



THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST
2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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:
The Raggeds
Wilderness,
Colorado
Photo by
John Fielder



This issue is dedicated to the late **John Fielder**: renowned photographer, longtime board member and supporter of the Trust, and lover of Colorado's wild places.

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT

The Promise of Wilderness. Our Promise to You.

Happy autumn dear friends of The Wilderness Land Trust.

As we enter our fourth decade, we hope you'll find a moment to celebrate all that we have accomplished together – because there is so much to be proud of.



As the only organization with a lands program solely dedicated to removing the threat of industrial, commercial and private development within, and adjacent to, federally designated wilderness, we hold a unique position in the wider world of land conservation. And, while the properties we acquire and transfer range from 2.5 acres to several thousand, it's fair to say we have had a positive impact on more than 17 million acres of wilderness, not to mention nimbly and efficiently expanding our national wilderness preservation system year after year without fail. Because the majority of our work occurs in regions with economies dominated by outdoor recreation, natural resource extraction and real estate development, these projects matter because they bring each wilderness area one step closer to being a holistic and protected system.

In 2022, to celebrate our 30th anniversary, the board and staff revisited our mission, vision, and impact as a way to reflect on our accomplishments and, at the same time, anticipate a roadmap for the future. What we came away with is a simple value proposition that suggests that our nation's wilderness is guaranteed for you and your children's children to experience nature in a way that is unique to wilderness; for wildlife, water, forests, and biodiversity, for ecological health and climate resilience, for equitable access for enjoyment, appreciation, solitude, and rejuvenation, and for economies based on the beauty of nature.

How we go about this in our next thirty years includes the following:

- **Continue to offer a fair and honorable service** to federal agencies and landowners,
- **Ensure smart decision-making based on current and accurate data**, and a project prioritization system that is based on land conservation values and impact,
- **Assume reasonable risks to pursue land transaction opportunities** that meet our values and provide a reasonable return on investment for our federal partners and donors,
- **Collaborate and contribute** to the wilderness movement in a meaningful way,
- **Operate at full organizational capacity** to fulfill our mission, and;
- **Cast a wide net to attract and keep new and diverse audiences** who are engaged in the protection of wilderness and wildlands.

Leveraging our expertise, distinct niche, and excellent reputation, we imagine a future that capitalizes on a successful business model to increase philanthropic mission support, building a broader, more diverse, engaged constituency of individuals who believe in a future where protected wildlands and wilderness are key to combatting global threats caused by climate change, biodiversity loss, and development pressures both within and on the edge of wilderness areas.

The Wilderness Land Trust's ability to respond to the challenges of our times is directly related to two things: a strong board and staff with the vision to see the difference that this organization makes on a national level, and the support of donors like you who want to make that vision a reality. If you like what you read in the pages that follow, I hope that you will give as generously as you can during our fall fundraising drive. From an unrestricted gift that supports our day-to-day operational needs, to a named wilderness opportunity fund that provides critical resources to buy land, to including us in your estate plans with a planned gift, we promise to put every dollar to work protecting the wild places you and your family love.

Thank you for 31 years of unwavering support in pursuit of our mission, and together, let's boldly move forward for more!

Sarah Chase Shaw, Board Chair

Brad Borst, President

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

ACQUIRED

Last year the Trust acquired six exciting properties in Washington, California, and Colorado totaling 1,277 acres.

Purchase of the Greater New York Lode and Jumbo Lode projects continue our work in the Silver Creek drainage of Washington's **Wild Sky Wilderness** where old mining claims riddle the valley. Nearby in the adjacent **Henry M. Jackson Wilderness**, our purchase of West Seattle Lode also helps to unify the landscape.

Farther north in the **Mt. Baker Wilderness**, the Trust protection of the 20-acre 4th of July Lode property includes one of the last remaining alpine glaciers in the wilderness area.

In Northern California, the 918-acre Thomas Creek property adjoining the **Sanhedrin Wilderness** was at high risk for development, but our acquisition has protected its critical spawning habitat for Steelhead and Coho salmon in the wild and scenic Eel River.

And, in Colorado's **Weminuche Wilderness**, we purchased the 31-acre Great Western Lode, protecting sensitive alpine habitat and ensuring public access on a popular trail.

TRANSFERRED

Last year the Trust transferred five properties totaling 2,259 acres to public ownership in Oregon, California, and Washington.

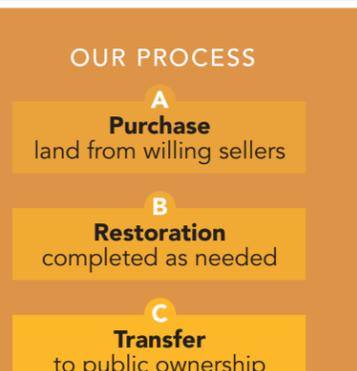
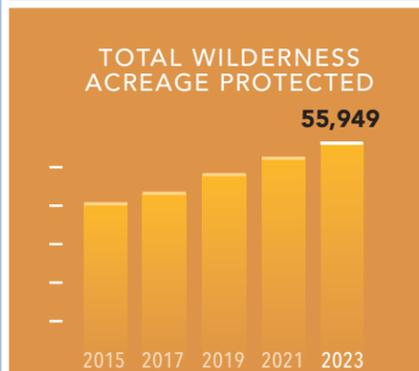
We completed the final step in protecting the 60-acre Little Chetco property, restoring an active dredge mining site to its wilderness character and removing the last remaining private inholding in Oregon's **Kalmiopsis Wilderness**, completing the wilderness area.

In California we continued our work in the **Bodie Hills** with the transfer of the 1,687-acre Flying M property, helping to protect some of the most ecologically intact and highest biodiversity lands in the region. We also built off past projects in the California Central Coast with the transfer of the 147-acre Trout Creek 4, the final in a series of projects ensuring connected habitat between the **Santa Lucia** and **Garcia Wilderness** areas.

Finally, in Washington we added two former inholdings in the **Wild Sky Wilderness**, bringing us one step closer to protecting the Silver Creek drainage.



| Acquired in 2022-23 | Transferred in 2022-23 | Other current projects | Completed projects |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6 properties 1,277 acres | 5 properties 2,259 acres | 51 properties 3,222 acres | 462 properties 49,191 acres |



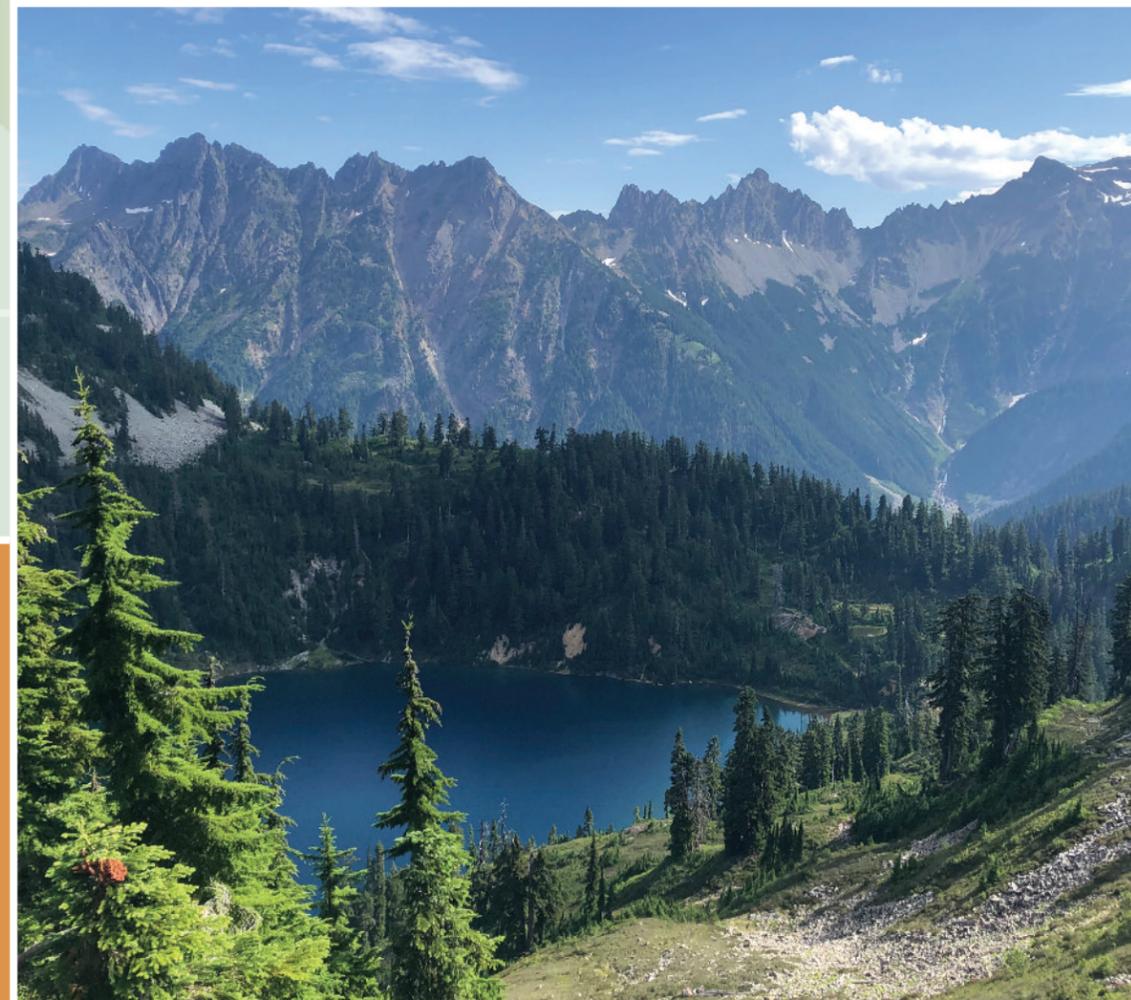
WILDERNESS PROTECTED

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

| PROPERTY | WILDERNESS AREA | AGENCY | PARCELS | ACRES | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------|---------|
| ACQUIRED | | | | | |
| 1 | Greater New York Lode | Wild Sky Wilderness, WA | USFS | 3 | 280.0 |
| 2 | Jumbo Lode | Wild Sky Wilderness, WA | USFS | 1 | 12.0 |
| 3 | West Seattle Lode | Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, WA | USFS | 1 | 15.2 |
| 4 | 4th of July Lode | Mt. Baker Wilderness, WA | USFS | 1 | 20.7 |
| 5 | Thomas Creek | Sanhedrin Wilderness, CA | USFS | 4 | 918.0 |
| 6 | Great Western Lode | Weminuche Wilderness, CO | USFS | 3 | 31.0 |
| TOTAL | | | 13 | 1,276.9 | |
| TRANSFERRED | | | | | |
| 7 | Little Chetco | Kalmiopsis Wilderness, OR | USFS | 1 | 60.0 |
| 8 | Flying M | Bodie Hills WSA, CA | BLM | 5 | 1,687.0 |
| 9 | Trout Creek 4 | Santa Lucia Wilderness, CA | USFS | 1 | 147.0 |
| 10 | Evergreen | Wild Sky Wilderness, WA | USFS | 8 | 345.0 |
| 11 | Jasperson Lode | Wild Sky Wilderness, WA | USFS | 1 | 20.0 |
| TOTAL | | | 16 | 2,259.0 | |



The Great Western Lode acquisition protects sensitive alpine habitat and ensures public access on a popular trail in Colorado's Weminuche Wilderness.



Above: Signs of connected wildlife habitat in California's Sanhedrin Wilderness.

Left: Wild Sky Wilderness projects bring us one step closer to protecting the Silver Creek drainage in Washington.

LAST YEAR, AS THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST CELEBRATED OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY, WE REFLECTED BACK ON ALL THAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER.

We also undertook a strategic planning process to point our gaze forward and set the Trust's course into the coming decades. While our work remains anchored in the same mission that has brought us this far – to keep the promise of wilderness by acquiring and transferring private lands – the national conservation landscape is changing and we have the opportunity to rise to meet new challenges.

The threats that our wild places face today are more complex than ever before. But the tools available in our work to protect these special places are also more sophisticated than ever.

We're excited to share with you our 2022–2026 Strategic Plan for how our small, but mighty, organization will continue to evolve, advancing how we work, where we work, and who we work with.

THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022–2026

HOW WE WORK

By 2026 we will advance how we work by establishing a GIS-based inventory and analysis system.

Behind the scenes of the work you see is a process for identifying, inventorying, and evaluating potential projects. For three decades this process has been largely analog, using county maps and anecdotal data from project partners to analyze and select projects on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

With your support we are working to create the first-ever complete

GIS-based inholding inventory, not only to support the Trust's work, but as a tool that can be shared with our agency and non-profit partners.

Once a potential project is identified, we evaluate it using a prioritization criteria that scores its wilderness values and threat of development. Until now we have largely scored projects using on-the-ground staff assessments and consultation by

partners. However, with the rise of remote sensing, GIS mapping, and powerful data modeling, it is becoming possible to measure factors like climate resilience and habitat connectivity on both a landscape scale and parcel-by-parcel. Using this technology, **we are working to develop a dynamic analysis tool to layer with our on-the-ground work, making our prioritization criteria scoring more accurate and nuanced.**

WHERE WE WORK

By 2026 we will expand where we work to protect vulnerable wilderness east of the Rockies and to more systematically include private edgeholdings.

The Trust's work has been focused on protecting wilderness in the western lower 48 states, and more recently in Alaska. While states east of the Rocky Mountains only contain a combined 4% of the nation's wilderness, it is vulnerable wilderness. Smaller wilderness areas often have little buffer of public lands surrounding them and are even more susceptible to the effects of nearby development.

Many eastern wilderness areas also provide important access to life-changing wilderness experiences for the residents of nearby urban centers. Driven by this need, **your support will allow us to complete inventories of and begin protecting private wilderness inholdings in the upper mid-west and eastern states,** expanding our work east of the Rockies.

While protecting private wilderness inholdings has always been at the heart of our work, we are seeing how rapid development is pushing the wildland-urban interface closer and closer to wilderness areas in many states. In response, **we are working to complete inventories of private property adjacent to wilderness areas, known as edgeholdings.** While we have sometimes protected edgeholdings in the past, this will allow us to approach it more systematically.

WHO WE WORK WITH

By 2026 we will expand who we work with by growing our community of supporters and partners, ensuring it is welcoming to the full diversity of people who love wilderness.

Since the Trust was founded three decades ago in the Roaring Fork Valley of Colorado, our work has been made possible by a community of passionate, generous, and committed supporters. That many of our donors, and even some members of our board of directors, have been with the organization since the beginning is a great source of pride.

As is the case for many conservation organizations, **our ability to engage the next generation of conservationists is imperative to our continued success.** We strive to share our mission with new audiences, communicating the value of wilderness, the threats of development facing it, and the benefits of our work to protect it in new and engaging ways.

As we grow and strengthen our community, **we are also working to ensure that we are welcoming diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and traditions of connecting with wild places.**

Wilderness inspires people from all walks of life and backgrounds, and we have the opportunity to make sure they all have a seat at our table.

WE NEED YOU

To reach these goals by 2026, advancing how we work, where we work, and who we work with, we need your support.

We hope you are as excited and energized by what is to come for the Trust as we are. Achieving these goals while continuing our current work will mean expanding the organization's capacity.

We are asking you to invest in this vision alongside us as we grow and evolve, meeting new challenges to protect the wild places we love in an ever-changing world.

NO MATTER HOW YOU GIVE, YOUR SUPPORT WILL ALLOW OUR NEXT 30 YEARS TO BE AS SUCCESSFUL AND IMPACTFUL AS OUR LAST 30 YEARS.



FINDING STILLNESS IN THE MIDST

Zen Lessons from the Ventana Wilderness

For many of us, wild places are one of life's greatest teachers. Moving through them teaches us to pay attention to the trail ahead and push through the hard climbs. Sitting in their alpine meadows or under their endless stars teaches us stillness. They have the power to teach us about both solitude and deep connection with community and the world around us. For Sozan Miglioli, president of the San Francisco Zen Center, mountains and wild places are transformative, "A single hike through the mountains can change your life. It doesn't always, maybe it's not the time, but it can."

Tassajara Mountain Zen Center



San Francisco Zen Center

For centuries the connection between Zen practice and nature has been interwoven. In Japan, where the Soto Zen school of Buddhism began in the 13th century, many training monasteries and temples were built in the mountains, and many Zen teachers would adopt the name of the mountain where they trained. In Zen practice the mountains mirror back what you seek to create in yourself, to find stillness in the midst of the hum of life around you.

So, when the San Francisco Zen Center was founded in 1962 by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, they began looking for a site for their own mountain monastery. The old Tassajara Hot Springs and Hotel, located a few hours south of San Francisco on the central coast, provided the perfect opportunity.

The Zen Center purchased several properties around the hot springs in 1967 and established the Tassajara Mountain Zen Center. Just two years later the land around it was designated

as the Ventana Wilderness. Since then, generations of Zen students have come to Tassajara to be in the wilderness, walking its trails, sitting beneath its trees, and learning its lessons.

This summer the Trust purchased 160 acres next to Tassajara from the San Francisco Zen Center with the goal of transferring it to public ownership. For the Zen Center, the decision to work with the Trust to protect the property came easily: "One of the main

tenets of Zen is the understanding that there is no separation. When one thing happens, it has an effect in the whole universe. This means there is no separation from nature – the way we take care of nature is the way we take care of ourselves. Conservation is an expression of this caretaking" says Sozan. With the property now protected, it will be open for people from all walks of life and spiritual practices to come and learn its lessons of resiliency, stillness, solitude, and connection.

"The way we take care of nature is the way we take care of ourselves."

lead the way

Investing in the Trust's work to protect our shared wilderness legacy transforms your love for wild places into direct action. With many ways to give, find the one that's best for you.

SENTINEL SOCIETY

Our Sentinel Society of donors invest not only in the Trust's work today, but in the future of the organization. Sentinel donors are the backbone of the Trust, ensuring that we can move quickly as new conservation opportunities emerge.

Your leadership and support will help guide the Trust as we work to expand how we work, where we work, and who we work with in the coming years.

Consider becoming a Sentinel Society member with a gift of \$1,000+ annually or cumulatively through monthly giving.

MONTHLY GIVING

If your days are busy, or you'd just rather be out enjoying your time in wilderness, setting up monthly giving is a great way to consistently support the Trust without having to remember to donate.

PLANNED GIVING

Wilderness is one of our greatest American legacies. Consider including The Wilderness Land Trust in your planned giving to leave your own legacy protecting the wild places you love.

WILDERNESS OPPORTUNITY FUND

A named gift or loan to the Wilderness Opportunity Fund directly supports land acquisition. Your gift will not only help to protect a single project, once that project is complete your gift can be reinvested in future projects, leveraging the impact of your gift.

To learn more visit wildernesslandtrust.org/donate or contact Brad Borst Brad@WildernessLandTrust.org or 206-397-5240



HONOR ROLL

For 31 years, The Wilderness Land Trust has been focused on one thing: making wilderness areas complete and secure. With sincere gratitude, we thank each and every one of you for your generous investment in our work.

Fiscal year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

SENTINEL SOCIETY DONORS

Sentinel Society members provide essential support for ongoing wilderness lands projects by generously contributing \$1,000 or more annually.

Sentinel Society Legacy Circle (\$10,000+)

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Sentinel Society Leadership Circle (\$1,000+)

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Jesse Alston
American Online Giving Foundation
Lowell & JoAnne Aplet
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Susan Waters
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Nathan Van Velson

Grants

The Trust partners with grantors specializing in wilderness lands projects. We are very grateful for the essential resources they provide as well as their guidance and counsel.

Anonymous
National Fish and Wildlife
Foundation
National Resource
Conservation Service

Rick VanderVoet
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Tedd Ward Jr
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& Will Roush
Andrea & Matt Wool
John D. Wright
Arthur Wuster
Bryan L. Wyberg
Andrew Zepp
Edward Zukoski

Wilderness Opportunity Fund

Donors to the Wilderness Opportunity Fund invest in the Trust's revolving capital fund for wilderness land acquisitions. The fund includes donations, grants and loans – including project specific funds.

Anonymous
Sarah Chase Shaw & Richard Shaw,
BF Foundation
John Witmeyer

We appreciate the opportunity to recognize every donor. The Donor Honor Roll above includes gifts received during our last fiscal year, July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. If you find an error or omission please accept our sincere apologies and contact us so that we may correct our records.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

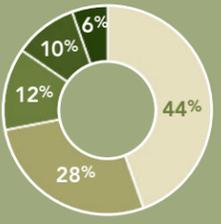
Fiscal year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Unaudited – see audited financials on our website in December 2023

Beginning Net Assets **\$3,695,476**

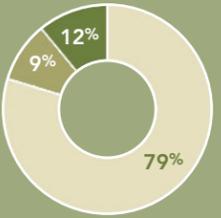
OPERATING INCOME

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Contributions | \$450,224 |
| Grant Income | \$288,887 |
| Land Sales | \$120,755 |
| Other Income | \$98,828 |
| Reimbursements | \$57,800 |
| TOTAL | \$1,016,494 |



OPERATING EXPENSES

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Lands Program | \$1,137,481 |
| Administrative | \$123,942 |
| Fundraising | \$178,879 |
| TOTAL | \$1,440,302 |



Ending Net Assets **\$3,271,668**

VITAL PARTNERSHIPS

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Bureau of Land Management
California Wilderness Coalition
Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, & Safety
Conservation Alliance
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
DeChambeau Creek Foundation
Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks
Friends of the Eel River
Friends of the Inyo
Idaho Conservation League
Independence Pass Foundation

Mono Lake Committee
Mono Lake Foundation
Mount Shasta Trail Association
National Park Foundation
National Park Service
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
Resource Legacy Fund
Sierra Club, Redwood Chapter
Siskiyou Land Trust
Southeast Alaska Land Trust
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Stu Smith – GIS Specialist
U.S. Forest Service
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Wildlands Conservancy
Willits Environmental Center





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This year we are thrilled to welcome **Connie Myers** and **Torrey Udall** to the Trust's volunteer board of directors.

Connie lives in Missoula, Montana and brings decades of experience leading wilderness stewardship and education programs at the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.

Torrey lives in Salt Lake City, Utah and brings organizational expertise as Chief of Staff for Protect Our Winters and a long family legacy of conservation.