This summer, as fossil fuel markets around the globe crashed and left many a rural economy on shaky ground, work was afoot in the Halls of Congress and across Colorado to ensure coalfield communities have a path to a healthy, just and self-reliant future.

First, the great news that after a decade of community organizing from coalfield communities from Western Colorado to Appalachia, the RECLAIM Act passed out of the U.S. House as part of a massive infrastructure bill (H.R. 2) in its entirety, due to RECLAIM’s long track record of bipartisan support, we are hopeful the Senate will pick up RECLAIM as part of its own package. Our Alliance is currently working to garner the support of both Senators Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner to support RECLAIM and help it cross the finish line, to bring much needed aid to coalfield communities.

Although it is very unlikely that the Senate will pick up the RECLAIM Act passing the house, the Western Organization of Resource Councils released a long awaited study to understand the actual economic impact of reclamation jobs across the West. The report, Coal Mine Cleanup Works, estimates potential reclamation job creation for four Western coal states (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming) and provides recommendations for decision makers to ensure cleanup is fully funded and employs the local workforce.

WORC Release
Reclamation
Jobs Report

On the heels of the RECLAIM Act passing the house, the Western Organization of Resource Councils released a long awaited study to understand the actual economic impact of reclamation jobs across the West.
Our certainty in an uncertain world

by Steve Allerton

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Prepares for “the mother of all rulemakings”

by Brian Williams
Community Organizer

Uncertainty is a word I’ve heard many times during these months of COVID-19, as we live each moment not really knowing what the future may hold. It’s a word I wrote about in my first Clarion column as President of then Western Colorado Congress. “It feels to me that we are entering uncertain times,” I wrote. Little did I know! Inspired by the words of Sherrina Macy, I continued, “It is my hope that we come together, liberate our creativity and our courage in order to create an even stronger western Colorado.”

I believe we have done just that!

After a challenging and purposeful rebranding effort, Western Colorado Congress became Western Colorado Alliance for Community Action. Clear and meaningful mission and vision statements were crafted and a Platform that defines our values and guides our work was developed — creativity and courage at its best.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as President these last four years. The work, however, could not have been accomplished without the incredible support and dedication of the Board and staff. With that, I thank both former and current board members for their wisdom and passion while not just governing but working hard on issues they care about in their communities. So too, I recognize with great appreciation those who have worked together and created a staff that inspires and holds tightly the artistry of community organizing. To all of our members and supporters that testify, write the letters, attend the meetings, and show up in innumerable ways, I thank you.

Western Colorado Alliance’s journey will continue with new leadership, new faces, new challenges, and amazing accomplishments. Of that I am certain.

Western Colorado Alliance
President Steve Allerton

Preparing for “the mother of all rulemakings”

As summer drags on, so does the seemingly endless attempt to reform Colorado’s oil and gas permitting system. This was supposed to be a year of reform. Last year, the Colorado State Legislature passed two key pieces of legislation, Senate Bill 181 and House Bill 1261, which together laid the foundation for state regulatory agencies to vastly improve the rules governing the production of oil and gas. Specifically, SB-181 SB 181 fundamentally changed the mission of the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) to put the health and safety of Coloradans and their environment above the profits of corporations, and HB -1261 mandates the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 90% of 2005 levels by 2050. These legislative directives triggered a massive wave of rulemaking which both agencies planned their year around.

Then COVID-19 struck.

As state lawmakers scrambled to mitigate the worst of the crisis, the political momentum that had been driving environmental policy all but vanished. It quickly became clear that the pandemic would result in substantial losses of revenue not only for state and local governments, but also the oil and gas industry as consumers chose to drive less, and the economy violently contracted. Like the private sector, the COGCC and the AQCC had to navigate a new paradigm of social distancing, moving meetings to Zoom and negotiating novel methods of conducting the public’s business. The rulemaking agenda has been delayed by months.

However, this month, after almost a year of work by our Alliance’s Oil and Gas Committee, the Grand Valley Citizen’s Alliance and the Battlement Concerned Citizens, the “mother of all rulemakings” for the COGCC is finally set to beginning on August 24 and conclude in early October through a series of two hearings happening almost every week.

Throughout these weeks, Alliance members and residents impacted by oil and gas development from across the state will be united in front of the COGCC to demand that all of the rules must reflect the agency’s new mission to protect health and safety first in the permitting process. We will be tackling issues ranging from setback distances, to the legal standing of impacted homeowners to challenge permits, to water quality protections and many dozens more that our Alliance has been working to achieve for literally decades.

Continued on page 6
Tri-State and new green legislation

by Joel Dyar
Community Organizer
On June 1, Tri-State filed its first Phase 1 documents for the historic Electric Resource Plan underway at the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. In 2019, both Colorado and New Mexico lawmakers moved to create new state-level account-ability mechanisms for Tri-State, whose electricity remains among the most costly and dirty in the West. This Electric Resource Plan process may be Tri-State’s defining West. This Electric Resource Plan process may be Tri-State’s defining decade.

Tri-State’s Phase 1 documents — meant to describe the organization’s position today — were submitted in a heavily redacted form with little precedent. With large swaths of information being obscured from the public, it is difficult for the member co-ops and rate-payers that nominally run the organization to gain any useful insight over the state of their supplier.

Western Colorado Alliance will continue monitoring this situation and providing vital information and interpretation for Tri-State rate-payers to make their voices heard at the Public Utilities Commission later this year.

A Historic Moment for DMEA
Early this July, the Delta-Montrose Electric Association finalized its historic exit from Tri-State’s contract, becoming the second member co-op across four states to do so. DMEA’s exit price of $62M ends its relationship with Tri-State and marks the beginning of a new 12-year contract with supplier Guzman Energy that Board Members indicate will allow for lower rates for members and provide for a large share of local energy development in the form of new solar and other assets.

Currently, two other Western Colorado co-ops, and one serving the Front Range, have signaled a desire to consider exiting their own Tri-State contracts to achieve a greater share of cheaper, cleaner energy and local control.

A Vision for A New Federal Energy Package
June saw the introduction of the Moving America Forward Act in Congress (H.R. 2). The act is a package of several bills that collectively imagine a renewal of American energy, jobs, and infrastructure for the coming decades — and has climate-friendly technologies square in its sights.

Including in this large vision is the GREEN Act — a package including $70 billion for electrical grid modernization, a ramp-up of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and revitalization of national energy efficiency programs. The Act includes a vital five-year extension of the solar and wind investment tax credits with the power to super-charge the market transition to cleaner new technologies. Finally, an investment tax credit for large battery storage, a vital component of the clean energy transition, is included.

H.R. 2 passed the House on July 2 and heads to the Senate.

An exhausting & unprecedented legislative session
by Jeriel Clark
Political & Organizing Director
In a daily evolving landscape at least one thing is certain, the 2020 Legislative Session is done. With a two and a half month recess from March to May, the Colorado legislature adjourned Sine Die on June 15, later than any date in its history. They won’t be back in session now until January 2021, but there is still a lot left from this year. Nearly half of the 651 bills introduced failed to pass, and the bills Western Colorado Alliance was tracking were no exception. But in their place we saw a suite of COVID-19 relief bills as the legislature scrambled to simultaneously cut the state budget by 3.5 billion, while also creating opportunities to help keep residents and businesses afloat.

When the legislature came back together at the end of May, they did so with a common understanding that any bills introduced or passed were going to be fast, free, and friendly — and the path ahead seemed straightforward. But as 2020 has proven, you can’t count on anything, and on May 26th, a day before the legislature reconvened, the tragic death of George Floyd sent the nation into upheaval. In prior conversations there seemed to be an unspoken rule that any bills not directly addressing COVID would be in poor taste to prioritize moving forward. But George Floyd’s death changed that. Colorado was suddenly in a position to immediately respond to racial injustice, and several law makers, with years of lived experience, had well thought out bill language ready for action.

What normally takes weeks, legislators spent just days reviewing and voting on bills. As they worked to address the pandemic, they simultaneously tackled the very big issues of police brutality and racial inequity.

SB20-217 the Enhance Law Enforcement Integrity Act passed through the legislature and was signed into law by Gov. Polis. Thanks, in part, to members of Western Colorado Alliance, our legislators heard from over 300 residents in western Colorado asking them to support this bill. A resounding thank you to Senators Ray Scott, Bob Rankin, Don Coram, and Kerry Donovan, as well as Representatives Dylan Roberts, Julie McCluskie, Marc Catlin, Barbara McLachlan, and Janice Rich, who all voted in support of this sweeping police reform legislation. All West Slope legislators with the exception of two, Rep. Matt Soper and Rep. Perry Will, voted in support. The bill accomplished a lot, including mandating the use of body cameras by July 2021, prohibiting the use of chokeholds by police, and ends qualified immunity for law enforcement. So are we done righting the wrongs of systemic racism? Absolutely not. But, this is a great first step.

A suite of COVID relief bills also passed through the legislature. These include housing assistance, funds for behavioral health, utility bill payment assistance, a small business recovery loan program, sick leave for employees, and more.

The Legislative Committee at Western Colorado Alliance is currently drafting a legislative synopsis with a breakdown of the COVID relief bills, focusing on how western Colorado residents can take advantage of these programs.

Our kids and teachers bore the brunt of the budget shortfalls this year. Sixty bills introduced to support children and public schools died. This includes the elimination of the state tax credit for teachers who buy their own school supplies. And it makes this the 11th year in a row that education is defunded in Colorado. HB20-120 Adjust Tax Expenditures for State Education Fund attempted to make up the $250 million in shortcomings, but ultimately was only able to make up $120 million. Still, this bill increases funding to the State Education Fund as well as expands the earned income tax credit to 15% of the Federal EITC in 2023, and closes tax loopholes, instead prioritizing lower income tax payers.

Speaking of taxes, the legislature passed SCR20-001 Repeal Property Tax Assessment Rates, sending a question to the ballot in November, asking voters to repeal the Gallagher amendment. Originally approved by voters in 1982, the Gallagher amendment put the onus of property taxes on businesses and commercial building owners by limiting residential property taxation. The economic impact of the coronavirus means we’ll see a hefty cut in property taxes, leading to a larger decrease in school funding.

It was exhausting just to follow from this side of the Rockies, and I imagine our legislators were relieved to see this session come to a close. They won’t get much rest as many of them have elections coming up in a few months.

Our Alliance isn’t giving them a rest either, as we are currently holding in-district meetings with legislators. I hope you’ll join me in giving a collective round of applause to all of our West Slope legislators. This year they worked tirelessly to prioritize the needs of Coloradoan’s in this unprecedented time.
As our Alliance prepares to celebrate 40 years of grassroots organizing and people power across Western Colorado, we are also living through historic and unsettling times. 2020 has presented us with great challenges: a global pandemic, economic uncertainly, an uprising for racial justice, and a critical election. And we are barely halfway through the year! But we know together, with the deep roots we have grown in this dusty desert soil over the past 40 years, our Alliance will get through it all.

Although we want nothing more than to bring the membership together and celebrate four decades of work together, to protect the health and safety of everyone, we are moving all of our Annual Conference activities online this year. We promise we’ll make it fun and engaging and it for sure won’t be one endless Zoom meeting!

We’ll kick off a series of online workshops on September 9 with with a series of four workshops leading up to the Annual Business Meeting and Keynote on September 19. See below for all the details!

Once it is safe to meet in large groups again, we promise we’ll all get together in person and throw ourselves the big birthday bash we all deserve. Till then, we hope you will join us for some or all of these events so we can share, learn, and grow our Alliance together. Times are tough, but our roots run deep and we know our Alliance will weather these storms.

In the two weeks leading up to the September 19 event, Western Colorado Alliance will be presenting a series of workshop/webinars for the benefit of our members. From legislative run-downs to pathways to a new and improved “normal,” you can expect lively and engaging education! Watch your email for Zoom registration information. All workshops will be held from 6:30 - 8 pm.

**Capitol Confidential**

**September 9**
Always a favorite! Join our Capitol liaison Sol Malick for an in-depth breakdown of one of the most unusual legislative sessions in recent history. We’ll discuss what bills did in fact pass, their implications for Western Colorado, and talk a bit about the implications of the state budget cuts on our communities and future policy work.

**Building a Resilient Rural America**

**September 10**
In the wake of the COVID 19 induced recession and resulting economic uncertainty that has impacted workers, small business owners, and every sector of our economy, it is time to re-think how we rebuild our economies to work better for all of us. Join us for a presentation of the **WORC Resilient Rural America Platform** and discussion about how we can “build it back better” in Western Colorado.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusivity: Working for Justice in Rural America**

**September 15**
Our Alliance and our parent network, the Western Organization of Resource Councils, have recently made a commitment to making our organizations more Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive. Join us and leaders and organizers from across Western Colorado working to advance racial justice efforts in our communities. This will include a discussion on how our Alliance can be a part of this critical work.

**Issue Committees Roundup!**

**September 17**
Join organizers and leaders from across the Alliance for updates on our 2020 campaigns for clean and renewable energy, local food and agriculture, West Slope Youth Vote, oil and gas reform, public lands, and our continued work for a just transition in coal country. We'll share the victories and lessons learned from the year as well as the work that lies ahead on all of these critical topics.

We'll also announce the Worley and Rising Star awards, declare the winner of our 40th Anniversary Scavenger Hunt & Sticker Contest, and of course, elect officers and ratify our 2020 Platform (see page 5)!

We’re also working to confirm another keynote speaker to complement Rep. Haaland’s address. We will share the details as soon as we have them.

We'll also announce the Worley and Rising Star awards, declare the winner of our 40th Anniversary Scavenger Hunt & Sticker Contest, and of course, elect officers and ratify our 2020 Platform (see page 5)! And there will be other surprises as well. We hope to see you there!
Our 2020 Draft Platform

From 1983 through 2017, Alliance members adopted resolutions at our annual conference to shape the organization’s policy and issues work. While the resulting 100+ resolutions covered a wide range of topics, they did not easily convey our values and purposes which were bigger and more inspiring than any one issue or position.

At our 2016 annual conference, we adopted a resolution to transition from this resolution-based process to a platform that would be reviewed and reaffirmed each year. The 2020 Draft Platform is the product of an ad hoc committee that has taken feedback from last year’s annual conference, additional comments from committee members, and formed it into this document.

This draft platform has highlighted proposed changes for easy comparison with the current platform.

We now seek additional feedback from the membership before we bring the document to the Annual Conference for approval. If you have any feedback, please send it to us at platform@westerncoloradoalliance.org.

Our vision: We believe that right now, today, we have the ability and opportunity to create a future where engaged local voices are leading communities that are healthy, just, and self-reliant.

1. We believe in an authentic GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY where each one of us has an equal right and opportunity to impact public decisions that affect our lives, and where government is open, honest and responsive to the needs of the people. More specifically, we support:
   a. Reducing the influence of moneyed interests in elections and the legislative process.
   b. The protection of individual voting rights and fair representation practices (e.g., in drawing legislative district boundaries and in reforming the Electoral College).
   c. The protection of a free press as an integral part of any democracy.

2. We believe that global CLIMATE CHANGE is the most important worldwide environmental crisis of our time. Science has shown that human activity is a major cause of climate change and, as such, we have an immediate and urgent responsibility to act to address its causes and impacts. We recognize that climate change has a disproportionate impact on communities of color and low-income communities and any solution must be based in CLIMATE JUSTICE. Specifically, we support:
   a. Pro-active policies, regulations, and practices that:
      - sequester carbon (See also planks under Local Foods & Agriculture and Public Lands);
      - eliminate the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases;
      - minimize the environmental, economic and social impacts of climate change (climate justice), and
      - foster societal and ecological resiliency to adapt to and survive climate change.
   b. Genuine consideration of the cumulative impacts of climate change in all decision-making in every sector of our society.

3. We believe in the inalienable right of individuals and communities to a CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT including air, water, land and food supplies. More specifically, we support:
   a. The protection of the world’s water quality and availability, as well as the integrity of aquatic ecosystems.
   b. The protection of our air quality, including the reduction of toxic emissions and those that contribute to climate change.
   c. The principles of “reduce, reuse and recycle” to conserve the world’s limited resources and limit the harmful effects of production and disposal of consumer products.

4. We believe in SOCIAL JUSTICE that respects human and civil rights, uplifts all people to their potential, and values everyone’s participation in their communities and in decision-making processes. Our belief in Social Justice requires us to not only support equitable policies but also to eliminate systemic oppression and racism. More specifically, we support:
   a. Systems that equitably value the contributions and dignity of all workers, including the right to collectively bargain, substantial paid family and medical leave, and an adequate living wage.
   b. A comprehensive approach to creating health equity that encompasses a wide range of social and economic factors such as education, social welfare, housing, income, environmental justice.

Continued on page 8

Candidate for President: Andrey Krieves

Andrey Krieves lives in Mesa County and has served on the Western Colorado Alliance board of directors since 2016. Her professional background is in secondary education, having taught middle and high school in Colorado, Texas, and New York. Since moving to Grand Junction in 2013, she has worked on local campaign committees serving as Chair for the GJ Community Center Campaign and Volunteer Coordinator for the 2019 School District 51 Bond Campaign.

Andrey is the current secretary on the Western Colorado Alliance board, serves as one of our Alliance’s representatives to Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) board, and chairs the Grand Valley Parks and Recreation Foundation. She also works for the District 51 Foundation and teaches yoga. Andrey is an avid runner and skier and enjoys exploring the outdoors with her husband and two young boys.

Candidate for Treasurer: Bill Wellman

Born and raised in North Carolina, Bill moved to the west in 1973 to work at Theodore Roosevelt NP in North Dakota. After a 41-year career with the National Park Service, he and his wife retired in Crawford, Colorado in 2012.

During his career, he served as superintendent of eight National Park units including Great Sand Dunes, Curecanti, and Black Canyon of the Gunnison here in Colorado. Most of the final years of his career were spent on the Mexican border at Organ Pipe Cactus NM and Big Bend NP dealing with natural resource and international issues.
Preparing for “the mother of all rulemakings”

Continued from page 2

Air Quality Victory & More Work Ahead

And if that were not enough, the AQCC is simultaneously gearing up for another set of rulemakings aimed at reducing methane and toxic air emissions from oil and gas facilities. These rulemakings will build on the existing rules and the new air quality protections to take effect statewide.

Orphaned Wells, Looming Crisis

While state regulators continue their slow walk toward fulfilling their legislative mandate, oil and gas interests have been hard at work to oppose the efforts. Yet even as they scheme to undermine basic reform designed to protect people and our planet, many oil and gas operators are on the verge of collapse due to heavy debts, shifty accounting, and a fundamental mismanagement of their financial resources. This is a disaster for taxpayers, who will have to foot the bill to clean up hundreds of drilling sites across the state should these companies declare bankruptcy.

In order to begin production, companies are required to post a bond—money that the government holds until wells are plugged after extraction is completed. Unfortunately, both in Colorado and throughout the United States, bonding requirements are woefully inadequate to compensate for the immense cost of reclaiming wells. Should an operator fold, the wells that they managed are all too frequently left unplugged to spew poisonous greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and pollute any groundwater when the wellbore pipe that is no longer being maintained inevitably erodes.

Seeing this predicament as an opportunity to fleece taxpayers, industry executives have shamelessly solicited bailouts from the federal government, using the present economic conditions and their self-inflicted financial distress as an excuse to demand billions of dollars in the form of federal subsidies. In Colorado, operators and the local governments which they’ve commandeered claim that now is not the time for regulations which would put more pressure on the oil and gas industry; they say measures like keeping drilling away from homes and continuously monitoring for gas leaks are simply too expensive.

Of course, we know better. We know that public health and safety can’t wait, that we need to curb greenhouse gas emissions now and that the oil and gas industry needs to be responsible for cleaning up its own mess. We know that we cannot wait for an ideal time to regulate the oil and gas industry.

Fortunately, our Alliance has refused to wait. Every day, our members are working to ensure that the rules envisioned under SB-181 and HB-1261 come to fruition. Despite all that has happened, 2020 is still a year of reform and the changes we have worked so hard to achieve are within reach.

Together we will work for a healthy, just and self-reliant future for Western Colorado.

Good news in the coalfields

Continued from page 1

These findings offer a rare bright light of opportunity for coal communities that are facing massive lay-offs and lost revenue as the coal industry crumbles. Reclamation is one of the few immediately available job opportunities for local workers after a mine shuts down, and the report finds that these jobs are ideally suited for current or former miners.

“Reclamation jobs were really important for me and my community after the New Horizon Mine shut down,” said Roger Carver, a retired coal miner and former president of UMW Local Union 1281, and member of the Western Colorado Alliance. “We at the union had to fight for these jobs because we knew workers were in limbo and didn’t know when the next paycheck was going to be. Plus, it felt good to be part of the cleanup and to repair the land that is part of my home.”

Coal Mine Cleanup Works points out that reclamation jobs cannot replace all the jobs and revenue coal mines provide, but that it is one piece of a forward-looking approach to adapt to a changing energy economy.

Contact Brian Williams (brian@westerncoloradoalliance.org) if you are interested in participating in the rulemaking or want more information.

COGCC Rulemaking Webinar

August 20, 2020

COGCC Mission Change Rulemakings

August 24-28, 2020

Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 2020

Sept. 2-4, 2020

Sept. 8-10, 2020

The Clarion Summer 2020
Remembering Walt Rule

by Kevin Williams

Long-time Alliance member and former board president Walt Rule passed away on April 18 after a long illness. Walt was born May 30, 1931, in Plainfield, New Jersey. After a distinguished career in the US Forest Service (USFS), including nearly nine years (1968-1976) as District Ranger for the Ouray District of the Grand Mesa, Gunnison and Uncompahgre National Forests, he and his wife Nancy retired to Ouray in September of 1986.

Soon after Walt retired, he joined our Alliance’s Forest Management Committee. His knowledge and expertise proved to be an invaluable asset to the committee’s campaign to promote responsible public land management.

Walt joined our Alliance’s board in 1989, and served as president in 1991-1992. In 1998, Club 20 released a paper once again calling for increased aspen timber cutting in western Colorado. Walt helped write our Alliance’s critique of the paper, which he called “industrial forestry propaganda,” adding that “the science behind the Club 20 paper is very selective.”

In 2000, our Alliance honored Walt’s outstanding contributions as a volunteer by presenting him with the Chuck & Betsy Worley Award. Walt was a caring, compassionate and informed leader for the people and communities of western Colorado. The world was a better place with Walt in it, and he will surely be missed by all who knew him.

Michael Soule: A Major Passing

by Robin Nicholoff

As many of you are now aware, on June 17, our dear friend and colleague Dr. Michael Soulé passed into the great unknown at age 84. His life was one of major scientific accomplishments, keen insights into the proper functioning of native ecosystems, and unbounded love for nature and students of nature.

Michael’s love and observations of natural processes began at an early age while exploring the back-country deserts, canyons, and water bodies of California and Baja California and progressed to earning a Doctorate in evolutionary biology and ecology from Stanford.

In addition to teaching and faculty duties at the University of California, University of Michigan, and in Samoa and Malawi, he did field research over the years in the Caribbean Islands, Mexico, Africa, and the Western U.S. Closer to his final home near Paonia, he did research early-on at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory at Gothic.

He later moved to the North Fork Valley where he was elected a member of the Board of Directors of the Western Slope Conservation Center and served on the Public Lands Committee.

As Michael consulted and lectured across the planet, he became more well-known as the founder and first president of the Society for Conservation Biology and a co-founder of the Wildlands Network, and is considered to be the “Father of Conservation Biology.”

Along the way, he managed to find time to write or edit 11 books and dozens of articles on everything from population genetics to the need to conserve alpha predators in order to prevent trophic cascades. But Michael also showed his students the need to utilize their scientific knowledge and skills to stand up to the current forces of willful ignorance and advocate for sound environmental policy and practice.

His numerous contributions to environmental science earned him many awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the National Wildlife Federation’s National Conservation Achievement Award, the Zoological Society of San Diego’s Conservation Medal, and the Edward O. Wilson Biodiversity Technology Pioneer Award. Audubon Magazine named him among the 100 Champions of Conservation of the 20th Century.

Ever the educator and mentor, Michael participated in public forums as recently as last year in Paonia, and initiated lively discussions with friends in the Scientists and Philosophers Friday lunches around the North Fork Valley.

 Appropriately, Michael spent his final winter with his wife, June, in the wonderland of his youth, Baja California. Let us always honor and cherish our memories and the contributions of this giant of science, Michael Soulé.
Our 2020 Draft Platform

Continued from page 5

conditions, nutritious food, and universal access to health care.

c. Environmental justice policies that protect poor and minority communities from bearing an inordinate burden on their health from industrial development.

d. Comprehensive and thoughtful reform of our nation’s immigration and refugee policies to reflect the values of the United Nations’ Global Compact for Migration.

5. We believe in HOMEGROWN ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, reflected in a Western Slope that is home to diverse and resilient local economies that work for all of us while protecting the natural environment that makes our communities desirable places to live.

a. Note: We are continuing our work to create a grassroots vision of Homegrown Prosperity for Western Colorado but our keystone event for the program was canceled as a result of COVID-19. In the meantime, we suggest the adoption of the National Economic Transition Platform, a vision for rural economies built by a national Platform, a vision for rural economies built by a national

b. Restructuring/scraping of utility contracts that are prolonging fossil fuel use and discouraging increased renewables.

c. Regulation of public utilities in a manner that protects both consumer interests and environmental sustainability.

d. Proactive upgrades of energy delivery systems to anticipate changes in energy technology.

7. We believe that our nation’s PUBLIC LANDS must be managed in ways that respect our collective histories and recognize the Native peoples who have called these lands home for millennia. These lands connect our cultures and communities and we all depend on them for a sustainable future. Public lands support healthy wildlife populations and their habitat and forests crucial to the health of our atmosphere. They protect the headwaters of many vital watersheds and provide the safest refuge for essential biodiversity. These lands also sustain a strong and growing outdoor recreation economy that enhances everyone’s quality of life and nourishes the human soul. More specifically, we:

a. Recognize that public lands are the ancestral territory of Native peoples who have called them homes since time immemorial. For this reason we insist on their involvement in the decision making for our public lands.

b. Insist that public lands remain public. Transfer of federal lands to states, or worse, private interests, compromises all of the values mentioned above.

c. Support responsible management of public lands that prioritizes ecological integrity and resilience of those lands and our climate.

d. Support maintaining the size and integrity of existing wilderness areas, parks, and monuments along with connecting wildlife corridors, as well as expanding such protections to other areas that have appropriate characteristics.

8. We believe that food production and marketing systems that prioritize LOCAL FOODS AND AGRICULTURE are best able to sustain healthy communities, protect the environment and safeguard the rights of farm workers. More specifically, we support:

a. Policies and practices that support soil health and regenerative agriculture to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve crop yields, drought and flood tolerance, and air and water quality.

b. An individual’s rights to be able to make informed food choices through improved labelling on how and where their food is raised and processed.

c. Livestock production systems that are as humane as possible and minimize the need for antibiotics and other chemical intervention.

d. A Farm Bill that includes the programs and policies prioritized by the WORC Farm Bill Platform.

e. International trade and domestic policies that strengthen human and environmental health, food sovereignty, workers’ rights and competitive market-places in all countries involved.

9. We believe that local communities should have a fair say in where, how, and if NATURAL RESOURCE EXTRACTION occurs in their area, and that when these economic activities are permitted, they should employ the best available technologies for protecting public and environmental health. Specifically, we support:

a. Comprehensive bonding and reclamation fees so impacted areas can be restored as much as possible to their pre-development conditions.

b. Requiring royalty payments from private industry that reflect the full worth of the public resource being extracted or harvested.

c. Stringently enforced regulation of all extractive practices using evidence-based safety and environmental standards, including setbacks from industrial activities and the emission of contaminants to air and water.

d. Transparent and inclusive processes for decision-making that genuinely and adequately address the concerns of the community in the final decision.

Good news in the coalfields

Continued from page 6

You can read the full report on WORC’s website at: https://www.worc.org/publication/reclamation-jobs-report/

The release of this report coincides with the release of the Colorado Just Transition Office’s own draft reports and policy recommendations on how to support transition coalfield communities. The Just Transition Office is the first attempt of its kind in the country and is a combined effort of the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Local Affairs.

Formed from ground-breaking legislation passed in 2019, the Just Transition Office spent the first three months of 2020 traveling to coalfield communities and listening to the stories of impacted people. Alliance members and staff participated in these listening sessions from Nucla to Craig and we are eager to see the draft reports, which will serve as policy recommendations to the General Assembly and to the Governor for action in 2021.

The work we are doing in Colorado matches the work being done by coalfield communities across the country as we seek to rebuild our rural economies. This summer, our Alliance also endorsed the National Economic Transition Platform. The platform is a policy guidance document crafted by community leaders from Navajo Nation to Appalachia to the Powder River Basin and gives us all a framework for a comprehensive national transition program that will create vibrant, resilient, and inclusive communities. To read the platform visit: https://nationaleconomictransition.org/