



Annual Report 2025



Bark's mission is to transform Mt. Hood National Forest into a place where natural processes prevail, where wildlife thrives and where local communities have a social, cultural, and economic investment in its restoration and preservation.

Staff

as of October 2025

Julie Falk
Interim Executive Director

Gabi de Leon
Marketing & Events Manager

Cathy Wilde
Director of Finance & Administration

Jordan Latter
Forest Watch Program Manager

Jade Hagan
Director of Community Engagement
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Meg Waller
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Standing Strong Together

Reflecting on the past year, I am struck by the resilience, creativity, and fierce determination that define Bark's journey. From federal attacks on bedrock environmental laws like NEPA to attempts to sell off our public lands, this has been a year of both standing firm in defense of our forests and expanding the ways we organize—investing in the partnerships and strategies needed to face unprecedented threats to our forests.

We are guided by a truth we hold close: forests connect us all. These lands provide clean water, climate resilience, wildlife habitat, and cultural grounding for countless people and critters. Protecting them requires both vigilance and vision. In 2025, Bark deepened our commitment to community-based advocacy, science-based monitoring, and public engagement with land management in meaningful ways.

We prioritized deepening our relationships with Forest Service leadership, responding proactively to federal policy changes by outlining our “red lines,” which resulted in concrete safeguards for Mt. Hood's large trees and riparian areas. Bark staff and volunteers identified 15 priority sites for beaver habitat restoration and completed updates to the National Wetlands Inventory maps of the Oak Grove and Middle Clackamas watersheds, which is the first time these maps have been updated since the 1980s. These updated maps will allow us to

secure added protections for these sensitive ecosystems and the beavers that inhabit them. We also strengthened our relationships with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and advocated for greater inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in land management. Combined, these efforts ensure the ecological health of Mt. Hood National Forest remains at the center of forest management decisions.

Our leadership in watchdogging harmful timber projects and advancing proactive forest protections has elevated Bark's influence in shaping how Mt. Hood National Forest is managed. Whether out in the forest or in the streets, we've shown that forest defense is built on both long-term dedication and collective action.

As we look to the challenges and opportunities ahead, Bark is poised to take even bolder action. This work is not easy, but together—with your support—we are building a future where forests, wildlife, and the communities that depend on them can thrive.

For the forest,

Rynn Thompson
Board Chair

Our Impact

July '24-June '25

“Being out in the field...deepened my understanding of how public lands are managed, the threats they face, and the importance of community involvement in protecting them.

Seeing these areas in person gave me a stronger appreciation for the land and reinforced the importance of ecological preservation.”

-Bark Volunteer

Meg Waller with volunteers during a Beaver Habitat Survey field day.



an average of

71.5%

of all public comments on Mt. Hood forest management projects came from Bark staff and supporters

100 hours of facetime
with Mt. Hood NF leadership

“[Bark is] doing terrific work to bridge the gap between government agencies and the public...That work and advocacy is especially important now when our lands and the laws protecting them are so at risk. I look forward to continuing to volunteer with this amazing organization next year and beyond!”

-Alex, Bark Volunteer

48.36

miles of forest surveyed



26,231

donations from

3,211

donors

237 new donors

avg. contribution: \$32.36

"I think that having familiarity with the land that we live on...is one of the strongest ways to get people to care for and put in work to protect this land. Bark's volunteer opportunities create a really accessible space to start to gain this familiarity. I feel so grateful for the ways that Bark has helped me build a sense of community, both with people and with the lands around Mt. Hood!"

-Izzy, Bark Volunteer

86

field days
& events

with

777

volunteers
& attendees



Wetland Survey Field Day group photo.

35,417

email subscribers

partnered with **40** government
agencies, organizations, & businesses



Shaping Forest Policy from the Ground Up

When Forest Watch Program Manager Jordan Latter started at Bark in 2023, he inherited a program that was, and still is, one of a kind in the Portland metro area. Forest Watch is rooted in the belief that the ones who know a forest best are those who spend time in it. Every summer, our volunteers head out into Mt. Hood National Forest to collect data, or what we call “groundtruthing”—measuring tree diameters and canopy cover, mapping stream crossings, and documenting wildlife—to keep watch over these lands that so many Oregonians depend on. Jordan’s job is to take that raw, on-the-ground knowledge and use it to shape decisions about Mt. Hood’s forest management.

Coming from a background in forest ecology, Jordan approaches the work with a scientist’s eye and a community organizer’s heart. For years, Bark’s power has come from watchdogging—challenging the Forest Service leadership when they fell short of protecting habitat or honoring public input. That work is still vital. But Jordan also saw an opening:

what if Bark could take a seat at the table where those decisions begin, and bring our ecological expertise and community values into the room early enough to influence project designs before they’re even public?

Not everyone was convinced. Relationship-building with the Forest Service—the same agency we’ve sued in the past and may sue again—wasn’t an easy sell. It’s a lot easier to whip up opposition to a familiar foe than to change hearts and minds, much less build trust with people whose politics and priorities might differ from our own. But Jordan found that when he shows up with credible data, listens carefully, and stays grounded in our shared connection to this forest, real progress becomes possible.

In his first year, that approach began to bear fruit. During discussions on the 27 Road Fuel Break project—a thinning proposal running through the Douglas Cabin Late-Successional Reserve



Volunteers at a Groundtruthing Training
at Larch Mountain.

“...in these times of polarizing rhetoric and top-down authoritarian control, change starts with the people we interact with in our everyday lives.”

(LSR)—Jordan joined collaborative field tours and shared Bark’s groundtruthing data showing how the proposed logging units clashed with the management purpose of late-successional reserves and would fragment critical habitat. At first, he wasn’t sure the Forest Service would take our concerns seriously. But as more collaborative members echoed those concerns, the tone shifted. When the final decision was released, the Forest Service dropped several of the most harmful units and acknowledged in writing that “the conversations about protections of mature forests and old growth”—an unmistakable reference to Bark’s advocacy—had led them to reconsider management in that LSR. Although the final project design was far from perfect, it was a meaningful sign that this new approach could make a difference.

The months that followed brought greater challenges. When the Trump administration returned to power in 2025, one of its first actions was an executive order calling for the “Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production.” With federal agencies ordered to ramp up logging and cut out public oversight, Bark knew Mt. Hood Forest Service staff would soon feel the pressure.

In May, Bark sent Mt. Hood’s Acting Forest Supervisor, Gar Abbas, and Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor, Marin Palmer, a letter outlining our “red lines”: non-negotiable commitments to transparency, ecological integrity, and public engagement. We made it clear that if these lines are crossed—logging in old-growth or near riparian areas, transferring public lands, degrading water quality, or sidelining Tribal consultation—we will fight back.

To their credit, Abbas and Palmer didn’t shut the door. And in the months since, we’ve seen our willingness to engage Forest Service staff pay off. Old-growth units we flagged in upcoming projects

have been dropped before they reached the scoping stage. Forest Service staff have shared project data earlier so that we can ensure the public is given enough information to submit comments and share their concerns. They’ve even committed to not log stands 80 years or older and to protect wetlands and riparian areas. Abbas summed up our evolving relationship in June when he said: “We’re going to do things you don’t like, and you’re going to do things we don’t like—but we appreciate [Bark’s] willingness to always engage in timely dialogue.” It was a reminder that in these times of polarizing rhetoric and top-down authoritarian control, change starts with the people we interact with in our everyday lives.

This approach doesn’t mean there aren’t conflicts. But at a time when federal agencies are being pressured to prioritize extraction over ecosystems, it’s paved the way for Bark to push Mt. Hood leadership to chart a different path—one grounded in science, accountability, and respect for the public’s role in land stewardship.

This work doesn’t just change policy—it changes people. Many volunteers come to Bark unsure if they have the skills or experience to contribute and leave with a new sense of purpose and belonging. One longtime volunteer, Karyn, told us her experience going out on a field day with Bark deepened her understanding of Mt. Hood more than anything else in her 30 years of living nearby.

That’s what Bark’s Forest Watch program is all about: connecting people to the forest, turning knowledge into action, and transforming how decisions about Mt. Hood are made. By combining credible science, community power, and a willingness to engage, even when it’s uncomfortable, we’re proving that lasting change starts with relationships: not only between people, but also between people and place.

Bark, Beavers, & Land Stewardship on Mt. Hood

On a drizzly morning last fall, a dozen Bark volunteers waded through knee-high sedges along a meandering stream in the Clackamas River Basin. As they laughed, mud-streaked and elbow-deep in an unmapped wetland they'd helped Bark's Restoration Program Manager, Meg Waller, identify, it was easy to forget that they were engaged in small acts of care that, taken together, can reshape an entire watershed. Several of these volunteers were Portland State University students whose class has been partnering with Bark's Restoration program. "This is one of the first times I've felt properly involved in doing the actual work rather than just thinking about the work that needs to be done," one student later said. Another added, "I am not exaggerating when I say that it changed my life."

That belief—that humans can and must be active participants in the health of our ecosystems—is what sets Bark apart. While many conservation groups promote a "leave it be" approach to land protection, Bark's work is rooted in reciprocity: giving back to the land that sustains us.

Recreation culture often encourages people to go outside to recharge—a personal wellness ritual more than a relationship. The forest becomes a backdrop for escape. Yet that mindset, however well-intentioned, keeps people separate from the ecosystems they love. Trails erode, wildlife is displaced, and the labor of tending the land—once the responsibility of entire communities—is left undone.



Beavers spotted at Errol Heights during Bark's Beaver Club.

“While many conservation groups promote a ‘leave it be’ approach to land protection, Bark’s work is rooted in reciprocity: giving back to the land that sustains us.”

Bark’s Restoration Program is changing that. Every field survey and conversation about coexistence is part of our effort to transform how people relate to Mt. Hood National Forest: not as tourists, but as stewards.

Nowhere is this shift more visible than in Bark’s work to bring beavers—nature’s restoration specialists—back to Mt. Hood. For centuries, beavers shaped Oregon’s waterways, building networks of ponds and wetlands that stored water, slowed floods, and nurtured salmon, steelhead, and countless other species. But centuries of beaver trapping and development have left many streams silent, their channels cut deep and dry. On Mt. Hood, where 98% of the forest lies within municipal watersheds that supply drinking water to more than one million people, this absence matters.

As the climate warms and snowpack declines, beavers are one of our best partners in reducing the hydrological impacts of climate change. Their

dams raise water tables, create wetlands that store snow-melt and rainwater, and increase resilience against drought and wildfire. When beavers return, the forest begins to heal itself.

Over the past year, Bark has trained hundreds of volunteers in field surveys, restoration, and advocacy. Together, we’ve documented beaver sign, mapped wetlands, removed invasive plants, and built a community that extends beyond trailheads and campfires. Through our partnership with PSU’s Institute for Natural Resources, we completed detailed mapping of the Oak Grove Fork and Middle Clackamas watersheds—filling in gaps where wetlands had never been mapped before.

Bark is already using this data to make a difference. We’ve shared our findings with the Forest Service to influence management decisions, protect sensitive areas from logging, and help guide our own restoration priorities. For example, our findings secured additional protections for a rare peat fen near the Stone Creek timber sale. We’ve also identified fifteen high-priority sites for future beaver restoration—places where, with a little help, beavers can once again transform degraded streams into vibrant, water-storing wetlands.

When Meg talks to volunteers about this work, she often says that beavers are the ultimate teachers. They show us what’s possible when we act with persistence and care. A single beaver family can transform a dry ditch into a thriving wetland that stores water, filters pollution, and supports biodiversity. The same is true for people: when we come together with shared purpose, we can rebuild relationships that sustain both forests and communities.

At Bark, we know restoration isn’t about returning Mt. Hood to the past. It’s about preparing it for the future—and understanding that the forest’s future is inseparable from the people who show up to care for it.

Beaver chew found during a Beaver Habitat Survey.



The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

On a cold day at the end of October 2024, Bark's Forest Watch Program Manager, Jordan Latter, stood peering out at a meadow on the Warm Springs reservation watching as a group of Tribal firefighters, clad in dirty yellow and green Nomex, discussed the burn plan for the day. They were there because a family had asked the Tribe to conduct a burn of the meadow where they went to camp and dig camas bulbs every year. The camas population in the meadow was in decline, likely from drought and a lack of fire. It was affecting the family's harvest.

As a few of those family members snapped photos with their phones, the sound of a propane burner

firing could be heard, and a narrow wisp of smoke began rising into the air from the far end of the meadow. We watched the crew slowly walk, propane burners sweeping side to side across the ground, when a wintry mix of precipitation began falling from the clouds that hung low overhead. Unfortunately, nature had other plans in mind today, and the vegetation became too moist to carry a flame. The burn was over, postponed until later in the week.

As Jordan drove back home to Portland that afternoon, he thought about the chain of events that had brought him there that day. More than a year before, he had requested that the Mt. Hood



Tribal Firefighters conduct a cultural burn at a meadow on the Warm Springs Reservation in October 2024.

“If the environmental community is serious about environmental justice, we must start listening and learning from the Indigenous Tribes and communities who have been stewarding this land since time immemorial.”



Strips of burned and unburned meadow, side by side.

supervisor use their government-to-government relationship with Warm Springs to make an introduction between Bark and the Tribe. A few months after the request, Forest Supervisor Loftsgaarden fulfilled her promise and a few Bark staff, including Jordan, were out on the reservation getting a tour of their forestry program from a group of Tribal staff. They showed us forest stands in different stages of growth, discussed their perspectives on land management, and graciously answered our many questions.

If the environmental community is serious about environmental justice, we must start listening and learning from the Indigenous Tribes and communities who have been stewarding this land since time immemorial. If we want to avoid engaging in lawsuits and advocating for things that are directly counter to Tribal interests and Indigenous worldviews, we must take steps to better understand those worldviews. The public lands of Mt. Hood National Forest that Bark is committed to defending and restoring are the historic homelands and ceded territories of three confederated northwest Tribes. We at Bark believe that we should not

engage in work that questions or challenges the sovereignty of these Tribal nations over land that is only public because of the violent forced removal of their ancestors by the U.S. federal government.

As Bark continues to deepen our partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, we're grateful to Warm Springs' members and staff who continue to offer their time and limited capacity to help build the relationship. On Bark's end, this partnership is already strengthening our advocacy work by integrating Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge into the way we interpret and comment on Forest Service projects. Continued dialogue will help Bark and Warm Springs work together and advocate for shared values on Mt. Hood. As Bark continues this work, our hope is that our relationship with Warm Springs deepens into one grounded in trust and mutual respect—so that together, we can move forward as true allies in the care and defense of the lands now known as Mt. Hood National Forest.

Partner Spotlight

Parrott Creek Cultural Ecology Project

Mt. Hood National Forest is located on the stolen lands of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and many other Native peoples who live here and who have always lived here. These lands have long provided water, food, medicines, and spaces for cultural and spiritual practice. With the influx of white settlers in the 18th and 19th centuries, Native peoples were displaced from their ancestral territories and cut off from their customs, traditional foods, and lifeways. Due to this history of colonization and urbanization, many Native communities today—especially those in urban areas—still have limited access to natural spaces for cultural use. Without these natural spaces, they also lose access to the very cultural resources and practices that have shaped these lands for generations.

Bark started partnering with Parrott Creek Cultural Ecology Project in 2023 and has continued to help them provide such a space on an 80-acre site fed by the Clackamas River, which begins high on Mt. Hood's western slopes. Our Restoration Program Manager, Meg Waller, collaborates with Parrott Creek's Cultural Ecology Project Manager, Ameyalli Mañon-Ferguson, to organize volunteer field days focused on transforming the site into an intact natural area for cultural use by Portland's Indigenous community, as well as supporting public access for outdoor therapy, green workforce development, and community engagement.

Bark brings its volunteer network, ecological expertise, and restoration experience. Parrott Creek provides the cultural context necessary to ensure that the work reflects the priorities of those most directly connected to the land.



Volunteers walk through wet areas on Parrott Creek's 80-acre site.

Together, staff, volunteers, and youth participants remove invasive species, plant traditional foods such as camas and huckleberry, and collect ecological data to guide future restoration efforts.

We at Bark take seriously the colonial legacy of the national forest system and are committed to integrating environmental justice into every aspect of our work. Our partnership with Parrott Creek is a reflection of that commitment and of our broader goal of expanding public engagement with Mt. Hood's forest management among communities most impacted by federal forest decisions. By restoring this site for use by urban Native communities, the project provides culturally appropriate access and education—ensuring that traditional knowledge can be actively practiced and passed down to future generations.

Working alongside Parrott Creek's Cultural Ecology team has given Meg and the rest of the Bark staff a deeper understanding of Indigenous-led restoration methods and community-centered approaches to land stewardship. These lessons are influencing how we approach Bark's own restoration and advocacy—not merely as fights over policy or logging projects, but as a commitment to supporting the people and communities who depend on the land.

Our partnership with Parrott Creek has also deepened our understanding of what it means to “improve access” to Mt. Hood National Forest. Access must go beyond field days or educational hikes; it must address the social and cultural barriers that shape who feels welcome on the land.

At a time when climate change, federal underfunding, and social inequities continue to strain our shared ecosystems, Bark's collaboration with Parrott Creek demonstrates the strength of partnerships that serve both ecological and human needs. Together, we are building a foundation for a more inclusive and resilient future for Mt. Hood and the communities that depend on it.



Above: Autumn Martinez, Parrott Creek's Cultural Ecology Program Coordinator. Bottom left: a salamander found at the Parrott Creek site. Bottom right: Jordan Latter helps clear invasive blackberry at the Parrott Creek site.



Fiscal Year 24-25 Financials

Revenue \$837,723.27

Individual Contributions 69%

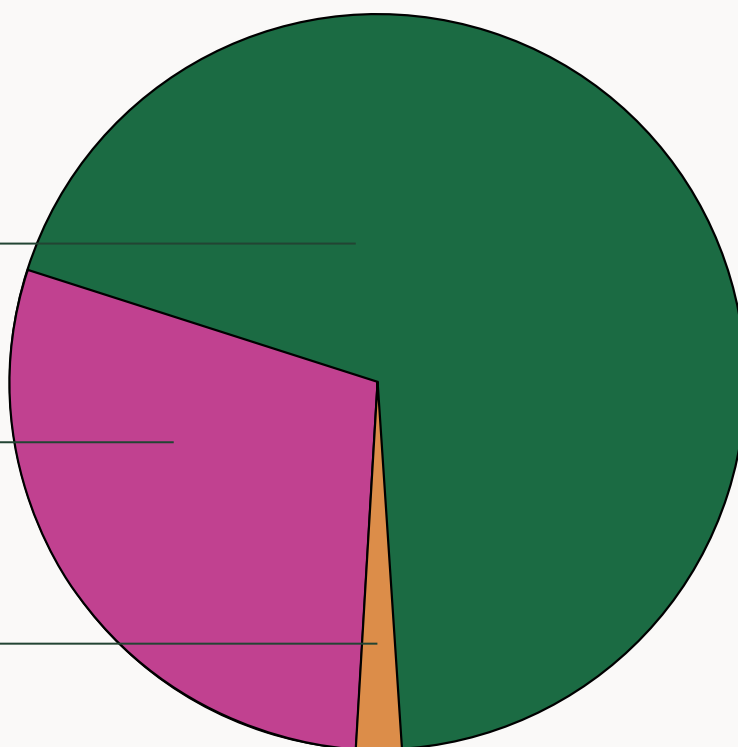
\$578,266.39

Foundation Grants 29%

\$242,750

Business Contributions 2%

\$16,706.88



Expenses

Programs	\$647,871.42
Fundraising	\$143,067.97
Administrative	\$135,344.84
Total	\$926,284.23

Overall, 2025 represented an important step forward in securing the long-term stability of the organization. We made deep investments in Bark's infrastructure and made hard choices to ensure we are focused on mission-critical activities and prepared for likely legal challenges. Fluctuations in annual operating expenses, as well as contributed and earned revenue, continue to be well managed, with the organization's overall financial health secured by significant operating reserves.

We value financial transparency and are always happy to answer questions. To see our financial statements from the last five years, please visit bark-out.org/financials.

Notes from Our Community

Groundtruthing volunteers measure a tree.



"I felt a sense that I was doing something important that would actually make a difference in protecting nature. These experiences were completely priceless to me..."

-Bark Volunteer

Meg Waller, Kyla Zaret, & volunteers during a Wetland field day.



"Slowing down and walking off-trail through the forest in areas that have burned, areas of old growth, and even young plantations has helped me connect with this land and also the community that Bark fosters. Plus, it's always fun snacking on berries, jumping in the lake after a long day of walking through spider webs, and staying up late to watch the Perseids meteor shower with friends on campouts."

-Elise, Bark Volunteer



Volunteers congregate around an interesting find during a field day.

"Jordan has an important voice and significant influence with local partners and east zone Mt. Hood National Forest staff. His approach is supporting the development of strong working relationships, which is leading to Bark having significant influence in project planning and collaborative decision-making on the east zone of Mt. Hood."

-Andrew Spaeth, Facilitator of Wasco County Forest Collaborative



Volunteers during a rainy Groundtruthing Training.



Thank you to all of our
generous supporters!

Scan the QR code to support our work!



You can make a difference in the lives of
all who depend on the lands and waters
now known as Mt. Hood National Forest.

BARK