



SPRING 2026

WHAT
WILDERNESS
CAN TEACH
US ABOUT
RESILIENCE





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

A future where all wilderness areas are complete and protected from development, where their biodiverse landscapes thrive, sustain life, and provide refuge for wildlife and people alike.

On the cover: Lupine blooms mark the arrival of summer in the high country.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring by W.S. Merwin

*The glass stems of the clouds are breaking
the gray flowers are caught up
and carried in silence to their invisible mountain
a hair of music is flying
over the line of cold lakes
from which our eyes were made
everything in the world has been lost and lost
but soon we will find it again
and understand what it told us when we loved it*

Dear Friends and Supporters,

One of my favorite poets, W.S. Merwin, wrote of the arrival of spring as a time when “everything in the world has been lost and lost / but soon we will find it again.” His message isn’t just about burrowed animals awaking from dormancy or new buds emerging from bare limbs, but about the resiliency of life, of roots that run deeper than the frost line. I find myself drawing on that same truth as I look forward to the coming warmth and color of spring, and reflect on our work, our partners, and on the landscapes we love.

As you’ll discover, this newsletter is all about resilience and what wilderness can teach us about it. Nature has a remarkable capacity to bounce back from adversity, and the Trust’s work to protect wild landscapes helps to bolster this resilience, allowing ecosystems the untrammled space they need to adapt and recover. Protection of wilderness has also proven resilient. For sixty years, The Wilderness Act has survived political swings in both directions because its protections are not discretionary. Designated Wilderness Areas cannot be opened to extractive use, sold, or converted without an act of Congress – a threshold that has proven remarkably durable against erosion. Wilderness, as both a place and system of protection, has endured.

The Wilderness Land Trust’s model of conservation also carries its own form of resilience. The Trust was built for exactly the kind of moment we’re facing now, when external pressure on public lands has increased in pace and scope.



Our model – acquiring and protecting private lands in and around wilderness – continues quietly, willing seller by willing seller, acre by acre. Our work doesn’t depend on any particular political alignment in Washington, DC. Instead, it depends on our relationships, on communities who love their big backyards, and on donors who understand that we can find conservation wins outside of Acts of Congress. While others wait for turbulent conditions to improve, we keep moving persistently forward.

This spring will test my own resilience, as I move away from the place I’ve called home for 19 years and plant new roots. But as Merwin wrote, I feel as if I’m finding something again. I’ve been so inspired by the Board and staff of The Wilderness Land Trust during my transition into this role, and energized by meeting many of you. Faced with change, I look to wilderness, “and understand what it told us when we loved it,” as the last line of the poem says. It’s wilderness, and the many adventures I’ve enjoyed in it, which teach me how to be adaptable and remind me why our continued tenacity in protecting it, in making it whole and healthy, is so important.

I hope, wherever you’re reading this, a vibrant spring is beginning to bloom for you. I look forward to seeing what we will continue to achieve together.

Anders Reynolds, President & CEO

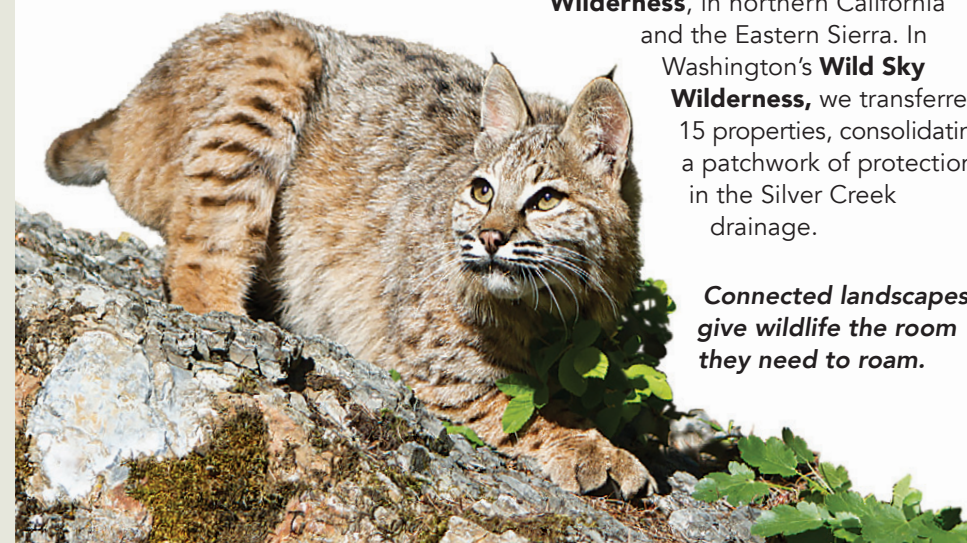
RECENT SUCCESSES

PUBLIC ACCESS

When a wilderness trail crosses private property, the public’s continued use of it isn’t always assured. Protecting access for the next generation of wilderness lovers is an important part of our work, and this year several projects helped keep trails open. In the **Weminuche Wilderness** of Colorado, we protected access on the Needle Creek and Whitehead trails with two successful transfers. Also in Colorado, we kept the viewshed pristine in Cumberland Basin, a popular hiking destination in the **Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness**. Access on the Little Sur Trail, which leads recreationists into California’s **Ventana Wilderness** is now secure. And in New Mexico’s **Organ Mountains Wilderness**, a new public access point to Achenbach Canyon was opened up, helping to spread out heavy recreational use from the growing Las Cruces area.

CONNECTED LANDSCAPES

Private properties in and around wilderness are like tears in the fabric of wilderness protection. When we remove the threat of development from them, no matter their size, we mend those tears, making the

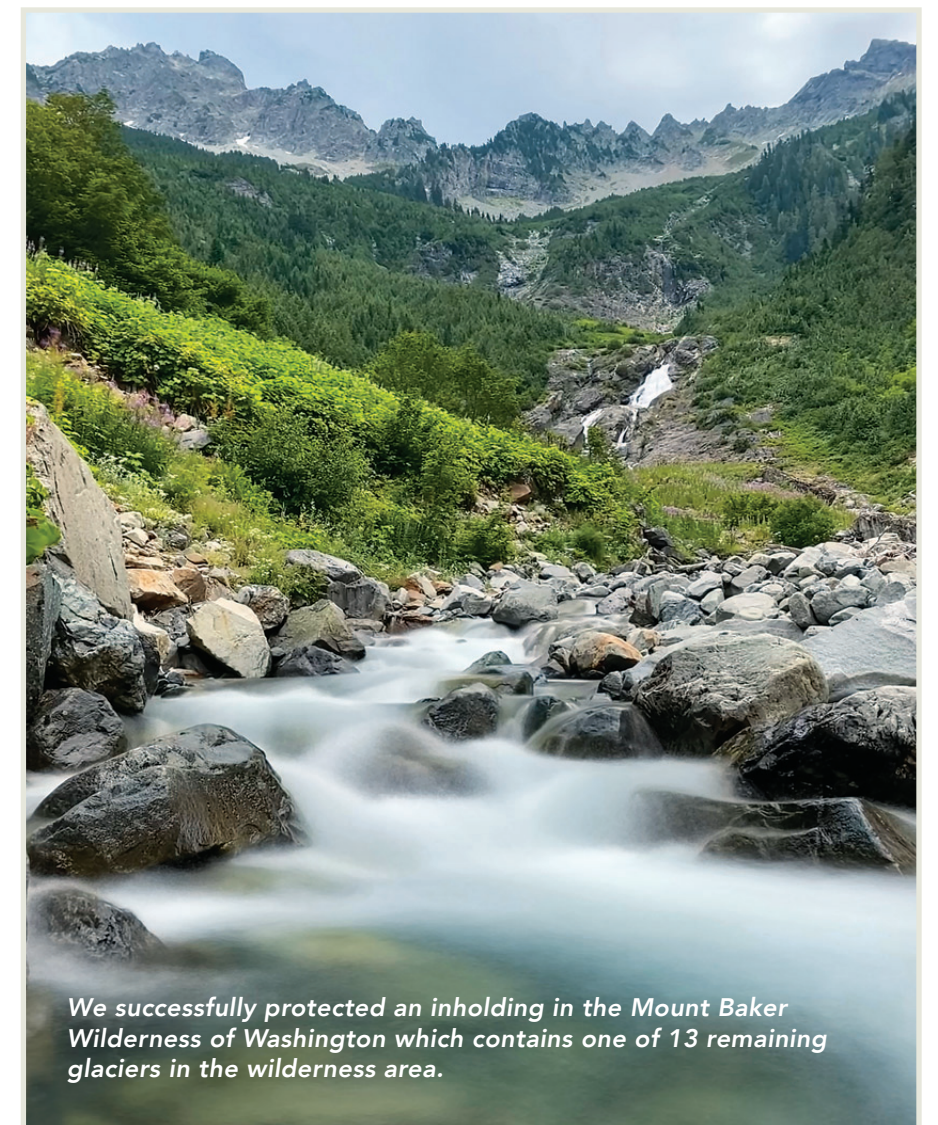


Connected landscapes give wildlife the room they need to roam.

whole of the fabric stronger. This year our work ranged from protecting a one-acre parcel in the **Mount Shasta Wilderness**, to a 960-acre property adjoining the **Granite Mountain Wilderness**, in northern California and the Eastern Sierra. In Washington’s **Wild Sky Wilderness**, we transferred 15 properties, consolidating a patchwork of protection in the Silver Creek drainage.

PROTECTED WATERSHEDS

Wilderness is one of our greatest sources of clean water, flowing into the watersheds we depend on to drink, fish, swim, boat, and grow our food. By making our wilderness areas whole, we can protect their watersheds from the degradation caused by development. This year we transferred a property in the **Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness** of Idaho, which helped to protect a tributary of the Wild and Scenic Salmon River. In high alpine environments glaciers, and the alpine lakes they feed, are important year-round water sources. We successfully protected an inholding in the **Mount Baker Wilderness** of Washington which contains one of 13 remaining glaciers in the wilderness area.



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Resilience: the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

We're living in a time where resilience is increasingly important. From our ability to balance hope with the news of the day, to how we respond in the face of a changing climate. Wilderness, both as the place and the system of protection, can teach us a lot about resilience, adaptability, grit, and dedication.

Wilderness is resilient in its adaptability.

Wild landscapes are remarkably adaptable: following catastrophic wildfire or floods, as green shoots push through the ashes and rivers find new channels, they begin to regain equilibrium almost immediately. Wilderness ecosystems can not only withstand these natural cycles, they rely on them to evolve over time to meet changing conditions. Whether in desert or high alpine tundra, adaptation through these natural processes doesn't make wilderness less wild, just more resilient.

Wilderness builds the resilience we rely on.

Giving flora and fauna the room they need to cope with a changing climate and the pressures of development gives them a better chance at adaptation and survival. Protecting large swaths of intact habitat as wilderness supports biodiversity and builds resilience in their ecosystems. As providers of clean air and water, and home to some of our largest carbon sinks, wilderness is also essential to the resilience of our human communities.

Wilderness teaches us resilience.

Time spent on the trails, rivers, and high peaks of wilderness teaches us grit. From steep pitches, to inclement weather, to an immersive sense of solitude, wilderness teaches us not just to push through challenges but to see our own strength and fortitude reflected back to us through them. For generations, wilderness has been teaching us to cultivate our own resilience. Protecting the landscapes which hold these lessons for us is essential to make sure our children and grandchildren have the same opportunities to learn from them.

The resilience of wilderness protection is built on our dedication to it.

Over the past year, we have seen a number of threats to wilderness and public lands introduced from state houses to the halls of Congress. But the fact that so few have been successful, and almost none have targeted designated wilderness areas, is a testament to the political resilience of our wilderness preservation system. For over 60 years The Wilderness Act has proven to be an incredibly durable piece of legislation, having never been altered or successfully challenged in the courts.

The simplicity of its language has proven effective as new technologies, like drones, have become common on a scale the authors of the act couldn't have conceived of. The resilience of The Wilderness Act is in large part thanks to the diverse, bipartisan coalition of wilderness lovers who are dedicated to maintaining and defending its protections.

Our work at The Wilderness Land Trust continues to invest in this legacy, as acre by acre we add to our designated wilderness areas and remove the threat of development within their borders. It is because of the resilience of wilderness, both the place and the system of protection, that these investments not only continue to be sound, but are increasingly needed.

Resilience

**Meet Trust Supporter
Kim Kanas**

LOCKING LAND IN TIME

Kim Kanas of Longmont, Colorado has been in love with wilderness for as long as she can remember, long before she knew it by that name. It's a love she inherited, first from her grandfather, an avid outdoorsman, then from her mother, who would trundle the kids and gear into the car and head into the mountains, a tradition that Kim continued with her own children and now with her grandchildren.

On those early trips when Kim was a child, there was no such thing as federally designated wilderness. But in the years following the 1964 Wilderness Act many of her favorite haunts would receive that designation: Indian Peaks, only a 45-minute drive from home; South Colony Lakes, now part of the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness; and Chalk Cliffs in the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness, where in one her earliest memories she fell into the rushing cold of Chalk Creek and was rescued by a family friend.

While she is happy to know these places are now protected, Kim can't help but note what has been lost, having seen the landscapes surrounding those wilderness areas developed, logged, and mined over the years. If there was one such scene in particular that turned her into an active champion of wilderness, it was on a day hike near Victor when she took in the full devastation caused by the Cripple Creek & Victor gold mine, the largest open pit gold mine in the world.

"When I first started hiking around Cripple Creek," she says, "the mining was all underground hard rock mining.



There were headframes, but the landscape was largely intact. Now the land has been scraped of nature, and toxic tailings flow into water and soil for miles around. It made me so angry, I knew I had to get more involved."

Kim heard about the Wilderness Land Trust through our Champion Mine project, near where she and her mother often hiked around Independence Pass. When she learned the project would remove the threat of development from this landscape she loved, she pledged her support and has been a generous donor to the Trust ever since.

This fall, Kim joined Trust staff for a hike through Snowmass Falls Ranch, the 650-acre inholding in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness that the Trust and Pitkin County have partnered to protect. There, she learned about the nearby 20-acre Busher Claim, a mining claim dating back to 1884, that the Trust was in the

process of acquiring. Knowing she wanted to be involved, Kim made a gift to the Wilderness Opportunity Fund to make its purchase possible.

Kim feels a personal responsibility to add to wilderness as the highest protection of wild land available. "We see so much wild land being lost, and wild animals being kicked out of their homes, because somebody wants to build a second, a third, a fourth house that they barely use. So much habitat has been lost just in my lifetime. Wilderness is a way to lock the land in time."

Kim wants to make sure this sense of responsibility, along with her love of the outdoors is passed on to her own young grandkids. On a recent hike, her 6-year-old grandson did what 6-year-olds do best: "mid-hike he declared 'this is stupid.' But we kept walking, and fifteen minutes later he had changed his mind. That's when he told me, 'Grandma, nature is nice!' That made my day."

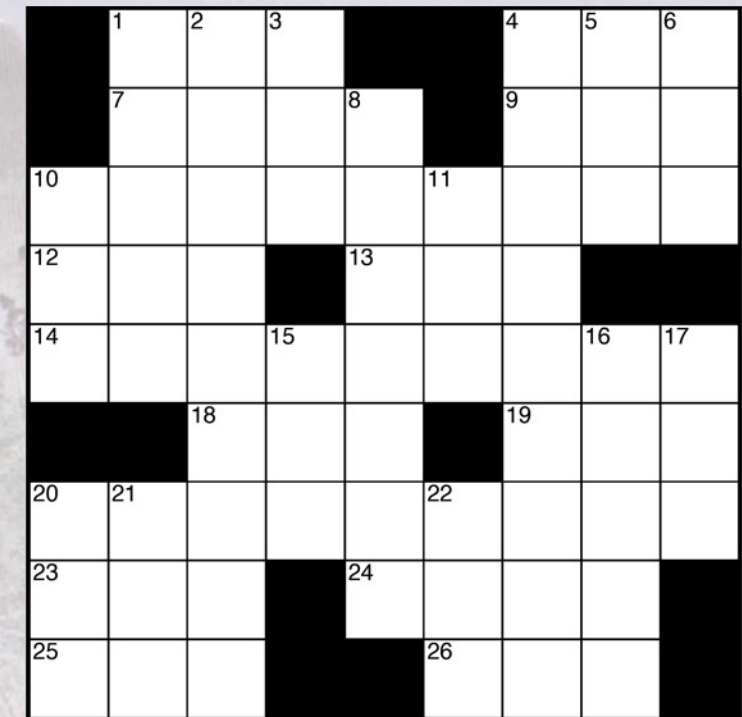
"So much habitat has been lost just in my lifetime. Wilderness is a way to lock the land in time."

trail mix

Fun Fact: Anders, our new president, is an hobby cruciverbalist (crossword maker). Enjoy his wilderness themed crossword!

ACROSS

- 1 Skipper's dir.
- 4 Mason who serves as Idaho Director of The Wilderness Society
- 7 Thomas known for her social media posts on environmental justice
- 9 Red state?
- 10 Presaged
- 12 California's ___ Rafael Wilderness
- 13 Montana's ___ Metcalf Wilderness
- 14 Land parcel targeted by The Wilderness Land Trust, often surrounded (as this answer is) by wilderness
- 18 Nevada's ___ Dome Wilderness
- 19 Arizona's Table ___ Wilderness
- 20 Fragrant spices found in backcountry recipes
- 23 Word before or after age



- 24 Peter Carey's "___ History of the Kelly Gang"
- 25 Cave dweller
- 26 BBC rival that has co-produced documentaries with National Geographic and Discovery
- 6 A cot or a blanket of moss might serve as one
- 8 Rabble-rouser
- 10 Bike tire no.
- 11 Protagonist of 24 Across
- 15 California's Fort ___, established as a National Monument in 2012
- 16 Policy held by Great Old Broads for Wilderness

DOWN

- 1 Painter John known for gritty, urban landscapes as well as impressionist seascapes
- 2 David who served as 53rd Interior Secretary
- 3 Dig in
- 4 Endure, like a storm in a tent
- 5 Mine find
- 17 Geocaching aid, in brief
- 20 Inner ear?
- 21 Pie ___ mode
- 22 PET scan alternative, after a skiing accident (Get well soon Kelly!)

Check your answers





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SPRING 2026 NEWS

JOIN US IN KEEPING THE PROMISE OF WILDERNESS!

Together we can continue having a direct and tangible impact in our wild places, but we need your support now more than ever. **A gift made today will help build a conservation legacy that will last long into the future.**



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Welcome to new board members Kay McConagha and David Hartwell!