



Kitsap Environmental Coalition – Annual Report for 2021

In August 2021, KEC celebrated its 3rd Anniversary with a gathering at Point No Point. It was our first in- person, face-to-face meeting in over a year. It was great to see one another outdoors! We continued to suspend in-person in-house meetings during 2021. We're working hard on adjusting to our changing world. It is all a stark reminder of how important our mission is—to educate and advocate for safe water, air, and soil to support a sustainable environment.

KEC is using multiple approaches in pursuing its mission. They include member action in their neighborhoods; education and outreach; networking across the state and nationally around key issues; and engaging with county and state leaders regarding issues affecting the environment in Kitsap County.

Here are highlights of KEC actions in 2021 as reported at our annual public meeting in September 2021 with a few updates since then. For each of the topics, you'll find an article in the Stories section of our website that provides more details.



NETWORKING

KEC recognizes that environmental issues in our county are tied to bigger systems of government, corporate power, and lack of public information. KEC cannot address them alone. As we band together at state and regional levels, we can start to make a difference that matters for our county. We are actively involved in three networks:

1. 350 WA Network. In 2020 KEC affiliated with 350 WA Network which is part of the parent global organization, www.350.org. The network is addressing climate change and racial justice. The network provides many valuable educational, organizing, and advocacy tool kits.
2. Pacific Northwest Forest Climate Alliance. In 2021 the 350 WA Network spawned a special network focused on forestry. This group is now an official work group within the Pacific Northwest Forest Climate Alliance that also is active in Oregon.
3. WA Community Rights Network (WACRN). The WA Community Rights Network (WACRN) has recently been launched with the support of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF). This network brings Washington communities together to build collective power to protect their rights and the rights of nature. KEC is a member of this network.



KEC REACHES OUT BY SIGNING ON

We have signed on in support of various groups and issues that are working on issues of importance to our members. For example, we recently signed a petition from #CruiseFreeSalishSea working to protect Orcas, and we signed an amicus brief in support of our children's right to a healthful environment, including a stable climate.



LOCAL PROJECTS

Tree Planting: KEC worked with the Kitsap County community to plant about 970 trees in the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park in November 2020. The story on our websites gives more information about the preparation as well as the tree planting. By the way, the trees have been checked on regularly and are mostly doing very well!

Scotch Broom Brigade:

KEC, along with a number of other Kitsap County residents, have been quite concerned about the insidious growth of scotch broom after clear cutting. KEC responded to a request from a park steward. We came together, walked up a very long path (#1300) in the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, and began lopping. Over a number of days our volunteers managed to almost clear that path! A special shoutout to Lisa Hurt, Carol Price, Sue DeArman and friends.

Clearing Invasive Weeds:

Sue DeArman has been a major force since the spring of 2020 in working with the Edgewater Beach Community board to stop the use of the herbicide, Crossbow as a weed-control agent. Read her story on our websites about stopping such spraying. Be inspired to do likewise.

Eglon/Rose Point Forest Trust Land:

There has been much concern within KEC and the North Kitsap community about the possible clear cutting of Eglon Forest which is a state trust land. KEC has been involved in many actions in 2021 to get the word out to the community about the possible clearcutting of the forest and also to work with the legislature and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on getting funding for the Trust Land Transfer program.

We are pleased to report that KEC recently learned that DNR will not be considering these trust lands for harvest again until at least 2030!



COUNTY ISSUES

In 2021, KEC has been working with the county on a number of issues related to protecting the environment and addressing the Growth Management Plan. We are especially concerned about environmental impacts and social justice related to housing development and other development. KEC has been involvement in issues related to the building of the new North

Kitsap Maintenance Facility as well as the variances to county rules that are endangering wetlands and giving preference to developers over the community's environmental wellbeing.



WA STATE ACTIONS

Although COVID has seriously dampened KEC members' involvement in direct protest actions, members have been active through other means of speaking truth to power about environmental issues. For example, KEC members have spoken out at nearly every monthly meeting of the Washington Board of Natural Resources (BNR) this year to call out deceptive uses of research by the timber industry, lack of attention to the well-being of the forests as a whole, and the overall negative climate and environmental impact of the timber sales on state trust lands.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022

KEC is now in the process of setting priorities and forming more targeted working teams for 2022. We are doing it in a way that allows for continual incorporation of new ideas, people, and issues. Each team will focus on one or two top priority actions. The teams include not only people who are actively carrying out the team's work. They also include people who are very interested in the team's work but can't be actively involved now for various reasons. We welcome "lurkers", those who are eager to learn more but can't contribute to the activities, and those who can also contribute financially. If you share our mission, please join us in whatever way works for you.