

# **North Queensland Conservation Council**



**2024/2025  
Annual Report**

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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Wulgurukaba, Bindal, Gugu Badhun, Nyawigi, Manbarra, Gudjal, Kalkadoon, Mitakoodi, Warrungu, Yirendali, Juru, Birriah, Ewamian, Tagalaka, Indjalandji-Dhidhanu and Waanyi Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the North Queensland region. We pay our respects to their elders, past and present, and recognise their enduring connection to Country. Sovereignty was never ceded, and this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.



## From the President

The 2024-25 period marks my first year as NQCC President. I was honoured to be elected last year, especially on the back of NQCC's 50th Anniversary. The celebration highlighted the incredible achievements of NQCC and its passionate and dedicated people. We're a small but mighty organisation with a long, impactful history in our region. It's my privilege to play a part in that history. Thank you to outgoing President Chris Pam for her years of leadership and ongoing mentorship.

NQCC's activity and impact has remained strong this year. We've continued to advocate for positive environmental outcomes, delivering clear asks to decision-makers and acting directly with members and community groups to protect North Queensland's environment.

My first official duty as President was to present our policy asks to candidates at the Townsville Community Alliance State Election Assembly. I was proud of the role that NQCC played in that powerful event. It was an incredible example of community strength and an opportunity to showcase our important work on renewable energy and climate adaptation. Community feedback has supported the importance of our local work on these issues.

The state election result has required a shift in some of our strategic approaches, and we have adapted well to this change in political leadership.

While some campaign areas have become a lot more challenging, NQCC is more than up to the task. Crystal and Luna make a formidable team and have been taking NQCC from strength to strength.

The stability and dedication of the Management Committee have enabled us to develop strong, strategic governance and oversight, ensuring we're supporting our staff, managing our finances, and aligning with our strategic goals. I'd like to recognise my fellow Management Committee members and especially our new Treasurer Monita, who has taken our financial management to an even stronger place.

I'd also like to recognise the important work of our subcommittees and volunteers. As a small organisation, NQCC relies on the time people generously give. We're grateful for volunteers and there are always ways you can get involved, should you want to.

Finally, on a more personal note, I was overjoyed to welcome my first child to the world this year. The arrival of NQCC's youngest supporter has only heightened my passion and drive to ensure that our beautiful region is protected for generations to come.

Tamara Inkster-Draper



## From the Coordinator

This year, NQCC celebrates 50 years as the voice for the environment in North Queensland. A milestone like this doesn't come easily for a small grassroots organisation that has always had to fight against the odds.

Over the decades, NQCC has stood up to environmental vandals, hostile governments and the influences of the media. Our interests have often been at odds with the most powerful organisations and industries. Throughout our history, there are stories of members showing immense courage in the face of public ridicule, abuse and even legal action – just for standing up for the living world we all share.

These stories were honoured in our 50th anniversary celebration – alongside stories of laughter, art, music and community. I believe that it's our connection to each other, our deep love for nature and our humour and humanity that have kept the fire alive through the decades.

For NQCC to have not just survived for 50 years, but to have thrived – against the odds – is testament to all who have played a role along the way, and I am humbled to carry the torch half a century on.

A highlight of my role this year has been co-developing community-led solutions for environmental challenges and delivering these to decision-makers. Uplifting local stories and knowledge is such a privilege and so important for ensuring policy decisions leave no one behind.

This year, our work has been supported by more than 40 volunteers and hundreds of community members who have engaged with our campaigns, projects and events. This is testament to the great work of Luna, our Community Campaigner. Our network of member groups has flourished, opening opportunities for meaningful collaboration and shared learning. I'm excited to see North Queensland's conservation and climate movement grow even stronger, with NQCC standing as a central peak body for our region.

In 2025, we still face immense challenges. Each day, we compete with targeted disinformation campaigns, political uncertainty and limited access to untied funding, while multiple social, environmental and economic crises continue to impact our members, volunteers and community.

Still, we remain buoyed by our people, grounded in our values, inspired by the courage of local First Nations leaders and the unique beauty of this place, and driven by our vision: flourishing communities living in harmony with a thriving natural environment in North Queensland.

Crystal Falknau

# ABOUT US

## Who We Are

Based on Wulgurukaba and Bindal Country, NQCC is the peak environmental advocacy body for North Queensland. We represent communities and ecosystems stretching from Giringun Country in the north to Juru Country in the south, and as far west as Kalkadoon Country – spanning ten local government areas.

## Purpose and Vision

Our purpose is simple: to protect and promote North Queensland's natural environment. Our vision is flourishing communities living in harmony with a thriving natural environment.

## Our Values

- We are independent and ethical
- We are bold in our actions to protect the environment
- We respect the knowledge, perspectives and rights of First Nations peoples
- We work collaboratively with others towards our vision

## Strategic Goals

- Achieve positive outcomes as a trusted authority on environmental protection.
- Empower communities to engage with and protect the environment.
- Work alongside and be guided by First Nations Peoples.
- Foster a strong, resilient organisation with people at its heart.



# OUR IMPACT

## Climate Action and Adaptation

Decades after the first IPCC warning, NQCC is still fighting for urgent climate action. With the support of our active Climate Action Group, we push for emissions cuts, no new coal, and serious investment in climate adaptation. Our message is clear: protect nature, and nature will protect us.

### Story Circles

Through small group conversations, we heard Townsville locals share raw experiences of climate impacts: heat stress, food insecurity, lost livelihoods, rising costs, and climate grief. These stories revealed the long tail of disasters and the urgent need for stronger resilience. These stories formed an [open-access report](#) to amplify these voices and ground our advocacy in lived experience.



Story Circles participants confirmed something we already knew – our greatest strength during times of crisis is our community connection – and this is getting harder to maintain. This, alongside timely education, inclusive communication and incorporating regional and First Nations perspectives into hazard planning were the primary recommendations to come out of the Story Circles.



### Heat & Hazards

Motivated by the powerful local stories captured in our Story Circles, and in partnership with Queensland's regional conservation councils, [we campaigned](#) for adequate government resourcing, statewide heat adaptation programs, and investment in nature-based solutions. Local governments and community leaders have voiced strong support, and momentum continues to build around this campaign and our policy objectives.

The floods that hit North Queensland in early 2025 drew national media attention to our region, and we used this opportunity [to highlight the need for climate action and adaptation](#).





## Climate & Energy Rally

Ahead of the 2025 federal election, 70 locals gathered at Townsville's Strand Amphitheatre to oppose nuclear power and demand a renewable-powered future and real climate action. Guest speakers shared powerful stories of resilience, justice and adaptation. Connecting through storytelling, music and laughter reminded us that our fight for climate justice is fuelled by hope and community.

## Townsville Heatwave Workshop

With Sweltering Cities, Once Upon Tomorrow and the Queensland Community Alliance, we hosted a full-day workshop bringing together union delegates, healthcare workers, faith leaders and emergency responders. Their insights – spanning safe cooling spaces, disaster compounding risks, and the links between heat and violence – have shaped a comprehensive report to guide local leaders and further inform NQCC's community-led advocacy.



# An Energy Transition for People and Nature

We advocate for a clean energy future that reduces emissions without sacrificing biodiversity or deepening injustice. Through submissions, forums, workshops and industry engagement, we've kept communities informed and leaders accountable, navigating the local, state and national nuances of this complex issue.

## Energy Champions Training

In collaboration with Solar Citizens and The Climate Reality Project, and supported by RE-Alliance and the Queensland Community Alliance, NQCC hosted a full-day workshop that empowered locals to become confident advocates for a fair and clean energy future. We learned about climate urgency, the cost-saving benefits of renewables and energy democracy, and how Yunbenun/Magnetic Island could be 100% renewable by 2030. Through table discussions, myth-busting sessions, and a deep dive into Queensland's energy policy, attendees gained the tools to engage in informed, persuasive conversations.



## Energy Conversations

Armed with engaging myth-busting resources, an eye-catching survey board and articulate volunteers, we spoke with more than 100 locals at markets about the energy transition in the lead up to the federal election. We heard a resounding rejection of coal and gas, strong support for renewables, and mixed feelings about nuclear. These face-to-face conversations cut through misinformation and opened doors for informed dialogue. We gratefully acknowledge the funding received from the Queensland Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation to support this grassroots community engagement around the energy transition.

## Mapping Our Energy Future

An exciting new project that was launched this year is [our workshop series](#) to co-create guidelines for a nature-positive energy transition in our region. We've started collaborating with stakeholders across government, industry, Traditional Owner groups and community, and this Queensland Government-funded project will continue into 2026, ensuring renewable development safeguards our unique natural and cultural values.



## Protecting Our Waterways and Reef

Water really is life – culturally, ecologically, and economically. We use forums such as the Healthy Waters Partnership Dry Tropics and the Townsville Local Marine Advisory Committee, alongside contributions to the Reef 2050 Plan and [Burdekin Basin Water Plan Review](#) to advocate for long-term environmental outcomes.



We also proudly support on-ground efforts for our waterways through collaborations with organisations such as Phil's Bush Cleanup, Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Inc., Tangaroa Blue Foundation and OzFish.



## Political Advocacy

From crocodile management to Queensland's tourism strategy, NQCC ensures that decision-makers hear the science and community perspectives needed for informed choices. This year, we also celebrated a statewide win: Queensland Labor committed to establishing an independent Environmental Protection Agency – an outcome driven by grassroots advocacy from a diverse collaboration of organisations from across the state.



### State Election Assembly

In October 2024, 163 people from 16 local organisations gathered for the Townsville Community Alliance's Election Assembly – a significant milestone for the Alliance. Candidates from Katter's Australian Party and the Labor Party publicly committed to climate adaptation measures championed by NQCC, as well as a range of policy platforms that would make life better for our community. This event deepened local relationships and demonstrated the power of our local community alliance.



### Ministers and MPs

In meetings with Queensland's Environment Minister and State MPs in our region, we have advocated for stronger protections for national parks and the prioritisation of bioregional planning and climate adaptation.



Our advocacy supports new elected representatives to better understand complex issues, how they manifest in North Queensland and why action matters.



## Growing Our Movement

Lasting environmental change depends on empowered communities. This year, NQCC strengthened networks, built capacity, and created spaces for locals to step into leadership.

Our reach and impact grew this year, through digital and on-ground engagement. Our social media posts reached more than **47,000 people**, with **6,500 actively engaging**, while our Paperbark newsletter continues to share updates and opportunities with over **1,400 subscribers**.

These platforms not only amplify NQCC's work but also spotlight the efforts of the wider conservation community.



This year, our network grew significantly through our regular **Green Drinks**, which since July 2024 have welcomed 85 different people, including 50 first-time participants. Some have become regulars, while others drop in occasionally - all contributing to a lively and supportive space where ideas are shared and new collaborations grow.

We also welcomed **new member groups** into our network, including Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Inc., Social Workers for Climate Action, NQ Wildlife Care and Parents for Climate. Each new partnership is grounded in collaboration and support, and several joint community actions have already taken root.



Additionally, we invested in building local leadership through **community training opportunities**. From Energy Champions Training with partners across the climate movement, to ongoing Community Organising Training with the Queensland Community Alliance, locals gained tools and confidence to advocate for a just and sustainable future.





NQCC thrives on bringing people together - creating opportunities for conversation, collaboration, and action. Through regular meet-ups, major community events and hands-on activities, we connect people who care about North Queensland's environment and provide them with meaningful ways to step up.



Engaging in statewide and national campaigns, such as **Threatened Species Day** and **Clean Up Australia Day**, provide opportunities to connect our community with issues close to their hearts.



NQCC also nurtures the next generation of leaders. In June, we hosted Astrid, a Year 11 student from Pimlico State High School, for a week-long placement. Astrid's enthusiasm and fresh insight reminded us of the importance of **youth voices** in shaping our future.

*"Action and ideas from the younger generation is a fundamental part of working towards change in the current environmental situation, since we will be the ones left to step into leadership positions in the future."* - Astrid



Each of these collaborations help to weave a stronger community fabric. They show that when people come together, they not only build connections but also find the courage to step up for a more sustainable and hopeful future.



We also engaged the wider public through film screenings, community expos and local celebrations. Community events like **Our Townsville** at Anderson Gardens, or **World Environment Day** at the Upper Ross Community Centre not only sparked new conversations but also gave people of all ages the chance to reflect, learn, and take action for the environment.



# ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH

NQCC is a community organisation that is powered by our people! With just two part-time employees in the 2024/25 financial year, our work is supported by a committed Management Committee, subcommittees, our members, donors and volunteers. Together, we ensure that our organisation has everything it needs to further our mission and flourish into the future.

## Celebrating 50 Years

In August 2024, more than 100 supporters joined us for Stories of the Wild North, celebrating five decades of grassroots activism. Bold, heartwarming and hilarious stories, music and poetry brought our movement's history to life and honoured the many who shaped it. We acknowledge Kate Osborne, Mish Dyer and Townsville City Council for their support.



*"I enjoy the encouraging sense of community that NQCC fosters... The inspiring individuals who spoke give me confidence that there is a high level of support for environmental protection in the Townsville community."*

**- attendee feedback**



## Celebrating Our Members

Our biannual general meetings are celebrations of our community. This year, members reflected on reconciliation, climate action and future directions, while celebrating the efforts of volunteers and welcoming new members.



## Celebrating Our Volunteers

Over 40 volunteers gave time, skills and expertise this year. At our AGM, John Connell and David Cassells were honoured with Life Memberships for their tireless work on our Burdekin Basin campaign. Volunteer Week was celebrated with a Sustainability Tour at Loam Island, connecting our volunteers with culture and Country.



## Raising Funds

Our State Government funding is supplemented by grants, membership fees, donations and fundraising activities. From trivia nights and garage sales to raffles and container recycling, we tapped into creative fundraising this year. Here are some of our highlights...



This year's **Garage Sale** fundraiser saved trinkets and treasures from landfill and gave them a second life, while raising some valuable funds!

Our 2025 **End of Financial Year Appeal** was supported by generous donors and bolstered by matched donations from the SM Robinson PAF.



Our annual **Trivia Night** and raffle – supported by 13 local businesses and nine teams – welcomed over 30 new supporters to our NQCC community! Cash bribes boosted the scoreboard tally and our takings...



# Our People

## Our Management Committee

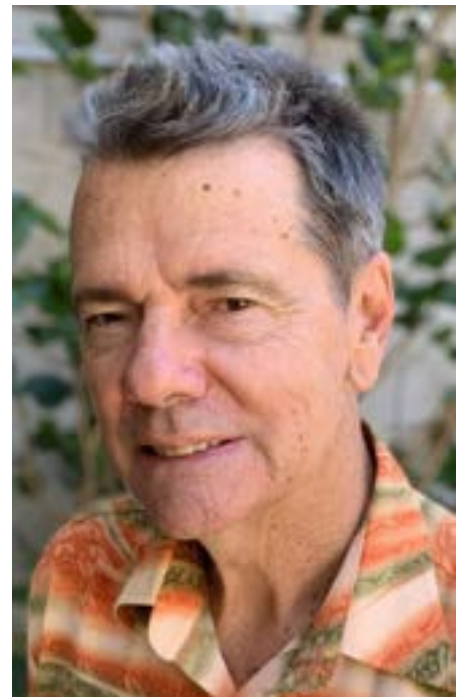


### **Tamara Inkster-Draper - President**

Tamara holds a PhD in Ecology from James Cook University, where her research looked at the impacts of climate change on Tropical Biodiversity. Over the last 10 years she's built a career around international climate action and advocacy. Tamara brings rich experience in climate advocacy alongside strong leadership skills to her role as NQCC President.

### **Peter Hanley – Vice President**

Peter Hanley has lived in North Queensland for more than 30 years. His interests include human rights, social justice, sustainability and community development, with a particular penchant for creative performances to educate and inform. Peter connects NQCC with the community through his vast local connections and adds laughter, colour, music and fun to NQCC's campaign tactics.



### **Chris Pam – Vice President**

Chris trained as an anthropologist and currently works as a facilitator in the JCU Respect Program. Some of her previous research has focused on community understandings of climate change in the Pacific. Chris has a passion for social justice, First Nations justice and environmental issues, and brings a strong equity lens to NQCC's Management Committee.

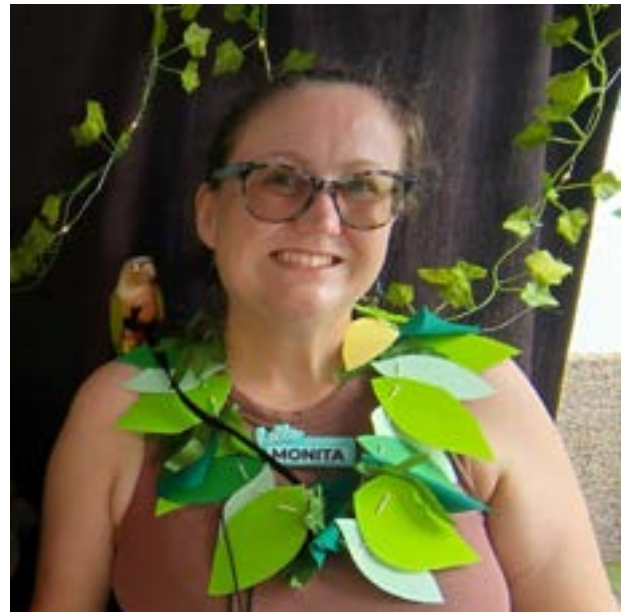


### **Amaya Hytch – Secretary**

A former Townsville Organiser for the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, Amaya is passionate about connecting young people to the climate crisis and ensuring that young and regional voices are heard in places of decision-making. Working as a solicitor during the day, Amaya brings a passion for justice, Gen Z pragmatism and robust governance expertise to the organisation.

### **Monita Gangavarapu – Treasurer**

With 25+ years of experience in bookkeeping and small business management in the private sector, Monita now brings transferrable skills to the not-for-profit sector, including volunteering with NQCC and working part-time with another purpose-driven local not-for-profit. Monita has a strong sense of social justice and loves a good spreadsheet. She brings financial, administrative and fundraising skills to NQCC.



### **John Connell**

John has spent 30 years working with livelihood development projects in southeast Asia and has a strong commitment to ensuring everyone has a 'fair go'. With experience engaging both smallholder farmers and government officials, John applies these skills to inform, support and guide NQCC's campaigns – particularly our campaign aimed at securing an integrated management approach for the Burdekin Basin.



## Our Staff Team

### Crystal Falknau – Coordinator

With a background in environmental science and seven years of involvement with NQCC, Crystal is experienced in organisational leadership, political advocacy, campaign coordination, community engagement and stakeholder collaboration. Their favourite part of the role is finding new and creative ways to campaign and influence decision-makers, particularly alongside unlikely allies.



Luna and Crystal

### Luna Prince – Community Campaigner

Luna believes true sustainability requires a holistic approach that values both the natural and social environment. With a Master's in Sustainability Science and a Bachelor of Social Sciences, she moved from Germany to Australia in 2023 and now applies her skills as NQCC's Community Campaigner. She strives to inspire and connect people through collaborative and supportive leadership.

## Our Subcommittees

**Climate Action Group** - advocating for climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions that benefit nature and our local community

**First Nations Partnerships Subcommittee** - including First Nations perspectives in our environmental advocacy through partnerships

**Fundraising Subcommittee** - supporting diverse and sustainable income streams to support NQCC's ongoing success

**Governance Subcommittee** - ensuring our organisation is compliant and resilient, with robust governance systems

**HR Subcommittee** - supporting a safe and supportive workplace environment where our people can flourish

**Public Fund Subcommittee** - governing the use of tax-deductible funds received from our generous donors

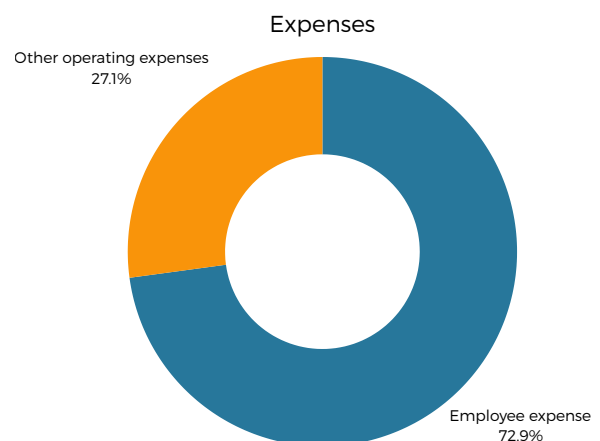
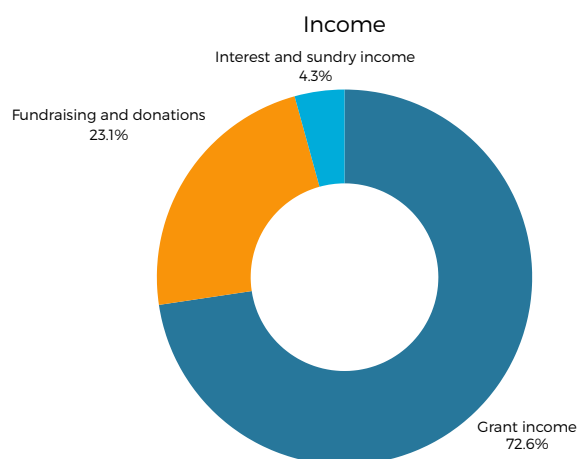
**Water Action Group** - advocating for an integrated management approach to water planning and sustainable water use in the Dry Tropics

# Our Finances

NQCC is a not-for-profit Incorporated Association under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Queensland). The organisation is registered for GST and a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). NQCC fulfills its governance obligations through reports and returns as required by the ACNC and the Australian Taxation Office.

Our main income comes from grants, donations, fundraising, and membership fees, with ongoing support from the Queensland Government's Department of Environment, Science, Tourism and Innovation.

We maintain a tax-deductible Environment Fund, overseen by our Public Fund Subcommittee. Every donation is directed to our mission.



# Our Partnerships

**NQCC member groups:**



Parents for Climate -  
Townsville and Surrounds



**NQCC is a proud member of the following:**



# Acknowledgements

## Sponsors and supporters:

- Biome
- Escape Room Townsville
- Ethical Brand Co.
- Float House Townsville
- Gallivanter Travel
- Gecko Interiors
- Grill'd Townsville
- Lamberts Fresh Produce
- Lucent Globe
- Mary Who? Bookshop
- Outback Linen Co.
- PB & J's
- SeaLink North Queensland
- Sweetleaf Gardening
- Tan Lines Distilling



## Volunteers

- Adam Rains
- Alastair Birtles
- Amaya Hytch
- Ben Clarke
- Bernadette Boscacci
- Cam Leitch
- Carly Sheil
- Carolyn Dixon
- Cheryl Falknau
- Chris Pam
- Chris Prince
- David Bailey
- David Cassells
- David McMillan
- David Sewell
- Diana Condylas
- Eli Small
- Emma Small
- Frank Dallmeyer
- Helen Hill
- Jenny Brown
- John Connell
- Josh Draper
- Kate Osborne
- Katharina Dallmeyer
- Krissy Wilhelmsen
- Linda Davis
- Madde Price
- Malcolm Tattersall
- Michelle Dyer
- Michelle Wylie
- Monita Gangavarapu
- Naomi Cassilles Southgate
- Natalie Lindsay
- Peter Buosi
- Peter Falknau
- Peter Hanley
- Sandra Croaker
- Sophie Thompson
- Stephen Prince
- Tamara Inkster-Draper

## What Our Members Say...



"I appreciate that NQCC stays grounded in facts, cutting through sensationalism to keep me informed about what's really happening. Being part of this community helps me stay connected and engaged with the environmental movement. Being part of NQCC means I am not alone in this fight. It gives me a sense of purpose and a way to keep making a difference." - **Sandra**

"As NQCC is an umbrella organisation for the many smaller groups fighting to defend the environment they often invite guest speakers from those groups. This is a great way for me to keep abreast of current activities and other chances to join in. The bonus is that the group is composed of like-minded people and the social gatherings increase one's knowledge and enthusiasm." - **Alex**



"NQCC understands both the science of climate change and the social justice issues that are affected by it. I find every interaction I have with them meaningful and inspiring. I believe NQCC is a great asset to our area and they continue to do amazing things both for our present and our future."

- **Emma**



# Looking Forward

In 2025/26, we will:

- Expand our connections with Traditional Owner groups in our region
- Grow untied core funding through philanthropy, sponsorships and donations
- Keep environment issues in the media spotlight
- Empower more locals to act for nature
- Hold decision-makers accountable through strong advocacy

You can be part of this work by donating, joining as a member, volunteering your skills, or partnering as a sponsor.



## Connect With Us!

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