



Idaho

2024 IMPACT REPORT

Director's Desk



Every year, we look forward to sharing with you our boldest accomplishments in this annual impact report. This year we have even more to celebrate, as 2024 marks the completion of our latest five-year strategic plan for The Nature Conservancy in Idaho. That strategic plan, launched in 2019, was ambitious and unlike anything we'd ever done before, including building new programs from scratch under our Climate Action and Regenerative Agriculture initiatives.

The stories in this impact report are not just a celebration of the past year, but a representation of both the evolution and the staying power of the innovative solutions we've built over the past five years. Our greatest successes of 2024 prove how much our work has grown—partnerships formed one relationship at a time, conservation work so important it has expanded across regions.

TNC's Regenerative Agriculture program started as an idea to support farmers and now encompasses multiple partnerships and demonstration farms that reach farmers, agribusinesses and even policymakers. Our

prescribed fire program began as a single pilot project and is now not only restoring forests across the state, but also expanding diversity and representation within the prescribed fire workforce. What began as a humble intention to support Indigenous-led conservation developed into an opportunity to partner with the Nez Perce Tribe to secure public funding for critical climate solutions.

As we begin the next chapter of our work, these inspiring outcomes are the strong foundation that will enable us to keep making a difference for nature. None of our successes would be possible without countless people beside us—our outstanding partners, our talented staff (including new staff you'll meet in these pages) and especially you, our dedicated supporters. Thanks to you, we can continue making lasting change for people and nature in Idaho.

Your friend in conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Menlove".

Mark Menlove
Idaho State Director



The Nature Conservancy in Idaho

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The Nature Conservancy acknowledges that the lands and waters of this place we know as Idaho are the ancestral homelands of many Indigenous peoples. Today they are represented by the Coeur d'Alene, the Kalispel, the Kootenai, the Nez Perce, the Shoshone-Bannock and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. We are deeply grateful to these Indigenous peoples, past and present, who have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial. We affirm our responsibility to honor Tribal sovereignty, culture and heritage, and to work in allyship to ensure a future where all people and nature thrive.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Land & Water Conservation



Bridging borders to restore the imperiled Sagebrush Sea

To save the imperiled and critical Sagebrush Sea landscape, TNC staff from Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming have come together to connect partners, leverage projects and share solutions across borders. This year, our multi-state approach helped to secure a \$9.9 million grant to restore streams in six critical locations across the West. This award also helped to hire six project managers, including Idaho riparian restoration manager Toni Ruth, who work together to implement low-tech interventions that mimic beaver dams and other natural processes.

This work touches down in the Upper Salmon River basin, where TNC and partners are helping restore streams that provide ribbons of life to sustain fish, birds and people. "These restoration efforts help support ranching operations as well as plants and animals in the region," says Ruth.

" For the 8 million people who call this landscape home, their health, quality of life, culture and recreation are intrinsically linked to the Sagebrush Sea. And for the 350 rare, threatened and endangered species whose existence depends on sagebrush, it is indispensable."



JUSTIN PETTY

Salmon & Sagebrush Programs Manager



Expanding the diversity of the fire workforce

The need for more prescribed fire in Idaho's forests is immense—and so is the need for people to do this critical work. Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act and an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service, TNC and local partners are hiring and training a prescribed fire workforce that was not imaginable in years past. In 2024, more than 80 fire professionals worked on thinning and prescribed burning projects across Idaho.

Historically, some of the biggest deterrents to a career in fire are low wages, unpredictable schedules and limited diversity. TNC is expanding opportunities for fire professionals by offering fair wages, flexible schedules and training opportunities, with 55% of our employees comprised of women and non-binary people. Together, these factors are attracting a diverse, enthusiastic workforce finding satisfying careers in forest restoration.

FIVE-YEAR IMPACT

You supported conservation of critical lands and waters in key geographies.

Our strategic plan focused on the protection of lands and waters in central Idaho's Pioneer Mountains and Silver Creek, North Idaho's Boundary County (*pictured left*), and East Idaho's Upper Snake and Henry's Fork watersheds to support fish and wildlife habitat and ensure nature can adapt to climate change.

With your help we protected and restored critical places for fish and wildlife and created a transformational model for resolving the forest health crisis.

524,738 ACRES

Forest restoration treatments completed

16.5 RIVER MILES

Salmon habitat protected

59,000 ACRES

Restored sagebrush habitat



Scan this QR code to learn more about the Sagebrush Sea or visit: nature.org/SagebrushSea



Supporting equitable access to public funding opportunities

It is vital to support equitable access to public funding for Indigenous Peoples and communities disproportionately impacted by climate change. The Nature Conservancy has an opportunity to lend our time and grant-writing expertise to support our partners in securing competitive funding for important community-driven projects.

To support access to funding from the Inflation Reduction Act, TNC provided a grant writer to advise the Nez Perce Tribe on their proposal for EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. Our collective efforts resulted in the Nez Perce Tribe being awarded over \$37 million from the general grant and \$8.7 million through a Tribal-only competition to fund climate solutions in their community. The funds will go toward energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades in over 600 homes on Tribal lands, solar power for Tribal facilities, workforce development and more.

FIVE-YEAR IMPACT

You helped motivate business and political leaders to act on climate.

Our strategic plan undertook an effort to amplify a solutions-based conversation about climate change. We continue working toward our long-term goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, advocating for smart climate policies and supporting community actions that limit warming.

With your help, we reached thousands with climate messaging, brought climate change education to Idaho schools and supported the passage of critical environmental bills.

\$370 BILLION

Funds available for energy and climate investments through the Inflation Reduction Act

28,000 VIEWS

Of climate action videos created by TNC



“Climate change impacts every economic sector and aspect of our lives. We cannot confront the scale and urgency of these challenges without political leadership that supports equally expansive solutions.”

JILLIAN HANSON

Climate & Renewable Energy Program Manager



Scan this QR code to see more results from our clean energy poll or visit: tinyurl.com/IdahoPolling



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Climate Action

Surveying Idaho voters to shape clean energy

TNC supports investment in clean energy to reduce carbon pollution and help turn the tide on climate change. As clean energy is increasingly developed in Idaho, careful planning and robust community engagement is critical to avoid impacts to sensitive natural, cultural and working lands.

To better understand what Idahoans think about clean energy development, TNC conducted a public opinion survey of 500 likely voters in February 2024. We found that 64% of Idaho voters agree that we can

both increase the production of clean energy while preserving natural areas, wildlife habitat and the character of our communities.

Additionally, 64% agree that clean energy is good economics, bringing affordable energy options, jobs and other benefits to local communities. Polls like this are an important way TNC helps influence smart policies by bringing informative data to policymakers.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Regenerative Agriculture



Transforming soil on a large scale

Applying chemicals to kill potential pests and disease is a common agricultural practice with devastating environmental impacts, as it destroys beneficial bacteria, insects and fungi along with potentially harmful ones. Regenerative agriculture offers a better way to support balanced ecosystems, and TNC's new partner—and largest demonstration farm to date—is proving this on a large scale.

Blake Matthews has used regenerative practices on his 2,500-acre farm in Oakley since 2011. He stopped applying chemicals in 2016 and began measuring his soil's level of organic carbon—an indicator of how “alive”

soil is with living beings and nutrients needed to sustain plant life. At first, the carbon levels were at 80 parts per million and the soil was dry, dusty and lifeless. By 2024, the soil had transformed to a rich, earthy texture with a carbon reading of 300 parts per million, thanks to the consistent implementation of practices like cover crops and reduced tillage.

The soil is so healthy that Matthews has eliminated fungicides and soil fumigants, drastically reduced insecticides and synthetic fertilizers, and uses less water. TNC's partnership will enable Matthews to level up his techniques by incorporating companion crops and reducing tillage across the large farm.

FIVE-YEAR IMPACT

You supported agriculture practices that reduce emissions.

Our strategic plan set out to create a meaningful shift in farming and water management practices across the Snake River Plain to improve soil health, adapt to climate change and ensure the viability of our state's agriculture industry and communities.

With your help, we added capacity to this growing program, increased farm partnerships, and set the stage for 10X the impact in the next five years.

28 FARMS

With regenerative transition projects underway across 14,000 acres

25,000 ACRES

Of farmlands with improved management



"Regenerative agriculture unlocks multiple solutions to the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, including retaining and filtering water, absorbing carbon, reducing emissions and sustaining habitat."

NEIL CRESCENTI

Regenerative Agriculture Program Manager

Inspiring policymakers on a farm tour

To see widespread adoption of regenerative agriculture across Idaho, we need supportive policies and more public programs that incentivize and assist farmers in the transition to regenerative practices. TNC's strategy involves demonstrating the benefits of regenerative agriculture not only to farmers, but also to policymakers. In June, TNC teamed up with the Idaho Dairymen's Association, Idaho Potato Commission and others to lead a tour at Blake Matthews' demonstration farm for Idaho state legislators to see first-hand the ecological and economic benefits of regenerative agriculture. The legislators heard directly from farmers about the importance of funding programs that make it easier on farmers to implement regenerative practices.

"I heard from several legislators that they felt more excited about regenerative agriculture after this tour," says Kari Kostka, director of external affairs. "It will help them become champions for our cause as they encourage peer legislators to also vote supportively."



Scan this QR code to hear stories from our farm partners or visit: nature.org/IdahoFarmers

Stories of Community 2024



Introducing our Lead Scientist

As TNC's lead scientist in Idaho, Taylor Ganz will provide science support for local conservation programs. A former research scientist at the University of Washington with a deep connection to the Wood River Valley, Ganz is using her scientific background to inform conservation actions across the region. "I deeply care about the wild places of the American West and the human communities sharing these landscapes," says Ganz.



Celebrating seedlings

Last spring, the partners of the Elaine Clegg City of Trees Challenge celebrated a major milestone of officially planting the 235,000th forest seedling—one for every Boise resident—years ahead of schedule. TNC was the lead partner on the seedling planting effort. The trees were planted in Boise National Forest to provide important clean air, water and reforestation benefits that lessen the negative effects of climate change.

"Strong partnerships between the U.S. Forest Service, local nonprofits and private funders were the key to reaching our goal six years early," says outreach specialist Traci Swift. "Reforestation in this area will benefit communities not only today, but in the decades to come."



Supporting Latino Conservation Week

Around the country, Latino Conservation Week organizes free, inclusive community events that champion the Latino community's access to the outdoors and commitment to conservation. For the second consecutive year, TNC has been a participating organization of Latino Conservation Week in Boise, helping to plan and promote events across the Treasure Valley.

Creating a climate curriculum

To increase climate literacy among young people, TNC launched a partnership with the Idaho Environmental Education Association to create an Idaho-specific climate curriculum, based on the Idaho Climate-Economy Impacts Assessment. This new resource is being shared with educators across the state and will enable students to consider how climate impacts and solutions might affect them.

Meet our Director of Conservation Programs

Kerey Barnowe-Meyer joined TNC following nearly 14 years with the Nez Perce Tribe, where he served as a wildlife biologist, program leader and planner. As TNC enters its next strategic plan, he is leading an inspiring and compelling vision for Idaho's conservation programs. "TNC has assembled an incredible team working to address critical needs throughout the state, and we have an impressive track record of doing so in partnership with diverse allies," says Barnowe-Meyer.



Thank You

The Nature Conservancy's accomplishments are only made possible by the many individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations that made gifts to our vital conservation programs during fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023—June 30, 2024). Every gift, regardless of size, plays a crucial role in our work—for people and nature. We thank you for your commitment to our mission.

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We have years, not decades, to take on the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. But by working together, we're overcoming barriers to the solutions our planet needs.

Together, we find a way.