



Wyoming Outdoor Council

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2017**

# WORKING TOGETHER



LISA MCGEE  
*Executive Director*

## A message from the director

**IN 1967, THE WYOMING OUTDOOR COORDINATING COUNCIL** was created to bring people from around the state together in defense of a place they loved. Then, as now, Wyomingites knew that this vast state — with its rugged landscapes, abundant wildlife, clear skies, and clean water — was like no place else on earth.

In 2017 this commitment to working together for Wyoming remained at the heart of our work. Every day we partnered with fellow conservationists, sportsmen and women, and a wide range of nonprofits and agencies to seek solutions to some of our state’s toughest problems.

**IT WAS A CRITICAL YEAR TO BE WORKING TOGETHER.** Even as the Outdoor Council celebrated a milestone anniversary — 50 years as Wyoming’s leading voice in statewide conservation — we also saw firsthand what the Trump administration’s new “energy dominance” mandate would look like on the ground. It wasn’t good. The BLM started fast-tracking oil and gas leases and attempted to scrap a no-nonsense rule designed to prevent the waste of natural gas produced on public lands. Interior Secretary Zinke revealed an egregious plan to roll back historic protections for the Greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush habitat on which it and hundreds of species depend. Drilling ramped up in sensitive habitats. And EPA Administrator Pruitt began to systematically unravel safeguards meant to protect human health at the same time that he advocated deep cuts to the agency’s budget.

**WE PUSHED BACK.** And we asked a lot of you in 2017. Thankfully, as Wyoming Outdoor Council members and partners have done for 50 years, you rose to the occasion.

You came to rallies around the state and told lawmakers in no uncertain terms that public lands must stay in public hands. You showed up to meetings to speak passionately about keeping wild landscapes wild. You wrote letters and emails defending science-based conservation and commonsense protections. All year long you asked hard questions of your legislators, leaders, and each other about the kind of future we want to create for Wyoming.

Your civic engagement should come as no surprise. Families have camped, hunted, and fished in Wyoming for generations. And, as anyone who's spent any time here knows, wild public lands, endless vistas, and trout-filled streams define this place — and are worth standing up for.

**DESPITE 2017'S CHALLENGES**, the news wasn't all bad. More and more state leaders touted the incalculable value of our proud outdoor heritage — as well as the more quantifiable value of our growing recreation economy. With your help we laid important groundwork with lawmakers for better renewable energy policies. And while there's still a long way to go on all of these issues, we are, as we've been since 1967, focused on our shared future. We know we'll only get there together.

After 50 years, the Wyoming Outdoor Council is here for the long haul. We hope you are, too. With your support and engagement bolstering our staff's skills and experience, we are confident that we can all keep Wyoming a place where people want to live and visit — now and for generations to come.

## THANK YOU.

Please visit [wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org](http://wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org) to see a list of the many individuals and groups who helped us protect Wyoming's outdoors in 2017.

## 2017: A TIMELINE

USDA undersecretary finalizes Forest Service's no-leasing decision in Wyoming Range

Citizens help defeat two bills that would pave the way to state takeover of public lands

WOC hosts Beers & Bills in Cheyenne

## OUTDOOR RECREATION: SHAPING WYOMING'S STRONG FUTURE

**WE WERE PROUD** to serve on and co-chair Gov. Matt Mead's Outdoor Recreation Task Force in 2017. In the fall, the task force recommended, and the state agreed, to create an outdoor recreation office as part of the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. Outdoor recreation is a \$5.6 billion industry in Wyoming, and creates 50,000 jobs in the state each year. We're glad to be part of the important conversation about how Wyoming's outdoor heritage can help lead to a stronger economic future for our state.



Image: Jared Steinman



Partners and citizens help stop bill that would harm Wyoming's fisheries

# 50,000

in-state jobs



# \$5.6 billion

consumer spending generated annually by Wyoming's outdoor recreation economy



# 12

veterans and supporters climbed to

# 13,809'

to summit Wyoming's tallest peak

## SUPPORTING SOLDIERS IN THE OUTDOORS

**JUST AS OUR FOUNDER**, Tom Bell, found solace and inspiration in Wyoming's public lands after returning home from WWII, so too do today's veterans. In 2017 we partnered with three veterans' groups to lend local support to a Gannett Peak ascent — part of a nationwide effort to raise awareness of the issue of suicide among veterans and to promote the healing power of the outdoors.



Image: Nick Knoke



WOC opens Cheyenne office

# HELPING CITIZENS SPEAK UP FOR WYOMING

**WE'RE PROUD** to continue our support of Keep it Public, Wyoming. This diverse coalition of citizens, businesses, and outdoor groups helped defeat a stream of public land grab attempts in 2017, including a proposed constitutional amendment that would have invited state takeover of public lands in Wyoming. Hundreds of citizens turned out around the state — at the Legislature, and at rallies in Laramie, Jackson, and Sheridan — to demand that lawmakers keep public lands in public hands.

**HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE** in communities around Wyoming also came out this year for our popular “Beers & Bills” events. This new program gives citizens essential information about current conservation issues and upcoming legislation, and effective methods of persuading lawmakers.

“ I have been involved with the Keep it Public coalition from the beginning, and the Outdoor Council has taken the lead on almost every activity . . . Their enthusiasm and technical and financial support has been outstanding. All public land owners in Wyoming should be grateful for their leadership.”

— EARL DeGROOT, WYOMING SPORTSMEN FOR FEDERAL LANDS, CHEYENNE



Wild Iris event in Lander raises \$2,100 for WOC

WOC hosts Beers & Bills in Lander

# ONE STEP CLOSER TO PROTECTING WYOMING'S NAMESAKE RANGE

**AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE** of successful advocacy to safeguard 1.2 million acres in the Wyoming Range from oil and gas leasing and development, we're still working to ensure that the last 40,000 acres improperly offered for lease sale along the range's eastern front are canceled. In January we got one step closer: the Bridger-Teton National Forest formally withdrew its consent to lease these parcels. Now it's up to the BLM to actually cancel those leases. Stay tuned.

WOC hosts Beers  
& Bills in Rock Springs

90 runners participate in  
4th annual Run the Red Desert

M A Y

Wyoming Range. Image: Jared White

## LEADING THE CLEANUP OF BROOKS LAKE

**ALGAE BLOOMS AT BROOKS LAKE** led to a devastating fish kill along a 10-mile stretch of the Wind River in 2008. We spent 2017 working with Brooks Lake Lodge and the Department of Environmental Quality to find a solution. The lodge installed a new wastewater treatment system at the end of the year — an important step in preventing future nutrient pollution in this stunning alpine watershed on the Shoshone National Forest.

**\$51-96  
million**  
value of natural  
gas wasted\*

## HOLDING THE LINE ON SMART AIR POLLUTION RULES

**WE WERE PARTIES** in two legal challenges surrounding the Bureau of Land Management's methane rule, a commonsense effort to reduce the amount of wasted natural gas on our public lands. Early in 2017 we defended the rule, beating back initial state and industry attempts to block it. Before the case was decided, however, the Trump administration attempted illegally to delay the rule. We challenged this action and won. Our advocacy — for clean air, public health, and fiscally responsible management of finite public resources — continues in 2018.

**\$8.8-  
16.1  
million**  
lost revenue to  
natural gas waste\*

“*The Wyoming Outdoor Council was an invaluable resource on the Wyoming Range project. We owe them a huge amount of gratitude and respect. There is no way we could have achieved the things we did without their knowledge, help, and love of the outdoors.*”

— MIKE BURD, CITIZENS FOR THE WYOMING RANGE, GREEN RIVER

\*These figures are from 2015 and reported in our 2018 Wyoming Natural Gas Waste Report.

WOC hosts Beers  
& Bills in Dubois

Summit for Soldiers kicks off  
Gannett Peak ascent in Dubois

## DEFENDING SCIENCE-BASED CONSERVATION

**IN 2017 SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR** Ryan Zinke ordered his agency to reconsider a bipartisan conservation plan to protect the imperiled Greater sage-grouse. Its habitat-based protections are important not only to sage-grouse, but to some 350 other species that depend on the sagebrush community for survival. We worked with sportsmen and other conservation partners to push back against this shortsighted rollback attempt, and to advocate that strong, science-based protections for this iconic Wyoming species remain. We were pleased to see Gov. Matt Mead and Sen. John Barrasso echo many of our points.

The current conservation plan helps protect . . .

**15 million acres**

of some of the best  
sage-grouse habitat  
in Wyoming

the nation's Greater sage-  
grouse population —

**37 percent**

of which lives in Wyoming

**350 species**

of plants and animals  
that depend on the  
sagebrush ecosystem

“*As a Wyoming native, I had the fortune of having one of the world's best backyards to grow up in. We're members of WOC because we want to keep that backyard intact, pristine, and wild for our daughters and future generations beyond us.*”

— SEAN AND STINA STAUTH, JACKSON

● Hundreds of citizens attend Keep it Public rallies in Laramie and Sheridan

● WOC hosts Red Desert field tours for decision makers and agency staff

● 400+ citizens attend Keep it Public event in Jackson

# WYOMING'S STATEWIDE WATCHDOG

**THE WYOMING OUTDOOR COUNCIL** regularly reviews leases and drilling permit applications between the Bureau of Land Management and energy companies to make sure the agency follows its own requirements to protect important wildlife habitat.

**IN 2017** we challenged a number of flawed permits, pointing out where the BLM wasn't adhering to its own rules and demonstrating how the agency could do better. Our efforts resulted in the suspension of development on some southwestern Wyoming landscapes until the agency completed more thorough reviews and showed how it would protect wildlife and habitat. We also worked with partners to create a process to ensure that energy development on public lands follows state requirements to protect sage-grouse habitat. Holding land managers accountable for long-term commitments to protect habitat, clean air, and water is essential to the future of Wyoming's shared resources.

700+ WOC friends celebrate 50th anniversary in Lander

DOI reveals plan to roll back historic sage-grouse protections

WOC hosts sage-grouse comment-writing workshop in Pinedale

Gov. Mead's task force recommends opening state office of outdoor recreation

O C T O B E R

Image: ©Scott Copeland Images

# 50 YEARS OF CONSERVATION IN WYOMING

## FRIENDS, MEMBERS, AND SUPPORTERS

from around Wyoming and the West came together in Lander in September to celebrate the Outdoor Council's 50th anniversary. Former EPA administrator Gina McCarthy gave a rousing keynote address, and Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard was on hand to accept the Tom Bell Conservation Legacy Award. The weekend was a tribute to the thousands of people who've pitched in over the decades to help protect the clean air and water, healthy wildlife, and rugged public lands that make Wyoming the kind of place people want to live, work, and pass on to the next generation.

WOC co-hosts legislative training session for conservation groups

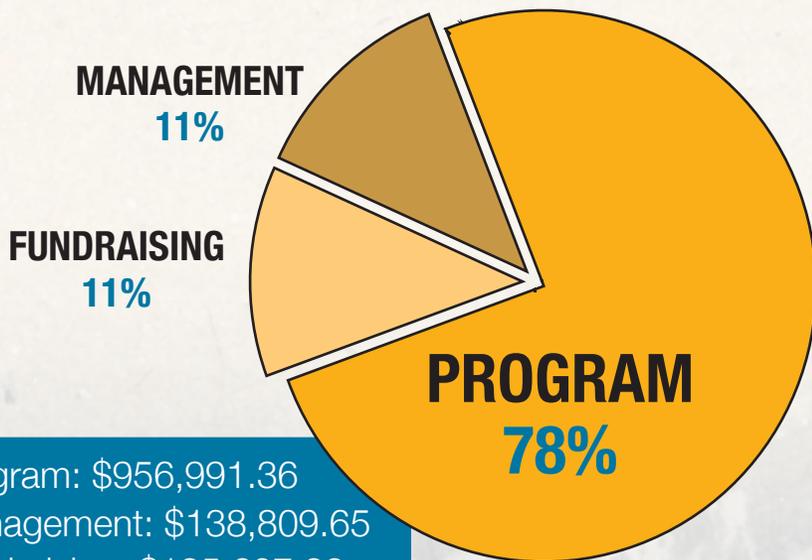
Brooks Lake Lodge constructs new wastewater treatment system

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

## BY THE NUMBERS

## GROWING OUR NETWORK



Program: \$956,991.36  
Management: \$138,809.65  
Fundraising: \$135,607.38  
**TOTAL EXPENSES:**  
**\$1,231,408.39**

Facebook Followers:  
 **13.52%**

Twitter Followers:  
 **14.19%**

Instagram Followers:  
 **122.62%**

Mail & Email Subscribers:  
**4,397**

Members & Supporters:  
**1,857**

# COVERING THE MAP

The Outdoor Council worked for you around Wyoming in 2017.

## KEY

-  Wyoming Public Lands Initiative
-  Cities/Towns Visited
-  Projects
-  Sage-Grouse Core Areas



Converse County:  
5,000 Wells Proposed



Wyoming Outdoor Council

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Protecting public lands, wildlife, and  
clean air and water in Wyoming since 1967