
CHRONOLOGY OF SUCCESS

May 2010

Stay granted by federal administrative law judge blocking BLM from constructing over 30 miles of new fencing in Green Mountain Common in southwestern Wyoming – one of the largest unfenced areas remaining in the lower 48 states, and sage-grouse stronghold.

April 2010

Federal lawsuit filed for Idaho Conservation League to enforce Clean Water Act requirement that State of Idaho must protect water quality from degradation.

Washington state district court rules that livestock grazing in Asotin State Wildlife Area is wholly unsupported by science and reverses 2009 state grazing lease.

US Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit ruling affirms that irrigation district cannot claim ownership of Middle Rio Grande Project in New Mexico, which was constructed over a half century ago using federal funds.

March 2010

In response to our prior litigation, US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that ESA listing of greater sage-grouse is “warranted” in light of habitat threats and population losses, but that listing is “precluded” by other priorities. We immediately filed suit in the District of Idaho to challenge this “precluded” determination.

February 2010

Settlement requires BLM to limit livestock grazing in Sonoran Desert National Monument in Arizona, and issue final determination of whether grazing is compatible with Monument purposes within 18 months.

US District Judge Winmill issues ruling declining to enjoin Idaho Fish and Game Department from landing helicopters in Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness to collar wolves during March 2010, but strongly warns the U.S. Forest Service against approving future operations.

December 2009

In a major victory in our long battle to prevent gold mining operations in the Boise River watershed, we won a court decision from the Snake River Basin Adjudication court holding that the Atlanta Mine could not revive long-unused water rights, and that a 2008 “mining forfeiture exemption” statute is unconstitutional if it is interpreted to allow resurrection of such rights. Following that ruling, the Atlanta Mine withdrew its SRBA water rights claims.

December 2009 (cont.)

US District Court for the District of Idaho ruled that BLM violated its own grazing regulations by failing to impose mandatory terms to protect streams, uplands, and fish and wildlife habitat on the 70,000-acre Nickel Creek allotment.

November 2009

Idaho State Land Board approves new regulations that – for the first time – allow conservation leases of state trust lands. The regulations were adopted after ten years of litigation headed by Executive Director Laird Lucas, in which state and federal courts repeatedly held that the Land Board violated constitutional requirements by discriminating against conservation applicants for state leases.

October 2009

After Senior Staff Attorney Todd Tucci won four court rulings against it, US Fish and Wildlife Service finally determined to list Slickspot peppergrass as a “threatened” species under the Endangered Species Act. This rare desert flower is found only in southern Idaho, and is nearing extinction due to impacts of livestock grazing, off-road vehicles, and other human actions.

In the latest of several rulings won by Staff Attorney Laurie Rule, the U.S. District Court enjoined BLM from allowing domestic sheep grazing on the Partridge Creek allotment along the Salmon River, to protect bighorn sheep from fatal diseases spread by domestic sheep grazing on public lands. The court also rejected recent Idaho legislation – procured by the sheep industry – that required Idaho Fish and Game Dept. to reach deals allowing sheep grazing to continue without protecting bighorn sheep.

August 2009

Advocates for the West filed several new cases against the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies to protect salmon, steelhead, bull trout and sage-grouse in the Lemhi and Pahsimeroi River drainages in the upper Salmon River basin of central Idaho.

July 2009

Court-approved settlement requires BLM to rescind August 2007 “categorical exclusion policy” under which BLM purported to authorize itself to avoid conducting environmental reviews when renewing grazing permits and approving vegetation treatments across the American West. This settlement complements our court victories enjoining BLM from gutting its grazing regulations to exclude the public from most grazing decisions.

June 2009

Executive Director Laird Lucas named a “Mountain States Super-Lawyer” for environmental litigation, for the third year in a row.

For more information on these and our many other cases, check our website:
www.AdvocatesWest.org