

## Open Letter to Cascadia Wild

Hi good people,

I had the privilege of consulting with the Cascadia Wild board back in 2015. I'm not sure whose eyes were opened wider, yours or mine. Either way, I feel a kind of kinship with you as a result. It as a friend of the family I will share these thoughts.

You introduced me to citizen science. Your partnership with the Forest Service with photography and tracking is unique as far as I know. I admire your persistence over time. There is a kind of poetry to your work. We don't know if it will lead to a headline-making breakthrough. Maybe that wolverine will arrive on the mountain. In the meantime, the beauty is in the doing. Trudging in the snow. A captured image. Shared rides and camaraderie. The planting of seeds of love for The Mountain and its inhabitants. Participants in one of your field trips takes a bit of The Mountain back into the rest of their lives.

For over last seven years, I also have been gathering bits of information, hoping to make something of it. And loving the process while I was at it. I started with two ideas.

The first, was the Handprint. Around 2007, I felt the need to find a new way to look at sustainability beyond reducing my Footprint. For me the inspiration came from the imprint of fingers carved into blackened stone by an indigenous person long ago. Through the ages, that Handprint communicated to me a caring person, doing the best he or she could under the circumstances, within a caring community. Nowadays I suppose we might call it graffiti. Back then I imagine there was spiritual grounding to the act, as with a great act of art. It came naturally for me to think of the Handprint as a proactive way to make a difference in the world.

The second idea was a vision I had on the morning of October 27, 2013. I woke up realizing how much good had already been done in the environmental realm. The Superfund Act had helped us clean up toxic waste. We have 55 national parks and a lot more wilderness areas. We have much more efficient motors. And LED light bulbs. We have mostly closed the hole in the ozone layer of the ionosphere by agreeing to the Montreal Accord of 1987 and curtailing chlorofluorocarbons. I started drawing bubbles with these things on the back of an old calendar. Then I started naming people and organizations that that brought these accomplishments to pass. John Muir godfathered six national parks. Rachel Carson helped rescue the bald eagle with her eloquent reporting. David Goldstein shepherded conservation appliance standards through a business-oriented Reagan administration, setting the stage for the ENERGY STAR program. And how about the organizations that made these things happen? The Natural Resources Defense Council. The Wilderness Society. Nature Conservancy. By the end of the morning the sheet was filled with bubbles representing good that has already been done. This mountain of good news is sadly underreported.

As I weaved these ideas together, I found a message of possibility and hope. Also, there is a need to make it personal.

At the end of each chapter, I gathered some Handprint Opportunities. They include reading *The Man Who Planted Trees* to a child and donating to the Pachamama Alliance. Handprint 9.5 reads, “Embrace citizen science. Join an organization such as Cascadia Wild, which tracks wildlife on Oregon’s Mount Hood. Check out *Citizen Scientist: Searching for Heroes and Hope in an Age of Extinction* by Mary Ellen Hannibal.” I assert that eating Regenerative Organic Certified foods supports a transition to carbon-sequestering agriculture. I also invite people to consider life choices such as Handprint opportunity 8.8, “Translate good intentions into a career. Consult *A Guide to Green Careers* by Michael Hoffman online. It even includes scholarship opportunities. Consider environmental science or environmental engineering.” I ended up with 178 Handprint opportunities.

The title my publisher and I chose for the book is *Our Environmental Handprints: Recover the Land, Reverse Global Warming, Reclaim the Future*. That is a pretty high aspiration, considering the troubling news we hear on an ongoing basis. That said, we now have the proven means at hand turn the tide.

What remains is for you and me to actually do the best we can within our circumstance. No more. And please, no less.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Biemer

Bio:

For 23 years, Jon Biemer managed energy efficiency research and programs for Bonneville Power Administration. He now is an Organizational Development consultant and author of *Our Environmental Handprints: Recover the Land, Reverse Global Warming, Reclaim the Future*.