



Great Old Broads for Wilderness Media Kit

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Mission

Great Old Broads for Wilderness (“Broads”) is a national grassroots organization, led by women, that engages and inspires activism to preserve and protect wilderness and wild lands.

Conceived by older women who love wilderness, Broads gives voice to the millions of Americans who want to protect their public lands as Wilderness for this and future generations.

As a women-led* organization, we bring knowledge, leadership, and humor to the conservation movement to protect our last wild places on earth.

Vision:

Wild public lands are treasured for their intrinsic values and protected for current and future generations.

Values Statement:

Wilderness and public lands are for everyone; they are the heritage of all and a gift to future generations. Wild places, once destroyed, may be gone forever.

We value:

- National public lands and waters.
- The spirit and intent of national conservation legislation such as the Wilderness Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and Antiquities Act, which protect wild places that once destroyed, may be gone forever.
- The natural world as a community where humans, as one small piece of an interconnected whole, must take responsibility for care.
- Sound science as a basis for informed decisions.
- Being bold, courageous, and fearless in defense of wild lands.
- Humor, grace, common sense, and passion.
- Openness to all perspectives.
- Dialogue to resolve conflicts.
- Expanding racial, cultural, and gender diversity in the conservation movement.
- Broadness as a state of mind.

* For Broads, the term “women” includes and represents anyone who self-identifies as a woman.



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Board of Directors

Board of Directors (April 2021)

- Rynda Clark, Co-Chair
- Micky Ryan, Co-Chair
- Anne Heikkila, Vice Chair
- Antonia Daly, Secretary
- Suez Jacobson, Treasurer
- Mary O'Brien
- Pip Coe
- Anna Lee Vargas

The Board of Directors actively provides guidance on strategic direction and assures that the necessary resources—including funds, staff, and professional expertise—are available to accomplish Broads' mission.

- Directors serve 3-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- The Board meets quarterly by conference call to focus on strategy, advocacy, budget, programs, activities, and fundraising.
- An annual retreat is held near the end of the fiscal year (December 31) to review past actions, plan future directions, and approve the budget.
- Each member is expected to take an active role in the organization.
- Each board member brings unique and valuable talents and networks to the organization. Board members taking on roles as officers will generally contribute more hours of work than other members.



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Council of Advisors

For years, our organization has relied on a select group of individuals with a unique set of skills, experience, and resources—the Great Old Broads’ Council of Advisors. This group provides the expertise, financial support, and encouragement necessary to meet the challenges facing us in our efforts to protect public lands and the values we hold dear.

Aside from providing advice on specific issues to the Broads’ national office and Broadbands, the Council serves as a “kitchen cabinet,” advising the Board of Directors on matters of national importance to the Broads.

Council of Advisors (April 2021)

- Steve Allen
- Joe Breddan
- Rose Chilcoat
- Craig Childs
- Dave Foreman
- Maggie Fox
- Ginger Harmon
- Vicky Hoover
- Libby Ingalls
- Frandee Johnson
- Matt Kenna
- Linda Liscom
- Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk
- Bill Meadows
- Caroline Kirksey Munger
- Marcey Olajos
- Tim Peterson
- Carl Rountree
- Lois Snedden
- Blake Spalding
- Liz Thomas



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Our Work

Broads empowers women to use democracy to defend our birthright—America’s public lands and waters. We train and mobilize advocates in communities across the nation to rally for wilderness designation and public land protections to ensure clean air and water, and a healthy habitat for all of Earth’s creatures. We focus on four core activities:

EDUCATION

Education is the foundation of action and the core of our work. We believe in placed-based education to develop a strong understanding of the issues, history, and important link between public lands and mitigating the effects of a changing climate. Our work is guided by science and research to ensure we advocate for what is best for the land. Our members learn to act as citizen scientists, documenting impacts on our public lands, and gathering data used to evaluate land conditions and support protection proposals.

ADVOCACY

Broads takes a grassroots approach, connecting people with a desire to get involved and guiding them on how to take action. Individual members and our 40 (and growing!) Broadband chapters across the country participate in land management decision-making to keep threats at bay and support policies that protect public lands. We coach Broadband leaders and members how to hold government agencies and decision makers accountable for sustainable management of our public lands, and how to engage communities to effect change. We’re there to speak at legislative and agency hearings for the voiceless—wilderness and wildlife.

STEWARDSHIP

We show our love for the land through projects that repair and restore our wild places. We teach volunteers to document impacts to landscapes and gather data. Broads are the eyes and ears, the boots on the ground, the reporters and supporters. From re-seeding to fence building to trail repair, Broadbands work with land management agencies such as the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to lend their loving hands to tend public lands.

FUN

As legendary columnist Molly Ivins once said, “You got to have fun if you plan on staying involved for the long haul.” This is serious work, but we don’t take ourselves too seriously. Broads have fun learning and doing, making their voices heard, putting pen to paper, and getting close to nature. The challenges often feel unrelenting, but being on the land leads to a natural camaraderie with others who share the enthusiasm for the fight for America’s wild lands.



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History

1989 – A Lively Beginning

Great Old Broads for Wilderness was founded in 1989 on the 25th anniversary of the Wilderness Act by a feisty bunch of lady hikers who wanted to refute Utah Senator Orin Hatch's notion that wilderness is inaccessible to elders. About that time, wilderness designation had been proposed for Escalante, and Senator Hatch opposed it, saying, "...If for no other reason, we need roads for the aged and infirm."

Outrage Begets A New Voice

Founder Susan Tixier and her fellow activists were outraged, and with sudden clarity, saw that an important voice was missing from the environmental movement: the older woman—impassioned, experienced, not afraid to speak out, and definitely not needing roads. The group committed themselves to grassroots advocacy to preserve wilderness and wild places for future generations.

What's in a Name?

Tixier and her colleagues happily settled on their role and purpose, but hadn't yet decided on what to call themselves. Fate brought an answer to them. One fine day while the gang was out hiking and discussing what action to take next, they came upon a group of elderly ladies coming off a trail—dusty, tan, sinewy, and gray-haired. Someone remarked "What a bunch of great old broads."

The name stuck. It captured the spirit of the budding entity they envisioned, emphasizing the old and the feminine. More importantly, the moniker had humor, a core value of the group from the beginning.

Concept to Coalescence

The early framework declared Broads to be a nonprofit, social organization dedicated to the protection, use, and enjoyment of the wilderness (designated, proposed, or imagined).

The early days were informal—there were no dues. To become a member you just had to declare yourself one, and then you could buy a T-shirt to proclaim it to the rest of the world. The point was to have fun while doing what you were passionate about.

The Broads sat around kitchen tables and brainstormed. The plan was to spend their time and energies on action protecting wilderness, not creating a formal organization with a paid staff.



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History (Cont.)

A Force to Be Reckoned With

By 1993, with a growing membership and expenses, the board decided to institute annual dues—though payment was still optional. In 1994, it became necessary to hire a staff person to keep the membership database, publish the newsletter, *Broadsides*, and handle public relations. Broads was on its way to becoming a cohesive organization.

Today, Broads has a small staff and our ranks have grown to more than 8,500 members and supporters. There are nearly 40 Broadbands (chapters) in 17 states across the country dedicated to local and national wilderness issues. Our members include men (Great Old Bros) and younger women, too.

Wherever there are wilderness concerns, you'll find Broads jumping into the fray.



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Broadbands

Broadbands are member-run regional or local chapters across the country formed around Broads' mission to preserve and protect wilderness and wild lands.

These chapters, led by volunteer leaders and co-leader teams, are made up of passionate and dedicated Broads and Bros of diverse backgrounds and ages, with a fire for change and a love for the land.

Have Fun Doing Serious Work

Focused on education, advocacy, outreach, and collaborative stewardship projects—humor and joy play a fundamental role in our work. Broadband members share stories, experiences, and passions; creating deep connections to each other and the earth that lead to stronger Broadbands and stronger advocacy.

As for activities, there's something for everyone:

- Educational events, lectures, films, or book clubs.
- Stewardship projects to monitor and collect data, build and maintain trails, remove invasive plants, etc.
- Attend public meetings, write letters, organize or participate in protests or rallies.
- Work with land management agencies and political leaders.
- Represent Broads at local events, make presentations, and attend gatherings.
- Lead hikes, enjoy happy hour, and take road trips.
- Host local Broadwalk or Broadwork events.



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Broadwalks and Broadworks

What's a Broadwalk?

Broadwalks are multi-day place-based educational events where you get to know an area through hikes, stewardship projects, and local experts. There's plenty of on-the-ground exploration and discussion with people who know the landscape, its history, flora and fauna, and land health.

Broadwalks give you an in-depth experience where you'll come away with a better understanding of why these landscapes warrant protection.

What's a Broadwork?

Broadwork events are stewardship-focused trips coordinated with partner organizations and agency land managers. Activities range from field observations and monitoring of land health to all-out river restorations and invasive plant removal. No experience is necessary. Broads and Bros are trained and schooled in the "whats" and "whys" behind the Broadwork activity. Conversations and learning continue throughout the event.

Keeping It Local

Broadband chapters across the country host their own style of Broadwalks and Broadworks focused around regional or state issues. Each event has a flavor of its own, but includes many of the same elements as national events.



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What Are Public Lands?

Broads' work is centered on the preservation and protection of wilderness and wild lands. These lands are "public" lands—not owned by individuals or businesses—they belong to all Americans. Government entities—local, state, or federal—manage them on our behalf.

Because the lands are held in trust for the public, every American has a say in how these lands are managed.

Most of the lands Broads are working to protect are federal lands managed by four Federal agencies. These lands, when claimed by the US government, were mostly Native American lands.

Different Management—Different Uses

The bulk of the management job is split between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), managing 10.5%, and the Forest Service (USFS) managing 8.5%. Two other agencies manage smaller pieces—the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Park Service (NPS) each manage about 4% of US land.

The BLM, the USFWS, and the NPS are agencies of the Department of Interior, while the USFS is an agency of the Department of Agriculture. This curious arrangement continues to reflect the view of USFS founder Gifford Pinchot that forests were agricultural products to be managed for "wise use," rather than preservation.

The agencies that manage most of our public lands are not strictly in the business of protecting our lands. In particular, the missions of the BLM and the USFS focus more on using resources and meeting needs for current consumption. That's why the US government leases public lands to be used for logging, grazing, fossil fuel extraction, and mining.

The mission statements of the BLM and the USFS are similar. Both agencies operate under a "multiple use" guideline, managing for both current consumption and preservation for the future.

The USFWS has a more eco-centric mission to "conserve, protect and enhance," wildlife and the places they live. However, the ultimate goal remains people-centric—management for the "continuing benefit of the American People."

The National Park Service's mission is distinctly different and clearly preservation-centered, calling for the NPS to "preserve unimpaired" "cultural resources and values."

But of all public lands, only designated wilderness areas are fully protected from development.



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What Are Public Lands? (Cont.)

A Concern for Conservation

When people began to see the devastation of natural resources and loss of wild lands in the US, particularly to logging and the damming of Hetch Hetchy in California's Yosemite, they began to formulate legislation that would protect wild lands in perpetuity. That was the genesis of the Wilderness Act, which was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

This law gave Congress the power to designate lands as Wilderness Areas. This is the highest form of protection for wild lands, a designation that protects those lands from future development of any kind. In fact, these are lands where there are no roads, no structures, no "mechanized" travel (including mountain bikes) and "man is only a visitor who does not remain."



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What is Wilderness?

We like to think of Wilderness as our gift to future generations of Americans. It's one piece of the ecological puzzle to save our country from ever-expanding development. It's refuge and corridor for wildlife. It's biological diversity. It's untamed forest, desert, coast, and mountain. It's quiet. It's restorative. It keeps us sane.

Protecting America's wild landscapes is what Great Broads for Wilderness is all about. It takes an act of Congress to designate an area as wilderness—and YOUR voice is an important part of protecting our wild places.

The Wilderness Act of 1964

The Wilderness Act created the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve and protect public lands that fit the following definition of wilderness:

"... in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, [Wilderness] is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.

An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which:

- *Generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.*
- *Has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.*
- *Has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.*
- *May also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."*



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What is Wilderness? (Cont.)

Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are landscapes that are currently being managed as Wilderness because they qualify for designation as Wilderness by Congress. These are roadless areas lacking human development that also have “wilderness characteristics”—opportunity for solitude and reflection.

Still, the vast majority of the wild lands managed by Federal agencies are open to consumptive uses of some kind.

There are also laws beyond the Wilderness Act that provide ways to designate lower levels of protection for our public lands. Designation of National Parks by legislation protects those lands from commercial development, setting them aside for conservation so that present and future generations can enjoy, be inspired by, and use them for education. There are 62 “National Parks,” but 419 national park sites, with at least one in every state. National Monuments, which are designated by Presidential decree, are also protected from commercial development.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manage their public lands according to “resource management plans” (RMPs) that must comply with the guidelines of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Much of Broads’ work involves participating in these resource management plans during the public comments periods and using NEPA in court to challenge plans that will lead to the degradation of wild lands and contribute to climate change.



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Wilderness Protection Position Statement

- New wilderness proposals and legislation must be in keeping with the spirit and the intent of the 1964 Wilderness Act.*
- Protection of designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas should never be reduced as the result of quid pro quo trades resulting in privatization, development, or other activities that degrade public lands. All public lands with Wilderness qualities should gain protection based solely on those qualities.
- Wilderness legislation must not compromise or reduce the existing protections for Wilderness Study Areas, Roadless Areas, National Park Units, Wildlife Refuges, and other lands important to cultural heritage, fish and wildlife habitat, air and water quality, and as refuges of peace and quiet.
- Proposals and legislation that set bad precedents should be opposed even if they might provide some permanent wilderness designation.

**Although livestock grazing is authorized under the Wilderness Act, Broads supports the elimination of livestock grazing in designated wilderness areas and encourages voluntary permanent retirement of grazing allotments*



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Energy and Mining Position Statement

Oil and gas drilling and mining exact a high price on the land—impairing air and water quality, disrupting or destroying wildlife habitat, and disturbing the natural quiet and beauty of the land. Broads speak out to prevent energy and mining activities from being expanded on our public lands and work to mitigate damage from existing activities.

- Designated Wilderness, Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, roadless areas; areas with wild, pristine character and wilderness qualities; and critical wildlife habitat and corridors must be protected from the impacts of energy and mining activities.*
- Energy and mining activities should not be allowed in future designations of protected lands.
- Great Old Broads advocates for reducing the demand for fossil fuels through conservation and sustainable alternative energy sources.

** We recognize in some cases, designation language specifically allows such activities.*



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Public Lands Grazing Position Statement

- Grazing must not be allowed to cause irreparable environmental damage to water quality, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities on federal lands.
- Public agencies must protect the ecological health of the nation's federal lands where grazing takes place. Agencies must be guided by sound scientific research to shape grazing management policies and actions.
- Management plans must be consistent with stated laws, regulations, and policies.
- Although livestock grazing is authorized under the Wilderness Act, Broads supports the elimination of livestock grazing in designated wilderness areas and encourages voluntary permanent retirement of grazing allotments.



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Roads, Roadless Areas, and Vehicle Use Position Statement

- New roadways and motorized routes result in the loss of wilderness characteristics and must not be created in roadless areas.
- Routes must not be designated as part of a Travel Management Plan unless a route-specific NEPA analysis has been conducted.
- Motorized and mechanized vehicle use (four-wheel drive vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, snowmobiles, and bicycles) on public lands should occur only on designated roadways and trails.
- Broads supports the policy of “Closed Unless Posted Open” as the underlying principle to determine where any vehicle travel may occur on public lands.
- Where appropriate, Broads will advocate for the closure and decommissioning of roadways when maintenance costs or the potential for environmental damage exceeds public use benefits.
- Public agencies must be held accountable for following and enforcing existing management plans in a timely manner.
- Management of motorized and mechanized vehicles must be consistent with stated laws, regulations, and policies.



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Climate Change Position Statement

Climate change affects all life on Earth and puts at risk many of the values for which wilderness areas are designated. At the same time, the unbroken habitat and wildlife corridors provided by wilderness give plant and animal species a fighting chance to adapt to changing conditions. Wild lands also sequester carbon in high biomass forests, grasslands, oceans, and other ecosystems.

Benefits provided by wilderness such as water supply, flood mitigation, and biodiversity conservation will become increasingly essential in the future.

- Broads supports keeping fossil fuels in the ground. It is our only chance to keep global temperatures and the Earth's vital signs from reaching a tipping point. Fossil fuel corporations must not be allowed to shift costs of climate disruption to society while reaping profits from public lands.
- Commercial timber harvests and development should take place on public forests only when an analysis demonstrates that carbon benefits exceed carbon costs over a two to four decade period. National Forest planning rules should require conservation of forested areas with a higher than average carbon biomass.
- Public land management plans must consider and minimize the climate impacts of livestock grazing, roads and vehicular routes, recreation, and other activities. Wild public lands should be prioritized for maximizing carbon storage, biodiversity, and ecological function.
- Natural water cycles on public lands must be rigorously protected to maintain quality, quantity, and ecosystem function. The federal government must protect and maintain water resources in trust for all citizens and for the benefit of ecosystem health and stability.
- Broads supports a bipartisan call to action to minimize climate change impacts, reduce fossil fuel consumption, and enhance national and global security.



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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

Great Old Broads for Wilderness is committed to building a diverse, inclusive, and broader conservation community.

Our Broad commitment means:

- We are focused on the inclusive value that “broadness is a state of mind.”
- We are open to all perspectives while encouraging dialogue to resolve conflicts.
- We develop deep and authentic partnerships with diverse communities to further a broad set of conservation goals.
- We understand and respect the goals of communities with which we work.
- We identify and find ways to eliminate barriers that prevent full diversified public participation.
- We seek common ground to work collaboratively for the long-term.

We define diversity broadly to include age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, geographies, socio-economic status, and political affiliation.

By including diverse voices, we seek to engage the cooperation of as many constituencies as possible to strengthen support for ecosystem preservation and balance, conservation of public lands, and the environmental justice issues associated with these issues.

We seek the representative voices of Indigenous peoples whose present-day identity and ancestral history are embedded in the land, along with the full diversity of cultures and ethnicities that make up the country’s population. We pledge to work in collaboration with individuals and organizations to respect and honor diverse cultural perspectives of public lands.

Fostering diversity and inclusiveness is an ongoing process requiring continuous awareness and diligence. Diversity is not a project or task with an end point.

Broads identify, engage, invest in, and listen to partners and community leaders as we work towards a more representative and inclusive conservation movement, and make choices consistent with those investments.

When working in new communities, we work to gain full understanding of issues facing those communities; and we are mindful of those issues, our potential impacts, and the need to follow through on clear commitments.



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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (Cont.)

We will integrate diversity and inclusiveness awareness throughout our programs and organizational structure. We work to create an environment in which all feel valued and respected, where learning and integrity are fostered, and laughter and fun are appreciated.