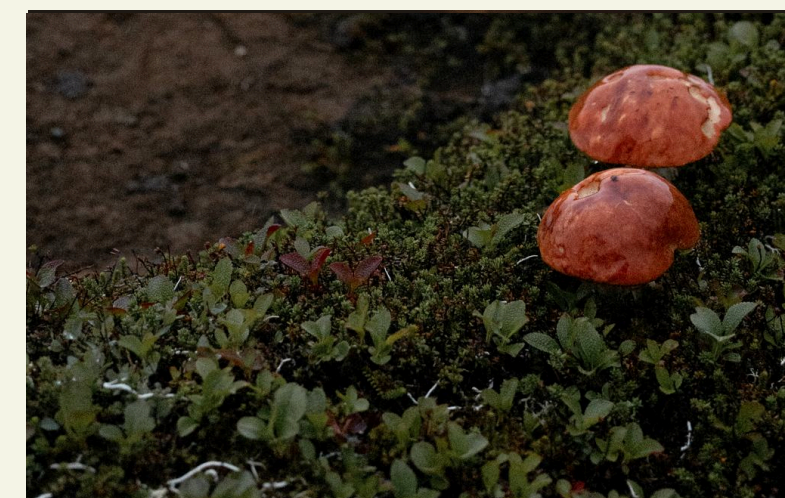




CONSERVATION IMPACT REPORT

Second Edition




S I T K A

Conservation is our core.

We define ourselves by the lasting benefit we bring to the natural world and believe that humans are an integral part of the ecosystem. The decisions we make have upstream and downstream effects. Much like how we design our gear systems, we think in terms of interconnected relationships and create innovative products that enable reconnection to the environment. We endeavor to continually improve the life experience of the hunter and create gear for people who seek—whether proactive or unbeknownst—a deep connection to nature in its rawest form.

A mature bull elk is part of a much larger story. His existence reflects an intricate food web supported by everything from soil and water to songbirds and predators. SITKA's conservation work funds projects that improve the state and function of ecosystems, protect wildlife and their habitats, and safeguard the future of outdoor access opportunity. We believe we have a responsibility to steward the wildlife and habitats that feed us, and we fulfill this mission by running an annual grant program and partnering with national conservation organizations.

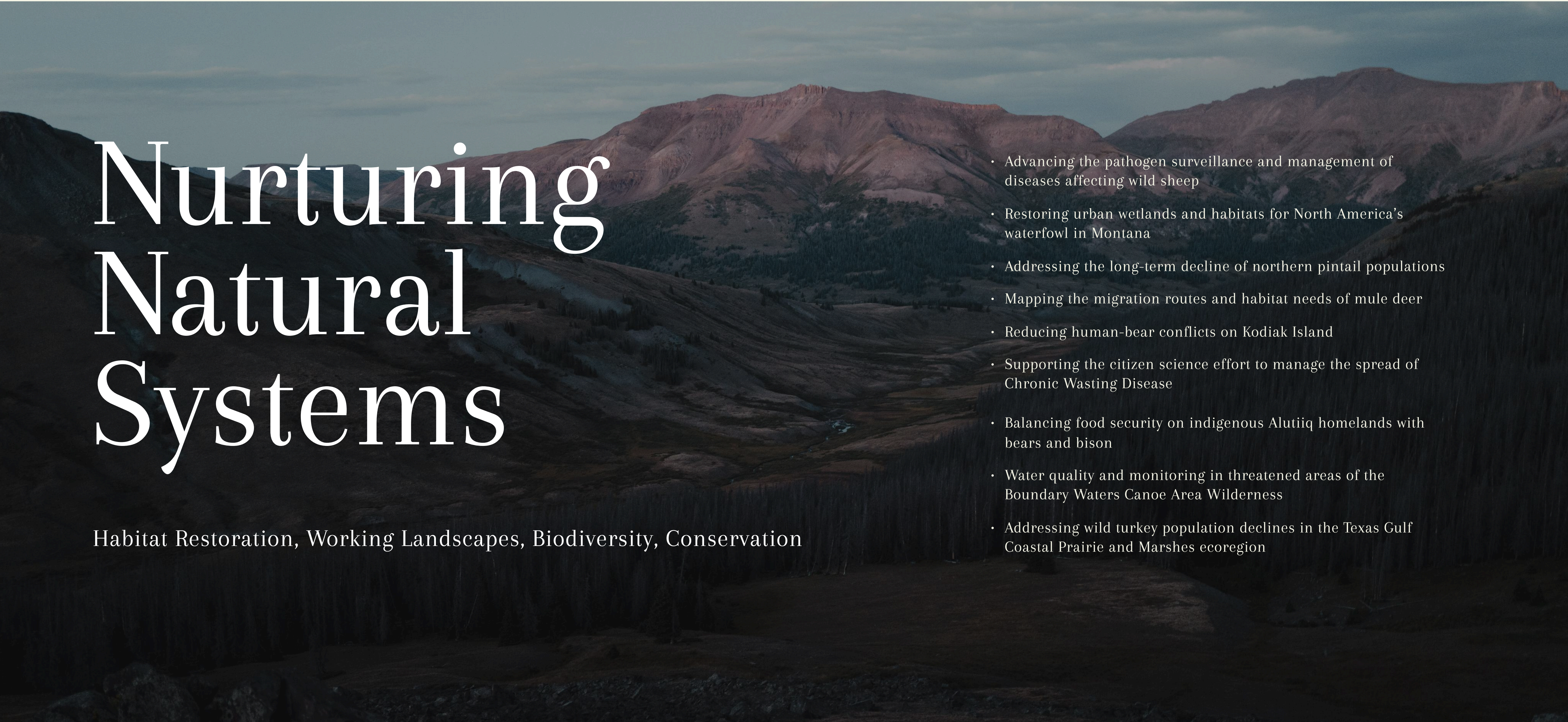
This is ecosystem thinking.



Science & Stewardship to Fuel Natural Systems

SITKA Ecosystem Grants funds projects that improve the state and function of an ecosystem, allow for the growth of the hunting experience through access and education, and create opportunities for collaborative conservation.

Our Funding Priorities



Nurturing Natural Systems

Habitat Restoration, Working Landscapes, Biodiversity, Conservation

- Advancing the pathogen surveillance and management of diseases affecting wild sheep
- Restoring urban wetlands and habitats for North America’s waterfowl in Montana
- Addressing the long-term decline of northern pintail populations
- Mapping the migration routes and habitat needs of mule deer
- Reducing human-bear conflicts on Kodiak Island
- Supporting the citizen science effort to manage the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease
- Balancing food security on indigenous Alutiiq homelands with bears and bison
- Water quality and monitoring in threatened areas of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
- Addressing wild turkey population declines in the Texas Gulf Coastal Prairie and Marshes ecoregion

Our Funding Priorities

Encouraging the Hunting Experience

Mentorship, Access, Education, Wellbeing

- Supporting post-9/11 combat veterans and their loved ones through hunting and nature experiences
- Supporting archery programs in schools across the country
- Supporting the mentorship and education of over 1,000 new hunters
- Providing scholarships for 10 students' graduate studies in Waterfowl Habitat and Recreation
- Management Scholarships for youth to participate in backpacking and aspiring hunter skills courses

Our Funding Priorities

Shared Stewardship

Prioritizing whole ecosystems through collaboration

- Increasing landscape connectivity for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn through wildlife friendly fencing in the Madison Valley
- Improving access to publicly owned lands and waters
- Restoring wildlife pathways for big game species through connected landscapes and citizen science
- Supporting landowners to conserve migration corridors in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
- Supporting the recovery of shortleaf pine and oak ecosystems in the southeast

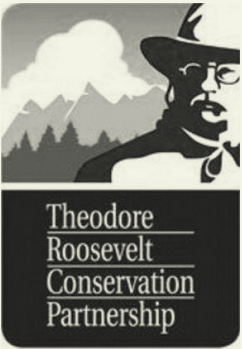
10 National Conservation
Organizations Sponsored

23 Grants
Awarded

100+ Organizations Supported
Through Donations

Our Partners

At SITKA we believe it is our duty as a hunting brand to support the national, bedrock organizations of the North American model for wildlife conservation. Without the work of these organizations, hunting opportunities and access would cease to exist. We are proud to support the efforts of the following organizations:



Geared Up for Conservation

In addition to product donations made across the country to over 100 nonprofits, SITKA outfitted the programs of the following organizations to support their efforts in conservation, education, and stewardship:



Blood Origin’s
Outfitted a Citizen Anti-Poaching Program

Texas Parks And Wildlife Foundation
Outfitted Participants in the Mentored Hunt Program

Georgia Wildlife Federation
Provided Gear for Participants of the Academics Afield Program

Owl Research Institute
Outfitted Biologists Working to Study Ground Nest Survival of Short Eared Owls

Montana Wilderness School
Provided Gear for the Aspiring Hunter’s Course

Wyoming Migration Initiative
Outfitted Biologists and Researchers Studying the Migratory Patterns of Mule Deer

Five Oaks Ag And Research Education Center
Created a Gear Locker for Students in the Graduate Program for Waterfowl Management

Freedive Safe Hawaii
Supported High School Education Programs for Spearfishing Safety and Awareness



Conservation Advisory Board

We are grateful for the support and dedication of SITKA's Conservation Staff and Advisory Board. Each individual represents unique and critical aspects of the conservation landscape today.



Lindsey B Davis
Director of Conservation and Advocacy,
bowhunter, naturalist, and ecosystem steward



Randy Newberg
Hunter, conservationist, media producer, and
advocate for America's public lands



Gaspar Perricone
Political strategist, founder of the Bull Moose
Sportsmen's Alliance, bowhunter, rancher, and
fourth-generation Coloradan



Rue Mapp
Founder and CEO of Outdoor Afro, author,
speaker, waterfowler, and public lands champion



Dr. Karl Miller
Research scientist and professor of deer
management, Warnell School of Forestry



Whit Fosburgh
Lifelong conservationist, policy expert, hunter,
and angler



Grant Projects



We believe humans are an integral part of nature and that extraordinary impacts can be made not only by large organizations but also by grassroots efforts led by passionate individuals. SITKA Ecosystem Grants funds projects that improve the state and function of an ecosystem, allows for the growth of the hunting experience through access and education, and creates opportunities for collaborative conservation.

Humans are an integral part of nature.

Impact at a Glance

- A Backcountry Hunters and Anglers**
Minnesota Chronic Wasting Disease Education Series
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Post Season Pintail Banding
- C Ducks Unlimited**
Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve
- D Five Oaks Ag and Research Education Center**
Graduate Certificate in Waterfowl and Wetland Management
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- F Kodiak Brown Bear Trust**
Mitigating Human-Brown Bear Conflicts
Through Improved Waste Management
- G Montana Wilderness School**
Backpacking Skills for Aspiring Hunters
- H National Archery in Schools Program**
School Equipment Grants
- I National Deer Association**
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Wildlife
and Forest Improvement Project
- J National Parks Conservation Association**
Papoose Creek Wildlife Friendly Fence Project
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Save the Boundary Waters Coalition
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Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
- N Sageland Collaborative**
Restoring Wildlife Pathways with Our Community
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Stewards of the Wild Mentored Hunt Initiative
- P Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundaiton**
Texas Bighorn Coalition
- Q Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**
Combating Chronic Wasting Disease
- R Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**
Public Lands and Water Access
- S Turkeys for Tomorrow**
Rio Grande Wild Turkey Nest Success
- T Warriors and Quiet Waters**
Built for More Hunting Track
- U Wild Sheep Foundation**
Management of Bighorn Sheep Pneumonia—
Tri-State Test & Remove (ID/OR/WA)
- V Working Dogs for Wildlife**
Detection Dogs as a Screening Tool for M.ov
Infection in Bighorn Sheep
- W Wyoming Migration Initiative**
Red Desert Mule Deer Migrations



Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Minnesota Chronic Wasting Disease Education Series

GRANTEE

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) is a conservation nonprofit organization that focuses on protecting and conserving access to North America’s public lands, waters, and wildlife. BHA has chapters in 48 states with roughly 30,000 members nationwide.



FOCUS AREA

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) continues to be a serious threat to Minnesota’s wild deer herd and the future of hunting in the state. Despite widespread concern, there remains a lot of misinformation about the disease itself and confusion about the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ (MN DNR) focus on addressing it. The truth is simple: CWD poses a long-term risk to wildlife health, and managing it effectively requires the engagement of Minnesota’s hunting community.

PROJECT

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) believes in science-based management, public involvement, and healthy wild landscapes, and empowers hunters to be part of the solution through educational programs. BHA Minnesota has taken an active role in supporting the state’s voluntary CWD testing program and helping get test kits into more hunters’ hands. These kits are free and easy to use—hunters can request one online to be mailed directly to them or pick one up at an in-person event. With support from the SITKA Ecosystems Grant program, BHA encourages citizen science by hosting educational events and demonstrations to teach hunters how to properly collect CWD samples, and incentivizes hunters to return their results.

California Waterfowl

Post-Season Pintail Banding

GRANTEE

California Waterfowl is a 501c3 organization whose mission is to grow California’s waterfowl populations, wetlands, and hunter-conservationist communities. Their vision is a California with thriving waterfowl populations, vibrant wetland ecosystems, and respected hunting communities.

FOCUS AREA

Northern pintail populations in North America have experienced significant long-term declines, dropping to around 1.78 million birds in 2023—49% below the North American Waterfowl Management Plan goal of 4 million. Despite improved habitat conditions in the 1990s that led to population rebounds in other prairie ducks, pintails showed little recovery. In response, a 2001 workshop brought together experts to develop management strategies, identifying key research and conservation priorities. One major outcome was the creation of a focused pintail banding program. Since 2006, over 40,000 pintails have been banded in California by the California Waterfowl Association and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

PROJECT

With support from the SITKA Ecosystem Grant program, CWA will increase the number of banded pintails in California to help improve the accuracy of key data used to inform harvest management strategies in the Sacramento Valley and the Klamath Basin. There is currently broad consensus among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the four flyway councils that the implementation of an operational pre-season banding program is critical to the support of Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) for pintails. Because pintails are early fall migrants to California’s Central Valley, large numbers of pintails are available to trap and band prior to the start of the waterfowl season. Combining data from both pre- and post-season banding efforts will produce more precise estimates of annual survival rates than relying on pre-season data alone.





Ducks Unlimited

Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve

GRANTEE	Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America’s waterfowl.
FOCUS AREA	The Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP) project addresses the alarming loss of wetland ecosystems in Montana, particularly in the fast-growing Bozeman area. Although wetlands comprise less than 2% of Montana’s land, more than 50% of the state’s wildlife rely on them for survival. Urban expansion has drastically altered the natural landscape of Bozeman, fragmenting habitat and reducing water quality and biodiversity. This project intervenes in one of the last remaining large urban wetland parcels, aiming to reverse the trend of habitat loss and ecosystem degradation.

PROJECT	SITKA supports the effort to restore and protect a 40-acre wetland complex and over 60 additional acres of adjacent habitat within the Bozeman urban corridor. Restoration will enhance water quality, provide critical wildlife habitat, and offer long-term educational and recreational benefits for the community. The restored wetland will improve groundwater recharge and filtration for the East Gallatin River watershed. By creating a thriving wetland ecosystem that includes forested wetlands and riparian buffers, the project will support more than 100 bird species and countless other wildlife, from amphibians to native pollinators. In addition to ecological restoration, the project includes trail connectivity, wildlife viewing blinds, and the future development of a nature center to offer experiential environmental education and a dedicated space where the public—especially youth—can learn firsthand about the importance of wetlands.
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Five Oaks Agriculture and Research Education Center

Graduate Certificate in Waterfowl and Wetland Management



GRANTEE	Five Oaks Ag Research and Education Center is a residential wetland management program that prepares young professionals with the applied skills and knowledge necessary to ensure healthy wetlands and waterfowl populations into the future.
FOCUS AREA	Securing the future of waterfowl hunting and species management necessitates the cultivation of a new generation of natural resource experts. Effective training in science-based methods of habitat restoration and management requires Graduate Certificate Program (GSP) curriculum and mentorship to successfully transition into professional opportunities that will impact the quantity and quality of waterfowl habitat and create more opportunities for waterfowl hunting.
PROJECT	SITKA provides scholarships to students for the GSP in Waterfowl Habitat and Recreation Management at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Through their experience on the Five Oaks property in Humphrey, Arkansas, these trained experts will significantly influence the quantity and quality of waterfowl habitat, thereby creating more opportunities for waterfowl hunting and contributing to the broader conservation efforts in this critical ecological domain.

Hunters of Color

Hunt Mentorship Program

GRANTEE

Hunters of Color is the only nationwide hunting nonprofit led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) working on increasing participation in hunting for the sake of conservation, food sovereignty, and to preserve ancestral traditions.

FOCUS AREA

There is a significant participation gap for People of Color in the hunting and conservation communities. This is attributed to a lack of education and outreach programs, access to resources, training, mentorship, and hunting opportunities for BIPOC communities. Additionally, there are stigmas and misconceptions surrounding hunting within these communities and externally.

PROJECT

SITKA supports Hunters of Color’s mentorship program expanding into five more states and bringing on five new ‘HOC Ambassadors’ to lead outreach in their communities. These education programs help create over one thousand new hunters annually. Support will also be used to design and implement a comprehensive leadership training program tailored to BIPOC individuals. This initiative will empower underrepresented communities to take active roles in hunting, conservation, and environmental stewardship.



Kodiak Brown Bear Trust

Mitigate Human-Brown Bear Conflict Through Improved Waste Management

GRANTEE

The Kodiak Brown Bear Trust’s mission is to support conservation of Kodiak brown bears and protection of their wilderness habitats throughout the Kodiak Archipelago through funding and guidance of research, management, habitat protection, and educational outreach projects.



FOCUS AREA

Anthropogenic (human-made) food waste containers and disposal sites are frequently at the forefront of human-wildlife interactions and typically result in conflicts. Tools used to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts associated with anthropogenic foods commonly target wildlife through deterrence, removal, or aversive condition—however, these methods typically have limited or short-term efficacy. Similarly, and though important, public education toward mitigating human-wildlife conflicts through changing human behaviors more often than not has had only limited efficacy. Based on Alaska Department of Fish and Game records, during 2016–2022 there were 487 reported human-brown bear conflicts on Kodiak Island (on average, 70 per year). Most of these conflicts included brown bears obtaining anthropogenic foods. Thirty bears were killed in defense of life or property during this same period, all or in part a consequence of obtaining anthropogenic food. Bears obtaining anthropogenic foods is the primary mechanism of human-brown bear conflict.

PROJECT

Kodiak Island has about 250 dumpsters located throughout the island along the road system, however, only about 12–13% are bear-resistant. SITKA Ecosystem Grant is supporting the effort by Kodiak High School welding and art students to retrofit non-bear resistant dumpsters. The reduction in access to anthropogenic food sources will reduce human-bear conflicts resulting in an overall safer community as well as a reduction in bears killed in defense of life and property. This will foster greater bear abundance on the landscape, providing increased ecological integrity and increased opportunities for sport or subsistence bear hunting.



Montana Wilderness School

Backpacking Skills for Aspiring Hunters

GRANTEE

Montana Wilderness School (MWS) provides expeditionary wilderness courses to youth that foster personal growth and cultivate a conservation ethic through connecting with remote landscapes and wild places.



FOCUS AREA

An increasing number of youth have become disconnected from nature. Modern lifestyles, dominated by technology and urbanization, have created a growing gap between young individuals and the natural world. Equally, some simply lack access and opportunity to experience the wilderness. This disconnection raises concerns about the well-being and development of today’s youth, alongside the future of environmental stewardship and practical pathways to hunting.

PROJECT

SITKA sponsors the participation of 10 students in Montana Wilderness School’s renowned Backpacking Skills for the Aspiring Hunter Expedition. This needs-based, 10-day wilderness course focuses on fostering personal growth and instilling a conservation ethic through meaningful connections with wild places. By integrating survival skills with hunting regulations and field care of game with stewardship principles, MWS provides youth with experiences empowering them with the knowledge to become hunters and stewards of the environment while cultivating a deep appreciation for the natural world.

National Archery in Schools Program

School Equipment Grants

GRANTEE

The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) promotes instruction in international-style target archery as part of in-school curriculum, to improve educational performance and participation in shooting sports among students in grades 4-12.

FOCUS AREA

Without deliberate opportunities for archery, youth participation in shooting sports faces a concerning decline. The lack of accessible programs hampers engagement, contributing to dwindling interest and skills in archery. This decline poses challenges to the broader shooting sports community, fostering a diminished appreciation for the sport, and limiting the potential recruitment of future hunters and enthusiasts.

PROJECT

SITKA supports the NASP providing equipment grants to 10 new schools across the country for building archery programs in grades 4-12. Based on the program's track record, 66% of students are first time archers, 91% of which will pursue, or want to pursue, other outdoor activities because of NASP. 1.3 million students are introduced to archery through NASP in over 9,500 schools each year.



National Deer Association

Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Wildlife and Forest Improvement Project

GRANTEE The National Deer Association (NDA) works to ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting. NDA is North America’s leading deer organization that works to empower deer hunters to be stewards of all wildlife, unite behind wise deer policy and help fight the biggest threats to deer, including diseases, loss of access and more.

FOCUS AREA Many forest ecosystems in the southeast have been degraded by woody encroachment, reducing habitat quality and biodiversity. Maintaining and restoring these forests requires strong collaboration between federal agencies and public-private partnerships. One key strategy is wildlife opening work, which includes reclaiming overgrown areas, expanding small openings and feathering edges, and connecting nearby openings to create brushy, sunlit corridors that benefit a variety of wildlife species. The National Deer Association (NDA) currently holds a Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) with the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest (CONF) to carry out both forestry and wildlife habitat improvements. However, the agreement faces a funding shortfall for thinning treatments without the support of additional entities.

PROJECT In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Natural Resources, the SITKA Ecosystem Grants program is supporting habitat improvements across several hundred acres on Cooper Creek Wildlife Management Area. This forest management work aims to restore native plant communities, enhance wildlife habitat, improve forest health, and support the recovery of shortleaf pine and oak ecosystems. Actively managing southeastern forest landscapes results in better hunting opportunities, greater biodiversity—including rare and declining species—and reduced wildfire risk. These efforts not only improve the experience for southern hunters but also contribute to safer, more fire-adapted forests. Healthy, resilient forests are essential for sustaining deer and thousands of other terrestrial and aquatic species.

National Parks Conservation Association

Papoose Creek Wildlife Friendly Fence Project

GRANTEE

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been a leading, independent voice to protect and enhance America’s national parks for present and future generations. The NPCA works to engage with congressional and administrative leadership on a national level, while maintaining a strong local presence through its 27 regional field offices across the country that are deeply connected to individual parks and the communities and landscapes that surround them.

FOCUS AREA

Papoose Creek in southwest Montana’s Madison Valley is a critical migration corridor for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Over 3,000 of the valley’s 5,000 elk use this drainage for seasonal movements, calving, and winter security, with grizzly bears also relying on the area for food. Maintaining high-quality, accessible habitat here is essential for the long-term health of these species. Traditional livestock fencing poses a major barrier to migration, often injuring or killing wildlife and damaging property. As development expands in the Madison and Gallatin Valleys, these challenges are intensifying, threatening ancient wildlife corridors.

PROJECT

The Papoose Creek landscape is a mix of sagebrush, grassland, timber, creek bottom, and steep, rocky hillsides which creates a challenge for fencing maintenance. SITKA is supporting the effort to increase wildlife connectivity by working with a willing landowner to remove 1.75 miles of barrier fencing located within an identified and difficult to reach pinch point along a wildlife pathway in the Madison Valley, between Ennis, MT and Hebgen Lake. A new wildlife friendly fence will be built on the perimeter of the Papoose Creek Forest Service grazing allotment that borders the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. This design will allow wildlife migration to proceed unhindered and for reduced damage to fencing, supporting the permittee holder. Educational signage will also inform the public who are recreating on the land—primarily hiking and hunting—about public-private partnerships to support wildlife connectivity.



Old Harbor Alliance

Balancing Food Security on Indigenous Alutiiq Homelands with Bears and Bison

GRANTEE

The Old Harbor Alliance (Alliance) is a local non-profit comprised of the residents of Old Harbor, tribal members of Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor, and shareholders and descendants of Old Harbor Native Corporation on Kodiak Island, Alaska. The Alliance manages the Sitkalidak Bison herd, comprised of approximately 300 free-range bison on Sitkalidak Island, spanning about 77,430 acres. The herd was established in 2017 to enhance food sovereignty and promote economic development for Tribal members by providing a rich, lean protein source amid rising food and freight costs and develop opportunities for hunting.

FOCUS AREA

The Old Harbor Alliance introduced bison to Sitkalidak Island in 2017 to enhance food security and promote economic development for the Alutiiq people. Proximate to these efforts, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game had deployed GPS collars on brown bears on the island to better understand the coexistence of the species through seasonal resource use, distribution, movement, litter size, cub survival, and birth intervals. Understanding the mechanisms driving these interactions is important to guide future conservation actions for native brown bears while ensuring sustainability and food security.

PROJECT

SITKA is supporting the effort to deploy GPS collars on bison and analyze their movements and interactions with native brown bears. The project will inform herd management strategies that balance predator-prey dynamics, and the data will help ensure the viability of a community-led hunting program while protecting both the ecological integrity of the island and the food security goals of the Old Harbor Alliance. Ultimately this will foster the sustainable growth and harvest of the Sitkalidak Island bison herd to strengthen food sovereignty through cultural hunts for the Alutiiq people, and in the long term, provide hunting opportunities for non-community members.





Property Environment Research Center

Conserving Migration Corridors in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

GRANTEE

The Property and Environment Research Center (PERC) is the national leader in creating market solutions for conservation, with over 40 years of pioneering research and a network of respected scholars and practitioners. PERC explores how aligning incentives for environmental stewardship produces sustainable outcomes for land, water, and wildlife.

FOCUS AREA

Recent migration science shows at least four separate elk herds (Northern, Paradise Valley, Mill Creek, and North Absaroka) utilize Paradise Valley as their winter range. At the same time, these herds compete with tear-down fences and livestock in the valley for forage. They can threaten livestock with brucellosis, a business-crippling disease. And predation by species that follow these ungulates imposes losses that are also a costly concern for livestock operations. Most landowners are interested in supporting wildlife habitat, hunting opportunities, and ecological services, but it requires resources and partnerships to do so. Compounding the issue, rapid regional growth and fragmentation from development pose a threat to these private lands that provide the vital wide open spaces for ungulate migration and about the most treasured public lands in the nation.

PROJECT

To preserve migration corridors and promote wildlife conservation in Montana’s Paradise Valley, the SITKA Ecosystem Grants are supporting a suite of innovative, landowner-centered tools that transform wildlife from a liability into an asset. Building on the findings of the 2019 Elk in Paradise report, PERC developed several first-of-their-kind programs designed to support working lands while increasing habitat for migratory species. These include Montana’s first customized elk occupancy agreement, which pays ranchers to allow elk to use or move across their land; a disease compensation fund—supported by RMEF and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition—to help manage brucellosis transmission risks; and a “pay-for-presence” program that uses artificial intelligence to reward landowners for providing winter habitat for migratory herds. Each of these projects offers a tailored solution, and together they have a powerful cumulative impact—preserving migration routes, expanding landowner tolerance for wildlife, and offering a scalable model for habitat conservation across the west.

Sageland Collaborative

Restoring Wildlife Pathways
with Our Community

GRANTEE

Founded in 1996, Sageland Collaborative’s mission is to provide science-based strategies for wildlife and land conservation. Sageland Collaborative’s work achieves positive outcomes for wildlife by fostering partnerships, bringing science into on-the-ground actions, and working with entire communities.

FOCUS
AREA

Big game species like mule deer, elk, and pronghorn depend on large, connected landscapes to migrate, access food, and survive seasonal extremes. However, expanding road networks, fencing, and the growing impacts of climate change—including extreme heat and forage loss—are fragmenting their habitats and threatening their long-term survival. Pronghorn, in particular, are approaching ecological thresholds as they avoid fenced areas, limiting access to critical resources. Without intervention, these barriers could lead to serious population declines. Although proven solutions like fence retrofits can restore connectivity, limited funding for materials and equipment remains a major barrier to implementation.

PROJECT

Utah has an impressive spatial database of wildlife movement from tens of thousands of GPS-collared mule deer, elk, and pronghorn that allows for the identification and prioritization of problem fences that obstruct migration. With support from the SITKA Ecosystem Grants program, Sageland Collaborative is working with agricultural producers, community science volunteers, landowners, and land managers to retrofit and remove fences to restore critical corridors for mule deer, elk, and pronghorn. This collaborative, science-driven approach strengthens partnerships with agricultural producers and communities, ensuring landscape-scale impact and long-term success.





Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness

Save the Boundary Waters Coalition

GRANTEE	Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness (NMW), which leads Save the Boundary Waters coalition, was formed in 1996 to continue working to protect the Boundary Waters and other wild places against ever-increasing public and commercial pressures so that the area’s wild character remains intact for future generations.	FOCUS AREA	The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is one of the most visited wilderness areas in the United States, offering world-class paddling, fishing, and backcountry recreation across over a million acres of pristine lakes and forests. Ecologically, it is a vital refuge for diverse wildlife, including moose, wolves, and migratory birds, and serves as a critical watershed within the boreal forest ecosystem. A sulfide-ore copper mine is being proposed in the headwaters of the BWCA in Minnesota. This type of mining has never been done in Minnesota and would generate waste rock full of sulfates, which, when exposed to air and water, becomes sulphuric acid, and leaches toxins like heavy metals into the surrounding water. Damaging impacts to water quality, air quality, forest health, and more on the edge of the wilderness would cause cascading effects downstream and into the protected wilderness.	PROJECT	The SITKA Ecosystem Grants program supports a community-driven water quality monitoring effort designed to fill critical data gaps in the Birch Lake region near the Boundary Waters, where mining proposals pose potential threats. By testing over 90 sites across Birch Lake, its tributaries, and surrounding areas, this rapidly expanding program helps track sulfate and mercury levels, ensuring that the pristine waters, vibrant ecosystems, and recreation-based economies of the Boundary Waters are protected for generations to come.
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Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation

Stewards of the Wild Mentored Hunt Initiative

GRANTEE

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) works to expand protected habitat areas statewide, foster scientific research, increase access to outdoor experiences, and cultivate stewardship opportunities to benefit present and future generations of Texans.

FOCUS AREA

As the metropolitan areas of Texas continue to grow at an unprecedented rate, many Texans reach young adulthood having grown up without developing a personal connection to the state’s wild places or the ethical pursuit of hunting. Factors such as changing demographics, urbanization, and a shift in recreational preferences contribute to the dwindling numbers of individuals joining the hunting community in particular. Keeping outdoor traditions alive in Texas is critical not only to the natural heritage, but is indispensable to the appreciation, enjoyment, and conservation of the lands, waters, and wildlife by future generations.

PROJECT

SITKA supports the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation in their Stewards of the Wild program and the Mentored Hunting Initiative to reverse the current decline of hunters in Texas. Each mentored hunting experience guides first-time hunters through a multi-day, comprehensive training and education curriculum, including access to all the necessary equipment and one-on-one mentorship by seasoned hunters equipping participants with the skills and knowledge to continue hunting in Texas and beyond.

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Combating Chronic Wasting Disease

GRANTEE

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) is a national partnership organization of 63 hunting, fishing and conservation organizations, outdoor businesses, scientific associations, and more than 135,000 individual grassroots partners. Through its Policy Council and Corporate Councils, and a series of policy working groups, the TRCP and its partners leverage federal and state conservation solutions to ensure all Americans have access to quality places to hunt and fish.

FOCUS AREA

Chronic wasting disease is the greatest wildlife disease challenge of our generation and an existential threat to North America’s wild deer hunting traditions and conservation funding. The disease has now been detected in 31 states and is a considerable threat to wild cervid populations across the country. It continues to spread, and a coordinated campaign waged by NGOs and businesses is necessary to stem the tide of this threat.

PROJECT AREA

SITKA supports TRCP’s work to convene stakeholders and host a series of engagement sessions to gather feedback on local issues and gain an understanding of the disease to bolster grassroots support for engagement and action. These efforts inform a national strategy to address CWD and build broader support for long-term solutions.



Turkeys for Tomorrow

Rio Grande Wild Turkey Nest Success

GRANTEE

Turkeys for Tomorrow (TFT) was founded in 2021 by members with a focused approach on saving wild turkeys by using science-based solutions for long-term sustainability. TFT is working closely with researchers across the nation to address wild turkey decline, habitat concerns from wetlands to uplands, wildlife management tools, private landowner cooperatives, and hunting heritage solutions for the future.

FOCUS
AREA

Wild turkey populations are in decline due to a combination of habitat loss, disease, and predation—all of which contribute to increased hen and brood mortality. In the Gulf Coastal Prairie and Marshes ecoregion of Texas, where diverse ecosystems support a wide range of wildlife, these pressures are particularly concerning. A lack of comprehensive research on the cumulative impact of these factors has hindered effective management and recovery efforts. Without targeted solutions, wild turkey numbers may continue to fall, threatening both ecological balance and long-standing hunting traditions.

PROJECT

The SITKA Ecosystem Grants program is supporting a multi-year research initiative to address wild turkey population decline in the Gulf Coastal Prairie and Marshes ecoregion of Texas. The project will involve live-capturing and GPS-collaring hens to monitor movement, survival, and behavior, while simultaneously assessing feeding practices, predator presence, and habitat conditions. With intensive fieldwork and continued monitoring, this research aims to identify and address the most limiting factors affecting hen and brood mortality. Insights gained will inform targeted management strategies that not only benefit wild turkeys but also enhance habitat quality for a broader suite of native species.

Warriors and Quiet Waters

Built for More Hunting Track

GRANTEE

Warriors and Quiet Waters empowers post-9/11 combat veterans and their loved ones to thrive and live purpose-driven lives through peak experiences in nature, meaningful relationships, and a sense of community.

FOCUS AREA

Millions of U.S. service members have transitioned back to civilian life, yet more than a third face persistent stress, isolation, and uncertainty as they adjust to life without the structure, purpose, and support of military service. Without clear guidance, many veterans struggle to meet basic needs and cope with physical and mental health challenges—making reintegration difficult. There is increasing urgency to provide them with the tools and support necessary to navigate this critical transition.

PROJECT

Supported by SITKA Ecosystem Grants, the Built for More Hunting Track empowers post-9/11 combat veterans through a transformative, long-term program that blends the challenge of archery hunting with an evidence-based personal growth curriculum. Far more than a single trip, this immersive experience combines outdoor pursuits, peer connection, and guided self-discovery to help veterans rebuild purpose, resilience, and identity—using the hunt not as an end goal, but as a powerful tool for healing and growth.



Wild Sheep Foundation

Management of Bighorn Sheep
Pneumonia in Hells Canyon

GRANTEE

The Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) is the conservation organization dedicated to restoring wild sheep populations through promoting scientific wildlife management and educating the public on the conservation benefits of hunting. Through its chapters and affiliates, WSF actively funds initiatives throughout North America and beyond to ensure that wild sheep populations and their habitats worldwide are effectively managed, accessible, utilized, and supported.



FOCUS
AREA

Wild sheep are highly susceptible to a respiratory disease called *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (M.ovi) when they come into contact with domestic sheep. Exposure leads to widespread respiratory illness amongst herds, population decline, wider ecological impacts, and significant conservation and management challenges.

PROJECT
AREA

Supported by SITKA Ecosystem Grants, this tri-state, multi-year initiative aims to improve the health and resilience of bighorn sheep populations across Idaho, Oregon, and Washington through intensive fieldwork and science-based disease management. This phase will involve capturing, collaring, and testing 390 bighorns in eight study populations, with a focus on monitoring and mitigating the spread of M.ovi, especially in the shared herds of the Hells Canyon complex. This effort will inform more effective, range-wide strategies for managing disease and sustaining bighorn populations into the future.

Working Dogs for Conservation

Detection Dogs as a Screening Tool for M.ovi infection in Bighorn Sheep

GRANTEE

Working Dogs for Conservation is the world’s leading conservation dog organization. Whether it’s law enforcement, biosecurity, ecological monitoring, or environmental justice, WD4C consults, collaborates, and leads capacity building for detection, tracking, and discrimination dogs and handlers, all to make conservation happen around the world.

FOCUS AREA

Many bighorn sheep populations have failed to recover following M.ovi outbreaks, and in some areas have even become extirpated. These population crashes and slow recovery place significant constraints on sheep distributions, hunter opportunities, and the prospects for harmonizing wild sheep conservation with domestic sheep production. There are currently no existing vaccines or effective medical treatments available for domestic or wild sheep. Therefore, detection and monitoring of this disease is vital to inhibiting and preventing its continued spread. Fast and reliable pathogen or disease detection is desperately and urgently needed to effectively manage this disease in affected populations through testing and removal operations, protecting those who are uninfected.

PROJECT AREA

With support from SITKA Ecosystem Grants, this innovative project is advancing the use of specially trained detection dogs to identify Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae (M.ovi) in wild bighorn sheep populations. By integrating detection dogs into routine wildlife capture events and developing the first-ever non-invasive field screening method through scat detection, this effort offers wildlife managers a faster, more accurate, and less disruptive approach to disease surveillance. The project not only enhances current bighorn sheep health management but also sets the stage for broader applications of conservation dogs in wildlife disease detection and response.





Wyoming Migration Initiative

Red Desert Mule Deer Migrations

GRANTEE	The Wyoming Migration Initiative is a project of the University of Wyoming that works to advance the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of Wyoming’s migratory ungulates by conducting innovative research and sharing scientific information through public outreach.	PROJECT AREA	With support from SITKA Ecosystem Grants, this long-term research project is deepening our understanding of how migration influences the health, resilience, and productivity of declining mule deer populations. Now entering its 12th year, the Red Desert Mule Deer study is one of the most comprehensive projects of its kind, tracking survival, reproduction, and condition across deer that follow long-, medium-, and short-distance migration strategies. By examining how migration diversity supports herd productivity, how movement patterns affect harvest pressure, and how barriers limit the benefits of migration, this work is shaping science-based conservation strategies for sustaining migratory big game in an increasingly fragmented west.
FOCUS AREA	Migrations enable herds of ungulates (e.g., deer, elk, caribou) to reduce risk of disease, predation, population collapse from catastrophe, and competition. However, migrations are threatened and disappearing worldwide. Among the drivers of decline, human impacts and global climate change have detrimental effects on how well animals time their migrations, the benefits they receive from migrating, and the overall health of herds as a result. Conserving migration requires information on where and when animals move, but also requires knowledge of what maintains them.		



Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Public Lands and Water Access

GRANTEE

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) is a national partnership organization of 63 hunting, fishing, and conservation organizations, outdoor businesses, scientific associations, and more than 135,000 individual grassroots partners. Through its Policy Council and Corporate Councils, and a series of policy working groups, the TRCP and its partners leverage federal and state conservation solutions to ensure all Americans have access to quality places to hunt and fish.

FOCUS AREA

Publicly owned lands and waters are a cornerstone of the North American Model of Conservation and vital to the future of hunting and fishing in America. However, widespread confusion and gaps in access information—particularly regarding public waters, boating restrictions, access points, and fishing regulations—limit recreational opportunities for hunters and anglers. Despite progress in identifying and opening landlocked public lands, significant work remains to digitize and publicize comprehensive, user-friendly access data to ensure these resources are fully available to the public.

PROJECT AREA

With support from the SITKA Ecosystem Grants program, TRCP is advancing efforts to improve public access to lands and waters across the U.S. This work will help continue the implementation of access-focused policies like the MAPLand Act and support passage of the bipartisan Modernizing Access to our Public Waters (MAPWaters) Act. This critical legislation would require federal agencies to digitize and publish comprehensive data on public water access—such as boat ramps, watercraft restrictions, and fishing regulations—expanding recreational opportunities for anglers, boaters, and hunters who rely on water-based access to public lands.



Grant Stories



Shared Stewardship

FEATURED COLLABORATION



PROJECT

SITKA’s Shared Stewardship Initiative is designed to create opportunities for collaborative conservation. This year we jointly supported a key wildlife migration initiative of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation in partnership with The Conservation Alliance to show how conservation groups from across the outdoor recreation industry can have a larger, positive impact when working together.

The grant work of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation is focused on preserving the Wyoming Range Mule Deer migration corridor, which spans 1.3 million acres of vital habitat. This corridor helps to ensure the survival of the species which is critical to the area’s local ecosystems and also supports world-class hunting and recreation activities for nearby community members and visitors.

We are proud to unite conservation groups in the outdoor industry to foster habitat connectivity and ensure healthy wildlife populations in the West.



Fraser River Project

PARTNER

The Wild Sheep Foundation

PROJECT

Wild sheep are highly susceptible to a respiratory disease when they come into contact with domestic sheep called M.ov. Exposure leads to widespread respiratory illness amongst herds, population decline, wider ecological impacts, and significant conservation and management challenges.

SITKA supports the 6th year of a pathogen surveillance research project on the Fraser River which includes habitat enhancements and a disease workshop for the 13 states, provinces and first nations working on M.ov reduction in wild sheep populations.

Fraser River SITKA Hoodie Inclusion: SITKA produced a limited-edition sweatshirt featuring the Fraser River Project in British Columbia. All proceeds directly supported the work of the Wild Sheep Foundation.



WATCH THE VIDEO

The Hard Way

PARTNER

A Feature Story About Paul Forward

PROJECT

Paul Forward is a conservationist, climate advocate, professional ski guide, whitewater kayaker, full-time physician and traditional bowhunter based outside of Anchorage, Alaska.

He drew an any-ram archery tag, only open for a 30-day season, for one of the most difficult animals to bow hunt. The ever-changing elements of the Chugach Mountains and the miles of sketchy terrain set the stage for a challenging pursuit while shedding light on critical conservation initiatives.

In addition to documenting Paul’s journey, we partnered with him to support conservation work studying the impacts of avalanches on mountain goats. Iconically described as “a climbing bearded beast the color of winter”, mountain goats are a highly valued species of North American mountain landscapes but are particularly sensitive to climate change and human disturbance who share critical habitat with Wild Sheep. Among the climate- linked factors are avalanches, which can impose major demographic impacts through direct mortality but may also provide important benefits through facilitation of food resource availability during critical times of the year.

SITKA supported research biologist Kevin White’s work to conduct field studies to better understand these factors. Understanding these relationships will fill an important knowledge gap and aid in the ability to understand how climate-linked factors influence mountain goat populations and advance our capability ensure long- term sustainability.



WATCH THE VIDEO



On The Wing

PARTNER

Five Oaks Ag and Research Education Center

PROJECT

Along the Mississippi flyway, a small Arkansas town hosts one of the most important roosting points for migrating ducks.

“The Five Oaks Agricultural Research and Education Center is only a few years into their work, but they’re already seeing positive change...across duck populations in the entire Mississippi Flyway.”

SITKA has been supporting the Graduate Certificate Program in Waterfowl Habitat and Recreation Management since 2022. This critical work prepares a new generations of land managers to be trained in the proven Five Oaks philosophy of waterfowl habitat restoration, monitoring, and management.



WATCH THE VIDEO

Preserving America’s Wild Turkeys

PARTNER

Turkeys for Tomorrow

PROJECT

Habitat health, widespread disease, and predation are all negatively impacting wild turkey populations. The SITKA Ecosystem Grants program supports Turkeys For Tomorrow’s research in their Rio Grande Wild Turkey Nest Success project. Through live capturing hens and applying GPS collars, structure monitoring for feeding, predator detection, and habitat assessment, this project is focused on finding solutions for wild turkey population decline by addressing the most critical factors with hen and brood mortality.

Results from this study will be used in a solution-based model for private landowners to actively begin working towards making a difference locally for conservation. Additionally, solutions derived from this project will be used to influence policy with all governmental agencies to ensure that wild turkey management frameworks are sustainable at regional levels.



READ MORE



Mauka to Makai

PARTNER

Mauai Nui Venison, Auwahi Forest Restoration Project, and Pu’u Kukui Watershed Preserve

PROJECT

From the highest mountain peaks to the deep-blue ocean reefs—the traditional Hawaiian concept of mauka to makai (mountain to ocean) explains the circular, interconnectedness of the islands’ unique ecosystem. The health of the island and its people is dependent on every component of the watershed and food chain working in harmony, and one disruption can create a cascading effect of irreversible damage.

Approximately 90% of Hawaii’s native plants are found nowhere else in the world and there are thousands of animal species that are endemic to the islands. Due to the unique nature of Hawaii’s environment, the negative impacts of invasive species tend to be amplified: the greater the biodiversity, the greater the potential devastation. It’s a place unlike any other and protecting every avenue is crucial to the entire health of the islands from mauka to makai.

The Hawaiian Islands are one of the richest and most biodiverse places on the planet, and with that comes a unique set of challenges for keeping their ecosystems in balance.





S I T K A





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