

WPR and WPM issues report 4th Quarter 2013

Prepared by Bob Beck

Issue: Energy

Topic: A proposal to test water quality at oil and gas wells before and after drilling is making its way through the rulemaking process. The governor's office and industry hope it will answer some of the questions surrounding groundwater contamination near oil and gas development, but as Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports, the rule may not actually be able to answer the question of who's responsible, if contamination occurs, and that has some people questioning whether it's valuable at all.

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM

Time: 5 min

Topic: Mary Kelley is the author of *Coal in Campbell County*, a book that traces the lineage of each of Gillette's major coal companies in the area. It's her second book about the coal industry in Gillette. She and her husband both worked for the AMAX coal company for many years. Kelley told Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov that she wanted to preserve the history of the coal companies, but also show how they helped create a good life for people like her in Campbell County.

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM

Time: 6 min

Topic: Many retired people take up a hobby -- knitting, bird watching, bingo. But two Laramie retirees have decided to spend their days in pursuit of a decidedly less mainstream pastime: solving the energy challenges of our time. Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce has the story

Time: 6 min

Date: 10/25 at 3pm and 10/27 at noon on WPR. 10/27 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A few weeks ago, the Sinclair Wyoming Refining Company got a \$707,000 fine for safety violations. Wyoming's Occupational Health and Safety Administration, or OSHA, found that Sinclair had willfully violated various safety regulations and failed to fix hazards that could have resulted in death or serious physical harm. The refinery has had a series of accidents over the past few years and has been fined multiple times. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden spoke with OSHA's John Ysebaert. He says this latest fine was meant to be a wake-up call, to show Sinclair that it needs to clean up its act.

Time: 7 min

11-8-13 at 3pm and 11-10-13 at noon on WPR. 11-10-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Converse County is one of six counties in Wyoming with no land use regulations. When a proposal to develop zoning came up a decade ago, it went nowhere. But as development associated with the oil and gas boom in the Niobrara explodes, the county is struggling with questions of how to make sure it happens responsibly. And as Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports, some residents are starting to question the costs of not planning.

Time: 6 min

11-8-13 at 3pm and 11-10-13 at noon on WPR. 11-10-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: For most of Wyoming's history, mineral rights have clearly taken precedence over surface rights. But in 2005, the Legislature passed a split estate law which, for the first time, gave surface owners some say over how their land could be used to access the minerals below it. It was a big change, but many have argued since that it didn't go far enough. As Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports, a case heard by the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission this week tested the limits of the law, and the rights of surface owners.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-15-13 at 3pm and 11-17-13 at noon on WPR. 11-17-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Pollutants have been showing up in water wells in the Pinedale Anticline gas field since 2006. Until recently, no one knew where the contamination was coming from. Now, the Bureau of Land Management and Department of Environmental Quality have released a report indicating that most of the problem was not caused by energy production. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-8-13 at noon on WPR. 12-8-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's biggest export is soda ash, which comes from trona mines in Sweetwater County. Last year, the trona industry produced 17 million tons of soda ash for which the state received nearly \$90 million in various taxes and royalties. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov report, the industry has a dirty side, too.

Time: 6:30 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-8-13 at noon on WPR. 12-8-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Wildlife and outdoors

Topic: Women still only make up a small percentage of all hunters, but that number has increased significantly in recent years. Now, organizations like the Wyoming Women's Foundation want to encourage more growth through mentorship. The group says hunting is an important way to teach self-sufficiency and economic independence. Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov tagged along on the state's inaugural Women's Antelope Hunt and filed this report.

Time: 5 min

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last year, we reported on research that's being done at the University of Wyoming regarding coyote contraception. The idea is to use birth control to reduce coyote numbers, and in particular, to keep coyotes from killing livestock. The project now has some preliminary results, and Marjie MacGregor, who's leading the study, joins Willow Belden.

Time: 5 min

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming was once wet, balmy, and full of creatures like dinosaurs. Today, their fossils are slowly weathering out of the ground. If the bones happen to be on public land, researchers are granted permits to dig for them and the fossils have to end up in a public repository. But on private land, *anyone* can dig and they can do whatever they want with the specimens. Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov reports that commercial, or independent collectors, are sometimes eyed warily.

Time: 5 min

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Warm weather tourist traffic is winding down in Yellowstone National Park, and they're getting ready for winter tourists. The National Park Services bans over-snow vehicles in all national parks, unless individual parks pass rules permitting and regulating them. Yellowstone has been refining its rules regulating snowmobile and snow coach traffic for about 15 years, and released the final rule this week, which will kick in NEXT winter. Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Martinez spoke with Yellowstone Superintendent Dan Wenk, who says many parks see the winter as a time to "rest" after busy summer visitation.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10/25 at 3pm and 10/27 at noon on WPR. 10/27 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Continental Divide Trail is a hiking path that runs from Canada to Mexico, along the great divide. It's more than 3,000 miles long, and only a handful of people hike the whole thing in a single year. Marc Koeplin of Cheyenne is one of them. He and his hiking partner finished the trail a few weeks ago, and joined Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden to talk about the trip. He says his first long-distance hike was the Appalachian Trail, which he did 12 years ago.

Time: 7 min

Date: 10/25 at 3pm and 10/27 at noon on WPR. 10/27 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In her nine years as Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park, Mary Gibson Scott has overseen a number of park improvements from Transportation to a new Visitors Center. But issues from funding for Parks to protecting wildlife continue to be a concern. Gibson Scott retires this weekend, so we asked her about a few key issues, such as reforming the Endangered Species Act.

Time: 8 min

Date: 11-8-13 at 3pm and 11-10-13 at noon on WPR. 11-10-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Education

Topic: As schools look at new ways to improve education, in Thermopolis they are hoping that new technology and the access it brings to data bases, videos, and better access to the outside world will improve learning and teaching. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A school in Casper has started teaching some of its classes in Chinese. The idea is that the students in those classes will grow up bilingual. This is the first Chinese immersion program in a Wyoming school, but data from other states that have similar programs show a wide range of benefits. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM.

Topic: It's been a rough week for UW President Bob Sternberg. He's been taken to task by several UW faculty on University list serves over his handling of a number of issues, but people have expressed the most concern over the turnover of some U-W administrators. Most recently the dismissal of the College of Education Dean and the resignation of the Law School Dean. Sternberg gives Bob Beck his perspective on the controversy.

Time: 8 min

Date: 11-8-13 at 3pm and 11-10-13 at noon on WPR. 11-10-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The University of Wyoming Board of Trustees announced UW President Bob Sternberg's resignation on Thursday. The Trustees spent Thursday and Friday in meetings, but President of the Board David Bostrom sat down to talk with Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov about what comes next. Bostrom says the Trustees didn't try to convince Dr. Sternberg to stay.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-15-13 at 3pm and 11-17-13 at noon on WPR. 11-17-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: It's been a long year for State Superintendent Cindy Hill. After legislators determined that she was undermining some of their education reform efforts, they voted to take away her ability to run the state department of education and assigned her to less essential tasks. Later a report suggested mistreatment of employees, possible misuse of the state aircraft, and misuse of Department of Education money. That last piece is being investigated by a legislative committee who is trying to determine if impeachment charges should be brought against Hill. For those who think Hill was incompetent...recent test scores show that students actually improved during her time running the Department of Education. Hill says her problems started when she objected to some federal initiatives.

Time: 8 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-8-13 at noon on WPR. 12-8-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Following the resignation of Bob Sternberg, Dick McGinity has taken over reins at the University of Wyoming as Interim President. McGinity was simply a faculty member at UW until Sternberg promoted him to be part of the administration and now he's running the show. Among his first duties is getting UW priorities through the legislature. He tells Bob Beck that includes pay raises.

Time: 8 min

Date: 12-20-13 at 3pm and 12-22-13 at noon on WPR. 12-22-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Environment

Topic: In such an arid state as Wyoming, water is precious. Last year, the University of Wyoming created the Wyoming Center for Hydrology and Geophysics, combining field experts and state-of-the art technology to better understand where water goes in after it falls from the sky, since much of it ends up in snowpack or underground. There isn't too much information available about that, but it's important to state and local water managers, who need to know just how much water they have to work with. Rebecca Martinez reports.

Time: 6 min

Date: 10/25 at 3pm and 10/27 at noon on WPR. 10/27 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Ranchers have always planned for the next season and the next generation...and as such have been natural conservationists. But new management tools in the conservation toolbox are making it easier for land owners to be successful stewards of their land. Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov reports that ranchers are up for the challenge.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10/25 at 3pm and 10/27 at noon on WPR. 10/27 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Converse County is seeing an increasing amount of energy development, and some residents worry that air quality could suffer as a result. The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and researchers from the University of Wyoming are now monitoring air quality in the area. On the whole, they've found that the air is pretty clean. But they've also documented times when pollution levels have spiked. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-15-13 at 3pm and 11-17-13 at noon on WPR. 11-17-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Pine and spruce beetles have killed millions of trees across Wyoming and the West. To many, the dying forests are visually unattractive. But there's a bigger issue. Researchers in the Medicine Bow National Forest are finding that beetle kill has had a major impact on how the forest processes carbon dioxide. Wyoming Public radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-8-13 at noon on WPR. 12-8-13 at 3pm on WPM.

Topic: More than 40 million acres of trees have been killed by bark beetles in the Rocky Mountain West over the last two decades. Those trees are an eyesore, and as we heard in the last story, a source of carbon dioxide. But a new project is trying to find an upside to the epidemic. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has given researchers at five western universities, including the University of Wyoming, \$10 million to see if those dead trees can be converted into gasoline.

The project has been hailed as a win-win-win for the atmosphere, the ecosystem and the economy. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports, skeptics question whether making gasoline is really the best use of the West's dead timber.

Time: 6 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-8-13 at noon on WPR. 12-8-13 at 3pm on WPM.

Topic: Skiing has been a popular pastime in the West for decades, but with climate change, the future of the sport is in question. Porter Fox is the features editor at Powder magazine and the author of [DEEP: The Story of Skiing and the Future of Snow](#). Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce spoke with Fox about his new book, and what's in store for Wyoming.

Time: 7 min

Date: 12-20-13 at 3pm and 12-22-13 at noon on WPR. 12-22-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Social issues

Topic: October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and we're going to hear a story about abuse that stemmed from alcoholism. This interview was recorded as part of Story Corps, a project that records conversations between loved ones. In this case, 89-year-old Myrtle Forney talks with her grandson, Nate Swinton. After her first husband (Nate's grandfather) passed away, she married another man, named Ken.

Time: 6 min

Date: Oct 18th at 3pm and Oct 20th at noon on WPR. Oct 20th at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Nina McConigley is a lecturer in the University of Wyoming's English Department. Her new book is a collection of short stories called *Cowboys and East Indians*. Book tells the stories of a variety of Indian characters living in Wyoming, and explores what, often, reads as an unusual combination. McConigley's father is an Irish-born petroleum geologist, and her mother, Nimi McConigley, was the first Indian-born person to serve in the Wyoming Legislature. Nina tells Rebecca Martinez she grew up in Casper.

Time: 7 min

Date: 10/25 at 3pm and 10/27 at noon on WPR. 10/27 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Lots of people enjoy the calming and relaxing benefits of yoga, but in Laramie a group is trying to use yoga to help those in the drug court program. And the early returns are good. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck has more.

Time: 5 min

11-15-13 at 3pm and 11-17-13 at noon on WPR. 11-17-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Over half of Wyoming's nursing home residents currently have moderate to severe dementia...and that number is expected to rise steeply in coming years. By 2020, there may be as many as 13,000 people who are experiencing serious memory loss in Wyoming. And there's not enough space for all them in Wyoming's nursing homes. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-20-13 at 3pm and 12-22-13 at noon on WPR. 12-22-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Business

Topic: Wyoming might not be the first choice for grape growers and aspiring vinters, but a group in Sheridan is working to change that. Professors, graduate and undergraduate students at U-W and Sheridan College are using advanced techniques to identify traits in different grape varieties that make them well suited to Wyoming. Wyoming Public Radio's Chelsea Biondolillo reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10/25 at 3pm and 10/27 at noon on WPR. 10/27 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In our occasional "Upstarts" series, we're going to visit a company called Snowy Range Instruments. It's based in Laramie, and it makes devices that can identify mystery substances. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 11-8-13 at 3pm and 11-10-13 at noon on WPR. 11-10-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: More than half the U.S. population uses smartphones and apps. And as the appetite for mobile information continues to grow, some Wyoming entrepreneurs are poised to cash in, for the sake of conservation. Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Huntington has more.

Time: 4 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-8-13 at noon on WPR. 12-8-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: We've all heard stories about businesses that start in a garage or on the back of a cocktail napkin. But it takes a lot more than a great idea and some elbow grease to build a business from scratch. So a new Jackson program, called the Start-Up Institute, is running a business boot camp for entrepreneurs. Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Huntington has more.

Time: 4 min

Date: 12-20-13 at 3pm and 12-22-13 at noon on WPR. 12-22-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The U.S. cow herd is small right now because of the extended drought that's plagued large swathes of the country. But though dry conditions have driven ranchers to sell off animals they would have otherwise kept, the decreasing size of the national herd is a trend decades in the making. Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov reports on how livestock producers in Wyoming are turning out more meat with fewer animals.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-20-13 at 3pm and 12-22-13 at noon on WPR. 12-22-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Politics

Topic: The main revenue forecasting arm for the state of Wyoming called 2013 a solid year economically. Thanks to investments it means the state raised almost 350 million dollars over projections. But the Consensus Revenue Estimating Group or CREG says while this is great news, problems may be on the horizon. The legislative committee tasked with developing the state's budget wants to be cautious. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-8-13 at 3pm and 11-10-13 at noon on WPR. 11-10-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's senior Republican Senator Mike Enzi is on a special budget conference committee that he says has already become a moot point. Matt Laslo reports from Washington on why he's given up on the group before it's really gotten to work.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-15-13 at 3pm and 11-17-13 at noon on WPR. 11-17-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last week Wyoming governor Matt Mead released his proposed budget for the next two years. The governor joins us to discuss something he did not recommend and discusses other topics, such as whether he will run for re-election.

Time: 7 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-6-13 at noon on WPR. 12-6-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In the governor's budget last week, one area that didn't get a lot of attention is a proposal to increase funding to communities and counties by \$175 million. That would be a \$40 million increase over his previous proposal. 40 percent of that money would go for infrastructure, such as roads, but the rest would go into operations. If approved, it would come at a time when most local governments are dealing with less revenue. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 12-6-13 at 3pm and 12-6-13 at noon on WPR. 12-6-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Recently Governor Matt Mead made it clear that he does not support using federal dollars to expand Medicaid services for Wyoming's poor. State Democratic Party Chairman Pete Gosar tells Bob Beck that's the wrong move.

Time: 6 min

Date: 12-20-13 at 3pm and 12-22-13 at noon on WPR. 12-22-13 at 9am on WPM.