CORPORATE DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

Green Spoon Sales

This summer, the Green Spoon Sales team took a vote. At stake: which nonprofits would the Boulder-based natural foods sales agency support with its 1% For the Planet pledge?

"This is just the second year that we've been in a position to participate in the pledge," says Green Spoon CEO and Co-Founder Kari Pedriana. "We wanted everyone on the team to have a voice in where those dollars would go."

She's not surprised that her team picked Wild Salmon Center. After all, building a better world is at the heart of the startup that Pedriana and her husband launched in 2012. And Green Spoon employees truly live these values. In 2023 alone, the 200+ staff completed more than 1,552 volunteer hours. This year, the team is on track to surpass 2,250 volunteer hours—and once again give back to nonprofits.

Pedriana says the environment is also why customers flock to the products that Green Spoon gets on grocery shelves across the United States: beloved brands like Primal


Green Spoon Sales

Green Spoon Sales CEO and Co-Founder Kari Pedriana (center) and staff at a volunteer event.

Kitchen, Patagonia Provisions, and Kettle & Fire. These are brands that meet Green Spoon's exacting standards in areas including water conservation and ingredient sourcing.

"Our goal is to clean up grocery shelves across the country," Pedriana says. "It's why, for us, nonprofits that focus on the health of the land stand out. I fell in love with the natural world on the rivers of Montana. So it means a lot to me to be able to give back."

Learn more at greenspoonsales.com.


WSC Staff

Join the Stronghold Guardian Circle

Wild salmon are at the heart of Wild Salmon Center's mission. By joining our Stronghold Guardian Circle with a monthly gift of $10 or more, you can help protect these keystone species and the stronghold rivers they support around the Pacific Rim.

Monthly donors enable WSC to get to work where it matters most. Your support helps protect salmon strongholds from damaging development, restore rivers back to health, and conserve wild fish runs using the latest science.

It takes time and sustained effort to conserve the stronghold rivers of the North Pacific. Monthly giving is the most convenient way for our committed supporters to provide reliable funds that WSC can count on as we plan for the coming year.

Sign up for a monthly gift of $10 or more today and we'll send you a new WSC hat as a token of our appreciation. By becoming a Stronghold Guardian, you are committing to the future of our planet's most important salmon watersheds. Join today to help protect wild salmon and the rivers they call home.

Become a Stronghold Guardian today.

WILD SALMON CENTER | 2001 NW 19th Ave, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97209 (503) 222-1804 | wildsalmoncenter.org

Wild Salmon Center FALL • 2024


Erin McKittrick

Big Win for Alaska!

Public Land Protections from Bristol Bay to the Yukon

This August, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior announced full protections for 28 million acres of public lands across Alaska, safeguarding them from extractive development.

Tens of thousands of businesses, Tribal leaders, salmon advocates, and wilderness lovers asked for these protections this year. As part of this decision, 1.2 million acres near the Pebble deposit will also be off limits to mining and drilling, helping to stop the next generation of threats in Bristol Bay.

On behalf of our many campaign partners, thank you! Read on for how we won this victory, and what it means for fish, wildlife, and the health of our planet.

The Campaign to Keep Alaska Public Lands in Public Hands

In January 2021, Wild Salmon Center and our partners began to work to stop five Public Land Orders prepared by the previous Secretary of the Interior under the Trump Administration. These orders aimed to open 28 million acres of Alaska public lands and waters to extractive industrial development. ***(cont. next page)***

Dorsey Pictures

Salmon to Get Their Big-Screen Spotlight

INSIDE: Filming is underway for the world's first salmon IMAX. *(see pg. 3)*

IN THIS ISSUE

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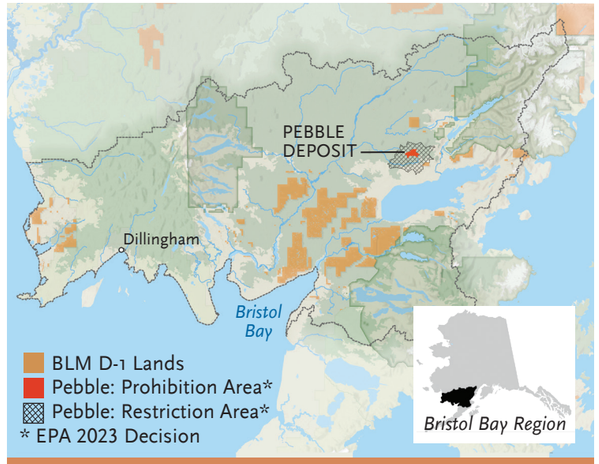
Alaska, cont.

These special federal lands span the state, from Bristol Bay and the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta to the famed Copper River and the nation's largest bald eagle preserve in Southeast Alaska. Known as "D-1" lands, these acres have been considered off limits to mineral, oil, and gas extraction since the passage of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).

Alaska's BLM-managed D-1 lands (50.1 million acres in total) cover roughly 13 percent of the state. These large swaths of unfragmented habitat represent some of the nation's largest remaining intact ecosystems, from high alpine tundra to pristine estuaries and wetlands in places like Bristol Bay, home to the world's most abundant wild sockeye runs.

These landscapes support migratory birds and herds of caribou. Their undisturbed watersheds deliver the cold, clean water that wild fish need to weather accelerating climate impacts. For Alaska Native communities that rely on subsistence fishing and hunting, D-1 lands support food security and a way of life that has endured for millennia. These protections are arguably more important than ever, given the pressures of climate change on Alaska's natural systems, fish and wildlife populations, and human communities.

In 2023—when the Bureau of Land Management launched an environmental review process—that brought us a chance to make the case that strong D-1 land protections, not resource extraction, best serve the public interest. And make the case, you did.



With our partners, WSC fought to keep 28 million Alaskan public acres off limits to mining and oil and gas development. More than one million acres of these lands are in the Bristol Bay region, where our coalition recently stopped Pebble Mine.

Over 145,000 Americans—including more than half of Alaska Native Tribes—and hundreds of businesses, hunters, anglers, and conservationists spoke up for D-1 land protections. Thanks to this broad support, we won a better future for some of the planet's last, best undisturbed public lands.

> *"Through this decision, federal land managers have protected 28 million public acres for fish and wildlife—and a way of life for Alaska Native communities."* - *Emily Anderson, Wild Salmon Center Alaska Director*

State Ratchets Up Pressure for a West Susitna Industrial Road

Alaska's roadless West Susitna wilderness is a state treasure: a vast wonderland of game refuges, backcountry hunting areas, fly-fishing streams, and the Iditarod Trail. That's why, for the past two years, our Defend the West Su coalition has been working to stop a 100-mile, publicly financed industrial access road from piercing the heart of this pristine region—cutting across more than 80 salmon-bearing streams in the process.

But in July, the Alaska Department of Transportation bucked strong public opposition to launch the first phase of its salmon-threatening road project. DOT claims it wants to build a "recreation" road with no relationship to the larger industrial road. But where DOT's road ends, the industrial road begins.


Alamy

We weren't fooled. Wild Salmon Center and our coalition partners spent the summer traveling across the state to let Alaskans know about DOT's sneak attack. At events like Salmonfest, we gathered hundreds of public comments speaking up for the West Susitna's public lands and salmon streams.

Now, we're working harder than ever to prevent the privatization of the West Susitna region. But we need your help to stop a project that threatens to repurpose the entire region for industrial development. With your support, we can keep the West Susitna a public treasure—a wonderland of abundant fish and wildlife, rich fishing, hunting and recreational opportunities, and the hub of a thriving tourism-based economy. *Learn more at westsuwild.org.*

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Ratmir Timashev

In 2021, tech leader Ratmir Timashev, the founder of Veeam Software, sat down to read the book *Stronghold*, the story of Wild Salmon Center CEO Guido Rahr's quest to save the world's wild salmon. Later that year, he met the man himself, while fly fishing in Bristol Bay, Alaska.

"Before that, I only really viewed salmon as one of the healthier meal options in my otherwise standard American diet," says Timashev, a serial technology entrepreneur who lives in Connecticut. "From Guido and later the WSC, I learned that the health of our salmon populations is a bellwether for the health of our rivers, oceans, and communities across the Pacific. Because of their fascinating life cycle and migration patterns, entire ecosystems feed off salmon and cannot afford for them to go extinct."

Timashev says since that Alaska trip, he's come to see parallels in WSC's stronghold approach to salmon conservation and his own approach to success in the world of technology.

> *"WSC understands that to protect wild salmon, you need to target this entire system—from the rivers where salmon spawn to the oceans where they mature and well beyond."*
>
> *- Ratmir Timashev, founder of Veeam Software*

"Like my companies in our target markets, the WSC team are experts in salmon," Timashev says. "WSC understands that to protect wild salmon, you need to target this entire system—from the rivers where salmon spawn to the oceans where they mature and well beyond. And that's similar to how I've approached business problems."


Ratmir Timashev (right) with guide Evan Schock on Alaska's Crystal Creek.
Guido Rahr

He also sees parallels in another, deeply personal endeavor: the quest to engage new generations in building a better future. Through the new Center for Software Innovation, his vision is nurturing young science and technology professionals at Ohio State University, his alma mater. Timashev says he sees a similar imperative for organizations like WSC to motivate the world's next salmon conservation stewards.

The quest to scale WSC's winning approach and reach younger generations is what drew him to support one of WSC's most ambitious efforts yet: our forthcoming IMAX film and outreach campaign to reach wild salmon champions across the planet.

"The scope of the challenges we face is enormous," Timashev says. "By involving and empowering young people to take ownership of these issues and solutions, we are not just preparing them for their futures. **We are passing the baton and ensuring that today's work expands for decades to come.**"


WSC Staff
Sukhbat Davaadorj on Mongolia's Delger River.

Mongolia Field Work

This summer, Wild Salmon Center scientists floated the Delger River with partner Mongolia River Outfitters and local researchers, including university student Sukhbat Davaadorj—pictured here with a lenok, a trout species vital to the diet of the world's largest salmonid, Siberian taimen.

"Sukhbat had never fly fished before," says WSC Salmon Watershed Scientist Melaney Dunne. "So when he caught this fish on our last day, it was an exciting moment for all of us."

A tissue sample from this lenok is now part of our research on the food webs of imperiled taimen. Field work is key to the work of WSC's Mongolia Program to cultivate new river stewards while shaping taimen conservation policies in Mongolia and beyond.

Bringing Back the Sitka Spruce Swamp

Maybe you've heard about the tidal mangrove swamps of Florida, Jamaica, and Indonesia—prized for their carbon-sequestering superpowers and the cool, shady refuge they create for fish and wildlife.

"A lot of people know about mangrove swamps," says Cyndi Curtis, Wild Salmon Center Oregon North Coast Manager. "Not so many know about Sitka spruce swamps, another forested wetland that's totally unique to the Pacific Northwest."

Like mangroves, Sitka spruce swamps store massive amounts of carbon. And as sea levels rise across the West, they can serve as storm surge buffers for lowland communities. A century ago, spruce swamps hugged estuaries and rivers up and down the Northwest coast. Today, just a few remnant forests remain—and vanishingly few larger than 20 acres.

The scale of this loss is a new revelation, Curtis says, driven by the work of wetland ecologist Laura Brophy, who estimates that **Oregon has lost 95 percent of its spruce swamp habitat since the 1870s.**

"Thanks to Laura, we have a much better idea of what these coastal landscapes looked like when salmon were still truly abundant," Curtis says. "Her work has helped make Sitka swamps one of our top conservation priorities on the Oregon Coast."

Now, a growing number of conservationists like Curtis are rallying to protect this rare habitat type—not just for its climate and flood mitigation benefits, but also for its role in nurturing juvenile salmon. Until recently, salmon restoration has often focused on upstream spawning and rearing habitat. But Curtis says a growing body of research shows that salmon also need healthy estuaries and tidelands—areas where the Sitka spruce swamp could help, if it makes a comeback.

"Spruce swamps often border larger streams, making them refuges for juvenile salmon all year long," Curtis says. "In winter, fish look for calmer waters where they can eat and rest. In the summer, the swamp's dense vegetation means they stay dark and cool, which can mean life or death for fish, given our increasingly hot summers."

That's why WSC and our partners are working with ecologist Brophy to understand and map these landscapes. By merging data on elevation, historic vegetation, salinity and climate change, we're creating a rich picture to share with interested landowners and local stakeholders—and see where, together, we can seed the spruce swamps of the future.

Recovering spruce swamps could play a key role in advancing our broader restoration vision in Washington State, as well as informing the work of the WSC-led Coast Coho Partnership in Oregon. What will it take? For starters, Curtis says, we need long-term partners—and patience.

> *"The hope is that we can start this restoration work now, so that when sea levels are higher, we can still have these habitats that provide so many benefits for people and fish."* - *Cyndi Curtis, Wild Salmon Center Oregon North Coast Manager*

Spruce swamps often border larger streams, which make them important refuges for juveniles all year long.

In Oregon, Habitat Plans for State and Private Forests Advance

OREGON FOREST POLICY TRACKER

State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan. The HCP would protect roughly half of Western Oregon state forest acres in conservation areas. Approved in March by the Oregon Board of Forestry, new delays have pushed federal approval back to 2026.

Private Forest Accord Habitat Conservation Plan. Oregon's historic 2022 private forest reforms still require federal approval by 2027. To get there, administrators must implement the law's full suite of programs—and finalize its own HCP.

Elliott State Research Forest. Established as the nation's largest research forest in 2022, agencies are crafting a new plan for the 83,000-acre Elliott: a unique mix of timber, research, conservation, and carbon storage.

Wild Salmon Center's Oregon Policy Team is pushing hard to keep two state habitat conservation plans on track. One would improve fish habitat and clean water across 630,000 state forest acres. A second would lock in new streamside habitat protections on more than 10 million acres of private forestland.

For state forests, we won a victory in March 2024 when the Oregon Board of Forestry advanced a habitat conservation plan now in place across Western Oregon. But this plan still requires a final federal review—a process that's since been delayed, pushing approval back to early 2026.

"Federal approval of the state forest plan is necessary to protect North Coast rivers and their critical salmon habitat," says Oregon Senior Policy Manager Michael Lang. "We are so close."

"The landmark reforms of 2022's Private Forest Accord aren't a done deal either," says Oregon Policy Director Stacey Detwiler. This summer, WSC and our partners stepped up work to ensure that critical PFA programs receive adequate funding in the state's next budget cycle.

"Oregon's historic agreement broke decades of gridlock on how best to manage private industrial forestlands," Detwiler says. "But without more support for the PFA, we don't yet have a clear path to federal approval for its 50-year habitat conservation plan."

Sign up for Oregon Forest & Fish News at forestlegacy.org to stay updated on all our Oregon policy initiatives.

Summer is for Salmon Restoration

Warmer weather is when the shovels come out—and the excavators, sump pumps, dump trucks, and slash crews. From Southern Oregon to Washington's Quillayute Basin, Wild Salmon Center and our partners spent the summer working to bring key salmon streams back to health.

In the Kentuck Valley of Oregon's Coos Basin, the WSC-led Coast Coho Partnership is recovering hundreds of wetland acres for salmon.

A new culvert for Washington's Anton Creek will fix passage for coho, steelhead, and lamprey.

Science

Clearcut-plantation forestry can reduce summer stream flow by 25-50% compared with unlogged watersheds

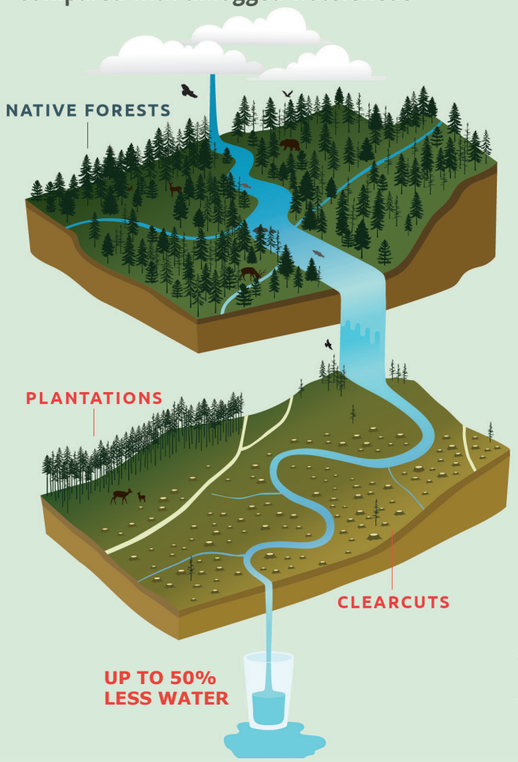


Illustration from GreenOregon.org

Find the study at wildsalmoncenter.org/publications.

How Logging Impacts Salmon Rivers

Wilder winter rivers and hotter summer streams: a new study shows that forestry can make life harder for wild fish.

Across the Pacific Northwest—and beyond—clearcuts scar coastal forests. For many salmon fans, the sight prompts mixed feelings, even confusion. In part, that's because competing messages about the relationship between industrial logging, forest health, and clean water churn all around us.

Now, a new comprehensive study proves that logging does impact salmon rivers, and not for the better. Published in *Ecological Solutions and Evidence*, the study synthesizes 50 years of water temperature and streamflow data in watersheds ranging from California to Alaska, with telling results for salmon-bearing rivers.

Drawing on studies that compared logged and unlogged watersheds, the team of scientists from Simon Fraser University's Salmon Watersheds Lab and Wild Salmon Center found that, broadly speaking, **forestry elevated winter flows by a mean 20 percent, reduced summer low flows by a mean 25 percent (and as much as 50 percent), and raised summer water temperatures by a mean 15 percent.**

"We already know that salmon face unprecedented threats from climate change," says WSC Science Director Dr. Matt Sloat, a study co-author. "Now we know that forestry can also change flows and temperatures in rivers, adding to these threats."

IN REMEMBRANCE: *Jim Lichatowich*

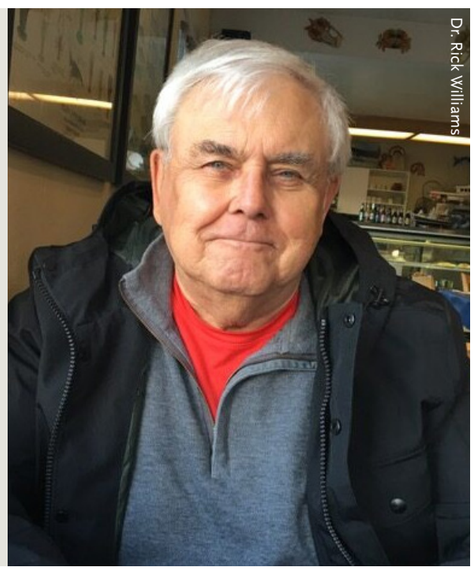
In April 2024, we lost a visionary scientist and wild fish advocate—one whose words forced the world to face hard truths about wild salmon.

Jim Lichatowich was a Wild Salmon Center board member, science advisor, and a veteran biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. His books—including *Salmon Without Rivers* (1999) and *Salmon, People, and Place* (2013)—are canonical in our world.

Lichatowich's board tenure (2007–2011) overlapped with the growing influence of *Salmon Without Rivers*—including in Russia, following the release of a WSC-led translation. WSC President Guido Rahr credits the book with slowing the spread of hatcheries in the Russian Far East.

This fall, Lichatowich's bibliography expands with *Managed Extinction*, a new book co-authored with longtime collaborator Dr. Rick Williams.

"It's hard to overstate Jim's influence on the work that we do," Rahr says. "He will be greatly missed."



Dr. Rick Williams

British Columbia

Dave McCoy

Steelhead are having a good year. What's next for Skeena?

By late August, relief echoed across the Skeena Basin. Numbers were in from the Tyee Test Fishery: more than 33,000 steelhead had passed the lower Skeena, the 13th best return since 1956. It's not just the Skeena: runs are strong across the West Coast, buoyed by recent favorable ocean conditions.

"We're happy that returns are strong," says Greg Knox, Executive Director of SkeenaWild, a core Wild Salmon Center partner. "But one year doesn't make a trend."

He notes that we're just three years distant from the river's lowest steelhead returns on record—when just 5,400 steelhead passed the test fishery. For at least the past five years, Knox says, Skeena steelhead returns have remained stubbornly low.

"There can be a sense, with a strong year like this, that everything is fine again," Knox says. "But we're not. If we're serious about the long-term health of these fish, we have to consider the bigger picture."

Case in point: **since the test fishery launched in 1956, more than 60 percent of Skeena summer steelhead runs have fallen within or below the "concern zone" for escapement**—when too few fish make it to spawning grounds to sustain future runs. For Knox, that means we're not yet doing enough to set these runs up for success.

That's why SkeenaWild and other partners are pushing to reform Southeast Alaska's marine salmon fishery, where Skeena steelhead can be caught alongside target pink salmon and other species. Knox also points to the promise of selective, terminal fisheries, like the Kitselas First Nation's new fish wheel and dip-netting at the Gitanyow Fish Camp at Lax An Zok.

> *"We strongly support the expansion of Indigenous selective fishing practices in the Skeena. This is the future of fishing."* - Greg Knox, SkeenaWild Executive Director

Myles Connolly/MPEG

IMAX Magic Begins

Above, Wild Salmon Center CEO Guido Rahr takes a turn in front of the camera as a film crew shoots scenes this summer on British Columbia's famed ***Dean River*** for WSC's forthcoming IMAX project. Interweaving the life cycle of salmon with the stories of people and places intimately connected to these fish, this ambitious film project is slated to wrap by the end of 2025, landing in theaters in 2026.

WSC Staff

Nuxalk Fish Wheel

This August, Wild Salmon Center's Dr. Will Atlas worked alongside Nuxalk Fish and Wildlife on one of the First Nation's new fish wheels on the ***Bella Coola River.*** "Fish wheels empower First Nations and others to reliably monitor returning salmon and fish selectively," Dr. Atlas says. "Up and down the British Columbia coast, we're seeing interest in moving toward these time-tested, in-river harvest methods."