35 YEARS Wildlands Network
TOGETHER FOR THE WILD



2026 Annual Impact Report

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS FOR THE WILD | SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION

A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear Friend of the Wild,

As Wildlands Network celebrates 35 years, I feel immense pride in the movement we helped build to reconnect, restore, and rewild North America, and deep gratitude for everyone carrying it forward. Together, we are showing what is possible when hope is matched by action. Our progress is possible because of donors like you, committed partners, and an extraordinary team working from the field to the halls of government.

The past year tested our resolve. Public lands across the U.S. came under mounting pressure, long-standing environmental protections were rolled back, and border wall construction continued to carve through vital habitat. Yet even amid these setbacks, we saw real progress toward a new foundation for wildlife-driven conservation across North America.

Seven states passed laws to fund wildlife crossings and connectivity conservation, investing nearly $50 million USD. Red wolf pups were born in the wild. And in Mexico, 56,749 acres of land were placed under voluntary conservation. These wins remind us that even in a difficult year, the momentum for connected landscapes continues to build.

In 2027, we will keep building on what we know works to rewild lands and lives across North America. We'll unlock larger, more lasting investments for wildlife crossings. We'll help more communities adopt plans that protect critical habitat. We'll advance pro-wildlands policy across borders and boundaries. We'll partner with landowners to help them realize their conservation goals. And we'll turn new field research into action, sharing scientific evidence that drives real change.

As you read the stories of rewilding that you helped make possible in 2026, I hope you feel what I do: optimism grounded in impact. With your support, we are protecting the pathways wildlife need and bringing a wilder future within reach.

With gratitude,



Katie Davis, J.D.
Executive Director,
Wildlands Network

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Photos: Pathways for Wildlife / Wildlands Network

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2026 Impact Report
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Our Vision: Rewilding North America

At Wildlands Network, our roadmap for a more connected, rewilded continent is in our name: we're conducting research, working with local communities, influencing policy, and lending our expertise to create networks of wildlife migration pathways, enabling wildlife to roam freely across their entire range.

North America has three major Wildways we are committed to reconnecting, restoring, and rewilding. The Pacific Wildway runs from Baja Mexico north through Canada and Alaska. To the east, the Western Wildway follows the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains of Mexico and the Rocky Mountains north into Canada. On the eastern side of the continent, the Eastern Wildway runs from Nova Scotia south to Florida, encompassing Appalachia & the highly populated East Coast of the US.

As a leading voice in conservation and restoration for the past 35 years, we know that when communities prioritize policy that preserves the lands that livelihoods and wildlife depend on, everyone thrives. When infrastructure opens safe paths for wildlife to traverse roadways, ancient migration routes are restored, and species return to their historic range for the first time in decades.

This process, known as rewilding, has long been our focus: we're reshaping policies to restore, conserve, and connect habitat, allowing wildlife to migrate, survive, and thrive in their ancestral lands.

Impact Across Boundaries

In 2026, your support turned conservation vision into connected wildlands, safer roadways, & lasting policy change.

From camera traps in the field to coalitions in the capital, Wildlands Network works wherever wildlife need room to roam. This year, we gave 60+ talks and presentations, got covered by 150+ news stories, and continued to grow a movement to realize the vision of a connected, wild, & resilient North America.

$50M in State Funding Secured for Connected Landscapes & Wildlife Crossings

Thanks to supporters like you, Wildlands Network and our partners unlocked nearly $50 million in public funding this year to protect habitat, build wildlife crossings, and connect wild lands. That investment turns plans into progress and puts wildlife on the path to thrive for generations. This included wins across the Wildways, from Utah out West, to Virginia and North Carolina in the East.



$27M for Mexico's Protected Areas

Our Mexico team and partners helped secure $27 million to strengthen Natural Protected Areas in Mexico for the 2026 national budget, helping safeguard habitat for biodiversity and the many species that depend on it for survival.

8 Crossings to Reconnect Wildlife

This year, we supported eight wildlife crossing projects to help mule deer, red wolves, and other wildlife travel safely. With local partners, we're turning data and design into real solutions for wildlife on the move.



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7 State Policies Passed

Strong policy helps protect and restore connectivity. This year, seven state policies passed across the Wildways, funding connectivity & putting wildlife movement at the center of decisions about roads, development, and land use.



56,749 Acres of Land Under Voluntary Conservation

Landowners in Mexico chose to protect 56,749 acres of private land through voluntary conservation: an area larger than Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. Each protected acre of habitat for wildlife is a stepping stone in a larger, connected Wildway.



2.2M Wildlife Photos Captured or Reviewed

Our team deployed 454 camera traps in the field, capturing and reviewing more than 2.19 million images, each one a window into how wildlife are moving across the land. These photos show where animals travel, where roads and barriers get in their way, and where a crossing could make the difference.

22 Partnerships & Coalitions for the Wild

Wildlife don't recognize borders, and neither does our work. In 2026, we worked alongside 22 partners and coalitions, sharing expertise, aligning priorities, and amplifying our voice. That's how big, bold ideas become lasting change.





Thank you for being part of the rewilding movement.

Wildlands Network is growing the rewilding movement: people and communities across North America who share our vision of a more biodiverse and wild North America.

Over the past 35 years, our mission and vision have inspired a global movement. Our actions on the ground, with local partners, at statehouses, and in Congress have inspired generations of conservationists and driven the conversation on what a more connected, resilient continent could look like.

We're so excited to share our progress with you — and with your support, to continue achieving wins for communities and wildlife in the years and decades ahead.

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This year, amid growing challenges, we forged ahead with new projects to protect imperiled Peninsular bighorn sheep living in the borderlands.

Tracking Wildlife Across a Divide

ACROSS BOUNDARIES

Peninsular Bighorn & The Effects of the US-Mexico Border Wall

Peninsular bighorn sheep have lived in the California Deserts and Baja Peninsula for millennia. One population, the Jacumba group, serves as a genetic ambassador to all bighorn in Mexico. The imminent installation of a 30-ft-tall steel wall will isolate their populations, increasing the risk of inbreeding and regional extirpations on both sides of the border.

Historically, landscape-altering projects would be researched before and after installation to evaluate impacts. In the borderlands, this is not the case. The Secretary of Homeland Security invoked the Real ID Act of 2005, waiving dozens of existing environmental protections and leaving us with sparse baseline data on the wildlife and ecosystems being impacted.

To help fill this gap, we're partnering with Santuario Cimarrón, a project focused on protecting Peninsular bighorns and their habitat in Baja California, Mexico. Together, we've placed 11 trail cameras just south of the border to document the Jacumba bighorn group's use of the region's water resources — data that will inform adaptive strategies to mitigate the effects of a completed wall. In November, we gave a presentation highlighting the border wall's impacts on wildlife and what is being done to study and protect Peninsular bighorn sheep on both sides of the border at a webinar hosted by the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC).

> **"The entire population will be impacted by the sudden split in their range and lack of genetic exchange across the border."**
>
> **Christina Aiello, Ph.D.**
> *California Wildlife Biologist*

The partnerships and the data collected on wildlife behavior in the borderlands will inform mitigation strategies that help them survive these new conditions. We continue to engage the media to raise awareness of the pressures bighorn face, and advocate for more openings in the border wall for the connectivity of all wildlife there.

A Common Ground for Jaguars

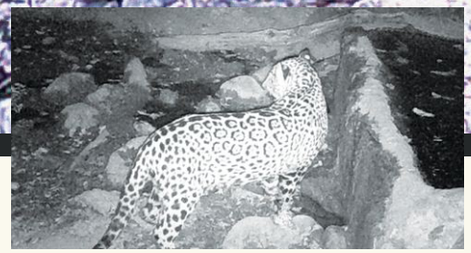
New Cub Brings Hope for Them to Return Home













Camera trap images of the cub, Nawa, above, and the two adult jaguars Kawi (male) and Ania (female) in the row below. Both have been seen repeatedly on the property where Nawa was discovered.

RESTORE WILDLIFE

In Sonora, Mexico, communities have a new habitat conservation tool, and are watching wildlife come home.

Last fall, our camera traps documented something truly remarkable: a mated jaguar pair and cub in a region that had not seen a jaguar in over forty years.

Their presence indicates healthy herbivore populations, and a potential preference for low-density areas with year-round water as prolonged droughts become more common.

Sonora is a critical link in jaguar habitat, stretching from Arizona to Argentina. Coexistence there requires collaboration with community members — including the landowners where the cub was found — to monitor wildlife presence and incentivize habitat protections.

In Mexico, 95% of the land is communally owned. Between 2022 and 2024, the state of Sonora updated its environmental law to establish the Real Right of Conservation (Derecho Real de Conservación), which created a framework for landowners to conserve land via property tax reductions, stewardship funding, and green certifications.

"The presence of the jaguar, like that of other large carnivores, is always an indicator of a healthy ecosystem, but it also poses a significant challenge for its conservation."

Carlos Castillo
Northwest Mexico Program Director

In June, leaders and landowners in Sonora signed the first contract under the law, which positions the state to achieve significant habitat conservation for large mammals — jaguars, bears, mountain lions, and more that depend on large, connected swaths of habitat.



95%

of land in Mexico is privately or communally owned

Research & Future Road Crossings are Restoring the Eastern Wildway

Red Wolves & US 64

A Path Back for Wildlife

12+

New red wolf pups growing up wild

RESTORE WILDLIFE

Several projects are supporting the return of endangered red wolves to the Southeastern US, a key part of North America's Eastern Wildway.

Underpasses are underway on US 64, the roadway that cuts through North Carolina's Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, where some of the last wild red wolves roam.

Wildlands Network and our partners fund-raised $4 million to help NCDOT secure $25 million in federal grant funding for the project in 2024. Design work is in progress for the next year, with construction target-ed for 2028 and completion by 2031.

WN staff are also documenting road-killed wildlife on 64 and the quieter US 264. The study has been funded for a third year. Our data are setting a baseline of local wildlife-vehicle collisions that will inform the placement of future crossings and help us measure their success. Daily removal of roadkill also helps keep red wolves from foraging on the highway.

Since the start of the survey in 2024, only two red wolves died from highway vehicle strikes compared to 12 red wolves be-tween 2020 and 2024. This spring saw the birth of the most red wolf pups born since 2013, with an estimated 12–16 currently growing up in the wild.

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"Our data are setting a baseline of local wildlife-vehicle collisions that will inform the placement of crossings and help us measure their success."



Photo: Nancy Arehart

Wild pups born in a previous year's litter at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.

Building with Wildlife in Mind

Solar, Fencing, & Development Practices in the Growing Western Wildway

500+
Miles of fence
total surveyed for impact on wildlife

19
Miles of fence
modified & removed in the Paunsaugunt migration corridor

Mule deer rely on the ability to move between their seasonal ranges — fencing can be a significant barrier.

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ACROSS BOUNDARIES

The Western Wildway runs through the American Southwest, where we're conducting research and advocating for policies that promote connectivity and reduce habitat fragmentation.

For the past three years, our team has been studying interactions between utility-scale solar energy (USSE) and pronghorn and other species in New Mexico and Arizona.

While the research remains ongoing, we have already submitted some of our data for publication and have started to put some of those results into practice. In Utah, we advocated for the passage of HB 412, which will require solar and wind developers to consult the Division of Wildlife Resources during the permitting process, a critical step for reducing project impacts on wildlife.

We're also surveying rangeland fencing in critical migration corridors so that we can reduce its effect on wildlife movement. In Utah, we have already modified 19 miles of fence and plan to modify an additional 7 miles next year.

In New Mexico, we surveyed 27 miles of fence that was previously identified as a significant barrier to migrating pronghorn and elk; we'll begin modifications to those sections next year. In Colorado, we initiated a project in the San Luis Valley, surveying 500 miles of fence. Next summer, we'll modify or remove 15 miles of fence identified during surveying.

While most of our work has focused on the wide-open spaces we typically think of as wildlife habitat, in fast-growing Utah, we released a Planning for Habitat Connectivity toolkit to assist local planners in maintaining wildlife habitat in the wildland-urban interface.



Pronghorn at the site of our solar study in San Juan, New Mexico.

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Trails, Roads, & the Wildlife in Between

Leading Research & Wildlife-Friendly Recreation in the Pacific Wildway

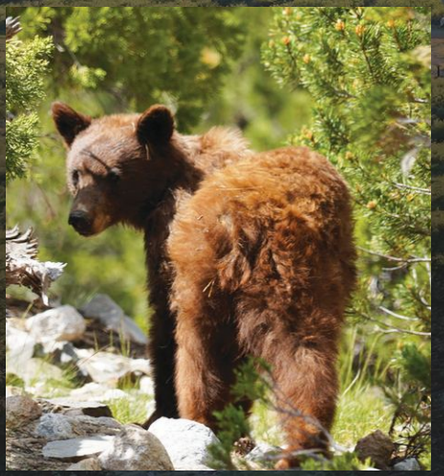
ACROSS BOUNDARIES

The Northern Sierra Nevada Mountains boast some of the Pacific Wildway's most connected habitats and most popular outdoor recreation areas, requiring thoughtful planning to minimize impacts on wildlife.

This year, we worked with biologists from state and federal agency partners and local organizations to develop the Northern Sierra Wildlife Connectivity and Restoration Framework. It includes a new mapping tool that prioritizes wildlife needs in recreation planning. To launch the framework and share how it can be applied to manage and develop recreation infrastructure, we co-hosted the Northern Sierra Recreation and Wildlife Symposium, bringing together key stakeholders & decision-makers, connecting landscapes for mule deer migrations, dispersing wolves, and isolated populations of Sierra Nevada red fox, fisher, and marten while providing meaningful opportunities to connect people to the outdoors.

"This isn't about choosing between people & wildlife. It's about choosing better design."

Mari Galloway
California Program Director



Black bear sighting in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. Yes, American black bears (Ursus americanus) can be brown, cinnamon, blonde, or even white, despite their name.

We're also leading a study of wildlife movement around State Route 62, while consulting on designs for two wildlife crossings between Palm Springs and Yucca Valley.

This long-term project marks a new partnership between our organization and the Mojave Desert Land Trust. A key component of this project will involve local community education and outreach. The crossings will support connectivity for species like mountain lion, bobcat, & bighorn sheep. The data will establish a baseline, inform the crossing designs, and document how wildlife interact with the road before and after crossing construction.

Securing Funds for Wildlife

Dedicating Funding to Protect Wildlife and Motorists

WILDLIFE CROSSINGS

Over the past year, Wildlands Network has worked to secure permanent, dedicated funding for wildlife crossings at the federal and state level.

The US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved a bill to reappropriate and increase funding through the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program. Established in 2021, it has directed $350 million toward crossings planning and construction. This latest bill also removes "pilot" from the program, symbolizing a desire for program permanence. It also waives matching requirements for Tribal applicants. The bill's next stop is the House floor, but for now, we're celebrating the program's overwhelming bipartisan support.

Virginia approved legislation creating the Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund. The law allows Virginians to voluntarily contribute to the fund, supporting wildlife crossings and making culvert improvements to create safer, more resilient roadways & reconnect habitat. Meanwhile, North Carolina appropriated $10.2 million in dedicated funding, recurring every two years, allowing the state's transportation and wildlife agencies to pursue new crossings to protect wildlife and drivers alike.

Oregon passed a bill to increase the state's transient lodging tax by 1.25% to fund wildlife & habitat connectivity programs, a move expected to raise $38 million per year, starting in 2027. We identified the funding option with partners in 2022, drafted the original bill, and helped pass the final version of the bill by testifying at legislative hearings and engaging with the statewide coalition.

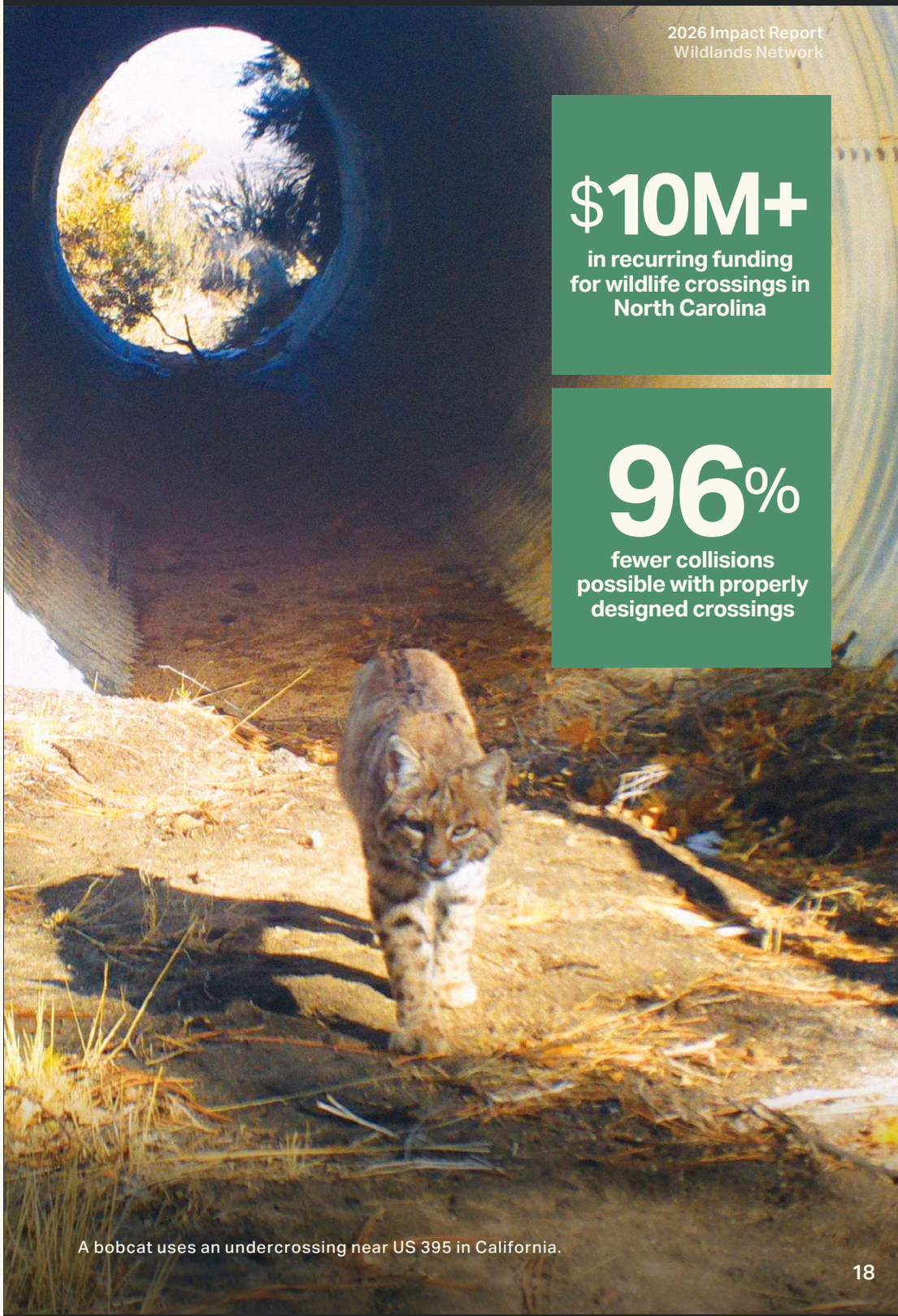
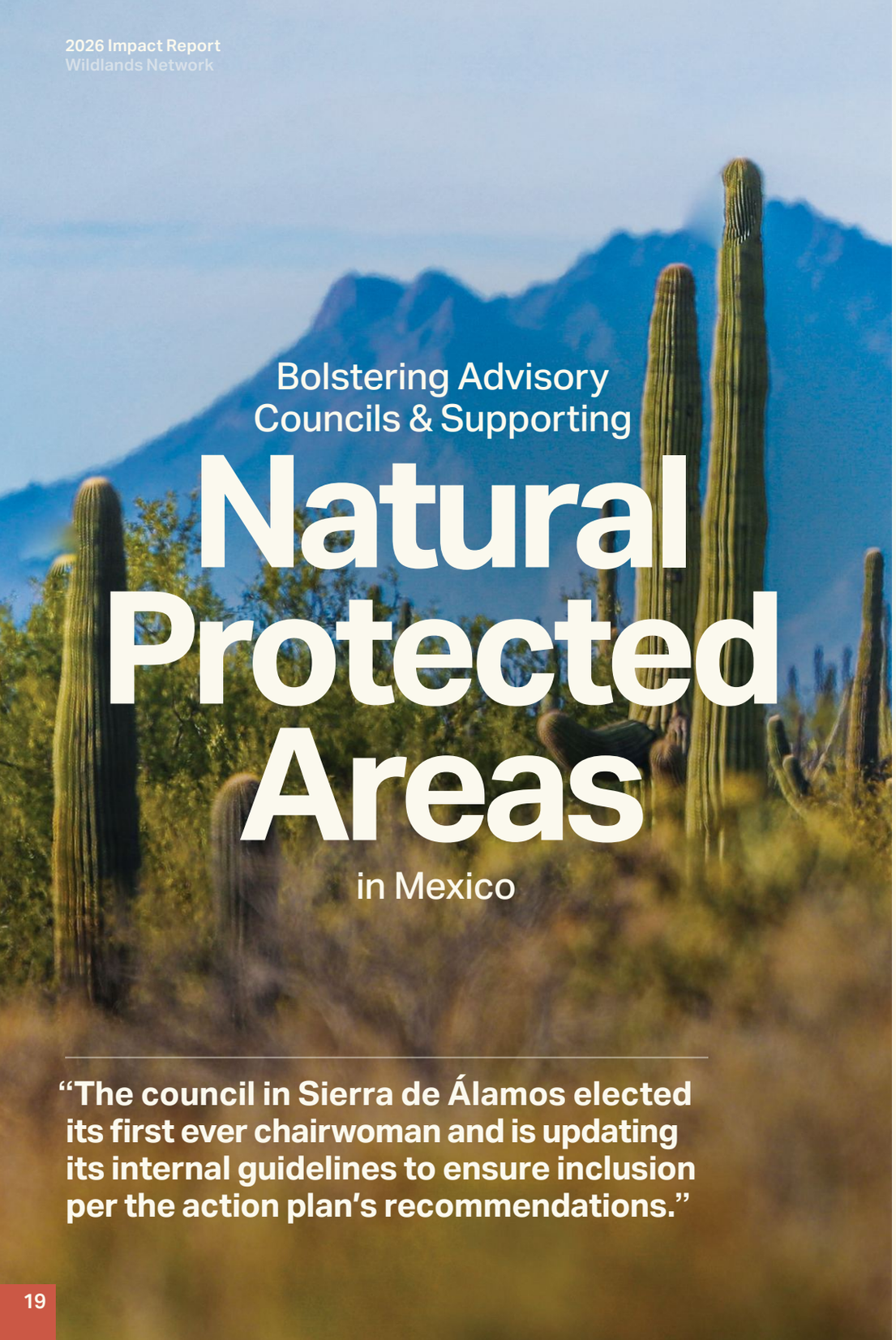


Photo: Pathways for Wildlife / Wildlands Network

A bobcat uses an undercrossing near US 395 in California.



Bolstering Advisory Councils & Supporting

Natural Protected Areas

in Mexico

“The council in Sierra de Álamos elected its first ever chairwoman and is updating its internal guidelines to ensure inclusion per the action plan’s recommendations.”

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Protecting Nature Through Coalitions & Communities

72 NEWS

Local, national, & international media outlets covered the team’s 2025 media campaign to raise awareness about the federal budget for NPAs

$27M+

USD secured for Mexico’s Natural Protected Areas in the 2026 federal budget, a 50% increase from 2025

CONNECTING WILDWAYS

In Mexico, Wildlands Network is part of NOSSA, Northwest Civil Society for Environmental Sustainability, a coalition working to improve effective conservation of Mexico’s natural protected areas (NPAs).

At the local level, community advisory councils foster participation in the management of NPAs. This past year, Wildlands Network collaborated with our partners to assess the state of the councils for two NPAs: Sierra de Álamos Río Cuchujaqui and Bavispe, both located in the state of Sonora.

We created action plans for each council to strengthen internal governance and improve transparency and inclusiveness. That revitalized community engagement, repositioning the councils as platforms to connect local knowledge, protected area management, and climate and ecosystem resilience.

Following the action plan, council members in Bavispe developed a strategy to ensure community participation in the process of updating and publishing the Management Plan for the NPA. The council in Sierra de Álamos elected its first ever chairwoman and is updating its internal guidelines to ensure inclusion per the action plan’s recommendations.

Part of an advisory council’s work is building connections with communities living in and around NPAs, strengthening ties with the people whose lives and livelihoods depend on them.



From the Field to the Headlines

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This year Wildlands Network elevated our work in major media outlets to reach new audiences with compelling stories about wildlife movement and the urgent need to reconnect landscapes.

These features helped increase visibility of the challenges facing bighorn sheep, mountain lions, red wolves, and other species — building public understanding and support for the conservation solutions that can enable a more vibrant future for wildlife and communities.

We also launched a new website to share our work, and are highlighting more of our stories across social media. We invite you to visit the new site and explore our channels for more regular updates on wildlife and community happenings across the continent.

Los Angeles Times

JUN. 4, 2026

Rare sheep face sharp new obstacle at U.S.-Mexico Border

Christina Aiello, our California wildlife biologist, spoke about plans to construct the final 140 miles of border fence in southern California and the threat that poses for Peninsular bighorn sheep. We're advocating for mitigation measures here to keep wildlife in mind.

The Washington Post

JUL. 18, 2026

Red wolves, once nearly wiped out, had a spring baby boom

This year saw the most red wolves born in the wild since 2013. Our Chief Scientist, Ron Sutherland, said it's a promising sign of the population's potential to grow over the next five years thanks to some protection from road mortality.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

JAN. 8, 2026

The mission to keep the borderlands wild

This feature highlighted our work monitoring limited border wall openings in the section of wall cutting through the remote Madrean Sky Islands of Arizona and New Mexico, part of our efforts to document how the wall is impacting wildlife.

Sierra

JUN. 1, 2026

A jaguar cub is born in Sonora, and hopes soar for recovery

Our field technician, Juan Haro, captured camera-trap images of a jaguar cub in rural Sonora, Mexico – the first spotted in the area in over 40 years. The discovery suggests jaguars are establishing resident populations beyond protected reserves.

The Washington Post

DEC. 27, 2025

Blowing up national park land for a new border wall

Reporters followed our borderlands team to document dynamiting for border wall construction in Arizona's remote Coronado National Memorial. The region constitutes an important corridor for jaguar and other wildlife.

kpcw

91.7 | 91.9 | 88.1 | APP | .ORG npr

AUG. 19, 2026

Talking habitat connectivity across Utah and beyond

On the podcast "This Green Earth," Utah Project Manager, Kasey Lindstrom, outlines the organization's strategy for building habitat corridors that allow wildlife to move freely across the state and beyond.

Sierra

MAY 27, 2026

$25 million project aims to save world's rarest wolf from roads

Vehicle strikes are a leading cause of death for North Carolina's wild red wolf population. Our Chief Scientist, Ron Sutherland, speaks about securing federal funding to build crossings and fencing along US 64, to keep wolves off the road.

kpbs

FEB. 25, 2026

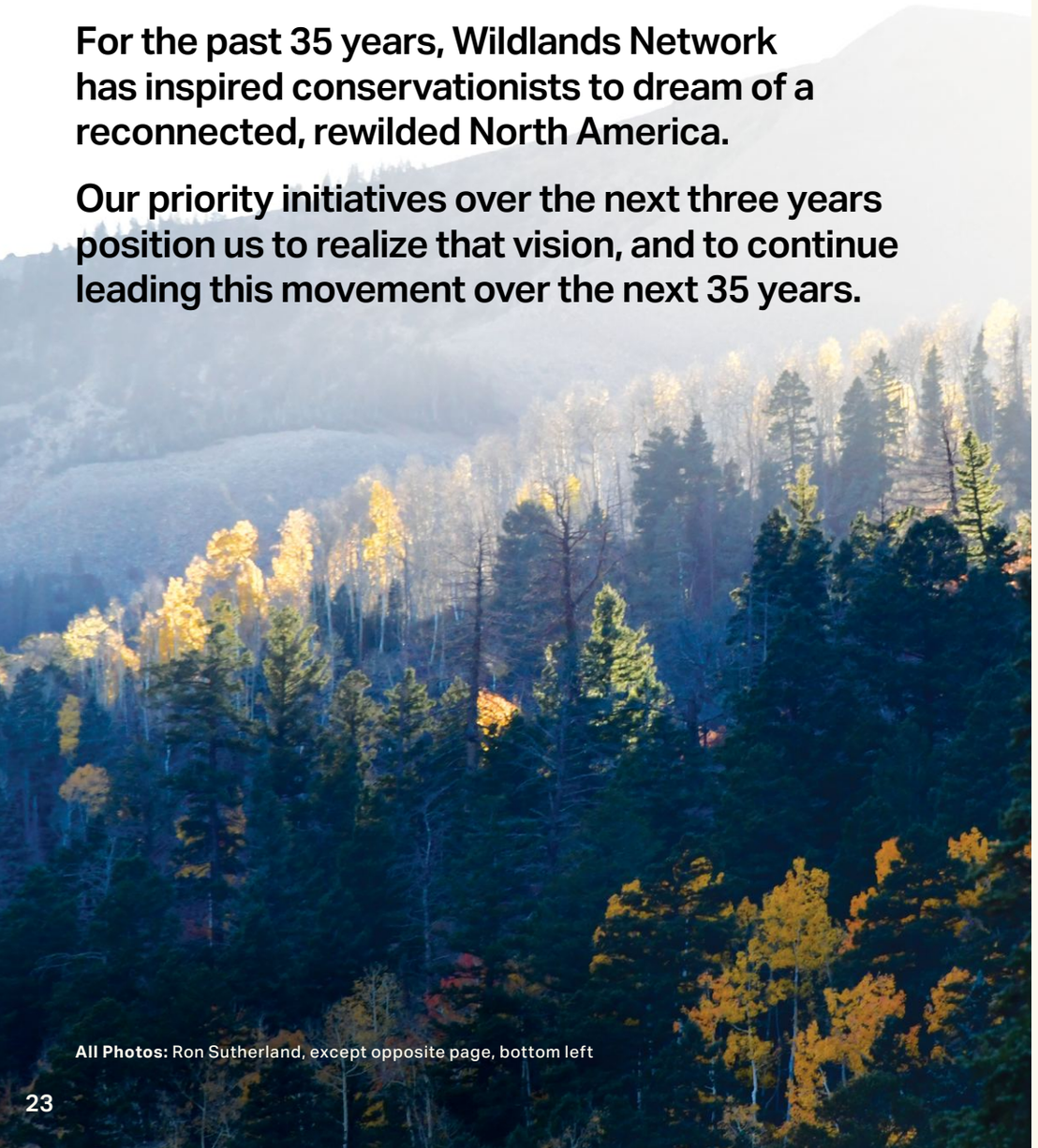
Border wall barriers divide bighorn sheep from resources

Christina Aiello took reporters to the California borderlands to discuss WN's calls for changes to the border wall that could give Peninsular bighorn sheep, and other species, a fighting chance.

Looking Ahead: **Our Next 35 Years**

For the past 35 years, Wildlands Network has inspired conservationists to dream of a reconnected, rewilded North America.

Our priority initiatives over the next three years position us to realize that vision, and to continue leading this movement over the next 35 years.



All Photos: Ron Sutherland, except opposite page, bottom left

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Wildlife Crossings

North American wildlife need crossings to successfully navigate the continent's vast transportation network. Habitat fragmentation from roads impacts ecosystems continent-wide. Wildlife-vehicle collisions kill 1 billion animals every year, and cost $10 billion in crash-related expenses. By 2030, we're striving for $1 billion committed or obligated toward the design, planning, and construction of 25 or more crossings.



Reconnect Wildways

With development, governments have an opportunity to preserve access to nature. By the end of 2030, we envision five communities launching wildlife corridor protection plans, resulting in an additional 30,000 or more acres managed for wildlife. We're also identifying practices for wildlife-friendly solar siting and renewable energy development, with a goal of $50 million or more in research funding.



Restore Wildlife

Over time, pressures from people have removed wildlife from parts of their ranges. We're using targeted research, analysis, and information sharing to inform wildlife recovery planning. For example, we're helping cougars rewild the Eastern US by identifying large-scale habitat corridors for protection; and we're collaborating with coalitions to facilitate the reintroduction of species such as wolverines, elk, and black-footed ferrets across their ranges.



Across Boundaries

Wildlife don't recognize borders. Through multi-jurisdictional partnerships, we're contributing to the assessment or modification of 1,000 or more miles of public fencing, including the US-Mexico border, by 2030. This involves the government shifting toward prioritizing habitat connectivity via coordinated management, and a resource alignment of $100 million or more in funding toward habitat connectivity stewardship.



Our Team

Executive Team

Katie Davis, J.D.
Executive Director

Juan Carlos Bravo
Associate Director

Ron Sutherland, Ph.D.
Chief Scientist

Lindsay Biedel
Development Director

Caitlin Lutsch
Finance Director

Tim Noviello
Communications Director

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Ed Marx
Northeast Project Manager

Mari Galloway, J.D.
California Program Director

Christina Aiello, Ph.D.
California Wildlife Biologist

Michelle Gin
California Program Coordinator

Liz Hillard, Ph.D.
Senior Wildlife Biologist, Appalachian Region

Nikki Robinson
North Carolina Project Manager

Erin Sito, J.D.
U.S. Public Policy Director

Misty Boos
U.S. Conservation Policy Manager

David Ellenberger
Oregon Special Projects Manager

Carlos Castillo
Northwest Mexico Program Director

Gina Chacón
Mexico Public Policy Director

Daniel Martin
Coordinator of the NOSSA Coalition

Lucy Britton
Foundation Relations & Grants Manager

Lindsay Schou
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Aaron Facka, Ph.D.
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Kasey Lindstrom, J.D.
Utah Project Manager

Kevin Smith
Four Corners Program Manager

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Lauren Humphrey
Executive Assistant

Anna Weinberg
Arizona Project Manager

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2025 Financials

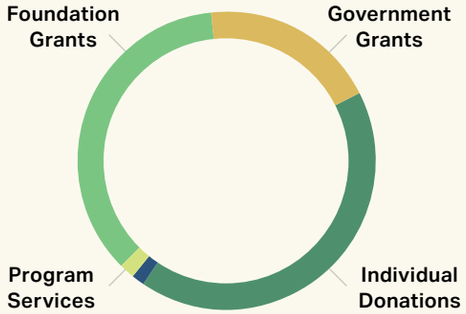
In 2025, we balanced continued investment in our mission with sound financial management. Total revenue reached $4,066,055, drawn from a diversified base of individual donors, foundations, government partners, and other sources, building on a mixed funding stream and strengthening our long-term resilience.

Expenses grew to $3,861,046 as we invested strategically in the people, programs, and systems needed to scale our conservation impact. Despite this growth, we closed the year with a positive operating balance of $205K. We're investing this right back into our programs, strengthening our ability to respond quickly to emerging opportunities and develop new partnerships aligned with our strategic plan.

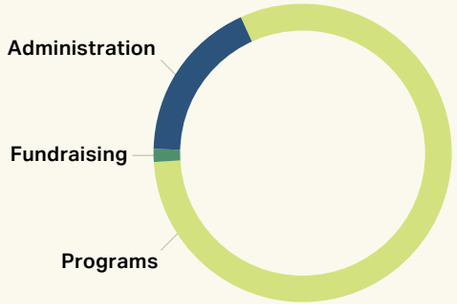
Revenue

Foundation Grants: $1,458,421
Government Grants: $781,327
Individual Donations: $1,704,693
Program Services: $59,095
Other Income: $20,440
Investment Income: $42,079

Total: $4,066,055



Expenses



Program Expenses: $3,131,637
Administration: $679,853
Fundraising: $49,556

Total: $3,861,046

Photo: Ron Sutherland

What's Possible When We Move Together

In 2026, we came together and proved what's possible: 7 policies shifted toward wildlife. 22 partnerships and coalitions aligned behind habitat connectivity. Wildlife moved safely over and under crossings. Major media coverage in Mexico informed the public, increasing awareness around protected areas, connectivity, and crossings funding. But this is just the beginning.

The work ahead is bigger. Wildlife corridors don't follow borders, and neither does our vision. We're scaling what works — the policy wins, the crossings that save lives, the partnerships that endure. That takes sustained investment and committed partners like you.

Whether you support our work through an annual gift, a monthly *Sustain the Wild* donation, through stock or your IRA, or have an estate gift set aside for Wildlands Network, you're betting on a future where wildlife and people move and thrive together across connected landscapes.

Every investment, at every level, helps power the next crossing built, the next policy win, the next mile of habitat protected.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A LASTING IMPACT

SCAN TO DONATE

Support the next thirty-five years of this work.



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