



A continental movement  
to protect nature

**2022**

Impact Report



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**Reconnecting, restoring, and  
rewilding North America since 1991.**



## **My fellow wild ones,**

This report celebrates the accomplishments of the Wildlands Network community over the past year. These are **your accomplishments**, catalyzed by **your investment** in our projects and **your sustained support** for our shared continental vision for nature.

## **Thank you.**

Bringing more people like you into this community is a top priority for me. People who are passionate, inspired and taking proactive steps to invest in the foundational, systemic change we need to restore and protect nature.

One critical step to growing our ranks is to center ourselves as a North American organization focused on the needs of wildlife and built by people from across the entire continent.

We want to see this place through the eyes of nature – one dynamic, connected, interwoven and evolving landscape. We want the humans who live here to connect to the land as one vibrant community, collectively finding ways to co-exist with each other and with nature in harmony.

In our journey toward this vision, we believe it is paramount that we recognize, elevate and invest in the people who are creating a better future.

Within the pages of this report, we spotlight not only our conservation achievements, but also members of our staff who are responsible for these wins. Furthermore, we highlight organizational goals and current actions that reflect our intention to grow a larger and more diverse community protecting nature across North America.

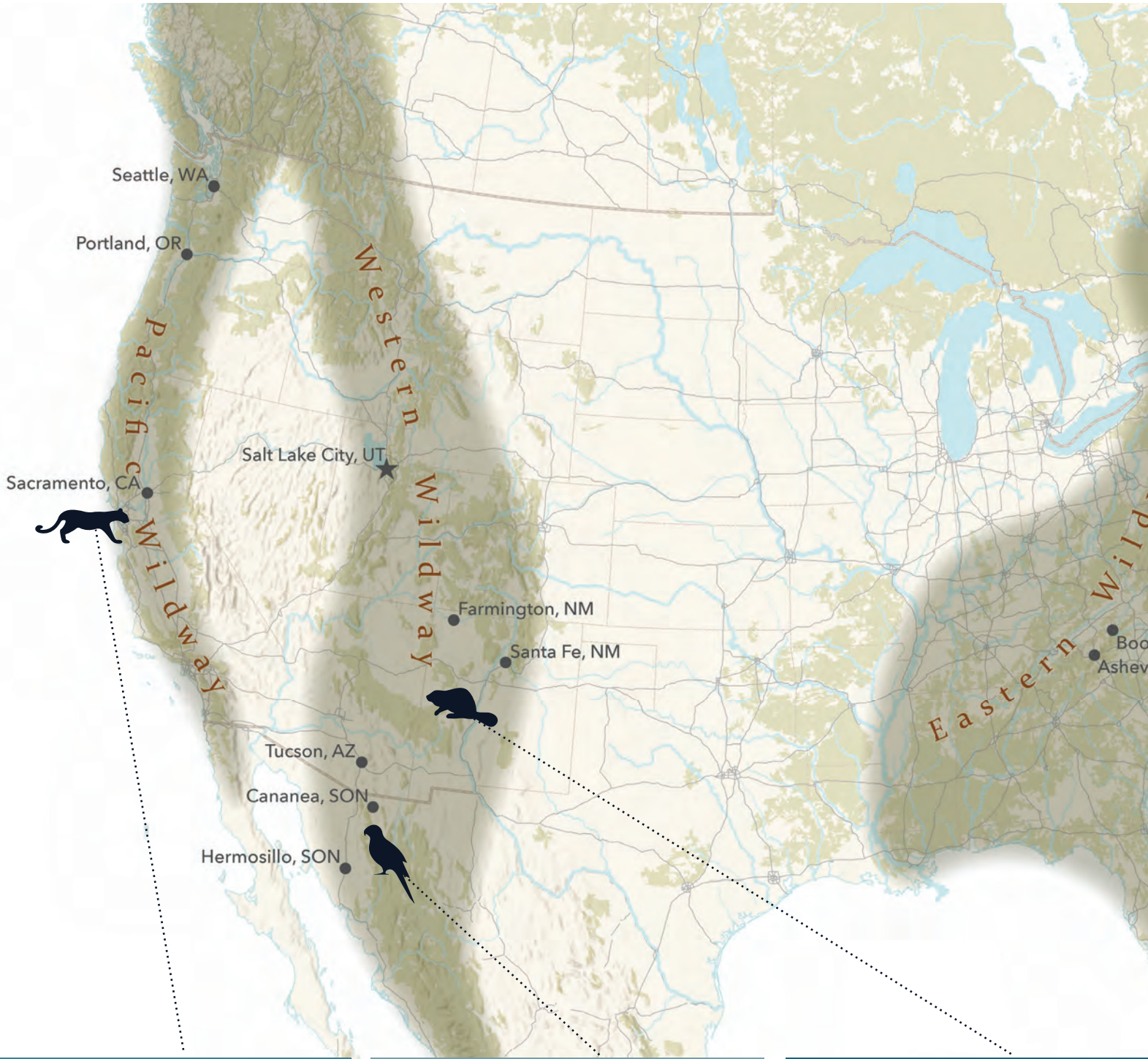
Only together, will we restore, reconnect and rewild nature so that life – in all its diversity – can thrive.

## **With gratitude,**



**Katie Davis**

*Executive Director*



## Pacific Wildway

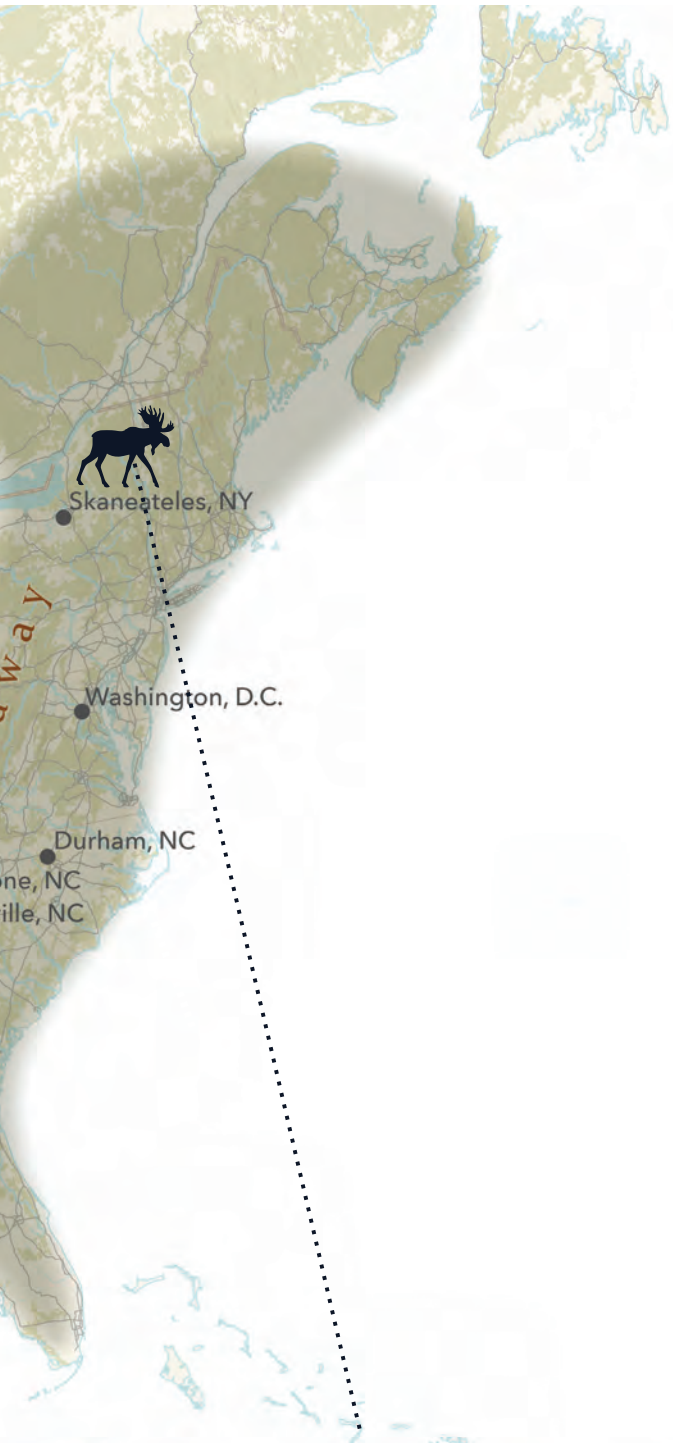
We are creating a virtual map that identifies existing and proposed wildlife crossing locations in California to serve as a resource and communication tool for reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions.

## Mexico

We are protecting thick-billed parrots from the increasing threat of wildfires on protected breeding landscapes by removing some vegetation through controlled burns and constructing fire breaks in key areas.

## Western Wildway

We are tracking translocated beaver on public land in Southern Utah to improve survival rates and inform future releases.



## Our Purpose

The wild spaces of North America are under increasing pressure from land use change, climate change, pollution, and other threats driven primarily by human activities. As a result, millions of species face endangerment and extinction in the coming decades, and the impacts of these losses could put entire ecosystems at risk of collapse. Half of North America's most biodiverse eco-regions are becoming severely degraded, and the region has at least 1,300 endangered or threatened wildlife species.

We know that human health and wellbeing are inextricably linked with the natural world and the integrity of the ecosystems in which we live. Still, we must also protect wildlife for its own intrinsic value. We are reaching a tipping point at which damaged ecosystems will be irreversible unless we take urgent action. **Our mission is to reconnect, rewild and restore North America so that life—in all its diversity—can thrive.**

Learn more about our work at:  
[wildlandsnetwork.org](http://wildlandsnetwork.org)



### Eastern Wildway

We are convening transboundary practitioners in Northern Appalachia-Acadia region to protect old forests and cultivate future old forests.

# Wins for wildlife in 2022

- A federal court in California gave a boost to **restore Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves** across most of the U.S.'s lower 48 states by overturning the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to delist the populations in Minnesota and outside the northern Rocky Mountain region. Wildlands Network was a co-plaintiff on the suit.
- We supported local community members in **identifying priority sub-watersheds** of the Upper Río Mayo basin in Mexico that will inform proposed zoning for an upcoming Management Program.



- The I-10/Peloncillo Mountain corridor has been included as a **state priority in New Mexico's Wildlife Corridor Action Plan**, a direct result of Wildlands Network's extensive research.

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- The Congress of Sonora unanimously approved a bill to modify environmental and municipal tax laws that will **better conserve private land** across the Mexican state, thanks in part to technical knowledge provided by Wildlands Network.
- A total of **\$15 million in state funding has been allocated to support wildlife crossing infrastructure** in the United States in 2022 so far, with legislation passed in Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Oregon.

▫ Our **Future Forests Reimagined** virtual workshop series brought in **more than 240 participants**, resulting in the successful launch of the next stage of our Northern Appalachia-Acadia regional ecological forestry initiative, in partnership with Two Countries, One Forest and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.




▫ We released the results of one of the **largest road ecology research projects ever completed**—along Interstate 40 in the Pigeon River Gorge of North Carolina and Tennessee. This study, conducted in partnership with the National Parks Conservation Association, identified key hotspots for wildlife movement and strategies for local governments to protect them from traffic.



- We partnered with National Parks Conservation Association, Center for Large Landscape Conservation and ARC Solutions to produce the **Demystifying Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Projects** webinar series, which guides local, state, tribal, and federal representatives in the U.S. to access and make the most effective use of funding made available by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- We **welcomed one of our most robust intern classes** ever. Hailing from North Carolina to California and Hermosillo to Portland, this cohort brings a diverse set of backgrounds, interests, and expertise including environmental law and policy, wildlife monitoring and conservation biology.
- **More than 600 participants** joined our *American Scar* film event hosted in partnership with Sky Island Alliance and Cuenca Los Ojos. This New Yorker documentary and its accompanying written story highlighted our collaboration to protect and restore wildlife connectivity in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.





**Our long-term vision is to create a vibrant and sustainable future for nature which is built upon the following:**

- Humans see themselves as part of nature, with the responsibility and desire to safeguard the natural world.
- North American governments adopt policies that ensure the protection of restored wildlife habitat and connectivity at a landscape scale.
- Communities across North America are stable, just, equitable, and inclusive. All people have access to information and the tools they need to protect and live in harmony with nature.



## We Dream Big

Nicknamed the “father of biodiversity,” E.O. Wilson proposed the Half-Earth theory that if we preserve half of the planet’s land and half of the planet’s sea, we will save 85 percent of species from extinction and ensure the long-term health of our planet. We believe the key to achieving this ambitious goal is connectivity conservation.

An important stepping stone toward achieving Half-Earth is the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015. We are actively involved in advocacy that directly contributes to achieving several of these goals. These include Goal 15, “Life on Land,” which seeks to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.” We are also closely aligned with Goal 13, which is to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.”

Additionally, Wildlands Network strives to prioritize justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. Just as we place a high value on biodiversity and coexistence with other species, we also believe we should value and reflect cultural diversity.

**Wildlands Network’s path to a more just, equitable, diverse and inclusive continental community fighting for protection of nature is guided by the following organizational goals:**

**1**

Wildlands Network operates as a North America-centric organization with approaches that are inclusive of different cultures, laws, and methods to conservation in Canada, the United States and Mexico.

**2**

Wildlands Network staff, volunteer, board, partner and supporter demographics reflect the multiculturalism of the human communities of North America.

**3**

Individuals within Wildlands Network adopt and promote values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the actions taken to achieve our mission.

**4**

All Wildlands Network programs and projects are designed and implemented based on an inclusive community-driven approach, resulting in the best measurable outcome for biodiversity in the regions where we work.

**5**

Our fiscal and administrative management systems reflect Wildlands Network’s organizational values.



□ We are working to **understand and mitigate the impacts of solar energy development on pronghorn populations in northwest New Mexico** to achieve landscape-level connectivity. We are collaborating with diverse stakeholders and land and wildlife managers including the Ute Mountain Ute, Navajo Nation, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and New Mexico State Land Office, and private solar developers.



□ We held a **series of webinars to help local, state, tribal, and federal entities plan and implement wildlife crossing infrastructure projects**. These educational resources will help to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by empowering peers, elected officials and agency managers to effectively harness the \$350 million in federal funding for a “Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program” that was unlocked when the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed last fall due in part to our advocacy.



□ We are **securing state-level engagement and funding in priority regions to support locally-led gains in wildlife habitat conservation** aligned with landscape-scale plans and initiatives. This includes state investment in and commitment to (1) ongoing, meaningful participation from government agencies; (2) sustained financial support; (3) public commitment to clear, shared goals; and (4) practices and outcomes designed to support mutual trust and collaboration from and within local communities.

# Our Approach

*We address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change through the implementation of on-the-ground conservation projects coupled with systemic policy change.*



## Protecting Local Ecosystems

We are building a connected network of wild communities across North America. We preserve and restore key ecosystems, allowing wildlife to move across their historic habitat ranges. We use sophisticated spatial analysis and modeling to identify continental-scale wildlife corridors that inform on-the-ground conservation projects. We collaborate with landowners, managers, and communities to understand ecosystem dynamics and provide technical support for habitat restoration. We collaborate to identify the underlying issues facing keystone species, and provide resources that promote protection and repatriation to preserve biodiversity.



## Advancing Innovative Policy

We educate policymakers and encourage public debate with science and policy analysis focused on improving conservation and land connectivity in North America. In the United States, our advocacy has been instrumental in the success of several key pieces of legislation at the federal level including the America the Beautiful Initiative, Wildlife Corridor Conservation Act, and the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In Mexico, we were instrumental in passing legislation to modify environmental and municipal tax laws that will conserve private land across the state of Sonora.

Our projects and policies are driven by science-informed solutions and inclusive community engagement. We collaborate with local partners to identify areas where we can be changemakers to protect nature. Through this framework, we can achieve short-term gains in protecting biodiversity that are supported by ongoing government and community initiatives that ensure long-term resiliency.



## Transforming Transportation Networks

We are reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions so that species can move safely within their range. We are collaborating with North Carolina partners to redesign key sections of Interstate 40 within the Pigeon River Gorge to allow safe passage for wildlife. Based on research findings, we provided 20 detailed mitigation recommendations for improvements to existing structures or the creation of new structures throughout the Gorge and we called for the installation of a system of strategically-placed wildlife fencing.



## Building Community

Our Future Forests Reimagined project convened key stakeholders from Indigenous groups, Canada, and the United States for a five-day workshop series. Drawing on a wide range of perspectives, the workshop participants identified specific measures to advance management and protection of a resilient forested landscape across the Northern Appalachian-Acadian ecoregion. Together they developed an actionable plan to identify and protect remaining old forests, accelerate the restoration of wildland forests, and increase the amount of resilient forest through ecological management.

# Wildlands Network is a leader in landscape-level connectivity conservation.

Over the past 31 years, Wildlands Network has become a leader in landscape-level connectivity conservation and has produced a well-established track record of success. With staff located in regions across the United States and Mexico, our work is built upon a strong foundation of collaborative relationships. We prioritize multi-level engagement with community, local, state, tribal and federal stakeholders and agencies. These partnerships allow us to address the holistic wellbeing of ecosystems and achieve habitat connectivity across boundaries.

We understand the importance of responding to the ever-changing impacts and challenges presented by biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. Thus, we are dedicated to evaluating our work and adapting our strategies for continued success across the continent. Our work is grounded in a science-based approach that informs our conservation strategies.





**1991**

Renowned scientists and conservationists, including Michael Soulé, create a new conservation organization—later renamed Wildlands Network—focused on continental-scale connectivity for conservation. The first issue of Wild Earth publishes that spring.



**1999**

Scientists Michael Soulé and John Terborgh publish *Continental Conservation: Scientific Foundations of Regional Reserve Networks*, a book whose principals are central to Wildlands Network’s mission to this day.



**2011 & 2013**

Wildlands Network’s wilderness explorer John Davis completes 7,600- and 5,000-mile journeys across the Eastern and Western Wildways, respectively. Discoveries along his treks further prove the need for continental wildlife corridors in North America.



**2013**

Hofmann Forest is the largest state-owned property in North Carolina and an ecological gem. When plans were announced to sell the forest without protections, Wildlands Network stepped in to build a diverse coalition and a grassroots advocacy campaign to Save Hofmann Forest—and succeeded in 2016.




**2017**

After years of bureaucratic limbo, Ajos-Bavispe National Forest Reserve and Wildlife Refuge in northern Mexico was officially recategorized as an “Area for the Protection of Flora and Fauna”—a status accompanied by clearly defined conservation objectives and regulations—thanks to leadership efforts of Wildlands Network’s Mexico Program and partners.



**2019**

Detailed Eastern Wildway map that includes climate modeling and advanced geospatial analysis is finalized, updating Wildlands Network’s vision for the 21st century.



**2000**

Wildlands Network collaborates with Naturalia and Pronatura to protect almost 6,000 acres of mature spruce-pine forest in Chihuahua, Mexico, a crucial nesting ground for endangered thick-billed parrots.



**2002-2008**

Wildlands Network scientists draft visioning documents called "Wildlands Network Designs" for the Rocky Mountain West and the Northern Appalachians that identify existing protected areas and propose wildlife corridors that connect them as pathways for wide-ranging, keystone species.



**2014**

Wildlands Network expands southward, officially establishing its Mexico program.



**2016**

A long-term goal of Wildlands Network is achieved: U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA-8th) introduces the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act in the U.S. House of Representatives. Wildlands Network has been spearheading a national campaign for the bill ever since.



**2020**

Wildlands Network migrates to Utah, establishing a new headquarters in Salt Lake City.



**2021**

Wildlands Network secures \$350 million in new federal funding to support the construction of wildlife crossing structures on highways across America.

# Our Team

## Staff

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**Alex Vanko** - GIS Specialist

**Aaron Facka** - Senior Wildlife Biologist

**Carlos Castillo** - Senior Conservation Specialist and Mexico Program Co-Director

**Cecillia Aguilar** - Mexico Program Road Ecologist

**Christine Laporte** - Eastern Program Director

**Colin Reynolds** - Oregon Project Manager

**Damon Yeh** - California Project Manager

**Danielle Fisher** - Communications Manager

**Ed Marx** - Northeast Project Manager

**Erin Sito** - U.S. Public Policy Director

**Gina Chacon** - Mexico Policy Coordinator and Mexico Program Co-Director

**Greg Costello** - Conservation Policy & Pacific Program Director

**Jessica Walz Schafer** - Director of Strategic Initiatives

**José Miguel Gabutti** - Assistant Road Ecologist

**Juan Carlos Bravo** - Conservation Programs Director

**Jude Solorio** - Administrative Assistant

**Katie Davis** - Executive Director

**Kim Howes** - Development Director

**Lindsay Martindale** - Colorado Plateau Project Manager

**Liz Hillard** - Senior Wildlife Biologist, Appalachian Region

**Lucy Britton** - Development Associate

**Makensie Brown** - Digital Media Specialist

**Mari Galloway** - California Program Director

**Meg Naumann** - International Major Gifts Officer

**Michael Dax** - Western Program Director

**Mirna Manteca** - Road Ecology Coordinator and Mexico Program Co-Director

**Myles Traphagen** - Borderlands Program Coordinator

**Nikki Robinson** - North Carolina Project Manager

**Paulina Badillo** - NOSSA Technical Secretariat

**Princess Gutierrez** - Assistant to the Executive Director

**Ron Sutherland** - Chief Scientist

**Samantha Thomas** - Development Associate

**Susan Holmes** - U.S. Federal Policy Director

**Taylor Thurman** - Operations Manager

**Tracey Butcher** - Senior Philanthropic Advisor

**Zach Schwartz** - Oregon Project Manager

## Board

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**Abbey Camaclang**  
**Chris Pupke**  
**Conrad Reining**  
**Danielle Droitsch**  
**David Steen**  
**Diana Hadley**


**Fernando Ochoa**  
**Fred Koontz**  
**Jeanne Calhoun**  
**Lisa Micheli**  
**Roshan Patel**  
**Steve Olson**  
**Wendy Francis**

## Interns & Volunteers

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**Alexa Murray** - *Science Intern*  
**Arienne León** - *Road Ecology Volunteer*  
**Armando Ponce De Leon** - *Road Ecology Volunteer*  
**Aspen Stevanovski** - *Science Intern*  
**Helen Lober** - *Policy Intern*  
**Marilú Peralta** - *Road Ecology Intern*  
**Misbah Rafiq** - *Policy Intern*  
**Sarah McMullen** - *Science Intern*  
**Talbrett Caramillo** - *Science Intern*

# 2022 Staff Highlights



Wildlands Network is comprised of a dedicated team of skilled individuals who continue the work of our founders. In addition to a passion for wildlife conservation, our team brings valuable expertise in a variety of roles including conservation biologists, policy experts, outreach coordinators and others. Combining these strengths allows us to collaborate effectively, think critically and achieve creative solutions that lead to long-term change. Together, we are driven by a focused vision of a connected, biodiverse landscape.

We are highlighting a few of our staff members who embody our organization's broad ability to address the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change and achieve our conservation goals.



## Mapping and Data Modeling - GIS Specialist, Alex Vanko

Alex is Wildland Network's first dedicated GIS specialist. He combines his biology and environmental science backgrounds to support all of the organization's mapping and landscape analysis projects. Alex is currently developing a project to map habitat connectivity in the Pacific Wildway as well as a map showcasing all of the organization's active projects across the continent. "We've seen how powerful a communication tool it has been in the eastern wildway for presenting our vision and our philosophy for conservation. I like to think I bring the hard science rigor and analytical way of thinking to the mapping we do and the conservation problems we tackle. I've been taught and always lived by a good map is really a story in visual form, the goal for me is to get that conservation story out there."



## Policy - Mexico Program Policy Coordinator, Gina Chacon

With a background in Latin American studies, politics and public policy, Gina works to increase support for private lands conservation, federal Natural Protected Areas, wildlife corridors, and improved enforcement practices around wildlife protections in Mexico. She coordinates two coalitions of diverse stakeholders to strengthen environmental laws and policies in Mexico. "One of the ways I actively work to improve laws and policies is by protecting Natural Protected Areas—these areas are key sites for connectivity in Mexico. Working in policy is essential for conservation. It's essential for protecting the rights of nature and the rights of people to live in a healthy environment."



## Biology and Ecosystems - Borderlands Program Coordinator, Myles Traphagen

Myles oversees strategic partnerships, communications and projects to advance large-landscape conservation goals in Mexico and the United States. He is currently working on a 3-year wildlife camera project in the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge to look at the effects of the border wall on wildlife populations. "The work that I've done in the last four years related to border wall construction has become very personal, because it occurs in places that were my first exposure to wild landscapes in the Southwest. In this particular area, the borderlands, it's a connection point between the more tropical regions to the south in Mexico and the temperate regions in the north, so therefore restoring and maintaining connectivity for nature really requires a large continental vision and strategy for achieving this."



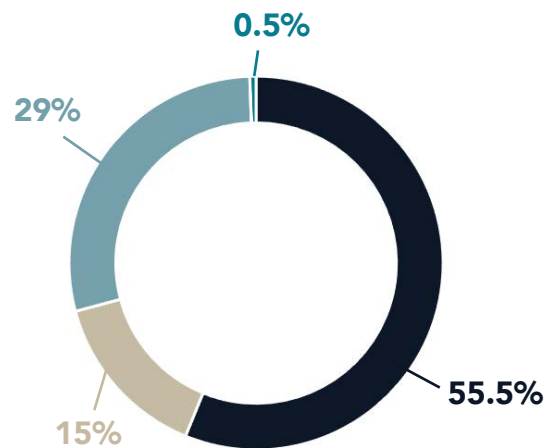
## Outreach - Digital Media Specialist, Makensie Brown

Makensie creates and publishes digital content to get the word out about different projects that program staff are working on across the continent. She just finished supporting research staff in putting together a comprehensive report about our wildlife connectivity project in the Pigeon River Gorge. "The key role of communications is amplification. It's about getting the word out about our work in order to bring like-minded folks together so that together we can make a bigger impact. The communications team seeks to reach people who aren't aware of these environmental issues to get them interested, or to guide those who are already interested but might not know how to get involved."

# 2021 Finances

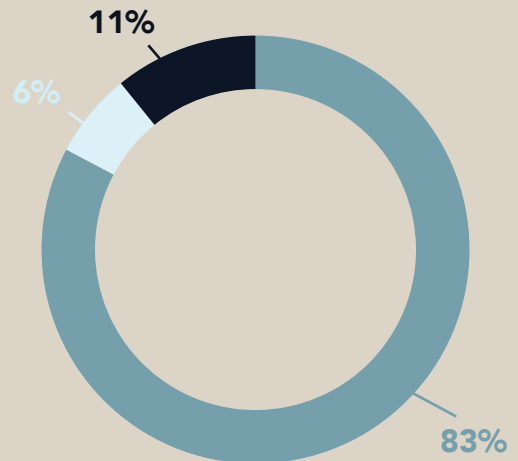
## Revenue

■ Foundation Grants	\$1,630,002
■ Government Grants	\$426,088
■ Individual Donations	\$830,516
■ Other Income	\$15,591
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,902,540</b>



## Expenses

■ Programs	\$1,980,554
■ Fundraising	\$259,408
■ Administration	\$154,226
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,394,188</b>



## Our Current Fiscal Sponsorships

**Safe Passage Fund Coalition** is a collaboration of six organizations that raise private funding for wildlife-vehicle collision mitigation in the Pigeon River Gorge in the southern Appalachians.

**The Lobos of the Southwest Coalition** is a diverse group of passionate Mexican wolf advocates who champion the recovery of the species across the Southwest United States.



# Remembering Dave Foreman, an “Unapologetic Warrior for Nature”

Earlier this year, visionary conservationist and Wildlands Network cofounder Dave Foreman passed away. The author of numerous books including *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* and *Rewilding North America*, Foreman’s ideologies were—and continue to be—the very core of our mission. His vision for continental-scale rewilding inspires us and many other wilderness and biodiversity protection and restoration efforts around the world.

Dave had a profound influence on the lives and careers of our staff, board and others from the Wildlands Network community. We gathered a selection of stories and memories of Dave, below.

“Dave was an unapologetic warrior for nature. His influence and impact cannot be overstated, particularly in the formative years of the Wildlands Project. RIP Dave.

—**Wendy Francis**, Board President,  
*Wildlands Network*

“Dave Foreman changed and expanded the way we do conservation in North America and inspired conservation activists and biologists to think big, wild, and connected throughout the world.”

— **John Davis**, Co-Founder,  
*Wildlands Network*

“May his proverbial campfire shed light on many future generations so that we may learn one day to respect all beings as they deserve. Compost in peace, Dave.”

— **Juan Carlos Bravo**, *Conservation Programs Director, Wildlands Network*

“His embodiment of his beliefs—to protect those without voices, and the right of all beings to exist—resonated with my worldview, and has deeply influenced me personally and professionally. With his passing, I will act on his primary exhortation to me: That in order to protect the wild, we must spend time in the wilderness with our coinhabitants. Rest in peace, Dave, and thank you. See you in the wild.”

— **Christine Laporte**, *Eastern Program Director, Wildlands Network*

“Anyone who met Dave knows he was a force of nature—in more than one sense. His passionate, uncompromising advocacy for the natural world was uncomfortable at times. Yet his vision—of healing a world of wounds, of valuing wild nature in its own right—stuck with me and, as it turns out, is a lodestar for millions across the world.”

— **Conrad Reining**, *Wildlands Network Board and former staff member*



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