



Photo: Mason Cummings

## THE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE Grantee Update

In April 2018, The Conservation Alliance invested \$800,000 in grassroots conservation organizations. Each grant went to a project working to secure permanent protection for a specific threatened wild place. We direct organizations to use our funding over the course of a 12-month period. At the end of the grant period, we ask each group for a 12-month final report. These reports play a key role in helping us determine the return on our investment.

On April 1, we received 21 final reports and one discretionary grant report. Following is a summary of the progress our grantees have made with our funding. At the end of this summary are several exciting updates on work we funded in October 2018. We will share final reports on all of our October 2018 grants in October 2019.

## Final Reports from April 2018 Grantees



Our grant supported AWL's Arctic Refuge Defense Campaign to stop oil and gas exploration and development activities in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Congress approved oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge's Coastal Plain as part of tax cut legislation in 2017, and AWL is challenging that effort on every front. The House of Representatives is moving a bill that would strip the oil drilling provision from the tax law, and AWL is coordinating legal efforts to challenge any drilling efforts in court. Companies were unable to secure permits to conduct seismic testing – a necessary precursor to oil leasing – due in part to the recent government shutdown. This delay should push any leasing out until 2020.



We supported CWC's Northwest California Mountains and Rivers and Central Coast Wild Heritage Campaigns to designate 570,909 acres of new Wilderness and 644 miles of wild and scenic rivers; restore over 500,000 acres of public lands damaged by clearcutting and other development; designate 34,882 acres in two new scenic areas; and establish a new recreation trail in California. CWC reports that legislation for these protections was introduced into both chambers of Congress in 2018, and will be reintroduced in the 116th Congress.



CPAWS-Quebec secured our support for its Magpie River Protection Campaign to permanently protect 180 miles of Quebec's Magpie River and 640,000 acres of its watershed. To move these protections forward, CPAWS is engaging the support of the Innu First Nation, and directing advocacy toward the Quebec Provincial government, and Hydro-Quebec, the provincial energy company.



We funded CRAG-Vermont's Bolton Dome Conservation Campaign to acquire the 48-acre Bolton Dome climbing area in Vermont. The group reports that they have successfully completed the acquisition, and that the crag is now open to the public. They are now working on developing a new trail network on the property, which will be complete by June, 2019.

**SUCCESS: 48 Acres and One Climbing Area Protected**



FRIENDS OF SCOTCHMAN PEAKS WILDERNESS

We supported FSPW's Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Campaign to protect the 13,960-acre Scotchman Peaks area of Idaho as Wilderness. The campaign hit a major obstacle when Bonner County held a non-binding vote on whether residents supported a Wilderness designation for the area, and opponents outnumbered supporters by 800 votes. Idaho Senator Jim Risch, who had introduced legislation to protect the area, withdrew his support. FSPW is now focusing on developing more supportive stakeholders for protecting Scotchman Peaks, and aligning the effort with broader conservation efforts in Northern Idaho.



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BIKING ASSOCIATION

IMBA used our support for its Protecting Montana's Gallatin Gateway to recommend 300,000 acres of Wilderness adjacent to Yellowstone National Park and protect access to 1,171 miles of multi-use trail, 131 miles of whitewater paddling, 636 climbing routes, 122 backcountry skiing runs, and 78 miles of mountain bike trails in the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan. IMBA reports that the Forest Service released its draft management plan in March, and the group is reviewing the draft prior to a June comment deadline. The final plan is scheduled to be released in mid-2020.



METHOW VALLEY CITIZENS COUNCIL

MVCC used our funding for its Methow Headwaters Campaign to permanently protect 340,079 acres of Washington's Methow Headwaters region from industrial-scale mining. The group reports that legislation securing this permanent mining ban passed in March as part of a package of public lands bills.

**SUCCESS: 340,079 Acres Protected**



MONTANA TROUT UNLIMITED

We funded Montana Trout Unlimited's Rattlesnake Creek Dam Removal Campaign to remove the Rattlesnake Dam, resulting in 35 river miles reconnected for native fish, ten acres of wetlands restored, 45 acres of new open space, two miles of new recreation trails, and a new five-mile class II/III boating opportunity near Missoula, Montana. The group reports that the dam removal is on track, with final permits secured, and project bids complete by the end of 2019. Dam removal should begin in Summer, 2020.



**NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE**

NMWA received a grant for its Chaco Protection Campaign to halt new oil and gas leases and development within New Mexico's greater Chacoan landscape through the Bureau of Land Management's Resource Management Plan Amendment process, and secure 20-year administrative protections and/or permanent legislative protections from mining. NMWA reports that the BLM is scheduled to release a draft management plan in Summer 2019, and that the New Mexico State Land Commissioner recently announced a moratorium on energy development on state land around Chaco. Meanwhile, New Mexico's Congressional delegation is likely to introduce legislation this year that would permanently protect the region from energy extraction.



**NORTHEAST WILDERNESS TRUST**

We supported NWT's Eagle Mountain Campaign to acquire the Eagle Mountain property, permanently protecting 2,454 acres, 3.5 miles of stream habitat, eight peaks over 1,000 feet, 155 acres of wetlands, numerous ponds, and a recreational trail in New York's Adirondack Mountains. NWT reports that they expect to complete the purchase in May, 2019, and will then work with a local organization to build a trail network on the property by Summer, 2020.



**NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTANS FOR WILDERNESS**

We funded NMW's Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters to protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (1.1 million acres), Voyageurs National Park (218,200 acres), and Canada's Quetico Provincial Park (1,180,000 acres) from sulfide-ore copper mining pollution by halting mining activity on 234,328 acres surrounding the Boundary Waters. The campaign suffered a setback last Fall when the Trump Administration announced plans to cancel an Obama-era plan to prohibit mining around the Boundary Waters. On a positive note, the new chair of the House Interior Appropriations Committee is Boundary Waters champion Betty McCollum, who is determined to use her authority to prevent any mining near this special place.



**OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL**

We funded OEC's ReCreation For All Campaign to acquire 60,000 acres in eastern Ohio that include 28 miles of hiking trails, 40 miles of horse trails, ten miles of mountain bike trails, 600 lakes and ponds stocked for fishing, six developed campgrounds, and roughly 380 primitive campsites. OEC helped the state acquire 5,735 acres of the privately-owned land that is now the Jesse Owens State Park and Wildlife Area. In addition, the state entered into an MOU to purchase approximately 7,000 additional acres over two installments (one installment later in 2019, and another in 2020).

**SUCCESS: 5,735 Acres Protected**



Oregon Wild used our support for its Oregon State Scenic Waterways Campaign to protect Oregon's Nehalem River and South Umpqua River as State Scenic Waterways, and to improve the State Scenic Waterways designation as a tool for conservation and the long-term protection of many of Oregon's at-risk waterways. The group reports that protection for 17 miles of the Nehalem River is imminent pending the end of Oregon's legislative session in June. Oregon Wild plans to build on this success to pursue additional State Scenic Waterway designations elsewhere in the state.

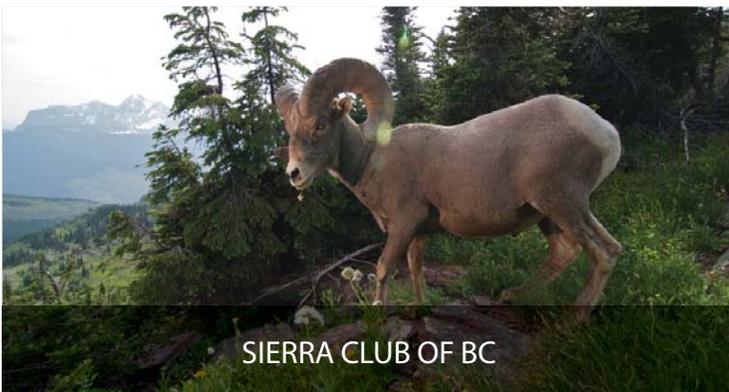


We supported OA's Protecting North Carolina's Mountain Treasures Campaign to secure 15-20 years of improved management for the 1.1 million acres of North Carolina's Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, including protections for 48,000 acres along 31 new eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers and 70,000 acres of recommended Wilderness, and to lay the groundwork for Congressional designations for these special places. OA expects the Forest Service to release a draft management plan this Summer, and is confident that several of their key recommendations will be included in the new plan.



Pew used our funding for its Emery County Public Lands Campaign to permanently protect more than 500,000 acres of Wilderness and more than 340,000 acres of National Recreation Area in Emery County, Utah's San Rafael Swell area; and designate more than 50 miles of the Green River as Wild and Scenic. Pew reports that they exceeded their goal with the passage of the Emery County legislation, which moved through Congress as part of a larger package of public lands bills. The final bill protected 972,000 acres of public land in and around the San Rafael Swell, and 63 river miles.

**SUCCESS: 972,000 Acres and 63 River Miles Protected**



We funded Sierra Club of BC's Securing Permanent Protection for the Flathead River Valley Campaign to designate 100,000 acres in culturally-appropriate conservation designations, and designate 750,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas in British Columbia's Flathead River Valley. The group reports limited success over the past year, and has decided that they will change their strategy to focus on supporting the Ktunaxa First Nation's conservation goals for the Flathead.



TPL used our funding for its Catamount Community Forest Project to permanently protect 393 acres of important forest habitat and non-motorized trails in Williston, one of Vermont's fastest growing towns. TPL reports that they have completed the acquisition, and have conveyed the property to the town of Williston. They have also given a conservation easement for the property to the Vermont Land Trust.

**SUCCESS: 393 Acres Protected**



We funded TWS for its Gunnison Public Lands Initiative to engage in a stakeholder process develop legislation that Congress can pass by 2020 that designates 140,000 acres of Wilderness and 656,000 acres of proposed special management areas in central Gunnison County, Colorado. TWS reports that the stakeholder group has agreed on a proposal that would protect 452,221 acres in the county, and that vision has been well-received by citizens of Gunnison County. TWS anticipates that members of Colorado's Congressional delegation will introduce legislation for the protections in 2019.



TRCP used our funding for its Safeguarding Montana's Wild Backcountry Campaign to protect 150,000 acres of wild, publically owned lands in Montana as Backcountry Conservation Areas (BCA) through the BLM's Lewistown and Missoula Resource Management Plans. The group reports that both management plans will be released soon. The Missoula plan would designate 48,000 acres of BCAs, and the Lewistown plan would preserve up to 150,000 acres as BCAs. These designations benefit from strong local support, including that of Montana Governor Steve Bullock.



We supported VLT's Walker-Hearne Ranch Acquisition Project to permanently protect the 2,123-acre Walker-Hearne Ranch at Harmon Canyon, including perennial springs, oak groves, scenic vistas, and ten miles of multi-use dirt roads for public access. VLT reports that success is imminent as they expect to complete the acquisition by the end of 2019. The group is now working on developing a management plan for the property, and raising funds for a permanent stewardship endowment.



VWC used our support for its George Washington National Forest Project to pass legislation designating roughly 12,000 acres of the George Washington National Forest (GWNF) in Virginia as Wilderness. The group reports that legislation to protect 5,600 acres of Wilderness in the GWNF nearly passed in 2018, and in early 2019, but ran into opposition from one member of Virginia's Congressional delegation, who has since retired. VWC has built a good relationship with the new member, who has agreed to remain neutral on the protection. The group hopes to see the bill move through Congress in 2019.



We funded WWA's Northern Sierra Management Planning Campaign to protect 1.5 million acres of critical wildlife habitat, vital upper watersheds and high-value human-powered winter recreation landscapes in California; and ensure the five national forests at the heart of this campaign have in place balanced winter management plans that provide quality recreation opportunities for both non-motorized and motorized winter recreation. Management plans for all five National Forests, and early indications show that they may designate 1,391,583 acres as newly closed to motorized Winter recreation.

## Notable Updates from October 2018 Grantees



We funded Audubon Alaska's Arctic Refuge Campaign to ensure that 1.5 million acres on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge remain a wild, undeveloped landscape. Audubon Alaska worked with a coalition of organizations to stop the urgent threat of seismic exploration in the Arctic Refuge. The pending application for seismic testing was withdrawn shortly after the extended government shutdown.



We funded CPAWS-BC's effort to collaborate with the Kaska Dena Nation to protect 2.5 million acres of land in Northern BC as National Parks, Provincial Parks, and Indigenous Protected Areas. CPAWS reports two significant changes to the campaign in recent months: the size of the proposed protected area increased from 2.5 million to 9.6 million acres; and the proposed designation shifted to a Provincial Conservancy.



We funded Conservation Colorado's Continental Divide Campaign to pass the Continental Divide Wilderness and Recreation Act, permanently protecting 96,000 acres of public lands in Colorado, including new Wilderness designations and the country's first National Historic Landscape at Camp Hale. Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Joe Neguse introduced The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act in both chambers of Congress in January 2018. The CORE Act would protect 400,000 acres in Colorado, including the 96,000-acre areas outlined in the Continental Divide proposal.



We funded KS Wild's Oregon Wildlands Campaign to pass the Oregon Wildlands Act, which would protect 86,000 acres of federal land as Wilderness, designate 120,000 acres as National Recreation Area, and designate more than 135 miles of rivers and streams as Wild & Scenic in Oregon. In March 2018, the John Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act was signed into law. Portions of the Oregon Wildlands proposal were included in this legislation, including protections for 30,621 acres of Wilderness, and 11 river miles. KS Wild will continue their work to secure protections for all of the wildlands included in the original Oregon Wildlands Act.

**SUCCESS: 30,621 Acres and 311 River Miles Protected**



We funded SJCA's San Juan Mountains Wilderness Campaign to protect 60,000 acres in Colorado's San Juan Mountains by expanding the Mt. Sneffels and Lizard Head Wilderness, designating McKenna Peak as the first desert Wilderness area in southwest Colorado, and protecting the Animas River headwaters from future mining. Colorado Senator Michael Bennett and Representative Joe Neguse introduced the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act in both chambers of Congress in January 2018. The CORE Act would protect 400,000 acres in Colorado, including 60,000 acres of Wilderness and special management areas in the San Juan Mountains.



We funded TNC's Citadel Tract, Black River Preserve Campaign to acquire 1,790 acres of land adjacent to North Carolina's Black River, including wetland forest, longleaf pine forests, and some of the oldest bald cypress trees in the world. TNC reports they have acquired the 1,790-acre Citadel tract, and are working to restore forest health on the property.

**SUCCESS: 1,790 Acres Protected**



We funded WLT's Skookum Creek Campaign to acquire more than 1,150 acres and 2.3 miles along Washington's Skookum Creek, a major tributary of the South Fork Nooksack River, as a recreational resource for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. WLT completed the Skookum Creek acquisition in January 2019, permanently protecting 1,250 acres, 2.3 miles of creek and the 150-acre Duck Pond.

**SUCCESS: 1,400 Acres and 2.3 River Miles Protected**



We funded Y2Y's Campaign to Protect Alberta's Bighorn Region to protect 2.7-million acres in Alberta's Bighorn region through the creation of a Wildland Provincial Park and other conservation designations that connect the eastern slopes of Canada's iconic Jasper and Banff National Parks. In November 2018, the Alberta government proposed new protected areas in Bighorn Country totaling 988,000 acres. Further progress in this campaign hinges on the results of Alberta's provincial election.