

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 2015

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We all have our own specific reasons for why we choose to live in the West, specifically in this wonderful state. We endure bad weather, long travel distances, and have limited amenities compared to other parts of the country. But we wouldn't have it any other way.

A huge draw for most of us, whether we live in the state or not, is the truly



Dave Moody

remarkable amount of public land that we all currently have access to. Each of us probably has a favorite spot or two that we cherish. And, if

you're like me, most of those special places are on public lands, whether it's in the Wyoming Range, the South Fork of Owl Creek, or Adobe Town, west of Baggs. We've all had access to public lands for so long that I fear some recreationists may not realize that our ability to continue to use them may be in jeopardy.

Sound farfetched? It's not. There's a large coordinated effort to potentially transfer public lands to the states, which in turn would mean the ability to sell public lands to the highest bidder. Legislation has already been passed at the national level that would grease the skids for this transfer to take place. Both Wyoming U.S. senators voted in favor of this bill. Several western state legislatures have already drafted – some have even passed – legislation to allow this to happen.

While Gov- *(Continued on page 5)*

Changing Tides

Founded in 1937, the Wyoming Wildlife Federation (WWF) has emerged as the state's premiere grassroots hunting, angling and conservation organization, with more than 2,000 members, thousands of supporters and 13 state affiliate organizations. Just as the tide ebbs and flows so does a nonprofit organization. Our tide is changing with a new Executive Director and four new board members, all poised to help take WWF into a bright future.

WWF was created when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt convened the first North American Wildlife Conference, at the urging of National Wildlife Federation founder Ding Darling. The idea was to stimulate public interest in the management and development of America's natural resources. Back then, WWF realized the need for game laws and scientific research to help the Wyoming Game and Fish Department manage the state's wildlife resources. The organization also recognized the link between people's health, the environment, and our quality of life, with WWF leaders and its members, setting out a conservation mission.

More than 75 years later, WWF's primary focus remains to "conserve wildlife, habitat and outdoor opportunities." The organization's efforts include programs and campaigns for wildlife and habitat as well as hunting and angling programs, all while providing information and inspiration, linking children and families back to nature and showing them how to conserve it.

WWF PUBLIC LANDS CAMPAIGN

This spring WWF is gearing up to take part in and rally members and affiliate organizations for a statewide Wyoming Public Lands Initiative, administered by the Wyoming County Commissioners Association. The process will consider Wilderness Study Areas as the "launching pad" for other public lands and land use recommendations in Wyoming counties. The goal is to advance one legislative package through the Wyoming delegation to be introduced in Congress in 2018.

WWF and other sportsmen and conservation groups will be at the table participating in this important process with long term impacts for wildlife, hunters and anglers and future generations. What can WWF members do? Please write your local officials and attend these public meetings. WWF will provide meeting times/locations and the data we are gathering (economic impacts of hunting and angling, GIS maps, public survey, etc.) to support our efforts for this collaborative process. Please check the WWF website for more information and sign up for our email notices by becoming a WWF member.



Big Game Migrations WWF and its members have been participating in the development of new, more detailed definitions for Wyoming's big game migration habitats for the Game and Fish Department. These seasonal ranges include migration corridors, stopover habitat, where animals stay and forage, and bottleneck areas such as highway, fence, or development that can constrain their movements. The definitions provide a common understanding about these important habitats. Most critical for protecting Wyoming's big game migrations, these definitions will be used in land management decisions.



Joe Riis



The Wyoming Range

What's at risk: The potential loss of aquatic habitat for Colorado River and Snake River cutthroat trout. The

Bridger-Teton National Forest will issue a new draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to address management of 44,720 acres of public lands and 35 original contested lease parcels in the Wyoming Range. WWF along with Sportsmen for the Wyoming Range have put in hundreds of hours working to protect these 35 parcels, which in 2011 were withdrawn for analysis and thus are being considered for development by the Forest Service. The Wyoming Range was originally protected under the Wyoming Range Legacy Act in 2009. WWF feels strongly that development of these lands would degrade backcountry recreational opportunities, water quality and fish habitat, important big game and wildlife habitat.

The Red Desert to Hoback Mule Deer Migration

Wyoming is home to one of the longest mule deer migrations in the nation, spanning up to 150 miles, from Rock Springs to Jackson. More than 4,000 animals make this trek to forage in their seasonal ranges. Under the Wyoming Migration Initiative, GPS-radio collars were used to record



Joe Riis

this migration route, which extends from the Red Desert all the way to Hoback Basin. These migrations are vital to the health of our big game resources. WWF's role is to collaborate with other groups to bring the science of migration to the public. Bottom line: The future of this deer herd depends on the health and permeability of this historic migration route.

Declining Mule Deer

Wyoming's mule deer herds have seen a serious decline in recent years. Finding a way to reverse this decline continues to be the major research focus of the Wyoming



Coop Unit at the University of Wyoming and the Game and Fish Department. During 2015, WWF representatives served on regional working groups created to draft management actions for these threatened herds across the state.

Greater Little Mountain Coalition

During 2015, WWF played a lead role in the Greater Little Mountain Coalition, which created a management proposal that protects the unique fish and wildlife resources of this biological diverse area of southwest Wyoming, while still providing development opportunities.



Resource Management Plans An important role of WWF is providing comments on resource management plans (RMP). Many of these are administered by the BLM. Our efforts toward these plans involve many hours and numerous meetings by staff. WWF also collaborates with other groups and conducts research and analysis for crafting thoughtful recommendations for the BLM's consideration. In 2015, WWF participated in two major processes: The Rock Springs RMP for southwest Wyoming and the Big Horn RMP. *Stay tuned...*





Co-mingling of Bighorn and Domestic Sheep One of the biggest threats to our native wildlife species are diseases of domestic animals. WWF is a member of the Wyoming Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group, convened to develop recommendations for minimizing the co-mingling of these animals. Bighorn sheep are extremely susceptible to diseases of domestic sheep, especially a virulent form of pneumonia, which can be fatal. WWF is currently addressing this issue on BLM lands where co-mingling is common. One project includes the land on the west side of the Bighorn Basin. This program represents an important role WWF plays in keeping wildlife – our iconic bighorn sheep herds – healthy and wild.

Wyoming Governor's Sage Grouse Implementation Team (SGIT)

WWF has been a member of this team since its inception, more than a decade ago. It was formed by Governor Dave Freudenthal to develop strategies to conserve the Greater sage-grouse and preclude it from being listed under the Endangered Species Act. This major collaborative effort paid off in 2015 when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced listing the bird was not warranted. Wyoming celebrated this success but the work is far from over. SGIT will continue with implementing the U.S. Department of Interior management plans, as well as creating consistent definitions for wintering habitat and concentration areas, along with identifying where in Wyoming winter concentration areas exist and what type of management is needed.



Mark Gocke



Forever Wild WWF is a partner with the Game and Fish Department's Forever Wild program, designed to teach and mentor entire families in outdoor skills, including hunting, fishing, archery, and camping. The goal: reconnect families with the outdoors.

Governor's Task Forces: Forests and Fish and Wildlife

WWF is a member of two multi-disciplinary task forces convened by Governor Matt Mead: The Healthy Forests Task Force and the Fish and Wildlife Task Force. WWF Field Scientist Steve Kilpatrick serves on both. The Healthy Forest Task Force works to address the widespread loss of forests in the state from the conifer bark beetle pandemic. The Fish and Wildlife Task Force supports alternative funding for the Game and Fish Department, which in recent years



has had to make up for shortfalls and to find new ways to fund wildlife management and conservation in the state.



Wounded Veteran Hunt Last year's Wounded Veteran Hunt program was in collaboration with the Jackson Hole Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. This program honors our armed forces, wounded service men and women. WWF provides

a special backcountry hunting experience for the veteran and last year was no exception. WWF honored combat-wounded Veteran Staff Sergeant Shaun Meadows with the U.S. Air Force. Meadows harvested a six-point elk in the Jackson Hole area.

Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project WWF also conducts on-the-ground conservation projects during the year. These include WWF's annual wildlife habitat enhancement project, which involves taking down old fencing. This fencing is a barrier to big game animals' movements and can pose life-threatening risk due to entanglement.



FROM THE PRESIDENT, *continued from page 1*

ernor Mead stated publicly that he doesn't think transfers are in the best interest of the people of Wyoming. However, legislation passed last year that allows for a study to take place on the feasibility of the state to manage federal lands. Additionally, HB 209, which passed the House and failed in a Senate committee, would have REQUIRED the transfer of public lands to the state. Make no mistake, this effort is no flash in the pan and is not going to go away, especially in today's political environment.

I don't care how our members use public lands for recreation, whether it's for hunting, fishing, packing, photography, it's time to stand up and fight for continued access to public lands. The standoff with a few radical individuals at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon is an affront against us. Hunters and anglers are the first to buy a duck stamp to help fund these refuges. This militia effort is wildly unpopular with the public. And for good reason, we paid for those lands they want to take over.

Luckily, our forefathers had the wisdom to constitutionally assure that these lands would be available for all Americans, not just those who want to make a buck from them. The Constitution grants the United States exclusive legal control over American lands.

Public lands represent the birth right of every American. They are there for everyone to use. That right may be totally lost or greatly reduced should this process move forward. Every one of us needs to become involved at whatever level possible. Please contact your local, state, and federal representatives and let them know you want public lands to remain accessible to everyone.

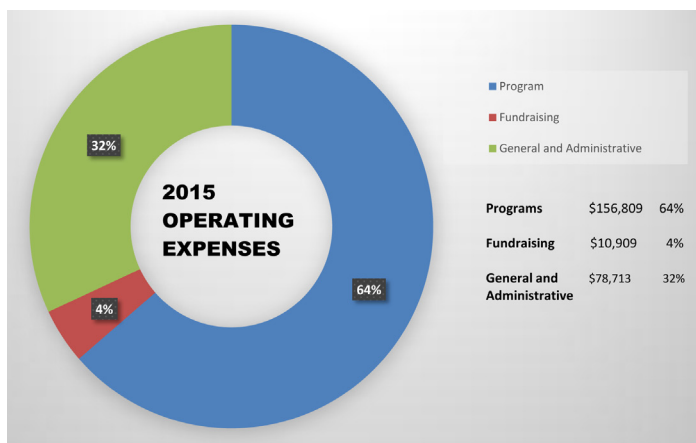
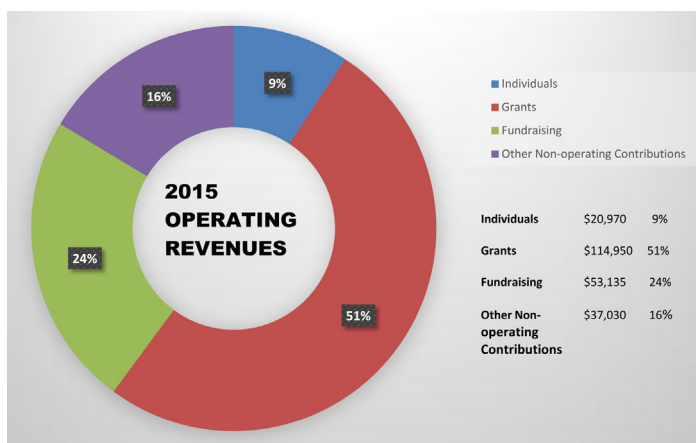
The WWF believes this is probably the most important issue facing sportsmen and women in 2016. We will aggressively defend the right to access public lands and keep them in public hands. Working on this issue will require considerable effort on our part. Please consider helping us with a donation or calling to volunteer some of your time. Since the time of Teddy Roosevelt – the godfather of public lands – federal policy has been to manage, not dispose, of its lands, for the benefit of the public. We are the people and WWF will fight for what is ours.

Thank you for your continued support,
Dave Moody, President

We abuse land because we regard
it as a commodity belonging to us.
When we see land as a community
to which we belong, we may begin
to use it with love and respect.

—Aldo Leopold,
A Sand County Almanac (1949)

Financial Report



A MESSAGE FROM OUR ED



Chamois Andersen

In 2015, WWF was called into action on several conservation fronts. With these additional initiatives along with our current programs, all under our current dedicated staff, it has become clear that we need more funding capacity to keep up with the growing needs and opportunities to conserve

Wyoming's wildlife resources.

While funding these activities was steady in 2015, this year we will do more with our fundraising efforts and outreach to better gain the strong support essential to our efforts to invest in the future of wildlife conservation. Your trust in WWF to make this adjustment in our financial strategy for 2016 is really important. We are already off to an exciting year and are well positioned for growth. Thank you for enabling us to achieve our program and funding goals.

Chamois J. Andersen

Chamois Andersen, Executive Director

Thank you to all the contributors, donors and sponsors who gave to WWF during Old Bills (Community Foundation of Jackson) and Challenge for Charities (Lander Community Foundation), as well as everyone who purchased tickets through our HuntSweeps fundraiser. In addition, anyone who purchased through Smile.Amazon.

WWF SUPPORTERS

Contributors

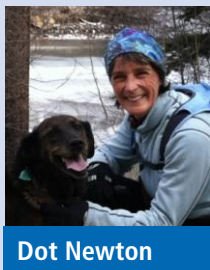
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Dot Newton

Dot Newton, WWF administration manager and outreach specialist, enjoys hiking, running and skiing with her friends, family and dog Lotus, our office canine. Dot is the “glue” of this organization, spending countless hours administering WWF membership, operations and conducting our fundraising and education efforts.

FROM THE FIELD

In 2015, we made significant strides in WWF’s program work. The Greater sage-grouse wasn’t listed on the Endangered Species List, the Greater Little Mountain Coalition finalized management recommendations for the public land that it represents, and the state’s wildlife agency adopted definitions for big game migration corridors, which will be key when land management agencies deal with balancing the needs of wildlife and development.



Joy Bannon

In addition, WWF participated in the collaborative process to revise Wyoming’s Executive Order for the Greater sage-grouse. Wyoming needed to assure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that we had solid and thoughtful management prescriptions to protect this iconic bird. To do this, Wyoming’s Executive Order needed to be revised. As an appointed member of Wyoming’s Sage Grouse Implementation Team, WWF was at

the forefront of this process, collaborating on important conservation decisions. As a result, the Greater sage-grouse was not listed as an Endangered Species. Victory!

In addition to species protection, in 2015 WWF was involved, on behalf of its members, in committees and processes aimed at conserving vital aquatic and terrestrial habitat for wildlife. In southwest Wyoming, a landscape covering 522,000 acres, WWF participated in the process for a major management revision by the BLM for the Greater Little Mountain Area.

Colorado River cutthroat trout inhabit six key trout streams that run through this area. This fish has been revered as one of North America’s most beautiful native fish. It’s also one of the nation’s most imperiled. Other species that still thrive in the Greater Little Mountain Area are big game, including elk, mule deer and pronghorn that birth their young and winter in this area. The Greater Little Mountain Area is a priority habitat for WWF and for the coalition’s 2,500 supporting members.

Other news: If you have noticed in newspapers this year, the subject of big game migration corridors has become a topic of debate among sportsmen and women, wildlife advocates and the agriculture and energy industries. New technologies have enabled scientists to better identify ungulate migration patterns. The recent documented Red Desert to Hoback mule deer migration corridor is one such model and was discovered to be one of the longest migration routes in America!

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New WWF Executive Director!

Chamois Andersen has been named the new Executive Director of WWF. She joined WWF on January 1. Andersen replaces Steve Kilpatrick, who served as director beginning in 2012 and will continue working for the organization as Field Scientist.

Andersen previously worked in communications for wildlife agencies in California and Colorado, and for the University of Wyoming's Environment and Natural Resources program.

"Her blend of high-level business experience, scientific writing, and her background with game and fish agencies and nonprofits made Chamois an incredibly skilled and seasoned candidate to lead WWF," says Dave Moody, president of the WWF board.

As Executive Director, Andersen will work to build membership capacity and fundraising while bringing awareness to Wyoming's citizens about important issues facing Wyoming's wildlife resources.

"It is an honor and a privilege to lead the Wyoming Wildlife Federation into a future where hunters and anglers can continue to have a voice, and for which the conservation of our wildlife resource takes precedence," says Andersen. "This is an enduring organization with a long history of working for sportsmen and women and residents who value the wildlife and the wild places we gain so much from in terms of our own well being."

Andersen is an avid angler and mountain climber. She lives in Laramie with her husband Matt, daughter Marie and their two dogs, Bella and Stone.

Current WWF Board Members serving you

Dave Moody
Lander (President)

Bill Alldredge
Thermopolis (Vice President)

Blake Blazen
Wheatland

Chuck Butterfield
Jackson

Shane Cross
Douglas

Brianna Jones
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Janet Marschner
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Phoebe Stoner
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