

ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT TODAY ~ FOR TOMORROW

## BUFFALO WYOMING BLM TO END COAL LEASING IN POWDER RIVER BASIN

Powder River & WORC Staff

In May, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it will end federal coal leasing in the Powder River Basin – the largest coal-producing region in the United States. The decision represents a historic shift in federal management of coal in the region, recognizing environmental and health impacts on coalfield communities and acknowledging that the market has shifted away from coal toward cleaner and more affordable energy sources.

The BLM released a final environmental impact statement for two Powder River Basin resource management plans, Buffalo and Miles City, finding there would be significant impacts to climate, human health, and environment from continuing to lease the region's approximately 6 billion tons of low-grade, highly polluting coal. BLM selected a "no future coal leasing alternative," through which existing mines can develop already-leased reserves but cannot expand with publicly owned coal reserves. BLM anticipates that coal

“For decades, mining has affected public health, our local land, air, and water, and the global climate. We look forward to BLM working with state and local partners to ensure a just economic transition for the Powder River Basin as we move toward a clean energy future.

Lynne Huskinson

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companies in Wyoming have sufficient reserves to keep mining through 2041, negating the need for new coal leases.

“Coal has powered our nation for many decades, but technology, economics and markets are changing radically. BLM's announcement recognizes that coal's era is ending, and it's time to focus on supporting our communities through the transition away from coal, investing in workers, and moving to heal our lands, waters and climate as we enter a bright clean energy future,” said Paula Antoine, Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) Board Chair, from Winner, SD.

In 2022, in response to a challenge from conservation groups, including Powder River and WORC, a federal judge found that the two resource management plans failed to address the public health consequences of allowing massive amounts of coal, oil, and gas production from public lands and minerals in the Powder River Basin over 20 years. The court ordered BLM to redo its environmental analysis.

BUFFALO WYOMING BLM  
continued on page 7

## Bonding, methane rules face federal pushback

KATHERINE STAHL  
Powder River Staff

Recently finalized rules reforming the federal onshore oil and gas leasing program and imposing restrictions on methane emissions from the oil and gas industry are facing pushback in Congress. This resistance comes in the form of two Congressional Review Act (CRA) joint resolutions of disapproval. This act provides Congress an avenue to overturn federal agency actions. When an agency issues a rule, it is required under the CRA to submit the rule to Congress – this usually happens around the same time that the rule is published. Once the rule is submitted to Congress, Congress then has 60 session days to file a joint resolution of

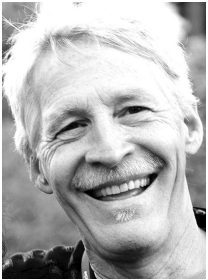
disapproval. “Joint” means that both the House and the Senate file the resolution.

Although the CRA was enacted in 1996, it has been used only 20 times to overturn a federal agency rulemaking. Notably, the CRA was used to overturn 16 rules shortly after former President Trump took office in 2017. This was a unique situation wherein the Republican Party held the House, the Senate, and the Presidency, creating a perfect setting for CRA use. The act requires a joint resolution of disapproval to be passed by both the House and the Senate, then signed by the President, to overturn an agency rule.

METHANE  
continued on page 7



# Message from the Chair



I'm writing this not long after the recent Bureau of Land Management's supplemental environmental impact statement proposing to issue no further federal coal leases in the Powder River Basin. This proposal was met with statements of "outrage" from Wyoming's congressional delegation, the members of which suggested it was part of President Biden's war on the west. Our governor termed it the president's "...lack of regard for the environment..." as if the president had made the decision rather than the BLM following a court order and an exhaustive review.

The implication in both our congressional representatives' and our governor's statements was that the BLM had made a partisan political decision rather than an environmental one that sought to further a long term solution to problems arising from our reliance on fossil fuels and the relationship that reliance has to the climate crisis. It also implied that the decision would stop coal mining. But mining companies can continue to develop their existing federal coal leases which the BLM estimates will allow for the region's current rate of production to continue through 2041.

Between 2015 and 2023, US coal production fell 36%. In the Powder River Basin, it dropped 20% in the first quarter of 2024 as compared to the first quarter of 2023. These declines are not the result of the BLM's decision. Rather, changing economies in a changing world have been the primary cause and these changes ask us to plan for economic transition in a way that will be less disruptive than it otherwise might be. That means moving away from fossil fuels and toward more environmentally friendly renewable energy systems.

Unlike Wyoming's representatives in Congress or the governor, environmental groups lauded the BLM decision as a long overdue win for the health and protection of the earth. An article in the New York Times included a color photo of a Wyoming coal mine foregrounded by a very large very bright yellow coal haul truck with a very celebratory headline commenting on this victory. While I agree with the BLM's proposed ruling, I am uncomfortable with celebrating it as the victory of one view over another. If we are to move forward, it can't be with winners and losers. Any victory worth celebrating must be a victory for us all, for the future of our lands and lives.

My uneasiness with celebrating the end of future coal leasing has another side, which is more direct, more personal. I live in the Powder River Basin. Many of my family members have been and continue to be ranchers in the Basin whose lives have been linked to Buffalo and Gillette. Friends and neighbors have worked in the coal mines as well as in the oil, natural gas, and coalbed methane extraction industries. In the 1950s Buffalo and Gillette were about the same size. Now Gillette is nearly ten times larger. That's because of energy development, a world built around the production and sale of fossil fuels, largely coal.

I know that ending the burning of fossil fuels will be good for the planet and, in the long term, good for all living beings. But in the short term, an economy's end means dislocation for many people—living, breathing, laughing, crying human beings losing jobs and homes, having to start over. To face change in a positive way means guaranteeing good schools, both the kinds that prepare us to be flexible resilient individuals and the more technical kinds that prepare us for jobs. It means making sure there is a universal social service system that includes affordable health care and housing, access to parks and cultural resources, financial support for families and children. It means supporting an agricultural system in which foods are fresh, of high quality, and equitably distributed.

Only when we recognize the difficulties people face when one economy is disappearing before another is fully in view can we begin to celebrate such change. Celebration will be the result of work we do together on behalf of a healthier planet and healthier communities serving the needs and hopes of each person. When that day arrives, we'll celebrate together.

*David Romtvedt*

**POWDER RIVER BASIN RESOURCE COUNCIL (POWDER RIVER)** is a grass-roots organization of individuals and affiliate groups dedicated to good stewardship of Wyoming's natural resources. Powder River was formed in 1973 and stands for the preservation and enrichment of our agricultural heritage and rural lifestyle; the conservation of Wyoming's unique land, minerals, water and clean air consistent with responsible use of these resources to sustain the livelihood of present and future generations; and the education and empowerment of Wyoming's citizens to raise a coherent voice in the decisions that will impact Wyoming residents' environment and lifestyle.

**POWDER RIVER IS A MEMBER OF** the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC). WORC member groups are Dakota Resource Council, Dakota Rural Action, Idaho Organization of Resource Councils, Nebraska Organizing Project, North Dakota Native Voice, Northern Plains Resource Council, Oregon Rural Action, Western Colorado Alliance for Community Action, Western Native Voice and Powder River Basin Resource Council.

**THE SERVICES PROVIDED** by Powder River include public education, community organizing and lobbying as permitted on behalf of its membership. Powder River is a non-profit, 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:** \$30 for individuals, \$50 for families and \$20 for students and senior citizens. Powder River is dependent on contributions for its work; contributions, large and small, are welcomed.

### ACTIVE AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

- Alliance for Renewable Energy (ARE)
- Clark Resource Council (CRC)
- Cheyenne Area Landowners Coalition (CALC)
- Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens (PACC)
- Sheridan Area Resource Council (SARC)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### POWDER RIVER BREAKS

EDITOR: Robin EH. Bagley  
 Photos by Powder River staff and members.

# BLM coal leasing plan hasn't caused the sky to fall

by BOB LERESCHE, Clearmont

*Editor's Note: Reprinted from the June 20, 2024 issue of WyoFile. WyoFile is an independent nonprofit news organization focused on Wyoming people, places, and policy.*

Last month the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued Wyoming a reality check. Governor Mark Gordon's reaction would put Chicken Little to shame. An "outraged" Gordon claimed the BLM's decision was merely part of an "ongoing attack on Wyoming's coal country and all who depend upon it," and issued his usual threat to sue over "federal overreach." Ignoring that BLM leadership hails from our neighboring Western states, he expressed his "profound disappointment that our nation's highest executive leadership has chosen [...] to grovel at the feet of coastal elites."

What grave threat caused such gubernatorial angst? Nothing more, really, than a land use plan that acknowledges the realities of coal market trends. BLM published a Resource Management Plan with a "preferred alternative" that includes no future coal leasing in the Powder River Basin. Sounds bad, eh? But the reality tells a different story, so let's step back from the political rhetoric and look at what BLM's decision really means.

Since 1990 Clean Air Act amendments moved the epicenter of federal coal mining to Wyoming, our state has enjoyed the huge benefits of jobs and revenues from mines that at their peak produced half of America's coal

and generated over 25% of America's electricity. In 2008, almost 7,000 Wyoming miners produced 468 million tons of coal. But a lot has changed since those peak employment and production days. For many reasons, including primarily low natural gas prices, the bottom has fallen out of the market for Wyoming coal.

Every big coal company in Wyoming has gone through bankruptcy in the last decade, fewer than 5,000 miners still have jobs, and production has been cut roughly in half from the top years to under 250 million tons in 2022. Although Wyoming still produces more coal than any other state, as more coal power plants are being retired and competing energy sources like natural gas and renewable energy are more affordable for utility customers, coal's share of the electricity market continues to shrink even faster. Just this year, coal production is down 20% because natural gas prices stayed low through our warmer winter.

No company has bought a federal coal lease in the last 12 years. Why would they? BLM's records show a trend of lease applications being voluntarily withdrawn by the companies that originally wanted them. All the BLM plan does is recognize reality – why should the agency make coal available for leasing when no company is asking for a lease? There is enough federal coal under lease now to last through 2041 at today's production rate, which continues to shrink. The companies know BLM's decision doesn't threaten their industry. This lack of concern

about BLM's realistic resource plan was obvious when, as WyoFile reported, not one coal mining company bothered to attend a Campbell County Commission meeting held to rally opposition to the BLM plan.

Public and political outrage is even more baffling when we look at what the recent Resource Management Plan really means. It is just that – a plan. It's what the agency intends to do in the future under the laws that guide their mission, given their best estimates of what markets and environmental conditions will be. If carbon capture, the Hail Mary dream of saving the coal industry, does succeed and coal is needed to economically power our electric grid into the future, the resource plan will certainly be amended. If new coal feedstock manufacturing requires more coal, the plan will be amended. The plan is not an eternal prohibition of coal mining, but a logical course of action given market and climate realities.

And yet, our political leaders seem determined to deny what has been obvious to most of us for years. Jobs and revenue from Big Coal will not support our state forever. It's time to stop whistling past the graveyard and start embracing the future.

Our politicians owe us not lawsuits, anger, accusations, and despair, but a commonsense plan to deal with realities over which we have no control. BLM's coal leasing plan should give us the impetus to create another even more valuable plan – one designed to transition into Wyoming's inevitable economic future.

## New bonding rules will hold industry accountable

By JILL MORRISON, Story

*Editor's Note: Reprinted from the May 13, 2024 issue of WyoFile. WyoFile is an independent nonprofit news organization focused on Wyoming people, places, and policy.*

The Bureau of Land Management has finally required the oil and gas industry to grow up and operate responsibly. The BLM finalized a new rule requiring bonds to cover the cost of plugging oil and gas wells and reclaiming public and private lands over federal minerals. The oil and gas industry has enjoyed a virtual free pass for decades, while the coal industry has been required to post bonds and reclaim lands since 1977. The coddling of the oil and gas industry is over.

I spent 31 years working with landowners addressing impacts of oil and gas development on their property. I witnessed first-hand damages caused by thousands of idle or orphan oil and gas wells. Trash and equipment littered landscape with rusted and leaking tanks, unfenced blackened pits, rusted barrels, plastic pails, broken pump-jacks, contaminated soils either barren or covered with noxious weeds, and dead birds in uncovered waste pits. For decades the oil and gas industry waltzed away from the messes due to BLM's failure to require adequate bonding to ensure plugging and reclamation.

Many landowners I worked with referred to this problem as the "wreck, ruin and run strategy" used by the oil and gas industry. Wildcatters often initiate drilling, and if the field was productive, the majors would come in and operate it for a while. When production inevitably declined, they would pass the field to a small producer with

few resources to complete plugging and reclamation of the degraded land. Lacking financial resources to complete their cleanup responsibilities, the small producer would often simply run away. BLM would spend decades looking for a responsible operator or former lessee to clean up the mess so American taxpayers were not saddled with that burden.

The powerful oil and gas industry is finally being held accountable by the Biden administration for the messes they have left on our landscapes, and the Petroleum Association of Wyoming is whining like a spoiled brat. The group recently published an opinion piece regarding BLM's common sense rule to protect taxpayers and the environment. In it, PAW glosses over some facts to push misleading figures. They state that BLM plugs and reclaims a couple dozen wells per year because there are so few wells to reclaim. This is inaccurate.

BLM has a duty to U.S. taxpayers to track down previous owners and hold them liable for cleanup costs before they officially designate a well as orphaned. This process takes years, which means that the federal orphan well list grows very slowly, even while thousands of wells sit idle and abandoned. BLM's new rule incentivizes operators to plug and reclaim their wells by requiring a higher upfront bond to drill. It also increases bonds retroactively on existing wells. In doing so, the rule ensures industry cleans up its own mess, replacing our current system of BLM going on a wild goose chase while wells sit idle on our land.

BONDING RULES  
continued on page 6

# EPA rejects plan to pump Moneta oilfield waste into potential drinking water

ANGUS M. THUERMER JR  
WyoFile

*Editor's Note: This is reprinted from the April 24, 2024 issue of WyoFile. WyoFile is an independent nonprofit news organization focused on Wyoming people, places, and policy.*

Federal environmental officials have rejected a request by Aethon Energy to pump Moneta Divide oilfield wastewater into the Madison aquifer, saying the deep reservoir could be used for drinking water, especially by tribal nations on the Wind River Indian Reservation.

The Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission in November 2020 approved wastewater disposal into the 15,000-foot deep well, but the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said last week the state's decision did not align with federal rules.

Aethon's plan does not support a finding "that the aquifer cannot now and will not in the future serve as a source of drinking water," the EPA wrote in a 20-page record of decision. Aethon argued, and the Wyoming commission agreed 4-1, that the underground Madison formation was too deep and remote to be used for drinking water.

The EPA relied on the Safe Drinking Water Act as the authority under which to protect the aquifer. It also cited climate, environmental justice and tribal interests in its decision, pointing to the nearby Wind River Indian Reservation as a community that could use the water.

"The significance of that is the EPA finally didn't wimp out on us," said Wes Martel, a member of the Wind River Water Resources Control Board. "We're just glad they now have some people in place following up on their Indian policy."

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes "foresee increased reliance on groundwater for drinking water purposes and anticipate needing to access deeper aquifers, such as the Madison aquifer, as the climate changes and water resources grow scarcer," the EPA wrote in a 94-page analysis of tribal interests. The agency cited historic cultural and spiritual ties to the land and water and tribes' status as sovereign nations in its decision.

"We have to make sure our future generations have a reliable source of clean water," Martel said. "Our reservation, this is all we have left. We've got to do our best to protect it."

The Powder River Basin Resource Council, along with the Wyoming Outdoor Council and others, has spent years monitoring discharge reports and industry permits and was vital in challenging pollution threats, Martel said.

The EPA understood that science, and the law did not support Aethon's request, said Shannon Anderson, organizing director and staff attorney with the resource council. "They recognized the value of our groundwater resources and the need to protect those into the future," she said, hailing the decision.

Aethon must find a way to dispose of produced water — a brine pumped from energy wells to release gas and oil — as it expands the Moneta Divide field by 4,500 wells. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management authorized that expansion in 2020, leaving the

question of water disposal to Wyoming, which has authority over surface and underground water quality under overarching federal standards.

Aethon must find a way to dispose of the equivalent of 120 Olympic-sized swimming pools full of produced water a day to expand the field. Aethon and Burlington Resources, a co-producer at Moneta, could generate \$182 million a year in federal royalties, \$87.5 million a year in Wyoming severance taxes and \$106 million annually in County Ad Valorem taxes from the expansion.

But Aethon has violated state permits that allow it to pump some produced water into Alkali and Badwater creeks that flow into Boysen Reservoir, a drinking water source for the town of Thermopolis. Wyoming's Department of Environmental Quality has notified the Dallas-based investment company of its infraction and has required Aethon to reduce the salinity of surface discharges this year.

The DEQ this year listed the two creeks as "impaired" and unable to sustain aquatic life. Underground injection of wastewater into the Madison was to be a new component of the disposal program.

The EPA cited climate change, drought, increasing temperatures and use of reservation surface water by others as some of the reasons to preserve the Madison aquifer.

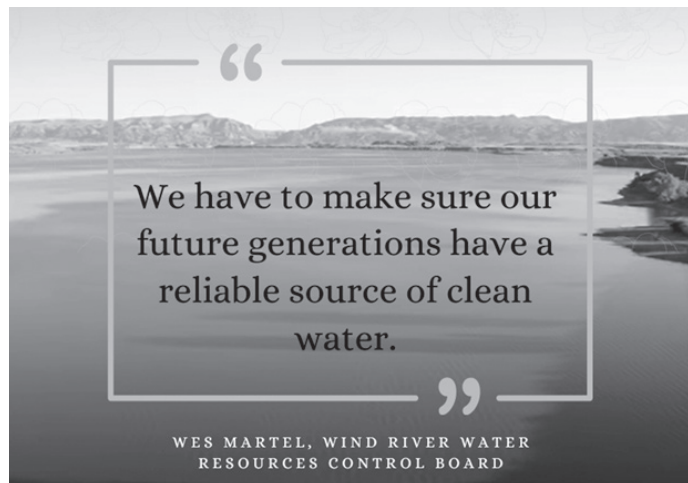
"Removing the existing statutory and regulatory protections for a potential source of high-quality drinking water for the rural and overburdened communities in Fremont County and on the WRIR would further exacerbate existing inequities particularly with respect to historic and ongoing adverse and

cumulative impacts to water resources and community health," the EPA wrote.

"Thus, equity and environmental justice considerations, which include Tribal interest considerations, support maintaining the existing [Safe Drinking Water Act] protections that apply to the aquifers consistent with Congressional intent to protect both current and potential future sources of drinking water," EPA documents state.

Neither Aethon nor a representative of the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission responded immediately to a request for comment Wednesday. But WyoFile received this response from Tom Kropatsch, oil and gas supervisor for the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, shortly after publication:

"We do not agree with EPA's decision on this application. We are still reviewing their decision and the information utilized by EPA in support of their decision. Much of this information was not part of the original application or a part of the record. EPA did not follow the standard procedure of allowing the WOGCC and the applicant to review and respond to the additional information they had available prior to making their final decision. EPA evaluated data that differs in its geographic, geologic, engineering, and other technical information. EPA also inappropriately related the proposed injection location to other areas of the state. Since the data EPA reviewed does not accurately reflect the conditions at the location of the proposed disposal well it is not appropriate to rely on it for a decision on this application. The WOGCC is reviewing EPA's decision and weighing its options for further action."



# Wyoming lawmakers & ranchers unite against mandatory electronic ID tags



PENNIE VANCE  
Powder River Staff

In 2013, following years of advocacy from Powder River ranchers and allies, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rulemaking gave ranchers the right to choose which type of ear tag worked for them. This rule enabled ranchers to opt out of using electronic identification (EID) tags on their cattle. For 11 years, this voluntary system has worked for everyone.

Then, a number of months ago, the USDA began caving to influence from industrial ag groups and tag manufacturers pressuring for mandatory EID tags. Despite strong opposition from ranchers, a final rule from the USDA was recently released requiring EID tags on all adult cattle being shipped across state lines. At this time, the rule does not apply to calves.

The alleged justification for EID by big ag industries is that electronic tags will keep U.S. cattle safe in the event of a contagious disease outbreak. However, non-EID tags have prevented disease spread for years, and studies show that at most only 11% of cattle in the U.S. will fall under the requirement to wear EID tags. However, the USDA has declared that at least 18% must be tagged for EID to be considered effective.

A separate study also shows that under the current voluntary tagging system, the average response time to track down a disease once detected is already less than a day. The \$26 million from taxpayers allotted to get the program up and running is mostly for the tags, but the government will only pay for them during the first year. Therefore, while there is no proof that EID tags will reduce response time, they will definitely increase costs to ranchers.

There is also a lack of funding and adequate implementation plans for the sophisticated electronic infrastructure needed to read the tags at state lines, aggregate the data, and make it available for tracing purposes. Plans for enforcement also lack clarity in the final rule. There are, however, documented plans by the USDA indicating that this ruling is just the first step of a bigger plan to eventually require EID tagging on all cattle crossing state lines.

Rather than crumple in defeat, ranchers have again rallied with allies and lawmakers. In response to rancher voices, on June 13, Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY) and Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) filed resolutions of disapproval in the House and the Senate respectively that if passed will overturn the USDA's final rule by disallowing mandatory EID ear tags on adult cattle shipped across state lines. Senator Barrasso (R-WY) is a cosponsor.

Thank you to all of the members who have called and emailed Wyoming's Congressional delegation. Although there are no guarantees at this stage of the game, our members have proven time and again that when enough grassroots voices are heard, our lawmakers listen.

Stay tuned for updates as this issue progresses.

## TAKING MY NEXT STEPS

### Deuter joins WORC staff

CLAIRE DEUTER  
Powder River Staff

After almost two years with Powder River, I've made the bittersweet decision to take the next step in my career and transition to a new role as the Fossil Fuel Campaign Coordinator for the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC). Although my time as Powder River's renewable energy organizer has come to an end, I'm grateful that I'll continue working with Powder River and other network member groups to protect our environment and communities in the region.

I've learned so much during my time at Powder River, and I'm especially thankful for the relationships I built with our members. The members have inspired me through their dedicated, hardworking, and caring attitudes. I've learned when we come together, we really can create change. I want to thank all the staff and members for their support over these last two years, and I hope our paths cross again!

## TRANSITIONING TO A NEW OPPORTUNITY

### Stahl moves onto public lands focus in the Southeast

KATHERINE STAHL  
Powder River Staff

After an excellent year and a half with Powder River, I have made the difficult decision to move on to a new opportunity. I will be expanding my issue focus to public lands with Mountain True, an environmental nonprofit based in Asheville, North Carolina. This career move will provide me a new set of challenges and responsibilities that I am excited to tackle. I will also be moving closer to my family in the Southeast, which I am very happy about.

The people of Powder River, especially our members, have made my time here incredibly rewarding. I am thankful to have been given the opportunity to work with passionate change-makers who are so committed to ensuring a thriving future for Wyoming. Your engagement and dedication throughout my time here has been deeply impressive. This state will always be very special to me, and I know I am leaving it in good and capable hands.

# Flex your green thumb

Sheridan has the honor of having one of those “best kept secrets,” the only food forest in Wyoming. Located in Thorne-Rider Park, the Sheridan Food Forest is bursting with blossoms, and buzzing with pollinators all working to provide flowers, apples, veggies, and berries, free for the taking, in a month or so.

Volunteers, including many Powder River members, helped develop the forest and continue to help it flourish each year. Consider joining this crew of helpers to keep the forest alive and well. There are weekly options to help out in July and August. Come for an hour or a morning, whenever you can. For more information contact Carol LeResche at [leresche@rangeweb.net](mailto:leresche@rangeweb.net).

## JULY

**7/13 8:00 a.m. – Noon – 4-5 volunteers**

- Arrive between 8 - 9 a.m.
- Mow and finish adding pea gravel to pathways (2-3 volunteers)
- Ongoing maintenance & weeding (1-2 volunteers)

**7/20 11:30 a.m. – 4-5 volunteers**

- Arrive 11:30 a.m. to prep for noon pollinator count
- 12:30 p.m. Prepare for YMCA camp and RiW project

**7/27 8:00 a.m. – Noon – 4 volunteers**

- Arrive between 8 - 9 a.m.
- Ongoing normal maintenance (4 volunteers)

## AUGUST

**8/10 8:00 a.m. – Noon – 4-5 volunteers**

- Arrive between 8 - 9 a.m.
- Mow and finish adding pea gravel to pathways (2-3 volunteers)
- Ongoing normal maintenance including weeding (1-2 volunteers)

**8/17 11:30 a.m. – 4 volunteers**

- Arrive 11:30 a.m. to prep for noon pollinator count
- 12:30 Prepare for YMCA camp and RiW project

**8/24 8:00 a.m. – Noon – 4 volunteers**

- Arrive between 8 - 9 a.m.
- Ongoing normal maintenance



Students from Arvada-Clearmont School plant vegetables in their new school garden. Photo courtesy of Cynthia Vannoy, Sheridan Media.

## Arvada-Clearmont students learn to raise produce

PENNIE VANCE

Powder River Staff

On the banks of Clear Creek in late May, elementary students from Arvada-Clearmont (A/C) schools continued their gardening education when they gathered to plant over 2,000 seedlings they had started from seed as part of the Rooted in Wyoming (RiW) school gardening program. The plot of land for the students' garden was provided by Powder River members Bob and Carol LeResche on their ranch near Clearmont.

With the help of parents and school staff members, the students filled the plot with squash, beans, tomatoes, onions, cucumber, potatoes, corn, and more.

The students, parents, and staff will take care of the garden throughout the summer and harvest the vegetables in the fall. A/C head cook Aubrey Holland helped choose veggies that she can use for the school lunch programs. RiW has introduced hundreds of elementary students throughout Sheridan County to growing their own food, and they have helped develop over 20 community gardens.

To help expand their gardening program, the school is building a polycarbonate greenhouse and a Horticulture Science course is being planned for the district's science course offerings. For more information on Rooted in Wyoming's school gardens throughout Sheridan County visit their website at [www.rootedinwyoming.org](http://www.rootedinwyoming.org).

## BONDING RULES

continued from page 3

Finally, those days are over. After more than six decades of BLM requiring only minimal blanket bonds for thousands of oil and gas wells, and the government spending over \$4 billion in taxpayer money to plug and clean up orphan wells, we are done bailing out the richest industry on earth. The bureau is finally holding the oil and gas industry accountable, and the sky is not falling, despite what industry claims. All oil and gas companies, large or small, are now being required to operate professionally and responsibly. Requiring upfront adequate bonding of the oil and gas industry is long overdue. The taxpayer will benefit, as will the land and water on which we depend.

POWDER RIVER BASIN  
*Resource Council*

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**52ND ANNUAL MEETING**  
NOV. 9TH - SHERIDAN

BUSINESS MEETING - 2:30 PM  
Members Only

DINNER & KEYNOTE SPEAKER - 6:30 PM  
Barbara Smith  
Wyoming Poet Laureate

### SAVE THE DATE!

Visit [powderriverbasin.org/events](http://powderriverbasin.org/events) for updates.


# BUFFALO WYOMING BLM

continued from page 1

In the ruling, U.S. District Judge Brian Morris found that BLM failed to comply with a previous court order directing the agency to account for the environmental and human health impacts of burning publicly owned coal. The judge also held that BLM failed to consider alternatives that would limit or end new coal leasing in the Powder River Basin in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

“As someone who lives near some of the largest coal mines in the nation, I’m thankful for the leadership from the BLM in finally addressing the long-standing negative impacts that federal coal leasing has had on the Powder River Basin,” said Lynne Huskinson, retired coal miner and Powder River board member from Gillette, WY. “For decades, mining has affected public health, our local land, air, and water, and the global climate. We look forward to BLM working with state and local partners to ensure a just economic transition for the Powder River Basin as we move toward a clean energy future.”

BLM’s plan now awaits a final record of decision following a protest period that ended June 17.



**JOIN US**

**WYO GIVES**

**JULY 10, 2024**

**24 HOURS**

This year, the 5th annual WyoGives is on National Wyoming Day! As we celebrate 134 years of statehood, join us in **amplifying, cultivating, and advocating** for Wyoming’s nonprofits.

an initiative of **WYOGIVES.ORG**  
Wyoming Nonprofit Network

We are participating in the Hughes Charitable Foundation Incentive Pool. Every donor who contributes online to Powder River Basin Resource Council via the WyoGives.org platform on July 10th will have their donation boosted by this generous \$1,000,000 incentive pool.

# METHANE

continued from page 1

Alternatively, Congress can override a presidential veto.

Congress is now using the CRA to attack the Bureau of Land Management’s Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Rule, which enacts higher bonding and royalty rates for federal minerals, and the Environmental Protection Agency’s Methane Rule, which restricts methane emissions from the oil and gas industry. These joint resolutions of disapproval are unlikely to successfully overturn either of the rules, since the Senate likely will not pass the resolutions. Additionally, since both rules are products of the current administration, President Biden is unlikely to sign either resolution, even if they make it to his desk.

Although the CRA is an important tool in our democratic system of checks and balances, it is frequently used as a means of political posturing. In this case, it is being used to voice disapproval of rules that increase regulation of the oil and gas industry. Both rules are important for industry accountability, through reducing the risk of oil and gas wells becoming taxpayer liabilities and cutting excessive methane emissions. Powder River will continue voicing our support of these rules, which are good for the American public and the climate.



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**IN THIS ISSUE**

Buffalo Wyoming BLM to end coal leasing in Powder River Basin .....	1
Bonding, methane rules face federal pushback.....	1
Message from the Chair .....	2
BLM coal leasing plan hasn't caused the sky to fall .....	3
New bonding rules will hold industry accountable .....	3
EPA rejects plan to pump Moneta oilfield waste into potential drinking water....	4
Wyoming lawmakers & ranchers unite against mandatory electronic ID tags ....	5
Taking my next steps .....	5
Transitioning to a new opportunity .....	5
Flex your green thumb .....	6
Arvada-Clearmont students learn to raise produce .....	6

**PLANNED GIVING AND ESTATE PLANNING GIFTS**

The Powder River "family" has been thinking a lot about the future lately, because, as the saying goes, "We aren't getting any younger." We want to make sure this organization remains viable for future generations in the same way it serves today's members. So we're inviting you, our extended family of members and donors, to consider including Powder River in your estate plans.

Your gift would create a living legacy allowing Powder River to continue our work far into the future and helping ensure Wyoming remains the place we know and love for our kids and grandkids.

As one long time Powder River member, Digger Moravek stated, "I want to raise Hell long after I'm gone." You too can do this through a bequest to Powder River.

The two easiest ways to include Powder River in your estate planning take little time (and no legal assistance).

- THROUGH YOUR RETIREMENT ACCOUNT (Your IRA, Roth-IRA, SEP-IRA, 401(k), or other such account): Name Powder River Basin Resource Council as a Primary beneficiary for a percentage. One percent, 10%, 25% or whatever you wish. You can do this through the account custodian, or often even on the custodian's website in a few minutes (Powder River's Tax ID is 74-2183158).

- THROUGH YOUR LIFE INSURANCE POLICY: Name Powder River Basin Resource Council as a primary beneficiary of any percentage of your life insurance policy. You can do this through your insurance agent or the insurance company, or often even on your insurance company's website in only a few minutes (Powder River's Tax ID is 74-2183158).

If you are preparing a formal will or living trust document, you can include Powder River Basin Resource Council as a primary beneficiary of a specific dollar amount or percentage of your estate. If you already have such an instrument, you can have it revised to include Powder River. This is probably best done through your attorney.

Finally, there are several more complex tax-advantaged ways to contribute to Powder River's future and receive continuing income and tax advantages during your lifetime. These include "charitable remainder trusts" and sale of appreciated and depreciated securities. Please consult your legal and financial advisors about how you can use such tools to support Wyoming's most effective grassroots member organization, and how you might benefit.

If you have any questions, please give Powder River a call at 307-672-5809.

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