



# GREEN CORPS

The country's most respected training program for environmental organizers

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



*“The mission of Green Corps is to equip new organizers with the skills to instigate, grow and manage campaigns to protect the environment.”*

## THE SKILLS TO CREATE CHANGE

When a new protection is won for the environment, you might see a photo of the governor signing the bill into law, a group of legislators huddled around their desk. You might notice an environmental advocate or two, squeezed somewhere in the back of the picture.

Who’s missing? Usually the organizers who built the campaign that made the victory possible.

These are the people who set out to change something because it wasn’t right, who figured out that a new law or corporate initiative would solve the problem, who set clear goals for the steps of their campaign, who built a strong coalition, and motivated thousands—perhaps millions—of people to make their voices heard at the right time by the right decision makers.

The organizers’ story unfolds in countless meetings, petition drives, phone banks and other actions, through which these committed activists steadily build enough people power to shift the political landscape.

The mission of Green Corps is to equip new organizers with the skills to instigate, grow and manage campaigns to protect the environment.

After learning core organizing principles, strategies and tactics in the classroom, Green Corps organizers go out into the world and start learning by doing, with guidance and feedback. They plan and run campaigns on behalf of active environmental groups across the country. Through successes and failures, they gain invaluable insights and skills.

Then they graduate to work full time with campaigns, nonprofits, legislative offices and other levers of change—wherever their skills are needed to protect our planet.

Ask around. You can’t go far in the environmental community without bumping into someone who was trained by Green Corps.

Thank you for all you’ve done and all you do to make this mission possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Doug Phelps". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Doug Phelps  
Chair, Green Corps Board

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*2019 brought inspiring progress at the state, national and international levels for our environment. From cities such as Philadelphia investing in solar power, to Colorado limiting carbon pollution, to Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg mobilizing a generation, we're making progress every day toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.*

*This year, Green Corps organizers worked to channel a groundswell of public support behind that environmental progress. Our organizers engaged students, community members and local leaders on campaigns to save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from drilling, to protect the Canadian boreal forest from being logged so we can have extra soft toilet paper, and to advance renewable energy policies from Arkansas to Washington state.*

*No matter where they land, our organizers find everyday people who are ready to stand up, get organized, and protect our planet.*

*In 2020 and beyond, Green Corps will continue to train young people to build the movement that will tackle the most pressing environmental issues we face. Thank you for making our work possible.*

*Onward,*

*Annie Sanders*

*Annie Sanders*

*Executive Director*

*Green Corps Class of 2019*





# YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION:

## COLORADO TAKES BOLD STEP ON CLIMATE

In 2019, Colorado made one of the nation's strongest commitments to reducing the pollution that's warming the planet and changing our climate. Four Green Corps organizers helped make it possible.

Their story unfolded as the Trump administration repealed or weakened multiple rules enacted under President Obama designed to reduce global warming pollution from power plants, cars and trucks, and other sources. The administration's actions underscored the urgency of action at the state and local levels. Few states are better-positioned to lead on climate as Colorado, where voters approved the nation's first-ever Renewable Energy Standard ballot question in 2004, and state leaders imposed strong limits on emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from oil and gas developments. With a pro-conservation governor and Legislature, Colorado had an opportunity to do more during the 2019 legislative session.

Conservation Colorado, a statewide organization based in Denver, decided to take advantage of that opportunity. Last spring, they hired a team of four Green Corps organizers to help build the public support needed to convince lawmakers to prioritize robust, precedent-setting climate legislation. On behalf of Conservation Colorado, our organizers worked with Colorado's Climate Future to reduce carbon pollution to at least 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, and 90 percent by 2050 across the state. Organizers were tasked with building public support to convince key state senators to prioritize bold policies in 2019 that will drive the long-term carbon reduction needed to protect Colorado's beautiful landscapes, public health and way of life for future generations.

The team of four organizers—Mireille Bejjani, Ingrid Archibald, Victoria Higgins and Lucas Judson—were based in four key districts across the state: Jefferson, Adams, Denver and

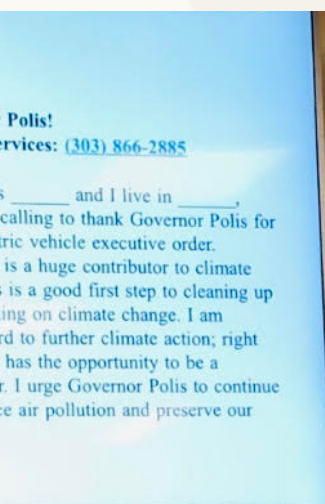


Pueblo counties. Organizers hit the ground running in early January, quickly building up and training volunteer teams and local leaders in those communities. Working with local groups, they got almost 100 community members to turn out to these initial events.

Overall, organizers mobilized 825 volunteers to make phone calls to decision-makers' offices, built a coalition of 140 small businesses, and collected more than 4,300 petition signatures advocating for bold climate action in Colorado. They worked closely with legislative champions and gained the support of elected officials on the fence by elevating the voices of everyday Coloradans through grassroots outreach. Our work on this campaign culminated in four large forum-style events that featured local business leaders, elected officials and thought leaders who informed more than 200 community members about the facts of climate change and the ways they could help advance solutions. After nearly

four months of organizing and many false alarms in the legislative session, the bill passed in early May and was then signed into law by Gov. Jared Polis.

Our work with Conservation Colorado and a campaign led by Colorado's Climate Future not only helped to set Colorado apart as a national leader on climate action, but also built a statewide movement of local leaders who will continue to raise the bar for bold climate action in the Centennial state. Although we still have much work to do in many states across the country, we're proud to have helped Colorado strengthen its legacy as a national leader on climate change, and set a standard for other states to follow.



## POWER FROM THE GRASSROOTS

*(Left) Mireille Bejjani (left) speaks with Colorado state Rep. Dominique Jackson (right) after a day of lobby training.*

*(Right) Caption: Victoria Higgins speaks to attendees at her campaign kickoff meeting in Denver.*





*In March, Lauren Karpinski and Audrey Beedle organized and spoke at a lobby day in Little Rock, Ark., to encourage state legislators' support for a bill to expand solar energy.*

## YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: ORGANIZERS HELP ARKANSAS GO SOLAR

If we're going to avoid the worst effects of climate change, we need to move away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. That's why we're organizing to win strong commitments to solar from coast to coast—even in states that so far have been reluctant to adopt clean power.

Arkansas ranks 11th in the country for solar energypotential, but that potential is not reflected in its solar infrastructure. Due to regulations that hadn't been significantly updated in 18 years, Arkansas was failing to tap into its solar energy potential and the associated benefits to the state's environment. These old laws made solar an unaffordable energy option for many homeowners and businesses in the state.

In the spring of 2019, Audubon Arkansas hired a team of two Green Corps organizers to help advance its Solar Access campaign by passing SB 145 through the Arkansas state Legislature. By amending old regulations, the bill eases restrictions on the size of solar installations and

opens up options to make upfront solar costs affordable for Arkansas residents and businesses.

Green Corps Organizer Lauren Karpinski launched the effort in Fayetteville and quickly recruited a team of local leaders to reach out to their community, collect petition signatures, organize letter-writing parties and more. In just 14 weeks, Lauren and her volunteers generated more than 100 handwritten letters to legislators and collected more than 1,100 petition signatures from the community.

In March, Lauren joined forces with Audrey Beedle, Green Corps' lead organizer based in Little Rock, to organize a culminating solar lobby day at the state Capitol. After a three-week recruitment push, Lauren and Audrey turned out 55 community members to advocate for solar energy to their elected officials. Shortly afterward, the bill passed in the Legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law.

## YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: GREEN CORPS, NRDC TEAM UP TO PROTECT THE BOREAL FOREST

The boreal forest in Canada is one of the most majestic and ecologically important forests in the world, home to wildlife such as caribou and bears. Charmin toilet paper, which is manufactured by Procter & Gamble (P&G), is made with 100 percent virgin forest fiber, much of which is sourced directly from forests such as the Canadian boreal. That's massively unsustainable.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) partnered with a team of two Green Corps organizers for a seven-week effort in P&G's hometown of Cincinnati. Organizers hit the ground in Ohio after three weeks of training to convince P&G to set stronger commitments to reduce virgin forest fiber content in its tissue products.

In seven short weeks, the team collected more than 1,600 petitions and generated more than 150 social media posts.

Leading up to P&G's annual shareholder meeting on Oct. 8, organizers Hayley Berliner and Gwen Nahnsen ran a recruitment campaign to pack a rally in front of the meeting. When the day of the meeting came, nearly 70 people turned out to the early morning rally, and two volunteers attended the shareholder meeting itself to ask questions of P&G's CEO David Taylor directly. The rally generated 12 media hits and provoked a response from P&G officials, moving us one step closer to protecting Canada's pristine boreal forest from being flushed down the toilet.



Image Courtesy of Mary Lebus

*Protesters recruited by Green Corps organizers Gwen Nahnsen and Hayley Berliner take part in the "Stop Flushing Our Forests" protest in front of the main office of Procter & Gamble (P&G) in Cincinnati on Oct. 8, 2019.*



## YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: GREEN CORPS ALUMNI PUT THEIR SKILLS TO WORK



### JEANNE MERRILL, CLASS OF 1995

For the past 10 years, Jeanne Merrill (GC '95) has been the policy director for the California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN), a coalition of sustainable and organic agriculture organizations.

In 2006, when the state of California passed the most comprehensive climate change law in the country and began implementation a couple years later, few in the state even considered agriculture's potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and store carbon

in soils and trees. CalCAN formed to change that.

After years of advocacy in Sacramento by CalCAN advocates and farmer allies, California now boasts the country's most comprehensive suite of climate-smart agriculture programs that protect farmland from sprawl development and incentivize farmers to transition to farm management practices that are climate-friendly. Nearly \$400 million have been invested in multi-benefit, agricultural solutions to climate change. Gov. Gavin Newsom recently doubled the funding for Healthy Soils, a unique program to boost carbon stocks on agricultural lands.

Jeanne got the bug to work on the nexus of agriculture and environmental issues when she joined Pesticide Watch in 1995, following her year with Green Corps. Since then, she's worked for Greenpeace, the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, the Center on Wisconsin Strategy and now, CalCAN.

She lives in Alameda, California, with her husband and daughter.





## NICK GUROFF, CLASS OF 2001

Nick Guroff recently joined International Rivers as its director of communications and development as the 30-year-old Oakland-based organization accelerates its campaign to legally protect the world's remaining free flowing rivers.

During his Green Corps year, Nick worked on campaigns with World Wildlife Fund, Toxics Action Center, Clear the Air, Sierra Club and the Human Rights Campaign in four different states. After graduating from the program in 2001, Nick ran the California office of National Environmental Trust (now Pew Environment Group), where he helped launch and coordinate a collaborative of organizations advocating for new environmental health policies. Nick spent the next decade working for Corporate Accountability as a communications and deputy director with Green Corps graduates including Patti Lynn (GC '97), Sriram Madhusoodanan (GC '10) and John Stewart (GC '09).

Alongside his work with International Rivers, Nick continues to work with Corporate Accountability in a part-time capacity while also advising groups such as Pacific Environment on communications, fundraising and program development. Nick says, "the truth is, almost 20 years later, I still reference the trainings and apply the skills I developed in Green Corps in every aspect of the work I do."



## SAM LOCKHART, CLASS OF 2011

After graduating from the College of William and Mary, Sam Lockhart joined the Green Corps Class of 2011. With Green Corps, she defended California's landmark global warming law, organized East Texas landowners to oppose the Keystone XL pipeline, recruited student activists to attend the Powershift conference in Washington, D.C., and canvassed in New York and New Jersey to oppose corn subsidies.

Following her time with Green Corps, Sam worked with the Power Past Coal Coalition through Friends of the Columbia Gorge to successfully oppose coal export terminals that had been proposed in Oregon and Washington state.

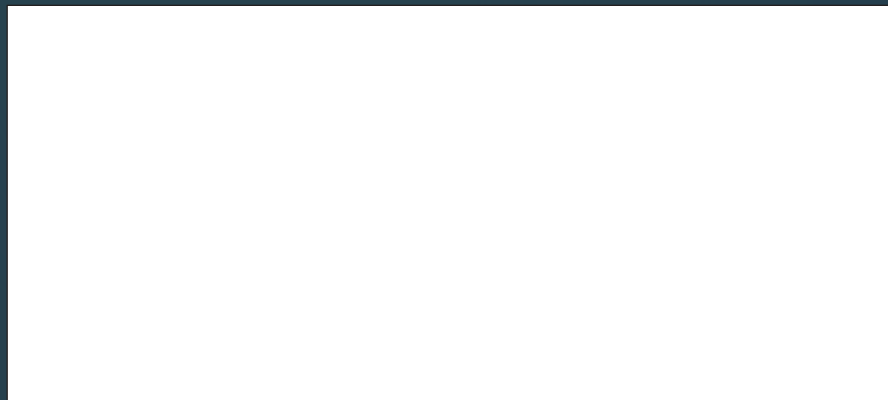
Today, Sam serves as the National Wildlife Federation's eastern regional field director. She works closely with a team of East Coast affiliates and field consultants to build the power of the conservation movement, defend against attacks on the environment, and support opportunities for bipartisanship through vehicles such as the Recovering America's Wildlife Act—a piece of legislation designed to provide \$1.3 billion annually to support proactive wildlife management at the state level.

She also serves as field director for the Clean Water For All coalition.



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