Dear friends of CELP,

Happy New Year everyone! CELP is entering 2020 focused on our mission to protect, preserve, and restore Washington’s waters.

This year we will continue our outreach to connect people to the impacts of climate change and water scarcity issues. We will continue to act in the community, participate in streamflow restoration workgroups, work with Native American Tribes to honor and support their treaty rights and tribal fisheries, and advocate for sustainable instream flows. When our water is threatened we will use litigation to protect and defend Washington’s rivers and drinking water aquifers.

We are starting the year strong and working hard in Olympia to protect Washington’s waters during the legislative session. Our hard work would not be possible without you. We rely on generous donations from our members and supporters to hold our lawmakers and agencies accountable for protecting Washington’s rivers and streams. Please consider helping us continue this important work by making a donation today!

In this issue you will find information about Snowpack levels, the 2020 Legislative Session, Clean and Abundant Water Lobby Day, the latest Columbia River Treaty town hall, a big...
beneficiary of your IRA, SEP-IRA, 401(k), 403(b) or other retirement plan assets, which can have significant estate tax advantages.

Learn more here.

Upcoming Events

Winter Waters
March 6th, Patsy Clark Mansion Spokane
tickets

Stay Connected

Follow us on social media to stay updated on our work!

Methow River. Elan Ebeling

Snow Watch

More than half of our state's water supply comes from snowpack. The mountain snowpack forms a natural reservoir, storing water for the summer months. Declining snowpack levels lead to more severe droughts in summer. Last summer, a drought emergency was declared for 27 of the state's 62 watersheds.

The Cascades are especially sensitive to greater losses in snowpack because of their relatively low elevation. According to the Washington Department of Ecology, "Spring snowpack levels across the state are projected to decrease 29% by the 2020's, 44% by the 2040's and 65% by the 2080's" WA Ecology. We are entering the 2020's now, and changes are happening. Average snowpack has already declined greatly in the last 70
Recent snow storms across Washington have finally raised this winter's snowpack level above 50% of average. However, according to Scott Patte, a water-supply specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, "this is our third-slowest start to winter (snowpack) since 1990... the odds of us catching up completely are pretty slim". You can read more about the water supply in this [Seattle Times Article](https://www.seattletimes.com/columns/hal-bernton/water-supply-subzero/) by Hal Bernton. For more information about Washington's water supply forecast check out this [article](https://www.washingtonstatewaterblog.com/) by Kimberly Cauvel.

![Snowfall Map](https://example.com/snowfall_map.png)

**Thank YOU!**

You pushed us above and beyond our goal of $10,000 for our end of the year campaign. Your generous contributions raised $13,645 to protect Washington's waters. With Patagonia Actions Works match, we raised a grand total of $19,645 to continue our work.

Thank you for your continued [support](#)!
Legislative Session 2020

Although it is a short session this year, CELP is very busy tackling the many water-related bills introduced. It is a big year for water and we are working hard in Olympia to protect the public interest in our waters, and preserve and restore our rivers and aquifers.

Bills we are Tracking

Plastic Bag Ban (SB 5323 / HB 1205) - passed Senate
Copper Antifouling Paint Ban (SB 6210 / HB 2385)
Motorized/Suction Dredge Mining Ban (SB 5322 / HB 1261)
Water & Energy Conservation C-PACER (SB 6222 / HB 2405)
Ecology's Drought Legislation (HB 1622 / SB 5675)
Ecology's Water Banking Bill (HB2603 / SB 6494)

Senate Bills

Water Right in Trust for Drought Mitigation (SB 6036)
Tribal Traditional & Cultural Interests in Water Resources (SB 6260)
Commercial Water Bottling (SB 6278)
Water Right Sales (SB 6292)
Trust Water Public Interest Standard (SB 6301)
Water Infrastructure Program (SB 6345)

House Bills

Stream Flows (HB 1979)
Tackling Climate Change in Growth Management (HB 2427)
Work Group on Water Resource Policy (HB 2553)

Track the bills and see CELP's position here

Clean and Abundant Water Lobby Day 2020

RESCHEDULED!

Summary:
The Center for Environmental Law & Policy and Puget Soundkeeper Alliance Clean & Abundant Waters Lobby Day has been rescheduled.

New Date:
February 25th, 2020
Meet us at 11am
Where: United Churches of Olympia 110 11th Ave. SE Olympia, WA 98501
Email our Water Policy Coordinator, Nick Manning at nmanning@celp.org if you are interested in being involved or want more information.

Let's raise our voices for clean and abundant water!

We want to hear your voice

Our Communications & Development Coordinator, Kayla, wants to hear why water is important to you. What is your favorite watershed? Do you have a water story you would like to share?

If you have a story, a passion, or anything you want to share let her know. We can use our voices together to create awareness, educate each other, inspire our communities, and protect our rivers and streams.

Send her your thoughts at development@celp.org and let her know if we can use your name for a quote or if you want what you share to be anonymous.

Thank you Kalispel Tribe

CELP would like to extend a huge thank you to the Kalispel Tribe for their support of our work on the Columbia River Ethics & Treaty Project.

The mission of the project is to modernize the Columbia River Treaty to promote the common good through stewardship and justice, while encouraging respectful dialogue and an international water ethic for the Columbia River. The project is a joint project of CELP and Sierra Club, working with the 15 Tribes with natural resource authorities in the Columbia River Basin and also First Nations in the basin.
Background:
"The Columbia River Treaty is an international model for transboundary water cooperation signed in 1964. Negotiations to modernize the treaty between the U.S and Canada started in May of 2018. More info Negotiations to modernize the Columbia River Treaty are closed to the public and the Tribes. To allow for public input, the State Department is hosting a series of what it calls "Treaty Townhall" meetings.

5th Town Hall to Discuss Modernization of the Columbia River Treaty, December 16th, 2019 in Richland WA

Full Summary and Resources

Recap:
The U.S. negotiating team is led by the State Department. As in previous Town Halls, the event was 90 minutes long with time split equally between remarks from Chief Negotiator Jill Smail and questions/comments from attendees.

Quarterly Town Halls are an important opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns about the negotiating team's progress and priorities. They are the only substantive way the State Department has engaged with the region's public since negotiations began.

Some key takeaways from the Richland Town Hall:

- Since May 2018, there have been eight rounds of negotiations, with each country taking turns to host. The U.S. chose to postpone the ninth round of negotiations to allow for more preparation time.
- The negotiating team emphasized that their work is still guided by the Northwest's Regional Recommendation, which prioritizes ecosystem-based function alongside hydropower and flood control. They also noted that the modernized Treaty may not require approval from the Senate, depending on what changes negotiators agree to. They could not comment on the potential impact of a change of Administration following the 2020 election, but reiterated their commitment to the Regional Recommendation.
- The negotiating team, which includes five federal agencies, continues to ignore suggestions that it should include tribes as full members of the team like Canada has done with First Nations. Falling short of this, the team has requested that tribes present on specific topics and has consulted with them before and after negotiating sessions.
Top Questions Moving Forward:

- In principle, the Regional Recommendation elevates ecosystem-based function alongside hydropower and flood control (the only two purposes of the existing Treaty) and highlights the importance of climate change. But when specific details of the new agreement emerge, will new environmental provisions be meaningful?
- When negotiations conclude and the modernized Treaty moves into the implementation phase, will the government reform the "U.S. Entity" to include a representative(s) for ecosystems? Will tribes and First Nations have a role in implementing the Treaty commensurate with their sovereign status? Currently, the Entity includes just the Bonneville Power Administration (i.e. hydropower) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (i.e. flood risk management).
- Can we reform watershed governance to improve public knowledge and involvement and increase collaboration across the U.S.-Canada border?

More Information

You can also contact Graeme Lee Rowlands, graeme@wildsalmon.org [U.S. Conservation Caucus Coordinator for the Columbia River Treaty, Save Our wild Salmon Coalition]

Upcoming Events

**Winter Waters**

**Summary:** The annual Winter Waters Celebration is jointly hosted by CELP and Sierra Club's Upper Columbia River Group.

We will be honoring our River Flow Champions:

- American Whitewater- Thomas O'Keefe
- ROW Adventures- Peter Grubb
- Silver Bow Fly Shop- Sean Visintainer
- FLOW Adventures- Jon Wilmot

**When:** Friday, March 6th, 2020 6:00pm-9:00pm

**Where:** Patsy Clark Mansion (2208 W 2nd Ave Spokane, WA 99201)

**Tickets:** $40 per person or $70 for two people purchase [here](#)
Thanks for taking the time to read Washington Water Watch! Thanks to your help, CELP has accomplished much but, as you can see, more needs to be done. You can support our work by making a donation online here, or mailing a check to:

85 S Washington St #301, Seattle, WA 98104

The Center for Environmental Law & Policy is a statewide organization whose mission is to protect, preserve and restore Washington's waters through education, policy reform, agency advocacy, and public interest litigation.

If you care about a future with water, please become a CELP member today!

You can reach us at (206) 829-8299 or email us.