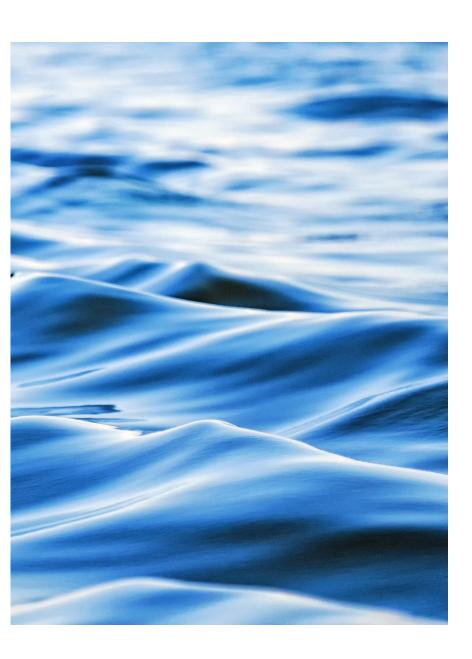


### What is water equity?

Water equity or water justice means that we all have access to clean, healthy water—regardless of our income, where we live or come from, our educational background, or our economic status.

What for? Drinking, cooking, sanitation, physical and mental health, ecosystem wellness, recreation, access to fish and aquatic plants, spiritual and religious and ceremonial purposes, etc.





#### **Water Equity Fund**

Water Equity Fund is the first of its kind in the nation; groundbreaking intervention that has put Oregon on the map in the water sector nationally and internationally.

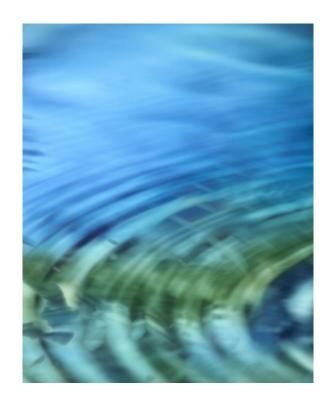
Community Water Justice Awards funded research, capacity building, outreach, stewardship, and local education led by organizations supporting environmental justice communities. Priority investments and the awards allocation process were shaped through engagement with community-based organizations, state agencies, researchers, utilities and environmental organizations.

An environmental justice community is a geographic area (For example: neighborhoods near industrial facilities or contaminated lakes, rivers, and streams; remote/rural/frontier/coastal regions) where communities experience a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards and reduced quality of life relative to comparative communities due to factors such as drought conditions, contaminated drinking water, inadequate water infrastructure.

### **Funding priorities**

- Funding positions to provide water education; learn about water law and policy; lead water stewardship activities; and develop better, equitable, and accessible emergency response systems.
- Investing in water stewardship and policy education that is designed by or co-designed with environmental justice communities.
- Investing in culturally sensitive communication and outreach specialists who can work with environmental justice communities, and provide technical, policy, and legal assistance to the efforts above.

Investing in environmental justice communities to provide capacity building, including workforce development in water and environmental careers.



### **Use of funds**

- Just Futures Institute Payroll Expenses 36,154
- Finance and Administration Shared Services 11,409
- Awards Selection Committee Stipend 2,000
- Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians 50,000
- Coalition of Communities of Color 50,000
- Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural & Resource Center 50,000
- Friends of Tryon Creek State Park 50,000
- Future Generations Collaborative 50,000

- Long Tom Watershed Council 50,000
- Necanicum Watershed Council 50,000
- Portland Harbor Community Coalition 50,000
- Portland State University 9,000
- **Rios to Rivers** 28,125
- **Verde** 30,000
- Willamette Partnership 5,000

**TOTAL**: 521,688



"Thank you for such a flexible and accessible funding opportunity."

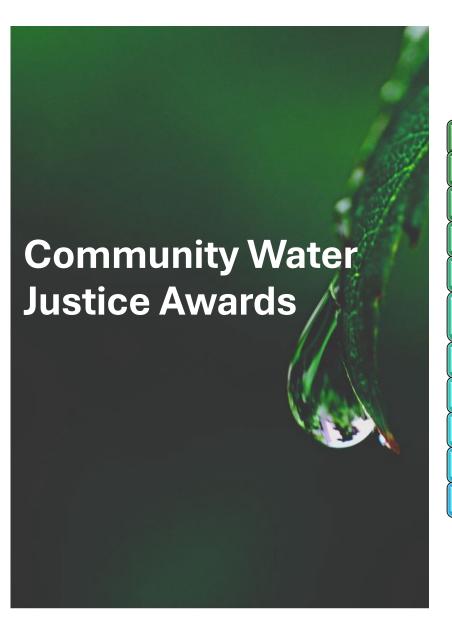
"This has been the best reporting process."

(after our mid-term report meeting in December)

### **Immediate Impacts**

Awardees used grant funds to provide technical, policy, and legal assistance, and support workforce development in water and environmental careers, stewardship of rivers and floodplain, strategic plans and cultural restoration plans, conferences to facilitate collaboration and inclusive approaches to land stewardship, drafting climate vulnerability assessment, and convening workshops focused on emergency preparedness.

Immediate impacts include: Tribal restoration of waterways in the Wallowas; Emergency preparedness and response in the Portland Metro area; Education, leadership and workforce development in the water sector across the state; Food security and food sovereignty in Clatsop County and Jackson County.



7 Waters Canoe Family

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Water Program

**Coalition of Communities of Color** 

**Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and Resource Center** 

**Friends of Tryon Creek** 

Long Tom Watershed Council, Traditional Ecological Inquiry
Program

Rios to Rivers/Maglags Paddle

**Necanicum Watershed Council** 

**Portland Harbor Community Coalition** 

**Upper Willamette Stewardship Network** 

Verde



### **Community Stories**

Eugene, OR

"Water is a precious resource that we have to preserve."



## **Community Stories**Portland, OR

"Last year, here in Oregon, there was a **fire** in a place very close to me—it's like two blocks away, it's really close. So, the **water turned yellow from the smoke** and all that. When we opened up the water, it looked yellow; it **looked blurry**.

### Community Stories Woodburn, OR

"I really don't know what our water has, but we do know there have been many cases where **the water is polluted—we don't know with what**. But we know that it can be polluted. And that's why we try not to drink tap water, but sometimes there **isn't another option**."



# **Community Stories**Clackamas, OR

"I'm trying to create a conscience in my daughters that we need to keep things **clean and pristine** because, as a matter of fact, **water is life.** It's our life."

### **Community Stories**Salem, OR

"I don't go to the rivers much lately because I feel the water is getting very polluted."

### Community Stories Chiloquin, OR

"So, I don't know, we've always went and gathered food from the water. We went and cared for the water. He's always had me in a canoe or a boat or something, so I've always learned to use water as like, a—I don't know; it's **something that we use for everything**."



# Community Stories Eugene, OR

"We grew up in very **small and rural areas** where we had access to water, but it was kind of **gross water**. You would **buy** water at the store or, if you had it coming out of your pipes, you **boiled it first** and put it in, like, jugs of water—right?—in your fridge to keep it cold kind of thing."

### **Community Stories**Chiloquin, OR

"I think that, growing up, both of my parents were always very vocal and very, like, firm in the belief that **we need water for everything** in our lives. And I think my father has really taught me that **the water that flows** in these streams, in these rivers, in these lakes that run, is the **same as the blood that flows in our bodies."** 

### **Community Stories**Portland, OR

"I wouldn't be able to give you an answer about where water comes from, but I do know it's polluted. I feel the water is dirty and I've been told that — I live in an apartment and I've been told that sometimes there are apartments where they don't clean the water.

I showered my children and I noticed their **skin would get irritated,** and the water from the shower is kind of **yellow.** So that's why I say the water is polluted."



Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program (TEIP)

- Goal: Engaging cultural burning practices to build resiliency to wildfire, restore meadows, and honor Indigenous Ecological Knowledge
- Led inaugural Cultural Fire Exchange (CFEX) training at Siskiyou Field Institute in Selma, Oregon
- "Returning fire to this landscape was a critical step in eco-cultural restoration..."





"This meadow along the Illinois River is at the center of the ancestral home of the Takelma Band of Rogue River Indians. Seven generations after removal, descendants of this fireadapted culture have returned to tend this neglected place."



#### **Spotlight:**

Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and Resource Center (EECRC)

- Goal: Enhancing community awareness and leadership in water justice through culturally appropriate workshops, trainings, and community outreach designed to empower individuals with knowledge and leadership skills in water conservation and justice
- Led interactive Water Justice Workshops exploring topics such as the history and sources of water, water conservation practices, and disparities in water access and equity
- Recruited community members to Water Justice Ambassador Program to raise awareness and foster leadership in water justice

#### **EECRC Pre- and Post-Workshop Survey**

"What do you know about water and water justice?"



"We've been advised against drinking tap water due to its dirtiness."

"Shower water is said to cause baldness, indicating a need for fewer chemicals."

#### **Post-Workshop**

"Water access here is better than in our home country."

"Water is life."

#### **Spotlight:**

Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC)

- Goal: Supporting clean water and fish access and engaging impacted constituencies in habitat restoration, equitable redevelopment, and communitybased research
- Hosted Indigenous-led Water Ceremony on the Willamette River with 250+ participants
- Engaged diverse communities in planning for Willamette Cove Regional Nature Park project on the Lower Willamette River
- Partnered with frontline community organizations to begin developing Cumulative Health Impacts & Resilience Plan (CHIRP)





#### **Spotlight:**

#### **Necanicum Watershed Council**

- Goal: Codifying shoulder-to-shoulder relationships with Tribal partners and Indigenous stewards of the Necanicum Basin
- Hired Tribal Lands and Water Steward as liaison between NWC and Tribal partners
- Hosted Días del Salmon event to promote public education and food sovereignty
- Engaged Indigenous Ecological Knowledge to include native planting in Middle Necanicum restoration project
- Began developing multi-cultural Spanish-language educational materials with Oregon and Washington DFWs to ensure culturally-inclusive state-level fishing regulations



# NWC's Días del Salmon featured in *The Astorian*

"Over the summer, the watershed council partnered with Consejo Hispano for the first time to teach classes to Spanish-speaking youth as part of Consejo Hispano's summer enrichment program. The classes, hosted at Warrenton Grade School, invited students to learn about a range of topics, from the anatomy and life cycle of a salmon to the coastal food web and riparian habitats.

The first week, participants built terrariums, filling glass pots with soil, rocks, peat moss and different seeds to learn about the water cycle. As the lessons progressed, they also engaged in other interactive activities like building their own model culverts to learn about fish passage. Although lessons were taught in English, teachers and volunteers spoke Spanish with the students throughout their time together."





### **Spotlight:** Friends of Tryon Creek

- Goal: Restoring the Tryon Creek State Natural Area (TCSNA) and its riparian zones to ecological balance through Indigenous land management practices
- Drafted Climate Vulnerability Assessment, engaging Indigenous knowledge holders and communities connected to the TCSNA
- Built foundation for an Indigenous-led Cultural Restoration Plan for the TCSNA
- Hosted Indigenous Land Conservation Summit examining topics such as environmental justice, cultural restoration planning, and workforce development

Working with Friends of Tryon Creek, environmental sociologist Kirsten Vinyeta created artistic projections for the future of Tryon Creek that could be possible through Indigenous-led land management



## **Spotlight:** Verde



- Goal: Educating and empowering community members through inclusive water policy education and direct engagement with government representatives
- Conducted Water Justice Leadership Institute, engaging participants from across the state
- Organized Community Legislative Day at the Oregon State Capitol, providing a platform for community members to share their water justice stories with state representatives
- Completed naturescape installations, transforming 4,500+ sq ft. of urban land and providing hands-on environmental education to local youth
- Partnered with Columbia Slough Watershed Council to enhance stormwater management and watershed health

"Community
members gathered at
the Oregon State
Capitol to speak to
elected officials,
sharing their
journeys of
resilience and
determination in the
face of environmental
justice challenges."



# **Spotlight:**7 Waters Canoe Family

- Goal: Practicing cultural canoe traditions while restoring wetland and riparian habitats and engaging Native youth as future stewards
- Organized canoe journey on Wallowa River, prioritizing floodplain-restoration work such as native planting and invasive species removal on the "side channel."
- Engaged Native youth in stewardship through experiential learning and educational activities focused on the history of the land, the health of the water, and the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to protect environmental health



