



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## **Our mission:**

Cascade Volunteers works to connect individuals and communities to the Willamette National Forest and adjacent public lands through programs, stewardship, and education.

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year was one of transition for Cascade Volunteers (CV). The entire staff turned over and the three of us “newbies” have been learning as much as we can as quickly as we can. We focused on providing services to both the Forest and to the many incredibly generous volunteers who help to steward the Willamette National Forest (WNF).

We brought back the West Cascades Skills College (an intensive 3-day, professional-level training in trail building and maintenance) after taking a hiatus during the pandemic.

For the third consecutive year, our volunteers smashed the record in number of hours volunteered.

So many people signed up for our annual Volunteer Appreciation dinner that we actually had to find a new, larger venue at the last minute to accommodate all of the guests!

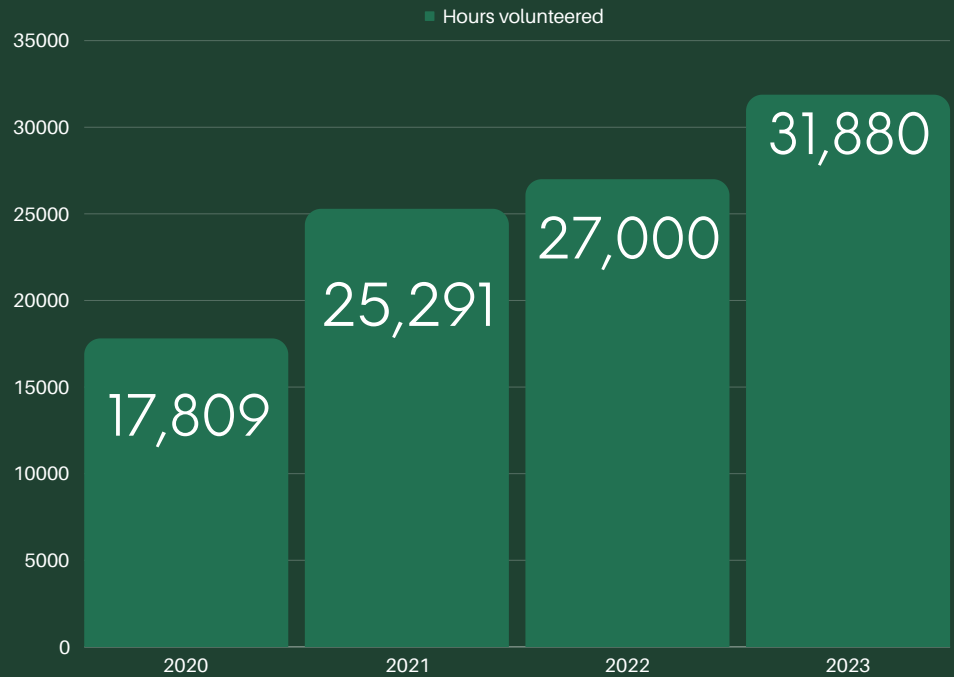
Read on to learn more about these accomplishments and much more in the following pages.

In closing, I am humbled by, and in awe of, the dedication and generosity of the volunteers, donors, partners and other supporters. We are all working together with the Forest Service to ensure that our cherished local treasure will be available to enjoy by the public for generations to come.

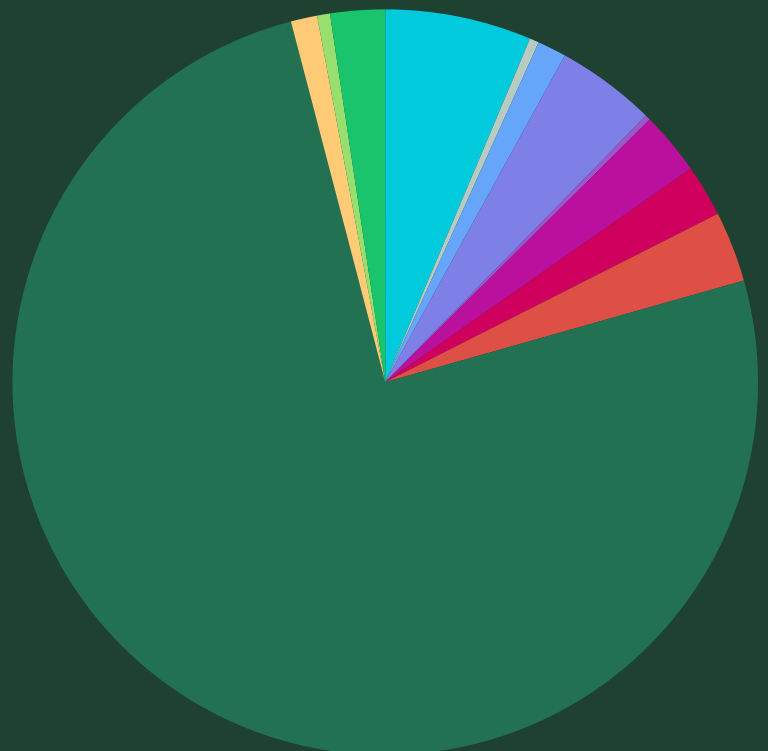
Cheers!

**Chip Coker**

## Service Hours



## Distribution of Volunteer Hours in 2023





# Service Metrics

31,880   
hours volunteered

\$  1,013,784  
in value of volunteer time

 **98,557**  
miles driven in personal  
vehicles

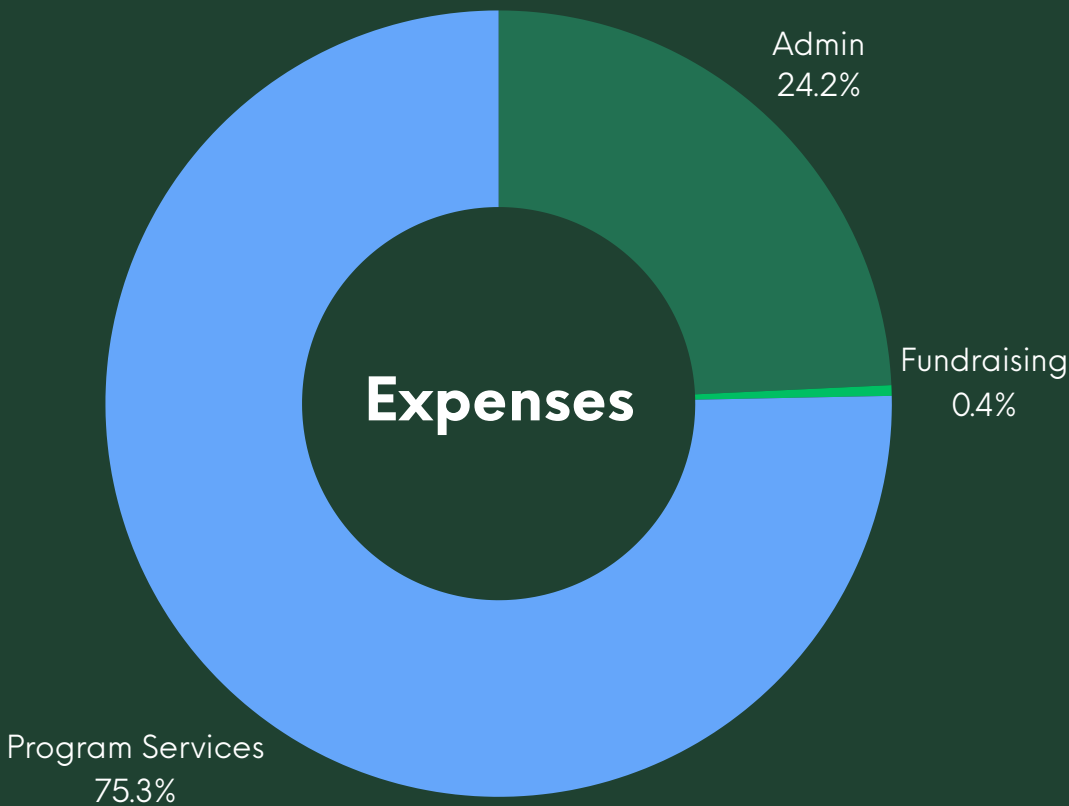
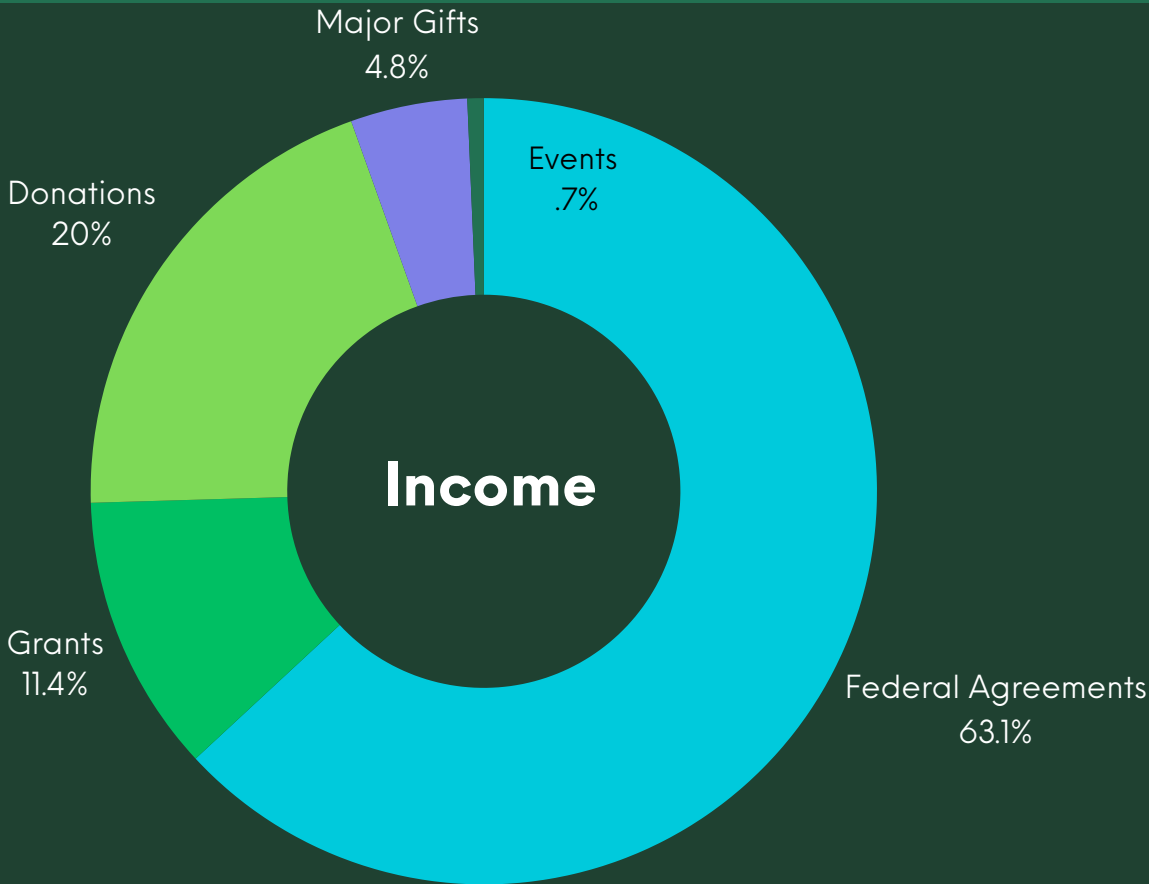
 **1,762**  
miles of trails maintained

 **46** lakes cleaned

 **106** bags of trash removed

 **224** dispersed campfire rings  
maintained & **97** removed

# Finances



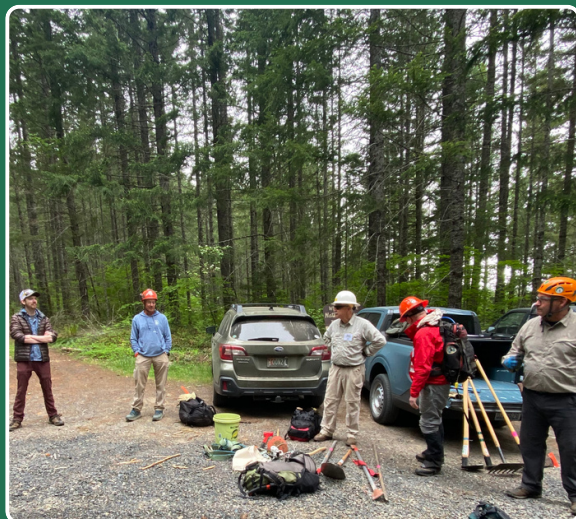
# West Cascades

# Skills College

Cascade Volunteers partnered with Pacific Crest Trail Association and the Willamette National Forest at Camp White Branch in May to offer a free three-day trail skills college experience open to new and experienced volunteers.



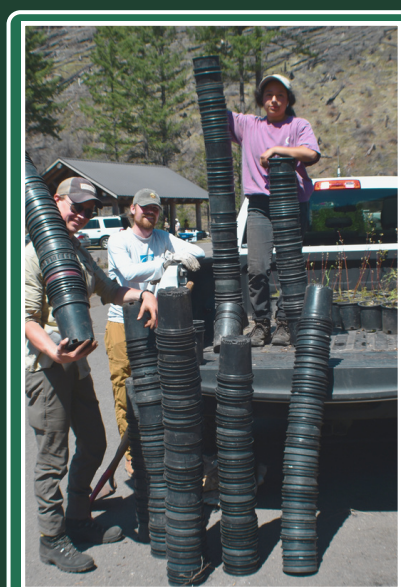
Approximately 60 volunteers learned how to maintain trails through hands-on trail education courses taught by expert volunteers and professionals.



# Upper Arm Day Use Area Tree Planting



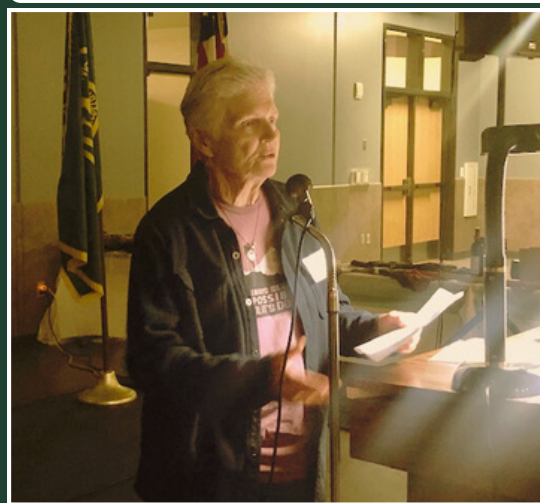
With the help of a generous donation, Cascade Volunteers and The Willamette National Forest teamed up in the spring and again in the fall to restore the Upper Arm Day Use Area, planting a total of 1,200 native trees and shrubs outside Detroit, Oregon.



This family friendly event brought volunteers of all ages out from across the Willamette Valley to lend a hand in replanting this busy day use area, heavily impacted by the 2020 Lionshead Fire.

# Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event

A record number of volunteers turned out for this year's recognition event. The Willamette National Forest and Cascade Volunteers celebrated our volunteers and their accomplishments as stewards of our public lands at the 2023 Willamette National Forest Volunteer Appreciation Night on November 17th. Approximately 120 guests were treated to an amazing evening of dinner, libations, live music, and raffle prizes donated by several local businesses.



Three volunteers were recognized for their exemplary service:  
**Arden Corey:** Cascade Volunteers 2023 Trail Stewardship Award;  
**Sig Johnsen:** Willamette Lasting Impact Award;  
and **Jean Clancey:** Judy Mitchell Volunteer of the Year Award.



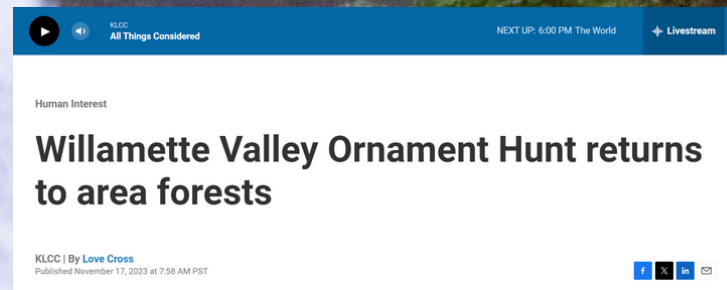


## 6th Annual Ornament Hunt

This year's hunt was the most successful year on record and marked the first year that ornaments were sold at the four Willamette District offices through Discover Your Northwest (DYNW) with all proceeds benefitting CV.



Cascade Volunteers partners with Willamette Valley Visitors Association and the Willamette National Forest each year to coordinate this fun family friendly event that encourages visitors to experience our local forest trails and support local businesses.



In November, CV volunteers hid 200 locally crafted wooden ornaments along 24 non-wilderness Trails in the following ranger districts: Detroit, Sweet Home, McKenzie River and Middle Fork on the Willamette National Forest and Cottage Grove on the Umpqua National Forest for lucky hikers to find.





# MEET THE CREW



Cascade Volunteers is made up of dozens of volunteer crews that have blossomed into every district of the Willamette National Forest. While each group is uniquely poised to take on different projects, our collective mission is to be stewards of this beautiful land. While we simply can't list all of the wonderful work accomplished by every group, we want to highlight some of the crews that Cascade Volunteers wouldn't be the same without!

In 2023 the **Scorpion Trail Crew**, which included 60 different volunteers, headed into the forest for 89 trail workdays. We donated 3,942 total hours while maintaining over 260 miles of trails mostly in the Willamette National Forest. Packed to the brim with supplies and tools, we worked on 30 different trails including 86 miles of trail in the Three Sisters, Diamond Peak, Mt. Washington and Waldo Wilderness Areas.

- Sig Johnsen





In the spring of 2023, just like each of the past five years, the leaders of the **Salamander Trail Crew** met with the Santiam River Zone (SRZ) USFS trail crew leader to map out a strategy for clearing trails in the Detroit and Sweet Home districts. In dividing up the work load one particular project stood out from the rest: clearing Minto Pass Trail.



This trail burned severely in the B&B fire of 2003, killing essentially every tree. Now, 20 years later, the dead trees continue to fall. This year an additional 230 trees had fallen within a two-and-a-half mile stretch. The major challenge was location: The west end of the trail starts five miles from the nearest trailhead, and the east end begins four miles from a trailhead, with a very long drive from the Willamette Valley. Due to this, most trips required the teams to carry in several days of food, backpacking gear, crosscut saws and other tools. Thankfully, for one five-day push, mule-packer Paul Schmiesing was able to deliver the gear up to base camp. Over the summer, volunteer crews spent a total of 14 nights camped out and hundreds of hours working and hiking just to clear this one trail.

One of my favorite mentors, Wayne Chevalier, used to say that a trail is never finished; all we can do is make it easier for next year. And that is what we have done.

**- Beth Dayton**



**Trans-Cascadia** had a great year this past year working on the Middle Fork District alongside our trail alliance partners at Oakridge Trails Alliance.

It's always rewarding to get a big crew together, make new friends and see old, and volunteer time doing what you love! Heckletooth was a big project goal of ours this season, a popular trail in the Oakridge area. Lot's of hard work to get 4 crib walls built, the trail logged out and brushed out. We were able to get it back up and running for the 2023 Season and we've seen lots of positive social media feedback from the community as a whole.



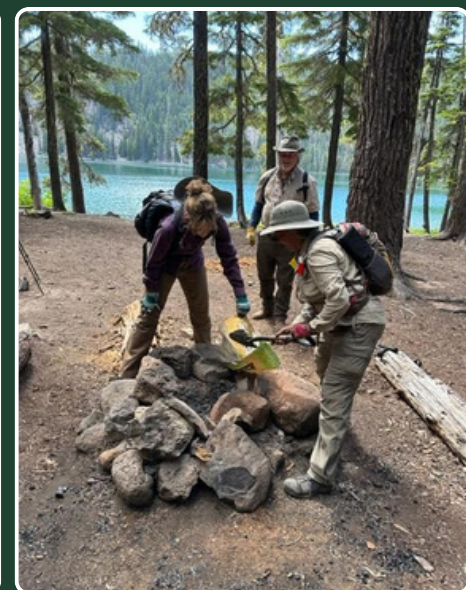
We had a very successful season and look forward to returning this year, or next, to accomplish some more trail work on the Willamette!

**- Nick Gibson**





In 2023, **Love Your Lake** was responsible for cleaning nearly 50 lakes across the Willamette!



## Ann Samsell:

The lakes I help with are the three Erma Bells in the Willamette National Forest. Mostly what we do is eliminate illegal fire pits and clean up camping areas. The fire pits must be removed one rock at a time, the ash dispersed and the trash hauled out. It's heavy, hard work, but it's fun working with the team and you definitely feel good about keeping these beautiful areas as pristine as possible.

I look forward to helping out next summer and maybe getting involved in the invasive plant project.  
Thanks for your help in coordinating these projects.



Adopted lakes: Arrowhead Lake, Benson Lake, Betty Lake, Big Lake, Birthday Lake, Blow Lake, Bobby Lake, Charlton Lake, Crawfish Lake (Umpqua NF), Daly Lake, Diamond View Lake, Divide Lake, Donaca Lake, Doris Lake, Dunlop Lake, Elk Lake, Fawn Lake, Gordon Lake, Hand Lake, Hanks Lake, Hidden Lake, Indigo Lake, Lancelot Lake, Larison Cove, Lills Lake, Lower Erma Bells Lake, Marion Lake, Middle Erma Belle Lake, Midnight Lake, Notch Lake, Otter Lake, Packard Creek, Parish Lake, Pretty Lake, Ranger Lake, Riggs Lake, Rosary Lake, Scott Lake, Short Lake, Sisters Lake, South Matthieu Lake, Tenas Lake, Upper Erma Belle Lake, Vivian Lake, Williams Lake, Yoran Lake



Some groups, such as the **Friends of the Central Cascades Wilderness**, volunteer by building and repairing various facilities and signage, as well as maintaining campsites throughout the forest.



There are many ways to get involved in your local forest, and we are constantly searching for new opportunities in which volunteers can learn, gain skills for the future, and give back to the community. If you'd like to suggest a program, feel free to contact us at [volunteer@cascadevol.org](mailto:volunteer@cascadevol.org)



This year, we are branching out to include another training opportunity. We have an ongoing need for volunteers who are passionate about combating invasive weeds (that means you, blackberries!)



# 2023 Donors

Allegra Helfenstein  
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Tyler Larson

Cascade Volunteers is extremely grateful for  
all of the support from our community!

# 2023 Corporate Donors

We would also like to thank our corporate sponsors for supporting our local forest community through their generous donations.



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