

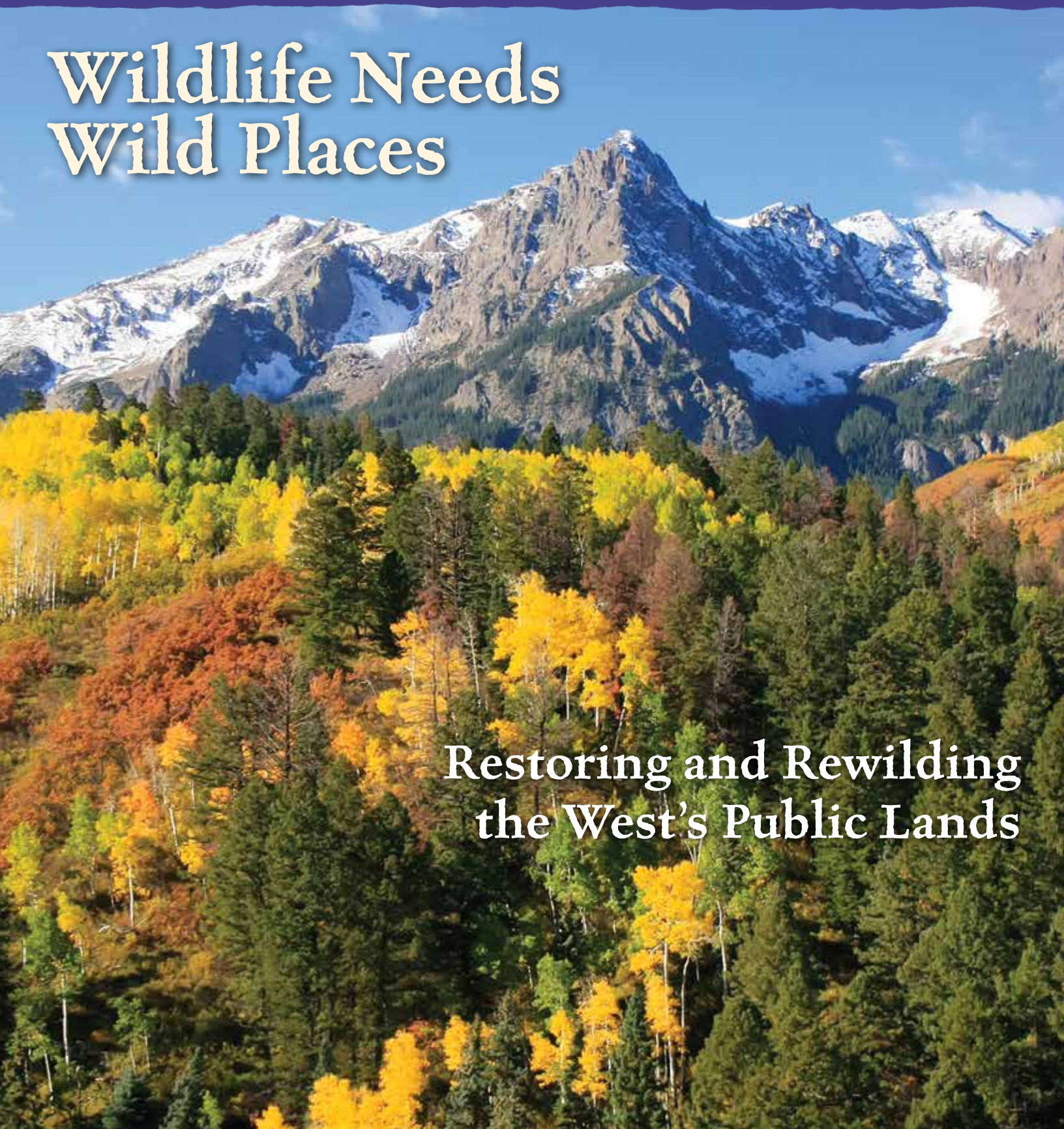
WILD AT HEART

THE WORD FROM WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

No. 17, Fall 2013

Wildlife Needs Wild Places

Restoring and Rewilding
the West's Public Lands





MISSION STATEMENT

WILD EARTH GUARDIANS protects and restores the wildlife, wild places, and wild rivers of the American West.

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A BOLD VISION

Getting to the Root of Real Climate Solutions

John Horning

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS



For years I've heard ecologists and hydrologists say that the two greatest threats to restoring and rewilding our national forests and watersheds are roads and cows. Each, in their own way, disrupt native processes and diminish the ability of the land to produce clean water and sustain native carnivores.

WILD EARTH GUARDIANS has been confronting the public lands grazing threat for years, but we hadn't adequately dealt with the more than 375,000 miles of legacy roads that

criss-cross and fragment our national forests.

That's why, when Bethanie Walder called me late last year to explore the possibility of having her group, Wildlands CPR, become a part of GUARDIANS, I was immediately excited. You see, her group had been at the forefront of the national effort to deal with roads and off-road vehicles.

Our recently-announced merger with Wildlands CPR transforms WILD EARTH GUARDIANS, with Bethanie and four other new staff on our team, into that same leader on roads and off-road vehicles, with a robust set of strategies to address the problems and advance a restoration vision throughout the West.

One other exciting new development as a result of the merger is that GUARDIANS now fully embraces the Spine of the Continent vision, which seeks to protect and restore big wildlands and big wildlife along the Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico.

Our aim is to protect crown jewels of the Rockies from New Mexico to Montana—places like the Greater Gila, the Utah High Plateaus and the High Divide northwest of Yellowstone.

It's an exciting time to be at the helm of WILD EARTH GUARDIANS. We now have 25 talented, passionate, and hard-working staff, and a budget approaching \$3 million.

Thanks for continuing to believe in our vision and work.

For the Wild,

GUARDIAN GIVER

Rob Elliott

Rob Elliott came to WILD EARTH GUARDIANS through Nat Cobb, one of our Board members. Rob and Nat started the river program for Colorado Outward Bound School in Dinosaur National Monument in 1969. Later, in the 70s, Nat guided for Rob's Arizona Raft Adventures (AzRA) in the Grand Canyon. As a river outfitter for 34 years, Rob served as an environmental advocate for the river outfitters, founded the Grand Canyon Conservation Fund, and

served on the Grand Canyon Trust's Board of Trustees for 20 years. Today Rob lives with his life-partner, Sharon Woods, in Santa Fe. Two years ago when WILD EARTH GUARDIANS started its Rio Grande: America's Great River campaign, and knowing of Rob's passion for rivers, Nat approached Rob to be a charter donor supporting the program. Rob signed up for three years!



GET ON THE BUS



Bethanie Walder

the Huckleberry Wilderness. “This one logged section is like a ‘keyhole’ inside the wilderness, and we wanted to unlock it’s potential,” Alex explained.

The Forest Service left the road in place with unclear, but likely future, logging plans. This one road, and this one area of land were an intrusion into the middle of a wilderness area that boasts wild salmon runs, spectacular old growth forests, and many forest critters who depend on intact, core habitat to survive.

The road also facilitated off-road vehicle trespass into the wilderness area. “Still, it was a challenge to recommend closing this road and restoring this area. Lots of folks from Portland,

including Bark’s own members, loved to drive up to the keyhole to go chanterelle picking,” Alex said. “But ecology is more important than mushrooms, and the benefits of

rewilding this place far outweighed the costs!”

Reclaiming the road meant a lot for salmon and wildlife. As Alex explained, “once the road was converted to a trail, the agency decided there was no point in considering future logging projects.” And this was just one of many forests and streams that have been degraded by roads and logging, creating so many opportunities for rewilding. It was the perfect discussion topic for our chanterelle dinner!

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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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WILDEARTH GUARDIANS



Above: Chanterelles on the trail portion of a reclaimed road; right: Chanterelles



DAN MOLTER

Golden chanterelles...the name alone sounds luscious. You can smell them simmering on the stove, but can you imagine where they grow? We’ve walked 1.5 miles on a former road that’s been reclaimed and converted to a trail. It leads us to the Huckleberry Wilderness Area on the Mount Hood National Forest outside of Portland, OR. We’re here to find these beautiful chanterelles.

I’d asked Alex P. Brown, Executive Director of Bark if he could help us set up a field trip for two of our funders. I’ve worked with Alex and many other organizational partners around the country for many years to address problems with the Forest Service road system - now that work is GUARDIANS’ work. For this trip, we’re looking for a place that physically illustrates how our mutual work to reclaim old, unneeded logging roads helps rewild our forests. “I know just the place,” said Alex. “When I hike there I can imagine the next generation hiking this same trail, after the canopy has closed in, and after this area is fully wild again.”

The Salmon Road once led to an old logging site surrounded by what is now



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

Alex P. Brown discusses road reclamation with Marlies Wierenga, Fred Munson, and Kay Treakle, on former road converted to trail at edge of Huckleberry Wilderness.

POWERING PAST COAL, ONE PLANT AT A TIME

Jeremy Nichols

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"As a native New Mexican, I grew up with the outdoors—and the environment around me changed quickly as I grew up. GUARDIANS fights to keep our growing population in balance with the health and sustainability of our natural environment. The work inspired me to become a monthly supporter."

— CLAIRE NICKEL,
GUARDIANS' Office
Manager
Santa Fe, NM

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KAZORNYN



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' campaign to power past coal is guided by the simple fact that we can't effectively combat climate change unless we aggressively and quickly transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. To this end, we've sought to secure the shutdown of thousands of megawatts of coal-fired electricity generation here in the American West, so that efficiencies like wind energy, rooftop solar, and community-based electricity generation, can take root and flourish. So far in 2013, we've made tremendous progress. To date, we've locked in the retirement of more than 1,700 megawatts of coal-fired power plants, opening the door for more than 1.5 million homes to be powered by clean energy. Here's a rundown of our successes:

• **San Juan Generating Station:** In March, the State of New Mexico announced that half of this 1,800-megawatt coal-fired power plant in northwestern New Mexico would be taken offline by 2017. The announcement came after GUARDIANS' legal efforts compelled the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to force the power plant's majority owner, Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM), to install costly, clean air upgrades. We leveraged this liability to convince PNM to retire half of the power plant, rather than invest millions in more coal.

• **Cherokee Station:** In May, we finalized a settlement agreement to ensure the retirement of the 800-megawatt Cherokee Station in north Denver by 2017. The settlement resolves a lawsuit filed by GUARDIANS against the plant's owner, Xcel Energy, over thousands of clean air violations at the coal-fired power plant. Not only that, but our agreement secured \$450,000 for Groundwork Denver, a community-based environmental group, to undertake clean energy and green space projects in affected neighborhoods.

• **Lamar Repowering Project:** In July, we finalized another agreement to ensure the shutdown of the 43-megawatt Lamar Repowering Project in southeastern Colorado. Leveraging two lawsuits over ongoing clean air violations, the agreement ensures its owner, the Arkansas River Power Authority, keeps the coal-fired power plant offline while replacement clean energy is secured by 2022. The agreement also directs more than \$120,000 to energy efficiency projects in Lamar and other communities in southeastern Colorado.



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

Our successes come as our allies have also gained ground this year in their efforts to power past coal. For example, in Nevada, environmental, health, and indigenous groups secured a commitment from the state's largest utility, NV Energy, to retire the 612-megawatt Reid Gardner power plant near Las Vegas. Our collective efforts have convinced utilities to shutter more than 6,000-megawatts of coal in the American West.

Visit wildearthguardians.org:
Top Priorities / Power Past Coal

Bethany Cotton

The Making of the Film *Without Wolves*

One of the best things about my job is getting to be out in the very wild places we're working to protect. Making the *GUARDIANS* video *Without Wolves* was just such a time. Award-winning videographer Trip Jennings is a fellow activist and a good friend, which makes working with him that much more fun.



PHOTOS BY BETHANY COTTON



Following an early breakfast with plenty of caffeine, Trip and Rebecca Vitale-Mandich—a *GUARDIANS* supporter—and I set out from Denver with a cooler packed full of good veggie food, a lot of camera equipment, and all the wildlife juju we could muster. We arrived at the park, and within a half an hour had a close encounter with a young coyote.

We spent two days soaking in the beauty of the park, filming elk, deer, bighorn sheep, yellow-bellied marmots and more critters, noticing the thin air at 12,000 feet, and wondering at how much more magical it will be when wolves return. It was an exhilarating few days. If you haven't already seen *Without Wolves*, check it out here: [Priorities / Wolves in the American West / Stand4Wolves](#).



WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"It is my passion to lead a natural areas restoration group, the Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative. My ties to the West are equally strong, from growing up there and owning land in northern New Mexico. Contributing to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS makes it easy for us to stay on top of key issues, and positively engage government support for wildlife and habitat conservation. Their work multiplies our individual efforts, and it's EFFECTIVE!"

— DR. LESLIE KUHN,
Coordinator,
Mid-Michigan
Stewardship Initiative
Haslett, MI

Interested in becoming a *GUARDIANS* Monthly Donor? Visit our website for more details: wildearthguardians.org/SupportUs/MonthlyGiving.

WILDLIFE NEEDS WILD PLACES

Restoring and Rewilding the West's Public Lands *Bryan Bird*



The 2013 merger will extend the range and depth of WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' conservation programs from Canada to Mexico with numerous special places where our work will be critical.

Around the time of our nation's bicentennial, a bow hunter in the San Juan Mountains of southern Colorado surprised a resting female grizzly bear. Startled from her slumber, she attacked the man, and legend has it that he in turn killed her by hand with an arrow. That mother grizzly, south of Yellowstone, may have been the last of a once great population of bears that roamed from Alaska into Mexico along the Spine of the Continent.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' vision of a tapestry of wild places from Canada to Mexico holds hope for grizzlies to again ramble freely in the once great wild places of North America.

This vision was significantly bolstered this summer when we joined forces with Wildlands CPR, a Missoula, MT-based non-profit with a 20-year history of protecting and restoring healthy watersheds and wildlife from the threats of roads and motorized recreation. In unifying these two great advocates for nature, we also expanded our geographic scope, issue expertise, campaigns and size.

Both organizations shared a common purpose to protect, restore, and preserve wildlife, wild lands, and waterways throughout the American West. The integration deepens WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' ongoing work to protect national forests, and boosts our growing efforts to restore wildlife and wild places. It also complements our work confronting fossil fuel development in Montana and the Northern Rockies.

Planetary health and species conservation demands that we restore, re-wild, and re-connect damaged landscapes. The imperatives of clean water and native carnivore conservation are the anchors of all of our rewilding work on national forests.

The science is abundantly clear: big, wild landscapes with a full assemblage of native wildlife—especially ecosystem engineers like wolves, prairie dogs and beavers—are going to be much more resilient to climate change. In addition, changes in snowpack and precipitation will make it critical to protect our nation's wild rivers and streams. For native trout, that means well-connected, cold headwater streams in unroaded watersheds across the West, free of the impacts of livestock grazing and off-road vehicles.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is using our expanded capacity to ensure wolves have secure core habitats throughout the Rocky Mountains and into the greater Gila Bioregion of New Mexico and Arizona, connected by secure travel corridors.

Planetary health and species conservation demands that we restore, re-wild, and re-connect damaged landscapes.



ROADS, ORVS AND WCPR MERGER

We think of our national forests as some of the wildest places on earth, yet they hold the dubious distinction of having 375,000 miles of roads – destroying wildness and making these areas less remote.

Many of our national forests are situated along the Spine of the Continent, especially in the Northern Rockies where habitat and connectivity for grizzly bears, wolves, salmon and trout are despoiled by roads. But by removing roads and restoring habitat, we can ensure that these and other species have the re-wilded lands they need to thrive.

Off-road vehicles – dirt bikes, ATVs, UTVs, dune buggies, snowmobiles, jet skis, rock crawlers and new multi-purpose vehicles – are a major threat to our wildlands. Off-road vehicle management on most public lands is poorly controlled, covering the landscape with a web of motorized paths and roads. They ruin the quiet, natural experience for millions who visit our public lands. Inadequate management plans, irresponsible use, and insufficient enforcement, have resulted in hundreds of thousands of miles of unauthorized “renegade routes” across the land.

Protecting and restoring the Spine of the Continent requires a bold, creative organization with a presence from one end of the Rockies to the other. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS’ recent merger with Wildlands CPR provides the anchors in Missoula, MT, Denver, CO, and Santa Fe, NM. The merger also provides us a new presence in the Pacific Northwest, creating additional opportunities to reconnect, rewild and restore our public lands.

The new staff brings unparalleled expertise in road and off-road vehicle issues; diverse allies in land managers and scientists; and creative, successful legislative strategies. With 25 staff, nine offices and more than 100,000 members and supporters, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is a substantial FORCE for NATURE.



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

Off-road vehicles (ORVs) - dirt bikes, ATVs, dune buggies, snowmobiles, jet skis, etc., pose one of the fastest growing threats to our public lands.

Our ground-breaking campaigns, including a voluntary grazing permit retirement and banning traps and poisons, are more crucial than ever in assuring a viable native wolf population in the United States.

National forest watersheds are also critical for their drinking water supplies, which some 66 million Americans depend on. Healing damaged watersheds ensures high-quality, low-cost drinking water, while also providing salmon and other migratory fish unobstructed access to travel from sea to spawning grounds. Our new staff in the Pacific Northwest has the expertise to advocate for the places and policies that guarantee watershed restoration in the Western and Northwest U.S. As these Wild Places staff in Oregon push the administration to make the Clean Water

Act enforceable on forest road systems, we will press individual national forests across the West to identify landscapes where rewilding, or minimizing the presence of motorized roads and trails, is most effective.

Our new staff from the merger co-lead a West-wide campaign to engage Forest Service Motorized Travel Planning, a process designed to end rampant and unrestricted cross-country travel by off-road vehicles. That campaign has been wildly successful, resulting in at least 50 million acres of land formerly open to cross-country travel now closed, and off-road vehicles now allowed only on designated routes in those areas.

Decaying, unmanaged, and under-maintained roads are a top threat to endangered salmon and to clean drinking water. But roads aren't just degrading water; they are also a primary cause of

West Big Hole Inventory Roadless Area looking at the Beaverhead Mountains.

PHOTO: RYAN APPLIGATE



CARNIVORES AND CONNECTIVITY

Many of the most imperiled species in this country are large carnivores: gray and Mexican gray wolves, grizzly bear, lynx, mountain lion, and wolverine. But due to a host of factors, including habitat loss and fragmentation, hunters' guns and traps, Wildlife Services' poisons, climate change impacts, and all too often irrational human hatred, these magnificent animals are in trouble.

RAY RAFFITI



Key to ensuring that endangered carnivores not only persist, but also recover, is providing connectivity corridors between protected and core habitats. When species' populations are isolated from each other, genetic diversity is lessened over time, and events like wildfire and drought can be devastating.

If animals have connectivity corridors between core areas—for example, from Yellowstone to the Indian Peaks Wilderness in Colorado, or from the Gila to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon—they are more likely to recolonize suitable habitat and to be more resilient in the face of serious threats. We at GUARDIANS are working to ensure that carnivores have the corridors they will need to thrive.



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

Mountain lions captured on one of GUARDIANS' remotely-triggered cameras

habitat fragmentation, chopping core habitats for grizzly bears, elk, wolves and other species, into smaller and smaller pieces. And roads are one of the main vectors for the spread of non-native pests, weeds and forest diseases.

Road reclamation and landscape restoration on the other hand, are first steps towards rewilding these damaged landscapes. In response to advocacy from our new staff, Congress created and funded the Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program to protect water quality compromised by roads. From its inception in 2008 through 2013, Congress has appropriated \$315 million to Legacy Roads and Trails. As a result of the merger, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS now leads the national advocacy for this program.

The Forest Service is responsible for one of the largest road systems in the world. In 2010, thanks to our new staff, the Forest Service began a long-delayed process to identify which roads it needs and which roads it doesn't. Each national forest must now identify an ecologically-appropriate and affordable, optimum road system by the end of September 2015. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS will now be leading efforts to ensure this process is followed so we can restore and rewild landscapes scarred by roads.

As we seek to complement policy change with practice on the ground, fragmented forests and waterways polluted by livestock and a legacy of logging roads, will remain a priority activity in the Wild Places Program. For the last eight years, our new staff have been documenting how road reclamation "rewilds" the landscape by measuring the return of wildlife across the Northern Rockies.

We now have remote, motion-triggered cameras set up across six national forests in the northern Rockies. We're finding that in addition to bears, a variety of animals appear to be benefitting from renewed and rewilded habitat, including deer, elk, and moose. And while relatively rare, we have captured images of carnivores such as wolves, lynx, and fisher using old roads—now paths—years after the landscape had been healed.

The spirit of that last mother grizzly killed in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado nearly four decades ago, continues to inspire our work. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' vision of vast, wild landscapes interconnected by corridors free from the impacts of human activity and teeming with the diversity of life, is stronger than ever. Ultimately, we will measure our effectiveness when the grizzly can once again roam the entire Spine of the Continent.

*Visit wildearthguardians.org:
Programs / Wild Places*

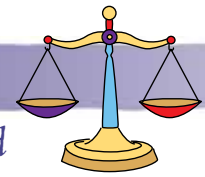


JOE CLARK

The Bitterroot Mountains have long been considered an ideal location for grizzly bear reintroduction.

IN THE HALLS OF JUSTICE

Jen Pelz, Jeremy Nichols, Bryan Bird



OPPOSITION FORCES UTILITY TO RECONSIDER WATER TRANSFER

Late this summer, in yet another assault on the Rio Grande, the City of Albuquerque water utility applied to the New Mexico State Engineer for a permit to move what was once agricultural water upstream, to be diverted at its drinking water facility north of the city. The permit, if granted, would deprive the Rio Grande of the flows necessary to sustain a healthy river and bosque, and pave the way for other similar transfers by cities. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS challenged the transfer, requesting that the State Engineer deny the application

as contrary to the public welfare of the state. Faced with opposition by GUARDIANS and others, the utility withdrew its application. Any further attempt to transfer water by the utility will require a new application, and GUARDIANS will be ready to initiate a challenge once again.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Rio Grande: America's Great River*



ADRIEL HESEY

GUARDIANS' CLIMATE TEAM BUSY IN THE COURTROOM THIS FALL

GUARDIANS' Climate and Energy Program is leading the charge in the courtroom this fall, defending clean energy and demanding accountability from the fossil fuel industry in high-profile lawsuits. At the end of September, we deftly argued before a federal judge in Utah that mining giant, Kennecott, is violating the Clean Air Act. Targeting the company's gigantic Bingham Canyon mine west of Salt Lake City, we aim to curtail their reliance on fossil fuels. In October, we filed our opening salvo in a lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency for refusing to rein in air pollution from coal mines. Filed with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, we called on the second most

powerful court in the country to ensure the Agency curbs coal pollution. Finally, in November, GUARDIANS will be arguing before the D.C. Circuit that the Interior Department illegally leased coal in the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming. Our hope is that justice can and will be served for the climate.

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

HANDKERCHIEF MESA TIMBER SALE

Nearly five and a half square miles of logging, and many miles of new road reconstruction in the headwaters of the Rio Grande, are officially off the table. The Handkerchief Mesa Timber Sale planned near Wolf Creek Pass in Southern Colorado, was in the very heart of lynx country and high-quality watersheds. The final gavel landed on our legal action (Rocky Mountain Wild et al v. Vilsack et al. Civil Action No. 09-cv-01272-WJM) in June with a fee award to our partners at the University of Denver Environmental Law Clinic. The court was unequivocal, and awarded reasonable attorneys' fees because WILDEARTH GUARDIANS and Rocky Mountain Wild were "prevailing parties" in this action, the government's position was not substantially justified, and there were no special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Clean Water, Wild Forests*



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WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"As the Executive Director of Wildlands CPR, I relied on monthly donors for the steady, reliable, foundational support they provided. I became one myself, and with Wildlands CPR becoming a part of WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, I am happy to continue my monthly donation. As both a staff member and a monthly donor, I know I'm contributing in multiple ways to GUARDIANS' success."

— BETHANIE WALDER,
GUARDIANS' Public
Lands Director
Missoula, MT

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CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Bethany Cotton, Wendy Keefover, Jeremy Nichols



WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



“It feels good to be a small part of something big that will help to ensure future generations an opportunity to witness real wilderness with real wildlife, versus a glass-encased replica found at a natural history museum.”

— GERAMY QUARTO,
Event Planner
Santa Fe, NM

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CITIZENS' WOLF HEARING DEMONSTRATES BROAD PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO DELISTING

BETHANY COTTON



More than 100 people attended our Denver Citizens' Wolf Hearing. People gave spirited, informed testimony unanimously opposing the proposal to remove Endangered Species Act protections from the gray wolf. Those giving testimony included a hunter, several teachers, a rancher, biologists, recreationists, and many others who understand the importance of wolves to healthy ecosystems. Stay tuned for info on rescheduled formal hearings in Albuquerque, Sacramento, and Denver.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Wolves in the American West*

WILDLIFE SERVICES KILLS MEXICAN WOLF. AGENT REMAINS EMPLOYED, UNPROSECUTED

RAY RAFITI



Last January in New Mexico, a Wildlife Services agent “observed [an] animal for several minutes” with his rifle’s scope before he killed it. The victim: a Mexican wolf who enjoyed Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections. The Department of Justice (DOJ) failed to prosecute because the agent claimed he thought he shot a coyote. Killing legally endangered animals and then claiming ignorance is the heart of what’s wrong with the DOJ’s “McKittrick Policy,” which

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS challenged in federal court earlier this summer. The Policy allows killers of endangered species to claim mistaken identity as their defense. Nearly 50 Mexican wolves have been shot illegally—with almost no prosecutions. Wildlife Services states that its agents “shall be knowledgeable at a professional level” about Mexican wolf identification; yet when one is not, he or she remains employed. Meanwhile, DOJ’s policy emboldens Mexican wolf shooters, undermining the species’ recovery.

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

COAL INDUSTRY TURNING ITS BACK ON COAL



This past summer we saw a tremendous turning point in our efforts to rein in coal in the Powder River Basin of northeastern Wyoming and southeastern Montana. The Powder River Basin is the largest coal-producing region in the nation, with huge strip mines that fuel more than 200 power plants in the U.S., and increasingly power plants abroad. Yet even in the Powder River Basin, the coal industry is falling apart. In August, the U.S. Interior Department tried to auction off 148 million tons of coal, but was rebuffed when the company seeking the coal refused to submit a bid. Then in September, Interior tried to auction off 167 million more tons of coal. This auction drew a single low-ball bid that was the lowest offer in 15 years. Interior ultimately rejected the bid. The reality is that the coal industry isn’t willing to pay the true cost of coal anymore. That’s great news for the climate. The failed coal sales this past summer prevent more than 550 million tons of carbon pollution; the equivalent of keeping 108 million cars off the road.

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

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GUARDIANS

Erik Molvar, Jen Pelz, Bethany Cotton



ERIK MOLVAR JOINS GUARDIANS TO DEFEND THE SAGEBRUSH SEA



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has added expertise in sage grouse and oil and gas defense by hiring Erik Molvar, who will direct our Sagebrush Sea Campaign. Molvar is a wildlife biologist and hiking guide author who worked the past 13 years for Biodiversity Conservation Alliance, where he halted the 1,250-well Seminoe Road drilling project. He managed to get Wyoming's Adobe Town proposed wilderness designated as "Very Rare or Uncommon" under state law, which protects the area from strip mining, and he teamed up with former GUARDIANS' Sagebrush Sea guru, Mark Salvo, to secure a West-wide planning effort by the Bureau of Land Management to save the greater sage grouse. Erik advocates for the protection of sage grouse and lesser prairie chickens, and will watchdog the oil and gas industry from a new WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' office in Laramie, Wyoming.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Saving the Sagebrush Sea*

STORAGE SAFETY NET SECURED FOR RIO GRANDE

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS reached a landmark agreement this summer securing a 30,000 acre-feet of storage in an upstream reservoir to provide water for environmental flows in the Rio Grande. This environmental storage was proposed as part of the 2005 settlement of a lawsuit brought in 1999 by GUARDIANS and other environmental groups to protect the Rio Grande under the Endangered Species Act. Under the agreement, the Albuquerque water utility set aside 15% of its total storage in Abiquiu Reservoir for exclusive use by environmental groups to provide water to meet key ecological goals, including sustaining endangered species. This is the first permanent Environmental Pool in the Rio Grande Basin controlled by environmental groups. This storage will serve as a necessary safety net in times of drought, as well as a source of water to create dynamic high flows lacking in the current management scheme.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Rio Grande: America's Great River*



ADRIEL HEISEY

SALAMANDER SAFETY



CHRIS NEWSOM

After a wait of more than 31 years, the Jemez Mountain salamander at last received Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection when the Fish and Wildlife Service listed it on October 13. The small brown and gold salamander lives in mixed-conifer forests at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 11,000 feet around the rim of the Valles Caldera in the Jemez Mountains in New Mexico. Off-road vehicle use, climate change and fire are the greatest threats to the endemic salamander, whose habitat is almost exclusively

on federal public lands. GUARDIANS will continue working to reduce motorized recreation in its range. The salamander is among several species that received ESA protections this year as a result of GUARDIANS' unprecedented settlement with the Service, which ensures the full backlog of listing decisions will be addressed by 2016. Hooray for the Jemez Mountain salamander!

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MEET THE NEW WILDEARTH GUARDIANS!

Kevin Gaither-Banchoff



PHOTO: FERN SEIDEN

(l to r) Back row: Marlies Wierenga, Whitney Bacon, Erik Molvar, Stuart Wilcox, Jeremy Nichols, Bryan Bird, Adam Switalski, Kevin Gaither-Banchoff, Bob Brister (UEC); Middle row: Bethany Cotton, John Horning, Wendy Keefover, Kevin Mueller (UEC), Karyn Boatman, Sarah McMillan, Claire Nichols, Sarah Peters, Jim Matison, Carol Norton; Front row: Adam Rissien, Ashley Wilmes, Samantha Ruscavage-Barz, Bethanie Walder, Lori Colt, Taylor Jones, Jen Pelz.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is growing to meet the needs of the West, its people, wild places, and wildlife. This year we've created a bigger and bolder organization, better able to achieve our goals to protect national forests, restore watersheds, combat fossil fuel development, and recover endangered carnivores—like lynx, wolves, and grizzly bears—across the West. GUARDIANS now has main offices in Denver, Santa Fe,

and Missoula, with satellite offices in Eugene, Laramie, Portland, San Diego, Tucson, and Salt Lake City, and more than 100,000 members and e-activists from throughout the country. Visit our website to learn more about each of our new staff members! WILDEARTH GUARDIANS thinks big, acts boldly and doesn't give up. Thanks for being a GUARDIAN!