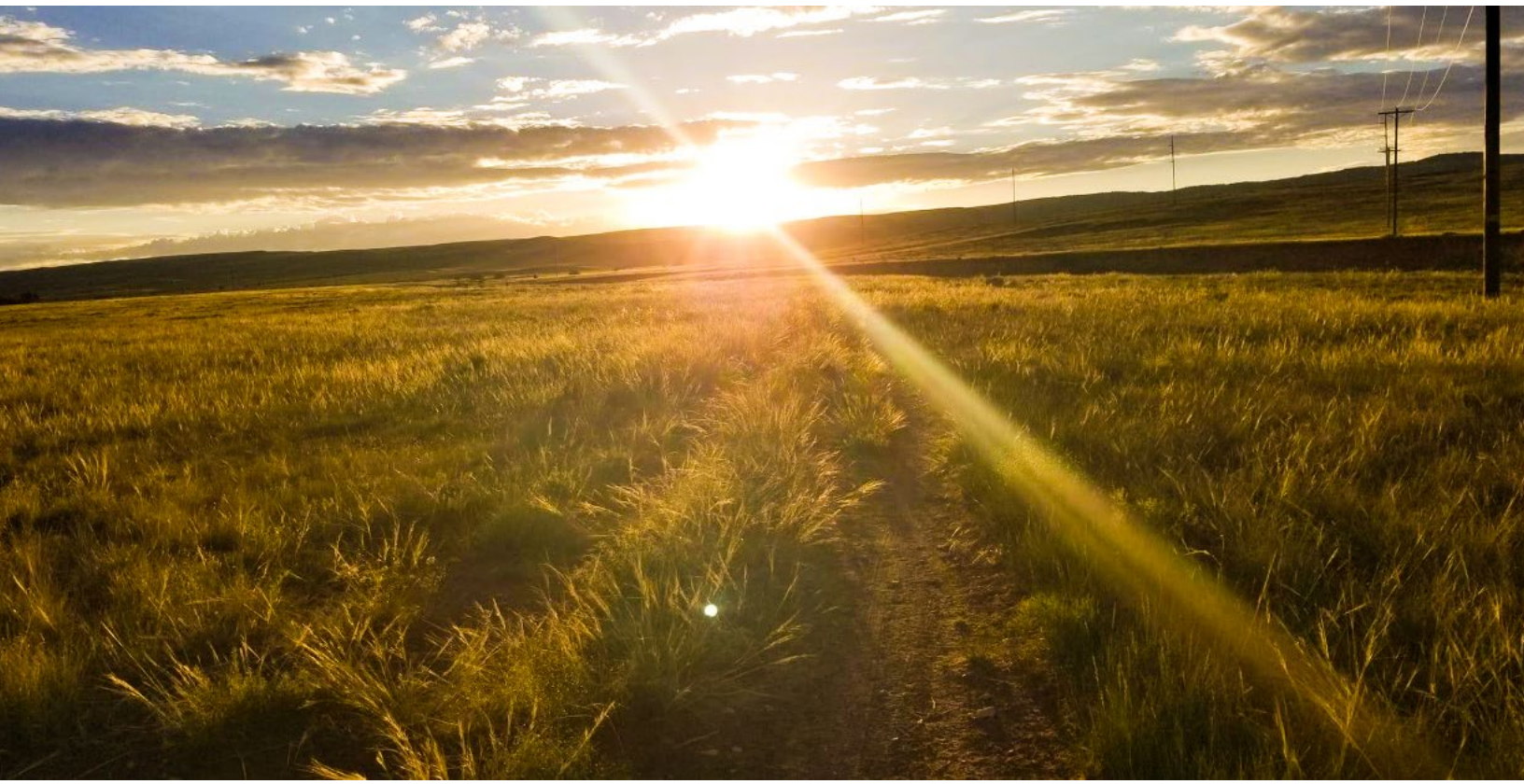
WYOMING'S *Energy Future*

Sponsored by the UW School of Energy Resources and the Wold Foundation

October 22, 2026
Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center



WOLD FOUNDATION

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING | School of Energy Resources

Agenda

10:00 AM — **Welcome Remarks**

Dr. John Kaszuba
John and Jane Wold Centennial Chair in Energy &
School of Energy Resources Professor of Geology & Geophysics, University of Wyoming

Shane Reeves
President, University of Wyoming

Pete Obermueller
Executive Director, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources

Court Wold
Partner, Wold Companies

10:15 - 10:45 AM — **Presentation: Critical Mineral Workforce Development**

Erin Phillips
Director of Cross Cutting Programs,
University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources

10:45 - 11:45 AM — **Panel 1: Critical Minerals in Oil & Gas**

Moderator:
Autumn Eakin
Assistant Director, Center for Economic Geology Research,
University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources

Panelists:
Jonathan Brant
Professor of Civil and Architectural Engineering and Construction Management, University of Wyoming;
Director, Center for Produced Water Management

Brian Annes
Counsel, Davis | Graham

Ariel S. Martin
University of Wyoming Postdoctoral Researcher, Kaszuba Research Group

11:45 AM - 12:20 PM — **Networking and Lunch Break**

12:20 - 12:26 PM — **School of Energy Resources 20th Anniversary Video**

12:26 - 12:35 PM — **Special remarks from Curt Coccodrilli, Acting Assistant Secretary for Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy, Department of Energy**

12:35 - 12:45 PM — **Remarks and Introduction of Keynote Speaker**

Peter Wold
Senior Partner, Wold Companies
Board of Directors, Wold Foundation

12:45 - 1:15 PM — **Keynote Address**

Governor Mark Gordon

1:15 - 2:15 PM **Panel 2: Coal as an Unconventional Critical Material Resource**

Moderator:
Tyler Brown
Program Manager, Minerals, Center for Economic Geology Research, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources

Panelists:
Davin Bagdonas
Principal Research Professional, Minerals, Center for Economic Geology Research, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources

Scott Montross
Acting Technology Director, Critical Minerals and Advanced Alloys Center of Excellence, National Energy Technology Laboratory

Dan Connell
President of CONSOL Innovations at CORE Natural Resources

Hoon Choi
SER Professor of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, University of Wyoming

2:15 - 2:45 PM **Presentation: Uranium and Nuclear Energy**

Ryan S. Schierman, M.Sc.
Vice President Regulatory Affairs, UR Energy

2:45 - 3:10 PM **Afternoon Coffee Break**

3:10 - 4:10 PM **Panel 3: Critical Mineral Usage in Modern Society**

Moderator:
Brian Leonard
Associate Professor and Department Head of Inorganic and Materials Chemistry, University of Wyoming

Panelists:
Jinke Tang
Professor of Physics, University of Wyoming; Director, UW Science Institute

Paul Bonifas
Director, Business Development at Rare Element Resources

Justin Loyka
Wyoming Energy Program Director, The Nature Conservancy

Tisi Barlock
Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chain Specialist, Argonne National Laboratory

4:10 - 4:40 PM **Presentation: Mining and Traditional Critical Minerals, Halleck Creek Project**

Nick Lissolo
Chief Commercial Officer at American Rare Earth, Inc.

4:40 - 5:00 PM **Student Poster Session Winners and Closing Remarks**

About the Wold Foundation



Created in 1985 by John and Jane Wold and the Wold family, the Wold Foundation exists to assist, encourage and promote charitable, scientific, literary and educational endeavors. The Foundation supports institutions and programs that promote traditional values and free enterprise and gives a preference to projects benefiting Wyoming citizens and Wyoming youth. The Foundation supports these endeavors through grants for research or publication through cooperation with agencies and institutions already in existence, or by any other means which may seem appropriate to the Board of Directors of the Foundation.

About the School of Energy Resources



The School of Energy Resources (SER) at the University of Wyoming collaborates with stakeholders at the state, national, and international levels to advance energy technologies and policies to grow and support Wyoming's robust energy sector. SER's mission is energy-driven economic development for the state of Wyoming. With that mission in mind, the focus of the school is to provide a mechanism to achieve excellence in energy academics, outreach and research.

Special Thanks to Glenda Catchpole, Executive Director of the Wold Foundation, Peighton Hayes, SER Special Events Coordinator, and Christine Reed, Director of Outreach at the School of Energy Resources for their help in planning the event!

Master of Ceremonies



John Kaszuba, John and Jane Wold Centennial Chair in Energy and School of Energy Resources Professor of Geology and Geophysics

John Kaszuba is the John and Jane Wold Centennial Chair in Energy and a School of Energy Resources Professor of Geology and Geophysics. A prominent expert in hydrothermal and multiphase fluid-rock reactions, Kaszuba has forged a path of excellence throughout his career, both in his research and in his dedication to student instruction. Before joining UW in 2008, Kaszuba earned his B.S. in geology from Beloit College (1982), followed by his M.S. from Virginia Tech University (1986). He later earned his Ph.D. in geochemistry from Colorado School of Mines (1997) before working as a research scientist in the Los Alamos National Laboratory for over a decade.

Since joining UW, his research has focused largely on Wyoming energy production, with extensive industry collaboration, and he has garnered an impeccable reputation as an esteemed professor. He was awarded tenure in 2012 and promoted to full professor in 2019.

During his tenure at UW, Kaszuba has continued to teach a full course load, all with an emphasis on energy education. Additionally, he supervises and leads a research group focused on a wide variety of projects regarding the geochemistry of fluid-rock interactions in the shallow to middle crust. Over 25 students have made contributions through their research in the energy sector and thrived under his tutelage and mentorship.

Keynote Speaker



Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon

Mark Gordon was elected Wyoming's 33rd Governor, on Nov. 6, 2018. He was sworn into office on January 7, 2019.

Mark Gordon grew up on the family ranch in Wyoming where he learned the values of hard work and integrity and the importance of working together. As Governor, he brings those values to the table, maintaining his commitment to a Wyoming where its citizens can pursue their dreams while the state retains its unique character. He is a strong believer that Wyoming must chart its own course, and a steadfast defender of its interests to do so.

As a conservative, Governor Gordon has worked tirelessly to set Wyoming on a sustainable fiscal path. He is committed to making government more transparent, accessible, productive and efficient. He believes government is best when it is closest to the people, and is committed to giving local communities the tools they need to thrive. He is a staunch advocate of quality education for all children from bottom to top, K-12 through all forms of post-secondary education, private and public.

Governor Gordon served as Wyoming State Treasurer from October 2012 until January 2019 when he was sworn in as Governor. He was ranked 57 th among the Sovereign Wealth Fund institute's "most significant and impactful public investor executives" in 2013. During his time in office, he transformed and modernized the management of the state's financial portfolio, leading in 2016 to Wyoming earning the No. 1 ranking in the United States and No. 3 in the world among all sovereign funds by the Peterson Institute.

Elected Governor in 2018, he has successfully led Wyoming through two of its most significant challenges in decades: the COVID-19 crisis and the most significant decline in mineral revenue in the state's history. He has spearheaded efforts to diversify all sectors of Wyoming's economy, including technology, finance, agriculture, energy, including carbon capture and sequestration, research, education and tourism. He is dedicated to continuing to make the state a darn good place to raise kids.

Special Guests



Shane Reeves, University of Wyoming President

Shane Reeves is the 29th President of the University of Wyoming. A Wyoming native from Rock Springs, he previously served as a Brigadier General in the U.S. Army and as the Academic Dean at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Drawing on over 30 years of distinguished leadership in higher education and military service, President Reeves returns to his home state to guide UW's academic vision, innovation, and public mission.



Curt Coccodrilli, Acting Assistant Secretary of Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office, U.S. Department of Energy

Mr. Coccodrilli helps set the strategic direction for the Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy (HGEO). Prior to his leadership role at HGEO, Mr. Coccodrilli served as a Senior Advisor in the DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations and as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Fossil Energy. He chaired the USDA National Taskforce on Energy, fostering cross-agency partnerships that led to key interdepartmental agreements between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy. He also served on the USDA Opioid Task Force, hosting the first national opioid roundtable in Pennsylvania.

Featured Speakers



Peter Wold, Senior Partner, Wold Oil Properties, Inc. and Member of the Board of Directors, Wold Foundation

Peter Wold is a senior partner of Wold Oil Properties and Co-founder of Wold Energy Partners. He manages the Casper office. Mr. Wold is a Landman by background and is integrally involved in all major business decisions. Peter is an active board member of Petroleum Association of Wyoming and on their executive committee. He is a board member and treasurer of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a Trustee of the Casper YMCA, on the Dean's Leadership Council for the School of Natural Sciences at Colorado State University and a board member of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West Museum in Cody, Wyoming. He recently retired from the Boards of Arch Coal Company, First Interstate Bank and Oppenheimer Funds Board of New York.



Court Wold, Partner, Wold Oil Properties, Inc.

Court Wold is a Partner at Wold Companies, where he plays a key role in managing and expanding the family's oil and gas portfolio. Court began his career in energy banking, before transitioning to the upstream and midstream sectors. From 2008 to 2014, he was deeply involved in the Anadarko Basin shale boom with Cordillera Energy Partners, where the company operated an active horizontal drilling program in Texas and Oklahoma. Following the sale of these companies, Court joined his father, Jack, and uncle, Peter, as a partner at Wold Companies. Together, they oversee a diversified portfolio of oil and gas assets across 10 states. Currently, the company is focused on building a yield vehicle with oil and gas mineral and royalty properties. Court lives in Denver, Colorado, with his wife, Cullen, and their three children. Court serves on several nonprofit boards in Denver and Casper and is integrally involved in the community.



Pete Obermueller, SER Executive Director

Pete Obermueller is the Executive Director of the School of Energy Resources. With more than two decades of experience in legislative affairs, natural resource and energy policy, and community relations, Obermueller has championed major initiatives to advance Wyoming's economy and reduce regulatory burdens, including cultivating research partnerships with UW, most recently serving as the President of the Petroleum Association of Wyoming (PAW). Before leading PAW, Obermueller was executive director of the Wyoming County Commissioners Association, coordinating policy for all 23 Wyoming counties. His experience in Washington, D.C., includes serving as executive director of the Congressional Western Caucus and working as legislative director for U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., where he was a principal adviser on energy, environmental and public lands issues. He also served as a legislative assistant for U.S. Rep. Barbara Cubin, R-Wyo.



Erin Phillips, SER Director of Cross-Cutting Programs

Erin Phillips, Ph.D., is the Director of Cross-Cutting Programs at the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources (SER). Erin has contributed broadly to critical minerals research at SER and was the Principal Investigator for the DOE-sponsored Powder River Basin Carbon Ore, Rare Earths, and Critical Minerals (CORE-CM) project. She is currently working on multiple energy-related workforce development initiatives and recently received a Fulbright Award to study critical mineral supply chains in Norway. Originally from the Black Hills of South Dakota, Erin earned her bachelor's degree in geology from Macalester College followed by her master's degree from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology. Prior to pursuing her Ph.D., she worked for the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources and Black Hills State University. Erin completed her Ph.D. at the University of Wyoming Department of Geology and Geophysics and is an adjunct faculty member in that department.



Ryan Schierman, Vice President of Regulatory Affairs, UR Energy

Ryan Schierman joined Ur-Energy in March 2024 as its Vice President Regulatory Affairs. Prior to joining Ur-Energy, Mr. Schierman held numerous positions in management, most recently at Fluor/ Idaho Environmental Coalition, contractors to the U.S. Department of Energy, at the Idaho Cleanup Project. Mr. Schierman has also held several positions in the uranium recovery industry, gaining expertise in regulatory relations and compliance, licensing, and environmental health and safety. As the Wyoming Uranium Recovery Program Manager (2015 2020), Mr. Schierman was critical in assisting Wyoming to become the 38th US Nuclear Regulatory Commission Agreement State, the first ever partial agreement for material solely at uranium recovery operations. Mr. Schierman earned a B.S. in Environmental Science from Brigham Young University, a M.Sc. in Health Physics from Idaho State University, and is a Certified Health Physicist.



Nick Lissolo, Chief Commercial Officer, American Rare Earths

Nick Lissolo has 18 years of experience in mining finance, project evaluation, and business strategy. Prior to joining American Rare Earths, he held leadership roles with Newmont Corporation, where he evaluated major mining investments and supported capital allocation decisions for projects around the world. At American Rare Earths, he leads commercial strategy, corporate development, and investor relations. Nick is a graduate of the University of Wyoming and is proud to be helping develop a Wyoming resource that can play an important role in America's critical minerals future.

Panelists and Moderators



Autumn Eakin, Assistant Director, SER Center for Economic Geology Research

Autumn Eakin is the Assistant Director of the Center for Economic Geology Research at the School of Energy Resources. Eakin is an experienced subsurface geologist bringing a unique blend of interpersonal and leadership abilities along with robust technical expertise. Eakin earned her bachelor's degree in Geological Sciences from Indiana University before earning a master's degree in Geological Sciences from the University of Texas at Austin. Specializing her studies in structural diagenesis, she gained valuable global field experience, including the study of faults, fractures, and stratigraphy in Taiwan, China, Mexico, Canada, and in the US. Following graduation in 2011, Eakin began a long-term career with oil & gas giant, Chevron. As an exploration geologist, she worked to evaluate the resource potential of subsurface structures across aeolian, fluvial, deltaic, shallow marine, carbonate, and deep marine environments. Cultivating a specialty in seal and trap characterization, she is a leader in seal risk and uncertainty analysis for conventional oil and gas exploration and in emerging opportunities for carbon capture and storage. Additionally, her talent for interfacing with the community has led to her playing a more active role in stakeholder outreach and communication.



Brian Annes, Counsel, Davis | Graham

Brian Annes is counsel in the Energy & Mining Group at Davis Graham & Stubbs LLP. Serving as a strategic advisor, Brian counsels clients seeking to thrive in complex exploration and development projects within the extractive and carbon industries. His practice spans a broad range of areas, including upstream and midstream oil and gas, carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS), geothermal, helium, hydrogen, mining, and water rights operations. Before rejoining Davis Graham, Brian served as counsel for a Denver-based Quantum Energy Partners portfolio company, concentrated on acquiring, developing, and exploring oil and gas assets, primarily focused on heavy oil development in California. He navigated complex and unique transactions, negotiating and implementing various agreements and deal structures. Brian collaborated with diverse internal teams, providing strategic advice and legal support. Earlier in his career, Brian was an associate in the Davis Graham Natural Resources Department, where his practice had an emphasis on oil and gas transactions and production royalties. Brian received his J.D. from the University of Wyoming, where he served as editor-in-chief of Volume 15 of the Wyoming Law Review and concurrently received his M.A. in Environment and Natural Resources.



Jonathan Brant, Professor and Thomas and Shelley Botts Department Head in the UW Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering and Construction Management

Dr. Jonathan A. Brant is a Professor and the Thomas and Shelley Botts Department Head in the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering and Construction Management at the University of Wyoming (UW). He also holds the title of Vincent O. Smith Professor in Engineering and serves as the Director of the School of Energy Resources (SER) Center of Excellence in Produced Water Management at UW. Dr. Brant earned his B.S. in Civil Engineering from the Virginia Military Institute (1998) and completed his M.S. (2000) and Ph.D. (2003) in Environmental Engineering at the University of Nevada, Reno. He is a licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) in Wyoming. His research specializes in environmental engineering, physical and chemical water and wastewater treatment processes, membrane technologies, water reuse, and nanoparticle transport in aquatic environments. At UW, he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses including Introduction to Environmental Engineering, Design of Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities, Advanced Physicochemical Treatment Processes, and Water Reuse Nanotechnology.



Ariel Martin, Postdoctoral Researcher, UW Department of Geology and Geophysics

Dr. Ariel S. Martin is an experimental geochemist and Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Geology and Geophysics at the University of Wyoming. Her research sits at the intersection of carbonate mineralogy and isotope geochemistry. Dr. Martin completed her foundational and advanced academic training at Western Michigan University, including a Ph.D. in Geochemistry. Following her Ph.D., Dr. Martin joined the Kaszuba Research Group at the University of Wyoming, where she collaborates on energy-related research initiatives spanning the Department of Geology and Geophysics and the UW School of Energy Resources. Her post-doctoral research involves analyzing mineral trapping, fluid-rock dynamics, and carbon storage mechanics (CCUS) within deep saline basins.



Tyler Brown, Program Manager, Minerals, SER Center for Economic Geology Research

Tyler Brown serves as the Program Manager for the Minerals Team in the Center for Economic Geology Research at the School of Energy Resources. Brown earned his undergraduate degree from Northern Arizona University in Geology and Geophysics. He then migrated to Wyoming where he earned his Ph.D. in Geology from the University of Wyoming. Throughout his education, he also gained practical industry experience through internships with Marathon Oil Corporation, ConocoPhillips, as well as with the United States Geological Survey. Brown began working in the Materials Characterization Lab in the UW Department of Geology & Geophysics as a technician beginning in 2016. He was promoted to the lab manager in 2021, and remained in the position until moving to SER in 2023. Through his role, he participated in and facilitated research for various departments across UW, other universities, industry partners, and members of the public.



Davin Bagdonas, Principal Research Professional, SER Center for Economic Geology Research

Davin Bagdonas is the Principal Research Scientists at the School of Energy Resources where he specializes in unconventional resources for rare earth elements and critical minerals. He has extensively studied and published on rare earth elements related to coal and coal byproducts, new methods for assessing unconventional critical materials hosts, and the potentiality of rare earth element extraction from coal fly ash. He currently serves as Co-Principal Investigator on two DOE-funded Carbon Ore, Rare Earth and Critical Mineral (CORE-CM) projects covering the Rocky Mountain and Interior Highlands Regions of the U.S. and previously served as the Principal Investigator for a Phase I CORE-CM project in the Greater Green River and Wind River Basins. He graduated from the University of Wyoming in 2004 with a degree in Geology, and with his master's degree in 2014 in the same field, before joining the School of Energy Resources in 2015. Bagdonas' research expertise additionally includes studies of Archean basement rocks in Wyoming related to uranium minerals, subsurface investigations benefiting SER's initial programs in reservoir studies, and pore-space geochemistry.



Dan Connell, President of CONSOL Innovations, Core Natural Resources

Dan serves as President of CONSOL Innovations, which is the innovation-focused business unit of Core Natural Resources. In this role, he leads Core's efforts to grow sustainably through the development and commercialization of new technologies, with a particular emphasis on coal-derived and other carbon products in applications spanning aerospace and defense, building products, energy storage, and advanced materials. Previously, he served as Senior Vice President – Strategy for CONSOL Energy Inc., with a primary focus on developing and executing CONSOL's overall strategy, while having responsibility at various times for the company's Baltimore marine terminal, Itmann mine project, and sales & marketing, environmental & sustainability, and business development efforts. Dan earned his B.S. in chemical engineering, summa cum laude, from the University of Notre Dame, and a Certificate of Excellence in Advanced Management and Leadership from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. He is the recipient of the Robert Earll McConnell Award from the Society of Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration and was named one of the Pittsburgh Business Times 20 People to Know in Energy in 2022. He has authored or co-authored more than 75 publications and presentations on topics related to coal, energy, and the environment.



Scott Montross, Technology Manager for the Critical Minerals and Materials program, National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL)

Scott Montross is a Technology Manager for the Critical Minerals and Materials program at the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL). He also serves as a Center Lead for the Minerals to Materials Supply Chain Research Facility (METALLIC), which is led by NETL. His work is centered on re-establishing U.S. leadership in extracting and processing critical minerals from unconventional and secondary resources to support an economical, environmentally responsible, and geopolitically secure domestic supply chain. With over 20 years of experience, he studies mineral, rock, and fluid interactions, employing advanced characterization techniques and material testing to develop technologies for energy resource recovery. Montross earned his doctorate and master's degrees in Earth Sciences from Montana State University and a bachelor's degree in molecular biology and geology from Metropolitan State University of Denver.



Hoon Choi, SER Assistant Professor of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering

Hoon Choi is a School of Energy Resources Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering and a President's Distinguished Scholar. He teaches Thermodynamics and provides research expertise in the areas of separations, including bioprocessing, downstream process development, lithium and rare earth element (REE) extraction, and lignin valorization. Earning his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from Purdue University, Choi has amassed a research portfolio focused on materials separations. While at Purdue, he worked on extracting REEs from coal fly ash and purifying the individual elements out of the mixture. Most recently, he worked as a separations engineer at the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR)—formerly NREL— where he led applied research on real feedstocks to develop economic and energy-efficient processes for real-world material separations. He was recognized with both NREL's President's Award and Director's Award for his contributions to sustainable energy systems, critical mineral recovery, and the circular economy.



Brian Leonard, Associate Professor and Department Head of Inorganic and Materials Chemistry, UW Department of Chemistry

Dr. Brian M. Leonard is an Associate Professor and Department Head of Inorganic and Materials Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Wyoming. He joined the university faculty in 2010 after completing his postdoctoral training. Dr. Leonard earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2003, followed by a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in 2008. From 2008 to 2010, he conducted advanced postdoctoral research as a scientist at Cornell University. In addition to his faculty duties, he serves the broader scientific community on the editorial board for Materials Research Express and as a councilor for the American Chemical Society. At the University of Wyoming, he leads the Leonard Research Group, which focuses primarily on solid-state inorganic materials chemistry.



Jinke Tang, Professor of Physics, Director of the UW Science Institute

Jinke Tang is a Professor of Physics and the Director of the Science Institute at the University of Wyoming. He served on DOE's Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Committee (BESAC) from 2024 to 2025. He taught at the University of New Orleans before he moved to Laramie 19 years ago. He has a PhD in Physics and MS in Metallurgy, both from Iowa State University/Ames Lab. He came to the US in 1984 to pursue graduate study via CUSPEA (China-US Physics Exams and Applications) organized by Nobel Laureate T.D. Lee. He obtained his BS degree in Physics from Jilin University in China.



Tisi Barlock, Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chain Analyst, Argonne National Laboratory

Tisisilile "Tisi" Barlock is an expert economist and supply chain specialist at Argonne National Laboratory, working within the Nuclear Technologies and National Security Directorate. She previously spent seven years as a fiscal economist for the Tanzanian Ministry of Treasury, leading the creation of the nation's first oil and gas revenue laws. From 2021 to 2023, she served as a Senior Advisor for the U.S. Department of Energy, where she helped shape multi-billion dollar clean-energy infrastructure programs, including the Heat Pump Defense Production Act initiative and the 48C Advanced Energy Project Credit. Barlock holds a broad academic background spanning economic policy and critical materials. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Statistics and a Master of Arts in Economics from the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. She later moved to the United States, completing both a Master of Science and a Ph.D. in Mineral and Energy Economics from the Colorado School of Mines.



Paul Bonifas, Director of Business Development, Rare Element Resources

Paul Bonifas brings over a decade of experience within the energy sector in corporate development and strategic project management. As Director of Business Development at Rare Element Resources, Paul leads efforts in business growth initiatives, corporate partnerships, and stakeholder relations. He is the founder of Bonifas Consulting, where he has provided project management, economic analysis, and regulatory navigation services to clients across mining, petroleum, and greenfield energy development. Paul has also held leadership roles at 9H Energy, where he drove the development of datacenters & energy projects, and serves as a Board Director at the 9H Research Foundation, a non-profit focused on innovation and education in Wyoming. His career includes extensive work in mining, power grids, and regulatory affairs, with a focus on economic and technical development for energy projects. Paul holds an M.S. in Petroleum Engineering, an M.B.A., and a B.S. in Chemical Engineering, Magna Cum Laude, from the University of Wyoming. He is fluent in both English and French.



Justin Loyka, Wyoming Energy Program Director, The Nature Conservancy

Justin Loyka is the Energy Program Director for the Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, where he works to balance community needs, conservation priorities, and climate imperatives. Justin Received a B.S. in Mining and Minerals Engineering from Virginia Tech and began his career as an engineer with Peabody Energy. He spent a decade working as a water resources and environmental engineer in Wyoming before his current role. He works on the ground in communities, directly with project developers, and on policy to identify and work towards positive visions of Wyoming's future.

Poster Competition

Meet the Judges



Senator Chris Rothfuss, Wyoming Legislature

Chris Rothfuss is the Senate Minority Leader of the Wyoming Legislature. First elected in 2010, he represents Senate District 9 in Laramie, Wyoming. Senator Rothfuss co-chairs the Wyoming Blockchain Select Committee and serves as the ranking member of the Education Committee and the Minerals, Business and Economic Development Committee. He also serves as a Visiting Assistant Professor for the Honors College, an Adjunct Professor of International Studies, and the Director of the UW Summer High School Institute. He received his PhD in Chemical Engineering (2002) and MS in Applied Physics (2002) from the University of Washington; and his MS in Chemical Engineering (1996) and BA in International Studies (1994) from the University of Wyoming where he competed as a member and captain of the Cowboy debate team.



Kraig Sheetz, Executive Vice President, University of Wyoming

Kraig Sheetz is the Executive Vice President for the University of Wyoming. In 2018, Sheetz retired from active duty after more than 28 years in the U.S. Army. Early in his Army career, he served as a military intelligence officer, and he spent the second half of his career at West Point, where he was an associate professor in the Department of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, researcher in the Photonics Research Center, director of the dean's staff and vice dean for operations. Most recently he served as the vice dean for engagement and research at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Sheetz holds a bachelor's degree in geophysics from Millersville University; a master's degree in geophysics from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology; a master's degree in applied physics from the Naval Postgraduate School in California; and a doctorate in applied physics from the Colorado School of Mines.



Ranie Lynds, Wyoming State Geologist

Ranie Lynds began managing the Wyoming State Geological Survey (WSGS) Energy and Minerals Team in late 2017. Ranie has a B.S. in geology and an M.S. in geophysics from Stanford University and a Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming where she specialized in fluvial sedimentology. Ranie has worked on CBNG drill rigs in Colorado's San Juan Basin, dabbled in Utah's uranium industry, and spent several years studying geologic carbon sequestration in Wyoming's basins. Since joining the WSGS in 2012, she has focused primarily on oil and gas research, delving into the details of not-so-well documented hydrocarbon systems throughout the state and participating heavily in the WSGS's STATEMAP program. Ranie is currently working to understand the mineral resources of Wyoming and is heavily engaged in Earth MRI and the collection of airborne geophysical data from across the state.



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