Conservation Northwest

Keeping the Northwest Wild

Annual Report

2022

A lynx in Washington state photographed by our Community Wildlife Monitoring Program.

To our Supporters

Mitch Friedman
Executive Director

I'd count 2022 as a pretty good year for Conservation Northwest. Notably, 2022 marks the successful reintroduction of Pacific fishers to Washington, an effort we started way back in 2002 when we provided funds to the State to assess the feasibility of the idea. Twenty years from inception to total success, founding populations in the Olympics and both the North and South Cascades are now healthy and thriving.

While that project closed, another opened, as we executed the first ongoing projects with virtual fencing in Washington state, including on the Figlenski Ranch that we purchased for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in 2021. This revolutionary, affordable technology enables greatly improved stewardship of grass, soil, wildlife, and streams. Demand is now exploding, so it may be that twenty years from now, people won't much remember the need for barbed wire.

Meanwhile, another ten lynx were moved into the Kettle Range through our partnership with the Colville Tribes and the Okanagan Nation Alliance. Additionally, we moved forward programs that will restore the Upper Green River Valley, advanced wildlife connectivity across I-5 and Highway 12 to link the Cascades and Olympics, supported almost two dozen range riders to keep wolves out of trouble, and ran a campaign that inspired the Washington Legislature to direct $83 million toward protecting legacy forests on state public lands.

That's just a sample of what a fair, maybe above-average year for us is at Conservation Northwest. We set a high bar with our expectations, track record, and a stellar team - that makes me very proud. I hope you share that pride, as it is only with the help of our supporters that we and our wildlife heritage succeed.

BOARD'S LETTER

WHEN MY TWENTY-SOMETHING SON invited me to climb with him this summer I jumped at the opportunity. Chances to spend time together in the outdoors come up much less often than when he was younger. Over ten days we skied on three Washington volcanoes - Kulshan, Tahoma, and Loowit. As we drove between these wild places, from north to south in the state, it's hard not to be reminded of Conservation Northwest's past successes and current opportunities.

The biodiversity in the forests around each of these mountains is richer than it was just ten years ago thanks to the reintroduction of fishers. Wolves and other large mammals now have an easier time moving between the Rockies and Cascades and making the same north to south journey that we did thanks to highway crossing projects like Safe Passage 97 and the I-90 Corridor Campaign. Thanks to Conservation NW's legislative victory last year, the state forests we traversed are now managed for timber, biodiversity, and clean water to benefit all Washingtonians.

The skills developed in these past efforts has set Conservation NW up uniquely well to address the continued challenges of protecting, restoring, and connecting our wild places. As more people are visiting the outdoors, our coexistence program is weighing the importance of people recreating in nature against the pressure it puts on our wildlands. Our journey down I-5 is a stark reminder that it's practically impossible for wildlife to move across that barrier, which is why I'm so happy to see the efforts to address this in the Cascades to Olympics program.

Your support in the past has allowed Conservation NW to achieve so much. In many ways the organization is just getting started. Thanks to your continued support, Conservation NW can do the unfinished work of allowing our future generations to live in balance with wildlands and wildlife in the Pacific Northwest.

Matt Uyttendaele, Board President

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Thank you very much.

2022

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> Our mission means stitching the landscape back together and pushing against the destructive trends of modern development and healing. Healing people, healing wildlife and healing wildlands.
>
> *- Paula Swedeen*

> Keeping the habitat we have and fixing what we broke, so wildlife have a brighter future.
>
> *- Dave Werntz*

1 WILDLANDS

> Protecting the wild things that inspire us humans in the natural world.
>
> *- Laurel Baum*

> Connecting, protecting and restoring from the Cascades to the Olympics means saving a highly developed, fragmented and diminished natural environment in critical condition, and the wildlife that depend on it. The only way to connect wildlife to habitat long separated by I-5 is to connect people to places, to each other, and to nature.
>
> *- Brian Stewart*

Are you reading this as a PDF? Click the topic and it'll bring you to that page!

> "Conservation Northwest's mission means that we work to protect wildlife and wild lands, connect both landscape-scale linkages and local habitats, and restore our native habitats for our wildlife to help create or reestablish resilient ecosystems. I love working in our incredibly important sagelands, which are threatened by fierce wildfires, invasive species, and conversion. Our work is critical to protect pygmy rabbits, greater sage-grouse, burrowing owls, pronghorn, and many more.
>
> *- Jordan Ryckman*

> "Conservation Northwest is a fast moving, tenacious, strategically driven group of dedicated people that respectfully engages with diverse communities to achieve remarkable results in habitat conservation. Because of that, we are trusted by many to lead efforts in restoring, connecting, and protecting some of the best wild places and wildlife in our state. A relatively small organization that consistently makes a big difference in the work we accomplish, and one I am very proud to work for.
>
> *- Jay Kehne*

> "I grew up in the Okanogan and grew up thinking about the landscape, how critical connecting habitat is for wildlife, and how it is our responsibility to protect it.
>
> *- Matt Danielson*

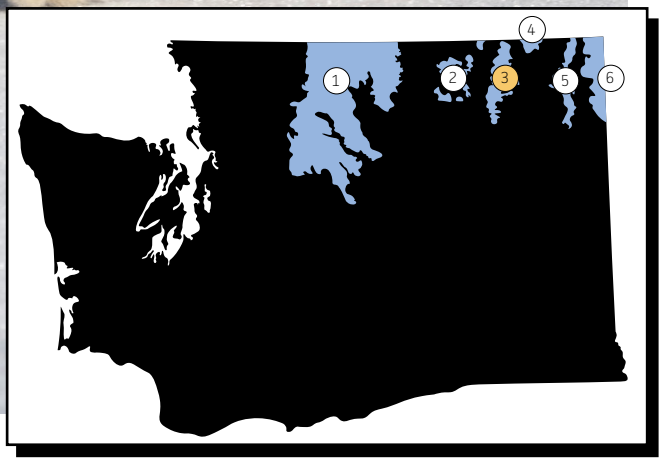
Who we Are

What our mission means to us.

Lynx

> It was an amazing year. The Tribe's wildlife staff, trappers, Okanagan Nation Alliance, Upper Columbia United Tribes, and other partners showed up strong for another successful year supporting lynx recovery. It's inspiring to work together with such a competent and productive team to right a historic wrong and boost biological diversity, ecological resilience, and regional lynx recovery.
>
> *- Dave Werntz*

Canada lynx release in the Kettle Range. Photo by David Moskowitz. ©



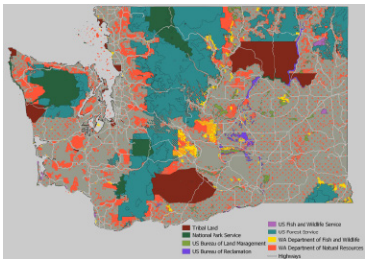
WINTER 2022 was the second year of our five-year project to reestablish Canada lynx in the Kettle Mountain Range in northeastern Washington. The Kettle Range is one of six "core areas" identified by federal biologists as essential to the continued persistence of lynx due to its extent of suitable habitat, connection to stable lynx populations in British Columbia, good quality snow, and prey conditions.

The Kettle Range is located in northeast Washington and is one of six "core areas" essential for lynx conservation.

19 So far, 19 lynx have been transported from British Columbia and released on the lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Wildlife Recreation Coexistence

We identified four key areas where Conservation Northwest can support public land managers in making recreation that's sustainable for both people and animals.



1. Identify wildlife-recreation overlap across Washington.

2. Better measure recreation intensity and frequency.

3. Protect spatial and temporal refugia that wildlife need.

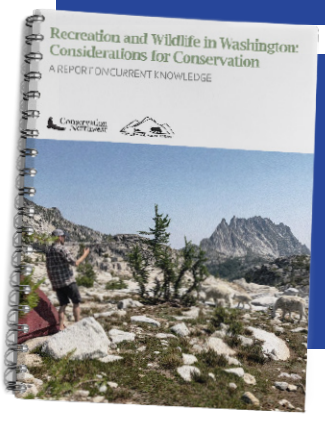
4. Implement adaptive management actions.

RECREATION ACROSS Washington continues to grow and offer more opportunities to enjoy the many benefits of our public lands. Our Wildlife-Recreation Coexistence Program (WREC) aims to ensure that Washington's wildlife populations can thrive alongside increasing participation in outdoor recreation. We've illuminated ways that people can better understand how wildlife and recreation interact and we help develop strategies to sustainably manage recreation in ways to better protect wildlife and their habitat for generations to come.

In September, WREC released a report synthesizing the existing science on the dynamics between recreation and 15 species in Washington – bighorn sheep, caribou, elk, mountain goat, mule deer, black bear, Canada lynx, grizzly bear, mountain lion, wolf, wolverine, bald eagle, golden eagle, marbled murrelet, and sage-grouse. Created in partnership with Home Range Wildlife Research, Conservation NW's report will help inform future recreation management and direct new education efforts about recreating with respect to wildlife.

Hikers with dogs, even on-leash, provoke increased responses in mule deer.

Lynx avoid developed ski areas especially when ski hills are at their busiest.



Read the full report for more details and information!

Female bighorn sheep tend to be more sensitive to recreation than males, especially during the lambing season.

Black bears can maintain territories with high recreational use, but will alter both their behavior and movement patterns to avoid encountering humans.

You can help reduce your impact by: sticking to designated trails, respecting any seasonal closures of recreation areas, and consolidating your own recreation footprint.

Wolverines are most affected by dispersed and off-road activities, such as snowmobiling and backcountry skiing.

Wolves are highly sensitive to increasing road densities.

Grizzly bears may shift activity to more nocturnal behavior and avoid areas of high human activity in response to recreation.

Caribou are highly disturbed by less predictable forms of recreation (off-trail, quiet).

Healthy Watersheds

Copper Mountain mine poses dire consequences to our transboundary watersheds.

Photo by Gilles Wendling.

ONE OF OUR MAIN CAMPAIGNS in 2022 brought attention to the threat to Washington rivers posed by British Columbia mines. The primary threat is the Copper Mountain mine, which has two massive tailings dams holding toxic waste perched above the Similkameen River and an unacceptable probability of failing.

The mine, located just 25 miles north of the Washington border, straddles a valley between Wolf Creek and the Similkameen River, which flows into Washington to meet the Okanogan River and eventually drains into the Columbia River. The threatened Similkameen Valley is home to several communities and includes territory of two First Nations and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. The rivers are a source of culturally important foods such as sockeye salmon, steelhead, and threatened Chinook salmon, all of which would be harmed if either of the mines' two dams failed.

AUGUST

Reports released on the probability and impacts of tailings dam failures.

SEPTEMBER

LightHawk flew journalists over Copper Mountain mine, garnering media and public attention. We joined Tribal and First Nation partners in Wenatchee for the first conference aimed at the transboundary mining issue.

NOVEMBER

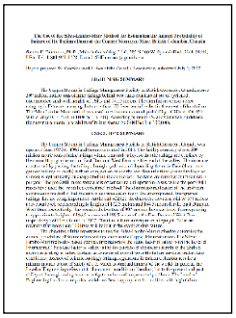
Indigenous nations passed a resolution urging government officials to immediately address the unacceptable mining regulations and to protect these critical waterways.

DECEMBER

Mitch Friedman joined a delegation of Indigenous Tribes, Aboriginal First Nations, and conservation leaders to meet with members of Congress and officials with the Biden Administration and Canadian Embassy to deliver the message that the governments must do more to regulate these mines and honor their legal and ethical obligations under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

Conservation Northwest has been working with Tribes, First Nations and organizations in Alaska, Idaho and Montana to bring attention to the Copper Mountain mine threat and other unsafe mining waste dams that will affect U.S. waters. In 2022, we commissioned two reports:

LYNKER TECHNOLOGIES modeled the results of dam failure in 62 simulation scenarios. They determined that even a mid-range scenario would release a debris flow that would cover parts of the city of Princeton in over 30 feet of mining waste within 90 minutes. The flow would proceed down the Similkameen Valley, covering the Washington border with about six feet of sludge 24 hours after the dam failed. Impacts would continue into the Columbia River itself.



A COMPANION REPORT by Dr. Steven Emerman, a geophysicist and international expert specializing in groundwater and mining, estimates an annual probability of failure as high as one in a hundred. According to most U.S. and Canadian guidelines, the maximum annual probability of failure should be under one in a million.

Grizzly Bears

In December, Conservation NW sent an action alert asking our community to submit comments in support of grizzly bear recovery efforts in Washington state. Additionally, our staff redesigned our work group's website to prepare advocates for the renewed process with content support from our partners. northcascadesgrizzly.org

Grizzly bear family in southern British Columbia. Photo by Tonette McEwan.

IN NOVEMBER, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the restart of the process to restore grizzly bears to the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE) - a large expanse of mostly protected public lands with North Cascades National Park at its core. The NCE is one of only six ecosystems in the U.S. recognized as federal grizzly bear recovery zones, and it's the only one outside of the Rocky Mountains.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process will include opportunities for public input on a range of strategies designed to restore grizzlies. This revival of a multi-year effort is backed by overwhelming public approval. When a similar process began in 2015, it received more than 159,000 public comments supporting it. Our leadership on this issue, which has gone on for 35 years, helped the cause get to this point.

Joe Scott

Associate Director of International Programs

Joe leads our grizzly bear recovery programs, including the Coast to Cascades Grizzly Bear Initiative and North Cascades grizzly bear restoration. Joe has been with Conservation Northwest since 1998 and has managed our British Columbia programs for the entirety of his tenure. Joe currently leads our transboundary grizzly bear recovery efforts in the North Cascades and southwestern British Columbia, working closely with the Sta'at'imc First Nations and other conservation partners.

CNW STAFF HIGHLIGHT

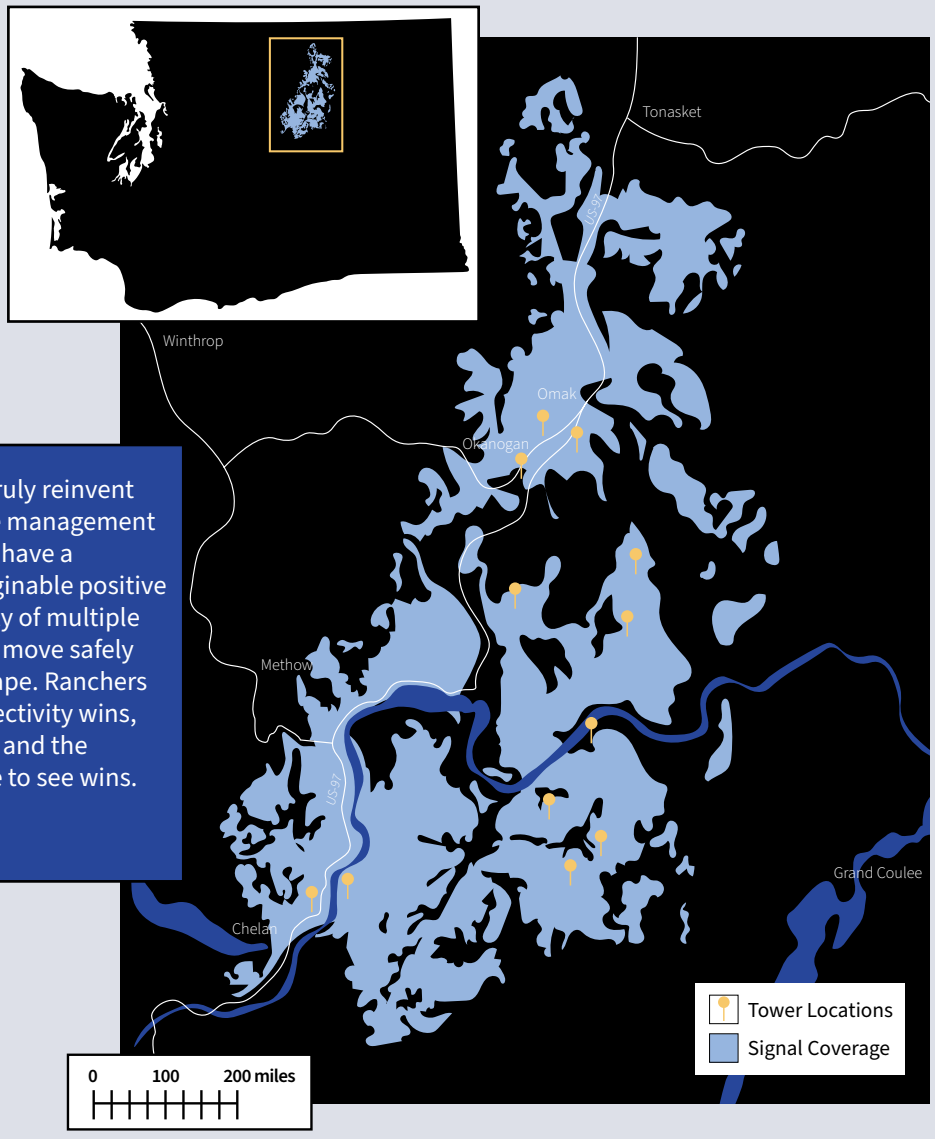
Virtual Fencing

The vision of a fence-less west is underway in Washington with the roll out of a new virtual fence pilot program.

THE REMOVAL OF TRADITIONAL FENCING used for cattle management brings benefits to ranchers, critical wildlife species, and the ecosystem as a whole. Conservation Northwest is partnering with local ranchers to adopt virtual fencing to manage their herds. Along with our partners, we started installing towers in Okanogan County in April 2022.

Removing these barriers will help wildlife by connecting habitat for easier migration and make it possible for wildlife to move quickly from an area threatened by fire. Sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, pronghorn, mule deer, elk and other species benefit from the removal of barbed wire.

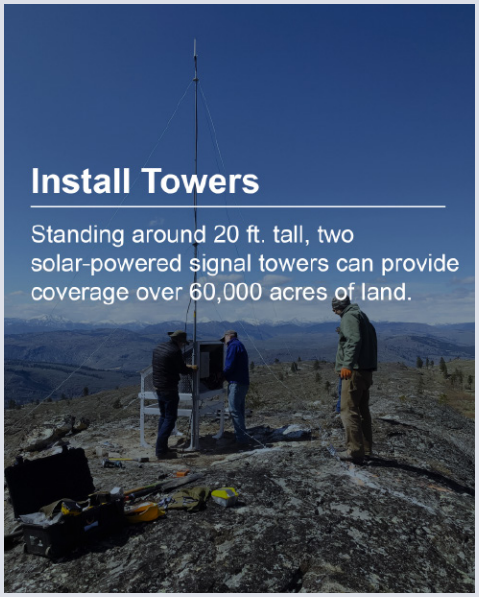
By the end of 2022, our team funded and assisted with the installation of 11 signal towers, had five ranchers participating in virtual fences for cattle management, and gave more than 500 presentations to ranchers and conservationists on the benefits of virtual fencing in Washington, British Columbia, California, and Arizona.

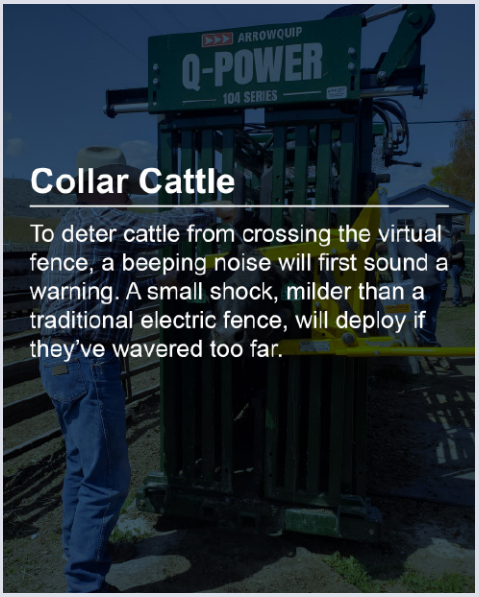


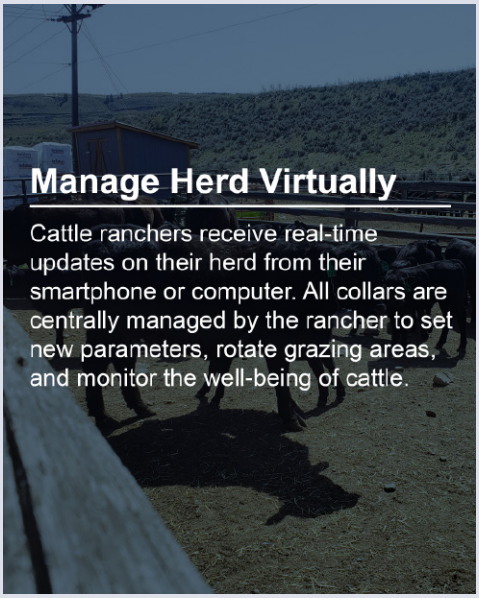
> "We can now truly reinvent the way range management occurs, which will have a previously unimaginable positive effect on the ability of multiple wildlife species to move safely across the landscape. Ranchers win, habitat connectivity wins, communities win, and the wildlife we all love to see wins.
>
> *- Jay Kehne*

What is virtual fencing?

Using real-time data and GPS management systems, cattle producers can construct dynamic boundaries from the palm of their hands —little to no barbed wire required.







CONSERVATION NW'S SAGELANDS HERITAGE PROGRAM has been one of the first on-the-ground advocates to bring virtual fencing to Washington, working directly with ranchers, state land managers, and Vence, a virtual fence company.

There are currently 19 planned towers that will eventually cover more than 700,000 acres in Okanogan, Douglas and Chelan counties. The technology replaces the function of barbed wire fencing, which can then be removed (or not replaced after a wildfire), with the exception of hard-lined fencing adjacent to roads and highways.

Virtual fencing is proving to be more than effective and significantly undercuts barbed-wire fencing in cost, area of coverage, and overall maintenance. The ease of moving the fence creates more opportunities for rotational grazing, protection of important riparian areas and waterways, and keeping cattle off fire-impacted land to allow for recovery. Cattle can even be easily virtually fenced away from specific wildlife areas, such as pygmy rabbit burrows, grouse leks, and even wolf dens.

Wolves

Photographed by CNW's Community Wildlife Monitoring Program. ©

Wolf Pack Territories in 2022. Source: WDFW

DURING THE 2022 CATTLE GRAZING SEASON in eastern Washington, we supported 19 range riders covering 85,000 acres. Some of these riders are part of a west-wide research study based at the University of Utah, whose findings will influence future wolf conservation policy. Wolf numbers in Washington increased for the 14th consecutive year.

216 +5%
WOLVES TOTAL

37 +12%
WOLF PACKS

26 +37%
BREEDING PAIRS

Conflict between ranchers and wolves increased last year, but our efforts helped it remain relatively low.

I-5 Wildlife Crossing Research

Working to connect wildlife habitat in the Cascade Mountains to the Olympic Peninsula.

I-5 connectivity research in partnership with LightHawk Conservation Flying.

IMPROVING THE ABILITY for wildlife to move from one side of Interstate 5 to the other has long been a target area of concern for connectivity. In 2022, studies showed that the window to make these infrastructure changes is rapidly closing due to a development boom from the Chehalis Basin to the Columbia River. As land prices soar, warehouses, factories, and other structures are being built quickly. There is even talk of a SeaTac-sized airport in the area.

This region is home to diverse species, including Roosevelt and Rocky Mountain elk, cougar, black-tailed deer, black bear, fisher, western gray squirrel, vulnerable salmon, and more. Our Cascades to Olympics Program is prioritizing advocating for wildlife crossings in this area.

In 2022, our staff held 20 restoration work parties in critical wildlife corridors with the support of more than 100 volunteer hours. Our staff managed four conservation interns, hosted the first Southwest Washington Connectivity Summit, and removed two acres of invasive plants from wildlife crossing areas.

The time to design and build safe crossings is now before this area is overdeveloped in key crossing locations. Enhancing habitat connectivity around I-5 will continue to be a key focus in 2023.

Forest Field Program

The Forest Field Program is focused on three regions across the state. The team works within the national forests to support sustainable forest planning, restoration, and overall ecosystem health.

2022 Highlights:

- Formally requested mature and old-growth forest protection in Forest Service timber sales to align with President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies.
- Co-wrote amendments to the National Prescribed Fire Policy Act to accurately reflect acres restored or mitigated by prescribed fire activities.

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

- Completed source population mapping to facilitate a native plant propagation program on the south zone Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.
- 150 volunteer hours to remove invasive blackberry from the Milepost 27 wildlife undercrossing (the oldest wildlife crossing in Washington state) in preparation for new, wider fencing to improve passage for a local elk herd.
- Installed vehicle barriers at eight riparian campsites along the Greenwater River.
- Improved riparian outcomes for the North Fork Nooksack Project Decision.

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

- Developed a comprehensive ecological assessment of restoration needs in Twisp River including a landscape prescription, and delivered it to the North Central Washington Forest Collaborative to inform discussions around management actions.
- Coordinated a scientific review & update of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest's Restoration Strategy.
- Improved riparian outcomes for Little Naches Uplands Project Decision (signed Nov 2022).
- Developed a white paper analyzing the effectiveness of fuels breaks.
- Initiated a monitoring program after discovering heavy-handed logging in the Mission Restoration Project.

Colville National Forest

- Awarded a grant to support Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition's Northeast Washington Forest Vision 2020 for ecological restoration.

① Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Our work in the Central Cascades prioritizes collaboration with public land managers to improve habitat for fish and wildlife while increasing forest resiliency to fire, climate change, and other natural disturbances. We provide feedback to the Forest Service on landscape scale projects; elevate forest and aquatic treatments that benefit wildlife and enhance old-growth characteristic forests that better represent ecological processes; and reduce bottlenecks that are slowing implementation by bringing more funding and capacity to the Forest Service. In support of improving watershed conditions and addressing the legacy of managed timber lands, our projects support a range of areas including ecological restoration, rehabilitation of sites damaged from recreational impacts, cultural heritage surveys, and road decommissioning.

Jen Syrowitz

Conservation Programs Senior Manager

Jen leads our Forest Field Program work on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and the southern half of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Originally hailing from the Great Plains to the north, she has more than ten years of experience in wildlife conservation, community outreach and advocacy, and non-profit development, most recently through the lens of wildlife management and funding, public lands protection and access, outdoor education programming, and climate change.

CNW STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Alishia Orloff

Colville Forest Coordinator

CNW STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Alishia leads our Forest Field Program work in the Colville National Forest, represents Conservation NW in the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, and works on efforts to connect the Cascades to the Rockies through our Northeast Washington Heritage Campaign for permanent public land protections. Alishia's undergraduate work at the University of Washington focused on storytelling as a basis for environmental literacy, and earned her master's degree at Yale studying agroecological restoration of Hawaiian wetlands. She utilizes community-based approaches with a scientific lens that engages and acknowledges communities most directly impacted. Her work prioritizes the reaffirmation and integration of traditional and local ways of knowing as a lens for holistic understandings of conservation.

③ Colville National Forest

In the Colville National Forest, our work includes technical analysis, collaborative engagement around ecologically based forestry and watershed restoration, wildlife recovery, access and range management, wilderness protection, and organizing and communications for public engagement and advocacy.

Matt Danielson

Okanogan Forest Senior Coordinator

Matt leads our Forest Field Program work in the Okanogan National Forest, including coordinating with the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative, Methow and Entiat ranger districts, and the Tonasket Ranger District of the Colville National Forest. Born and raised in Omak, Washington, Matt continues to work and live there because "it is a microcosm of the American West – the Columbia basin desert meets the North Cascade and Rocky Mountain forests to provide some of the widest ranging habitats on earth!" Prior to joining Conservation NW, Matt worked on wildlife surveys, timber marking, wildfire suppression crews, and carnivore research projects including lynx.

CNW STAFF HIGHLIGHT

② Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

Our Okanogan Forest Field staff work to strengthen wildlife populations and habitats in the forested ecosystems across Chelan and Okanogan counties. Priorities include restoring endangered wildlife such as northern spotted owl, grizzly bear, and fisher; and connecting areas of core habitat for species such as Canada lynx and mule deer; and treating and restoring dry forests to withstand future wildfires.

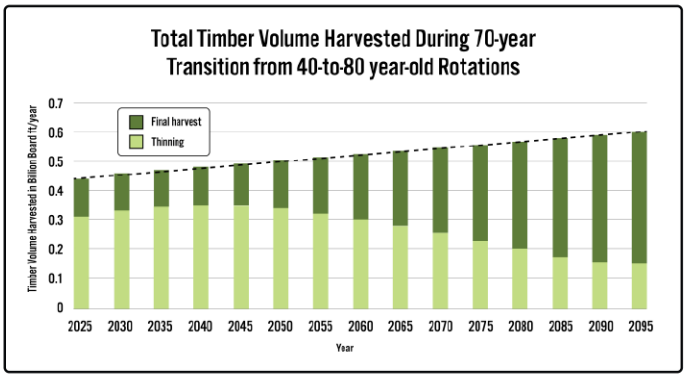
Climate Resilient Forestry

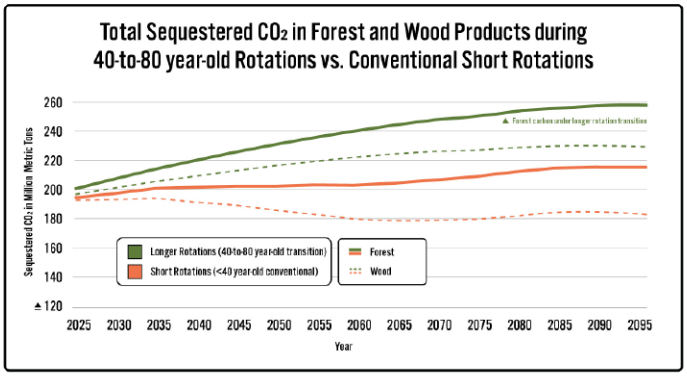
Our results show it is possible to achieve good outcomes for everyone who depends on our forests. This means there is no need to pit climate against the economy or environmentalists against wood product workers.

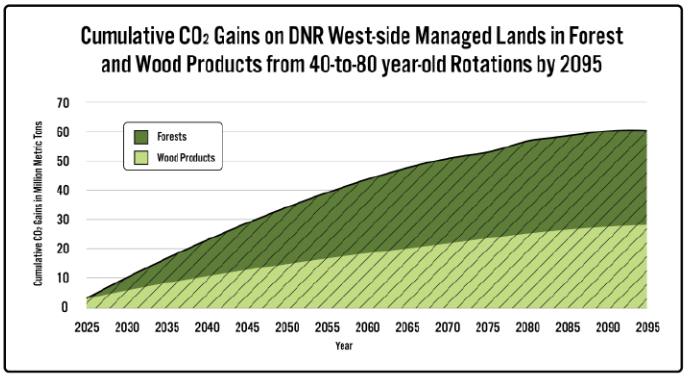
NORTHWEST FORESTS have a crucial role to play in trapping and storing carbon from the atmosphere to help reduce climate change. We've known for a long time that our beautiful old-growth forests store massive amounts of carbon. But new scientific modeling contracted by Conservation Northwest (in partnership with Washington Conservation Action Council), offers the good news that there is a feasible pathway to increase carbon storage on lands under intensive management for timber production.

Conservation Northwest's Senior Policy Director, Paula Swedeen Ph.D., released the results of this modeling, along with preliminary economic analysis. Paula reports that on both state and private lands, by lengthening harvest rotations to 80 years (current practice is to log these stands every 40 years or so), we would obtain all these benefits: increased carbon sequestration, improved fish and wildlife habitat, and a broader range of jobs and marketable forest products. Amazingly, our modeling shows that all this can be done without any decrease in the amount of timber produced!

Now that we know that Washington's managed forests can be so much more productive for both people and nature, we can push state officials and corporate leaders to make better decisions.







Paula Sweeden Ph.D

Senior Policy Director

Paula is Conservation NW's point person at the Washington State Capitol, directs our State Forest Lands and Cascades to Olympics conservation programs, and works on wolf recovery policy. Paula has worked on habitat conservation issues around the Pacific Northwest for nearly 30 years, starting as wildlife biologist and endangered species policy analyst.

CNW STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Fisher

Fisher release in the Olympics. Photo by Paul Bannick. ©

Cascades fisher recovery areas in Washington, release sites, and historic range.

2022 PLACED A CAPSTONE on our successful two-decade campaign to reintroduce Pacific fisher populations to Washington. Between 2008 and 2021, Conservation Northwest and its public and Tribal partners translocated 279 fishers from British Columbia and Alberta to the ecosystems of the Olympics and North and South Cascades Mountains.

We continue to help monitor and research the fisher populations as they recolonize habitat around the state. In 2022, five volunteers with our Community Wildlife Monitoring Program established six fisher monitoring stations throughout the South Cascades.

In early 2022, a report was published with survival data of fisher released between 2008 and 2010. It found that both reproduction and survival rates of post-release fisher match those of established resident populations in other parts of the species' range. Essentially, they are doing great in their new home!

In October 2022, the success of this project was highlighted as the cover story of Science News.

Community Wildlife Monitoring Program

OUR COMMUNITY WILDLIFE MONITORING PROGRAM has engaged volunteers in the monitoring of Washington's rare and sensitive wildlife for over 15 years. Using motion-sensing remote cameras and snow tracking surveys, our volunteers help document wildlife throughout the state, with an emphasis on areas critical for habitat connectivity and species persistence.

As a community science effort, we strive to make our program accessible to everyone who is interested and to have representation across our diverse communities. New this year, we established a BIPOC affinity team and an LGBTQ+ affinity team to create a safe space for marginalized and underrepresented communities in our volunteer pool. For our 2023-2024 winter snow tracking season, we hope to continue to increase demographic diversity of our volunteer pool through recruitment of representative team leaders and continuing to remove barriers and increase access to conservation.

Thanks to all our volunteers who dedicated more than 2000 collective hours. You make this work possible.

CAMERA STATIONS

In 2022, 47 community science volunteers maintained 43 remote camera monitoring stations throughout Washington aimed at supporting statewide monitoring efforts of Canada lynx, fisher, general wildlife along I-90 and I-5 travel corridors, gray wolf, wolverine, and fisher.

In 2023, we are expanding to include Cascade red fox, and have increased our program capacity to 86 community science volunteers that maintain 69 remote camera monitoring stations throughout Washington state.

SNOW TRACKING

Each winter CWMP conducts snow tracking surveys along a 15-mile stretch of I-90, providing data for the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project, a highway improvement project that includes measures for connecting wildlife habitat, such as the construction of wildlife crossings. CWMP engages trained volunteers to walk established transects on the north and south side of I-90 at locations where crossing structures either exist, are being improved upon, or have been targeted for construction.

During our 2022-2023 winter season, 51 community science volunteers completed a total of 38 snow tracking surveys, nearly doubling the number of surveys and wildlife detections of our previous winter.

Tanner Humphries

Wildlife Monitoring Senior Coordinator

Tanner grew up in Washington, which fostered his passion for protecting and conserving this wild and biodiverse area. His master's research focused on the fisher reintroductions in the Cascades. Before joining Conservation Northwest, Tanner conducted wildlife research with a variety of species ranging from butterflies to snow leopards in North Cascades National Park Service Complex, Mount Rainier National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Montana, Mexico, and Kyrgyzstan.

CNW STAFF HIGHLIGHT

A wolverine remote-captured by David Moskowitz. ©

First Foods

In 2022, we formally launched our work on First Foods, a new initiative in our 2022-2027 strategic plan. First Foods refers to plants and animals gathered for food and medicinal uses by native peoples using traditional means. First Foods often coincides with healthy habitats, meaning that protection and stewardship of First Foods can also advance our wildlife conservation objectives. Through this new initiative, Conservation Northwest is exploring how best to support Tribes and Native-led organizations to identify and protect areas rich in First Foods.

Critters we have our eyes on.

Burrowing Owls

In November, Conservation Northwest joined the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife working group on burrowing owls. Our Sagelands Heritage Program team is supporting research to prepare for possible translocation efforts.

Spotted Owls

After Conservation Northwest and allies filed a legal challenge, President Biden published a final rule withdrawing Trump's plan to strip 3.4 million acres of owl habitat protections across the Pacific Northwest.

Cascade Red Fox

We successfully advocated for a state "endangered" status for Cascade red fox due to their small population, substantial range contraction, geographic isolation, ecological specialization, and threats from climate change and invasive non-native red fox.

Wolverines

In 2022, we won our lawsuit contesting a 2020 decision to deny Endangered Species Act protections for wolverine. The Montana District Court ordered the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to issue a new listing determination by the end of this year.

Northern Leopard Frog

Our Sagelands Heritage team started work with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to help preserve northern leopard frog populations around Potholes State Park, including building fencing around a pond, the only known population remaining in Washington.

Bighorn Sheep

Our Sagelands Heritage and Forest Field teams worked with student interns from Oroville to do wildlife monitoring of bighorn sheep, collecting data from camera stations to assist in monitoring the Mt. Hull population's interactions with domestic animals.

Pygmy Rabbits

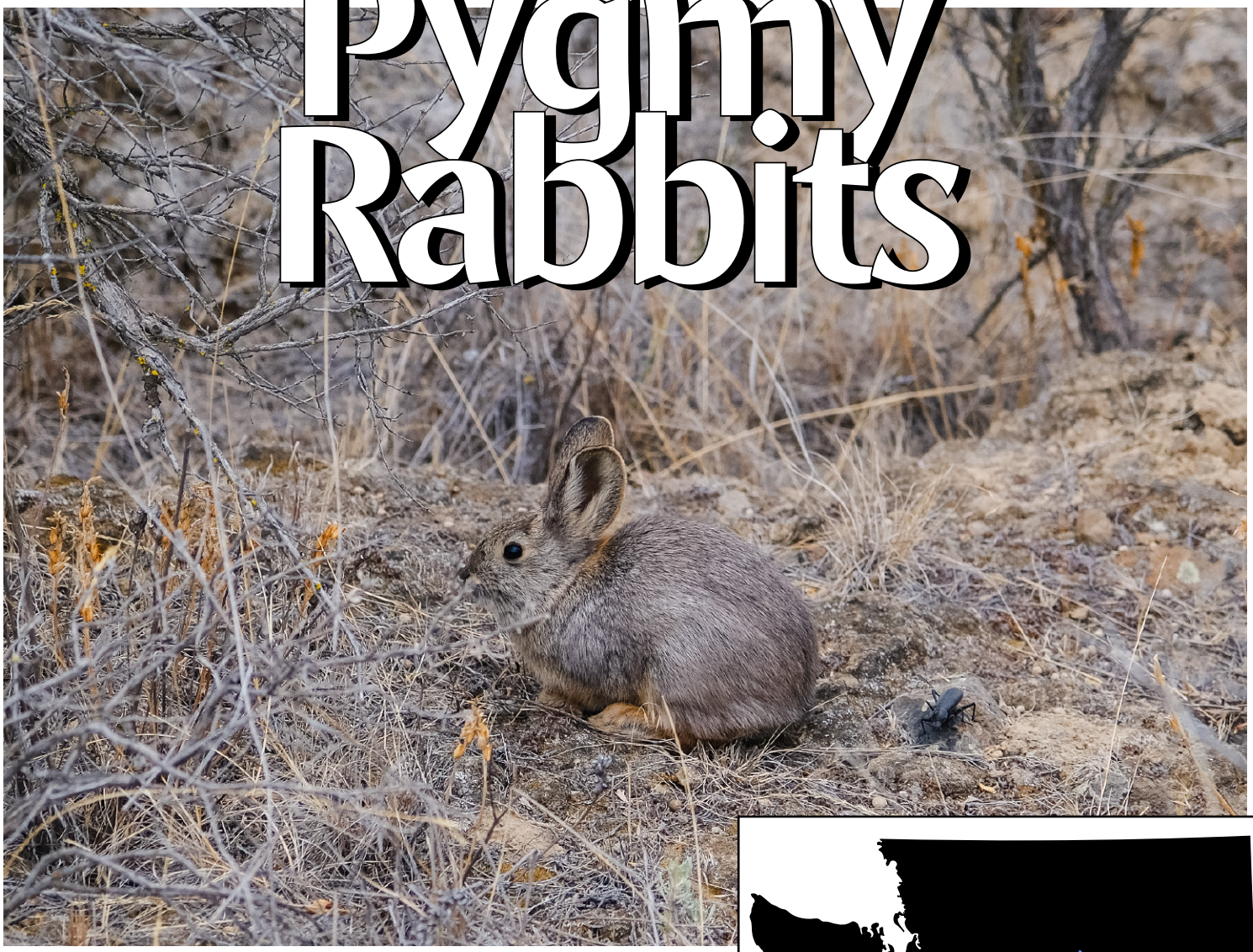


Photo by Conservation Northwest donor and volunteer, Nikita Kozhekin.

Pygmy rabbit core habitat in Washington.

CONSERVATION NORTHWEST STAFF helped the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) build a six-acre pygmy rabbit breeding enclosure. This is the biggest enclosure yet in a new area with exciting opportunities to sustain pygmy rabbit populations into the future.

Our staff and volunteers participated in several capture and releases with WDFW to count and vaccinate pygmy rabbits, with 76 kits released into the wild.

We added six new wildlife cameras on burrows and enclosure fence lines to collect camera data throughout the winter for students to sort, tag, and evaluate pygmy rabbit activity and predator presence for WDFW biologists.

16 VOLUNTEERS
Helped with catch and release days and winter surveys.

145 HOURS
Spent by volunteers to support winter tracking and surveys.

100 PYGMY RABBITS
Estimated population in 2022.

73 ACTIVE BURROWS
Confirmed, twice as many in 2021.

A pygmy rabbit being prepped for vaccination.

WHAT'S A NEXT FOR THE NORTH WEST

Northeast Washington Heritage Conservation

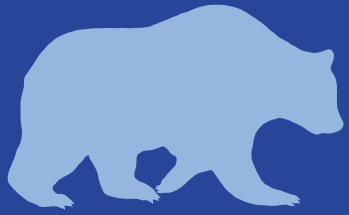
For 20 years we have been working to protect the Kettle Crest. This is the vital heart of the wildlife corridor linking populations of lynx, wolverine, and others between the Cascades and the Canadian Rockies. In 2023, we have ramped up our partnerships with Tribes, including the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, to find a pathway to permanent protection that would meet all our habitat objectives, while also helping to remedy long-standing social justice concerns by better acknowledging the history and presence of Tribes on the landscape.

First Foods CEC Project

In spring 2023, we were awarded a grant from the Canadian Commission for Environmental Cooperation for a First Foods project with the Spokane Tribe and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. This project supports the launch of a collaborative effort to address the impacts of climate change on Tribal territories and members by creating opportunities to steward their traditional lands in culturally and ecologically significant ways while positively impacting community health. We're excited to expand our work to strengthen cultural and climate resilience through Indigenous land stewardship.

Grizzly Bears in the Northwest

After the 2022 announcement by the Biden Administration to restart the grizzly bear restoration process in the North Cascades Ecosystem, we continue our outreach efforts to garner support to bring these bears back home. Along with our coalition partners, we will campaign to get positive public comments sent to the decision makers and continue to educate the public on how to peacefully coexist with grizzlies in their native habitat.



Finance Overview

APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023

Expenses:

$2,556,359
Programs (Protect, Connect, Restore) — 75%

$494,079
Fundraising — 15%

$350,205
Operations — 10%

Total: $3,400,643

Support:

$1,917,148
Individual Donations — 56%

$1,203,888
Grants — 35%

$148,215	Estate Gifts	5%
$111,570	Corporate Donations/Sponsorship	3%
$34,994	Other Revenue	1%

Total: $3,415,815

MORE THAN 56% of our funding last year came from individual donors. This community of 2,500 people supports the core of our work, and has since we started 34 years ago. These gifts help us to continue our long-term programs, like Forest Field and Community Wildlife Monitoring, but also allow us to launch new initiatives in response to critical needs, like Wildlife-Recreation Coexistence. Large or small, these gifts play a direct part in every aspect of Conservation Northwest's impact. Thank you for helping us succeed in protecting, connecting and restoring our wildlife and wildlands.

ROUGHLY 38% of our funding last year came from grants, businesses and workplace giving programs. These partners are essential to our work. Thank you for helping us keep the Northwest wild!

CNW's Laurel Baum & Community Wildlife Monitoring Program volunteer, Christian Holtz.

Special Thanks to these Donors in 2022

Daryl & Michelle Connell
Keith Cowan & Linda Walsh
Robert Girard & Phoebe Cowles
Tom & Sonya Campion
Paul & Peggy Butler

Grants

Anonymous Foundation
James M. Lea Foundation
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Anonymous Foundation
Bullitt Foundation
Harder Foundation
Tortuga Foundation
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Burning Foundation
Peach Foundation
MiiR
National Forest Foundation
Wiancko Charitable Foundation
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