

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

2017 OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Rachael Paschal Osborn receives this year's AWRA-WA Service Award for "Outstanding Contribution to Washington's Water Resources"



The Washington Section of the American Water Resources Association is pleased to present the 2017 award for Outstanding Contribution to Washington's Water Resources to Rachael Paschal Osborn in recognition of her long career promoting and defending the public interest in the state's water resources.

Rachael Osborn is a public interest water lawyer and has provided representation to Indian tribes, environmental organizations, labor unions, and small communities since 1992. It is appropriate to give Rachael the award in this year, the centennial of the Water Code, given her life's work in bringing meaning to the public interest prong of the code.

After receiving her law degree from the University of Washington, Rachael, along with the late Professor Ralph Johnson, co-founded the Center for Environmental Law and Policy (CELP), dedicated to the protection and restoration of free-flowing waters in Washington State. Rachael served as Executive Director of CELP for many years. Rachael and Ralph's mission was to bring the Public Trust Doctrine into the water right permitting process through public interest comment letters and, at times, litigation.

Rachael also co-founded the Washington Water Trust, which, since 1998 has been using voluntary, market-based transactions to improve and protect stream flows and water quality throughout Washington State.

Rachael is a dedicated educator and has taught scores of water law and policy courses over the years — in law schools, conferences, seminars, workshops and classrooms — and has written extensively on water resources and environmental issues. She has taught water law at Gonzaga Law School in Spokane and at the University of Washington.

Rachael's work as an attorney and advocate for the public interest has a long list of accomplishments. To name just a couple, working with her husband John Osborn, Rachael advocated for and eventually won minimum flow over the Spokane Falls during summer low flow during Avista Spokane River Project Relicensing. Working for Tribes and others, Rachael was instrumental in bringing a sound scientific basis to policy on hydraulic continuity in Washington.

We applaud Rachael Osborn for her contributions to the water resources of Washington.