



Western
Environmental
Law Center

VICTORY REPORT

These victories are your victories.

Charitable gifts from individuals, families, and foundations make our wins and advocacy possible.

We provide legal representation for and work alongside more than 165 partners and clients each year. These include community groups, small nonprofits, large national groups, Tribes, youths, and more.

As a public interest law firm, we do not charge for our services. It is your support that makes achieving our mission possible. Together, we defend the West.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
GENEROUS SUPPORT.**

WIN FOR WILDLIFE AND HABITAT IN OREGON

Together, we helped Oregon become the first state to have permanent, dedicated funding for its State Wildlife Action Plan. The new “1.25% for Wildlife” law will generate about \$37 million/year and fund the recovery and conservation of Oregon’s most imperiled wildlife and habitats. It also funds invasive species control, wildlife coexistence programs, wildlife connectivity, wildfire risk reduction, and more.



OUR VICTORIES



HOLDING THE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE

We represented environmental and community groups in a thorough, evidence-based process that led the New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission to reform outdated oil and gas bonding and cleanup rules.

The updated rules mark a major step toward protecting New Mexican communities, land, air, and water.

The commission adopted some of the strongest safeguards in the country to prevent orphan wells and ensure oil and gas corporations pay to clean up the wells they drill and operate.

When wells are not properly plugged, they can leak toxic chemicals into the air and groundwater, threatening public health, drinking water, agriculture, the climate, and nearby communities.

These modernized oil and gas rules will ensure corporations pay to clean up their messes, instead of pushing the costs on the public.

CLEAN AND HEALTHY AIR

Years in the making and following intense public hearings, our team celebrated another major win for New Mexico as the state Environmental Improvement Board unanimously approved a significant update to its air quality permit fee structure that increases essential funding for inspections, monitoring, and enforcement.

New Mexicans have for far too long borne the burdens of air pollution—respiratory illness, dangerously elevated particulates, and degraded lands—caused by the oil and gas industry. Change is on the way.

Increasing state monitoring and enforcement resources will help deliver stronger air quality protections to communities, with big industry—not community members—bearing the costs. A true breath of fresh air.

The WELC team of legal and policy analysts advocated for these meaningful changes every step of the way, helping make a difference for communities and clean air across New Mexico.



PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILDLANDS

Our team won an important case protecting grizzly bears, Canada lynx, and pine forests just outside of Yellowstone National Park.

In response to a WELC lawsuit, a federal court halted the U.S. Forest Service's plan to recklessly log more than 16,500 acres of forest adjacent to the park.

This logging project had proposed new clearcuts and more roads in an especially vulnerable area for grizzly bears. The U.S. Forest Service did not inform the public about the location of the roads and failed to apply the best available science on the bears' habitat needs.

Our victory now requires the U.S. Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service to redo key analyses to protect threatened grizzly bears and Canada lynx.

This is a significant win protecting wildlife and forests in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. You can count on our skilled attorneys to defend native, imperiled wildlife across the West.

DEFENDING WOLVERINE

When the U.S. Forest Service revealed plans to allow snowmobiling on an *additional* 80,000 acres of public National Forest System land within important wolverine denning habitat in northern Idaho, we sent the agency a notice and prepared a lawsuit. In response, the agency agreed to suspend that plan while it undertakes a new analysis on how such widespread snowmobile use would affect wolverines in this important habitat.

There are only about 300 wolverines in the entire lower 48 states, and the limited, wintry habitats they need for denning and survival are already under threat from climate change. These last remaining places need to be protected from destructive snowmobile use.

This important case is one of the first challenges focused on winter recreation's impacts on wolverines and their habitat. Our team of wildlife experts will follow the new agency analysis to ensure the best available science is utilized in decision making so wolverines get the protections they need to thrive in the wild.



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WE DEFEND THE WEST

The Western Environmental Law Center is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of the law to foster thriving, resilient western lands, waters, wildlife, and communities in the face of a changing climate.

We envision a thriving West, abundant with protected and interconnected ecosystems, powered by renewable energy, and cared for by communities brought together in an ecology of kinship.

Our talented team of attorneys and policy experts advocate for communities in the western U.S., representing national and local environmental allies each year.

EMERGENT HORIZONS is our strategy to seek new paths that lead away from the ruins of what was to the promise of what can be. We are revitalizing environmental law in service of a just, thriving, and abundant Earth. Your support makes our victories possible.

