

## Meet Energy Champion Winnie Adams

Winnie Adams came to Waldron Island in the late 1970s to spend time with her brother and his children. Her parents were already living on Orcas Island, which made for a natural transition. She has served our island community as a public-school teacher, environmental educator and a yoga instructor – maybe most well remembered for her Mamasana classes for new moms and babies. She is active in local writing and farm-food circles and served on the OPALCO Board of Directors.

Currently, Winnie and her husband, Bob, spend about half the year living off the grid (powered by solar) and gardening on Waldron and the rest of their time on Orcas. They live a low cash lifestyle: growing their own food, trading with neighbors and keeping the thermostat low. Winnie says: *“Being an islander means you are dependent on interdependence,” said Winne. “We must be engaged community members and helpful to our neighbors. It also means slowing down, being flexible and entertaining yourself.”*

For their Orcas home, Doug Poole conducted a Home Snapshot Energy Assessment and created a master plan to maximize efficiency. Each year since, they do another project on the list which has included new windows, a ductless heat

pump, LED light bulbs and more – working with OPALCO for rebates and incentives. While their Orcas home in the trees isn’t a good location for solar, they partially offset their energy use through participation in the Decatur Community Solar Project.

Winnie was encouraged by her friend and former General Manager, Doug Bechtel, to check out the OPALCO board. He emphasized that you didn’t need to be an engineer but that they were looking for a diverse set of big picture thinkers – people just like Winnie who have the health of the island community on their minds. Winnie was thoughtful in her approach to joining the OPALCO board, attending many meetings before running. She was impressed by the smart, considerate, conscientious board and she decided she wanted to contribute. The first time she ran (on a very full ballot), she lost but was later appointed when a board member retired midterm. She served the Co-op for eight years.

During her time on the OPALCO board, some of her major accomplishments include creating an active MORE (member owned renewable energy) committee – supporting exponential growth of local solar generators and laying the foundation for our current shift to renewable power, and hosting “tea talks”



to give members an opportunity to speak directly with the Board. She helped to shepherd in the acquisition of Rock Island Communications, joining PNGC (a regional generating cooperative) and a significant shift in the OPALCO team when about 25% of the staff turned over due to retirements in a quick two-year period.

“I’m so impressed with the dedication, talent and professionalism of our OPALCO staff and management team!” said Winnie. “The next generation of leaders are here and they have what we need to build a healthy energy future.”

Winnie continues to be one of OPALCO’s biggest cheerleaders and truly demonstrates what it means to live The Electric Life.



THE ISLAND WAY

**OPALCO is powered by YOU – the members who own and operate the co-op! We are proud to be YOUR locally-owned and operated non-profit co-op. Email [communications@opalco.com](mailto:communications@opalco.com) if you have a member story to share.**

## OPALCO Board Meetings open to Members via Zoom

Beginning with the January 21, 2021 regular meeting of the OPALCO Board of Directors, co-op members will be able to sit in on virtual board meetings using a Zoom connection. A link for members to access the meetings will be published with board materials each Monday before a board meeting online at [www.opalco.com](http://www.opalco.com). Go to the Document Library / Board Meetings & Materials.

When OPALCO shifted to virtual meetings in March of 2020 due to COVID-19, staff hosted a FaceBook Live session at the beginning of each meeting to continue the tradition of a member comment and question period. OPALCO has upgraded their technical capacity to include co-op members for the entire regular meeting and will continue to invite member comments and questions during the first part of the meeting.

**Find details about our annual board calendar at [www.opalco.com](http://www.opalco.com)**



**OPALCO Board Nominations are now open!**

**Why Run?**

**You can make a difference!**

**Help shape the future of the co-op! It's the co-op way!**

Find out more about the benefits, eligibility and what it means to serve on a non-profit co-op board.

**[www.opalco.com/why-run](http://www.opalco.com/why-run)**

**Important dates:**

**Jan. 27 – Applications to committee due**

**Feb. 19 – Applications by petition due**

**Feb. 26 – List Candidates posted**

**March 22 – Election opens**

**April 24 – Annual Meeting**