

WILD SALMON CENTER > *Annual Report 2017*





## *President's Letter*

Free-flowing rivers and their seasonal runs of wild fish are cherished by local people, fishermen, indigenous communities, and anglers, until something bad happens that puts the river ecosystem and its wild fish into long-term decline. It might come in the form of a big development such as a dam, or a large-scale mining project like the Pebble

Mine proposed for the headwaters of Bristol Bay, Alaska. Or it can come in the form of “death by a thousand cuts,” including illegal fishing, clear-cut logging, hatchery fish programs, or water withdrawals for agriculture.

We have learned over two decades of work that the most effective protection of a salmon river comes before the damage is done.

This is why the Wild Salmon Center developed the stronghold strategy. It is a simple and straight-forward approach that targets the “last, best” watersheds in each region. We invest in local conservation partners’ financial, scientific, and programmatic strength, and we work together to achieve proactive land and water use protections such as new parks, expanded riparian buffers, and other land use designations—legal armor around stronghold watersheds. At the same time, we work with the fish management agencies, tribes, and the commercial and recreational fishermen to create protections for wild fish—and prevent overharvest and the impacts of fish hatcheries.

This approach is more cost-effective than restoration-based conservation, but requires a multi-decadal strategy to ensure that these systems will survive as salmon ecosystems far into the future.

The Wild Salmon Center and our local partners have now won legal protections for almost 9 million acres of land in strongholds, secured wild fish management agreements and designations in 68 watersheds in the Russian Far East and Pacific Northwest, and have established 13 new conservation groups throughout the Pacific Rim.

This year, we are helping lead a major partner-based campaign in Alaska (see page 9), have three more large watersheds being added to Russia’s network of regional protected areas (see page 14), and are helping launch a new initiative in British Columbia (see page 19).

As climate change warms our rivers, and the demands of the growing economies of the Pacific Rim for food, water, minerals and energy threaten even the most remote river systems, we must secure our great salmon, trout and steelhead ecosystems. We must preserve them as reservoirs of salmon genetic and life history diversity, safeguarded by ancient forests, cold clear flows and local people who are willing and able to fight to protect this miracle of nature and way of life.

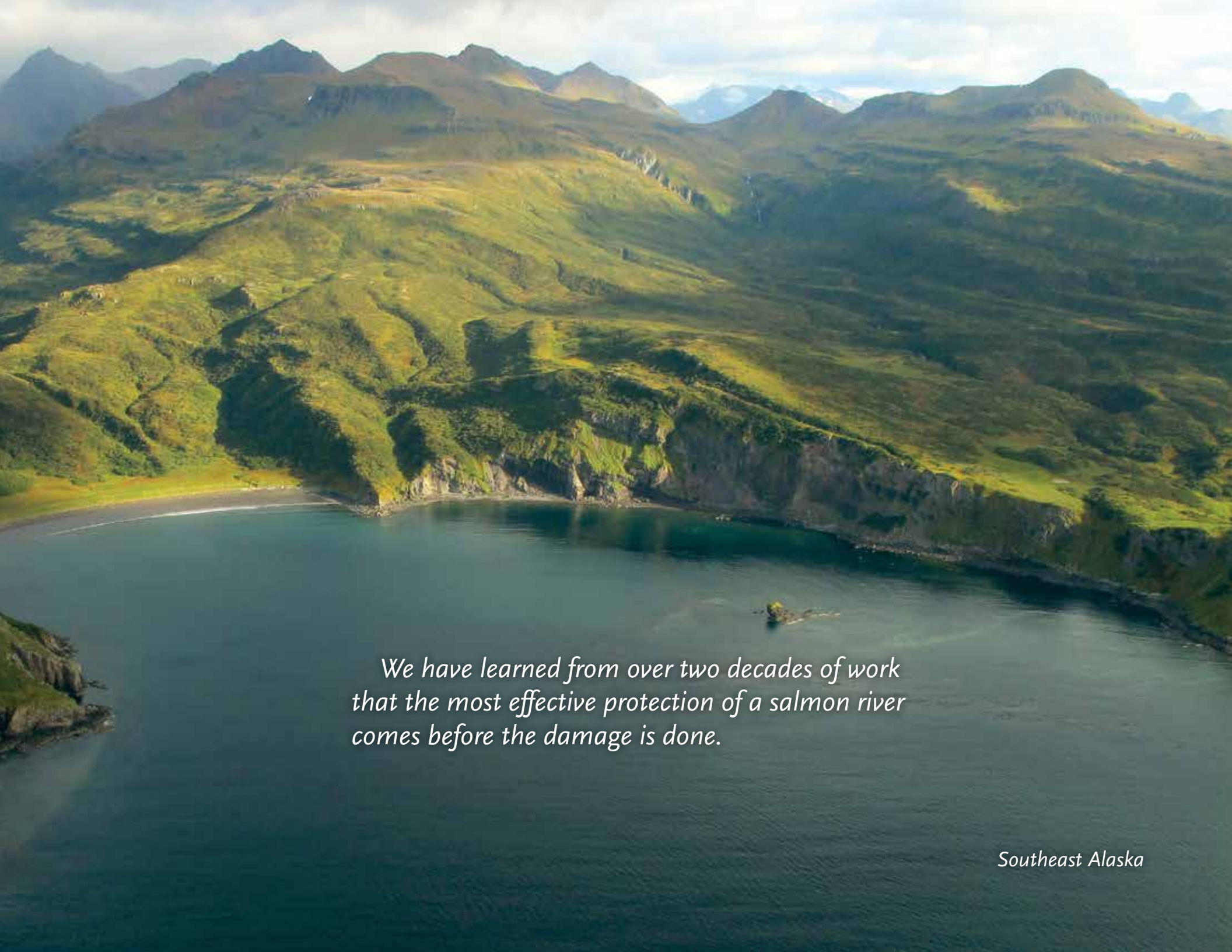
We continue to look at new strategies to strengthen the ability of salmon and river-based communities to defend against the threats that will come next. You can learn more about those in the following pages.

So, thank you—patient and generous supporter—for being part of our team. We are grateful for your help, and you can count on the Wild Salmon Center and our partners to leave a priceless gift of wild rivers for our children and grandchildren.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guido Rahr'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Guido Rahr  
President and Chief Executive



An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape in Southeast Alaska. The scene shows a bay with dark blue water, a small beach on the left, and a rugged coastline with steep, green mountains. The sky is overcast with soft light. The text is overlaid on the lower part of the image.

*We have learned from over two decades of work  
that the most effective protection of a salmon river  
comes before the damage is done.*

*Southeast Alaska*





Weathering *climate change* by building a clear-eyed view of salmon watershed futures (see pg. 22).



Russia's Far East: A network of Protected Areas and unlocking the mysteries of *taimen* (see pg. 14).



The Stronghold Fund will bring proactive, science and partner-based work to places like the Dean (see pg. 18).





# North America



Standing for Salmon in **Alaska**, a ballot initiative fighting for the future of salmon rivers (see pg. 8).



Celebrating a victory for wild salmon and Canada's **Skeena** river estuary (see pg. 6).



Elliott State Forest for all and bringing back the **Oregon** Coast coho (see pg. 10).

*Futures:  
in a Changing World*





*Skeena Estuary, British Columbia*





Brian Huntington



*SkeenaWild staff, advisors, and trustees at Kawesas Lodge in British Columbia for their annual board meeting.*

## A Win for the Skeena

In 2017, we celebrated victory in the fight to protect one of Canada's most important wild salmon habitats—the juvenile rearing grounds at the mouth of the Skeena River. In July, Malaysia's state oil company, Petronas, canceled plans for a massive liquefied natural gas export facility over Flora Bank, used by over 300 of the Skeena's salmon and steelhead populations. The decision came after international market conditions soured and several Skeena First Nations and our partners at SkeenaWild mounted legal challenges and heavy community pressure. Wild Salmon Center was proud to partner with SkeenaWild and First Nations with financial, scientific and communications support over the last three years in this battle to stop a risky and poorly-sited project.

SkeenaWild's Greg Knox said the campaign "has united far flung groups in the watershed and across the Pacific around the goal of protecting salmon. Without salmon, we lose the foundation of our ecological health, our local culture and our economy."



*Greg Knox, SkeenaWild*

This campaign has changed the conversation about the future of the Skeena estuary. WSC and SkeenaWild are working with partners to initiate an estuary management planning process that includes First Nations leaders throughout the watershed, including those far upriver who depend on Flora Bank. The plan will also include 40 years' worth of science showing the importance of this salmon habitat. SkeenaWild and partners also negotiated a settlement with Petronas to retire their federal development permits for Flora Bank and nearby Lelu Island.

Wild Salmon Center will continue to partner with and support SkeenaWild in this crucial work to protect one of the last, large free-flowing salmon and steelhead systems in North America.



*Bristol Bay, Alaska*



# Alaskans Stand for Salmon

To be in Bristol Bay, Alaska in the summer is to witness one of the greatest migrations on earth: the movement of over 50 million sockeye salmon into the crystalline rivers and lakes that flow into the bay.

This wave of fish, shifting colors from ocean bright to spawning red as they move up the watershed, brings marine nutrients to feed the whole food chain, from insects to human communities. But this extraordinary wild salmon stronghold is under imminent threat—Pebble Mine, now in its second incarnation, is being fast tracked through the federal permitting process at unprecedented speed, despite millions of Americans speaking out against it.

In response, Wild Salmon Center took a strong leadership role this year for a proactive campaign designed to update Alaska's fish habitat protection laws. The Stand for Salmon campaign brings together commercial and sport fishermen, businesses, Alaska Native tribes and conservationists to get at the root of the problem: the state's lack of clear standards to guide development where it impacts fish habitat.

A groundswell of Alaskans have come out in support of salmon, the state's most renewable resource. Forty-two thousand, including voters from every state House district

(a first in Alaska), took action to put the Stand for Salmon initiative on the November 2018 ballot. The initiative will put new fish habitat protection standards in place that will ensure development projects don't sacrifice wild fish or clean water for gold and other minerals. It will force Pebble and future toxic mine developers to completely rethink their operating plans. It will put an upper limit on the amount of damage they can do and force them to pay for restoration for any salmon habitat disturbed.

Alaska has a short window of time to avoid the monumental salmon habitat mistakes of the Lower 48. We know the Pebble Mine could be permitted in three to four years. Now is our chance to secure the long-term health of Bristol Bay and the rest of the state's great salmon rivers—some of the best that remain in the world.

Professor and author David Montgomery wrote recently: "By defining proper protections for salmon habitat now, Alaska will live up to its legacy as the last and greatest bastion for wild salmon. Seize the chance to break the sorry cycle of historical loss for the king of fish."

If we all Stand for Salmon, Alaska can remain the salmon state for generations to come.

*Fishermen and fisherwomen across Alaska have come out in support of stronger protections for salmon rivers with Stand for Salmon.*



Pat Clayton

Perry Broderick



Jennifer Gibbins



Dave McCoy



## Defending Oregon Rivers & Forests

The cold, clear rivers that run through remaining intact Oregon Coast temperate rainforests are an oasis for wild fish in the increasingly clearcut, developed, and warming landscape of Western Oregon. Over the years, Wild Salmon Center has vigilantly fought to protect important forests and watersheds holding diverse salmon runs across the 500,000-acre Tillamook and Clatsop state forests.

In 2017, our attention turned to the central coast, when the 82,000-acre Elliott State Forest was in danger of being sold to logging interests. We rallied a coalition of hunters and fishers to speak up in favor of keeping the Elliott public, so its diverse coastal forests could continue to support elk hunting and provide key spawning grounds for Oregon Coast coho salmon. The State Land Board responded by unanimously canceling the sale of the Elliott.

The state legislature then passed \$100 million in state bonds to reduce the pressure to log the Elliott in order to fund schools. The Legislature also provided funding to engage the public in forest planning based on a wide spectrum of values.

Wild Salmon Center is building on nearly two decades of forest planning work to reshape the Elliott's future. In partnership with the Oregon Hunters Association, we are providing critical input to the state as it re-envision the Elliott. We will ensure the Elliott evolves into a thriving forest with a strong emphasis on both recreation and wild fish conservation.

### Recreational Mining Reform

In another big win for Oregon rivers in 2017, the Legislature prohibited destructive in-stream recreational gold mining on salmon streams. The bipartisan bill was the result of a multi-year effort by Wild Salmon Center and conservation partners.



Tom Lange



Eiko Jones





*Wilson River, Oregon*



*Mark Trenholm, WSC*

## Targeted Restoration in Action

The health of Oregon's coastal coho populations are a vital indicator of the health of our coastal watersheds. But these fish are threatened after 150 years of land use on the coast has altered watersheds and degraded critical habitats. Restoring coastal river systems is a key step in bringing coho back. What's often missing from restoration work is a coordinated, science-based approach to prioritize the most important projects, and enough funding to get those projects completed. Wild Salmon Center's Mark Trenholm has stepped up to meet this challenge by convening local and regional partners in conservation planning, and leveraging public and private funding to support implementation of the resulting priorities.

Starting in the Siuslaw, Nehalem, and Elk watersheds, we were able to pinpoint priority restoration actions using the best science and mapping tools—to make sure projects generate the greatest possible benefit for every project dollar spent. Partners also now have a long-term, science-based plan for coho recovery.

In the summer of 2018, local partners will take to the field to reconnect rivers with floodplains, install large wood in streams, plant cooling canopies of streamside vegetation, restore beaver to their historic habitats (beaver are great for coho!), and begin activities to ensure quality salmon habitat from headwaters to estuary.





*Hoh River, Washington*





Luke Kelly with aerial support from LightHawk

# Washington Coast: The Next Chapter

Our earliest work in North America was to survey and map sections of the Olympic Peninsula, where the Hoh Rainforest—one of the wettest and most biodiverse places on the continent—serves as headwaters to some of the greatest steelhead and salmon rivers left in the Lower 48.

In 2006, we hired biologist Devona Ensmenger on the peninsula to build up a lasting salmon habitat protection and wild fish management program. Twelve years later, through a blend of meticulous science and patient partnership building, she has helped regional leaders speak with a powerful, unified voice that has delivered clear conservation wins for this important salmon region. The Coast Salmon Partnership, which Devona helped found, has protected thousands of acres of important habitat in the Calawah and Hoh watersheds and developed a regional conservation plan approved by the governor for 3.8 million acres on the Washington Coast. Through 12 years of work, Devona leveraged \$3 million in private grants to bring \$52 million in public investments in regional restoration and habitat protection.

As she leaves the Wild Salmon Center to focus on new pursuits in Central Washington, Devona has set up the region and the program for continued success.

In the next stage of work, we'll continue the campaign Devona started to remove old culverts and other stream blockages to connect young fish to 150 miles of key cold water refuges in upstream reaches. This will help the region's wild fish survive increasingly hot summers.

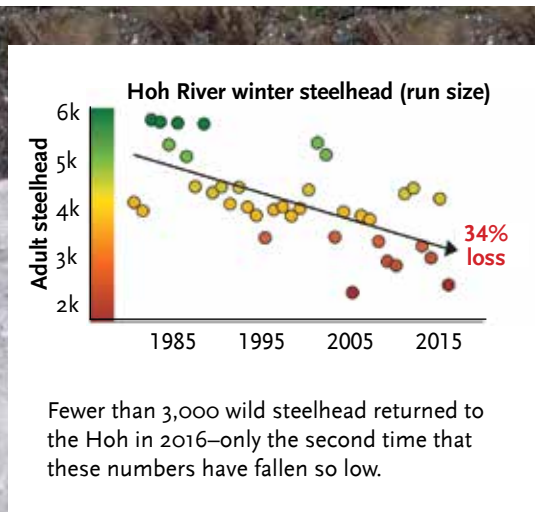
We are also supporting the rebuilding of wild steelhead runs on the peninsula, through a scientific reconstruction of historic runs in the region. This is one key piece of information that has been missing from the management debate on the Olympic Peninsula. The new data analysis, led by our Science Director Matt Sloat, will help fish managers set spawning goals that can save the species from further decline.



Devona Ensmenger, WSC

Wild Salmon Center remains committed to the Olympic Peninsula and restoring its stronghold rivers and wild fish runs to full health.

*Our work on the Olympic Peninsula includes the Calawah system, home of the Elk Creek Conservation Area (pictured bottom right), and the Hoh River, where new data (inset) will help fisheries managers recover declining steelhead runs.*



Pat Clayton



Lindsey Aspelund



## Taimen Set the Course

The giant, long-lived taimen of the Russian Far East are a regal member of the salmon and trout family that once reigned supreme across hundreds of healthy watersheds in the region. Only a handful of great taimen rivers with robust runs of Siberian and Sakhalin taimen still exist. In these treasured ecosystems, with clean water and plentiful prey, we are working to understand taimen behavior and protect these last territories of taimen.

The Nimelen River has some of the last robust wild salmon runs in the great Amur system, and it serves as a cold-water refuge for the region. But poaching and development are beginning to put pressure on the river and its wild fish. In 2017, after extensive biological surveys and community outreach by our partners at Khabarovsk Wildlife Foundation, the provincial government officially established the 72,000-acre Nimelen River Refuge. It expanded the network of protected areas Wild Salmon Center has helped secure in the Russian Far East to more than 3 million acres.

This reserve will cover key spawning grounds for the Nimelen's four million wild fish. It's also adjacent to the Tugur River Nature Reserve, which protects spawning sections of another salmon and taimen stronghold. These two protected areas anchor the kind of large landscape conservation efforts needed to sustain thriving fisheries and a full complement of other species from wolves to moose, elk, bears and sea eagles, as well as traditional hunting grounds for the Nanai people.

Across the Tatar Strait in Sakhalin Island, the regional governor announced new protected areas encompassing the Nabil and Dagi rivers in the northeast. They are strongholds for critically endangered Sakhalin taimen, an ancient relative of Siberian taimen, as well as chum, coho, Asian masu and pink salmon, which fuel commercial and sport fisheries. Wild Salmon Center's scientific assessments a decade ago strengthened local partners' argument for protecting these two rivers. Now WSC partner Dmitry Lisitsyn and other stakeholders are working on reserve plans, to be finalized later this year.



Unique spotting patterns are used to identify individual taimen and monitor population abundance.

Guido Rahr

## Unlocking Mysteries of the Tugur

Siberian taimen are becoming better known to anglers but the scientific complexities of the species are still largely a mystery—which hampers conservation efforts. Last year, Wild Salmon Center launched a new taimen population monitoring effort on the Tugur River in Khabarovsk Region. With the help of lodge owner Alexander Abramov and in partnership with long-time collaborator Mikhail Skopets (who's worked with us since 1994), each taimen caught by sportfishermen in the Tugur will be photographed and measured. The photos are fed into image recognition software that will use the unique spotting patterns on each taimen to identify and monitor these individuals over time. We will, for the first time, develop an understanding of the Tugur River taimen population size, growth, and movements.

*The Nimelen is a critical reservoir of wild salmon genetic diversity and abundance.*

Khabarovsk Wildlife Foundation





*Nimelen River, Russia*



# The Next Decade

Wild Salmon Center's success over the last two and half decades has been built around a core mission—protecting salmon strongholds for the benefit of natural and human communities that depend on these magnificent wild fish. But we are always refining our tactics for getting there, whether it's embracing new scientific approaches, or developing novel coalitions.

As we look forward over the next decade here are some of the most important frontiers of work we're opening up, as we seek to strengthen the greatest remaining Pacific salmon rivers in the face of a growing human population, increasing demand for mineral resources and seafood, and a rapidly changing climate.



## Strongholds for the future:

### Doubling Down on Strongholds.

The Stronghold Fund is a new resource that will support major partnership initiatives around the Pacific. We're answering the call for rapid response during critical campaigns and aiming to support high leverage endeavors that require long-term stability. *(see pg. 18).*

### Mobilizing the Salmon Army.

Whether it's rallying the public behind a ballot initiative in Alaska, bringing conservationists and commercial fishermen together in Sakhalin Island, or building a new catch-and-release fly fishing constituency in Khabarovsk, we are helping mobilize salmon advocates to support pro-fish, clean water policies *(see pg. 20).*



Dave McCoy



Ken Morrish



An aerial photograph of a vast, mountainous landscape. The terrain is characterized by rolling hills and valleys, with patches of green vegetation and brownish-yellow soil. In the foreground, a river valley is visible, with a river winding through it. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall scene is bathed in natural light, suggesting a clear day.

3

### Weathering Climate Change.

Wild salmon won't be able to weather climate change without intact stronghold rivers. Our science network is working to identify the effects of climate change on everything from Oregon Coast coho habitat and Alaskan flood scenarios to glacier retreat on the West Coast. A clear-eyed view of salmon watershed futures will help fisheries managers and forest planners maintain productive salmon habitat (*see pg. 22*).

4

### Strengthening Life History Diversity.

Salmon life history diversity is a key strategy to adapt to a changing landscape. We are working to understand the effects of genetics and environmental triggers on salmon survival strategy (*see pg. 24*).

*Kisaralik River, Alaska*



## THE NEXT DECADE:

### Investing in Extraordinary Rivers

As we plan for the future we know that threats to wild salmon and steelhead strongholds will become increasingly urgent. Being proactive and getting into watersheds early will matter more than ever. We also know that strongholds have fierce allies, from local groups defending their home waters, to anglers swinging flies for bright steelhead in their favorite stretch of river. But the most profound lesson we've learned is that behind every conservation accomplishment is a strong and effective partnership.

With these truths in mind, we founded The Stronghold Fund. The idea was to create a new resource to fill a current void in conservation funding and to ensure financial support for the Pacific's great salmon, steelhead, and trout strongholds including Bristol Bay, Skeena, Dean, and Kamchatka. The Fund complements WSC's work by providing the ability to invest in urgent campaigns and new initiatives that go above and beyond the scope and purview of a single organization.

The Fund was also born from the fact that there are many fisheries and watershed groups with overlapping missions competing for funds and visibility, year in and year out. But the conservation community is most successful when we work together and bring our complementary strengths to a unified campaign. These alliances need to be encouraged and supported, especially when a once-in-a-generation opportunity or initiative needs backing.

The Stronghold Fund's initial fundraising goal is \$15 million and so far, we've raised half of that. We've supported the Stand for Salmon campaign in Alaska, the Skeena estuary campaign in British Columbia, and a new initiative focused on the Dean River and B.C.'s central coast.

We're seeking new donors interested in this high-impact approach to conservation. We aim to make The Stronghold Fund a one-stop shop for investors looking to support collaborative efforts that protect the Pacific's most extraordinary salmon, steelhead, and trout rivers.



*“By reinforcing and supporting high leverage, partner-based initiatives, we’re greatly improving our chances of protecting the Pacific’s stronghold rivers.”*

*David Finkel, Executive Director of The Stronghold Fund and WSC's VP of Development and Communications*

#### *The Stronghold Fund is:*

##### *Partner-Based*

The Fund will support partnerships and organizations working cooperatively and in coalitions—because success in conservation is almost always the result of more than one group's effort.

##### *“Win-Now”*

More war chest than endowment, the Fund is a “win-now” resource that will deliver funding to strategic, targeted initiatives within stronghold watersheds.

##### *Proactive*

The Fund will prioritize science-based activities that are preemptive and durable in nature, and will aim to deploy funds before long-term damage and decline occurs.

Learn more at [TheStrongholdFund.org](http://TheStrongholdFund.org).







## The Dean

The long, remote, perfect runs on the Dean River have changed (and perhaps ruined) many a steelheader forever. But dedicated conservation of the area's outstanding wild salmon and steelhead fisheries has been relatively absent compared to other world-class rivers. Looking to change that narrative, WSC recently convened a small group of conservationists, First Nations, lodge owners, and funders to develop short and long-term strategies to address conservation challenges on the Dean and central coast of British Columbia.

The Stronghold Fund is supporting this new initiative that will involve working with partners on a combination of advocacy, applied science, and public education efforts to help ensure the long-term ecological health of the Dean and B.C. central coast and its outstanding fisheries.

*Dean River, British Columbia*





*Susitna River, Alaska*





Ryan Peterson  
Skeena Media

## THE NEXT DECADE: Mobilizing the Salmon Army

Wild Salmon Center supporters and partners know the electric shock from a truly wild steelhead strike in a quiet riffle, or the sense of wonder that comes from wading through a spawning channel filled with fish.

As we look to the next decade, we want to get more people knee-deep in rivers. And as these people join the ranks of the converted, we want to do more to move people up the food chain of engagement—to where they can be more active on fish-first policies.

So Wild Salmon Center and partners are expanding our entry level engagement in the Russian Far East. Boomerang outdoor club, our partners on Sakhalin Island, have reached thousands of school kids and their families with wilderness outings across the region and salmon curriculums in classrooms. And a new program will teach catch-and-release angling to hundreds of fishermen of all ages across the Khabarovsk Region.

On the other side of the Pacific, WSC has extended its educational reach to Alaska where a pilot program in Cordova gives fifth graders a holistic view of the role salmon play in local economies, ecosystems, and broader culture. We are also working to coordinate and leverage grassroots alliances

and coalitions to more effectively change policy. Last year, we partnered with hunting and fishing groups in Oregon to deliver strong messages of support for public ownership of the 82,000-acre Elliott State Forest. And this year, our Alaska staff are pivoting from years of campaigns and organizing against mega-developments to push for proactive salmon habitat protections. The Stand for Salmon campaign will build on the direct citizen outreach of the last decade.

In the Skeena River region, salmon advocates have called the groundswell of activism that always seems to rise up against damaging development an “immune response” of the watershed.

Over the next decade, Wild Salmon Center will work to help shift these sorts of partner networks and power building ventures into proactive policy across the North Pacific. We want to help build the type of foundation that gives salmon advocates equal weight in decision making about the future of salmon and steelhead rivers. If we're smart about how we leverage voters and constituents, we can head off the worst kinds of development before they start and also change the terms of the conversation so as not to pit development against salmon conservation across the entire North Pacific.

*Wet'suwet'en leaders on Lelu Island, B.C.; teacher Yelena Kuznechikhina with students showing off their Russian salmon primer artwork at the First Salmon Celebration in Khabarovsk; Patagonia Portland event in support of the Elliott State Forest and open public lands.*



Aleksandr Cortuhov



Sam Beebe



## THE NEXT DECADE:

### Weathering Climate Change

We know the coming decades will bring greater climate extremes—warmer and, in some regions, wetter and potentially more destructive. With science partners around the North Pacific, we're studying salmon landscapes to identify effects of big changes, from bigger floods to melting glaciers. And we're outlining strategies to keep salmon habitat intact, whether it's protecting those rivers that show strong resilience to climate disturbance or reconnecting and recovering those waterways that need help.

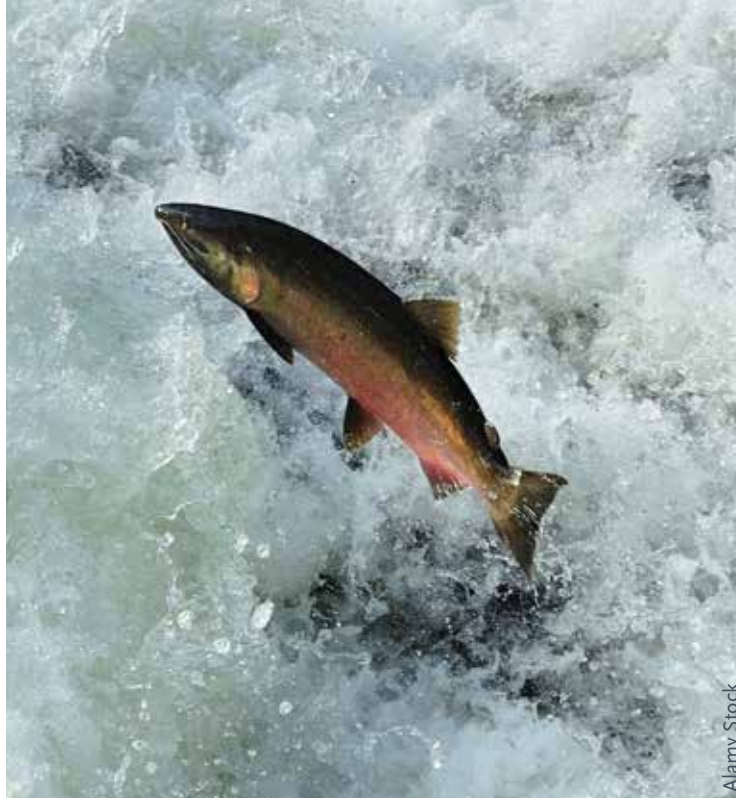
With partners at the US Forest Service, we have modeled how rivers in Southeast Alaska can withstand floods and continue to support productive salmon habitat. In short, those waterways with intact floodplains are more likely to fare well into the future; floodplains act as pressure release valves during large flood events, ensuring that sensitive spawning gravels and juvenile habitat aren't completely washed out.

Now, land managers are using that analysis to inform where to implement salmon habitat restoration, to reconnect streams with floodplains and rebuild river function.

A forthcoming analysis will further guide watershed restoration in Southeast Alaska by showing where large wood is needed in streams—to slow down the energy of floods and protect sensitive salmon habitat. Some watersheds were heavily logged in the 1960s and are still bereft of old-growth trees and big log jams that support productive salmon habitat.

We also continue our analysis of glaciers and salmon watersheds in North America with partners at Simon Fraser University. The team is seeking to understand how and where salmon habitat will be changed by glacial retreat.

By grasping the dynamics of current and future salmon landscapes, we can ensure salmon rivers will remain healthy in an unpredictable world.



Alamy Stock

## Coho Climate Strongholds

A recent look back at 25 years of Oregon Coast coho runs is painting a picture of which coho rivers are more resilient to ocean and freshwater extremes and why. The results are informing how we approach our coastal restoration work in Oregon (see page 11), including in the Siuslaw River basin. Identifying the rivers where coho runs remain strong despite climate shifts and extreme weather events gives us critical clues for restoring coho resilience in other watersheds.

*We're studying salmon landscapes to identify effects of big changes—whether they are bigger floods or melting glaciers.*

Alamy Stock





*Tongass National Forest, Alaska*



## THE NEXT DECADE:

### Strengthening Life History Diversity

As adaptive survivalists, wild salmon and steelhead around the Pacific have endured millions of years of volatile tectonics, volcanic eruptions, glaciations, and megafloods that have constantly reshaped the landscape. A large part of their secret for success is diversity—a single steelhead population may have over 30 different strategies for migration and reproduction.

But these various survival strategies are diminishing at just the wrong time—as climate change and development pressure close in and require wild fish to be more adaptive than ever. These diverse strategies, known as life histories, include a range of migration timing, patterns of habitat use and other adaptations. A strong portfolio of salmon runs in each river system hedges against drastic changes that could wipe out whole populations.

One of the more exciting scientific projects we'll be pursuing over the next decade is a quest to understand the genetic basis for different life histories. We can then help better protect and restore life history diversity, especially in highly altered Lower 48 river systems.

Wild Salmon Center is already tapping into a new generation of genetics research to restore spring Chinook to the upper Klamath basin in Oregon. As four dams are removed on the Klamath in the next few years, fisheries managers want to ensure that spring-run Chinook salmon return upriver. But research with partners at UC Davis last year suggests that "springers" have a unique gene that's not found in their fall-running cousins. Once the spring-run dies out, it apparently can't be revived using fall-run fish. We will ask managers to consider novel techniques for ensuring that the "springer gene" is restored to the upper Klamath. In some cases, it's more complicated than simply tearing down the dams and waiting for wild fish to fill a niche.

We are also advocating for proactive protections for strong spring Chinook populations in the Rogue and North Umpqua watersheds in Oregon.



WSC Staff

### Clues Across the Pacific

Can steelhead in Kamchatka give those in the Klamath River system a leg up, from half a world away? Hopefully. In robust steelhead populations in West Kamchatka, we're examining genetic triggers for certain life history strategies—such as the “half-pounder,” which takes two roundtrips from river to the ocean before spawning. As we help local partners rebuild Klamath and Trinity river steelhead populations, understanding this genetic information from Russia can assist North American managers to restore a healthy spectrum of life histories.

The great ecologist Aldo Leopold said, “to keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.” As humans tinker with wild salmon systems, we must have the foresight to maintain the critical parts that hold these systems together, especially those pieces that could be lost forever.



Pat Clayton





*Bristol Bay, Alaska*



# 2017 Donors

Thank you to all our donors for helping make 2017 a success. With your support, we can ensure the health and abundance of wild salmon and steelhead into the future.

## The Stronghold Fund\*

Anonymous  
John W. Childs  
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\*see pg 18

## Foundation, Corporation, Government and NGOs

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*Bill and Sally Neukom.*

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Orange Photography

*Wild Salmon Center's Stronghold Dinner in San Francisco, 2017. In the foreground WSC Board Member Brooks Walker and other honored guests.*

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## FUNDER SPOTLIGHT: Mountain Rose Herbs

At Mountain Rose Herbs, “planet before profit” has long been the motto.

Founded in 1987 as a small herbal business, MRH has since grown to a staff of 210 under the leadership of co-owners Shawn Donnille and Julie Bailey. Their vision: meeting an increasing demand for sustainably-sourced herbs and teas.

Over the last 30 years the Oregon-based company has cultivated a nationwide customer base devoted to their environmentally-friendly business practices. Despite its rapid growth MRH has maintained their commitment to responsible sourcing, and now offers one of the largest selections of botanical products on the market—all certified as organic, produced without chemicals, or harvested ethically in the wild.

“Our goal is to provide a new model for business,” says co-owner Shawn Donnille. “As a large company our decisions can have major impacts, not only for our products but also in driving a broader trend of environmental stewardship.”

Over the past decade MRH has also launched ambitious initiatives like a Zero Waste program for company facilities and production, as well as efforts to restore local watersheds—a focal point of volunteer hours and conservation grants.

“One of the agricultural industry’s worst side effects is pesticide runoff,” says Alyssa Bascue, Director of Sustainability. “Not only do we want to try and mitigate that impact, we want to actually improve watersheds as



Staff remove invasive English ivy during a Mountain Rose River Project.

we grow. That’s why we’re committed to organic farming and sustainable harvesting practices.”

MRH’s environmental ethic also drives its philanthropy. Today, the company contributes over \$200,000 to more than 50 environmental nonprofits each year. In 2017, MRH made a special grant in support of WSC’s coalition effort to keep the Elliott State Forest in public hands (more on page 10).

“By supporting groups like WSC, we’re able to take our environmental efforts even further,” says Bascue. “Together we can really move the needle on issues of habitat and water quality, and hopefully inspire other companies to follow our lead.” Learn more at [mountainroseherbs.com](http://mountainroseherbs.com).





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*WSC Board Member Loretta Keller enjoying the salmonfly hatch (with one on her hat) on Oregon's Deschutes River.*

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## BOARD SPOTLIGHT: Mitch Zuklie

Orrick Chairman and innovative tech attorney Mitch Zuklie doesn't name favorites when it comes to extraordinary rivers: "If a Chinook or steelhead calls it home, I am happy to be there."

But he does have a special affinity for Alaska. "The first

time I visited Alaska, about 20 years ago, I simply could not believe its scale. The epic rivers, mountains, and estuaries. The numbers of fish. It was and remains magical to me," says Zuklie. "It was all the more impactful because of where I grew up: Connecticut. That state is about 100 miles by 70 miles, and its largest state park is about 4,000 acres. I grew up fishing for brook trout with a 2 weight rod on small streams, a far cry from the Nushagak, Kvichak or Susitna."

Mitch joined Wild Salmon Center's board in 2016 not only for his love of Chinook and steelhead, but because he was drawn to the organization's science-based approach, its focus on strongholds for wild fish, and WSC's "willingness to both listen to, and partner with, other organizations."

Wild Salmon Center is lucky to have Mitch's thoughtful perspective on the direction of our conservation work. "It's natural to focus on what is most at risk. But it's far more efficient to preserve what is not already broken... even if it's much harder politically to galvanize and sustain support for this proactive approach."

In addition to the prudent reasons for Mitch's support of Wild Salmon Center, there's a deeper, more emotional reason as well: "I have a daughter, Hannah, who just finished her first year in college. And a son, Angus, who is about to be a senior in high school. As a result, I think about the question of legacy for the next generation often," says Zuklie. "I'd hope that our legacy will be to develop a thoughtful playbook for responsible development."

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 Morgan Stanley  
 Salesforce.org

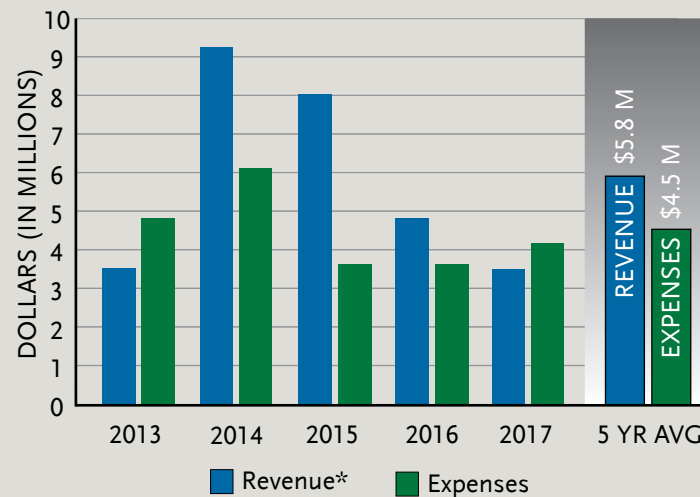


Cuido Rahr

Fisheries biologist and WSC partner Mikhail Skopets with a Siberian taimen.

## FINANCIALS: Five Year Retrospective

Revenue & Expenses 2013-2017



\* Revenue includes new funds raised during each calendar year and contributions pledged for work in future years.



Wild Salmon Center has received consistently high ratings for sound fiscal management from Charity Navigator.



The Wild Salmon Center has been awarded the "Best in America" Seal of Excellence by the Independent Charities of America and Local Independent Charities of America. This signifies that, upon rigorous independent review, the organization met the highest standards of public accountability, as well as program and cost effectiveness.



WSC is a grantee of [The Conservation Alliance](#), a group of outdoor industry companies that disburses collective annual membership dues to grassroots environmental organizations.



# Wild Salmon Center Staff

## Guido Rahr, President & Chief Executive

- Emily Anderson, Alaska Director
- Oakley Brooks, Communications Director
- Tara Brown, Oregon Policy Associate
- Devona Ensmenger, Washington Sr Program Manager
- David Finkel, VP of Development & Communications and Executive Director of The Stronghold Fund
- Kathy Holler, Chief Financial Officer
- Kacy Holven, Staff Accountant
- Lori Alexander Howk, Sr Media Design Manager
- Kim Kosa, Development Director
- Sara LaBorde, Executive VP
- Hollye Maxwell, Executive Assistant
- Amee Pacheco, Grants Manager
- Audie Paulus, Development & Communications Coordinator
- Ashley Rood, Staff Writer
- Matt Sloat, Ph.D., Director of Science
- Mark Trenholm, Coastal Program Director
- Sam Snyder, Ph.D., Alaska Sr Campaign Manager
- Bob Van Dyk, Ph.D., Oregon and California Policy Director
- Mariusz Wroblewski, Western Pacific Program Director

## Interns and Volunteers

- Spencer Daigle, Administration
- Anna Lane

Right: WSC staff on Washington Coast, floating the Clackamas River, and greeting guests at a Give!Guide event at Patagonia Portland.





# & Board of Directors



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## Emeritus

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 Dmitry S. Pavlov, Ph.D.  
 Peter Seligmann  
 Peter W. Soverel (Founder)  
 Jack Stanford, Ph.D.

*Front cover: Tutka Bay in Southeast Alaska (Erin McKittrick, Ground Truth Trekking). Back cover: Alaska bear (Pat Clayton).*





WILD SALMON CENTER

721 NW Ninth Ave, Suite 300

Portland, OR 97209

(503) 222-1804

[wildsalmoncenter.org](http://wildsalmoncenter.org)

