



NORTHERN ROCKIES CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE

Conservation for the Common Good
– since 1987 –



2016 YEAR IN REVIEW



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NRCC, now entering its 30th year, builds capacity and creates opportunities to improve communication, education, research, and conservation decision-making. All of our work is directed at making tangible conservation gains and developing the leadership skills needed to help people in their important work.

NRCC continues to grow in scope and impact thanks to an outstanding group of Project Leaders, Advisors, Board Members, and public and private funders and partners. This past year we added 6 new Research Associates (RAs), 20 new projects, and three new Resident Experts. We now have residencies in Education, Writing, Photography, and Art. All of these individuals raise our effectiveness and make our network even more remarkable.

In this issue, Writer in Residence Todd Wilkinson shares his perspective after three decades observing GYE conservation challenges and reflects on NRCC's unique role and contributions. Co-founder and Emeritus Board Member Susan Clark offers insights from her new book, which point to a more sustainable, pragmatic path forward for the GYE in the 21st century.

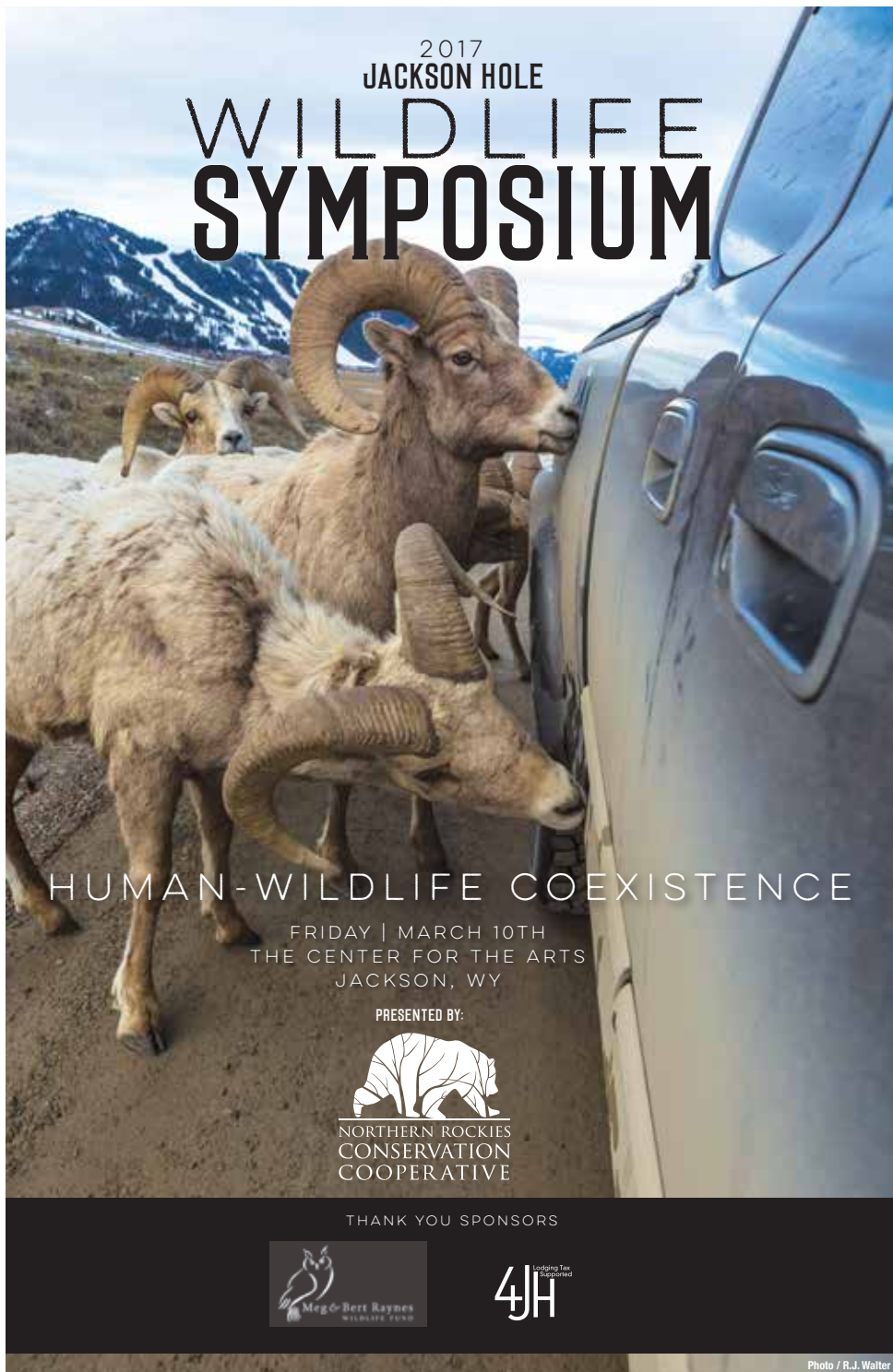
Next spring, NRCC is convening the 6th Jackson Hole Wildlife Symposium focused on Human-Wildlife Coexistence and the Integration of Science, Education, and Conservation in Greater Yellowstone. Gao Yufang, who is a National Geographic Emerging Explorer, as well as a NRCC Research Associate, will give a keynote presentation about lessons from his work with elephants, snow leopards, and rhinos and show how it relates to Greater Yellowstone.

I hope you'll continue to participate in NRCC's vital work. "Conservation for the Common Good" requires we all work in complementary, supportive ways to create solutions to today's and future challenges. Please consider attending a NRCC event, checking out one of our online or published resources, or contributing to our programs. Your participation and assistance is essential and greatly appreciated!

Best wishes,

Peyton Curlee Griffin
Board President

Save The Date!




2017
JACKSON HOLE
**WILDLIFE
SYMPOSIUM**

HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

FRIDAY | MARCH 10TH
THE CENTER FOR THE ARTS
JACKSON, WY

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NORTHERN ROCKIES
CONSERVATION
COOPERATIVE

THANK YOU SPONSORS






Photo / R.J. Walter

**Jackson Hole
Wildlife Symposium
March 10, 2017
The Center for the Arts
Jackson, Wyoming**

This spring, NRCC will host the 6th Jackson Hole Wildlife Symposium (JHWS) at the Center for the Arts in downtown Jackson, Wyoming.

Symposium participants will experience diverse sessions, panels, and speakers addressing “Human-Wildlife Coexistence in Jackson Hole and Beyond: Integrating Science, Education, and Conservation.”

The goal of the JHWS is to provide a forum for deepening dialogue about human-wildlife coexistence among local and regional citizens, professionals and leaders. It will also identify common challenges faced by GYE community members, and will feature forward-thinking, practical strategies that are being implemented in the region to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

Speakers are being invited from Jackson Hole and beyond. Sessions include keynote addresses, panel discussions, quick-talk and poster sessions, an art show, and local awards ceremony.

Stay in touch at: www.nrcccooperative.org/jhws for more information on the JHWS agenda, registration, and sponsorship opportunities!

It's Time to Heed the *'Signals From The Future'*

By Todd Wilkinson

*T*odd Wilkinson is a well-known environmental journalist who has been writing about the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem for 30 years. As NRCC's Writer in Residence, he will be penning a number of essays about the intersection of science, people, land management, public policy and conservation within the region.

For those unfamiliar with Greater Yellowstone—the elements that set this ecoregion apart in America—let's start with a refresher. At 22.5 million acres, Greater Yellowstone is one of the last, still-essentially-intact and interconnected masses of wildlands left in the world. Because it is located in the backyard of a wealthy developed nation with more than 320 million people, this alone makes its status something of a 21st century miracle.

Owed in part to its geographical remoteness and the work of generations of conservationists, the region today contains all of its native mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, and fish species that were here 10,000 years ago. That includes grizzly bears and gray wolves, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, trumpeter swans, bison, and black-footed ferrets, every single one of these rescued by intervention or due to shielding by the federal Endangered Species Act.

Greater Yellowstone still has epic migrations of elk, deer, and

pronghorn, eliciting comparisons to the Serengeti Plain of eastern Africa. Yellowstone, the mother of all national parks and the preserve situated at Greater Yellowstone's core, still has 10,000 living, breathing geothermal phenomena, more than can be found in the rest of the globe combined. The ecosystem is a watershed birthplace of three major river systems—the Snake-Columbia, Green-Colorado, and Missouri-Mississippi—which means that the water that gathers here shapes human lives, communities and economies hundreds if not thousands of miles distant.

As for the things that fuel Greater Yellowstone's commerce, no longer is it logging, mining or ranching. The region's two crown jewel national parks, Yellowstone and its Jackson Hole neighbor, Grand Teton, are responsible for generating \$1 billion in annual commerce based on nature tourism. Ecosystem-wide, one prominent economist says non-consumptive natural resource amenities account for at least another \$3 billion in direct and indirect economic activity.

In terms of Greater Yellowstone's value in shaping the lifestyles of her 600,000 human residents scattered across 20 counties and three states—and in attracting six million visitors every year—just one word characterizes the assessment: priceless.

According to so many different metrics, the powerful forces of

*“Without quality data, problems
go undetected....
Without effective leadership,
challenges go unanswered.”*

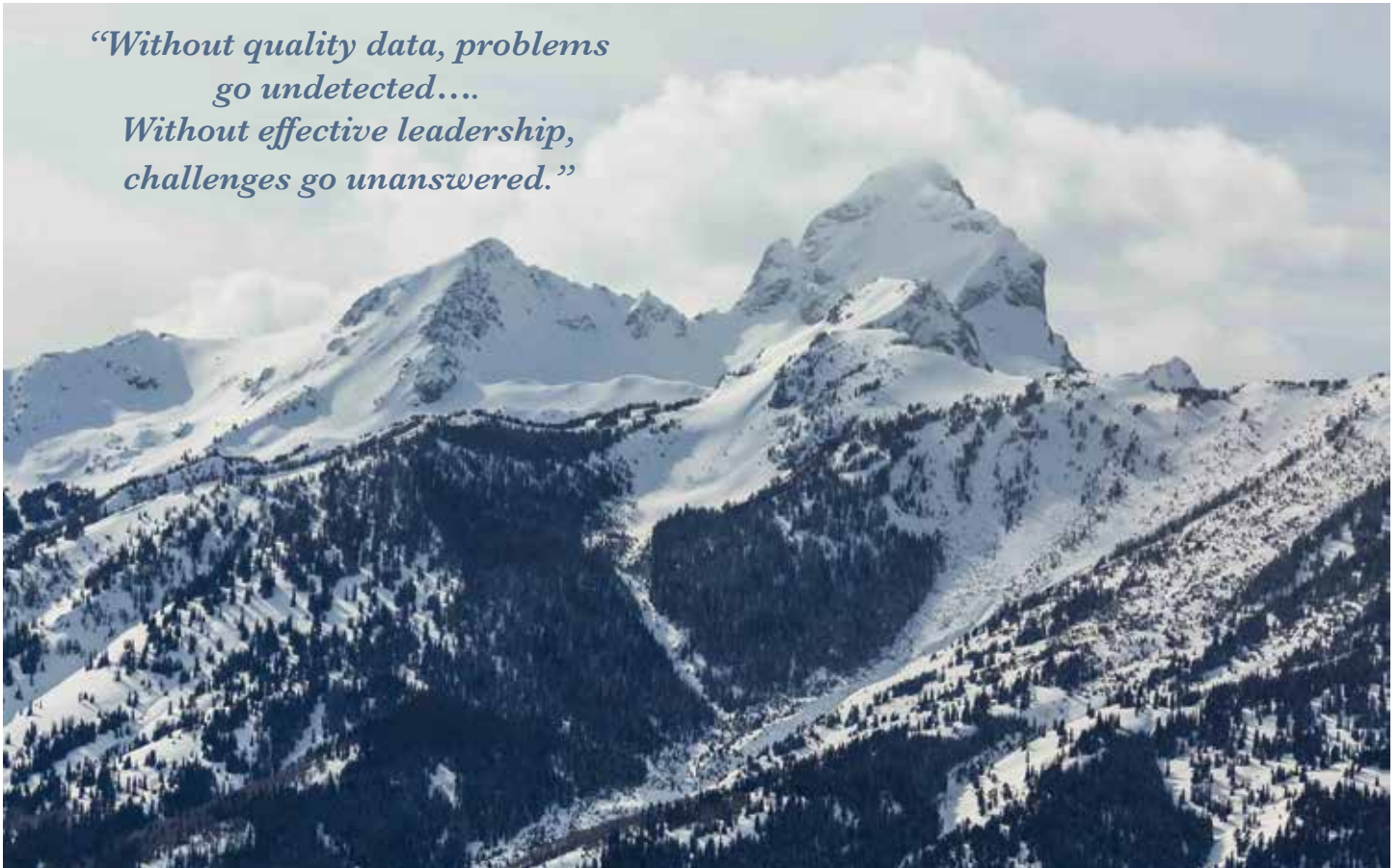


Photo by R.J. Walter

nature that both converge and emanate from Greater Yellowstone are without rival, certainly in the Lower 48. And each is attached to a common denominator: The vast, vast majority of the terrain in this ecosystem belongs to you and me.

Greater Yellowstone is composed mostly of federal public land. Whether you realize it or not, you are a stakeholder—federal laws give you valid legal standing in shaping how these national parks, national forests and national wildlife refuges should be managed, how wildlife is stewarded and how other resources ought to be administered.

Greater Yellowstone, too, possesses something else: one of the highest per capita concentrations of professional conservationists on Earth. Yet only one organization, the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative (NRCC), inhabits a niche unlike any other.

Thirty years ago, around the time I began writing about Greater Yellowstone from a home base in Jackson Hole, NRCC was just getting off the ground. Dr. Susan Clark, an ecologist by training, had been researching the sudden discovery of a wild remnant population of black-footed ferrets near Meeteetse. The species had long been thought to be extinct.

Throughout her career, she has distinguished herself as an out of the box thinker. In the late 1980s, for example, she, Robert Dorn and Ann Harvey produced the first-ever comprehensive compendium for rare and endangered vascular plants and vertebrates in Wyoming.

“You can’t protect what you don’t know is there, but you can easily lose it and never know it’s gone if you don’t pay attention,” she told me recently. “Unfortunately, there are lots of things that are inter-related; you lose one and you can lose others; it may happen at the soil level or it might be apparent in a trophic cascade when you, say, eliminate an important system driver like the wolf.”

As Clark, who still spends part of her year teaching at Yale University, remembers, there was no truly unified thinking being applied to wildlife and other issues in Greater Yellowstone. Clear-cut logging was toppling national forests across the West, hard rock mining was sullyng thousands of river miles, and livestock grazing had resulted in a lot of native species being extirpated on public land in the competition for grass.

The prevailing paradigm was one of approaching conflict piecemeal, agency by agency, silo by silo; seldom was planning applied across the artificial human boundaries of the National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service that oversaw, in total, a landmass larger than New England.

In the beginning and subsequently over the years, NRCC has brought hundreds of scientists with international experience together to apply their knowledge. Clark, who was among the early voices giving rise to creation of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, played an instrumental role in Greater Yellowstone being treated as an ecosystem and pushing to establish a baseline for assessing the health of individual species. But she realized that science alone does not ensure better management. Without quality data, problems go undetected, she is fond of saying. Without effective leadership, challenges go unanswered.

Part scientific think-tank, part gathering place for an esteemed community of scientific researchers, part catalyst for evolving the approaches of federal and state land management agencies, and part oracle, NRCC today is pushing a loftier goal: Trying to advance

public discussions about Greater Yellowstone’s future so that decision makers and citizens are better equipped to deal with unprecedented changes bearing down on the ecosystem; changes that if they continue unaltered will result in the loss of the region’s attributes forever.

“Everything is stressed, between the tightening grip of climate change being expressed in lots of different ways, and new residents pouring in and making Greater Yellowstone one of the fastest-growing rural areas in the country, and of course, record onslaughts of visitation to the national parks and other public lands,” says Dennis Glick, founder of the community conservation group FutureWest. “If there’s one thing we can do, it’s have meaningful conversations about what we want Greater Yellowstone to be. We aren’t going to quickly turn around climate change but we can be smarter about how human pressure comes to bear on the sensitive ecological systems that make our region whole. Susan Clark and NRCC are at the forefront of making those necessary discussions happen. The organization serves as a nexus that is badly needed but isn’t being provided by anyone else.”

By 2030 there will be an estimated 830,000 residents in Greater Yellowstone, twice the number in 1990. On top of that, there is the specter of climate change. Andrew Hansen, a geography professor at Montana State University, just published a book about the negative ecological impacts of rising temperatures. Already, just an average temperature rise of 2 degrees Fahrenheit documented over the last 116 years has altered river flows, fish health, water available for agriculture, and wildlife behavior. By the end of this century, the average temperature is expected to soar between six and 11 degrees.

Here is the sobering reality: Not long ago, Yellowstone’s former chief scientist David Hallac told *National Geographic* magazine that this very well could be Greater Yellowstone’s golden age when, for a brief span, all of the hard work came together to secure something matchless. And yet, Hallac warned that Greater Yellowstone’s novelty, given the gathering challenges, may only be short-lived.

In future essays as NRCC’s Writer in Residence, I will be exploring the multi-faceted ways that NRCC is devoted to “conservation for the common good.” Part of that will be telling the stories of NRCC researchers in the field. In particular, I’ll be drawing upon conversations with Clark as she works toward completion and publication of her much-anticipated book, “Signals From the Future,” which attempts to lay out a different pathway forward.

“Everyone, because of what hats they wear and how they identify culturally, socially, ideologically, and even spiritually, has different ways of making meaning of Greater Yellowstone,” Clark says. “NRCC is operating at the leading edge in terms of pushing the

“NRCC is operating at the leading edge in terms of pushing the discourse to a place...where creative solutions can emerge.”

discourse to a place, sometimes out of people’s comfort zones, where creative solutions can emerge. Knowing we can get there is, for me, not only a statement of faith that we can still save the best of Greater Yellowstone but I have a pragmatic hope that we can rise together to meet the challenge.”

The Future of Greater Yellowstone?

*A New Book by NRCC Co-Founder
Susan G. Clark*



*“Stories are how we make meaning for ourselves...Is Yellowstone just a surrogate or reference for real nature? What is its meaning for us?”
– Susan Clark*

*H*aving worked in greater Yellowstone for nearly five decades, I have witnessed many changes. For newcomers living inside the Jackson Hole “bubble,” on the other hand, change may be largely imperceptible.

My book celebrates the achievement of the creation of Yellowstone National Park, a “public good” augmented with the addition of other public lands of the region. The park’s value has been repeatedly reconfirmed by the American people and to people around the world. That public good is now threatened.

Although the focus of the book is ostensibly greater Yellowstone, my real zone of interest is people. I argue that we are experiencing multiple crises in how we are living in a world of increasing human populations, diminishing resources, and, at heart, a basic and foundational crisis in imagination, concept, and commitment.

*“With the future arriving ever faster... foresight is more important today than ever before.”
– Wendell Bell, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Yale University*

I am writing this book to contribute to and, I hope, help clarify the ongoing dialogue about greater Yellowstone’s future. I take stock of where we are, where I think we need to be, and what we can do about those diverse, growing problems.

We need to rethink our relationship to Yellowstone and develop a new story for it and for ourselves in relation to nature—a narrative that is adaptable and realistic, and one that will move us closer to a sustainable future. Ultimately, we need to upgrade capacity, pragmatic hope, practical action, and collective impact. I hope the book will be destined for wide readership, serious public discussion, and follow-up action.

Expert in Residence Program

NRCC has an innovative Expert in Residence Program that draws on diverse disciplines and offers unique approaches to conservation problem-solving.



Katie Holsinger

Artist in Residence

Next spring, I will release *The Artist's Field Guide to Greater Yellowstone*, published by Torrey House Press—a nature guide to Yellowstone's wildlife told through the words and artwork of fifty of the region's most distinguished storytellers and

visual artists. We will be showcasing some of the work during the Jackson Hole Wildlife Symposium. I am eager to continue organizing creative and collaborative community efforts in the Northern Rockies region.

For more information go to: www.artistsfieldguide.com



Richard L. Wallace

Educator in Residence

I have been designing and implementing educational programs at the college and university level for more than 15 years. My work has included developing and implementing curricula, designing and conducting curricular and programmatic

assessments, and much more. My role in educational program development has been as a program-builder, administrator, and evaluator and I plan to work with NRCC in the years ahead to study and develop new approaches to integrated conservation education in the GYE.

For more information go to: <https://www.ursinus.edu/live/profiles/103-richard-wallace>



R.J. Walter

Photographer in Residence

As a Conservation Photographer, I provide images of power and clarity to highlight environmental and social issues around the world. This year I was selected to be a part of *Remembering Elephants*, a London-based project that illustrates the beauty and magic of elephants

and advocates for anti-poaching efforts in Africa. I was also chosen as a Highly Honored Photographer in the African Category of Nature's Best Photography awards, and will be included in their exhibition at the Smithsonian National Museum and the Fall/Winter 2016 *Nature's Best Photography* magazine. I am proud to be NRCC's Photographer in Residence and look forward to continuing to inspire environmental awareness and conservation in our local and global community.

To view R.J. Walter's work, go to: <http://www.rjwalter.com/>



Todd Wilkinson

Writer in Residence

For 30 years, I have worked as a professional journalist and author with assignments taking me around the world. While I write about a variety of subjects (fine art, business, politics, and this vast home region, the American West), I'm probably best known for

my knowledge and coverage of environmental issues. My work has appeared in publications ranging from *National Geographic* and *The Christian Science Monitor* to *High Country News*, *Orion* and the *Utne Reader*. I will be providing articles to NRCC over the coming year on conservation issues and policy in the GYE.

More information on journalist and author Todd Wilkinson can be found at: <http://toddwilkinsonwriter.com/>

Richard Reading: *Building Conservation Capacity*

Peyton Griffin caught up with Richard Reading at his home in Denver. Rich has been a RA with NRCC since 1988. His conservation work in the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains, and in 25 other countries, is exemplary. He is globally recognized as one of the most effective, practical, and thoughtful leaders in modern conservation. He recently left Denver Zoological Foundation, where he directed the Conservation Biology program for 19 years. Rich was awarded a Fulbright grant to work in Botswana from Nov. 2016-Sept. 2017. Although active in the West, Peyton asked about his Botswana work first.

Peyton: What will you be doing in Botswana?

Rich: I noticed through my conservation work and research with graduate students in Botswana that many of the students need help with practical things like data analysis. I'm excited to help address these needs with my Fulbright grant by teaching a series of short courses at the University of Botswana's Okavango Research Institute. We'll be focusing on how to write a proposal or science paper, how to analyze data, and how to present scientific findings.

Peyton: You've been involved in other projects in Botswana, will you be working on them as well?

Rich: Yes, I've worked on vulture conservation as well as wild



Photo by Rich Reading

dog, lion, wildebeest, and springbok projects. I'll be continuing to work on many of these while I teach.

Peyton: Can you tell us a little bit about one of these projects?

Rich: Vultures are in big trouble in Africa. They're declining really quickly. Mostly due to poisoning. Poachers lace elephant and buffalo carcasses with poison to kill the vultures and to keep the birds from making the poacher's activities obvious to authorities. Ranchers poison carcasses to try and kill carnivores like lions, but vultures often get there first. Also, vultures are being impacted by lead.

Peyton: How can you help vultures?

Rich: Poaching is the hardest, and really requires help from the military. Fortunately, Botswana has the resources and training to help take on poachers. We can work with ranchers to show that poisoning carcasses usually kills vultures, not the carnivores. And ranchers like vultures, which dispose of carcasses for free. In India, where vultures have declined by 97%, ranchers have to pay to dispose of carcasses now.



Photo by David Kerry

Peyton: What about lead?

Rich: After testing water and other possible sources of lead, it seems clear that ammunition is the problem. New lead-free bullets cost only 3 cents more per bullet, so banning lead or encouraging people to switch to lead-free bullets won't be economically harmful.

Peyton: How are carnivores viewed in Botswana?

Rich: Carnivores are recognized as having value and importance to the entire country, which holds sway with ranchers. This is different than some other countries where I've worked, especially contrasting with the large carnivore work I conducted with NRCC in the Northern Rockies. Another thing we're experimenting with is "vulture restaurants," where the birds can safely feed. This is a good interim strategy to provide "safe" food and stop the drastic declines.

Peyton: What aspects of your conservation projects are universal despite differences in species, culture, and causes of endangerment?

Rich: I always try to look for places where my skills match needs and where I can help build capacity—both in myself and local communities. I work with local people to better understand problems through basic research and I facilitate partnerships to help address problems collaboratively. These are approaches and skills I developed working with Susan Clark, you, and the rest of NRCC early in my career. I'll give an example from Peru. Fishers in Lake Titicaca have been overfishing frogs. I did some social science research, as well as ecological research, and found that this is not a traditional, cultural use but a modern economic choice. So it turned out to be a matter of helping identify other economic development possibilities.



Photo by Rich Reading, Lake Titicaca, Peru

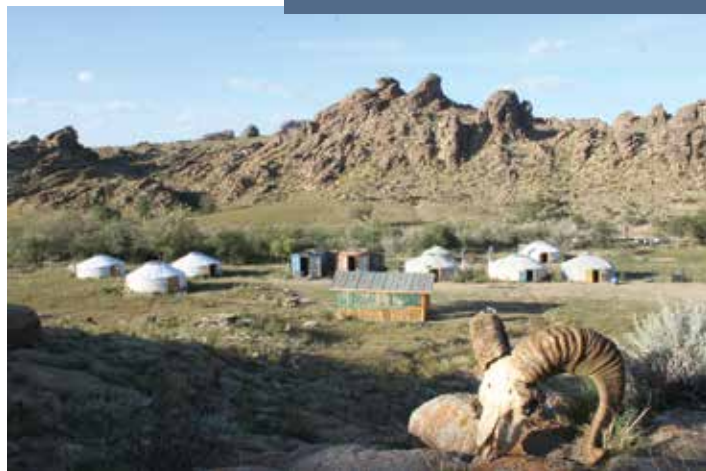


Photo by Rich Reading, Mongolia

Peyton: You have also established new NGOs to help preserve biodiversity and benefit local communities that are dependent on natural resources.

Rich: Yes, I've helped build capacity in scientific research, governance, and economic redevelopment. We set up a research station in Mongolia that also serves as a community center. One project was so successful that livestock herders decided some conservation measures, like protecting natural springs, have benefited them and their livelihoods as much as wildlife. In the southwestern US we helped create the only US refuge that is successfully run by a NGO; this has become one of the most successful working relationships between tribes and the federal government.

"I've helped build capacity in scientific research, governance, and economic redevelopment."

Peyton: You have always been a social scientist as well as a wildlife biologist. How does that inform your work?

Rich: I try to be holistic and use several different methods. It helps me understand the fundamental drivers of species declines so projects are more practical and have a better chance of being adopted by local communities. Again, these are approaches Susan Clark and NRCC helped me learn and develop.

Something else that I think is important, and often overlooked, is that we need to have fun and create positive experiences. Celebrations, outings and sports programs with local kids are a few ways that make a difference far beyond the actual "work." We all want to feel valued.

Peyton: Thanks for taking the time to talk. We look forward to getting updates from you while you're in Botswana. We hope to bring you to Jackson for workshops and talks soon.

Throughout 2016, NRCC hosted several professional development workshops for conservationists, researchers, and policy scientists seeking to expand their skills and knowledge. NRCC's workshop series was funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole. Photos by R.J. Walter

Women in Conservation

Last March, women conservationists gathered at the historic Murie Ranch in Grand Teton National Park to share experiences and discuss hurdles they face within their careers and conservation efforts.



“Thank you for bringing together such great people in a place conducive to sharing and trust, and laughter.”

—Murie Center Women in Conservation workshop participant



Compassionate Communication

Partnering with The Cougar Fund, NRCC brought in Aimee Ryan, a Certified Trainer with the Center for Nonviolent Communications, to lead this two-hour experiential workshop. She focused on the basic components of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), a language and consciousness of compassion that empowers us to listen deeply, speak honestly and connect authentically.

Funding Conservation

Held in mid-October, this workshop focused on providing insights into the world of conservation funding. The expert panel discussion included tips, trends, sources and strategies for securing funding for conservation projects. The evening was facilitated by Michael Whitfield, ED of the Heart of the Rockies Initiative and NRCC Research Associate. Panelists included Elaine Walsh Carney, Principal, Pathfinder Philanthropy Advisors; Kathleen Belk Doffermyre, Sr. Program Officer for The George B. Storer Foundation; Charles Folland, Board President, The Cross Charitable Foundation; and Susan Patla, Board Member for The Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund.

Elephants In The Room

We all love wild Greater Yellowstone; that's why we live or visit here. But are we, as communities of people, really dealing with the transformative issues relating to the region's future, instead of just superficial ones? In NRCC's final workshop of the series, scheduled for January 9, 2017, Todd Wilkinson and Susan Clark will ask us to move beyond our comfort zones and have a provocative, no-holds-barred discussion about the real elephants in the room.

Research Associate Updates

Photo by R.J. Walter

NRCC's Research Associate (RA) program is as diverse as the skills and interests of our 40 plus team members. At the heart are projects in the intermountain west that aim to help humans and wildlife coexist by increasing understanding of ecological and social systems, improving professional practices, testing practical solutions, and disseminating successful strategies. In special cases we work beyond the region and in other countries.

NRCC welcomed six new Research Associates over the past year including **Allyson Mathis** and **Tani Hubbard** who work in Science Communication with our partner, the Greater Yellowstone Network. **Blake Hossack** conducts amphibian

monitoring projects in the Rocky Mountains and desert southwest. **Drew Reed** enhances wetlands and works to conserve Trumpeter Swans with RA Ruth Shea and the Northern Rockies Trumpeter Swan Stewards. **Katie Holsinger**, whose work is profiled in more detail on page 5, has joined NRCC as a RA and Artist in Residence. **Mimi Kessler** works to conserve Asian Great Bustards.

In this issue, we highlight the work of just a few RAs. For information on all NRCC RAs and their projects, please visit nrccoperative.org.

Ruth Shea and Drew Reed

So far this year, our on-the-ground work included improving nest sites at 3 wetlands in WY and ID where flooding has been problematic, conducting aerial and ground surveys to identify nest attempts and hatching success in eastern Idaho, deploying cameras at 4 territories to assess swan behavior and factors possibly contributing to nest failure, and relocating beaver from problem sites in developed areas to public lands where they can improve wetlands to benefit swans. This fall we launched our second Swan Safe project to help raise funds to bury a swan-killing powerline at Miller's Pond in Teton Basin, Idaho. Through an innovative partnership we are mobilizing community support to bury this line before the wintering swans arrive.



Photo by R.J. Walter

Corinna Riginos

I am working on several projects aimed at reducing the problem of collisions between vehicles and wildlife. I have been working with partners at the Wyoming Migration Initiative to identify places where mule deer migration and seasonal movements are most threatened by roads. It is really interesting to see how the spatial and temporal patterns of collisions line up almost perfectly with some of the migration corridors that WMI has identified from GPS-collared deer. I am also using thermal video footage of deer to learn what traffic volumes are low enough for deer to cross roads safely—in order to guide decisions about mitigations such as over- or under-passes. I am also working with Bryan Bedrosian (Teton Raptor Center) to identify places where Golden Eagles are most likely to get hit by cars when they are feeding on ungulate roadkill.

Separately, I am continuing to study the effects of climate change on the Tetons by looking at how current plant flowering times compare to flowering times observed by Frank Craighead in the 1970s. In addition to my work in Wyoming, I recently returned to Kenya to launch a new study on an invasive ant species that is wreaking ecosystem havoc.



Avana Andrade

I am working on a series of handbooks that will explore something called the Policy Sciences, a framework that's well suited for thinking and working through complicated environmental and social problems. They will be focused on skills, issues (e.g. migrations, large carnivores, and ecosystem conservation), and people.

The handbooks are designed for wide readership, from natural resource managers and researchers to residents, and will be made available throughout the Greater Yellowstone area. Anyone should be able to pick them up and quickly get something out of them, whether they focus on the text or graphic illustrations. They invite the reader to ask new questions about social or environmental problems.

The goal is to promote better relations among people, more effective, democratic problem solving, and fair minded critical thinking. They will help forward NRCC's goal of conservation in the common interest.

These booklets may, in the future, be converted into an online interactive and multimedia tool that an individual or group may use to gain perspective on others' views as well as their own and how all of this intersects with scientific or "objective" information.



Rebecca Watters

I'm the executive director of the Wolverine Foundation as well as a NRCC RA. In North America, I'm conducting multi-species monitoring with the Southwest Crown of the Continent initiative and I am collaborating with Round River Conservation on the Wolverine Winter Recreation project in the northern Rockies.

I also continue to survey carnivores with the Mongolian Parks and Protected Areas administration. I'm working to establish an exchange program for conservation biology students interested in taking on projects in Mongolia.



Mimi Kessler

My work focuses on understanding and protecting one of the world's most unusual birds: The Asian Great Bustard. This is the heaviest bird capable of flight, weighing in at a hefty 45 pounds. These birds occupy temperate grasslands, the world's least protected habitat, primarily in central Asia.

My approach to conserving these incredible birds meshes well with the mission and vision of NRCC. In addition to on-the-ground research on the ecology of Bustards, I work with a wide variety of stakeholders to advance Bustard conservation. I carry out environmental education programs for rural youth, work to train a new generation of conservation

biologists, and pursue improvements in international conservation policy.

This fall I spent time in the Ubsunur Depression in western Mongolia, identifying important bustard habitat prior to the design and construction of a new rail line. I am also working with the Mongolian government and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species to plan a conference that will bring together scientists, conservation organizations, and government representatives from across the Asian range of the Great Bustard to develop plans for the species' conservation and secure commitments by participating states to concrete conservation actions for Great Bustards.

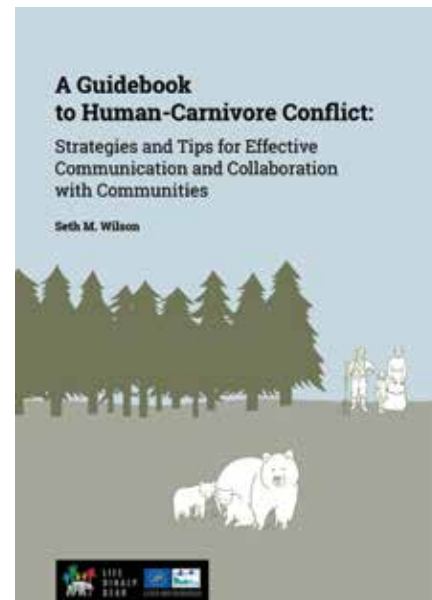
Seth M. Wilson

This past year my family and I had the chance to live and work in Slovenia—a tiny, gemstone of a country that was formerly part of Yugoslavia. Sovereign since 1991 and a member of the European Union, Slovenia is now at the forefront of large carnivore conservation in southeastern Europe. I was invited by the Slovenian Forest Service to act as a technical advisor to the LIFE DINALP BEAR Project—a five-year effort that seeks to manage and conserve brown bears (*Ursus arctos*) as one large population across Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, and Italy. A major aspect of the work entails reducing human-bear conflicts with local communities and improving prospects for bears to recolonize the southeastern Alps from the Dinaric Mountains of Slovenia to Croatia.

There is great opportunity for grassroots, bottom up conservation in Slovenia,



particularly in a post-communist environment where there is an appetite for more local control in decision making. This became clear when I started my major project for the year—a book titled, *A Guidebook to Human-Carnivore Conflict: Strategies and Tips for Effective Communication and Collaboration with Communities*. Since Slovenian Damage Inspectors were an important audience for the book, I asked them what skills they wanted to improve. Engagement, excitement, and interest in the book is emblematic of a new change occurring in Slovenia—the growing appetite for a participatory democracy.





Updates from Visiting Researchers

Photo by R.J. Walter



Marian Vernon

The work I completed as a visiting researcher with NRCC was recently awarded the Lasswell Prize from the Society of Policy Scientists. My work with Susan Clark entitled Addressing a Persistent Policy Problem: The Elk Hunt in Grand Teton National Park Wyoming, was published in *Society and Natural Resources*.

The Lasswell Prize is awarded annually to honor an exemplary published article in the policy sciences. The prize is named for Harold D. Lasswell, one of the founders of the discipline. My article discusses our research into the Grand Teton National Park elk reduction program (elk hunt), which has been a source of conflict and controversy—a “persistent policy problem”—for more than 60 years. I used social science research methods to understand the differing perspectives of stakeholders and provide recommendations about how the “social process” could be better organized to build more effective governance and management of elk.

Marian completed her Master's in Environmental Science at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies in 2015.



Josh Morse

I spent the summer mapping the alignments and divergences of stakeholder interests surrounding the mule deer migration from Wyoming's Red Desert to the Hoback. Although I came to Wyoming concerned that my status as an outsider would be an obstacle to gaining access and building trust in the communities interested

in the migration, I discovered quite the opposite. Because of my distance from the history and politics of southwestern Wyoming, the stakeholders I interviewed during my fieldwork were curious about me, and touched by my curiosity about them. This set the tone for interactions characterized by respect and openness—elements essential for common-interest work.

However, the curiosity, respect, and trust that defined my work with Red Desert to Hoback stakeholders are not universally present in the decision-making processes unfolding around the migration. This may be a serious obstacle to the pursuit of a common-interest management prescription for the migration. I will be sharing my findings in the months ahead.

Josh will complete his Master's in Environmental Science at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies in 2017.

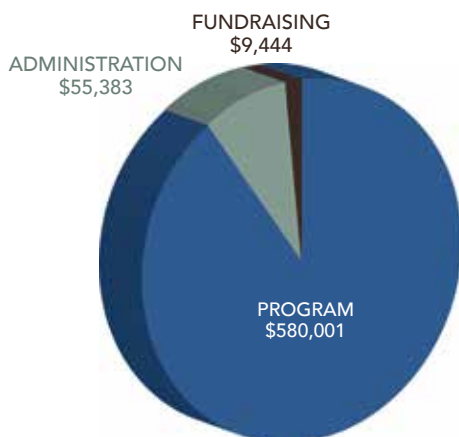
2015 Financial Report

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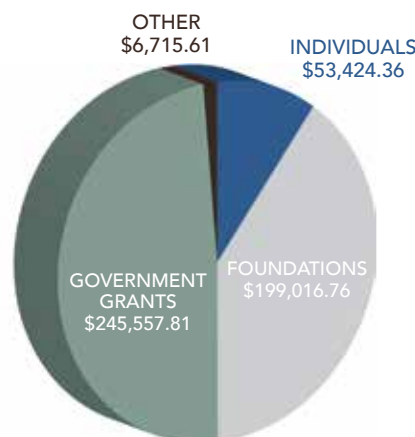
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