



GREEN CORPS

The country's most respected training program for environmental organizers

2022 PROGRAM REPORT

“Your action and support of Green Corps plants the seeds for a stronger environmental movement for years to come.”

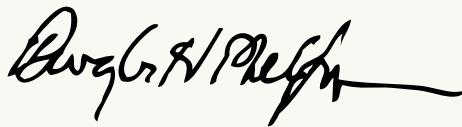
GOOD TRAINING CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Energy and enthusiasm are a potent combination, and there’s no better place to find them than in young idealists.

Even so, most newly minted environmental activists quickly discover that energy and enthusiasm on their own are rarely enough to overcome the barriers to positive environmental action. You also need experience. Good training can provide a bridge to the benefits of that experience.

That’s why The Public Interest Network founded Green Corps in 1992. Over more than three decades, we have taught more than 400 aspiring environmental organizers the most effective ways to recruit volunteers and allies; organize actions and events; nudge supportive decision-makers in the right direction or make reluctant decision-makers feel the heat; turn all of these strategies, tactics and tasks into a campaign; and run campaigns in ways that build organizations capable of running more and better campaigns in the future.

This training enables each new class of Green Corps organizers to make a near-immediate difference on environmental campaigns. Your action and support of Green Corps helps make that difference, and plants the seeds for a stronger environmental movement for years to come. Thank you.



Doug Phelps

Chair, Green Corps Board

LETTER TO OUR MEMBERS



2022 proved to be another eventful year at Green Corps and across the environmental movement. The federal government made record-breaking investments in renewable energy and established new national monuments, while states took steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and curb the production and use of single-use plastics. At Green Corps, the Class of 2022 ran campaigns to reduce e-waste and to protect rooftop solar in California. The Class of 2023 then launched their organizing careers with efforts to protect the Arctic from fossil fuel development, expand wildlife corridors in Pennsylvania, and safeguard pollinators from toxic pesticides in Colorado.

Our team showed up every day to do the challenging yet rewarding work required to protect our planet, and recruited thousands of people to act with them. In a rapidly changing world, the value of organizing for environmental progress remains constant. As always, thank you for your support, which makes our work possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renee Wellman".

Renee Wellman
Executive Director

Green Corps Class of 2023



YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: THE ONGOING FIGHT TO SAVE THE ARCTIC

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is internationally known for its beauty and ecological importance, including the 45 resident species of land and marine mammals that call it home. Millions of migratory birds travel to the refuge from all 50 states and six continents. Its Porcupine caribou herd is one of the largest caribou herds in North America and is a critical part of both the region's fragile ecosystem and the culture and sustenance of the Gwich'in people.

For decades, there have been attempts to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Drilling would be devastating, as heavy equipment would scar the fragile tundra, pipelines would disrupt caribou calving grounds, and the burning of additional fossil fuels would further destabilize the climate in a place that is already experiencing above-average temperature change in recent years. In January 2021, the Trump administration held a lease sale to allow companies to

purchase leases and the right to drill in the Refuge. Despite decades of campaign work to instate permanent protections and the Biden administration's actions to temporarily delay drilling in the Arctic Refuge, the 1.5-million-acre coastal plain remains vulnerable to fossil fuel development.

Fortunately, there are other avenues available to prevent drilling in the Refuge. Fossil fuel development requires significant money and resources, and if that is not available, harmful development cannot take place. More than two dozen banks have issued policies against financing drilling in the Arctic Refuge. As of August 2022, 14 international insurers had committed to not doing business with oil and gas companies in the Arctic Refuge. However, three of the U.S.'s largest insurers, Chubb, The Hartford and Travelers Insurance, had not yet made this commitment.





After the Green Corps Class of 2023 wrapped up their introductory August training, the Arctic Refuge Defense Campaign brought on a team of Green Corps organizers to build public support in the backyards of these companies' headquarters in Hartford, Connecticut, and the New York City metro area. They recruited and trained student leaders to educate their peers about this issue before organizing volunteer meetings and days of action to build needed visibility. Our team mobilized thousands of Connecticut and New Jersey residents to sign petitions, take photo petitions, place calls to company headquarters, and more. Students at UConn Hartford passed a resolution through their Undergraduate Student Government supporting the protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas activities.

During the fall campaign, the team generated 10 media hits, signed on 78 local businesses and organizations to support letters, and delivered more than 100,000 petition signatures to the corporate headquarters of Chubb and Travelers Insurance in the final weeks of the effort.

In November, our Hartford organizers recruited more than 50 students and community members to a rally in front of Travelers Insurance headquarters in Hartford. Carrying copies of the firm's iconic red umbrella, they called on the insurance company to make the same commitment as their industry competitors and take a stand to protect this critical place. As of the end of 2022, the team remained hopeful that these companies will make this commitment in the year ahead.



POWER FROM THE GRASSROOTS

(Page 3 left) Sam Cowles leads a march in Hartford, Conn., where more than 50 students and residents delivered thousands of petition signatures to Travelers Insurance headquarters, calling on the company to commit not to finance drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

(Page 3 right) Green Corps participated in an action with the Arctic Refuge Defense Campaign coalition partners calling on Chubb to commit not to insure fossil fuel drilling operations.

(Left) Connecticut students meet to plan next steps on the campaign in September 2022.



Migratory Connectivity

Movements of Broad-winged Hawks
2014 - 2018



Scott Parkhill from Audubon Mid-Atlantic speaking at the "Protecting Pennsylvania's Wildlife" online event.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: PROTECTING PENNSYLVANIA WILDLIFE

Across America, we're losing wildlife habitat at an alarming rate. Every minute, the U.S. loses two football fields worth of forest, meadow, grassland, desert, beachfront, riverside or wetland. This problem is exacerbated by the remaining nature being increasingly compromised and fragmented by roads, suburbanization, fossil fuel infrastructure development and more.¹

In 2022, three Green Corps organizers partnered with PennEnvironment to protect wildlife in Pennsylvania through the creation of wildlife corridors. Wildlife corridors allow wildlife to safely move and migrate between habitats. Corridors can include projects like highway over- and underpasses, strips of woodlands or wildflowers, or culverts to allow amphibians and fish to pass under roads.

Our organizers advocated for the state government to study the gaps and opportunities for wildlife corridors across the commonwealth. We collected

petition signatures and hosted letter-to-the-editor writing parties to generate more visibility for this issue. Organizers reached out to local elected officials, including city council members and county commissioners, as well as hunting and fishing organizations, to demonstrate widespread support for this commonsense idea and the benefits wildlife corridors could provide. More than 150 elected officials, recreation groups and outdoor outfitter businesses signed on in support.

The team also hosted an online panel to educate dozens of Pennsylvanians and highlight the work already happening in-state and regionally to protect wildlife such as birds and elk. At the end of March, the Pennsylvania House Transportation Committee brought the resolution up for a vote. After three years of organizing, this resolution passed through the first hurdle of the state Legislature. While more work remains, the connections created by Green Corps organizers will strengthen ongoing local conservation efforts.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: SAVING THE BEES IN COLORADO

Starting in the fall of 2022, Green Corps partnered with Environment Colorado to save the bees.² Colorado has the fifth-highest level of bee diversity in the United States—but bees are dying at alarming rates due to habitat loss, climate change, and the overuse of toxic pesticides, including a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids. One of the easiest ways to save the bees is to stop the consumer sale of neonicotinoids which inhibit bees' ability to find food.

Beginning in 2022, more than 1,200 Coloradans added their names to the campaign petition calling on state legislators to stop the sale of neonicotinoids to the general public. Many more participated in campaign actions at the Denver Botanic Gardens, concerts and a “Trick or Seeding” event in Boulder in October. This Halloween-

themed event featured University of Colorado students distributing native wildflower seeds to Boulder residents while asking them to sign the campaign petition. One hundred and forty-one businesses, farms, beekeepers and health professionals also voiced their support for the campaign, and the team generated letters to the editor in Denver, Boulder and Glenwood Springs newspapers.

After building undeniable public support, the team hosted a press conference outside of the Colorado state capitol building before volunteers delivered the petition signatures and coalition letters to Colorado elected officials inside in advance of the 2023 legislative session. Colorado has the opportunity to lead the Mountain West while joining other states, including Maryland and Maine, in taking this straightforward step to save the bees.

1 <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0707/ML070730105.pdf>

2 <https://beesneeds.colorado.edu/introtonativebees.html>



Staff

Volunteers get ready to deliver thousands of petition and coalition signatures at the Colorado State Capitol in November 2022.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: GREEN CORPS ALUMNI PUT THEIR SKILLS TO WORK



ROGER SMITH, GC'02
MIGHTY EARTH

After a decade working with Clean Water Action in New England, Roger relocated to Japan and now serves as Japan Director for Mighty Earth. His work, in close coordination with allies from Tokyo to Dhaka to Melbourne, contributed to the cancellation of a massive coal plant in Bangladesh in April 2022. This cancellation marked the end of Japan's new overseas coal power plant development.

However, Japanese utilities are resisting the transition away from coal and looking to prolong the life of coal plants by also burning wood. With millions of tons of wood pellets imported from British Columbia and the southeastern U.S., Roger worked with Green Corps graduates from organizations including Dogwood Alliance to ensure the voices of impacted communities in North America are heard in the halls of power in Tokyo.



ASHLEY SHAEFFER YILDIZ, GC'07
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

Ashley Shaeffer Yildiz has dedicated her career to reducing the environmental impact of industrial food systems. She joined Friends of the Earth to design and execute a new international climate and agriculture finance program. Using finance as a lever to pressure agribusiness to reduce its climate impact and other social and ecological harms, she leads the Stop Financing Factory Farming campaign targeting the World Bank and leading regional development banks. In coordination with international partners, she designs and implements hard-hitting campaign strategies aimed at pressuring international financial institutions to strengthen their policies and criteria for lending, exclude the worst animal agribusiness actors from their portfolios, and shift their investments toward smaller-scale, diversified, agroecological production systems.



CHARLEY OLENA, GC'13, VOTING RIGHTS LAB

Charley Olena works as the Vice President of Advocacy for the Voting Rights Lab. Charley sets the strategy and manages the implementation of state legislative campaigns in 22 states to advance pro-voter policy reforms and end America's legacy of felony disenfranchisement, while combating denialism and misinformation that has become central to the voting rights debate in recent years.

After a year of Green Corps training plus stints as a Green Corps lead organizer and assistant organizing director, Charley became New Era Colorado's Advocacy Director before joining Voting Rights Lab in 2019 to expand the footprint of her impact on democracy issues. Since joining VRL, Charley has won expansions of voter access in Kentucky, Connecticut, Michigan, Washington, Missouri, Arizona and New York. Charley uses the skills she learned with Green Corps as she helps the Voting Rights Lab's directors organize state legislatures, growing and managing state and national coalitions, shaping press narratives, informing messaging and more.

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