



# GRANTEE REPORTS

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**IN SEPTEMBER 2019**, The Conservation Alliance invested \$900,000 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 October 1, we received 22 final reports. 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 April 2020.



## FINAL REPORTS FROM OCTOBER 2019 GRANTEES

### SUCCESS: 254 ACRES AND 1.3 RIVER MILES PROTECTED

#### **Alachua Conservation Trust: Rise Up for the Santa Fe River Campaign**

We funded Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) to protect 818 acres of land and three freshwater springs along 1.6 miles of Florida's Santa Fe River, and increase public access to outdoor recreation in the Santa Fe watershed. ACT completed an initial acquisition of 254-acres, 1.3 river miles, and two freshwater springs. An additional acquisition of 163 acres, including river frontage and a spring, is planned for Fall of 2021. A loop trail designed for hikers, bikers, and birders will open in 2022.

#### **Audubon Alaska: Protect the Arctic Refuge Campaign**

We funded Audubon Alaska to permanently protect the 1.5-million-acre Coastal Plain within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for the people, wildlife and ecological systems that represent the only undeveloped and intact portion of the entire Arctic Coastal Plain in the United States. During the last year, Audubon Alaska has stepped into a leadership role in the Arctic Refuge Defense coalition and leveraged Audubon National's network of activists to fight for the Arctic Refuge . They provided detailed information to the Department of the Interior about the impacts of seismic testing on polar bears and other wildlife. In August, after the Department of Interior took the final administrative step toward opening the Arctic Refuge to drilling, they filed a lawsuit because "the Department of Interior blocked scientific review, dismantled its own agency processes, and ignored the concerns of Indigenous Peoples."

#### **Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – National: Seal River Watershed Indigenous Protected Area Initiative**

We funded CPAWS to permanently protect the Seal River Watershed's 12.5 million acres, and develop community-driven ecological and cultural tourism ventures within an Indigenous Protected Area established in partnership with four regional First Nations. CPAWS supported the establishment of an Indigenous-led non-profit organization to manage the project and lay the groundwork for Indigenous management of the protected area, secured the support of the influential Arviat Hunters and Trappers Organization and other prominent groups, and engaged with several First Nations.

#### **Conservation Colorado: CORE Act Campaign**

We funded Conservation Colorado to help pass the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act, which will preserve 400,000 iconic acres of Colorado's public lands. Conservation Colorado worked with the CORE Act coalition to build and maintain a strong, vocal call from Coloradans to their decision-makers in support of the CORE Act. This included the first-ever virtual Colorado Public Lands Day, several online press events and webinars, and other engagement activities designed for the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. In July, the CORE Act and several other public lands bills passed the US House of Representatives as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).





# The Conservation Alliance

## **Conservation Lands Foundation: Campaign for the Gila River, Wild and Scenic**

We funded Conservation Lands Foundation to secure a Wild and Scenic River designation for 435 miles of New Mexico's Gila River and its tributaries. CLF staff worked closely with Senator Udall and Heinrich's offices and the staff of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, supporting the introduction of the "M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act." The bill now awaits a potential hearing in the full Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for markup. CLF has built a consistent and place-based drumbeat of support, highlighting both the conservation and economic benefits of the Wild and Scenic designation.

## **SUCCESS: 560 ACRES PROTECTED**

### **Ducks Unlimited: Grayland Acquisition and Protection Project**

We funded Ducks Unlimited (DU) to acquire, restore and protect a total of 1,750 acres of tidal and forested wetlands in Washington State. DU and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) collaborated to acquire 1,670 acres through two separate acquisitions, with ownership and management by the WDFW. DU used our funding to acquire 560 acres, and they will sell a 70 acre parcel to a local duck club after the completion of a conservation easement. Now called the "Elk River Unit," this area contains fresh and estuarine wetland habitats, tidal mudflats, and old growth forested uplands, and it is open to the public for hiking, birding, and big-game and waterfowl hunting.

## **Grand Canyon Trust: Campaign to Permanently Protect Public Lands In and Around the Grand Canyon from Uranium Mining**

We funded Grand Canyon Trust (GCT) to permanently protect 1,006,545 acres of federal land adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park and the Colorado River from the threat of any new uranium mining. GCT worked closely with Arizona Rep. Raúl Grijalva on the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act (GCCPA). After months of hard work by a broad community of Grand Canyon supporters and numerous tribal nations, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 236-185 to pass the GCCPA. GCT worked with Senator Sinema (D-AZ) on the introduction of a companion bill to the senate, it could pass as part of the NDAA this Congress, or reintroduced under a potential Biden administration in 2021.

## **Greater Yellowstone Coalition: Yellowstone Gateway Land Protection Campaign**

We funded the Greater Yellowstone Coalition to purchase 900 acres of private patented mining claims on Yellowstone's northern border and transfer them to public ownership, permanently protecting these wild lands from the threat of two proposed gold mines. GYC is working with nearly a dozen landowners to secure approximately 600 acres to be included in a Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisition. GYC's consistent outreach in the Crevice Mountain mining district has generated a coalition comprised of every landowner on the mountain not leased to mining. These owners are actively working with GYC to stop gold mining and other expanded development on the border of the Park.



## **Idaho Conservation League: Protecting the High Divide Campaign**

We funded the Idaho Conservation League (ICL) to secure Wild and Scenic River designation for 110 miles of rivers in Idaho's Salmon-Challis National Forest, to protect 300,000 acres of land as Wilderness, and to administratively protect an additional 150,000 acres for quiet, non-motorized recreational uses. ICL worked within the Central Idaho Public Lands Collaborative, spearheaded the Wild and Scenic Rivers Taskforce, and did other coalition building and outreach work to build a unified vision for Central Idaho's public lands. An opposition group in Central Idaho has slowed down the forest planning processes, and the Forest Service is currently reevaluating whether or not they will proceed with the Salmon and/or Challis Forest Plan revisions.

## **KS Wild: Oregon Wildlands 2.0 Campaign**

We funded KS Wild to secure the passage of the ORE Act, which will: establish the 98,000-acre Rogue Canyon Recreation Area in southwest Oregon; expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness by 60,000 acres; establish the 30,000-acre Molalla Recreation Area in rural Clackamas County; and prohibit destructive mining on 100,000 acres in the Baldface, Rough & Ready, and Hunter Creek watersheds of southwest Oregon. Senator Wyden introduced the ORE Act in 2019 (S. 1262). In spite of opposition from the powerful industrial timber industry lobby, the ORE Act has passed out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee in December 2019 and is awaiting a companion introduction in the House. Unfortunately, southern Oregon's Rogue Valley was heavily impacted by the Almeda and Obenchain Fires and KS Wild's community is dealing with the devastating impacts of climate change.

## **Montana Wilderness Association: Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project**

We funded Montana Wilderness Association to permanently protect 83,000 acres of habitat for threatened and endangered species and improve quiet recreation in Montana by expanding the Mission Mountains, Bob Marshall, and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas. Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act (BCSA) was introduced by Senator Tester in June, 2019. Though Senator Daines has yet to fully, publicly support the Act, at a September 2020 hearing he praised the collaborative process that created the bill. The BCSA is well positioned to receive a mark-up in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee in November.

## **New Mexico Wilderness Alliance: Greater Chaco Protection Campaign**

We funded New Mexico Wilderness Alliance to protect the Greater Chacoan Landscape by halting new oil and gas leases and development within ten miles of Chaco Canyon, and pass legislation through Congress that prohibits any future leasing in this culturally significant area. NMWA reports that the BLM released a draft Resource Management Plan Amendment that neglects oil and gas leasing threats to the greater Chaco region. On a positive note, in July 2020, Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Lujan helped secure a one-year moratorium extension on oil and gas drilling on federal lands near the Chaco Culture National Historical Park. NMWA will continue their work with the Pueblos and the Navajo Nation to secure protections for the Chaco region.



# The Conservation Alliance

## **Oregon Natural Desert Association: Protecting Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands**

We funded the Oregon Natural Desert Association to protect the natural values, environmental health and recreation assets of Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands by securing conservation designations and management plans that result in: a National Conservation Area totaling 2,579,032 acres, with 2,012,350 acres of Wilderness; 50 miles of Wild and Scenic River protections; closing 50,000 acres in the region to motorized travel, and strengthening grazing, mining and development restrictions on one million acres of the region's public lands. In November, 2019, Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley co-sponsored a bill to protect 14.7 river miles and 1.1 million acres of public land in the region as Wilderness. ONDA was central to this achievement, serving as coordinator, convener, implementer and strategist on the Owyhee campaign. The resulting bill is now pending in Congress and Senator Wyden has indicated moving it forward remains among his top priorities.

## **San Juan Citizens Alliance: San Juan Mountains Wilderness**

We funded the San Juan Citizens Alliance to secure Wilderness and other protective designations for 60,000 acres in Colorado's San Juan Mountains that includes expanding the size of the existing Mount Sneffels and Lizard Head Wilderness Areas, designating McKenna Peak as the first desert Wilderness area in southwest Colorado, and safeguarding alpine basins in the Animas River headwaters from future mining. The legislation to protect this area is incorporated within the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the CORE Act on October 31, 2019, and again in July as an addition to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) as one of eight land protection bills. Final resolution awaits a conference committee between the House and Senate that will convene after the November election.

## **Save Our Canyons: Wild Forests and Connected Watersheds Education Program**

We funded Save Our Canyons to pass legislation that designates the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area (CWNCR), permanently protecting 80,000 acres of public land, and the water quality for the million plus residents living along the Wasatch Front. Save Our Canyons launched a multi-level marketing campaign to demonstrate the need and public support for protecting the Wasatch Mountains through the CWNCR. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused all the planned grassroots events to be cancelled. The campaign continues to educate more people about the importance of the CWNCR using video content and online events.

## **SUCCESS: 530 ACRES PROTECTED, INCLUDING 483 GIANT SEQUOIAS**

### **Save the Redwoods League: Protecting the Giants of Giant Sequoia National Monument**

To acquire 530 acres of private property within the Giant Sequoia National Monument, protecting the largest and last unprotected giant sequoia property in the world, eliminating urgent development threats to an ancient forest containing the fifth largest tree in the world, and ensure public access to more than 400 ancient giant sequoia and a swimming hole. On December 31, 2019, the League closed on the purchase of Alder Creek, securing permanent protection of this 530-acre old-growth property located within Giant Sequoia National Monument in the Sequoia National Forest. Alder Creek comprises 483 giant sequoias which have a diameter of 6 feet or larger, including the Staggy Tree, the fifth largest tree known in the world.



# The Conservation Alliance

## **The Trust for Public Land: Spence Mountain**

We funded The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to permanently protect 7,500 acres of forest land and more than 28 miles of recreational trails overlooking Upper Klamath Lake in southern Oregon. TPL has now secured an option agreement and established a purchase price. TPL's goal is for Klamath County to own and manage the property by December 2022.

## **SUCCESS: 637 ACRES PROTECTED**

### **The Wilderness Land Trust: Little Castle Lake-Castle Crag Wilderness Project**

We funded The Wilderness Land Trust (WLT) to acquire and protect 637 acres of private land within the Castle Crag Wilderness ensuring public access for climbing, hiking, running, fishing, hunting, camping and horseback riding, and preserving vital habitat for flora and fauna. WLT purchased the property for \$1.9M in June of 2019, immediately removing the threat of commercial or resort development and logging on the property and ensured that public access to wild public lands would remain open. The next phase of the project will include due diligence leading up to an eventual transfer to the USFS.

## **Trout Unlimited: Sportsmen for the Ruby Mountains**

We funded Trout Unlimited to permanently protect the Ruby Mountains from oil and gas development with the passage of the Ruby Mountains Protection Act (RMPA) through Congress. Senator Cortez Masto of Nevada introduced the bill in 2019. Trout Unlimited and their Sportsmen for the Rubies Coalition secured a Republican co-sponsor and House-side companion bill, as well as a “no leasing” decision from the Forest Service as the RMPA moves through Congress. The campaign is currently focused on getting the legislation passed as written during the post-election lame-duck session. If the legislation must be introduced in the next new Congress, the bill could be expanded with additional acreage.

## **SUCCESS: 1,791 ACRES PROTECTED**

### **Wallowa Land Trust: Campaign for the East Moraine**

We funded the Wallowa Land Trust to acquire and permanently protect 1,791 acres of the iconic East Moraine of Wallowa Lake and 2.75 miles of lakeshore, to be managed for critical habitat, public access, and sustainable forest and rangeland stewardship. After nearly a decade of negotiations, the Wallowa Land Trust and the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership came to a purchase agreement in January 2019. Nearly \$6.5 million was raised through grants and donations to purchase the moraine property and plan for its perpetual management. The East Moraine property was transferred to Wallowa County in January, 2020 to be managed as a sustainable working community forest, protecting native plants, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources while providing opportunities for non-motorized recreation.

## **Washington Wild: North Cascades and Puget Sound Headwaters Campaign**

We funded Washington Wild to secure passage of Congressional legislation that permanently protects more than 100,000 acres of Wilderness and hundreds of miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers on the western slope of the North Cascades in Washington State. WA Wild and other members of the Cascades Coalition have initiated conversations and are building relationships with tribes on the North Cascades landscape. Additionally, the Coalition has held nearly 50 stakeholder meetings with conservation and recreation groups, local businesses and elected officials. In July 2020, the Coalition completed a preliminary proposal that includes Wilderness, Wild and Scenic River designations, and other protective designations. Once the Coalition releases their proposal, a grassroots outreach strategy will lead to the eventual introduction of a bill.

## **Wilderness Workshop: Thompson Divide and CORE Act Campaign**

We funded Wilderness Workshop (WW) to permanently protect 200,000 acres of the Thompson Divide in the form of a mineral withdrawal, and 100,000 acres in the Continental Divide as Wilderness, recreation, and wildlife designations, through passage of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. WW achieved an important court decision, once again confirming that the oil and gas leases in the spectacular East Willow Roadless Area on the western edge of the Thompson Divide expired a decade ago. The CORE Act has passed in the House twice, once as a stand-alone bill last fall and as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. WW worked closely with Senator Bennet as he introduced the CORE Act in the Senate. If CORE doesn't pass this year, WW will work to secure co-sponsorship of the bill for reintroduction in the next Congress.



WASHINGTON WILD  
ISAAC LEON FROST



## INTERIM REPORT SUMMARIES (NOTABLE UPDATES)

### American Whitewater

We funded AW's Wild Olympics Campaign to pass a legislative public lands and waters conservation package that includes 464 river miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers and 126,000 acres of new Wilderness Areas on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. At the time of the report, the Wild Olympics bill is one of six bills included in the "Protecting America's Wilderness Act", which is included in the must-pass National Defense Authorization Act. Final resolution awaits a conference committee between the House and Senate that will convene after the November election.

### Alaska Wilderness League

We funded AWL's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Campaign to stymie the administration's efforts to advance seismic testing, leasing, and eventual drilling on the Arctic Refuge coastal plain, and restore protections for the 1.6 million acres of rolling tundra, braided rivers, and coastline. AWL reports that as of September 2020, no lease sales are scheduled, and no seismic testing has taken place. Following the Record of Decision on the Coastal Plain Leasing Environmental Impact Study, AWL joined 12 groups in a lawsuit led by the Gwich'in Steering Committee that challenges the leasing program.

### California Wilderness Coalition

We funded CalWild's Northwest California Mountains and Rivers & Central Coast Wild Heritage Campaigns that seek to protect 506,595 acres of new Wilderness and 639 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers, restore more than 729,000 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. CalWild reports that both bills are attached to the must-pass National Defense Authorization Act, which passed the US House of Representatives in July. Final resolution awaits a conference committee between the House and Senate that will convene after the November election.

### Columbia Land Trust

We funded CLT to acquire the 1,945-acre Mount Hood Oaks property in Oregon, and protect the oak and pine woodlands and streams from rural-residential development. CLT reports that unforeseen complications have halted this acquisition indefinitely. Our grant was redirected to help pay down an outstanding loan for another Conservation Alliance funded project called Klickitat Canyon, which protected 11,000 acres earlier this year.

### SUCCESS: 14 ACRES AND ONE CLIMBING AREA PROTECTED

#### Western Mass Climbers Coalition

We funded WMCC's effort to acquire and permanently protect the 14-acre Hanging Mountain property, located near the border of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and open it to the public as a new climbing area. WMCC reports they have acquired the climbing area and completed critical trail and parking infrastructure, and are now awaiting approval of the management plan from state environmental regulators before the crag is open to the public. WMCC will continue to raise funding to pay the outstanding loan balance.

### Trout Unlimited – Alaska

We funded TU's Save Bristol Bay campaign to stop Northern Dynasty Minerals from moving forward with the Pebble Mine project and permanently protect Alaska's 40,000 square mile Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve from all future large-scale hard rock mining exploration. The US Army Corps of Engineers announced that the Pebble Mine cannot be permitted under section 404 of the Clean Water Act due to the "likely result in significant adverse effects on the aquatic system and human environment." Most notably, Alaska Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan also came out against the proposed Pebble Mine.