

Your Winter Report

‘Yes, we canyon!’ Welcoming a new national monument

By Ellen Montgomery, director of our national public lands campaigns

With the stroke of a pen, last August the president established a new national monument on the threatened land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, permanently making this land off-limits to mining. This action protects about 900,000 acres of land from pollution.

We’re celebrating thanks to supporters like you who told President Biden that uranium mining doesn’t belong anywhere near this natural wonder.

You never forget your first visit to the Grand Canyon

No matter where you live, or how long ago you visited, you never forget your first glimpse of the Grand Canyon’s majestic walls; the deep hues of red, orange, yellow and green that shift by the hour; and the seemingly unfathomable distances from the rim to the canyon floor.

The Grand Canyon isn’t just a wondrous beauty for visitors, it’s also critical for wildlife. The park’s 1,900 square miles and the surrounding area serve as an ecological refuge for many threatened and endangered species such as the California condor, the Mexican spotted owl and the little brown bat.

The Grand Canyon is too important to destroy with toxic mining. More than 600 uranium mining claims surrounding the park, some as close as 10 miles from the park boundary,



Staff collect photo petitions at the Grand Canyon in support of its permanent protection from toxic uranium mining.

threatened to contaminate the greater Grand Canyon area with radioactive pollution.

New mining would have brought in heavy equipment to dig massive pits or pump chemicals into the groundwater. That groundwater feeds a river that supplies drinking water to 40 million Americans. Any one of the operations could leak radioactive materials into groundwater, or pollute the air with radioactive dust, threatening local residents, park visitors, as well as wildlife—from bald eagles and bighorn sheep to Gila monsters and desert tortoises.

Continued on page 3 ►

Thanks
for making it
all possible

WRAP Up Waste: A Make A Difference Day cleanup event

On one weekend in October, Environment Washington Research & Policy Center teamed up with University of Washington student organizations WashPIRG Campus Action, Beautify UW and Green Greeks to hold a community cleanup event on Make a Difference Day called “WRAP Up Waste.”

WRAP is the acronym for “Washington Recycling and Packaging” Act and is the name

the total plastic footprint—broken down by type of plastic—of its in-house brand, Kirkland Signature, by July 2024. The big box retailer has also committed to disclosing the percentage of recycled content used in its plastic packaging by that same date. Additionally, in December 2024, the company will release a 5-year plastic action plan that will outline steps the company will take to reduce plastic in its Kirkland Signature packaging.

“Costco’s recent commitments are a good step forward, but we hope this is just the beginning,” said Celeste Meiffren-Swango, director of our national Zero Waste program. “In the face of a plastic pollution crisis that’s growing more dire by the day and putting hundreds of wildlife species in harm’s way, retailers such as Costco have a responsibility to reduce the use of wasteful single-use plastic wherever and however they can.”

Costco’s commitments come after pressure from both shareholders and the general public.

State-by-state progress: Wind and solar energy tripled over past decade

In 2022, the United States produced more than three times as much solar, wind and geothermal power than the country did in 2013, with growth in all 50 states. That’s according to “Renewables on the Rise 2023,” an online dashboard unveiled on Oct. 11 by our research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group. You can check out the Renewables on the Rise 2023 dashboard and see data for Washington on our website.

“Abundant and clean renewable energy sources, most notably wind and solar, are increasingly playing a leading role in how we power our lives,” said Johanna Neumann, senior director of Environment America Research & Policy Center’s Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy. “The sooner we power our lives with renewable energy, the better it will be for our health and our planet.”

The data compiled for the 2023 dashboard predates the impact of expanded clean energy tax credits and other new federal incentives. Coupled with state clean energy goals and other programs, the federal incentives should spark even greater adoption of renewable energy in 2024 and beyond.

Get more updates on our work online at <https://environmentwashington.org>.

Staff



Environment Washington Advocate Pam Clough (far right) with volunteers during their “WRAP Up Waste” cleanup event.

of the producer responsibility bill supported by Environment Washington.

With more than 25 volunteers, we picked up more than 120 pounds of trash in and around Ravenna Park. In addition to picking up litter in our community, attendees learned about policy solutions to stop plastic pollution and improve waste management outcomes at the source, like establishing producer responsibility for packaging and paper products in Washington.

A special thanks to our event sponsors and volunteers, our supporters like you who make our work possible, and to state Rep. Julia Reed for her inspiring words about the power of individual action in advancing state-level policies to address the root cause of plastic waste.

Win against waste: Costco commits to reduce plastic use

Costco Wholesale has committed to increasing its transparency about its plastic use and developing a 5-year action plan to reduce the amount of plastic it uses. A growing body of data suggests that plastics and microplastics pose significant threats to public health and our environment.

Costco has committed to releasing data on



Toward a greener future

Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment Washington or Environment Washington Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentWashington.org



Deep Desert Photography via Shutterstock

Page 1 story continued: 'Yes, we canyon!'

For countless ecological, historical and cultural reasons, the Grand Canyon is too precious to risk the pollution that mining brings.

A decade of advocacy and action

For more than a decade, Environment Washington and our national network has worked with coalition partners to protect it permanently from mining and other polluting and extractive activities.

Back in 2012, we helped win a 20-year moratorium on new uranium mining claims surrounding the park. A decade later, we joined the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition to call on President Biden to establish a national monument on these threatened lands.

We were up against opposition from the mining industry—but we were successful in making the case for permanent protection.

Our research documented the risks of uranium mining, including contaminated water,

airborne uranium dust and toxic chemicals.

Our organizers helped win the support of key constituencies and earned coverage in local and national news outlets.

Our national network delivered more than 29,000 petition signatures last summer, many from members like you, opposing uranium mining in the Grand Canyon to the Biden administration. And our staff testified in Flagstaff, Arizona, to make the case for no new mining.

Thanks to President Biden and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland for designating the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. Congratulations to the tribes, our conservation community allies, outdoor business leaders and more who came together to help keep the Grand Canyon safe from dirty and dangerous uranium mining forever. And it's support from members and other environmentalists like you that allows us to defend our most special places from destruction.

Our staff testified in Flagstaff, Arizona, to make the case for no new mining.



Staff

Featured staff



Kimball Nelson

Pam Clough
Advocate

As an advocate with Environment Washington, Pam develops and runs campaigns to protect Washington's environment. Pam has worked on issues ranging from wildlife restoration, clean energy and climate solutions, plastic pollution, and clean water. Pam's organizing has helped reduce kid's exposure to lead in drinking water in Washington public schools, ban polystyrene foam packaging peanuts and food containers statewide, and win advances in clean building energy standards to advance climate solutions. Pam lives in Steilacoom, Washington, where she enjoys recreating on Puget Sound, skiing and hiking all year, and gardening.



Environment Washington and The Public Interest Network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.

505 Broadway Ave. E #129
Seattle, WA 98102
(206) 568-2850

Environment Washington

NON-PROFIT
ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 430



Your 2024 Winter Report

Our mission:

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Washington, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Washington's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Three surprising facts about bees

Most bees in the U.S. live very different lives than you may have heard. Here are three facts about wild bees that might surprise you:

1. They don't all hail the queen. European honeybees may be headed by a queen bee, but they're more the exception than the rule—more than 75% of all bee species are solitary and don't have a queen.

2. They don't all make honey. Bumblebees can make small batches of a honey-like

substance, and the cellophane bee brews a beer-like beverage from fermented pollen and agave nectar, but no wild bee produces the kind of honey that we eat.

3. They face extinction. Wild bees may be wildly diverse, but they all deal with the same threats: climate change, habitat loss and the widespread use of bee-killing pesticides.

And here's one more fact: Your support of Environment Washington gives our team of researchers, advocates and organizers the resources we need to win protections for all bees.

Together, we're calling on major corporations to stop selling bee-killing pesticides, urging lawmakers to expand bee-friendly habitat, and providing the public with tips and guides to help us all do our part to make the world a little more welcoming to bees.

Learn more fun facts about bees and how you can take action to save the bees on our website.



Dave Angelini