



## 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Highlights Diversifying Wyoming Jobs & Revenue

On the snowy evening of November 4th, around 100 of our members gathered in Sheridan for Powder River’s 45th Annual Meeting. After socializing and shopping at our silent and live auction, the crowd got down to business with a credential-filled panel of economists discussing the future of Wyoming. This year’s theme, *Reclaiming Wyoming & Diversifying Our Economy*, featured a panel conversation between Mike Madden, economist & Chair of the Wyoming House Revenue Committee; Mark Haggerty, economist with Headwaters Economics; and Rob Godby, Director of the Center for Energy Economics & Public Policy at the University of Wyoming. The panel was moderated by Dustin Bleizeffer, a Wyoming journalist with more than 18 years of experience covering energy and natural resource



issues. While providing few answers to the difficult questions facing Wyoming—specifically our over-dependence on fossil fuels (which fund about 2/3 of the current state budget)—the panelists reinforced some cold hard truths and provided a few lessons for our own advocacy work. As Godby admitted, “economic diversification in this state is really hard . . . [and] revenue diversification is even harder.” But he noted, “it has to

be addressed,” especially because of the volatility in mineral revenue. Talking about the future of energy development, Godby said he “will defer to the Magic 8 Ball” because the only thing certain is “the future is uncertain.” He said Wyoming has some opportunities in enhanced oil recovery and other areas for increased revenue from minerals, but also

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## Powder River Hosts Workshop with Healthy Soils Guru, Gabe Brown

On November 10, Powder River hosted a day-long soils health workshop led by award-winning regenerative farmer Gabe Brown. Over 150 ranchers, farmers, producers, and agriculture students attended. Also hosting the event were the Sheridan County Conservation District, Plank Stewardship Initiative, Sheridan College Department of Agriculture, and *Barnyards & Backyards*, a publication of the University of Wyoming Extension. The workshop was aptly titled “Regenerating Landscapes.”

Gabe and his family engage in holistic management on their 5,000-acre ranch, where he says improving soil health is a number one priority. The family has practiced no-till farming since 1993, along with diverse cropping strategies including cover and companion crops. These management practices have allowed the Browns to eliminate the use of synthetic fertilizers, fungicides and pesticides, while increasing the production and profitability of the ranch. To learn more about Gabe Brown’s Ranch visit <http://brownsranch.us/>.

The workshop opened with an Agency and Producer Q&A session during which Gabe responded to participants’ questions about the details of his operation and helped trouble-shoot problems they

might have encountered on their own farms and ranches.

After a quick break for lunch, the workshop resumed with an update on the Northeast Wyoming Invasive Grass Working Group by Dr. Brian Meador of the Sheridan Research and Extension Center, and a primer on soils presented by Dr. Caitlin Youngquist from the University of Wyoming Extension. The rest of the day was taken up by Gabe Brown’s presentation on regenerative farming and ranching.

He began with a discussion on soil function and his five principles for achieving a healthy soil profile. “Plant diversity is the key to enhancing soil biota in the long-term,” he explained. “I see our farm as an ecosystem and I try to imitate nature’s design from the ground up.” Gabe uses animal “impact” as a tool to treat invasive, noxious weeds and to restore landscapes through an approach he calls adaptive multi-paddock grazing. When asked how he has achieved such amazing success, Gabe replied “it’s all about the soil health.”

Gabe also shared his experiences with direct marketing and what he termed “stacked enterprises,” which he described as adding new revenue streams on top of existing ones. For example, Brown’s ranch stacks livestock enterprises by raising multiple species on the same land

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# Message from the Chair

## Welcome 2018



Thank you to Bob LeResche for a distinguished and eventful term as Board Chair. Bob leaves big shoes and a high bar for the new officers. Our organization flourished under his leadership and we are fortunate that he just changed positions and did not leave the board. I am honored to have been given the opportunity to lead our work with the board, staff and members. Powder River was one of the first organizations my young family joined in the 1970's as we began our ranching career on my family's ranch in southern Carbon County. Our corner of the world experienced the boom as King Coal rolled through Wyoming with the promise of riches and a glittering, inexhaustible future. Schools and hastily constructed rentals and trailer parks were built just in time for the inevitable bust, leaving our communities to pick up the pieces and try to hang on. We did not have as much methane to build another bubble as folks in the Powder River Basin did, but we watched in horror as wells destroyed even more of the good agricultural potential there.

We maintained our membership as our children grew up and we decided to move on to different jobs. We kept the ranch, but followed employment that took us to Canyonlands National Park and then to Fort Laramie National Historic Site. We believe that it is important to contribute to the economy and live where we work, so we moved into a home in the town of Fort Laramie. Then the oil boom approached in the form of a pipeline to rail transloading facility within yards of our home, so we turned to Powder River for the support we needed in mitigating the dangers from that business. With excellent help from Jill and the rest of the staff, we were able to negotiate with the company and helped build a working relationship that is beneficial to the whole community. It is not perfect, but all sides are relatively comfortable.

That contact with the staff and board caused my interest in Powder River to resurge, and when I was invited to join the board, I did so with excitement. My first two terms were packed with opportunities to meet great people among the membership and to observe true professionals in the field of resource protection work. It is amazing to be in a position to watch as issues arise and are dealt with in a common-sense manner. I am very happy for the opportunity to be a part of Powder River as we continue to move toward our goals.

This introduction is intended to say hello to you, but also to prepare you for the inevitable calls that will come to you in the next few years, asking for your time, your letters, your financial support, and your energy. I know that you share my concerns for the health of our state, its open country, its agricultural heritage, and its future. Together, we can make a positive difference. Let's go do it!

*Joyce E Evans*

**Powder River Solar Energy Production**  
**2017 Year to Date**

Energy Produced: 2,446 kWh  
Carbon Offset: 3,698 lbs  
We have offset the equivalent of 38 trees so far this year!

**Powder River Basin Resource Council (Powder River)** is a grass-roots organization of individuals and affiliate groups dedicated to good stewardship of Wyoming's natural resources. Powder River was formed in 1973 and stands for the preservation and enrichment of our agricultural heritage and rural lifestyle; the conservation of Wyoming's unique land, minerals, water and clean air consistent with responsible use of these resources to sustain the livelihood of present and future generations; and the education and empowerment of Wyoming's citizens to raise a coherent voice in the decisions that will impact Wyoming residents' environment and lifestyle.

**Powder River** is a member of the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC). WORC member groups are Dakota Resource Council, Dakota Rural Action, Idaho Organization of Resource Councils, Northern Plains Resource Council, Oregon Rural Action, Western Colorado Congress, Western Native Voice and Powder River Basin Resource Council.

**The services** provided by Powder River include public education, community organizing and lobbying as permitted on behalf of its membership. Powder River is a non-profit, 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

**Membership dues:** \$30 for individuals, \$50 for families and \$20 for students and senior citizens. Powder River is dependent on contributions for its work; contributions, large and small, are welcomed.

### Active Affiliate Organizations

- Cheyenne Area Landowners Coalition(CALC)
- Clark Resource Council (CRC)
- Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens (PACC)
- Ranchers & Neighbors Protecting Our Water (RNPOW)
- Sheridan Area Resource Council (SARC)

### Board of Directors

- Chair.....Joyce Evans
- Vice Chair.....Bob LeResche
- Secretary.....Christy Gerrits
- Treasurer.....Roger Davidson
- Judy Leggett, Carol LeResche, Wayne Lax, Stacy Page, Wilma Tope, Gillian Malone, DJ Purcell, Joan Tellez & Marcia Westkott

### Staff

- Executive Director-Jill Morrison
- Executive Administrator-Stephanie Avey
- Organizers-Shannon Anderson, Hesid Brandow, Megan Taylor, Gillette, WY and Casey Quinn, Cheyenne, WY

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### Powder River Breaks

Editor: Gillian Malone  
Assistant Editor & Layout: Stephanie Avey  
Photos by Powder River staff and members

# Ramaco Appeals EQC Decision, Pushes Coal Processing Projects

## *Powder River Debunks Company's Claims*

On October 27th, Ramaco appealed the Wyoming Environmental Quality Council's (EQC) and the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) rejection of its permit application for the proposed Brook mine in Sheridan County. The EQC ruled that the mine permit was deficient in several areas, and that the coal mine poses serious, long term impacts for nearby landowners from blasting and subsidence, as well as the real potential for widespread damages to water resources. Ramaco's appeal challenges the EQC's authority to oversee critical coal mine permit issues, including evaluating whether a proposed permit will appropriately prevent material damage to the hydrologic balance inside and outside the permit area, as required by coal mine laws. In response to Ramaco's appeal, Powder River issued the following statement by then board chair, Bob LeResche:

*"Instead of tilting at legal windmills, it would benefit everyone more if Ramaco put its time and resources into actually fixing the serious deficiencies in its coal mine permit application. This appeal tells the residents of the Tongue River Valley and the rest of us in Sheridan County that the company isn't concerned with protecting the important water resources and quality of life of the valley, but instead just wants to push forward with its deficient plan for a coal mine, regardless of the consequences to local citizens."*

The appeal is pending before Judge Catherine Rogers in Cheyenne, and briefing from the parties, including Powder River, will proceed during the first part of 2018.

Meanwhile, having abandoned its original plan to market coal from the Brook Mine for sale to utilities—and its subsequent plan for household scale coal sales—Ramaco is now expounding on a couple of coal "processing" projects it claims it has in the works. The latest proposal involves using a plot of land the company owns across the river from the mine to build "iPark" and "iCam" facilities for carbon fiber manufacturing and 3-D carbon printing projects. However, Ramaco has yet to submit an application to Sheridan County to rezone its property, a necessary step to allow industrial uses of agricultural land. Ramaco claims it will proceed with a rezone application "soon" with construction to begin at its facilities as early as next summer.

Powder River and our members in the Tongue River Valley have been critical of Ramaco's various announcements, calling them attempts to mislead the public and policymakers about uses of facilities that they have yet to get the permits to build.

"Not only are these facilities preliminary but they are in fact imaginary," said Powder River board member Gillian Malone. "The so called 'iPark' and 'iCAM' research sites are not even zoned for industrial use. The area is a hayfield. Furthermore, Randy Atkins is no Steve Jobs. These statements are designed to hoodwink the public into

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# Members Tell BLM to Protect Sage Grouse Habitat



The Wyoming Bureau of Land Management (BLM) updated management plans in 2015 to protect habitat for imperiled sage-grouse populations. While these plans were not perfect, they were the result of a multi-year process that incorporated the comments from a diverse range of stakeholders including scientists, citizens, industry, and state and local governments.

But now newly installed Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke

wants to loosen up the protection standards in the plans to facilitate more federal fossil fuel development at the expense of habitat for sage-grouse and other sagebrush dependent wildlife.

In advance of a December 1st comment deadline, our members weighed in to tell BLM to support science-based decisions that appropriately protect sage-grouse and its habitat. Here is a great letter from Powder River's Secretary, Christy Gerrits:

Dear BLM,

I am writing to express my disappointment that the Secretary of Interior, Ryan Zinke is ignoring years of work by landowners, scientists, government entities, and other stakeholders to protect the diminishing sagebrush ecosystem in order to try to maintain the sage grouse habitat, so that they remain off of the endangered species list. I have had the wonderful opportunities to witness the mating rituals of these amazing birds on their leks, and it truly is a once in a lifetime experience.

This valuable habitat provides life-saving cover and nutrition to many endemic species, including sage grouse, elk, mule deer, swift fox, burrowing owls, and pronghorn antelope. Once it is destroyed, it is very difficult, if not impossible to reestablish. We need to make decisions based on science, and not on the short-term profits of the fossil fuel industry. Our environment is at a critical juncture, drying out and overheating due to climate change. We should not be allowing the fossil fuel industry to destroy this delicate ecosystem, while at the same time adding to the amount of carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere which are contributing to our runaway climate change.

Please support the sage-grouse management plans that were already in place. They may not have been perfect, but they did represent many diverse stakeholders' input. It is your duty to protect our public lands for multiple uses, not just industry.

Yours truly,  
Christy Gerrits  
Gillette, WY

# Injection Wells in Laramie County Threaten Homeowners, Aquifer

EOG Resources is seeking approval from the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (WOGCC) for a new waste water injection well in Laramie County—bringing the total number of wells to three—which threatens nearby landowners and local citizens dependent on drinking water from the critical Sussex Aquifer.

EOG is planning to inject up to 25,000 barrels of toxic waste per day into the aquifer, which is just 5,000 feet below the surface. The proposed site is east of Cheyenne and less than one mile from Durham and Triple Crown subdivisions, and is surrounded by a large number of private domestic water wells.

The Sussex Aquifer, a future drinking water source for the Cheyenne area, has seen a rapid decline in potability since the creation of several other injection wells northeast of Cheyenne; studies have shown that injection wells often leak. The Cheyenne area is a growing region and will eventually need to look to other water resources. Protecting this aquifer now would ensure future options.

In addition to the Durham well, *Durham 106-07H*, EOG is requesting an aquifer exemption for *Pole Creek 148-25H*, and an increase in the size of the injection zone of the *Pole Creek 175-34H* well, within 4 miles of the proposed Durham well.

All of this has been of major concern to residents of Triple Crown and Durham Estates subdivisions, and should concern all residents of Laramie County. Powder River and its local affiliate, Cheyenne Area Landowners Coalition (CALC) has worked to notify the public through alerts, mailings, phone calls, editorials, and interviews with the local newspaper. Powder River has submitted comments with the help of expert Hydrologist Michael Wireman, who gave a thorough analysis of the aquifer.

The 30-day comment period to the WOGCC on the injection wells and aquifer exemption ended December 6, but you can contact the Commission anyway and request a public hearing in Cheyenne. You can either email Supervisor Mark Watson at [mark.watson@wyo.gov](mailto:mark.watson@wyo.gov) and Deputy Supervisor Tom Kropatsch at [tom.kropatsch@wyo.gov](mailto:tom.kropatsch@wyo.gov) or you can call the Commission at 307-234-7147 and leave a message. Thank You!

**Casey Quinn**  
**Powder River Staff**

## Legislative Committee Seeks Improvements in Government Transparency

Members of the Select Committee on Legislative Facilities, Technology and Process gathered in Cheyenne on November 8 to discuss the potential for livestreaming, recording, and archiving interim committee meetings online for easier access to Wyoming citizens. Wyoming is well behind the curve in this area, as 42 other states in the U.S. already record meetings in some form.

Wyoming's vast distances and harsh conditions often make it difficult for the typical Wyoming citizen to stay involved with the legislative process. Live-streaming and archiving interim meetings would greatly increase transparency because members of the public could listen to the discussion and deliberations of the committees, even after the fact.

Last legislative session, House Bill 276, "Recording Legislative Meetings" sought to address this issue by making recording all interim legislative meetings mandatory. However, despite strong public support, and after making it to second reading in the Senate, the bill ultimately died on third reading.

During the committee discussion, the Legislative Service Office (LSO) staff commented that they have a number of concerns with the mandatory recording of meetings in Wyoming. Matt Obrecht, Director of the LSO, said he thought that, given our rural nature and lack of consistent, strong internet connections, recording the several dozen interim meetings statewide could burden the LSO staff with logistical and technological challenges. While the majority of other states hold their interim committee meetings at their state capitols,

committee meetings in Wyoming are spread throughout the state and could be held anywhere—even in a community firehouse, as someone recalled—which makes Wyoming unique but problematic.

Giving public testimony at the meeting were representatives from various non-profits including Powder River, the Equality State Policy Center, and the Wyoming Press Association. The common message from these groups was that they support recording legislative committee meetings but also understand the problem caused by a lack of fast internet statewide. However, everyone felt that moving one step at a time, even if it meant simply audio recording the meetings, would still be an improvement over the current situation.

This committee cannot sponsor a bill, but it can make recommendations to the Legislature's Management Council, made up of House and Senate leadership. The committee ultimately passed a motion recommending that a trial livestreaming program be developed by LSO for the upcoming interim period of 2018. A second recommendation from the committee was that the two largest committee rooms at the Jonah Building in Cheyenne with audio recording capability have livestreamed committee meetings during the 2018 legislative session.

**Casey Quinn**  
**Powder River Staff**

# Powder River Basin 2017 Res

## Need for Government Transparency

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Environmental Quality and other state agencies have been adopting new rules to charge members of the public for review of agency records; and

**WHEREAS**, our organization and our members rely on these public records to participate in comment periods and to monitor agency compliance with laws and regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, open records are a critical part of democratic government and ensure transparency about agency decision-making and use of resources; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the Public Records Act, the Department of Environmental Quality must also comply with the Wyoming Environmental Quality Act that requires open agency records;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Powder River Basin Resource Council opposes fees for review and access of public records of any state agency, especially records of the Department of Environmental Quality.

## Opposing Agrochemical and Seed Company Mergers

**WHEREAS**, impending mergers of the world's largest agrochemical and seed companies threatens the free market and will negatively impact American farmers' livelihoods by increasing input costs, reducing competition, and decreasing research and development; and

**WHEREAS**, it is predicted that if the Dow Chemical merger with DuPont, Monsanto with Bayer AG, and Syngenta with ChemChina are allowed to proceed, the three resulting companies would control nearly 70 percent of the world's pesticide market, more than 61 percent of commercial seed sales, and 80 percent of the U.S. corn-seed market; and

**WHEREAS**, conglomerates of such massive scale, breadth and reach, such as those proposed by these mergers, pose a real risk to our economy, to our agricultural sector, to public health, to food security, to the environment and to the general health of the agricultural and food business climate; and

**WHEREAS**, these mergers will exacerbate and worsen consolidation that the industry has been experiencing for many years (In 1996 there were 600 independent seed companies; this number dropped to 100 by 2009; this concentration resulted in crop seed prices more than doubling relative to the prices farmers received for commodity crops between 1994 to 2010); and

**WHEREAS**, such a heavily consolidated seed and agricultural

input industry makes it easier for cartel-like tacit collusion that raises prices for farmers and other buyers and ultimately consumers while stifling innovation that is propelled by healthy competition in the marketplace; and

**WHEREAS**, the outsized market power of the companies involved would grow as a result of the mergers, these companies would be able to unilaterally raise input prices for farmers, hurting rural economies across the United States and leading to increased prices for consumers as well; and

**WHEREAS**, the mergers would likely: further limit farmers' choices of the best seeds to suit their needs; result in farmers having to pay more for seeds as market competition diminishes; reinforce unsustainable dependence on genetically engineered (GE) crops that are developed to be used in combination with herbicides; result in a more highly concentrated pesticide industry that will be in a greater position to influence regulators; and aggregate the power of companies that promote chemical intensive agricultural practices that are harmful to human health, pollinator populations and the environment;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Powder River Basin Resource Council opposes further acquisitions and mergers by monopolistic agrochemical and seed companies.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Powder River Basin Resource Council urges the United States Department of Justice to thoroughly investigate and enjoin the mergers to protect American farmers, American workers, and American consumers from the harmful effects resulting from increased consolidation in the agrochemical industry.

## Support for Protecting Sage-Grouse Habitat

**WHEREAS**, our members and other Wyomingites enjoy vibrant sage-grouse populations and other wildlife in sagebrush landscapes; and

**WHEREAS**, energy development has led to significant declines in sage-grouse habitat and populations in the Powder River Basin and across Wyoming; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Wyoming and federal land management agencies are actively considering how best to balance protection of sage-grouse habitat with energy development; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Interior under Secretary Zinke recently initiated a new planning period to revisit previous management decisions, with the goal of allowing greater energy development at the expense of sage-grouse habitat; and

**WHEREAS**, our members and other Wyoming citizens will be adversely affected if the sage-grouse is listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act;

# Resource Council

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Powder River Basin Resource Council will advocate for meaningful protections of sage-grouse habitat to ensure species viability at both the local and regional levels.

### Stronger Oil and Gas Air Quality Standards Statewide

**WHEREAS**, oil and gas development has led to a decline in air quality across the state of Wyoming; and

**WHEREAS**, the Upper Green River Basin near Pinedale regularly experiences high ozone days because of oil and gas development; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality is actively enforcing stronger regulations that significantly reduced Nitrogen Oxide (NOx), methane and Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions in the Upper Green River Basin in response to high ozone levels, but the standards have not been implemented statewide; and

**WHEREAS**, the current emissions standards statewide do not ensure air quality sustainable for future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, Laramie County and other more populated parts of the state are experiencing booms in oil and gas development; and

**WHEREAS**, weak air quality standards threaten public health and safety and will impact property values and quality of life;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Powder River Basin Resource Council supports stronger regulations and standards that will decrease emissions from oil and gas operations and improve air quality within Wyoming; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Powder River Basin Resource Council will advocate that all oil and gas development shall meet best available control technology standards statewide to prevent unhealthy levels of air pollution.

### Prohibiting Disposal of Out-of-State Oil & Gas Waste – Addendum

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, the members of the Powder River Basin Resource Council passed the Commercial Oilfield Waste Disposal Facilities (“COWDFs”) and Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (“TENORM”) Associated with Oil & Gas Production resolutions; and

**WHEREAS**, companies operating COWDFs are now considering accepting out of state oil and gas waste at their facilities in Wyoming;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE 2014 RESOLUTIONS ARE AMENDED TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:** the Powder River Basin Resource Council opposes the acceptance of oil and gas waste generated from outside of the state for disposal in Wyoming.

### Promoting Free and Fair Elections Through a 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment

**WHEREAS**, U.S. Supreme Court rulings including the 2010 *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* wrongly declared that corporations and other nonhuman entities are people, and money is speech; and

**WHEREAS**, the “corporations are people” declaration allows corporations, Super PACs, unions and other nonhuman entities to skirt campaign finance laws and inject vast sums of money, often anonymously, into our political system; and

**WHEREAS**, the “money is speech” declaration allows special interest groups to influence the outcome of our elections, determine policy, and draft legislation through largely untraceable “dark money”; and

**WHEREAS**, such declarations drown out the speech of ordinary citizens and threaten our democracy; and

**WHEREAS**, a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is needed to overturn U.S. Supreme Court decisions declaring that corporations and other nonhuman entities are people and money is speech;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Powder River Basin Resource Council supports cross-partisan efforts to restore free and fair elections and a well-functioning democracy through a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution authorizing Congress and the states to limit the political spending of non-human entities.



# Say “NO” to EOG Resources Application For Injection Well in Laramie County

Water. Potable drinking water is absolutely necessary for those living in rural Laramie County. The eastern two thirds of Laramie County is designated as a water shortage area. Rural residents get their potable water from wells in the Ogallala Aquifer, also known as the High Plains Aquifer, which is widely recognized as decreasing year after year. At some point alternative sources of potable water will have to be found. The Sussex Formation is one of those alternative sources.

Yet here comes EOG Resources with an application to the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (WOGCC) for an aquifer exemption to convert what was an application to drill for oil in the Niobrara formation into an injection well for disposal of toxic fracking waste water into the Sussex Formation. EOG proposes to inject up to 25,000 barrels (1,050,000 gallons) of toxic fracking waste water per day into the formation that is roughly 5000 feet below the surface. To make matters worse, this injection well, known as Durham 106-07H, is about one mile from the Durham and Triple Crown subdivisions and is surrounded by a large number of private residential domestic water wells.

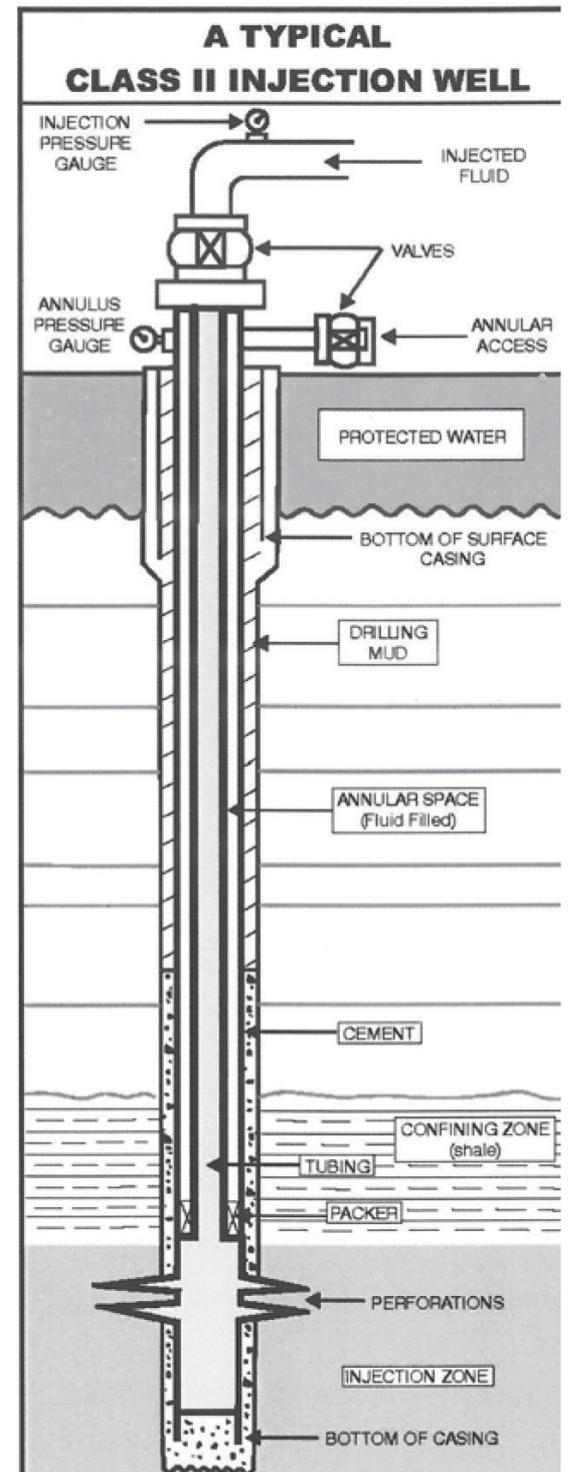
The consequences of a mishap during the drilling and operation of this well are too important to the residents of Durham and Triple Crown subdivisions to take the risk of contaminating their drinking water and destroying their way of life. Allowing this injection well, and perhaps any injection wells in Laramie County, is an issue that should concern all residents of Laramie County.

EOG does have alternatives. Fracking waste water can continue to be hauled to Colorado and disposed of in approved facilities. Or, it can be recycled and used repeatedly in fracking its other oil wells. It doesn't need to be piped through the Ogallala Aquifer from which we get our drinking water into the Sussex Formation.

Because of the “total dissolved solid” rating of the Sussex Formation, the Cheyenne Area Landowner's Coalition believes jurisdiction to approve or deny EOG's application rests with Region 8 EPA in Denver and not the WOGCC, since Wyoming does not have “primacy” in this matter. The Coalition believes the WOGCC should issue a negative recommendation to Region 8 EPA on the Durham 106-07H application. Just because something is legally compliant with WOGCC rules doesn't make it right.

Finally, Laramie County, Wyoming historically has been considered an area with low probability of earthquakes. Then again so is Greeley, Colorado. A quick internet search reveals that there have been at least nine earthquakes in and around Greeley within the last year, ranging in magnitude from 1.6 to 3.1. The prevailing opinion is that the presence of oil and injection wells in the area are the cause of these earthquakes.

The Cheyenne Area Landowner's Coalition opposes the approval of injection wells in Laramie County, especially the Durham 106-07H injection well, which is located nearby the Durham and Triple Crown subdivisions. You can express your opposition to the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission by email to [mark.watson@wyo.gov](mailto:mark.watson@wyo.gov) or by mail to the Commission at 2211 King Blvd. Casper, Wyoming 82602 P.O. Box 2640. The deadline for comment is December 3<sup>rd</sup>.



N. Alexander Bowler, MPH  
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remarked that overall minerals are in decline and “obviously coal is very challenged” because “hydraulic fracturing has changed the energy landscape for electricity generation.”

Haggerty noted that an over-dependence on minerals discourages economic diversification and presents a “fiscal challenge” for states like Wyoming. Haggerty challenged Wyoming to diversify the tax base while we still have reliable revenue from minerals. In other words, the time to start taking the diversification challenge seriously is NOW.

However, when asked if Wyoming’s politics are practical enough to make this big change, Madden said it would be unlikely. He noted that “this biennium [budget] is running on savings” but cuts will become more pronounced going into the next budget session with “the new normal” of reduced revenue coming from minerals. He said it is “very clear we can’t go on with only one industry being taxed” and reasonable legislators are looking to make changes, but the choices are difficult and the opposition to new taxes and decreased reliance on minerals is strong.

At the end of the night, Powder River’s new Chair, Joyce Evans, asked the panelists what citizens can do to help make positive change. Madden replied emphatically that we need to make our opinions known. He said the “cut and slash” lobby will drown average voices out if more citizens don’t speak up and speak out. Godby chimed in that the anti-tax lobby is “very effective” but “not a constructive solution” to Wyoming’s economic woes. He said sensible policy makers “have to be willing to consider some tax changes.” He challenged us to identify “the Wyoming we want,” determining what public services are essential and then finding ways to fund them. Haggerty agreed that “cutting the budget and doing less” isn’t the right way to go, as it will detract, not attract new investment in the state.

All in all, the conversation was a good and much-needed start to tackling the big tasks Wyoming faces to diversify our jobs and revenue.

**Shannon Anderson**  
**Powder River Staff**



Powder River member socializing at the 45th Annual Meeting Auction.  
Live music was provided by Marc Paninos, Lynn Young, Courtney Caplan and Scott Gall

## Gabe Brown....Continued from page 1

base. Gabe said on their ranch they strive “to grow with their clientele” in order to be positioned to offer the range of products their customers want. Brown’s operation sports its own label, “Nourished by Nature,” and the family currently operates 17 different enterprises including grass-finished beef, lamb and pork, eggs, heirloom vegetables, cut flowers, and honey. Gabe direct-markets his products, which means he gets to interact with his customers—and set his own price. “We need to get back to knowing our farmer or rancher,” he said. “We have an open-door policy at the ranch, and we are not going to do anything on

our ranch to jeopardize our customer’s trust.”

Gabe admits that his approach to ranching is unorthodox, but he shrugs it off by saying “they laugh at me because I’m different, but laugh at them because they are all the same. To ranch regeneratively you have to observe, adapt, and change,” he told the audience. “But most importantly, you have to have the ability and humility to unlearn and relearn.”

**Megan Taylor  
Powder River Staff**



## Ramaco....Continued from page 3

believing Ramaco’s going to provide economic opportunities for the whole community, and to coerce our local decision-makers into approving their proposals, no matter the consequences.”

Ramaco’s announcements about its yet-to-be-built facilities are short on details and high on hyperbole. Powder River has learned that the company’s latest business associate, “Carbon,” is a recent California startup company, still in the capitalization phase. In other words, its only assets are intellectual property and some venture capital. So far, it is just another fundraising vehicle. In fact, their agreement with Ramaco is not a partnership at all.

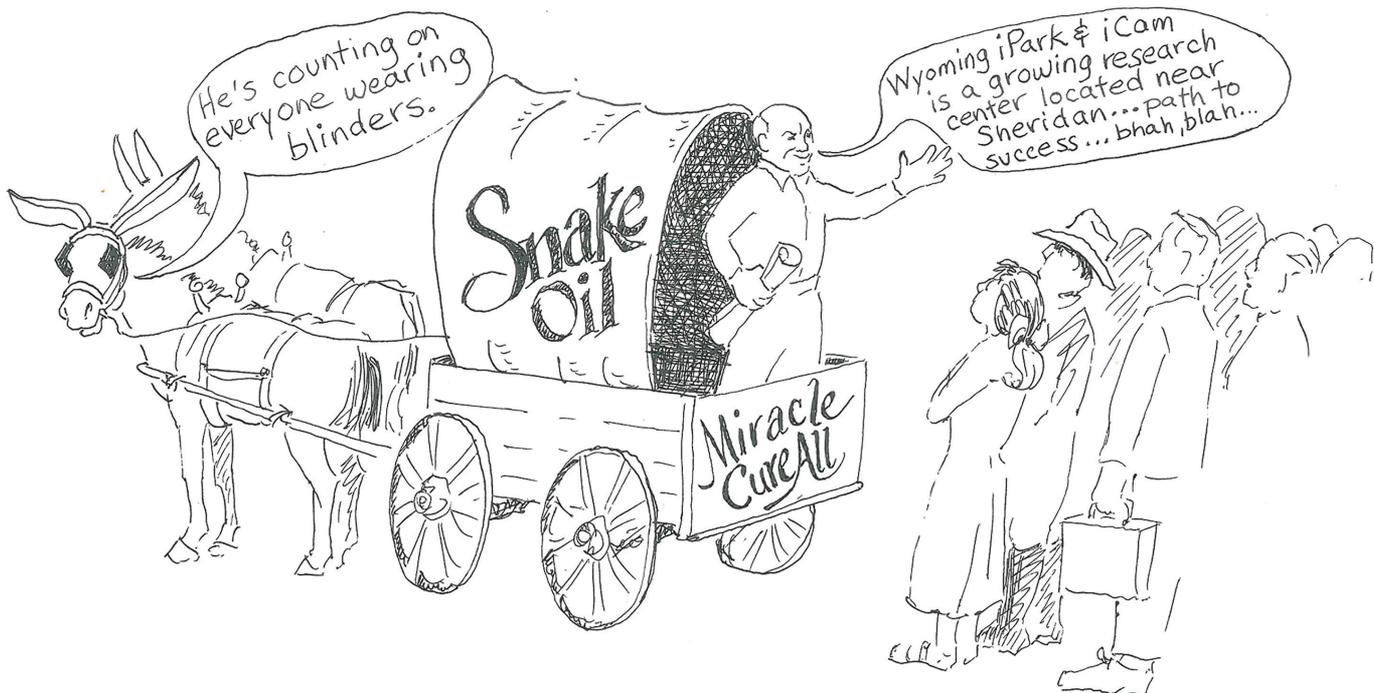
“At best, Carbon has agreed to license some uncommercialized processes to Ramaco so they can maybe make products for someone else,” said board member Bob LeResche, who is a former investment banker. “Ramaco’s press release reveals no customers, no specific

product, no financing and a *Popular Mechanics*-worthy dream of vague products. It reveals no commercially proven process. If Ramaco never gets off the ground, Carbon isn’t out any money, even if they do commercialize a process some day in the future. Maybe if Ramaco throws a chunk of coal at a 3-D printer it will magically be transfigured into something worthwhile. And if this does work, there are billions of tons of coal right down the tracks in Gillette and Wright, looking for markets.”

“All of this noise about their purported partnerships is nothing but smoke and mirrors,” said Tongue River landowner Joan Tellez.

Stay tuned as this story is far from over.

**Powder River Staff**



**Merry Christmas**

**Powder River Board  
&  
Powder River Staff**

**Wish You the  
Happiest  
of Holidays**



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## Save the Date

**2017**

- December 8th Raffle Drawing (Updated Drawing Date Dec. 9th)

# Planned Giving and Estate Planning Gifts: Don't Forget Powder River Basin Resource Council

The Powder River "family" has been thinking a lot about the future lately, because, as the saying goes, "We aren't getting any younger." We want to make sure this organization remains viable for future generations in the same way it serves today's members. For this reason, we are inviting you, our extended family of members and donors, to consider including Powder River in your estate plans.

More specifically, we are asking that you consider designating Powder River Basin Resource Council as a beneficiary in your will. Your gift will create a living legacy allowing Powder River to continue our work far into the future and helping to ensure that Wyoming remains the place we know and love for our kids and grandkids.

As one long time Powder River member, Digger Moravek stated, "I want to raise Hell long after I'm gone." You, too, can do this with a

generous bequest to Powder River.

Please consult your legal and financial advisors about how you can use a variety of estate planning tools to support Wyoming's most effective grassroots member organization, and how you might benefit. For example, there is a tax exemption for estate tax rates of up to \$5 million.

Thank you! If you have any questions, please give Powder River a call at 307-672-5809

**Powder River Basin Resource Council  
Fundraising Committee**

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