



# ADVOCATES for the WEST

2024 Spring/Summer Case Notes

Dream Stream – Josh Udesen





# A BIODIVERSE WEST IS CRUCIAL TO CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Laird J. Lucas, Executive Director

When I began working as an environmental litigator more than three decades ago, environmentalism in the West was much more rooted in saving our natural wonders from the threats of industry exploitation and government carelessness.

Today, that fight continues, but the focus has shifted. There is now widespread recognition that preserving imperiled species and their habitats is just as much about saving ourselves as it is righting the environmental wrongs created by exploitation and extraction.

2023 was the hottest year on record, and rare are legal challenges *Advocates for the West* brings today that don't have a close intersection with our changing climate. We are not only fighting to protect our public lands, water, and wildlife, but advocating for the biodiversity needed to provide climate resilience and ensure a livable planet for humans.

For instance, our work challenging massive oil and gas projects

seeks to keep fossil fuels in the ground and promote the transition to clean energy. At the same time, it serves to protect millions of acres across the vast and ecologically rich Sagebrush Sea—including sage-grouse and many other species of this iconic western biome—from further habitat loss and fragmentation.

Promoting biodiversity underlies our work to safeguard sensitive riparian areas threatened by livestock grazing, old growth forests that are in the crosshairs of the logging industry, wild salmon runs pushed ever closer to extinction by dams, ancient wildlife migration paths obstructed by mining and other industrial development, and other threatened and dwindling ecosystems whose restoration is key to carbon storage and climate mitigation.

There's hope in the fact that we—*Advocates for the West* and our partners in the conservation community—are winning through court victories elevating climate

considerations and using our litigation to promote more ecologically responsible policies. Our efforts, as outlined in the pages that follow, are raising awareness about the climate value of preserving intact ecosystems, clean and abundant water, and resilient communities.

A biodiverse planet is our strongest natural defense against climate change, and the West's vast public lands offer a fighting chance to preserve thriving ecosystems. But as we're combating climate change, we must ensure our response to the crisis is socially just and environmentally sound.

Recognizing this interconnectedness—between biology and climate, and between human communities—is key. Increasingly, it's key to winning in court, as shown by our recent victory to protect the Oregon spotted frog within central Oregon's Fremont-Winema National Forest. And it's crucial to ensuring equitable climate solutions for

communities across the West.

I've said before, partnerships are the foundation of our work to provide free legal services for the environment. Only together, will we thrive. Thank you for standing with us to protect and defend a biodiverse and environmentally just West!

With immense gratitude,



Evening Migration – Josh Udesen

*Advocates for the West*

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## SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

“With a devoted staff and Board of Directors, *Advocates for the West* protects things I am passionate about. The voice that they bring to our natural resources inspires me personally and professionally. Supporting them is supporting my own mission. I am grateful for their efforts throughout the West and the impact this energy has on our communities’ wellbeing now and beyond.”

**Amanda Gardner**  
Clayton, Idaho  
Sage Society Member

Sawtooth Lake – Josh Udesen

## PLANNED GIVING

What is the legacy you want to leave for the West?

You can help protect the West’s special places for generations to come. Joining our Legacy Society is as simple as naming *Advocates for the West* as a beneficiary in your will or estate, either with a specific amount or a residual gift after your heirs have received their distributions. While these specific gifts (“bequests”) are the most common type of planned giving, there are other options. These include a beneficiary designation in a:

- Charitable Remainder Trust
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- Revocable Living Trust
- Charitable IRA Rollover
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Legacy Society gifts under \$25,000 are directed to our general support, and gifts over \$25,000 may be directed to general support or to our endowment fund, at the discretion of our Board of Directors. We recommend you seek the advice of your financial or legal adviser before making your bequest.

If you choose to make a gift in your estate plans, our legal name is *Advocates for the West, Inc.* and our 501(c)(3) tax ID number is 06-1654062.

If you have already included *Advocates for the West* in your estate plans, please let us know. Sharing your plan with us places you under no obligation, but it does enable us to say thank you and welcome you to our

Legacy Society. We respect all requests to remain anonymous.

Contact Aimee Moran, Deputy Director, to learn more about *Advocates for the West*’s Legacy Society at [amoran@advocateswest.org](mailto:amoran@advocateswest.org) or (208) 342-7024 x205.

Your legacy can help *Advocates for the West* win for the West, today and for future generations.

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF PLANNED GIVING?



Learn more about planned giving by watching an *Advocates for the West* webinar on the topic. Scan the QR code or visit [AdvocatesWest.org/3-5-2024-planned-giving-webinar](https://AdvocatesWest.org/3-5-2024-planned-giving-webinar)





# DRILLING PUBLIC LANDS IS A CLIMATE PROBLEM

*Sarah Stellberg, Staff Attorney*

The United States is now producing more oil than any nation in history. Let that sink in. As the planet hurtles toward climate disaster, American fossil fuel production is expanding to historic levels. We are pouring fuel on the climate fire.

To have any chance of combatting climate change, we need to address the root cause: fossil fuels. After all, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that any new fossil fuel development is incompatible with staying below the 1.5°C climate tipping point.

Our public lands are a key offender when it comes to climate-warming pollution. The federal government owns nearly a third of all mineral rights across the nation—roughly 23 million acres of which are already under lease to oil and gas developers, who extract them for personal profit. In any given year, public lands account for anywhere from 10 to 25 percent of all domestic oil and natural gas production.

President Biden campaigned on a promise of “no more drilling on federal lands, period.” Yet he has failed to deliver in a big way. In his first three years in office, President Biden approved nearly twice the number of oil and gas drilling permits on federal land as former President Trump did over that same span. A recent report estimates that these fossil fuel projects will fully erase the emissions reductions from the administration’s climate progress.

*Advocates for the West* believes the courts can deliver where politics have failed. Seven years ago, we saw the opportunity to use our legal expertise to slow the proliferation of public lands drilling. And we got involved in no small way. *Advocates for the West’s* portfolio of oil and gas lawsuits have brought the federal government to court to improve environmental reviews, keep drilling out of sensitive landscapes, and hold private companies responsible for mitigating their damage:

- In Wyoming’s Powder River Basin, we are fighting the massive Converse County Oil & Gas Project—a “climate bomb” equivalent to adding 1.2 million cars to the road.
- In the western U.S., we have successfully challenged and overturned more than a quarter of all federal oil and gas leases issued during the Trump era—and are not done yet.
- In Utah, we sued the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for auctioning off oil and gas leases in a sacred cultural landscape outside Bears Ears National Monument. A favorable settlement forced BLM to reconsider the leases after meaningful Tribal consultation.
- In the vast Sagebrush Sea, we blocked the Trump administration’s attempts to allow expanded oil and gas development across 51 million acres of greater sage-grouse habitat.

Our litigation has succeeded in keeping fossil fuels safely below ground and carbon out of the atmosphere. However, these cases have other significant climate co-benefits.

The interior West’s vast Sagebrush Sea is an important carbon sink, storing even more carbon than forests in the soil and roots of its perennial plants. Carving up these lands for fossil fuel development releases these carbon stores—by disturbing native vegetation; increasing erosion; and facilitating conversion to invasive weed monocultures that store less carbon and frequently ignite into wildfires. Keeping oil companies out of these lands keeps their carbon stores intact.

Keeping ecosystems intact is also vital to climate change adaptation and resilience. The Sagebrush Sea sustains a diverse array of wildlife species, many that depend on public lands for survival. The greater sage-grouse, for example, is facing an extinction crisis precipitated by habitat threats like

oil and gas drilling. Maintaining diverse expanses of native habitat is essential to the survival of sage-grouse and other wildlife species in the face of climate change.

*Advocates for the West* helps concerned groups and citizens challenge oil and gas projects for a variety of reasons—to conserve wildlife habitat, safeguard cultural resources, or maintain clean air

and water. But the beauty of these cases is their power to achieve climate action at the same time. We are gearing up for big new oil and gas fights in 2024—making climate progress one case at a time.

**“KEEPING ECOSYSTEMS INTACT IS ALSO VITAL TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE. THE SAGEBRUSH SEA SUSTAINS A DIVERSE ARRAY OF WILDLIFE SPECIES, MANY THAT DEPEND ON PUBLIC LANDS FOR SURVIVAL.”**

*On Point – Josh Udesen*

*Advocates for the West*

2024 Spring/Summer Case Notes





**“OUTSIDE OF OUR CASE, WE HOPE THAT THE NINTH CIRCUIT DECISION SENDS A STRONG MESSAGE TO FEDERAL AGENCIES THAT THEY CANNOT IGNORE CLIMATE CHANGE WHEN CONSIDERING WHETHER, OR HOW, TO AUTHORIZE HARMFUL ACTIVITIES LIKE LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN HABITAT FOR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES.”**

**A**dvocates for the West recently won an important victory to protect sensitive species on federal public lands in Oregon’s Klamath basin from the devastating effects of climate change and livestock grazing.

For nearly 15 years, we have worked with a large coalition of conservation groups to protect about 90,000 acres within the Fremont-Winema National Forest that contains extraordinary biodiversity. This area includes Jack Creek, which provides critical habitat for an imperiled population of Oregon spotted frogs, as well as the largest concentration of fen habitat—a unique type of wetland that boasts a wide range of unique plants—on U.S. Forest Service land in the Pacific Northwest.

But the Forest Service has allowed cattle grazing to harm and destroy this oasis for decades, prompting us to file, and win, a series of three federal lawsuits. Our most recent



# A STRONG MESSAGE TO FEDERAL AGENCIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

*Lizzy Potter, Staff Attorney*

case has forced the Forest Service to drastically curtail grazing on the sensitive pastures since 2019.

Our case centered on the Oregon spotted frog—the most aquatic of all frogs in the Pacific Northwest—which relies on healthy streams, rivers, and wetlands to survive. Preventing the frog from going extinct requires protecting and improving its habitat throughout its range. Unfortunately, climate change is poised to alter precipitation patterns in the Pacific Northwest and dry up streams and wetlands, posing a serious threat to this species. Cattle grazing in frog habitat exacerbates this problem by further lowering water levels, forcing frogs into dwindling pools where they’re more likely to be harassed and trampled by cattle.

In October 2023, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in our favor by finding that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) fell short of its obligations under the Endangered Species Act when issuing a Biological Opinion that allowed cattle grazing within Jack Creek.

The Ninth Circuit faulted the FWS’s analysis of climate change, which failed “to consider whether the small frog population could sustain grazing-related impacts on top of potential climate change effects.” By ignoring available information that climate change will exacerbate low water conditions, FWS failed to consider an important aspect of the problem. The Court also found that FWS relied on vague and inadequate mitigation measures to address the serious threat that low water conditions pose to the species. Crucially, the Court noted the importance of the Jack Creek population and the risk that its extirpation would pose to the species as a whole.

In our case, the decision will prevent the Forest Service from authorizing grazing within Jack Creek unless and until FWS issues a new Biological Opinion. In the meantime, we are working outside of the courtroom with our partners to encourage federal agencies to prioritize restoration of habitat there. Our partners are working hard to translate the courtroom victory into long-lasting protections

by pushing for a strong recovery plan for the Oregon spotted frog; supporting efforts to restore Jack Creek and the surrounding area; and passing federal legislation that would designate Jack Creek as a Wild and Scenic River.

Outside of our case, we hope that the Ninth Circuit decision sends a strong message to federal agencies that they cannot ignore climate change when considering whether, or how, to authorize harmful activities like livestock grazing in habitat for threatened and endangered species. This is particularly important as livestock grazing on sensitive public lands is becoming more incompatible with ecological systems amid our rapidly changing climate.

The case spotlights many of the elements that make *Advocates for the West* so successful. We leverage science and the law to defend threatened and often under-represented ecosystems and species. But a single case is rarely enough to achieve lasting success for species or ecosystems on the ground. That requires persistence.

Once we invest in an issue, we stick with our clients throughout the ups and downs of our cases and their advocacy efforts, which can span many years—or even decades.

We also invest in cases and partners that matter. Our work to protect the Oregon spotted frog may seem novel to some, but it helps supports healthy aquatic ecosystems that offer a wide range of benefits. Indeed, here in central Oregon, protection of the Oregon spotted frog is driving river management throughout the Deschutes River basin, which is starting to restore more natural flows that should improve conditions for fish, wildlife, and people who depend upon the river.





# WATER IS KEY IN FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WEST

Andrew Missel, Staff Attorney

**A**dvocates for the West works hard to fight climate change by challenging oil and gas development on public lands. For instance, our work challenging oil and gas leasing and development in sage-grouse habitats has helped shut down or delay oil and gas development on over 1 million acres of public lands in the West.

Much of our other work intersects with the climate crisis in a more subtle—but still important—way. Take our efforts to force the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to spend more money to protect salmon in the Columbia River basin. BPA, the federal agency that sells the power generated at the large federal hydroelectric dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers, pitches itself as the best source of “affordable and carbon-free” power in the Pacific Northwest. But BPA’s power rates are artificially low, because the agency has consistently underfunded fish mitigation and restoration efforts. And BPA’s power is not

truly “carbon-free,” because the federal dams that generate that power have created huge reservoirs that produce methane and other greenhouse gases.

If we can successfully force BPA to spend more money to protect fish, it will help shore up vital salmon habitat restoration and other efforts. It will also force BPA to show its customers the true cost of its power, which could help make solar and wind more competitive against BPA’s hydropower—a good result both for fish and the climate.

Another example of our work intersecting with the climate crisis is our effort to defend legally protected streamflows for fish in the lower Crooked River in Oregon. Our client, WaterWatch of Oregon, worked for years to help ensure adequate, legally-protected flows for fish downstream of the Prineville Reservoir. That work paid off in 2023, when the Oregon Water Resources Department finally granted a water-rights permit that would keep water in the Crooked

River downstream of the reservoir from being diverted out of stream for irrigation and other purposes. That permit is now on hold due to a challenge from a group of ranchers who claim that they will be harmed by keeping water in-stream for fish, but we are fighting to get the ranchers’ challenge dismissed.

These types of disputes over how scarce water resources should be allocated are going to happen with more frequency as the climate of the West becomes drier, hotter, and less predictable. Powerful industrial and agricultural interests will fight hard to take the lion’s share of the water, and we will fight against them on behalf of fish and wildlife—especially when the industrial and agricultural interests in question are major contributors to the climate crisis.

In the Crooked River water-rights case, for instance, the groups complaining about water being used to protect fish want that water to instead go to support ranching, one of the most carbon-

intensive forms of agriculture on the planet. By fighting to keep water in-stream for fish, we are also fighting to keep that water from feeding an industry that is a major contributor to climate change.

In fact, because of the high carbon costs of livestock grazing, *Advocates for the West’s* work to halt or reduce harmful livestock grazing on public lands helps to curb climate change. According to recent studies by scientists at Oregon State University, livestock grazing on public lands in the West accounts for annual greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 12.4 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>—about three times more than the entire city of Seattle generates.

When we successfully stop grazing on public lands, we cut into that total. Our recent grazing victories—from our successful challenge to the Bureau of Land Management’s authorization of grazing on portions of the Sonoran Desert National Monument to Oregon’s Fremont-Winema National Forest

*Pilgrimage – Josh Udesen*

(page 8)—are wins for the climate as well as the plant and animal life harmed by excessive grazing.

Of course, *Advocates for the West* still takes on, and will continue to challenge, giant oil and gas projects that both contribute to climate change through carbon pollution and destroy sensitive wildlife habitats. But ensuring cold, clean, and abundant water for fish and other species amid a hotter, drier, more unpredictable climate is just as important for the future of the West—and all its inhabitants.

**“THESE TYPES OF DISPUTES OVER HOW SCARCE WATER RESOURCES SHOULD BE ALLOCATED ARE GOING TO HAPPEN WITH MORE FREQUENCY AS THE CLIMATE OF THE WEST BECOMES DRIER, HOTTER, AND LESS PREDICTABLE.”**

*Advocates for the West*

2024 Spring/Summer Case Notes





# CASE UPDATES

## Victory for Sage-grouse and Sagebrush Habitats

*Advocates for the West* won landmark victories in February 2020 and June 2021 in the first two phases of our sweeping case challenging thousands of Trump-era oil and gas leases in sage-grouse habitats. Our wins held unlawful more than one-quarter of all Trump Bureau of Land Management (BLM) oil and gas leases issued in the lower 48 states, covering over a million and a half acres of sage-grouse habitats, and ordering the BLM to reinstate an Obama policy requiring more public input and environmental reviews. In January 2024, we won a ruling from the district court, denying an oil company’s request to drill new wells on a phase two lease. The Court also blocked BLM from approving new drilling on phase two leases through permit extensions.

## Protecting the Owyhee Canyonlands from Military Airspace Expansion

*Advocates for the West* filed a case challenging the Air Force’s decision to expand and intensify its military trainings using F-15 fighter jets over Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Owyhee Canyonlands of Idaho, Oregon,

and Nevada. These vast desert wildlands feature miles upon miles of deep rugged canyons and rolling sagebrush grasslands that support a rich diversity of wildlife. The Air Force’s actions threaten key sage-grouse strongholds, as well as bighorn sheep and other wildlife. The Air Force decision lowers the “floor” for military jets to train as low as 100 feet above ground level for subsonic flights, generating significant noise, visual intrusions, pollution in largely pristine and quiet natural landscapes, and disturbing sage-grouse other sensitive species.

## Safeguarding Idaho’s South Fork Clearwater River

We are defending before the Supreme Court our victories to protect Idaho’s rivers from unpermitted suction dredge mining—a method of mining gold from riverbeds that degrades water quality and destroys fish habitat. In June 2021, we won a significant victory holding that high-profile, anti-federal suction dredge miner Shannon Poe, of California, violated the Clean Water Act (CWA) when he dumped suction dredge waste into Idaho’s South Fork of the Clearwater River without a required permit. Then, in September 2022,

the Court ordered Poe to pay a \$150,000 fine for his actions—one of the largest CWA penalties ever against an individual in Idaho. But after the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit upheld our wins and denied Poe’s motion for rehearing, Poe filed a petition for review before the Supreme Court, which we are now opposing.

## Challenging Massive Stibnite Gold Mine in Idaho

Representing the Nez Perce Tribe and conservation groups, we filed a petition with the Idaho Board of Environmental Quality challenging a hearing officer’s decision to uphold an air quality permit issued to Perpetua Resources for its proposed Stibnite Gold Mine on the edge of the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness. Perpetua (formerly Midas Gold) proposes three open-pit, cyanide heap leach gold mines and a towering mine waste dam at the Stibnite Mine project site in the headwaters of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River. The proposed mining would emit large quantities of dust known to contain arsenic, which can cause serious health problems, and also threatens spawning habitat for Endangered Species Act-protected chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull

trout, while restricting Tribal and public access to the area.

## Defending the “High Divide” from Harmful Livestock Grazing

We just filed a lawsuit to challenge harmful livestock grazing at Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in the Centennial Valley of Montana. Decades ago, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that grazing conflicted with the NWR’s purposes but has continued to authorize grazing every year, without public comment, while ignoring the agency’s commitment to monitoring. Red Rock Lakes NWR is the largest wetland complex in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, providing migratory and year-round habitat for grizzly bears, trumpeter swans, and many other species along the “High Divide” connecting Yellowstone to the Northern Rockies.



To learn more about our victories and active cases, please visit: [AdvocatesWest.org/cases](https://AdvocatesWest.org/cases)

# BOARD NEWS



## FAREWELL DEBORAH FERGUSON AND MICHAEL LOPEZ

It is with great appreciation that we bid farewell to Deborah Ferguson and Michael Lopez, and thank them for a combined 13 years of service on our Board of Directors. Deborah served on the board for 7 years, including as Chair. Michael served on the board for 6 years, including as Vice Chair.

Among their many contributions to the *Advocates for the West* board, Deborah helped shepherd improvements to staff contract and compensation protocols. Michael was a critical partner in helping us deepen our longstanding relationship with the Nez Perce Tribe and a driver in our commitment to advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice.

Thank you for all you do, Deborah and Michael!



Water Study Afternoon – Josh Udesen

# STAFF NEWS



## WELCOME ANDREW HURSH <sup>(HE/HIM)</sup> STAFF ATTORNEY

Andrew joined *Advocates for the West* as a Staff Attorney in May 2024. He pursued a public-interest law career following an academic and professional background in natural resource science and policy, including global climate change modeling and carbon cycle research. Andrew has a varied history working in and around western federal lands, including trail and restoration work, preparing monitoring data for wilderness areas, guiding backcountry and

river trips, and working with multi-interest collaboratives.

Andrew grew up in Kansas City and attended the University of Montana for an undergraduate degree in natural resource conservation and a master’s degree in systems ecology, with an additional program training in facilitating natural resource conflict resolution. Andrew received his law degree from Vermont Law School, where he served as an articles editor on the Vermont Law Review. Andrew spent a year clerking for Chief Justice Mike McGrath on the Montana Supreme Court, and prior to joining *Advocates for the West* litigated cases on public lands administration for a small non-profit conservation group.

Andrew lives in Missoula, MT, or else is somewhere around the West pursuing all modes of outdoor exploration. Andrew is thrilled to work defending wild places, serving human communities’ relationships with the natural world, and seeking justice at the intersection of law, ecology, and humility toward the earth and each other.



# LAW CLERKS, EXTERNS, & INTERNS



**LARA ANDENORO** (SHE/HER)

Summer Law Clerk

Lara is a rising third-year law student at the University of Colorado Boulder. In law school, Lara worked as a student attorney at the University of Colorado Natural Resources and Environmental Law Clinic. In this role, Lara helped develop a case strategy for unregulated industrial pollution by considering solutions through the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and state nuisance law. Lara also assisted in drafting an Amicus Brief arguing for the protection of water through the public trust doctrine and state water law. Additionally, Lara is a lead production editor for the Colorado Environmental Law Journal, and vice president of If/When/How, a lawyering for reproductive justice student group. Before law school, Lara majored in environmental science at Portland State University in Oregon and worked for an employment and labor law firm in Portland, OR. In her downtime, Lara loves to ski, hike, bike, cook, craft, and spend time with her cat, Luna.



**IAN CONNOLLY** (HE/HIM)

Spring Extern

Ian grew up in Colorado, less than a mile from the South Fork of the Platte River in Denver, and is a second-year student at Lewis & Clark Law School. His undergraduate studies took place at Quest University, in British Columbia, where he studied environmental science and Human Geography, and he works as a multi-day river guide in Idaho. He is presently pursuing a J.D. with a focus on environmental and Native American law to complement his love of free-flowing rivers and passion for Tribal justice. Since beginning law school, Ian has interned with the Idaho Conservation League, and leads a student project on public lands for the Northwest Environmental Defense Center, where he is also a student board member. Despite the demands of a legal career, he hopes to return to the Salmon River for years to come, and to leverage his education on behalf of wild places and communities across the West.



**LUKE KEENEY** (HE/HIM)

Spring Extern

Luke is a second-year law student at Columbia Law School. He is an aspiring patent litigator from Cartersville, GA. Luke studied biology at Georgia College & State University, with a focus on aquatic biology and ecosystems. He has always been passionate about preserving nature and protecting wildlife. Growing up near the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains has instilled those values in Luke for as long as he can remember. His most significant environmental interest is the preservation of waterways and the impacts of dams on native wildlife. This past summer, he interned in the Northern District of Georgia as a judicial intern for the Hon. J.P. Boulee. There, Luke enhanced his legal skillset by learning to effectively analyze, revise, and write various legal documents. In his free time, he enjoys maintaining aquariums, playing golf, and spending time with friends and family.



**SIERRA MEGGITT** (SHE/HER)

Summer Law Clerk

Sierra is a rising third-year law student at the University of Colorado Boulder. Born in Portland, OR, and raised in Charlotte, NC, Sierra’s dedication to public lands and decision to go to law school was inspired by her love of the Pacific Northwest. During her first year of law school, Sierra was the Charles N. Woodruff Fellow where she worked on issues surrounding conditional water rights in western Colorado. After her first year, Sierra interned at American Rivers where she researched the Antiquities Act and Tribal co-management. This year, Sierra interned with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, served as a student attorney for the American Indian Law Clinic, and worked as a research assistant at the Getches-Wilkinson Center where she studied wetlands management on public lands. Prior to law school, Sierra attended Bucknell University, where she majored in sustainability management, worked on a permaculture farm, and taught yoga. Upon graduating, she worked in Cannon Beach, OR, before settling in Breckenridge, CO. In her free time, Sierra enjoys recreating in the mountains and getting to know her non-human neighbors on her bike, skis, and two feet.



**LEONARDO ALEKSANDER RYAN** (HE/HIM)

Andrus Scholar Summer Intern

Leonardo is an interdisciplinary studies major at Boise State University. He is in his junior year and plans to attend graduate school on the East Coast within the next two years. He has been a nonprofit consultant and advocate for the last six years, serving the state of Idaho and the nation. Leonardo grew up in Salt Lake City, UT, with very little access to natural lands. Once moving to Boise, his adoration of nature has grown. If he isn’t in the office, he can be found writing poetry by the river, biking through downtown, or up-cycling vintage clothing.







ADVOCATES for the WEST

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## FEATURED ARTIST: JOSH UDESEN

Josh Udesen is an observant passerby for all things under an open sky. His art is simply a reflection of his passion for how he sees the world and the places he spends his time. Between his obsession for outdoor exploration, years of guiding rivers and mountains, and constantly thinking of his next adventure, there is much to inspire his art. Primarily self-taught, he always possessed a love of art, but only recently considered his art as something more than a hobby. In addition to being a working artist, he is well into his second decade as a high school visual arts and comparative religions teacher. He lives in Boise, ID with his teenage daughter and spends as much time as possible teaching her the benefits of sleeping under the stars, rowing a boat down rivers, and exploring the nooks and crannies of the Idaho outdoors. Josh's work can be found at [tightlinestudio.com](http://tightlinestudio.com)