

The Brainerd Foundation

Director's Message

The Crickets of Cascadia

William Stafford has a poem called "The Animal that Drank Up Sound." In it, an animal came down to a lake. "He gazed enormously, and instead of making any, he took away from, sound; the lake and all the land went dumb... In all the wilderness around he drained the rustle from the leaves into the mountainside and folded a quilt over the rocks... Then that animal wandered on and began to drink the sound out of the valleys-the croak of toads and all the little shiny noises grass blades make."



There's a hush in the air. We were taken aback by the November 2004 election. The outcome certainly will require renewed efforts at the national level, as well as in many of our states.

We at the Brainerd Foundation, however, take comfort in the strength and resilience of the conservation community. Despite the anti-conservation bent of governments on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border, there can be victories ahead. We begin 2005, where we left off in 2004, by sharing a few of the successes to which this foundation contributed:

- **Protecting bedrock environmental laws:** Our grantees helped initiate a United Forest Defense Campaign to protect the Northwest Forest Plan and the National Forest Management Act, and helped re-energize efforts to protect the Endangered Species Act. We also supported efforts to uphold the 'Roadless Rule' and Clinton monument designations.
- **Defending critical habitat:** Brainerd Foundation grantees helped hold the line on efforts to protect critical ecosystems from destructive mining, logging, road construction, energy development and grazing. The foundation supported efforts to defend the northern Rockies, northeast British Columbia and parts of Alaska from unnecessary oil and gas development, to shelter 250,000 acres in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area from harmful grazing practices, and to convince Boise Cascade that it should phase out outdated old-growth logging practices in response to market pressure.
- **Achieving significant gains across the region:** In Alaska, our grantees raised early public concern about the impacts of methane development in coal beds. We supported groups in Idaho that have gained traction in efforts to protect the Boulder-White Cloud and Owyhee Canyonlands. Victories by Oregon grantees included federal rulings to protect old-growth trees from logging in four national forests and to address a Klamath Basin water plan that failed to protect salmon adequately. Washington grantees have seen the Environmental Protection Agency order the cleanup of the Columbia River near British Columbia's Teck-Cominco smelter. Those in Montana enjoyed a host of victories-they won litigation requiring that factory farm discharges meet state water quality standards, thwarted efforts to weaken reclamation bonding requirements, overcame an attempt to repeal the Montana Environmental Policy Act, and won U.S. Supreme Court affirmation that water from coalbed methane production is a pollutant under the Clean Water Act. More recently they successfully enacted regulations protecting lands from the impacts of coalbed methane development, requiring water to be treated prior to its release and they halted an effort to repeal a ban on new open pit cyanide leach mines.

So, despite potentially stifling challenges, the conservation community uses our democratic rights and institutions to make a lot of noise.

At the Brainerd Foundation, we don't make much noise ourselves. We work behind the scenes to give others a greater voice. The Brainerd Foundation, with its partners, has put a lot of energy into identifying areas of special biological importance that are most essential to the Pacific Northwest bioregion. These are the places where we concentrate our resources. We have also put a priority on defending environmental regulations at the state and national level. And we have identified bellwether conservation groups in the region and, over the past several years, have provided them with special funding and training through our Challenge Grant program.

The Brainerd Foundation continuously strives to add value for grantees and other funders by initiating discussion and efforts to work together. Staff members here don't believe in doing our work a certain way just because that's how it's always been done. We strive to find and test new ideas and approaches. Recent efforts in this arena have focused on helping the conservation movement engage a broader and more diverse constituency. We worked to increase the capacity of regional conservation efforts by informing organizations' strategic decision-making.

Going forward, we expect to redouble our efforts to protect our bedrock environmental laws, look for ways to add value, monitor and assess our new and ongoing projects, and find ways to involve new constituencies in speaking up for the region's environment. In short, we will continue to expand the choir and amplify the voices singing out against potential silence.

In Stafford's poem, sound returned to the land through the actions of a single cricket that had hidden when the "animal that drank up sound" passed. When that animal starved to death in a silence of its own making, the cricket chirped, "and back like a river from that one act flowed the kind of world we know, first whisperings, then moves in the grass and leaves; the water splashed, and a big night bird screamed."

At the Brainerd Foundation, we try to help all the crickets out there. We hope our support makes a difference to the people working valiantly to preserve the Pacific Northwest quality of life for coming generations. If you have suggestions about the best ways to nurture crickets — and night birds and blades of grass and the people who live in this beautiful region — please contact us. We believe it holds the best of what's left for future generations.

And last, as Clarissa Pinkola Estés tells us in no uncertain terms, "Do not lose heart. We were made for these times." Tough, durable, facile and smart, we conservationists will find ways to be heard and to solve the challenges of our era.

— Ann Krumboltz, Executive Director

(Note: The Brainerd Foundation supports grantees through general support and project support grants. The Brainerd Foundation does not seek to influence legislation and does not provide funding to grantees designated for influencing legislation, except as permitted by federal tax law. The Brainerd Foundation does support efforts to protect the environment by defending administrative laws and rule-making, and by other non-legislative means. In the fall of 2004, the Foundation hired evaluators to assess our own progress in achieving our 2001-2004 strategic plan. That assessment, plus a new external analysis of the political climate at the state and federal levels, will inform a revised strategic plan for 2005-2008. Visit our Web site again in early 2005 for an update about the future direction of the Brainerd Foundation.)

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