



2401 Montana Avenue #301
Billings, Montana 59101
406-252-9672

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 352
Billings, MT 59101



MEMBER GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

Dakota Rural Action

- Protected family farms by defeating Amendment A, a referendum that would have let corporate factory farms into South Dakota. This amendment would have repealed Amendment E, a voter approved constitutional amendment limiting corporate ownership of livestock.
- Added two new local chapters, the Western Plains Action Group in Bison, and Dakota Urban Action in Sioux Falls.
- Won policies to promote wind energy development in South Dakota by halving the contractor's excise tax on new wind farms, helping to level the playing field between wind energy and fossil fuels.



Dakota Resource Council

- Convinced local grocery stores in Minot to voluntarily comply with North Dakota's unenforced country-of-origin labeling law, which helped convince federal lawmakers to adopt national legislation.
- Assisted its local chapter, the Missouri Valley Resource Council, to gain a pilot project providing fish consumption mercury warnings to all anglers for the first time.



- Moved to protect North Dakota's clean air by filing a notice of intent to sue the EPA for failing to require a new state clean air plan after coal fired power plants violated clean air standards.

Idaho Rural Council

- Reached a landmark settlement that protects Idaho's water resources and established the precedent that pollution of groundwater connected to surface waters by factory farms violates the Clean Water Act.
- Organized a new local group, the Three Island Rural Council, of farmers, ranchers and rural residents working to preserve water rights and water quality and stop the invasion of factory farms into the area.
- *High Country News* (HCN) featured members in an in-depth look at the growth of factory style dairies in Idaho's Magic Valley. HCN reported that the number of dairies doubled to 500 and number of cows grew to 250,000 in the seven-county area over the last ten years. The article described the impacts of this influx on neighbors, water and air quality, local communities, and politics.



Northern Plains Resource Council

- Developed and proposed standards to limit the amount of sodium and salinity pollution allowed in rivers threatened by coalbed methane development. Any standards adopted by Montana would apply to water entering the state, in effect making standards binding on methane development in Wyoming or on tribal land.

- Nearly 1,000 people attended coalbed methane development hearings, and more than three-quarters of those who spoke supported the *Doing It Right* proposal and criticized the EIS's failure to address impacts to water, land, wildlife, and landowner rights.
- Produced and distributed 25,000 copies of the brochure, *Why Plant What You Can't Sell?*, and conducted nine town meetings with nearly 150 participants in major wheat producing areas of Montana.



Western Colorado Congress

- The Western Slope Environmental Resource Council, WCC's community group in Delta County, pushed the county to deny four out of five wells in a coalbed methane drilling proposal and place stipulations on the fifth.
- Secured resolutions from every municipality in Garfield County in support of protecting the Roan Plateau from wide-scale oil and gas development, and successfully appealed the motorized use plan for the Uncompahgre National Forest, winning closure of more than 700 miles of roads and trails through sensitive ecosystems and the restriction of motorized travel to designated routes.
- Sheep Mountain Alliance, WCC's community group in San Miguel County, led the passage of an initiative in Telluride that helps preserve 570 acres of open space at the gateway of the community.



A GRASSROOTS ALLIANCE



A Year of Challenges and Success

WORC remained focused, aggressive, and effective in 2002 despite the headlines and sound bites about the poor economy, terrorism, and prospects of war. We advanced the grassroots agenda for family farmers and ranchers. We held our own against a bad energy policy proposal. We blunted several attempts to cut protections for clean water, clean air, land, and human health. And we won a major First Amendment case that may end a program that family farmers and ranchers believe forces them to pay for their own demise.

Perhaps more importantly, we helped hundreds of men and women gain new skills and the confidence to lead for change and a better 2003.

- WORC won an historic energy title in the federal Farm Bill. The new program provides grants for energy audits and grants and loans for farmers, ranchers, and rural residents to produce renewable energy and increase energy efficiency.

- WORC helped lead a broad-based coalition of farmers, ranchers and consumers to win country of origin labeling for meat, fish, and produce, giving consumers the right to know and choose the origin of their food.
- WORC and the Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) won a federal court decision declaring the beef checkoff program unconstitutional because it forces producers to pay for speech with which they disagree.

Protecting the West from Irresponsible Energy Development

WORC is challenging the energy industry to 'do it right' by responsibly developing fossil fuels. WORC is also pushing for an increase in renewable energy use and protections for landowners and homeowners affected by energy development.

- WORC challenged the administration's national energy policy and held off many negative provisions pushed by the oil, gas and coal industries. The proposal died for lack of consensus at the end of 2002.

- WORC produced and distributed information about renewable energy and coalbed methane and helped generate unprecedented local, regional, and national press attention.

- WORC helped to coordinate the Powder River Basin Coal Bed Methane Working Group, a network of six organizations sharing information and coordinating strategies on coalbed methane development in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana.

- WORC is one of the leading participants in the Rocky Mountain Energy Campaign, a coordinated response to energy threats to private

property, wildlands, water quality, and wildlife in the Rocky Mountain region.

- WORC, Northern Plains and the Dakota Resource Council persuaded the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to prepare a full environmental impact statement, rather than an environmental assessment, for a proposed pipeline that would run through Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota.

- WORC endorsed comments submitted by the Clean Air Task Force urging the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to require dry cooling technology at new and existing power plants. This technology would dramatically reduce water needs.



Restoring Competition and the Right to Choose

WORC organizes farmers and ranchers to stand up to the dominant private corporations and public policies shaping the U.S. farm and food system. In 2002, a coalition of farmers, ranchers, workers, and consumers forged a national campaign to win agriculture and food policy reforms that benefit family farmers, rural communities, consumers, and the environment.

- After winning the country of origin labeling law, WORC and its member groups helped develop a 100-group coalition of farmers, ranchers, and consumers to work for effective implementation of the law by a reluctant administration.

- The U.S. Senate voted twice to increase market competition by prohibiting meatpackers from owning livestock, but a House-Senate conference committee dropped the provision from the Farm Bill. Supporters then introduced a new bill to ban packer ownership and another to reform livestock marketing contracts based on WORC's proposal. In July, WORC submitted testimony in favor of the bills to two Senate committees.

- WORC launched a fair trade campaign to oppose corporate-driven trade deals, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and unaccountable bodies, such as the World Trade Organization.



WORC is a leader in protecting the rights of landowners and homeowners against the harmful impacts of coalbed methane development.

For more in-depth coverage of WORC and our member groups, visit www.worc.org

WORC is a regional network of seven grassroots community organizations that include 8,250 members and 46 local chapters. WORC helps its member groups succeed by providing training and by coordinating regional issue campaigns.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Dakota Resource Council
North Dakota
- Dakota Rural Action
South Dakota
- Idaho Rural Council
Idaho
- Powder River Basin Resource Council
Wyoming
- Northern Plains Resource Council
Montana
- Oregon Rural Action
Oregon
- Western Colorado Congress
Colorado

2002 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Shirley Effling, Sec./Treas. DRA
- Shane Kolb DRA
- Donald Nelson DRC
- Wayne Fisher DRC
- Jack Thornborrow, Vice-Chair IRC
- Connie Clapier IRC
- Richard Parks NPRC
- Suzin Kratina NPRC
- Skip Waters, Chair PRBRC
- Tom Garrett PRBRC
- Curtis Imrie WCC
- Reed Kelley WCC

STAFF

- Patrick Sweeney Regional Director
- John D. Smillie Program Director
- Sara Kendall DC Office Director
- Kevin Williams Field Organizer
- Jeri Lynn Bakken Regional Program Associate
- Kevin Dowling Development Director
- Janel Miller Regional Technology Coordinator
- Eileen Hanchett Comptroller
- Brandy Hinkle Communications Coordinator
- Marvel Karch Administrative Assistant
- Kerri Nelson Intern

Beef Checkoff Ruled Unconstitutional

U.S. District Judge Charles B. Kommann sided with WORC and the Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) in June when he declared the beef checkoff unconstitutional. Judge Kommann found that the mandatory \$1 per head assessment violates the First Amendment's free speech guarantees by forcing cattle producers to pay for speech with which they disagree.

WORC and LMA sued the U.S. Department of Agriculture in December 2000, asking for a referendum on continuation of the checkoff in response to petitions signed by 146,000 cattle producers. In June 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a similar checkoff program for mushrooms; WORC had filed a friend of the court brief in that case.

WORC, LMA, and independent cattle producers across the country object to being forced to subsidize and associate with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), which is the primary beneficiary of checkoff funds and gets 90% of its budget from the checkoff. The NCBA opposes measures to restore open and competitive markets, require country of origin labeling for beef, and insure fair trade rules in agriculture. If Judge Kommann's ruling, now under appeal, is upheld, the NCBA will no longer be able to use checkoff funds to push those positions.



Continued Commitment to Leadership Development and Training

WORC provides training and organizing tools for members, staff, and community activists. The trainings teach participants how to develop and maintain strong community groups and effective leaders and campaigns.

- WORC conducted six major leadership development trainings, including two *Principles of Community Organizing* trainings in Grand Junction, Colorado, and Twin Falls, Idaho; member group staff director training; a senior staff training; and member and staff trainings at our June and December regional network meetings.

- WORC was fortunate to have assistance in our leadership training events from these consultants and trainers: Maureen O'Connell from Save Our Cumberland Mountains, Rebecca Kessinger from the National Family Farm Coalition, Ruth Tovim from 6degrees fundraising & communications, Phil Mattera from the Center for Corporate Research, Joe Szakos from the Virginia Organizing Project, Robert Bray of the Spin Project, and Michael Sligh of Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA.

- WORC provided a total of 202 days of consulting to its member groups for long term planning, fundraising, technology, media, and new organizing assistance.



High Plains News

High Plains News, WORC's radio service, covers Western issues from a community perspective. We take pride in providing quality, in-depth coverage that's important to rural America. In 2003, we plan to focus exclusively on 30-minute specials.

- High Plains News produced and distributed 26 stories covering natural resources and the environment, conventional and renewable energy issues and

conservation, sustainable agriculture, food safety, family farms and ranches, and rural economic concerns.

- High Plains News created and distributed two half-hour programs: *The Race for Coalbed Methane* and *Harvest of Concern: Genetically Modified Crops*.

- High Plains News received a Silver Reel Award for *The Race for Coalbed Methane* from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters.

Recognizing Commitment



The Center for Rural Affairs honored DRA members Charlie and Bette Johnson the 2002 Citizen Award for their efforts on behalf of family agriculture in South Dakota.

Gilles Stockton received the *Bob Tully Spirit Award* from Northern Plains for his outstanding service to the organization. Gilles ranches near Grass Range with his wife Joan.



Northern Plains also awarded the first *Mary Donohoe Tell It Like It Is Award* to



Norma Bixby for her exceptional leadership. A state representative from Lame Deer and member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Norma has worked to ensure that coalbed methane is developed responsibly.

PRBRC honored founding member, Ed Swartz, with *The Digger Moravek Guts and Gumption Award* at the 30th annual meeting. In giving the award, PRBRC acknowledged Ed's many years of above-and-beyond support, unwavering tenacity, and participation in numerous campaigns.



WCC honored Fred Wetlaufer with *The Chuck Worley Award*. Fred was recognized for his years of service and his long-time efforts on water issues and organizational leadership.

WORC recognized Pat Sweeney's 30 years of commitment to social, environmental and economic justice at its December regional meeting. Pat worked as an organizer and director for Northern Plains starting in 1972 and became WORC's regional director in 1982.



Protecting Our Wheat from Genetic Contamination

WORC is striving to protect the economy and environment of the Northern Great Plains from the release of genetically modified (GM) wheat, which could devastate markets for all kinds of wheat and put organic and other wheat farmers out of business.

- WORC organized and hosted a national strategy meeting on GM wheat in Billings in July.

- WORC launched campaigns with the Dakota Resource Council in North Dakota and Northern Plains in Montana to push for

state policies restricting release of GM wheat pending resolution of marketing and liability issues.

- WORC commissioned an analysis of the potential economic impacts of commercial introduction of GM wheat in the U.S. by agricultural economists at Iowa State University.

- WORC, Dakota Resource Council, Northern Plains, and Oregon Rural Action urged EPA to postpone a proposal to set new herbicide standards that Monsanto needs before it can market its GM wheat. EPA delayed approval of the standards.

- WORC produced and distributed public education materials on U.S. wheat production, wheat markets, world wheat facts, and wheat production in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Oregon.

MEMBER GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

Oregon Rural Action

- Collected signatures and helped make Oregon the first state to get labeling of genetically engineered foods on a statewide ballot.

- Sponsored two, day-long wind energy workshops for 130 people in Pendleton and 170 in La Grande and raised awareness of renewable energy through a series of articles in the local paper.

- Secured more than \$3,000 a year in assistance for low-income families and senior citizens to buy fresh fruit, vegetables, and herbs at a local farmers market.



Powder River Basin Resource Council

- Won a ruling from the Department of Interior's Board of Land Appeals that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management failed to use updated environmental studies before granting coalbed methane leases.

- Filed suit in federal court to stop surface and groundwater pollution and damage to streams, wildlife, ranching, and agriculture from coalbed methane production. The suit

challenges the Army Corps of Engineers' general permit, which governs construction

of in-channel reservoirs for produced water from coalbed methane production wells, roads, and pipeline crossings.

- Members of the Powder River Basin Resource Council were featured in Bill Moyers' national news program, *NOW*, in March. The segment focused on coalbed methane development and its impact on people, land, and water in the Powder River Basin of northern Wyoming.



Thanks to Our Funders

In 2002 WORC and WORC Education Project had income of \$838,261.38 from foundations, memberships, fees, publications and donors. We would like to thank all our supporters and the following institutions:

Beldon Fund
Benton Foundation
Brainerd Foundation
Cinnabar Foundation
Nathan Cummings Foundation
Environmental Support Center

FarmAid
HKH Foundation
Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy
National Family Farm Coalition

Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Albert A. List Foundation
John Merck Fund through the Farmer to Farmer Campaign
C.S. Mott Foundation
Patagonia

Presbyterian Church, USA
Rocky Mountain Energy Campaign
Tides Foundation/Alki Fund
Town Creek Foundation
True North Foundation

Turner Foundation
Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock
Weeden Foundation
Wyss Foundation