



ANNUAL REPORT

2015

International Union for Conservation of Nature - United States



The International Union for Conservation of Nature – United States (IUCN-US), a 501(c)(3) organization, has been supporting IUCN and its network of members and partners for nearly 30 years. IUCN is the world’s authority on biodiversity conservation, the effective and equitable governance of nature’s use, and nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food, and development.



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Valuing and  
conserving nature

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Effective and equitable  
governance of nature’s  
use

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Deploying nature-  
based solutions to  
global challenges

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# Our year at IUCN-US

It is difficult to describe the entirety with which the governments and citizens of the world have embraced 2015 as a fulcrum of global attention to the conservation of nature.

The impending and consequential effects of climate change have proven themselves undeniable forces of global change that impact far more than landscapes; these now cut to the core of human dignity and survival, and in 2015 citizens of the world have taken pause to reflect on nature and our place within it. Early in 2015 the Pope released an encyclical dedicated to climate change that significantly and directly aligned with the mission and vision of IUCN-US. These sentiments are now surging through pulpits, communities and families in ways that the conservation community has dreamt but never fully realized.

While we are a relatively small organization, IUCN-US has spent 2015 supporting the conservation and restoration of nature in many novel, interactive, and game-changing ways. At the end of 2014, over 6000 people gathered in Sydney Australia for the IUCN World Parks Congress which set the stage for the reflections and actions of 2015. In

2016, the United States will host the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i, which will undoubtedly provide a platform for new conservation initiatives and a forum to discuss and improve upon the methods and partnerships that have helped to define and propel global nature conservation and restoration.

IUCN-US continues to be an essential component of the global charge to value and conserve nature in novel and interdisciplinary ways. In 2015, support granted from IUCN-US has provided everything

been instrumental in supporting nature conservation action and progress on each habituated continent – no small feat for any charitable organization!

In December 2015 the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change united the world around practical but challenging solutions to climate change, and the Vatican marked the occasion by projecting images of species, people, and nature on St. Peter's Basilica. If the past year has taught us anything it's

***Our vision:  
A just world that  
values and conserves  
nature.***

from local conservation knowledge and action in rural Nicaragua to international support of species assessments for the IUCN Red List and water security and natural infrastructure in Southern Africa. If we include the results component of the support of IUCN-US from the World Parks Congress in Australia, in 2015 IUCN-US has

that one of the most cost-effective and important investments that can be made is in nature-based solutions that leverage both the unique and ubiquitous nature of human ingenuity.

# Letter from the CEO



The International Union for Conservation of Nature – United States (IUCN-US) is an essential partner to IUCN and its Members in obtaining and managing grants dispersed by government agencies, foundations, and corporations in the United States. For various reasons, IUCN-US necessarily acts as a liaison between IUCN offices and these US-based grant makers.

For example, a common requirement for international organizations seeking support from US-based institutions is that they must submit proposals under the auspices of a charity registered in the US. Due to the 501(c)(3) status it has maintained under US law since its incorporation in 1986, IUCN-US plays a central role in seeking and acquiring those opportunities. In addition, the tax-exemption conferred by 501(c)(3) status encourages US institutions and individuals alike to support the work of IUCN and its Members around the world.

Our Board of Directors is actively involved in the operations of IUCN-US. Fielding project grant requests – which involves making certain that proposed projects further the ideals and goals of IUCN – is one regular task for which our Board Members are particularly well suited. The Board's affiliations include IUCN Members such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, National Wildlife Federation, and the Rainforest Trust, as well as other influential institutions such as the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the United Nations Foundation, the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Institute for Global Change Strategies, Cornell Plantations, the sustainability department of luxury goods holding company Kering.

This year the Board of Directors approved project grant requests from IUCN offices in many regions, including the IUCN Red List Unit located in Cambridge, UK, IUCN Vietnam, IUCN Nepal, the IUCN Washington DC office, and the IUCN Global Water Programme, located in IUCN Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland. Upon approval, the IUCN-US grants management staff is instrumental in supervising and coordinating the submission of reports by the IUCN staff that implement these projects, as required by grant makers.

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***IUCN-US is both a partner  
to and an indispensable  
resource for IUCN and  
its network of Members.***

***As we reflect on the  
achievements made in  
2015, we look forward to  
developing and enhancing  
US-based support for  
IUCN in the years to come.***

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Dr. Frank Hawkins  
CEO, IUCN-US  
Secretary, IUCN-US Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Hawkins'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a clear 'F' and 'H'.

*IUCN-US has provided financial support for scientific and educational activities, field projects, and efforts to develop and implement policy, laws, and best practices to advance conservation initiatives around the world.*

# Letter from the President

The choices that humanity makes now, we recognize, will have long standing effects on our living planet. This century, human population growth and our increasing consumption have increasingly outpaced nature's provision of goods and services. Yet only by working with nature can human lives and livelihoods be improved now and in the future. Governments, businesses, organizations, and communities that embrace nature-based solutions to the challenges of global change will be critical players in reconciling today's needs with those of future generations.

The mission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature – United States (IUCN-US) is to be an ally to IUCN and its partner organizations. Incorporated in 1986 as an independent charity registered and based in the United States, IUCN-US has supported the work of IUCN and others by representing the Union with US partners and by harnessing important opportunities for funding. For these nearly 30 years IUCN-US has provided financial support for scientific and educational activities, field projects, and efforts to develop and implement policy, laws, and best practices to advance conservation initiatives around the world.

Among the many valuable contributions IUCN-US has made to the work of IUCN is the ongoing implementation of a \$2 million cooperative agreement with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) that seeks to ensure a water secure future for southern Africa by applying the ecosystem approach in the Orange–Senqu River Basin. IUCN-US has also contributed significantly to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, in one notable case by securing funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation for the conservation status assessments of 108 cactus species in the Caribbean and southeastern US and for a new portal for regional assessment information on 982 species of bony fish in the Gulf of Mexico. These assessments, which included data on vulnerability to

climate change, have been an important resource for efforts to protect these species.

Last year IUCN-US was instrumental in organizing an effective IUCN World Parks Congress (WPC) in Sydney, Australia. In particular, IUCN-US worked closely with The Rockefeller Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to prepare for the WPC World Leaders' Dialogues, and promoted the opportunity for the finance sector to become more involved in investment in nature, while recognizing the importance of biodiversity conservation for managing environment-related risk.

As IUCN and its Members prepare for the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 in Hawai'i, IUCN-US will once again play an active and evolving role. IUCN-US and its Board Members are in a unique position to mobilize the support of US-based organizations, including IUCN Members, for the Congress and its outcomes. Institutions in the US must step up to take responsibility for global conservation and sustainability issues, and IUCN-US will be there as they do.

Dr. John G. Robinson  
President, IUCN-US Board of Directors





Photos: IUCN © Alicia Wirz, IUCN, NPS

# Global support for nature conservation

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## *Oceans*

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Ongoing marine activities supported by IUCN-US in 2015 included a project in the Archipelago of the Azores that addresses marine plastics pollution. Supported by a charitable donation to IUCN-US by Mr. John Vermilye, IUCN in partnership with the University of the Azores and several other scientific organizations are seeking to assess the levels of microplastic pollution at coastal sites throughout the Azores; estimate the abundance, distribution and sources of benthic litter in selected sites in the Azores; monitor marine litter entanglement and the occurrence of marine litter in the stomachs of commercial fish and other species (e.g. stranded turtles, cetaceans); and to collaborate with community and youth educators on programs related to marine litter issues.

IUCN and partners kickstarted this project with a workshop from 19-20 June that brought together over 40 experts on marine litter research, local stakeholders and government representatives. Participants reviewed and discussed issues ranging from waste management in the Azores to EU marine litter policy and plastic bag bans, then led a coastal clean-up.

Throughout 2015 the project partners made progress in establishing a baseline of marine litter in the Azores. They began surveying beaches to collect and aggregate data on coastal microplastics and analyzed sea bottom imagery to quantify levels of benthic litter. Stomach samples have been taken from over 200 commercial fish and deceased juvenile birds.

Engaging local communities in marine litter awareness and activism was a major focus of this project in 2015. School children learned about the impacts of marine litter on seabirds

***94% of spending in 2015 went directly to conservation programs***

and assisted in the release of rehabilitated Cory's shearwaters. Sixteen local fishing boats competed to collect the most marine litter, together removing more the 600 kg of garbage from

the sea. Local scuba divers, freedivers, and citizens came together to clean up harbors and beaches, and even to sculpt an awareness-raising Christmas tree out of salvaged glass bottles and fishing nets.



At a harbor cleanup event in November, three fishermen received rewards for collecting the most marine litter from July-October. Photo: António Silveira

## The Arctic

IUCN-US's established focus on Arctic issues continued in 2015. With support from the Alcoa Foundation and IUCN-US, IUCN's Global Marine and Polar Programme was able to contribute to a multistakeholder workshop on cross-sector sustainable development in the Arctic, held in Fairbanks, Alaska, 2–3 June.

Science and policy experts from state and federal agencies, traditional knowledge-holders from Alaska's North Slope, and academic and private sector representatives gathered to discuss scenarios for energy and resource development on the North Slope and its adjacent seas. These scenarios covered marine oil spills, subsistence harvest of marine mammals, subsistence trapping and hunting, cultural shifts, permafrost, erosion, human health and safety, and the decommissioning and reclamation of infrastructure.

The North Slope Science Initiative, in collaboration with a team from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and GeoAdaptive will continue to perform statistical and geographic analysis of the identified

implications. This will be used to inform a final workshop, which will focus on prioritization of research and monitoring resources through 2040.

## Biodiversity

As one of IUCN's more notable knowledge products, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is unparalleled in its detail, reliability, and distinction. It is the global standard for the assessment of the conservation status of species and a resource used far and wide to help inform decisions that could have an impact on local, regional, and global biodiversity. IUCN-US maintained the proud tradition of supporting the IUCN Red List Unit, the Biodiversity Assessment Unit, and other species assessments and Red List activities in 2015.

Between 2010 and 2015, Chevron – as a part of the Red List Corporate Support

IUCN-US supported two major projects on species assessment in 2015. First, a project initiated with the support of the Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation of the Americas has reassessed a large number of Canadian freshwater species and newly assessed several previously unassessed freshwater species. In July, a unprecedented technical workshop took place in Toronto to undertake conservation assessments for plants and molluscs and to delineate key biodiversity areas in Canada for freshwater plants, fishes, and molluscs. In collaboration with NatureServe, the IUCN Biodiversity Assessment Unit continues the data analysis of updated species assessments for their inclusion on the IUCN Red List.

Additionally, with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, IUCN-US supported the increased capacity and decision support for risk assessment and marine biodiversity conservation in the Gulf of Mexico. During two IUCN Red List assessment workshops, all 942 bony shorefishes in the Gulf of Mexico were regionally assessed against the IUCN

## Grantmaking grew by 15% in 2015

Group – has helped IUCN-US to support the activities of the IUCN Red List Unit. Among other activities, these funds have been used to maintain and update the Red List website. In 2015, the Red List Unit changed the structure of the website such that historical assessments would no longer be displaced by updated assessments. Now, each species assessment has a dedicated digital object identifier, or "doi". The result of this change is that for the first time, historical species assessments are available to the general public and can be cited as academic, peer-review publications. For scientists and species conservation practitioners, this is an incredibly important change that allows them to refer to species assessments as publications and gives broad, open, and unrestricted access to these documents.

Red List Categories and Criteria. Overall, about 4% of the species with sufficient data to assess were threatened.

The process involved more than 35 species experts from the US, Mexico, Cuba, and beyond, resulting in substantial cross-boundary networking for improved Gulf science. In addition, three early career researchers, four graduate students, two Old Dominion University alumni, and at least seven undergraduate students were involved in the assessment process, increasing the knowledge of and interest in the Gulf of Mexico for the next generation of scientists.

The Biodiversity of the Gulf of Mexico (BioGoMx) database ([biogomx.org](http://biogomx.org)) has been redesigned and updated to display

both original BioGoMx information and the IUCN Red List regional data. The new BioGoMx database and website also now displays “People in the Know”, a list of people with taxonomic or management expertise on each species, providing contact information, as available.

IUCN-US received its first grant from the Disney Conservation Foundation in 2015 to support the work of IUCN in Nepal on the conservation of the Ganges River Dolphin. The project aims to enhance conservation of this species through the engagement of local communities in citizen science-based data collection and livelihood enhancement. Simultaneously, project partners will lobby policymakers in order to develop effective conservation policies. Finally, project partners will engage experts and stakeholders in Nepal and India to develop a Trans-boundary Conservation Action Plan, which is essential to the long-term conservation of this migratory species.

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## Water

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Over the past several years, IUCN-US has supported IUCN and a network of in-country partners to develop a Water Secure Future for Southern Africa through the application of the ecosystem approach to integrated water resource management. This large, multi-national project is ongoing with the support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). This project unites different national water security projects in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, and Namibia, each of which are working to improve water security through different local projects and partners.

Also in Africa, IUCN-US has supported a project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation to develop and test a prototype Natural Infrastructure Facility to reduce competition for fresh water and increase



As part of the ecosystem approach to integrated water resource management, the communities at Ha Kelebone and Ha Tlhaku in Lesotho were trained in the use of quadrats to monitor rate of growth and regeneration of vegetation on both cleared and un-cleared areas of their grazing lands. The communities used their knowledge of the different grass species to record which grasses regenerate faster. This information is vital for communities to monitor the recovery of their rangelands over time and to inform management plans. Photo: IUCN

local investment in ecosystems. This project has primarily taken place in Tanzania’s Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT). SAGCOT is a region of rich agricultural potential as well critical ecosystems that spans several river and lake basins. The Government of Tanzania has set a goal of attracting large-scale investment in both agricultural enterprises and transport and energy infrastructure.

The prototyping process uncovered a number of exciting ways in which various incentive-based water management approaches can be developed to support resilient ecosystems and inclusive economies. The process also demonstrated that there is burgeoning interest and momentum behind many of the different approaches and helped to identify the key needs for their further expansion. The Rockefeller Foundation believes that the opportunity is ripe for increased adoption across a range of incentive-based approaches and applauds all of its prototyping partners for their excellent contribution

to innovation in this field.

In 2015, IUCN-US supported a significant amount of work in Viet Nam. IUCN-US was approached in 2015 by the Chino Cienega Foundation to facilitate the support of a five-year update on a seminal baseline report on Hanoi’s lakes carried out by the Center for Environmental and Community Research (CECR). The result is an extensive and detailed report comparing the 2010 and 2015 status of every lake and pond within Hanoi, including area, water quality, waste water sources, and conservation recommendations.

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## Private Sector

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At the intersection of marine, freshwater, and business engagement for conservation, IUCN-US, through the support of USAID has supported the development of the Ha Long–Cat Ba Alliance, which

seeks business engagement for sustainable development in these World Heritage sites. In recent years, tourism of this area has dramatically increased without the necessary waste treatment infrastructure to support this blossoming industry. As a result, the water and ecosystem quality of these areas drastically declined and has put the ecosystems, human health, and World Heritage status of these areas in jeopardy.

IUCN has engaged several businesses in the Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Archipelago area and has built a coalition of business interests interested in ensuring that these natural areas remain pristine. Most importantly, they are undertaking a tour-boat operation certification system with the goal of certifying the environmental quality of 90% of the vessels that operate in these areas.

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## *Outreach*

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Over the past three years, IUCN-US, with the support of the Appleby Charitable Lead Trust, has supported conservation activities in the Fundación Reserva Esperanza Verde (Funde Verde) in Nicaragua. In 2015 these funds continued to support radio broadcasts on fire prevention, patrols of the protected area, signage, and other conservation outreach activities.

The District of Columbia Marine Community (DCMC), coordinated by IUCN's Global Marine and Polar Programme, was renamed and redirected in 2015 as the Global Marine Community: Americas (GMCA). With the support of the Munson Foundation, IUCN-US has funded this community since its inception. The GMCA email listserv now has thousands of subscribers who use the network to find jobs, learn of seminars, workshops, and conferences, and contribute to a North American community of marine ecosystem scientists, educators, professionals, and students.



Photo: IUCN Photo Library © Guy Marcovaldi



*The Drakensberg Mountains of Lesotho are the source of the Senqu River. Since 2012 IUCN-US has supported integrated water resources management in the Orange-Senqu Basin of Southern Africa.*

# Our Board of Directors

The IUCN-US Board of Directors is actively involved in the organization's grantmaking process and other operations. The Board plays a critical role in ensuring that the programs IUCN-US supports are in line with the mission and vision of IUCN and its members. Several Board Members are affiliated with IUCN, IUCN members, IUCN commissions, or civil society, while others hail from varied academic, philanthropic, corporate, and financial institutions.

## *Thank you, Board Members!*

JOHN G. ROBINSON, Executive Vice President Conservation and Science, Wildlife Conservation Society

FRANK HAWKINS, Director, IUCN Washington DC Office

THOMAS E. LOVEJOY, Senior Fellow, United Nations Foundation

BARBARA J. BRAMBLE, Senior Director, International Wildlife Conservation, National Wildlife Federation

CHRISTOPHER HOLTZ, Program Officer, Conservation and Sustainable Development, Office of Grants Management, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

MICHAEL A. MEHLING, Executive Director, Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research at MIT

HELEN CROWLEY, Head of Sustainable Sourcing Innovation, Kering

JESSICA MCGLYN, Founder and President, Catalynics LLC

PAUL SALAMAN, CEO, Rainforest Trust

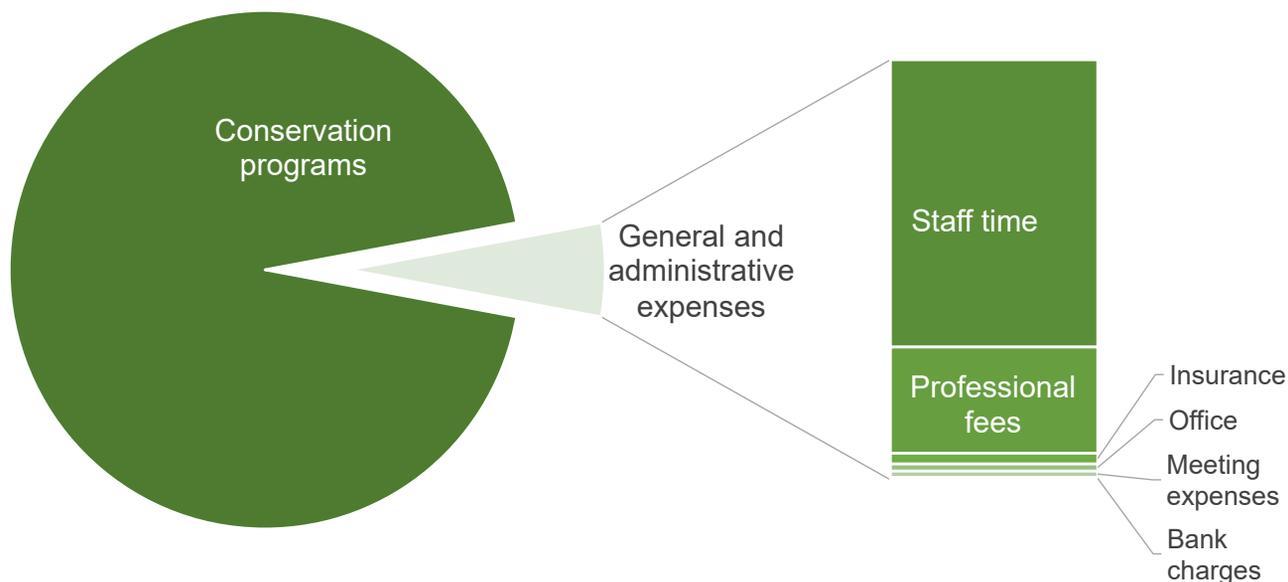
NANCY COLLETON, President, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

CHRISTOPHER DUNN, Elizabeth Newman Wilds Director, Cornell Plantations, Cornell University

SABINE MILTNER, Managing Director and Group Sustainability Officer, Deutsche Bank

# Financial Report

Proportional expenses, 2015 (by activity):



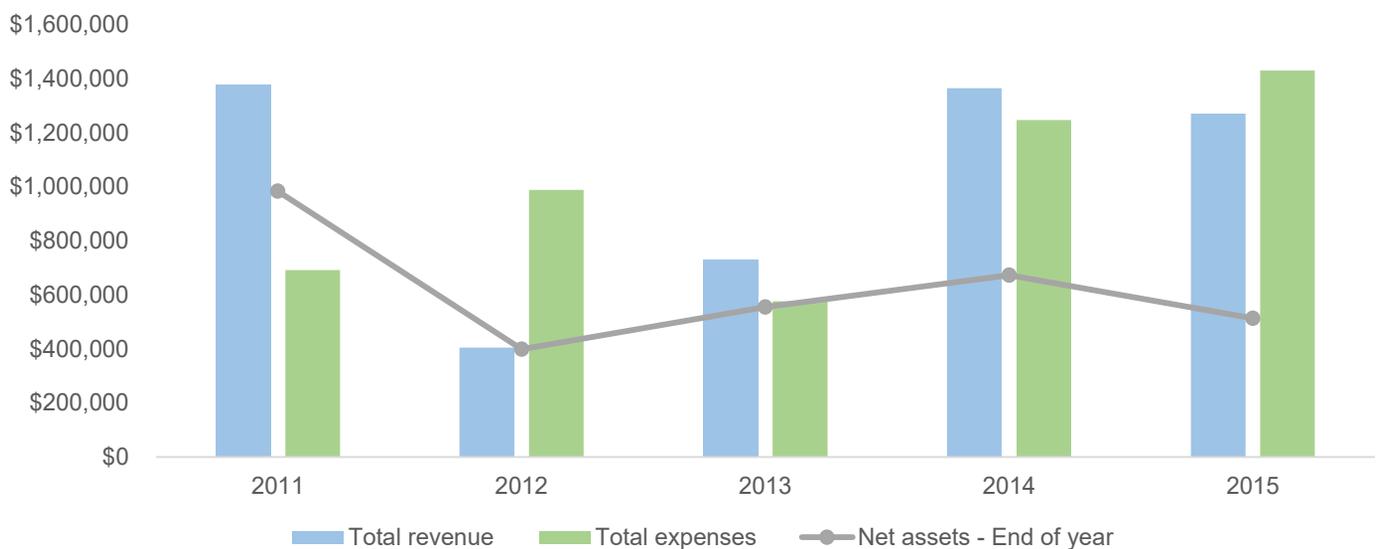
Expenses, 2015 (USD):

	Conservation programs	General and administrative	TOTAL
Grants/contracts	\$1,348,438	-	\$1,348,438
Staff time	-	\$56,737	\$56,737
Professional fees	-	\$20,958	\$20,958
Insurance	-	\$2,138	\$2,138
Bank charges	-	\$495	\$495
Office	-	\$1,393	\$1,393
Meeting expenses	-	\$1,221	\$1,221
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,348,438</b>	<b>\$82,942</b>	<b>\$1,431,380</b>

## Annual revenue, expenses, and end-of-year net assets (USD), 2013-2015:

	2013	2014	2015
Grants and contributions	\$732,116	\$1,345,567	\$1,271,334
Interest income	\$551	\$396	\$351
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$732,667</b>	<b>\$1,365,379</b>	<b>\$1,271,685</b>
Conservation programs	\$513,099	\$1,166,699	\$1,348,438
General and administrative	\$63,275	\$81,214	\$82,942
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$576,374</b>	<b>\$1,247,913</b>	<b>\$1,431,380</b>
Change in net assets	\$156,293	\$117,466	(\$159,695)
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$555,128</b>	<b>\$672,594</b>	<b>\$512,899</b>

## Annual revenue, expenses, and end-of-year net assets (USD), 2011-2015:





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