

Wyoming Outdoor Council Strategic Plan 2009–2013

Adopted by the Board of Directors December 13, 2008

Vision Statement

We envision a state that thrives with wildlife, open space, wildlands, clean air and water, healthy communities, and people sustained by renewable energy.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Wyoming Outdoor Council is to protect Wyoming's environment and quality of life for future generations.

Role in Wyoming

We are advocates, watchdogs, problem solvers, capacity builders, and leaders.

We advocate for a healthy environment—with wildlife and wildlands—that contributes to the wellbeing of our communities and people. We advocate for and defend sound environmental public policies and private practices, and against any abuse of Wyoming's land, air, and water.

We help to develop constructive solutions to conflicts that threaten environmental health. We bring people together—the many voices and concerns of Wyoming—to develop practical, collaborative, and consensus-based approaches to stewardship.

We are also leaders in the environmental field. We help to build the strength of the environmental movement in Wyoming. We promote awareness and understanding of conservation issues by Wyoming citizens.

We are prepared, when necessary, to use the legal system to protect Wyoming's environment.

Our Path

Since 1967, the Wyoming Outdoor Council has worked to protect Wyoming's environment and quality of life for future generations. In that time, we have served as advocates, watchdogs, coalition-builders, problem-solvers, and legal experts in a strong and consistent way that makes us leaders in the area of environmental protection in the state.

While addressing the challenges to Wyoming's environment today, we are also planning for Wyoming's future. We have the experience to see the big picture; have a track record of bringing the stakeholders to the table to solve problems; and aren't afraid to think about new directions that we must take to achieve our mission in the decades to come.

Beliefs and Values

- We treasure Wyoming's wild places, clear air, clean water, and wildlife.
- We believe environmental issues are entwined with our quality of life, including human health, economic wellbeing, healthy wildlife, open space, and our children's future.
- We are bound to protect those nation's treasures located in Wyoming—our public lands.
- We believe the health of the environment affects the health of the individual.
- We value jobs that build and sustain stable and sustainable communities. We believe that Wyoming can create such jobs with a greater emphasis on clean, renewable energy production and visionary economic development.
- We value democracy. Citizens have a right to participate in developing solutions that protect Wyoming's unique environment.

A. Protecting Wyoming's Land, Air, Water, and Wildlife

1. Heritage Landscapes

The Wyoming Outdoor Council will seek to protect large tracts of federal land by pursuing enforcement of and development of appropriate and needed federal and state laws, rules, plans and policies. The focus of these state and federal efforts will be preventing energy development or other substantial impacts in these iconic areas. The heritage landscapes we have identified for protection include

- The Wyoming Range
- Wind River Front
- Areas in the Bridger-Teton National Forest currently closed to oil and gas leasing
- Jack Morrow Hills
- Adobe Town
- Fortification Creek
- Beartooth Front
- Shirley Basin
- All national forests in Wyoming
- BLM areas of critical environmental concern
- Citizens' proposed wilderness areas on BLM lands
- National parks, national monuments, and national wildlife refuges.

We may also seek to protect other areas of federal land if they are identified as having significant environmental, historic, cultural, or social values threatened by energy development; however our primary focus will be on the identified areas. If other threats besides energy development become significant, we will address them.

At the **federal level**, our efforts to protect heritage landscapes from energy development will include the following:

- We will advocate for the enforcement of federal laws, working closely with the regional EPA office and the USFWS.
- We will ensure that federal land management agencies (primarily the USFS, BLM, NPS) prepare adequate environmental analyses and planning documents and involve the public in all decisionmaking processes affecting these landscapes.
- We will participate in grassroots coalitions and in outreach efforts to educate and involve the public.
- We will meet with and advocate that federal elected and appointed officials support our positions.
- We will pursue media strategies that further our goals of protecting these landscapes.
- We will undertake administrative appeals and litigation efforts, if necessary.
- We will advocate for federal legislation, where appropriate, to safeguard these landscapes.

At the **state level**, our efforts to protect the identified heritage landscapes from energy development will include the following:

- We will advocate for the enforcement or improvement of state air and water quality laws and regulations.
- We will seek to engage and achieve the support of relevant state agencies, primarily the DEQ air and water quality divisions and if time and resources (staffing) permit, we will also engage with the Abandoned Mine Lands, Industrial Siting, Land Quality, and/or Solid and Hazardous Waste divisions and other agencies such as the Office of the State Engineer, the Office of State Lands and Investments, the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority, and the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.
- We will also work with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in the active protection of these landscapes, especially with respect to the protection of migration corridors and important seasonal habitat in these areas, and the protection of sensitive species.
- We will involve state decisionmakers, state agencies (including the Environmental Quality Council), state elected officials (particularly the governor’s office), and other citizens (including local residents and our members) who could influence the protection of these areas at a state level.

2. Best Available Technology and Practices

We will seek to ensure that on all areas of federal lands where energy development occurs or is proposed (including any development that occurs in the heritage landscapes), the development is regulated to protect environmental, cultural, historic, and social resources to the maximum extent possible. In other words, we will ensure that the agencies and operators are “doing it right.” We will focus on oil and gas development proposals; there may be other energy technologies and infrastructure we choose to address (see Energy section).

Specific elements of these **state-based** efforts may include:

- Pursuit of statewide air and water quality campaigns. A focus of the air quality campaign will be reducing regional haze and protecting Class I areas. The water

quality campaign may have as one component pursuit of a statewide instream flow statute.

- We will seek to ensure that reinjection, discharge, and disposal of coalbed methane–produced water occurs in ways that ensure environmental protection. Specific elements of these efforts may include attempting to ensure the State of Wyoming general watershed permits are as protective as possible, commenting on relevant rulemaking and regulations, participating in watershed committees, and seeking to get the state to more fully recognize water quantity is a key component of water quality that the DEQ should regulate.
- Needed state legislation or Environmental Quality Council action for more protective laws and regulations will be considered and pursued as necessary.
- We will seek to involve and get the support of decisionmakers, state agencies, university officials, and elected officials (including the governor’s office) in these efforts.
- We will promote and seek to enlist active participation of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in efforts to protect migration corridors, important seasonal habitat, and sensitive species in areas proposed for oil and gas and perhaps other types of energy development.
- We will also engage in grassroots advocacy in efforts to protect areas from the effects of oil and gas development, including seeking the direct involvement of community members, including our members. We will encourage the development of comprehensive health impact assessments.
- We will file protests, administrative appeals and/or lawsuits when necessary.

Specific elements that target the **federal level:**

We will promote aggressive implementation and enforcement of federal environmental laws as conditions to energy development on federal lands or of federally owned minerals and seek to ensure that land-use plans and project-level decisions require the most stringent conditions possible. The focus of these efforts will be on oil and gas development, but we may selectively engage in other issues affecting federal lands such as vegetation treatment projects, livestock grazing, hardrock mining proposals (including uranium mining), wind development proposals, and other issues. Specific elements of these efforts may include the following:

- We will seek to create the most protective Bureau of Land Management resource management plans and Forest Service land and resource management plans possible, focusing on oil and gas development, roadless area protection, special status species protection, and special area protection.
- We will seek to achieve the most environmentally protective decisions possible for specific project-level authorizations of oil and gas development. We will selectively engage in other project-level development proposals, such as vegetation treatment projects.
- In pursuit of the previous two items, we will maintain our involvement in various coalitions including the Upper Green River Valley Coalition, Friends of the Red Desert, and Citizens Protecting the Wyoming Range unless we determine that

continued participation in these coalitions will not advance our goals to the extent desired.

- We will continue to seek to protect Forest Service roadless areas from all threats and seek to maintain the Forest Service “roadless rule.” We will seek to protect citizens’ proposed wilderness areas on BLM lands.
- We will seek to involve in support of our goals agency personnel (both land managers and EPA), decisionmakers, elected officials (particularly the governor’s office), and citizens, including our members.
- We will seek out and build relations with private industry and local communities.
- We will file protests, administrative appeals and/or lawsuits when necessary.

3. *Wildlife*

The Wyoming Outdoor Council will work to ensure the health, sustainability, and continued protection of Wyoming’s native wildlife.

We will support the Endangered Species Act and advocate for protection of threatened and endangered species and species of special concern. We will employ media and outreach strategies; other tools may include engagement with agencies, legislation, and litigation. Specific projects include the following:

- Work to protect wildlife in the face of energy development in the heritage landscapes listed above and in places where development does proceed.
- Research and publicize endemic species in Wyoming, linking this effort to the broader topic of threatened landscapes.
- Build support for and advocate for the protection of desert sagebrush ecosystems.
- Work to protect the greater sage-grouse, including working collaboratively with other groups to determine best policies and recommendations for protecting sage-grouse, especially from the impacts of energy development.
- Advocate for local, state and federal protection of migration corridors.
- Work with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to promote sound policies for fish and wildlife, including protecting winter range and other sensitive habitats across Wyoming for all native species.
- Build support for wolf recovery in Wyoming, working to influence elected officials and state and federal wildlife managers. We will also advocate for state legislation that will designate statewide trophy-game status for wolves in Wyoming.
- Build support for and advocate for the protection of forest carnivores in Wyoming, including the Canada lynx and wolverine.

4. *Energy*

Revised energy statement adopted by the board of directors September 18, 2010

To help safeguard Wyoming’s outdoor and environmental heritage, and to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, the Council will participate in the planning and management of new sources of electricity, fuels, and energy infrastructure including electrical transmission and pipelines. Issues related to energy generation, infrastructure, and deployment are central to our work. With demand for energy continuing to increase, it has become even more vital that energy development in Wyoming be planned to minimize environmental impacts and maximize social benefits. Because of the

consequences of climate change and the health risks and environmental costs associated with carbon-based energy production, the Wyoming Outdoor Council will

- Advocate that state and national decision-makers, citizens, and stakeholders move toward a clean energy future with emphasis on increased energy-use efficiency and the adoption of renewable, distributed energy as a significant component of the state's energy portfolio.
- Promote strict guidelines regarding the siting and construction of new and traditional energy-related infrastructures in order to minimize negative impacts on the environment.
- Encourage diminished reliance on fossil fuels for energy production and more responsible use of existing energy resources.
- Resist approaches to energy policy that are not based on the above principles if we determine such a course is needed.

More specifically, the Wyoming Outdoor Council will

- Participate in the planning and monitoring of new sources of electricity and transportation fuel as well as electrical transmission. As new and traditional energy infrastructures are proposed—including generation facilities, carbon sequestration projects, enhanced oil recovery projects, and energy transmission corridors—we will work to minimize impacts to landscapes, wildlife, public health and welfare, and air and water quality, and will resist these projects if we believe their environmental impacts are too great.
- Encourage the state to make investments in advanced coal technologies and energy storage and research projects, to the extent these projects have environmental benefits or lesser environmental impacts relative to other alternatives.
- Influence policy and legislation that will enable Wyoming to do its part as the nation's biggest per capita emitter of greenhouse gases to limit and offset carbon emissions and to more efficiently use existing resources.

B. Outreach and Legislative Advocacy

The Wyoming Outdoor Council will support and inform people, agencies, legislators, and organizations of the mission of the Wyoming Outdoor Council. This will be accomplished in a variety of ways, including:

- Engage, serve, and inform our members through publications, mailings, conferences, meetings, field trips, and other means.
- Collaborate with partners, including members, other conservation groups, land trusts, and coalitions.
- Influence elected officials and other decisionmakers and anticipate changes in their offices.
- Understand and communicate with regulatory agencies and authorities, including BLM regional offices, the Wyoming DEQ, governor's office, attorney general, secretary of state, state legislature, WGFD, Forest Service/USDA, and EPA.
- Mobilize citizens and encourage public board participation.
- Be aware of public boards that have vacancies and be prepared to suggest or nominate individuals to serve on those boards.

- Respond to citizen requests for help.

C. Organizational Strategies

1. Build Broad Support for Mission and Recognition of the Council's Brand

- Execute a marketing plan to build support for our programs, including conveying important information about the challenges to Wyoming's environment to journalists, Wyoming citizens, policymakers, current and potential supporters, and other stakeholders.
- Maintain the integrity of the Council's brand, vision, and voice consistently across all promotional activities.
- Increase Council membership to 2,011 by 2011.

2. Secure the Council's Financial Future

- Achieve stable annual revenues of \$1,000,000 by 2011.
- Increase foundation fundraising by 10 percent annually.
- Increase major donors portfolio (members at \$1,000 and above) by 10 percent annually.
- Establish life-long relationships through stewardship initiatives.

3. Strengthen Board Capacity

- Put into place a comprehensive board development plan with recruitment targets and new director orientation procedures by summer 2009.

4. Build Organizational Capacity

- Expand on capable staff to meet the scope of the challenges facing Wyoming's environment while positioning the organization to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.
- In the near term, we have identified two staffing requirements—a communications director and an energy program director—that must be filled in order to insure that our mission is widely understood, relevant, and robust.

5. Continue to Develop Organizational Structure and Management to Accomplish Strategic Goals

- Use all tools available and strategic, integrating the Council's assets to take advantage of program efficiencies and complimentary priorities.
- Strengthen teamwork and internal communication by adding quarterly calls between staff teams (executive and program) and by convening one all-staff retreat or meeting annually.
- Use consistently the document "Process for Taking on a New Issue/Opportunity" for evaluating all new programmatic actions. Annually review current campaigns

and programmatic actions under the same guidelines prior to submitting work plans at the beginning of each year.