

KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

SPRING 2022



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Notes From the Trailhead

During a year that was full of challenges, KS Wild's network of volunteers and donors delivered once again, providing a strong base of support for the organization. We navigated changes in our personnel, along with an extensive re-zoning application and renovation effort for a new office during the course of 2021, and we still managed to advance protections for the region's rivers, forests, and wildlife. Thank you to the more than 3,000 individuals, businesses, and families that supported KS Wild and its Rogue Riverkeeper program over the past year! You helped us prevail in a decade-long fight against the Jordan Cove LNG pipeline and export project, as well as in federal court when the Bureau of Land Management proposed to log mature, primary forests in the Griffin Half-Moon timber sale near the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

Like many in the non-profit sector, KS Wild benefited from the Paycheck Protection Program in 2021, after Congress approved the measure in the early months of the public health crisis. While our membership and supporter numbers remain strong, we did see a leveling off in our active, renewing supporters and new donors. It's not a surprise, as we have seen communities across southern Oregon and northern California's Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion impacted by parallel environmental emergencies. The COVID public health crisis, drought, wildfires, and smoke have taken their toll. Personally, I know several dozen KS Wild supporters that spent the past year rebuilding their homes, and their livelihoods, after the Labor Day fires of 2020 tore through communities along the Klamath River and in the Rogue Valley. Dozens more have left the region entirely. We are still very much in the midst of a long recovery and healing process for many defenders in our region.

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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In our line of work KS Wild often talks about resiliency; setbacks are bound to happen but preparing for them allows us to come out stronger on the other end. With more than 3,000 individual and business supporters and a dozen foundation partners, KS Wild's \$900,000 annual budget supported 13 staff members and a contract bookkeeper. For every \$5 donated, \$4 went to our Climate, ForestWatch, and Rogue Riverkeeper programs. Roughly 45% of our funding continues to be sourced from individual, family, and business donations which gives us lots of flexibility to respond to threats and opportunities.



It was important for us to get through these past two years maintaining our reserves during global and local crises, while navigating a major capital investment with our new office in Ashland's Historic Railroad District. Four bequests over the past 18 months provided the organization with almost all of the funding we needed to complete our renovation and remodeling project, which meant more of your annual fund contributions were invested with our conservation, restoration, and advocacy programs.

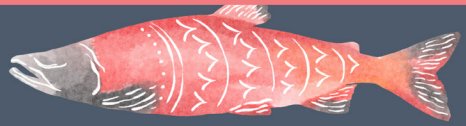
No matter the amount of one's donation—\$5, \$50, \$500, or \$5,000—it makes a difference. In 2022, we look forward to engaging more community members across the region and outside of it. If we are going to meet the challenges that climate change will bring to our region, we need to branch out and reach community members who are not yet engaged. Beyond charitable contributions, supporters like you can also help us advance KS Wild's mission by sharing social media posts, signing petitions to elected leaders, forwarding emails to new friends or colleagues, writing letters to the editor, or even hosting house parties with neighbors.

With your continued support we can achieve even greater success in 2022 with the passage of the Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act, River Democracy Act, and Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion Act. Combined, these bills would protect more than 250,000 acres of public lands in the Rogue, Illinois & North Fork Smith River watersheds in southwest Oregon, while designating several hundred miles of watersheds as Wild & Scenic.

Michael Dotson is KS Wild's Executive Director.



THE FIGHT TO END A PIPELINE NO LNG



2007



Jordan Cove Energy Project and the Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline applied for approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.



2009: Rogue Riverkeeper was born out of the need for aquatic advocacy in the Rogue River Basin, especially in the face of the Jordan Cove LNG facility.



2014



Local organizing brought over 300 people out to a FERC hearing in Medford where floor space and hallways were utilized to fit everyone into the room.



2015: A statewide coalition grew, focusing on a targeted event at Oregon's capitol. Hundreds came from across the state to "Rally for our Home" and against the Jordan Cove LNG project.



2019

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) denies the Clean Water Act Section 401 permit



2020: Jordan Cove withdraws its state lands permit. Less than a month later, the state denies them a Coastal Zone permit.



2021

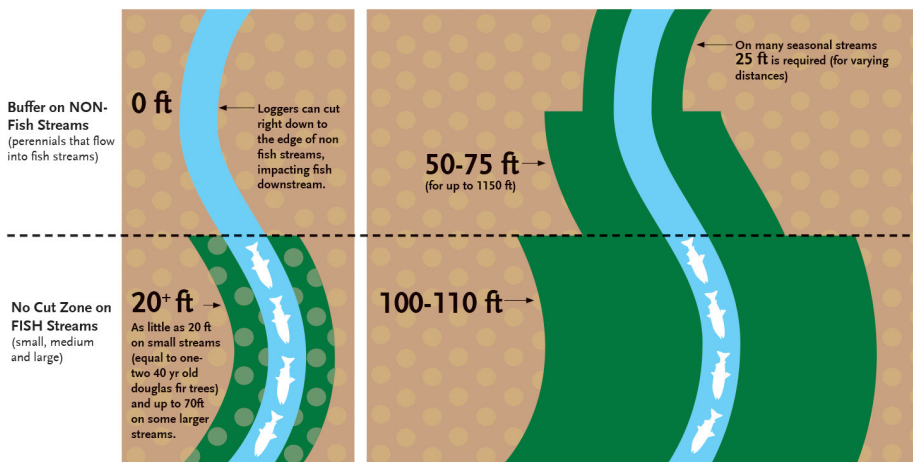
After years of community organizing, Jordan Cove LNG Export Terminal and Fracked Gas Pipeline is dead.

BIG WINS HAVE A BIG IMPACT

OREGON FOREST ACCORD

CURRENT **V.** PROPOSED STREAM BUFFER RULES

(Comparison of current and proposed changes to stream buffers on westside private forests)



After nearly a year of intense negotiations, an unprecedented conservation agreement was reached between the conservation community and timber interests that overhauls the Oregon Forest Practices Act (OFPA). The Private Forest Accord is set to dramatically improve the state's forestry rules, and represents the most sweeping upgrades to the OFPA since its enactment in 1971. As we go to press, the Accord has passed the legislature. Once signed by Governor Brown, this law will create wider forest buffers along streams, a logging road network that won't bleed sediment into streams and block fish migration, and enhanced protections for steep slopes reaching across 10 million acres of private forests in Oregon!



So much of our work relies on supporters like you.

Thank you for taking action and making change!

FORESTWATCH WORKS

WHERE IT 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, and grazing project that is proposed by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management (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.



million

ACRES OF
PUBLIC LAND IN
SW OREGON &
NW CALIFORNIA



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



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

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.

THE RESULTS OF OUR WORK

In 2021 Forestwatch:

- Defended the existence of Northern spotted owl “critical habitat” at all scales- including within individual timber sales and across the region.
- Persuaded land managers on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest to retain rather than log post-fire forests located in Late Successional and Riparian Reserves.
- Led Challenges to the 12th hour Trump Administration rules gutting public participation in BLM planning and timber sale implementation.
- Achieved in the modification, improvement, or cancelation of numerous projects across the region.

THE WORK AHEAD

In 2022 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.



SPECIAL FOREST FOCUS

PUBLIC LANDS and the Legacy of the **Oregon & California Lands Act of 1937**

The timber industry has long sought to ensure that 2.6 million acres of public forest lands overseen by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in western Oregon are managed the same way that the timber industry treats their own lands- namely as a rotation crop in which wildlife, watersheds, and recreation always take a back seat to short-term timber profits.

To achieve their nightmarish dream, Big Timber has filed multiple lawsuits on the other side of the country in the DC Circuit Court seeking to force the Oregon BLM to manage these public lands solely for timber production. Their corporate lawyers handpicked a judge sympathetic to their cause and asked the court to order the BLM to maximize logging throughout southwest Oregon regardless of impacts to fire hazard, community values, carbon sequestration, or water quality. They even asked the judge to forbid the BLM from using the word “wildlife” in their timber sale documents.

Pointing to the Oregon & California Lands Act of 1937, Big Timber is attempting to prevent the consideration or implementation of environmental safeguards for watersheds and wildlife by BLM timber planners.

In 2022 KS Wild and our conservation allies will renew our focus on ensuring that America’s public lands are managed for the benefit of all- including fire affected communities, downstream water users, future generations, and fish and wildlife. We will not let a cadre of timber lawyers force the BLM to slick off every acre of ancient forest to enrich a few at the expense of many.

George Sexton is KS Wild's Conservation Director

FOR THE ROGUE: 2021 AND BEYOND



Hands down, the major win for Rogue Riverkeeper in 2021 was the defeat of the Jordan Cove LNG project. A few pages back, you can find a timeline of the long battle with the Canadian energy company which sought to construct a fracked gas pipeline and terminal. The effort of individuals and organizations to stand up to this project was immense, but we did it! It was only through the long hard work and support provided by so many like you that we won, so thank you.

Rogue Riverkeeper tracks many kinds of activities that impact the Rogue Basin, some of which would get little notice otherwise. This past year, Rogue Riverkeeper launched a campaign to stop the proposed dredging of the Rogue in nine locations by Hellgate Jetboat Excursions, and engaged with the OR Dept. of Environmental Quality and the OR Dept. of Forestry on protecting watersheds on industrial forest lands.

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the landmark federal law, the Clean Water Act. As our region continues to experience extreme drought conditions, Rogue Riverkeeper looks closely at current and planned activities in our basin, whether it is the destruction of riparian and groundwater protection areas, polluted runoff from urban development and agricultural practices, or high-impact recreation on the river. All of these activities have a negative impact on clean water and the sustainability of aquatic ecosystems; exactly what the Clean Water Act is meant to protect.

As summer approaches, we plan to host on-water and virtual events. Rogue Riverkeeper will continue its long-standing water quality monitoring program, using volunteers to help collect water samples at popular locations and analyze them for water contact safety and post results publicly on the Swim Guide. Sign up for Rogue Riverkeeper enews to stay up-to-date on our work to protect water quality in the Rogue basin and ways to keep water swimmable, drinkable, and fishable. We hope to see you soon!



Frances Oyung is Rogue Riverkeeper's Program Director

ANOTHER WIN FOR THE ROGUE

In June of last year, Hellgate Jetboat Excursions, a Grants Pass based business, sought a 10 year authorization to dredge and discharge up to 1,050 cubic yards of sediment annually for vessel navigation access within a 17 mile reach of the Rogue River.

This was clearly a problem because dredging of the Rogue River is a threat to chinook salmon habitat, clean water, and the natural condition and environment of the river bed. Rogue Riverkeeper did not believe that one business should be able to alter the river channel within the Wild & Scenic corridor simply for their own use. We launched a campaign to stop the necessary permits from going through by collaborating with other advocacy organizations and Tribal authorities and asking our supporters to write to the responsible agencies.

Rogue Riverkeeper launched a campaign to bring the issues around this application to the attention of the public in coordination with Northwest Environmental Defense Center and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. After a 30-day extension was granted, over a thousand community members submitted comments to the agencies asking them to deny the permit until the insufficient information which was lacking in the application was provided for public review of the full impacts of the proposed activity. Commenters also requested that the agencies consider practicable alternatives and public benefit, and that the dredging activity should be fully evaluated to determine the potential harm to waters of the United States, a violation of the Clean Water Act. With the help of supporters like you, we successfully showed Hellgate Jetboat



Excursions that there was strong community resistance to this project causing the withdrawal of their permit application leading to an official rejection by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Emily Bowes is Rogue Riverkeeper's Conservation Director

TAKING ACTION FOR CLIMATE

Climate change is here and we are at a critical point in the future of our planet. KS Wild is taking action. As KS Wild's Climate Program enters its third year advocating for the protection of forests and biodiversity as a natural solution to climate change, these strategies are gaining traction nationally. We are passionate about advancing climate smart conservation and community wildfire resilience throughout southern Oregon and northern California.

NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

This past year our program was focused on an incredible opportunity to negotiate the Private Forest Accord to revamp the dismal private industrial forest practices across 10 million acres in Oregon. Many of these forests are managed by timber companies with clearcuts, herbicides, and tree farms. The agreement expands forested buffers on streams, ensures fish friendly roads, and protects beaver and other aquatic species.



CLIMATE SMART CONSERVATION

Climate change forces us to alter how we approach conservation and land management. KS Wild is pushing agencies to embrace forward-looking approaches to forest and water management. With the influx of over \$50 million to land management agencies in our region from recent state and federal investments, the Climate Program is engaging in collaborative efforts to ensure this funding supports projects that protect old forests and clean water sources.

WILDFIRE RESILIENCY

As it gets warmer, the wildfire season grows in length and intensity each year. We need to do more to protect communities and build a better relationship with fire. We published the Rural Forest and Fire Toolkit, a critical resource on how to prepare for wildfire. We also helped secure funding for defensible space around homes, treating fire evacuation routes, and building support for prescribed burning in the Rogue Basin. We created KS Wild's first podcast, One Foot in the Black, exploring the solutions to living with wildfire in the era of climate change.



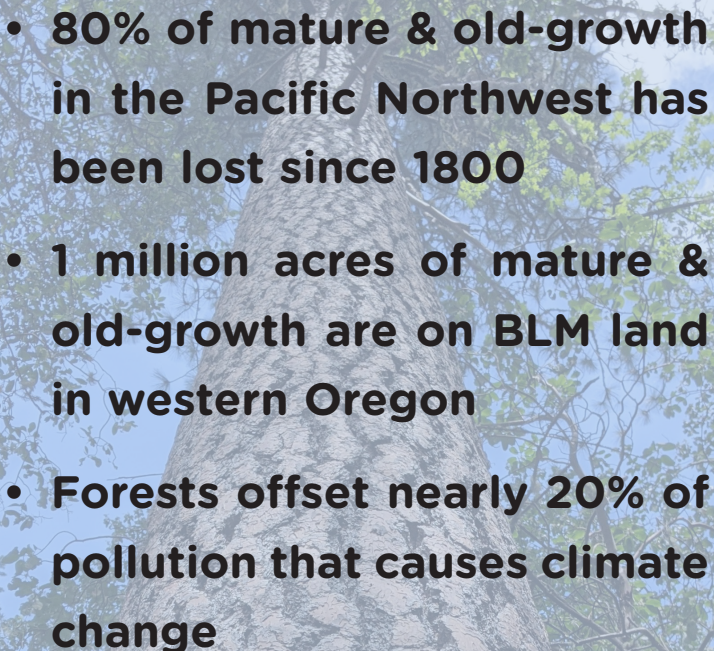
Joseph Vaile is KS Wild's Climate Director

FOREST DEFENSE IS CLIMATE DEFENSE

As the Climate Program looks ahead to 2022, we are working with partners across the Pacific Northwest to advance climate change adaptation and carbon storage in our forests. **This year our focus will be on protecting the remaining mature and old-growth forests in the Klamath-Siskiyou through grassroots coalition efforts and momentum building.**

Old-growth forests in the PNW have myriad values: they produce clean water for salmon and peoples; they provide unique recreation opportunities; they are home to many plants and animals, and they are a natural solution to climate change. By protecting our old-growth forests, we can reduce carbon emissions from logging and increase our forests' natural capacity to capture and store carbon.

Alexi Lovechio is KS Wild's Forest & Climate Coordinator

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- **80% of mature & old-growth in the Pacific Northwest has been lost since 1800**
 - **1 million acres of mature & old-growth are on BLM land in western Oregon**
 - **Forests offset nearly 20% of pollution that causes climate change**

CONNECTIVITY:

MAKING ROADS SAFER FOR WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

America's road network, as currently designed, is a major impediment to migration. Fragmentation of habitat caused by roads prevents animals from accessing food and water. For animals both large and small, roads also reduce a species' long-term viability.

6,100+

The number of wildlife-vehicle collisions
in Oregon in 2020 alone.

#KeepOregonsWildlifeMoving



The impacts go beyond barriers to wildlife movement. According to State Farm Insurance, Oregon drivers face a greater risk of wildlife collisions than our neighbors in Washington and California. Deer and elk accounted for a vast majority of the 6,000 wildlife collisions. Oregon's Department of Transportation (ODOT) also reports that cougars, bears, fishers, and various birds of prey fall victim to these collisions.

In northern California and southern Oregon, the Klamath and Siskiyou Mountain ranges have an east-west orientation which is exceedingly unusual among mountain ranges, which generally

run north to south. A number of wildlife migration "linkages" have been identified in the region, including the Rogue-Umpqua Divide in Oregon and the Shasta Trinity and Castle Crags linkages in California. The Siskiyou Crest straddles the Oregon/California border and is a key linkage as well.

Scientists have identified these areas are critically important to the connectivity of wildlife populations. They are "land bridges" that offer the highest quality habitat corridors between the Coast Ranges of California and Oregon with the massive volcanic ranges of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada. Unfortunately, Interstate 5 dissects each of these linkages and is a huge barrier to wildlife movement.

KS Wild is excited to be a partner in the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition, which is a group of 17 organizations, state agencies, federal land managers, and science advisors focused on improved infrastructure and wildlife passages along southern Oregon's Interstate 5 corridor between Ashland and the California state line at the Siskiyou Crest. This stretch of Interstate 5, known as the Siskiyou Pass, cuts right through the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, which is the only monument set aside for the primary purpose of protecting the area's biodiversity.



Michael Dotson is KS Wild's Executive Director.

STEWARDSHIP IN THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU

KS Wild's Public Lands And You (PLAY) Stewardship program has led restoration efforts at Eight Dollar Mountain and Days Gulch Botanical areas for five successive years to help protect and improve the rare and endemic serpentine plant communities and water quality of the Wild & Scenic Illinois River. On the outskirts of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, this botanical wonderland is where my love of wildlands first blossomed, and it is a great honor to now work alongside the community to protect and restore this special place.

Beginning in 2017, KS Wild in collaboration with public lands agencies, community members, local businesses, and partnership organizations set out to restore areas damaged by illegal off-road vehicles and to secure long-lasting protections for the Eight Dollar Mountain Botanical Area. In 2021, we marked success with the installation of a new botanical area gate that permanently protects the designated botanical area from illegal access.

This huge feat simply couldn't be made possible without the help from our volunteer base, so thank you for the many hours of literal blood, sweat and, tears to get to where we are now. Looking back and remembering that first year together, working in the hot sun with little to no shade as we picked up trash and concealed tire routes throughout the botanical area was hard but satisfying work, especially after a dip in the river. Over that first year and since then our volunteers continue to visit the site for photo monitoring and stewardship days to repair buck and rale fencing, install and in most cases re-install signage, pick up trash, upkeep interpretive signage, and make kiosk improvements.

This year as the wildflowers wake up from their winter slumber, they will be basking in their protective glory from illegal off-road vehicles for the first time in decades. A victory to celebrate!

Allee Gustafson is KS Wild's Community Organizer



YOUR SUPPORT KEEPS US MOVING AHEAD

A big THANK YOU to all our supporters this last year, and through the years. KS Wild celebrates 25 years of defending the forests, wildlife, and wildlands of the Klamath-Siskiyou, and we rely on supporters like you to keep fighting the good fight!



Thank you to the businesses and individuals who sponsored the
2022 Wild & Scenic Film Festival

**Art Bop Beer Co. • Ashland Food Co-op • Bob Hunter
Dan the Backhoe Man Excavation • Full Circle Real Estate
Herb Pharm • Mark Flynn with Century21 • Mountain Rose Herbs
Peerless Hotel • Plant Oregon • Rise Up! Artisanal Bread
Rogue Law Firm • Smith River Alliance**

and all the businesses who contributed in-kind gifts to the raffle!

Please support businesses that support important conservation work in the Klamath-Siskiyou region and Rogue basin watershed.



GETTING OUTSIDE... TOGETHER!

Luke Wimmer

EARTHMONTH EVENTS

Hike on the Green Springs Mountain Loop Trail

Friday, April 15, 2022, 1:00-3:30pm

Greensprings Mountain Loop Trail is an easy 3-mile loop trail that provides a trip through mountainside meadows, diverse forest, and open views of the Rogue Valley and Mt Ashland. Great for families! Led by Communications Associate Haleigh Martin.

Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 16, 2022, 10:00am-2:00pm

Learn plant and wildflower identification in one of souther Oregon's biodiverse hotspots! This moderately easy hike follows a 1.6-mile loop along the Wild & Scenic Illinois River. We will visit a Darlingtonia (Cobra Lily) Fen, as well as Little Falls, where we will enjoy lunch together at an overlook. Hike Leaders: KS Wild Staff Ecologist Rich Nawa and Community Organizer (wildflower enthusiast) Allee Gustafson.

Sunset Hike to Hobart Bluff

Friday, May 13, 2022, 6:00-8:30pm

2.5 mile total out-and-back trail with moderate difficulty, this trail is great for wildflowers and bird watching. With a 413' elevation gain, you are rewarded with views into the Rogue Valley as well as of Mt. McLoughlin, Mt. Ashland, Pilot Rock, and Mt. Shasta. Bring a picnic dinner and your headlamp as we enjoy one of the best sunset views in Southern Oregon.

Boundary Springs Hike

Friday, May 27, 2022, 9:00am-4:00pm

Enjoy this moderate 5-mile out-and-back hike to the Boundary Springs, tucked away in the northern part of Crater Lake National Park where waters of the Rogue River burst forth from volcanic soils. This is a beautiful trail with a couple of cascading waterfalls and a lush riparian zone set against the backdrop of an intact post-fire forest.

Once you sign-up on our website, you will receive more details including meeting locations and what to bring.

More events and information at www.kswild.org/events



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www.kswild.org

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Cover: Pacific Crest Trail at Donomore Meadows. Photo by Luke Wimmer.