



WYOMING PUBLIC MEDIA

General Manager's Newsletter | June 2026



Happy June!

Would you believe that almost half of 2026 is already behind us? So much has happened since January that it's hard to fully grasp the challenges we've faced and the accomplishments we've achieved together. We're still navigating uncertain times nationally and on many fronts. But we're in this together, and that shared commitment is what gives us the will to keep moving forward.

WPM received two **Edward R. Murrow Awards** this year! The winners were **Jordan Uplinger**, our State Government Collaboration Digital Journalist, and **Caitlin Tan**, our former Energy Journalist. Jordan was recognized for his innovative approach to explaining state government through reels, quizzes, and other engaging digital formats. Caitlin was honored for her exceptional use of sound in her story on trona extraction in Wyoming. Jordan and Caitlin are perfect examples of journalists who came to WPM as interns and grew into nationally recognized talent. While we recently lost Caitlin to *Marketplace*—where you're hearing her reports in the morning—we're incredibly proud of both of them and the work they've done to elevate Wyoming stories on the national stage. You share in this pride as well – it's donor funding that supports these positions. [Link to news release](#)

Legendary humorist, comedian, author David Sedaris just published a book. An excerpt from *Fresh Air* sums it up in his interview: "His latest essay collection, *The Land and Its People*, casts Sedaris in several roles, including devout brother, itinerant traveler, grieving friend and reluctant caretaker." ([If you attend a David Sedaris reading, you're helping him edit | NPR](#))

Weekend Edition's Scott Simon, an unabashed animal lover, also published a new book -- *Ulysses S. Cat*. As per Scott: "We don't make much of a distinction in our family between humans and the other animals. Two legs or four, flesh-covered, feathered, fur-covered, gilled or under a shell, we're all family." ([In 'Ulysses S. Cat,' NPR host Scott Simon tells animal tales | WBUR](#))

Cuts, cuts, and more cuts. Many stations and networks, including WPM, have tightened their belts in the post federal funding loss period. A new austerity reigns supreme. *NPR* is no different. ([NPR reduces staff through layoffs, buyouts | Current](#))

"What's this *Rural Radio Resiliency Fund* message I'm getting?" Some of you may have received a note from the *American Coalition for Public Radio (ACPR)* encouraging you to contact your Senators and Representative in support of the *Rural Radio Resiliency (RRR) Fund* when it comes before Congress. The *RRR Fund* is designed to strengthen the infrastructure that keeps rural public radio stations and networks—like WPM—on the air. This includes towers, generators, transmitters, antennas, feed lines, and other essential equipment. Across the country, these systems are in serious disrepair. WPM alone has 51 sites hungry for attention. A letter to our Wyoming delegation in support of this initiative would be incredibly valuable. It's a practical way to help ensure the long-term stability of rural public broadcasting. (See goacpr.org/)

Speaking of the *Rural Radio Resilience Fund* message, Wyoming was specifically highlighted in an *ACPR*

appropriations request to the *House Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies*. At the end of the document, the coalition cited economist J. Shogren's statistics on the economic value of cultural programming to the State of Wyoming. It's encouraging to see Wyoming—and the impact of public media—recognized so prominently in a national funding request. ([*FY27 House Interior Testimony by American Coalition for Public Radio-ACPR*](#))

Thanks to the *Wyoming Arts Council* and *Wyoming Humanities* for including a WPM podcast in the 2026 *Wyoming Road Trip Playlist*, which highlights music and podcasts from Wyoming-based creatives. From the announcement: “As summer travel begins, the playlist offers a curated soundtrack for exploring Wyoming’s scenic byways, public lands, and cultural destinations.” The WPM podcast selected was Megan Feighery’s *HumaNature*. ([*HumaNaturePodcast.org*](#)) All WPM podcasts are available to listeners—whether you’re in the car, at the office, or relaxing on the couch. ([*Wyoming Public Media Podcasts*](#))

A good time was had by all at Bob Beck’s casual reception celebrating his *Honorary Doctor of Letters*. For staff and guests alike, it felt like old times. Our thanks go to the UW President’s Office for their support in organizing the event, and to the UW Trustees for selecting Bob for this honor. We couldn’t agree more with their choice.

The 2026 Election Year is in full swing, and WPM is gearing up for an exciting season. We’ll be collaborating with *WyoFile*, the *League of Women Voters*, and several other partners to bring you an engaging, informative, and genuinely fun election experience. We’ve already launched our site with key information and links to help listeners stay connected and well-informed. ([*How Do I Vote? Wyoming Election Information link*](#))

Our Community Highlight for June is *Skate Laramie*, recognized for their outstanding public service. They’re featured on *Community Minute*, WPM’s on-air and online series showcasing the mission, reach, and impact of nonprofit and service organizations across the state. You can explore all of our [*Community Minute features here*](#).

Our June fiscal year-end drive is coming up June 22–24. This year, we’re focusing on the stragglers among us—the “I’ve-been-meaning-to-give-for-years-but-haven’t-gotten-to-it” folks—as well as our seasonal residents and the tourists driving through Wyoming who appreciate our unique brand of public radio. And of course, we can’t forget the pet lovers who never miss a chance to add their beloved furry friend’s name to the Pet Wednesday roster. We’re deeply grateful to everyone who has helped us weather the federal cuts, and we’re taking every opportunity to diligently raise funds for the future. Your support truly keeps WPM strong.

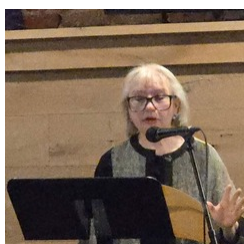
There’s so much happening in public media these days, and that momentum gives us purpose. But more than anything, you give us purpose. Your generosity, your loyalty, and your belief in the value of trusted journalism make everything we do possible. Wyoming would be a very different place without public radio—without the reporting that informs us, the stories that challenge us, and the cultural programming that brings a breath of fresh air into our daily lives.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments at ckuzmych@uwyo.edu.

Christina Kuzmych,
WPM General Manager



BEHIND THE SCENES



Christina Addressed League of Women Voter Gathering in Laramie

Wyoming Public Media’s General Manager Christina Kuzmych recently spoke to the League of Women Voters in Laramie, offering an overview of NPR’s history, the current media landscape, and how public radio stations like WPM are adapting in the face of funding uncertainty. *May 7, 2026.*



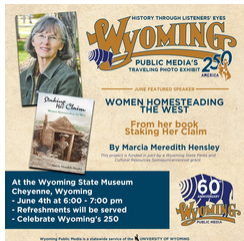
Bob Beck, in Wyoming to Receive an Honorary Doctorate, Stopped by the Station

Bob chatted about his time at Wyoming Public Radio and his 33 years on the air. Thanks to everyone who came down to the radio station in the basement of Knight Hall to offer congratulations to Bob Beck on his receipt of an honorary degree from the University of Wyoming! *May 14, 2026.*



Melaina Nielson, Wyoming Sounds "Tuesday" Host, Wears Many Hats

In addition to hosting *Wyoming Sounds*, Melaina works as a Radio Traffic operator, produces *Community Minutes*, and works in development. Melaina has interviewed several bands during the show, ranging from Inda Eaton to Eli Lev. She hosted for the first time while an intern at the radio station. *Listen at WyomingSounds.org.*



WPM Photo Exhibit Reception & Presentation by Author Marcia Hensley

Stop by the Wyoming State Museum in Cheyenne on June 4th to view Wyoming Public Media's Wyoming 250 Photo Contest Exhibit. The opening reception features a presentation by Marcia Hensley, a Wyoming author. Marcia's presentation will explore her book: "*Staking Her Claim: Women Homesteading the West.*". *[More information here.](#)*



SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Election Facts 101 Offered by Wyoming Public Media Reporter Jordan Uplinger

Wyoming voters are gearing up for this year's elections. Join Wyoming Public Radio's Jordan Uplinger as he breaks down what you need and what you should know to vote in both the primary and general elections with Laramie County Clerk Debra Lee!

View Jordan's *[Instagram Reel](#)*. *May 18, 2026.*



BEYOND WYOMING



Can restricting abortion reverse Wyoming's long-standing population drain?

A story by Hanna Merzbach about abortion legislation in Wyoming aired nationally on *NPR*.

[Listen to the story.](#) *May 5, 2026.*

'Good, clean fun': Inside the resurgence of community dance halls

A story by Hanna Merzbach about Wyoming dance halls aired on *NPR*. *[Listen to the story.](#)* *May 23, 2026.*



MUST LISTEN





HumaNature Season 17. We're back with *The Greatest Love Story Ever Told*

Jackie and Shadow are possibly the most famous eagles in the world right now, and with good reason. They live in Big Bear Valley, California and their story has it all; scandal, birth, death, and true love. So strap in for *The Greatest Love Story Ever Told* and send it a birder in your life (or ten). Photo by *Friends of Big Bear Valley*.

Listen to *10 years of HumaNature*, as WPM celebrates its 60th anniversary..

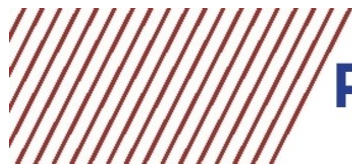


PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Phil Hilson - Echoes of Earth and History

One of the Winners of the 2025 WPM Photo Contest

About the Photo: Golden wildflowers ripple across the Wyoming plains like sunlight poured onto the land. Above them rises Heart Mountain — steadfast, commanding, unforgettable. It's very summit is a monument to Earth's power: a colossal block of ancient limestone that slid miles from the Absaroka volcanic plateau in what scientists consider the largest known landslide on land. An event so immense that it reshaped the very story of this mountain.

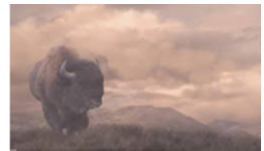
But Heart Mountain holds human history, too. In its imposing shadow once stood the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, where thousands of Japanese American citizens and immigrants — families, children, veterans — were forced to live behind barbed wire during World War II. Their lives uprooted, their freedom temporarily stolen, even as the mountain remained unchanged.



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