

# IN THE FIELD

## Your Fall Update from the Wyoming Outdoor Council



Dear friend,

*For me, autumn means a time of transition and reflection. Much like the feeling of a crisp September morning, or witnessing our iconic wildlife move about the landscape as they prepare for colder weather, the Wyoming Outdoor Council is also in a time of transition. We've added new staff positions and have increased our capacity. We're also preparing to say a fond farewell to our fearless executive director, Lisa McGee, as she pursues the next chapter in her professional life. Thanks to Lisa's leadership and our dedicated staff, the Outdoor Council is more prepared than ever to achieve great things for Wyoming's lands, wildlife, and clean air and water in 2024. Please join us in celebrating our recent accomplishments and learn more about the conservation victories we are seeking in the near future.*

Alec Underwood | **Program Director**  
alec@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org



## A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RED DESERT

Over the last several years, members like you have been part of our efforts to connect people to the values of the Red Desert. Whether we're sharing the wonders of Greater sage-grouse mating dance rituals, respectfully visiting the area's many Indigenous cultural sites, or even cheering racers across the finish line at events like Run the Red, our aim has always been to inspire a will to protect this absolutely remarkable landscape, now and far into the future.

Now, after 12 years of eager anticipation, the Bureau of Land Management has finally issued its draft

Rock Springs Resource Management Plan. It's hard to overstate how much this matters. Because the RMP will dictate how the landscape is managed for the next 25–30 years, this is the best chance we've ever had to secure lasting protections for the Red Desert. The BLM's preferred alternative is highly protective of wildlife and cultural values and includes designations that will prevent major disturbances from energy development. To put it simply, we couldn't be happier with the draft plan.

The BLM is collecting public comments until mid-November. From now until then, under the leadership of Red Desert advocate Kyle Elmquist, WOC will be encouraging members like you to support a strong final plan. We'll need your support to secure lasting protections so future generations can continue to enjoy all that we love about the Red Desert. Now more than ever, your voice will be essential to make the most of this once-in-a-generation opportunity. Be on the lookout for news from us on events, comment-writing parties, and more. Thank you in advance.

## **YOU SPOKE UP FOR THE PATH OF THE PRONGHORN**

Wyoming's big game herds depend on interconnected habitat for their seasonal migrations — and no migration route in the country is more celebrated than the hundred-plus mile "Path of the Pronghorn." But after a particularly hard winter that resulted in huge pronghorn losses across the state, we were stunned to hear from Sublette County members about an oil and gas parcel being offered for development directly in one of the route's crucial bottlenecks.

Under the leadership of wildlife and public lands advocate Meghan Riley, we mounted a campaign to protect this vital habitat and urge the state to remove parcel 194 from the Office of State Lands and Investments' July auction. Members like you saw how development of parcel 194 would add insult to injury to an already weakened herd. And along with our conservation partners, you helped us drum up significant opposition.

More than 100 citizens spoke up to protect the Sublette pronghorn herd — voices that the State Board of Land Commissioners heard, and heeded: Just ahead of the auction, the parcel was pulled. A win for now, and a necessary reprieve for pronghorn. You rallied into action, and our collective voice made an impact. Thank you!

Despite this success, we still have much work to do to ensure this and other parcels in essential migratory habitat aren't developed. We hope you'll join us in urging the state to prioritize leasing outside of areas that our cherished wildlife need. Stay alert for future updates — we'll be counting on your support should the pronghorn need it again.



## **ON THE HORIZON**

In the coming months, we'll increase our influence on federal, state, and local policies on energy, wildlife, land management, and more. Climate energy and policy director John Burrows and Tribal engagement coordinator Big Wind Carpenter are working hard to bring much-needed investments in renewable energy to Wind River Tribes. They're also supporting other communities to implement local solutions and adapt to climate change. To help us with this work and expand our outreach into other communities around the state, we'll be bringing on a new climate advocate, Jonathan Williams, who will join our staff at the end of September.

As we look ahead to the 2024 legislative session, we're excited to have an experienced and effective presence in Cheyenne. Era Aranow, WOC's legislative advocate, has been actively building WOC's relationships with state lawmakers and the governor's office in the interim. With so much at stake each year as our legislators allocate resources and create laws that impact our environment and quality of life, Era is serving a pivotal role for WOC. You can count on our continued up-to-the-minute coverage of bills affecting the values we Wyomingites care deeply about, and ways you can directly engage your elected representatives.

## **THANK YOU**

Your support of the Wyoming Outdoor Council means that your values are being represented wherever decisions are made about our lands, wildlife, water, air, and future. I cannot thank you enough for standing up for this place we all love.