Year-End Reflections

If hindsight is 2020, most of us are looking forward to seeing the year 2020 in the rearview mirror. Uncertainty and disconnect are the realities of our moment. In these trying times, our team at the Center for Large Landscape Conservation continues to make headway despite the headwinds.

At the Center, we have always viewed conservation as a health issue. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforces our thinking as emergence of the pandemic is closely related to the increase of habitat fragmentation and the destruction of wildlife habitat. Our work to combat fragmentation through ecological connectivity conservation is a means to protect and restore health—both health of landscapes and of people.

The fragmentation we are seeing in nature can also be seen in communities, as they fragment across political, jurisdictional and cultural boundaries. We've seen this across the United States this year with heartbreaking results. The process of working together to connect nature helps heal these divides. We promote collaborative conservation where people must talk to each other, work side by side on complex problems and build trust. While some say society is losing its civility, we continue to encourage people to come together around the landscapes they love. Are we making progress to achieve this mission? We believe so.

At the local level, we are excited to continue on-the-ground efforts with the sovereign tribes of Montana. We are grateful to work with the Fort Belknap Tribes and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes as they lead a community process to develop and implement climate adaptation plans. We are providing support to the Blackfeet Nation in their reservation-wide land use planning efforts and hope this work builds the foundation for a Tribal protected area east of Glacier National Park that opens up nature-based economic opportunities for the Tribe.

This year, we also worked with states to advance connectivity policy and 13 U.S. states have embraced wildlife corridor legislation or executive orders from their governors. Federally, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a National Wildlife Corridor Bill and is considering a National Tribal Wildlife Corridor Bill.

At the global level, the Center contributed to the UN Convention on Migratory Species adopting definitions of ecological connectivity as a pillar of their work impacting wildlife movement within and passing through 161 cooperating countries. On behalf of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, we also released the first-ever “Guidelines for Conserving Connectivity through Ecological Networks and Corridors”. Since its release in July, it has been the most downloaded IUCN publication.

As COVID numbers have climbed over the year and we grieve the many that have been lost in the U.S. and abroad, we document the linkage between healthy landscapes and healthy people. In the weeks ahead, the Center will release three scientific papers looking at the connection between maintaining ecological integrity and preventing disease spillover—the dynamic process that leads to epidemics and pandemics. Protecting nature reduces the risk of disease spillover and as such, conservationists not only protect biodiversity but are frontline defenders of public health.

We all hope for a better tomorrow and a better world for our children. Let us go into 2021 having learned from the trials of this year’s social, environmental, and economic struggles and from the humility brought by the pandemic and events bigger than ourselves. Life is precious. Hug your loved ones. Love your neighbors. Listen to perspectives different than your own and connect with nature.

Sincerely,

Gary Tabor, President
About Us

Vision
Conserving life on Earth by connecting our fragmented natural world.

Mission
Engage, connect, and activate people and communities to protect the integrity of landscapes and ecosystems that maintain our climate and support life.

Values
• **Innovation:** We integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge, community perspectives, science, and policy to pursue conservation solutions that are culturally respectful and ecologically transformative.

• **Collaboration:** We prioritize building authentic relationships that are rooted in trust, and bring together the voices and opinions of all people to improve community resilience and restore landscape integrity.

• **Equity:** We celebrate communities in managing and governing their own conservation institutions and resources, and support communities in getting their rightful share of conservation benefits.

• **Respect:** We honor, learn from, and continually evolve to reflect the values, experiences, and perspectives of our staff, partners, and people in the communities in which we work and serve.
We help identify threats and prioritize solutions, connect natural areas, provide critical habitat and safe migration for wide-ranging animals, and protect ecological processes and systems.

2020 Outcomes

We leveraged more than $1.5 million for the first wildlife overpass in Idaho with a $25,000 investment. On average we leverage $5 for every $1 we invest in crossing structures.

$660,000

Awarded $660,000 to 27 landscape conservation collaboratives through the Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund.

25 keynote presentations and trainings given across 12+ countries in 2019 to deliver proven, science-based connectivity approaches and solutions.

121 nations have adopted a new strategic plan with connectivity conservation as a policy goal.

Our Programs

• Community Resilience
• Corridors and Crossings
• International Connectivity

Our Focus Areas

Science + Research
Mentorship + Networking
Community Resilience
Policy + Law
Community Resilience Program

Biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation are affecting every community and ecosystem on Earth, but the impacts are not equally distributed. The climate crisis continues to threaten the future of our planet, while marginalized communities face increasing health and resource inequities. At the Center, we continue to advance community-based efforts to prepare for and adapt to a changing climate, protect biodiversity and restore landscape integrity to ensure healthy human communities.

Metrics

- We provided technical support to nine tribal natural resource and social service sectors to address climate change impacts on the Flathead Indian Reservation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

- We secured two large grants to support climate adaptation by building forest resilience in the Little Rocky Mountains of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in north central Montana. This work will make forests healthier and more resilient to drought and devastating fires.

Environmental issues like fragmentation and climate change put both natural systems and human wellbeing at risk. Efforts to restore and protect ecosystems must include solutions that contribute to ecosystem health as well as strengthened community resilience.

In the face of growing environmental challenges there is a critical need for expertise in how to identify, design, and implement conservation projects that protect landscape integrity and human health, while respecting culture and tradition.
2020 Highlights

Tribes Take Leadership in Climate Change Adaptation Planning

Throughout 2020, the Center supported comprehensive climate adaptation planning with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) Climate Advisory Committee, including facilitating critical updates to CSKT’s 2016 Climate Adaptation Plan and expanding evaluation and monitoring metrics for tracking adaptation progress across nine natural resource and social service sectors. The Center has been a member of CSKT’s Climate Change Adaptation Coordinating Committee since 2015, and is honored to continue supporting the Séliš, Qlispé, and Ksanka peoples’ efforts to protect biodiversity, sacred landscapes, and their ways of life. The updated and expanded CSKT Climate Adaptation Plan is scheduled to be published before year-end. To learn more, visit: http://csktclimate.org/.

Supporting Land Use Planning and Creation of a Nature-Based Economy

Under the guidance of the Blackfeet Nation Tribal Business Council, the Center continues to support the Blackfeet Nation’s agricultural and land planning efforts. Our work is led by tribal priorities and integrates traditional knowledge with Western science and other information needs to support smart sustainable land use planning that serves Amskapi Pikuni ways of being and knowing. To coordinate these efforts, the Center welcomed Terry Tatsey, former Blackfeet Council member to the Center’s team in August. Terry now serves as project lead and liaison between Blackfeet Nation, the Center and many other state and federal land management partners.

Building Forest Resilience in the Little Rockies Forest of Fort Belknap

The Center is pleased to announce an expanded partnership with the Fort Belknap Indian Community, home of the A’aninin and Nakoda peoples. This partnership—consisting of members of Fort Belknap’s Fire Management, Environmental Protection Office, Climate Change Program and Aaniiih Nakoda College—seeks to reduce the risk of devastating wildfire in the forested Little Rocky Mountains while expanding climate adaptation planning across natural resource sectors and tribal departments. The Little Rockies Forest Resilience Project will reduce fuel loads in ponderosa pine forests, working to make the forest more resilient to drought induced by climate change while also improving habitat for wildlife.
Corridors and Crossings Program

This year, wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity rose to new levels of awareness across the nation. At the federal level, landmark language was included in proposed transportation legislation that would bring new funding and attention to wildlife-vehicle collisions and the impact roads have on wildlife and ecosystems. Additionally, states continue to advance policies to improve landscape connectivity while creating safer roads for people and wildlife.

From landowners to lawmakers, every person has a role to play in reconnecting natural landscapes for the benefit of people and animals. In 2020, the Center continued to guide strategic partnerships to advance on-the-ground solutions, while merging science and policy to inform innovative connectivity legislation. Success requires working together at all levels and across aisles, and we remain committed to serving this important role.

Metrics

- Provided technical support to pass corridor legislation in two states (UT and VA).

- Secured passage of the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act in the U.S. House of Representatives and unanimous, bipartisan passage of the Tribal Wildlife Corridors Act in the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

- Two staff from the Center represented Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage on two leadership teams for the Montana Statewide Steering Committee on Wildlife and Transportation.
Bridging the Divide Between Citizens and Agencies

As a longstanding member of the Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage coalition, the Center worked with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) staff on the adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that formally commits these agencies to work together on wildlife and transportation issues in Montana. Additionally, program staff, in collaboration with these agency partners, provide guidance and leadership through a statewide Data and Information Working Group. This group is currently mapping areas of greatest need for wildlife crossings on Montana’s roads, which will inform on-the-ground action to reduce wildlife-vehicle conflict and enhance public safety.

Using Federal Policy to Create Safer Roads

Following a decade of work, the Center has succeeded in crafting and advancing landmark legislation that aims to protect biodiversity, stimulate local economies, and make roads safer for people and wildlife. Staff at the Center, working with coalition partners and federal lawmakers, successfully included protections for wildlife corridors and funding for wildlife crossing structures into transportation legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in June. The Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2) includes language originally crafted by the Center that would make hundreds of millions of dollars available to build wildlife crossing structures and other projects to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve habitat connectivity. The legislation has been passed in the House and will be considered by the Senate when Congress reauthorizes current transportation programs, set to expire in September of 2021.

Land Trusts and Connectivity Toolkit

The Center has launched a multi-year project aimed at increasing landscape connectivity practices in the work of land trusts across the U.S. Private lands are critical to large landscape conservation but are often overlooked in large-scale connectivity planning. This project will result in a toolkit of resources that land trusts can use to integrate connectivity into their planning and management and promote the critical role of private lands in large landscape conservation. Toolkit components will include policy and science best practices, case studies, landowner incentives, and funding information. To launch this project, in 2020 staff from the Center conducted a national survey to gather data on the types of resources, knowledge, opportunities, and other resources land trusts need.
At the outset of 2020, referred to as the “Super Year for Nature,” our International Connectivity Program set its sights high to inform global decision-making, expand collaboration, and build partnerships that accelerate large-scale conservation around the world. The urgent need for the Center’s comprehensive approaches has never been more apparent as we confront challenges such as the increasing loss of ecological connectivity and negative impacts of rapidly expanding infrastructure. We work to improve knowledge, understanding and collaboration to better safeguard human and ecological wellbeing. The health of both depends on tackling the interrelated crises of habitat fragmentation, climate change, and biodiversity loss.

Biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation are global crises, affecting every country and every ecosystem on earth. Only through collective efforts can we restore the health of our shared planet.

International Connectivity Program

To conserve ecosystems at the landscape scale, conservation itself must become a large and interconnected network of partners, working collaboratively across borders and cultures to protect biodiversity, enhance climate resilience, and restore our shared ecological wealth.

Metrics

- More than 950 experts in 120+ countries are now members of the IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group (CCSG) operated by the Center.
- Over 120 practitioners from 19 countries attended workshops sponsored by the Center.
- The Center joined 20+ organizations as part of a coalition to produce the Nature and Infrastructure Webinar Series.
2020 Highlights

Accomplishments of the Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group (CCSG) and its working groups during 2020 include:

- The Marine Connectivity Working Group and the National Marine Protected Areas Center published the report “Ecological Connectivity for Marine Protected Areas”.
- The Transport Working Group established its online library for global partners to access.
- The Asian Elephant Transport Working Group convened two Steering Committee Meetings to address rapid linear infrastructure development across Asia.
- The Latin American and Caribbean Transport Working Group officially formalized its partnership and action plan.

Promoting Global Connectivity Policy

In 2020, the UN Convention on Migratory Species officially adopted the definition of ecological connectivity as “the unimpeded movement of species and the flow of natural processes that sustain life on Earth.” This endorsement set the stage for more focused engagement by the Center in other policy-making processes. This included the Center contributing specific language to the Strategy for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030; presenting policy resolutions to the IUCN World Conservation Congress to address ecological connectivity from local to international levels and promote wildlife-friendly infrastructure; and a focus on connectivity in ongoing negotiations to agree on a post-2020 framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Increasing Collaboration for More Sustainable Infrastructure

Global infrastructure development (such as roads, rails, powerlines, dams and pipelines) is fragmenting ecosystems around the world. The Center, along with the Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, partnered with 20+ organizations to deliver the ’Infrastructure and Nature Webinar Series’ to increase private and business sector engagement that achieves more sustainable infrastructure projects worldwide. With over 300 participants attending each webinar, the series engaged thousands of practitioners and formed a more coherent message and means of coordinating future efforts.

Working Around the World to Support Connectivity Practice

- In late 2019, the Center, CCSG, and partners in Europe held a meeting in Romania to enhance connectivity policy and practice. The meeting resulted in the report, “Connectivity Conservation Workshop: Guiding the Carpathian Region,” and a decision by the Romanian Ministry of Environment to form the new National Connectivity Committee.
- In early 2020, the Center co-sponsored and led a workshop in Kenya, “Designing Linear Infrastructure for Sustainable Outcomes,” to explore how banks, conservationists, businesses and government officials can better communicate and limit impacts of new infrastructure projects. Participants from more than seven African countries attended and a final report proposed solutions. This effort will continue its momentum at the African Congress for Linear Infrastructure and Ecology in Nairobi in 2021.
- The Center continues to collaborate with World Wildlife Fund International to co-develop the new Wildlife Connect Initiative with the goal of bringing together diverse partners and communities to protect and restore corridors and ecological connectivity across three pilot landscapes in Africa, South America, and Asia.
Guidelines for Conserving Connectivity through Ecological Networks and Corridors

The Center for Large Landscape Conservation has spent years working to mainstream connectivity conservation solutions around the world that save biodiversity, increase resilience to climate change, and safeguard human health. To advance this goal, and after more than five years of stakeholder input through the IUCN Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, we are proud to have published the first-ever IUCN "Guidelines for Conserving Connectivity through Ecological Networks and Corridors."

The main objective of these Guidelines is to clarify and standardize consistent practices for the effective design, governance, and management of conservation networks that are connected by designated ecological corridors.

What is “Ecological Connectivity”? 

As defined by the UN Convention on Migratory Species in February 2020, “ecological connectivity is the unimpeded movement of species and the flow of natural processes that sustain life on Earth.” This definition demonstrates the importance of connectivity conservation solutions, and everything they protect, including invaluable resources like water and nutrient cycling, pollination, seed dispersal, food security, and disease resistance.
Why Connectivity Matters?

Connected ecosystems are more resilient. They support plants, animals, and processes to persist in an increasingly fragmented human-dominated world. Now, more than half of the planet is now developed and this is threatening human well-being, accelerating species loss, and limiting nature’s ability to withstand the impacts of climate change. Safeguarding ecological connectivity is a proven conservation measure, and the Guidelines bring together the most current knowledge and proven practices to lead the new global effort to combat habitat fragmentation and protect intact ecological networks for conservation.

Key Messages from the Guidelines

The Guidelines define the spaces (such as corridors) meant to maintain and restore connectivity; summarize best-available science; and recommend ways to formalize designated ecological corridors and networks with the following messages:

- Science overwhelmingly shows that interconnected systems of protected and conserved areas are necessary for species and natural processes to persist in the face of climate change;
- Communities and countries around the world are working to protect ecological connectivity, and more consistent global practices can advance legislation, policy, and action; and
- A coherent global approach to connectivity conservation allows for measuring, monitoring, and assessing the effectiveness of efforts to enhance biodiversity conservation.

To learn more about the Guidelines and the WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, visit [www.conservationcorridor.org/CCSG](http://www.conservationcorridor.org/CCSG) or contact [connectivity@largelandscapes.org](mailto:connectivity@largelandscapes.org).
Networks We Host

Network for Landscape Conservation

Network for Landscape Conservation is a national umbrella group for advancing collaborative landscape conservation. The Network works to connect people to ideas and innovations—and to each other. Since 2011, the Network has built a rapidly growing community of more than 200 organizational partners and 4,000 practitioners. Participants work on a wide variety of landscape conservation efforts at all scales, from urban parks to large continental transboundary ecosystems.

The Network’s partners represent landscapes across the country—ranging from the urban landscapes surrounding Baltimore to the dramatic wildlands of the Blackfeet lands of modern-day Montana. Partners also represent a range of socio-environmental issues, from the Tlinget communities of the Chilkat Valley in southeast Alaska imperiled by disrupted climate and extractive industries to the biodiversity hotspot and Civil Rights seedbed that is the Alabama River landscape of southern Alabama.

Highlight: In August 2020, the Network’s re-granting program, the Catalyst Fund, distributed 13 grants to landscape conservation partnerships through the US to support capacity building and coordination.

ARC Solutions

Animal Road Crossing (ARC) Solutions is an international not-for-profit network whose mission is to identify and promote leading-edge solutions to improve human safety, wildlife mobility and long-term landscape connectivity.

Highlight: ARC is working with the National Wildlife Federation and other project partners to ensure the wildlife crossing at Liberty Canyon in Southern California represents a worldwide model of excellence in design for the safe passage of wildlife, including California’s endangered mountain lion population.

Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent

The Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent is a diverse collaborative of leaders from tribes, agencies, nonprofits, and private interests who are working together to protect culture, community, and conservation throughout the Crown Landscape.

Highlight: In 2020, the group has been focused on promoting environmental justice in the region and climate planning among many other things. Crown leaders were invited to present at a public forum in September that was facilitated by the Center.
Financial Statement

The Center for Large Landscape Conservation is a 501(c)(3) organization supported by a broad network of foundations, government agencies, corporations, and individuals. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, our program work has grown and we have completed the year in a strong financial position. The majority of our funding is restricted for specific projects to advance conservation around the world.

We continue to serve as the fiscal sponsor for numerous projects, the largest being Network for Landscape Conservation and its re-granting program, the Conservation Catalyst Fund. This program accounts for $1.4 million of the Center’s net assets and over $200k has already been directly distributed to conservation collaboratives, through capacity-building grants and peer learning, with the goal of increasing cooperative large landscape conservation efforts throughout the U.S.

Statement of Activities
July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Revenue
Foundations 1,427,315
Individuals 524,612
Government & Tribal 114,020
Universities, Partners & Corporations 95,862
Contract for Service 68,163
Other 58,219

Total Fiscal Year Revenue 2,288,191

Expenses
Program 1,797,409
Administration 319,524
Development 149,875

Total Fiscal Year Expenses 2,266,808

Net Assets from FY end 2019 3,437,493

Total Fiscal Year Net Assets 21,383

Total Net Assets 3,458,876
Catalyst Fund Time-Restricted Assets (1,250,700)

Total Liquid Net Assets for FY 20-21 2,208,176

Financial Position as of June 30, 2020

Assets
Current Assets
Cash & Cash Equivalents 1,196,867
Certificates of Deposit 2,571,253
Grants & Other Receivables 23,084
Other Current Assets 3,001

Fixed Assets 23,683

Liabilities & Equity
Current Liabilities
Accounts Payable 29,518
Payroll Liabilities 104,394
PPP Loan Payable 225,100

Total Current liabilities 359,012

Net Assets
Without Donor Restrictions 1,042,823
With Donor Restrictions 2,416,053

Total Net Assets 3,458,876

Total Liabilities & Equity 3,817,888
In 2020, the Center focused on its journey to better understand the connection between conservation, our work, and justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) principles. As we work to bring more JEDI principles into all aspects of our organization and our practices, we are examining what JEDI means to us as a conservation organization. We are exploring the words we use, our choice of partners, how we hire, and the work we pursue. Our goal is to be informed by respect and supportive of diverse ideas, perspectives, experiences. We seek to understand traditions from a wide-range of backgrounds and identities.

Since its inception, the Center has prioritized developing relationships with all our partners, and tribes are no exception. We have worked with Montana tribes through the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent and on collaborative climate adaptation and land use planning for nearly a decade. We are proud to maintain a policy of 50% equity with tribal partners on all our tribal-related projects. This ensures that conservation opportunities are provided and capacity is built within tribal communities so projects are sustainable.

In addition to continuing and improving our work with tribal partners, we have also launched an internal JEDI Dialogue Group to support staff in an ongoing process of learning and unlearning. Some staff have also had the opportunity to participate in JEDI trainings and we hope to provide these trainings to all staff in the future.

We are committed to a continued practice of learning, recognizing that there is no finish line to exploring, understanding, and promoting JEDI principles in conservation efforts. It is only by including all voices — especially those that have been silenced for generations — that we can achieve a collective goal of healing the natural world.

**Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

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Our Staff

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Renee Callahan, ARC Solutions Executive Director
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