



Introducing Vanessa: WALT's new Executive Director!

July 31, 2022

Greetings members, partners, and supporters of the Washington Association of Land Trusts! We have some exciting news to share that bodes well for the future of our organization.

After a robust search that attracted a stellar pool of candidates from across the state, we are pleased to announce that Vanessa Kritzer has accepted the role of Executive Director. She is a great addition and will be an excellent leader for WALT.

Vanessa will begin her leadership of WALT on December 1st. Our board and staff will provide leadership and guidance during the transition period with board Vice President Curt Soper serving as interim Executive Director and board Treasurer Rebecca Rettmer serving as Finance Director.



Vanessa is a lifelong conservation advocate who has dedicated her career to working at the federal, state, and local levels for social and environmental progress. She spent years working for nonprofits in Washington, DC, including on international land and human rights issues at the Latin America Working Group and on mobilizing people for environmental action at the League of Conservation Voters.

Vanessa holds MBA and MPA degrees from the University of Washington's Foster School of Business and Evans School of Public Policy and Governance. During graduate school, she was appointed by Governor Inslee to serve as the sole student member of the University of Washington Board of Regents. She also brings experience from the private sector, having worked at Microsoft on smart city and healthcare technology that helps make communities healthier, safer, and more sustainable.

Vanessa is an elected member of the Redmond City Council, where she currently serves as Council Vice President. During her time on council, she has worked on local and regional conservation policy,

including leading as Vice Chair of the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council and as a member of the King Conservation District Advisory Committee and the Lake Sammamish Kokanee ILA Management Committee. She also serves on other regional boards engaged in public-private partnerships, sustainable economic development, and effective transportation policies, including as a member of King County's Regional Transportation Committee.

Vanessa is a devoted mom and loves spending her free time taking her family out to play in parks and hike the trails near her home in Redmond and beyond. She also enjoys volunteering, supporting local art, and playing strategic board games.

A message from Vanessa:

“I'm so thrilled to have the opportunity to join WALT and its coalition members in their powerful work to preserve the natural spaces that make our state such a great place to live. Growing up in Washington, our mountains, forests, and waterways were as much a part of my home as my own backyard and I have always been passionate about protecting them. I can't wait to collaborate with all of you to steward these special places to ensure that they are accessible to everyone and that our children and future generations can enjoy them in perpetuity.”

We look forward to Vanessa's arrival and we are very grateful for your continued investment in our success. Keep up all your great work. Together, we are having a positive impact on our quality of life.

Very Best Regards,

Steve Cook, Board President