



Western
Environmental
Law Center

2021
ANNUAL REPORT



LEADING BY EXAMPLE

We are proud of the work we have done, with you, to build a formidable organization. We fight hard, we win, and we achieve amazing results. That mission-based success is reflected in the Better Business Bureau's recognition of the Western Environmental Law Center as an accredited charity worthy of a Torch Award for Ethics—an honor that reflects our deep commitment to our supporters' rights, our strong measures to protect their privacy and online safety, and the ethics with which we operate on a day-to-day basis. WELC is also an *Oregon Business* Best Green Workplace and an *Outside Magazine* Best Place to Work. For the fourth year in a row, WELC received Charity Navigator's highest 4-star rating. The GuideStar Exchange Program, which rates nonprofit transparency and impact on a national scale, also certified us at its highest level.



DEAR FRIENDS

In her poem "Conditions of Happiness," Annie Lighthart concludes with the evocative line, "If there is no wind, then row." That line captures how the Western Environmental Law Center, with your support, has navigated the confluence of crises we are witnessing in this moment.

We have acted with purpose, intention, and courage. Our ability to do so is the result of your support—support for which we are so grateful, and support grounded in our shared responsibility to build a thriving, resilient future for the West.

In the past year, we made great progress toward our vision.

We held the line against the Trump administration's worst attacks against our public lands. We championed the climate and the West's iconic wildlands and wildlife. And we worked thoughtfully and methodically to weave equity, inclusion, and justice into the fabric of our organization and its mission.

This is the work of our lifetimes; work that will ripple through time to the benefit of our children and our vibrant and beautiful Earth.

Thank you for making this work possible.

Karin P. Sheldon
Board President

Erik Schlenker-Goodrich
Executive Director



FORESTS AND THE WATERS THAT SUSTAIN THEM ARE THE PLANET'S LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM. BUT THEY NEED PROTECTION, AND WELC IS UP TO THE CHALLENGE.

COLLABORATING TO SAVE OLD-GROWTH FORESTS

WELC is committed to sustainable forest management, which requires moving through conflict between otherwise entrenched interests with dialogue informed by science. In the Pacific Northwest, we participate in forest collaboratives using the “cabinet of rivals” model to fight old-growth logging while improving forest wildfire resilience and helping rural communities. Revered *New York Times* journalist Nicholas Kristof featured our work in April.

PROTECTING SONORAN DESERT NATIONAL MONUMENT

Against its own experts' recommendations and under pressure from the National Rifle Association, the Bureau of Land Management opened nearly 100% of Arizona's Sonoran Desert National Monument to recreational shooting. We sued due to threats from irresponsible shooting to iconic saguaro cacti, ancient petroglyphs, and wildlife. We won, forcing a do-over. Trump-appointed land managers protected only 10% of the area, forcing us back to court to again protect this unique desert monument.

JORDAN COVE LNG: DORMANT AND TRENDING DOWNWARD

WELC has fought the proposed Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal and Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline for more than a decade, and defeated it twice. The Trump administration unsurprisingly resurrected the dreadful scheme, and we reignited the fires of legal resistance to what would be the largest climate polluter in Oregon. It worked. Now, the project is dormant and trending downward. But we're still on guard.

STANDING UP FOR CLEAN WATER IN NEW MEXICO

Water quality standards are the basis of river, stream, and wetland protection in New Mexico. WELC continued its history of advocacy for protective and proactive water policies in this year's Triennial Review, where these standards are written. We provided expert-based solutions and stood up to the powerful Los Alamos National Laboratories in favor of monitoring for toxic PFAS and PCBs because water is life.



PROTECTING THE CLEAN WATER ACT

For nearly 50 years, decisions regarding large federally regulated projects such as pipelines, dams, industrial plants, municipal facilities, and wetland development have required state, Tribal, and federal cooperation under the Clean Water Act. The Trump administration gutted that part of the law, allowing the federal government to force such projects onto states and Tribes despite pollution risks to rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands within their borders. The changes to the Clean Water Act's Section 401 represent a major threat to clean water and public health from coast to coast and everywhere in between.

We are challenging these undemocratic changes to the Clean Water Act in court to restore states' and Tribes' right to make critical water decisions, and to refuse harmful projects if necessary. In two other cases with potentially broad implications, we are defending the right of the state and communities near the Yuba, Merced, and Tuolumne Rivers in California to ensure hydroelectric projects comply with state water quality requirements.

WE TOOK ON FACTORY FARMS IN WASHINGTON STATE—AND WON

Puget Sound is in crisis. The marine ecosystem is under siege from increasingly frequent algae blooms and plummeting dissolved oxygen levels. These chronic issues have devastated fish and wildlife populations, including iconic salmon and the critically imperiled orca.

Through 30 years of study, the Washington Department of Ecology has identified nutrient, bacterial, and toxic pollution runoff from high-density animal agriculture as a main cause of these problems, which not only affect marine life, but communities' drinking water and economies as well.

An adult dairy cow generates roughly 120 pounds of manure per day. The waste generated at factory farms is stored in unlined lagoons and over-applied to farmland, threatening water quality for nearby and downstream areas.

In Puget Sound, factory farm pollution has contributed to shellfish bed closures and ocean

acidification, which has wiped out billions of oyster larvae, a critical food source for birds and fish. This pollution is also harming other important sea life, including red king crab and wild salmon.

Washington state has known this for decades, but has failed to take any meaningful action to reduce pollution from factory farms.

The agriculture industry is extremely powerful in the state. It has exercised its outsized influence to prevent the Department of Ecology from requiring even basic limits on the pollution that is harming Puget Sound and water quality statewide. But the industry's influence ends at the courtroom door.

This summer, we won a precedent-setting case that will force Washington state to rewrite its permits for waste discharges from industrial agriculture operations. Thanks to the legal advocacy of WELC and our partners, the court ruled that Ecology allowed factory farms' manure storage lagoons "to continue

to operate and potentially discharge contaminants into groundwater indefinitely," in violation of state law that requires these facilities to use modern pollution control technologies.

In addition, the court called out the state's failure to ensure discharges from factory farms will not degrade water quality, both in nearby surface waters and in local groundwater.

Our legal team also successfully showed the court that the permit improperly shut the public out of the process for reviewing plans for individual factory farms and illuminated failures in the permit's water monitoring requirements.

The court found that the state failed to address the climate crisis in the permit. Factory farms' discharge of nutrients is worsening climate change impacts by contributing to localized ocean acidification, causing algal blooms, and creating oxygen-depleted "dead zones." According to the court, under Washington's

state Environmental Policy Act, Ecology must address these impacts in the revised factory farm permit.

Our victory presents Washington with a crucial opportunity to modernize factory farm waste treatment requirements.

Recovery for a severely damaged Puget Sound is within reach, and restoration of clean water in Washington's rivers and streams hangs in the balance.

Washington must require factory farms to use known and affordable practices to minimize nutrient, bacterial, and toxic runoff pollution to protect clean water—one of our most basic needs.

We will continue to engage in the permit revision process, and will not accept half-measures. Public health and a restored Puget Sound depend on controlling this pollution at the source.





“The Wildlands and Wildlife Program is working tirelessly to protect spectacular landscapes and iconic wildlife from ill-considered development and management. We use sound science to guide our advocacy to ensure these natural treasures are preserved for future generations.”

*Susan Jane Brown
Wildlands and Wildlife Director
Portland, Oregon*

DEFENDING NORTHWEST FORESTS FROM DESTRUCTION

Our work to protect forests and wildlife habitat in southwest Oregon from the saw is legion. We are in court over the Griffin Half Moon timber project, which would log more than 900 acres of wildlife habitat home to perhaps the largest and most well-known population of great grey owls in southwest Oregon. We are challenging another timber project that would render 9,000 acres of suitable endangered northern spotted owl habitat “non-habitat” for up to 120 years. We are also fighting in court against the large Poor Windy and Evans Creek timber projects, which would degrade more than 14,000 acres of northern spotted owl habitat. On the same thread, we are challenging the Round Oak and Bear Grub timber sales, which would harm 37 known northern spotted owl sites and log more than 3,000 acres of the imperiled bird’s habitat.

SAVING ENDANGERED PUGET SOUND WILD SALMON

In June, a federal judge in Seattle ordered the Electron Hydroelectric Project to cease diverting water from the Puyallup River in Washington state, to protect threatened Puget Sound Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout from being killed. To resume any diversions, the company must first seek federal agency approval that its operations will not harm these threatened fish.

PRESERVING DECADES OF MOUNT ST. HELENS RESEARCH

The blast zone of the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens is unique worldwide as a living natural laboratory. But a rushed U.S. Forest Service road-building plan to assess a natural dam at Spirit Lake would destroy ecologically sensitive and scientifically valuable areas. We are challenging the plan because prudent design can ensure public safety while preserving this scientific jewel and its extraordinary ecology.

PROTECTING THE SOUTHWEST FROM OVERGRAZING

We are challenging a U.S. Forest Service decision to allow livestock grazing across 271,665 acres of the Greater Gila bioregion in the Apache-Sitgreaves and Gila National Forests in Arizona and New Mexico over a 10-year period. This massive grazing project has significant implications for endangered Mexican wolves, water resources, and wilderness values in one of the Southwest’s most treasured landscapes.

CLOSING A MASSIVE TRUMP-ERA LOGGING LOOPHOLE

Categorical exclusions are large and often harmful loopholes in U.S. environmental law. We are in court to take down a national Trump-era categorical exclusion allowing logging free-for-alls after fires and other disturbances nationwide up to 5,000 acres each. The Trump administration failed to analyze the decision under the National Environmental Policy Act as required. The science says overall, this type of logging is a bad idea.

WATER QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN PUGET SOUND

This year, WELC was proud to welcome attorney and Diehl Fellow Jennifer Calkins to our Seattle office. The Diehl Fellowship is a program WELC developed with the University of Washington to advance our environmental justice advocacy in the state. Jennifer's work focuses on connecting with and serving communities already overburdened by environmental injuries.

Jennifer brings a wealth of experience and passion to WELC, and has hit the ground running. For example, she filed a brief with the Washington Supreme Court highlighting the environmental justice issues at stake in a case over the Washington Department of Natural Resources' management of state lands. Earlier this year she also helped advocate for Washington's environmental justice-focused HEAL Act, which will integrate active environmental justice consideration into decision making for many Washington's agencies. In addition, Jennifer is speaking up for the orca, advocating for the Duwamish River, fighting to protect Puget Sound, and defending the western gray squirrel.



ERASING PENDLEY'S ANTI-PUBLIC LANDS LEGACY ON 6.25 MILLION ACRES

William Perry Pendley was one of the worst officials in the Trump administration. His tenure as acting secretary of the Department of the Interior was defined by his desire to take public lands away from regular people and privatize them.

The Trump administration knew the Senate wouldn't confirm Pendley, so it kept him in power illegally for the final 424 days of his tenure. Thankfully, the state of Montana won a court case invalidating Pendley's illegal policies within its borders.

But Pendley's influence spans the western U.S., resulting in decisions that would harm wildlife, water, and public lands for the next 20 years.

Our team of attorneys is suing to overturn eight of Pendley's decisions made while he was illegally running Interior, across 6.25 million acres in California, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.

INFORMED BY SCIENCE AND POWERED BY THE LAW, WELC IS DRIVING PROGRESS TOWARD TRANSITIONING THE U.S. AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUEL ENERGY.

PREVENTING FRACKING ON 3.5 MILLION ACRES

We have expanded our pioneering legal strategy against the federal government to compel it to account for the cumulative climate impacts of leasing public lands for oil and gas drilling. Our first case in 2019 protected 450,000 acres from drilling and fracking. We followed this victory with two additional cases that account for 3 million acres of oil and gas drilling leases in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Utah. The federal government has now agreed to withdraw and reconsider every lease challenged. We intend to use the power of the law to block any further attempts by the federal government to lease public lands for oil and gas drilling while hiding the true climate impact of those actions.

PROTECTING COLORADO FORESTS FROM FRACKING

WELC is challenging the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service's approval of a plan that allows fracking across 35,000 acres of Colorado's Western Slope. The plan would impact the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison national forests. Federal land managers failed to fully assess the plan's potential for water pollution and harm to the climate. Gunnison and Delta Counties have already exceeded 1.5°C of warming, and more drilling is projected to harm Delta County's tax revenue, not help it. We are fighting for land management that serves the public interest for these communities.

ATTACKING METHANE EMISSIONS IN NM AND NATIONWIDE

Slashing volatile organic compounds and methane emissions from oil and gas extraction on public lands is critical to addressing the climate crisis and protecting human health. Methane is a greenhouse gas 87 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year timeline. In New Mexico, home to the country's largest methane hot spot and chronic public health impacts, WELC convinced the Environment Department to tighten gaping loopholes in new air emissions rules to protect clean air and the climate. On the national level, we supported Congress' efforts to reinstate Environmental Protection Agency rules to curb methane emissions from the oil and gas industry on public lands.

DEFENDING PRESIDENT BIDEN'S OIL AND GAS LEASING PAUSE

With our partners at Earthjustice, WELC represents 22 conservation, recreation, Tribal, farming, and ranching groups intervening to defend the Biden administration's pause on federal oil and gas leasing in two lawsuits.

Oil and gas pollution disproportionately harms low-income communities and fossil fuel extraction on public lands, and accounts for about 25% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. We must end fossil fuel extraction on public lands to meet U.S. and international goals to minimize the worst effects of our climate reality.

A ruling in a separate case set back these efforts, forcing the Biden administration to resume oil and gas leasing. The administration appealed that order and indicated it will make important changes to the federal fossil fuel leasing program. We are supporting this effort by defending the pause in court.

KEEPING FOSSIL FUELS IN THE GROUND ON 3 MILLION ACRES

The message of this summer's report on global climate change from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is grave: "[I]mmediate, rapid, and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions" are necessary to avoid true global catastrophe. Many of us have already experienced firsthand wildfire, drought, floods, and extreme weather. It has been deadly, ugly, and costly for far too many already. But with your help, WELC is making major progress toward a livable climate.

One of the most effective opportunities for climate action is ending fossil fuel production on public lands, which represents about a quarter of overall U.S. greenhouse gas pollution.

Scientific studies estimate ending the federal fossil fuel leasing program would reduce carbon emissions by 280 million tons per year. That's a lot.

In 2019, WELC and our partners won a precedent-setting case challenging oil and gas leases on more than 450,000 acres, forcing the federal government to consider the cumulative effects of fracking at a regional and national scale, rather than just the effects of each lease in isolation (see p. 10). Our case also required the government to analyze for the first time the climate effects of burning these fossil fuels.

Since that victory, we have applied that precedent broadly to keep the climate-harming greenhouse gases associated with oil and gas development safely in the ground. This year, we prevailed in two more cases, bringing our streak to a total of 14 climate victories during the Trump administration.

First, we challenged a plan that would have allowed oil and gas drilling on 45,000 acres of oil and gas leases in western Colorado. Because of our

continued success in the courtroom, the Bureau of Land Management voluntarily halted drilling on those acres. Further, the Bureau agreed to revise land management plans in the Grand Junction and Colorado River Valley Field Offices that govern about 2 million acres of public lands in the region.

This victory benefits public health and many prized landscapes. These leases are near three state parks, a migratory bird hotspot, the "18 Hours of Fruita" mountain bike race site, within a half-mile of a K-12 public school, and beneath Vega Reservoir, an important area for wildlife, recreation, irrigation, and hydroelectric power.

Second, we challenged a 20-year Grand Junction resource management plan allocating nearly 1 million acres for oil and gas leasing, which land managers predicted would allow nearly 4,000 new oil and gas

wells. The Bureau failed to analyze climate impacts from lease sales in the plan area and prioritized oil and gas extraction over all other land values, such as wildlife, water, and recreation.

Keeping all this carbon in the ground is something to celebrate. But we have larger goals. Just as this year's IPCC report confirms, our leaders must enact reforms on the largest scales to prevent the wrath of climate chaos from worsening even further. WELC is working hard every day not only to keep climate pollution in the ground using the power of the law, but also to lead our top policymakers on a path that will ensure the generations to come have a future.

We are living in the era in which our climate future will be decided. We must do absolutely everything possible in this fight for survival.

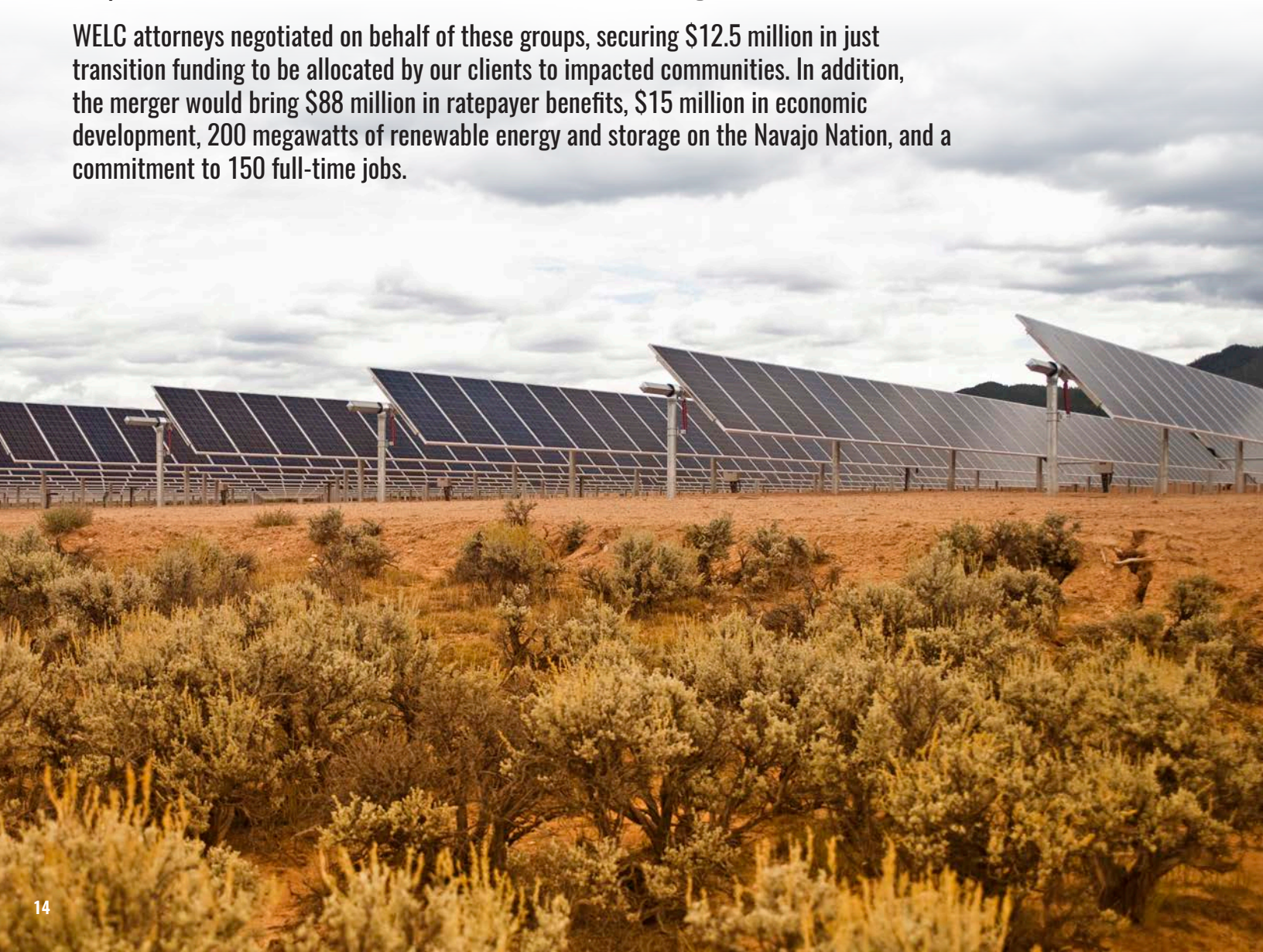


FIGHTING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN NEW MEXICO

Navajo and other front-line communities in New Mexico's Four Corners region have suffered as a "sacrifice zone" for almost 60 years as home to two polluting coal-fired power plants. But a proposed shift to renewable energy promises a healthier future and clean energy jobs.

WELC is representing Navajo and community groups in official hearings to determine how and if a renewables-focused company, Avangrid, may merge with the local power company to speed a transition away from coal and toward renewable energy.

WELC attorneys negotiated on behalf of these groups, securing \$12.5 million in just transition funding to be allocated by our clients to impacted communities. In addition, the merger would bring \$88 million in ratepayer benefits, \$15 million in economic development, 200 megawatts of renewable energy and storage on the Navajo Nation, and a commitment to 150 full-time jobs.



"As a father, I spend a lot of time thinking about the planet and future my kids will inherit. Our climate and energy team works to align government decisionmaking with the urgency of our climate crisis—which means securing an end to fossil fuel exploitation and bringing justice to the communities who have been forced to endure the harms that exploitation has caused.

While our mission will not be achieved overnight, our success is helping to create a pathway to a brighter future."

*Kyle Tisdel
Climate and Energy Director
Taos, New Mexico*

WIN KEEPING 85 MILLION TONS OF COAL IN THE GROUND

This year, WELC and our partners won an important case against a planned 1,100-acre expansion of Spring Creek, the largest coal mine in Montana. The expansion would have unearthed an additional 85 million tons of coal. The judge found the federal government flouted the law by failing to address the climate and air pollution costs of more coal mining and burning as well as the environmental impacts of coal trains. To address the climate crisis, the government must implement a managed decline of coal mining and burning to protect public health, ensure full cleanup, and help us justly and equitably transition to a sustainable clean energy future.

SAFEGUARDING GREATER CHACO FROM FRACKING

We are in court to nullify 42 Bureau of Land Management oil and gas leases in New Mexico's Greater Chaco region, even as we support long-term legislative solutions. Greater Chaco is sacred to Tribes, but is over 90% leased for drilling. Even more exploitation would worsen disruptions to community life, public health, and historic and cultural properties. For these leases, the Bureau rushed public comment and even skipped some altogether. The agency also fell short on analyzing the cumulative climate impacts of drilling as required by law. With 40,000 wells already in the region and the climate crisis raging, Greater Chaco's communities need a reprieve, not more drilling.

PROTECTING CLEAN WATER IN MONTANA AND NORTH DAKOTA

We are challenging Bureau of Land Management oil and gas lease sales on 58,297 acres of public land in central and eastern Montana and North Dakota. We previously won a court case on these same issues, but the agency did not learn its lesson. Here, federal land managers again ignored cumulative climate impacts and failed to adequately assess the potential harm oil and gas extraction would have on the area's groundwater. As long as the Bureau continues to ignore the fact that every metric ton of pollution contributes to the climate crisis, we will continue to take it to court and win.

WE ARE DEDICATED TO PROTECTING WILDLIFE IN THE WEST WHILE PRESERVING AND RESTORING THE HEALTHY, FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEMS THEY RELY ON FOR SURVIVAL.

VICTORY FOR MARBLED MURRELETS

Thanks to our legal advocacy, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission gave marbled murrelets more protection by reclassifying the birds from threatened to endangered under the state's Endangered Species Act. The marbled murrelet population has declined dramatically due to climate change and extensive logging in Oregon's coast range. These rare seabirds are considered one of the least resilient species to climate change and are at risk of being wiped out by a single catastrophic event, such as wildfire. In 2019, we prevailed in a lawsuit challenging the Commission's first decision to deny additional protections to the marbled murrelet, and are pleased this time the Commission followed the science and provided the enhanced protections for the sea bird it so desperately needs.

WIN FOR MONTANA GRIZZLY AND BULL TROUT HABITAT

This summer, our legal team won an important victory requiring site-specific analysis of road building in grizzly bear and bull trout territory in Montana's Flathead National Forest. Without our legal advocacy, a forest plan could have been used to green-light increased road construction and logging in sensitive wildlife habitat for at least the next 15 years, and likely much longer. Grizzly bears and bull trout remain imperiled throughout their range, including on the Flathead. We will not allow the essential habitat provided by the Flathead National Forest to be degraded by the threats roads and other development pose to the true recovery of these iconic Western species.

PROTECTING THE CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST IN IDAHO

Even after our clients won a court case on the issue in 2015, the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho has refused to revisit its decision—as ordered by a federal judge—allowing motorized use of a high-elevation trail in a recommended wilderness area in the national forest. We are challenging the Forest Service's six-year delay in responding to its loss in court. Motorized use of the Fish Lake trail has caused extensive damage to waterways, and presents a threat to the area's Endangered Species Act-listed bull trout and grizzly bears, as well as the Clearwater's struggling elk population.

DEFENDING CANADA LYNX

Canada lynx and their habitat are threatened by climate change, wildfires, logging, development, motorized access, and trapping. Since designating Canada lynx as threatened with extinction 21 years ago, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has gone to extraordinary lengths to deny the big cat necessary protections.

Virtually every step the Service has taken to help lynx has been prompted by WELC's legal victories. Now, the Service is preparing to declare the lynx recovered, even though experts estimate only a few hundred remain in the lower 48 states.

The assertion that lynx are recovered is not only invalid and outdated, but also is in direct conflict with the best available science, including the agency's own 2017 species status assessment.

We are suing the agency to force it to work on a recovery plan that will make a real impact to help this wild cat survive.



PROTECTING WOLVES ACROSS THE NATION

Gray wolves lost on election day in 2016. WELC's attorneys knew immediately the incoming administration would attempt to strip wolves of much-needed endangered species protections across the lower 48 states.

Our legal team devoted itself to preparing a strong, science-based case for the U.S. to continue its wolf restoration efforts.

When the Trump administration announced what we all feared, ironically on the very day the American people overwhelmingly voted the former president out of office, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service touted an imaginary success story of complete wolf recovery. But that fantasy couldn't be farther from the truth, as the Endangered Species Act requires protection for any animal "in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range."

Only 132 wolves are believed to exist in Washington state, with only about 30 outside eastern Washington. Scientists estimate 173 live in Oregon, with just 19 outside the northeastern part of the state. A handful of wolves exist in California, and wolves remain functionally absent from their historical habitat in Nevada, Utah, and Colorado.

The Endangered Species Act demands federal wildlife managers restore wolves in the ample suitable habitats afforded by the wild public lands throughout the West.

Yet, the Service says wolves everywhere are recovered because there are sufficient numbers in the Great Lakes states. We are forcing the agency to defend that unjustifiable position in federal court, and we aim to restore the protections wolves west of the Rockies need to recover.

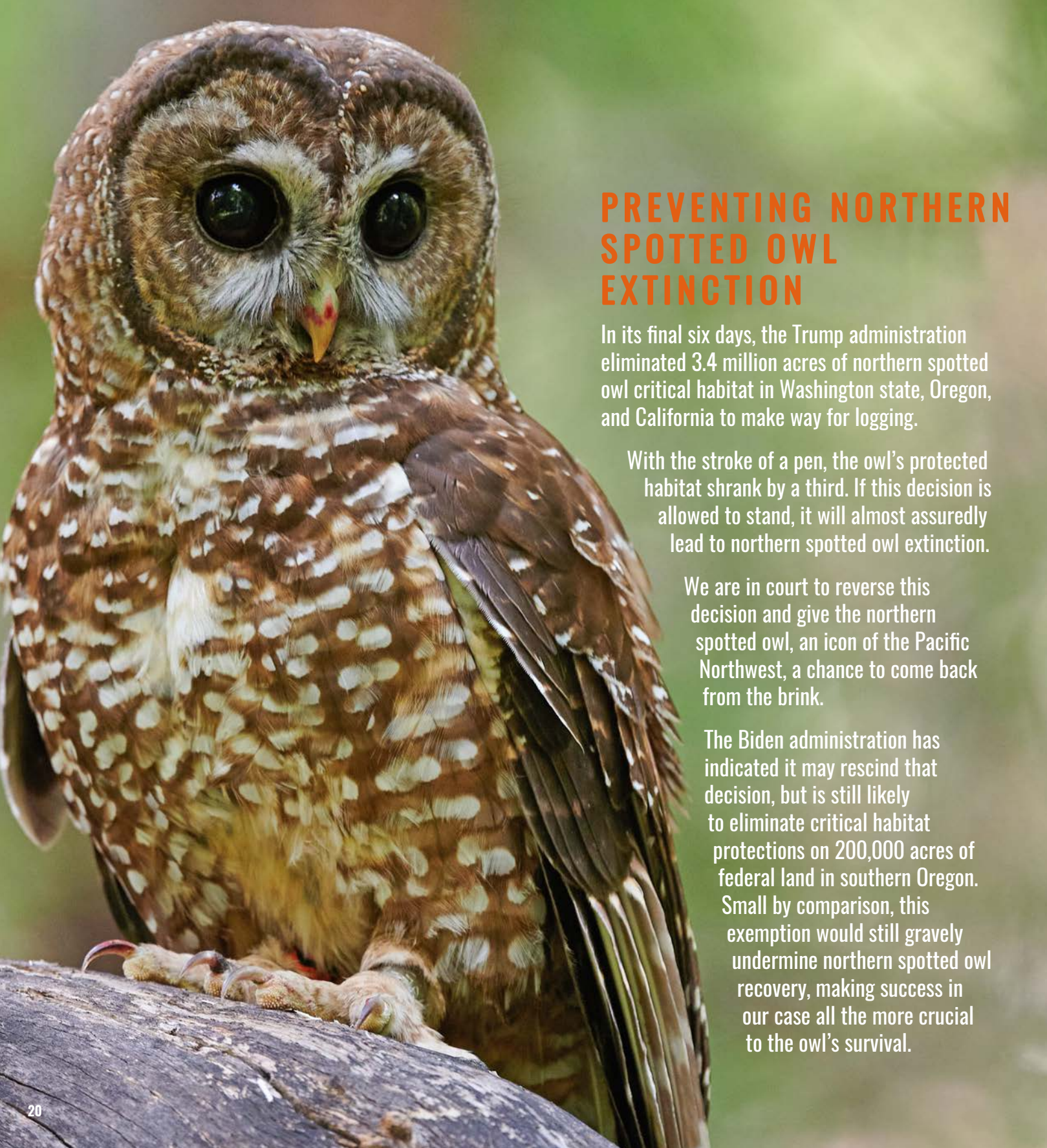
In the delisting announcement, the Trump administration touted an "ongoing commitment and proven track record of states and tribes to continue managing for healthy wolf populations once delisted." In reality, months after federal wildlife managers lifted protections, Wisconsin held a derby-style wolf hunt, killing at least 216 wolves.

The event took only three days, and overshot state wildlife managers' quota of 119 wolves by 80%. Since those terrible three days, Wisconsin's wolf population has fallen by a full third. That is irresponsible, unsustainable, and unhealthy for wolf populations. Wisconsin has since authorized another wolf hunt in November 2021 that will kill an additional 300 wolves. With our court case, we not only hope to aid western wolves, but those anywhere in the lower 48 states unfortunate enough to live under such poor, scientifically indefensible management.

Unless the Biden administration takes drastic action, our court case is wolf advocates' best hope to restore the endangered species protections wolves need to return and eventually thrive throughout their historic range. And it is not just about the wolves themselves. Wolves are a keystone species, regulating animal populations and improving ecosystem health in ways that are tremendously beneficial to a litany of plants, animals, and even rivers.

Allowing people to kill wolves in Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana has already stunted recovery and damaged ecosystems in those states. Applying this same death sentence to wolves throughout the contiguous U.S. would nationalize these negative effects, with potentially catastrophic ripple effects on ecosystems where wolves have yet to fully recover. We will not stand for it. We will use the full power of the law to defend wolves across the country.





PREVENTING NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL EXTINCTION

In its final six days, the Trump administration eliminated 3.4 million acres of northern spotted owl critical habitat in Washington state, Oregon, and California to make way for logging.

With the stroke of a pen, the owl's protected habitat shrank by a third. If this decision is allowed to stand, it will almost assuredly lead to northern spotted owl extinction.

We are in court to reverse this decision and give the northern spotted owl, an icon of the Pacific Northwest, a chance to come back from the brink.

The Biden administration has indicated it may rescind that decision, but is still likely to eliminate critical habitat protections on 200,000 acres of federal land in southern Oregon. Small by comparison, this exemption would still gravely undermine northern spotted owl recovery, making success in our case all the more crucial to the owl's survival.

"Our essential legal advocacy on behalf of our nation's most imperiled species provides a vital voice for the voiceless. We are fighting every day to ensure the health of native wildlife and ecosystems across the western U.S."

***Kelly Nokes
Shared Earth Wildlife Attorney
Buena Vista, Colorado***

FIGHTING BEAR BAITING IN IDAHO AND WYOMING

We challenged a U.S. Forest Service policy that allows states to determine whether they allow bear baiting in national forests within their borders. Under this policy, Idaho and Wyoming permit hunters to pile caches of human foods such as doughnuts and bread in national forests to attract and kill black bears. Not only does the practice violate "fair chase" hunting ethics, black bear baiting can attract threatened grizzly bears. Many grizzly bears have been killed at black bear baiting stations in national forests in Idaho and Wyoming, including the first grizzly seen in Idaho's Bitterroot region since 1946.

STANDING UP FOR WOLVERINES

Five years ago, WELC's legal team defeated the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in court over its decision to deny wolverines endangered species protection even though they number only about 300 in the lower 48 states. Predictably, the Trump administration again denied the imperiled animal protections in 2020 despite no new scientific support for such a determination. Public records show the Service decided not to protect wolverines from day one and worked backward to justify the decision. It is scientifically unjustifiable. We are again challenging the Service in court over its political decision to deny wolverines endangered species protections.

PROMOTING WINTER STEELHEAD TROUT RECOVERY

Winter steelhead trout in Oregon's upper Willamette River basin, at just 5-10% of their historic population levels, are imperiled and protected under the Endangered Species Act. Scientists agree that stocking out-of-basin, hatchery-raised summer steelhead into the Santiam River basin—within the Willamette River basin—can harm winter steelhead. Despite these facts, 122,000 hatchery-raised summer steelhead are to be released into these waters every year. We are challenging this program to ensure summer steelhead have a real chance at recovery in the Santiam River basin.

TOGETHER, WE DEFEND THE WEST

Your donations make a direct impact on the public lands, wildlife, and communities of the American West. As a public interest law firm, we do not charge clients and partners for services, but rely instead on charitable gifts from individuals, families, businesses, and foundations to achieve our mission. Our victories are not possible without your support.

THANK YOU!

A NOTE TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our donors. In the past year, more than 1,800 individuals and families made contributions to WELC—a truly inspiring number. These gifts allow us to provide *pro bono* legal services to our clients and to use the power of the law to defend the West’s environment and communities. Your support is critically important to our mission. Simply put, we could not do what we do without your help. *Thank you!*

For many years we have listed the names of all our donors in our annual report. Listing these names was a small way to show appreciation and offer recognition. However, this year we have decided to make a change. We will continue to list the names of our charitable foundation supporters, our business supporters, and our planned giving supporters. But we will no longer list the names of all our generous donors. We would like to explain to you why we have made this decision.

Over the past decade, our donor rolls have grown exponentially. This is a great thing! The increasing support we received enabled us to hire new attorneys, open new offices in Seattle and Santa Fe, and offer our free legal services to even more clients. But this increase in supporters has also meant that the list of names in our annual report has grown very long. In the past few years we have added more pages to our annual report to list all donor names and this year we would have needed to add four more pages to ensure all were listed. Adding more pages would have required more money, used more natural resources, and created an even longer report.

We believe—and we think you will agree—that your contributions are better utilized fighting in court to protect grizzly bears and salmon, to stop reckless fracking, to safeguard our iconic forests and clean water, and to secure a healthier, better future for the West.

In no way does this change indicate that we appreciate your support any less or take for granted your partnership in our work. In fact, quite the opposite. We are so proud of what we have achieved together over nearly 30 years of advocating for our wildlife, our public lands, our climate, and our communities. We are humbled by your dedication to defending the West. We acknowledge all that you do to make our work possible. And we thank you for putting your trust in our organization.

In our communications with you we often say “Our victories are your victories.” There is a powerful truth contained within this statement. Our staff and board work tirelessly to protect the West because we have a passion for justice and a love for the region’s natural heritage. We know you share this passion and love—you have shown us with your loyal and committed support. Every gift we receive is deeply meaningful to our staff and board. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts and we genuinely mean it when we say: *Our victories are your victories.*

GIL F. STAENDER LEGACY CIRCLE DONORS THAT NAME WELC IN THEIR ESTATE PLANS

Emory W. and Marilyn M. Ackley	Pam Fletcher	Francis W. Mangels	Timothy J. Thomas
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Fritz M. and Ginger Bachem	Rev. Steven E. Greenebaum	John I. Mattill	Stephanie and Ken Wallace
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Joseph Bower	Martha J. and Robert Hall	Timothy McNally	Lornie White
Alan Caplan	Thomas Patrick Hammond	Dyan Oldenburg	
Douglas Clark	Roger J. Harmon	Peter M. and Jean C. Ossorio	
Thomas and Lucille Clohessy	Steven J. Hollowell	James A. Posewitz Trust	
Jemma T. Crae and	Harvey Johnson	Michael P. Ryan	
Dana B. MacDonald	Gayle Joslin and Jim Posewitz	Charlotte R. Sahnnow and	
Thomas and Lila V. Creager	Phil Katzen and Joan Kleinberg	Alan Eliason	
Dennis A. Dewitt	Jane Ann Lamph	John M. Sherman	
Benton Elliott	Kirk Lawton	Wendy S. Simmons and	
Raymond L. Elliott	Mary Levy	Lori Hilterbrand	
Louise and Jeanette Entwisle	Judith Lindsay	Gilbert F. Staender	
Jane C. Fessenden	Edna Litten	Arthur Thiede	

FOUNDATIONS AND CHARITABLE FUNDS

11th Hour Project	Cogswell-Grant Charitable Fund	Jubitz Family Foundation	Seattle Foundation
444S Foundation	Community Foundation of North	Just Woke Up Fund of the Santa	Shared Earth Foundation
Agerter Judd Family Fund at the	Central Washington	Fe Community Foundation	Suzan Mackler Fund
East Bay Community	Cross Charitable Foundation	Kenneth White Trust	Swinomish Indian Tribal
Foundation	Energy Foundation	Lazar Foundation	Community
An Advised Fund of Oregon	Environment Foundation	Mackenzie Charitable Fund	Taos Community Foundation
Community Foundation	Evanston Community Foundation	Maki Foundation	The Connable Office, Inc.
Bella Vista Foundation	Evergreen Hill Fund of The Oregon	Methow Valley Citizens Council	The Healy Foundation
Bullitt Foundation	Community Foundation	Michael R. Hansen Fund For A	The Jewish Community Federation
Cabin Fund of the Santa Fe	Firedoll Foundation	Better World	and Endowment Fund
Community Foundation	Fund to Protect NM Air, Water and	Mitchell David Solomon	The Norcliffe Foundation
Cambridge Investment Research	Federal Public Lands at the	Foundation, Inc.	The Russell Family Foundation
Campizondo Foundation, a Donor	Santa Fe Community	New-Land Foundation	The San Diego Foundation
Advised Fund of U.S.	Foundation	Northern Trust Charitable Giving	Water Foundation
Charitable Gift Trust	Gwladys and John Zurlo Charitable	Program	Wiancko Family Donor Advised
Carroll Petrie Foundation	Foundation	Peter and Josephine Von Hippel	Fund
Christopher and Priscilla Williams	Harder Foundation	Family Fund of the Bank of	Wilburforce Foundation
Fund of The Oregon	Head and Heart Foundation	America Charitable Gift Fund	Winky Foundation
Community Foundation	John Sperling Foundation	Santa Fe Community Foundation	Wy'east Foundation

ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND EMPLOYEE GIVING PROGRAMS

501 Commons	Cid's Food Market	Planet in Peace Naujokas	Waterwise Gardening
Applied Scientific Instrumentation,	Corrie Yackulic Law Firm, P.L.L.C.	Network for Good	Winter Green Farm
Inc.	Edward Jones	Skjersaa Group at Duke Warner	World Cup Café
Benevity Community Impact Fund	Law Office of Karl G. Anuta, PC	Realty	
Caffry and Flower, Attorneys at	Mountain Rose Herbs	United Way of Central New	
Law	One Williams Center	Mexico	



WAYS TO GIVE

We fight in court to defend the American West on behalf of our clients free of charge, but we can't do it without your support. As a public interest law firm, we rely on charitable gifts from individuals, families, businesses, and foundations to achieve our mission. Your donation is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

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GIL F. STAENDER LEGACY CIRCLE: Name WELC in your will, trust, or other estate plans and leave a lasting legacy to defend the West.

ASSETS: Gifts of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUSTS AND CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES: Payments are made to beneficiaries during their lifetime and the remainder is added to our endowment fund.

We can also receive donations from workplace giving, business giving, real estate and vehicle donations, tribute gifts, and more. Please contact David Lawlor, Director of Development at (541) 255-0209 or lawlor@westernlaw.org with questions or to learn more. We're happy to help and discuss options with you, and we welcome gifts of all sizes.

CLIENTS AND PARTNERS

Ranging from small grassroots to large national groups, we represented, partnered, and worked with more than 195 organizations and individuals in 2021.

ACLU Montana
Alliance for the Wild Rockies
American Forests
American Rivers
American Whitewater
Amigos Bravos
Appalachian Mountain Club
Archaeology Southwest
Arizona Zoological Society
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Audubon Society of Portland
Backcountry Horsemen of America
Backcountry Horsemen of California
Beyond Toxics
Blue Mountains Forest Partners
Bob and Gail Barker
California Native Plant Society
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance
California Trout
CalUWild
Cascade Forest Conservancy
Cascadia Wildlands
Center for American Progress
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Civic Policy
Center for Environmental Law and Policy
Center for Food Safety
Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Chaco Alliance
Chama Peak Land Alliance
Citizens Against LNG
Citizens Caring for the Future
Citizens for a Healthy Community
Citizens for Sustainable Development

Clean Air Task Force
Clean Water Action
Climate Solutions
Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy
Coast Range Association
Coast Range Forest Watch
Colorado State University
Columbia Gorge Audubon Society
Columbia Riverkeeper
Community Association for Restoration of the Environment
Compass Science Communication
Concerned Citizens of the Yakama Reservation
Conservation Colorado
Conservation Voters New Mexico
Cottonwood Environmental Law Center
Crag Law Center
Dakota Resource Council
Defenders of Wildlife
Dennis and Bonnie White
Diné Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment
Dr. James Gawel
Dr. John Bishop
Dunton Hot Springs, Inc.
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Ecosystem Workforce Program
Enhancing Montana's Wildlife and Habitat
Environment America
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Protection Information Center
Food and Water Watch

Footloose Montana
Forest Issues Group
Fort Belknap Indian Community
Friends of Living Oregon Waters
Friends of Oak Ridge
Friends of the Bitterroot
Friends of the Clearwater
Friends of the Crazy Mountains
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Wild Swan
Friends of Toppenish Creek
George Wuerthner
Gold Country Trails Council
Grand Canyon Trust
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
HECHO: Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and Outdoors
Helena Hunters and Anglers Association
High Country Conservation Advocates
High Sierra Hikers Association
Humane Society of the United States
Hydropower Reform Coalition
Indian People's Action
Institute for Fisheries Resources
Interfaith Power and Light
Karuk Tribe
Klamath Forest Alliance
Klamath Riverkeeper
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Kootenai Environmental Alliance
Law Offices of Charles M. Tebbutt
League of Conservation Voters
Los Padres ForestWatch

Lummi Indian Nation
Moms Clean Air Force
Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Montana Elders for a Livable Tomorrow
Montana Environmental Information Center
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
Native American Voters Alliance Education Project
Native Ecosystems Council
Native Fish Society
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Mexico Audubon Council
New Mexico Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
New Mexico Physicians for Social Responsibility
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
North American Falconers Association
Northern Blues Forest Collaborative
Northern Plains Resource Council
Northwest Energy Coalition
Northwest Environmental Advocates
Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
Oregon Coast Alliance
Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition
Oregon State University
Oregon Wild
Our Children's Trust
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Pacific Rivers
Pasado's Safe Haven
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste
Pipeline Awareness Southern Oregon
Powder River Basin Resource Council
Public Justice
Public Land and Water Access
Puget Soundkeeper Alliance
RE Sources for Sustainable Communities
Renewable Northwest
Rico Trails Alliance
Rio Arriba Concerned Citizens
Rocky Mountain Wild
Rogue Climate
Rogue Flyfishers
Rogue Riverkeeper
San Juan Citizens Alliance
Sequoia ForestKeeper
Sheep Mountain Alliance
Sierra Club
Sierra Club - Grand Canyon Chapter
Sierra Club - Mother Lode Chapter
Sierra Club - Washington State Chapter
Sierra Club Environmental Law Program
Sierra Forest Legacy
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Sky Island Alliance
Skyline Sportsmen's Alliance
Socially Responsible Agriculture Project
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
South Yuba River Citizens League
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Southwest Environmental Center
Spokane Riverkeeper/Center for Justice
Susan Saul
Sustainable Northwest

Swan View Coalition
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
The Conservation Angler
The Nature Conservancy
The Pew Charitable Trusts
The Wilderness Society
Tó Nizhóní Aní
Trout Unlimited
U.S. Climate Plan
Umpqua Watersheds
University of New Mexico School of Law
Natural Resources and Environmental Law Clinic
University of Oregon
University of Washington
Upper Green River Alliance
Washington Native Plant Society
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Western Resource Advocates
Western Slope Conservation Center
Western Watersheds Project
What's Upstream
WildEarth Guardians
Wilderness Watch
Wilderness Workshop
Wildlands Network
Willamette Riverkeeper
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Yurok Tribe
350 Eugene
350 Montana
350 New Mexico
350 Santa Fe

FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUE

Grants	\$1,865,500	50.9%
Contributions	\$897,376	24.5%
Program Services	\$529,056	14.4%
Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)*	\$347,200	9.5%
Investment & Other Income	\$24,461	0.7%
TOTAL	\$3,663,593	

EXPENSE

Program	\$2,203,249	80.7%
Administrative	\$311,692	11.4%
Fundraising	\$215,909	7.9%
TOTAL	\$2,730,850	

*The Paycheck Protection Program government grant is for 2020 only.

These amounts are from our audited 2020 financial statements. Net assets at 12/31/20 are \$4,043,917.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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