



2004 Annual Report

A Year in Review

Over the past 25 years, WORC has organized a regional community based on the values of stewardship of land, air, and water; sustainable, family farms and ranches; and just economic and social policies.

These years of grassroots leadership and action paid off again in 2004. We advanced the *Doing It Right* campaign to protect landowners, homeowners, communities, and natural resources from irresponsible energy development. We defended the constitutional rights of family cattle producers by challenging the beef checkoff in the Supreme Court. We protected the livelihoods of wheat farmers by forcing Monsanto to rethink its plan for genetically modified wheat. And, by empowering more than 500 leaders and staff through leadership and organizing trainings, we've sown the seeds for continued progress.



Law and Order in the Oil and Gas Fields

WORC released *Law and Order in the Oil and Gas Fields: A Review of Inspection and Enforcement Programs in Five Western States*. The report provides oil and gas field residents with the information they need to achieve

better enforcement of oil and gas laws and regulations, and persuade government decision makers and employees to strengthen inspection and enforcement programs.

WORC sponsored four day-long citizen enforcement trainings in three states, attended by 46 people. The trainings gave the participants the knowledge, skills and confidence to gather credible information

on oil and gas operations, and use that knowledge to push for better industry compliance with public health and environmental standards. Sixty-four on-the-ground inspections of oil and gas well pads and wastewater impoundments were conducted in the fall.

Stopping GM Wheat

Under pressure from WORC, our member groups and allies, Monsanto announced it was postponing efforts to introduce genetically modified wheat. Monsanto's spokespeople that opposition of wheat growers and buyers—the focus of our organizing and strategy—were factors in this decision. Monsanto's announcement is a significant victory for our campaign, and a major milestone in the international effort to protect farmers and consumers from the adoption of unsafe or untested genetically modified foods.

In November, WORC released an update to 2003's study, *Market Risks of Genetically Modified Wheat*. The update finds that attitudes of consumers and regulatory treatment of GM foods overseas have not changed since the original study, which found unacceptable market risks.

Supreme Court Hears Beef Checkoff Case

On December 8, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on our case against the beef checkoff, known as *Veneman v. LMA, WORC, et.al.*

Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe argued the case on behalf of WORC and LMA. The Supreme Court will issue a decision by the end of its current term in June.

The mandatory beef checkoff forces cattle producers to subsidize the NCBA, which opposes their interests on trade policy, country-of-origin labeling for meat, and livestock market reform. A string of court decisions agreed with WORC that the checkoff is unconstitutional because it forces ranchers to pay for speech with which they disagree.



Citizens inspect an oil well outside of Buffalo, Wyoming, as part of WORC's *Law and Order in the Oil and Gas Fields* Campaign.



Skip Waters talks with reporters about beef checkoff outside Supreme Court building after the hearing on December 8.

WORC is a regional network of seven grassroots community organizations that include 9,500 members and 49 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

Northern Plains
Resource Council
Montana

Oregon Rural Action
Oregon

Powder River Basin
Resource Council
Wyoming

Western Colorado Congress
Colorado

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Outsourcing the American Cowboy

WORC's message—that the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement “outsources the American Cowboy”—brought international media attention to our campaign in 2004.

WORC's efforts also drew the attention of Australia's prime minister, who publicly denied WORC's contention that the agreement would lead to the outsourcing of cowboys.



C-NBC correspondent Rob Reynolds (left) met with Trade Team Chair, Gilles Stockton (right), to discuss outsourcing of the American cowboy.

Protecting Livestock Markets

Representative Earl Pomeroy (D-North Dakota) introduced the House version of the Captive Supply Reform Act in March, following WORC's livestock fly-in. Nine WORC members and three staff visited 53 Congressional offices, and USDA's Packers and Stockyards Administration. The team talked about prohibiting packer ownership of livestock, country of origin labeling, the U.S. - Australia Trade Agreement, renewable energy and mandatory animal identification systems.

Rethinking U.S. Agricultural Policy

In May, WORC hosted a tour featuring Dr. Daryll Ray, a farm policy expert from the University of Tennessee. Dr. Ray is co-author of the Agricultural Policy Analysis Center report, *Rethinking U.S. Agricultural Policy: Changing Course to Secure Farmer Livelihoods Worldwide*. Dr. Ray spoke on how U.S. farm policy favors multinational agribusiness firms and importers over family farmers here and abroad.

Protecting Surface Owners from Irresponsible Oil and Gas Development

Powder River Basin Resource Council member Marjorie West, testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on behalf of WORC in March. West asked the committee to require oil and gas companies to negotiate surface use and damage agreements with landowners, increase bonds ensuring adequate land reclamation, and protect taxpayers by requiring developers to clean up sites. In her testimony, West described the harm to her land, water resources and health from irresponsible coalbed methane development.



Bill West, checks the age of a cottonwood tree killed by saline water discharges.

SUPPORT

Thanks to Our Funders

We would like to thank the new and the continued supporters of WORC and the WORC Education project:

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Supporting Clean and Renewable Energy

In addition to fighting for the responsible development of fossil fuels, WORC and its member groups support a transition to a clean and renewable energy system that will promote security, health and economic prosperity. WORC supported a federal renewable energy standard and multi-year extension of the wind energy production tax credit. Congress ultimately extended the tax credit for one year.

WORC also participated in a national network to improve the direction and focus and secure more funding for the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program (Section 9006) of the 2002 Farm Bill.

Country of Origin Labeling

In January, the Senate voted to pass our omnibus spending bill with language postponing implementation of country of origin labeling until September 2006. Although the date of implementation was delayed, WORC and our allies helped stop efforts to kill mandatory labeling outright.

Montana rancher Dan Teigen represented WORC at a public hearing on the National Animal Identification Program held in Billings, Montana, in August. Teigen told USDA Undersecretary Bill Hawks that mandatory country of origin labeling is more important to producers and consumers than a new, expensive animal identification program. Teigen said USDA should build on existing programs that already identify and trace animals in the event of an animal disease outbreak.



Dan Teigen, a member of Northern Plains, told the USDA to concentrate on establishing a mandatory COOL program.

Developing Strong Groups, Leaders & Staff

WORC provided 120 days of one-on-one consulting and training to its member groups on board development, media, technology, fundraising, planning, campaign strategy, and staff and organizational development.

WORC held seven trainings, attended by 500 leaders and staff, in 2004:

- Two *Principles of Community Organizing* workshops in Fargo, North Dakota in April, and in Laramie, Wyoming, in August.
- An *Advanced Principles of Community Organizing* workshop in February in Billings, Montana.
- Two regional meetings for members and staff in Deadwood, South Dakota in June, and in Billings, Montana in December.
- A staff directors' meeting and training in March, and a senior organizer training in September.

FIVE-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

In 2004, WORC completed its 1999-2004 Five-Year Strategic Plan. In 2005, a new Five-Year Strategic Plan will be drafted for implementation in 2006.

Below are some highlights of our work in the past five years:

- Grew from 6,000 members in 1999 to 9,500 by the end of 2004
- Completed a technology assessment for WORC and its member groups and established a Strategic Technology Plan.
- Launched grassroots initiatives on international trade agreements and GM wheat.
- Gained country-of origin-labeling and renewable energy funding in the 2002 Farm Bill.
- Expanded the network to a seventh state with the founding of Oregon Rural Action in 2001.
- Launched two new programs: the *Strategic Technology Program* to integrate new technology with community organizing and the *Communications and Media Program* to improve communications within WORC and expand our media presence.

MEMBER GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

Dakota Resource Council

■ DRC convinced 17 counties and three municipalities in North Dakota to pass resolutions urging the U.S. Trade Representative not to use international trade talks to negotiate away our nation's right to food labeling.

■ Because of work by DRC's Missouri Valley Resource Council, anglers are now able to get fish consumption advisories wherever they buy a fishing license. Fish consumption advisories are based on EPA field studies on the amount of mercury found in various kinds of fish.



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Foundation
Foundation
Trade Campaign
Stone Campaign

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John Merck Fund
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MEMBER GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

Dakota Rural Action

■ DRA and allies pushed the legislature to restore the rights of citizens to challenge and refer county commission decisions to a vote of the people. The group also stopped a bill to create statewide zoning districts for factory farms that included another attempt to take away the right to refer county commission decisions to a vote.



■ DRA appealed a lower court decision overturning Amendment E, South Dakota's anti-corporate farming law, to the U.S. Supreme Court. The high court declined to hear the case.

Idaho Rural Council

■ For five years, IRC members have been fighting against a water right permit for a mega-dairy in Twin Falls County. The permit for the proposed site, in the Thousand Springs Ranch of the Snake River, through which a National Scenic Byway passes, was denied by the Idaho Department of Water Resources.



■ IRC launched a campaign for setbacks around dairy lagoon disposal fields to protect public health. Setbacks have been required around farm fields where industrial and municipal liquid waste is disposed; IRC is working to ensure setbacks are required for dairy lagoon waste.

Northern Plains Resource Council

■ Northern Plains helped pass a local ordinance to protect soil and water from coal bed methane development. Eighty percent of voters in the Rosebud County Conservation District voted to give local conservation district officials the authority to regulate methane wastewater pits. The ordinance also requires permits, bonds, and reclamation of off-channel pits.



■ Northern Plains collaborated with several other state groups and overcame Canyon Resources' \$3 million effort to overturn the 1998 citizen-passed ban on open pit cyanide gold mining. Montanans rejected Initiative 147 by a 58% to 42%.

Oregon Rural Action

■ The Blue Mountain Chapter focused on keeping family wage jobs in Union County by holding the city of La Grande accountable for their land use laws. This campaign resulted in the city's denial of a Wal-Mart Superstore's expansion.



■ The Snake River Chapter is working to ensure the city of Ontario provides clear and fair utility bills for low-income, Spanish-speaking, disabled and elderly residents. Because of the Chapter's efforts, Ontario now makes water billing and information available in Spanish.

Power River Basin Resource Council

■ PRBRC won a federal appeals court decision that requires the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to examine the potential impacts of coalbed methane development in the Powder River Basin before issuing federal leases.



■ Landowners concerned about gas development near Clark, Wyoming, banded together to form the Clark Resource Council, an affiliate of the Powder River Basin Resource Council. Clark Resource Council is organizing for air and water quality, surface owner rights, and protection of archaeological sites.

Western Colorado Congress

■ WCC released *A Naturalist's View of Forest Health in Colorado* showing the lack of a connection between current forest politics and what science says about forest health. The report promotes legitimate community protection and forest restoration projects in the wake of the U.S. Congress' passage of the 2003 Healthy Forests Protection Act.



■ WCC led efforts on the Western Slope to pass a Renewable Energy Standard on the November 2004 ballot. The Standard requires 10% of Colorado's energy to come from renewable sources by 2015.

A GRASSROOTS ALLIANCE