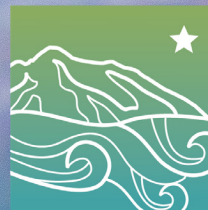




ANNUAL REPORT FY24



TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA

PROTECT | DEFEND | REPRESENT

DEAR SUPPORTERS

Snow can make for a joyful day of ski travel, a steady climb on snow shoes, or a thigh-deep trudge through an icy snowpack in nasty weather. The political and legal climate can feel the same way at times. One moment you're gliding steadily forward in airy snowfall, and the next you're leaning into a headwind on icy terrain.

Or, in the case of our work this fiscal year, one moment the federal government upholds the health and sustainability of Bristol Bay salmon and communities from an unwelcome and toxic hard rock mine, and the next those protections face court challenges by Pebble mine proponents eager to bog down those protections in court. Put another way, I cut my teeth at Trustees on the Pebble mine proposal 20 years ago, and here we are, still in the thick of defending fishing communities, livelihoods, and ways of life.

This year brought plenty of pushbacks on conservation gains, and also some big wins. Take the bad idea called the Ambler road proposal, which aims to put a 200-plus-mile industrial gravel road in the southern Brooks Range. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management looked at the facts and the impacts this road would have on local communities and chose to safeguard this Arctic region rather than rubberstamp a fiscally perilous road project. Of course, a week later, Alaska Senator Dan Sullivan tried to slip the Ambler proposal into a national defense spending bill. We joined clients, partners and local advocates in successfully demonstrating to legislators how Ambler has nothing to do with national security.

We got a win for polar bears, too, when the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with us that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can't make a rule allowing oil and gas operations to incidentally harm Beaufort Sea polar bears based on the fiction that these bears won't be harmed—especially when the agency's own calculations acknowledge the likelihood of injury and death, particularly of cubs.



Meanwhile, we held steady in our effort to keep oil and gas leases out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by carrying forward multiple lawsuits and urging the Interior Department to fix the 2020 Arctic Refuge leasing program to maximize protection of the coastal plain. Our western Arctic work included engaging with Interior's rulemaking process to advocate for expanding or modifying designated "Special Areas" in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska to protect the food sources and ways of life of local people, and to prevent more carbon pollution from feeding the cycle of sea ice melt, thawing permafrost, eroding coastlines, and severe storms.

Last year we went to the U.S. District Court to challenge the Biden administration's approval of the massive ConocoPhillips oil and gas hub known as Willow, and early this fiscal year the court upheld the agency's approval, so we appealed to the 9th Circuit and filed a motion requesting the cessation of construction. We had oral argument before the appellate court in February 2024. The court has neither ruled on our request for a halt on construction, nor on the merits of the case, as of the end of this fiscal year. This means ConocoPhillips can continue doing on-the-ground construction work with harmful impacts to land, water, and local communities.

Keeping private interests from gobbling up public lands matters right now and will have profound significance for generations to come. Public lands ensure that abundant life continues to support and nourish people and animals, whether by providing food or a place to recreate or connecting with ways of life and nature. Public lands help prevent the loss of animal and plant species and can provide a buffer to the harmful cycles of a warming climate.

One of our focus areas centers on the smallest refuge in Alaska, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, which nourishes migratory birds that feed in the eelgrass-rich Izembek Lagoon. These birds help keep the region's web of life healthy and offer an important source of food to people and other animals in western Alaska.

We have gone to court several times to protect Izembek, ultimately appealing to the 9th Circuit in 2022. Sec. Deb Haaland rescinded the Trump-era land trade relevant to that lawsuit in March 2023 because of its legal problems, and the appellate court dismissed our case as moot. But Sec. Haaland vowed to conduct another environmental review and potentially choose another land exchange, so we turned our attention this year to preparing for a draft supplemental environmental impact statement that puts these public lands in Alaska at risk—again. A land trade that lets an appointed Interior secretary give public land to private parties sets a dangerous precedent.

Millions of acres scattered across Alaska were threatened by another Trump-era effort to open more lands to private uses. These lands were first withdrawn from industrial and extractive uses decades ago through section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971—called DI lands.

These lands support the hunting practices and cultural traditions of Alaska Native communities and protect ecosystems vital to all five species of Pacific salmon, three of North America's largest caribou herds, abundant moose, and countless migratory birds, among other animals and plants. This year we celebrated when the Bureau of Land Management released a final environmental impact statement that proposed maintaining DI withdrawals and then again when Sec. Haaland finalized that decision.

Our reception was more lukewarm when the U.S. National Park Service finalized a 2024 rule that bans bear baiting in Alaska's national preserves. We have gone to court before to defend Park Service's authority to regulate hunting practices in preserves, so we had hoped the agency would act more fully to prohibit destructive hunting methods like killing black bears with cubs in dens, using dogs to hunt black bears, and hunting wolves during denning season. Though the agency acknowledges it has the authority to do all that, it just didn't, and that's disappointing.



One thing that's never disappointing, thankfully, is seeing people come together to advocate for clean water and intact landscapes, which is precisely what's happening to defend the Susitna River region in southcentral Alaska from another proposed mining access road. Again and again, these state-backed, and often financed, proposed industrial roads subsidize foreign mining companies and their wealth while they pollute the land and water vital to salmon, wildlife, and Alaska communities.

We supported and engaged in advocacy and public education efforts to protect the Susitna River region and emphasized with agencies that the permitting process must consider the full impact of the entire road—not just its initial segment—while calling for a comprehensive environmental impact statement.

Throughout the year, we remained steadfast in defending Alaska landscapes and waterways from sketchy and irresponsible project proposals that would cost Alaskans money, health, and the abundance of life that defines our home. What's at stake includes Alaska ways of life and future generations.

We're honored to work alongside all of you in supporting the sound stewardship of land, water and Earth to ensure healthy communities, wildlife and ways of life.

With respect and many thanks,

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading "Vicki Clark", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Victoria Clark, Executive Director





Clean water and air

Protecting salmon, fishing ways of life, and a thriving Bristol Bay watershed

Back in January 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized its Clean Water Act determination prohibiting large-scale mining like the Pebble mine proposal in Bristol Bay. This historic action was a monumental win for the people of Bristol Bay and a significant step toward ensuring lasting protection for one of the planet's most productive and ecologically rich salmon ecosystems.

This year, the Pebble mine controversy resurfaced with renewed legal attacks. In March 2024, Northern Dynasty Minerals and its U.S. subsidiary, Pebble Limited Partnership, filed a lawsuit against the federal government to challenge the Clean Water Act determination protecting Bristol Bay. Shortly after, the State of Alaska and Iliamna Natives Limited and Alaska Peninsula Corporation followed with their own legal complaints. These actions once again threatened to undo years of scientific review, public input, and the hard-won protections for Bristol Bay salmon runs and communities.

In response, we returned to court in May 2024 to defend the EPA's authority and the integrity of its decision. Trustees for Alaska intervened on behalf of 12 clients, alongside additional conservation groups represented by Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Bristol Bay Tribes and local organizations also filed to intervene, noting that the agency's decision was the result of two decades of science, research, and public engagement—making Pebble the most studied mining proposal in American history. Trout Unlimited filed to intervene as well.

Both the State of Alaska and Pebble Limited Partnership also filed separate lawsuits in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C., alleging that the final determination amounted to a breach of contract and an unlawful "taking" of their rights to mine at the headwaters of a watershed that supports fishing communities and economies. These lawsuits were stayed, which means suspended for a time, pending further proceedings in Pebble Limited Partnership's lawsuit challenging the EPA's Clean Water Act determination.

Through all the court filings, press releases, and challenges, our purpose remains clear: to protect Bristol Bay. We stand with Tribes, fishing communities, and partners to safeguard the land, water, and ways of life that make this region abundant in fish, livelihoods, and life.

Marine ecosystems

Cook Inlet and beluga whales

The Cook Inlet beluga whale population continues to decline for reasons that are not entirely clear. Our work this fiscal year focused on preventing pollution and protecting food sources for these whales.

The Cook Inlet beluga population surpassed 1,300 animals at the time Congress enacted the Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1972, but it declined sharply in the 1990s, largely due to unsustainable subsistence harvesting. No hunting has been allowed since 1999, yet the population still struggles. At last count in 2023, there were approximately 330 animals.

A host of causes could be making it hard for this population to thrive, including noise, pollution from oil and gas operations, marine traffic disturbing or hitting whales, the loss of food sources, disease, and more. 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 that standard industry practice.

Trustees worked to get the Cook Inlet belugas listed as endangered decades ago, and we continue to promote protection for this population, which is geographically and genetically isolated, and inhabits the Cook Inlet area all year. In March 2024, a proposal to restore the Susitna River Commercial eulachon (hooligan, smelt) harvest was passed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, keeping 200,000 more pounds of forage fish in the Susitna River ecosystem available to Cook Inlet beluga whales.





Wild lands and wildlife

Sustaining the health of refuges and parks in Alaska

Our decades-long effort to protect Izembek National Wildlife Refuge shifted from court to advocacy. A land swap aimed at making way for a road that would cut through a critical conservation area vital to migratory birds and dozens of surrounding communities continues to threaten the refuge, and we have gone to court several times to protect Izembek, appealing to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 2022. The appellate court dismissed that case as moot in 2023 after Interior Secretary Deb Haaland rescinded the Trump-era land swap in question, vowing to do another environmental review.

In May 2023, the U.S. Department of Interior published a notice of intent that stated that it would release a draft supplemental environmental impact statement on Izembek that would potentially select a land exchange as a preferred alternative. Throughout this fiscal year, we collaborated with partners to raise public awareness and prepare for submitting comments on the anticipated draft impact statement.

The proposed road threatens migratory birds such as the Pacific black brant and emperor geese, which rely on Izembek's eelgrass-rich lagoon during their seasonal migrations. These birds help keep the region's web of life healthy and offer an important food source for people and other animals along their migration paths in western Alaska.

Opposition to the project remained strong among Alaska Native communities. The Native village of Hooper Bay and its village corporation, along with more than a dozen other tribes and tribal entities across the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and beyond, passed resolutions opposing any land swap that would allow road construction in Izembek. These communities underscored the vital importance of the refuge to their food security and way of life.

A land trade that allows a road would do great harm by setting a precedent for an appointed Interior secretary to make a deal that gives private parties pieces of public lands without congressional authority. We will continue to advocate as we have for decades for solutions that protect both the health and safety of rural residents and the integrity of Alaska's public lands.



Wild lands and wildlife

Sustaining the health of refuges and parks in Alaska

This year, the protection of approximately 28 million acres of DI lands in Alaska took a major step forward. These lands—scattered across regions like Bristol Bay and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta—are land withdrawals that the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 intended to forestall mineral entry, oil and gas leasing, and protect federal subsistence protections.

At the end of June, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management released a final environmental impact statement and a proposed course of action to maintain the DI withdrawals. This analysis laid the groundwork for protecting and preserving Alaska Native communities, subsistence lifestyles, cultural traditions, and thriving ecosystems that include all five species of Pacific salmon, three of North America's largest caribou herds, abundant moose, and countless migratory birds.

By August, following extensive public input, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland finalized the decision to maintain DI withdrawals on nearly 28 million acres of public land. The administration concluded that Trump-era attempts to lift these withdrawals through Public Land Orders were legally flawed and failed to comply with critical statutes like the National Environmental Policy Act and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The decision reaffirmed the importance of DI lands for subsistence, cultural survival, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

The move drew strong support from Alaska Native communities, with 78 Tribes and three major Tribal consortia—representing 118 federally recognized Tribes—urging the federal government to maintain protections. Public meetings confirmed widespread public backing, reflecting the deep connection between the land and the people who depend on it.

This decision is a powerful reminder that the fight to protect Alaska's natural and cultural heritage is ongoing, and that it requires the voices and actions of communities, Tribes, and leaders committed to the well-being of people for generations to come. We will continue to protect and defend DI lands in Alaska.



Wild lands and wildlife

Defending the Susitna River region

We worked diligently to safeguard the Susitna River region from the proposed West Susitna Industrial Access Road. This 100-mile road, backed by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, would benefit an Australian mining company at the expense of Alaska's salmon-rich waters, diverse ecosystems, and rural communities.

The road proposal, which would carve through the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge, including a major crossing over the Susitna River, and cross over 150 streams, threatens to fundamentally alter the region's biodiversity, recreational value, and cultural significance. When AIDEA's initial attempts at permitting failed, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities joined the effort. The Department of Transportation is attempting to move the project forward in pieces by misleadingly framing the first 22-mile segment as a separate "recreational access road" despite its clear role as the gateway to a broader industrial corridor.

Throughout the year, we supported and engaged in advocacy and public education efforts, underscoring the devastating long-term consequences of this project. We emphasized that the permitting process must consider the full impact of the entire road—not just its initial segment—and called for a comprehensive environmental impact statement rather than the limited environmental assessment proposed by the Department of Transportation.

We remained steadfast in defending the West Susitna region against irresponsible and destructive roads. The fight to preserve this critical landscape continues to be a priority as we prepare for further legal and strategic challenges in the year ahead.

Wild lands and wildlife

Protecting animals in wildlife refuges and national preserves in Alaska

The U.S. National Park Service finalized a new rule in July 2024 that bans the controversial practice of bear baiting on Alaska's national preserves. This was a positive step forward for wildlife and public safety. However, the rule fell short by continuing to allow several harmful and ethically questionable hunting methods. These include killing black bear cubs and sows with cubs at den sites using artificial light, hunting wolves and coyotes during denning season, using dogs to hunt black bears, and killing swimming caribou from motorboats.

Back in 2020, we sued the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. National Park Service for unlawfully adopting a rule that allowed Alaska's regulations to govern hunting within national preserves, allowing practices such as brown bear baiting, the killing of wolves during denning season, and other damaging methods. In response, the U.S. District Court found the 2020 rule to be poorly reasoned and arbitrary. While the case was with the appellate court, the agency released a proposed rule in January 2023, which better aligned with conservation principles and public expectations. In November 2024, after the agency published a final rule, the appeal was dismissed as moot.

While the finalized rule acknowledges the Park Service's authority to regulate sport hunting and recognizes that predator reduction practices conflict with agency policies, it ultimately fails to ban many damaging state-sanctioned practices. These methods, often intended to boost game populations like moose and caribou, lack scientific support and are inconsistent with the conservation goals of national preserves.

Despite strong public and legal pressure, including the Park Service's own prior and more protective 2015 rule, the 2024 rule did not go far enough to protect all wildlife from aggressive sport hunting practices that are designed to reduce predator populations. The Park Service has ample legal authority to broadly protect wildlife within national preserves, but the 2024 rule only prohibited bear baiting.

We continue to advocate for science-based, ecologically sound policies that preserve natural predator-prey dynamics and ensure public lands remain spaces for all users and all wildlife.



America's Arctic and Climate Action

Protecting the Arctic--keeping oil and gas leasing out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

In late spring, the Porcupine caribou herd migrate to the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to birth and nurse their young, feed on lichen and grasses, and find relative safety and relief from insects and hunting animals. This caribou herd provides food to the Gwich'in of Alaska and Canada, and forms the foundation of their way of life. The Gwich'in know the coastal plain as "the sacred place where life begins."

Indeed, Arctic people, animals, and vegetation have thrived in relationship with each other for millennia. The health of one life form—and the land and water that sustains it—matters to the health of the rest.

Since our founding, Trustees for Alaska has played a key role in keeping the Arctic Refuge free of industrialization. In fiscal year 2024, we pushed the Interior Department to fix legal problems with the 2020 oil and gas leasing program and litigated multiple cases tied to that program.

It helps to review some background on these lawsuits. Early in the first Trump term, Congress passed the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which included a rider for an Arctic Refuge leasing mandate that required two lease sales. The Trump administration rushed through the environmental review of that program in 2020, and we immediately challenged it in court. The first lease sale took place on Jan. 6, 2021, drawing no bids from major oil companies and failing to bring in even a fraction of 1 percent of promised revenues.

Early in 2021, President Biden called for a review of the leasing program and a new environmental review to address the legal problems with the Trump program. The Biden administration also suspended and then cancelled leases handed out after the 2021 lease sale. In August 2023, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management released a draft of its supplemental environmental impact statement, and we submitted comprehensive comments to urge a final decision that would provide protections for the coastal plain.





Keeping oil and gas leasing out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (cont'd)

Since the 2017 Tax Act mandated two lease sales, our work this fiscal year focused on advocating for as protective of a leasing program as possible to avoid opening up vital habitat for animals like caribou and denning polar bears, and to minimize impacts to land, water, and wildlife important to local communities.

Because these administrative efforts were underway, we continued to pause our lawsuit challenging the 2020 leasing program. However, we litigated in two other Arctic Refuge lawsuits. First, we participated in an appeal before the 9th U.S. Court of Appeals in a case we won in court as intervenors. The State of Alaska and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority brought the case in 2023 to challenge the suspension of leases.

Second, we intervened on behalf of the Gwich'in Steering Committee and 11 allied groups in a related case to defend the Biden administration's authority to cancel AIDEA's leases due to serious legal flaws with the 2020 leasing plan. AIDEA challenged those lease cancellations in 2023. We briefed the case this fiscal year and are waiting for a U.S. District Court ruling.

Trustees knows that every legal action offers an opportunity to prevent harm and pave the way for healthy stewardship. Truth is, oil and gas industrialization of the coastal plain would pollute and destroy Arctic Refuge landscapes and sacrifice the health of the Arctic on behalf of oil and gas corporations while doing nothing to support Alaska's future.

We have and will always keep working with clients, partners and coalitions to stop public land giveaways through leasing programs that put industry profits before the health of Arctic communities and to stand up for a healthy Alaska where humans and more-than-human beings thrive.

America's Arctic and Climate Action

Protecting the western Arctic—the massive Willow oil and gas project, and a call for more protections

We went to court multiple times to stop the massive ConocoPhillips' Willow oil and gas extraction project, essentially an industrial hub that would fuel an oil and gas expansion in the western Arctic. The initial footprint would include drill pads and a processing facility near Nuiqsut, a community already surrounded by oil rigs making deafening noise and spewing out pollutants and carbon.

We brought a lawsuit that stopped the project in 2022. A court ruling sent the environmental analysis and approval for the project back to agencies to fix, and when those agencies opened up public input processes again, we submitted robust comments outlining the profound harm the project would do to the people nearby, and the animals they rely on for food and their culture, not to mention the harm done by putting more carbon pollution in the atmosphere.

The Biden administration approved the project anyway in March 2023, despite viral opposition nationwide and globally. So, we went to court again, challenging the approval and requesting a preliminary injunction to stop construction while the case made its way through court. The lawsuit charged the administration with failing to look at the full range of options for the project, including the option to take no action (not issue permits), and for not adequately protecting sensitive areas and local subsistence users who hunt, gather, and live in the region.

Early in fiscal year 2024, a U.S. District Court decision upheld the permitting decisions, so we appealed to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and filed a motion requesting the cessation of construction while the appellate court hears the case. In February 2024, we had oral argument before the court. We are still waiting for a decision from the court, which has neither ruled on our request for an injunction to halt construction, nor on the merits of the case. By default, this means ConocoPhillips can do on-the-ground construction work with grave harm to the land, water, and communities, despite the lawsuit.

Allowing the Willow project to move forward only supercharges threats to the western Arctic region at large, an area already profoundly impacted by oil and gas exploitation, as well as by climate warming.

Trustees has for a long time sought more protection in the region, urging the Interior Department to maintain and expand designated special areas important to communities, Arctic health, and future generations. This work began to yield positive outcomes this fiscal year.

Protecting the western Arctic (cont'd)

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management adopted a new rule in May 2024 to better protect areas in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska from the impacts of oil and gas. The Bureau also sought feedback on whether it should expand or designate new protected areas or modify existing boundaries or management of these areas. Congress required maximum protection of these designated "Special Areas" almost 50 years ago to preserve fish, wildlife, cultural resources, recreation opportunities, and subsistence food and traditions. Preserving and modifying those areas would protect local communities now and uplift the health of the Arctic for generations to come.

Industry, the North Slope Borough, the State, and others filed lawsuits challenging the new rules. This year, we represented a handful of groups that intervened in those five lawsuits to defend the rule and the Bureau's ability to protect the Reserve from harmful oil and gas.

This work is absolutely essential to Alaska. The Arctic is warming many times faster than other parts of the country, with sea ice melt, permafrost thaw, floods, severe storms, and other impacts devastating community infrastructure and making it harder for people and animals to find food.

Trustees engaged deeply in the Bureau's rulemaking process this year and will continue to do so as part of our core mission to support the health of Arctic land, water, animals and people.





America's Arctic and Climate Action

Protecting the Brooks Range—stopping the Ambler industrial road

We got great summertime news this fiscal year when the U.S. Bureau of Land Management chose to listen to Tribes, local communities, facts, and sound evidence to protect the Southern Brooks Range from an industrial access road. This milestone win wasn't the end of the proposal to build a road to the Ambler mining district, but it demonstrates the effectiveness of steadfast resolve, unity, and the power of people speaking up for their communities and values.

The win came after over a decade of work with clients and partners to show how the project would do great harm and no good for Alaska.

The road proposal centers on an industrial transportation corridor that would cross thousands of rivers and streams and cut across thousands of acres of wetlands, spewing toxins into the air and into waterways used for drinking as well into some of the country's last remaining streams without industrial contaminants. It would threaten sheefish and salmon spawning habitats, disrupt the migration of one of the greatest caribou herds left in Alaska, and pose a profound existential threat to the hunting traditions of local people.

We filed a lawsuit over the Trump administration's approval of the Ambler road in 2020. The Biden administration acknowledged legal problems in 2022 and requested that the court allow it to do a supplemental environmental impact statement to address some of those problems. The agency released a draft of that statement in October 2023, and we submitted comments and advocated for the agency to take no action on the permit request.

The Bureau rightly took no action in its 2024 final decision—in other words, it did not hand out permits—to protect Arctic communities from a destructive and needless industrial road. A week later, Alaska's Senator Sullivan added an amendment to an annual defense bill to try to push the Ambler road through anyway. Advocates were able to show that the Ambler road proposal has nothing to do with national security, and the language was eventually pulled out of the bill.

We know that the Alaska delegation, Alaska's governor, and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority—an entity owned by the state—will keep trying to put Ambler back on the table to enrich foreign mining companies while draining the State of Alaska's pocketbook. Ambler truly defies logic—it would cost Alaska billions of dollars with no reasonable payback scheme in place to enrich Outside mining corporations that hire Outside labor to extract unneeded minerals to export to foreign countries like China.

It's a lose-lose and lose again proposal that would sacrifice the Brooks Range, dozens of Arctic communities, and Alaska's fiscal health for a private gravel road that would enrich foreign corporations and leave a wake of toxic waste and destruction behind.

We know what's at stake and will doggedly fight for Alaska communities and the lands and waters of the Brooks Range.

America's Arctic and Climate Action

Having the backs of Beaufort Sea polar bears

We filed a lawsuit back in 2021 that challenged a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule that allowed oil operators to do activities that disrupt polar bears in the Beaufort Sea and along the North Slope. This five-year incidental take regulation lets oil and gas operators harass or harm polar bears when doing oil and gas operations with heavy equipment, aircraft, and other disruptive means that trigger feeding bears to abandon food, forcing sows with cubs to leave dens, and scattering bears when they are interacting. The agency itself concluded there would be a high chance of polar bear fatality due to these oil and gas activities, with cubs at the highest risk.

A U.S. District Court took a magistrate's recommendation and ruled against our claims in 2023, so we took the case to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. We participated in oral argument in February 2024.

It's important to know that the Marine Mammal Protection Act prohibits unauthorized harassment of marine mammal populations like polar bears, with a narrow exception that allows Fish and Wildlife Service to authorize an unintentional "take" of small numbers of marine mammals for five years or less if it will have a negligible impact on the population. These authorizations are called "incidental take regulations," and the term "take" means to harass or injure an animal.



Having the backs of Beaufort Sea polar bears (cont'd)

Fish and Wildlife Service claimed that the impact of oil and gas activities may bother bears but do not cause serious harm, despite their own studies showing that operations over five years would injure or kill cubs.

Basic math has a way of proving itself true, and the 9th Circuit Court understood that when issuing its ruling in March 2024. The decision found that the agency can't invent "less serious" subcategories of polar bear "take" that cause injury without acknowledging that those injuries would occur; and that that the agency failed to evaluate the cumulative level of take over five years of oil and gas activities on polar bears by trying to look at each year in isolation to conclude oil activities would cause negligible impact.

Truth is, Fish and Wildlife Service denied the fact that there is a 94 percent chance of at least one cub death over the five years. The court sent the rule back to Fish and Wildlife Service to fix, and we can hope the agency puts in place extensive protections for this vulnerable population of polar bears, who already face challenges in finding food and raising cubs due to sea ice loss, permafrost thaw and other impacts due to the warming Arctic.



Legal fellowships with Trustees

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 gives opportunities to dive deeply into all aspects of environmental law, from coalition work and client representation to litigation, organizational support, 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 2024 fellows at the completion of their fellowships.



Geoff Toy

When I accepted the Fellow position at Trustees, it was November in Atlanta and still 75 degrees. I remember thinking I'm not sure if I'm cut out for Alaska, but it'll at least be a two-year adventure. I was prepared for the winter to be cold, but I wasn't prepared for how beautiful it would be.

When I arrived, I wasn't very informed about Alaskan issues, but after working at Trustees I firmly believe that Alaska is the best place to be an environmental lawyer. The issues that Trustees works on are on the front lines of environmental justice, public health, subsistence, wildlife and wilderness conservation, and the struggle against climate change. Trustees' attorneys do an amazing job at situating the issues in a larger context. It helps that Trustees has been working on these issues for decades, and has a wealth of experience and institutional knowledge to draw on.

I will be bringing so much from my time with Trustees to my next position as an attorney, not just through improved legal research and writing skills, but also through team and coalition-based work skills, and so much more knowledge of and appreciation for the ecological and cultural landscapes that make Alaska unique.

Lydia Heye

During the second year of my fellowship at Trustees, I continued to grow as an attorney and to learn from the expertise of the legal team. For example, this winter I helped the attorneys prepare for oral arguments before the Ninth Circuit. Our Arctic team had two back-to-back oral arguments over the course of a week, which is rare. By helping moot the attorneys (bringing up topics of debate or discussion to prepare for argument), watching the arguments, and debriefing with the legal team afterward, I learned what effective oral advocacy looks like.

I've continued to work on several projects including drafting briefs, legal memos, pleadings, and comment letters. The assigning attorneys have been generous with their time and feedback on my writing assignments which has helped strengthen my legal research and writing skills.

I feel confident in the experiences and skills I have gained from this fellowship as I embark on my next journey as an environmental attorney. I believe that this fellowship has given me the tools I need to excel in the legal field and beyond. I have learned how to think analytically about facts and the law, I have witnessed what it means to be a zealous advocate for your clients, and I have seen how to work productively within broad coalitions toward a common goal.

I'm incredibly thankful for the opportunity to have worked at Trustees over the past two years. I am leaving the organization inspired to continue to do this work and to advocate for our communities, lands, and wildlife.



Donor Spotlight - Martha Raynolds

With the support of donors like Martha Raynolds, Trustees for Alaska can provide legal expertise and representation to protect and defend Alaska's lands, water, animals, and communities. Thank you, Martha, for your commitment to Trustees for Alaska!

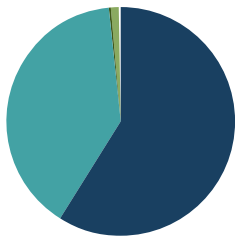
Martha Raynolds lives, works, and plants her garden in Fairbanks, Alaska, at the former home of Ginny Wood, who advocated for conservation alongside Celia Hunter for decades starting in the 1950s. She is a plant ecologist with a focus on mapping Arctic vegetation. She has done work for private consulting companies and the federal government, and done research at the University of Alaska for the last 25 years. She is a founding board member of the Interior Alaska Land Trust and has served on that board for 25 years. She also served on the board of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center for ten years. She donates annually to Trustees for Alaska and has done so for 36 years.

"I have a scientist's perspective of human activities, and see the importance of maintaining ecological balances - stopping greenhouse gas emissions and conserving natural habitats. When I moved to Alaska in 1982, I was impressed to learn of the existence of a nonprofit law firm to protect Alaska's natural landscapes, so I donated and have appreciated Trustees' work since then."



Statement of financial position

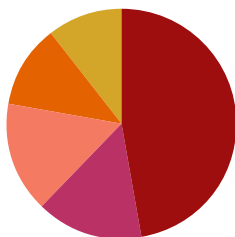
Revenue:



Grants (59.1%)	\$ 1,027,000
Contributions (39.6%)	\$ 687,875
Special events (0.2%)	\$ 3,446
Program service revenue (0%)	\$ 0
Other (1.2%)	\$ 20,012

Total 1,738,333

Expenses:



Arctic and Climate Change (47.4%)	\$ 928,724
Clean Air and Water (15.1%)	\$ 295,098
Wild Lands and Wildlife (15.5%)	\$ 303,268
Administration (11.8%)	\$ 231,277
Fundraising (10.3%)	\$ 200,873

Total 1,959,240

ASSETS	2024	2023
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 256,678	\$ 576,779
Receivables		
Foundation grants	\$ 125,000	-
Other receivables	\$ 5,681	\$ 6,638
Intercompany receivable	\$ 11,300	\$ 9,534
Investments	\$ 363,970	\$ 336,692
Prepaid expenses	\$ 23,270	\$ 14,172
Property and Equipment, net	\$ 99,990	\$ 116,915
Operating lease right-of-us asset	\$ 513,847	\$ 608,989
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 1,399,736	\$ 1,669,719
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 19,372	\$ 8,344
Accrued payroll expenses	\$ 109,483	\$ 104,286
Deferred revenue	-	\$ 50,000
Finance lease liability	\$ 2,985	\$ 6,482
Operating lease liability	\$ 528,641	\$ 617,923
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 660,481	\$ 787,035
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions		
Undesignated	\$ 245,550	\$ 430,551
Board designated - operating reserves	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
Net investment in property and equip.	\$ 97,005	\$ 110,433
With donor restrictions	\$ 246,700	\$ 191,700
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 739,255	\$ 882,684
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 1,399,736	\$ 1,669,719

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.

FY24 foundations

444S Foundation
Alaska Conservation Foundation
Campion Foundation
Eaglemere Foundation
George H. and Jane A. Mifflin Memorial Fund
Harder Foundation
New-Land Foundation
NorthLight Foundation
Patagonia, Inc.
Tortuga Foundation
Volgenau Foundation
WestWind Foundation
Wilburforce Foundation
William C. Bannerman Foundation

Individual giving

We are honored by all of the people who contributed to Trustees this year through direct contributions, legacy gifts, monthly giving, and workplace giving programs. Though we do not list the names of donors to protect their privacy, we recognize our ongoing supporters as essential to our work, and we are extremely grateful to partner with so many generous people.



CLIENTS

Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Alaska Wilderness League
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society
Center for Biological Diversity
Conservation Lands Foundation
Cook Inletkeeper
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthworks
Environment America, Inc.
Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends of McNeil River
Gwich'in Steering Committee
Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Salmon State
Sierra Club
Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic
The Alaska Center
The Wilderness Society
Wild Salmon Center
Wilderness Watch
Winter Wildlands Alliance

COALITION PARTNERS

Alaska Marine Conservation Council
Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition
Alaskans for Wildlife
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Arctic Audubon Society
Audubon Alaska
Braided River
Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation
Bristol Bay Native Association
Bristol Bay Native Corporation
Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association
Brooks Range Council
Center for American Progress
Center for Science and Public Participation
Chilkat Indian Village-Klukwan
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Conservation Lands Foundation
Copper Country Alliance
Denali Citizens Council
Earthjustice
Environmental Investigation Agency
Eyak Preservation Council
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
First Peoples Worldwide
Food and Water Watch

Friends of the Earth
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Greenpeace
Humane Society of the United States
Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
League of Conservation Voters
Lynn Canal Conservation
McNeil River Alliance
Native Movement
Native Peoples Action
Natural Resources Defense Council
Ocean Conservancy
Patagonia
Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation
Salmon Beyond Borders
Seeding Sovereignty
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Susitna River Coalition
The Nature Conservancy
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
United Tribes of Bristol Bay
Water Protector Legal Collective



Staff

Victoria Clark, Executive Director
 Teresa Clemmer, Legal Director
 Tracy Lohman, Development Director
 Dawnell Smith, Communications Director
 Ashley Boyd, Administrative Director
 Brook Brisson, Senior Staff Attorney
 Suzanne Bostrom, Senior Staff Attorney
 Bridget Psarianos, Senior Staff Attorney
 Joanna Cahoon, Staff Attorney
 Siobhan McIntyre, Staff Attorney
 Lydia Heye, Legal Fellow
 Geoff Toy, Legal Fellow
 Lang Van Dommelen, Legal Assistant
 Madison Grosvenor, Communications Specialist

Board of directors

Chase Hensel, Ph.D., Chair
 Marlyn Twitchell, Vice-Chair
 Ann Rothe, Secretary
 Jim Stratton, Treasurer
 Michelle Meyer
 M. James Spitzer Jr.
 Leonard Steinberg
 Margaret Williams
 Peg Tileston
 Stacy Shutts
 Sophie Swope

To see a list of our current Board and their bios, go to <https://www.trustees.org/board-of-trustees/>; for staff, go to <https://www.trustees.org/our-team/>.

Trustees for Alaska
 121 W Fireweed Ln. Ste. 105, Anchorage, AK 99503
 t: 907.276.4244
 f: 907.276.7110
ecolaw@trustees.org

Trustees for Alaska is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Tax ID: 92-6010379

Contributing photographers

Bob Waldrop
Lisa Hupp
Carol Ann Woody
Madison Kosma
Kristine Sowl
USFWS
Katie Moest
Alexis Bonogofsky
Florian Schulz
Tim Bowman
Bridget Psarianos



TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA

SUSTAIN | PROTECT | REPRESENT