

WINTER  
2025/26

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UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

School of  
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**QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 6, Issue 4

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## ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF ENERGY RESOURCES

The University of Wyoming (UW) School of Energy Resources (SER) was created in 2006 to enhance the University's energy-related education, research, and engagement. SER directs and funds cutting-edge energy research and technology development. It further bridges the gap between academics and industry through targeted engagement efforts. The partnerships formed between academics and industry ensure programs are relevant, current, and deliver impact and high value to stakeholders and the state.

Since its inception, SER has maintained flexibility in its focus and structure to meet the changing needs of Wyoming's energy industries and the State's economy—which is now more critical than ever.

This quarterly newsletter highlights SER's significant achievements from November 2025 through January 2026, in academics, research, newly emerging areas of focus, and engagement to keep UW and Wyoming at the forefront of the energy sector.



**SER ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Scott Quillinan

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## SER LEADERSHIP

### UW Launches Search for School of Energy Resources Executive Director

The University of Wyoming has launched a comprehensive search for the next executive director of its nationally and internationally recognized School of Energy Resources (SER).

The next leader will be tasked with guiding UW's premier interdisciplinary energy research and academic efforts that support Wyoming's role as a global energy leader.

SER's governing body, the Energy Resources Council (ERC), in conjunction with UW, has engaged search firm Spencer Stuart to work with an appointed search committee to fill the position promptly.

The ERC and the UW Board of Trustees have confirmed **Scott Quillinan** as SER's acting executive director. He will serve until the search for a new full-time executive director has been completed.

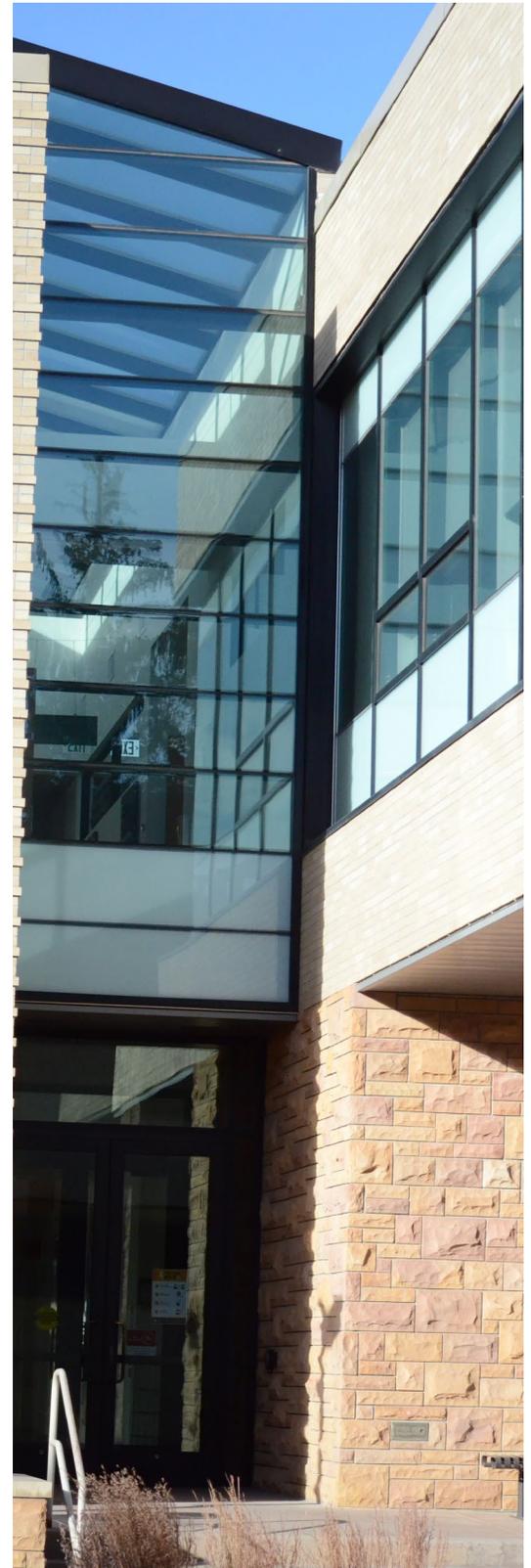
SER is central to UW's mission, facilitating interdisciplinary academic, outreach and research programs across engineering, science, economics and policy. Its core focus is to advance energy-driven economic development for Wyoming, fulfilling the state's promise to be a leader in a thriving and sustainable energy future. As UW's land-grant energy hub, SER ensures cutting-edge energy programs directly serve the people, communities and industries of Wyoming.

The new executive director will build on this strong foundation to significantly elevate SER's national and international reputation and expand the impact of the university's energy and extractive initiatives, including critical minerals, fossil fuels and unconventional resources.

"This is a pivotal moment for the School of Energy Resources and the state of Wyoming; we are seeking a visionary leader who can bring a world-class perspective to our energy future," says **David Emery**, who recently was elected chair of the ERC. "We are committed to finding a dynamic individual with substantial energy industry experience who can expand SER's research and outreach footprint and solidify its standing as a key driver of Wyoming's economy."

The position profile, which includes comprehensive information about the job duties, expectations and the mission of the school and university, is available [here](#). Spencer Stuart is actively accepting applications and nominations at [UWyomingSER@SpencerStuart.com](mailto:UWyomingSER@SpencerStuart.com).

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## ACADEMICS

### School of Energy Resources Celebrates Fall 2025 Graduates

The winter commencement ceremony acknowledges the achievements of two students completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Energy Resource Management and Development (ERMD), two students completing a minor in Energy Resource Management (ERM) and one student earning a Land Administration certificate (LAND).

Cheyenne native **Lars Quinlivan** graduated with a B.S. in ERMD with a concentration in Professional Land Management, while **Jack McKinley**, originally from Oxford, Ohio, earned his B.S. in ERMD with a concentration in Energy and Environmental Systems.

Two exceptional Petroleum Engineering graduates – **Daniel McFadyen** of Calgary, Alberta, and **Logan Colwell** from Windsor, Colo. – completed SER's interdisciplinary ERM minor, while **Brenna Graham** of Lander, completed SER's online LAND certificate.



*Pictured: SER Acting Executive Director Scott Quillinan, Jack McKinley and Lars Quinlivan at the winter commencement ceremony.*

### UW Trustees Approve New Undergraduate Certificate in Subsurface Energy

The University of Wyoming Board of Trustees has approved a new undergraduate certificate in subsurface energy, designed to solidify Wyoming's position as a global leader in energy education and workforce development.

The certificate is a strategic collaboration between SER and the Department of Energy and Petroleum Engineering within the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. By blending SER's interdisciplinary focus with the department's deep technical expertise, the program offers a unique educational pathway that bridges traditional methods with future technologies.

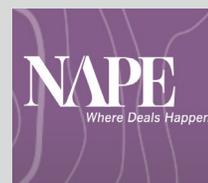
The certificate also was approved by the Higher Learning Commission and will be available to students starting this fall.

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## Academics Highlights

- **Soheil Saraji** was named as the new head of the Department of Energy and Petroleum Engineering. He has been a professor in the department since 2016, as well as in SER, earning the distinction of the Richard and Marilyn Lynch Non-Endowed Chair in Subsurface Energy and Digital Innovation in 2024. 
- **Dario Grana**, an SER professor and Wyoming Excellence Chair in the University of Wyoming Department of Geology and Geophysics, has been named a 2025 Highly Ranked Scholar™ by ScholarGPS, placing him in the top 0.05% of scholars worldwide. 

- An article about state trust lands by **Temple Stoellinger**, associate dean of UW's Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources, a Wyoming Excellence Chair in the College of Law, SER adjunct professor, and co-director of the Gina Guy Center for Land and Water Law; and **Bryan Leonard**, an associate professor with a dual appointment in the Haub School and SER, has been recognized by the *Environmental Law and Policy Annual Review (ELPAR)* as one of the top environmental law and policy articles of 2025.
- Students in the Professional Land Management concentration of the ERMD program will attend the 2026 NAPE Summit in Houston, Feb. 18-20. Visit them in the Expo at booth #1516!



## RESEARCH

### Center for Economic Geology Research

#### UW Researchers Release New Thermal Maturity Assessment Publication on Mowry Shale

Researchers at the University of Wyoming have published a new study conducting a thermal maturity assessment to better understand the Mowry Shale.

The article, "Raman spectroscopy of electrostatically isolated organic matter for thermal maturity assessment: A case study on the Mowry Shale," was published in the International Journal of Coal Geology and was written by **Tarek Ismail**, a UW Ph.D. candidate in energy and petroleum engineering, and **Soheil Saraji**, an associate professor of energy and petroleum engineering.

The study was funded through the SER competitive proposal opportunity to study and optimize the recovery of oil and gas from the Mowry Shale in the Powder River Basin.

The study evaluates the thermal maturity of the Mowry Shale using pyrolysis, vitrinite reflectance and Raman spectroscopy, with emphasis on the impact of sample preparation.

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#### UW SER and Wyoming Rare (USA) Inc. Project Selected for NSF-Funded Award

The School of Energy Resources, in partnership with Wyoming Rare (USA) Inc., has been selected for a Seed Translational Acceleration of Research (STAR) Project award.

This competitive funding, provided through UW's National Science Foundation (NSF) Accelerating Research Translation (ART) award, will advance the assessment of potential byproducts associated with rare earth elements at the Halleck Creek Project in Wyoming.

The STAR Project awards are a core component of the NSF-funded ART project at UW, which aims to emphasize applied research innovations across the university that have high potential for commercialization.

Led by **Tyler Brown**, minerals program manager in SER's Center for Economic Geology Research, the project team will work directly with Wyoming Rare to examine the tailings and byproducts resulting from rare earth elements extraction at Halleck Creek – and explore potential applications for those materials to determine potential technical viability for end-use applications, processing requirements and implications to overall project economics.



*Pictured: Dr. Tyler Brown*

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### Wyoming Integrated Test Center

#### Wyoming Integrated Test Center 2025 Year-in-Review

The Wyoming Integrated Test Center (ITC) concluded 2025 by celebrating a year defined by international partnership, significant technical milestones, and growing market relevance. As global energy markets increasingly value secure CO<sub>2</sub> supply for Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR), energy resilience, and regulatory certainty, the ITC firmly established itself as a premier destination for carbon management innovation.

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## Center for Carbon Capture and Conversion

### UW SER Advances Coal Refinery Field Demonstration Plant, Unlocking New Markets for Wyoming Coal

Researchers at SER spent much of the fall semester overseeing the construction of a coal-to-products field demonstration plant at the Wyoming Innovation Center (WylC) near Gillette. The demonstration plant is a major step forward in creating new and diversified markets for Wyoming coal.

The coal refinery process developed by SER's Center for Carbon Capture and Conversion (CCCC) integrates flash pyrolysis and solvent extraction technologies to produce both intermediate feedstocks and finished products from coal. The integrated process yields beneficial liquids and solids that then are used to manufacture valuable, non-energy products, such as building and construction materials, asphalt products, synthetic graphite and agricultural soil amendments.

The facility also will provide material for in-depth research on concentrated critical mineral/rare earth element recovery from unconventional feedstocks. **READ MORE >**



## Research Highlights

- Senior Research Professional **Davin Bagdonas** in the *Center for Economic Geology Research (CEGR)* was recognized at the third annual Celebration of Research and Innovation Excellence dinner by UW's Research and Economic Development Division for his contributions to UW's research and innovation landscape, particularly for his work and scholarship on the use of coal and coal fly ash as unconventional sources of critical minerals in the United States.
- The *Center for Energy Regulation and Policy Analysis (CERPA)* continues to release monthly Consolidated Review of Energy in Wyoming (CREW) Reports. Stay up to date on the economic status of Wyoming's energy sectors. **CREW REPORTS >**



- Acting SER Executive Director **Scott Quillinan** published an article alongside international lawyer **Ingvild Ombudstvedt** in *The Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law Journal*.
- A research team led by **Haibo Zhai**, the Roy and Caryl Cline Distinguished Chair in Engineering and a professor of environmental engineering, published two peer-reviewed sister articles exploring different life cycle impacts related to hydrogen production pathways and their applicability to an emerging hydrogen industry. The studies were supported by the Wyoming Innovation Partnership (WIP), with additional funding from SER for blue hydrogen development. **READ MORE >**



## OUTREACH

### Energy Frontier: The Wyoming Landscape Continues with New Host

**Erin Phillips**, director of Cross-Cutting Programs and acting senior director of research, is the new host of the SER podcast, Energy Frontier: The Wyoming Landscape. Released every other week, episodes bring together academic researchers, industry professionals, students, policymakers and more to explore energy topics, including SER's research efforts and developing Wyoming projects. Catch up on any of the previously released episodes and become a regular listener!

**LISTEN TO EPISODES >**



*Pictured: Dr. Erin Phillips*

## Outreach Highlights

- Please stay up to date on our upcoming events by checking the **EVENTS CALENDAR >**



- Save the Date(s): April 14-15, 2026, for the Rocky Mountain Land and Resource Management Conference (RMLRMC). Formerly known as the Rocky Mountain Professional Landman Conference, the newly re-branded event will serve both the Professional Land Management (PLM) and Energy and Environmental Systems (EES) concentration with relevant themes. The day-long conference brings together a cross-section of academic, industry, legal, and business experts to discuss issues in land and resource management.

**CONFERENCE WEBSITE >**



- The ultimate outreach effort is representing the University of Wyoming at the South Pole! **David Emery**, Chair of the Energy Resources Council, recently took Wyoming pride to the literal ends of the Earth. Whether it's advancing energy research or exploring Antarctica, Pokes are always leading the way!



### Looking for ways to stay connected to SER?

Contact SER Director of Outreach Christine Reed at [christine.reed@uwyo.edu](mailto:christine.reed@uwyo.edu)

## New Faces at the School of Energy Resources

SER is dedicated to recruiting and retaining the top-tier talent necessary to drive our latest projects forward. We are proud to recognize the new team members who have joined us in 2025. Their shared drive, passion, and commitment are vital to our mission: advancing energy-driven economic development for the State of Wyoming.



**Cole Swisher**  
Administration & Finance



**Larissa Rutz**  
Academic Programs Staff



**Haoming Ma**  
Hydrogen Energy Research Center



**Yun Yang**  
Center for Economic Geology Research



**Sanzhar Begimbetov**  
Center for Economic Geology Research



**Hoon Choi**  
Academic Programs Faculty



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