

When We Unite

2020 Gratitude Report



102 Letter from Leadership

Our Refocused Mission: uniting people to protect America's wild places

Making Enduring Progress

Solving Urgent Crise

Fulfilling the Promise of Public Lands for All

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The Wilderness Society Action Fund

Cover image:

Red Cliffs National Conservation Area, Utah

Michelle Craig



2020: Battling current threats and charting the course for transformational change

After four very challenging years for conservation, hope for a sustainable future was renewed in November 2020 by the election of the first president to place tackling climate change, conservation and racial inequity at the center of the national agenda. Because of your unwavering support, The Wilderness Society became a stronger organization during these years, transforming ourselves to meet the historic opportunity we now have.

It was a remarkably eventful year, beginning in late February, when our Governing Council unanimously embraced a bold new vision and plan for the powerful role public lands can play in helping solve the climate, nature and inequity crises facing our nation.

Then, life was upended by a global pandemic. But we did not let that slow us down. By uniting in common cause, we were able to steady ourselves in the face of economic uncertainty, sustain our vigorous defense of public lands against relentless attacks, build effective community led coalitions and gain a once-in-a-generation victory for conservation.

The passage of the landmark Great American Outdoors Act by huge bipartisan majorities in both Houses of Congress permanently dedicated \$900 million a year to land and water conservation. And it demonstrated yet again the power of community led conservation to bring people together to find solutions that transcend the political divide.

Most importantly, we were able to bring our new vision for public lands to life. We built stronger coalitions from the ground up, listening to and working with communities previously left out of decisions concerning the use of public lands.



In particular, we acknowledged Indigenous peoples as the longest serving stewards of the land and increased our efforts to seek their guidance and partnership in ways that share power, voice and impact.

In 2020, we joined forces with more partners than ever before to ensure that public lands equitably benefit all people, that their potential to help address the great crises facing our nation are unleashed, and that we unite in a more inclusive and far more powerful conservation movement.

To this end, we were able to come together around a shared set of big priorities for climate, conservation and environmental justice that helped shape the Biden-Harris administration's unprecedented commitment to these goals.

Thanks to decades of uniting people to protect America's wild places, together we have elevated the role of public lands in our nation's future. We now have the opportunity to secure transformational change to create a healthy and sustainable future for our communities and for wildlands.

With your continued support and involvement, we will seize this moment. Thank you for your leadership, support and dedication!



Jamie Williams

President

Crandall C. Bowles
Chair, Governing Council

Our mission: uniting people to protect America's wild places.

The Wilderness Society was founded on the revolutionary idea that the irreplaceable wild places around us must be conserved—and together, with generations of supporters like you, we have secured the highest protections for more than 110 million acres of wilderness since.

But the next decade will determine our shared future. Scientists tell us we have less than 10 years to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and irreversible declines in wildlife populations. Public lands have a critical role to play in solving these crises—and only bold, sweeping action and equitable solutions can fully realize their promise.

That's why The Wilderness Society embraced a new plan for the new decade in 2020 that's every bit as revolutionary as the vision we were founded upon—one that evolves how we work in order to create a future where people and wild nature flourish together, meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing planet.



Our Shared Agenda

Now more than ever, we believe public lands are critical to bringing about a brighter future—one that includes a healthy climate, healthy lands and waters, and healthy communities everywhere. But to truly deliver on the promise of public lands, we must:

Transform conservation policy and practices so all people benefit equitably from public lands while building a larger, more inclusive conservation movement capable of transcending the politics of the day and achieving enduring wins.

Make public lands a solution to the climate and extinction crises by securing a resilient, continental network of landscapes and eliminating climate-changing emissions.

Our focus on these interrelated priorities—an inclusive conservation movement and bold conservation solutions—already led to major achievements in 2020. And with your support, we will build on this progress and achieve far more in the years to come.

Recognizing that this critical fight won't be won by one organization alone, we worked in collaboration with supporters and partners at both local and national levels to identify outcomes that are urgently needed by 2030, which we believe our new strategic plan and unique expertise can make possible, including:



30% of U.S. lands and waters protected



Net zero fossil fuel emissions from public lands



All people in the U.S. benefit equitably from public lands

Olympic National Forest, Washington

Beni Wadsworth

When we find common ground, we make enduring progress possible.

Signed into law in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is America's preeminent conservation and recreation funding program. LWCF has supported outdoor projects in every state and almost every county since its inception. But it was only last year, after five decades of fighting for this critical program, that its promise was finally realized.

In 2020, by bringing conservationists, lawmakers and the will of the public together, we beat the odds and built the bipartisan support needed to sign the Great American Outdoors Act into law—a generational accomplishment that established permanent and full funding for LWCF, ensuring we:

- Revitalize and improve access to shared outdoor spaces like trails and parks in every community, so that we all have opportunities to experience the benefits of nature.
- Create healthy, connected landscapes that can better confront the impacts of climate change by allowing plant and animal species to adapt, safeguarding clean water, and shielding communities from floods, storms and wildfires.
- Put people to work on green infrastructure projects that invest in communities and support the recreation, travel and tourism economies.

The global pandemic only reinforced how critical outdoor access is to people's mental and physical health, wherever they live. This victory guarantees greater access to public lands for all, while strengthening ecosystems and communities against the effects of a changing climate.



Protecting Wildlands; Protecting Communities

- 14 priority landscapes where
 The Wilderness Society can have
 the greatest impact on the climate,
 nature and inequity crises
- The remaining biologically rich landscapes, identified by The Wilderness Society's scientists, which represent 94% of ecoregion diversity and 95% of species diversity in the U.S.





Addressing the Climate and Nature Crises

As climate change, species loss and environmental degradation have accelerated over the past decade, the global movement to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030 (30x30) has entered the mainstream and was embraced by the Biden-Harris administration.

With your support, The Wilderness Society was able to complete a thorough analysis to identify 74 of the most biologically rich, large-scale (1-10 million-acre) landscapes to conserve and link together in the years ahead. Among these, 14 emerged as areas where The Wilderness Society can have the greatest impact. A network of protected wildlands will provide clean air and water, ensure wildlife survives and absorb climate-changing emissions.

Protecting landscapes like these can't be done without engaging with the communities that will be the hardest hit by a changing climate. These voices have traditionally been left out of decisions that directly impact their lives, but if public lands are truly for the benefit of all, they must have a seat at the table—and we will make it a priority.

The Wilderness Society's strategic plan brings critical focus to building a collective effort that will ensure all of our children and grandchildren have the clean water, clean air and sustainable communities they need to thrive.

When we come together, we can make public lands a solution to the most urgent crises before us.

Public lands offer one of the best opportunities for policy makers to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing climate. But for too long, our government has only seen public lands as a means of profit for the fossil fuel industry, with the previous administration offering more land for lease than any administration in history.

This approach is profoundly damaging—and, like so many things, its damage is highly inequitable. Many of the communities subjected to the greatest social and health inequities are also those most exposed to

pollutants and most impacted by the effects of climate change. Yet these same communities are least likely to have a voice in a decision-making process too often dominated by extractive industries.

But today, after years of organizing and advocacy that your support makes possible, there is more momentum than ever—to bring in all voices, unite around a new direction, harness the full potential of these lands for all and restore a livable world for future generations.



Throughout 2020, as the Trump administration continued to open up lands for leasing, you stood up to this threat of irreversible damage and helped us join with a range of partners across race, class and geography in the fight to put people and ecosystems at the center of public lands.

- Action for the Arctic Refuge: We worked with the Gwich'in people and 12 other partners to fight the Trump administration's Bureau of Land Management as they tried to hurriedly hand over the 1.5 million-acre coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to the oil and gas industry before leaving office.
- Vigilance over the Boundary Waters:
 We filed multiple lawsuits and engaged people across the country in protecting the Boundary Waters in Minnesota, the nation's most visited wilderness area, where the Trump administration had

- steadily moved to allow toxic mining that would threaten the landscape, the health of surrounding communities and priceless nature experiences for millions.
- Protection of the Tongass: We stood with Native American tribes and communities in southeast Alaska to prevent logging and development on more than nine million acres of the Tongass National Forest. A rare old-growth temperate rainforest, the forest is a major "carbon sink." Keeping the Tongass wild is critical to area tribes and communities—and to ensuring a livable planet for us all.



To make public lands a climate solution for all, we must dramatically curtail carbon emissions from fossil fuel extraction—before we run out of time.

Throughout 2020, your support enabled us to begin to co-create the People, Public Lands, and Climate Collaborative among community based organizations across the country. These groups came together to develop a shared framework to ensure that public lands and waters are managed as part of a just and equitable climate solution.

And we collaborated with the renowned Aspen Institute to convene experts and thought leaders to explore the relationship between public lands and crises of climate, nature and

racial inequity. Called "Public Lands, We The People," these panel discussions and resulting report helped move public lands toward the top of the nation's climate agenda.

Today, with a new administration that is committed to combatting climate change, we have a real opportunity to make public lands a major part of an equitable solution to the climate crisis. Our bold plans recognize both the scale of the crisis before us and the disproportionate harms many communities have borne throughout the history of public lands.



View recorded sessions and report at www.wilderness.org/wethepeople

Our Plans Include:



Ensuring that local communities have a seat at the table and are engaged in policy and public land management decisions that impact them.



Protecting, connecting and restoring critical landscapes to help capture carbon and mitigate natural disasters.



Achieving net-zero emissions from public lands by 2030. This means reducing the coal, oil and gas production that makes up 24% of the U.S.'s greenhouse gas emissions, while also promoting solar, wind and geothermal development on sites that work best for local communities, ecosystems and economies.



Working with people most impacted by oil and gas drilling and pollution on public lands to create just solutions and livable communities.

Navigating Uncertainty, Focusing on the Future

Kevin Luzak

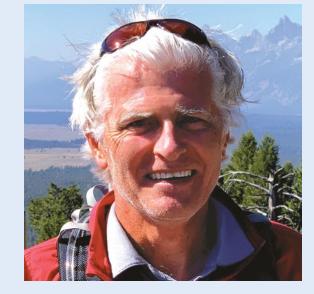
Kevin Luzak's appreciation for wild landscapes began in the middle of the ocean. "Growing up in the woods of rural Connecticut, nature was a part of my world, but the years I spent sailing in the undisturbed expanse of ocean waters deepened my understanding of the interconnectedness of weather, ecosystems and species." Most importantly, the changes he's witnessed on the water have brought the crisis of climate change into sharp relief. In 1988, he was part of a five-year seagoing expedition that attempted the first circumnavigation north of the Arctic Circle, an area that was typically iced in for 10 months of the year. "Fast forward to today," Kevin says, "you could accomplish this feat in a catamaran within a week because of how open the Arctic Sea is."

Having served as the CEO of a private forest products company, Kevin brings an important private lands management perspective to The Wilderness Society's Governing Council. And though he admits he never expected to face a crisis created by a global pandemic, his business background has been critical. "Things could have been shaky," Kevin notes, "had we not put so much effort into this new strategy

focusing on confronting the climate challenge and on strengthening the connections between people and wild places." He reflects on the Council's unanimous approval of these initiatives in early 2020 as one of the most exciting feelings he's experienced at The Wilderness Society. "It was an extraordinary moment, followed less than a month later by an extraordinary international catastrophe."

As he contemplates the strength of The Wilderness Society today, Kevin is quick to add, "We're very fortunate to have the capable staff we have. Not only did they keep us moving full steam ahead toward these long-term, visionary goals, they also helped us skillfully navigate the difficult uncertainty of the past year."

Most importantly, Kevin is grateful to the donors who have equipped The Wilderness Society to have a major impact in this



particular moment. "When you consider the fact that many of the communities we serve are more challenged than they've ever been, the impressive set of opportunities presented by the Biden administration, and the harm that we need to undo as a result of the Trump years—our mission has never mattered more. Our generous supporters recognize this and continue to respond in a significant way. Thanks to them, we're in a unique position to really create change."

"It was an extraordinary moment, followed less than a month later by an extraordinary international catastrophe."

When we build a shared agenda from the ground up, we fulfill the promise of public lands for all. Public lands are for all. They hold promise for Together, we are not just confronting these all people—for clean air and water, for cultural past inequities; we are transforming public land heritage, for respite and recreation, for beauty conservation to begin to fully realize public and perspective, and so much more. And lands' promise for all people and the planet we share. Alongside people, communities and protecting them requires us all to work together. organizations reflecting the full diversity of our Yet for too long, they have been managed for nation, and with the support your philanthropic too few: following the violent removal of tribal leadership provided, we saw the power of a community based approach in 2020—and laid nations from their lands, a narrow vision for who could partake in public lands and what it the groundwork for a more robust, inclusive meant to be in nature prevailed, with Black, and transformative public lands movement Indigenous and people of color left out of across the nation. these discussions.

From the grassroots to the halls of power

Working with people of all races,
ethnicities and backgrounds in both
urban and rural communities, we can
make public lands work for everyone,
especially those who have had the
least access to nature's benefits, while
reshaping public lands policy for the
nation. In 2020, you helped:

- The Blackfeet Nation secure long-delayed justice as the final improperly issued drilling lease within the sacred Badger-Two Medicine area in Montana was canceled.
- Support a successful push to prevent more oil and gas leasing in the Chaco Canyon region of New Mexico. We stood with Tribal Nations and local communities to raise our voices against the Trump administration's attempt to rush new drilling plans with minimal public engagement under the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also worked together to secure language in the year-end stimulus and appropriations bills banning leasing for one year while providing \$600,000 for cultural resource studies in the region.
- Restoration of the National Bison Range to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Montana, whose efforts to reclaim tribal sovereignty and manage the land for conservation values and public benefit we have supported through a yearslong partnership you helped make possible.

- win \$125 million in funding—five times more than in any previous year—for the Outdoor Legacy Recreation Partnership Program. As the pandemic highlighted the importance of outdoor spaces and park equity, we successfully pushed Congress to provide unprecedented resources for this critical program—which funds urban park projects with a priority on economically disadvantaged areas lacking outdoor recreation opportunities. With your support, we helped shape legislative strategy while elevating the voices of more than 200 grassroots partners who demanded that their representatives act.
- A record number of people make informed and valuable contributions to a new management plan for the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina. Combining our on-the-ground knowledge with cutting-edge GIS mapping technology, we created an online North Carolina Mountain Treasures story map that enabled people to explore areas of the forest that are not yet protected, make more specific and forceful comments to the U.S. Forest Service, and exercise their right to help shape public lands management for the benefit of all.



As we work to unite people to protect America's wild places, we must find common ground around enduring conservation solutions.

Enduring conservation solutions that equitably benefit all people emerge from strong, community led coalitions that reach beyond traditional conservation and environmental groups. The Wilderness Society plays a key role in convening these partners in both urban and rural areas.

Our Urban to Wild Director Yvette Lopez-Ledesma works on programs and policies to ensure equitable access to public lands, urban parks and open space for millions of people living in and around Los Angeles, Seattle and Albuquerque.

"In pursuing these efforts," she says, "we serve as a bridge, bringing together coalitions that include people outside the traditional conservation arena who can outline and achieve our collective goals."

"I'm a big believer that the people closest to the problem are the people closest to the solution."

—Yvette Lopez-Ledesma, Urban to Wild Director

Her colleague, Conservation Program Manager Jordan Reeves, works in the Crown of the Continent region in Montana, an area with millions of acres of protected wildlands. Jordan works with multiple stakeholders to create and advance a shared vision for their communities that integrates conservation and economic development.

"Humility and inclusion are fundamental values Yvette and I share in how we approach our work," Jordan says. "Like our colleagues throughout The Wilderness Society, we recognize that we're working in longestablished communities, with people who have a lot at stake. Their daily lives are deeply impacted by what happens on public lands."

"Although the population density and demographics are radically different, the work in rural Montana and urban areas is actually very similar," according to Yvette.
"The people Jordan and I are working with are often left out of decision-making processes in their own communities. We respect our partners as trusted leaders and experts in their communities and facilitate connections to decision-makers and other fellow leaders. Together, we are working to build power through new and existing alliances and to put forward solutions that work for everyone."

Thank You to **Our Supporters**

The Wilderness Society extends our deepest gratitude to all of our supporters. You have protected America's wild places and laid the groundwork for enduring conservation gains. Together, we will build a more inclusive and powerful conservation movement to harness the potential of public lands to help our nation address the challenges of our time: climate change, the nature crisis and inequity in who benefits from the lands that we share with all people.

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In Memoriam

Jan McCoy Miller

Jan McCoy Miller spent her life advocating for people and nature. This passion inspired her robust support of our efforts to keep the San Gabriel Mountains in greater Los Angeles protected and accessible to all. Though she passed away in 2019 at age 80, opportunities to advance this critical work endure through the extraordinary bequest Jan and her husband Roy made to The Wilderness Society in their will.

Jan blazed a unique trail from her upbringing in the Chicago suburbs. With an undergraduate degree from Stanford, she entered the gendersegregated graduate program at Harvard Business School, finishing near the top of her class in 1961 with a certificate in business—the precursor to an MBA that would be open to women the following year. Her career began in the male-dominated culture of computer programming at IBM, where she was responsible for teaching clients how to use early mainframe computers. She went on to raise three children, who fondly remember weekend hiking excursions and summer camping trips in Acadia National Park in Maine.

After moving to Los Angeles in 1985, Jan's growing interest in conservation led her to cross paths with the man who would become her second husband, Roy Miller. Together, Jan and Roy made their home in the Santa Monica Mountains and delighted in daily hikes in Will Rogers State Historic Park.



Bill Meadows, past President of The Wilderness Society, met Jan and Roy in 1992 and maintained a close friendship with the couple. who became steadfast supporters. After Roy died in 2007, Bill recruited Jan to serve in an advisory capacity. "Jan was both serious and enthusiastic in her support of our conservation agenda—a superb partner," he recalls. "She set a thorough example of active philanthropy with her generosity."

In the last decade, influenced by her interests in education and child welfare, Jan gravitated toward our work to engage youth in greater Los Angeles in caring for wild places. She understood the importance of nature for physical and mental health and sought to ensure that all residents of park-poor communities could have access to those same benefits. Now, thanks to the incredible gift she and Roy made possible through their estate, we can feel confident that people and nature will have opportunities to flourish together for decades to come.

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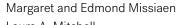
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Our legacy society is named for Robert "Bob" Marshall, a visionary whose beguest served as the foundation for The Wilderness Society. His generous gift decades ago paved the way for spirited individuals to continue serving at the forefront of America's conservation movement today.

Bob's gift through his will was the first planned gift to The Wilderness Society, and we gratefully acknowledge today's visionaries who are following Bob's example by including The Wilderness Society in their wills or other estate plans.

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Financials

Despite the negative impacts of COVID-19 in 2020, thanks to the efforts of our adaptable team and steadfast supporters, we continue to benefit from steady growth in financial resources to support current and future conservation efforts. The growth in net assets in 2020 resulted from unusually large bequests and high investment returns. These funds provide a foundation of financial stability as we tackle the existential climate, nature and inequity crises.

The Wilderness Society and The Wilderness Society Action Fund follow generally accepted accounting principles, which require that the full amount of pledges to be paid over more than one year are recorded as revenue in the year the pledges are made. As a result, years in which we receive an unusually large number of multi-year pledges there is also a corresponding increase in revenues.

Additionally, to ensure sound stewardship of your philanthropic support, we also closely monitor our budget on a cash basis—tracking actual expenditures and revenues that are available to spend in the current fiscal year.

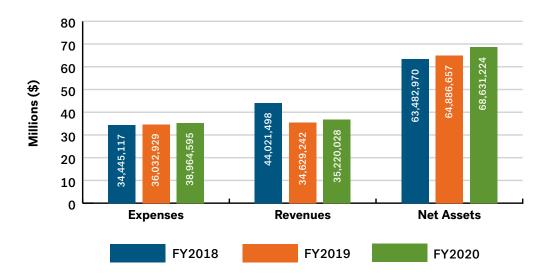
If you would like a copy of the consolidated audited financial statements or have any questions, please contact us:

Email: member@tws.org Visit: wilderness.org/our-accountability Call: 1-800-THE-WILD

2020 Total Program Expenses:	\$27,466,305
Land and Water	\$11,965,402
Energy and Climate	\$8,760,269
People Outdoors	\$4,934,580
Action Fund	\$1,806,054

^{1.} Taken from the consolidated audited financial statements

Organizational Growth¹



Elected to the Governing Council in 2020



Daniel Cordalis

Daniel is a natural resources and Indian law attorney. He stepped down from the Governing Council in 2021 after being appointed Deputy Solicitor, Water, at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

For the last decade, he has worked on natural resource and complex water and land management issues on behalf of Tribal governments and conservation groups. Daniel most recently worked in private practice. He previously was an attorney with Earthjustice, the Yurok Tribe, and clerked for the Colorado Supreme Court and the Native American Rights Fund.

A Navajo Tribal member, Daniel earned his bachelor's degree from Rice University, followed by a master's degree focused on hydrology and a J.D. from the University of Colorado, Boulder.



Lisa Keith

Lisa is a conservationist and retired development executive based in Connecticut.

She has devoted her career to raising resources for conservation and climate organizations. She worked at the Environmental Defense Fund for almost 30 years, leading multiple capital campaigns and working with leadership donors.

She is active with numerous nonprofit organizations addressing conservation and poverty alleviation. She also serves as a Trustee of the Environmental Defense Fund, an Advisory Board member of the Appalachian Mountain Club and is a former board member of the Chocorua Lake Conservancy.

Lisa received her B.A. in history from Middlebury College.



Aaron Wernham

Dr. Aaron Wernham is a family physician and chief executive officer of the Montana Healthcare Foundation. Over more than a decade in clinical practice, Aaron worked in underserved communities in urban California and rural Alaska, where he also served as a policy advisor for Alaska Native tribes.

In his work on health policy at the national level, Aaron developed and led the Health Impact Project, a major initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts focused on incorporating health considerations in public policy decisions; he has served on several National Academy of Sciences committees and authored peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and public health reports.

Aaron received his medical degree from the University of California, San Francisco.

Uniting People toBuild Political Power

In 2020, The Wilderness Society Action Fund amplified the political power of the pro-public lands majority.

The Wilderness Society Action Fund is dedicated to the vision it shares with The Wilderness Society—a future where people and wild nature flourish together, meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing planet. The Action Fund—a separately incorporated 501(c)(4)—is making long-term investments in areas where the opportunities to build political power for conservation are the greatest. Focusing on Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Montana, The Action Fund in 2020 invested in grassroots organizing to promote vital legislation, held elected officials accountable for their votes and supported propublic lands candidates for office.

On the national level, The Action Fund helped center climate within the platforms of all the major Democratic Party presidential candidates. It then worked to ensure that Joe Biden's policy team recognized the critical role that public lands can play in tackling the climate and nature crises in an equitable way. This push was reflected in a number of public lands policies that Biden campaigned on, including: addressing the climate challenge with the full force of the executive branch; support of the effort to protect 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030; a commitment to restore protections to national monuments and other lands and waters threatened by the Trump administration; pausing new oil and gas leasing on public lands and waters; and other priorities shared by The Action Fund and The Wilderness Society.

The Action Fund also invested in key congressional, state and county races to help pro-conservation candidates in their bids for office. Our support helped Tom O'Halleran, a

pro-conservation member of Congress from Arizona, win a close race for re-election and expanded climate-friendly leadership at the state level. Anna Tovar, a strong proponent for renewable energy and addressing the climate crisis, won one of the five seats on Arizona's powerful public utilities board, becoming the first Latina ever elected to statewide office. In New Mexico, The Action Fund helped tip a key county commission to conservation-friendly control while retaining a conservation majority in another.

Looking ahead, The Action Fund will work on a sustained basis with many partners from community-based organizations to large national groups to leverage our resources to the greatest extent possible to build the politics for protecting public lands.



