



## Western Watersheds Project

# Watersheds Messenger

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Late Fall 2003

### New West: Grazing Buyout Bills Reach Congress By Keith Raether

A new refrain is playing on the western range.

It resounds across Arizona, where fourth-generation rancher John Whitney III and his son, John Whitney IV, allow that public lands ranching makes less and less sense in the drought-worn West. "Ranching on some public lands is just not feasible anymore for a lot of folks," says Whitney IV. "It's too complex and inefficient in a time of fierce competition in the industry."

It rings in Utah, where Kash Winn, a public lands rancher in Ferron, says a voluntary grazing buyout program is "the cheapest end to a lot of problems in a lot of cases."

It echoes in Idaho, Colorado and Wyoming, where Max Howrey of Story, Wyo., who bought 500 acres of land in 1958 and never looked back, now looks ahead. What he sees is an eventual end to ranching on public lands. "I can see what's coming down the road, and I feel like it's a good thing to move on," says Howrey.

And now the song is playing in Washington. In October Reps. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) and Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) introduced legislation to enact a voluntary federal grazing permit buyout program that would generously compensate public lands ranchers in exchange for their federal grazing permits.

The Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act would allow federal public lands ranchers to waive their interest in grazing permits. In exchange, they would receive \$175 per animal unit month (or AUM, the amount of forage to sustain one cow and calf for one month). The Shays-Grijalva bill authorizes \$100 million for the pilot program.

The Arizona Voluntary Grazing

Permit Buyout Act is a similar bill that applies specifically to Arizona.

"Buying out federal grazing permits is good for western states and the entire nation," says Shays. "It benefits our nation's environment and budget, while providing a lucrative offer to ranchers who want to sell their permits."

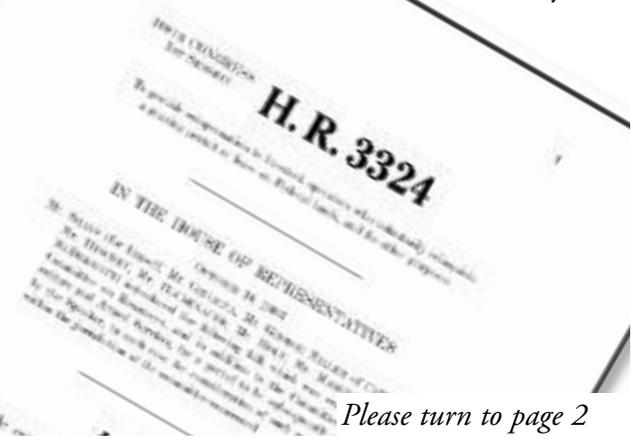
"This legislation will go a long way toward resolving the ongoing and contentious debate on public lands grazing in the West," says Grijalva. "Congressman Shays and I have introduced a bill that will give much-needed relief to ranching families suffering the results of drought and other economic factors."

The Whitneys and other public lands ranchers across the West say the time is right. They know the numbers. They see the soil. The average return on investment in public lands ranching is less than 1 percent. Sustaining a cow on Bureau of Land Management lands in the West requires an average of 16 acres a month. Feeding a cow on private lands in the Midwest and East takes an average of 2 acres.

Adding insult to injury, the current federal grazing program costs taxpayers \$500 million annually and returns a scant \$7 million over the same period.

"It's a relief that Congress is finally seeing past all the theories and paying attention to the reality on the ground," says Whitney III, who holds the largest U.S. Forest Service grazing permit in Arizona. The family's

Working to protect and restore western watersheds



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158,000-acre Sunflower allotment in Tonto National Forest northeast of Phoenix has been closed for three years because of drought.

In a recent poll conducted by the Arizona Grazing Permit Buyout Campaign, 165 permittees (more than 70 percent of all respondents) of the state's 870 federal public lands ranchers supported the bill.

Under the plan, a permittee with 300 cow/calf pairs that graze public lands for five months of the year would receive \$262,000. The allotment associated with the grazing permit would then be permanently retired from commercial livestock grazing and the forage reallocated to wildlife.

Ranchers who opt for the buyout could use their compensation to buy more private lands, pay off debts, retire from ranching or leave a monetary gift to their heirs, most of whom don't see ranching in their future.

The retirements would also diminish decades of environmental destruction caused by livestock grazing. In its Global 2000 report, the Council on Environmental Quality noted that "improvident grazing . . . has been the most potent desertification force, in terms of total acreage, within the United States."

No sooner had the Shays-Grijalva bills landed in the U.S. House of Representatives than Rep. Scott McInnis (R-Colo.) sent out flares in the form of a letter to every member of the House, urging them to reject the "radical" buyout proposal. The voluntary buyout campaign, McInnis railed, was the work of "narrow-minded interest groups devoted to nothing less than building a wall between the American people and their federal lands."

When the Whitneys and other ranchers got wind of McInnis' letter, they sent a rejoinder to the congressman. They pointed out that 165 Arizona permittees in support of a buyout "is not a single rancher who may have suffered an unfortunate string of bad years," as McInnis stated.

"This bill was developed by conservation groups and Arizona ranchers working together," the ranchers wrote. "Sure, environmental groups may want to end ranching on federal lands. But that's happening anyway, with or without them. No environmental lawsuit ever bankrupted any ranchers to our knowledge."



*Rancher John Whitney III discusses the buyout bill in U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva's Tucson office.*

Predictably, the National Cattlemen's Association, which relies heavily on memberships, has not endorsed the voluntary grazing buyout. However, various state associations have publicly acknowledged the right of individual ranchers to choose for themselves on the buyout issue.

Supporters of the buyout also note that when the second annual National Conference on Grazing Lands convenes Dec. 7-10 in Nashville, the focus of the meeting will be on "increasing awareness of the economic and environmental benefits" of private, not public, grazing lands.

Federal public lands yield only 2 percent of the nation's total livestock feed.

Contrary to the opinion of some western legislators, ranching does not sustain rural communities; rural communities sustain ranching.

"My empirical analysis demonstrates that grazing on federal lands contributes only a tiny sliver of 1 percent of total income and employment, and rarely more than 1 percent," notes Thomas Power, author of "Post-Cowboy Economics: Pay and Prosperity in the New American West." "During the 1990s, local economies in the West grew by this amount every few weeks. The ongoing rapid economic growth has been heavily fueled by families and businesses relocating in the pursuit of higher-quality living environments. Protecting the environmental integrity of public lands contributes to this ongoing economic vitality and almost certainly offsets any

losses in the livestock sectors that may be associated with changes in livestock use of federal lands."

Time magazine estimates that 328,000 ranchers and farmers will lose their jobs in this decade alone. And as the cost of ranching continues to rise, the capital value of federal grazing permits continues to decline.

"A federal grazing permit buyout is ecologically imperative, economically rational, fiscally prudent, socially just and politically pragmatic," says Andy Kerr, director of the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign, which conceived the voluntary buyout program. (Western Watersheds Project is one of six conservation groups on the steering committee of the NPLGC.) "It's a win-win-win for permittees, taxpayers and the environment."

"We know this is just the tip of the iceberg," says Whitney IV, steering committee chairman of the Arizona buyout campaign. "A lot of permittees have told us they support a buyout, but they just couldn't believe it would ever happen. Well, now it is happening."

*Keith Raether is public information director of WWP and public information coordinator for the NPLGC. He lives in Missoula, Mont.*

*For more information about the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign, visit [www.publiclandsranching.org](http://www.publiclandsranching.org)*

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P.O. Box 1770 • Hailey, ID 83333  
208-788-2290 • [wwp@westernwatersheds.org](mailto:wwp@westernwatersheds.org)

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## **WWP Sues Top BLM Officials Over Renegade Rancher; Inspector General Investigation Pending**

Western Watersheds Project and the American Lands Alliance have sued top political appointees in the Bureau of Land Management, including director Kathleen Clarke and deputy director Francis Cherry, for allowing a wealthy Wyoming rancher, Frank Robbins, to violate federal grazing laws.

The lawsuit targets a settlement between the BLM and Robbins that is the subject of a separate Inspector General investigation about improper political favoritism by the agency.

Below is a full story on the Robbins saga reported by Brodie Farquhar in the Sept. 29 edition of High Country News and reprinted by permission of the publication.

### **Reckless rancher cuts sweet deal in D.C.; Bush administration orders local BLM office to back off**

THERMOPOLIS, WYOMING - Tip to toe, Harvey Frank Robbins Jr. looks every inch a Wyoming rancher. He's tall and whipcord slender, with flecks of gray in his moustache and the deep sunburn that comes from years spent outside.

His work-toughened hands fidget with a shovel when he's interrupted in his task of spilling water from an irrigation ditch into a verdant field. He's hesitant to talk to a reporter. But as he chops stray weeds into compost, his words start to flow - words that tear into the federal Bureau of Land Management.

Many ranchers complain about federal agencies. Robbins, however, is way beyond anger. His is a cold, bitter rage, focused on the BLM's Worland field office, which manages public-lands grazing in the area. "No one is going to tell me what to do with my property," Robbins says.

His definition of his personal property seems to include the public lands he leases. He has been charged with breaking many grazing regulations, and he's clashed head-on with the federal regulators. It's gotten so ugly that he bypassed the local BLM staffers and brokered a unique deal with top officials in the Bush administration's Department of Interior, forcing the locals to back off.

#### *A cowboy with connections*

Scion of a wealthy Alabama family with solid Republican Party connections, Robbins moved to Wyoming in 1994, "to hunt and ranch," as he puts it. He's purchased three ranches - the High Island Ranch, the HD Ranch and the Owl Creek Land Co., totaling about 55,000 acres of private land and 55,000 acres leased from the BLM. He runs a cow/calf operation, and sells the cattle-drive experience to tourists.

As soon as Robbins moved in, his notions of an independent ranching life quickly collided with BLM regulations. He reportedly balked at requirements that he cooperate in the monitoring of grazing impacts and allow BLM staffers access to BLM land.

BLM files are filled with complaints about Robbins' operation: cattle trespassing on the private property of neighbors and on the neighbors' BLM grazing allotments;

grazing too early, too late, and putting too many cattle on his allotments; blocking a neighbor's use of a cattle-drive trail; claiming his cattle were on private pasture when they were on BLM pastures; refusing to obtain recreation permits for his dude ranch trail drives over BLM lands; and refusing to modify his grazing practices during drought.

As the struggle developed, the local BLM staffers tried to deny grazing permits to his ranches, and even contemplated seizing his herd. For years, lawsuits and counter-lawsuits volleyed back and forth. At one point, Robbins was charged with interfering with the work of federal officers; he was acquitted in a jury trial in 1998.

"Mr. Robbins has shown a complete disregard for the terms and conditions of the permits and of the authority of the BLM to manage public lands," Darrell Barnes, manager of the Worland office, said in a memo to the director of BLM's Wyoming operations in March 2002. "His conduct was so lacking in reasonableness or responsibility that it became reckless or negligent and placed significant, undue stress/damage on the public land resources."

Robbins contested many of the charges, claiming harassment, and found a receptive audience when he traveled to Washington in 2002, to complain to higher officials in the BLM and Interior Department. By January 2003, he'd secured the settlement agreement. The 17-page document is remarkable in numerous ways. Nine years of Robbins' alleged violations were essentially forgiven, Robbins can continue to graze his cattle on BLM allotments, he gains considerable flexibility in grazing management, and grazing levels are set without conducting an environmental assessment. In turn, Robbins agrees to allow the BLM access to BLM lands that he leases.

The settlement will be in effect until January 2005. While it lasts, only two people can cite Robbins for violations of BLM regulations: BLM Director Kathleen Clarke and the Wyoming director, Bob Bennett.

The Worland staffers are keeping their heads down and not talking, but privately, they remain angry - as are environmentalists. "The only thing that the United States government got out of this agreement, was out of the way," says Jeff Ruch, director of PEER, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.

Robbins' lawyer, Karen Budd-Falen, who specializes in property-rights lawsuits against the government, says he is committed to living up to the settlement. But the Worland BLM office reports that Robbins has violated it by continuing to trample grazing regulations.

Meanwhile, the Inspector General of the Interior Department is investigating the legality of the settlement. Several environmental groups are threatening to sue to overturn it. And Robbins has one remaining active lawsuit, alleging that eight current or former BLM staffers conspired against him in violation of a federal racketeering law. That case is scheduled for trial in federal court in Cheyenne Dec. 8.

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## **WWP Opens Offices in Boise and Bozeman**

With the opening of offices in Boise, Idaho and Bozeman, Montana, Western Watersheds Project continues to expand its capability to restore and protect watersheds and wildlife in the West.

In September WWP hired Katie Fite in a new position as the organization's biodiversity director.

Fite has been one of the most successful advocates in the West for riparian restoration, wildlife and wild lands. A biologist with a graduate degree from Utah State University, she worked for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for many years before taking the position of conservation director for the Committee for the High Desert. She worked for CHD for the past eight years.

"The Boise area is the population center of Idaho," said Fite. "One of my aims is to get more people out to areas like the Owyhee Canyonlands to show them firsthand what livestock are doing to their public lands and waters, from devouring sage grouse nesting cover to choking redband trout streams with sediment and waste."

Fite's work with WWP will have an impact on policy-makers, the Bureau of Management and U.S. Forest Service. She has encyclopedic knowledge of public lands extending from Owyhee County, Idaho to Elko, White Pine and Humboldt counties in Nevada, as well as Malheur and Harney counties in Oregon, and will be responsible for monitoring BLM and Forest Service management of public lands across southern Idaho, all of Nevada and eastern Oregon.

Fite will also continue to work on projects already in progress for CHD in partnership with WWP, supporting legal actions against the BLM in Twin Falls and Owyhee counties in Idaho, on State of Idaho public school endowment lands in Owyhee County, and on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada. She can be reached at [katie@westernwatersheds.org](mailto:katie@westernwatersheds.org).

In October WWP hired Glenn Hockett of Bozeman, Mont., as director of operations in Montana.

Hockett brings a degree in range management and more than 20 years of experience in rangeland ecology to WWP. He is president of the Bozeman-based Gallatin Wildlife Association, which advocates fish and wildlife conservation with a focus on keystone native species, including bison, bighorn sheep, sage grouse, trout and beaver.

The GWA was instrumental in recent efforts to reintroduce bighorn sheep to the Greenhorn mountains of Montana. The group has also initiated stream-side fisheries and beaver habitat recovery projects along Brackett Creek in the Bridger area and worked to control noxious weeds along the Madison River in Bear Trap Canyon of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area.

Under Hockett's leadership, the GWA has endorsed the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign.

Hockett will continue as president of GWA while working for Western Watersheds Project. He will continue to monitor forest plan revisions for the Beaverhead Deerlodge and Gallatin National Forests; the Resource Management Plan for the BLM Dillon Field Office; and management plans of the Montana

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks for elk, sage grouse, grizzly bears, bison and wolves.

"I intend to keep this focus as Montana director for WWP," Hockett said. "I also plan to monitor and participate in a proposal by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to develop a habitat conservation plan for Montana state lands."

Hockett's on-the-ground knowledge of public lands in Montana ensure that his WWP work will go a long way toward our goals of restoration and protection of watersheds and wildlife. He can be reached at: [glenn@westernwatersheds.org](mailto:glenn@westernwatersheds.org)

WWP now has offices in Mendon, Utah; Pinedale, Wyo.; Missoula and Bozeman, Mont.; and Hailey and Boise, Idaho, as well as ongoing conservation work in eight western states.



## **Ray Corning: 1934-2003**

**By Jon Marvel**

Western Watersheds Project and others seeking to restore and protect the West lost a great friend and colleague when Ray Corning of Lander, Wyo., died Saturday, Sept. 13.

Ray's work to restore the Green Mountain Common allotment in central Wyoming was legendary.

He attended RangeNet 2002 and the Greenfire Revival last year. He requested that one of his memorial charities be WWP.

Raymond V. Corning died Sept. 13 after a 10-month battle with esophageal cancer.

He was born April 15, 1934 in Casper, Wyo., the son of Charles Lester and Hilda Elizabeth (Goodrow) Corning. He graduated from Haxtun High School in Haxtun, Colorado and obtained both bachelors (fisheries science) and master's (zoology) degrees at Colorado State University. He married Mary Ann Reichardt on June 20, 1964. Together they raised three children and recently celebrated their 39th anniversary.

During his professional career, Raymond worked for Idaho Fish and Game, Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries, the Bureau of Land Management in Washington D.C., and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

After his retirement in 1994, he remained passionate about the protection of Wyoming's water resources as an active "interested person" for the Green Mountain, Atlantic City, Granite Mountain and Silver Creek Common Grazing allotments. He was an avid hunter. His other hobbies included photography and genealogy.

Raymond was a dedicated family man survived by his mother, his wife and their three children: R. Vincent Corning, Jr. and his wife Colleen (Carswell) Corning of Soquel, Calif.; Caroline Renee (Corning) Creager, her husband Robert Stuart Creager and their children Christopher Robert and Michael James Raymond of Berthoud, Colo.; and Muriel Elizabeth (Corning) Wheeler, her husband Jim Wheeler, stepson Nathan, and their daughters Zoe Elizabeth and Aiko Anne of Geneva, Ill.



*Ray  
Corning*

In addition to his second family Raymond is survived by two sons from his first marriage: David Vincent Corning, of Estes Park, Colo.; and Brett Allen Corning, his wife Kim Louise (Renzelman) and daughters Brittney Diane and Shelby Nicole of Arvada, Colo.



## Director's Notes

By Jon Marvel

Western Watersheds Project welcomes the filing in October of federal grazing buyout legislation (HR 3324 and HR 3337) by U.S. congressmen Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) and several co-sponsors.

The first bill would authorize a voluntary buyout of federal public lands grazing permits with an initial authorization of \$100 million in funding. The second bill is a similar pilot grazing permit buyout proposal (without a set funding figure) specifically for Arizona, where numerous public lands ranchers fully support the bill.

The bills are a manifestation of an important change in the way our public lands are perceived. The idea that 270 million acres of western public lands have values that are greater than ranching is not new. But these bills are an acknowledgement that it is time to directly address values of healthy wildlife habitat, clean water and recreational opportunities which have been greatly diminished by livestock production.

The old idea of multiple use of public lands is a failure because it has not been able to reflect changes in public values about the use of public lands. When the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act was signed into law in 1960 by President Eisenhower, public understanding of the national importance of these lands was barely perceptible.

Forty-three years later, there is little question that our public lands deserve better than the ad hoc management failures of the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service.

The two bills support this change in values in a generous way that eases the transition from commodity use of public lands to conservation and restoration. Because both bills specify that the buyout is voluntary, they leave participation up to individual ranchers.

In the past, the remarkably draconian regulations governing the administration of public lands has required that lands be grazed by livestock even if individual ranchers wished not to do so. Rep. Shays and Rep. Grijalva's support for the voluntary buyout ensures that decisions will be made at the level of the individual and not by agency bureaucrats or political ideologues in Washington. It is a thoughtful and appropriate response to what has been an increasingly intractable problem.

The two bills also provide an opportunity for Western Watersheds Project and our partner organizations in the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign to show beleaguered public lands ranchers that there is a financially generous way for them to resolve the growing list of environmental and economic stresses which are pushing public lands ranching toward extinction with little in the way of an economic future.

Western Watersheds Project looks forward to the passage of both bills and encourages members and supporters to contact their congressional representatives and ask for their support for both measures.

*Jon Marvel is executive director of WWP.  
He lives in Hailey, Idaho.*



## Cost of Freedom Earns Special Jury Award

"Cost of Freedom," Vanessa Schulz's film about the wolf introduction program in Idaho that Western Watersheds Project screened outdoors for the first time during the Greenfire III Revival, received a Special Jury Award at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival.

The festival was attended this year by more than 600 registered delegates from around the world. "Cost of Freedom" was a finalist in the People and Animals Category and as such was included in the program.

"This is a breakthrough, and the encouragement it gives me is invaluable to the work that needs to be done," said Schulz, who lives in Ketchum, Idaho.

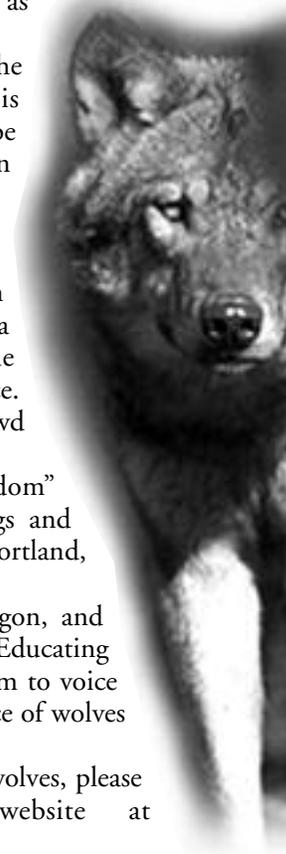
One week before the festival, Mountain Film on Tour brought "Cost of Freedom" to the Teton Theatre in Jackson Hole as part of a three-day festival to benefit the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. The film was shown to a capacity crowd of 300 locals and tourists.

In September, "Cost of Freedom" toured in Oregon. Public screenings and discussions were held in Ashland, Portland, Eugene, Cottage Grove and Bend.

Wolves are dispersing into Oregon, and many of them are turning up dead. Educating local communities and inspiring them to voice their opinions about the re-emergence of wolves was an aim of the tour.

For those interested in helping wolves, please visit the 21st Paradigm website at [www.21paradigm.com](http://www.21paradigm.com).

*photo@  
Tess Garman*





## Death Traps in the Desert By Miriam L. Austin

I breathe in sharply. The bird in the trough is large this time. The feathers are scarcely wet - the head lying face down in gentle repose - yet somehow as if at any moment it might spring awake and gracefully lift into the sky on those powerful

wings tucked so neatly against the sides of the body.

No! I cry out. But there is no response. No head lifts, no eyes plead for assistance. I realize suddenly that life and hope have only been recently abandoned by this still form, and my imagination begins to race. If only - if only I had made it here just an hour before, perhaps even just minutes ago, before that last fateful breath was taken. If only I could have plucked this beautiful falcon from the alluring but deadly water and sent it winging back across the night sky, back to Echo Crater where the prairie falcons nest and scream from the rocky walls.

But this bird will never fly again. Nor will the hundreds and likely thousands of other birds that have drowned this summer alone in water developments on public and private rangelands in Idaho. The prairie falcon was only one of three found drowned this summer in Laidlaw Park, Idaho. The three falcons, along with approximately two dozen other birds, died recently in troughs and tanks in the Craters of the Moon National Monument Expansion, where a warning was issued upon establishment by Presidential Proclamation "not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument."

This experience follows on the heels of the Pleasantview, Idaho tragedy, where an estimated 500 to 1,000 birds, bats and small mammals drowned needlessly this summer. We have counted and photographed enough death on the BLM's Pleasantview Allotment for the images to linger forever with my assistants and me.

We will relive again and again the horror of approaching one stinking trough filled with the corpses of more than 69 deceased migratory songbirds, the hot sun glinting from iridescent lazuli buntings, the contrasting reds and browns of



Cassin's finches, the bright yellow markings of warblers and siskins. We will relive the horror of lifting valve box covers at the ends of troughs and discovering the decaying piles of birds and mammals that thought the narrow openings represented some sort of escape from their watery doom.

We will relive the horror of finding the temporary wood and escape debris we have placed in the troughs (to serve as interim devices until the BLM could intervene) thrown out by thoughtless permittees, followed by the horror of finding dozens of new bodies floating in the same waters on our next visit.

We will relive the horror of finding drowned female kestrels and other hawks, knowing that somewhere nearby their nestlings have also been condemned to death. The horror of finding, on consecutive weeks, drowned mated pairs of downy and hairy woodpeckers, of pairs of dozens of other species large and small, knowing again that not only have the parents died by drowning but also that whole families were now condemned to die of starvation.

And how to find the young or even offer any rescue assistance? How to find dozens of innocent young birds hidden away from prying eyes in their many kinds of nests and cavities, desperately waiting for a parent to return with life-giving sustenance?



We will try to relive our short-lived joy finding one lone young brewer's sparrow - a BLM sensitive species - still holding its head above water in a tank the size of a modest living room in Pleasantview. And we will relive again and again the agony of losing the short desperate battle to try to warm and rescue that one lone tiny bird from fear, exhaustion and hypothermia.

How long do these birds and mammals swim in endless, hopeless desperation? The will to live is strong in even the tiniest of wild hearts. We found this little bird at noon, exhausted and paralyzed. Had it been swimming since first light, when it came for a drink at dawn? All night? How long can the long-legged bats, the golden-mantled ground squirrels, and the prairie falcons swim, searching for a way up and out of steep-walled prisons flooded with water we have captured for the convenience of livestock? Hours? A full day? Clinging to tiny bits of wood and floating algae on a warm day or night, perhaps even longer?

Does hypothermia win out? Or, in silent exhaustion, do these precious bits of life finally just lay their heads down on the watery pillow? And how long did each of the birds and

mammals wait before taking that last chance to reach the life-giving waters in the steep-sided troughs? And how could any human being repeatedly throw out the hundreds of spent bodies, like so many pieces of used tissue, without even making an attempt to relieve their plight?

We cannot forget or erase these scenes. We will relive the horror of discovering over and over, across the months of this desperately hot summer, the newly dead, the decaying corpses, the floating protein and lipid debris, as empty promises to address the carnage were broken again and again by an agency - the Bureau of Land Management - legally responsible for managing these lands and all their inherent values in a manner that merits the public trust.

It is only now, following years of protests and complaints by ourselves and so many of our friends and associates to area BLM offices, that the agency is taking official state action. Following public prodding by WWP and others, as well as threats of legal action by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho BLM office under the direction of K. Lynn Bennett has finally issued mandates to all Idaho field offices to address immediately the issue of wildlife escape ladders.

But the scope of the problem is still far beyond the current efforts. Vertebrate wildlife have been dying needlessly for years in troughs in California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming and anywhere else where there are unprotected troughs. The presence of alternate sources of water is not sufficient. There remains something alluring to wildlife in the still, open and often deeper and relatively clean waters of livestock troughs.

Drowning deaths are also occurring in Idaho on U.S. Forest Service lands, Idaho Department of Lands state school sections, and private rangelands and pastures. And no one has even begun to take official action to stop the terrible toll of troughs on invertebrate wildlife.

As I wrote in a recent short note to the Idaho Cattleman's Association's Rangeland Resources Council and to U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo's office in Pocatello, Idaho, it is time for all of our land users to do more than just "talk the talk" of land stewardship. Stewardship is an act of caring for something valuable. It's time for everyone to "walk the walk." And this applies to every one of us, including those who include themselves in the conservation community.

We have been very dismayed by a few of the more narrow-minded responses we have received regarding our reporting of the trough deaths and calls for action. One biologist who makes a contract income from bird-related resources claimed our calls for official action were "hysterical," that we should be concentrating on designing a new and better trough instead. This ignores the fact that the BLM has had, since the 1980s, excellent research and publications available to the public on designing and installing escapes within water troughs. It is not a lack of technology; it's a lack of care and effort on the part of most of our agency managers and resource users that has resulted in the current desperate situation.

An even more disturbing response came from hosts of a



bird-oriented website in Idaho, where we have placed a number of alerts regarding the trough deaths and pleas for conservation-minded and bird-loving folks to contact their public land managers and request action. In a forwarded message that I recently received, I learned that the site's hosts feel that issues such as birds drowning in water troughs "deteriorate" their website into a "pulpit to proclaim . . . pet or favorite agendas." They claim that their purpose is "geared toward the reporting of sightings, wild bird behavior, habitat and announcements."

What a terrible and callous attitude from a narrow-minded segment of the birding community itself! To ignore ongoing habitat threats that are inextricably tied to bird behavior, and to want to utilize birds as nothing more than cute bundles of feathers to check off on a year or life list is to utilize our public and wildlife resources in just as extractive and callous a manner as our irresponsible livestock users. Thankfully for the list-checkers, there are more than a few of us who care enough to actually do something besides watch our wildlife resources struggle in the downward spiral brought about by our own anthropogenic influences.

It is too late for the hundreds and thousands of wildlife that have already perished in livestock troughs this year. But as I have expressed to the BLM's Idaho office, as well as to local offices and the media, let's not let these deaths be in vain. Let's learn from this terrible, costly lesson and finally act to secure the safety of wildlife West-wide. Regardless of our political and world views, wildlife is everyone's business, and we have a moral obligation to see that our human activities have the least impact possible on the species with whom we share the earth - species that must rely upon our voices to serve as theirs.

Please contact your local land managers and request that they take all possible steps to address wildlife safety in your area, including the provision of escape ladders in any troughs. Please take the time to report any unprotected trough or tank to your state and local managers. And please report any deaths you observe in troughs or tanks immediately to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

*Miriam L. Austin is a field biologist and WWP resources specialist who lives in Twin Falls County, Idaho.*

## Report From Greenfire

By Debra Ellers

A dedicated crew of 15 volunteers came to Greenfire Preserve the weekend of Oct. 24-26 to aid Western Watershed Project's wildlife habitat improvement efforts.

The project focused on making the fencing on the preserve (which was in place before WWP took over the property) more wildlife-friendly for the elk, deer and pronghorn that graze in and pass through Greenfire's pastures.



The group tore down barbed-wire fencing along Greenfire's road boundary, dismantled wooden fences along riparian areas, and moved and reconstructed the wooden fences to replace the barbed wire. More than 500 yards of wooden fencing replaced the barbed wire that previously hindered wildlife passage.

The group soon enjoyed the rewards of their hard work. At the end of the weekend, they saw a herd of deer use the wooden fence access instead of attempting to jump the barbed wire!

WWP thanks the following supporters and directors for their hard work: Charley Herrington, Ed Grant, Bill Robins, Paul Martin, Jennifer Anderson, Damon Anderson, Patrick Csizmazia, Sue Rahmann, Maryanne Csizmazia, Tim Whitecotten, Dale Grooms, Debra Ellers, Bob Wagenknecht, Louise Wagenknecht and Gene Bray.



Special thanks go to Dale for organizing the weekend, planning meals and supervising the project, to Gene for use of his tractor and trailer, to Patrick for use of his truck and trailer, and to Martin for donating plants for landscaping.

The project is expected to continue in the spring with more removal of barbed wire and reconstruction of wooden fencing. If you would like to participate in this or other volunteer projects at Greenfire, please contact Teri Stewart at WWP: (208)788-2290 or [teri@westernwatersheds.org](mailto:teri@westernwatersheds.org).

## Volunteers Bring Green Thumbs to Greenfire

By Debra Ellers

Twelve hardy Boy Scouts and three adult leaders from Troop 318 in the Treasure Valley of Idaho came to Western Watersheds Project's Greenfire Preserve on Nov. 7, on a conservation mission to plant sagebrush seed.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Intermountain West Joint Venture provided the seed as part of its 10-year commitment to assist with Greenfire's uplands restoration project." About 150 pounds of seed was supplied to cover 100 acres."

Josh Malmgren, one of the scouts, organized the volunteer planting as his Eagle Scout project. His group successfully completed the planting in one day under extreme conditions - a tremendous accomplishment!

The group camped out overnight, braving sub-zero temperatures, then worked in temperatures barely above freezing during the day, hand-casting sagebrush seed around 100 acres of former cattle pasture. The conditions were trying for the volunteers but ideal for the seeding, as the seeds will lie dormant until next spring.



The sagebrush is expected to grow among the forbs and grasses that were seeded in the same area earlier this year. All of the plantings will provide forage and cover for birds, deer, elk and pronghorn.

The group saw a variety of wildlife around Greenfire, including deer, wild horses and a dramatic encounter between a golden eagle and a rabbit. (The rabbit won - this time.)

WWP supporter Bob Wagenknecht provided on-the-ground guidance for the group, and WWP Greenfire manager Stew Churchwell coordinated equipment and logistics.

WWP thanks Bob and the following scouts and their leaders for their hard work and perseverance in the cold: Scouts Josh Malmgren, Kenny Adams, D.J. Bush, Carter Hurst, Jace Johnson, Trent Johnson, A.J. Lowe, Eric Malmgren, Mark Malmgren, Jacob Olsen, Josh Peterson and Garrett Schroath; adult leaders Drew Dayton, Andy Johnson and Rick Malmgren.

WWP hopes to collaborate on future projects with Troop 318, and we hope the scouts will return to see the fruits of their labors at Greenfire.



## **Congressional Staffs Tour GYE with NPLGC By Gilly Lyons**

As part of the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign's ongoing public lands information effort, congressional staffers were invited this summer on a fact-finding tour of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

NPLGC staff on the tour included director Andy Kerr and George Wuerthner, Mark Salvo and me. We were joined by eight congressional staffers representing seven offices in the U.S. House of Representatives: Brian Bonlender and Matt Taylor for Rep. Inslee (D-Wash.); Janine Benner for Rep. Blumenauer (D-Ore.); Stephanie Ashwell for Rep. N. Johnson (R-Conn.); Ana Unruh for Rep. Markey (D-Mass); Paul Brotherton for Rep. Hinchey (D-N.Y.); Eric Lutz for Rep. McDermott (D-Wash.); and Bill Goold for Rep. Holt (D-N.J.).

Non-congressional participants included Glenn Hockett, director of Western Watersheds Project's new office in Montana; Tom Pringle of the Sperling Foundation in Eugene, Ore., Brent Israelsen, an environment reporter with the Salt Lake Tribune, and Barry Reiswig, manager of the National Elk Refuge in Jackson, Wyo.).

On Day One of the tour (Aug. 27), Wuerthner took the group to a gorgeous, ungrazed (by cows) corner of Yellowstone National Park a few miles from West Yellowstone, Mont. Our hike afforded us an opportunity to see intact grasslands, thriving aspen groves, healthy riparian areas (complete with spongy wetlands) and other elements of cow-free landscapes. Wuerthner explained just what we were seeing, highlighting the characteristics of healthy, natural systems that have been allowed to evolve free of domestic livestock abuses.

On Day Two (Aug. 28), we ventured into the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, which boasts "state-of-the-art grazing management." If that is indeed the case, the art of grazing management has miles to go. On our hike, we found several ravaged creeks and riparian areas that stood in stark contrast to the places we'd visited the day before. Wuerthner pointed out huge swaths of perfect grizzly habitat that have no bears due to conflicts with livestock.



*Congressional and NPLGC staffers on a hiking tour near Yellowstone.*

A curious highlight of the day was a visit to a high alpine meadow (around 10,000 feet) dotted with an outhouse. The outhouse was surrounded by about 30 or 40 head of cattle and several times as many cowpies. In the midst of this scene was a U.S. Forest Service sign that read, "Please keep your National Forest clean; pack out all refuse."

The congressional staffers seemed to appreciate both the factual information we shared and the chance to see (and smell) what grazing damage really is. Each of them started the tour with a relatively solid grasp of why grazing is a problem on public lands, but the two days we spent in the field clearly broadened their understanding of the extent of the damage livestock inflict on public lands.

You can read about grazing-related damage 'til the cows come home, but there's no substitute for seeing a cow-bombed creek with your own eyes. It gives new meaning to notions like "turbidity" and "disconnected from its historic floodplain."

*Gilly Lyons works for Save Our Wild Salmon  
in Washington, D.C.*



## **Forest Service Reneges on Kane Wyoming Permit Cancellation**

The public lands ranching operations of Charles Kane, whose family was one of the original permittees on the Bighorn National Forest in Wyoming, were dealt a major blow this fall when the U.S. Forest Service upheld a decision to cancel Kane Land and Livestock's grazing permit in the Tongue Ranger District.

Then, in an abrupt turnaround, the Forest Service reinstated grazing on the larger of Kane's allotments governed by the permit.

The agency had cancelled the Sheridan rancher's permit for overgrazing and other documented violations over the past three years.

In reversing its decision, the agency cited "a bureaucratic mistake." According to District Ranger Craig Yancey, regional range staff found that two allotments governed by one grazing permit must be treated separately for administrative purposes, which wasn't done in Kane's case.

"We began documenting Kane L&L's grazing practices in 2000," said David Beard, a supervisory range conservationist for the Bighorn NF. "His operation was cut by 40 percent before the 2001 grazing season, and again before the 2002 season, for exceeding allowable use standards and other violations."

On Jan. 29, 2003, Yancey issued a decision to cancel the Kane L&L permit. The ruling was appealed twice by Kane's lawyers before Stem issued a final decision on Aug. 26.

Kane's relationship with the Forest Service has long been contentious. Sources in Wyoming say he was instrumental in having Forest Service ecologist Michelle Girard removed from her job with the Bighorn NF after nearly eight years of service.



## Report From Utah By John Carter

**CIRCLING CEDAR MOUNTAIN -** I'm waiting, waiting to see if it is possible to negotiate any effective environmental compromise with the Bureau of Land Management and thus achieve some of our goals for wildlife.

This story is about a two-day camping trip around Cedar Mountain, Utah, a remote, low-elevation mountain range and Wilderness Inventory Area in the West Desert, far from water and home to a wild horse herd. This range is truth and beauty in earth tones. Brown, tan, orange canyons and rocks; ridges spotted with the dark green forms of juniper; fingers of sagebrush feeding up the canyons.

Native bunchgrasses dot the landscape after recent burns. Cheatgrass fills the sage interspaces in the bottoms of the canyons, while the north-facing slopes are all sage with native bunchgrass and biotic crusts. The south slopes are similar but with less vegetation and more bare ground.

Evidence of wild horses is everywhere. Even with springs five or 10 miles away, the horses are able to access all of the nearly 100,000-acre area - if not in summer, in winter when snow is available.

The few springs to be found are denuded, drying up and weed-infested. The soils are churned, rills are growing into gullies, and biological crust is being displaced and lost along with watershed function. There are too many horses. In fact, there are between 400 and 500 horses in a Herd Management Area where their numbers should be less than 100 based on carrying capacity.

Now comes the Skull Valley Allotment grazing permittee with an offer to build a 150-mile water pipeline with nearly 200 water troughs, ostensibly to enable cattle on this 335,000-acre allotment to eat sufficient cheatgrass to control it because it is causing a high fire frequency aided by bombing and weapons testing at the neighboring Dugway Proving Ground. Of course, cheatgrass has been spread and enabled across the West by livestock grazing. So, one has to be suspicious of any claims to the contrary.

As proposed, the pipeline would encircle the wilderness boundary and enter the wilderness. It would guarantee grazing on Cedar Mountain by thousands of cattle in addition to the feral horses.

I am negotiating with the BLM and the permittee to eliminate the pipeline around Cedar Mountain (50 miles' worth) and build the portion in the lowlands, where the cheatgrass is dominant. This would take their experimental test on grazing control away from Cedar Mountain, where the last native grasses reside.

I have asked that they significantly reduce the wild horse herd to conform to capacity. I have asked that they address the water issue for horses using other means. I have asked for an experimental design with quantitative monitoring to ascertain whether their proposed management accomplishes its expected outcomes.

We will see if this proposal is about trying to manage cheatgrass and prevent fire, or if it's really about getting livestock to the last native forage and decent habitat in the area.

*John Carter is Utah director of WWP.  
He lives in Mendon, Utah.*



## Report From Wyoming By Jonathan Ratner

Since the start of the Wyoming office a few months ago, I've been out in the field gathering information on two of our top priority projects, renegade rancher Frank Robbins' grazing operation near Thermopolis and the Wyoming Range Allotment Complex in the northern third of the Wyoming Range.

Both areas vividly bring home the extent of the destruction of our public lands from negligent livestock grazing practices. The allotments leased by Robbins were severely impacted with massive headcuts that had lowered the water table, vast sheet erosion that had long since eliminated any topsoil and major changes in the biotic communities.

This area is crucial to large wildlife in the region due to its unique geography, but its usefulness has all but expired due to the impacts of livestock grazing.

The Wyoming Range Allotment Complex is a good example of the severity of grazing impacts. This area has endured continuous sheep grazing since the 1880s. The result, according to U.S. Forest Service researchers, is the loss of between 2 to 4 feet of soil from much of the allotment complex.



The massive erosion continues. In my travels around the complex, I found many fallen trees half-buried in soil. By the looks of them, they'd toppled over 15 or so years ago. That's a lot of moving soil.

All topsoil has been stripped off, creating major changes in the rare tall-forb communities. More than 3,000 acres of the complex are what the Forest Service calls "mass erosion sites" - areas along the divide with no vegetation that are dumping huge amounts of silt into all the headwaters in the area.

The silt has nearly eliminated the last few strongholds of the threatened Colorado River cutthroat trout. Research from

the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish Department shows declines in these last few remnant populations of 65 percent over the past 10 years.

Domestic sheep grazing in the area causes yet other impacts. Dispersing grizzly bears and wolves are routinely shot to protect domestic sheep from predation.

Domestic sheep also transmit pasteurella to bighorn sheep, resulting in major dieoffs of the Jackson bighorn herd every few years. In spite of all this, the Forest Service has proposed that sheep grazing be expanded in this area. WWP will be doing everything in our power to overturn this proposal and eliminate domestic sheep from the northern Wyoming Range.

*Jonathan Ratner is Wyoming director of WWP.  
He lives in Pinedale, Wyoming.  
Contact him at [wyoing@westernwatersheds.org](mailto:wyoing@westernwatersheds.org)*



### **Report From Montana: Call of the Wild by Glenn Hockett**

Hello, everyone. I am excited to open a new field office in Montana for Western Watersheds Project. As a range ecologist, wildlife advocate, hunter and fisherman, I bring more than 20 years of experience and passion to the WWP team.

I have and will continue to serve as volunteer president of the Bozeman-based Gallatin Wildlife Association, which advocates habitat protection and fish and wildlife recovery and conservation at the landscape level. I believe the missions of WWP and GWA match seamlessly, and I am honored to work with such dedicated conservationists.

My focus will remain on restoring, protecting and connecting the habitats of keystone or "indicator" native species such as wild bison, bighorn sheep, sage grouse, grayling, cutthroat trout and beaver. What a wonderful adventure to be involved in, and I have never felt more confident of our opportunities for success.

A bit of background about my work: I have lead the GWA, a small group of anglers, hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts, as a fierce advocate for fish and wildlife habitat protection. We have and will continue to work hard to lay the groundwork for native species recovery and conservation, including the reintroduction of wild bighorn sheep throughout southwestern Montana.

Due largely to GWA's efforts, bighorn sheep were recently released in the Greenhorn Mountains near Alder Montana and in the Muddy Creek watershed near Dell. I see the successful return of wild bighorn sheep to the bunchgrass-covered ridges, canyons and foothills of southwestern Montana as an indicator of ecological restoration and a conservation legacy we can all be proud of.

Under my leadership, the GWA has initiated stream-side fisheries and beaver habitat recovery projects along Brackett Creek in the Bridger Mountains near Bozeman. We have also worked to biologically control noxious weeds along the Madison River in Bear Trap Canyon of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area.

Beyond these initiatives, I am most excited about the opportunities to restore wild, free-roaming bison herds in the Greater Yellowstone Area. As Montana director for WWP, I intend to work with others to develop extensive support for the recovery and conservation of wild bison in the area. We will work systematically to secure, protect and connect critical bison habitat throughout the region. We have already begun in the Taylor Fork, Buffalo Horn and Porcupine watersheds of the Gallatin Canyon, where two small cattle allotments are the primary barriers to wild bison accessing a vast landscape of public lands in the area. Stay tuned on this one.

The GWA has also endorsed the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign, an initiative to end abusive livestock grazing on public lands through a voluntary federal buyout plan for public lands grazing permittees. I continue to seek broad based support for this "win-win" concept. The benefits of this voluntary buyout program to improve, restore and protect native fish and wildlife habitat in Montana are immense.

This past summer I worked with Montana State University and University of Montana researchers on a project that investigated the effects of coalbed methane development on sage grouse populations in southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming. Sage grouse are the "canary in the mine shaft" for big sagebrush grasslands and interspersed riparian areas. I recently published a peer-reviewed article in the Intermountain Journal of Science on the impacts of livestock grazing on the herbaceous components of sage grouse habitat. I will continue to monitor land-use planning processes that are crucial to the future of sage grouse and other native fish and wildlife.

Currently, forest plan revisions are under way on the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest and Gallatin National Forest. The resource management plan for the BLM Dillon Resource Area is being written. And the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has statewide management plans for elk, sage grouse, grizzly bears and wolves. I also plan to monitor and participate in a proposal by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to develop a habitat conservation plan for all state lands in Montana.

There are many crucial conservation efforts under way in Montana, and I am excited to be a part of them. We could use your help. If you would like to learn more about any of these efforts, give me a call, send an e-mail or stop by sometime if you are in the Bozeman area. I would be happy to show you around. Aren't the opportunities before us exciting? It's going to be wild!

*Glenn Hockett is Montana director of WWP. He  
lives in Bozeman, Mont  
Contact him at [glenn@westernwatersheds.org](mailto:glenn@westernwatersheds.org)*

## President's Perspective: An Appreciation of Grasses By Debra Ellers

When I first moved to Idaho a couple of decades ago, I was awed by the towering mountains. The Sawtooths, the Seven Devils, the Pioneers, the White Clouds, all with their jagged summits and rocky faces, captivated me.

I still love seeing and visiting the high peaks. Lately, however, on my trips to the backcountry, I find that I'm absorbed in more subtle features. Like grass.

I relish seeing a thicket of tall native grasses gone to seed. These grasses will continue to reproduce and provide forage and cover for wildlife and birds. Unfortunately, the more common scene on public lands is stubble - often non-native species such as crested wheatgrass - chewed to nubbins by domestic livestock.

Enlightened public land managers do exist, however, and I was delighted to experience a couple of places in Idaho this summer where green grasses grew tall and lush.



photo©Dale Grooms

One was the Seven Devils Mountains area in Hell's Canyon Wilderness, where all domestic livestock grazing has been eliminated. Bunchgrasses and wildflowers now flourish, providing forage for elk, bighorn sheep, forest grouse and other wildlife that inhabit this subalpine wonderland.

Another was Stanley Lake Creek in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, an especially rewarding visit for me. When I first saw it in the mid-'80s, cattle had deposited cowpies, trampled banks and devoured much of the grass, a desecration of an otherwise spectacular landscape. The cattle were removed in the early '90s because of the havoc they wreaked on spawning habitat for salmon.

When I returned to Stanley Lake Creek this year on a late summer pack trip, the recovering vegetation on the banks, clarity of the creek and growth of tall grasses were gratifying to

see. Now the grasses provide forage for elk to fatten on before they migrate from the high, cold Stanley Basin. They also give cover to sandhill cranes for their chicks.

The dramatic improvement around Stanley Lake Creek motivates me to keep working to end abusive livestock grazing on our public lands, so that we can see and celebrate the return of our native grasses!



### Western Watersheds Board Member Profile

**Name:** Debra Ellers

**WWP Affiliation:** President, Board of Directors

**Residence:** Boise, Idaho

**Family:** Husband, Dale Grooms; dog, Kaz; mom, dad and grandmother in Virginia;

brother, sister-in-law, new niece in Portland; assorted aunts, uncles and cousins all over.

**Occupation: Day job:** Corporate attorney specializing in employment law.

**Real job:** Fun-hog (backpacking, mountain biking, backcountry skiing, windsurfing).

**Other conservation affiliations:** Wilderness Volunteers, Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, Natural Resources Defense Council, Buffalo Field Campaign.

**Memorable conservation experience:** Fence removal project in Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge in Oregon in 1998, cow-free since 1993. Lush bunchgrasses, colorful wildflowers and plentiful ground nesting birds showed the beauty of public lands without abusive livestock grazing.

**Spectacular wildlife encounters:** Yearling elk 5 feet away at Bull Trout Hot Springs in Idaho; mountain goat 20 feet away in Seven Devils Mountains in Idaho; giant manta ray and dolphins close-up while diving on the Great Barrier Reef.

**Other interests:** See above under "Occupation, Real job." Also fitness, digital photography, gardening, reading nonfiction.

**Favorite place(s) in the West:** Seven Devils Mountains, Idaho; Pioneer Mountains, Idaho; Boulder-White Clouds Mountains, Idaho; Dirty Devil and Escalante regions of southern Utah.

**Conservation hero(es):** Classic: John Muir, Ed Abbey. Contemporary: Public land activists like WWP's Jon Marvel, Katie Fite and John Carter, all dedicated to saving wild places and wildlife.

**Book recently read:** "A River Lost" by Blaine Harden.

**Words to live by:** "In wildness is the preservation of the world"-Thoreau. "In the mountains, there you feel free."-T.S. Eliot

**Three wishes for the world:** That people would turn off their TVs and go for a walk; that humans would respect and treat animals as living beings with feelings; that humans would develop sustainable economic systems that don't involve destruction and exploitation of people, animals and the earth.

## Greenfire Revival IV

Remember to mark your calendar to mark your 2004 calendar. WWP's Greenfire Revival IV is slated for Sept. 17-19, 2004. Each year's event draws more friends and delivers more events, and the time of year is spectacular for a retreat to nature. We look forward to seeing you at the event.

## Western Watersheds Wins Appeal of BLM Grazing Permit

Western Watersheds Project and the Committee For the High Desert have successfully appealed a Bureau of Land Management decision to transfer a grazing permit from Bell Brand Ranches to Bert Brackett, one of Idaho's largest livestock operators, in O'Neil Basin, an endangered fish habitat in northern Nevada.

Administrative Law Judge James Heffernan effectively reversed the BLM's decision to extend a 10-year permit to the O'Neil Grazing Association, hastily formed by Brackett.

In upholding WWP and CHD's appeal, the judge ruled that the agency's Documentation of NEPA Adequacy, or DNA, failed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and was not a document recognized under any law.

"Judge Heffernan makes clear that the BLM cannot fabricate documents to comply with environmental law," said

Jon Marvel, executive director of WWP. "His order will help bring Nevada public land management into the 21st century instead of languishing in the 19th as it is now."

The BLM sought to make the transfer without an environmental analysis required under NEPA, and Brackett was aggressively represented by legal counsel Alan Schroeder of Boise.

Heffernan chided the agency for using DNAs to make its case, noting that they are not part of NEPA but an independent, "ad hoc" creation of the agency.

The judge also ruled that the BLM failed to consider in its decision a previous environmental impact statement that indicated the need for environmental protection of O'Neil Basin.

The O'Neil allotment is home to a small population of Lahontan cutthroat trout in the West Fork of Deer Creek. Lahontan cutthroat have been listed under the Endangered Species Act for 30 years without significant recovery.

WWP is pursuing further remedies under this decision through legal counsel Todd Tucci in the Boise office of Advocates For The West.



## White Poplar, Black Locust

By Louise Wagenknecht

"Louise Wagenknecht tells us two related stories—she tells an evocative story, populated by people we can care about, of growing up in a northern California lumbering town which no longer exists. And she tells us, in a precisely informed and useful way, with sorrow but without invective, about the timber practices which led to the demise of the town. This is a terrific book which casts considerable light on the ongoing urgent problem of how to care for our communities and our environment at the same time."—William Kittredge, author of *Southwestern Homelands*

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LOUISE WAGENKNECHT

## Grants and Thanks

The Foundation for Deep Ecology has awarded Western Watersheds Project a grant of \$10,000 in support of WWP's work on the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign.

As a part of its change in operations, the Committee for the High Desert has generously donated \$30,500 to WWP in support of grazing advocacy work to be accomplished by WWP's new biodiversity director, Katie Fite.

WWP received \$5,750 from The Sperling Foundation, \$5,000 of which is to aid in the opening of the new WWP office in Montana.

The Humane Society of the United States contributed \$1,000 in support of WWP's work on behalf of wildlife.

Many thanks go out to these groups for their generous support.

Western Watersheds Project extends a special thanks to Dale Grooms for his hard work in preparing "Cowzilla and the Wild Things" for performance at the Greenfire Revival. Additional thanks go to Margo Nelson for "The Voice," and to all the performers who played their roles so well!

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### WWP extends special thanks to the following WWP supporters, each of whom contributed \$100 or more to our efforts since the last newsletter.

Alliance Packaging	Karen Klitz
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Bruce Hayse	Charles Walter
Paul and Ann Hill	John C. Ward
The Humane Society	

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## Requests for Donations

At various times for various reasons, WWP has specific needs for our operations. One comes from board member Gene Bray for our Greenfire Preserve:

- Refrigerator needed with the following dimensions: width no more than 33 inches, height no more than 67 inches and depth (crucial) no more than 26 1/2 inches.

Gene has identified a suitable unit, Frigidaire for Restaurants, model FRU17B2J, at a cost of \$549. He has offered to pay half of the cost and to transport the unit to Greenfire.

- For field work associated with our new office Wyoming, Jonathan Ratner needs a Pentax Optio 450 digital camera. The unit costs \$390.
- WWP's Greenfire Preserve is in need of a 50-horsepower tractor, preferably 4 wheel drive.

If you can help with these items, please contact WWP at (208)788-2290.

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## Western Watersheds Project Offices

### WWP (main office)

Jon Marvel, executive director  
P.O. Box 1770 • Hailey, ID 83333  
(208)788-2290 • (208)788-2298 (fax)  
wwp@westernwatersheds.org

### WWP/Idaho (Boise office)

Katie Fite, director  
P.O. Box 2863  
Boise, ID 83701  
(208) 429-1679  
katie@westernwatersheds.org

### WWP/Utah

John Carter, director  
P.O. Box 280 • Mendon, UT 84325  
(435)881-1232  
utah@westernwatersheds.org

### WWP/Wyoming

Jonathan Ratner, director  
P.O. Box 1160 • Pinedale, WY 82941  
(307)537-3111 • (707)231-1325 (fax)  
wyoming@westernwatersheds.org

### WWP/Montana

Glenn Hockett, director  
745 Doane Rd. • Bozeman, MT 59718  
(406)586-1729/(406)581-6352  
glenn@westernwatersheds.org

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## Membership Policy Change

To streamline administration, many organizations have moved to a calendar-year membership system. We, too, see the sense in simplifying this part of our daily work, and we hope the new system will be easier for our members as well.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2004, WWP will move all membership renewals to a calendar year. In the transition this year, members who join in November or December 2003 will be given a two-month grace period, with memberships extended until the end of 2004.

## Help WWP Match a \$12,000 Challenge!

Western Watersheds Project has been offered a membership challenge grant of \$12,000 by a generous supporter. Time is of the essence. WWP will receive this grant if it is matched one to one by our membership by *December 31st*.

### Western Watersheds Project

P.O. Box 1770 • Hailey, ID 83333  
Phone: (208) 788-2290 Fax: (208) 788-2298

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### Western Watersheds Project Staff

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 Stew Churchwell.....Central Idaho Director and Greenfire Manager  
 Judy Hall .....Director of Fund Development  
 Keith Raether .....Director of Media and Public Information  
 Teri Curtis .....Office Administrator  
 Glenn Hockett .....Montana Director  
 Dr. John Carter.....Utah Director  
 Jonathan Ratner .....Wyoming Director  
 Katie Fite .....Biodiversity Director  
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Miriam Austin .....Resource Specialist, Red Willow Inc.

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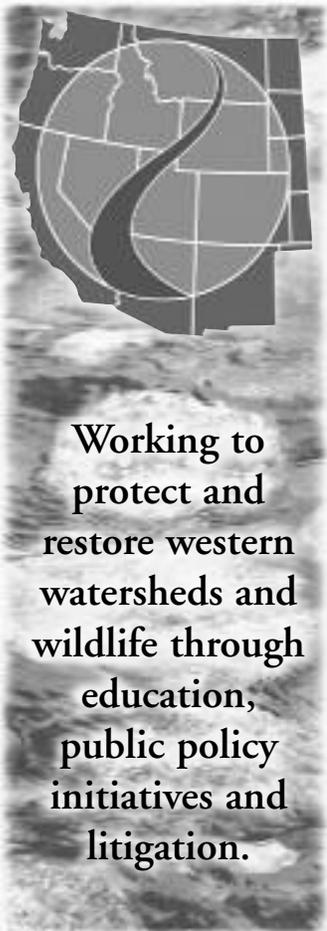
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*An enclosure clearly shows how cattle grazing damages the land. The moonscape on the right is grazed by cattle, while the area to the left is protected from them. The fence at the center of this photo is designed to grant access for deer and antelope, yet exclude cattle.*

*This enclosure is not far from WWP's Greenfire Preserve in the Road Creek watershed.*

