

AGENDA

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR TOMORROW



WYOMING OUTDOOR RECREATION *Summit*



UW

Jay Kemmerer
WORTH Institute



APRIL 30—MAY 1, 2026

PLATTE VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER
SARATOGA, WYOMING

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Welcome to the 2026 Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Summit.

The future of outdoor recreation in Wyoming is being written right now, and it starts here at the 2026 Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Summit. Development projects, new opportunities, and long-range planning all depend on the partnerships and relationships that hold this industry together. Over two days, these sessions are designed to connect current leaders and equip the next generation with practical tools, strategies, and real-world lessons they can bring back to their communities, building the capacity to make tomorrow's vision a reality.

Convened by the Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute and the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation, the Summit brings together Wyoming's outdoor recreation community to share experiences, highlight statewide updates, and strengthen connections across agencies and organizations.

This two-day program includes sessions on public lands, recreation, legislative integration and community economic development. Together, these conversations aim to support a coordinated and sustainable approach to outdoor recreation in Wyoming.

About Us



Jay Kemmerer
WORTH Institute

The mission of Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute is to support, expand, and diversify Wyoming's economy through outdoor recreation, tourism, and hospitality industries.



The Wyoming 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.

Our Sponsors

This event would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors.

Peak Partners



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!



Wagners

Founded in 2002, Wagners CFT pioneered a unique pull-winding process for composite materials. Our products, including pedestrian trail bridges, road bridges, boardwalks, stairs, viewing platforms, light poles, and crossarms, offer superior strength-to-weight ratios, ensuring cost-effective, sustainable solutions for civil infrastructure. Committed to quality and customer satisfaction, we provide extensive design capabilities, pre-fabrication, and a variety of color options.

Canyon Champion



Visit Casper

Visit Casper's mission is to connect travelers with the unforgettable experiences of Natrona County - driving economic impact through tourism while preserving the quality of life locals love.



Spur Supporters



Casper College Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management

Wyoming is the perfect place to experience the exciting and growing outdoor recreation and tourism industry. The Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management 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.



National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

Headquartered in Lander, Wyoming, the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) is a nonprofit global wilderness school that believes in the transformative power of leadership through wilderness education.



Pointe Strategies

Pointe Strategies is a nationwide outdoor recreation planning and design firm dedicated to safely connecting communities from their front doors to nature and recreation.



Power Company of Wyoming

A longtime corporate citizen of Carbon County, Wyoming, Power Company of Wyoming LLC is an independent natural resources developer working to build high-capacity, reliable, clean electric power supplies in an environmentally responsible manner to help meet local and regional market demands.



Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources

Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) is Wyoming's Assistive Technology Act program and a resource for all assistive technology (AT) needs in Wyoming. The Assistive Technology Act supports state efforts to improve the provision of assistive technology by providing states with financial assistance to implement State Level Activities and State Leadership Activities to meet the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities.



Wyoming Conservation Corps

The mission of the Wyoming Conservation Corps (WCC) is to promote individual development and stewardship through education and service.



Wyoming Workforce Services

Wyoming Workforce Services' mission is to collaborate to support a thriving workforce and economy, aiming to lead workforce innovation and investing in employee development today for a stronger tomorrow.



University Corporation for Atmospheric Research

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) brings together the Earth system science community to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and share learning. By connecting researchers and educators with each other, with cutting-edge resources, and with the private sector, UCAR takes research out of the lab into the real world for the benefit of society.

In-Kind



Kate's Real Food

Born in the Rocky Mountains, Kate's Real Food creates healthy snacks to fuel adventures. Starting with homemade energy bars for outdoor activities, the brand has grown into a nationally recognized name, committed to crafting delicious, organic snacks that enhance connection to nature and experiences. Please enjoy Kate's Real Food bars in your swag bags!

Raffle

We extend heartfelt thanks to the organizations who generously donated raffle prizes.

All registrants are automatically entered, but you must be present for a chance to win!

1. 2-night stay at the historic Elk Mountain Hotel in Elk Mountain, Wyoming. This prize comes with a dinner for 2, and a 30-minute llama meet-and-greet (courtesy of Elk Mountain Llama Trekking)
2. River Float Trip down the Encampment River, courtesy of Beacon in the Wind, a coffee and outdoor adventure shop.
3. 2-night stay at any campsite, shack, yurt, or cabin at ANY Wyoming State Park, courtesy of Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources.



Agenda

Thursday, April 30

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM Breakfast & Check-in

9:00 AM Field Trips Depart

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM Building Place Based Learning Partnerships: Reengaging Students with the Outdoors (Nathan Tedjeske, Mark Landerman, Ben Larsen, Dean Olenik, Amy Reyes, and Wayne Turner)

This session will be focused on how to build both partnerships and programming for schools and students. Outline ways local businesses can provide unique opportunities for local children, while giving their business exposure to the future workforce. This workshop will incorporate a presentation, a large amount of Q&A and work time as participants develop plans and proposals that could be used in their communities.

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM Field Trips Return

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM Welcome Address (Dan McCoy, Director, Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute; Chris Floyd, Deputy Director, Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources; Mark Tesoro, Manager, Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation)

2:30PM – 3:45 PM Keynote Address: Transformative experiences outdoors are good for business (Stacy Bare, Executive Director, Friends of Grand Rapids Parks)

Awe pioneer, National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, Executive Director of Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, and US Army Veteran Stacy Bare brings his decades of experience in programming and infrastructure in outdoor recreation to discuss why and how ensuring access to the outdoors for all means good business for communities, outdoor and outdoor-adjacent brands, and recreation and hospitality services.

3:45 PM – 4:00 PM Break

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM General Session: Wyoming's Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives: Spotlight (Amy Crawford, Andrea Maichak, Zulima Lopez, Sandra Sanderson, Luke Thorkildsen, Rick Tryder, and Darran Wells)

The Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation convenes and facilitates 12 Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives. Engaging voices from businesses, non-profits, clubs, elected officials, students, conservation groups, land owners, agency advisors and community members, these Collaboratives are a public, community-driven conversation about how to improve the quality, quantity and sustainability of Wyoming's exceptional outdoor recreation spaces. In this session, you will be hearing from 6 Collaborative members and advisors from around the state as they share how their experiences are impacting their communities and agencies.

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM Social Hour

Sponsored by WYORBA. Network, mingle, and enjoy appetizers and a cash bar.

Dinner on your own—enjoy Saratoga’s finest!

Friday, May 1

OPTIONAL Sage-Grouse Viewing Tour with Cindy and Steve Loose

Interested in watching male sage-grouse perform their spring courtship strutting display on a lek? Join retired U.S. Forest Service wildlife biologist Steve Loose for this special early-morning experience.

Meet at the Platte Valley Community Center at 5:30 a.m. on Friday, May 1. A bus with seating for up to 40 people will depart from there for the 20-minute ride north of Saratoga to the lek viewing area and parking site. Please note that no restrooms are available.

Participants should dress very warmly, including a warm hat, coat, gloves, and other cold-weather layers. To provide the clearest viewing opportunity, the bus will be turned off at the lek and the windows will remain down. Everyone will stay on the bus at the viewing area to avoid disturbing the birds.

Binoculars are helpful for a closer look but are not required. Photography is welcome!

To sign up for this experience, please join the list on Thursday evening at the WORS.

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM Breakfast & Check-in

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM Welcome Remarks (Laurel Stephens, Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources)

8:45 AM – 10:00 AM Where Trails Meet Travelers: The Crossroads of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (Domenic Bravo, Executive Director, Wyoming Office of Tourism; Kalene Griffith, President and CEO, Visit Bentonville)

Outdoor recreation is reshaping destinations across the country, transforming communities, fueling local economies, and inspiring a new generation of travelers seeking authentic experiences. In this engaging fireside chat, Domenic Bravo, Executive Director of the Wyoming Office of Tourism, sits down with Kalene Griffith, CEO of Visit Bentonville, to explore how outdoor recreation and tourism intersect to create thriving destinations. From Bentonville’s rise as a global mountain biking hub to Wyoming’s legendary wide-open landscapes, the conversation will explore how communities can invest in outdoor assets, build meaningful visitor experiences, and ensure tourism enhances quality of life for residents. Attendees will hear insights on partnerships, destination branding, infrastructure investment, and the evolving role of tourism leaders in stewarding both places and experiences. Through stories, lessons learned, and a look toward the future, this discussion will highlight how destinations of all sizes can harness the power of outdoor recreation to drive sustainable tourism growth and community pride.



10:00 AM – 10:15 AM Break

10:15 AM – 11:15 AM Concurrent Sessions I

The Secret on How to Get Things Done: Dan McCoy, Sarah Brown Mathews, Austin Burgess and Brendan Kelley (Shively Meeting Room)

This panel explores how to move projects from idea to implementation, focusing on real-world trail and recreation efforts in Wyoming and the surrounding region. Panelists will share firsthand insights on building partnerships, navigating public land processes, and overcoming common obstacles. Through case studies and discussion, attendees will learn what separates successful projects from those that stall. The session will conclude with practical advice and key lessons for turning concepts into completed projects.

Bridging the Gap and Building Collaborations: Jennifer Ricupero and Linda Merigliano (White Meeting Room)

Friends of the Bridger-Teton is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing capacity for resource stewardship, connecting people to the National Forest, and supporting projects that help care for the land and serve people. The work is based on three pillars – Learn, Collaborate, and Act. We will share what led to the organization’s successful launch and how the Friends has evolved to connect with community leaders in order to meet new challenges and expand to a multi-landscape focus. Participants will leave with at least one actionable idea for a potential new partner or to expand the work of an existing partner.

Tie Hack Trail Rehabilitation Project: Michael Kusiek (Donnan Training Room)

For fourteen years, flooding and a lack of funding left the Tie Hack Trail near Saratoga nearly impassable, frustrating hikers, mountain bikers, hunters, and the broader community that had long cherished this corridor. This presentation walks through how Wyoming Pathways planned, funded, and executed the restoration of this beloved trail from the ground up. Michael Kusiek will cover the full arc of the project, from initial planning and contractor selection through the realities of construction, including bridge installation, debris removal, major trail rerouting, and the challenges of working in a dynamic high-country environment. He will discuss what went as planned, what didn’t, and what Wyoming Pathways learned along the way about managing complex trail infrastructure work at scale. The result is a restored trail that has become a regional draw and a daily source of community pride, and an organization with significantly expanded technical capacity for future projects across Wyoming.

Using the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model to Modernize Legacy Programs: Ashley Leonard and William Poole (Platte Valley Training Room)

The field of recruitment, retention and reactivation of hunters and anglers is based on the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM). This model was developed for hunting and fishing, but is applicable to any outdoor recreation. In this presentation, we will discuss what the ORAM model is, how we use it as a tool to understand where we are and where we are going, and, finally, how we have used it to modernize legacy programs at Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp to fit within a more robust framework. Furthermore, we will discuss how these actions align with our goal of building new partnerships with a variety of organizations and bringing new generations into the fold of historic programs and activities. Finally, we will tie it all together by explaining how we evaluate program goals against the ORAM model and other departmental objectives.

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM Morning Break

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Buffet Lunch

Enjoy a buffet lunch provided by Bella's Bistro. Raffle winners will be announced at 12:30 pm!

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM Vendor Expo & Networking Hour

Stretch your legs and engage with our amazing vendors! Coffee and sweet treats available.

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM Concurrent Sessions II

Building Community Stewardship to Support Outdoor Recreation on Public Lands (will start at 1:45 PM): Richard Vercoe, Austin Burgess, Devin Erick, Nicole Foss and Jamie Hansen (Shively Meeting Room)

As demand for outdoor recreation on Wyoming's public lands grows, land managers face financial and staffing constraints. This panel and workshop brings together members of the US Forest Service, Wyoming Office of Recreation, Central Wyoming Trail Alliance, Common Outdoor Ground (COG) and Wyo Trail FAIRIES to explore how community-based stewardship programs can bridge the gap. Through panel discussion and interactive breakout stations, participants will identify land manager needs, discover funding and partnership opportunities, and learn how to build effective local stewardship programs that sustain our public lands for generations to come.

Cultivating Political Allies: Sandy Newsome and Jerimiah Rieman (White Meeting Room)

Strong relationships with elected officials don't happen by accident; they are built over time through trust, preparation, and a willingness to work together. In this session, former state legislator and business leader Sandy Newsome joins Jerimiah Rieman to share real-world insights on how communities can more effectively engage local, state, and federal decision-makers to advance outdoor recreation. Drawing on experience in local and state government, tourism leadership, and public service, Sandy and Jerimiah will offer practical advice on getting to know your elected leaders, communicating your priorities, and building partnerships that lead to results. They will also share examples from their own work advancing policy, particularly through the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund, to highlight what effective collaboration looks like in practice. This session will emphasize preparation, flexibility, and partnership, giving attendees tools they can immediately apply to move outdoor recreation initiatives forward in their communities.

The Tech Frontier of Access: Sam Seeton and Liz Lightner (Donnan Meeting Room)

Sam Seeton, CEO of Infinite Outdoors, will speak on how his Casper-based company has teamed up with landowners to allow managed, fee based or free, access to (or through) private property through an online and app-based booking platform. Free access is provided through their Access Granted Initiative. The primary focus has been to allow access for hunting and fishing. With the recent addition of the Golden Rule Ranch property, rock climbers will now have FREE access to (never before) sport climbing in the Wind River Canyon! Landowner and WyoClimbers Board Member, Liz Lightner, will speak about why she opted to partner with Infinite Outdoors to share her husband's vision for their property.



Gravel Road Adventure Field Guides: a look at Wyoming: Stephen Benerski (Platte Valley Training Room)

Gravel adventures open up options for out-of-the-box outdoor recreation development. John Stephen Benerski from Gravel Adventure Field Guides for a look into the economic development opportunities associated with the growth of gravel pathway tourism. This session will explore development opportunities for, including the Great American Rail Trail in Lovell and Greybull.

3:15 PM – 3:45 PM Afternoon Break

3:45 PM – 4:45 PM Concurrent Sessions III

Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Business Session (Shively Meeting Room)

Founded Outdoors – Wyoming Outdoor Business Needs Assessment and Recommendations: Ruth Mayapa, Tom Salerno and Carter Watsabaugh

This session presents findings from a statewide survey and stakeholder interviews with outdoor recreation businesses across Wyoming. The research highlights key challenges, opportunities, and resource needs identified by business owners. It also offers practical recommendations to support business growth, strengthen industry connections, and inform future mentorship and development programs. Attendees will gain insights into how Wyoming’s outdoor economy can be better supported through collaboration, targeted resources, and strategic planning.

Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance (WYORBA) Information Session (Cheyenne Sterck)

Join WYORBA’s new Executive Director for a brief overview of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance, followed by small-group discussions focused on real-world business needs and opportunities. After a 10–15 minute presentation covering WYORBA’s mission, current initiatives, and ways to get involved, participants will break into conversation tables to share insights, challenges, and ideas related to Wyoming’s outdoor recreation economy. This interactive session is designed to foster connection, gather input, and ensure WYORBA’s work reflects the needs of businesses and communities across the state.

Search and Rescue In Wyoming: Sheriff Alex Bakkan, Mike Cavalier and Brynn Hirshman (White Meeting Room)

This session will provide an overview of Search and Rescue Programs across Wyoming. Panelists will discuss the challenges and opportunities of county-led SAR programs, give insight into critical case studies and mission evolution, and provide takeaways for session attendees to support their local SAR program.

Fly Fishing Guide School Development and Best Practices: Katy Fleming, Cole Grant-Guerra and Konnor Gregory (Platte Valley Meeting Room)

Konner Gregory, Cole Guerra, and Katy Fleming, seniors in the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program at the University of Wyoming have conducted research to identify standards and best practices for fly fishing guide school development in the state of Wyoming. As the guided fishing industry continues to grow across the state, the need for an established foundational framework for guide training has become increasingly important. This Capstone project addresses that need by identifying

baseline standards designed to promote industry longevity, further conservation efforts, and elevate the quality of guided fishing endeavors in the state of Wyoming. These best practices and standards can be utilized as a resource for guide schools, outfitters, and industry professionals focused on advancing the profession and ensuring its future success.

4:45 PM Closing Remarks (Laurel Stephens, Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources)

Dinner on your own – enjoy Saratoga’s finest!

Thank you to our emcee, Laurel Stephens!

Laurel Stephens is the Communications and Marketing Manager for Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources, where she leads the development and implementation of agency-wide communications strategies, brand standards, and marketing initiatives that support the agency’s state parks, outdoor recreation, and cultural resources programs, as well as public engagement efforts. Originally from Georgia, Laurel developed a strong connection to the Rocky Mountain West and has lived and worked in Colorado and Wyoming since 2016. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Middle Georgia State University and has built a career focused on strategic communications and marketing within the hospitality, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors. Prior to her current role, Laurel served as the agency’s Outreach Coordinator for the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation beginning in August 2021, where she supported statewide initiatives to promote outdoor recreation and strengthen partnerships across public and private stakeholders. Laurel lives in the Bighorn Basin of north-central Wyoming with her husband. Her personal interests reflect the breadth of her work—spending time outdoors fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and rafting, while also staying connected to her performing arts roots through her background in theater and ballet and her continued enjoyment of live performances.



Speaker Information

Speaker

Stacy Bare is a father, husband, outdoorsman, veteran, writer, and speaker. He is currently the Executive Director of Friends of Grand Rapids Parks in Grand Rapids, MI. He and his team are working to create community through nature by planting trees, building trails, and restoring habitat. The end goal is that everyone in Grand Rapids has maximum access to experiences of everyday awe. Before turning his work towards infrastructure, he spent years in outdoor programming and large landscape conservancy. His work with Dr. Dacher Keltner of the Greater Good Science Center has been foundational to the explosion of research and conversation about the health benefits of time outdoors. He has been called an 'awe pioneer', recognized as a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year and was at different times, sponsored by The North Face, Pret Helmets, Trew Gear, and OARS for expeditionary film making that includes a first ski ascent and descent of Mt. Halgurd in Iraq, skiing in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Japan, as well as climbing in Angola and rafting in rivers across the United States. He was commissioned as a US Army Officer out of the University of Mississippi in 2000 where he also received a BA in Philosophy. He has a Bronze Star for Merit from his time in Iraq, served in Bosnia, worked in land mine clearance in Angola and Abkhazia in the Republic of Georgia and received a Masters in City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania. He falls and laughs a lot outside and is surprisingly slow on a bike.



Alex Bakken is currently the youngest serving sheriff in the state of Wyoming, serving the residents and visitors of Carbon County. Alex was a search and rescue volunteer prior to becoming sheriff and continues to volunteer with search efforts across the county. As sheriff, Alex created a dual-division search and rescue structure in Carbon County, incorporating each division as their own standalone 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity. Alex also serves on the board of directors for the Carbon County Avalanche Observation Team; a nonprofit organization he helped create in 2024 after a rash of avalanche fatalities in the Sierra Madre Mountain Range. An avid snowmobiler, he creates and submits avalanche condition observations for the Snowy and Sierra Madre Ranges in south-central Carbon County.



Clint Becker was elected the 21st Sheriff of Converse County in 2006 and currently serves in that role. 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. Sheriff Becker is currently on the Governor’s appointed SAR Council and Wyoming Volunteer’s Retirement Board, representing the SAR volunteers.

Stephen Beneski is the co-founder of the Gravel Adventure Field Guide along with Juan DelaRoca. Founded in 2022 as a resource dedicated to helping cyclists discover and navigate great places to ride gravel. The pocket-sized guidebook includes curated routes, stories, and art that serves as a roadmap, inviting riders of all abilities to create their own adventure. While attending art college, Stephen developed a lifelong appreciation for the mountains; an influence that continues to shape his work. After graduating, Stephen moved to Denver, Colorado, where he worked at several advertising agencies before launching an outdoor-focused freelance graphic design company in 2002. Today, he combines his creative background with a passion for exploration and endurance cycling, helping document routes, share insights, and build a community around off-road adventure riding.

Domenic Bravo leads the Wyoming Office of Tourism with a blend of strategic vision, public-sector experience, and a deep love for the landscapes and communities that define the state. His career spans executive leadership in tourism, outdoor recreation, and state parks, including service as CEO of Visit Cheyenne and Administrator of Wyoming State Parks. He also helped build the University of Wyoming’s Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Management program, where he continues to champion workforce development and student mentorship.

Known for collaborative leadership and forward-thinking ideas, Domenic is focused on elevating Wyoming’s brand, expanding its reach into new markets, and ensuring that tourism supports both economic vitality and the preservation of the state’s natural and cultural heritage. A longtime public servant with roots in the Mountain West, he brings a grounded, people-first approach to everything he does.



Sarah Brown Mathews is a third generation Wyomingite with a deep love for the geography of her childhood in Albany County. She has a Masters in Natural Science Education from UW, and over 30 years of nonprofit management, fundraising and community relations experience. Sarah was hired as a consultant to the Pilot Hill committee in 2018 and became the Executive Director in 2020. She serves on the City of Laramie Parks, Trees and Recreation Advisory Board, on the Albany County Tourism Board, Laramie Beautification Committee and the FORGE Laramie Steering Committee. Sarah maintains balance in her life by spending time at her family's cabin.



Austin Burgess is the Executive Director of the Central Wyoming Trails Alliance and a steering committee member of the Natrona-Converse Outdoor Recreation Collaborative. Born and raised in Wyoming, he brings deep local roots and a lifelong connection to the state's landscapes. He also serves as an instructor and presenter for CS Consulting and is retired from the Wyoming Fire Service after 24 years of service. Austin is dedicated to advancing CWTA's mission by advocating for and laboring on non-motorized soft-surface trails throughout central Wyoming.



Michael Cavalier serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator for Natrona County, a role he assumed in June 2025 after six years as Deputy Coordinator within the Natrona County Sheriff's Office and through the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security. Drawing on and growing experience gained in Public Health Preparedness and co-owning a Wyoming-based safety and security consulting business, he focuses on supporting local government before, during, and after a crisis. He is active in Search and Rescue and as a Volunteer Fire/EMS team member at a local municipal fire station. Beyond service to Natrona County, Michael has volunteered in a Casper-based ministry since 2009. Above all though, he is a husband to a Wyoming-raised high school math teacher, who he met in Laramie during College, and a father to their two girls.



A native of Wyoming, **Amy Crawford** brings a background of environmental and adventure education to the Office of Outdoor Recreation. Amy attended Alaska Pacific University where she earned a degree in Outdoor Studies with an emphasis in Recreation Program Design and Leadership. While in Alaska, Amy worked as an Interpretive Ranger for the National Park Service at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center. Amy serves on the Board of Directors for the Casper College Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management Program, and is in her 9th year serving on the City of Casper's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (4 years a Chairman). As the OREC Coordinator, Amy facilitates the 12 Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives. Amy and her team act as representatives for the Office of Outdoor Recreation in other recreation-based projects and events throughout the state. Amy is based in Casper.



Devin Erickson is the Recreation Management Specialist with the U.S. Forest Service. Born and raised in Western Wyoming, Devin holds a B.S. in Geography, Natural Resource & Recreation Management, from the University of Wyoming. A lifelong lover of public lands, Devin started working on the Shoshone National Forest as a seasonal, backcountry/wilderness ranger and trail crew member in 2010. Since that time, he has worked in trail maintenance and construction for the Forest Service, as well as private industry, along with general recreation management and special uses permitting. Forest Service career has led Devin to work on five national forests in four states with current duties in recreation, trails, and special uses on the Central Zone of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests & Thunder Basin National Grassland, based in Laramie.



Katy Fleming is a senior studying Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management with a concentration in recreation resource management through the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming. She grew up in Casper, Wyoming, and spent a majority of her childhood camping, fishing, and hunting. While completing her associate's in Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management online through Casper College, she worked seasonally at a fly-fishing lodge along the South Fork of the Snake River in Idaho. It was there that she gained an understanding of the importance of professional development in the outdoor recreation industry. She aims to develop programming standards that support current and future fishing guides as well as increase revenue generated by in-state outfitters and guides to further boost Wyoming's outdoor recreation economy.



Based in Evanston, **Chris Floyd** started with Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources in 2016 and now serves as a Deputy Director. Over a twenty-year career in four states, he has managed parks and historic sites as well as the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation. Among other outdoor activities, he and his family enjoy hiking, camping, shooting sports, and motorcycle adventures. His education includes bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Georgia.



Nicole Foss is the Director of Operations and Development for Common Outdoor Ground (COG). After receiving both her BA and MA in English from the University of Wyoming, she was 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 another summer participating in the sustainable stewardship of public lands.

Kalene Griffith is the CEO and President of Visit Bentonville, the destination marketing organization for Bentonville, Arkansas. A passionate advocate for tourism and community development, she leads initiatives to promote Bentonville as a premier travel destination while enhancing the city's quality of life for residents. Kalene's commitment to advancing the tourism industry in Arkansas is evident through her appointment by the Governor to the Arkansas State Parks and Tourism Commission. Additionally, she actively contributes her expertise as a board member of several organizations, including the Southeast Tourism Society, Arkansas Hospitality Association Travel Council, Arkansas Association of Convention Visitors Bureaus, and multiple local organizations in Bentonville. Her dedication to the tourism industry and her community has earned her numerous accolades, including the 2020 Tourism Person of the Year award, recognition as a 40 under 40 honoree by the Arkansas Business Journal, and the Northwest Arkansas Business Journal C-Suite Award. Kalene resides in Bentonville with her husband, John, and their dog, Jersee. She takes pride in her family, including her son Keegan and daughter Keelah.



Konner Gregory is a senior in the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program with a minor in Outdoor Leadership at the University of Wyoming. Konner spent the majority of his life in Kemmerer, Wyoming. He has spent most of his life fishing and hunting and doing anything outdoors. Konner has worked seasonally for Sinks Canyon State Park for multiple seasons. During his time he found a respect and understanding for the outdoor recreation and tourism industry. He strives to create a standard for fishing guide programs to help ensure proper service and to help continue to boost Wyoming's recreation.

Cole Guerra is a senior in the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program and is pursuing a minor in Outdoor Leadership at the University of Wyoming. Cole is originally from Basehor, Kansas. Cole has worked as an activities guide in Montana, specializing on the fly fishing side. It was there he learned what it takes to guide and what standards are missing for newcomer guides in this industry. He hopes to create program standards for all fishing guides so they can continue to provide excellent service and boost recreation in Wyoming.



Jamie Hansen is an Outdoor Recreation Specialist for the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation. Her role consists of community outreach and meeting facilitation for Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives across Wyoming. WYOREC Collaboratives bring together various stakeholders of outdoor recreation, from community members and business owners to federal and state agencies, and from elected officials to nonprofit organizations. Hansen has a background in the guest ranch and hunting industries, and has a fondness for public land, specifically, wilderness areas in Wyoming.



Raised in the rolling hills of Northeast Ohio, **Brynn Hirschman** has always had a passion for the outdoors and animals. Brynn attended the University of Wyoming, where she earned a B.S. in Animal Science in 2018 and a B.S. in Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management in 2020. During her time at the university, Brynn worked year-round at Vee Bar Guest Ranch, which ignited her passion for the agricultural industry and how it interacts with the outdoor recreation industry. She began her career with the State of Wyoming's Outdoor Recreation Office in 2020 as an OREC Specialist. Currently, she serves as the Grants Coordinator, collaborating with partners across the state to manage both federal and state grant funds. Brynn has served on the Board of Directors for the Wyoming Community Foundation since 2024.



Brendan Kelly is the assistant regional trails and dispersed recreation program manager for the Rocky Mountain region (CO, WY, SD, NE, KS) of the US Forest Service. His Forest Service career has spanned 20 years including roles as trail crewmember and lead, district recreation operations manager, district recreation staff officer and his current role. He holds a graduate degree in natural resource management. His current role supports trail managers and partners across the Rocky Mountain region including topics such as trail management (design, maintenance, visitor management), trail environmental planning (NEPA), grants, partnerships, and dispersed recreation management (camping, rock climbing, shooting sports).



Michael Kusiek has over 20 years of experience in project management for health care, education, conservation, and public lands. He has worked with groups in South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, New York, and Colorado on performance improvement and organizational development. Michael is the past Chair of the Lander Community Foundation and is a past member of the Lander City Council. He has also coached the University of Wyoming Women's Rugby Team and several collegiate select-side teams. Michael earned a B.A. in multicultural studies/history and a Master's in Education with a focus on Total Quality Management. Michael has been the Executive Director for Wyoming Pathways since 2020.



Mark Landerman is a business educator at Cody High School in Cody with over 25 years of experience in career and technical education. He serves as an advisor for Future Business Leaders of America and speech and debate, helping students consistently achieve success at the national level. He founded a high school fly fishing program in partnership with Trout Unlimited and helped develop an outdoor guide certification program with the University of Wyoming that incorporates the POD program, blending business, English and science through hands-on, outdoor learning. In addition to teaching, Mark owns a small business offering guided fly fishing trips and guest house stays, further connecting his passion for the outdoors to real-world experience.

Ben Larsen is a dedicated science educator at Cody High School in Cody, where he teaches biology and works within Park County School District #6. With a strong commitment to experiential learning, Larsen has built his career around connecting classroom science to the real-world landscapes of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. In the classroom, Larsen emphasizes inquiry-based instruction, ecological literacy, and student engagement through hands-on investigations. His biology curriculum frequently integrates local environmental issues, giving students opportunities to study wildlife, fisheries, watershed health, and human impacts on natural systems in and around northwestern Wyoming. Larsen has helped develop and teach an innovative outdoor program that blends biology, business, and

English into a field-based learning experience. This program immerses students in authentic environments, where they apply scientific concepts while building communication and problem-solving skills. Larsen is also the founder and leader of the Cody High School Fly Fishing Club, which provides students with access to local waters and mentorship in angling, conservation, and stewardship. Through this program, students gain hands-on experience with fisheries science, river ecology, and responsible outdoor recreation—often exploring waters connected to the Yellowstone region. His work consistently reflects a belief that education is most powerful when it is active, place-based, and meaningful. By leveraging the unique natural resources surrounding Cody, Larsen inspires students to become informed, capable, and engaged stewards of the environment.

Ashley Leonard currently serves as the Education Supervisor for the Wyoming Game & Fish Department. Ashley has been with Wyoming Game and Fish for over 9 years and, during that time, has worked to build and refine various education programs, including summer camps, the Inspire a Kid initiative, public outreach events, and the implementation of our in-school programs. As the education supervisor, Ashley is responsible for guiding the hunter education, conservation education, volunteer, and hunting/angling recruitment and retention programs. Ashley is passionate about engaging audiences to learn more about the natural world around them.



Having lived in six states prior to moving to Wyoming, **Liz Lightner** now splits her time between Lander and the Wind River Canyon. She's an avid rock climber, gardener, and soaker in the hot springs. She began hospice volunteering in 2013 and became certified as an End-of-life Doula in 2020. Liz is passionate about people completing their advance directive and having courageous conversations with their loved ones about their wishes. She has served on numerous boards and recently joined the Central Wyoming Climbers' Alliance Board (aka: WyoClimbers), an organization that her husband Sam helped start in 2014 that hosts the annual International Climbers' Festival in Lander each July; this will be its 33rd year.



Zulima Lopez has devoted more than 27 years to public service with the City of Casper building a career that spans engineering, utilities, risk management, and ultimately her favorite role as Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities Director. In overseeing city-owned parks and trails, a golf course, a ski area, aquatic facilities, athletic fields, and cultural facilities that define Casper's outdoor lifestyle, Zulima brings a collaborative, community-centered perspective to recreation planning and leadership. As a director, she works at the intersection of



infrastructure, partnerships, and quality of life initiatives that support access to recreation across Casper and the region. Zulima currently serves on the Natrona/Converse Outdoor Recreation Collaborative, where she works to support local and state government agencies, nonprofits, and user groups to align priorities, leverage resources, and strengthen connections between outdoor recreation, economic vitality, and community well-being. She is passionate about the power of collaboratives to break down silos, amplify local voices, and deliver lasting outdoor recreation outcomes that benefit residents, visitors, and future generations. In her free time, Zulima enjoys spending time with her family, cross country skiing, hiking, water sports, travel, and music.

Andrea Maichak grew up at the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains, a landscape that sparked her lifelong commitment to natural resource stewardship. She holds a B.S. in Resource and Recreation Management with a minor in Wilderness Studies from the University of Montana, and an M.S. in Natural Resource Management from the University of Idaho. Her Forest Service career began as a lead Wilderness Ranger in the Wind River Range, followed by the Wilderness and Trails Program Manager on the Bridger-Teton National Forest and Recreation Planner in a Regional Office supporting Forest Plan Revision. She later served as the North Zone Recreation Staff Officer on the Shoshone National Forest before returning home to the Bighorn National Forest, where she has spent the past five years as the Forest’s Recreation, Lands, and Heritage Staff Officer. Now in mid-career, Andrea strives to be a thoughtful and effective manager of public use on federal lands. She is committed to inspiring and mentoring the next generation of public land managers and is passionate about community engagement, partnership-building, and managing public lands for a variety of personalities and interests.



Ruth Didima Muyapa is an undergraduate student at the University of Wyoming majoring in Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management with a concentration in Recreation Resource Management and a minor in Hospitality. Originally from Nabire, Central Papua, Indonesia, she brings a deep passion for nature, conservation, and community-based tourism shaped by her upbringing. Ruth is involved in research with the WORTH Institute, focusing on outdoor recreation businesses and sustainable development in Wyoming. Her work aims to support local communities while promoting responsible and inclusive tourism.

Dr. Dan McCoy has served as Director of the Jay Kemmerer Wyoming Outdoor Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality (WORTH) Institute since 2022 and is an Adjunct Professor in the University of Wyoming’s College of Business and College of Education. With more than two decades of experience in outdoor leadership, education, and recreation, he previously coordinated the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management (ORTM) program in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources, managed the UW Outdoor



Program for nearly 20 years, and led a \$30.5 million award-winning renovation of the Half Acre Recreation and Wellness Center as Assistant Director of Campus Recreation. His statewide leadership includes serving as principal investigator on more than \$4 million in sponsored projects related to sustainable tourism, recreation economics, and community sentiment, along with extensive scholarly publications, conference presentations, graduate mentorship, and board service across Wyoming's outdoor recreation and hospitality sectors.

Linda Merigliano is a retired recreation/wilderness program manager who also served as the public engagement and recreation specialist on the forest plan revision team for the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Her work over the past 40+ years has focused on visitor use planning, public outreach and partnerships, and promoting responsible, respectful use. She recently joined the Friends of the Bridger-Teton board.



Sandy Newsome is a longtime Cody business owner, community advocate, and former Wyoming state legislator whose career reflects a deep commitment to public service and strengthening Wyoming's future. A graduate of Colorado State University with a degree in Animal Science, Sandy moved to Cody more than four decades ago and quickly became a cornerstone of the local business community. As a partner in Newsome Investments and Ishawooa Investments, she built a reputation for practical leadership, fiscal responsibility, and a collaborative approach to problem-solving. Sandy's passion for Wyoming's people and economy led her into statewide service. She spent six years on the Wyoming Tourism Board—including time as Chair—helping guide one of the state's most vital industries. In 2018, she was elected to represent House District 24 in the Wyoming Legislature, where she served through 2024. She currently serves as the chairman of Wyoming's America 250 task force. During her tenure, she championed issues related to outdoor recreation, economic development, tourism, education, and community well-being, always emphasizing that Wyoming's strength lies in its diverse local voices. Known for her steady, solutions-oriented leadership style, Sandy brings a business owner's pragmatism and a public servant's heart to every role she takes on. She and her husband, Bob, raised their son Wiley in Cody and remain deeply engaged in civic and community life.



William Poole is the R3 Coordinator for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD). William's primary focus is the recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) of hunters and anglers. He develops programs aligned with the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model and is interested in the role of community-based social marketing within the outdoor recreation community. While at WGFD, he has worked to develop and modernize programs, including the National Archery in Schools Program, Trout in the Classroom, the Wyoming Collegiate Conservation Symposium, WY Hunt Fish and Becoming an Outdoors-Woman.



Amy Reyes is a distinguished leader in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) space, renowned for her career-long dedication to reconnecting children with the natural world. With over 26 years of experience spanning roles as a Montessori Director, Head Start Director, and State Government Administrator, Amy has become a primary architect for nature-based pedagogical shifts both in Wyoming and across the United States. Amy's approach is rooted in a deep academic background, holding degrees in Outdoor Learning and Education, Elementary Education, Child Development, and Organizational Leadership. This unique intersection of disciplines allows her to lead transformational change that prioritizes the "outdoor classroom" as a primary site for development.

Jennifer Ricupero is the Partnership Manager for Friends of the Bridger-Teton (FBT). Since starting with FBT, she has developed over 400 new partnerships; including Chamber of Commerce's, nonprofits, regional government and elected officials, nation and state-wide organizations, local businesses, and community members. Jennifer has Bachelor's of Science degrees in Recreation and Leisure Management and in Business Management. She earned a Master's degree in Recreation and Leisure Education from Boston University. Prior to moving to Pinedale, Jennifer was director at a women's retreat in Vermont, where she guided recreational activities, fitness, and nutrition. Later, in Florida's Everglades and on the South Carolina Coast, Jennifer guided running, kayaking, yoga and fishing trips. Jennifer's 4-year old 95-lb Labrador Retriever, Otto, helps pick up trash while they enjoy the trails and public spaces. He was taught to bring litter back to Jennifer for proper disposal receiving kibble as a reward.



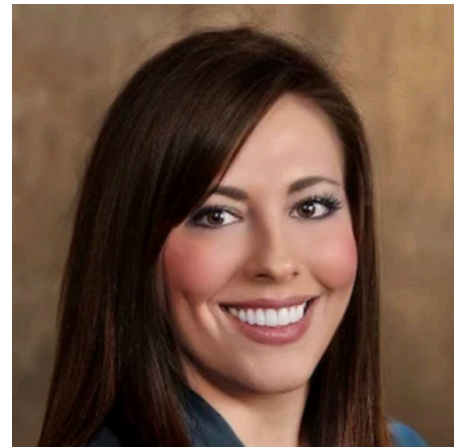
Jerimiah Rieman is the Executive Director of the Wyoming County Commissioners Association and a former member of Governor Matt Mead's administration, where he focused on economic diversification and natural resource policy. He also serves as Chairman of Wyoming's Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund. A sixth-generation Wyoming native from Fremont County, Jerimiah holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism from Colorado State University and a Master of Legal Studies from the University of Arizona. He is the author of Wyoming Singletrack: A Mountain Bike Trail Guide. Jerimiah and his wife are raising identical twin boys and enjoy spending time outdoors as a family.



Tom Salerno is a student at the University of Wyoming studying Environment and Natural Resources, with a dual major in Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management (Outdoor Leadership concentration) and a minor in Sustainability. He moved to Jackson, Wyoming at age nine and plans to remain in the community long term. Tom's work focuses on the intersection of land management, sustainability, and outdoor recreation, with particular interest in how outdoor economies support local communities. He is passionate about ensuring Wyoming's outdoor recreation industry continues to grow in ways that benefit both people and the landscapes they depend on.



Sandra Sanderson is the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator for the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT). Holding an MPA and PMP certification, she has nearly a decade of state government experience, including five years focused on integrating recreation related transportation topics and projects. She was instrumental in establishing the first Outdoor Recreation position at WYDOT, is an advisor to all 12 Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives, a voting member of the state's fee advisory board (REACT), and represents the agency on the Trails Advisory Council. She implemented the 2022 legislative changes codifying on-road ORV safety requirements, and led the first enrollments of highway segments into the statewide ORV program.



Sam Seeton is the Co-Founder and CEO of Infinite Outdoors, a Wyoming-based company focused on connecting landowners and outdoor enthusiasts through technology-driven access solutions. Raised on a ranch in Colorado and now living on his own small ranch west of Casper, Sam has a deep-rooted appreciation for working lands, conservation, and responsible access to the outdoors. Through Infinite Outdoors, he is building tools and programs that create new revenue streams for landowners while expanding opportunities for hunting, fishing, and recreation to the public. Infinite Outdoors also provides nationwide public and private digital mapping free of cost, helping more people confidently and responsibly navigate and access the outdoors. Sam also leads initiatives like Access Granted, aimed at unlocking landlocked public lands and other unique opportunities to increase access for all- again, free of cost to the public. He serves on the national board of directors for the Mule Deer Foundation and First Hunt Foundation, helping ensure that outdoor recreation and wildlife are sustained for generations to come. He is passionate about bridging the gap between private land stewardship and public outdoor recreation.



Cheyenne Sterck is the Executive Director of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance (WYORBA), where she works to strengthen and support outdoor recreation businesses across the state through advocacy, collaboration, and strategic growth. She also serves as Executive Director of Camp GROW, a nonprofit focused on youth development through outdoor education in Sublette County, and as General Manager of Half Moon Lake Lodge. Cheyenne brings a strong background in community engagement, program development, and nonprofit leadership. She is passionate about connecting people to the outdoors and building sustainable opportunities for Wyoming's future.

A career educator, **Nathan Tedjeske** is the Chief Innovation Officer at the Wyoming Department of Education. Nathan has incorporated his passion for the outdoors into his schools whenever possible. Now at the department, his focus is to assist schools and industry partners in creating partnerships and opportunities that benefit Wyoming youth.



Mark Tesoro is the Manager of the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation, where he works to forward Wyoming's outdoor recreation economy. He manages a team that facilitates 12 Outdoor Recreation Collaboratives across the state, engaging nearly 500 stakeholders, NGOs, elected officials, and federal partners. His team also serves as liaisons for the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund, organizes the Wyoming Governor's Match and Wyoming Firearms & Outdoor Recreation Expo, promotes outdoor recreation through educational programming, and facilitates special events and outdoor recreation programming throughout the state. In addition, he is the Secretary of the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund. The fund is a dedicated source of funding for outdoor recreation infrastructure established by the Wyoming State Legislature in 2023 and 2024. Mark is also a member of the Confluence of States, the 24 states that have an Outdoor Recreation Office. He was asked to serve on the Wyoming Office of Tourism Board of Directors from 2022 to 2025, after creating the non-profit Southwest Wyoming Off-road Trails (SWOT). He was the publisher of 5 newspapers in southwest Wyoming until 2023. He graduated with a degree in Communications from Saint Louis University and is an avid fly-fisherman, bow hunter, snow skier, mountain bike and ADV rider, OHV enthusiast, and hiker. Mark feels there is no better place to live than Evanston. He resides there with his wife and golden retriever.



Luke Thorkildsen is the Chief Operating Officer at Weatherby, Inc. in Sheridan Wyoming. He also serves as the chairman of the board for the Mule Deer Foundation and is a Board Member on the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trust Fund. Luke is also a steering committee member of the Cloud Peak Outdoor Rec Collaborative. He is a passionate outdoorsman and advocate for motorized travel, hunting, public land access, and an avid skier. He has 5 kids from 18 years old to 1 year old with his wife of 22 years.. He wants to make sure his kids have the same or better access to outdoor activities that he had.



Rick Tryder is an Outdoor Recreation Planner with the Bureau of Land Management's Cody Field Office in northwest Wyoming, where he has served since 2015. After completing five years of active duty in the United States Marine Corps, he earned a degree in Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Management from Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks of New York. Rick works across more than 1.1 million acres of public lands in the Bighorn Basin, helping develop and improve recreation opportunities through collaboration with local communities, agencies, and partners. His work has supported a wide range of projects, including open OHV areas, mountain bike trail systems, river access improvements, and ADA/ABA accessibility upgrades at recreation sites. He is passionate about creating sustainable outdoor opportunities that balance public access, resource protection, and community benefit.



Wayne Turner serves as Executive Director of Teton Science Schools. His career as a nonprofit leader has focused on the intersection of education, conservation, and community, with more than half his career spent at Teton Science Schools. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth. Wayne lives in Kelly, Wyoming with his wife, Polly (a graduate of TSS's Professional Residency in Environmental Education and a former TSS faculty member) and his two daughters, Phoebe and Wren.

Richard 'Rico' Vercoe is the founder of the Wyo Trail FAIRIES. The Fast-Acting Initial Response Indefatigable Environmental Stewards (FAIRIES) were established two years ago to facilitate organized and coordinated citizen engagement in the stewardship of public lands in South Eastern Wyoming. This program brings local community members together in coordination with land manager needs to conduct organized training and work sessions to maintain and improve trails and resource access for the inclusive recreation and tourism experiences on public lands. Rico has a professional background in adventure



recreation programming and management and is currently faculty in the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming.

Carter Watsabaugh is a senior at the University of Wyoming, majoring in Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management, with minors in Entrepreneurship, Hospitality Business Management, Outdoor Leadership, and Computer Science. Originally from Jackson, Wyoming, his academic and professional background includes hospitality and food service operations, outdoor leadership, tourism, entrepreneurship, and hands-on work across Wyoming's outdoor industry. His current capstone project, completed in partnership with Founded Outdoors, focuses on identifying the needs, barriers, and opportunities of outdoor businesses across Wyoming. Through this work, he is especially interested in strengthening Wyoming's outdoor business industry through better data, stronger connections, and more useful support systems, as well as exploring how AI can support sustainable tourism.



Darran Wells grew up racing mountain bikes with his father in Houston, Texas. After graduating Magna Cum Laude in Philosophy from the University of Houston and completing EMT training, he joined the US Peace Corps and served two tours in Central Africa as a health education volunteer before returning to the states to work for NOLS in 1999. At NOLS, he taught mountaineering, rock-climbing, whitewater rafting, caving, backcountry skiing, and customized leadership development trainings in wilderness settings throughout the US and Alaska. He was senior faculty and custom education program coordinator from 1999-2007 where he led leadership training programs for the Wharton School of Business, NASA and the US Naval Academy. From 2000 to 2005, Wells competed internationally in multi-day adventure races and appeared in Eco-Challenge, Primal Quest, and Global Extremes. In 2012, he wrote the second edition of NOLS Wilderness Navigation. Wells completed his master's degree in adventure education at Prescott College in 2007 before taking over the outdoor education degree program at Central Wyoming College. In addition to outdoor skills courses, Wells teaches courses in the history and theory of experiential education, leadership development, outdoor teaching techniques, and natural resource management. He is a Wilderness First Responder and has volunteered for Fremont County Search and Rescue since 2000.



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