



Cascadia Poetics LAB

Annual Report 2023

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Mission

Cascadia Poetics LAB is a vibrant community whose workshops, festivals, and opportunities for connection can open the door for transformative experiences in the 21st century. We believe that poetry is the nexus at which self knowledge, bioregionalism, and expansive creativity converge. Based in Seattle, our programs and events are held in the Pacific Northwest and the Cascadia Bioregion.

Summary

The year 2023 featured the highest revenues in the organization's 30 year history. In 2023, Cascadia Poetics LAB expanded its reach by establishing new publication ventures, introducing new workshop offerings, and employing the help of new board members, dedicated volunteers, and an administrative assistant. In our 30th year as an organization, Cascadia Poetics LAB established an exciting and hopeful foundation for fruitful years to come.

Thank you

We can do nothing without our individual donors and volunteers, the grantors at the city, county, state and federal levels, and foundations. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for their generous support and endorsement of our mission and activities. Their invaluable contributions have played a pivotal role in fostering the growth of Cascadia Poetics LAB throughout its 30-year history as an organization, invigorating our vibrant community, adapting with the needs of our communities, and expanding our program offerings, all of which strengthens and broadens meaningful connections for all involved.

2023 Major Achievements



30 Year Anniversary

The Cascadia Poetics LAB (formerly SPLAB) was founded by Paul E. Nelson on December 14, 1993 with the mission of creating a weekly syndicated radio public affairs program. 30 years later, the organization has expanded far past its original intention, now with a deeper focus on poetic community and bioregionalism. In 2023, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the birth of the organization by establishing strong bonds and stable foundations for our future.

Board Recruitment

In 2023, Cascadia Poetics LAB recruited two new members to our board. Dr. Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, published poet, author and professor at Seattle University, joined our board on September 11, 2023. Award-winning poet and former professor of English at CU Boulder Lorna Dee Cervantes joined our board on November 6, 2023. Since their recruitment to the board, they have both been invaluable to the organization by engaging with our offerings, providing resources for new and exciting programs and events, consistently providing thoughtful ideas on community strengthening, sharing their poetic and literary talent, and expanding our outreach and connections to Latinx communities and nonprofits in Seattle.

Organizational Updates

In June of 2023, Cascadia Poetics LAB hired its first administrative assistant, Verónica Martinez. Working closely with the Cascadia Poetics LAB board and founding director Paul Nelson, Verónica has assisted with the coordination of multiple events, the organization of our website and its content, communication with our supporters and associates, and many other responsibilities that have come her way.

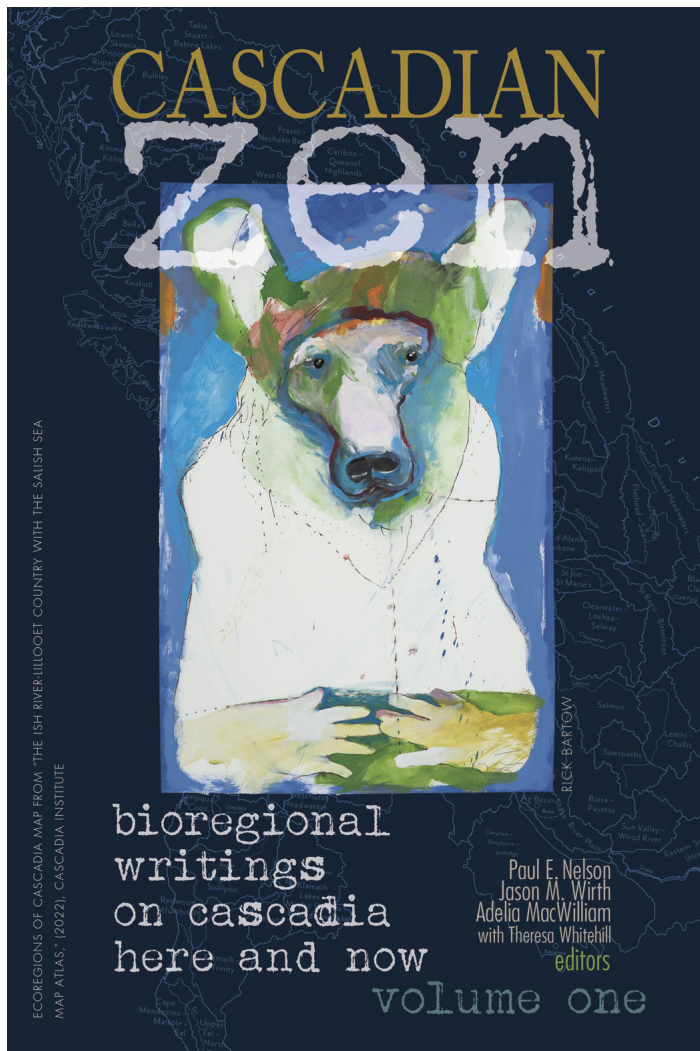
In 2023, Cascadia Poetics LAB implemented a committee structure to assist with the organization of our different offerings. Currently implemented are the Poetry Postcard Fest committee and the Cascadia Poetry Festival committee. These committees are overseen by Paul Nelson and contributing CPL board members and utilize the skills of our dedicated and talented volunteers to promote events, maintain organization of these events, and construct new ideas and activities to keep our offerings engaging and fresh.

2023 Major Achievements



Watershed Press

In 2023, Watershed Press was founded as a standing Committee of the Board of Cascadia Poetics LAB by Paul E. Nelson, Jason Tetsuzen Wirth, and Adelia MacWilliam to support a landmark first publication, *Cascadian Zen Volume One*, a carefully curated collection of poetry, essays, interviews, art, and photography from the bioregion of Cascadia. The committee's purpose is to foster and publish compelling work by a wide range of voices allied deeply with place, sustainable, and Indigenous approaches to navigating the ecological and political harm of the Anthropocene in the bioregion of Cascadia. Poet Ursula Vaira joined the committee in late 2023.



Cascadian Zen Vol. I

Cascadian Zen Vol. I, the first publication through Watershed Press, is an anthology featuring work from distinguished artists and authors throughout the Cascadia bioregion. The work in the anthology connects to the mission of the Cascadia Poetics LAB by exploring the nature of the Cascadia bioregion, Zen practice and the many questions that surround these topics.

The anthology was released in October of 2023, edited by Paul Nelson, Jason Wirth and Adelia MacWilliam, designed by Theresa Whitehill, and including work by Sam Hamill, Mary Norbert Körte, Diane di Prima, Michael McClure, Cedar Sigo, Jane Hirshfield, Joanne Kyger, Philip Whalen, Denise Levertov, Tess Gallagher, Brenda Hillman, José Kozer and more. The release of *Cascadian Zen Vol. I* was celebrated at the 7th Cascadia Poetry Festival.

2023 Major Achievements



7th Cascadia Poetry Festival

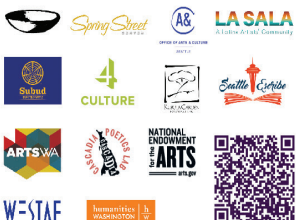
The 7th Cascadia Poetry Festival, the return of the festival following a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was a three-day experience hosted at the Spring Street Center in Seattle, WA on October 6-8, 2023. The festival was a celebration of the publication of *Cascadian Zen Vol. I*, and featured readings and presentations by poets, activists and educators Robert Bringham, Jan Zwicky, Andrew Schelling, Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Theresa Whitehill, Sara Marie Ortiz, Brenda Hillman, Gary Copeland Lilley, Tess Gallagher, Tim McNulty, Michael Daley, Holly Hughes and Cedar Sigo. Featured workshops and panels were "Stimulating the Satori Moment in Poems" with Tess Gallagher, "Writing Across Languages" with Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, "Bioregional Typography" with Robert Bringham and Theresa Whitehill and "Eco-Poetics" with Andrew Schelling, Jan Zwicky and Brenda Hillman.

An afterparty and open mic was hosted by Unpoetry host Eric Acosta at Vermillion Bar in Capitol Hill, and the following morning festival attendees gathered at Kubota Garden in Rainier Beach, where Tetsuzen Jason Wirth led a tour of the garden and Theresa Whitehill, Holly Hughes and Michael Daley read poetry in the beautiful landscape. Theresa Whitehill and Felicia Rice's incredible book "Heavy Lifting" was displayed at the festival, and its accompanying short film closed out the last day of the festival.

Attendees anonymously provided testimonials for their experience at the 7th Cascadia Poetry Festival:

"Cascadia Poetry Festival might just be the last stronghold of a truly innovative and wide-ranging poetry event. It has not been colonized by academia or co-opted by special interests. I could hear salmon in the creeks, winds scouring the summits, water drain through the waterways of Cascadia. All of it backed by the hum of what humans do best: sing out their poetry."

"I was kept engaged with the bioregional poets in both panels, workshops and readings. Thanks again for organizing this cohort of brilliant poets and philosophers! My brain and heart were sated."



2023 Major Achievements

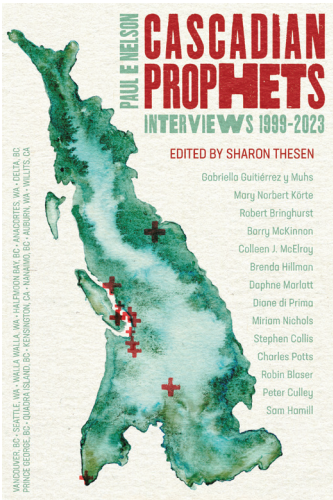
17th Poetry Postcard Fest

Founded in 2007, The Poetry Postcard fest is the gateway to our poetics: writing that is spontaneous, takes its open form from content rather than a predetermined form, and is grounded in a specific place on the planet, like a bioregion. The event is an annual 56-day experiment in spontaneity and community-building that completed its 17th cycle in 2023 and welcomed 518 participants from 8 different countries, 44 U.S. states and 5 Canadian provinces. Poetry Postcard Fest committee member Ina Roy-Faderman had this to say about PPF 2023:

I love the mix of old friends and new poets on my list. There are people on this year's list that I've met in real life because of the fest, and new names in cities I looked up (thank you, Google Maps) because I've never been there. It's like this huge net of connection; the feeling of getting postcards from all over must be what it felt like when telegraphs started connecting people around the country.
—Ina Roy-Faderman



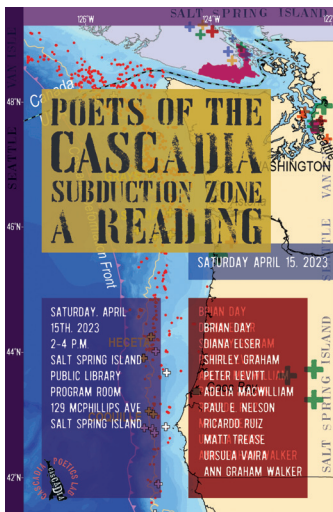
2023 Major Achievements



Cascadian Prophets Podcast

In 2023, CPL founder Paul Nelson interviewed multiple artists, activists and poets for the Cascadian Prophets podcast. Interviews in 2023 included Robert Bringhurst, Lorna Dee Cervantes, John Tanner, Stephen Thomas, Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Ann Batchelor Hursey and Lou Cabeen of the Columbia River Confluence Project, Matt Meyer of the International Peace Research Association, Carletta Carrington Wilson, Theresa Whitehill and Felicia Rice, Shuri Kido, Sharon Thesen and Brenda Hillman.

CPL's second publication of transcribed interviews *Cascadian Prophets (Interviews 1999-2023)* was published in 2023. Edited by Canadian poet Sharon Thesen, the book features multiple transcribed versions of Paul Nelson's interviews over the last 24 years, including interviews with Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Mary Norbert Körte, Colleen J. McElroy, Brenda Hillman and more.



Community Engagement

Cascadia Poetics LAB participated in the two off-site readings for the 2023 AWP Conference, hosted in our home town of Seattle, WA, both at Gallery 110 in the historic Pioneer Square neighborhood.

On April 15, 2023, the Cascadia Poetics LAB board hosted a reading at the Salt Spring Library on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia. Featured readers included Brian Day, Shirley Graham, Diana Elser, Paul Nelson, Matt Trease, Adelia MacWilliam, Anne Graham Walker, Ursula Vaira, and Peter Levitt. The event was attended by about 30 people, including readers.

Following the publication of *Cascadian Zen Vol. I*, Cascadia Poetics LAB engaged with the Seattle and greater Cascadia community through readings for the anthology. Reading locations included Elliott Bay Book Company in Capitol Hill, Seattle, WA, Peninsula College in Port Angeles, WA, Winekraft Wine Bar in Astoria, OR and Time Enough Books in Ilwaco, WA. *Cascadian Zen Vol. I* editors Paul Nelson, Jason Wirth and Adelia MacWilliam were joined by various contributors to the anthology, as well as supporters of the organization.

2023 Major Achievements



Workshops and Classes

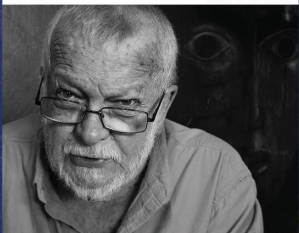
In Autumn of 2023, Paul Nelson continued his workshop series “Life as Rehearsal for the Poem” and “Poetics as Cosmology,” focusing this round of workshops on *Overland to the Islands* by Denise Levertov. Using the predominant text as well as foundational essays, interviews and work from other relevant poets, these workshops focus on spontaneous composition, a reduced reliance on editing, investigative poetics, and a new component of spiritual ecology to deepen connections to place.

In 2023, Cascadia Poetics LAB also introduced a new workshop, “The Cantos of Ezra Pound,” taught by poet, educator, and translator Andrew Schelling. This workshop focused on the seminal text *The Cantos* by Ezra Pound by diving deep into its structure, literary and political themes, and exploring the literary and political history surrounding the text.

KAGEAN NI

Born in 1943, Sam Hamill was raised in Utah, attended the UC—Santa Barbara, where he served as editor of the university’s literary magazine. In 1972, with money awarded for editorial excellence, he co-founded Copper Canyon Press. He wrote numerous books of poetry & literary prose, edited several volumes of poetry & published several books of translations. Editor of Copper Canyon Press for 34 years, he founded Poets Against the War, a movement of poets protesting the invasion of Iraq & Sam received numerous honors & awards, including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, and the U.S.-Japan Friendship Commission, as well as the First Amendment Award from PEN USA, & two Washington Governor’s Arts Awards. He died in Anacortes, Washington, on April 14, 2018. The writing retreat center we envision is named after the home Sam built outside of Port Townsend, Kagean, Japanese for “Shadow Hermitage.”
<https://cascadiapoeticslab.org>

PHOTO BY IAN BOYDEN



Kagean Ni

To achieve Kagean Ni, our envisioned literary arts/bioregional knowledge center in rural Western Washington, Cascadia Poetics LAB will have to engage in more sophisticated & larger-scale fundraising effort. Paul Nelson and Veronica Martinez read *Cash Flow Strategies*, written by organizational consultants Richard and Annie Linzer, to develop a new funding idea called “money parking” which asks individuals to deposit significant sums of money in an interest-bearing account, in which earned interest becomes a donation for the organization (CPL) while the principal is left untouched. Paul mentioned that Amalio Madueño has agreed to write a fundraising plan (no cost to the organization). He then introduced Peter Wolf, a realtor with Windemere, and his son, Simon Wolf, as well as a poet in his own right serving on the Cascadia Poetry Festival Committee. Peter and Simon know the Brinnon area well, and have agreed to assist with finding and financing an appropriate property. They have experience working with communities to coordinate fundraising.

Looking Forward

Organizational Updates

In 2024, Cascadia Poetics LAB plans to continue its signature activities: the international Poetry Postcard Fest, Cascadia Poetry Festival, several workshops that expose students to the poetics we practice, and skilled interviews with key artists and authors who discuss their work. Those interviews are posted monthly as podcasts along with archived interviews from earlier decades.

We are strengthening our infrastructure to support expanded programming via increased attention to financial and demographic data and reporting capabilities, and our committee structures to foster increased engagement from interested and talented volunteers.

Updated Mission

In 2024, Cascadia Poetics LAB plans to adjust and update our mission and committee structure to attract a wider, younger group of participants that reflects our changing communities, growth of our organization and the needs of our community. We continue to explore establishing a place in the bio-region outside of Seattle where we can offer residencies and workshops in a setting that offers a flavor of Cascadia and Cascadian Poetics.

Board

Board Development

In 2023, the Cascadia Poetics LAB board of directors updated the organizational by-laws based on recommendations by non-profit organizational development consultant Amalio Madueño to include committee formation and function, welcoming a new committee system which included a committee for the Poetry Postcard Fest, Cascadia Poetry Festival and Watershed Press.

The Cascadia Poetics LAB board of directors held a board retreat on April 15, 2023 at Cedar Beach resort in Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. At the retreat, the board deliberated on the release of *Cascadian Zen Vol. I*, the upcoming 30th anniversary celebration, the potential of hiring an intern, and marketing plans. The retreat ended with a poetry reading at the Salt Spring Island Library. At the retreat, Watershed Press welcomed British Columbia resident and poet Ursula Vaira to their committee.

In 2023, the quest continued to build a board suited to the cultural realities of the 21st century, creating an organization that will continue to adapt to assure our programming continues for at least 30 more years. We are led by our Founding Director Paul E. Nelson, a Cuban-American, and a majority of women and people of color on the board of directors. Following the resignations of previous board members Cate Gable and Matthew Behrend, Cascadia Poetics LAB welcomed two new members to the board of directors, poet and Seattle University professor Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs and poet and former CU Boulder professor Lorna Dee Cervantes. In June of 2023, Veronica Martinez was hired as Paul Nelson's administrative assistant and Cascadia Poetics LAB's first official employee.

Board Members 2023

Paul E. Nelson, B.A., M.A. Founding Director
Matt Trease, M.A.
Dr. Jason M. Wirth
Diana Elser, Secretary/Interim Treasurer
Adelia MacWilliam (Canada)
Ricardo Ruiz
Dr. Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs
Lorna Dee Cervantes
Matthew Behrend
Cate Gable

Key Volunteers

Joe Chiveney
Dan Clarkson
Sally Hedges-Blanquez
Cate Gable
Zach Charles
Ursula Vaira
Veronica Martinez (Administrative Assistant)

Board meetings are held monthly on the second Monday in the evening, via Zoom. Usually we do not meet in July or August, sometimes both.

Strategic Planning and Fundraising

We are continuing to develop a strategic plan that will include a fundraising and marketing plan. Our major high-level goals are to (1) expand and broaden our reach and (2) to organize and elevate fundraising efforts. We plan to follow and achieve these goals by:

- **Increasing marketing and communications** capacity effectiveness via further web improvements and an established marketing plan
- **Marketing signature events** more widely
- **Seeking capacity-building** funds to employ more assistance in marketing and fundraising
- **Developing key community** partnerships
- **Broadening content** production
- **Formalizing budgeting** and finance reporting & oversight
- **Conducting annual assessments** of board and founding director effectiveness
- **Diversifying culture**, geographic location, gender, age, and sexual orientation within board of directors
- **Developing a succession plan** and organizational transition for founding director Paul Nelson's retirement

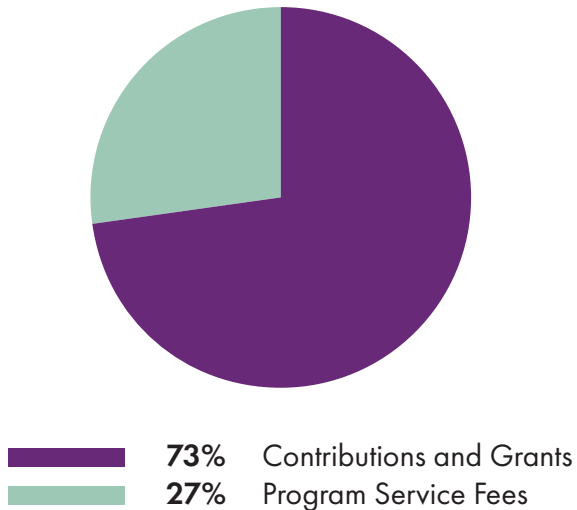
Operations

Cascadia Poetics LAB has ambitious goals that require we begin to formalize and expand our operational capacity and fund-raising capabilities. We are gold level GUIDESTAR certified. We have drafted a set of performance metrics and are now working on how to track those metrics using as much automation as we can. Other operational improvements include:

- Completing a full year being run by a salaried (dependent on availability of funds) Executive Director (titled Founding Director), complete with job description and evaluation procedures. We also added a procedure for the Governance Committee to do an annual check-in with board members to find out how the experience is working out for them, and whether there are concerns that have not been raised in board meetings.
- Creating an intern/admin assistant job (part-time, as funds allow) to help the Founding Director, and to bring a younger perspective into the organization. Veronica Martinez joined us mid-2023 and has been invaluable. One of our goals is to secure funding to make that position full-time.
- Hiring a new firm that specializes in non-profit operations to keep our financials in order and file our 990's.
- Engaging on a consulting basis an experienced grant writer to improve our ability to raise funds. We have a similar arrangement with a website specialist and artist who designed the revitalized website we launched in 2021 - which is still a work in progress, limited by funding.
- Fundraising software has been upgraded to increase convenience for our donors, and to improve our ability to track more efficiently.

Finances

2023 Operating Revenue: \$110,557.00

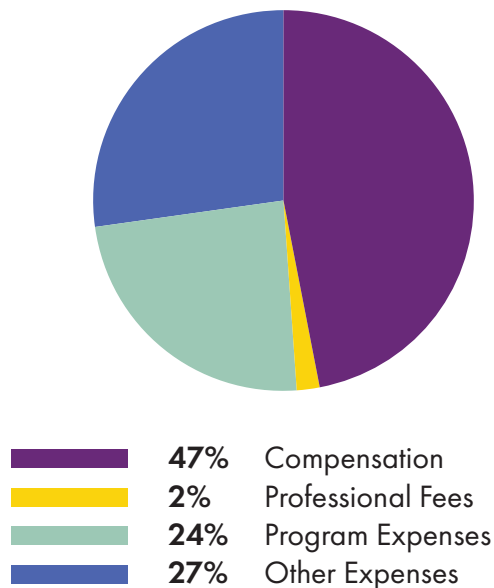


Cascadia Poetics LAB saw an incredible 68% increase in revenues from 2022 to 2023 with an annual budget of \$110,557. We are a small organization that does a lot with a little, and increased revenues make a world of difference for what we can achieve and offer our community. Our goal is to slightly more than double our budget in order to hire our administrative assistant full time, improve our technology, and more smoothly provide programming for our communities. In 2023, we have been dedicated to formulating and solidifying a formal strategic and fundraising plan.

Financial Summary

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$12,731.00
Total Net Assets	\$12,731.00

2023 Operating Expenses: \$110,506.00



Revenue

Contributions and Grants	\$80,007.00 [73%]
Program Service Fees	\$30,550.00 [27%]
Total Operating Revenue	\$110,557.00

Expenses

Compensation	\$52,410.00 [47%]
Professional Fees	\$2,100.00 [2%]
Program Expenses	\$25,958.00 [24%]
Other Expenses	\$30,038.00 [27%]
Total Operating Expenses	\$110,506.00

Contributions

Thank You

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our Sponsors, Funding Partners, and Business In-Kind Donors. It is through their unwavering support that Cascadia Poetics LAB has been able to thrive. Their generosity touches our hearts and makes our mission possible. We are funded primarily by public grants, and by modest donations from many different supporters who give what they can.

2023 Sponsors and Funding Partners

- National Endowment for the Arts
- Humanities Washington
- WESTAF
- 4 Culture
- Subud Greater Seattle/ Spring Street Center
- SICA-USA
- Arts WA
- White River Valley Museum and Mary Olson Farm
- Steinbrueck Native Gallery
- Poets & Writers
- Empty Bowl Press
- Office of Arts & Culture Seattle
- La Sala
- ArtsFund Community Accelerator Grant

2023 Business In-Kind Donors

- Colored Horse Studios
- Joe & Cathy - catering & food
- Matt Trease - technical
- Greg Bem - technical
- Anonymous - lodging
- Spring Street Center
- Subud International Cultural Association
- Subud Greater Seattle
- Prolific Writers Life
- Gallery 110
- Salt Spring Library

Thank You to Our Sponsors

