



# WSEHA NEWSLETTER

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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## MESSAGE FROM THE AEC CHAIRS

Wow is it getting close for the 71st Annual Education Conference! The conference will be held April 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> at the Suquamish Resort. The planning committee is excited to bring Washington's Environmental Health professionals together to this unique and beautiful northwest location rich in culture on the Suquamish land, taking their name from the traditional Lushootseed phrase for "people of the clear salt water" (suquamish, 2025).

[Registration is currently open](#) and the early bird special is offered until March 24th; WSEHA also offers a student, retired or unemployed discount, please encourage those you know in the profession to join us! We have listened to your feedback from last year's conference and put together a great line up of presentations and activities.

This year's layout will lend to a great networking experience with so many activities on site to enjoy! Monday night there will be a social time and poster presentation, followed up Tuesday evening by game night at the resort with another riveting updated cornhole competition. Get your team together and [sign up now!](#) Along with offsite attractions and activities such as [golf](#), [Suquamish museum](#), and [beach walking](#).

Also, new this year, we will have an environmental health competition to show off the interesting and meaningful work we all do! Find your most interesting pictures to demonstrate the meaningfulness of the work you do and submit to win!

We look forward to seeing you all in April!

Conference Co-Chairs

Anne Moen & Heather Watts

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION'S 2025

# PHOTO CONTEST

**DEADLINE: APRIL 1**

**EMAIL TO MEGAN@WSEHA.ORG**

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

- HEALTH INITIATIVES IN ACTION
- ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH EFFORTS
- TEAM COLLABORATIONS AND OUTREACH MOMENTS
- CREATIVE VISUALS HIGHLIGHTING PUBLIC HEALTH THEMES

THERE'S REASONS YOU DO WHAT YOU DO...SEND IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROOF!

DYE TEST CONFIRMING SEPTIC FAILURE ON KITSAP'S SHORELINE



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**Nominations and Awards Committee—Emily Hovis**  
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**Publications Committee—VACANT**

**International Health Committee – Layken Winchester**  
[Layken.winchester@kitsappublichealth.org](mailto:Layken.winchester@kitsappublichealth.org)

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Like [WSEHA’s Facebook page](#) ! Stay up-to-date with the goings-on in the field of Environmental Public Health.

Another way to keep up with what we’re doing is to join our mailing list. Go to [wseha.org](http://wseha.org) to join the mailing list or email Megan McNelly at [megan@wseha.org](mailto:megan@wseha.org).

**Next Newsletter Deadline:  
Summer 2025**

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Membership in WSEHA is not required for acceptance of articles in the newsletter.

Opinions expressed in articles published in the WSEHA newsletter should not be accepted necessarily as statements of policy or opinions of WSEHA.

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## NEHA UPDATES

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[Public Health On Call](#) – Floride and the Law. About this episode: Conversations about fluoride in the water supply are revving up but a key factor in the debate is the legal framework. In this episode: a discussion about the relevant law for assessing fluoride added to drinking water known as the Toxic Substances Control Act—a law limited to a focus on risk, not benefit—and what that means for emerging science and policy discussions around fluoridating water.

### Students and Emerging Professionals

We are excited to announce that we have launched a complimentary 12-month NEHA Student Membership!

Students can easily register by visiting <https://www.neha.org/students> and completing the form at the bottom of the page. Students can submit posters for presentation at our AEC (virtual or in-person)—more details can be found in the [AEC Presenter Information](#).

**NEHA's 2025 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition** We are looking forward to seeing you July 14 - 17, 2025 at our [2025 AEC in Phoenix, Arizona](#), and virtually, where we invite you to discover "Your Oasis in the Desert."

AEC [Registration is now open](#)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Change. Whether it is at the local, state, or federal levels, most have seen changes in policy, funding priorities, emerging public health challenges, or all three. Sometimes these changes are gradual, other times they can be dramatically rapid. They can alter our best-laid plans for the year or beyond, and require us to be nimble in our reactions to those changes.

At the end of each day, as an environmental health professional, you make real and positive improvements or protections to the air, water, food, and land that surround us. Many take for granted that their taps provide water free of cholera or other pathogenic bacteria, or that their vegetables are not grown in soils laden with heavy metals. I do not take that for granted and I know that you, and those that worked before us, are the reason behind these successes.

I wanted to take this time to deliberately state that Washington is better due to your combined efforts.

As we collectively respond to changing external conditions, I hope that your internal sense of dedication to public health and the environment remains robust. I also hope that you are aware of the professional and personal connections present between WSEHA members, as well as other environmental and public health practitioners. Few can make significant and lasting impacts alone. As a group, WSEHA members have spent 80 years (!) connecting individual efforts to our collective benefit. A discharging pipe that was identified and eliminated, a shellfish bed reclaimed from storm run-off, or an ill restaurant employee prevented from making salads; these ongoing wins coalesce and create a state we should be proud of.

I am looking forward seeing many of you in April at the Annual Education Conference at Suquamish Resort. As I close out this year that I have been privileged to lead the association, I am confident that our cohesive and collective efforts will continue to protect and promote the health of those we care for.

Sincerely,  
Sammy Berg, RS

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## INTERNATIONAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

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For over 20 years, the International Health Committee (IHC) has been dedicated to working with different organizations to support environmental health related projects abroad. With your help, we have raised money to support clean water, latrines, disease prevention, and more in many different areas of the world. With the upcoming AEC, the IHC has another opportunity to continue that support.

This year's silent auction recipient is **Water1st International!**

What is their mission statement and what do they do?

Water1st has a mission to enable the world's poorest people to implement and sustain community managed projects integrating clean water supply, toilets, and hygiene education. They work through locally-based partner organizations in Kenya, Honduras, and Bangladesh to support the implementation of clean water and latrines, as well as provide hygiene education. These projects help reduce the spread of disease, help to end cycles of poverty, and enable girls to attend school. Water1st projects are successful with the strong commitment of the project participants. Participants are involved in every step of the planning, implementing, and financing of their projects.



Since their inception 20 years ago, they have provided 286,936 people with water and have completed 5,004 projects. They focus on not just completing new projects, but monitoring and evaluating already completed projects to ensure that their projects do not fail.

Want to know more about Water1st? [Visit the organization's website](#) and view their 2024 [International Programs Report](#) to learn more.



How can you help?

- Donate to the silent auction. Any donation is a fantastic donation! Past items donated have included gift cards, services, handmade items, getaways, books, etc. Items can be donated in person at the conference or mailed to the address below.
- Donate raffle baskets. Competition for the best basket and the most creative basket continues!
- Bid on silent auction items and buy tickets for the raffle drawing to win big!
- Can't attend the conference? That's ok! You can donate directly by [clicking here](#).

Thank you for your time and help in supporting Water1st!

Any additional questions about donating, volunteer opportunities, or the upcoming auction can be directed to Layken Winchester, IHC Chair.

Contact Info: [Internationalhealth.WSEHA@gmail.com](mailto:Internationalhealth.WSEHA@gmail.com) (360) 728-2247 345 6th St. Suite 300 Bremerton, WA 98337

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## OUTSIDE THE BORDERS: DESCHUTES COUNTY

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### Deschutes County's Indoor Air Quality Project

Since the early 2000s, the number of smoky days per year has been increasing across the nation. In 23 years, from 1989 to 2012, Central Oregon (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties) experienced seven days with AQI at Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (USG) or above, an average of less than one smoky day per year. The number of smoky days in this region has increased substantially in the last 10 years, with 83 days at USG or higher from 2013-2023, [with 21 smoky days in 2023 alone](#). These stats make Central Oregon one of the smokiest regions in the state, with a population that is growing fast.

To tackle the public health concerns that this increase in smoke and air pollution brought on, Deschutes County staff – Tia Lattanzio, Jeff Freund, and Sarah Worthington – applied for and received a grant from Oregon State University's [ASPIRE](#) Children's Environmental Health Center. Our grant project, which began in February 2024, targeted in-home childcare providers in Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties. These types of childcares are based in residential homes, which often do not have the luxury of commercial HVAC units, proper insulation, or funding to purchase and maintain indoor air filters. Using grant funds, we purchased PurpleAir indoor air quality monitors and created indoor air quality



toolkits to help educate home-based childcare providers on indoor air pollution and how to protect their indoor air. The project also included a pre- and post- project survey, where providers self-identified their level of confidence and knowledge about various indoor air quality topics before and after participation in the grant.

With the help of a National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) intern, 35 childcare providers received an indoor air quality monitor, an indoor air quality [toolkit](#), and were offered an indoor air quality assessment and materials to build their own box fan filter.

The post project survey revealed that many of the participants had not had much awareness of their indoor air quality before the project. The survey also showed that providers gained confidence in knowing how to protect their indoor air quality as a result of participating in the project. You can view the results of the post project survey [here](#).

Looking forward, our partners at ASPIRE will help us collect and analyze data from PurpleAir monitors to compare indoor and outdoor air quality readings during the project period. You can read more about ASPIRE, other awardees, and the research this group conducts by visiting their [website](#).

~ **Contributed by Tia Lattanzio, REHS  
Deschutes County, OR**

