

KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

SPRING 2021



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NOTES FROM THE TRAILHEAD

This year's Impact Report takes on new meaning as our community deals with the impacts of climate change first-hand. Many families and communities in the Klamath-Siskiyou had to face down two climate emergencies—the Coronavirus pandemic and the Labor Day Fires—within the span of a year. As community members, we are helping our friends and neighbors find care and rebuild. As advocates for biodiversity and climate action, we recognize the sense of emergency. Our experiences together over the past year remind us why the mission of KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper—to protect and restore the forests and rivers of the region—is as critical as ever.

In this edition of the KS Wild News, we highlight several of our conservation advocacy success stories from this past year. It's hard to believe, but it was at this time last March that we began our "work-from-home" journey. We are a staff that often thrives on community, and despite our distance with one another, we still came together to speak up and defend the region's wild places and wildlife. Thank you for listening, reading, sending emails and letters, and making phone calls to elected leaders and decision-makers.

With more than 5,000 contributions in 2020 and supporters ranging across 40 different states (plus a Canadian province), we have been able to close out an uncertain year with

KS Wild's mission is to protect and restore wild nature in the Klamath-Siskiyou region of southwest Oregon and northwest California.

We promote science-based land and water conservation through policy and community action.

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solid reserves and a stable network contributors. Thank you! Our funding is balanced between reliable foundation partners, many of whom have been supporting us for the past two decades, and several thousand individuals, families, and businesses across the region and beyond.

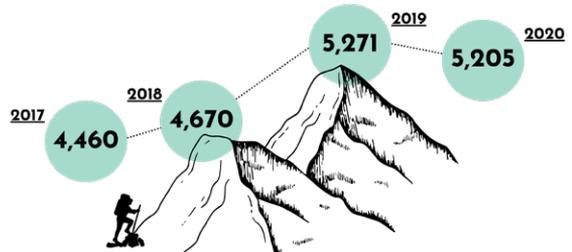
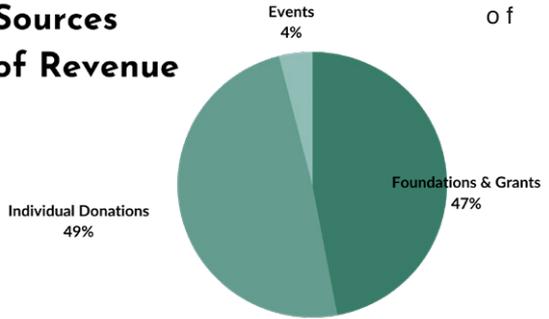
Your contributions support our ForestWatch program, which is working with partners to try and overturn Trump timber protest rules and reviewing and commenting on several post-fire management plans associated with the Slater, Obenchain, and Archie Creek Fires. We are also keeping a close eye on the Medford Bureau of Land Management's focus on logging the best wildlife habitat we have around: old-growth forests. Since our last publication we have great news to report on the campaign to stop the Jordan Cove LNG pipeline, and our work with the Western Environmental Law Center also forced the BLM to reconsider impacts to rare and threatened Great Grey Owls near the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

In this Impact Report, you will learn about our new Forest & Fire Toolkit. KS Wild's Climate program has created this educational resource for families and communities to help raise awareness and promote wildfire preparation and safety. Aside from community education, we are also advocating for significant reforms to Oregon's private forest management practices. Our organization is one of six conservation groups working on the negotiating team for Governor Brown's Oregon Forest Practices Act reform effort.

On the heels of an important federal denial of the Jordan Cove LNG project, our region's rivers will remain a key focal point for us this year. Together, KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper are working to pass legislation in the coming years to help expand protections for the Wild Rogue, as well as Wild & Scenic designations for hundreds of miles of streams and creeks from the Wild Rivers Coast to the Cascades. We are also working with partners from the Smith River Alliance and Kalmiopsis Rivers coalition to ensure protections for the North Fork Smith, Rough & Ready Creek, and Pistol River watersheds.

Thank you for your support of KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper. It is truly a team effort to accomplish what we can year in and year out. Your contributions, kind words, and fierce advocacy for the Wild have an impact!

Sources of Revenue



Number of Contributions

Average Donation Amount



KS WILD FOREST WATCH WORKS

KS Wild keeps track of over 8,000,000-acres of public lands in southern Oregon and Northern California. We evaluate every logging, mining, grazing project that is proposed by the Forest Service or BLM and we then work to defend and restore forests and watersheds. If something happens on public lands in the Rogue River or Klamath River watersheds, KS Wild likely knows about it.

Where It Works

In Oregon we monitor the:

- Fremont-Winema National Forest
- Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
- Medford District BLM
- Klamath Falls Resource Area BLM

In California we monitor the:

- Klamath National Forest
- Six Rivers National Forest
- Shasta-Trinity National Forest



million
**ACRES OF
PUBLIC LAND IN
SW OREGON &
NW CALIFORNIA**

How It Works

We provide site-specific comments based on our reading of BLM and Forest Service proposals and our observations in the field. We encourage public lands managers to focus on restoration rather than resource exploitation. If the project would harm forest or watershed values, we file an administrative objection. If the project would violate the law, we file litigation.

Who We Work With

Our closest Forestwatch allies include:

- The Western Environmental Law Center
- The Environmental Protection Information Center
- The Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
- Cascadia Wildlands
- Oregon Wild
- Advocates for the West



The Result of that Work

In 2020 our efforts:

- Stopped the Crawford old-growth timber sale that would have “taken” one of the last remaining successfully reproducing spotted owl pairs in that portion of the Klamath National Forest.
- Changed the Lake of the Woods project from an area-wide old-growth timber sale into a focused treatment of hazard trees adjacent to cabins.
- Prevailed in a challenge to the BLM’s Griffin Half Moon timber sale that targeted previously protected Great Gray Owl nesting sites for logging.
- Increased protections for the Humboldt Martin.
- Resulted in the modification, improvement or cancelation of projects across the region.

The Work Ahead

In 2021 we intend to:

- Lift the environmental rollbacks instituted by the Trump Administration.
- Incorporate climate and carbon sequestration into agency planning.
- Take on BLM old-growth timber sales across the region.
- Help the Forest Service transition towards restoration, recreation and watershed protection.
- Ensure that public lands project focus on fire resiliency near homes and communities and not on backcountry logging and mining.

George Sexton is the Conservation Director for KS Wild.

A BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



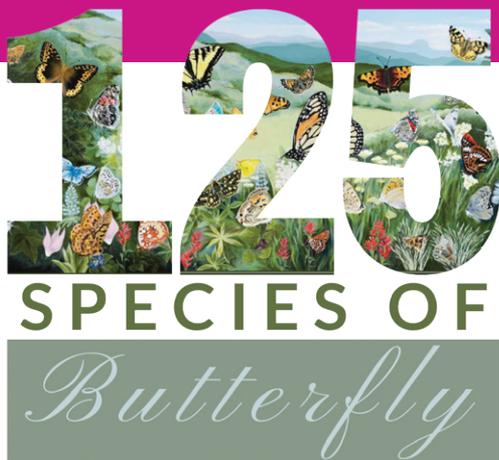
The forests, wildlands, and rivers of the Klamath-Siskiyou provide refuge for a remarkable variety of wildlife. Many imperiled wildlife species rely upon large blocks of intact forest to provide habitat and sustenance necessary to thrive and reproduce. These large blocks of habitat often provide a “source habitat” for wildlife contributing to population stability and recovery. Conservation efforts in the Klamath-Siskiyou have protected large wildlife habitat hotspots associated with the Kalmiopsis, Marble Mountains, Siskiyou Crest, Trinity Alps, and the Cascade Range.



STEWARDSHIP IMPACTS —————

KS Wild’s Pubic Lands and You (PLAY) stewardship program is committed to restoring and protecting the wild places of the Klamath Siskiyou region. Connecting our spectacular volunteers with on-the-ground impactful projects that contribute to improving our botanical hotspots and monitoring some of the most biologically rich places in the Klamath-Siskiyou. For more info or to get involved, visit kswild.org/land-stewardship.

By preventing the logging of our old-growth forests we are protecting many species that are especially sensitive or at-risk. Protecting high elevation wetland meadows on the Siskiyou Crest and inland serpentine landscapes are essential to safeguarding endemic species of plants and insects.



KS Wild also collaborates with conservation allies in petitioning the US Fish and Wildlife service to list and defend threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.



To learn more about biodiversity of plants and wildlife in the Klamath-Siskiyou, visit our website at kswild.org/safeguarding-wildlife.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Eight Dollar Mountain Botanical Area At A Glance

10 volunteers, restored about 30 acres of natural habitat, seeded 6 native plant species, 85 hours, 4 photo monitoring reports filed, replaced botanical area signages.

Alex Hole Meadows At A Glance

30 hours, a quarter mile of fencing, and 10 acres of riparian meadow protected.

FOR THE ROGUE IN 2020



Even through all of the changes and challenges of 2020, and thanks to your support, we saw big achievements for the Rogue!

We protected the Rogue against Jordan Cove LNG

Thanks to your support, the state issued two more permit denials for the project continuing to stop it in its tracks. We wrote detailed comments, led a coalition of technical experts, legally challenged FERC's approval of the project, and led a coordinated response to defend against weakening Clean Water Act protections, defending the Rogue and keeping Jordan Cove LNG at bay.

Worked to improve protections for one million acres of private forest lands in the Rogue Watershed

We joined with conservation partners and representatives from the timber industry in a historic agreement that resulted in legislation in June 2020 improving stream buffer standards for the Siskiyou region. This legislation also established a process for the coalition and state to develop a statewide Habitat Conservation Plan for aquatic species to improve protections for streams that flow through private forestlands in the Rogue Basin and all of Oregon's forest waters.

Addressing post-fire impacts along Bear Creek

In response to the recent Almeda fire that devastated communities in the Rogue Valley, we are working to support efforts to minimize toxic runoff from burned areas into the waterway. We implemented a volunteer photo monitoring program to capture restoration efforts and collect samples in coordination with local agencies to monitor water quality.

Connected to supporters during social distancing

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we shifted to "virtual" gatherings and adapted our communications to provide key updates on campaigns and programs to help you stay up-to-date on everything from the fight against Jordan Cove LNG to attacks on the Clean Water Act. Thanks to everyone who joined virtual and in-person events helping us stay connected and inspired!



PROTECTING THE ROGUE IN 2021

Stopping Jordan Cove LNG

Thanks to recent Federal decisions upholding Oregon's denial of the crucial permits for the project, we are closer than we've ever been to stopping Jordan Cove LNG for good. We will continue to work with our coalition partners in 2021 to uphold permit denials from the state, legally challenge federal approvals and build opposition to stop Jordan Cove LNG once and for all.

Working to Reform the Oregon Forest Practices Act

As part of the MOU and legislation passed in 2020, we will work closely with KS Wild staff to address issues for Oregon's forest workers while directly engaging in this historic opportunity for collaboration between groups to reform the Oregon Forest Practices Act to protect Oregon's forest waters.

Restoring the Bear Creek Corridor Post Almeda Fire

In response to the Almeda fire and the many issues that continue to plague "The Bear ", we will work with volunteers on clean up and monitoring programs and coordinate with partners and communities to address post fire impacts to Bear Creek. We will also work with local municipalities and social justice groups to advocate for safe and equitable housing and resources for those facing homelessness.

Engaging Local Communities for Clean Water

While we will still have to connect virtually for a bit longer, we plan on developing fun and creative ways to talk about clean water issues whether it's through our Monthly Winter Speaker Series, Bear Creek Clean Ups and Photo Monitoring Programs, film festivals, salmon walks or river trips. We hope you will join us and we hope to see you in person soon!

Hiring a new staff to kick butt for the Rogue

In saying goodbye to our Conservation Director, Stacey Detwiler, we're excited for the possibilities that lay before us. We hope to bring on new staff with a passion for clean water advocacy that will bring their skills and experience to help us protect and defend the Rogue Basin and its communities!

Letting you know where it's safe to swim

This year, we plan to safely return to our water quality monitoring program by working with volunteers and partners to test for E coli bacteria at sites throughout the watershed. We plan to expand our outreach to engage with Indigenous and Latinx communities on how our ongoing monitoring can support their needs and existing work.



Robyn Janssen is Rogue Riverkeeper.

CLIMATE PROGRAM

LOOKING BACK

KS Wild's Climate Program is advancing climate focused conservation throughout the Klamath-Siskiyou region. "Climate Smart" conservation is necessary to ensure that ecosystems increase carbon storage and are resilient to climate change.

Forests act like a carbon sponge. The best natural climate solution is to keep the diverse mix of old trees in our forests standing. When we do this, carbon is stored, biodiversity is protected, and clean water is safeguarded.



This work is only possible through constant collaboration with our climate partners: Oregon Climate Action Plan, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, Firesmart Merlin, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now, Illinois Valley Community Development Organization, Prescriptions For Safety, and many others.

2020 Highlights of KS Wild's Climate Program

Advanced several projects that **create defensible space around homes and communities and implement climate smart forest management**. This past year our work has focused in the Upper Applegate, Smith River, and Illinois Valley watersheds covering over 100,000 acres, including the approval of nearly 25,000 acres of prescribed fire. Nearly 10,000 comments were delivered to land managers encouraging the use of climate and fire science to guide project development.

Teamed up with the new Oregon Climate Action Plan (OCAP) group working to ensure that **Oregon's forests are managed to store carbon and combat climate change**. Through Executive Order 20-04, the Oregon Department of Forestry and Global Warming Commission are mandated to develop strategies to store more carbon in industrial forests. We are keeping them to their goal.

Through our rural organizing and community engagement, we are helping to facilitate the Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group to advance community fire protection and federal land management. We are also sponsoring Prescriptions for Safety, a group focused on treating areas near roadside evacuation routes in residential areas in the Applegate Valley prone to wildfire.

A major accomplishment for the Climate Program in 2020 was the

FIRE AND CLIMATE SUMMIT

Originally planned as a three-day networking event for community members, the realities of COVID-19 precluded the in-person meeting. However, the digital webinar series that followed reached far more people—with almost 800 people participating throughout the series!

The Summit was developed with many partners to host a forum on the intersection of climate change, wildfires, and our human and natural communities. A discussion of climate adaptation in our region and hearing directly from experts and land management agencies was critical to understand the issue as a whole. By adapting the series' content, we were able to provide timely information from leading experts on how COVID-19 affected the 2020 wildfire season.

Participants in the Summit learned about climate adaptation efforts in southern Oregon and northern California, tribal burning practices that mitigate wildfire risks, and the necessary steps to reduce the threat of fire to homes and communities.

The Summit led to the creation of the **'Forest and Fire Toolkit'** for rural communities throughout the Siskiyou region. A 'one stop shop' for the resources you need to acquaint yourself with the forests in the Siskiyou Mountains, the toolkit provides descriptions of the agencies that oversee millions of acres of public and private industrial forest lands. We include invaluable resources on how to prepare properties, homes, and communities for a wildfire emergency and to gain a better understanding of the role of fire in these forests.

The toolkit is part of KS Wild's ongoing efforts to support community adaptation to wildfires and a changing climate.

Alexi Lovechio is the National Forest Organizer for KS Wild.



CLIMATE PROGRAM

LOOKING FORWARD

As we look forward, the Climate Program is focused on advocacy at the state and national levels to advance climate change adaptation and forest carbon policies. There is broad recognition that northwest forest ecosystems store more carbon than almost any other region on Earth, helping to stabilize our climate. We will push policy makers and the incoming Biden administration to advance programs that help communities adapt to wildfire, build a workforce for climate resilience projects, and protect valuable, carbon-rich old growth and streamside forests.

Local Priorities

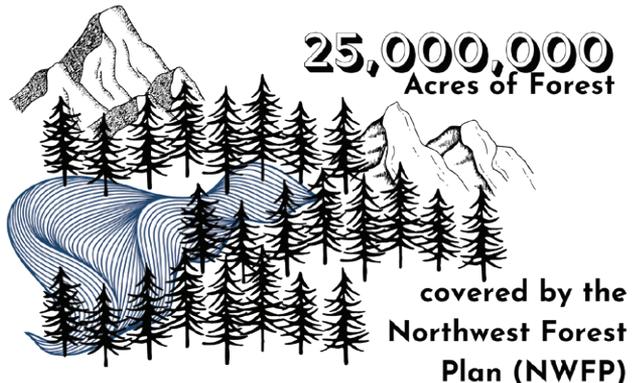
KS Wild's Climate Program works from our communities out with a focus on evacuation planning, creating defensible space around homes, and advancing climate smart conservation and forest resiliency projects. In 2021 we will be working with community partners and land managers to advance more projects that protect residences from the threat of wildfire intensified by climate change and increase prescribed fire use to restore landscape climate resilience.

Statewide Efforts

In 2021, we will continue our work to ensure that the Oregon Climate Action Plan executive order meaningfully addresses climate change on Oregon's carbon rich forests. We will engage in state-wide wildfire and forest policy efforts to reform the tax funded, pro-industry Oregon Forest Resources Institute. We are one of six salmon and forest conservation groups negotiating terms of salmon habitat reforms for 10 million acres of private and industrial forests in Oregon.

Federal Opportunities

With the change of the US Congress and the incoming administration, there is a tremendous opportunity to take action on forest conservation and climate change. We are urging the Biden-Harris administration to protect our valuable older forests that shade our streams, store massive amounts of carbon, and act as a buffer against climate change. Science will be our guide as we apply the best practices to protect biodiversity in the era of climate change. We will be a part of a core team working to update the conservation framework of the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan and make sure climate adaptation is a primary focus.



LOOKING FORWARD

OREGON FOREST PRACTICES ACT

An area of focus in 2021 for KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper will be to reform Oregon's rules for industrial logging practices. We are part of a core negotiating team working on a state-wide effort to update Oregon forest practices through a historic agreement with the timber industry.

Clearcut logging, often right over streams, continues as the dominant practice across ten million acres of private and industrially-owned forests in Oregon. While California and Washington have updated their logging rules in recent years, Oregon lags behind its neighbors. If you spend any time driving around western Oregon, you see the result. Clearcut logging leaves behind flammable logging slash. Logging roads cause sediment to fill salmon streams. Denuded hillsides remove the forest carbon, hastening climate change.

Industrial forestry is bad for salmon. Removing trees near streams results in warmer stream temperatures. Numerous streams that flow into southwest Oregon rivers are already too warm, which puts threatened species such as coho salmon at risk. By keeping stream buffers intact, streams can recover and stay shaded, helping fish and wildlife, and protecting drinking water source areas. Retaining more trees in forests can also provide habitat for fish and wildlife at risk in a warmer climate by providing shade that will be more important as the region warms.

Industrial logging practices have contributed to the climate crisis by removing large carbon stores: big, old trees. In fact, the Oregon Global Warming Commission found that industrial logging was one of the leading contributors to climate change in the state. However, by retaining trees along streams and allowing forests to grow longer, forests can become a part of the solution to climate change. Forests capture and store enough carbon to offset nearly 30% of pollution that causes climate change.

Private landowners of both large and small tracts of forestland own 34% of Oregon's forests. The Forest Practices Act allows clearcutting, aerial herbicide spraying, and logging too close to many streams.

While we have been working for years to ensure that proper buffers are applied to southwest Oregon streams, 2021 is an opportunity to make significant headway in the long overdue effort to reform Oregon Forest Practices.

*Joseph Vaile is the
Climate Director for KS Wild.*



A NEW HOME FOR KS WILD

If you have been a KS Wild supporter for long enough, you know the story of the organization's founding more than two decades ago, and the rustic nature of KS Wild's original office space: a backyard yurt in the forests outside Williams. Since those early days, the KS Wild office has taken many forms. If you include the KS Wild merger with the Siskiyou Project in 2011, that history only expands to iterations of offices in Takilma, Cave Junction, Williams, Grants Pass, and Ashland. Let's not forget that over the past decade, the KS Wild office has included the Rogue Riverkeeper team too!

The KS Wild office is traditionally a hub of activity during this time of year, as we prepare for a busy spring of hikes and events, including a fun-filled Earth Month each April. This spring, we look forward to sharing with you all a glimpse into the future office of KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper. We are excited to create this permanent home in Ashland's Historic Railroad District, unlike any other KS Wild office; It will be a gathering place and a welcoming space for the public. Our dear friend and former colleague Gary Powell would have wanted it that way.

Many of you knew Gary Powell, who served as our canvass director from 2005-2018, visiting supporters at their homes in communities like Ashland and Talent. A few times a year, Gary would also visit our friends in Mt. Shasta and share our actions and campaigns. Gary passed away in 2019 (and his partner Geronimo a few months later), and they left KS Wild their home in their bequest.

His old home will be our new home. We are honored to carry on his legacy as a voice for the forests, waters, and wildlife of the Klamath-Siskiyou. Throughout his life, Gary was a champion for the expansion of civil rights, LGBTQIA+ advocacy, as well as the arts. We are thrilled to be creating a work space and gathering place for the organization's staff, volunteers, and community of supporters. We are hopeful that other activists and service groups find the new space useful as a spot to meet or network too.

In addition to Gary and Geronimo's generosity, we would also like to thank the families of Robert Stowell, Michele Lorenz, and Ann Macrory for additional bequest donations.

These funds have been allocated to a capital campaign by KS Wild's board and represent a significant portion of the funding needed for KS Wild to complete our remodel project. The City of Ashland is currently reviewing KS Wild's site plan and application, and we hope to begin remodeling in the next few months. It's our hope to welcome staff and guests from the public to our new office later this year. We look forward to seeing you again soon!





JOIN US EVENTS

Shane Stiles

Join us on a year-long, online learning adventure in our new **Love Where You Live Series**. For more info and to sign up go to www.kswild.org/events.

Butterflies and Moths: Walk Softly and Carry a Big Net

Wednesday, March 31, 6-7pm

Featuring entomologist and local educator, Dana Roth, specializing in the order Lepidoptera, which includes moths and butterflies. First introduced to the area by Ernst Dornfeld's 1980 book, *The Butterflies of Oregon*, he has returned year after year to reconnect with both the diverse insect fauna and a growing number of interesting and conservation minded people that have become friends.

Shadow's Tribe and How They Live: The Great Gray Owl

Thursday, April 22, 6-7pm

Guest speaker Harry Fuller has lived in Oregon since 2007. Harry has written three natural history books, including *Great Gray Owl* in California, Oregon and Washington, *Freeway Birding*, *San Francisco to Seattle*, and *San Francisco's Natural History*. He has been leading bird trips and teaching birding classes since the 1990s. You can find his birding journal online at atowhee.blog.

Trails of the Klamath-Siskiyou: Find Your Outdoor Adventure

Wednesday, May 12, 6-7:30pm

Get ready to hit the trails this summer with our next episode in the *Love Where You Live* series, *Trails of the Klamath-Siskiyou*. We will hear from Siskiyou Mountain Club, Pacific Crest Trail Association and Siskiyou Upland Trails Association.



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5 days along the Rogue
Trail with raft support
and delicious meals.

ROGUE RIVER TRAIL RAFT-SUPPORTED HIKE MAY 2021



For more information:
www.kswild.org/events



www.kswild.org

www.roguekeeper.org

Cover: Waterline Trail, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, Ashland watershed.
Photo by Holly Christiansen.