Annual Report







The fossil fuel industry really seems to have a particular hatred for WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, which I always take as a sign of good work on behalf of a livable future. GUARDIANS has earned the fury of the fossil fuel industry, and the respect of activists like me, by taking the lead on the Keep It in the Ground campaign and using creative and confrontational strategies to disrupt business as usual.

—TIM DECHRISTOPHER

Mission Statement

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS protects and restores the wildlife, wild places, wild rivers, and health of the American West.

Legacy Givers BILL KENT AND DEBBIE HAMMACK



eing longtime residents of New Mexico (Bill has lived here more than 35 years and Debbie has lived here more than 50 years) who live in Corrales very near the Rio Grande and the Bosque, we value the health of the river and its ecosystem. It truly is the lifeblood of our arid setting.

We have been members of many national environmental groups. However, for the last few years, we have decided to mainly support local causes closer to home. We are approaching 20 years

as members of WILDEARTH GUARDIANS. Several years ago, we made a decision to include WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in our estate planning, a decision we do not regret. We hope that others will do the same. Keep up the great work, GUARDIANS!

Legacy giving is a means to ensure Guardians will continue to be a force for nature far into the future. We are grateful to Bill Kent and Debbie Hammack and to all of you who include us in your estate planning. Thank you!

Please contact Kevin Gaither-Banchoff for more information on how you can create a legacy with Guardians: kevin@wildearthguardians.org.

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ENDING THE WAR ON WILDLIFE

We gained some important ground in 2015 on our longstanding effort to vanquish Wildlife Services, the villainous taxpayer-funded program that kills more than 100,000 native carnivores and millions of other animals each year at the behest of agribusiness and the Western livestock industry.

For years we've been pursuing bold legal strategies that aim to expose the program's most egregious activity: the brutal practice of killing native carnivores without regard to their ecological roles. In 2015 we secured two important legal wins.

First, last summer we won an important "standing" ruling from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that protects the right of all citizens to challenge and overturn Wildlife Services' activities in the courtroom. Our victory sets a critical legal precedent that allows many other cases to proceed on their merits.

Building on that precedent, we won another lawsuit overturning Wildlife Services' plan to kill wolves in Washington state. The federal program now must do a more comprehensive analysis that will require it to consider modern science and ethics, which should leave more wolves in the wild. Those two victories are complemented by ongoing legal engagement in several other Western states, including Oregon and Idaho.

We also supported emerging champions in Congress, growing opposition in local communities, greater media attention, and even tantalizing signs of dissent within the program.

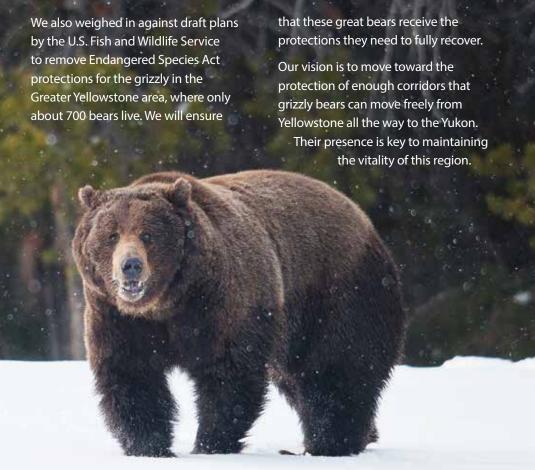
Our efforts and those of other groups did more to bring the secretive program out of the shadows and advance our vision of ending the use of steel leg-hold traps, neck and leg snares, poisons, and aerial gunning, especially on our public lands.

GRIZZLY BEARS

Fully recovering grizzly bears in the contiguous United States means safeguarding bears under the Endangered Species Act and protecting vital habitat corridors, both of which are primary aims of our grizzly bear advocacy.

Fragmented habitats mean loss of genetic diversity and greater mortality due to human interactions—a steady path to extinction. That's why we're working to protect grizzly corridors from Yellowstone to northern Montana and west to Oregon and Washington.

In 2015 we challenged a U.S. Forest Service plan to allow 8,000 domestic sheep to graze in the heart of one of these essential corridors, the Gravelly Mountains in Montana, which link the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem to northwestern Montana. Conflicts with sheep ranching have already occurred, leading to the deaths of several grizzlies.



KEEP IT IN THE GROUND

In 2015 we inspired the coming to life of a climatechange fight like nothing before: the *Keep It in the Ground* movement coalesced around our campaign to end fossil fuel leasing on public lands, thereby reducing the release of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.

We organized 450 groups to deliver a letter to the White House last summer, requesting a halt to federal fossil fuel leasing. And we won! On Jan. 15, the Obama administration halted all future sales of coal from public lands while also calling for a comprehensive review of the climate impacts of the federal coal program.

Our legal victories against the coal industry last year slowed new mines, made the industry clean up more of its messes, and threatened mine shutdowns.

With our diverse allies, we built similar momentum targeting the federal oil and gas program—holding protests at lease auctions around the country and shutting down three of those lease sales.

We have little doubt that our legal might, grassroots pressure, and savvy media exposed the Obama administration's climate hypocrisy and gave them only one choice: to embrace our bold vision of confronting fossil fuels at their source by keeping them in the ground.

MEXICAN WOLVES

Fewer than 100.

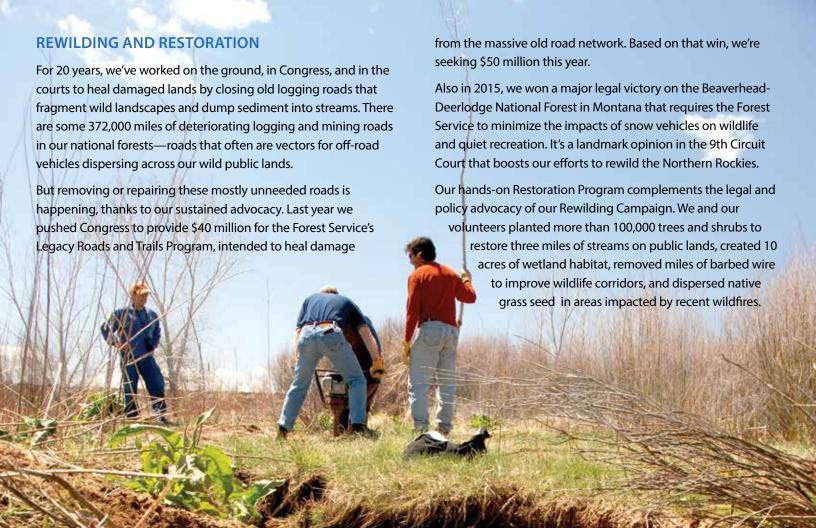
the lobo go extinct.

In the battle to protect an endangered species, a number like that is never a good place to be. But that's exactly the predicament of the Mexican gray wolf. At the end of 2015, only 97 critically endangered lobos roamed the wilds of New Mexico and Arizona, down from the previous year's high of 109.

In light of the lobo's dire status we sued over the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's new rules, issued in January 2015, that undermine wolf recovery by capping the population at 325 animals, prohibiting wolves from recolonizing habitat to the north, and failing to even consider giving the lobo the more protective "essential" designation.

Poaching also remains a huge threat. To address illegal killings, we continued our lawsuit targeting the U.S. Department of Justice's "McKittrick policy," which creates an extremely high bar to prosecute the illegal killing of a protected animal if the killer claims "mistaken identity." Our lawsuit has angered trophy hunting groups like the Safari Club.

As we fight for the Mexican wolf's recovery in the Southwest, we're keeping in check special interests like the Safari Club and livestock associations that would prefer



2015 HIGHLIGHTS

WILD PLACES PROGRAM

We secured consideration
from the Environmental
Protection Agency for regulating
forest road runoff nationwide, which,
if implemented, could protect our wild forests and salmon
streams across the West.

We challenged logging in federal court of nearly 20 square miles of lynx habitat on national forest land in Colorado, including 2,300 acres of clear-cutting, to keep imperiled lynx protected.

We convened leading conservation groups in Arizona and New Mexico to set a vision for the Greater Gila Bioregion, North America's next great conservation landscape, ancestral home to the Mexican wolf and jaguar and source of the last undammed river in the Southwest, the Gila.

Along with our partners, we reached a legal agreement with the Forest Service in Colorado to consider reducing the damage of more than 500 miles of roads, thus furthering our vision of a chain of wild lands along the spine of the continent from Mexico to Canada.

CLIMATE AND ENERGY PROGRAM

We secured a historic moratorium on public lands coal leasing, keeping 1.4 billion tons of coal in the ground and



WI

preventing the equivalent of 50 percent of all U.S. carbon pollution from being released.

We scored major victories in federal court, overturning mining approvals in Colorado and Montana, and building momentum toward bigger reforms.

We built unprecedented momentum to keep our fossil fuels in the ground, playing a pivotal role in launching a successful grassroots movement to confront the Obama administration's plans to auction public lands for fracking in the American West.

We kept the pressure on utilities in the American West to shutter coal-fired power plants and move beyond coal.

We protected the Greater Chaco region from fracking, thwarting industry plans to lease 3,000 acres and launching a campaign to put the brakes on new fracking permits.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS thinks big, challenges conventional "wisdom," and embraces both conflict and cooperation to protect and restore the natural world.

WILD RIVERS PROGRAM

We created hope to restore the once-dynamic flows of the Rio Grande when a federal court rejected the Army Corps of Engineers' attempt to shirk its duty to protect the river and gave our lawsuit the go-ahead.





We safeguarded the Rio

Grande's right to roam—necessary for the Rio Grande silvery minnow and Southwestern willow flycatcher—by challenging the Corps' plan to build 43 miles of levees near Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

We worked with environmental and recreational boating communities in northern

New Mexico to seek congressional funding for a study of flows from



the Colorado state line to Velarde that are necessary to sustain the scenic, recreational, fishery, and cultural values of the river.

WILDLIFE PROGRAM

In response to Guardians' petitions, litigation, and groundbreaking settlement, 10 terrestrial and four marine species received much-needed Endangered Species Act protections.

We are keeping lynx safer in Montana by reining in cruel trapping in a settlement with the state that significantly restricts the types of traps and lures that can be used in lynx habitat and



requires traps to be checked more frequently.

We won a decisive victory in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals against Wildlife Services, the federal wildlife-killing program, which makes clear we and our allies can hold the program accountable for its cruel and destructive, taxpayer-funded activities.

Wolves are much safer thanks to a big win in our challenge to Wildlife Services' wolf-killing activities in Washington state, with the court agreeing Wildlife Services failed to analyze the broad impact of killing wolves and ordering the killing stopped.

FRACKING AND SAGE GROUSE

With fracking overwhelming our Western public lands, the greater sage grouse, iconic bird of the Sagebrush Sea, may be the best hope for both saving our wild places and protecting our climate.

More than 94,000 oil and gas wells have been drilled on Western public lands, turning the landscape into an industrial zone. Sage grouse need unspoiled space to mate and reproduce. With so much fossil fuel development, the bird's populations are in a tailspin. Rescuing the sage grouse from extinction now gives us the best chance to put the brakes on fracking.

In 2015, our efforts to protect the sage grouse reached new heights and new urgency. Although we secured better safeguards across 80 million acres of public lands in 10 Western states, we face loopholes that still allow fracking to endanger the grouse. In early 2016, we filed suit to strengthen revised land management plans and to press for scientifically justified conservation, not more giveaways to the oil and gas industry.

The stakes are high. Industry is gunning to drill on more than 10 million acres of core sage grouse habitat on our Western public lands. Thwarting those plans will restore refuge for the grouse in its Sagebrush Sea and keep 30 billion metric tons of carbon in the ground. That's like eliminating five years' worth of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.

By saving the sage grouse, we're responding to the climate crisis, restoring our public lands, and rescuing a wildlife icon from extinction.



RIO GRANDE

In our campaign to win back the Rio Grande's right to its own water and give its endangered fish and wildlife a future, we continue strategic litigation while also collaborating with farmers and First Nations communities who share our concern for a living river. Our goal in all of our strategies remains to remedy the fundamental flaw in state and federal water policy: the Rio Grande does not have the legal right to be a flowing, living river.

One of our primary aims is to force a recalcitrant U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to re-operate dams, especially Cochiti Dam, in a way that restores dynamic flows and creates pulsing flood flows where currently none exist. In September, a federal judge greenlighted our lawsuit that could force the Corps to re-operate and re-regulate Cochiti Dam to benefit the Bosque and native fish.

We also filed suit to challenge the Corps' overzealous plan to build levees in a biologically rich region in central New Mexico. The project—conceived over 50 years ago—would permanently halve the floodplain and destroy the last, best remaining habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo, Southwestern willow flycatcher, and Rio Grande silvery minnow. By stopping this project, we can preserve the opportunity to ensure the restoration of this crown jewel of the Rio Grande.

We also continued to pressure Congress, the federal Bureau of Reclamation, and the Rio Grande Compact Commission to adopt a new water management paradigm that reduces agricultural use and ensures a resilient river as we all adapt to a warming climate.



Legacy Giver DEBORAH BRISTOW



fter graduating from college, I spent many weeks hiking in national parks, rafting on the lakes, and painting desert landscapes.

One night we camped near our car, where we had stored our food for the 10-day hike, since we had arrived at night and couldn't raise the packs up in the trees. In the middle of the night, we awoke to find a bear behind the wheel of the MG! He couldn't get into the trunk, so he went in the other way — through the tonneau cover— but got stuck behind the wheel. Fortunately, he worked his way out when we ran toward him, jumping and screaming.

These are great memories, since I can't hike that far anymore. This is the reason I have included WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in my will, to help preserve the wild spaces for future generations to experience unadulterated nature like I did. Guardians is very good at maintaining the wilderness, with its capacity to respond to threats quickly and professionally. For many years I have followed Guardians' progress. I had met Sam Hitt in the early 1990s and was very impressed with his work to keep the wilderness wild, so to help out, I donate a desert watercolor painting to Guardians every year for the auction.

Not only are the public lands and climate benefiting from GUARDIANS' help, but wild and endangered animals in these areas can continue to thrive, since GUARDIANS is protecting their habitat from development by the oil and gas industries and other interests.

I have included

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

in my will to help

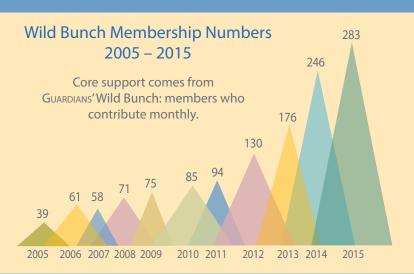
preserve the

wild spaces for

future generations...



OUR MEMBERSHIP 27 Years of Your Support

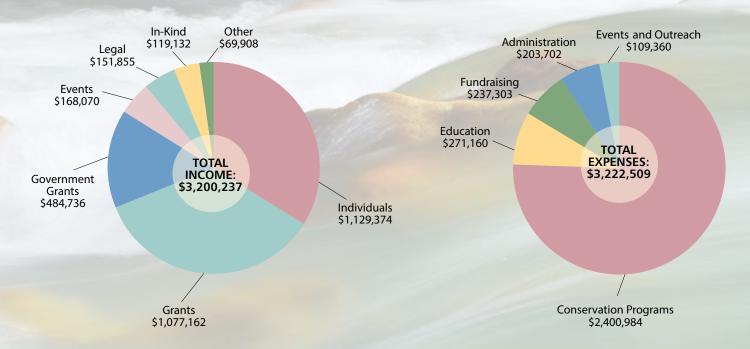




Numbers to Know: Guardians' online presence is critical to educating the public and engaging our government officials.



2015 Audited Financials



With key accomplishments in our core work in 2015, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS prepared the ground for even bigger results to come. We continue to earn Charity Navigator's top rating, a reflection of our efficient fundraising and administrative functions, solid systems, and transparent fiscal management. The small deficit reflects our continued investment in our work.

We are so grateful for our members.

This year, in addition to listing grant givers, we are including a list of members who have been with us for 10 years or more. Thank you!

RESTORATION GRANTS

American Forests
New Mexico Environment
Department
United States Department of
Agriculture
New Mexico Youth
Conservation Corps
National Park Service
National Fish and Wildlife
Foundation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FOUNDATIONS

444 S Foundation
American Forests

Anderson-Rogers Foundation

Ark Foundation Aveda Corporation

Blue Ridge Fund, California Community Foundation

Caprock Fund of Tides Foundation, on the recommendation of Ms. Kappy Wells

Casa de Brio

Chamisa Fund, Santa Fe Community Foundation

Community Foundation for the National

Capital Region

Deep Ecology Fund of Tides Foundation

Deer Creek Foundation

Eli Farmer Fund, New Mexico Community Foundation

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F and S Fund, Santa Fe Community Foundation

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Northwest Fund for the Environment

Odell Brewing Company Fund of the Community Foundation

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Patagonia

Rubens Family Foundation

S.B. Foundation

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Schaffner Family Foundation Sulica Fund Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation Turn & Return Fund, Santa Fe Community Foundation Wallace Genetic Foundation Weeden Foundation Western Organization of Resource **Councils Education Project** Wilburforce Foundation Women Donors Network

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