

A CAMPAIGN OF



WILD FOREVER FUTURE CAMPAIGN

B R I E F I N G P A P E R

Building a Campaign Skills Initiative

Insights into The Training and Professional
Development Needs of Wilderness Campaigners

A photograph of a hiker with a large backpack and a child sitting on a rocky cliff edge, overlooking a vast, layered canyon landscape under a clear blue sky.

We are not slowing down a force that inevitably will destroy all the wilderness there is. We are generating another force, never to be wholly spent, that renewed generation after generation will be always effective in preserving wilderness. We are not fighting progress. We are making it. We are working for a wilderness forever.

HOWARD ZAHNISER, 1961

Author of the Wilderness Act

Building a Campaign Skills Initiative:

Insights into the Training and Professional Development Needs of Wilderness Campaigners

This briefing paper can be read from cover to cover or can be browsed by section. To jump to the section you wish to read, please click on the heading in the table of contents below.

Executive Summary	4
Key Survey Findings	5
Key Interview Findings	9
Conclusion	10
INTRODUCTION TO THE CAMPAIGN SKILLS INITIATIVE	14
THE INVESTIGATION	16
SURVEY INSTRUMENT	18
SURVEY RESPONDENTS	24
SURVEY RESULTS	26
What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents find useful?	27
What are the professional development goals of respondents?	31
What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents believe will be very or extremely useful in achieving their professional development goals?	32
What training, networking, and professional development activities should The Wilderness Support Center expand upon?	35
THE INTERVIEWS	40
INTERVIEW GUIDE	44
OUR CONCLUSION: ONE STEP FURTHER	47

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary

“One of the most valuable services we provide is in building connections among wilderness advocates. It’s something that we do well — bringing our community together, young and old. But how can we go one step further? How can we build meaningful, long-term relationships between campaigners to share lessons learned and help training in best practices stick?”

“The reality of our day-to-day campaigning for land protection has changed a lot over the last 20 years, and I’m not sure that our training has kept pace.”

“Wilderness campaigners are truly transformational leaders. We are moving beyond fighting against “the bad” to push for a solution that permanently protects a special place. We should be much more conscious of how powerful a strategist a land protection campaigner is and help them realize their full potential as leaders, whether in the land protection community or beyond.”

- Insights from Wilderness campaigners on training and professional development needs

Taking to heart the philosophy of its founders, The Wilderness Society (primarily through the Wilderness Support Center) has invested time and resources into the people leading the wilderness movement, just as it has in wilderness campaigns. With hands-on coaching and mentoring, formal trainings, and conferences like Wilderness Week and the Mentoring Conference, the Wilderness Support Center has taught wilderness leaders how to create effective, multi-faceted campaigns. We have also brought them together to create a rudimentary peer network, and now these leaders routinely reach out to one another for support and guidance.

Yet we know instinctively that there is more we can do to support our campaigners – to help them advance their careers, to build sophisticated and sustainable organizations that can have enormous impact long into the future, and to help each other anticipate and address the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.

That’s why The Wilderness Society is launching the Wild Forever Future Campaign (administered by the Wilderness Support Center), a comprehensive training initiative aimed at recruiting the best and brightest to join the movement, supporting the seasoned campaigners who have done so much to protect wild places, and strengthening the ties between leaders – present and future.

There are two key components to the Wild Forever Future Campaign. The **Wild Forever Future Fellowship** is a one-year intensive training program for emerging activists designed to provide them with both classroom and real-time training in multi-faceted land protection campaigns. Fellows will receive mentoring support from the Wilderness Support Center and be provided with a variety of opportunities to build a professional network.

A second key component of the Wild Forever Future Campaign – and the focus of this briefing paper – is a **Campaign Skills Initiative**, a new level of training, mentoring, and professional development support for seasoned campaigners.

There are a plethora of training resources out there, and many that are specifically tailored to environmental leaders. Yet we also know that our campaigners continue to struggle with the demands of their jobs, that they often feel isolated, that they have trouble envisioning the next step forward in their careers and in the movement as a whole.

So we want to expand existing training and mentoring activities for land protection campaigners with three principle goals in mind:

- increase the number of *unique skills trainings* for professionals working on public land protection campaigns;
- connect leaders in the movement to training and mentoring opportunities that help them to strengthen their organizations; and,
- create networks between leaders in the land protection community so that they can learn from and support each other.

Having looked at a wide range of existing training programs offered by nonprofits, universities, corporations, and the federal government, we decided to reach out to our campaigners to get their perspectives, opinions, and advice on training and professional development needs. We started a conversation with 60 campaigners in two ways: an online survey and a series of one-hour interviews.

The objectives of this investigation were as follows:

- Identify specific kinds of trainings and support that seasoned campaigners want to improve and expand land protection campaigns;
- Assess how much campaigners know about training resources that are currently available to them;
- Identify the barriers that campaigners see to receiving and absorbing various kinds of training; and,
- Identify the modalities of training that these campaigners might be willing to explore, including traditional classroom workshops, online tutorials, conference call training, wikis, and communities of practice.

For the most part, the *online survey* reflects the opinions and perceptions of whom we call “seasoned campaigners,” meaning those people who have been in the movement for at least five years and are taking on increasing responsibilities in managing a campaign, employees, and organizations.

The campaigners who we *interviewed* (nine in all) are also experienced wilderness advocates from within The Wilderness Society and from key organizations (primarily situated in western states) seen as effective in protecting special places. Campaigners selected for interviews were particularly thoughtful and provided a bird’s eye view of the training, networking, and professional development needs of wilderness advocates at all stages of their career.

The following is a summary of findings from the survey and interview.

Key Survey Findings

The key evaluative term used throughout the survey was “usefulness.” Survey participants were asked to:

- (1) evaluate the usefulness of trainings, networking events, professional development activities, and online tools that they have participated in or used;

- (2) provide their opinion in terms of usefulness for proposed kinds of trainings, networking events, and professional development activities as they apply to their own professional development goals; and,
- (3) provide their opinion on the usefulness of proposed trainings, networking events, and professional development activities that The Wilderness Support Center (through the new Wild Forever Future Campaign) might provide.

We believe that the results from the online survey give us insight into four key questions that will help The Wilderness Society expand upon its existing training, mentoring, and networking activities.

What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents attend and find useful?

- Survey participants are accessing a wide range of training opportunities from a wide range of sources, including the federal government, universities, training organizations, and land protection groups. Survey respondents also cite a wide range of trainings as useful – from technical training to leadership development to mentoring.
- Survey participants cited conferences as particularly useful training experiences. We speculate that conferences are viewed as the most useful vehicle for training for several reasons:
 - There are a number of conferences around land protection, which are easily accessed by the majority of participants.
 - The conference model – where participants have the opportunity to discuss strategy, network with peers and decision-makers, and attend trainings in an immersive environment away from the office – is an ideal one for land protection campaigners.
 - If an organization has enough money to provide training to its staff, the organization’s leadership is more likely to send them to a conference that provides both training and networking opportunities.
- The opportunity to network was the most frequently cited reason for why a survey respondent found a training, networking event, or professional development activity useful. Aside from networking, the following reasons were cited:
 - A training, networking event, or professional development activity provided the opportunity to share ideas, problems, and strategies.
 - A training, networking event, or professional development activity provided the chance to connect with campaigners in all stages of their career, particularly seasoned leaders in the movement.
 - A training, networking event, or professional development activity provided the opportunity to connect with a Congressional delegation.
 - A training, networking event, or professional development activity helped the participant to step away from day-to-day campaigning and look at the “bigger picture.”
 - A training, networking event, or professional development activity addressed a specific skill/activity that was relevant to the participants day-to-day work.
 - The majority of survey respondents view The Wilderness Support Center’s existing training, networking, and mentoring activities as very or extremely useful. However, It should be noted that significantly fewer people, although still a majority, view the Wilderness Support Center’s mentorship training as very or extremely useful.

- The most common obstacles for participating in additional training cited were:
 - Lack of time to research and/or find trainings, conferences, networking events, or professional activities that might be beneficial;
 - The prohibitive expense of trainings, conferences, and professional development activities;
 - Cost of travel to trainings; and,
 - Family commitments.

What are the professional development goals of respondents?

- Two professional development goals were most frequently cited by survey respondents: increase effectiveness in leadership development and organizational management and advance a land protection campaign.
- The next most frequently cited professional development goals were expand or deepen a knowledge base and deepen knowledge around fundraising.
- We speculate that the split in the most frequently cited professional development goals reflects the stage of the career of survey respondents. The fact that many, if not most, are in the middle of their careers, where they are serving as managers and executive directors, is important to note, and is probably the reason why leadership and organizational development is as important to campaigners as a campaign itself.

What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents believe will be very or extremely useful in achieving their professional development goals?

- When asked to name trainings, networking events, and professional development activities that they hope to attend in the near future, respondents most frequently cite conferences hosted by The Wilderness Society. The next the most frequently cited category of training was communications, including media relations, public speaking, online media, and social networking. Leadership development is an equally important training priority for respondents.
- When asked more generally about the training, networking, and professional development activities in terms of their professional development goals, the majority of survey participants think the following would be very useful or extremely useful:
 - Networking events that allow me to connect with colleagues that I work with on a regular basis (68.3% or 41 out of 60 respondents);
 - Facilitated sessions among peers to discuss challenges and best practices in land protection (68.3% or 41 out of 60 respondents);
 - Technical trainings that enhance my skill set to plan and execute land protection campaigns (65% or 39 out of 60 respondents);
 - Management training to help me become a better supervisor and/or mentor (60.3% or 35 out of 58 respondents);
 - Formal mentoring from seasoned land protection campaigners (56.6% or 35 out of 60 respondents); and,
 - Skill-building in organizational development, such as strategic planning, fundraising, and financial management (55% or 33 out of 60 respondents).

What training, networking, and professional development activities should The Wilderness Society (through the Wild Forever Future Campaign) expand upon?

- The majority of survey respondents think that it would be very or extremely useful for the Wilderness Society to expand upon the following kinds of trainings, networking, or professional development activities:
 - Strategy sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities in the land protection movement (67.2%, or 39 out of 58 respondents);
 - Skill-building trainings specifically focused on building and expanding land protection campaigns (63.7%, or 37 out of 58 respondents);
 - Engagement with decision-makers to discuss land protection legislation and/or issues (62.7%, or 37 out of 59 respondents); and,
 - Networking events and activities (60.3%, or 35 out of 58 respondents).
- While there are clear majorities on the usefulness of these kinds of activities, we believe that survey results reflect a desire for the Wilderness Society to provide and/or link to a wide variety of training, including that in organizational development and workforce management. Campaigners who were interviewed note a training gap around organizational development, management, and fundraising. They see the value of learning best practices in these areas, but struggle to apply them to their particular organizations.
- Sixty-five percent of respondents think that facilitated conference calls that allow for discussion of topics and best practices with peers would be moderately, very, or extremely useful. We speculate that respondents do not see these conference calls as a primary mode of training, but an important follow-up activity to ensure that formal training “sticks.”
- Respondents give a mixed message on whether the Wilderness Society should expand its mentorship training. Forty-seven percent of survey respondents thought it would very or extremely useful for The Wilderness Society expand its efforts to create mentorship relationships, and 28 percent think it would be of little or no use at all. This somewhat contradicts respondents who believe that existing efforts are very or extremely useful. We speculate (and this is somewhat confirmed by interviewees) that respondents see value in mentorship, but struggle to find long-lasting and productive mentoring relationships.
- Survey respondents are virtually split on whether the Wilderness Society should provide online learning tools, such as webinars, wikis, and list serves. Fifty-two percent of respondents think that such tools would be of little or no use, while 47.3 percent think that these tools would be moderately, very, or extremely useful. This split could reflect the varying ages of respondents, with older campaigners not seeing the value and younger campaigners viewing online tools as more integral to their learning.
- It is important to note that 63.8 percent of respondents indicated that they would be more likely to use wikis, webinars, podcasts, and other online tools if they received training on how to best use them as learning tools.
- The most frequently suggested training by survey respondents were:
 - Best practices in successful wilderness campaigns;
 - Workforce management;
 - Best practices in organizing, especially in rural and conservative areas;
 - Negotiating to win;
 - Best practices in communication and messaging;

- Best practices in using social media to advance campaign goals;
- Strategy sessions on connecting Wilderness campaigns to other movements/campaigns;
- Fundraising;
- Diversity training, especially working with new allies; and,
- Strategic planning and implementing strategic plans.

Key Interview Findings

In addition to the survey, we interviewed nine seasoned land protection campaigners to further explore the training, networking, and professional development needs for the land protection community. Among those interviewed were: campaign coordinators and organizers; executive directors from state and regionally focused organizations; and a senior staff member at the Campaign for America's Wilderness.

We prepared an interview guide with questions about interviewee's own training needs and questions that addressed community needs. **What we found is that each interviewee provided thoughtful responses on the community as a whole, and we stuck to those questions in all nine interviews.**

The following is a summary of these interviews highlighting the opinions and perspectives shared by most, if not all, interviewees.

- The Wilderness Society's existing training, mentoring, and networking activities – most notably the Mentoring Conference and Wilderness Week –are unique and important services, specifically in building connections between land protection campaigners across the country.
- That said interviewees universally see the need for expanded and deeper kinds of training, mentoring, and networking. All interviewed seek additional training from other sources, most notably Training Resources for the Environmental Community, but none are completely satisfied with the current "ad hoc," "crash course," or "out-of-the-box" modes of training that they receive.
- All interviewees would like to see a holistic program that includes: training and discussions around best practices in land protection campaigns; training in organizational development (including fundraising and workforce management); training in all aspects of communication (from media relations to finding common ground with stakeholders); as well as coaching and mentoring.
- All interviewees saw the value of and need for mentoring, although all noted the challenge of creating formal, long-lasting, and productive mentoring relationships. Training in mentoring like that provided at the Mentoring Conference is useful, but it does not ensure that a fruitful mentoring relationship develops over time.
- Organizers who were interviewed spoke to the challenge of seeing a clear path toward career advancement. They seek out "ad hoc" training that they believe they need, but would appreciate coaching to help them define career goals, identify training and professional development opportunities to meet those goals, and assess their particular strengths and weaknesses.
- Nearly all interviewees championed some kind of regional training model, where campaigners from a particular region are brought together more than once over a 12-month period to receive formal training, discuss best practices, and network. They saw more value in connecting with campaigners in their region than those across the country and with focusing on specific challenges that they face in their region, whether that be ranching, grazing, organizing in rural areas, or forging alliance with First Nation people.

They also saw a regional training program as more cost and time effective.

- Whatever the training model may be, all interviewees saw the value in a conference model that gets campaigners out of the office and in front of their colleagues and trainers. That said, interviewees noted that they have limited time and resources for conferences.
- All interviewees invite and crave strategies for “making training stick,” whether follow-up conference calls to discuss how campaigners have applied training, a facilitated, in-person discussion around application of training, an advanced level of formal training that digs deeper into a training subject, or follow-up coaching.

Conclusion

Our conclusion from this investigation is that while a wide range of training is available to campaigners, training experiences don’t link together for a holistic learning experience. Moreover, campaigners crave different modes of learning that ensure that training “sticks,” especially as the balance demands for time with limited resources. Finally, our campaigners want more opportunities to learn and apply new skills together.

The Wilderness Society therefore propose a new training framework for the Campaign Skills Initiative with the goal of building a sophisticated, savvy, and connected community of professional campaigners who are able to anticipate the challenges and opportunities of this work in order to protect millions of acres of wildlands across the United States.

Specifically, we will launch a two-year training initiative where professional campaigners engage in a wide range of formal, interactive, and real-world training aimed at:

- **providing a solid foundation in sophisticated advocacy, campaign planning, and communications;**
- **building communities of practice that support the application of training in campaigner’s day-to-day activities;**
- **facilitating strategy discussions around cross-cutting issues that impact land protection campaigns; and,**
- **providing opportunities to build a professional development network and create mentoring relationships.**

There are three phases of training over the two-year period, each geared to accommodate a variety of learning styles.

We are also taking the recommendation of our interviewees to bring together campaigners working to protect a particular landscape – such as the Great Basin region that crosses Oregon, California, Nevada, and Utah – to participate in this regimen in this training. A small group of campaigners will engage in the training together and form a community of practice that designs and engages in follow-up training exercises, as well as develops strategies for cross-cutting challenges and opportunities.

Through the Campaign Skills Initiative, we will continue our investigation in deepening training experiences for the land protection community. Key questions that remain unanswered are:

- How can the Wild Forever Future campaign link land protection campaigners to training that enhances leadership skills and help build sustainable organizations?
- How can the Wild Forever Future campaign enhance existing leadership training, cementing best practices in leadership in ongoing land protection campaigns?
- How can The Wilderness Society continue to facilitate meaningful mentoring relationships between new and seasoned campaigners?

- What's the best way to provide guidance on professional development and create fulfilling career paths for land protection campaigners?
- How can The Wilderness Society bring people from all walks of life into the land protection movement and create land protection leaders from all walks of life?

“One of the most valuable services we provide is in building connections among wilderness advocates. It’s something that we do well — bringing our community together, young and old. But how can we go one step further? How can we build meaningful, long-term relationships between campaigners to share lessons learned and help training in best practices stick?”

“The reality of our day-to-day campaigning for land protection has changed a lot over the last 20 years, and I’m not sure that our training has kept pace.”

Insights from land protection campaigners
on training and professional development needs



**INTRODUCTION
TO THE CAMPAIGN
SKILLS INITIATIVE**



INTRODUCTION TO THE CAMPAIGN SKILLS INITIATIVE

In 2000, The Wilderness Society established The Wilderness Support Center as a hub for training, mentoring, and strategic campaign support with a clear and urgent mission: to rebuild the grassroots movement to protect our nation's wildest places. Working with local activists and grassroots groups, The Wilderness Support Center helped launch strategic wild land protection campaigns across the country, providing much-needed capacity and know-how to partners.

Ten years later, The Wilderness Society is proud to have played a significant role in most major wild land protection campaigns in the U.S. – from West Virginia to Nevada. Today, an additional eight million acres of federal public lands have been permanently protected.

But there is another equally important legacy of this work that has far-reaching consequences for the wild land protection movement moving forward.

The Wilderness Society and a range of partner organizations – like Training Resources for the Environmental Community and the PEW Environment Group's Campaign for America's Wilderness – have invested in conservation leaders across the country, both those who are veterans in the movement and those just starting their careers. With hands-on coaching and mentoring, formal trainings, and conferences like Wilderness Week and the Mentoring Conference, we have taught these leaders how to create effective, multi-faceted campaigns. We have also brought them together to create a rudimentary peer network, and now these leaders routinely reach out to one another for support and guidance.

Yet we know instinctively that there is more we can do to support our campaigners – to help them advance their careers, to build sophisticated and sustainable organizations that can have enormous impact long into the future, and to help each other anticipate and address the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.

We know that the ripple effect of investing in even one conservation leader cannot be overestimated.

That's why The Wilderness Society is launching the Wild Forever Future Campaign administered by the Wilderness Support Center – a comprehensive training initiative aimed at recruiting the best and brightest to join the movement, supporting seasoned campaigners who have done so much to protect wild places, and strengthening ties between leaders – present and future.

There are two key components to the Wild Forever Future Campaign. The **Wild Forever Future Fellowship** is a one-year intensive training program for emerging activists designed to provide them with both classroom and real-time training in multi-faceted land protection campaigns.

The second component and focus of this briefing paper – a **Campaign Skills Initiative** – will be a new level of training, mentoring, and professional development support for seasoned campaigners. Our goal over the next five years is to reach 1,000 campaigners within the wilderness and public lands community with a mix of workshops, networking events, coaching, facilitated discussions, and online learning tools. We can then build a more effective, experienced, and connected community that can face the next set of conservation challenges together as a united force.

THE INVESTIGATION



THE INVESTIGATION

Over the past two years, The Wilderness Support Center staff has studied the best practices in training among nonprofits, academic institutions, and corporations. We scanned more than 80 different training initiatives that focus on leadership development, advocacy, and organizing.

There are a lot of existing trainings out there, and many that are specifically tailored to environmental leaders. Yet we also know that our campaigners continue to struggle with the demands of their jobs, that they often feel isolated, and that they have trouble envisioning the next step forward in their careers and in the movement as a whole.

So we want to expand The Wilderness Support Center's existing training and mentoring activities with three principle goals in mind:

- increase the number of unique skills trainings for professionals working on public land protection campaigns;
- connect leaders in the movement to training and mentoring opportunities that help them to strengthen their organizations; and,
- create networks between leaders in the land protection community so that they can learn from and support each other.

Having looked at existing programs, we decided to reach out the campaigners themselves. We solicited their perspectives, opinions, and advice in two ways: an online survey and a series of one-hour interviews.

The objectives of our conversations with campaigners were as follows:

- Identify specific kinds of trainings and support that seasoned campaigners want to improve and expand land protection campaigns;
- Assess how much campaigners know about training resources that are currently available to them;
- Identify the barriers that campaigners see to receiving and absorbing various kinds of training; and,
- Identify the modalities of training that these campaigners might be willing to explore, including traditional classroom workshops, online tutorials, conference call training, wikis, and communities of practice.

The following is a detailed analysis of the survey and a summary of findings from the interviews.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT



SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The following online survey was posted on the Wild Forever Future website (www.wildforeverfuture.org) in May 2010. Wild Forever Future Campaign Director Michael Carroll sent an invitation to take the survey to land protection campaigners across the country, as well as the entire staff of The Wilderness Society – approximately 1,000 people.

The key evaluative term used throughout the survey was “usefulness.” As can be seen from the questions below, survey participants were asked to evaluate the usefulness of trainings, networking events, professional development activities, and online tools that they have participated in or used. They were also asked to provide their opinion in terms of usefulness for proposed kinds of trainings, networking events, and professional development activities as they apply to their own professional development goals. We also asked them to provide their opinion on the usefulness of proposed trainings, networking events, and professional development activities that The Wilderness Support Center – through the Wild Forever Future Campaign – might provide.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey for The Wilderness Society's Wilderness Support Center.

As you know, The Wilderness Support Center is committed to providing training and support to leaders like you. One of our greatest successes has been the growth we have seen in leaders we work with as they take on more ambitious and sophisticated land protection campaigns.

After ten years of work with leaders across the movement and watching the community of land protection advocates grow, we believe the time is right to further expand our training programs with three key goals in mind:

- increase the number of unique skills trainings for professionals working on public land protection campaigns;
- connect leaders in the movement to training and mentoring opportunities that help them to strengthen their organizations; and,
- create networks between leaders in the land protection community so that they can learn from and support each other.

It is with this in mind that we are getting ready to launch a new effort called the WILD FOREVER FUTURE CAMPAIGN—a comprehensive program designed to recruit and nurture future and current leaders while building strong connections between campaigners throughout the community.

As someone who has participated in our trainings and events, your feedback will be invaluable as we develop this ambitious program. Please take 30 minutes to answer the following questions that will help us create the training, mentoring, and networking experiences and tools that are most useful to you.

1. How many trainings and/or conferences (both in person and online) do you attend in any given year?
 - none
 - one
 - two
 - three
 - four
 - five
 - other (please provide the number)
2. Which of the following training and/or networking activities/tools do you currently attend and/or use? (please check all that apply)
 - one- to two-day conferences
 - four- to five- day training retreats
 - one- or two-day workshops
 - networking events
 - online trainings and exercises
 - online conferences
 - list serves
 - wikis
 - blogs
 - social networking groups

- podcasts
 - other (please describe)
3. Please list up to three trainings, networking events, or professional development activities that you participated in the past two years that you found particularly useful. *(If you can, please provide the name of the training, networking event, or professional development activity and the organization that provided it. Also indicate if it you attended in person, online, or via conference call.)*
 4. Why did you find the training(s) you listed particularly useful?
 5. What trainings, networking events, or professional development activities do you want to attend in the near future? *(Please describe the training, networking, and/or professional development activities and provide the name of the organization that provides them.)*
 6. What is your primary professional development goal for the next two years?
 7. Please rank in terms of usefulness the following training, networking, and professional development activities, referring to your stated professional development goal:

SCALE

Not at all useful - Slightly useful - Moderately useful - Very useful - Extremely useful

- technical trainings that enhance my skill set to plan and execute land protection campaigns
 - management training to help me become a better supervisor and/or mentor
 - skill-building in organizational development, such as strategic planning, fundraising, and financial management
 - coaching in creating professional development plans
 - networking events that allow me to connect with colleagues that I work with on a regular basis
 - networking events that allow me to connect with colleagues that I wouldn't otherwise have the chance to meet
 - facilitated sessions among peers to discuss challenges and best practices in land protection
 - formal mentoring from seasoned land protection campaigners
 - online tools that allow me to get training on the spot
 - online tools that allow me to post particular questions and/or research a particular land protection issues
 - other (please describe the training, networking, or professional development activity)
8. What prevents you from participating in trainings, conferences, networking events, or other professional development activities? (please check all that apply)
 - It is difficult to find the time to step away from day-to-day such activities.
 - It is difficult to set aside time to think about my professional development goals and then identify the kinds of training and networking support I would need to achieve them.
 - It is difficult to convince my supervisor that training and networking activities are important.
 - Most trainings, conferences, and professional development activities are too expensive.
 - I don't have the time to research and/or find trainings, conferences, networking events, or professional activities that might be beneficial.
 - Other (please describe the reason other than what is provided above.)

9. Have you attended and/or participated in any Wilderness Support Center trainings or conferences?
- Yes
 - No
10. Please rank the following activities and/or interactions at Wilderness Support Center trainings or conferences in terms of usefulness to you:
- SCALE
- Not at all useful - Slightly useful - Moderately useful - Very useful - Extremely useful
- Strategy sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities in the land protection movement
 - Engagement with decision-makers to discuss land protection legislation and/or issues
 - Skill-building trainings specifically focused on building and expanding land protection campaigns
 - Mentorship training
 - Networking events and activities
11. Which of the following activities would be most useful for you for the Wilderness Support Center to expand upon in the next two years:
- SCALE
- Not at all useful - Slightly useful - Moderately useful - Very useful - Extremely useful
- Strategy sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities in the land protection movement
 - Engagement with decision-makers to discuss land protection legislation and/or issues
 - Skill-building trainings specifically focused on building and expanding land protection campaigns
 - Mentorship training
 - Networking events and activities
 - Management training
 - Skill building in organizational development, such as fundraising, strategic planning, and financial management
 - Webinars and conference call trainings on specific skills and/or topics
 - Facilitated conference calls that allowed you to discuss topics and best practices with peers
 - Wikis, list serves, or social networking groups focused on discussing challenges, opportunities, and best practices with peers
12. What topics (up to five) would you like the Wilderness Support Center's trainings and/or strategy sessions to address in the next two years?
13. If there were online tools (such as wikis, webinars, podcasts, etc.) that allowed you to exchange information and ideas with your colleagues, how often do you think you would use them?
- I would not use them at all.
 - I would occasionally use these tools when I couldn't find information or training anywhere else.
 - I would use these tools regularly if they were available.
 - I would use these tools regularly and would be interested in helping create and update these tools.

14. If training were provided to you on how to best use online tools and sites to exchange information and ideas with your colleagues, would you be more likely to use them?
- Yes
 - No
15. Would you be willing to participate in a longer interview to discuss how The Wilderness Support Center can support you with training, networking, and professional development?
- Yes
 - No

SURVEY RESPONDENTS



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

While we did not ask for demographic information, respondents could voluntarily provide their email addresses if they were amenable to a follow-up interview. Thirty-five people provided their email, and so we were able to identify them and get some sense of the kinds of people who responded – specifically what organization they were from and where they are in their career. Here is what we know about respondents that we believe is relevant to the survey results:

- There were 60 respondents to the survey.
- Eight respondents are staff members at The Wilderness Society. One respondent comes from the development office. The rest are regional staff from across the country.
- Three respondents are program officers from foundations that support land protection campaigns.
- Six respondents come from state-based wilderness organizations.
- Four respondents come from grassroots organizations focused on a specific area within a state.
- Six respondents are at the beginning of their careers, with one to five years in the movement.
- Fifteen respondents are at a middle stage of their career, with between five and 15 years in the movement.
- Two respondents are at the end of their career, with more than 15 years in the movement.
- Six respondents are entry-level campaigners, serving primarily as organizers.
- Twelve respondents are mid-level campaigners, serving primarily as campaign directors.
- Five respondents are executive directors.
- Eight respondents work at organizations with an annual operating budget of less than \$1 million.
- Two respondents work for organizations with an annual operating budget of between \$1 million and \$5 million.
- Twelve respondents work for organizations with annual operating budgets of more than \$5 million.
- Thirty-nine respondents have attended trainings provided by The Wilderness Support Center.

Looking at this breakdown of respondents, we believe that the survey strongly reflects the opinions and perceptions of who we call “seasoned campaigners,” meaning those people who have been in the movement for at least five years and are taking on increasing responsibilities in managing a campaign, employees, and organizations. It is also important, if obvious, to note that respondents are those that have some existing tie to the Wilderness Support Center. So it can be assumed that they have a fair degree of familiarity with the Wilderness Support Center’s services and believe to some degree in the value of the services it provides.

SURVEY RESULTS



SURVEY RESULTS

We believe that survey results give us insight into four key questions that will help The Wilderness Support Center expand upon its existing training, mentoring, and networking activities:

- **What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents attend and find useful?**
- **What are the professional development goals of respondents?**
- **What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents believe will be very or extremely useful in achieving their professional development goals?**
- **What training, networking, and professional development activities should The Wilderness Society (through the Wild Forever Future Campaign) expand upon?**

The following are answers to each question, based on survey results. Please note that we are not looking at each survey question in order. Rather, we have grouped responses from survey results under each of the four overarching questions.

What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents find useful?

Survey participants are accessing a wide range of training opportunities from a wide range of sources, including the federal government, universities, training organizations, and land protection groups. Survey respondents also cite a wide range of trainings as useful – from technical training to leadership development to mentoring.

As can be seen in the following table displaying the results from the first survey question (*How many trainings and/or conferences (both in person and online) do you attend in any given year?*), 75 percent of respondents (45 out of 60) attend between one and three trainings in any given year.

Number of trainings attended each year	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total
None	3	5%
One	13	21.7%
Two	17	28.3%
Three	15	25%
Four	6	10%
Five	2	3.3%
Other	4	6.7%

As can be seen from the responses to the second survey question (*Which of the following training and/or networking activities/tools do you currently attend and/or use?*), social networking groups and list serves are the most frequently used tools.

However, they are not seen as the most useful tools, as can be seen in responses to other survey questions.

Type of training, networking activity, or tool	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total
One- to two-day conferences	3	5.2%
Four- to five- day training retreats	1	1.7%
One- or two-day workshops	4	6.9%
Networking events	5	8.6%
Online training and exercises	4	6.9%
Online conferences	1	1.7%
List serves	12	20.7%
Wikis	0	0%
Blogs	1	1.7%
Social networking groups	20	34.5%
Podcasts	2	3.5%
Other	5	8.6%

Survey participants cited conferences as particularly useful training experiences, as can be seen from an aggregation of results from the third survey question (*Please list up to three trainings, networking events, or professional development activities that you participated in the past two years that you found particularly useful.*)

A list of 90 trainings, networking events, and professional development activities was aggregated into eight categories, as shown in the following table.

Categories of “particularly useful” training, networking events, and professional development activities	Number of Trainings Cited in Category	Percentage of Total
Conferences that include strategy discussions and engagement with decision-makers	27	30%
Individual skills-building trainings around land protection	20	22.2%
Mentoring (specifically the Mentoring Conference and one-on-one mentoring from The Wilderness Support Center)	13	14.4%
Leadership development	10	11.1%
Workforce management	7	7.8%
Fundraising	5	5.6%
Networking	5	5.6%
Other	3	3.3%

We speculate that conferences are viewed as the most useful vehicle for training for several reasons:

- There are a number of conferences around land protection, which are easily accessed by the majority of participants.
- The conference model – where participants have the opportunity to discuss strategy, network with peers and decision-makers, and attend trainings in an immersive environment away from the office – is an ideal one for land protection campaigners.
- If an organization has enough money to provide training to its staff, the organization’s leadership is more likely to send them to a conference that provide both training and networking opportunities.

We then asked respondents to explain why the trainings they listed were particularly useful with the fourth survey question. **The opportunity to network was the most frequently cited reason why a training, networking, or professional development activity was considered particularly useful.** Twenty-four of 80 responses included a reference to networking (32.5 percent of all responses to the question).

Aside from networking, the following were the most frequently cited reasons why a particular training, networking, or professional development activity was considered particularly useful were:

- **It provided the opportunity to share ideas, problems, and strategies.**
- **It provided the chance to connect with campaigners in all stages of their career, particularly seasoned leaders in the movement.**

- It provided the opportunity to connect with a Congressional delegation.
- It helped the participant to step away from day-to-day campaigning and look at the “bigger picture.”
- The training addressed a specific skill/activity that was relevant to the participants day-to-day work.

The majority of survey respondents also view The Wilderness Support Center’s existing training, networking, and mentoring activities as very or extremely useful.

Wilderness Week and the Wilderness Support Center’s Mentoring Conference were both cited as useful training events in the third survey question. The Mentoring Conference in particular seems to be a unique learning vehicle for land protection campaigners, one that no other organization appears to be offering.

The tenth survey question (*Please rank the following activities and/or interactions at Wilderness Support Center trainings or conferences in terms of usefulness to you.*) directly addresses the question of usefulness of The Wilderness Support Center’s existing training, networking, and mentoring activities.

Training, networking, professional development activities provided by The Wilderness Support Center	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Total Responses
Strategy sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities in the land protection movement	1: 2.2%	3: 6.5%	11: 23.9%	21: 45.7%	10: 21.7%	46
Engagement with decision-makers to discuss land protection legislation and/or issues	2: 4.5%	2: 4.5%	10: 22.7%	18: 40.9%	13: 29.5%	44
Skill-building trainings specifically focused on building and expanding land protection campaigns	1: 2.2%	4: 8.9%	11: 24.4%	15: 33.3%	14: 31.1%	45
Mentorship training	1: 2.3%	6: 13.9%	13: 30.2%	13: 30.2%	10: 23.3%	43
Networking events and activities	3: 6.4%	3: 6.4%	6: 12.8%	15: 31.9%	19: 40.4%	47

These activities currently provided by the Wilderness Support Center can be ranked by the percentage that found them very or extremely useful as follows:

- Networking events and activities, with 72.3% or 35 out of 47 respondents viewing them as very or extremely useful;
- Engagement with decision-makers to discuss land protection legislation and/or issues, with 70.4% or 31 out of 44 respondents viewing them as very or extremely useful;
- Strategy sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities in the land protection movement, with 67.4% or 31 out of 46 respondents viewing them as very or extremely useful;
- Skill-building trainings specifically focused on building and expanding land protection campaigns, with 64.4% or 29 out of 45 viewing them as very or extremely useful; and,
- Mentorship training, with 53.3% viewing this training as very or extremely useful.

It should be noted that significantly fewer people, although still a majority, view the Wilderness Support Center’s mentorship training as very or extremely useful. As seen in subsequent interviews, there is recognition of the importance of mentorship and of the challenge of creating long-lasting, productive mentoring relationships out of the Mentorship Conference.

Finally, we asked campaigners what the biggest obstacles to attending additional trainings are with the eighth survey question. The full results are provided in this table.

Reason preventing respondent from attending additional trainings	Number of Respondents	Total of Percentage
It is difficult to find the time to step away from day-to-day such activities.	4	7.0%
It is difficult to set aside time to think about my professional development goals and then identify the kinds of training and networking support I would need to achieve them.	5	8.8%
It is difficult to convince my supervisor that training and networking activities are important.	2	3.5%
Most trainings, conferences, and professional development activities are too expensive.	13	22.8%
I don’t have the time to research and/or find trainings, conferences, networking events, or professional activities that might be beneficial.	20	35.1%
I attend all the training, conference, networking, and professional development activities that I need.	2	3.5%
Other	11	19.3%

A commonly cited obstacle listed in the other category was family commitments.

Thus, the most common obstacles for participating in additional training are:

- **Lack of time to research and/or find trainings, conferences, networking events, or professional activities that might be beneficial;**
- **The prohibitive expense of trainings, conferences, and professional development activities;**
- **Cost of travel to trainings; and,**
- **Family commitments.**

The expense of travel and the need to carefully manage time between work and family may also make the conference model more attractive. As we speculate, conferences provide an opportunity for “one-stop” training and networking, while taking participants away from other responsibilities – essentially maximizing “bang for buck.”

What are the professional development goals of respondents?

Two professional development goals were most frequently cited in response to the sixth survey question (*What is your primary professional development goal for the next two years?*). Virtually the same number of survey participants cited increase effectiveness in leadership development and organizational management and advance a land protection campaign as their primary professional development goal over the next two years.

50 responses were aggregated into seven professional development categories, as shown in the following table.

Category of Professional Development Goal	Number of Times Cited by Respondents	Percentage of Total
Increase effectiveness in leadership and/or organizational development	13	26%
Advance a land protection campaign	12	24%
Expand or deepen knowledge base	8	16%
Deepen knowledge around fundraising	7	14%
Advance in career	6	12%
Broaden a professional network	2	4%
Other	2	4%

The next most frequently cited professional development goals were expand or deepen a knowledge base and deepen knowledge around fundraising.

We speculate that the split in the most frequent responses for this question reflects the stage of the career survey respondents. The fact that many, if not most, are in the middle of their careers, where they are serving as managers and executive directors, is important to note, and is probably the reason why leadership and organizational development is as important to respondents as the campaign they lead or manage.

What training, networking, and professional development activities do respondents believe will be very or extremely useful in achieving their professional development goals?

We asked respondents to think about the training they believe would be useful to them in two different ways. The fifth survey question (What trainings, networking events, or professional development activities do you want to attend in the near future?) gave us some insight into existing trainings that campaigners are aware of and believe are useful.

The table below displays an aggregation of 76 trainings cited by respondents into ten different categories.

Category of training, networking, or professional development activity that respondents hope to attend in the near future	Number of Times Cited by Respondents	Percentage of Total
Conferences offered by The Wilderness Society (Wilderness Week, the Mentoring Conference, and Women in Wilderness Conference)	20	26.3%
Communications	12	15.8%
Leadership development	11	14.5%
Fundraising	6	7.9%
Nonprofit management	6	7.9%
Intermediate or advanced training around land management	6	7.9%
Fundamentals of land protection campaigning	4	5.3%
Strategy sessions around land protection campaigning	3	3.9%
Negotiation techniques	2	2.6%
Other	6	7.9%

Aside from the conferences hosted by The Wilderness Society, the most frequently cited category of training that respondents hope to participate in relates to communications. Within this category, respondents cited training in media relations, public speaking, online media, and social networking.

Leadership development is an equally important training priority for respondents, with 14.5 % planning to attend some kind of such training, especially the leadership development programs at Training Resources for the Environment.

After leadership development, respondents hope to attend specific trainings in fundraising and nonprofit management. They also want to receive intermediate or advanced training around land management.

With the seventh survey question, we asked respondents to evaluate the usefulness of general kinds of training, networking, and professional development activities in terms of the their stated professional development goal.

The majority of survey participants think the following training, networking, or professional development activities would be very useful or extremely useful, in terms of their professional development goals:

- **Networking events that allow me to connect with colleagues that I work with on a regular basis** (68.3% or 41 out of 60 respondents);

- **Facilitated sessions among peers to discuss challenges and best practices in land protection** (68.3% or 41 out of 60 respondents);
- **Technical trainings that enhance my skill set to plan and execute land protection campaigns** (65% or 39 out of 60 respondents);
- **Management training to help me become a better supervisor and/or mentor** (60.3% or 35 out of 58 respondents);
- **Formal mentoring from seasoned land protection campaigners** (56.6% or 35 out of 60 respondents); and,
- **Skill-building in organizational development, such as strategic planning, fundraising, and financial management** (55% or 33 out of 60 respondents).

Survey participants have divergent opinions about professional development coaching. Forty-four percent, or 26 out of 60 respondents, think such coaching would be very or extremely useful, but 33%, or 20 out of 60 respondents, think such coaching would be of little or no use in terms of their professional development goals.

One reason for this split response could be a lack of knowledge about what professional development coaching is and how it works. Another reason could be that campaigners have a wide variety of definitions for what professional development is. We did not define the term for survey respondents.

Survey respondents do not view online tools as either very or extremely useful in terms of their professional development goals. Thirty-five percent think that “online tools that allow me to get training on the spot” would be moderately useful, but 40% of respondents think such tools would be of slight or no use at all. Forty percent of respondents also think that “online tools that allow me to post particular questions and/or research a particular land protection issues” would be moderately useful.

The following table provides the full breadth of responses to the seventh survey question (Please rank in terms of usefulness the following training, networking, and professional development activities, referring to your stated professional development goal).

Training, networking, professional development activities serving a professional development goal	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Total Responses
Technical trainings that enhance my skill set to plan and execute land protection campaigns	1: 16.7%	7: 11.7%	13: 21.7%	21: 35.0%	18: 30.0%	60
Management training to help me become a better supervisor and/or mentor	11: 19.0%	2: 3.4%	11: 19.0%	17: 29.3%	18: 31.0%	58
Skill-building in organizational development, such as strategic planning, fundraising, and financial management	4: 6.7%	6: 10%	17: 28.3%	17: 28.3%	16: 26.7%	60
Coaching to create a professional development plan	10: 16.9%	10: 16.9%	13: 22.0%	10: 16.9%	16: 27.1%	59
Networking events that allow me to connect with colleagues that I work with on a regular basis	5: 8.3%	1: 1.7%	13: 21.7%	23: 38.3%	18: 30%	60
Facilitated sessions among peers to discuss challenges and best practices in land protection	1: 1.7%	5: 8.3%	15: 25%	23: 38.3%	18: 30%	60
Formal mentoring from seasoned land protection campaigners	5: 8.3%	6: 10%	14: 23.3%	23: 38.3%	11: 18.3%	60
Online tools that allow me to get training on the spot	5: 8.3%	19: 31.7%	21: 35%	10: 16.7%	5: 8.3%	60
Online tools that allow me to post particular questions and/or research a particular land protection issues	6: 10.1%	12: 20.3%	23: 40.0%	8: 13.6%	10: 16.9%	59

What training, networking, and professional development activities should The Wilderness Support Center expand upon?

As shown with the results from the 11th survey question, the majority of survey respondents think that it would be very or extremely useful for the Wilderness Support Center to expand upon the following kinds of trainings, networking, or professional development activities:

- **Strategy sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities in the land protection movement** (67.2%, or 39 out of 58 respondents);
- **Skill-building trainings specifically focused on building and expanding land protection campaigns** (63.7%, or 37 out of 58 respondents);
- **Engagement with decision-makers to discuss land protection legislation and/or issues** (62.7%, or 37 out of 59 respondents); and,
- **Networking events and activities** (60.3%, or 35 out of 58 respondents).

While there are clear majorities on these kinds of activities, we believe that survey results reflect a desire for the Wilderness Support Center to provide and/or link to a wide variety of training, including that in organizational development and workforce management.

Forty-nine percent (27 out of 55) think that skill-building in organizational development, such as fundraising, strategic planning, and financial management provided by the Wilderness Support Center would be moderately, very, or extremely useful. Forty-six percent (27 out of 58) think that it would very or extremely useful for the Wilderness Support Center to provide management training.

We speculate that this response reflects the need and desire for such training and the recognition that there are many training organizations, like Training Resources for the Environment Community, already providing support around organizational development.

That said, those interviewed (as described in the next section) note a training gap, where they see the value of learning best practices in organizational development, but struggle to apply them to their particular organization.

It is also important to note that 65% of respondents (39 out of 56) think that facilitated conference calls that allowed for discussion of topics and best practices with peers would be moderately, very, or extremely useful.

We speculate that respondents do not see these conference calls as a primary mode of training, but an important follow-up activity to ensure that formal training “sticks.”

Respondents give a mixed message on whether the Wilderness Support Center should expand its mentorship training.

The following table reflects the full range of responses to the 11th survey question (Which of the following activities would be most useful for you for the Wilderness Support Center **to expand upon** in the next two years).

Training, networking, professional development activities that the Wilderness Support Center should expand upon	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Total Responses
Strategy sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities in the land protection movement	2: 3.5%	5: 8.6%	12: 20.7%	22: 37.9%	17: 29.3%	58
Engagement with decision-makers to discuss land protection legislation and/or issues	2: 3.4%	4: 6.8%	15: 25.4%	15: 25.4%	22: 37.9%	59
Skill-building trainings specifically focused on building and expanding land protection campaigns	1: 1.7%	6: 10.3%	14: 24.1%	19: 32.8%	18: 31.0%	58
Mentorship training	5: 8.8%	11: 19.3%	14: 24.6%	14: 24.6%	13: 22.8%	57
Networking events and activities	4: 6.9%	5: 8.6%	14: 24.1%	17: 29.3%	18: 31.0%	58
Management training	9: 15.5%	10: 17.2%	12: 20.7%	10: 17.2%	17: 29.3%	58
Skill-building in organizational development, such as fundraising, strategic planning, and financial management	2: 3.6%	12: 21.8%	13: 23.6%	14: 25.5%	14: 25.5%	55
Webinars and conference call trainings on specific skills and/or topics	6: 10.7%	11: 19.6%	21: 37.5%	13: 23.2%	5: 8.9%	56
Facilitated conference calls that allowed you to discuss topics and best practices with peers	7: 13.5%	15: 28.8%	17: 32.7%	10: 19.2%	5: 9.6%	52
Wikis, list serves, or social networking groups focused on discussing challenges, opportunities, and best practices with peers	11: 20.0%	18: 32.7%	14: 25.5%	10: 18.2%	2: 3.6%	55

Forty-seven percent of survey respondents thought it would very or extremely useful for the Wilderness Support Center to expand mentorship training, and 28% think it would be of little or no use at all. This somewhat contradicts respondents who believe that current training is very or extremely useful. We speculate (and this is somewhat confirmed by interviewees) that respondents see value in mentorship, but struggle to find long-lasting and productive mentorship relationships.

Survey participants offered a comprehensive list of specific suggested trainings in response to the 12th question (*What topics (up to five) would you like the Wilderness Support Center's trainings and/or strategy sessions to address in the next two years?*)

We aggregated 108 suggestions into the following nine categories:

Categories of Suggested Trainings	Number of Trainings in Category	Percentage of Total Suggested Trainings
Best practices in wilderness campaigns	40	37%
Strategy sessions on land protection challenges and opportunities	18	16.7%
Technical training on legislative and scientific issues	15	13.9%
Workforce management	10	9.3%
Fundraising and organizational development	9	8.3%
Diversity training	7	6.5%
Leadership development	5	4.6%
Mentorship	3	2.8%
Other	1	.9%

The most frequently cited trainings that survey respondents suggested that the Wilderness Support Center provide were:

- **Best practices in successful wilderness campaigns;**
- **Workforce management;**
- **Best practices in organizing, especially in rural and conservative areas;**
- **Negotiating to win;**
- **Best practices in communication and messaging;**
- **Best practices in using social media to advance campaign goals;**
- **Strategy sessions on connecting Wilderness campaigns to other movements/campaigns;**
- **Fundraising;**
- **Diversity training, especially working with new allies; and,**
- **Strategic planning and implementing strategic plans.**

Finally, survey respondents are virtually split on whether the Wilderness Support Center should provide online learning tools, such as webinars, wikis, and list servs.

In response to the 11th survey question, 52% of respondents evaluate such tools as being of little or no use, while 47.3 % think that these tools would be moderately, very, or extremely useful.

This split could reflect the varying ages of respondents, with older campaigners not seeing the value and younger campaigners viewing online learning tools as more integral to their learning.

We are provided a bit more insight on the use of online learning tools with 13th survey question (*If there were on-line tools (such as wikis, webinars, podcasts, etc.) that allowed you to exchange information and ideas with your colleagues, how often do you think you would use them?*) and the 14th survey question (*If training were provided to you on how to best use online tools and sites to exchange information and ideas with your colleagues, would you be more likely to use them?*)

Seventy-six percent (35 out of 46 respondents) would only occasionally use wikis, webinars, podcasts, etc. to exchange information and ideas with colleagues, only if they couldn't find information anywhere else. However, the majority of respondents, 63.8% (37 out of 58 respondents) would be more likely to use wikis, webinars, podcasts, etc. if they received training on to best use these online tools.

THE INTERVIEWS



THE INTERVIEWS

To follow up with the survey, Michael Carroll and Anne M. McCaw interviewed nine seasoned land protection campaigners to further explore the training, networking, and professional development needs for the land protection community. The specific objectives of these interviews were:

- Identify specific kinds of trainings and support that campaigners at different levels need to advance their campaigns and their careers;
- Assess how much campaigners know about training resources that are currently available to them;
- Identify the modalities of training that these campaigners might be willing to explore;
- Gather more information on responses to the online survey, particularly around building an effective conference training and around online learning tools; and,
- Better understand the different learning needs of campaigners at different stages of their career.

Among those interviewed were:

- one campaign coordinator from The Wilderness Support Center;
- one senior staff person at The Wilderness Society;
- two executive directors of state-focused organizations;
- one executive director of a regionally focused organization;
- a conservation director of a regionally focused organization;
- two senior organizers; and,
- a senior staff member at Campaign for America's Wilderness.

We prepared an interview guide of 18 questions. We also provided alternative questions for funders, whom we thought would have a bird's eye perspective on the training landscape. **What we found is that each interviewee provided thoughtful responses on the community as a whole, and we stuck to those questions in all nine interviews.**

The following is a preliminary summary of these interviews, highlighting the opinions and perspectives shared by most, if not all, interviewees.

- **The Wilderness Support Center's existing training, mentoring, and networking activities – most notably the Mentoring Conference and Wilderness Week –are unique and important services, specifically in building connections between land protection campaigners across the country.** As one interviewee put it, this kind of networking is “therapeutic,” giving campaigners perspective beyond their own daily challenges, an opportunity to commiserate with colleagues, and then to move to a discussion of overcoming ongoing challenges that campaigners face where ever they are.
- **That said, these interviewees universally see the need for expanded and deeper kinds of training, mentoring, and networking.** All interviewed seek additional training from other sources, most notably Training Resources for the Environmental Community, but none are completely satisfied with the current “ad hoc,” “crash course,” or “out-of-the-box” mode of training that they receive.

- **All interviewees would like to see a holistic program that includes: training and discussions around best practices in land protection campaigns; training in organizational development (including fundraising and workforce management); training in all aspects of communication (from media relations to finding common ground with stakeholders); as well as coaching and mentoring.**
 - Two executive directors cited the need for a comprehensive course on what they termed the “new model” for legislative advocacy focused on building support among key constituents in a district and/or state, as well as building a rapport with a Congressional delegation’s field staff.
 - A training regimen around organizational development should go beyond general best practices and address the specific challenges of strengthening organizations involved in land protection. Two interviewees cited training in board development as important, focusing on how to build a governance board that can advance a land protection campaign, as well as help an organization grow financially.
 - Communications training should encompass more than media relations, but also how to communicate with your staff (especially those of different generations), how to find common ground with stakeholders, and how to communicate effectively with a Congressional delegation.
- **All interviewees saw the value of and need for mentoring, although all saw the challenge of creating formal, long-lasting, and productive mentoring relationships.** Training in mentoring like that provided at the Mentoring Conference is useful, but it will not ensure that kind of relationship over time.
- **Organizers who were interviewed spoke to the challenge of seeing a clear path toward career advancement.** They seek out “ad hoc” training that they believe they need, but would appreciate coaching to help them define career goals, identify training and professional development opportunities to meet those goals, and assess their particular strengths and weaknesses.
- **Nearly all interviewees championed some kind of regional training model, where campaigners from a particular region are brought together more than once over a 12-month period to receive formal training, discuss best practices, and to network.** They saw more value in connecting with campaigners in their region than those across the country and with focusing on the specific challenges that they face in their region, whether that be ranching, grazing, organizing in rural areas, or forging alliance with First Nation people. They also saw a regional training program as more cost and time effective.
- **Whatever the training model may be, all interviewees saw the value in a conference model that gets campaigners out of the office and in front of their colleagues and trainers.** That said, they have limited time and resources for conferences.
- **All interviewees invite and crave strategies for “making training stick,” whether follow-up conference calls to discuss how campaigners have applied training, a facilitated, in-person discussions around the application of training, an advanced level of formal training that digs deeper into a training subject, or follow-up coaching.**

In closing, it is worth noting an observation made by an executive director who has in the land protection movement for two decades. He said:

“The work of a wilderness advocate is truly transformative, because campaigners are moving beyond fighting against “the bad” and push for a legislative solution that *permanently* protects a special place.

A well-trained, sophisticated wilderness campaigner is therefore a powerful, transformative leader, not just among other land protection advocates, but also in the conservation world at large. We should be much more conscious of how powerful a strategist a land protection campaigner is and help them realize their full potential as leaders, whether in the land protection community or beyond.”

The interview guide is provided on the following pages.

INTERVIEW GUIDE



INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What have you found to be the most useful training and/or professional development activities? What have you learned from them? Why do you think they were particularly effective?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* What do you think are the most useful kinds of trainings available to the land protection community right now?
2. We noticed in our training survey that most participants cite conferences – like the Wilderness Support Center’s mentoring conference and the National Conservation Land Conference – as particularly useful learning experiences. Do you find conferences to be particularly beneficial for your learning? Why or why not?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* We think that people find conferences to be so beneficial because: (1) they leave the workplace; (2) they get the opportunity to interact with their peers; and, (3) they have an opportunity to get both classroom and on-the-job training. In other words, conferences can provide an immersive, holistic training experience with opportunities to network. Do you agree with this conclusion? How would you read these results?
3. What is your key professional development goal for the next two years?
4. Are there particular trainings, networking events, or professional development activities out there that you know of that you want to attend and/or have your staff attend in the near future? Why?
5. Is there a particular kind of training, networking, or professional development activity that you think you and/or your staff need that you currently can’t find? What is it?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* Is there a particular kind of training, networking, or professional development activity that you think the community needs but that is not currently available?
6. Have you attended and/or participated in any Wilderness Support Center trainings or conferences? What activities or interactions did you find most useful? What did you learn from them? Why do you think they were particularly useful or effective?
7. As you know, The Wilderness Support Center has made a commitment to mentoring, especially through the mentoring conference. Have you participated in any mentoring work for or with The Wilderness Support Center? What did you get out of that experience? How can The Wilderness Support Center improve on and/or expand mentoring support?
8. What particular skill-building trainings would you and your team like to see The Wilderness Support Center provide?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* What do you see the community as a whole needing, in terms of skill building? What kind of basic, intermediate, and advanced skill-building trainings are most needed?
9. What kind of support would you and your team need from The Wilderness Support Center around management and organizational development?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* What do you see the community needing around management and organizational development? What role should The Wilderness Support Center play in providing support/training around management and organizational development?

10. What kind of support in professional development would you and your team like to see The Wilderness Support Center provide?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* What support does the community as a whole need around professional development? What role do you see The Wilderness Support Center playing around professional development for the community?
11. Have you ever received any coaching (formally or informally) around professional development? How would you work with a coach made available to you specifically to assist you with articulating goals to help you advance your career?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* How do you think established and emerging leaders should use professional development coaching?
12. Do you stay in touch with the people you meet at conferences, networking events, and trainings? How do you stay in touch? How often do you stay in touch? What kinds of questions do you ask each other? What kinds of support do you provide to one another?
13. Are there people in the land protection community that you would like to connect with but don't or can't at the moment? Who are they? What is preventing you from connecting with them?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* Are there particularly groups within the land protection community that you think need to forge connections? How do you see The Wilderness Support Center facilitating those connections?
14. Are there ways in which The Wilderness Support Center can help you maintain contact between training or conference participants?
15. We also noticed that many survey participants use social networking sites on a regular basis. Are you using social networking as a learning tool? If so, how are you using it?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* We believe that survey participants are using social networking regularly, but are not necessarily using it for training purposes. Do you agree with this assessment? How do you think the community should explore social networking as a learning tool?
16. We noticed in our survey that people did not find online training tools as useful as other modes of learning. Is that true for you? Do you think online training tools can serve a role in your training? How would online training tools be most useful to you and your team?
 - a. *For trainers and funders:* How do you think the community should use online training tools?
17. Based on this conversation, if you could create or invest in a year-long training experience (which could include anything and everything we talked about today) what would be the components of that experience? What would you hope to learn from it? What kind of support would you need to stay engaged? What kind of support would you need to apply the training and learning you receive over the long term?
18. Can we get in touch with you with any additional questions we might have, after we finish these interviews?

**CONCLUSION:
ONE STEP FURTHER**



OUR CONCLUSION: ONE STEP FURTHER

The survey results and the responses from those we interviewed confirm that land protection campaigners actively seek a wide range of learning experiences and view a wide range of training as important to their effectiveness as advocates. This investigation also tells us that The Wilderness Support Center provides a critical kind of learning experience – specifically the opportunity to make connections with campaigners at all stages of their career.

But how can we go one step further in our efforts to train and mentor our campaigners and create the support networks that will help them continue to learn?

Our conclusion is that while a wide range of training is available to campaigners, training experiences don't link together for a holistic learning experience. Moreover, campaigners crave different modes of learning that ensure that training “sticks,” especially as they balance demands for time with limited resources. Finally, our campaigners want more opportunities to learn and apply new skills together.

The Wilderness Society therefore propose a new training framework for the Campaign Skills Initiative with the goal of building a sophisticated, savvy, *and connected* community of professional campaigners who are able to anticipate the challenges and opportunities of this work in order to protect millions of acres of wildlands across the United States.

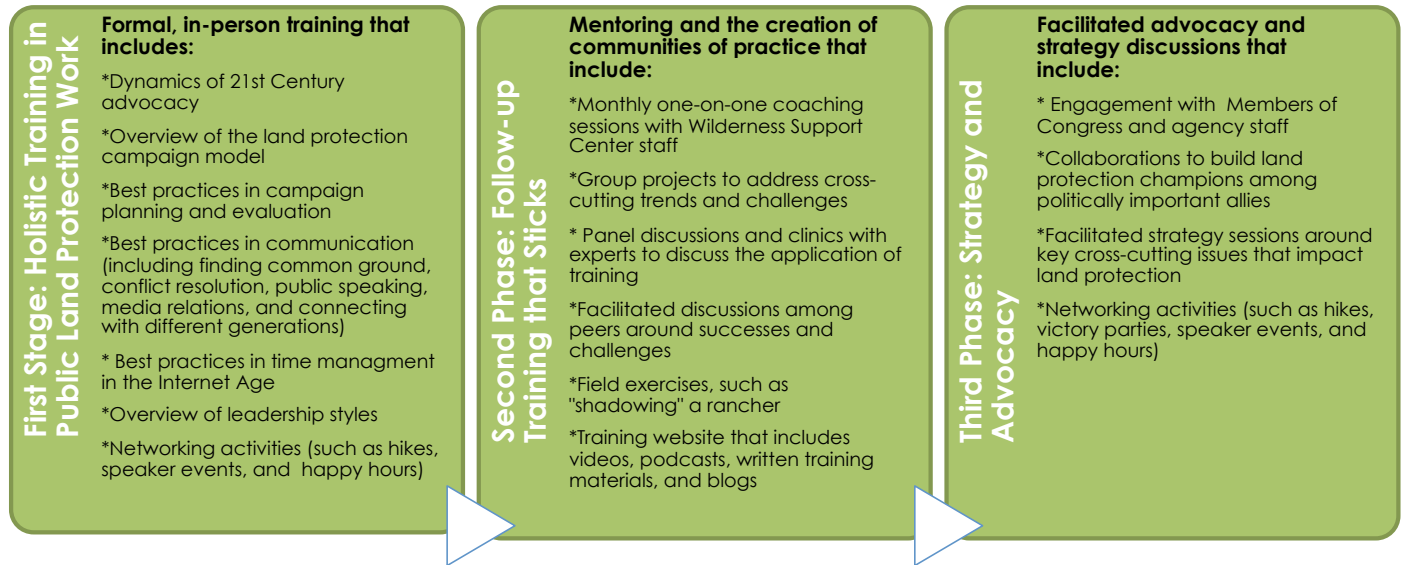
Specifically, we will launch a two-year training initiative where professional campaigners engage in a wide range of formal, interactive, and real-world training aimed at:

- (1) providing a solid foundation in sophisticated advocacy, campaign planning, and communications;**
- (2) building communities of practice that support the application of training in campaigner's day-to-day activities;**
- (3) facilitating strategy discussions around cross-cutting issues that impact land protection campaigns; and,**
- (4) providing opportunities to build a professional development network and create mentoring relationships.**

There are three phases of training over the two-year period, each geared to accommodate a variety of learning styles.

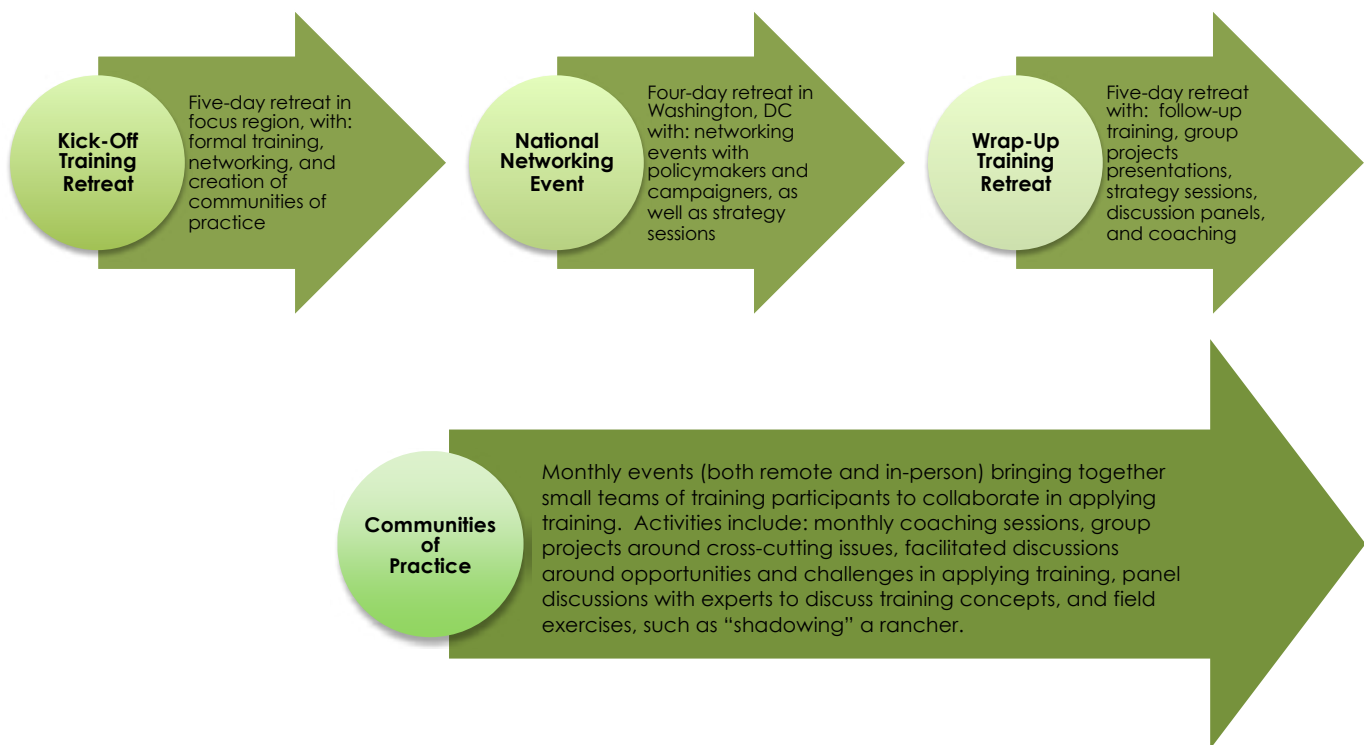
We are also taking the recommendation of our interviewees to bring together campaigners working to protect a particular landscape – such as the Great Basin region that crosses Oregon, California, Nevada, and Utah – to participate in this regimen in this training. A small group of campaigners will engage in the training together and form a community of practice that designs and engages in follow-up training exercises and develops strategies for cross-cutting challenges and opportunities.

Phases of Continual Training for Professional Campaigners



A Regional Investment in Training

Small, targeted groups of campaigners in each region will meet in person three times during the two-year period for formal training, strategy sessions, networking, and engagement with decision-makers. Two of those events – the initial Kick-Off Training Retreat and the Wrap-Up Retreat – will be held in the regions. The National Networking Event will be held in Washington, DC. Between in-person training and networking events, each regional training team will create communities of practice, engaging in monthly events (both in-person and remote).



Through the Campaign Skills Initiative, we will continue our investigation in deepening training experiences for the land protection community. Key questions that remain unanswered are:

- How can the Wild Forever Future Campaign link land protection campaigners to training that enhances leadership skills and help build sustainable organizations?
- How can the Wild Forever Future Campaign enhance existing leadership training, cementing best practices in leadership in ongoing land protection campaigns?
- How can The Wilderness Society continue to facilitate meaningful mentoring relationships between new and seasoned campaigners?
- What's the best way to provide guidance on professional development and create fulfilling career paths for land protection campaigners?
- How can The Wilderness Society bring people from all walks of life into the land protection movement and create land protection leaders from all walks of life?