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.

Guido Rahr
President and Chief Executive


William Rahr

Jason Ching

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*

Winning protections
steelhead acro

See pg. 20 for our work in Mongolia.

for wild salmon and
oss the Pacific

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

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

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

UTBB Executive Director Alannah Hurley at the White House in May 2023

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."

VICTORY

PEBBLE MINE

Jason Ching

Bristol Bay rally in Anchorage, Alaska

SalmonState

WSC's David Finkel, Emily Anderson, and Guido Rahr in D.C.

WSC Staff

Bristol Bay Defense Fund celebration in Portland, Oregon

WSC Staff

Stopping Pebble Mine

For more than 30 years, Wild Salmon Center has built a conservation strategy driven by grit, science, and trust. This year, our partner-based approach saw the world's greatest wild salmon fishery saved at last from a devastating gold mine.

2001: Mining Claims

Canada-based Northern Dynasty (backer of the Pebble Limited Partnership) announces plans for a vast gold, copper, and molybdenum mine in Alaska, at the headwaters of Bristol Bay's Nushagak and Kvichak Rivers.

2010: Call on EPA to Take Action

Six Bristol Bay Tribes, along with commercial and recreational fishers, ask the Obama Administration's Environmental Protection Agency to use its Clean Water Act authority to protect Bristol Bay.

2012: WSC Leads Science

Wild Salmon Center publishes Bristol Bay's ***Wild Salmon Ecosystems and the Pebble Mine***, the first technical report to lay out the mine's risk to the region's wild salmon fisheries.

OVER 4 MILLION comments were sent to the EPA

August 2020: Support Craters
WSC reaches out to prominent Republicans 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.

September 2020: Caught on Tape
The leaked "Pebble Tapes" reveal mine executives' lies about the true size of the mine concept, along with their manipulation of politicians.

November 2020: Army Corps Pauses Project
Pebble fails to earn a key permit for construction from the Army Corps.

A swing toward success

2021: EPA Restarts Protections
EPA announces it will restart the process to protect Bristol Bay under the Clean Water Act.

2022: Widespread Support
EPA releases a proposed determination for protecting Bristol Bay; the agency receives 500,000 public comments in favor of protection.

Victory!

2023: EPA Final Determination
In January 2023, in its final determination, EPA announces protections will safeguard 200,000 acres at the headwaters of Alaska's Nushagak and Kvichak Rivers.

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).

2012: Growing the Grassroots

Emily Anderson joins WSC to head our Alaska Program. Outreach efforts grow and WSC and partners host events throughout Alaska and in the lower 48, building growing opposition to the mine.

2014: Political Allies

WSC, Senator Maria Cantwell, and fishing families from across the Northwest rally for Clean Water Act protections for Bristol Bay in Seattle's Fishermen's Terminal.

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.

Turn for the worse

between 2010 to 2022 — thanks to advocates like you!

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.

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.

2019: New Coalition

WSC and partners launch the Bristol Bay Defense Fund, securing new funding and momentum for the Stop Pebble Mine campaign.

July 2020: On the Brink

The Army Corps recommends approving Pebble for a major permit, despite 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 wildlife, fisheries, and an Alaskan and Indigenous way of life.

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

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

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

Brady Holden

WSC 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.

Brady Holden

Wilson River, OR

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

TODAY

Since 2017, we've built a pipeline of smart, shovel-ready coastal 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.


Brady Holden

Quillayute River, WA

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 re-open 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


Brady Holden

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

Spring Chinook staging in Butte Creek, CA

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.

Chinook salmon

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.

TRUE VICTORY

Next, we'll scale these early wins to complete science-based policies that protect water in the Northwest's best salmon streams.

Defending an iconic Alaskan watershed

TODAY

Drawing on past wins in the Susitna, we've built a coalition to stop a 100-mile road through the wild West Su.

TRUE VICTORY

To truly safeguard the West Susitna, we must make sure that it stays wild and roadless for future generations.

Brandon Cole

Overlooking the headwaters of the Susitna River, AK

The proposed 100-mile road would cross 182 waterways (at least 83 with wild salmon) within the West Susitna region.

Alaska's Susitna River

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, watershed-scale 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

Pat Clayton

Chinook salmon

28 Million Acres at Risk

In Alaska, everything is bigger. That includes a historic opportunity to protect huge tracts of federal public land in 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 working to retain D-1 protection and even strengthen it—seizing this moment as a shot to secure a bigger victory.

"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."

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

WSC Staff

Billy Blewett (Lower Dean River Lodge), Dr. Matt Sloat (WSC), and 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."

Alamy

Leading the way in salmon conservation science

TODAY

Our research reforms a B.C. chum fishery and closes critical data gaps for conservation scientists and fisheries managers across the North Pacific.

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.

See the latest science at wildsalmoncenter.org/publications

Rallying a global initiative around a legendary salmonid

TODAY

Our International Taimen Initiative convenes top scientists to accelerate the study of a charismatic and imperiled megafish.

TRUE VICTORY

With better data on taimen, we can build a powerful and far-reaching new conservation strategy in Asia and Europe.

Dr. Matt Sloat with a Siberian taimen in Mongolia

WSC Staff

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.

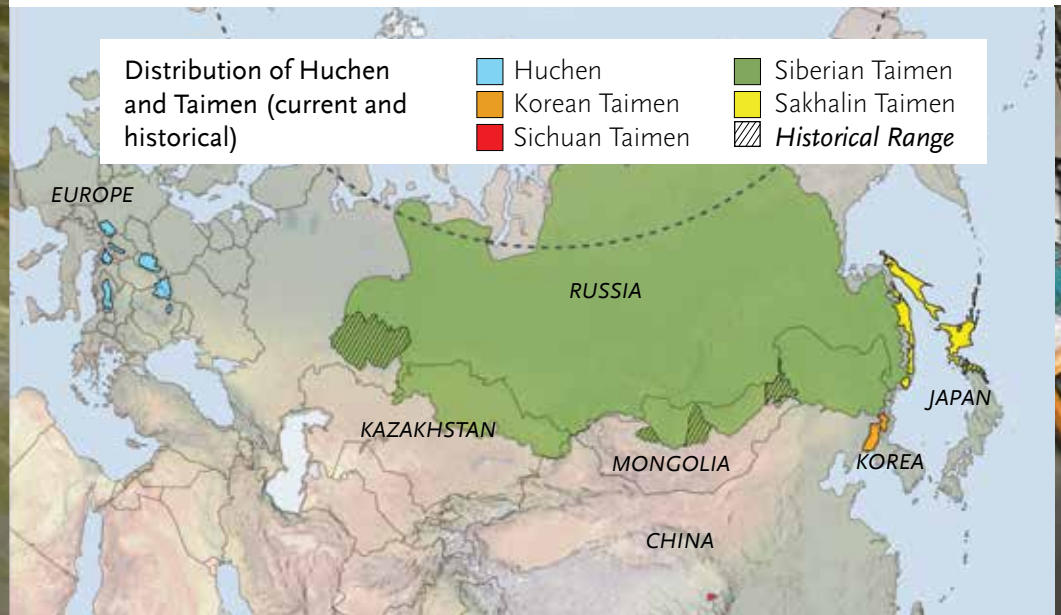
The historical range of this group of species is vast, covering one-tenth of the world's surface, from Europe's Danube to Korea to the Sea of Okhotsk. Adult taimen prey on lenok, grayling, and even other adult salmon, hunting in packs to earn the nickname "river wolves."

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

WSC Staff

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

Alamy

Taku River, AK

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 long-standing 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.

Ken Morrish

Babine River, B.C.

Championing our local partners in Northern B.C.

TODAY

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."

Open net-pen salmon farm in B.C. Tavish Campbell

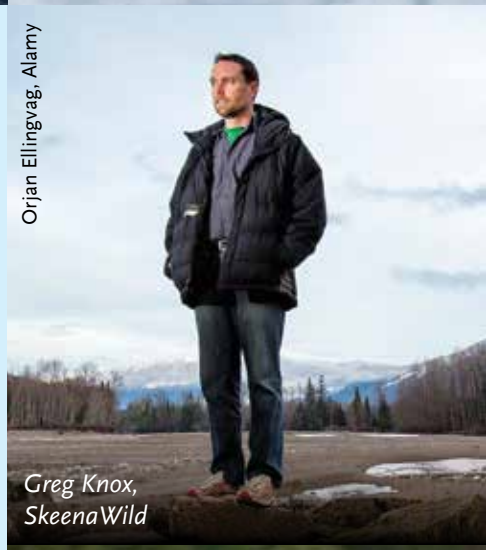
Alamy

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.



Greg Knox, SkeenaWild Orjan Ellingvag, Alamy

Dr. Will Atlas (WSC) and Nuxalk Guardian Watchman Ernie Talio on the Kimsquit River, B.C. Olivia Leigh Nowak

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
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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

GRANTS

SkeenaWild Conservation Trust
Coastal Rivers Conservancy
Watershed Watch Salmon Society
Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Oregon Water Initiative
West Susitna Campaign
Tillamook Rainforest Campaign

Building our base across the North Pacific

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

Guido Rahr

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

—WSC President & 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 Wild Salmon Ecosystems Initiative, this support became truly transformational.

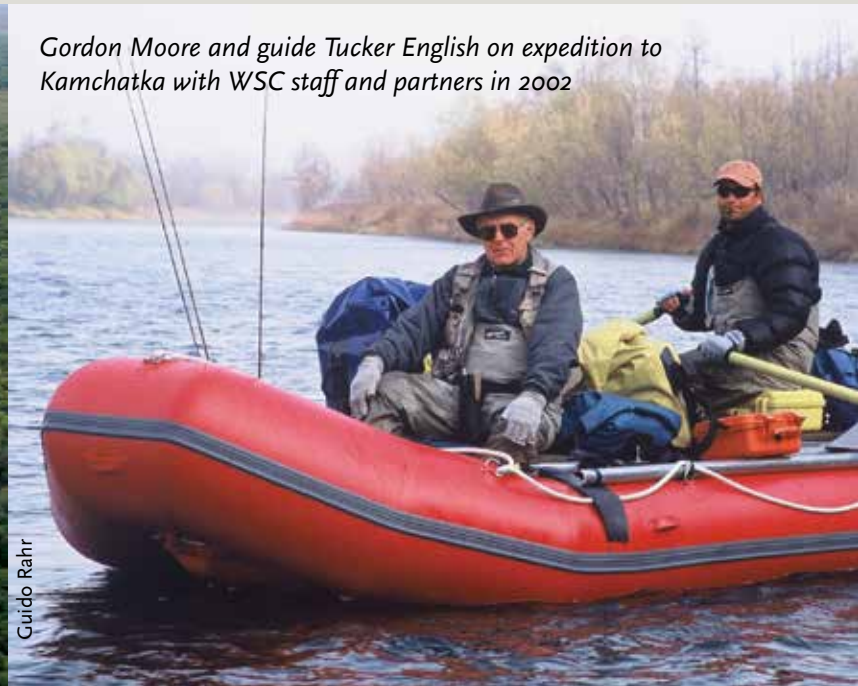
"To this day, our mission is built on the Moore Foundation's 15-year commitment to the stronghold strategy," Rahr says. "Gordon Moore's leadership helped to usher in a new generation of salmon conservationists and win victories that remain firmly in place."

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."

Kol River Salmon Refuge, Kamchatka

Guido Rahr



Gordon Moore and guide Tucker English on expedition to Kamchatka with WSC staff and partners in 2002

Guido Rahr

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

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

Foundation Funders

Anonymous
Audubon Society of Portland
Autzen Foundation
Bella Vista Foundation
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Boreal Songbird Initiative
The Builders Initiative
Burning Foundation
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Oregon Community Foundation
Oregon Wild
Pew Charitable Trusts
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Taimen Conservation Fund
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Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Foundation
Weeden Foundation
Wilburforce Foundation
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Yellow Dog Community & Conservation Foundation

Corporate Funders

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1% for the Planet
Bamboo Sushi
Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's Outdoor Fund
Becker Capital Management
Beyond 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
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Expedia
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Netflix
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Russell Matching Gifts Program
Salesforce.org
UBS Financial Services

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.


Bamboo Sushi

CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT: Bamboo Sushi

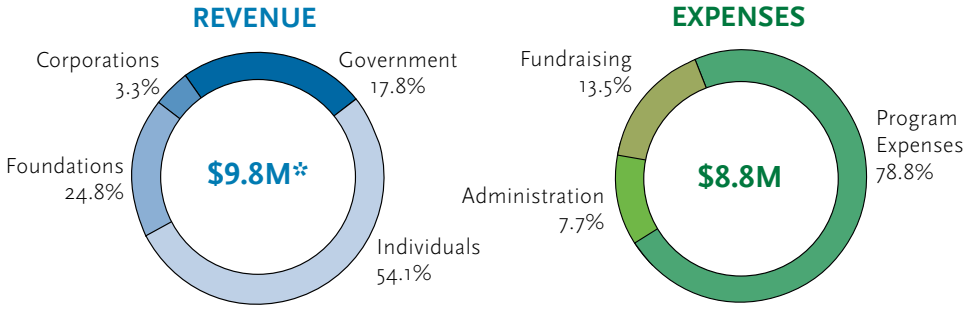
For 15 years, Portland-based Bamboo Sushi has aimed to be a "restaurant of purpose"—to enrich the communities it serves in ten locations across four U.S. states, while reducing its carbon footprint.

"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

CHARITY NAVIGATOR
Four Star Charity

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

WSC has received the GuideStar gold seal for transparency.

Gold Transparency 2023
Candid.

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

The Conservation Alliance
Outdoor Business Giving Back to the Outdoors

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

1% FOR THE PLANET

Caitlin Dutterer

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, watershed-scale 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

Dave Herasimtschuk

Restoration in Oregon's Nehalem River

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
Caylin 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
Jessica Helsley, Director of Government Affairs & Washington Program
Katherine Holler, CPA, CGMA, Chief Financial Officer
Lori Howk, Senior Media Design Manager
Kimberly Kosa, Development Director
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


Andrea Lonas

Audie Paulus, Senior Manager, Corporate & Donor Relations
Nicole Rasmussen, Fish Habitat Specialist
Nancy Slavin, Grants Coordinator
Matthew Sloat, Ph.D., Science Director
Ellie Stair, Development Associate
Tasha Thompson, Ph.D., Polsky Conservation Research Fellow
Mark Trenholm, VP of Conservation
Mariusz Wroblewski, Western Pacific Program Director

Science Fellow

Mikhail Skopets, Ph.D., Science Fellow

Ambassadors

Billy Blewett, British Columbia
Kate Crump, Oregon/Alaska
Jeff Hickman, Oregon/B.C.
Dan Michels, Alaska
Ken Morrish, Oregon
April Vokey, B.C./Australia

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 Staff


WSC Staff

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
Ray 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

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Jack Stanford, Ph.D.

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Jonathan Armstrong, Ph.D., Oregon State University
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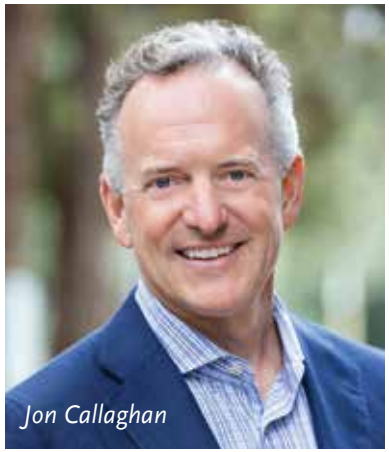
Nate Mantua, Ph.D., NOAA
John McCosker, Ph.D., Cal Academy of Sciences, retired
Michael Miller, Ph.D., UC Davis
Jonathan Moore, Ph.D., Simon Fraser University
Randall Peterman, Ph.D., Simon Fraser University, retired
Gordie Reeves, Ph.D., USFS, retired
Andrea Reid, Ph.D., University of British Columbia

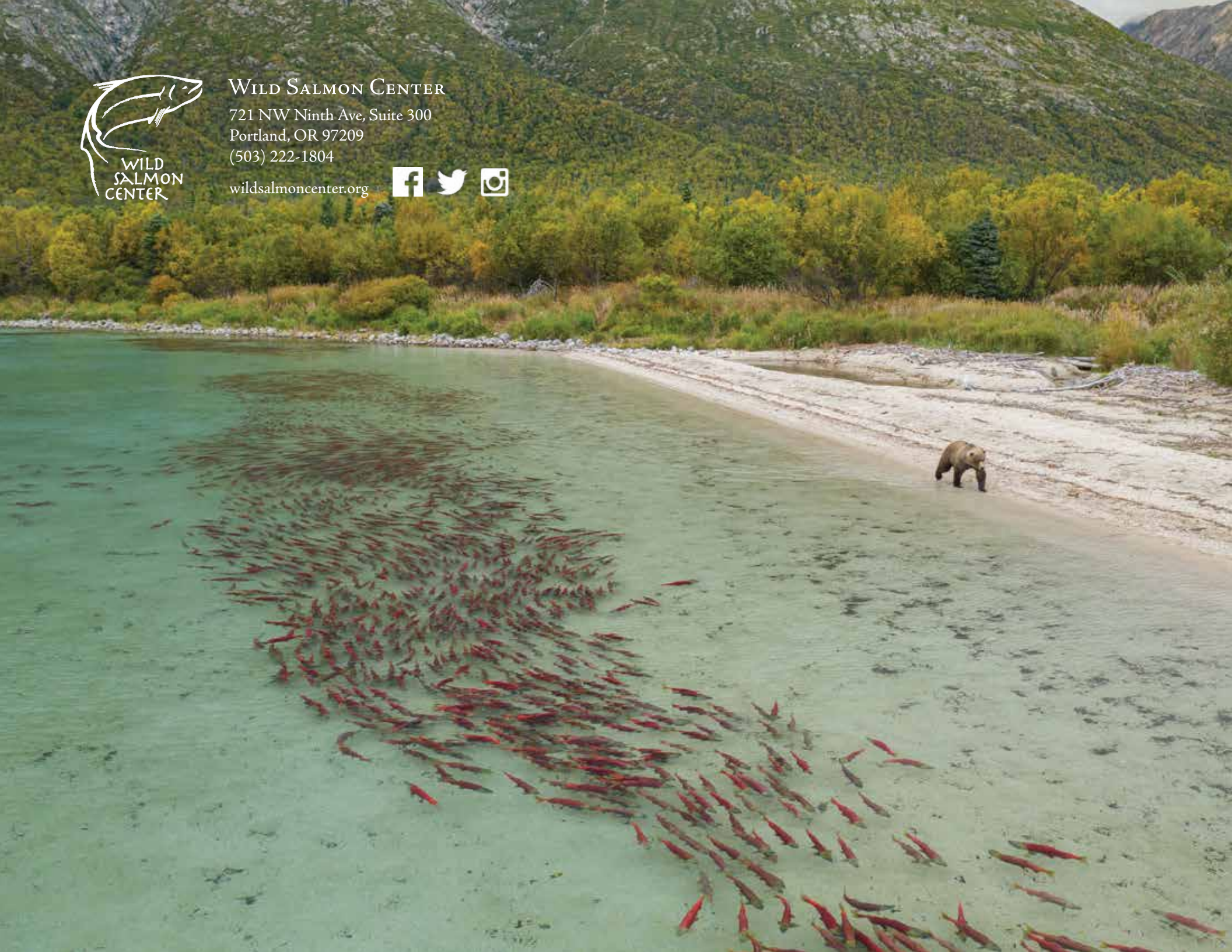

Jon Callaghan


Rhea Suh

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.



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