

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Sara Husby

## A Wilderness Defense Tool

Recently, one of our staff shared an interesting statement from long-time member (and former Board member) Lois Snedden about protecting public lands.

“When you have a win, you have to keep fighting to hold on to that win, but when you lose something, you lose it forever.”

It’s so true—in campaigns across the country we’ve had wins we’ve had to defend or “re-win” over and over again—like combatting the ongoing attempts to mine copper adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. We’ve suffered losses that we cannot undo, such as the recent Supreme Court decision that impacts wetlands protection and undermines the Clean Water Act (see Broader Wilderness, page 4).

Threats to designated wilderness are constant and increasing. That’s why it is essential that we continue our work to monitor and document land health, call attention to illegal activities, and hold management agencies accountable when they aren’t being good stewards. And sometimes, that means litigation.

Typically, Great Old Broads participates or initiates litigation to challenge a project or action due to a failure by the land management agency to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, or legal requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, or the Wilderness Act.

There are parts of the country where agencies don’t even follow their own official resource management plans—and that may prompt litigation. It’s a good idea to familiarize yourself with regional plans—and participate in the development and implementation of those plans whenever possible.

### To Sue or Not to Sue

There are specific circumstances that influence Broads’ involvement in litigation. We don’t join a case just to get our name on a lawsuit. We get involved when we know we can make a difference.

For example, in 2019 Broads and two other conservation groups filed a suit against the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), who illegally approved the use of chainsaws in designated wilderness in Colorado (Wilderness Watch, San Juan Citizens Alliance, and GOBW v. Brian Ferebee, Regional Forester, and USFS). After we filed a preliminary injunction, the USFS rescinded the decision.

(Continued page 10)

*“Sooner or later,  
we will have to  
recognize that  
the Earth has  
rights, too...  
What mankind  
must know is  
that human  
beings cannot  
live without  
Mother  
Earth, but  
the planet can  
live without  
humans.”*

— Evo Morales



*Thank  
you*

*to all our donors and  
bidders for making  
our 2023  
Wild for Wilderness  
Online Auction a  
success!*



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by Sara Husby

## Rulemaking Rules!

This year has provided some awesome opportunities to make our voices heard on federal rules related to public lands management, and more opportunities are on the way!

In March, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) opened a public comment period on their proposed Public Lands Rule, which aims to place conservation on equal footing with other land uses such as extraction, grazing, and energy development. Soon after, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) opened a comment period on Mature and Old-Growth Forests. We worked hard to get the word out on these comment periods, and I was excited to see the interest and participation by our members at webinars and then putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard). Several Broadbans, as well as the national office—and many of you, our members—submitted comments on these rules. A wild thanks to all of you who got involved!

Additional commenting periods are expected to open soon on grazing, oil and gas management, and renewable energy development on public lands, as well as the Endangered Species Act—topics that are especially near and dear to Broadbans' hearts. Our participation is critical to represent the conservation voice and push public lands management in a greener direction.

Watch for our action alert emails for more information, educational webinars, and resources to help you prepare your comments for the upcoming rulemaking topics. We will keep our eyes open for opportunities to weigh in and make positive changes on our public lands.

## Wilderness Convergence Conference

In June, I attended the Wilderness Convergence Conference in Park City, Utah, where representatives from several conservation groups got together to talk about the current state of the wilderness movement, and how to reach a wider and more diverse audience to grow support for

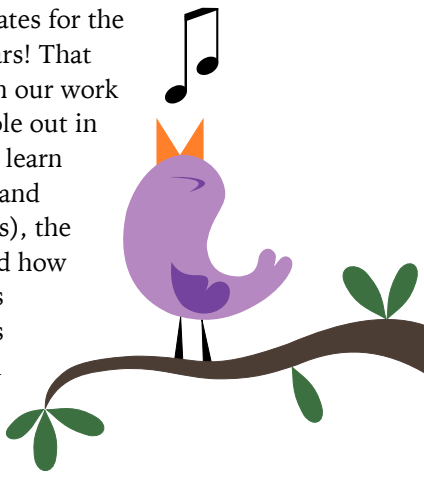
the protection of existing wilderness and wilderness designation.

The discussions at the conference made me think of how there are so many different views on the meaning of “wilderness.” For some, it’s car camping in a regional park, for others it’s hiking deep into the backcountry. And for some, “wilderness” may simply mean a stretch of road with no cell service!

For me (and probably many of you), I think of it in terms of the gold standard “Big W” type of wilderness—landscape protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. But not everyone knows about or understands the Wilderness Act, how it works, and the significant protections it provides. Nor do they understand there are other ways to protect wild places through agency designations such as Wilderness Study Areas, Wild & Scenic Rivers, or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

We recognized at the conference that education is the key to bringing a wider audience on board to support wild land protections. It’s going to take a groundswell of support to get the attention of our elected officials to meet the administration’s goal to protect 30% of U.S. wild lands by 2030. And wilderness designations are a way to help meet that goal. The clock is ticking, so we better get busy!

I see Broadbans playing a critical role in this effort—after all, it’s been our mission to grow the ranks of wild land advocates for the past 34 years! That begins with our work to get people out in the wild to learn about the land (and waters), the threats, and how protections allow lands to heal and thrive.



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women-led national  
grassroots organization that  
engages and inspires activism  
to preserve and protect  
wilderness and wild lands.**

Please credit Broadbans for  
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# New Broads Gear!

We've been working hard to add some sparkly new items featuring our equally sparkly new logo to the Broads Shop! Browse and buy at <https://bit.ly/BroadsShop>

## Appealing Apparel

**2023 New Logo Tee** – This earth-friendly tee is available in women's fitted sizes (S-XXL) and unisex sizes



that offer a looser fit with a crew neck (M-XXL). It's lightweight and carbon neutral, made with 50% recycled cotton and 50% recycled polyester.

**Long-sleeved Logo Tees** – You asked for it, you've got it! Slightly fitted and available in three Broadacious colors: Royal Blue, Broads Purple, and Safety Orange. Due back from the printer any day now, check our website for sizes and other details.

## Sassy Accessories

**To-Go Broads-Ware** – Sustainable, sturdy, and just what you need for your next Broadwalk or campout. This bamboo set includes a fork, knife,



spoon, and a set of elegantly designed chopsticks, all packed in a case made from recycled plastic bottles. As a bonus—it includes a carabiner to clip the kit to your pack!

### Broads Chico Bag

We LOVE this bag! Reusable, sturdy, and attractively branded, this Chico bag is perfect for carrying gear, groceries, or whatever a Broad on-the-go needs. Plus, it stuffs into a tiny little sack that you can store in your pack, purse, or glove box for those tote bag emergencies!



### Broads Travel Mug

– Your go-to cup when you need a cup to go! Insulated to keep things hot or cold, it's a four-



season friend for busy Broads. Holding a generous 16.9 ounces (caffeinate me, baby!), it has a handy push-on lid with an easy-to-open slide for sipping.

**Broads Koozie** – Keep your canned beverages frosty and slip-free with this Broadstastic Koozie. Light and portably packable, you'll be the coolest



Broad at the campfire with this branded accessory.

**Broads Notebook** – A handy-dandy way to take notes at a meeting, or document deleterious deeds on public lands. Petite and easy to pack at just 5" x 7", it features an elastic band to mark your spot or keep it closed for travel.



**Broads Lapel Pin** – This elegant, enameled pin has been a big hit! It's



just the thing to proclaim your Broadness when tabling, meeting with agency folk, or anytime you're out Broading. Just the right size at 1.25" in diameter.

## A Dam Good Book

Back in 2019 at the Don't Dam Salmon Broadwalk, we met writer and filmmaker Steven Hawley, who shared his powerful film, *Dammed to Extinction*, which highlighted the tragic starvation of Orcas due to the lower Snake River dams impacting Chinook salmon along the Pacific Coast. His film inspired many Broads and Bros in the Pacific Northwest and around the country to advocate for breaching the dams.

Hawley recently released a critically-praised book entitled, *Cracked: The Future of Dams in a Hot, Chaotic World*. The book is both a reckoning of America's misguided attempts to control water, and an activist's handbook for freeing our rivers. A companion online storymap that offers an eye-opening look at the ecological and cultural destruction caused by dams, and a call to action. See the storymap here: <https://bit.ly/CrackedMap>



## Help Us Keep Our Records Accurate

Want to know how much you've supported Broads over the years? You can create and log into your Broads account to view your giving history, update your contact information, make an additional gift, or even opt to "go paperless."

It also helps us keep more accurate records, prevent duplicates, and gives us more time to work for wilderness. If you need help setting it up, give us a call at (970) 385-9577 or email [membership@greatoldbroads.org](mailto:membership@greatoldbroads.org). To set up an account, scan the QR code or visit: <https://bit.ly/MyBroadsAccount>



# THE BROADER WILDERNESS • • • • •

## USFS Pauses on Oak Flat Copper Mine

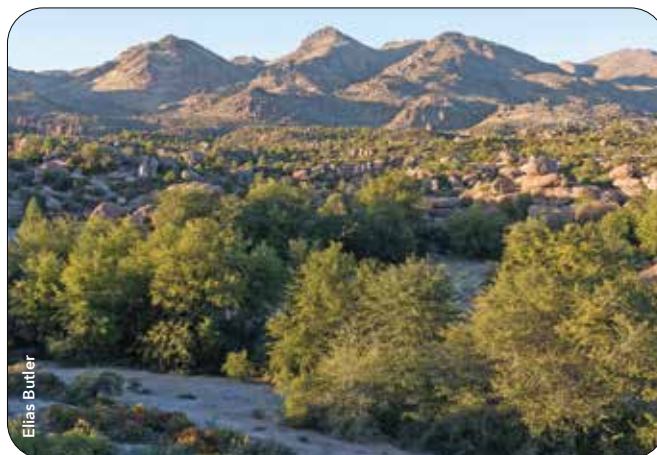
The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has paused action on plans to put a catastrophically destructive copper mine in the scenic and culturally important Oak Flat area of Arizona's Tonto National Forest, telling a federal court that it's not sure when an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be approved on the project.

The release of an EIS would, thanks to the *Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act* (a last-minute rider to the "must pass" 2014 National Defense Authorization Act), trigger a land swap between the USFS and Resolution Copper—a British-Australian company owned by international mining conglomerates Rio Tinto and BHP. It would give the company the 2,400-acre Oak Flat area in exchange for roughly 5,400 acres of private land. The 2014 legislation also requires the USFS to complete the land swap within 60 days of the finalization of the EIS—regardless of what the statement reports.

The USFS says they will use the pause to consult with the San Carlos Apache and other tribes that have strongly objected to the project for over a decade. The tribes and Indigenous advocates say that the proposed mine violates their First Amendment right to practice their religion. Indigenous people have used the Oak Flat area for religious ceremonies and as a spiritual center for millennia.

Oak Flat is an important cultural site to the Apache, who call it *Chi'Chil'Ba'Goteel* ("a broad place of Emery oak trees"), and they continue to hold important ceremonies and gather traditional medicinal plants there. Oak Flat is also a popular destination for hikers, campers, bird watchers, and rock climbers.

But roughly 7,000 feet below the surface lies one of the largest remaining copper deposits in the nation. The copper



Elias Butler

by Jason Vaughn

## Nation Gains New National Monuments

It was decades in the making, but more than half a million acres of rugged Mojave Desert in southern Nevada is now permanently protected as Avi Kwa Ame National Monument. It was established by President Joe Biden, under the authority of the Antiquities Act, on March 21 as part of his America the Beautiful Initiative (aka "30x30") conservation plan.

Avi Kwa Ame, which translates to "Spirit Mountain" in the Mojave language, is considered sacred by a dozen Indigenous groups and tribes, and contains countless cultural sites and petroglyphs. It's also a delicate ecosystem that's home to numerous threatened species of wildlife—including desert bighorn sheep, golden eagles, and the endangered desert tortoise—and plant species like Joshua trees that are specially adapted to the hot, dry high-desert conditions.

The creation of the 506,814-acre monument also serves as an important link in a protected wildlife corridor—one of the largest in the nation—that stretches from Lake Mead National Recreation Area in the east to federally-protected Mojave Desert lands in California, giving native species room to thrive and adapt to a changing climate.

The monument will be managed in close consultation with representatives from several Tribal nations, similar to the federal/Tribal management arrangement at Utah's Bears Ears National Monument.

In the same ceremony, the President also designated the 6,672-acre Castner Range National Monument in the rugged Franklin Mountains of west Texas near El Paso. The new monument is a highly-unique addition to the National Monument system, as it is part of Fort Bliss and therefore managed by the U.S. Army—the only national monument dedicated to conservation in the Department of Defense.

*Join Broads at the Honor Avi Kwa Ame Broadwalk October 8–12. Come explore the natural wonders and human history of this incredible landscape! For more information and to register, go to: <https://bit.ly/AviKwaAme>*







mining techniques proposed by Resolution Copper would—by the time the mine reached its lifespan—leave this important human and ecological landscape a gaping, mile-wide and 1,000-foot-deep crater.

For several years, Arizona Broadbans and many other conservation and community organizations have supported the San Carlos Apache's efforts to stop the destruction of Oak Flat. In 2015, Broads was a co-signer on a proclamation issued by Indigenous and conservation groups to stop the land swap.

For more information on the fight to save Oak Flat, go to <http://apache-stronghold.com>

## Supreme Court Delivers Blow to Clean Water Act

It wasn't all good news out of Washington though, as the U.S. Supreme Court—in a disastrous and potentially precedent-setting decision—sharply curtailed the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate wetlands under the Clean Water Act, delivering a severe blow to the government's ability to protect our waterways from pollution.

The case, *Sackett vs. EPA*, dates back to 2007, when the EPA ordered construction work on the Sackett's home in Idaho to stop because the land it was situated on was, at the time, a protected wetland under the Clean Water Act.

In the decision, the court ruled that the government's interpretation of the Clean Water Act was "inconsistent" with the law's text, claiming that only wetlands with a "continuous surface connection" to navigable waters are covered by the law. This decision contradicts an earlier 2006 Supreme Court decision, which determined that a wetland may be covered by the law if it has a "significant nexus" with navigable waters. In layman's terms, the court redefined the word "adjacent" to mean "adjoining," so that now, for example, a wetland that directly empties into a navigable river is still covered under the Clean Water Act, but a wetland that empties into a stream that then flows into a navigable river is not.

Wetlands provide a number of important benefits ranging from wildlife habitat to flood control and cleaner water supplies. This ruling threatens to impact millions of acres of

wetlands across the nation, which could now be destroyed or polluted without any sort of environmental review.

## Dirty Pipeline Gets OK in NEPA-Damaging Debt-Limit Deal

Meanwhile, in June President Biden negotiated and signed a deal with Congress to raise the nation's debt ceiling. But the deal undercut one of our bedrock environmental laws—the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), giving U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) the pet natural gas pipeline project he otherwise could never get Congress to approve.

In the deal, the long-stalled Mountain Valley Pipeline was greenlit, paving the way for construction to finish through hundreds of miles of national forest land and private property across the heart of West Virginia into Virginia. The pipeline will cross multiple waterways, exposing ecosystems and people alike to potential disaster in the event of a leak.

This deal also represents a direct attack on NEPA, as it "streamlines" the approval of infrastructure projects like transmission lines, fossil-fuel pipelines, and other energy projects by sharply limiting the public's ability to provide comment. It also shortens the time frame for environmental impact assessments.

But despite these developments in Congress and the Supreme Court, the fight to protect NEPA, the Clean Water Act, and all of our bedrock environmental laws is far from over—and Broads will be there every step of the way.

## Speaking Out Just Got Easier!



Advocacy for our public lands and wilderness is what we do, and Broads (and Bros) aren't the kind to just sit around when there is action that needs to be taken. So, with that in mind, we've made it just a bit easier to make your voice heard on important issues!

Earlier this year, Broads received a grant that allowed us to upgrade our advocacy outreach technology (to make our action alerts better). We contracted with VoterVoice on a new system that will make it easier than ever before to send letters to elected officials, make public comments to land management agencies, and also make it easier for Broads' national office to track and quantify the results of our outreach.

The new system will allow you to sign up for alerts, keep track of current advocacy campaigns, find your local elected officials, and host resources to help you write effective letters and public comments.

Check it out at [www.greatoldbroads.org/take-action](http://www.greatoldbroads.org/take-action)



# BROADBANDS IN ACTION!

by Jason Vaughn

## Broadbands Celebrate Earth Day

It stands to reason that Earth Day (April 22nd) is circled on the Broads calendar—and this year nearly every Broadband across the nation marked the 53rd annual Earth Day with a lot of public outreach, stewardship work, and (of course) a lot of fun!



*Four Corners Broads (CO) took on trail-building for their Earth Day activity.*

Here's just a small sampling of some of our Broadband's Earth Day events and activities:

In Arizona, the **Sonoran Broadband** participated at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's Earth Day event with Mexican red wolf related activities for kids. Meanwhile, the **Tucson Broadband** participated in Earth Day events at the Children's Museum in Tucson, where they had a great time teaching kids about wildlife using stuffed animals.

In Colorado, the **Four Corners Broadband** spent the day doing stewardship work at the Carpenter Natural Area in Cortez. Broads helped with some clean up and built two new trails in the area.

The **Minnesota Wild Waters Broadband** braved frigid weather with partners from Friends of the Mississippi for their annual River Gorge Cleanup—a day of stewardship work along the Mississippi River in Minneapolis.

In Nevada, the **Blue Diamond Broadband** partnered up with several other organizations at a local riparian area to share information about the environment with visitors, hand out vegetable garden seedlings and milkweed seed balls, and make bird feeders out of pinecones.

In Utah, the **Greater Wasatch Area Broadband** set up a table at the Ogden Events Center geared to children with conservation-themed games that attracted some 225 kids and parents.

And in Washington, the **Cascade Volcanoes Broadband** teamed up with the Washington Trails Association to do stewardship work at Columbia Springs, a 100-acre urban natural site and outdoor education center in Vancouver.

They cleaned up a trail, revegetated and rehabilitated an unwanted trail, and removed invasive species.

A big Broads thank you to all the Broadband volunteers across the nation who worked at Earth Day events both big and small to get the word out about conservation and the environment—and to also share what Great Old Broads for Wilderness stands for and does in the fight for Mother Earth.

## South San Juan Broads Put Brakes on Mountain Bike Trail Plan

This spring, the **South San Juan Broadband** (CO) helped successfully stop a U.S. Forest Service (USFS) plan for miles of mountain bike and multi-use trails across important elk habitat in the San Juan National Forest.

The USFS's Jackson Mountain Project plan had originally included 40 miles of trails across the 11,703-acre landscape north of Pagosa Springs. Many of these proposed “new” trails would have actually been improvements on some of the illegally-constructed trails that have existed in the area for years.

This plan could have set a dangerous precedent that may have actually legitimized—or even encouraged—the construction of illegal trails on public lands as an effective way to bypass environmental impact studies and other planning procedures. In addition, most of the project area is officially classified by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department as a winter concentration area for the region's imperiled elk population.

But the South San Juan Broads and Bros stepped up and got to work, writing advocacy letters and working with other area organizations to successfully convince the USFS to



*Greater Wasatch Broadband (UT) member Linda Laws plays a game with a young visitor at an Earth Day celebration.*



remove the trails, as well as a proposed gravel pit, from the project plans.

Well done, South San Juan Broads!

## Cascade Volcanoes Defeat Timber Sale & Gain a Park

The **Cascade Volcanoes Broadband** (OR-WA) successfully stopped a land transfer that would have allowed logging along the Hantwick Trail in south-central Washington.

Thanks to their advocacy efforts over the course of several years, that 80-acre parcel of land was instead transferred by the state in a land swap to Clark County (WA) to be turned into a new park!

According to Broadband leader Laurie Kerr, efforts to conserve the land northeast of Vancouver to prevent logging started when the Broads met with Washington state legislators to discuss the transfer in 2019. Over the next four years, the Broadband held fundraising events, gathered signatures on petitions, submitted public comments, and attended numerous public meetings to voice their concerns.

The end result: the Washington State Board of Natural Resources approved the necessary measures to transfer the state-owned property into the county's hands, permanently protecting the land around the Hantwick Trail by Moulton Falls.

Way to go, Cascade Volcanoes Broads!

## Regional Broadwalks a Big Hit!

**Southern California** - In March, the SoCal Broadband (newly renamed the **Inland Empire Broadband**) braved traffic jams and sketchy weather to put on a great Broadwalk event at Joshua Tree National Park. The group—which included members of local partner organizations—hiked, birdwatched, and attended evening programs. There was an informative presentation on the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and a lecture from author Dennis Walker on the butterflies of Joshua Tree.

**Washington** - In April, nearly 40 Broads and Bros joined the Pacific Northwest Broadbands at the Camp Delany Retreat Center in Dry Falls State Park for four days



*Genia Moncada from the Polly Dyer Seattle Broadband (WA) removes invasive blackberry on Earth Day.*

of advocacy, stewardship, hiking, and fun! The participants helped clear a trail at the retreat center, and picked up litter along State Highway 17, while evening presentations included a look at the highlights of the Lower Snake River Dam campaign—including a viewing of the film *Dammed to Extinction*. In addition, over 150 postcards were sent to legislators and federal agency officials regarding a variety of issues. There was also an art class, and (as to be expected at most Broads events) the food was “out of this world!”

**Northern California** - The NorCal Broadband (now known as the **Crest to Coast Broadband**) took a trip to the snowy Sierra Nevada mountains for the “Icicles to Wildflowers” regional Broadwalk. There the participants laughed, ate, hiked, and learned about the impact of logging in roadless areas and logging of mature and old-growth trees. Participants wrote 40 letters to Stanislaus National Forest officials to advocate for the protection of old-growth forests in the region.

## WALTS Sparks Six New Broadbands

*by Lisa Pool*

We welcome a new cohort of Broadband Leaders who completed Wilderness Advocacy Leadership Training Sessions (WALTS) in March. Many are stepping up to lead a Broadband already in existence, and a handful are launching brand new chapters in Sandpoint, ID; Fayette, IA; San Diego, CA; Mammoth Lakes, CA; Los Angeles, CA; and Sebastopol, CA.

In addition, we've launched a new type of Broadband that organizes the close-knit community of long distance hikers who aren't necessarily putting their roots down in one place—we're calling it the “**Mobile Broads**.” In addition, we're reviving the **North Georgia Broadband**!

At WALTS we covered the many nuts and bolts it takes

*(Continued page 8)*

to lead a Broadband. We examined grassroots organizing techniques, advocacy and campaign planning, communication and leadership development, and how to lend a hand in creating a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive (i.e. “Broader”) conservation community. We couldn’t be more grateful that these women leaders choose to lend their experience and passion to Broads.

By the way, don’t forget to check out the Broadband Directory on our website to connect with a chapter near you. It sometimes takes a little bit of time to get new Broadbands fully launched (including creating a directory page) so if you don’t see one that I listed above, just reach out to our office and we will connect you.

Speaking of the time and effort it can take to fully launch a new Broadband, we’re excited to report that two of last year’s new chapters are now in full swing—the **Northern Arizona Wild Broadband** (Flagstaff, AZ/Coconino County) and the **Northern Front Range Broadband** (Fort Collins, Colorado). The leaders infused their lifetime of skills to bring these new Broadbands into being.

Cuyler Boughner leads the Northern Arizona Wild Broadband. She was the owner/operator of a team building company for 35 years, so needless to say their meetings are engaging and members stay on task while feeling a growing bond with one another. They have joined the campaign to support a Native American coalition of tribes to advocate for the designation of the Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument, which comprises one-million acres surrounding Grand Canyon National Park.



The Northern Front Range Broadband now has a three-person Leadership Team: Della Garelle, Jan Moraczewski, and Anne Dal Vera. One of the most important steps of launching a new Broadband is to contact other conservation organizations to explore partnership opportunities, and identify a niche that no one else has filled. Della, Jan, and Anne compiled a list of 27 potential partners to contact, divvied up the list, and collectively spent over 50 volunteer hours initiating those conversations. After a bit more follow up and conversations as a full Broadband, they will decide on their focus areas and projects. Great job!

We have wild gratitude for our volunteer leaders. The passion, knowledge, skills, creativity, and spark they bring to our organization is humbling. We can’t wait to see what these new Broadbands will accomplish in their first year!

## The Marvels of Monthly Giving

by Kaye Berman



Let’s talk about the unsung heroes of the nonprofit world: monthly sustaining donors. At Great Old Broads, we are immensely grateful for the unwavering support we receive from the nearly 300 individuals who share our commitment to saving public lands with their monthly gifts.

Why are recurring donations so vital, you might ask? So many reasons!

### Set It and Forget It

We are all busy, and it’s easy to forget to support the causes and organizations we love, but monthly donations give you the power to automate your giving. Once you set up the monthly amount of your contribution, your donations flow like clockwork and you can focus on other things, like the backpack trip you are taking later this summer.

There are other benefits too. Monthly donations make it easier to budget and can help you give more because your total contribution is spread out over the year rather than given all at once.



### The Snowball Effect

Even a modest contribution, when combined with others, makes a massive impact. Monthly sustaining donations provide a dependable source of funding that allows Broads to plan ahead, tackle long-term projects, and make a lasting impact. A monthly donation of any amount goes a long way to further the work of Broads.

Think of a monthly donation as your subscription to saving the world. Do you know that every time a new monthly sustainer signs up we break into an impromptu celebratory dance? It involves questionable dance moves and an abundance of joy!

Our sustaining donors are indispensable in the support of our vital work to safeguard wild lands and waters for future generations. If you sign up today, we’ll video ourselves doing our gratitude groove and send it your way!

Set up your giving at  
<https://bit.ly/SustainBroads>





## 30x30 Spotlight

# The Great Bend of the Gila

by Jason Vaughn

The centerpiece of President Biden’s environmental policy—the America the Beautiful Initiative (AKA “30x30”)—aims to combat climate change by setting aside 30 percent of the nation’s public lands and waters from natural resource exploitation by the year 2030.

But the process of getting our public lands and wilderness permanently protected from development has, to this point, been painfully slow. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of landscapes across the nation that would qualify for permanent protection under the 30x30 initiative—and many of those landscapes are in dire need of immediate help.

One such place is in southwest Arizona, where the Gila River meanders through the jagged mountains and eroded lava flows of the Sonoran Desert, in one of the more incredible—and largely unprotected—landscapes in North America.

Located roughly halfway between Phoenix and Yuma, the river—a perennial source of surface water in an otherwise parched region—makes a nearly 90-degree turn to flow south, curving around an ancient volcano in an area known as the Great Bend of the Gila.

Here, the Sonoran Desert comes alive—especially in the summer monsoon season when countless species of desert-adapted plants come into bloom. The riparian landscape on the valley floor supports dozens of species of iconic (and endangered) local and migrating desert wildlife including Sonoran pronghorn, Sonoran Desert tortoise, desert bighorn sheep, Gila monster, mule deer, javelina, kit fox, ringtail cat, kangaroo rat, and Mojave rattlesnake.

The river and surrounding wetlands also support over 150 different species

of birds—including ducks, geese, hawks, falcons, hummingbirds, and many others.

The Great Bend of the Gila area has also been an important crossroads and meeting place for Indigenous cultures dating back at least 5,000 years. Thirteen different Tribes have deep cultural connections to this landscape, and the architectural remains of the ancestral Hohokam and Patayan cultures can be found along the river. An estimated 10,000 petroglyph sites—including many spectacular rock panels—have been identified in the area.

However, even in the best of circumstances life in a desert environment can be a tenuous proposition. Today, virtually unchecked suburban sprawl from Phoenix brings with it the constant threat of residential and business development. The area is often victim to vandalism and theft of cultural resources, the destruction of delicate cryptobiotic desert soils by off-road vehicles, and the introduction of invasive plant species like tamarisk (“Salt cedar”). The Great Bend is also threatened by mineral extraction and exploitation and industrial energy development.

These threats alone would be bad enough—but a now hotter and drier climate has made a difficult situation much worse.

There are flickers of hope, though. There is a growing tribal-led movement to ask the White House to declare the area to be a national monument under the Antiquities Act. Last year, Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ-3) introduced the



Great Bend of the Gila Conservation Act (HR 8719) which would have permanently set aside nearly 377,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land “to conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the Indigenous ancestral, archaeological, cultural, historic, geologic, hydrologic, natural, recreational, educational, and scenic resources.” In addition, the bill would have identified areas that would be off-limits to vehicles, and prohibit the construction of new roads.

The proposed legislation would have also required the Department of Interior to consult with Tribal governments on land management plans, including creating a Tribal commission to provide guidance on a conservation management plan.

But, like so many other pieces of important conservation and environmental legislation languishing in Congress, the bill stalled and never got to the House floor for a vote.

Unfortunately, the threats to places like Great Bend of the Gila don’t stop just because Congress refuses to act. For more information on the ongoing efforts to protect the Great Bend of the Gila—check out [www.respectgreatbend.org](http://www.respectgreatbend.org).



Other compelling reasons for litigation include when we have:

- A strong connection to the landscape
- Local or national expertise on the issue
- Followed an issue or been involved from the beginning
- Observed a decline or violation through direct monitoring

Broadband chapters who actively monitor landscapes can provide important data that can be vital in support of a legal filing.

Right now, we're involved in a case regarding the use of illegal airstrips in the Frank Church-River of No Return



Wilderness. The suit\* was filed by Advocates for the West on behalf of Wilderness Watch, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Friends of the Bitterroot, and Friends of the Clearwater in the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho. The area is increasingly inundated with low-flying aircraft as commercial and hobby pilots continue to use four unlawful airstrips for sport and to shuttle paid clients between remote wilderness locations.

The USFS district ranger advertised the sites as open and began to cut trees to expand flight paths and improve landing sites within the

Wilderness, violating the Wilderness Act, the Central Idaho Wilderness Act, the National Forest Management Act, and NEPA. The goal of the suit is to eliminate public use of the four airstrips permanently.

## How it Works

We have a Litigation Committee made up of representatives—many with legal backgrounds—from Broads' Board of Directors and Council of Advisors. There is a formal screening process to review and evaluate whether participation in litigation is appropriate. Requestors fill out a document that includes many questions about the issue and the goals and desired outcome of pursuing legal action.

Some litigation inquiries are brought to the committee by Broadbands, the national office, or individual members, while others may come through partnerships with other organizations that seek our on-the-ground expertise on issues.

\* Case No. 1:23-cv-295

*Wilderness Watch; Great Old Broads for Wilderness; Friends of the Clearwater; and Friends of the Bitterroot v. Linda Jackson, Forest Supervisor of the Payette National Forest; Mary Farnsworth, Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region; and United States Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture*

## Funding Defense Efforts

With political winds blowing that are not particularly friendly toward wilderness legislation, litigation is an important tool to ensure agency accountability when other grassroots efforts fail.

In December 2021, Broads was able to establish our first-ever endowment—the Wilderness Defense Fund—with a generous \$100,000 gift from the Pope family. Inspired by the chainsaw lawsuit in 2019, the Pope's wanted to help increase Broads' capacity to initiate legal actions, arbitration, or mediation to protect the integrity of wilderness. The Idaho lawsuit is the first funded by the Wilderness Defense Fund endowment!

## You Can Help!

While the Pope family generously laid the groundwork to support wilderness defense, your gifts are critical to build this resource to expand funding for litigation to protect our precious wildlands.

**Please consider a donation to the Wilderness Defense Fund today:**

<https://bit.ly/WildernessDefenseFund>

## WISH LIST!

We've created a wish list on Amazon with items we need or want. Take a peek and see if you can help us out!

<https://bit.ly/BroadsWish>



## Save a Tree, Donate Online



Did you notice there is no donation envelope tucked into this newsletter? To save costs (almost \$1,000 per newsletter!!) and be more earth friendly, we ask that you give online to help support our programs to train and support badass advocates like you to protect wild lands! Give at <https://bit.ly/SustainBroads>.

**We are "greatful" for your support!**





## Molok Luyuk Broadwalk Recap



In May, Broads and Bros braved miles of dirt roads in northern California to gather at Silver Spur Ranch to learn more about the proposed addition of Molok Luyuk ("Condor Ridge") to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

Our wild and remote camp, less than 2 hours from the Sacramento airport, was in a grassy valley between oak-dotted ridges, still a vibrant green from winter rains. It was sunny and hot, and we gave thanks each evening when the sun dropped behind the ridge to the west, bringing on cooler air and spectacular stars. The musical calls of quail and red-winged blackbirds woke us at dawn.

The first day brought stewardship projects. One group traveled over the west ridge to clean up debris from a burned cabin along Cache Creek. Their enthusiasm and success at rounding up rusty cabinets, glass, and assorted detritus impressed our activity leader, Nate Lillge from our partner organization, Tuleyome. Broads peppered him with questions as we ate our lunch next to the large pile of clean-up debris.

Another group, led by Broads' Executive Director Sara Husby, spent the day picking up trash left behind by thoughtless recreators along Walker Ridge Road. Venerable Broad Vicky Hoover penned a poem to commemorate the activity:

*Valiant Libby, armed with bag,  
Picking up that roadside swag,  
Look ta Linda, leaning into the day  
She picks up litter as though it's just play.  
Working tirelessly, there is Carol,  
Grabbing from bushes, even to her peril.  
One helpful Broad is surely Sharon,  
Cleaning the roadside, she's really carin'.  
And bravely determined Laura,  
Finds treasures lurking in the flora,  
Now Sara—there's no doubt she's the leader,  
Working hard—as long as we feed her.  
Of all Broads, I'm certain the Queen,  
In my mind, is always Maureen.  
With one lunge, she, no idle goofer  
Grabbed a can AND bottle—that's a twofer.  
Later Sara, who has lots to arrange,  
Found time for a quick tire change.*

We spent the next two days exploring Molok Luyuk, its serpentine soils, endemic plants, wonderful wildflowers, and unique geology. We learned more about the efforts to protect the region—the opposition and support—and about projects to restore lands scarred and poisoned from the legacy of mercury mining.

Friday, we packed up to head home, sharing hugs with old and new friends. As we prepared for the bumpy ride out (and blissful air conditioning), we reflected on our new appreciation for a special place that needs protection.

For more information on Molok Luyuk and the effort to expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, go to: <https://www.expandberryessa.org/>

## Calling All Artists!



### 2024 T-Shirt Design Contest

Send us your black-on-white design inspired by America's wild lands and waters.

**The winning design will grace the back of our 2024 member t-shirt AND the winning artist will receive a free t-shirt and \$250!**

We'll feature the winning artist's design in the 2024 Winter/Spring newsletter.

Everyone who submits a design will be entered into a drawing to win a 50%-off certificate to a Broadwalk or Broadwork event.

Each year, anyone who gives \$100 or more to Broads receives a limited-edition member t-shirt to boldly declare their commitment to the wild!

**Submit designs by:  
Nov. 1, 2023**

For more info, visit:  
<https://bit.ly/2024Btee>





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## Calling All Artists!

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100% solar powered.



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*Broads at the Molok Luyuk Broadwalk take  
a break after a stewardship project.*

## Support Broads!

Donate online: <https://bit.ly/SustainBroads>

Contribute to Broads and help protect wilderness and wild  
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