DEAR SUPPORTERS:

We went into 2020 knowing our work would get caught up in political chaos and election year maneuvering. We knew, too, that our courtroom challenges would need to hold the line while holding agencies and industry accountable to the laws meant to protect land, water, and communities.

What we didn’t know was that a global pandemic would disrupt “normal” and make the many threats to people and the planet more visible, more palpable, and more personal. COVID-19 put the nation’s legacy of racism, police brutality and inequitable health care outcomes under the spotlight and demonstrated how a global crisis that would leave so many without jobs and safety nets could at the same time allow the wealthiest to horde even more wealth.

The U.S. response to the pandemic lagged and lacked cohesion, partly due to budget cuts and staff reductions to agencies and programs responsible for that work, and partly due to the willful political choice of those in power to deny the threat and ignore the science. Meanwhile, the Trump administration continued undermining agency mandates, eviscerating regulations necessary to the health of land, water and people, and denying the climate crisis.
During a time when pausing “normal” life was necessary, the administration pushed even harder to rush through agency processes, environmental reviews, and virtual public hearings. In response, Trustees submitted requests to delay or reschedule hearings to ensure access, letters laying out legal concerns, and thousands and thousands of pages detailing the inaccuracies, information gaps and legal flaws in deficient industry applications and agency environmental reviews.

We prepared clients and partners for public hearings and legislative outreach. We presented oral arguments and filed briefs and responses as litigation moved through court. We further filed five new lawsuits in direct response to an administration that repeatedly broke the law, ignored science and traditional knowledge, and debased and dismissed public input to pander to and enrich extractive industries.

Our efforts helped hold off projects that would devastate salmon, caribou, and Alaska ways of life. Our lawsuits shut down illegal agency actions and kept destructive activities from happening on sacred and public lands. Our work lifted up the voices of people fighting for their communities, cultures, and livelihoods.

In August alone, we went to court four times to stop destructive hunting practices like brown bear baiting in national preserves; to prevent the sell-off of the largest tract of public land in the nation to oil companies; to keep drilling off sacred lands in the Arctic Refuge; and to stop a 200-mile-plus commercial gravel road to a mining area from devastating the southern Brooks Range of the Arctic and the people and animals who rely on it.

These lawsuits result from years of staying on top of agency processes, demanding transparency and public participation, and working alongside clients and partners. Our efforts get results even in the most challenging times. Our role as legal expert, strategist, and watch dog will always be necessary to the health of Alaska land, waters, and communities.

As 2020 reminded us, those with power will shrug off their responsibilities to the law and the public to profit from exploitation, with no care to those harmed along the way. Our job is to care deeply. Our role is to think strategically. Our way is through the law.

We know the issues and the challenges, the people and the places, what we’re up against and what’s at stake.

We also know what makes this work possible: All of you, the foundations and donors who commit to standing with us to protect land, water, and communities. Because of your support, we can use our knowledge, passion, expertise, and experience to protect sacred places, ways of life, public lands, and all the living communities that make Alaska extraordinary.

Thank you for being part of our Trustees team!

Victoria Clark, Executive Director
Protecting Bristol Bay salmon, communities, and ways of life

The 2020 presidential election year meant that political and corporate pressure to secure a permit for the proposed Pebble mine intensified. Though the global pandemic disrupted most people’s lives, the Trump administration continued pushing through agency processes aimed at approving extraction projects like the Pebble mine.

The proposed mine would put a destructive and massive open pit copper and gold mine at the headwaters of Bristol Bay, threatening the food and livelihoods in dozens of Alaska villages and risking thriving salmon runs that nourish traditional Yup’ik, Dena’ina, and Alutiiq ways of life that go back thousands of years. These fisheries provide food to the world and support a $2 billion industry and tens of thousands of jobs.

Early in the fiscal year, we filed a lawsuit on behalf of a large number of local to national conservation organizations charging the Environmental Protection Agency with breaking the law when it withdrew proposed protections for Bristol Bay’s headwaters. In 2014, based on peer-reviewed extensive scientific analysis of impacts from mining, the EPA concluded that the proposed Pebble mine would devastate the fisheries, economies, and the social and cultural fabric of communities in Bristol Bay. The agency never withdrew those scientifically supported conclusions but it did withdraw its effort to proactively protect Bristol Bay from mining. In April of 2020, the U.S. District Court found that EPA’s decision to withdraw was subject to agency discretion and not reviewable by the court.
Meanwhile, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continued with its environmental analysis of the project, releasing a final environmental impact statement in July 2020. The Corps proceeded with its hasty review despite substantial changes to the project design, significant criticism by other federal agencies, and the shocking revelations of the Environmental Investigation Agency’s “Pebble Tapes,” a series of recorded conversations between EIA investigators and the chief executive officers of Pebble Limited Partnership and Northern Dynasty Minerals. The Pebble Tapes revealed Pebble’s plans to mine for more than 200 years, in stark contrast to the 20-year mine application presented to the Army Corps.

Trustees submitted comments critical of the Army Corps’ final evaluation on behalf of a large number of local and national conservation groups. Much like the EPA’s own assessment, our comments were science-based, relying on the analysis conducted by a number of experts hired to evaluate the environmental impact statement. Their overall findings were that the Army Corps’ EIS failed to adequately assess the short and long-term impacts on the ecosystem and that mining could result in disastrous impacts that were overlooked by the Army Corps.

The fact remains that the Pebble Limited Partnership, which has never operated a mine, has lost multiple major mining partners, faced ongoing and overwhelming opposition from Bristol Bay communities, and has been two-faced as it promises a “small mine” to Alaskans and a century-long road to riches to investors. It is neither a small mine, nor a road to riches, but a proposal that promises catastrophic consequences to people and the fish they rely on for their food, jobs, and ways of life.

Through our work in 2020, we continued to bring science to the forefront and call out the legally flawed analysis prepared by the Army Corps. The agency had yet to decide on whether to issue a permit at the end of the fiscal year.
Staying vigilant in ensuring the health of Cook Inlet and beluga whale habitat

Trustees continues to keep a close watch on any administrative and industry actions impacting Cook Inlet water quality and beluga whales.

After years of delays, the Department of Environmental Conservation finally released the draft General Permit for Cook Inlet Oil and Gas Facilities for public comment in 2019, but they continued to delay their release of the final permit—all while continuing to allow facilities to discharge their waste directly into Cook Inlet waters.

The coastal waters of Cook Inlet are the only waters in the United States where oil and gas facilities are allowed to discharge wastes such as drill cuttings and fluids directly into the water. All other coastal oil and gas facilities in the country are required to meet zero-discharge for these discharges.
Preventing oil and gas industrialization on sacred lands in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

The year presented arguably the greatest political and industrial threat to the sacred coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge since its establishment.

The coastal plain protects and nourishes millions of animals, including the Porcupine caribou herd, denning polar bears, and birds that migrate to all continents. The Gwich’in Peoples of Alaska and Canada consider the coastal plain sacred—they call it lizhik Gwats’an Gwandaii Goodlit, or “the sacred place where life begins”—for its vital role as the birthing and nursing grounds for the Porcupine caribou, a primary food and the foundation for the Gwich’in way of life.
The Republican majority in Congress slipped language into the 2017 tax bill allowing oil and gas exploitation in the Arctic Refuge coastal plain without accountability to the public, despite 70 percent of Americans supporting protections for the Arctic Refuge. The Alaska delegation and Trump administration subsequently pushed for a rushed environmental review process for a leasing program, culminating in August 2020 with the administration’s adoption of a devastating leasing and drilling plan that opened the entire coastal plain to oil and gas leasing.

A week after that decision, we took the Interior Department, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to court for violating human rights and the public trust, and ignoring the harms the leasing program would do to land, water, people and wildlife. We filed the suit on behalf of the Gwich’in Steering Committee and a dozen allied groups, charging the agencies with breaking multiple laws when finalizing a leasing program founded on a hasty and deficient analysis that curtailed public participation, shortchanged Indigenous input and concerns, and ignored and omitted science and facts.

The litigation came after years of ongoing work to support our clients and their engagement in this rushed and legally questionable process. That work, which continued through 2020, included preparing clients and partners for administrative hearings and legislator outreach, developing technical documents, and educating legislators and the public about how drilling in the coastal plain would erode human rights, accelerate climate change, and devastate the purposes of the Arctic Refuge.

Prior to 2020, we made several Freedom of Information Act requests to federal agencies for public documents that would shed light on how decisions were made about the Arctic Refuge. The requests went ignored under the Trump administration, forcing us to bring a lawsuit in July 2019. In response to the lawsuit, the agencies have been releasing documents on a rolling basis through 2020 and under the court’s ongoing supervision.

Critically, we also tracked and responded to proposals to conduct seismic exploration on the coastal plain.

This year’s litigation and administrative efforts helped restore accountability to the public and the communities most impacted by oil and gas extraction and industrialization, and elevated the issue nationally.

Trustees has worked to protect the Arctic since our founding in 1974—a long time from the perspective of a human life—but the Gwich’in Nation has lived in relationship with the sacred coastal plain for millennia. From the halls of Congress, to gatherings in Arctic communities, to the courtroom, we stand with the Gwich’in.
Stopping more fossil fuel extraction in the Western Arctic

Despite its name, the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska isn’t inherently an oil reserve waiting for corporate interests to extract profits from it, but rather an Arctic region essential to people and animals like caribou, shorebirds, and an array of mammals, fish and birds. The largest unit of public lands in the nation, the Reserve has supported Indigenous ways of life forever, and continues to do so now.

Despite the importance of this area, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management pushed through a revised management plan for the region that would open up over 80 percent of the Reserve to oil and gas and other infrastructure—including areas previously designated as protected because of their importance to traditional cultural uses and wildlife habitat. The agency released its final environmental impact statement for this revised plan in June.

We took the agency to court in August, charging it with violating multiple laws during its environmental review of the management plan, which was completely at odds with the agency’s obligation to provide maximum protection for places like Teshekpuk Lake, and other areas essential to the health of people and animals. Throughout the administrative process, we provided comments and assisted clients, partners and the public in responding to these threats to Alaska communities, animal habitat, and climate.

The pressure to open more of the NPRA to oil and gas exploitation continued through multiple projects with huge cumulative impacts on local communities and Arctic lands.
In prior years, we took BLM to court over its 2017 lease sales and later over its 2018 and 2019 lease sales, charging BLM with breaking the law by failing to assess the impacts of oil and gas activities resulting from its leasing program. This fiscal year, we represented our clients in oral argument on the 2017 lawsuit before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in Seattle. In July, the Ninth Circuit found in BLM’s favor. While the agency was given a pass on assessing the impacts at the time of the lease sales through an environmental assessment or impact statement, the court did acknowledge that the impacts needed to have been analyzed in depth at some point before leasing. With the filing of the lawsuit on the revised management plan finalized during the Trump administration, we are pressing the agency to consider the site-specific impacts of oil and gas leasing.

BLM’s disregard for the impacts of its decisions came into view again in its approval of the Willow Master Development Plan for significantly expanded oil and gas extraction by ConocoPhillips. The Willow proposal would extend the spider web of roads and industrialization further into the western Arctic, with public health harms to the community of Nuiqsut, as well as adverse impacts on animal habitat and climate. We prepared detailed comments during the agency environmental review process, prepared clients and partners for public hearings, and sustained our vigilance during a period of global crisis. In August, BLM released its final environmental impact statement. No decisions on the project were made by the close of the fiscal year.

Trustees is committed to supporting local frontline communities in being heard and protected from pollution, climate impacts, and industrialization.
Preventing the proposed Ambler road from degrading Arctic health

The Trump administration gave the go-ahead for the 211-mile commercial Ambler road in July 2020. The project proposed by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority aims to help mining interests gain access to an area on the south side of the Brooks Range in the Arctic. Two weeks after that approval, we brought a lawsuit challenging the federal review and permitting of the Ambler road on behalf of a group of regional and national conservation organizations.

The road would harm land, water, air, and the health and integrity of a vast region that includes Gates of the Arctic Preserve, the Brooks Range foothills, and land essential to Arctic communities. Local villages oppose the road, which would fragment caribou habitat and diminish food access, water and air quality, and their ability to hunt, fish, and practice traditional ways of life.

The lawsuit is against the Interior Department, Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, and Coast Guard. It alleges the agencies violated the law when approving AIDEA’s Ambler proposal without knowing or taking a close look at key
information like the exact location of the route, how it will be constructed, where gravel mining will occur, what the impacts would be to water and a wide range of other resources, plus an array of other details necessary for adequate environmental review. The analysis also failed to adequately address the gravel mining the road would support and how that mining and related activities would threaten air and water quality, and the health of people and animals like fish and caribou.

AIDEA, a public corporation of the state of Alaska, also shifted $35 million into a fund for use on the proposed road, including for preconstruction work, in late March. When doing so, AIDEA used the cloak of the COVID-19 crisis to call an emergency meeting with little public notice. Virtually all the public testimony opposed the decision.

AIDEA’s proposal calls for using millions of public dollars for the proposed road, which would be used solely by private mining corporations while polluting water, air, and land on state and tribal lands, and Gates of the Arctic. The road would create an unjustifiable cost to the state and an unjust cost to the communities and animals of the region. We consider stopping the Ambler road critical to our work in fighting for the health of people and animals in the Arctic.
Trustees didn’t just win in court, we won in big and important ways. We first filed a lawsuit in January 2018 in U.S. District Court arguing that a land exchange between King Cove Corporation and the Department of the Interior to build a road in Izembek National Wildlife Refuge violated multiple federal laws, including the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

We won in court in March 2019. The court voided the land exchange, finding that Interior did not justify its reversal from decades of policies and decisions refusing to allow for a road through Izembek.

Weeks later, the Interior Secretary negotiated a second nearly identical deal behind closed doors, so we took them to court again—and we won again. The District Court decision in June 2020 resoundingly shut down Interior’s attempt at an illegal land exchange to make way for a road, and further made it clear that Interior can’t avoid the legal requirements related to road construction on protected lands. The court agreed that a land exchange does not meet the purposes of ANILCA. Interior appealed this decision to the Ninth Circuit in August 2020.

The argument that the road is necessary for emergency medical access for King Cove ignores studies that show that there are cheaper, safer and more reliable ways of getting people from King Cove to Cold Bay, and that in fact a lot of money has been spent on improving that access. Truth is, weather conditions would make driving any proposed road dangerous and even impossible.

Illegally exchanging land out of the Refuge and designated Wilderness for a road would set a dangerous precedent for the entire Refuge System and public lands.

Our work to stop efforts to build destructive commercial roads through congressionally protected lands is vital to preventing the degradation of these important and ecologically valuable places and critical to ensuring the purposes and intentions of the Refuge System are met today and into the future.
Keeping predator control out of Refuges and Preserves in Alaska

The Trump administration took aim at wolves, bears, coyotes and other predators in national preserves in Alaska and in the most visited wildlife refuge in the state.

In June 2020, the U.S. National Park service reversed its longstanding position that the state of Alaska may not implement sport hunting rules on national preserves targeting predators like wolves and bears to attempt to increase game like moose and caribou sought by sport hunters.

We sued the Park Service in August, charging the agency with failing its legal obligation to protect wildlife diversity on national preserves, and with violating the National Park Service’s Organic Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, and the Administrative Procedure Act.

The state of Alaska generally manages sport hunting on federal lands in Alaska, but that management must stay within the bounds of federal mandates. The Park Service’s about-face essentially gave the state the go ahead to allow an array of destructive hunting practices designed to manipulate wildlife populations within national preserves, which violates federal mandates.
At the same time that Park Service flipped its position, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed allowing activities like killing Kenai brown bears over bait and allowing trapping without a permit in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Kenai brown bears are genetically distinct and now struggling because of habitat loss on the Kenai Peninsula.

We helped clients and partners prepare for public hearings, make comments, and engage on the Kenai proposal in administrative processes.

The Park Service rule and Fish and Wildlife proposal would allow the state to treat preserves and the Kenai like game parks, defying federal mandates for these lands. Trustees continues to go to court and engage with agency processes to protect wildlife diversity and uphold mandates for management of public lands.

This year, we also engaged in oral arguments on a case in U.S. District Court. Back in 2017, we intervened on behalf of clients in two lawsuits filed by the state of Alaska and Safari Club that challenge Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service regulations prohibiting aggressive sport hunting methods targeting wolves and bears. The Park Service portion of this case had been stayed since 2018. This year we briefed and presented oral argument on the Fish and Wildlife Service portion of this case in District Court, arguing that Fish and Wildlife has the necessary authority and obligation to prohibit brown bear baiting on the Kenai Refuge, and to continue to manage the Skilak area for non-consumptive uses like wildlife viewing and photography.

Trustees will stay engaged in administrative and legal actions to stop dangerous wildlife management practices that undermine the purpose of national parks, preserves, and refuges.
I have always felt an immense sense of joy and wonder in the natural world, and have spent most of my life working in one way or another to support natural systems and the human communities that intersect with, steward, and rely upon them.

As a young lawyer, I was immensely excited to dive into that work from a litigation perspective, and the Trustees’ fellowship was an incredible opportunity to do so. From my first day at Trustees I’ve had the privilege to work on the type of issues I’ve always wanted to work on—like protecting the Bristol Bay watershed and its rich community of life from the proposed Pebble mine and fighting radical predator control in protected areas.

I also stepped into working with a talented and inspiring group of coworkers whose support and mentorship blew me away. The fellowship program gave me the opportunity to develop new litigation skills and subject matter knowledge more rapidly than I had imagined possible. I learned through collaborating with talented colleagues, and gained the confidence to push myself to new places knowing that I had their support and assistance. I am so grateful for the opportunities the fellowship program provided me, and to continue growing as a staff attorney at Trustees.
JOANNA CAHOON

Working as a legal fellow for Trustees for Alaska has been a privilege and unparalleled learning opportunity. Since starting with the Arctic team in August 2020, I have been lucky enough to perform research, draft motions, and contribute to briefing cases impacting some of Alaska’s most iconic landscapes. It’s work I am proud to be a part of and it’s exciting to be learning from such an experienced team.

One of the most impressive aspects of my experience thus far has been the passion, determination, and expertise of Trustees’ staff. My fellowship began in the middle of a pandemic and in the run-up to the most consequential election in a lifetime. Through such unprecedented times, and despite their unprecedented workloads, Trustees’ attorneys provided me with exceptional mentorship and support. Their work over the last year has been nothing short of inspiring and being a part of the team has propelled my professional growth.

LAUREN SHERMAN

After attending law school with the goal of using my legal education to protect ecosystems and wildlife, I feel incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from the expertise of Trustees for Alaska’s devoted staff. I began my fellowship in September 2020, developing my professional skills by working on issues ranging from protecting Bristol Bay from the threat of the proposed Pebble mine to fighting predator reduction efforts on national preserves. It’s been an honor to work on behalf of local communities and organizations on these important issues.

In support of Trustees’ crucial work, I’ve prepared research memoranda, conducted legislative history research, collaborated with clients on standing declarations, submitted FOIA requests, reviewed administrative records, and drafted letters and portions of briefing. Taking on so many diverse tasks as a legal fellow has been an unparalleled learning experience.

Despite the challenges of navigating the pandemic and a record-breaking caseload, I am in awe of the mentorship and training I’ve received from Trustees’ team. I look forward to continuing to grow as a young attorney while working alongside such knowledgeable and dedicated colleagues.
### 2020 FINANCIALS

#### REVENUE

- **Grants 74%** 1,076,000
- **Contributions 23%** 338,751
- **In-kind revenue 1%** 16,464
- **Interest 0%** 0
- **Other 1%** 13,807

**Total $1,445,022**

#### EXPENSES

- **Arctic & Climate Change 45%** 651,583
- **Clean Air & Water 19%** 277,572
- **Marine Ecosystems 1%** 19,893
- **Wild Lands & Wildlife 12%** 176,486
- **Administration 11%** 159,966
- **Fundraising 11%** 164,789

**Total $1,450,289**

#### STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

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<th>September 30</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Current Assets</td>
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<td>Less accumulated depreciation</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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| **LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** |        |        |
| Current Liabilities |        |        |
| Accounts payable | $9,049  | $21,175 |
| Accrued payroll liabilities and leave | 73,749  | 49,591 |
| Current portion, loadn payable | 123,156 |        |
| Current portion, capital lease payable | 3,142  | 3,573 |
| **Total Current Liabilities** | $209,096 | $74,339 |
| Long Term Liabilities |        |        |
| Loan Payable | 78,372  |        |
| Capital lease payable | 12,958  | 6,778 |
| **Total Liabilities** | $300,426 | $81,117 |

| **NET ASSETS** |        |        |
| Unrestricted: |        |        |
| Designated by the board for operations | 150,000 | 150,000 |
| Undesignated | 333,351 | 32,563 |
| Temporarily restricted | 248,914 | 252,595 |
| **Total Net Assets** | $732,265 | $435,158 |

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** $1,032,691 $516,275
Thank you to the many generous individuals and foundations who make our work to protect the health of Alaska’s land, water, people and wildlife possible. We are incredibly grateful.

FY20 FOUNDATIONS

444S Foundation
The Alaska Conservation Foundation
The Baker Brook Foundation Trust
The Brainerd Foundation
The Campion Foundation
Charlotte Martin Foundation
The Conservation Alliance
Eaglemere Foundation
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The Glickenhaus Foundation
The Harder Foundation
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The Volgenau Foundation
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Alaska Wilderness League
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Alaskans FOR Wildlife
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Arctic Audubon Society
Audubon Alaska
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society—Yukon Chapter
Center for Biological Diversity
The Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks
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Cook Inletkeeper
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Denali Citizens Council
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Wilderness Watch
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Brooks Range Council
Center for Science and Public Participation
Earthjustice
Friends of the Earth
The Nature Conservancy
Oasis Earth
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Susitna River Coalition
Trout Unlimited
United Tribes of Bristol Bay
Brook Brisson, Senior Staff Attorney

Lauren Sherman, Legal Fellow

Victoria Clark, Executive Director

Katie Strong, Senior Staff Attorney

Joanna Cahoon, Legal Fellow

Brian Litmans, Senior Staff Attorney to Legal Director

Dawnell Smith, Communications Director

Rachel Briggs, Legal Fellow to Staff

Lang Van Dommelen, Legal Assistant

Valerie Brown, Legal Director

Fannie Dock, Office Assistant

Suzanne Bostrom, Staff Attorney

Ashley Boyd, Office Manager, Tracy Lohman, Development Director

Maresa Jenson, Legal Fellow

Bridget Psarianos, Staff Attorney

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TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA

1026 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 201
Anchorage, AK 99501
t: 907.276.4244
f: 907.276.7110
ecolaw@trustees.org

To see a list of our current Board and their bios, go to https://www.trustees.org/board-of-trustees/;
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CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Rebecca Fabbri
Lisa Hupp
Carl Johnson
Bob Waldrop
Ken Hill
Peter Pearsall
Russ Taylor
Matt Cameron
Katrina Liebich
Kyke Joly
Kristine Sowl
Jacon Barbaro