

CLARION

Vol. 44 No. 3 Autumn 2024



BIG WIN FOR CLEAN ENERGY



**CLEAN ENERGY CANDIDATES WIN BOARD SEATS
IN DELTA/MONTROSE!**





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.

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 Hanna Arauza, *Organizer*
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Western Colorado Alliance of Mesa County

Steve Allerton, *Grand Junction Director Emeritus*

Director Emeritus

Peggy Rawlins, *Grand Junction*

Passing the baton

As I pen my final column for the **Clarion**, I find myself reflecting with a deep sense of gratitude for the Western Colorado Alliance and the wonderful humans I have had the pleasure to meet and work with along the way. At this year's Annual Conference, I will be stepping back from the Board of Directors. Serving on the Board since 2015 has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and it has been an immense honor to serve as the Chair for the past 4 years. Now, as I prepare to pass the baton, I want to take a moment to bid farewell and express my heartfelt thanks to each of you.

When I first joined the Board of what was then called the Western Colorado Congress (WCC), I was driven by a passion for issues specific to my community in Grand Junction. The staff and my fellow board members introduced me to the broader work of WCC in our region and a commitment to the values that unite us—community, sustainability, and justice. Over the years, I have witnessed incredible growth and transformation within our organization. We restructured, refocused, and rebranded (goodbye Western Colorado Congress, hello Western Colorado Alliance!), built up a team of inspiring leaders on staff and within our membership, survived (and thrived!) through COVID, supported the successful unionization of Alliance staff, purchased a building, and grown the overall impact of our Alliance. Together, we have tackled numerous challenges, celebrated significant victories, and, most importantly, made a tangible difference in the lives of our community members. I can say with confidence that we have made real progress toward our shared vision of building a future where engaged local

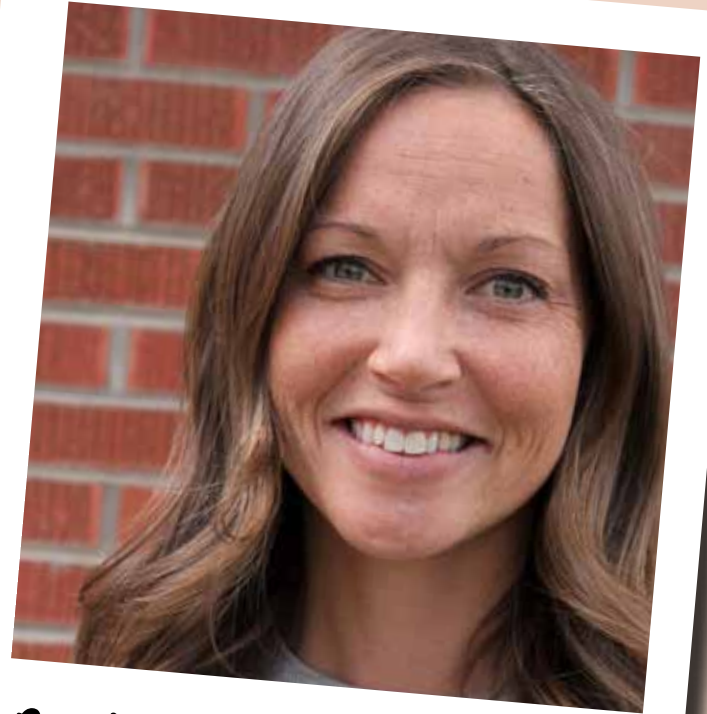
voices are leading communities across Western Colorado that are healthy, just, and self-reliant.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our remarkable staff, and the unwavering leadership of Emily Hornback, our Alliance's Executive Director. Your unwavering commitment, creativity, and resilience have been the driving force behind our successes.

I am continually inspired by your passion and professionalism, and I have no doubt that you will continue to propel the Alliance forward.

To my fellow Board members, I extend my deepest gratitude for your support, wisdom, and camaraderie. Our collective efforts have stabilized the Alliance during times of uncertainty and positioned it for continued success. I am confident that the incoming Chair will build upon the foundations we have laid and guide the organization to even greater heights.

As I step down from my role, I do so with a sense of optimism and hope. The Western Colorado Alliance is in a strong position, poised to tackle the



Andrey Krievs
Chair of the Board

challenges
And seize the opportunities
that lie ahead.

Thank you for the privilege of serving on the Western Colorado Alliance Board of Directors. It has been an incredible journey, and I am grateful for the memories, the lessons learned, and the friendships forged along the way. I look forward to watching our Alliance continue to thrive and make a lasting impact on our beloved region.

With deepest gratitude
and best wishes,

Andrey Krievs
Chair of the Board
Western Colorado Alliance



THE IMPORTANCE OF RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

By Tyler McDermott, Regional Organizer

As we approach November's critically important General Election, we should take a moment to appreciate another set of consequential elections that take place this summer — Rural Electric Cooperative Board elections.

Rural electric cooperatives are a way for rural communities to have democratic control over their energy, anyone who buys power from one is not just a customer, but also a member-owner of the cooperative. As a member-owner, you get a say in who represents you on the board of directors to make energy decisions such as where your power comes from, who you get it from, what sources are used, and what energy rates you pay. The difference between good boards and bad boards can be drastic, potentially resulting in poorer air quality, less local control of energy, and higher energy prices. This year, Western Colorado Alliance is focused on two particular co-ops — Grand

Valley Power (GVP) and Delta Montrose Electric Association (DMEA).

DMEA member-owners turned out for their board member elections in record numbers in June to ensure they will continue to receive top-tier service at affordable rates. DMEA has consistently been among the best rural electric cooperatives in the state of Colorado for a reason; they have always put their member-owners first, have been forward-thinking in transitioning to cheaper, cleaner energy sources, they provide better and more services to those in their territory (such as broadband internet!), and do all of that at rates that are stable and affordable for their community.

We would like to congratulate all three of Western Colorado Alliance's endorsed candidates and clean energy supporters Ryan Sedgeley (District 1), Steve Metheny (District 2), and Kevin

Williams (District 5) on winning their seats on the board where they will serve a 3-year term.

On top of their top-tier service and record, DMEA has been a leader in ensuring accountability and transparency for their board. A prime example of this is that for the first time, DMEA allowed digital voting through their bill-pay portal or registered emails on top of traditional methods such as mail-in voting and participation at their annual meeting, which granted more member-owners the chance to easily participate and make their voices heard in their elections process. This resulted in a more than 50% increase in voter turnout, speaking volumes to the importance of increased voter access and how pleased DMEA member-owners are with the trajectory of the current board.

The second co-op we are watching this year is Grand Valley Power, whose member-owners will begin voting on July 8 and close

WESTERN COLORADO ALLIANCE'S ENDORSED DMEA CANDIDATES



STEVE METHENY



RYAN SEDGELEY



KEVIN WILLIAMS

out their elections on August 8, 2024. Three seats are up for election this year, where the top three vote-getters will win a seat. The stakes are high at GVP, where major decisions are soon to be made such as how to handle their transition away from Xcel energy to Guzman Energy, the hiring of a new CEO in the coming years, how solar users at individual, community, and commercial levels will be handled, and rate changes.

Unlike DMEA, GVP will not offer digital voting, so voting can only be done by mail-in ballot or dropping them off at GVP headquarters.

Rural electric cooperatives are special entities across the country that democratize our energy sources and their management, and this system only works when people like you participate. We count on you to vote to ensure a clean, resilient, and affordable energy future.

—““—

**“RURAL ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES ARE A WAY
FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES
TO HAVE DEMOCRATIC
CONTROL OVER THEIR
ENERGY, ANYONE WHO
BUYS POWER FROM ONE IS
NOT JUST A CUSTOMER, BUT
ALSO A MEMBER-OWNER OF
THE COOPERATIVE.”**

—””—



Pollinators

THE 44TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF WESTERN COLORADO ALLIANCE
AUG. 24 • COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY MEYER BALLROOM

Saturday, August 24
Colorado Mesa University
Meyer Ballroom in Grand Junction

Each year, the members of Western Colorado Alliance come together in an annual conference to conduct their annual business meeting (including the ratification of a platform for the year and the election of officers), as well as educate ourselves and bond as friends and colleagues. You are very cordially invited to help steer our work for the year to come!

Day at a glance

Doors Open 9:30am

Sign in. Grab some continental breakfast and some coffee.
Check out the table displays. Visit with Alliance friends.

Business Meeting 10:00am

Hear reports from our Executive Director. Conduct officer elections. Discuss the platform.

Celebrations/Awards 11:45am

Hear reports from our organizers. Celebrate the winners of the **Rising Star Award, Worley Award,** and **Rawlins Award.**

Group Picture 12:00pm

Join us for the annual Membership photo!

Lunch 12:15pm

Let's eat!

Keynote 12:30pm

Liliana Flanigan
(see page 8 for details)

Workshops 1:30pm-3:45pm

(see right for details)

Adjourn/Happy Hour 4:00pm





Plenary Workshop: Bees • 1:30pm

Title: Buzzing to the Polls: Mobilizing for the 2024 Elections

Summary: There's a lot of buzz about the General Election of 2024! Beyond the national spotlight, key races and ballot measures will impact our West Slope communities. Curious about what to expect and where our Alliance stands on these issues? Join us for a hive discussion about the ballot measures, how our Alliance plans to Get Out the Vote, and ways you can bee involved in our democracy to make a meaningful difference for our communities this fall.

3 Breakout Session Options • 2:45pm

Workshop 1: Butterflies

Title: Wings of Diversity: Promoting Equity and Inclusion in Our Communities

Summary: Just as a diverse array of butterflies enriches an ecosystem, fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion is vital for the health and self-reliance of our communities. In this workshop, a special guest will guide us through strategies to engage all demographics in our area through the lens of language justice. Like butterflies of different colors and patterns essential for a flourishing environment, we need everyone's participation for a vibrant future! Join us to explore how we can support an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.



Workshop 2: Garden

Title: Harvesting Growth: Fundraising for Community Empowerment

Summary: Communities thrive when they invest in themselves, much like a garden nourished by dedicated caretakers. Our role is to create opportunities for growth. Join us to explore the joys and challenges of fundraising, from overcoming the discomfort of asking for support to understanding how fundraising builds community power. Participants will gain a deeper connection to fundraising and leave with practical strategies to cultivate their inner fundraiser!

Workshop 3: Hummingbird

Title: What's The Word, Hummingbird? Connecting with Local Decision Makers

Summary: Have you ever wondered how elected officials make local policy decisions? What they find most compelling in public comments, and how the community can support them in being effective leaders? Just as the vibrant feathers of a hummingbird catch our eye, this is your chance to discover what captures the attention of West Slope decision makers. Join us for a workshop featuring a diverse panel of elected officials from across the region, ready to answer your questions about local representative democracy.



Our 2025 candidates



Candidate for Western Colorado Alliance Board Chair

Kevin Williams

Kevin grew up in a small town in upstate New York surrounded by family farms, which instilled in him a deep connection to people who work the land and a strong work ethic.

Kevin migrated west in 1980 to attend the University of Idaho where he met his spouse Brenda. "I could not have come this far in life without her love, support and counsel." As he was completing his MS degree in Forest Resources, he applied for a community organizer position with Western Colorado Alliance. "Teresa Erickson hired me sight unseen after I interviewed with her sister Lill in Boise, Idaho. That was 1984, and the rest is history."

Kevin's daughter Hannah was born and raised in Montrose, and has traveled the world. She cares deeply about the dignity and rights of refugees and immigrants and has been a major influence on Kevin and Brenda. In their spare time, Brenda and Kevin enjoy hiking in the San Juans, walking their rescue dog Zorro, and gardening, swing dancing, and traveling.

Kevin also serves on the Board of Directors of Delta Montrose Electric Association, one of the more forward thinking rural electric cooperatives in the state and nation. (See "The Importance of Rural Electric Cooperatives," page 1.) Kevin says, "I am honored and humbled to be nominated as Alliance chair, and

will do my best to listen, learn,



and lead. When we organize and undertake issue campaigns for equity, justice and democracy, we can and will change our communities, states, nation and world. To quote Samwise Gamgee in the Lord of the Rings, 'there's some good in this world... and it's worth fighting for.'"

Candidate for Western Colorado Alliance's Treasurer board seat

Dee Wernette



Dee Wernette is our candidate for Western Colorado Alliance's open Treasurer board seat, as Bill Wellman steps down after reaching the end of his term.

Dee moved to Grand Junction in 2023, after living most of his life in Michigan and Illinois. He retired in 2007 after 25 years as a sociology professor at a Chicago-area university. He also conducted applied social research on environmental justice, public involvement, and related topics at nearby Argonne National

Laboratory there. His first project at the laboratory in the late 1970s involved analyzing and mitigating potential boomtown effects in Colorado's Western Slope.

Here, he enjoys hiking and biking with his wife and extended family in our beautiful natural environment. He also enjoys reading, attending concerts, films, and New Dimensions classes, and involvement in Restore the Balance and Western Colorado Alliance.

2024 keynote speaker: Liliana Flanigan

Western Colorado Alliance is very happy to announce Liliana Flanigan is our 2024 Keynote Speaker.

What happens after a young woman in Western Colorado gets politically activated by a group like West Slope Youth Voice? Liliana will travel from her current home in New York City to tell us!

As a Venezuelan-American from rural Western Colorado, Liliana's passion lies in ensuring that marginalized communities have the opportunities they need to be successful. She has served as a director of youth civic engagement programs and led West Slope Youth Voice lobby trips to the Colorado State Capitol.

Liliana is deeply committed to

public service and is focused on incorporating cultural competency in resource distribution and outreach. She aims to ensure that the legislative process is accessible for marginalized communities to have their voice heard in our democracy.

She has previously worked for members of Congress, and held positions with Everytown for Gun Safety, Pfizer, Western Colorado Alliance, and as Campaign Manager and staffer for various political campaigns. She has traveled throughout the continental United States and Puerto Rico supporting national non-profit work, and engaging rural and urban Latinx communities in conversations about gun violence prevention. This included coordinating listening sessions and



serving in the rapid response to the 2022 tragedy in Uvalde, Texas.

Liliana holds a B.A. in Politics and Spanish from the NYU College of Arts and Science (Class of 2024), and is excited to continue in the MPA program at NYU Wagner.

Celebrating commitment & dedication within our Alliance

One of our favorite parts of the annual Western Colorado Alliance Annual Conference is honoring outstanding members and leaders from across our network who are advancing the mission and vision of our Alliance across Western Colorado. We have three annual awards:

Worley Award

The Chuck and Betsy Worley Award was established in 1999, and honors individuals who have made outstanding volunteer contributions to our Alliance. The award is named in honor of two of our founding members, who were life-long activists for environmental and social justice.



Recent winners have included Scott Beilfuss from Grand Junction

and Kevin Kuns from Montrose.

This year, a \$1,000 donation has been made in the memory of Chuck and Betsy Worley to accompany the Worley Award. Awardees will direct funds raised to a project or campaign of their choice within Western Colorado Alliance. If you would like to grow this fund with an additional donation, please contact emily@westerncoloradoalliance.org.

Rising Star Award

The Rising Star Award was established in 2017 and is intended to specifically honor new volunteers. To be eligible, a nominee must have joined or become active in our Alliance in the past two years. Last year we celebrated Rising Stars in three of our affiliate chapters: Arlo Miller in Western Colorado Alliance of Mesa County, Amy Dickenson from Uncompahgre Valley Alliance, and Indhira Barron from Western

Colorado Alliance of Garfield County.

Rawlins Award

Our newest award, the Rawlins Award, is offered to members who have shown "determination, grit, and fearlessness in speaking truth to power." We associate this trait with Peggy Rawlins, our long-time Board member and fearless defender of healthy, just, and self-reliant Western Colorado communities. For that reason, the award is named after her. This will be the second year the award has been issued. Dr. Barbara Vasquez from Jackson County was our first Rawlins Award winner in 2023.

Nominations may be made by an individual, a local affiliate group, or campaign team. If you have someone you would like to nominate for any of these awards, please reach out to Executive Director Emily Hornback at emily@westerncoloradoalliance.org by August 14.

2025 Draft Platform

From 1983 through 2017, Alliance members adopted resolutions at our annual conference to shape the organization's policy and issue work. While the resulting 100+ resolutions covered a wide range of topics, they did not easily convey our values and purpose which are 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 2024 Platform was ratified at the Western Colorado Alliance's 43rd Annual Conference on August 26, 2023.

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:

1. Reducing the influence of moneyed interests in elections and the legislative process.
2. The protection of individual voting rights and fair representation practices (e.g., in drawing legislative district boundaries and in reforming the Electoral College).
3. The protection of a free press as an integral part of any democracy.

2. We believe that global **CLIMATE CHANGE** is the most important world-wide 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 while climate change affects the entire world, it has a disproportionate impact on communities of color and low-income communities and so any solution must be based in **CLIMATE JUSTICE**. Specifically, we support:

1. Pro-active policies, regulations, and practices that:
 - promote biologic carbon sequestration (See also planks under Local Foods & Agriculture and Public Lands);
 - minimize the emission of carbon dioxide, methane 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.
2. 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:

1. The protection of the world's water quality and availability, as well as the integrity of aquatic ecosystems.
2. The protection of our air quality, including the reduction of toxic emissions and those that contribute to climate

change.

3. The principles of "reduce, reuse, share and recycle" to conserve the world's limited resources and limit the harmful effects of production and disposal of consumer products.
4. Establishing a program with adequate ongoing funding to clean up "legacy" pollution sources including orphaned oil and gas wells, abandoned mines and contaminated former industrial sites.
4. We believe in **SOCIAL JUSTICE** that respects human 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:

1. Systems that equitably value the contributions and dignity of all workers, including the right to collective bargaining, substantial paid family and medical leave, and an adequate living wage.

2. 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 conditions, nutritious food, social, **mental** and emotional health care, and universal access to health care.

3. **The right to safe, legal, and accessible abortion and full-service reproductive health care.**

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

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

6. Language justice in all levels of our society to create shared power, practice inclusion, and dismantle traditional systems of oppression that have traditionally disenfranchised non-English speakers.

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. To that end, we support

policies and actions that:

1. Invest in local, community-based leaders to help communities plan and respond to changing economic conditions.

2. Invest in entrepreneurs and locally owned small businesses to grow diverse economic sectors that contribute to stronger, more resilient communities, improved public health, restored ecosystems and equitable opportunities for all people.

3. Provide a broad system of support for workers and viable pathways to quality, family-sustaining jobs.

4. Invest in physical and social infrastructure to stimulate economic development and build a foundation for change, **including the fundamental right to safe and affordable housing.**

5. Empower local communities by providing direct access to state and federal resources to make change possible.

6. We believe our communities have exciting opportunities to shape **A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE**. We believe we can substantially reduce energy usage and, through the use of clean and renewable sources, reduce air pollution, eliminate the harmful effects of fossil fuel extraction, create new jobs and industries, and lessen our contribution to climate change. More specifically, we support:

1. Governmental policies that provide incentives for clean energy projects, and regulations that require/encourage energy conservation, **electrification**, and efficiency practices in homes, transportation and industries.

2. Restructuring/scrapping of utility contracts that are prolonging fossil fuel use

and discouraging increased renewables.

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

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

5. Distributed energy sources that are locally owned, small scale and have community benefit plans.

7. We believe that our nation's **PUBLIC LANDS** must be managed in ways that respect our collective histories and recognize the Indigenous 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



Continued from page 10

economy that enhances everyone's quality of life and nourishes the human soul. More specifically, we:

1. Recognize that public lands are the ancestral territory of Indigenous 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.
2. Insist that public lands remain public. Transfer of federal lands to states, or worse, private interests, compromises all of the values mentioned above.
3. Support responsible management of public lands that prioritizes ecological integrity and resilience of those lands and our climate.
4. 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 and economies, protect the environment and

safeguard the rights of farm workers. The creation of a decentralized food system protects family and independent producers and processors who are the key to feeding local peoples with local foods. More specifically, we support:

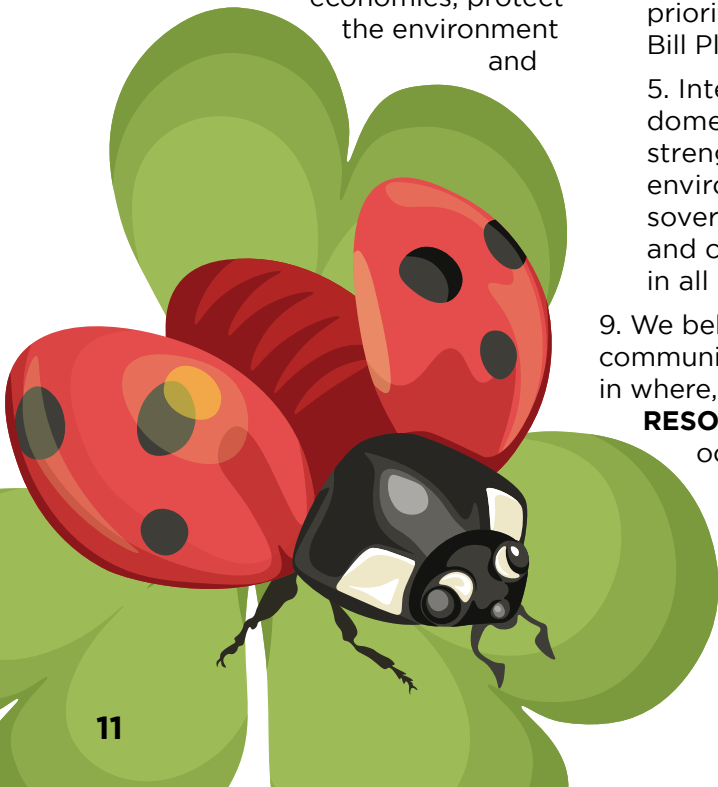
1. Policies and practices that support soil health and regenerative agriculture to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, chemical use and water consumption, improve crop yields, drought and flood tolerance, and air and water quality.
2. **The right to healthy, locally produced food and the ability to make** informed food choices through improved labeling on how and where their food is raised and processed.
3. Livestock production systems that are as humane as possible and minimize the need for antibiotics and other chemical intervention.
4. A Farm Bill that includes the programs and policies prioritized by the WORC Farm Bill Platform.
5. International trade and domestic policies that strengthen human and environmental health, food sovereignty, workers' rights and competitive marketplaces 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:

1. Comprehensive bonding and reclamation fees so impacted areas can be restored as much as possible to their pre-development conditions.
2. Requiring royalty payments from private industry that reflect the full worth of the public resource being extracted or harvested.
3. 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.
4. Transparent and inclusive processes for decision-making that genuinely and adequately address the concerns of the community in the final decision.



Holding oil and gas operators accountable for impacts

By Keeley Meehan, Oil & Gas Contract Organizer

The state of Colorado is long overdue in developing a rule to address cumulative impacts of oil and gas development. The Colorado Energy and Carbon Management Commission (ECMC) is currently tasked with setting requirements to require oil and gas developers to forecast and measure the intensity of environmental pollutants and community impacts from their operations. This rulemaking process stems from Senate Bill 19-181, a law passed over five years ago, designed to address large-scale environmental effects from the oil and gas industry's operations.

Through this process, the ECMC seeks to incorporate analysis and consideration of cumulative impacts into oil and gas operations. The proposed rules would update the permitting process for operators, increase coordination with state air pollution regulators, and require oil and gas developers to engage with the public about their drilling plans, including specific

consideration to what the rule refers to as "disproportionately impacted communities."

The proposed rulemaking initially kicked off in January 2024, and was postponed in April as a result of House Bill 24-1346, a parallel rulemaking process that defined cumulative impacts. ECMC released a new version of the cumulative impacts proposed rule in June with a revised deadline of September 2024. Our Alliance has been involved in this process every step of the way, and will be participating in the rulemaking as an official party.

We were excited to see several of our initial proposed changes incorporated into the updated draft rules, including a 2000 foot setback requirement from and additional time for notice to be given to all disproportionately impacted communities, as well as a designated community liaison located in the Western Slope. We will continue to advocate for

additional changes to be made to the proposed rules, including: additional transparency and a standardized process for all operators, an overall commitment to enhanced systems and practices to avoid, minimize, and mitigate harmful emissions, and added prescriptions to consider water quantity impacts and engage in reclamation.

The cumulative impacts rulemaking is an important opportunity to hold oil and gas operators accountable for public health and environmental impacts. Our Alliance, along with our friends at Defiende Nuestra Tierra, will be hosting a public information session in Rifle sometime in the coming weeks ahead of the September deadline. Please keep an eye on our website and email alerts for additional information. We hope these new regulations will break the status quo and hold oil and gas developers accountable for the impacts of their actions to everyday people.

Know your housing rights!

Mesa County's Just Housing group, a part of Western Colorado Alliance of Mesa County, strives to bring you the latest information on your housing rights. Now, we are gearing up to host three Know Your Rights events to keep you up-to-date on new bills, credit programs, loan options, upcoming bills on your ballot, and connections to legal and non-profit organizations.

The first of these was scheduled for Saturday, July 27, in the Fruita Community Center Cherry Room, focusing on the For Cause Eviction bill that just passed during the 2024 session of the Colorado Legislature. This bill specifies the legal reasons a landlord can evict a

residential tenant. The information is presented by legal advisors that can answer any questions raised during the session.

We'll be following up with two more Know Your Rights events (see right). Watch the Western Colorado Alliance of Mesa County Facebook page, or Western Colorado Alliance's website (westerncoloradoalliance.org) for exact locations still to be determined.

If you would like to know more, please reach out to maria@westerncoloradoalliance.org, or to Arlo Miller, chair of the Just Housing group, at industrybased@gmail.com.



KNOW YOUR HOUSING RIGHTS!

UPCOMING KNOW YOUR HOUSING RIGHTS EVENTS

Clifton
Aug. 17, 2:30 pm

Grand Junction
Sept. 21, 4:30 pm

The Uncompahgre Valley Alliance is hitting the road!

By Bianca Diaz, Community Organizer



Alliance member Lisa Thomas wraps up a bus interview shift.

At the wheel, we have newly elected affiliate leadership. These drivers will keep us focused on the road – keeping the car in good health and making sure that we don't get lost and. Together, they bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and commitment to make the journey.

Mel McKelvey, our chair, is a natural leader and also a fount of new ideas. She was the event coordinator for the 2022 San Juan Rural Philanthropy Days and was site director at the Black Canyon Boys and Girls Club. She joined our Alliance at the People's Lobby Trip this past March along with John English! John English, communications chair, was motivated to lend his talents to our Alliance after attending our Community Conversation last December. He recognizes why good communication is so critical in organizations. Especially ones with members that come from all walks

of life. He spent his career as a leader in the regenerative agriculture space, even getting the opportunity to represent Colorado at the Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Board.

Kendra Stucki has been a member of the Uncompahgre Valley Alliance for the past four years and has always been ready to participate and lead. She was a part of the homelessness caucus in the Alliance before the decision was made to focus on childcare. For the past year she has been working tirelessly to help the Alliance car get going, and is still committed by stepping up as our membership chair because "... a solid membership that will support the Alliance mission is both empowering to those members and the leadership team as we continue to grow our organization." Laura Baker answered the fundraising chair call. She started off with our organiza-

tion in the early days of the deep listening initiative, attending one of our first ever trainings on the topic! As a bilingual canvasser and a well-connected community member, she has grown the Uncompahgre Valley Alliance's network and people's access to it. Lastly, Bobbie Kuns has the important role of treasurer. Money is a crucial resource to keep this car going and she will be the one tracking every cent. Which is fitting because she is a highly experienced controller, both in the profit and not-for-profit industries.

The energy source fueling this vehicle is our campaign. Through it, we get to bring vitality to our mission and our vision of local people leading their communities. Over the past few weeks members of the public transportation team have been riding on the All Points Transit public bus and interviewing the bus riders. The team is asking,

“What is the main reason you ride the bus? What do you like about the services? What improvements would you like to see?” and offering an invitation to join our work of bettering public transportation in Montrose. An online survey is also being circulated and in it we want to ask everyone, whether they ride the bus or not, what barriers they face in taking public transportation. We are about half way through this portion of the campaign issue identification process and some running themes have become apparent. People want weekend service, they want benches at the bus stops, and they want two buses on the residential route. These wants won't happen magically: it will require a coordinated campaign effort and the Alliance is the community organizing group to make it happen.

Our new leaders and our first campaign action is proving that we are ready to put our organizing skills to the test.



Uncompahgre Valley Alliance member and newly elected Fundraising Chair Laura Baker leads a team-building activity at the most recent membership meeting.

The Evolution of a Clarion

With this issue of the **Clarion**, you may have noticed that the flagship print publication of our Alliance has taken a big evolutionary leap!

We think you will find it still packed with the same information and news regarding Western Colorado Alliance and its affiliate groups, but in a new, hopefully more eye-pleasing format which will better serve our membership.

The decision to change the **Clarion** wasn't made lightly. Initially spurred by some dissatisfaction with the printing quality we were seeing on newsprint, Executive Director Emily Hornback directed the staff to engage in internal discussions and external data collection in order to set a path for a new **Clarion**.

As part of that effort, our Alliance

conducted targeted interviews, an in-house SWOT session, and ran online and print polls to ascertain how our members were experiencing the **Clarion**. We found that most members felt strongly that there was real value in continuing to offer the **Clarion** as a print publication. Several members praised the paper in its old format. “I love sitting down and reading HARD COPY covering issues in areas where I have lived and also that I care about,” wrote one member.

Our first priority was finding a format which would provide the space to write about our efforts to make Western Colorado communities more healthy, just, and self-reliant, but which will be easy to read, offer more graphic possibilities, and not leave your fingers dirty after reading it! With that in mind, welcome to the new **Clarion**!

And please allow us to introduce you to Destiny Faithe, who is joining the **Clarion** production team as a contract designer. Destiny is the proprietor of Spark Design Studio (you can see some of her great work at <https://sparkdesign.studio>), and has helped the Alliance's Communication Coordinator Arn McConnell shape the new look of the **Clarion**. We're very happy to have her on the **Clarion** team!

This is just a beginning step, and we hope to introduce other features in the **Clarion** to improve it further. But we sincerely hope you like what you've seen so far!

Please don't hesitate to let us know your thoughts on the new design by writing arn@westerncoloradoalliance.org!



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BREAKOUT SESSION PREFERENCES (see page 7):

- _____ Wings of Diversity
Promoting Equity and Inclusion in Our Communities
- _____ Harvesting Growth
Fundraising for Community Empowerment
- _____ What's the Word, Hummingbird?
Connecting with Local Decision Makers

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___ NEWBIES @ \$30 =	___
___ PAY IT FORWARD @ \$40 =	___
___ Kids under 12 =	FREE
TOTAL =	___