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*There are years that ask questions and years that answer.  
-Zora Neale Hurston*

Year End 2020

Dear Friends,

As snow falls in the Okanogan Highlands, blanketing each twig and branch in a fluffy coat, we are looking back at a year that has been anything but usual. From filing a Clean Water Act citizens suit to reimagining the ways that we do most of our work, it's been quite a year. Perhaps more than ever we are thankful for the inspiration, resourcefulness, and steadfast support of our board, our members, and our community far and wide to be able to work to protect and restore the highlands and provide a window into the natural world as we navigate life in a pandemic.

OHA's Clean Water Act suit is intended to enforce limits imposed by the mine's discharge permit that require the waters near the mine to be almost as clean as they were before mining. The lawsuit is still in early stages, but it has already been met with legal resistance from the mining companies, through motions to dismiss and a baseless counterclaim against OHA. Despite the companies' delay tactics, distractions, and attempts to intimidate OHA, the data and the law are clear. The companies are in flagrant violation of their permit, and we are working to hold them accountable for their pollution.

**Your support is critical at this time to hold the companies responsible.**



As always, OHA will use scientific analysis of the data to support our efforts. We are building our team of technical experts, and your support will enable us to hire them to dive deep into the data, create careful analyses, and present their findings to the court while facing the company's team of attorneys.

**Please consider expanded support to hire the experts needed to bolster this legal effort.**

COVID has demanded, and continues to demand, creativity and flexibility in all of our lives. OHA's efforts to engage the community in the natural world are no exception. After taking stock of the situation and assessing priorities this spring and summer, we are excited to be stretching into new forums to engage the public in the wonders of the Okanogan Highlands. We are creating videos and podcasts, writing stories, learning together about highland wildlife through our social media platforms, and conducting maintenance on local trails. We are also developing new projects such as: our Community Art Project that will install artworks reflective of the Okanogan Highlands' biological diversity, and our Lost Lake Preserve Wetland Boardwalk that will enable visitors to appreciate the wetland in a low-impact way.

**With your support OHA will build creative ways to help people connect with nature.**



Our efforts to improve highland habitats is ongoing. We continue to be inspired by the positive changes happening at the Triple Creek restoration site, as our plantings flourish, the streambed gets closer to the floodplain, and the habitat becomes a healthier wetland. This spring the stream overflowed its banks in part of the project area, showing connectivity for the first time since we started our work there!

**Your donations enable OHA to continue our restoration work in the long term.**

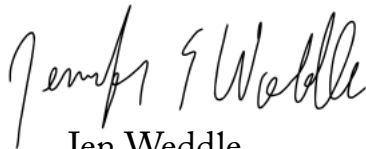
Life in the COVID era is a grand experiment, but OHA's commitment to our mission is unwavering. We are taking action to prevent environmental degradation on Buckhorn. We are fostering the conservation of natural resources throughout the highlands. We are engaging our community with nature in the hopes that people will work to protect the precious earth on which we all depend.

**With your ongoing and generous support, we  
will continue to work towards OHA's mission.**

As we look forward to 2021, we are filled with optimism that has come with the prospect of a new administration in the White House. We are filled with hope of the time when we will be able to gather again, safely, with friends and family. We are filled with determination as OHA mounts a legal effort to ensure that our area is not left with the toxic remnants of here-today-gone-tomorrow mining companies. OHA is steadfast in our efforts to protect our environment and build our community.

**In the spirit of optimism, hope, and determination, please give generously.  
We can't do this work without you.**

Onward!

  
Jen Weddle

  
Sarah Kliegman

co-Executive Directors

*P.S. Your contribution may be tax deductible and will help OHA protect and improve water resources in the Okanogan Highlands. Please take a moment to return the enclosed card with your membership contribution in the envelope provided.*