



# 2025 Impact Report

 **RE SOURCES**

*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 the Tribes' enduring care and protection of the lands and waterways. (Photo: John D'Onofrio)*

## When an old tree falls in the woods, it really does make a sound.

Quite a few, in fact. Earth and roots heave upward. Wood pops, twists and cracks as the trunk crashes to the ground, shearing off neighboring branches along the way.

In the wake of the upheaval, light streams down from a new canopy gap. A host of organisms — invertebrates, moss, fern, lichen, fungi — deftly shift their orientation and mingle with newly acquainted communities of living soil. Decomposition reiterates into composition as a nurse log forms and tiny hemlocks sprout anew. What looks like decay can also be the beginning of a broader transformation.

Looking back on 2024 at RE Sources, we reflect on a transformative year. An organization charting a new path with new, shared leadership. Our nation at another crossroads and Washington communities grappling with whether to forge ahead or turn back the clock on progressive climate policy. As a nonprofit, we coalesced around a vision of a Climate Resilient Northwest Washington and a determination to build a durable institution and community resource. As a community, we dove into the work of local collective action in defense of our lands, waters, climate and people. Together, a community of 12,500 advocates:

- Led regional grassroots efforts to soundly defeat Initiative 2117, which sought to repeal the Climate Commitment Act. Whatcom County voted down the initiative at a 3% greater margin than the state as whole.
- Filled vital data gaps on stormwater pollution, the single greatest source of pollution in the Salish Sea, by teaming up with a regional ally to scale our Bellingham-based, volunteer-run stormwater monitoring model.
- Retooled and revitalized our RE Store programs to divert new forms of manufacturing waste from the landfill.
- Tackled teen climate anxiety through our YEP! program, an after-school program guiding youth-directed local climate action.

2024 also feels like it was a lifetime ago. We're still feeling the violent reverberations of a federal administration bent on further enriching billionaires instead of protecting working people and the environment. At times, it's hard to see much but disaster.

As a regional environmental advocacy group with roots more than 40 years deep in Northwest Washington, we're committed to composting the systems that no longer serve us, repurposing what we can, and cultivating better pathways forward.

In the years to come, we aim to shape our region's communities to better mirror its ecosystems — resilient and regenerative, interdependent and reciprocal. That starts in 2025 with advocating for comprehensive plans for our region's growth that account for increased climate impacts, from wildfires and floods to droughts and heat waves. It includes forging strong partnerships with workers and advocates closest to the natural resource challenges we're facing. And it includes a campaign to elevate the declining health of our waters as a top issue for our decision-makers.

When we mobilize thousands of voices, when we demonstrate the real-world benefits of smart policies, when we reject the ultra-financialization of everything, we start to embrace the audacity of local collective action.

What difference can one regional advocacy nonprofit in the corner of the country really make? What difference does healthy soil make to a forest? Thank you for protecting this place with us, and for helping a brighter future take root. 🌱



**Ander Russell**  
**Janet Marino**  
**Jay Kosa**

RE Sources  
Co-Executive  
Directors

# Message from our Co-Directors



(Ilona Ilyés)

# 2024 by the numbers



627

Acres of forest in Whatcom County conserved with Climate Commitment Act funds.

16,000

Local voters reached through our No on I-2117 campaign calls, canvassing, and digital outreach.

4,000

Bellingham Bay water quality measurements recorded by 18 stormwater monitoring volunteers and staff.

34%

Increase in confidence experienced by high school-age participants in YEP! regarding their ability to make a positive impact on issues facing their community.

## You Make the Difference

Your support makes it possible for RE Sources to secure crucial environmental victories today, while ensuring plans and policies center people and planet for generations to come. **Thank you.**

**RE Sources would like to thank the following business and foundation funders for their generous support of our work:**

Anchor QEA  
Aslan Brewing Co.  
Backcountry Essentials  
BRT Charitable Trust  
Burning Foundation  
City of Bellingham, Public Works Department  
Community Food Co-Op  
Cosman Family Foundation  
Dudley Foundation  
First Federal Community Foundation  
Fred Meyer  
Heritage Bank  
H & H Evergreen Foundation  
Harder Foundation  
Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation  
Industrial Credit Union  
Keta Legacy Foundation

Loyal Bigelow and Jedediah Dewey Foundation  
Lucky Seven Foundation  
Lummi Indian Business Council  
Medina Foundation  
Moondance Sea Kayak Adventures  
Mt. Baker Sierra Club  
Northwest Fund for the Environment  
Resin, LLC  
Rose Foundation  
Satterberg Foundation  
St. James Presbyterian Church  
Steele Financial Services  
Stones Throw Brewing Co.  
Superfeet Worldwide Inc.  
Sustainable Whatcom Fund  
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community  
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund  
The Gary Milgard Family  
Village Books & Paper Dreams  
Washington Conservation Action  
Washington Sea Grant  
Washington State Department of Commerce  
Washington State Department of Ecology  
Waste Action Project  
Whatcom Community Foundation  
Whatcom County Health Department  
Whatcom Educational Credit Union

2.28 million

*Pounds of trash diverted from landfills by RE Store programs in 2024.*

40<sup>+</sup>

*Community issues on which we provided expert insight through comment letters, legislative advocacy, and coalition work.*

4,000

*Pounds of high-quality rope diverted from the landfill through our new manufacturing waste diversion partnership with Samson Rope.*

78

*Whatcom County K-12 teachers who received free professional development around incorporating climate change into the classroom (and outdoors!)*

## Defending Washington's landmark climate policy

*Through digital outreach, phone calls and a robust ground game, RE Sources staff and volunteers lead local efforts to defend the Climate Commitment Act.*

Every knock on a door comes with a hint of trepidation. Will anyone answer? If so, will they be friendly or annoyed? Supportive of your cause or opposed? When it came to the attempt to roll back Washington's key climate law, the Climate Commitment Act, we found that the majority of folks thought letting polluters off the hook for climate pollution was a bad idea.

Our staff and volunteers reached 16,000 voters in Whatcom County, where 65% of voters ultimately rejected the initiative – a 3% higher margin than the state at large. Our community engagement specialist Seth Mangold mobilized local volunteers and knocked on more doors for the No 2117 campaign than any other individual in the state. As a result, Washington now has millions of dollars in funds to invest in community improvements that help slash carbon emissions, build climate resilience and invest in frontline communities.

Importantly, this victory also signaled to the rest of the nation that it's possible to pass – and defend – meaningful climate legislation.

## Protecting forests, salmon and our kids' health through state-level advocacy

*Something fishy going on in our rivers? Critical Whatcom County forests on the chopping block? We seized the 2024 state legislative session as a prime opportunity to advance solutions with local benefits.*

More than 550 people on our Legislative Action Team list successfully advocated for the state legislature to pass several vital bills into law, such as funding zero-emission school buses, expediting plans to protect salmon from a toxic chemical found in tire dust, and securing \$15 million of Climate Commitment Act funding for protecting mature forest acreage from logging. In February 2024, 47 Washingtonians joined RE Sources and ally organizations for Clean & Abundant Water Lobby Day, where they met with 18 legislators and staffers representing 12 districts to advocate for our water-related legislative priorities.

Our Legislative Action Team has grown steadily year after year, as more community members entrust our policy staff to assess priority environmental legislation and provide concise, convenient opportunities to plug in and help ensure strong environmental bills become laws. Our team stays in regular contact with statewide partners, and highlights ways in which state-level legislation could benefit regional communities here in Northwest Washington.

“

*No child should feel the weight of the environment on their back over simply receiving quality schooling. We urge you to continue to advocate for the decoupling of school funds from timber sales."*

*—High school YEP! participant giving public comment at the December 12th, 2024 Whatcom County Council meeting*

Lobby Day participants in Olympia



Below: YEP! students learning to take water quality samples

7



# 2024 Milestone victories

## Honing and scaling for impact on Salish Sea water quality

*RE Sources linked up with a broader network of volunteers to routinely monitor stormwater outfalls across eight Puget Sound cities and flag pollution hotspots.*

Low tide is at 6:00 am? Not a problem for RE Sources' stalwart team of volunteers in Bellingham. Every month, 18 trained community scientists sample water from stormwater outfalls and creeks entering Bellingham Bay. The goal? Fill vital data gaps and assess trends in our marine water quality and identify pollution sources.

In 2024, RE Sources continued its leadership in monitoring Bellingham's stormwater pollution and partnered with ally organization Friends of

the Salish Sea to provide technical assistance and harmonize community science data collection efforts in cities throughout Puget Sound – a collaborative effort now known as the Salish Sea Stormwater Monitoring Project. The project now includes eight cities in the lower Salish Sea, from Bellingham to Poulsbo, which allows us to help assess water quality trends across the region and share knowledge with stormwater managers across jurisdictions.

In June of 2024, we released our Year 3 report from Bellingham Bay stormwater monitoring. In the report, we sounded the alarm about high fecal bacteria counts at the stormwater outfall at Taylor Dock, the bay's most popular swimming spot. We'll continue leading sampling efforts in 2025, with an eye out for high bacteria and other pollution concerns as we head into the prime season for swimming and bay recreation. 🌊

## Salish Sea Protection

At the beginning of 2025, Southern Resident orca Tahlequah lost a newborn calf, echoing a similar loss that captured the world's attention in 2018. The occasion served as a heart-wrenching reminder that the waters of the Salish Sea are in a dire state. Dense human populations along the Salish Sea have replaced forests, wetlands and shorelines with hard surfaces, and have in turn increased inputs of toxic stormwater pollution into our waters. It's a wicked problem to try and solve, but take heart in the progress we're making locally. In 2024, we:

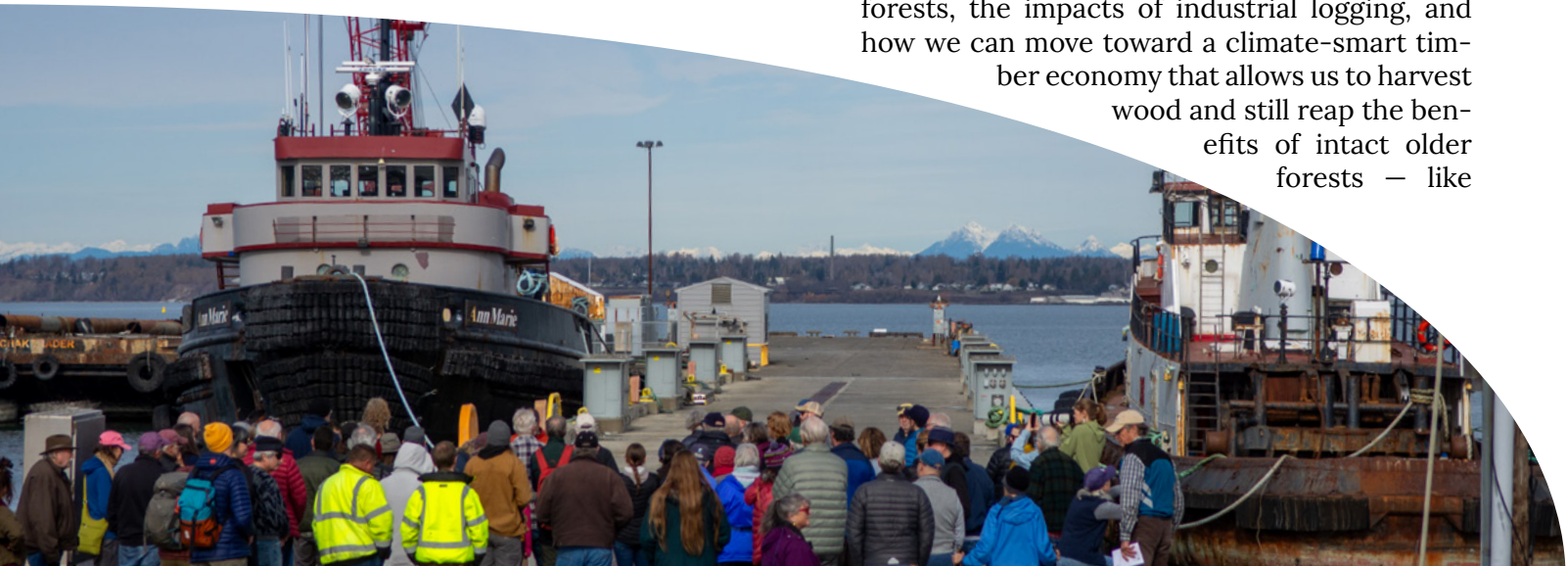
- Coordinated 18 monitoring volunteers and staff in taking over 4,000 measurements of water quality parameters across 150 visits to stormwater outfalls in Bellingham, identifying problem spots for bacteria pollution and other contaminants. Thanks to our advocacy, a new stormwater collaborative, consisting of our staff and several public agencies, has formed to continue tackling pollutants.
- With the help of 145 volunteers, we removed almost 1,200 pounds of trash from local beaches at our 9 beach cleanups.
- Spent 50 hours on the water doing pollution patrols and hazardous algae sampling. We identify potential contaminants going into the water so we can alert local agencies that can clean it up or close waters to recreation and fishing if necessary. We also monitored ABC Recycling's loading operations at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal to ensure pollution mitigation practices were being followed.

- Hosted our annual Cherry Point Science Forum, where people got to hear from local scientists on their research about seagrasses, herring health, and invasive green crabs.
- Hosted two tours of Bellingham waterfront toxic cleanup sites (Model Toxics Control Act, or MTCA, sites) with over 120 attendees. These sites are being remediated for future use as public parks, business spaces, and residences — as well as better habitat for shoreline wildlife. Our tours offer folks a chance to connect with formerly off-limits sites along the industrial Bellingham Bay waterfront, and have their questions answered by officials and scientists directly involved with restoration.

## Resilient Watersheds + Future Forests

Five years ago, RE Sources questioned the wisdom of clearcutting stands of mature forest in the Lake Whatcom watershed and petitioned the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to amend its proposed Bessie Sorts Timber sale. The community rallied behind the effort, and helped highlight a much broader need to update a 20th century state timberland management model for 21st century challenges. The effort grew into our Future Forests campaign, housed within our broader land and water policy program, Resilient Watersheds. Our forest advocacy efforts in coalition with allies have made Whatcom County a statewide leader in the push for clearer, more sustainable forest policy. In 2024, we:

- Led two community hikes in local forests aimed at connecting people with state-owned mature forests, the impacts of industrial logging, and how we can move toward a climate-smart timber economy that allows us to harvest wood and still reap the benefits of intact older forests — like





wildfire and drought resilience, flood reduction, carbon storage, and more.

- Convened and participated in monthly policy, outreach, and science sessions with 30+ Whatcom Forest Watch coalition members to coordinate forest advocacy at the local and state levels.
- Hosted Governor Jay Inslee to visit the south end of Lake Whatcom, where 575 acres of forests were protected thanks to Climate Commitment Act funding this year, benefiting the drinking water source for more than 110,000 people. We chatted with the governor about what the CCA means to Northwest Washington, and he told us about exciting projects across the state it's helping fund, such as electric school buses, heat pumps in nursing homes, and more.
- Successfully urged Whatcom County Councilmembers to use their voice at the state level and ask the DNR to come up with a policy for protecting mature forests. For too long, we've had to oppose mature forest clearcuts on a sale-by-sale basis, securing protections for some forests like Brokedown Palace, but losing others to logging along the way.

Already in 2025, we've seen progress with the new commissioner of public lands, Dave Upthegrove, issuing a 6-month pause on mature forest sales. In the state legislative session we are advocating for solutions and funding that reduce the reliance of Whatcom County public schools on state forestland timber revenue.



*I thought the Climate Commitment Act was a good idea for many reasons, but I didn't know it would help create a Garden of Eden."*

*—Former Governor Jay Inslee at a visit RE Sources led to a protected forest parcel above Lake Whatcom*

**Left:** 70 participants at a Bellingham waterfront cleanup site tour we led.

More ways  
you made a  
difference

(Zeuk Brzoza)

## Climate Action

Northwest Washington is a nexus for fossil fuel transport, refining and transshipment, which means we bear more significant risks for spills, accidents and pollution. It also means we have an outsized influence on how swiftly, justly and strategically our economy transitions to clean energy. At the same time, we're engaging with major planning processes to make sure the region grows in ways that account for the impacts of climate change. Our most critical victory on these fronts in 2024 was defending the Climate Commitment Act. Beyond that, we:

- Launched advocacy for improving climate resilience in Skagit and Whatcom Counties as our region grows via five Comprehensive Plan update processes (ongoing in 2025), and presented at several community meetings about the processes underway. These processes are also the first time our counties and cities must plan for climate adaptation and mitigation. We're continuing to work on all five Comprehensive Plan updates: Skagit and Whatcom Counties, and the Cities of Anacortes, Mount Vernon and Bellingham.
- Engaged as a stakeholder with the Department of Ecology in their rulemaking process for who should be financially responsible for oil spills. We also hosted a webinar to educate the public. The rule was adopted with some of our input taken, leading to increased oil company responsibility and closed loopholes.
- Continued our work to watchdog for new projects and proposals by the fossil fuel industry in the Cherry Point industrial area. With nearly four years on the books, the Cherry Point protections we helped secure continue to ensure that there will be no expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure or transshipments from this important ecological and cultural area of Whatcom County.

## Youth Education + Action

Youth, educators, and school leaders are key to driving and sustaining a societal shift toward ecological restoration and climate action. Yet far too many youth and educators feel overwhelmed by these issues and are pulled in too many other directions to address them. We model our Educating for the Environment program around supporting



Northwest Washington's schools, educators, and youth with tools, training, and spaces for collective learning and action. In 2024, we:

- Connected 31 high school students with avenues for local climate action through our Youth for the Environment & People (YEP!) program. Cohorts of students in Whatcom and Skagit counties implemented three semester-long projects in the community to address a different climate-related issue of the students' choosing. In 2024, one cohort did an energy audit of a high school and proposed opportunities to the Bellingham Public School Board for saving money with more efficient lighting. Another cohort tackled mature forest protection and hosted an intergenerational letter-writing workshop, resulting in 43 handwritten messages to the Whatcom County Council.
- Found that across three years of YEP! participant surveys, students are on average 34% more confident in their ability to make a positive impact on issues facing their community.
- Partnered with other local nonprofits and the Washington State ClimeTime program to equip 78 Whatcom County K-12 teachers with free professional development around incorporating climate change into the classroom (and outdoors!).
- Created a lending library of 15 take-home "kits" for teachers to integrate lessons and action projects on water quality and quantity and waste reduction in their classrooms.
- Conducted 11 school waste assessments across Whatcom County and provided each school with an action plan for reducing their waste, and resources and support for implementing it.
- Worked with Bellingham Public Schools to offer three professional development workshops for every first-grade teacher in the district. Teachers walked away with lessons and materials to teach streamside about watersheds and water quality.

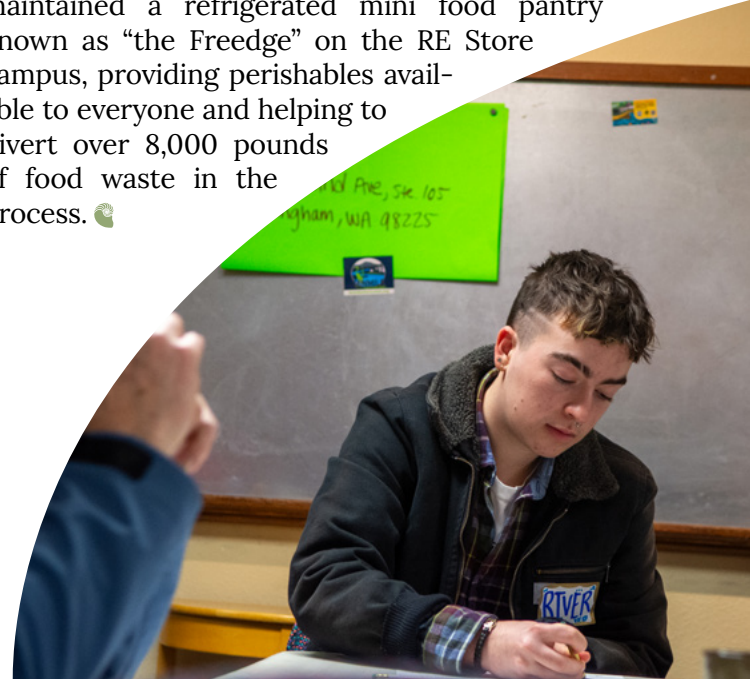
**Left:** RE Store staff processing salvaged lumber

**Right:** YEP! students write letters to the Whatcom County Council

## Defying waste at The RE Store

For more than 30 years, The RE Store in Bellingham has demonstrated the community-building power of thoughtful reuse. While big box stores sell low-quality products, The RE Store supplies countless renovations, DIY projects, and creative pursuits with high-quality used materials. It also offers salvage and deconstruction services, avenues for diverting manufacturing waste, and crucial pathways to employment via jobs training. After years of pandemic- and inflation-related challenges that hit our local retail sector hard, The RE Store regained its footing in 2024. Together, we:

- Diverted 2,278,000 pounds of materials from the landfill through Salvage Services deconstruction jobs, store donations, and item pickups.
- Launched a Manufacturing Waste Diversion program partnership with Ferndale-based Samson Rope, one of the largest rope producers in the United States, where we take lengths of rope they can't utilize and sell them in the Store. In its first year, we diverted almost 4,000 pounds of high-quality rope from the landfill.
- 10 community members completed our Community Jobs Training Program, where people who encounter barriers to employment can get paid work experience at the Store. Over the last several years, 90% of our trainees landed employment or enrolled in local colleges after completing their terms.
- In partnership with Sustainable Connections, maintained a refrigerated mini food pantry known as "the Freedger" on the RE Store campus, providing perishables available to everyone and helping to divert over 8,000 pounds of food waste in the process. 🌱



## 2024 Financial Report

In 2024, RE Sources ended the year with revenue exceeding expenses. Grassroots fundraising – driven by individual donors who believe in the power of local action – doubled from the previous year. Additionally, RE Store revenue trended upward, reinforcing the value of reuse, waste reduction, and job training in our region.

Despite the uncertainty of an election year and world events in 2024 that created competing priorities for donors, our supporters showed up, ensuring we could advance clean water protections, climate resilience, and local environmental advocacy.

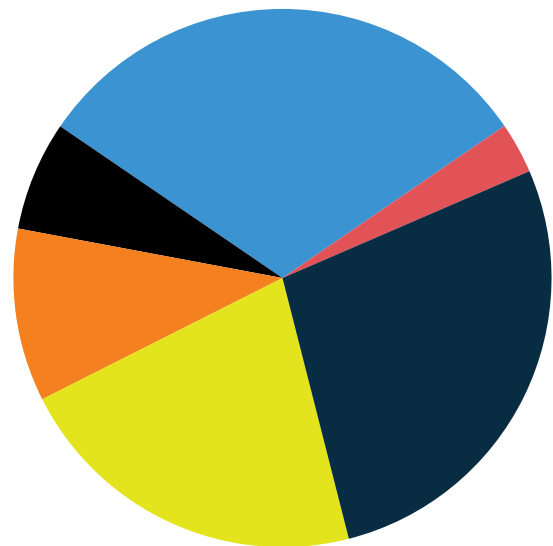
As we make our way through 2025, we must continue monitoring the shifting funding landscape, as federal actions and state budget woes are impacting the availability of critical support. We remain committed to adapting and sustaining our work for lasting impact, and now more than ever, community support is critical to our success.

**If you wish to receive a copy of our 2024 990 Tax Filing, available by mid-year, please reach out to Development Director Callie Hamilton at [CallieH@re-sources.org](mailto:CallieH@re-sources.org).**



**Expenses: \$2.40M**

- 38.9% RE Sources Advocacy Programs
- 13.5% Educating for the Environment
- 31.6% The RE Store
- 12.5% RE Store Salvage Services
- 3.5% RE Store Community Jobs Training



**Revenue: \$2.49M**

- 30.9% RE Store Retail Sales
- 3.1% RE Store Salvage Services
- 27.5% Foundation/Trust Grants
- 21.5% Individual Donations
- 10.4% Government Grants & Contracts
- 6.6% Other Income



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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.  
[www.re-sources.org](http://www.re-sources.org)

