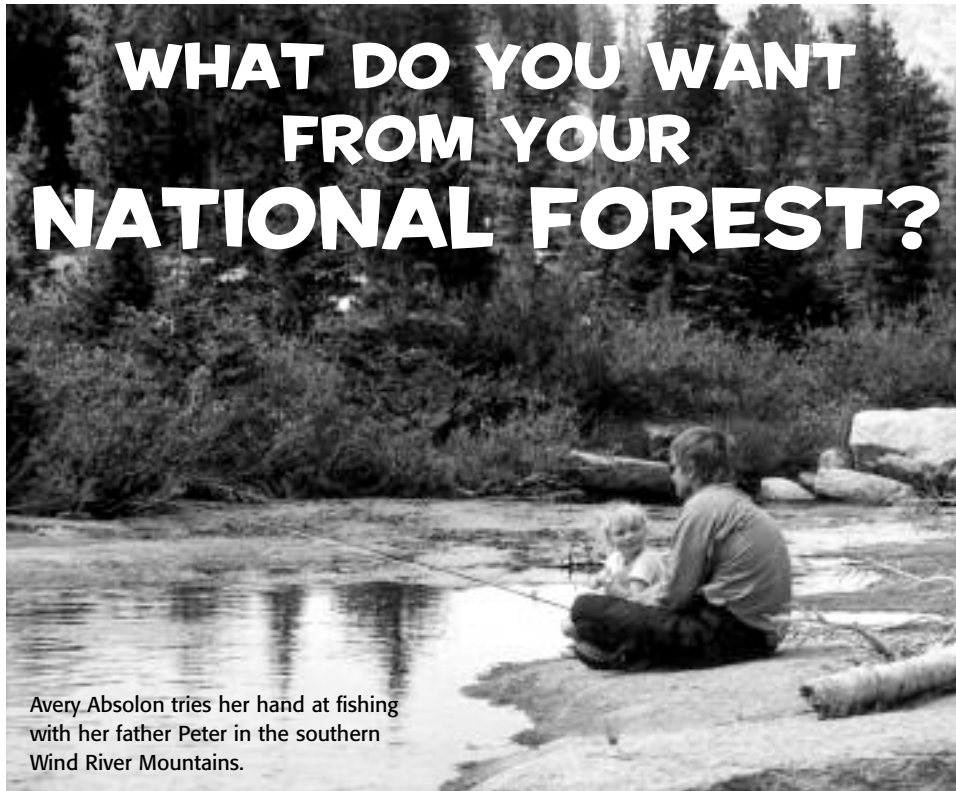




FRONTLINE

R E P O R T

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR NATIONAL FOREST?



Ann Ambrecht

Avery Absolon tries her hand at fishing with her father Peter in the southern Wind River Mountains.

Bridger-Teton and Shoshone National Forests Undergo Forest Plan Revisions

by Molly Absolon

Seventeen of us gathered in the Monarch Room of the Pronghorn Motel in Lander last May to talk about forest planning. The room felt empty. It's hard to draw people in for a discussion on our national forests when the sun is shining and the very wild lands under discussion beckoning. But there we sat. Talking.

Both the Bridger-Teton and the Shoshone National Forests are rewriting their forest plans—visionary documents designed to guide management decisions for the next 10-15 years. And while forest plan revisions are nothing new, this process is. In January

2005, the United States Forest Service adopted a new planning rule that has changed just about everything.

"The Forest Service told us to take anything we knew about forest planning and pitch it," says Kevin Hurley, a wildlife biologist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in Cody. Hurley is one of the department's representatives on the Shoshone Government Cooperators Work Group. He participated in the last round of forest planning for the Shoshone back in the mid-1980s.

"The new process is hard for me," Hurley continues. "We're still on the outer fringes of this thing working our way toward the center. I'm ready to get to the meat and potatoes of it, to get my hands around what we are trying to accomplish."

Bryan Armel, the forest planner for the Shoshone, agrees that the new rule has made things challenging, but he is optimistic about the process.

"This is a change," Armel says. "In the past it was easy to figure out what steps to take next because we knew the procedure. Now we have to figure out how to do this as we go along. It's like anything new.

"But I think the new rule looks positive at this stage. It's more strategic and doesn't get into too much detail, which has the potential benefit of allowing us to get through the process and begin implementing changes more quickly."



THE FOREST SERVICE WANTS TO KNOW.

The Forest Service calls this new planning process a "paradigm shift." Plans will now be "more strategic and less prescriptive in nature than under the 1982 planning rule." The new final rule for national forest planning, published in the Federal Register on January 5, 2005, announced its intended effects are to "streamline and improve the planning process by making plans more adaptable to changes in social, economic and environmental conditions; to strengthen the role of science in planning; to strengthen collaborative relationships with the public and other governmental entities; and to reaffirm the principles of sustainable management consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act and other authorities."

What this actually means on the ground is subject to debate. According to some, flexibility will enable the *continued on page 3*

John Fandek



Enough Is Enough
No Drilling in the
Bridger-Teton *Page 7*



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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*Executive Director
Mark Preiss*



I've been on the road lately, in Wilson, Casper, Rock Springs, and to Seattle and the Northwest, visiting with our members and supporters, and participating in the Dimensions of Regional Leadership Yellowstone Business Partnership and Greater Yellowstone Power of Place joint conference.

Through these conversations—across borders and disciplines—it is clear that folks are beginning to engage to develop new solutions to the issues facing Wyoming, the environment, and the Greater Yellowstone area. The time is right to create new alliances that build bridges across political allegiances and integrate economics, social and environmental concerns.

This convergence of common values is evidenced in my conversations with respected leaders in the foundation community, in discussions with state leaders, and most recently in my conversations at the Dimensions of Regional Leadership conference. The Wyoming Outdoor Council's new three-year strategic plan anticipated this opportunity, and firmly articulates our determination to play a leading role in developing and fostering its powerful vision. The future sustainability of Wyoming and the region depends on innovative partnerships, and it also depends on our ability to help facilitate and build the capacity of this emerging coalition of voices.

Our air quality campaign, my participation in the Leadership Wyoming program beginning in August, our renewables efforts working with Western Resource Advocates, our participation as committee members on the Western Governors' Association Energy Task Force, and our work helping convene a meeting of the Wyoming conservation community in order to increase our own effectiveness and capacity building are but a few examples of this emerging transformative and dynamic thinking.

My face-to-face conversations continue to leave me optimistic that together we can build a "stewardship of wildness," as John Turner discussed during his keynote speech at the Dimensions of Regional Leadership conference, that understands and empowers a blending and binding together of the common values of economic, social and environmental health. I want to share an excerpt from the opening session of the conference.

“There is a false dissonance between social and environmental. Nonprofit, for profit, no difference. Nonprofits under-perform economically, for-profits under-perform socially, environmentally. Our focus moving ahead must be upon leveraged relationships that maximize total value. We need new leaders to develop new ways of doing business.” *Keynote speech — “Leading Toward Sustainable Capitalism,” Jed Emerson, senior fellow with the Generation Foundation*

What I find encouraging as we move forward is the confluence of trends, the interest and energy around new ways of thinking, of getting back to our roots, from many disciplines and perspectives. We call it common sense, but sometimes it takes time to regain our senses. In the current national dynamics, I believe we've been given the wake-up call, and an opportunity to build strong and lasting relationships to do it right locally, knowing our efforts will have far broader implications. Back in 1967, the Wyoming Outdoor Coordinating Council, as we were once called, was established for that very purpose. It's good to be home, back to our roots.

I'll keep you posted and engaged.

Happy Trails,
Mark



Established in 1967, the Wyoming Outdoor Council (WOC) is the state's oldest and largest independent statewide conservation organization. Our mission is to protect Wyoming's environment and quality of life for future generations.

Frontline Report is the quarterly newsletter of WOC and is provided as a benefit of membership. Letters to the editor and articles by members are welcome.

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continued from cover

Forest Service to adapt to changing conditions and demands; to others it has the potential of creating a plan so vague it has no meaning.

What's different?

One of the biggest changes is that forest plans no longer require analysis of multiple alternatives under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Plans can be developed and revised from a single alternative instead. Analysis of multiple alternatives will be conducted on a project-by-project basis—say a specific timber sale—when that project comes on line. In theory this sounds good, but it makes many nervous.

The new rule also means that the public cannot appeal forest plans. There is an “objection” period before the plan is finalized during which the Forest Service will hear concerns. But it is not clear what weight an objection will hold or how it will be addressed in the final plan.

“I’m not completely comfortable that a planning document doesn’t require environmental analysis,” says Jen Lamb, the public policy manager at the National Outdoor Leadership School, one of the largest permittees on the Shoshone and the Bridger-Teton National Forests.

“I don’t think streamlining at the cost of environmental analysis is a good idea. However, the agency has told us in no uncertain terms that environmental analysis will not suffer, so I guess we have to trust them and wait and see,” she says. “But we should not forget that these plans do have weight. The oil and gas leasing going on in the Wyoming Range now was identified as available for leasing in the 1990 Bridger-Teton Forest Plan.”



Join us on field trips to the Wyoming Range (July 15), and to roadless areas in the Shoshone National Forest (July 22) and the Bridger-Teton (August 12).

See www.wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org for details.

Jeff Vanuga

Wait and see

A number of stakeholders and members of the public have echoed this “wait and see” viewpoint but also expressed divergent opinions about the forest planning process.

“On the one hand the process has been encouraging,” says Steve Dutcher, the chairman of the board of supervisors for the Popo Agie Conservation District and the district’s representative

on the Shoshone Government Cooperators Work Group. “I feel as if our comments are noted and our input considered. But I’m not sure where it’s going. I’m concerned that this is a way for the government to go through the backdoor to get around process in the name of expediting things.

“We’re working on a plan that is supposed to be flexible. But I worry that it seems like an easy way out. Look at what happened with the Jack Morrow Hills. They worked with cooperators and took input from the public and then in the final plan the Bureau of Land Management blew by what people wanted,” Dutcher adds.

In the past, forest plans took five to seven years to complete, and it was not unheard of for the process to drag out for ten years. The Shoshone’s Armel said the old plans cost up to \$1 million per year. The planning process is now supposed to be completed in three years with an average budget of \$500,000 per year. Both Armel and Rick Fox, the Bridger-Teton’s forest planner, say their respective plans are on schedule, although the two forests have opted to follow different paths to reach the same end.

“All the regions are handling this a little differently,” says Fox of the Bridger-Teton. “Personally I think it is a good thing that we’re trying different approaches. This will give us more diversity of perspectives on how to go about forest planning in the future.”

But for some people interested in both forests, the differences can be confusing.

“The fact that the Bridger-Teton and the Shoshone are doing the same thing in different ways is totally mind boggling,” says Liz Howell, executive director of the Wyoming Wilderness Association. “I think the public is being ditched in this process.”

The forest planners disagree with Howell’s contention and the forest rule states explicitly, “This final rule assures the public an effective voice in the entire planning process from beginning to end.” Still the meetings can be confusing and the weight of public comments hard to discern. At the May meeting on roadless areas, the discussion rambled and which comments were actually being recorded was unclear.

“I care about the forest. I use it heavily and it is a large part of why I choose to live here,” says Nathan Foster, a Lander resident. “Management of the forest is critically important to me personally. But I left the planning meeting with a feeling that I don’t totally understand the process, and I have the sense that not too many others understand it either.”

In spite of the confusion and an element of pessimism on the part of some, the planning process is moving forward rapidly. Both forests hope for a final plan in 2008, so now is the time for public participation in protecting the lands we love. ➤

WYOMING OUTDOOR COUNCIL'S ROLE

The Wyoming Outdoor Council is working to influence the forest planning process in ways that protect our water, air, wildlife and wild places. We are also seeking to keep people informed so that you—or anyone else who knows and loves these forests—know how and when to be involved.

Government cooperators weigh in on forest plans

by Molly Absolon

The new forest planning rule puts an emphasis on public involvement and collaboration. To this end, both the Shoshone and the Bridger-Teton National Forests have held a number of public meetings and workshops over the past year. In addition, the forests have established Government Cooperators Work Groups that meet regularly to discuss the forest plans.

Comprised of representatives from the state including the Governor's Planning Office, the Game and Fish Department, the State Forestry Division, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environmental Quality, and local conservation districts, as well as other federal agencies and county commissioners, the cooperators are intended to represent a broad spectrum of stakeholder constituencies through elected officials and their full-time staff appointees.

"You get a diverse spread of viewpoints at the cooperators' meetings," says Randy Williams, the executive director of the Teton Conservation District who serves on both the Bridger-Teton and the Shoshone cooperators groups. "From my perspective, this is a good thing. It brings balance.

"I believe this is a proactive kind of program. We are trying to figure out how to

bring all the stakeholders together as one big group where we can work together in an effective way," Williams continues.

Most of the cooperating groups come to the table with a specific agenda or mandate dictating the nature of their input: Conservation districts are focused on soil, water and agricultural interests; Game and Fish representatives look out for habitat, wildlife and fisheries; the State Department of Agriculture watches out for grazing permittees.

"My role is restricted to fish and wildlife," says Kevin Johnson, a fisheries biologist for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in Lander. "We try to minimize damage to water and habitat loss. I don't know how the county commissioners weigh in and decide their positions."

"I'm looking to bring the views of ag to the table," says Matt Hoobler, a senior policy analyst with the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. "Instead of just planning on an ecological basis, I can represent social, economic, community and overall ag industry concerns. The bottom line is I represent grazers to make sure they have a voice in the planning."

The stakeholder system guarantees a voice for many constituencies, but others are less clearly represented. For example, conservation, outfitting and recreation groups—groups that are not a part of local government or state agencies—do not have a formal seat on the cooperators' work groups. The input of these groups is either filtered through members of the cooperating groups who theoretically represent them as elected officials, or comes through their voluntary participation in the public process. On paper, these two avenues for providing input will be weighed evenly. But some, like Liz Howell of the Wyoming Wilderness Association, are skeptical.

"It seems to me as if this process is giving a lot of power to the Government Cooperators Work Group," Howell says. "And they represent the most conservative elements in the state."

What You can do

If you live in any of the counties surrounding the Shoshone and Bridger-Teton National Forests, call your county commissioners to talk to them about your vision for the forests. If you belong to any user groups—bike associations, ski clubs, etc.—consider submitting comments both as a group and individually. You can also contact the forest planners to ask if your group may make a presentation at a cooperators work group meeting. Or you can contact us and we'll let you know about ways to participate.

Contact Information:

- Bridger-Teton National Forest planner, Rick Fox: hsfox@fs.fed.us
- Shoshone National Forest planner, Bryan Armel: barmel@fs.fed.us
- Wyoming Outdoor Council director of national parks and forests, Lisa McGee: lisa@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org

To date, the cooperating group meetings have been cordial. But so far, the topics have been uncontroversial.

"Everyone can agree to a healthy environment, clean water, good fish populations, and blue skies. Who isn't going to support that? It's like motherhood and apple pie," says Kevin Hurley, a wildlife biologist for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. "But good fish populations cannot have sedimentation. Where does sedimentation come from? Road building, prescribed burns.... That's where the potential conflict can come in. When we start talking about those details, the ride is going to get interesting."

Neither forest is holding any public meetings over the summer. In September 2006, the details of both forest plans will begin to be hammered out. According to Bryan Armel, the Shoshone forest planner, this fall is when they will pull out the maps and try to figure out what areas will be managed for which conditions. That's when the fact that you agree in principle with motherhood and apple pie, but prefer banana cream pie, will make all the difference. ➤

BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST TIMELINE

- Summer-Fall 2006: Desired conditions framework, monitoring program, and evaluation process determined. Collaborative workshops to solicit public input.
- Spring-Fall 2007: Proposed forest plan developed.
- December 21, 2007: Proposed revised plan released, 90-day public comment period begins.
- June 2008: Plan finalized, followed by 30-day objection period.

For More Information:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/btnf/news/fpr.shtml>

The fairytale of our forests

by Jeramie L. Prine

I can vividly recall my first real outing in the Shoshone National Forest and Washakie Wilderness. I was eight years old and my father had decided that it was time to show me what existed in our “backyard.” He had planned a four-day backpacking trip west of Ramshorn Peak into the cirque of Six Mile creek. We were to set up a base camp at the mouth of the cirque, with the main objective to summit peak 11,873, or what my family calls Six-Mile Mountain.

The day came for us to set off into the forest. My dad walked me through the way to pack the gear and food that we would need, and some of the conveniences that would make life at camp more entertaining and pleasurable. He stressed the importance of leaving no trace except our footprints, so that another backcountry traveler might encounter the wildness of the forest much the same as we had.

I could tell how important it was for him to share this wilderness experience with me. He kept talking about how mystical the cirque would be with snow melting into cascades pouring down the mountain walls and how walking into the cirque reminded him of a land that only existed in fairytales. These words would help motivate me to reach—by my own power—our destination and the summit of what was to be the first of many Washakie Wilderness peaks.

The summit did not come easy, and I did

not understand why we kept pushing upward. That is, until I finally reached the top. Standing there, able to see in all directions for miles, I raised my arms high overhead with joy and a sense of earned accomplishment. From that moment on, I understood the importance of this journey and how much we can learn about ourselves in natural environments.

Now that I am a father, I yearn for the day when I take my daughter out into the forest and show her how to respect and appreciate what Mother Nature has provided us in the Shoshone National Forest and surrounding Greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

When that day comes, I hope that when she rounds the bend or comes over the top of a hill, it is a grizzly bear, moose or bighorn sheep she encounters and not the exhaust of a four-wheeler, snowmobile or snow cat, all of which are encroaching deeper and deeper into our national forests and designated wilderness areas. I want her to experience the fairytale of these forests and mountains, and not to depend on my stories about what they were once like. The forests and mountains belong to everyone, but with misuse and without conservation efforts, their splendor will be lost for generations to come. When issues arise that affect our forests, we must become active and voice our concerns in order to ensure their magnificence in the future. ▶



Matt Sheridan

Jeramie Prine teaches 7th and 8th grade English at Fort Washakie School and lives with his wife, CeCe, and four-month old daughter, Meesha, in Lander. He can be found exploring the backcountry on his snowboard in the winter and on bike or foot when the snow melts. He is a new member of the Wyoming Outdoor Council.

Shoshone National Forest:

2.4 million acres, 1.5 million acres designated wilderness. The Shoshone was set aside in 1891 as part of the Yellowstone Timberland Reserve Act, making it the first national forest in the United States.

SHOSHONE NATIONAL FOREST TIMELINE

- June 2006: Draft desired conditions package available for review. Comments accepted until August 9.
- Sept. 2006-March 2007: Public meetings to develop other plan components.
- Spring 2007: Draft plan released followed by 90-day comment period.
- Spring 2008: Final plan issued, followed by 30-day objection period.
- Sept. 2008: Plan approval.

For More Information:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/shoshone/projects/planning/revision/revision_index.shtml



Jeff Vanuga

Cirque of the Towers

Fifty-two years working and playing on the Bridger-Teton National Forest

by Rod Newcomb

My attachment to northwest Wyoming began like it has for so many others, with a summer visit that eventually turned into a lifetime stay. I came out in the summers of 1953 and 1954 to work in guest lodges in Grand Teton National Park. After a stint in the army in 1959, I returned to live here for good.

My relationship with the mountains and forests around Jackson began with my individual adventures and then turned into adventures I shared with my children. I flash back to when my kids were in junior high and my son said he wanted to go hunting with me. It was a cold rainy day and by noon it was time to build a fire and warm up. We both had a lesson in making a fire in a rain-soaked forest that neither of us has ever forgotten. Or there was the blue-bird day in late fall when my older daughter ordered me to take her climbing. Or the January day my younger daughter wanted to camp out on Teton Pass in a snow cave. After a storm with a foot of new snow, we had a lesson in route finding that included skirting around the avalanche paths. Now my children are grown, but those memories of times we shared in the mountains together then and now are precious.

I still get out as much as I can. Two summers ago, I joined Jack Turner on a five-day hike from south to north on the Wyoming Range National Recreational Trail. Jack is one of Wyoming's imminent naturalists, mountaineers and philosophers. On this trip, we had nothing but blue skies, green grass, elk, deer and mosquitoes. One night something spooked the elk, and they ran through camp. The thrashing sound of their panicked rush woke us up, and we covered in our tent hoping that they could see its outline in the dark and avoid running us over. It could have been a disaster, but wasn't. On that trip we did not see another person for five days even though it was the first week of July. These are the kind of things I love about the Bridger-Teton.

You might ask what changes have I seen in the past 50-odd years in western Wyoming's national forests. I have seen the



Scott Bosse

Wyoming Range

fire season of 1988, but the trees are growing back. I have seen two infestations of lodgepole pine bark beetle, but the beetles don't kill all the trees. I am witnessing the dying of the white bark pine from blister rust. Hopefully a solution will be found.

What is sad and I fear irreversible is the deterioration of the air quality as viewed from the Grand Teton. My first climb of the Grand was in 1954. I missed the next four years, but from 1959 through last summer I have made well over 400 ascents of the mountain. On a clear day the highest peaks in Wyoming, Idaho and Montana are visible. I have been told that the Tetons can be seen from the high point in the Uintas, so add Utah. Unfortunately, I never carry a camera, but if I had photographed the view on each climb dating back to 1954, we would notice a slow diminishing and blurring of the horizon. At first it was to the west, then to the east. Now it is the exception to see Temple

Bridger-Teton National Forest:
3.4 million acres, 1.2 million acres designated wilderness. The Bridger-Teton is the largest and most visited national forest in the contiguous United States.



photo courtesy Rod Newcomb

Rod Newcomb and his fellow instructor Ron Matous (left)—both seasoned mountain men—prepare to teach a class on avalanche awareness. Rod is the director of the American Avalanche Institute. He lives in Wilson.

Peak in the southern Winds and Granite Peak in Montana. One of my rewards in making the summit of the Grand has been to see all of "my country." On most days now I know it's still there, I just can't see it.



Enough is enough: No oil and gas development on Wyoming's national forest lands

by Lisa Dardy McGee

Wyoming people are lucky to call the Bridger-Teton National Forest our backyard. It is an exceptional forest that we and our friends and families appreciate for its scenery, recreation, trout streams and wildlife.

To celebrate the Bridger-Teton and to address the threat that oil and gas development poses to this beloved place, the Wyoming Outdoor Council, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, The Wilderness Society and Greater Yellowstone Coalition recently hosted two community forums in the towns of Daniel and Jackson. The forums were designed to explain to community members which areas of the forest are currently threatened by new leasing and to identify areas that are temporarily off-limits to development, but which could be re-opened under the new forest plan.

Mike Judd, an outfitter from Alberta whose business and backyard—the Canadian Rockies—were hurt by oil and gas development, spoke at both forums. Mike shared with us the lessons he and his neighbors learned and suggested ideas for what we can do today to protect the lands we love. He cautioned that “oil and gas development will allow a few corporations to get rich,” but if this development occurs on sensitive forest lands, it will “leave our children impoverished.”

During the question and answer session at the end of the forum in Jackson, one local cited all other oil and gas development projects in the state and asked, “What makes the issues on the Bridger-Teton any different from these areas?”

1.9 million acres of the 3.4 million acre Bridger-Teton National Forest could be open to oil and gas leasing with the new forest plan.

The answer is twofold. First, many of the areas that have the potential for energy development in the Bridger-Teton are not yet leased. Leasing is the all-important stage after which it becomes difficult to halt future development. Through the forest plan revision process, the public has the ability to speak out and tell the Forest Service that certain lands on the Bridger-Teton are not suitable for oil and gas development. If an area is deemed “not suitable,” future leasing is not an option for the life of the forest plan.

Second, there is diverse and resounding support for protecting the Bridger-Teton as evidenced by the varied constituencies that have opposed new leasing in the southern

part of the forest. Groups like the AFL-CIO representing labor unions; residents of the communities of Rock Springs, Green River, Big Piney and Pinedale (many of whom work in the gas fields but recreate in the forest on their weekends); homeowners

in Merna, Daniel and Bondurant; as well as outfitters, hunters, anglers, ranch owners and conservationists have all protested recent lease sales in the Wyoming Range. In addition, elected officials including Senator Thomas and Governor Freudenthal have voiced strong opposition to new leasing and any new oil and gas development in the Wyoming Range and other parts of the Bridger-Teton.

Given the booming oil and gas development occurring on surrounding BLM lands in the Upper Green River Valley, Wyoming residents are drawing the line at the forest boundary. “Enough is enough,” was the sentiment the public repeated during both forums. The Bridger-Teton National Forest is one of the last best places. With continued participation from an active and engaged public, we are working to keep it that way. ▶



Pincher Creek, Alberta

After losing his livelihood to rampant oil and gas development along the eastern front of the Canadian Rockies, Alberta outfitter Mike Judd hit the road to tell his story and help others avoid the tragedy that befell his homeland. Early this summer, he shared his cautionary tale with Wyoming audiences in Daniel and Jackson.



AROUND WYOMING

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRAM WORK

GREATER YELLOWSTONE

Safeguarding the Wyoming Range—a place too special to drill. In November, the Wyoming Outdoor Council along with four other conservation groups and a local homeowners' association protested the first of several oil and gas lease sales offered in the Wyoming Range. In April, the BLM dismissed our protest. In response, the Wyoming Outdoor Council and our partners appealed the decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and requested the board halt any ground-disturbing activities until it decides the merits of the appeal. Since the board's decision will likely set precedent for the other lease parcels and because we share the sentiment of most Wyoming citizens that this place is too special to drill, we hope to receive a favorable decision. *Contact: Lisa McGee*

Keeping the Bridger-Teton a land of many uses. In 2004, ExxonMobil submitted a proposal to the Forest Service to conduct seismic testing in the Lake Ridge area of the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The proposal was controversial because these operations would have overlapped with the big game hunting season. The Wyoming Outdoor Council joined with the National Wildlife Federation and the Wyoming Wildlife Federation to appeal. Our goal was to protect the interests of hunters and the general public. Through lengthy negotiations with ExxonMobil and the Forest Service, we were able to reach an agreement: ExxonMobil will conduct its operations, but at the start of the hunting season, seismic exploration will cease. This settlement represents the good work that can result from diverse constituencies working together. *Contact: Lisa McGee*

Protecting roadless areas—one project at a time. In April, the Shoshone National Forest released a Decision Notice for the Wiggins Fork vegetation treatment project. Accompanying the original plan for the project, which included thinning, prescribed burning and some commercial logging, was a proposal to build miles of new roads, including some in the Telephone Draw Inventoried Roadless Area. The Wyoming Outdoor Council and the Greater



Jeff Vanuga

Llama packing in the Wind River Mountains.

Yellowstone Coalition submitted comments opposing the proposed construction in a roadless area. We were happy to learn recently that the Forest Service has responded to the public's desire and withdrawn its plans to build roads and conduct logging activities in Telephone Draw. *Contact: Lisa McGee*

Togwotee Highway reconstruction update. After more than two years, the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) announced on May 24, "that the existing highway alignment across Rosie's Ridge is the most predictable and manageable route for the [Togwotee Highway] project." WYDOT had been considering a new alignment on the north side of Rosie's Ridge because of the high cost of mitigating the slides on the existing highway.

Conservationists and nearby residents have pushed for maintaining the original alignment rather than cause new impacts to habitat, wildlife and cultural sites by rerouting the road. WYDOT conducted numerous studies that validated our concerns and dropped the northern route alternative. The Wyoming Outdoor Council applauds WYDOT staff for conducting the careful analysis with due public process and for reaching a decision that has the fewest impacts possible. *Contact: Meredith Taylor*

Protecting Wyoming's priceless air. The BLM issued its "Record of Decision" approving the Jonah infill natural gas project (3,100 wells) in March. The final environmental impact statement showed there would be significant visibility degradation in protected Class I areas (especially the Bridger Wilderness Area, but impacts will extend to other protected areas, including Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks) and greatly increased levels of ozone, particulate matter, and other pollutants that adversely affect human health. Because of these impacts, the Wyoming Outdoor Council and several other groups appealed this decision asking that the project not be allowed to proceed as approved. *Contact: Bruce Pendery*

Pinedale Anticline development exploding at what cost? Dramatic expansion of oil and gas development in the Pinedale Anticline field just south of Pinedale is also being proposed. Up to 7,231 new wells could be drilled in this area of crucial winter range for mule deer and pronghorn and important habitat for sage grouse. Recent research has shown a 46 percent decline in mule deer populations on the anticline due to the oil and gas development and similar impacts on sage grouse populations. The operators in this field are asking to be

allowed to drill year-round and to engage in well completions during the winter, both of which adversely affect wildlife. To their credit, industry is proposing some actions (such as drilling many wells from a single pad) that will help reduce impacts. However, we do not think their offers go far enough. The BLM has initiated an environmental impact statement to review this proposal, and the Wyoming Outdoor Council has submitted detailed comments. We will be monitoring the project closely, and will work to ensure that important wildlife resources in the area, as well as air quality, are not damaged by it. *Contact: Bruce Pendery*

RED DESERT

Eastern Red Desert industrialization occurring under the radar.

In November 2005 BLM released the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Seminole Road natural gas project (1,240 natural gas wells), in December 2005 it released the draft EIS for the Atlantic Rim project (2,000 wells), and in March 2006 BLM initiated an EIS for the mammoth Continental Divide-Creston project (nearly 9,000 wells). The Wyoming Outdoor Council has submitted comments on all of these projects, focusing on the need to better manage oil and gas development. In addition we raised concerns about reducing impacts to wildlife and air quality. All of

these development plans are taking place against the background of an out-of-date land-use plan for the BLM Rawlins Field Office. The BLM is supposedly revising the plan, but it has been languishing for more than a year now. What this means is that all this development is occurring in a haphazard way instead of under a carefully thought-out and up-to-date plan. *Contact: Bruce Pendery*

STATEWIDE

Keeping Wyoming's skies clear and its air clean.

The Wyoming Outdoor Council is expanding its efforts to protect Wyoming's air quality into a statewide campaign. Besides the appeal of the Jonah infill project mentioned on the previous page, we are increasingly engaging in a host of air-quality protection efforts. We have begun to submit comments on Clean Air Act permits, and are monitoring other Clean Air Act permitting actions being taken by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). We will also be submitting comments on clean air rulemaking efforts that are being pursued by DEQ. In April, we submitted comments on EPA's new rules governing particulate-matter pollution. In addition, we are also investigating pollution from coal-fired power plants to make sure these major sources of air pollution are not degrading air quality. And last, because many of the BLM's projects approving

major oil and gas development could have severe impacts to air quality, we will consider challenging those projects on clean air grounds, just as we have the Jonah infill project. *Contact: Bruce Pendery*

Landfill bill provides cleanup dollars.

Many of Wyoming's 52 operating landfills are leaking, threatening nearby drinking-water wells and human health. The Wyoming DEQ predicts that at least 65 of the 145 operating and closed landfills statewide will eventually leak and contaminate groundwater. To address this problem, the 2006 Legislature passed a landfill bill that established funding for groundwater pollution studies and local planning efforts. Senate File 38 created a \$7.97 million matching grant program to help cities and counties monitor and analyze groundwater pollution from operating or closed landfills. The bill also requires cities and counties to prepare solid waste management plans, with \$1.3 million available in matching grants. Larger matches will be available for plans including at least two cities and/or counties. By July 2010, the DEQ will complete its report on which landfills cause groundwater pollution and how to pay for the costs of cleanup.

Contact: Michele Barlow

Lawmakers take up interim studies.

Wyoming legislators have plenty of homework to complete before they return to Cheyenne in January 2007. The interim study list includes important conservation topics such as funding for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department; incentives for new power plants and refineries; condemnation of private land for energy development; mitigation payments for counties impacted by energy development; pricing and taxation of natural gas; assistance to low-income families for heating bills and home weatherization; cleanup of leaking underground storage tanks; and reviewing the 35-acre county subdivision law.

Legislative committees will meet periodically until next year's general session. For more information on study topics and meeting dates, visit the legislature's web site (<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/>) or call the Legislative Service Office (307-777-7881). *Contact: Michele Barlow* ♣



Jeff Vanuga

The Wyoming Outdoor Council is expanding its campaign to protect Wyoming's clear skies, clean air and priceless views, like this one of the Dubois badlands.

Luna Leopold Remembered

by Tom Bell

Luna Leopold, friend of Wyoming's rivers and wild places, died on February 23 at the age of 90. He was the son of the renowned Aldo Leopold.

Dr. Leopold was a hydrologist, meteorologist, geologist and a professor. He spent part of his year at a cabin near Pinedale; it was here that his relationship with the Wyoming Outdoor Council—and with me—began.

During the early 1970s, there was a proposal to build a large dam on upper stretches of the magnificent, free-flowing Green River. The plan was to move some of the unused Green River water into the Powder River Basin for use in several proposed coal-fired power plants.

Dr. Leopold had a ranch in the Upper Green River Valley. It just so happened that he was also one of the foremost hydrologists in the country. His work as an ecologist and his studies of American rivers had provided new insights into the hydraulics of moving water. He immediately became interested in the plan to dam the Green and transport large amounts of its waters across the Continental Divide



Luna Leopold, here in his 50s, sits on the banks of the East Fork River near Boulder, Wyo. (Photo circa 1974.)

into the Platte River system and on north to the coalfields. After doing his own studies, he came out against the idea.

The Wyoming Outdoor Council had also come out in opposition. The dam would have flooded many miles of critical wintering moose habitat. And it would

have changed the river from a free-flowing, blue-ribbon fishing stream to a reservoir. Some of the local community supported the concept but the vast majority opposed it.

Dr. Leopold entered into the debate. He worked with the Wyoming Outdoor Council and, thanks to his personal interest and great knowledge, was instrumental in defeating the dam. It was one of our early victories.

Dr. Leopold had a 22-year career with the United States Geological Survey, retiring in 1972 as the chief hydrologist of the Water Resources Division. He then began a second career as a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, from which he retired in 1986. He continued to be active up until his death and was the author of some 200 books and the recipient of more than 40 awards and prizes.

"It can be fairly said that Luna Leopold has changed the way this society approaches environmental problems and conducts environmental science in the service of people and the natural environment," Thomas Dunne, a professor at UC Berkeley, wrote in memory of his friend and colleague.

We owe much to Luna Leopold. He'll be missed. ▶

Goodbye and Thanks, Mary!

Mary Jones first became associated with the Wyoming Outdoor Council tagging along on forays out to the Green Mountain Common Allotment with her



husband, the late Ray Corning.

"He was adamant about preserving range lands for the future so we spent a lot of time out there," Mary said. "I just liked to be out-

doors. But that's how I first came into contact with WOC."

Mary joined the staff at the Wyoming Outdoor Council as our administrative assistant in November 2003 and immediately began helping Bonnie Hofbauer whip the organization into shape.

"I've always been an organizer," Mary says about her work. "I like to keep things moving."

Alas for us, Mary retired in April, but she is still keeping things moving. Mary was remarried in 2005 to Tom Jones of Lander, and is now hard at work putting in a garden, making jewelry and spending time with family.

"My family of two daughters, one son, two stepsons and seven grandchildren grew to ten kids and 14 grandkids when Tom and I got married," Mary says. Plus Mary's mother has moved to Lander to be close by and Tom's mother is in town as well. So Mary's got her hands full.

In addition, Mary and Tom have some adventures planned including a potential road trip back East and possibly a trip to New Zealand. In the meantime, we welcome her smiling face whenever she drops by the office to say hello.

—Molly Absolon



Hello, Kathy

The Wyoming Outdoor Council's new administrative assistant Kathy

Sanderson grew up in Crowheart, Wyo., living behind the old M&R Grocery Store.

"I remember tourists would stop by on their way to Yellowstone in the summer," Kathy recalls. "I used to wash the windshields of cars full of people on vacation and get so envious. I wanted to go too."

Eventually Kathy did leave. She spent most of her adult life in Minneapolis. Last August, she came back to Lander for good.

"I have roots here," Kathy says. "My grandfather arrived in Wyoming in 1886. He voted for statehood even though he wasn't of age. I still have family here and that is the main reason I came back."

Kathy joined the staff at the Wyoming

Outdoor Council this spring. She says her experience working as a legal secretary, particularly as a patent secretary, has given her perfect skills for juggling the various demands of conservation work. Already her eye for detail and deadlines is helping keep us on track.

"I didn't know anything about WOC before I got this job," Kathy says. "I was looking for something full-time with benefits, but the more I get to know about the organization, the more I think it is a good place to be. Our work is in line with my thinking about what is good for Wyoming."

Kathy says her dog Ebony is the "love of her life." Plus she enjoys the cultural offerings found in Lander and the surrounding area. According to her, there may be more going on in Minneapolis, but it's a heck of a lot cheaper and more fun to take advantage of things here.

Welcome, Kathy! —Molly Absolon

Welcome, Cory



In May, Cory Teye joined the Wyoming Outdoor Council to begin a ten-week legal internship before he returns to the University of

Wyoming to finish his final year of law school. Cory was excited to secure an internship in Lander, having spent previous summers in the area. In 2002, Cory worked for The Nature Conservancy. He returned in 2003 to work on the Winchester Ranch, property owned by the Conservancy just outside of Lander. There he helped the ranch manager implement conservation

techniques that improved wildlife habitat. He also spent some time here last summer, working with the Department of Environmental Quality staff.

Originally from Laramie, Cory received a bachelor's of science degree in economics with a minor in environment and natural resources from the University of Wyoming. His undergraduate project focused on the socio-economic impacts of coalbed methane development in the Powder River Basin. After college, Cory moved to Alaska for a year, where his father and brother live. He volunteered for the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Committee, an independent, non-profit group that works to ensure the Alyeska Pipeline conducts its operations in a safe and environmentally sound way.

Having now completed two years of required law school classes, Cory is looking forward to a course schedule in the fall packed with classes that focus on his area of interest: environmental and natural resource law. The internship with the Wyoming Outdoor Council is a great fit for Cory, whose goal is to work for a non-profit conservation organization.

"Organizations such as the Wyoming Outdoor Council play an important role in protecting the environment while looking to improve regulations for the development of natural resources in Wyoming," Cory explains. "I am very grateful for the opportunity to work for the Wyoming Outdoor Council. This internship is an amazing opportunity for me to gain the experience and knowledge that will help me pursue a career in the challenging field of natural resource and environmental law."

—Lisa Dardy McGee

Leave a Legacy:

A Planned Gift to Protect the Wyoming You Love

If you own assets of any kind, creating a will is important so that your wishes are carried out upon your death. Whether you're married, single, a parent, or childless, your will is the only way to share your love with the people and organizations that have been important in your life.

As you think about how your money and property will be managed at your death, you may want to plan gifts for the charitable organizations that do work you support. Including the Wyoming Outdoor Council in your planning ensures that your investment in Wyoming's environment will continue in the future. With a gift to the Wyoming Outdoor Council's Tom Bell Endowment, your investment will provide such ongoing support.

Do You Need an Attorney?

Most experts say it's prudent to hire an attorney to draft your will in order to ensure it is legally correct and will accomplish the goals you set forth.

How Do You Leave a Gift to Charitable Groups?

An easy way to support the Wyoming Outdoor Council is with a bequest. Once you identify the specific organization(s) you wish to benefit, you designate what that organization will receive such as a specific sum of money, an item (such as a car or collectible), a piece of real estate, a percentage of your estate, or the balance of your estate after debts, taxes and other bequests have been paid. Your estate will receive an estate tax charitable deduction for the amount of the gift.

Examine Your Options

There are many ways to plan for how your estate will be handled. It's important to note that much of the value given to a charity is derived from reduced federal estate taxes, leaving heirs much the same inheritance they would receive without the charitable donation.

Now in our 39th year, the Wyoming Outdoor Council continues to shape environmental policy and practices toward a more sustainable future. We need you—our members—to foster this important work for generations to come. For more information about including the Wyoming Outdoor Council in your estate planning, please call Laurie Milford, development director, at 307-721-7610 or email laurie@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org.

CINNABAR FOUNDATION POSES CHALLENGE GRANT

The Cinnabar Foundation of Helena, Montana, has challenged the Wyoming Outdoor Council to raise \$5,000 in 2006 to match its grant for our work to protect the air quality, outdoor life and wildlife habitat of the southern Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This is an opportunity for you to stretch your contribution, making your money work even harder toward protecting the Wyoming you love. Please join the Cinnabar Foundation in supporting the Wyoming Outdoor Council by making your contribution today. If you would like additional details about the challenge, please call Laurie Milford at 307-721-7610 or email laurie@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org.

Wyoming Outdoor Council sponsors

Field Trips and Work Projects

by Andy Blair

On April 29th, 35 people showed up for a Wyoming Outdoor Council tour of the AES SeaWest wind farm near Arlington. There was a light breeze blowing and all but one of the turbines was turning when we toured the field. Wind speeds at Arlington average between 15 and 35 mph, which is ideal for generating electricity. Wind speeds greater than 60 mph cause the turbines to shut down automatically after 10 minutes, which happens less than 5 percent of the time at this site. The field generates enough power for 48,000 homes. Most of this energy is consumed in California and Oregon. Thanks to Gary McCarty, an engineer at the facility, who led the tour.

The Wyoming Outdoor Council also hosted a workday on the Christina Lake Trail in the Shoshone National Forest in early June and led a group out into the Jack Morrow Hills for a geology field trip with Central Wyoming College professor Suki Smaglik. We sponsored a number of activities to promote biking as a way to conserve energy this past June including a bike ride in the Jonah Field with EnCana, a large oil and gas company. ▶

Check out our website for upcoming activities.



SAVE THE DATE:



SEPT. 9 WYOMING OUTDOOR COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING


Join us in Lander on September 9 for our annual meeting. We'll be offering field trips, workshops, dinner with guest speaker Harold Bergman, and more. Contact Kathy Sanderson for details: kathy@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org

Meredith Taylor's Ancient Corridors program is now available on DVD. Contact bonnie@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org for a free copy.



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