

FUND for
WILD
NATURE



2021 Annual Report

Investing in Cutting Edge Environmental Grassroots
Action Since 1982

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Our Mission:

The Fund for Wild Nature invests in bold grassroots organizations and innovative conservation efforts that meet emerging needs for protecting biodiversity and wilderness.

The Fund for Wild Nature is supported entirely by donations from individuals like you. We have no endowment – our ability to make grants depends upon the continuing generosity of our contributors. We invite you to join our many donors whose contributions are making a tremendous difference for wild nature. The Fund is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization #87-0386717.

Donations may be made by mail or on our website and are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Fund for Wild Nature

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FROM THE BOARD

The year 2022 brings two exciting developments for the Fund for Wild Nature. First, we are happy to be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Fund, as described further in the letter accompanying our annual report. Second, we are pleased to announce a new form of grantmaking by the Fund—the Badger Boost! Named in honor of our feisty mascot, this is a special type of large grant to assist our partners. Here’s why and how the Badger Boost came to be.

For decades, the Fund has provided financial support to bold grassroots groups on the frontlines of protecting wildlife and wild places. These remarkable grassroots groups can produce big results from a modest amount of resources. Yet even the most effective groups sometimes need an extra boost when facing an unusual situation that requires a larger amount of money than the typical Fund for Wild Nature grant.

Fortuitously, the Fund recently received a generous bequest from William E. Hauser, who passed away in 2018. The board of the Fund has decided to put those resources into a special grants program specifically to provide larger grants for when an ally needs special help—i.e., the Badger Boost grants— to complement our regular grantmaking program.

We have recently approved our first Badger Boost to provide \$30,000 to the Alliance for the Wild Rockies. This Montana-based group is on the frontline in defending the national forests in the northern Rockies from logging projects that destroy habitat for grizzly bears, lynx, and other imperiled wildlife. The Fund for Wild Nature has been proud to contribute to the Alliance over the years as it has achieved a remarkable success rate of over 80% in its public interest litigation to stop environmentally harmful projects. For example, last year the Alliance and its co-plaintiffs filed a lawsuit that compelled the Forest Service to withdraw a project that would have clearcut thousands of acres of native forest near Yellowstone National Park.

Nonetheless, the Forest Service continues to churn out new harmful logging projects, particularly targeting lynx habitat, even though the lynx is supposed to be protected under the Endangered Species Act. The pace of Forest Service logging activity has grown such that the Alliance for the Wild Rockies needs more attorneys to defend against this onslaught. Adding a new attorney takes more resources than the typical Fund for Wild Nature grant, so we are thrilled to have a new tool to help the Alliance in a bigger way at this crucial time through a Badger Boost. We expect this grant to have important long-term implications for the protection of wild nature in

the Rockies. And we look forward to seeing similar benefits to other ecosystems as we make more Badger Boost grants.

As a reminder, the Badger Boost grants are specifically made possible by William Hauser's bequest. We still very much need your generous annual donations in order to continue the Fund's regular grantmaking to an impressive array of bold grassroots environmental groups throughout the country, as described in our annual report. And if you like what we've done with the Badger Boost, please also consider including the Fund for Wild Nature in your will. Together we are doing great things to protect our beloved wild places and wildlife.





Grassroots Activist of the Year:

Lisa Owens-Viani

It was a mystery. Why were so many birds dying in Berkeley? And not just any birds, but some of the rarest birds in the urban landscape, the birds at the top of the food chain: raptors. In 2007, Lisa Owens-Viani was approached by a neighbor carrying a black garbage bag. Inside were the bodies of two young Cooper's Hawks. The neighbor told Lisa that they'd found the birds that morning in a plastic wading pool. The neighbor asked Owens-Viani if she could identify the birds. Not only could Lisa identify them, she thought she might even know them. They were likely to be a pair of Cooper's

hawks that had been recently fledged from a nest she'd been monitoring as part of her volunteer survey work for the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory.

Why had raptors been in a children's swimming pool? And why had they died? Lisa had an idea, but she needed confirmation. She had the bodies sent to an animal testing lab at UC Davis, where necropsies confirmed her suspicions. The birds had been poisoned. Not by some raptor-hating neighbor, but by rodenticides that had built up inside the hawks' food source: rats. The poison had likely dehydrated the young hawks, attracting them to the small pool. Lisa began investigating. She put up flyers across her neighborhood and soon found more reports of dead raptors in Berkeley, including one Cooper's hawk that had bled out on a sidewalk in front of a child. A necropsy later confirmed that its body had a high level of the poison brodifacoum.

Raptors were becoming collateral damage in the pesticide industry's never-ending war against rodents. Never-ending may be the key phrase here. Because the rodent population has remained stable for decades despite the saturation of American streets and buildings with "second generation rodenticides." Any loss of an apex predator like a Great Horned Owl, fox or Mountain Lion, is a blow to their small numbers and a benefit to their prey species, including rats. Rodenticides are indiscriminate killers, and can kill pets like your dog or cat, wild predators and scavengers, as well as the rodents you fear. As Lisa told me: "toxic rodent control methods are eliminating the very species that provide natural pest control."

Lisa's challenge was extreme: how to get people to overcome their innate loathing for one animal population to save another in a habitat that defies every ingrained concept of what is "natural." It was not only anti-rat prejudice and fear she had to overcome, but

also a multi-national industry with deep pockets and long-standing political connections.

So in 2011, she set up her own environmental organization. The name of her group is elegant for its simplicity and straightforwardness: Raptors Are the Solution (RATS). According to Lisa, there's been some resistance, largely because of people's deep-rooted phobia toward rats, the same phobia that is exploited as part of the sales pitch from the poison marketers. One of the first tasks for RATS was to educate the public about a hidden environmental crisis that most of them didn't even realize had become a problem. "We needed to inform the public on the dangers of rat and rodent poisons in the food web and the dangers these toxins pose not only to wildlife but to their own pets and children," Lisa said.

Owens-Viani came up with creative advertising campaigns using slogans like "Don't Poison My Dinner" and "Rat Poisons Kill More than Rats," with photos of owls and hawks on billboards and busses.

Educating the public was one thing, confronting the pesticide industry was another. As far back as 2008, the EPA had determined that second-generation pesticides were a threat to wildlife species. And not just raptors. Mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats and even deep-forest species like fishers were vulnerable. Indeed, one study showed that necropsies on a spectrum of wildlife species revealed 75% of them testing positive for rodenticides. EPA proposed a rule strictly limiting the use of these poisons, but the livestock and poultry industries objected and used their lobbying might to impede the rule's implementation.

But Lisa used the EPA findings to pressure cities to begin taking action on their own. San Francisco was the first municipality to urge local businesses to remove second generation pesticides from

their shelves. Then RATS led similar campaigns in the East Bay, convincing the cities of Richmond, Albany and Berkeley to pass similar resolutions. Eventually dozens of cities across California followed suit. As a kind of reward, RATS came up with its Owl Wise Leader award to highlight businesses, schools and government institutions that had voluntarily stopped using rat poisons.

Still, Owens-Viani knew that voluntary compliance would only get her so far, and that more decisive and comprehensive action was needed. In this respect, RATS played a crucial role in the campaign that compelled the state of California to remove all second-generation rodenticides from most consumer shelves in 2014 and the EPA to follow suit in 2015. But huge loopholes remained and the pesticide industry was deft at exploiting them. In an effort to close these lethal exceptions, RATS sued the state of California's Department of Pesticide Regulation demanding that the agency evaluate the consequences of using both first and second-generation rat poisons on non-target species. Before the court could rule, the DPR agreed to conduct a new review of the second-generation poisons.

As the review dragged on, Owens-Viani and her colleagues pressed the state legislature to take action, knowing they had an ally in the governor's mansion with Gavin Newsom. The governor had become distressed by the reports of dead mountains lions in southern California, whose bodies had tested positive for rat poison. The campaign culminated in 2020 when the state legislature passed AB 1788, a bill puts a moratorium on the sale and use of SGARs until DPR finishes its reevaluation. The enactment of this landmark bill is one of the most consequential victories for wildlife in California, and one of the most consequential blows to the poison industry in decades.

Lisa is a realist. She knows the power of the industry she is fighting and that more pressure needs to be applied to secure and expand this hard-won victory. “This isn’t the end,” Lisa told me, “but hopefully the beginning of the end of the rat poison industry.”

Lisa Owens-Viani embodies the creativity and boldness in defense of the earth that the Fund for Wild Nature seeks. The Fund for Wild Nature was created by grassroots activists to help fund the boldest grassroots efforts working to protect wildlife and wild places, knowing how difficult it can be for these groups to get assistance from large foundations, and also recognizing how even a small amount of money can lead to big results. Unlike most other foundations, the Fund for Wild Nature depends entirely on annual contributions from the public, which it then redistributes to support worthy grassroots biodiversity protection groups throughout North America. In addition to providing grants, the Fund sponsors the Grassroots Activist of the Year Award as another way to promote bold activism. We are honored to have Lisa Owens-Viani as the recipient of our award for 2021. -written by Jeffrey St. Clair



2021 Grantees

New grantees are underlined

Alaska Rainforest Defenders \$4,000, AK

To protect Tongass forest landscapes, fish, and wildlife from timber extraction and herbicide use through public advocacy.

Alaska Wildlife Alliance, \$3,000, AK

To defend endangered polar bears from oil and gas development and Alexander Archipelago wolves from hunting, through litigation.

Allegheny Defense Project \$4,000, PA

To safeguard wildlife habitat by monitoring and challenging agencies that permit oil and gas drilling in Pennsylvania's public lands.

Alliance for the Wild Rockies, \$5,000, MT

To stop thousands of acres of clearcut logging in Cabinet-Yaak grizzly habitat through litigation.

Applegate Neighborhood Network \$3,000, OR

To establish a grassroots coalition to support and permanently protect the Siskiyou Crest region.

Arizona Mining Reform Network \$3,000

To preserve Oak Flat from Rio Tinto's proposed mine by using the public permitting process to secure permanent protection.

Battle Creek Alliance, \$5,000 + \$5,000, CA

To protect the Battle Creek watershed from cumulative impacts to forests, habitat, and water quality through data collection and lawsuits.

Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project \$5,000, OR

To defend forests in Eastern Oregon through field-surveying timber sales and grazing allotments, litigation, public outreach, and organizing a network for public lands protection.

CA Spotted Owls & Logging Stud) \$3,000, CA

To quantify long-term responses of California spotted owls to logging which will aid in successful litigation to protect forests.

Community Action Project \$3,000, CA

To safeguard habitat for 34 special status species from development through litigation against the 2019 Calaveras County General Plan.

Conservation Congress \$5,000, CA

To protect Northern spotted owls and other imperiled species dependent on old growth forest habitat from the threat of logging, by commenting on and objecting to Forest Service timber sales.

Eco Advocates NW \$2,500, OR

To use Interstate 5 billboards to expose logging legislation by Senators Wyden and Merkley exempting federal agencies from NEPA and ESA.



Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology \$3,000, OR

To stop post-fire salvage logging of burned forests by showcasing Warner Creek's inspiring natural recovery and activist history.

Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force \$3,000, MT

To protect grizzly bears from loss of habitat and reduced genetic viability by proposing plans to enhance habitat and connectivity.

Footloose Montana, \$2,500, MT

To save grizzly bears and wolves from traps and snares by designating areas of federally managed wilderness off-limits to trapping.

Friends of the Wild Swan \$4,000, MT

To challenge plans, timber sales, and road building to conserve grizzly bears, bull trout, lynx and other wildlife.



Gill Tract Community Farm \$3,000, CA

To safeguard overwintering western monarch butterflies from habitat destruction by campaigning for University of California Berkeley to complete a current Environmental Impact Report.

Grizzly Times, \$5,000, MT

To reconnect bear populations by reducing human-caused bear deaths, protecting habitat, and galvanizing public support for their protection.

Kettle Range Conservation Group \$3,000, WA

To save landscape-level migration corridors and habitats essential to survival of wolf, grizzly bear, lynx, and other apex species from new road construction, logging, and damaging livestock grazing.

Klamath Forest Alliance \$4,000, OR

To conserve late successional forests and complex, early seral snag forest habitat throughout the Siskiyou Mountains via forest watch activities.



Mendocino Trail Stewards \$3,000, CA

To protect species dependent on rare second growth redwood forest by stopping state sponsored timber sales.

Mianus Chapter of Trout Unlimited, \$3,000, CT

To safeguard native wild trout from climate change by building community awareness, action, and advocacy on dam removal through the Down with the Dams project.

Palm Springs Wildlife Advocates \$4,000, CA

To defend Coachella Valley native wildlife from lethal control through grassroots advocacy for nonlethal wildlife policies.

Project Coyote \$5,000, CA

To save wolves, grizzly bears, and other imperiled carnivores from cruel hunting, trapping, poisoning, and killing contests.

Public Lands Media, \$5,000, OR

To protect forests from fire prevention logging and thinning programs by providing an alternative to the popular narrative that “fuel reductions” will preclude large blazes.

Native Ecosystems Council, \$3,000, MT

To challenge the Forest Service to develop and implement a valid conservation strategy for the threatened Canada lynx.

RESTORE: The North Woods \$3,000, MA

To conserve large tracts of New England forest from logging and other exploitation by protecting them as public parks and reserves.

Raptors Are The Solution, \$5,000, CA

To prevent poisoning of California’s wildlife through legal action challenging state approval of the use of poisons and seeking reevaluation under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Sacred Lands Conservancy \$3,000, WA

To safeguard the Southern Resident Killer Whales from the ongoing trauma of colonization by promoting Indigenous stewardship.

San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council \$3,000, CO

To defend Wolf Creek Pass from development, which will threaten reintroduced Canada lynx and critical habitat areas in the southern Rockies.

Selkirk Conservation Alliance \$3,000, ID

To save threatened and endangered plant and animal species within the Selkirk Mountains through grassroots advocacy and public policy work.

Snake River Waterkeeper \$3,000, ID

To protect endangered native salmon, steelhead, and redband trout from pollution discharges that violate the Clean Water Act.

Sound Action, \$5,000, WA

To safeguard Puget Sound nearshore habitats from development impacts through watchdog work and legal action to enforce environmental laws.

Swan View Coalition, Inc. \$4,000, MT

To protect grizzly bears, bull trout, and other wildlife by limiting logging, roads, and commercial recreation on the Flathead National Forest.

Tennessee Heartwood \$4,000, TN

To conserve state and federal lands in Tennessee through advocacy, media, field work, and litigation.

The Forest Advocate LC, \$3,000, NM

To protect the Santa Fe National Forest from ecologically damaging fuel treatment projects and require compliance with environmental laws.



Upper Missouri Waterkeeper \$3,000, MT

To safeguard one of the Lower 48's last wild, blue-ribbon trout streams through a combination of science, citizen action, and the law.

Virginia Wilderness Committee \$3,000, VA

To save Virginia's endemic species and their high elevation habitat from resource exploitation and management through congressional protective designations.

Western Slope Conservation Center, \$3,000, CO

To protect the wildlife, public lands, water, and local economy of the North Fork Valley from oil and gas development.

Wild Farm Alliance \$3,000, CA

To safeguard native ecosystems from conversion to organic farm production through community engagement and advocacy aimed at compelling the National Organic Program to adopt stronger standards.

Yellowstone to Uintas Connection \$3,000, UT

Funds support the continued protection of wildlife and habitation through the Yellowstone to Uintas Corridor Habitat Integrity Project that advocates for sound science in land management, and supports litigation to oppose projects with projected negative impacts.



Financial Statement

* Note 2021 entries excluding Hauser Trust bequest for 2020 comparison

Financial Position on January 1	Year 2020	Year 2021
Assets	\$285,411	\$210,745
Liabilities (unpaid grants)	(\$12,000)	(\$9,000)
Net Assets	\$273,411	\$201,745

Statement of Activities

Support and Revenue

Contributions, unrestricted	\$98,711	\$158,889
Hauser Trust Bequest, unrestricted	\$0	\$445,916
Investment Income	(\$23)	(\$140)
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE*	\$98,688	\$159,029
Including Hauser Trust Bequest		\$604,945

Expenses

Grants awarded	\$163,300	\$153,000
Administration and Fundraising	\$7,053	\$9,115
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$170,353	\$162,115
Change in Net Assets*	(\$71,665)	(\$3,068)

Financial Position on December 31

Assets*	\$210,745	\$239,159
Liabilities (Dec 31 unpaid grants)	(\$9,000)	(\$40,500)
Net Assets*	\$201,745	\$198,659
Including Hauser Trust Bequest		\$644,575



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