

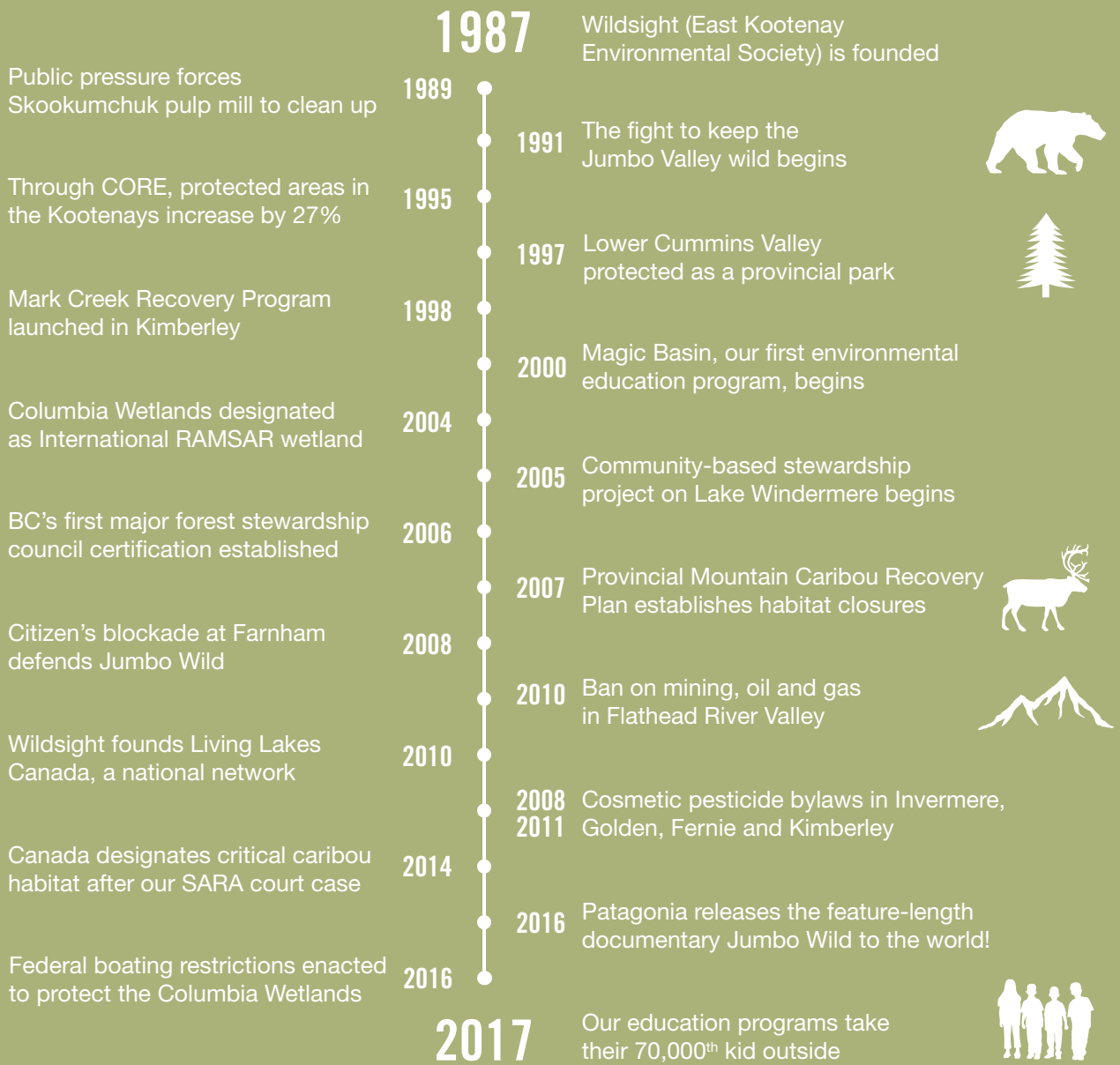
wildsight



wildsight
30 YEARS

ANNUAL
REPORT
2017

30 YEARS OF WILDSIGHT



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It all started in a kitchen. Tea and tablecloths were the backdrop to passionate debates, big dreams and brainstorming ways to protect our wild home. What began as grassroots organizing in communities around the Kootenays decades ago led to the creation of the East Kootenay Environmental Society, now Wildsight.

I grew up in this community of believers, never questioning that this place was worth protecting, always believing in the power of people and knowing that it was our collective responsibility to act. For years, my dad published the newsletter and our home was filled monthly with boxes and envelopes for the mail-out while we children played on the edges. Wildsight was built on grassroots volunteer efforts.

Thirty years later, looking back on all that has been accomplished by this committed group of people is astounding, humbling and inspiring. The challenges that we face now are great, but the importance of

conservation and protecting wild places, wild critters and clean water has never been greater.

Andy Warhol said, "They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." May we all be inspired to action and carry on the incredible legacy we have been gifted from the past 30 years of work. My deepest thanks to all of you who have been part of this wild and wonderful team—here's to the next 30 years!



For the wild,

Robyn Duncan
Executive Director



Jumbo in bloom, Steve Shannon

CONSERVATION

SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Between Banff National Park and Glacier National across the border, the Flathead and Elk Valleys are part of a critical wildlife corridor for vulnerable species like grizzly bears and wolverines. This internationally significant corridor is in need of protection. In 2017, we realigned our goals and shifted our approach to try and practice conservation as an act of reconciliation. With a declining wildlife population in the Southern Rockies, we expanded our work with wildlife coalitions and non-traditional allies to build public momentum for broad wildlife protections across the landscape.

PURCELL MOUNTAINS

The Jumbo Valley provides an important linkage area for wildlife deep in the Purcell Mountains. For 27 years, Wildsight and its partners have fought a proposed large-scale ski resort. In 2017, we delivered **61,526 petitions** calling for permanent protection of the Jumbo Valley to the Ktunaxa Nation and to the British Columbia Legislature. Next year, we will work on getting the Jumbo Resort Municipality dissolved and the Master Development Agreement revoked and continue to support Ktunaxa Nation's vision to protect Qat'muk and beyond.



Delivering the Qat'muk petition to the Ktunaxa Nation, Aric Keane

FORESTRY

A big part of our work at Wildsight for the last 30 years has been stewarding change on the ground. In 2017, we worked with forestry companies like Canfor to increase riparian protection and forest retention and to monitor High Conservation Value and endangered forests under the Forest Stewardship Council.

WILDLIFE

With connectivity key for our wide-ranging **grizzlies** and **wolverines**, we worked at all levels to protect wildlife corridors and critical habitat and to minimize the impacts of industrial activity and recreation in the Rockies and Purcells.

Across BC, **mountain caribou** are disappearing. Our southernmost herds are barely hanging on with around a dozen animals each. In 2017, Wildsight continued to play an active role in driving policy and putting pressure on our governments to protect critical caribou habitat and support recovery of this special animal.

Our supporters played a key wildlife advocacy role by speaking up on issues that mattered to them:

- 1818** people sent a strong message to the provincial government demanding regulations on **commercial huckleberry harvesting**, a crucial food for grizzlies.
- 1271** messages were sent against subdivision plans along Lizard Creek, near Fernie, in prime **grizzly bear** connectivity habitat.
- 200** people spoke up to put habitat protection back in the **Fisheries Act**.
- 166** spoke out against imidacloprid, a neonic pesticide that is extremely harmful to **bees**.
- 76** people wrote letters asking that Parks Canada re-focus on **conservation in the mountain parks**.

ELK VALLEY WATER QUALITY

With our partners on both sides of the border, we worked to address water quality impacts of coal mining in the Elk Valley and downstream in the Kootenay River, and engaged industry and government to reduce pollutant levels, today and in centuries to come.

COLUMBIA WETLANDS

After 20 years of lobbying, organizing and campaigning, the final piece of our three-part protection strategy for these internationally-recognized wetlands came into force: a regulation banning high-powered boats and limiting motorized boating to the main channel of the river.



“I think we all at Wildsight share a love for wilderness and wildlife and the outdoors.

My connection to the Columbia Wetlands grew out of living near and recreating in the wetlands and my passion for birding. But I really became seriously committed after the early 1990s Protected Areas Strategy when scientists deemed it one of the most important and diverse ecosystems in the Kootenays.”

Ellen Zimmerman, Columbia Wetlands Lead Campaigner,
Wildsight member since 1987

LIVING LAKES CANADA

This year, Living Lakes Canada launched on its own as an independent society. We are proud of all the work we accomplished together over the last decade.

Living Lakes has trained groups across Canada, as well as internationally, to monitor the water central to their lives. One of their goals is to bridge the gap between academics, citizen scientists and policy-makers; they’ve driven the national dialogue on citizen science water monitoring and have been honoured with national water leader awards for their work. We look forward to their future successes and positive impacts in the Columbia Basin and beyond.



Living Lakes Canada's Raegan Mallinson, Kat Hartwig & Heather Leschied

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

With increasing demands on our natural world, building sustainable local communities is crucial. Wildsight works collaboratively with our five autonomous branches in Creston, the Elk Valley, Golden, Invermere and Kimberley/Cranbrook.

In 2017, we brought farmers and the community together with the vibrant **Kimberley Farmers' Market** and celebrated the local bounty with the third annual **Our Harvest Feast & Fest** in Fernie. We planted and sustained community produce gardens in Kimberley and Fernie. The Elk Valley branch launched **Keeping Food Real**, a series of workshops and resources to support food gardening in our challenging cold climate.

We engaged in deep discussion through **Wild Ideas**: a speaker series meant to inspire positive action. We ran **Wild Nature Tours** in Fernie and Invermere, getting locals and tourists alike into the wild, and held outdoor summer camps for kids in Golden.

Wildsight Invermere held a community **Bear Day** with speakers, displays and demonstrations about living in harmony with bears and in Golden, we worked with our community to minimize the impact of recreation trails.

The **Wild & Scenic Film Festival** and presentations by adventurer Jon Turk delighted audiences and brought in new Wildsight members in Kimberley, Cranbrook, Creston and Invermere.

The **Creston Bird Festival**, run by Wildsight Creston, continues to be a spring highlight, bringing together conservation, art, local food and education—and more than 25,000 birds. Wildsight Golden's **Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey** entered its third year of collecting the data needed to achieve Important Bird Area status for the Columbia Wetlands. Citizen scientists counted more than 75,000 birds in their fall and spring 2017 surveys!



Invermere Bear Days, Pat Morrow



Classroom with Outdoors in Revelstoke, Michael Royle

EDUCATION

Protecting the places we love for the long-term means inspiring the next generation to love them too. Our education programs get kids outside to teach them about nature, sustainability and themselves.

In 2017, we developed **Nature through the Seasons**, an action-based and experiential program that takes students deeper into nature with outdoor experiences in each season and supports teachers in integrating the outdoors into their teaching all year round.

Know Your Watershed, a program we deliver on behalf of the Columbia Basin Trust, took 722 Grade 9 students out learning in their local streams and rivers.

5378 students got outside into the ecosystems in their wild backyards through **Classroom with Outdoors** and **Winter Wonder**. Our **EcoStewards** program offered classes a deep dive into stewardship projects: planting native plants along river banks, establishing school gardens and outdoor learning spaces, pulling invasive weeds and creating an illustrated field guide to the plants and trees near their school.

Our 24-week **Beyond Recycling** program continues to grow and develop, empowering kids to take positive actions towards sustainability by reducing their eco-footprints and contributing to their communities.

In summer 2017, youth from around the Columbia Basin went on two **Go Wild** backpacking trips: an epic hike over the historic Earl Grey Pass in the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy and a rugged trip into the Hornaday Wilderness in the heart of the Rockies.

“Showing the students the world right around them and the important roles each area plays is key. I had many say they had never walked that way onto the flats before and they all appreciated how beautiful it was. The program made my students realize how important it is to protect and care for what is right in front of us so that further generations will be able to enjoy it as well.”

Connie Haworth, teacher at Begbie View Elementary School

1455 MEMBERS

Our members are amazing people who value wilderness, wildlife and healthy communities and who believe in taking care of the things we love, together.

WHERE WE WORK

Wildsight is based in the East Kootenay region of British Columbia. Our home contains North America's longest intact wetland, the headwaters of the mighty Columbia River and the majestic peaks of the Columbia and Rocky Mountains. Our environmental education programs are offered across the Columbia Basin.



Cover: Lone Rock, Jumbo Mountain, Howard Smith, mountainwonder.ca



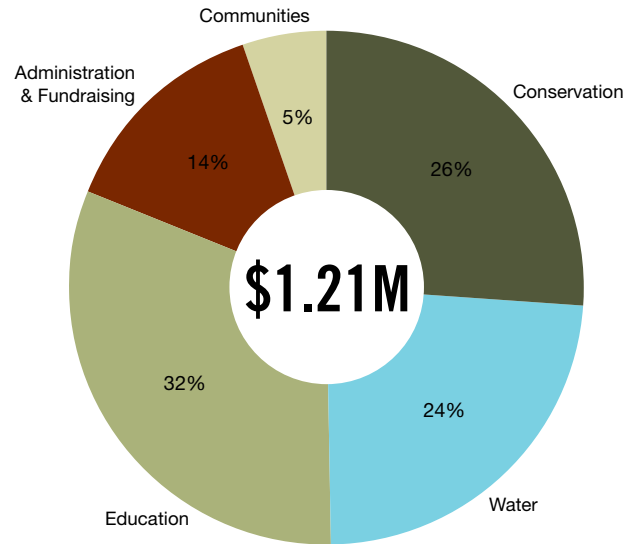
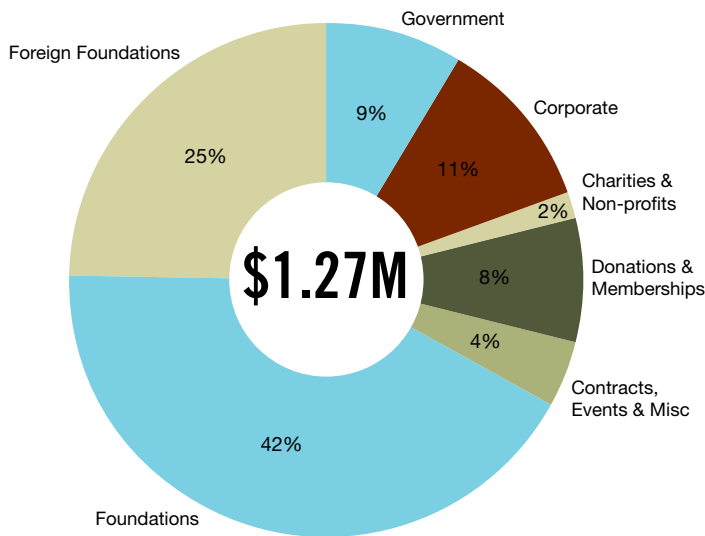
PROGRAM TEAM AND MANAGEMENT

Robyn Duncan Exec Director & Purcells Manager
 John Bergenske Conservation Director
 Ryland Nelson Southern Rockies Manager
 Eddie Petryshen Conservation Coordinator
 Kat Hartwig Water Director
 Heather Leschied Water Stewardship Manager
 Raegan Mallinson Water Stewardship Coordinator
 Nicole Fulcher Groundwater Program Coordinator

Monica Nissen Education Manager
 Dawn Deydey Beyond Recycling Coordinator
 Mary Searchfield Education Program Development
 Dave Quinn Know Your Watershed Coordinator
 21 Environmental Educators in the Columbia Basin
 Lindsay Cuff Comms & Development Manager
 Lars Sander-Green Comms Manager, IT, Climate
 Jeremy Sroka Communications Coordinator
 Bryan Duffett Finance & Administration Manager
 Stephanie Hirn Office Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brian Conrad Chair
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 Annette Lutterman Secretary
 Baiba Morrow Director
 Brian Clarkson Director
 Casey Brennan Director
 Jim Smith Director
 Tanna Patterson Director



This report covers Wildsight's fiscal year from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017. Find our full audited financials at wildsight.ca.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

444S Foundation | Alberta Ecotrust | Alberta Real Estate Foundation | Brainerd Foundation | Canada Summer Jobs
 Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network | Columbia Basin Trust | Columbia Power Corporation
 Columbia Shuswap Regional District | Columbia Valley Community Foundation | ECO Canada
 Environment & Climate Change Canada | Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program | Fortis BC
 John & Barbara Poole Family Funds at Edmonton Community Foundation | Leroi Foundation
 Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics | McLean Foundation | Mountain Equipment Co-op | NSERC | Osprey Foundation
 Patagonia | Province of British Columbia | RBC Blue Water | Real Estate Foundation of BC
 Regional District of Central Kootenay | Sitka Foundation | TD Friends of the Environment
 Teck Coal & The Canadian Museum of Nature | Teck Trail | Tides Canada Foundation – Full Circle Small Grants Fund
 Tides Foundation | Vancouver Foundation | Wilburforce Foundation | WWF-Canada and Loblaw Companies Limited
 Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative