DEAR FRIENDS,

Ecotrust was designed to be a complex adaptive system, and in 2020, our adaptive capabilities were tested as never before.

Deep flaws—in health care, the economy, our justice system, current approaches to climate change—became even more apparent, and the need for creative, collaborative solutions became even more urgent.

The pandemic’s effect on our food system is a grounding example: food insecurity increased dramatically, supply chains were disrupted, and foodchain worker safety threatened. In short order, food systems leaders, from farmers to school nutrition staff, began rapidly identifying acute needs and collaborating on place-based solutions. Through adaptive physical spaces, programs, and partnerships, Ecotrust was able to meet new needs and challenges, resulting in a year of continued, meaningful food system impact from California to Alaska.

The challenges of 2020 also reminded us of the centrality of equity in Ecotrust’s mission. Systemic racism led to disproportionate impacts on Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color through 2020’s multiple crises. At the same time, across our region, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leaders and communities pushed new solutions at the confluence of community health, economic strength, and climate resilience. We are incredibly grateful for the courage and creativity of our BIPOC colleagues and partners.

The pages of this Annual Report chronicle adaptation across sectors that hold the greatest promise of transformation—in our food systems, in the stewardship of our lands and waters, and in our own business operations. With your support in 2020, we found new ways to meet urgent needs and challenge entrenched systems.

While the fallout of 2020 is still unfolding, I see a great opportunity to keep moving forward in a way that centers the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, supports what Jane Jacobs called “a reliable prosperity” in urban and rural areas, and addresses the urgent need for climate action—all essential elements of a more equitable, livable future. I am deeply grateful for the support that has empowered Ecotrust to be adaptive and responsive for 30 years. It is your commitment to our shared mission that enables this work. Thank you.

Onward,

Jeremy Barnicle, Executive Director
ADAPTATION

lives at indefinite edges. Like transition zones between woodlands and grasslands, estuary and open ocean, vulnerability and opportunity coexist. In the negative space created by uncertainty, creativity, diversity, and interdependence can flourish.

"THE WAYS IN WHICH WE’VE ADAPTED TO KEEP COMMUNITY SAFETY, HEALTH, AND FOOD SECURITY IN MIND HAS BROADENED OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST."

Miakah Nix
KKCFP COORDINATOR
Ecotrust
One of the strongest links to an equitable, prosperous, climate-smart future are the young land stewards in our region’s frontline communities.
ACROSS DIVERSE landscapes and communities, we are working in partnership to both create and adapt career education and workforce development opportunities that center the knowledge and experience of Black and Indigenous land stewards and build the capacity of young people to shape and benefit from a new green economy.

With our Tribal Forestry Workforce partners at Heritage University, we adapted programming for culturally-relevant online learning, serving Yakama Nation Tribal School students in Central Washington. In this program, high school students are introduced to a range of environmental studies subjects through the window of working in their ancestral forests. In particular, they explore forestry careers and forestry-related opportunities to implement place-based solutions for addressing climate change alongside mentors pursuing degrees in those fields. Many participating mentors are members of the Yakama tribe, enhancing intergenerational learning. To inspire replication, this base curriculum will be adapted and shared across the country.

In Portland, two cohorts of Black and Indigenous young adults graduated from the Green Workforce Academy. The program, offered by Ecotrust in collaboration with several culturally-specific community organizations, offers in-person, hands-on learning about green jobs, as well as workforce readiness skills like building resumes. Students earn a stipend while participating, and we provide multiple tools to help minimize barriers to participation—with a goal to support safe learning in the COVID era.

“Seeing yourself and your culture represented in STEM can be incredibly powerful. I’m honored to be in partnership with Yakama students, mentors, and all the educators who came together to co-create and support this program over the past year; it has been a north star throughout it all.”

Stephanie Cowherd
FORESTS AND COMMUNITY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

And, in Southeast Alaska, Ecotrust team members representing the Keex’ Kwaan Community Forest Partnership (KKCFP) continued building community momentum toward collaborative forest management with the Organized Village of Kake and local youth. Ecotrust Indigenous Fellow Laurie Dunn created a routed road network map for the small community of Kake, Alaska, which has limited mapping services. With this geospatial product, the Keex’ Kwaan field crew will be able to get turn-by-turn directions to field locations, and the community of Kake can improve navigation for emergency services. Our work to create an on-the-ground landscape assessment will inform future community-led decision making around critical natural resources.

In response to food insecurity exacerbated by COVID impacts on Southeast Alaska’s food supply chain, KKCFP Coordinator Miakah Nix partnered with local organizations to start the Kake Cooperative Gardens. More than 200 pounds of produce were supplied to the senior center and local families throughout the season.
In Oregon and Washington alone, family forest owners, tribes, land trusts, and local governments manage 9.5 million acres of forestland. In partnership with many of these forest landowners, we are making gains towards drawing down carbon and reducing wildfire risk while protecting clean drinking water, biodiversity, cultural resources, and natural forest functions.
IN 2020, our team focused on the embodied carbon of wood products, the identification of forest restoration hotspots, the growth of the workforce in tribal forestry, and the expansion of conservation protections and incentives for climate-smart forestry.

The potential climate impacts of careful, targeted management across some of the most productive forest lands on the planet is hard to overstate. Ecotrust’s studies show that climate-smart forestry could store an average of nearly 30 percent more carbon than common forest practices currently store, while supporting forest restoration and rewarding land managers if we better connect management practices to the wood products market.

To further the potential for climate-smart forestry to take hold, we are engaging in a systematic approach: we have conducted technical analyses for green building projects; connected climate-smart forests with the growing numbers of businesses who have pledged to reduce their carbon footprint; and analyzed and shared decades of cumulative timber harvest data with communities that rely on forests for their drinking water.

By providing carbon storage data to architects and builders, we’re creating a clearer view of the potential climate-positive impacts of their building projects and strengthening the business case for climate-smart wood. Our data show that a 10 percent price premium for climate-smart wood could fundamentally shift the economics of forestry and that putting a price on carbon (and a value on carbon sequestration) is a critical next step.

To pursue more and better incentives for land managers who pursue climate-smart forestry, we are actively engaging with partners in Salem, Olympia, and beyond to support climate-smart policy. Our staff participate in a variety of committees and boards, such as the Washington Forest Practices Board; Steering Committee of Leadership Summit for Climate, Wood, and Forests; Washington State Forest Carbon Advisory Committee; and the US Board of Directors of the Forest Stewardship Council.

“Our Pacific Northwest forests are globally unique in their capacity to capture and store immense amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. In 2020, the historic and devastating wildfire season put what we already know into stark terms: the time for wide-scale adoption of climate-smart forest management is now.”

Brent Davies
VP, FORESTS & ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

In addition, we have worked with the USDA Forest Service to identify restoration hotspots in the dry forests east of the Cascades and have quantified the amount and types of restoration forest products that could be generated over the next 40 years through careful forest stewardship. Our data indicate that 56 percent of the acres mapped could be thinned through restoration efforts, effectively reducing fire hazard and returning positive net revenue following harvest. Prescribed burns are another important tool recommended to restore forest health.

Putting a value on climate-smart forestry extends beyond the price of timber: for example, in Oregon, 70 percent of residents rely on forests as a critical source of drinking water. By compiling publicly available data and satellite imagery, we found that drinking water source areas for Oregon’s coastal communities, in particular, are at increased risk. Coastal communities are using this data and information to make informed decisions for a climate-resilient future.
Our regional food system presents a critical opportunity for economic, social, and environmental transformation.

RESILIENT, EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Aaron Vargas, Food Equity Manager, examines the soil at Wapato Island Farm. In fall 2020, Aaron Vargas interviewed Jennifer Rose Marie Serna, owner of Wapato Island Farm, about her connections to the land and to healing ancestral ties to plants as medicine and food. Sean Gutierrez

Come Thru Market is a Black and Indigenous-centered farmers market that came to the Redd on Salmon plaza every other Monday through the summer and once a month through the fall. Noah Thomas

Noah Thomas, Aaron Vargas, Food Equity Manager, examines the soil at Wapato Island Farm. In fall 2020, Aaron Vargas interviewed Jennifer Rose Marie Serna, owner of Wapato Island Farm, about her connections to the land and to healing ancestral ties to plants as medicine and food. Sean Gutierrez
THIS PAST YEAR, we leveraged our expertise in business development and training, our existing food system infrastructure at the Redd on Salmon Street, and our convening capacity to strengthen a resilient and equitable regional food economy in partnership with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) food producers and food system leaders.

At the Redd on Salmon Street in Portland, we supported a number of important Black-led initiatives. In February, Ecotrust Events and our Food & Farms team collaborated with the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition and Mudbone Grown to hold Back to the Root at Redd East. This conference brought together more than 100 attendees from California, Oregon, and Washington to teach, learn, and build connections for a regional, BIPOC-led food system.

As the food system constraints and racial inequities of COVID-19 were laid bare, the Redd became the site for the Come Thru Market, a Black and Indigenous-centered farmers market that generated more than $50,000 in sales for businesses. The Redd Community Kitchen also incubated the Fed Project, a chef-created hunger relief program.

As schools worked to adapt meal programs to the needs of students and families during the pandemic, we continued working to connect K-12 schools and early care sites with growers and food businesses who are providing local and culturally relevant foods. With the Redd as a key point of introduction to more diverse and delicious local food, we began working toward facilitating purchasing agreements between BIPOC producers and large institutional buyers, including hospitals like Kaiser Sunnyside.

"Now is the time to highlight the vitality of our local and regional food system and the strength of the relationships between people working together to transform the system for the better."

Angela Hedstrom
COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS PROGRAM MANAGER

In Washington state, we worked with partner and agriculture business incubator Viva Farms to begin building a bilingual small business development program for Latinx producers. We also collaborated with King County-based farmer and food systems organizer Vero Vergara from Sweet Hollow Farm to develop a series of discussions that will focus on identifying shared priorities and the essential components necessary to support a BIPOC-led food systems network, along with strategies to continue growing toward self-reliance across the region. The series will launch in early 2021.

The pandemic demonstrated the durability of small-scale regional agriculture, while illuminating the need for food system innovation. Through this year’s upheaval, we supported a coalition of nonprofit, academic, and for-profit partners in Oregon through the North Coast Food Systems Collaborative, to understand the impacts of the pandemic on seafood, meat, and veggie producers in the region and develop marketplace solutions to ensure locally grown products were accessible by their communities. In addition, we welcomed a fourth cohort of farmers, ranchers, and fishers to the Ag of the Middle Accelerator business development program, introducing them to a curriculum adapted for online instruction and expanded to include sessions on food justice. During the summer months, a group of past and current Accelerator participants formed an Anti-Racist Learning Group to understand the oppressive history that has led to the inequities in our food systems and to learn ways to take action towards racial justice.

Our Accelerator network of nearly 100 small- to midsize farmers, ranchers, and fishers proved to be a source of support and transformation. Through this network, we helped producers access vital government funding at the onset of the pandemic and assist those adopting new technology in order to reach customers during lockdown.
ACCOUNTABILITY and transparency build trust. The nest that fleges visions of a better tomorrow must be woven with intention, compassion, perseverance, and healing, here and now.

“THIS IS WHERE WE GO BEYOND DIVERSITY AND BEYOND INCLUSION. THIS IS WHERE WE START TALKING ABOUT EQUITY, JUSTICE, AND LIBERATION.”

Jamese Kwele
VP, ORGANIZATIONAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS EQUITY
Ecotrust
AT ECOTRUST, racial equity is an integral component of our mission, vital to fostering resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems. Since our founding in 1991, Ecotrust has worked quietly as a convener and humble partner alongside American Indian tribes in Oregon, Washington, and northern California, Native villages in Alaska, and First Nations communities in British Columbia in their determined efforts to strengthen sovereignty, protect homelands, build economies, sustain their cultures, and improve their communities. We know that deep-rooted, systemic diversity is essential to our ability to survive and thrive. Yet, significant disparities persist in economic opportunity and environmental well-being in our region and beyond.

In so many ways, 2020 shone a spotlight on the ways in which racialized systems continue to cause harm to Black, Indigenous, and people of color. The coronavirus pandemic claimed a disproportionate number of Black and brown lives. The killings of Black people—George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and far too many others—gave rise to local, national, and global uprisings for racial justice. Black and brown communities bore the brunt of an economic recession, while Wall Street reaped record gains and wealth inequality continued to grow. At Ecotrust, we responded by deepening our commitment to racial justice; working with and learning from both Indigenous communities where we have a history of engagement, and also Black, Latinx, and other communities of color who call this bioregion home; and creating a more defined focus on disrupting the ways in which anti-Blackness shows up at our organization and across our region and the importance of centering the vision, voices, and leadership of Black staff, partners, and communities.

All staff at Ecotrust, at every level of the organization, have a role to play in embedding racial equity into internal practices, systems and policies, and external programmatic activities. Core to this is ensuring that our leadership, staff, board, and community and philanthropic partners are also invited (and sometimes pushed) to advance this work. Whether organizational or regional, transformation requires vision and commitment. We know we have so much more to do, and we expect to continue learning and growing, both individually and collectively.

JAMES E KWETLE, VP, ORGANIZATIONAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS EQUITY

EQUITY AT ECOTRUST

At Ecotrust, we see equity as an integral component of our mission, vital to fostering resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems. Deep-rooted, systemic diversity is essential to our ability to survive and thrive.

2020 RACIAL EQUITY PLAN

Continuing our commitment toward racial equity, and intentionally shifting resources, power, and privilege to advance equitable outcomes.

ACTIVITIES

• Shifted power in the organization by implementing a Leadership Transformation plan, which increased Black and Indigenous representation on our leadership teams and enabled the whole organization to benefit from the skill sets, content expertise, and lived experiences that BIPOC leaders at Ecotrust contribute.

• Developed new promotional guidelines that decenter characteristics of white dominant culture, more deeply value equity competencies, and work to advance equitable outcomes at Ecotrust.

• Built relationships with board candidates and added five new BIPOC members to Ecotrust and Ecotrust Investments’ board of directors.

2020 EQUITY WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

GOALS

1. Support and empower BIPOC staff
2. Build equitable leadership teams and develop BIPOC leadership
3. Drive forward organizational, programmatic, and cross-programmatic equity work
4. Be data-driven and utilize results-based accountability

KEVIN BUMATAY
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

BRITTANIE GRAYSON
EVENT OPERATIONS MANAGER

STEPHANIE COWHERD
FORESTS & COMMUNITY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

JAMESE KWETLE
VP, ORGANIZATIONAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS EQUITY

LARA FORD
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

VICKIE OWENS
SENIOR OFFICE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGER
It is no surprise that 2020—marked by a pandemic, suffocating wildfires, and an incoherent economy—was a financially challenging year for Ecotrust. Fortunately, our diversified business model granted us resilience, and our healthy balance sheet gave us space to be more intentional in our response to the economic uncertainty. Further, Ecotrust was a fortunate recipient of a Paycheck Protection Loan, which we anticipate to be fully forgivable. Taken together, these conditions allowed us to mitigate austere measures to reduce expenses as well as make prudent investments to support our valued staff and continue to fulfill our mission by supporting businesses owned by Black, Indigenous, and people of color, expanding our internal equity efforts, and bolstering our program impact.

Living through the pandemic, witnessing the deep racism that pervades our institutions, and simply being part of Ecotrust’s racial and social equity journey this past year has prompted me to reconsider the predominance of scarcity principles and how it has often guided my perceptions and decisions as a CFO. No doubt financial resilience and accountability are of deep concern to me; however, this past year has made me acutely aware of the immense importance and consequentiality of staff resilience and well-being. Our mission and impact begin with our people.

Kevin Bumatay, Chief Financial Officer
ECOTRUST INVESTMENTS has emerged from 2020 with a commitment to raise and deploy catalytic capital that generates financial returns to fund Ecotrust’s programs, and also enables historically underserved populations to grow businesses that are addressing and adapting to climate change.

Our team entered 2020 poised to make transformational changes to our investments and our operations. Then, as our partners and communities faced unprecedented and unequal impacts of the year’s events, we were called to respond. We are continuing on a path of change that will allow us to deliver more direct assistance, and deeper long-term systems change. This is work that builds on Ecotrust’s 30-year history and energizes us all.

Nathan Kadish, Managing Director of Ecotrust Investments

2020 ECOTRUST INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Ecotrust Investments manages the Natural Capital Fund, a portfolio of catalytic investments that are in service to equity, the economy, and the environment. We manage this capital to elevate impact by focusing on the interlocking goals of advancing our mission and generating financial returns.

SUPPORTIVE SPACES

With a combination of expert staff assistance and safe, state-of-the-art infrastructure at the Redd on Salmon Street and the Natural Capital Center, we supported both temporary and ongoing opportunities for entrepreneurs and food system leaders who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color to engage with the broader community and do business.

FORT ROCK CARBON PROJECT

EFM partnered with Nike this year to allow us to develop a carbon project on Fund III’s Fort Rock property from which Nike purchased carbon credits in order to offset emissions produced by shipping Nike.com orders. In addition to restoring and protecting these working forests, this commitment will help EFM preserve recreational public access, protect drinking water and biodiversity, and support rural economies.

Learn more at: https://efmi.com/nike-forest-carbon-sale/

ECOTRUST CDE

In 2020, Ecotrust Community Development Entity (CDE) closed a $6.6 million loan with Pueblo of Laguna to support the development of a reliable water supply coupled with a wastewater system. The project addresses what is not only a serious health concern, but also an essential component of community well-being and a foundation for economic development opportunities.

47% of businesses at the Redd on Salmon Street are woman- and/or BIPOC-owned
UP UNTIL NOW, I HAVEN’T LOVED A JOB QUITE THIS MUCH. I GET TO WORK WITH NATIVE, BLACK, AND OTHER STUDENTS OF COLOR. AS A NATIVE PERSON MYSELF, SERVING THESE COMMUNITIES IS CLOSE TO MY HEART. I FEEL LIKE I’VE LANDED IN THE BEST POSSIBLE SPOT.

COMMUNITY
makes a more livable future possible. Seeing each other clearly is the first step in a path toward shared well-being.

TERESA GADDY
GREEN WORKFORCE ACADEMY PROGRAM MANAGER
EcoTrust
like so many others in the events and hospitality industry, saw in-person gatherings come to a screeching halt in March 2020. It was surreal and frightening. And as a team, we made several painful staffing decisions involving layoffs and furloughs.

For context, in 2019 we hosted more than 750 events across two buildings, with 22,000 square feet of space and a team of 10 to manage the operation. Our lively spaces reverberated with constant bustle of inspiring summits, raucous festivals, touching nuptials, and thought-provoking conferences.

After the shock of an industry standstill, our team masked up, rolled up our sleeves, and got to work doing what we know how to do best: creating optimal conditions for connection, no matter the physical distance requirements.

The event spaces at Redd East were a natural fit to meet community need—from opening the doors to the Feed the Mass project, to hosting Come Thru, a mission-driven farmers market focused on Black and Indigenous farmers who want to scale and become market-ready. When the holidays rolled around and in-person gatherings were postponed yet again, we partnered with chef and entrepreneur Elsy Dinvil to create an online holiday bazaar, inviting and incentivizing shoppers to support local, innovative BIPOC-owned businesses. We rounded out the year helping Chef Gregory Gourdet launch his first pop-up restaurant, Kann Winter Village—a Haitian food concept—hosted in physically-distanced dining yurts.

“The pandemic has given us an opportunity to expand upon our existing mission-focused business practices, serving more people, building trust within our community, and creating spaces that fulfill this moment’s most pressing needs.”

Jeanne Kubal
VP, EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT

The need and value of community was clear as ever in 2020, and, despite the challenges, we ended the year with renewed purpose. Learn more and stay tuned at our new website ecotrustevents.org.
THE ECOTRUST BOARD

Jeremy Barnicle, Executive Director
Portland, OR
Priscilla Bernard-Wieden
Portland, OR (retired 2020)
Cory Carman
Wallowa, OR (retired 2020)
Bobbie Conner
Vice-Chair
Pendleton, OR

Ken deLaski
Bend, OR
Gun Denhart
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Mark Eden
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Seattle, WA
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Santa Cruz, CA (retired 2020)
Kat Taylor
Vice-Chair
San Francisco, CA
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Vice-Chair
Fairview, OR (retired 2020)

THE ECOTRUST STAFF 2020 & 2021

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Allison Brinkhorst
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Kale Charlet
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Karl Dawson
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Maralea Luino
Bill Maddrell
Lizzie Marsers
Michael Mortens
Miakah Nix

Vickie Owens
David Pollard
Tyson Raser
Olivia Rebanal
Kaitlyn Rich
Jennifer Richards
Yolimar Rivera Vázquez
Katie Russell
Emma Sharer
Stacey Sobell
Melanie Troutman
Jocelyn Tutak
Aaron Vargas
Carson Viles
Catherine Villarreal
Lisa Watt
Katherine White
Tina White
THANK YOU PARTNERS
No one organization can accomplish this work alone. Our impact is made possible through collaborative partnerships and the momentum that comes from collective action.