

# Wild Impact

YOU MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

OCT 2024



## Clayoquot Sound protection



Photo: Now protected: Clayoquot Sound rainforests (Jacqueline Windh)

This summer, decades of advocacy for the world-renowned rainforests in Clayoquot Sound — and thousands of years of First Nations leadership and stewardship — paid off in a big way. Along with the province of B.C., Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations leadership announced ten new conservancies that will permanently protect the vast majority of the remaining unprotected old-growth in the iconic Clayoquot region.

**This historic win underscores the power of Indigenous leadership, and highlights why Indigenous-led conservation is the future of ecosystem protection in Canada and beyond.**

This is an outcome that you and I, and tens of thousands of people like us across the country and around the world, have supported and championed for decades.

Thanks to donors like you, we've worked for years to support the Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht and we'll continue to seek guidance from these communities on how we can best work towards a healthier future for everyone in this region.

## You doubled up spotted owl critical habitat

Thanks to donors like you, over 200,000 more hectares of old-growth forests in B.C. — spotted owl critical habitat — finally has a fighting chance of formal protection.

Back in early 2023, under pressure from the province of B.C., **the federal government slashed the amount of forests to be designated as spotted owl critical habitat, in its recovery strategy, by half.** To make matters worse, it was the unprotected forests that were dropped from critical habitat designation. Most of the remaining 200,000 hectares were already protected.

**We knew you wouldn't let that stand** — so we put out the call and more than 1,000 of you wrote to the Canadian government. After receiving this mountain of letters, the government was forced to backtrack. This August, they completely reversed their direction — specifically citing the amount of letters they received from all of you as the reason — and **the recovery strategy is back on track designating the entire 400,000 hectares as critical habitat.** You made this happen!

We have been fighting to stop old-growth logging and defend the spotted owl for decades. And while our work isn't done, this proves we really are making a difference, together.



Photo: Protected Areas Campaigner Joe Foy in spotted owl habitat (Joe Foy)



## Caribou protection win

In another huge win for Indigenous-led conservation this summer, the Saulteau and West Moberly First Nations, along with the province, finalized the creation of the Klinse-za Park — **the largest new protected area in a decade at over 2,000 square kilometers**. Located just west of Chetwynd in Northeast B.C., this protected area sets aside a large area of caribou habitat mapped as part of the historic 2020 partnership agreement between the two Nations and the provincial and federal governments.

You and I have long called for increased habitat protection as the key measure to recovering caribou populations. **We were honoured to be a part of this work with the Saulteau and West Moberly, and attend the celebrated 2020 partnership agreement.** Our team has spent time in the northeast with members of the communities and their caribou protection work including a successful maternity pen for breeding — we couldn't be happier to see this huge new protected area come to fruition.

Photo: Klinse-za Park protection brings hope for caribou recovery (David Moskowitz)

## Building connections through fieldwork

Being on the ground in the summer with volunteers clearing trails, paddling, researching and educating is what makes us unique. This year was no exception. Thanks to you we could organize 15 such trips across the country with 200 volunteers. Our fieldwork program is all about **connecting people and places to foster relationships with landscapes, and grow recognition and understanding of the Nations that have always lived on and stewarded them.**

In B.C., we built trails in three old-growth forest ecosystems: Walbran Valley (Kaxi:ks) in Pacheedaht territory, Koksilah Grove in Cowichan territory and in Clayoquot Sound on Tla-o-qui-aht territory and Ahousaht territory. We continued our partnerships with Colour the Trails, a national organization working to increase access and remove systemic barriers to outdoor activities for Black, Indigenous and people of colour, and with the Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria, which supports immigrants and refugees. Some of their **youth joined us at Koksilah Grove to maintain trails and talk about the importance of old-growth forest.**

In Ontario, we brought people on the ground to experience the places we're working to protect. We started the spring with a **"Rivers not Highways" birding hike** along the Humber River, traditional territory of Mississaugas of the Credit, Anishnaabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee and Wendat. We led several old-growth appreciation day hikes in Catchacoma Forest, traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations.

We led **canoe camping excursions to maintain old-growth trails** in Temagami, Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and traditional territory of the Teme-Augama Anishnabai, and Rushbrook, Robinson-Huron Treaty territory, traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg. We engaged the hearts and hands of people in conservation efforts and advocacy.

For over a decade we've been **paddling to protect the lower Bird River on Sagkeeng First Nation territory** in Manitoba, a wild place providing lifelong memories for two volunteer groups. The first group of Chilean youth navigated through Bird Lake and onto the wild rice-bordered waterway. The second group took in the wildlife and learned what they can do to protect the lower Bird.

Thanks to you, we were able to continue supporting First Nations communities and ecotourism initiatives while connecting people with forests, part of our overall efforts to support Indigenous-led conservation.



Photo: Eric Reder with volunteers paddle to protect lower Bird River, Manitoba (Natalie Smith)



## QUESTIONS?

Your commitment to protect nature and ensure a wild Canada drives each of our campaigns. Since the Wilderness Committee is funded almost entirely by individual donors like you, your gifts have a huge impact.

Contact **Dena Ellery Annual Giving Manager:**  
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 **Thank you** 

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