



# Western Watersheds Project MESSENGER

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Spring 2018

Conserving the Coastal Prairie

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Allotment Retirement in Capitol Reef National Park

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WWP Prevails in Lawsuit to Protect Idaho Bighorn Sheep



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

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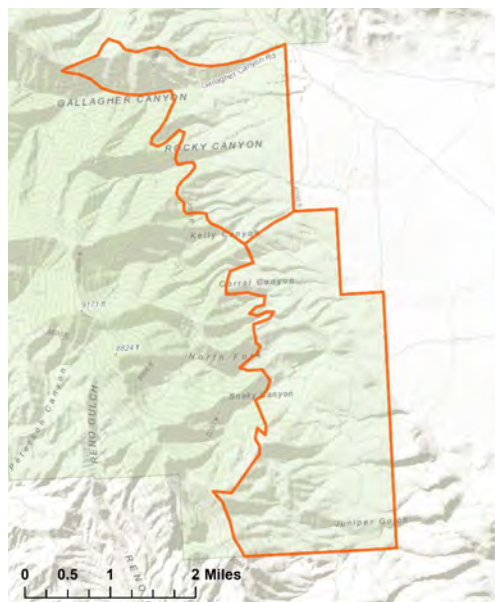


# WWP Prevails in Lawsuit to Protect Idaho Bighorn Sheep



By Scott Lake

Western Watersheds Project has long argued that domestic sheep grazing by the USDA Sheep Experiment Station in eastern Idaho's Centennial Mountains poses an unacceptable risk to nearby bighorn sheep populations. On November 20, 2017, a federal court agreed, blocking the sheep station's 2017-2018 plan to graze the Snakey Canyon and Kelly Canyon allotments near Dubois, Idaho. The judge reasoned that the risk of harm to the small South Beaverhead bighorn herd would likely violate the Forest Service's obligation under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) to ensure a "viable" bighorn population. Accordingly, the court issued a preliminary injunction against grazing on the two allotments. The ruling marks the latest chapter in WWP's long-running efforts to address the sheep station's impacts on bighorn and other native wildlife.



The Snakey Canyon and Kelly Canyon allotments

WWP's (and our co-plaintiff WildEarth Guardians') primary concern was that domestic sheep carry a pathogen-known as *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*-to which domestics are naturally immune, but which causes deadly pneumonia in bighorn sheep. One individual contact between the two species can transmit the pathogen to a bighorn herd. Once infected, the bighorn herd is likely to suffer a partial or total die-off. And if any bighorn ewes survive a die-off, they will transmit the disease to their lambs, suppressing bighorn populations in the infected area for several generations.

The South Beaverhead bighorn herd has likely already endured multiple outbreaks. At the time WWP filed its most recent lawsuit, the herd numbered 34 individuals and showed few signs of recovery. With such low numbers, there was a high risk that another disease event would extirpate the entire herd.

Unfortunately, the sheep station and its supporters within the Forest Service were unwilling to keep the station's domestic sheep out of occupied bighorn habitat. Even with data showing that the Snakey Canyon and Kelly Canyon allotments directly overlap with the South Beaverhead herd's home range, the Forest Service allowed the sheep



Bighorn Sheep

station to turn out over 1,000 domestic sheep in the fall of 2017. With the threat of a deadly disease event imminent, WWP sued to stop the sheep station's reckless and short-sighted plans.

Fortunately, the court agreed with WWP and WildEarth Guardians that the public's interest in protecting bighorn sheep outweighed any interest the sheep station has in continuing to graze on public lands. "The balance clearly tips in favor of the public interest in preserving the iconic Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and the viability of the South Beaverhead population," the court wrote, explaining that an injunction would have a "minimal effect" on the sheep station and "on the commercial sheep industry as a whole."

This decision was another step forward in our campaign to remove domestic sheep from high-risk bighorn sheep allotments. Hopefully, with adequate protection from domestic livestock diseases, bighorn sheep will someday thrive in the Centennial Mountains as they once did. WWP thanks our dedicated attorneys in this case, Laurie Rule and Lizzy Potter of Advocates for the West.

*Scott Lake is WWP's Idaho Director.  
He lives in Boise, Idaho.*



"Trump is proclaiming that... our entire public land heritage may soon be up for sale."

I hope this excellent book will awaken all Americans to an unprecedented threat to our parks, national monuments, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges, and ocean sanctuaries."

Former U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt



"... nuanced, comprehensive, surprisingly up-to-date review of the threats... direct, captivating stories..."  
*Nature (journal review)*

"...humorous, despite the book's serious subject matter...describes how efforts to protect U.S. parks have been thwarted...."  
*Science (journal review)*

"...explores decades of twisted incentives, rotten politics, and feckless regulators... elegant, readable prose."  
*Sierra magazine (review)*

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## Grand Canyon for Sale is a Timely Exhortation

By Karen Klitz



At its heart, *Grand Canyon for Sale* by Stephen Nash (Univ. of California Press, 2017) is a plea for Americans to get involved with the protection of their public land.

Iconic landscapes that we assume have higher levels of protection, such as national parks, national monuments, wilderness, are being degraded by extractive and commercial private businesses at a time when the managing agencies are scraping by with ever-diminishing funding.

*Grand Canyon For Sale* is both painful and informative, and it includes interviews with past and present Grand Canyon National Park biologists and other experienced observers, providing insight into the alarming current situation faced by our national treasures. The book's chapters address the warming climate, ghost species, gateway towns, invasives, overflight noise and impoverished budgets. Its take on livestock grazing is revealed by the author's decision to list grazing activist and legal expert Debra Donahue first in the Acknowledgments. Chapters 8

and 9 and 10 describe grazing history, damage and politics. Nash quotes academic scholars Thomas Fleischner, Robert Beschta, Thomas Power, and Freeman Tilden; he also mentions Wyoming's trespass law and the good work of Western Watersheds Project.

I was drawn into reading this non-fiction by the lively reporting and extensive source documentation. There's a section of notes by chapter as well as a sources and bibliography section divided into a glossary of interviewees and the usual referenced publications.

### Snippets:

- Livestock presence gets a lot of negative mention throughout. For example: the herd of 400 beefalo stripping vegetation on the North Rim.
- Large numbers of threatened and endangered species disappearing from many Parks: 84 species missing from national parks. Grand Canyon has lost 1 in 5 of its mammal species.
- Lead bullets which kill condors are still allowed. The Forest Service and BLM refuse to ban lead bullets on public land near GCNP.
- 81% of Arizonans polled in 2005 support wolf presence in Arizona, this support reaffirmed in 2008.
- Private property on the borders of

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2017 Board Meeting and Art Auction in Boise, ID**



**Save the date for Saturday, June 9th. Please visit  
[westernwatersheds.org/boardmeeting](http://westernwatersheds.org/boardmeeting) for more  
information on location and how to RSVP.**

*Grand Canyon National Park*

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Park – tiny town of Tusayan was forced to incorporate – has been commercialized with an Italian developer's push. There is now helicopter service, hotel, trailer park, residential development, a dude ranch, craft outlets, and at the time of publication a 3 million square foot shopping center had been proposed.

## WWP Welcomes Laura Cunningham, Our New California Director

In addition to describing Grand Canyon's problems, Nash makes the case for public engagement in order to successfully defend public lands and especially for "protected" lands like national parks and monuments.

As WWP members know, federal land management agencies are often captured by commercial political interests. Thousands of federal scientists were polled about political interference and their work, and those at the USFWS came out the highest at 75% yes.

The heartening truth is that Americans already support real protection by large margins. But when *Grand Canyon for Sale* was published last year, the public had not yet embraced the power of its voice, perhaps because it does not yet know that our Park's natural systems are endangered and in some cases are falling apart.

I knew the threats to our public lands had been growing but the exhortation to action couldn't be more timely, with Washington's attacks on public lands now including bills in the House and Senate to open up Wilderness areas to motorized use and other diminishment of public lands along with continuing decreases in funding.

I recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn how the politics of public lands management work out on the ground. Let us hope each reader takes action.

*Karen Klitz is on WWP's Board of Directors. She lives in Berkeley, CA.*



*Laura (right) with friend Pam camping, birding, and hiking at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge*

Western Watersheds Project is delighted to welcome Laura Cunningham as our new California Director. Laura comes to WWP from her previous position as the Executive Director of the hard-hitting grassroots environmental group Basin and Range Watch. "I'm really pleased to be working with Western Watersheds Project, an organization that over the years had made a difference in protecting so many native species and natural landscapes across the West," said Cunningham.

Over the years, Laura has watchdogged conservation issues in the Mojave Desert, including energy development and desert tortoise conservation. She brings with her a feisty propensity for legal challenges, for bucking politically powerful opponents, and for fighting for native wildlife and public lands.



*Laura (right) and sister Margot at Tilden Regional Park, CA.*

Laura studied zoology, botany, and resource management at the University of California at Berkeley, and went on to work for state and federal agencies. Some of her specialties, like the California red-legged frog, Lahontan cutthroat trout, desert tortoise, and tule elk are species that Western Watersheds Project has focused our conservation efforts on over the years, making Laura an excellent fit for WWP's environmental work.



*Laura (right) on a hike with her sister and uncle in Calistoga, California*

Laura also is a talented artist, and her paintings are featured in her magnum opus on the historical ecology of California grasslands, titled *A State of Change: Forgotten Landscapes of California*. "After writing my book, *A State of Change*, about the ecological history of California and how areas can be restored, I was seeking ways to work further in conserving these natural communities and species that I studied over 20 years," Cunningham added. "Western Watersheds Project is

giving me the perfect opportunity to continue to help restore native grasslands, wetlands, and forests across the Golden State."

Laura's expertise in California grassland ecosystems will be a major asset as she tackles livestock grazing problems in the Golden State.

Welcome, Laura!



# Conserving the Coastal Prairie



By Laura Cunningham

The fog-swept and windy Pacific edge of the continent holds a unique plant community that stretches along the hills and terraces of the California coast from Oregon south to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County and the Channel Islands.

The relatively high winter rainfall and cool summers create conditions that mimic mountain meadows in many places, and similar species of grasses can be found in both coastal prairie and lush montane meadows at higher elevations. Deep-rooted native bunchgrasses such as Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), red fescue (*F. rubra*), and Pacific reedgrass (*Calamagrostis nutkaensis*) grow thickly on the hills. Tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) fills swales and wet meadows. Nearly 80 endemic species specialized to sea bluffs and salty air occur in this niche. A diversity of wildflowers mix with the lush prairies, and the community interfingers with north coastal scrub, salt marsh, oak woodland, redwood forest, and inland valley grassland.

Glimpses of this once-widespread habitat are shown in historical accounts. On March 28, 1776, Franciscan missionary Pedro Font wrote in his diary as he entered San Francisco at what is now the Presidio: "On leaving we ascended a small hill and then entered upon a mesa that was very green and flower-covered, with an abundance of wild violets" (Minnich 2008)<sup>1</sup>.

Before 1769—the date of Spanish colonization—these prairies were teeming with wildlife: large herds of tule elk,

black-tailed deer, and pronghorn antelope. California grizzlies roamed the hills and valleys digging up *Brodiaea* bulbs with their long claws and hunting ground squirrels. Wolves, coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats also hunted here. California condors soared overhead. And as the coastal prairie merged with the sandy beaches and ocean bluffs, piles of elephant seals, harbor seals, and sea lions could be seen.

Today the coastal prairie is one of the most threatened plant communities in the United States, especially its perennial grass component. And most of the wildlife is gone or hard to see, except at one unique place: Point Reyes National Seashore in Marin County, CA.

Here visitors can catch a glimpse of the former wild abundance of the Pacific Coast, with a herd of tule elk inhabiting coastal prairies. Black-tailed deer, coyotes, bobcats, and badgers roam the peninsula and can be seen and photographed by patient observers. This place has the potential to be a California "Yellowstone Ecosystem" with a range of wildlife living in native plant communities with the blue waters of the sea for a backdrop. There is no other public land habitat that supports California endemic tule elk along with coastal prairie.

But even at Point Reyes National



Tule elk (*Cervus canadensis nannodes*) bulls lying in the sun with growing antlers in velvet.

Seashore, much of the public land is still grazed by dairy and beef cattle. Instead of native prairie grasses and wild elk, the grand vistas offer views of cow trails, erosion gullies, manure piles, silage fields, and mechanically mowed pastures. This industrial agricultural landscape, full of introduced European annual grasses and invasive weeds, does not fit the mandate of the National Park Service to manage these lands in a natural state.

Point Reyes National Seashore was intended to be a restored and conserved natural landscape, with some historic



Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), California buttercups, and native bunchgrasses, relict coastal prairie on L Ranch, too far from the barn for dairy cows to graze.

<sup>1</sup>Minnich, Richard A. 2008. California's Fading Wildflowers: Lost Legacy and Biological Invasions. University of California Press: Oakland CA.





OIL ON CANVAS © LAURA CUNNINGHAM

*Coastal prairie with shed tule elk antlers, 500 years ago on what is now Nob Hill in San Francisco, looking eastward across the Bay.*

landscape elements, full of elk herds and other wildlife, native bunchgrasses and wildflowers abounding. In a process of voluntary retirement, all the dairy and beef farms agreed to sell their operations to the National Park Service between 1962 and 1978, in order to phase out modern commercial agriculture. Beef and dairy operations were paid a total of \$57.7 million to sell their lands to make way for the National Seashore, and were given “life estates,” which allowed the former ranch owners to stay on in houses owned by the Park Service, and run their livestock operations on

leased National Seashore lands for a 25-year period. Now the life estates have run their course, yet the livestock farmers have not agreed to retire or move on to private lands with this taxpayer subsidy.

Western Watersheds Project and our allies Center for Biological Diversity, Resource Restoration Institute, and Advocates for the West won a key settlement last summer that mandates the Park Service undertake long-term planning that considers the ecological impacts of the ongoing livestock operations. That process will allow conservationists to describe our vision for the future of

Point Reyes.

Point Reyes National Seashore should be restored to a more natural setting; cattle grazing dominates the California grasslands on hundreds of thousands of acres of private lands in the Coast Ranges. There should be one beautiful and wild example of a park unit that could wholly showcase the natural heritage of early California, the way the land could be.

*Laura Cunningham is WWP's  
California Director.  
She lives in Beatty, Nevada.*

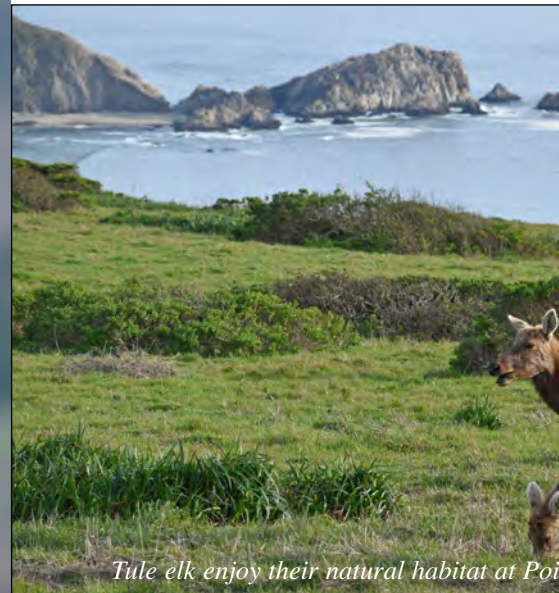


*Sketches, and reconstructed California grizzly (Ursus arctos) digging up brodiaea bulbs (Dichelostemma capitatum) in a coastal prairie.*

PEN AND INK ON PAPER © LAURA CUNNINGHAM



# Beauty and a Point Reyes Seashore



*Tule elk enjoy their natural habitat at Point Reyes National Seashore.*



*Ranch on Point Reyes National Seashore feedlot with extreme overgrazing, trampling, and manure.*



*Point Reyes National Seashore should be protected as a sea*



# Destruction at Point Reyes National Seashore



Point Reyes National Seashore



Cattle make a hash of once-pristine grasslands at Point Reyes National Seashore



The relict native coastal prairie. This ungrazed area is a good source and reference site to guide restoration.

Watersheds Project



A coyote at Point Reyes National Seashore



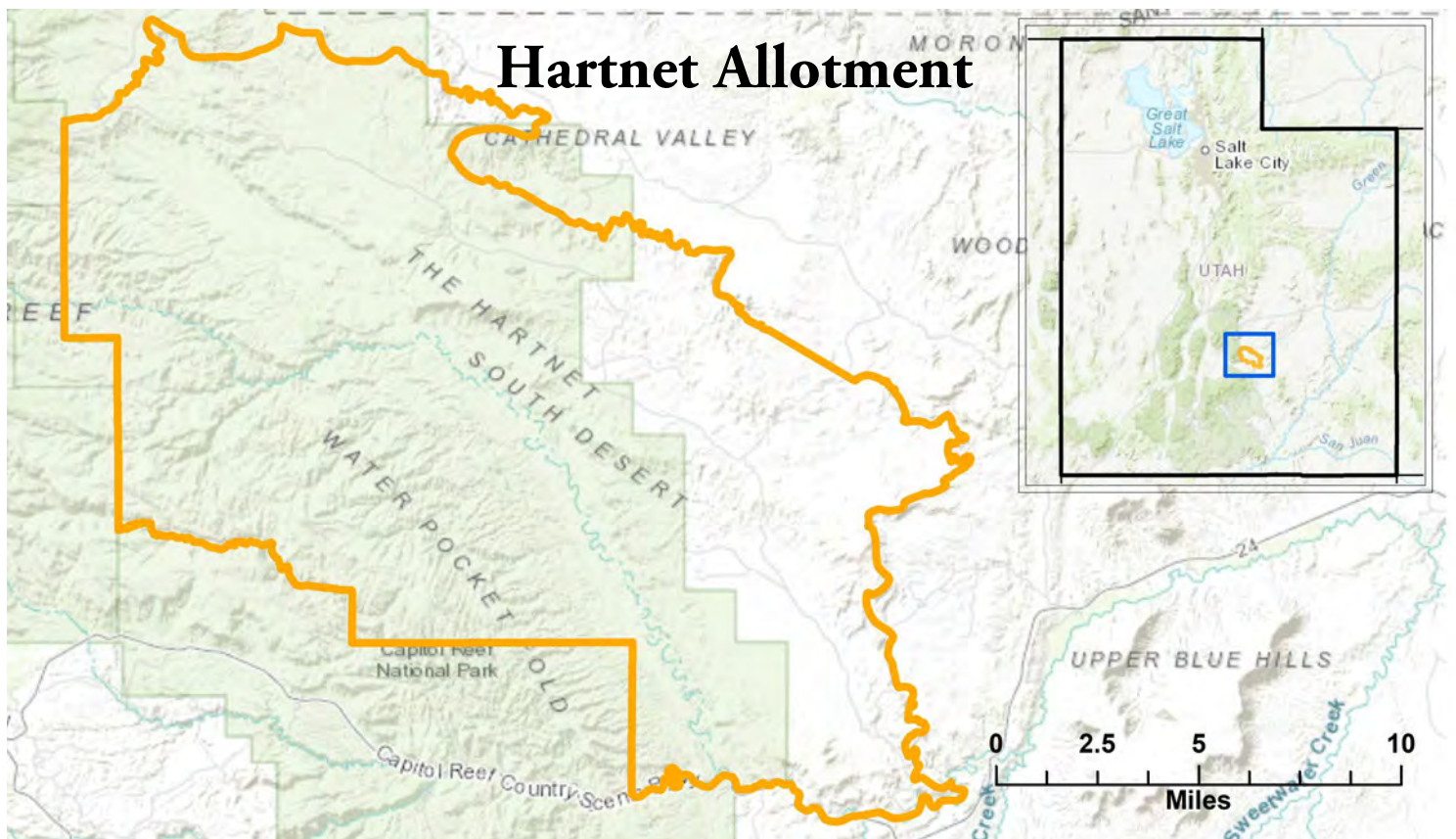


After years of dedication and hard work by WWP and our allies to limit the effects of livestock grazing in Capitol Reef National Park in Utah (including litigation brought in 2014 with Cottonwood Environmental Law Center), we're delighted to report that over **72,000 acres of the park will not be grazed again!**

**In April, the Sagebrush Habitat Conservation Fund - which manages Western Watersheds Project's settlement monies - provided the majority of the funding to permanently retire the Hartnet allotment. Hooray!**

Removing permitted livestock grazing from this allotment provides much needed protection for the federally-listed threatened Winkler cactus (*Pediocactus winkerli*) and the endangered Wright's fishhook cactus (*Sclerocactus wrightiae*), two small Utah endemics that are trampled and destroyed by cattle. The allotment's fragile biological soil crusts will also be protected by the closure.

Congratulations and thanks due to all the people that worked on this retirement effort!





# Yellowstone Bison Endangered Species Act Protections Back in Play

By Paul Ruprecht



In 2014, Western Watersheds Project and our partners at Buffalo Field Campaign (BFC) petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

to protect the Yellowstone bison under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Yellowstone bison need this protection because current management by the National Park Service and State of Montana does not ensure their continued survival and recovery.

Actually, management by those agencies—which revolves around killing bison that leave the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park—is a grave threat to the species. It prevents bison from occupying their historic habitat along the Yellowstone and Madison Rivers, limiting their population growth



*Bison in Yellowstone National Park*

and expansion. Shockingly, the National Park Service killed over 1,100 of the estimated 4,000 Yellowstone bison leaving Yellowstone park in the 2018 winter season alone.

The confinement of Yellowstone bison to the Park is based on the flawed belief that they transmit brucellosis to cattle. However, infection from bison has never occurred in the wild, and recent studies show that elk are the main carriers of brucellosis in the Yellowstone region. The true force behind the misguided management is the political pressure from ranchers who do not want to

share grass with free-roaming bison.

When the Fish and Wildlife Service denied our petition to list the Yellowstone bison, WWP, BFC, and Friends of Animals filed suit in federal court in Washington D.C. We alleged that the denial of ESA protection was unlawful because the Fish and Wildlife Service had disregarded studies in the petition showing that the aggressive culling undertaken by the Park Service and Montana state agencies threatened the genetic integrity of the Yellowstone bison.

The Court agreed with WWP and our co-plaintiffs, holding that the Fish and Wildlife Service had erred by ignoring information indicating that the two genetically-distinct bison herds in Yellowstone National Park—the Northern and Central herds—each needed to be managed at the minimum population level that the agencies had been applying to the Yellowstone bison as a whole. The Court ordered Fish and Wildlife Service to make a new decision on the listing petition. Unfortunately, however, the fight is not over—in early April, the Department of Interior and Secretary Zinke appealed the court's decision to the D.C. Circuit Court. We'll continue to advocate for full protection for these bison.

*Paul Ruprecht is WWP's Oregon/Nevada Director. He lives in Reno, Nevada.*



Western Watersheds Project is pleased to announce that Paul Ruprecht, formerly a staff attorney, has become our new Nevada/Oregon Director! Paul's love for the Great Basin and Pacific Northwest and his deep understanding of livestock grazing issues in this area will help us be more effective and engaged in these states! Thank you Paul!



# Killing bighorn to save them? Not so fast, New Mexico!



By Melissa Cain

Bighorn sheep are native to Northern New Mexico, and they feature prominently in the ancient petroglyphs etched into the basalt of the vast Taos

Plateau lava flow. The Taos and Tewa peoples utilized the meat, hide, and horns of the mountain sheep, called “kuwà,” and they named features and places after them, including the town known as Tres Piedras, “Three Rocks” in Spanish, but as Kuwahiuna and Kuwak’u, “Sheep Rocks,” in Taos and Tewa. However, as in much of the West, New Mexico’s bighorn sheep herds were wiped out as European-Americans settled in the area, bringing with them livestock, and livestock pathogens, to which bighorn sheep had never been exposed. By the early 1900s, disease had claimed the last



*Bighorn sheep near Red River, New Mexico*

of New Mexico’s bighorn sheep, with ethnologists Junius Henderson and John Peabody Harrington noting in 1914 that “[t]he animal is well known to the Tewa, though very few of them have ever seen it alive.”

In 2006, the species was returned to a habitat it had thrived in for millennia, when the Taos Pueblo released 23 bighorns captured from the adjacent Wheeler Peak herd, itself the result of a transplant, into the Rio Grande Gorge. The following year, 25 additional bighorn

sheep from the Pecos Wilderness were transplanted to the Gorge, giving the species a more secure foothold in the steep canyons from which they’d been extirpated for more than a century. As new lambs were born to the herd, and as the animals began to scatter throughout the Gorge, it became clear that the transplants were likely to be a success: Bighorn sheep would once again traverse these ancient lands.

Just a decade after they were reintroduced, more than 350 bighorn sheep roamed the rugged 50 mile long gorge. With plentiful water, abundant forage, and protection from predators along the steep canyon walls, the nascent herd has thrived in its new, old home, expanding north and south through the gorge’s 800-ft-deep crevasse, and into the dozens of sheltered side canyons cutting into the ancient Taos Volcanic Field. Rio Grande Gorge bighorns have pioneered across the landscape to other herds as well, forming a connected metapopulation comprised of at least 4 distinct herds and over 2,000 animals. With few areas in the west boasting bighorn populations which demonstrate the historic structure of large, interconnected herds, divided into smaller subgroups, the reestablished northern New Mexico bighorns have proven a remarkable fit for the landscape.

## BEASTLY

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This explosive growth demonstrates the capacity of this seemingly-fragile species to thrive when restored to its native habitat, but it has also exposed significant risks that remain on the landscape: Pathogen-carrying domestic sheep and goats are distributed on public and private lands in the area, and these animals have the potential to decimate not only the Rio Grande Gorge herd, but also the connected Culebres, Latir, Red River, and Wheeler Peak herds, through just a single nose-to-nose contact with a wild bighorn. Should contact occur, more than half the herd could be lost, and lamb survival could be stalled for a decade or more, turning a success story to a tragedy with just one quick nuzzle.

There have been close calls already. In the last year, bighorn sheep have been shot for approaching BLM allotments grazed by domestic sheep at the northern end of the Gorge in Colorado, and for approaching domestic sheep and goats on private lands at the southern end, near Pilar, as wildlife managers seek to prevent potentially-exposed bighorns from returning to, and sharing pathogens with the main herd. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) officials have approached private lands livestock operations, but

neither they, nor the permittees who graze sheep on the Carson National Forest or on BLM lands in Colorado, have been willing to give up their livestock for the protection of bighorns. BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife have even proposed moving more domestic sheep to the northern end of the gorge, in order to address risks the domestic animals pose to Colorado's bighorn sheep herds.

Faced with the prospect of a catastrophic disease outbreak, NMDGF officials quietly authorized the killing of more than four dozen ewes, many of them likely pregnant, in February and March of 2018. Hunters were enlisted to carry out the killing, and these native sheep, largely docile and well-accustomed to being photographed by the groups of locals and tourists who gather to marvel at them from the canyon rim or the gorge-spanning bridges, were shot over the course of four weekends. By the end of March, more than 10% of the herd had been killed.

The decision to kill almost 50 ewes was a rash and ineffective measure to prevent a disease outbreak. Boxed in by domestics at either end of the Gorge, yet retaining their ancestral urge to roam, these bighorns will inevitably encounter pathogen-carrying domestic sheep and



*Rio Grande del Norte National Monument*

goats should the public lands livestock and hobby herds remain on the landscape. The onus is squarely on the producers and public lands managers to eliminate the risks by removing domestic sheep.

Though NMDGF officials had hoped to carry out the killing in secret, and without public comment, WWP raised the alarm. We alerted the news media and locals who love their native wildlife of the agency's plans to kill bighorn sheep, and we've insisted that BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife scrap efforts to move even more domestic sheep into range of the Rio Grande Gorge bighorns. We've let NMDGF know that this killing can't occur in the dark, and that it isn't a long-term solution to addressing the risks to the Rio Grande Gorge herds. We've joined New Mexicans in asserting that the only way to ensure that the herd isn't devastated once again by livestock pathogens is to clear the way for this beloved native species. We'll keep fighting until the majestic kuwà can roam risk-free.

*Melissa Cain is WWP's Bighorn Conservation Director. She lives in Ketchum, Idaho.*



*Bighorn on Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, New Mexico*



# Idaho M-44 Moratorium Still Holds



By Erik Molvar

This March in Pocatello, WWP co-hosted a somber event. One year prior, an M-44 ‘cyanide bomb’ planted by Wildlife Services detonated on public lands behind a rural subdivision, poisoning 14-year-old Canyon Mansfield and killing his dog, Kasey. Canyon, his parents, WWP, and allies partnered to screen “Exposed,” a documentary produced by Predator Defense about Wildlife Services’ use of poisons. They were joined by former Wildlife Services trapper (now author and wildlife advocate) Carter Niemeyer in a rousing panel on the dangers of M-44s.

In the wake of that tragedy, Western

Watersheds Project led a coalition of conservation and animal rights groups in formally petitioning Wildlife Services to halt M-44 use throughout Idaho, on all land ownerships. Wildlife Services granted that petition, imposing an indefinite moratorium on the use of these deadly and indiscriminate devices, primarily used to kill coyotes at the behest of sheep ranchers. As of this writing, the statewide moratorium remains in place, and to the best of our knowledge, there are no M-44s planted in Idaho.

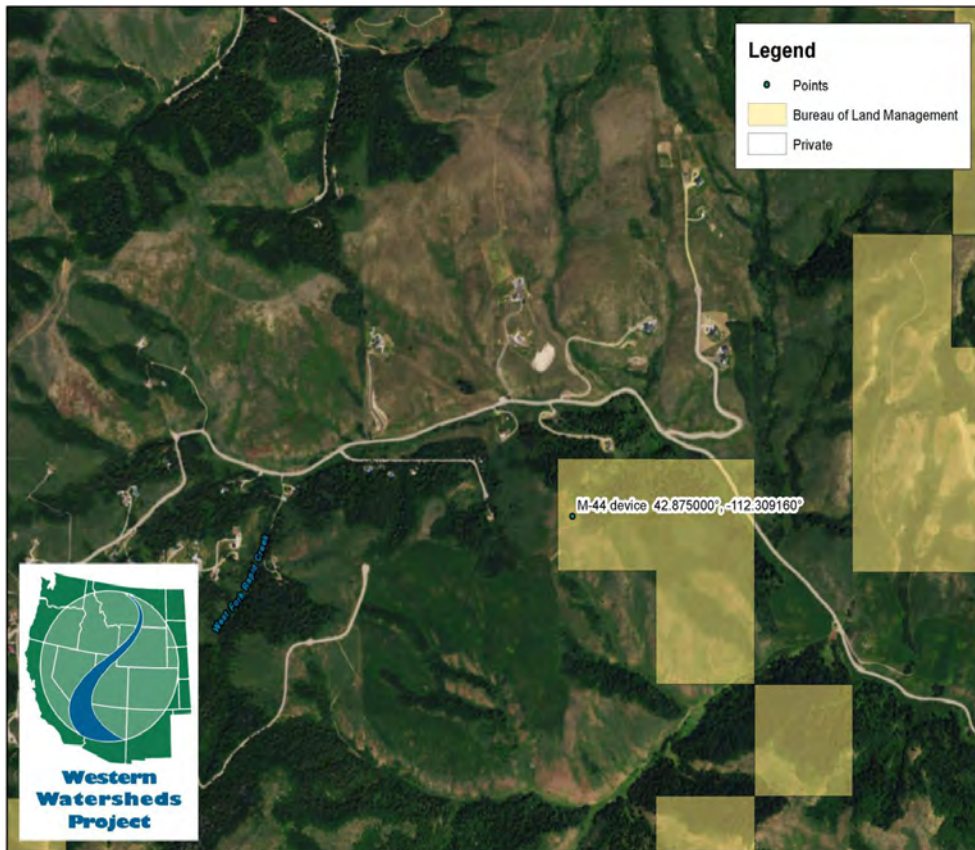
Despite the well-known dangers of M-44s, Wildlife Services has been plotting to get the public back on board with their use. The agency went on a “charm offensive” in late July of 2017, with a series of public presentations across Idaho to try to sell the public on new and somewhat stricter guidelines. Western Watersheds Project, Predator Defense, the Mansfield family, and others made sure the meetings were well-attended.

Idahoans were not charmed: Wildlife Services got quite the hostile reception from the general public and from law enforcement, which found itself ill-equipped and short on the necessary knowledge for dealing with a chemical weapons incident in rural Idaho. This renewed public outcry probably helped convince the wildlife-killing agency to keep M-44s on the shelf.

However, no one can say when the reprieve from M-44s in Idaho will end. At the end of the February 2018, Wildlife Services’ Idaho State Director Todd Grimm visited the Idaho State Legislature. Legislators deep in the pockets of Idaho’s agricultural lobby pressed him on when he would re-authorize M-44 use in Idaho. Grimm said the agency had not yet pursued using them again, but “probably will eventually.”

In addition to wildlife deaths, there are the public safety problems. People have tripped M-44s on a number of occasions in the past. Cyanide is a nerve agent, and can cause lasting disabilities. Dennis Slaugh was rockhounding with his brother south of Vernal, Utah in 2003 when he saw what he thought was a survey marker, and brushed off the top to read the inscription. But it was an M-44, which went off, spraying Slaugh in the face with deadly cyanide. In the years that followed, Dennis was frequently in and out of hospitals, and was forced to go on permanent disability. Dennis Slaugh died on February 27th of this year, and M-44 cyanide poisoning was listed among the causes of death on his death certificate.

We’ll be fighting to keep M-44s out of Idaho, but we’re not satisfied with a temporary ban in one state. The only solution to the seemingly endless string of problems caused by M-44s is to ban them entirely, nationwide. Our allies at Predator Defense have been deeply involved in this issue for many years, and have convinced Rep. Peter DeFazio



WWP created this map using a GPS location provided by the Bannock County Sheriff's Department to dispel any doubt that the Pocatello M-44 that poisoned Canyon Mansfield and his dog was on BLM land.





*The Pocatello Screening of 'Exposed' was a huge success. (from left to right) Mark Mansfield, Theresa Mansfield, Carter Niemeyer (author and former Wildlife Services trapper), Canyon Mansfield, Talasi Brooks of Advocates for the West, Carson Barylak of International Fund for Animal Welfare, Brooks Fahy of Predator Defense, and WWP's own Kristin Ruether.*

(D-OR) to introduce legislation, nicknamed "Canyon's Law," that would make the possession or deployment of M-44s by anyone (federal agencies included) a criminal offense. The bill would also ban another deadly wildlife poison, Compound 1080. Decades ago, President Nixon banned the use of these poisons across the United States, but they were brought back by James Watt after President Reagan took office. Today, WWP staff members are boosting the work of Predator Defense by seeking a Senate sponsor for the M-44 bill, and we're finding support for the idea on Capitol Hill.

In the end, the M-44 issue poses a fundamental question of whether the American taxpayers should be funding an agency to kill off our native wildlife for the convenience of ranchers. With WWP's focus on public-lands livestock grazing, we are working toward a day when the livestock industry no longer works to wipe out native species in the West. The burden of proof is on the livestock industry to demonstrate that their livestock can coexist with healthy native ecosystems and abundant wildlife, and up to this point in history, they are failing.

Meanwhile, our tax dollars would be much better spent in re-tooling Wildlife Services to focus on non-native, invasive species that are damaging to our public lands and native wildlife.

*Erik Molvar is WWP's Executive Director.  
He lives in Laramie, Wyoming.*

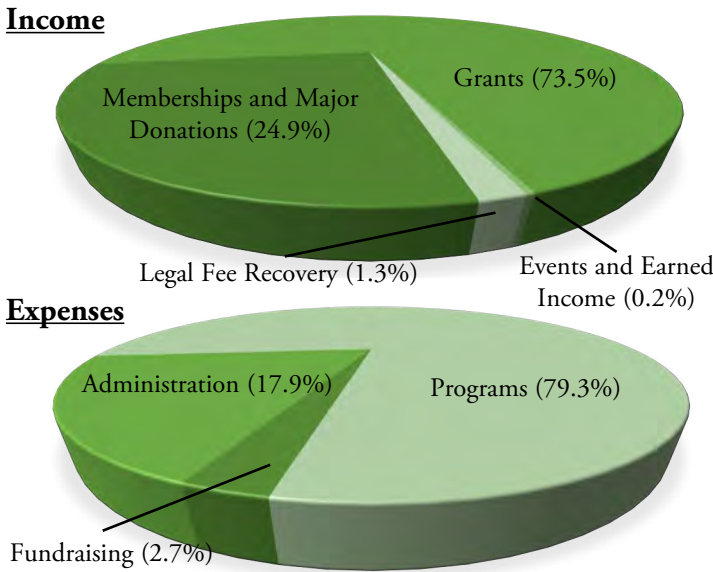
# Western Watersheds Project 2017 Annual Financial Report

<b>INCOME</b>	
Memberships and Major Donors.....	222,500
Grants.....	657,300
Events and Earned Income.....	2,200
Legal Fee Recovery.....	11,900
<b>Total Income.....</b>	<b>\$893,900</b>

<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Accounting.....	3,100
Donation Processing.....	3,200
Conferences and Meetings.....	1,500
Contract Services.....	49,200
Employee Benefits.....	24,100
Equipment Rental and Maintenance.....	3,200
Grazing Leases.....	400
Insurance.....	28,500
Legal.....	19,300
Occupancy.....	24,700
Payroll.....	498,800
Payroll Expenses.....	46,900
Postage and Shipping.....	8,100
Printing and Publications.....	80,200
Supplies.....	5,800
Special Events.....	1,000
Telephone.....	5,400
Travel.....	32,200
Website.....	600
<b>Total Expenses.....</b>	<b>\$836,200</b>

<b>2017 Budgeted Expenses.....</b>	<b>884,000</b>
<b>2018 Budgeted Expenses.....</b>	<b>944,700</b>

\*All figures rounded.







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### Thank You for Your Continued Support!

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 exists 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.



The Western Watersheds Project Messenger is printed using vegetable-based inks on carbon neutral, 100% post-consumer waste.

