

# BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS



THE VOICE FOR OUR WILD  
PUBLIC LANDS, WATERS  
AND WILDLIFE





# 2017 / BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS annual report



**2017 WAS A YEAR OF GREAT ADVANCEMENT** for BHA. With a new Congress in session and a new administration in power, BHA rose to the occasion by defending our opportunities and traditions. From Washington, D.C., to town halls and county commissioner meetings, our motivated members and chapter leaders stood firm against public lands transfers, irresponsible development in critical wildlife habitat, fair chase infringements, water access restrictions, and a legion of other threats to the wild animals and wild places we cherish. People noticed. BHA's membership doubled in 2017, with new recruits lending their time, resources and voices to our conservation mission. Donors stepped up to help us grow our staff and impact. The press took note of our strong stances and young and growing membership. Politicians took heed of the grassroots juggernaut that is BHA. From a gathering of seven around a campfire in 2004 to a membership in the tens of thousands, BHA has become a force to be reckoned with. Following are just a few of our proudest accomplishments from the last year. Much work remains to be done, however. You can help us continue this growth and engagement to make sure future generations will have the same or better opportunities to hunt, fish and simply revel in the splendor of our public lands.

## 1 DOUBLING MEMBERSHIP... AGAIN

For the fourth year running, BHA's membership more than doubled in 2017, jumping from 8,000 to more than 17,000. As threats to public lands continue, sportsmen and women are coming in droves to the organization dedicated to protecting our rights, traditions and public lands.

## 2 DEFEATING PUBLIC LANDS SEIZURE LEGISLATION

BHA chapters across the U.S. were instrumental in defeating every piece of meaningful public lands seizure legislation introduced in state legislatures in 2017 (except in Utah). From Florida to Alaska, BHA members showed up and spoke up in defense of access to the public lands we all enjoy – and demonstrated without a shadow of a doubt that sportsmen and women are a force to be reckoned with.

## 3 BUILDING A WINNING TEAM

Team BHA continued to grow in 2017 with the strategic addition of seven new staffers. To keep pace with the needs of our growing membership, we hired chapter coordinators across the continent as well as new headquarters staff to support them.

## 4 PUBLIC WATERS ACCESS FOR ALL

Access to public waters is just as important as access to public lands for hunters and anglers, but achieving access can be tricky, as individual states and provinces define access laws for public waters. In 2017, BHA increased our focus on public waters access, publishing a report that breaks down water access laws, rallying both grassroots members and outdoors industry partners and establishing a new, full-time position dedicated to water access issues.

## 5 WATERS ACCESS, STATE BY STATE

In 2017, BHA engaged in critical water access debates. In Louisiana, we mounted an effort to oppose a court order that would remove public access from most of Catahoula Lake, a popular duck hunting destination. In South Dakota, we worked to resolve arguments over ownership of many “non-meandered” lakes. In Washington, we helped re-establish fallow access easements. With insufficient access cited by sportsmen and women as the No. 1 reason for forgoing time afield, BHA's work on stream and water access promises to continue to gain momentum.

## 6 PUBLIC LANDS DEFENSE

In January, then-Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah introduced legislation mandating the sale of 3.3 million acres of public lands. BHA was at the forefront of a crowd of hunting, angling and outdoor recreation groups vocally opposed to this misguided legislation. Facing this tidal wave of pressure, Chaffetz withdrew his bill within a week, citing pressure from sportsmen and women as driving his decision.

## 7 SAGE GROUSE

A diverse roster of Western stakeholders – including land and wildlife management agencies, ranchers, sportsmen, energy industry reps, environmentalists and others – spent the better part of a decade brokering cooperative conservation plans to conserve the greater sage grouse and its habitat and keep the bird off the endangered list. However, in 2017 Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke moved to roll back those plans, and BHA mobilized to oppose the administration's course of action, driving thousands of public comments, show-

ing up at meetings and working with a broad coalition of sportsmen and other interests in support of the sage grouse and the Western sage steppe. We also worked to keep bad sage grouse related riders out of the National Defense Authorization Act.

## 8 PUBLIC ACCESS ON OREGON'S ELLIOTT STATE FOREST

Established in 1930 as Oregon's first state forest, the Elliott was dedicated to providing a sustainable source of timber revenue to Oregon public schools. Unfortunately, due to declining timber revenue the state was forced to put the Elliott up for sale. BHA harnessed the power of grassroots sportsmen and women in support of the Elliott and public access, attending public meetings and generating 4,000-plus signatures on a petition – ultimately playing an instrumental role in convincing the state land board to reverse course and keep the Elliott available to the public.

## 9 NATIONAL MONUMENTS

In April, President Trump ordered Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to undertake a review of 27 national monuments, including places providing quality wildlife habitat and hunting and fishing opportunities. In response to the review, BHA drove media dialogue, held field tours and mounted advertising campaigns. We also developed educational resources regarding hunting opportunities in the monuments to educate citizens commenting on the review. Unfortunately, despite overwhelming public opposition, in August the secretary recommended altering the boundaries of four monuments, including reducing Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by half and Bears Ears National Monument by 85 percent.

## 10 BOUNDARY WATERS

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota, the most visited wilderness area in the U.S., is a bucket list item for anglers, paddlers and backcountry enthusiasts the world over. However, the Boundary Waters is threatened by proposed sulfide-ore mines on its southern boundary, within the wilderness watershed. In 2017, BHA continued to be a leading voice in the push to protect America's most visited wilderness, maintaining a visible presence at public meetings and hearings, generating feedback from sportsmen and working with a broader sportsmen's movement to conserve the Boundary Waters.

## 11 NEW CHAPTERS IN THE U.S. AND CANADA

2017 saw the addition of four new BHA chapters: Alberta, the Capital Region, the Southeast Region and South Dakota. All four wasted no time engaging in their own fights to conserve and improve public access to public lands. By the end of the year, BHA had established chapters covering 35 states, two provinces and Washington, D.C.

## 12 COLLEGE STUDENTS HELP DRIVE GROWTH

In 2017, BHA grew our collegiate program from six to 17 established clubs. (More than 40 others are currently in the works.) Hunting for Sustainability, a BHA program that teaches college students the basics of hunting and processing their own wild game, saw great growth in Montana, spurring plans to expand the program in 2018 to Colorado, Idaho and Wyoming. College club members participated in BHA D.C. fly-ins, state game commission hearings, USFWS service projects and are leading the charge for major hunting regulation clarifications and changes.

## 13 AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN

Public lands hunters and anglers achieved new visibility in 2017 thanks to BHA's outreach online, in social media and with the press. We've surpassed an online fan base of more than 250,000 and are harnessing this growing voice to engage on the issues outlined here.

## CORPORATE PARTNERS

ALPS Outdoorz  
Benchmade  
Black Coffee Roasting  
Black Eagle Arrows  
Cairn Cartographics  
Camp Chef  
Cooper Firearms  
CRKT  
Eclipse Broadheads  
Ellis Canvas Tents  
Elk Valley Bighorn Outfitters  
Federal Ammunition  
First Lite  
Fishpond

Kettlehouse Brewing  
Kimber  
Leupold  
Missoula Fishing Company  
Montana Canvas  
Mystery Ranch Backpacks  
Northwestern Outdoors Radio  
OnX  
Orvis  
Princeton Tec  
Rep Your Water  
Sage  
Schnee's  
Seek Outside

Sitka Gear  
Stone Glacier  
Timber To Table  
Traditional Bowhunter  
Vortex  
Under Armour  
Weatherby  
Western Hunter  
Western Hunting Journal  
Wilderness Athlete  
Worldcast Anglers  
YETI

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that relies on private donations for our organization's work on public lands. BHA is fiscally transparent and strives to be efficient in our everyday work. In Fiscal Year 2017 our revenue was \$4,902,872 and expenses were \$4,142,596. We directed 93 percent of our own budget to programs and 7 percent to administration and fundraising. Backcountry Hunters & Anglers' tax ID is 20-1037177.

Statement of Activities, Year Ended December 31, 2017

### SUPPORT & REVENUE

Grant Revenue	\$2,739,280
Events and Miscellaneous	\$805,476
Membership	\$693,462
Donations and Sponsorship	\$664,654

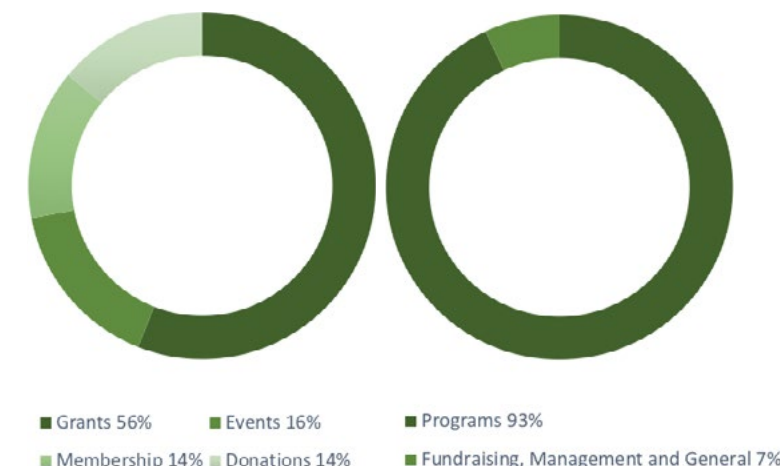
**Total Revenue** **\$4,902,872**

### EXPENSES

Program Expenses	\$3,864,559
Management and General	\$99,800
Fundraising	\$178,210

**Total Expenses** **\$4,142,596**

**Change in Net Assets** **\$760,303**



### STAFF

**President and CEO**  
Land Tawney

**Alberta Public Lands Coordinator**  
Aliah Adams Knopff

**Corporate Partnership and Special Events Coordinator**  
Grant Alban

**Development Director**  
Todd Barton

**State Policy and Field Operations Director**  
Tim Brass

**Campus Outreach Coordinator**  
Sawyer Connelly

**Collegiate Curriculum and Outreach Assistant**  
Trey Curtiss

**Southwest Chapter Coordinator**  
Katie DeLorenzo

**Montana Chapter Coordinator**  
Kevin Farron

**Operations Associate and Assistant to the President**  
Caitlin Frisbie

**Conservation Director**  
John Gale

**Regional Manager**  
Chris Hennessey

**High Divide Coordinator**  
Ace Hess

**Southeast Chapter Coordinator**  
Josh Kaywood

**California and Nevada Chapter Coordinator**  
Russell Kuhlman

**Regional Manager**  
Josh Kuntz

**Backcountry Journal Editor**  
Sam Lungren

**Operations Director**  
Frankie McBurney Olson

**Communications Director**  
Katie McKalip

**Great Lakes Coordinator**  
Jason Meekhof

**Public Waters Access Coordinator**  
Rob Parkins

**Government Relations Manager**  
Julia Peebles

**Northwest Chapter Coordinator**  
Jesse Salsberry

**Membership Coordinator**  
Ryan Silcox

**Merchandise Coordinator**  
Ty Smail

**Operations Assistant**  
Dylan Snyder

**Chapter Coordinator and New Chapter Development**  
Ty Stubblefield

**Colorado and Wyoming Chapter Coordinator**  
Brien Webster

**Digital Media Coordinator**  
Rob Yagid

### 2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Chairman**  
Ryan Busse, Montana

**Vice Chairman**  
Ben Bulis, Montana

**Treasurer**  
J.R. Young, California

**President Emeritus**  
Michael Beagle, Oregon

Jay Banta, Utah

Ryan Callaghan, Idaho

Sean Carriere, Idaho

Hilary Hutcheson, Montana

Heather Kelly, Alaska

Tom McGraw, Michigan

Ben O'Brien, Montana

T. Edward Nickens, North Carolina

Mike Schoby, Montana

Rachel Vandevort, Montana

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