



Wild Salmon Center

2026 Impact Report | **RUNNING WILD**



Ken Morrish

Summer 2026

Letter from the President

One foggy February morning, my oldest son and I fished for winter steelhead on Oregon's Wilson River. We anchored the boat where the river emerged from coastal rainforest and broke into shallow braids before reaching Tillamook Bay. In the clear water, we saw the shape of a lone steelhead gradually working its way upstream, like a weary soldier marching home from war. It was magnificent, with sides like mirrors and a back still the bluish green of the ocean. It was making its final push in a journey that might have begun near coastal Kamchatka, 3,500 miles away.

The steelhead's return to a clear, cold Wilson River was no accident. It's the result of 25 years of hard work by Wild Salmon Center and our partners—fighting and winning battles to protect headwaters, restore tidal wetlands, negotiate with the timber industry to safeguard streamside forests, and ensure that enough wild fish can return home to spawn each year. The Wilson and the other Tillamook Bay rivers are now a durable wild salmon stronghold in an increasingly logged and developed part of the world: a gift to our children and grandchildren.

Securing the health of salmon strongholds is our mission, our life's work. By 2032, we'll complete protection of the stronghold archipelago—20 regional strongholds consisting of 119 individual rivers—and build an endowment for local partners. To inspire people everywhere to join our campaign, we co-produced *Running Wild: Return to the River*, narrated by Liam Neeson—the first giant screen and IMAX film to follow salmon on their epic journey.

Please watch the film—details at runningwild.org—and share it. Celebrate the miracle of wild salmon and their role in the conservation of ecosystems. And bring your children to the river. Feel its flow and be reminded that we are part of an ancient, nourishing web of life. This connection is as important as the air we breathe, and essential to pass to future generations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Guido".

Guido Rahr
President and Chief Executive



Ken Morrish

Smith River, California

Celebrate the miracle of wild salmon and
their role in the conservation of ecosystems.
And bring your children to the river.

OUR GOAL

A thriving network of 20 protected salmon and steelhead systems across the North Pacific by 2032.

OUR IMPACT TO DATE:

35.7
million

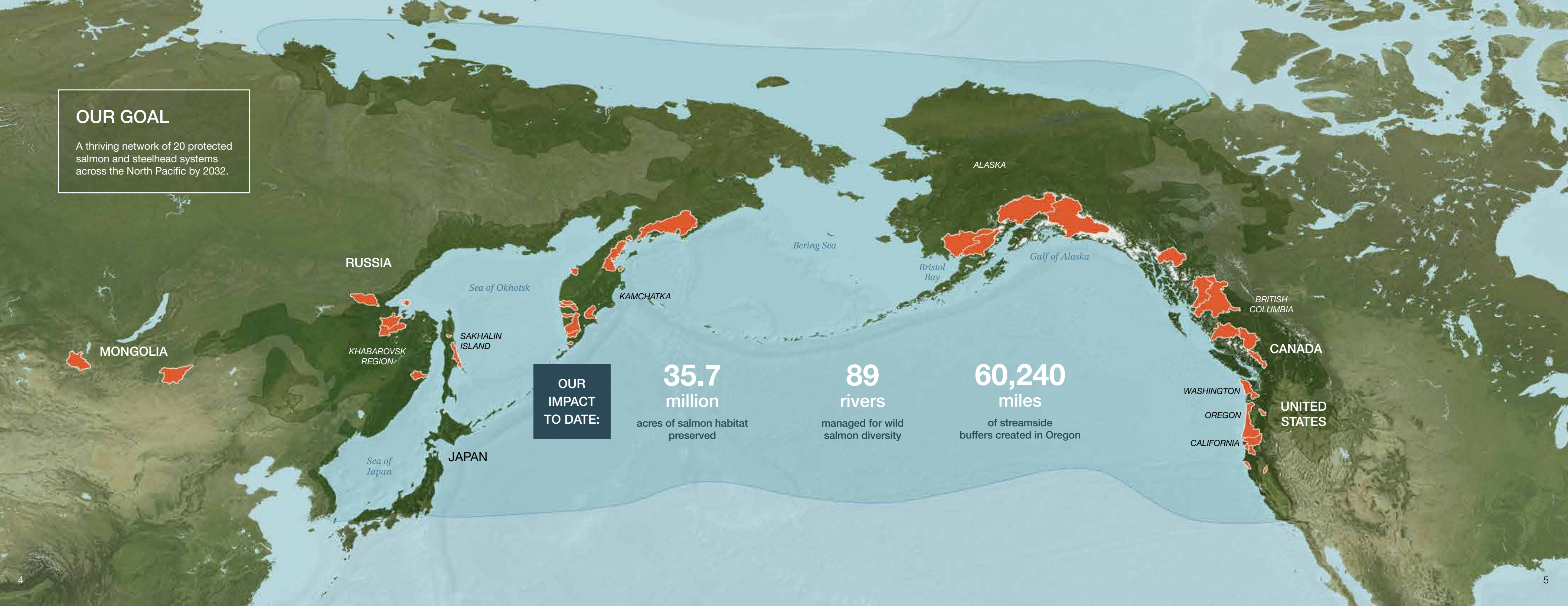
acres of salmon habitat
preserved

89
rivers

managed for wild
salmon diversity

60,240
miles

of streamside
buffers created in Oregon



WHEN SALMON RIVERS RUN WILD

From headwaters to ocean, wild salmon rivers are key to clean water, healthy forests, rich wildlife, and thriving communities.

Trees in salmon streams grow bigger. Natural braids and oxbows create havens for countless species. Connected tidelands store carbon, absorb floodwater, and help salmon grow strong for the sea. Healthy wild salmon mean healthy river systems across the North Pacific.

Bristol Bay, 25 years later

In 2001, Canadian mining company Northern Dynasty announced its discovery, in Alaska’s remote Bristol Bay region, of the world’s largest undeveloped gold and copper deposit.

As former Alaska State Senator and Wild Salmon Center board member Rick Halford said later, “it felt like God was challenging us.” Extracting that mineral wealth would mean a massive open pit mine and billions of tons of toxic waste, stored forever near the headwaters of the world’s most productive sockeye salmon nursery.

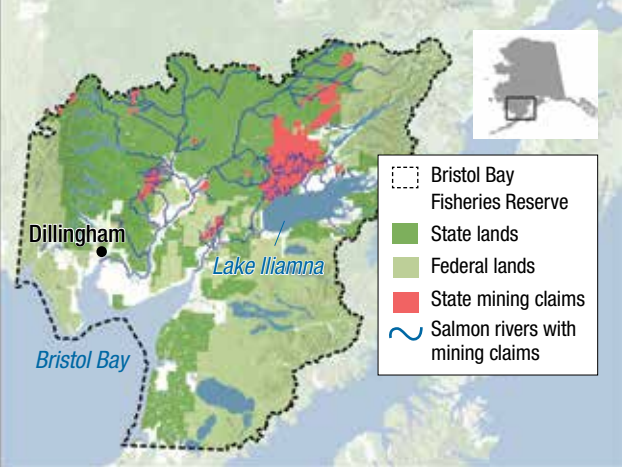
“Bristol Bay is the crown jewel of strongholds,” says Wild Salmon Center President and CEO Guido Rahr. “Intact, its long-term value outweighs any mine.”

The ensuing battle to stop the Pebble Mine involved four U.S. presidential administrations, high-ranking members of Congress, lawsuits, subpoenas, thousands of pages of scientific reports, millions spent by corporate lobbyists, rallies in fishing ports across the West Coast, a caught-on-tape scandal

with Northern Dynasty’s CEO, and the rise of the now-ubiquitous No Pebble Mine sticker.

The fight reached a fever pitch in summer 2020, as Pebble’s backers came close to securing a Clean Water Act permit to build the mine. But after the United Tribes of Bristol Bay, Wild Salmon Center, and our allies highlighted the mine’s ecological and economic risks, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers followed that scientific record and denied the permit. In 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency then made 200,000 acres in Bristol Bay’s headwaters off limits to Pebble and mining projects like it—the strongest protections to date. Today, despite ongoing legal challenges from Northern Dynasty, we’re heartened by the second Trump Administration’s continued strong opposition to the Pebble Mine project and support for Bristol Bay’s wild fishery.

“We have learned that for large-scale conservation wins to be truly durable over time, we must build support across the political spectrum,” Rahr says. “That is why we continue to engage with the Trump



Alaska’s Bristol Bay Forever Act would permanently protect all state land within the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve from hardrock mining.

Administration in support of their efforts to protect Bristol Bay from industrial mining.”

This long saga has one chapter left: preventing the next Pebble. In the Alaska legislature, our coalition is advancing the Bristol Bay Forever Act to safeguard state land within the 36,000-square-mile Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve, an area larger than the State of Indiana. We’ll succeed with your support.

Alaska’s roadless West Susitna supports five species of salmon, as well as rainbow trout, Arctic grayling, and Dolly Varden (pictured).



Defending the West Susitna

Mining is a risk to salmon rivers. Sometimes, so are the roads that make mines possible.

Take Alaska’s West Susitna: a roadless region that supports all five species of salmon, as well as rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, and Arctic grayling. Salmon are the backbone of the regional economy, supporting hundreds of tourism businesses and thousands of jobs. But two state agencies want to build a 100-mile, publicly funded industrial road here—bisecting more than 180 streams—to help mining companies reach still-unproven claims.

With our Defend the West Susitna coalition of Alaska Native Tribes, businesses, hunters and anglers, and thousands of Alaskans, we’re asking state leaders to defund the road. What’s at stake is the health of one of the world’s last, best wild salmon strongholds.

Alaska’s salmon strongholds face heightened pressure from road-building and mining.



TOP PRIORITIES
We’ve won strong safeguards for key parts of Alaska’s Bristol Bay: the world’s greatest sockeye salmon nursery. Now, we aim to protect the entire 36,000-square-mile watershed from hardrock mining.

A renewed push to protect British Columbia strongholds

Within each of the 29 salmon ecoregions of the North Pacific, certain rivers stand out. These are the strongholds: river systems that support each region's most abundant, productive, and diverse wild salmon runs, with habitat intact enough to sustain them for decades.

Building on our seminal study “Strongholds for Pacific salmon,” published in the journal *Fisheries* in 2025, Wild Salmon Center drew on peer-review studies and the latest data to reassess our stronghold network in Western Canada.

The results identified stronghold status for the Inner Central Coast, Skeena, Nass, and Taku Basins, where we've worked for years. They also elevated one candidate previously outside our network: the Chilcotin Basin. But in some strongholds, the assessment also found an acute and growing risk of

human encroachment—from the threat of clear-cut logging in parts of the Skeena to a major pipeline planned for the Nass.

“British Columbia's best salmon rivers are vital to the greater North Pacific stronghold archipelago,” says Wild Salmon Center British Columbia Director Greg Knox. “We must push harder than ever to head off new threats from poorly planned mining, logging, and energy development, and establish large new protected areas across the province.”

We're now teaming up with First Nations, provincial leaders, and local conservation partners in an ambitious push to protect 12 million acres in community-led protected areas in the next four years. Wild Salmon Center has boosted program staffing in the province, grown our support for local organizations, and built important alliances with government agencies to ensure that these protections will last.



Wild Salmon Center drew on peer-review studies and the latest data to identify six British Columbia salmon strongholds.

“We must push harder than ever to head off new threats from poorly planned mining, logging, and energy development, and establish large new protected areas across the province.”

– Greg Knox

Meet the Chilcotin, B.C.'s inland stronghold

Descending from glacial lakes through arid plateaus, the Chilcotin River cuts a dramatic path to the mighty Fraser. It's home to famous Chilko Lake sockeye, who make an arduous 370-mile (600-kilometer) home migration thanks to their larger hearts and higher warm water tolerance. The Chilcotin also boasts robust Chinook runs and more vulnerable populations of coho and steelhead. It's a hub of wild fish abundance in the Fraser Basin, where many salmon runs are in trouble.

Our new assessment of British Columbia salmon systems identifies the Chilcotin as a stronghold, recognizing the importance of these anchor populations. Now, we're partnering with the T̓silhqot'in First Nation to accelerate science and rebuild salmon population across the watershed, and advance reforms through the Pacific Salmon Treaty that do more to protect T̓silhqot'in fisheries.

As British Columbia's strongholds face new threats from pipelines, mining, and logging, momentum is growing for permanent protections.

With partners including the T̓silhqot'in First Nation, we're working to reform fisheries and expand land protections to benefit salmon strongholds across British Columbia.

Guido Rahr

Chris Harris, All Canada Photos

Chilcotin River, British Columbia

TOP PRIORITIES

We've identified six stronghold systems across British Columbia. Now, as B.C. aims to protect 30 percent of its land mass by 2030, we're advancing new protected areas in the Nass, Skeena, and Taku Basins.

A salmon fishery comes home

For the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, gaat (sockeye salmon) are a vital food source and irreplaceable part of Haa Kusteeyí—“our way of life”—on Baranof Island. For Tribal citizens, that life is sustained by Kunáa Shak. áayí, also known as Redoubt Lake.

Known for abundant sockeye runs, Redoubt Lake and its bay are true terminal fisheries. Both the lake’s subsistence fishery—Southeast Alaska’s largest—and commercial fisheries in the bay carefully target local salmon at the end of their home migrations.

But in 2024, federal budget cuts threatened the operation of a monitoring weir that had been in place since 1982, when only 453 sockeye returned. No weir would mean no fish counts. No counts would mean lower bag limits for subsistence fishers. Elders wouldn’t receive their usual sockeye distribution. The commercial fishery couldn’t open. The Tribe scrambled to muster resources, and the weir stayed open.

But the Tribe needed a longer-term solution. It found one in Salmon Vision: automated fish counting software co-developed by Wild Salmon Center. Real-time counts help communities and fisheries managers respond proactively to shifts in salmon abundance—as well as climate, economics, and policy. Proactive management is key to our goal of improving salmon fisheries across the Pacific so that wild runs thrive long into the future.

“Our fisheries are as sustainable as you can get,” says Kyle Rosendale, a Fisheries Biologist with the Tribe’s Resource Protection Department. “But without data, we can’t prove that enough sockeye made it home to start fishing.”

Salmon Vision now provides that data to the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Last summer, the Tribe tested the software at the lake. In summer 2026, Salmon Vision will run the full season.

“Salmon Vision can keep our community fisheries alive,” Rosendale says. “That means enough sockeye in freezers and more opportunities for fishers. It also means more direct stewardship in the hands of local champions.”

OUR IMPACT

90%
accuracy rate

for Salmon Vision fish
identification (to date)

Salmon Vision technology can distinguish sockeye salmon from other salmonid species in a river.

Ben Hamilton, Sitka Wonders

Counting on wild rivers

A sockeye salmon passed a camera in Alaska’s Chignik River, updating a web app for staff at the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. At 30 other locations—including the Skeena’s Bear River and the Elwha River in Washington—other fisheries managers can now track salmon returns in real time.

As of summer 2026, Salmon Vision software is counting fish for 24 Indigenous nations, government fishery managers, and communities. This machine learning tool is part of a bigger movement.

“Salmon Vision empowers our partners to manage their fisheries more sustainably and come to decision-making tables backed by their own data,” says Wild Salmon Center Senior Salmon Watershed Scientist Dr. Will Atlas, a Salmon Vision co-founder. “It puts them in the driver’s seat.”

To protect wild fish runs from overharvest, we need accurate, real-time data while salmon are running.

Lee House / Sitka Conservation Society

Redoubt Lake, Alaska

TOP PRIORITIES

We’ve launched Salmon Vision in more than 30 locations to date, including Alaska’s Redoubt Lake (pictured). By 2028, we aim to bring this revolutionary sustainable fishing technology to 100 salmon rivers.

Spring Chinook: Protecting genetic superpowers

Spring Chinook once reigned in the upper Salmon River. Decades ago, natural barriers in this Klamath River tributary made upper reaches impassable to most salmon in dry months. But spring Chinook return months earlier than their fall-run cousins, capitalizing on time and opportunities created by snowmelt and rain to overcome obstacles in rivers that can be insurmountable when flows are lower. A salmon’s instinct for when to come home is called run timing—behavior we now know is driven by genetics.

“In their ancient past, spring Chinook evolved early return as a way to find and claim spawning and rearing habitat exclusive to themselves,” says Wild Salmon Center Conservation Geneticist Dr. Tasha Thompson, whose research led to this genetic discovery. “This superpower could help them adapt now, as climate change alters their home rivers.”

But for spring Chinook to make full use of their adaptive superpowers, they must hold on to the

gene variant that drives their special behavior. That’s a growing challenge in many rivers where they’re struggling. That includes the Salmon River, where human interventions like dynamiting have removed many natural “low flow” barriers. Today, the Salmon River’s fall Chinook runs can encroach on stretches of river once exclusive to spring Chinook, outcompeting and interbreeding with spring runs. The sad result is that the Klamath Basin’s last remaining wild spring run has dwindled to a few hundred fish.

Help is coming. To re-create the kind of barrier that once kept runs separate in the river, UC Berkeley researcher Amy Fingerle and partners including Wild Salmon Center plan to test a temporary weir in summer 2027. This passive fishing structure could keep fall Chinook out of key spring Chinook refuges.

“Amy’s research is some of the most important right now for spring Chinook,” says Dr. Thompson, whose research informs Fingerle’s work. “If our weir test is successful, this could be a simple way to help spring Chinook in many rivers.”



This map represents most spring Chinook populations in the Lower 48 and southern British Columbia, including populations with abundance data analyzed by Wild Salmon Center scientists in 2023. See the full study at wildsalmoncenter.org/publications.

Returning hope to the Upper Klamath

Days after four Klamath dams came down in California, wild fall Chinook salmon were migrating above them. In March 2026, the Klamath Tribes confirmed salmon fry roughly 70 miles higher, above Klamath Lake in Oregon, the upper watershed’s first wild salmon generation in a century.

Now, as Tribes and state agencies plan for the reintroduction of spring Chinook to the Upper Klamath, Wild Salmon Center scientists are drawing on foundational research, including their own, to advise decision-makers on ways to naturally sustain these runs.

“We believe spring Chinook salmon, too, could again thrive in the unique conditions of the upper basin,” says Wild Salmon Center Science Director Dr. Matthew Sloat. “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Science can help us get it right.”

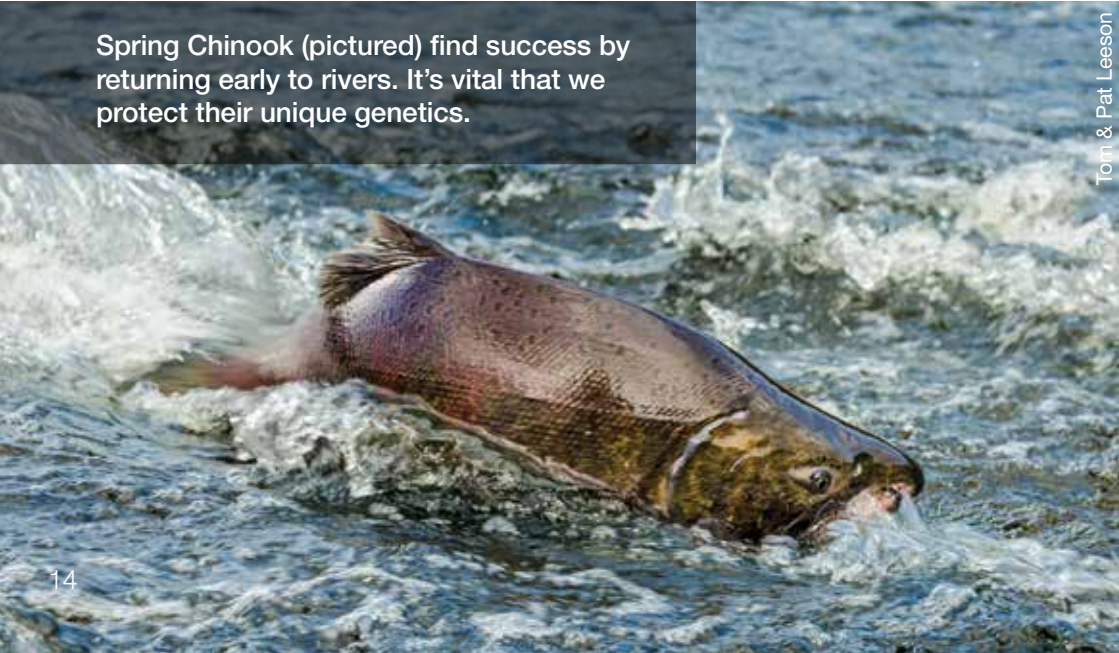


With four dams gone on the Upper Klamath, we have a historic chance to bring wild salmon back across this vast basin.

TOP PRIORITIES

We’ve mapped spring Chinook genetic diversity across the West Coast. Now, we’ll draw on the science to spur more funding to restore key spring Chinook habitat, and help reintroduce spring runs to the Upper Klamath Basin (pictured).

Spring Chinook (pictured) find success by returning early to rivers. It’s vital that we protect their unique genetics.



Tom & Pat Leeson

Ken Morrish

Klamath River, California

Mining threatens the Lower 48’s best strongholds

In the borderlands of Southern Oregon and Northern California, rivers like the Smith, Illinois, Rogue, and Elk are home to giant redwoods, rare and endemic plants, and some of the Lower 48’s strongest remaining runs of wild salmon and steelhead.

This is one of the most biologically diverse regions on the planet. Keeping it so is one reason why many features of the “Wild Rivers Coast” boast protections, including Wild and Scenic River designations and a federal lands moratorium on new mining claims through 2037.

Yet many of these rivers now face new threats. Canadian company Homeland Nickel, for example, has acquired preexisting mining claims—and staked new ones—to pursue industrial-scale nickel mining on 17,000 acres across this region.

“Industrial mining in even one stronghold carries unacceptable risks,” says Wild Salmon Center Oregon Wild Fish Manager Kirk Blaine. “We’re

closely tracking these developments and ready to take proactive steps if they advance.”

The West Coast is pocked with toxic, abandoned mines. That includes the Formosa Mine just north of the Wild Rivers Coast, which leaked tailings into the South Umpqua watershed in the 1990s—accelerating ongoing declines for its wild salmon runs.

Strip mining for nickel can mean long-term pollution, denuded and destabilized landscapes, and other threats for salmon and communities. But Wild Salmon Center is fighting back. With conservation allies in both states, we’re building a movement to secure state designation as Outstanding Resource Waters for some areas, advance the federal Southern Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act, and pass a bill to expand California’s Smith River National Recreation Area north into Oregon.

“The best time to stop a mine is before it breaks ground,” Blaine says. “That’s why this year is key for the Wild Rivers Coast.”



Proposed mining: Old mining claims dot salmon rivers across Northern California and Southern Oregon. In them, industrial mining companies see a potential loophole around river protections.

“Industrial mining in even one stronghold carries unacceptable risks.” – Kirk Blaine

A bold new path for Butte Creek

From remote headwaters to its Sacramento River confluence, Butte Creek sustains the last, best wild spring Chinook runs in California—runs more abundant, in some years, than in larger strongholds to the north.

The headwaters of Butte Creek still remain forested and healthy. But other stretches show the toll of drought, dams, mining, and agriculture. Restoration here requires creative modifications to the creek’s existing hydropower infrastructure: both to prevent mass fish kills (as happened in 2021) and to ensure that in a hotter, drier future, spring Chinook can still find cold water in summer.

Wild Salmon Center and our local coalition detail this approach in a new restoration plan—including transferring hydropower infrastructure to an operator ready to work with us. This year, we set that plan in motion.

In some years, Butte Creek has more spring Chinook (pictured) than larger rivers to the north: proof that with cold water and good habitat, salmon can thrive even in altered systems.



Suji Roland



Strip mines can devastate salmon rivers for generations. Our campaign is heading off those impacts.

Ken Morrish

Pistol River, Oregon

TOP PRIORITIES

We’ve launched a bistate coalition to stop mining threats in Southern Oregon and Northern California salmon strongholds. Now, we’ll push for new state and federal protections across the Wild Rivers Coast.



WE LIVE FOR WILD RIVERS

For millennia, salmon and people have thrived together. We rely on salmon to sustain families, communities, and economies across the North Pacific. But many other species also count on salmon: from sea lions and orcas to tiny caddisflies. Salmon connect us to each other—as well as every other creature that depends on salmon to make a living in the wild.

On the Olympic Peninsula, closing in on a 10-year goal

In the fall, tea-colored water drops from a high-perched culvert under the Moclips Highway, deep in the Quinault Basin on Washington’s Olympic Peninsula. In the pool below the drop, coho in spawning colors rise repeatedly—trying and failing to leap upstream.

This brutal fish barrier—and another like it a half-mile up the highway—were among the first to inspire our Cold Water Connection Campaign. In 2016, Wild Salmon Center worked with local Tribes, Trout Unlimited, the Coast Salmon Partnership, and other partners to map more than 4,000 coastal fish barriers. We then prioritized the most ecologically important to fix. Our goal: reopen 125 river miles for salmon by 2030.

“Wild fish need cold, clean water to adapt in a changing climate,” says Wild Salmon Center Fish Habitat Specialist Nicole Rasmussen, who leads

these projects from start to finish. “We’re reconnecting them with the very best habitat out there.”

We’re now three-quarters of the way to our 2030 goal. To date, our team has advanced more than 100 restoration projects—many already completed—and removed more than 20 wild fish barriers across the Olympic Peninsula. As of summer 2026, that includes the Moclips Highway problem spots, where wide new bridge and culvert spans now pass salmon year-round for the first time in decades.

“From simple fixes to technical bridges, fish passage work is a heavy lifter in wild salmon conservation,” Rasmussen says. “These kinds of projects aren’t just great for salmon. They also strengthen community flood resilience, protect roads, and bring neighbors together.”

Because each extra mile that helps salmon rivers run wilder can make communities stronger, too.

“Wild fish need cold, clean water to adapt in a changing climate. We’re reconnecting them with the very best habitat out there.” – Nicole Rasmussen

OUR IMPACT

94
river miles

opened for wild salmon and steelhead
across the Olympic Peninsula

Hope for Chinook starts closer to home

Many Pacific Chinook runs are in trouble. On the Olympic Peninsula, it’s not just declining abundance. It’s their size. Over three decades, the average length of a three-year-old adult Chinook has shrunk nearly 2.5 inches. Smaller hens lay fewer eggs, exacerbating declines.

“Many of our larger Chinook get caught in distant ocean fisheries,” says Wild Salmon Center Washington Wild Fish Manager James Losee. “That compromises local Chinook recovery efforts.”

Almost 75 percent of Olympic Peninsula Chinook harvest happens in ocean fisheries far from Washington. As negotiations continue for a new Pacific Salmon Treaty, more equitable harvest—a guiding principle of the original treaty—should be a priority.

Says Losee, “To help recover these runs, we need more terminal fisheries in Washington rivers, guided by Tribes and other regional fisheries managers, working in concert with local anglers and conservationists.”

Wild Salmon Center and our partners are tracking wild Chinook salmon across the Olympic Peninsula. These data can inform local fisheries and aid larger efforts to recover struggling runs.

WSC Staff

John Gussman

Olympic Peninsula Chinook

On the Olympic Peninsula, cold water is gold for salmon. We’re restoring key networks of spring-fed spawning streams.

TOP PRIORITIES

We’re 75 percent of the way to reopening 125 strategic river miles for Washington wild fish. Now, we’ll meet that goal while reforming marine fisheries to better protect vulnerable Chinook runs.

Coho: Holding strong on the Oregon Coast

A few years ago, Kentuck Creek, a tributary to Oregon’s Coos Bay, was a straight channel pushed to the property lines of local homesteads. Coho salmon didn’t linger in the valley; there was nowhere here to safely rest. After decades of ranching, the wetlands where they’d once reared were compacted by cattle hooves and rife with invasive plants.

Then one landowner linked up with the Coos Basin Partnership—local partners in the Wild Salmon Center-managed Coast Coho Partnership—to remeander their stretch of creek. Neighbors watched as crews created ponds, seeded native plants, and nudged the stream into braids and bends. Soon, another landowner signed up. Then another. Today, juvenile coho are thriving in the creek, and rearing in the restored floodplain.

In Oregon, coho began a steady decline likely starting in the mid-19th century, through factors including habitat loss, fish hatcheries, and overharvest. The

nadir was 1997—around 24,000 fish, less than five percent of their estimated historical abundance. In 1998, Oregon Coast coho were federally listed as threatened, ending all commercial and most recreational fishing for decades.

Fast-forward to now. Over the past five years, average Oregon Coast coho abundance is more than 167,000: enough to reopen more recreational fishing. According to Wild Salmon Center Vice President of Conservation Mark Trenholm, our restoration work is helping to sustain this trend.

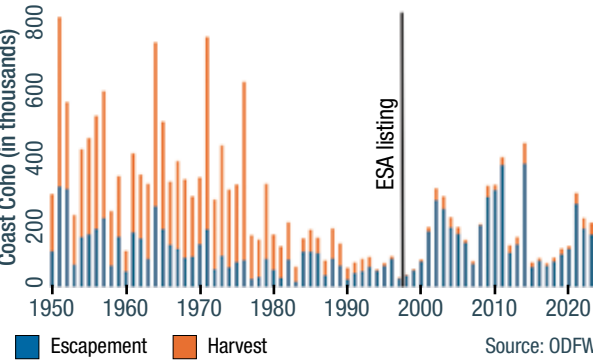
“Oregon coho are improving,” Trenholm says. “But we’re looking beyond getting coho off the threatened list. We want full recovery: coho runs thriving again and supporting commercial, recreational, and Tribal fisheries.”

To get there, we’re expanding our work to more than 10 watersheds—from the Elk and Nehalem to places like the Alsea River and the South and Middle Umpqua, where coho recovery still lags.

“We’ve come a long way since the 1990s,” Trenholm says. “There’s more work ahead, but we have made incredible progress—and modeled a path to recovery for other salmon species.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Oregon Coast coho: Eliminating commercial harvest and coho hatcheries following ESA listing in 1998 provided immediate relief for wild coho populations and increased abundances relative to the 1990s. Habitat restoration work is also critical to achieve recovery.



Protected by federal law and restored to strength, Oregon wild salmon strongholds can weather climate stress and development pressure.

In Oregon, new forestry reforms will protect more mature tree canopy in coastal watersheds, promising a brighter future for threatened salmon species.

The link between logging and Oregon salmon

Before the Private Forest Accord, you could log to the waterline on many small Oregon streams without fish. The problem, says Wild Salmon Center’s Oregon Habitat Restoration Manager Dr. Tim Elder, is that small streams flow into larger streams—and with fewer trees in headwaters, they’re hotter, dirtier, and more inhospitable for salmon downriver.

“There’s a clear nexus between forestry policy and salmon,” Dr. Elder says. “In Oregon, policy is finally starting to catch up with what wild fish need.”

Made state law in 2022, the Private Forest Accord creates 60,000 river miles of new stream buffers (from 35 to 110 feet wide) on private forestlands. Even more protections are rolling out in state forests through a 70-year habitat conservation plan to be approved by federal fish and wildlife agencies by year-end 2026.

TOP PRIORITIES

To protect Oregon Coast coho and other wild salmon, we’ve won historic reforms across 10 million acres of private forestland and 500,000 acres of state forestland. Now, we’ll lock in these protections for the next generation.

Taimen: Protecting a freshwater icon in Mongolia

Salmon are cold water fish, and Siberian taimen are no different. But on the high steppes of Northern Mongolia, rivers including the Delgermurun and Onon are warming fast, raising questions of how much environmental change these freshwater “river tigers” can handle.

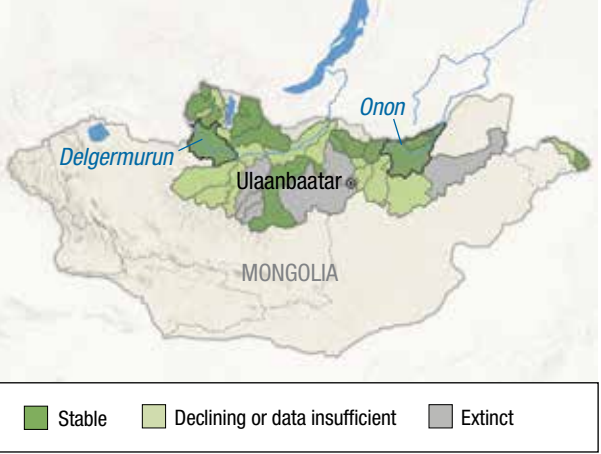
“Taimen are an umbrella species for the health of the whole watershed,” says Wild Salmon Center Mongolia Consultant Dr. Saulyegul Avlyush. “When the conditions are there for taimen to thrive, other important species thrive, too.”

To help keep taimen healthy, says Dr. Avlyush, we need to know how hot is too hot for taimen. Over the past several years, Wild Salmon Center scientists and partners have installed more than 49 temperature loggers in Mongolian rivers and tributaries. In summer 2025, our international team began building on this baseline thermal data

by directly measuring taimen heat tolerance at a streamside field lab on the Balj River — research that continues next season on this Onon tributary and other locations.

The field of aquatic species research is nascent in Mongolia, Dr. Avlyush says. Our work comes at a time when Mongolian policymakers and scientists are debating major shifts in water infrastructure projects, land use, and aquatic species conservation. In North America, dams and overgrazing are well-known risks for salmon. Now, Wild Salmon Center’s international expertise and field research are ensuring that the well-being of taimen factor into these important debates.

“Wild Salmon Center is acknowledged as the only fish and freshwater-focused organization operating at a national level in Mongolia,” Dr. Avlyush says. “As huge decisions are being made for taimen rivers, our support is being actively sought by government and civil society stakeholders.”



Mongolia taimen: The range of taimen is shrinking in Mongolia and beyond. Wild Salmon Center and our partners are advancing science-driven strategies to help these populations recover.

“Taimen are an umbrella species for the health of the whole watershed. When the conditions are there for taimen to thrive, other important species thrive, too.” – Dr. Saulyegul Avlyush



Siberian taimen are among the most understudied of all salmonid species. To fill key data gaps, our scientists are studying taimen redds (pictured) and food webs in Northern Mongolia.

Spotlight on taimen redds

Wild Salmon Center Spatial Ecologist Jon Hart spots a taimen redd in a tributary of Mongolia’s Balj River. In a tailout, water flows down a shallow pit and over a mound of clean, plum-size stones. Tiny eggs nestle in the cracks; one day, they might be fish surpassing five feet in length.

Little is known about where and when taimen spawn. These insights are crucial to help protect this freshwater salmonid, now listed as threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. In Spring 2026, Hart (pictured at left) and our Mongolia team launched one of the first formal studies of taimen reproduction to illuminate what they need to thrive here and across Eurasia.



Clemens Ratschan

Siberian taimen, Mongolia

Through science and knowledge exchange, we’re driving a new era of wild fish conservation for Mongolia’s taimen rivers.

TOP PRIORITIES

We’ve united a global network of scientists on the need to protect imperiled taimen. Now, we’re advancing a 15-year roadmap for wild fish conservation in Mongolia, centered on its iconic runs of Siberian taimen.

The Stronghold Fund

The Stronghold Fund—a first-of-its-kind impact fund for wild salmon and steelhead conservation—helps Wild Salmon Center and our partners seize powerful new opportunities. In 2025, we worked with several partners on exciting initiatives happening right now.

2025 CAMPAIGN AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

British Columbia aquaculture, fisheries reform

Purpose: Boost accountability for Canada’s phase-out of net-pen salmon farming, engage Indigenous, recreational, and commercial fishing leaders in international fisheries reforms.
Partner: Watershed Watch Salmon Society

British Columbia Central Coast wild fish research

Purpose: Continue to fill critical data gaps and rebuild wild sockeye, steelhead, coho, and Chinook runs in river systems including the Dean, Atnarko, Takia, Kimsquit, and Bella Coola.
Partner: Coastal Rivers Conservancy

Defend the West Su campaign

Purpose: Stop the buildout of the West Susitna Industrial Access Road in Alaska’s West Susitna region through public engagement and targeted legislative outreach.
Partners: Alaska Range Alliance, SalmonState

Expanding Skeena Basin selective fishing

Purpose: Support the construction and operation of a second fish wheel in Kitselas Canyon, operated by the Kitselas First Nation to expand selective food and commercial fishing opportunities.
Partner: Kitselas First Nation

Morice River Basin protection

Purpose: Promote Indigenous conservation leadership and salmon habitat protections across the Upper Widzin’kwa watershed, part of the Morice River Basin in the greater Skeena.
Partner: Office of the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs

Skeena watershed key initiatives

Purpose: Reinforce core partner SkeenaWild’s capacity to lead efforts to restore salmon habitat, improve mining policies, help establish new protected areas, and reduce commercial fishing impacts on Skeena Basin wild fish.
Partner: SkeenaWild Conservation Trust

Stand Tall Oregon campaign

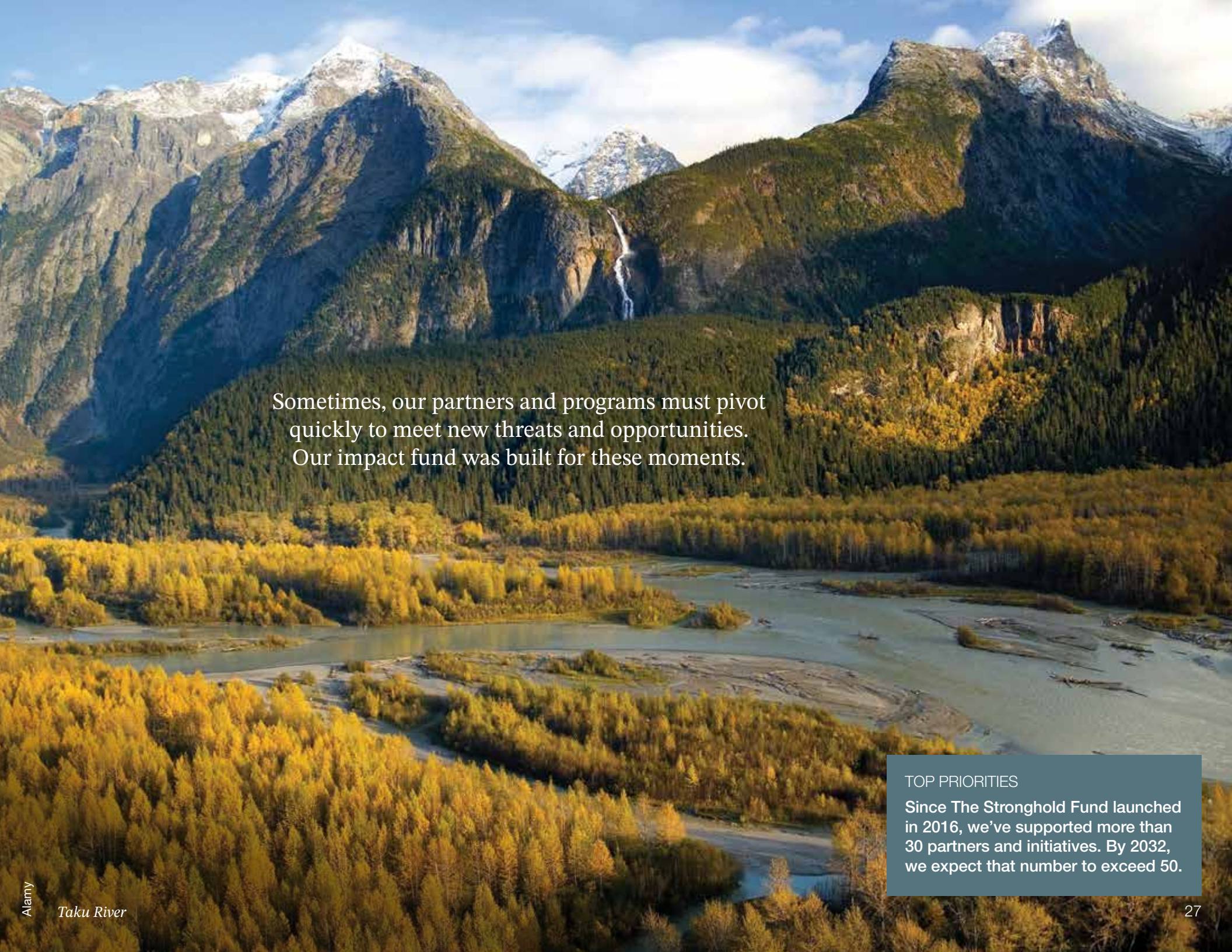
Purpose: Guide this grassroots movement through the home stretch of a years-long effort to finalize a plan that protects half of some 635,000 acres of coastal rainforest in Western Oregon state forests.
Partner: Stand Tall Oregon

Taku River climate change assessment

Purpose: Advance ongoing research to assess the climate change vulnerabilities of wild sockeye, coho, and Chinook runs in this northern B.C. stronghold and develop a steelhead stock assessment program.
Partners: Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Simon Fraser University

On the Skeena, fish wheels roll out

In 2024, a Kitselas First Nation pilot fish wheel tested selective sockeye salmon harvest in the Skeena River. The pilot significantly reduced Chinook and steelhead bycatch mortality. Now, The Stronghold Fund is supporting the buildout of a second wheel, which could empower the Nation to selectively source nearly all of its food fish.



Sometimes, our partners and programs must pivot quickly to meet new threats and opportunities. Our impact fund was built for these moments.

TOP PRIORITIES

Since The Stronghold Fund launched in 2016, we’ve supported more than 30 partners and initiatives. By 2032, we expect that number to exceed 50.

2025 Donors

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we're protecting the North Pacific's wild salmon strongholds. We're profoundly grateful to the individuals, foundations, companies, and government agencies whose support makes lasting change possible.

Our full list of supporters can be found online at wildsalmoncenter.org/2025honor-roll.

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Running Wild hits theaters! Wild Salmon Center staff, board members, partners, and friends joined our special *Running Wild* screening events in Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco*. The new Wild Salmon Center-sponsored giant screen film is rolling out in theaters and at special events. See runningwild.org for more.

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A Vision for Permanent Protection

The Wild Salmon Center Endowment Fund

For 35 years, Wild Salmon Center has successfully defended the most important strongholds for wild salmon and steelhead around the Pacific Rim. Now, we're preparing to sustain these conservation initiatives in perpetuity.

With the help of our most committed donors, Wild Salmon Center recently established its **Endowment Fund** to provide support for the long-term protection of stronghold rivers. Financed largely by legacy gifts—including a generous bequest from the late John S. Dale—annual income from the Endowment will ensure Wild Salmon Center and partners within the stronghold network have a reliable source of funding to defend key watersheds far beyond our lifetime.

If you have questions about making a gift to the Endowment Fund, please contact Kim Kosa at 971-255-5562 or kkosa@wildsalmoncenter.org.



Artist Tyler Jensen using a Japanese fish-printing technique in Seattle

Jeff Wodniack, iStock



Wild Salmon Center has been approved to receive grants through the One Percent for the Planet program.

* Event photos by Dylan VanWeelden unless otherwise noted.



Ken Morrish

Our Legacy Circle

Wild Salmon Center's Legacy Circle is a dedicated group of supporters who have chosen to include a gift to WSC in their estate plans. In doing so, these individuals are helping ensure that stronghold watersheds remain healthy and intact for generations to come. ***Thank you.***

Judith Ann Andrews	Dale and Kathy Jessup	Zee R. Ship
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If you would like to notify WSC of your intent to make a bequest gift, or if you believe your name has been omitted in error, please contact Kim Kosa at 971-255-5562 or kkosa@wildsalmoncenter.org.
Learn more at wildsalmoncenter.org/legacy.

*Indicates Legacy Circle members who have passed.

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WSC board member Mary Ruckelshaus in Seattle

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Guido Rahr, WSC board member Rhea Suh, and Grant Werschkuhl (Smith River Alliance) in San Francisco



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Wild Salmon Center has received both the highest rating for sound fiscal management from Charity Navigator and the GuideStar platinum seal for transparency.



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Guido Rahr

In Memoriam: Ted Turner

Nearly two decades ago, the legendary television producer and philanthropist Ted Turner floated Kamchatka's Zhupanova River with Wild Salmon Center President & CEO Guido Rahr. Following that inspiring excursion, the Turner Foundation granted us more than \$1.6 million over 18 years to help secure major protected areas in the Russian Far East. At our Voices of the Pacific dinner in Seattle in 2014, he joined us to celebrate huge milestones in wild salmon conservation in Russia. Turner passed away in May 2026 at the age of 88.

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WSC board member Ray Lane and Tony Garvey in Portland



Tucker Malarkey signing her book *Stronghold* in San Francisco

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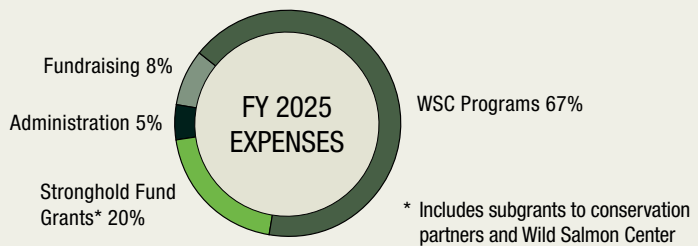
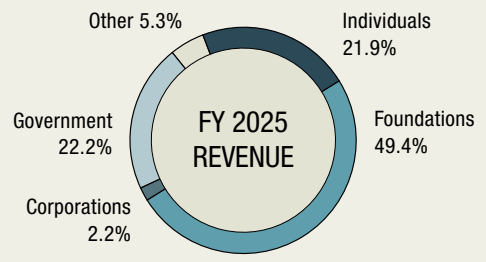
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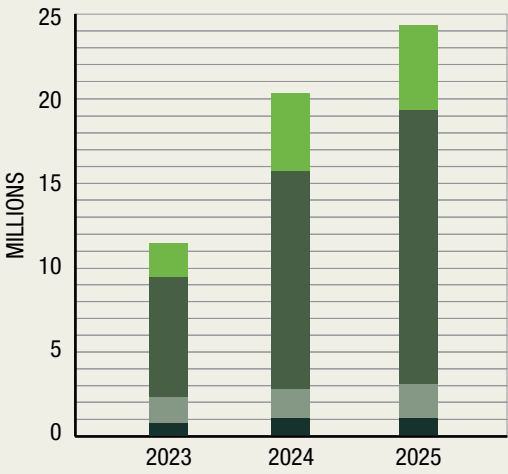
Financials

As part of our 2032 goal to secure durable protection for salmon strongholds, Wild Salmon Center is making major investments in our conservation projects, staff and partners, and outreach efforts. Our operating budget has grown significantly as a result. These investments are fueled largely by multi-year gifts from foundations, public grants for large-scale habitat restoration, and committed donors like you.



* Includes subgrants to conservation partners and Wild Salmon Center

Operational Activities 2023-2025



Make Wild Rivers Your Legacy

Including a gift to Wild Salmon Center in your will—or designating us as a beneficiary of your trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy—are easy ways to ensure future generations know the joy of wading in cold, clean rivers, exploring vast forests, and observing wild fish heading upstream.

Legacy giving can sound complicated, but it doesn't have to be. Contact Kim Kosa at 971-255-5562 or visit wildsalmoncenter.org/legacy to get started.



The People of Wild Salmon Center

Andrea Lonas



Staff at a retreat on the Deschutes River, Oregon

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April Vokey, B.C./Australia

Front cover: schooling salmon (Tavish Campbell); back cover: bear cubs (Petr Simon, Adobe Stock).



Carolynn Beaty is the Executive Director of the Sitka Foundation. She supports its granting program and provides strategic direction for the organization. Beaty has a background in conservation biology and philosophy, and holds a BSc, BA, and BEd from Queen's University, and an MSc from Imperial College London, and resides in Vancouver, British Columbia. She's an educator with more than 15 years of experience.



Ken Morrish is the co-founder and Travel Sales Director of Fly Water Travel, one of the world's largest and most respected fly fishing travel companies. Based in Ashland, Oregon, he is a fourth-generation fly fisher who has guided throughout Alaska, Oregon, and California. Morrish is an accomplished writer and photographer whose work has appeared in most major fly fishing publications as well as dozens of fly fishing books.



Margaret Williams lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is a Senior Fellow at the Arctic Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, supporting work on marine governance and sustainable ocean management. For more than 30 years, Williams has worked on conservation issues in Russia and Alaska. Most recently, she established the World Wildlife Fund U.S. Arctic Field Program, serving as its Managing Director.

More moments from screenings of Running Wild: Return to the River

WSC Staff



OMSI theater, Portland

WSC Staff



Guido Rahr, film director Myles Connolly, and Oakley Brooks at Los Angeles industry screening



Former Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber introducing the Running Wild screening in Portland



Oregon Governor Tina Kotek and WSC board member Ed Bowles

NOW SHOWING!

The world's first-ever IMAX salmon film hits theaters in 2026. From VIP screenings to action-packed events, you can share the spotlight with Wild Salmon Center and our global community of wild salmon fans. Visit runningwild.org



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