

# FIELD NOTES

NEWS FROM WESTERN RESOURCE ADVOCATES

## Forward Momentum: Continuing Significant Climate Progress

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Learn how WRA works within the policy ecosystem to keep energy flowing between legislative sessions.

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#### **About the Photographer**

*Based in Arizona, Jordan Griffith is an outdoor photographer aspiring to connect others with the wild and beautiful world around them in the Southwest. This photo of a hummingbird was captured at the Usery Mountain Regional Park in Mesa, Arizona. @jordanexplores*

## FEATURE STORY

# Harnessing State Action to Catalyze Change

Energy sustains and powers life on our planet. While we often talk about energy as a commodity to be created and traded, how it is created and how it is harnessed and directed is at the core of our ecosystems. Energy is also critical to the well-being of our communities. Farmers harness the sun to grow food that sustains our families. Electricity allows us to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer, and powers our hospitals to care for our most vulnerable. At the same time, how we have historically generated energy, from turning on the lights in our homes and the power industry to the transportation sector, has contributed to and exacerbated climate change. Because of this, how we use, create, and manage energy is paramount to our ability to adapt to a changing climate.

Nature is constantly leveraging and adapting to the flow of energy. Leaves on olive trees differ in shape to optimize harvesting sunlight and remain flexible to changing conditions. Rainbow trout can utilize a special swimming behavior that enables them to conserve energy. One species of hornet has an outer layer that allows them to absorb solar energy and likely convert it into electrical energy. At even the smallest level, some bacteria build electrical “nanowires” outside their cell walls to create a microscopic electrical grid.

**Energy is constantly pulsing through our environment.**

Olive tree



Rainbow trout



Hornet



We know that our work to fight climate change requires urgency and forward momentum. WRA works to take the momentum generated from a policy success to direct and orchestrate this energy to create subsequent impact that compounds into additional progress.

Just as energy flows through and is managed in our natural systems, WRA works to harness and direct this power into policy progress and action that helps life in the West thrive.

Legislative policy is an important force that WRA leverages to advance our goals, and success in this arena is critical. But we don't stop there. WRA is always working within the policy ecosystem to keep energy flowing throughout the calendar year and in between each year's legislative sessions.

**What does this holistic, year-round ecosystem include?**

## RULEMAKINGS WITH REGULATORY AGENCIES

The policy ecosystem includes working with state agencies and decision-making bodies, like public utilities commissions and air quality boards, wildlife boards and agencies, water utilities, and state agencies, on critical rulemakings that affect things like the adoption of renewable energy, building electrification, and clean cars. While legislation plays a key role, it doesn't tell the whole story of our progress in advancing the clean energy transition.

Advanced Clean Cars II standards are among the most important policies states can adopt to decarbonize the transportation sector, as they require auto manufacturers doing business in the state to provide a higher percentage of electric vehicles for sale within a specific, measurable time frame.

This fall, WRA intervened in the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission's rulemaking for a new clean cars standard to ensure the adopted rule is as strong as possible. Last December, Gov. Polis' administration proposed updating the current rule in 2023, and has recommended a partial rule which would increase the number of zero-emission vehicles that automakers are required to produce year over year, gradually scaling to a requirement that roughly 82% of all vehicles produced be zero-emission by 2032.

WRA commissioned a new study that shows if Colorado adopts a stronger standard — one where all new vehicles sold by 2035 must be zero-emission — everyday Coloradans and consumers would reap between \$90 and \$95 billion in net benefits by 2050, as opposed to \$72.5 billion under a partial rule.

Implementing a strong standard would not only give Coloradans more buying choices, but would also incentivize auto manufacturers to offer more affordable zero-emission models, bringing electric vehicles within reach for more people in the state.

In October, the commission voted unanimously to approve a new Colorado Clean Cars standard. Although we didn't get the full rule, we did secure a provision that requires the state to begin a second rulemaking by 2029, ensuring time for a future commission to review adoption of a 100% clean car standard. Securing these regulations

complement other steps the state has taken to prepare for the rapid adoption of electric vehicles and trucks, such as building out widespread charging infrastructure and implementing the advanced clean-trucks and low-NOx rules, which were also passed unanimously by the commission earlier this year.

## UTILITIES AND RESOURCE PLANNING

Outside of the legislative session, WRA is vigilant in advocating for the most cost-effective, emission-free resources through processes like integrated resource planning. Better resource planning can help utilities reduce their environmental impact by identifying and implementing cheaper, cleaner, and more efficient resources, and it provides greater transparency to consumers.

In the summer of 2022, when NV Energy requested its first new gas plant in 15 years, WRA and several other intervenors successfully argued that this amendment was the latest in a string of rushed, poorly supported filings that highlight the need for resource planning reform. In response, the Nevada Public Utilities Commission opened a new investigatory docket and series of workshops to identify improvements to the planning process moving forward.

Similarly, in Arizona this fall, WRA will be pushing Arizona's largest utilities to add more renewable energy to the grid through the Arizona Corporate Commission's integrated resource planning process.

As utilities continue to develop emission-free resources to respond to climate change, resource planning will become significantly more important. The energy grid of tomorrow is more complicated than the grid of the past. We're progressively relying on more resource technologies with different characteristics, customer energy demand is increasing, and the effects of climate change will continue imposing new and more volatile challenges on electricity service. Proactively planning for these new variables, instead of reacting to them after the fact, through robust resource planning processes is the only way we can accomplish a cost-effective and reliable clean energy transition.



Power lines on the Nevada and Arizona state line.

## IMPLEMENTING AND INCREASING FUNDING FROM POLICIES

While legislation may designate money for certain programs, WRA leverages and helps direct this funding outside of the session to ensure that it's spent as intended and maximizes impact. Thanks to WRA's advocacy, the state legislature made a two-year appropriation of \$500,000 to the Nevada Outdoor Education and Recreation Grant program that provides students with opportunities to experience the outdoors. Over the last few months, WRA has been working to ensure that partners are aware of the funding provided through the program.

We also use the time between legislative sessions to advocate for increased funding so that the momentum of a specific program can continue and not stall out. In New Mexico, Senate Bill 9 established the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, the state's first-ever permanent conservation trust to leverage federal money and deliver critical resources to New Mexico communities. The \$100 million appropriation for the fund is the single largest land and water conservation investment in New Mexico history. But for the fund to be self-sustaining and last for years to come, it needs a minimum investment of \$350 million.

This summer, WRA experts presented to the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee advocating for an additional appropriation in the 2024 session so that New Mexico can successfully prioritize land and water conservation, forest and watershed health,

outdoor recreation and infrastructure, agriculture and working lands, historic preservation, and wildlife species protection.

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE LEGISLATION

Sometimes, the policy solutions that WRA advocates for do not get adopted in the ways that we hope. During the 2023 legislative session, WRA worked to develop comprehensive policies and tools to address the growing crisis on the Colorado River. We built partnerships and worked to find consensus around conservation actions to keep more water in the river.

Unfortunately, negotiations stalled at the state legislature. Undeterred, WRA played a key role in shaping the Colorado River Drought Task Force bill to ensure that important water conversations continue over the interim and result in comprehensive solutions before it's too late. Orla Bannan, WRA's strategic engagement manager, has been appointed to the task force, which is charged with preparing legislative recommendations to address water scarcity in the Colorado River Basin.

While the task force is a step in the right direction, the real efforts have just begun. WRA is working to ensure that the task force produces meaningful legislative recommendations for managing and conserving water. We will continue to build on our work next session to pass legislation to protect Colorado's rivers and the people, fish, and wildlife that depend on them.

While we celebrate the wins that come during each state's legislative session, WRA knows that these policies are just the initial catalysts for change. Working within ongoing processes like rulemakings, integrated resource planning, litigation, grant administration, and task forces, just to name a few, is what can ignite the necessary spark that transforms into a complete system that powers a brighter climate future. Our world is humming with these small sparks of energy waiting to be shaped into solutions, and at WRA, we're diligently harnessing energy to drive state action that moves the needle.



Amanda Reed is a mixed media artist in Denver, Colorado. She takes inspiration from all things botanical and natural, mixed with geometric elements. Most of her work utilizes digital illustration, linocut, textiles, gouache, and collage. This illustration represents a vision of natural elements in harmony with human habitation. [birdsongprints.com](http://birdsongprints.com) | [@birdsongprints](https://www.instagram.com/birdsongprints)

## Urgency and Action in Decarbonizing the West



The clock is ticking on executing the clean energy transition. Colorado has set ambitious greenhouse gas emissions goals, and its new clean heat standard is leading the way in setting emission reduction targets for gas utilities. This nationally leading policy also takes us into uncharted territory. Policy becoming reality requires continuous focused and strategic work to generate momentum that leads to actual on-the-ground impacts. To make sure our clean heat vision becomes a reality, WRA has centered our efforts on demonstrating an actionable path to decarbonization that is cost-effective and achievable by 2030.

Colorado passed Senate Bill 21-264 in 2021 requiring Colorado's gas utilities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 4% by 2025 and 22% by 2030. For months prior to passage of the bill, WRA legal and technical experts participated extensively in the stakeholder process, providing detailed input on the legislation to strengthen the emissions reduction targets aligned with climate science, and to create a nation-leading policy foundation for gas utilities to reliably and equitably implement a clean heat plan with approved emissions reduction measures, tracked and measured with robust accounting.

Colorado is the first state in the nation to require that gas utilities meet these targets, which are called clean heat standards. And the first utility required to file a clean heat plan was Xcel Energy, Colorado's largest electricity and gas provider.

Since this process is the first opportunity for the Colorado Public Utility Commission to engage in rulemaking to reduce emissions on a gas utility system, there was no established template for how gas utilities can and should meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets. WRA developed a data-driven clean heat strategy where a transition to efficient electric appliances, along with wide-scale weatherization, would take center stage.

This work led to the publication and release of WRA's position paper, *A Path to Pollution-Free Buildings: Meeting Xcel's 2030 Gas Decarbonization Goals*. The report, developed by WRA, NRDC, and SWEEP, recommends measures to drive a steep reduction in emissions from Xcel and demonstrates how the gas utility can meet Colorado's targets in a way that delivers the most emissions reductions per ratepayer dollar. The paper demonstrated that to achieve its 2030 goal, Xcel must rapidly increase adoption of efficient electric appliances — heat pumps and heat-pump water heaters — and weatherize tens of thousands of homes and businesses.

Jettisoning gas-burning appliances, which emit NOx and other pollutants, would dramatically reduce climate-warming pollution from natural gas used to heat and cool our homes and improve indoor and outdoor air quality throughout the state. This would particularly benefit communities of color and lower-income neighborhoods that have historically experienced a disproportionate impact from pollution.

The report, published days before Xcel filed its clean heat plan, immediately shaped the debate on the future of decarbonization in Colorado. WRA kept the conversation moving by hosting a webinar on our report's findings, attracting high levels of engagement from key decision makers.

In September, WRA further built the case for rapid building electrification by releasing a third-party analysis highlighting the costs and emissions-reduction potential of space- and water-heating decarbonization in Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico. The analysis showed that building electrification is the most cost-effective decarbonization measure that utilities across the Southwest can deploy.

The analysis was accompanied by a new Building Decarbonization Analysis tool, a spreadsheet-based resource that allows users to analyze the gas utility costs and emissions reductions associated with space- and water-heating and carbon emission-reduction strategies in the residential building sector.

Our report, follow-up analysis, and new tool provide regulators and lawmakers in Colorado and in other states with a wealth of easily accessible data and resources that illustrate the benefits and cost-effectiveness of accelerated

adoption of electric appliances and beneficial electrification (replacing direct fossil fuel use with electricity in a way that reduces overall emissions and energy costs). As other Colorado utilities prepare to file clean heat plans as required by the 2021 law, and as other states consider following Colorado's lead, WRA has established itself as a thought leader in this rapidly evolving policy arena.

As 2023 comes to a close, the Colorado utility regulators face a choice between two futures. One, outlined by WRA and partners, facilitates a transition away from fossil fuels through the expanded and accelerated use of renewable sources. The other would involve maintaining our reliance on fossil fuels and other technologies or schemes (like "certified" fossil gas and carbon offsets) that have not proven to reduce emissions from the gas distribution system and provide no meaningful path to full decarbonization of Colorado's gas system.

**To hit Colorado's climate goals, WRA is creating the policy framework that will drive a near-term market transformation. WRA will continue to be at the center of the debate, keeping the urgency of decarbonization clear and helping decision makers make informed choices that protect the health and well-being of all Coloradans.**





Roaring Fork River, Colorado.



## MEET OUR EXPERTS

### Orla Bannan: Moving Toward Solutions

I've always enjoyed spending time outside — going for long walks as a child through the green fields of Ireland, enjoying Australian beaches and wilderness, and more recently, exploring the amazing American West. Living in different places and cultures helped me gain a broader perspective on problems and solutions and taught me the importance of building relationships. These skills help me in my role at WRA as strategic engagement manager within the Healthy Rivers team. Spending time outside is a continuous source of energy and inspiration for my work.

I began my career in private practice as a transactional lawyer — first in Australia and then in the United States. I worked at a large law firm in New York on real estate transactions for many years and then transitioned to an in-house counsel role with Vail Resorts in Colorado. I had several different roles in the legal department and then became the lead lawyer for the mountain division, where I worked on a wide variety of water rights, environmental, and land use issues related to ski areas and operations on public and private lands. Through this role, I gained valuable experience working with local government and other administrative agencies that taught me how to effectively drive change through policy and legislation with WRA.

I was excited to join the team at WRA in 2017, as I strongly believe that protecting our natural resources and addressing climate change are critical. My work now is dedicated to developing policies that address the gap between our water supply and demand and improve the health of Western rivers and streams, and as a result, the region's economic well-being. I seek to harness the energy and innovative ideas of fresh voices to broaden the conversation and acknowledge that

all are impacted by water. We need to find viable solutions that work for both our communities and our rivers.

This fall, I am honored to serve as one of the members of the Colorado River Drought Task Force, which was authorized by state legislation during the 2023 session. We meet twice a month and will provide recommendations for potential state legislation that offers additional tools to address drought and interstate commitments through demand-reduction projects for the Colorado River. The task force includes representation from diverse stakeholders across the state who are impacted by the river.

At the local level, WRA has worked for many years to encourage municipal conservation, reuse, and thoughtful integration of land use and water planning. In the last few years, I have witnessed the conversation shift around municipal conservation, with much more awareness now of the need for Colorado and all our Western states to grow in a water-smart and resilient way. WRA continues to be a leader in driving these changes and advocating for municipal water conservation measures across the region.

One of my proudest moments at WRA was protecting over 520 new miles of important

streams in Colorado in 2022. WRA worked for three years on a proposal to designate 25 streams in Southwest Colorado as Outstanding Waters — a designation that provides the highest tier of water quality protections and preserves exceptional recreational and ecological values. This designation, established through the Water Quality Control Commission in Colorado, protects the water quality in the river from future activities that would permanently degrade the water quality.

WRA is a collaborative organization, looking for win-win, durable solutions that protect our land, air, and water, and allow communities to thrive. The work that I do at WRA is critical to ensuring that everyone can live in a sustainable way and protect our precious natural environment.

There are many smart and motivated people with a strong history of collaboration working on these complex issues. I am hopeful that our collective efforts will result in effective solutions that support the Colorado and other rivers, and those who cherish and rely on them, in a sustainable way. I am grateful to have the opportunity to do all that I can to ensure everyone has access to healthy rivers for generations to come.

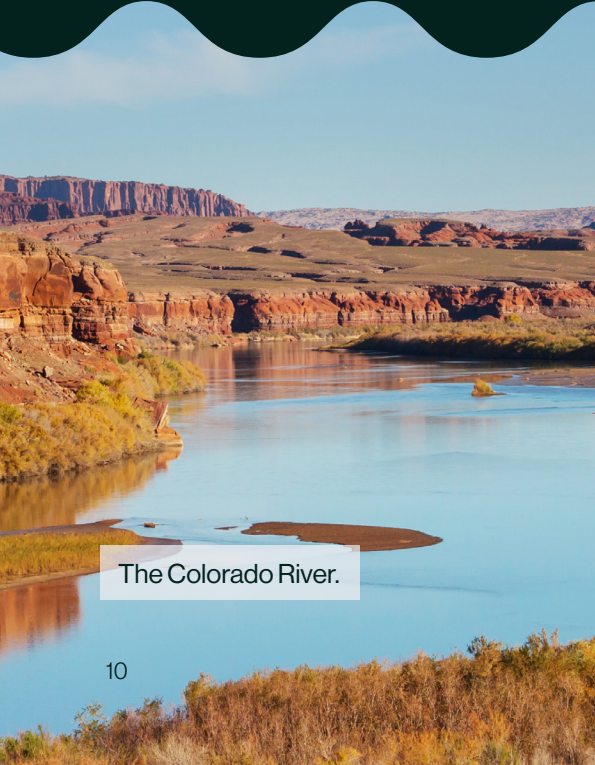


Orla enjoys being by rivers whenever she can, including this moment on the banks of the Arkansas river in Salida, which she visited for a Colorado Water Conservation Board meeting.

...I strongly believe that protecting our natural resources and addressing climate change are critical.

# A Blueprint for Governing the Colorado River: WRA's Guiding Principles

The Colorado River serves as an oasis for wildlife, provides refuge for endangered fish, supports outdoor recreation, fuels the economy, and gives life to Western communities as it rolls through alpine meadows and races into red-rock canyons. For more than a century, people have fought over the river's water and sought to bend this dynamic system to their will. Today, the river's flows are declining due to climate change, drought, and overconsumption. It is time to stop asking how much more we can take from the river and start giving back.



The Colorado River.



## Reduce water use by 25%

Demand for the river's water vastly exceeds the supply. Businesses, industry, cities, farms, and ranches must reduce water use. We must also ensure that Colorado River Basin Tribes, who have long been denied their fair share of water, can access water and are equal players in identifying strategies for sustainable management.



## Plan for less water in the river today and less in the future due to a warming, drying climate

Actions to address water shortages are often too small and too late. We need more flexible and proactive policies to respond to changing conditions.



## Keep water flowing in the river to protect irreplaceable ecosystems, cultural values, and outdoor recreation

When the Colorado River's water was divided up a century ago, little or no attention was paid to the needs of the environment. Future policies must protect ecosystems and keep the river flowing.



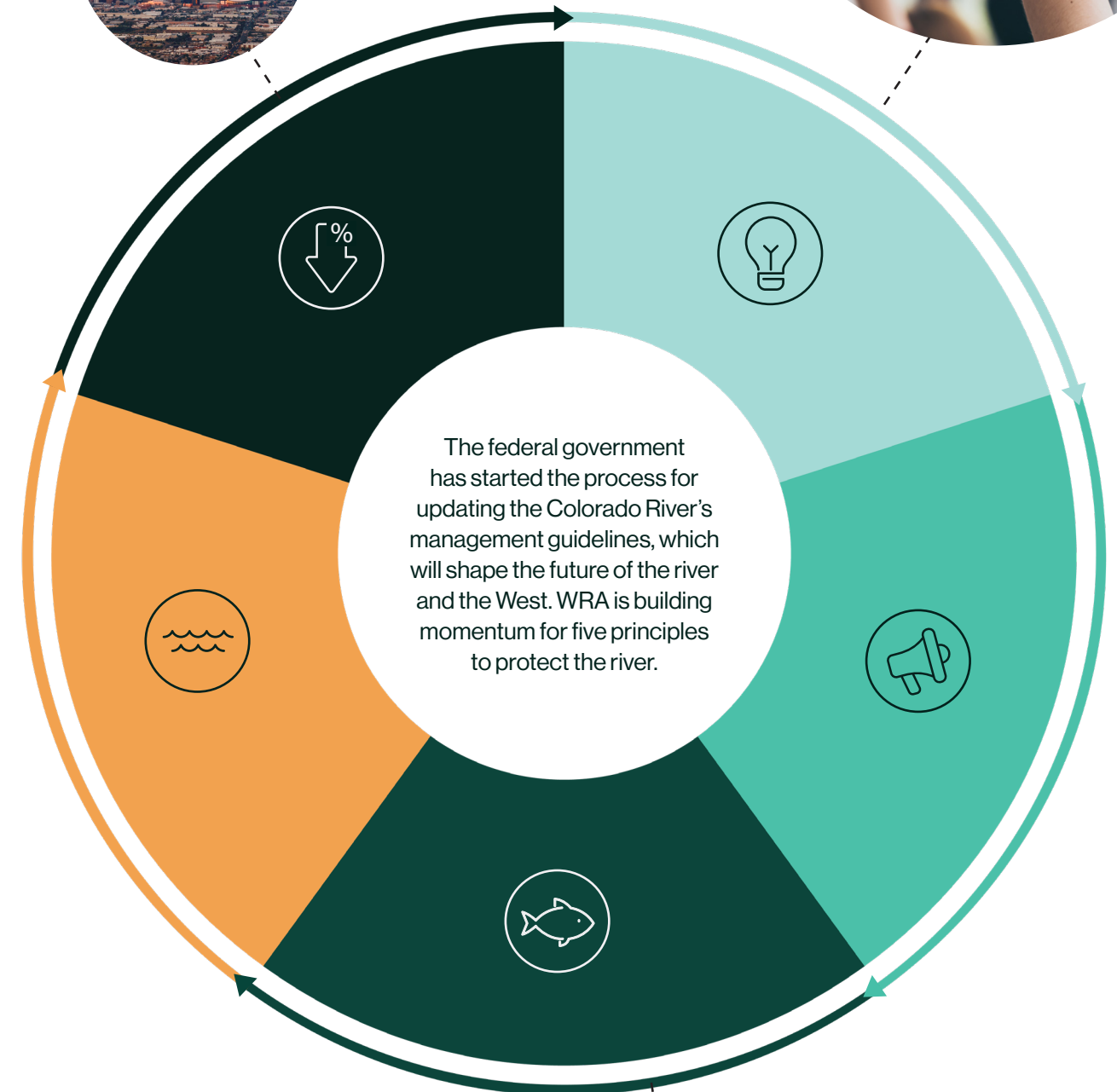
## Include Basin Tribes in decision making and ensure they have equitable access to water

Tribal water rights, infrastructure needs, and values have long been put on the back burner. Tribal communities throughout the Basin have been left without access to clean, running water as a result. Tribes must be included in decision making and be able to access and use their water.



## Provide impacted people, conservation groups, and other stakeholders with the opportunity to contribute ideas for sustaining the river

Stakeholders have not always been given meaningful opportunities to provide input. Decision-making forums must be more transparent, accessible, and inclusive.



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# Shaping the Future with Smart and Sustainable Investments



Giving back is integrated in the culture of FirstBank. *Left:* A group of staff enjoying Colorado Gives Day. *Right:* A volunteer event with We Don't Waste, a Denver-based nonprofit.

All who call the West home have a responsibility to protect it — businesses included. Investing in the environment is critical to the health of customers, each business' reputation, and the future of the places they call home.

WRA partner FirstBank is no exception. The bank is a leader when it comes to environmental action. That's why WRA switched our operating accounts to FirstBank in early 2022. After the pandemic, we were searching for a local bank that would be responsive and connected to our mission and organizational needs — one with ties to the communities we work in and with a genuine commitment to serving those communities. WRA also chose FirstBank because they have strong environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria and do not make investments in fossil fuel extraction. It was critical for us to work with a bank that wasn't investing in business activities that are responsible for driving climate change. The changing climate is a shared challenge; we all play a part in fighting for a better future. We were looking for a new banking partner that embodied this idea.

FirstBank was the perfect match. The bank, headquartered in Colorado, has branches across Arizona, California, and Colorado. Being based in the same region as WRA, they understand the challenges the climate crisis poses for us all. They generously supported victims of the Marshall Fire by contributing \$250,000 to the Boulder County Wildfire Fund; that fire affected many of WRA's Front Range staff and our families, donors, and partners.

Luckily, FirstBank's longstanding commitment to "banking for good" means doing what is right for their customers, communities, and employees. As their customer, WRA's assets are managed with an investment philosophy consistent with ESG criteria.

As for their communities, FirstBank has donated more than \$85 million and thousands of volunteer hours to nonprofits, including environmental organizations, since 2000. Their actions contribute to a larger movement of corporate giving. Corporations nationally donate, on average, between \$20 and \$26 billion to nonprofits annually.

FirstBank's involvement in regional giving is robust. They helped launch Colorado Gives Day, Arizona Gives, and Coachella Valley Giving Day, which have collectively raised over \$450 million

for thousands of local nonprofits since their respective inception. WRA has participated in Colorado Gives Day for years and has gained many new supporters through the event's promotion. It's even inspired some friendly fundraising competition among WRA's staff!

It is important for FirstBank to engage in these sustainable investments.

**"We've made it a part of our mission to help foster sustainability," said Dave Portman, FirstBank Roaring Fork Valley Market President, who leads the branch where WRA opened its accounts. "Investing in organizations, like WRA, that improve the health and vitality of our planet is a fundamental pillar of 'banking for good' and important to preserving life in the Roaring Fork Valley."**

As for their employees, FirstBank has been named a top workplace year after year. They offer 16 hours of volunteer time off annually to all full-time employees to support involvement in their communities. And they've even implemented Ozone Alert Days to encourage employees to work from home on poor air-quality

days — an all-too-frequent occurrence around our Western region.

WRA's banking relationship turned into a rewarding partnership with FirstBank in the short time we have been working together. They joined our corporate sponsorship program with the largest commitment of financial support made since the program was launched. FirstBank's commitment recognized that corporate sponsorships play a role in sustaining our work fighting climate change and its impacts.

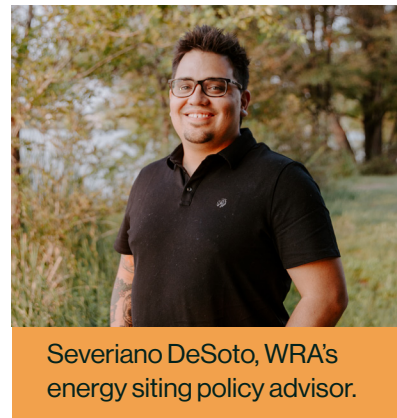
WRA is also a beneficiary of the bank's Go Green Checking campaign. This summer, the campaign raised \$60,000 to benefit three nonprofits, including WRA, supporting our work to ensure healthy rivers. WRA's efforts to protect rivers and save water is a cause very near to FirstBank, as their customers, communities, and employees experience the impacts of drought.

We are grateful for our partnership with FirstBank and for their support of our work to advance water conservation, to protect Western lands, and to accelerate the clean energy transition. Together, we are investing in sustainable solutions that make our home a better place.



Arizona sunrise.

# Navigating Colorado's Clean Energy Future: WRA's Approach to Smart Energy Siting



As Colorado pushes toward its ambitious climate goals, the delicate balance between clean energy development and land conservation has become paramount. While WRA and environmental advocates have passed legislation and won commitments that put electric utilities on track to reduce emissions, advance clean cars and trucks, electrify buildings, and decarbonize gas utilities, this requires more clean energy than ever before. To be successful in meeting these goals, we must focus on the next step in this process — where to place clean energy infrastructure through smart energy siting.

Renewable energy projects, like wind and solar, require large swaths of land — meaning we need to be mindful of not sacrificing our land protection goals as they are developed. WRA has been a leader in championing the need for smart energy siting. This approach seeks a planned and orderly transition to clean energy that protects habitats and communities.

We sat down with Severiano DeSoto, WRA's energy siting policy advisor, to delve into the intricacies of this work.

## What is energy siting, and why is it crucial for our climate goals?

Energy siting is the process of strategically selecting and evaluating potential locations for energy projects by considering environmental, economic, and social impacts. Smart energy siting goes further by also assessing effects on wildlife, biodiversity, and land conservation opportunities. The only way we can meet our climate goals is by simultaneously safeguarding Colorado's environment.

## How does WRA balance the need for new clean energy development with its aggressive land conservation goals?

Our goal is to accelerate the deployment of clean energy while conserving 30% of Colorado's lands by 2030. This balancing act recognizes that new clean energy projects will lead to habitat loss if the state fails to properly plan for the transition. WRA collaborates with partners through the Colorado Energy Siting Coalition, striving to ensure a clean energy transformation that accounts for both conservation and community interests.

## What is WRA's approach to policy development, and why does it set us apart?

WRA's process involves engaging a diverse array of stakeholders, from local governments, developers, and utilities to environmental groups, Tribes, and state agencies. This inclusive approach helps us co-develop policy solutions that prioritize climate, conservation, and communities. Our unique focus on both land conservation and clean energy makes us ideally positioned to ensure the clean energy transition not only benefits people and communities across the state, but also centers the needs of wildlife and nature as we advocate for a more sustainable future.

## What does energy siting in Colorado look like currently, and what challenges does it present?

Currently, siting authority rests at the county level, with local officials making project approval decisions. However, with 64 counties having distinct regulations, this can be a burdensome process for developers. Colorado needs a more coordinated approach to site clean energy projects, focusing on low-conflict areas to minimize impacts on natural lands.

## How did the Colorado Energy Siting Coalition come about, and what are its goals?

The Coalition naturally formed in 2022 due to a shared concern for the potential impacts of clean energy goals. With the release of impactful reports by organizations like The Nature Conservancy, there was a growing recognition of the need for smart energy siting. The Coalition's primary mission is to accelerate clean energy deployment while ensuring appropriate conservation and accounting for community values.

## What is WRA's role within the Coalition, and what steps are being taken toward policy development?

WRA is playing a leading role in organizing and coordinating the Coalition's efforts. We are conducting policy analysis and research by

studying local siting policies and drawing from examples across states. Our aim is to improve coordination between state climate and conservation goals and local decision making, while also addressing the cumulative impacts of new development. A fundamental part of this work will be to raise public awareness about the nexus between clean energy, biodiversity, and land conservation goals and to build community and stakeholder support for options that address this problem. The result will be a final policy proposal slated for introduction during the 2024 legislative session.

## How are you involving stakeholders in the process?

We are hosting a series of meetings to gather diverse perspectives on energy siting across the state. Former Gov. Bill Ritter helped facilitate the initial round where we engaged with over 90 stakeholders, including county commissioners, developers, environmental organizations, and utilities. We're reviewing all of these conversations to identify areas of agreement and tension about site selection for clean energy projects so we can best develop a comprehensive policy framework. We're specifically looking at things like the balance between local and state jurisdiction, the state's role in identifying least-conflict areas, impacts to disproportionately affected communities, and integration of environmental evaluation in project selection criteria. This is an iterative process, and we plan to continue to engage stakeholders along the way.

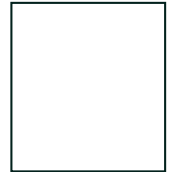
## In your perfect world, how does this all come together in Colorado?

In an ideal scenario, Colorado would have a well-managed, high-level state plan that considers the cumulative impacts of clean energy projects. This plan would be adopted through state legislation and would ensure equitable distribution and minimal negative tradeoffs for communities hosting these developments, all while protecting wildlife and natural resources.





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**FROM YOUR FIELD**

Utah resident and WRA donor Ben Miller captured this beautiful image from the northeast corner of Utah near Chalk Creek. The Uinta and Wasatch Mountains run through the area, offering scenic vistas and important wildlife habitat.

For more information about WRA or becoming a donor, please contact Annual Fund Specialist Erika Stadsklev at [erika.stadsklev@westernresources.org](mailto:erika.stadsklev@westernresources.org) or 720.763.3734.

**[WesternResourceAdvocates.org](http://WesternResourceAdvocates.org)**