The Nature Conservancy

Protecting nature. Preserving life.

WYOMING

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming

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DEAR FRIENDS,

I'm very pleased to send you this review of our work over the past year, especially in the context of our 30th anniversary. Since officially opening our doors as a chapter, The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming has made huge strides. Moving from our early focus on nature preserves and conservation easements, we have branched out into much broader efforts to protect Wyoming's spectacular lands and waters.

We are still committed to protecting this natural bounty, but we have also accelerated our efforts to transform the way we use valuable natural resources and inspire citizens to take action for conservation. In partnership with you and others, we can realize a Wyoming where people and nature thrive.

This has also been a year of change, including the departure of Milward Simpson from the helm. The chapter had many great successes under Milward's stewardship and we all thank him for his leadership, inspiration and energy.

We are extremely fortunate to have Elizabeth Kitchens step in as our interim director. Starting as a member of TNC's global legal team and now as Utah's associate state director, Elizabeth's experience of over 17 years with TNC has shown her to be a steady hand and sound leader. We are confident that she will continue to move forward our conservation agenda without missing a beat. Each of you is also an essential part of our conservation success and we are honored to have such committed supporters on the team. Thank you for being part of this continuing journey!

All the best,

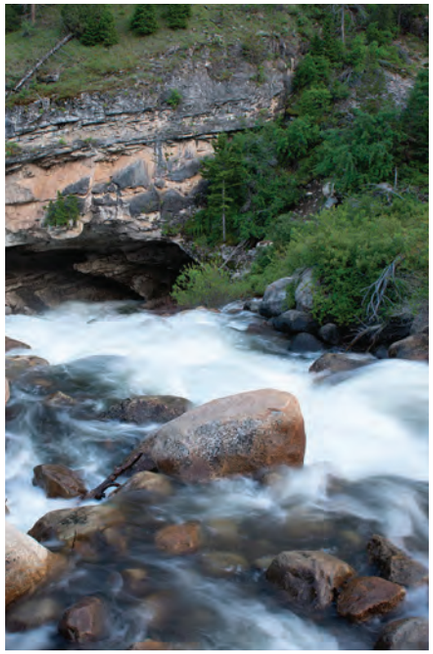
Margie Taylor

Margie Taylor
Chair, Board of Trustees

I am thrilled and honored to have been asked to serve as acting Wyoming state director. I've had the opportunity to work with many of the Western state chapters during my 17 years with TNC, and I know Wyoming to be a strong, dedicated team. With the incredible Wyoming staff and its steadfast trustee leadership, I'm confident the chapter's critical conservation work will keep progressing during this time of transition.

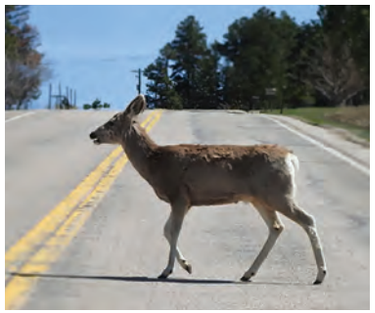
~ Elizabeth Kitchens
Acting Wyoming state director

BY THE NUMBERS

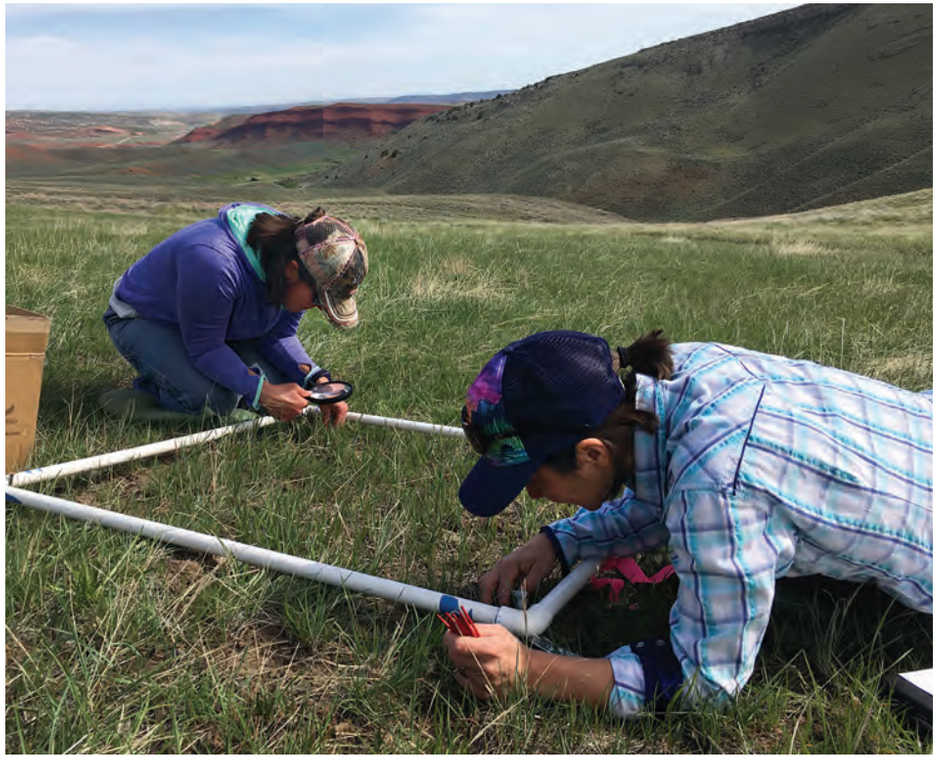


$1.6M
Raised since 2017 for Healthy Rivers Initiative projects

1,087
attempts by deer to cross roads captured on camera trap video in FY19



53,949
Pounds of CO_2 emissions offset by the solar array on our Lander office, which provides 85 percent of our electrical needs



20,000 sagebrush seed pods planted

302,811
Acres in TNC Wyoming's 185 conservation easements

234
Wildflower Watch citizen scientists (ages 2–89 years old!)

COVER PHOTO Bighorn © *Gage Graus* **OPPOSITE PAGE** LEFT TO RIGHT Margie Taylor © *TNC*; Elizabeth Kitchens © *Andrea Nelson/TNC*; Popo Agie River © *Scott Copeland* **THIS PAGE** CLOCKWISE Deer crosing road © *Summer Giubbini*; Solar panel installation © *Scott Kane/Creative Energies*; Wildlife Watch citizen scientists © *Trevor Bloom/TNC*; Hansen Ranch, Lander © *Kathy Browning/TNC*; Checking seed pod growth © *Maggie Eshleman/TNC*

LAND

Coming Full Circle

When John and Lucille Hogg's dog brought home what looked like some kind of weasel 38 years ago, little did they know it would open a new chapter for the most endangered mammal in the country: the black-footed ferret. Now, the Hogg family has taken an important step in the successful return of the ferrets to the wild by placing a 2,354-acre conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy on their Lazy BV ranch near Meeteetse.

In 1981, no one believed there were any black-footed ferrets left in the wild, so the discovery on the Hoggs' ranch came as quite a surprise. Since then, more than 70 captive-bred ferrets have been released on the Lazy BV and neighboring Pitchfork Ranch (also protected with a conservation easement), and biologists have documented six wild-born kits at the release sites.

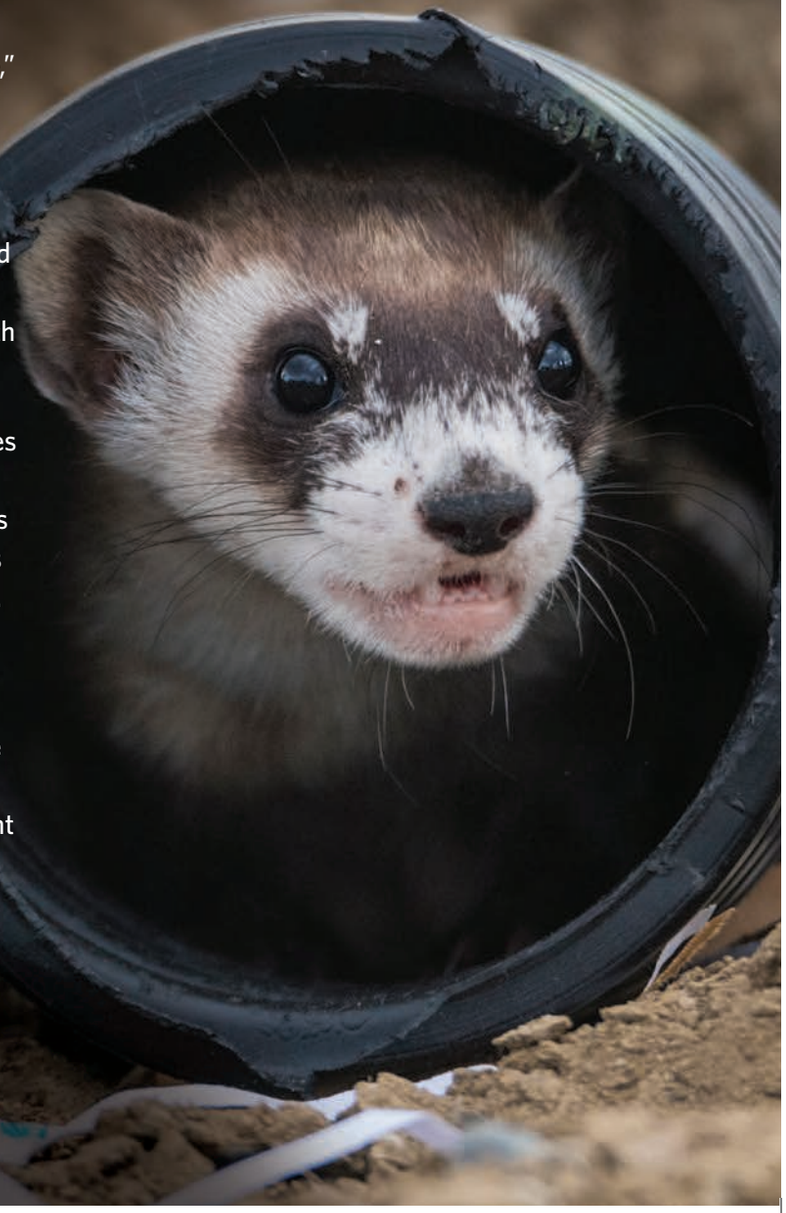
The Lazy BV was purchased by the family in 1918, and Allen Hogg and his wife Kris are now the third generation to steward the land. For them, a conservation easement just makes sense.

"We really agree with the idea of conservation, keeping this land in ranching and good for wildlife," says Allen Hogg. "We also want our son to be able to inherit the place, and the payment for the easement will help make that possible."

TNC land strategies director Jim Luchsinger had high praise for the family's perseverance: "The Hoggs deserve our appreciation for sticking with us throughout a very long process."

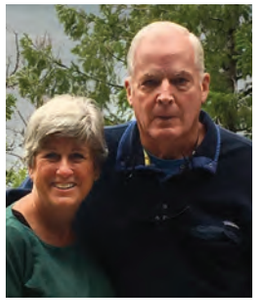
In addition to the ferret, the easement conserves habitat for greater sage-grouse, grizzly bears and Yellowstone cutthroat trout. It also protects important big-game winter range and stretches of the upper Greybull River and Rawhide Creek.

The Lazy BV is part of approximately 27,000 acres of land under easements in the Greybull River–Cottonwood Creek region, preserving the agricultural character of the area, protecting habitat and preventing degradation of important streams and wetlands.



THIS PAGE Black-footed ferret © *Keith Ladzinski* OPPOSITE PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM Kris and Bill Hogg help release ferrets on their ranch. © *Jenna Van Hofe/Casper Star-Tribune;* Deborah de la Reguera and Bill May. *Courtesy Deborah de la Reguera;* TIMELINE TOP TO BOTTOM © *Robert Granzow;* © *Dewey Vanderhoff;* © *Dewey Vanderhoff;* © *Dick Reddick;* © *Guillaume Beau de Lomenie*

A Little Help from Our Friends



Our donors have always had different ways of showing their commitment to The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming. Most offer us essential financial support. Some donate valuable conservation easements on their land. Some volunteer their time as members of our Board of Trustees. Others make a more unusual contribution.

Former trustee Deborah de la Reguera and her partner Bill Mayo just completed the second year of their three-year commitment to help us monitor easements. De la Reguera's family put an easement on their ranch south of Lander before they sold it, so she was familiar with the tool. As part of an easement agreement, TNC is obligated to regularly visit the land and ensure that the contract terms are being fulfilled. The visits also let us keep in touch with landowners with whom we enjoy a special partnership.

"What a great way to experience the landscape and to meet some wonderful people," says Mayo.

For de la Reguera and Mayo, who are also Legacy Club members, easement monitoring is a way to add a little extra to their love of outdoor activities.

The couple spend part of the year in Baltimore, close to family, but count the days until they can be back in Wyoming. They are both "hooked" on TNC's collaborative and nonconfrontational approach. "A lot of open lands we have today, a lot of migratory corridors that are protected today are thanks to people's past efforts," de la Reguera explains. "TNC is building upon that great work to ensure our wildlife and open space have a future."

30 YEARS Wyoming Wild&Working

30 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

1989–2000

The Nature Conservancy began working in Wyoming in the 1970s and was formally chartered in 1989

1989

TNC's Wyoming chapter established in Lander

1990

Tensleep Preserve established

1991

Sweetwater River Preserve created

1993

Red Canyon Ranch purchased

1997

Y Cross Ranch easement donated (50,000 acres)

1998

Heart Mountain Ranch purchased

HEALTHY WATERS

Tongue River Initiative

This year, private contributions from sponsors like you allowed The Nature Conservancy and partners to remove 10 acres of invasive Russian olive trees from tributaries of the Tongue River and replace them with native cottonwood and willows. Russian olives crowd out native plants that provide critical habitat for birds and other wildlife. They also use enormous amounts of water—far more than the native plants—taking it away from the wildlife and people who need it.

With your support, this fall, we're completing the largest collaborative Tongue River Initiative project to date on the river just outside Dayton. Using rock and wood structures and realigning the stream, we're improving stability of the banks, habitat for fish and wildlife, and overall stream function. We're also finishing a smaller project to stabilize streambanks on Little Goose Creek, using on-site woody materials to reshape the channel and banks.

Five Years of Success

This year marks the culmination of a five-year Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant secured by TNC for the Tongue River Initiative. These funds made it possible to take some big strides in improving the health and function of the river system. In most cases, the partnership reached or exceeded the goals for this first grant, which we have already applied to renew it.

Project Type	Planned	Completed
Septic System	6 projects	16 projects
Fencing/Water/Cover	8 projects	11 projects
Irrigation On-Field	5 projects	4 projects
Irrigation Infrastructure	3 projects	3 projects
Stream Restoration	1 project	3 projects
Conservation Easements	1 easement	1 easement
Russian Olive Treatment	No set goal	5 projects

RCPP grants are funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

THIS PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT Flowering Russian olive © *iStockphoto;* Sheridan City staff removing Russian olive © *Sheridan Community Land Trust*

Crow Creek Revival

The Nature Conservancy has helped the Crow Creek Revival, a team of community members working to improve the creek, take a big step toward restoration of this valued local resource. The public can look forward to enjoying more recreation and cleaner water on the creek, thanks to a $200,000 grant secured by TNC from the Microsoft Environmental Sustainability Water Replenishment program. The funds will help launch the first phase in the revitalization of a 1.2-mile segment that runs from Happy Jack Road in western Cheyenne to Lincolnway.

In addition to revitalizing the creek system, the restoration will improve water quality, increase habitat and provide recreation for residents and visitors to Cheyenne and Laramie County. It will also improve the visual appeal of the western portion of Cheyenne.

TNC has been a strong advocate for the Crow Creek Revival for several years, helping sponsor local volunteer clean-up days, but this grant moves restoration efforts to the next level.

30 YEARS Wyoming Wild&Working

30 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

2000–2010

From ground-breaking science on the range to establishing important preserves, TNC expands its reach and asserts its leadership in conserving Wyoming's natural world

2000

Sheep Mountain protected

2001

Pitchfork Ranch easement secured (14,000 acres)

2006

Grasslands Conservation Fund created

2007

Mitigation plan for the Jonah field created

2008

Student Photo Contest launched

THIS PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM Volunteers clean up Crow Creek. © *Brent Lathrop/TNC;* TIMELINE TOP TO BOTTOM © *David Stubbs/TNC; © Edward Orth; © Alyssa Flanagan*

SECURING THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION

Through the Lens of Youth

For 10 years, high-school students from across Wyoming have been capturing beautiful photographs for our "I Believe in Nature" Student Photo Contest. You've seen many of these images in our publications and on the website. The goal of the competition is to inspire kids to get up close and personal with the natural world and then share their perspectives. Each year, the number of submissions has grown, reaching more than 500 in our 2019 competition. As always, some of the things the teens have to say about the photos are as poetic as the images themselves.

Lucia Mauri:
This is a picture of a section of the Yellowstone River... I've always loved water and when I saw this perfect curve made by the river, I knew I had to take a picture of it.

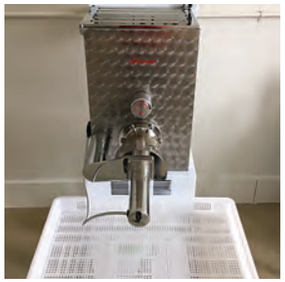
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Austin King; Samantha Gray; David Gordon; Elizabeth Chambers; Skyler Woodruff; Keturah Cowan; Kinley Bollinger; Sadie Dimsey; Tyler Whitaker; Trinity Burke; Moran Heydenberk; Virginia Wing; Lucia Mauri*

Skyler Woodruff: This is a beautiful place so we as conservationists need to speak for the forests and protect them so humans and animals can enjoy it.

Kinley Bollinger: I reflected on the beauty of our planet while taking this picture. Moments like these make me determined to protect our wild and free home.

Larissa Benson: Photos are perfect for looking at things with a different point of view. You can look at things that are plain that everyone sees the same, but then you can find a new way that is more interesting.

NEXT-GEN CONSERVATIONISTS



Magda Escudero-Kane

It was a book she read one summer, *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren, that inspired TNC intern Magda Escudero-Kane to learn more about science. And when her mom heard about our sagebrush seed pod lab, things just seemed to fall into place. As a volunteer at the lab, Escudero-Kane says, "I could have a lasting and profound impact on the Western landscape that I love."

The 15-year-old Lander native and sophomore at Lander Valley High School has carried out a variety of tasks at the lab, everything from testing which soil and fertilizer mixes generated seeds the best, to counting, on hands and knees, the tiny seedlings that had sprouted in the field.

"That was the most fun," she enthuses, "seeing something a third the size of my fingernail grow into an actual plant!"

In addition to her internship, Escudero-Kane keeps busy playing the cello and competing as a cross-country runner and skier. And while she is continuing to study science, she has her sights set on a career in politics, preferring a role behind the scenes as an aide.

Wherever she is, Escudero-Kane will no doubt make a big impact on protecting the natural values she so cherishes in Wyoming.

THIS PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT Magda Escudero-Kane © *Scott Kane/Creative Energies;* Laboratory equipment, sagebrush seed pods and first sprouts © *Maggie Eshleman/TNC*

Mary Schneider

Mary Schneider moved to Lander in mid-July, the day before she began her new job with The Nature Conservancy. "I had never been to this part of the state," she shares. "It was the first time I realized how outrageously beautiful the landscape is here."

For Schneider, part of that beauty lies in the mosaic of shrubs and grasses beneath her feet in sagebrush country. Originally from upstate New York, Schneider studied restoration ecology and graduated from Washington State University in 2018 with honors. "Since I moved out West, I have been drawn to the sagebrush ecosystem, and I was excited to get involved in its conservation," she explains.

A chance to serve as TNC's "Seasonal Precision Restoration Technician" proved the perfect match for Schneider's education and passion. She's working with TNC restoration scientist Maggie Eshleman, who is leading innovative efforts to encase sagebrush seeds in a special "dough" to increase their survival rates. The job gives Schneider a front-row seat to the inventive and detailed work involved in repairing nature.

Whether she's setting up field experiments outside or painstakingly counting seeds under a microscope, Schneider appreciates the big picture behind her work. "It feels really good to be part of the entire story...to problem solve and to be creative along the way."

30 YEARS Wyoming Wild&Working

30 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

2010–2013

TNC increases the pace and scope of work to secure wildlife migration corridors, improve river health and inspire new connections between people and nature

2010

Statewide Wetlands Assessment launched

2011

Interpretive cabin opens at Heart Mountain Ranch Preserve

2012

Lander Foothills easements purchased (3,500 acres)

2013

TNC reaches 84,000 acres of conservation easements in the Big Horn Foothills

THIS PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM Sagebrush near the Platte River © *Mark Godfrey/TNC;* Mary Schneider © *Maggie Eshleman/TNC;* **TIMELINE** TOP TO BOTTOM © *Ken Driese;* © *Edward Orth;* © *Zack Mason;* © *Joseph Kiesecker/TNC*

FINANCIAL RESULTS

(July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019)

WE CARRY OUT OUR WORK WITH A DEEP COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY.

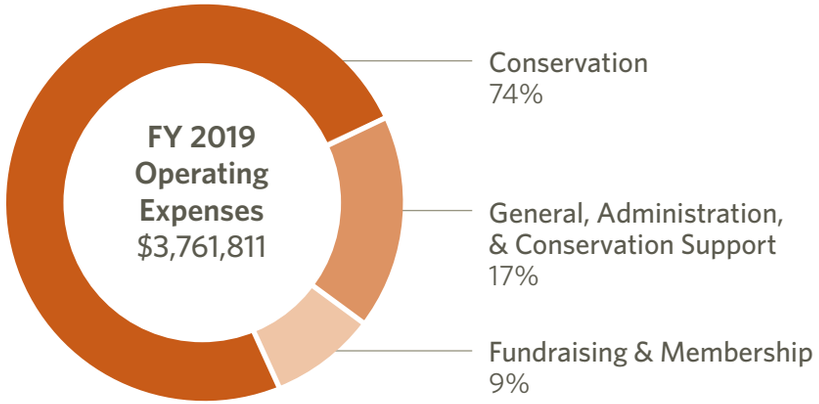
Our conservation accomplishments this year have been empowered by sustainable financial resources. We have built a strong and effective organization in keeping with our strategic plan.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY IN WYOMING STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

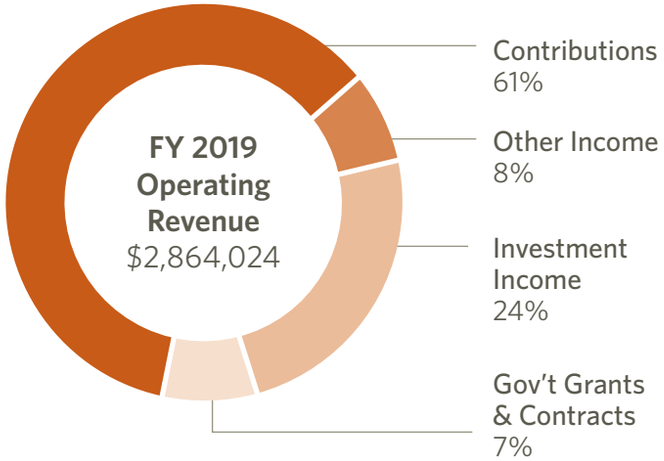
	As of June 30, 2019	As of June 30, 2018
Assets		
Cash and Investments	$2,417,152	$3,234,209
Endowment Funds	$17,670,878	$17,458,707
Conservation Lands	$178,055,884	$178,488,861
Other Assets	$3,239,527	$4,206,884
	$201,383,442	**$203,388,661**
Liabilities	$2,016	$27,002
Net Assets	$201,381,425	$203,361,659
	$201,383,442	**$203,388,661**

This figure includes our conservation easements. The value of these easements, which cannot be sold, make up the majority of the conservation lands on our balance sheets and reflect the generosity of Wyoming landowners who, to date, have granted 185 easements to TNC.

Programmatic Efficiency



Revenue*



* Total revenue includes land gifts and investment income that are not part of operating cash.

OPPOSITE PAGE The Y Cross Ranch in eastern Wyoming's Shirley Basin grasslands © *Edward Orth;* Amy Davis, *courtesy of the Patten-Davis Foundation* TIMELINE TOP TO BOTTOM © *Scott Copeland;* © *Scott Copeland;* © *Trevor Bloom/TNC;* © *Mark Godfrey/TNC*

DONOR PROFILE

The Patten-Davis Foundation

As we mark our 30th anniversary, we pause to thank some of the long-time supporters who have helped ensure that our state's lands, waters and way of life continue. One of these partners is The Patten-Davis Foundation.

In 1941, Chicago lawyer Courtenay C. Davis moved to Wyoming, where he purchased the 50,000-acre Y Cross Ranch outside of Cheyenne and gradually moved his family and himself to Wyoming. He ran a successful cattle operation over the next five decades. He established The Courtenay C. Davis Foundation in 1992 to help protect open spaces and ranching traditions.

Davis' daughter, Amy, grew up splitting her time between Wyoming and Illinois. Summers riding horseback on the ranch had a lasting impact and fostered an early conservation ethic. After completing her education, she spent increasing amounts of time at the ranch working alongside her family and ranch hands.

Amy's adventurous life included jobs at NBC News and in the Wyoming legislature. She also risked her life during a 26-day sailing trip from San Diego to Hilo, Hawaii. One friend recalled that while Amy traveled frequently and visited friends in many places, Wyoming was always a touchstone for her.

After her father's death, Amy ran the organization (which streamlined its name to the Patten-Davis Foundation) and volunteered with local nonprofit organizations. "She was determined and knew what she liked," says David Cohen, one of the Foundation's three trustees. "She was devoted to ranching and that motivated her interest in TNC." Davis was equally devoted to health care and education.

In 1997, the Foundation gave the Y Cross Ranch to Colorado State University and the University of Wyoming to develop a working laboratory for ranch management. That plan never worked out and, instead, the ranch was sold. Fortunately, Amy had donated a conservation easement to permanently protect the ranch from future development. The conservation easement is held by TNC who continues to monitor it.

To date, the Foundation has donated over $1.7 million to TNC's Colorado, Indiana and Wyoming chapters. These funds have enabled us to explore innovation in rangeland management and protect important working lands. We are grateful for their generosity and value their partnership as we continue to maintain Wyoming's wild spaces and working places.

30 YEARS Wyoming Wild&Working

30 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

2013
1 million acres protected in collaboration with our partners

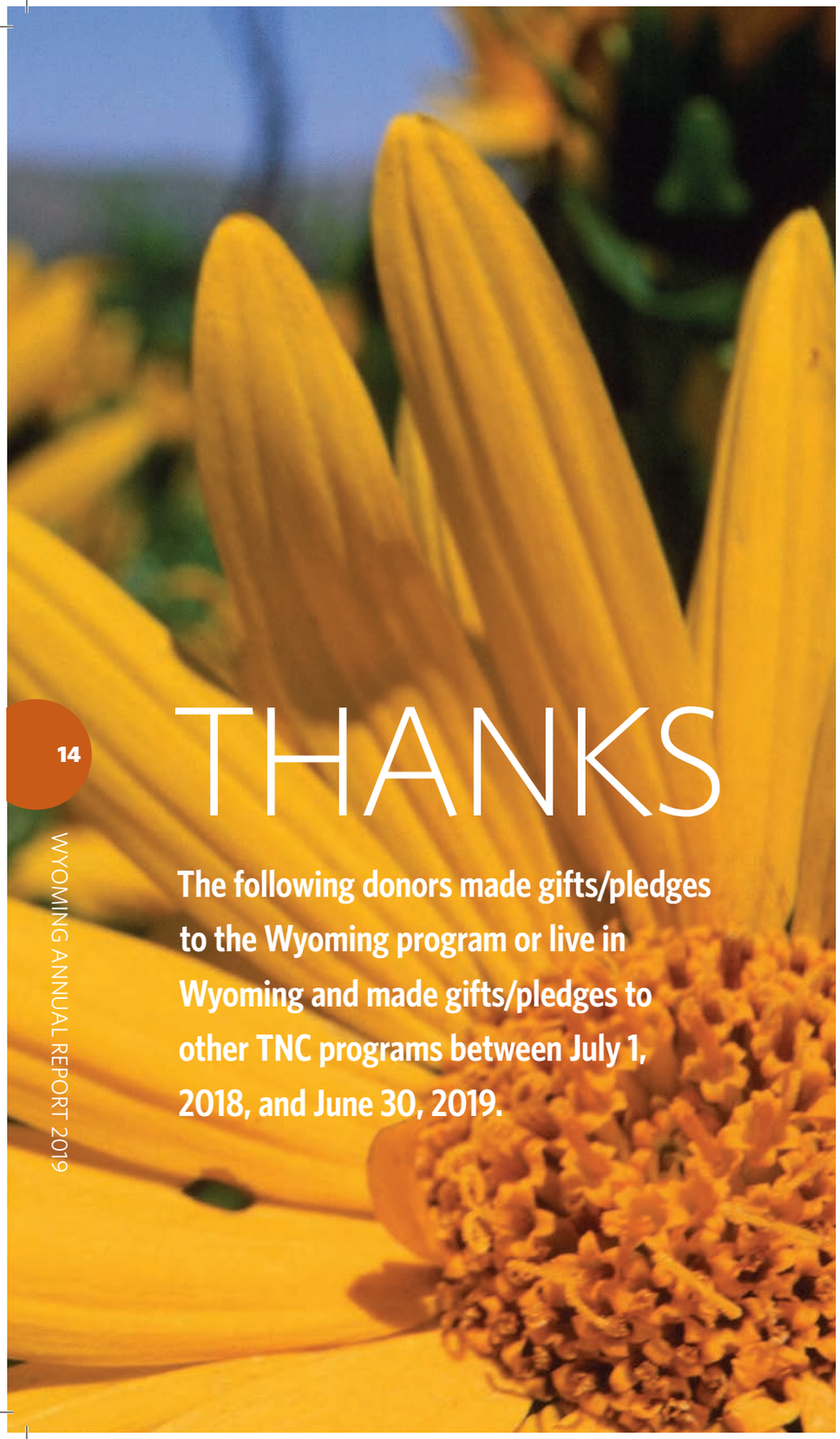
2014
Mule Deer Migration study begun in Greater Yellowstone

2016
Healthy Rivers Initiative created for Popo Agie River improvements

2017
Assisted TNC's Argentina program with its first conservation easement (99,000 acres)

2018
Wildflower Watch citizen scientist program launched

2019
Sagebrush restoration technology lab opened



THANKS

The following donors made gifts/pledges to the Wyoming program or live in Wyoming and made gifts/pledges to other TNC programs between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019.

$100,000—$999,999

Anonymous (2)
Dr. Frances W. & Dr. Lenox D. Baker Jr.*
Mary Anne* & Bill Dingus
Linda & Reid Murchison III*
Nancy-Carroll Draper Charitable Foundation
Anne P. Pendergast*
Anne N. Young* & Jim E. Nielson

$10,000—$99,999

Anonymous (4)
Ranlet & Frank Bell, Jr.
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Lisa Carlin
Barron Collier II *
Community Foundation of Jackson Hole
Ginger & James Dager
Anne & Charles W. Duncan, Jr.
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Kristine & Richard McGuire
Mule Deer Foundation
National Geographic Society
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Patagonia Environmental Grants
Patten-Davis Foundation
Erika Pearsall & Edgar D. Jannotta, Jr.
The Perkins Charitable Foundation
Lollie Benz Plank*
Winifred & Kevin Reilly, Jr.
Christine & James Scott
Trillium Family Foundation
Whiteley & Nicholas Wheeler
Susan & David Work*
Wyoming Community Foundation

$1,000—$9,999

The A.C. & Penney Hubbard Foundation, Inc.
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Terri & William Baas
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Elizabeth & Dr. Steven Buskirk*
James Campbell
Stephen G. Campbell
Lynne & Jeff Carlton
Laura & Edward Carney
Ann & Charles Catlett
Ann & F. J. Cornwell, Jr.
Susan Cory
Deborah de la Reguera*
Nancy & Mark Doelger*
Sarah & Dr. David Doll
Nancy & David Donovan
Tania G. & Thomas M. Evans, Jr.
Gregory J. Fluet
John Freeman
Ashley & Roderick Gagne
Alice C. & Dr. Alan Garner
Bob Giurgevich
Stanley E. Hartman
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Kathryn Jenkins & Michael J. Shonsey
Alison & Richard Jones
Peggy Keigher & Paul Lonac
Betsy & Morris Kellogg
Judy & Dr. Dennis Knight*
Lander Community Foundation
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Gloria & James Lawrence
Margaret & Henry Lester
Catherine & David Loevner
Carolyn & Jack Long
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* Wyoming board member, emeritus board member, staff member or volunteer

Susan & Steven Twitchell
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Dr. Karen C. & Dr. Steve E. Williams
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Yonder Star

NEW LEGACY CLUB MEMBERS

Anonymous (1)
Catharine Bell & Robert Weiglein
Dede J. Christopher
Diane D. Mott
Gene A. Rohrbeck
Daniel M. Smith
Doug & Pegi Sobey
Neil Uranowski

IN-KIND DONATIONS

AIC Investment Properties, LLC
Black Dog Design
The Brinton Museum
Davis & Cannon, LLP
Anne P. Pendergast*

COLLABORATION IS KEY

Albany County Commissioners
Audubon of the Rockies
Boise State University
Buffalo Bill Center of the West
Cheyenne High Plains Audubon
City of Cheyenne
City of Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities
City of Cheyenne Parks & Recreation
City of Cheyenne Public Works
City of Lander
City of Laramie
Cody Conservation District
Crow Creek Revival
Curt Gowdy Chapter Trout Unlimited
Curt Gowdy State Park
Environmental Defense Fund
Fremont County Weed and Pest
Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation
Hot Springs County Weed and Pest
Indiana University
Jackson Hole Clean Water Coalition
Jackson Hole Land Trust
Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation
Knobloch Family Foundation
Laramie County Conservation District
Laramie Rivers Conservation District
Little Snake River Conservation District
Medicine Bow Conservation District
Minnesota State University
Mule Deer Foundation
Muley Fanatic Foundation
National Geographic Impact Initiatives
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Northeast Wyoming Invasive Grasses Working Group
Northern Great Plains Joint Venture
Northwest College
Occidental Petroleum
Park County Weed & Pest
Popo Agie Conservation District
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Sandstone Ditch Company
Science Kids
Sheridan Community Land Trust
Sheridan County Conservation District
State University of New York
Sublette County Conservation District
Sublette County Weed & Pest District
Syracuse University
Teton Science Schools
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Conservation Fund
The Wilderness Society
Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association
Trout Unlimited
Trust for Public Land
UC Berkeley
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University of Wyoming Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources and the Ruckelshaus Institute
University of Wyoming Program in Ecology
University of Wyoming Wyoming Natural Diversity Database
US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
US Department of Agriculture United States Forest Service
US Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management
US Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation
US Department of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service
US Department of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife
Western Ecosystems Technology
Wyoming Conservation Corps
Wyoming Disabled Hunters
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Wyoming Prescribed Fire Council
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