# WILD SALMON CENTER

**2022 ANNUAL REPORT** 

### President's Letter

What is true victory? Standing in the White House Rose Garden in May 2023, celebrating the defeat of Pebble Mine with my colleagues David Finkel and Emily Anderson, I had to pinch myself: were we really here, at journey's end? Fighting this devastating project had brought years of twists and turns. Now, we marked victory, surrounded by so many people central to this long campaign.

We worked with nearly all of them, from the Alaska Native leaders who were the heart and soul of this fight, to scientists, political leaders, national conservation groups, and hunting and fishing organizations. Each of us had a role. At WSC, our work was sometimes behind the scenes, coordinating different talents and resources to get this herculean effort to the finish line.

To us, credit is secondary. Our reward is the health of wild fish rivers, their salmon and steelhead runs, and the communities who need them. And I'm proud of how we've embodied this steadfast, partner-based model of conservation in the fight to protect Bristol Bay.

It took more than a decade to stop Pebble. It will take similar commitment to secure the health of other strongholds—the last, best salmon and steelhead rivers across the North Pacific. Over our 31-year history, Wild Salmon Center has been careful to remain focused, relying on science and a clear view of the steps we need to take to win in each watershed.

For us, true victory is durability. We aim to reach a threshold of lasting success in three areas: habitat protection and restoration, fish management for wild salmon biodiversity and abundance, and local leadership and capacity to defend each stronghold. We must be ready for the next generation of large-scale development threats. In many rivers, these threats are already here. Our approach is as bold as it is simple. But is it realistic? Can we really defend these rivers now and in the future? The answer is yes.

Already, Wild Salmon Center and our partners have prevented significant ecological damage within almost all of the strongholds where we work. We have countered pressure from hard rock mining, hydroelectric dam development, fish hatchery development, poaching, and more. Based on what we've learned, we know we can win the multidecadal health of these salmon ecosystems.

And we're tracking our progress closely. To date, WSC and our conservation partners have advanced elements of the durability strategy in 18 major strongholds, which comprise 120 distinct river basins. These basins contain the most intact wild salmon and steelhead ecosystems—and locally adapted biodiversity—across the North Pacific.

Now, we're putting the durability strategy's remaining elements into place. By 2032, we aim to have secured the necessary long-term funding, policy wins, and architecture of this strategy to safeguard the future of every stronghold where we work. Our plan is a tremendous undertaking. When complete, we'll have created the most ambitious place-based conservation effort ever attempted across the Pacific Rim.

We are all in. We know where we're going, how to get there, and what victory will look like. And we'll get there because of the friends and partners in this journey with us.

Thank you. 20

Guido Rahr President and Chief Executive



In Oregon, we're positioned for twin wins on private and state forestland. Pg. 10

In California and beyond, we're protecting the cold, clean water that fish need. Pg. 14

In the Pacific Northwest, we're seizing a historic moment for habitat restoration. Pg. 12

Western Pacific



**JAPAN** 

Winning protections for wild salmon and steelhead across the Pacific

Bering Sea

КАМСНАТКА

North America

A Mar

CANADA

WASHINGTON

OREGON

CALIFORNIA

See pg. 20 for our work in Mongolia.

Sea of

In Alaska, we're defending two iconic salmon watersheds Pg. 6 and pg. 16

TSH MBIA

500

Across the North Pacific, we're leading the way in salmon conservation science. Pg. 18

UNITED STATES

*In British Columbia*, we're championing new protections in the Taku and Skeena basins. *Pg.* 22

### Alaska's Bristol Bay

# True Victory

For more than 30 years. Wild Salmon Center has built a conservation strategy driven by grit. science, and trust. We've learned from our wins and setbacks, from grinding negotiations and surprise opportunities. But our goal remains unchanged: true victory for every stronghold across the North Pacific. That means protections that stand the test of time.

This year, we won our campaign to defend the world's most prolific wild salmon fishery from the threat of a toxic open pit mine. In January 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized Clean Water Act protections for Bristol Bay. It's officially no place for Pebble Mine. Not now. Not ever.

What does it take to win a true conservation victory? Bristol Bay shows the way.

# Defending Bristol Bay

Victory for Bristol Bay took decades of partnership, and a strategy built on science. In 2012, Wild Salmon Center published one of the first technical assessments of Bristol Bay's extraordinary system of spawning lakes, and exactly how Pebble Mine endangered its sockeye fishery.

We continued to build the scientific case against Pebble, adding dozens of analyses and expert opinions to the federal record—a body of work numbering thousands of pages. While the science became clear, political support for Pebble waxed and waned. It took more than two decades to build the grassroots power and storytelling to reach policymakers.

Across the world, people now know what Pebble almost cost Alaska Native Tribes, residents, and countless fishing communities and businesses. That's the result of relentless work by local coalitions including our own, led by the United Tribes of Bristol Bay. Our coalition rallied millions of people across the political spectrum, pushed back against powerful interests, and never gave up. (Turn the page to follow our journey.)

Today, 200,000 acres in Bristol Bay's headwaters are off limits to large-scale mining. And we can advance to the next stage of our plan. Because victory doesn't mean we're done. Across the North Pacific, we're pursuing our strategy of layered protections: stacked wins to buffer against changing politics and a changing climate.

For Bristol Bay, the next step is safeguarding more of its nearly 12 million remaining unprotected acres, through federal and/or state legislative action. With your help, we'll keep the victories coming for Bristol Bay and beyond. We'll tell you how in the pages to come.

"Once large-scale damage reaches wild salmon rivers, it's difficult, expensive, and sometimes impossible to restore them to health. That's why we fought tooth and nail for Bristol Bay. And it's why we fight for salmon strongholds across the North Pacific." -WSC President & CEO Guido Rahr



# Follow the Leader

For millennia, Bristol Bay's stewards have been its original people. That's why the United Tribes of Bristol Bay have led the fight against Pebble Mine from the beginning.

Since 2011, Wild Salmon Center has proudly supported Bristol Bay protection efforts with science, outreach, and the power of our international community.

But the real story of our Bristol Bay victory starts and ends with Tribal leadership. Thirty-one federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes in Bristol Bay rely on subsistence fishing, continuing a tradition several thousand years old. Now, that tradition is secure.

In 2023, UTBB Executive Director Alannah Hurley stood in the White House Rose Garden next to President Joe Biden. A WSC delegation and our coalition members were there to mark Pebble Mine's defeat. Few had more reason to celebrate than Hurley and her children.

"This is everything our people have been fighting for," Hurley said. "To make sure that our children will know who they are, and will be able to continue to be Native people in Bristol Bay for generations to come. To see our kids with the President today ... for us was just profound."



WSC's David Finkel, Emily Anderson, and Guido Rahr in D.C. Bristol Bay Defense Fund celebration in





d. Oregor

deviastating gold mine	ast from a molybdenum mine in Alaska, at use its Clean Water Act a	istration's the Pebble Mine, the first technical report to lay out the mine's risk to the region's wild salmon fisheries.	in the lower 48, building growing	
devastating gold mine.	A swing toward Project Project Project Project Shift Bay S Nushagak and Kvichak Rivers. November 2020: Army Corps Pauses Project Pebble fails to earn a key permit for construction from the Army Corps.	es" reveal WSC reaches out to prominent Repub- licans to explain the science behind pebble. Top GOP leaders including	July 2020: On the Brink	it, <b>2019: New Coalition</b> WSC and partners launch the Bristol Bay Defense Fund, securing new funding and momentum for the Stop
	2021: EPA Restarts ProtectionsEPA announces it will restart the process to protect Bristol Bay under the Clean Water Act.2022: Widespread Suppo EPA releases a proposed tion for protecting Bristol agency receives 500,000 comments in favor of protect	d determina- tol Bay; the po public safeguard 200,000 acres at the head-	For wildlife	llife, fisheries, and an Alaska For fisheries
toward	A swing toward success 2021: EPA Restarts Protections EPA announces it will restart the process to protect Bristol Bay under the Clean Water Act.	es" reveal bout the true bot, along with oliticians. WSC reaches out to prominent Repub- licans to explain the science behind Pebble. Top GOP leaders including Alaska Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan turn against the mine as impacts become clear. Victory! 2023: EPA Final Determination In January 2023, in its final determina- tion, EPA announces protections will safeguard 200,000 acres at the head- waters of Alaska's Nushagak and	The Army Corps recommends approving Pebble for a major permidespite the mine's direct threat to 10,744 wetland acres and 335 stream miles. Broad outrage ensues, from Bristol Bay to Capitol Hill. A true victory for wild For wildlife	it, n WSC and partners Bay Defense Fund, funding and mom Pebble Mine camp

Photo captions (from left to right): Overlooking the site of the proposed Pebble Mine (Erin McKittrick); Bristol Bay advocates gather in Washington D.C. (Jeanne Modderman); WSC Staff conducting surveys on the Nushagak River (WSC Staff); Emily Anderson gathering signatures in Cordova, Alaska (Jennifer Gibbons); Senator Maria Cantwell and fishing families in Seattle (WSC Staff); Alaska bear (Dave McCoy); Bristol Bay fisherman (Perry Broderick); Bristol Bay family (Bristol Bay Defense Fund).



### 2014: EPA Ruling Blocked

EPA moves Clean Water Act protections forward, following supportive comments from 1 million Americans. But Pebble successfully sues to block further EPA action.



the set of the second second

- 52

### 2019: Mine Review Falls Short

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases a draft environmental impact statement lacking basic information on Pebble's mining plans—and questionable science about impacts to Bristol Bay's fishery and communities.

### 2017: Reversal

Pebble persuades the Trump Administration's EPA leadership to halt the Clean Water Act process; Pebble seeks federal permits for construction under an expedited schedule.

Turn for the

worse

# an and Indigenous way of life.



For salmon strongholds across the North Pacific, our goal is protections that stand the test of time. <u>Bristol Bay</u> <u>shows the way</u>.

Turn the page for more wins and what's next.

### **Oregon Forests**

# Protections, from Headwaters to Sea

From the Columbia River to the California border, Oregon's coastal strongholds maintain the most productive wild fish runs in the contiguous United States. Science shows that wild salmon and steelhead need genetic diversity, cold, clean water, and healthy habitat from headwaters to sea.

Wild Salmon Center has built a multidecadal Oregon strategy on all these fronts. Now, our years of groundwork to protect forested watersheds is gaining critical velocity.

### A Paradigm Shift for Private Forests

More than a decade ago, Wild Salmon Center realized that to protect Oregon's public salmon rivers on private land, we needed a paradigm shift in forestry practices. After decades of lax rules and monitoring, salmon and coastal communities were suffering from poor water quality that threatened fish and people.

This sense of urgency seeded our ambitious campaign to bring Oregon private forest policy in line with its neighboring states. But reform is a long game. For our team, it meant getting good science to regulators, educating legislators and Oregon Board of Forestry members, and years of sustaining grassroots engagement. Then, for nine grueling months in 2021, we negotiated directly with the timber industry.

The result is the Private Forest Accord: a historic law that secures new protections for wild fish across 10 million acres of private forestland. Starting in 2023, these rules will improve logging practices along streams and steep slopes across Oregon.

"It's time we managed Oregon's forests for their full value, including fish, wildlife, and all of us who rely on their many benefits."

—WSC Oregon Policy Senior Program Manager Stacey Detwiler

# SC staff on the Wilson River, OR

# Standing Tall for State Forests

On Oregon's North Coast, we need a new management plan for state forests, one that prioritizes watershed health and builds on our victory on private land.

World-class wild salmon rivers like the Kilchis, Wilson, and Nehalem run through the 500,000 acres of the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests. Despite the broad values Oregonians hold for their state forests—from abundant fish and wildlife to outdoor recreation and clean drinking water—industrial logging still dominates these public lands.

But after a decade of groundwork, we're close to generational change. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of our policy team and partners, Oregon's Department of Forestry and federal agencies are advancing a habitat conservation plan to protect half of these lands for threatened fish and wildlife—matching protections secured last year on more than 60,000 acres of the Elliott State Research Forest. With these stacked wins, we'll see a brighter future for Oregon wild fish. Closing in on legacy wins for Oregon's private and state forests

### TODAY

We won a landmark Private Forest Accord and secured the future of the Elliott State Research Forest.

### TRUE VICTORY

Next, we need to win the same generational protections for Oregon North Coast state forests: home to six world-class salmon rivers. Seizing a historic moment for Pacific Northwest strongholds

Since 2017, we've built a pipeline of smart, shovel-ready coasta restoration projects, while channeling nearly \$30 million to get it rolling

TRUE VICTORY

By tapping unprecedented new federal funding, we can realize our full restoration vision for a dozen Northwest strongholds.

### Coastal Restoration

# We're Just Getting Started

From the Strait of Juan de Fuca south to the Oregon-California border, stunning salmon and steelhead rivers tumble from mountains to sea

They're key producers of Oregon Coast coho, Olympic Peninsula steelhead. Chinook, and other wild fish. But after more than 160 years of heavy human impacts, important parts of these strongholds require restoration to unleash their full potential.

Where to begin with a project so vast? In 2017, we prioritized a handful of key watersheds, diving deep into the science. Within each, we identified top projects to target in the near term to win long-term results: a culvert replacement to reopen quality habitat, a critical stretch of river to reconnect to a floodplain. In the past six years, we've assessed over 4,000 fish passage barriers in the Olympic Peninsula and created Strategic Action Plans to restore six Oregon watersheds.

We've leveraged these plans to secure some \$22 million in public funding for Oregon and Washington restoration, plus \$7.3 million in private funding. These funds are helping coastal Tribes and partners break ground on some 35 projects, opening up habitat and creating hundreds of local jobs. This past year, NOAA Fisheries cited our work as a factor in steadying Oregon Coast coho runs despite poor ocean conditions.

But the really good news? We're just getting started. With our proven model, strong partnerships, and track record of success, we're now seizing a rare opportunity, as federal agencies unlock unprecedented new funding for restoration and resilience. This is our moment to capture lasting wins for some of the North Pacific's last, best salmon rivers.

"To get coastal restoration right, we've invested in science and supporting our partners on the ground. Now we're scaling our Northwest restoration strategy to British Columbia and Alaska." -WSC VP of Conservation Mark Trenholm



Quileute Youth Opportunity Program interns Frankee Jackson and Gracee Cole on Washington's Quillayute River

# **Building Bandwidth**

On the Olympic Peninsula, the Quileute Tribe and Quinault Indian Nation are among our most important partners in the work of restoring salmon and steelhead habitat.

But like many small communities, they're strapped for time and human resources. And that can be a problem when looking to win state and federal grants.

"There are real barriers to entry in accessing funds for salmon recovery," says Wild Salmon Center Director of Government Affairs Jess Helsley. "So one of the ways we can help our partners is by boosting local capacity to go after those recovery funds."

In 2023, we partnered with the Quileute Tribe and Quinault Indian Nation to secure nearly \$600,000 in capacity-building grants from NOAA Fisheries. These grants will support Tribal agency hires and fish passage projects across the Quillayute and Quinault River basins.

This funding is one early win for an allyship model that we're actively expanding. Because with historic federal funding now open for conservation, we need to build local bandwidth to take on a bevy of new projects.

# Water and the Pacific Northwest

# Going with the Flow

No win for wild salmon can happen without water. It may seem obvious. But it's becoming a more urgent consideration: just as we're learning more about salmon's skill in finding cold, clean water, much of it is disappearing.

Across Washington, Oregon, and California, stream temperatures are rising and summer flows are dwindling. Snowpack and spring rains—so important for spring Chinook and summer steelhead—are increasingly unpredictable.

The good news? From small policy tweaks to big dam removals, we have a chance to do better. Just three years in, Wild Salmon Center's Oregon Water Initiative is proving this case. With Oregon Water Partnership, we're part of a core group of conservation organizations that supports innovative water stewardship programs. In 2022 we secured \$25 million in resilience funding from the Oregon Legislature. Now, with Tribes, local watershed councils, and the agricultural community, we're building a coalition to tackle Oregon's toughest water challenges.

In Oregon, where roughly 85 percent of water use is for irrigated agriculture, we're partnering with ranchers on restoration projects, and we recently collaborated with the Oregon Farm Bureau and other trade associations to win incentives for farmers to share their water allocations with salmon streams.

Meanwhile, momentum is growing across the West to remove dams that block wild fish from critical cold water habitat. This year, all eyes are focused on the Klamath River, where history's largest dam removal is about to begin. It's symbolic of barriers big and small—in concrete and on paper—now coming down across salmon country. Water may be changing across the West, but we're changing with it.

"Through the Oregon Water Initiative, Wild Salmon Center and our partners are tackling outdated water policies on behalf of rivers, fish, and the communities they support." —WSC Oregon Water Policy Senior Program Manager Caylin Barter



### California's Secret Stronghold

High up in the western slopes of the Sierra Nevadas, a small Sacramento River tributary is a bright spot for salmon in California's Central Valley.

Despite its size, Butte Creek boasts spring Chinook runs rivaling larger rivers like Oregon's Rogue. This robustness is one reason why Sacramento springers overall are listed as a threatened species, rather than fully endangered.

A century ago, Central Valley rivers may have seen spring runs as large as 700,000 fish. In recent decades, good years rarely top 30,000 springers. Many of these fish are headed to Butte Creek.

"Butte Creek has benefited from strong local allies and the adaptive capacity of spring Chinook," says Wild Salmon Center VP of Conservation Mark Trenholm. "But its health won't be secure without a long-term plan."

That's why WSC and the Friends of Butte Creek have convened a team of partners including Tribes and NGOs to protect Butte Creek. We aim to craft a comprehensive plan to restore critical river habitats, enhance fish passage, and secure reliable cold water flows for this small but mighty stronghold. Our hope is that with hard work, Butte Creek will continue to serve as a bulwark against the extinction of springers in the broader Sacramento. Taking on the Northwest's toughest water challenges

### TODAY

With our partners, we won a \$25 million drought resilience package for Oregon, passed a win-win bill for farms and fish, and put Oregon Water Partnership on the legislative leaderboard. Next, we'll scale these early wins to complete science-based policies that protect water in the Northwest's best salmon streams.

TRUE VICTORY



# Defending an iconic Alaskan watershed

TRUE VICTORY Susitna, we must make sure that it stays wild and roadless for future generations.

# Alaska's Susitna River

Overlooking the headwaters of

would cross 182 waterways (at

least 83 with wild salmon) within

the Susitna River, AK

The proposed 100-mile road

the West Susitna region.

# Watershed Moment

Alaska's Susitna River watershed is a salmon-rich wilderness the size of West Virginia. The western half of this pristine region is completely roadless, home to game refuges, backcountry lodges, and the legendary Iditarod Trail. The Susitna supports Alaska's fourth-largest Chinook run, as well as coho, sockeye, chum, and pink salmon, rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, and Arctic grayling.

Despite its wild, iconic status, the Susitna faces serious industrial pressure. Three times in the last 60 years, the Susitna has been the focus of large dam proposals. The most recent, the \$10 billion Susitna-Watana hydro project, would have towered 735 feet and drastically altered the river.

For years, we fought that dam with the Susitna River Coalition. In 2016, we won, celebrating even as we pivoted to the next threat: the West Susitna Industrial Access Road.

This state-sponsored 100-mile road—proposed to benefit a handful of mining companies-has already spent millions of public dollars for permit applications. If built, it'd cost Alaskans at least \$450 million, cutting through 182 waterways and at least 83 free-flowing salmon streams in the process.

"Everyone agrees that the West Susitna is too important to be sacrificed for speculative mining ventures," says Wild Salmon Center Alaska Program Director Emily Anderson. "The good news is that word about this project is getting out among the small businesses, lodges, anglers, hunters, and Tribes who care about the area—and we're rallying to stop it."

Our history of wins in the Susitna shows us that we can do so again. But for true victory, we need long-term, watershedscale safeguards for this Alaskan treasure.

"The Susitna is iconic, an Alaskan treasure. A road right into the heart of this wild place is simply unacceptable." —WSC Alaska Program Director Emily Anderson



### 28 Million Acres at Risk

a state teeming with wild salmon streams.

Since 1971, 50.1 million acres of salmon- and wildlife-rich federal lands have been considered off-limits to mineral, oil, and gas extraction. These "D-1 lands," managed by the Bureau of Land Management, cover roughly 13 percent of Alaska and represent some of the nation's largest remaining intact ecosystems, from alpine tundra to estuaries and wetlands in strongholds like Bristol Bay and the Kuskokwim River.

But in January 2021, five federal Public Land Orders aimed to open up 28 million acres of D-1 lands to industrial development. Now, the Biden Administration is considering whether to retain protection for these incredible places: protection that's even more critical, given the pressure of development and resource extraction on Alaska's natural systems.

With our partners and Tribes across the state, WSC is work-

"This is a chance to secure a huge win for Alaska's fish, wildlife, and human communities,"says Wild Salmon Center Alaska Program Director Emily Anderson. "What's at stake here is the future of some of our last, intact landscapes."

### Wild Salmon Science

# Net Effect

Salmon and steelhead spend years at sea. Much of their marine journey still remains a mystery. But we do know that salmon runs can overlap. And wherever these mixed stocks meet commercial fishing fleets, vulnerable and endangered wild fish are caught together with target stocks.

These intercepted salmonids are fishing casualties, often caught far from the home rivers where they spawn. For fisheries managers, it's a problem exacerbated by a lack of data. And it's a growing flashpoint between salmon advocates.

But mixed-stock fishing isn't just an issue for near-shore and river fisheries that lose out. The resulting loss of smaller stocks also reduces the genetic diversity that has sustained salmonids for millions of years by helping them adapt and bounce back.

Wild fish genetics aren't something you can usually see in a net. But soon, it may be something you can test. For the past two years, WSC's science team and our partners have been developing research and data tools to help fisheries managers—tools that could ultimately lead to international reforms for mixed-stock fisheries.

One promising tool we're building is a genetic database of West Coast salmon runs, a first step to mapping the migration routes and run timing of genetically distinct salmonid populations. Meanwhile, WSC's science team and our partners are contributing key research to policy efforts to better protect steelhead and sockeye from interception in B.C.'s Central Coast commercial chum fishery.

What will true victory look like for our salmon conservation work at sea? Through science, we believe we can illuminate new ways to sustain commercial fishing, while also protecting runs that need safe passage home.

"We're building out a better scientific toolkit, one that can help keep salmon fisheries open while safeguarding the biodiversity within each of these species."

-WSC Senior Salmon Watershed Scientist Dr. Will Atlas

Billy Blewett (Lower Dean River Lodge), Dr. Matt Sloat (WSC), a Scott Carlson (Coastal Rivers Conservancy) on B.C.'s Dean River

# Built by Science

This year has been a busy one for our science team, with seven new peer-reviewed studies in journals, including Fish and Fisheries and Nature Ecology and Evolution.

Our team has found bright spots for Chinook abundance, shared new insights on when-and why-smolts head to sea, and built range-wide genetic maps for multiple species.

"Science informs all aspects of Wild Salmon Center's work," says WSC Science Director Dr. Matt Sloat. "With this foundation, we can advance science-based conservation approaches across the North Pacific."

From taimen research in Mongolia to new fish counting software in British Columbia, Dr. Sloat's team of leading conservation scientists and technicians is responding to a growing need for quality research. In the United States, research from WSC and our partners is driving change at the local, state, and national levels-shaping new watershed-based steelhead management plans in Washington State, and informing new Endangered Species Act listing petitions for spring Chinook.

"Our goal is to close the data gaps that have long stymied salmon and steelhead recovery," Dr. Sloat says. "The next step is to see this research drive proactive policies that help these fish rebound."

Leading the way in salmon conservation science

Our research reforms a B.C. chum fishery and closes critical data gaps for conservation scientists and fisheries

### TRUE VICTORY

In the coming years, our science can guide international policy that secures the long-term ecological health of wild salmonids and their watersheds.

Rallying a global initiative around a legendary salmonid

TRUE VICTORY

With better data on taimen, we can build a powerful and far-reaching and Europe.

Dr. Matt Sloat with a Siberian taimen in Mongolia

### Western Pacific

# Taimen Beyond Borders

What links Northern Japan with the Russian Far East and the steppes of Mongolia? The world's largest salmonids, taimen, a group of species that rule the high reaches of the world's most remote and rugged rivers.

In 2022, to better understand this venerated species, we launched our International Taimen Initiative with leading researchers and committed local partners like Mongolia River Outfitters. We also have the blessing of The Taimen Fund, an advocacy group that closed this year, entrusting its mission to Wild Salmon Center.

"Taimen are the stuff of legends," says WSC Science Director Dr. Matt Sloat. "But poaching, habitat loss and fragmentation, and climate change have made them increasingly fragile."

Our initiative formalizes work that we've been doing for decades. In 2005, WSC began studying Siberian taimen on Russia's Tugur River as part of a quest to better understand taimen ecology.

The historical range of this group of species is vast, covering one-tenth of the world's surface, from Europe's Danube to Korea to the Sea of Okhotsk. Adult taimen prey on lenok,

KAZAKHSTAN

Distribution of Huchen and Taimen (current and historical)

Huchen

grayling, and even other adult salmon, hunting in packs to earn the nickname "river wolves."

But there's much we still don't know about taimen. In 2023, the International Taimen Initiative gained momentum as the world's taimen experts met in Hokkaido, Japan, to update the status of taimen populations across their vast range. This crucial consensus-building-endorsed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature-will help prioritize conservation efforts over the next five years.

"Recovering taimen will be an international effort, with ecosystem-level solutions," says Dr. Sloat, Pacific region chair of the IUCN's salmonid specialist group.

"The International Taimen Initiative is the unified global approach we need to make a difference for these legendary salmonids."

-WSC Science Director Dr. Matt Sloat



Taimen research in Hokkaido, Japan



### British Columbia

# A Vision for the North

The wild, undammed Skeena River runs more than 350 miles from source to sea. Together with tributaries like the Babine, the Bulkley, and the Morice, it drains an area the size of Switzerland, anchoring Northern British Columbia's salmon landscape and producing some of the world's largest Chinook and steelhead.

But this fabled watershed also faces growing threats from large-scale energy and development projects. In 2016 and 2017, Wild Salmon Center joined with local partner SkeenaWild, Skeena First Nations, and others to scuttle a liquefied natural gas terminal that would have damaged a critical salmon nursery at the mouth of the Skeena.

Now, we're teaming with SkeenaWild, Babine River Foundation, and Gitxsan Nation to stop another threat: industrial logging in the Babine's headwaters. The Babine's last old-growth stands are the jewel of the upper Skeena, supporting commercially and culturally important runs of steelhead and sockeye, and one of the province's highest concentrations of brown bears.

But energy and logging aren't the only threats to Northern B.C. strongholds. With a global rush underway for technology minerals, we're supporting our conservation partners to establish land use plans that protect fish and wildlife in Skeena country—including in the Babine as well as in the Nass River to the north.

To win true victory for Northern B.C., Indigenous-led planning is key. First Nations select culturally and biologically important places to protect, while guiding responsible development across their territories. In the coming years, WSC will support these efforts and more to meet Canada's ambitious climate and land protection goals. We're contributing science, communications, and direct and leveraged funding. And with our partners, we'll steer the ship to better waters.

"Northern British Columbia is at a crossroads. With our partners, we aim to ensure that wild fish and wild rivers remain a focus for the future."

—Executive Director of The Stronghold Fund David Finkel



### Guardians of the Taku

The Taku River Basin sprawls across nearly 10,000 square miles in Northern British Columbia before crossing the border into Alaska and emptying into the Pacific.

With a 2023 grant from The Stronghold Fund, Wild Salmon Center is launching a new partnership with the Taku River Tlingit First Nation to support their longstanding efforts to safeguard this key salmon ecosystem for future generations.

A decade ago, the Atlin-Taku Land Use Plan protected 16 percent of the Taku basin and made it off limits to commercial logging. In 2023, The Taku River Tlingit named the entire watershed an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area. Because the Taku remains largely intact—and will continue to be through the Taku River Tlingit stewardship—it's a rare chance to study how resilient landscapes, salmon, and cultures can adapt to climate change.

WSC is supporting ongoing salmon conservation and research efforts led by the Nation and other partners, from the study of environmental conditions, such as water temperature and glacier dynamics, to climate vulnerability assessments of the Taku's wild salmon. WSC will also support salmon population monitoring led by Taku River Tlingit Land Guardians and fisheries staff. This new international partnership could model success for other transboundary strongholds.



# Championing our local partners in Northern B.C.

### TODA

With our partners, we've successfully held off damaging developments in the Skeena.

### TRUE VICTORY

Now, we're working toward strong land use and fisheries management plans for the Skeena, Taku, and Nass, based on science, First Nations priorities, and long-term climate resilience.

# The Stronghold Fund

With a proven model in place, The Stronghold Fund of Wild Salmon Center is now expanding the constellation of partners we support: partners who share our vision to protect the North Pacific's most beautiful and productive rivers.

A case study is SkeenaWild—our close ally in Northern British Columbia. For the last decade and a half, this core WSC partner has worked with First Nations and other advocates to lead conservation work throughout the Skeena River basin, one of the world's most significant wild fish rivers. SkeenaWild is well known in the salmon and steelhead world, yet it hasn't attracted the broad donor base reflective of its success—and the high stakes for one of Canada's most important salmon ecosystems.

"The Stronghold Fund was created in part to bolster our core partners," says David Finkel, the Fund's Executive Director. "We aim to support local stewards where resources are often slim but impact can be monumental."

Since our first SkeenaWild grant in 2016, we've been a resource for key partners in other B.C. stronghold systems, as well as Bristol Bay and the Oregon North Coast. Along with targeted financial support, we work to bring national and global audiences to time-sensitive conservation campaigns—audiences that, in turn, bring their own resources to bear.

"In many ways, The Stronghold Fund embodies WSC's core mission," Finkel says. "We exist to focus on stronghold rivers, build strategic partnerships, and provide durable support. Because together, our impact scales fast."



# Campaign Promises

In 2022, The Stronghold Fund made its first grant to British Columbia's Watershed Watch Salmon Society. Our grant aims to support its campaign to end the use of harmful open net-pen salmon farms and reform aquaculture off the B.C. coast.

Thanks to Watershed Watch's organizing and outreach efforts—and in close collaboration with First Nation partners and other allies—the Canadian federal government has committed to transition away from open net-pen farms in B.C. by 2025.

Despite this major step forward, additional pressure is needed to prevent backsliding by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. This year, The Stronghold Fund remains committed to partnering with Watershed Watch and ensuring that the Canadian government keeps its promise.

### STRONGHOLD DONORS

Anonymous James Budelman Joseph Budge John W. Childs John S. Dale The DeBruce Foundation Doug Fund Russell Fisher Schwab Charitable Fund and Lawrence and Pamela Garlick James and Angela Hambrick Set Foundation Jt Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Set The J.C. Kennedy Foundation and Sie James C. Kennedy Ra Ray J. and Stephanie Lane Th M&C Somewhere Foundation De Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation Ir John and Susan Mullin Fund Ir Paulus Family Foundation Wi

### Searle Family Trust and John and **GRANTS**

Julie Dixon Senior Family Charitable Gift Fund Siegler Family Fund Ratmir Timashev TMT Charitable Foundation Deke and Hope Welles Fund of the Toledo Community Foundation, Inc. and Deke and Hope Welles Willow Springs Charitable Trust SkeenaWild Conservation Trust Coastal Rivers Conservancy Watershed Watch Salmon Society Taku River Tlingit First Nation Oregon Water Initiative West Susitna Campaign Tillamook Rainforest Campaign





Di. win Abus (w.S.) and Yuxan Guardian Watchmar Ernie Talio on the Kimsquit River, B.C. TO DATE, support from The Stronghold Fund has helped to power Bristol Bay protections, advance a legacy plan for Oregon state forests, and amplify work by our B.C. partners to end harmful salmon farming. LOOKING FORWARD, The Stronghold Fund will expand the scope and geographic range of its support, starting with initiatives in the Susitna and Taku watersheds.

Kermode (spirit) bear in B.C.'s Great Bear Rainforest



### "Gordon Moore knew we were running out of chances to protect the world's biodiversity. He had the courage and the vision to make longterm investments at the scale of the Pacific Rim."

CEO Guido Rahr

# Remembering Gordon Moore

Few people have done more to shape modern technology than Gordon Moore, who passed in March 2023 at the age of 94. Known as the mind behind "Moore's Law," Moore was also a champion of biodiversity, one who remade the salmon conservation landscape.

In 1999, after stepping down as Chief Executive at Intel—the revolutionary semiconductor company he cofounded in 1968-Moore invited Guido Rahr, then Wild Salmon Center's new Executive Director, to Silicon Valley for a frank talk about the future of wild Pacific salmon and steelhead.

"Gordon was an incredibly thoughtful, modest, and perceptive person," Rahr says. "He was determined to use his wealth to protect biodiversity in a way that would carry it through the apogee of human population growth."

This far-reaching vision aligned perfectly with WSC's stronghold approach. Following these first meetings, Moore became a major backer of our work in the Russian Far East. With the 2001 launch of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and its -WSC President & Wild Salmon Ecosystems Initiative, this support became truly transformational

"To this day, our mission is built on the Moore Foundation's 15-year commitment to the stronghold strategy," Rahr says. "Gordon Moore's leadership helped to usher in a new generation of salmon conservationists and win victories that remain firmly in place."

Under the guidance of Aileen Lee, Charles Conn, Ivan Thompson, and Pic Walker, the Moore Foundation supported a new generation of conservation leaders in British Columbia and local efforts to fight illegal fishing, while working with WSC to support Marine Stewardship Council certification across Kamchatka, establish the 544,000-acre Kol River Salmon Refuge-Russia's first salmon park-and foster knowledge exchange among the world's top salmon conservation scientists.

"Over the years, I spent quality time on the water with Gordon, including a trip down the Zhupanova in Russia," Rahr recalls. "Gordon was inspiring: a long-term thinker who truly valued the role of science in salmon recovery. He made a tremendous impact on conservation across the Pacific Rim."





# Institutional Funders

Roughly half of WSC's annual support comes from foundations, companies, and government agencies. These committed partners are essential to our work. Thank you.

### Government Funders

Foundation Funders

Audubon Society of Portland

Bevond Boundaries Expeditions &

Anonymous

Autzen Foundation

Bella Vista Foundation

Baranof Wilderness

The Builders Initiative

Burning Foundation

Edgerton Foundation

Glassybaby Foundation

Grassy Creek Foundation

Harder Foundation

The Healy Foundation

Horizons Foundation

Hugh and Jane Ferguson

L.P. Brown Foundation

Newcomers Welcome Club

D27 Foundation

Foundation

Foundation

Lazar Foundation

Boreal Songbird Initiative

The Conservation Alliance

Donald Slavik Family Foundation

The Eurasian Conservation Fund

of Silicon Valley Community

Alaska Department of Fish & Game National Fish and Wildlife Foundation NOAA Restoration Center USDA Forest Service US Fish and Wildlife Service Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office

The New-Land Foundation, Inc. Oregon Community Foundation Oregon Wild Pew Charitable Trusts The Portland Garden Club Resources Legacy Fund Taimen Conservation Fund Wallace Research Foundation Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Foundation Weeden Foundation Wilburforce Foundation William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Yellow Dog Community & Conservation Foundation

### Corporate Funders

Anonymous 1% for the Planet Bamboo Sushi Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's Outdoor Fund Becker Capital Management Bevond Boundaries Expeditions Cell Signaling Technology (CST) Cohoweb Consulting LLC Division Optical Earth Is An Island Designs Elevate Building Commissioning Fly Water Travel The Harbor Fish Company Harbor Ophthalmology HKM Employment Attorneys Integral Ecology Group lim Callahan Studio

Juniper Ridge Lam Research Madrone Hill Mobile Home Park McDonald Jacobs Mountain Rose Herbs Multnomah Whisk{e}y Library Natural Systems Design Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP Owyhee Fishing LLC Patagonia Portland Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries, Inc. Portland Fly Shop Portland General Electric Rahr Corporation Sage Manufacturing Tower Rock Lodge Walrus Oil Water Time Outfitters Yonder, Inc. Your True Nature, Inc. 7GF Architects Matching Gift Companies

Apple, Inc. Boeing Investment Bank Expedia Genentech Google.org HPI Intel Liberty Mutual Mastercard Mercari Netflix Nike, Inc. Raytheon Technologies Salesforce.org

# Thank you to all our donors

Your generosity is what makes our conservation work possible. The full honor roll of our growing base of supporters can now be found at wildsalmoncenter.org/2022honor-roll.

Credit Agricole Corporate and

JP Morgan Chase Foundation

Russell Matching Gifts Program

UBS Financial Services



### CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT: Bamboo Sushi

For 15 years, Portland-based Bamboo Sushi has aimed to be a "restaurant of purpose"-to enrich the communities it serves in ten locations across four U.S. states, while reducing its carbon footprint.

"At Bamboo Sushi we are dedicated to actionable transparency in our sustainability commitments," says Jin Soo Yang, Bamboo's Chief Culinary Officer. This commitment to transparency and quality is reflected in both its fidelity to sourcing wild sockeye from Bristol Bay and its overall sourcing practices across seafood, land-based proteins, and even its packaging as it works to reduce the use of virgin plastics in its kitchens and to-go packaging.

In 2022 Bamboo Sushi joined WSC as a new Corporate Partner as part of its 1% for the Planet pledge. In addition to its annual commitment, Bamboo Sushi contributes a substantial portion of the restaurant's Earth Day sales to WSC. This generous support enhances our work to protect wild salmon strongholds across the North Pacific.

"We applaud WSC's leadership role in protecting wild salmon strongholds across the North Pacific and their tireless advocacy not only for critical watersheds like Bristol Bay, but also for Indigenous communities and the protection of their salmon-based way of life," says Jin, who has worked Bristol Bay's commercial fishing season. "We're proud to lend Bamboo's voice and resources to help support and raise awareness of WSC's significant and ongoing work." Learn more about Bamboo Sushi at bamboosushi.com.

# Financial Statement: Fiscal Year of 2022



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

### Winning for Wild Salmon

- 7.7 million acres of salmon habitat protected across the Pacific Rim
- 89 rivers designated for wild fish conservation
- 5 major projects stopped or shelved, including three dams, an LNG pipeline, and Pebble Mine
- **60,000 miles** of Oregon rivers and streams estimated safeguarded through expanded riparian habitat rules



Wild Salmon Center has received the highest rating for sound fiscal management from Charity Navigator.

Gold

2023

Candid.

Transparency

WSC has received the **GuideStar gold seal** for transparency.

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



WSC has been approved to receive grants through the One Percent for the Planet program.



Including Wild Salmon Center in your estate plans helps us ensure the most important ecosystems for wild salmon and steelhead are protected for generations to come. Learn more at <u>wildsalmoncenter.org/legacy</u>.



# Andrew Dutterer: A Legacy of Thriving Rivers in Oregon

For Andrew Dutterer, fishing was the common thread that wove together his past, present, and future.

Fishing was a connection to his grandparents and the memories of exploring the forest on their West Virginia farm; a link to his great-grandfather, "a grizzled fisherman with a soft heart"; and a way to know his grandfather, a charismatic outdoorsman and direct descendant of the Choctaw Nation who passed away when Andrew's mom was a child.

"Fishing and wading in rivers were ways that he connected with those ancestral spirits and felt more alive himself," says Caitlin Dutterer, his wife.

Andrew fly-fished on the rippling rivers of rural Vermont during college, spent months exploring New Zealand's rivers, and ultimately made his home among the majestic rivers of the Northwest. While managing the Deschutes Angler fly shop in Maupin, Oregon, he witnessed the enormous ecological and social impacts that river and fishery management decisions had on his community. He knew he could create positive change for fish and people by influencing those decisions.

Andrew earned dual graduate degrees focused on water science and water policy from the University of Oregon, then landed at the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), where he coordinated state grants for collaborative watershed restoration efforts.

"Andrew really embodied the spirit of OWEB's work and our passion for fish and wildlife habitat," says Meta Loftsgaarden, former Executive Director. "He knew these fish inside and out."

After Andrew's tragic passing in September 2021, family members asked Wild Salmon Center to direct gifts in his memory to our restoration efforts in Oregon.

"Andrew's work at OWEB ran parallel to WSC's stronghold approach," says Meta. "Protecting the best, strongest rivers that have the potential to carry on—not only for the resilience of the fish, but the landscapes around them."

Donations to Andrew's memorial fund were instrumental in building a new, watershedscale restoration plan for Oregon's Nehalem River, which recently helped leverage significant public grants for projects (see Coastal Restoration, page 12).

"Supporting this restoration work honors Andrew," says Caitlin. "He cared strongly about fish conservation for future generations. I hope this work inspires people to explore their local rivers and watersheds, wherever they may live. They will find Andrew there, too."

"I hope this work inspires people to explore their local rivers and watersheds, wherever they may live. They will find Andrew there, too." —Caitlin Dutterer



# Staff

Guido Rahr. President and Chief Executive Officer Emily Anderson, Alaska Program Director William Atlas, Ph.D., Senior Salmon Watershed Scientist Jessica Baker, Events & Donor Engagement Coordinator Cavlin Barter, Oregon Water Policy Senior Program Manager Oakley Brooks, Communications Director Michelle Cramer, Habitat Restoration Engineer Jody Creasman, Media Design Coordinator Cyndi Curtis, North Coast Manager Ramona DeNies, Senior Writer Stacey Detwiler, Oregon Policy Senior Program Manager Melaney Dunne, Salmon Watershed Scientist Tim Elder, Ph.D., Southwest Oregon Program Manager Erin Ellis, Human Resources Manager David Finkel, VP of Development & Communications, Executive Director of The Stronghold Fund Jon Hart, GIS Spatial Analyst lessica Helsley. Director of Government Affairs & Washington Program Katherine Holler, CPA, CGMA, Chief Financial Officer Lori Howk, Senior Media Design Manager Kimberly Kosa, Development Director

Audie Paulus, Senior Manager,

Corporate & Donor Relations

Nicole Rasmussen, Fish Habitat

Nancy Slavin, Grants Coordinator

Ellie Stair, Development Associate

Tasha Thompson, Ph.D., Polsky

Billy Blewett, British Columbia

Kate Crump, Oregon/Alaska

Jeff Hickman, Oregon/B.C.

April Vokey, B.C./Australia

Dan Michels, Alaska

Ken Morrish, Oregon

Program Director

Science Fellow

Ambassadors

Conservation Research Fellow

Mark Trenholm, VP of Conservation

Mariusz Wroblewski, Western Pacific

Specialist

Betsy Krier, Washington Senior Habitat Manager Michael Lang, Oregon Policy Senior Program Manager Hollye Maxwell, Executive Assistant Jordan McCauley, Government Grants Manager Noel O'Donnell, Administrative Assistant Amee Pacheco, Grants Director



Welcome to our new staff of 2022-2023! Pictured below are Jordan McCauley, Cyndi Curtis, Michael Lang, Nicole Rasmussen, and Noel O'Donnell. Additional new staff (included above) are Jessica Baker, Michelle Cramer, Stacey Detwiler, Melaney Dunne, and Jon Hart. We are so grateful for their talent and dedication.





WSC Board members. Top left to right: John Childs, Andrea Reid, Steven Kohl, David E. Kelley, Nate Mantua, Loretta Keller, Mitch Zuklie, Mary Ruckelshaus, (former Board member) Deke Welles. Bottom left to right: Rick Halford, (former Board member) Tatiana Degai, Rhea Suh, and WSC President Guido Rahr.

Front, back, and inside cover: Bristol Bay sockeye from Iliamna Lake (Jason Ching).





# Board of Directors

Chair: Mitch Zuklie, California Jon Callaghan, California John Childs, Massachusetts Rick Halford, Alaska Loretta Keller, California David E. Kelley, California Steven Kohl, Virginia Rav Lane, California Nate Mantua, Ph.D., California Guido Rahr. Oregon Andrea Reid, Ph.D., British Columbia Mary Ruckelshaus, Ph.D., Washington Rhea Suh, California Ivan Thompson, British Columbia

### Emeritus

Peter W. Soverel (Founder) lack Stanford, Ph.D.

### Science Advisory Board

Chair: Mary Ruckelshaus, Ph.D., Stanford University Jonathan Armstrong, Ph.D., Oregon State University Stephanie Carlson, Ph.D., UC Berkeley Nate Mantua, Ph.D., NOAA John McCosker, Ph.D., Cal Academy of Sciences, retired Michael Miller, Ph.D., UC Davis Ionathan Moore, Ph.D., Simon Fraser University Randall Peterman, Ph.D., Simon Fraser University, retired Gordie Reeves, Ph.D., USFS, retired Andrea Reid, Ph.D., University of British Columbia

### Welcome New Board Members

*Jon Callaghan* is an early stage venture capitalist and co-founder of True Ventures. He has been in the venture capital business since 1991 and built three companies of his own, including Mountain Bike Outfitters. Inc., created at age 18. He started his venture career at Summit Partners and then joined Greenhouse, AOL's venture capital investment group and incubator. He entered the internet market in 1996 by joining CMGI's @Ventures group. Before founding True, Callaghan was a managing director at Globespan Capital Partners. He received a bachelor's degree in government from Dartmouth College and an MBA, with distinction, from Harvard Business School.

**Rhea Suh** is the President and CEO of the Marin Community Foundation. Before MCF, Suh served as President of the Natural Resources Defense Council. From 2009 to 2015, she was the Assistant Secretary for policy, management, and budget at the U.S. Department of the Interior under the Obama Administration. Prior to her appointment, Suh created and ran a \$200 million conservation and clean energy program for the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and developed similarly far-reaching programs at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, where she led the effort to create the Great Bear Rainforest. Suh earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science from Barnard College and a master's degree in education, administration, planning, and social policy from Harvard University.



# Wild Salmon Center

721 NW Ninth Ave, Suite 300 Portland, OR 97209 (503) 222-1804

wildsalmoncenter.org