

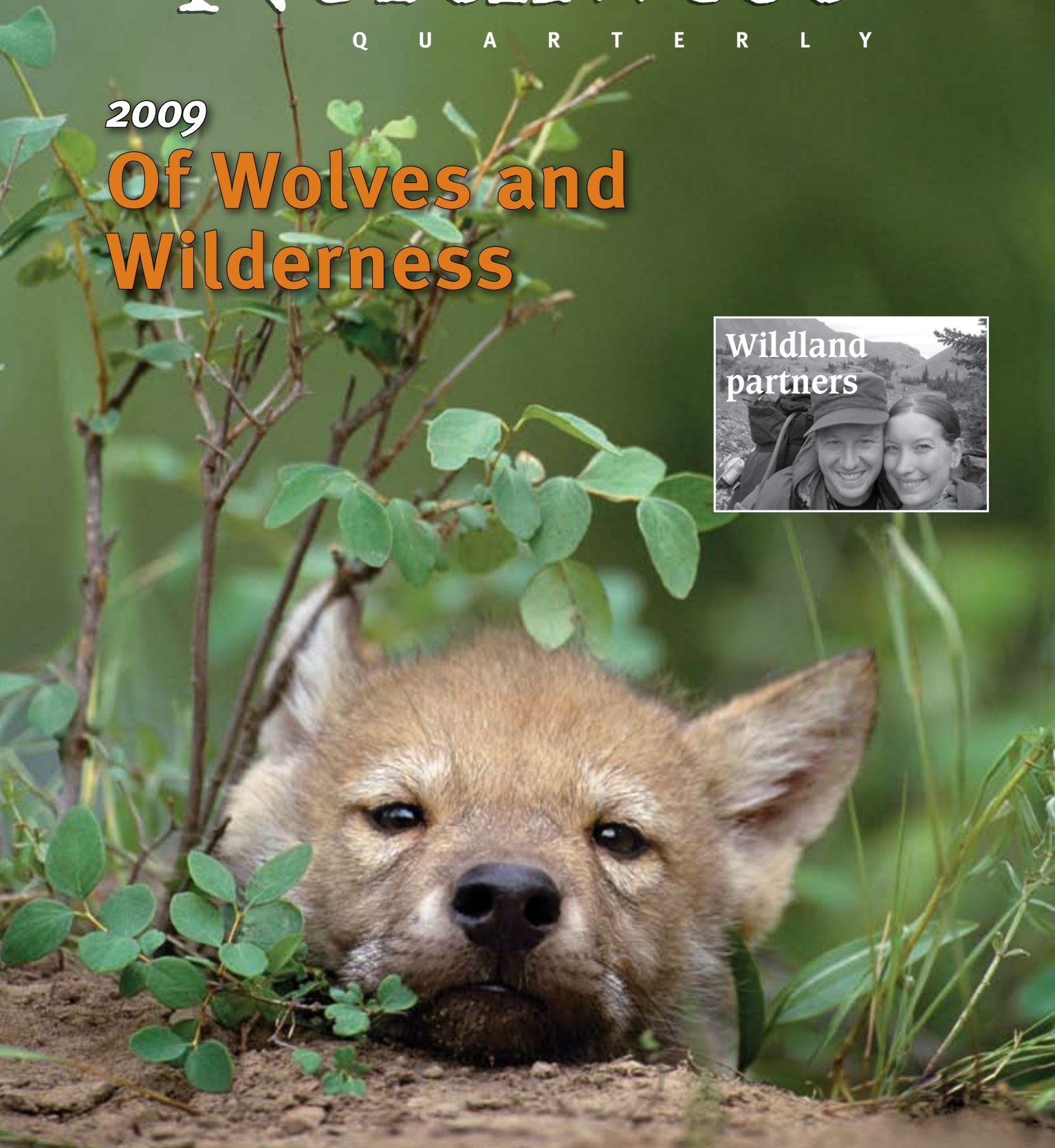
WINTER 2010 ISSUE 80

# Conservation Northwest

Q U A R T E R L Y

2009

## Of Wolves and Wilderness





Coast to Rockies



Collaboration



Adopt a wilderness



Climate change



Conservation Northwest protects and connects old-growth forests and other wild areas from the Washington Coast to the BC Rockies: vital to a healthy future for us, our children, and wildlife.

### Cover image

Photo © Art Wolfe, [www.artwolfe.com](http://www.artwolfe.com)

This 8-week old wolf pup was photographed in Montana under controlled conditions, but the majority of Art Wolfe's photos of wildlife are taken in the wild. Art has written many books, including *In the Presence of Wolves*, and has generously mentored upcoming photographers, like our friend Eric Zamora, who has taken remarkable images in the Columbia Highlands.

Art says that while growing up in West Seattle in the 1950s, he was long "subject to the lure of wooded ravines, foxes, and coyotes.... I loved and still love photographing wild animals. Early on, I developed the banner of staying very calm. Slow, calm movement around wildlife lets you get very close."

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We also publish an email action alert (to subscribe, send a blank email to [wildnw-subscribe@lists.onenw.org](mailto:wildnw-subscribe@lists.onenw.org)) and a monthly illustrated online newsletter (subscribe by emailing [esubscribe@conservationnw.org](mailto:esubscribe@conservationnw.org)).

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VIEW FROM THE DIRECTOR

## A Howling Success for Wild Lands

**The highlight of my 2009?** Hearing wolves howl in the eastern Cascades of Washington while on vacation in July with my daughters, Jessie and Carrie, and my teenage nephew, Kevin.

At the time, agency biologists suspected that the Lookout Wolf Pack was denning in the Methow Valley, near to where we were. It was time to get confirmation. Scott Fitkin, from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Ray Robertson, with the US Forest Service, led us up a forest road to within a mile or two from where the pack was suspected to be.

At 8:15 pm, just as light was fading, we heard a chorus of howls and pup yelps. My heart melted. If ever I could forget that magical sound, I assure you I will never forget the rapt faces of my daughters and nephew as their eyes lit up with the wonder of wild nature.

At Conservation Northwest we committed ourselves twenty years ago to guarding, increasing, and protecting the wildness of our great Northwest region. The results today are gratifying:

- Logging of ancient forest on state and federal land in Washington is now a rarity. So many places that I knew once as imminently threatened are now safe forever.
- We've woven together forest habitat corridors linking the North and Central Cascades and are now close to seeing construction of wildlife bridges across Interstate 90.
- I myself have seen elusive fisher and wolverine, and now heard wolves, here in our home state of Washington, where these totemic creatures were for so long absent.

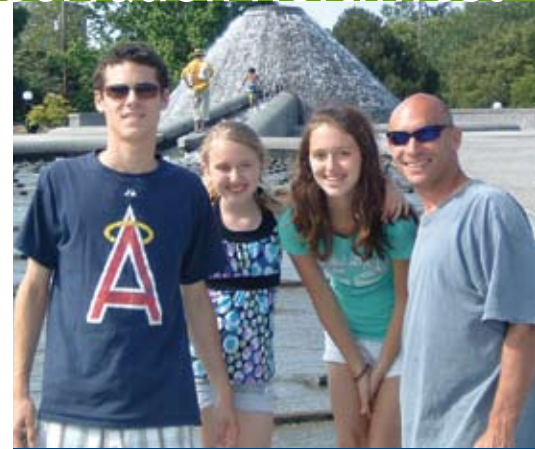
Five years ago we set out to assure that wildlife would have connected habitat across a vast span from the Cascades to the Rockies. To do so we helped protect millions of acres of mountain caribou habitat in southeastern British Columbia. We are also making rapid progress in protecting many thousands of acres of arid grasslands in the central Okanogan Valley, where large and historic ranches are threatened with residential subdivision.

Between the historic ranches of the Okanogan and high mountain caribou refuges of the BC Kootenay lies the Columbia Highlands, federal land within the Colville National Forest, where truly wild lands have eluded protection despite three decades of effort.

This August, Congress and the Obama Administration took public notice of our successful collaborative work with the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition. That encouragement and recognition has set us on a path that I believe will result soon in a balanced proposal for forest management and wilderness protection in the area, and a plan for the Colville National Forest that has garnered broad community support. That pathway will surely open the door to legislation in Congress.

In this newsletter you'll hear from our staff working on the front lines and get a taste of our work this year protecting and connecting wildlands and wildlife from the Washington Coast to the BC Rockies.

The moment of 2010 that I most anticipate? Being in the White House for the official signing of a bill designating wilderness in the Columbia Highlands.

Left to right: Kevin, Carrie, Jessie, and Mitch Friedman

As light was fading, we heard a chorus of howls and pup yelps. My heart melted. If ever I could forget that magical sound, I assure you I will never forget the rapt faces of my daughters and nephew as their eyes lit up with the wonder of wild nature.



View from Blanchard Mountain.  
Photo © Tim Chandonnet

From the Washington Coast to the Cascade Mountains, Okanogan Valley, Columbia Highlands, and BC Rockies: It's big territory for a small group. Yet 2009 was another year when we got great things done for wild areas and wildlife.

# Connecting and Protecting

## WASHINGTON COAST

# From Fishers to Butterflies

Fisher in the Olympics. Photo CNW



**Pacific fishers** have nothing to do with fish but everything to do with the old-growth forests they need to live. A smaller relative to wolverines, fishers have been missing from Washington State for 80 years—enough time that they had dropped from the natural history books. Today we are all only now rediscovering this important little forest hunter.

Though fishers were trapped out early last century, they have long been protected from trapping. Yet they seemed unable to return to Washington on their own. They needed our help to recover.

A visionary plan to reintroduce fishers to Washington resulted last year in relocation of four dozen animals from Canada to the Olympic Peninsula. An earlier habitat feasibility study had judged the Olympics the best place for them.

**Erin Moore** Publications director, [emoore@conservationnw.org](mailto:emoore@conservationnw.org)

The fisher's return to the deep forests of the Olympics is the culmination of a reintroduction partnership that Conservation Northwest helped launch with support from the Doris Duke Foundation and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

In 2009, this newly reintroduced, small native mammal continued to thrive. This spring near the Elwha River, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and federal biologists recorded the first fisher family native-born to Washington since their return to the forests.

Hidden cameras illustrate a true-life biology lesson: The female fisher chose for her original denning site a big, old snag heavily marked with cavities created by pileated woodpeckers. Motion-triggered images taken at the snag show a mother fisher carrying her litter of four kits, one at a time, from the den tree. Females commonly move their young to new dens, biologists say, as the kits grow up and become more mobile.

The reintroduction plan calls for release of another 40 or so fishers this year. They are currently being captured—mostly in the British Columbia's Chilcotin region where populations are still robust—and cared for before relocation. We've stayed involved throughout the year, contributing monitoring volunteers to help the agencies document the progress of this marvelous native animal, a success story for recovery in Washington.

The kits are proof of the healthy recovery of an endangered animal just returned to Olympic National Park two years ago. It's thrilling news on the path to reweaving a web of life long missing from the Peninsula.

**Eastward over** the Straits of Georgia are the Chuckanut Mountains, where the Cascades meet the sea. In early 2009, the Washington State Board of Natural Resources voted to buy 80 acres of private land on the south slope of Blanchard Mountain, outpost of the Chuckanuts and popular equestrian and recreation destination. The purchase conserves working forest lands and helps stem the tide of development.

This was the first of multiple such transactions and one of several outcomes of the Blanchard Strategies Agreement. That agreement at the end of 2007 protected 1,600 acres of mature forest and popular recreation trails in the heart of Blanchard. Conservation Northwest was one of a broad group of stakeholders in the year-long process that culminated in this agreement, which uniquely protected key forests, retained a funding base for fiduciary trusts like the local school district, and increased public forest ownership to ensure that forest lands preservation is part of the solution to the threat of sprawl.

Half of the watershed is public land managed by the Department of Natural Resources, who planned to eventually build more roads and log a large amount of the area.

This fall marked a next, important step to protecting a good portion of these public lands as a Lake Whatcom forest preserve. In November 2009 the Whatcom County Council approved funding for work to transfer from state to county park management 8,400 acres, more than a quarter of the watershed. The planned forest preserve will be managed to protect beautiful, remnant old-growth forest and to restore mature forest to old-growth conditions for marbled murrelets, bald eagles, ospreys, tailed frogs, and the Salish sucker, a small native fish.

Conservation Northwest has worked for a decade to reduce the impact of commercial logging on state-managed, publicly owned forest. In 2000 we helped local citizens bring their safety concerns about logging on unstable slopes and landslides to the state legislature, which passed the

Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan. We helped defend the landscape plan in court. The plan continues to help provide basic protections on forest land remaining in DNR management, but without preserve status, the plan is limited and would still allow clearcutting leading to 43 miles of new logging roads. Protecting the watershed as a county park will protect people and wildlife in the watershed.



Everybody loves spring: Endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterflies mating at prairie near Fort Lewis. Photo © Rob Gilbert

animals, from horned lark to western gray squirrel, that live on this little-known jewel of oaks, pines, and prairie flowers between Fort Lewis and McChord Airforce Base. The proposed Cross-Base Highway would cut through the heart of this, one of the best pieces of oak-woodland prairie remaining in Washington.

Local residents, business owners and equestrians have steadfastly opposed the highway for nearly a decade. The highway's environmental plans have been broadly panned, and the military has admitted quietly that they aren't crazy about the project, which is now projected to cost nearly half a billion dollars. Still, it continues to hang around, like a mindless zombie in an old horror movie.

Recently, state and Fort Lewis biologists have done wonders raising and reintroducing native butterflies and frogs, including Oregon spotted frogs, to the prairie. The Cross-Base Highway, should it go through, shatters those gains.

In November nearly 200 people urged the Puget Sound Advisory Council to pull Cross-Base from a "2040" transportation list, particularly given the state's commitment to decreasing Washington's carbon footprint.

Together with Tahoma Audubon and others in the Cross-Base Coalition, we will continue to work to protect this rare prairie and leave this paradise unpaved.



Above the Northshore trail, site of a new watershed preserve. Photo Erin Moore

**Between north** Puget Sound and Mount Baker lies Lake Whatcom, drinking water source for half the people in Whatcom County, about 90,000 people, including all the residents of Belling-

**Further south** along the coast reveals a rare remaining prairie, an example of what Washington's south Puget Sound used to look like. We've long worked to protect the endangered plants and

**Jen Watkins** Conservation associate,  
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## CASCADES MOUNTAINS

# Busy Before Snowfall in the Cascades



Decommissioned road in Partnership lands of the upper Yakima features 700-year-old western red cedars. Photo Jen Watkins

**Wildlife and habitats** saw major gains in the eastside Cascades this summer and fall. Conservation Northwest and our partners this year restored forests, reintroduced fire, removed old roads, and protected old trees. We also documented wildlife from bears to elk in our monitoring program, and watched as a remarkable wolverine, Sasha, made her long journey traveling from Harts Pass in the north all the way south to near Highway 2.

Black bear tracks, North Cascades. Photo © Eric Zamora



This year's highlights for forest restoration included a controlled reintroduction of fire to reestablish a fire ecology onto 6,000 acres of dry forest in the Naches Ranger District with the Tapash Collaborative. We also reached resolution with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, who will now protect, not log, large trees near Lake Wenatchee in an ongoing fuels reduction project called the Natapoc Ridge Restoration Project.

Topping the year off was the historic ground-breaking of the first phase of the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project. The I-90 project includes wildlife bridges, the first in Washington. Conservation Northwest has long recognized the importance of Washington's central Cascades and lands near I-90 as a pivotal biological link for wildlife connectivity between the north and south Cascades. Ensuring safe passage for people and wildlife in the area is a great gain.

On the subject of roads: This year we also entered an agreement with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest to address other roads issues. Through this agreement and with the support of generous partners, we hired a contractor, Natapoc Resources, to restore forests and close 1.5 miles of problem road near the Upper Kachess River and just under 1 mile of road near Twin Lakes.

We used a combination of private and public dollars to close these old spur roads that run through old-growth trees, home to goshawks and adjacent to a documented spotted owl nest.

The roads closure protects a stream crossing that harbors endangered tailed

and Cascades frogs. According to US Forest Service biologist Patty Garvey-Darda, the tributary is also the only place in the entire Cle Elum Ranger District with a documented population of terrestrial Pacific giant salamanders. The closure helps finish work begun by The Cascades Conservation Partnership. Conservation Northwest administered The Partnership from 2000 to 2004, a project that inspired 16,000 people to protect 45,000 acres of forests and rivers.

Restoring these roads could not have happened without generous funding from The Mountaineers Foundation, Puget Sound Energy Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Resource Advisory Committee. It ably illustrates the power of teamwork and partnership.

2009 was also a successful season for citizens recording wildlife on the move in the Cascades. As part of the Cascades Citizen Wildlife Monitoring Project, and in concert with wildlife and land management agencies, scores of volunteers installed and maintained cameras during our second, full season. Of the thousands of wildlife photos returned, most notable was a second set of pups from the resident wolf pack in the Methow Valley, as well as a red fox in the Teanaway Valley.

A wealth of diverse wildlife was documented moving through habitats around I-90 just east of Snoqualmie Pass where wildlife crossing structures are to be built. In a forested island between the



As part of our restoration on the Upper Kachess Road pictured here, adding big logs as woody debris helps restore an old road bed. Photo William C Ehinger/USFS

freeway's east- and west-bound lanes, cameras recorded elk and a bobcat walking by. Look for a final 2009 wildlife report on our website by year's end.

Winter brings with it the search for wolverines. Monitoring intern Julie Meneely plans to install a handful of remote cameras looking for wolverines near Highway 2. And as the snow flies, in our fourth season coordinating with the Wilderness Awareness School, we are training backcountry winter enthusiasts to track wolverines frequenting Interstate 90 east of Snoqualmie Pass.

Next year brings many more opportunities for us to help wildlife, including

start of a fuels reduction project near Leavenworth. This forest restoration project builds on the tremendous collaborative strides we've made with the Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition.

Also to come is release of a final Travel Management Plan for the more than 4 million acres of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, detailing which areas will be open to vehicles and which closed for people and wildlife. With the support and engagement of members, like you, we look forward to continuing our work on this important landscape next year.

**Jay Kehne** Okanogan County outreach associate,  
jkehne@conservationnw.org

OKANOGAN VALLEY

# New Day in the Okanogan

**This year at Conservation Northwest**, we are finding out what success looks like in Okanogan County. Our work on the ground for wolves and other wildlife, for ranchers and ranchlands, and for the people of the Northwest gives us reason to celebrate the connection of wild areas vital to a healthy future for wildlife and people. That work is also helping us forge new connections with the Cascades.

In 2008, the first wolves to return to Washington and raise a litter of pups chose the Methow Valley as their home territory. Only one of those pups is known to have survived, largely because of poachers who illegally shot pups, but the alpha male and female had another litter in the spring of 2009 and it is believed that three or four of these pups are still with us and doing well.

This summer, Conservation Northwest cameras captured a picture of this year's wolf pups with a guardian "teenager" standing watch while the alpha male and female were known to be a large distance away.

These wolves wandered into Washington on their own, as is common in dispersing wolf packs. In the winter of 2008, a lone, collared female wolf traveled over 1,200 miles from Montana through Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado in 90 days exploring new territory and looking for a mate. With the confirmation of another wolf pack in Pend Oreille County, wolves are proving their ability to adapt and to seek out new territory.

Conservation Northwest staff and volunteers are working with Department of Fish and Wildlife and US Forest Service biologists to provide monitoring data and real-time photo documentation whenever possible. Learning more about the Lookout Pack's movements and territorial range (now known to be at least 300 square miles) is crucial to managing wolf presence, recovery, and longevity in our state.

The state began planning ahead for wolves more than two years ago, but the wolves had other plans and have already arrived. Conservation Northwest, with others on a wolf

*Continued next page*



Lookout wolf, July 2009. Photo CNW



Burrowing owls nest in rodent and skunk burrows in grassland, shrub-steppe, and farmland areas of the Okanogan.

Photo © Paul Bannick

*New Day, continued from previous page*

working group appointed by the governor, helped create a management plan for wolves that is currently in draft form and open for public comment until early January. Please make sure to send your letter (see below) saying that you value wolves in Washington.

Yet, if wolves and other large animals in our state are to be sustained, they need not only habitat to live in but connected paths for movement in response to drought, wildfire, and habitat shifts from climate change. Connected landscapes also allow the expansion of gene pools that lend populations the ability to evolve, adapt, and survive.

Land intended to be permeable for wildlife movement, as part of a habitat corridor, can be comprised of a variety of habitat types and land uses, depending on the species. So while northern spotted owls require old-growth forest and sharp-tailed grouse require shrub-steppe, wide-ranging species like wolves or lynx mostly just need to avoid highways and settlements. Working ranches can meet this need and are far better for wildlife than the subdivisions that now threaten many ranches.

Conservation Northwest is working with partners including the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Trust for Public Land, Methow Conservancy, and Okanogan Valley Land Trust to provide Okanogan County ranchers with options other than selling to developers. Financial challenges for ranching communities are monumental, and now is the time to protect the landscapes that large ranches provide for wildlife, rural economies, and local heritage.



In the Okanogan, our coalition succeeded in putting four ranches, totaling about 8,000 acres, under easement last year. Ranchland protection provides wildlife benefits. Photo Mitch Friedman



Lookout wolf pup, July 2009. Photo CNW

*“The wolf is a natural presence. It has reclaimed its habitat.... We will coexist. It is right to have a plan for that.” –Wenatchee World editorial, Nov. 14, 2009*

## Protecting Washington’s Wolves

**Gray wolves are making** a natural comeback to Washington. Wolves play a crucial role in balancing predator and prey populations—from cougars to rodents—that wildlife scientists consider essential to maintaining healthy ecosystems.

There are now two confirmed packs in our state, in Okanogan and Pend Oreille counties, with a possible third pack in the Blue Mountains of south-eastern Washington.

This winter, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife issued a draft conservation and management plan for wolves. The plan comes after two years of hard work by members of

the state’s Wolf Working Group, which included Conservation Northwest.

Now is a perfect time to show support for Washington’s wolves and landscapes and to comment on the conservation and management plan.

**By January 8, 2010**, write to: WDFW, SEPA Desk, 600 Capitol Way N. Olympia, WA 98501-1091. Or go online to [www.conservationnw.org/wolf](http://www.conservationnw.org/wolf) to take action.

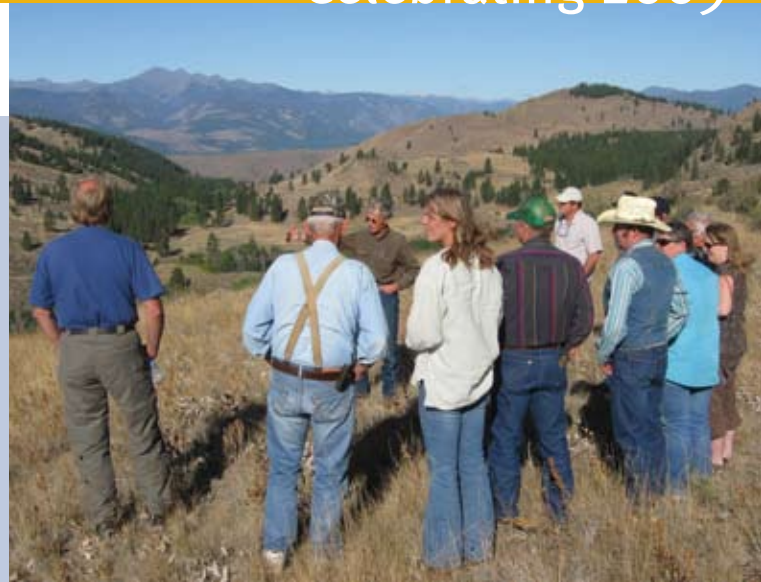
Let the state know that you value wolves and their positive effect on ecosystems and wish to see their recovery to our state’s wildlife and habitat. Alternative 3 provides the highest likelihood that wolves will be fully recovered in Washington State.



## Knowledge Is Power

**Lords of Nature** is a powerful film documentary about wolves and cougars that asks the question, “Can people and predators co-exist—can we afford not to?” This fall Conservation Northwest sponsored several showings in communities around the state.

“This film says so much, it even changes the outlook of the naysayers,” says Jay Kehne. In Twisp, 150 people attended; in Tonasket, more than 50 people showed up to watch the film, asking lively questions afterward during a panel discussion about wolves.



In the Methow, Conservation Northwest convened folks from across the fence to talk about wolf management. Photo © Jasmine Minbashian

Through conservation easements, ranchers volunteer to permanently retire the option to develop their property, thereby maintaining it as habitat and for agriculture. In return, they receive tax benefits and/or payment of the appraised fair market value of the development rights. Everybody wins in these scenarios, with landowners receiving cash today, the public enjoying sustained wildlife habitat, and local elected officials happy that their tax base and agricultural economy is being maintained.

Our coalition succeeded in putting four ranches, totaling about 8,000 acres, under easement last year. We’re on pace to exceed those numbers by over 50 percent this year and much more in years to come. Conservation Northwest’s roles include working for state and federal funds and recruiting for participation those ranchers and property owners with whom we have relationships.

For each property owner who enters into a conservation easement, there are five other ranchers watching and considering when and how they might do the same. Many funding sources are needed to make conservation easements work. The USDA Farm and Ranch Protection Program is one of those programs. Conservation Northwest has been directly involved in making sure this program is equally available to eastern and western Washington applicants. Because of our work, two pools of funds have been created, one for eastern and one for western Washington. And, thanks to recent changes to the ranking criteria, there is today a more equitable allocation of funds and more Okanogan County acres entering into easements. We are also considering a couple of key projects in Ferry and Stevens counties.

Creating “ecosystem awareness” in Okanogan communities is equally challenging but we are making good ground. As outreach associate for Conservation Northwest in Okanogan County, I don’t always find a receptive audience when the talk turns to wolves or wilderness. But, no matter how challenging, now is still the right time to be having these talks with hunters, elected officials, educators, snowmobilers, ranchers, and service groups. The similarities between hunters, ranchers,

and conservationists are bigger than the differences. Getting the word out that the health of the whole ecosystem is more important than any one person’s personal agenda or use of a part of the ecosystem is essential at this point in time. And getting the word out means having success stories to tell.

One of our biggest successes in Okanogan County so far are the hundreds of people at the County Fair, Rotary Club, Conservation District, Resource Conservation and Development Council, and personal contacts who have been given a new definition for conservation. Just my being here talking about wolves, connectivity, and wilderness is sending a message that there is another way to look at the place we live and how we interact with it.

Many people in the Methow support presence of the new wolf pack in their area. More than 150 people came to the Conservation Northwest showing of *Lords of Nature*, a film documentary on living with predators, and at least 20 folks signed up that night as volunteers. The film played in Tonasket several weeks later, drawing 50, all supportive of wolf recovery. On a panel discussion after the Twisp showing, wildlife biologists answered questions late into the night about wolf biology, extent of territory, expected recovery goals, and more.

The next day, seven ranchers attended a field tour with the panelists arranged by Conservation Northwest. Discussions included non-lethal methods to avoid depredation, what to do when a depredation does occur, and wolf livestock interactions. One rancher summed up the tour, “Better to be having these discussions now rather than later, standing around a dead cow killed by a wolf pack.”

Just as the wolf pack is adapting to its new territory in the Methow, the people who live in the Okanogan are also adapting, slowly changing a mind set to include the importance of predators, biodiversity, and landscapes, in their way of thinking.

Success in Okanogan County is measured in acres, projects, and wildlife recovery. Most important, success is measured in the willingness of people in the communities to learn and embrace sound ecological principles so that they and their children can enjoy and benefit from the natural world around them.

**Tim Coleman** Director of the  
Columbia Highlands Initiative,  
tcoleman@conservationnw.org

## COLUMBIA HIGHLANDS

# A Collaborative Success

Watching an early Columbia Highlands' snow-fall blanket mountains and valleys, I am filled with joy (and some trepidation) as I contemplate this year's challenges, successes, and work yet to be done in establishing a lasting legacy of healthy ecosystems and community self-reliance across northeastern Washington. In this least populated region of the state, where the Rocky Mountains connect to the North Cascades, community organizing is always a tough game to play.

Here, where rugged individualism always takes center stage, organizations and the people who forge their mission are as diverse and colorful as the fall-draped landscape. Yet it is here that 80 years after its extermination the gray wolf has returned to cloak the night in song, where rich and diverse wildlife flourish, and where one of the most heralded success



Hiking Hall Mountain in northeastern Washington, big wild lands.  
Photo Leif Jakobsen

stories of collaborative forest management in America is creating vibrations that may reframe the balance of wilderness in our national forests. Conservation Northwest is proud to have played a vital role in these efforts to maintain landscape connections that support wildlife and people from the Washington Coast to the Rockies.

Midway through its eighth year, the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition has become a national model for cooperative management of public resources. The Coalition's course charts

## Why I Adopted Hall Mountain Wilderness

**Aaron Theisen** Intern,  
atheisen@conservationnw.org

**Colorful and grand**, Hall Mountain is a glaciated mass overlooking the placid shores of Sullivan Lake 4,000 feet below. The forested terrain is so rugged that the US Air Force, until 2001, trained survival instructors here.

The wild tangle of forest also makes it a bastion for wildlife. The Forest Service keeps one of the primary access roads closed most of the year to allow undisturbed foraging opportunities for the reclusive grizzly bear. Caribou, lynx, and wolverine traverse the higher reaches, while birdwatchers, hunters, and berry-pickers ply the miles of intersecting trails.

Despite Hall Mountain's lack of development or marks of humanity, and its profound solitude for two- and four-legged creatures alike, the area was cut from wilderness consideration in each of the Forest Service's last two roadless area reviews and evaluations. In the in-

tervening years, bulldozers and chainsaws have chipped away almost half the area. Now only 7,919 acres of undisturbed land remain. This past summer, citing factors such as evidence of clearcuts on adjacent mountains, distant noise from Sullivan Lake, and the "bright lights" of the tiny towns of Metaline and Lone, the Forest Service again left Hall Mountain out of its initial wilderness recommendations.

The Forest Service's considerations provide an incomplete picture. The intangible experience of the place, comprised of tangible sensations—sights, smells, sounds—tells a different and more compelling story. Wild places are more than a name typed on a map or buried in hundreds of pages of lawmakers' language. But how do we tell their true stories? One way is by adopting these special places. Conservation Northwest's Adopt A

Wilderness program pairs advocates for wilderness with roadless areas of their choosing, such as Hall Mountain, to lend citizens' voices to the story of these last wild places.

On the October weekend I visited my adopted wilderness, Hall Mountain, autumn colors were beginning to give way to winter white. Western larch trees glowed on neighboring mountains, and every breeze brought a shower of yellow aspen leaves to the ground. Noisy Creek Trail climbs quickly away from Sullivan Lake, intermittently following the creek from which it takes its name as it tumbles down a draw lined with gigantic western red cedar and the flat sprays of hemlock. Shortly after the trail crosses Noisy Creek near a decaying miner's cabin, a giant old-growth larch, survivor of the 1926 wildfire that raged across Hall Mountain, stood guard. Yellow leaves

from a single timber sale to a present-day forest plan alternative for the entire 1.1 million acre Colville National Forest.

Along the way the Coalition has redefined the “multiple-use” of the old Forest Service lexicon. That word used to often mean “multiple clearcuts.” It’s now evolving to a new definition of balanced land allocations that honors wilderness and ancient forest preservation equally with that of resource extraction. US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack recently called the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition’s success in the Colville National Forest the “best model” of community collaboration in the country.

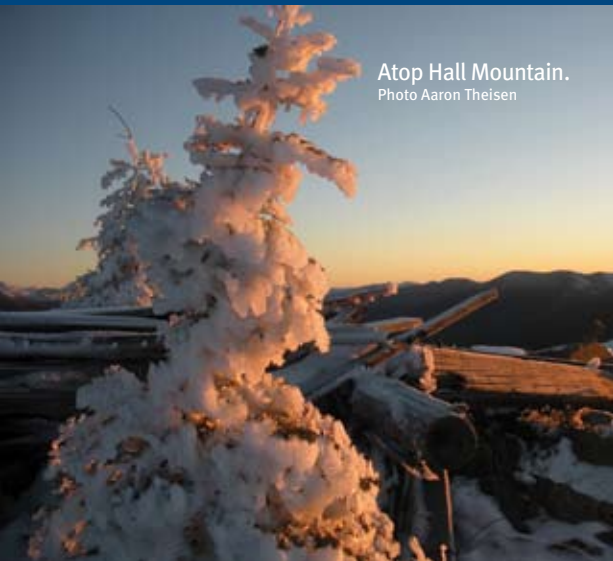
The Coalition’s success at resolving the timber wars, putting loggers back to work restoring healthy forests, and sending 12,000 logs trucks full of wood to area mill and cogeneration facilities, has caused some people (who’d rather fight than switch) to cry foul. The issue isn’t about forestry, old growth preservation, or even roadless areas, it’s about wilderness. Oddly, loggers and wilderness advocates, the most unlikely partners, created the Forestry Coalition that has brought the two “sides” together to support a sustainable timber supply and wilderness designation for all but one inventoried roadless area in and adjoining the Colville National Forest. These wild forests are all-important to the survival of lynx, wolverine, grizzly bear, and mountain caribou.

Perhaps the most important take-home lesson of the Coalition is that to participate honestly in collaborative problem

solving you have to be willing to compromise. You could not collaborate on timber, range, or wilderness management if your position was always “no.” Unfortunately, some folks are stuck in “Never-Never Land,” and that’s a crying shame because there’s an abundance of opportunities for everyone.

Conservation Northwest is committed to working with all groups to resolve problems. Following the successful Congressional “listening session” held in Spokane in August about the Coalition’s successes, Senator Cantwell and Representative McMorris Rodgers invited key community leaders, including county commissioners, equestrians, motorized recreationists, and tribal government to help build on the work of the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition and resolve outstanding forest management issues regarding range, recreation access, mining, and tribal concerns—and do it by midwinter. We’re making progress.

So it is that amid the clamorous public lands debate seizing the Columbia Highlands over wilderness, motorized recreation, and community collaboration, old brother gray wolf waltzed unnoticed into the region as quietly and mysteriously as fog on a moonlit night. A reproducing pack in Pend Oreille County this year means wolves are back to balance nearly the full complement of wildlife that early explorers found in the Columbia Highlands, from grizzly bear to wolverine to bighorn sheep. Parts of the Columbia Highlands are as rich and wild today as they ever were, and they deserve wilderness protection.



Atop Hall Mountain.  
Photo Aaron Theisen

from the occasional cottonwood and birch tree piled up on the trail. Higher up, false azalea, creeping Oregon grape, and prince’s pine competed for space among close stands of lodgepole pine. Shortly after Noisy Creek Trail intersected Hall Mountain Trail, the dense forest gave way to meadows of spicy-scented sagebrush, and finally, fescue. Stout, stately spruce and wide-skirted, windblown subalpine fir stood tall against the brisk wind. I made camp in a rocky draw a 15-minute hike from the summit as the sunlight gave way to a cold, clear night sky bursting with stars.

That morning, watching the sun rise over the Idaho Selkirks from the ruins of the old lookout, I could see the silhouettes of Hooknose and Abercrombie Mountains to the west and, in a valley below, one twinkling light that could not compete with the rapidly brightening sky. Hiking back to my car in the warmth of the midmorning sun,

## Adopt a Wilderness

**Wild roadless** forests such as Thirteenmile, Twin Sisters, Bald-Snow, Quartzite, and Hall Mountain-Grassy Top, need your voice. We invite you to become a guardian by “adopting” one or more roadless areas in the Columbia Highlands. These lands deserve the highest level of protection under the Wilderness Act. Go online to [www.conservationnw.org/adopt](http://www.conservationnw.org/adopt), or call us in Spokane at 509.747.1663.

I saw a tangle of animal tracks stitched over my own, the only evidence of some midnight predator-prey drama that unfolded while I slept unaware nearby.

A good criterion for wilderness is that when you’re there you can truly feel the world is yours. That’s what is so great about the Adopt a Wilderness program—it’s a reminder that each of us truly owns these public lands.

“Adopt a wilderness” pairs advocates for wilderness with roadless areas of their choosing, lending citizens’ voices to the story of these last wild places.



In Canada, millions of acres of forest habitat were protected from logging and roadbuilding for mountain caribou in 2008. But how will one of the most endangered large mammals in North America fare with climate change? Photo © Jan Formby

**Joe Scott** International conservation director,  
jscott@conservationnw.org

## BC ROCKIES

# Climate Change, A Human Challenge

**We face in climate change** a very serious human challenge. Or at the very least, we may be entering some uncharted waters—where the waves are steepening and the clouds darkening. But let's set aside the gloom and doom for a bit. Let's take a walk on the (positive) wild side for a bit.

If the public gets its collective head out of the rapidly saturating sand, and governments start worrying about the next generation instead of the next election, if society can somehow manage a kind of climate Hail Mary pass—we will have come out of this looming disaster with a blueprint for cooperation and an infinitely more wildlife-friendly landscape.

There's nothing like a good old-fashioned looming disaster to bring folks together in the spirit of cooperation and encourage creative ideas. We Americans have always had this capacity—like manufacturing and bipartisanship—that somehow has undergone a post-war decay that tracks that of our rust belt cities.

The point is that there are some good things happening out there. Strangely enough, governments are planning strategies to help wildlife adapt to what will almost certainly be some serious habitat changes.

For one thing Americans and Canadians are talking to each other about wildlife adaptation, certainly not at the necessary levels or with enough details yet. But we are talking. Conservation Northwest can take some credit for that as we've been working with our Canadian colleagues for years. But now state and federal governments are also interested in a wildlife détente with our polite neighbors to the north.

This year, Conservation Northwest, British Columbia-based Wildsight, South Similkameen Conservation Program, and Defenders of Wildlife cosponsored the third annual Wild Links conference in Osoyoos, BC, to trade science and brainstorm on issues relevant to transborder wildlife and to network. There were First Nations representatives, conservation groups, academics, and agency and ministry scientists in the room, along with a lot of good energy.

These are the kind of gatherings where work gets done and relationships are built. Out of Wild Links came the idea for a

binational transboundary working group that would push our shared Canadian/US wildlife interests. The folks in the room were determined to build foundations for future work.

The Wild Links conference was also a coming-out party for the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, an interagency/non-governmental organization effort to understand the wildlife habitat needs of species in the Pacific Northwest as climate change effects become more pronounced. The working group has representatives from British Columbia and will analyze the landscape on an ecoregional basis which transcends political boundaries and is more meaningful for wildlife movement.

Ultimately that will hopefully help us to answer questions that are fundamental to our work and mission—for example whether there is the possibility that there are wildlife connections that extend northwest into the BC Coast Range and northeast into the BC Monashee and Columbia Mountains. And, what types of land use practices may restore or enhance those pathways.

Perhaps most excitingly the federal government is interested in the same kinds of questions: How can we help wildlife adapt to climate change while also devising habitat conservation strategies to mitigate climate change? For example, what types of land use practices can simultaneously give wildlife more freedom to roam while boosting carbon storage capacity, e.g., conserving old-growth forests?

Congress has appropriated \$10 million for the US Fish and Wildlife Service to assemble regional Landscape Conservation Cooperatives to answer these questions. Conservation Northwest has been invited to participate.

Maybe out of the climate change crisis we can write a new narrative, one that embraces a new model of conservation that is proactive, not reactive; one that designs wildlife habitat into the landscape instead of feeding them the leftovers.

Perhaps the new narrative reflects big thinking and big landscapes, not habitat islands with struggling populations of increasingly rare animals, but a real awareness of wildlife needs and a new era of Canadian/US cooperation.

## Fond Farewell to Jeff Bodé

**Jodi Broughton** Business and membership director, [jbroughton@conservationnw.org](mailto:jbroughton@conservationnw.org)

*Jeff Bodé served on our board for almost 18 years, or as he says “nearly one third of my life.” He helped take Conservation Northwest from a scrappy advocacy group to a professional conservation organization that is still cutting-edge, lean, and efficient. Below are Jeff’s highlights of his time on the board. We’ll miss you, Jeff.*

“I recall the 1991 Greater Ecosystem Alliance retreat on Whidbey Island—it was incredibly long because decisions were made by consensus. This was fine back then but if the organization was to grow, its board of directors had to modernize. I helped with that, just in time, as Greater Ecosystem Alliance already was growing and soon became Northwest Ecosystem Alliance.

“I stuck around back then because we did exciting work (e.g., Thunder Mountain), effectively leveraged our litigation (e.g., Loomis Forest), and the growth itself was exciting.

“By the time we launched The Cascades Conservation Partnership in 2000, our focus had begun to shift slightly away from litigation and we were gaining recognition as coalition leaders and strategic campaigners.

“As we matured as an organization, I began to feel I should step aside, but then the post-Enron Congress made life difficult for non-profits. New legal rules made it clear that my departure would leave a void that a good lawyer should fill, yet no other lawyer was available. If I had needed any consolation, Conservation Northwest’s work

amply provided it, especially in the prospect of preserving wilderness in the Columbia Highlands. I also was buoyed by the board itself, especially the changes President Alex Loeb made in how the board did its work.

“Finally, a much better lawyer than I had hoped for in a successor, Jenifer, came along. One of the best highlights was touring the area that Conservation Northwest is helping to secure for transboundary wildlife passage at my last board meeting, our October retreat.

“An image of large animals crossing that landscape formed in my mind’s eye and that wonderful image will never leave me. I am confident that Conservation Northwest will make that image a reality.”

## Advancing Conservation at a Board Retreat

**Alexandra Loeb** Outgoing board president, ongoing board member, [alex\\_loeb@msn.com](mailto:alex_loeb@msn.com)



Board members, back row, left to right: Tom Campion, Chris Kopczynski, Jenifer Merkel, Nancy Ritzenthaler, Anne-Marie Faiola, Mitch Friedman, Jeff Bodé, Floyd Rogers, John Magoteaux, Hilary Franz. Front row, left to right, Bill Donnelly, Peggy Printz, Heidi Wills, Emily Barnett, Alex Loeb. Photo © Paul Bannick

For me, this year’s annual Conservation Northwest board of directors retreat was the best one yet. As Conservation Northwest looks forward, we have a large decision to make: Stay in our current geographic world, centered in Washington State for the most part, or follow the science.

The science is telling us that as we continue to secure important wildlife habitat in the US, we need to also increasingly look north to British Columbia where the lands, very much connected to Washington and Idaho, provide our favorite wildlife—from Pacific fishers to grizzly bears—population bases and areas to roam. Of course, it would be easier to just stay put. I must admit that as I looked around the room at the incredible talent and energy we have in our staff and our board, I was hoping that we’d sign up for a challenge worthy of this amazing team, and I think we have! You’ll hear more on this next year from Mitch and other staff.

This year, we’re sad to say goodbye to lawyer Jeff Bodé, our stalwart secretary and longest-serving board member, who has shepherded Conservation Northwest through many campaigns and internal transitions. Thank you, Jeff! I’m pleased

*Continued next page*

*Advancing Conservation, continued from previous page*

that we added two new energetic board members, Jenifer Merkel and Heidi Wills, who were great auction table captains before they were even voted in.

Jenifer Merkel practices law at Foster Pepper PLLC, primarily in the areas of trusts and estates with a particular emphasis in nonprofits. "As an attorney, I'm trained to solve problems, form strategic alliances, and find creative solutions. As a board member, I'll be able to suggest solutions to issues that many tax-exempt organizations face in this era of heightened scrutiny by the IRS and Congress, as well as planned charitable giving advice," said Jenifer. "I joined the board because I believe in preserving our wild areas, particularly the North Cascades and northeastern Washington, where some of my family is from. Conservation Northwest is the most efficient and effective environmental organization in the area and I am thrilled to be a part of it." Jenifer is an avid runner, hiker, skier, and urban gardener and lives with her husband Chris, two dogs, four chickens, and a roommate near Greenlake.

Heidi Wills moved from Montana to Seattle in 1983 and counts protecting wild lands and biodiversity among her

strongest passions. "From my vantage point as a staff member at King County and as a councilmember for the City of Seattle, I know the importance Conservation Northwest plays in building partnerships and being a catalyst behind preserving our most critical habitats. I also deeply respect Conservation Northwest's reputation and its effectiveness in achieving its mission." Heidi has served on the boards of Transportation Choices Coalition, Climate Solutions, and Seattle Seafair. She currently directs a nonprofit organization that primarily serves disadvantaged children, recognizing that they will inherit the legacy and values we bestow to them. Heidi enjoys cycling, traveling, reading, running, and hiking and lives with her husband Kobi and two children in Fremont.

Members also stepped up to give our leadership some new energy. Floyd Rogers was elected as president, Emily Barnett as vice-president, Bill Donnelly as treasurer, and Jenifer Merkel as secretary.

It has been an honor to serve as board president these last five years and I look forward to continuing to serve on the board as we tackle the new challenges ahead!

## Are You a "Wildland Partner"?

**Julia Spencer** Membership associate,  
julia@conservationnw.org



Aaron and Kristi partner with Conservation Northwest for wildlife and wildlands.

**Kristi and Aaron** Theisen became Conservation Northwest members in 2007 and joined the *Wildland Partner* program in 2008. This year, they joined our Facebook fan club and participated in our Columbia Highland hike series. Most recently, Aaron became our Spokane outreach intern, working on the Adopt a Wilderness campaign.

Thank you, Kristi and Aaron, for stepping up to support Conservation Northwest in so many ways. "Becoming a Wildland Partner was an easy choice for us. The automatic monthly

giving makes it easy to demonstrate our commitment and supports a cause that reflects our values of conserving our precious wild areas and protecting wildlife in the beautiful Northwest."

Our *Wildland Partner* program is an incredible opportunity for you to have a direct impact on keeping the Northwest wild. Wildland Partners provide crucial resources for strengthening our partnerships, building community awareness and support, and successfully protecting the animals and places we love. The efficiency of this monthly or quarterly donor program ensures more of each dollar

you give goes toward protecting wild places and endangered animals. For as little as \$10 a month you can help us accomplish many things, such as:

- Enabling Erin to send action alerts on priority issues such as wolves and wilderness to over 3,600 people,
- Helping Jay in Okanogan County to find common ground for communities balancing the return of native wolves and preserving the heritage of working ranchlands,
- Allowing Derrick to collaborate with a diverse group of foresters, businesses, recreationists, and others to spearhead a national model for forest management through the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition,
- And so much more!

Please join today! We need more Wildland Partners to keep the Northwest wild. Your membership is automatically renewed, gifts show up conveniently on your monthly statements, and we send a year-end tax receipt for your total charitable gifts. Sign up for EFT (automatic withdrawals from your checking account), which is the best return on your investment, or use your credit card by contacting me at [julia@conservationnw.org](mailto:julia@conservationnw.org) or calling 800.878.9950 x10.

You can also sign up online at [www.conservationnw.org/donate](http://www.conservationnw.org/donate) or by using the form on the back page.

# Conservation: The Gift that Keeps Giving Back

Your donations comprise more than 70% of our yearly revenue, helping protect and connect forests and wildlife from the Washington Coast to the BC Rockies. Thank you! To donate, go to [www.conservationnw.org/donate](http://www.conservationnw.org/donate), call Julia at 800.878.9950 x10, or fax 360.671.8429. **Please share our vital work with these special holiday prices on fun merchandise!**

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We are grateful for your support!**



Skiing in the Grassy Top Roadless Area, in the Columbia Highlands of northeastern Washington.  
Photo Leif Jakobsen

## Thank you, volunteers

**In 2009**, volunteers donated hundreds of hours across the state for wildlife and wild places. We can't thank you enough for your efforts working in the field, keeping Conservation Northwest offices and events running smoothly, and inspiring the public to take action. We succeed because of allies like you. Thanks!

Want to do more for wildlife in 2010? Get involved at [www.conservationnw.org/getinvolved](http://www.conservationnw.org/getinvolved)