

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2023



TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA

PROTECT | DEFEND | REPRESENT

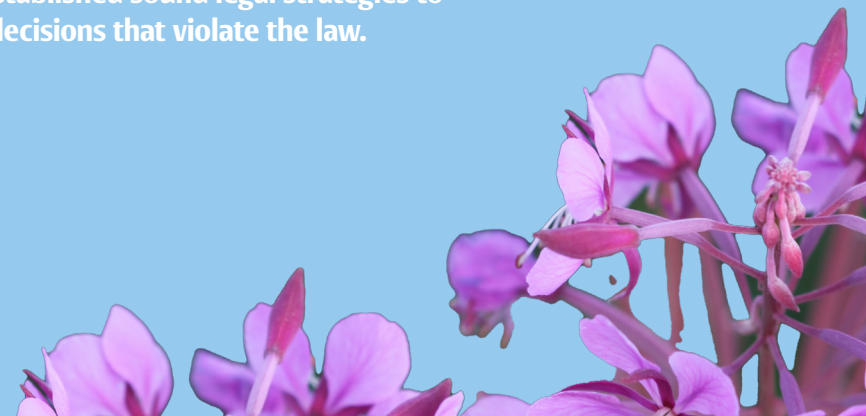


Letter from the executive director

Dear supporters,

Courtroom dramas often depict the law as a series of fast-paced maneuvers full of objections, outbursts, and finales. Our work in environmental law looks a bit different than that. It can feel urgent and immediate with a lot at stake, for sure, but our litigation usually takes years, if not decades, to resolve, and even then, the issues shift and return. There are few tidy bows in this work. It comes as no surprise, then, that we spent the year carrying forward lawsuits, and repeatedly engaging in agency processes to establish the record on science and community impacts on long-standing issues like mining near salmon streams and drilling on in the Arctic.

Again, we fought for clean water, abundant fish, healthy wildlife, and the protection of lands important to Alaska communities and ways of life. We urged agency leaders to make decisions that support the health of land and water for generations to come, and we did so by providing a bevy of evidence, research, and legal analysis to demonstrate why. At the same time, we established sound legal strategies to challenge decisions that violate the law.



Letter from the executive director

With our Pebble mine work, we again provided expertise within a unified coalition that includes community members, Tribal organizations, commercial and sport fishing interests, and conservation groups. One of our roles in the coalition involved ensuring that agencies included sound and up-to-date science in their analysis. Early in the year, we got terrific news when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under its authority in the Clean Water Act, issued a Final Determination that protects Bristol Bay from large-scale toxic mines like Pebble, noting the undeniable damage that toxic mining discharge would do to the region's salmon fisheries, economies, and communities.

Bristol Bay communities breathed a sigh of relief. Decades of small communities having to fight an international mining interest takes its toll. We expect those mining interests to challenge the agency's decision in the months and years ahead, but the win lightened the hearts of so many who have fought for Bristol Bay for decades.

We got more good news when the Alaska legislature refused to support a plan by Alaska's governor to take over Clean Water Act wetlands permitting. The governor wanted to move permitting processes currently run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency to state oversight, which would mean big trouble for Alaska waterways. The State of Alaska simply does not have the experience or resources to effectively do section 404 permitting under the Clean Water Act.

Unfortunately, we anticipate facing new obstacles in protecting clean water in the years ahead. The U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in May 2023 that severely limits the scope of waterways covered by the Clean Water Act and removes millions of acres of wetlands from the definition of "waters of the U.S." The Court decided that a wetland must have continuous surface connections to qualify, despite science demonstrating that wetlands and waterways interconnect under the surface as well above. Alaska has an enormous amount of wetlands vital to human and animal life. This Supreme Court decision will make it harder to safeguard water in Alaska.



Letter from the executive director

Where waterways are at threat, so are people and animals. The wetlands and waters of Izembek National Wildlife Refuge nourish an array of animal and plant life. Migrating birds who stop in Izembek for nourishment in turn provide food for subsistence hunters and animals hundreds of miles away. The narrow Izembek Isthmus creates an essential habitat for these birds and many interconnected sea and land animals.

For decades, commercial and private interests have wanted to put a road on that narrow isthmus. We sued in the U.S. District Court over a 2018 land swap deal between the Interior secretary and the city of King Cove that aimed to make way for a road. We won in District Court and later lost on appeal, so we filed an en banc petition in April 2022 requesting a hearing before the full panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The court granted our request and vacated its March ruling in November 2022.

A month later, we went before a full panel of the 9th Circuit Court in Pasadena, California, arguing that that 2018 land swap that intended to allow a road in Izembek violated the Alaska National Interest Conservation Act and the purposes of Wilderness areas established by that law. Allowing an Interior secretary to exchange land from a wildlife refuge for the purpose of a road for private interests would set a precedent that threatens over 100 million acres of federal lands in Alaska.

We never got a ruling in that case because Interior Secretary Deb Haaland withdrew the legally troublesome land exchange in March 2023, and the court dismissed the case as moot that June. Pressure to put a road in the refuge continues, however, and we intend to keep upholding the laws that protect these public lands and all who rely on them.

In our Arctic work this year, we continued challenging approval of the proposed ConocoPhillips' Willow project and urged the Biden administration to fix legal problems with the 2020 leasing program for the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge. We also defended the Interior Department's suspension of leases auctioned off during the first Arctic Refuge lease sale on Jan 6, 2021. The entire Arctic region of Alaska contains a vast integrated landscape that sustains local people and abundant life while providing the world with climate and biodiversity benefits necessary for a livable Earth.

In addition, we continued our work within a coalition of Arctic communities, Alaska groups and conservation groups to stop the proposed Ambler road from devastating a vast area of the Southern Brooks Range. The road would threaten local communities with air and water pollution and their access to caribou for food.

We also went to court to challenge an incidental take rule that allows oil activities that disturb, harass, and even injure already vulnerable Beaufort Sea polar bears. We filed a lawsuit challenging the 2021 rule in 2022, then appealed the U.S. District Court decision upholding the rule in the 9th Circuit Court in April 2023. This population of polar bears, already deeply threatened by climate change impacts like melting sea ice, need protection from oil and gas operations that disturb these bears while they're denning, feeding, hunting, and interacting with other bears

Letter from the executive director

Our other work protecting bears concerns measures that attempt to allow destructive practices like bear baiting on federal lands. One area of this year's legal work relates to our 2017 litigation as interveners in a lawsuit filed by the State of Alaska and Safari Club challenging a 2016 Fish and Wildlife Service rule that prohibited brown bear baiting in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

We won that case in District Court and an appeals court upheld that Fish and Wildlife rule in 2022, but the State of Alaska and Safari Club tried to get the U.S. Supreme Court to hear and overturn that 9th Circuit Court ruling.

We filed a brief in January 2023 arguing that the Supreme Court should not take the case since the question at issue related to the federal management of bears on federal land in Alaska under well-settled principles of law. We got great news when the Supreme Court refused to take up the case, leaving in place a rule that continues to provide longstanding protection for this distinct population of brown bears.

Here, it's important to understand that the State of Alaska generally manages sport hunting on federal lands in Alaska, but this management must be consistent with federal law. The State of Alaska, in alliance with trophy and sport hunting groups pushes for increased predator control in Alaska, like bear baiting in national preserves and wildlife refuges.

Back in 2020, we sued the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service for unlawfully adopting a rule that would allow brown bear baiting, killing wolves during denning season, and other destructive hunting practices on national preserves. The U.S. District Court ruled in our favor, sending the rule back to Park Service to fix. Park Service released that new proposed rule in January 2023.

We submitted comments supporting this proposed rule in March 2023, noting that it would prevent safety problems caused by bear baiting stations and food-conditioned bears, while also preserving natural predator-prey dynamics and clarifying the term "sport hunting" to distinguish it from federally authorized subsistence hunting.

Here again we're waiting for the agency's final rule.

With the waiting comes the enduring work of preparing for how to respond effectively, again and again, to ensure that Alaska can continue to nourish people and animals, landscapes and waterways, and a healthy Earth for generations to come. Whatever the issue or region of the state, our work has local to global impacts. What we do with clients and partners, in coalitions and in the courtroom, influences the future—whether the land can sustain life, whether water is clean, whether animals can thrive, whether people can stay healthy and live their ways of life.

We know what's at stake and so do all of you, the people and organizations who do the work with us and who support us, and who join us in speaking up for the health of Alaska.

Much gratitude to you all for caring about the land, water, and communities of Alaska. We do the work and succeed because of your support.

With respect and many thanks,



Victoria Clark, Executive Director



An aerial photograph of a river delta, likely the Copper River in Alaska, showing a complex network of channels and sandbars. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color, which is darker at the top and fades towards the bottom. The river channels are a deep blue-green, contrasting with the lighter, sandy, and brownish tones of the delta's surface.

Program highlights - Clean Water and Air

This year we joined a unified effort to compel the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to protect Bristol Bay from large-scale mines like the proposed Pebble mine. Pebble's open-pit mining proposal has threatened the bountiful and thriving Bristol Bay region that supports salmon cultures, record-breaking salmon runs, commercial and recreational fishing, and dozens of Alaska Native communities for decades.

Trustees has litigated to protect Bristol Bay along the way and continued to work with Tribes, Bristol Bay groups, and an array of environmental and conservation groups in Alaska and around the country this year to advocate for enduring protections for the watershed and region.

Our work centered on submitting technical and scientific comments and contributions that demonstrate Pebble's threat to Bristol Bay while supporting the efforts of many groups to make sure Alaskans continue to be heard, particularly the people who would be most impacted by massive and destructive projects like Pebble.

In late January 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency, under its authority in the Clean Water Act, issued its Final Determination to prohibit large-scale mining operations like Pebble because of the undeniable, unacceptable, and catastrophic damage such a mine's waste discharge would do to the region's fisheries.

This good news came in the first half of the fiscal year, giving the people and groups working to protect Bristol Bay a cause for robust celebration and a chance to breathe a sigh of relief, however brief.

The work will certainly ramp up again soon. We anticipate legal challenges to the agency's prohibition on Pebble. Trustees will, as always, stay deeply connected with clients and partners as we prepare for the work ahead in support of the agency's prohibition on large-scale mines in Bristol Bay and to prevent a mine like Pebble from posing an existential threat to local people, along with everything they care about and everything that sustains them.

The salmon, animals, plants, landscapes, and waterways of Bristol Bay bring cultural and physical connection and nourishment to local Yup'ik, Dena'ina and Alutiiq Peoples. The region offers healthy food to people around the country and world. The region's fisheries and watershed support varied businesses from fly fishing lodges to commercial fishing companies to restaurants and much more.

We will steadfastly stand with Bristol Bay communities, our clients, and our many partners in ensuring that the region can sustain human communities and more-than-human beings for generations to come.



In good news this year, the Alaska Governor's effort to take over Clean Water Act wetlands permitting from the federal government failed to get support in the Alaska legislature. Instead, the Alaska House Finance Committee removed funding for the state's proposed wetlands' permitting program from the budget. The State of Alaska taking over permitting would mean trouble for Alaska waterways since the state has no experience or sufficient budget to sustain an adequate program. The more experienced and better-resourced U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency currently oversee Clean Water Act section 404 permitting as they do throughout the country. Few states have taken this program over due to the expense and workload.

As we continue to watch what happens with the processes and protections around clean water, we also recognize that the U.S. Supreme Court severely limited the scope of waterways covered by the Clean Water Act when it issued its decision in *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency* in May 2023. The Court removed millions of acres of wetlands from the definition of "waters of the U.S."

The decision says that a wetland now must have a continuous surface connection with other kinds of waterways, which defies hydrological science that shows that waters and wetlands have complicated connections under the surface as well as on the surface. This could be devastating in Alaska, which has 170 million acres of wetlands and over 60 percent of the country's intact wetlands, which are not only important to animal life and local communities, but also essential for filtering water, mitigating flooding, cooling streams, and holding carbon.

This Court decision could mean that agencies no longer look at wetlands when evaluating an industrial proposal's impacts, and that would mean an incomplete analysis of what a project would do to waterways overall. We will see the outcomes of this decision in our work in the months and years to come.





Marine Ecosystems - Cook Inlet and beluga whales

Our efforts to protect the endangered Cook Inlet beluga whale population centers on preventing pollution and sustaining the health of food sources. Oil and gas operations discharge drill cuttings, fluids, and other wastes into Cook Inlet despite the vulnerability of these whales. It's important to note that 100 percent of other coastal oil and gas operations across the country must meet zero-discharge requirements, and that only Cook Inlet oil and gas operators have been given a pass on standard industry practice.

We got good news this fiscal year when the Alaska Board of Fisheries voted to limit the Susitna River commercial eulachon (hooligan or smelt) catch limit to 100 tons. That sounds like a lot of fish going to commercial fishing companies, and it is, but this limit means that another 200,000 pounds of forage fish will nourish the ecosystem and beluga whales.

As lawyers, much of what we do in our legal work builds on the depth of knowledge within our partner communities. We will continue to participate with and support partners working to understand and protect the health of Cook Inlet and beluga whales.

Program highlights - Wild Lands and Wildlife

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, like all the conservation lands established through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, holds incalculable importance to the animals who live in and migrate to the area, and to the many Alaska communities reliant on and connected to those animals for food and their culture. A proposed road in this refuge between the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska would threaten internationally recognized wetlands that sustain the survival and health of these birds, fish, and animals. Private interests have wanted a road on the narrow Izembek Isthmus for more than 30 years.

Early this fiscal year we argued in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to protect Izembek Refuge. Allowing a land swap to make way for a road would lead to devastating consequences for birds and wildlife while also undercutting Alaska's conservation lands at large.

Allowing an unelected secretary of the Interior Department to trade away congressionally designated Wilderness areas without public transparency or congressional approval would undermine the purposes outlined in the ANILCA and the refuge statute itself. This could mean opening a pathway for industry to have mining operations, airports, and other private and commercial infrastructure in national parks or refuges, with devastating impacts to public lands.

The land swap deal in question took place in 2018. We took this and prior land swap deals to District court and won. Interior appealed the second ruling, and a small panel of the appellate court decided in Interior's favor. We filed an en banc petition requesting a full hearing before a larger panel of judges in April 2022 and argued that case in December 2022.

In oral argument before the en banc panel in a Pasadena courtroom, we aimed to uphold protections not just for Izembek, but for all national parks, refuges, and designated wilderness areas in the state. Our legal argument centered again on how this land swap violated ANILCA and the purposes of Wilderness areas established by that law. We're grateful and honored that former President Jimmy Carter, who pushed for and signed ANILCA into law in 1980, submitted an amicus brief in May 2022 to support our en banc petition that brought us before the full panel. Others also filed amicus briefs.

We didn't get a ruling in the case since Interior Secretary Haaland withdrew the land swap deal in March 2023, and the court dismissed the case as moot that June. These actions sustained the protection of Izembek for now, though Interior did not say it wouldn't pursue another land exchange.

We can't say how the case would have been decided in court, but we absolutely know that we will continue uplifting and defending the subsistence and conservation purposes of the millions of acres of protected by ANILCA many decades ago.

Protecting animals in wildlife refuges and national preserves in Alaska

A U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision in 2022 upheld a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule protecting brown bears in the Kenai Wildlife Refuge, and we celebrated that win, but we knew better than to consider the issue over and done with—yet even we didn't expect the State of Alaska to try to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

But they did, and we filed a brief in January 2023 arguing that the Supreme Court should not take the case since the question at issue related to the federal management of bears on federal land in Alaska (the Kenai Refuge) under well-settled principles of law. These legal actions relate to our 2017 litigation as interveners after the State of Alaska and Safari Club filed lawsuits to challenge a 2016 Fish and Wildlife Service rule that prohibited brown bear baiting in the Kenai Refuge.

All along we've argued that Fish and Wildlife Service has the authority to preclude state hunting practices on federal lands that are designed to increase the effectiveness of killing bears leading to overharvest and creating public safety risks related to baiting practices. The 2016 Fish and Wildlife Service rule simply formalized a long-standing prohibition on brown bear baiting and codified the management of the Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area for education and wildlife viewing purposes.

We got great news in March 2023 when the Supreme Court declined to hear the case, which left the ban on brown bear baiting in place.

It's important to understand that the State generally manages sport hunting on federal lands in Alaska, but that management must be consistent with federal law. The State of Alaska, in alliance with trophy and sport hunting groups like the Safari Club and Alaska Professional Hunters Association, consistently argues in support of increased predator control in Alaska. This includes aggressive intensive management programs and pushing to legalize practices like bear baiting in national preserves and wildlife refuges.



A brown bear is walking through a field of tall green grass. The bear is in the lower-left portion of the frame, moving towards the right. The background is a soft-focus field of similar grass, creating a sense of a natural, open environment.

This fiscal year we continued to push back against efforts to allow aggressive hunting practices like bear baiting on federally protected lands.

Back in 2020, we sued the Department of Interior and the National Park Service for unlawfully adopting a rule that would allow brown bear baiting, killing wolves during denning season, and other destructive hunting practices on national preserves. The U.S. District Court ruled that the 2020 Park Service rule was poorly reasoned and arbitrary, and sent it back to the National Park Service to fix. The National Park Service released that proposed rule in January 2023.

This proposed rule would prohibit bear baiting and other sport hunting practices aimed at killing predator animals to manipulate natural predator-prey dynamics in national preserves in Alaska. We submitted comments supporting this proposed rule in March 2023, noting that it would prevent safety problems caused by bear baiting stations and food-conditioned bears in parklands where people go to hike, boat, fish, forage, camp, and recreate; that it would preserve natural predator-prey dynamics between animals; and that it would define the term "sport hunting" or hunting for "sport purposes" to distinguish it from federally authorized subsistence hunting, a clarification that would reiterate that local subsistence hunting would be prioritized over sport hunting.

Our effort this year included pushing for this rule to get finalized. We're still waiting for the administration to issue a final rule.

Throughout the year, we remained engaged with agency processes and litigation to protect wildlife on federal public lands across Alaska.



Program highlights - America's Arctic and Climate Action

Keeping the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge free of oil and gas leases

The coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge provides nourishment to people and animals. The Gwich'in of Alaska and Canada know it as "the sacred place where life begins" because of its role as birthing and calving grounds to the Porcupine caribou, who in turn provide food and form the foundation of the Gwich'in way of life.

The region is home to an array of interdependent plants and animals that make up a landscape teeming with life. Animals that live in the Refuge range from the tundra shrew and Dolly Varden char to hundreds of resident and migratory birds who return every spring, not to mention Arctic hares and foxes, musk rats, wolves, wolverines, and black, brown and polar bears.

Our work in 2023 centered on continuing to push the Biden administration to fix the profound legal problems with the Trump administration's 2020 leasing program. The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—passed with an Arctic Refuge leasing mandate as a tag-a-long rider—mandated two lease sales in the Arctic Refuge. The Trump administration rushed through an environmental review to finalize a leasing plan. We went to court in 2020 challenging that leasing program.

In early 2021, President Biden called for a review of that program and later suspended and then cancelled the few leases handed out from the first sale. Notably, no bids came from major oil operators; and that lease sale yielded a fraction of one percent of promised revenues. Our work this fiscal year focused on getting the administration to fix legal problems with the prior administration's leasing program and finalize a program to protect the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management released a draft of its supplemental environmental impact statement in August 2023 and opened a public comment period. We submitted a comprehensive comment letter on behalf of our clients and supported clients and partners in preparing their comments.

We engaged in two other lawsuits this year. The first relates to the State of Alaska and Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority's 2021 challenge to the Biden administration's suspension of leases. We intervened on behalf of the Gwich'in Steering Committee and 12 allied groups to defend the Biden administration's authority to suspend the leases because of the profound legal problems with the 2020 leasing program. We got good news in August 2023 when the U.S. District Court ruled in our favor, though we anticipate the State of Alaska and AIDEA may appeal.

Meanwhile, we intervened in another lawsuit this year, this time brought by AIDEA to challenge the cancellation of leases. Here again, we seek to defend the administration's authority to cancel leases because of the serious legal flaws with the 2020 leasing plan.

Since our founding Trustees has gone to court to keep oil rigs off the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. Oil and gas drilling pollutes the land and water and fuels a climate crisis that already impacts the Arctic in dramatic and destructive ways, in turn affecting communities who hold enduring relationships with the Refuge. More drilling perpetuates oil dependence and furthers warming trends. The Arctic cannot afford more oil and gas projects.

Throughout 2023, as in our founding, Trustees continued to stand with the Gwich'in and many clients, partners, Alaskans, and people throughout the country and world in working to protect the Arctic Refuge.



Preventing more fossil fuel projects in the Western Arctic – the massive Willow proposal

During the fiscal year 2023, we once again went to court to stop the massive ConocoPhillips' Willow oil and gas extraction hub, which would put a new processing facility, drill pads and much more near the community of Nuiqsut, which is already surrounded by oil rigs while spewing carbon into the atmosphere. Our litigation stopped the project in FY22 when a court ruling sent project approvals and analysis back to agencies to fix. This garnered a large amount of media attention, and we spent a lot of time this fiscal year responding to reporter inquiries.

We submitted comments on the draft supplemental environmental impact statement on Willow in July 2022 and this year worked to reiterate and elevate the profound harm the project's toxins and pollution would do to people in the community of Nuiqsut, as well as to the animals they hunt. The Arctic region already sees significant climate impacts ranging from erosion, floods, and permafrost thaw to changes in the type and location of vegetation important to caribou due to the carbon pollution projects like Willow spew out.

Despite enormous opposition nationwide and globally, the Biden administration approved the Willow project in March 2023, locking in massive greenhouse gases for decades, and permitting ongoing pollution and industrialization. We filed a lawsuit the next day, charging the administration with failing to look at the full range of alternative options for the project, including not approving the project at all, and with failing to adequately protect sensitive areas and local subsistence users who hunt, gather, and live in relationship with the region as part of their traditions and culture.

A month later we filed a motion for a preliminary injunction to stop on-the-ground harm while the case made its way through court. The District Court denied our injunction motion in April 2023, as did the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. We expect a District Court decision in the case early next fiscal year before the 2023–24 winter construction season begins.

We also engaged in broader work on behalf of our coalition partners in the Reserve space. This included extensive conversations regarding advocacy around implementing regulations protecting Special Areas, as well as submitting comments on other proposed oil and gas related activities in the Reserve.

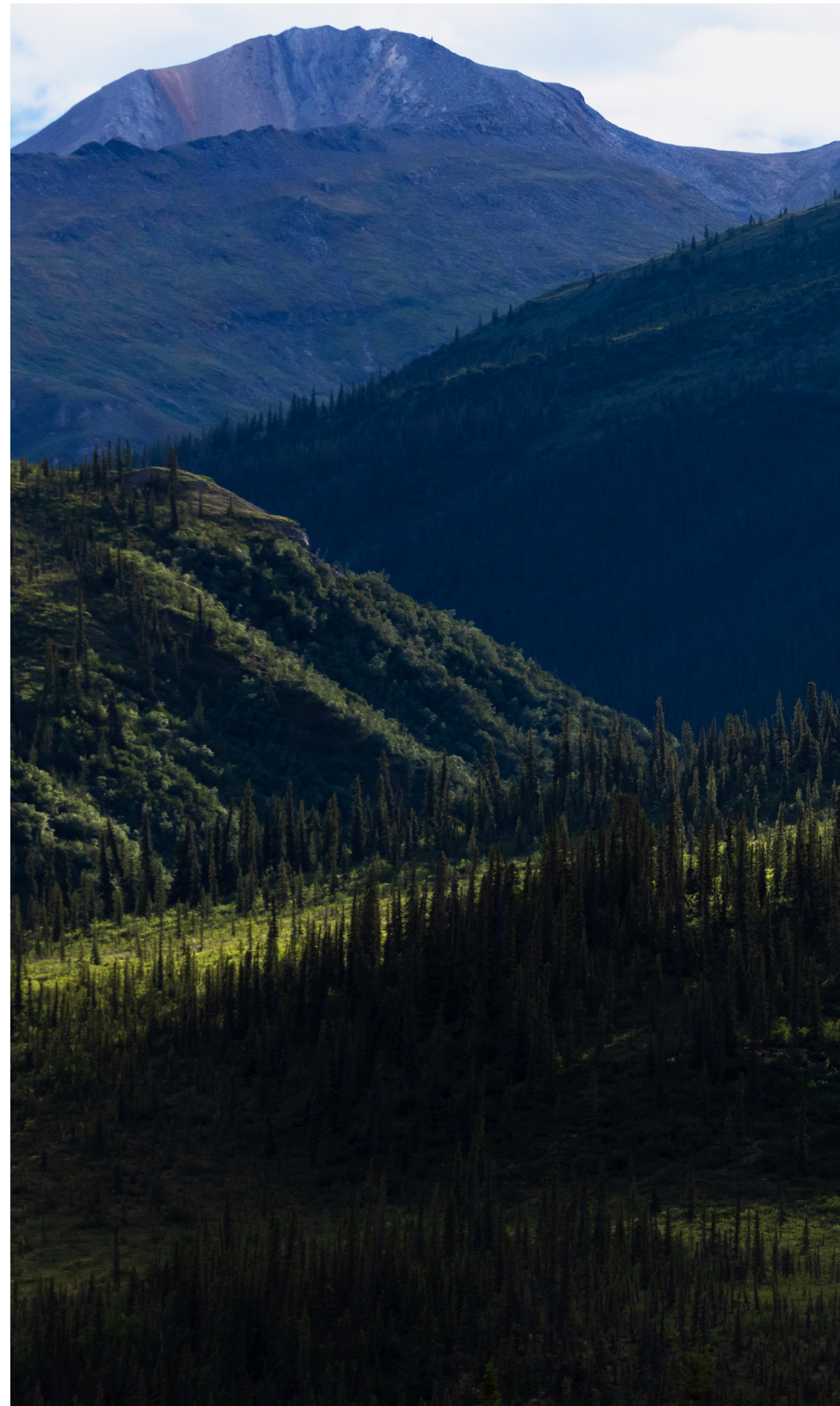
Stopping a destructive industrial road across the Arctic

Our effort to prevent an industrial transportation corridor that would threaten clean water, air, and the health of dozens of communities in the southern Brooks Range continued in 2023.

Construction and operation of the 211-mile industrial Ambler road would cut through thousands of rivers and streams and thousands of acres of wetlands. It would pollute clean water used for drinking and some of the country's last remaining streams without industrial contaminants. It would harm sheefish and salmon spawning habitats, it would disrupt the migration of one of the greatest caribou herds left on Earth, and it would pose a profound threat to the physically and culturally vital hunting practices of local people.

We filed a lawsuit over the Trump administration's approval of the Ambler road proposal in 2020. The Biden administration acknowledged legal problems with that approval in 2022 and asked the court to let it do a supplemental environmental impact statement. We submitted scoping comments to the bureau in November 2022. The bureau released the draft supplemental impact statement in October 2023, and we will submit comments and respond to that statement on behalf of our clients and allies.

We go into the next year knowing we have a lot of work to do in partnership with clients and partners to keep this industrial road from devastating communities, animals, and landscapes across the Brooks Range.



Preventing harm to Beaufort Sea polar bears

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule has allowed oil operators to do activities that disrupt polar bears in the Beaufort Sea and along the North Slope. We filed a lawsuit in 2021 that challenged that five-year incidental take regulation, which allows oil and gas activities that harass or harm polar bears. Fish and Wildlife Service's rule concluded that there would be a high chance of polar bear fatality resulting from oil and gas activities on the North Slope, with cubs at the highest risk.

In February 2023, a magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court recommended a denial of all our claims in that lawsuit. A magistrate's role centers on issuing findings and recommendations to the District Court judge, not issuing a final ruling, so we formally objected. The District Court nevertheless ruled against all our claims in March 2023.

We appealed that ruling in the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in May 2023. We're committed to protecting this already deeply threatened population of polar bears who now grapple with sea ice melt and climate warming impacts that affect their ability to hunt, den, and thrive.





Legal Fellowship Opportunities

Trustees for Alaska's legal fellowship program allows lawyers to expand their knowledge and skills as they work alongside the legal team for two years. The fellowship experience allows them to dive deeply into all aspects of working in environmental law, from coalition work and client representation to litigation, equity and justice work, and communications.

The perspectives and contributions of fellows are invaluable to Trustees, and we're grateful to all who have started or shifted their careers with us. Here're some thoughts from our 2023 fellows.



Geoff Toy

My first year with Trustees has been a whirlwind of activity. I learned so much from Trustees' attorneys about laws like ANCSA and ANILCA that are unique to Alaska, as well as how to litigate issues relating to pollution and climate change that are national challenges. I've had the opportunity to work with every attorney at Trustees on different projects and be exposed to the breadth of the issues we work on, and see how Trustees is making a difference across Alaska.

I've really valued the chance to improve my legal thinking and writing, and appreciate the patience and willingness of Trustees' attorneys to discuss issues and help me grow as a lawyer. One of the highlights of my first year was getting to work on briefing before the Supreme Court of the United States relating to wildlife regulation – an amazing opportunity for a young lawyer, and an incredible chance to collaborate with and learn from seasoned advocates.



Lydia Heye



The first year of the fellowship comprised of many opportunities for learning and growth. As many lawyers will admit, law school does not properly prepare you for the day-to-day tasks of lawyering. This fellowship has provided me the opportunity to learn the ins and outs of what it means to be an environmental lawyer in a supportive space.

Over the course of my first year, I had an array of work projects including writing legal research memos, drafting briefs, putting together client declarations, writing legal-technical public comments, and even helping moot (practicing a court hearing) the senior attorneys as they prepared for oral arguments. Each of these projects helped strengthen my research, writing, and analytical skills.

I also had the opportunity to travel with the Arctic team to Washington D.C. for the Arctic Refuge Defense Campaign annual meeting in February 2023 where I listened to and connected with some of Trustees' partners. I was inspired by the dedication of people who had been working to protect places such as the Arctic Refuge for decades. I learned firsthand about the strengths and difficulties of working within large coalitions and the important role attorneys play in those spaces.

I am eager to continue to learn and grow as an early career attorney during the final year of my fellowship here at Trustees.

Donor Spotlight - Jordan Schoonover

With the support of many donors like Jordan Schoonover, Trustees for Alaska can provide the legal expertise and representation that we are known for to achieve conservation victories that protect and defend Alaska's lands, water, animals, and communities. Thank you, Jordan for your commitment to Trustees for Alaska!

Jordan Schoonover lives in and practices law in Hillsboro, Oregon, and has a deep and ongoing relationship with Alaska. She interned with Trustees in 2012 after getting her first Alaska job collecting native plant seeds for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. She traveled throughout the state, from Nome and Kotzebue to Valdez and Homer and many places in between. She says she will keep coming back. She donates monthly to Trustees.

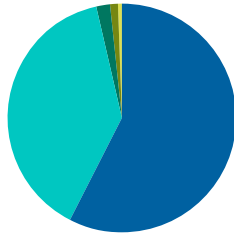


"Protecting Alaska is particularly important to me because there is so much undeveloped space, which I think is an undervalued natural resource. In the United States, we have significant power to protect wild places with the environmental laws and access to legal processes that do not necessarily exist in other countries that have wild spaces similar to Alaska. So, I think it is important to take advantage of the available opportunities to provide Alaska as much protection as we can, which Trustees certainly does."

"As a former Trustees legal intern, I know first-hand that Trustees is made up of great people doing great work. I also value the fact that Trustees is local and focused on the needs of Alaska and Alaskans in particular."

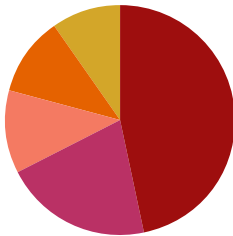
Financials

Revenue:



Grants (57.8%)	\$ 993,000
Contributions (39.0%)	\$ 672,230
Program service revenue (1.9%)	\$ 33,000
In-kind revenue (0.5%)	\$ 8,100
Other (1.0%)	\$ 17,715

Expenses:



Arctic and Climate Change (46.9%)	\$ 837,937
Wild Lands & Wildlife (20.6%)	\$ 368,870
Clean Air and Water (11.7%)	\$ 209,296
Administration (11.2%)	\$ 200,202
Fundraising (9.6%)	\$ 170,796

September 30	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 576,779	\$ 727,294
Receivables		
Foundation grants	-	\$ 50,000
Other recievables	\$ 6,638	\$ 4,236
Intercompany recievable	\$ 9,534	-
Investments	\$ 336,692	\$ 101,554
Prepaid expenses	\$ 14,172	\$ 20,514
Property and Equipment, net	\$ 116,915	\$ 137,670
Operating lease right-of-us asset	\$ 608,989	-
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 1,669,719	\$ 1,041,268
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 8,344	\$ 20,835
Accrued payroll expenses	\$ 104,286	\$ 92,768
Deferred revenue	\$ 50,000	-
Finance lease liability	\$ 6,482	\$ 9,720
Operating lease liability	\$ 617,923	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 787,035	\$ 123,323
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions		
Undesignated	\$ 430,551	\$ 438,036
Board designated - operating reserves	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
Net investment in property and equip.	\$ 110,433	\$ 127,950
With donor restrictions	\$ 191,700	\$ 201,959
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 882,684	\$ 917,945
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 1,669,719	\$ 1,041,268

IN GRATITUDE

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.

FY23 Foundations

444S Foundation
Alaska Conservation Foundation
Campion Foundation
Charlotte Martin Foundation
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Victoria Clark, Executive Director
Brian Litmans, Legal Director (until January 2023)
Teresa Clemmer, Legal Director (starting August 2023)
Tracy Lohman, Development Director
Dawnell Smith, Communications Director
Ashley Boyd, Administrative Director
Brook Brisson, Senior Staff Attorney
Katie Strong, Senior Staff Attorney (until June 2023)
Suzanne Bostrom, Senior Staff Attorney
Bridget Psarianos, Senior Staff Attorney
Rachel Briggs, Staff Attorney
Joanna Cahoon, Legal Fellow (until November 2022) and Staff Attorney (starting February 2023)
Lydia Heye, Legal Fellow
Geoff Toy, Legal Fellow
Lang Van Dommelen, Legal Assistant
Teresa Soley, Digital Communications Coordinator (March-June 2023)

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