

2017 2nd Quarter Issues Report for Wyoming Public Media

Issue: Energy

Topic: A new coal mine may open in Wyoming for the first time in 50 years. State regulators issued a permit for the Brook Mine back in December, paving the way for construction to begin. But now that permit has become the center of a controversy. Landowners, environmental groups, and even a coal company are taking issue with it. Cooper McKim reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14-3pm and 7-16-noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: The wind energy industry is growing worldwide, and so is the global competition between turbine-makers. That battle is now playing out in Wyoming, a state with some of the best wind potential in the nation. In the next few years two massive wind power projects are slated to come on line. To get an edge, a Chinese company is trying to win over the state's scant pool of workers through free training to become a wind turbine technician. Inside Energy's Madelyn Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14-3pm and 7-16-noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Newly minted Interior Department Secretary Ryan Zinke just took a massive step towards streamlining the permitting process for oil and gas drilling on federal lands. Correspondent Matt Laslo reports from Washington that while Wyoming lawmakers love the move, Democrats fear it's a dangerous first step down a slippery slope.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14-3pm and 7-16-noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: In Wyoming, the industry still uses open wastewater pits. Newer commercial pits have to put up a bond to pay for eventual cleanup, but 11 older ponds have no bonds. The state is now changing the rules to make sure all pit owners pay for reclamation, targeting that loophole for older pits. One pit owner sees the move as unfair and nearly impossible, while another sees it as necessary. Inside Energy's Madelyn Beck reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 7-21 at 3pm and 7-23 at noon on WPR. 7-23 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A changing climate may be bad PR for fossil fuels but, ironically, it could help their bottom line. Two major coal companies released earnings reports last week. They said higher

temperatures across the country meant coal stockpiles were being eaten up. They're hoping for a long hot summer so that trend continues. Inside Energy's Madelyn Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-4 at 3pm and 8-6 at noon on WPR. 8-6 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Since January, President Trump has ordered systematic rollbacks of Obama-era environmental regulations. He's voiced an intent to focus on energy development and jobs over environmental regulation. Many of these rules were crafted by Obama's Environmental Protection Agency under Gina McCarthy. She was EPA Administrator during his second term. They focused on taking strong steps against climate change. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim spoke with McCarthy during her visit to Wyoming and gets *her* reaction to these changes.

Time: 7 min

Date: 9-29-17 at 3pm on WPR

Topic: In 2012, Wyoming set some of the strongest emissions limits on oil and gas companies in the country. Guidelines in the Upper Green River Basin require companies to restrict pollutants that may lead to ozone — a dangerous greenhouse gas. With several other states following suit, the Environmental Protection Agency is now on the verge of enforcing similar rules nationally. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports how the Upper Green can act as a model for both the state and the country.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-4 at 3pm and 8-6 at noon on WPR. 8-6 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: If you've ever spent time in Rock Springs, you may have had a hard time finding your way around its winding blocks and sudden buttes. The city's sprawl is a turn-off for some, and the historic downtown area is isolated from Interstate 80. Rock Springs is one of several communities in Wyoming trying to reenergize their downtowns through a program called Main Street. Wyoming Public Radio's Alanna Elder reports, Rock Springs' history as a coal town is a benefit and an obstacle to these efforts.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-25 at 3pm and 8-27 at noon on WPR. 8-27 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Politics

Topic: The Endangered Species Act has been the law of the land for more than 40 years. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website, the act was intended to highlight the “esthetic, ecological, educational, recreational, and scientific value to our Nation and its people.” But Wyoming Senator John Barrasso says it needs updating.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8/4 3pm and 8/6 noon on WPR. 8/6 9am on WPM.

Topic: Early this summer lawmakers were looking at a massive shortfall in education funding and overall revenue. That pushed lawmakers into a lengthy discussion about possible tax hikes. The idea was to hold a number of hearings over the summer on a variety of proposals and then pass bills that would raise \$100 million, \$200 million and \$300 million. But a funny thing happened on the way to passing tax legislation the state’s revenue picture improved.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-25 at 3pm and 8-27 at noon on WPR. 8-27 at 9am on WPM

Topic: One reason some lawmakers have backed off on their support of tax increases is that Wyoming is making a lot of money from investments. Unrealized gains sit around \$900 million and even the energy industry has had a slight uptick. State Treasurer Mark Gordon says that it’s true, things are good. But he also tells Wyoming Public Radio’s Bob Beck that lawmakers should be careful about using investment money versus a more stable source of revenue.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-25 at 3pm and 8-27 at noon on WPR. 8-27 at 9am on WPM

Topic: The Trump White House is blaming Congress for “slow walking” the president’s nominees to fill out his cabinet. But some lawmakers say the blame lies with the White House. Washington correspondent Matt Laslo has the story.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-18 at 3pm and 8-20 at noon on WPR. 8-20 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's lawmakers just returned to Washington after a summer break that President Trump urged the Senate to cut short to take up more of his agenda. Matt Laslo reports from Washington on what Wyoming lawmakers think they can accomplish this fall.

Time: 4 min

Date: 9-8-17 at 3pm and 9-10-17 at noon on WPR. 9-10-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Cities and towns are terrified about their financial future...especially when it comes to having a stable source of revenue. Years ago legislators removed direct funding...preferring instead to fund them on a bi-annual basis from the state general fund. But Lawmakers have been engaged in budget cuts and communities fear they will lose their general fund money. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that communities think one solution is to have the ability to raise their own revenue.

Time: 5 min

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

Topic: The Equality State Policy Center has launched a new effort called The People's Review. It's intended to let the public know how their legislators voted on key legislation supported by social justice, conservation, and labor groups in Wyoming. The Director of the ESPC is Phoebe Stoner. She speaks with Bob Beck.

Time: 6 min

Date: 9-29-17 at 3pm on WPR

Topic: Wildfires have dominated headlines in much of western Wyoming this summer. Wyoming Senator John Barrasso chairs the Senate Environment Committee and this week held a hearing on a string of bills that proponents say will help keep those catastrophic wildfires at bay. But Matt Laslo reports from Washington that some people say that lawmakers are trying to do too much.

Time: 5 min

Date: 9-29-17 at 3pm on WPR

Issue: Education

Topic: For thousands of low income children in Wyoming, there **is** such a thing as a free lunch, at least during the school year. In order to provide healthy food to students who rely on free or reduced meals throughout vacation, schools and other organizations are attempting to offer free

summer meals to kids. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Alanna Elder reports, they aren't reaching everyone.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14-3pm and 7-16-noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Last year, twenty of Wyoming's 48 school districts reported they had to reduce their supply budgets, and this year that number jumped to 38, according to survey results compiled by the state legislature. As a result, parents may see a longer list of back-to-school supplies they're asked to purchase. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson discovered a lot of teachers are pitching in with their personal funds, too.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-25-17 at 3pm and 8-27-noon on WPR. 8-27-17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Health Care

Topic: Schools are a steady source of more than just lunch. Teachers and counselors are also a source of support for kids who are struggling with mental health issues. But just like hunger, which doesn't pause for summer, emotional turmoil doesn't take a break either. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death nationally for people between the ages of 10 and 24. As Wyoming Public Radio's Tennessee Watson reports, that's why a unique partnership has formed in Campbell County . . . to support kids year round.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14-3pm and 7-16-noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: One of the major problems in Wyoming is the lack of affordable health care. It's an old issue and while health insurance is certainly a piece, there are few affordable places people can go who are without insurance or who are underinsured with high deductibles. For many years Laramie has had a clinic for **very low income** people, it now has another health clinic for those who have fallen through the cracks. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14-3pm and 7-16-noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: As the Senate health insurance reform effort remains on life support, Wyoming's two senators are pushing their Republican colleagues to get on board with the effort. Correspondent Matt Laslo reports from Washington that they face an uphill battle convincing some frustrated senators to go along.

Time: 4 min

Date: 7-21-3pm and 7-23 at noon on WPR. 7-23 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Eclipse

Topic: Many Wyoming communities are expecting a surge in visitors in the days surrounding the August 21 eclipse, but Jackson officials say if the weather holds it could be anywhere between 50-thousand to 80-thousand extra people visiting the area. Jackson is always packed on that date, but the potential increase in visitors has led to months of planning and the hiring of a coordinator to make sure Jackson Hole can get through the event. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-4 at 3pm and 8-6 at noon on WPR. 8-6 at 9am on WPM

Topic: When everything goes perfectly, a total eclipse of the sun is impressive. What might be overwhelming, is the potential for hundreds of thousands of visitors to flood into Wyoming to see it. But that's what has been predicted. Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard found out such a huge event requires a lot of planning.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-18 at 3pm and 8-20 at noon on WPR. 8-20 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming towns in the path of totality for the solar eclipse are expecting huge crowds, including Casper, and hotel rooms there are almost entirely booked. As a result, a record number of locals are using the home sharing service "Airbnb" to accommodate visitors and to make some of that eclipse cash. Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen has more.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-18 at 3pm and 8-20 at noon on WPR. 8-20 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Goshen County is a small agricultural county that rarely attracts masses of people. But the upcoming eclipse is changing that. As the solar event passes directly over the area, residents and businesses are preparing for a huge influx of people and hopefully funds. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-18 at 3pm and 8-20 at noon on WPR. 8-20 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: For most of us, a total solar eclipse is a once-in-a-lifetime event ...And that's why, for some people, it doesn't seem right to commemorate it with a t-shirt or a typical souvenir. So many are buying original art...and artists are scrambling to have enough artwork to supply the need. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-18 at 3pm and 8-20 at noon on WPR. 8-20 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Agriculture

Topic: Two years ago, Wyoming passed the Food Freedom Act, giving the state the most lenient local food regulations in the country. It allows Wyoming farmers to sell things other states can't... raw milk, eggs and poultry direct to consumers. But many Wyoming food producers say, there's still one road block: beef. As Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports the issue is that federal regulations make it hard to market Wyoming branded beef outside the state where all the customers are.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14 at 3pm and 7-16 at noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: For several years, Wyoming's Congressional delegation have introduced bills that would allow the state to use more of the Colorado River water in the Fontenelle dam. Politicians have talked about the economic promise of the dam since it was built for agriculture in the 1960s, and now it's part of the state's plan to store more water. The project wouldn't change the size of the reservoir, but as Wyoming Public Radio's Alanna Elder reports, the plan could impact fishing.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-23 at 3pm and 7-25 at noon on WPR. 7-25 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Sexual Assault and crime

Topic: On July 6, the University of Wyoming came under federal investigation for its handling of reports of sexual violence made last year. The student who filed the complaint with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights says she came forward with the hope of strengthening the university's policies and procedures. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-4 at 3pm and 8-6 at noon on WPR, 8-6 at 9am on WPM

Topic: In August we aired a story about a University of Wyoming student who filed a Title 9 complaint with the federal government about the handling of her sexual assault. Since then Education Secretary Betsy DeVos initiated an overhaul of the federal guidelines concerning sexual violence enforcement on college campuses. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson explores UW efforts to prevent sexual violence.

Time: 5 min

Date: 9-29-17 at 3pm on WPR

Issue: Native American Issues

Topic: Summer in Wyoming means a variety of shows dedicated to reenacting the Wild West. There will be cowboys and Indians — except in some locations the Native Americans will be played by white actors in redface — which is the situation in Lusk, Wyoming, where the two day production the “Legend of Rawhide” depicts Native Americans skinning a white settler alive. And as Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard reports, it's a town tradition.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-14 at 3pm and 7-16 at noon on WPR. 7-16 at 9am on WPM

In 1881, fifteen children from the Wind River Indian Reservation were sent to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. All were the children of chiefs, sent bearing gifts for their white educators. But only *six* of those children survived the experience. Three were buried in the school's cemetery. Now, as Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, the Northern Arapaho tribe has exhumed those graves so they could bring their ancestors home to be reburied.

Time: 6 min

Date: 9-29-17 at 3pm on WPR

Issue: Wildlife & Nature resources

Topic: Life isn't easy for the Wyoming Range mule deer herd. Some of them make the world's longest mule deer migration over rugged mountains. Along the way, they struggle with disease, predators, energy development... But last winter's record breaking snow pack was downright brutal. Every single fawn radio collared from the herd last year, died. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8/4 at 3pm and 8/6 at noon on WPR. 8/6 9am on WPM

Topic: Thousands of years ago in northern Wyoming, countless animals fell to their death at the bottom of an 85-foot-cave. Natural Trap Cave has long been closed to recreation, but scientists have spent the last 4 summers unearthing the remains of many now-extinct animals. As Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen reports, excavations will soon come to an end.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8/4 at 3pm and 8/6 at noon on WPR. 8/6 9am on WPM

Issue: Recreation

Topic: This summer, a University of Wyoming trail building program launched a work crew specifically for veterans in need of a job. As Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen reports the crew is the first of its kind in the country.

Time: 4 min

Date: 7/21 at 3pm & 7/23 at noon on WPR. 7/23 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Tourism is booming in Wyoming. Recreationists spent 5 point 6 billion dollars in the state last year, and parks and historic sites are seeing more visitors each season. But more people means more trash. While the national park system has embarked on an ambitious project to keep waste out of landfills, many state parks are still struggling to recycle. Wyoming Public Radio's Alanna Elder reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8/4 at 3pm and 8/6 at noon on WPR. 8/6 9am on WPM