

A photograph of a forest stream with sunlight rays filtering through the trees, creating a serene and natural atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Don't Read This

*...unless you want to  
be inspired*

We live and work on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples, including Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe, who have lived in the region from time immemorial. We acknowledge the Tribes' treaty rights, as well as our responsibility to uphold them, and we are grateful for their enduring care and protection of the lands and waterways.



**RE SOURCES**

**2023 Impact Report** ●

# A Unifying Vision of Hope & Resilience

(Dave Alan)

## Having a child who is in his final year before leaving for college can really bring the passage of time into focus.

My emotions are everywhere — proud, nervous, and at times melancholy — but most of all, I'm excited for the multitude of opportunities for him on the horizon.

Opportunities abound for Northwest Washington as well. **In 2022, RE Sources' work coalesced around a unifying vision of hope and resilience.** In the face of floods, droughts, heat waves, storm surges, wildfires and other climate impacts that are now a part of what it means to be a Northwest Washingtonian, we put our full weight behind real solutions for our region's lands, waters and communities.

**In real terms, this means RE Sources catalyzes innovative, local solutions and leverages them to larger, broader movements and impact.** In 2022, this strategy spanned forest protection, climate education and pollution prevention:

- A community outcry to stop the logging of a mature forest in the Lake Whatcom watershed spurred a conversation across the Pacific Northwest, re-examining our relationship with forestry in the era of climate change and water challenges.
- A call from educators hungry to help students struggling with climate anxiety led to the co-creation of new teacher training curricula using local examples of climate solutions across farming, forestry, shorelines, and salmon rivers. Other parts of Washington and even other states are looking to the project as a model.
- Community concerns regarding the City of Bellingham's plan for the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant — a proposal to produce and sell potentially toxics-laden biosolids for spreading on local cropland and parks — sparked a successful campaign to stop the plan, while proposing a safer, healthier approach.

Time and time again in the past year, we've seen that we reap the seeds of regional innovation that we sow. **Restorative action rooted in community can unfurl across the country and provide a potent counter to despair and disconnection.**

In these final months before my son sets out on the next phase of his life, I can see how thousands of tiny moments (and a few big ones) have made him the person he is today. I'm motivated to keep pushing so that he always has a vibrant, thriving home along the Salish Sea to come home to. 🌱



*Shannon Wright*

**Shannon Wright**  
RE Sources Executive Director

# 2022 By The Numbers

2,300

Contacts to lawmakers by our Legislative Action Team during the 2022 WA state legislative session

1,200

People who spoke out to stop the Bessie Timber Sale, a vital Whatcom County legacy forest

34

Community scientists in the field tracking changes in shoreline species populations and habitat health

2,200

Pounds of trash cleaned from beaches, rivers and lakes by 150 volunteers

2,500

Whatcom County students benefiting from dozens of teachers engaging in ClimeTime and other professional development workshops

613

Fifth graders took on action projects with our support as part of Bellingham Water School

4,000

Hours of training and work experience racked up by RE Store Community Jobs Training Program participants

2.7 million

Pounds of trash diverted from landfills by RE Store programs in 2022. Equivalent to the weight of nearly 7 Acid Balls!

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship  
Bullitt Foundation  
Burning Foundation  
Charlotte Martin Foundation  
Clay for Earth  
Community Food Co-op  
Cosman Family Foundation  
City of Bellingham, Public Works Department  
Danne Neill, Realtor and Broker  
Darby Foundation  
Daylight Properties  
Dudley Foundation  
Evolve Chocolate and Cafe  
First Federal Community Foundation  
H & H Evergreen Foundation  
Harder Foundation  
Heritage Bank  
Horizons Foundation  
Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation  
Industrial Credit Union  
Keta Legacy Foundation  
King County Solid Waste Division - Next Cycle  
Kramer Knives  
Loyal Bigelow and Jedediah Dewey Foundation  
Lucky Seven Foundation  
Lummi Indian Business Council  
Medina Foundation

M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust  
Norcliffe Foundation  
Northwest Fund for the Environment  
Nuu Muu  
Patagonia  
Peach Foundation  
Pepper Sisters  
Puget Sound Benefit Services  
Rose Foundation  
Russell Family Foundation  
Satterberg Foundation  
Seeking Health  
Stand Up To Oil Coalition  
Steele Financial Services  
Superfeet Worldwide Inc.  
Sustainable Path Foundation  
Sustainable Whatcom Fund  
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community  
Temper Of The Times  
Village Books  
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund  
Washington Federal Bank  
Washington State Department of Ecology  
Whatcom Community Foundation  
Whatcom County Health Department  
Wildlife Forever Fund

## You make the difference.

Odds are if you're reading this, you're one of the local advocates for healthy, thriving, resilient communities here in Northwest Washington who has moved our work forward in the past year.

Whether you're a first-time action-taker, occasional volunteer, a major funder, a diehard community scientist, an educator or a regular at our climate activist meetings, thank you. We're grateful for your time, and we need your continued help in making our vision of hope and resilience a reality. From tree to sea, this place needs champions like you.

## RE Sources would like to thank our funders for their generous support:

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RE Sources 2023 Impact Report // Milestone victories

# 2022 Milestone Victories

## Halting the destruction of legacy forests

*What began as a grassroots push to protect a legacy forest has kick-started the movement toward climate-smart, ecological forestry.*

Just rest for a moment beneath the towering cedars and firs at Stimpson Family Nature Reserve or Lake Whatcom Park and you'll get a sense of how precious our region's remaining mature forests are. For decades, RE Sources has advocated for protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed as the source of more than half of Whatcom County's drinking water. Across land uses, one of the best ways to protect our drinking water quality is to keep trees on the landscape. That's one of several reasons we spoke out against the proposed sale of 50 acres of mature forest in the Lake Whatcom watershed, part of the Bessie Timber Sale.

More than 1,200 Washingtonians sent letters to the Department of Natural Resources' Board of Natural Resources urging them to stop the proposed sale — an outcry that helped lead to DNR pausing the project. Shortly after, DNR included these trees for protection as part of a new carbon reserve program (the first such state program in the nation) to decouple 10,000 acres of its trustlands in western Washington from timber harvest revenue obligations.

This watershed moment has since spurred the launch of our Future Forests campaign, a science-based grassroots effort to transition from industrial logging practices to ecological forest management in critical parts of the Lake Whatcom and Nooksack River watersheds. Since the Bessie Timber Sale victory, we've helped protect the Upper Rutsatz forest along the Nooksack River and have built a groundswell of support to stop the timber sale at Brokedown Palace, a legacy forest on steep slopes above the Middle Fork Nooksack River.

**Together, we passed some of the most climate-friendly municipal and state-level building standards in the nation.**

(Hannah Gabrielson)

## Stopping a toxic legacy before it starts

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*Widespread toxic contamination is often discovered only after much of the damage has been done. Why take a risk like that in the first place?*

It's a nice idea in theory. Why not take a waste product, sewage sludge generated by a city's wastewater treatment plant, and turn it into something useful like compost for local farms, parks and gardens? That was the thinking behind the City of Bellingham's proposal to install anaerobic digesters to replace aging sewage incinerators at the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Unfortunately, communities around the nation are realizing the dangers of applying biosolids (a euphemism for wastewater sewage sludge that often contains dangerous concentrations of toxic chemicals) to local croplands and gardens. Farmers in states like Maine are finding that contamination from forever chemicals known as PFAS is fouling cropland and poisoning wells. National and state standards for PFAS concentrations are still being developed, but the dangers to human health are becoming disturbingly clear. And PFAS are just one category of toxic chemicals that tend to show up in wastewater. Here in Northwest Washington, we saw an opportunity to prevent decades of toxic soil and water contamination before it started.

In the spring of 2022, our staff, allies at Sierra Club: Mt. Baker Chapter and dozens of RE Sources supporters sounded the alarm about the City of Bellingham's proposal to replace the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant's aging incinerators with anaerobic digesters — which would have produced toxic-laden biosolids that would contaminate farmland and waterways. Thanks in part to this advocacy, Bellingham halted the costly project and is considering more modern, less-polluting methods of treating our wastewater — methods that could be part of a region-wide wastewater solution and serve as a model for other communities.

## Advancing 100% clean energy

*Lighting strikes twice as advocates like you urge passage of some of the most climate-friendly municipal AND state-level building standards in the nation.*

2022 started off with a jolt as Bellingham became one of the first cities in Washington to require newly built commercial/large residential buildings to use efficient electric heating and hot water systems, plugging into our increasingly clean electric grid instead of relying on methane-leaking, climate-polluting gas pipelines. Hundreds of Bellingham residents heard the calls of RE Sources and allies to urge the Bellingham City Council to stop digging the hole deeper for the climate.

Several hundred advocates also urged the Washington State Building Code Council to adopt similar rules for both new commercial and residential buildings. Thanks to your months of advocacy, Washington now has among the cleanest, healthiest standards for space and water heating in the United States, allowing us to invest more in super-efficient heat pumps. And local actions like Bellingham's helped prove it could be done across the Northwest and nationwide. 🌱



(Marcela Gara, Resource Media)

## Protecting watershed health and the Salish Sea

*From the forested headwaters of Mount Baker to the depths of the Salish Sea, the way we treat one landscape impacts all the others. RE Sources employs advocacy, education, science and action across these landscapes so we can address pollution, environmental degradation, and climate change in the most impactful ways possible. In 2022, supporters like you:*

- Protected more trees for cleaner drinking water: Advocates successfully urged Whatcom County Council to pass an important set of updates to the Lake Whatcom Overlay District Code, a wonky name for a policy that will increase tree retention, providing better natural protection for the drinking water supply of more than 100,000 Whatcom County residents.
- Stewarded local beaches: Our monthly beach cleanups across Whatcom County removed over 2,200 pounds of trash that pollute the Salish Sea and are a threat to wildlife. Thank you to the more than 150 residents who pitched in.
- Monitored and watchdogged pollution in local waterways: We completed a second year of stormwater pollution monitoring in Bellingham Bay, creating an interactive stormwater map on our website that lets people check our findings of where in the Bay there are pollution concerns. This helped fill in critical data gaps that local agencies aren't able to collect, so we can alert them to problem areas.
- Led quarterly tours by land and by kayak of Bellingham Bay toxic cleanup sites (MTCA sites), engaging 40 people in conversations with officials working on restoring these parts of our shared waterfront for future uses like parks, businesses, affordable housing and more.

- Advanced action on dangerous PFAS pollution: Our Pollution Prevention team sampled local waters and contributed important data to the first-ever nationwide study of PFAS pollution in America's waterways. This helps sound the alarm and build pressure on decision makers to take action on these hazardous chemicals.

- Upheld stronger pollution limits: In 2020, RE Sources joined several organizations and regional Tribes in legal action against the Trump administration's attempted dismantling of Washington's 2016 water pollution limits. These limits were designed to protect people who eat local seafood contaminated by toxics. In December 2022, the EPA announced it would return to using those state water quality standards developed with years of scientific research. Tougher standards are needed, but we applaud the EPA's decision.



# More Ways You Made a Difference

## Building regional climate action

*The opening salvos of the climate crisis are upon us, but we still have a lot of say in how much we can both reduce climate emissions by transitioning to clean energy, and adapt in ways that build resilience across our Northwest Washington communities. In 2022, supporters like you:*

- Prompted Skagit and Whatcom residents to insist that refinery communities near March's Point and Cherry Point be included in air quality monitoring efforts as an important step in protecting front-line communities from the air pollution posed by our region's four oil refineries.
- Urged the successful passage of a resolution to center equity and climate resilience in updates to Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan, the overarching framework that establishes goals for how and where the county will accommodate growth in the next 20 years. Balancing agriculture, forestry, development and open space fairly — without exhausting the waters and lands on which we all rely — is crucial to ensuring a thriving future for our region.
- Insisted the State Legislature seriously address the climate crisis and protect our cherished waterways. Supporters sent over 2,300 messages to legislators and 35 of you joined us in virtual meetings with lawmakers to talk about vital bills for salmon, kelp and the climate during Clean & Abundant Water Lobby Week (which we held again in early 2023).
- Educated and engaged with folks around the health risks and climate change implications of natural gas in homes and buildings, along with the virtues of electrification. This effort featured Bellingham Farmers Market induction cooking demos (now we're cooking with...magnets!), a 100% Northwest campaign kick-off celebration and an in-depth blog series.

(Hannah Gabrielson)

**With your help,  
we strengthened  
natural protections  
for drinking water  
in Lake Whatcom  
with better tree  
retention rules**

## Curbing waste at The RE Store

*More than a store, The RE Store (a largely independent project of RE Sources) on Meridian Street in Bellingham is a local champion for second chances and reinvention.*

Through a suite of programs, we provide training to disadvantaged workers, salvage building material, build furniture, and teach reuse. We evolve to meet the changing needs of our community, fighting waste and climate change all the while. In 2022, we:

- Diverted 2,733,450 pounds of building materials from the landfill across all programs. That's equivalent to the weight of 237 African elephants or 6.8 acid balls like the one at Bellingham's Waypoint Park.
- Diverted 49,457 pounds from the landfill from 29 deconstruction projects, thanks to our skilled salvage crew.
- Supported 21 trainees and three interns through our Community Jobs Training Program, which saw a major resurgence in 2022. The program provided customized training modules and one-on-one mentoring focused on in-demand jobs skills, resulting in an 80% job placement rate. In addition to this, we hosted our first collaborative volunteer day with Heritage Bank.
- Welcomed 6 trainees into the Design Build Program. These trainees designed and crafted over 60 unique value-added furnishings with guidance from our instructors.
- Built over 300 pieces of furniture through our Revision Division, a program that repurposes used materials into hand-crafted furniture. Custom builds (66 of them!) ranged from spiders to farm tables.
- Took on local food waste and food insecurity by partnering with Sustainable Connections to build and launch Washington state's first official "FREEdge" shed, a mini food pantry for perishables available to everyone.
- Fundraised for flood relief, providing over \$5,000 in gift cards to our community to help rebuild after widespread flooding across our region in 2021.



## Youth education and action

*The kids aren't alright, but we can all help. A 2022 national EdWeek survey found that 37% of teenagers feel anxious when they think about climate change and its effects. That's why we're aligning our climate and environmental education offerings with pathways to hope through action. In 2022, we:*

- Trained 106 Whatcom County teachers in bringing environmental solutions into the classroom. From mitigating the effects of stormwater on Coho salmon to understanding how the meal you choose affects greenhouse gas emissions, teachers left with solutions to share with their 2,500+ students, giving them tools for finding hope during the climate crisis.
- Supported more than 600 students in taking action to protect our freshwater resources. Nearly 500 students collected 89 pounds of trash, and 161 students created posters educating folks on how and why they can protect our freshwater.
- Twenty-two high school students in our Youth for the Environment and People (YEP!) program across Skagit and Whatcom Counties studied and took action on food waste reduction. This unique youth empowerment program centers student voices and helps hone key changemaking skills. Each student-led cohort culminates with an environmental action project. 🌱



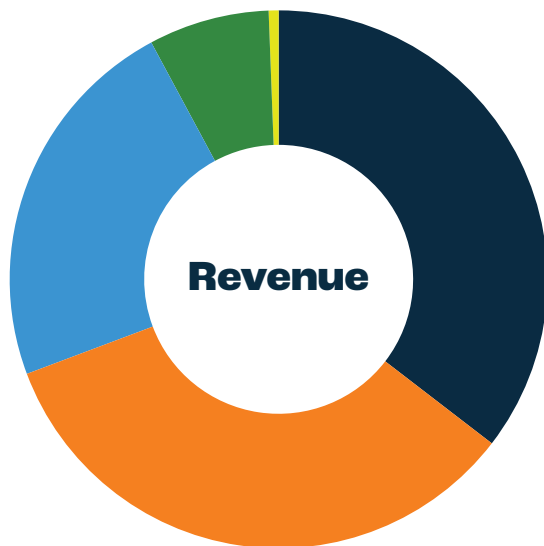
**It was really nice to do something where you know you're making a difference and be able to do it alongside others your age. It just makes it a lot more fun and meaningful.**

—Dez, 2022 YEP! participant

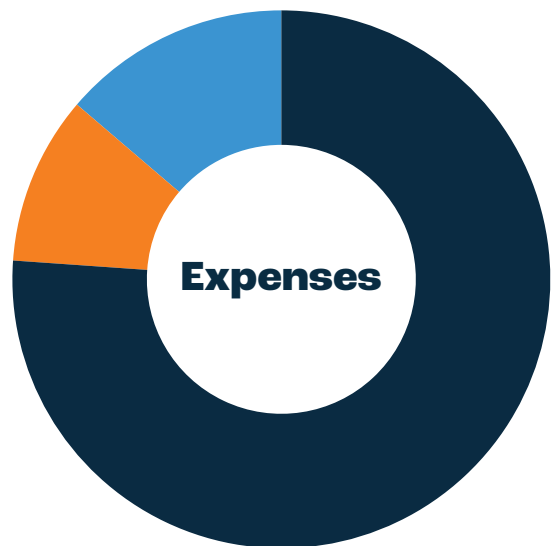
# Financial Report

Our revenue and expenses were both roughly \$2.49 million. Despite 2022's rollercoaster on Wall Street and several hotly contested midterm election races that impact nonprofit fundraising, RE Sources' donors, foundation supporters, and business sponsors continued their generous and reliable support. We welcomed new and greater foundation funding and individual supporters from throughout the region. The RE Store's sales bounced back to pre-pandemic levels. Perhaps most importantly, through dozens of events during the year — from beach cleanups to campaign celebrations — we were able to connect in person with so many of you who fund this critical work we do together to protect this place we love.

If you wish to receive a copy of our 2022 990 Tax Filing please reach out to Development Director Mary Humphries at [maryh@re-sources.org](mailto:maryh@re-sources.org). 📧



- 35.4% RE Store sales / services
- 33.8% Foundation / trust grants
- 22.9% Individual donations
- 7.3% Government grants / contracts
- 0.6% Other income



- 76.1% Programs (Advocacy / education, RE Store)
- 10.1% Development
- 13.7% Admin support



## RE SOURCES

2309 Meridian St, Bellingham, WA 98225  
[info@re-sources.org](mailto:info@re-sources.org) • (360) 733-8307



RE Sources' North Sound  
Waterkeeper advocates  
for the Salish Sea and  
waters that flow into it.

## Join Us.

We mobilize people to protect the water, land and climate we all depend on.  
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