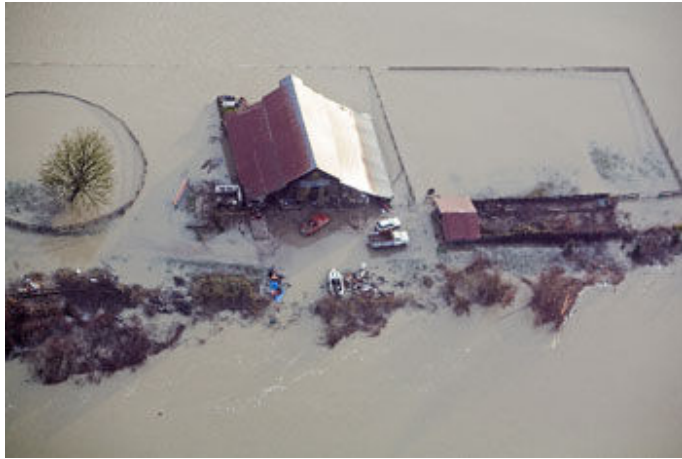


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LightHawk's monthly update, WayPoint, was created to share some of the good news we on staff learn about daily. These success stories illustrate the critical role we play in conservation efforts throughout North and Central America through the unique perspective of flight. We hope you enjoy WayPoint and will share with others our success stories from above.

### Fast Flight Response Nets Flood of Images



Muddy floodwaters inundate farms in Snoqualmie Valley. Photo: Benjamin Drummond/LightHawk



Rivers overwhelmed with rapid snowmelt accelerated by warmer than seasonable temperatures breach their banks flooding neighboring fields and houses. Photo: Benjamin Drummond/LightHawk

*This winter, residents of western Washington state were hit with a big one-two punch. An arctic blast in December brought record snowfall and unseasonably cold temperatures, then a "pineapple express" of warm, moist air coming off the Pacific Ocean followed just a few weeks later. As several days of heavy rain falling on top of the just-melting snow led to extreme flooding across the region, LightHawk was able to respond quickly to position a team above the flood plain to capture the local story on a heated global issue.*

Last January, rivers jumped their banks, homes and farms were flooded, and interstate freeways and Amtrak rail lines were swamped by rising water and landslides. For an intrepid photographer/writer team studying the impacts of climate change on people and communities all over the world, these events provided a unique opportunity to document the local effects of a global problem. An increase in the number and severity of winter flood events is just one of the impacts that global climate change is predicted to bring to the Pacific Northwest.

The project, *Facing Climate Change*, puts a human face on global climate change through photography and narratives about real people and communities. Through print and Web media, presentations and exhibitions, Seattle-based photographer Benjamin Drummond and writer Sara Joy Steele have shared the stories and photos they've collected from all over the world, from semi-nomadic reindeer herdsman in the Arctic and fishermen in the North Atlantic, to wildland firefighters of the American West. Their work has been featured in *Orion* and *Mother Jones* magazines, as well as in galleries and venues across the country.

By addressing the natural tendency to think of global warming as someone else's problem, *Facing Climate Change* tries to remove some of the intangibility of global warming by telling stories and making art that speaks to people on a personal level. By raising awareness and causing people to think about global warming as a local issue, the project attempts to help people understand their own role in both the problem and the solutions, and as a result start to change their own patterns of environmental impact.



The Facing Climate Change Crew, photographer Benjamin Drummond and writer Sara Joy Steele next to Val Tollefson's plane. Photo: G. Val Tollefson/LightHawk

*"This flight was a huge contribution to our work. Up until now we have not employed aerial perspectives in our effort to illustrate global climate change...and this flight opened up a whole new dimension...With our work we try to get beyond the news cycle and tell personal stories that illustrate global climate change. The images we collected on this flight will help us bring these stories into a larger context."* - **Benjamin Drummond, photographer**

As the rivers crested that week in January, Benjamin, realizing how difficult it would be to capture the magnitude and scope of the flooding from the ground, turned to LightHawk for help. Volunteer pilot Val Tollefson responded to the call for pilots in less than an hour, and worked quickly with Pacific Program Manager Christine Steele to line up a flight the following morning. LightHawk's program managers put a lot of time and attention into building strategic relationships with our partners to plan for long-term projects throughout the regions. However, sometimes an urgent and compelling call comes in, and LightHawk adapts to provide the aerial resource in a short timeframe.

Early on Friday, the trio took off from Bremerton National airport and flew over Puget Sound up to Everett. From there, they worked their way south through the hard-hit Snoqualmie Valley, following the swollen Snohomish and Snoqualmie rivers upstream and gathering images of farms, fields, and roadways inundated with floodwater. Much of the valley floor is made up of rich farmland, although the area has seen burgeoning development in recent years. In the days following the flight, Benjamin and Sara went back to the same locations they had flown over and collected additional images and stories from the people on the ground. As Sara said later, "Climate Change is a global problem, but every community has a local story." Their photographs and stories will be incorporated into a larger body of work that will be shown through numerous events, exhibits and publications both regionally and nationally.

Benjamin and Sara are currently working with Rockies Program Manager Laura Stone to plan flights to continue their work on wildfires in the American West and climate change.



Join us at the renowned Inn and Spa at Loretto, our home base for the Fly-in.

### ***Celebrate 30 Years*** **On the Wings of LightHawk**

Come join us where it all started 30 years ago and meet an adventurer who traveled the entire length of the Colorado River by kayak and local experts who will illuminate what's at stake in this part of the West and how LightHawk missions make a difference. You'll also hear stories about the early days of LightHawk and a plane named, "Emily," reconnect with fellow flyers and enjoy the beauty of Santa Fe, New Mexico a city celebrating its 400th anniversary.

**October 9-11, 2009. Santa Fe, New Mexico**

~Call Bev at 207-699-4145 or email [bgabe@lighthawk.org](mailto:bgabe@lighthawk.org) to reserve your spot today.~

## **About LightHawk**

What started in 1979 with one man and a vision has grown to almost 150 volunteer pilots flying missions across the U.S., into Canada, through Mexico and down to Panama. Today, LightHawk is the oldest and largest nonprofit, volunteer pilot-based organization flying environmental missions in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations.

At LightHawk we believe the view from the window of a small airplane provides a powerful and effective platform for research, groundtruthing, environmental awareness, and education.

## **Contact Information:**

International Headquarters  
LightHawk  
304 Main Street, Suite 14  
PO Box 653  
Lander, WY 82520

Tel.: (307) 332-3242  
Fax: (888) 297-0156  
Email: [info@lighthawk.org](mailto:info@lighthawk.org)

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