

STEFF'S FALL UPDATE

Dear Friends,

The last few months have been some of the busiest our staff has ever experienced. We've responded to unprecedented levels of oil and gas leasing on our public lands, worked to keep sage-grouse conservation plans in place, attended legislative committee meetings around the state, organized citizens to weigh in at air quality hearings, and developed new programs to build and support civic engagement. And we've asked a lot of you. I'm pleased to say that members and citizens have stepped up. Thank you! Here's just a glimpse of what we've been up to . . . and what you've helped accomplish. As always, be in touch with questions!



Image: Dave Showalter

Clean Air: A Win for Health, Climate, Wyoming, and Industry

Massive volumes of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, are lost to the atmosphere each year through leaks in industrial equipment. This is bad for air quality, a warming climate, and human health, not to mention companies' bottom lines and state tax revenues. But there's a simple solution: regularly inspect and repair faulty equipment. **Does it make a difference? You bet.** Not only would capturing this lost gas significantly reduce air pollution, but our research shows it could also generate millions for state and county coffers.

A coalition of groups and citizens in the Upper Green River Basin successfully made this case to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality a few years ago, after a natural gas boom led to dangerously high ozone levels there. In 2015 the DEQ adopted a requirement for oil and gas operators in the Upper Green to use leak-detection technology to find and fix faulty equipment. (Energy companies have found this effort more than pays for itself.) Since then, we've been working to see those good pollution controls expanded around the state. This summer, the DEQ finally released a draft proposal to require operators throughout Wyoming to inspect new and modified equipment twice each year, and to repair any leaks. Citizens testified in support of the proposal, and the agency will release its final guidance in November.

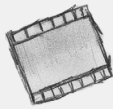
Strong state requirements are especially important as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Bureau of Land Management keep rolling back federal air quality protections. The state's proposal would go a long way toward protecting air quality for everyone in Wyoming.

An Update on Your Advocacy

This summer we asked members to weigh in on several key public lands and wildlife issues. Hundreds of you responded. **Thank you!** Here's a quick look at where things stand.

Longest Mule Deer Migration Threatened by Federal Oil and Gas Leasing

We asked you to urge Gov. Matt Mead to push back on the BLM's plans to lease in the Red Desert to Hoback migration corridor. As a result, some lease parcels were withdrawn from the September lease sale. Good news . . . but we're still advocating deferral of **all** the oil and gas leases in this world-renowned migration corridor. Your help is working. Keep it up! See the next page to learn how.



CHECK OUT OUR VIDEO to learn more about efforts to defer oil and gas leasing in the Red Desert to Hoback corridor. Then ask the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission to urge the BLM not to lease in this one-of-a-kind habitat.

wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org/wildlife

Standing Up for Wyoming-Grown Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans

We asked members to urge the BLM not to weaken historic sage-grouse conservation plans in Wyoming and around the West. You did not disappoint! The final decision is still pending, but we believe the voices of Wyoming's citizens and Gov. Mead, who spoke up in defense of these conservation measures, will be heard.

State Leasing in the Northern Red Desert

We rallied members and a diverse coalition of groups to contact the State Board of Land Commissioners to oppose oil and gas leasing in the Northern Red Desert. You responded — and the board was swamped with comments. In spite of that, the commissioners went ahead with leasing, pointing out that leases have not historically been developed in this remote area. While that's nice to hear, it doesn't ensure this landscape's protection. We said as much in our testimony to the board, then offered a proactive solution to avoid similar conflicts in the future. Thanks to strong public comments the commissioners had already received, our plan got their attention and the door's open to work with the state on a better long-term strategy.

Wyoming Public Lands Initiative

Since 2015, we've participated in a county-by-county effort to develop recommendations for Wyoming's congressional delegation about the future management of "wilderness study areas" in our state. These include locally beloved public lands such as Sweetwater Canyon in Fremont County, McCullough Peaks in Park County, Encampment River Canyon in Carbon County, and Palisades in Teton and Lincoln counties. From

the outset, our goal was to make sure that any legislative package forwarded to Congress had measurable conservation gains. We've worked closely with fellow conservationists, recreationists, and sportsmen toward this end. At best, though, the statewide initiative has been unwieldy, with different counties working from different playbooks — some more successfully than others. We remain engaged, but are skeptical about the results to date. In the next few months, watch for an opportunity to comment on draft legislation. We'll let you know when and how to weigh in.

Conservation Leadership Institute 2018

We're excited to launch our inaugural Conservation Leadership Institute next month in Lander. The CLI is an in-depth training designed to provide citizens the tools they need to be effective advocates. This year, we're offering the Institute to budding Fremont County conservationists who want to learn more about making a difference in their communities. The program will run for eight weeks and will feature guest speakers, a review of Wyoming conservation case studies, practical applications, and introductions to topics ranging from the basics of local, state, and federal government to best practices for digital advocacy. Want to know more? Contact Kristen Gunther at kristen@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org.



And keep an eye out for information about upcoming legislative internships! These weeklong immersive internships, offered during the 2019 legislative session, are a great chance for citizens to get some real-world training in conservation advocacy. The 2019 session runs from January 8 through mid-March.

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P.S. Want more regular updates from us? Send your email address to info@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org!