

ANNUAL DONOR REPORT

Whidbey Environmental Action Network

2025



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A year at the intersection of science, law, and community

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In 2025, WEAN worked at the intersection of community voice, environmental science, and public accountability. From local land-use decisions to statewide shoreline policy, our focus was clear: ensuring that growth, governance, and stewardship on Whidbey and Camano Islands are guided by transparent government, an engaged public, and the best available science.

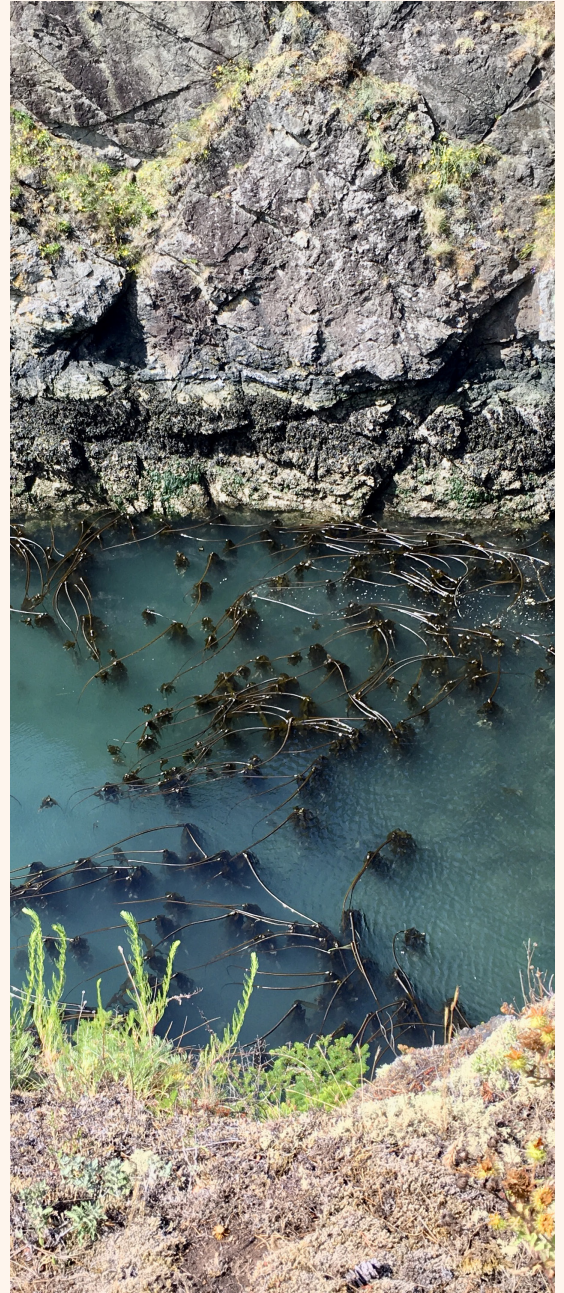
This year, we challenged Oak Harbor in court over their failure to conduct a required environmental review. We helped form a statewide coalition to strengthen shoreline protections. We made meaningful progress on forest stewardship through advocacy for PBRs reform. We deepened our reach into communities across Island County with multilingual surveys, neighborhood walks, and our first-ever in-person summer benefit, where we shared [this impact video](#). Also in 2025, we had the joy of welcoming three extraordinary young environmental professionals to our team.

None of this happens without you. Your generosity is what makes it possible for WEAN to show up—in the courtroom, in the commissioners' chambers, and in the community—year after year. Thank you for being part of this work.

With Gratitude,



Marnie Jackson, Executive Director



Nereocystis luetkeana (bull kelp) at Deception Pass State Park, by Marnie Jackson

Cover: *Asio flammeus* (short-eared owl) at Ebey's Landing, by Carlos Andersen



Merhynchites (rose weevil) by Neil O'Sidhe. Below, *Fritillaria affinis* (checker lily) by Marnie Jackson

Our mission and vision

Our mission is to protect ecosystems on Whidbey, Camano, and beyond through civic education, policy advocacy, and litigation.

We envision an Island County whose protected environment supports myriad species in harmony, and whose engaged community recognizes the interdependence of all life and actively participates in stewardship of and advocacy for our shared home.

In gratitude for tribal stewardship

We acknowledge the first peoples of this bioregion, including the Snohomish, Lower Skagit, Kikiallus, Stillaguamish, and Suquamish peoples, and those affiliated with the Tulalip Tribes and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. They are among the many Coast Salish tribes whose interdependent relationships with these lands, waters, and beings have nurtured the biodiversity of these islands over countless generations. Their ongoing stewardship is vital to the Salish Sea and beyond.



Four strategic priorities

WEAN's work is organized around four mutually reinforcing priorities. Each depends on and strengthens the others.

01

ADVANCING COUNTY-WIDE CONSERVATION

Building partnerships, data analysis, and policy campaigns for a biodiverse, climate-resilient Island County.

03

HOLDING JURISDICTIONS ACCOUNTABLE

Ensuring laws like the Growth Management Act are followed, through watchdogging, advocacy, and litigation.

02

EDUCATING & ACTIVATING COMMUNITY

Closing the gap between public concern and effective local civic action by educating and empowering advocates.

04

SUSTAINING OPERATIONAL HEALTH

Building institutional capacity and deepening relationships with donors to sustain lasting outcomes.

People power our work. Thank you!

STAFF

Marnie Jackson [EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR](#)
Amanda Bullis [ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR](#)
Violet Bleumer [ENVIRONMENTAL DATA ADMIN.](#)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andrea Linton [CHAIR](#)
Linda LaMar [VICE CHAIR](#)
Belinda Griswold [SECRETARY](#)
Gabbi Korror [TREASURER](#)
Kim Drury [DIRECTOR](#)
Jackie Lasater [DIRECTOR](#)
Neil O'Sidhe [DIRECTOR](#)
Andrea Trisler [DIRECTOR](#)

FORMER BOARD MEMBERS (2025)

Leslie Athey [TREASURER](#)
Skip Demuth [DIRECTOR](#)
Joaquin Swett-Fosmo [DIRECTOR](#)

2025 STAFF, INTERN & CONSULTANTS

Reilly McVay [ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ADMIN.](#)
Natalie Estrada [COMMUNICATIONS INTERN](#)
Diana Sandoval [EQUITY CONSULTANT](#)
Mary Elizabeth Himes [EQUITY CONSULTANT](#)
Holly Harlan [DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT](#)
Chan "Yessi" Ye [BOOKKEEPER](#)

FOUNDERS

Marianne Edain [ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISOR](#)
Steve Erickson [LEGAL ADVISOR](#)

Moving shoreline advocacy from local action to **statewide collaboration**

Along with mission-aligned partners—Futurewise, Sierra Club, Washington Conservation Action, Friends of the San Juans, and Washington Audubon—WEAN formed an informal statewide coalition to advocate for stronger SMA enforcement tools for illegal shoreline armoring. To educate the public and policy-makers about this critical issue, WEAN launched the 'State of Our Shorelines' ArcGIS StoryMap. See the Storymap here: www.tinyurl.com/WEANshorelines.

THE STATE OF OUR SHORELINES

Shoreline armoring is decimating forage fish habitat, and with it the Chinook salmon and orca communities that depend upon these critical nurseries on our shorelines. Visual tools and collaborative advocacy can help turn this complex policy challenge into shared understanding—and shared solutions.

“ I just wanted to reach out and say how much I enjoyed reading the State of Our Shorelines story map published by WEAN. I found it very informative, especially the additional links to other resources and maps. ”

—Austin Hoofnagle
PLANNER

Island County

Progressing on forest protection through **PBRS** reform

WEAN's 2024 advocacy to the Island County Commissioners and Assessor's Office got Public Benefit Ratings System reform onto the work plan in 2025. WEAN brought forward detailed recommendations to improve the program, supporting climate-wise and tax-smart land use and giving landowners a practical path towards stewardship versus logging. [In November, the Commissioners went on the record and agreed:](#)

A NEW PATHWAY IS NEEDED FOR FOREST PROTECTION

All three Commissioners agreed to create a dedicated transfer mechanism for Designated Forest landowners who want to move into the Public Benefit Rating System for stewardship purposes. They directed planning staff to design a point structure that makes that transition viable.

THE CURRENT POINT SYSTEM UNDERVALUES FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Commissioners acknowledged that the existing, significant gap between the Designated Forest tax benefit (~90%) and what PBRS currently offers stewardship-focused landowners (as little as 10%) is a barrier to conservation, and that closing that gap is a legitimate County goal.

ADMINISTRATIVE HURDLES AND COSTS MUST BE LOWERED

The Board and the Assessor's Office align on reducing enrollment barriers. The Board reached agreement in principle with the Assessor's Office to waive the \$1,000 PBRS application fee for DF-to-PBRS transfers. Sharing DF data could reduce the administrative burden of those applications.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Adoption is on hold during Comprehensive Plan finalization. For now, our advocacy continues. We'll keep making the case that landowners deserve a compelling choice between stewardship and extraction and that a well-designed tax system can reward the right decision for forests, wildlife, and the public. As always, we'll advocate for reforms to protect additional ecosystems.


Uplifting civic voices for ecosystem protection

Designed and taught by WEAN staff, each day-long *Finding Your Civic Voice* workshop engages people of varying ages and experience levels in the process of finding their own unique voices as environmental and civic advocates. Participants learn about the public comment process, craft their own remarks, and workshop their comments in front of a supportive audience of peers.

Lana Rasmussen, pictured below, shared her passion for prairies with County Commissioners after taking the workshop. Months later, the Commission referenced her remarks when speaking to the need for prairie protection. Read an interview and Lana's comment on our blog: [A New Civic Voice for Prairie Ecosystems](#).

A CONTINUING PROGRAM WITH DONOR SUPPORT

The first three sessions of *Finding Your Civic Voice* were supported with funding from Washington's [Climate Commitment Act](#). It is now an on-going, donor-funded offering.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing sunglasses and a plaid shirt, is sitting in a lush green field. In the background, there is a large body of water (a lake or bay) and a forested hillside under a clear sky. The woman is smiling and looking towards the camera. A picnic basket is visible on the ground next to her.

“This workshop taught me that I do have a voice and that my opinions and values for the environment matter.”

—*Lana Rasmussen*
RESTORATION ECOLOGIST

Holding the line on environmental review in Oak Harbor

Appellate Hearing April 21, 2026

The Oak Harbor City Council passed the profoundly unpopular Ordinance 1999 in August 2024, stripping citizens of their right to vote when the City proposes to sell or transfer public park lands to private entities.

WEAN challenged the adoption of Ordinance 1999, having already raised concerns during the public comment period that an **environmental review was required under SEPA** for this significant land-use policy change.

Though initial complaints were dismissed by Island County Superior Court, WEAN has appealed. WEAN's appeal asserts that the Island County Superior Court erred in granting the City summary judgment and dismissing WEAN's SEPA claim, and a hearing is scheduled for April 2026.

Skipping environmental review sets a dangerous precedent for every community that depends on SEPA being fairly and lawfully applied.

[Read Our Appeal Opening Brief online.](#)

WHAT IS SEPA?

The State Environmental Protection Act is often described as the state's environmental charter. It was enacted in 1971 to ensure environmental values are considered during agency decision-making.

- Aug 13, 2024 Oak Harbor passes Ordinance 1999
- August 30 WEAN files complaint
- April 11, 2025 Island County Superior Court judge dismisses. WEAN immediately files appeal.
- Apr 21, 2026 Appellate Court hearing scheduled, with an Oak Harbor venue.

Special thanks to **Oak Harbor Garry Oak Society** and **Oak Harbor Garden Club** for their stewardship and protection of Oak Harbor's parks.

Empowering the next generation of environmental advocates

WEAN's vision depends on nurturing early-career environmental leaders. In 2025, we welcomed three.

Natalie Estrada, a Communications and Social Media Intern from Seattle University, designed WEAN's 2025 Pride pins and stickers and energized our social media presence—keeping environmental issues approachable, engaging, and fact-based. We congratulate Natalie on her 2025 graduation. [Visit our blog for an exit interview with Natalie.](#)

Reilly McVay, Environmental Policy Administrator, indexed three years of public meeting recordings and authored policy recommendations for submission to Island County to help shape planning.

Violet Bleumer, Environmental Data Administrator, compiled and analyzed public records on mitigation variances. This will inform a forthcoming Storymap and strengthen WEAN's data-driven approach to wetland protection. Thank you, Natalie, Reilly, and Violet!



Reilly McVay, left, and Violet Bleumer at our 2025 Summer Benefit. Amanda Bullis photo

REFLECTION FROM REILLY:

“Growing up on Whidbey Island, I always had a more passive appreciation for our natural environment. This organization and the people within it have taught me that an active appreciation is necessary if we want to keep it.”

Expanding public participation in comprehensive planning

Island County's Comprehensive Plan will guide land use, housing, transportation, and environmental protection decisions through 2045. In 2025, WEAN focused on helping ensure that the update process meaningfully reflects community input and meets legal obligations for public participation.

In order to counter the false narrative that farming, housing, and agriculture have conflicting goals, WEAN worked with partners across these issue areas to obtain grant funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act (CCA). Goosefoot administered the grant.

In partnership with Island Roots Housing and the Agricultural Resources Committee, WEAN engaged equity consultants, offered educational workshops, and gathered community input on housing, water, land use, and environmental justice issues. Consultant Diana Sandoval reviewed the last adopted Comprehensive Plan through an equity lens.

WEAN's "Finding Your Civic Voice" workshops taught community to engage in the public comment process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS

Island Roots Housing *creates housing affordable to people who live and work in Island County, with an initial focus on workforce rental housing. Generations Place, their 14 unit project in Langley, opens in Summer 2026.*

Agricultural Resources Committee of Island County *advocates, educates, and builds connections to support Island County's farmers, ranchers, food processors, and other agricultural entities.*

Goosefoot *supports essential needs, helps local businesses grow, preserves historic places and rural landscapes, and connects neighbors.*

The **process** is a **product**: lessons from working in consortium

In February 2025, WEAN reported to Island County planners on 352 survey responses from across Whidbey and Camano Islands. Results revealed deep concern about groundwater contamination, habitat decline, wetland loss, and aquifer recharge, with nine out of ten respondents worried about each issue. Forests, shorelines, and wetlands were identified as most urgently needing protection, while wildlife corridors and salmon habitat emerged as top conservation priorities.

This environmental survey was one of several conducted by our Community Based Organizations Consortium with Climate Commitment Act funding from the Washington State Department of Commerce. In partnership with Island Roots Housing and the Agricultural Resources Committee and with support from consultant Mary Elizabeth Himes, our consortium conducted multilingual surveys and in-person outreach to communities with a focus on reaching residents of Oak Harbor and Camano Island.

The experience and results underscore the importance of inclusive, iterative, community-driven planning. [View our Consortium presentations to planners.](#)

LOOK FOR COMMON GOALS

Farmers, environmental advocates, and affordable housing advocates share the goals of enhancing community infrastructure to support health, increase resilience, and more equitably enhance the best qualities of our islands.

SEEK NEEDED VOICES

Our laws, policies, and previous comprehensive plans—in Island County and around the state—have disproportionately been shaped by people with identities of privilege. Some voices are missing from the conversation.

HOST CREATIVE SPACE

Our community has changed a lot since 2016 (the date of our last Comprehensive Plan adoption) and will continue to change. Circumstances—including climate change—require us to become more nimble, adaptive, regenerative, and interdependent. We need creativity in planning.

THE PROCESS IS A PRODUCT

Design for collaborative and inclusive dialog is, in itself, an exercise in being the kind of community we need—well-resourced, interconnected, and moving together toward a healthy, equitable, and resilient future.

STRONGER TOGETHER, WISER IN COMMUNITY

Reflections from our partners

“Whidbey Environmental Action Network has a much deserved reputation as a leader and innovator in protecting fish and wildlife habitats and rare plants. Several of its wins in the State of Washington Court of Appeals are frequently cited in cases seeking to protect fish and wildlife habitats. WEAN couples this work with close connections to the people and environment of Island County. Futurewise is proud to work with WEAN on its important work.”

Tim Trohimovich
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND LAW

Futurewise

“Whidbey Environmental Network’s consistent and strong work to advocate for improved environmental protection is a huge asset to the environmental non-profit space. The work they have done on shoreline armoring on Whidbey and Camano Islands is critically important if we are to effectively protect and restore nearshore habitats in the face of a changing climate. Washington Conservation Action has loved working alongside the talented individuals at WEAN for the current Shoreline Management Act rulemaking and always looks forward to working with WEAN at every opportunity.”

Robinson Low
HABITAT POLICY SENIOR MANAGER

Washington Conservation Action

Sialia currucoides (mountain bluebird) at Pacific Rim Institute by Carlos Andersen



“WEAN fills a vital niche in our community: holding the line when environmental protections are ignored, sounding the alarm when ecosystems are endangered, and empowering residents to participate meaningfully in civic processes. Just as importantly, WEAN helps co-create the conditions for collective action—weaving organizations, neighbors, and agencies into a more coherent whole by strengthening our collective synergistic capacity that our island demands. Their work makes it possible for all of us—human and more-than-human—to imagine and co-create a flourishing future.”

David Haskell
LANDSCAPE STEWARD

ReGenerate Whidbey

“Whidbey Environmental Action Network brings dedication, deep-rooted knowledge, and a strong connection to Island County’s communities to the coalitions and partnerships they join. Their commitment is evident in the meaningful work they lead and the thoughtful way they share and communicate that work. Friends of the San Juans is glad to collaborate with WEAN and to learn together and exchange expertise with such an effective organization.”

Magali Cota
LEGAL DIRECTOR AND STAFF
ATTORNEY

Friends of the San Juans

“ Our work at the Land Trust depends on landowners who willingly choose conservation—but not every place we care about has that. WEAN’s dogged defense of threatened island ecosystems is critical, often opening the door for permanent protection later on. Neither approach could fully succeed on its own, and I’m grateful WEAN is there to ensure these vital places have a chance to persist into the future. ”

Ryan Elting, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Whidbey Camano Land Trust

2025 FINANCIALS

Building toward full staffing

In 2023, with the encouragement and support of thought partners and donors, WEAN's founders and board took a bold step: for the first time in nearly 40 years of ecosystem defense, they hired a full-time Executive Director charged with creating a staffed, next generation organization. WEAN has been deliberately investing in its capacity to meet the needs of this moment and future generations. Three years in, we're well on our way to longterm, sustainable mission delivery as a staffed organization.

THREE YEARS OF INTENTIONAL GROWTH—2023 to 2025

2023

FIRST STAFFED YEAR

\$175,262

First year with paid staff, ED hired. Founders transition to consulting roles.

Net -\$9,467

2024

INVESTING IN CAPACITY

\$353,455

Revenue doubles. Team expands. Programs deepen. Strategic infrastructure built.

Net -\$25,661

2025

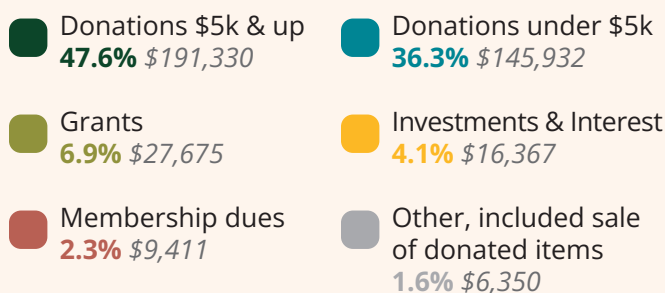
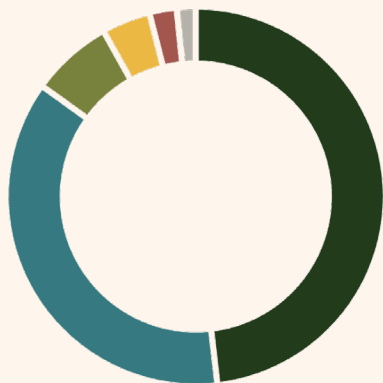
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

\$401,562

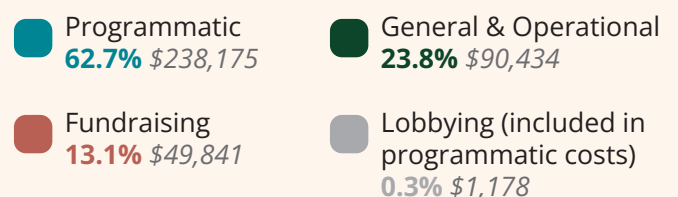
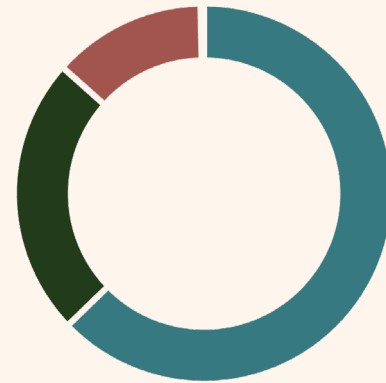
Team expands. Programs continue. First staffed year ending in the black.

Net +\$28,283

2025 REVENUE BY SOURCE



2025 EXPENDITURES BY AREA



In our third year as a staffed organization, 63 cents of every dollar went to mission delivery, even as we invested in systems and tools to do even better in the years ahead.

OUR DONORS

The power of relationship

WEAN's work is possible because of people who stay involved, keep in touch, and give again. Year after year, donors who believe in this mission choose to renew that commitment—and that loyalty is what makes everything else possible. We are profoundly grateful for all of it: the steadfastness of those who never left, the trust of those just arriving, and the generosity of those who found their way back. Your support is what allows us to show up, year after year, in defense of nature.

2025 TOTAL DONORS

332

Up from 206 in our first staffed year—a 61% increase in three years.

RETAINED DONORS

199

Donors who gave in both 2024 and 2025—double the 99 retained in 2023.

RETAINED DONOR REVENUE

\$308,986

Given by returning donors in 2025—89% of all gift revenue that year.

DONOR COUNTS BY RETENTION STATUS—2023 TO 2025

DONOR TYPE	2023	2024	2025	
FIRST-TIME DONORS <i>New to WEAN</i>	35	57	68	+19%
RETAINED DONORS <i>Gave the prior year as well</i>	99	148	199	+34%
RETURNING DONORS <i>giving again after some time away</i>	72	106	65	
TOTAL DONORS TO WEAN BY YEAR	206	311	332	

Our relationships are WEAN's most important assets—more durable than any single campaign, and more powerful than any one gift. Thank you, donors, for sticking with us and helping us mount strategic, sustainable environmental defense in this moment and for generations to come.

2025 METRICS

A year in numbers

OUR ORGANIZATION

4
STAFF

Up from two in 2024 with the addition of two part time administrative roles.

332
DONORS

Up 7% over 2024. Our donors make our nature defense work possible.

117
MEMBER
HOUSEHOLDS

In our formal membership program, launched in 2025.

1402
SUBSCRIBERS

Receiving WEAN's monthly environmental newsletter and calls to action.



Photos, clockwise: Marnie Jackson, Natalie Estrada, and Amanda Bullis by Allyson Meyer; Deer Lagoon driftwood and birdwatchers by Marnie Jackson

COMMUNITY REACH

12
PODCAST EPISODES

Published on the Action Hour in 2025, covering topics from forests to shores.

2,478
STORYMAP VIEWS

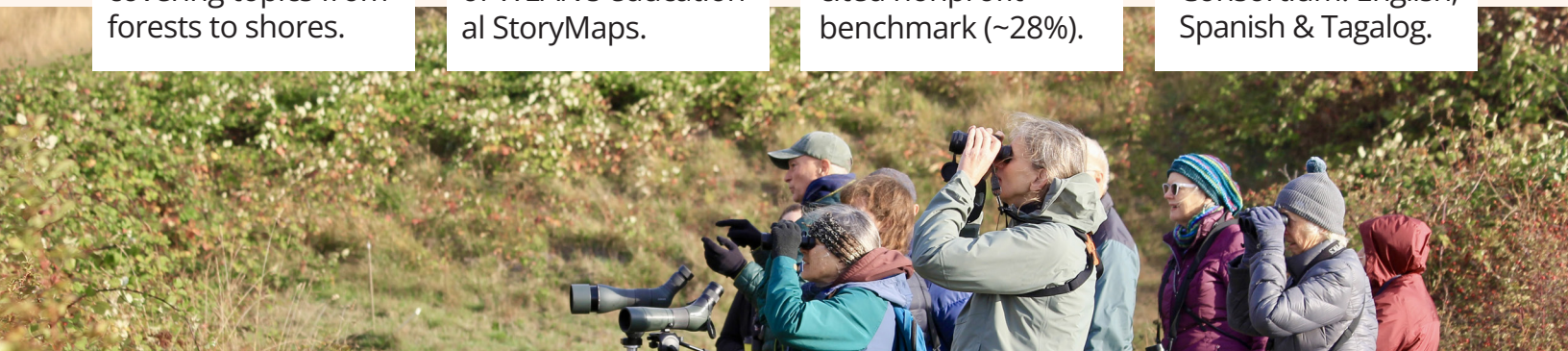
For "The State of Our Shorelines," the first of WEAN's educational StoryMaps.

54%
EMAIL OPEN RATE

Roughly double the most commonly cited nonprofit benchmark (~28%).

3
LANGUAGES

Used to engage community in Consortium: English, Spanish & Tagalog.



ADVOCACY & ACCOUNTABILITY

300+
COMMENTS

Public comments documented from WEAN's community for comp. planning.

15
ORG PARTNERS

Advancing state and local policy goals through formal and informal coalitions.

800+
PAGES

Submitted by WEAN to Island County as guidance for the 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

191
PUBLIC MEETINGS

Of County Board, Planning Commission, & Cities tracked and summarized.

A glimpse of what's at stake

80,000

ACRES OF WESTERN WASHINGTON FOREST ARE PROJECTED TO BE LOST TO DEVELOPMENT AND CONVERSION FROM 2019 TO 2030

according to the [Washington State Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) 2024 Forest Action Plan Annual Report](#).

Defending the Growth Management Act and its promise for smart, equitable, environmentally just growth in Washington happens county-by-county. We're leaders in this work.

1 in 4

MILES OF ISLAND COUNTY SHORELINE IS ARMORED, AND 85% OF ARMOR ADDED FROM 2016 TO 2023 WAS UNPERMITTED

according to a [2024 survey by Herrera Environmental Consultants](#) for the Island County Marine Resources Committee.

In addition to educating Island county residents and elected leaders, WEAN is working with coalition partners across Puget Sound to call for enforcement of the Shoreline Management Act.

7 of 25

TESTED STREAMS IN ISLAND COUNTY MET WATER QUALITY STANDARDS IN 2024, DOWN FROM 14 IN 2023

according to [Island County's Natural Resources WY2024 Surface Water Quality Report](#).

We've developed a data analysis program to study gaps between state-mandated wetland damage mitigation and real outcomes. Through education of the public and advocacy to decision-makers, we strive to reverse this downward water quality trend.

TRIBUTES

In honor and in loving memory



GIFTS IN HONOR

Honoring *those still with us*

We were grateful to receive gifts in honor of the following individuals. We thank our generous donors as well as these honorees for their longstanding commitment to ecosystem protection.

Marianne Edain

Steve Erickson

Chris & Amy Gulick

Linda Morris

“A gift in honor of someone is a way to say, ‘thank you for loving this place. I see your commitment. I’m committed too.’”

—Marnie Jackson

WEAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
giving in honor of WEAN founders
Marianne Edain and Steve Erickson

GIFTS IN MEMORY

Remembering *those we have lost*

These departed community members were, and are, deeply beloved. We are grateful for their lives of service, and for their loved ones who chose to honor their memories with a contribution to WEAN's nature defense.

John Comer

Karen S. Kelly

Dr. John R. Magsoll

Elliott Menashe

Tex Richardson

Ed Severinghaus

EDITOR'S NOTE

Another beloved friend, donor, and strategic partner to WEAN—Nancy Nordhoff—passed away on January 7, 2026. She will be memorialized in our 2026 Donor Report.

Grow with us

BECOME A MEMBER

As a WEAN member, you gain voting rights, strengthen our legal standing, and join a network of activists and advocates working to protect the environment on Whidbey, Camano, and beyond.

PARTICIPATE

Join us at upcoming events—a WEAN's In Your Neighborhood walk, a coffee talk, our Summer Benefit, or even a picnic with Melvin the donkey (date to be announced)! Watch our website for details.

LEAVE A LEGACY

These lands and waters connect us across generations. A bequest to WEAN ensures that today's care shapes tomorrow's outcomes for the places, ecosystems, and communities we cherish.

DONATE

Your gift turns love for nature into strategic defense of our Island home.

STAY INFORMED


Subscribe to our newsletter, attend a workshop, and raise your voice for the places and beings that you love.

REQUEST ANOTHER FORMAT

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This page, Pseudacris regilla
(Pacific chorus frog), by Neil
O'Sidhe. Facing page, *Uria*
aalge (Common murre) by
Marnie Jackson

A few of our **furriest** volunteers

Scooter

Tabling with WEAN at the Penn Cove Water Festival



Josie

Having a blast at a WEAN team retreat



Blue

Tabling with WEAN at South Whidbey Pride



Moon

SuperviZZing staff at the WEAN office



Freda

Boosting morale at a Civic Voice workshop



Tenakee

Bringing founders Steve and Marianne for a visit



Kimi

Leading a "WEAN's In Your Neighborhood" Walk at Strawberry Point. Pictured with, from left: Amanda Bullis, Carole Dawes, Pam Bishop, and Annette Stillwell

