



KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

SPRING 2023

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Notes From the Trailhead

I am a self-described map nerd, and my favorite maps are ones that help tell stories. The map in this latest edition of the KS Wild News is a little different than many you have seen before because it focuses more on the people that contribute to our conservation success stories. This edition's map is less about the place we call home, but still helps tell the story of our organization and forest defense in southwest Oregon and northwest California.

Four decades ago, local community activists launched the first tree-sits and road blockades to defend the ancient forests of the Klamath-Siskiyou. Groups like the Siskiyou Project and Headwaters emerged and made an immediate impact on a number of fronts. They stopped numerous old-growth timber sales and road-building efforts through wilderness-quality landscapes, and they helped ban aerial spraying of toxic herbicides on public lands. This was well before the days of the internet and social media when pamphlets, conferences, phone-banking, and slide shows were the way to get the word out about the threats to our ancient forests.

People traveled from all over the country to come to this little corner of the world to fight for wildlife, clean water, and biodiversity. They took their stories and experiences of blockades back to their communities, while some ended up staying and making a home in the Klamath-Siskiyou. At the same time, local forest defenders like Lou Gold saw value in bringing the majesty of these ancient forests to the

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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masses, and it was in the late 1980s that Lou launched and embarked on several national road trips to share his “Ancient Forest Slideshow” with groups and individuals across the country.

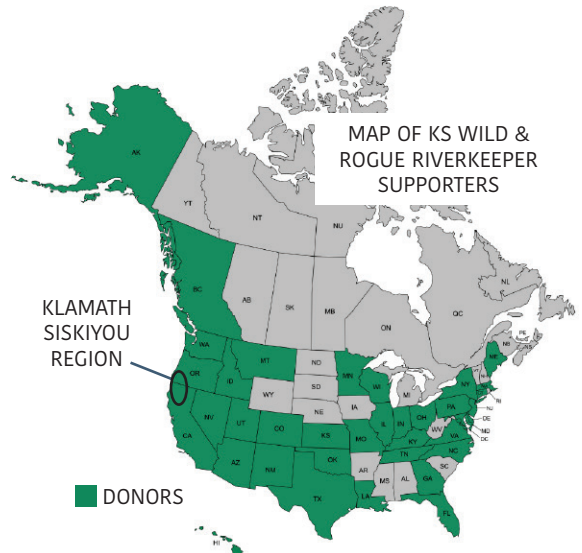
Fast forward to today, and groups like Headwaters have evolved, and in the case of the Siskiyou Project, they merged with KS Wild over a decade ago. We still see the impact of Lou’s efforts as donations and contributions roll in from across the country, and there are several times a year when I learn about long-time donors who have been giving to the organization for decades because of Lou’s slideshows all those years ago.



While much of the KS Wild supporter network resides in the bioregion that encompasses southwest Oregon and northwest California, the organization is supported by donors and contributors in more than 35 states and Canadian provinces. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, up to Alaska and over to Hawaii, I have had the pleasure of stewarding relationships and partnerships that began decades ago with forest defenders like Lou Gold.

As you read through our annual impact report, I hope you understand the vital role supporters like you play in stewarding this organization as we promote stewardship of the region’s wildlands, waterways, and wildlife. Whether you’ve been supporting us for 30 years or three months, your engagement makes a difference and a lasting impact in the Klamath-Siskiyou.

Michael Dotson, KS Wild Executive Director



\$8 FOR 8 MILLION ACRES

Our organization is as unique as our bioregion, including our fundraising. What sets KS Wild's finances apart from other environmental organizations is an unusually robust presence of gifts from local community members. 1,500 individuals, families, and small businesses contributed 47% of our 2022 budget, averaging a \$96 annual gift. That breaks down to \$8 per month! KS Wild works as a watchdog for environmentally destructive behavior on over 8 million acres of public land. \$8 for 8 million acres—sounds like a bargain, right?

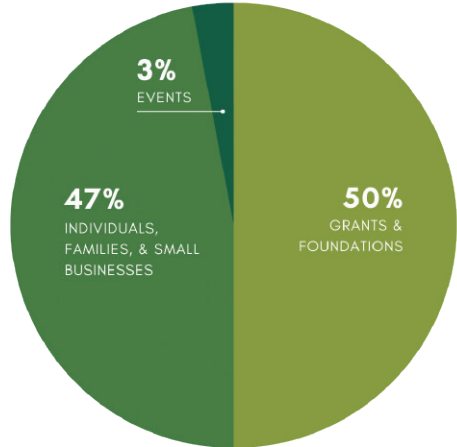
For every \$5 you donate, \$4 is invested in our program staff. The other \$1 supports administration, communications, and personnel, as well as expenditures like office operations, travel, and limited litigation fees. We are proud of the time

and effort our staff puts into their work, and we know people who are taken care of are better caretakers. By paying our staff fair wages, we can work more effectively and contribute more to our local economy (you may know this if you've spotted our staffers shopping at the co-op or getting lunch in downtown Ashland!). When looking at our spending, KS Wild has received an A+ rating from Guidestar, an information service that reports on nonprofits across the nation, for our financial management which is awarded to groups whose overhead expenditures are less than 25%.

Bequests from individuals are another way to make an outsized difference in the health of our organization, allowing us to go above and beyond our normal revenue to meet extraordinary needs. We allocated \$190,000 for our capital campaign between 2020-2022 which allowed us to complete the multi-year renovation of our new office left to us by our beloved friend, supporter, and employee of KS Wild, Gary Powell. Our new office space would not have been possible without the astounding bequests left to us by supporters during the last few years. We have recently expanded our bequest program with Free-Will, an online service that specializes in helping the public easily create no-cost wills online. Visit freewill.com/kswild to learn more, and consider leaving a gift for the wild.

The other 50% of our income comes from our grant and foundation partners, and these dollars are often restricted to specific programs. This information all goes to show that we receive most of our flexible income that allows us to do what we do from supporters like you! A small amount of your discretionary spending can account for an enormous effort to protect the imperiled wild lands and rivers of the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion. Visit kswild.org/join-ks-wild to set up a \$8 (or more!) monthly gift to protect our cherished 8 million acres of public lands.

KS WILD & ROGUE RIVERKEEPER FUNDING



Isaak Oliansky, KS Wild Development Manager

LONG TERM ACTION LEADS TO LONG TERM RESULTS!

We often get messages from our supporters thanking us for our work protecting the wildlands, wildlife, and wild rivers of the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion. Truth be told, as a staff of only 11 people, we can only accomplish so much while monitoring eight million acres of public land; our true power comes from supporters like you taking action and advocating on behalf of wildlife and wild places. Your consistent, dedicated actions create long term change for the health of our forests, rivers, and those who rely on them.

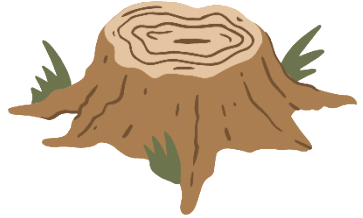
In 2022, you proved how grassroots action can effect change when we all band together! Collectively, we garnered over 1,000 comments from Rogue Riverkeeper supporters for the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act in advocacy of clean water in the Rogue basin. Several hundred more chimed in to ask state agencies to limit jet boat impacts along the Rogue River. We submitted over 2,800 comments through our ForestWatch campaigns seeking to halt harmful timber sales across public lands in southern Oregon and northern California. As part of President Biden's Executive Order on mature and old-growth forest preservation, we delivered more than 1,200 local comments to add to the 122,000 comments alongside our partners for the national Climate Forests campaign! We recently celebrated when the Poor Windy timber sale was struck down in court, after being named one of the 10 worst timber sales in the U.S. That victory came after three years of consistent support! These collective voices calling for permanent protections of our old-growth forests are making a difference in 2023.

Change doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't happen with a single signature. It happens when dedicated people take action, time and time again, on the issues that matter most to them.

We thank you for your dedication to taking action and protecting the wild places that we get to call our backyard. We look forward to another year of powerful action in the name of this beautiful region!

Haleigh Martin, KS Wild Communications Manager

2,800 COMMENTS
TO HALT HARMFUL TIMBER SALES
ACROSS PUBLIC LANDS



1000+
COMMENTS
FOR STRENGTHENING THE
CLEAN WATER ACT



NATURE PROTECTION IS A CLIMATE SOLUTION

Nature-based climate solutions are becoming the goal of conservation actions, and KS Wild's Climate Program is on the frontlines of creating the future of climate-based conservation. Old-growth protection, forest resilience projects, home hardening, and climate-based land management is now a part of state and federal law. We have been busy this past year shaping climate and conservation practices through our advocacy, and we have made huge strides!

Old-Growth Forests

We advanced concrete protections for older forests, including about 1 million acres still threatened in the Pacific Northwest. These forests help lock up carbon pollution and are key in combating climate change. There is still more to do, but our efforts paid off when the President made an Earth Day announcement to conserve older forests on public land, including some of the last, best forests in our region!

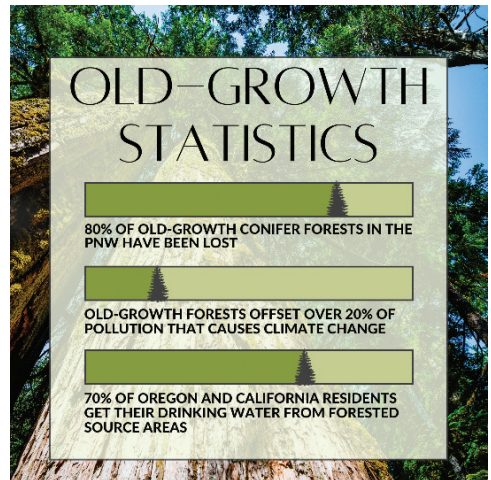
Community Wildfire

We engaged public land managers and rural communities throughout the region, leading to better state and federal wildfire policies, more use of prescribed and Indigenous cultural fire, and distributed over 500 copies of our Forest & Fire Toolkit.

The Private Forest Accord - We invested over 1,000 hours in the development of the Private Forest Accord to reshape how forests are managed across 10 million acres of private and industrial forest land.

Natural & Working Lands - We were appointed to the state-wide Natural and Working Lands Advisory Committee to help set Oregon's goals and realize the climate benefits of conservation. The advisory council will shape state-wide policies, and could help steer millions of dollars of federal infrastructure funding.

Wildfire Landscape Resilience - We were appointed to the Oregon stakeholder group to help develop Oregon's 20-year wildfire strategy to direct priority treatments across the nearly 8 million acres identified as high risk to fire and other disturbance in the state.



Joseph Vaile, KS Wild Climate Director

ACTION SOLUTION

GET YOUR FOREST & FIRE
TOOLKIT HERE



As the Climate Program looks ahead to 2023, we will continue to advocate at the local, state, and national levels to advance climate change adaptation and carbon storage in our forests. We are dedicated to ensuring healthy ecosystems can thrive and that our communities are prepared from the future impacts of climate change.

We will continue the work of the **Private Forest Accord** to advance better management of industrial forests in the region.

We plan to continue supporting local communities in **adapting to a future with wildfire** by tracking and helping direct investments that are flowing into the region through State and Federal climate and infrastructure spending bills.

We are updating our **Forest and Fire Toolkit**, a key resource on preparing for wildfire. New updates include resources on living with smoke, new funding opportunities for landowners, and more!

We need to apply pressure to make sure the Biden Administration creates durable policies to permanently **protect our remaining mature and old-growth forests**. KS Wild will be engaging with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to make sure they include all of Oregon's ancient forests in their inventory and mapping due in April.

Alexi Lovechio, KS Wild Forest & Climate Coordinator

Coming soon: 2023 Forest Defender Training Series!

We are hosting our second Forest Defender Training Series this summer! You will learn how to submit comments on destructive timber sales targeting ancient forests and participate in field-based trainings to collect ecological data for proposed timber sales. These are critical pieces in the forest defense movement and we need your help!

Keep an eye on our events page at kswild.org/events to sign up for this series!



FOR THE ROGUE



In October of 2022, Waterkeeper organizations around the country celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. The best way Rogue Riverkeeper could honor this historic act was to give our supporters the opportunity to participate in ensuring the protections of our nation's waterways. Throughout the month of October, Rogue Riverkeeper requested that supporters send in public comment letters to Administrator Regan of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a variety of threats facing clean water. Over 1,000 Rogue Riverkeeper supporters sent letters requesting stronger regulations for confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and emerging contaminants such as PFAS, and many of you advocated for increased protections of waterways by asking the EPA to expand the definition of a water of the United States (WOTUS). Submitting your concerns to the agencies that are charged with protecting drinking water sources and rivers and streams is one of the best ways people can engage in the protection of their waterways. Thank you for all your support for keeping the Rogue clean for swimming, drinking, fishing, and more!

Emily Bowes, Rogue Riverkeeper Conservation Director

ACTIONS TAKEN IN 2022

WOTUS (WATERS OF THE U.S.)

348 ACTIONS TAKEN



We asked the EPA to restore the 1970s definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) to remove the limitations of protection for rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, & other waters.

EMERGING CONTAMINANTS

407 ACTIONS TAKEN



We asked the EPA to develop stricter water quality standards for emerging contaminants & Congress to pass the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act & the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act to further control plastic pollution in our drinking water.

CAFOs (CONFINED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS)

282 ACTIONS TAKEN

Supporters requested the EPA require large CAFOs obtain permits that contain meaningful & protective limits that actually prevent uncontrolled discharge of untreated animal waste into our nation's waterways.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE PETITIONS AND TAKE ACTION AT ROGUERIVERKEEPER.ORG/ACT-NOW



2022 WATER QUALITY MONITORING BY THE NUMBERS

Water quality monitoring is one of the cornerstones of the work of Rogue Riverkeeper. Every summer, we employ a seasonal field technician to coordinate sampling for one type of *E. coli* bacteria to determine water contact safety throughout the Rogue basin.

Waterways of most concern for bacterial contamination in the Rogue basin are **Little Butte Creek in Eagle Point** all summer, **Wagner Creek in Talent** all summer, and **Evans Creek in Rogue River** in late summer.

In 2022, with the help of volunteers and partners like the Lower Rogue Watershed Council, we tested 21 sites throughout the Rogue basin. This data was published in our Swim Guide where you can also view our Water Quality Report Card—a graphic showing water quality testing results and a map of testing locations.

Thanks to the contributions of supporters, this year we are revamping our lab with new equipment, so look for results this summer on the Rogue Riverkeeper website and Swim Guide app.

You can check out the entire 2022 Water Quality Report Card to see a map of the sites tested for locations and more details about which sites passed and which sites didn't at our website.

rogueriverkeeper.org/the-swim-guide

Frances Oyung, Rogue Riverkeeper Program Director

NUMBER OF WATER QUALITY VOLUNTEERS

6



NUMBER OF SITES REGULARLY TESTED



21

NUMBER OF SITES THAT DID NOT PASS EVERY TIME



15



NUMBER OF SITES THAT PASSED EVERY TIME



6



ROGUE RIVERKEEPER'S
**FUNDRAISING
RAFTING TRIP**

ON THE ROGUE

with ROW Adventures
September 7 - 10, 2023



FORESTWATCH WORKS FOR THE BIOREGION

Where We Work

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 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.

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:

- Western Environmental Law Center
- Environmental Protection Information Center
- Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
- Oregon Wild
- Cascadia Wildlands
- Crag Law Center
- Mt Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center



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

The Result of that Work

In 2022 ForestWatch:

- Overturned the Trump Administration rulemaking that would have exempted post-fire logging from environmental analysis.
- Prevailed in litigation challenging the US Fish and Wildlife's approval of BLM timber sales that removed old-growth habitat for Northern spotted owls.
- Prevented post-fire "salvage" clearcut logging following the Antelope fire in Northern California.
- Protected streamside old-growth forests adjacent to fish-bearing streams in the Upper Rogue River Basin.
- Stopped "regeneration" and "gap creation" logging of old-growth forests in timber sales located on the Medford BLM District.
- Administratively challenged the BLM's plans to turn old-growth reserves into "open seral" clearcuts through the so-called "Integrated Vegetation Management" plan.
- Achieved in the modification, improvement or cancelation of numerous projects across the region.



Field checking trees that have been marked for cutting in a BLM 'gap creation mini-clearcut' at the Lost Antelope timber sale in southern Oregon.

The Work Ahead

In 2023 we intend to:

- Challenge the conversion of forests at the Lake of the Woods on the Fremont-Winema National Forest into an RV parking lot.
- Protect old-growth forests in the BLM's proposed Late Mungers and Penn Butte Late Successional Reserve timber sales.
- Influence the Snowy Butte project in Medford's municipal watershed administrated by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest to focus on restoration rather than logging.
- Prevent clearcutting of post-fire Late Successional Reserve forests in the River Complex timber sale on the Klamath National Forest.
- 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 projects focus on fire resiliency near homes and communities and not on backcountry logging and mining.

Special Focus: Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)

The primary hope for the many at-risk species that rely on ever-shrinking amounts of old-growth habitat for their survival is the existence of public forestlands that are designated as "Late Successional Reserves." The timber industry and some BLM timber planners have long resented the existence of these old-growth reserves and long to return to the days when all public lands were managed primarily for timber production. In an attempt to turn back the clock the BLM has developed the "Integrated Vegetation Management" (IVM) project that would convert existing late-successional habitat within the old-growth reserves into "open seral" stands that would no longer provide habitat for wildlife species that rely upon the existence of old-growth forests. In 2023 KS Wild intends to do all that is within our power to make sure that Late Successional Reserves continue to provide late-successional wildlife habitat for years to come.

George Sexton, KS Wild Conservation Director

VOLUNTEERS AND STEWARDSHIP

We want to extend a huge thank you to our volunteers for their important work with us at events, in the office, and in the field. Our supporters are a special group who spend both time and money on what matters most to them.

A special thanks to the volunteers who deliver the *KS Wild News* each quarter, help us table around the community, assist with events, and for all of the office and property tasks we now have as caretakers of our beautiful home-turned-office.



Allee Gustafson and an all-star group of volunteers at Eight Dollar Mountain Botanical Area.

Another place our volunteers show up is in our stewardship program, which focuses on specific botanical hotspots that are areas of concern. In 2022, the Public Lands And You (PLAY) stewardship program totaled 385 volunteer hours. Last April, our volunteers planted roughly 100 willow trees to help restore a riparian area on the border of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in the Mariposa Preserve.

In May, the PLAY program celebrated our fifth year of restoration efforts at Eight Dollar Mountain and Days Gulch Botanical Areas in an effort to protect rare serpentine plants and habitat from off-road vehicles. In total, volunteers rebuilt three separate buck and rail fences, collected 140 pounds of trash, and installed signs to inform the public of the botanical area where it is illegal to ride motorized vehicles.

If you haven't joined us at Alex Hole on the Siskiyou Crest, this is your year to do so! Every summer and fall, staff and volunteers manage the upkeep of a quarter mile of fencing that protects a 10-acre, highly sensitive wetland meadow from unauthorized cattle trespassing from the Klamath National Forest. This is an incredible opportunity to experience what the Siskiyou Crest has to offer for outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds.



A huge thank you to each of the 56 volunteers who helped us at one or more of these projects to protect rare plant communities and threatened species.

We're excited to announce a new collaborative project with the USFS as we begin restoration efforts within the T.J. Howell Botanical Drive which leads to the trailhead for Babyfoot Lake just on the edge of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. Learn more and sign up to join our stewardship program at kswild.org/volunteer.

Allee Gustafson, Events & Volunteer Manager

A WEB OF COMMUNITY



"Thank you, KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper, for protecting our forests and rivers. My newest project, Turtle Wisdom - Personal, Political, and Playful, is a series of wood panels that are shaped, carved and painted into turtle themes, inspired by the important conservation work of KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper. Turtle Wildfire Fear reminds us that climate change is real and everywhere, and Turtle Rogue Riverkeeper safeguards salmon habitat, clean water." -Betty LaDuke

"Being an outdoorsman who lives in southern Oregon, I care about our wild places and preserving them for future generations. There are very few places where I can spend time with people who care so much about the Earth and are making such an impact. KS Wild is an environmental advocacy group that is actually making a difference, and I want to support them in any way I can."
-Ayani Mikasi



"KS Wild strives to protect the Klamath-Siskiyou region, and it was an honor to be a small part of this meaningful work. As KS Wild's summer Law Clerk, I glimpsed into their ongoing litigation, and I was proud to be on the good side." - Lillian Klein, Law Clerk summer 2022

"I shudder to imagine what our region would look like without the hard work and dedication of KS Wild. I am grateful for all the work they do and will be a supporter as long as I am residing in this body of mine. KS Wild is more than the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, KS Wild is a community." -Alice Di Micele



www.kswild.org/volunteer

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: *PSATHYRELLA AQUATICA*

Last summer, a few of our staff members were given the opportunity to venture to the Upper Rogue River in search of a very special aquatic fungal species. Alongside retired professor Darlene Southworth, the crew waded up and down the riverbanks of the Rogue in search of the only known fungi to grow underwater.



While there are a few mushroom species that can grow partially in water, *Psathyrella aquatica* is the only known gilled mushroom to grow fully submerged in water, and it has only been documented in the Upper Rogue River! It was discovered in 2005 by Robert Coffan and studied by Darlene Southworth and Jonathan Frank for years. Since 2005, the fruiting body of the aquatic fungi has been spotted in this secret section of the Rogue every summer since. Found only on this small section of the river and nowhere else in the world, very little is known about this mushroom except it is very unique in its preferred habitat, and studies continue to explore its evolution and reproductive methods to allow it to sustain in the cold, oxygenated waters of the Upper Rogue River.



KS Wild's 6-part podcast One Foot in the Black examines wildfire in the West and how these stories serve as a warning for our communities. This podcast is not just the story of fire's past, but a story of hope. It is also a story of how climate change is remaking the rules, and how our future is tied to indigenous fire use. One Foot in the Black uses a combination of narratives and interviews from folks on the frontlines of fire and climate change. KS Wild's Joseph Vaile and Alexi Lovechio take you on a storytelling journey of past, present, and future fire in the west at kswild.org/podcast or wherever you listen to podcasts.



JOIN US FOR AN ADVENTURE THIS SPRING!

Once you sign up for an event online, you will receive details including carpooling locations and what to bring. Sign up: www.kswild.org/events

Sunset Hike to Hobart Bluff: April 19th, 7-9pm

Bring a picnic dinner and your headlamp for an incredible sunset view over the Rogue Valley. 2.5 mile total out-and-back trail with a moderate difficulty.

Wildflower & Plant Walk: April 15th, 10am-1pm

This will be a moderately easy, 3.7-mile guided tour of the wildflowers along the Wild & Scenic Illinois River. Visit a *Darlingtonia* fen and enjoy an overlook of Little Falls.

Bear Creek Stewardship Day on Earth Day: April 22nd, 8:30am-12pm

Join the community for clean-up and restoration tasks focused on Bear Creek. Several sites available in Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point.

Eight Dollar Mountain and Days Gulch Stewardship Day: May 27th, 10am-3pm

Working with the Forest Service, help repair damage and protect the botanical diversity in this rare serpentine landscape. Expect low/moderate hiking, digging, and lifting.

Hike the Rogue River Trail with KS Wild and ARTA

May 29th-June 2nd (see back cover)

Rogue Riverkeeper Whitewater Rafting Fundraiser Trip

September 7th-10th

Four days and three nights whitewater rafting the iconic Wild & Scenic Rogue River!

2023 First Fridays at the KS Wild office in Ashland

April 7: Corbin Brashear - Wild and Wooly Feltworks Art Show

May 5: April-Marie Johnston - "Nature isn't just my muse, I am her student."

June 2: Student Art Show

www.kswild.org/events



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ROGUE RIVER TRAIL RAFT-SUPPORTED HIKE

MAY 29 - JUNE 2, 2023

JOIN KS WILD AND AMERICAN RIVER
TOURING ASSOCIATION (ARTA) FOR 5
DAYS ALONG THE ROGUE TRAIL WITH
RAFT SUPPORT AND DELICIOUS MEALS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
KSWILD.ORG/EVENTS



Cover: Morel mushrooms, *Morchella esculenta*