



Program Report

Recapping our work in 2014 for our members



From the director

“With your support, we’ll keep working to translate our simple formula into positive change in our lives, in the quality of our environment, and in the world we leave to future generations.”

At Environment America, we live by a simple formula: Mobilize grassroots action, build strong and diverse coalitions, and conduct tough-minded advocacy that yields tangible results for our environment and in our lives.

This past year was full of action and more than a few signs of real progress. We still have work to do, though, to protect our environment and our families.

One of our top priorities this year has been restoring Clean Water Act protections to all our waters. In 2014, we celebrated when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to close loopholes in the law that have left 2 million miles of streams across the country—and the drinking water for 117 million Americans—at risk for a decade. On the heels of the announcement we worked to build support for the rule, mobilizing 200,000 people and hundreds of local farmers and small businesses to take action. At the same time, lobbyists for major agribusinesses and their friends in Congress ramped up their efforts to maintain the status quo. We’ll keep at it as long as it takes to ensure the Clean Water Act protects all our waterways.

Of course, nothing is more important than doing our part to help solve global warming. This past year, we’ve been focused on limiting carbon pollution from dirty power plants—the nation’s number one source of the pollution that leads to climate change. The EPA is on the case as well. But we need to organize more citizen climate defenders, more solar businesses, and more local elected officials to counter the congressional climate deniers and their fossil fuel industry backers, who are fighting to block the Obama administration’s plan. Getting this plan over the finish line and implemented by states will make a dramatic difference in our nation’s carbon footprint, our ability to negotiate climate action with other countries, and the future of our planet and our families.

In this report, you can also learn about the work we did on other issues, including campaigning for more solar power, working to protect our parks and other special places, and fighting to stop more dangerous fracking.

In the year to come, we’ll strive to make a difference on all these issues. With your support, we’ll keep working to translate our simple formula into positive change in our lives, in the quality of our environment, and in the world we leave to future generations. Thank you!

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margie Alt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'M' and 'A'.

Margie Alt
Executive Director



From the president

"[Our] grassroots approach informs everything we do. In the long run, the changes we seek for our environment are possible only if we talk to, and listen to, enough people."

Among all the organizations working to protect the environment in Washington, D.C., and throughout the country, what makes Environment America unique?

For one thing, we work at all levels of government to win changes that result in cleaner air, cleaner water, cleaner energy and more open spaces.

At the federal level, the organization has gained critical support for action to curb carbon pollution from power plants, restore clean water protections to America's streams and wetlands, spare conservation programs from funding cuts, and other issues you'll read about in this report.

In the states, our affiliates have done trail-blazing work, winning victories for solar power from Minnesota to Massachusetts and carbon-reducing initiatives from California to the Northeast.

In the courtroom, our attorneys have won dozens of court-ordered settlements that have reduced illegal air and water pollution in Texas, Pennsylvania and other states.

In short, Environment America is a multi-issue, multi-strategy group that gets results for our environment at multiple levels of American government and society.

Yet the most distinctive characteristic of Environment America might not be what we do but how we do it.

Many people know us best for our grassroots activism. It starts with the thousands of canvassers who hold face-to-face conversations with hundreds of thousands of Americans each year, raising awareness and building support for environmental protection among people across the country. But it doesn't end there.

This grassroots approach informs everything we do. In the long run, the changes we seek for our environment are possible only if we talk to, and listen to, enough people; only if enough people understand that a clean, healthy environment is first and foremost; and only if we keep working every day to involve more people in meeting and solving the challenges that confront us.

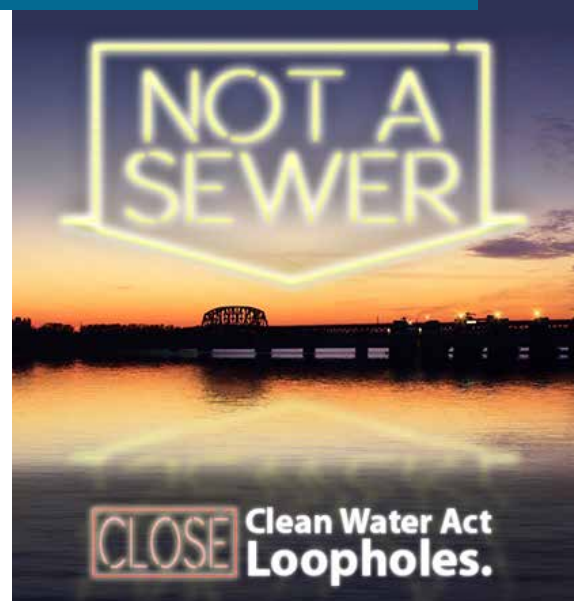
I'm grateful you've found our work and approach worthy of your support. Thank you.

Doug Phelps
President and Executive Director
The Public Interest Network



Clean Water for America

Polluters shouldn't be allowed to treat the waters we love like their own personal sewer. That's the message Environment America and our state affiliates took to more than 400,000 people in 2014, as part of a renewed call to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act. Together, we collected more than 200,000 public comments and built a coalition of businesses, elected officials and farmers to restore protections to America's waterways.



▲ Thousands took action in response to our online outreach efforts.

The EPA agreed to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act

After a chemical spill in West Virginia, a coal ash spill in North Carolina, drought plaguing the West, a toxic algae bloom in Ohio, and other pollution disasters, it's clearer than ever that restoring protections to America's waterways is crucial. On March 25, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act that have left more than half the nation's streams, and the drinking water for 117 million Americans, at risk for more than a decade. Environment America enthusiastically applauded the proposal and went to work to get it over the finish line.

800,000 people joined our call to action

More than 800,000 people sent public comments to the EPA backing the clean water proposal, with 200,000 coming from our supporters. Environment America also sought to engage influential constituencies, including local elected officials, family farmers and small business owners.

"If we want our waterways to be clean for future generations to enjoy, we must restore Clean Water Act protections now," said Ally Fields, clean water advocate with Environment America.

Wild exaggerations, outright falsehoods

On the heels of the EPA's announcement, opposition from some polluting industries intensified. Some agribusinesses launched a "Ditch the Rule" campaign, based in part on claims that the EPA was engaged in a massive "land grab" designed to regulate "puddles in driveways." Their allies in Congress even threatened to shut down the government if the EPA didn't back off.

The exaggerations were wild and often false, but they had their intended effect, giving some members of Congress all the reason they needed to support efforts to block the EPA. As 2014 drew to a close, Environment America worked to refute the industry's fanciful claims and show senators who were on the fence that the public wants our country to move forward on clean water, not backward.

206 million pounds of toxic chemicals dumped

In 2014, we worked to set the facts straight. In June, Environment America Research & Policy Center released "Wasting Our Waterways," a report highlighting the urgent need to protect our rivers, lakes and streams.

The report revealed that 206 million pounds of chemicals were dumped into America's waterways in 2012 alone, many of which are known to cause cancer and be harmful to children. To curb this massive release of toxic chemicals into our nation's water, we must step up Clean Water Act protections for our waterways and require polluters to reduce their use of toxic chemicals. The report earned coverage in more than 160 media outlets.



Top: Federal Clean Water Advocate Ally Fields updates staff on the campaign's progress.

Bottom: Across the country, people joined our call for clean water, submitting photo petitions to demonstrate support for closing loopholes in the Clean Water Act.



Global Warming Solutions

Together, we've made hard-won progress in the race to protect our children from the worst consequences of global warming. In June, after 6 million Americans urged President Obama to limit carbon pollution from dirty power plants, the Environmental Protection Agency finally proposed a bold Clean Power Plan. Environment America defended the EPA's plan from attacks by those in Congress who deny the science of climate change, as well as their fossil fuel industry backers.



Administrator Gina McCarthy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

▲ Executive Director Margie Alt (left) counters the testimony of Hal Quinn, President & CEO of the National Mining Association (right) at an EPA hearing.

▲ EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy announced a precedent-setting plan to curb carbon emissions from power plants in the U.S.

A groundbreaking step to tackle global warming

From severe storms to wildfires and drought, the consequences of global warming are becoming increasingly clear. This summer, we took a big step in tackling this threat when the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants. America's power plants are the number one source of the dangerous carbon pollution that is fueling global warming, and cleaning up power plants is the most important step we can take to reduce this threat.

Historic plan released to cut pollution from power plants

The EPA's proposal was dubbed the Clean Power Plan, with a goal of reducing carbon pollution from power plants by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, and a promise of ushering in more clean energy throughout the country.

It's a huge deal—but it's not a done deal. The fossil fuel industry lobby and other polluters are spending millions to oppose the EPA's commonsense action.

Following the announcement, our Global Warming Solutions campaign sought to connect the dots between the consequences of global warming that are already being felt across America and the meaningful impact of the Clean Power Plan.

Staff, supporters turned out to back Clean Power Plan

Environment America sent 25 organizers to towns across Pennsylvania and Colorado this summer with a goal of building a lasting grassroots network of more than 300 citizen "climate defenders" committed to solving global warming. These volunteers were recruited and trained to take on ongoing campaign responsibilities in their hometowns, making a significant contribution to winning carbon pollution limits on dirty power plants.

In June, the EPA held hearings on the Clean Power Plan in Denver, Pittsburgh, Atlanta and Washington, D.C. Environment America's staff testified and helped turn out citizens to show support for the plan.

During the summer, we also distributed literature making the case for global warming solutions to nearly 1 million households across the country.

In September, Environment America Research & Policy Center released an update of a report, entitled "America's Dirtiest Power Plants," that found our country's coal-fired power plants produced more carbon pollution than the entire economies of Russia, India, Japan, or any other nation besides China.

CO2 emissions from the nation's five most polluting power plants, 2011

21.3 million metric tons of CO2 emissions

Scherer, Georgia Power Co.

Fuel source: Coal



20.7 million metric tons of CO2 emissions

James H. Miller, Jr., Alabama Power Co.

Fuel source: Coal



18.8 million metric tons of CO2 emissions

Martin Lake, Luminant Generation Co., LLC

Fuel source: Coal



18.5 million metric tons of CO2 emissions

Labadie, Union Electric Co.

Fuel source: Coal



17.8 million metric tons of CO2 emissions

W.A. Parish, NRG Texas Power, LLC

Fuel source: Coal



TOTAL OUTPUT FROM THE NATION'S FIVE MOST POLLUTING POWER PLANTS

20.2 MILLION

Passenger vehicles emit equivalent pollution



(that's 97.1 million metric tons of CO2 emissions)

Source: America's Dirtiest Power Plants report, 2013



Go Solar

2014 was a breakout year for solar power in America. Another home or business in the United States goes solar every four minutes, and the rate keeps getting faster. By crafting and promoting state and local policies, Environment America and our state affiliates have played a major role in the clean energy boom and continue to work to defend and expand pro-solar initiatives.



▲ Charlie Fisher, with Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center, released "Wind Power for a Cleaner America," a report that found that wind power now displaces 68 million metric tons of global warming pollution.

Fueled by smart state, local policies, solar power tripled in three years

In 2014, Environment America called on our decision-makers to embrace solar power and enact policies and programs to help repower our country. Nationwide, the amount of solar power tripled between 2011 and 2013. This year, we won more pro-solar policies in Minnesota, Massachusetts and other states, and reported which states are leading the way on solar.

But solar isn't the only clean energy growing. Two leading wind projects, Cape Wind in Massachusetts and the Block Island Wind Farm in Rhode Island, took big steps closer to the finish line. The developers announced permits, leases and plans, and these two projects are now ready to begin offshore construction in 2015.

Report outlined path to solar success

In August, Environment America Research & Policy Center released a report revealing the states at the forefront of this solar revolution. The report, "Lighting the Way," found that 10 states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico and North Carolina—possess strong policies that are enabling increasing numbers of homeowners, businesses, communities and utilities to "go solar." These 10 states are responsible for 89 percent of the solar currently installed in the U.S., while representing only 26 percent of the population and 20 percent of the electricity consumption.

On June 21, Environment America and other coalition partners celebrated the summer solstice by organizing a "Solar Day of Action" to expand solar power in communities across the country. In response to our outreach efforts, more than 17,000 people emailed President Obama, urging him to put solar on federal buildings. Hundreds of people also shared our "Put Solar On It" image on Facebook and Twitter.

Offshore wind poised to repower Atlantic Coast

Meanwhile, wind power is also growing and could grow even more if our country harnesses our offshore wind resources. And according to Environment America Research & Policy Center's report, "Catching the Wind," wind energy is on the verge of getting a huge boost now that offshore wind farms are within reach. The report, released in July in conjunction with the National Wildlife Federation and with the support of more than 40 cosponsoring organizations and leaders, determined that:

- More than 1.5 million acres off the Atlantic Coast already designated for wind energy development could generate more than 16,000 megawatts of electricity (MW), enough to power more than 5 million homes.
- The public could save about \$350 million per year in energy costs from adding 1,200 MW of offshore wind energy to New England's grid, a modest projection based on areas already designated for offshore wind development.
- There is unprecedented momentum along the coast in advancing offshore wind power, with two projects within sight of the finish line and substantial areas of federal waters currently available for leasing. Eleven states have taken steps toward considering offshore wind development.



Electric cars put brakes on pollution

More than 220,000 electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles are on America's roads today, delivering real benefits for our health and our environment, according to a report released across the country in June by Environment America Research & Policy Center. In just the last two years, annual sales of electric vehicles have increased by 500 percent.

The report, "Driving Cleaner: More Electric Vehicles Mean Less Pollution," shows that electric vehicles could prevent more than 18 million metric tons of climate-changing carbon pollution annually in the U.S. by 2025. That's the equivalent of saving more than 2 billion gallons of gasoline per year, or eliminating tailpipe pollution from 3.8 million of today's cars and trucks.



Conservation America

With the Land and Water Conservation Fund facing funding cuts year after year, and set to expire altogether as early as 2015, Environment America worked this past year to show decision-makers that the public wants to protect our parks and other open spaces from pollution and development. We rallied people across the country to join our call on Congress to make preserving special places a priority.



▲ *Environment America is calling on President Obama to permanently protect Berryessa Snow Mountain in California and its surrounding area, including Lake Berryessa (pictured), by declaring it a national monument.*

Our work defended some of America's most iconic places

For nearly 50 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has protected the iconic places that make up our natural heritage, from the coast of California to the Grand Canyon to Cape Cod. But that fund is now facing drastic cuts, and may expire altogether. Environment America's grassroots work in 2014 raised public awareness of the threats facing some of the country's best places and the critical need to fight back against the current and reckless proposal to eliminate funding for our most successful parks and open space program. In a recent poll, 74 percent of Americans opposed these congressional funding cuts to our national parks. This year, Environment America urged our leaders to save and strengthen the LWCF.

50,000 joined our call to restore critical funding

Over just a few months in 2014, Environment America collected more than 50,000 signatures and more than 250 photo petitions, mobilizing small business owners and outdoor enthusiasts, conservationists and historians to take action and tell Congress not to zero out funding for the LWCF, as the conservation program reached its 50th anniversary.

Our national team built support for protecting places from Riverbend Park in Virginia to the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. In 2014, we ran outreach campaigns in five states to protect places from Cape Cod in Massachusetts, to Hocking Hills in Ohio, to Mount Rainier National Park in Washington and the Chattahoochee River National Recreation area in Georgia.

Two new national monuments declared

More than 200 state legislators also joined Environment America in calling on President Obama to fulfill his State of the Union promise to use his authority to protect America's public lands—and he did.

In 2014, we won two campaigns formally protecting California's Stornetta Public Lands and New Mexico's Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks as national monuments. We also launched new campaigns to protect the Grand Canyon watershed in Arizona and Berryessa Snow Mountain in California.

- In March, the president expanded the California Coastal National Monument to include Stornetta Public Lands, protecting more than 1,600 acres of beach, wetlands, dunes and waterways along northern California's scenic coastline.
- This past May, President Obama also permanently protected the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks after Environment New Mexico, our New Mexico state affiliate, joined other conservation groups in delivering more than 15,000 petition signatures to the president.

"We'll continue bringing people together to urge our leaders to make preserving special places a priority," said Margie Alt, Environment America executive director. "There are incredible places across the country that are at risk, and that's a threat we can't ignore."



Top: President Barack Obama signed an order declaring the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks in New Mexico a new national monument.

Middle: Environment America canvassers in Washington, D.C., thanked the president for permanently protecting the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

Bottom: Campaign Organizer Nathan Weaver with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell at the Stornetta Public Lands



Stop Fracking Our Future

From Pennsylvania to the coasts of California, the dirty drilling process known as fracking has boomed across the country, contaminating water, tearing up landscapes, and threatening public health and the environment in its wake. In 2014, Environment America knocked on doors across the country, collaborated with victims of fracking to share their stories, and joined with health professionals to urge our decision-makers to limit fracking for the sake of our environment and our communities.

1,000 doctors decried the dangers of fracking

Environment America called on the Obama administration to better protect communities from fracking. More than 1,000 doctors, nurses and other health professionals signed letters to President Obama and other decision-makers verifying that fracking and its toxic waste have real consequences for the health of nearby communities.

Last winter, Environment America Research & Policy Center collaborated with residents in Pennsylvania to release “Shalefield Stories,” a booklet of accounts of people living on the frontlines of drilling. From flammable tap water, to cancer-causing substances in the air, to severe illness, real people shared their stories and gave life to the alarming numbers that outline fracking’s environmental impacts.

Local ‘Fracktivists’ mobilized in California

In California, our local affiliate Environment California’s campaign offices talked with more than 130,000 people about the dangers of fracking. More than 50,000 people signed our petition, and 300 people called Gov. Jerry Brown urging him to shut the door on fracking before it’s too late.

Environment California’s staff also ran “fracktivist trainings” across the state, to help 100 local activists organize against fracking in their own communities, preparing them with tips on how to lobby their representatives, get their friends and neighbors to make phone calls, and write strong letters to the editor to gain a spotlight on the issue in the media.

Momentum is on our side: Recent polling shows that 68 percent of Californians now believe fracking doesn’t have a place in California.



Top: PennEnvironment’s Adam Garber delivered petitions to the Pennsylvania state Legislature against fracking.

Bottom: Canvassers hit the streets to educate Californians about the dangers of fracking and mobilize support to ban this dirty drilling in the state.

Keep Plastic Out of the Pacific

The world's largest ocean is also home to the world's largest collection of plastic debris. More than 3.5 million tons of trash is flowing in the currents of the Pacific right now, washing up on beaches, and harming wildlife. Environment America has been a leader in this effort for years, and in 2014, we won big victories in California and Oregon to reduce a major source of the pollution: plastic grocery bags.

Statewide plastic bag ban won in California

Environment America celebrated in September as California made history when Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags in grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores and food marts. More than 115 local governments in California joined our movement over the years and banned plastic bags in their own communities, including Los Angeles, Oakland and Long Beach.

Plastic bags are a direct threat to wildlife, like the Pacific leatherback sea turtles that mistake them for food. A study of more than 370 leatherback sea turtle autopsies found that 1-in-3 had plastic in their stomach, most often a plastic bag.

Fourth Oregon city banned the bag

In May, the city council in Ashland, Ore., voted to ban plastic bags. Bag bans have seen growing public support in Oregon, with the cities of Portland, Corvallis, and Eugene adopting similar bag bans since 2011.

Over the last year, our Oregon state group collected hundreds of signatures from citizens in Ashland in support of a plastic bag ban, as well as endorsements from nearly 100 local businesses. Environment Oregon has also worked with citizen activists in Bend, Salem, West Linn, Beaverton, Tigard and Forest Grove on initiatives to ban plastic bags.



Top: Environment California State Director Dan Jacobson spoke at a news conference with the senators who authored the bag ban bill.

Bottom: Environment Oregon canvassers show their support for banning single-use plastic bags.