

WILD AT HEART

THE WORD FROM WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

No. 18, Winter 2013 – 2014

The Face of the Endangered Species Act

A Look at the
Next 40 Years



WILDEARTH
GUARDIANS
A FORCE FOR NATURE

25
YEARS



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A BOLD VISION

John Horning

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS



How do we know if an endangered species is worthy of our care and compassion?

Before you answer, I ask that you find the time to look a Chiricahua leopard frog in the eyes; listen to the howl of a Mexican wolf pack echo from canyon rim to canyon rim; or gaze on a field of Sacramento prickly poppies.

Should we let developers, the oil & gas industry, or ranchers have the final say about whether or not these species matter?

We don't think so. Nor did Congress when it had the ethical clarity and moral courage to pass the Endangered Species Act 40 years ago.

In this issue of *Wild at Heart* we celebrate the vision and wisdom of the U.S. Congress (hard to write, I know) for passing the Endangered Species Act, which is premised on a simple belief: that all species have a right to exist—whether for intrinsic or utilitarian purposes, or both.

For four decades our nation has conserved wolves, grizzlies, minnows and flycatchers and many other species. Sometimes with great success. But never without tremendous struggle.

As strong as this landmark law is I am humbled when I think that I am older than the Endangered Species Act—and I consider myself young.

The Act's relative youth is a reminder that as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Endangered Species Act we must be vigilant in its defense. Though there are many, like us, who believe the law is a cornerstone of democracy there are powerful forces who want to weaken and destroy the Endangered Species Act.

It is our responsibility to ensure that the ethical promise that the law's framers made to future generations—that all species have an intrinsic right to exist—is one that we continue to fulfill. The only way we deliver on that promise is to stand up and be counted—for wolves, beetles, and butterflies.

Please join WILDEARTH GUARDIANS as we defend the Act and the right of all species to exist for the next 40 years.

For the Wild,

GUARDIAN GIVER

Rebecca Vitale Mandich and Family

Families who love wild places and wildlife inspire WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' mission and work. Rebecca Vitale Mandich's family is a shining example. Rebecca came to GUARDIANS after reading about our campaign to end the U.S. Department of Agriculture's War on Wildlife. Her connection to wolves impels her to act. Every day she changes hearts and minds, insisting that we all look at our actions and consider the consequences. Rebecca's compassion and drive resonates with WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, and we admire her family's activism. Thank you to Rebecca, Mitch, Matthew and Madeleine.



GET ON THE BUS



Taylor Jones

RAMONA GAYLORD



A badger peers from a burrow in the Valley Floor prairie dog town, Telluride, Colorado.

In 2008, the picturesque mountain town of Telluride, Colorado, raised funds to purchase and preserve a beautiful meadow at the entrance of town known as the “Valley Floor.” The land was forever safe from development. As the Valley Floor returned to its natural condition, a small colony of imperiled Gunnison’s prairie dogs expanded. Unfortunately, not everyone welcomed the prairie dogs.

“There was a sentiment in town against the prairie dogs; many people who had donated to preserve the land thought it should remain ‘pristine,’ but [‘pristine’] according to their own idea of the word,” recalled Telluride resident Dan Chancellor. “The Open Space Commission started talking about ‘controlling’ and ‘managing’ them, which implied poison,” added resident Ramona Gaylord.

Ramona, Dan, and other concerned residents joined forces to protect the prairie dogs, monitor the Valley Floor and address other issues of concern. Dan became the campaign spokesperson, taking to the

airwaves and writing the local paper on the prairie dogs’ behalf. They asked Dr. Nicole Rosmarino, then Wildlife Program Director with WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, to educate the Telluride Town Council and town employees about prairie dogs’ keystone role in the ecosystem. A group of townspeople collaboratively crafted a “natural dispersal” management plan prohibiting lethal control and allowing natural expansion and contraction of the colony. The Council unanimously adopted the plan on June 21, 2011. “This was a perfect example of citizen scientists and activists working in conjunction with professional non-profits, and it saved our little colony,” Ramona said.

Telluride’s prairie dog champions continue to win people over to the cause. The group—



NICOLE ROSMARINO

A Gunnison’s prairie dog sounds an alarm on the Valley Floor

with help from GUARDIANS and several prairie dog experts—held an event celebrating the animals, and crafted a brochure for local businesses. “Lots of people pick up those brochures and take them back home to Wyoming, Utah, or many other places,” said Dan. “Some of the most vociferous critics of prairie dogs in Telluride have really softened their stance. I believe that’s due to having a better understanding.” Leaving the colony in peace also allowed for other species that rely on the prairie dogs to return to the Valley Floor, including badgers and birds of prey. Through the hard work of people like Ramona, Dan, and other prairie dog champions, positive change happens, community by community.

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Take Action / Activist Spotlight



We invite you to join the Wild Bunch, our amazing monthly donors. Whether your contribution is \$5, \$20 or \$250 a month, monthly givers form the backbone of our organization, and provide the sustainability and flexibility that enables us to work on urgent and critical issues. Your pledge deepens our capacity to respond quickly and decisively.

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TAYLOR JONES



Prairie dog champions in front of the Valley Floor prairie dog town. From left to right: Dan Chancellor, Nicole Rosmarino, Amy Cannon, and Jerry Davidian.

FRACK BAN BENEFITS CLIMATE, COMMUNITIES

Jeremy Nichols

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"I'm a wildlife artist. I support WILDEARTH GUARDIANS because there is nothing more important than protecting wild places and wildlife, and because the GUARDIANS have the highest ratings for low fundraising and administrative costs and efficient use of funds. They get things done, in the backcountry and in the courtroom. I contribute via automatic debit every month. It's easy and it feels good. "

— CATE MOSES,
Wildlife Artist
Santa Fe, NM

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MOTHERSPROJECTORCOLORADO



In 2012, the people of Longmont, a Front Range community northwest of Denver, voted to ban fracking. In 2013, that monumental achievement was followed by bans and moratoriums passed by four additional Front Range communities: Fort Collins, Lafayette, Broomfield, and Boulder.

As vital safeguards, these restrictions promise greater protection for clean air, drinking water, and open spaces. They also come at a critical time.

Right now, Colorado's Front Range is experiencing one of the most significant fracking booms in the American West, fueled by a rush to tap the region's shale oil and gas with horizontal drilling. Consider that in 2009, the state issued 18 permits to drill horizontal wells in the Front Range. In 2013, the state issued nearly 2000 permits, a 100-fold increase in four years.

Clearly, backyard bans are important, but we have to think bigger.

Throughout the West, fracking isn't just encroaching on communities; it's encroaching on essential wildlife habitat, treasured landscapes, wild rivers, and our hallmark open skies.

Fracking is also one of the most staggering threats to our climate: one year of oil and gas production in the West produces as much carbon pollution as 94 coal-fired power plants.

Put another way, it's not just Colorado's backyards that are at risk from fracking, it's America's backyard—the western United States.

In recognition of this, GUARDIANS' Climate and Energy Program has focused on protecting the West from fracking for

years. In 2008, for example, we successfully filed suit to prevent the U.S. Bureau of Land Management from exempting the oil and gas industry from wildlife safeguards in New Mexico. Since then, we've stepped up our efforts, curtailing drilling impacts and seizing opportunities to keep irreplaceable landscapes out of industry's reach.

Our vision is a frack-free West by 2035. As communities in Colorado and elsewhere have learned well, it's not enough to make oil and gas development cleaner or safer. For the sake of our health, our quality of life, and our future, it simply has to be stopped.

To achieve this goal, we're ramping up efforts to expose and leverage the true cost of fracking, using environmental liabilities to rein in industry.

In some cases, we can stop it cold, like our recent victory in keeping oil and gas leases from being sold near Chaco Culture National Historical Park. In other cases, we can raise the cost of drilling to make it economically infeasible. In Colorado, we're working closely with partners to ensure more stringent and costly clean air rules are adopted to limit methane and smog-forming pollution from fracking.

To win, we have to make it as difficult as possible for the oil and gas industry to frack. By building on the momentum to keep fracking out of communities, leveraging the West's special values, and keeping the climate in focus, we can turn the tide and keep fracking out of America's backyard.

Visit wildearthguardians.org:
Top Priorities / Wild Skies of the West

Erik Molvar

An Aerial Foray Over the Sage Grouse Front Lines

The day dawned stormy, threatening snow. Our Light-Hawk overflight of the Douglas Core Area in northeastern Wyoming had been postponed once due to blizzard conditions.

Luckily, once aloft, the winds were smooth for our aerial tour of the Douglas Core Area. In 2008, Wyoming's Governor established this key habitat for sage grouse protection.



But in a tale of broken promises, it is now slated for more than 90 oil wells. We had a bird's-eye view of a spiderweb of oilfield roads, pipelines, and drilling pads nearby.

We then swung north across the Thunder Basin National Grassland, where coal strip mining threatens sage grouse habitats. Grouse, coal and oil just don't mix.

The Wyoming governor promised sage grouse protections for Core Areas, but Wyoming has sold out the sage grouse when the chips were down. Seeing the potential for destruction from above underscored for me why we need to draw the line in Douglas. Halting drilling here will make light plane flights in Wyoming winter gales worth it.



Visit wildearthguardians.org: Priorities/Saving the Sagebrush Sea

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"WILDEARTH GUARDIANS mobilizes courageous and diligent efforts in the fight to preserve what so many take for granted. I want my contribution to be applied to the causes that I support, and WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is making tangible differences protecting what I hold dear, not just for myself, but also for future generations. With the constant feedback via the *Wild at Heart* newsletter, I feel part of it all, a 'True Guardian.'"

— ESTE ROTHMANN, Santa Fe, NM

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WOLVES AND GRIZZLIES AND LAWS, OH MY

How the Endangered Species Act Enriches Our World

Bethany Cotton

BETHANY COTTON



Wildlife watchers view grizzlies and wolves interacting in the Lamar Valley, Yellowstone National Park.

Last September, a few hundred people visiting Yellowstone National Park's Lamar Valley delighted in a rare experience even veteran park rangers said they'd only seen once in the last sixteen years: A male grizzly feasting on a bison was joined by five members of a wolf pack.

The Junction Butte pack's alpha male, alpha female, two of her sisters and a two-year-old wolf, left their pups under the care of yearlings near their den farther down the valley to join the buffet. Mostly, the wolves waited patiently for their turn, though occasionally they'd make

a run for a few bites, inciting the wrath of the male grizz. The wolves and the bear were joined by dozens of magpies and crows. Bison, pronghorn antelope, and the occasional coyote passed not far away. A pair of peregrine falcons looked on from a treetop.

Toward evening, new and unexpected guests arrived. A mama grizzly and her triplets came bounding up the valley, crossing the Lamar River and heading straight for the carcass. The mama brought her cubs into a potentially dangerous situation: male grizzlies are known to attack and sometimes kill cubs, even those they fathered.

This mama, though, decided a good meal was worth the risk as her cubs needed to store up fat for the winter's long hibernation. The

other human spectators and I watched in quiet awe. No fight ensued, and as the sun went down, the mama curled up with her cubs less than twenty feet from where the male rested on the carcass.

The next morning, the scene was even more spectacular. The male grizz, perhaps satiated by days of feeding, was more inclined to share. The mama and the cubs moved in to feed. Then the wolves returned. Playfully nipping at the bear cubs' rumps, the wolves would quickly turn and run to avoid the swipe of the mama bear's claws. As the sun rose over the valley, streaking the sky with brilliant pink, five wolves and five bears shared a picnic while people watched enraptured from a hillside three hundred yards away.

Forty years ago in December 1973, Congress had both the vision and the political will to pass, nearly unanimously, our nation's most powerful wildlife law, the Endangered Species Act. When signing the Act, President Nixon said, "At a time when Americans are more concerned than ever with conserving our natural resources, this legislation provides the Federal Government with needed authority to protect an irreplaceable part of our national heritage—threatened wildlife... Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed." The passage of the ESA wasn't about partisanship. It was about a fundamental shift in American's understanding of, and relationship to, our shared environment.

The conservation tools provided by the Act, including the citizen suit provision under which organizations like WILDEARTH GUARDIANS can enforce the law, is what



made possible the scene I witnessed unfolding in Yellowstone nearly forty years later. When Congress passed the Act, the gray wolf—hunted, trapped and poisoned mercilessly—was almost gone from the lower 48 states. The grizzly bear was a charter member of the list of endangered species. No wolves and few bears called Yellowstone home in 1973, and the landscape suffered in their absence. Now it sings with their return.

*WILDEARTH GUARDIANS
envisions a world where wildlife
and wild places are respected
and valued and our world
is sustainable for all beings.*

The Endangered Species Act is fundamentally an act of love. Whether the reasoning behind the law is rooted in human self-interest—because we can't know how the existence of any particular plant or animal could benefit our species—or the belief in the intrinsic right of all species to exist and thrive, the law recognizes the need to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Ensuring the Endangered Species Act functions as it is meant to requires constant vigilance, which GUARDIANS has maintained for twenty-five years.

Perhaps the most significant milestone in our vigilance is our landmark settlement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, requiring the agency to make final listing decisions on over 250 species languishing without protections. GUARDIANS' numerous lawsuits challenging the failure to make progress on the long list of candidate species broke open the logjam. It forced a fundamental and essential shift in how the Service approaches its responsibilities in implementing the Act—hopefully for decades to come.

GUARDIANS works to ensure that the protections of the Act stretch across the landscape, safeguarding the survival of everything from the Jemez Mountain salamander, endemic to high elevation mountains of New Mexico, to the gray wolf, whose habitat historically covered most of the United States.

GUARDIANS' HISTORIC SETTLEMENT ENTERS THIRD YEAR

USFWS



Mt. Charleston blue butterfly

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' landmark settlement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife continues to advance protections for imperiled species by breaking the logjam of species on the candidate list waiting for Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections. Our agreement is now entering its third year of implementation, and in 2014 final decisions are due on several iconic or wide-ranging species, including the lesser prairie chicken, Gunnison sage

grouse, wolverine, New Mexico meadow jumping mouse, and yellow-billed cuckoo. Listing these species could bring protections to millions of acres of habitat critical to their recovery, from the sagebrush sea to the banks of the Rio Grande. Thus far, of the 252 candidate species scheduled for listing decisions under the historic agreement, 87 received "threatened" or "endangered" status and another 34 are proposed for listing. Species that received ESA protections in 2013 include the Jemez Mountain salamander, Gierisch mallow, Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, streaked horned lark, and Mt. Charleston blue butterfly.

The settlement does not guarantee the Service will grant protections to all candidate species, so GUARDIANS continues to carefully track listing decisions and challenge those that fail to follow the best available science. We also continue to petition for new species to receive the protections of the Act. We're proud of the huge progress we've made in securing ESA protections for imperiled species and will continue to advocate for all species that need the ESA's protections to survive and recover.

— TAYLOR JONES

Members of Yellowstone's Junction Butte pack share breakfast with a mama grizz and her cubs.

PHOTO: TRIP JENNINGS



CELEBRATING THE WILD SUCCESS OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

GREG LAVATY



Yellow-billed cuckoo

In November, GUARDIANS co-sponsored a celebration of the 40th anniversary of our nation's premier law protecting imperiled plants and animals. The event honored members of Congress who champion our nation's most imperiled plants and animals and former Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton for her work to preserve species internationally. Renowned author, conservationist and GUARDIAN, Terry Tempest Williams, served as Master of Ceremonies for "The Endangered Species Act at 40: A Wild Success." Her speech celebrated the many achievements of the Act, and highlighted the importance of protecting habitats and recovering keystone species including the Utah prairie dog and greater sage grouse. You can read an adaptation of her remarks in Orion magazine.

The ESA is wildly successful: 99% of the more than 2,000 listed species receiving protections have survived and are rebounding from the brink of extinction. GUARDIANS will continue working to ensure that those species needing the protections of the Act are listed, and that the ESA remains intact and is fully and effectively enforced. Here's to the next 40 years of the ESA!
— BETHANY COTTON



BETHANY COTTON

After feasting, the grizzly mama and her triplets head down for a drink from the Lamar River.

A critically endangered black-footed ferret surveys the landscape.



Over the Act's four decades, we've learned that the preservation and restoration of imperiled species does indeed have unforeseen benefits. The wisdom of the Act is clearly born out in the story of the return of the gray wolf to Yellowstone. Since the wolves returned, elk populations are back in balance. Because elk and deer are now on the move, aspen and willow have regrown, providing habitat for beavers and shade in streamside habitats for native fish species and songbirds.

Biologists refer to this phenomenon as the trophic cascade: like creek water rushing over a waterfall, the benefits of the return of an apex carnivore cascade through an ecosystem. Even other apex species benefit. As new science shows, the wolves in Yellowstone are helping the imperiled grizzlies as they face new threats, including climate change impacts on a key food source, the white bark pine.

GUARDIANS helped usher in a new era in the life of the Act, but our work is not done. The Endangered Species Act is constantly

under threat, perhaps now more than ever before. The Act works, but like anything it needs care and advocates. Looking forward to the next forty years of this visionary law, GUARDIANS will continue to fiercely defend the Act and the species that depend upon it.

We will stand for the wolves and the grizzlies as talismans and key ecological forces, and because they have an innate right to exist. We will resist efforts to prematurely strip species of the Act's protections, including the gray wolf and the grizzly. We will defend and enforce the Act's edict that decisions be based on science, not politics or economics. We will speak for the black-footed ferret and the Mexican spotted owl, the lynx, southwest willow flycatcher, silvery minnow, and the Parachute penstemon.

We will help ensure that these species and many others survive and thrive, so that one day our children and our children's children might be among the lucky few to witness wolves and grizzlies frolicking in the wild.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: Top Priorities / Endangered Species Protection

IN THE HALLS OF JUSTICE

Jeremy Nichols, Taylor Jones, Bethany Cotton



RULING OPENS DOOR FOR CLIMATE ACTIVISTS, SADLY UPHOLDS COAL MINING

Just before Christmas, D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals handed down a ruling in our lawsuit to overturn the Interior Department's sale of 400 million tons of coal in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming. It was bittersweet. While the Appeals court overturned a District Court ruling that GUARDIANS lacked "standing" to challenge the Interior Department's failure to protect the climate, the court ultimately ruled in favor of Interior. The ruling is a setback in terms of efforts to rein in coal mining in the Powder River Basin, but it opens the door for climate activists across the country. Federal courts have been rejecting climate lawsuits, holding that groups lack the legal right to bring climate-related claims. Thankfully, the D.C. Circuit rejected this notion, ensuring that future climate lawsuits will get their day in court.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Power Past Coal*

GUNNISON'S PRAIRIE DOGS HAVE A DAY IN COURT TO SECURE PROTECTIONS



RAMONA GAYLORD

We are readying to fight a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision denying the Gunnison's prairie dog protection under the Endangered Species Act, despite a documented 95 percent decline since the early 1900s. We've already notified the Service that we'll be challenging the finding in court. The Service's decision ignores the species' precipitous range-wide decline over the last 100 years and focuses solely on occupancy modeling from just the last 3 to 6 years. The Service also downplays ongoing impacts from shooting, poisoning, agriculture, and development. It further dismisses plague, even

though an outbreak can wipe out a colony in a single season. These intelligent and social keystone animals deserve better, and the dozens of species that benefit from prairie dogs need them to thrive.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Protecting the Prairie Dog Empire*

SPEAKING OUT AGAINST WOLF AND COYOTE KILLING CONTESTS ON PUBLIC LANDS

GUARDIANS learned in mid-December about the planned "Wolf and Coyote Derby" in Salmon, Idaho, and immediately began working to prevent the slaughter. We went to court over the holidays to try to prevent the killing contest. While we weren't able to get a restraining order against the Forest Service to force the agency to require permits for contest hunting on Forest Service lands, we did work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to ensure that it enforced permitting requirements, making the killing contest illegal on BLM lands. The Idaho killing contest highlights the uphill battle to protect wolves in states where Endangered Species Act protections were stripped. Thankfully, no wolves were killed during the contest. Our legal and wildlife program teams are pursuing various strategies to end contest hunting on public lands.

Visit wildearthguardians.org:
Top Priorities / Ending the War on Wildlife



SAM PARKS

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"I have followed the plight of the gray wolf for thirty years, including the epic fight to reintroduce them into Yellowstone National Park. Now, once again, we are fighting for the survival of these misunderstood and persecuted animals. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS fights for them in major court battles and works hard to stop the insanity of killing wolves for sport and entertainment. I'm proud to support this active organization that is a true friend to our wolves and wild things"

— DENISE KENNEY,
Coon Rapids, MN

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CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Bethany Cotton, Jen Pelz, Bryan Bird



LEGACY GIVING

For 25 years, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has been an advocate for wildlife, wild places and wild rivers.

To ensure we continue for another 25 years, include us in your estate planning. Make your legacy a force for nature by becoming a member of our Diversity of Life Society.

Contact Kevin Gaither-Banchoff at Kevin@wildearthguardians.org or 520.869.4673 to learn how easy it is to leave a legacy gift.

Please visit wildearthguardians.org: Support Us/More Ways to Give

STANDING FOR WOLVES



SAMPARKS

GUARDIANS is standing for wolves wherever they face persecution. We submitted formal comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opposing the proposal to delist the gray wolf in anticipation of a future lawsuit. We also commented on the proposed reclassification of the Mexican wolf calling for the population to be designated as “essential.” This would grant the 83 Mexican wolves in the wilds of New Mexico and Arizona the full protections of the ESA. GUARDIANS will continue working to reinstate protections for wolves in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, and to restore wolves to habitats where they remain absent, including Colorado, California, and Utah. We will continue to challenge Wildlife Service’s authority to target wolves, and challenge contest hunting and trapping of wolves on public lands.

Visit www.wildearthguardians.org/Stand4Wolves

2013 ROAD RESTORATION BRINGS RESULTS



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

In 2011, using remote camera traps, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS documented our first grizzly sow and cub on a reclaimed road on the Gallatin National Forest. In 2013, GUARDIANS installed remote cameras on four national forests. Our initial data show that grizzly and other wildlife species are using reclaimed roads. In addition, the study shows that moose and elk

are benefitting from road reclamation. While initial use of reclaimed roads drops immediately after treatment, within one year, the use of the area is higher than it was before the road was reclaimed. When we take the time to restore watersheds and re-create functional habitat, the reality becomes clear: wildlife does return and habitat is reconnected!

Visit wildearthguardians.org/Programs/WildPlaces/LegacyRoadsandTrails

GUARDIANS SEEKS ACCOUNTABILITY TO ENSURE LIVING RIO GRANDE



ADRIEL HEISEY

Our efforts to restore and protect the mighty Rio Grande from diversions, dams, and depletions that threaten the river’s survival entered a new phase in January. GUARDIANS warned state and federal officials from Colorado to central New Mexico that their ongoing water management activities continue to violate the Endangered Species Act and that we will file lawsuits in federal court if the agencies fail to take the necessary action to restore a living Rio Grande. GUARDIANS targeted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ refusal to alter its reservoir operations to provide key peak flows for the benefit of the Rio Grande silvery minnow, Southwestern willow flycatcher and the bosque; the state of Colorado’s massive diversions to serve agriculture in the San Luis Valley; and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s irresponsible management practices causing large sections of the river to run completely dry for much of the summer. GUARDIANS demands accountability now to ensure the Rio Grande thrives into the future.

Visit wildearthguardians.org/TopPriorities/RioGrandeAmericasGreatRiver

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GUARDIANS

Kevin-Gaither Banchoff, Jeremy Nichols, Bryan Bird



YEAR-END GROWTH



Welcome to 2014, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' historic 25th year! Founded in 1989 to fight a logging project on northern New Mexico's Elk Mountain, we've grown to become a lead voice and guardian of wildlife, wild places, and wild rivers, and a key advocate fighting to preserve our climate, clean air and water. In fact, we start this year having grown significantly: we are now 26 staff working out of eight offices across the west, all supported by a GUARDIANS' family that now includes over 43,000 members

and activists! Our voice has never been louder. Our strategies and tactics have never been stronger. Thanks to you and your support, we are paving the way for a better future.

VICTORY FOR CHACO

In a victory for culture and the climate, the Bureau of Land Management announced in January it is officially not leasing lands for oil and gas drilling and fracking near Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The decision culminates a years-long effort by GUARDIANS and our allies to prevent the agency from selling off potentially thousands of acres of land around Chaco. Last fall, GUARDIANS, together with the Chaco Alliance, San Juan Citizens Alliance, Society for American Archaeology, and the New Mexico Archeological Council, petitioned the Bureau of Land Management to protect 1.1 million acres of lands around Chaco by designating a Greater Chaco Landscape Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Keeping Chaco safe from fracking is a major step forward in protecting the cultural integrity of the landscape.

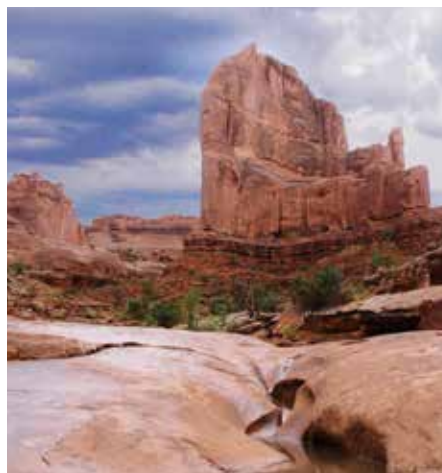


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NEW PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENS WILDLANDS & WILDLIFE PROTECTION THROUGHOUT WEST

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS expanded our staff and expertise and deepened our commitment to protecting national forests and wildlife in the American West through our merger late last-year with the Utah Environmental Congress (UEC). For 15 years, UEC protected and restored national forests and was a voice for the wild in Utah. UEC secured important legal victories and stopped the Forest Service from logging, building roads, drilling for oil, and mining coal on our national forests. We welcome Kevin Mueller, founding UEC board member, who joined GUARDIANS as our Utah-Southern Rockies Conservation Manager, and life-long organizer Bob Brister, who has also joined the GUARDIANS' team.

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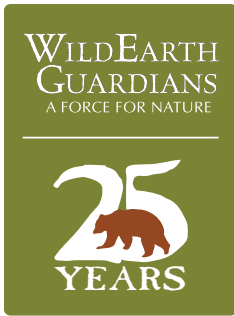
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SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

Sarah McMillan



Sarah McMillan grew up reading Ed Abbey by kerosene lamp at night and by day exploring the woods, rivers, and mountains of Montana and western Washington. She received her B.A. from Williams College and her J.D. from the University of Montana. Sarah is an avid hiker, locavore

wannabe (notable downfalls include olive oil, licorice, Marmite, and black tea), and life-long environmentalist. She has worked in private practice and with Western Environmental Law Center to protect the natural world. Her litigation background is broad—from the ESA, CWA, NEPA, NFMA, etc. to protecting Montanans’ right to a clean and healthful environment, to defending a citizen’s initiative that effectively stopped game farm “hunting” in Montana. She is thrilled to join WILDEARTH GUARDIANS as Senior Attorney.

Stephanie Sample



Stephanie Sample joined WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in 2014 as our Development Associate. Stephanie migrated to the Southwest in 2011 with the intention of expanding her literal and metaphoric horizons. As a graduate student in Language, Culture & Society at

the University of New Mexico, Stephanie organized grant distribution connecting fellow students with funding opportunities. Before that, she developed her own company in the Czech Republic. From her youth, Stephanie spent time outdoors in Maine, and thrived on connecting with wild places, wild rivers and wild people through her work in local non-profits across the Eastern seaboard. Stephanie is deeply grateful to call New Mexico home and to work towards the rewilding of the West.