



Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska
Lisa Hupp, USFWS

Life Depends on Protecting Nature

Around the globe, plants and animals are being forced out of their natural habitats by human development and the effects of climate change. To survive, they must migrate and establish themselves in new areas.

But in the U.S., only 14 percent of the land is protected from development in scattered islands of wild nature, such as parks, wilderness areas and wildlife refuges. To give wildlife the chance to adapt and endure, we must conserve, expand and connect wildlands across the nation. And The Wilderness Society is leading the way with a vision for conserving entire landscapes that have extraordinary ecological importance and connecting them to form a national network to sustain people and wild nature.

Landscape conservation is a collaborative effort to build and implement long-term conservation solutions. By combining protected areas that benefit nearby communities and focusing on ecological restoration and sensitive management of working lands, we enable entire ecosystems to sustain themselves indefinitely.

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Explore the Vision for Connected Landscapes map on pages 4-5. It shows more than 70 landscapes identified by our science team that contain roughly 95 percent of species in the U.S. and 95 percent of the ecosystems they require to survive. Within many of these landscapes are the 400 million acres of federal public lands that currently lack protection.



Dear Conservation Champion,

You have a vital role in the campaign to create a national network of protected wildlands that will ensure the health and survival of human communities, vital ecosystems and wildlife.

We must conserve and connect large landscapes of wildlands to form the migration routes that animals and plants need in order to find new habitat as their traditional range is destroyed or altered by human development and climate change.

Thanks to your support, our science team has identified the most important landscapes to protect and connect. Among these are 14 that contain millions of acres of federal public lands that are not protected from fossil fuel and other extractive industries and where The Wilderness Society will focus our efforts in the coming five years. (See the map on pages 4-5.)

Together with you and many partners, we can, we must and we will conserve wild public lands to safeguard the natural world and ourselves.

Thank you for your commitment to conservation and a sustainable future.

Jamie

Jamie Williams
President




Castner Range, Texas
Mark Clune

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The Wilderness Society recognizes Native Americans and Indigenous peoples as the longest serving stewards of the land.

To learn more visit:
wilderness.org/landacknowledgment

Since 1935, The Wilderness Society has led the effort to permanently protect nearly 112 million acres of wilderness in 44 states. We have been at the forefront of nearly every major public lands victory.

Our Mission:
Uniting people to protect America's wild places.



The Wilderness Society meets all standards as set forth by the Better Business Bureau/Wise Giving Alliance.
bbb.org/charity

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Building on our Strengths

No organization is better at bringing people together to protect public lands than The Wilderness Society. Since 1935, we have been at the forefront of efforts to permanently protect nearly 112 million acres of wilderness. With your support, we will double down on our strengths in facilitating community led conservation, scientific analysis of landscapes, and national policy innovation to bring our vision of landscape conservation to life.

Community Led Conservation

At the local and regional levels, we help design equitable, science-based conservation plans that support the entire community and protect wildlife and wildlands. We do this by convening and supporting local organizations and leaders representing the wide array of stakeholders affected by what happens on regional public lands—especially communities of color that have historically been excluded from public lands decision-making. When all the key stakeholders are involved, collaboration leads to enduring conservation solutions.

Reliable Ecological Science

Detailed analyses by Wilderness Society scientists identify the most critical areas to conserve, restore and manage in order to better support biodiversity and ecosystem health. From communities to Congress, leaders rely on the work of our scientists to guide conservation plans and policy.



Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness, Idaho
Joe Whittle

Advancing Transformative National Policy

For 87 years, we have been bringing transformative national conservation solutions to life. Our work led to The Wilderness Act (1964), which established the world's first system of protected wilderness, as well as the Roadless Rule (1991), which prevents logging, mining and drilling in the very wildest parts of our national forests. More recently, we co-led the coalition campaign to secure permanent reauthorization (2020) and full funding (2021) of the nation's largest conservation program: the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a milestone fought for over 60 years! With your help, we are ready to continue building on this foundation of success, ensuring that public lands are part of the connected, sustainable and just future that people and the rest of nature need to survive and thrive.

Have you ever wanted to do even more for public lands?

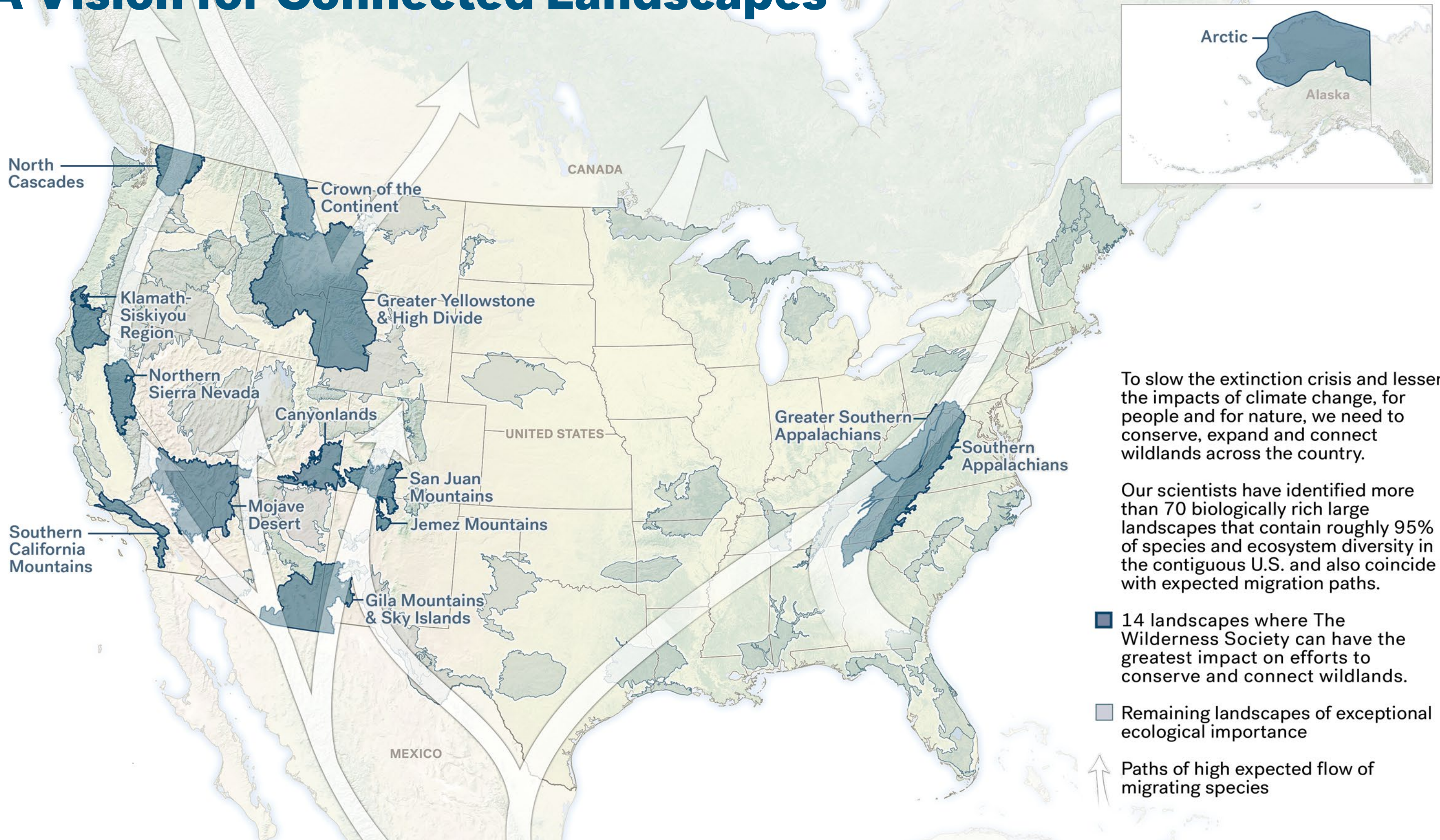
With thoughtful planning, you can expand your impact beyond your lifetime and help preserve our country's wild places for generations to come.

Contact us to learn what you can do today to secure the future of wilderness. A little can make a big difference!

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Olympic National Forest, Washington
Mason Cummings

A Vision for Connected Landscapes



To slow the extinction crisis and lessen the impacts of climate change, for people and for nature, we need to conserve, expand and connect wildlands across the country.

Our scientists have identified more than 70 biologically rich large landscapes that contain roughly 95% of species and ecosystem diversity in the contiguous U.S. and also coincide with expected migration paths.

- 14 landscapes where The Wilderness Society can have the greatest impact on efforts to conserve and connect wildlands.
- Remaining landscapes of exceptional ecological importance
- ↑ Paths of high expected flow of migrating species

Returning Sacred Lands

Wrested away from its original occupants centuries ago and threatened by development for decades, a sacred landmark is once again under the stewardship of the Rappahannock Tribe.

In April, more than 460 acres along the Rappahannock River in Virginia were transferred back to the Tribe at a ceremony presided over by Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. Looking on were representatives of the broad partnership, including The Wilderness Society, which helped the Tribe complete their multi-year effort to reacquire a portion of their ancestral lands.

“Today really does mark a new direction for conservation, here and nationally, one that acknowledges and begins to correct this nation’s tragic history of injustices towards Native Americans.”

— Jamie Williams, President

The land return saves a portion of Fones Cliffs, a four-mile cliff formation that is sacred to the Rappahannock Tribe and serves as a major nesting place for bald eagles.

Conserving Old and Mature Forests

On Earth Day, President Biden took an important step towards addressing the climate and biodiversity crises by announcing an Executive Order to conserve old and mature forests on federal public lands. The order instructs the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to assess existing mature and old growth forests nationwide, identify threats and develop a policy that protects these forests for their role in carbon sequestration and climate resilience.



Fones Cliffs, Virginia
Ian Plant

The Wilderness Society has long been advocating for these measures, which bring us closer to ensuring that national forests are managed in ways that help fight the climate crisis and provide habitat for wildlife.

We’re working with many partners to urge the administration to engage with Tribes and the broader public to quickly develop a durable policy that will protect these forests for the benefit of healthy communities and a healthy planet.

Forest conservation is one pillar of a comprehensive climate plan for public lands—one that must also include expanding responsibly sited renewable energy and rapidly phasing out oil and gas development on public lands, done in a way that involves and supports communities currently dependent on the fossil fuel industry.

Protecting Nature Through Science

The Wilderness Society has always based our conservation campaigns and policy proposals on sound science. The data we collect and share—in vivid maps, expert testimony and published research—shows how conservation is key to meeting the needs of people and nature on a changing planet.

Part of our science team since 2009, Bozeman, Montana-based ecologist Dr. Travis Belote spends his days doing just that. As Director of Research, Travis analyzes landscapes, gathering knowledge to map the location, health and biological diversity of wildlands that will guide conservation strategies going forward. “The simple way to put it,” says Travis, “is that our job is to better understand nature so that we can be better stewards of it.”

And stewardship is the guiding principle of Travis’s conservation ethic. While his science-based view of the world stems from his chemist father, Travis will tell you that his values were equally shaped by an undercurrent of love and respect, which he attributes to his mother and her family’s strong connection to the land in East Tennessee. “Walking through the woods with my great-grandfather as a kid, I was inspired to follow in his footsteps by paying closer attention to the mysteries of nature,” says Travis.



Before earning a Ph.D. in ecology, early stints with the National Park Service in the Great Smoky Mountains, Denali and Grand Teton enabled Travis to experience big landscapes and gain an introduction to the inspiring conservation legacies of icons like Mardy Murie and Harvey Broome. “To later accept a dream job at the very organization these figures helped shape made me feel incredibly lucky,” says Travis.

For Travis, every pixel he studies on a map is personal. “Those are places that you can see and smell, and they have different bird songs and trees,” he says. They are also very fragile. “Because we are facing a changing climate, we need to acknowledge the responsibility we have to future generations. Do we want them to experience all the mystery and beauty that we have?” For this science-loving dad of two boys, the answer is a booming “YES!”



To hear more from Travis about creating connections and to see for yourself how a network of lands can protect nature, visit wilderness.org/connected.



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Red Cliffs National Conservation Area, Utah
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