

THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST

SPRING 2021 NEWS

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MISSION

We Keep the Promise of Wilderness – by acquiring and transferring private lands to public ownership to complete designated and proposed wilderness areas, or directly protect wilderness values.

VALUES

We revere our remaining wild places, a legacy to pass on to future generations, the tenacity to work until the job is done and treating everyone with fairness.

VISION

We envision a National Wilderness Preservation System that is complete, secure and accessible.

On the cover:
**Organ Mountains
in New Mexico**
Wayne Suggs photo

FROM THE PRESIDENT

SPRING: Noun. A time or season of growth or development.

Last night as I laid down to sleep, the sound of Pacific tree frogs drifted through my open window, a distinct new addition to the nightly hoots of Barred Owls or yip-howl of coyotes during the winter. I couldn't help but smile. A changing of the seasons is upon us.

Spring is a time of renewal and growth, the beginning of something new as we surface from the tenebrific darkness of winter. And like the emerging season, The Wilderness Land Trust is embracing the opportunity to work with a new administration to develop and advance additional wilderness projects across the American west.

While the Trust has made meaningful strides to remove the threat of private development within and adjacent designated wilderness during the past four years, progress towards transferring those same properties slowed to a crawl as the prior administration focused on a different set of priorities for our cherished public lands.

We have approximately 5,700 acres of property waiting to be transferred off our books and into the hands of public ownership. During the coming year, we look forward to significantly boosting the number of project transfers and we are grateful this administration is

Our ultimate goal is to ensure a national wilderness preservation system that continues to expand with every acre we purchase and transfer.

openly committed to conserving at least 30 percent of our nation's land and ocean areas by 2030.

In the pages that follow, you will find stories that explain how the Trust's work plays an important role in this historic effort, as well as profiles about generous people – just like you – who make it all possible.

Our ultimate goal is to ensure future generations experience a landscape more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate, wilderness areas that are ecologically intact, biologically diverse and well-connected to adjacent wildlands to ensure safe passage of wildlife, and a national wilderness preservation system that continues to expand with every acre we purchase and transfer.

Thank you for your generous investment in the work of the Trust, and your valued partnership on all our projects. We are deeply grateful for your support.

– Brad Borst, President



Brad Borst



A SNAPSHOT OF RECENT SUCCESSES

THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST is dedicated to acquiring private land within and adjacent designated wilderness before transferring it to public ownership to be incorporated into the surrounding wilderness. With each land purchase, the Trust not only removes the threat of potential development within the designation's borders, but also helps protect the health of an ecosystem that depends on wilderness to thrive. Some of our recent successes over the last six months include:

Purchased a 236-acre property - the last private inholding - in the heart of the 7,000-acre Juniper Dunes Wilderness in southeast Washington state. In doing so, you have helped remove the threat of future development on this harsh, beautiful area. The Trust is now working through the complex process of transferring this property to the Bureau of Land Management and when we're done, this wild and windy wilderness will be complete.

Purchased 160 acres that straddle the Wild Sky Wilderness in Washington state. This land is located near the Silver Creek drainage where the Trust has eight active projects underway. The Wild Sky Wilderness is part of a 2.6 million-acre wilderness complex in Washington state that crosses the Cascade Mountain Range from Canada south to Snoqualmie Pass.

Transferred the 21-acre Colombine Hondo property to public ownership as part of the Carson National Forest directly adjacent to the Colombine Hondo Wilderness in New Mexico.

Transferred 581 acres of the Rimrock Rose Ranch - Sabinoso Wilderness Project to the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and an additional 320-acre Lagartija Creek – Sabinoso Wilderness project parcel to TPL where they will soon be transferred to public ownership. By combining these parcels with TPL's pending donation of the former HOB0 Ranch to the Bureau of Land Management as the latest addition to the Sabinoso Wilderness, all these properties will become designated wilderness with one transfer.

The Trust has 10 projects underway across Washington state, including eight in the Wild Sky and Henry M. Jackson Wilderness areas.



The Ferruginous Hawk is a threatened and endangered species in Washington state that is often found in the Juniper Dunes Wilderness in Washington state.

Don Bartling

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

We look forward to sharing more success stories with you. We are actively working in designated and proposed wilderness areas in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Keep up with our work at The Wilderness Land Trust by following our adventures on Facebook, Instagram, and at www.wildernesslandtrust.org. Our e-news is also a great way to be the first to hear about our wilderness projects. If you aren't already signed up, email Ingrid@wildernesslandtrust.org to be included. We promise to never sell or share your information with anyone.

Thank you for your unwavering support of our work to protect our wilderness landscapes!

Vibrant desert landscapes. Towering snowcapped mountains. Breathtaking national monuments. New Mexico's peaceful and diverse landscapes are steeped in heritage thousands of years in the making, inspiring adventurers from across the country to descend upon this southwestern state.

It's no surprise New Mexico is known as...

THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

From the Sangre De Cristo Mountains to the Organ Mountains and everywhere in between, New Mexico's geologic evolution has created a colorful patchwork of mountains, valleys and basins with a biological diversity that has evolved over 700,000 years.

But despite boasting some of the nation's most majestic wildlands, **New Mexico has less protected wilderness than any other western state.** Only 2.5 percent of New Mexico's total land area is protected as wilderness and 10.5 percent held as tribal lands, with an estimated five million additional roadless acres deserving of protection.

For more information on these efforts, please contact Aimee Rutledge at aimee@wildernesslandtrust.org or 415-606-5895.

Without it, this beautiful landscape is vulnerable to permanent destruction from oil and gas development, mining, commercial logging and other threats.

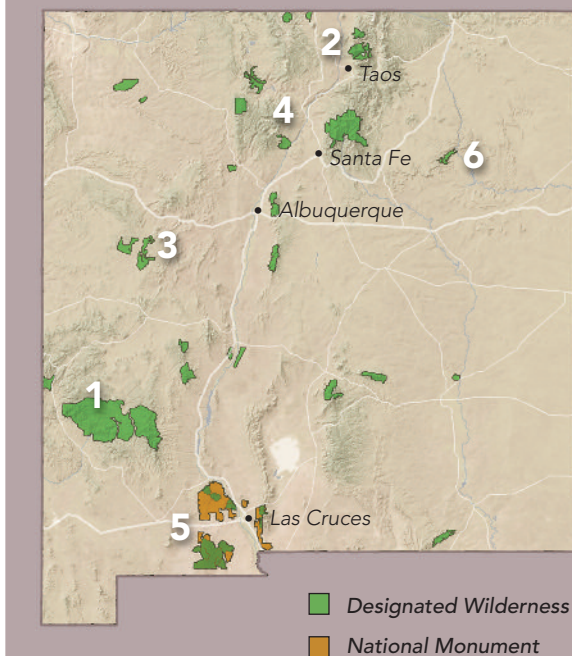
Since 2004, the Trust has been working to conserve this land by removing private use threats in the Gila, Columbine Hondo and Sabinoso Wilderness Areas and the El Malpais National Conservation Area (NCA).

This spring, the Trust partnered with Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument to purchase and protect a 109-acre property adjacent to the entrance to the Achenbach Canyon in the Organ Mountains Wilderness.

This project builds on our 2020 acquisition of 98 acres on the north end of the wilderness. Both sites secure future public access and prevent residential development encroaching on the designation from nearby Las Cruces.

Our Achenbach Canyon project is directly east of Las Cruces. By purchasing it, we are dispersing increased public use from Las Cruces, which will protect native plants and other sensitive wildlife. We are grateful to all our supporters who have helped us protect New Mexico's breathtaking landscapes, preserving this land of enchantment for us, our families and future generations.

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks
National Monument



NEW MEXICO AT A GLANCE

5,005 ACRES PROTECTED SO FAR

1 GILA WILDERNESS

One parcel acquired • 21 acres
Private development prevented, spring protected near East Fork Gila River

The Gila Wilderness was the world's first protected wilderness. Today adventurers from across the country flock to New Mexico to backpack the Gila's high mesas, rolling hills and deep canyons.

2 COLUMBINE HONDO WILDERNESS

One parcel acquired • 20 acres
Private development prevented, trail access protected

The headwaters of the Rio Hondo and Red River, both major tributaries of the upper Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, flow through the Columbine Hondo Wilderness, providing surface water for downstream agricultural communities.

3 EL MALPAIS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

Two parcels acquired • 90 acres
Private development prevented, elk habitat protected

El Malpais is Spanish for "the badlands," the perfect description of a region of New Mexico where prior volcanic eruptions sent rivers of molten rock and flying cinders over the valley floor, leaving a stark landscape created from three million years worth of hardened lava.

4 ARROYO DE LOS FRIJOLES INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREA

One parcel acquired • 53 acres
Private motorized access and cabin use prevented, creek, wet meadow habitat and trail access protected

Located south of Abiquiu, this is one of several roadless areas surrounding the Canones Creek National Trail that have the potential to become future wilderness.

5 ORGAN MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS, ORGAN MOUNTAINS-DESERT PEAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Seven parcels acquired • 207 acres
Residential development prevented, public access and wildlife habitat protected

The striking granite crags and spires of the Organ Mountains range from 4,600 to just over 9,000 feet and offer incredible hiking trails, important wildlife habitat, and watershed protection.

6 SABINOSO WILDERNESS

13 parcels acquired • 4,246 acres
Public access provided to Sabinoso Wilderness for the first time since designation

The Sabinoso Wilderness is located in remote northeastern New Mexico. Spectacular Canyon Largo stretches 16 miles through its landscape, with upper elevations reaching 6,200 feet. Its diverse microenvironment is home to mountain lion, black bear, mule deer, New Mexico Dahl sheep, blue heron, Rio Grande turkey and migratory water fowl.

The Trust's work in this area has increased the size of this wilderness by 25 percent.

Lisa Phillips

THE PARTNERS BEHIND OUR LAND TRANSFERS

Once The Wilderness Land Trust acquires a property, the Trust staff begin the process of transferring the land to the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management or National Park Service for permanent protection. However, this process is more complex than simply signing over the deed. It takes a dozen or more steps to add our land to the surrounding wilderness.

These steps could not be completed without our strong agency partnerships. Working hand in hand with our staff, these specialists help us keep the promise of wilderness. As an expression of our gratitude, we wanted to feature a few of these dedicated folks starting with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Region 5 office is made up of real estate specialists who process land acquisitions to protect our forests, critical habitat areas and endangered species. With their help and the help of our other agency partners, we have protected nearly 35,000 acres in California.

KATHY VALENZUELA
Senior Realty Officer, U.S. Forest Service

Tenure: "Somewhere north of 40 years." After spending time in a Youth Conservation Corps program, Kathy ditched her plans to become a veterinarian because she liked being outside and working among trees.

Favorite Wilderness Land Trust project: Castle Crags – 1,257 acres of land adjacent to the Castle Crags Wilderness that protected mature forest and critical wildlife habitat, as well as provided a positive economic impact for local communities through additional public recreation access.

"The Trust's Castle Crags purchase was a one of a kind for me. We were approached by the landowner but direct land purchases by the Forest Service are time consuming and frustrating so we connected them to the Trust. This one started out as just another project, but when we watched a virtual fly over of the land, the Crags took my breath away. By purchasing and transferring this land, the Trust made that area whole, and provided an amazing recreational opportunity for hikers and the rock climbing community."

SANDRA LEW
Realty Specialist, U.S. Forest Service

Tenure: 35+ years. Sandra spent a lot of time at local parks and lakes growing up, followed by summer camping trips to national forests and parks. That, and a seasonal parks and recreation job fueled her love of the outdoors and led to her long career with the Forest Service.

Favorite Wilderness Land Trust project: 29-acre Milpitas purchase, Los Padres National Forest, Ventana Wilderness edgeholding

"The Milpitas purchase was a tiny project with a really big impact because of where it was located. When the Trust purchased the land and transferred it to the Forest Service, they provided access to thousands of acres of the Los Padres National Forest."



BECKY BRAND
Realty Specialist, U.S. Forest Service

Tenure: 21 years. Becky was struggling to make her home improvement store job work with her children's scheduling needs. Her sister worked for the Forest Service and encouraged her to apply because it was a family-friendly agency. She fell in love with the work and never looked back.

Favorite Wilderness Land Trust project: Trout Creek 2 and 3 – 160-acre Trout Creek 2 provides access to the Los Padres National Forest and 324-acre Trout Creek 3 provides access and is adjacent to the Santa Lucia Wilderness.

"In order to transfer land, we have 20 or more documents to prepare, including title reports, water and mineral rights, physical examination of the property, surveyor review, hazmat exam, funding approval, and more. All of these steps need to be completed before we get the green light to move forward. We need to evaluate everything and the process takes about a year to complete.

The Trout Creek 2 property involved a court case over some title issues. I worked with Aimee Rutledge (vice president and senior lands specialist) and she was able to work with the title company to get it cleaned up before the land transferred to the Forest Service. The Wilderness Land Trust staff are really good at thinking outside the box and coming up with great ideas on how to work around the different pieces of the puzzle that make up each project. I can't imagine not having the Trust as a partner. They do so much for us and are a wonderful asset to the Forest Service."



"Conservation, public access, and quality outdoor experiences are important. It's more than just a career."
– Kathy Valenzuela



"I consider the Forest Service my legacy job. Most of my work will live on forever and that's important."
– Sandra Lew



"It's so great to know that what we do will protect the land for our kids, their kids and generations to come."
– Becky Brand

A NEW TRAIL EMERGES IN THE WILDERNESS



In late 2020, the Deadwood Fire Crew built a significant portion of an officially designated trail leading from Castle Lake to Heart Lake.

Deadwood Fire Crew

Buying land is just the first step in a long process that not only conserves wilderness, but also protects the health of an entire ecosystem that often depends on its connection to the land to thrive.

When The Wilderness Land Trust purchased a privately owned 637-acre parcel of land that straddles the border of the ruggedly beautiful Castle Crags Wilderness in northern California, it saved the Little Castle Lake area from private development and the potential closure of the popular trail that leads to Heart Lake.

Unfortunately, the thousands of people who enjoy this sometimes hard to find trail every year have created a spider web of unofficial routes across the landscape in their quest to find Heart Lake, to the detriment of the surrounding ecosystem.

To protect the area, the Trust coordinated with the U.S. Forest Service and Mt. Shasta Trail Association to devise a plan to create an officially designated trail leading from Castle Lake to Heart Lake. In late 2020, the Deadwood Fire Crew built a significant portion of this trail with plans to complete it this spring/summer.

The trail traverses the Trust's newly purchased property, which will eventually be transferred to the Forest Service as part of the Castle Crags Wilderness.

Thank you to our partners for helping us protect this special landscape:

- U.S. Forest Service Region 5
- Mt. Shasta Trail Association
- Siskiyou Land Trust
- David and Lucile Packard Foundation

For more information on these efforts, please contact Aimee Rutledge at aimee@wildernesslandtrust.org or 415-606-5895.

DEVELOPMENT THREAT REMOVED FROM INDEPENDENCE PASS



Below: the Roaring Fork River, which runs directly below the Trust's Collegiate Peaks Wilderness property. With the preservation of the property, the river downstream is now protected from debris and runoff from development.

Numerous wildlife species rely on the river corridor for their survival, making it a great place to view elk, bald eagles, osprey, great blue herons, moose, mule deer, and more.



A cabin of historical significance will remain on the property.

Kelly Conde

From wind swept summits to lush, vibrant meadows, the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness in Colorado is said to possess the highest average elevation of any wilderness in the lower 48. It is also home to eight "fourteeners" (peaks higher than 14,000 feet in elevation) and an expansive variety of high valley flora and fauna characteristic of the Rocky Mountains.

In Fall 2020, The Wilderness Land Trust purchased a 19-acre property east of Aspen just off of Highway 82 in the Independence Pass area of the Collegiate Peaks.

This land is a special region known for its incredible alpine landscapes. It is also visible from the road and along a popular hiking trail. Without protection, it was vulnerable to residential development, which would have disrupted plant and animal habitat and threatened access to the trail. With a generous matching grant from a local resident and contributions from the AABC, Alpenglow, BF, Independence Pass, Iselin and

Oak Foundations, as well as numerous individuals in the Aspen area, the Trust raised the funds needed to acquire this critical property.

In the last three years, the organization has purchased two other properties totaling an additional 19 acres and with this most recent purchase, the Trust has removed the last remaining threat of private development in this area of the Collegiate Peaks.

Permanent Protection in Progress
Purchasing this land is the first of a two-step process. The Trust is now working with the U.S. Forest Service to clean up the property before

transferring it to public ownership. This work includes removing a metal roof, wood burning stove and other debris from in and around a cabin. Because the cabin is of historical significance, the log walls will remain. Once cleanup of the property is complete, the Trust plans to transfer the property to the USFS to be incorporated into the surrounding wilderness area.

We are grateful for our partnership with the Independence Pass Foundation and the generous support from local organizations and residents who jumped in to help us protect this piece of Colorado paradise.



Kelly Conde



For more information on these efforts, please contact Kelly Conde at kelly@wildernesslandtrust.org or 208-223-3964.

INSPIRING WILDERNESS PROTECTION

Getting to know Fred Dietrich

Science, conservation, giving back to the community, the value of spending time with family. These are at least four things you will learn about Fred Dietrich, Ph.D, should you have the opportunity to meet him. On any given day Fred can be found researching genomic technology in his lab at Duke University, leading a trail building project with a local youth group, planting trees to restore areas in local protected lands, helping scouts plan and carry out Eagle Scout projects, or other trail work projects on the North Carolina Mountains-To-Sea Trail.

It was Fred's dad who got him interested in the environment, wilderness and science. Sam Dietrich often recruited Fred and his sister Lura to volunteer at the local recycling coalition and lobbied for the city to include recycling as part of waste disposal. At the same time, Sam was also volunteering his time and resources to protect threatened resources such as Mono Lake and Mineral King in California where he grew up.

"My dad started backpacking in the Sierra in the late 1950s before the

Wilderness Act. In the late 1960s when I was about seven, he started taking me on trips. First to Desolation Wilderness and later to the now Ansel Adams and Emigrant Wilderness areas, King's Canyon National Park and more. It was always great to get out in the woods with my dad."

"Preserving an area of wilderness my dad loved is the perfect way to honor him... generations of hikers walking through the canyon will look up at the beautiful canyon walls, undisrupted by development."

Fred may now live in North Carolina, but his favorite wilderness memories reside in California. Like the time his dad took him backpacking over Hell for Sure Pass in the John Muir Wilderness. "I was 11 years old and it was a big deal for me to carry a heavy pack over that pass." Or the time his dad got upset while fly fishing at Edith Lake in Yosemite because his favorite fly snagged the bottom of the lake after he hooked a trout. "I had learned to tie flies and my dad loved using them.

So when his line snagged I took off all my clothes, jumped in the water and followed his line. I reached into the

grass at the bottom of the lake, grabbed the fish, swam to the surface and returned his fly and the fish. That evening we had a delicious fireside meal of fresh cooked trout."

What Fred values most about his adventures is the time he has spent bonding with family and friends on the countless backpacking and hiking trips throughout his life. Fred credits his dad for igniting his passion for wilderness and the importance of protecting it. Something he says he hopes to inspire in others.

Sam Dietrich passed away in 2008. To honor him, Fred worked with the Trust to protect the Upper Lundy Lake property in Lundy Canyon, a 49-acre former mining claim within the Inyo National Forest and adjacent to a popular hiking trail in Lundy Canyon. "Preserving an area of wilderness my dad loved is the perfect way to honor him," says Fred. "Generations of hikers walking through the canyon will look up at the beautiful canyon walls, undisrupted by development. They won't know exactly how this land came to be protected, and that would be just fine with my dad, as long as future generations can create memories as we did in those mountains."

Fred Dietrich

Fred and his father Sam on a 1995 trip through the Southern Emigrant Wilderness.

Why Fred Dietrich Supports The Wilderness Land Trust

Fred has been a Wilderness Land Trust supporter since 2010. Having hiked and backpacked in the Sierras for decades, Fred says it's important to see land that has the potential for development become part of the surrounding wilderness instead.

"My goal is to continue helping to preserve properties in the Sierra Nevada Wilderness areas because that's the area I grew up exploring. It's important to give back and protect these areas. I appreciate what the trust does and am glad to support its mission."



Fred Dietrich

Fred's niece Anika Nichols on a recent trip to the Trust's 49-acre Lundy Canyon property in the Inyo National Forest.

LEAVE A WILDERNESS LEGACY

With each land purchase, The Wilderness Land Trust not only conserves the wild land within its project's borders, but also helps protect the health of an ecosystem that depends on wilderness to thrive.

Our work provides permanent protection for vital habitat, ensures corridor connectivity for wildlife to roam free, and safeguards streams and waterways that provide fresh clean water for plants, animals and humans.

Help us protect our National Wilderness Preservation System and the legacy of designated wilderness for future generations. The creation of a bequest in your will is a relatively simple and powerful way you can support our work to protect the wild places you and your family love.

Speak with a knowledgeable, reputable financial advisor today to help you get started.

To learn more contact Brad Borst, President, at 206-842-1214 or brad@wildernesslandtrust.org

Thank you for your generosity.





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SPRING 2021 NEWS



This spring, the Trust will transfer its 154-acre Windham Bay property in Alaska to the U.S. Forest Service. Once complete, we will have protected the largest remaining private inholding in the Chuck River Wilderness. This land is dense with wildlife-rich rainforest that hosts grizzly and black bear, moose, wolves, and many other species. It is also home to Spruce Creek, a known salmon stream, and muskeg wetlands.

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