



WYOMING UPDATE

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

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Dear Friends,

Say Cheese!

If you notice a teen out snapping pictures of nature, they may well be hoping their image will win a prize in our annual "I Believe in Conservation" student photo contest. The contest, which offers a cash award, is aimed at getting kids out to observe and connect with nature. TNC also wins by getting great photos for our various publications and website! Prizes are awarded in four categories: Wyoming Lands, Wyoming Waters, Wyoming Wildlife and People & Nature.



Spring is a time for renewal, and, as we celebrate TNC Wyoming's 30th anniversary, it is also a time for looking back at the past and forward to the future! The numbers included here speak loudly for our decades of accomplishment, and the work we profile here befits our long legacy of conservation achievement in Wyoming. I hope you share my excitement in seeing us work to engage people of all ages in nature-based activities, to strengthen public policy and funding for conservation, to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions to animals and people, to continue to protect vulnerable lands from development and to advance conservation science through innovative efforts like the sagebrush restoration project.

For me, a key recent accomplishment was the passage of the federal public lands package. If you hike, fish or enjoy the wonders of Wyoming's outdoors, The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has probably touched your life. LWCF directs money from offshore oil-drilling federal royalties to conservation, public access and recreation priorities across America. Since its creation, the fund has delivered \$132 million for projects in Wyoming—projects as local as the ball field in Lander City Park, to the addition of Antelope Flats to Grand Teton National Park.

But it almost disappeared after Congress failed to reauthorize the fund before its expiration date last year. Fortunately, and thanks to the tireless efforts of TNC and its partners, lawmakers rallied and, with a rare show of strong bipartisan support, voted to permanently reauthorize the fund.

This not only gives us hope but allows us to affirm, together, that conservation continues to play an important role in our country and that TNC Wyoming, as it enters its next 30 years, will continue to reflect that enduring American value.

Milward Simpson

Milward Simpson, State Director



The Nature Conservancy is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) international membership organization. Its mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. An annual membership fee of \$25 includes membership to the Wyoming Chapter and the worldwide organization.



The Nature Conservancy meets all of the Standards for Charity Accountability established by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The BBB Wise Giving Alliance is a national charity watchdog affiliated with the Better Business Bureau.

Printed on 100% PCW recycled, process chlorine-free paper, creating the following benefits:

- 2.9 # trees preserved for future
- 2,787.9 gal. water saved
- 285.2 lbs. solid waste not generated
- 937.1 lbs. CO2 prevented

JOIN US!

There are lots of great ways to connect with nature this spring and summer. Click the "Get Involved" tab at nature.org and search for "Volunteer and Attend Events" in Wyoming to get more details on the following events.



Crow Creek Cleanup

MAY 11 - CHEYENNE

Give Mother Nature a hand with her spring cleaning by removing trash and other debris from a section of Crow Creek near Cheyenne. It won't be glamorous, but you'll feel great about helping to restore this stretch of creek.

30th Celebration!

MAY 30 - LANDER

Help celebrate our anniversary with food, spirits, music and memories. Join us at the Museum of the American West livery stable.



Wildflower Watch Walks

JUNE-SEPTEMBER JACKSON

First Sunday of every month

Become a citizen scientist and learn more about local native

plants while collecting data on how they are being affected by climate change. It's a great way to do your part in helping nature adapt to the changes.

Heart Mountain Community Hike

JUNE 1 - POWELL

A hike at TNC's Heart Mountain Preserve is always an adventure, and this time of year plants are in bloom and wildlife are on the move. Choose a leisurely pace or shoot for the summit. The summit hike is approximately 8 miles round trip.



Wyoming BioBlitz

JUNE 7-9 - EVANSTON

Bring friends and family for a 24-hour adventure identifying as many plants, animals and insects as you can at this fun and enriching event. This year's location is Bear River State Park. BioBlitz is free, but book early, as reservations fill quickly!

Butterfly Count

JUNE 14 - LANDER

We'll supply the nets; you bring sharp eyes to spot these fluttering beauties. It's fun for all ages. As usual, we'll split the day between TNC's Red Canyon Ranch and Sinks Canyon State Park.



Lander Community Foundation in support of our work in the local area.

Heart of a Trapper Hike

AUGUST 24 - POWELL

This 8-mile Heart Mountain Ranch Preserve hike is sponsored by Northwest College, in partnership with TNC. The hike is part of the "Paint the Town Red" celebration weekend, which promotes school spirit and the return of alumni.



Conservation Brown Bag

JUNE 19 - SHERIDAN

Bring a lunch and join us at noon for an hour-long informational session about our program in northeast Wyoming. The sessions will be hosted by different conservation groups each Wednesday in June at the Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library.



Challenge for Charities

JULY 4 - LANDER

Kick off the Fourth by showing your support for local nonprofits at the annual Lander Half Marathon and 5K races. You can choose to run or walk. Help TNC receive matching funds from the

Antelope Dash

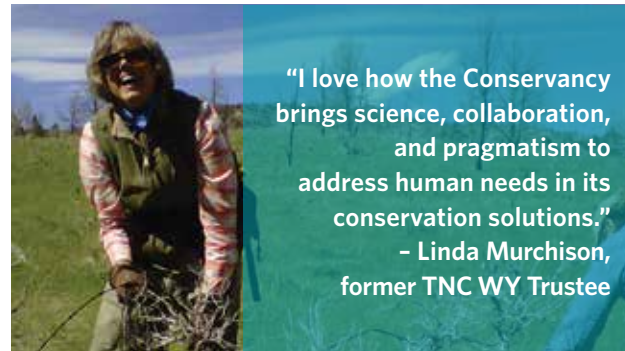
AUGUST 24 LARAMIE/CHEYENNE

This rugged trail, which runs through Curt Gowdy State Park, is challenging at either the 4-mile or 8-mile distance. Join Wyoming chapter staff on the trail and learn about our work statewide.

"It's the Conservancy's great sense of purpose that moves us. In the conservation world, it's a beacon of light. The organization will never be deterred in working hard to secure the future of the lands and waters it strives to preserve."
 - Frank Goodyear, TNC WY Trustee



"I had the feeling ... of being admitted to a place of special beauties. But not just to observe and enjoy but to go forth and tell, show, bring the message that these treasures can so easily vanish if man does not work to preserve this gift, this heritage."
 - Nancy-Carroll Draper, on protecting Yellowstone



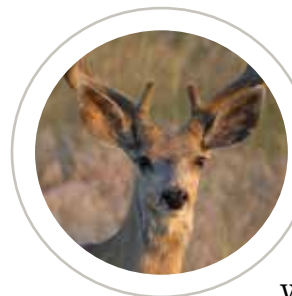
"I love how the Conservancy brings science, collaboration, and pragmatism to address human needs in its conservation solutions."
 - Linda Murchison, former TNC WY Trustee



"The Conservancy is my choice because I trust them to preserve, in perpetuity, the natural beauty of the area, the opportunity for my students to learn about and enjoy horses and riding and the land's agricultural use."
 - Ellie Prince, landowner with TNC easement



CELEBRATE OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY!



Traditionally, the 30th anniversary is marked with a pearl. We're celebrating our entire string of conservation achievements over the past three decades!

Since our early days, when we secured Wyoming's very first conservation easement in Jackson, we and our partners have conserved more than one million acres and hundreds of miles of river across the state. But we're about more than numbers.

Resilient Lands

We've protected habitat for what was, at the time, the largest wintering bighorn sheep herd in the world. We've helped protect and restore sagebrush habitat that is crucial to greater sage-grouse, mule deer and other wildlife. We've employed cutting-edge science to study wildlife migration and develop ways to reduce death and damage from wildlife-vehicle collisions. Even the rare Wyoming toad has benefited from

our collaboration with the Mortenson Lake National Wildlife Refuge. We've also built a network of nature preserves to engage people with nature and serve as living laboratories for conservation practices.

Healthy Waters

In addition to completing the first-ever survey of Wyoming wetlands and clearing hundreds of acres of invasive Russian olive trees on the Shoshone River, we've joined with others who cherish the Popo Agie River in the Healthy Rivers Initiative. Through our collaboration and restoration, we are ensuring that the river holds enough clean, cold and abundant waters for both people and nature. On the Tongue River, our partnership with the local ranching community is maintaining the integrity of this important warm water fishery. We are also finding ways to naturally store water in streams and wetlands by imitating the work of beavers—providing a hedge against the warmer, drier conditions that result from the changing climate.

Securing the Future of Conservation

Everything we do is with an eye on the long term. Conservation that endures relies on the support of people, now and into the future. To that end, we regularly engage students and community members in the work—whether it's planting sagebrush seedlings, hiking a preserve or restoring damaged riverbanks. We are also taking the lead on advancing policy that supports conservation such as the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust, or the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. In almost everything we do, we work with public and private partners.

Growing and Sharing

Through the years, we have expanded the number and expertise of our stellar staff and built an outstanding Board of Trustees. We've even lent our skills to global efforts, such as the first-ever conservation easement in Argentina.

We look forward to more conservation successes over the next 30 years and beyond. We hope you'll continue to support us through your generous contributions and by spreading the word about who we are and what we have accomplished.

By the Numbers

1986
 YEAR THE CHAPTER WAS - OFFICIALLY - CHARTERED

1,500+
 - NUMBER OF - RIVER MILES CONSERVED

6,080
 - NUMBER OF - SUPPORTERS (as of August 2018)

300K+
 ACRES IN CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

132,231
 - ACRES - CONSERVED IN COLLABORATION - WITH OUR - PARTNERS

184
 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS HELD BY THE CHAPTER

Restoring Sagebrush With A Pastamaker?!



Sagebrush grows under pretty harsh conditions, so you might think that cultivating it would be easy. Not so. It's not simply a matter of scattering seeds on top of the soil. To restore sagebrush on disturbed sites across Wyoming, our scientists needed more answers, so they went back to the lab—one

that looks a bit like a hybrid kitchen and plant nursery. On one side of the lab, three large tables hold rows of tiny pots, under the nourishing light of grow lamps. On the other, a large mixer blends various recipes of a growth medium, or as TNC restoration scientist Maggie Eshleman calls it, "the seed pod dough," which provides nutrients and protection from herbicides and helps retain moisture. The "dough" is then loaded into an industrial pasta machine, which extrudes it as small pellets called pods. Now, with the seeds safely encased in the growth medium, the pods are ready to plant.

Eshleman and conservation scientist Corinna Riginos are developing a pod recipe that may bring sagebrush back to disturbed areas like mine sites. There are several questions they need to answer. What size pods are ideal for these minute seeds? Too much growth medium may make it hard for the seeds to emerge; too little may not supply enough nutrients and moisture to give them a good start. What are the essential ingredients to help sagebrush establish in places where the



topsoil is gone? Different recipes may even be needed for different conditions and different locations. At the lab, we can test new recipes indoors before trying them in the field.

The idea for seed pod pasta began with researchers at TNC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture who were working to restore burned areas in Oregon. We are adapting and further testing the technology on abandoned mine sites and other disturbed areas in Wyoming. Along with our Oregon colleagues, we are working with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and the Bureau of Land Management. In fall 2018, we planted some 10,000 seed pods on reclaimed mine sites and at our Red Canyon Ranch Preserve. We hope to have some initial results of our laboratory trials this summer.



Legislative Update

It was another busy session for the Wyoming Legislature. As always, our highest conservation priority was protecting and strengthening the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust Fund. Under the leadership of Governor Mark Gordon and with strong legislative support, an additional \$5 million has been added to the fund's corpus. The legislature also approved additional support for the Treasurer's Challenge Fund for the WWNRT, which will encourage matching fund contributions that can then be added to the trust fund. In addition, we won approval for the Transportation Committee to recommend additional funding for research that will reveal ways to reduce accidents from wildlife crossing our state's roads and highways. TNC scientists have been in the forefront of research on wildlife—vehicle collisions.



Donor Profile: Anne Pendergast

her early life, a place where she could find solitude and open space. In her twenties, she moved across the country to pursue a master's degree in geology from Oregon State University, then landed a job in Casper, Wyoming. Anne quickly grew to love the state's wide-open spaces and recreation opportunities. Today, she enjoys fly fishing, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and admiring the Bighorn Mountains through her kitchen window.

Anne joined the Wyoming Board of Trustees in 2005, where she focused on learning more about the organization and supporting fundraising activities. When asked what distinguishes TNC from other conservation groups, she responds: "Being able to take a

30,000-foot perspective and get out ahead of problems coming down the pike is critical. TNC is good at prioritizing its work and gathering the right partners to solve problems in a collaborative way."

Along with being a trustee, Anne is a member of the Legacy Club—a group of supporters who have made lasting commitments to conservation through life income gifts or by naming TNC as a beneficiary in their estate plans. "I realized that it was an easy and comfortable thing to do," she says. "And it represents a vote for TNC's future and a continued dedication to the organization's mission."

Ask Anne Pendergast what she thinks of TNC, and she will get right to the heart of the matter. "The French word for heart is 'coeur,' which is also the root of 'courage,'" she says. "TNC has both, and they are qualities that I truly value."

She was born and raised in Maine, and the ocean was a central focus of

[→](#) GO TO our back cover for more information on legacy giving.



Deer Haven: Partnering For Conservation

Conservation is very much a team sport. TNC is happy to help other conservation groups bring projects to a close. That was the case with the Deer Haven conservation easement that is now held by the Sheridan Community Land Trust.

The easement covers just 113 acres, but it's prime, irrigated land near the Tongue River—very important for the community's agricultural heritage, for clean water and for wildlife. Herds of a hundred mule or whitetail deer are often seen feasting on the fields in the spring, which led to the name of this project. But the area is also feeling a lot of development pressure, so the easement is a way to prevent subdivision and development of the land, to enable completion of the easement, TNC provided expertise and financial assistance.

OUR MISSION | TO CONSERVE THE LANDS AND WATERS ON WHICH ALL LIFE DEPENDS

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THIS PAGE Hiking Heart Mountain © Zack Mason



LEAVE A LEGACY FOR NATURE

The Legacy Club is a special group of supporters who have made a life-income gift to The Nature Conservancy or named us as a beneficiary in their estate plans. Members receive exclusive benefits such as a semiannual newsletter, TNC's annual report and invitations to special trips and events. But the real benefit is knowing they've helped keep Wyoming wild and working.

Won't you join them in making a gift for the future of conservation?

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The Nature Conservancy cannot render tax or legal advice. Please consult your financial advisor before making a gift.