



Grant Report to Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund
Project Number: ORCF 2023-59
January 13, 2025

Cascadia Wild would like to thank the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund for their generous support of our community science project, the Wolverine Tracking Project.

The Wolverine Tracking Project trains and organizes volunteers to collect data on rare carnivores on the Mt Hood National Forest. The project has two main goals: to conduct long-term monitoring of rare carnivores (wolves, Sierra Nevada red fox, Pacific marten, and wolverine) to support and inform better wildlife conservation and management practices, and to connect Oregonians to the wildlife and wild places that makes Oregon such a special place to live. The project utilizes three different types of surveys: camera surveys, year-round; snow tracking, winter only; and scat surveys, summer only. This report documents activity from April through December 2024. This corresponds to three of our survey seasons: the very end of Winter 2023-24, Summer 2024, and the beginning of Winter 2024-25. Although most of the Winter 2023-24 season did not end up being covered by the grant because of a delay in the contract being finalized, some of the results will be included in this report since the work was written into our goals, and was accomplished as planned with other funding sources.

Survey findings

Summer surveys detected three of our target species. Wolves were detected at three different camera sites and their sign was detected on six different scat surveys, adding to information about the new pack that appears to be establishing itself on the Mt Hood National Forest to the north of the White River pack. Red fox and Pacific marten also were detected, each at one camera site. Twelve potential red fox scats were collected and handed over to researchers for genetic analysis, these will be included in a research project on Sierra Nevada red fox in Oregon and also a research project on red fox diet throughout the west. In addition, numerous other species were documented to add to long term records.

Trainings

Trainings for the summer season took place in May and June, and surveys were carried out May through mid November. Trainings for the winter season took place in November and December; surveys started in mid November and will run through the end of April. Online trainings were held for each type of survey. In addition, camera and snow tracking volunteers were given an optional field training as well, repeated three times, and scat survey volunteers were given two optional group survey trips. Trainings covered not only how to carry out the survey, but also information on our target species and outdoor safety, and are an important part of the project.

Survey effort

- Number of volunteers: 322 (167 summer, 173 winter) / 240 anticipated
- Number of cameras maintained: 23 summer, 19 winter / 19 anticipated
- Miles of tracking surveys completed: 12 (all in winter) / 15 anticipated
- Miles of scat surveys completed: 146 (all in summer) / 175 anticipated
- Volunteer hours: 4398 (2004 summer, 2394 winter) / 4500 anticipated
- Number of trips for non-regular volunteers: 1 completed, 1 pending / 3 anticipated

The project engaged over a significantly higher number of volunteers than anticipated, a testament to how much people want to be engaged in wildlife projects such as this. Survey effort was close to anticipated; though it lagged behind what we hoped for, effort was still very high. We will continue to

evaluate and improve the project to keep volunteers engaged.

The Winter 2024-25 survey season started in November. To date, 129 volunteers registered and have been trained, and 31 camera and tracking trips have gone out. We are looking forward to the rest of the season.

In addition to organizing regular volunteers, each year we also try to organize special trips for groups that don't usually have access to the outdoors. One trip was done last winter for Cascade Education Corps, a program which provides job skills to at-risk teenagers, and another trip is planned for them this coming winter. A second trip is also scheduled this winter with Helensview High School, an alternative high school that serves students who are having difficulty in the normal educational system.

Social media and public engagement

To further engage volunteers, a weekly newsletter was sent with highlights from the surveys as well as other interesting wildlife information. To reach the general public, survey highlights were also shared weekly on facebook and instagram. Cascadia Wild also participated in ODFW's Coyotepalooza and a bioblitz hosted by the North Clackamas Watershed Council.

Research report

In early May, an annual research report was written with the project's findings and shared with the agencies and organizations who use the data, including: Mt Hood National Forest, US Forest Service Pacific NW Research Station, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife district biologist and wolf biologist, OSU's Institute for Natural Resources, US Fish and Wildlife wolf biologists, and Cascades Carnivore Project. The report for the timeframe covered by this grant will be out next spring.

Budget

	Projected annual budget	Actual budget (Jan 1- Dec 31, 2024)
Wolverine Tracking Project Coordinator Salary	\$24,000	\$32,000
Outreach Coordinator Salary	\$0	\$8,320
Supplies (replacement cameras, parking passes for volunteers, batteries, misc supplies)	\$2,000	\$2,526
Volunteer events	\$700	in-kind donations
Overhead (rent and insurance)	\$4,500	\$4,300
Total	\$36,900	\$47,146

The final budget was similar to anticipated, with the project coordinator's salary increased to make it closer in line with market value, as this position is indispensable to the project. Last year, we also hired a part-time Development and Outreach Coordinator to help make the organization more sustainable. Many donations were received to fund our end-of-season volunteer celebration events. Although additional insurance coverage was required, it did not cost any more.

Summary

We at Cascadia Wild are very grateful to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund for selecting us as a grant recipient. With funds from this grant, we were able to continue to carry out the Wolverine Tracking Project, offering a chance to volunteers to learn about wildlife and interact with the natural world, while collecting important data on rare carnivores. Healthy ecosystems start with people who are passionate about the natural world, and we are grateful to be able to continue to carry out this work.