As many as 20 Western Colorado residents are poised to adventure into grassroots democracy as part of Western Colorado Alliance’s 2019 People’s Lobby Trip. They join community organizer Jeriel Clark on Sunday, February 24, to travel to the State Capitol in Denver, where they are meeting with Colorado legislators and tracking bills significant to Western Colorado.

The People’s Lobby Trip is an annual event conducted by the Alliance to foster civic engagement and democratic involvement.

The People’s Lobby Trip is free for all Western Colorado Alliance members and covers travel, lodging, and some meals.

To discover more about some of Western Colorado Alliance’s legislative priorities, check out our Legislative Guide on page 4-5.
Our Alliance 2.0: Strategic Plan and Membership Restructuring

As part of our ongoing work to strengthen our Alliance and grow our grassroots power, we are making some changes to our membership system. In consultation with our county based affiliate groups, we have agreed that:

- **Full membership dues** will now be retained by the main office.
- **Affiliate groups will contribute an annual institutional fee** to help contribute to the organizing, training, and communication support provided by Alliance staff.
- **We will create a non-dues paying supporter category for people who contribute to and engage in the work of our organization via their time and effort**, but who have not yet made a financial contribution. These are our future members who we will work to develop as leaders and donors within our organization!

These decisions come after years of input, conversation, and reflection with members, affiliate group leaders, and Alliance Board members. We are grateful for all the thoughts and ideas our members have contributed to this process. If you have any questions about these changes, please contact the Western Colorado Alliance office.
Colorado Conservation Community’s legislative Reception 2019

Western Colorado Alliance is a forward-looking organization and one that is passionate about creating a western slope that is healthy, just, and self-reliant. It is an organization that continues to evolve and refine itself over time. Without the efforts of many people, past and present, WCA would not be where it is today.

Regardless of position or tenure, I am grateful for the contributions and presence of those staff, board members, and members that have made a difference in the evolution of this organization.

Today, WCA’s office is experiencing a “full house” and efforts are underway to secure a new and expanded office space. As you’ll read in these pages our organizers and staff are making the best of a crowded situation while continuing to get “it” done!

With your support, we have experienced successful fundraising efforts. Many thanks to the Board and staff for reaching out and engaging our members as together we create a more secure financial foundation.

I am excited about the prospects and promise of 2019. The legislature is in session and our lobbying team will once again trek over the mountains to make western slope voices known at the Capitol. Our organizers are actively engaging our members and allies alike, inspiring and supporting the work our members care about.

Finally, with kind regards to H.D. Thoreau, I look forward to experiencing and appreciating actions and interactions that recognize the genius in each of us. Onward!

A “full house” makes for a winning hand

Western Colorado Alliance President
Steve Allerton
Western Colorado Senate Districts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>SENATOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KERRY DONOVAN (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DON CORAM (R)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>RAY SCOTT (R)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>BOB RANKIN (R)</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>LARRY CROWDER (R)</td>
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Gov. Jared Polis (D)
136 State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203-1792
www.colorado.gov/governor
(303) 866-2471 Front Desk
(303) 866-2885 Constituent Services

Note: Contact information is from Colorado’s legislative website which can be found at www.leg.state.co.us. The information is accurate as of February, 2019. This website is also a good source for the current status and language of proposed bills.

For more info, visit: www.congress.gov

Senate Committees

Agriculture & Natural Resources
Donovan, Chair; Danielson, Vice-Chair; Coram, Ginal, Sonnenberg, Fields, Garcia, Jones, Marble, Scott

Appropriations
Zenzinger, Chair; Donovan, Vice-Chair; Coram, Smallwood, Winter

Business, Labor & Technology
Williams, Chair; Danielson, Vice-Chair; Priola, Story, Tate

Finance
Court, Chair; Lee, Vice-Chair; Donovan, Smallwood, Stringer, Hisey

Health & Human Services
Fields, Chair; Pettersen, Vice-Chair; Gardner, Koontz

Judiciary
Lee, Chair; Coram, Vice-Chair; Ginal, Coyle, Rodriguez

Education
Todd, Chair; Forest, Vice-Chair; Bridges, Hill, Lundeen

Energy
Donovan, Chair; Danielson, Vice-Chair; Coram, Gardner, Ginal

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Phone: (970) 241-2499
Fax: (970) 241-3513
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Putting a community center on the ballot

by Jeriel Clark
Community Organizer

It’s been a long time coming, but on April 2, 2019, residents of Grand Junction will finally get to vote on whether or not they think it’s time for a community center. Several members of Western Colorado Alliance - Mesa County have championed this effort and lead it from a hope in 2015 to a reality today. For us, a community center holds different meanings based on the user. It’s an amenity sorely needed in Grand Junction, and one most of our Western Slope communities are already benefiting from. So what will be on the ballot?

The proposal contained in ballot measure 2C is based on community input gathered during a 2018 independent feasibility study and in-depth analysis conducted by the City of Grand Junction and the Parks and Recreation department. The proposal includes three main components to ensure services for different areas of town and makes use of existing city resources:

“This is a quality of life issue.” — Andreya Krieves

- A 98,000 square feet community center located at Matchett Park. It will include warm water, lap, and leisure pools (with play features), a 3-court gymnasium, an indoor elevated walking track, 3 multi-purpose meeting rooms and 2 pool party rooms, gathering spaces for young adults and seniors, a bouldering wall, fitness areas, child supervision services, and a tenant lease space.

- 75 acres of park development at Matchett including 7 multi-purpose fields (soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.), walking paths, a plaza area, 2 playgrounds, 3 restroom/shelters, a skate park, a pond, 4 basketball courts, 12 pickleball courts, and 8 tennis courts.

- A renovation of the existing Orchard Mesa pool, gymnasium, and adjoining facilities to serve as a 32,000 square feet satellite Community Center. This will include a new social zone with a food/snack bar, family/special needs dressing areas, 2 multi-purpose rooms, a pool party room, and a new pool spa.

The new Community Center, the partial Matchett Park development, and the renovation/expansion at Orchard Mesa will cost approximately $79m to construct. If approved by voters, it will be funded by a 0.39% (or 39 cents for every $100 spent) sales tax increase in the City of Grand Junction. This less-than-half-a-penny sales tax will cover the cost of construction and ongoing operations and maintenance for all facilities included in the proposal. The tax would not apply to the sale of unprepared food/groceries, gas, prescription medication, or services.

Advocates from the GJ Community Center Campaign (GJCCC) suggest that building a Grand Junction Community Center where everyone belongs will promote health and wellness, social connections, involvement in recreation, and activities for all ages - children through seniors. “This is a quality of life issue,” suggests Andreya Krieves, chair of the GJCCC steering committee. “A Community Center serves a need and strengthens our entire social fabric by offering a variety of amenities that bring people together. From creating spaces for events, to bridging the gap between our generations and giving our young people a safe place to grow up strong, the end result is a more resilient and dynamic community.”

For more information, visit www.gjcommunitycenter.org.

Bob Arrington: Climate justice activist

by Troy Redding
Community Organizer

Bob Arrington is a full-time activist who has dedicated himself to fighting against climate change. An engineer by trade, Bob has spent countless hours using his expertise to support our work here at the Western Colorado Alliance. However, he hasn’t limited his support to his technical expertise. Bob has helped our Alliance in a number of ways such as serving on our board of directors and inspiring others to join the fight for climate justice. Many of our members have probably heard Bob talking about the need to protect the climate for our children.

Bob reminds us that the fight for our climate is the fight for our future. The Alliance is proud to have an astounding activist like Bob Arrington as a member of the Western Colorado Alliance family. When Bob isn’t fighting for climate justice, you might hear him explaining the intricacies of Star Trek to anyone who has a few minutes to chat. He is an avid supporter of renewable energy and is passionate about science. His knowledge of various scientific fields is impressive. One moment Bob might be explaining the mechanics behind seismic activity and the next, he could be talking about how various chemicals interact with one another. With Bob around, we never lack for fun and engaging conversation!

Members in the Spotlight

Thank you! Alliance members help raise $64k!

We had very ambitious goals — but thanks to you, we met them. In the final days of 2018, we asked you to help us in the new year to:

- Expand access to local food throughout Western Colorado
- Protect wildlands in our national forests
- Ensure we all have clean air
- Protect our public lands from irresponsible oil and gas drilling
- Help both the health of our lands and the workers displaced by declining coal markets
- And build a grassroots blueprint for diverse and resilient local economies

And you stepped up. In a big way!

Thanks to you and our member-led movement across Western Colorado, we turned $30,000 into $64,000 through our matching challenge grant. Thank you for your help. Thank you for being a hero. Thank you for coming through again. Our Alliance enters 2019 strong and ready to make change happen. Let’s do it together!
Grassroots Democracy
Municipal elections

by Jeriel Clark
Community Organizer

Raise your hand if you’re already counting the days until the 2020 General Election.

With our sights often set on our representatives in Washington DC, it can be easy to lose focus on the elections happening in our own front yards that impact our everyday lives every bit as much as those who represent us in Congress. In the Spring and Fall of this year, ballots will mail for dozens of local Western Slope elections, containing within them pivotal local ballot issues and races from city council to county commissioner to school boards.

These elections are the most meaningful act a citizen can provide in service of our democracy. While local positions like county commissioner come with salaries that exceed those of our state legislators, many more like our school board and council candidates work at no cost or exceedingly little. Local elections are unique because local elections are about local people. The folks make big decisions for our hometowns and are also our neighbors who live and contribute to our local communities. There’s little chance for these candidates to hide behind big-money marketing schemes or far-away legislative schedules. It all comes down to community organizing and citizen power and we’re proud to see Western Colorado Alliance members answering the call.

Just as important as the candidates on our ballots are the issues referred to a citizen vote. With TABOR requiring many local governments to seek tax approval from residents, local ballot items determine the quality of the services we receive, the durability of the roads we drive on, the education our schools can provide for our children, and the ways we chart the future of our rural areas. A fantastic example of local ballot issues is the community center effort which will go to a vote in Grand Junction on April 2nd. This municipal ballot measure, involving several Western Colorado Alliance members, is a citizen-initiated and lead effort that is a direct result of grassroots organizing at it’s finest. Read more about it on page 6.

Aside from building a ballot measure from the ground up, considering running for office yourself and start building the foundational blocks you would need for success now. Join prominent local boards, run for a position on your local electric association board or possibly serve on a water board. Build name recognition and experience in local government, and then help us build a more just and sustainable, and self-reliant communities as a representative.

The biggest way to make a change right now? Stay informed about the local elections happening in your town, and vote. And whether your candidate of choice wins or not, show up and make your voice heard.

New staff hires crowd Alliance office

With success comes growth. And Western Colorado Alliance is growing! The new year sees two new staff members join our ranks.

Arn McConnell has joined our Alliance as full-time Communications and Marketing Coordinator. Arn was most recently a creative services producer for Gray Television, but his career includes more than 35 years of experience in broadcast media, online advertising and branding in both Western Colorado and New York City. He is a four-time Colorado Broadcast Award winner and has also won multiple Colorado Press Association Awards. (Trivia buffs, he advised: Arn was the original editor of MTV’s Beavis and Butthead and directed the late actor James Gandolfini in his film debut.)

Also newly hired (but not new to the organization!) is Joel Dyar, who joins the Alliance as organizer for clean and renewable energy.

A 15 year veteran of community organizing in Colorado and six countries, Joel has worked to help social movements and everyday citizens discover their power and make their voices heard on a broad spectrum of sustainability, social, and legislative issues.

Joel brings a Masters of Community Development and graduate studies in renewable energy and green business to his work on behalf of our energy future.

McConnell says he’s happy to be a part of a group helping bring meaningful change to our communities — even if it has made the Alliance office awfully crowded.”

That problem may see a solution in the near future, as the Alliance actively looks at other office space possibilities.
Schools gain greater buffer from oil and gas facilities

by Troy Redding  
Community Organizer & Emily Hornback  
Staff Director

Last December, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) voted unanimously to increase the setback distance for oil and gas operations near schools. This rule closes a loophole that formerly allowed oil and gas activity to occur near school playgrounds and community sports fields, as long as it was 1,000 feet from the school building.

New wells are now required to be at least 1000 feet away from school buildings. In addition to setbacks away from school buildings, the new rule requires wells to be at least 1000 feet away from child care centers, and outdoor areas. Outdoor areas include things like playgrounds and athletic fields next to schools. This new rule recently went into effect on January 30.

“Finally, after three years of effort, the COGCC is responding to the concerns of impacted schools, parents and residents,” said Leslie Robinson, chairwoman of the Grand Valley Citizens Alliance, a local affiliate of Western Colorado Alliance. “We should not put children at risk for a privately owned company’s bottom line. Everyone is a champion when we protect children’s health and safety and we hope that this rule is the beginning of more significant changes in Colorado’s oil and gas industry.”

Robinson was especially pleased to see Garfield County support the inclusion of child care centers in the rule, which the Commissioners had originally opposed. “Children deserve to be protected wherever they learn and play, including in western Colorado. We are glad the Garfield County Commissioners agreed with us in the end.”

This decision is the direct result of Western Colorado Alliance’s negotiations with industry leaders, the legislature, and the COGCC. After several years of efforts, we were able to pressure the oil and gas industry and the COGCC to increase protections for Colorado schools and child centers and the residents they serve. Thanks to the hard work of our Alliance, Colorado students living near oil and gas production sites will be safer and healthier.

North Fork gas leasing temporarily shelved

by Troy Redding  
Community Organizer & Emily Hornback  
Staff Director

After years of political deadlock, Western Colorado Alliance and our allies are championing an oil and gas reform bill at the Colorado Assembly that, if successful, will usher in a new era of regulatory change to better protect our public and environmental health and safety.

As of this writing, the bill has not been introduced, but House Speaker Representative KC Becker is committed to introducing it in the “next few weeks.” Although the exact bill details are still being worked out, we understand the bill will be focused on the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, looking to overhaul the dysfunctional agency that has long prioritized industry extraction over the health and safety of Colorado residents. Our Alliance is hopeful that the bill will revise the mission statement of the COGCC to prioritize public and environmental health and safety rather than “foster” the oil and gas industry within the state and create mechanisms through which the agency can deny applications (there has only been one application denied in the past 20 years). We also anticipate the bill will settle the issue of local government control over oil and gas siting. Of course we have a laundry list of other reforms we would like to see in the bill and we eagerly await the bills’ release so we can start lobbying for the policy Western Colorado landowners and residents need.

Many changes are required to fully protect the landowners and communities from the impacts of oil and gas development and ensure balanced representation of residents in oil and gas decision-making. However, this bill opens a door that has long been shut under the Hickenlooper administration for future reform and a voice for impacted people at the decision-making table.

As we await the introduction of this bill, the fate of the latest drilling proposal in Battlement Mesa hangs in the balance. In the eleventh hour of the Hickenlooper administration, the COGCC partially approved 24 new natural gas wells and an associated toxic waste water injection well within the community.

The A Pad, as it is known, is possibly the worst location in the state for a number of reasons. It’s located near the Colorado River, the wastewater treatment plant, the water treatment plant, and a mobile home park community. It will also be necessary to cut into a 90-foot hill in order to build the site. The approval of this pad demonstrates the need for COGCC reform. Human health must take priority when the COGCC decides whether or not to approve drilling in residential neighborhoods.

The timing of this approval by the COGCC is somewhat concerning. Governor Polis promised that under his administration oil and gas development would be handled in a responsible manner. Unfortunately, this irresponsible proposal from Ursa Resources is the very first pad approved by the COGCC under the Polis administration. This approval seems to have been rushed through before Governor Polis had even had time to appoint his director of the COGCC. Governor Polis has since appointed long-time local community and local government attorney Jeff Robbins as the new COGCC Director.

Because the COGCC approved this controversial proposal before Director Robbins was given an opportunity Alliance affiliate groups Grand Valley Citizens Alliance (GVCA) and Battlement Concerned Citizens (BCC) have asked that the COGCC review and reverse their decision, requesting a full hearing. This would have given Director Robbins an opportunity to review the proposal under the direction of the new governor. Unfortunately, the COGCC has denied the citizens groups request to review Ursa’s proposal. Additionally, Garfield County has also refused to use their authority to request that the COGCC review this irresponsible decision. The final decision on A Pad will be precedent setting and set the tone of the Polis administration’s approach to the long controversial of “residential drilling.”

However residents decided they could not wait for legislative reform to determine the fate of A Pad. On February 14, BCC and GVCA filed suit against COGCC to request the court intervene on the controversial proposal.

“We have maintained for years that A Pad presents a significant hazard to the entire Battlement Mesa community. We have tried every avenue open to us to challenge this proposal, but the Colorado Oil and Gas Commission has given us no other option than to bring the matter before the courts,” said Dave Devaney, Chairman of Battlement Concerned Citizens.

GVCA, BCC and Alliance members remain committed to the best outcome possible for Battlement Mesa while simultaneously working for the public health and safety of all Coloradans.