



Fiscal Year 2021 Program Report
Thanks for making it all possible

From the director

Every day, the news delivers more dire warnings about the state of our natural world.

Fewer than 400 Right whales remain in the North Atlantic. Fewer than 80 Southern Resident orcas survive in Puget Sound. Nearly 99 percent of western monarch butterflies have disappeared. Climate change is accelerating this loss of wildlife and threatening human life as well.

It would be naive to downplay the scale of these problems and heartless not to mourn the losses. But it would be irresponsible to conclude that there's nothing we can do—especially when solutions are all around us.

Our country has all of the clean, renewable power we need if we choose to use it. We can accelerate the transition to electric vehicles. U.S. corporations can reduce their use of plastic pollution and their sale of pollinator-killing pesticides. And on and on.

Environment North Carolina and our national network of 29 state environmental groups made progress on all of these issues and more in the past year. None of these problems are completely solved—not even close. But we keep chipping away, breaking down big problems and making them a little more manageable. Incremental change that leads to concrete results is our stock-in-trade because success, one step at a time, is how we build confidence in—and demand for—the changes that are still to come.

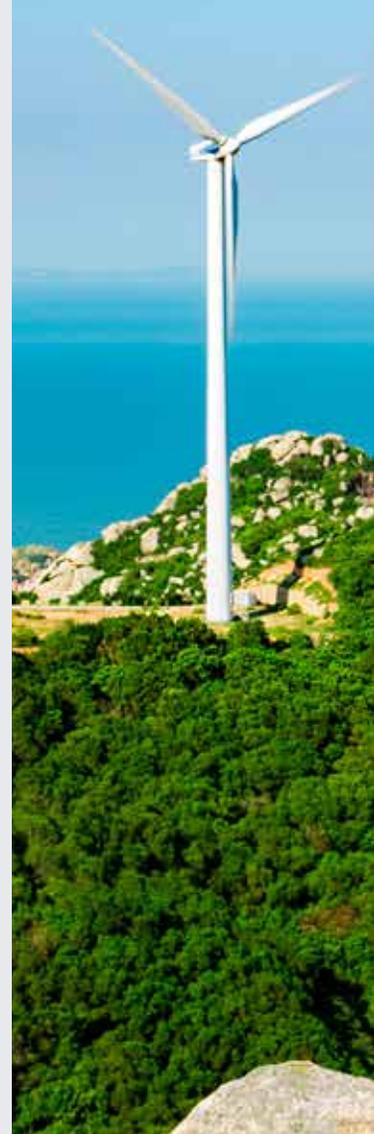
Our action and progress—all of which is made possible by your support—also provide fuel for hope. Not a passive hope, like that of spectators rooting for their team. Our hope is action-oriented, results-oriented, a hope that serves, as an ally once said, “as a hammer that we use in case of emergency to break the glass, sound the alarm and spring into action.”

We're reminded every day about the emergency our natural world faces. And every day, together with you and all of our friends, supporters and allies, we pick up that hammer.

Thanks for making it all possible.



Krista Early
Krista Early
Advocate



Clean, Green & Renewable Energy

We envision a healthier world powered by clean, renewable energy. With support from Environment North Carolina's members, our national network bolstered our nation's chances at harnessing our vast renewable energy potential. From our rooftops to our coasts, we keep taking steps toward a future powered by 100% clean energy.

Report: After years of advancement in clean technology, it's clear that 'We Have The Power'

JUNE 16, 2021: It's time for North Carolina to move beyond fossil fuels, and fortunately, we have the power to realize our clean, renewable energy potential.

That was the finding of the 2021 edition of our national research partner's "We Have The Power" report, released in June. According to the report, North Carolina has the technical potential to meet all its electricity needs more than 30 times over with wind and solar energy.

"To a visitor from an earlier century, America in 2021 would be unimaginably advanced in all ways but one: We still rely on dirty and dangerous fossil fuels to meet our energy needs," said Susan Rakov, chair of our national research partner's Clean Energy program.

"But it doesn't have to be that way. This report shows that between the sunshine and the wind, we have the potential to run our society on clean energy, today and in the future."

Executive order enacted, promising to boost North Carolina's offshore wind production

JUNE 9, 2021: North Carolina has the potential to meet all of its electricity needs more than 30 times over with wind and solar energy—and the state just took a major step toward tapping this potential.

On June 9, Gov. Roy Cooper issued an executive order that commits North Carolina to producing 8 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2040. The move, which follows a flurry of national and regional offshore wind advancements, also establishes a task force on offshore wind.

"Harnessing the massive potential of wind off our coast is a key component to transitioning our state to 100% clean energy," said Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center Advocate Krista Early. "With some of the greatest potential for offshore wind in the country, North Carolina stands to gain a lot from offshore investments."

Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center staff and members will continue advocating for clean energy policies and calling on Gov. Cooper to take bold climate action.



Environment North Carolina advocates and supporters have worked for years to bring us closer to a future powered by clean, renewable energy.



Reino Hyyppa



Mandy Apa



Celeste Meiffren-Swango



State Rep. Janeen Sollman



State Rep. Diane Herrin



Faran Savitz



Clockwise from top: Our staff spoke with legislators at our national network’s “United States Against Plastic” virtual rally; Staff talk to supporters about the campaign to get Amazon to stop selling bee-killing pesticides.



State Sen. Ben Allen



State Sen. Mona Das



Conservation

Across North Carolina, our wildlife and wild places need protection. This year, as bee populations dropped at alarming rates and our plastic waste crisis worsened, tens of thousands of supporters like you took part in campaigns to protect wildlife and the places we love.

Over 47,000 supporters told Amazon: Stop selling bee-killing pesticides

JULY 19, 2021: To save the bees, our staff have asked the world's largest online retailer to stop selling the pesticides that kill them. And we're not alone.

In March, Environment North Carolina and our national network kicked off our campaign to convince Amazon to take neonicotinoid pesticides (or "neonics")—the substances linked to troubling declines in bee populations—off its (virtual) shelves. By August, campaigners with our network had collected more than 47,000 petition signatures online and in 10 communities across the country.

"We need to reduce the use of this pesticide that's contributing to the collapse of our most important pollinators," said Malia Libby, our national network's Save the Bees campaign associate. "Amazon should do the right thing and take neonics off its shelves."

Our ask is far from unprecedented: The Home Depot and Lowe's have pledged to phase out the use of neonics on their live plants, and Lowe's has committed to taking the pesticides off its shelves altogether.

59,000 supporters, 40 lawmakers told Whole Foods to put 'planet over plastic'

MAY 18, 2021: A massive environmental crisis requires a massive call to action.

That's why Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center, along with our friends at U.S. PIRG Education Fund and the Student PIRGs, delivered a letter to Whole Foods on May 6, 2021—signed by nearly 60,000 supporters, including 40 state lawmakers—calling on the grocer to phase out single-use plastic packaging in its stores. Once an environmental leader that stopped using plastic bags at checkout in 2008, Whole Foods recently earned an "F" for its plastic policies in a report by the environmental group As You Sow.

"Nothing we use for a few minutes should pollute our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years," said Kelsey Lamp, Protect Our Oceans campaign director for our national research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center. "Companies that rely on single-use plastic must adopt more sustainable packaging options."

"Whole Foods should lead the way to a future where we put the planet over plastic."



Clockwise from top: In January 2021, our national network's supporters shared their electric vehicle (EV) stories in a series of EV testimonial videos; Our national Destination: Zero Carbon Campaign Director Morgan Folger calls for pro-electric vehicle policies in New Jersey.



Global Warming Solutions

The climate crisis is here, now. For years, Environment North Carolina has advanced concrete ideas for reducing global warming pollution. Last year, we moved forward a critical measure that tackles our nation's No. 1 source of global warming pollution and called on our governor to take bold climate action here in North Carolina.

Back on course: Biden administration moved to allow states to set stronger vehicle emissions standards

MAY 7, 2021: For nearly 50 years, federal law allowed California to set stronger clean car standards and more than a dozen other states to follow California's lead—until the previous administration tried to revoke their authority.

On April 26, the Biden administration started the process of undoing this action—checking off one of the “First things to fix” called for by Environment North Carolina in a series of 20 recommendations shared with the Biden team before they took office.

“Thank you President Biden, for taking this first step,” said Morgan Folger, director of our national network's Destination: Zero Carbon campaign. “Now it's time to reaffirm that states can and should lead the way for clean air and cleaner cars.”

Vehicle tailpipes are a major source of climate-changing, health-harming air pollution. A report from our research partners showed that in 2018, 108 million Americans lived in areas that experienced more than 100 days of degraded air quality.

Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center urged Gov. Cooper to act on climate

NOV. 20, 2020: For newly re-elected Gov. Roy Cooper, congratulations were quickly followed by urgent pleas for action on climate change.

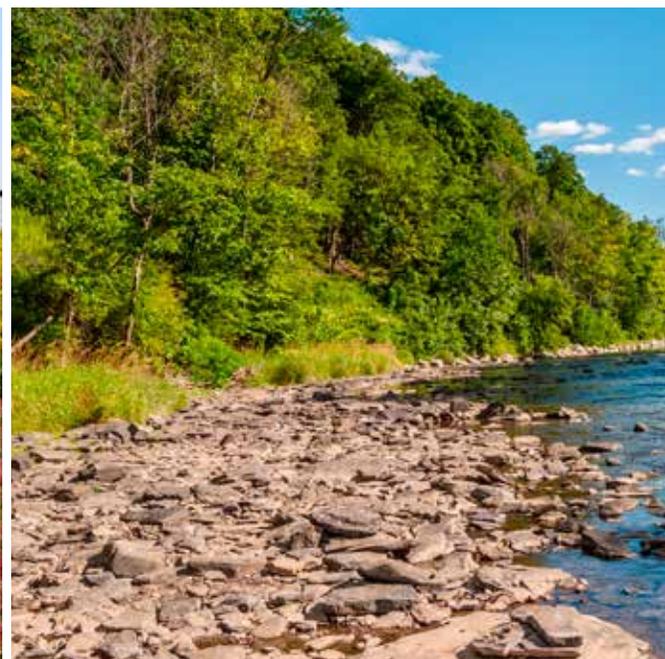
Following the Nov. 3 re-election of Gov. Cooper, at least 160 supporters of Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center sent the governor personal letters urging him to keep pushing for progress on climate change. Environment North Carolina also elevated the voices of these climate defenders in our four-part webinar series on climate action.

“If we want to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, we need Gov. Cooper to take bold climate action,” said Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center Advocate Krista Early. “North Carolinians know that our governor can be a huge champion for climate and clean energy, but only if we make our voices heard. That's why we're calling on him to take strong, decisive climate action and to put us on a path toward aggressive carbon reduction.”

Our network will continue supporting clean climate policies in the Tar Heel State.

States can and should lead the way for clean air and cleaner cars.

Morgan Folger
Director, Destination:
Zero Carbon Campaign



Clockwise from top: Clean Water for America Campaign Director John Rumpler, before giving testimony to Congress on funding needed to replace lead pipes and stop sewage overflows in February 2020; Our staff advocated for rain gardens (such as the one above), green roofs and other nature-based infrastructure that keep our waters cleaner by preventing runoff pollution from entering our streams, rivers and lakes.

Clean Water & Air

Keeping on the path to cleaner air and water requires constant vigilance—including making sure that we reinstate bedrock environmental protections that we lost under the Trump administration. Below, you'll find a report on our national network's campaign to restore our nation's strongest clean water protections and a blueprint to keeping our waterways safe with clean, green infrastructure.

Endangered streams, wetlands moved closer to regaining federal protection

JUNE 25, 2021: Polluters have been quick to take advantage of the Dirty Water Rule, which weakened protections for our nation's waterways. But these protections could be on their way back.

On June 9, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it would take steps toward repealing and replacing the Trump administration's "Navigable Waters Protection Rule." This rule stripped Clean Water Act protections from thousands of streams and wetlands, and allowed companies to win rulings stating that no protections applied to more than 750 waterways.

"Repealing and replacing the Dirty Water Rule is a vital step for America's rivers, lakes and bays—and for the drinking water of millions of Americans," said John Rumpler, senior attorney and clean water program director for our national research partner, Environment America Research & Policy Center.

Environment America Research & Policy Center now calls on the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to strengthen waterway protections.

'A Path to Cleaner Water': Our research partners showed how repairing infrastructure can help make our waters safe for swimming

DEC. 7, 2020: With billions of gallons of sewage and runoff polluting our nation's waterways and making us sick, something needs to change.

On Dec. 2, our national research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center published a report on how to fix our outdated water infrastructure. It summarized nearly two dozen case studies on projects that stop pollution—from conventional repairs to "green" infrastructure such as rain gardens.

The report helped educate the public and policymakers as Congress considered major infrastructure investments.

"Investing in water infrastructure works," said John Rumpler, co-author of the report and clean water director with Environment America Research & Policy Center. "We have the tools to stop sewage overflows and make our waterways safe for swimming."

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