



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Bandon Preserve, No. 11



Marie Simonds
Executive Director



Paula Thompson
*Program &
Administrative Assistant*



Timothy Scahill
Digital Marketing Specialist

Dear Friends,

In 2021, WRCA and its partners collectively learned to navigate a new norm. As we returned to making grants focused on our core mission, we were enriched and inspired by the new connections, partnerships and possibilities we found across sectors during our shift toward COVID-19 relief.

We learned that we all have shared goals for the South Coast. And as we recover and move forward, we continue to find innovative ways to collaborate with leaders, funders, volunteers, business owners and organizations working on behalf of our communities.

In reconnecting with our long-standing partners and projects, we noted the resilience of South Coast communities and the organizations and volunteers that serve them so well. Over the last year, vital projects continued to progress, offering new opportunities for economic, ecological and community renewal.

As always, we are grateful to our steering committee, which shares with us the expertise and knowledge we need

to connect with local awareness and leverage our resources further.

We also want to recognize the WRCA team members who have stepped away due to other commitments: Kathleen Flanagan, Anne Kubisch, Tony Roszkowski and Tim Scahill. We appreciate their dedication to WRCA's work on the South Coast, and we wish them luck in their new endeavors. They will be missed.

Our work continues to be supported through Bandon Dunes Golf Resort and our founder, Mike Keiser, whose dedication to community, conservation and economy along the South Coast is a catalyst for WRCA grantees and the work they do.

And, of course, we are grateful to the people of the South Coast, whom we feel fortunate to call our neighbors, partners and friends. We value their support, and we look forward to continuing to work with them for the benefit of our communities and environment.

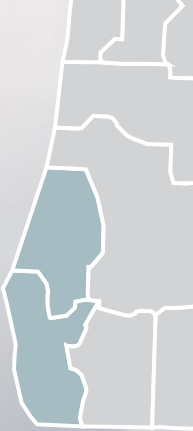
— Marie Simonds & the WRCA Team

MISSION

To fund community projects on the South Coast of Oregon that are committed to the triple bottom line (conservation, community and economy) and prioritize approaches that blend innovative ecological initiatives while driving economic opportunity.

SERVICE AREA

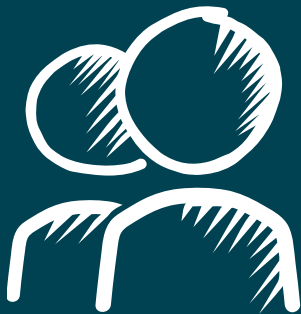
Communities and working lands in Coos and Curry counties, ranging from the Coquille watershed south through the Winchuck watershed.



Isaac Lee Patterson Bridge, Gold Beach

WRCA GRANTS

35 grants awarded in 2021



COMMUNITY



CONSERVATION



ECONOMY

\$6.3 million awarded since inception





COMMUNITY

“Quality, affordable child care continues to be a statewide and national priority. Communities are struggling to meet this need while finding qualified staff and adhering to licensing policy. Bandon Community Child Care Center is addressing the need for care by increasing its capacity due to the generosity of community organizations and grant programs.”

— Becky Armistead, Bandon School District Middle School Principal



28 child care spaces
available with new BCCCC
building (an increase of 20)



20 youth attending Salvation
Army's after-school program
each day



1,500 meals per month
provided to seniors and the
unhoused at Gold Beach
Community Center

GRANTEES

- Bandon Community Child Care Center
- COVID-19 relief funds
- Gold Beach Community Center
- Gold Beach Main Street
- In a Landscape
- Salvation Army
- South Coast Business
- United Way of Southwestern Oregon

Forging partnerships, building capacity and helping regional organizations secure resources.

From child care to the arts, WRCA encouraged and expanded some of our region's most vital community resources.

The collaboratively funded Bandon Community Child Care Center obtained a new facility in 2021. Following the donation of a modular building by Grace Lutheran Church in Eugene, funders from across the South Coast and the state joined together to fund the rehabilitation of this site and increase the area's number of licensed, high-quality, affordable child care slots. In March 2022, BCCCC moved into the newly remodeled building and immediately more than doubled its enrollment.

Support for the Salvation Army's administrative headquarters and gymnasium enabled them to bring back their after-school programs for at-risk youth. In

coordination with many other funders, we also contributed toward a new roof at the Gold Beach Community Center, which will allow this important community gathering place to reenergize its in-person programming.

Gold Beach Main Street is shepherding efforts that improve their community's quality of life while enhancing its historic beauty and interest for visitors. In 2021, their civic renovation projects included the restoration of Pocket Park for patrons of the downtown corridor. Gold Beach Main Street is also propelling efforts to assess the feasibility of placing utilities underground, developing new pedestrian and traffic paths, and installing additional benches and pullouts.



CONSERVATION

“The triple bottom line really resonates with us, because we realize that the broader impacts of our conservation work also support coastal communities. There’s a ripple effect out from what happens with a conservation project; we try to get a foothold on one project, and then build on areas around it that create an even larger impact.”

— Ann Schmierer, Executive Director, Wild Rivers Land Trust



4 new tide gate projects began implementation



250+ acres of gorse control and treatment was completed



18 river miles of tributary restoration



1st wildfire training center in Oregon will be built in the Gold Beach area

GRANTEES

- The Conservation Fund
- Coquille Watershed Association
- Curry Soil & Water Conservation District
- Gorse Action Group
- River Docs, LLC
- Rogue Siskiyou Regional Wildfire and Emergency Training Center
- Wild Rivers Land Trust

Strengthening economic stability, community assets and the environment by supporting working landscapes and seascapes.

Some of this year's grants focused on projects that protect community water, monitor fish passages, and control noxious invasive species.

In partnership with The Conservation Fund and Wild Rivers Land Trust, we funded a critical land purchase in the Port Orford Drinking Watershed. This acquisition will help keep sediment out of the local water system by protecting 160 acres of private timberland in the uplands.

Our funding for Coquille Watershed Association will expand the Lower Coquille River tide gate and fish passage monitoring to incorporate the Coaledo tide gate at Beaver Slough with new equipment and antenna arrays, making fish counts more accurate and efficient. Enhanced monitoring data is already being used to

seek further funding for critical tide gate infrastructure on the Coquille River.

Gorse control continues to be a major conservation priority for WRCA. It's critical to reducing the risk of wildfires as well as protecting regional economic and environmental assets.

The Gorse Action Group — a dedicated partnership of federal, state and county agencies and nonprofits — continued its highly successful collaboration in 2021, removing more than 250 acres of this invasive weed from the watersheds between the Winchuck River and New River. This critical control work frees up the land for recreation, agriculture and the restoration of native plant species and animal habitat.



“We need to think in terms of developing the economy by making this a more comfortable community to live in, as opposed to recruiting some big company or industry. We’ve got some wonderful assets in our community down here, so how can we build on those?”

— Harv Schuboth, Executive Director, Greater Bandon Association



16 miles of bike trail in Gold Beach and a system in Coquille scoped



30 nonprofits received business assistance through United Way



1 FTE to help Bandon Chamber of Commerce extend the tourist season



8 final miles of Whiskey Run trails completed, plus new restrooms and parking lot, in concert with Coos County and many funders

GRANTEES

- Bandon Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Bandon Association
- Oregon Coast Visitors Association
- South Coast Culture Tour
- Whiskey Run Bike Trail System

Supporting economic development and ecological enhancement by fostering local, sustainable businesses and nonprofits.

Each year, WRCA supports organizations and collaborative efforts that are enhancing the South Coast as a destination for sustainable tourism. Research shows that direct and indirect tourism accounts for almost 25% of the region's economy.

Accordingly, WRCA looks for funding opportunities that will increase the economic benefits of tourism while also safeguarding the natural attractions that make the South Coast unique.

Revitalizing historic downtowns is a good example. WRCA funding supported the second year of Greater Bandon Association's three-year strategic plan, which includes downtown beautification projects and the installation of bicycle racks and wayfinding kiosks. In line with this effort, we also assisted the Bandon Chamber

of Commerce with hiring a new event coordinator who has been tasked with identifying ways to extend the tourist season beyond the summer months.

The 30-mile Whiskey Run mountain bike trail system is a major destination development project supported by WRCA, Coos County, Travel Southern Oregon Coast, and many other partners. In 2021, the final 8 miles were completed, new public restrooms were installed, and parking and signage were improved.

We also supported planning and scoping efforts for other trail systems, with the goal of creating a cluster of high-quality destination trails that will offer visitors and locals safe, scenic hiking and biking while also providing an ongoing boost to South Coast businesses.



SMALL GRANTS



“The longer we do this project, the more we’re going to learn about how whales adapt to changing oceans. So I think our knowledge is only going to grow and grow, as well as the impact we have on students and communities on the South Coast.”

— *Dr. Leigh Torres, Associate Professor at Oregon State University’s Marine Mammal Institute*

Photo courtesy of The GEMM Lab at OSU



32 Circles in the Sand
labyrinth draws



120-square-foot greenhouse
in Brookings to provide
sustainable meals for locals



22 high school and
undergraduate students have
participated in OSU's gray
whale research program



512-square-foot educational
mural depicting offshore kelp
forest ecosystems

GRANTEES

- Circles in the Sand
- OSU GEMM Laboratory
- Port of Bandon
- St. Timothy's Community Garden

Responding to the South Coast's immediate needs and making positive impacts on our communities.

This year's small-grant recipients highlight the importance of exploring and understanding place, as well as the innovation, creativity and commitment that characterize our region's approach to recognizing and meeting community needs.

These qualities are embodied by a unique program headed by Dr. Leigh Torres of the Geospatial Ecology of Marine Megafauna (GEMM) Laboratory at Oregon State University, which studies gray whale behavior off the Port Orford coast while also engaging local youth in scientific research and public education.

More than 20 students have participated in this annual six-week internship program, and most have gone on to college or a STEM field.

The Port of Bandon's Great Kelp Forest Project will create a larger-than-life mural that educates viewers on the ecological and cultural significance of the South Coast's offshore kelp forests.

The Circles in the Sand labyrinth draws are a beloved beach program that attracts visitors to Bandon from all over the globe. These enormous, ornate sand drawings give visitors an opportunity to learn about environmental stewardship as well as to relax and reflect. These unique artworks that wash away with the incoming tide are an inspiring example of the triple-bottom-line perspective that informs our grant-making.



WRCA FOUNDER

Mike Keiser

When Mike Keiser imagined the 13-hole, par-3 Bandon Preserve golf course, he also envisioned a sustainable way to benefit the South Coast.

Through its net proceeds, Bandon Preserve golf course supports Wild Rivers Coast Alliance projects focusing on conservation, local communities and regional economic development.

The Keiser Family — including Mike's two sons, Chris and Michael L. — continue to support what their father started: using the creation of world-class, links-style golf to sustainably promote a thriving South Coast of Oregon.

WRCA STEERING COMMITTEE

Thank you to our 2021 WRCA Steering Committee members!



Jena Carter



Steve Denney



Kathleen Flanagan



Melissa Freeman



Rick Goche



Mark Grenbemer



Al Johnson



Wayne Krieger



Anne Kubisch



Cam Parry



Tony Roszkowski



Matt Swanson



Mary Wahl



Joe Whitworth

wildriverscoastalliance.com

