



Annual Report

Recapping our work in fiscal year 2015 for our members

To our members

"I'm grateful for the power you bring to these fights, and the staying power you give our efforts. Let's keep up the great work together."



Margie Alt
Environment America
Executive Director



Anna Aurilio
Federal Legislative
Director



Laura Dorle
Campaigns Director



Once in a while, you realize in the middle of a phone call that you're going to remember it for a long time.

The conversation in question:

Laura Dorle, our campaigns director, called me one evening in September from Washington, D.C. She was at the Capitol accompanying a delegation of Mainers to meet with our Congressional leaders about climate change impacts on our state. The impressive group included a doctor, state representative and farmer, and renewable energy expert.

The first words out of Laura's mouth: "Samantha absolutely hit it out of the park!"

Samantha Wolzich, the youngest of the group, is an incredible 10-year old from Naples and a card-carrying member of the Sebago Lake Anglers Association. Her ability to catch big fish on light tackle impresses old-timer anglers in the group, big time. And, as Laura excitedly described to me while debriefing the group's visit to our senators and representatives that day, Sam's ability to bring climate change impacts to life was impressing everyone she met in Washington, D.C.

Sam is the kind of young leader who gives me hope. Her story about the future of ice fishing in Maine was a compelling one to our elected leaders—and exactly the kind of story that makes the problem of global warming, and the urgency behind action, so meaningful.

As you'll read in the following pages, behind all of our accomplishments are engaged citizens and committed individuals like Sam, and like you, who joined us in fighting for a healthier future. I'm grateful for the power you bring to these fights, and the staying power you give our efforts. Let's keep up the great work together.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Taryn Hallweaver".

Taryn Hallweaver
Director

Local, Sustainable Maine Food

Maine's local foods movement has grown rapidly in the last decade. But we still import more food than any other state in the continental United States, and rely heavily on factory farms and an increasingly vulnerable national agriculture system. In 2015, Environment Maine Research & Policy Center advocated for a more sustainable, resilient food system in Maine by calling on big institutions to go local.

Calling for "Real Food" and sustainability in the UMaine System

Environment Maine Research & Policy Center is working to expand the market for local agriculture by helping larger institutions shift policies to support Maine farmers. With the UMaine System's contract with food giant Aramark expiring in 2016, Environment Maine Research & Policy Center and our allies highlighted this opportunity to make a serious commitment to local and "Real Food."

Our coalition called for a commitment to 20 percent local, and 20 percent "Real Food" by 2020. "Real Food" guidelines consider organic growing methods, labor, humane treatment of animals, and fair trade, and are used to successfully track institutional involvement with local food at 193 colleges and universities worldwide.

Nearly 200 Maine producers, 1,500 students and University of Maine community members, and 20 other organizations joined our coalition in backing these recommendations. And in August 2015, the UMaine System adopted the 20 percent local by 2020 goal. We'll continue to advocate for "Real Food" guidelines in the system's final contract, which will be signed in 2016.





Global Warming Solutions

Mainers are seeing the impacts of climate change everywhere we look, from shifting seasons and more frequent extreme storms, to changing fish and wildlife populations. Without urgent action, the effects of global warming may become catastrophic. But we're optimistic: Together in 2015, Environment Maine and Environment Maine Research & Policy Center helped build support for, and won, the greatest step the United States has ever taken to address the climate crisis.



▲ U.S. Sen. Angus King (front row, second from left) joined Environment Maine members and supporters to discuss the impacts of global climate change on Maine's ice fishing season.



▲ Environment Maine Research & Policy Center Campaigns Director Laura Dorle (left) released "Dangerous Inheritance" at Maine State Pier in Portland.

You helped get the historic Clean Power Plan over the finish line

This past year was a historic one for climate change action: President Obama took decisive action to address the threat of global warming by moving forward with the Clean Power Plan, the first-ever plan to limit carbon emissions from power plants—America’s biggest source of global warming pollution.

50,000 Mainers like you took action

In 2015, Environment Maine 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.

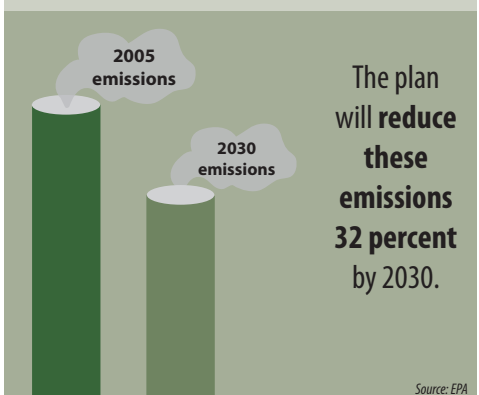
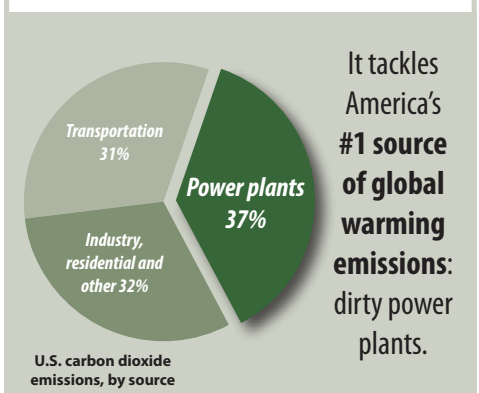
- We mobilized 50,000 Mainers and leaders of the clean energy sector, sportsmen community, and elders groups to take action to show our Congressional delegation how critical the Clean Power Plan is to Maine’s future. Mainers joined a chorus of millions of Americans calling on the president to act.
- Throughout the winter, we held events with sportsmen, ice fishermen and fisherwomen, and decision makers like Sen. Angus King, to bring attention to how climate change is affecting Mainers, and possible solutions.

Environment Maine Research & Policy Center highlighted Maine’s rapidly changing climate

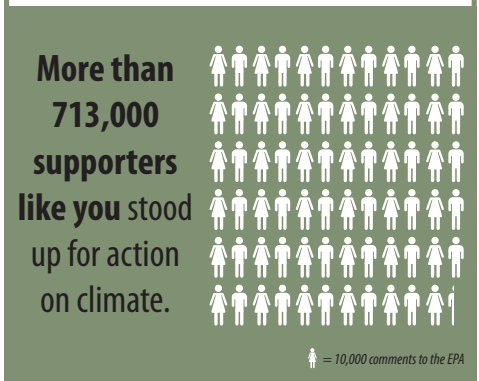
In 2015, Environment Maine Research & Policy Center worked to shine a spotlight on the effects global warming is already having on Maine and the meaningful impact of limiting carbon pollution from power plants.

- Our report, “Dangerous Inheritance,” released in March, found that the current generation is experiencing hotter temperatures and more intense storms than their predecessors did 40 years ago.
- Environment Maine Research & Policy Center also launched an inter-generational storytelling project to give life to these changes, and highlight the need for urgent action. Students interviewed grandparents and elders in their community about the changes they’ve seen in Maine’s environment over the decades, and the traditions they hope to pass along to future generations.

Why the Clean Power Plan matters...



You called for action



Clean Water for America

Protect Maine's lakes

In 2015, Environment Maine and Environment Maine Research & Policy Center celebrated the biggest victory for clean water in a decade! In May, the Environmental Protection Agency issued a rule to restore Clean Water Act protections to thousands of waterways, in Maine and across the country. Our public education and outreach efforts, bolstered by action taken by our members, allies, and a diverse coalition of businesses, 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 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).



▲ Allagash Brewing Company was one of more than 20 breweries across Maine that joined Environment Maine in support of the Clean Water Rule.

Together, we won the biggest step forward for clean water in a decade

In the early 2000s, a set of polluter-driven court cases opened up loopholes in the Clean Water Act. Since then, Environment Maine has gone toe-to-toe with powerful polluters and their allies in Washington to restore the Clean Water Act to full strength. And in 2015, our efforts finally paid off when President Obama restored federal protections to more than half the nation's streams.

Drinking water for one in three Mainers regained protection

The Clean Water Rule closed loopholes in the Clean Water Act, returning protection to 24,000 miles of streams in Maine, and the drinking water for one in three Mainers. You gave Environment Maine the resources to advocate in Congress, recruit and mobilize a diverse and powerful coalition, and rally the grassroots to demand action.

- We held face-to-face conversations with more than 20,000 Mainers, and collected 10,000 comments in support of the Clean Water Rules. We also enlisted the support of 23 Maine-based breweries and more than 75 small businesses that depend on clean water for their livelihoods.
- 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

Maine's waterways are essential for wildlife habitat, flood protection, and pollution filtration—and are treasured destinations for fishing, swimming and boating. Last year, together with our affiliated state groups across the country, Environment Maine Research & Policy Center's research on the threats facing Maine's lakes 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.
- "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.

<p>Polluting industries carved loopholes in the Clean Water Act, leaving 2 million miles of streams across the country open to pollution.</p>  <p><i>An algae bloom caused by runoff pollution</i></p>	<p>With a resounding call from supporters like you and our allies nationwide, we worked to protect America's waterways.</p> <table border="0"><tr><td>800,000 comments to the EPA</td><td></td><td>1 million took action online</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1,000 letters to the editor</td><td></td><td>1,000 business owners, farmers and elected officials</td><td></td></tr></table>	800,000 comments to the EPA		1 million took action online		1,000 letters to the editor		1,000 business owners, farmers and elected officials		 <p>VICTORY! On May 27, 2015, the Clean Water Act was restored.</p>
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Go Solar, Maine

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 Maine Research & Policy Center presented hard-hitting research and made the case for setting bold solar goals.

Strong policies fuel solar's rapid growth

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.

- The report "Lighting the Way" found that just 10 states hold 87 percent of the nation's solar electric capacity due to strong policies that are enabling more people to "go solar."
- The report "Shining Cities," found that cities are playing a crucial role in growing national solar capacity: Just 20 cities accounted for 6.5 percent of total installed solar in the country. Portland ranked #11 in the New England region.

Let's keep solar growing in Maine

Solar is taking off in Maine, with new community solar projects in towns like Freeport and Bar Harbor, and a proposal for a new solar farm in Winslow 20 times bigger than the largest one in the state. Still, Maine remains the only New England state that lacks a clear policy promoting solar development. To continue solar's growth, Maine can follow the lead of cities and states that have prioritized solar in their energy policies.



Top: A residential rooftop solar installation

Bottom: Environment America Research & Policy Center and its state affiliates released "Shining Cities" nationally in April 2015.

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 Maine 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 to strawberries, to the alfalfa used to feed dairy cows. Yet, beekeepers report losing on average 30 percent of all honeybee colonies 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 Maine and our national team, 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.



Top: Environment Maine members and supporters, from all walks of life, took action with photo petitions to protect bees.

Bottom: Beekeepers report losing on average 30 percent of all honeybee colonies each year.

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