

“Hope and Restoration – Saving the Whitebark Pine”

Local Film Screening Kit

On Dec. 14, 2022, whitebark pine was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, indicating the species is likely to become endangered if it is not conserved and restored. The whitebark pine, a keystone tree for subalpine and treeline ecosystems, is the widest-ranging tree species ever listed under the Endangered Species Act.

In response to the listing, the film “Hope and Restoration – Saving the Whitebark Pine,” was released as part of “[Save The Whitebark Pine](#),” a campaign that aims to raise awareness about whitebark pine and the need for restoration of this iconic tree. The film, produced by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Ricketts Conservation Foundation, documents the decline of whitebark pine and the efforts underway to conserve and restore it. “Hope and Restoration” has been featured in the New York Wild Film Festival and the DC Environmental Film Festival.

Groups of all sizes are invited to host local screenings of “Hope and Restoration” and help share information about whitebark pine and its intricate relationship with Clark’s nutcrackers, grizzly bears, and the high elevation forests we rely on for drinking water and snow. The following materials have been made available to support screenings and facilitate learning experiences about whitebark pine,

- The film “[Hope and Restoration – Saving the Whitebark Pine](#)”
- Printable overview on whitebark pine
- Sample outline for a 45-60 minute screening event
- Question and answers t to facilitate group discussion
- Marketing suggestions for local film screenings

To learn more about the whitebark pine or sign up for more information, , please visit: [SaveTheWhitebarkPine.org](https://www.savethewhitebarkpine.org).

Save the Whitebark Pine is a collaboration between the following organizations:



Save the Whitebark Pine

About the Film



Co-produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Center for Conservation Media and The Ricketts Conservation Foundation, "Hope and Restoration – Saving the Whitebark Pine" is a powerful documentary film that showcases whitebark pine and its role in the ecosystem, current threats, and the coalition of leaders working to restore it. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Conservation Media team shot the film over 2.5 years across the United States in order to build awareness and support for saving whitebark pine. The film includes never-before-filmed scenes of Clark's nutcrackers feasting on and distributing seeds, and footage of grizzly bears finding seeds buried by squirrels and devouring them. This film provides unique perspectives and videography to help illustrate the true need to #SaveTheWhitebarkPine.



Sample Program Outline

Hosting a film screening is a great opportunity to connect with local community members and foster awareness and stewardship of whitebark pine.

The following sample program outlines an approximately 45 – 60-minute event. We encourage you to curate a screening that is unique to your audience. Optimize attendance by hosting the screening at a location and time that is accessible to large numbers of people in your community or organization. You might consider if there are any other local partners in your community that can co-host this event with you, or if there are any local experts you could invite to share more information on this species. With a little research and creativity, this event will surely be a success.

Sample program

- Introduction - 10 minutes
 - Introduce the host organization(s)
 - Provide a brief introduction to whitebark pine, and the threats that have led to its recent listing as a threatened species on the Endangered Species Act.
 - Briefly introduce the Save the Whitebark Pine campaign
 - Provide an overview of the film, “Hope and Restoration – Saving the Whitebark Pine.”
 - If there are any whitebark pine researchers, land managers, or other local experts present, introduce them.
- “Hope and Restoration” film screening - 15 minutes
- Facilitated discussion on Whitebark Pine - 15 - 30 minutes
 - Open the floor up to audience questions about whitebark pine. It may be helpful to ask members of your organization to come prepared with some questions from the Q&A guide, provided below.
 - If a local whitebark pine expert is present, invite them up to help answer questions.
- Event closing - 5 minutes
 - Briefly review the importance of saving whitebark pine.
 - Highlight future opportunities to connect with your organization
 - Point attendees to www.SaveTheWhitebarkPine.org to learn more about restoration efforts.



Whitebark Pine Q&A and Discussion Guide

Few people are aware of the whitebark pine, though many hikers, skiers and outdoor recreationists have probably seen this iconic species as they have traversed western landscapes. National parks such as Glacier and Yellowstone are home to the unique whitebark pine ecosystems. The film “Hope and Restoration-Saving the Whitebark Pine” offers a great introduction to the species and the current management challenges it faces and encourages conversations around conservation needs. Below are some common questions and answers crafted to facilitate a discussion after the film screening at your event.

1. What is whitebark pine?

Whitebark pine is a conifer tree that is an iconic symbol of high-elevation forests in Western North America. This five-needle pine has a range stretching across 80 million acres in seven western states and two Canadian provinces. Whitebark pine forests are landmarks of many nationally treasured public lands, including Crater Lake, Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks. These high-elevation forests are inspiring scenic backdrops for outdoor recreation, such as hiking and skiing. Each year, millions of Americans hike, hunt, camp and ski in whitebark pine forests, although few are aware of the importance of this keystone species.

2. Where can whitebark pine be found?

Found in the rocky landscapes of towering mountain ranges, whitebark pine is both a keystone subalpine and treeline species and an iconic symbol of the North American West. Whitebark pine helps stabilize steep slopes, retain snowpack and filter water. Additionally, it provides critical shelter and food to a range of species, including Clark’s nutcrackers, grizzly bears, black bears, squirrels and red foxes. Its ability to survive and flourish in harsh, rocky landscapes has made whitebark pine a fixture of interest in some of America’s most beloved wilderness locations, including Yellowstone, Glacier, Crater Lake, Mt. Rainier, Lassen and Yosemite National Parks, as well as the Northern Rockies, Cascades, Sierra Nevada and Olympic mountain ranges.

3. Why are whitebark pine forests important for western watersheds?

Whitebark pine forests exist in the headwaters regions for several large western river systems (e.g., Snake, Columbia and Missouri). High-elevation forests like those featuring whitebark pine help redistribute, shade and retain snowpack, and their root systems stabilize soil and prevent erosion, especially on steep, rocky slopes where they thrive. In other words, healthy whitebark pine forests are vital to the health of western watersheds, helping sustain ample streamflows that human and natural communities depend on.



4. Why is this species so important to wildlife?

Whitebark pine is a “keystone species,” meaning that if it were to disappear, the ecosystem would suffer drastically. Numerous birds and mammals rely on whitebark’s calorie-rich seeds, including the threatened grizzly bear, and big game species like deer and elk seek shelter in whitebark pine forests. Whitebark pine cones are 2-3 Inches long and contain an average of 50-70 seeds per cone. The seeds have more calories per gram than chocolate offers humans. The Clark’s nutcracker is a very important avian visitor to whitebark pine forests, eating and burying its seeds. In turn, the whitebark pine relies on nutcrackers, which may fly as far as 20 miles away with a seed, to regenerate its forests.

5. If whitebark pine is so important, why is there not more awareness of it?

Chances are people living in or visiting the West have seen this species while skiing down a mountain, hiking a trail, or summiting a ridge in the western U.S., but may have been unaware that they were surrounded by whitebark pine trees. That’s why a campaign such as Save The Whitebark Pine is so important in spreading the word about its importance the need to save it.

6. When was the whitebark pine listed under the Endangered Species Act?

The whitebark pine was officially listed as threatened on the Endangered Species List on December 14, 2022.

7. Why is whitebark pine threatened?

A 2018 range-wide survey showed that, in the US, there are as many dead whitebark pine trees as there are live ones. The decline is most acute in Montana and Idaho, with more than 90% mortality in Glacier National Park. Declines are the result of three threats: a fatal, non-native fungal disease known as white pine blister rust, the mountain pine beetle, and greater fire size and frequency. Climate change is accelerating these declines by fueling mountain pine beetle outbreaks, adding the stress of drought, and altering fire regimes. Climate warming is also shrinking whitebark pine’s range.

8. What's being done to save the whitebark pine?

Planting disease-resistant whitebark pine seedlings, direct seeding, forest thinning and prescribed fire, and protecting trees from mountain pine beetles are all effective strategies that can help conserve and restore whitebark pine. Federal and tribal land managers and local conservation groups are implementing important restoration projects that plant disease resistant seedlings, monitor the health of tree populations, and more.

American Forests, the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation and other partner organizations have been working directly with federal agencies and tribal governments to develop the National Whitebark Pine Restoration Plan (NWPRP), a range-wide restoration plan for whitebark pine forests in the U.S. This shared “restoration roadmap” will help guide restoration efforts to recover whitebark pine forests in priority restoration areas.



There is growing momentum and increased public interest to expand protections for whitebark pine and restore its range. Whitebark pine has been listed as “endangered” under Canada’s Species at Risk Act since 2012. Given the rapid decline of whitebark pines in the U.S., the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed it for listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 2020, and the listing was finalized in December 2022.

9. Why can't we just plant more whitebark pine trees?

Planting whitebark pine seedlings that are resistant to white pine blister rust is key to restoring this species. However, this process is challenging and time consuming. Trees must be screened for white pine blister rust resistance, a process that can take three to four years. After identifying resistant trees, cones are collected and seedlings grown, which takes a minimum of three years. In total the process to identify and plant a disease-resistant seedling can take seven years. Despite the time-consuming nature of this process, restoration is possible and occurring across many landscapes. We are also experimenting with options to speed up the screening process, like using genomic sequencing.

10. How can we help?

- Visit www.SaveTheWhitebarkPine.org to learn more and sign up for email updates on whitebark pine restoration.
- Tell your friends and family about whitebark pine and the Hope and Restoration film on social media. Photos and graphics on whitebark pine are available on www.SaveTheWhitebarkPine.org
- Visit whitebark pine forests to witness the magic of these special forests for yourself. Remember to leave no trace.

13. Where can I learn more about the whitebark pine and get involved?

To learn more about the whitebark pine, visit www.SaveTheWhitebarkPine.org.



Your Guide to Promoting Film Screenings

The key piece to a successful film screening event is ensuring that your community members are aware and invited to attend! Here are some ideas to help get word out about your event and engage your community.

Local Media (Print and Radio)

Public media like newspapers, blogs, websites and radio can help you promote community events. A great way to connect with local media outlets is to create a media advisory to send to them. Here are our tips for getting out the word:

- **What to submit:** In the sample media advisory provided, the key information is included in a short and succinct format. Adapt the advisory to reflect the unique details of your event.
- **When to submit:** Submit the media advisory between one month and two weeks before the event. If the publication is published weekly or monthly, you may want to submit even earlier.
- **Where to send the media advisory:** Depending on the size and format of the outlet, you may want to submit the media advisory to the community events calendar, arts or lifestyle editor, environmental news editor, or the general newsroom. Emails for newsrooms and journalists can typically be found on the newspaper website.



MEDIA ADVISORY

Film Screening: “Hope and Restoration - Saving the Whitebark Pine”

WHAT: Short description of the event here (e.g., [organization name] is partnering up with [Save the Whitebark Pine](#) to screen “Hope and Restoration – Saving the Whitebark Pine,” a powerful documentary film on the decline of an iconic keystone tree species and the efforts underway to conserve and restore it. After being featured in the New York Wild Film Festival and the DC Environmental Film Festival, the film is being brought to [insert name of city/region] as part of a [one hour or 45-minute] screening event).

WHEN: Date and time of event.

WHO: If speakers, include name and title here; also include information on host organizations.

WHERE: Location details.

BACKGROUND: Found in the rocky landscapes of towering western mountain ranges, whitebark pine is both a keystone and subalpine tree species. The species is a fixture in some of America’s most beloved wilderness locations, including Yellowstone, Crater Lake, Glacier, Lassen, and Yosemite National Parks, as well as the Sierra Nevada and Olympic mountain ranges. Every year, millions of people hike, camp, ski, fish, and hunt in whitebark pine forests.

Currently, whitebark pine is facing a rapid decline due to the triple threat of climate change, deadly disease and harmful insects. In December 2022, the US Fish and Wildlife Service listed the whitebark pine as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the widest ranging tree species ever listed. If further action isn’t taken to protect the species, it will likely become endangered.

“Hope and Restoration – Saving the Whitebark Pine” is a short cinematic documentary that tells the story of whitebark pine, its role in the ecosystem, current threats and the coalition of leaders working to restore it. Co-produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Center for Conservation Media and The Ricketts Conservation Foundation, the film was shot in a span of 2.5 years and includes never-before-filmed scenes of Clark’s nutcrackers, grizzly bears, and the iconic soaring mountain landscapes whitebark pine call home.

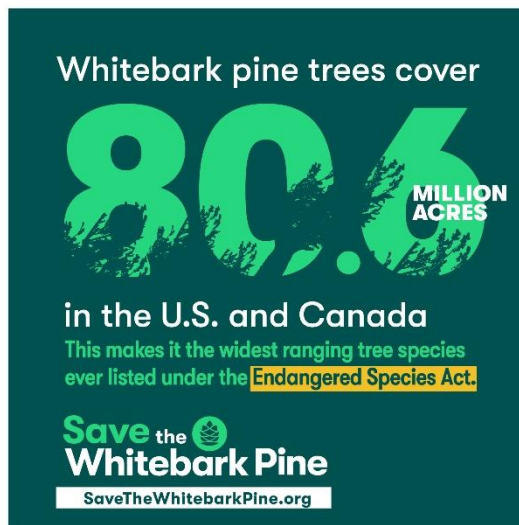
[Host organization] has partnered with [Save the Whitebark Pine](#) to offer a local screening and discussion of this film. The event is free and open to the public. For more information on the event, please visit: [insert website].

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Save the Whitebark Pine

Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, & More)

Social media is also an effective tool to promote your screening. If your organization is active on social media, we recommend sharing through your social account and encouraging your members to also share to spread the word. Consider also posting to local community groups and pages. You can also create a Facebook event, so that many in your community are able to learn about the event.



Below are some sample posts you can use to share your event and information on whitebark pine. All graphics and images available for use [can be found here](#). This will be updated as new graphics are created, so be sure to check back.

Campaign Hashtag: #SaveTheWhitebarkPine

Sample Posts

The whitebark pine is an iconic tree that defines many treasured Western US landscapes. Every year, people hike, camp and ski among whitebark pine, but this tree is in peril. Just listed under the Endangered Species Act, it's time to #SaveTheWhitebarkPine. Join us for a film screening to learn more.

Whitebark pine is the center of many high-elevation ecosystems, supplying nutritious seeds to grizzly bears and other animals. They're also vital to the health of our drinking water. But they're under threat. Learn why we need to #SaveTheWhitebarkPine by watching a film with us on (date).

On 12/14, whitebark pine was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), indicating the species is likely to become endangered if it's not conserved. As the widest-ranging

Save the Whitebark Pine

tree species ever listed under the ESA, we must #SaveTheWhitebarkPine. Join us for a special film screening to learn more.

Just listed under the Endangered Species Act, whitebark pine is facing a trio of threats: a deadly disease, a pest and climate change. We must act now to protect this iconic species of the American West. Join us for a special event to learn what we can do to help.