. -Pat Himes, coordinator

### ◆ *Introducing the FERNS Committee*

Together, we have begun a campaign to help spread awareness around ongoing clearcutting and spraying of pesticides in our local area. We will be developing documents that include a public service announcement to be shared with local property owners and citizens affected by these practices. It will also include information regarding what actions can be pursued to resist this ongoing threat to our health and planetary well-being. More information will follow, and if you would like to volunteer to work with our group of FERNS "watchdogs," feel free to email [nccwp.wm@gmail.com](mailto:nccwp.wm@gmail.com). -Jordan Gulaskey, coordinator

*"Please do not let anyone talk you into a discreet silence..." Aldo Leopold, November 29, 1947*

For more information contact: Nancy Webster, [rockawaycitizen.water@gmail.com](mailto:rockawaycitizen.water@gmail.com) 503-355-2516  
*Our name, North Coast Communities for Watershed Protection (formerly known as Rockaway Beach Citizens for Watershed Protection), reflects our working together on a regional basis to insure that the air we breathe and the water we drink are safe. <https://healthywatershed.org> <https://www.facebook.com/rockawaybeachcitizens>*