



Strategic Plan 2022–2027



If you can see it, you can change it.

An aerial photograph of a river valley in the Peruvian rainforest. The river is a light brown color, winding through the landscape. The surrounding forest is dark green. Overlaid on the map are numerous red and yellow patches, which represent detected gold mining operations. These patches are scattered throughout the valley, particularly along the riverbanks and in the surrounding forested areas.

Mission

Sharing the view
from space to promote
conservation for people
and the planet.

Our SkyTruth Alerts map displays Inambari's detections of gold mining operations in the Peruvian rainforest. CREDIT: SKYTRUTH



Vision

Everyone around the world enjoys a healthy environment and sustainable livelihood because transparency is the norm: polluters know they will be seen and caught, industries have cleaned up their practices, and governments are vigorously enforcing environmental protection.

LETTER FROM THE CEO



SkyTruth celebrated its 20th anniversary in May 2021. Since its inception, SkyTruth has grown from a one-person operation working from an unfinished basement near Washington, D.C., to a dynamic team of technical, management, and communications experts around the world, with its headquarters in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

This growth is critical to fulfilling our mission. We need a highly skilled conservation technology team at SkyTruth, engaged partners, and responsive leadership to combat the most pressing challenges humankind has ever faced: climate change and the biodiversity crisis. Each year, the impacts of global climate change become more real at the local level—record-breaking wildfires and drought in the American West, deadly hurricanes on the Atlantic coast, unprecedented flooding and heat in Europe, crop failures around the world, and more. Climate change makes the growing threats to biodiversity on Earth even more challenging. Scientists have documented the loss of thousands of critically endangered animal and plant species over the past century, and expect this loss to accelerate as human populations and consumption grow. Habitat destruction from mining and other extractive industries, wildlife poaching for profit and food, and encroaching human development all contribute to what scientists have dubbed the sixth extinction crisis—the only time in the history of Earth that human activity has triggered such widespread species loss.

But there is hope. Existing and emerging technologies can help us understand the magnitude of these problems and develop new solutions for addressing them. In particular, as satellite and computing technologies have exploded in recent years, SkyTruth’s staff has begun automating the detection of human impacts on the Earth. For most of SkyTruth’s history we’ve relied on human analysts to process and interpret satellite imagery. Today, the vast quantities of satellite data available make it impossible to rely on SkyTruth staff alone to capture what’s happening around the world. In our previous Strategic Plan (2018–2021) we described how SkyTruth would embrace new computing capabilities through our Conservation Vision program, developing and applying techniques such as machine learning to peer



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into even the remotest areas on Earth, sifting through an ever-growing stream of satellite data to find the images that reveal harmful activities, and providing opportunities to protect and restore the environment.

Today, I'm proud to say that we've developed, and continue to refine, machine learning models and data pipelines that process thousands of satellite images each day. These technologies allow us to detect oil pollution from ships at sea, oil and gas drilling in ecologically and culturally important areas, mining that harms Indigenous people and biodiversity in the Amazon rainforest, and more. Much of our work, including our ongoing monitoring of mountaintop mining in Appalachia, highlights the dangers of continuing fossil fuel extraction and use; namely, accelerating climate change, polluting ecosystems, and harming local communities.

Over the next five years, we will focus on improving our models and applying them to expose the environmental impacts that accelerate climate change and species loss. Equally important, we will develop strong partnerships with those who can use our findings to bring about positive change, including conservationists, citizens' groups, researchers, and data providers. We will reach out to environmental justice partners to help them protect those communities disproportionately burdened by pollution and resource extraction. And as always, we will continue to make our images and data publicly available for free to citizen activists, journalists, policymakers, and others to hold polluters accountable and level the playing field.

All of the strategies in our 2022–2027 Strategic Plan focus on amplifying our impact by merging increasingly powerful satellite and computing technologies to tackle the world's biggest environmental challenges, and by forming close, effective partnerships with key players. By automating the detection of environmental impacts from vast amounts of satellite data, we can monitor the globe and develop tools and products that help protect this pale blue dot we call home.

John Amos
Chief Executive Officer

GUIDING VALUES



A view of Yosemite Valley, United States, near Tunnel View in 2017. A haze of smoke from recent fires obscures cliff faces surrounding the valley. CREDIT: BAILEY ZINDEL/UNSPLASH

Stewardship

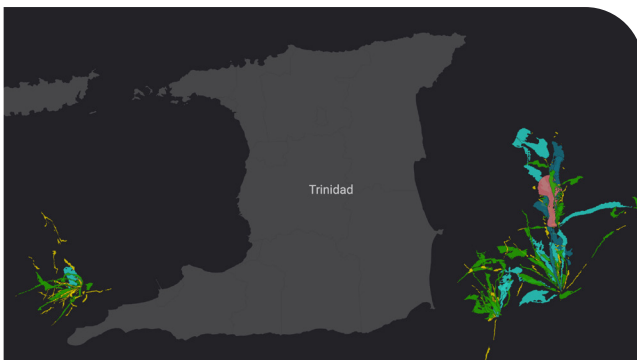
Nature has intrinsic value, worth protecting for its own sake. At the same time, human health, security, and our long-term survival in a changing climate depend on vibrant and diverse ecosystems that supply us with food, clean air, clean water, and economic opportunity.

Inclusivity

Rescuing a planet in existential peril requires an all-hands-on-deck approach. The environmental movement will be most successful when everyone is empowered to play a role.



A member of the Ese'ejja Infierno community inspects a fishing boat on the Tambopata river in Madre de Dios, Peru. SkyTruth's Inambari project tracks gold mining in the region. CREDIT: YOLY GUTIERREZ/CIFOR/FLICKR



Cerulean 12-month results showing slicks associated with four offshore oil platforms in the waters of Trinidad and Tobago. We estimate these platforms are contributing up to 260,000 gallons every year to the chronic oil pollution problem in this area. CREDIT: SKYTRUTH

Transparency

Governments and businesses work better to protect the environment when the consequences of their actions—or lack thereof—are plain for all to see. Better transparency leads to better management and better outcomes.



SkyTruth Chief Technology Officer Jason Schatz presents at Google's Geo for Good Summit about how our Alerts platform uses Google's Dynamic World dataset to detect changes to land use and land cover. Such terrestrial "change detection" is an important component of our Verdant project. CREDIT: GEO FOR GOOD SUMMIT

Openness

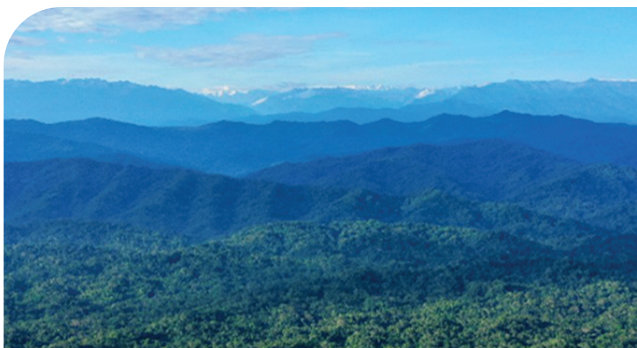
We approach our work with a spirit of openness, generosity, and collaboration. We share our experience, expertise, analysis, and outputs for free to empower and inspire everyone to advance environmental protection.

Scientific Integrity

SkyTruth is data-driven and transparent about our data sources and methods. Credibility is the foundation that gives our work value.



SkyTruth team member Bjorn Bergman checks satellite automatic identification system (AIS) data for tracking the squid fleet. CREDIT: SIMON AGER/SEA SHEPHERD



A drone view from a hill above the Amarakaeri reserve outpost in Peru. SkyTruth conducted fieldwork for Project Inambari there, alongside Servicio Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado (SERNANP), a Peruvian government agency for conservation. The drone is looking west toward the foothills of the Andes. CREDIT: SERNANP

Optimism

Technology can drive positive change and innovation because people, when given the opportunity to see environmental degradation firsthand, will be more likely to take action to protect the environment. And organizations will be better equipped to champion conservation, sustainability, and the well-being of communities everywhere.

SKYTRUTH

Data, maps, imagery, high-end analysis, and tools are free for everyone

SkyTruth tools make the invisible visible, triggering greater understanding, action, and accountability

Our Vision: Because transparency is the norm the world is cleaner and more vibrant, and people are healthier and safer



Habitat & Biodiversity

As scientists document an accelerating extinction crisis, ever more remote ecosystems around the world are losing species and habitat to human encroachment. With the rapid growth in satellite data and advances in technology, SkyTruth is tracking activity across the world's oceans, in the Amazon rainforest, in the American West, and elsewhere, using artificial intelligence to point conservationists toward problems and hold wrongdoers accountable.



How **SkyTruth** turbocharges the work of conservationists, policymakers, journalists, researchers & activists to change the world.



Health & Well-Being

Policymakers won't act to protect public health without strong evidence of danger. SkyTruth data, maps, and tools equip stakeholders and policymakers with key information that fills data gaps to protect public health by revealing where environmentally harmful activities occur, providing researchers with credible data, advocates with reliable information exposing threats, and journalists with compelling stories to alert the public and government officials.



Climate

Fossil fuels remain the greatest threat to Earth's climate, one of the biggest challenges humankind has ever faced. SkyTruth has a 20-year track record documenting the location, extent, and pervasiveness of fossil fuel extraction, illuminating the multiple threats from continued fossil fuel use. Collectively, the recognition and measurement of these impacts creates even more public pressure for a global switch to renewable energy.



Government Performance

Government agencies worldwide suffer from limited resources and inertia; officials can't be everywhere, and there is reluctance to embrace new approaches. With the exponential growth in satellite data and computing technology, SkyTruth can provide materials to equip users to push governments to create strong laws, oversee environmentally harmful activity, prosecute criminal behavior, and adopt these new technologies themselves to address environmental threats more effectively.



Corporate Evolution

People act differently when they know they are being watched—and so do corporations. As SkyTruth expands its reach, scanning thousands of satellite images a day from around the globe, industries learn they can no longer hide their actions. One example: Cerulean uses machine learning technology to automatically track vessels at sea and detect when and where they pollute the ocean. As our partners become increasingly able to hold polluters accountable, illegal activity will diminish.

OUR GOAL

AMPLIFY SKYTRUTH'S
IMPACT IN ADDRESSING
THE CLIMATE AND
BIODIVERSITY CRISES



SkyTruth continues to be an impactful partner due to their dedication to apply new and creative tech solutions to some of the world's most pressing environmental issues at both local and global scales. As an organization, they have evolved with the latest advances in AI as we continue to face new political and climate issues as a society.

Brian Sullivan

Co-Founder, Global Fishing Watch
Senior Program Manager, Google



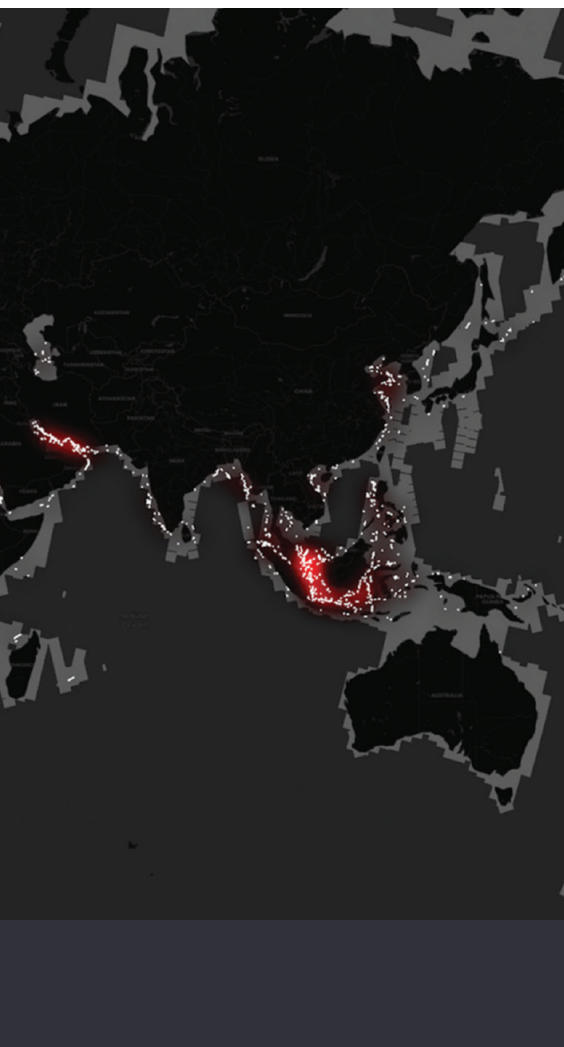
Cerulean 12-month results showing slicks associated with vessels as bright spots. Red highlighting indicates hotspots of oil pollution associated with shipping. CREDIT: SKYTRUTH

Over the past two decades SkyTruth has established itself as an innovator in the field of remote sensing, using the view from space to highlight the dangers of fossil fuel extraction and expose damage to natural habitats from human activities—key drivers of the current climate and extinction crises.

Now, with new remote sensing, cloud computing, data science, and artificial intelligence technologies, SkyTruth has the opportunity to exponentially expand our work, covering not only communities and ecosystems of concern, but the entire globe.

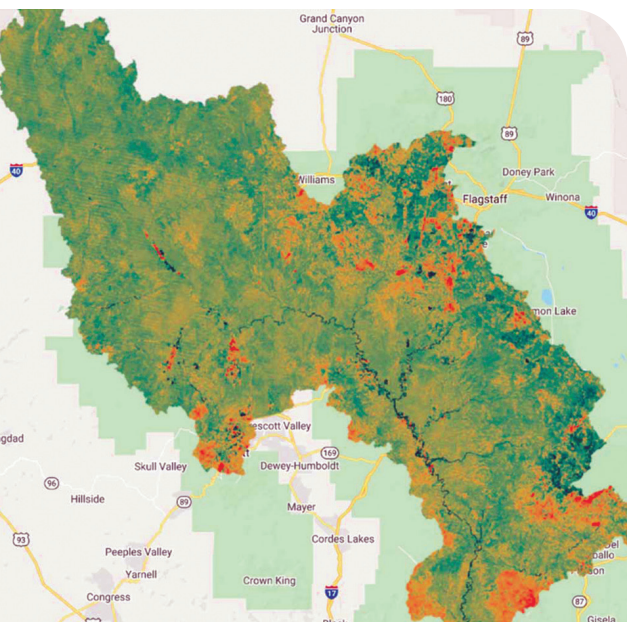
Our Strategic Plan for 2022–2027 focuses on amplifying SkyTruth’s impact by developing and deploying applications at scale that combine data from the growing number of satellites orbiting the Earth with the latest computing technologies. We will use these technologies to accelerate the case against fossil fuels and expose destructive activities in even the remotest corners of the world. We will increase our outreach to forge effective partnerships with conservation, advocacy, and environmental justice groups who can use our tools to help us bring about positive change; researchers who can work with us on new technologies and validate our work; and data providers to help expand our capacity and explore what’s possible. As always, we will keep our work freely available to everyone passionate about protecting people and the planet to expand our reach even further.

Our strategies to achieve our goal include advancing our conservation technology program to continue our innovative work, strengthening our communications to reach a wider audience, and building a strong and diverse organization.



01

Strategy One

ADVANCE SKYTRUTH'S
CONSERVATION TECHNOLOGY
PROGRAM

A prototype of Verdant shows the trend in vegetation coverage and health of the Verde River area for every 30-meter Landsat pixel.

CREDIT: SKYTRUTH

Build the datasets and tools that enhance scientific and technical capacity within the environmental movement to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and protect 30% of Earth's lands and waters by 2030.

- **User focus.** Understand the data and analytical needs of users including advocates, journalists, policymakers, and scientists.
- **Technology development.** Build accessible technology that responds to user needs; makes environmental monitoring more efficient and effective; advances the public's understanding of, and engagement with, environmental issues; and creates opportunities for better policies and management practices.
- **Innovation.** Develop and showcase public benefit applications of existing and emerging data and technology.

02

Strategy Two

TELL THE
SKYTRUTH STORY

Raise awareness about SkyTruth—who and what SkyTruth is, and how we make a difference—so that more people are working with us and using our products and tools to effect positive environmental change.

- **Cultivate relationships.** Engage journalists, conservation and environmental justice allies, university researchers, donors/funders, technology providers, and others to trigger productive partnerships.
- **Strategic communications.** Design and implement a communications approach, using effective content and distribution platforms.
- **Measure impact.** Monitor and promote outcomes of the use of SkyTruth tools and products.



Aerial view of Bulga Coal mine, located near Broke NSW Australia. SkyTruth's work tracking mountaintop mining is a core piece of our land monitoring program. CREDIT: ISTOCK

03

Strategy Three

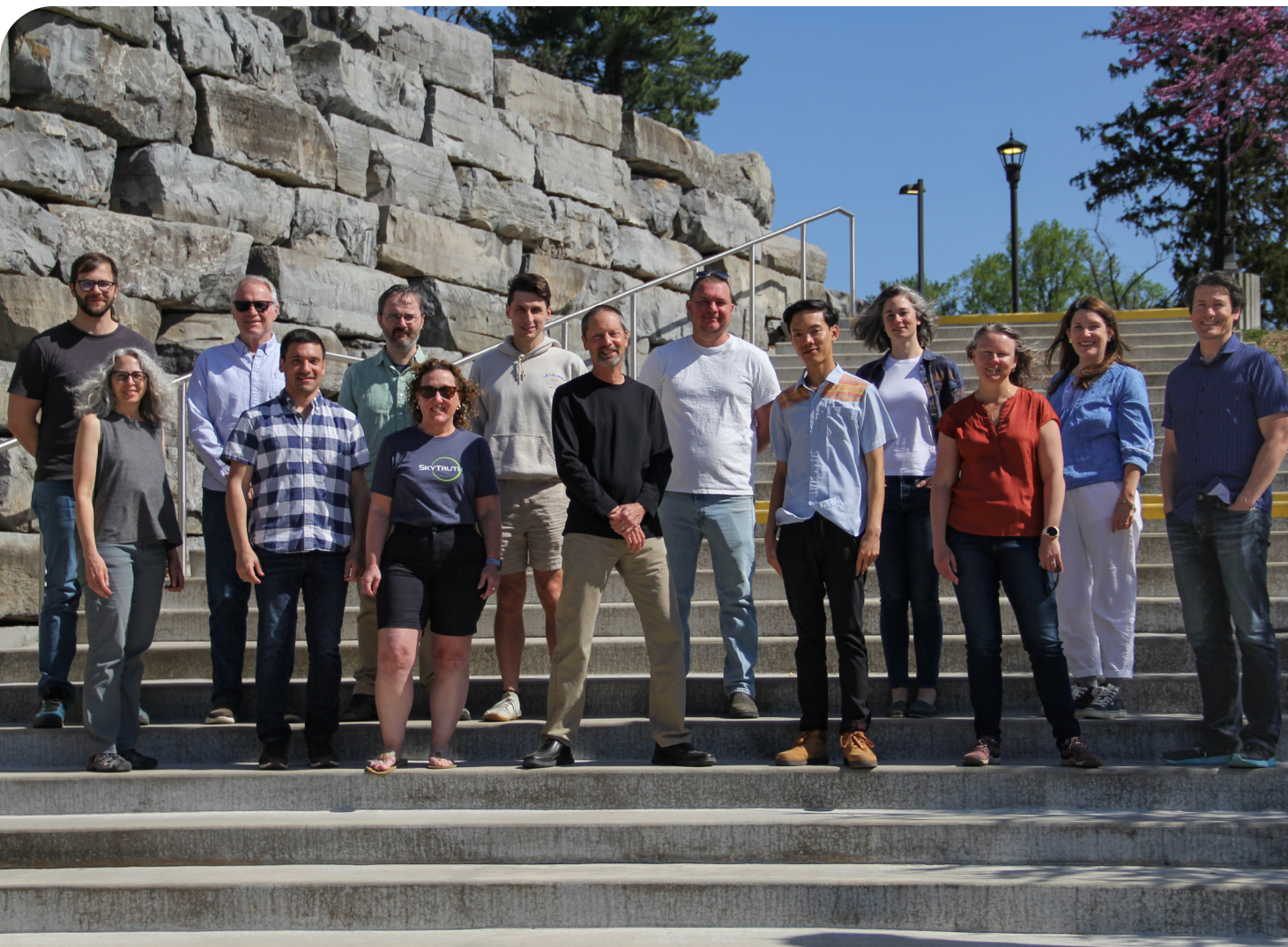
BUILD A SUSTAINABLE AND
THRIVING ORGANIZATION

SkyTruth has a strong history of building tools and technology to protect ocean biodiversity. Given their leading role in building Global Fishing Watch—and in light of SkyTruth’s new AI-powered Cerulean project to automatically detect oil pollution in our world’s oceans—we’re proud to invest in such an innovative conservation technology team.

—
Allegra Gordon
Program Officer, Oceankind

Nurture SkyTruth’s culture of supporting our people and embracing trust, generosity, innovation, and creativity; build a stable financial foundation; and grow a welcoming, talented, and diverse staff and Board.

- **Governance.** Cultivate a diverse and engaged Board of Directors that promotes the organization’s mission and vision, and challenges the leadership to meet SkyTruth’s potential.
- **Leadership.** Increase organizational resilience by honing the role of the CEO, elevating leadership responsibilities of senior staff, and encouraging distributed responsibility throughout the organization.
- **Culture.** Build a thriving, inclusive culture and invest in a diverse, dynamic, and talented staff motivated to protect the environment.
- **Strategic partnerships.** Pursue partnerships that best reflect our organizational goals and values, add capacity, complement our mission, and increase in-kind support.
- **Operational excellence.** Invest in thoughtful financial management, risk management, crisis planning, and human resources practices.
- **Diversity of funding.** Build organizational capacity and financial resilience through a portfolio of long-term funding sources, including a mix of direct and in-kind support from foundations, individual donors, and partner organizations.



Members of the SkyTruth team gather for a retreat at our headquarters in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. CREDIT: SKYTRUTH

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