

WILD AT HEART

THE WORD FROM WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

No. 2, Winter 2008-09

To Drill or Not to Drill?

page 8





MISSION STATEMENT

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

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RESTORING THE VISION

John Horning

After eight years of laboring under the failed policies of the Bush administration, we can quantify our shared losses and frustrations both anecdotally and empirically. They are seen in unemployment numbers and shrunken 401Ks. They are felt in money wasted on misguided wars and the lives lost to violence.

Here in the American West, one of the most troubling legacies that we and future generations must contend with is our backward looking energy policies. The “drill here, drill now” mentality that has dominated our past energy policy has grossly oversimplified the challenges that lie ahead of us.

This misguided energy policy has not only polluted our air, chopped up wildlife habitat, sacrificed some of our last best wild places and endangered water supplies, but we are even less energy independent than when we began this junkie-like lust for every last drop of fossil fuel.

As with any addiction, change will not come easily and often isn't achievable until the goal and the steps to success are clearly articulated. But the climate crisis and our national security create an imperative to shift to a new energy paradigm as quickly as possible.

As Jeremy Nichols, our Climate & Energy program director, so eloquently puts it in his feature article we've cross the divide with the recognition of the severity of the climate crisis and now we must build a bridge to a new energy future. We simply can't afford to continue to build bridges to more old, dirty energy.

Which is why WILDEARTH GUARDIANS will both challenge every last plan that feeds our addiction and help envision and implement an energy greenprint for the American West.

That vision means policy that encourages conservation, efficiencies and renewables. It means fighting a rear-guard battle against the still powerful and entrenched oil and gas industry. The WILDEARTH vision means never giving up our precious wildlands and the rich tapestry of earth that is threatened.

GUARDIAN GIVERS

David Barnes and Lori Wray

Early in their relationship, Lori Wray and David Barnes noticed cow pies while backpacking through the Sierra Nevada. A flier on their car inspired them to stop accepting the destructive activity and start investigating what they could do to protect public lands.

When they met John Horning and

Bryan Bird at a wild lands conference years later, they were further inspired by the GUARDIANS' “enthusiasm, vision, and knowledge of southwestern wildlife and land preservation issues.” They have been members ever since.

“Petitioning for Endangered Species Act protections, along with legal challenges to public land policies, seem to us to be WILDEARTH's most effective strategies,” say Lori and David. “Thank you, also, for restoring the Babocomari River. We have hopes that it may become a healthy riparian area once again.”

“Imagine how life might change if citizens came to cherish land and all that lives on the land,” they say. “That's why it's important to get involved with WILDEARTH GUARDIANS.”



STUMP AN ENVIRO!

Duncan North

Dear Duncan,

I went hiking with my son last weekend to see the aspens changing. The golden trees were beautiful, but the trail and surrounding areas were so littered with stinky cow pies that it was hardly a walk through nature. I thought we were in the National Forest. What gives?

Yours truly,

Grossed Out in the Forest

Dear Grossed Out, Nature is full of poop. This is one of the main reasons I avoid nature (unless, of course, I need to walk through nature on my way from a building to a car). Maybe you grew up in the city, where the majority of poop is puppy poop that polite people put in packages, but real nature contains a wide variety of un-packaged poop. 'Outdoor Elitists' (my term for people who know the name of every tree and enjoy hiking more than television) use the term scat, instead of poop, when referring to the poop of wild animals. A cow is a domesticated ungulate (the fancy, outdoor elitist term for cows and horses). Domesticated ungulates make manure, not poop, crap or scat. I don't like any of these words, but I like manure least of all. Manure is usually goopier than scat and, as we all know, goopy poop is the worst kind of poop.

If nature has to be full of poop, I'd prefer wild scat to domestic manure (however, I'd prefer a gin and tonic to all of the above).

Your walk was marred by manure because somebody in the government thinks our forests are a good place for a bovine buffet. I can think of two solutions to your stinky problem. First, you could buy thousands of big plastic bags and send them to your nearest rancher in hopes that he will curb his cows (an entertaining idea, but hardly realistic). Second, you could support proposals to buy and retire grazing permits from ranchers by contacting your legislator or contributing to your favorite environmental organization. Then, we could all enjoy nature the way God intended – by tip toeing through the tulips instead of dodging the goopy poop.



Stump an Enviro!

To "Stump an Enviro," contact Duncan North at dnorth@wildearthguardians.org.

SAVE THE DATES

Look for WILDEARTH GUARDIANS 2009 events schedule in the next issue of *Wild at Heart*.

GOVERNOR AT OUR GALA

Michelle Miano

At the fifth annual Guardians' Gala last month, keynote speaker Governor Bill Richardson praised WILDEARTH GUARDIANS for our fervent efforts to restore and protect New Mexico's lands and rivers, highlighting the ongoing restoration of the Rio Puerco and efforts to protect the state's cleanest waters.

He also first announced his intention to create Pecos Canyon State Park, which would be New Mexico's 36th state park, adding to his record of conservation and providing a new gift to all who live in and visit the "Land of Enchantment." The crowd buzzed with energy as the Governor cited the significance of the term "guardian" and what it means to be a guardian of our wild lands and wildlife – to rise to the legal and ethical duty to defend and protect the members of our environment that cannot speak for themselves.

He also brought a humorous tone to the evening, mentioning that the grand applause for Executive Director John Horning rivaled the applause he received. But Governor



Richardson truly shined on behalf of the environment that evening. He even reminded guests of the need to support WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in light of the challenging economic times in which we find ourselves.

Visit Events at wildearthguardians.org

John Horning and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson at the Guardians' Gala.

The Western Ark Sets Sail

Nicole Rosmarino

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



I am an Endangered Species Act Guardian because WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has never disappointed me. All their efforts and resources go directly toward funding lawsuits and other initiatives on behalf of the little guys – the wolves, prairie dogs, prairie chickens and many other endangered species. There is no waste and no abuse. And they consistently WIN their uphill battles! I urge anyone who is concerned about the fate of our beloved fellow creatures and Planet Earth to join me in supporting WILDEARTH GUARDIANS.

Sincerely,
MARLENE FOSTER
Monthly donor
since 2004 and ESA
Guardian since 2006

Sign up to be a
Endangered Species
Act Guardian:
wildearthguardians.org

What do two plants, a salamander, a tortoise, a bird, six mollusks, and two mammals have in common? They all need help from the Endangered Species Act (ESA), our nation's legal ark for species on the brink.

On October 9, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS launched the Western Ark by filing eight petitions covering 13 species and calling attention to the ESA as an ark designed to protect the diversity of life. The species include diverse life forms, whether leafy, furred, feathered, or scaled. The collective range of these plants and animals sprawls across portions of 18 U.S. states and large expanses of Mexico and Canada.

The age-old story of Noah building an ark and ushering pairs of the world's animals onboard to spare them from an apocalyptic flood is mirrored in the ESA. The ESA aims to prevent extinction of plants and animals by protecting them from the many threats they face.

But species aren't allowed passage on the ark of the ESA until they are listed. There are two paths to listing: proposals by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the primary agency in charge of implementing the ESA, and citizen petitions, such as the eight we recently filed.

The species we included in the Western Ark all desperately need protection from a slew of threats, including habitat destruction, exotic species, collection of plants and animals, excessive water use, disease, pesticides and insecticides, and many others. Once the species are listed under the ESA, federal agencies would have to take meaningful steps to address these threats and give the passengers on the ark a chance at survival and recovery.

Nearly all of the species we petitioned are affected by climate change. The Western Ark takes on a special meaning in a world besieged by the climate crisis. Whether on rising ocean waters or in a riverbed emptied by drought, we're all in the same boat. The ESA provides one more approach to fighting the climate crisis and therefore protects us all.

Visit Western Ark at wildearthguardians.org



JENNIFER FREY

New Mexico meadow jumping mouse lives in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico, but has vanished from 74 percent of the places it used to inhabit.



CESAR MENDEZ

White-sided jackrabbit occurs in rare desert grasslands, but remains in just one small area in New Mexico, and may be on the decline in Mexico as well.



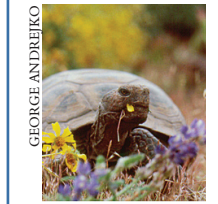
ROBERT G. HOWELLS

Texas pimpleback mussel and five other mussel species that signal water quality are on the decline.



NPS, CHRIS LUDSON

Jemez Mountains salamander is found only in the Jemez Mountains of northern New Mexico and is a likely victim of climate change.



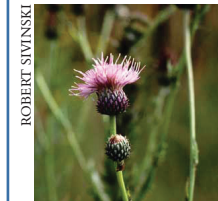
GEORGE ANDREIKO

Sonoran desert tortoise, which ranges across southern Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, has declined by more than half since 1987. Since being passed up for protection in 1991, their situation has worsened.



DOUG BACKLUND

Sprague's pipit ranges across the Great Plains and southwest. Due to assaults on its habitat, this grassland bird has declined by 79 percent since 1966.



ROBERT SWINSKI

Wright's marsh thistle now occurs only in New Mexico, in wetland habitat threatened by water diversion, agriculture, and herbicides aimed at non-native thistles.



USBLM

Chihuahua scurfpea is a plant with only 300 individuals left. Threatened by herbicide in the U.S., it appears to be gone from Mexico. It was historically collected to reduce fevers.

REIGNING IN OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Bryan Bird



Fifteen years ago, while taking respite in the Lincoln National Forest, my expansive view of White Sands National Monument was interrupted by a mob of motorcyclists. Consumed by noise and exhaust, I stepped aside and wondered if such a disturbance on our public land is legal. Unfortunately, it is. And now the over-use of motorized recreation has forced the Forest Service to address the problem.

Off-road vehicles represent one of the fastest growing threats to the integrity of our forests because of their disproportionate

impacts. As a result, the qualities for which most Americans value these lands – clean air and water, wildlife, the tranquility of wild places – are being destroyed at an alarming rate. The former chief of the National Forest Service named off-road vehicles as one of the four primary threats facing public lands and released a rule to govern their use.

In collaboration with other conservation groups, government agencies and concerned citizens, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is working within the framework of the Forest Service rule to reform motorized vehicle use on public lands. So far, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has reviewed and commented on plans for the Santa Fe, Lincoln, and Carson National Forests in New Mexico. We are participating in collaborative groups for the plans in Utah and Arizona National Forests. Enlisting considerable mapping and analysis talent, we will expose how the motorized use plans harm wildlife and water. With these resources, we're watching to make sure off-road vehicles do not destroy our precious wild places.

*Visit Protecting Public Lands
at wildearthguardians.org*

LAY OF THE LAND

Mark Salvo

Have you ever wondered where the biological hotspots on public lands are and what's threatening them? WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has created a new online mapping tool to inform and empower you about our public lands.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS invested years in researching, developing, vetting and plotting Geographic Information System (GIS) data to create maps of the species and landscapes we protect. Now these data are posted on a new website at www.publiclands.net called "The Lay of the Land," for you to create your own maps. The website offers a wide array of data on land ownership and management, species distribution and other biological values, and a multitude of land uses and threats to western ecosystems. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is the first to offer much of this information to the public. Bird's Eye View GIS in Albuquerque constructed the new website.

Data posted on publiclands.net supports every WILDEARTH GUARDIANS program, bolstering our scientific credentials when seeking policy reforms. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS staff have already used data on publiclands.net to create maps and reports to advance our work, including a series of maps depicting Outstanding National Resource Waters in New Mexico and maps and analyses for the *Shrinking Sagebrush Sea* report.

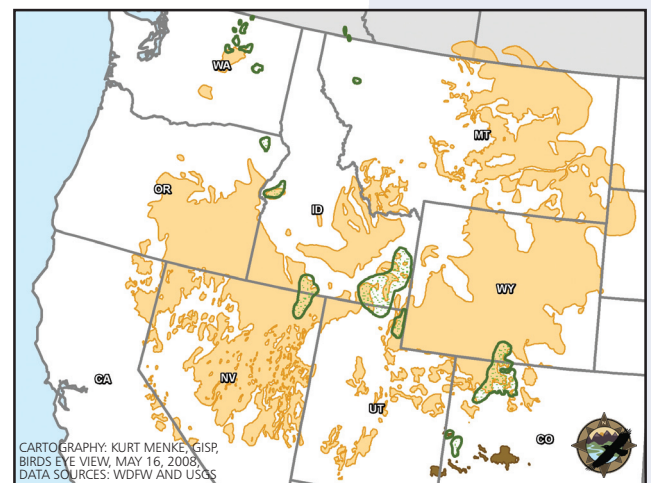
Go online and surf the site to learn what old and new threats might endanger your favorite public lands.

Visit publiclands.net

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

The Forest Service is working collaboratively with the public to identify and designate roads and trails that are suitable for motor vehicle use on all 115 of our National Forests.

Tell the Forest Service to protect public land from vehicle abuse. Go to www.fs.fed.us, find your favorite forest by name or state and then look up the planning status for that forest and comment.



This map shows populations of three species of grouse. Customize your own map from hundreds of possible combinations at publiclands.net.

- Columbian Sharp-Tailed Grouse Current Distribution
- Greater Sage-Grouse Current Distribution
- Gunnison Sage-Grouse Current Distribution

After you've used the site, let us know how it can be improved... and forward the site to a friend.

THE TREE PLANTER

An Interview with Jim Matison

Duncan North

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



As a trained ecologist, I understand the intimate connection between our waters and the entire web of life that these waters support. I am a Watershed Guardian and I support WildEarth's efforts to protect the very best of New Mexico's waters and their surrounding wild forests. By understanding the natural balance and working to preserve our natural resources, we are not only supporting our environment, but we are also supporting every living thing within it.

Sincerely,
MICHAEL RUSSELL GOLINSKI,
M.S., PH.D.
WATERSHED GUARDIAN
SINCE 2008

Sign up to be a
Watershed Guardian:
wildearthguardians.org

Jim Matison is the Restoration Projects Director for WILDEARTH GUARDIANS. My first question for Jim was, "How do you explain your job to your two-year old daughter?" His reply: "Daddy plants trees." Yes, Jim plants trees. In fact, in his six-year tenure at the GUARDIANS, Jim has planted more than 100,000. But he does much, much more.

Before a tree is planted, Jim travels around the Southwest and networks with locals to find degraded streamsid es in need of restoration. After assessing the needs of a potential restoration site, Jim develops a vision and writes a grant proposal to fund his vision. If he gets the money (and he usually does), he develops a specific work plan that includes accounting, administering the grants, organizing volunteers and, I assume, making excuses for not spending more time at home.

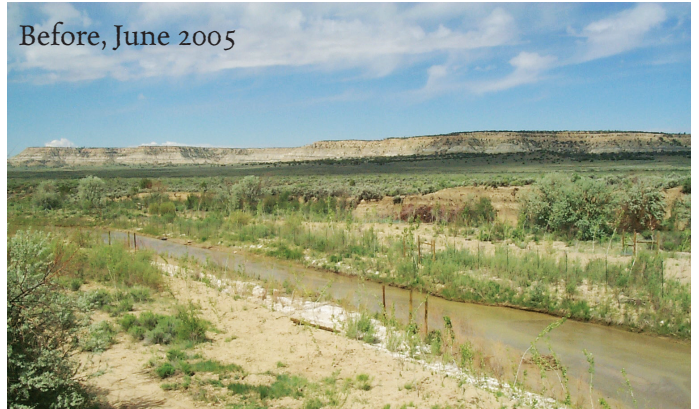
Jim is also a collaborator. This year alone, he has worked with the New Mexico State Land Office, the Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe County, the City of Santa Fe, Las Placitas Association, the Rio Puerco Alliance, The Rio Puerco Management Committee, the Earth Works Institute, the Santa Fe Watershed Association, and private landowners.

I asked Jim if those partnerships are challenging. "In 1995, when we first applied for a grazing permit to restore some land, we met a lot of resistance from the Land Office because we were threatening the status quo. But in 2006, they came to us and asked us to take over a lease to protect some land," Jim said. He added, "We all have a shared vision of restoring healthy habitats, but everyone has a different method of getting the job done. All of these streams have been impacted by human activities, from grazing to water diversion to roads to urban run-off and ground water pumping. To restore these systems, you have to eliminate those activities or greatly reduce them and some people are willing to do certain things, but more needs to be done. Still, I



Jim Matison

Before, June 2005



After, July 2008



Thanks to Jim's efforts, New Mexico's Rio Puerco is recovering.

want to praise all the people we are working with now."

Why does Jim work so hard? "I was born and raised in Tucson, which grew from a city of 300,000 people to more than a million in my lifetime. As a kid, I enjoyed swimming in creeks and swimming holes that are now dry. To see those areas swallowed up by development was heartbreaking, and that's what motivated me to get involved in this work. There are so many people who own a little plot of land, and it's theirs and they spend an extraordinary amount of time and money making it as nice as possible. But people don't realize that all our public land is just that, our public land, and I wish we spent that kind of time and money keeping up those lands as well."

You can be a part of the amazing transformation of damaged streams by joining the Stream Team next spring. Join Jim and his crew at various restoration sites throughout New Mexico and Arizona and help put another 100,000 trees in the ground. Look for the planting schedule coming soon.

Visit River Restoration at wildearthguardians.org

THE SHRINKING SAGEBRUSH SEA

Mark Salvo

JAMES OWNEY



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS released a new report in October describing extensive habitat loss and degradation in the vast sagebrush steppe landscape, called the Sagebrush Sea. The comprehensive report, entitled *The Shrinking Sagebrush Sea*, contains original spatial analyses of threats to sagebrush steppe and its iconic indicator species, the greater sage-grouse.

Our analyses found that more than 80 percent of remaining sage-grouse habitat is currently affected by one or more major threats, while less than three percent of the species' range is afforded some level of federal protection. Additional findings in the report:

- Livestock grazing has multiple negative effects on sage-grouse. Grazing is permitted on 91 percent of federal public land and 72 percent of all land ownerships in sage-grouse current range, making it the most ubiquitous use of sage-grouse habitat.
- Gas and oil development is harmful to sage-grouse, especially in or proximate to breeding, nesting and brooding habitat. Twenty-three percent of sage-grouse current range is within three kilometers of permitted natural gas and oil development in Montana,

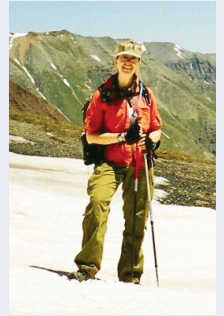
Wyoming, Utah and Colorado, where the majority of energy development is occurring in the Sagebrush Sea.

- Cheatgrass, a non-native flammable weed, destroys sagebrush steppe and probably is present in 36 percent of the sage-grouse's current range.
- Wildfires in the Sagebrush Sea are larger, hotter and more frequent than in the past. More than five million acres, or nine percent, of sage-grouse habitat burned in Idaho, Nevada and Utah between 1997-2007.
- Roads are everywhere in the Sagebrush Sea. Less than five percent of sagebrush-steppe is more than 1.6 miles from a road.

The Shrinking Sagebrush Sea was published just months before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will determine whether to protect sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act. Our findings support listing the species under the Act. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS will also use information in the report to buttress administrative and legislative proposals to designate large habitat reserves in the Sagebrush Sea.

Visit Sagebrush Sea at wildearthguardians.org

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



I am a Sagebrush Sea Guardian because I have seen first hand – as an avid hiker, backpacker, and birder in Colorado during the past 35 years – the immense damage inflicted on our sensitive environments and wildlife by irresponsible mining and drilling, rampant development, over-use, and misuse.

Each of us needs to commit and re-double our efforts to protect our precious wild places and inhabitants.

My generation must not be the last to enjoy the few wild places and species that are left.

Sincerely,
BARBARA WALKER
Donor since 2005

Sign up to
be a Sagebrush
Sea Guardian:
wildearthguardians.org

TO DRILL OR NOT TO DRILL?

Jeremy Nichols



ECOFLIGHT

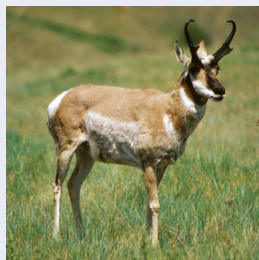
Like many public lands, Wyoming's Powder River Basin is threatened by the push to extract every last drop of fossil fuel. More than 60,000 permits have already been approved.

The mention of ozone air pollution, the key ingredient of smog, typically conjures images of Los Angeles or Houston – big cities with big freeways, big factories, and big populations. Yet in the midst of an unprecedented oil and gas boom in the Rocky Mountain West, sickening smog is settling in places you'd least expect. Fueled by drilling, ozone air pollution is on the rise in places like Farmington, New Mexico and Pinedale, Wyoming. Small towns are facing big city air pollution and projections indicate the smog will only worsen.

And yet industry and the politicians they support are calling for more oil and gas drilling. "Drill here, drill now," they demand.

Bolstered by rising prices at the pumps and escalating energy bills, it's a simple slogan that has gained traction. But this short-sighted demand for more drilling will not only fail to stem increasing costs, it threatens what we value most in the West: clean air, clear water, majestic landscapes, thriving wildlife, and our climate. Worse, it promises to stall the critical progress we've made toward a new energy future.

The West doesn't need more smog and it certainly doesn't need more fossil fuel drilling.



ISTOCK.COM



ISTOCK.COM

For animals like antelope and elk, misguided energy policies are not up for debate.

IF ONLY IT WERE THAT SIMPLE

Calls for more drilling are based on a seemingly sensible concept. More drilling means more production means more supply means lower prices. But it's just not that simple.

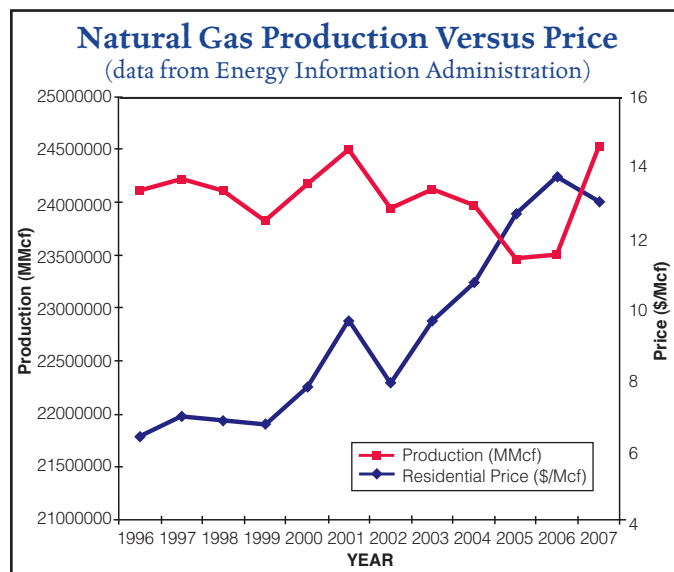
The fact is that ramped up drilling hasn't eased prices. Take natural gas. Although gas drilling in the United States has increased substantially, especially in the Rocky Mountain West, natural gas prices have soared in the last decade. Residential natural gas prices peaked at nearly \$14 per thousand cubic feet in 2006, more than double what they were in 1996.

And what about oil? According to the Energy Information Administration, nearly 400 rigs in the United States are drilling for oil, a nearly three-fold increase just since 1999. More drilling hasn't decreased gasoline prices in the present and it surely won't decrease prices in the future.

THE TRUE PRICE OF OIL AND GAS DRILLING

More drilling won't affect prices, but it promises to leave us with a hefty bill for water contamination, air pollution, degraded landscapes, and disappearing wildlife, especially in the West.

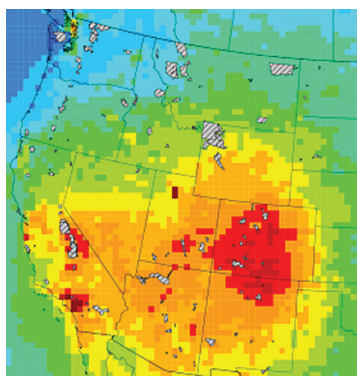
In fact, oil and gas drilling has already taken a tremendous toll. Ozone air pollution monitoring attests to this. While in the higher layers of our atmosphere, ozone helps protect the Earth from ultraviolet radiation. But down low it puts children, seniors, those with respiratory conditions, and even active adults



Despite the growth in drilling, residential consumers are spending twice as much as they did just a little over 10 years ago.

Predicted Ozone Levels in 2018

Ozone is created by many sources, both urban and rural, and can be transported great distances. Orange, red, and yellow symbolize potential future ozone levels at or above federal health limits recently adopted by the EPA.



Source: Ozone data from haze analyses by the Western Regional Air Partnership.

at risk. Formed when sunlight reacts with two key pollutants – nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds – ozone triggers asthma attacks, damages lungs, and exacerbates lung diseases.

In February and March of this year, ozone concentrations reached 122 parts per billion in Sublette County in western Wyoming, higher than both Houston and Los Angeles reported in 2007. The producing oil and gas wells in Sublette County now number over 3,400 – a nearly 200 percent increase since 2000. What's more, according to the Bureau of Land Management, oil and gas operations release 97 percent of all nitrogen oxide pollution and more than 99 percent of all volatile organic compounds in the area.

And in mid-October, ozone air pollution levels were so high in San Juan County in northwestern New Mexico that the region violated federal health standards, which limit ozone concentrations to no more than 75 parts per billion. In San Juan County, monitors recorded ozone concentrations at 77 parts per billion. There are currently more than 18,000 producing oil and gas wells in the area. These operations release more than 21,000 tons of nitrogen oxides and 60,000 tons of volatile organic compounds into the air annually. There are more than 10,000 oil and gas wells planned for drilling in the area and by 2023, these operations are projected to spew more than 70,000 tons of nitrogen oxides, more than the combined pollution from the two coal-fired power plants currently operating in San Juan County. It's a mess, but it doesn't end there.

- **Water Contamination:** The New Mexico Oil Conservation Division has recorded over 350 instances where chemicals dumped in pits at oil and gas operations have contaminated groundwater. In Colorado, drilling fluids have spilled into streams, contaminating irrigation and drinking water.
- **Toxic Air Pollution:** In areas being drilled in Colorado, oil and gas operations are the

largest source of benzene air pollution. Benzene is known to cause leukemia. In Garfield County, in western Colorado, oil and gas operations release 69 percent of all benzene air pollution, more than all other sources combined.

- **Wildlife Impacts:** In northwestern and southeastern New Mexico, the Bureau of Land Management has granted hundreds of "exceptions" for oil and gas companies to drill in sensitive wildlife habitat since 2000.
- **Special Places at Risk:** Irreplaceable landscapes throughout the Rocky Mountain West, including the Roan

Plateau of Western Colorado, the Otero Mesa of southern New Mexico, and Adobe Town in southern Wyoming have been targeted for drilling.

The track record of oil and gas drilling in the Rocky Mountain West is truly a disaster and the promise of ramped up drilling seems only to portend a price tag that we can ill-afford.

AND THEN THERE'S GLOBAL WARMING

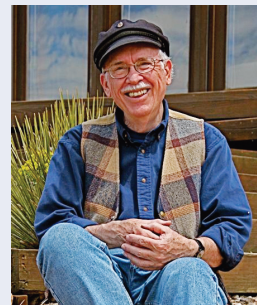
The argument goes, "Natural gas is cleaner than coal and therefore, more oil and gas drilling is better for the climate." It's a line spouted over and over to support the push for more drilling, but clean is in the eyes of the beholder. And being cleaner than coal doesn't mean that natural gas is clean.

A large part of the problem with natural gas operations is, quite simply, natural gas. Otherwise known as methane, natural gas is 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its heat trapping ability. In the process of producing natural gas, methane is not only vented, but it seeps from leaking pipes, valves, fittings, and other equipment. This means oil and gas production often amounts to very large sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

In both New Mexico and Wyoming, oil and gas operations are the second largest source of greenhouse gases, right behind coal-fired power plants. Inventories show that in the Rocky Mountain West, oil and gas operations currently release over 44 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, more than all the coal-fired power plants in Wyoming.

When burned, natural gas may release less carbon dioxide than coal, but this alone is a poor measure of its global warming impacts. From the cradle to the grave, oil and gas drilling has a far greater impact on the climate than the rhetoric suggests.

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



Like Robert Frost standing where "two roads diverged in a yellow wood," we too have a momentous choice to make. Do we continue on our present path, consuming everything, planet and climate be damned? Or will we adopt sustainable policies and practices and join Frost in saying, "I took the one less-traveled by and that has made all the difference." With a livable climate in mind, I've personally chosen to belong to and support WILDEARTH GUARDIANS because they steadfastly walk the less-traveled road and so do I.

Sincerely,
DOUGLAS STEWART
Supporter since 2005

Sign up to be a
Climate Guardian:
wildearthguardians.org

A BRIDGE TO NOWHERE

Notwithstanding all this, natural gas is viewed as a “bridge” to a clean energy future. So the thinking goes, natural gas can help transition to renewable energy sources.

But is the push for more drilling really about promoting a transition, or just continuing within the fossil fuel paradigm? Is natural gas really a bridge, or is it just the next fossil fuel that

threatens to leave us hanging? With the oil and gas industry and the politicians they support fighting safeguards for clean air, clean water, wildlife, and wild places, the push for more drilling is nothing

more than an attempt to lock us into continued reliance on fossil fuels.

Perhaps the most important question to keep in mind is, why build a bridge if we’ve already crossed the divide?

While a 100 percent clean, carbon-free energy future may be a few decades away, we already know the potential is present. In New Mexico, it is estimated that by 2020, efficiency improvements alone could reduce electricity use by 24 percent, natural gas use by 20 percent, and gasoline use by 26 percent. Efficiencies combined with the rapid development of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and geothermal, as well as the implementation of smart grid technology, plug-in hybrid vehicles, and energy storage could quickly propel us into the clean energy future that we need. With the clean energy potential at hand, it seems senseless to build a bridge out of fossil fuels.

WHY PUT OFF UNTIL TOMORROW WHAT WE CAN DO TODAY

The question really is whether we as a society are going to prioritize shifting away from fossil fuels once and for all.

We can shift to a clean energy future that is dependable, affordable, and most importantly does not leave the future a massive deficit. It is not science fiction. It is a question of shifting our priorities and demanding reform of the status quo approach to energy.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has been working to revitalize our economy with clean and renewable energy resources that not only combat the climate crisis, but also are integral in protecting the wild heritage of the West.

We’ve started in Santa Fe, NM with our Solar Santa Fe program – an effort that would allow the City of Santa Fe to issue long term, low interest loans to help property owners offset the costs of installing solar systems and efficiency measures. We’ve generated massive support for the Solar Santa Fe program and already pre-enrolled close to 300 enthusiastic Santa Feans for the program.

In addition, our Climate and Energy Program is:

- **Tackling Coal Mining:** We filed two challenges against coal mine expansions in western Colorado. Coal mining is the root of coal burning, the largest source of greenhouse gases in the world. Our challenges take an innovative and hard-hitting approach to reining in fossil fuel use.
- **Making No Exceptions for Oil and Gas Drilling:** We just reached a legal settlement with the Bureau of Land Management requiring the agency to conduct a full environmental analysis of oil and gas drilling in sensitive wildlife habitat in the San Juan Basin of northwestern New Mexico. The analysis should boost efforts to keep the BLM from granting “exceptions” for drilling.
- **Safeguarding Clean Air in the Rockies:** Air pollution problems in the Rocky Mountain West stem from fossil fuels. We’re using clean air as leverage to rein in fossil fuels, targeting oil and gas drilling plans in northwestern New Mexico and other parts of the West.

To drill or not to drill – there is only one answer. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is leading the switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy because future generations deserve to inherit the breathtaking Western vistas, not breath-stealing smog and pockmarked wildlands.

Visit *Climate & Energy* at wildearthguardians.org

NICOLE ROSMARINO



New Mexico’s Otero Mesa, a hotspot of biodiversity, has been targeted for drilling.

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To drill or not to drill – there is only one answer.

ALPHAVISIONS



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is working for clean and renewable energy that will revitalize our economy and combat the climate crisis.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GUARDIANS

VALERIE TRAINA



ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT RALLY

In September, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center (CWWC), and other groups rallied in Denver to protect the Endangered Species Act (ESA) from dangerous regulations proposed by the Bush administration. Flanked by two wolves from CWWC, we talked with pedestrians along Denver's 16th Street mall and collected 450 letters of protest in just two hours. We submitted over 800 letters to the administration in October, along with technical comments prepared with the University of Denver and other groups.

Visit Endangered Species Act at wildearthguardians.org

GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE VICTORY

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' efforts to protect Gunnison sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act took another step forward this fall when the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. ruled in our favor. The ruling, though technically complex, is important in bringing the species one step closer to protection under the Act.

Visit Western Grouse Project at wildearthguardians.org



LOUIS SWIFT

RICHARD BADGER



NEW MEXICO COUGAR PROTECTION

In October, the New Mexico Game Commission adopted historic reforms for cougars. The new regulations protect breeding females and their dependent kittens by limiting the killing of females and by instituting an online education course. The Commission also ended a one million dollar government-subsidized program to snare cougars in the Guadalupe Mountains. Since 1985, this sweetheart deal benefited a private trapper at the outrageous cost of more than \$2,000 per cat. WILDEARTH commends the Commission for recognizing that cougars are a critical part of the web of life.

Visit Monitoring State Management at wildearthguardians.org

LIVING RIVER PROGRAM COMES TO ALBUQUERQUE

For the first time, a community dependent on the Rio Grande has the power to sustain the river. Due in part to the work of WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority implemented a program in October that will give Albuquerque the opportunity to protect and restore the river that provides its drinking water. Starting with October water bills, residents can support the Rio Grande ecosystem by contributing \$1 or more per month to "The Living River Fund" by checking a box. The fund will be used to purchase water rights and ensure that current levels are maintained, thereby protecting the various species of wildlife that call the river home.

Visit Living River at wildearthguardians.org



ADRIEL HESSEY



DONATE WITH CONFIDENCE!

This good news is made possible by your generous donations. As evidenced by our consistent 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS gets the job done with your dollars. Help keep the good news flowing by making a gift to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS today.

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GUARDIAN PROFILE

Jeremy Nichols



Jeremy joined WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in 2008 as the Director of the Climate and Energy Program, taking action to fight fossil fuels, promote clean energy, slash greenhouse gases, and develop innovative strategies to safeguard the climate and the American West.

Jeremy has been active in conservation advocacy since 2000, when he first started working with Biodiversity Conservation Alliance to protect forests, grasslands, and imperiled species in Wyoming and the Black Hills of South Dakota. In 2006, he founded and led Rocky Mountain Clean Air Action, a nonprofit that successfully held polluters, states, and the Environmental Protection Agency accountable to our clean air laws throughout the Rocky Mountain region.

A native of Boise, Idaho, Jeremy made his way to the Rocky Mountain West to study geology at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. He now lives in Denver with his son, Obsidian, undoubtedly the coolest six-year old boy in the world.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS Receives Piñon Award



KATE RUSSELL

l to r: Rebecca Sobel, Rosie Brandenberger, Carol Norton, Duncan North, Wendy Keefover-Ring, Tom Noble, Michelle Miano, John Horning

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS was honored to accept the prestigious John J. Kenney Piñon Award for Environment from the Santa Fe Community Foundation on October 7. The Foundation chooses only five non-profits each year to receive their award for outstanding service.

PHOTOS.COM



Test Your WILD KNOWLEDGE

How well do you know your wildlife?

Take the WILDEARTH challenge and test your knowledge.

Level 1: What species is pictured here?

Level 2: What is this animal doing?

Level 3: What plant does this species need to survive?

Level 4: What is a major threat to this species' survival?

Level 5: How much has this species' habitat declined since the 1800s?

Find out how you did on our website or in the next *Wild at Heart* issue.