

LEGAL DOCKET



Our team is stronger than ever before. Experts in law and policy, we approach our work with a commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice. We have a full suite of strategic projects and cases to safeguard public lands, wildlife, and communities across the American West. Our impact is profound: we achieve on-the-ground change, set precedent and authority that sparks forward-thinking reform, and build power for the future.

Together, we defend the West. Thank you for your support!



This is a pivotal year for iconic western wildlife. The Trump administration is poised to make a slew of key decisions that bode ill for the federal protections and endangered species status essential to the survival of gray wolves, grizzly bears, Canada lynx, wolverine, and more.

Through strategic, cutting edge legal cases to defend these animals, we will leverage the power of the law every step of the way to ensure decisions made for western wildlife are based on science, not politics. The West would not be what it is without its wildlife. You can count on us to defend these animals, their homes, and the laws that protect them.



DEFENDING THE LAW

In another extreme assault to the environment, the Trump administration proposed a rule dismantling one of our country’s most important, bedrock environmental laws—the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The proposed rule, if finalized, would allow more fossil fuel drilling and extraction on our public lands, reducing federal agency transparency and accountability to you, the public. In 2020, we will be leading coordinated efforts to fight this troubling proposal head-on.

PUBLIC LANDS

We continue to deepen our legacy of successful litigation protecting federal forests in Oregon, Colorado, Montana, and New Mexico. From watchdogging timber sales to active legal involvement in the development of once-in-a-generation land management plans, we will use the law to defend these public lands and the values they provide. We will also continue to protect and defend the expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon, our country’s only national monument designated to protect native biodiversity.

CLEAN WATER

The Puget Sound shouldn’t be a waste dump for pollution. Accordingly, we will take legal action to force the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington Department of Ecology to develop cleanup plans for Puget Sound and the thousands of rivers and streams in Washington state that have long been degraded by unsafe levels of pollution. Our waterways, communities, and wildlife have suffered for far too long, and it’s time for real action to achieve clean water solutions.

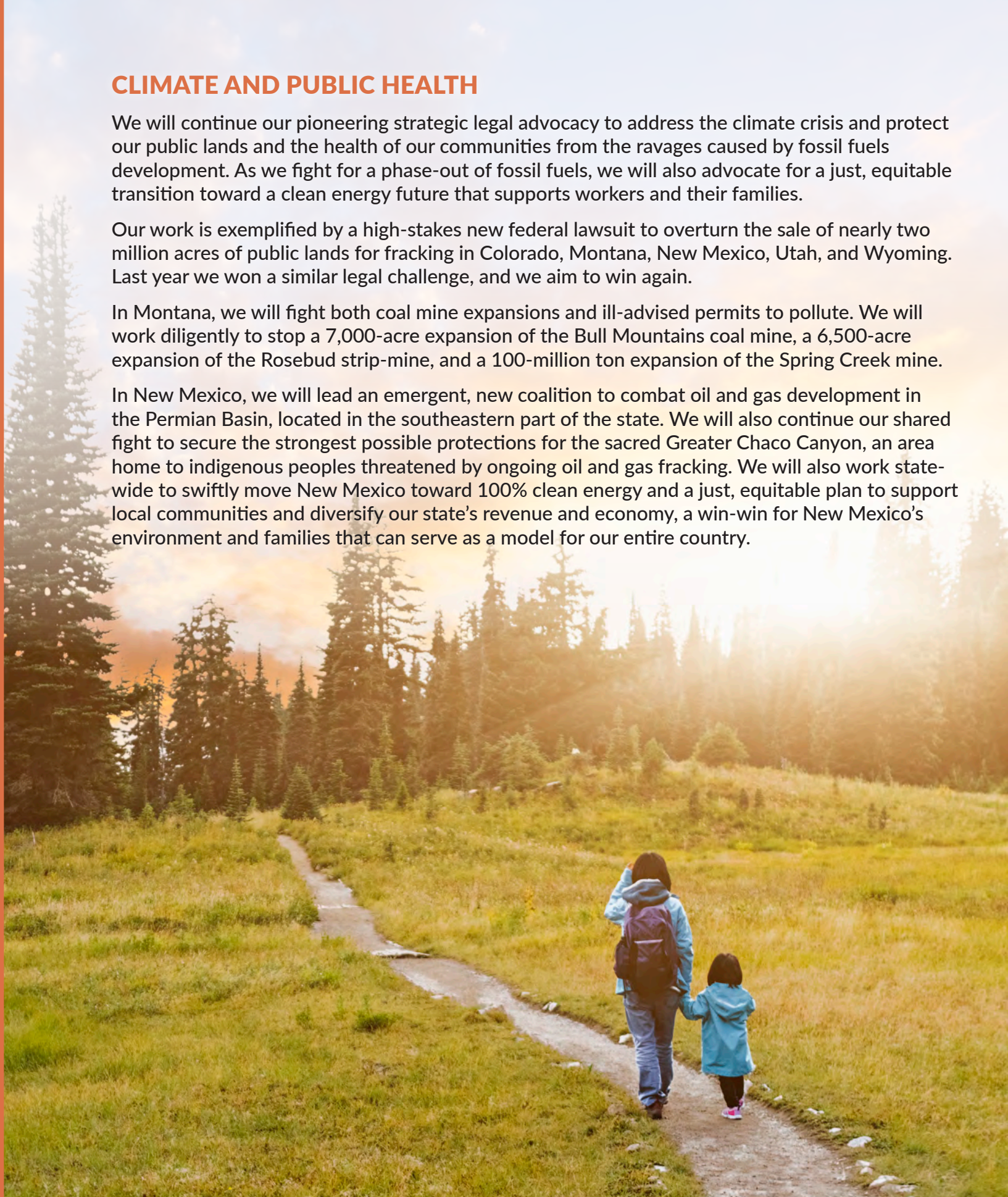
CLIMATE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

We will continue our pioneering strategic legal advocacy to address the climate crisis and protect our public lands and the health of our communities from the ravages caused by fossil fuels development. As we fight for a phase-out of fossil fuels, we will also advocate for a just, equitable transition toward a clean energy future that supports workers and their families.

Our work is exemplified by a high-stakes new federal lawsuit to overturn the sale of nearly two million acres of public lands for fracking in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. Last year we won a similar legal challenge, and we aim to win again.

In Montana, we will fight both coal mine expansions and ill-advised permits to pollute. We will work diligently to stop a 7,000-acre expansion of the Bull Mountains coal mine, a 6,500-acre expansion of the Rosebud strip-mine, and a 100-million ton expansion of the Spring Creek mine.

In New Mexico, we will lead an emergent, new coalition to combat oil and gas development in the Permian Basin, located in the southeastern part of the state. We will also continue our shared fight to secure the strongest possible protections for the sacred Greater Chaco Canyon, an area home to indigenous peoples threatened by ongoing oil and gas fracking. We will also work state-wide to swiftly move New Mexico toward 100% clean energy and a just, equitable plan to support local communities and diversify our state’s revenue and economy, a win-win for New Mexico’s environment and families that can serve as a model for our entire country.



Western Environmental Law Center was recently named a Law360 Environmental Group of the Year. This honor is a testament to our organization’s effectiveness, creativity, and determination to protect our climate and environment. You can count on us to defend the West.



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We are a nonprofit, public-interest environmental law firm. We use the power of the law to safeguard the public lands, wildlife, and communities of the American West in the face of a changing climate. We represent more than 185 clients each year and do not charge for our services. We depend on charitable donations to achieve our mission.

WESTERNLAW.ORG

We balance and offset our environmental footprint by purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates, Carbon Offsets, and Water Restoration Certificates®

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2020 LEGAL DOCKET

The Sonoran Desert National Monument in Arizona is one of the most biologically diverse areas of the North American desert. Yet 90% of this monument is open to recreational shooting, thanks in large part to the noxious lobbying efforts of the National Rifle Association (NRA) and its close ties with the Trump administration. As a result, centuries-old saguaro cacti and irreplaceable petroglyphs are becoming permanently damaged with bullet holes from target shooters. We've fought to protect this national monument before, and this year we are back in court to end this practice once and for all in this important and delicate place.

Read this report to learn more about our 2020 cases to defend public lands, wildlife, and communities across the American West.

