

# NUCLEAR ENERGY

AN EMERGING ISSUE FORUM

APRIL 13-14, 2026

MARIAN H. ROCHELLE GATEWAY CENTER  
LARAMIE, WYOMING

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Convened by the University of Wyoming's Ruckelshaus Institute at the  
Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources, the School of Energy  
Resources, and the Wyoming Energy Authority



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**The Emerging Issue Forum is a chance to get ahead of an emerging natural resource issue in Wyoming. This year, the focus is on the full fuel cycle of nuclear energy. Held annually, the forum brings together stakeholders and decision-makers to jumpstart collaboration and provide space for the crosspollination of ideas and solutions.**

Across the country, growing energy demand, changing market preferences, and technological advances have created the conditions for what many are calling a “nuclear renaissance.” In Wyoming, that looks like a forecasted boom in our uranium mining, Kemmerer chosen as the site for the first ever Sodium advanced nuclear reactor, a recent grant to build a TRISO fuel fabrication plant in Gillette, and opportunities for high level manufacturing. It also looks like town halls with Wyoming residents concerned about spent fuel storage, environmental contamination, transportation of nuclear materials, regulatory changes, and more.

Together, the Ruckelshaus Institute, School of Energy Resources, and Wyoming Energy Authority see this moment as an opportunity to build a shared understanding of the benefits and risks of nuclear industries across the fuel cycle and create space to consider under what conditions they might be right for Wyoming’s communities.

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## Goals

1. Build a shared understanding of all parts of the nuclear energy fuel cycle, including the cultural and historical context, the potential risks and benefits, and the regulatory framework.
2. Equip participants with the knowledge and tools to engage in informed decision-making around current and future development of nuclear energy industries in Wyoming.
3. Identify policy, community engagement, research, planning, and other needs or opportunities and begin to develop strategies to address them.

# About Us

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Ruckelshaus  
Institute

## The Ruckelshaus Institute

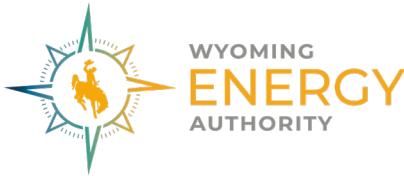
Inspired by William D. Ruckelshaus's legacy of collaboration, the Ruckelshaus Institute supports community-driven approaches to environmental challenges by advancing collaborative decision-making, convening discussions around emergent policy and management questions, and communicating insights and practical approaches to critical natural resource issues. Learn more at [uwyo.edu/ruckelshaus](http://uwyo.edu/ruckelshaus)



School of  
Energy Resources

## The School of Energy Resources

The School of Energy Resources (SER) at the University of Wyoming is dedicated to advancing energy-driven economic development for the state of Wyoming. Created in 2006, SER enhances the university's energy-related education, research, and outreach. Learn more at [uwyo.edu/ser](http://uwyo.edu/ser)



## The Wyoming Energy Authority

The Wyoming Energy Authority coordinates across the full energy spectrum to support project development, promote Wyoming's energy resources, and advance sustainable growth. It leverages policy, funding, and innovation to strengthen the State's energy sector while ensuring environmental stewardship and long-term competitiveness. Learn more at [wyoenergy.org](http://wyoenergy.org)

## Thanks to our steering committee members

- Jim Anderson, Chairman, Senate Minerals, Business & Economic Development Committee, Wyoming State Legislature
- John Burrows, Energy and Climate Policy Director, Wyoming Outdoor Council
- Travis Deti, Executive Director, Wyoming Mining Association
- Jim Ford, Campbell County Commissioner
- Brandi O'Brien, Land Quality Administrator, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
- Jake Hawes, Assistant Professor, University of Wyoming School of Computing and Haub School and Faculty Affiliate, Center for Rural Community Resilience and Innovation
- Scott Heiner, Chairman, House Minerals, Business & Economic Development Committee and Majority Floor Leader, Wyoming State Legislature
- Dawson Kluesner, External Affairs Director, Wyoming Association of Municipalities and Coordinator, Wyoming Economic Development Association
- Rita Meyer, CEO, Wyoming Energy Futures
- Glen Murrell, Director of Regional and Industry Engagement and Wyoming Regional Engagement Lead, Idaho National Laboratory
- Clay Richardson, Vice President - Advanced Fuels, BWXT



# Thanks to our sponsors

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## Special thanks

to Idaho National Laboratory for their generous provision of the Nuclear Science Trailer



## U235 Sponsor



School of Energy Resources

## UF6 Sponsors



## Yellowcake Sponsors



Center for Rural Community Resilience and Innovation



## Thanks to our planning team

- Birch Malotky, Emerging Issues Initiative Coordinator, Ruckelshaus Institute
- Tara Righetti, Co-director, Nuclear Energy Research Center, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources
- Sean Schaub, Nuclear Industry Coordinator, Wyoming Energy Authority
- Dylan Fernholz-Hartman, Co-coordinator and Graduate Research Assistant, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources
- Vicky Harder, Co-coordinator and Graduate Research Assistant, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources
- Anastasia Brady, Special Events Coordinator, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources
- Melanie Armstrong, Director, Ruckelshaus Institute

# Day 1 Agenda: April 13

Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center | 222 S 22nd St, Laramie, WY 82070

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## 8:00-9:00am: Hot Breakfast and Registration

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### 9:00-9:20am: Welcome

Why Nuclear and Why Wyoming?

- Tara Righetti, Co-director, Nuclear Energy Research Center, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources
  - Sean Schaub, Nuclear Industry Coordinator, Wyoming Energy Authority
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### 9:20-9:45am: Story Circle

What is a formative memory or experience you have around nuclear?

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### 9:45-10:30am: Presentation + Q&A

Nuclear history and legacies

- Christine King, Director, Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear, Idaho National Laboratory
  - Jonathan Grams, Project Researcher, Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear, Idaho National Laboratory
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### 10:30-10:45am: Break

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### 10:45-11:30pm: Presentation + Q&A

Radiation and Nuclear Fuel Cycle Overview

- Liane Moreau, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, University of Wyoming College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
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### 11:30-12:30pm: Presentations + Q&A

Uranium Milling and Mining: State of the industry and regulation

- Matthew Gili, President, Ur-Energy
  - Brandi O'Brien, Land Quality Administrator, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
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### 12:30-1:30pm: Buffet Lunch

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### **1:30-2:30pm: Panel + Q&A**

Economic development opportunities across and beyond the fuel cycle

- Moderator: Sean Schaub, Nuclear Industry Coordinator, Wyoming Energy Authority
- Brent Berg, Senior Vice President, US Operations, Uranium Energy Corp
- Will Cayton, BANR Business Manager, BWXT
- Rita Meyer, CEO, Wyoming Energy Futures
- Mike Wandler, President, L&H Industrial

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### **2:30-2:45pm: Break**

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### **2:45-3:45pm: Presentation + Panel**

Understanding the regulatory ecosystem: Licensing and high level waste

- Moderator: Tara Righetti, Co-director, Nuclear Energy Research Center, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources
- Jenny Staeben, Industrial Siting Administrator, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
- Tison Campbell, Partner, K&L Gates LLP

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### **3:45-4:30pm: Panel**

Collaborating with Communities: A preview of Day 2 discussions on engagement and planning

- Moderator: Melanie Armstrong, Ruckelshaus Institute Director, University of Wyoming
- Rachael Budowle, Collegiate Associate Professor, Virginia Tech Honors College
- Jennifer Richter, Associate Professor, Arizona State University School for the Future of Innovation in Society
- Big Wind Carpenter, Northern Arapaho, Wyoming Outdoor Council Tribal Engagement Coordinator (They/Them)

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### **4:30-6:30pm: Public Reception and "Science Fair"**

Explore hands-on, interactive learning opportunities about the nuclear fuel cycle while enjoying appetizers and a cash bar. Activities include the Idaho National Lab Nuclear Science Trailer and more. This event does not require forum registration to attend.

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### **Optional: Dinner at Altitude Chophouse & Brewery**

320 S 2nd St, Laramie, WY 82070 | Back room reserved under "Nuclear Forum"

- Starting at 6:30pm and continuing through the evening, connect with other forum attendees and keep the conversation going with a buy-your-own dinner at Altitude Chophouse & Brewery in downtown Laramie.

# Day 2 Agenda: April 14

Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center | 222 S 22nd St, Laramie, WY 82070

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## 8:00-9:00am: Hot Breakfast

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## 9:00-10:30am: Concurrent workshop sessions - Social legitimacy and community visioning

This multi-part morning session will focus on why building social legitimacy is critical to successful development and explore a variety of strategies and frameworks for facilitating genuine community engagement. Each session begins with brief kickoff presentations sharing experiences with, and research on, community engagement around nuclear, then participants will practice a hands-on community engagement activity. These strategies should be equally useful to industries interested in community engagement, elected officials, and community organizations or citizens groups.

### **Salon A: Community, Capacity, and Collaboration: Lessons from public forums across Arizona about nuclear waste management**

- Kickoff presentation: Jennifer Richter, Associate Professor, Arizona State University School for the Future of Innovation in Society

### **Salon B/C: Engaging communities in advanced nuclear energy facility siting: Lessons from a case study of the Natrium project in Kemmerer, Wyoming**

- Kickoff presentation: Rachael Budowle, Collegiate Associate Professor, Virginia Tech Honors College

### **Salon D/E: Never again: Nuclear impacts and lessons from Arapahoe**

- Kickoff presentation: Big Wind Carpenter, Northern Arapaho, Wyoming Outdoor Council Tribal Engagement Coordinator (They/Them)
- Rae Friday
- Nolan Friday

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## 10:30-10:45am: Break

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## 10:45-12:00pm: Salon B/C - Action planning

Following the morning sessions, participants will be asked to identify what community conversations need to happen around nuclear development in Wyoming, then will self-select into facilitated small groups tasked with figuring out what it would take to move those conversations forward. Participants may, for example, coalesce around a particular proposed project, a specific geographic area, a part of the fuel cycle, or different ways to support these conversations through funding, capacity-building, or toolkits. Because these sessions will be driven by small-group discussions, please come prepared to participate.

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## 12:00-1:00pm: Buffet Lunch



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## 1:00-2:30pm: Concurrent workshop sessions - Planning for responsible economic development

These afternoon sessions will address key considerations for after a community has decided to pursue, or be open to, development. Like the morning, the sessions will begin with brief kickoff presentations, then participants will self-select into facilitated small groups tasked with imagining what this means for their communities, or moving the needle on identified barriers and opportunities. Because these sessions will be driven by small-group discussions, please come prepared to participate.

### **Salon A: Workforce development: How Wyoming can take advantage of nuclear industry jobs, and grow our workforce to attract further development**

- Crystal Reyes, Dean of Manufacturing, Industrial Technology, and Workforce Development, Western Wyoming Community College
- Selena Gerace, Program Manager, Energy Engagement, Leadership, and Careers Program, UW School of Energy Resources

### **Salon B/C: Building resilient communities: Mitigating impacts and securing long-run benefits from industrial development**

- Grete Gansauer, Assistant Professor of Sustainable Communities, UW Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources

### **Salon D/E: Wyoming's nuclear supply chain: Economic benefits and barriers across the nuclear energy fuel cycle**

- Alexander Charles Gebben, Energy Economist, UW Center for Business and Economic Analysis

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## 2:30-2:45pm: Break

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## 2:45-3:45pm: Takeaways panel and final commitments

- Moderator: Birch Malotky, Emerging Issue Initiative Coordinator, Ruckelshaus Institute
- Jim Anderson, Chairman, Senate Minerals, Business & Economic Development Committee, Wyoming State Legislature
- John Burrows, Energy and Climate Policy Director, Wyoming Outdoor Council
- Will Cayton, BANR Business Manager, BWXT
- Travis Deti, Executive Director, Wyoming Mining Association
- Jim Ford, Campbell County Commissioner
- Brandi O'Brien, Land Quality Administrator, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
- Scott Heiner, Chairman, House Minerals, Business & Economic Development Committee and Majority Floor Leader, Wyoming State Legislature
- Dawson Kluesner, External Affairs Director, Wyoming Association of Municipalities and Coordinator, Wyoming Economic Development Association
- Glen Murrell, Director of Regional and Industry Engagement and Wyoming Regional Engagement Lead, Idaho National Laboratory
- Tara Righetti, Co-director, Nuclear Energy Research Center, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources
- Sean Schaub, Nuclear Industry Coordinator, Wyoming Energy Authority

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## 4:00-6:00pm: Joint reception with the Rocky Mountain Land and Resource Management Conference

The Student Chapter for Energy Resources will host a joint networking reception sponsored by the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources. The Rocky Mountain Land and Resource Management Conference, co-convened by the School of Energy Resources and the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources, will take place the following day, April 15, at the Gateway Center.

# Speaker Bios

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## Melanie Armstrong

Melanie Armstrong is the Director of the Ruckelshaus Institute and an Associate Professor in the Haub School of Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming. In these roles she aims to integrate scholarship and collaborative practice to enable creative, scientific, and community-driven responses to land management challenges. She researches how social systems are built around shifting ideologies of nature and is the author of *Germ Wars: The Politics of Nature and America's Landscape of Fear* and co-author of *Environmental Realism: Challenging Solutions*. Her 15-year career with the National Park Service also provided a laboratory for exploring complex natural resources issues in the landscapes of the American West.

## Brent Berg

Brent Berg is an environmental engineer and project management professional with over 29 years' experience in the mining and mineral processing industry, including 24 years working at in-situ recovery "ISR" and conventional uranium facilities. Mr. Berg was appointed Senior Vice-President, U.S. Operations of Uranium Energy Corp in March 2024. Mr. Berg previously worked for Rare Element Resources as President and CEO, Taseko Mines as General Manager of the Florence Copper Project, and for Excelsior Mining Corp. as Vice President of Sustainability, Health & Safety. Additionally, Brent spent over 21 years at Cameco Corporation in various roles, including as President of Cameco Resources, where he was responsible for oversight of the company's U.S. in-situ uranium operations in Wyoming and Nebraska. Brent is a Professional Engineer with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Systems Engineering and an MBA from the University of Regina. In 2023, Brent received a Master of Legal Studies degree from the University of Arizona with a focus on mining law and policy.

## Rachael Budowle

Rachael Budowle, Ph.D. is a collegiate associate professor in the Virginia Tech Honors College with an adjunct appointment at the University of Wyoming Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources. As a cultural anthropologist, her transdisciplinary and community-engaged research and teaching focus on a range of social-ecological community resilience and sustainability topics and contexts. These include food security and sovereignty; community and university climate action; and emerging energy siting processes. She is lead principal investigator for the U.S. Department of Energy-funded Engaging Wyoming Communities in Advanced Nuclear Energy Facility Siting project. Additionally, she serves on the national Executive Committee of the Interinstitutional Network for Food, Agriculture, and Sustainability and as an associate editor for the *Journal of Food Systems, Agriculture and Community Development*.



## John Burrows

John Burrows is the Energy and Climate Policy Director for the Wyoming Outdoor Council, Wyoming's oldest independent conservation organization. His policy and community engagement work focuses on balancing the needs of responsible energy development with environmental protection. In his role, John and his team work closely with community partners, academic institutions, and local and state policymakers on a range of topics, including air and water quality, nuclear energy, renewable energy, and, more recently, data center development. John's roots trace back to the mountains of western North Carolina, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies as a Morehead-Cain Scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He later received his master's degree in Environmental Management from Duke University and is a recent graduate of the University of Wyoming's Collaborative Program in Natural Resources. John has spent the last 9 years living and working in Lander, Wyoming, where he serves as a local Rotarian and sits on the board of Lander's fisheries conservation group, the Popo Agie Anglers.

## Tison Campbell

Tison Campbell is a partner at K&L Gates in the firm's Policy and Regulatory practice. His practice focuses on nuclear energy and the use of nuclear materials. Tison joined the firm after more than 19 years at the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, where he served in various senior leadership roles, including as the assistant general counsel for legislation, ethics, and administrative law; the assistant general counsel for materials, fuel cycle, and waste programs; the assistant general counsel for operating reactors; and the acting assistant general counsel for reactors and materials rulemaking, where he led OGC's rulemaking support activities and provided legal support for the Agreement State Program.

## Big Wind Carpenter

Big Wind Carpenter is a member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe from Arapahoe, Wyoming and currently serves as Tribal Engagement Coordinator at the Wyoming Outdoor Council. With more than 15 years of advocacy experience across Indian Country, Big Wind's work on nuclear issues is very personal. It is rooted in their community's history with uranium contamination. They emphasize that the future of nuclear energy must consider affected communities and incorporate accountability, rather than repeating the same mistakes.

## Will Cayton

Will Cayton has over two decades of experience in various operational and leadership roles across multiple BWXT divisions specializing in supply chain, project management and process improvement within the nuclear industry. Currently serving as a Senior Business Manager at BWXT Advanced

Technologies, his focus has been on the development of supply chains for first-of-a-kind microreactors and is now leading the efforts to site and build a TRISO Fuel Facility in Gillette, WY.

## Jim Ford

A Wyoming native and lifelong Campbell County resident, Jim's early career centered on the Rocky Mountain West regional energy sector in capital facilities design and construction, project management, upstream infrastructure in O&G, transportation and logistics, and rail terminal operations. He is co-founder of US Carbon, Inc, currently manages contract operations at the Wyoming Innovation Center and the Wyoming Integrated Test Center, is Partner and General Manager of the Fort Union Industrial Rail Park, and is in his first elected term of the Campbell County Wyoming Board of Commissioners. He lives in Gillette with his wife Kandis and children Ethan and Sarah.

## Grete Gansauer

Dr. Grete Gansauer is an Assistant Professor of Sustainable Communities in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming. She is an economic geographer and interdisciplinary public policy researcher focused on regional economic resilience, public services and place-based policies in rural communities. Specifically, she is interested in contributing to planning and policy strategies which sustain essential services of the 'Foundational Economy' within resource-based economic contexts. She has held fellowships and visiting appointments with the US Department of Agriculture, National Academies of Sciences (Washington DC), University of Cambridge (UK), and Lund University (Sweden), leading her to collaborate on research in the US, UK, Sweden, and Finland. Currently, she is a trustee of the Regional Studies Association, and she co-organizes EdgeNet, a global research network on peripheral regions and why they matter.

## Alex Gebben

Alex Gebben is an Energy Economist conducting research with the Center for Business and Economic Analysis. From the Colorado School of Mines, he holds a PhD and MSc in Mineral and Energy Economics, as well as a BSc in Petroleum Engineering. Alex's most recent work covers the nuclear sector in Wyoming with a series of feasibility and impact studies across the supply chain. Other areas of work include ground water management, oil industry incentives, unconventional methods of lithium recovery, and energy choices in bitcoin mining. He is particularly interested in how these industries are responsive to policy, natural resources, and economic outcomes. Alex is an avid fly fisherman with a love for the outdoors, and loves exploring Wyoming with his family.



## Selena Gerace

Selena Gerace has an undergraduate degree in Politics from Whitman College and a master's degree in Agricultural & Applied Economics and Environment & Natural Resources from the University of Wyoming. She has experience in stakeholder engagement, collaborative decision making, and public communication and outreach of scientific research. Currently, Gerace is a research program manager at the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources where she has a joint appointment in the Energy Engagement, Careers, and Leadership Program. Her research focuses on public perceptions of energy, the social license to operate, and engagement with rural and energy-producing communities.

## Matt Gili

Mr. Gili was appointed in December 2025 as the President and CEO of Ur-Energy. Matt is a seasoned mining executive who has more than two decades of proven senior leadership and extensive operational experience across several publicly traded mining companies. Throughout his career, Matt has built a reputation for driving operational excellence, strengthening organizational capability, and leading growth initiatives. Before joining Ur-Energy, he served as President and Chief Operating Officer of i-80 Gold Corporation, where he oversaw operational growth and advanced multiple development projects. He was also formerly the Chief Executive Officer of Nevada Copper Corporation, guiding the company through critical stages of project development and early operations. Mr. Gili has held senior leadership roles at some of the world's largest mining companies. At Barrick, he served as Executive General Manager of the Cortez District before being promoted to Chief Technical Officer, where he provided strategic oversight of global technical functions. He also held leadership positions at Rio Tinto, including Managing Director of the Palabora Mining Company in South Africa and Chief Operating Office of Oyu Tolgoi in Mongolia, where he led large, multicultural teams and delivered sustained operational improvements. Recognized for his commitment to safety, community engagement, and responsible development, Mr. Gili has served as Chairman of the Palabora Foundation, a South African nonprofit focused on community empowerment and as Chairman of the Mongolian Safety Association. He holds a B.Sc. in Mining Engineering from the University of Idaho and is a Registered P.E. in the state of Idaho.

## Jon Grams

Jon Grams, (MA Nuclear Technology Development, MSHP) works with GAIN (Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear) as a technical researcher in their legacy documentation program. He also collaborates on multiple projects with Idaho National Laboratory's NS&T (Nuclear Science and Technology) division including the Advanced Fuels Campaign (AFC), HTGR (High Temperature Gas Cooled Reactor) research and development via the Advanced Reactor Technologies or ART program, and reactor balance of plant technologies. His expertise includes open and closed cycle turbomachinery, helium HTGR design, high performance fuels development, nuclear thermal propulsion (NTP) and fission space power systems technology development, and legacy advanced reactor technologies.

## Christine King

As Director of the Gateway for Acceleration in Nuclear (GAIN) initiative, Christine King facilitates a range of public-private partnerships to help move innovative nuclear energy technologies toward commercialization. As these technologies mature, GAIN works with communities and states to evaluate how nuclear energy may provide new economic opportunities as well serve their citizens. Finally, GAIN works to ensure that the nuclear ecosystem is also prepared to support the scale and deployment of 200GW of new nuclear in the United States to meet decarbonization and sustainability goals. Prior to GAIN, she worked in the private sector for 27 years in roles ranging from outage maintenance to collaborative research and technology investments. BS in chemical engineering from North Carolina State University MBA from Lynchburg College

## Dawson Kluesner

Dawson Kluesner joined the Wyoming Association of Municipalities in September 2025, where he leads stakeholder engagement, supports statewide advocacy efforts, and oversees communications. He also serves as Coordinator for the Wyoming Economic Development Association, working closely with local governments, industry leaders, and policymakers on issues shaping Wyoming's economic future. Previously, Dawson served as an Energy Economist at the University of Wyoming's School of Energy Resources, where he led research examining the impacts of local, state, and federal policy on Wyoming's energy industries.

## Birch Malotky

Birch Malotky is the Emerging Issues Initiative Coordinator at the University of Wyoming's Ruckelshaus Institute, a division of the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources. In addition to coordinating activities and stakeholder engagement around emerging natural resource issues in the state of Wyoming, she also writes, edits, produces, and publishes a range of science communication materials for the Haub School, including Western Confluence magazine.

## Rita Meyer

Rita is currently Chief Executive Officer of Wyoming Energy Futures, LLC and is solely dedicated to TerraPower's Advanced Nuclear Power Demonstration Project in Kemmerer, Wyoming. She previously served 10 years as Rocky Mountain Power's VP for Wyoming. Rita had a distinguished 23-year career in the United States Air Force. She is a combat veteran with service in both Afghanistan and Iraq as well as with the Counterdrug Directorate in Washington, D.C.



## Liane Moreau

Prof. Liane Moreau comes to UW from Washington State University, where she led a research group in the area of Nuclear Nanotechnology. In short, her group aims to understand what happens to the structural and electronic properties of the radioactive actinide elements as you make them very small in size, down to the atomic and nanometer length scales. The Moreau group both synthesizes the actinide particles that they study, as well as performs comprehensive characterization on these new systems to understand structure/property relationships.

## Glen Murrell

Dr. Glen Murrell has worked in energy research and development during a career spanning over two decades. Before coming to Idaho National Laboratory, he served as executive director of the Wyoming Energy Authority and has also served in a variety of leadership roles aimed at advancing projects and technologies in the oil and gas industry for General Electric and Baker Hughes and the Wyoming Enhanced Oil Recovery Institute. An active participant in regional initiatives, Murrell has been a key figure in the Western Inter-State Hydrogen Hub coalition and the Western Green Hydrogen Initiative. Recognized as an authority in the energy domain, Murrell has testified before the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, as well as numerous Wyoming state government committees. His insights have helped shape energy policies and strategies. Murrell holds a doctorate in geology from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (2003), along with bachelor's and master's degrees in geology from University of Waikato (1995 & 1997).

## Brandi O'Brien

Brandi O'Brien is the Administrator for the Land Quality Division (LQD) at the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ). With over 15 years of service to the WDEQ, Brandi brings extensive regulatory expertise to her leadership role. She previously spent nine years within the LQD's Source Material and Uranium Recovery Program. Her foundational experience also includes four years within the Air Quality Division. Brandi holds a B.S. in Nuclear Engineering and a research background, having spent three years as a fellowship student at the Idaho National Laboratory focusing on uranium nitride fuel development.

## Crystal Reyes

Crystal Reyes is the Dean of Manufacturing, Industrial Technology, and Workforce Development at Western Wyoming Community College. She leads efforts to align education and training with industry needs, with a strong focus on energy and emerging sectors like nuclear. Previously serving as Director of Workforce Development, Crystal has extensive experience building employer partnerships, developing

talent pipelines, and designing flexible training programs to meet regional workforce demands. She holds a Master of Public Administration from California State University, Bakersfield and is actively engaged in advancing Wyoming's workforce to support future energy development.

## Jen Richter

Jennifer Richter is an associate professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society and School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University. She is also a senior Global Futures Scholar with the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory. Professor Richter focuses on identifying and articulating systemic energy injustices, and informing new methods and processes to include more diverse voices in energy planning, for more equitable and intergenerational energy futures. More specifically, she has been researching social and political aspects of the back-end of the nuclear fuel cycle since 2005, and most recently was a co-PI on a Department of Energy grant to inform a community-driven process for siting interim nuclear waste facilities. She is a contributor to "Our Radioactive Neighbors: Collaborative Imagination, Community Futures, and Nuclear Siting Practices" (2026), an edited volume of speculative nuclear waste futures and essays, published by the Center for Science and the Imagination at ASU.

## Tara Righetti

Tara Righetti is the Occidental Professor of Energy and Environmental Policy and the co-director of the Nuclear Energy Research Center at the University of Wyoming. Prior to joining UW, she worked in the oil and gas sector at an upstream E&P. Her research focuses on administrative and property law issues related to energy and extractives, including state and federal regulation of nuclear facilities.

## Sean Schaub

Sean Schaub is the Nuclear Industry Coordinator at the Wyoming Energy Authority, where he helps lead statewide efforts to position Wyoming as a leader in the evolving nuclear energy landscape. A geologist by training, Sean began his career in Wyoming's uranium industry, which is where his passion for nuclear energy originated. His career has since spanned global supply chain management, hands-on work with Wyoming's manufacturing sector through the state's Manufacturing Extension Partnership center, and now, strategic collaboration with policymakers, industry leaders, regulators, higher education institutions, workforce and economic development agencies, and other statewide stakeholders. Sean aims to leverage his unique perspective and collaborative approach as a means of advancing nuclear energy development throughout Wyoming and the United States as a whole.



## Jenny Staeben

Dr. Staeben is the Industrial Siting Administration for the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. She was a research scientist, project manager and consultant in the antimicrobial and pesticide industries and has served Wyoming as a public defender, prosecutor and civil county attorney. Most recently she has worked for the Wyoming Attorney General's Office where she served as legal counsel for the Game & Fish Department and the DEQ, including the Industrial Siting Division. Her education includes: a bachelor's degree in Insect Biology from the University of Wyoming, a master's degree in Entomology from Clemson University, a juris doctorate from the University of Wyoming, and a doctorate in Forest Resources in the study of semiochemical ecology from the University of Georgia.

## Mike Wandler

Mike Wandler prioritizes love, freedom, mental and physical fitness, energy, and flow. He is the President of L&H Industrial, Inc., a third-generation family-owned company that provides Engineering & Design, Manufacturing & Repair, and Field Services to heavy industries worldwide. L&H serves key sectors such as Mining, Oil & Gas, Railroad, Wind Energy, Government, and other specialized industries—delivering innovative solutions with a relentless focus on quality, service, safety, and innovation. In addition to his leadership at L&H, Mike is the CEO of Evercore Energy, a startup dedicated to innovating energy by including the deployment of microreactors for heavy industries across the globe. Evercore Energy's mission is to revolutionize energy reliability, efficiency, and sustainability for industrial operations. Mike is also the Founder and Leader of Wyoming's Innovative Entrepreneurs, an initiative committed to growing and diversifying Wyoming's economy. The organization empowers entrepreneurs to think big, leverage strategic resources, and achieve their long-term business goals with resilience and adaptability.



Undergraduate/Graduate

# Nuclear Energy Science

*Certificate Program*



## About The Certificate

The Nuclear Energy Science Certificate Program is being offered due to growing opportunities in Wyoming and beyond.

This certificate will provide UW students interested in pursuing careers in nuclear fields the opportunity to learn a credential requiring a strong technical background in nuclear energy science and technology.

## Augment Your Degree

This certificate program is a great addition for students pursuing degrees in technical disciplines relevant to nuclear energy:

- Chemistry
- Physics
- Computing
- Geology
- Mechanical Engineering
- Chemical Engineering

## What To Expect

**15** credit hours of coursework | **2** year timeframe

The coursework will consist of:

**2-course core series** About nuclear energy science fundamentals and reactor design

**3 elective courses** Covering different topical areas relevant to nuclear energy.

## What You Will Learn

### 01 Fundamentals of Nuclear Physics

Grasp the basic physical principles relevant to nuclear energy production through the analysis of industrially relevant decay chains and fuel energy densities.

### 02 Conventional & Emerging Reactor Designs

Learn the operating principles of traditional light water reactors and emerging designs for grid-scale generation and remote deployment, highlighting the relative advantages of each with respect to safety, construction/operating costs, and fuel requirements.

### 03 Economics of Nuclear Energy Production

Build simple techno-economic models capable of analyzing the costs of nuclear energy projects.

### 04 Public Engagement

Gain the ability to communicate, in simple terms, the execution of nuclear energy projects and the technical and environmental risks associated with nuclear energy generation.



## Career Opportunities

**Nuclear Criticality Safety Engineer**

**Nuclear Fuels Engineer**

**Reactor Engineer**

**Simulator Software Engineer**

**Health Physicist**

**Inspection Engineer**

**License Renewal Engineer**



Watch our program overview!

*Jody Speight*

**Recruiting Coordinator**  
College of Engineering and Physical Sciences  
(307)766-4122  
Jspeigh2@uwyo.edu



Learn more about the program!



College of Engineering and Physical Sciences | School of Energy Resources

# ANNUAL COLLABORATION GATHERING

CONNECT | LEARN | GROW

**April 24, 2026 | Laramie**

Join collaborative practitioners and CPNR alumni for our annual gathering, where we build community, connect around collaborative principles and practices, and create space for ongoing learning and practice.



## DETAILS:

- 8:00 am - 5:00 PM April 24
- Family Ballroom, Wyoming Union, University of Wyoming
- \$75/person includes light breakfast, lunch, and all the caffeine you need

## LEARN MORE & REGISTER:

[uwyo.edu/haub/  
ruckelshaus-institute/  
forums/collaboration-  
symposium.html](https://uwyo.edu/haub/ruckelshaus-institute/forums/collaboration-symposium.html)

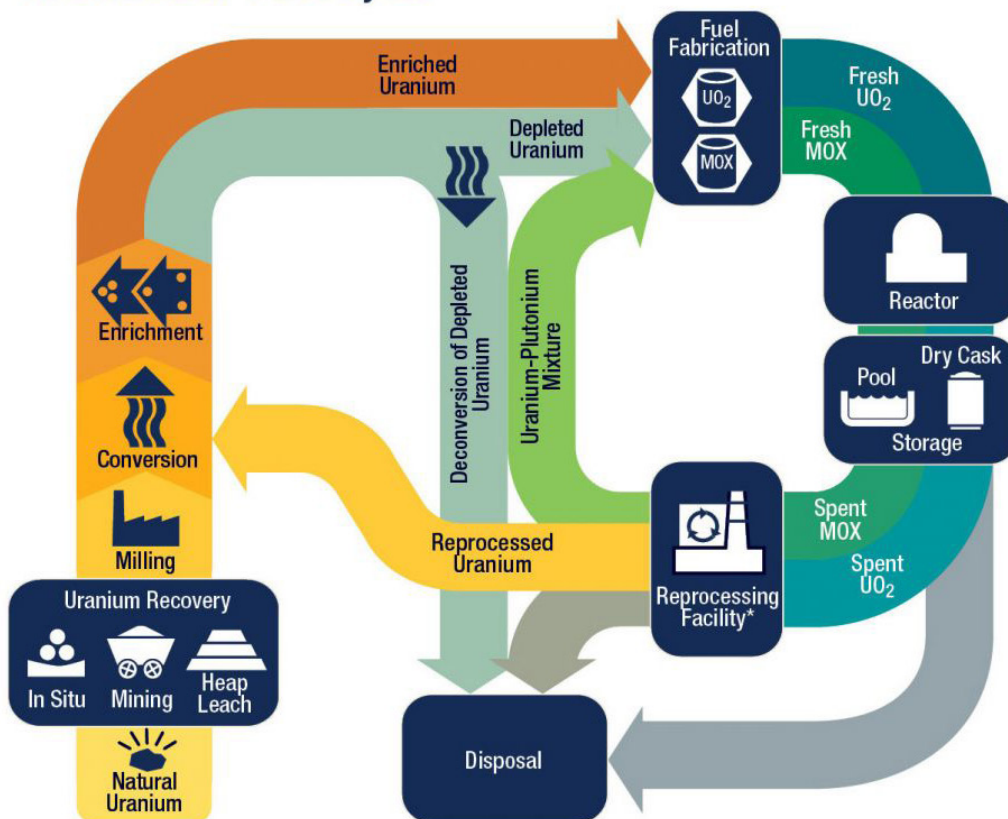




# NUCLEAR ENERGY

AN EMERGING ISSUE FORUM

## The Nuclear Fuel Cycle



\* Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, including mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel, is not practiced in the United States.  
Note: The NRC has no regulatory role in mining uranium.

As of June 2017



### Your feedback matters.

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