

# Nature Allies

## Impact Report 2024







©Ed Kendall

## Together, We Find A Way

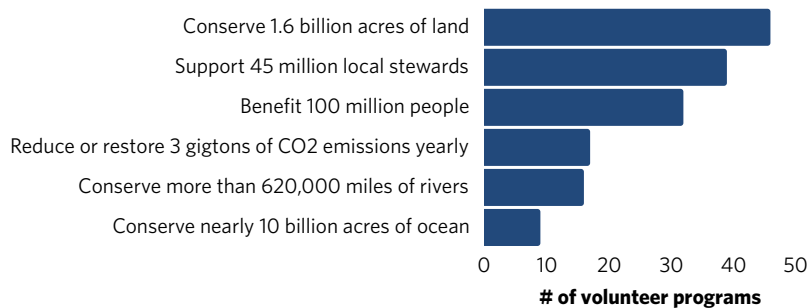
As humanity confronts the unprecedented challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, the demand for action is greater than ever before. The Nature Conservancy believes that together, we can find a way to meet this moment. Embedded in that belief is the understanding that the “we” must rapidly encompass more people from all ages and abilities, different cultures and backgrounds, across the globe.

That’s why The Nature Conservancy is designing creative and relevant pathways to mobilize the time, talents, experiences and influence of people who can help us to work toward our ambitious 2030 goals to inspire action in their communities.

## Achieving TNC’s 2030 Goals

Volunteer efforts across TNC are meaningfully aligned with the organization’s 2030 goals.

### TNC’s 2030 Goals



## Volunteers FY 2024



**14,183**  
Total Volunteers



**123,281**  
Volunteer Hours  
(65+ FTEs)



**\$4.1M**  
Donated Labor Value

©Evan Semón Photography



# Volunteer Roles

Volunteers serve in many ways, guided by a shared vision to support healthy, more resilient lands, waters, and communities. They contribute on projects remotely from their homes, assist in our offices and across 250+ preserves and in collaboration with our partners.

Volunteer roles support both foundational and skills-based needs. Below is a summary of the different ways people are giving their time to The Nature Conservancy.

## FOUNDATIONAL ROLES

Roles where anyone can step in with little to no training and/or guidance.

Trail Creation & Preserve  
Maintenance



Clean-ups & Trash Removal  
& Recycling



Invasive Species  
Management



Native Seed Collection,  
Processing & Planting



Office & Clerical



## SKILLS-BASED ROLES

Roles that require placement of individual volunteers with specific skills, life experiences and/or training.



Photography &  
Videography



Research, Monitoring, &  
Data Analysis



Docent, Ambassador, Tour  
& Hike Leaders



Outreach, Education, Event  
Planning & Tabling



Project/Volunteer  
Management



# Snapshots

## From the Field

### CALIFORNIA

#### Intersection of Conservation & Markets

Seven Bain & Company volunteers supported a range of projects at the intersections of conservation and markets, from Indonesian Forestry to sustainable beef supply chains in the United States.

### ALABAMA

#### Pluggin' Away

Local volunteers planted over 2,000 plugs of native marsh grasses along Little Lagoon's southwest shoreline to restore a 1,100-meter stretch of eroded shoreline.

### ARKANSAS

#### The Little Things

Volunteer Charlie Warriner helps with the general maintenance of our office—anything from painting office spaces, to helping with the recycling program, to reconditioning our wooden kitchen countertops. He helps with the little things so that we can focus on the big things.

### DIGITAL MARKETING

#### On the Map

Seven virtual global volunteers claimed or created 400 additional Google preserve listings, achieving the goal of listing all TNC preserves that are open to the public in Google Maps. In total, there are 711 preserves listed on Google Maps, which have earned 6.7 million views and nearly a million calls or clicks on directions in the last year.

### ILLINOIS

#### Maintenance Man

Volunteer Paul Mellen works every Tuesday and Thursday at Nachusa Grasslands to care for all the equipment, vehicles, and buildings we own. Paul's expertise has saved TNC hundreds of staff hours.





# Snapshots

## From the Field

### COLORADO

#### Can't Do It Alone



© Anya Byers/TNC

At Phantom Canyon, our summer volunteer days provided opportunities for public engagement and education while strengthening TNC's relationships with other conservation partners through trail clean-up and preserve maintenance.

### CONNECTICUT

#### On the Move



© Martha Rice

When the Connecticut Chapter had to move to a different office space, volunteer Jane Aldieri saved the day. She not only saved staff 30 hours of work by inventorying the entire office but then contacted nonprofit groups in the area to donate office furniture, also saving on the cost of moving.

### ARIZONA

#### Paying it Forward



© The Nature Conservancy (Peter Leiterman)

At TNC's Ramsey Canyon Kids' Camp, campers learn about nature through fun activities, hiking, and creating a nature-themed craft. Two of five volunteers who assisted had attended the camp as youths and returned this year as volunteers to share their enthusiasm, knowledge and experience.

### FLORIDA

#### Accessibility



© Virginia Hamilton

Tiger Creek Preserve volunteers donated over 100 hours to help make the preserve more accessible. They researched ADA standards, created an accessible parking spot, doubled the width of the trail, and tested track chairs on the trails.

### NEW YORK

#### Dynamic Duo



© Rebecca Kusa

Mashomack Preserve volunteers Bob and Barb Vandenberg are a dynamic duo. The pair have worked together to tackle projects around the preserve, from stewardship and trail maintenance to event help. They have helped install 18 benches that increase the accessibility of our trails, maintained new sections of trail, served on parking duty for events, and much, much more!

### HAWAII'

#### Now That's a Bird Story



© Robert Shallenberger

Volunteers contributed over 3,500 hours to seabird social attraction projects at Palmyra Atoll. They detected three species of seabirds thought to have been extirpated and documented a breeding event.



## INDIANA

### Skills-based Help

Since 2022, Norm Gwaltney has curated all of Indiana's photos and videos in Aprimo, TNC's digital asset management platform. This has helped staff in philanthropy, grants management, marketing & communications, and outreach & engagement tell more stories. In 2024, Norm transitioned to building a searchable database of lease agreements for the land protection team.

At Kankakee Sands, volunteer Bill Cummings repaired a fanning mill for native seed production. The mill separates seeds from chaff, and without it volunteers and staff sort by hand. Bill took the mill home, deconstructed it, researched components, made a model, fabricated new parts, repaired broken ones, and completely repaired the mill just in time for the fall seed cleaning season. This equipment would have cost several thousand dollars to replace, and Bill gave his skills with engineering and 173 hours of his time to repair it.

## MISSISSIPPI

### On the Half Shell

Volunteers assisted in the collection of oyster shells from a local oyster cook-off. Approximately 3,000 visitors attended the annual event and collected approximately 20,000 shells or about 3 cubic yards of material, that can be used in future restoration projects.

## LOUISIANA

### A Big Day

Volunteer Rickie Aizen brings his brush mower and camera to the Grand Isle Lafitte Woods Preserve several times a year to maintain the trails and capture educational photos. With his help, the trails are easily found by birders, and his photos are used to communicate TNC's mission.

## NEVADA

### It Takes a Village

In May, the River Fork Ranch Preserve welcomed 16 new volunteer docents that are serving the community by greeting visitors and helping to organize educational events at the preserve. Docents commit to serving 3-4 Saturdays at the Whit Hall Interpretive Center and organize at least one educational event per year.





## KENTUCKY

### Eyes and Ears

Two of our preserves are fairly remote and difficult for staff to access, so the volunteers who live closest to them are the eyes and ears of these preserves. They assist with trail/preserve maintenance, keep invasive species in check, and report their observations. This allows staff to prioritize time and travel.

## MICHIGAN

### Devil in the Details

Our volunteer writer synthesized data and information from a 92-page technical report down to about 10 pages of text and tables for the final report for the Keweenaw Inventory project. In that process, she extracted information that would be most relevant to the future managers of the 32,000-acre Keweenaw Heartlands property.

## MONTANA

### Getting Personal

Kay, and her late husband John Allen, started a donor thank-you effort back in 2018. Their goal was to send a hand-written thank you letter to as many TNC Montana donors as possible. In FY24, Kay handwrote roughly 500 letters to donors who give monthly recurring gifts.

## NEW JERSEY

### It's Official

Over the past few years, 300 young trees were planted in the Paulins Kill Watershed with supportive stakes and protective tubes to aid in their survival. These trees have since outgrown the extra support and volunteers were able to clear all materials from the site which is now considered an established and thriving restoration.

## OHIO

### Aw Nuts!

This Fall, volunteers across Ohio collected thousands of native tree nuts and seeds around their homes and donated them to TNC to assist with reforestation. After weeks of collecting nuts, volunteers joined TNC staff at three restoration sites throughout Ohio to put tree nuts in the ground and plant the next generation of forests. By bringing nuts from their homes to plant on site, volunteers fostered a personal connection to conservation while also helping to preserve local genotypes.



# Snapshots

## From the Field

### MARYLAND

#### After the Burn



© Matt Kane/TNC

Twelve students in the Forest Technology program from Allegheny College of Maryland helped us collect vital inventory data following a prescribed fire on a TNC preserve, which will be used to monitor vegetation responses to fire over time.

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Blood, Sweat & Tears



© Rene Wendell

A volunteer from Williams College helped map invasive species, remove barbed wire, monitor endangered species, and haul out a submerged leech-filled rowboat from one of our newest properties. It was a wet and muddy job!

### MINNESOTA

#### Paying it Forward



© TNC

In Minnesota, volunteers provide the most of the restoration and stewardship on 67-acre oak savanna that is one of the best examples of that habitat type in the state. The preserve would not be in such good condition without that cohort of volunteers, some of whom have been working there since the early 1990s.

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

#### Growing On



© Annette Ruzicka

Our Mangoro Market Meri team and partners planted 20,000 mangrove saplings within two years at Dogura. The volunteers in our program assisted in the field, helped clean up the beach, and planted mangroves alongside corporate, academic, youth, and community-led groups in the Bootless Bay Area.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### It's for the Birds



© Jason Peters

Volunteer Jason Peters is our carpenter extraordinaire. He donated the lumber and built 25 bluebird boxes in his shop. He also volunteers at the Edward H. McCabe Preserve in southern Delaware, where he monitors 10 bluebird boxes from March through June, utilizing a custom online monitoring form that captures data and photos in real time.

### OREGON

#### Volunteer of the Year



© Molly Dougherty

This year, Oregon TNC hosted our first in-person volunteer recognition event in several years to celebrate the many achievements of TNC volunteers. Susan Brown is just one of these volunteers. For over 25 years, she has tended tirelessly to Cogswell Foster Preserve. From monitoring wildlife to organizing volunteer events, her stewardship ethic and love for the preserve and its inhabitants shines through in every task she undertakes.

## SOUTH DAKOTA

### **How Can I Help?**

In South Dakota, a volunteer has been assisting TNC with filing and clerical work for over 10 years! We're grateful for this work, which keeps us organized and on track.

## RHODE ISLAND

### **All in a Day's Work**

As part of their annual "day of action," corporate volunteers added 18 bog bridges to the trail at Whale Rock Preserve, which will reduce hikers' impact on the trail and protect fragile wetlands.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### **Right-hand Volunteer**

A longtime southern North Carolina volunteer can be counted on to take Conservancy vehicles in for service, organize and cull files, inventory supplies, and much more—freeing up time for conservation staff to focus on priorities like preserve management and easement monitoring.

## OKLAHOMA

### **Say Cheese**

Local photographers volunteered their time and creativity to capture thousands of photos at the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve. They donated not only the images but the creative rights to TNC. These shots will be used for years to come, and will do an excellent job of telling the story of the preserve.

## VERMONT

### **Respecting Our Elders**

Over the course of two days, students from St. Michael's College contributed a total of 96 hours to removing invasive woody species from Williams Woods Natural Area, a property harboring remnant centuries-old pockets of the Valley Clayplain Forest natural community.





## UTAH/IDAHO

### **Across State Lines**

Over 400 volunteers came together to plant over 3,000 native plants at the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation's Wuda Ogwa Site (Bear River Massacre Site) on the Utah/Idaho border. This project brings partners together, restores and creates wildlife habitat, and protects the banks of the Bear River (the biggest tributary of Great Salt Lake) from erosion.

## WYOMING

### **Good Neighbors**

Nebraska Friends of Nature lent a hand to open Tensleep Preserve for the season. Their many talents were put to good use—fixing buildings, installing fences, deep-cleaning buildings, and setting up platform tents. We couldn't have done it without them.

## WISCONSIN

### **Labor of Love**

We're grateful to a small group of dedicated volunteers who lead work parties at our preserves. These volunteers are incredibly knowledgeable and deeply committed to the restoration of these lands.

## VIRGINIA

### **Many Hands, Light Work**

In Virginia, volunteers give us a huge boost toward meeting our stewardship goals. For example, over 100 volunteers gave 1,000 hours of their time to monitor and improve trails at nine TNC preserves across Virginia. One of our volunteers, Margaret Chatham, has been contributing to our mission for decades. She led 15 invasive control volunteer workdays at TNC's Fraser Preserve and gave over 250 hours of her time to improving habitat at the preserve.

## WASHINGTON

### **It's All About the Seeds**

This past year has been all about the seeds! Volunteers have joined many seed parties throughout 2024 held at our Seattle office to help with a research project lead by our science team to sort teeny tiny seeds from forest floor debris at TNC's Ellsworth Preserve.

# Looking Forward

Volunteerism is at the core of The Nature Conservancy's past successes and present ambitions. Just like TNC's work has evolved to include much more than traditional land conservation, we have to adapt how we think about engaging people, too. While we must learn from our past, the ideas and solutions of yesterday are not up to the task we are facing—we must find new ways forward.

Thoughtful and modern interpretations of volunteerism present a powerful opportunity to grow and diversify the “we”, which in turn, will inspire innovation, strengthen connections to nature and support our organization's commitments to global conservation to amplify hope and foster action at the scale needed to meet the challenges confronting society.

## In the coming years, we aim to:

- **Expand opportunities for skills-based volunteers** to serve in vital roles across TNC, which improves TNC's ability to meet the urgent challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change;
- **Create training opportunities** that meet the needs of volunteers and TNC to improve operations, increase outcomes and foster meaningful relationships;
- **Create more volunteer experiences** to engage new audiences;
- **Implement a centralized volunteer management system** that provides a seamless experience for people who are searching and signing up for volunteer opportunities while streamlining how TNC tracks and reports on volunteer service and impact;
- **Grow and nurture a community of practice** to foster collaboration, unlock efficiencies and support innovation.

These creative, relevant and interconnected initiatives are intentionally designed to harness the time, talent, experience and influence of people in new ways.

**We are broadening our definition of volunteering—to fostering allies for nature.**

© Alex Novak/TNC





# Get In Touch!

For more information on the Nature Allies program and how to get involved, contact:

[nature.org/volunteer](https://nature.org/volunteer)



## Karen Tharp

Director of Nature Allies  
[ktharp@tnc.org](mailto:ktharp@tnc.org)



## Megan Whatton

Nature Allies Program Manager  
[megan.whatton@tnc.org](mailto:megan.whatton@tnc.org)

