

2023 4th Quarter Issues for Wyoming Public Media

Issue: Environment

Topic: A conversation about the Endangered Species Act would be remiss without the Greater Sage-Grouse. The bird lives in 11 states in the West, with about 40 percent residing in Wyoming. Since the 1960s, data show that the total population has been declining. So, for many years, some groups have petitioned to list it as endangered. Wyoming has tried desperately to avoid that, as it could severely restrict development and energy production across much of the sagebrush landscape in the state. Wyoming Public Radio's Caitlin Tan spoke with Bob Budd, chairman of the Sage-Grouse Implementation Team, which is overseeing the redrawing of Wyoming's new sage-grouse map. Budd has been involved with the state's efforts since 2000.

Time: 9 min

Date: Oct. 20 at 3 pm and Oct. 22 at noon.

Topic: The main thing about Kate Olsen is she's a fish biologist for the U.S. Forest Service and loves and knows all things fish. Part of her job is managing a fish that is only found in one place in the world: in a 1,000-foot stretch of stream in the Upper Green. The Kendall Warm Springs dace is a tiny fish that's been listed as endangered for 50 years.

Time: 6 min

Date: Oct. 20 at 3 pm and Oct. 22 at noon.

Topic: The Modern West podcast just released the trailer for its new series. "The Burn Scar" tells the story of podcast producer Ariel Lavery, how her parents were evacuated, and how her family lost their home in the Marshall Fire, an urban grassfire that burned into the suburbs of Boulder in the middle of winter in 2021. The Modern West's host Melodie Edwards sat down with Ariel to talk about why she decided to produce a podcast about this devastating event, and starts by asking what made the Marshall Fire so unusual.

Time: 11 min

Date: Nov. 3 at 3 pm and Nov. 5 at noon

Issue: Outdoor Recreation

Topic: For a lot of people, the holidays mean getting a Christmas tree, and usually, that means some type of big, bushy green tree – like a Douglas fir, blue spruce or even a fake tree. But, Wyoming Public Radio's Caitlin Tan tagged along with one Sublette County local who went on a hunt for an unexpected type of Christmas tree.

Time: 4 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Topic: Mom and pop ski resorts are often the heart of ski towns. They're usually pretty affordable, safe and not very crowded – lending themselves to being family oriented where a lot of kids learn to ski. But what happens when winters become less predictable and there isn't even enough snow to open around Thanksgiving – which has become widely thought of as the start of ski season? How can these resorts afford to stay in business?

Time: 6 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Topic: The center received a grant from the Wyoming State Trails Program to create a new Avalanche Information Exchange page for the area on their website. The page is a centralized place for the public to share and see other community snow-focused observations for the Big Horn, Sierra Madre, and Snowy Mountain ranges.

Time: 5 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Topic: Back in 2020, Rowan Shea was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare type of cancer that forms in soft tissue. He was 11 years old. Make-A-Wish was not on the family's mind at all. But his mom Jodi said someone she knew reached out to her.

Time: 5 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Issue: Women's issues

Topic: As yet another OB/GYN clinic shuttered in Teton County, women are left wondering what the future holds.

Time: 7 min

Date: Dec. 1 at 3 pm and Dec. 3 at noon.

Issue: Agriculture

Topic: Last year, Wyoming lost 500,000 acres of farm and ranch land, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In the Mountain West, more than seven million acres have disappeared in the past decade, mostly in Montana, Wyoming and New Mexico.

Time: 5 min

Date: Nov. 3 at 3 pm and Nov. 5 at noon.

Issue: Water issues

Topic: Jenny Loveridge is a scientist who's lived in Laramie since 2004. She's snorkeled just about every body of water within 200 miles. This summer, when she was snorkeling in Alsop Lake, she saw something new on the plants: New Zealand mudsnails – an invasive aquatic species. They're the size of a grain of rice, with a swirly tan or dark colored shell. Loveridge saw millions.

Time: 5 min

Date: Nov. 17 at 3 pm and Nov. 19 at noon

Issue: Energy

Topic: Rocky Mountain Power serves about 144,000 customers in the state – it's the largest public utility in Wyoming. And earlier this year it requested two rate hikes to its customers – one of which has been partially approved by the Wyoming Public Service Commission, the state entity in charge of regulating utilities. Dustin Bleizeffer is an energy reporter for WyoFile and has followed the issue closely. He spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Caitlin Tan about what this all means.

Time: 10 min

Date: Dec. 1 at 3 pm and Dec. 3 at noon`

Topic: Tourism is a \$4.5 billion industry in Wyoming, partly because of its huge roadtrip destinations. With more Americans driving electric vehicles than ever, road trippers coming through Wyoming need access to EV chargers, something the doesn't have a lot of -- at least not yet.

Time: 5 min

Date: Dec. 8 at 3 pm and Dec. 10 at noon

Issue: Wildlife

Topic: By the late 1880s, less than twenty-five bison remained in Yellowstone National Park. Currently, the bison population in the park is between about 4,800 to 5,000. The size of the bison herd in Yellowstone and how to maintain that number has been a source of conversation, conflict, and collaboration over the decades. This August, the National Park Service released a 137 page draft of their Environmental Impact Statement for how to manage the shaggy creature within the park boundaries.

Time: 6 min

Date: Oct. 13 at 3 pm and Oct. 15 at noon

Topic: The name Ken Burns has become synonymous with American history documentaries. You probably know some of them like “The Civil War,” “Country Music,” and “The Roosevelts.” Now Burns has done something he’s never done before: released a new PBS series that traces the history of an animal. It’s called “The American Buffalo.” Wyoming Public Radio’s Melodie Edwards talked to Burns about why he chose this subject and why now.

Time: 14 min

Date: Oct. 13 at 3 pm and Oct. 15 at noon

Issue: Science

Topic: Most people in the United States — Christian or otherwise — recognize December 25 as Christmas Day. For some, the day remembers the birth of Jesus Christ, for others it’s a celebration of family, an excuse to give gifts and party during the darkest part of the year. And for many, it’s all of the above. But for Patrick Ivers, a retired math teacher from Laramie, December 25 is a day to remember the discovery of calculus. Wyoming Public Radio’s Jeff Victor asked Ivers about his unorthodox holiday tradition.

Time: 4 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Issue: Politics

Topic: Wyoming Public Radio’s Kamila Kudelska talked with reporter Will Walkey about the past, present and future of the Endangered Species Act, how it affects Wyoming and some of the controversies surrounding the law.

Time: 9 min

Date: Oct. 20 at 3 pm and Oct. 22 at noon.

Topic: Western Wyoming residents and top state officials oppose selling off hundreds of acres surrounded by Grand Teton National Park.

Time: 5 min

Date: Nov. 17 at 3 pm and Nov. 19 at noon

Topic: Turning Point USA, a college-based conservative organization, and the Wyoming Freedom Caucus held a discussion on the University of Wyoming (UW) campus. 30-plus people gathered to discuss the Republican Party's priorities for the future. Wyoming Public Radio's Jordan Uplinger attended and spoke with state lawmakers, potential voters and UW students about their views of the current state of conservatism.

Time: 4 min

Date: Nov. 17 at 3 pm and Nov. 19 at noon

Topic: Wyoming's only Representative in the U.S. House, Harriet Hageman, has served in Congress for almost a year. In that time, Republicans have struggled to maintain their leadership and have fiercely debated government funding and American involvement in foreign conflicts. Wyoming Public Radio's Will Walkey spoke with Hageman about her reflections about her tenure so far, as well as what issues she's focusing on in the new year.

Time: 11 min

Date: Dec. 1 at 3 pm and Dec. 3 at noon

Issue: Aging population

Topic: Through community-building activities and an abundance of flexibility, Warm Valley Lodge aims to create a community that respects autonomy and independence – all in the hope of supporting Wyoming's rapidly growing population of older residents.

Time: 5 min

Date: Dec. 1 at 3 pm and Dec. 3 at noon

Issue: Solutions

Topic: Fred Lindzey and his wife Stephanie call 140 acres of farmland just west of Laramie home. Their property is full of meadows, temporary ponds, and even a small stream. Their main crop is hay, but that is not the only thing they are helping to grow. The Lindzeys are part of a small group of landowners who are helping the endangered Wyoming toad make a comeback.

Time: 5 min

Date: Oct. 20 at 3 pm and Oct. 22 at noon.

Topic: Grey wolves are one of the most controversial animals in the West, and how you can manage the species depends on what state you're in. Along the Colorado-Wyoming border, that friction is part of daily life.

Time: 5 min

Date: Oct. 20 at 3 pm and Oct. 22 at noon.

Issue: Community issues

Topic: It was 25 years ago that Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, was brutally murdered in Laramie. While long time residents may remember those events, a lot of Wyoming's college students weren't alive yet when it happened. Wyoming Public Radio's Jordan Uplinger interviewed people around campus to see what they think about the historic event.

Time: 5 min

Date: Oct. 6 at 3 p.m. and Oct. 8 at noon.

Topic: The grizzly bear is one of the more controversial species in the West. It's listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. But some experts and landowners think the population in and around Yellowstone National Park should be considered recovered. Meanwhile, some environmentalists say that in order for that grizzly population to be fully healthy, it needs more genetic diversity. One way to do that is by allowing grizzlies from a central Montana ecosystem to travel south and breed with bears in the Yellowstone Ecosystem, called creating connectivity. But that 100 miles or so between the two ecosystems is populated with over 200,000 people. Two communities in that 100 mile swath are preparing for the nearly inevitable arrival of grizzlies.

Time: 8 min

Date: Oct. 20 at 3 pm and Oct. 22 at noon.

Topic: The award winning podcast out of WNYC studios 'Death, Sex & Money' wanted to dig in. Wyoming Public Radio's Caitlin Tan spoke with the show's host Anna Sale about the episode, 'Married With No Kids and a Ranching Business With No Heirs'.

Time: 27 min

Date: Nov. 10 at 3 pm and Nov. 12 at noon

Topic: Biden Administration officials have been visiting the West a lot to promote spending packages like the Inflation Reduction Act. They've already directed more than \$50 billion to the region. But it's unclear if rural residents care.

Time: 5 min

Date: Nov. 17 at 3 pm and Nov. 19 at noon.

Topic: Jackson resident Connie Owen answered Wyoming Public Radio's open call for holiday stories with a tale of Christmas past. Owen's mother Ruth Hartzell Trout, who was born in 1923 and passed away in 2022, wrote this story on an old recipe card years ago.

Time: 2 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Topic: Stewart Shipman and his family live in Laramie. And they have a pretty unique tradition that has lasted over 70 years. He told Wyoming Public Radio the story.

Time: 3 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Topic: For many residents, the holidays hold a special place in their lives. And from Gillette to Cheyenne, towns play a big role in how people from around the Cowboy state celebrate.

Time: 3 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Issue: LGBTQ+ issues

Topic: In the 25 years since the death of her son, Judy Shepard has advocated on the national stage for LGBTQ acceptance. She pushed for and witnessed former President Barack Obama's signing of the Matthew Shepard and James Bird, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in 2009. Throughout the years, award-winning playwrights, directors and musicians have produced art grappling with the death of her son and what it has meant for the larger culture. Shepard spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Jeff Victor about Matthew's legacy, the everyday reminders of his life and, despite everything, her hope for the future and for the next generation.

Time: 18 min

Date: Oct. 6 at 3 p.m. and Oct. 8 at noon.

Topic: LGBTQ+ protections vary greatly across the state. A handful of cities have non-discrimination ordinances, some have human rights commissions, others report hate crimes to the FBI. It can be difficult to track all these moving parts, which is why the Human Rights Campaign publishes annual scorecards for more than 500 cities in the United States — including seven cities in Wyoming. These scores can give a sense of where a city stands when it comes to LGBTQ+ protections, but they don't paint the full picture.

Time: 6 min

Date: Dec. 1 at 3 pm and Dec. 3 at noon

Issue: Native American issues

Topic: Julianna Brannum is a documentary filmmaker and citizen of the Comanche Nation. She is the director of the new PBS short film “Homecoming,” which tells the story of the return of bison to Indigenous lands. The film is a companion to the recent Ken Burns documentary “The American Buffalo,” which Brannum also worked on as a consulting producer. Wyoming Public Radio’s Hannah Habermann spoke with Brannum.

Time: 8 min

Date: Nov. 3 at 3 pm and Nov. 5 at noon.

Topic: Students from the Wind River Reservation worked with a Wyoming artist to make a piece that depicts the ‘Four Hills of Life.’

Time: 5 min

Date: Nov. 3 at 3 pm and Nov. 5 at noon.

Topic: The Northern Arapaho Tribe is taking a case against the Department of Health and Human Services to the U.S. Supreme Court. The lawsuit in question, *Becerra v. Northern Arapaho Tribe*, revolves around funding for health care and questions of tribal self-governance – and its outcome could have a big impact on the financial future of the tribe.

Time: 8 min

Date: Dec. 8 at 3 pm and Dec. 10 at noon

Issue: Health

Topic: The Lander Community Resource Center officially opened its doors last month. The space is focused on creating a welcoming space for veterans and first responders to process, connect, and access resources.

Time: 6 min

Date: Nov. 10 at 3 pm and Nov. 12 at noon

Topic: Wyoming has a growing maternity care shortage, and WyoFile’s Katie Klingsporn has taken the time to dig into the causes and impacts of the lack of resources for expecting mothers in the state. Her investigative work is being released throughout December every Wednesday. The first article told the stories of many families who have upended their lives to find care.

Time: 8 min

Date: Dec. 8 at 3 pm and Dec. 10 at noon

Topic: Organ donation saved Douglas resident Rhonda Hill's life. She's been an advocate for the Donor Alliance nonprofit since a kidney and pancreas donation in her thirties gave her a new lease on life. On New Year's Day, Hill will represent the Donor Alliance and Wyoming in the Rose Parade hosted in Pasadena, California. Wyoming Public Radio's Jeff Victor is no stranger to organ donation himself; he gave a kidney to his father five years ago. While Victor gave a living donation — undergoing a transplant surgery to give up one of his organs — Hill received her new kidney and pancreas from a deceased donor. That means someone Hill never met added a little red heart to their driver's license and when they died unexpectedly, their tragedy became someone else's chance at a new life. Whether living or deceased, Hill told Victor the gift of life is not an easy gift to receive.

Time: 8 min

Date: Dec. 22 at 3 pm and Dec. 24 at noon

Issue: Business and industry

Topic: The 40th Annual Governor's Forum will be next week in Laramie. It will bring business owners from all over Wyoming together to discuss and share ideas through a series of panels. Many people helped organize the event, including Chris Mickey. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylor Saunders got a preview of the event from him.

Time: 7 min

Date: Nov. 10 at 3 pm and Nov. 12 at noon

Issue: Veterans

Topic: Last summer, the nonprofit StoryCorps hosted an oral history project here in Wyoming, in which veterans and their families recorded honest and personal stories about their military experience. We're grateful to begin sharing those conversations now with our listeners.

Time: 11 min

Date: Nov. 10 at 3 pm and Nov. 12 at noon

Issue: Education

Topic: Mike Rowe, of Discovery Channel's "Dirty Jobs" fame, stopped by Casper College recently. Rowe focuses on trade jobs like welding or electricians rather than the four year college path. Wyoming Public Radio's Jordan Uplinger spoke with Rowe about his foundation, the state of jobs and the meaning of work.

Time: 9 min

Date: Nov. 3 at 3 pm and Nov. 5 at noon.

Topic: The parents of a Cody kindergartner felt really excited to send their daughter to Livingston Elementary School this year. But after school started at the end of August, the mom said things went awry almost immediately. She said, finally, at the end of October, she started asking questions. That was when her child told her she was sexually assaulted by six older elementary school girls in a school bathroom.

Time: 7 min

Date: Dec. 1 at 3 pm and Dec. 3 at noon

Issue: Sports

Topic: University of Wyoming head football coach Craig Bohl is retiring at the end of this season. He built a legacy of consistency and toughness in 10 years in Laramie – a place where it’s not always easy to win.

Time: 6 min

Date: Dec. 8 at 3 pm and Dec. 10 at noon

Issue: Music

Topic: The Shepard Symposium on Social Justice is an annual event held at the University of Wyoming. It hopes to bring attention to inequities still experienced today and find solutions. Dr. Anne Guzzo was asked by the conductor of this year’s music show to compose a piece of music in honor of Matthew Shepard.

Time: 4 min

Date: Oct. 6 at 3 pm and Oct. 8 at noon

Issue: Immigration

Topic: Have you ever heard of the “Betabeleros”? Neither had University of Wyoming Professors Conxita Domenech and Chelsea Escalante. That was until they came across a 1920s newspaper called “La Pagina Espanol”. Published entirely in Spanish, this special page in the Powell Tribune was made for communities of Mexican-American beet farmers, AKA Betabeleros in the area. Wyoming Public Radio's Jordan Uplinger spoke with them about their findings.

Time: 8 min

Date: Dec. 8 at 3 pm and Dec. 10 at noon

Issue: International

Topic: As war rages in Ukraine, University of Wyoming student Anastasiia Pereverten has been hard at work half a world away, doing what she can to help her homeland from the United States. This summer, Pereverten went to the nation's capital, where she met with Senator John Barrasso and others, advocating for continued support to Ukraine. She also interned for a foreign policy think tank, helping to prepare a report on Russia's genocidal actions in Ukraine, researching conflict-related sexual violence and tallying the financial reparations Russia could owe in the aftermath of its invasion. Pereverten checked in with Wyoming Public Radio's Jeff Victor about the work she's been up to.

Time: 8 min

Date: Nov. 17 at 3 pm and Nov. 19 at noon

Topic: The war in Gaza might seem far away to many Wyomingites but it's very personal to one member of Laramie's community. Abdalrahim Abuwarda is a Palestinian student at the University of Wyoming, here in the U.S. on a Fulbright Fellowship. He left behind a wife and three small children and now lives in terror of bad news from home. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards sat down with him to hear his story.

Time: 15 min

Date: Nov. 17 at 3 pm and Nov. 19 at noon

Issue: Suicide issues

Topic: More than half of the firearms deaths in the U.S. are done by suicide, and Wyoming has the highest number of people who take their own life per capita in the country. Getting help for mental health problems is not easy for firearm owners. And this conference is part of Hlebinsky's mission to get rid of the stigma gun owners feel about getting help.

Time: 6 min

Date: Dec. 8 at 3 pm and Dec. 10 at noon