Getting outside and going to our favorite wild places is so important to our mental and physical health. We need to protect and defend these places for all of us.

Will you join us?  wawild.org/donate
Public Lands for Our Public Health

Great American Outdoors Act Funds
Public Lands

Conservation Voices: Healthy Public Lands for Healthy Families

Wild Olympics Passes House of Representatives

wawild.org/donate
Hello Washington Wild!

I am very excited to have been recently elected by my peers as your new Board of Directors President. Living in Washington is such a gift as we have access to an abundance of mountains, lakes, rivers, old growth forests and recreation activities that many can only dream of.

Growing up in Southern California, there were times as a kid where I wasn’t able to play outside at recess or my soccer team couldn’t practice because the air quality was so bad. Despite recent issues in the PNW with the wild fires, having good air quality where you live is nothing to overlook. Having wild places to go on adventures and feel your physical and mental health improve just by being outside is so crucial, especially during the challenges we are facing at a local and global level. Having worked from home since March, I relish any chance I can to get outside and enjoy our state’s beautiful environment.

In this issue, Washington Wild highlights our remarkable public lands not just for their scenic beauty, but also the public health benefits they provide to our communities. We have reached out to children’s health research scientists, local tribal members, and recreation partners who all agree that healthy public lands lead to healthy communities.

I am so thankful to have been able to share the experience recently of climbing Mount Si with my wife for the first time, including all the physical and mental health benefits that it brought to us, especially during this COVID-19 era. With the passing of the Great American Outdoors Act, we can finally get the federal funding needed to continue to protect these special places for all of us, as well as for our children and their children.

Like many of you, I’m looking forward to my next adventure and want to remind everyone that it’s important to recreate responsibly—it is respectful to the land, to each other, and to our tribal communities.

Stay Wild!

Andrew Escobar
Washington Wild Board President
2020 has been a challenging year for all of us with the COVID-19 pandemic, an economic recession, racial justice reckoning, and increasingly evident climate impacts. These challenges have also highlighted the importance of our national, state and city parks, forests, and other public lands.

As communities in Washington State instituted shelter-in-place restrictions, public health officials recognized the health importance of exercise and time in nature—including walking, hiking, biking, and running outdoors at a safe distance—as one of a handful of essential activities allowed. With knowledge that COVID-19 transmission is significantly higher in indoor settings, there was a call to “get outside.”

Indeed, parks are appealing venues for physical activity. Getting outside combats sedentary lifestyles, which are linked to a host of chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, cancer, hypertension, arthritis, stroke, depression, and sleep disorders. Only about half of Americans get the exercise they need to be healthy. A 2019 study in Denmark found that citizens who grew up with the least green space nearby had as much as a 55 percent increased risk of developing psychiatric disorders including depression, anxiety, and substance abuse in later years. Parks and other public lands promote play and physical activity, which can be key to long-term mental and physical health.

**NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER**

A decade ago, Pooja Tandon remembers sitting on a Pacific Northwest beach with the sun on her face reading *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv while watching her two boys play. Louv’s book was the first to create national recognition about nature deficit disorder and possible negative consequences to individual health and the social fabric as children spend more time indoors.

As a pediatrician and researcher at the Seattle Children’s Research Institute, this was the moment where she decided to delve further into the relationship between outdoor time, nature contact, and children’s health. Today she still practices as a pediatrician while also serving as a researcher interested in promoting health equity by focusing on the social and environmental determinants of children’s health, including exposure to nature.

"Based on existing research, there are clear and significant benefits to our children’s health and well-being from having regular opportunities to play particularly in natural settings, whether that be in a national forest or a local city park."

Pooja Tandon, pediatrician and researcher at the Seattle Children’s Research Institute
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“I was always intrigued by the idea of an exercise prescription. If you tell someone to go outside or exercise they say, 'yeah great,' but if they leave with a prescription, they are 10x more likely to actually do it.”

PRESCRIBING NATURE
Three years ago, a Bellingham family doctor issued one of his first “park-scriptions.” That’s right, a prescription to get outside. Dr. Greg Anderson had just been recruited by Recreation Northwest to be a champion of their Park Rx pilot program in Whatcom County. “I was always intrigued by the idea of an exercise prescription,” said Dr. Greg Anderson of Bellingham Bay Family Medicine, “if you tell someone to go outside or exercise they say, 'yeah great,' but if they leave with a prescription, they are 10x more likely to actually do it.”

One of his patients, a young woman managing a busy family of three kids, was experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. Past pharmaceutical prescriptions had led to negative side effects. Dr. Anderson prescribed a daily walk at a local park. “There are fewer barriers to talking about nature as a prescription when you can say, ‘side effects may include an elated mood,’” said Anderson. Three weeks later, the patient reported her anxiety was gone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a significant increase in mental health related issues to a growing number of people. Dr. Anderson has leveraged this opportunity to say, “Get outside. Even 10 minutes every morning has measurable benefits.”

ENSURING OUR PUBLIC LANDS BENEFIT ALL OF US
Daniel Shinwoo Kim sat in the back seat of his parent’s GMC Yukon craning his neck as he looked in awe at the biggest mountains he had ever seen draped with large conifer forests. They were the Washington Cascades and a far cry from the rolling hills he had known growing up in Suwanee, Georgia. His family was driving cross country to relocate to Seattle, in part, because of his Dad’s fond memories of the clean air and water of the Pacific Northwest.

Once established in Federal Way, Daniel found the rivers, mountains and forests calling to him as he
“Here in Washington State, our parks and forests and other public lands are an incredible resource that support healthy lifestyles but we need to work to make sure that these benefits are accessible to all races, levels of income, and communities.”

Daniel Shinwoo Kim, social media writer at Climbers of Color Mountaineering.

hiked, explored, and camped more and more. As a boy in Georgia he struggled with his fitness but found that his new proximity to nature began to change his physical health. He was particularly enamored with the well-established Northwest pastime of mountaineering but struggled as a Korean-American to feel like he belonged in a community that did not look like him and required a significant amount of money for the right gear and equipment. Eventually he connected with a nonprofit, Climbers of Color Mountaineering, which provided him the comfort, mentorship and confidence he needed to pursue his passion of mountaineering. Today he serves as the organization’s social media writer.

“The outdoors changed my life and is a big part of who I am today,” said Daniel Shinwoo Kim. “Here in Washington State, our parks and forests and other public lands are an incredible resource that support healthy lifestyles but we need to work to make sure that these benefits are accessible to all races, levels of income and communities.”

UNIQUE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE LAND AND TRIBAL LIFEWAYS

For the Indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest, the connection between the natural landscapes and themselves transcends the concept of health for their people. The forests, rivers and wildlife health are essential to preserving their tribal lifeways. They are a place-based people and the relationships between the land, water, and their culture are one of immersion, interconnection, and mutual respect. Tribes rely on the landscape for their food, clothing, tools, sacred ceremonies, sharing traditions and honoring their ancestors.

At the time of treaty signing, Tribes were faced with a difficult choice and made great sacrifices in ceding millions of acres of land to the U.S. government. As sovereign nations, they retained what was most important to them—guaranteed access to all ancestral fishing, hunting, and gathering grounds in perpetuity. The federal government has a treaty obligation to provide wise and sustainable management of national parks, forests, and other federal lands that support harvestable levels of natural resources necessary to sustain tribal culture and lifeways.

The Tulalip Tribe has recently invested in several workshops focused on educating conservation and recreation organizations about principles for supporting treaty rights and tribal lifeways. These workshops are meant to address the fact that in the brief 150 years since the signing of tribal treaties, habitat loss from logging, agricultural, industrial, residential development, and growing recreation has outpaced restoration and conservation, threatening our tribal treaty rights and lifeways. Washington Wild attended the first workshop in January 2019.

“As recreation increases, so does the impact on the natural resources, fish and wildlife protected by our treaty rights” said Patti Gobin, Tulalip Tribes Treaty Rights. “We need to work to find a balance so that our public lands also continue to provide the spaces and solitude we must have to hunt, fish, gather foods, and medicines to live our cultural and ceremonial lifeways. Tread lightly and respectfully to ensure there are still open and wild places for future generations.”

"As recreation increases, so does the impact on the natural resources, fish and wildlife protected by our treaty rights. We need to work to find a balance so that our public lands also continue to provide the spaces and solitude we must have to hunt, fish, gather foods, and medicines to live our cultural and ceremonial lifeways.”

Patti Gobin, Tulalip Tribes Treaty Rights
PUBLIC LANDS provide

BREATHTABLE AIR

DRINKABLE WATER

OUTDOOR HEALTH BENEFITS

Decreased Stress
Increased Energy
Boosted Immune System
Restored Focus
Improved Blood Pressure
Vitamin D

THE AVERAGE WASHINGTON RESIDENT SPENDS

56 DAYS PER YEAR RECREATING OUTDOORS

= 446 MILLION PARTICIPANT DAYS A YEAR

ACCESS FOR ALL to public lands + waters

make the outdoors inclusive and safe for all identities + abilities
local tribes depend on exercising their treaty rights to fish + wildlife, many of which occur on public lands

PUBLIC LANDS &
PLAY IT SAFE

SLOW DOWN
reduce risk of injury

search and rescue operations and health care resources are strained right now.

BE MINDFUL of your IMPACT

LEAVE NO TRACE
take all garbage with you

RESPECT
public lands + waters native + local communities

EXPLORE LOCALLY

SEATTLE IS the #1 major city with access to WILDERNESS

GET KIDS OUTSIDE TO PREVENT NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER
children's behavior may suffer from lack of access to outdoor space.

PUBLIC HEALTH in the Evergreen State

Due to being quarantined for so long, getting out into wild places is more important than ever! These statistics show that getting outside offers important health benefits. We could all use a little guidance on how to stay safe and be responsible as we get out. Washington Wild has joined the Recreate Responsibly Coalition. For more guidelines on how to keep yourself and others safe, check out recreateresponsibly.org.
My family treasures the time we spend together hiking and fishing in the Great Outdoors. I am honored to represent the 8th Congressional District which includes the I-90 corridor, Mountains to Sound Greenway, Alpine Lakes Wilderness, Mt. Rainier National Park, and many of the most popular and accessible trails in the state.

As a mother and pediatrician living in the Pacific Northwest, I recognize how beneficial access to public lands is for a person's mental and physical well-being. Ensuring access to the outdoors is now more important than ever as we search for safe ways to recreate and exercise, and new ways to teach our children. Parks and nature promote physical activity and play, which can be key to long-term mental and physical health. Being outdoors allows children to feel less isolated, even if that time spent outdoors does not include socializing with others. Time spent outdoors in nature reduces stressors, supports positive development, and increases resiliency. With most childcare and school facilities still closed, and with increasing rates of anxiety, depression, and obesity in our children during this pandemic, safe access to the outdoors is more important than ever to promote healthy physical activity and provide a respite from excessive screen time. And, with our children learning at home, let's not forget the incredible science lessons nature provides. Just take a sketch pad and a magnifying glass with you and engage those powers of observation and wonder!

We're so lucky to live in a state with such a bounty of public lands and parks to explore and enjoy. Consider this: Of the top 25 most populous cities in America, Seattle is surrounded by vastly more wilderness than any other. In fact, there are 3.6 million acres of designated Wilderness within a 100-mile radius of Seattle. Next best is Phoenix, Arizona, which doesn't even come close with 1.4 million acres. Our access to the great outdoors is why so many of us choose to live, work, and play here in the Evergreen State. And it is why we are so grateful to Washington Wild and other organizations that champion careful stewardship and access to our public lands and waters. As a pediatrician, I want children outside in nature, playing, breathing fresh air, and learning about our natural world. It is the perfect antidote to screen time. There are well-established physical and mental health benefits to spending time in the great outdoors. Along those lines, last year I joined REI and area Veterans for a hike in North Bend. We discussed the sense of respite and solitude that nature offers, and how it can augment therapy for Veterans and others coping with PTSD or other challenges.

In Congress I have been working hard to ensure that Washington’s parks and forests will still be here for future generations. I was thrilled to vote for the Great American Outdoors Act, now law, that commits $900 million a year for land conservation and a one-time $9.5 billion boost to address maintenance needs at national parks. In the 8th district, the Issaquah Creek headwaters, Mt. Rainier National Park, the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, and the rivers that flow through the Cascades and into Wenatchee are all examples of public lands that the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped to preserve. Our state will receive hundreds of millions of dollars over the next decade under the program. This is one of the most significant pieces of conservation legislation in decades.

I'm also partnering with Congressman Derek Kilmer and organizations like Washington Wild to permanently authorize the Legacy Roads and Trails (H.R.7273) program under the US Forest Service. Today, the Forest Service has a deferred maintenance backlog of more than $5.2 billion. That includes about 370,000 miles of road, 158,000 miles of trails, and 13,000 bridges in disrepair. When roads are not adequately maintained, culverts become clogged with debris, landslides occur, bridges weaken, and roads wash out. Large amounts of sediment can end up in mountain streams, suffocating fish and burying stream channels. This program ensures dedicated funding to key areas where projects improve upstream and downstream connections for fish, improve water quality, and ensure road and trail resilience in a changing climate. It's a simple solution to a formidable problem.

Our parks, forests, and public lands belong to all of us. It is incumbent upon all of us to protect our public lands and ensure that people of every background can access these areas. Let's make sure these areas are still around to be enjoyed many years from now.

I hope to see you out on the trails soon (from a distance!).
Since the COVID-era has made it difficult for many Washingtonians to enjoy indoor dining and entertainment, many have turned to our public lands for safe recreation. Getting out into nature can be therapeutic in the best of times but especially now, we depend on outdoor spaces for mental and physical health. This increase in use of public lands is not without a cost. With more folks heeding the call to “get outside,” it's more important than ever to fund and maintain these spaces in order to keep them accessible for all. The recent passing of the Great American Outdoors Act—one of the most important pieces of conservation legislation—could not have come at a better time.

The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) does two things. First: it permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for $900 million annually. Second, it provides $1.9 billion over five years—$9.5 billion total—for deferred maintenance on our nation’s public lands.

LWCF is our country’s most important conservation program, supporting local economies, providing infrastructure for public health, tourism, and recreation, and increasing access to the outdoors in all states and territories. It is paid for with non-taxpayer dollars and is overwhelmingly popular. It has maintained broad bipartisan support due to its more than half-century history of successful, locally-driven conservation. In Washington State alone, the outdoor recreation economy contributes over $26 billion in consumer spending and supports more than 201,000 direct jobs. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a key component of our nation’s robust outdoor recreation economy, which generates over $887 billion in annual consumer spending and supports 7.6 million American jobs.

Most of the $1.9 billion of the GAOA allocated for maintenance will go to The National Park Service and will be used to address deteriorating roads, visitor centers, and facilities. The Great American Outdoors Act will provide the financial support and infrastructure that is desperately needed for the conservation and maintenance of public lands, now more than ever. These crucial investments to our public lands will help Washingtonians and all Americans access and enjoy the beauty that our state has to offer. Outdoor recreation is one of our best options for keeping ourselves mentally and physically well during these trying times. The Great American Outdoors Act ensures that wild lands and waters across our country have the infrastructure and funding needed for all to enjoy them.

"Taking this revenue from oil and gas offshoring and putting it into land conservation has been a big win for the American people. Not only did they get open space and [the ability] to recreate, it puts money back into our juggernaut outdoor economy as well.”

Senator Maria Cantwell

Photo courtesy of Christopher Newton
Wild Profiles

YAKIMA CHIEF HOPS
Local Hop Farm

Yakima Chief Hops is a 100% grower-owned network of family hop farms. Since 1869, they've been known for quality hops with an ever-growing vision towards sustainability. Situated in “Hop Country, USA,” or the Yakima Valley as you may know it, YCH is uniquely positioned to establish strong relationships between the growers who supply their super-premium hops and their innovative brewing customers who make the most of their products in their beer. YCH’s mission is to connect family hop farms with the world’s finest brewers, providing the highest quality hop products and uncompromising service for the ultimate benefit of customers, employees, and growers.

To say that Washington has excellent beer is an understatement. Besides all the talented brewers, the secret is that we have top notch ingredients, local malt, clean mountain water, and yes, incredible Washington grown hops.

YCH understands that access to clean water is undoubtedly important to produce healthy hops and refreshing beer, which is why they are a strong supporter of Washington Wild’s work. There is an intrinsic relationship between healthy waterways and healthy hops; therefore, YCH’s growers strive to conserve the use of this natural resource for their growing requirements. Earlier this year, they worked with Washington Wild to host a virtual happy hour event on the importance of protecting our wild waterways for hops and beer. We are grateful for Yakima Chief Hops for their recent donation of hops to power our collaboration with Seattle-based Big Time Brewing Co. The result is a refreshingly crisp PNW IPA. With community and quality at the center of their work, Yakima Chief Hops is a Washington state treasure.

ASCENT OUTDOORS
Local Outdoor Gear Store

Our story begins 24 years ago. Originally a second hand sporting goods store named Second Bounce, we slowly began bringing in more and more outdoor gear focused on activities including backpacking, camping, climbing, backcountry skiing and biking. In 2001 Second Bounce moved to the current location in Ballard, ditched the “bouncing items”, rebranded as Second Ascent, and became a full-service outdoor retail store with a full service bike shop selling new, used, closeouts, and salesman samples. In April 2016 our bike shop moved 3 doors up the street under the name Ascent Cycles. On May 1st, 2017, after 16 years, we rebranded from Second Ascent to Ascent Outdoors. As we have evolved to meet the demands, second hand items have become a smaller, though no less important part of our store. After a sudden closure of the store in April 2019, Sandeep Nain, the founder of retail and mountain climbing group Miyar Adventures, bought the store and Ascent Outdoors reopened July 2019 with a new focus on diversity and community.

Under new ownership, we are excited to continue to cater to our existing community, foster the same close connections with our guiding service, Miyar, and continue growing both locally and nationally! Supporting and partnering with an organization like Washington Wild gives us the opportunity to educate and equip both our audiences with the knowledge of what to expect in our wild places, and just as important, how to protect them. So when you are backpacking in the Wild Sky Wilderness, climbing in the North Cascades, or enjoying a tasty craft beer, think about what went into keeping those places wild for all of us and where that clean water came from. It’s on us to keep these places clean and pure for generations to come.
Conservation Updates

GOVERNOR INSLEE SIGNS BILL TO PROTECT CRITICAL SALMON HABITAT FROM SUCTION DREDGE MINING

On March 18 Governor Jay Inslee signed legislation that would ban the harmful practice of motorized suction dredge mining in stream segments designated as critical salmon habitat. This was a hard-fought and long-awaited victory for protecting the billion-dollar investment in salmon recovery from federal and local governments, Tribes, and conservation groups. Washington Wild helped coordinate a statewide and diverse coalition of more than 160 conservation, recreation, and wildlife organizations, local businesses, and electeds. Tribal nations from across Washington State, including the Quinault Indian Nation, Snoqualmie Tribe, Yakama Nation, Sauk-Suiattle Tribe, and Tulalip Tribes have also supported the bill.

LOCAL SUPPORTERS CHEER HOUSE PASSAGE OF WILD OLYMPICS BILL AS PART OF NDAA

The Wild Olympics Coalition cheered a major bi-partisan vote in Congress yesterday that helped advance important public lands and rivers legislation, including the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act sponsored by Senator Patty Murray and Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06). The legislation passed with several other public land bills as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The Wild Olympics legislation would permanently protect more than 126,000 acres of Olympic National Forest as wilderness and 19 rivers and their major tributaries—a total of 460 miles—as Wild and Scenic Rivers. The Wild Olympic legislation has a real chance to become law as part of a final National Defense Authorization bill which will be considered for final passage in the House and Senate in late 2020.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Wild Night In Raises Over $50,000

This year, Washington Wild hosted its first ever virtual fundraising event and auction appropriately called, Wild Night In! On Thursday, October 8th our staff, board and supporters from around the state got together to celebrate a challenging but successful year in conservation. We are very proud to have given awards to our incredible conservation champions and community partners. We continue to have a great year because of people like you! We hope to see you all in person next year!