



# PACIFIC RIVERS FREE FLOW

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Mike Morrison - Board Chair

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Pacific Rivers has a prominent place in the history of Northwest environmental activism and a long record of fighting for its mission, "...to protect and restore the watersheds of the west to insure river health, biodiversity, and clean water for present and future generations."

The pursuit of that mission and the organization itself have taken a variety of forms since 1987, when the organization was founded. For example, founding board member Rick George returned to and has served on the Board since 2016. The organization has remained vital and relevant, has undergone challenges and changes, but has kept steadfast focus on its mission.

Our office remains, essentially, closed due to COVID and board meetings have been held remotely. Public gatherings, appropriately, have been curtailed. Covid restrictions have hampered our ability to get out among our supporters and share our excitement about the work we are doing. Losing in-person board meetings has been difficult—the board is comprised of a diverse group of folks who all like one another and enjoy working together. We really miss seeing you and one other.

Nonetheless, I am pleased to report to you on some of Pacific Rivers' many accomplishments since the publication of the July issue of Freeflow. I urge all of you to take a look at our website, a trove of information.

- In Washington State, we are a leader in the coalition, including Tribal partners, seeking non-dam alternatives to address flooding on the Chehalis River, thus protecting that watershed and its stressed anadromous fish. We expect to release the film, Lost Salmon in the near future, highlighting the plight of Washington's Spring Chinook runs and important genetic discoveries about these fish.
- On the Lower Snake, we report the Clean Water Act litigation we brought (with Idaho Rivers United) against the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has settled. The settlement requires Oregon to develop a plan to limit dangerous methylmercury pollution and accelerate critical mediation of water temperature impacts at the Hells Canyon Complex. This settlement is but one of the steps needed to address water quality, human health, and salmon recovery in the Snake River basin.
- Wildfires throughout the West may have an important impact on many folks' drinking water sources— Pacific Rivers identified the issue and is in the midst of a risk assessment. We are working to complete the report early 2022. While the analysis will focus on four major Oregon fires, the recommendations and contributing factors could assist any community that depends on forests for some or all of their drinking water such as coastal Oregon.
- We have long been part of the U.S. Treaty Conservation Caucus, an effort to modernize the US - Canada Columbia River Treaty. The Caucus has recently written to Secretary of State Blinken and, separately, Canadian Authorities asking them to increase transparency in the

negotiations and urge better collaboration for climate resilience and salmon recovery as part of the process to update the Treaty. The Caucus is also advocating the US grant a greater voice in the process to First Peoples.

- Senator Wyden’s River Democracy Act is an ongoing effort to greatly increase the number of Wild and Scenic River miles. Pacific Rivers has been actively involved in getting the legislation across the finish line. We are also proud of our short film, River Democracy, highlighting Senator Wyden and his commitment to Wild and Scenic Rivers, past, present and future.
- And, speaking of collaboration, Pacific Rivers remains an important force in the protection of the North Umpqua River. Ravaged by fires over the past two years, the North Umpqua watershed is the focus of important restoration efforts. As part of the North Umpqua Coalition, we are working with partners to push the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to focus on the protection of native steelhead while considering the future of the fire-destroyed Rock Creek Hatchery. Downriver, led by WaterWatch of Oregon, Pacific Rivers is again part of a coalition to force the privately owned Winchester Dam to be brought in compliance with law to address fish passage and migrating fish safety issues. Upriver, Pacific Rivers continues to lead the way in conducting tributary snorkel surveys, with the support of The North Umpqua Foundation, Steamboaters, and USFS.

This is also a time of another significant transition for the organization. We wish to thank our previous Executive Director, Greg Haller for his years of service and dedication to rivers and the health of our ecosystems. Director of Storytelling Shane Anderson is transitioning out of a full time role at Pacific Rivers in order to focus exclusively on his gift—the ability to make award winning documentaries that consistently “move the needle” of public understanding of those environmental threats he exposes. Shane will continue to work alongside us to complement Pacific Rivers advocacy with film.

These transitions inspired a refocus by the board on how best to pursue our solidly relevant mission: more attention to policy work and grass roots advocacy. We are a science-based organization, and we will continue to study and evaluate data in aid of meeting our mission. We have engaged the services of a highly regarded and very experienced consultant, Don Elder, who is working with us as we chart the next steps, while completing the important initiatives we are pursuing.

Like all boards, individual members Pacific Rivers’ have varying reasons. While I cannot detail everyone’s reasons to volunteer to serve as board members of an environmental non-profit. I can say with confidence that each of us is devoted to the mission and is passionate about the future of Pacific Rivers. In other words, we are “all in” because we uniformly believe that what we do today matters tomorrow.

We are humbled and most grateful for the past support of each and every one of you—and we ask that you continue to invest in this critical work and our next strategic initiatives. Your support and donations are the backbone of Pacific Rivers.

We look forward to greeting you in person soon, and we hope the situation improves so we can reconnect in early 2022.

Thank you,

Mike

# BACK TO THE HEADWATERS

Shaunna Oteka McCovey - Board Member

In the early 2000s, my Dad suggested I read a book, *The River Why* by David James Duncan, so we could discuss it through emails. Our own little book club. I was living in Vermont at the time, going to law school, and he was working for our Tribe at our Tribal headquarters near the mouth of the Klamath River in northern California. I grew up on the Klamath about twenty-five miles inland and spent most of my childhood swimming, fishing and exploring the river. There was a time when I knew every inch - every eddy and riffle - on the one mile stretch of Klamath that meanders just below our family home on the reservation. In all of our email exchanges during this time he always mentioned the river. He called it the Mighty K. He called the mouth of the river where it empties into the Pacific, "The Lips". Our house was his "River Aerie" - his nest above the river. He told me how he bought my brother a fly-fishing rod so he could "enjoy the aesthetics of honoring fishing and our fish instead of just pulling fish from the nets in our beautiful waters." Sometimes he described in detail how the mist was rising off the river, or how a cool breeze or blustery wind was making its way upriver. Most often he would say it was a beautiful day at The Lips. It was his way of keeping me connected, but also an expression of his deep love for the Klamath.

There is a chapter in the book where the main character goes on a quest for meaning deep into the wilds of Oregon. I remember the exact moment while reading it when I realized the trek he was making was to the headwaters of a river. I was so proud of myself for making this discovery that I immediately emailed my Dad to tell him. It was all so clear to me then: when we are in an existential crisis, or any crisis for that matter, and need to find meaning in the change that is happening around us, the healthiest thing to do is to go back to the source. The main character

in the book was doing just that. Pained by the changes happening to the natural world and in himself, he went looking for meaning at the source of a river.

We do this all the time as Tribal people. We use ceremony and songs, stories and teachings, the wisdom and voices of our elders who remind us of where we come from - the source - we go back to the headwaters of our existence. Through our communion with the source expressed in ceremony, we take a world out of balance and restore it. My Yurok, Karuk, and Hupa people have done this for thousands of years. We call these our World Renewal Ceremonies and we hold these dances because we know change is inevitable, and that change can often create imbalance in ourselves and the natural world. Our work is to put things back into balance. And we don't just dance for ourselves. We dance for this planet and all of its people.

We are now in the throes of an environmental crisis - which should also be considered an existential crisis. Climate change has us in its grip and future generations are begging us to do something - To Act. We must all do something. We've got to go back to the headwaters - to the source - and figure this thing out. We can't continue to let terrible policy decisions impact river health. We can't let dams stand in the way of river restoration. We can't sit idly by and watch our rivers die.

The Mighty K is not the same river I grew up on. Its health has suffered tremendously over the years. And my Dad isn't here anymore, but he taught me about responsibility - that as a Tribal person we are born into a world of great responsibility.

We are responsible for the health, welfare and well-being of our families, our communities, our governments, and our natural environment - our rivers, our mountains, and every sacred place our ancestors walked. When we read *The River Why* together, he was also telling me that we aren't the only people who have a responsibility. That there are people (and organizations) out there who want to help take care of the environment – people who love rivers just as much as he did.

Tribal people will continue to dance. We will do our part to remake the world – to restore balance – but we need help. We need people like you, dear reader, to go back to the headwaters, to your source, whatever that may be, and look at a river with the same reverence my father did. It's come to the point where we are in this together. We are all responsible.



Sunset on the the Mighty Klamath River in Oregon.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

Liz Gilliam - Board Treasurer

## THE RIVER DEMOCRACY ACT: SENATOR WYDEN'S LEGACY RIVER PROTECTION LEGISLATION

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is the nation's preeminent river protection law, designed to safeguard values like native fish and clean water by maintaining rivers in their free-flowing condition. A Legacy to be proud of: Just one year after Pacific River's formation, Senator Wyden and Pacific Rivers helped craft and pass the Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This law was used to protect 1,400 river miles on 40 iconic Oregon rivers. Currently, we have campaigns in Montana, Oregon, and Washington to designate more rivers under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Oregon's senior Senator made good on his promise to make Oregon the nation's leader in Wild and Scenic Rivers when he introduced the unprecedented River Democracy Act of 2021.

By asking the citizens of Oregon to nominate river segments for protection, the River Democracy Act builds a fresh approach to river protection. Wyden's office received a whopping 15,000 nominations from nearly 2,500 Oregonians from across the state. From the nominations, nearly 4,700 miles of rivers were from the headwaters downstream throughout Oregon's incredibly diverse landscape.

These new Wild and Scenic Rivers will permanently protect our clean water and native species, improve fire resiliency, honor Tribal co-management, guarantee ongoing recreational and economic opportunity, and firmly establish Oregon as the country's undisputed leader in permanent river protection.

Launched on the first day of National Rivers Month, our latest film celebrates Senator Ron

Wyden's efforts to permanently protect free-flowing Oregon Rivers. In February, Senator Wyden invited us into his home to interview him for our new short film "River Democracy." We had a great conversation about his long commitment to protecting Oregon's rivers, how our fellow citizens nominated their favorite rivers for protection in his new legislation, and how the River Democracy Act would make Oregon the undisputed leader in Wild and Scenic River protections.

As Senator Wyden explains in the new film, the River Democracy Act is about protecting Oregon's treasures and, on our watch, truly doing something meaningful for the future of all our kids and grandkids. You can find more information at <https://www.pacificrivers.org/wild--scenic-rivers.html>



Proposed for Wild and Scenic designation, Big Alvord Creek flows from the Steen Mountains in Southeast Oregon.

## COLUMBIA AND SNAKE RIVERS

The mighty Columbia and Snake Rivers once produced the most abundant salmon runs on Earth. Today 13 different populations of salmon are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, primarily due to the presence and operation of dams. We have a multi-pronged, basin-wide strategy to help salmon that includes modernization of the Columbia River Treaty, removal of four dams on the lower Snake River, improving water quality and restoring fish passage at the three dams that make up the Hells Canyon Complex.

Of all the river basins Pacific Rivers works in, the Snake, with millions of acres of pristine and near-pristine habitat in Idaho and Northeast Oregon, has the largest conservation and salmon recovery opportunity in North America. A complex issue that with-compromise and hard work, we can shape the solution. Conservation groups, elected officials, and us as inhabitants of these watersheds, must step up too before we lose the fish that define the region's ecology

and cultural heritage.

Pacific Rivers strongly supports the removal of these dams for ecological, moral, and economic reasons. We support mitigating the impacts that dam removal will have on irrigation, transportation and energy. Over the past year and more, Pacific Rivers with Greg Haller at the helm has been working to communicate and support the efforts to restore salmon populations in the Snake River Basin. After generations of lost time and billions of dollars of failed mitigation efforts, the time has come for elected leaders to finally take the steps necessary to breach these unnecessary dams and restore the region's salmon before we lose the fish that define the region's ecology and cultural heritage. Good work is happening in places like the Lostine, but ultimately, the success of those collaborations depend on restoring a free-flowing Snake River.

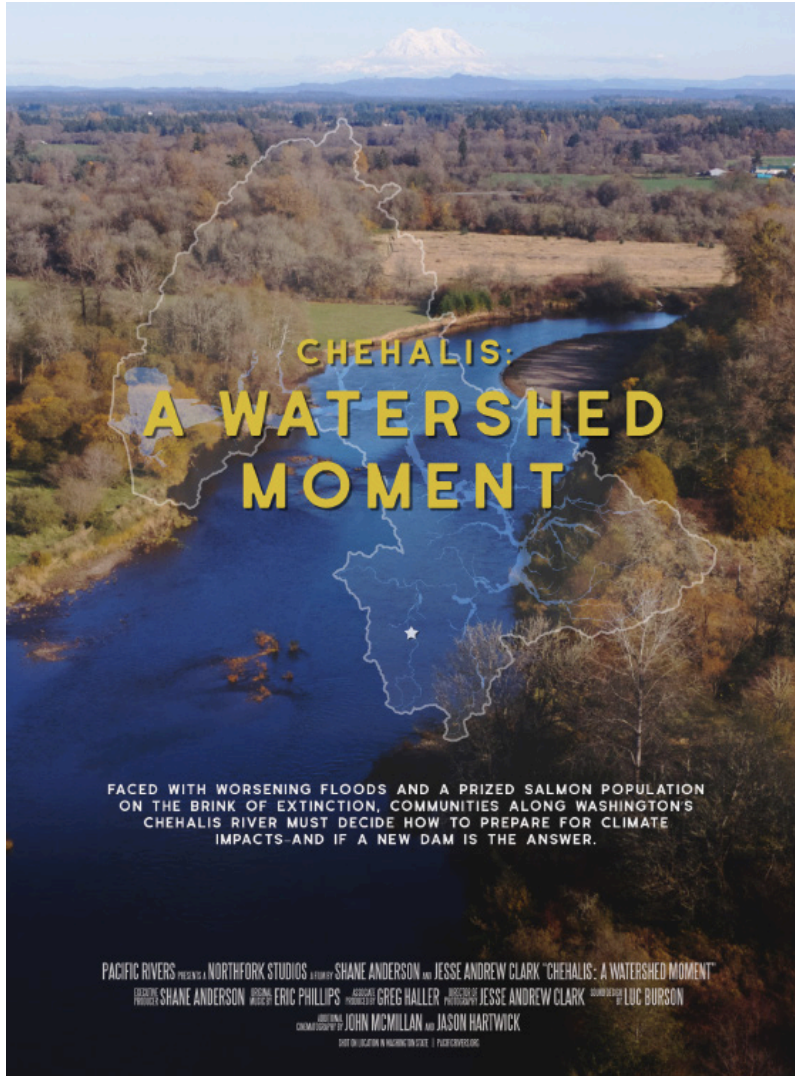
View our archives of picture and film we have collected to support these efforts at <https://www.pacificrivers.org/columbiasnake.html>



Lower Granite, one of the four Lower Snake River Dams. Despite significant investments to improve juvenile fish passage at these dams, salmon continue to spiral towards extinction.

## THE CHEHALIS BASIN AND PENDING PROPOSALS FOR A NEW DAM

CHEHALIS: A WATERSHED MOMENT is a 60-minute documentary film about how climate change and a legacy of human impact is affecting Washington's Chehalis River and the people living in the watershed. Told by the people grappling with decisions that will affect the fate of the river, its salmon and their communities, the film explores the intersection of social, cultural, economic and environmental values that are increasingly being defined by a new climate reality.



Faced with worsening floods and a prized salmon population on the brink of extinction, the decisions made in the coming years will decide the future and fate of this watershed.

Major floods in the previous 30 years have driven a resurgence of long-standing interest in building a flood retention dam to protect those homes and businesses residing in the floodplains of the Chehalis River.

The dam proposal, a 250-ft flood control dam proposed for the headwaters of the Chehalis immediately on top of important spawning and rearing habitat, has spurred a massive scientific investigation to learn more about this little-known basin and its fragile habitat.

Historically, the Chehalis once supported over one million salmon. And while populations are a shadow of their former abundance, the river still has some of the largest returns of self-sustaining wild salmon and steelhead in the state. If no action is taken, the prized spring Chinook population will stay on trajectory toward extinction.

You can learn more from the documentary Chehalis: A Watershed Moment, and at <https://www.pacificrivers.org/chehalis-basin.html>

## THE NORTH UMPQUA BASIN

We've been working to protect and restore the North Umpqua since our founding because it's one of the key remaining wild salmon and steelhead rivers left on the West Coast. Our long-running snorkel survey project, for which we've partnered with a local charter school, documents the abundance and distribution of wild steelhead and lays the groundwork for restoration. We've expanded that project into the newly minted Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Sanctuary, legislation we crafted to protect 100,000 acres of the Steamboat Creek watershed as a cold-water refuge. We're also working to remove the Winchester Dam on the lower river.



Pacific Rivers has contracted with respected scientist Charley Dewberry to document conditions in important creeks, which provides crucial information that helps us protect clean water and healthy rivers. Our monitoring program has been highly successful, but to truly know what's happening in our rivers and streams. Pacific Rivers is using the information to advocate that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Congress protect this creek from harmful logging practices because it is one of the North Umpqua's most important steelhead refuges. By knowing exactly how many fish are produced in places like Canton Creek, Pacific Rivers and its partners can champion measures that will maintain river health. And protecting river health protects human health.



Snorkeling survey counting juvenile and adult steelhead in the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Sanctuary.



North Umpqua underwater juvenile steelhead.



Steamboat Creek watershed. A cold-water refuge for Steelhead.

# STORYTELLING UPDATE

Liz Gilliam - Board Treasurer

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Storytelling has been an important part of Pacific Rivers' advocacy and there has been no shortage of important stories to highlight and films to produce in 2021. <https://www.pacificrivers.org/storytelling.html>

## LOSTINE

Our latest short film "Lostine" tells the story of an inspiring collaboration between the Nez Perce Tribe and farmers in Northeast Oregon. Together, they are working to restore chinook salmon to a headwaters tributary of the Grande Ronde River. The film reminds viewers that, ultimately, the greatest opportunity for the basin's rivers, fish, and communities is to breach the four Lower Snake River Dams. Collaborations, like the one featured in "Lostine," can help guide this restorative work. Born in Oregon's largest wilderness of the Wallowa Mountains, the Lostine River is a critically important stream for salmon and communities that depend on it for cultural and economic reasons.

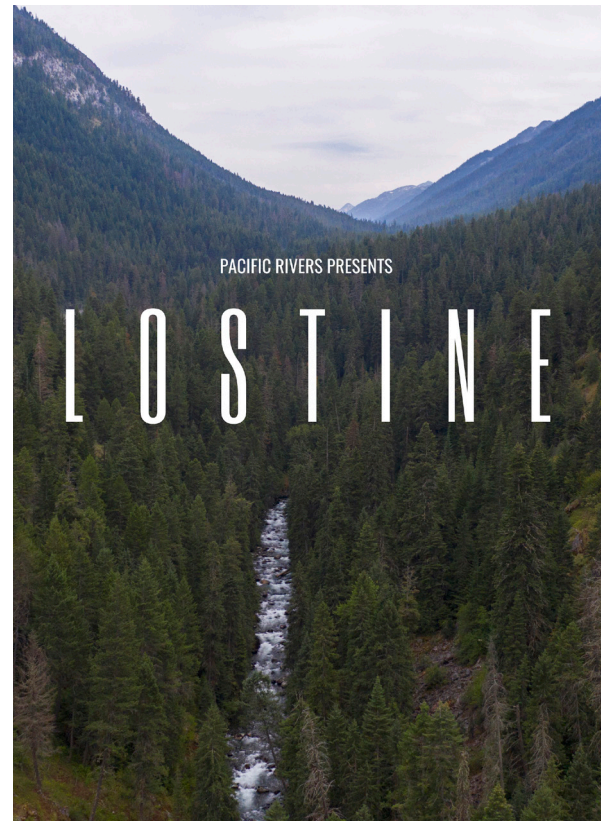
You can also find Chehalis: A Watershed Moment, and River Democracy films on our YouTube channel, for more information and inspiration about these key campaigns.

## THE LOST SALMON

Our new film, tentatively titled "The Lost Salmon", will tell the story of spring Chinook and the new genetic discovery that could help save them.

In addition to the film on spring Chinook, we have recently started another new feature film in collaboration with the Nez Perce Tribe. This exciting project will celebrate the Tribe's culture, treaties, relationship with salmon, and explain why removing the four lower Snake River Dams is the last viable option for salmon recovery in the watershed. In the wake of the Tribe's recent extinction report, and their decades of recovery efforts, it is an important time to document their tireless work to preserve the keystone of their culture.

We know these stories will inspire, educate and motivate our communities to take action and hold our elected officials accountable.



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## BOARD MEMBER SPECIAL RECOGNITION

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### MEGAN PONDER

Megan Ponder is the Board Vice President of Pacific Rivers and co-founder of Peak Plastic Foundation, an NGO focused on reducing plastic production and pollution through coalition building, policy, research, storytelling, and environmental justice organizing. Megan is a Producer of *The Story of Plastic*, a feature-length documentary that was filmed across three continents and presents a cohesive timeline of our current global plastic pollution crisis and the industry-manipulated narrative around it. In September, the film **WON** an **EMMY** in the Outstanding

Writing: Documentary category. To celebrate the Emmy win, Discovery is offering *The Story of Plastic* film for free on their YouTube channel through the end of November. Watch the film and join us in congratulating Megan on an impressive and important accomplishment. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCNanJNJ8JA&feature=youtu.be>



### KATE CRUMP

Kate spends two thirds of each year guiding fishing guests in Bristol Bay, AK rivers and the north Oregon coast watersheds. Her livelihood depends on healthy rivers and ecosystems as does her spiritual and mental well-being. Kate shares with us, "These wild places are a significant part of who I am as a person and inspire reverence in me. Sharing these places with our guests and watching the wild landscape impact them is one of the most fulfilling aspects of my life." This is why working with Pacific Rivers is so important to her; she

wants to help protect the watersheds that offer so much to all of us. We want to congratulate Kate in the purchase of her lodge in the Bristol Bay Region of Alaska, furthering her connection to and commitment to salmon.



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## MEET THE BOARD

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**LIZ GILLIAM**  
**BOARD TREASURER**

Liz Gilliam, Board Treasurer, is a fluvial geomorphologist living in Portland, OR. She has worked in the field of river science throughout the Pacific Northwest, currently as the Restoration Program Manager at the Clackamas River Basin Council. She also teaches in the School of Environmental Sciences and Management at Portland State University.



**MIKE MORRISON**  
**BOARD CHAIR**

Mike is a retired attorney living in Portland, OR. He has served on numerous nonprofit boards over the years. Mike spends much time in southern Oregon and can be found fishing or hiking rivers.



**MEGAN PONDER**  
**BOARD VICE CHAIR**

Megan is an accomplished public policy professional and producer of the Emmywinning film *The Story of Plastics*. Megan is also co-founder of Peak Plastic Foundation; she lives near the Columbia Gorge in Washington.



**RICK GEORGE**  
**BOARD SECRETARY**

Rick is a founding since-retained member of the Board of Pacific Rivers. Rick lives outside McMinnville, OR and has recently retired from a career that included over twenty years with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla working in natural resources, strategic planning, treaty rights and political affairs and, most recently, as Planning Department Manager for the Grand Ronde Tribes.



**JON KURTZ**  
**BOARD MEMBER**

Jon Kurtz, a plumbing contractor and owner of North Umpqua Plumbing, lives on the North Umpqua River near Glide, OR. A long-time conservationist and angler, Jon is a past Treasurer of Pacific Rivers. He is also a long-time member of the Board of Directors of The North Umpqua Foundation, and past President of the Board.

## MEET THE BOARD



**SHAUNNA OTEKA  
MCCOVEY  
BOARD MEMBER**

Shaunna Oteka McCovey lives in Humboldt County, CA, and holds an undergraduate degree in Social Work from Humboldt State University and a masters in the field from Arizona State University. She also earned a Master of Studies in Environmental Law and a Juris Doctor from Vermont Law School. A poet and writer, she is the author of *The Smokehouse Boys*, a collection of poems about growing up in the river communities of the Klamath, Salmon, and Trinity Rivers. Shaunna is Yurok and Karuk, and a member of the Yurok Tribe.



**BRYAN LESSLEY  
BOARD MEMBER**

Bryan Lessley is an attorney living in Eugene, OR. While in law school he served as president of Harvard Law's Environmental Law Society. A runner, climber, and backpacker, Bryan is a past-Chair of the Pacific Rivers Board of Directors and also served many years on the Oregon Track Club Board of Directors, including two terms as President.



**KATE CRUMP  
BOARD MEMBER**

Kate Crump is a fishing guide, hunter, and (along with her husband, Justin) owner of Frigate Travel. She splits her time between Bristol Bay, Alaska and the Oregon Coast. She is a fierce advocate for the reform of Oregon's private land logging forest practice laws and has been a member of Rockaway Beach Citizens for Watershed Protection. Frigate Travel owns and operates a fishing lodge on the Oregon coast and now, in Bristol Bay, Alaska.



**NICKY SCOTT  
BOARD MEMBER**

Nicky Scott, who lives in Berkeley, CA, is a recently retired physician who practiced Obstetrics and Gynecology in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is a passionate outdoorsman and angler who has backpacked, fished, and skied extensively throughout the West.

# NOTES OF GRATITUDE AND TRANSITION

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## GREG HALLER

Greg Haller has worked on critical issues in The PNW and has gained important alliances and trust throughout the region. He has been instrumental in PR's efforts to restore fish populations to the Snake River Basin by eliminating the Snake River Dams. He has and will continue to do great things.



## SHANE ANDERSON

All of us at Pacific River's wish the very Best for Shane Anderson, our lead storyteller and Documentarian, as he launches his own film company, Swift Water Films. We are privileged to have worked with such a skilled, passionate, and talented storyteller and we cannot say thank you enough for your contributions.

## ELLIOTT GAGNON, MD

It is with great sadness that the Board shares the sad news of the passing of river defender, outdoorsman, and friend of Pacific Rivers Elliott Gagnon, MD. Elliott passed away unexpectedly on October 24, 2021 at his home in Palmer, Alaska. He found contentment and joy on rivers of the Northwest and Great North and was an avid and masterful fly angler. However, he will be best remembered by those who knew him as a devoted husband, son, and father -- and as nice a man as any of us have ever met.



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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We want to thank our many, many supporters for giving us the motivation, ammunition, and yes, funding, to tackle these challenging issues. We could not do it without our contractors, scientists, policymakers, friends and family to be eyes-wide-open and motivating change.

## OUR MISSION

The mission of Pacific Rivers is to protect and restore the watershed ecosystems of the West to ensure river health, biodiversity and clean water for present and future generations.

## OUR VISION

A future where healthy communities have access to clean, cool drinking water free from chemicals, and people can play in rivers and streams. A future where watersheds that store carbon are resilient to warming temperatures and other effects of climate change and are home to abundant populations of fish and aquatic wildlife.

## DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT WITH A MATCHED DONATION UP TO \$10K! ENDS 11/30

Thanks to a very generous gift from the Crane Creek family foundation, all donations to Pacific Rivers through Giving Tuesday on November 30th up to \$10,000 will be doubled!

Giving Tuesday, on November 30th, is an international day of giving where people all over the world donate to the charities they love

It's our most ambitious goal yet, but with your help Pacific Rivers will be able to continue this important work. Visit our donation page and help us reach our fundraising goal. Thank you for your contribution and as always, thank you for being a part of our community!



## PACIFIC RIVERS MERCHANDISE

Pacific Rivers is excited to team up with Yeti to make these beautiful Pacific Rivers branded insulated water bottles and wine tumblers! We also have dvd's, hats, and books for sale on our website under the store tab. All of the proceeds will go towards supporting Pacific Rivers' work to ensure free-flowing, clean water; advocate for Wild and Scenic river protections; build fire resilient forested watersheds; and recover the Snake River's endangered salmon before it is too late.



**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT!**

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