



Annual Impact Report

2021-2022

We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Since 2013 when we first organized to challenge the proposed Crystal Geyser Water Company’s beverage bottling project, we’ve been supported by our community. We’re grateful for the loyalty and support we’ve been shown all these years and are super pleased to report a victory in the effort to challenge CGWC’s plans. See page 2 for more on this achievement!

The Board of Directors released W.A.T.E.R.’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to guide our efforts for the future. In it we articulate the lessons learned from our previous experiences and the principals and approaches we are taking to continue our work to benefit our communities and the planet. See page 3 for more about our vision.

In keeping with our mission of working to preserve and protect the environment and with the help of grants, W.A.T.E.R. funded the installation of two water bottle refill stations in an effort to address and begin to stem the massive pollution from plastics, at least locally. Located at Parker Plaza in downtown Mt. Shasta and at Mt. Shasta High School the stations allow students, community members and visitors to refill their reusable water bottles and help reduce the prevalence of single-use plastic waste. See page 4 for more.

W.A.T.E.R. has also become involved with Forestry issues since clean water flows and forests are intimately connected. Between Global Warming and the mega-drought we are enduring, and with current inadequate forestry practices, our forests are becoming stressed and succumbing to wildfire. Because forests are/will be crucial for addressing the excess carbon in the atmosphere, we are joining with other groups in dialogue with the US Forest Service to help determine the best course for restoring forests to a healthier state using the best available scientific knowledge. See page 5 and beyond for more on this topic and additional achievements this past year.

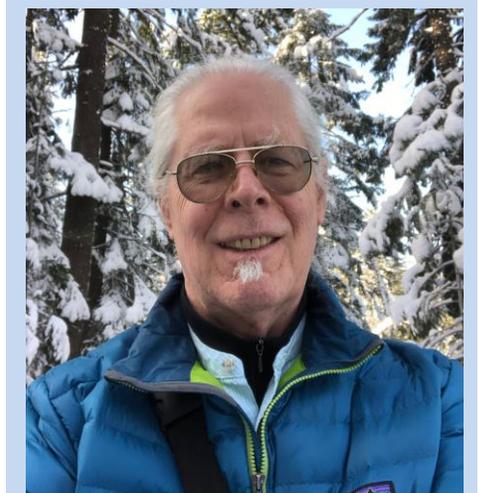
With much gratitude for your enduring support,

Frank S Toriello

Frank Toriello
President, Board of Directors

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Final Victory: Appellate Court Invalidates FEIR

In its ninth year, the ongoing effort to prevent potential environmental impacts of a proposed beverage bottling plant near Mt. Shasta continued. In July, 2021, W.A.T.E.R. and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe filed final briefs in California Third District Appellate court challenging a woefully inadequate Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) prepared by Siskiyou County for a proposed Crystal Geyser Water Company (CGWC) beverage bottling plant. We also challenged a wastewater permit granted by the City of Mt. Shasta. Oral arguments were heard on March 22, followed by the court rulings in April.

The appellate court ruled that two critical components of the FEIR did not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In addition, the City failed to follow appropriate CEQA procedures, rendering the FEIR and associated permits invalid.

The cases have returned to the lower court to carry out the appellate court's rulings, giving the County and the City the opportunity to fix the deficiencies. Our legal team is still actively involved in this process and we are committed to ensuring the deficient FEIR and related permits will not stand.



Water towers being removed from the former CGWC plant.

Photo by Robert Renick



Meanwhile, the CGWC property sold to One Shasta LLC, a recently incorporated consortium. In a fortuitous twist, the Grant Deed has a use restriction stating: "No portion of the Property shall be used for the manufacture, assembly, distribution, sale and/or transportation of water beverage products." Thus the persistent community effort spearheaded and supported by W.A.T.E.R. and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe prevented the potential environmental harms of the proposed project.

The Strategic Plan adopted the following “Speak Your Peace” Principals for engaging in civil public discourse:

Pay Attention. Be aware and attend to the world and the people around you.

Listen. Focus on others in order to better understand their points of view.

Be Inclusive. Welcome all groups of citizens working for the greater good of the community.

Don't Gossip. And don't accept when others choose to do so.

Show Respect. Honor other people and their opinions, especially in the midst of disagreement.

Be Agreeable. Look for opportunities to agree; don't contradict just to do so.

Apologize. Be sincere and repair damaged relationships.

Give Constructive Criticism. When disagreeing, stick to the issues and don't make a personal attack.

Take Responsibility. Don't shift responsibility and blame onto others; share disagreements publicly.

Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project
<http://www.dsaspeakyourpeace.org/about.html>

Strategic Plan Released!

The culmination of almost two years of soul searching and creative thinking, W.A.T.E.R.'s Strategic Plan 2021-2025 was approved and released in November. Titled “**Vision into Action – Pathways to a Sustainable Future**”, the document conveys the importance of local action within a global context. The vision is stated as such:

We envision a society that stewards and equitably shares in the care of our planet's ecosystems now and for future generations.

That vision is being converted into action by the following mission statement:

- *Embed the climate crisis front and center in our work, given the urgent, existential threat it poses to humanity;*
 - *Advocate for the restoration and preservation of the biosphere to ensure a healthy environment, with a primary emphasis on advocating for the ecosystems of the regions encircling Mount Shasta and its watersheds, while recognizing the connections between surface, spring, and groundwater;*
 - *Advocate for and participate in long-range community planning and regenerative practices to promote healthy and sustainable communities;*
 - *Encourage community-wide participation and volunteerism through education and action;*
 - *Engage with government officials and agencies in advancing these issues with active participation, social activism and, if necessary, litigation that benefits public interests.*

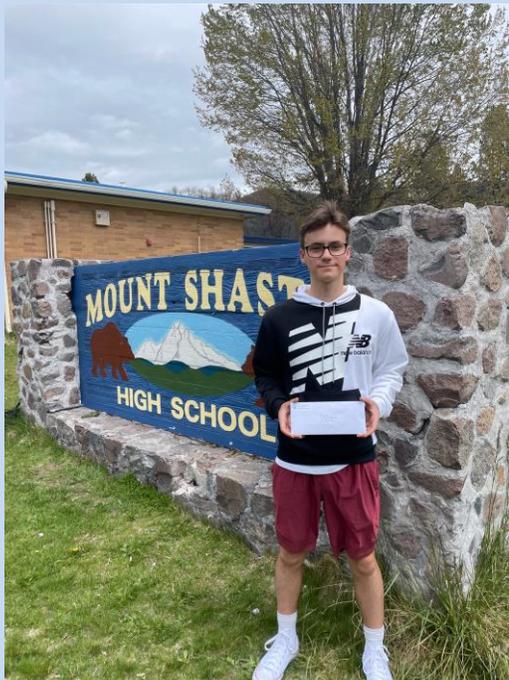
To read more about our future plans and operational strategies, you can read the full document on our website:

cawater.net/about/strategic-plan.html

Reducing Plastic Waste

Water Bottle refill station installed in Mt. Shasta City's Park Plaza

Dedication for a water bottle refill station in Mt. Shasta's Parker Plaza was held in December. The weather was no barrier for winter-hardy community members and a unit with freeze-resistant drinking fountains (for people and doggies) and a water bottle refill function. W.A.T.E.R. spearheaded fundraising for the effort and donated the funds to the City of Mt. Shasta, which purchased and installed the unit. Now community members and visitors to the area can use their own reusable bottles to enjoy mountain fresh water without generating the plastic waste associated with single use water bottles.



Mt. Shasta High School student Nathaniel Bekaert holds the envelope with a check from W.A.T.E.R.

W.A.T.E.R. Grants funds to Mt. Shasta High School

W.A.T.E.R. readily responded after receiving a request from Mt. Shasta High School's ASB President and leadership class student Nathaniel Bekaert for funds for a new water bottle refill station and drinking fountain in the schools main lobby. The unit will encourage students to bring their own reusable water bottles to school and stay well hydrated throughout the day. The unit is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, filters and chills the water, and keeps track of the equivalent number of 20 oz. plastic bottles saved from waste. The unit will be installed for the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year.

Monitoring Groundwater for the Future



Since 2013, Board member Raven Stevens has been measuring the ground water elevation in residential wells surrounding the former CGWC plant. The data has documented important groundwater information during severe ongoing drought and one year of normal precipitation. This information is crucial for local decision makers and community members in understanding how groundwater levels shift and are directly affected by drought and rising snow levels. In 2021, Raven worked directly with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to gain approval and begin the process of uploading all of the data into the state-maintained groundwater elevation data bank. This is precedent-setting work, since it will be the first time DWR will incorporate data from a non-agency source. Raven’s work is opening the door for properly trained citizen scientists to contribute to these important public data resources.

Forests Protect Water Sources

W.A.T.E.R. has begun participating in local efforts to ensure forestry practices evolve from the current practices designed to prioritize timber harvest to a much needed ecological approach that is designed to prioritize carbon sequestration, protection of water resources and prevention of severe wildfires. By participating in a local “Stop Clear Cutting” group, providing input on forest service timber management plans and collaborating with other local groups, we are helping elevate the voices demanding a very different vision of the role our public forests play in facing the challenges of climate change.



The Lava Fire raged near Mt. Shasta in Northern California in 2021.

Working with Our Neighbors

Supporting WCWC:

In solidarity with our neighbors from Weed, CA, we submitted an amicus brief supporting the community group, Water for Citizens of Weed, CA, in their effort to hold a legal firm accountable for damages caused by a “SLAPP” suit (strategic lawsuit against public participation). The suit was filed by Roseburg Forest Product’s law firm against WCWC because of its opposition to RFP’s attempts to take over an important city water source. WCWC’s “SLAPP back” suit will be a precedent-setting case, testing the effectiveness of California’s anti-SLAPP legislation in deterring malicious SLAPP suits.



Progress Protecting Water for the Community of McCloud :



The Community of McCloud, long a target for water and beverage bottlers, has updated its water codes such that bottlers wanting to profit from the Community’s spring water resources will need a contract with the Service District. As a consequence, such projects will be subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act. This will give community members greater opportunities to ensure their water resources are prioritized for domestic use. W.A.T.E.R. has participated in the effort to protect McCloud’s spring water resources from inappropriate bottling operations. We are pleased to see the service district has taken this important step.

Saving the Shasta River Ecosystem

The Shasta River has been seriously impacted by climate change, drought, and over allocation of water for agricultural and municipal use. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has implemented emergency regulations to ensure water flows in the river remain adequate to protect threatened fish species as well as culturally and commercially significant fish. W.A.T.E.R. participated in, and will continue to do so, DWR’s public input process to argue for strong protections for the river ecosystem.

Continuing Collaborations: We continue to support local, state, and national efforts to protect planet earth so it remains habitable for humanity. These include Last Chance Alliance, Move to Amend, and California’s NGO Groundwater Collaborative.

Notable Acknowledgements of Our Work: W.A.T.E.R. was a finalist for the 2022 Anthony Prize, an award administered by the Rose Foundation. Our accomplishments were highlighted in the newsletters of two previous funders, the Rose Foundation and Resist. Our work was also included in the Sisson Museum’s exhibit about water issues in our area.

Volunteer Profile: Maggie Shepard

Maggie is a long-time resident of Siskiyou County, for many years serving as a school nurse and more recently working in the field of opioid addiction treatment and prevention. Her career in medicine has been interwoven with an ongoing interest in public health and the impact of our economic system on health and wellbeing.



A long-time supporter of W.A.T.E.R.’s work, Maggie served on our core leadership team for several years as our volunteer coordinator. In the early years of the campaign to demand an environmental impact report for the CGWC project, Maggie created placards simply saying “EIR” to place in car windows and on storefronts. The placards became great conversation starters for educating community members about the potential problems with the proposed beverage bottling operation. As a potter, Maggie created and sold 16 oz mugs depicting the educational theme, “We All Live Downstream,” and donated the profits from the sales to W.A.T.E.R. More recently, Maggie co-authored an article for our e-newsletter on the history of corporate culpability in today’s plastic pollution crisis. Maggie’s high energy, creativity, and enthusiasm for a healthy community have been great inspirations for the W.A.T.E.R. team.

Financial Report

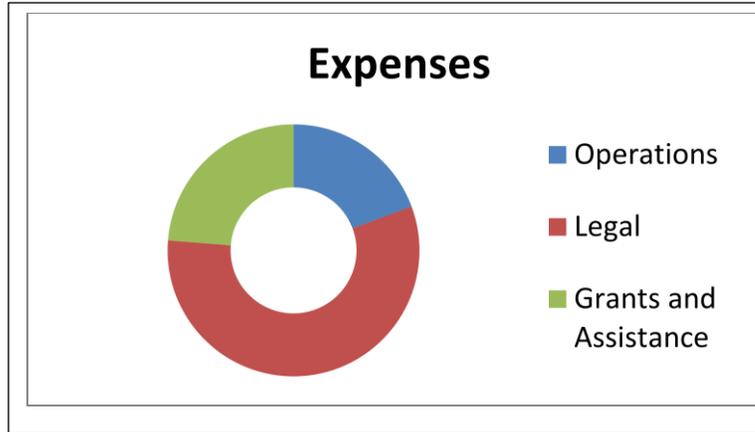
July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022

Income: \$10,746.10

Expenses: \$26,023.14

Net Revenue: -\$15,277.04

End of Year Assets: \$38,713.17

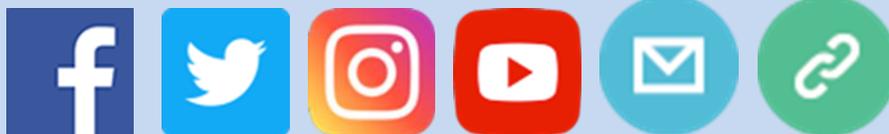


Many, many thanks to:

- Wonderful individual donors from our community and around the world!
- Community Foundation of the North State for organizing North State Giving Tuesday
- Myra Villella Consulting LLC for overseeing our financial accounting.

Expanding Our Social Media Presence

We have now added Twitter and Instagram to our social media outreach to supplement our existing information via Facebook, our website, e-mail, and YouTube channel. You can sign up for our e-newsletter [here](#). We use these platforms to share information and images on the environment and issues affecting our region, including our own in depth analyses of local and global issues that impact our lives. We invite you to explore any or all of these options.



About Us:

Board of Directors 2021-2022:

Frank Toriello, President
Bruce Hillman, Treasurer
Geneva M. Omann, Secretary

Daniel Axelrod, Member
Diane Lowe, Member
Raven Stevens, Member
Mark Kennedy, Member

Passing the Baton: Founding board members Raven Stevens and Diane Lowe resigned from the board of Directors at the end of this fiscal year to move on to other worthy projects in their lives. Their many contributions to the organization have been deeply appreciated and helped secure the victory against the CGWC project.



Mark Kennedy

We are pleased to welcome Mark Kennedy as the newest member of the board. A longtime supporter of W.A.T.E.R., he brings to the leadership team his current experience as a local businessman and a history of work on environmental issues. Mark masterfully manages our social media.



Raven Stevens



Diane Lowe

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