



# SELKIRK CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

KEEPING THE *Wild* IN THE SELKIRK ECOSYSTEM

## **Selkirk Conservation Alliance 2023 Annual Comprehensive “Impact” Report**

SCA Fiscal Year (FY23) - October 1st, 2022 – September 30<sup>th</sup> 2023

**Because of our members, partners, volunteers, and supporters like you, we accomplished great things together in 2023. You showed up when it mattered – and spoke up for the issues we're fighting for together. We are proud of this work and will continue to be the leading voice for conservation in the Priest Basin!**

Selkirk Conservation Alliance is a small, nonpartisan, grassroots, environmental nonprofit organization that has been working to protect and conserve the land, air, wildlife, forests and waters of the lower Selkirk Mountains for the last 37 years. SCA is the ONLY environmental nonprofit whose sole focus of FUNDS, TIME, EXPERTISE, RESEARCH and ADVOCACY encompasses the Priest Lake and Priest River Watersheds – Priest Basin.

Support of SCA’s work is especially hard to come by as many entities do not fund environmental advocacy or rural community environmental work. SCA is small, powered almost entirely by volunteers & is often overlooked by large funding entities. Due to COVID, funding is even harder to come by to support small grassroots environmental nonprofits, yet the need for environmental protection work is greater than ever. Due to SCA’s size & volunteer base, a small amount of funding goes a long way!

**In 2023, SCA’s supporters re-affirmed their commitment to a future of healthy lakes & rivers, clean water, wetland conservation, local environmental education, scientific research, common sense land use advocacy, and MORE in the lower Selkirk’s – Priest Basin.**

**SCA Mission:** Engage the public in southern Selkirk resource and land management issues through cooperation, scientific inquiry, education and economic diversification.

**SCA Vision:** The Selkirk Conservation Alliance is the leading and faithful advocate to all who live, love and benefit from Priest Lake and its surroundings. We are committed to understanding, supporting and protecting the environment and all living beings found here. We are dedicated to the educational programs and scientific research that support and maintain this rare and exceptional environment for future generations.

The following report touches on *some* of the highlights of SCA’s fundraising and pillar program work, successes and progress towards our mission goals in 2023!

## WHERE DOES SCA’S FUNDING COME FROM?

### FUNDING AND CORE MISSION SUPPORT

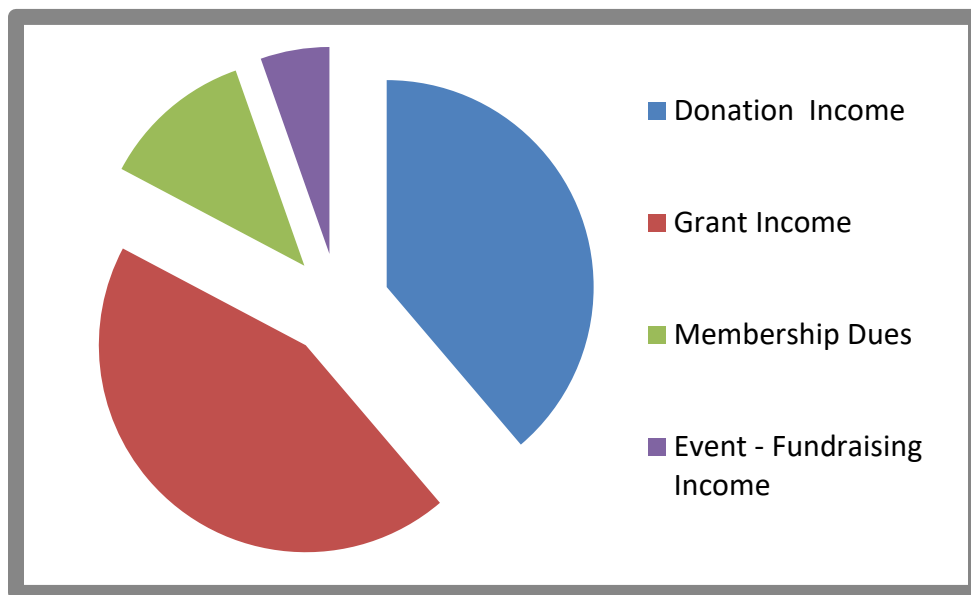
This year SCA successfully raised \$119,390.00 dollars in philanthropic revenue from Board of Director contributions, members, individuals, family and private foundations, bequests and grants. This is an increase of \$24,280.00 from 2022 totals!

SCA had several bright spots in this year’s quest to bring in funding!

- ❖ SCA hosted our SECOND annual SCA Environmental Film Festival
- ❖ Evans Brothers Coffee Roasters developed a “Selkirk Roast” and donated some of the proceeds of sales from this roast to SCA
- ❖ Ace Hardware Priest River held a “round-up” your dollar program throughout the month of September in support of SCA
- ❖ The Pour Authority (Sandpoint) hosted an October fundraiser for SCA

These events and fundraisers brought in roughly 5% of this year’s income and “spread the word” about SCA’s work throughout the region!

### SCA 2023 - Incomes Chart



## **WHERE DOES MY MONEY GO?**

### **KEY ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS PILLAR PROGRAMS & PROJECTS**

SCA has three “pillar” programs; Environmental Advocacy, Environmental Education, and Scientific Research. Under each of these “pillar” programs SCA has projects furthering SCA’s mission to “Engage the public in southern Selkirk resource and land management issues through cooperation, scientific inquiry, education and economic diversification.”

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY**

Agencies and governments (state, federal and local) have so contorted the public engagement process as to make meaningful, localized changes in land-use, wildlife, forestry, water management (and other) practices nearly impossible. Yet, citizens play a critical role in public agency government oversight and development of management plans for the conservation of critical natural resources and special sites. SCA works hard to educate and involve the community in decisions that will impact their “own backyards” and the home that we all love, the lower Selkirk Mountains – Priest Basin!

SCA has had a busy year challenging local governments and natural resource management agencies through public engagement and education, direct actions and good old fashioned grassroots activism. The SCA pushed back on plans, policies, developments etc. that would negatively impact some of our most beloved sites in the Priest Lake and Priest River Watersheds and Pend Oreille Watershed.

In 2023, SCA’s Environmental Advocacy Pillar Program submitted over 105 comment letters, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA’s), and Public Records Requests (PRR’s), scoping feedback reports, petitions, Motions to Reconsider, formal objection letters and other watchdogging and pushing back on city, county, state and federal plans, permits, policies, projects etc. that would negatively impact our area’s special sites and important natural resources across the region.

As unchecked development and poor land use management decisions by local agencies and governments continues to erode what makes this area SO VERY special, our pristine natural environment SCA’s watchdogging and advocacy has helped to make a difference in our neck of the woods. The following is a BIT of a summary of this work in 2023!

This year (2023) SCA has successfully continued to work to block development in the Coolin Wetlands. SCA submits regular Freedom of Information Act (FOIA’s) and Public Records Requests (PRR’s) to the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and Bonner County watchdogging for any new development permits coming down the pipeline so we can alert the community and push back before it’s too late to stop development or other.

This year (2023) SCA discovered an egregious error with the ACOE and Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) wetland mapping and delineation of Class I (highest conservation priority for

the state of Idaho) wetland systems in Bonner & Boundary Counties. SCA alerted the (ACOE) and Idaho Fish & Game that the database (IDFG wetland data mapper - WDV) they use to identify and issue permits for north Idaho wetlands was inaccurate/NOT up to date for at least 59 sites in northern Idaho!! These sites were labeled as “not ranked,” rather than as Class I sites. Through SCA’s work, IDFG further informed the Corps that the data for the WDV was being pulled from the wrong dataset and that the WDV has been updated to pull data from the correct source. As a result, the WDV now reflects the presence of Class I wetlands in Bonner and Boundary Counties, which equals GREATER PROTECTIONS for our precious and finite north Idaho wetlands.

This year (2023) SCA helped to protect and conserve the mouth of Trestle Creek a major Bull Trout spawning tributary to Lake Pend Oreille. Although the encroachment permit and development activities were approved by the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) for Trestle Creek the developer submitted to placing 5.8 acres of the mouth of Trestle Creek into a conservation easement owned and managed by the Kalispel Tribe. It’s very likely that without SCA ringing the alarm bells and raising community awareness, this conservation easement would have never been considered!

This year (2023) SCA has devoted considerable staff and Board of Directors time to participation in a newly formed conservation workgroup – the Priest River Workgroup (PRWG). The mission of this volunteer collaborative is the long term conservation and restoration of the Priest River system. The conservation of Priest River is a very high priority for SCA’s membership and our Board of Directors and SCA will continue to devote staff & Board time to the accomplishment of this mission.

Those are just a handful of the ‘flashier’ wins for SCA and conservation in the Basin in 2023! Often, our most impactful work never makes a single headline or trends on social media. Some of our most impactful work this year included some of the most beloved sites in our region; Priest Lake, Priest River, Pend Oreille River, Trestle Creek, Bismarck meadows, Coolin Wetlands, Joslyn Park Property, and the Mosquito Bay - Sandpiper Shores Wetlands. Please check our social medial platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Sightlines Newsletter Library and Website) to read more on these campaigns!

## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

SCA’s Environmental Education pillar program works to provide low income/rural & Tribal youth in our area with hands on, outdoor environmental educational experiences outside of their classrooms. Our "Living-Classroom" field trips get local students, outdoors learning principles and concepts of natural resources protection, climate change, conservation biology, natural sciences, ecology, water quality protection and more with regional scientists and natural resources professionals. Our Education program also has projects that seek to provide environmental education to our local adult community. To that end we work to give many talks & presentations, participate at local events & organize volunteer opportunities for our community members!

Our community Environmental Education Pillar Program was able to facilitate 9 adult educational events in Priest River, Coolin, Sandpoint and Coeur d’Alene! Our “Living Classroom” outdoor field trips were able to target and engage 14 schools and roughly 850 students and youth in our community this year!

Here are some of the highlights of SCA’s 2023 “Living Classroom” activities and educational outreach in the community!

**Summary of SCA Community Environmental Education/Outreach 2023**

**Adults/Community**

<b>Date 2023</b>	<b>Event/Outing</b>	<b>Total Outreach</b>	<b>Notes</b>
3/25/23	Pend Oreille Master Naturalists	15 Individuals	Community educational event at the Waterlife Discovery Center
4/22/23	Coeur d’Alene Earth Day	450 Individuals (est.)	SCA Educational Booth, Coeur d’Alene
5/15	Priest Lake Kaniksu-Coolin Lions Club	58 Individuals	Community educational event Coolin, ID
5/19/23	Priest River Smithsonian exhibit	330 Individuals (est.)	SCA Educational Booth, Priest River
5/27/23 5/28/23	Coolin-Priest Lake Spring Festival	450 Individuals (est.)	SCA Educational Booth, Coolin
6/17/23	SCA Environmental Film Festival	125 Individuals	Community educational event
7/29	Priest River Timber Days	350 Individuals (est.)	SCA Educational Booth, Priest River
9/2/23	Evans Bros. – Community environmental Education event	75 Individuals (est.)	Community educational event, Coeur d’Alene
9/9/23	Evans Bros. – Community environmental Education event	75 Individuals (est.)	Community educational event, Sandpoint

**TOTAL Community Adult Outreach  
Number of Individuals = 1,928**

**Students/Teachers/Community**

<b>Date 2023</b>	<b>Event/Outing</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Total Outreach</b>	<b>Notes</b>
5/18/23	Stratton Elementary	47 - Students 12 - Parents & Teachers 1 - Instructor	60 Individuals	Stratton Elementary SCA presented Watershed Model & Water cycle education
5/18/23 5/19/23	Bonner County Water Festival	425 - Students 150 - Parents & Teachers 40 - Instructors	615 Individuals	Targeted ALL Bonner county 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students SCA presented Watershed Model
5/25	"Living Classroom" Waterlife Discovery Center	40 - Students 12 - Parents & Teachers 6 - Instructors	58 Individuals	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade- Northside Elementary
5/31/23 6/1/22 6/2/22	"Living Classroom" Waterlife Discovery Center	130 - Students 25 - Parents & Teachers 14 - Instructors	169 Individuals	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade- Sagel, Southside and Washington Elementary Schools
6/9/23	Brig Museum Farragut SP	75 - Youth 25 - Parents & Teachers 4 - Instructors	104 Individuals	Farragut State Park - Fish Days
9/21/23	"Living Classroom" Trestle Creek Field Trip	68- Students/Youth 13 -Parents & Teachers 9 - Instructors/helpers	90 Individuals	Forrest Bird Charter School
9/28/23	"Living Classroom" Trestle Creek Field Trip	65- Students/Youth 10 -Parents & Teachers 7 - Instructors/helpers	82 Individuals	The Kalispel Tribe Camas Early Learning Center and the Tribal Salish Language School

**TOTAL Community/Students/Teachers Outreach -  
Number of Individuals Participating = 1,166  
14 Schools!**

SCA was also able to successfully collaborate on advocacy and environmental education work this year with; Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Bonner County Soil & Water Conservation District, Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), Idaho Conservation League (ICL), Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), Idaho Fish & Game (IDFG), Kalispel Tribe, Lakes Commission, Pend Oreille Chapter of Master Naturalists, Trout Unlimited (TU) , Panhandle Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Selkirk Alliance for Science, Idaho Rivers United & the University of Idaho.

Without hundreds of hours of volunteer time in addition to SCA staff time this environmental education work would not be possible in our community. It is only through enormous amounts of teamwork, collaboration, dedication and passion that we are able to touch so many, young and old(er) with this work!

## **SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

As an organization, SCA is taking a strategic approach to using participatory science projects to strengthen environmental protection. To that end we have worked to build capacity for community-based participatory science by establishing two robust citizen science water quality monitoring programs in the Priest Lake & Priest River Watersheds.

SCA's water quality monitoring programs benefit the Priest Lake and Priest River Watershed communities by working to protect and conserve regional surface and groundwater quality with real time annual monitoring and increased response time by agency managers to the sources of water quality contamination in the Priest Lake & Priest River Watersheds. Through these citizen powered/community water quality monitoring programs SCA is able to work more effectively with regional natural resource management agencies and the Kalispel Tribe to pro-actively identify and address the most pressing surface water quality threats in our region.

SCA has been conducting water quality monitoring on Priest Lake in conjunction with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's Citizen Voluntary Monitoring Program (CVMP) since 2008. SCA is the *only entity* conducting annual water quality monitoring of Priest Lake and regional stream systems and reporting this information to Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), University of Idaho, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) and the Kalispel Tribe.

In 2023 SCA was able to complete another successful year of water quality monitoring in the Priest Lake and Priest River Watersheds. Quantitative results included the successful organization and collection of water samples at eight targeted sites on Priest Lake and 16 primary tributary streams feeding into the Priest Lake and Priest River systems.

SCA's Priest Lake Citizen (volunteer) Science Water Quality Monitoring Program (CVMP) successfully collected water samples at eight targeted sites (Priest Lake North, Kalispel Bay, Coolin Bay, LWQA-S, Priest Lake South/Upper Priest River, Priest River at Outlet Dam LWPR, Cavanaugh Bay and Outlet Bay) on Priest Lake. Water samples were collected and submitted to laboratory (Tshimakain Creek Labs - Spokane) for analysis for Total Nitrogen (TN), Total Phosphorus (TP) & Chlorophyll-a. Profile measurements of water temp and dissolved oxygen were also collected at each site. Our team further collected data on pH, turbidity and secchi depth at each of these sites.

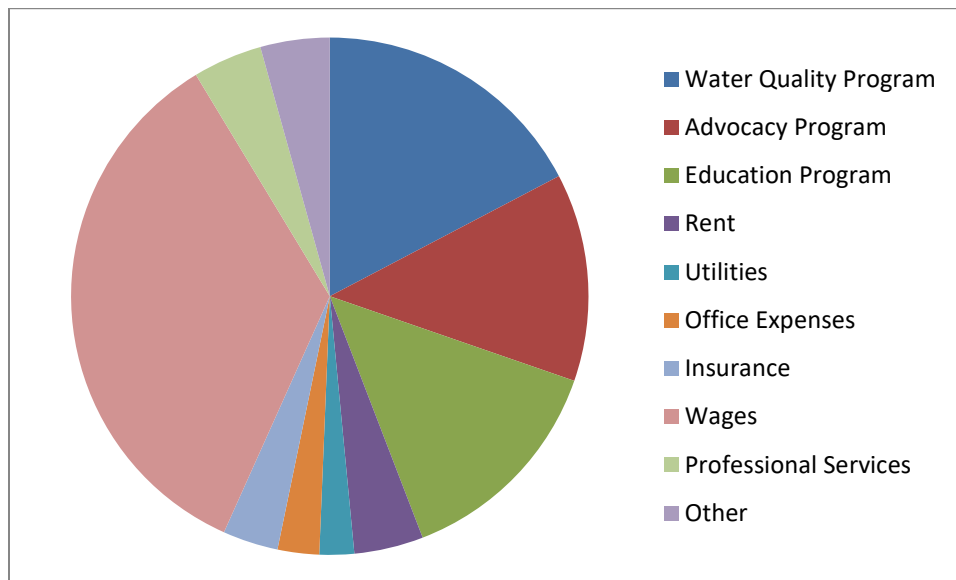
SCA's STREAMS Citizen (volunteer) Science Water Quality Monitoring Program (CVMP) successfully collected water quality data for Total Phosphorus (TP), turbidity and

temperature at 16 regional streams in our watershed. These streams include; Lion Creek-(Bull Trout-designated critical habitat), Two Mouth-(Bull Trout-designated critical habitat), Indian Creek, Hunt Creek, Soldier Creek, Caribou-(Bull Trout-designated critical habitat), Kalispel Creek, Upper west branch, Binarch, Granite Creek, Upper Priest, Trapper Creek, Bear Creek, Lamb Creek, Cougar Creek and Chase Creek.

Over the winter months SCA will be conducting data entry and analysis as well as reporting and sharing this data with the Tribe, IDEQ, IDL and UI.

Truly, SCA is the Waterkeeper of the Priest Basin!

### SCA 2023 - Expenses Chart



### OTHER 2023 NOTABLES!!!

#### NEW BOARD

SCA is very proud to say that as we enter into 2024 we have a full 11 person Board with a pedigree and skill set to be envied by other nonprofits! We heartily welcomed Dr. Jim Lea (back), Pam Duquette, Dr. Bill Ganz, Jeremy Patterson and Joe Cronrath to the SCA Board of Directors family in 2023. Please check our website for bio's on these folks!

#### New Logo and Website facelift!

In 2023 SCA gave our logo and website new life with a new, more user friendly interface, updated program and project sections and MORE. In addition the SCA logo was redeveloped using themes of past logos but with fresh colors and fonts.

#### New Sightlines production team and look!



SCA has taken over the development and graphic design work of our long running Sightlines newsletter! SCA will continue to bring you updates on our pillar programs and project work as well as relevant conservation news and information in a new exciting Sightlines format.

In closing,

We are truly grateful for your generosity, love and commitment to keeping the *WILD* alive and well in our unique, awe inspiring and precious HOME.

To learn more about SCA's work in the Priest Basin please contact SCA's Executive Director and or check out our social media platforms!!!

**This year SCA's was able to be more active and impactful because of YOU!**

THANK YOU!!!

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**What a community chooses to save is what a community chooses to say about itself!**

**- adapted from M. Beattie quote**