



2020

ANNUAL REPORT



GEOS

INSTITUTE



FRANTZOU FLEURINE ON UNSPLASH

From the Desk of the Executive Director Tonya Graham



Dear Friends,

So much has changed in the course of a single year.

In the climate resilience world we say that people always emerge from a major disturbance different than they entered it, and we are seeing that now.

As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, we are thinking differently about things we used to take for granted, checking assumptions, and learning that our systems are not as resilient as they need to be for the future.

The global and local disruptions over the past year have freed us to imagine new ways of doing things now that the old systems have less momentum behind them. That is a gift, a silver lining of sorts, in an otherwise extraordinarily difficult year.

Two things are clear. We must aggressively reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by half over the next decade. At the same time, we are living with the early impacts from our past emissions. The way forward is together — transforming our energy systems and land use practices while protecting our communities from the impacts that are already underway.

As we share the impact of our work in 2020, we are stepping through the early stages of 2021 knowing that, as Amanda Gorman reminds us, there is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we are brave enough to be it.

We hope you enjoy reading about the progress we have accomplished in 2020 — accomplishments you helped create through your generous support.

All the best,



Stay up to date!

Sign up to get our monthly eNews and stay up to date on our work through the year.

<https://geosinstitute.org/newsletter>

Join our Cornerstone Network

Become a monthly contributor and receive exclusive messages from our Executive Director, just for Cornerstone Network members. Learn more at

<https://geosinstitute.org/cornerstone-network>

Geos Institute helps communities build resilience in the face of climate change using science and local knowledge. Our holistic approach prioritizes the needs of ecosystems and those on the frontlines of climate change impacts.

We work to create solutions that are science-based, work for people and nature, address the causes and impacts of climate change, and endure over time. Our initiatives focus on communities, freshwater, and forests.

Climate Ready Communities helps small to mid-sized communities prepare for a changing climate.

ClimateWise® helps local leaders develop ecologically sound and socially just climate resilience plans.

Drinking Water Providers Partnership helps water managers use the power of nature to prepare for a changing climate.

Forest Legacies helps land managers and decision makers prepare forests for a changing climate.



Why we support the Geos Institute

By Linda Langston

I have long been involved in resilience work with local governments. The Geos Institute has been so responsive to those wishing to build and support communities advancing resilience and climate work that giving our financial support was easy! I have worked with Executive Director Tonya Graham for many years to make sure smaller local communities can attain planning for climate resilience and she makes it very easy to stay engaged. The work of the Geos Institute means people can be involved in making real change in communities to sustain our future. That is so worthy of our support.





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CLIMATE READY COMMUNITIES

As extreme weather driven by the climate crisis disrupts communities across the U.S., local leaders are becoming increasingly aware of the need to build climate resilience to protect their residents, economies, natural resources, built systems, and cultural treasures.

We built Climate Ready Communities to serve those who need help building climate resilience the most — small to mid-sized and under-resourced communities.

We launched this new initiative less than a year before the pandemic arrived and caused major disruptions for local governments everywhere. Communities that were moving forward on their climate resilience plans suddenly had to shift focus to emergency management and figure out how to deliver services within physical distancing guidelines.

Our Guidebook for Do-It-Yourselfers

Despite this need to focus elsewhere for the near term, interest in our *Practical Guide to Building Climate Resilience* continued to grow over the course of 2020. This guidebook, which includes step-by-step instructions for local leaders who must develop climate resilience plans on their own, has been downloaded over 700 times since its publication. Local leaders are using the guide to create climate resilience plans

We offer a support package that includes a number of templates and tutorials for specific tasks in the Guide



ANDREW SEAMAN ON UNSPLASH

for their communities, update regional economic development plans, and revise comprehensive and general plans to address climate change.

State Level Cohorts

When our ongoing projects slowed due to the pandemic, we focused our attention on growing the services the program offers by initiating our first climate resilience cohort to support communities as they move through the program together. This first cohort is made up of communities in Oregon — Tigard, Mosier, Troutdale, Gresham, and Sandy — that are in the early stages of developing climate resilience plans. There is strong interest in possible cohorts in Alaska, Texas, Washington, Indiana, and Virginia.

Two of our pilot communities — Missoula, MT and Corinth, TX — finalized their climate resilience plans in 2020. The need for cross-sector resilience planning became even more apparent for many cities and towns during the coronavirus pandemic. We are excited to see plans coming forward that highlight how building climate resilience strengthens a community in so many different ways.



Out in the World

Closer to home, we joined with Beyond Toxics and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to support a comprehensive planning effort in Lane County, OR. This exciting project is being led by these local community organizations. We are enjoying working with and learning from them as we help Lane County build local climate resilience.

We provided webinars for the National Association of Development Officers and Resilient Virginia. In addition, our Executive Director, Tonya Graham, received the Four Generations of Leaders in Clean Energy and Sustainability Solutions award for Gen X by Leaders in Energy. This award recognizes her work in developing the Whole Community Resilience planning framework and the Climate Ready Communities program.

Climate Resilience Strategy Database

One of the most challenging parts of climate resilience planning comes after a community has identified what is vulnerable to climate change and needs to decide what to do about it. For example, a community might know that they are at extreme risk from wildfires, but not know what their options are to reduce that risk.

Because the field is still relatively new, there are no tools to help local leaders understand their options before choosing the path forward. Currently, every community has to brainstorm their solutions starting from scratch, or spend hours reading other reports and plans, or both. But soon there will be an easier way.

In 2020, our team received a grant from the Climate Resilience Fund to lead the development of a climate resilience strategy database. Members of the working group include federal government representatives, nonprofit and professional organizations, and academic and technical experts.



We began creating the structure of the database at the end of 2020 with an aggressive timeline for a functional database that can be easily searched by community leaders across the U.S. by the end of 2021. This database will not only provide information on solutions that have worked in other communities, but will also offer considerations around a particular strategy's impact on nature, social equity, and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Looking Ahead

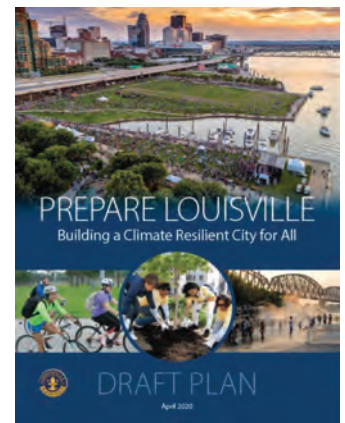
We are actively looking for opportunities to expand Climate Ready Communities into a nation-wide program, now that a climate-friendly administration is in the White House. Since the election, we have been in conversations with federal agencies, congressional offices, colleague organizations, and academic institutions about how to build the system of climate support needed by communities across the U.S. to meet the needs of their citizens and for our country to meet our obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement. We are working hard so that we can report good news in 2021 about the forward movement of this expanded program.

CLIMATE WISE®

Our ClimateWise team continued to manage and promote the Climate Ready Communities initiative, while completing multi-year climate resilience planning efforts with the communities of Louisville, KY and Truckee, CA. These projects integrated ecological health and social equity to develop climate adaptation strategies that provide benefits across the community. Both projects involved significant community engagement components. In Truckee, we worked with a local consultant to increase involvement with the LatinX community by translating planning materials into Spanish and

focusing on individual outreach into that community. In Louisville, we partnered with Climate Access to engage the African American community through a series of facilitated Resilience Dialogues across the metro area.

Learn more about both of these projects at <https://climatewise.org/projects>



FOREST LEGACIES

Forests are the Earth's first line of defense against climate change. As the world comes dangerously close to irreversible climate impacts, forests provide a life-giving bridge to a sustainable future and fossil fuel free economy. Conserving and protecting temperate rainforests has been a key element of our mission since our inception in 1974.

2020 was a big year for our Forest Legacies work. In addition to moving forest conservation forward in several key geographies, we made the difficult, but necessary, decision to allow the majority of our Forest Legacies programs to transfer with Dominick DellaSala to his new position with an allied organization. This move positions the work to be even more effective on a national and international stage.

Pacific Northwest Forests

In Oregon, we provided the lead science for a coalition of conservation, climate, and social justice groups to block legislation proposed by state legislators that would ramp up logging on millions of acres of federal and state forests in response to forest fires. We also worked to ensure that Oregon's "cap and trade" legislation includes a provision for landowners that are practicing climate-smart forestry to receive financial benefits through carbon offsets.

Canada's Inland Rainforest

We continued to partner with Griffith University in Australia on our primary (unlogged) forest assessment work as part of an international team of scientists from North America (our team), Europe, Russia, the tropics, and Australia. This project is documenting the importance of primary forests as one of nature's climate solutions to aid countries in meeting their

commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement. We completed the science assessment that we have been working on since 2018 with this team.



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Looking Ahead

While our forest conservation programs moved to another organization in 2020, we continue to explore opportunities to connect this work to our focus on community climate resilience. We have been working for several years to help transition logging from old-growth to second growth in the Tongass National Forest and will investigate opportunities to move that effort forward in 2021.

JEFF CLARK, BLM/ CC BY 2.0

DRINKING WATER PROVIDERS PARTNERSHIP

The fifth year of grants to communities that are using watershed restoration to protect drinking water and native fish habitat was a big success. The 13 projects recommended for funding in 2020 represented communities across Washington and Oregon that want to protect their drinking water source by improving floodplains, reducing sediment, developing educational tools for residents, and more.

These projects will enhance habitat for Coho, Chinook, Steelhead, Lamprey, Bull trout, and Cutthroat trout as well as water quality for hundreds of thousands of people who rely on these streams and rivers for their drinking water.

Geos Institute co-founded the Drinking Water Providers Partnership with the Forest Service five years ago and it has since grown to include the Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Washington Department of Health, The Freshwater Trust, and Wild Earth Guardians.

Project Spotlights

Schooner Creek

This project is a partnership between the Salmon Drift Watershed Council and Lincoln City Water District. The project will reduce sediment delivery to Lincoln City's water source by reducing road-related erosion and improving road drainage.

The Schooner Creek watershed is part of the larger Siletz Bay Watershed, which is a designated wild salmon stronghold providing high quality habitat for listed Oregon Coast coho, Chinook, and chum salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout. This project improves the drinking water for Lincoln City, Oregon.



Early work photo of a culvert addition. The steel plates allow for traffic passage while the construction work moves forward.

JOHN SANCHEZ

Deer Creek

This project continues the restoration of Deer Creek, a tributary to the McKenzie River, in partnership between the USFS McKenzie River Ranger District and Eugene Water and Electric Board. A multi-phased floodplain restoration project is underway to improve water quality and habitat for Chinook salmon and redbreasted rainbow trout.

The Partnership funded parts of Phases I and II included the removal of streamside berms restricting the stream from its floodplain and aggrading the streambed to account for past channel downcutting. The project improves the drinking water for Eugene, Oregon.



Deer Creek looking upstream with maximized habitat complexity and floodplain connectivity.

USDA FOREST SERVICE

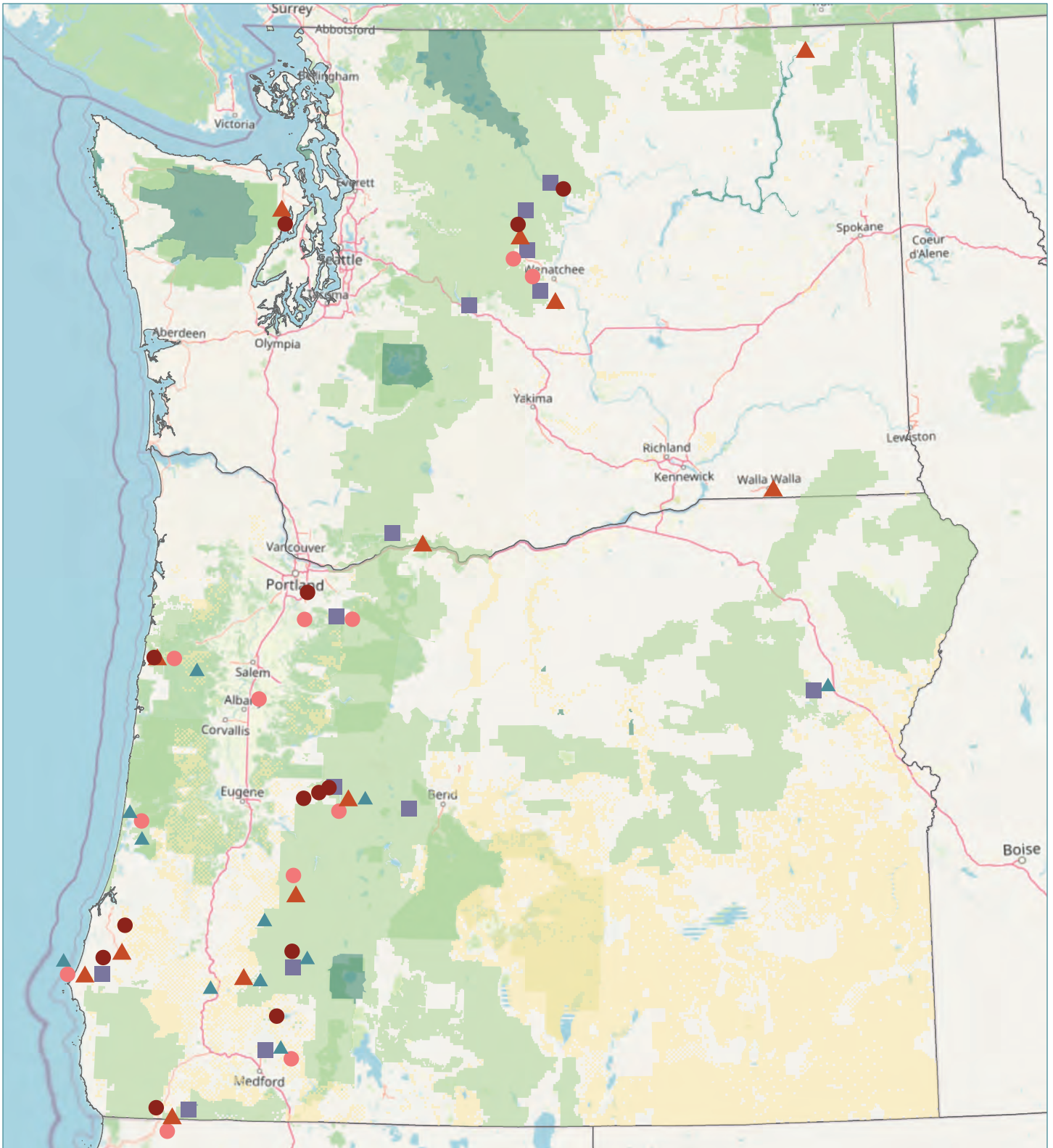


Deer Creek untreated reach looking downstream with minimal habitat complexity and floodplain connectivity.

USDA FOREST SERVICE

Drinking Water Provider Partnership Funded Projects

▲ 2016 (11 Projects) ● 2017 (12 Projects) ■ 2018 (14 Projects) ▲ 2019 (13 Projects) ● 2020 (13 Projects)



Staff



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Organizational Supporters and Partners 2020

Clif Bar Family Foundation

Climate Resilience Fund

Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust

Environment Now

Griffith University

Louisville Metro Government

Town of Truckee, CA

Weeden Foundation

Wilburforce Foundation

Intern Spotlight

By Kristina Quanbeck

I had the amazing opportunity to intern with Geos Institute this past summer and jump into the world of climate change action. I was excited to work with Geos because of their commitment to community-centered climate action. It was so meaningful to see towns across the United States working to become climate ready. I was also fortunate to have the Geos staff as my mentors throughout the summer — they helped me prepare for my future education and career. Thank you for the opportunity to intern with Geos Institute!



Financial Snapshot

These financial figures are derived from unaudited financial statements. All figures are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting.

Support and Revenue

Grants	\$195,125
Donations	\$96,196
Earned Revenue	\$168,021
Total Support and Revenue	\$459,342

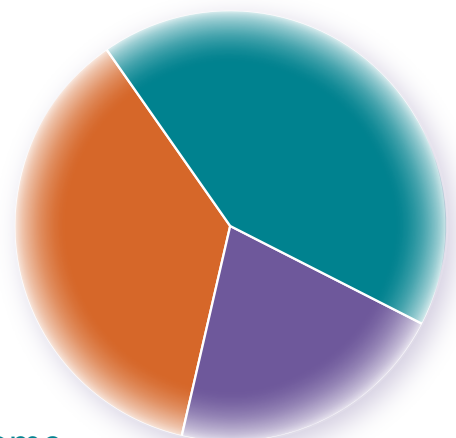
Expenditures

Direct Program Services	\$363,543
Programmatic Support Services	\$149,125
Organization Resource Development	\$18,573
Total Expenditures	\$531,241

Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$170,576
Net Assets, End of Year	\$95,149

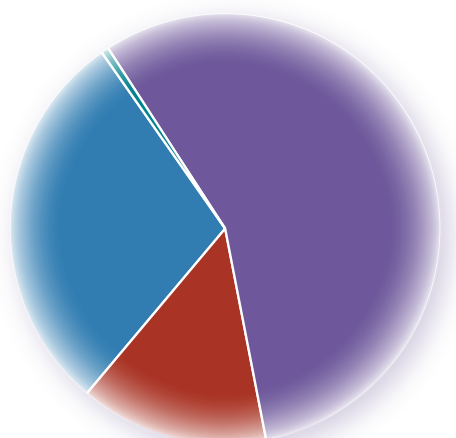
Income

■ Grants ■ Donations ■ Earned Revenue



Expenses

■ Drinking Water Providers Partnership ■ ClimateWise & Climate Ready Communities
 ■ Forest Legacies ■ Program Support





MORGAN DAVID DE LOSSY ON UNSPLASH



COURTNEY KENADY ON UNSPLASH



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