

Restoration Economy Center

a year in review

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
INNOVATION
CENTER

A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

We envision a world where environmental restoration outpaces environmental impacts. But right now, traditional government funding focuses on activities without knowing what outcomes are achieved, and lengthy and expensive permitting processes burn through available funding for restoration. We launched the Restoration Economy Center (REC) in 2022 to tackle these issues and increase the scale and speed of high-quality, equitable restoration outcomes through policy change. With one year in the books, we want to take the opportunity to celebrate the successes we've made thus far.

Our biggest victory in 2022 was Maryland's bipartisan passage of the Conservation Finance Act (CFA). The law marks the first time that any state has authorized a type of contract that can pay for environmental outcomes the same way they purchase computers. Through research on other potential opportunities and knowledge-sharing, we've heard from other states and will be working in 2023 with legislators interested in replicating the CFA.

We've also supported policies that catalyze private investment in wetland, stream, and habitat mitigation markets. In 2022, we commented on four species mitigation policies, and tracked both the Biden Administration's and the Supreme Court's actions relating to the definition of 'Waters of the United States' which is very wonky but can greatly impact protection and restoration of streams and wetlands.

We're identifying and lifting up opportunities to make it easier to permit ecological restoration - like California's 'cutting green tape' initiative, and Virginia's Permit Enhancement and Evaluation Platform. We have also conducted research on the time it takes to permit wetland and stream mitigation banks - it turns out it's 1.5x longer than required in regulations, just for the part of the process that the Feds are responsible for. In 2023, we hope to lead a lot more state and federal efforts to improve the permitting of and financing for nature.

Do you have ideas about Pay for Success for environmental restoration? Do you want to keep more restoration funds for restoration rather than paperwork? We welcome insights and opportunities to collaborate in 2023!

-Becca Madsen, Director, Restoration Economy Center (becca@policyinnovation.org)

Photo credit: Daniel Coe, "Sustina River Channels", CC-by-NA-ND 2.0 (cover and last page)

restoration economy center at a glance

- 4 full-time staff & 4 part-time staff
- 8 publications
- 30+ blogs
- 5 comment letters
- 13 presentations & webinars
- 1 website



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
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OUR STRATEGIES IN ACTION

To achieve our mission of increasing the scale and speed of high-quality, equitable restoration outcomes through policy change, we focus on four strategies: research, knowledge-sharing, advocacy, and coalition-building



research

- Analyzed 400,000 permits to estimate the potential impact of a Supreme Court ruling on WOTUS - 1 million linear feet/year of streams could lose protection
- 50-state scan reveals trends and opportunities in Pay for Success contracting authorization
- Mitigation bank approvals take 1.5x longer than requirements allow
- Market-based approaches could increase the use of natural buffer filters in the Chesapeake Bay
- There is great opportunity for tribes to participate in compensatory mitigation with better policies



knowledge-sharing

- Webinar on Cutting Green Tape (CA), aimed at state and federal government employees
- Webinar on financing Nature-based Solutions, co-hosted with Duke University
- 10+ blogs on state and federal procurement innovation
- 11+ conference presentations and webinars aimed at sharing our findings and recommendations with government agencies, national and regional conferences, tribes and NGOs



advocacy

- 4 states are currently engaged in conversations aimed at introducing Pay for Success legislation
- Comment letters provided on US FWS species policies and UN restoration standards gave our opinions directly to those in power
- Recommendations provided on federal and state procurement policies/program structures helped cement our role as experts in this field



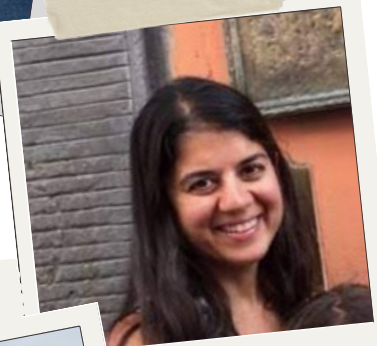
coalition-building

- Collaborated on a project with the US Digital Service to envision a modernized RIBITS (an instrumental website for tracking and managing regulatory restoration projects)
- Penned letter urging reinstatement of 2016 US Fish and Wildlife Service mitigation policies together with multiple organizations



OUR TEAM

Garrett Altmann
Mariah Black Bird - Perry
Grace Edinger
Phoebe Higgins
Harry Huntley
Kavita Kapur Macleod
Becca Madsen
Tim Male
Leanne Spaulding



TOP 5 MOMENTS OF 2022



Maryland passed the Conservation Finance Act with bipartisan support.

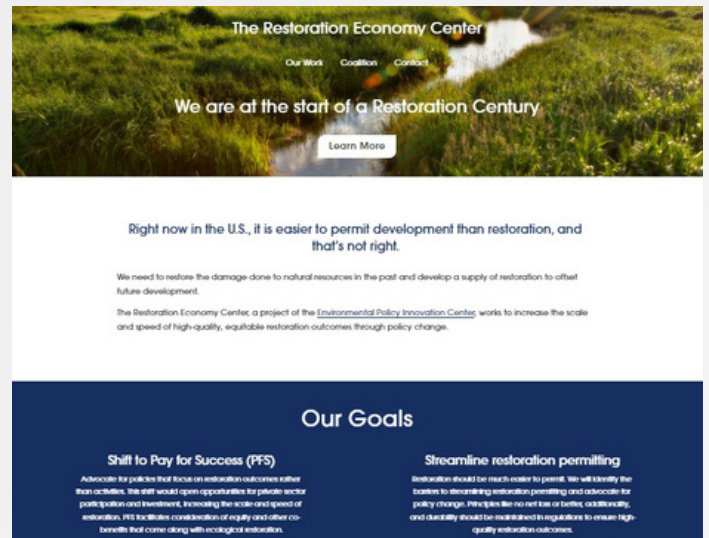
In The
Supreme Court of the United States
MICHAEL SACKETT; CHANTELL SACKETT,
Petitioners,
v.
UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY;
MICHAEL S. REGAN, Administrator,
Respondents.

A Supreme Court case about the definition of 'Waters of the United States' may not be the end of protections for wetlands. REC tracked developments and implications for the restoration economy in a 4-part blog series.

REC publishes first-ever reports about tribal opportunities for participation in compensatory mitigation.



We voiced our opinions on how the IJIA & IRA funding can be better spent with innovations in procurement through publications, public comments, and blog posts.



...and of course, we launched the Restoration Economy Center!

WORK THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

reports

[Delivering Faster Restoration with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\) Funding](#)

[A look at four new natural resource procurement bills](#)

[Clean Water Act - Priorities for Offset Policies](#)

[Pennsylvania Clean Water Procurement Program Explainer](#)

[2022 Maryland Conservation Finance Act Explainer](#)

[Pay for Success 101 Resource Guide](#)

[Promoting Tribal Roles in Providing Compensatory Mitigation Offsets](#)

[Tribal Compensatory Mitigation](#)

[National Mitigation and Ecosystem Banking Conference: Tribal Mitigation Panel, Boise ID](#)

[EPA Region 9 Wetlands Section: Tribal Compensatory Mitigation: The Case Studies, Virtual](#)

[Great Plains Tribal Water Alliance: Natural Resource Mitigation Efforts on Tribal Nations, Virtual](#)

[Tribal compensatory Mitigation YouTube Series Part 1, Part 2, & Part 3](#)

[National Association of Wetland Managers: Tribal Compensatory Mitigation: The Case Studies, WV](#)

presentations

[ERBA: Initial Insights on MBI Timelines Presentation, Washington DC](#)

[Conservation Finance Conference: Taking the Pulse of Public Funding & Enabling Authorities](#)

[One Water Conference: Conservation Finance Presentation, Alpena MI](#)

[Environmental Council of States Spring Meeting: Maryland's CFA, Asheville NC](#)

[River Rally: How the Farm Bill can Support Healthy Rivers, Clean Water, and Equity in Agricultural Landscapes, Washington DC](#)

[Choose Clean Water Coalition: Opportunities for Clean Water in the 2023 Farm Bill, Virtual](#)

[Mississippi River Legislative Caucus Forum: The Next Generation of Environmental Restoration, Virtual](#)

[Virtual Webinar: Financing Nature-based Solution Projects Webinar](#)

blogs and comment letters

[How can tribes use mitigation banking for economic development?](#)

[Three changes to the mitigation rule to enhance successful tribal compensatory mitigation programs](#)

[Versatile purpose: New IRT workbooks offer additional resources for Tribal Compensatory Mitigation](#)

[Streamlining Restoration Projects with Nationwide Permit 27](#)

[Recent Efforts to Streamline Restoration Permitting: Why it matters](#)

[If You Can Track a Pizza, You Can Track a Permit](#)

[An EPIC Response to EPA's Nutrient Pollution Memo](#)

[Breaking News: Species Banking ANPR Released](#)

[ANPR Cheat Sheet](#)

[Species Banking ANPR](#)



WORK THROUGH THE YEAR

blogs and comment letters continued

[Bald and Golden Eagle Comment letter](#)

[Bald and Golden Eagles Enlist the Resistance](#)

[Wildlife Connectivity Gets Historic Funding Influx](#)

[The Case for Crediting Wildlife Crossings](#)

[Corporate Action on Biodiversity: Sweden](#)

[The Irish Way on Farmland Outcomes for Nature](#)

[Biodiversity: Europe is the Center for Policy Innovation](#)

[United Kingdom's Net Gain for Biodiversity Goals](#)

[Perspectives of WOTUS in SCOTUS](#)

[Is it WOTUS after SCOTUS \[with accompanying BuzzFeed quiz\]](#)

[Scenarios of WOTUS in SCOTUS](#)

[Major Themes from the Supreme Court's Hearing of Sackett v EPA](#)

[Bringing Human-Centered Design into Restoration Tracking \[RIBITS\]](#)

[UN Standards of Practice for Ecosystem Restoration Comments Comment Letter](#)

[Opinion: Combating environmental crises requires investment from the private sector](#)

[Getting money out the door faster: Design-build as an alternative procurement tool](#)

[Common Pay for Success contracting pitfalls and how to avoid them](#)

[Conservation Finance Act Passes Maryland House & Senate Press Release](#)

[America's First state conservation law for private finance](#)

[Compilation of comment/support letters for the Maryland CFA](#)

[What's In a Name? One writer's frustration with technical term redundancy](#)

[How We Can Get Better, Faster Environmental Outcomes from the \\$9+ Billion Water Resources Development Act](#)

[Pennsylvania Lags on Bay Restoration. To Catch Up, the Legislature Must Spend Smarter not Harder](#)

[Hey H2Ohio - buy outcomes, not practices!](#)

[Build Banking Back Better](#)



GROWING OUR IMPACT

Our vision, a world where environmental restoration outpaces environmental impacts is a big one. We're excited to take this work to the next level in the near future.

EPIC is working to expand our work on the Restoration Century over the next two years to support building out a core program team to lead engagement with the coalition, set research priorities, and execute a political advocacy strategy.

If interested in supporting our growth, please reach out to

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415.830.1970

