

DOCKET



This is a big year for WELC—and you helped us get here. We are celebrating 30 years of defending the public lands, wildlife, and communities of the western U.S. Thank you for partnering with us to reach this milestone! Our team is stronger than ever. This report highlights the impacts we will have together in the year ahead.

PROTECTING GRIZZLIES ACROSS THE WESTERN U.S.

Grizzly bears are listed as threatened on the endangered species list and should be receiving federal protections. Yet, many barriers still stand between grizzlies and recovery. In 2023, we aim to build on our legacy of defending these iconic bears. We filed a legal case against the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for allowing grizzly bears to be killed and removed through a largely unregulated predator killing program in Montana. The killing and removing of grizzly bears (including females) moving across Montana is harming the bears' recovery in the region. Our legal team also filed a federal lawsuit to protect grizzlies from black bear baiting in Idaho and Wyoming because grizzlies have been killed at these bear baiting sites. This hunting practice involves heaping human food such as donuts to "bait" or attract black bears where they can then be shot and killed—often in grizzly habitat. You can count on us to continue fighting for the long-term recovery of grizzly bears across the western U.S.

You make our cases and advocacy possible—THANK YOU!



CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE: SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC LANDS FROM FRACKING

Our team is tackling the climate crisis head on. We understand there is no time to waste, and we are seeking bold climate action from the federal government—now. We are challenging the Bureau of Land Management’s decision to approve more than 4,000 applications for oil and gas drilling permits in Wyoming and New Mexico. Our court case challenges 75% of the Biden administration’s fracking approvals in its first year. Our goal is to set new legal precedent that will impose substantive limits on all future oil and gas drilling.

We are also using the law to prevent air pollution and adverse health, safety, and climate effects that would be associated with several thousand new oil and gas wells. This pollution disproportionately harms frontline communities as well as those facing historical and ongoing inequities and injustices. Our legal advocacy on climate change will also benefit more than 100 climate-threatened wildlife species and their critical habitat. Our team has a history of success in climate action, and our forward-thinking leadership will continue making a difference for climate justice across the western U.S.

DEFENDING PUBLIC RIGHTS AND BEDROCK ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

Core components of the National Environmental Policy Act, the bedrock environmental law that safeguards clean air, clean water, and health, as well as imperiled wildlife and wildlands, are at risk. These changes would stifle local communities’ right to participate in environmental decision-making processes and exempt countless federal actions from consideration of climate impacts. We are challenging these rollbacks in court on behalf of 21 conservation, recreation, and environmental justice organizations.



FIRST CHILDREN’S CLIMATE TRIAL IN U.S. HISTORY

With our partners at Our Children’s Trust and McGarvey Law, we filed a lawsuit on behalf of 16 youths against the state of Montana. We assert that by supporting a fossil fuel-driven energy system that contributes to the climate crisis, Montana is violating the youths’ constitutional rights to a clean and healthful environment; to seek safety, health, and happiness; and to individual dignity and equal protection of the law. The plaintiffs and their attorneys are preparing for a trial this June—the first children’s climate trial in U.S. history.



PROTECTING WILDLIFE: WOLVES, LYNX, SALMON, AND MORE

For the past 30 years, we have won cases for imperiled wildlife, and we will build on that legacy in the year ahead. We are preparing numerous court cases to protect and recover iconic, native wildlife of the western U.S.

We are leading three court cases against the federal government over its failures to protect and work toward recovery for Mexican wolves. Stronger recovery efforts are essential to return Mexican gray wolves to their rightful place in the wilds of the southwestern U.S. We are also continuing to protect Canada lynx, and are preparing for their national critical habitat designation and recovery plan. In addition, we are pursuing new litigation to protect forested habitat for lynx in Washington state. In Oregon and California, we are working to recover wild coho salmon and their habitat in the Shasta River. We are challenging the flawed Shasta River safe harbor program that allows a dam owner and water diverters to harm the threatened salmon in exchange for scant stewardship practices on private lands. You can count on us to secure legal victories that translate into real, on-the-ground protections for these imperiled animals—and more.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, HEALTH, AND SACRED LANDS

We are leading the way on legislation to reform the New Mexico Oil and Gas Act to protect the environment, public health, and provide fair treatment and meaningful public involvement—especially for communities of color and low-income, Tribal, and Indigenous communities. We are also continuing to defend the Greater Chaco region from fracking. This year, our legal team is developing strategies to establish new precedent on protecting public health and sacred sites from oil and gas exploitation.





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We are a nonprofit, public-interest environmental law center.
We use the power of the law to safeguard the public lands,
wildlife, and communities of the western U.S. in the face of a
changing climate.

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Children's Trust.



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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
1993-2023

FIGHTING FOR CLEAN WATER

For far too long, industrial animal feeding operations have discharged toxic pollution into the waters of the Puget Sound, harming communities and wildlife. We are using the power of the law to challenge these pollution permits, as they continually violate state and federal laws. We have won prior related cases and our team will tenaciously hold the government and industry accountable as we fight to protect Washington's communities, wildlife, public health, and safe drinking water.

**OPEN AND READ ABOUT
OUR UPCOMING CASES
FOR 2023 >>**

