



THE
BIG BAD PROJECT

2024

ANNUAL
REPORT



Message From Leadership



Our experiences this past year were essential in creating a stronger, more sustainable future.

In 2024, The Big Bad Project embraced a year of experimentation and growth. Across all of our programs, we tested new approaches, expanded our reach, and laid important groundwork for the years ahead.

Our work was not without challenges. Limited capacity meant that every success was built on careful prioritization. Funding needs pressed us to be creative and resourceful, while scaling our virtual programs required both adaptability and persistence. These obstacles were real, but we did not let them define us. Instead, we viewed them as an opportunity to sharpen our focus and reinforce our commitment to creating lasting coexistence between people and wildlife.

Through Aerial Allies, Wolves in the Classroom, and the Rescue Network, we demonstrated what is possible when science, education, and community come together. Our success is a result of our team's resilience, our partner's dedication to coexistence, and our supporter's encouragement to keep moving forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaunna Costicov-McCombe'.

Shaunna Costicov-McCombe

Executive Director

Who We Are

At The Big Bad Project, we believe coexistence with wildlife is essential for the future of conservation. Outdated ways of thinking and misinformation have left us with broken systems that deliver defective results.

We bring together science, creativity, and community to reimagine how people and wildlife live alongside one another. By challenging old narratives and creating practical solutions, we are working toward a future where coexistence is part of everyday life.

How We Work

We believe the only way forward is to address the root causes of conflict. Lasting change comes from repairing what is broken at its core. In focusing on systemic solutions, we create long-term success.



Support Science-Based Solutions



Inspire Through Interpretation



Promote Grassroots Coexistence



Build Collaboration & Community

By the Numbers

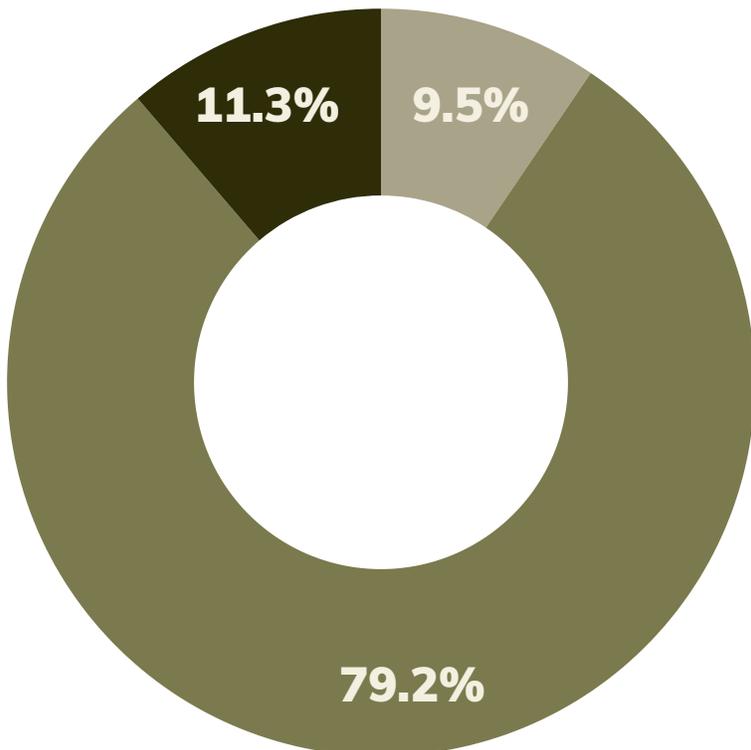
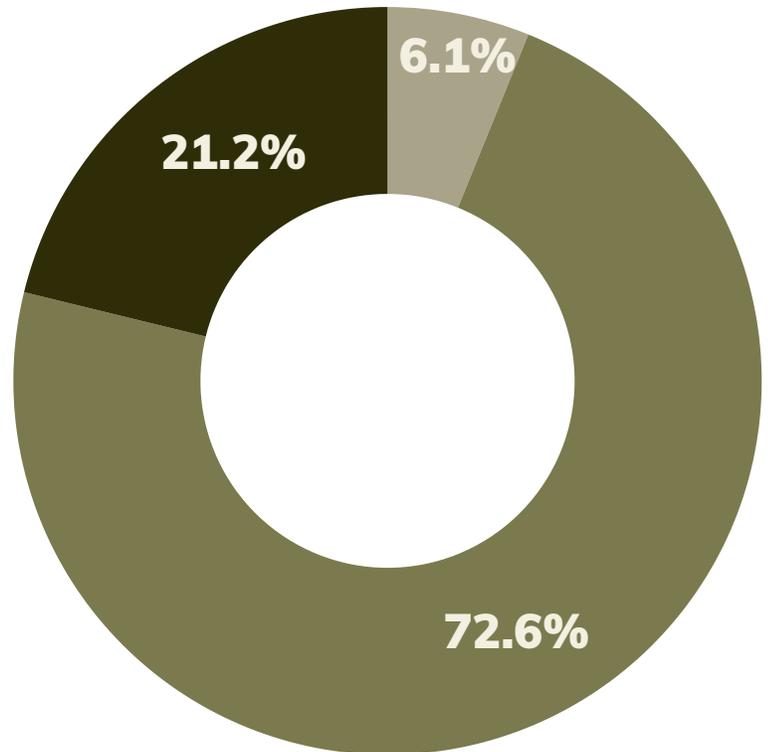
Accountability is central to our work. We share regular updates through reports, newsletters, and stories that show where contributions are making a difference. Our commitment is to keep supporters informed, engaged, and confident that their trust is well-placed.

Operating Revenue

Individual Donors \$3,000

In-Kind \$10,350

Grant Funding \$35,500



Operating Expense

Management & General \$2,070

Programs & Services \$17,307

Shared Expenses \$2,462

Aerial Allies

Aerial Allies is a collaborative initiative designed to advance non-lethal predator management strategies, with a focus on reducing wolf-livestock conflict through the use of drone hazing.

As Principal Investigator Cooperators with USDA Wildlife Services, The Big Bad Project contributes funding and logistical support to drone-based field research while also leading public education and outreach efforts to promote coexistence and humane deterrents.



Field Research Summary

In partnership with USDA Wildlife Services, the 2024 field season included 210 drone flights across multiple counties in Oregon, totaling 74.3 flight hours. Wolves were detected on 39 flights, with hazing conducted during 19 of those encounters.

Key Insights:

- **Variable Wolf Response:** Drones influenced wolf behavior, but responses differed between individuals and packs.
- **Audio Treatments:** Initial tests used seven sound treatments (e.g., gunfire, music, fireworks), later reduced to five due to sound similarity and sample size constraints.
- **Environmental Challenges:** Dense canopy cover, wildfire-related flight restrictions, and heat-retaining terrain reduced detection effectiveness.
- **Land Access Barriers:** In at least one case, landowner refusal limited hazing activity, allowing wolves to adapt and avoid deterrents.

This work is made possible by the generosity of The Park Foundation, our supporters, and the partnership of USDA Wildlife Services, along with the ranchers, educators, and community members who share this commitment to coexistence.



Rescue Network

The Rescue Network is an initiative created to address the growing strain on rescues and sanctuaries that care for wolves, wolfdogs, and other exotic animals.

By convening regular roundtables and sharing practical knowledge, The Big Bad Project supports organizations on the front lines of animal care while shaping public understanding of what coexistence requires.



In its first full year, the Rescue Network hosted six roundtables that drew a recurring audience of more than **80 participants**, with discussions reaching hundreds more through **over 1,000 recording downloads**.

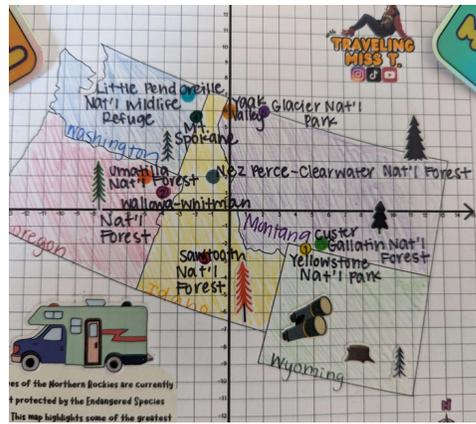
Each session created space for candid conversations about the realities of rescue work.



What began as a pilot quickly became a trusted forum, with participants returning regularly to exchange strategies, seek advice, and connect with peers who share both the challenges and the passion of caring for these animals.

Wolves in the Classroom

Wolves in the Classroom is an educational initiative designed to bring science and storytelling directly to students, making conservation both accessible and relevant. In 2024, the program reached an estimated **15,000 high school students across the country** during the fall semester, building toward a total of **37,500 over the full 2024–2025 school year**. By weaving together biology, ecology, and cultural narratives, the program equips young people with a deeper understanding of wolves and their role in ecosystems, while also sparking critical conversations about coexistence and conservation.



We are deeply grateful to the students whose curiosity makes Wolves in the Classroom so impactful, and to the teachers who bring these lessons into their schools. This work is made possible through the generosity of the Leiter Family Foundation, the William and Mattie Harris Foundation, and the National Wolfwatcher Coalition, along with the many supporters who believe in the power of education. Together, you ensure that the next generation not only learns about wildlife but also imagines new ways to live alongside it.



LEITER FAMILY FOUNDATION



Looking Ahead to 2025

As we enter 2025, The Big Bad Project is building on the lessons and momentum of the past year. For **Aerial Allies**, this means expanding research in partnership with USDA Wildlife Services while also finding new ways to share results beyond the conservation field, bringing our work into mainstream media channels where public awareness can grow.

With **Wolves in the Classroom**, we celebrate the success of its first full year, reaching tens of thousands of students nationwide. At the same time, we recognize the challenges of capacity and sustainability that come with offering free educational initiatives, and we are committed to exploring solutions that will keep this program strong and accessible.

For the **Rescue Network**, 2025 offers an opportunity to deepen its role as a trusted hub for rescues and sanctuaries. We are seeking additional support to create new resources that will meet the needs of organizations already stretched thin, ensuring they have the tools to continue their essential work.

Together, these priorities reflect our belief that coexistence is built through science, education, and community, and that each step forward in one area strengthens the whole. We are grateful to our partners and supporters whose commitment makes it possible to carry this work forward into 2025.

