

## Leveling up in August!



Over 70 friends and members of our Alliance gathered at the DoubleTree By Hilton in Grand Junction on Saturday, August 26, for the 43rd Annual Conference of Western Colorado Alliance! More details available on **page 6!**

## Mountainfilm On Tour returns to the Grand Valley



by Arn McConnell  
Communications  
Coordinator

November brings adrenalin and inspiration back to the Avalon Theatre in downtown Grand Junction on November 16, when Western Colorado Alliance presents the return of Mountainfilm On Tour - Grand Junction!

If you've attended one of the Mountainfilm On Tour presentations our Alliance has hosted for the past couple decades, you know that the world-

*Continued on page 2*



Image from "Pass It On: Tami Knight," directed by Jen Randall, one of the films which will be shown at this year's Mountainfilm On Tour - Grand Junction.

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### Inside

Let's reconnect and reignite our Alliance! .....	2
When communities speak: A transformative moment in land management .....	3
This just in: Just Housing says Yes! to 2B!.....	4
Sprouting New Futures .....	5

Our Annual Conference hits a new level .....	6
Member profile: Kendra Stucki .....	6
A force for change in Western Colorado.....	8



# Let's reconnect and reignite our Alliance!



by **Andreya Krieves**  
Alliance Chair

It's always so energizing to connect with Alliance members and allies in person at the Annual Conference. This year's conference was no exception as we leveled up with over 70 in attendance, took steps toward language justice with available translation/interpretation, presented a record number of awards celebrating the work of member leaders, enjoyed an inspiring keynote call to action from Representative Elizabeth Velasco, and participated in action-oriented workshops full of ideas to get us activated and organized in our communities.

If you missed it, or if it's been some time since you last connected with us, I'd like to invite you to reconnect with our Alliance. Whether you've been busy with other commitments or simply

lost touch, we want to welcome you back into our fold. Our alliance has always thrived on the diverse contributions and perspectives of our members, and we believe that your involvement can make a significant difference.

There are lots of great ways to join or re-join us this fall. Here are some ideas:

Mountainfilm on Tour returns on Thursday, November 16 to the Avalon Theater in Downtown Grand Junction. Our alliance is proud to host this annual event since we believe strongly in Mountainfilm's mission to use the power of film, art and ideas to inspire audiences to create a better world. Bring a friend and share an evening with us. It's always a good time!

If you live in Mesa County, Montrose, or Garfield counties

– please reach out to that area's community organizer (Maria Luisa Perez Chavez, Bianca Diaz, or Hannah Arauza, respectively) to get connected with the work of that affiliate group. They're actively organizing and are always welcoming new participation and ideas.

If you do not live within an affiliate group's geographic area, or even if you do, check out the work of our regional organizers. Whether you're interested in protecting human and environmental health in the face of oil and gas development, developing a clean energy economy, supporting sustainable local food and agriculture systems, advocating for the responsible management of our public lands, building homegrown prosperity where resilient local



Western Colorado Alliance  
Chair Andreya Krieves

economies work for all of us, or grassroots organizing to impact public decisions that affect our lives, there is need for your voice and your presence. You can make a difference in this work – even remotely!

Hope to see you soon!

## Mountainfilm On Tour returns to the Grand Valley



Image from "Apayauq," directed by Zeppelin Zeerip, one of the films which will be shown at this year's Mountainfilm On Tour - Grand Junction.

*Continued from page 1*

famous film festival specializes in films which inspire us to create a better world — while entertaining with thrilling, heart-stopping adventure. This year's selection of films include stories about surfing, snowboarding, mountain climbing, and much more.

This year, doors will open at 5:30 pm on November 16, with the films scheduled to start at 7 pm.

This year's Mountainfilm event will also mark the return of our traditional Silent Auction, and

a Happy Hour with musical accompaniment. Come early enough to make a bid on one of the outstanding gifts and packages available in the Auction!

Alpine Bank, Bin 707 Foodbar, and Atlasta Solar are among the sponsors for this year's festival presentation, which is an important fundraiser (and "friend raiser!") for our Alliance.

We look forward to seeing you on November 16 for the thrilling spirit of Mountainfilm On Tour - Grand Junction!



brings people together to build grassroots power through community organizing and leadership development.

Our Alliance's vision for the future is one where engaged local voices are leading communities across Western Colorado that are healthy, just, and self-reliant.

### Our Alliance's Staff

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Bianca Diaz, Organizer  
Tyler McDermott, Organizer  
Alicia Lucero, Finance Administrator  
Arn McConnell, Comms. Coordinator  
Shanna Shepherd, Office Administrator  
Brian Williams, Membership Coordinator

### Our Alliance's Board of Directors

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#### Director Emeritus

Peggy Rawlins, Grand Junction





by **Laura Bloom**  
Regional Organizer

It's an amazing thing to witness communities making themselves heard.

As you may know, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is the steward agency for our public lands and resources. That is, all residents of the United States have collective ownership of the federal lands and the resources they host, and the BLM manages these on our behalf.

The BLM's existing federal oil and gas program is outdated, with many rules dating back decades, prioritizing oil and gas over other crucial uses of our public lands. The BLM has finally released an updated draft rule that modernizes their land management. The reforms represent a pivotal moment, ensuring that taxpayers receive a fair return and that our public lands are managed respon-

sibly for the benefit of all.

The comment period for the BLM's proposed rule to update the federal oil and gas leasing program closed on September 22, with overwhelming support and engagement from our community and countless others across the nation. We at Western Colorado Alliance embarked on a mission to advocate for reform for the state of Colorado — and the response has been awe-inspiring.

Our Alliance united over 150 comment letters, demonstrating the strength of our collective voice. But we did not stand alone in this endeavor, collaborating with over 20 other organizations in Colorado to lead a robust state response. What unfolded is a testament to the power of community, the importance of our public lands, and the passion of those who cherish them.

Over 260,000 members of

the public stepped forward to provide input and make their voices heard. Remarkably, initial analyses revealed that more than 99 percent of these comments resoundingly supported the proposed rule. This groundswell of support via public comment is a historic moment, one that should not be underestimated.

But the story doesn't end there. Our success extends beyond the digital realm. In three in-person information sessions held in New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, we witnessed an incredible 95 percent of attendees expressing support for the rule, while opposition was nearly nonexistent. These sessions served as a powerful reminder that our mission resonates with people from all walks of life, bound by a shared dedication to responsible land management.

Our voices, your voices, have reverberated throughout the nation, and the implications are profound.

This groundswell of support aligns perfectly with the essence of National Public Lands Day, which coincides with the end of the comment period. It is a fitting conclusion to this phase of our journey, one that brings us closer to realizing the commonsense reforms that are essential for harmonizing oil and gas extraction with the myriad uses of our public lands. These lands are vital to the Western way of life, supporting open land, hunting, fishing, recreation, renewable energy, and conservation.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of the Interior, and the Biden administration for taking these vital steps to modernize the federal oil and gas leasing program. The public input gathered during this comment period is invaluable and will undoubtedly shape the final

*Continued on page 7*



Western Colorado Alliance is giving thought to how best to serve our members via our quarterly newsletter, **The Clarion**. Toward that end, we are collecting data on our members' experience with **The Clarion**. Thank you for taking a couple minutes to share your opinions. (Most of these questions are simple multiple-choice questions regarding **The Clarion**, but you will be invited to optionally offer additional thoughts at the end of the questionnaire.)

**1. Do you find The Clarion informative?**

- Very!                       Somewhat.                       Not much...                       Not at all

**2. Roughly how much of each issue of The Clarion do you actually read? (Choose the answer which best describes your typical behavior.)**

- I read the whole thing!                       I read most of the stories.                       I read a few of the stories.                       I skim but don't read much.

**3. My favorite parts of The Clarion are (Select all that apply):**

- Updates on issue campaigns                       Stories about our members                       Information on upcoming events                       Analysis of decisions impacting our area
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Would you prefer The Clarion's current format of tabloid-sized newspaper, or one of these alternatives?**

- Current format                       Magazine format                       Digital only                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Optional: Do you have any other thoughts, comments, or suggestions regarding The Clarion? (Use a separate piece of paper if necessary.)**

Please clip your answers and mail to:  
Western Colorado Alliance  
PO Box 1931, Grand Junction, CO 81502

Or save postage and tell us online at: [bit.ly/clarion-questions](https://bit.ly/clarion-questions)



# This just in: Just Housing says Yes! to 2B!



by **María Luiza Pérez Chávez**  
Community Organizer

Western Colorado Alliance of Mesa County's Just Housing group got its start while our Alliance was doing our Deep listening work.

Many in our community were concerned about the lack of affordable housing, the cost of living, and the difficulty they had when trying to find a home. Richmark, a housing developer from out of state, submitted a proposal to the City for fee waivers in their plan to tear down the former downtown City Market and build market-rate apartments.

Our Just Housing committee quickly formed with a need to speak up against this new development. Just Housing invited all of the city councilors for one-on-one meetings in our space. All except one attended, and one brought the city staff along. However, every meeting I attended with Richmark on the agenda got pushed, postponed, or rescheduled, until finally, after getting most of our team to attend a second time,

we got to speak up. Just Housing members spoke to the Council stating this development incentive plan was not addressing affordability.

Although we lost that battle, Just Housing prepared, promoted and conducted an Open House which was well received! Poignant stories were shared with all who attended and during break-out sessions.

We had gathered many people going through different housing situations from owners, to renters to business owners, and heard many stories, including the heart-wrenching housing tale of Sarah, who had recently joined Just Housing. She had moved to Mesa County to be a teacher with her husband. Living with him was displacing her whole life. He then decided he wanted a divorce, and she could no longer afford to live in the apartment they shared with a teacher's salary. She attempted to stay, but could not find a way to afford to live here, so she quit

her job and moved to be with her family. Stories like these and others have been heard throughout our Deep Listening campaign and our Just Housing events.

Driven by all of these stories and the fact that the City Council passed the Richmark project,



Western Colorado Alliance of Mesa County's Just Housing has continued to educate, not only the team, but the community on causes, repercussions, and possible solutions for the housing crisis.

We have built local relationships, have had valuable connections with former City Council members and new City Councilors, like Alliance member Scott Beilfuss. We've built partnerships with Grand Junction Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Grand Valley Peace & Justice - Bridge to Hope. And we've become members on housing and homelessness coalitions.

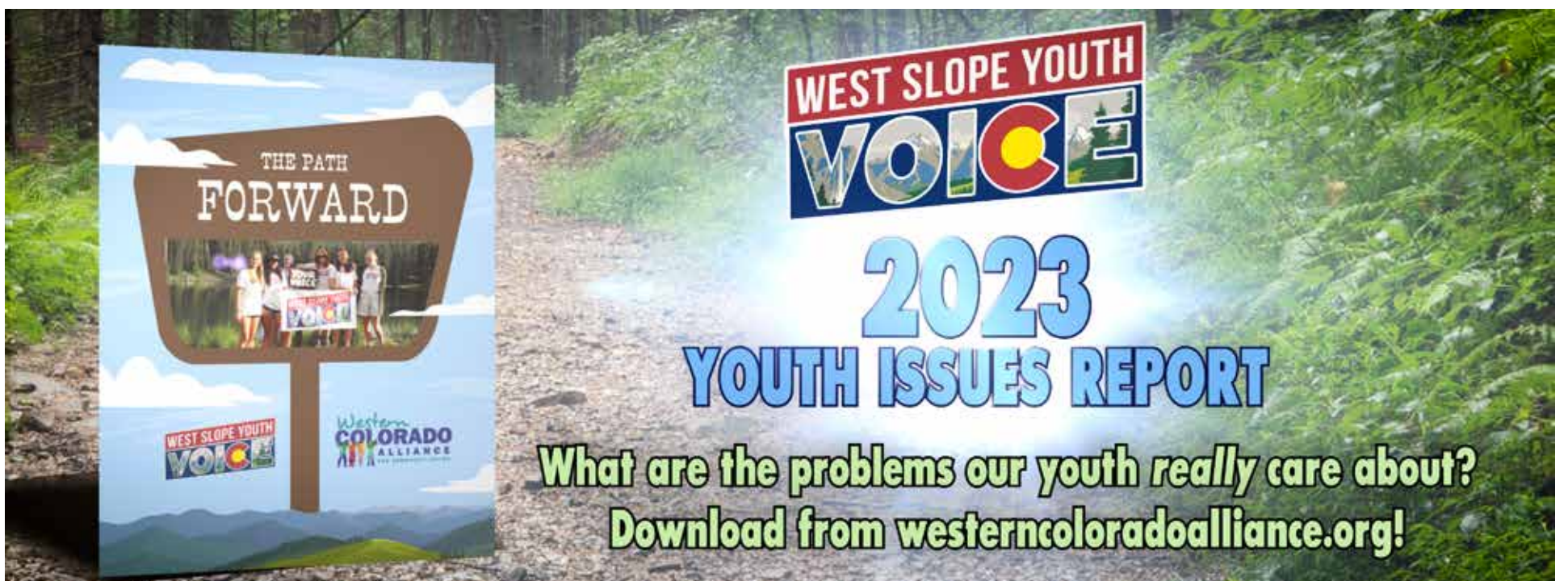
Our goal is to put Grand Junction on the path toward meeting its housing needs. Our current objective is to collaborate with the City Council on Amendment 2B, a ballot issue which should increase maximum leases from 25 years to 99 years, permitting housing built with money acquired from the implementation of Proposition 123, which was passed last year.

We are also supporting Prop.

HH, the statewide measure which would lower property taxes while simultaneously creating a fund to help low-income renters.

To help these measures pass, we hosted an educational Open House on October 16. We are teaming up with the City Council to promote these ballot choices, and will be doing some Get Out The Vote canvassing efforts as well. And apart from social media and mailings, we also hope to collaborate with different organizations to put together a holiday event for younger voters. We hope that we can get them interested and see that, with their support, we can move the needle toward affordable, sustainable, equitable, and safe housing for ALL in our community.

If you'd like to help in the struggle for affordable housing for all, please join Just Housing members Arlo, Constance, Scott, Alexis, and Jennifer by joining Western Colorado Alliance of Mesa County's Just Housing team. YOU are what can make this movement more powerful!





# SPROUTING NEW FUTURES

**MAY 19**  
EARLY MORNING ORCHARD,  
Palisade



In the summer of 2023, our Alliance undertook our most ambitious series of farm tours ever. Between **May 19** and **September 16**, we led over 150 residents on tours of six farms in three Western Colorado counties. These tours showed what is possible utilizing healthy soil techniques and regenerative agriculture practices. Here are some of our favorite memories from this summer's tours.

Thanks to all who joined us for these memorable farm visits!



**JUNE 17**  
GREEN JUNCTION FARMSTEAD,  
Clifton/  
Palisade



**JULY 21**  
LOBATO FARMS,  
Fruita



**JUNE 28**  
HIT THE HAY FARM,  
Fruita



**AUG. 5**  
HIGHWATER FARM,  
Silt



**SEPT. 16**  
FRESHIES FARM,  
Montrose



**THANK YOU TO THE HARD-WORKING FARMERS AND INTERESTED RESIDENTS WHO TOOK PART IN THESE TOURS! WE'LL SEE YOU AGAIN NEXT YEAR!**



# Leveling up at the Annual Conference!



by **Arn McConnell**  
**Communications**  
**Coordinator**

On Saturday, August 26, Western Colorado Alliance held its 43rd Annual Conference at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Grand Junction. The theme of this year's conference was "Leveling Up!" Over 70 people attended the event.

During the business meeting portion of the conference, the Alliance's 2024 platform was ratified. (You can find the platform on our website at [westerncoloradoalliance.org](http://westerncoloradoalliance.org).) Two new officers were elected to the Alliance Board: Adriane Moline was elected to Vice President, replacing term-limited Kevin Kuns. Previously, Adriane had served as Acting Secretary for the Board.

And Haley Van Camp was elected Secretary to the Board. Haley joined the Alliance Board in 2022.

This year, our Alliance recognized three new Alliance members: Arlo Miller of Mesa County, Amy Dickinson of Montrose

County, and Indhira Barron of Garfield County all won Rising Star Awards as people new to our organization but who have made a significant contribution during the past year.

The very first Rawlins Award was handed out this year. Recognizing a member who has shown

"determination and grit and fearlessness in speaking truth to power," and named after our Board Member Emeritus, Peggy Rawlins, this year's award went to Dr. Barbara Vasquez.

The Worley Award, named after Alliance founders and celebrated activists Chuck and

Betsy Worley, was given to Kevin Kuns and Scott Beilfuss, for their long-time commitment and service to our Alliance.

The conference was capped by a fabulous keynote speech from Rep. Elizabeth Velasco, and workshops for our members. We hope to see you there next year!



Some 26 attendees from across the Western Slope converged in Montrose for this quarter's **Seeds of Community Action** event. Community organizers **Bianca Diaz** and **Tyler McDermott** captivated the crowd with a behind-the-scenes look at the great work of our members. We got the inside scoop on the plans and progress of the Uncompahgre Valley Alliance (UVA). Attendees also got to learn about how our members are leading the way toward clean, renewable and affordable energy, as well as what we're doing to give young people a voice concerning the policies that impact their lives.

## Member profile: Kendra Stucki



by **Bianca Diaz**  
**Community**  
**Organizer**

Ask any organizer what their favorite part of their job is, and they will probably tell you: it is the members we work with day in and day out. We as organizers are not able to carry out our responsibilities without the fantastic individuals who align themselves with this work. This quarter, I get the pleasure of sharing about one Uncompahgre Valley Alliance (UVA) member who, along with her fellow committee members, has been instrumental in strengthening our Montrose County affiliate.

I first met Kendra back in February of this year, and I've been blown away by her commitment and dedication to the Alliance since. I knew upon our first meeting that she had what it took to be a guiding leader for the next chapter of the Uncompahgre Valley Alliance. She always shows up to our meetings prepared

and ready to engage, with an unmatched level of focus.

Without delay, let's hear all about Kendra Stucki!

***When did you join the Uncompahgre Valley Alliance?***

I joined UVA upon moving to Montrose from the Roaring Fork Valley in 2019. UVA had the mission and goals that I respected and felt I could stand behind.

***Why is community involvement important to you?***

As a teacher of 35 years, community involvement always seemed to be naturally fitting.

***You are a part of Uncompahgre Valley Alliance's organizing committee! Can you explain a bit about the group and what you all are working on?***

*Continued on page 7*



Uncompahgre Valley Alliance Organizing Committee Member  
**Kendra Stucki**



# When communities speak

*Continued from page 3*

rule. For years, Westerners have called for an update to these policies, recognizing the need to bring them in line with the demands of this century.

Consider this: A staggering 90 percent of public lands and minerals in the West, overseen by the Bureau of Land Management, are open to oil and gas leasing. That's an astonishing 192 million acres, equivalent to the combined size of Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. This vast expanse could potentially be tied up in oil and gas leases for decades, ensnared in a broken system that allows oil and gas CEOs to thrive while local communities and taxpayers shoulder the consequences.

But Westerners are no longer willing to accept this status quo. A resounding 68 percent of Western voters see the impacts of oil and gas leasing and drilling as a "serious problem." A remarkable 93 percent of Western voters believe that these companies should shoulder the burden of cleanup costs, ending

the era where taxpayers foot the bill, which was reflected in the enormous response in the comment period. Our communities are demanding that the Biden administration listens to their voices, finalizing these essential reforms to protect taxpayers, support wildlife, and ensure that our public lands are managed to benefit all, not just oil and gas development.

The proposed reforms tackle several critical aspects of oil and gas leasing. They increase bonding rates to ensure that companies, not taxpayers, pay for cleanup. These rates have remained stagnant for over 60 years, failing to account for inflation or the costs of modern well cleanup. Consequently, over 99 percent of federal wells have bonds inadequate for reclamation costs, incentivizing operators to evade their responsibilities.

Furthermore, the reforms introduced leasing criteria that reduce conflicts with wildlife, cultural, and outdoor recreation resources. They combat speculative leasing, preventing the industry from tying up land

with little chance of development. Not only this, but the rule eliminates noncompetitive leasing, preventing our public lands from being handed away for a mere \$1.50 per acre.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support, your dedication to our public lands, and your commitment to responsible land management. Together, we have made history, and we are on the

culmination of transformative change.

The journey doesn't end here; it continues as we await the finalization of these reforms. Let us remain vigilant, knowing that we are on the right path toward a future where our public lands are managed responsibly, benefiting all Westerners. We look forward to celebrating the fruits of our labor and a brighter, more sustainable future.



Our Alliance's own **Dr. Barbara Vasquez** testified before the U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources in Washington last month regarding the Bureau of Land Management's new proposed leasing and bonding rule.

## Member profile: Kendra Stucki

*Continued from page 5*

Currently, as part of the UVA organizing committee, we have been working on revitalizing membership by reaching out into the community to listen to what interests people have that align with our mission.

*What's your favorite part about being on the committee?*

It's exciting to see a small group continue to grow because of community connectedness and common goals.

*You always add a lot of great insight to our meetings. What's your background, or skill set, that has contributed to your ability to improve ideas and push the group to think out of the box?*

I believe my teaching background, along with being

a spirited community member in the many places I have lived throughout Colorado including the Yampa Valley, Arkansas Valley, Roaring Fork Valley, and the Gunnison/Crested Butte Valley, provides me with insight into the issues and tools to move through the action needed for outcome to match community and environmental needs.

*What are you looking forward to the most as the committee moves through the organizing work?*

As a parent of two active grown boys, a grandmother, a born and raised Coloradan that has always

advocated for healthy, just, and self-reliant communities, I look forward to working with UVA and WCA to develop leadership and build grassroots power for the many generations to come.

Thank you Kendra! We are lucky to have you. I also want

to take this opportunity to share about an event that Kendra and her committee members have been working on. Join us on **December 7** to get an update on all the behind-the-scenes organizing work that will support our Alliance going forward! You do not want to miss it! Dinner will be provided.



*A community conversation*

Join our Alliance as we reunite, update, and discuss options for our next issue-based campaign!

**Thursday, Dec. 7**  
**5-7 pm**  
**Ute Indian Museum**



# A force for change in Western Colorado

After years of dreaming big and working to achieve big, hairy and audacious goals, in 2023, our Alliance is celebrating some major achievements for our organization and Western Colorado. With the support and leadership of members like you, we have re-energized and united.

We also completed our next Strategic Plan, outlining our steps to grow our grassroots base, increase our communications capacity, deepen our organizational stability, and achieve more victories for our Western Slope communities.

With an unwavering commitment to creating healthy, just, and self-reliant communities, our Alliance is poised to make an even greater difference for rural Colorado, uniting individuals, and inspiring change on the Western Slope and beyond.

In 2023, we accomplished so much together:

- Connected rural electric coops with \$9.7 billion of Inflation Reduction Act monies **to accelerate and expand the build-out of local clean energy generation** across Western Colorado.
- Passed the first in the nation legislation that **allows local farmers and ranchers the right to repair the agricultural equipment** apart from the equipment manufacture.
- Brought farmers and consumers together across the region to **learn about water efficiency projects, soil health and how to access resources to support regenerative agriculture projects.**
- Won more precedent setting rules from the Air Quality Control Commission to **further reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector**, holding operators accountable to the amount of air pollution they produce.
- Organized support for new oil and gas bonding rules from the Department of Interior, which will **save taxpayers \$838 million in clean-up costs for abandoned wells over the next decade.**
- West Slope Youth Voice interns won the inclusion of a **student health clinic in the construction of the new Grand Junction High School**, overturning a previous school board decision and providing mental and physical health care to students.

...and so much more, victories big and small from Ouray to Nucla to Rifle. Behind each of these victories are hundreds of human stories and members like you, rolling up your sleeves and doing the work to affect positive change in our communities. Thank you for joining us in creating a livable and resilient future for the Western Slope.



Thank you for making our Alliance what it is today. Help keep us strong, financially independent, and ready to face whatever challenges lie ahead. **Please consider a donation to our end-of-year fundraising drive so we can hit the ground running in 2024!**

Make your donation at **westerncoloradoalliance.org**

or mail it to  
**P.O. Box 1931**  
**Grand Junction, CO 81502**

## Western Colorado Alliance Financial Statement

### Statement of Financial Position

Total Assets	<b>\$1,427,146</b>
Total Liabilities	<b>\$294,478</b>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<b>\$1,427,145</b>

### Statement of Financial Activities

Total Revenue	<b>\$1,146,456</b>
Total Expenses	<b>\$929,947</b>
Total Net Assets (End Of Year)	<b>\$216,508</b>

