

An aerial photograph of a lush, forested valley. A river winds through the center, reflecting the sky. The surrounding mountains are covered in dense green forests, with some trees showing early autumn colors. Mist or low clouds are visible in the valley and around the base of the mountains. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

LAST STAND

SAVING THE ELWHA RIVER'S LEGACY FORESTS

A FILM BY DAN HERZ & NIAD PRODUCTIONS

WHAT ARE LEGACY FORESTS?

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Legacy Forests: Forests that are naturally re-grown (2nd growth) and not monoculture plantation forests. They contain old growth trees, complex forest canopies & understories, and legacy forest characteristics, including snags (dead standing trees) and large wood on the forest floor. They also have higher biodiversity, higher resilience to forest fires, protect water quality, control erosion and sequester more carbon than plantation forests. If left alone, they're our future old growth forests!

ABOUT THE WRITER & DIRECTOR

Dan Herz is a San Francisco-based Emmy Award-winning writer, producer and director with over 30 years of experience in visual storytelling. His career began as an intern on the beloved and long-running SF Bay Area television show, *Bay Area Backroads*. Captivated by the show, its people, and the production process, Herz spent the next 15 years traveling, learning the craft of storytelling and working on all aspects of the show, ultimately becoming its Executive Producer.

After his tenure at *Bay Area Backroads*, Herz worked on a variety of productions for NBC, PBS, and the Discovery Channel, including a writer/producer role on a documentary, featuring an 86-year-old female kung fu master, filmed in the Wudang Mountains of China.

Outside of his professional endeavors, Herz is an avid outdoor enthusiast. He spends much of his free time surfing, skiing, biking, windsurfing, and rock climbing, drawing inspiration from his adventures in nature.

He currently owns and operates NIAD Productions, a full-service production company named after a notable one-day ascent of Yosemite's El Capitan, he completed in 2005.

Herz currently co-hosts, writes, produces, edits, and shoots *Open Road*, a weekly television series, broadcast on NBC, profiling environmentally themed stories in and around Northern California.

DAN HERZ



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In the heart of the Pacific Northwest's Olympic Peninsula, lies the Elwha Watershed, a sanctuary of dense, wildlife-filled forests that stand as living testaments to the rich biodiversity and natural heritage of our planet. These legacy forests, with their life-giving, towering trees and intricate ecosystems, are now under imminent threat from logging. This documentary, "Last Stand - Saving the Elwha River's Legacy Forests," is an important call to recognize the urgent need to protect these irreplaceable forests.

As a filmmaker, my journey through the Elwha Watershed was both awe-inspiring and sobering. The beauty and majesty of these forests starkly contrast with the looming threat of their destruction. This film is not just a chronicle of a battle against logging; it is a celebration of the interconnectedness of life, the resilience of nature, and the power of community activism.

This film aims to give voice to the countless species that call these forests home, the indigenous communities whose cultural heritage is intertwined with these lands, and the environmental activists who tirelessly fight to safeguard them. Through their stories, we hope to inspire a deeper understanding of and appreciation for these critical forests and galvanize a movement to protect them for future generations.

STARRING ELIZABETH DUNNE



MOVEMENT LAWYER &
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL ADVOCACY, EARTH LAW CENTER

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:

MISSY LAHREN

KARIE CRISP

JULIA JACKSON

RUSSELL LONG

MEG RUXTON

MARY EVELYN TUCKER

TILLIE WALTON

LEAD CINEMATOGRAPHER:

JOHN GUSSMAN

SYNOPSIS

When a large, ecologically sensitive legacy forest in the heart of the Elwha River Watershed was identified for harvest, the Earth Law Center, Keystone Species Alliance, and Center for Whale Research began using all legal means possible against the Washington State Department of Natural Resources in an attempt to halt the impending clear-cut. Through breathtaking cinematography and intimate interviews, witness the profound beauty and ecological significance of the watershed, as well as the dire consequences of unchecked deforestation.

Against the backdrop of stunning landscapes and stirring testimonials, "Last Stand: Saving the Elwha River's Legacy Forests" captures the urgency of the environmental crisis and the power of grassroots activism to effect positive change. In the face of unbalanced resource extraction, the film serves as a poignant reminder of the Olympic Peninsula's interconnected ecosystem and our duty to protect and preserve the natural wonders that sustain us all.



Rally at "Aldwell" logging site
March 2023



ALTHOUGH DNR
PROTECTED
69 ACRES IN THE
ELWHA WATERSHED

**850 ACRES ARE
STILL AT HIGH RISK**



A topographic map of Western Washington, showing the coastline on the left and the mountainous interior. Numerous small red dots are scattered across the map, primarily in the mountainous regions, representing legacy forests at high risk. The map uses a light beige color for land and blue for water, with contour lines indicating elevation.

THERE ARE
**112,000 ACRES OF
LEGACY FORESTS
AT HIGH RISK**
IN WESTERN
WASHINGTON



STARRING
ELIZABETH
DUNNE

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LONG, MEG RUXTON, MARY EVELYN TUCKER, TILLIE WALTON

IN THE PRESS

"Our wellbeing is inseparable from the health of the Elwha River and its forests," said Elizabeth Dunne, policy director at the Earth Law Center who's based in Port Angeles. "We have a responsibility to steward the land in the watershed in a way that supports the river, the salmon, the orcas and all of us."

- *The Seattle Times*

"On our last day of filming, on day 10, the state decided to revoke the timber sale," said [Missy] Lahren. "And so it's a big win." Fresh off victory, Lahren said the 20-minute film, titled "Last Stand: Saving the Elwha River's Legacy Forests," has more to accomplish. She said there are 850 acres along the river that still need to be protected.


- *NBC Bay Area*

"Many said it wasn't possible to get the Power Plant sale canceled and protect this stretch of forest near the banks of the Elwha River, but we did it," Dunne said. "This is a first step toward greater protections for critical and mature forests in the Elwha Watershed."

- *Peninsula Daily News*



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An aerial photograph of a river valley. The river is light blue and winds through a valley. A large, light-colored sandbar is visible in the middle of the river. The surrounding hills are covered in dense green forest. The sky is clear and blue.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

❖ www.instagram.com/earthlawcenter

❖ www.earthlawcenter.org/elwha-legacy-forests

❖ www.elwhalegacyforests.org/

❖ www.filmfreeway.com/projects/3165124

“Without the soaring birds, the great forests, the sounds and coloration of the insects, the free-flowing streams, the flowering fields, the sight of the clouds by day and the stars at night, we become impoverished in all that makes us human.”

- Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*, 200