



western views

WRA CONDEMNS OIL SHALE LEASE PLAN Almost 2.5 Million Acres of Public Land Are at Stake

by Nicole Theerasatiankul, Development and Communications Coordinator

On March 20, 2008, WRA led a coalition of 23 conservation groups in opposing the plan by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to open up almost 2.5 million acres of public land in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah for industrial oil shale and tar sands development. The BLM plan would prematurely permit

commercial leasing of public lands for oil shale and tar sands development before completion of industry research to accurately assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts of these proposed developments, and in the case of oil shale, ahead of the development of technology that can even extract it.

Additionally, large-scale oil shale and tar sands development would require up to 10 new coal-fired power plants, thwarting efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These power plants alone would consume almost as much water each year as all of metro Denver, straining municipal water supplies and permanently altering the agricultural economy of the three states.



PHOTO: ISTOCK

The BLM plan would permit commercial leasing of public lands for development before completing industry research to assess social, economic, and environmental impacts.

Oil shale and tar sands development, if approved, will consume great quantities of energy and scarce water resources, compromise air quality, release large amounts of greenhouse gasses during production, destroy wildlife habitat, diminish recreational opportunities and have negative consequences that will be felt on a local, regional, and national level.

Oil shale deposits in Wyoming and Colorado are sedimentary rock layers that are infused with a compound called kerogen from which petroleum products can be derived. The tar sands of Utah are layers of sand or clay that contain bitumen, a thick, gooey precursor to crude oil. Both resources are more difficult to extract than regular crude oil and cause even greater environmental impacts.

The BLM's plan is awaiting review by the U.S. Congress. WRA remains committed to protecting the West's land, air, and water from the unnecessary risks of oil shale and tar sands development. We invite you to read the comments and other related material at www.westernresourceadvocates.org.

With the Bear River's Fate at Stake, Ogden Improves Water Conservation

by Nicole Theerasatiankul, Development and Communications Coordinator

Western Resource Advocates and the Utah Rivers Council (URC) worked tirelessly — and successfully — to convince the City of Ogden, Utah, to adopt a more aggressive approach to its water management. Beset with aging and leaky water infrastructure, high residential water consumption levels, and plans to dam the Bear River to solve its water demand woes, the City of Ogden acted to adopt an improved water rate structure to both drive down demand and raise more capital for water system repairs. Because of this measure, the Bear River

should be able to remain a free-flowing river, a scarce commodity in Utah.

For more than two years, WRA and the URC met with the staff of the Ogden Public Utility and members of the Ogden City Council, provided sample rate plans and analysis, and educated the public on the benefits of the new water rate structure. The city's strengthened increasing block rate structure assigns the most cost to those who place the highest burden on water supplies and rewards those who use water efficiently. The improved water rate



Avocets in the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

PHOTO: U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

structure better reflects the true value and cost of water in the arid West.

The WR Ap Up

WESTERN RESOURCE ADVOCATES NEWS IN BRIEF

▶ WRA's David Berry wrote *Investment Risk of New Coal-Fired Power Plants*, which shows that **projections given to investors often underestimate the costs of new coal-fired power plants**, leading to adverse financial consequences. The report advises that renewable energy sources may be less vulnerable to cost surprises and equally effective in meeting energy demands.

▶ WRA released the report **A Clean Electric Energy Strategy for Arizona**, demonstrating Arizona's electricity demand through 2025 can be met reliably and cost effectively with renewable energy, increased energy efficiency, natural-gas-fired generation and advanced fossil fuel technologies with low CO₂ emissions.

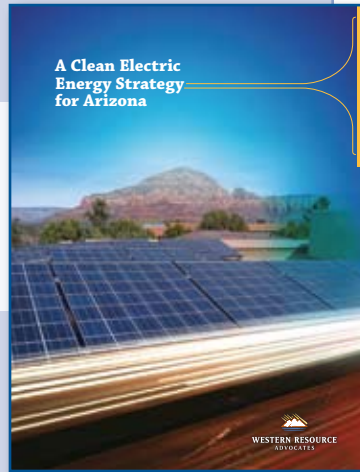
▶ WRA is working to speed approval of Arizona Public Service's contract to purchase clean energy from a 280-MW **central solar power** project, significantly advancing the use of this technology in the U.S.

▶ WRA played a central role in the development of amendments to **energy efficiency legislation** in New Mexico. The amendments call for utilities to deploy *all* cost-effective demand-side management tools and also establish aggressive energy efficiency requirements.

▶ Sierra Pacific Resources confirmed it was **delaying plans to develop the coal-fired Ely Energy Center** in Nevada. This delay was spurred primarily by Senator Harry Reid's aggressive stance against any new coal plant development in the state, as well as rising coal plant construction costs, increased public awareness, uncertainties of future carbon regulation, and opposition to the plants by WRA's Nevada office, local partners in Nevada, and our Western Clean Energy Campaign (WCEC).

▶ WRA continues to work with state policymakers and regulators in the West who are developing a **regional CO₂ cap-and-trade program** for a subset of states in the western United States. WRA developed a cap-and-trade design alternative that avoids many of the complexities of other designs that arise in a regional cap-and-trade program where all states are not participating.

▶ WRA partner The Western Clean Energy Campaign collaborated with Navajo group Diné Citizens Against Ruining our Environment (Diné CARE) to release a report entitled **Energy and Economic Alternatives to the Desert Rock Energy Project**. While the Navajo Nation continues to press forward with the coal-fired Desert Rock Energy Project, it recently announced a joint venture with Citizens Energy Corporation for a 500-MW wind power project, due in large part to the report and the organizing efforts of Diné CARE.



Xcel Energy's Resource Plan Headed in Right Direction

by Nicole Theerasatiankul, Development and Communications Coordinator

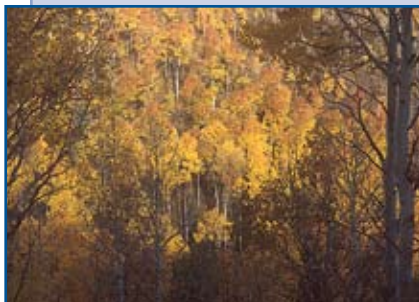
Western Resource Advocates supports Xcel Energy's proposed Colorado Resource Plan, which will halt the growth in the company's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and begin to bring them down. Xcel aims to accomplish this all while continuing to reliably meet Colorado's growing electricity needs. The reductions will contribute to the goals set forth in Governor Ritter's Climate Action Plan.

Key elements of Xcel's plan include retiring two coal-fired power plants located in Denver and Grand Junction, substantially expanding customer energy efficiency programs, and accelerating its use of renewable energy. By 2015, it is expected over 15% of the company's electricity sales will come from renewable resources, exceeding Colorado's Renewable Energy Standard.

WRA has reviewed many utility resource plans. This is the first utility plan we have seen that would actually reduce GHG emissions.

Xcel Energy's plan, awaiting approval by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, represents a major shift away from the utility's past operations. Since its founding over 15 years ago, WRA has reviewed many utility resource plans in states across the West. This is the first plan we have seen that would actually reduce GHG emissions.

WRA's Energy Program Director John Nielsen calls Xcel's plan "precedent-setting," remarking that the "plan will hopefully serve as a model for other utilities on how they can affordably and reliably meet growing demand for energy while at the same time addressing the pressing problem of global warming."



Canyon ablaze in fall color, Roan Plateau.
© 2003, Colorado Environmental Coalition

▶ The federal government rejected the State of Colorado's recommendations to **improve the BLM's Roan Plateau management plan**. The Roan Plateau in western Colorado is a unique area unusually rich in wildlife species. Regional mayors have complained that the gas industry finds "no place is too special for your drilling rigs." WRA is now focused on challenging the plan and any proposed oil and gas leases in federal court.



Continued on back cover

Tom Darin by *Andria Bronsten, Human Resource Director*

In the one year attorney Tom Darin has been at Western Resource Advocates, he has become the “go-to” guy in the world of western energy transmission, focusing on the infrastructure of power lines that carry electricity from generation plants to homes and businesses.

“I like working toward solutions. Smartly planned transmission will play a role in bringing wind, solar, and geothermal energy sources onto the power grid.”

In 2007, WRA created an energy transmission program called “Smart Lines for the West.” The goals of the program are to ensure that increasing energy use efficiency is used as a tool to meet growth in demand,

new transmission lines connect to renewable and clean energy sources and that new transmission corridors adequately protect the region’s outstanding landscapes and wildlife resources. A year later, Tom’s work in this area has caught the ear of two House Natural Resources subcommittees — the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, and the Energy and Mineral Resources — in front of which Tom testified in mid-April.



“I like a good challenge,” says Tom. “I like working toward solutions. Smartly planned transmission will play a role in bringing wind, solar, and geothermal energy sources onto the power grid. Perhaps my favorite aspect is bringing both the utility and renewable energy industries together with the environmental community to ensure a smooth transition to the new energy economy in the West.”

Growing up in Illinois, Tom fell under the spell of the West during fishing trips in Yellowstone with his father. He fulfilled his dream to relocate to the West when he moved to Montana to work for the National Wildlife Federation, and later to Wyoming as a public lands attorney, first for the Wyoming Outdoor Council and then for the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. Tom moved to Boulder in 2007 with his wife, Hope Sieck, and daughter, June. Their son, Jackson, arrived on Leap Day 2008.

Shaping the future of renewable energy and the developing new technologies for both energy storage and transmission are important tasks. With an eye to his two young children and their future, Tom understands the importance of our energy legacy. WRA is impressed and excited with Tom’s work!

www.westernresourceadvocates.org

Aveda Honors WRA With Earth Month Partnership

by *Nicole Theerasatiankul, Development and Communications Coordinator*

In the 1960s, a senator from Wisconsin traveled around the United States on “conservation tours” in hopes of bringing attention to environmental issues. What Senator Gaylord Nelson found on his travels was that “the people were concerned, but the politicians were not.” Inspired by the anti-war demonstrations of the late 60s, Senator Nelson believed that aligning people’s environmental concerns with the power of public demonstration would finally put environmental issues on the national agenda. He announced that, in the spring of 1970, there would be a one-day national grassroots demonstration expressing the public’s environmental concerns. It succeeded beyond the Senator’s wildest dreams: 20 million demonstrators across the United States gathered on behalf of the environment on April 22, 1970 for the first Earth Day.

By Earth Day’s 20th anniversary in 1990, over 200 million people in over 141 countries were promoting the importance of environmental issues on the global agenda. Among the growing crowd were new-found Earth Day supporters at the Aveda Corporation. For Aveda, what began as a day of support for environ-

mental consciousness in 1990 has now turned into a month-long international effort to raise awareness, educate customers, and contribute funds to promote a healthy environment. Aveda has grown into a global corporation that is dedicated to an ethical approach to business, which includes a steadfast commitment to addressing environmental issues.

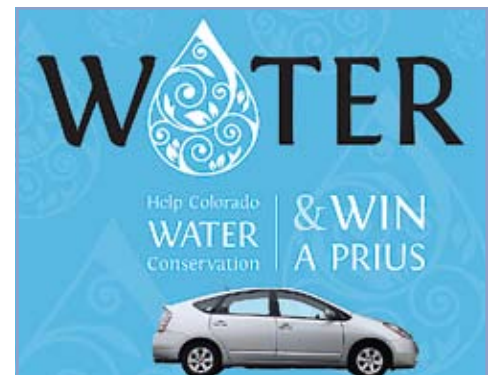


the art and science of pure flower and plant essences

For 2008, the Aveda Corporation’s Earth Month campaign focused on water conservation, and Western Resource Advocates was proud to be named as one of 21 international Earth Month partners for a second year in a row! Throughout April, 133 salons across the Rocky Mountain region held charity events to benefit our water program, which focuses on meeting human water needs while also protecting the West’s rivers, streams, and aquifers. Finding this balance is especially challenging and important in the arid Southwest, where population is rapidly increasing.

Local Aveda Salons and Spas engaged in cut-a-thons, Earth Day parties, gift basket raffles, silent auctions, and even a raffle for a brand new Prius hybrid car to raise funds for Western Resource Advocates. Aveda’s grassroots support not only brought in funding, but also brought recognition for WRA and its mission.

WRA thanks Aveda and all its partner salons and spas for their work on a very successful Earth Month!



Timothy Tobin, a handyman living in Boulder, won the Prius raffle with the purchase of just one lucky ticket.

BLM Plan Opposed

WRA condemns reckless oil shale proposal.

Ogden Opts for Conservation

Increased water efficiency avoids damming Bear River.

Xcel Energy

Xcel Energy supported for making progress cutting its greenhouse gas emissions.

Earth Month

Aveda Salons and Spas embrace grassroots action for Earth Month by raising funds to support WRA's water program.

Meet WRA's Tom Darin

Tom is focusing on an often overlooked part of the clean energy picture: energy transmission.

The WR Ap Up

WESTERN RESOURCE ADVOCATES NEWS IN BRIEF

Continued from inside

▶ WRA is appealing a decision by the State of Utah to deny citizen input on allowing the industrial development of 33,000 acres of the bed of Great Salt Lake. At issue are plans to increase the extraction of minerals from the lake and its impact on water quality. At the center of the debate is a numeric **water quality standard in the Great Salt Lake for selenium**, a mineral that causes reduced hatches and embryonic deformations in bird eggs at certain levels. The state and industry are attempting to secure a standard that would allow for 10 percent mortality among water bird eggs, a level WRA considers too high for an essential stop for migrating birds on the Pacific flyway.

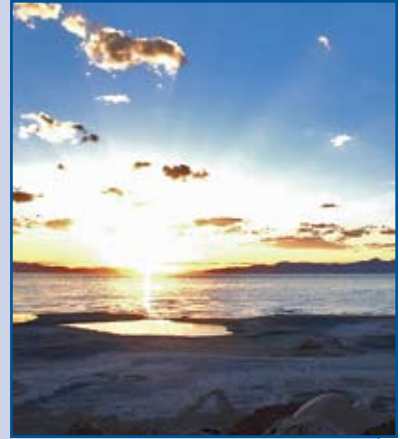


PHOTO: ISTOCK

▶ WRA Energy Program Director John Nielsen co-authored an article with Energy Program Lead Attorney Steve Michel for *The Electricity Journal*, the leading policy journal for the U.S. electric power industry. The article proposed a simplified yet **more efficient version of cap-and-trade policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** produced by power generation.

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www.westernresourceadvocates.org



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