



Western Watersheds Project MESSENGER

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WWP Suit a Possible Death Blow to Wyoming Science Suppression Law

Victory for Wild Fishes in the East Fork Salmon River of Idaho

Point Reyes National Seashore, not National Barnyard!



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

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Western Watersheds Project Staff

Erik MolvarExecutive Director
Greta AndersonDeputy Director
Melissa CainBighorn Habitat Protection Campaign
Coordinator
Scott LakeIdaho Director
Kelly FullerEnergy Campaign Coordinator
Jeremy GreenbergOperations Director
Kevin MuellerCalifornia Director
Josh OsherMontana Director & Policy Director
Jonathan RatnerColorado, Wyoming & Utah Director
Kristin RuetherSenior Attorney
Paul RuprechtStaff Attorney
Laura WelpEcosystems Specialist

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Western Watersheds Project State and Regional Offices

Main OfficeP.O. Box 1770 • Hailey, ID 83333
(208) 788-2290 • wwp@westernwatersheds.org
Executive Director • emolvar@westernwatersheds.org

BoiseP.O. Box 2863 • Boise, ID 83701
(208) 429-1679 • boise@westernwatersheds.org

Arizona 738 N. 5th Avenue, Suite 200 • Tucson, AZ 85705
(520) 623-1878 • arizona@westernwatersheds.org

California..... 2111 Pacheco Blvd • Martinez, CA 94553
(801) 580-6200 • california@westernwatersheds.org

Wyoming, UT & CO P.O. Box 1160 • Pinedale, WY 82941
(877) 746-3628 • wyoming@westernwatersheds.org

Montana P.O. Box 1135 • Hamilton, MT 59840
(406) 830-3099 • montana@westernwatersheds.org

Nevada P.O. Box 12356 • Reno, NV 89510
(208) 421-4637 • nevada@westernwatersheds.org

WWP's Fax Number is (208) 475-4702



Western Watersheds Project MESSENGER

Table of Contents

WWP Suit a Possible Death Blow to 4 Wyoming Science Suppression Law

Greta Anderson

The First Amendment will not be trampled by Wyoming's legislature.

Rose Chilcoat Receives the 2017 Sagebrush 6 Sentinel Award

Victory for Wild Fishes in the East Fork 7 Salmon River of Idaho!

Kristin Ruether

WWP's relentless pressure in central Idaho results in the retirement of key allotments.

The Sheep Experiment Continues 10

Melissa Cain

A blight on the Centennial Valley wildlife corridor.

Idaho Team Transitions 11

WWP welcomes our new Idaho Director Scott Lake.

Sage-grouse Update 12

Josh Osher

The fight for grouse continues on a national scale.

Refuges: Where Wildlife Come First? 13

Paul Ruprecht

Surprise, cows aren't a habitat value for native plants and animals.

Victory for Sage-grouse in Nevada 14

Kristin Ruether

The BLM can't ignore a species in decline.

Point Reyes National Seashore, not National 15 Barnyard!

Greta Anderson

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WWP Suit a Possible Death Blow to Wyoming Science Suppression Law



By Greta Anderson

Officially, Wyoming is “The Equality State,” but its unofficial nickname—“The Cowboy State”—seems to more accurately define the state’s land use agenda.

Fortunately, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals hasn’t forgotten about equal rights under the law, and in September, it found two Wyoming laws applied unevenly, and thus illegally, to people collecting natural resource data on public land. The two laws, dubbed Jonathan’s Laws, were aimed squarely at the hard work of our Wyoming Director (Jonathan Ratner) in gathering water quality data

on public lands and his efforts to gather water quality on public lands, by making it illegal to gather data or even take photos on public land if you had inadvertently crossed private property along the way.

Jonathan Ratner doesn’t seem like much of a threat. He’s soft-spoken and gentle, spends much of his free time meditating or backpacking in remote mountains, and lives simply and off-the-grid in rural Wyoming. But ever since he started sampling water contamination on public lands and reporting egregious Clean Water Act violations to the Wyoming Department of Water Quality, the livestock industry has looked for ways to shut him up, and to shut down WWP’s work to reform public lands grazing.

In 2014, anti-environmental attorney (and potential Trump pick to lead the Bureau of Land Management) Karen Budd-Falen and a group of ranchers filed a lawsuit claiming Jonathan must

have trespassed on their private property in order to gather water quality samples from public lands grazing allotments. Ms. Budd-Falen and her clients got a heads-up about WWP’s submissions to DEQ and, rather than worry about the disgusting levels of cattle excrement in Wyoming’s rivers, they looked at maps and alleged trespass. She wound up the loser. This frivolous lawsuit was resolved in 2016 through a settlement agreement that ultimately penalized the ranchers through their legal fees, and WWP agreeing to follow the same laws it always follows regarding private lands.

In 2015, the Wyoming DEQ decided not to accept any of WWP’s data: “Any submission submitted by such organizations should not be accepted due to their inherent bias towards one of Wyoming’s leading economic industries.” If an organization cares about water quality and native fish habitat more than cows, the data be damned. Alleging inadequate sampling methods, DEQ simply



WWP’s Wyoming Director Jonathan Ratner measures stubble height along a cattle-damaged stream in Wyoming.



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The Tetons at sunrise

disregarded the evidence of high levels of *E. coli* in the waterways.

Also that year, the DEQ decided to just change the rules about *E. coli* in 76 percent of the waterways in the state – effectively legalizing the extreme pollution levels that Jonathan had been documenting by exempting most watercourses from compliance with body-contact standards. The rule change, as requested by the livestock industry, went into effect in February 2017 despite broad opposition by recreational users and federal land management agencies.

Wyoming counties got in on the

The Wyoming State Legislature decided to take special interests' right to wreck the environment to another level by passing legislation making it illegal to cross "open land for the purpose of collecting resource data."

obstruction as well. In Lincoln County, for years the public used a county road to reach the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area on public lands. In 2013, the county sold a strip of land along the road to an Idaho rancher and subsequently made the private portion of the road legally impassable. According to emails revealed in litigation, this was done with the specific understanding that WWP would no longer have access

to a long-troubled grazing allotment.

In addition to state agencies and public lands grazing permittees thinking of ways to disqualify WWP's important findings, the Wyoming State Legislature decided to take special interests' right to wreck the environment to another level by passing legislation making it illegal to cross "open land for the purpose of collecting resource data." WWP and our allies were alarmed by the fact that the laws would seek specifically to punish people who intend to communicate data to the government; this is a restriction on free speech and targets a specific

class of citizens (data collectors), which the U.S. Constitution prohibits. The outrageousness of the law was broadcast widely, with an article by Justin Pidot (WWP's 2016 Sagebrush Sentinel recipient) in slate.com showing how the laws could be used to criminalize a tourist taking photos in Yellowstone and submitting them to a government-sponsored photo contest. Of course, WWP and the public knew that the legislature's intent wasn't to prosecute tourists taking pictures, but something more insidious: blocking citizen watchdogs from documenting evidence of environmental crimes and animal abuse.

After the Wyoming legislature modified the laws to redefine "open lands"

where data collection or photography occurs to "cross[ing] private land" to collect data on adjacent public land in 2016, Wyoming had our case in District Court dismissed. But WWP and our co-plaintiffs weren't fooled by the tweaks in language, and we appealed the case to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals which affirmed in September that a plain reading of the statute demonstrated that Wyoming was seeking to regulate an activity that occurred on public land and that resource data collection is within the definition of the creation of speech – protected under the First Amendment and essential to public participation in numerous federal environmental statutes, including the Clean Water Act. The laws went beyond penalizing trespassing and into extra penalties for certain types of trespassers, thus creating legal inequalities about different groups of people. The case now heads back to the District Court under orders to consider it in context of the First Amendment, and WWP expects to prevail in having "Jonathan's Laws" overturned.

While we wait for this next round of litigation, we hope that Wyoming's next move is simply to clean up its act and stop letting the livestock industry foul the state's precious waters.

Greta Anderson is WWP's Deputy Director. She lives in Tucson, AZ.

Rose Chilcoat Receives the 2017 Sagebrush Sentinel Award

It is with great pleasure and honor that we recognize Rose Chilcoat as the recipient of the 2017 Sagebrush Sentinel Award! The annual Sagebrush Sentinel Award recognizes an outstanding individual whose commitment to protecting the environment has earned our gratitude, respect, and emulation. This year, we're honoring Rose, a conservation hero whose tenacious spirit is an inspiration to us all.

Rose recently retired from her 15-year tenure as Associate Director at Great Old Broads for Wilderness, where she played an instrumental role in inventing the "Broadwalk" (the organization's public outing program) and the "Broadband," as local chapters are now known. Rose also is a founding Board Member of both Friends of Cedar Mesa and Torrey House Press. She's an avid hiker, river runner, camper, and outspoken advocate for public lands.

She previously had worked for the National Park Service, so she understands the agency lingo and policies, and she remains a knowledgeable and personable activist. Many WWPers know Rose's firm dislike of the impacts of public lands livestock grazing and she helped WWP in many of our grazing-related comments and cases over the years in Utah and Colorado.

In 2005, Rose used a camera and a GPS to document a seven-mile illegally constructed motorized trail for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) through Recapture Canyon in southeastern Utah. At first the Bureau of Land Management ignored the illegal trail. But after the ancient ruins of the Recapture Great House were looted in 2007 by ATV-riding pot-hunters, the agency finally enforced its own laws and closed the trail.

In a back-handed compliment to

Rose's effectiveness, motorized offenders from San Juan County then mounted a protracted campaign to harass and demonize Chilcoat and the Great Old Broads, including thinly-veiled death threats on "wanted" posters, mounting Halloween masks on posts to lampoon the Great Old Broads, and once even locking a party of 40 elderly volunteers into a campsite using a chain and padlock. In 2014, San Juan County Commissioner Phil Lyman staged a "protest ride" on the closed Recapture Canyon trail that included among its participants Ryan Bundy of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge infamy. Lyman was convicted and jailed.

Rose's outspoken but polite insistence on doing what is right has been an effective means of advocacy over the years. But in southern Utah, no good deed goes unpunished: in 2017, Rose and her husband were accused of trespass and "attempted wanton destruction of livestock" for allegedly closing a gate on public lands. Her efficacy as an environmental advocate apparently triggered the cowboy cabal of San Juan County, UT to pursue her with unfounded criminal charges. In addition to the frivolous charges, we can truly say that Utah picked the wrong Broad to mess with. Rose has the overwhelming support of the conservation community. Thanks for everything, Rose! We stand with you.

The Sagebrush Sentinel award was established in honor of Jon Marvel, the founding director of Western Watersheds Project, a steadfast and tenacious environmentalist who truly changed the West by challenging the environmental exploitation that has been destroying and degrading the West for centuries. Jon inspired many of us to continue on this same path, and the Sagebrush Sentinels represent a cohort of superlative role-models.



Rose Chilcoat's notoriety precedes her in San Juan County, Utah.

Victory for Wild Fishes in the East Fork Salmon River of Idaho!



By Kristin Ruether

In 2016, Western Watersheds Project and Advocates for the West filed a lawsuit aiming to bring improved protections to two large grazing allotments in the East Fork Salmon River watershed of central Idaho. This summer, we achieved a settlement that ensured the allotments – long in violation of federal laws – would be rested for two years. Better still, one of the allotments has since been permanently retired!

WWP's involvement in the Upper and Lower East Fork allotments stretches back to 2002 and 2004, when we sued the Forest Service for failing to reduce livestock grazing damage to important fisheries. At the time, the Forest Service promised that careful monitoring would adequately protect habitat here and that management adjustments would be made so as not to impair the watersheds. However, even after repeated grazing violations, the agency refused to reduce grazing use or impose any penalties for non-compliance. In 2012 and 2013 the agency issued new ten-year permits, and its annual authorizations issued every year since have failed to meaningfully correct the problems. In 2016, we decided we needed to intervene again to protect the Snake River steelhead, Chinook salmon, and bull trout spawning streams on these allotments.

A suite of complex factors affect salmon and steelhead returns, like ocean temperatures and dam operations. But another important factor is the habitat conditions of spawning grounds on our

The Upper East Fork allotment is now permanently closed!

public lands. Salmon and steelhead require cool, clean water with complex habitat features such as downed wood, shady vegetation, and overhanging banks. If you've seen a stream where cattle congregate, you know that livestock grazing is a big part of the problem. We were determined not to let that go unchecked in the East Fork.

In June 2017, we were pleased to enter into a settlement agreement giving the allotments a significant reprieve. The agreement guaranteed that there would be no authorized domestic livestock grazing on the Upper and Lower East Fork allotments in 2017 or 2018. In some pastures, grazing wouldn't resume until conditions improved and new environmental analyses were

completed.

Subsequently, we learned that the sole permittee of the Upper East Fork allotment decided to take a voluntary buyout in late August 2017, as authorized by the 2015 Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Jerry Peak Wilderness Additions Act, a wilderness bill for this region that included a beneficial grazing retirement provision. This means that the Upper East Fork allotment is now permanently closed!

In these uncertain times for steelhead and salmon, they need every assist they can get, and that includes protecting their spawning habitat. Let's hope this trend of resting and retiring allotments continues around the West.

Kristin Ruether is WWP's Senior Attorney. She lives in Boise, ID.



WWP's Executive Director Erik Molvar surveys the Upper East Fork allotment

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*Walk away quietly in any direction and taste the freedom of the mountaineer. Camp
full of nature's darlings. Climb the mountains and get their good tidings, Nature's
own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn
nature's sources never fail. - John Muir*



The Upper East Fork Allotment

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mp out among the grasses and gentians of glacial meadows, in craggy garden nooks
's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their
utumn leaves. As age comes on, one source of enjoyment after another is closed, but

The Sheep Experiment Continues



By Melissa Cain

The USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Sheep Experiment Station, headquartered in Dubois, Idaho, spans more than 60,000 acres of public land in Idaho and Southwest Montana. Sheep Station grazing pastures sprawl from the lower-elevation sagebrush steppe north of Dubois to the top of the Continental Divide and down to Montana's Centennial Valley, a critical corridor for bears, wolverines, and lynx. Allotments on the Caribou-Targhee National Forest are also grazed by ARS sheep.

Grazing of 3,000-6,500 sheep at the facility displaces native species and prevents their dispersal along the unique east-west corridor, eliminating connectivity between wildlife populations in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the rugged mountains of central Idaho. Sheep Station use of high-elevation pastures prevents the return of once-thriving bighorn herds to historic habitat atop the Centennial range, as wild sheep risk deadly pneumonia outbreaks should they come in contact with the domestic sheep grazed at the facility. Wolves, bears, coyotes, and foxes are trapped or shot from helicopters to prevent predation on sheep and lambs. Public access is restricted year-round on lands used by the ARS for Sheep Station research, so that hikers, hunters, and wildlife watchers do not disturb the domestic flocks.

Though a government research facility in the Rockies dedicated to improving sheep production efficiency might have made sense in 1915 when the Sheep Station was established, such



Domestic Sheep

© ARLEN BREIHOLOZ, COURTESY FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS

a program seems all but irrelevant today. Wool has been replaced in textile manufacturing by lighter, more durable synthetic fibers, and per capita consumption of lamb and mutton has plummeted since World War II, now totaling less than a pound per year.

At the same time, interest in restoring apex predators like bears and wolves to historic habitat in the high Rockies has grown, and recovery efforts have led to expanding populations of large carnivores in the areas surrounding Yellowstone. The potential for grizzly conflicts with Sheep Station activities led the Yellowstone

the ARS, for the protection of bighorn sheep.

So when, in 2014, the Obama Administration first proposed shutting down the Sheep Station and transferring its 14 full-time employees to other ARS stations, the announcement was met with broad support; reallocating funds from domestic sheep research to other programs and opening the Centennials to recreational use and wildlife seemed like a clear win-win.

However, federal funding for sheep industry research was retained through the last-minute intervention of the House Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee, after members were urged by Idaho Representative Mike Simpson to block the proposal. When the Obama Administration proposed closure a second time in 2015, sheep industry lobbying efforts were again successful in convincing Rep. Simpson to act to spare the

Despite support for closure from administrations of both political parties, a plethora of state and federal agencies, recreationists and wildlife advocates, the Sheep Station persists, impeding and imperiling wildlife.

Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Committee (comprised of state and federal wildlife agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and others) to send a letter to the ARS in 2012, urging the agency to stop grazing sheep in areas critical for the protection of grizzlies. In the same year the BLM closed the Bernice allotment, grazed by

Sheep Station. The Trump Administration, too, recognized the benefits of closing the facility with the release of the 2018 ARS budget proposal, which would have redistributed the Sheep Station's \$2.1 million annual budget to other programs and shuttered the Station once and for all. Hunters, hikers, and wildlife advocates lauded the proposed closure, cheering the potential reopening of the Centennial

range to recreational users, large carnivores, and bighorn sheep, but Rep. Simpson once again stepped in to block the proposal, restoring funding for the Sheep Station in the proposed 2018 budget.

Western Watersheds Project and others have successfully challenged Sheep Station grazing multiple times in recent years, citing the USDA's failure to properly analyze and disclose the effects of grazing on wildlife. One such challenge, in 2007, ultimately forced the USDA to undertake NEPA Environmental Impact analysis of Sheep Station grazing, the first such assessment in the facility's 100-year history. Another challenge resulted in an agreement that the Sheep Station would cease grazing in certain areas until the analysis was complete. After more than a decade, the final version of this Environmental Impact Statement was released in July of 2017. The proposal: Resume grazing. Change nothing.

Despite support for closure from administrations of both political parties, a plethora of state and federal agencies, recreationists and wildlife advocates, the Sheep Station persists, impeding and imperiling wildlife for the benefit of an anachronistic industry. But even as ARS officials wind down another season of sheep grazing in the Centennials, they no doubt see the writing on the wall. One day the Sheep Station will close forever, and the critical Centennial Valley wildlife corridor will be restored. Bighorns will again roam the rugged peaks, wolf pups, grizzly cubs, and wolverine kits will be born in the nooks and crevices of the rocky slopes; and the awe-inspiring wildlife of Yellowstone will travel through to the wilds of central Idaho. Until that day comes, our fight isn't over.

Melissa Cain is WWP's Bighorn Habitat Protection Campaign Coordinator. She lives in Ketchum, ID.

Idaho Team Transitions

This past summer, we said "bon voyage!" to Ken Cole, who worked for WWP in Idaho since 2008. Ken has been a key part of our team, especially as he became Idaho Director in 2015. We can't blame Buffalo Field Campaign for recruiting him into its Executive Director position – we know he'll do great work for our allies at BFC – and we're proud he's still a member and active participant in WWP. Goodbye, Ken, and many thanks!



The upside of Ken leaving is that we were able to bring in Scott Lake as Idaho Director. Scott just got started in September in our Boise office and we're excited to introduce him to our membership.

Scott grew up in central Idaho and spent his childhood exploring Idaho public lands with his father, a career employee of the US Forest Service. After graduating from high school, Scott earned a degree in English from the College of Idaho and spent his summers with the Forest Service as a wildland firefighter. He also spent two seasons mapping invasive plant populations in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. After a brief, unsuccessful attempt to make a living as a professional guitar player, Scott attended Vermont Law School, where he earned a J.D. and a Master's in environmental law and policy. He then served one year as a law clerk with the Alaska state trial courts in Anchorage, and another year as a law clerk with the Alaska Supreme Court before joining WWP. Scott's past conservation experience includes working to protect Idaho native fish habitat from grazing impacts and assisting with litigation against a major international crude oil pipeline project.

He is an avid climber, cyclist, hiker, and backpacker. Welcome back to Idaho, Scott, and welcome to our team!

Sage-grouse Update

By Josh Osher



For more than two decades, WWP has been leading the charge to protect the great sagebrush sea and the hundreds of wildlife species that

depend on it. As the proverbial canary in the coal mine for determining the health of this vast landscape, the iconic greater sage-grouse often takes center stage in our habitat conservation efforts. Following years of legal wrangling, and for better or for worse, in 2015, the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service approved Resource Management Plan Amendments (ARMPA) that were supposed to protect sage-grouse habitat throughout its range.

Now the Trump administration, through Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke, is actively working to weaken even the insufficient ARMPAs by catering to the insatiable appetite of the livestock



A Sage Grouse soars in the hills of southern Idaho

© KEN COLE

and energy industries. Unfortunately, the shortcomings WWP and our allies identified in the ARMPAs and their built-in flexibility is making it all too easy for the administration to get around habitat protections even in the most sensitive areas for imperiled sage-grouse populations.

Secretary Zinke wasted no time figuring out how to gut the ARMPAs to industry liking. In summer 2017, his sage-grouse review team, none of whom are sage-grouse scientists, released a report that is a carbon copy of industry wish lists: Cut protections immediately

where possible, and then figure out how to work around the ones we can't completely cut.

Make no mistake: WWP wasn't thrilled with the original plans either, and our lawsuit to see them strengthened in accord with the science is still pending. But WWP wanted to see the plans improved and not overturned; our position was that the agencies hadn't gone far enough creating strict and enforceable plans that would truly save sage-grouse and the habitat they depend on. Importantly, this isn't just about one species in the wilderness. As the sage-grouse go, so do mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, pygmy rabbits, sage thrashers, Brewer's sparrows and countless other irreplaceable wildlife populations that depend on the same precious habitats. WWP is committed to protecting the entire web of sagebrush-dependent species from industry greed.

We are saddened and frustrated by the Trump administration's short-sighted and callous push to destroy the sagebrush sea for industry profit, but we are not surprised by it. WWP and our allies are mobilizing the best legal minds and sage-grouse scientists to fight back and figure out how to regain and improve protections for sage-grouse and the sagebrush sea.

Josh Osher is WWP's Montana Director and Public Policy Coordinator. He lives in Hamilton, Montana.



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Male Greater sage-grouse turning

Refuges: Where Wildlife Come First?



By Paul Ruprecht

Many people visit national wildlife refuges for birding and wildlife watching, photography, hunting, and other activities but most people are not familiar with the way refuges are managed. Unlike national forests and BLM lands, which are subject to multiple use management for activities like mining, grazing, and logging, federal law mandates that wildlife must come first on national wildlife refuges. This means that human uses can only be allowed if they are compatible with the purpose for which a given refuge was established, for instance, breeding bird habitat. And economic activities, including livestock grazing, can only be authorized if they serve to further the refuge purposes.

This is an important requirement, and it is the reason we have several large, cow-free landscapes like Hart Mountain and Sheldon National Antelope Refuges, where livestock caused devastation for many years before grazing was eliminated.

But unfortunately in many other refuges, instead of disallowing grazing, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has performed contortion acts to try to show that grazing (and often grass hay harvest as well) benefits wildlife. For example, at Ruby Lake NWR in Nevada and Malheur NWR in Oregon, the FWS claims livestock are “needed” to create low-cropped areas and openings in vegetation for waterfowl and other migratory birds. And recently at Clear Lake refuge in northeast California, the Service approved livestock grazing in the only breeding area for last remaining sage-grouse populations in the Klamath Basin, supposedly to improve its habitat! The



The beautiful Ruby Valley in northeast Nevada

agency says grazing will prevent fires and reduce cheatgrass, thus benefitting the bird, despite peer-reviewed science that finds no benefit from this “prescribed grazing.” In fact, grazing has long been recognized as one of the main drivers of the establishment and spread of annual grasses like cheatgrass. Cows also compete with sage-grouse, pronghorn, and mule deer for forbs along the shoreline at Clear Lake.

In early 2017, WWP filed suit to

challenge the management plan for Clear Lake NWR, and we are hopeful that the case will provide precedent against the narrative that grazing can improve habitat for native plants and animals—and help keep the Fish and Wildlife Service honest about its duty to put wildlife first on our national wildlife refuges.

*Paul Ruprecht is WWP's Staff Attorney.
He lives in Reno, NV.*



A Greater sage-grouse in the Ruby Valley

Victory for Sage-grouse in Nevada

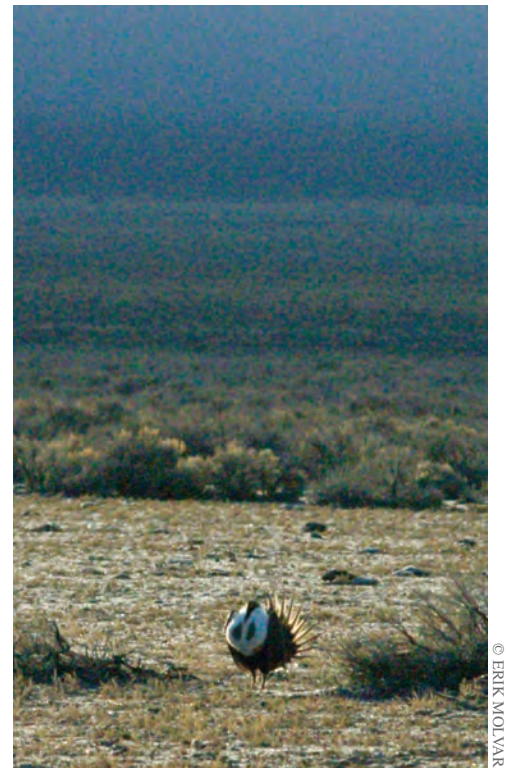
By Kristin Ruether



This summer, Western Watersheds Project won its appeal of a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decision in central Nevada. The Cottonwood and Scotty Meadows allotments south of Ely are home to sage-grouse and a unique species of spring-dwelling fish, the rare Pahrump poolfish. Grazing is permitted to the Southern Nevada Water Authority as part of its scheme to pull water from rural Nevada into Las Vegas. The Water Authority maintains money-losing ranching operations to maintain access to water sources. Both allotments had failed to meet habitat needs for sage-grouse based on lack of plants in the understory – an effect that just might have something to do with livestock grazing.

WWP challenged the decision in 2013, and briefing was completed this

year. In the sharply worded opinion, an Administrative Law Judge admonished, “BLM’s selection of the proposed action and final grazing decision with no attempt to seriously consider and incorporate any terms and conditions that could benefit sage-grouse habitat was without a rational basis.” The judge noted that BLM rejected out of hand common-sense measures to reduce the impacts of grazing, such as reducing grazing levels to the amounts actually used in recent years, or adopting utilization standards scientists say sage-grouse need. As WWP members know, BLM promised the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the American public that greater sage-grouse would be protected by the 2015 Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments, and this promise was the basis for FWS’s 2015 decision that the bird did not need Endangered Species Act protection. The Plan Amendments were supposed to impact all future land-use decisions and provide sufficiently protective measures to ensure the species won’t continue its population declines.



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The problem is that BLM has argued that the Plan Amendments don’t apply to decisions currently being adjudicated, and resisted implementing any new restrictions on grazing in these and other sage-grouse allotments. (Furthermore, the restrictions in the Plan Amendments are terribly weak, which is why WWP is challenging their adequacy in court.)

BLM claims these pending decisions are only governed by weaker guidance in effect prior to the Plan Amendments. But the judge here found that BLM’s decision to largely maintain the status quo did not even comply with that guidance, leaving one to wonder how genuine BLM’s commitments to save the sage-grouse really are.

WWP’s appeal victory should require BLM to go back to the drawing board and make a decision that accurately considers sage-grouse needs on the allotments, but both BLM and the Water Authority are appealing this decision to a higher level. We’ll be defending our victory, and keeping an eye on these allotments.

Kristin Ruether is WWP’s Senior Attorney. She lives in Boise, ID.

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Point Reyes National Seashore, not National Barnyard!



By Greta Anderson

Point Reyes National Seashore is 71,000 acres of stunning central California coastline, home to tule elk, salmon and steelhead, bobcats, elephant and harbor seals, snowy plovers, mountain lions, over 490 resident and migratory bird species, and numerous rare and imperiled plant species. It offers a unique recreational experience, with 150 miles of hiking trails and six campgrounds set among breathtaking scenery and archeological sites.

And cow pastures. Don't forget the cow pastures!

When Point Reyes was designated in 1962, existing dairy ranches within the park boundaries were allowed to enter limited leases, extending their use of the park either 25 years or until the lessees died. Over \$19 million dollars was paid to ranch owners to buy out their land, but the National Park Service has continued to issue Special Use Permits that allow numerous agricultural operations to use the public lands within a



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Cattle trashing the Point Reyes National Seashore

28,000-acre "Pastoral Zone." When, in 2014, the National Park Service began the development of a "Ranch Management Plan," WWP and our allies knew we needed to intervene before this outdated land use was further entrenched.

We filed a lawsuit in 2016 to compel the National Park Service to govern the Seashore according to a General Management Plan that would give "maximum protection" to wildlife and natural resources, and to be left "unimpaired

for the enjoyment of future generations," in accordance with the Park Service's Organic Act. We wanted the Park Service to take a hard look at the impacts from the livestock operations including the spread of non-native weeds, trampling and soil compaction, erosion, pollution of soil and water from the manure of several thousand cows, endangerment of native species, and losses to archeological and cultural sites, and the effects to tule elk who are excluded from the Pastoral Zone by a tall fence.

In 2017, after months of legal wrangling, the Park Service agreed to settle the case and set a deadline for completing a new management plan that includes consideration of no ranching, reduced-ranching, and non-dairy ranching alternatives and discloses the impacts of each on the special resources of Point Reyes.

We believe that a true and fair hard look should result in a better plan for the seashore and the species that live there.

Greta Anderson is WWP's Deputy Director. She lives in Tucson, AZ.



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Native tule elk in the more pristine area of Point Reyes



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Every day the public lands, streams and wildlife throughout the West benefit because of the work done by Western Watersheds Project. The agency management plans we challenge, the allotments we monitor, and the lawsuits we file all help to protect and restore our western public lands.

- **Any size donation is greatly appreciated and makes a difference!** Everything WWP does to influence the restoration of western public lands is based on a vision that western North America may be one of the only places on earth where enough of the native landscape and wildlife still exist to make possible the restoration of a wild natural world.
- **Make a gift of appreciated stock.** Talk to your accountant or financial planner about the potential tax benefits of making this type of donation.
- **A gift through careful estate planning can make a lasting difference for WWP.** A bequest, an arrangement made in a donor's will, is a simple and uncomplicated approach to planned giving. Other methods to facilitate a planned giving donation include: charitable remainder trust, charitable lead trust and gift annuity. It may be wise to talk to your accountant or financial planner to fully understand the potential tax benefits of different giving options.
- **Help others learn about WWP!** Recently, WWP supporters hosted events in Pocatello, Idaho and Berkeley, California to help us spread the word about our important work. You can host an event too and WWP will help. We'll supply informational materials, send out email/printed invitations combining your guest list with local WWP supporters, and even have a WWP representative attend a "meet & greet" which can be customized to your area of interest or concern.



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