

wildsight



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**ANNUAL
REPORT
2019**



Photo and cover photo by mountainwonder.ca

As we reflect on 2019, the year may be remembered as one of significant milestones. In conservation, Jumbo Wild began the end of its nearly 30-year campaign. A full year of environmental education programming ran alongside preparations for our 20th year of delivery. And operationally, the organization peered into the future and asked ‘what will the next decade bring’?

After 30 years of concerted effort by Wildsight, our partners and Ktunaxa citizens, a Collaborative Stewardship Agreement for Qat’muk, including the Jumbo Valley, was announced between the province and the Ktunaxa Nation. This announcement followed a major milestone in British Columbia’s history, the declaration into law of the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). The legislation signalled an increased commitment for action on reconciliation and a significant change in land use decision making. Wildsight welcomed the opportunity for the Ktunaxa concept of ‘All Living Things’ (akxamis qapi qapsin) and Ktunaxa stewardship principles to be incorporated into land use decisions.

Protecting intact wild areas in the Kootenays has required Wildsight’s persistence over time. The Purcell Wilderness Conservancy was over 20 years in the making. Areas such as the Height of the Rockies and Akimina-Kishineena Provincial Parks were Forest Service Recreation Areas for years before being converted to provincial park status. The boating regulations on the Columbia Wetlands took decades of engagement with successive governments. The 30 years of campaigning to Keep Jumbo Wild was finally successful when the Ktunaxa Nations’ rights were at last recognized.

We have now entered an exciting new age of land management in BC and across Canada, where First Nations’ collaboration and consent is integral to the process.

Wildsight’s conservation program remains focused on efforts to maintain healthy functioning ecosystems – including the animals, plants, rivers and interconnected landscapes. With UNDRIP legislation, Cooperative Stewardship Agreements and the introduction of Indigenous Conserved and Protected Areas, we are optimistic that protection of nature will begin to replace the decision making model that views environmental protection as merely a constraint on development.

Our shared natural heritage of wildlife, clean water and wild places is dependent upon all of us acting together for the benefit of all living things.



For the wild,

John Bergenske
Conservation Director



EDUCATION



Photo by Michael Royle

It continues to be a privilege to lead the Wildsight team of educators in delivering our suite of place-based environmental education. Fostering the next generation of environmentally conscious and conservation-minded community members is the most rewarding experience.

During the 2018-2019 school year, our Education in the Wild programs took more than 200 classes outside to experience the wonders of the wild ecosystems that make up our backyards. Wildsight educators continued to support teachers and students to leave the classroom and learn from nature.

We delivered a number of local stewardship projects, allowing students to roll up their sleeves and learn through engaging activities, from planting native species to publishing field guides of local trails to designing and creating signs for sensitive habitat protection.

Beyond Recycling, our 24-week journey into sustainability through topics such as waste, energy, food, water, and climate change, reached 25 classrooms in 12 communities, inspiring students to take action in their own lives, at school, and at home.

Other students around the region learned where their water comes from and just how precious it is, through Know Your Watershed, a Wildsight delivered program on behalf of the Columbia Basin Trust.

We hosted our six-day Go Wild! backpacking trip in July, taking 14 teenagers into Height of the Rockies Park. Weather conditions were tough. The group endured heavy rains, thunder, and lightning as well as an at-a-distance encounter

with a grizzly. It was great to see the group rise to meet these wilderness challenges.

Year two of the Columbia River Field School was a huge success. In August we took 16 youth on an inspiring adventure, exploring the history and current state of the Columbia River with the aim of generating leaders knowledgeable in a multitude of aspects of the river's story. This year for the first time the program was accredited - allowing the participants to earn 4 high school credits.

As we entered the 20th year of Wildsight environmental education delivery, demand for our programs remained high. After two decades, our programs are as important, and as sought-after as ever.

We continue to look for creative ways to bring on new funders and partners to help us in this important work and look forward to your ongoing support in 2020 as we engage with the youth of the basin.



Monica Nissen

Monica Nissen
Education Director



Wildsight's strongest asset has always been its people. From an operational perspective, this year saw a broad theme of managing shifting staff personnel and responsibilities.

Jill Jennings increased her role with the education team, providing much-needed additional core support. In conservation, we welcomed Golden-based Brian Gustafson. Wildsight communications saw longtime staff member Lindsay Cuff leave for a new challenge. We welcomed Vanessa Humphries in March only to lose her due to unexpected family demands in the late summer. The process of filling the job vacancy started over once more as our financial year ended.

In April, the Blue Lake retreat was a great weekend for regional and branch teams to spend time together. Many opportunities were identified to improve how we support each other's work. Bryan Duffett, regional's finance manager, took on an additional role of Branch Liaison which has quickly borne fruit.

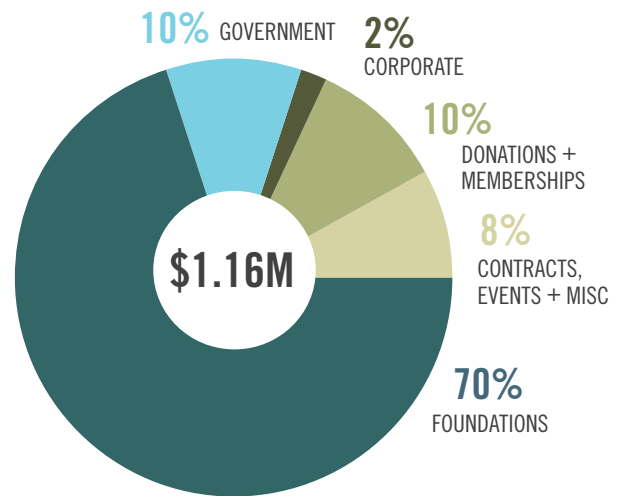
At the end of May, we wished our Executive Director Robyn Duncan well as she started her maternity leave. Arlo Duncan Kerckhoff joined the Wildsight family on June 20th!

With the staffing challenges providing an initial catalyst, we looked into the future and asked some big questions: how robust are we, and are we ready for what's next? Wildsight's Organizational Sustainability Plan is an evolving body of work that will put us in great shape to face the next ten years. I am excited to be a part of this team. With your support, we will continue to be as relevant in this new decade as we ever were.

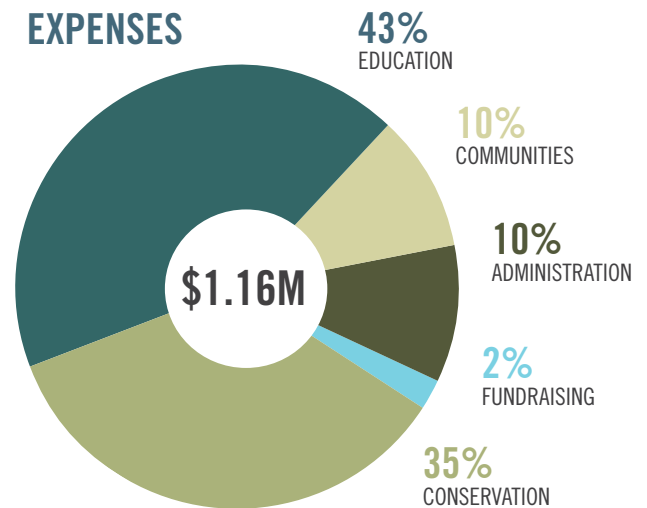


Andy Miller
Operations Director

REVENUE



EXPENSES



This report covers Wildsight's fiscal year from Oct. 1, 2018 to Sept. 30, 2019. Find our full audited financials at wildsight.ca.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

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BRAINERD FOUNDATION

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COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST

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