



Watersheds Messenger

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Western Watersheds Project

Working to protect and restore western watersheds and wildlife through education, public policy initiatives and litigation.

Western Watersheds Project wins retirement of 16,000 acres of Idaho State School Endowment Lands

Capping a four year effort, Western Watersheds Project has won a decision from the Idaho State Land Board to retire 16,300 acres of state school endowment lands from livestock grazing indefinitely.

The lands – known as the Lacey Meadows lease – are located south of Weippe, Idaho. The Lewis and Clark expedition's lives were saved by the Nez Perce Indians who they first encountered on this lease area in September 1805. The 16,300 acres lie within the Lolo Creek watershed – habitat for endangered salmon and steelhead – and are managed to provide income for Idaho's public schools and other endowments.

"These lands have enormous historical and recreational value for hunters and fisherman," said Gene Bray, a board member of Western Watersheds, "but they have cost the state more money to manage for livestock grazing than the income grazing produced – and the cows were destroying the area's streams, soils and vegetation."

Western Watersheds has sought since 1993 to improve management of state school endowment lands and increase income to public schools by offering to pay more for grazing leases and not grazing them, to allow damaged lands to recover.

On the Lacey Meadows parcel, Western Watersheds outbid the grazing operators four years ago for a 10-year lease. The Idaho Land Board initially rejected that higher offer, asserting that grazing was a necessary management tool.

An Idaho state court reversed that decision in 2001, ordering the Land Board to conduct a hearing on whether grazing would aid management or harm the land. After that hearing, the Idaho Department of Lands changed its position and agreed that grazing was damaging the resources of Lacey Meadows and producing little if any income.

The Department of Lands thus recommended – as Western Watersheds has advocated all along – that grazing be eliminated indefinitely on the Lacey Meadows parcel.

At its December 14, 2004 meeting, the Land Board adopted that recommendation, deciding to stop leasing the land for grazing in order to protect the state's forest resources from livestock damage. Governor Dirk Kempthorne, Superintendent of Schools Marilyn Howard, and Controller Keith Johnson all voted to support the Land

Board decision (Attorney General Lawrence Wasden and Secretary of State Ben Ysursa did not participate).

WWP Board member Gene Bray commented about this great victory: "The Land Board has finally acknowledged that certain lands can be much more valuable if they are not grazed by livestock, because grazing yields so little income and harms the land. This is what we have been saying for years, and what the science shows beyond doubt. I'm encouraged that the Governor and other members of the Land Board are now seeing this."



Thanks and a Goodbye to Stew Churchwell !

Western Watersheds Project Central Idaho Director and Greenfire Preserve manager Stew Churchwell has resigned his position with WWP, married (please see separate story on page 6), and moved to Boise, Idaho to become a co-owner of Restoration Seeding and Conservation, the company that has been instrumental in getting the native plant seedlings started at WWP's Greenfire Preserve.

As WWP supporters well know, Stew has been a stalwart of WWP for many years. He had been living at WWP's Greenfire Preserve since August 2000 and has been the most important force for positive change in the management of public lands in central Idaho in the last few decades.



Stew Churchwell

Stew lived for many years and still owns a cabin on remote Sawmill Creek in Custer County in the Morgan Creek watershed north of Challis. His encyclopedic knowledge of the landscape, the wildlife, the creeks and rivers, and the people of central Idaho can never be duplicated. His hunting capability is legendary, and his ability to find and stay close to all forms of wildlife is renowned. One story serves to describe his relationship with the natural world. He was taking his future spouse, Margo, into the wild

country west of Morgan Creek to bugle-in bull elk just to enjoy seeing them, when instead of elk arriving on the scene two wolves showed up convinced, no doubt, that they were hearing the dinner bell. They came up within a few dozen yards before determining that the "elk" they sought were just a couple of human friends.

WWP is deeply indebted to Stew for all his work influencing public policy and in starting the restoration process at the Greenfire Preserve. Stew's help will continue with WWP's efforts to bring some level of improved management to the 125,000 acre Morgan Creek grazing allotment in between his hard work to restore native vegetation to gas and oil blighted lands in Wyoming for CSR.

Everyone at WWP regrets that Stew is no longer our central Idaho bulwark, but we all know this is not the last we will hear and see his advocacy for the wildness that is our common heritage.

Thank you and good fortune Stew !!



WWP Welcomes Jerome and Julian

Western Watersheds Project heartily welcomes Jerome Rovnak as the new caretaker at WWP's Greenfire Preserve on the East Fork of the Salmon River in central Idaho. Jerome moved into the apartment at the Preserve in October when Stew Churchwell moved to Boise.

Jerome is a long time resident of Blaine and Custer Counties in central Idaho. He was the first administrator of the Animal Shelter of the Wood River Valley.

He moved to the Greenfire Preserve from 12 miles upstream near Big Lake Creek in the East Fork watershed. Jerome is an artist in wood carving, a Vietnam Marine Corps veteran, and a lover of wildlife. Recently he has reported the second sighting of two wolves at the Greenfire Preserve along with 65 elk, over 250 mule deer, and 8 wild horses. Welcome Jerome !!

WWP also welcomes Utah native Julian Hatch of Boulder, Utah as WWP's new southern Utah contract monitor and public lands coordinator. Julian has joined with WWP thanks to a very generous

Escalante Wilderness Project. Julian will be monitoring the Dixie National Forest, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and the Kanab Field Office of the BLM for compliance with federal law and regulations. As a long-time resident of Garfield County, Utah with an encyclopedic knowledge of the public lands from the San Rafael Swell to the Kaibab Plateau, Julian will provide a strong local presence for the public interest in a critical part of Utah. Thanks and welcome Julian !!



Jerome Rovnak with Boss & Happy



Julian Hatch, Southern Utah Coordinator



WWP Legal Efforts are Winning!

by Laird Lucas

A key part of Western Watersheds Project's work is using the courts to enforce our nation's environmental laws and improve management of our public lands. Recent experience illustrates how WWP's legal victories do promote changes in management and improve conditions on the ground.

How WWP's Legal Program Works

Over the last five years or so, WWP's staff has worked in close partnership with the attorneys at Advocates for the West to develop a broad portfolio of legal cases, involving literally dozens of court cases and appeals across six western states.

These cases use a variety of legal tools - including the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Federal Lands Policy and Management Act, National Forest Management Act, and other laws - in order to protect fish and wildlife, improve their habitat, and block further degradation by greedy resource industries and complicit agencies.

Typically, cases are identified through on-the-ground work of WWP's staff and its network of activists and expert scientists - who usually know what is happening to the land better than the local BLM or Forest Service office.

Then the lawyers, scientists, and activists collaborate as a team to establish goals and strategies intended to maximize our leverage, and identify good litigation opportunities. Sometimes we focus on one specific allotment - that may have high resource values, or offer a good opportunity to set precedent - and sometimes we bring large cases sweeping in millions of acres of public lands within an ecosystem or landscape.

At essence, WWP's legal strategy is to "marry" law with science - proving to a court how an agency's decisions (or failure to act) is harming the land and violating the law.

Scope of WWP's Litigation Program

WWP now has pending cases challenging abusive livestock grazing on 12 million acres of public lands across the West, in Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, Utah, and Oregon. No other conservation group has such an ambitious public lands grazing litigation program - and aside from our many victories (some described below), the sheer size of these efforts is helping to promote change in public lands grazing.

In addition, WWP is also pursuing protections for many imperiled fish, wildlife and plant species under the Endangered Species Act. These species typically are representative of the declining sage-steppe ecosystem - including the sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, pygmy rabbit, mountain quail, and slickspot peppergrass. WWP is also seeking ESA listing of the Montana fluvial Arctic grayling, a stunning fish that now is only found in small parts of the Big Hole Basin in Montana.

WWP is also using the courts to fight Bush Administration efforts to cut off public access to agency documents and information under the Freedom of Information Act. We won two FOIA cases already this year, and have others pending.

Finally, WWP is also working with other conservation groups to battle irresponsible and destructive public lands projects, aside from grazing. These include our successes in the last two years blocking plans by USDA Wildlife Services to kill 75% of foxes, coyotes, badgers and other so-called "predators" of sage grouse in parts of southern Idaho; three years of success in blocking other Wildlife Services' plans to spray malathion and other poisons across southern Idaho to control crickets and grasshoppers; battling plans to burn sagebrush or juniper in Idaho and Nevada; and similar misguided schemes by public agencies.

Our Victories Are Helping To Protect The Land

Because we are careful in selecting cases, and use the strong combination of law-plus-science to prosecute the cases we bring, WWP has established a strong track record of victories - not only in court, but on the ground too.

In Wyoming, for example, WWP filed suit in September 2003 challenging grazing by rogue rancher Frank Robbins on 50,000 acres of public lands in the Bighorn Basin, near the Wind River mountains. This lawsuit has already succeeded in forcing BLM to rescind a behind-closed-doors "settlement" with Robbins - and resulted in halting Robbins' grazing in 2004. We are now moving to have the court order BLM to rescind Robbins' permits because of his history of violating environmental laws; and intend to prohibit further grazing by Robbins on public lands in 2005 and future years.

In Utah, WWP filed federal court litigation in 2002, challenging BLM's issuance of over 70 grazing permits covering 1.5 million acres in the northern part of the state. We are now nearing final settlement of this case, which will require BLM to conduct riparian inventories and improve stream conditions, while using the latest science to prepare a comprehensive environmental analysis of livestock grazing impacts.

In northern Nevada - where there are really no other conservation groups examining BLM and Forest Service land management decisions - WWP has brought several court cases and administrative appeals that are shaking up the agencies and ranching industry. One case, settled last year, required the Forest Service to improve stream protections from grazing on dozens of allotments in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests. A second case, which we just won, requires BLM to perform a full Environmental Impact Statement assessing grazing impacts upon sage grouse and other sensitive species on over a million and a half acres in the Elko region. WWP also just won an administrative appeal blocking BLM from embarking on a costly new "welfare ranching" program in the Squaw Creek area.

Much of the focus of WWP's legal efforts, however, continues to be on Idaho public lands. In the stunning

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canyonlands of the Jarbidge and Bruneau rivers, we are challenging BLM's mismanagement of grazing on 1.4 million acres. We won a court injunction this summer blocking ranchers from increasing grazing beyond their permit limits, which BLM tried to allow under the authority of a recent grazing "rider." That case will next demonstrate that BLM has wrongly "outsourced" its scientific monitoring and assessment to the livestock industry, dominated by Simplot Livestock Company - the single largest public lands rancher in the United States.

WWP is also continuing its focus on improving streams and uplands on the 1.8 million acres of the Owyhee Resource Area, in southwestern Idaho. WWP previously won a sweeping injunction - affirmed by the 9th Circuit appeals court - requiring BLM to conduct detailed assessments of all allotment conditions, and ordering interim stream protection measures. But the Bush Administration has forced out BLM staff trying to do their job, and brought in rancher "experts" to run the Owyhee office. WWP is now bringing court cases and appeals to prevent this political interference from weakening grazing reforms in this area.

Finally, in central Idaho, WWP's Greenfire Preserve has provided the base for many legal efforts intended to improve fisheries and wildlife habitat values. We continue to use the Endangered Species Act to force irrigators on public and private lands to modernize their diversions, and promote recovery of salmon, steelhead and bull trout. We are suing the Forest Service to force it to adhere to the Salmon Challis National Forest plans in managing livestock grazing and range improvements. We have protected wolves from being killed on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area for the last three years. This year we won another injunction ordering the Forest Service to close large parts of the Lower East Fork allotment (in the Boulder-White Cloud mountains) to livestock grazing because of cattle damage to high altitude lakes and streams.

As a direct result of these efforts, streams are now flowing that were historically dammed and diverted; riparian areas are recovering; and ranching operators in central Idaho are having to spend money to improve their operations - or are now willing to seek permanent retirement of their grazing allotments or water rights. The fact that ranchers in the East Fork Salmon River drainage are willing to support a Boulder-White Clouds wilderness bill, with federal retirement of their grazing permits, demonstrates the power of WWP's legal efforts in central Idaho.

Conclusion

Legal efforts have always been a powerful part of the conservation movement. WWP ranks among the most sophisticated and aggressive in using the courts to enforce our environmental laws and promote sound management of our public lands.

Laird J. Lucas has served as WWP's outside counsel for the last five years. He is also Executive Director of Advocates for the West, a public interest environmental law nonprofit based in Boise. To learn more about Advocates for the West, visit their website at www.AdvocatesWest.org.



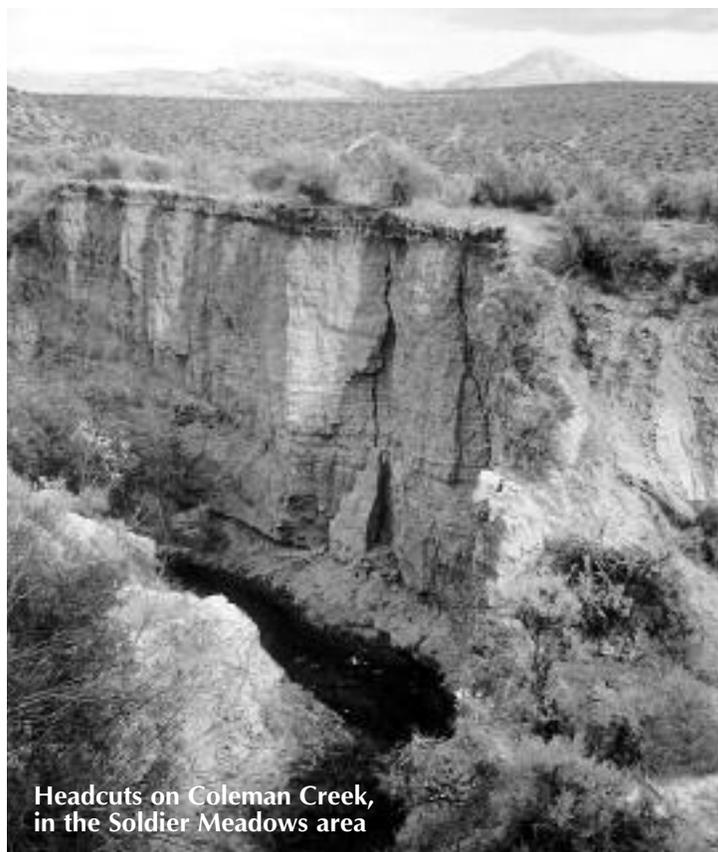
Mired in Myth: How Public Lands Management is Returning to the Dark Ages

by Katie Fite

Ranching in the arid west has always been suffused with mythological beliefs:

There is the myth that grazing and trampling by a lumbering exotic behemoth that spreads weeds in its wake is good for the land.

There is the myth that building more contraptions or conducting more "treatments" like fences, pipelines, spring projects, and burning that shift livestock impacts to less used areas is good for the land. Scarcely a BLM livestock grazing decision is ever issued that does not propose building more livestock facilities that fragment wild landscapes, without any accounting of the impacts or effectiveness of these manipulations.



Headcuts on Coleman Creek,
in the Soldier Meadows area

There is the myth that damage to the land was done by "historical" grazing but now everything is getting better. Unfortunately growing headcuts along Coleman Creek in the Soldier Meadows area or the remains of willows and old beaver dams stranded 40 feet above the current water level of Trout Creek in the Salmon River allotment near Jackpot, Nevada belie this myth.

There is the myth that public lands ranching is the economic cornerstone of rural communities when it is the taxes of American city dwellers that finance the smooth gravel roads to ranches in the middle of nowhere and all other rancher hand-outs. Ranch families are almost always

dependent on jobs in rural towns to support their ranching business and not the other way around.

In the late 1990's these myths began to break down; and, albeit with legal prodding from conservationists, changes began to seep into BLM decision-making. Threads of ecological science began to influence the land management agencies. Emerging among these was the novel idea that leaving residual grass cover or stubble height on stream banks would help to protect the banks of the stream from the erosive force of the water and keep the soil in place during spring runoff. Slowly BLM and Forest Service offices began requiring stubble heights so that the protective cover of grasses and sedges remained on streams.

But now, in the anti-science, myth-based world of the current U.S. Department of the Interior, the BLM and the Forest Service are abandoning these protections. Range "scientists" at the University of Idaho, long known for their pro-livestock bias, are producing papers saying there is no need for protective stubble heights and cover on stream banks.

Purposeful deception and misrepresentation by the BLM to support the myths of the livestock industry and unsustainable levels of livestock have returned in force. These are readily exposed when one goes out and looks at the land. When WWP Board member Gene Bray and I examined livestock projects that were supposed to exist to help "manage" cows across Vale, Oregon BLM's Louse Canyon area (the lovely sagebrush country of Oregon's West Little Owyhee River near the Nevada and Idaho borders) we found fences, spring projects, even windmills in dilapidated and unusable condition. Large sums of taxpayer dollars were squandered to build projects to try to sustain unsustainable numbers of cattle in the 60s and 70s, and most have fallen apart from lack of maintenance.

Another good example of the return to the bad-old-days is the petty quibbling used as an attempt to undermine public involvement. When WWP surprisingly received a Stay in our appeal of a grazing decision for Barrick Goldstrike and Ellison Ranches on the 500,000 acre Squaw Valley and Spanish Ranch allotments in Elko County, Nevada, the Elko BLM tried in an absurd reading of their own regulations to get WWP's appeal and the stay thrown out.

BLM claimed that WWP had not commented during the protracted decision-making process, so we had no standing to appeal. BLM also said that our comments had been submitted under the name of Idaho Watersheds Project, which was not the same as Western Watersheds Project. Indeed, in 1997 when we first commented on this project, WWP was Idaho Watersheds Project. The Elko BLM knows full well that it is the same organization. It certainly was not WWP's fault that BLM had taken forever 7 years to issue a final decision. Fortunately, the Appeals Judge denied BLM's request.

Perhaps the most Orwellian change under the Bush administration is that collaborative efforts are now used to promote and sustain the myths, delusions and deceptions of the public lands livestock industry. A major goal of the collaboration-based Owyhee Initiative in Owyhee County, Idaho is based on a false premise that livestock grazing is an economic engine in Owyhee County, and that it is an economically viable and benign use of public lands.

As stated in its mission statement the Owyhee Initiative aims to: "provide for economic stability by preserving livestock grazing as an economically viable use". Amazingly there are only about 80 public lands ranchers in all of Owyhee County with a population of over 11,000 people. Public lands ranching is so minor an economic impact in Owyhee County that it doesn't even rate a separate break-down in the Idaho Agriculture jobs statistics, and public lands livestock grazing in Owyhee County could not exist without massive taxpayer subsidies. BLM management costs to administer grazing permits in Owyhee County alone average 15 to 20 times the amount the agency receives in grazing fees. Unfortunately for ranchers there is no such thing as economically viable public lands ranching.

In the face of these rollbacks of better ways to manage public lands the work of Western Watersheds Project takes on even more importance to raise the voice of restoration of damaged watersheds across the west.

***Katie Fite is WWP's Biodiversity Director
She lives in Boise, Idaho***



**A non-functional
livestock installation:
collapsed windmill on BLM land.**

WWP Celebrates Two Weddings and New Overseas Members

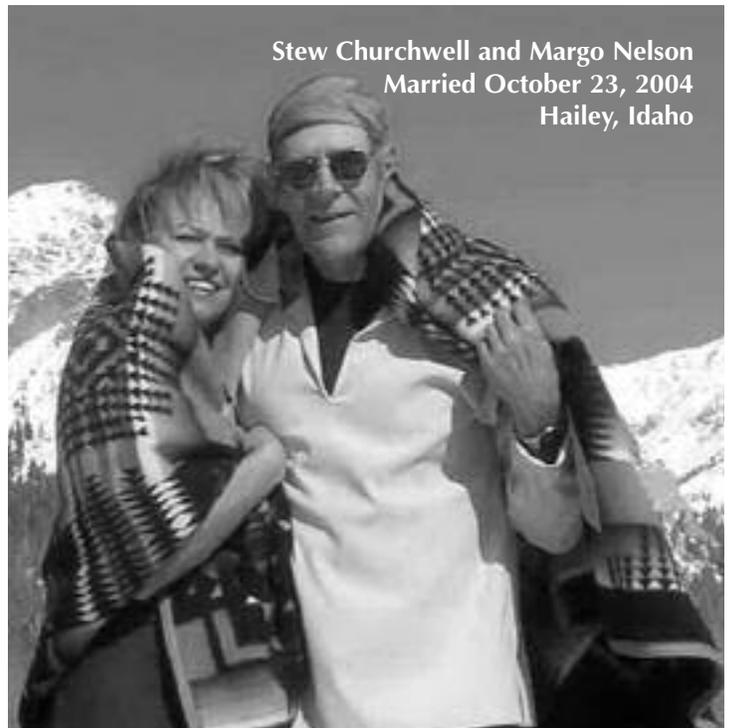


Keene Hueftle and Ana Thompson
Married December 13, 2004
Hailey, Idaho

Keene & Ana

Western Watersheds Project Advisory Board member Dr. M. Keene Hueftle of Pocatello and Ana Thompson were married by Hailey Mayor Susan McBryant on the Colorado Gulch bridge over the Big Wood River near Hailey, Idaho at noon on December 13, 2004. Witnesses and friends present were Jon & Stefanie Marvel.

Ana is a native of Venezuela, and after Keene and Ana's visit to Venezuela in late December, WWP now has members in that country!



Stew Churchwell and Margo Nelson
Married October 23, 2004
Hailey, Idaho

Stew & Margo

WWP's Central Idaho Director and Greenfire Preserve Manager Stew Churchwell and Margo Nelson were married on October 23, 2004 at the Hailey Cultural Center, the birthplace of famous American poet and author, Ezra Pound. The wedding was enjoyed by many relatives and friends.

Margo is a native of Salmon, Idaho and is a FM radio personality in Boise, Idaho; Stew has moved to Boise and has become a co-owner of Conservation Seeding and Restoration that does important contract work to reestablish native plants across the intermountain west.

All of us at WWP extend congratulations and best wishes for many happy years to Keene and Ana and Stew and Margo. Come back and visit us often!



Western Watersheds Project is proud to welcome our newest international members from San Antonio de los Altos in the state of Miranda, Venezuela.

Shown here in December 2004 wearing their new WWP t-shirts and hats are from left to right: Juan Carlos Chacin, Captain Saul Chacin Sanchez (father of WWP member Ana Hueftle of Pocatello), and Saul Chacin.

Juan Carlos Chacin is a Systems Engineer for the main office of the L.D.S. Church in Caracas, Venezuela; Captain Chacin Sanchez is recently retired from the Venezuelan Navy and is a consultant for the Venezuelan Department of the Interior's Dredging Office; and Saul Chacin is the Director of the Miranda State Hospital.



BLM Plans Destruction of the Jim Sage Hills for Cattlemen

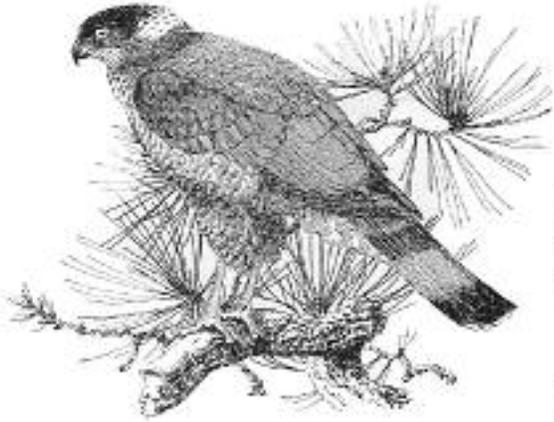
by Katie Fite

The Jim Sage Mountain area is the largest unfragmented landscape in all of the Burley, Idaho BLM lands. Located just north of the Utah border it is a unique and beautiful wild area, cloaked in juniper with some of the only occurrences of pinyon pine in Idaho. It is rich in bird life,

harboring some of Idaho's only occurrences of pinyon jay and juniper titmouse, as well as Virginia's warbler, Cooper's hawk, ferruginous hawk and many other important or declining birds.

Burley BLM, with the goading of local cattlemen, has long been hellbent on destroying the native juniper forests of the Jim Sage to produce livestock forage for the same cattlemen who have destroyed much of the surrounding area. Burley's mismanagement of livestock and past failed livestock forage seedings in the sagebrush and sage grouse habitat at lower elevations has resulted in extensive cheatgrass, halogeton and other weed invasions, depletion of native grasses, desertification as well as sage grouse habitat fragmentation.

Instead of focusing on restoring the weed wastelands in



Cooper's Hawk

the lower elevations, BLM set in motion a plan to spend 6 million dollars or more of federal fire funds (your tax dollars!) to deforest the entire Jim Sage Hills destroying habitat of numerous native wildlife including Pinyon jay, Virginia's warbler and Cooper's hawk. The BLM proposal includes using a witches brew of herbicides; "prescribed" fire including likely use of bulldozers for fire lines and balls soaked in napalm-like substances lobbed from helicopters at patches of trees as well as chaining with bulldozers and other "mechanical" treatment.

Last year BLM prepared a programmatic deforestation Environmental Assessment and claimed it would conduct future site-specific environmental reviews.

In November 2004 WWP heard from a deer hunter that a massive chaining project had interrupted his trip to Cottonwood Canyon on the east side of the Jim Sage Hills, so I visited the site in late December, and was horrified to find over 1000 acres of Juniper forest had already been chained by the BLM. My visit occurred during the days right after the tsunami – if junipers were palm trees, the scene in the Jim Sage would have been indistinguishable from images flashed across TV screens; however, in this case the environmental devastation was planned.

Chaining is truly a Neanderthal practice. A ship's anchor



The shattered Jim Sage Hills landscape after BLM chaining in November 2004.

photo©Katie Fite

chain is strung between two large bulldozers. The dozers drive cross-country parallel to each other, wrenching trees and everything else from the earth with the anchor chain.

In the area leveled by the chaining, a two year study of nesting birds conducted for Idaho Department of Fish and Game had documented several species including Cooper's hawk, gray flycatcher and Virginia's warbler. That area of the bird study has been entirely destroyed.

One of the justifications used by BLM for its deforestation/livestock forage projects in the Jim Sage Hills, is that killing and removing juniper trees will protect the small group of recently introduced bighorn sheep. Some bighorns have been killed by mountain lions. BLM claims predators use trees for screening, and that bighorns avoid areas with trees, so if it clears trees from the mountain, bighorns will do better. Ironically, natural predator kills are the least of the problems facing the Jim Sage bighorns. In a January visit to the site, we observed a band of 30 domestic sheep near the chained area. By chaining the juniper trees, BLM has likely doomed the Jim Sage bighorns. The chaining opening provides the bighorns a straight walk downslope to mingle with the domestic sheep from which the bighorns will contract an inevitably fatal lung disease.

In an effort to put a stop to this to this assault on our public lands, Western Watersheds Project has filed a lawsuit in Federal Court with the able help of our counsel Judi Brawer of Advocates for the West's Boise office.

All readers of the Watersheds Messenger can keep up on the activities of Western Watersheds Project by signing up for WWP's Online Messenger.

Email postings are sent out about twice a month so your email inbox will not be overwhelmed by new messages, and it is easy to unsubscribe whenever you wish.

To join WWP's Online Messenger simply send an email to wwp@westernwatersheds.org with the word subscribe in the subject line.



Helping Yellowstone by Restoring the Taylor Fork Watershed
By Glenn Hockett

Just northwest of Yellowstone National Park the majestic Taylor Fork watershed is a high and scenic mountain valley of primarily public lands draped with sagebrush-grasslands. This is critically important habitat for grizzly bears, elk, deer, wolves, mountain lions and bison migrating in and out of the Park. Its headwater streams provide flows to the Gallatin River.

The U.S. Forest Service currently leases two small cattle grazing allotments on 16,000 acres of public lands here to provide forage for 450 cattle for about three months every summer. Because cattle congregate in the most important wildlife habitat areas of the watershed, their grazing comes at the expense of native species over a much broader landscape including more than 150,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat on the Porcupine, Buffalo Horn, Sage Creek and Tepee Creek watersheds. Wildlife migrations — in particular wild bison — on a total of more than 300,000 acres of public lands northwest of the Park are also adversely impacted by the presence of cattle and the current controversy in Montana surrounding the potential for transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle. That controversy has resulted in the death of over one thousand bison outside of Yellowstone National Park in the last few years.

These public lands are nearly all part of the Gallatin National Forest along with 9,000 acres of critical elk winter range in the watershed owned and managed by the Montana

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks as the Gallatin Wildlife Management Area. The disruption of this wonderful landscape by such a very small amount of cattle grazing is symbolic of the problem with public land livestock grazing across the west where conservation opportunities are lost over millions of acres of beautiful landscapes of wild and remote public lands solely to support a few ranchers.

With generous assistance from the A.B. Schultz Foundation of Alta, Wyoming, Western Watersheds Project's Montana office is working to resolve those conflicts through cooperative means. Similar conflicts with federally subsidized government allotments have been solved through voluntary buyouts and permanent retirements including the Blackrock/Spread Creek allotment in northwestern Wyoming just east of Grand Teton National Park. Applying this proven solution to the Taylor Fork watershed will require slightly over \$100,000 to permanently retire both of the Taylor Fork cattle allotments, but only when both the ranchers and the Forest Service agree to the retirement of the two allotments.

At this time negotiations continue with both the ranchers and the Forest Service and good progress has been made, but more remains to be done.

Interested readers can help by calling the Gallatin National Forest's Hebgen Ranger District in West Yellowstone, Montana at 406-823-6961 and let District Ranger Bill Queen know you want the Taylor Fork managed for wildlife. Ask him and other officials to work with WWP to permanently retire the Cache/Eldridge and Wapiti allotments so that wild bison and other wildlife can resume their natural roles in this wonderful and wild landscape.,

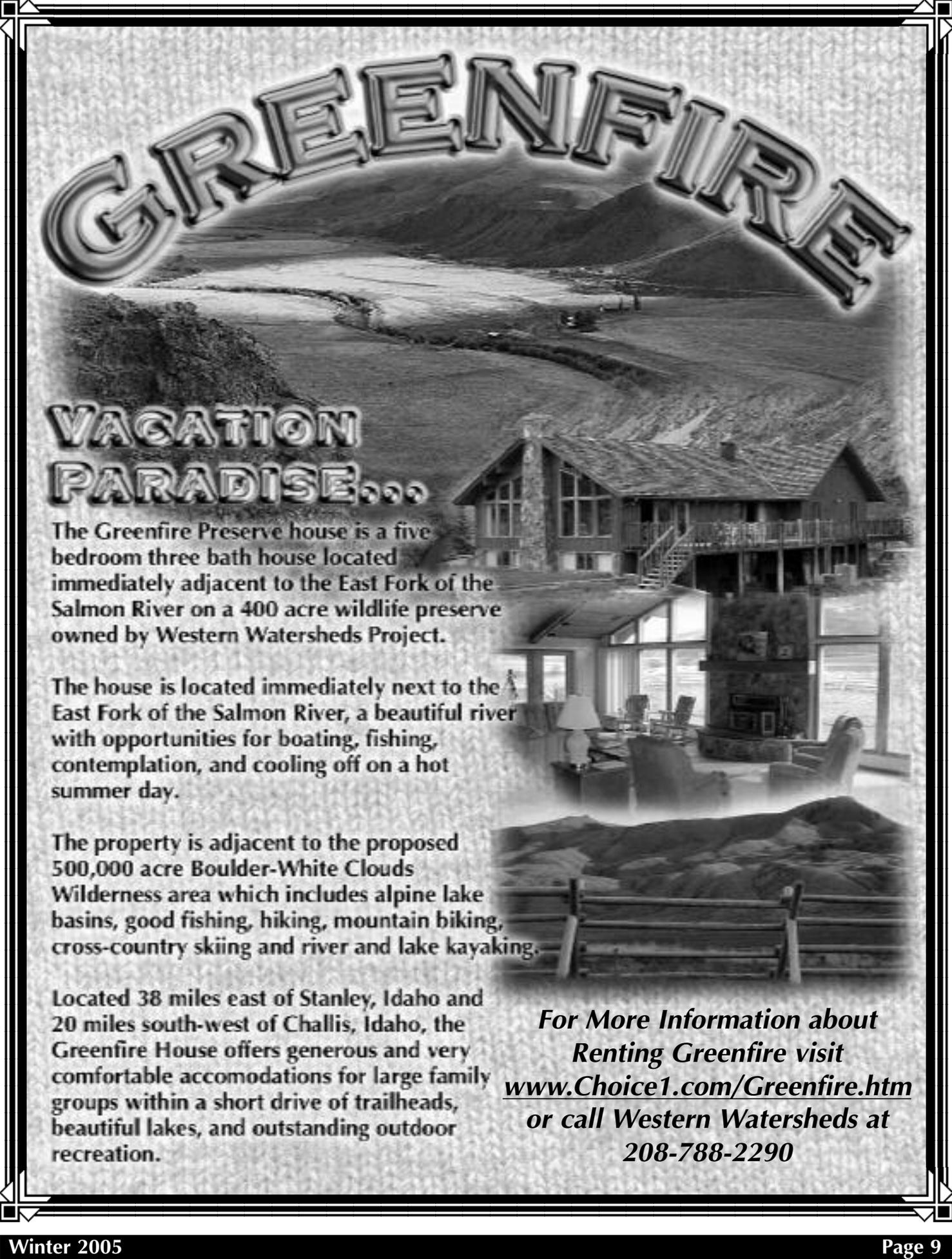
***Glenn Hockett is Montana Director of WWP
He lives in Bozeman, Montana***



The Gallatin River area serves as habitat for bison, elk, bear, wolves and other species

photos©NPS

GREENFIRE



VACATION PARADISE...

The Greenfire Preserve house is a five bedroom three bath house located immediately adjacent to the East Fork of the Salmon River on a 400 acre wildlife preserve owned by Western Watersheds Project.

The house is located immediately next to the East Fork of the Salmon River, a beautiful river with opportunities for boating, fishing, contemplation, and cooling off on a hot summer day.

The property is adjacent to the proposed 500,000 acre Boulder-White Clouds Wilderness area which includes alpine lake basins, good fishing, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing and river and lake kayaking.

Located 38 miles east of Stanley, Idaho and 20 miles south-west of Challis, Idaho, the Greenfire House offers generous and very comfortable accommodations for large family groups within a short drive of trailheads, beautiful lakes, and outstanding outdoor recreation.



*For More Information about
Renting Greenfire visit
www.Choice1.com/Greenfire.htm
or call Western Watersheds at
208-788-2290*

Western Watersheds Project 2004 Annual Financial Report

In the financial realm, 2004 was a year with many successes and some setbacks for Western Watersheds Project. The year started out with a flurry of expansion for WWP including the move to a new headquarters office in the E.G. Willis Building in Hailey and the hiring of additional staff to support fundraising efforts, other state offices and some administrative work.

In mid spring 2004 some anticipated major funding did not materialize and staff had to be reduced and other financial cutbacks made to sustain our efforts through the summer and fall. Because of this setback WWP was obliged to borrow funds from its commercial line-of-credit to cover expenses for about four months. Additional sources of funding support from many generous contributors helped WWP get over the period of financial stress and helped regain a near income-expense balance by the end of the year.

Notwithstanding the setbacks of last summer, the year-end financial situation of WWP improved significantly to show a deficit of about \$17,000. (about 3.4% of 2004 expenses) Total liquid assets at the end of 2004 exceeded \$125,000. Total assets and liabilities amounted to almost 1.5 million dollars.

The remarkable financial support of our members in the December end-of-the-year fundraising effort has set the stage for a successful 2005. Thanks to all who contributed so generously !

One bright financial note for 2004 was the success of short-term rentals of the Greenfire Preserve house. In 2005 WWP anticipates that income from rentals will be worth more than twice the costs to operate the Greenfire Preserve. WWP invites readers to consider vacationing at the Preserve. Details relating to costs of rental can be found at the First Choice Vacation Home Rental site at this web site: <http://www.choice1.com/greenfire.htm>. (Please turn to page 9)

WWP 2004 Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

Grants	264,656.00
Memberships	79,648.00
Donations	126,641.00
Events and Earned Income	7,594.00
Reimbursed Expense	1,860.00

Total Income.....480,399.00

Expense

Accounting	2,800.00
Bank Charges.....	2,163.00
Conferences & Meetings.....	749.00
Contract Services	61,639.00
Employee Benefits	317.00
Equipment Rental & Maintenance.....	3,141.00
Insurance.....	15,904.00
Interest Paid.....	3,607.00
Legal	50,028.00
Miscellaneous	1,121.00
Occupancy	21,460.00
Payroll	183,903.00
Payroll Expenses	16,346.00
Penalties	1,473.00
Postage & Shipping	10,176.00
Printing and Publications.....	33,290.00
Professional Fees, Other	4,047.00
Program Expense, Other	29,368.00
Supplies	17,787.00
Taxes	3,582.00
Telephone	10,876.00
Travel	11,998.00
Website	2,006.00

Total Expense497,779.00

Net Income.....-17,381.00

WWP Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2004

Assets

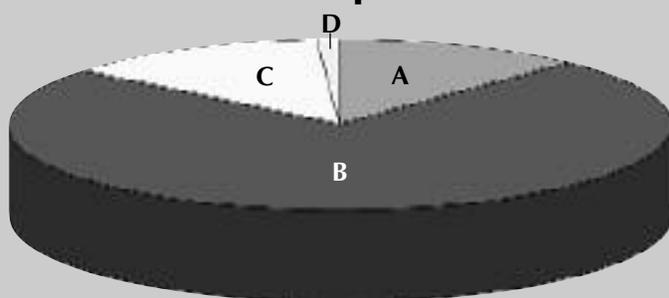
Total Checking/Savings	127,747.00
Total Fixed Assets	1,360,661.00
Total Assets.....	1,488,408.00

Liabilities & Equity

Total Accounts Payable	25,791.00
Long Term Liabilities	125,000.00
Restricted Net Accounts	69,383.00
Unrestricted Funds	1,268,235.00

Total Liability and Equity1,488,408.00

2004 Expenses



A. Fundraising	12%
B. Programs	73%
C. Administration	13%
D. Special Events	1%

WWP News Briefs

News From the RangeNet 2004 Meeting in Albuquerque

The 2004 RangeNet meeting held in Albuquerque November 11-13 was sponsored this year by WWP's co-National Public Lands Grazing Campaign member group, Forest Guardians (<http://www.fguardians.org/>). The conference was very successful.

WWP would like to express thanks to the Forest Guardians staff for their good efforts with a special thanks to Rosie Brandenberger and Billy Stern for their hard work organizing the conference this year.

Among the conference high points was a debate between Courtney White of the Quivera Coalition (<http://www.quiviracoalition.org/>), a New Mexico based group that supports helping ranchers become better stewards of public and private lands, and WWP Advisory Board member, George Wuerthner.

George effectively used Courtney White's own slides to question White's message that ranching is compatible with arid western public lands. George's success in this panel was one of the high points of this year's conference.

Another high point was the keynote talk by Arizona Congressman Raul Grijalva from Tucson who explained in detail why he is co-sponsoring the federal legislation proposed by the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign to offer public lands ranchers a generous buy-out of their grazing permits in order to permanently retire federal grazing allotments on federally managed lands.

Congressman Grijalva's talk was an excellent overview of why the bills need to pass.

Interested readers may review copies of the Arizona and National buy-out bills at the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign's web site: <http://www.publiclandsranching.org>. The

bills now have more than twenty co-sponsors each in the House of Representatives. More than 220 public lands ranchers in Arizona alone support the Arizona specific buy-out legislation.

WWP also especially enjoyed the "oldtimers" panel with grazing luminaries Steve Johnson, Jane Baxter, Jim Fish and Brett Matzke, all ably moderated by Sam Hitt. Thanks to all of them for their work over the years.

work to "Bring the Rule Of Law To Public Lands Ranching".

John has been actively working on the issue of public lands ranching for more than a decade first with the National Wildlife Federation and now with Forest Guardians. His efforts have been instrumental in making major positive changes in how public lands are administered in the southwest. John is a worthy successor to the two previous award winners: long time grazing activist

George Wuerthner in 2002 and RangeNet Founder, Larry Walker in 2003. Congratulations John !!

WWP Appeals Two Sawtooth National Forest Grazing Decisions

On November 20, 2004 WWP appealed two very large sheep grazing decisions on the Sawtooth National Forest: the North Fork-Boulder and Baker Creek Allotments decision and the Smiley Creek and Fisher Creek grazing allotments decision.

These four allotments cover over 150,000 acres of mostly forested land north of Ketchum, Idaho and show the effects of decades of abusive sheep grazing.

Among the appeal points are the failure of the Forest Service to use its own capability mapping of these allotments that shows that no more than 15% of the area of any of the four allotments is capable of sustaining grazing by domestic sheep!

Other points of appeal involve the failure to assess the impacts of domestic sheep on Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep and the potential danger of disease transmission to humans from sheep, in particular Q fever which is an airborne bacteria (a Rickettsia) that can infect humans

by inhalation of dust containing domestic sheep waste.



Western Watersheds Project

PRESENTS THE EDWARD ABBEY MEMORIAL HOOVED LOCUST AWARD

TO

JOHN HORNING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FOREST GUARDIANS

FOR OUTSTANDING SUCCESS IN BRINGING THE RULE OF LAW TO PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING

AWARDED THE TWELFTH OF NOVEMBER 2004

2004 Edward Abbey Memorial Hooved Locust Award

On Friday November 12, 2004 Jon Marvel, WWP executive director, was honored to announce the award this year to John Horning, the executive director of Forest Guardians, for his exceptional

WWP extends special thanks to the following supporters, each of whom contributed \$100 or more to our efforts since the last newsletter. This generous assistance helps to preserve and restore habitat for many species of wildlife including those shown on this page.

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^ Western Watersheds Project works tirelessly to protect vital habitat in the West. Recent victories include the retirement of 16,000 acres of Idaho State School Endowment Lands. (story, P. 1) photos ©Katie Fite