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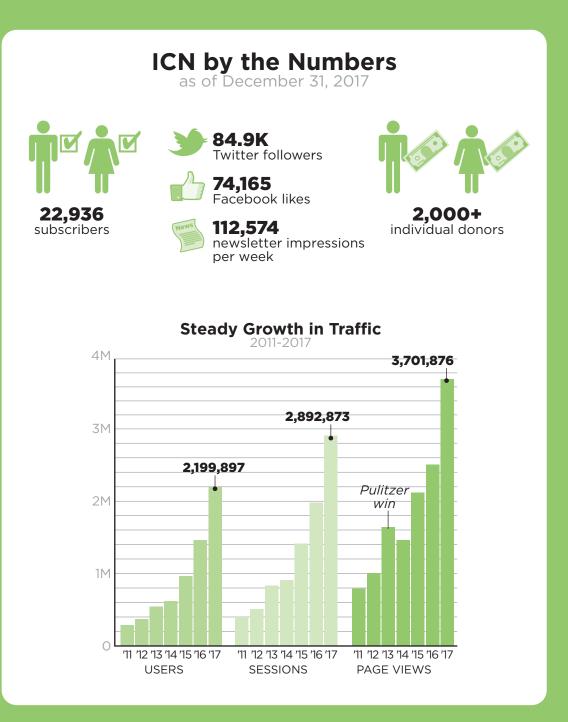
Building a Permanent Home for Environmental Journalism

2017 Annual Report

insideclimatenews.org

# **About InsideClimate News**

InsideClimate News is a Pulitzer Prize-winning non-profit, non-partisan news organization that provides essential reporting and analysis on climate, energy and the environment for the public and decision makers. We serve as watchdogs of government, industry and advocacy groups and hold them accountable for their policies and actions. Already one of the largest environment newsrooms in the country, ICN is committed to establishing a permanent national reporting network, to training the next generation of journalists, and to strengthening the practice of environmental journalism.



# Bringing Back Journalism That's Gone Missing

Dear Reader,

InsideClimate News celebrated its 10th anniversary last November, and our second decade is already off to an auspicious start with good news reaching us two times over.

First, we learned from both the Scripps Howard Awards and the Society of American Business Editors and Writers that they are awarding recognition to our two biggest bodies of work from 2017 – *Finding Middle Ground* and *Choke Hold*, both highlighted in this annual report – as well as two other ICN investigations.

Second, the Grantham Foundation gave us confirmation that it will be providing a major grant to help us kick-start the establishment of a national environment reporting network.

Why do we want to build this national network? Because the ecosystem of environmental journalism has been hollowed out in most local markets. Our newsroom may provide safe harbor for talented environmental journalists, but hardly any others are working at news outlets in the vast middle of the country anymore. A dangerous silence has descended on too many communities about profound changes afflicting our natural world.

We see it as part of our mission to revive and embolden environmental journalism so it can spark civic discussion where it's most needed – in the backyards and main streets of everyday America. We have witnessed a great hunger for these conversations that have gone missing in the carnage of the polarization of recent years.

Our non-profit environmental newsroom is the biggest of its kind in the nation. We make the claim proudly even if we have only 15 people. We consistently punch above our weight. We went from start-up to a Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting in five years, and from there doubled our staff while around us journalism was going through a devastating financial crisis. Ours is an improbable story, and an important chapter in the coming of age of non-profit journalism.

Still, both Earth's climate and American journalism are facing a long season of reckoning ahead. The two crises at the heart of ICN's concerns are in worse condition than when we started publishing in 2007. American leadership on climate solutions has been thrown into reverse, and the central role of a free press in American democracy is under attack. Operators, foreign and domestic, are running amok undermining the validity of facts and rational discourse.

It only means that our work at ICN is as important as ever. It's why, as we continue to produce our journalism and build our reporting network, we are also launching a summer journalism program for high school students. Training the next generation of environmental reporters is part of our mission, too, as we embark on our next decade of journalism in the public interest.

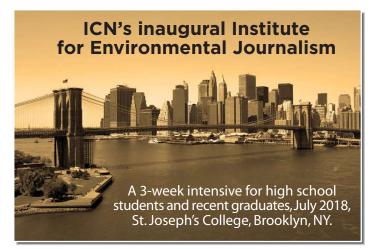
David Sassoon Founder and Publisher, *InsideClimate News* 

# How We Are Working to Revive **Environmental Journalism**

As ICN has grown over the last ten years into one of the nation's largest environmental newsrooms, we have simultaneously witnessed environmental journalism all but vanish from small, trusted outlets in the nation's interior. We are now continuing our work to revive environmental journalism by developing a national environment reporting network and training the next generation of environment reporters.



...and Training the Next Generation of Reporters



# **Board of Directors**

InsideClimate News is a non-profit incorporated in the state of New York and a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization operating with IRS approval as a public charity. It is governed by a Board of Directors and guided by the best practices of non-profit management.

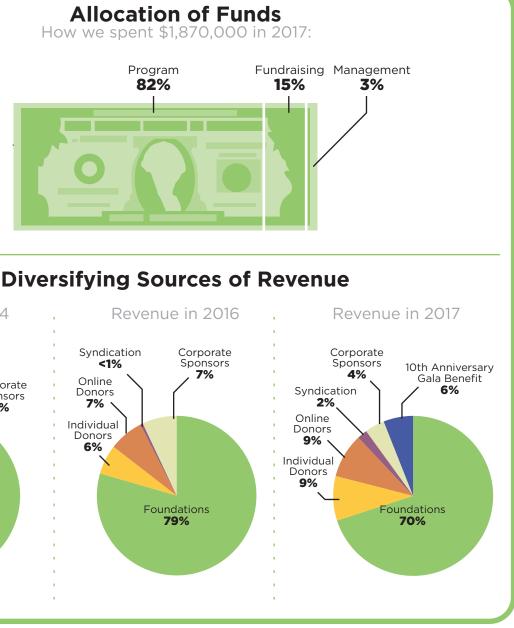


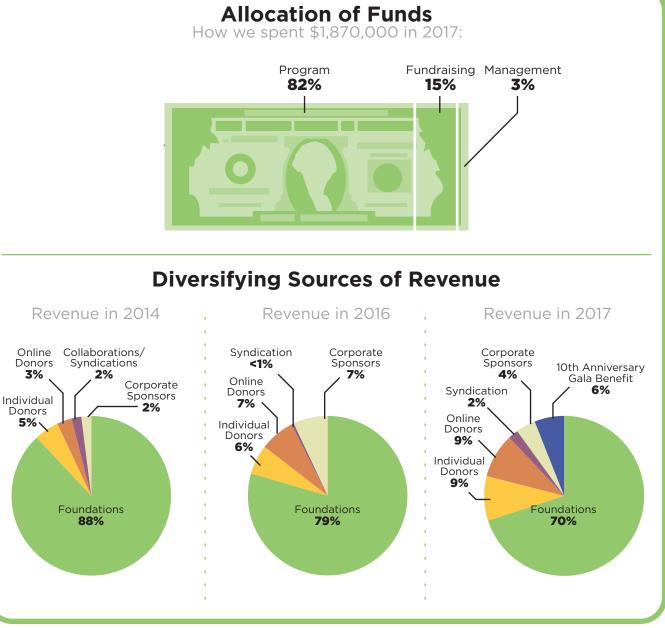


Lawrence Rodman

Susan Kish

Ted Loewenthal







Jennifer 8. Lee



Michael Northrop



Norman Pearlstine



David Sassoon

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# 2007-2017 **Ten Years of Journalism**

How ICN became the largest non-profit environmental newsroom in the nation

 ICN founded by David Sassoon & Stacy Feldman with funding of \$150,000 from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund

• The original website launches as a fiscally sponsored project of Public Interest Projects (now Neo Philanthropy)

• 57.000 journalists are working at daily newspapers around the country

• ICN makes top 10 list of climate sites ranked by Technorati

• Financial crisis in journalism starts to shut down or shrink news outlets

• 47,000 journalists are left working at daily newspapers around the country

 Reuters begins publishing ICN stories during Copenhagen climate talks

• Reuters enters into formal agreement to publish ICN content

 42,000 journalists are left working at daily newspapers around the country

# Susan White becomes executive editor

• ICN grows its full-time staff to four people

## Bloomberg News enters into agreement to publish ICN content

• Lisa Song, David Hasemver and Elizabeth McGowan cover the Kalamazoo oil spill and pipeline safety in a project called The Dilbit Disaster

• ICN's annual budget crosses \$500,000

• The New York Times dismantles its environment desk

• Only about a dozen environment reporters remain at top 5 U.S. newspapers

• Jack Cushman joins ICN

• ICN wins Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for The Dilbit Disaster: Inside the Biggest Oil Spill You've Never Heard Of

 McClatchy enters into agreement to publish ICN content

• ICN publishes Bloomberg's Hidden Legacy: Climate Change and the Future of New York City



 ICN detaches from its fiscal sponsor and becomes its own 501(c) (3)

· Larry Rodman becomes first chair of the board of directors, which includes Michael Northrop, Susan Kish and Simon Li

ICN publishes:

- Keystone and Beyond: Tar Sands and the National Interest in the Era of Climate Change
- Big Oil & Bad Air on the Texas Prairie in collaboration with the Center for Public Integrity and The Weather Channel
- Meltdown: Terror at the Top of the World

· ICN's annual budget reaches nearly \$1 million

 National Public Radio reduces its environment team to one reporter

• 37,000 journalists are left working at daily newspapers around the country

 Susan White steps down, Stacy Feldman steps in as executive editor

 Neela Banerjee joins ICN as senior investigative reporter

• Big Oil & Bad Air wins National Press Foundation energy writing award and seven additional awards from other juries

ICN relaunches its website

• ICN publishes Exxon: The Road Not Taken

 33.000 journalists are left working at daily newspapers around the country

· Grantham Foundation provides a five-year \$1.5 million grant to ICN

• Exxon: The Road Not Taken is a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service and wins ten other awards

• ICN wins EPPY award for best web site redesign/relaunch

 Norman Pearlstine, Jennifer 8. Lee and Ted Loewenthal join the board of directors

· ICN launches its membership program, the ICN Circle

• ICN publishes Choke Hold: The Fossil Fuel Industry's Fight against Climate Policy, Science and Clean Eneray

• ICN publishes Finding Middle Ground: Conversations Across America About Climate Change

• ICN launches Clean Economy Weekly newsletter

• Beth Daley, Stacy Morford and Ricardo Sandoval-Palos join ICN to fill senior posts

• ICN expands its full-time staff to 15 people

• ICN's annual budget reaches \$1.8 million

• ICN celebrates its 10th anniversary at Time Inc. headquarters

## **Finding Middle Ground Conversations across America about Climate Change**

OWARD AWARD FINALIST ICN began an important search for an elusive geography in 2017: The middle ground on climate change. Harsh politics and fiercely guarded values made it a risky assignment, but writer Meera Subramanian's talent and humanity provoked revealing conversations across America's heartland. Her lyrical and healing body of work captures the complicated connections that Americans have to the places that sustain them—and just how tangled our notions around climate change can be.

## In Georgia's Peach Orchards, Warm Winters Raise Specter of Climate Change



Seeing God's Hand in the Deadly Floods, Yet Wondering about Climate Change





While Mel Omernick sees the climate changing around her, her father, Ron Behm, is skeptical of any human role in climate change and leans on counter-arguments that scientists say aren't major drivers of the changes.



"What was advanced yesterday is no longer advanced today," James Beall said. He sees wind power and its continuing advancements as the future

In West Texas Where Wind Power Means Jobs. Climate Talk Is Beside the Point



As Snow Disappears, A Family of Dogsled Racers in Wisconsin Can't Agree Why



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# **Our Daily Beats**

## The Arctic

The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world. ICN's Sabrina Shankman — the Lower 48's only fulltime Arctic reporter we know of — is keeping an eagle eye on some of the most powerful climate pollutants, and polluters, in this fragile, melting region at the top of the planet.

## **POPULAR STORIES**

Alaska's Bering Sea Lost a Third of Its Ice in Just 8 Days

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Faces New Drilling Risk from Congress

Court Sides with Arctic Seals Losing Sea Ice Habitat to Climate Change

As Hilcorp Plans to Drill in Arctic Waters, a Troubling Trail of Violations Surfaces

**Trump Administration Approves** Its First Offshore Drilling Plan



Polar Bears Wearing Cameras and Fitbits Reveal an Arctic Struggle for Survival

# **Clean Energy**

2017 marked a pivotal point in the transition to a clean economy as the cost of solar and wind power declined so greatly they have become competitive with fossil fuel generation. ICN is closely covering this beat. We published 75 stories on the subject last year and launched Clean Economy Weekly to give readers an authoritative round-up of each week's national clean energy news.

POPULAR STORIES

America's First Offshore Wind Energy Makes Landfall in Rhode Island

After the Hurricane, Solar Kept Florida Homes and a City's Traffic Light Running

Solar Boom in Trump Country: It's about Economics and Energy Independence

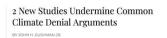
How New York is Building the Renewable Energy Grid of the Future

# **Climate Science & Denial**

5 Shades of Climate Denial, All on Display in the Trump White House Pope Calls Out Climate Deniers in Wake of Hurricane Irma, Harvey



Climate Denial Pervades Trump White House, But It's Hitting Limits





### Appeals Court Takes Up Youth Climate 200 Environmental Activists Murdered During a Deadly 2016, Report Finds Change Lawsuit Against Trump

**Environmental Justice & Activism** 



Beyond Standing Rock: 'There Is a Real War Going On' for Environmental Instice





Judge Allows 'Necessity' Defense by

Climate Activists in Oil Pipeline

## Sea Level Rise

U.S. Coastal Cities Will Flood More Often and More Severely, Study Warns Rising Seas Are Flooding Virginia's Naval Base & There's No Plan to Fix It



In the Outer Banks, Officials and NYC Issues Climate Change Roadmap for Its Builders











Elon Musk: Tesla Could Help Puerto Rico Power Up Again with Solar Microgrids

24-Hour Solar Energy: Molten Salt Makes it Possible, and Prices Are **Falling Fast** 

## **Policy & Politics**

106 Lawmakers Urge Trump to Put Climate Change Back in National Security Strategy



Trump Pick for Top Environment Post: Carbon Dioxide Is 'The Gas of Life'



10 Senators Call for Investigation into EPA Pushing Scientists Off Advisory Boards



Paris Climate Exit: Will Trump Continue to Meddle in the Talks?



7



With Bare Knuckles and **Big Dollars**, Exxon Fights Climate Probe to a Legal Stalemate

It Took This Coal Miner 14 Years to Secure Black Lung Benefits. How Come?

How Fossil Fuel Allies Are Tearing Apart Ohio's Embrace of Clean Energy

Industrial Strength: How the U.S. Government Hid Fracking's Risks to Drinking Water

Instrument of Power: How Fossil Fuel Donors Shaped the Anti-Climate Agenda of a Powerful Congressional Committee

How Big Oil Lost Control of Its Climate **Misinformation Machine** 



How Federal Giveaways to Big Coal Leave Ranchers and Taxpayers Out in the Cold

YEAR-LONG INVESTIGATION

# **Choke Hold** The Fossil Fuel Industry's Fight Against **Climate Policy, Science and Clean Energy**

For four decades industry encouraged the unchecked acceleration of climate change and left the world with little breathing room to avoid its catastrophic impacts.

**Bethel Brock** launched the Black Lung Association of Southwest Virginia to help other miners with black lung disease get through the health benefits process Credit: Lathan Goumas



Bryan Latkanich of

hydraulic fracturing

the cause of his son's

numerous medical issues. Credit: Anna Belle Peevey

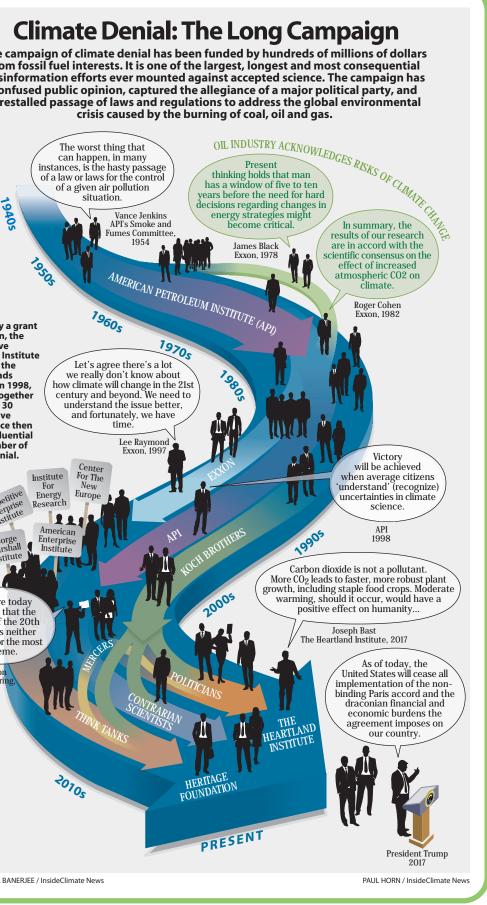
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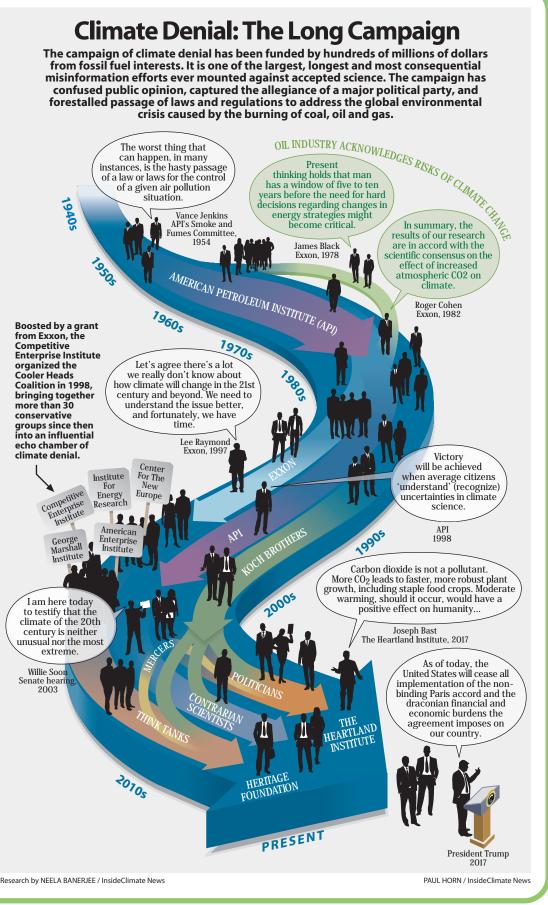
wells on his property are





Billions of gallons of water have been lost across the Powder River Basin from coal mining. L.J. Turner sued the state unsuccessfully over the loss of his water. Credit: Anna Belle Peevey





WINNER, 2018 Business Editors & Writers Award for Explanatory Journalism

# **Awards**

ICN reporters have won many of the most prestigious awards in journalism conferred by juries of our peers. Since 2012, our news outlet has won 36 national and regional awards and recognitions, including the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting. They provide unimpeachable validation for the value and importance of non-profit news in our evolving media landscape.



Last year we welcomed six new full-time staffers to ICN — our graphic artist, director of strategic development, audience engagement director, senior editor of investigations and two veteran reporters.



**David Sassoon** Founder. Publisher



**Stacy Feldman** Co-Founder, Executive Editor



John H. Cushman, Jr. Managing Editor



**Stacy Morford** Senior Editor



**Beth Daley** Director of Strategic Development



Jessica Lee Audience Engagement Editor



.

**Ricardo Sandoval Palos** Investigations Editor



Neela Banerjee Senior Correspondent

# **ICN Staff**









Marianne Lavelle Politics Reporter





**Phil McKenna** Reporter



### Nicholas Kusnetz Reporter



### Georgina Gustin Reporte





# **ICN** is grateful for contributions from the following individuals

## **ICN Visionaries** (contributing \$50,000+)

Norman Pearlstine and Iane Boon

Simon and June Li

Stephen and Jill McDonnell

Gretchen Sisson and Andrew McCollum

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**ICN Nobles** (contributing \$25,000+)

Larry and Linda Rodman

## $\diamond \ \diamond \ \diamond \ \diamond \ \diamond$

**ICN Champions** (contributing \$5,000+)

Sven Huseby & Barbara Ettinger

Ted and Adlyn Loewenthal

Eric & Debra Schwartz

William Sawyer

Mike Slosberg

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Lukas Haynes

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Lawrence Rodman Jenny Rothenberg Val Schaffner Rob Sedgwick Marc Weiss **Charles Zeller** 

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Ava Seave **Brett Simon** Sylvia Stein Laura Tenner Tarun Theogaraj Lee Wasserman Victoria Westhead Amy Wolf Durwood Zaelke Strauss Zelnick

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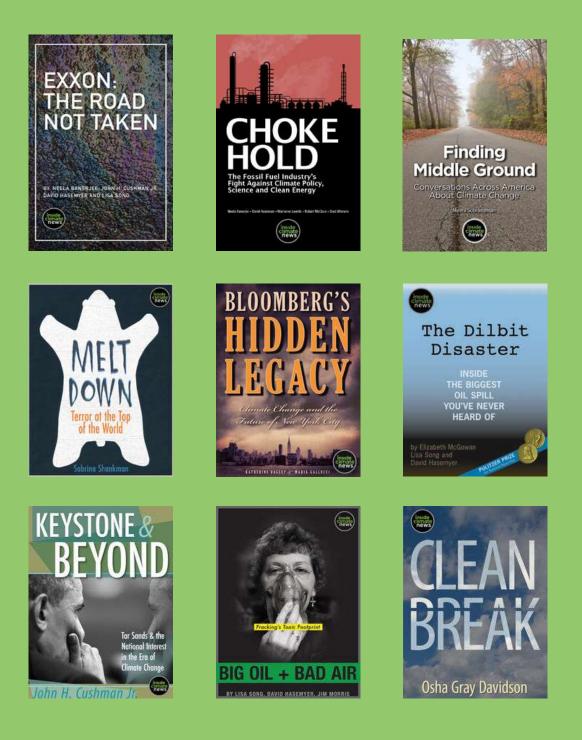








## ICN e-books and on-demand paperbacks



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