

PRONGHORN

Join Our Board

WWF is accepting applications for its Board of Directors. If you have a passion for wildlife and our hunting and fishing heritage, consider this opportunity to serve on our Board. For information and to download an application, log on to www.wyomingwildlife.org. Applications are due Nov. 10.

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From the President

Take Back Our Cowboy Hat

Shane Cross, Board President

Every state has its iconic symbol. Cheese in Wisconsin, country music in Tennessee, corn in Nebraska, and Arnold Schwarzenegger in California. In Wyoming, most of us would say it's the cowboy – which we sport with pride on our license plates. To many, however, the symbol might look more like Old Faithful or the Grand Tetons. In fact, on the home page of the State of Wyoming's website, four of the five images are of our national parks, monuments and forests. We might have two symbols, the cowboy and our public lands.

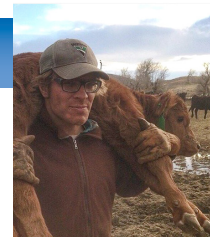
Proponents of public land transfer have done a funny thing, however, when it comes to Wyoming's symbols—they've tried to co-opt the image of the cowboy hat for the transfer movement. For example, one of the movement's chief supporters, William Pendlay, President of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, chose the image of Ronald Reagan in a cowboy hat for the cover of his book, "The Sagebrush Rebels." And despite local ranchers speaking out against the occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge last January, supporters of federal land transfer painted Ammon Bundy as a sympathetic cowboy fighting against government oppression.



Neither could be further from the truth. Ronald Reagan was an actor and politician. And the majority of the occupants at the refuge had no ties whatsoever to agriculture. The truth is, the federal lands transfer movement is driven by corporate interests with an eye toward development and extraction. It's time they just come out and say it instead of soiling, the integrity of the cowboy hat.

The cowboy and public lands go together hand in glove. The cowboy needs and thrives on wide open spaces for his livelihood, while out on the land cultivating the rugged and independent spirit of the cowboy. When my great grandfather threw his hat in the cattle industry in the 1800s in Wyoming, stockmen grazed all their livestock on public lands. And despite a small number of conflicts, most have continued to graze their livestock beneficially, collaboratively, and without conflict on federal public lands.

At WWF, we recognize the importance of both preserving public lands and helping our private land stewards to maintain and enhance healthy wildlife populations in the state. If you agree, please join us and support our efforts to "keep public lands in public hands." Let's take back our cowboy hats and help preserve open lands as the symbol of Wyoming for future generations.



A Wounded Vet Helps Us Find the Heart of the Hunt

Steve Kilpatrick, Field Scientist

July 31st, 2008 altered Shaun Meadows life forever. While guarding our values and life styles in the US and Wyoming, he experienced the impact of an “improvised explosive devise” (IED) in Afghanistan. “I don’t recall for sure what I was doing that day, but I am sure I was relishing Wyoming’s great outdoors and wildlife in some fashion,” says Shaun. “I’m embarrassed to say that I probably never gave a single thought that day to the fact that many others were being injured, and some dying, so that I could enjoy my family and Wyoming’s exceptional outdoors.” However, during the fall of 2015, Shaun gave me and numerous other volunteers from the Wyoming Wildlife Federation and the Jackson Hole Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation the opportunity

to “give back.” He graciously let us take him elk hunting.

Shaun was born on July 31, 1980 in Culpepper, Virginia; July 31, the same day he was injured in combat. He spent most of his childhood in the woods hunting or fishing the lakes, ponds and rivers surrounding his family’s property. He also loved playing football. Shaun is a competitor and likes face-to-face contact with the opponent. “After 9/11, I felt it was my duty to step up and do my part as an American,” he says. “I wanted to take the fight to them after the 9/11 attack.” In May of 2002, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and became part of their elite force as a Combat Controller. He would now be “face-to-face.”

After extensive training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas as well as Hurlburt Field, Florida and McChord AFB, Washington, he was deployed to Iraq in 2007 and Afghanistan in 2007 and 2008. His wife also served her country and was deployed there over similar dates. On July 31, 2008, his 28th birthday, he was on the receiving end of an unwelcome present from his opponent, an IED. Shaun became a bi-lateral above knee amputee.

While Meadow’s physique was altered his persona was undaunted. He was walking three months post-surgery after rehab at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Furthermore, he was running, yes running, six months post-surgery. And

then, after one year at the Walter Reed center, he returned to his unit at McChord, Washington. Shaun finally retired from the Air Force in January of 2011, but quickly landed a position in law enforcement in Lymnville, Tennessee where he now lives with his wife and 10-year-old son.

Fast forward to the week of October 21-25, 2015 when Steve Statler from Semper Fi Community Task Force’s Heroes Outdoor Adventures Program landed at the foot of the Tetons with Shaun to pursue the wily wapiti. Semper FI is a volunteer-based organization in the Tennessee Valley community, which focuses on “giving back” to wounded veterans. The day started with a meeting at Game and Fish where Shaun secured his elk license. We arrived at the camp site nestled along a spring creek adjacent to the renowned Snake River, near Jackson. The camp, fully set up and equipped by numerous members of the Jackson Hole RMEF chapter and WWF, consisted of two wall tents, one for sleeping and one for cooking and storytelling. The landowner and ranch manager along with their families showed up for the evening meal prepared by gourmet camp cook Chuck Butterfield, a member of the WWF Board. Storytelling, enriched by certain beverages, continued into the late night under a star-filled sky.

Morning came quickly with the sounds of breakfast being cooked by volunteer Janet Marschner, also a WWF Board member. After stomachs were filled and the coffee pot emptied, the ranch manager and Shaun canvased the ranch during the early morning hours. Some crafty elk were spotted but Shaun optioned to extend this extraordinary experience and not pull the trigger just yet.

Marschner said, “It was a special anticipation and nervousness, knowing that Shaun had traveled across the country for this opportunity and I was excited and nervous for him, all of us, because we wanted him to harvest an elk.” Shaun passed up the first bull and decided to wait for a better one. We were just ready to quit looking



Steve Statler and Shaun Meadows with his dandy bull elk near Jackson, Wyoming.

when the guide spotted a big bull at the edge of the meadow. Quiet, overtook our group and we were all scrambling for binocs. Shaun then very carefully lined up and took one shot. That part of the hunt was over. At Shaun's first opportunity he called his son.

That evening was filled with the warmth of the fire, but more so with the warmth of making new friends and feelings of "giving back" to an American who so bravely served his country. Chuck, the camp cook, made another gourmet supper with the abundance of donated groceries. Story swapping, a camp meal, a warm tent, laughter and new friendships gave us memories, which we will take to the grave.

A friend once told me that all "life really gives us is time, and the only things we get to take with us are memories." Shaun, you helped us spend our precious time in a way that was so gratifying and fulfilling. The many volunteers from the JH RMEF and WWF now have new memories that we will treasure forever. You reinforced the fact that hunting is about such memories and comradery, not just harvesting an animal. We thank you for sharing your hunt with us.

WWF Vet Hunt 2016!

This year's hunt will be with Vietnam veteran Larry Baker of Cody, who was a squad leader sergeant during the Vietnam War. On May 1, 1968, Baker went into the field for the last time. The official military record says, "1,130, 1 U.S. soldier WHA (wounded by hostile action) from a booby-trap, multiple fragment wounds, hit booby-trap while searching hut." WWF's Steve Kilpatrick will lead Larry on an elk hunt in the Jackson area, thanks to the support of the Jackson Hole Chapter of the Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation.]



"I'm trying to wrap my head around this whole idea of selling off public lands," says Camden Schroth, winner of a fishing pole that was featured in the WWF silent auction at its Aug. 27th fundraiser event in Sheridan. "We need to come up with other ways to solve Wyoming's money issues. But, if we sell off our public lands we get rid of Wyoming," Schroth says. "We need to figure out different ways. We can't sell them...we need to save them!"



Rally for Public Lands — Join us!

For more information and to sign our petition, log on to: **Keep It Public, at** <https://keepitpublicwyo.com/>

When: Saturday, Nov. 5, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Where: Izaak Walton League, 4205 Fort Caspar Rd., Casper, WY

What: Live music and food and beer! Speakers include Chris Madson, writer and former editor of Wyoming Wildlife Magazine. Tania Lown-Hecht, the Outdoor Alliance and Land Tawney, President and CEO, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Wyoming Public Lands Initiative"

The Wyoming Public Lands Initiative (WPLI) is moving forward. While many counties have formed their advisory committee (Carbon, Fremont, Johnson, Park, Sublette, Teton), there are still some waiting in the wings. Because Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) were not created with the idea of being county specific, there are many that cross multiple county lines. For example, the Sweetwater Rocks WSA complex falls between Natrona and Fremont counties, and Fortification Creek WSA lies between Campbell and Johnson counties. These highly regarded and somewhat hot button areas present a problem of how to build a fair and balanced stakeholder advisory committee that is inclusive of each county's involvement.



Jesse Johnson

Johnson County, Campbell County, and Sheridan County addressed this concern by creating a WPLI advisory committee specifically for Fortification Creek WSA. They are asking for broad representation for this committee; the application deadline is October 20th.

As sportsmen, we are focusing on the wildlife in each area, making sure that habitat stays protected and that areas remain accessible to users. As this process continues, we would like to encourage you to get involved. Each meeting and site visit is open to the public and to public comment. For information as well as a listing of participating counties and links to applications, log on to <http://wyomingwildlife.org/public-lands/wpli/>.

Migrations – Historic Corridor Designation Sets Milestone in Conservation

Chamois Andersen, Executive Director



Deer and elk have long utilized their historic migration routes in Wyoming to access vital habitats for their survival. As plants green up at certain times of the year, the animals arrive at just the right time to forage for optimal nutrition. This symbiotic relationship with nature is pretty awesome, but what is key are migration corridors. The Game and Fish Department, along with WWF and other stakeholders are working together to conserve mule deer migrations in southwest Wyoming. The impacts of oil and gas development, housing subdivisions, animal and vehicle collisions, and not so friendly fences can make big game corridor travel incredibly difficult. Such barriers are being considered and management measures proposed. This month we will see a milestone for conserving our historic migrations in Wyoming with the designation of the Sublette Mule Deer corridor.

Game and Fish held a stakeholder meeting on September 30th in Cheyenne to discuss the process to designate the Sublette Mule Deer corridor. The proposal is for one herd-wide corridor for three deer herds, the Ryegrass, Mesa and Red Desert herds. The Sublette Mule Deer corridor has become a template and model for other migrations. The meeting including WWF and numerous conservation groups, academia and industry representatives.

The health of the Sublette Mule Deer herds depends on the ability of the animals to move freely along the corridor to their seasonal ranges (high elevation summer ranges to low eleva-

tion winter ranges). This month the Game and Fish will officially designate this corridor. This designation will be based on agency analysis and scientific research conducted by Hall Sawyer, under the Wyoming Migrations Initiative and through the use of GPS collar data.

Wildlife Division Chief Scott Smith said, “These are historic migration routes that have been used for hundreds of years.” The science also supports this notion. Sawyer said that based on his research there is no evidence of the animals changing their corridor route; it is consistent year after year. However, he said, the timing of migration can vary depending on habitat conditions. “Drought or winter severity effects the timing of migration, earlier or later, but not the location of the route,” Sawyer said. He also stressed that this corridor is not just a ‘conveyor belt’, it is made up of stopovers and bottlenecks. Game and

Fish is currently working to address bottlenecks such as at Fremont Lake on the Red Desert to Hoback Basin migration. Stopovers and bottlenecks are specific areas that have been defined as “vital” to the health of the herds in the Game and Fish Commission’s Mitigation Policy, as approved by the Commission in January. This decision came after more than a year of stakeholder engagement, which included WWF’s participation.

Ultimately, designating the herd-wide Sublette Mule Deer corridor will be important for mitigating the impacts of development. It will also be important for inclusion in the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan, with long-term impacts for wildlife and land management in the region. To read more about the Red Desert to Hoback Basin migration and conservation partnership, log on to www.rd2h.org.



Migration routes of mule deer have been documented using deer that were captured and fitted with GPS collars that record their locations every three hours.” Photo by Mark Gocke.

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From the Field Director

Greater Little Mountain – “Out South”

Joy Bannon, Field Director

The mountain stream is clear, about 3-feet wide, and inhabited by native Colorado cutthroat trout. Red-stripped sandstone badlands scrape up to forested pine hillsides. Mule deer casually eat grass and forbs in groups of four or five, with a couple of nice lookin’ bucks leading the way. This area in southwest Wyoming is located “out south” as residents of Rock Springs and Green River like to call it.

This hidden gem is the Greater Little Mountain Area, located in a unique high desert region regarded by biologists, resource managers and sportsmen and sportswomen to contain some of the most sensitive fish and wildlife habitats in Wyoming. The Greater Little Mountain Area is managed by the Rock Spring’s Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management and is a destination hot spot for hunters and anglers.

Contiguous landscapes of juniper, sagebrush, rabbit brush, and the most northerly reach of pinyon pine spread across 522,000 acres, hosting a variety of habitats that a myriad of wildlife call home. Hydrologically, the landscape is impressive with two recharge areas, ephemeral veins of water, and six streams with native cutthroat trout,

including Red Creek that has the purest genetic strain of Colorado cutties. This landscape represents a much-loved escape. It hosts two core habitat areas for the western iconic bird, the Greater sage-grouse. Little Mountain, Iron Mountain, Miller Mountain, and Pine Mountain are inhabited by trophy-prized elk and mule deer herds. It also contains biologically rich ecosystems with antelope birthing sites. Looking across the landscape you can see quaking aspen groves with leaves fluttering in the wind. It is truly awe-inspiring.

In 2008, sportsmen, union members, and community members joined together to establish a coalition designed to be the guardians of this area. WWF was a lead organization in spearheading the Greater Little Mountain Coalition, with the goal to promote a balanced management plan that protects the area’s hunting, fishing and recreational opportunities for future generations while supporting responsible oil and gas development.

In 2015, the Coalition submitted a management proposal outlining six priority zones to the BLM for the agency’s revision of the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (RMP). Over the past eight years the Coalition has engaged a diverse group of stakeholders in the development of the proposal, which also has the support of the County of Sweetwater and the cities of Green River and Rock Springs. The Rock Springs RMP is slated for final completion by 2019. In the meantime, the Coalition will continue building its foundation of support for the plan, and for this amazing place where wildlife call home and locals call, “out south” – the Greater Little Mountain Area. For information, visit www.greaterlittlemountain.org or www.wyomingwildlife.org.



Photo: Joy Bannon



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Make a regular donation or become a member of WWF via online: www.wyomingwildlife.org

Thank you, your gift is tax deductible.

Major appeal for WWF's 2016 campaigns - Public Lands and Migrations

As a WWF member and supporter, I am asking you to please step up today and make a donation of \$100 or more to our fall fundraising drive. We really need your help! **Thanks to an anonymous donor, your gift can be matched dollar-for-dollar, for up to a maximum total of \$5,000 per donation. We need to hit our goal by Oct. 31, 2016. Donations of \$100 or more will receive a free calendar!**

Make your donation today ~ by mail to WWF P.O. Box 1312, Lander, WY 82520 or online at www.wyomingwildlife.org.