

irreplaceable

Wildlife in a Warming World

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GLOBAL WARMING SCIENTISTS PRESENT FORUM “THE NORTHWEST IN A WARMING WORLD” AT BURKE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

SEATTLE, Washington – August 6, 2008 - Just days before the [Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World](#) exhibit leaves Seattle, scientists will gather on Wednesday, August 6th for a panel discussion focused on global warming’s impact on the people, plants and animals of the Northwest. The free event, titled “The Northwest in a Warming World” is open to the public and will be held at 7:00pm at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture located on the University of Washington Campus. The event is presented by Earthjustice, a co-sponsor of the Irreplaceable campaign and exhibit, as well as local sponsors including Endangered Species Coalition, Earth Ministry, People for Puget Sound, Restoring Eden, Save Our Wild Salmon, Woodland Park Zoo and Western Natural Resource Center.

The science forum will include preeminent scientists who will share scientific perspectives on global warming’s predicted impact on the Northwest, what steps can be taken to address climate change, best practices on how to deal with climate change locally, and what options are available to shape climate change policy. Speakers include Dr. Deborah Jensen, Ph.D, President and Chief Executive Officer of Seattle’s Woodland Park Zoo; Patty Glick, Senior Global Warming Specialist at the National Wildlife Federation; Jeremy Littell, Ph.D, Research Scientist at the JISAO Center for Science in the Earth System Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington; and, Lara Whitely Binder, outreach specialist at the University of Washington’s Climate Impacts Group.

“Wildlife species are ill-prepared to meet the threat of global warming’s rapid and disruptive climate changes,” states Woodland Park Zoo’s President and CEO Dr. Deborah Jensen. “Scientists have documented that increases in carbon dioxide and other gases due to human activities are affecting the earth’s climate. We are now seeing the changes to wildlife and ecosystems in our own backyards (in Washington) and as far away as the Arctic. We have time to take actions that will do the right thing and there’s no question our children as well as the wildlife will thank us.”

Dr. Deborah Jensen, also a conservation biologist, has more than 25 years of experience leading conservation and environmental science programs. She is a noted author and lecturer in conservation science, and has served as Vice President of the Conservation Science division at The Nature Conservancy, and is a past-president of the Society for Conservation Biology.

Climate Specialist Patty Glick will discuss global warming specifically as it impacts Salmon and the Pacific Northwest. Dr. Jeremy Littell will focus on rising temperatures in the Northwest, focused on both forests and terrestrial species.

“No icon represents the Northwest ecological heritage more than wild salmon,” Glick says. “Their continuing decline has generated an increased attention to climate change and action to protect them, but the ongoing problems of habitat loss, deforestation, and other destructive human-induced activities loom as a serious threat to the region’s salmon and other coldwater fish and the economic, cultural and ecological systems they sustain.”

"Climate Change is likely to make its most dramatic initial impact on fish and wildlife, pushing some species closer to extinction," says Ryan Manion of the Endangered Species Coalition, a local sponsor of the event. "It's up to us to make sure we're protecting our ancient forests, streams, and coasts - all important places that endangered species call home."

The animals and plants from the Pacific to the Cascades are feeling the consequences of global warming, and are subject of the exhibit and campaign “Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World.” From forests to rivers, mountains to oceans, the Northwest is home to some of the most diverse wildlife in North America. The state of Washington, alone, is home to 372 birds, 127 mammals, 21 reptiles, 51 fish and 25 amphibians – all of which will be impacted by climate change. The region’s deserts and sagebrush, alpine meadows and snowy peaks, temperate rainforests, wild rivers and hundreds of miles of coastline will be transformed by the rising temperatures and sea levels that will change the makeup of its ecosystems, forcing wildlife to shift their ranges or adapt.

Northwest Climate Change Facts:

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates average temperatures in Washington could rise about 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100 if global warming continues unabated. This will take a toll on several of the region’s ecosystems.
- Higher temperatures will reduce snowpack in the mountains, which contributes to lower summer stream flows and higher river temperatures, which in turn place more stress on threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead, which are already struggling to survive.
- Research released by the National Wildlife Federation, shows that a 3 degree rise in average August temperatures would cause up to 20 percent of the streams in the Columbia River Basin and coastal watersheds of Washington and Oregon to become too warm for most salmon, steelhead and trout which could face extinction.

- According to a report by the National Wildlife Federation, coauthored by Patty Glick, titled [“Fish Out of Water”](#), by 2040 up to 20 percent of the Pacific Northwest could become too warm for salmon, steelhead and trout if global warming is left unchecked.
- Sea level rise could also impact the state’s low lying estuaries, which are important habitat for oysters, clams and waterfowl.
- Coastline is at risk. Projected sea level rise and increased winter precipitation would increase coastal flooding, erosion and the risk of landslides and coast.
- The majority of Washington’s 950 glaciers are receding rapidly, with several that have already disappeared in recent decades.
- The economy is at risk. In addition to a declining salmon, fish and shellfish industry, the loss of wildlife and habitat could take a toll on tourism - outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Additional resources:

- National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org)
- “Fish Out of Water” report by the National Wildlife Federation: http://www.nwf.org/nwfwebadmin/binaryVault/Fish_Out_of_Water_2005_FINAL.pdf
- Earth Science Climate Impacts Group (CSES) <http://www.cses.washington.edu/cig/>
- Fire and Mountain Ecology Lab (FAME) at the University of Washington <http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.FME/>
- Woodland Park Zoo www.zoo.org

About Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World

[Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World](#) is a national campaign by faith, science, art and justice groups to tell the story of how plants and animals are struggling to adapt to a rapidly warming world. Featuring work by award-winning wildlife photographers, the campaign seeks to bring the public face-to-face with the wildlife most threatened by climate change – from the iconic polar bear to Montana’s own wolverine. The 40-print exhibit debuted in Rhode Island in April, and will remain on display at the Roxy through June 14. The campaign is presented by [Earthjustice](#), [Noah Alliance](#), [International League of Conservation Photographers](#) (ILCP), [Conservation International’s Center for Applied Biodiversity Science](#) (CABS) as well as local partners. Local sponsors include Endangered Species Coalition, Earth Ministry, People for Puget Sound, Restoring Eden, Save Our Wild Salmon, Woodland Park Zoo and Western Natural Resource Center.