



Leadership
For a
Clean and Just
Oregon

SPRING
2018



Photo by Carla Hervert

Beyond Toxics NEWSLETTER

Non Toxic Oregon coming to your community!

by Lisa Arkin, Exec. Director

Beyond Toxics is launching the **Non Toxic Oregon Project**. Our goal is to guarantee our right to be safe from toxic chemicals when visiting parks, sporting fields and schools. After all, these are public facilities supported by public dollars.

In the past two years, dozens of cities across the nation have switched to organic land care. Cities in Oregon should be on this list too!

Oregon mayors and school superintendents are working with Beyond Toxics to rethink using pesticides in parks and on school grounds. The shared goal is to adopt an organic land care approach to keeping public facilities neat, beautiful and safe for children and pets. Organic land care makes the use of synthetic pesticides obsolete.

We are thrilled with the results of *Organic Land Care*, our series of presentations in May. We featured a team of experts who helped dozens of cities in other states make the switch from using synthetic pesticides to organic techniques on public land. Nearly 200 Oregonians from Wilsonville to Talent, including elected leaders, maintenance staff and mothers holding tiny babies, attended the Beyond Toxics forums.

We teamed up with Non Toxic Neighborhoods, a grassroots group in Irvine, California that took action after discovering a childhood cancer cluster in their community. Using a practical soil science approach, they convinced their city council and school district to stop using pesticides in public parks and on school grounds.

Beyond Toxics and our community partners hosted Bob

Johnson, a former city manager and city planner who now volunteers for Non Toxic Neighborhoods, to give a series of presentations in five Oregon cities. Bob explained how maintaining parks and playgrounds with organic products that improve soil health can save money and time. In southern California, practicing

organic land care has also reduced irrigation water use from 5 days a week to 2 days a week, which is quite a cost savings. From park maintenance staff to parents, those who heard Bob's presentation are excited to support organic land care to end the risk of exposing kids and pets to cancer-causing poisons such as glyphosate and 2,4-D.

You may find it shocking that Beyond Toxics still receives calls from distraught parents who've witnessed their local playgrounds and ballfields being

sprayed with industrial-strength glyphosate and 2,4-D. Parents shouldn't have to worry that their children are being exposed to harmful

chemicals linked to cancer and hormone disruption at their neighborhood playground!

We're seriously concerned that Oregon's pesticide advisors at Oregon State University approve of spraying toxic pesticide products that mix glyphosate 2,4-D and dicamba together. There are no studies on what happens to children exposed to a mixture of three pesticides in one product.



(L to R) Kristina Lefever, Beyond Toxics board member; Bob Johnson, Non-Toxic Irvine; and Lisa Arkin, Executive Director in front of the Beyond Toxics office in Phoenix, Oregon.

“ Parents have the right to ask ‘When is killing a weed more important than protecting my child’s health?’ ”

Non Toxic Oregon coming to your community!

cont.

Two pesticides likely cause cancer and the third one, dicamba, is highly prone to drift.

Parents have the right to ask “When is killing a weed more important than protecting my child’s health?” In 2013, Beyond Toxics wrote and helped pass the Oregon School Integrated Pesticide Management Law. The law clearly articulates the goal of protecting children’s health. In fact, pesticides must be used as the last resort or in an emergency, and cannot be used as a routine application.

Why is this important? Chemicals disrupt our body’s natural functions, resulting in significant harm to our health. Pesticides can cause cancer, endocrine disruption and neurological damage. Recent research is revealing that the common pesticides we’re using are associated with diabetes and other conditions, links never before suspected. For children, small exposures can have big consequences. It’s not about what this exposure is going to do to you one day at a time...but what about 10, 20, or 30 years down the line?

We have a vision of a healthy future: non-toxic neighborhood parks and schools throughout Oregon. We ask you to join us to achieve this vision.

We’re seeking community partners to host in-person and

video conferencing workshops across the state. In a virtual workshop, we can loop in the nation’s top experts right to your community meeting center, school board meeting or city council public sessions. Please contact Beyond Toxics to work with us to launch a Non Toxic Oregon program in your area. We would be happy to partner with you!



(L to R) Darby Stricker, Mayor of Talent; Bob Johnson, Non-Toxic Irvine; and City Councilor Stephanie Dolan in front of the Talent City Hall after an historic meeting to adopt organic land care in Talent.

Beyond Toxics welcomes new staff member, Rhianna Simes, M.S. Ed.



Rhianna with her son, Rowan

Rhianna was hired in January of this year to staff our Southern Oregon office in Phoenix, Oregon. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Beyond Toxics. Rhianna worked at Oregon State University for 10 years, and developed three OSU programs: Master Recycler, Land Stewards, and Citizen Fire Academy. After starting and running these programs, Rhianna coordinated the OSU Master Gardener program for 4 years. She holds a Masters degree in Education and Botany from Southern Oregon University.

Rhianna grew up on a 100-acre farm in Central Texas where she developed her love of horticulture and organic farming. After completing her bachelor’s in Women’s Studies, Communications and a minor in

Spanish, Rhianna moved to Oregon in 2002 to be part of the environmental justice movement in the Northwest forests. She worked on farms in the Eugene area, and managed a local nonprofit (Breaking Free) that teaches women’s self-defense. Rhianna moved to Southern Oregon in 2005 and worked at several plant nurseries in the area, and spent 7 years at a nursery specializing in native plants.

Rhianna completed Oregon Tilth’s Organic Land Care Accreditation program to help educate people and municipalities about implementing organic land care.

Upon being hired by Beyond Toxics, Rhianna said, “I feel so proud to work with people who are fighting for the voices that are often overlooked and ignored.”

In her spare time Rhianna is happy to work in her own organic, commercial greenhouse on her one-acre educational, mini farm called Verdant Phoenix just outside Phoenix, Oregon. Rhianna lives with her husband, two young children, dogs, chickens, and beautiful, silty loam soil.

Supporting Native Pollinators in West Eugene

by Krystal Abrams

Native pollinators play a key role in sustaining the framework of food sovereignty, human health and nutrition right here in Oregon. Several studies have shown that wild pollinators are often more efficient than honeybees at pollinating plants. They also visit more plants on average and are stronger pollinators. Though the dramatic loss of honeybees has grabbed headlines in recent years, declines in native pollinator populations may be a more alarming threat to crop yields everywhere.



Beyond Toxics organized an Earth Day work party at Churchill Garden in West Eugene. Photo by Ephraim Payne.

Factory-farming, the use of pesticides and higher average temperatures associated with climate change all pose problems for pollinators and thus the quality of food we grow.

In Eugene alone, over two-thirds of our community resides within a “food desert,” which means that there are either no healthy food options or too few options to meet basic nutritional needs. Lack of good nutrition contributes to poor health.

Protecting native pollinators can help our community increase local, fresh food and resist the corporate takeover of our food system. Since the Industrial Revolution, food production has increasingly become the domain of large corporations that use highly toxic, unsustainable models to produce food. Their methods degrade the natural ecosystems that are needed to support society over the long run.

We have three projects to protect pollinators, build up their habitat and keep bee-killing pesticides away from their food sources. Beyond Toxics has started working with Huerto de la Familia in west Eugene to help build pollinator habitat within low-income food-growing spaces. This vitally important project focuses on helping low-income folks provide their families with proper nutrition while supporting native

bees and butterflies.

We are close to making Eugene Oregon the next Bee City USA. Bee City USA is a program that helps protect

pollinators on public lands. We are also re-introducing the Oregon Pollinator Protection Act in the 2019 state legislature. This bill will restrict the sale of bee-killing neonicotinoids, making farms and home gardens safer for bees to pollinate.

It’s important to recognize that not everyone has the luxury of being able to plant native wildflowers to support pollinators in valuable food-growing spaces. We’re working to bring volunteers out to food deserts to help transform these

spaces into habitat that supports pollinators while educating people about ways they can build fertile soils and preserve heirloom seeds.

Our initial project launched in fall of 2017 with Huerto de la Familia and the folks at Churchill Community Garden, continues to draw local interest and support.



Beyond Toxics staff took a tour of the Huerto de la Familia garden in West Eugene last fall, which started the idea of growing a garden plot set aside to encourage pollinator habitat. Huerto staffer, Alexandra Perez Urbina (back row, 3rd from left) helped lead the tour.

To learn more about this garden project or to volunteer your time, contact Krystal at kabrams@beyondtoxics.org.

Earth Justice Week 2018

by **Mysti Frost**
photos by *Ephraim Payne and Mysti Frost*

This year Beyond Toxics led the way to shape the standard Earth Week into one focused on Environmental Justice. We collaborated with a wide range of local arts and social justice organizations to answer the question, *What is Environmental Justice?* As the week unfolded, we witnessed our community come together to work towards making Eugene a more just and safe place for everyone. From pollinator gardens in West Eugene, to panels on climate change and justice, to providing a platform for front-line communities to speak their truth, every day brought us closer to understanding our role in the Environmental Justice movement. We succeeded in strengthening community relationships with each other and made it a week we will never forget!

Pollinator Garden Preparation - Earth Day



Krystal Abrams, Social Media & Pollinator Projects Manager, led a hearty crew of volunteers in work to create a pollinator-friendly garden in West Eugene.



Environmental Justice Community Organizer Mysti Frost joined volunteers for the work party.



Panel: Not Just Climate, But A Just Climate!



Ana Molina, Beyond Toxics' Environmental Justice Campaign Liaison, joins Kelsey Juliana to discuss climate justice issues and the Juliana v. US lawsuit.

Film Showing: Black Snake Killaz



Sandra Clark from 350 Eugene spoke at the showing of "Black Snake Killaz," a powerful documentary about the movement to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Breath of Fresh Air: An environmental justice showcase



Poet and performance artist Yolanda Gomez engaged the audience with powerful readings from her work.



Local poet Marcus Holloway emceed a rare lineup of progressive music, political speakers and poets.



Foreground: Jelani Imamu and Marcus Holloway of *N/A - Not Applicable*. Not pictured: Ratie Dangarembwa.



Northwest Reggae-Hip Hop band *Chiefed* of the Siletz Tribe rocked Kesey Square in downtown Eugene and kept the enthusiastic crowd (right) dancing.



Beyond Toxics and our *Original Resilient Forestry Tours* (Don't fall for the Corporate "Copy-Cat" version!)

by Lisa Arkin

Beyond Toxics' *Resilient Forestry Tours* are not just nature walks. They are intimate afternoons of seeing, touching, smelling and listening experiences. They are immersions into the rare ambience of truly beloved, biodiverse forests. Our tours are led by local forest stewards. These experts focus their management skills on promoting the natural process of soil building, intra-species connectedness and wildlife habitat. On our Resilient Forest Tour, you'll learn how mother trees lay down fungal root connections to create tree communities. You can discover how big trees generate drips and sips of water for young trees, even those of different species.



Photo By Kali Lamont

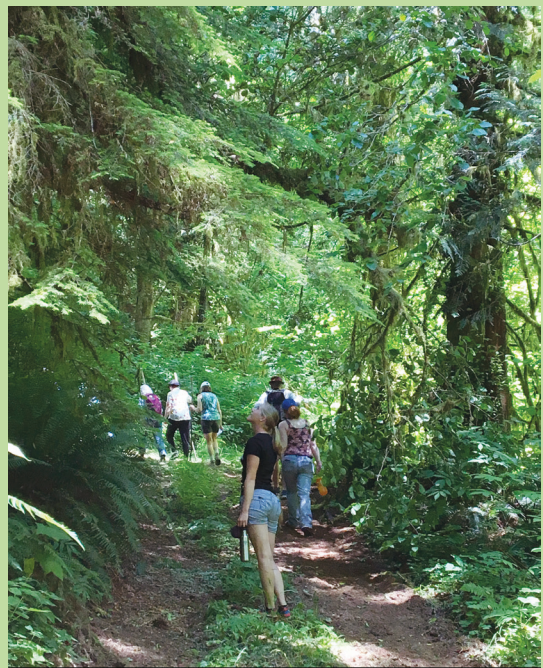
In the last two years, Beyond Toxics hosted a half dozen forestry tours in Yamhill, Benton and Lane counties. Business leaders, elected representatives, commission members and the public learned about how working forests can be managed for income as well as carbon sequestration, rich soils, mature trees, moisture retention, clean and cool streams and healthy communities. These gains are all accomplished without clear cuts and spraying pesticides.

Our forest tours are so darn good that Oregon's corporate timber lobbyists have been trying to copy our model! On more than a few occasions their public relations "hired guns" have been heard urging the Oregon's timber industry to "copy these successful Resilient Forest Tours!" In fact, I attended an industry-sponsored tour recently that mimicked the tours we've been doing. We walked through a nicely thinned forest on one slope, but the route we took kept us far from their clear cut on the other side of the ridge. We were fed a misleading narrative. In truth, real resilient forestry practices protect the soil, water and air throughout the land, not just where it's convenient for a contrived public relations event.

This summer, join us for our next set of tours, *Real Resilient Forests: Protecting Ecosystem Complexity*. In late June, we'll tour Shady Creek Forest in Lane County, where you'll see three different bioregions supporting a collection of life forms, including ancient alders, giant rhododendrons and crystal-clear salmon streams.

In late July, we'll travel into the dryer southern Rogue Valley to explore a forest nestled in a valley at almost 5,000 foot elevation built up through eons of volcanic activity. In this special terrain, ancient freshwater lakes have become seasonal wetlands home to Western Pond turtles, beneficial insects and amphibians. The rich volcanic soils encourage thick conifer forests.

I hope you'll join us to form a deeper relationship with true Oregon forests and meet the proud stewards of these unique ecosystems. You'll be all the more inspired to take a stand against corporate timber practices that turn Oregon's vibrant forests into plantations of dead soil, skinny trees and salmon-killing, algae-clogged streams. Be sure to become a member to receive invitations to the Real Resilient Forest Tours and announcements of our **Protect Oregon's Forests** campaign.



Appreciating big trees during a tour of a healthy, working forest grown with Resilient Forestry practices.

Building Relationships, Building Community

by Ana Molina, EJ staff

I've been on the job about a year now, and soon after I started in July I attended the first stakeholder meeting on farmworker and pesticide policy decisions.

Oregon OSHA is Oregon's state agency responsible for protecting workers. I tried to understand the proposed rules, but the language the government used was confusing and filled with insider jargon.

The bottom line: through their words and actions, OSHA showed they held a much lower standard for farm workers than for any other workers they were responsible for protecting.

We were worried that farm workers themselves had no opportunity to understand the labor rules much less provide public comment about the proposal. After we sent a complaint about lack of access

to OSHA, the agency scheduled hearings in Woodburn, Medford, and Hood River to accept public commentary. I attended them all to hear testimony. Sadly, OSHA's administrator was only present at the hearing with farm owners in Hood River.

He was not present for the testimony provided by the workers.

In response to OSHA's apparent disinterest in the worker perspective, I helped plan forums in different areas of the state to reach out to the workers who would be most personally impacted

by the rule: farm workers and their families.

During the last few weeks in December, we planned a public forum in Hood River for farmworkers to attend and learn about the proposed rule. The event was publicized and held in partnership with Columbia Riverkeeper and the Rockford Grange in order to inform the public about the Oregon OSHA proposal on farmworkers and pesticides.

That's when I learned that the work of an environmental justice

organizer can attract menacing responses from people who don't want workers to have a voice or be informed. The day before the event I received a phone call from the Columbia Fruit Growers Association threatening to "show up in full force to the event." It was a very frightening phone call. As I sat there processing what had just transpired, I wondered what they meant by "*showing up in full force*," and how this might affect the attendance

of workers at the forum. The rest of the day was spent calling allies and partners who knew how to handle potentially volatile situations. In the end we decided that we wouldn't let the Fruit Growers Association intimidate us. Beyond Toxics showed up in Hood River, lifted

by the solidarity of lots of allies who came to provide support. I gave my presentation on the proposed OSHA rules in Spanish for the farmworkers, as well as in English for anyone else who attended, including the folks from the Columbia Fruit Growers Association.



Ana Molina, Environmental Justice Campaign Liaison, is interviewed on Spanish language radio about farm worker justice in Hood River.

“
...It was a very frightening phone call. As I sat there processing what had just transpired, I wondered what they meant by *showing up in full force*.
 ”



Leadership for a Clean and Just Oregon

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Beyond Toxics weaves social justice and human rights advocacy into environmental protection policies.

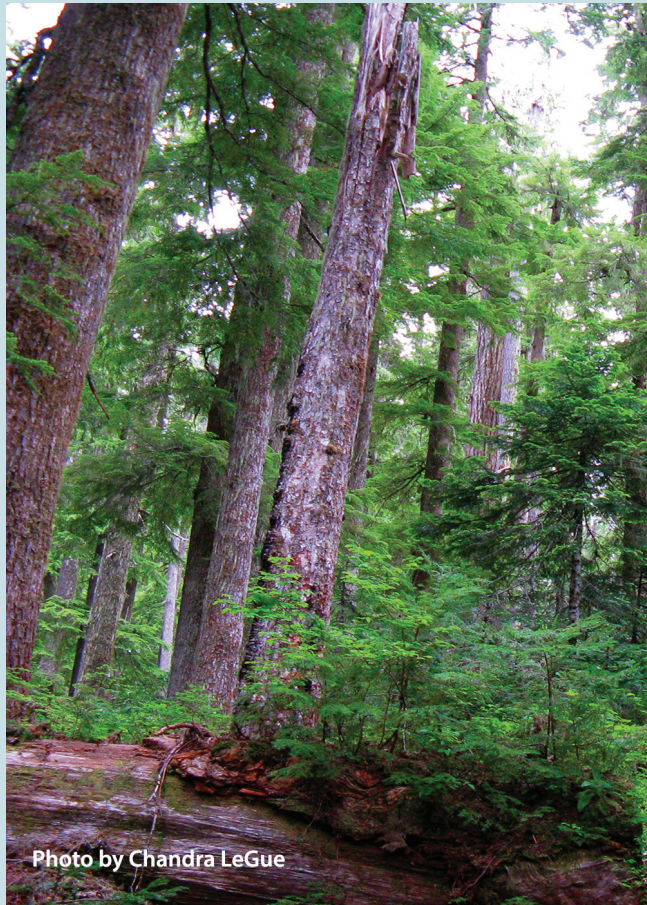


Photo by Chandra LeGue

*Willow-Witt
Resilient
Forestry
Tour*

A Guided Walking Tour

Saturday, July 28
1:00 - 4:00 pm

Willow-Witt Ranch
30 minutes from Ashland, Oregon

Reservations available
starting June 4

