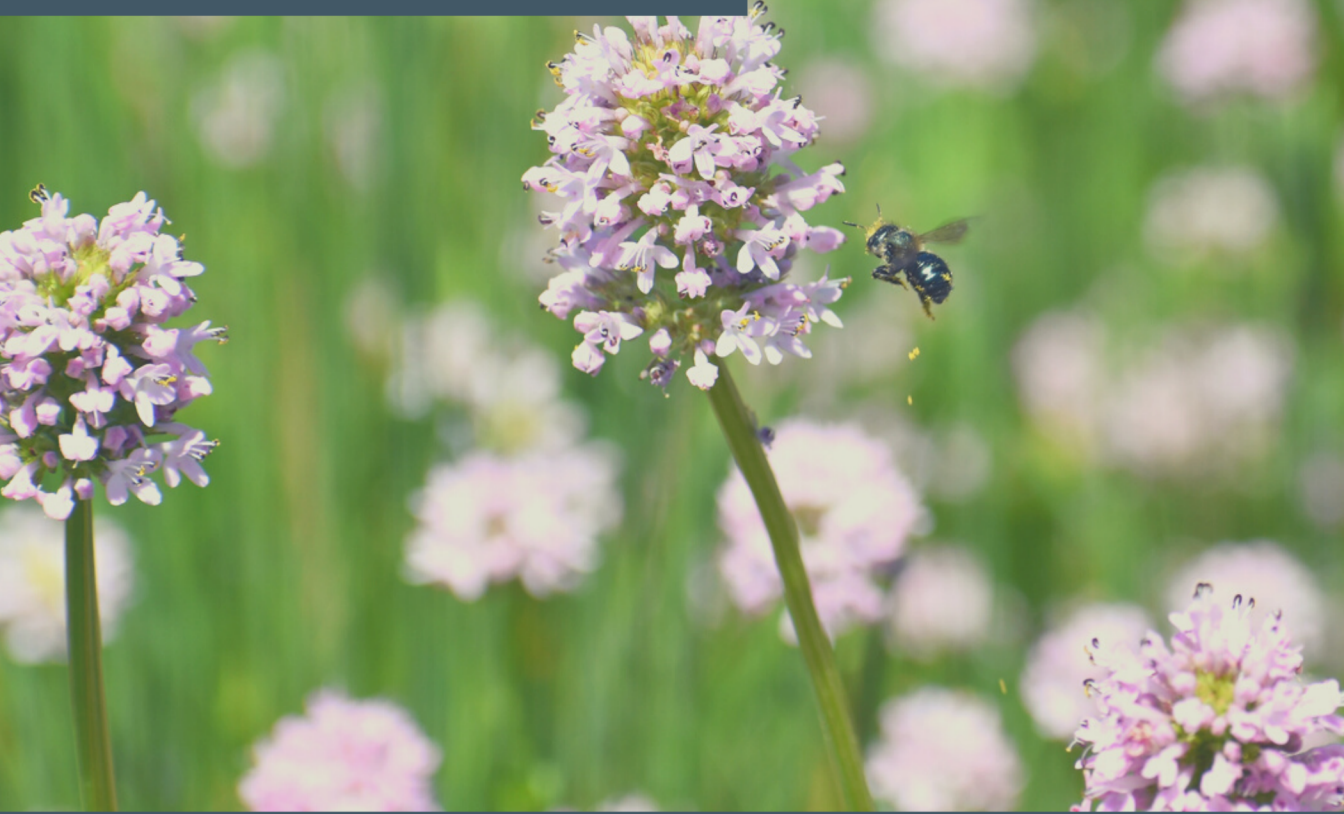


SPRING • SUMMER 2023

BEYOND TOXICS SPRING NEWSLETTER

Newsletter



OUR MISSION

We envision a society where everyone has equitable access to healthy food and clean air and water, and underserved communities are included in decision making processes that affect them. Together, we move beyond the damaging environmental practices of the past and collectively work to support and maintain ecological resilience and balance.

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Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As the Executive Director of Beyond Toxics, I am honored to lead an organization dedicated to environmental justice and the well-being of all communities. We strive to include underserved communities in decision-making processes that impact their lives. Our work gets results, from stopping big air polluters, to challenging the expansion of fossil fuels, to reforming outdated pesticide laws. We invite you to join us in our mission, recognizing that your involvement is pivotal in creating enduring change.

I value each of you and am eager to share our workshops, advocacy campaigns, and collaboration opportunities with people passionate about environmental justice!

We rely on your unwavering commitment and generosity to propel us forward in our progress, whether it be boots-on-the-ground in vulnerable communities or game-changing environmental policy reforms.

Together, let us construct a sustainable and just future. The collective actions we take today will shape the world we leave for future generations. **Your donation to Beyond Toxics helps forge a healthier, more equitable Oregon!**

Yours in pursuit of environmental justice,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa". The signature is stylized, with a large, looping "L" and a cursive "isa".

Staff Spotlight

RAYNA VILES

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

We are pleased to announce that there's a new member of the Beyond Toxics team in town! Rayna Viles is joining our team as the new Assistant Executive Director. She brings three years of experience working with Beyond Toxics as a volunteer and board member with expertise in the nonprofit realm.

Rayna has a strong connection to West Eugene, where she grew up and her parents still reside. "Part of what drew me to Beyond Toxics was that there is such impactful work going on in West Eugene," she says, which is important to protecting the health and wellbeing of her family.

As a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and a descendant of the Chinook Indian Nation, she feels strongly about the importance of indigenous-informed land stewardship. The lens of traditional ecological knowledge has helped guide her work in the environmental field.



"I'm very community-oriented," Rayna says. She majored in Arts Management with minors in Planning, Public Policy and Management, Business Administration, and Native American Studies at the University of Oregon. This combination allowed her to explore relationships between Native people and the environment, and she brings a passion for indigenous land stewardship to our team.

"I want to use my background in planning, public policy, management and fundraising to help make healthier communities," Rayna says. She served as an intern for University Advancement and worked in the fundraising department for over two years. Her skills will be essential to supporting Beyond Toxics initiatives.

Please give Rayna a friendly welcome when you see her at events this summer!



Championing Climate, Health & Equity at the Oregon Legislature

Our policy framework starts with understanding the problems and risks faced by communities across our state and bringing their lived experiences and valuable knowledge to the attention of lawmakers. The result is innovative, meaningful policy recommendations that shift Oregon towards significant achievements in environmental justice, toxics reduction, ecosystem protections and empowered communities.

Here are our top three legislative priorities that our advocacy leadership will bring to fruition and, we hope, the Governor's desk for signing!

Natural Climate Solutions

Natural Climate Solutions Bill (SB 530) is a crucial piece of legislation in the fight against the climate crisis. SB 530 aims to:

- ✿ Advance natural climate solutions in forests, agricultural lands, and rangelands, including a comprehensive inventory and workforce analysis.
- ✿ Allocate funds to leverage federal and private investments for voluntary projects.
- ✿ Support forest owners, farmers, and ranchers with incentives and technical assistance.
- ✿ Strengthen environmental justice language in forest and agriculture practices.

Toxic Free Schools

Toxic-Free Schools Bill (SB 426) focuses on promoting safe environments and protecting children's health through the following key provisions:

- ✿ This bill prioritizes transparency, prevention, and non-chemical approaches to reduce pesticide exposure, ensuring healthier and safer learning environments.
- ✿ Environmental justice is at the forefront of this initiative.
- ✿ Update integrated pest management plans for schools, emphasizing non-toxic methods.
- ✿ Allocate funds for an electronic pesticide applicator records system.

Medical Waste Incinerators

Medical Waste Incinerator Bill (SB 488) upholds the community's right to know about toxic emissions from incinerators. Key policies include:

- ✿ Continuous monitoring of pollutants, such as dioxins, furans, PCBs, heavy metals, and carbon monoxide, which helps detect malfunctions and illegal activities.
- ✿ Sets a national precedent for modernizing industrial emissions reporting.
- ✿ Empowers communities, beginning with the mid-Willamette Valley, to understand and address the environmental impact of waste incineration.

At the time this article went to print (5/20/2023), all three bills had passed out of their committees and were awaiting votes in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. These bills are vital for protecting Oregon's environment, advancing climate action, ensuring safe school environments, and promoting transparency in pollution reporting. Stay tuned for updates about these legislative efforts for a better future!

Moths to a Blue Flame

BY MASON LEAVITT

Cooking with gas appliances is often considered the epitome of luxury and culinary experience, but it also creates indoor air pollution. Peer reviewed research published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health confirmed that 12.7% of childhood asthma can be attributed to air pollutants from gas stoves, particularly nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

However, the public health problem is not just limited to children. Gas stoves produce other harmful pollutants like benzene, toluene, formaldehyde, and carbon monoxide, which are hazardous to everyone, especially vulnerable populations like the elderly, people of color, or those with existing respiratory health conditions.

To better understand how using gas stoves may affect indoor air quality, Beyond Toxics designed a first-of-its-kind study using two types of pollution measurements in residential kitchens. We deployed an **air quality meter** to measure NO₂ and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) combined with a **Forward Looking InfraRed (FLIR) Camera** to visualize dangerous fumes and gasses we are unable to see with the human eye.



Above: The FLIR camera shows invisible gasses during a house visit.

The FLIR camera uses optical gas imaging (OGI) technology to visualize unburned hydrocarbons such as methane, the primary ingredient in natural gas, and some specific hazardous chemicals such as benzene and toluene. Over the course of a week in February, we visited 13 homes in the Eugene and Springfield area to collect air quality data while the residents turned on their indoor gas stoves.

In 9 of 13 houses, NO₂ levels increased to high enough levels to trigger increased asthma symptoms for children. In 5 of 13 houses, the indoor NO₂ concentration rose to levels considered harmful for vulnerable populations.

In 3 of 13 homes, we measured spikes in NO₂ that reached dangerous levels for all people, regardless of health conditions.

One of the houses reached NO₂ concentrations the World Health Organization (WHO) considers emergency conditions during which individuals should try to remove themselves from the area or minimize their breathing and physical activity as much as possible if they can't leave.

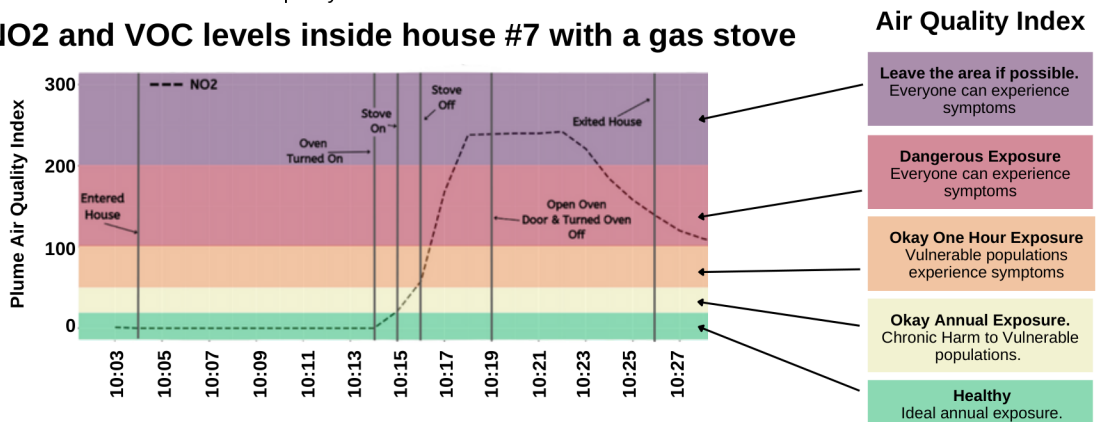
The results of our case study is detailed in our newest report, ***Seeing is Believing: Visualizing Indoor Air Pollution from Gas Stoves***. Based on the degradation of indoor air and the risk of unhealthy chemical exposures when using a gas range, we recommend switching to electric stoves to help improve indoor air quality.

Each time people choose electric appliances, we also reduce greenhouse gasses to meet stronger climate goals.

The data shows that it is time to advocate for safer and healthier kitchen appliances.

Below: Example of NO₂ and VOC monitoring in house #7 overlaid on an air quality index

NO₂ and VOC levels inside house #7 with a gas stove





Bethel Clean Energy Update

The Bethel Community in West Eugene faces challenges due to poor urban planning and heavy industrial pollution. Inadequate funding, pollution burdens, and public health risks impact the community, where over a quarter of residents live below the poverty line. We've organized in the Bethel neighborhood for over a decade and believe it is vital to implement positive projects that enhance health and property values.

Bethel neighborhoods north of Roosevelt Ave exhibit higher rates of lung cancer and Hodgkin's Lymphoma, according to the Oregon Health Authority. Shockingly, in 2022, state and federal agencies tested local soils and discovered dangerous levels of dioxin, a known carcinogen and reproductive toxin, contaminating numerous residential yards. These findings have caused fear and stress among Eugene's residents.

Safe homes, free from concerns of dioxin-contaminated soils, should be the norm. Children deserve parks and schools where cancer and asthma are not constant worries.

Our Airbusters team has partnered with the Eugene Water and Electric Board to establish cohorts of Bethel residents benefiting from home energy audits, economic incentives for clean energy appliances and home climate retrofits, and participation in a community energy project. We are actively engaging the community to develop plans for a climate-resilient Bethel!

An inspiring community vision is to build a community solar project on the 42-acre J.H. Baxter brownfield site, adjacent to the affected neighborhood. This transformative endeavor will lower electricity bills and improve air quality for hundreds of households.

ANNUAL BEE COUNTS 5/10 + 5/17

Community comes together to catch, identify and safely release native bees in local parks during our Annual Bee Counts, a shared project between Bee City Eugene and Beyond Toxics.



**SOLO FLIGHT,
NEVER ALONE**



BUZZING WITH JOY



**LITTLE EXPLORER AND
HER BUZZY FRIEND**



**CHASING BEES
CHERISHING MOMENTS**



**A PEACEFUL
RENDEZVOUS**



**BRINGING PEOPLE
CLOSER**



Green Home Cleaning

BY ALYSSA RUEDA

Many of the products we use on a daily basis actually pose risks to our health and the environment. I've researched common household toxins and suggest do-it-yourself alternatives (*listed on the right*) that help minimize harm.

Bleach is commonly used for disinfection and whitening, but it can be dangerous. A 2010 study revealed that bleach in spray bottles caused the most injuries among household cleaners for almost 270,000 children under five.

Pesticides are a significant concern as spring turns into summer. Surprisingly, the EPA reports that 80% of pesticide exposure occurs indoors. With the increase in insects and intrusions during this season, consider creating natural pest deterrents if you are concerned about insects.

Room sprays and **air fresheners** can irritate and introduce chemicals into our homes. Switching to safer alternatives can be easy and inexpensive.

Reducing toxic exposure is a personal achievement that can be easily accomplished. Join us in making our homes safer and healthier. Together, we can create a toxic free environment for ourselves and future generations!

Cleaning

Boost your laundry detergent and brighten clothes by adding $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of **baking soda** to the washer drum.

For surfaces, use hydrogen peroxide directly from the bottle. Or, create a personalized spray by funneling a **1:1 ratio of hydrogen peroxide and water** into an opaque spray bottle with **lemon juice** or essential oils for a pleasant aroma!

Pest Solutions

Repel aphids and ants by mixing 5-7 drops of **peppermint oil**, 3-5 drops of **dish soap**, with **warm water** in a spray bottle. Spray along windows, doors, and plants.

Air Fresheners

Make a **lemon basil** room spray by steeping dried basil in boiling water, filtering out the **basil**, adding distilled **water**, **vodka** (for preservation), and **lemon** juice or essential oil. Shake and spray as needed.



Celebrating Oregon's Pollinators

BY EMILY MATLOCK

Can you BEE-lieve it? Our beloved annual fundraiser and celebration of pollinators, Bee Jazzy, is just around the corner! This year, our **9th Annual Bee Jazzy** will be held at the beautiful **Silvan Ridge Winery** on **June 22, from 5:30-9pm**. It's one of the longest nights of the year and we can't wait to spend the evening of the summer solstice with you. We're so excited for this year's celebration and we hope you'll be able to join us. We're breaking out our best bee jokes and our dancing shoes while we await this pollinator party.

Halie Loren, our favorite local jazz singer, will return again this year with danceable tunes. We've also invited **Carl Woideck** to join us – he's an acclaimed saxophonist and volunteer host of KLCC's Soul of Jazz program.



B-Heavenly and Tucky's Kitchen will return and you'll be able to find plenty of goodies at our silent auction. With more prizes and sweet surprises than ever before, we know Bee Jazzy will be a blast for everyone! Bring your friends, your date, your parents, your neighbors or your coworkers for a night of live jazz, fine wine and fun for all.



Tickets on sale at
www.beejazzy.org



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Beyond Toxics Board of Directors seeks potential candidates to be part of the Board team. For more information please email Kim: kim@oregoninsurancelady.com or Kathleen: sullivan8108@gmail.com.

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