

# Works in Progress

Advocating for social justice since 1990

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## Pushback on police accountability laws

# New bills would eliminate gains in curbing lethal police maneuvers

D. M. Enfield

In 2010, John T. Williams, a 7th generation Nuu-chah-nulth Elder and woodcarver, was walking near downtown Seattle with a closed wood-carving knife. A police officer yelled from his car to get his attention but, because he was hearing impaired, Williams did not respond. Seven seconds later, Williams lay dead in the street.

The officer, Ian Birk, resigned but no charges were ultimately filed against him. As King County prosecuting attorney, Dan Satterberg, told Seattle Met magazine last year, Birk "... brought all of the risk to a situation that didn't require any intervention at all."

Renee Davis was a pregnant, 23-year old Muckleshoot woman. She was a survivor of domestic violence and a mother of three with a history of depression. When she threatened suicide, her partner called the sheriff's office for assistance. When a King County deputy entered her residence on tribal land to do a welfare check, Davis was in bed. Within a minute of the deputy's arrival, Davis was dead.

Outrage over civilian deaths at the hands of police was further sparked by nationwide coverage of lethal police actions in the cases of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain, Daunte Wright and others. This helped propel legislation in 2020 that increased police accountability in Washington state.

But now that protests over police killings have dwindled and public attention has shifted to other concerns, some legislators in Washington State want to roll back two laws that put some constraints on police actions linked to fatal outcomes. HB 1310 revised standards for the use of physical force, requiring officers to assess situational context, such as pre-existing mental health conditions or the presence of children at the scene. HB 1054 banned law enforcement from using chokeholds, neck restraints, no-knock warrants and some military gear. Wording regarding the use of tear gas was especially controversial. The final version of the legislation allows for use of teargas in certain situations.

The Washington Coalition for Police Accountability says two recent bills introduced in the House would erase the hard-fought gains of HB 1310 and HB 1054. Returning more freedom to police, they warn, will mean more people of color will be killed by police—more dead bodies

on the streets, more motherless and fatherless children.

At a recent rally to bring attention to the proposed legislation, Coalition spokespeople said statistics on racial profiling confirm that police often target people of color, pursuing them in vehicular chases for minor infractions which may or may not be justified.

Many vehicular encounters, they say, end in death for people of color and in some cases, harm bystanders as well. They oppose HB 1788, which states an officer can engage in a deadly vehicular pursuit if there is "reasonable suspicion a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a criminal offense, and the safety risks of failing to apprehend or identify the person are considered to be greater than the safety risks of the vehicular pursuit under the circumstances." HB 1788 has not progressed past introduction in the House as of this writing.

HB 2037, which the Coalition also opposes, would allow police officers to use force if they feel they are in immediate danger—a "shoot first, ask questions later" approach. The Coalition says this stance is standard operating procedure for law enforcement personnel across the country. In part it reflects training termed "Killology," a program taught by retired Army ranger Dave Grossman. The Killology website states it focuses on "the

reactions of healthy people in killing circumstances (such as police and military in combat) and the factors that enable and restrain killing in these situations."

Detractors of Grossman's approach say it is essentially the same behavior exhibited by former police officer Derek Chauvin when cameras captured the murder of George Floyd. HB 2037 has passed the house and

was scheduled for executive session on February 24, 2022.

Two other bills introduced in the last session have passed the House and now move to the Senate: HB 1719, which addresses the use and acquisition of military equipment by law enforcement agencies, and HB 1735, which would modify the standard for use of force by peace officers.

Among other provisions, HB 1719 would allow for larger caliber, "non-lethal" rounds to be approved for firing. HB 1735 would allow police to take a suspect by force to a mental health institution if deemed unwell by the officer.

*D. M. Enfield is a local writer and activist.*



The Washington Coalition for Police Accountability held a rally protesting proposed rollbacks of the new police accountability laws on February 3. Photo by D. M. Enfield

# Black students at North Thurston press for their right to a safe school environment

For five days, from January 31 to February 4, 2022, students from River Ridge and North Thurston High Schools carried out a multi-faceted protest to call attention to the failure by North Thurston administrators and others in leadership roles to address continuing incidents of racism in their schools. A list of some of the most recent incidents was compiled by a community member and can be found on pages 8-9 of this issue.

Members of the Black Student Union of North Thurston have drafted a letter to the administration outlining the kinds of actions and changes that are required for students of color to learn in the safe and supportive

environment that is the right of all school students.

Christie Tran, a visual arts teacher at River Ridge and advisor to the Black Student Union said, "This is a systemic issue that needs to be addressed at North Thurston Public Schools and in Lacey. We are seeking a broader impact on addressing racism in our district and in our city."

(So far, officials at North Thurston School District have responded by banning student protests on campus. They also said they plan to finalize a plan "to provide students, staff and families with a safe space to have their concerns heard...")—BW

## Letter from the Black Student Union To NTEA, Jan 28, 2022

We are the Black Student Union of North Thurston Public Schools. Our BSU advocates for the collective interest and rights of Black students, and by extension the rights of all students participating in the institution of public education. We are writing to you not only on behalf of our BSU members, but also in an effort to protect the rights of students who have been targets of sexual violence in our schools, including female-identifying, transgender, and non-binary students. We are uniting in a collective effort to

► Safe at school, continued on page 6

**Works in Progress (WIP)**, is a community newspaper based in Olympia, WA, that has been published monthly since 1990.

WIP's mission is to contribute to the struggle for justice across economic, social, environmental and political realms, and to expand participatory democracy across classes, races, and genders.

**Editorial policy**

Our priority is to focus on stories that are ignored or misrepresented in the corporate media, especially those that relate directly to our mission. We seek well-researched news stories, serious analyses of issues confronting our communities and accounts of personal experiences or reflections by local writers. We encourage articles that relate to the monthly theme, but material on other topics is also welcome.

Informed opinion pieces are accepted when accompanied by facts, examples and sources. We discourage writing where a key point is stated as fact when it's unproven or in serious dispute. Writing that stereotypes groups or categories of people won't be accepted.

Once we receive a submission, we may choose to publish it or not. While the views expressed in the material we print are those of the author alone, WIP aims to print material that is consistent with our mission. WIP reserves the right to edit all submissions for accuracy, length, and clarity of expression. We will work with authors if there is a need for editing that extends beyond those areas.

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**THOUGHTS ON THE THEME**

**What lies beneath is better faced than feared**

Like most issues of *Works in Progress*, this one came together while the stories were still (d)evolving. Russia made good on its promises concerning Ukraine, students weary of racist policies at a local high school staged multiple day walkouts, city officials initiated an extensive planning process for Olympia's Westside with no provision for affordable housing and bills were introduced in the legislature that would unravel years of work to increase police accountability.

Last year WIP printed an interview with Christine Yorba, then a teacher at North Thurston Public Schools. Yorba made some pointed observations about a toxic learning environment that failed to deliver on new policies that claimed to combat racism and value diversity. One example of this failure was captured in a video in January that shows racial slurs being shouted from the stands by "fans" during a North Thurston vs River Ridge basketball game.

Representatives from the district condemned the behavior and promised to investigate. But by then, North Thurston students staged a series of strikes and issued a letter we reprinted in this issue. A list of recent racially-charged incidents in the District appears on page 6.

In a recent exchange with WIP, Yorba reported that she too had finally tired of the District's inaction:

"Shortly after [the WIP] interview, I realized that no impactful or meaningful changes were going to be made regarding the abusive NTPS policies and behavior towards Teachers of Color, students, families, and their accomplices, so I decided not to renew my contract. I refuse to work in hostile environments that dehumanize me, compromise my safety, and/or actively impede my work towards social justice."

"NTPS students/staff/families won't see any necessary changes until the district administration, the names I mentioned in my interview, are ousted. They are upholding white supremacy culture and there are many in the district and beyond who benefit from them being in those positions of power, which is why our fight for change was going nowhere. It's frustrating that we've identified the people at fault and what needs to happen for our community to move beyond being oppressed, but as we know, it's hard to take power from the people who benefit from it."



March is the month we remember Rachel Corrie, the young Olympia native who lost her life 19 years ago defending a Palestinian family's home from destruction by an Israeli bulldozer. Austin Okopny writes that he was a teenager when Corrie died, watching night vision footage of the US invasion of Iraq in his living room. It would be years before he even heard of Corrie, and even longer before he would find himself living in her hometown and interning for the foundation her parents established in her name. We welcome Austin's reflections about his growing awareness of the legacy of

genocide.

We also follow up in this issue on last month's inquiry into the status of public forest lands and the state agency with the power to decide their fate. Who's really calling the shots at the Department of Natural Resources? The analysis of Hilary Franz's campaign donations on page 5 offers a few clues. In their latest email to subscribers, 350 Seattle, a non-profit devoted to fostering environmental change at the most elemental levels, shares a new statistic we should have seen coming—that Washington's third largest source of greenhouse emissions is logging. The time has come for the forestry and fossil fuel industries to come clean about their contributions to ecocide.

Several other stories in this issue reflect our "what lies beneath" theme, some quite literally, like Ava Arvest's piece on what underground mycelia have to offer

our damaged world and Marcia McLaughlin's review of *Waste: One Woman's Fight Against America's Dirty Secret* by Catherine Flowers. The latter reviews a hard-hitting expose of how the consequences of the mismanagement of human excrement and toxic wastes have largely been borne by Black and poor people. We also encourage you to read Dan Leahy's brief summary of proposals for developing land just off Boulevard Road (covered by WIP in September 2021). Only one proposal appears to address Olympia's need for affordable housing. Most, predictably, are designed to attract middle to high income residents, and one with seniors in mind fails to mention proposed rental rates.

We leave you with this short excerpt from Chris Hedges, in his most recent article for *Scheer Post*, titled "Chronicle of a War Foretold."

**"After the fall of the Soviet Union, there was a near universal understanding among political leaders that NATO expansion would be a foolish provocation against Russia. How naive we were to think the military-industrial complex would allow such sanity to prevail."**

~JL



**Upcoming themes**

**April: Taking time, making time, doing time.**

Do we make time for ourselves and our families, mindfully, willingly? Are others taking our time from us? How did the 8-hour workday morph into having to be available by phone after the shift ends? How do incarcerated people mark time? Are we using time or is it the other way around? **Deadline March 15.**

**May: Hostages to the future.**

It's moving ahead, with or without us. Who's keeping track? Is change

the same as progress? Is being human still a good thing? Who gets to decide? **Deadline April 15.**

**June: What moves us.**

What moves us emotionally and does sentiment lead to change? What other ways are we moved? Is being moved always a good thing or only when we welcome it? What happens when we're forcibly moved, physically or into a different way of thinking or behaving? **Deadline: May 16**

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# Will citizen perseverance lead to a clean Black Lake?

Esther Kronenberg

Citizens for a Clean Black Lake (CCBL) will finally get a hearing March 8 on their petition to have Thurston County Commissioners dissolve the Black Lake Flood Control District which was formed improperly and has worsened lake-wide water quality problems.

The CCBL request was recently bolstered by a Federal court decision in December, 2021. The Court found that neither the Environmental Protection Agency nor the Washington Department of Ecology had updated standards necessary to protect water users from toxic chemicals.

The lawsuit identified many toxin standards that are nearly three decades old; the list includes toxics present in Black Lake. Mercury is known to have been present in Black Lake fish for years, as well as aluminum, 300,000+ gallons of which was emptied into Black Lake in March 2021 as an alum treatment for algae. Other toxins such as arsenic, ammonia and copper are likely present in Black Lake due to past industrial practices. (Read about the lawsuit here: [tinyurl.com/nwenvironmentaladvocates](https://tinyurl.com/nwenvironmentaladvocates))

The Court's decision also confirms CCBL's request last year to Ecology to deny the permit used by the Flood Control District—a permit based on decades old data. The Department of Ecology has also acknowledged that “no coherent state program exists designed to address non-point pollution statewide and to protect threatened and endangered species as well as public health.” This applies directly to the non-point pollution threatening the Black Lake ecosystem and the connected waters of Puget Sound and Gray's Harbor.

To further erode public trust in the data used to issue permits, recent articles in The Intercept by Sharon Lerner detail the pressures put on the EPA by industry to ignore or falsify data about the toxicity of chemicals to gain approval for use. ([tinyurl.com/pesticidesexposure](https://tinyurl.com/pesticidesexposure) and [tinyurl.com/epawhistleblowers](https://tinyurl.com/epawhistleblowers))

For these reasons, CCBL asserts it cannot rely on the EPA or Depart-

ment of Ecology's risk assessment for these toxic chemicals. The Black Lake Flood Control District leaders have sprayed chemicals annually on Black Lake since 2013—contrary to the District's own Aquatic Vegetation Management plan which approved only two years of herbicide use.

Applying these poisons to Black Lake with no environmental assessment is particularly troubling because Black Lake overlies the city wells of Olympia and Tumwater and 16 Critical Area Recharge Areas. The lake also forms a large exposed portion of the Strategic Groundwater Reservation for the State Capitol, the sole source aquifer for our area—the water we drink and bathe in.

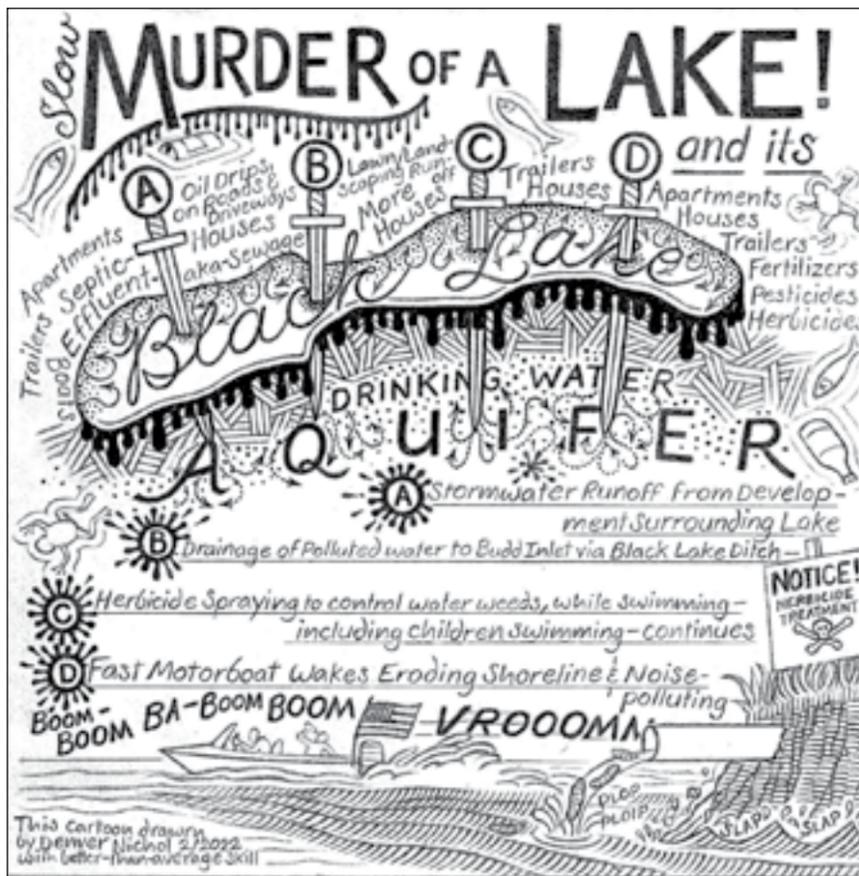
Black Lake is a vital drinking water aquifer that requires oversight and management by the County, the Department of Ecology, the cities of Olympia and Tumwater and concerned residents. This duty can't be off-loaded to a three-member Board of lakefront property owners whose stated mission is to rid the lake of weeds that damage watercraft engines.

### To learn more or participate:

Read the Sept 2021 article at [tinyurl.com/blacklakefloodcontrol](https://tinyurl.com/blacklakefloodcontrol) and visit Citizens for a Clean Black Lake Facebook page

Attend the Zoom public hearing on March 8 at 3 pm by registering at: [tinyurl.com/thurstoncounty](https://tinyurl.com/thurstoncounty) or submit written testimony to the County Commissioners before the public hearing: [county.commissioners@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:county.commissioners@co.thurston.wa.us)

*Esther Kronenberg is Co-Chair of Citizens for a Clean Black Lake. She is inspired by the work, memory and vision of her Co-Chair, Suzanne Kline, who recently passed away.*



## About the cover

Born in Casablanca, Aïcha El Beloui is an architect working as an illustrator, creative director, and graphic designer. Responding to a need to express the invisible urban experience, Aïcha uses research, interviews, drawing, and animation to represent the unwritten narratives present in urban human habitat through its habitants; works produced are displayed in public space.



“I am motivated to understand and express the unexpressed; the daily struggle of those not heard, the unwritten narratives. Socio-political environment, historical narratives, and/or media manipulation strongly influence and affect perception and judgment; the

use of allegory across a number of mediums invites the viewer to experience alternate perspectives and form a more complete narrative.”

<p><b>Are you a resident of Thurston County in need of rental assistance?</b></p> <p>As a community organization in partnership with the Community Action Council, CIELO can help you with the rental assistance fund application process.</p> <p>Call <b>(360) 968-0571</b></p>	<p><b>¿Es usted residente del condado de Thurston y necesita asistencia con el alquiler?</b></p> <p>Como organización comunitaria en alianza con el Consejo de Acción Comunal, CIELO puede ayudarte con la asistencia de alquiler solicitud de fondos proceso.</p> <p>Llame al <b>(360) 968-0571</b></p>
	

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## PERSPECTIVE

### Support Ukraine! No US or NATO War!

# The best time to stop a war is before it starts

Peter Bohmer

[Peter Bohmer gave a speech at the "No War with Russia over Ukraine" rally on Feb. 5, 2022. The rally was sponsored by Economics for Everyone. This is an update of that speech.]

The situation between the United States and Russia over Ukraine is very dangerous. Russia is a capitalist country headed by an authoritarian and militaristic leader, Vladimir Putin. A major Russian invasion of the Ukraine began on February 24, together with massive bombing.

The Russian aggression is wrong and totally unjustified. Yet, according to the mainstream media and our leaders, Russia is the only aggressor and the only responsible party for this horrific war. That is not the reality.

#### An agreement made and then violated—by our side

In 1990, the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev made an agreement with Secretary of State, James Baker, then a close confidant of President, George H.W. Bush. In return for Gorbachev agreeing to the unification of Germany and permitting many nations within the USSR to become independent, the US and European leaders agreed not to station troops east of Germany nor to expand NATO there.

Ukraine was specifically mentioned as part of this verbal agreement. The request from Gorbachev for the neutrality of countries in Eastern Europe must be seen in the context of the Soviet Union losing 25 million of its residents from Nazi aggression and wanting to maintain a buffer between Germany and Russia.

From 1999 to 2004, NATO violated this agreement, expanding east of Germany into Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and the Baltic countries, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The US has recently sent 10,000 US troops to Germany, Poland and Romania with more likely to come. There were major sales of weapons to Ukraine even before the Russian invasion.

#### A negotiated settlement

There could possibly still be a negotiated settlement along the following lines. In return for Russia agreeing to withdraw fully from Ukraine and accepting its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Ukraine, NATO and the US could pledge that Ukraine will not now or in the future join NATO. This was the main demand by Putin and the Russian government during their troop buildup on the Ukrainian border.

The US rejected this reasonable demand so we will never know whether it would have been sufficient to stop the Russian invasion. It still should be made by the US at this late date. Of course, Ukraine should be part of this negotiated settlement.

Does this violate the Ukrainian right to self-determination? Let us not forget that NATO is a military

and expansionist alliance led by the US. Sovereignty doesn't include the right to militarily intervene in other countries which is a central part of NATO. In the longer run, we should demand the dismantling of NATO, a cold war relic.



Let us demand the United States end its threat of *sanctions* and military escalation and be a part of a negotiated and peaceful solution

#### Targeted sanctions and a cease-fire

The war is catastrophic for the people of Ukraine and could spread throughout Europe and beyond. Higher energy and food prices globally are happening and likely to worsen as well as a major refugee crisis from Ukrainians fleeing. Negotiations beginning with an immediate ceasefire and diplomacy including in a central way, Ukraine, is the way forward. A neutral Ukraine is a possible, desirable outcome of a settlement.

Let's demand that the US in addition to calling for ending the Russian invasion and supporting "No Ukraine in NATO" propose sanctions that primarily hurt the rich and powerful in Russia. Much of their wealth is abroad, so freezing their assets and threatening to confiscate it could reduce their support for Putin and the war.

60% of Russian exports are oil and natural gas. Refusing to buy them until a cease fire by Russia and honest negotiations would harm Russian exporters although it would also hurt the Russian people as Russian imports would soon be reduced. The US could temporarily increase oil and gas production and help people here by subsidizing the rising costs they incur for higher energy prices.

#### Why do we focus on the United States?

There is a serious danger of the escalation of this war. The Ukrainian people have the right to defend themselves and the US sending defensive weapons such as anti-aircraft artillery is justified while providing offensive weapons or troops or military advisers is not. Those could lead to a war beyond the Ukraine.

Why is our focus on the US and not just Russian aggression? We live here and we can have more influence on US actions than on other countries. US behavior is partly our responsibility. When people here participate in an anti-war movement to stop US escalation and support peace efforts, it encourages those in Russia seeking peace and increases their credibility in demanding Russia end the war. Each will reinforce the other.

The large protests in Russia against Putin, say "No to War" are courageous and inspiring. More than 3000 people have been arrested since the beginning of the Russian invasion and the number is

unintended consequences. Specific actions by the US or Russia could be misinterpreted and a broader war that is not planned for could occur.

There is the slight danger of a nuclear war. Let us not take this chance. Let's make a call for diplomacy and a negotiated settlement part of our daily life—and the groups we are part of.

#### Building an anti-war movement

Let us educate ourselves, our friends and communities, our workplaces and fellow students about the history and current situation in Ukraine including the human costs of the war and Ukrainian resistance. Let's build an anti-war movement calling for "No NATO expansion into Ukraine" and Russia out.

Let's educate and build an antiwar movement for cutting US military spending. We need a movement against the growing US military build-up and threats against China. This movement would demand the end of sanctions against Iran, Cuba and Venezuela; an end to military support for Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and an end to military sales there.

In building an anti-war movement in Olympia and beyond, we should build one that makes central calls for ending injustice and oppression in the US and links up with organizations and social movements involved in these struggles such as housing justice and freedom for political prisoners.

#### A movement extending across borders

Let's build solidarity with people across borders who are resisting oppression and militarism and repression and foreign intervention.

Let's connect US militarism and imperialism, not only to its costs, but also to "race", gender and class oppression at home and to an exploitative capitalist system that we need to replace and transform into a participatory socialist system.

*Peter Bohmer is active as a member of Economics for Everyone, and was a long-time faculty member at The Evergreen State College.*

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# Natural resources, campaign finance and regulatory capture

## Some friends of legacy forests

### Beneath the rhetoric: What DNR says vs what DNR does

In the last several months, representatives of Washington state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have responded to an unprecedented volume of public outcry and reasoned argument objecting to the agency's "business-as-usual" plans to clearcut mature older forests on state land. It cannot be easy to be a career public servant working under these conditions; yet these are the very conditions that are basic to making decisions that reflect the public interest. In that spirit, we have highlighted here a few talking points DNR has developed under the leadership of Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz. These are followed by the relevant facts compiled by several friends of Washington's legacy forests.

**What DNR says.** "DNR shares your concerns about conserving biodiversity."

**The facts.** Representatives of DNR have stated publicly time and again that forests on public lands are not managed for biodiversity, but rather to generate revenue. DNR has made plans to log nearly all of the older, natural, mature stands that remain in Capitol State Forest as well as in many other small watersheds across the state.

If DNR follows through on these plans, it will lead to the permanent destruction of dynamic ecological lifeboats and structurally complex carbon sequesterers. The moonscapes that remain will become fire- and disease-prone monocrop plantations.

**What DNR says.** "We thoroughly reviewed the sale area and found no old growth forest."

**The facts.** Under DNR's definition, "old growth forest" no longer exists on most of the lands the agency manages. That forest type will never return on any of the hundreds of acres slated for clearcutting by DNR at the direction of Franz. Once clearcut, the successor will be a monocrop, single-aged, high-rotation tree farm. This is the antithesis of naturally regenerated, mixed species, mixed age, long-lived, structurally complex, fire-resistant and carbon-dense forest habitat—"legacy forests" or "primeval forests."

The "thorough review" in the case of recent timber sales, is limited to the parameters of the 1997 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). These parameters exclude new information such as, for example, how climate change is increasing wildfire severity, as well as new discoveries of rare fauna. The HCP studies were "already done" long ago. The forests are deemed sacrifice zones, based on the mantra of "economic certainty" and "no surprises" that comes with the "business-as-usual" paradigm.

**What DNR says.** DNR policies "protect old growth forests."

**The facts.** DNR was prepared to log up to 12 acres of bona fide old growth forest in the headwaters of McLane Creek earlier this

year. Only after interested parties provided photo documentation of 400-year old trees to the *Seattle Times* was the logging called off. More recently, DNR has publicly stated that there is nothing "even remotely close" to old growth in the "Green Thomas" timber sale in Wahkiakum County. This was approved for auction and sold last year for \$2.6 million. An independent stand age assessment of the "Green Thomas" units, however, reveals that this timber sale will lead to the destruction of trees that are close to 200 years old.

Meanwhile, DNR is planning to auction hundreds of acres of legacy forests across Western Washington that are on a healthy trajectory to old growth. These include, among many others, the recently approved "Bluehorse" timber sale in Capitol State Forest and the scheduled "Bessie" sale near Lake Whatcom, where there are dozens of 200-foot tall trees that are close to four feet in diameter.

**What DNR says.** "During the timber sale process, there are multiple opportunities for public input, including a public comment period during State Environmental Policy Act review and another before approval by the Board of Natural Resources at its monthly meeting."

## Beneath the rhetoric: follow the money

Observers familiar with Washington state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have remarked that the agency once again appears to be managing forests on public lands as private holdings for the benefit of private logging interests. Although the current Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz, campaigned as an environmentalist, public records demonstrate that she has succumbed to the overtures of the timber industry and taken their money hand over fist.

A website launched in 2016 to support Franz's first campaign for Commissioner states unequivocally that Franz "doesn't take campaign contributions from [timber] corporations and her decisions won't be affected by their money."

This turns out to have been an aspirational statement on the part of Franz's early supporters. For the 2020 campaign, according to the Public Disclosure Commission, the Commissioner of Public

**The facts.** A common assertion in a failed environmental review process is that everyone has had plenty of chances to comment. The truth is that the comment process is moot. The decision of what to do has been made prior to public comment opportunities and the plan moves forward without meaningful public support. Since this is illegal under state and national environmental policy law, part of the reason for the Habitat Conservation Plan was to front-load the decision-making process and side-step the need to address public concerns.

In another blow to public input, the Board of Natural Resources eliminated the opportunity for public comment prior to timber sale approvals as of December 2021. The longstanding norm at these meetings had been two periods of public comment: one on "general items of interest" and the other on "timber sale action items." Then, at the February 2022 Board meeting, public comment was abruptly limited to a 60-minute period with the result that of the 51 people registered to speak, 17 were prevented from saying anything. These actions undermine public confidence in DNR decisions.

**What DNR says.** Revenue from timber sales helps DNR meet its

Lands took more than \$25,000 from the very corporations this advertisement disavows. Last month it was revealed that in the latest cycle of campaign finance, she took in at least another \$14,000. Here's a list of the most recent donations—note that four of the nine are headquartered out-of-state:

- \$2,000 — Hampton Lumber (Portland OR)
- \$2,000 — American Forest Resource Council (Portland OR)
- \$2,000 — Rayonier Operating Company LLC (Yulee FL)
- \$2,000 — Washington Forest Protection Agency PAC
- \$2,000 — Vaagen Bros. Lumber, Inc.
- \$1,500 — Noble Forest Company
- \$1,000 — Green Diamond Resource Company
- \$1,000 — Sierra Pacific Industries (Redding CA)
- \$500 — Port Blakely Tree Farms LP



Photo by Lindsey Dalthorp for Works in Progress

financial obligations to specific beneficiaries, including public schools and rural counties.

**The facts.** It's true that DNR's Policy for Sustainable Forests states that DNR must act with "undivided loyalty" to trust beneficiaries, to the exclusion of all other interests. But it's also true that Article XVI of the Washington State Constitution states unequivocally that "All the public lands granted to the state are held in trust for all the people."

DNR's interpretation of what they and the timber industry call "the trust mandate" is currently being challenged in the Washington State Supreme Court. The Common School Trust is the biggest beneficiary of revenue from sales, receiving ~60% of the total (after DNR takes its cut). Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal, who serves on the Board of Natural Resources, has rejected this funding model. In January 2022 on Northwest Public Broadcasting, he said: "Step one for me, is to extract schools out of this question, stop letting people use school construction as the excuse to harvest."

**What DNR says.** "DNR-managed forests are critical to the supply of timber in Washington State, and keeps us from having to bring in timber from other states or countries."

**The facts.** This talking point exposes DNR's institutional bias in favor of the timber industry's broken paradigm. The total volume of logs harvested in Washington state comes predominantly from forests owned by private interests. These companies ship a significant percentage of their logs overseas. (Federal law prohibits the overseas export of logs harvested from public lands in Washington.) Ending the overharvesting of irreplaceable legacy forests on public lands would have minimal impact on the overall supply of wood in Washington state. DNR's annual output typically represents less than 20% of raw logs produced here. Few sawmills remain with the capacity to process such large logs in-state.

Shortly after Commissioner Franz took office, the DNR stopped publishing both the annual Timber Harvest Report and the biennial Mill Survey. The numbers from 2016—the last Mill Survey produced under Franz's leadership—are instructive. That year a total of 3,100 MMBF (million board feet) of raw logs were produced in Washington. 54% of the logs came from private, industrial plantations, 16% from small landholders, 16% from DNR-managed lands, 5% from tribal lands and 3% from Federal forests.

Twenty-eight percent of that 3,100 MMBF went overseas, primarily to China. These exports represent the single most significant loss of wood and wood-related jobs in Washington. Students of the timber economy have observed that logging, trucking and stevedoring don't employ large numbers of people, whereas labor-intensive wood processing does.

When private timber companies export raw logs—think of all those ships that leave the Port of Olympia filled with wood—they are exporting a large number of jobs. The tiny volume of MMBF represented by legacy forests on public land are basically nothing compared to what private forests export with little benefit to local communities: a painful example of the "resource curse" right here at home.

# A right to a safe school environment

From page 1

ensure that students' rights are protected, regardless of sex, gender presentation, or sexuality, and that all students have access to a safe and inclusive school environment free from sexual violence, racism, harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

Students from a variety of backgrounds and identities are reporting multiple experiences of discrimination and injustice when reporting incidents of racism and sexual harassment. This is not acceptable. We must act in our own best interests to secure our rights under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in public schools because of race, color, or national origin. Public schools include elementary schools, secondary schools, public colleges, and universities. We must act to hold institutions of public education accountable to the Title IX Constitutional Amendment of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity) in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Our previous attempts to work "within the system" have resulted in re-traumatization, gaslighting, and repeated instances of our concerns being dismissed or minimized. Despite attempts to follow outlined procedures and make reports to the powers that be, we have not been protected from racial abuse and sexual trauma inflicted on us by peers and even staff. Administrators and district officials have proven unable to provide us with a safe learning environment. Because of these shortcomings, it is now our respon-

sibility to cultivate change and secure justice for ourselves.

We must act as a collective body to ensure that our most vulnerable populations are safe from harm at schools. The dehumanization of students will continue to occur, as well as systemic racism and rape culture, if we do not unite for change. The North Thurston Education Association ensures that the rights of teachers in our district are protected—in this same spirit of collective strength, we ask that you support students as we fight for our rights. We want our schools and the district to do better so that we don't have to endure suffering just to receive an education. We ask that you stand with us in solidarity by modifying assignments, assessments, and deadlines (particularly for finals); that you join us in our strike during your lunch and planning periods; and that you take your classes out to witness young people engaging in their civic duties in active citizenship.

We have been intimidated, coerced, and forced to abide by demands dictated to us by administrators against our own self-interest. There is an imbalance of power when it comes to reporting traumatic experiences that needs to be amended. When we are forced to be silent and to bear the burden of being harmed through race-based and gender-based violence, we internalize feelings of anger, sadness, and confusion. This negatively impacts our attendance, motivation, academic outcomes, mental health, and more. When students come to school, they need to feel safe and secure enough to communicate with our mandated reporters about the traumatic experiences students go through. So, as educators and student advocates, please consider this trauma we are experiencing,

in addition to the strain put on us from the COVID pandemic with buses that don't show up, substitutes in multiple classes, and our own absences due to quarantine and/or mental health circumstances.

**This is a student strike** (long-term, disruption of schooling) **and not a one-day walk out.** We demand that our schools agree to the following Short-Term Achievable Goals that can begin to build trust and healing before we return to schooling:

- ▶ Students participating in the strike must receive accommodations and/or modifications to make up work missed in their classes so they are not penalized for exercising their constitutional rights to demonstrate.
- ▶ Students participating in the strike will not be retaliated against with disproportionately harsh disciplinary action.
- ▶ Agree to negotiation/planning with BSU students and students who have experienced sexual trauma at schools and stakeholders to plan a stop to "business as usual" schooling for 1-2 weeks during the month of February to address major student concerns at our schools. Students are not just learning Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetics. There is a 4th R and a 5th R that are silent. NTPS needs to make a commitment to end Racism and Rape culture in schooling. We demand that a commitment is made to dedicate space, money, time (1-2 weeks in February 2022 and then regularly and effectively throughout the year with accountability measures), and effort so that all students, staff, and stakeholders can address these community issues

so that we can collaborate on community solutions. Outside professional organizations specializing in these issues should be hired with the consent of students. Stakeholders engaging in the process should be compensated (school credit, volunteer hours, a stipend, etc.) if this is not part of curriculum and made to be extracurricular.

- ▶ Policies are changed in the students' rights and responsibilities handbook that any student whether they are the ones doing the harm or the ones receiving the harm entering into a disciplinary meeting with a school administrator must be accompanied by a student advocate/trusted adult that will balance the power differential by supporting the student and their needs.
- ▶ Create positions for student advocates at all schools for the protection of students. Long-Term Goals:
- ▶ A full investigation conducted by the Washington State Department of Justice of the current and historical issues and management of incidents of racism and sexual harassment.
- ▶ Accountability measures for racial equity, LGBTQIA+, and social justice training for all staff.
- ▶ Consequences up to termination for staff that violate student constitutional rights.

To Be Continued:

We are not done with goal setting yet. More will come.

In Solidarity,

*NTPS BSU members and students who have been impacted by sexual violence*



◆ **Racist Incident at a Basketball Game On January 14th**, Capital High School students were captured on video yelling out racist taunts at a Black player from River Ridge High School, the video quickly went viral. This incident has exacerbated ongoing student experiences of racism in local schools

◆ **Student Mobilization** On January 24th Capital High School students held a walk-out and issued demands to address racism in local schools. Starting on January 31st, North Thurston School District students have organized and held daily rallies, student strikes and have issued demands in response to this racist incident and others. Students have linked the issues of racism, rape culture and hate crime as interlinked threats to school safety;

◆ **WIAA Investigation** The Washington Interscholastic Activities

Association is investigating the January 14th incident, which is very similar to several other recent incidents across the state. WIAA has the jurisdiction to penalize schools for bad behavior at public school sporting events in our state

◆ **Media Attention** These student rallies and walk-outs have been picked up by regional TV including KOMO, King 5, KIRO, Fox 13; newspapers including the Olympian and the News Tribune; online news sources including Newsbreak and My Northwest; and nationally by Newsweek Magazine. This media has inspired support for the students and but has also stirred up detractors

◆ **Unity Meeting with Capital High School** Unity met with Capital High School Principal Rosmaire Burke, Vice Principal Jawanne Brown and Olympia High School Principal Matt

Grant to learn of their responses to students and their families harmed by this and related incidents and offer to suggestions and assistance for ongoing responses to racism in schools

◆ **North Thurston (NT) Administrators** discouraged the strike. Initial NT District student demands have allegedly been put off by administrators—students were asked to wait until Black History Month to address their concerns

◆ **NT Students** face potential disciplinary actions. Allegedly, the NT administration and individual teachers have threatened disciplinary action against student activists

◆ **NT Teachers** face potential disciplinary actions: Allegedly, teachers have been told by the NT administration to stay away from the student actions at risk of disciplinary actions. One

teacher-adviser told me they were worried they would get fired for supporting the BSU

◆ **NT Student Movement is Growing and Maturing** After a first day that involved some activist disagreements on strategy and a few loud F-bombs, student leaders have found a way to bring together the issues of racism, hate crime and rape culture into a movement for Safe Schools

◆ **Potential for Backlash** As this student movement continues to grow, so does the potential for backlash. These issues are precisely the issues at the core of the growing national divide and our region has been afflicted by white supremacist activity

*The photo on this page was taken by a member of the community during a day-long strike at River Ridge High School in February 2022.*

# Windows to the soil: how fungi help restore personal and planetary health

Ava Arvest

If eyes are the windows to the soul, mushrooms might be the window to the soil. Fungi are indicators of diversity, burned carbon, the abundance of microbes, or the lack thereof. An undergrowth of fungi could indicate a healthy microbiome or a damaged one, based on what kind of fungi is fruiting and when. Mushrooms are not necessarily the problem – they are more likely to be indicators of an underlying chemical profile, just as the whites of a person's eyes being yellow might be an indicator of a failing liver.

## A hidden world of inter-species communication

We rarely even see most mushroom species that exist beneath the soil, the mycorrhizal or endophytic varieties. Mycorrhizal mushrooms associate with and form relationships with the roots of trees and plants. These fungi deep in the soil create a plethora of photosynthesizing organisms, sending their messages across the forest floor, offering various organisms access to minerals they would not otherwise be able to reach. Amazingly, they can sense when a tree on the other side of the forest is in need and can distribute water or minerals to that tree based on this awareness.

## Fungi as health indicators

We are constantly witnessing the consequences of our technologically curious and ignorant culture. One example is the process of extracting and refining metals, which was undertaken before fully understanding their properties. That ignorance led to “Mad Hatters” disease (mercury poisoning) and lead paint poisoning. What would have alerted us to the fact that leaded glass would lead to kidney disease, except a five- or ten-year study? Who knew treated lumber and the manufacturing of long-lasting tires would be implicated in the die-off of several salmon species, short of a 20-year study? We just can't be clear on how things will affect the natural world without lengthy, double-blind studies. Unless, that is, we observe nature and heed her messages.

*Candida albicans* is a fungus that lives in the human body. When in balance, *Candida* helps us digest food and chelate otherwise harmful heavy metals. Most health “experts” emphasize the negativity of *Candida*'s presence and the

internet is full, mostly, of information on how to get rid of it.



What is less understood is that *Candida* may be present in internal human environments because it is an indicator of a larger problem like heavy metal accumulation. Perhaps we should not try to eradicate *Candida* as much as under-

stand why it proliferates in humans. In much the same way, mushrooms can alert us to environmental problems and point to their solutions. Cultivated fungi are now being used around the world to remediate heavy metal pollution in the soil. Rather than being the cause of the imbalance, fungi are often the first indicators of a problem, also serving on the clean-up crew.

## Respecting the messages of fungi

Our medical system typically makes treatment choices based on symptoms. Even when we know health problems are systemic and deeply rooted, we persist in prescribing treatments based on outer symptoms. Perhaps when they see an organism that annoys them, like a mushroom that blooms on the lawn after a rain, humans can learn to think about all the underlying reasons why something so inherently misunderstood would present itself. What could their presence be implying? What could they possibly be trying to tell us? It could be an entire network of organisms, talking to each other and making decisions about how to orchestrate remediation of an unhealthy situation.

We know network systems of fungi communicate with each other. More than likely, they are talking smack about how intolerant humans are of organisms that are merely cleaning up after them. However, based on what I know about fungi, they're probably just having little spore parties and making plans to bring more phosphorus to Sheldon, the elder tree in the forest whose topsoil is stripped due to foot traffic at the entrance of the state park.

*Ava Arvest is a mycologist and owner of Mycouprrhizal. Ava organizes classes and workshops and organizes events to educate and empower people surrounding the use of fungi. Learn more at [mycouprrhizal.wordpress.com](http://mycouprrhizal.wordpress.com) or visit the Mycouprrhizal booth at the Olympia Farmers Market.*

*Photo by Lindsey Dalthorp*



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# Will the City of Olympia act to support housing for working people?

One proposal reflects the City's goal for its Boulevard Road property of "maximizing affordable housing for working class people." Or will they go for more "market rate?"

**South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity.** SPS Habitat proposes to build 110 permanently affordable home ownership units for families with incomes from 30% to 80% of the Thurston County's Area Median Income (AMI) of \$90,200. It is the only proposal offering home ownership; all others are rental projects. The average person buying their homes has an income of 45% of AMI. Their last home sold for \$171,000 with a \$950/month mortgage. The average house sale price in Thurston County as of December 2021 was \$481,500. Habitat ensures affordability in perpetuity with a Community Land Trust model. (Our Westside Statement of Principles calls for prioritizing housing for folks with incomes at 40% of AMI.)

**Ken and Julie Brogan.** The Brogans (140 unit Views on 5th) propose the exact opposite from Habitat. They propose to build, own and then management 180 rental units in nine buildings with

HUD financing. No mention of possible rental prices.

**Great Expectations.** They want to build 180 units with an emphasis on middle income families. They want to implement the City's 2020 Missing Middle Ordinance. Their average monthly rental is \$1,822/month and their renters have an average income of 86% of the AMI of \$90,200.

**Dove Development.** They plan to build 180 rental units. Their focus is on seniors and the middle income brackets. Their apartments will rent for \$2000/month and their shared cottages for \$2250/month. They state no rental price for their 118 units of shared congregate senior living.

**Wolff Company.** Their rental project is aimed at residents making 80% to 120% of the AMI of \$90,200 and consists of two-and three-story buildings. Their projects generally are built using the Multi Family Tax exemptions (MFTE). They

want the City to expand the use of their property tax exemptions. (Our Westside Statement of principles opposes the City's use of MFTE)

**Inland Group.** They plan 180 rental units to create 'an active adult and affordable townhouse community' with "attainable" rents using Olympia's density bonus by building for families with incomes at 80% of \$90,200.

**RJ Development.** RJ sees this site as "ideal for people migrating to the area." It will be designed for middle income families with incomes between 70% and 100% of the AMI of \$90,200. They do not mention possible rental or sale prices.

**Shelter Resources, Inc.** They plan a housing development of townhouses and high-density apartment flats with emphasis on middle income families. They do not mention number of units or price of rentals.

**LMC – Lennar.** Lennar clear cut 9.4 acres of woodland in SW neighborhood for 57 homes priced at \$500,000 + against the total opposition of the SW neighborhood. They now plan "best-in-class multifamily housing community" with a plan "not to designate certain units as "affordable! "

**Southport Financial.** 180 rental units with a low-income deed requiring incomes of 60% or less of AMI, but they twice suggest the City will reject their proposal because it wants middle income housing.

*Summary by Dan Leahy. Read more about the history of the Boulevard Road project in [olywip.org](http://olywip.org) for September 2021*

## Prioritizing workers pays off even when wages don't

### WIP Editors

*Employee shortages and low wages. Supply chain disruptions and business closures. Non-existent benefits and unsafe working conditions—the economic consequences of the pandemic have exacerbated an employment market that's been in decline for decades.*

According to the *New York Times*, corporate consolidation and dwindling labor unions have led to worker compensation now being lower than at any point in the second half of the 20th century.

But while some businesses are struggling to find and keep workers, others have a stable workforce and report strong earnings. One common denominator appears to be strong unions and cooperative business models.

### Lessons from the delivery industry

By 2021, corporate management at FedEx was facing a national trend: record numbers of US workers weren't returning to jobs with low wages or dangerous workplace conditions. FedEx increased wages at ground facilities to attract and retain workers but by the last quarter of 2021, they reported overall losses for the year.

In contrast, UPS reported higher earnings in the same quarter while paying workers almost twice what FedEx Ground drivers earn for the same work. Employees at UPS credit their advocates at the package division of the Teamsters Union with securing them the highest wages in the delivery business. ( It should be noted that UPS also earns almost twice the return on invested capital that FedEx does, due to variances in how the two companies invest and reward shareholders.)

Unions don't just negotiate for better wages and benefits for members. They also advocate for greater job security, more safety precautions, and increased gender and race equity—factors that are determined solely by corporate heads when union representation is absent.

### Mitigating difficult work by empowering employees

The US has over 1.4 million home health care workers. Their work is demanding, with low wages, negligible benefits, high turnover and few health and safety protections. Most are women and people of color, employed by agencies that take a sizable cut of their earnings. Even when they work full-time, one in four home care aids lives at poverty level.

A new report by The Real News Network says worker cooperatives in the home health arena are proving to be more resilient, if not always immediately more profitable, than hierarchical commercial enterprises.

At Bronx-based Cooperative Home Care Associates, the support and education that workers receive have made it the largest cooperative in the US. It has 2,000 unionized employees, over half of whom are worker-owners. Members

receive discounts on supplies and enjoy partnerships with other co-ops. Every worker has a vote in the direction of the business, and all are trained in financial literacy. After free training and three months on the job, they are eligible to become worker-owners.

"Working outside a cooperative, I had no control, no power over when I went to work, how much I made, how much money I put in, how much was taken out. Now I'm not just putting on a uniform and going to a 9-5 job, miserable. Here, I'm happy," says CHCA worker-owner Pam Armstrong.

Because their clients are almost entirely dependent on Medicaid, CHCA employees work for \$15, the minimum wage in New York State. Organized efforts to increase pay for home care aids have failed in the state so far but they aren't giving up.

### Public and private sector need legislation to strengthen the right to organize

Teachers and other public service employees are not protected by right to union laws in a majority of states. A study released in 2020 by the Economic Policy Institute recommends immediate passage of the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act and the Public Safety

Employer-Employee Cooperation Act. It also strongly advocates for passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. The main provisions of the act would give private sector workers more support in creating unions and participating in collective bargaining. Although it was passed in the House of Representatives in 2021, the bill is currently stalled in the Senate.

Until employees are legally allowed to bargain for living wages, safe working conditions and immunity from predatory employers, jobs will remain unfilled, adequate housing will remain unaffordable, and the livelihoods of millions of Americans will remain in peril.



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## BOOK REVIEW

# Waste: One Woman's Fight Against America's Dirty Secret

by Catherine Coleman Flowers

Marcia McLaughlin

"We visit homes in the country with no means of wastewater treatment, because septic systems cost more than most people earn in a year and tend to fail anyway in the impervious clay soil. Families cope the best they can, mainly by jerry-rigging PVC pipe to drain sewage from houses and into cesspools outside. In other words, what goes into their toilets oozes outside into the woods or yards, where children and pets play. Pools of waste form breeding grounds for parasites and disease."

Catherine Flowers is not talking about a third world country. She's talking about places in the United States. It's happening in rural places throughout our country, but also in urban areas: areas of poverty and most often, neighborhoods of people of color.

Catherine Coleman Flowers grew up in a poor neighborhood in Lowndes County, Alabama in the 1960s. She began her life as an activist, protesting conditions there as a high school student in an all-black school with systemic racist policies.

As a high school student, she was a Robert Kennedy Youth Fellow in DC. Her activism continued as she attended college at Alabama State University. She became part of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and marched for voting rights and against lynching.

She was a teacher, fighting for the rights of black students in her classroom. She fought for her spouse's rights when he was injured while in the army and accused of malingering.

Activism has been a constant part of her life wherever she lived. In 2000, she returned to Lowndes County, where she began working with various officials to find a way of helping the community. In visits to rural homes, this is what she typically found:

It was evident that the elderly woman's septic tank was not working. Feces clung to the back of her home outside the bathroom. She could have received a citation and eventually been



arrested for not being able to afford a septic system. A young man who lived with his wife and child had been cited for not having a septic tank was in danger of going to jail for ninety days and losing his job.

Flowers went to court with the young father and persuaded the judge to provide assistance instead of arresting him.

She went on to work with Alabama Senators and Representatives to find funding for septic tanks, getting an appropriation for the Black Belt Water and Sewer District. Still, it was eight years after the appropriation was approved before they saw any funds.

Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) invited Flowers to continue her work in partnership with EJI. They started with an intensive survey of the issue in Lowndes County:

"The survey revealed an array of wastewater issues affecting both homes and businesses across the county. Stuningly, they even occurred in townships that had wastewater treatment. ... Stories about sewage running into bathtubs and flooding houses were common. The biggest revelation for us was that the wastewater treatment technology that people were required to buy to avoid arrest was failing at high rates."

Flowers developed a mysterious illness as she worked in these homes. After reading a *New York Times* article titled "Tropical Disease: The New Plague of Poverty," she contacted the author. He sent a parasitologist to Lowndes County and they determined that 34.5% of the people tested positive for hookworm, a disease that the US health department had thought eradicated in this country.

This is a very readable book, difficult to put down, as Flowers takes you through her life as an activist. It's a must-read that demands follow-through to our Senators and Representatives in Washington, DC.

In 2019 Flowers established the Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice. In the concluding chapter, Flowers says: "Now I understand that the issue affects all kinds of people regardless of race or geography. You shouldn't have raw sewage running back into your home or in your yard, period."

I invite you to read this book and join me in writing to Congress and to the President, demanding that this be an essential part of rebuilding our infrastructure.

*Marcia McLaughlin is a resident of Lacey, new to the community, formerly from King County and active there in fighting for housing for all.*

*This review was submitted as part of WIP's \$50 book review grant.*

## REFLECTION

# "They tried to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds"

"Quisieron enterrarnos, pero no sabían que éramos semillas."

Austin Okopny

On March 16, 2022, it will be 19 years since Rachel Corrie passed away. Rachel had gone to the border city of Rafah in Palestine to protest the Israeli Occupation and specifically, Israeli policies regarding land seizures. She perished under a militarized CAT bulldozer made specifically for Israel's use. She was 23.

Her death reminds me of the powerful quote by Dinos Christianopoulos, which the Zapatistas adopted in their struggle to maintain indigenous land in Mexico: "They tried to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds."

Genocide is still occurring in Palestine, in the US, and around the world. Omar Abdalmajeed As'ad, a Palestinian-American octogenarian, was murdered by Israeli security forces outside of Ramallah in January of this year, one of the countless Palestinians murdered by Israeli security forces every month. In our own country, Valentina Orellana Peralta, a 14-year old, was shopping in a clothing store when she was gunned down by Los Angeles police two days before Christmas 2021. Those who are most or more marginalized are being buried, quite literally.

Like everyone who gives their lives for justice, peace, hope, and liberation, Rachel was a complex human who deserved a long and fruitful

life. Her legacy has become a seed for many in the United States and in Palestine. Her family continues to water that seed with the Rachel Corrie Foundation, so that generations after me in Olympia and in Palestine may reap its fruit, rise to Rachel's challenge, and keep fighting for what is right.



One way to water these seeds locally is in mutual aid—supporting community members who are suffering, so that they, in turn, may support us or others. The future won't be in self-care, but in community care. We have orchards of community power to draw from, all over the

United States and the world, to continue working to end Israeli apartheid and foster healthy communities based not on technocratic fascism but on self-determination for Palestinians and freedom for all people. We can lend a hand to those who need it, across the street or across international borders, so that we may all live in dignity. If not for ourselves, then for our children, whether they live in Renton or in Rafah. Let's do some gardening together.

*Austin Okopny is a formerly homeless TESC student and intern at Rachel Corrie Foundation.*

**March 16, 2022 is the 19th anniversary of Rachel Corrie's death.**

Rachel Corrie Foundation invites the community to attend a zoom webinar on "Holding Israel Accountable," featuring voices and perspectives from the Palestinian Diaspora, solidarity groups, and current actions being taken in the United States and internationally. Wednesday, March 16th, 5 pm. Register for the event and receive the zoom link at <https://rachelcorriefoundation.org>.

# Redevelopment of the City of Olympia's Triangle Subarea

## A Westside Perspective

We, the undersigned, are residents of the Westside of Olympia. We intend to be part of the "robust analysis and public engagement" that Mayor Selby indicated will be part of the City of Olympia's Subarea planning effort. The City is scheduled to begin this effort in March, 2022.

We appreciate the efforts of Amy Buckler, the City's Strategic Project Manager, to clarify the intent of the \$250,000 grant from Commerce in support of this planning effort and to understand the shape of the Triangle subarea itself.

We agree that the northern boundary of the Subarea needs to be clarified. We also need to understand why parcels on the eastside of Division between Garfield and 4th Avenues were included in the Subarea's boundary.

We also requesting to review a draft of the RFP that the City intends to use to recruit a consultant for this planning effort and, to the extent possible, be part of the selection process. We wish to ensure that the term "blighted" is not used to describe portions of our Westside neighborhood. This term has been inappropriately used by previous City consultants. We want to ensure the selection of a consultant who understands and respects the Westside of Olympia.

### Preparation for Engagement

Since November, 2021, we have taken several steps to prepare ourselves for this task of envisioning what a beneficial redevelopment could look like.

We developed a "Land Ownership Map" of the Triangle Area and met to share this with the leadership of the three Westside neighborhood associations (SWONA, NWONA & Burbank/Elliott Association).

We informed the un-represented homeowners on Bush and Jackson Avenues and many of the local businesses on Division and Harrison about the City's proposed Subarea planning.

We have sent City-generated information about this proposed planning effort to well over 200 households on the Westside.

We have discussed this planning effort with Westside neighbors in three separate Zoom discussions in January, 2022.

### Our Preliminary Principles and Vision

**A Public Orientation.** Triangle Redevelopment must prioritize public space and community-oriented activity.

The current Triangle area south of Harrison is a private land mass of impervious parking lots dominated by big box stores owned by five out of state companies: Capital Mall Land, Capital Mall Company, WIG Properties, Cafaro NW Partnership and MGP Properties.

Whether through the use of eminent domain, easements or mandatory regulations, publicly owned land such as pocket parks, bike paths, pedestrian pathways, must be accessible to all residents.

The plan must preserve Sunrise Park, a public park off of Bush Avenue NW.

Expand the use of building space for services such as the existing Public Health (vaccination) Clinic and Thurston Regional Library. In addition, create more community services such as a community bike repair shop.

The Westside is in need of a Westside Community Center. One building on the periphery of the Triangle, the permanently closed 24 Hour Fitness Center, should be purchased by the City for a Westside Community Center. It should partner with SPSCC and Evergreen to create art and environmental learning opportunities for neighborhood residents. It could also be the site for community acupuncture, yoga and other health related services.

### Housing

Existing housing must be preserved and future housing must be affordable at below market rates.

There are approximately 60 single family homes on Bush and Jackson Avenues NW and three homes on 4th avenue SW. Preserving this housing would be in line with one of the goals of the

subarea plan to "reduce pressure on single family housing."

The low-income housing complex, Evergreen Villages, must remain intact. Portions of this complex are on the northern border of the Triangle Subarea.

Future housing must be affordable to those people with incomes at 40% or less of the Area Median Income currently \$90,200. This means a maximum annual income of \$43,080 and a rent of \$900 or less.

The Thurston Housing Land Trust, the Housing Authority of Thurston County and the Low Income Housing Institute must be given top priority for any new housing in the Triangle and included in the planning process.

This is especially the case if there is new housing at the sites identified as "redevelopment sites" in the Regional Planning Council's Buildable Lands Report. These sites are currently owned by Cafaro NW Properties and WIG Properties and are between Kenyon and Cooper Point Rd south of Harrison.

The City should gift the two lots it owns on 4th Avenue to one of the above listed low income housing organizations to meet our current housing needs.

It may be possible to re-purpose office buildings for neighborhood housing. If the Department of Licensing no longer needs these buildings for office space, it may be possible to re-purpose the two buildings on 4th and Black Lake Boulevard for neighborhood housing.

There is no reason to utilize eight year property tax exemptions to meet housing needs. These exemptions only benefit the building owner, as documented by the JLARC report.

### Climate Crisis Recognition

Re-development must recognize that global warming is caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Redevelopment must be guided by climate resilience.

The preservation and planting of trees must be a part of redevelopment. The stand of trees just west of Kenyon must be preserved. It is one of the few stands of trees in the Triangle south of Harrison.

Green design elements like living roofs, all electric buildings, solar energy, rain water containment, public parks, playgrounds and community gardens and food hub need to be integrated into planning and development.

Electric vehicle charging stations need to be constructed in the Triangle.

Much of the estimated 60% to 70% of the impervious parking lots need to be repurposed and replaced with stacked parking facilities to reduce the wasteful use of land for often vacant parking space.

### Transportation

Prioritize travel by public bus, public bike lanes and walkability. Safe and convenient walkability requires a dense network of pedestrian walkways and social trails.

Connect the Grass Lake pedestrian trail to the Westside neighborhoods.

Connect the east and west borders of the Triangle to the SW neighborhood between 9th and 4th avenues and to Yauger Park over Cooper Point Rd via pedestrian bridges.

Create spaces for short term electric car and bike rentals and covered bike parking throughout the Triangle.

Establish an Intercity Transit shuttle service from the Triangle area to Sea-Tac and the Amtrak station on Yelm Highway.

### Preservation and expansion of locally owned small businesses

The uptown Westside has a vibrant core of small, locally owned businesses, many of which have been around for decades. There are viable and community oriented small businesses both outside and inside the Triangle boundary. These businesses and services are directly connected

to the livability of the Westside and its neighborhood. We want to preserve all of them.

Outside of the Triangle boundary there are small businesses like the Hash House, Westside Tavern, Westside Hair and Nail Salon and Tony's convenience store, Eagan's, Olympia Framemakers and many others.

Inside the Triangle Boundary near the corner of Harrison and Division alone, there are small businesses like Terry's Automotive and Alignment, the food and service businesses in the Westside Mini Mall and the Westgate Center building, as well as California Taco truck. On the north side of Harrison, we have Vic's Pizza on Division and the Grocery Outlet in the Westside Mall, the Olympia Furniture Company, the Mediterranean Breeze Turkish Restaurant and many others.

We also support the presence and expansion of locally-owned businesses inside the existing Capital Mall area south of Harrison.

### Conclusion

We look forward to the beginning of the City's planning and receiving a draft of the Consultant RFP.

Please put our names and emails on the official "parties of record" list and keep us informed of your progress.

If you have any initial responses to this statement, please address it and all future City correspondence to all of our below-listed email addresses.

Sincerely (SIGNED),

<i>Olivia Archibald</i>	<i>Ann Heitkemper</i>	<i>Ann Margaret Phelps</i>
<i>Karma Arslanian</i>	<i>Teresa Herinckx</i>	<i>Jamie Phelps</i>
<i>Jennifer Balas</i>	<i>Ryan Hollander</i>	<i>Talauna Reed</i>
<i>Elizabeth Baldo, RN</i>	<i>Jill Ivie</i>	<i>Janis Rich</i>
<i>Judy Bardin</i>	<i>Shareem Jackson</i>	<i>Lisa Riener</i>
<i>Salima Benkhalti</i>	<i>Karen Janowitz</i>	<i>Linnea Rothenmaier</i>
<i>Alicia Blanch</i>	<i>Sayad Kahn</i>	<i>Jessica Ryan</i>
<i>Peter Bohmer</i>	<i>Steven Kant</i>	<i>Dan Ryan</i>
<i>Filemon Bohmer Tapia</i>	<i>Mary Kasimor</i>	<i>Peter Sanderson</i>
<i>Keith Briscoe</i>	<i>Jon Kovarik</i>	<i>Cynthia Sanderson</i>
<i>Chelsea Buchanan</i>	<i>Valerie Krull</i>	<i>Kendra Sawyer</i>
<i>Terrilyn Burke</i>	<i>Caroline Lacey</i>	<i>Julie Slone</i>
<i>Kathleen Byrd</i>	<i>Thea LaCross</i>	<i>Shelby Smith</i>
<i>Angela and John Carlson</i>	<i>Dan Leahy</i>	<i>Dick Stamey</i>
<i>Elizabeth Carr</i>	<i>Helen Lee</i>	<i>Nancy Sullivan</i>
<i>Savvina Chowdhury</i>	<i>Carri Leroy</i>	<i>George Sullivan</i>
<i>Chris Ciancetta</i>	<i>Janine Lindsey</i>	<i>Mick Synodis</i>
<i>Faith Coldren</i>	<i>Syd Locke</i>	<i>Beverly Taylor</i>
<i>Bruce Coulter</i>	<i>Karen Lohmann</i>	<i>Krag Unsoeld</i>
<i>Nancy Curtis</i>	<i>Michael Maile</i>	<i>Derek Valley</i>
<i>Susan Davenport</i>	<i>Jean Mandeborg</i>	<i>Ann Vandeman</i>
<i>Melissa Davis</i>	<i>Steve McGrain</i>	<i>Robert Vanderpool</i>
<i>Bob Delastrada</i>	<i>Barbara McLean</i>	<i>Michael Vaurus</i>
<i>Jean Eberhardt</i>	<i>Riley Moody</i>	<i>Cathy Visser</i>
<i>Jon Epstein</i>	<i>Diana Moore</i>	<i>Bethany Weidner</i>
<i>Kate Fehsenfeld</i>	<i>Drew Moore</i>	<i>Kitty Weisman</i>
<i>Caleb Fitts</i>	<i>Larry Mosqueda</i>	<i>Ted &amp; Jennifer Whitesell</i>
<i>Gabriel Garceau</i>	<i>Julie Mullikin</i>	<i>Gary Wiles &amp; Jan Sharkey</i>
<i>Zaragoza</i>	<i>Delores Kelso Nelson</i>	<i>Carol Williams</i>
<i>Rosemary Gilman</i>	<i>John Newman</i>	<i>Elizabeth Williamson</i>
<i>Jim &amp; Jennifer Grant</i>	<i>Rosalinda Noriega</i>	<i>Nancy Young</i>
<i>Joel Greene</i>	<i>Meryon Nudelman</i>	<i>Barbara Young</i>
<i>Kevin Hansen</i>	<i>Tyler Nugent</i>	<i>Annie Youngblood</i>
<i>Joan Harlow</i>	<i>Judy Olmstead</i>	<i>Anthony Zaragoza</i>
<i>Dave Harris</i>	<i>Jennifer Olson</i>	
<i>Jack Havens</i>	<i>Aristides &amp; Jane Pappidas</i>	

# Community Spotlight

## Erin Jones at Capital High School

March 5, 4-5:30 pm at CHS' Performing Arts Center, 2707 Conger Ave. NW

The public is invited to join this presentation by author, speaker and educator Erin Jones, author of *Bridges to Heal US, Stories and Strategies for Racial Healing*.

Tickets are not required but RSVPs help: [https://bit.ly/erinjones\\_chs](https://bit.ly/erinjones_chs) or contact [rburke@osd.wednet.edu](mailto:rburke@osd.wednet.edu)



## Rachel Corrie Foundation

Wednesday, March 16th, 5 pm

Join us for "Holding Israel Accountable." Details on page 9. Register for the meeting and receive the zoom link at <https://rachelcorriefoundation.org/>



## Heartsparkle Players

Stories of How Art Connects Us Live: March 18, 6:30pm at Traditions Café—300 5th Avenue SW

(or online performance Saturday, March 26th at 2:30pm)

In collaboration with hummingbird studies performers, the group Heart Sparkle will engage a free creative space which cultivates authentic artistic expression in our communities.



Register online at [heartsparkle.org](http://heartsparkle.org)

## Olympia Film Society

The Automat film and Q&A w/ Director Lisa Hurwitz, Monday March 28th 6:00 pm Doors/7:00 pm Film

A documentary about Horn & Hardart, the original restaurant chain which inspired Starbucks, and the revolution of coffee and communal tables. Including perspectives from customers Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Mel Brooks, and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

\$11 General Admission/\$8 Olympia Film Society Members



## Olympia Family Theater Poetry!

Tuesday April 5, 6:30-8:30 pm, The Olympia Family Theater, 612 4th Ave, Olympia WA

Express your creativity and meet local poets in this all-age poetry series with guest speakers and open mic curated by Lennee Reid. Featuring an interactive performance with Lucas Smiraldo, a collaborative artist and author of 365 Revolutions.



\$5-\$10 donation, no one turned away for lack of funds. Masks and proof of vaccination or negative covid test proof required for entry.

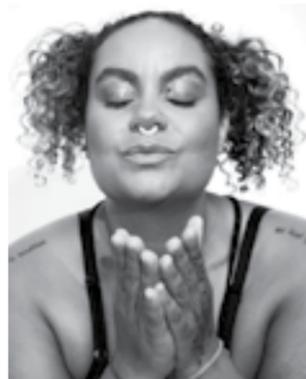
## SAVE THE DATE!

## Evergreen Equity Symposium 2022

Tending This Moment: Community Care and Connection, April 13-15

The Equity Symposium is designed to facilitate connection and care as we identify harm in our communities.

Inviting proposals for presentations, activities, training, and artistic expression and more will be included in the presentation. In Emergent Strategy, Keynote speaker adrienne maree brown will call on us to tend to the lifecodes of the present moment. With symposium opening by Dr. Leticia Nieto and presentations by author and activist, Walidah Imarisha, workshops and community building activities.



Registration opens soon. Stay tuned to <https://sites.evergreen.edu/ltc/event/save-the-date-2022-evergreen-equity-symposium>.

## GRuB

Herbal Apothecary 1: Teas, Infused Honeys, Vinegars and Shrubs, Tuesday, April 19, 10 am – 5 pm, pay what you can: \$100 or \$125

2016 Elliott Way NW Olympia WA 98502

Attention, aspiring herbalists! Members of GRuB's Tend, Gather, and Grow Team will teach you to identify and harvest local plants and the process for creating medicinal teas.

Proceeds will cover supply costs and support GRuB programs. Classes subject to change based on COVID safety protocols.



Registration closes April 15, 2022

## KOUG TV at Capital High

Students at Capital High School produce a Youtube news and entertainment program, KOUG TV. Over 80 episodes are available, with plans to hold open forum discussions and debates for and about the greater Capital community.



<https://www.youtube.com/c/KOUGTV>

## Furnace Club

A place for Queer Trans Black, Indigenous & POC creatives to make art and build community in a harmonious setting, operated solely through mutual aid and art grants. We currently provide free access to a Recording- Production & Visual Art space with a desktop computer with Digital Audio Workstations including Logic Pro, Garage Band, Ableton Live and FL studio. Learn more at [thefurnaceclub.com](http://thefurnaceclub.com).



## Parallax Perspectives TV

The New Nuclear Arms Race is Happening in Oak Ridge, TN, Mondays at 1:30 pm, Wednesdays at 5:00 pm, Thursdays at 9:00 pm

Since the 1940s, 100% of the highly enriched uranium for the U.S.'s nuclear weapons was produced in an aging nuclear weapons production plant located near an earthquake fault at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. A savvy non-profit organization there, the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA, [www.orepa.org](http://www.orepa.org)), has been nonviolently organizing against it.

Available for view on Thurston County's Channel 22 or at [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).



To be featured in Community Spotlight, send 120 words about your program or event to [olywip@gmail.com](mailto:olywip@gmail.com) by the last Wednesday of the month. We can sometimes also feature items on our Facebook and Instagram pages when they take place after the deadline. Link these items to your social media platforms, too!

## Help us expand our community networks

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