



# Our program report

on the actions you made possible

Fiscal Year 2023

Guadalupe River



# For a greener Texas



# A letter to our supporters

*Every life depends on a livable environment. So there's nothing more important than protecting the web of life that sustains us all.*

*Over the past year, Environment Texas staff and supporters worked to put the environment first. We won legislative, and then voter, approval of a \$1 billion fund to create new state parks, helped Texans take advantage of new clean energy tax credits to reduce climate-warming emissions, and continued to stand up to ExxonMobil's pollution at its massive Baytown complex.*

*We also won commitments from the Houston school district to install filters on water fountains to protect kids from lead exposure, the Austin school district to switch to 100% electric buses, helped convince the San Antonio utility to retire a dirty coal-burning power plant, and much more.*

*Your action and support make all our work possible. We couldn't do it without you.*



**Luke Metzger**  
Executive Director

At Environment Texas, our mission is to work for clean air, clean water, clean energy, wildlife, open spaces and a livable climate.

But we can't do it without you. Our staff research the issues, educate the public, and advocate tangible results for a greener world. Our members give us the resources to carry out our mission and put grassroots support behind all of our campaigns and programs.

To keep up to date with our work and learn more about our campaigns and progress, you can follow us at the addresses below. We'd also love to hear from you—feel free to email us at [info@EnvironmentTexas.org](mailto:info@EnvironmentTexas.org)

[EnvironmentTexas.org](https://EnvironmentTexas.org)

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# 500,000





## PRESERVE OUR FORESTS

# We delivered 500,000 comments for our oldest forests

Our planet needs old trees. They're essential allies in the fight against climate change, but they're being cut down.

In the summer of 2023, more than half a million people (including members like you) submitted public comments on behalf of our oldest trees. Through our Save America's Oldest Forests campaign, our staff and supporters played a key role in building to this moment.

In 2022, we led a coalition of more than 100 organizations to convince President Biden to direct the U.S. Forest Service to develop policies protecting mature and old-growth forests—and when the Forest Service issued its proposal on Earth Day 2023, our supporters were ready. We helped deliver more than 500,000 messages urging the Forest Service to protect mature and old-growth trees on federal lands from logging before the public comment period closed.



(Left and above) Public Lands Campaign Director Ellen Montgomery and staff help deliver more than 500,000 public comments to the U.S. Forest Service to protect mature and old-growth forests and trees from logging on federal land. Photo credits: (Left) Staff; (above, clockwise from top) Bob Pool via Shutterstock; Glen Fortner, Wood Valley Productions; Danita Delimont via Adobe Stock.





# Billions





## CLEAN, GREEN & RENEWABLE ENERGY

# With billions going to clean energy, we helped people go green

A world powered by clean, renewable energy is within our reach. Over the last year, our staff of organizers, advocates and researchers educated and mobilized the public to make the most of the clean energy opportunities available to them.

Back in 2022, we helped win the Inflation Reduction Act, the United States' largest-ever investment in clean energy and climate solutions. This policy package was designed to reduce global warming pollution 40% below 2005 levels by 2030. Now, we're working to make sure that funding is put to good use.

Our clean energy team held a series of webinars to teach attendees how to take advantage of the new clean energy tax credits included in the Inflation Reduction Act to get solar panels, make their home more energy-efficient, or get an electric vehicle.



You can find our Clean Energy Home Toolkit at:  
[EnvironmentTexas.org/cleanenergyhome](https://EnvironmentTexas.org/cleanenergyhome).

(Left) 100% Renewable Energy Campaign Senior Director Johanna Neumann releases a report on the benefits of installing solar panels on warehouse rooftops. (Above, top and middle) Staff call for clean energy. (Above, bottom) Lisa Frank, executive director of our federal legislative office, leads a webinar on how to use new clean energy tax credits. Photo credits: (Left) Tim O'Connor; (above, top to bottom) staff; Christian Fiore; staff.





**\$1 billion**



## CONSERVATION

# Texans vote to invest \$1 billion in our state parks

On Nov. 7, 2023, Texas voters approved a measure to invest \$1 billion to create new state parks—a big win for park-loving Texans everywhere.

This win came as the Texas state parks system celebrated its 100th anniversary—100 years of outdoor recreation, invaluable wildlife habitat and beautiful Texas landscapes. But as the state has grown in recent years, our parks system has been bursting at the seams and struggling to meet public demand for recreational opportunities. Environment Texas called for a measure to grant more funding to meet this need, which we helped pass and got on the November ballot.

We also helped save Fairfield Lake State Park in East Texas from being converted into a private development. And our research partners published the report “A Most Valuable Legacy,” detailing the importance of our state parks and the actions we must take to preserve them for the next century and beyond.



(Left) Garner State Park. (Above) Environment Texas staff and coalition partners advocate for more funding for our state parks. Photo credits: (left) Richard A. McMillin via Shutterstock; (above, clockwise from top): Staff; Staff; Chris Sanchez



## 100% RENEWABLE



Liam Louis, ElleVignette Photography

In Texas, we helped convince legislators to reject the worst attacks on clean energy, including a discriminatory permitting program for wind and solar, making renewables pay higher “ancillary services” costs, and even outright bans on renewable energy.

## WILDLIFE OVER WASTE



Courtesy of Oceana

Our supporters helped send 137,000 petition signatures to Amazon, urging the company to stop using single-use plastic packaging in its shipments. In July 2023, the company announced it would phase out its blue-and-white plastic padded envelopes in favor of recyclable alternatives.

## ! SAFE FOR SWIMMING



WGME

“Safe for Swimming?,” a report from our research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center, found that 55% of tested beaches nationwide experienced at least one day in 2022 in which fecal bacteria reached potentially unsafe levels. Read the full report at our website.





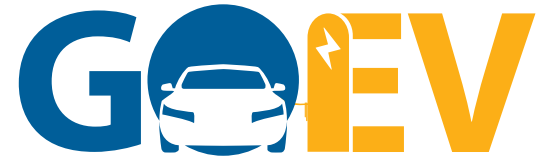
Brian Wanchow via Shutterstock

Our national Conservation team helped convince President Biden to designate three new national monuments in the last year, including the Castner Range here in Texas. The 7,081-acres in the Franklin Mountains near El Paso are now a national monument, protecting this special place and the wildlife that call it home.



Marc Olivier Le Blanc

Bees are dying, in part due to the use of bee-killing pesticides. Fortunately, decision-makers are starting to recognize the dangers these pesticides pose, and by the fall of 2023, 1 in 4 Americans was living in a state that had taken action to limit neonicotines.



Staff

Our research partner's report, "Renewables on the Rise," found that Americans bought 647,000 plug-in electric vehicles in 2021, a 13-fold increase from 2012. And thanks in part to the inclusion of EV tax credits in the Inflation Reduction Act, we expect to see more and more Americans switch to EVs.



# OUR LEGACY: A GREENER AMERICA

Together, we have a long legacy of victories for clean air, clean water, clean energy and more—including state and local wins that have provided blueprints for action nationwide.



## 2007: 5 states join regional climate pact

Environment Massachusetts, Environment Maine, Environment New Hampshire, Environment New Jersey and Environment Rhode Island help convince their states to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)—a climate program that cuts power plant pollution.

## 2011: Nation sets first mercury coal standards

Environment America helps win the first nationwide standards for limiting mercury from coal power plants. The Mercury Air and Toxics Standards go on to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants by 86%

between 2011 and 2017.

## 2012: We help secure national clean car standards

Environment America plays a key role in securing new national clean car standards equivalent to 54.5 mpg that will make super-efficient cars the norm by 2025. This win sets automakers on a path toward improving fuel efficiency across their fleets and even helps usher electric vehicles into the mainstream.

## 2012: New rules to curb pollution from drilling

Environment America and our national network helps win new standards to



curb air pollution from gas drilling operations. These rules will help reduce smog and protect people from toxic pollutants like benzene that can cause cancer.

## 2012-2014: 4 states spearhead local plastic bag bans

Between 2012 and 2014, Environment Oregon, Environment California, Environment Rhode Island and Environment Washington help pass bans on single-use plastic bags in various municipalities and counties. California passes the nation's first statewide plastic bag ban in 2014, and nine more states follow suit over the next eight years.

(Left to right) Dena Mottola with Environment New Jersey speaks with NJN News about climate change; our staff meet with President Obama at an event celebrating the new fuel efficiency standards; Environment California's Dan Jacobson calls for the passage of the statewide plastic bag ban. Photo credits: NJN News; White House; Staff





### **2015: Pres. Obama rejects the Keystone XL pipeline**

Environment America helps convince President Obama to reject the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. Our national network and our members worked alongside our allies for years to stop this project, which State Department officials estimated would produce 26 million metric tons of carbon pollution each year—the equivalent of 5.7 million cars.

### **2020: U.S. military phases out PFAS use**

Environment America helps win a law compelling the military to phase out its use of firefighting foams containing toxic PFAS chemicals,

which have contaminated drinking water in communities across the country.

### **2020: Conservation gets \$900 million annually**

After winning the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 2019, Environment America wins full funding of \$900 million annually for the LWCF the following year. It's the nation's most effective conservation and recreation law, putting billions of federal dollars into national and local parks, playgrounds and trails across the country over the last 50 years.



### **2021: Clean air, water get a boost in infrastructure bill**

Environment America advocated to help pass a major bipartisan package to improve our transportation and power infrastructure and ensure clean water and broadband access across the U.S. over the coming decades.

### **2022: Historic investment in climate action**

In 2022, President Biden approved our country's largest-ever investment in clean energy and climate solutions. Environment America advocated for expanded tax credits for clean energy, giving people crucial support for a transition to a cleaner future.

*(Left to right) The Keystone XL pipeline mid-construction; our staff distribute lawn signs calling on Congress to fully fund the LWCF; Environment America's Johanna Neumann tours a warehouse solar rooftop installation. Photo credits: Reinhard Tiburzy via Shutterstock; Suzanne Navarro Photography; Tim O'Connor*



## Our staff

To see a full staff list and learn more about our campaigns, visit us online at [EnvironmentTexas.org](http://EnvironmentTexas.org).

### **Luke Metzger**

Executive Director

### **Andrea Laureano**

State Parks Campaign Associate

### **Emily Rusch**

Vice President and Senior Director of State Offices

### **Steve Blackledge**

Senior Director, Conservation America Campaign

### **Johanna Neumann**

Senior Director, Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy

### **John Rumpler**

Senior Director, Clean Water for America Campaign and Senior Attorney

### **Ellen Montgomery**

Director, Public Lands Campaign

### **Kelsey Lamp**

Director, Protect Our Oceans Campaign

### **Susan Rakov**

Director, Research & Reports

### **Chuck Caldart**

Litigation Director and Senior Attorney, National Environmental Law Center

### **Emily Reid**

National Canvass Director

### **Jenny Douglass**

Director, Membership Services

### **Amy Floyd**

Senior Director, Grants

### **Ruthie Seroussi**

Development Director

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