



## **Rising to the Challenge of the Next 25 Years**

February 2016

### **Our Vision**

WildEarth Guardians believes that our public lands are a birthright shared by all Americans. We believe that wild landscapes are important not only for wild creatures but the human spirit as well. We believe in the intrinsic right of all species to exist and we work to defend endangered species. We believe that compassionate coexistence, not violence and cruelty, are the ideals that humanity should aspire to in how we relate to the animal world.

We believe that rivers have a right to their own waters and that restraint is the way to achieve our vision for living rivers. We believe that our fossil fuels should be kept in the ground as a means of addressing the climate crisis and expediting the transition to a clean energy future. In all these matters we believe that the American West, in all its vastness and diversity, is a special place that inspires our very best, and in doing so, can help rejuvenate our democracy and our institutions of governance.

### **Our Strategies**

We believe conflict and confrontation are essential in advancing social change. We collaborate with partners when possible, but independently pioneer new bold and creative strategies when and where necessary. We often deploy litigation because of the power of the law to create a level playing field, secure justice for the disenfranchised, and force systemic and long lasting change. At the same time we believe in the power of people to change unjust power structures. Our approach to change reflects the ecological, cultural, and economic diversity of our region.

## **Our Role**

WildEarth Guardians is a leader. We believe that it is our job to make the necessary possible and to push our elected officials, our agency leaders, and our movement to embrace bold change.

## **Wildlife Program**

2016 Budget: \$615,000

Goals: Safeguard endangered species—including a suite of imperiled native carnivores; end the use of cruel and barbaric traps, snares and poisons as a means of resolving wildlife-human conflicts.

- Ensure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to implement our historic 2011 legal agreement to secure Endangered Species Act protection for more than 750 imperiled plants and animals.
- End wildlife killing contests on public lands managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management throughout the American West.
- Ban trapping, snaring, poisoning, and aerial gunning of wildlife in the American West, especially when it targets native carnivores.
- Prevent the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from stripping away Endangered Species Act protected status for wolves in places vital to wolf recovery, but that are currently unoccupied or under occupied.
- Ensure the Mexican wolf recovery framework is dramatically improved.
- Launch a new campaign to bring wolves back to Colorado and the Southern Rockies.
- Mobilize the environmental community and the general public to ensure attacks on the Endangered Species Act by the Republican-dominated Congress do not weaken our nation's most powerful environmental law.
- Ensure protection of more than 25 million acres of priority habitat for the greater sage grouse.
- Challenge unjustified Endangered Species Act listing decisions (Gunnison sage grouse, Mono Basin sage grouse, wolverine, etc.).

## **Wild Places Program**

2016 Budget: \$1,296,000

Goal: Protect public lands with a priority focus on restoring and rewilding national forests from the threat of roads, privatization, fossil fuel extraction, off road vehicles, and livestock grazing.

- Advance our vision of protecting the endangered wildlands and wildlife in the 10 million acre Greater Gila Bioregion by retiring grazing permits and designating an additional two million acres of wilderness.
- Launch a coalition of environmental organizations, wild horse advocates, and wildlife groups to secure federal legislation that allows permanent retirement of livestock grazing on targeted public lands.
- Halt or severely restrict unsustainable logging in the Rocky Mountain West.
- Protect our last wild, unroaded national forests from incursions, whether by logging, road building, off road vehicles, or fossil fuel extraction.
- Reconnect core, wild places all along the Spine of the Continent in the Rocky Mountain West.
- Implement hands-on restoration strategies that restore streams and re-wild fragmented national forest landscapes in the American Southwest.
- Reverse the expansion of off-road vehicles on public lands, while ensuring 50 million acres of unroaded national forests remain quiet and wild.
- Advocate for cost-efficient and effective watershed restoration on public lands that focuses on restoring fire, removing deteriorating roads and retiring livestock grazing instead of continuing commercial logging.
- Increase federal funding of the Legacy Roads and Trails program to ensure the Forest Service has the financial resources and political will to close the tens of thousands of miles of unneeded, poorly built, and eroding roads.

### **Wild Rivers Program**

2016 Budget: \$129,000

Goal: Ensure that the American West's great rivers, foremost the Rio Grande, have dynamic flows that support healthy river ecosystems.

- Ensure the Rio Grande has a right to its own water by establishing an agricultural water-leasing program that reallocates water from flood irrigation of alfalfa back to the river for environmental flows.
- Preserve dynamic flows in the Rio Grande by securing environmental storage and retiming releases to benefit the river ecosystem and endangered species.
- Stop new levees and modify existing physical infrastructure to restore connectivity to the Rio Grande.
- Build a diverse coalition of allies including farmers, Pueblos, boaters, and anglers to support our vision of a living Rio Grande.
- Protect flows in America's first Wild and Scenic River by ensuring the Bureau of Land Management conducts an instream flow assessment of the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico.
- Challenge and reform the archaic system of water law and policy to ensure that our rivers do not shoulder the burden of climate change and scarcity.

- Secure permanent protection of the Gila River by preventing a massive new proposed water diversion and protecting the river under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

## **Climate & Energy Program**

2016 Budget: \$533,000

Goal: Stem the climate crisis by locking down publicly owned coal, oil, and gas; shuttering existing coal plants and facilitating a just transition to clean energy—all of which will significantly reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

- Strengthen and make more permanent the Interior Department's moratorium on the selling of coal in the American West.
- Drive a decrease in public lands coal mining, particularly in the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming.
- Ensure the Department of Interior institutes a policy that requires disclosure of the social cost of burning carbon in all fossil fuel extraction proposals.
- Ensure the Department of Interior increases royalty rates and implements a carbon tax on federal coal, oil, and gas resources.
- Create new financial liabilities through existing law and regulation that force closure or expensive retrofits of existing coal-fired power plants in the American West.
- Advance our 'Keep it in the Ground' vision and simultaneously launch a new coalition to advance the goal of locking down all publicly owned fossil fuels.
- Protect the Greater Chaco Canyon region from the threat of increased fracking.
- Oppose fracking and oil & gas drilling in half a dozen priority locations in the Rocky Mountain West.
- Promote clean energy solutions, including wind and solar to displace the centralized, fossil-fuel dependent public utility model of energy use.
- Utilize social and print media to educate and inform the general public about the need to require the Department of Interior to keep federal fossil fuels in the ground.