



Wyoming Outdoor Council

2023 IMPACT REPORT

*For today and tomorrow,
for nature and for people*

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friend,



Since starting as executive director of the Wyoming Outdoor Council this year, it's been my honor to travel our state and hear the unique perspectives of the people who form the backbone of Wyoming's conservation community.

While these perspectives vary, they each are grounded in an abiding care for our mutual home — and are *all* critical to the trajectory of the organization you've sustained. That's because successful conservation isn't solely dependent on any single person. Just as a landscape's health is predicated on the balance between plants and animals, predators and prey, and the intentions and actions of humans, this work has always taken a community.

I'm amazed by all you have helped WOC accomplish over the past year. We're all looking forward to seeing how we can collectively keep after the challenges and opportunities, for today and tomorrow, for nature and people.

Carl Fisher, Executive Director






2023 Key Achievements

The Red Desert: How you strengthened the outlook for a Wyoming treasure

With the arrival of the long-awaited Rock Springs Resource Management Plan last August, our campaign to protect the Red Desert entered its most promising — and fraught — phase yet. The Bureau of Land Management’s draft plan contained sweeping protections for the desert’s unmatched wide-open spaces, and wildlife and cultural resources. But the conversation became vitriolic as industry and state officials sought to eliminate the plan’s strong conservation provisions.



In December, we stepped up to represent conservation interests on the governor’s RMP task force. For 45 days of negotiations with representatives from

livestock, oil and gas, sporting groups, and other interests, we acted as conveners, educators, and staunch advocates, while bringing collaborative proposals forward to defend key landscapes and habitat.

We also relied on another source of unwavering support — you. Your resounding voice for conserving the desert’s landscapes, wildlife, and opportunities for solace was inspiring, *and effective*: With the BLM’s final plan expected in the coming months, protections we couldn’t have imagined for this vast and varied landscape only a few years ago are now just over the horizon.

YOUR IMPACT DIDN'T STOP WITH THE RED DESERT.

You also pushed for overdue reforms to the BLM’s oil and gas leasing program and called for equal consideration of conservation alongside other uses of public lands. Additionally, thanks to your opposition, the prime habitat of the Kelly Parcel was spared from the tragic fate of development.

You brightened Wyoming's climate future, from the grassroots up

From the adoption of greenhouse gas reduction targets by the city of Lander, to citizens in Cody exploring options for clean school buses, you helped us provide tailored support for a growing wave of locally led climate efforts. You also supported efforts to ensure Wyoming communities get access to critical federal dollars even as the state hesitates to pursue them, including Solar for All and Pollution Reduction Act funds, which would significantly lower energy costs for low- and middle-income households.

It was a big year for our broader climate efforts, too: You spoke up for cleaner air and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas operations, an effort that paid off with the release of a strong final methane rule from the EPA. Additionally, the foundation you helped lay for responsible siting of necessary renewable energy projects will ensure valuable habitat and cultural resources are protected as region-wide plans gain steam, such as the BLM's updated Western Solar Plan.

\$70 million

the potential incentives available to Wyoming families, businesses, and workers to make energy-efficient upgrades under the federal Home Energy Rebates.

...

\$30 million

Solar for All funding secured to improve solar energy access across the state and the Wind River Reservation.



You grew Indigenous conservation action across the state

The voices and interests of the original stewards of Wyoming's rivers, wildlife, and wildlands are critical wherever conservation decisions are made. From pursuing protected designations for culturally significant areas in the Red Desert, to a campout to promote Traditional Ecological Knowledge

and celebrate tribes' ancestral connections to the landscape, you supported vital work to strengthen Indigenous conservation. You also helped ensure Wind River Tribal communities will benefit from millions of dollars of funding for rooftop solar available under the Solar for All program.

Late in 2023, you supported an expansion of our Tribal Conservation Program — a director position has already been filled and we're recruiting an additional engagement coordinator.



You put the pressure on for big game migration protections

When the state offered up parcel 194 for oil and gas leasing last summer, the migration of Wyoming's largest and most prolific pronghorn herd came under threat. Development on the parcel, located squarely within a migration bottleneck along the famed "Path of the Pronghorn," would be a reckless blow to a herd still reeling from a harsh winter. You spoke up — and our collective and fierce opposition was enough to delay the sale.

Despite our protests, the state ultimately moved forward with the sale. Once again, you didn't hesitate to jump into action: In late 2023, with an outpouring of public comments, you made the strongest possible case for official designation of the Sublette Pronghorn migration.

These efforts are now bearing fruit: This past March, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission voted unanimously to move forward with the designation process. While the path to designation is still far from over, your contributions, messages to state officials, and willingness to roll up your sleeves during a fence modification project in the Big Sandy Foothills, all continue to show just how fervently Wyomingites want to see this iconic herd persist.

44%

of the Sublette Pronghorn herd (roughly 19,000 individuals) perished during the 2022–23 winter. Increasing threats such as energy development make it harder for populations to bounce back after devastating winter die-offs.

...

90%

of roughly 300 comments to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission favored formal designation to address these threats head-on. **WOC members helped push this process forward.**





You defended a precious source of clean drinking water

As the climate warms and dries, protecting our clean water resources is more important than ever. When Wyoming decision-makers approved Aethon Energy's proposal to inject wastewater from oil and gas operations into the aquifer — a potential future source of drinking water, especially for the Wind River Reservation — over 1,500 citizens boldly called on the EPA to override the decision. We're excited to report that your concerns were heeded: This past April, the agency issued a clear denial of the proposal. Want to see even more work done to protect the health of Wyoming's waterways? We do, too — and we're looking forward to working together to build our impact in this critical area.

You gave voice to conservation at the legislature

Strong relationships, great research, and well-reasoned testimony all make a difference when it comes to defending conservation values at the Wyoming State Legislature. But it's your advocacy that ultimately wins the day, which you proved in 2023 by pushing back against a devastating bill that would have ended net metering for rooftop solar systems. In the interim, your support helped ensure that grants awarded from the newly established Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund would take wildlife impacts into consideration — a key step towards ensuring sustainable recreation growth.

HOW WE USE OUR FUNDS

The impact you make by **POWERING** our mission via conservation programs: \$869,951

The impact you make by **SUSTAINING** our mission via administration and management: \$331,078

The impact you make by **AMPLIFYING** our mission via fundraising: \$306,427

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,507,456

▶ To view our tax forms, please visit qrco.de/WOC_reports or scan this QR code.





We've Moved!

Come visit our new headquarters in Lander

When we put out calls to support construction of our new “forever home,” you understood this was about more than just a building — it was about a space that would inspire the most innovative and collaborative solutions to Wyoming’s challenges.

Our new campus at 236 S. 2nd Street is bright, energy efficient, and powered by the sun: Thanks to Rocky Mountain Power Blue Sky program participants, the energy required for our community- and environment-serving work is offset by an ample array of rooftop solar panels. Blue Sky program participants also made possible a Level 2 electric vehicle charging station.

In addition to space for our advocates to conduct their vital work, the campus’s free, reservable meeting space provides a collaborative setting for partners, nonprofits, and community members to gather.

Celebrate with us!

Deepening Roots: A Conservation Celebration

September 12, 2024
6–9 p.m.

236 S. 2nd St. | Lander

Learn about our vision for protecting Wyoming’s lands and wildlife, tour our new home, and connect with community members over live music, food and drink, and more.



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Protecting Wyoming’s environment and quality of life now and for future generations.