

POWDER RIVER BREAKS

September/October 2023

Volume 51, Number 5

Celebrating **50** Years



POWDER RIVER BASIN
Resource Council

ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT TODAY ~ FOR TOMORROW



Powder River members, as well as members from around the WORC region, traveled to BLM's informational session in Denver, CO on the proposed federal oil and gas rules.

Powder River supports better bonding

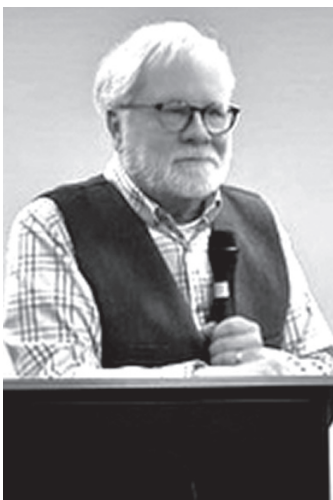
KATHERINE STAHL
Powder River Staff

Powder River staff and members traveled to Denver, CO in late August to show support for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposed Fluid Mineral Leases and Leasing Process rule. Readers may recall from our previous issue that the rule makes long overdue changes to the onshore oil and gas leasing process, including updating bonding requirements to better reflect the actual costs of well plugging and reclamation. The proposed rules also require inactive wells to be plugged and reclaimed sooner, end the practice of non-competitive leasing, and make it harder for companies in non-compliance with BLM rules to acquire new

leases. All these changes benefit you, the American taxpayer, by reducing the risk of well abandonment by irresponsible operators.

The BLM hosted several information sessions for the public to learn more about the rule. One such session in Denver, CO was well attended by rule supporters who showed up in t-shirts and stickers demanding "Oil & Gas Reform NOW!" The format of the session did not allow for public comment, but participants were encouraged to speak one on one with BLM staff after the informational presentation. Powder River members Dale and Bet Ackels and Marilyn Ham attended the info session to show their support for the rule.

POWDER RIVER SUPPORTS continued on page 8



Rodger McDaniel

Powder River to celebrate 51st annual meeting

ROBIN ENGLEHART-BAGLEY
Powder River Staff

On Saturday, Nov. 4, Powder River Basin Resource Council will host its 51st Annual Meeting at the Best Western in Sheridan. This year's theme, *Watching Out for Wyoming: The Next 50 Years*, will explore the unique time and place in which Wyoming finds itself as well casting an eye toward the future.

"At Powder River we've striven for 50 years to work on behalf of the environment and of our communities, to act with compassion toward both, and to honor the deep connection between the two. We'll be doing that for the next 50 years," said David Romtvedt, Powder River Chair.

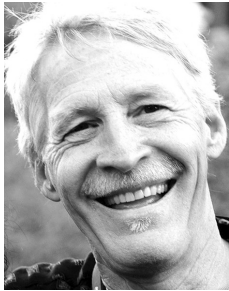
The evening's keynote speaker, Wyoming author

and former legislator, Rodger McDaniel, will use a historical lens to help frame Wyoming's present-day cultural, economic, and political climate. McDaniel's long career spans law, the ministry, and public service. He served in the Wyoming State Legislature from 1971-1981 and ran for the U.S. Senate. After practicing law for 20 years, he was ordained in 1999 and also served as the Director of the Wyoming Department of Family Services for a number of years. This fall, he retired after serving 15 years as pastor at Highlands Presbyterian Church in Cheyenne. Additionally, he has written five books.

His most recent is *Profiles in Courage: Standing Against the Wyoming Wind*, a collection of stories of Wyomingites who stood against the prevailing culture.

ANNUAL MEETING continued on page 10

Message from the Chair



It's fall, the season when Powder River holds its annual meeting, a time for reflection and evaluation, an occasion for the staff, the board and statewide members, as well as supporters and friends to talk with each other in person, to review events of the past year, to imagine what we can do together in the future, and to strengthen relationships.

This year's annual meeting will feature two guest presentations. One will be a keynote talk by Rodger McDaniel, author of several books on Wyoming's political and social history including *Dying for Joe McCarthy's Sins: The Suicide of Wyoming Senator Lester Hunt*; *Howard Zinn and Lois Mottonen Fistfight in the Equality State*; and the recently published *Profiles in Courage: Standing Against the*

Wyoming Wind. Another presentation will feature a slide show by photographer Dainis Hazners—longtime resident of Story, Wyoming—showing Powder River Country through the seasons. The presentations by Hazners and McDaniel speak to our efforts to protect both the health of our environment and of our communities.

Bear with me as I return to 1954 when Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy had back surgery. During his recovery, Kennedy began a project that resulted in the 1956 publication of *Profiles in Courage*, his Pulitzer Prize winning book chronicling the actions of eight United States senators whom Kennedy believed had shown integrity in the face of overwhelming opposition, senators who had taken an unpopular stand in service of a larger, higher cause. *Profiles in Courage* asked readers to consider what it means to live in a democracy, a political system that puts its faith in the people and asks that public servants both represent the wishes of the people and act conscientiously, that is, act based on their individual sense of right and wrong.

Kennedy believed that each of us holds a non-elected office as a citizen. The degree to which we fulfill the responsibilities of this office determines the kind of government we will have. Kennedy held that we the people are in charge. Consequently, we will have the political leadership—good or bad—that we demand, and what we demand will be what we deserve.

I mention Kennedy's book because of its link to the work of our annual meeting keynote speaker Rodger McDaniel, a former Wyoming state representative and senator, director of the state Department of Family Services, practicing lawyer, and until September of this year minister at Cheyenne's Highlands Presbyterian Church. Sixty-six years after Kennedy published *Profiles in Courage*, McDaniel published his own *Profiles in Courage: Standing Against the Wyoming Wind*.

In his book McDaniel presents the experiences of various people in Wyoming who have shown integrity in the face of public opposition. These include elected officials such as Sheridan area state representative Lynn Dickey, US congressional representatives Teno Roncalio and Liz Cheney, and US senators Joseph C. O'Mahoney and Gale W. McGee. Others profiled include Jeran Artery who confronted bigotry in his work on behalf of marriage equality, Sissy and Vickie Goodwin who were vilified because Sissy was, as he put it, "a guy who likes to wear women's clothing," and Tom Bell, the founder of *High Country News* and the Wyoming Outdoor Council. Finally, McDaniel includes chapters on groups rather than individuals—the residents of the Wind River Nation, the Japanese Americans imprisoned during WWII at the Heart Mountain Internment Camp, and the Black Fourteen—University of Wyoming football players who in 1969 were thrown off the team when they sought to wear black armbands in their game against Brigham Young University in protest of the LDS church's policy of prohibiting women and "men of Black African descent" from ordination in the priesthood.

What exactly is it to act courageously in the political and social worlds we inhabit? When does courage veer into narrow mindedness? How can we do right by ourselves, by others, and by the earth? These are the sorts of questions raised by McDaniel's book.

I've given much attention to the question of courage in the face of opposition but I want to end by returning to the photography by Dainis Hazners—photos that offer a glimpse into the land's heart, the solace the land provides, the model it offers of courage, a model that is both complicated and straightforward—to be true to what and who we are.

That's it for now.

See you at the annual meeting.

David Romtvedt

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

- Alliance for Renewable Energy (ARE)
- Clark Resource Council (CRC)
- Cheyenne Area Landowners Coalition (CALC)
- Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens (PACC)
- Sheridan Area Resource Council (SARC)

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POWDER RIVER BREAKS

EDITOR: Robin EH. Bagley
Photos by Powder River staff and members.

Corporations Committee misplaces blame on renewables for electric rate increase

CLAIRE DEUTER
Powder River Staff

This year, Rocky Mountain Power (RMP), Wyoming's largest investor-owned utility, proposed the largest rate increase customers have seen in over a decade. The utility is proposing to increase customer electricity rates by over 20% as early as Jan. 1, 2024 and also intends to shift 100% of the risk onto ratepayers when fuel costs are more expensive than projected. This shift would eliminate an existing cost-sharing agreement that split cost risk 80/20 between the utility and ratepayers.

Before raising rates, the utility must receive approval from the Wyoming Public Service Commission (PSC) in a rate case. This state agency has the authority to approve rates, which must be just and reasonable, as mandated by standards codified in state law. A public hearing for the rate case is scheduled for Oct. 25 – Nov. 3. There, the utility and intervening parties will present evidence and arguments to the PSC. The PSC commissioners will consider the arguments presented, deliberate, and decide on the proposal by the end of December. Intervening parties in this rate case include Sierra Club, Wyoming Industrial Energy Consumers, Walmart, the Wyoming Office of Consumer Advocate, and State Senator Cale Case.

The PSC held public comment meetings on the proposal throughout the summer and fall. Members of the public overwhelmingly opposed the proposed rate increase at these



meetings, voicing concerns about facing higher electricity bills. In addition to these worries, many people placed the blame for the proposed rate increase on renewable energy. The state Joint Corporations Committee shared a similar opinion at its September meeting in Cheyenne.

In explaining its rate increase proposal to the Corporations Committee, RMP explained that the utility must purchase fuel costs at a higher price now, and an increase in customer rates would cover such costs.

The utility discussed how fuel costs for fossil fuels have increased due to volatile market prices for coal and gas and noted that renewable energy has saved its customers money due to renewable energy's low fuel costs. "I want to clear the air," Gary Hoogeveen, RMP's President and CEO, stated at the committee meeting, "There is absolutely no increase in these rates due to renewable energy."

Even with RMP's reasoning for the rate increase proposal, the Corporations Committee remained skeptical. At its September meeting, the committee introduced a resolution and a variety of bills aimed at RMP, renewable energy, and West Coast states within the utility's greater service territory.

One of those bills sought to establish a year-long moratorium on utilities' ability to recover capital costs from renewable energy projects through customer rates, which would have seriously disincentivized renewable energy development. Fortunately, the committee declined to move the bill after negative feedback from several stakeholders. However, the committee voted to move a resolution in opposition to RMP's proposal.

The resolution describes the committee's reasons for opposition and includes language on the renewable energy transition for the benefit of California, Oregon, and Washington.

Regardless of the Corporations Committee's misplaced blame on renewable energy, the fate of RMP's rate increase proposal rests in the hands of the PSC. Members of the public can submit comments to the PSC by emailing wpsc_comments@wyo.gov with the subject line "Record Number 17252" or mailing the PSC at 2515 Warren Ave., Suite 300, Cheyenne, WY 82002.

The PSC will hold a public hearing on the rate case starting Oct. 25. Members of the public can attend and participate in person or online via Zoom.

SOLAR STATS

Energy Produced:
498kWh

Carbon Offset:
797pounds

We offset an equivalent
of 6 trees
in August & September

Northern Cheyenne garden unveiled at Sheridan Food Forest

PENNIE VANCE | Powder River Staff

On a warm August afternoon at the Sheridan Food Forest, over 80 citizens gathered to hear stories of indigenous plant food history and lore by Northern Cheyenne ethnobotanists and educators, Linwood and Randall Tall Bull. The gathering was a dedication of the recently installed Northern Cheyenne Medicinal Garden and an homage to the beauty of cultural diversity.

The Northern Cheyenne Medicinal Garden is a dream come to fruition for Sheridan Food Forest originator, Carol LeResche. Several years ago, Carol began working with Piney Island Native Plants owner, Alisha Bretzman and Dave Malutich of Piney Island Conservation Services. Both had a similar dream sparked by Alisha's time as a student of Linwood, who teaches at Chief Dull Knife College in Lame Deer, Montana.

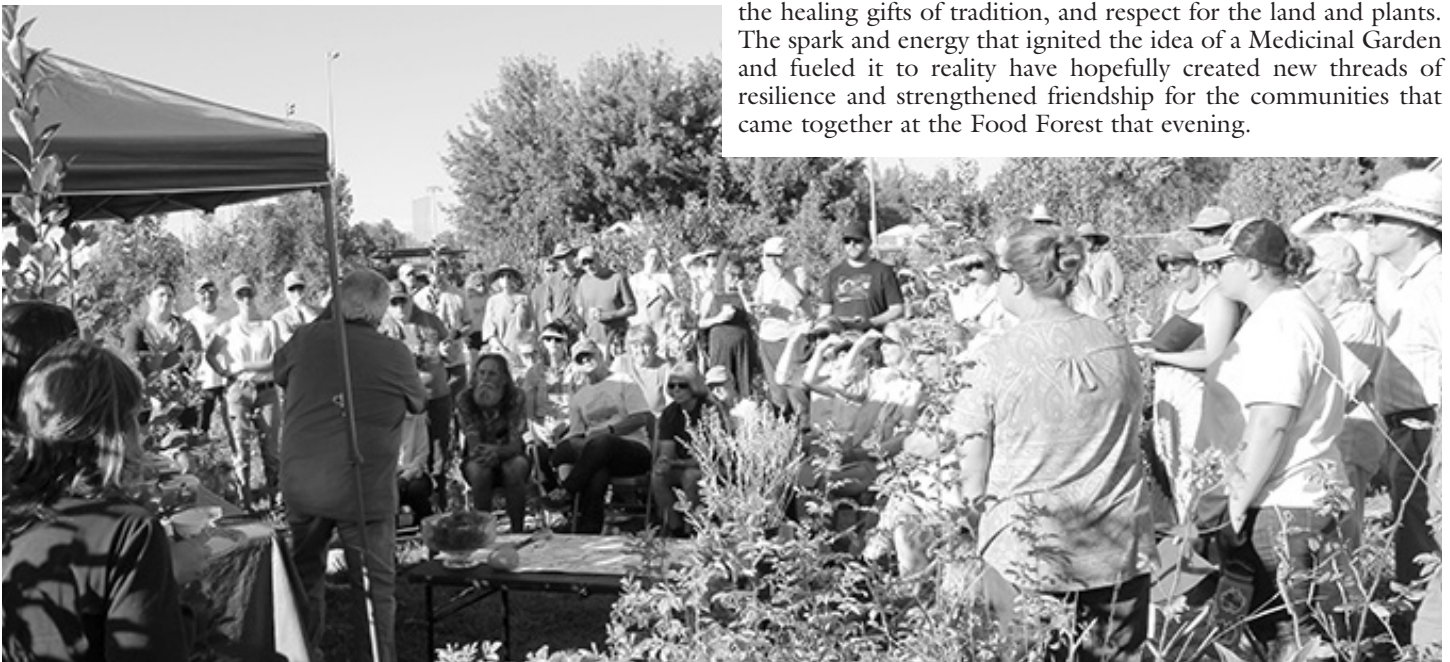
With the help of other Food Forest volunteers, Powder River, and the Tall Bulls, the dreamers began shaping a plan in 2022 which culminated in the planting and dedication of the Medicinal Garden. All plants in the garden are native plants cultivated by Piney Island Native Plants.

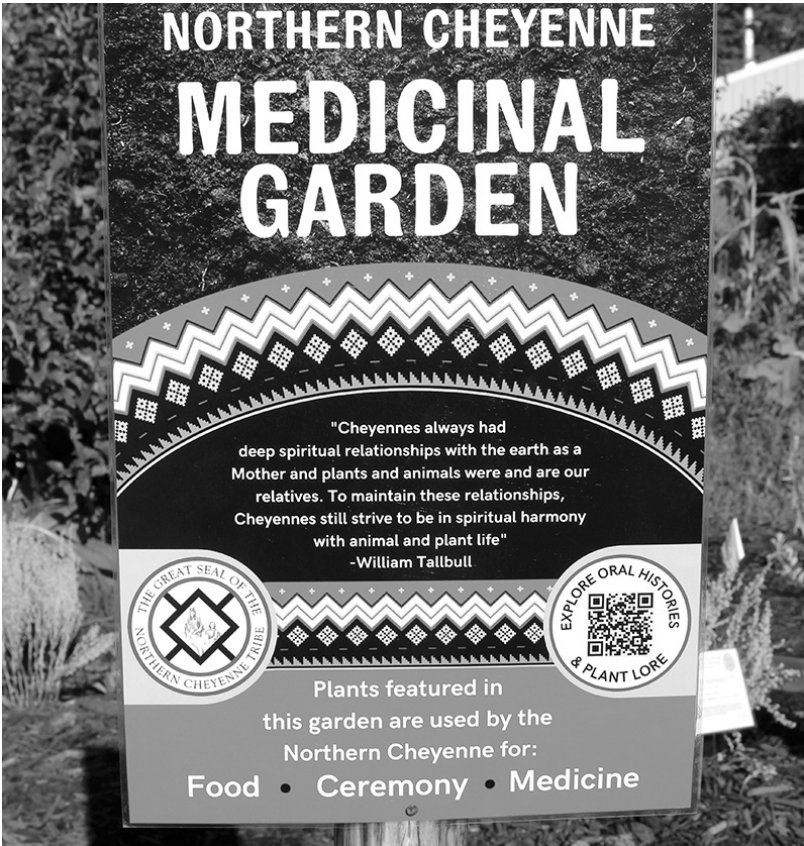
At the dedication, as soon as Linwood, accompanied by his son, Randall, began to speak, the crowd moved in closely. Linwood's mellow voice and sly sense of humor entranced the crowd with a flow of ageless indigenous stories and lore, sprinkled with stories from his own life and family, which were accompanied with a generous sampling of traditional Northern Cheyenne foods, such as dried chokecherry cakes and dried meats. Randall demonstrated the ancient way of grinding berries with smooth rocks and a rawhide bowl as well as showing other traditional tools and explaining the methods utilized in preparing the food.

Although traditional foods and medicines were the theme for the afternoon, laced deeply within Linwood's stories were threads of a people's long history, sustained by adaptation to the challenges and gifts of nature, resilience through hardship, and the healing gifts of tradition, and respect for the land and plants. The spark and energy that ignited the idea of a Medicinal Garden and fueled it to reality have hopefully created new threads of resilience and strengthened friendship for the communities that came together at the Food Forest that evening.



Linwood and Randall Tall Bull, Northern Cheyenne educators, shared stories and traditional uses of native plants, some of which can be found in the new Northern Cheyenne Medicinal Garden at the Sheridan Food Forest. The new garden was unveiled in August, and over 80 people came to hear Linwood and Randall present about the uses and meaning of traditional plants as well as sample traditional Northern Cheyenne foods.





Transportation Committee addresses EV taxes

CLAIRE DEUTER | Powder River Staff

On Aug. 31, the Wyoming Joint Transportation Committee discussed and moved a bill regarding electric vehicle (EV) taxes. The bill would charge \$0.035 per kilowatt hour (kWh) on all electricity used, sold, or distributed for sale or use by electric vehicles. On top of that, the bill provides a \$200 annual registration fee for EVs and a \$100 annual registration fee for plug-in hybrids.

The primary purpose of the bill is to address EV drivers' contributions to the state's transportation revenue. Because EV drivers don't use gas, they do not pay a fuel tax, which the state uses to maintain state roads. To make up for the lost fuel tax revenue, the state imposes a tax on electricity at EV charging stations.

Multiple stakeholders testified at the meeting. Local EV charger installation companies and the multinational company Tesla urged the committee to impose fair taxes at charging stations that appropriately compare to the lost fuel tax. They also cautioned the committee against unfair and overly burdensome EV fees and taxes.

The committee also discussed at which locations EV drivers should pay this tax. Since the purpose of the EV tax is to provide revenue for road maintenance, the committee discussed how it is important to direct taxes at fast charging stations that EV drivers often use when driving over long distances. It was felt that EV drivers who use the state highways the most, such as road-tripping tourists or residents who drive frequently throughout the state, should provide revenue for road maintenance. This location option differs from one where EV drivers slowly charge their vehicles at home and drive primarily in their community.

After thorough discussion, the committee agreed on a \$0.035/kWh tax at fast charging stations, a \$200 annual registration fee for EVs, and a \$100 annual registration fee for plug-in hybrid vehicles. The committee moved the bill as a House bill for the 2024 legislative session.

Commission should listen to the public about Acme

ROGER WILSON | Sheridan

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is reprinted from the Aug. 26, 2023 issue of The Sheridan Press. Public comment was overwhelmingly opposed to the creation of the Acme Special Use District. Thanks to such terrific engagement from Powder River members and many other county residents, the Planning & Zoning Commission did not move this proposal forward to the Sheridan County Commission.

On Sept. 7, the Sheridan County Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposal for the Acme Special Use District, which has been the focus of several meetings over the past several months. Comments delivered in person at these meetings, as well as many more written comments submitted to the commission, have illustrated that the residents of Sheridan County are overwhelmingly against this proposed district. The public has valid concerns and understand what's at stake. The commission should listen to them.

Interest in creating a potential commercial/industrial zone seems to have begun in 1979 due to the coal mining history of the Acme/Kleenburn area. Before there was county planning or zoning, coal mining was a major industry.

The underground Acme Mine began operation in 1911 and closed in 1940. In 1977, the Town of Acme and surrounding

area were purchased by Peter Kiewit and Sons to conduct open pit coal mining. The Town of Acme was removed.

Only the power plant building, a bridge, a water tower and concrete horse barn remained.

Operating as Big Horn Coal, Kiewit mined coal until 1999 when mining ceased and the coal tippie was removed. To my knowledge, only the power plant (which is slated for deconstruction), two bridges, water tower, maintenance shop, part of the concrete horse barn, and two lakes remain. Reclamation of the mine site was completed, and Big Horn Coal property was sold. It's evident that the nature of the land and future prospects of coal mining in the area have greatly changed since 1979.

Now what is there is mostly agricultural land, which includes the Tongue River, an important agricultural water source that also provides fishing, kayaking, and canoeing recreation; riparian wildlife habitat and connectivity as well as birding, and the popular Kleenburn Recreation Area, which is used by many Sheridan area residents for fishing and paddling.

Lastly, one cannot discount the scenic value of Tongue River Valley whether observed from county roads or interstate.

Zoning this area commercial/industrial would conflict with most public expressions for the future of Sheridan County. The most recent Comprehensive Plan clearly illustrates this. It is very

difficult for me to envision successfully retaining recreation and environmental values identified by the public and expressed in the Comprehensive Plan if it were zoned commercial/industrial. Normally, buffers between zone classifications would be provided in planning, but with this small area, there is no space for buffers, and therefore, conflicts are sure to occur.

It's clear from public comment that the residents would like to see the Acme area preserved. If we think about what a commercial/industrial zone may look like, we only need look along East Ridge Road east of Sheridan. It's certainly not what I would wish to see along any riparian area in the county. Zoning the land as agriculture, as most of the surrounding area is, is far more appropriate than commercial/industrial.

The use and conditions of the land have changed greatly since the Acme Special Use District was first proposed in 1979. Coal mining as before is gone, and the prospects for a return soon seem very unlikely. There are already locations in the county for commercial/industrial use, so, I question the need for the Acme Special Use District and believe that the appropriate zoning is agriculture.

I encourage all who care about preserving the Acme area to attend the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on Sept. 7 at 5:30 p.m. at the courthouse and express your views.



In opposition to proposed rate hike

DUDLEY CASE | Buffalo

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is reprinted from the Oct. 4, 2023 issue of the Buffalo Bulletin.

Dear Editor,

I am against [Rocky Mountain Power] RMP's two proposed rate hikes. RMP wants a 7.6% rate increase, an overall increase of \$50.3 million, and an additional 21.6% rate hike, an overall increase of \$137.2 million, which would also eliminate RMP's 80/20 cost-sharing provision between itself and its customers and put 100% of burden for cost overruns onto its customers. These rate hikes are bad for RMP's customers because its customers have no option to switch to a utility with

lower rates. Just the 21.6% rate hike would result in an average increase of \$15.67 on residential monthly bills and higher small businesses bills. These two rates hikes plus the future cost overruns to be borne by customers could mean an average increase in monthly bills much higher than RMP's estimated \$15.67 monthly increase. The Wyoming Public Service Commission will have to decide whether to support, reject or modify these rate hikes.

Many people have said that these rates hikes are due to RMP switching over from fossil fuels (coal and natural gas) to renewable sources of energy (wind and solar). However, this is not correct. RMP actually states that the cost overruns are due to "extreme fluctuations in fossil fuel prices" and dealing with "extreme

weather." RMP also states that without these new wind resources, along with wind repowering projects, customer rates would have increased an additional 60% (\$85.4 million) in Wyoming. Since 2021 the price of natural gas has risen 89% while coal fuel prices have increased 38%. RMP states that its investments in wind power and other renewable resources have actually reduced the impact of increases in fossil fuel costs and power market prices because wind and solar power have no fuel costs.

So, while we must encourage the Wyoming Public Service Commission to lower these rate hikes, we must also realize that the renewable energy that RMP is purchasing is not the cause of these hikes. It is the increases in coal and natural gas prices that are fueling these rate hikes.

Powder River supports EPA Solar For All grant

CLAIRE DEUTER | Powder River Staff

The Wyoming Energy Authority teamed up with the Bonneville Environmental Foundation to apply for a Solar for All grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The purpose of the grant is to spur the deployment of residential distributed solar energy in markets serving low-income and disadvantaged communities, enabling millions of Americans to access affordable, resilient, and clean solar energy. Powder River drafted a letter of support for the grant application, attended meetings, and has been working with Wyoming conservation partners to support the Wyoming Energy Authority's application to bring the benefits of solar power to Wyoming.

The Solar for All funding comes from the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund which is a program authorized through the Inflation Reduction Act, a federal law passed in August 2022. The total funding for the Solar for All grant is \$7 billion with each grantee receiving funding between \$25 and \$400 million. According to the EPA's website, grantees will use funds to expand existing low-income solar programs or design and deploy new Solar for All programs nationwide. The EPA will not fund individual projects under this competition.



COOL Legislation gains momentum in U.S. House

PENNIE VANCE | Powder River Staff

Momentum has strengthened for successful legislation that would restore mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) by retailers for American livestock producers' beef that was born, raised and harvested in the United States. Since the overturn of COOL in 2015, labels such as "Product of USA" on packages of beef at the grocery store do not ensure that it's genuine American beef.

Today beef imported from countries across the globe can simply be repackaged in the U.S. to appear to be a domestic product. This duplicity harms American livestock producers and consumers. Ranchers cannot differentiate their beef from foreign beef, and consumers have no way of knowing where any given package of meat came from.

Powder River has fought for years on behalf of American beef producers and are especially pleased with a new bill, Country of Origin Labeling Enforcement Act H.R. 5081, sponsored by Wyoming Representative Harriet Hageman with seven bipartisan co-sponsors. The bill has strong language challenging the contention that the United States is hamstrung by decades-old World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. It also has stiff penalties for anyone mislabeling beef as a product of the United States if the beef was not born, raised and harvested here. Recent research by R-Calf USA shows credible evidence that the WTO rules of 2015 have lost strength and no longer have the structural ability to challenge the United States ability to institute COOL.

The second House bill, the Beef Origin Labeling Accountability Act, by Rep. Johnson (R-SD) has no co-sponsors and while a worthwhile effort, lacks the time restrictions that are needed to prevent opponents from stalling the process for months, even years.

The American Beef Labeling Act, S.52, sponsored by Senator Thune (R-SD) with seven bipartisan co-sponsors including Wyoming Senator Cynthia Lummis, continues to have solid support from Powder River and many other livestock organizations. S.52 includes the means to comply with the WTO's rules through a negotiation process and includes acceptable time limitations.

S.52 and H.R.5081 ensure timely and complete restoration of COOL and together provide a pathway to an acceptable labeling bill for independent ranchers throughout the U.S.



POWDER RIVER SUPPORTS

continued from page 1

Ham stated that she "enjoyed being a part of the PRBRC effort to support oil and gas bonding changes by the BLM. These changes are long overdue and will save states and American taxpayers millions of dollars." Ham further explains that "[taxpayers] were being left with thousands of orphan wells to plug when companies abandoned them after their financial value was exhausted." The rule's updated bonding requirements will instead incentivize operators to plug wells and complete reclamation activities on affected surface lands.

Members and staff of Western Organization of Resource Councils, Western Colorado Alliance, Northern Plains Resource Council, and Dakota Resource Council, alongside ally groups from other western states, also attended the info-session. Overall, it was a strong showing of support for this crucial rule.

Powder River and the aforementioned groups collaborated on formal comments for the rule, offering general support and providing guidance for how the rule could be further strengthened. Many Powder River and other network group members submitted comments in favor of the rule as well. The comment period closed as scheduled on Sept. 22, with the public submitting over 260,000 comments. The comments were overwhelmingly positive, according to an analysis from the Center for Western Priorities, which estimated 99% of comments submitted supported the proposed rule.

Although there is no set deadline for when a final decision on the rule and its implementation will be made, our expectation is that the decision to adopt, change, or reject the rule will be issued by spring of 2024. As always, we will continue to provide updates through the Breaks and disseminate information on how to engage through emailed action alerts.

ACME REZONE STALLS OUT

Area remains protected for now

SHANNON ANDERSON | Powder River Staff

Responding to concerns raised by our members and the public, the Sheridan County Planning and Zoning Commission opted to not move the proposal to create a special use district in the Acme/Kleenburn area forward to the Board of County Commissioners at their meeting Sept. 7. The proposal was envisioned to rezone the area to create a special use designation that would facilitate commercial and industrial development. Without a motion and vote in favor of the proposal, the proposal effectively stalls out.

The decision – or rather the non-decision – followed several months of meetings discussing the proposal. Throughout the year, recreationists, local landowners, and other concerned residents sent in hundreds of emails, gave public comments during the meetings, and otherwise raised questions and concerns about how the proposal would impact existing and important uses of the area.

Nestled next to the Tongue River just north of Sheridan, the area is frequently used for hunting, fishing, boating, and other recreational activities. It also remains a critical agricultural area with its watershed fed alluvial valley floor. Of note, the Padlock Ranch, the largest landowner in the proposed rezone area, stated publicly

that it has no plans to do anything different with their land and wanted to maintain the agricultural nature of the area.

The decision also reflects the changing nature of Tongue River Valley, an area that has historic and abandoned coal mines and coal-fired power plant, but is now a central place for outdoor life in the county. The Sheridan County Conservation District and partners in state and federal government have been working to clean up the Acme power plant site to repurpose it for recreational purposes.

Likewise, old coal mines in the area have been transformed into public recreation areas at Kleenburn. With nearby walk-in areas for hunting, hiking, and boat access for floating the river, the Acme area is easily accessible destination for those wanting to spend an afternoon enjoying the beauty of Sheridan County. Comments received by the Planning & Zoning Commission reflected the community's desire to keep things the way they are to ensure these recreational opportunities remain available for Sheridan County residents.

Our organization has prioritized working on this proposal as part of our multi-year efforts to protect the Tongue River Valley from unwarranted and unwise impacts of industrial development. Powder River and our members will continue to watch this proposal, and others likely to come after it, to ensure this special part of our county and state's history and environment is protected for future generations to enjoy.



ANNUAL MEETING continued from page 1

The evening will also include a viewing of *The Big Open*, a photographic journey through the seasons in the Powder River Basin by Story photographer Dainis Hazners. An award-winning poet, Hazners also has an MFA in Photography and has shown his work at the Brinton Museum and Sheridan County Library.

Hazners says of *The Big Open*: "Since beginning this project, I've captured over 20,000 digital images, all of which are full-frame with no 'adjustments.' My goal has been to adore the world of 10,000 things as discovered in Powder River Country."

Registration opens at 2 p.m., followed by the members-only Business Meeting at 2:30 p.m. The public portion of the Annual Meeting kicks off at 4:30 p.m. with a social hour and a live auction, including Pies by Guys.

The dinner and program will begin at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50 for members and \$60 for non-members. Please feel free to invite a friend or neighbor who may be interested in learning more about Powder River. For more information, visit www.powderriverbasin.org, contact Powder River at 307-672-5809 or email info@powderriverbasin.org.



CALENDAR

NOV 4 | 51st Annual Meeting | Sheridan

NOV 5 | Powder River Board Meeting | Sheridan

WATCHING OUT FOR WYOMING

The Next 50 Years



KEYNOTE SPEAKER - RODGER MCDANIEL

Author of *Profiles in Courage: Standing Against the Wyoming Wind*
Plus! *The Big Open - PRB Photographs by Dainis Hazners*

Saturday, November 4th

4:30 pm Social & Pies by Guys & 6:30 pm Dinner

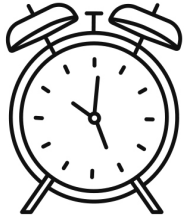
Visit www.powderriverbasin.org/events

BUSINESS MEETING

Saturday, November 4th

2:30 pm

Best Western - Sheridan
Powder River Members Only



It' Time to Update Your Membership

Choose the Easiest Option for you to do so



- A) Photograph the QR Code with your phone to complete online
- B) Fill in and deliver to: 934 N. Main Street, Sheridan, WY 82801
- C) Call 307-672-5809 and we will assist in completing over the phone

Member Information

First and Last Name(s) : _____

Street, City & State Address: _____

Occupation: (optional) _____

Phone Number (s) _____ Cell _____ Home _____

Email Address(s) _____

I/We support the following issues effecting Wyoming.

- Coal Mining and Power Plants
- Local Food Production
- Coal Transition
- Renewable Energy
- Soil Health / Regenerative Ag
- Oil and Gas
- Livestock Issues
- Write In _____

I /We have attended these PRBRC Events

- Solar Power Tours
- Harvest Celebration
- November Annual Meeting
- Sheridan Food Forest
- Coal Mine Tours
- Affiliate Meetings
- Agricultural Land Tours
- Seed Library @ Fulmer Public Library

I/We have a PRBRC Affiliates Membership

- CALC** Cheyenne Area Landowners Coalition (**Laramie County**)
- PACC** Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens (**Fremont County**)
- ARE** Alliance for Renewable Energy (**Albany County**)
- CRC** Clark Resource Council (**Park County**)
- SARC** Sheridan Area Resource Council (**Sheridan County**)

Thank you!

Please provide any additional information you would like for us to know:



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 Sheridan, Wyoming 82801

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PLANNED GIVING AND ESTATE PLANNING GIFTS

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. So we're inviting you, our extended family of members and donors, to consider including Powder River in your estate plans.

Your gift would create a living legacy allowing Powder River to continue our work far into the future and helping ensure 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 through a bequest to Powder River.

The two easiest ways to include Powder River in your estate planning take little time (and no legal assistance).

- THROUGH YOUR RETIREMENT ACCOUNT (Your IRA, Roth-IRA, SEP-IRA, 401(k), or other such account): Name Powder River Basin Resource Council as a Primary beneficiary for a percentage. One percent, 10%, 25% or whatever you wish. You can do this through the account custodian, or often even on the custodian's website in a few minutes (Powder River's Tax ID is 74-2183158).

- THROUGH YOUR LIFE INSURANCE POLICY: Name Powder River Basin Resource Council as a primary beneficiary of any percentage of your life insurance policy. You can do this through your insurance agent or the insurance company, or often even on your insurance company's website in only a few minutes (Powder River's Tax ID is 74-2183158).

If you are preparing a formal will or living trust document, you can include Powder River Basin Resource Council as a primary beneficiary of a specific dollar amount or percentage of your estate. If you already have such an instrument, you can have it revised to include Powder River. This is probably best done through your attorney.

Finally, there are several more complex tax-advantaged ways to contribute to Powder River's future and receive continuing income and tax advantages during your lifetime. These include "charitable remainder trusts" and sale of appreciated and depreciated securities. Please consult your legal and financial advisors about how you can use such tools to support Wyoming's most effective grassroots member organization, and how you might benefit.

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

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