

Anneliese Steel Senior Policy Advisor



Anneliese Steel is a senior policy advisor at Western Resource Advocates (WRA) with the Western Lands team. In this role, she advocates for policies that protect new lands and habitats, steward existing lands, and promote equitable access to the natural world. Steel is an adept coalition builder, strong supporter of public participation in the political process, and passionate about quantifying the economic impact of conservation. She brings unique expertise in economic development and over a decade of experience in the outdoor recreation industry to WRA. She helps find new sustainable funding streams for stewardship and acquisition of public land so that more people can get outdoors and enjoy all the West has to offer.

Steel's interest in conservation was solidified after a transformational experience in Alaska on an Outward Bound sea kayaking course as an undergraduate. She moved to Boulder, Colo., to pursue her love for outdoor recreation, where she worked for the Colorado Outward Bound School and then joined the Access Fund, a national rock climbing advocacy organization. As their corporate partnerships manager, she helped brands and organizations tell their philanthropic story, helping to grow annual revenue from \$1.4 million to \$3.5 million. During her time at the Access Fund, she pursued her passion for advocacy by lobbying to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and restore the original boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument.

Steel interned for WRA in 2019, where she published a paper on real estate transfer tax and supported the passage of Nevada Assembly Bill 486, which created the Nevada State Office of Outdoor Recreation. This affirmed her desire to work in the West, where she is a true stakeholder in the policies she puts forth.

Before joining WRA full-time in 2024, Steel worked as senior director of public affairs at Colorado Concern, where she helped shape economic policy in Colorado. During this time, she helped lead a 50-organization coalition campaign to secure \$5.3 billion for the Department of Transportation, marking the largest investment in roads and bridges in a generation.

While gaining invaluable policy experience in the economic sector, Steel remained engaged in activism for outdoor recreation and public access. As a volunteer, she helped reform the Colorado Recreational Use statute to strengthen liability protections for landowners and increase free access to private land. This measure helped reopen and safeguard access to popular Colorado Fourteener Mount Lincoln and protected the Leadville 100 race series after a high-profile bike accident caused landowners to close off their properties for fear of liability. She also serves on the board of directors for the Outdoor Alliance and is a long-time supporter of the Boulder Climbing Community and the Women's Foundation of Colorado. She is an avid hiker, rafter, trail runner, and outdoor advocate.

Steel is continually inspired by a Jacques-Yves Cousteau quote, "We only protect what we love, we only love what we understand, and we only understand what we are taught." By increasing equitable access to nature, she believes we can help foster a conservation ethic in the next generation.

Steel holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver and a Bachelor of Arts from Sarah Lawrence College.

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