



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



## OUR MISSION:

THE CASCADE FOREST CONSERVANCY **PROTECTS AND SUSTAINS** THE FORESTS, STREAMS, WILDLIFE, AND COMMUNITIES IN **THE HEART OF THE CASCADES** THROUGH CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY.

## OUR STAFF:

<b>Molly Whitney</b>	Executive Director
<b>Shiloh Halsey</b>	Director of Programs
<b>Ashley Short</b>	Policy Manager
<b>Amanda Keasberry</b>	Science and Stewardship Manager
<b>Suzanne Whitney</b>	Grants and Restoration Manager
<b>Bryn Harding</b>	Communications Manager
<b>Sean Roome</b>	Campaign Coordinator
<b>Debra Goldberg</b>	Stewardship Coordinator
<b>Mona Lindsey</b>	Accountant
<b>Alex Torres</b>	2022 Summer Intern

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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<b>Mark Soutter</b>	Director as of February 2023





## WELCOME TO CASCADE FOREST CONSERVANCY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

In conservation, success isn't always linear, but looking back at last year, I see a lot to be encouraged by.

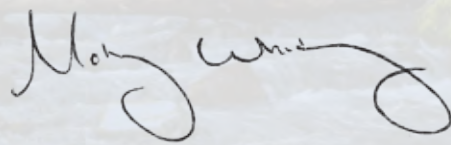
We kicked off 2022 by announcing an important victory in our work to protect Mount St. Helens and the nearby Green River Valley. Our lawsuit challenging prospecting permits that had been granted to a Canadian corporation was successful! We continued to gain momentum with our mineral withdrawal campaign—the Green River Valley Alliance (GRVA)—to build support for a lasting solution to the threat of mining in the area. In November, we were thrilled to receive a letter addressed to Washington's Senators and our former Congresswoman from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Chairwoman, Patty Kinswa-Gaiser, supporting the GRVA and our mineral withdrawal campaign.

We're proud of many other 2022 achievements as well. We successfully protected stands of mature forests in the Upper Wind timber sale area. We forged new partnerships to restore critical salmon habitat in the South Fork Toutle watershed and began what we hope will become a model process, employing low-tech restoration in the western slopes of the Cascades. We wrapped up our three-year wildlife camera project and are

currently processing the results with our partners at Oregon State University. We strengthened our relationships with Columbia Springs, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and released more beavers than in any year prior into the national forest.

Unfortunately, the inevitable nature of the work is that tough losses sometimes accompany our successes. For example, despite our best efforts, our lawsuit challenging the construction of a road across the Pumice Plain within the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument was unsuccessful.

Challenges like this make our wins worth celebrating, and that's what this Annual Report is all about. Thank you for being a part of all we accomplished on behalf of ecosystems and wildlife here in the heart of the Cascades in 2022.



Molly Whitney  
Executive Director



# CARING FOR AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

Rivers, creeks, and wetlands are the lifeblood of our forests, but many of these places are among the most threatened and degraded ecosystems in the southern Washington Cascades. Over the years, human-made dams, streamside logging, channelization, sediment runoff, and clearing wood from streams have dramatically reduced salmon and lamprey populations. Today, climate change is further altering stream flow patterns, increasing the frequency of droughts and floods, and warming these habitats to dangerous temperatures for cold water-dependent species.

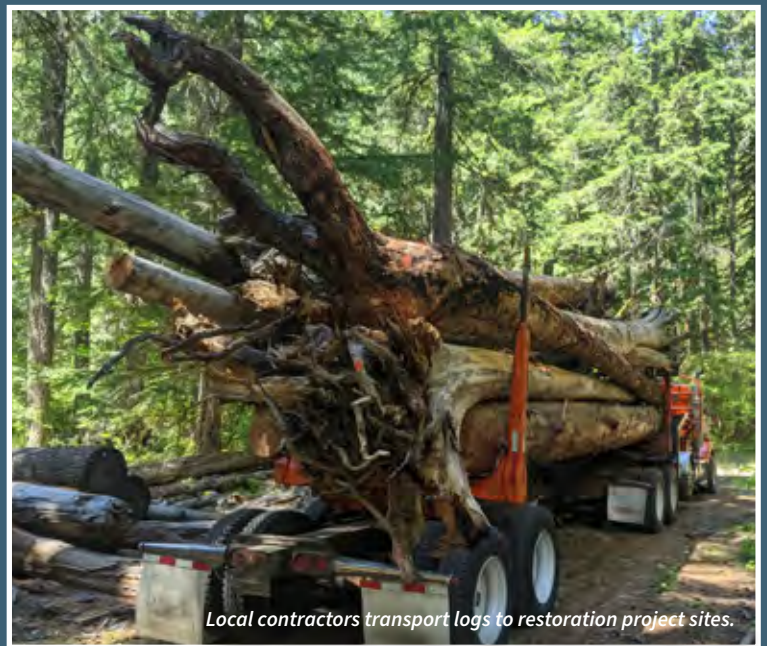
Protecting and restoring these habitats is a substantial part of CFC's efforts to safeguard the southern Washington Cascades and make our region resilient to the impacts of climate change. In 2022, we made significant progress toward those goals by launching new projects, forming new partnerships, and expanding and strengthening existing programs.

## INSTREAM WOOD BANK NETWORK

*The Instream Wood Bank Network (Wood Bank) has grown rapidly since its 2020 launch by filling a much-needed niche. When streamside forests are healthy, falling trees diversify and improve aquatic habitats by creating deep cool pools that benefit fish and help create gravel beds that are vital for spawning salmon and other species. The current amount of instream wood found in watersheds across southwest Washington is inadequate, and the agencies, Tribes, and habitat restoration professionals working to address the issue face barriers in securing the materials they need at affordable rates.*

*The Wood Bank works with landowners, timber companies, government agencies, Tribes, and private landowners to source non-lumber wood, and it employs local contractors to haul these materials to restoration sites across the region. In 2022, the Wood Bank:*

- Collected 410 logs that would have otherwise been chipped or burned
- Delivered these materials to instream restoration projects, saving our partners an estimated \$92,754 and helping their restoration efforts go further.
- Invested \$75,364 into the local economy through working relationships with local contractors.



Local contractors transport logs to restoration project sites.



## BEAVER REINTRODUCTIONS

*Beavers are keystone species whose presence leads to a cascade of positive impacts for forest ecosystems. By building dams, beavers create wetlands that prevent droughts and floods, limit the spread of forest fires, and create important habitats for an incredible variety of other species. Though beaver populations are rising in many places, current numbers are still only one-tenth of historical estimates. CFC has observed that their return has been delayed in some places high up in watersheds where the ecological benefits they bring are needed most.*

*Beavers are some of our most important allies in our campaign to build climate resiliency. In 2022:*

- CFC's Science and Stewardship Manager became a licensed beaver trapper, allowing us to respond quickly to requests to trap and remove beavers causing problems for private landowners.
- We formed a new partnership with Columbia Springs, a local environmental education non-profit, and the WDFW Vancouver Trout Hatchery, which provided facilities to safely house beavers between capture and reintroduction.
- We successfully relocated eight beavers to select locations within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.



*One of eight beavers taking his first steps into his new forest home.*

## STREAMSIDE FOREST PROTECTION



*Streamside forests provide water-cooling shade and instream wood that benefits aquatic habitats.*

*Logging in riparian habitats (the areas along rivers and creeks) can cause severe damage to aquatic ecosystems and fish populations. Streamside logging removes sources of shade that keep water temperatures cool during hot times of year and removes vital sources of instream wood. Logging activities within riparian habitats also lead to runoff and sedimentation, further damaging aquatic ecosystems.*

*CFC continued to speak out against actions that threaten watersheds in southwest Washington:*

- We continued weighing in on federal timber sales to protect aquatic ecosystems. In 2022, CFC's staff and volunteers participated in ground truthing inside stands included in the Yellowjacket timber sale.
- We began expanding our area of focus to include forests on state-owned lands and submitted comments on seven State timber sales.
- In addition to logging, other activities, like mining, can have disastrous consequences for aquatic habits. CFC continued leading a campaign to oppose mining near the Green River.

## AQUATIC HABITAT RESTORATION



*CFC's staff, Amanda Keasberry and Suzanne Whitney, planning low-tech restoration work at Stump Creek.*

*With the help of volunteers and partner organizations, CFC worked to restore and better understand aquatic habitats in southwest Washington. We helped study populations of Pacific lamprey, an important but understudied species that has experienced steep population declines in recent years.*

*We used low-tech, high-impact restoration techniques to build habitat for lamprey, salmon, and other aquatic species. In 2022, we:*

- Built ten instream structures along a tributary of the South Fork Toutle River called Stump Creek.
- Assessed the success of past years' beaver reintroduction efforts by conducting surveys in previous release sites.
- Surveyed 1.35 miles of stream for suitable lamprey habitat and verified presence of lamprey in Johnson Creek and absence of lamprey in Stump Creek, thus reinforcing the need to enhance habitat in Stump Creek to make it more accessible for lamprey.





## PROTECTING HABITAT BY INFLUENCING TIMBER SALES

*CFC's staff worked with volunteers to collect data in forest stands that had been included in the Yellowjacket timber sale in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.*

Watchdogging timber sales on federal lands has been the backbone of CFC's work for decades. Over time, we've built effective relationships and a multi-layered engagement system to protect essential ecosystems and species in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. One recent sale in the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District, the Yellowjacket Timber Sale, illustrates the successes our approach can achieve and why our vigilance continues to be essential to the health of our forests.

Engaging early and often is vital to ensuring we protect ecosystems and species. Because of conversations held in the Pinchot Partners Forest Collaborative, we expected that elements of the upcoming sale would need our attention, which was confirmed when the early draft of the project was released for scoping comments. In addition to other aspects of the plans, we were concerned about the agency's proposal to create early seral habitat (forests in the early stages of regrowth following a major disturbance) through a process called regeneration harvest on 217 acres. Regeneration harvest is an intensive technique not far removed from a clearcut. The agency proposed deploying this method to create habitats already becoming increasingly common due to fires and other disturbances in stands with large trees and high habitat potential. We were also concerned about the proposed intensive thinning included for the stated purpose of huckleberry restoration. Removing around 70% of the canopy cover was proposed in several areas, including along Forest Road 2816, which contains unique habitats, high biodiversity, and a lack of non-native plants.

With the data we had from spatial analyses and ground truthing trips, we provided the Forest Service with information about several units we believed should be removed from harvest plans or where the intensity of harvest should be decreased to

preserve high-quality habitats and other key environmental features.

After providing location-specific information, several units were dropped from the management plan including at least one regeneration unit with older trees and six of the nine units we outline as priority areas for protection.

Although we made some protection gains in the first stage of commenting, not all of our concerns were heard. There are still 181 acres of regeneration acreage included in the proposed sale, some of which are in northern spotted owl habitat and older forests. We also raised concerns about the agency's plan to add additional off-road vehicle (ORV) routes. But our request for an in-depth analysis on how these new ORV routes would impact species and ecosystems was not addressed. We restated our concerns and provided additional data to back our requests.

The negotiations and advocacy work to protect ecosystems and species in the Yellowjacket timber sale area are ongoing. Although we submitted our comments on the Environmental Assessment in the summer of 2022, we do not expect the sale to be finalized until sometime in 2024. We hope to see our remaining requested modifications incorporated in the Draft Decision.

If these remaining concerns are not adequately addressed, we will continue the fight to keep the gains we've made and advocate for the remaining concerns to be addressed before the project is finalized. The need to stay engaged and vigilant throughout the Yellowjacket planning process is typical of how CFC protects vital habitats and ecosystems. Each layer of engagement is essential to achieving success.

# THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND TIMBER SALES IN NATIONAL FORESTS

## SCOPING:

The Forest Service publishes a Scoping Document which provides an overview of management actions under consideration for the upcoming timber sale. Individuals and organizations are invited to submit comments in response to the scoping documents provided by the agency.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA):

After considering the comments they receive in response to scoping documents, the agency releases its refined proposed plans for the timber sale, along with an assessment of the expected impacts the project will have. The public is invited to offer comments in response to the contents of the EA.

## DRAFT DECISION:

After considering comments they receive on the EA, the Forest Service will release a Draft Decision Notice. This set of documents usually includes a Final EA, a write-up of which management actions the Forest Service plans to undertake and a draft decision of whether the selected actions will have a significant impact on the environment.

## FINAL DECISION:

After considering feedback on the draft Decision Notice and working through the objection period, the decision-maker will sign the Decision Notice. If major concerns have not been addressed, an outside group may choose to sue at this state. Once the agency's decision is finalized and any legal challenges are resolved, they can begin implementing management actions in the plan.

## HOW CFC INFLUENCES TIMBER SALES

### COLLABORATION

- Engage in monthly meetings with the Pinchot Partners Forest Collaborative and the South Gifford Pinchot Forest Collaborative, groups of stakeholders who work to find common ground and provide meaningful feedback to the Forest Service.
- Participate in subcommittee meetings to find common ground on specific forest management topics including riparian area management and fire salvage.
- Receive updates, ask questions, and provide feedback to the Forest Service throughout the several year planning process.

### GROUND TRUTHING

- Conduct volunteer and staff trips to investigate particular forest stands to see if there are any features that we need to protect like patches of old-growth or unique waterways. For example, in 2022 volunteers found old-growth stands in the Yellowjacket Timber Sale area that required heightened protection.
- Gather location-specific data into shareable formats to be included in communications with the Forest Service.

### MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

- We analyze spatial data layers like known northern spotted owl nesting sites, age of trees, our habitat connectivity model, wildlife camera sightings, and other data to identify areas where suggested harvest prescriptions would damage important ecosystems or species.
- For example, we regularly provide the Forest Service with on-the-ground habitat information. We highlighted locations where spotted owl nest sites, fishers, or unmapped wetlands overlap proposed sale units.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- We take all of the information from our ground truthing investigations, spatial analyses, and conversations within the collaboratives and incorporate those into our comments.
- We also compare the proposed actions against legal requirements and best practices and comment on whether proposed actions are not meeting legal standards.
- We comment at all stages of the public process and will object or litigate when necessary to protect valuable ecosystems and species. So far in the Yellowjacket Timber Sale, we have provided comments for the scoping process and the Environmental Assessment. If our concerns remain when reviewing the draft Decision Notice, we have the option to object. An objection can solicit various responses from agency officials, including a phase of negotiation regarding the specific management plans that prompted the objection.





## ADDRESSING WILDFIRES

Wildfires shaped the evolution of forests in the Pacific Northwest and are a normal and beneficial part of the ecology of our region. Historic fire patterns created forests that were an ever-changing mosaic of varied habitats that supported diverse communities of plants and animals, and Indigenous peoples intentionally used fire to shape and benefit the landscape.

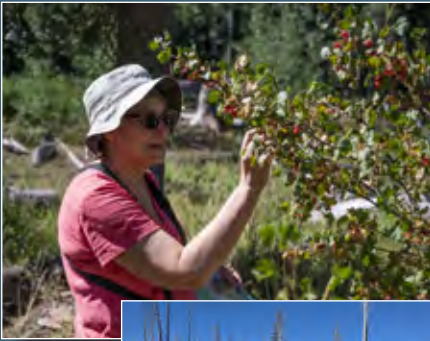
But today's forests are different from those of the past due to human-caused disruptions of natural processes, including a century of fire suppression and a history of timber harvest that replaced complex and biodiverse forests with homogenous stands. These disturbances, combined with hotter and drier conditions caused by climate change, have led to landscapes that lack the resilience to fire they had in the past.

In 2022, Cascade Forest Conservancy worked on several fronts to address the impacts of recent fires and prepare for a climate where wildfires can be expected to burn at higher frequencies, severities, and sizes.



## POST-FIRE RESTORATION

*The triple burn area south of Mount Adams has struggled to recover naturally after its seed bank was depleted by a series of intense fires that burned here in 2008, 2012, and 2015.*



*On two separate trips, CFC's staff and volunteers collected, and later distributed, the seeds of native plant species.*

- CFC staff and 14 volunteers collected 25 gallons of seeds from native plant species growing in stands near the triple burn area.
- Many of those seeds were spread during a volunteer trip later that season. 11 volunteers seeded areas along the Gotchen Creek Trail within the triple burn area.
- Volunteers also collected data across 30 acres of the triple burn area to assess the success of replanting efforts between 2019-2021.
- Many of the plants were unable to be located, but out of the plants found, around 78% were alive. We suspect the recent intense summer heat domes and elk and deer browsing could account for the missing plants. Nonetheless, it was an important finding that is helping inform CFC's continued restoration efforts.

## BUILDING FIRE-RESILIENT HABITATS IN EASTSIDE FORESTS

*Many areas on the eastside of the southern Washington Cascades are less resilient to fires than they were in the past. Fire suppression has threatened mixed-conifer forests where, historically, low-intensity fires once burned every 10-30 years. Today, thick layers of flammable duff have accumulated around the bases of old-growth ponderosa pines and some stands have high densities of younger grand fir trees.*



*Volunteers collected data about old-growth Ponderosa pines to understand how these trees are impacted by fires.*

- 11 volunteers worked with CFC staff to reduce the fuel loads and ladder fuels around some of our largest ponderosa pines to improve the survival of these old giants during prescribed burns or wildfires.
- Volunteers also collected data about 46 individual trees, wrapping up a four-year effort to better understand how old-growth ponderosas fare in wildfires.

## ADVOCATING FOR FIRE AND CLIMATE-SMART LAWS AND POLICIES

*CFC has been actively involved in the development of climate-smart laws and policies in 2022:*


- Through official comments, we supported the Department of Natural Resources' Carbon Project, which is a new state lands project that would set aside 10,000 acres of forest for carbon mitigation and storage.
- We have been actively engaged in minimizing salvage logging on state and federal lands by commenting on particular state timber sales and negotiating, through the South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative, to limit fire-related salvage on federal lands.
- We've been actively engaged in regional and national-level efforts to update the Northwest Forest Plan to account for the stresses of a changing climate.



*A forest stand impacted by the Big Hollow fire of 2020.*



# INSPIRING AND INFORMING OUR COMMUNITIES



*CFC's Executive Director, Molly Whitney speaking with other staff, supporters, Congressional staffers, and representatives of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation on Goat Mountain about CFC's work to prevent mining near Mount St. Helens. Goat Mountain, which sits beside the Green River Valley, is cherished by hikers, mountain bikers, hunters, and others, and would be irreversibly damaged by mining.*

Deepening connections to the natural world and broadening perspectives about our place within it are some of the most impactful, yet hardest to quantify, parts of what we do. To prevent damage to ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest, heal the harms that have already been done, and ensure a sustainable, climate change-resilient future requires that the right laws and policies are in place and that scientifically-vetted restoration efforts move forward. Achieving this depends on communities of people getting involved, supporting conservation work over the long-term, and moving past old ways of thinking and relating to the land—away from philosophies of extraction and control and toward interdependence, stewardship, and belonging.

For many, working in the field alongside CFC's staff with other like-minded volunteers is a personally rewarding and meaningful experience that helps them learn about and feel more connected to the forests, streams, and wildlife in the Cascades. When asked what she took away from her experiences working with CFC to identify, collect, and later plant native seeds to restore forest stands damaged by usually frequent and severe wildfires, one volunteer, Heather Gordon, put it like this;

“A lot of the time, you’re hearing or reading frightening headlines about the environment and not connecting with

the people who are saying, ‘yes, but we can do something.’ For anyone like me who is worried about the impacts that human beings have had on our environment, being able to do something concrete, on the ground, outside with other people who also care, is a very positive experience. I came away from my volunteer experiences with a sense of community, a sense of positive change, and hope that we can still stall or reverse the damage we’ve done.”

Everyone who participated in one or more of CFC's events or volunteer opportunities in 2022 made a positive impact on the Cascades. Volunteers gathered on-the-ground information about forest stands included in upcoming timber sales, restored fire-impacted forests, helped scientists study rare and threatened species, and restored critical salmon habitat. People in communities from Portland to Packwood came together to share pints and get involved in efforts to protect Mount St. Helens from the threat of mining. And, our friends and supporters filled every seat at our first in-person gala since 2019! Between them and the thousands of other individual donors who gave in 2022, our community contributed an astounding 45% of our total budget last year.



## COMMUNITY SCIENCE VOLUNTEERS

195 volunteers dedicated 1,378 hours to our projects in 2022

- 23 volunteers surveyed for the presence of Pacific lamprey along 1.35 miles of streams.
- 19 volunteers gathered baseline data on 46 old-growth ponderosa pines to help understand how fire impacts these stands.
- 34 volunteers helped conclude CFC's three-year project studying the recovery of reintroduced fishers (a mid-sized carnivore related to weasels and martens) by collecting thousands of photos from 72 wildlife cameras.
- 16 volunteers installed 10 instream structures to improve habitats for salmon and lamprey.



*Community science volunteers were elated by the discovery of larval Pacific lamprey found during a survey.*

## THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

We launched a new coalition called the Green River Valley Alliance to safeguard this area from the threat of mining once and for all.

- The Green River Valley Alliance hosted 11 in-person events in 2022 in support of our efforts to protect Mount St. Helens.
- The number of signatures on our petition asking Congress to take action to protect the area from mining grew by more than 170% in 2022.
- 300 postcards with personal messages of support for our #NoPlaceForAMine position were sent to local federal representatives.
- More than 70 organizations and businesses formally signed on as partners in the Green River Valley Alliance.



*CFC's Campaign Coordinator, Sean Roome explaining why Mount St. Helens is no place for a mine at one the GRVA's 2022 events.*

## OUR INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY

Our community stepped up to support conservation and restoration in big ways last year

- More than 150 of our friends and supporters came out to make our first major in-person fundraising event since 2019 a huge success.
- Individuals made their voices heard by responding to multiple calls to action, commenting on plans for proposed timber sales, and supporting the call for hardrock mining reform.
- More than 1,000 individuals made CFC strong through their generous donations.



*In 2022 we held our first in-person fundraising auction since 2019, and our community filled every seat!*

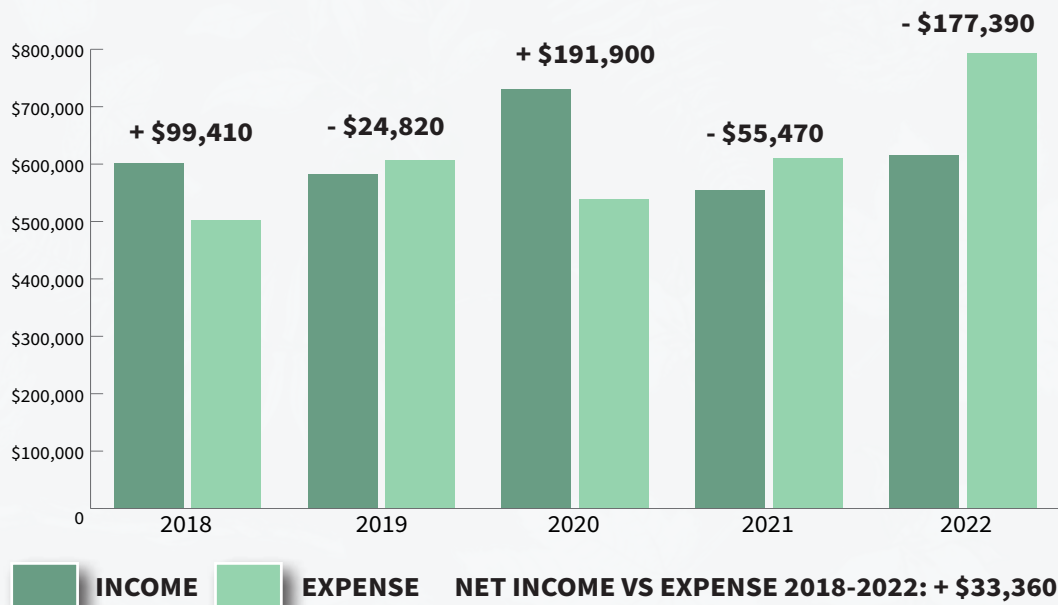


# 2022 BY THE NUMBERS FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

CFC's financial position is strong and our organization is stable. But, due to staffing transitions and unexpected funding circumstances, our 2022 revenue fell short of projections. We often receive large sums of grant funding for multi-year projects all at once and spend it over subsequent years, so it's not unusual for our income to exceed expenses in one year and for the inverse to occur in the next. This was the case this past year, but the difference between income and expenses in 2022 fell outside of what we had anticipated.

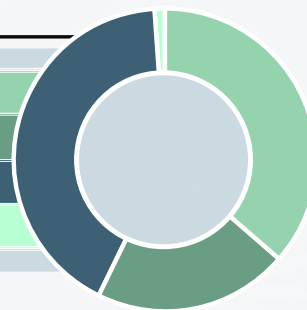
We're proud that despite these challenges, we were able to make adjustments without negatively impacting our programs or staff.

Ups and downs are normal, and despite the unexpectedly large gap between our income and expenses in 2022, CFC's net income is still greater than our total expenses over the last 5 years. Thanks to our partners, supporters, and individuals who care for our region, CFC has the strength to continue working to achieve our mission to protect and restore the heart of the Cascades now and for generations to come.



## TOTAL INCOME: \$616,420

INDIVIDUAL GIVING:	\$224,955
GRANTS UNRESTRICTED:	\$128,768
GRANTS RESTRICTED:	\$256,621
OTHER:	\$6,075



## TOTAL EXPENSE: \$793,810

PROGRAMS:	\$577,340
ADMINISTRATIVE:	\$164,080
FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS:	\$50,760
LOBBYING:	\$1,630

