In early November 2013, I received several calls from Gold Beach residents in southwest Oregon. They reported dozens of neighbors, including older adults and small children, were made sick from direct exposure to poisons from an aerial pesticide spray. From those calls, our rural advocacy partnerships blossomed into a shared vision. In just one year, Beyond Toxics and courageous rural Oregonians are advancing a statewide movement to end pesticide trespass.

The people exposed and sickened were outraged that state agencies hid vital information about the herbicides sprayed on their properties. The media was inspired to investigate; the Oregonian reported that agencies literally “blew off complaints” about a pattern of problems. A number of stories appeared in national and regional media about our research and the plight of pesticide-exposed Oregonians.

As a result legislators are discussing introducing a pioneering bill to protect homes and all streams and headwaters from aerial pesticide drift. We will need our members and allies to stand up to the heavy fist of chemical corporations who are already attacking what we know are common sense goals.

The findings from our groundbreaking report, Oregon’s Industrial Forests and Herbicide Use: A Case Study of Risk to People, Drinking Water and Salmon, are informing the public and legislators.

Beyond Toxics is simultaneously engaged in legal work on this issue. With the guidance of the Crag Environmental Law Center, a Portland non-profit law office, seventeen Curry County residents recently filed a lawsuit. Not your “run-of-the-mill” tort claim, this is a constitutional challenge to Oregon’s Right to Farm and Forest Act, a law that grants immunity to pesticide sprayers. This unfair law allows sprayers to evade responsibility for chemical trespass.

We’ve come a long way in one year. The new year will see Beyond Toxics advocating on your behalf to fight for justice in the courts and help pass better environmental laws in the Legislature.

Nearly 500 people flocked to the Herbicides and Health Conference in Eugene, co-sponsored by the UO Environmental Studies Department, the Oregon Humanities Center and Beyond Toxics. The keynote speaker, Dr. Tyrone Hayes (Integrative Biology, UC Berkeley) described his research on the herbicide atrazine, which is one of the top chemicals sprayed on Oregon’s industrial forests. Atrazine can...

- Can turn male frogs into females by blocking testosterone;
- Is strongly linked to cancer and birth defects;
- Is persistent in water and wreaks havoc in natural habitats.

The findings from labs around the world, including Dr. Hayes’, make a strong case for putting environmental health before chemical trespass.
Former Board President pledges a double-down match: perfect for year-end giving!

As the year rapidly comes to a close, it’s a great time to consider making a donation. Shawn Donnille, past Board President of Beyond Toxics and VP of Mountain Rose Herbs, has generously offered to personally match your donation (up to $2500). When you give during our year-end campaign your generosity is doubled! Our work has a direct and powerful impact. We can’t do what we do without your support.

You can visit our web site: www.BeyondToxics.org and click on the red DONATE button in the top right corner and check the Matching Gift, or drop a check in the mail to us.

Thank you! Your generosity is appreciated.
I am a pediatrician and pediatric infectious diseases specialist. In my role as a doctor and a Board Member of Beyond Toxics, I traveled to visit the community members in Cedar Valley, Curry County who were exposed to herbicides from an aerial forestry spray. As a physician, I have learned the importance of really listening to my patients, and not trying to make them fit into my preconceived ideas. I listened to the people in Cedar Valley. It was clear that they were sprayed directly with herbicides, and developed acute symptoms as a result. I was disturbed that state and local agencies had shown very little response to their requests for help. Their experience was so different by Lisa Arkin

Children in West Eugene have a high rate of asthma, one of the highest in the State.

Over the past four years, Beyond Toxics conducted many community interviews and meetings in Spanish, door-to-door surveys, community presentations, and other initiatives. Our 2014 solution-oriented approach featured the My Garden – West Eugene project. This was an innovative collaboration between the US EPA, the Active Bethel Citizens neighborhood association and Huerto de la Familia, a non-profit helping Latino families get training and experience in growing organic produce. Our shared goal was to find out if soils are safe for growing food.

In the weeks leading up to the event, Beyond Toxics and our partners distributed 250 citizen sampling kits and conducted surveys. Residents who brought soil samples to the EPA mobile hazardous materials lab received a free soil analysis. Arsenic, lead, chromium, and cobalt were four contaminants of concern. Whether we are taking you on an environmental justice bus tour or challenging weak regulatory action, Beyond Toxics is your clean air advocate.

The EPA brought their mobile hazardous response lab as part of a Beyond Toxics project to promote healthy gardening for working class families.

Neighborhoods in parts of West Eugene are located in the industrial corridor where the air is more saturated with chemical and particle pollution. Typical air pollutants found in residential areas are associated with a variety of health risks including asthma, headaches, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.

Pollution-free soils for healthy gardening: Beyond Toxics teams up with EPA to test soils by Lisa Arkin

On Sunday, October 19, folks on their way home from church noticed the large US EPA Hazardous Materials Response mobile lab truck parked at Clear Lake Middle School. A number of them stopped by to ask, “OMG! Is the EPA here for an Ebola outbreak?!”

The EPA came to West Eugene not for a disease response, but for an environmental health project. It all began with concerned mothers in West Eugene talking with our environmental health organizer. These mothers asked a simple question: With all the air pollution in the area, is the soil in my garden safe for growing food?

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The Art of Being a Doctor: Listening, studying & involvement by Lauren Herbert, MD

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I believe that one of the key reasons the response was so different was because public health officials believe the herbicides to be safe, based on data provided by the EPA. They therefore discounted the validity of the people’s reports, without investigating them. However, I am concerned there is not enough information to determine the safety of these mixtures. There is no data on the medical effects of these aerosolized mixtures, which contain not only several herbicides, but also petroleum oil and surfactants.

We need more studies to determine safety of these mixtures. Until then, Oregon should change its laws to provide more protection. I’ve been involved with helping Beyond Toxics work with the Lane County Medical Society and Oregon Medical Association to support legislation to protect people and drinking water from aerial herbicide spray.
The Quick and Feisty Report
Beyond Toxics in 2014

Nearly 100% of all our income goes straight to accomplishing environmental protection work.

• Worked with legislators to hold state agencies accountable for protecting our homes, schools and drinking water from pesticide drift!

• Worked with the media to expose the hazardous practice that helicopter pilots mix batches of herbicides and petroleum oil, which are then sprayed over streams, schools and homes.

• Launched the Save Oregon's Bees Campaign.

• Served rural residents in eleven counties to address chemical trespass, including filing a lawsuit to challenge pesticide sprayer immunity.

• Secured the Oregon Attorney General’s ruling that state agencies can’t keep pesticide records secret.

• Co-hosted the Herbicides and Health Conference with the University of Oregon featuring biologist and environmental justice advocate Dr. Tyrone Hayes.

• Hosted Bee Fest! to celebrate Eugene’s adoption of the nation’s first ban on bee-killing pesticides.

• Filed a complaint to the US EPA Office of Civil Rights to investigate increasing levels of chemicals and fine particulate air pollution in West Eugene neighborhoods.

• Organized the Give Bees Some Love Valentine Day rally in front of Home Depot in Eugene, part of a national project to get big retailers to label plants pre-treated with neonicotinoid pesticides.