

Photos by Jon Mullen Photography



## A Year Like No Other

Thank you for reading Wilderness Workshop's 2020 Annual Report—our first ever! Amidst all the work at hand to protect public lands we thought it important to take a moment to celebrate our achievements over the past year, thank our wonderful members and donors, and look towards the future.

It's tough to talk about 2020 without mentioning the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic, which had our staff working from home, modifying our events to ensure social distancing, and spending waaay too much time on Zoom. We're very grateful for the many front-line organizations who have been responding to the pandemic and our hearts go out to all who were, and continue to be, impacted by COVID. As we reflect on all the accomplishments at Wilderness Workshop in 2020 - despite the pandemic and uphill battles with the prior administration - both of us are tremendously proud of our staff and grateful to all who support the organization.

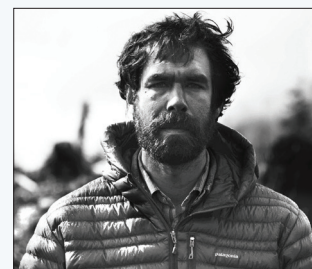
As you'll see in the report, we won important legal fights and fought back against ecologically damaging developments across western Colorado. Our Defiende Nuestra Tierra program grew exponentially. Our staff and volunteers led hikes into threatened landscapes and facilitated restoration projects. We advanced legislation and ran our first voter engagement campaign. Despite the cancelation of our largest fundraiser, donors remained engaged and informed. We conceived of and launched the Colorado Wildlands Project. Several new staff members joined the team. And so much more!

During the final year of the Trump administration, with their 'energy dominance' policy in full force we held the line and stopped new oil and gas leases in our neck of the woods. Wilderness Workshop played an outsized role in state and national coalitions to protect the public's right to have a say on how our public lands are managed. Efforts to undo the damage from the past four years are already underway, but it will take a lot of work and won't happen overnight.

Thank you for supporting us during this incredibly challenging year and being part of our community. If 2020 was about holding the line, 2021 is about taking advantage of new opportunities. Wilderness Workshop is stepping up to with energy and optimism. We look forward to engaging and informing you about the successes we achieve in 2021.

Sincerely,

Allyn Harvey, Board President &  
Will Roush, Executive Director





# Advocacy in Action

Our work includes so many different facets of protecting public lands - this past year included new and ongoing legal work, modified community outreach programs, and the creation of brand-new initiatives. Some of this past year's highlights include:

**West Elk Coal Mine** - In June 2020, Mountain Coal Company defied a court order and illegally bulldozed a nearly mile-long road and two large drilling pads in the midst of the spectacular Sunset Roadless Area near Paonia. Wilderness Workshop joined inspectors with the State of Colorado to survey the damage done, and it was astounding to see first-hand this egregious trespass on our public lands. Thankfully, in October, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals blocked further construction in the Sunset Roadless Area while our legal challenge to the coal mine expansion moves forward. It was an important victory, but the fight is far from over.

**Naturalist Nights** - This longrunning weekly winter speaker series - a collaboration with the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies and Roaring Fork Audubon - wrapped up just before the pandemic began. With topics ranging from feral horses to the vulnerability of mountain rivers to climate change, this series had something for everyone. New in 2020 was our first bilingual (English and Spanish) presentation, "Border Wall Impacts on Wildlife, Wilderness, and Communities: A View from Both Sides."

**CORE Act** - A critical piece of our long-term efforts to protect the Thompson Divide became part of the larger CORE (Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy) Act in 2019. 2020 saw the CORE Act again pass the US House, but it stalled in the Senate, despite a hearing there and Senator Michael Bennett's best efforts. In the current Congress, passing the CORE Act will be a priority for the long-standing champions we've cultivated in Rep. Joe Neuge and Senator Michael Bennett, as well as newly-elected Senator John Hickenlooper.

**30x30** - Protecting nature is a critical piece of addressing the twin biodiversity and climate change crisis, and 2020 saw the emergence of a plan known as the Global Deal for Nature and an ambitious new goal: protecting 30% of lands and waters by 2030, commonly referred to as 30x30. Staff contributed to the "Colorado Pathways to 30x30" report and began planning new land and water protections campaigns across Western Colorado that will take off in 2021.

**Colorado Wildlands Project** - We're maneuvering quickly to leverage political momentum for public land conservation with the creation of the Colorado Wildlands Project! The Colorado Wildlands Project is dedicated to the conservation, climate resilience and equitable management of our public lands, and focuses on protecting wildlands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in western Colorado. The Colorado Wildlands Project is powered with coordinated support



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from Wilderness Workshop and the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

**Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan** - In September, we sued the BLM over their land use plan for the Uncompahgre region. It would open vast areas of western Colorado, including the fruitful North Fork Valley, to oil and gas drilling while failing to protect wilderness quality public lands, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources. The plan is the result of political interference by the Trump administration and ignored years of collaboration and local public input in order to prioritize giveaways to the oil and gas industry.

**Berlaimont** - Our work to stop construction of a new paved road through critical wildlife habitat proposed by the developer of Berlaimont Estates (a proposed development 2,000 feet above the town of Eagle) continued throughout 2020. Though in-person gatherings

were limited, we rallied community members who signed petitions, submitted comments, and galvanized elected officials at the local, state, and national level in opposition. The US Forest Service issued a final EIS and draft decision in September 2020; Wilderness Workshop and others have filed an objection to this decision, and we anticipate a final decision in mid 2021.

**I Heart Public Lands** - Advocacy and accountability have been strategies in our work for years; in 2020, we added “voter engagement” to that list. Hopefully you saw our “I Heart Public lands” and “Vote Public Lands” materials over the summer and into the fall. Whether you were submitting comments to a federal agency, learning more about the local issues on the ballot, or talking with your friends and family about public lands, thank you! Colorado voter turnout reached record levels in 2020 and we’re already planning for the future!



**Defiende Nuestra Tierra (Defend our Land)** - Our Defiende Nuestra Tierra program, which focuses on engaging the Roaring Fork and Colorado River Valley Latinx communities in public lands and environmental justice issues, continued to grow and evolve in 2020. In addition to adding Beatriz Soto joining us full time and new partnerships, highlights included:

- Launching “Snow Days,” a bilingual (English and Spanish) winter event series, focused on breaking down barriers to winter outdoor activities; Snow Days included our first snowshoe drive and compliments Defiende’s robust summer programming.
- As part of expanded advocacy efforts, Defiende organized 50 multigenerational Latinx people for Latino/a Advocacy Day at the state capital, meet with state representatives and advocated for environmental justice and land conservation. Defiende also led Western Colorado’s participation in a virtual national Latino Conservation Week in July 2020.
- New and expanded communications with the launch of a quarterly Defiende Newsletter, selected bilingual advocacy alerts, continued growth of the Defiende Facebook page, and stories in both local and national media outlets.



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To join the Maroon Bells Circle, make a planned gift, or with any other questions, please contact Philanthropy Director Emily Kay, [emily@wildernessworkshop.org](mailto:emily@wildernessworkshop.org).



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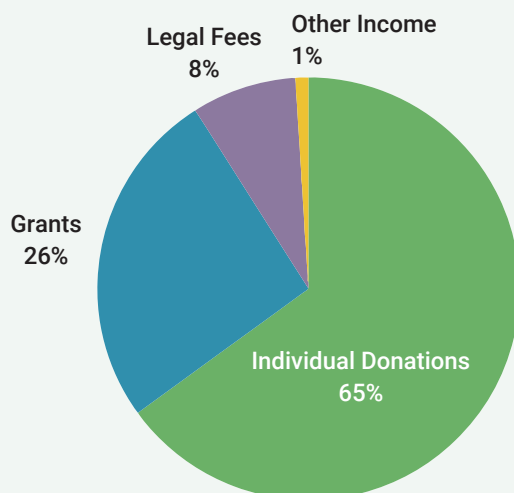
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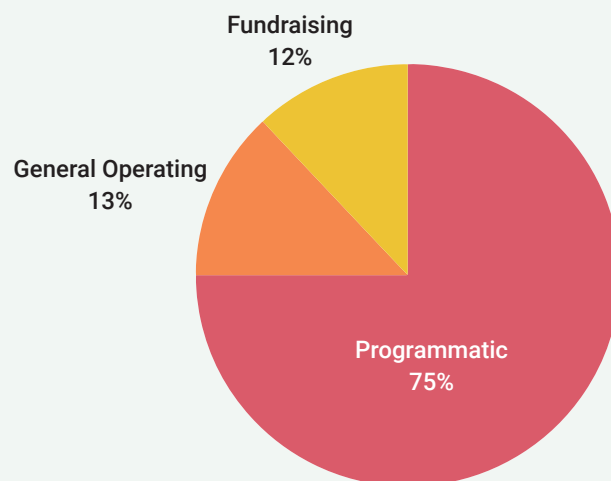
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## 2020 Income



## 2020 Expenses





## Board Member Spotlight Mary Dominick-Coomer



*Mary has been a long-time friend to Wilderness Workshop and a dedicated Board Member since 2004. You're certain to have seen Mary and her husband Sven at our events or out on the trails!*

### What sparked your interest in Wilderness Workshop?

My father taught my sisters and me Sunday school using Nature as a place of solace and where one could find the "great spirit." Consequently, Nature has always been a part of my life to honor and protect. After I moved to Aspen, Connie Harvey, one of the three "Maroon Belles" suggested I might be interested in the Workshop. I was because I knew that it not only protected wilderness and public lands but was proactive and invested in stewarding wildlands for the future.

### What is the most rewarding part of your role as a Board member?

Bringing me in contact with others who have a passion for being actively involved in protecting our land and nature as a whole; I find it very rewarding to be directly bringing the message and our goals to others. Fundraising with a purpose is one of my assets and I am fortunate to be acquainted with many of the longtime residents of the area.

### Looking ahead, what are you most excited for?

I am excited to see our staff grow in size and professional talents, bringing with them new and creative ideas. One of my projects which has widened our attraction to a diverse group has been the Artist in Wilderness program, which I look forward to resuming after the pandemic. I am thrilled to see the Workshop grow in partnership with other environment and climate-focused organizations.

### How does Wilderness Workshop make a difference in our community?

By attracting new members of many different backgrounds and ages; it is important to pass on the interests we carry to future generations. We must engage youth and energetic participation to ensure that our public lands, their biodiversity, and our climate are to be protected. The landscape and its character are what make our community unique, and the reason so many of us have a connection to these special places.

## Donor Spotlight John McBride



*You may know John and his wife Laurie from their decades of work to build community and protect the environment in the Roaring Fork Valley or as charming hosts at our annual benefit, Wild Feast.*

### Why is protecting public lands important?

Oh my gosh, because the land is so special. The land deserves it and the wildlife deserves it. We're incredibly blessed here.

### What's compelling about the work of Wilderness Workshop?

What's impressive to me is how caring you are as an organization - whether it's for our region's wilderness areas, the open spaces, or the animals that inhabit them. You do an honor to those places and I really do hold you in high esteem and have for a very long time.

### What would you say to potential donors?

I'd encourage them to give because Wilderness Workshop is more important now than ever before. It's so important to protect these local places, for the people and the wildlife, and for future generations. Outside interests and money are destroying magnificent places and our community. I can't say it enough: the role this organization plays really is more important than ever before.

### Why is giving to Wilderness Workshop a priority to you?

For me, it's really a love of nature- I've grown up and spend a lot of time in nature and appreciate it in so many ways - whether it's in Vermont, in the countryside of Illinois, or eventually when I made my home in the Roaring Fork Valley. I spent my early years in Vail, then was hired to work at Snowmass, and have built my life here - protecting public lands has been a priority every step of the way. Wilderness Workshop and I think alike.