

# 2017 DOCKET

**BIG IMPACT. BIG CASES. BIG YEAR AHEAD.**

The Western Environmental Law Center has wielded the full power of the law to defend the West for more than two decades. Our legal team fought the anti-environment Bush Administration every step of the way and we are not about to back down now against the Trump Administration. We are well positioned to navigate the uncharted waters posed by our current political reality and we will continue to serve as a steady, strategic partner to the conservation movement and the West's communities, providing our pro bono legal services where they are needed most. During the year ahead we will face challenges like never before, but we find strength in knowing that we possess the skill, experience, and expertise to defend the West's wildlife, wildlands, and communities. In partnership with you and the 150+ conservation groups we work with annually, we are a powerful voice for the environment.

This report highlights just some of the important work our supporters will make possible in 2017. One of our most critical cases this year is to protect Yellowstone's grizzly bears. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service incredulously plans to strip Endangered Species Act protections from Yellowstone's still-recovering grizzly bear population. Grizzlies and their food sources are vulnerable to climate change and it's important for the health of the entire ecosystem to have these bears in the wild. Moreover, if grizzlies lose legal protections, state officials said they will allow trophy hunting. We are prepared to go to court and fight for Yellowstone's grizzlies, and we are humbled and honored by your support that makes our defense of this majestic animal possible—*thank you*.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Schlenker-Goodrich'.

Erik Schlenker-Goodrich  
Executive Director





# WE DEFEND THE WEST

## DEFENDING COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES FROM RECKLESS FRACKING

Across the Intermountain West we are using the full power of the law to safeguard families and communities from the harms of reckless fracking and climate pollution. For example, we will fight this year in federal court to protect 379,950 acres of public lands in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah from irresponsible oil and gas leases. We are also demanding a halt to harmful fracking operations in New Mexico's Chaco Canyon region, Colorado's North Fork Valley, and the Colorado River Valley. And, in a potentially precedent-setting case, we are representing environmental author Terry Tempest Williams who purchased oil and gas leases with the intent of protecting Utah's public lands from fracking.

## PROTECTING RESILIENT WILDLANDS AND OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

Through strategic legal advocacy we will build resilient communities and ecosystems that are better prepared to respond to the threats of climate change. For example, in eastern Oregon we play a key role in several community-based stakeholder groups, which work to improve the health of the region's national forests while also bolstering the local economy. In New Mexico, we seek to safeguard critical forest wetlands to protect water supplies, provide clean water for wildlife and people, and sequester carbon. Our forest law experts are working across the American West to ensure that existing legal protections for ancient forests, rivers, and wildlife will be based on sound science, not politics.

## FIGHTING TO KEEP MILLIONS OF TONS OF DIRTY COAL IN THE GROUND

Plain and simple, the coal industry is a threat to our climate and communities. With the impacts of climate change already being felt, we must quickly transition away from dirty fossil fuels and toward clean, carbon-free energy. To make our goal a reality, in New Mexico we are working to secure a fixed retirement date for the coal-fired Four Corners Power Plant and to stop expansion of the Navajo Mine that feeds the plant. In Montana we seek to close three of the worst coal mines in the West, the Bull Mountains Mine, Rosebud Mine, and Spring Creek Mine. The mines' owners want to massively expand operations and we will fight in court to protect clean air and water, local communities, public health, and our climate.

## SAFEGUARDING IMPERILED NATIVE WILDLIFE ACROSS THE WEST

In 2017, our legal team will go to court to defend iconic Western wildlife including wolves, grizzly bears, salmon, wolverines, and Canada lynx. We are employing laws such as the Endangered Species Act to protect these critically important animals from the harms of trapping, shrinking habitat, and the impacts of climate change. We have filed a lawsuit demanding that Wildlife Services, a rogue federal agency that exterminates wildlife, be banned from shooting and killing wolves at the behest of the State of Oregon. Scientific studies show killing wolves is ineffective in preventing wolf and livestock conflicts. Wolves belong in the West and have a positive impact on wildlife in the face of climate change.





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We are a nonprofit, public interest environmental law firm.

We use the power of the law to safeguard the wildlife,  
wildlands, and communities of the American West.

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Every bit of air pollution we keep out of our skies,  
every acre of public land we protect, and every  
drop of water we keep clean is critically important.

This report features just a few of the many high-  
impact cases we will focus on this year to defend  
the West's environment and communities.

Thank you for being on our team.



Western  
Environmental  
Law Center

