



## The Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund Description of 2019 Grant Awards

*August 27, 2019*

The Network for Landscape Conservation is pleased to announce 14 inaugural Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund grant awards for partnerships working to implement community-grounded conservation at the necessary landscape scale. Each of these collaborative partnerships will work over the next one to two years to continue building enduring, place-based conservation efforts that protect the ecological, cultural, and community health of the places they call home. Working at the landscape scale is essential in order to address escalating challenges including habitat loss/fragmentation and climate change, and it is only through robust partnerships that we can be successful at this larger scale. For more information on the Catalyst Fund, please see: <http://landscapeconservation.org/catalyst-fund>.

Generous support for the Catalyst Fund has been provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and a portion of the Fund is specifically dedicated to Indigenous-led partnerships that serve Indigenous communities working on landscape conservation.

\* \* \* \*

### **Blackfeet Conservation Collaborative, \$25,000 over two years Advancing the Blackfeet Conservation Collaborative through Coordination and Community Engagement**

*Indigenous Communities recipient*

Bordered by Glacier National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park, and the Bob Marshall Wilderness, the 1.8 million acres of Blackfeet lands in Northwest Montana are relatively undeveloped and harbor remarkable natural resources and habitat connectivity, as well as incalculable cultural and spiritual significance to the Siksikaitapiiksi, or Blackfoot Confederacy People. These lands include 55% of Montana's species, five watersheds and the headwaters of three water systems (Columbia, Missouri, Saskatchewan) with more than 518 miles of streams and 180 water bodies.

The Blackfeet Conservation Collaborative is working to develop formal conservation areas controlled, owned, and managed by the Blackfeet people to support the health of Blackfeet lands and communities, based upon Blackfeet ideologies. Blackfeet ways of being and thinking promote the conservation and protection of all life forms and therefore conservation activities will be designed through holistic models

---

The Network for Landscape Conservation advances cross-border, collaborative conservation as a vital approach to sustain nature, culture, and community. The Network is a fiscally sponsored project of the Center for Large Landscape Conservation in Bozeman, MT.

*Generous support for the Catalyst Fund has been provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.*

[www.landscapeconservation.org](http://www.landscapeconservation.org)



to support Blackfeet lands and all its life, including its people. Funding support will catalyze the continued growth of this new Collaborative into a robust initiative capable of extending its resources and talents across and beyond Blackfeet lands. Specifically, funding will support regular meetings of the collaborative leadership, two annual meetings, implementation of a Collaborative expansion strategy, the creation of a Sustainability and Development Plan, targeted community engagement, and the development of associated outreach materials.

**Chilkat Valley Working Group, \$25,000 over two years**

**Building Capacity for the Chilkat Working Group: Just Transition from Extraction to Regeneration**

*Indigenous Communities recipient*

The Chilkat Valley is a transboundary watershed in Southeast Alaska and British Columbia that includes the Chilkat River at its heart. The landscape is characterized by rugged glacial mountains, temperate coastal rainforest, pristine waters, and a rich ecosystem that supports all five species of wild Pacific Salmon and the world's largest gathering of bald eagles. In the valley, 89% of residents depend on salmon for subsistence. Fishing and nature-based tourism are the top two economic drivers. The Tlingit people have been practicing their traditional culture in this valley for thousands of years, but today large-scale resource extraction and climate change threaten this ecologically unique landscape, the Village of Klukwan, and the Tlingit culture.

The Chilkat Valley Working Group strives to maintain and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Chilkat Valley for future generations, working to move the region away from a prioritization of exploitative resource extraction and toward a regenerative economy that supports the natural and cultural resources that allow the Tribal communities to thrive. Funding support will enable the Working Group to update its Strategic Plan and Communication Strategy, and facilitate capacity-building trainings around bridging western and Indigenous worldviews and around pursuing just transitions to regenerative economic futures. Additional workshops will develop technical information to inform strategic responses to a proposed hard rock mine development in the region. These investments will empower the Working Group to pursue a landscape conservation approach that heals the wounds of colonization, brings Indigenous land-use principles and understanding into decisions, and supports a culturally appropriate regenerative economy.

**Climate Science Alliance Tribal Working Group \$25,000 over two years**

**Building Resilience for Tribal Lands and Communities in Southern California**

*Indigenous Communities recipient*

The southern California counties of San Diego, Riverside, and Santa Barbara are home to 28 federally recognized Tribes, with San Diego County containing more Tribes than any other county in the United States. San Diego County also contains California's most biologically diverse ecosystem, with many plants and animals that are culturally significant to Tribes in San Diego County and other neighboring Tribal communities. Climate forecasts suggest a future of significantly warmer temperatures, more variable precipitation resulting in occasional high intensity flooding and more frequent and prolonged droughts, and more destructive fires—all of which threaten Tribal food security, health, and conservation of culturally and ecologically significant resources.

The Climate Science Alliance provides space for Tribal partners to collaborate in a Tribal Working Group. The Working Group is already comprised of more than 15 federally recognized Tribes and focuses on

building, supporting, and accelerating Tribal climate resilience to sustain the lands and cultures of southern California’s Tribes. Funding will provide coordination support for the Working Group, enable the development of a workplan to guide Tribes’ collaboration to advance strategies and solutions on five identified priority topics, and advance outreach efforts to expand Tribal participation. This Tribal-led collaboration will result in increased climate resilience leadership and expertise within Tribes of southern California that will translate into heightened resilience within Tribal lands and the opening of opportunities for increased intertribal collaboration.

**Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network, \$20,000 over one year**  
**Accelerating Conservation in the Delmarva Peninsula**

*All Communities recipient*

The Delmarva Peninsula stretches from the Delaware Bay in the north to the tip of Virginia in the south and is bound by the Chesapeake Bay to the west and Atlantic Ocean to the east. A shared sense of rural and maritime culture unites Delaware, Maryland and Virginia on the Peninsula—one of the last remaining great open spaces on America’s Eastern seaboard. Unfortunately, it is a landscape under pressure: Sprawling development is squeezing productive farms, forests, and wildlife habitat. Rising seas are intruding on wetlands, forests, fields, and homes. Environmental, human, and climate factors are placing economically important fisheries at risk, including oysters, shad, weakfish, and sturgeon.

The Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network works to restore and conserve the landscapes, waterways, and shorelines of the Peninsula that are special to its people, fundamental to its regional character and economy, and vital for its native fish, wildlife, and plants. Funding support will enable the Network to create a Network Coordinator position and to finalize and begin implementing a Strategic Restoration and Conservation Action Plan to advance wildlife habitat conservation and climate resiliency across the Peninsula. Investments in these collaborative processes will accelerate the Network’s capacity to create a network of natural lands embedded in a sustained working rural landscape that buffers habitat from development, mitigates sea-level rise, conserves rural character, and ensures a high quality of life for the Delmarva’s thriving towns and communities for generations to come.

**Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance, \$25,000 over two years**  
**Strengthening the Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance**

*All Communities recipient*

The Catocin and South Mountain ridges of the Blue Ridge Mountains in central Maryland form an evocative landscape of productive farms and forests; myriad parks and trails, including the Appalachian Trail landscape corridor; diverse wildlife, native plant and animal species; abundant rivers and streams including the Potomac; rural heritage and cultural sites including historic battlefields; scenic byways; and historic villages.

The Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance has emerged to conserve the region’s history, forests, farmland, mountains, streams, and quality of life in the face of escalating development pressure. Funding will support the creation of an Alliance Coordinator position that will be tasked with improving internal and external communications (including the launch of a website), drafting and beginning implementation on a Strategic Action Plan, and developing a fundraising plan. Additionally, an Alliance-wide summit will be held in the second year of the grant period. These core collaborative processes will accelerate the Alliance’s growth to become a strong regional conservation partnership that is achieving

solutions to land and water conservation and preserving the natural, cultural, and local economies of Maryland's Blue Ridge region.

**High Divide Collaborative, \$25,000 over two years**  
**Catalyzing and Focusing Conservation Action in the High Divide**

*All Communities recipient*

Reaching from the Greater Yellowstone to the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem and to Central Idaho's wilderness areas, the High Divide's public and private lands provide habitat and connectivity for nearly all the species that historically roamed here, including grizzlies, wolverine, lynx, elk, pronghorn, and sage grouse. The High Divide contains headwaters to the Missouri and Columbia River watersheds, supports ranching and recreation that are integral to the economy and local communities, and provides additional ecological services, cultural heritage, and public benefits.

The High Divide Collaborative works to build a shared foundation of knowledge, conserve and restore lands of importance for local communities, and protect ecological and social integrity at the landscape scale. Funding support will expand the Collaborative's capacity by transitioning a part-time Coordinator position to full time. Expanded coordination support will advance all core functions including facilitation of a regular meeting schedule of the Coordinating Committee, improved internal and external communications, and the convening of two Collaborative-wide gatherings per year. The Coordinator will also focus on the implementation of a recently established Forestry and Fire Working Group, and will work to launch a Wildlife Connectivity Working Group. This support will facilitate a transition from collective vision to collective action: following a dedicated period of listening, sharing information and lessons, building trust, and reaching consensus on shared priorities, this expanded capacity will enable the Collaborative to catalyze action around shared priorities across the landscape.

**Lake Superior Collaborative, \$24,538 over one year**  
**Accelerating Coordination of the Lake Superior Collaborative**

*All Communities recipient*

Wisconsin's Lake Superior Basin contains a diversity of unique and regionally/globally threatened habitats and species. It borders Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake on earth and includes 785 miles of state designated Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters. It is also rich in inland and coastal wetlands and boreal and mixed deciduous forest. Extensive wild rice beds, riverine and Great Lake fisheries, and abundant wildlife have provided sustenance for Indigenous people for generations and continue to provide food and tradition for Tribal and nontribal hunter and anglers, and recreation for droves of tourists.

The Lake Superior Collaborative has emerged to protect and restore natural resources, clean water, and climate resiliency in this important landscape. Funding will support the creation of a dedicated Collaborative Coordinator position, to be tasked with overseeing efforts to finalize the Collaborative's governance structure, expand and diversify membership, and finalize and begin implementing the Collaborative's Action Plan. Building on these collaborative process investments will accelerate the Collaborative's efforts to position landscape conservation as a core strategy for mitigating and adapting to climate change in the heart of Wisconsin's iconic Northwoods.

**Metro Denver Nature Alliance, \$25,000 over two years**  
**Connecting Communities and Championing Nature**

*All Communities recipient*

Due to rapid growth and inadequate conservation funding, the Metro Denver area is at increasing risk of losing natural spaces and the myriad values they support, including clean and abundant water, wildlife habitat, inclusive access to nature and recreation, carbon storage, and other ecosystem services. Loss of these critical natural assets also limits the broader benefits to people—including well-documented physical and mental health benefits—and adds to existing inequities and disparities in access to and engagement with nature within the region.

The Metro Denver Nature Alliance works to enhance the alignment and impact of nature-based efforts in the greater Denver region in order to champion more equitable access to nature and to promote healthy people, communities, and natural places. Funding support will catalyze the drafting of the long-term *Regional Vision for People + Nature*; the creation and initial implementation phases of an Equity Strategy to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in nature-based efforts; and the hosting of semi-annual stakeholder convenings. Such investments will accelerate the Alliance’s work to co-create strategies across scales, sectors, and programmatic focus areas in a fashion that builds measurable progress toward addressing enduring positive outcomes for people and nature in the Metro Denver region.

**Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative, \$25,000 over two years**  
**Equitable Conservation in the North: Expanding Engagement with Tribes and First Nations**

*All Communities recipient*

The Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative region spans the boreal forest biome of interior Alaska and northwest Canada (330 million acres), and includes the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Susitna, and Copper River Basins, and the Alaska Range and Mackenzie Mountains. Indigenous peoples of the region are Dené Athabascan, Tlingit, and Central Yup’ik. Many culturally important activities are deeply tied to the land, including hunting and fishing, which provide critical food sources and influence species conservation and wildlife management. Climate change challenges are acute, posing food security risks for subsistence-based communities and risks from fires, river flooding and erosion, permafrost thaw, and thin ice. There are also major conflicts over resource development and hunting and fishing rights.

The Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative works to sustain a dynamic landscape with functioning resilient boreal ecosystems, cultural resources, and resilient northern communities. Funding support will be used to catalyze an effort to build meaningful engagement with Alaska Native Tribes and Canada’s First Nations, which are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts and land and resource management decisions. Specifically, the Cooperative will launch an Indigenous Leadership Working Group, utilize travel stipends to enable the participation of Indigenous representatives at regular Partnership meetings, and pursue proactive engagement strategies, including attending key Indigenous gatherings. Investments here will be a pivotal moment for creating a co-leadership model with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to address pressing environmental and social needs and secure a healthy, intact, and resilient Northwest Boreal landscape.

**Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor Partnership, \$25,000 over two years**  
**Building the Ocala to Osceola (O2O) Wildlife Corridor and Partnership in North Florida**

*All Communities recipient*

The Ocala to Osceola (O2O) corridor is a 100-mile-long, 1.6 million-acre region of public and private lands anchored by two large National Forests in North Florida and home to two federal military installations. The O2O Corridor is part of the Florida Wildlife Corridor—Florida’s “conservation blueprint” for a connected network of conservation landscapes. This region is roughly 90% forested, contains the headwaters of five watersheds that provide drinking water for Florida’s rapidly growing coastal communities, and supports a regional timber economy and populations of many imperiled species that depend upon upland pine forests. As a main North-South corridor, an interconnected network of conservation lands will allow climate-induced species migration, groundwater protection, and storm mitigation as Florida’s climate becomes increasingly volatile and the state becomes rapidly more developed.

The Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor Partnership has emerged to build a network of conservation and working lands to protect wildlife, military readiness, and natural resources for the region’s growing population. Funding will support the creation of a dedicated Coordinator position for the Partnership. The Coordinator will work to expand and diversify Partnership membership, improve external communication through the launch of a website and digital newsletter, finalize a strategic conservation priority plan, and formalize a leadership structure. The Partnership will also work toward Sentinel Landscape designation during the grant period. Overall, Catalyst Fund monies will help the Partnership accelerate progress toward protecting 140,000 acres of land by 2050—thereby fostering climate resiliency, recovering regionally imperiled species populations, promoting watershed health, protecting military training flexibility, sustaining rural economies and amenities, and supporting outdoor recreation.

**San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership, \$25,000 over two years**  
**Building Resiliency through Landscape Collaboration in the San Juan-Chama**

*All Communities recipient*

Crossing the Continental Divide and the New Mexico-Colorado line, the San Juan-Chama landscape is defined by the Rio Chama watershed—the most northern branch of the Rio Grande—and the three San Juan River tributaries that constitute the San Juan-Chama Diversion Project. This Diversion Project provides 60% of the water supply for New Mexico’s two largest communities, is home to nationally important wildlife corridors, and is comprised of a diversity of landownership, including the Jicarilla Apache Nation, Spanish Land Grants, National Forests, state lands, and private lands. A legacy of fire suppression has left forests overgrown and less resilient to climate change—which is expected to exacerbate many interconnected environmental issues, including beetle outbreaks and tree diseases that impact forest health, a longer and potentially more intense wildfire season, and a declining snowpack that reduces water supplies downstream.

The San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership is bringing disparate partners together to support a healthy ecosystem, vibrant economy, and sustainable communities for the people who live and depend on this watershed. Funding support will enable the Partnership to update its geographic priority areas, implement an active landowner outreach strategy in priority geographies, and build a catalogue of on-the-ground potential restoration projects to target for future funding. Funding will also support the Partnership’s annual gathering, the Rio Chama Congreso. Through these investments, the Partnership

will accelerate its growth as a diverse, inclusive, and participatory collaboration that connects and communicates effectively with communities, and is capable of fostering a landscape resilient to drought, wildfire, and a changing climate.

**S’Klallam Territory Wildlife Monitoring and Conservation Partnership, \$25,000 over two years  
Advancing the S’Klallam Conservation Partnership Through Collaborative Development and  
Implementation of Effective Wildlife Monitoring**

*Indigenous Communities recipient*

Washington’s Olympic Peninsula consists of large watersheds that run from the Olympic Mountains to the Hood Canal to the east, the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to west. The topography is characterized by ridges separating short alluvial valleys, with coniferous stands defining the forests. The Peninsula’s Columbian black-tailed deer, Roosevelt elk, and the predators that prey upon them—including cougars, bobcats, and black bears—are of immense historic and contemporary interest to the Klallam Tribes. All species were here prior to European settlement and are part of a diverse and complete ecosystem, with deer and elk specifically important in contributing to Tribal subsistence and ceremonial harvest. Since time immemorial, Tribal members have relied on hunting and gathering for subsistence and cultural purposes.

The S’Klallam Territory Wildlife Monitoring and Conservation Partnership is collaborating to develop and implement specific, shared protocols for an integrated wildlife monitoring camera network on Tribes’ ceded areas in the northern portions of the Peninsula. As rapid population growth on the Olympic Peninsula escalates wildlife management challenges, including hunting pressure, human encroachment, subdivision of former timberlands for development, and habitat loss, it is essential that the Tribes gain knowledge about wildlife populations in their shared historic use area in order to conserve them for future generations. As signatories to the 1855 Treaty of Point No Point, the Klallam Tribes have rights to manage wildlife and other natural resources in their historic use area to the benefit of Tribal members. Establishing baseline data on these wildlife populations will position the Partnership to successfully sustain the subsistence and ceremonial hunting at the heart of Tribal life, and to conserve the ecological health of the overall landscape for current and future generations of Tribal members.

**Staying Connected Initiative, \$11,200 over one year  
Securing the Long-term Financial Future of the Staying Connected Initiative and Landscape  
Connectivity in the Northern Appalachian-Acadian region**

*All Communities recipient*

The globally significant Northern Appalachian-Acadian ecoregion is the largest remaining intact temperate broadleaf forest. The region spans five states and three Canadian provinces, and is home to over 5 million people and thousands of species of plants and animals. The forests are vital to the region, providing economically important natural resources and livelihoods, clean water and air, climate mitigation, and recreational spaces. Thanks to vast networks of healthy forest, wetlands, and rivers, Canada lynx, black bear, moose, and other mammals roam freely across much of the landscape. The region stands out as a center of climate resilience, making connectivity here essential for natural and human communities in the face of climate change.

The Staying Connected Initiative (SCI) works to sustain landscape connectivity across this important region. Funding support will enable SCI to undertake an in-depth assessment to identify a long-term,

sustainable funding model for the Initiative's core functions. SCI will also prepare an associated general report that will provide lessons learned and insights for other partnerships seeking to address this critical and chronic issue of sustaining landscape conservation collaboration over time. Creating a sustainable funding model for supporting core collaboration activities will be central to SCI's ability to realize a network of connected lands that sustains healthy, resilient wildlife populations across the Northern Appalachian-Acadian ecoregion.

**Texas Hill Country Conservation Network, \$25,000 over two years**  
**Accelerating Natural Resource Protection through Collaboration**

*All Communities recipient*

The Hill Country region of central Texas is an iconic landscape filled with natural beauty and heritage-rich rural communities. Rolling grasslands, spring-fed creeks and rivers, mixed canopy forests and shrublands, steep canyons, and wandering river bottoms create a diversity of habitat that supports dozens of endemic species. E.O. Wilson once described this region as among the top 25 most biodiverse ecosystems globally. Encompassing more than 11 million acres across 18 counties, the region is 95% privately owned and faces increasing development pressures, including in the rapidly growing Austin-San Antonio corridor.

The Texas Hill Country Conservation Network has emerged to maximize the protection of the Hill Country's natural resources through enhanced collaboration, in recognition that this approach is critical to meeting the escalating scale of the threats facing the region. Funding support will enable the Network to create a full-time Network Coordinator position. The Coordinator will facilitate the collaborative logistics of the Network, accelerate work on the Network's action plan, and build the "brand" of the Network by developing an online presence. Such investments in core collaborative processes will build upon momentum to date and accelerate the Network's progress toward its goal of conserving 200,000 acres of land in the next 10 years.