



**WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION**  
*Summit*



**April 18-20, 2024**

CASPER, WY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Welcome .....                | 1  |
| About Us.....                | 2  |
| Our Sponsors .....           | 3  |
| Agenda and Field Trips ..... | 4  |
| Speaker bios .....           | 11 |



# Welcome to the 2024 Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Summit.

**WORS aims to create a space for the outdoor recreation industry to come together to discuss issues, celebrate, learn from successes and challenges, and work cooperatively to build Wyoming outdoor recreation in a responsible and sustainable way.**

---

Outdoor recreation is an integral part of life in Wyoming and has been for decades. Wyoming's variety of landscapes and recreational challenges serve as inspiration to those who live here and those who visit. Serving as the second-largest economic sector in the state, the tourism and hospitality sector provides jobs, income, and a whole lot of fun.

The growth of the outdoor recreation economy must be considered in tandem with the health and prosperity of Wyoming's landscapes and its people. The 2024 WORS aims to address the successes and challenges that come with a growing industry, including how local communities have come together to build outdoor recreation opportunities, ways to increase the accessibility of outdoor recreation, and strategies to increase stakeholder buy-in to outdoor recreation development.

# About us...

---



Wyoming Outdoor  
Recreation, Tourism and  
Hospitality Initiative  
(WORTH)

## Wyoming Outdoor Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality (WORTH) Initiative

The mission of the WORTH Initiative is to support, expand, and diversify Wyoming's economy through outdoor recreation, tourism, and hospitality industries. The WORTH Initiative achieves its mission by:

1. Delivering timely and relevant applied research for WORTH industries
2. Supplying diverse workforce training products and services to students and working industry professionals
3. Providing extension and outreach to the tourism industry across Wyoming

Learn more at [uwyo.edu/WORTH](http://uwyo.edu/WORTH)



## Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation

The Office of Outdoor Recreation aims to diversify Wyoming's economy by expanding, enhancing, and promoting responsible recreational opportunities through collaboration, outreach, and coordination with stakeholders, landowners, private industry, and public officials.

Learn more at [wyorec.com](http://wyorec.com)



# Our Sponsors

We extend our gratitude to the following organizations for their generous sponsorship of this event.

---



## AllTrails

AllTrails was founded on the idea that we're all made better by spending time in nature. Today, AllTrails continues to be driven by the desire to share the outdoors with as many people in as many places as possible—and to do so responsibly and respectfully.



## Casper College, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management Program

Wyoming is the perfect place to experience the exciting and growing outdoor recreation and tourism industry. This new academic program at Casper College offers a blend of outdoor recreation and tourism that focuses on business, people, culture, environmental and natural resources, recreation, and tourism.



## Discover Carbon County

Are you seeking adventure and escape from the hustle and bustle of city life? Look no further than Carbon County, Wyoming! Nestled between the Snowy Range and Sierra Madre Mountains, Carbon County offers breathtaking natural beauty and outdoor activities year-round. Adventure Out!



## Natrona County Weed and Pest

Natrona County Weed and Pest is a government agency that works to protect Wyoming lands, wildlife, and agricultural resources from degradation by invasive species. NCWP aims to find a balance between communities and wildlands to keep them available for future generations to benefit.



## SE Group

We help clients reimagine their future through integrated planning and design services. SE Group was formed in 1958 in New Hampshire as the first company established for the sole purpose of designing ski resorts. Since that time, our company has evolved to include comprehensive community planning, environmental and land-use planning, multi-season recreation and trails planning, community planning and design, parks and open space planning, and public lands cooperative planning for natural areas, rural communities, and recreational development.

# Agenda

---

## Thursday, April 18, 2024: Outdoor Recreation Sessions

---

**7:30-8:30 am:** Check-in and breakfast

---

**8:30-9:00 am:** Welcome from the conveners and questions for attendees: Why are you here and why is this important to you?

*Dan McCoy (Director, Wyoming Outdoor Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality (WORTH) Initiative)*

---

**9:00-9:50 am: Keynote:** Crossing the Trillion Dollar Threshold—Strategies to Ensure the Outdoor Recreation Economy Benefits Society for Generations to Come

*Chris Perkins (Vice President of Programs, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable)*

Chris Perkins is Vice President of Programs at the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, where he works to promote the sustainable growth of the outdoor recreation economy. This work focuses on rural economic development through outdoor recreation, outdoor recreation infrastructure, state outdoor recreation advocacy, the outdoor recreation workforce, and building a more inclusive outdoor recreation community. Chris received a master's in environmental management and master's in business administration at the Yale School of the Environment (YSE) and Yale School of Management (SOM).



**9:50-10:00 am:** Break

---

**10:00-10:50 am:** Wyoming's Future Outdoors: Unveiling the 2024-2028 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

*Lindsay Romaniello (Associate Planner, SE Group) & Catherine Winnop (Environmental Planner & Analyst, SE Group)*

Lindsey Romaniello is an associate planner with the consulting firm SE Group. Her list of planning related interests is diverse, ranging from historic preservation to long-range community strategies to recreation planning. But no matter the project, Lindsey approaches the process with optimism, enthusiasm, and a keen eye for the big picture.



Catherine Winnop is a Wyoming native, receiving her bachelor's degree from the University of Wyoming Haub School, in Environmental Systems Science in 2020. She is an Environmental Planner and Analyst with the consulting firm SE Group. She has a deep knowledge of National Environmental Policy Act permitting, Wilderness areas, climate change, and collaborative decision-making processes. She loves complex projects and finds fulfillment when working collaboratively with others. Catherine loves a good ice cream cone, riding single track on her mountain bike, or finding the best swimming hole.



---

**10:50-11:00 am:** Break

---

**11:00-12:30 pm:** Bureau of Land Management's Blueprint for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Outdoor Recreation, RAPTOR Updates, and Inflation Reduction Act project opportunities

*Michael Coyne (Outdoor Recreation Planner, Lander BLM Office), Doug Mayes (Restoration Coordinator, WY BLM State Office), & Blaine Potts (Assistant Field Manager, Kemmerer BLM Office)*

Michael Coyne began his BLM career in 2004 working seasonally in the Wildland program before eventually becoming an Assistant Engine Captain in 2009. In 2013, he transitioned to Range and in 2014 began working as an Outdoor Recreation Technician in the Recreation Department. Mike currently serves as the Outdoor Recreation Planner in the Lander Field Office. In his free time Mike loves to explore the great outdoors with his wife and daughter. He is also active in his community as a member of the fire department, where he has volunteered for the past 14 years, during which he has served in many positions including Chief.



Doug Mayes serves as the Restoration Coordinator for the BLM Wyoming State Office. He has been with BLM for seven years in roles ranging from GIS Specialist to Renewable Resources Branch Chief. Prior to joining BLM, Doug was engaged in Red-cockaded Woodpecker recovery and Longleaf Pine ecosystem restoration on the coastal plain of South Carolina.



Blaine Potts is the Assistant Field Manager for the Kemmerer Field Office BLM. Prior to this appointment, Blaine served as the Outdoor Recreation Planner at Craters of the Moon National Monument, Shoshone, and Bruneau Field Offices in Idaho, and in the Wells Field Office in Elko, Nevada. Since he was 13, Parks and Recreation has been his lifelong passion. He started by helping his uncle with tasks like cutting grass, building playgrounds, and organizing events for municipal departments in northern Utah. Blaine's family loves exploring Wyoming and they enjoy all the adventures there are to be found in this great State.



---

**12:30-1:25 pm: Lunch**

---

**1:30-2:25 pm: Breakout Sessions**

**Grand Ballroom A-C:**

Open Sessions for Bike Parks, Water-Based Recreation, Motorized Recreation, & Shooting Sports

*Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives*

**Grand Ballroom**

**D:** Healing in the Great Outdoors: A Collaborative Vision for Inclusive Recreation

*Marc Homer, Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado & Wyoming; Jessica Baxter, Our Camp; Laurel Henry, Wyoming Department of Education; Ashley Littleton, Camp Hope; Eric Distad, Outdoor Mindset*

**Jackson Hole Hall B:**

Keeping Wyoming in the Dark

*Jessica Moore, Wyoming State Parks and Historic Sites*

**Jackson Hole Hall B:**

Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Pathfinder Program

*Laurel Stephens, Wyoming Outdoor Recreation*

**Jackson Hole Hall C:**

Outdoor Recreation's Double Whammy of Benefits: Attracting and Growing Wyoming's Gear Manufacturing Industry

*Steff Kessler, Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance; Lindsay Olson, Atmosphere Mountainworks; Aaron Davidson, Gunwerks; Kelsey Ball, Brunton International LLC*

---

**2:30-3:25 pm: Breakout Sessions**

**Grand Ballroom A-C:**

Happy Trails: Building Successful Partnerships with Land Managers and Communities

*Michael Kusiek, Wyoming Pathways*

**Grand Ballroom**

**D:** Solving Problems with Data and Communication

*Pitt Grewe, AllTrails*

**Jackson Hole Hall B:**

Keep Wyoming Wild and Beautiful

*Matt Jolivet, Natrona County Weed and Pest*

**Jackson Hole Hall**

**C:** Tale of Two Trails: Opening Private Lands for the Public to Choose the Trail Less Travelled

*Nita Tallent, Ph.D., Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources*





---

### 3:30-4:25 pm: Breakout Sessions

**Grand Ballroom A-C:**  
COG in the Machine: Implementing Effective Structure for Volunteering on Public Lands

*Nicole Foss, Common Outdoor Ground; Aaron Voos, Common Outdoor Ground; Willow Belden, Common Outdoor Ground; Dr. Sara Ghezzi, University of Wyoming; Michael Kusiek, Wyoming Pathways; Jonathan Brooks, United States Forest Service*

**Grand Ballroom D:**  
Using Economics to Make the Case for Trails  
*Megan Lawson, Ph.D., Headwaters Economics*

**Jackson Hole Hall B:** Neighbors to Nature: Wildlife and Recreationist Co-existence in the Front Country of the Bridger-Teton National Forest

*Courtney Larson, Ph.D., the Nature Conservancy; Linda Merigliano, Bridger-Teton National Forest*

**Jackson Hole Hall C:**  
Adaptive Trail Design Considerations

*Caleb Carter, Weston County Natural Resource District; Quinn Brett, Dovetail Trail Consulting; Joe Stone, Dovetail Trail Consulting*

---

**4:30-6:00 pm:** University of Wyoming student poster presentations & happy hour

---

**7:30-9:30 pm:** Film screening at Frontier Brewing (150 W 2nd St, Casper, WY) (optional)

*"In the Dirt" (Dir. T.C. Johnstone)*

*"Wyoming Pathways" (Wyoming Pathways, Gannett Peak Sports, & Wind River Shuttle)*

---

## Friday, April 19, 2024: Outdoor Recreation Sessions

---

**7:30-8:30 am:** Check-in and breakfast

---

**8:30-9:25 am: Plenary:** Granola & Gasoline: Full Send over the Great Divide

*Mandy Fabel, Leadership Wyoming*

Mandy Fabel loves breaking stereotypes. She got married on top of Pingora Peak in the Wind River Mountains and is a sponsored athlete for Polaris Snowmobiles as a small female rider. She previously worked for NOLS as a hiking, climbing, and winter course instructor and now serves as the Executive Director to Leadership Wyoming. She lives in Lander with her husband Brian and two-year old son Stokes.



---

**9:30-10:25 am: Keynote:** Avoiding the Amenity Trap: How to keep our trail towns from being loved to death

*Megan Lawson, Headwaters Economics*

Dr. Megan Lawson leads Headwaters Economics research in outdoor recreation and public lands. She uses economic and statistical analysis to better understand the issues that communities face such as the economic potential and impacts of housing and land use policies, economic diversification, and public land management. Equal parts scientist and communicator, Megan uses data to conduct actionable research that illuminates solutions. She applies analytical skills to land use, natural resource, and public health topics, with an emphasis on the unique needs and opportunities for rural communities.



---

**10:30-11:25 am: Breakout Sessions**

**Grand Ballroom A-C:**

Connecting Communities with Motorized Trails

*Mark Tesoro, Southwest Offroad Trails; Forrest Kamminga, Wyoming State Trails Program; Justin Smith, Tensleep Nowood Trailbreakers*

**Grand Ballroom D:**

Dispersed Camping Inventory Protocol: Findings and Possible Management Actions

*Kristi Murphy, United States Forest Service; Jonathan Brooks, United States Forest Service; Vsevolod Shperun, United States Forest Service*

**Jackson Hole Hall**

**B:** Prosper Wyoming: Crafting Experiential Events to Foster Community Growth

*Beth Brennan, Tread Agency; Ally Palmer, Tread Agency*

**Jackson Hole Hall**

**C:** Making the Great American Rail-Trail a Reality in Wyoming

*Kevin Belle, Rails to Trails Conservancy*

---

**11:30-12:30 pm: General Session:** Skin in the Game: Buying in to outdoor recreation

*Patrick Harrington, Wyoming Outdoor Recreation; Marc Hildesheim, National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Coalition; Jessi Johnson, Wyoming Wildlife Association; Forrest Kamminga, Wyoming State Trails Program*

---

**12:30 pm:** Lunch



---

**1:00 pm:** Optional Casper-based field trips

*Bike through Casper via the Great American Rail-Trail with Kevin Belle*

*Enroll in complimentary Seizure First Aid Certification Training with Marc Homer*

*Enjoy a self-guided tour of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center*

*Take a self-guided stroll along the Platte River Pumphouse Trail Walk*

---

## Saturday, April 20, 2024: Search and Rescue Conference

---

**8:00-8:30 am:** Check-in & breakfast

**8:30-8:45 am:** Welcome remarks

*Ken Blackburn, Big Horn County*

**8:45-8:55 am:** Wyoming's 84th Civil Support Team Introduction

*Wyoming's 84th Civil Support Team: Maj. Casey Henry and WO1 Taylor Russell*

**9:00-9:50 am:** Fundraising

*Tim Ciocarlan, Teton County Search and Rescue*

**9:50-10:00 am:** Break

**10:00-10:25 am:** Be 307 Aware: How we got here and where we are today

*Jim Mitchell, Sublette County Emergency Management and Homeland Security*

**10:30-10:55 am:** Building Capacity for Wyoming Search and Rescue Teams

*Mitchell Knock, Erik Olson, & Abigail Whitman, University of Wyoming*

**11:00-11:55 am:** Where are we with Wyoming SAR? What do we need?

*Dir. Lynn Budd, Wyoming Office of Homeland Security; Ken Blackburn, Wyoming Search and Rescue Council; Sen. Brian Boner, Wyoming State Legislature; Col. Dane Rogers, Wyoming Army National Guard; Dave Lankford, Tip Top SAR*

**12:00-12:55 pm:** Lunch

---

**1:00-1:50 pm:** Accessing Specialized State Assets

*Dir. Lynn Budd, Wyoming Office of Homeland Security; Col. Dane Rogers, Wyoming Army National Guard; Dave Lankford, Tip Top SAR*

---

**1:50-2:00 pm:** Break

---

**2:00-2:50 pm:** Breaking Down County and State Lines

*LaRae Dobbs, Big Horn County Emergency Management; Aaron Appelhans, Albany County Sheriff's Office; Alex Bakkan, Carbon County Sheriff's Office*

---

**2:50-3:00 pm:** Break

---

**3:00-3:50 pm: Breakout Sessions**

**Jackson Hole Hall B:** Wilderness First Responder Training: Increasing your team's capabilities and patient outcomes

*KC Bess, Wounded Bear Medicine; Anthony Stevens, Wounded Bear Medicine; Jack Carpenter, North Big Horn Hospital District*

**Jackson Hole Hall C:** Tracking Workshop: Providing the toolkit for managing a search incident

*Cody Carroll, Peak Rescue*

---

**4:00-4:50 pm: Breakout Sessions**

**Jackson Hole Hall B:** Lawsuits and Legal Liability for SAR Squads

*Micah Rush, Peak Rescue*

**Jackson Hole Hall C:** Recruitment and Education for Volunteers

*Clint Becker, Wyoming Volunteer Retirement Council*

---

**5:00-6:00 pm:** Happy Hour with appetizers and drinks (optional)



# Speaker Bios: Outdoor Recreation Sessions

---

**Kelsey Ball:** Kelsey, a native of Casper, holds a BA in Recreation and Tourism Management. Raised in a family that cherished hunting, hiking, and fishing, she found her way back to Wyoming for rock climbing after college and traveling. With experience as a wilderness instructor, at the Lander Chamber of Commerce, and as an events planner, she now thrives at Brunton, engaging with recreation buyers and enthusiasts from all around the world.

**Jessica Baxter:** Jessica is a self-labeled “Data Geek” with a love for building relationships, envisioning possibility, and helping others. Serving for 30+ years at Our Camp has been a foundational aspect of Jessica’s views on inclusion, equitability, and quality of life.

**Willow Belden:** Willow Belden is a founding board member of Common Outdoor Ground. She’s an avid hiker, Nordic skier, and cyclist, and she’s conquering her fear of heights by learning to rock climb. Willow’s passion for nature extends beyond recreation to her work as a journalist. Formerly a reporter for Wyoming Public Radio, she now hosts the award-winning podcast Out There, which uses stories about the natural world to help listeners make sense of life.

**Kevin Belle:** Kevin Belle is the project manager for the Great American Rail-Trail at Rails to Trails Conservancy. He is a trained trail planner and assists communities around the country in trail development and maximizing the potential of trails for local and visitor benefits.

**Beth Brennan:** Beth Brennan is a marketing and project manager in the outdoor industry with an interest in market research, economic development and sustainable and responsible growth. Beth has experience working for destinations such as Jackson Hole Resort Association, Durango Tourism Office and Aramark Parks & Leisure. She is also active with conservation and land stewardship groups such as Backcountry Hunters & Anglers and Public Land & Water Association.

**Quinn Brett:** Quinn, originally a professional climber, transitioned into an avid hand-cyclist following a climbing accident in 2017. She made history as the first known hand-cyclist to conquer the Tour Divide, a grueling +3000-mile bike ride from Jasper, Canada, to Antelope Wells, New Mexico. Her experiences before and after the accident, coupled with her work background, have honed her expertise in adaptive recreation. Quinn has contributed her skills to both the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife, focusing on wilderness preservation and accessibility. Her specialty lies in bridging the gap between sustainable trail development and adherence to wilderness and accessibility laws, particularly for adaptive hiking and aMTB (adaptive mountain biking).

**Jonathan Brooks:** Jonathan Brooks is the Recreation Program Manager for the Laramie Ranger District of Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest through the United States Forest Service.

**Caleb Carter:** Caleb is the District Manager for the Weston County Natural Resource District. He has been able to combine this role with his passion for outdoor recreation through the development of local trails. He has also been a part of efforts to expand access to local trails in the area to a wider audience, including adaptive riders.

**Aaron Davidson:** Aaron has been involved in long range shooting since he traded in his high school Camaro for his first precision rifle. As a mechanical engineer, his training and experience has given him a unique insight into

solving the problems presented with long range shooting. His inventions range from award winning rifles to the world's smartest rangefinders and riflescopes. Aaron is the founder and CEO of Gunwerks, based in Cody, WY.

**Eric Distad:** Eric is a board member at Outdoor Mindset. He is currently VP of Clinical Development at a start-up researching a new therapy for epilepsy. Eric is passionate about ski-mountaineering, climbing, trail running and mountain biking.

**Nicole Foss:** Nicole Foss is the Program Manager for Common Outdoor Ground (COG). After receiving both her BA and MA in English from the University of Wyoming, she is thrilled to bring her communication skills to the nonprofit and outdoor recreation sectors. Nicole enjoys camping, gardening, plant identification, foraging, walkabouts, and downhill skiing, but she is most excited to spend her summer participating in the sustainable stewardship of public lands.

**Sara Ghezzi:** Sara Ghezzi, Ph.D, is an assistant professor of practice at the University of Wyoming in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources with the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program. She has been a COG Board Member since 2022.

**Pitt Grewe:** Pitt has been working in the outdoor industry for 20 years. From resort operations to public service, he has always focused on helping people get outside and find a connection with our public lands. As the Head of Public Land Partnerships, he helps land managers reach AllTrails users with critical information and get access to important trail user data trends to keep people safe and protect our public lands. Before joining AllTrails, Pitt served as the Director of the Division of Outdoor Recreation in the state of Utah. He loves working with the many outdoor recreation stakeholders to increase funding, harbor collaboration and educate communities on the benefits of getting outside. He is always up for an adventure on a trail, a river, a cliff face, or in the snow.

**Patrick Harrington:** Patrick graduated from the University of Wyoming with a bachelor's degree in Environment and Natural Resources and has spent his professional career as a leader in this field. Patrick is the manager of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Office, bringing his prior experience as superintendent of Curt Gowdy State Park and the Director of the Wyoming Conservation Corps. Patrick enjoys fly fishing, mountain biking, trail building, hiking, skiing and anything else that lets him spend time outside with his family.

**Laurel Henry:** Laurel is a Vision Outreach Consultant for the Wyoming Department of Education with 18 years of experience assisting clients and their families adjust to vision loss, teaching the use of assistive technology, and helping clients develop independent living skills. She believes high expectations and a positive view of vision loss increases the chance individuals will succeed.

**Marc Hildesheim:** Marc is the executive director of the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Coalition. The NOHVCC develops and provides a wide spectrum of programs, materials and information, or "tools", to individuals, clubs, associations and agencies to further a positive future for responsible OHV recreation. Marc has built a career as a leader in the motorized trail communities in Idaho and New Mexico before becoming the CEO of NOHVCC.

**Marc Homer:** Marc is Wyoming Director at Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado & Wyoming, providing programs and services including outdoor summer camps and retreats. Marc is a UW alumnus and is passionate about cross-country skiing, mountain-biking, music and travel.



**Jessi Johnson:** Jess Johnson leads Wyoming Wildlife Federation's efforts to advocate on behalf of wildlife and wild places through policy and local advocacy and is a fixture of the Wyoming State Capitol during legislative sessions. Beyond her work with WWF, she's a co-founder and advisory board member of Artemis Sportswomen and serves as the policy seat on the board of directors for 2% for Conservation.

**Matt Jolivet:** With a decade of experience in invasive species management, Matt Jolivet brings a wealth of expertise to the field. His passion for hunting and fishing makes him a natural fit for the mission of Wyoming Weed and Pest, where he works to protect our lands, wildlife, and agricultural resources from the threats posed by invasive species. Drawing from his studies in agroecology, which explore the interaction between humans and ecosystems, Matt strives to strike a balance that serves both communities and wilderness areas, ensuring they remain accessible and beneficial for generations to come.

**Forrest Kamminga, Wyoming State Trails Program, Manager:** Forrest has a passion for outdoor adventures including fishing, hunting, and dirt bike riding, along with his favorite activity – snowmobiling. Forrest started with the Wyoming State Trails program as a seasonal employee before becoming the Regional Trails Supervisor in charge of snowmobile and ORV trails across western Wyoming. Now, as the manager, Forrest oversees all activities of the Wyoming State Trails Program.

**Steff Kessler:** Steff Kessler's journey in Wyoming began in her early 20s when she joined NOLS as a wilderness guide. Her adventures took her across the Rocky Mountains, Alaska, Mexico, and Kenya. Later, she transitioned into NOLS administration, focusing on staffing and development. Steff's diverse career also includes roles as the former executive director of the Wyoming Outdoor Council, Fremont County Commissioner, and the first Wyoming director for The Wilderness Society. As a seasoned nonprofit and conservation policy consultant, she has made significant contributions to environmental causes. Currently, she serves as the Interim Coordinator for the Wyoming Outdoor Business Alliance, championing the economic potential of outdoor recreation.

**Michael Kusiek:** Michael Kusiek is the Executive Director of Wyoming Pathways, a statewide organization dedicated to human-powered transportation and recreation. Michael has over twenty-five years of experience in project management for health care, education, conservation, and public lands concerns. Michael earned a B.A. in Multicultural Studies/History and a master's in education focused on Total Quality Management.

**Courtney Larson:** Courtney Larson, Ph.D., is a conservation scientist with The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming. Her current work focuses on recreation and wildlife coexistence, low-tech stream restoration techniques, and mapping and spatial analysis. Courtney completed a PhD and MS in Ecology at Colorado State University, focusing on the effects of recreation on wildlife, and a B.A. in Environmental Studies and International Studies from Colby College.

**Megan Lawson:** Megan Lawson, Ph.D., leads Headwaters Economics research in outdoor recreation and public lands. She uses economic and statistical analysis to better understand the issues that communities face such as the economic potential and impacts of housing and land use policies, economic diversification, and public land management. Equal parts scientist and communicator, Megan uses data to conduct actionable research that illuminates solutions. She applies analytical skills to land use, natural resource, and public health topics, with an emphasis on the unique needs and opportunities for rural communities.

**Ashley Littleton:** Ashley Littleton is a Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist. She is the Food Service director for Camp Hope for kids with diabetes on Casper Mountain. She is a Wyoming native and currently lives in Douglas with her two kids and wonderful husband.

**Linda Merigliano:** Linda is a recreation program manager for the Jackson Ranger District and the Bridger-Teton National Forest public engagement specialist. She began working as a wilderness ranger in the Teton Range in 1979 and quickly decided to move and stay for the long-term. Her work focuses on forest planning, visitor use issues, partnerships, and promoting responsible, respectful use. In 2020, she coordinated a multi-partner effort to investigate recreation-wildlife co-existence to help address tension between recreation and conservation interests and inform the forest plan revision.

**Jessica Moore:** Jessica Moore is the Superintendent at Sinks Canyon State Park. She grew up in Michigan where she started her career as an Interpretive Ranger with the National Park Service, moved to Washington State where she spent 18 years working as an educator at a 725-acre wildlife park, and was hired on with Wyoming State Parks in the fall of 2022. Jessica has had a lifelong passion for nature and conservation and now enjoys spending time in beautiful Sinks Canyon.

**Kristi Murphy:** Kristi Murphy is the Recreation Program Manager for the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland. Prior to her current duty station in Laramie Wyoming, Kristi worked in the field of Outdoor Recreation Management on several National Forests (Chequamegon National Forest, National Forests in Mississippi, Superior National Forest, and Rio Grande National Forest) and with the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado. Over her 31-year career, she has completed large-scale recreation projects and improved recreation outcomes by working closely with and listening to the needs of local communities, recreation visitors and partner groups.

**Lindsay Olson:** Lindsay is a Laramie native with degrees from UW including a Masters involving research with small-scale Peruvian farmers in the High Andes. In 2018, Lindsay and her husband bought Atmosphere Mountainworks, a Laramie company for more than 20 years, which makes one-of-a-kind bags and apparel. Lindsay chooses to live in Laramie because of its close access to the mountains for hiking and mountain biking.

**Ally Palmer:** Ally Palmer, originally from Wyoming and holding an MS in Innovation and Management from Montana State University and dual BS degrees in Marketing and Professional and Technical Selling from the University of Wyoming, is a dynamic marketing coordinator. Outside of work, she is an avid outdoor enthusiast, which inspires her to create compelling campaigns that connect with audiences. Ally effectively merges technical expertise with creativity to develop impactful marketing campaigns.

**Vsevolod (Sevi) Shperun:** Vsevolod (Sevi) Shperun is the Recreation Manager on the Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District on the Medicine Bow National Forest. Sevi manages 13 campgrounds, 10 day use sites, multiple trailheads, hundreds of miles of summer and winter trails, 2 Wilderness areas, and dispersed recreation. He started his career with the United States Forest Service in 2012 working in Forestry and in 2022, Sevi moved into the Recreation Manager position on the Medicine Bow National Forest. Sevi holds a degree in Biology from the Temple University.





**Justin Smith:** Justin Smith grew up between Ten Sleep, WY and Friday Harbor, WA before tripping around for school in Colorado and Texas and work in Texas and Oregon. In 2013 he moved back to Ten Sleep to start the Ten Sleep Brewing Company with his Dad, while keeping one foot in the engineering world. Justin's passion is two wheeled dirt and dual sport travel, although he'll also pedal if he has to. He tries to stay involved with outdoor rec advocacy via the Tensleep Nowood Trailbreakers and was proud to play a (very) small part in helping with the Wyoming BDR. At this point, Justin feels extremely fortunate to be surrounded by millions of acres of public land in Wyoming.

**Laurel Stephens:** Born and raised in the heart of Georgia, Laurel fell in love with the West many years ago and has called the Bighorn Basin home since 2019. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts in English from Middle Georgia State University, Laurel has assumed a variety of roles throughout her professional career that have focused on marketing and communications in the hospitality and tourism industry. Laurel has worked for the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation since 2021.

**Joe Stone:** Prior to joining Dovetail Trail Consulting, Joe served as the Executive Director at Teton Adaptive in Jackson Hole, WY. With extensive experience as an adaptive mountain biker and hiker, he has worked nationwide with trail crews, land management agencies, mountain bike festivals, and various nonprofits dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities. Joe is a passionate advocate for the civil rights of people with disabilities. His expertise lies in program development, staying abreast of emerging technologies, and understanding the desires of the disability community in expanding opportunities.

**Nita Tallent:** Nita Tallent, Ph.D., is a retired federal research scientist (US Environmental Protection Agency) and natural resource & environmental law & policy professional (National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, & Federal Emergency Management Agency). Concurrent with her professional career, Nita is an alumna of the University of Nevada Las Vegas where she earned a MS and Doctorate in biological sciences specializing in plant succession, restoration, and invasive species ecology. Following her federal service Nita has returned to academia to earn a MS in Environment, Natural Resources & Society as a member of the MacMillian Private Lands Stewardship Program exploring private land conservation and outdoor recreation.

**Mark Tesoro:** Mark Tesoro founded Southwest Wyoming Off-road Trails, also known as SWOT, in early 2020. SWOT is a nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting communities in Wyoming with off-road motorized trails as a means of economic development. He lives with his wife in Evanston and manages a sporting goods company. He also serves on the board of the Wyoming Office of Tourism for District 4 covering Uinta, Lincoln and Sweetwater Counties.

**Aaron Voos:** Since 2010, Aaron Voos has worked with the Public Affairs program on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests & Thunder Basin National Grassland. According to Voos, working with collaborative groups like COG is one of the most enjoyable and valuable aspects of his job. He has been involved with COG since inception. Voos lives in Laramie with his wife Marla and two sons, Jack (17) and Will (12). When not hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, playing tennis, landscaping, or otherwise doing something active, he can be found coaching youth baseball or traveling around the region/country to his kids' sporting events.

# Speaker Bios: Search & Rescue Conference

---

**Aaron Appelhans**, Sheriff, Albany County: Appelhans came to Laramie as a UW student in 1999 and graduated with a Civil Engineering degree in 2003. Not coming from a small town, he became accustomed to the benefits of small-town living pretty quickly, like being able to meet your neighbors and “go where everyone knows your name;” participating in and coaching kids in city recreation sports leagues, attending kids’ school plays, concerts, recitals; learn and enjoy the many outdoor activities. He has called Laramie his home ever since. He met his wife as a fellow Engineering student at UW and they got married in Laramie in 2004 where they now are raising their three kids. When he has time, he enjoys a game of pick-up basketball, along with golfing and fishing in the summers, hiking and hunting in the fall, skiing and hot springs in the winter, and travel and gaming in the spring.

**Alex Bakkan**, Sheriff, Carbon County: Bakkan was born and raised in northern Minnesota and received a bachelor’s degree in legal studies from the University of Wisconsin-Superior. After graduating college, he packed up everything he owned and moved to Wyoming so he could bow hunt elk. He had never been to Wyoming before and took a job at the State Penitentiary in Rawlins where he worked as a correctional officer and firearms instructor. He came over to the sheriff’s office in 2016 and worked as both a detention deputy and patrol deputy before being elected sheriff in 2022. As sheriff, he is also the coordinator of all search and rescue operations within Carbon County. He is also an active member of Carbon County Search and Rescue. As far as personal life goes, he is married and has 2 sons and is extremely passionate about the outdoors. He’s an avid archery hunter, snowmobiler, ice-fisherman, backpacker, and he serves as Vice President of Bowhunters of Wyoming. He loves to read and he’s a huge advocate for continuing education and is currently working on a second bachelor’s degree in business administration.

**Clint Becker**, Sheriff, Converse County: Becker was elected the 21st Sheriff of Converse County in 2006. He was sworn in as Sheriff in January of 2007. Sheriff Becker values teamwork, community outreach, training and professionalism. He relies on citizen input and community partnerships in his commitment to community-oriented policing. He also fosters a “participatory management” philosophy, in which all his employees are given a voice in the operation of the Sheriff’s Office. These beliefs and philosophies have led to him being reelected multiple times. In 1986, Becker moved to Converse County to start his law enforcement career with the Wyoming Highway Patrol. He served for 20 years with the Patrol, entirely in the Converse County area. Upon retiring with the Wyoming Highway Patrol, he decided to run for Office of Sheriff to continue his service to the people of Converse County.

**KC Bess**, owner/instructor/operator, Wounded Bear Medicine: Growing up in the red rock country of Southern Utah, Bess transitioned from scrambling on rocks as a kid to sport and trad climbing throughout the western United States as a young adult. Climbing led him to the Teton and Wind River Ranges and opened the door to river running and professional guiding. Bess has been working as a guide for the past 22 years and has been a risk and operations manager for 15 of those years. He has explored and run expeditions on rivers throughout the United States, Canada, Costa Rica and New Zealand. He serves as a member of the Teton County Search and Rescue Team, giving him valuable skills and experience as a technical rescuer. All these activities and experiences provided him the opportunity to begin teaching technical rescue and to start Black Fox Rescue Institute and Wounded Bear Medicine. Bess is also a Wilderness EMT, a WMA Instructor, an Instructor Training for Resuce3 International, a Sierra Rescue International River Rescue Instructor Trainer, a Class V ACA Swiftwater Instructor, an International Rafting Federation Assessor, and a 20+ year river guide. He is also an active member of Teton County Search and Rescue, serving as a Short Haul Specialist, Board Member, and on the PART team. He has embedded with camera operators, sound technicians, producers, and cast members in remote locations in the US



and Internationally. In his free time, Bess enjoys trail running, backpacking, climbing, and rafting. He and his incredible wife love to travel and spend time outdoors with their two kids, families, and friends.

**Ken Blackburn**, sheriff, Big Horn County: Blackburn currently serves as the sheriff of Bighorn County and has held this position for over 17 years. He began his law enforcement career in 1986 working for the National Park Service as a seasonal law enforcement ranger; since that time, he has served with the Powell Police Department, the Montana Livestock Board, the Lovell Police Department, the Bighorn County Sheriff's Department, and is also a sworn peace officer in the state of South Dakota. Blackburn's educational background is in health sciences with an emphasis in emergency medicine and search and rescue operations. He has also served on search and rescue units and EMS/ambulance units in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming over the past 40 years, and has held National Registry Certifications for over 25 years. Sheriff Blackburn has a passion for search and rescue and is currently serving as the chairman of the Governor's Search and Rescue Council in Wyoming.

**Brian Boner**, Wyoming State Senator, Converse County: Boner is a sixth generation Wyoming rancher and Air Force veteran. When not working in the legislature, he works on the family farm and ranch in Converse County. He also helps develop oil, gas and wind energy on the family ranch. A Converse County native, Boner graduated from the University of Wyoming in 2007 with a Bachelor of Arts in Russian and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science. After graduating from UW, he entered the active-duty Air Force, serving in various capacities in the land-based portion of our country's nuclear triad. As a Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Crew Commander, he has led airmen in providing a safe, secure and effective strategic deterrent in F.E. Warren Air Force Base's nuclear missile complex. He is most proud of his work as a crew commander and instructor where he spent years teaching his fellow missileers how to perfect their skills in a high stakes mission where failure was not an option. He also worked staff jobs at the unit and headquarters levels. While serving full time in the military, he completed his MBA in agribusiness from the University of Nebraska. After six years of active service, he returned to his family's ranch in Converse County. As a part of a multigenerational agriculture family, Boner understands the importance of hard work and prudent risk taking in building a successful business. He also has firsthand knowledge of the role production agriculture plays in responsible energy development by balancing that development with the long-term preservation of our natural resources. He will continue to be a voice for Wyoming's rural communities, core industries and veterans. He is currently serving on the Corporations Committee, Transportation, Highways and Military Affairs Committee (Chairman) and the Select Federal Natural Resource Management Committee (Chairman). He and his wife Nicole live in Douglas with their three kids.

**Lynn Budd**, Director, Wyoming Office of Homeland Security: Budd was appointed by Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon as the Director of the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security (WOHS) and the Governor's Homeland Security Advisor in January 2019. Budd has worked at the Office of Homeland Security since April of 2011, serving the state and agency in multiple positions. As a member of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), she serves on the Homeland Security Committee (past Vice Chair), and as a member of the Resilience, Legislative and Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Committees. She has served on the NEMA Board of Directors as the FEMA Region 8 Vice President representing the states of Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, Utah, South Dakota and North Dakota, and the Board Secretary. She currently serves as the Vice President of the Board. She is a member of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) to FEMA Region 8 and served as the Chair from April 2022 to November 2023. As the Homeland Security Advisor to the Governor, Budd is active in the Governor's Homeland Security Advisory Council (GHSAC) through the National Governor's Association. Budd received her bachelor's degree in business administration from Colorado State University, her Paralegal Certificate from Kaplan University and was named the 2018 recipient of the Wyoming Women of Influence award for Government, Military and Law. She is currently completing the Executive Leaders Program with

the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Post Graduate School. Prior to coming to the Office of Homeland Security, she worked with her family in the management of The Nature Conservancy's Red Canyon Ranch, a 50,000-acre working cattle ranch south of Lander, Wyoming for 12 years. Budd lives in Cheyenne, Wyoming with her husband, Bob, who is the Director of the Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust for the State of Wyoming. They have three grown children.

**Jack Carpenter**, PAMHS, FAWM: Carpenter is a Certified Physician's Assistant through the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). He holds a specialization in Psychological and Mental Health Services and Emergency Medicine. Carpenter is a member of the Wilderness Medicine Society and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). Carpenter lives in Lovell, Wyoming.

**Cody Carroll**, Peak Rescue: Carroll spent over 23 years in the military, most of it as a Force Recon Marine. After he retired, he spent a year on the Loveland Fire Department in Colorado as a Firefighter/EMT-W, before transitioning back to work as a military training provider. During his time in the military, he deployed to lovely places like Iraq, Afghanistan and PACOM. He has held billets from team member to platoon commander and has in-depth knowledge of team tactics and the application of mountaineering skills to the military mountaineering team. He holds the military qualifications of Mountain Leader, Free-Fall Parachutist, Combat Diver, Dive Supervisor and currently moonlights as a SOF Level 1 Sniper Instructor. He is a current TS/SCI clearance holder and a deployable advisor. For the last several years he has worked extensively in jungle terrain, developing mobility and jungle warfare programs for the Tactical Tracking Operations School, where he currently holds the title of VP and delivers jungle specific training to special operations teams. Carroll is passionate about transferring technical mountaineering and rope related skills to our military clients. He believes that these skills give commanders access to terrain that would be considered "denied" by most and that these skills open the playbook for operational access.

**LaRae Dobbs**, Emergency Management Coordinator, Big Horn County: Dobbs is the Big Horn County Emergency Management Coordinator. She was appointed by Governor Mead in 2016 and received a reappointment from the current sitting, Governor Gordon. She has served as the President Elect on the board for Wyoming All Hazards Association (WAHA) for the past two years and is the current sitting President for the next two. She completed the Emergency Management Basic Academy, earned the Wyoming Emergency Management Certification (WEM) and is on the FEMA teaching cadre. Dobbs has a passion for Wyoming and the Wyoming way of life. Collaboration within and outside of her jurisdiction to prepare for and mitigate against disasters is an important part of her role as an Emergency Manager. Her job includes bringing folks to the table to improve capabilities which will help to preserve the Wyoming way. She loves hiking in the mountains with her husband, hosting Sunday dinners with her kids and grandkids, and living in Wyoming.

**David Lankford**, Tip Top Search and Rescue, Sublette County Sheriff's Office: Lankford is a Wyoming native. He grew up in Jackson, graduated from Jackson-Wilson High School and attended the University of Wyoming. Since 1980, he has been a resident of Sublette County and lives in Pinedale with his wife Mary. Lankford is retired from a law enforcement career of 34 years with service as a City of Laramie Police Officer, Wyoming Highway Patrolman, and one term as the Sublette County Sheriff. He has been a member of Tip Top Search and Rescue for 25 years and currently serves on the Board of Directors and is an Incident Command volunteer.

**Jim Mitchell**, Emergency Management Coordinator, Sublette County: Mitchell began his career as an EMT II Advanced from 1986-1998. He also worked for the Rawlins Volunteer Fire Department from 1986-1991, where he focused on Structural and Extrication missions; he achieved the rank of Lieutenant and received two

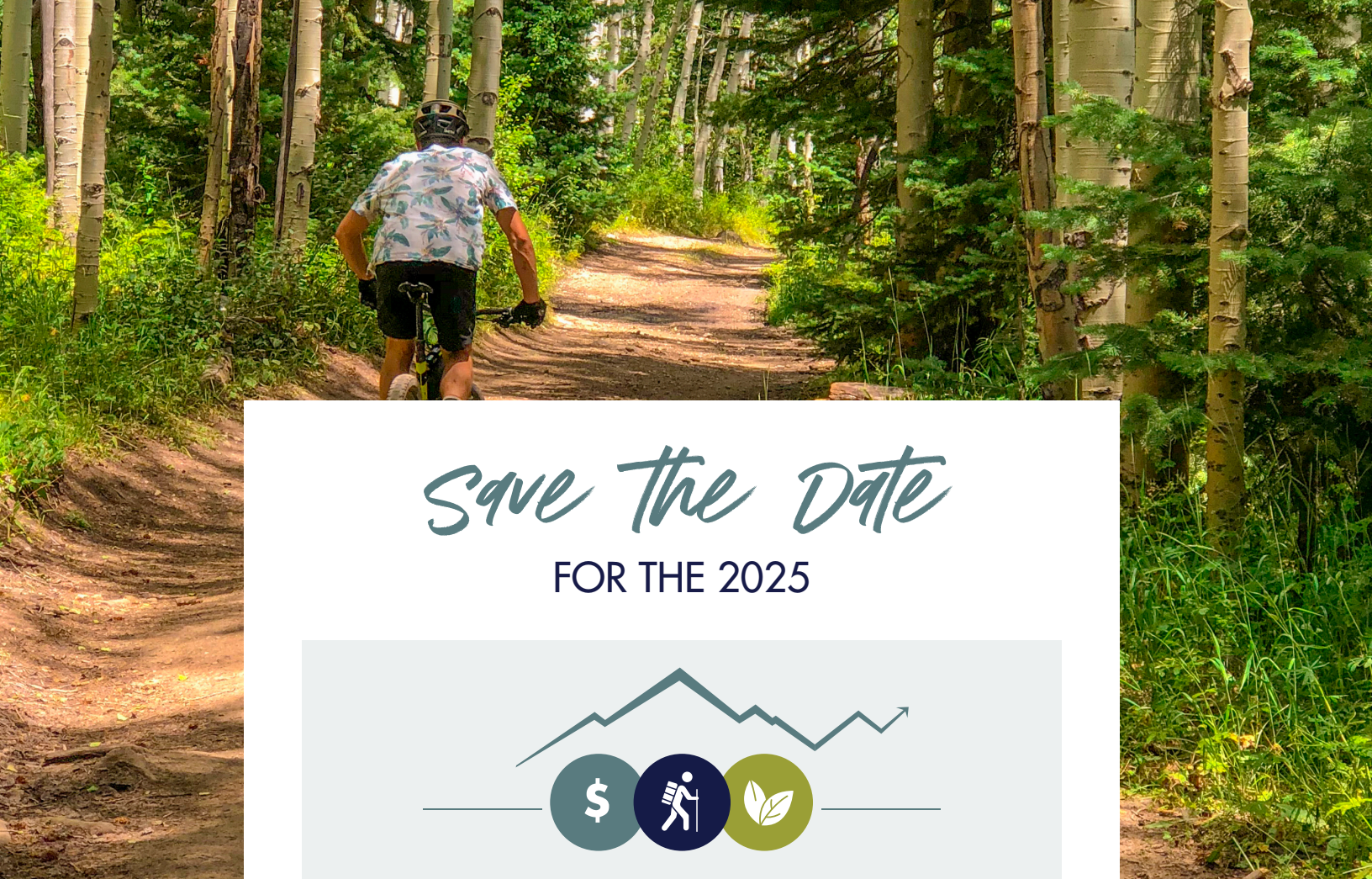


recognitions: Rookie of the Year and Officer of the Year. Mitchell also worked for the Carbon County Fire Department (1987-1992) working in wildland fire and engine operation, and the Carbon County Sheriff's Office (1992-1997) where he was a certified Detention/Peace Officer and a Special Ops team member. In 1997, Mitchell moved to the Rock Springs Police Department where he served for 10 years as a patrol officer and a Hazardous Device Technician as a member of the Sweetwater Combined Bomb Squad. From 2007-2011, Mitchell worked for Infinity Power and Controls as a building construction manager and a SCADA installation technician. In 2011, Mitchell began working for Sublette County Emergency Management and Homeland Security as the Emergency Management and Homeland Security coordinators. He is also a member of Tip Top Search and Rescue. In 2021, Mitchell and others developed the Be 307 Aware campaign.

**Dane Rodgers**, COL, Wyoming Army National Guard: COL Dane Rodgers entered his career as a pilot in Army Aviation in 1998 and has primarily flown UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. COL Rodgers is a Pilot in Command, Air Mission Commander, and is qualified as a Maintenance Test Pilot for Blackhawk helicopters. His deployments include Bosnia in 2001 with the 1022nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance), Operation Iraqi Freedom 2 in Kuwait from 2004-2005 with the 1022nd Medical Company, and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan from 2011-2012 as the Commander of the deployed element of C Company 5/159th General Support Aviation Battalion. COL Rodgers has experience flying medical evacuation, search and rescue, and wildland fire suppression missions with water buckets. COL Rodgers understands the WY Joint Operations Center (JOC) mission from his time served as the Joint Training Officer, coordinating emergency management exercises with Counties and the State of WY. He was the Joint Operations Officer from 2017-2020 responsible for coordination of all assigned Civil Support operations the WY National Guard JOC supported. COL Rodgers is currently the Army State Aviation Officer in charge of the Army Aviation program for the WY Army National Guard.

**Micah Rush**, Peak Rescue: Rush's knowledge and expertise is both varied and strong. With over 20 years' experience as a rope rescue technician, a seasoned fire fighter/ first responder, and mountain guide, Rush brings a wide variety of rescue skills and knowledge to share. Rush is one of the only rescue techs in the country with Rope Access, Rope Rescue, Mountain Rescue, ITRA Registered Assessor, ITRA Instructor Confined Space & Rope Level 3, and the full International Federation of Mountain Guides Association (IFMGA) certifications. This unique blend of knowledge ranging from backcountry rescue to industrial rescue allowed Rush to become a leader in these areas within the Fire Department and the Regional Rescue Teams. He has helped to inform OSHA as they create new guidelines surrounding rock climbing and guiding as well as testing both recreational and industrial rescue equipment for leading companies. As a professional mountain guide and rescue team coordinator, Rush has real world advice and experience as well as knowledge and theory from some of the highest standards in the business to pass on to each student he encounters.

**Anthony Stevens**, owner/lead instructor/operator, Wounded Bear Medicine: Stevens was born and raised in Wyoming, growing up adventuring in the mountains and working on the family ranch. He is a life-long resident of Jackson Hole. As a child, the Tetons and the Absaroka mountains were his playgrounds, which gave Stevens a passion for remote locations. After attending college in Arizona, he decided to return to Wyoming and devote his life's work to the outdoors. Realizing his commitment to experiential wilderness education, he began his path by becoming a field instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School in 2010. This then gave him the opportunity to hone his craft and skills while teaching and leading groups in rugged, wild areas around the globe. When not educating and working to keeping the adventurous safe, his passions include consuming vast amounts of coffee, trail running, mountain biking, backcountry skiing and anything else that keeps him in motion. Stevens and his amazing wife Erika enjoy passing on their enthusiasm for all things outdoors to their three kids.



# Save the Date

FOR THE 2025



WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION

*Summit*

**MAY 1-3, 2025**

Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center  
Laramie, WY



Wyoming Outdoor  
Recreation, Tourism and  
Hospitality Initiative  
(WORTH)

307-766-5009 | DAN.MCCOY@UWYO.EDU | UWYO.EDU/WORTH