



M Watersheds MESSENGER

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Summer 2007



VICTORY!

Western Watersheds Project Wins A Great Court Victory Overturning The Bush Administration's Grazing Regulations On Public Lands

On Friday June 8, 2007 Chief Judge B. Lynn Winmill of the Federal Court for the District of Idaho awarded Western Watersheds Project a stunning victory in an Order overturning the Bush Administration's grazing regulations for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) affecting over 160,000,000 acres of public lands in eleven western states.

Judge Winmill's 52-page ruling said the BLM's rule revisions would have loosened restrictions on grazing on millions of acres of public land nationwide, limited the amount of public comment the BLM had to consider and diluted the BLM's authority to sanction ranchers for grazing violations.

"While the BLM justifies the changes as making it more efficient, the BLM was not their originator — it was the grazing industry and its supporters that first proposed them," Winmill wrote.

"Past BLM regulations imposed restrictions on grazing and increased the opportunities for public input to reverse decades of grazing damage to public lands," Winmill wrote. "Without any showing of improvement, the new BLM regulations loosen restrictions on grazing."

"They limit public input from the non-ranching public, offer ranchers more rights on BLM land, restrict the BLM's monitoring of grazing damage, extend the deadlines for corrective action, and dilute the BLM's authority to sanction ranchers for grazing violations."

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**Western Watersheds Project: Working to protect and restore
western watersheds and wildlife through education
public policy initiatives and litigation.**

Visit WWP on the Internet! • www.westernwatersheds.org

The Jarbidge in Spring, Idaho. WWP seeks to protect areas like this on 160,000,000 acres of public land throughout the west. photo ©Katie Fite



Many of the revisions in the BLM's grazing rules were contrary to the findings of a team of BLM scientists who reviewed the environmental impact of the rules. The scientists found that the new regulations would have a slow but long-term negative effect on wildlife and biological diversity and that they would harm upland and riparian habitats.

The scientists concluded that the changes would have a "very long-lasting adverse effect to the wildlife of the public lands of the West."

The grazing regulations that have now been found illegal in this Court decision under three major federal statutes (NEPA, FLPMA and the Endangered Species Act) would have effectively returned the management of public lands managed by the BLM to the days before the Bruce Babbitt regulatory changes of 1995 that finally broke open the stranglehold of good-old-boy ranchers on public lands.

Thanks are due to the very hard work on this critically important case to WWP's Utah Director Dr. John Carter and WWP's Biodiversity Director Katie Fite who were directly quoted in Judge Winmill's Order.

WWP also received the best possible legal representation in the case from our legal counsel Laird

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Lucas, the executive director of Advocates For The West in Boise and Advocates attorneys Laurie Rule and Todd Tucci.

For a more thorough review of the this great win, please visit the WWP web site page:

http://www.westernwatersheds.org/news_media/news_media_2007/wwp128_newsmedia.shtml



WWP Fights To Protect Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep In Hells Canyon

Western Watersheds Project has won another public lands victory protecting native wildlife by preventing grazing by domestic sheep in Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep habitat next to the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area in western Idaho.

WWP and our litigation partner the Hells Canyon Preservation Council brought litigation in April 2007 to block turn-out of domestic sheep on allotments that the Payette National Forest had determined to be at high and very high risk of transmitting fatal disease to Bighorns from domestic sheep. The Payette National Forest had declined to act to protect Bighorns, but immediately after the litigation was filed the Forest reacted by banning domestic sheep grazing in most of the very high risk Smith Mountain allotment and all of the Curren Hill allotment in the western part of the Payette National Forest.

In subsequent appeals and federal court hearings WWP and our partner have prevailed, and so this year for the first time in almost 120 years there will be no domestic sheep grazing immediately adjacent to Hells Canyon. WWP's excellent legal counsel in this case is Laurie Rule of Advocates For The West.

photo ©USFWS





Burn Bandwidth, Not Oil

by Brian Ertz

The internet has transformed the way that people interact and communicate. With a few clicks, anyone in the world can access information pertinent to almost any question they have. Blogging has brought a more responsive and interactive form of media that has enticed people to discuss, argue, and contribute to stories in a way that has profoundly influenced the mainstream media and thus public-opinion at large. One result of these online forums has been the congregation of like-minded ‘virtual’ communities of people. Most of these people, for any number of reasons, find the main-stream media unresponsive to their concerns – and let’s be honest, who wouldn’t?

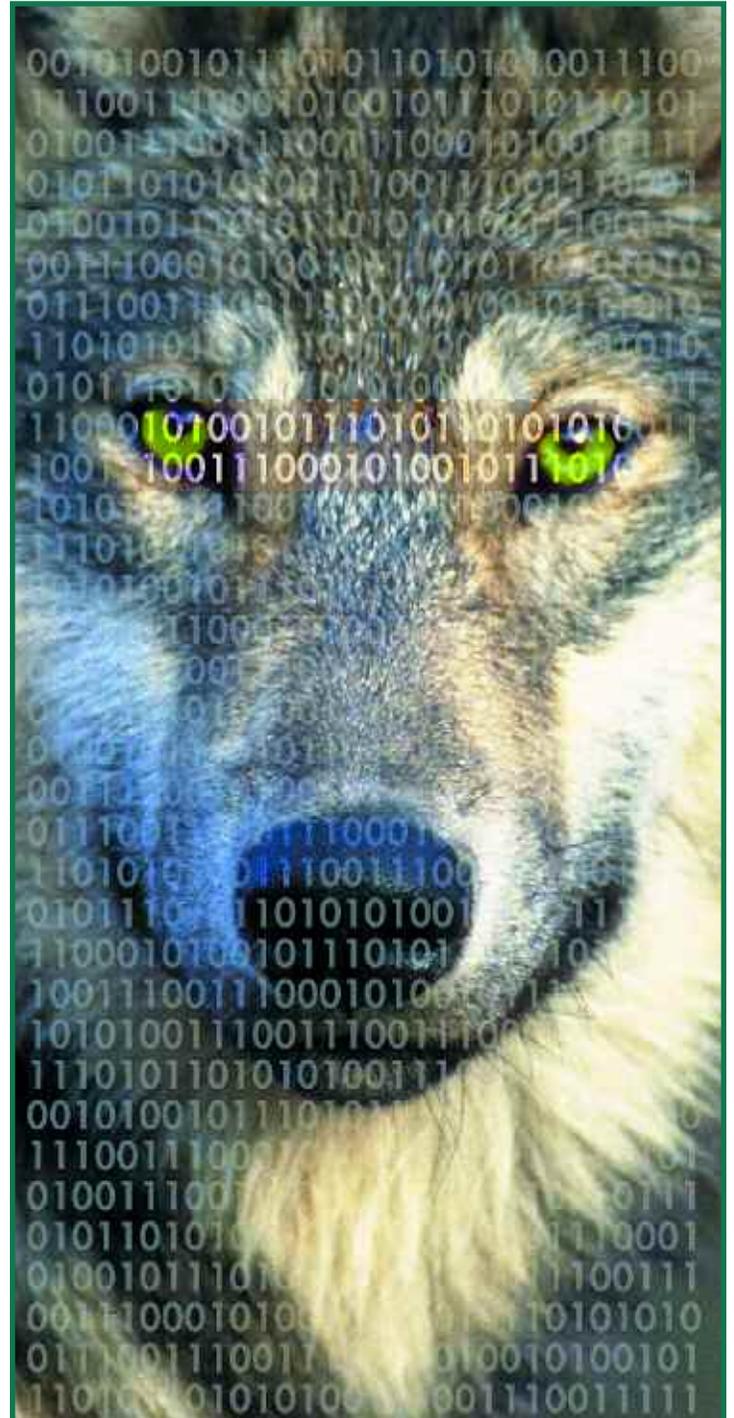
Conservationists are no exception. Internet technology has revolutionized the ability of conservationists to communicate amongst each-other and amongst their members. RangeNet, Western Watersheds Project – The Blog, Ralph Maughan’s Wildlife News, Wild Again!! - Sinapu’s weblog - and so many more are all examples of how conservationists are able to ensure their members’, and members of the community at large, have a uniquely responsive media outlet and forum for communication. RangeNet’s Myspace profile has grown a network of over 5,600 ‘friends’ who are now within the conscientious network of RangeNet’s Larry Walker. Weblog’s, listservers, and other online forums have been very successful at generating loyal networks of people who are motivated to learn and excited to toss their ideas into the fray.

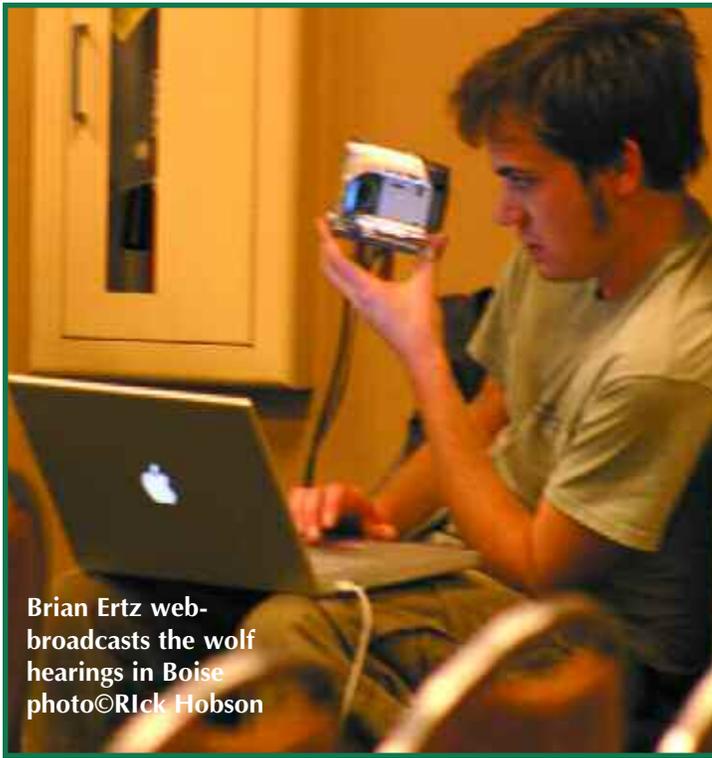
Western Watershed’s Project is well known for its vital contribution to public-oversight. Frequently, agencies will think twice about undertaking actions without the public-interest in mind knowing that Western Watersheds Project is looking over their shoulder. What if we could wield the cohesion and organization we already practice online more directly toward that end?

Now imagine for a moment a nearly empty public hearing in Wells, Nevada; a couple of cowboys are sitting up front as some college kid walks through the door, pulls out a camera, a laptop, and a cord. Within ten minutes the agency personnel are sitting back in their chairs watching a live projected image of Jon Marvel warning against an ill-advised chaining of hundreds/thousands of acres of Pinyon Pines – all for the almighty cow. A few minutes later John Carter is in real-time giving one of his acclaimed power-point

presentations citing real science. Whereas before agency folk might have been able to close up shop early, now they will be forced to burn every last minute watching and listening to a sophisticated demonstration of conservationists who care.

Or think of another FWS public-hearing to delist an iconic species such as wolves in the Rocky Mountains. There are innumerable supporters of wolves who have signed the online petitions, written public comments, and perhaps posted beautiful pictures of wolves on their Myspace profiles. Unable for one reason or another to fly to Boise, Idaho to demonstrate their solidarity, these folks are geographically disenfranchised. The internet





Brian Ertz web-broadcasts the wolf hearings in Boise
photo©Rick Hobson

can give anyone who cares the opportunity to become participant activists – to have the decision makers listen to what they value. With a couple of clicks these activists will find themselves on a blog encouraging them to post a comment to be potentially read at the hearing – or if they have a webcam, projected. Every comment on the blog is rated by the very participants who visit the site. Those with the highest ratings will be read as a public comment at the hearing and webcast live. ‘Tune-in to see if your comment will be read!’

Sound like a bundle of bells & whistles, like it’s too complicated or expensive? Consider this: On March 6, at the FWS public hearing to delist wolves, Western Watersheds Project took its first step toward adding to its list of pioneering accomplishments. With nothing more than a handcam, a laptop, and a wireless internet connection, Western Watersheds webcasted the hearing live. This first ‘test-run’ over-came nearly all of the logistical hurdles to bringing anyone with a computer and a high-speed internet connection into a public hearing, and in effect, forcing Ed Bangs et al to more generally confront a sophisticated and organized public who’s interests they are supposed to preserve and represent.

If the conservation community is to project organized public-oversight, if it is to break down the excuse that participation is geographically inaccessible, stay one step ahead of its adversaries, or attempt to grab hold and lead emerging, sympathetic online communities; it is time to more dynamically utilize the unprecedented democratizing force of the internet. This forum has far more potential than to serve as a billboard, an e-mail, or a petition. We can build online portals which will give concerned citizens/activists actionable access to the few remaining open forums of government left.

Thanks to the participation, support, and encouragement of Jon Marvel, Katie Fite, Ralph Maughan, Rick Hobson, Larry Walker etc. Western Watersheds Project continues to pursue innovative strategies which enhance public-oversight and keep agencies and public-lands abusers scrambling for cover.

***Brian Ertz attends Boise State University
He lives in Boise, Idaho.***

Western Watersheds Project’s Copper Basin Initiative

Starting in the summer of 2007 WWP will be focusing staff and media attention on the Copper Basin and adjacent areas in central Idaho in order to emphasize the potential and importance of this area for wildlife habitat and wilderness values. WWP believes that Copper Basin and the rest of the upper Big Lost River watershed has the potential to be as rich a wildlife area as the Lamar Valley in Yellowstone National Park but with better scenery and mountain backdrops !



On June 8-10 2007 members of WWP’s staff and boards camped at Charcoal Creek in Copper Basin to initiate WWP’s Copper Basin Initiative. From left: Kelley Weston, Jon Marvel, Debra Ellers, canine Syri, Brian Ertz, Katie Fite, Louise Wagenknecht, Katie Strong ,Ralph Maughan, John Carter, canine Fifa, Bob Wagenknecht and Dale Grooms



**Symptoms of
an Unsustainable World**
by Jonathan Ratner

I think it was the winter of 1981-82 when I first noticed that change was in the air. In 1984, my friend's outdoor gear shop went under

because cross country skis were their mainstay of business and the previous 3 winters it had been too warm to have much of a snowpack so no one was buying skis anymore. Another sign for me came in the winter of 1991 when a bus driver in the Netherlands was telling us his experience that over the previous decade it hadn't snowed in Holland and it never got cold enough to skate on the canals anymore. And then in the late 1990's and early 2000's I started examining the loss of glaciers and permanent snowfields in the Wind River Range that I had photographed in the mid 1970's. This experiment, which I still continue has been the most heart rending. Even though the 'Winds' contain 7 of the 10 largest glaciers in the lower 48, calculations made in 1998 predicted all but the largest, Fremont Glacier, would be gone by 2020.

Over the last few winters I have been keeping track of daily lows and finding that about 80% of the lows are 10-15 degrees above the 30 year average. SNOWTel sites throughout Wyoming, even on years of above average snowfall, are melting off 3 weeks ahead of the 1970-2000 average. This year is the melt-off started in mid February and really kicked in right at the beginning of March.

I can't stuff these into the can of vagaries of the weather, I can only classify these as symptoms of an unsustainable world. We have been withdrawing from our natural capital account, as a species, for thousands of years but the size and pace of these withdrawals have exponentially increased by the factor of available energy as we moved from wood to coal to petroleum. This same increase in energy availability precipitated the same exponential curve of population growth. And just as the other 80% of the world's population wants the same luxuries that the US (4% of the world's population) has enjoyed by using 35% of the planet's resources, nature seems to be starting to call in the debts. We are starting to see the symptoms of an unsustainable world.

Every aspect of the human world and its source, the natural world, is stretched to the breaking point. We, as a species, have built an empire on a specious philosophical foundation which failed to take basic physics or the innate interconnectedness of all systems

into account. We have built a civilization of cards by externalizing the "costs" of doing business under this baseless philosophy. Yes, it is true that this philosophy has provided many treasures and worked miraculously as long as we could keep rolling over the mortgage and never having to make any payments. But now we are faced with the undeniable symptoms of an unsustainable world.

What we who work hard each day to protect and restore the natural world deal with are the symptoms of an unsustainable world created from the foundation of a bogus and short-sighted philosophy. Be they the loss of the productivity of the land, degradation of riparian systems, loss of biodiversity, subsidies propping up unsustainable activities, policies that reward the externalizing of costs or global warming, all these and many more are just symptoms of an unsustainable world.

Albert Einstein is said to have written "You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created." We cannot build a sustainable world by tweaking the current foundation. Creating a sustainable world requires that we create an entirely new framework on which to base our civilization. Can we make the leap is the question of this millennia.

*Jonathan Ratner is Wyoming director of WWP.
He lives near Dubois, Wyoming.*



WWP is very happy to announce the continued support of the Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation. Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation, founded in 1994 by Rick Flory, an entrepreneur and conservationist, is a non-profit Foundation committed to using its resources to support the work of conservation and wildlife and habitat protection organizations throughout the western US, northern Mexico and western Canada. With his wife and Executive Director Lee Robert, Rick and the Foundation supports WWP and many other groups with challenge grants that encourage entrepreneurship, capacity-building, and best-business practices. The efforts and support of Rick and Lee have been invaluable over the past few years in providing the foundation on which we have established WWP's Wyoming Office.

www.EarthFriends.com

Western Watersheds Project Annual Financial Report Brings Good News

Western Watersheds Project concluded a good financial year in 2006 with income and expenses very close to the break-even point as shown in the adjacent income and expense lists and charts.

In addition early in 2007 WWP sold its interest in Valley Sun L.L.C. to a conservation buyer thereby transferring WWP's ownership in the Greenfire Preserve. Under the contract for sale WWP will remain as the land restoration manager for the new owner, and the management of the property will continue as before, albeit with more capital funds available for maintenance of the structures and restoration of the riparian and upland areas on the property. The Greenfire Preserve will continue to be managed by WWP as a wildlife preserve with an emphasis on winter habitat for elk, deer and bighorn sheep as well as native predators such as wolves, mountain lions and black bears. WWP will also continue to hold board meetings and future Greenfire Revivals at the property as soon as remodeling projects now underway are completed. WWP will also be continuing our efforts to permanently retire the 6 federal grazing allotments associated with the Greenfire Preserve. Those allotments amount to over 55,000 acres of important wildlife habitat that has not been grazed by livestock for the last eight years.

The sale of Valley Sun L.L.C. also ensures that WWP will have a significant capital financial reserve to help fund WWP's increased presence across the west including the addition of new staff and contract staff in California, Idaho, and we hope in Montana by the end of 2007.

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

Grants	147,955.42
Memberships & Contributions	243,657.38
Events & Earned Income	51,745.81

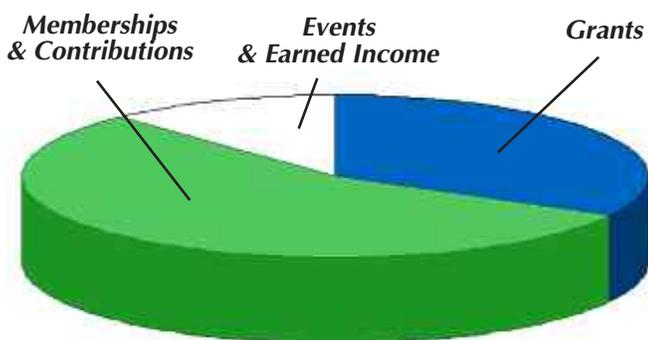
Total Income443,358.61

Expense

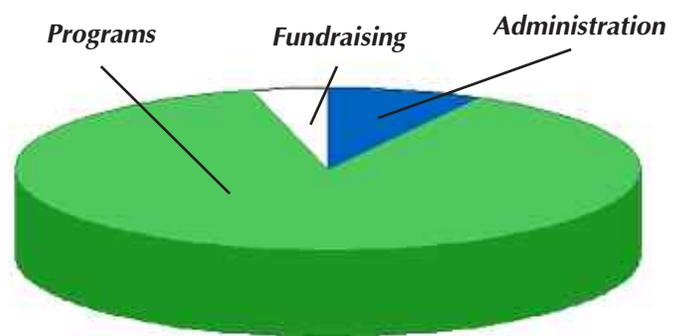
Accounting	1,500.00
Bank Charges	1,037.81
Conferences & Meetings	1,143.49
Contract Services	103,015.53
Equipment Rental & Maintenance ..	16,455.97
Insurance	12,742.71
Interest Paid	3,378.21
Internet	69.85
Legal	73,866.22
Miscellaneous	3,750.00
Occupancy	18,378.95
Payroll	117,277.24
Payroll Expenses	10,060.80
Postage & Shipping	7,653.43
Printing and Publications	13,424.26
Professional Fees, Other	24,765.45
Program Expense, Other	12,325.76
Supplies	10,221.40
Taxes	1,245.86
Telephone	6,734.96
Travel	10,936.53
Website	1,165.68

Total Expense451,150.11

Net Ordinary Income-7,791.50



2006 Income



2006 Expense

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

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



**WWP opens new
Western Idaho Office**
by Debra Ellers

The Western Idaho office of Western Watersheds Project sends its inaugural greetings. The office has a staff of two, with me serving as the

Western Idaho Director, and Dale Grooms serving as the Western Idaho Data Analyst.

Geographically, the boundaries covered within the Western Idaho office are roughly the Idaho/Oregon border to the west, the Clearwater River to the north, the South Fork of the Salmon to the east, and public lands north of I-84 to the south. It is a land of great beauty, including the rugged chasm of Hells Canyon, the glaciated cirques and peaks of the Lick Creek Mountains north of McCall, and the high mountain meadows of Council Mountain near Council.

This area presents a microcosm of events happening elsewhere in the West, such as fast population growth creating more demands for recreation on public lands, and threatened native wildlife and plants requiring action from public land agencies to protect them. Valley County, the heart of the Western Idaho office's area, was the fastest growing county in Idaho in 2006. Federally listed or candidate species in the area include Chinook salmon, steelhead, bull trout, wolves, sage grouse, mountain quail, and the Northern Idaho ground squirrel. All of these issues highlight the dire necessity for public land agencies to manage domestic livestock grazing on Western Idaho's public lands in accordance

with environmental laws and the best available science.

In seeking to hold public lands agencies accountable for halting abusive grazing practices, the Western Idaho office has several current projects. One is to develop site-specific capability and suitability analyses for grazing allotments on the Payette National Forest. Many of the areas presently authorized for grazing have steep slopes, erosive soils, low forage production, and other factors that make them incapable or unsuitable for cattle or domestic sheep grazing under the applicable Forest Service analysis. Another immediate project is to monitor domestic sheep grazing impacts on the small eastern portion of the Smith Mountain allotment that remains open after WWP's successful litigation filing to protect bighorn sheep located in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area closed much of that allotment.

Events have come full circle for me, as it was this part of the world that inspired me to become involved with grazing reform on public lands. In 1988, a backpacking trip into Rainbow Lake north of McCall in 1988 included camping beside a cattle-trampled cesspool, where a beautiful high alpine lake should have been. Now I am delighted to have the chance to contribute to WWP's remarkable success in protecting western lands, waters, wildlife and native plants from abusive domestic livestock grazing.

*Debra Ellers is Director of
WWP's Western Idaho Office.
She lives in McCall, Idaho.*



**Bighorn Sheep in the area of
Hell's Canyon, Idaho.
photo©Dale Grooms**

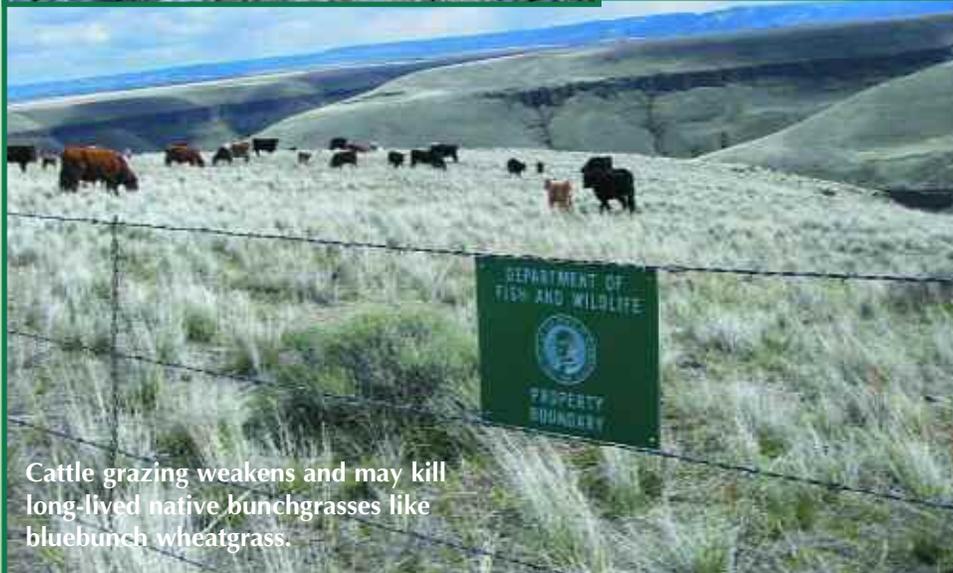
Pintler Creek, Washington State Opening Protected Habitat



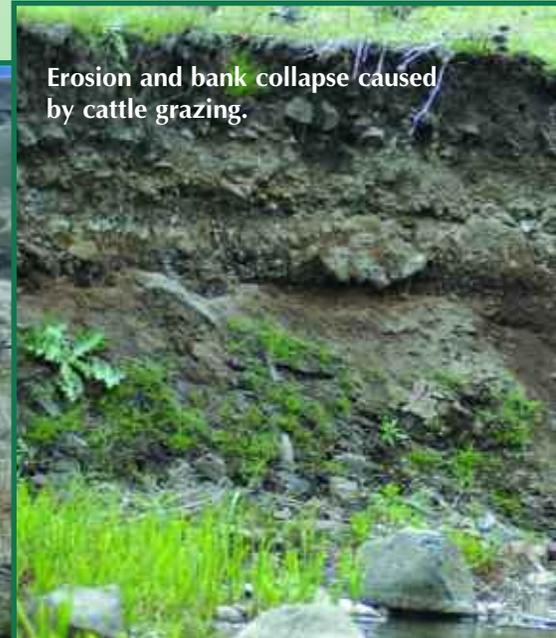
Highly degraded "blown-out" section of Pintler Creek that has suffered large-scale erosion and loss of riparian floodplain habitats.

The Pintler Pilot Grazing Plan, in the Asotin watershed, identifies a riparian habitat restoration area by state and federal funding. Over 2 million dollars in "habitat restoration" and "feedlot operation of sorts" located in the watershed where federal taxpayers have received channel reconfiguration. Now, more funding is being conducted on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife beleaguered watershed. As the photos show, the Pilot Plan is already destabilizing watersheds, polluting waters, and harming both humans and animals as interfering with human and animal health.

All Photos
©Katie Fite/WWP



Cattle grazing weakens and may kill long-lived native bunchgrasses like bluebunch wheatgrass.



Erosion and bank collapse caused by cattle grazing.

tate: to Grazing equals Disaster.

ing Project is located in
tified as a steelhead habitat
agencies. Taxpayers have spent well
on projects" here. Just downstream from a
floodplain is a blown out section of the
cently provided funds for expensive stream
ds are being spent on writing Pilot Project
ivities to support a private cattle operation
rtment of Fish and Wildlife lands in this
ow, the WDFW-Cattlemen's MOU Grazing
tersheds, promoting weed expansion,
h fish and wildlife habitats, as well
man recreational uses.



Cows have diarrhea from consuming green vegetation, and manure is splattered on wildflowers



Extreme degradation of sidehill spring. Cattle have churned the entire length of the springbrook into a mire of mud and manure.



Picture This! by Louise Wagenknecht

About midway between the towns of John Day and Mitchell, on Highway 26, along the John Day River, in the midst of the naked geology of eastern Oregon, the traveler comes upon Picture Gorge and plunges into the cool breezy shade of a mass of reddish brown rock, through which the river has carved a course.

Our well-thumbed copy of *Roadside Geology of Oregon*, by David D. Alt and Donald W. Hyndman (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1978), says that the gorge is "cut through a thick sequence of basalt lava flows. It is always marvelous to see a stream flow for miles through fairly soft rock and then suddenly pass through a narrow gorge laboriously carved in much harder rock; especially when a short detour would have kept it on softer rocks. It is not true that streams always choose a path of least resistance."

So what happened here? Why did the river take the time to carve straight down through this piece of volcanic rock? About five million years ago, in the dry Pliocene, deposits of sand and gravel were laid down here; deposits which today can be seen on hilltops all around, left high and dry by the erosion of wind and water. The John Day River began flowing about three million years ago, as the climate grew wetter, and as the new river found its way through the soft rocks, its path took it across the top of a hidden lump of harder and older rock; a lone chunk of basalt. Rivers take what comes to them, so as the water gradually exposed the top of what is now Picture Gorge, the John Day bit into the old lava flow.

Today the John Day River has cut right through the ancient stone. The sides of the monstrous divided chunk of basalt form the nearly vertical sides of the gorge, with here and there a step carved out where the river paused to think about its task. The highway, following a man-made carved path between river and rock, is shady. Driving through the gorge on a spring day, as Bob and I did three years ago, I rolled down my window and leaned out into the breeze and shouted up into the canyon as I might have done when I was ten years old. Echoes rolled back at me from the walls. We slowed down to enjoy the moment, and that was when I noticed something else about Picture Gorge.

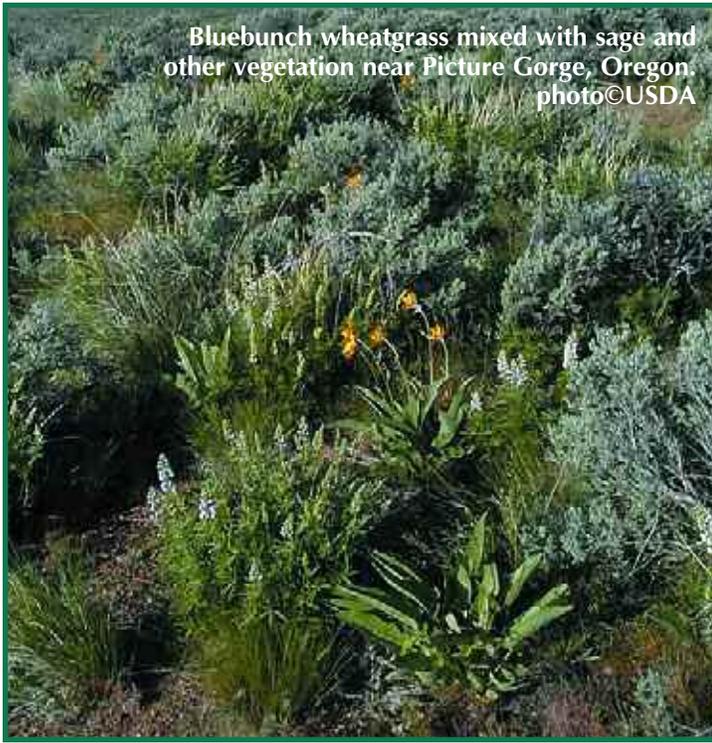
On the sides of the gorge, from base to summit, pale green fronds of grass waved, over a foot tall, clothing the clefts in the rock. They genuflected in the wind that riffled the river water. What were they? For many miles now, I had grown used to the tawny sameness of hills covered with cheatgrass, their russet-colored heads already ripe and ready to spread on this May day. But here was something different.

With no place to pull over in the gorge, we drove on. Back in the open ground between hills and river, we stopped to look back at it, and I saw, on the right-of-way, some of the same tall grass. I knelt down and pulled up a plant. A perennial, a bunch grass, it looked familiar. But away from the right-of-way, I could see none of it, only the endless invading cheatgrass, covering the slopes long since terraced by hooves of cattle and, before them, sheep. What was different about the fenced right-of-way? No cows, except now and then by accident. So it formed a refugia of sorts for this plant, and the gorge an even better one. For there, on the inaccessible walls, the aboriginal grass of this country had never been extirpated. No tooth of cow or



The Rugged, ungrazed basalt terraces of Picture Gorge, Oregon give sanctuary to native forbs and other vegetation
Photo©USGS

Bluebunch wheatgrass mixed with sage and other vegetation near Picture Gorge, Oregon. photo©USDA



sheep had ever touched it. Yet once, it had clothed all the land around us.

Bluebunch wheatgrass, *Pseudoroegneria spicata*. I recognized it now, for it grew, in a somewhat different shade of green, in our own backyard in Idaho. Back when I was taking range classes in college, bluebunch wheatgrass was described as an "ice cream plant," and a "decreaser," that disappeared under heavy grazing pressure. A study of cattle diets in eastern Oregon in the 1970s showed that in pastures where bluebunch wheatgrass made up 25% of the forage, it formed 28% of the diet of the cattle. Today in eastern Oregon, the disturbance-driven process of conversion from an ecoregion dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, and sagebrush to one covered in cheatgrass is nearly complete. What we had stumbled upon were relic populations.

This Oregon variety of bluebunch wheatgrass was taller and paler than our Idaho plants, more limber somehow. And once, when mountain men like John Day first saw Picture Gorge, and later when the first white cattlemen and sheepmen salivated over the waving fronds growing on a thousand hills, it must indeed have tickled the bellies of horses and made the viewer think of an ocean of grass. For even now, as it clings for survival to a wall of basalt where no Angus can climb, it is a force of nature, and a wonder.

To restore bluebunch wheatgrass and its fellow natives to the spectacular canyons and fossil beds of the John Day drainage will be the work of generations, and it will only begin with the removal of livestock. Conservation groups like ONDA and WWP are in for a

long fight. But although I have been told by other, perhaps wiser, heads that once cheatgrass takes over a landscape, there is no turning back the ecological clock, the sight of those wheatgrass plants thriving on a roadside makes me believe that if these protected areas can be expanded, a seed source yet remains to begin recolonization by native species. For where no livestock graze and trample, bluebunch wheatgrass survives, and multiplies. And if it grows on right-of-ways and cliffs, it must also grow, isolated but persistent, in the midst of rockpiles on other hills. Nor is the plant without hidden resources: its roots possess a heavy, waxy skin that survives dry soils and actually resists invasion by cheatgrass. In a fair fight, bluebunch wheatgrass can win, and in a world now warming and drying, it will need all its armor.

Louise Wagenknecht is an author, activist and WWP Board Member. She lives in Leadore, Idaho.

Speaking Back to the Cattle Empire!

"I really wish I had the political power to back up my way of life that you ranchers have to back up your way of life. Nobody's protecting my way of life. If I got fired from my job, it's not a big deal, it's not a front page story. If some rancher loses his way of life we're all left to basically cry for them because, well, they've lost their way of life. Well, I have to adapt. I have to adapt to changes in the world, just like everybody else. Why should ranchers not have to adapt to it? Are you going to compensate me and the rest of the public for the loss of those wildlife that you are going to kill because of this issue that was originated by the livestock industry? This issue with buffalo... we only have 3,500 wild buffalo left in this country. The livestock industry killed the buffalo, the wolves, the grizzly bear, the Native Americans, so that they could run their cattle everywhere across this land. I've seen horrific abuses. You should go into Yellowstone Park and see how vibrant the ecosystem is... how much diversity of life there is all over the Park. I was there on Saturday and saw every kind of wildlife you can imagine, and it's because there are no cows there. You think it's funny? It's not funny. [Wildlife diversity] is a good thing. We have thrown away the tools we could have used to feed this continent because of cows which have destroyed massive amounts of land and displaced many many species across this country. It's a disgrace."

-Ken Cole speaking on behalf of Buffalo Field Campaign at the Montana Livestock Board meeting that would have authorized the killing of 300 bison with calves near West Yellowstone, Montana.





This page and bottom: Bare churned ground and destroyed elderberry bushes adjoin water choked with cattle wastes.



Far bottom-right: A utilization cage shows vegetation that was protected from cattle destruction.



All Photos ©Katie Fite

Shoofly Creek Trespass Threatens Redband Trout

Shoofly Creek is a small but important watershed located in the northern part of Owyhee County, Idaho a few miles southeast of Grandview, Idaho.

In the late summer of 2006 cattle trespassed for several weeks onto a critical reach of Shoofly Creek and severely damaged the creek and the riparian vegetation adjacent to the water. The cattle belonged to one of the largest public land ranch operations in Idaho. The area shown in these photographs is managed by the Bureau of Land Management and is proposed to be designated Wilderness in currently pending federal legislation. The BLM has proposed no penalty on the rancher for the damage inflicted on Shoofly Creek.

*Shoofly Creek provides habitat for the imperiled desert redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss gairdnerii*), a native trout capable of withstanding unusually high water temperatures. Desert redband trout were first proposed for protection under the Endangered Species Act by Western Watersheds Project in 1995; however, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service denied that petition.*

Perhaps extraordinarily negative impacts like the ones shown in these photos will result in new attention being brought to protect this special native fish.



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.

Anonymous
 Barbara Adams
 Bob & Fraida Aland
 Susan Allison
 Erin Anchustegui
 Sharon & Bruce Benson
 Sharla Bilchik
 Leanore Bittner
 Katherine Anixter-Browning
 Peter & Carole Beedlow
 Wayne & Betty Bickley
 Win & Mimi Bowron
 Karen Byington
 Richard & Dawn Christensen
 Charles Conn &
 Beverley Robertson
 Cox Family Fund
 Nicholas Cox
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 Debra Donahue
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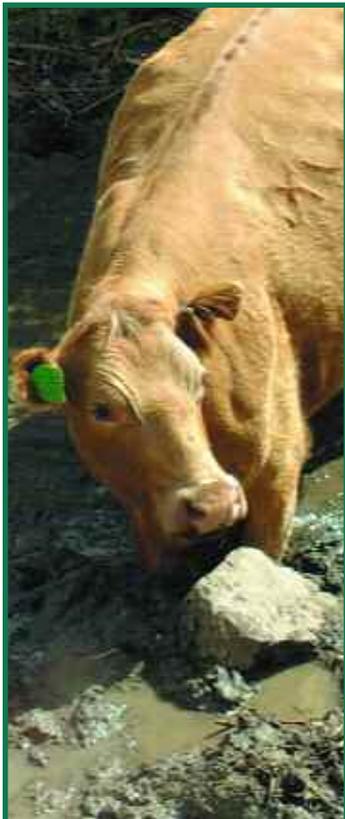


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^ "Mired in filth." The BLM's corrupt grazing rules are struck down in Federal Court, handing Western Watersheds a great victory. (Story, Page 1) photo ©Katie Fite