THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST



2026 ANNUAL REPORT

THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST

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:
Red-tailed Hawk

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT

To conserve is a verb.

That's not just a recurring theme in this year's annual report, but the idea behind all the work on which The Wilderness Land Trust engages. Inside this report, you'll read more about the Trust's efforts to conserve wilderness across the country by making it whole and healthy. Beyond our restoration and stewardship work, this means building lasting relationships with willing landowners, careful dialogue with agency employees, and outreach to some of the most passionate and committed wilderness conservationists we've met: you, our supporters and partners.

It also means knowing our job is never done. In our *Partners of the Year* story, New Mexico's Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks says it best: "We never stop protecting this place, everything we do is driven by the importance of protecting wild places for future generations."

Doing it over and over again requires patience, and patience is the watchword of our organization. We don't rush and we don't cut corners. And as tempting as it is to view our work as a map with new parcels periodically shaded in and declared "safe," up close the work looks different. It's emails and phone calls and site visits. It's database management. It's working with appraisal experts and title companies. It's research and grant applications. It's building relationships with land managers and journalists. It's wrangling staff and board members into meetings. It's crafting fact sheets and yes, even this annual report. So each new shaded area that we add to the National Wilderness Preservation System represents years of patient, persistent effort.

None of that could happen without you. We need patient donors who understand the payoff may take years. We need patient partners who pick up the phone for another call about working through the intricacies of protection. We need patient advocates who are willing to tell our story year in and year out.

To conserve is a verb, and patience is its tempo. And rather than get frustrated by the long timelines and trust exercises that don't care a whit about our fiscal year, we like to remind ourselves that all of it, every patient step of the process, are acts of conservation that little by little move the needle for our wild places. We hope you'll consider a patient gift today.





Anders Reynolds,
President

Sarah Chase Shaw,
Board Chair

Patience is the watchword of our organization... every patient step of the process is an act of conservation that little by little move the needle for our wild places.



Each summer, the Trust's staff and board hit the trail to visit project sites in wilderness areas across the country. It's a busy field season full of navigating due diligence, building relationships with partners and landowners, and enjoying some spectacular views.

2026 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

ACQUIRED

Last year the Trust acquired 8 parcels in California, Colorado, and New Mexico totaling 1,268 acres.

In California's Eastern Sierra, we purchased a high-development-risk property that sits between the shores of Mono Lake and the **Granite Mountain Wilderness**, growing our impact over the past decade in the **Bodie Hills**. Farther north, we acquired a 1-acre property in the **Mt. Shasta Wilderness**, a reminder that removing every inholding, no matter their size, is important to make wilderness whole and healthy. In Colorado, we protected pristine views from popular hiking destinations in the **Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness** and **Red Cloud Peak Wilderness Study Area**. In New Mexico, we acquired an inholding in the volcanic fields, dramatic sandstone cliffs, canyons, and arches of the **Cebolla Wilderness** and **El Malpais National Conservation Area**.

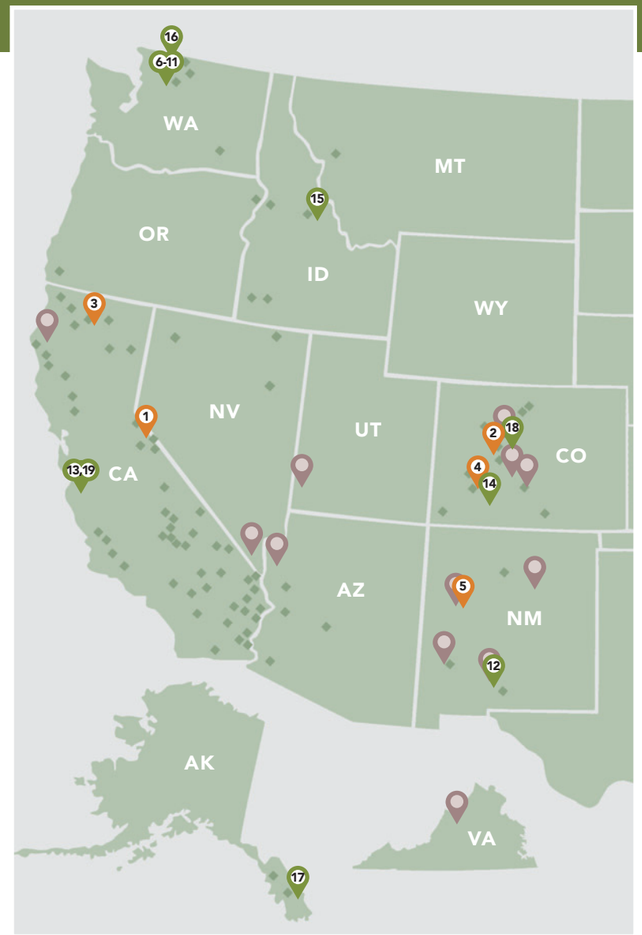
STEWARDED

Last year the Trust stewarded 84 properties totaling over 5,597 acres in Colorado, Utah, Virginia, California, Washington, Alaska, New Mexico, Nevada, and Arizona.

TRANSFERRED

Last year the Trust transferred 44 properties totaling over 1,378 acres to public ownership in Washington, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho, and Alaska.

At the culmination of years of work, we added 540 acres to Washington's **Wild Sky Wilderness** with the transfer of 16 properties. In the Central Coast of California, we transferred two properties in and around the **Ventana Wilderness**, which helped protect important watersheds. In Colorado we grew the **Weminuche Wilderness** while protecting public access on a popular trail, as well as access for those climbing Mount Champion just outside the **Mount Massive Wilderness**. In Idaho's **Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness**, we removed an inholding in partnership with Payette Land Trust. And in Alaska we added important fishing and foraging habitat for brown bears to the **Chuck River Wilderness**.



Acquired in 2025–26
8 properties
1,268 acres

Transferred in 2025–26
44 properties
1,378 acres

Other current projects
84 properties
5,597 acres

Completed projects
496 properties
51,418 acres



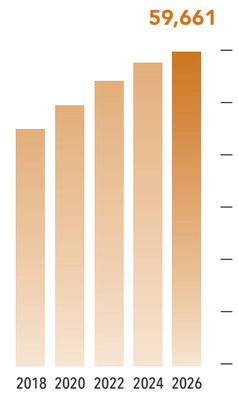


WILDERNESS PROTECTED

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

		PROJECT	WILDERNESS AREA	AGENCY	PARCELS	ACRES
ACQUIRED	1	Granite Mountain North	Granite Mountain Wildlerness, CA	BLM	3	960
	2	Busher Claim	Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness, CO	USFS	2	21
	3	Mt. Shasta North	Mt. Shasta Wilderness, CA	USFS	1	1
	4	Eastern Rebel Boy	Red Cloud Peak WSA, CO	BLM	1	7
	5	Pinyon Camp	Cebolla Wilderness, NM	BLM	1	280
		TOTAL			**8**	**1,268**
TRANSFERRED	6	Rambler Lode	Wild Sky Wilderness, WA	USFS	7	128
	7	Greater New York Lode	Wild Sky Wilderness, WA	USFS	3	284
	8	Jumbo Lode	Wild Sky Wilderness, WA	USFS	1	12
	9	Lockwood Lode	Wild Sky Wilderness, WA	USFS	2	39
	10	Idaho Lode	Wild Sky Wilderness, WA	USFS	2	31
	11	Hazel Lode	Wild Sky Wilderness, WA	USFS	1	160
	12	Achenbach	Organ Mountains Wilderness, NM	BLM	2	109
	13	Little Sur	Ventana Wilderness, CA	USFS	1	87
	14	Great Western Lode	Weminuche Wilderness, CO	USFS	3	31
	15	Annie Creek	Frank Church River of No Return, ID	USFS	5	94
	16	Fourth of July Lode	Mt. Baker Wilderness, WA	USFS	1	21
	17	Chuck River Bend	Chuck River Wilderness, AK	USFS	1	28
	18	Champion Mine S. Phase 1	Mount Massive Wilderness, CO	USFS	14	194
	19	Church Creek	Ventana Wilderness, CA	USFS	1	160
		TOTAL			**44**	**1,378**

TOTAL WILDERNESS ACREAGE PROTECTED



Fall settles over the North Cascades high country.



RESTORING WILDERNESS



While the restoration needed for each project is a bit different, all share the same goal: to prepare the property to join our wilderness and public lands, to provide connected habitat, clean air and water, and opportunities to explore and be inspired.

The time from when The Wilderness Land Trust purchases a property from a private owner until it is transferred to public ownership is typically between two and seven years. During that time, we steward each property. Often that means managing the property as wilderness, allowing natural processes to take over. But in some cases, where decades or centuries of human influence have left their mark, we complete restoration projects to rewild or return them to their wilderness character before they are transferred.

One of the most common ways we restore a property to its wilderness character is to haul out trash. From metal tent frames and stoves from hunting camps, to chemical barrels and cable pulley systems from mining, this trash tells a chapter of the land's history. For properties within wilderness areas, it usually must be hauled out on our back, or the back of helpful horses and mules.

When the remnants of human activities include historic cabins or structures, they may be left after modern improvements have been stripped from them. When structures are modern, they are usually removed completely.

Our restoration work can also be focused on ensuring the property is safe for public access before it is transferred. Because many of our projects are old mining claims, closing mine adits to ensure they aren't a hazard is common. When doing so, we install bars or cable nets to allow bats to pass through to preserve roosting sites.

The impacts of past mining activity can also seep into soil and waterways with heavy metal contamination. When that is a concern, we complete testing and any required remediation to make it safe for people and wildlife.

Beyond removing the remnants of human activity, we also work to improve ecological conditions through habitat restoration. In places where a changing climate has altered critical habitats and made water more scarce, we can help mitigate the impacts of change through our work.

In the Bodie Hills, by properly balancing sagebrush and juniper vegetation we improved nesting conditions for endangered sage grouse. On the same property, we rebuilt an existing spring box to improve the availability and quality of water for wildlife in an increasingly dry environment.

When we take on a new project, in addition to raising the funds to purchase the property and transfer it to public ownership, we must also cover the costs of this restoration work. Your support makes it possible to leave these cherished landscapes better than we found them.

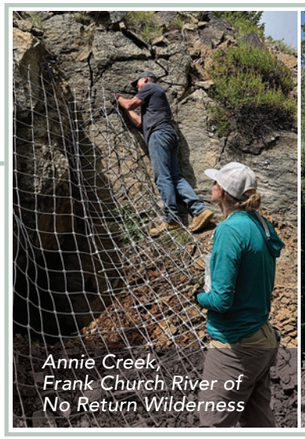
Left: Rambler Lode, Wild Sky Wilderness



Needle Creek, Weminuche Wilderness



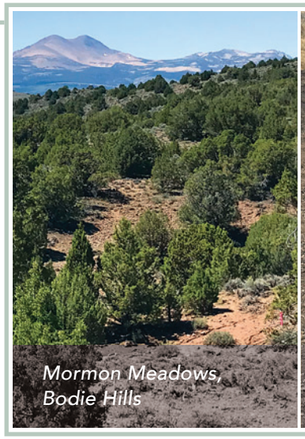
Panama Lode, Collegiate Peaks Wilderness



Annie Creek, Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness



Champion Mine, Mt. Massive Wilderness



Mormon Meadows, Bodie Hills



FRIENDS OF ORGAN MOUNTAINS-DESERT PEAKS

Starting in the early 2000s, a grassroots effort in the southern New Mexico city of Las Cruces began with the goal of protecting nearly half a million acres stretching from the Chihuahuan Desert floor to rocky peaks, steep canyons, volcanic cinder cones, and open woodlands surrounding the community. Eventually, this effort took shape with the formation of Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, and in 2014 the community's hard work paid off as these lands were designated as a National Monument by executive order.

Since the designation, Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks has continued advocating for more protections and community-centered management in wild places across southern New Mexico. "We never stop protecting this place, everything we do is driven by the importance of protecting wild places for future generations" says Executive Director Patrick Nolan. But a large part of their mission has turned to answering the question of how these protected landscapes can make the community stronger, healthier, and more resilient. Every year they bring thousands of local kids, many of whom may otherwise not have the opportunity, outside to explore and learn about their local ecology and history.

They also work to ensure that access points to the Monument, and its many recreational and cultural resources, are equitable for the whole community. With this goal in mind, Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks was instrumental in the Trust's work to protect 111 acres in Achenbach Canyon, including a popular trail, which we transferred to public ownership last summer. We are still working together to transfer another 98-acre property located just north of Achechbach Canyon.

"Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks brought invaluable local connections and support to our partnership. Together, we protected two new access points to the Organ Mountains Wilderness, and prevented development on over 200 acres of wildlife habitat. Partners are more important to our work than ever, and we're so grateful for them," says Aimee Rutledge, Vice President & Senior Lands Specialist for the Trust.

Thank you to Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, our Partner of the Year!



Every year Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks bring thousands of local kids, many of whom may otherwise not have the opportunity, outside to explore and learn about their local ecology and history.

Photo by Kyla Navarro on a hike with Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Mexico.

Thank you to all the partners who make our work possible!

Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Ascend Wilderness Experience
Aspen One
Aspen Valley Land Trust
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
California Wilderness Coalition
City of Aspen
Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, & Safety
The Conservation Alliance
Crested Butte Land Trust
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DeChambeau Creek Foundation
Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Environmental Protection Agency
Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks
Friends of the Eel River
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Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness
Hardrock 100 Mile Endurance Run
Independence Pass Foundation
Land Trust Alliance
Los Padres Forest Watch
Mono Lake Committee/ Mono Lake Foundation
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Park Service
National Wilderness Coalition
Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Dept. of Agriculture
Northern Mendocino Ecosystem Recovery Alliance
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
Northeast Wilderness Trust
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
Open Space Institute
Payette Land Trust
Pitkin County Open Space and Trails
The Pueblo of Santa Ana Tamaya
Resource Legacy Fund
Rewilding Institute
Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
San Juan Solstice 50 Mile Run
Santa Ana Pueblo
Southeast Alaska Land Trust
Stu Smith – GIS Specialist
The Wilderness Society
Town of Snowmass Village
Trout Unlimited
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Virginia Wilderness Committee
Watershed Biodiversity Initiative
Wilderness Watch
Wilderness Workshop
Wyss Foundation

HONOR ROLL

Fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

For 34 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.

SENTINEL SOCIETY DONORS

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

Sentinel Society Vista Circle ($50,000+)

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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
Sharon and Malcolm Clark
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Sarah Chase Shaw & Richard Shaw, BF Foundation
Stuart Smith

We appreciate the opportunity to recognize every donor. The Donor Honor Roll above includes gifts received during our last fiscal year, July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. If you find an error or omission please accept our sincere apologies and contact us so that we may correct our records

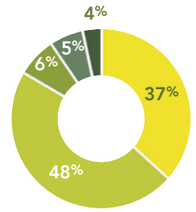
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
Unaudited – see audited financials on our website in November 2026

Beginning Net Assets **$5,007,742**

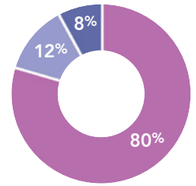
OPERATING INCOME

Contributions	$932,394
Grant Income	$1,213,455
Land Sales	$151,958
Reimbursements	$136,215
Other Income	$110,446
TOTAL	**$2,544,468**



OPERATING EXPENSES

Lands Program	$1,578,092
Fundraising	$229,442
Administrative	$157,541
TOTAL	**$1,965,075**



Ending Net Assets* **$5,587,135**

**Total land in Net Assets: $2,676,447*



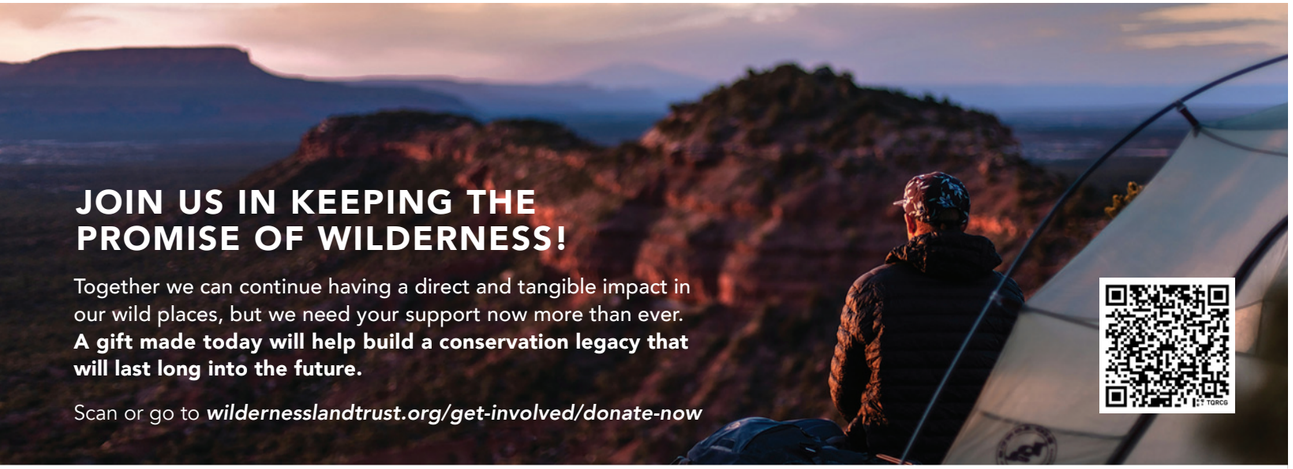
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JOIN US IN KEEPING THE PROMISE OF WILDERNESS!

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.**

Scan or go to ***wildernesslandtrust.org/get-involved/donate-now***

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