



THE  
WILDERNESS  
SOCIETY

# FOR OUR WILD

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY'S 2016 ANNUAL REPORT





Cover and inside cover: Bears Ears National Monument, Utah (see more on page 8).







**2016 WAS A WATERSHED YEAR FOR THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY** and for the conservation movement.

From protecting irreplaceable landscapes to promoting smart renewable energy development, to increasing opportunities for all Americans to experience and enjoy our public lands, we achieved some of our most meaningful and significant victories to date.

Over the past eight years, 29 new national monuments were created—and 2016 alone gave us three of the largest and most meaningful land protection stories in the history of the United States, with new national monuments protecting the Bears Ears region of Utah, the Katahdin Woods and Waters in Maine and 1.8 million acres in the California desert. Any one of these victories would be cause for celebration; securing all three in the same year makes 2016 one of the most successful in our history.

In addition to these landmark new monuments, we made public lands part of the climate solution by finalizing rules and regulations to reduce emissions from public lands, and by enacting plans that encourage clean energy development in the right places. Today, we are working vigorously to defend these and other energy reforms.

Finally, we helped people access their public lands more than ever before with new recreation initiatives, new policies that expand access to the outdoors, as well as the great success of the federal Every Kid in a Park program, which provides free park access for every fourth-grader in America. 2016 saw the launch of our national “Our Wild” campaign to mobilize the broad and vocal support our public lands need for the fight ahead.

In 2017, we now face empowered anti-conservationists in Congress and a new presidential administration, vowing to reverse the progress we worked hard to make possible. Our work on behalf of the nation’s lands and waters has never been more important. We’re ready to dig deep in the years ahead, working with the new administration wherever possible but also fully prepared to defend against threats as they are presented.

The Wilderness Society has provided leadership at defining moments in our nation’s conservation history. Throughout the 1950s we led the effort to enact what became the Wilderness Act in 1964. In the 1980s, we successfully fought a federal effort to privatize our public lands. In the 1990s, we protected the remaining old-growth forests and roadless areas. In the early 2000s, our advocacy put an end to repeated attempts to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. Every step of the way, The Wilderness Society has been on the front lines: framing the debate to find common ground on high-profile issues, mobilizing grassroots support and collaborating with others to build the strong defense necessary to win.

Building a movement to protect our public lands is a long-term endeavor. It’s even more important in the times when our values are most challenged. Our public lands need our help to survive. They belong to all of us—and it will take every one of us stepping up and doing more than ever before to protect them.

We can’t thank you, our supporters, enough for being part of this movement.



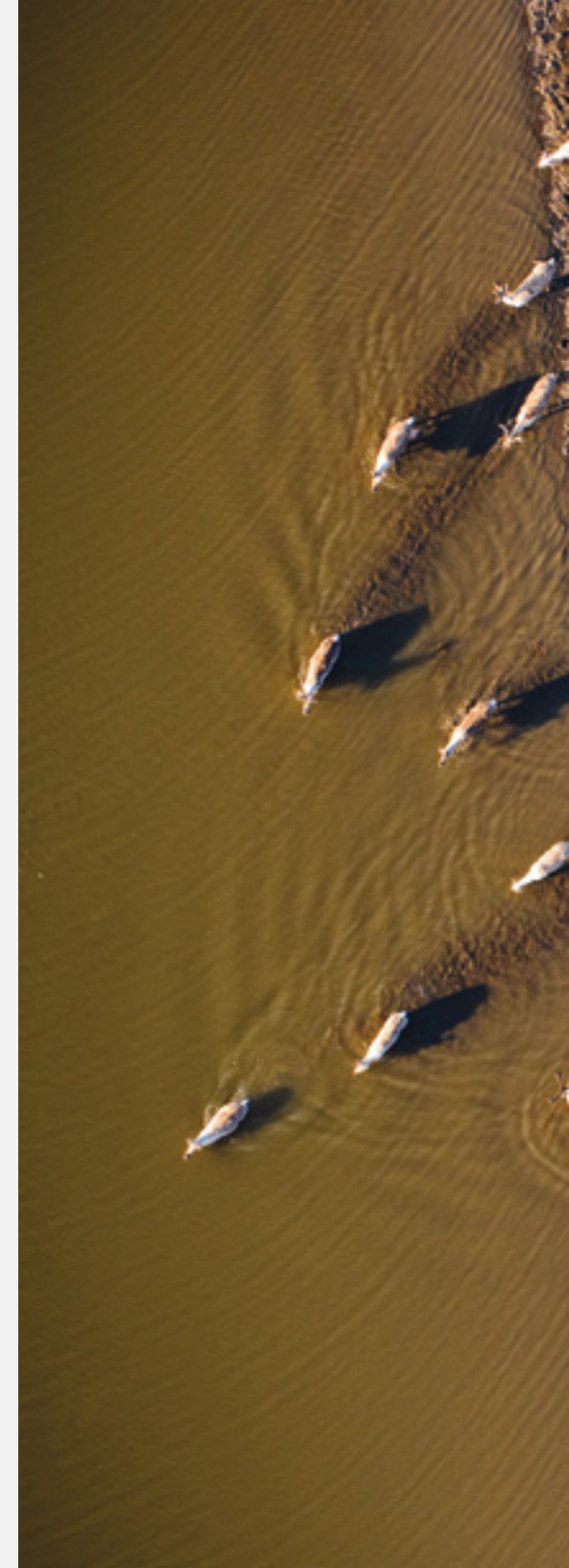
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Williams".

JAMIE WILLIAMS  
PRESIDENT



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Churchill".

DAVID CHURCHILL  
CHAIR, GOVERNING COUNCIL







**BY THE  
NUMBERS**

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Established  
in 1935

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1 million wilderness  
supporters

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109 million acres of  
wilderness protected

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# FOR LANDS AND WATERS



15 new national  
monuments



More than 290,000,000 acres  
of land and water protected  
as national monuments



Launched #OurWild  
campaign





"2016 will go down as one of the most significant years in conservation history. The Obama administration responded to the call from communities across the country to protect some of our most cherished and sacred lands."

—Melyssa Watson, Vice President for Conservation

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, Maine





# FOR THE PLACES THAT SUSTAIN LIFE

If we want our planet to thrive in a changing climate, we must fight to protect the places that are critical to ecosystem health, preserving essential habitats for plants and animals, and connecting wildlands that allow animals to migrate and adapt to a warming planet. In 2016, your support made some of our greatest achievements to date possible, with vast new national monuments declared throughout the nation.

California Coastal National Monument





## Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument: Resilience in Maine's North Woods

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For years, Maine's north woods represented some of the largest undeveloped—yet unprotected—wildlands in the eastern United States. That changed in August 2016, when President Obama responded to overwhelming local support for their protection and designated the **Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument** east of Baxter State Park in north-central Maine. With our support, a wide range of on-the-ground advocates challenged initial resistance to creating this monument from a vocal minority—and now, this protected land is helping to bolster the area's tourism economy, support outdoor recreation and preserve an interconnected ecosystem for wildlife in the face of a changing climate.

- > 87,500 acres protected
- > New public land donated by Burt's Bees cofounder Roxanne Quimby
- > Connects habitat for moose, black bear, Atlantic salmon and other wildlife

## Three New Monuments to Safeguard California's Desert

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In February, President Obama designated **three new national monuments** across 1.8 million acres of California desert between Las Vegas and Los Angeles: **Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow** and **Castle Mountains**. The designations honored years of work from our supporters, elected officials, business owners, faith organizations, veterans groups and others. By connecting previously protected areas, the new monuments preserve critical wildlife habitat and conserve a significant portion of the California desert—safeguarding its stark beauty in perpetuity.

- > Connects one of the world's largest protected desert ecosystems
- > Habitat for bighorn sheep, golden eagles and desert tortoises
- > Fossil beds, Native American cultural sites, military history sites and recreation

## Expanding the California Coastal National Monument

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As his second term came to a close, President Obama **added 6,200 acres to the California Coastal National Monument** by including six new sites in the monument. Since it was first created in 2000, this monument has primarily protected offshore rocks and islands. The expansion now brings protection to some of the coast's most treasured sites onshore—like the Piedras Blancas elephant seal rookery, a crucial habitat for one of the most unique marine mammals in existence. And in the case of the Cotoni-Coast Dairies site near Santa Cruz, the monument designation opens public access for the first time to this landscape's rolling hills and meadows, live oak and Redwood groves and incredible views of the Pacific Ocean.

- > 6,000 acres added to the monument
- > Crucial habitat for the northern elephant seal

"[The Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument proposal] was inspired by the leadership President Woodrow Wilson had to create Acadia [National Park]. It was a huge inspiration to me and my family ... These are America's crown jewels."

—Lucas St. Clair, President of Elliotsville Plantation and son of Roxanne Quimby, whose donation of private land made the monument possible





# FOR OUR HISTORY AND OUR HUMANITY

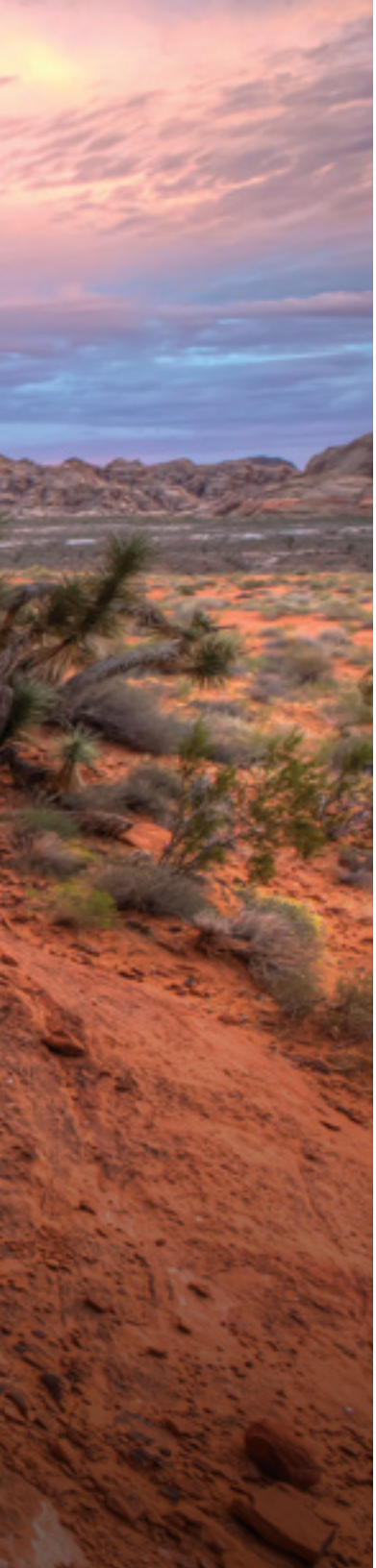
Our public lands are a living museum. They contain stories extending back millions of years and up to the present day. They're the places we visit to reflect, connect us with others, and renew our bond with the cultures that have shaped us.

In protecting our public lands, we protect our history, our identities and our most treasured cultural experiences; we protect our humanity.

Your support allows us to partner with local communities to permanently protect lands that are not only environmentally critical, but also provide critical links to our rich history and culture. In 2016, that approach led to major new national monuments that will protect our environment and our cultural heritage for years to come.

Gold Butte National Monument, Nev.





## Bears Ears National Monument: A Historic Triumph

The **Bears Ears** region in southeastern Utah is one of our country's richest archaeological landscapes—yet it has been repeatedly targeted by vandals and grave robbers, and threatened by oil and gas developers seeking new leases in the area. In July 2015, leaders from five Native American tribes with deep ties to the region founded the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition to advocate for a new kind of national monument on this precious land: one collaboratively managed by the tribes and the federal government. The Wilderness Society was proud to work alongside the first tribal-led coalition in American history to successfully create a national monument, which President Obama designated in December.

- > 1.35 million acres across southeastern Utah
- > More than 100,000 Native American archaeological and cultural sites, from ancient ruins to 1,500-year-old petroglyphs
- > 25 Native American tribes supported the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

## Gold Butte National Monument: A Living Link to Our Past

Located between the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the **Gold Butte** area—Nevada's piece of the Grand Canyon—contains fossils dating back 180 million years, thousands of centuries-old Native American petroglyphs and artifacts from westward expansion. But because the area was not permanently protected, irresponsible off-road vehicle use and vandalism compromised the land, ecology, and sacred sites and artifacts. After years of legislative attempts to protect Gold Butte fell short, The Wilderness Society worked closely with the surrounding community to rally broad support—and in December, President Obama designated the Gold Butte National Monument, permanently protecting this cultural treasure for generations to come.

- > 300,000 acres in southern Nevada
- > A recreational gem for hikers, hunters, birders and campers
- > Sacred land to the Southern Paiute Tribes
- > 71% of Nevadans supported designating Gold Butte as a national monument



**Crandall Bowles**

*"The Wilderness Society's important role in the recent national monument victories is particularly impressive as an illustration of what we can accomplish. I believe we are the only conservation organization that could have achieved the same wins, thanks to our focus, expertise and credibility with the government agencies and local interest groups involved. But now is the time to think about how we can defend these gains and ensure our future success as well. Getting more people outdoors—from city parks to national parks to wilderness areas—is the best place to start and probably the most important thing for our future."*

As a young woman, Crandall Bowles treasured her family's annual trips to Mt. LeConte in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It's a tradition she continues today with her 91-year-old mother, extended family and nine grandchildren. When she's not hiking in the Southern Appalachians, she serves on numerous corporate and non-profit boards and is a passionate supporter of the Anne Springs Close Greenway—a 2,300-acre nature preserve in Fort Mill, S.C., established by her family and dedicated to the public. Crandall has been a member of The Wilderness Society's Governing Council since 2010.



# FOR THE VOICES THAT MAKE A MOVEMENT

For decades, The Wilderness Society has worked to build common ground with communities across the nation, helping people everywhere advocate for the lands and waters we share—whether that means securing new protections or defending our most treasured places from adversarial industries and administrations. Because we know that together, individual voices have the power to create lasting change.

In just the past five years, our collective advocacy engaged culturally and ideologically diverse groups of people, spurred action and helped push the Obama administration to protect millions of acres through 34 new or expanded national monuments—more than under any administration in history.

That's progress we could only achieve together—and we're not going back. As we now confront a Congress pushing an anti-conservation and pro-drilling agenda, we're ready to act. With our supporters—donors, advocates and volunteers—The Wilderness Society is increasing our efforts to mobilize and empower people to stand up for the lands and waters we share, and to amplify their voices for the even bigger fights ahead.

## #OurWild

As Americans, we own 640 million acres of wildlands—but they are at risk. Though millions of Americans from all backgrounds support public lands, a radical movement in Congress is ignoring that longstanding national consensus and working stealthily to turn over the lands and waters that belong to all of us to states and private interests—where development, leasing and drilling awaits. This movement will likely gain momentum in the 115th Congress and under the Trump administration. That's why we launched #OurWild in 2016: a broad-based communications and advocacy effort to share the stories of individual Americans and their connections to our wild public lands. Their personal stories are encouraging bold, concrete action to fight for the lands and waters that belong to us all.



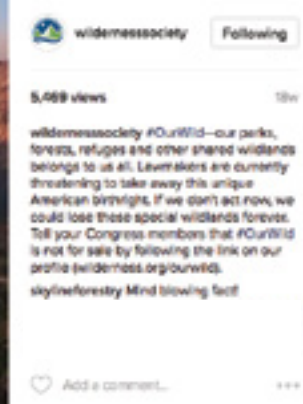




Creating Awareness  
**98 million social media impressions on #OurWild content**



Educating  
**3.4 million views of #OurWild video series**



Building Supporters  
**2.7 million social media engagements on #OurWild content**

Taking Action  
**83,000 actions taken including donations, petition signatures and emails/tweets to members of Congress**







# FOR OUR HEALTH AND PEACE OF MIND

## GAVIN WOODY'S STORY

Gavin Woody, a former U.S. Army infantry captain, Airborne Ranger and decorated combat veteran, served in Iraq during the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Service to others sometimes comes at the expense of the self, and Gavin's experience was no exception: He lost friends and fellow Rangers, he lost time with his family, and he witnessed destruction and ugliness that followed him home as memories.

In the middle of the chaos of war, memories of time spent outside offered Gavin refuge—stretching all the way back to his experiences as an Eagle Scout. When he settled in Seattle, the forests and mountains just outside the city once again became his refuge, helping him find peace by challenging his body and quieting his mind.

In addition to summiting the volcanoes near Seattle 17 times, completing several Ironman triathlons and skiing down Mount Rainier from its 14,410-foot summit, Gavin ran the 223-mile John Muir trail in four days. These feats are physically grueling, but for Gavin, there's beauty and peace to be found in the simple act of placing one foot in front of the other.

*"When I'm getting ready for a solo multiday trek, people ask me, 'What do you think about when you're out there?' And the answer is that I think about running—because I have to. It keeps me grounded in the beauty that's around me. During those times, I feel like I couldn't be farther from the chaos I left behind in Iraq."*

Millions of veterans return home and struggle with the transition, coping with physical, mental and emotional wounds. But for so many like Gavin, our wild places provide a refuge to heal body and mind. That's why The Wilderness Society advocates for—and with—thousands of veterans and veterans' groups in local communities and the halls of Congress.

*"I've come to realize that the wild asks only two things of us: our full attention and our constant respect. In return, it offers healing, adventure and a new perspective on our lives. How could any of this be possible without our public lands?"*





“When you come home from war, your body may be back, but your mind is often still on the battlefield. The aftershock of bombs, the constant barrage of bullets: you hear those sounds—and often feel them—again and again. The toll this chaos takes on your mind is sometimes the hardest thing to move past.”



TO SEE GAVIN'S **#OURWILD** VIDEO OR  
TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION  
VISIT **WILDERNESS.ORG/OURWILD**





# FOR ENERGY AND CLIMATE



New rule to cut methane emissions on public lands by 40%



Five-year moratorium on oil leasing in the Arctic Ocean



All oil and gas leases on 130,000 acres of sacred tribal land canceled



Desert Renewable Energy Plan protects four million acres and helps California move to 50% renewable energy target





“Nearly a decade of work with the outgoing administration culminated in 2016. From protecting places too special to drill, to reducing our carbon footprint and promoting renewables, to engaging native communities in development decisions, we took major strides forward this year—and we’re prepared to keep fighting for a vision that Americans agree with and that our planet needs.”

—Chase Huntley, director,  
Energy and Climate Program





# FOR THE PLANET WE SHARE

For decades, public lands have been one of our primary sources for the coal, oil and natural gas that power our nation—but not without consequences.

Right now, one-fifth of our nation's carbon emissions originate on public lands, and outdated federal policies, created years ago in response to different needs, continue to prioritize access to fossil fuels over their effect on ecosystems, people's lives and the climate.

As we confront a political agenda that favors the fossil fuel industry over wildland protection and clean energy investments, we must continue to act boldly and ensure that the lands belonging to all of us work in the best interest of our health and the planet we share. You make it possible. With The Wilderness Society's deep knowledge of federal policy—and your support for our ongoing local, political and legal advocacy—this year we can defend the progress we made in 2016.





## A Dramatic Drop in Methane Waste

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Reducing preventable releases of methane—the primary component of natural gas and a greenhouse gas more damaging than carbon dioxide—has been a critical strategy in our push to reform energy development on public lands. We spent years building support on the ground by drawing out the issue’s human impact—and in doing so, mobilized communities living close to oil and gas development sites. In November, the Bureau of Land Management finalized a rule that will put our nation on a path to cut methane emissions on public lands 40 percent by 2025. We’re now preparing to defend the rule and ensure its implementation through our partnerships with supportive businesses, community and press advocacy, and when necessary, legal action.

- > In the short term, the greenhouse effect that methane creates is 86 times more powerful than carbon dioxide’s effect
- > Rule will help cut methane emissions on public lands by 40% by 2025

“We want our voices to be heard ... Some of us may have been nervous about our English or participating in a meeting like this for the first time, but we saw this as a moral obligation and important to protecting our public lands for future generations to enjoy.”

—Linda Sosa, educator at St. Cajetan Catholic Church in Denver and advocate for BLM proposal to curb methane waste

## Defining a Path for Progress

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Oil, gas and coal extracted from public lands presents a blind spot in our national effort to address climate change. We first highlighted this blind spot in 2015, which led directly to Interior Department scientists beginning work to estimate emissions. In 2016, we took the next step, advocating for a national energy plan to address this problem by creating a system for tracking and ultimately *reducing* carbon emissions on public lands. If the Trump administration won’t continue this crucial work, we’ll do it for them: building our own carbon tracking system to shine a light on this important issue, monitor progress toward international commitments, force transparency and accountability, and provide the public with the information it needs to raise its collective voice.





# FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Public lands must be part of our solution to climate change. Less than one percent of our nation's electricity comes from renewables on public lands today—but public lands offer some of the best opportunities to shift energy development from fossil fuels to wind, solar and geothermal.

We have to scale up clean energy on public lands—and we have to be smart from the start, following a new model we helped pioneer that guides energy development to appropriate areas and protects wildlands that are sacred to people, essential to ecosystems and critical to the future of our planet.

Alongside supporters across the country, The Wilderness Society is leading the way.

Sonoran-Colorado Desert, Calif.





## A Framework for the Future

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In November, the federal Bureau of Land Management finalized a rule five years in the making—and that will resonate decades into the future. For the first time, our nation has a standard approach to wind and solar leasing on public lands—one that will provide certainty and accelerate permitting of renewable energy projects, protect sensitive natural resources, and provide transparency and a fair market return for the public. The Wilderness Society played a key role in advocating for this rule, which both Republicans and Democrats embraced, and we're ready to work with all stakeholders to turn this new beginning into an energy revolution.

## An Elegant Energy Solution

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Nine years ago, The Wilderness Society helped create an elegant solution to a difficult question: what course of action do you take when the best areas for solar and wind-energy development lie within the same landscape as some of our most fragile, vital ecosystems? The answer came in the form of an unprecedented collaboration between the state of California and the Department of the Interior: the **Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**.

The plan guides renewable energy development—enough to help meet California's ambitious renewable energy targets—to public lands in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts that are best positioned to support rapid but responsible development: places next to roads, near existing transmission lines or where there is already degradation. But the plan also secures four million acres to be protected and managed for conservation, endangered species and habitat connectivity.

Last year marked a major milestone: the completion of the first of the DRECP's two phases, designating more than 600 square miles for rapid wind, solar and geothermal energy development while protecting four million acres of important desert ecosystems.

- > 23 million acres covered by plan—10 million managed by the Bureau of Land Management
- > Four million acres protected and managed for conservation
- > Helps meet California's 50% renewable energy target
- > A model for the future of energy development: favorable to conservation and renewable energy developers



# FOR PLACES TOO WILD TO DRILL

Today, we face a new administration that has promised to open our public lands to unchecked oil and gas development. This is a fight we've won before, from the Arctic to the Rockies—and it's one we're ready to take on again, before new development does irreparable damage to our lands, to our waters and to the communities that depend on them.

Working with local communities and native nations, through both political and legal venues, The Wilderness Society continues to protect those places that are too wild and too sacred to drill. And in 2016, thanks to you and supporters all across the country, we celebrated landmark victories.

Ringed seals resting in the  
Chukchi Sea, Alaskan Arctic



## Badger-Two Medicine: A Victory 35 Years in the Making

Nestled between Glacier National Park, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, the rugged, roadless expanse where Badger Creek and the Two Medicine River meet is both sacred Blackfeet land and a critical ecological corridor. But starting in the early 1980s, oil and gas leases were granted on this public land without tribal consultation. Since then, we've fought for Badger-Two Medicine on the ground, partnering with Blackfeet leaders and facilitating meetings between the tribe and key officials in the federal government. This tireless advocacy paid off: in early 2017, the Obama administration canceled all remaining leases on Badger-Two Medicine, protecting 130,000 acres for the people who cherish this land and the plants and animals that depend on it for their survival.

## A Breakthrough in the Arctic

Last March, the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management proposed offshore oil leases in Alaska's Arctic Ocean, despite the urgency of climate change and the effect oil drilling could have on this rich but fragile ecosystem. Along with our supporters, we pushed back and helped bring about an extraordinary change. The Obama administration removed the Arctic Ocean from its five-year leasing plan in November and permanently withdrew 90 percent of the area from oil and gas development in December, invoking the president's authority under the 1953 Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. Now, for the first time, the extraordinary Arctic Ocean ecosystem on whose behalf we've fought for decades is off-limits to leasing—and the most sensitive areas protected for the future.

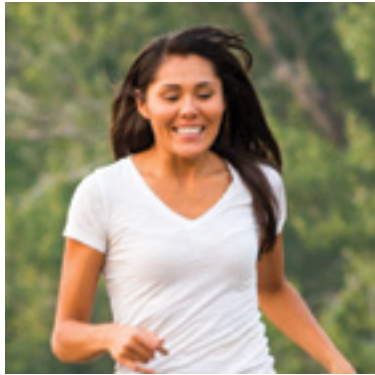


**Michael Scott** of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

*"If you consider that a quarter of this country's carbon emissions are attributable to fossil energy resources that are extracted from federal lands and waters, then it makes good sense to look at public lands as a key part of the climate solution. The Wilderness Society recognizes this important nexus and has established a very thoughtful and innovative approach to helping land managers prioritize energy development on public lands that is respectful of the ecological and economic values we hold dear: clean water, clean air, healthy wildlife, places where people can hunt, fish, and recreate, and clean energy. Ultimately, the organization's commitment to this work will help ensure that the network of public lands is protected and that the connection between the American public and their public lands is enhanced."*

As the immediate past program director of environment at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (term ending March 2017), Michael Scott was responsible for helping organizations like The Wilderness Society secure generous grants to support organizational effectiveness and to address climate change, expand clean energy and conserve the North American West. Previously, Michael was the executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and he was a member of The Wilderness Society's staff from 1981 to 1996.





# FOR MY CULTURE, MY COMMUNITY AND MY CHILDREN

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## KENDALL EDMO'S STORY

After years spent far from the Montana mountains of her childhood, Kendall Edmo returned home to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Browning, Mont., like she always knew she would. Working as a tribal liaison with Blackfeet leadership and alongside conservation partners including The Wilderness Society, Earthjustice and the National Parks Conservation Association, Kendall joined a decades-long fight: to end oil and gas leases granted without tribal consultation on 130,000 acres of land where the Badger Creek and the Two Medicine River meet.

"I wanted to make sure my friends and family knew about the issue," Kendall said. "I thought the impact I could make on the people I knew best could have a ripple effect throughout the reservation." And as she worked to protect the environment and her sovereign land, Kendall also found deeper meaning—and a connection that transcends the issue.

*"What I didn't expect was that taking on the Badger-Two Medicine fight would also connect me more deeply to my traditional culture. This was never just about conservation. It's about relationships and the people who have been fighting for decades to protect this landscape for future generations."*

When, after more than 35 years of protest and organizing, the Department of the Interior finally canceled all leases in the Badger-Two Medicine area, a shocked and overjoyed Kendall celebrated with her community. "I didn't want to believe it until I heard it directly from Secretary Jewell herself," she said. Kendall is hopeful about the precedent this victory sets—but knows it ultimately depends on the efforts of her generation.

*"The next generation of Blackfeet needs to continue this work—and it's less likely to happen if they don't feel connected to our culture and heritage," she said. "I want my children to exercise their treaty rights. I want them to go horseback riding and learn about traditional medicine. There's so much this land can teach us, and I want it to be a part of my kids' lives."*



“Every time I was away from the reservation—in New Mexico with my father, in Hawai’i, away at college in Missoula—I was incredibly homesick: for the sight of the mountains, for the land I call home, for the people I grew up with. I always knew I would come back—because I wanted to be with my community and help make it a better place for my children.”





# FOR PEOPLE OUTDOORS



500,000 fourth-graders visited national parks with their families through the Every Kid in a Park program

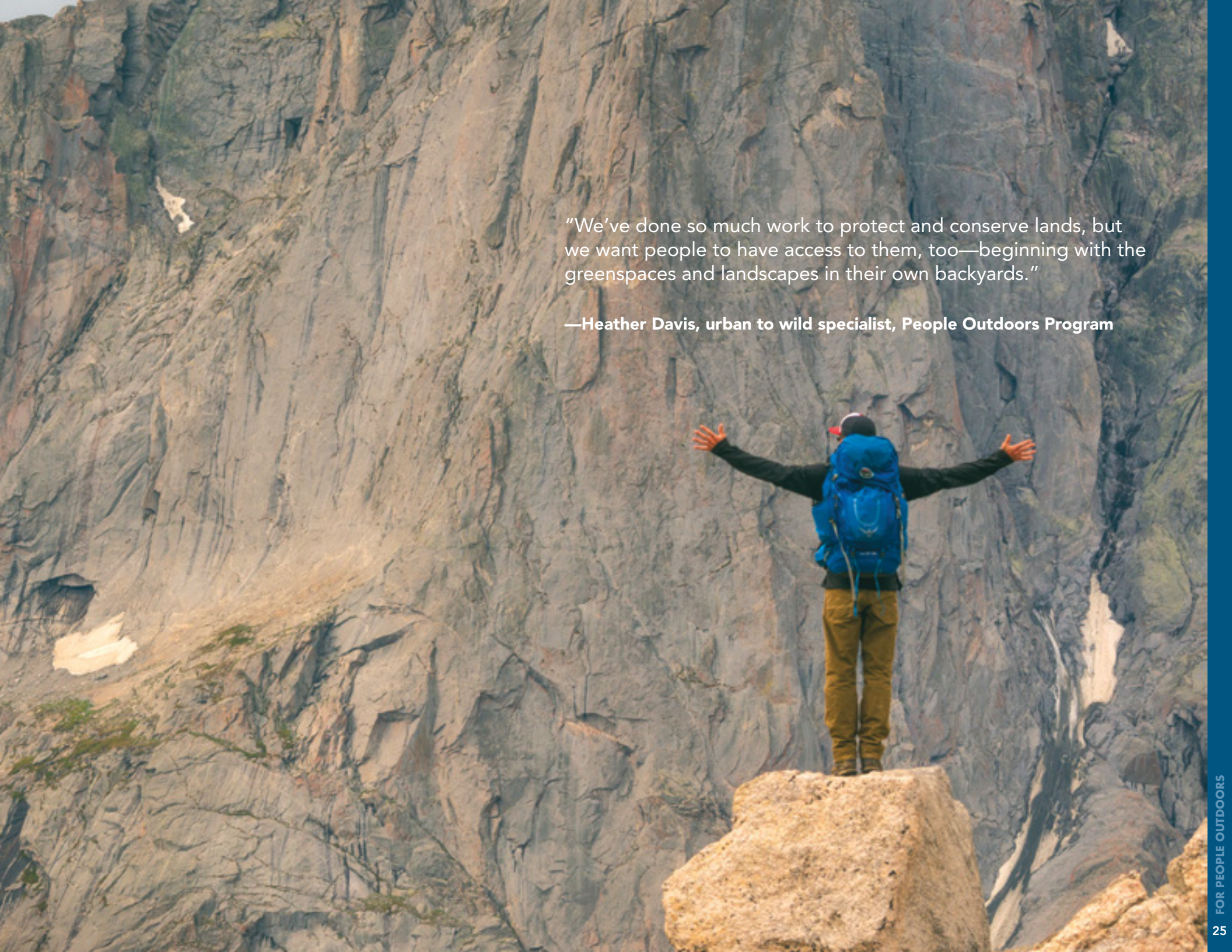


New permit guidelines opened national forests to more outdoor enthusiasts



New transit funding connects Los Angelenos to the San Gabriel Mountains



A hiker wearing a blue backpack and a black jacket stands on a large, light-colored rock outcrop. The hiker's arms are outstretched to the sides. The background is a massive, layered rock wall with some snow patches. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

“We’ve done so much work to protect and conserve lands, but we want people to have access to them, too—beginning with the greenspaces and landscapes in their own backyards.”

—Heather Davis, urban to wild specialist, People Outdoors Program





# FOR WILD PLACES EVERYWHERE

Four out of every five Americans live in urban areas today—and the urbanization of our nation is only expected to accelerate in the years ahead. For too many people—millions of Americans who live in cities—the wild places that are essential to our health and well-being can feel too far away.

Every American deserves the opportunity to get out and experience the natural world. But connecting our cities to our open spaces requires addressing a variety of challenges, from lack of transportation to cultural barriers. At The Wilderness Society, we're leading a new movement to give people in urban areas full access to our wild places. In 2016, we took a major step forward in that effort.

The Wilderness Society Civic Engagement Specialist, Duyen Tran (middle), hiking with San Gabriel Mountains Forever Leadership Academy participants in the San Gabriel Mountains, Calif.





## A Mountain Retreat in Los Angeles' Backyard

The Wilderness Society and our supporters played a critical role in advocating for the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument that was designated in 2014—and this year, we were central to ensuring that the monument would be accessible to everyone throughout greater Los Angeles. We worked with the Forest Service on an inclusive, comprehensive planning process that actively engaged the diverse communities of Los Angeles, included meetings in English, Spanish and Mandarin, and will result in a management plan to make the San Gabriel Mountains open, accessible and welcoming to everyone.

## Transit to Trails

In recent years, we've increased our efforts to secure wild places near urban areas, but—knowing transportation is too often a barrier—we must also ensure that everyone can get from the urban to the wild. In Los Angeles, we led a focused “transit to trails” effort within a broader infrastructure initiative, making sure that the proposal linked public transit and bus systems to the San Gabriel Mountains. In November, the ballot initiative we helped influence and endorse, Measure M, passed with nearly 70 percent of the vote, unlocking funding for critical transit routes.

## From a City to a Nation

Our “urban to wild” effort in Los Angeles has made a real difference—and now we're ready to grow the program beyond this city. With your support, we're working to expand the program and connect more of our cities to the open spaces in our backyards while laying the groundwork for a national policy platform that benefits cities everywhere.



**Judy and Brad O'Brien**

*“As administrations come and go and the future of our public estate is debated, it's incredibly important that there be someone at the table who is well-financed, well-staffed, and whose mission is conservation rather than exploitation. We're fortunate that The Wilderness Society occupies that seat on our behalf. With a logical, almost business-like approach, they are engaging local communities, making connections, finding compromise, and offering solutions that are environmentally appropriate to very difficult political and economic issues. It's not easy to bend the curve and make change happen, but The Wilderness Society is always there, laying the groundwork and leading the conservation movement toward real success.”*

Introduced to The Wilderness Society as recently as 2011, lawyers Judy and Brad O'Brien of Menlo Park, Calif., are anything but new to conservation. The daughter of environmental activists and hikers, Judy is a regular backpacker and has a deep love for the mountains, especially the High Sierra of Yosemite. Preferring the coast and the freedom his motorcycle provides, Brad fondly recalls annual summer trips to the national parks in his parents' station wagon. Members of The Wilderness Society's President's Circle, Judy and Brad were among the first to unlock the Robert W. Wilson Challenge Grant, which confers matching funds to leverage significant gifts to the organization. As new grandparents, they see greater urgency to protect the wild places that have given them so much.

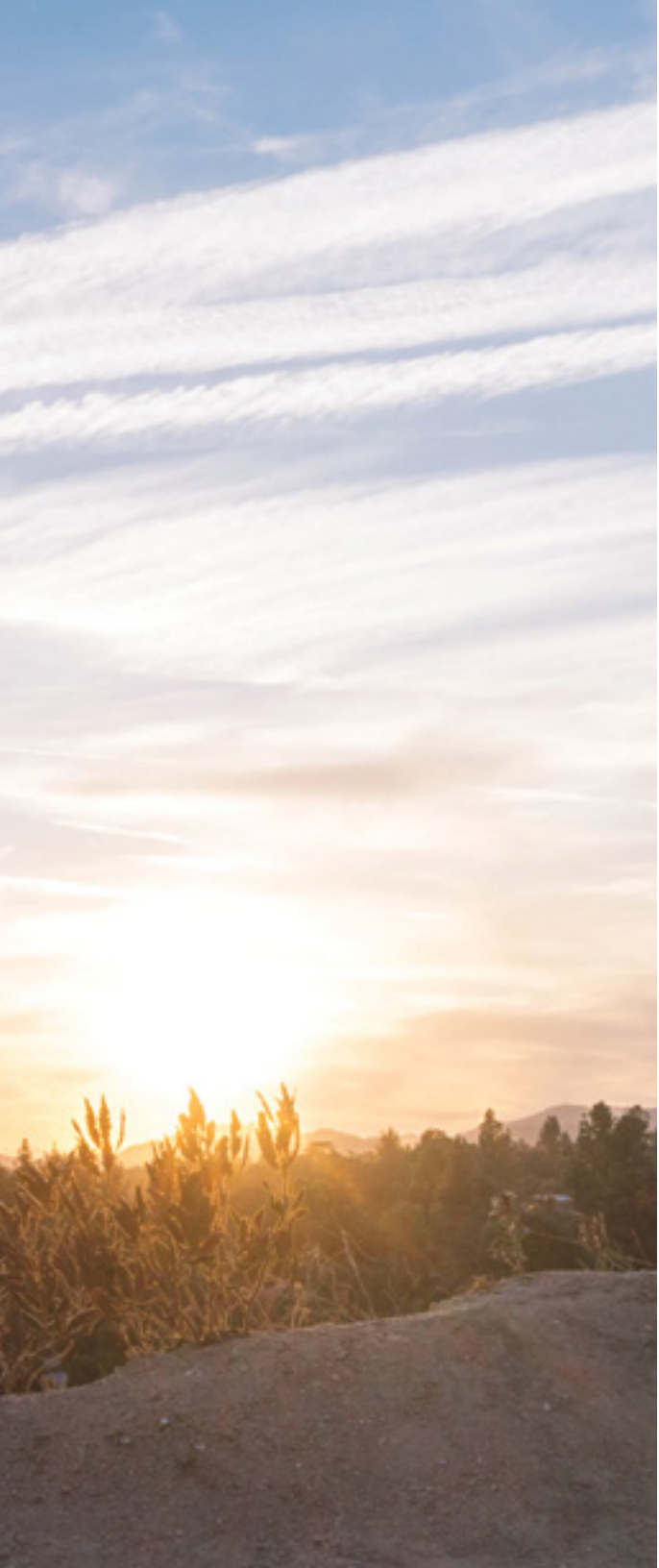


"I was only eight years old when I discovered the magic of the mountains. Now, when I lead a youth group into the mountains, I have that experience all over again through their eyes."



TO SEE NANCY'S **#OURWILD** VIDEO OR  
TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION  
VISIT **WILDERNESS.ORG/OURWILD**





# FOR MY SANCTUARY

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## NANCY VERDIN'S STORY

**"A** lot of L.A. is traffic. You have somewhere to go. You have to hustle, you have to make money, you're not getting anywhere without going on a freeway. Nature was the complete opposite. It was freedom and peace."

"My background is like so many other immigrant stories in this country," Nancy Verdin said. As a child in Pasadena, Calif., Nancy watched her young parents struggle to raise four children, adapt to a new language and culture, and achieve financial stability. She did her best to navigate the stress and overcome the anxiety and depression that so often came with it. And then she found the wilderness in her backyard—the San Gabriel Mountains.

*"You got to just explore. You could touch and run around and be kids and free. There's no other experience like it when you're sitting on top of a mountain," she said. "Anything that I'm struggling with, anything I'm worried about, feels really small. It kind of brings you back—it brings me back—to realizing that you can work through things, it's fine, it'll be okay. If I didn't have the wilderness, I can't even imagine where I'd find a place to feel safe or feel peacefulness."*

In the soaring San Gabriels, amidst the trees and hiking paths and looking down on the bustling metropolis she called home, Nancy found far more than sanctuary and perspective on her life. She also found her path forward.

After graduating from the University of California at Irvine, Nancy joined the San Gabriel Mountains Forever Leadership Academy—a six-month civic engagement and leadership program, supported by The Wilderness Society, that empowers local youth to advocate in their communities and for their public lands—and served as a tutor, mentor, and academic and behavioral coach with City Year. Today, Nancy continues to work as a community advocate in her role as Prevention Programs Coordinator with a nonprofit in her hometown of Pasadena. And she continues to find sanctuary in the San Gabriels, and to pass on her love to a new generation.



# FOR A NEW GENERATION

Our public lands belong to everyone. They're a legacy we all inherit—and we can all play a role in determining their future. As the link between local communities, federal policymakers, and conservation and recreation organizations, The Wilderness Society has a unique opportunity to make public lands meaningful to the next generation of Americans and give everyone a chance to play, to explore, to make the wild part of their lives and see their stories in the lands we share. With your support, we're stepping up our efforts—and in 2016, we ensured access to our public lands for more Americans than ever before.







Fourth-graders at an Every Kid in a Park event at Rock Creek Park, Washington, DC.

## Every Kid in a Park

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Now in its second year, the **Every Kid in a Park** program—which gives all fourth-graders and their families a free pass to our national parks—is thriving. As one of the co-chairs in the Outdoors Alliance for Kids, The Wilderness Society played a key role in helping 500,000 of the nation's four million fourth-graders visit our national parks through this program. For many of these fourth-graders, this was their first experience with our national parks—and one they will never forget. In December, the Obama administration announced an interagency commitment to continue this transformative program for the next five years.

- > 500,000 fourth-graders visited national parks
- > Five-year interagency commitment

## Opening Our Forests to America

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In June 2016, The Wilderness Society influenced a sea change in the way the U.S. Forest Service distributes and administrates **recreation permits**. As part of the Outdoor Access Working Group, we helped shape new guidelines designed to *facilitate* access to our wildlands, rather than *regulate* it. These guidelines have made the permit process more efficient, made permits more widely available and, ultimately, created more opportunities for people to get outdoors and seek amazing experiences.

## An Inclusive Story for a Changing Nation

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As part of The Wilderness Society's organization-wide commitment to ensuring that public lands are inclusive and welcoming, we're challenging ourselves—and educators across the country—to tell the story of America's wildlands through a different lens. In 2016, we began developing a **public lands educational curriculum** to broaden the story so that all Americans can see themselves in it: to include the indigenous people who lived here for thousands of years, the conservationists who protected these lands from rampant industrialization, and the immigrants who helped lay the infrastructure for our national parks. By making this curriculum available to educators across America, we can empower them to tell the complete story of our public lands—and empower all Americans to feel connected to them.



# Thank You to Our Supporters

The Wilderness Society extends our deepest gratitude to all of our supporters. Your generosity has helped preserve and protect the places we love, from the remote wilderness of Alaska's Arctic to the serene lakes and rivers of Maine's north woods. The commitment of our donors is what enables The Wilderness Society to work tirelessly in pursuit of the mission set forth by conservation giants like Margaret "Mardy" Murie and Aldo Leopold—to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places. Thank you for being a partner in our work.

The donors listed on the following pages generously contributed \$1,000 or more in fiscal year 2016 (October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016). We would also like to thank the many contributors who supported our work with gifts under \$1,000, not listed here due to space limitations.

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Bighorn sheep in Denali National Park, Alaska



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**Margery Nicolson**

*"If I could choose any place to go walking right now, it would be the Mineral King area in the Sierra Nevada—a place that was almost lost to development in the 1960s. My husband and I considered it our playground, and it's the place where my interest in the natural environment peaked. Although my husband has passed on and most of my time outdoors is spent closer to home, it's important for me to remain active with the organizations that protect these special places, and to ensure there's a continuity of support even after I'm gone. I've done that by including The Wilderness Society in my will, and I strongly encourage others who are passionate about fighting for wild places to consider joining me. Not only does The Wilderness Society know what to count on from me, but I know I can count on them to put those funds to use where they are needed most in the years to come."*

A retired AMGEN biochemist and former University of Southern California Medical School faculty member, Margery Nicolson of Pacific Palisades, Calif., fondly recalls the backpacking, climbing and birding adventures she shared with her late husband, Iain, during their nearly 40 years of marriage. Their deep love of the outdoors took them all over the world and inspired their commitment to protecting wildlands and wildlife, particularly their favorite bird, the Sandhill crane. Since Iain's death in 2001, Margery has continued advocating for a number of conservation organizations, including serving on Audubon's national board of directors and joining The Wilderness Society's legacy society, the Robert Marshall Council, in 2011.



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Our legacy society is named for Robert “Bob” Marshall, a visionary whose bequest served as the foundation for The Wilderness Society. His generous gift decades ago paved the way for spirited individuals to continue serving at the forefront of America’s conservation movement today.

Bob’s gift through his will was the first planned gift to The Wilderness Society, and we gratefully acknowledge today’s visionaries who are following Bob’s example by including The Wilderness Society in their wills or other estate plans.

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*We are deeply honored and grateful to acknowledge gifts received during fiscal year 2016 from the estates of the following individuals:*

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Badger-Two Medicine, Mont.

## President's Circle

Bound by their shared commitment to The Wilderness Society, our President's Circle members represent the organization's most generous philanthropists and ambassadors. Together, they support our mission to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places through substantial annual gifts and engagement.

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Anonymous (16)                       | Dave and Jeanne Matthews                    |
| Gail B. Austin                       | Sarah Merner and Craig McKibben             |
| Anne and Gregory Avis                | Janice Miller                               |
| Tom and Currie Barron                | Walter E. D. Miller                         |
| Richard Blum                         | Priscilla Natkins and Seth Novatt           |
| Bobolink Foundation                  | Judy and Brad O'Brien                       |
| Crandall and Erskine Bowles          | Martha and Robert Osborne                   |
| Marilyn and Allan Brown              | Diane Parish and Paul Gelburd               |
| Frances Chamberlin Carter            | Erika Pearsall and Ned Jannotta, Jr.        |
| Barbara J. and David A. Churchill    | Nancy and Robert Plaxico                    |
| Sharon Faison-Cohen and Murray Cohen | Mrs. Diana and Governor Bruce Rauner        |
| Barbara and Bertram J. Cohn          | Mary and Gaylan Rockswold                   |
| Judith and Stewart M. Colton         | Ellen Marshall Scholle                      |
| Anne Conn                            | Christine and James Scott                   |
| Brenda and Swebp Davis               | Courtney Scott and Ian Ryan                 |
| Margo and George Earley              | James R. Scott, Jr. and Kim Karniol         |
| Christopher Elliman                  | Sabine and Gregg M. Sherrill                |
| James Ellsworth                      | Jan and Carl Siechert                       |
| Margot and Chris Enbom               | Jennifer P. Speers                          |
| Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Inc. | Lois and Arthur Stainman                    |
| High Meadows Foundation              | Alice and Fred Stanback, Jr.                |
| Jaimie and David Field               | Shelli and Brad Stanback                    |
| Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Field            | Christy and Robin Stebbins                  |
| Daniel Flickinger                    | Cathy Douglas Stone and James M. Stone      |
| Michelle and Robert Friend           | Gene T. Sykes                               |
| Sara and Ed Groark                   | Edward and Millicent Thomas                 |
| Ruth and Ben Hammett                 | Maggie Walker                               |
| Ann Harvey and Mike Campbell         | Diana Wege                                  |
| Lena and Gerald Hirschler            | Marshall Hackett Whiting and Richard Arnold |
| Valerie Logan and Leroy E. Hood      | Edward B. Whitney                           |
| Hyunja and Jeffrey L. Kenner         | Joe and Terry Williams                      |
| Marcia Kunstel and Joseph Albright   | Eleanor and Frederick Winston               |
| Ann R. and Michael A. Loeb           | Marsha McMahan Zelus                        |
| Jacqueline Badger Mars               |   |
| Sandy and Patrick Martin             |   |



# Financials

As we fight for our wild today and in the years ahead, The Wilderness Society stands in a position of unprecedented financial strength, thanks to the generosity and commitment of all of our supporters.

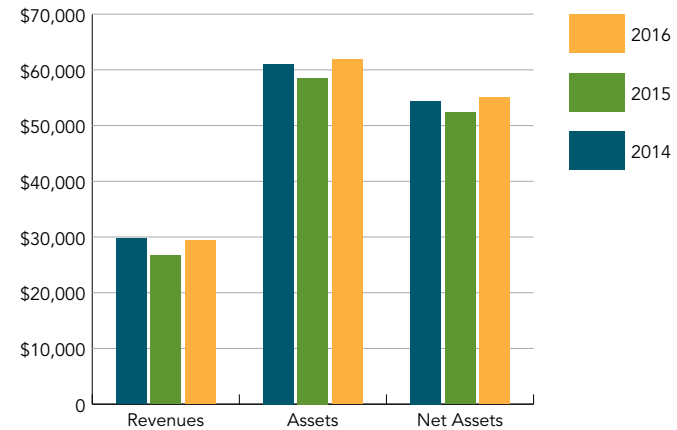
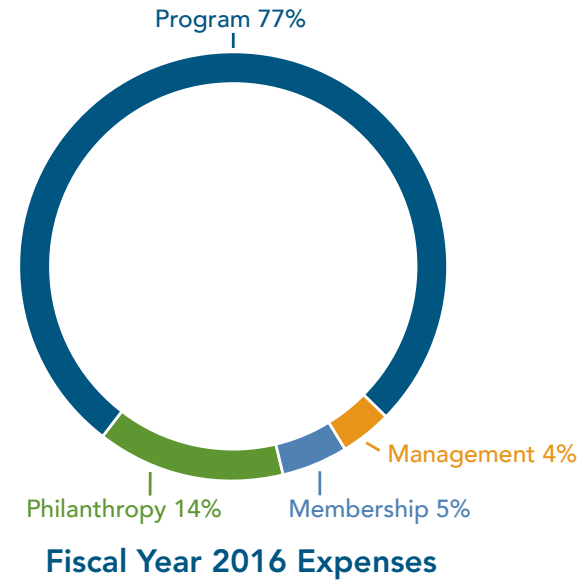
Led by support from our donors, revenues increased by \$2.7 million in 2016, resulting directly in more program spending and a significant investment in our crucial energy and climate work. At the same time, net assets reached a historic high of \$55 million, including an increase of \$2.2 million in unrestricted net assets—giving us the strength and stability to carry forward our essential work, as well as the flexibility to respond to new developments.

Across the nation, we are ready to defend the progress we've made together—and protect our wild and all it means to Americans today.

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If you would like to receive a copy of our audited financial statements, or if you have any questions about this overview or The Wilderness Society, please contact us at:

The Wilderness Society  
 Attn: Membership Services  
 1615 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-3209  
 E-mail: [member@twso.org](mailto:member@twso.org) or visit:  
<http://wilderness.org/about-us/annual-report>



Changes in Key Balances (in Millions)



Statements of Financial Position		2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>Assets</b>	Cash and cash equivalents	3.6	1.7	3.4	2.5	-
	Accounts and contributions receivable	9.9	7.7	6.6	4.7	2.7
	Investments	34.3	31.8	32.1	25.0	24.6
	Planned giving investments	4.6	4.4	4.8	5.3	5.6
	Beneficial interest in assets held by others	5.6	6.1	6.8	7.8	9.0
	Other assets	4.0	6.8	7.3	9.4	3.0
	<b>Total assets:</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>44.9</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	2.5	2.3	2.9	1.7	3.5
	Deferred rent	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.9
	Planned giving liabilities	2.9	2.4	2.5	3.1	3.3
	<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	Unrestricted	10.5	8.3	8.9	2.9	3.5
	Temporarily restricted	32.3	32.0	33.5	34.5	22.3
	Permanently restricted	12.2	12.1	12.0	11.5	11.4
	Total net assets	55.0	52.4	54.4	48.9	37.2
	<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>44.9</b>

### Statements of Activities

<b>Revenues</b>	Individuals	21.7	16.4	20.8	28.5	13.2
	Foundations	6.3	8.1	7.1	5.9	7.2
	Corporations	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
	Total contributions	28.5	24.7	28.0	34.7	20.8
	Other	0.9	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.7
	<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>22.5</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	Program Services					
	Land and Water	13.7	14.2	14.7	16.7	18.8
	Energy and Climate	5.6	4.5	5.2	4.0	5.7
	People Outdoors	2.6	3.2	1.0	0.7	0.7
		21.9	21.9	20.9	21.5	25.2
	Support services					
	Fundraising	5.4	5.3	4.3	4.3	3.8
	Management and general	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.9	2.1
		6.4	6.4	5.6	6.2	5.9
	<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>31.1</b>
	<b>Change in net assets from operations</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>(1.6)</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>(8.6)</b>
	Gains from investments and other changes	1.6	(0.4)	2.3	3.2	6.2
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>(2.0)</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	
<b>Beginning net assets</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>39.6</b>	
<b>Ending net assets</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>37.2</b>	



# The Wilderness Society Councils

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Sand to Snow National Monument, Calif.



