

## HOW IS THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE AFFECTING YOUR WORK?

The face and function of federal environmental governance in the United States has changed in the over the past year. We've seen climate change deniers appointed to lead environmental agencies, the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, repeals of crucial water and ecosystem protections like the Stream Protection Rule, proposed rescission of public lands and wildlife refuges protection from oil and gas drilling, and massive proposed budget cuts for environmental research and regulation enforcement. We've seen the entire EPA Climate Change web domain taken down (for seven months and counting), explaining that the EPA is "... currently updating our website to reflect EPA's priorities under the leadership of President Trump and Administrator Pruitt," which apparently involves limiting public access to information about the causes and consequences of climate change.

With this shifting environmental governance landscape, environmental sectors are responding. We have asked people who work in a variety of environmental fields, from academic environmental historians to sustainability professionals, how the changing environmental governance landscape is affecting their work and what strategies they are using to address their pressing issues amidst changing rules, politics, and public perceptions. Each article inside is one person's perspective on their work in this time.



## BACK TO BASICS, OR A DEPARTURE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS? HISTORY LENDS PERSPECTIVE.

By Leif Fredrickson, Environmental Data and Governance Initiative

Photo: Members of the Africatown Connections Blueway planning team explore the Mobile County Training School Museum after a goal setting workshop.

For good reason, much of the discussion about the new environmental governance landscape ushered in by President Trump has revolved around science: Top administrators equivocate on established climate change science, agencies shed scientific advisors, and public access to information about climate change and other issues has been lost through government web page changes.

But it is also worth considering the Trump administration's approach to the environment from the angle of history. For one thing, Trump's pick to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Scott Pruitt, has justified his entire "back-to-basics" approach to the agency via history. Pruitt's slogan aligns with Trump's vague, history-summoning rallying cry "Make America Great Again," but his "EPA originalism" does not have a basis in historical facts. Pruitt falsely suggests that the EPA originally balanced environmental protection with economic development, had a limited scope, and focused primarily on "cleaning up the environment," and has since strayed into wide-ranging regulation.

President Nixon created the EPA in 1970 as a "strong, independent agency" with a "broad mandate." The designers of the new agency deliberately separated it from agencies concerned with resource development, such as the Department of Interior, so that there would not be conflicts of interest between economic development and environmental protection. Also, for its first ten years, the EPA focused on protecting the environment by aggressively regulating polluters and only in 1980, with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, or Superfund), was

cleanup added to its duties. Even then, the idea was that the EPA would use money from liable parties and corporate taxes on polluting industries to clean up toxic waste sites, not fund that cleanup with taxpayer money, as it now does. In short, Pruitt's justification for his approach to the EPA is built on a faulty premise.

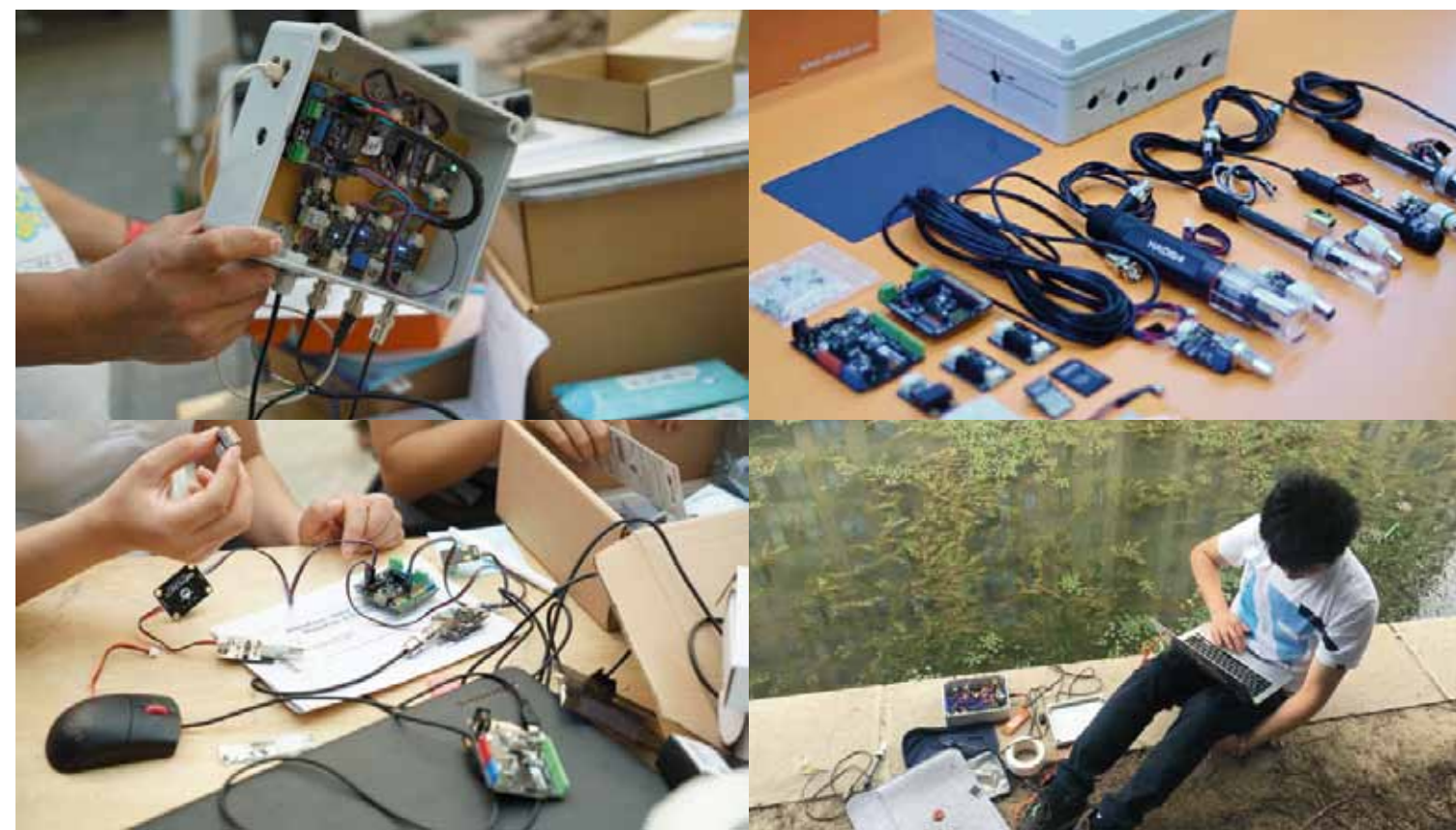
History is also important to put the Trump administration's environmental governance in perspective. There's a general impression that the Trump administration is unique, but pundits also draw parallels between Trump and previous political leaders, such as Richard Nixon. Trump does have many similarities to Nixon; he is vindictive and paranoid. But Nixon created the EPA while Trump intends to pulverize it. In terms of environmental policy, the Trump administration is much closer to the Reagan and George W. Bush administrations. Reagan was hostile to the EPA, seeking to undermine it through budget and staff cuts; George W. Bush was more subtle, obstructing environmental protection by undermining the use of good science and scientists. The Trump administration looks like a combination of the two, drawing on Reagan's frontal attack on regulatory agencies and Bush's undermining of science. In that sense, environmental governance under Trump is unique. Many other contextual factors have changed as well, including rising corporate influence on politics and increasing polarization and partisanship on environmental issues.

I and other historians working with the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative (EDGI) have been working to bring history to bear on the Trump administration. We hope that doing so will not only

reveal how past administrations undermined environmental protection, but also how people resisted attacks on the environment. Among other things, we've shown the critical role that career staff and public sector unions played in bringing to light corruption and subterfuge in agencies like the EPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Using editorials, we have tried to inform the broader public about these insights, as well as Pruitt's dubious historical justification for a radical approach to the EPA.

The threats to environmental protection brought by the new administration, potentially leveraging government and academic institutional resources with the reach of an engaged public seeking greater control of environmental management.

The humanities are crucial to understanding the new environmental governance regime.



## SILVER LININGS OF COMMUNITY SCIENCE

By Gretchen Gehrke, Public Lab

Photo: Building and using the KnowFlow water sensor to measure a variety of water quality parameters. Photos by Shan He.

Federal environmental protections are actively being undermined and overturned by our elected and appointed officials, presenting us with significant challenges, and emerging opportunities, for the development and utilization of community science and civic technologies. As the EPA's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year is nearly one third lower than in recent years and guts research and enforcement funding, we must acknowledge that environmental monitoring is not synonymous with environmental protection or intervention. Moreover, low-cost indicator species monitoring is not a direct avenue to protecting ecosystem and human health. However, relying on the regulatory state has always been insufficient to truly protect ecosystem and human health too. With our current environmental governance landscape, I think we need a multifaceted approach that includes public-private partnerships to harness the utility of community science for environmental protection.

The clarity of the federal deregulation agenda (e.g. Executive Order 13770) highlights challenges for the public writ large, and community scientists in particular. As federal laws are reversed or become too challenging to enforce, the model of community collected data prompting further investigation and enforcement by environmental agencies may not be as feasible as seemed plausible after the 2015 Office of Science and Technology Policy memorandum urging agencies to embrace citizen science. However, there could be a glimmer of opportunity as environmental agencies seek to continue environmental data collection: explicit partnerships with community monitoring organizations may become a more viable, mutually beneficial model for maintaining and improving spatial and temporal monitoring resolution amidst enormous agency budget cuts. We need eyes, ears, sensors, and samplers out there, and our technological developments and large population can be resources. There is plenty of work to do to actualize this opportunity, potentially leveraging government and academic institutional resources with the reach of an engaged public seeking greater control of environmental management.

The likelihood of public-private partnerships using community monitoring will likely vary by state, or even by zip code. With federal deregulation, there is likely to be a growing disparity between states' environmental laws. This is already evident, for example, in greenhouse gas emissions reductions, with fourteen states and one U.S. territory forming the U.S. Climate Alliance, wherein member states maintain commitments to the Paris Climate Accord, while the federal government has officially withdrawn from that global agreement. As state environmental laws diverge, it's possible that the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities of community science practitioners and supporters may vary among states. Another key variable is public perception of science and of environmental protection, which also varies

geographically. With concerted efforts and anti-science political rhetoric over the last twenty years, there has been increased public mistrust of science and scientists. Engaging more people in the development and utilization of civic technologies, and emphasizing science learning in that process, may provide avenues to greater understanding of and trust in science that is not couched in political bias. Engaging youth in civic technology development and utilization may be an effective avenue for ultimately engaging adult populations across greater geographic, political, and socioeconomic spectra.

In addition to building public-private partnerships and leveraging social pressures that tend to fall along geographic lines, we community science practitioners may need to turn our immediate attention to direct intervention strategies where feasible. Developing accessible remediation and exposure mitigation techniques for common toxins is essential for withstanding an uncertain future of federal environmental governance. Exploring the sorbent capacity of biochar for contaminated water, air, soils and sediments could yield great results. Utilizing a variety of plants for phytoremediation of contaminated soils has already had great success in pilot studies. Further developing these sorts of low-cost interventions may have some of the highest return on investment of our community science endeavors.

The changing environmental governance landscape, largely undermining the regulatory state we've grown accustomed to, presents both challenges and opportunities to community science. Acknowledging these formidable challenges, let's leverage them in enhancing public engagement and control in our environmental management.

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## LET PUBLIC LANDS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

By George Dusenbury, GA State Director, The Trust for Public Land

Twenty years ago, House Speaker Newt Gingrich secured \$25 million in federal funding to support land acquisition along the Chattahoochee River. The Trust for Public Land, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, leveraged that investment to raise tens of millions of private, state and local dollars to preserve more than 18,000 acres and 80 miles of riverfront along the Chattahoochee.

Similarly, Senator Johnny Isakson long has been a strong supporter of our Chattahoochee work, so much so that The Trust for Public Land's Georgia Office honored him with our 2011 Conservation Trailblazer Award.

That these Republican lawmakers have been supportive of public land is no surprise, as our National Parks and public lands have long had bipartisan support. No U.S. President is more associated with the creation and preservation of our national parks as Teddy Roosevelt, who helped preserve 230 million acres of public land and create 23 national parks.

In recent decades, the broad support for public land has begun to erode. In 1993, a Nevada rancher named Cliven Bundy stopped paying the federal government for the right to graze his cattle on public land. In 2014, after two decades of legal challenges, the federal government seized his cattle, seeking nearly \$5 million in outstanding payments. An armed confrontation ensued, and the federal government backed down.

Several politicians praised Mr. Bundy, accusing the federal government of overreach when it sought to enforce federal grazing rules by seizing Mr. Bundy's cattle.

Two years later, Cliven Bundy's sons led an armed group that seized the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon and held it for forty days. The occupation stemmed from the conviction of two ranchers for illegally setting fire to public lands. The occupation ended with armed confrontation and the death of one of the occupiers.

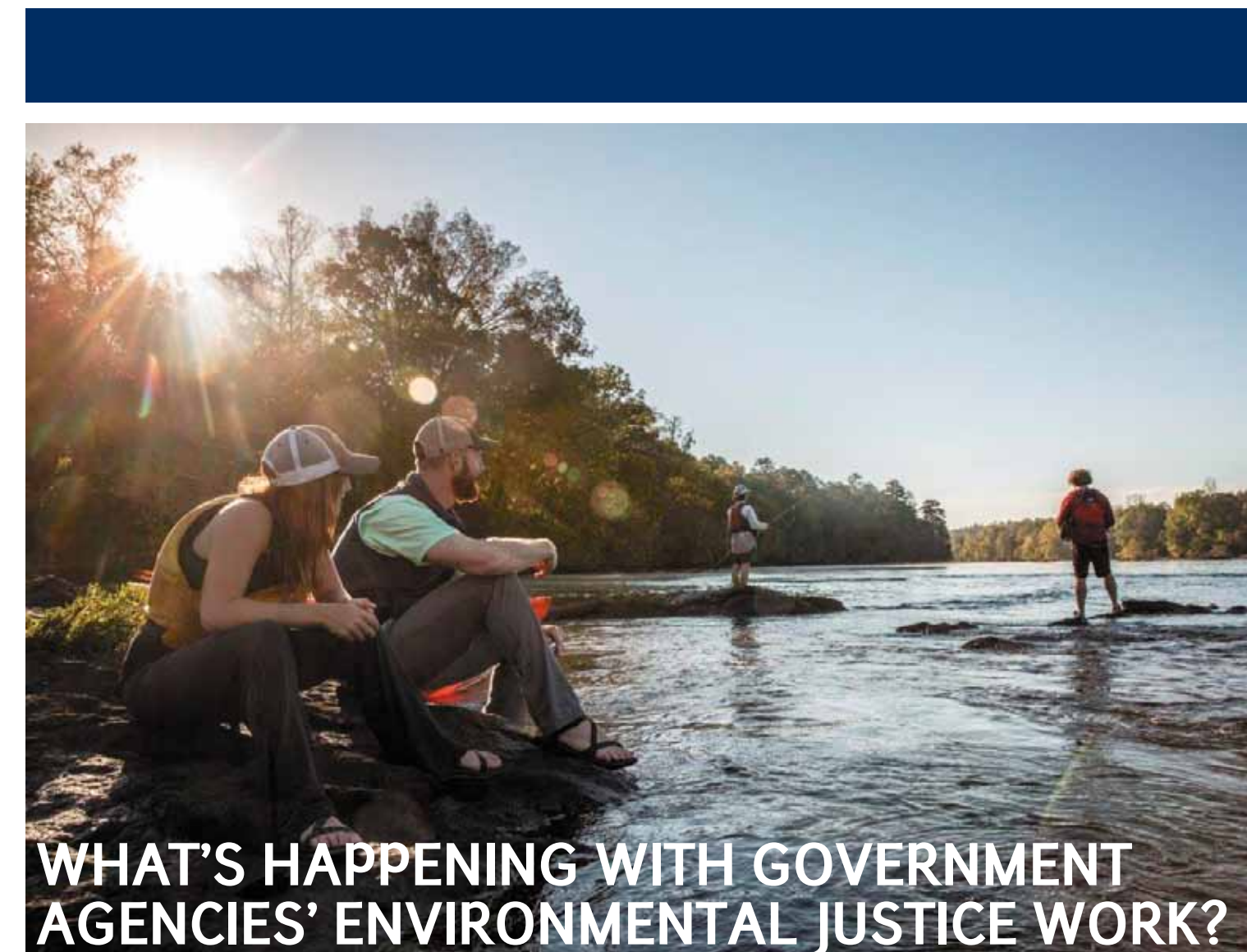
President Trump campaigned on a platform that questioned the creation of several national monuments and the expansion of public land. His proposed budget effectively eliminated funding for federal land acquisition – funding that has been crucial to preservation along the Chattahoochee. The President directed his Secretary of the Interior to review all large national monuments created by the past three presidents. Secretary Zinke has recommended shrinking four national monuments and increased fishing, mining and drilling on others.

It is against this backdrop that The Trust for Public Land continues to strive to preserve the special places that so many Georgians hold dear, especially along the Chattahoochee River.

We recently brought Congressional staff on a field trip to the river. One noted that many people – perhaps including the fisherman just below us – believe that the federal government already owns enough land. The fisherman happened to be on private land, land we purchased to convey to the National Park Service. The staffer noted that those views likely would change if we were to put up no trespassing signs around their favorite fishing holes – then they would be all for the federal government owning the land.

Which is why it is so important to get our elected officials onto the river. Yes, we can tell them that 2.7 million visitors spent an estimated \$19.1 million and supported 1,800 jobs while visiting the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area in 2016. But those numbers cannot convey the beauty of the land, the attraction of the river, and fishermen carefully working its pools and eddies.

Ultimately, the violent confrontations and inflamed rhetoric are no match for the power of the land. The voice of the land is deeper, more resonant. So we are redoubling efforts to bring our leaders to the land, so that they can hear its message from the source.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES' ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE WORK? WE NEED TO KEEP ASKING.

By Jill Lindsey Harrison, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Colorado-Boulder

Photo: Recreating in the Chattahoochee River. Photos by the Trust for Public Land.

In my research, I investigate environmental regulatory agencies' efforts to integrate environmental justice (EJ) principles into their core regulatory work of rulemaking, permitting, and enforcement. These efforts were prompted by EJ advocates, a loosely networked collection of largely grassroots activists who work at the intersection of the environmental and Civil Rights movements and who have long argued that justice requires that the government reduce environmental hazards in the most vulnerable and overburdened communities and enable them to have more control over government decision-making.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the state-level environmental regulatory agencies it supports curb the harms of industrial growth in ways that other actors will not and cannot do – neither industry, with its focus on profits, nor individuals and environmental organizations, who lack the power to force polluters to act. While the Trump Administration's budget cuts and efforts to shrink EPA's authority will harm all Americans, they are especially problematic for low-income, minority, and Native American communities, who have scarcely benefited from the environmental protections afforded to most Americans by legislation and regulatory enforcement.

Following President Clinton's 1994 Executive Order on Environmental Justice, federal agencies and numerous state-level agencies have responded to EJ movement pressure by adopting policies that could reduce the disproportionately large environmental burden on low income and minority communities, and hiring EJ staff tasked with proposing reforms to regulatory practice that would better facilitate environmental equity. Yet, although EJ advocates and agencies' EJ staff have proposed many regulatory reforms that could protect poor, minority, and Native American communities from dangerous environmental hazards, agencies have implemented few of them. My research examines the challenges faced by their EJ staff as a way to gain new insights into why these agencies fail to reduce harmful toxics and other hazards in our nation's most overburdened communities. I conduct in-depth, confidential interviews with and observations of staff at numerous environmental regulatory agencies across the United States to identify the challenges they face and the strategies they use to surmount them. My goals include lifting up the important and often invisible efforts of agencies' EJ staff, as well as pressuring agencies to more meaningfully implement the EJ principles they formally endorse.

The Trump administration's attacks on federal environmental regulation affect my work in numerous ways. Employees at federal agencies are under increased scrutiny and surveillance, and many are afraid to talk with researchers or journalists – those of us bringing EJ challenges to

light in the public eye – for fear of retaliation by political leaders. This, along with the rollbacks of environmental regulations and funding for regulatory programs further fuel my commitment to illuminating staff members' EJ efforts. Their work is crucial – despite the constraints they face. EJ staff endeavor to support our most environmentally burdened communities by trying to change both regulatory practice and regulatory culture from the inside out in much-needed ways.

In addition to my EJ-specific research, as a member of the Environmental Data Governance Initiative (EDGI), I have interviewed former staff of the U.S. EPA about how changes in presidential administrations have affected their work in the past and how that compares with changes unfolding under the current administration. We contextualize and communicate the challenges EPA staff have faced in regulatory practice and culture, and we critically challenge the Trump administration's attacks on environmental science and regulation, bringing greater public awareness and public pressure to support our crucial environmental agencies.

Scholars, environmental and human rights activists, journalists, retired government staff, and even some current staff in unprecedented public protest have done invaluable work of staidly criticizing the Trump Administration's attacks on environmental protections. Through my own research and my work with EDGI, I stand with them in that protest and in defending our important public institutions – while also holding them accountable to the principles of environmental justice.

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### COMMUNITY SCIENCE FORUM

is a publication of the Public Lab, a community which develops and applies open source tools to environmental exploration and investigation. This issue was edited and designed by SuperCommunity. All content is contributed by the Public Lab community. If you're interested in submitting, please email staff@publiclab.org.

### THE PUBLIC LAB

The Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which supports a growing community in developing and applying open-source tools for environmental exploration and investigation. By democratizing inexpensive and accessible "Do-It-Yourself" techniques, Public Lab creates a collaborative network of practitioners who actively re-imagine the human relationship with the environment. Our goal is to increase the ability of under-served communities to identify, redress, remediate, and create awareness and accountability around environmental concerns. Public Lab achieves this by providing online and offline training, education and support, and by focusing on locally-relevant outcomes that emphasize human capacity and understanding.

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Cover Balloon map of a creosote superfund site in Ploatsville, Mississippi. Mapped on Jan. 16, 2016. Image stitched by Dan Beavers.



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# COMMUNITY SCIENCE FORUM

# CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE

How is the changing environmental governance landscape affecting YOUR work? What are some strategies you have thought of or are using for proactively addressing issues amidst changing environmental regulations, politicization of environmental language, and public perceptions of environmental health, justice, protection, and safety?



## ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES AND FIGHT REGULATORY ROLLBACKS

By Stacy Shelton

Photo: The Wind River Range, Wyoming. Photo by Margie Cohen.

Before the 2016 election, I was a law clerk in the Vermont Superior Court's Environmental Division, contemplating a way to stay in the Green Mountain State and practice law. I also thought I might not have the stomach for litigation, with the courtroom face-offs that TV dramas love to feature. That all changed once the votes were counted. I had to join the fight. To me, that meant returning to the South where our environmental protections are particularly fragile.

In October, I joined the Southern Environmental Law Center as an associate attorney in the Atlanta office. SELC uses the power of the law to champion the environment across six states. We litigate, but we also lobby, and we work with a variety of partners to strengthen environmental laws, scrutinize government action, and stop abuses. While the Trump Administration poses an obvious threat to our natural resources as it seeks to rollback protections, so do the politicians in our state Capitols. We have to engage the fight on both the federal and state levels.

During the last change in Administrations, I made another transition, which gives me some insights into this one. In 2009, I left my job as a newspaper reporter at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and joined the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. At the time, President Obama had been in office only six months. Many of my new federal colleagues expressed relief that they could finally openly discuss and explore the impacts of climate change on animals and plants, and seek funding for the work. During my five years as a public affairs specialist for the

Service, one of my duties was to uncover climate change stories. For example, to combat the loss of sea turtle nests to the rising sea, our biologists in South Carolina started moving them further up the beach as soon as they were laid. A butterfly in Florida became one of the first species to be listed under the Endangered Species Act based in part on the threat of climate change, in the form of rising sea levels. This was possible because President Obama made it clear that climate change was a priority. The details of how to address it were up to the career leaders within the Service.

The Trump Administration is turning the clock back to the Bush era, when scientists were reluctant to openly discuss climate change and seek answers. This president is skeptical of climate science and views environmental protections as job killers. Those dangerous views are trickling down, because no federal agency leader wants to be at cross-purposes with the president's agenda. Those who are don't last long. Ask Sally Yates, the acting Attorney General who refused to enforce Trump's immigration-related executive order. She lasted only to days on the job.

The real harm to our environment will not come at the hand of Congress, which is mired in political stalemates. The real harm will come from federal agencies, where the battle over our environment will be won and lost through agency regulations and enforcement actions. The regulations, which are already being rewritten, determine how

agencies interpret federal law and what actions are illegal. But even when the law is clear and an industry violation is obvious, an agency can decline to enforce, effectively nullifying the law.

For those of us fighting for clean air and water, and the conservation of our diverse ecosystems, the challenge is to stay vigilant and find the resources to staff off the attacks. We are commenting on proposed changes to federal regulations, challenging permits, and litigating when appropriate. With this Administration calling the shots, success will be measured by how much doesn't get done.

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## ACTIVATE IMPACT: FUND BOLDNESS

By Jake Mogan, The 11th Hour Project

Photo: Groundwork New Orleans Green Team members explore low cost ways to monitor stormwater using rain gauges.

The 11th Hour Project prides itself in being a bold, leading-edge funder on energy, food, and human rights issues. We recognize and seek to disrupt the increasingly concentrated corporate interests that are accelerating the exploitation of natural resources at the expense of human health and ecological viability. To achieve our vision of more just and sustainable food and energy systems – underpinned by a strong commitment to human rights – we rely on partners in the field willing to directly challenge corporate interests and the elected officials who give them cover. This work takes many forms – from investigative journalism and scientific research to direct actions and strategic litigation.

Hard-hitting work challenging dominant paradigms has always come with a degree of risk. Corporations have long sought to make examples of activists in the courtroom and discredit them in opinion sections, and there have been many instances in which law enforcement and policymakers have aided and encouraged the silencing of dissent. This is especially true for activists of color and those organizing in developing countries. While these attacks are not new, they appear to be trending more frequent and more aggressive in recent years. In response to protests around the country, legislators in nearly 20 states proposed bills in 2017 that would restrict people's rights to protest, including a

handful which would protect drivers who struck protesters with their car. Globally, a report from Global Witness found that in 2016, at least 200 land and environmental defenders were murdered – the deadliest year on record.

The 2016 presidential election has only exacerbated these trends. The Trump Administration's stated goal of "deconstruction of the administrative state" is most clearly taking shape through EPA Secretary Scott Pruitt's comprehensive roll back of air, water, and climate protections. These attacks create an even greater role for environmental advocates to take action, but the White House appears determined to weaken activism of all kinds. This was announced forcefully on Trump's first day in office. In response to Inauguration Day protests, a statement on the White House website proclaimed: "Our job is not to make life more comfortable for the rioter, the looter, or the violent disrupter." Over 200 activists currently face felony rioting charges for their nonviolent actions that day.

More recently, 84 House members sent a letter to the Department of Justice urging it to extend domestic terrorism charges against activists protesting against oil and gas pipelines. While attacks against direct actions have made headlines, there are other, quieter attacks against

community science and data collection. In recent years, more than half of all state legislatures across the country have introduced so-called "ag-gag" bills, which are designed to silence whistleblowers revealing animal abuses on industrial farms. These laws criminalize acts related to investigating the day-to-day activities of industrial farms, including the recording, possession or distribution of photos, video, and audio at a farm. States like Wyoming have gone even further, with legislation that restricts individuals from collecting data on private lands that could be used to hold violators accountable. Laws like this are intended to disempower professional researchers and community scientists alike.

Fenceline communities and their allies have long assumed a disproportionate responsibility for protecting their health and environment in lieu of enforcement by state and federal regulators. Restricting this work is anti-democratic and means environmental injustices will grow more severe. At 11th Hour, we're committed to raising awareness about these attacks, and supporting our partners in the field to be even bolder in their pursuit of environmental justice. We believe it's critical that solidarity and resilience is developed across issues and regions in order to share resources, strategies, and lessons learned.

The Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which supports a growing community in developing and applying open-source tools for environmental exploration and investigation. By democratizing inexpensive and accessible "Do-It-Yourself" techniques, Public Laboratory creates a collaborative network of practitioners who actively re-imagine the human relationship with the environment.

Our goal is to increase the ability of under served communities to identify, redress, remediate, and create awareness and accountability around environmental concerns. Public Lab achieves this by providing online and offline training, education and support, and by focusing on locally-relevant outcomes that emphasize human capacity and understanding.

Public Lab



# WASHINGTON IS ONE OF MANY PATHS TO SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS. GREEN BUILDINGS CAN HELP.

By Jeremy Sigmon, Director, Technical Policy, U.S. Green Building Council

2017 has been quite a year. The 2016 election illuminated an electorate yearning for change and new leadership in Washington... but what, specifically, did the majority want, and how can we achieve it?

According to research and polling on environmental issues, most Americans really do want clean air and water, and are concerned about a changing climate. According to a 2017 Gallup poll, concerns about water pollution are at a 15 year high. In 2016, Yale University researchers found that a large majority of Americans support regulating CO<sub>2</sub> as a pollutant (and lots of other interesting stuff). A 2015 poll conducted on behalf of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) uncovered that 79 percent of Republicans and 89 percent of Democrats support the use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) in buildings.

So what's standing in our way? Some might argue, "Politics!" We know that the 115th Congress and the 45th President have set some priorities for 2017 and, generally, have found relatively little capacity to deliver. Of course, the potential for backsliding on energy, environment and public health policy looms large, and some steps backward have been initiated. However, this also has emboldened advocacy groups, private citizens, subnational governments, and businesses, too.

Environmental advocates should indeed remain vigilant against these very real threats, and also recognize that there are many paths to progress. The good, no, great news is that green buildings can address so many of today's environmental, energy, infrastructure, development, community, and equity issues... and green building is good for business! (See benefits of green building and the business case from USGBC).

When businesses are motivated to harness the money-making power of going green and sustainability standards are maintained and strengthened, we can leverage the market force of competitive differentiation to drive deeper sustainability investments to establish leadership. The result is a market transformed. This evolved state of expectations then creates space for public policy. This is, in a nutshell, the theory of change of USGBC, where I have proudly hung my hat for the last ten years.

In Reinventing Fires, founder and chief scientist of Rocky Mountain Institute Amory Lovins' newest manifesto on a bold new energy economy, Lovins points out that climate protection is "not costly but profitable—a very convenient truth." We must remind ourselves that these business motivations are a very powerful force that, if worked in concert with public policy, can be catalytic.

Complementing the free-market force of business driving towards sustainability is the role of subnational policies and programs. In a federalist system like the U.S., states have an enormous amount of power, and there's a lot of good news. Just this year, New Mexico continues its nation-leading green building incentive program, Rhode Island has established a new leadership initiative for sustainable public landscapes, and more than half the states are working to advance green schools!

Cities may be even more important. 2016 was the first year in human history where the majority of global citizens lived in cities, says The Economist. That doesn't change how the Electoral College works, but it does set the table for cities to lead. More than 1,000 U.S. mayors have signed the Climate Protection Agreement and mayors from across the world were essential in making the Paris climate agreement a success. Again this year, mayors and several U.S. governors traveled to Bonn, Germany to push the UN climate talks forward.

After more than ten years in environmental policy and advocacy, I've learned that there are many paths to progress—and it's urgent that we pursue them. As 20th century author, altruist, and acclaimed medical researcher Jonas Salk said, "Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors," and there's no time to waste.

So, if we want to move swiftly towards cleaner air and water, healthy and equitable cities, and a growing and sustainable economy, we need to spend time pursuing progress on all fronts. Let's remain vigilant on the federal front, advocate for sustainability in state and local policy, celebrate green business leadership, buy what you believe in, and cultivate citizen science. National elections and national policy will be influenced by evolved expectations that we can set through these many areas of work... so let's get going!

Photo Green Building Exterior: This LEED Platinum certified Research Support Facility on the Golden, CO campus of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory does far more than just save energy and generate clean energy on site. © Photo courtesy of USGBC

Photo Green Building Interior: Located in Emeryville, CA, Cliff Bar's LEED Platinum certified headquarters has a low impact on the environment while offering a desirable place to work and conduct business. © Cliff Bar & Company Photo courtesy of USGBC