

Brendan Witt Western Lands Fellow



As the Western Lands Fellow at Western Resource Advocates (WRA), Brendan Witt works to find ways to help Western communities bolster resilience against the threat of catastrophic wildfire. In this role, he primarily supports state policy efforts to increase the use of prescribed fire and improve ecosystem restoration, encourage land use planning to reduce wildfire risk, and support funding for these and other wildfire mitigation policies.

A large part of Witt's focus is on looking at ways communities can encourage forest health so that they can reap the many economic benefits of the region's beautiful landscapes and outdoor recreation, and the sustainable futures that come with healthy ecosystems. He also conducts research and advocates for policy solutions to expand equitable access to the outdoors.

Witt became engrossed in the work of WRA when he joined the organization as the digital communications coordinator in 2017, where he worked to elevate policy efforts through various digital platforms, including social media and video productions. He is also the founding host of WRA's podcast, 2° Out West.

Prior to WRA, Witt began his career in the brewing industry. While he enjoyed the community connection and the focus on craft and ingredients, he wanted to contribute to his home in a way that would have lasting impact. A passionate hunter and fly angler, spending time outdoors was always a driving force in Witt's life. He found meaningful connection in environmental work, wildlife conservation, and public lands advocacy, where he could do his part to ensure future generations can experience healthy forested ecosystems and abundant wildlife in the same way he did.

But it is a very personal link that motivates Witt's work today. His home, Grand Lake, Colo., was impacted by the second largest wildfire in Colorado history, the East Troublesome Fire. It grew over 100,000 acres overnight, and was the first fire in modern Colorado fire history to race over 25 miles across forested land in less than eight hours.

This personal experience fuels Witt's drive to find natural solutions to wildfire resilience in communities throughout the West. He doesn't want anyone to have to evacuate their home under red skies or watch fire race toward their home.

Now, Witt looks forward to turning his energy and interest into increasing the use of prescribed fire, and restoring healthy, functioning ecosystems across the region. He sees his role as providing the tools to help protect communities from unwanted fire and to keep communities safe – so that they may enjoy the landscape unshackled by the fear of catastrophic wildfire.

Witt received a Bachelor of Arts in English/Creative Writing and Communication Studies at the University of Puget Sound and Master of Science in Environmental Policy and Management at the University of Denver.

Born and raised in Colorado, Witt is a proud third generation Coloradan. When he's not hunting or fishing, he enjoys hiking and cooking, and has recently started to learn to cross country ski. He also volunteers for Colorado Parks and Wildlife at Golden Gate State Park as a back-country patroller.

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