2023 1st Quarter Issues for Wyoming Public Media

ISSUE: Environment

Topic: Sublette County’s Tip Top Search and Rescue hosted a public avalanche awareness class. John Kochever, a senior search and rescue member, led the class. As Kochever talked to the group, the sound of snowmobilers revving their engines echoed around. The class is being held at a popular trailhead in the area for backcountry users.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 2/3/23 at 3pm and 2/5/23 at noon.

Topic: Water officials across the West have been negotiating a crisis on the Colorado River. Drought is putting pressure on the 7-state basin, and the nation’s two largest reservoirs recently reached record lows.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 2/3/23 at 3pm and 2/5/23 at noon.

Topic: One can see hundreds of homes all on a couple acres of prairie, and mixed in with these houses is oil and gas development. Driving through one passes a home and then a couple pump jacks, and then past another home one sees a drilling rig. Oil and gas activity significantly picked up in Laramie County about 10 years ago, and in the years since, it has moved into residential areas. The Cheyenne Area Landowners Coalition advocates for residents that are concerned about this development.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

ISSUE: Outdoors

Topic: A transcontinental trail that’s being constructed on abandoned railroad beds is slowly connecting the East and West coasts. Wyoming Public Radio’s Hugh Cook spoke with Patrick Harrington of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Office about the Cowboy State’s planned segment of the Great American Rail-Trail.
Time: 7 min  
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

**Topic:** A Wyoming Public Media podcast on where humans and our habitat meet has come back after a two-year hiatus. HumaNature's new season is currently underway.

Time: 8 min  
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

**ISSUE: State legislature**

**Topic:** Wyoming’s 67th legislature session has begun. Lawmakers, lobbyists and advocates have been working in Cheyenne for a couple of days already. We caught up with two policymakers in leadership positions to get a preview of what’s to come.

Time: 10 min  
Date: 1/13/23 at 3pm and 1/15/23 at noon.

**Topic:** We sat down with a couple people from energy advocacy groups that represent different schools of thought on Wyoming energy. This interview is with Pete Obermueller, who is the president of the Petroleum Association Wyoming. The group represents oil and gas companies in the state.

Time: 8 min  
Date: 2/10/23 at 3pm and 2/12/23 at noon.

**Topic:** We sat down with a couple people from energy advocacy groups that represent different schools of thought on Wyoming energy. This interview is with Shannon Anderson, who is the staff attorney with the Powder River Basin Resource Council. The group advocates for the conservation of Wyoming’s landscape and minerals and often supports renewable energy projects.

Time: 9 min  
Date: 2/10/23 at 3pm and 2/12/23 at noon.

**Topic:** Last year, the Wyoming legislature passed a trigger ban that went into effect when Roe vs. Wade was overturned in June. That law is currently being challenged in court, so abortion is
still legal in the state. One of the main arguments against the trigger ban is that it violates a certain section of the Wyoming constitution that's been on a lot of lawmakers' lips recently: Article 1, section 38: Right to health care access.

Time: 6 min
Date: 2/10/23 at 3pm and 2/12/23 at noon.

**Topic:** Friday, March 3 marks the last day of the 67th Wyoming legislature. It was a 40 day session and a lot happened. Many bills were introduced and many died. Governor Mark Gordon has already signed some into law and he has 15 days from the end of the session to act on bills.

Time: 15 min
Date: 3/3/23 at 3 pm and 3/5/23 at noon.

**ISSUE: Agriculture**

**Topic:** National Agriculture Day is right around the corner on Tuesday, March 21, and to honor the annual holiday We spoke with Jessica Crowder, executive director of the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust. The organization does a lot of work with ranchers, wildlife and the land in Wyoming.

Time: 8 min
Date: 3/17/23 at 3pm and 3/19/23 at noon.

**ISSUE: Housing**

**Topic:** Every January, communities across the country come together and try to estimate the homeless population by going out at night and trying to locate those without a place to stay. Point in Time happens in late January in Wyoming. In Gillette, the Council of Community Services (CCS) also hosted its annual event on the same day this year. It’s meant to connect the local homeless population with several social service agencies to help them get back on their feet.

Time: 5 min
Date: 2/3/23 at 3pm and 2/5/23 at noon.
**Topic:** Demand to live in mountain communities is through the roof, and that’s putting a strain on local workers.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 2/24/23 at 3 pm and 2/26/23 at noon.

**Topic:** Back in December, a Riverton man’s death prompted conversations about resources for the unhoused population in Fremont County. We Taylar Stagner found that that tragedy galvanized the community to come together and talk about how to fix the problem. Stagner attended the summit for Our Unhoused Neighbors in mid-March.

Time: 6 min  
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

**ISSUE:** Energy

**Topic:** The state may soon have more than a million dollars to put toward any future litigation revolving around coal – an industry that is facing uphill battles nationally to stay alive. The $1.2 million was originally set aside for previous litigation in 2021 regarding Washington blocking the export of Wyoming’s coal. The case was later denied by the U.S. Supreme Court, leaving Wyoming with the unspent money.

Time: 6 min  
Date: 1/20/23 at 3pm and 1/22/23 at noon.

**Topic:** A clean energy project that’s looking at eastern Wyoming has made plans to construct a green hydrogen facility beginning in 2026. Wyoming Public Radio’s Hugh Cook spoke with Paul Martin, the president of Focus Clean Energy about the company’s plans for the Pronghorn H2 Project, the impacts, and what it will take to make their plans a reality.

Time: 8 min  
Date: 2/10/23 at 3pm and 2/12/23 at noon.

**Topic:** A book written by Former Wyoming Democratic Governor Dave Freudenthal that was released late last year details the history of Wyoming’s tax structure and how the state’s economy has become so dependent on mineral extraction and the fossil fuel industry.
Two University of Wyoming (UW) researchers wanted to understand how Wyomingites feel about the future of energy, including their perceptions and values. Selena Gerace and Jessica Western initially completed a survey of residents back in 2019. Gerace and Western decided to offer an updated version of the survey in 2022.

**ISSUE: Wildlife**

A lot of Wyomingites have horses or at least have ridden a horse. Well, Lisanne Fear of Sublette County took it to the next level. She recently rode her five wild horses, also known as mustangs, across the country on the American Discovery Trail. Fear is a horse trainer who specializes in training wild horses, and she wanted to use the cross-country ride to raise awareness about wild horses in holding corrals across the country.

Researchers are trying to protect the Jackson herd from pneumonia, which has killed off wild sheep for decades.

Numbers from the annual “Moose Day” help Wyoming’s Game & Fish Department get a more accurate picture of the health of the local moose herd.
ISSUE: Science

Topic: The University of Wyoming (UW) has graduates across the world. The relationships that come from that vast network serve important roles in research. But sometimes, that network helps with more than just research collaboration. Dr. Basant Giri founded the Kathmandu Institute of Applied Sciences in Nepal. It got its start in part thanks to a UW professor.

Time: 8 min
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

ISSUE: Politics

Topic: The Wyoming federal delegation is looking to make its mark on Washington. That includes newly sworn-in Congresswoman Harriet Hageman.

Time: 5 min
Date: 3/3/23 at 3 pm and 3/5/23 at noon.

Topics: A Teton County district judge questioned state lawmakers’ recent move to define abortion as "not healthcare."

Time: 3 min
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

ISSUE: Community issues

Topic: Wyoming country singer comes out with song to address the stigma surrounding substance abuse and addiction.

Time: 9 min
Date: 1/20/23 at 3pm and 1/22/23 at noon.

Topic: University of Wyoming (UW) English Instructor Rick Fisher has been thinking about what AI means for the future of education. He told Wyoming Public Radio’s Jeff Victor that the existence of ChatGPT might require teachers to rethink essay assignments, but it hasn’t changed what education is fundamentally about.
**Topic:** Serial Productions has come out with a new podcast series titled, “The Coldest Case in Laramie.” The show focuses on the 1985 murder of a 22-year-old University of Wyoming student named Shelli Wiley. New York Times journalist Kim Barker lived in Laramie when it happened. She opens the podcast by talking about how much that murder stuck with her.

**Time:** 8 min  
**Date:** 2/24/23 at 3 pm and 2/26/23 at noon.

**Topic:** It has been a tough winter on Teton Pass. The critical route between Jackson Hole and Teton Valley, Idaho, has seen numerous closures recently. Often, they happen because semi-trucks and vehicles with trailers illegally try to make the drive and then get stuck in the snow.

**Time:** 6 min  
**Date:** 3/17/23 at 3 pm and 3/19/23 at noon

**ISSUE: Native American issues**

**Topic:** The crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people has been a focus for President Biden’s administration since he took office. But the rollout of federal solutions has been slow, and states have been picking up the slack.

**Time:** 5 min  
**Date:** 1/13/23 at 3pm and 1/15/23 at noon

**Topic:** Interview with Northern Arapaho musician and artist Christian Wallowing Bull about his new video titled Wallowing Bull. Wallowing Bull explores the cultural significance of the American Bison and was filmed on the Wind River Reservation.

**Time:** 9 min  
**Date:** 2/3/23 at 3pm and 2/5/23 at noon.
**Topic:** For the last few years, Wyoming Public Radio has been producing a podcast that tells long form narrative stories for and about Westerners. It’s called The Modern West and we’ll be rolling out the sixth season of the podcast in the coming weeks.

Time: 8 min  
Date: 2/10/23 at 3pm and 2/12/23 at noon.

**Topic:** On November 29, 1864, Colorado’s third cavalry descended on a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho, mostly women, children and elders. The massacre that ensued is often considered one of the worst in U.S. history. Colorado Gov. Hickenlooper has apologized for the massacre, but the Northern Arapaho tribe is now negotiating with the City of Boulder for other reparations: some land where the troops trained.

Time: 11 min  
Date: 3/17/23 at 3 pm and 3/19/23 at noon

**ISSUE: LGBTQ+**

**Topic:** A bill working its way through the Wyoming Legislature would forbid teachers from covering certain topics in kindergarten to third grade classes. The bill is touted by its supporters as a necessary check to keep classroom conversations age-appropriate, but opponents fear it will stigmatize queer youth.

Time: 6 min  
Date: 2/3/23 at 3pm and 2/5/23 at noon.

**ISSUE: Health**

**Topic:** Through an ARPA - Wyoming Arts Council grant, a music therapist led songwriting workshops with healthcare workers at the Jackson hospital to address work related stress and burnout due to the pandemic. Four groups of health care workers shared stories and processed work-related trauma to write songs about their experiences. Four songs were officially released.

Time: 9 min  
Date: 1/13/23 at 3pm and 1/15/23 at noon.
**Topic:** Doctors have always been hard to find and keep in a rural state like Wyoming. So the state created incentives like WWAMI (which stands for the states served by the UW School of Medicine: Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho) to try to get Wyomingites to come back and practice in their home state after medical school. The program has been successful, but recent bills going through the legislature are causing some of those in the program to decide not to come back and help fill the physician gap.

Time: 7 min  
Date: 2/3/23 at 3pm and 2/5/23 at noon.

**Topic:** Wyoming leads the nation for suicide deaths per capita. A bill hopes to address that fact and is slowly moving through the legislature. It would permanently establish the 988 Suicide and Crisis Line in Wyoming, establish quality standards and potentially provide some kind of funding.

Time: 6 min  
Date: 2/10/23 at 3pm and 2/12/23 at noon.

**Topic:** Fentanyl-related deaths in Wyoming have been on the rise since 2015. There were 106 overdose deaths in 2021 alone. We spoke with Melissa Hunter, the drug information director at the University of Wyoming (UW) to understand just how dangerous fentanyl can be.

Time: 8 min  
Date: 2/24/23 at 3 pm and 2/26/23 at noon.

**Topic:** Sublette County is the only county in the state without a hospital but the community is trying to change that. Back in November of 2020, voters approved the formation of the Sublette County Hospital District by a 60 percent margin. This granted the district the ability to levy a property tax to build a hospital and long-term care facility. Since then, the Sublette County Health Foundation has been trying to secure funding.

Time: 8 min  
Date: 3/3/23 at 3 pm and 3/5/23 at noon.
**ISSUE: Business and industry**

**Topic:** It’s been a tough year for cryptocurrency – especially with the collapse of the massive exchange FTX. Yet, some Mountain West states are still courting crypto companies.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

**ISSUE: Education**

**Topic:** Two bills have been introduced to the House education committee regarding child care. One would create early childhood development special districts while the second would exempt property tax on child care facilities. Teton County Commissioner Natalia Macker who is a mother of three young children helped draft the bills.

Time: 7 min  
Date: 1/20/23 at 3pm and 1/22/23 at noon.

**Topic:** On March 15, 2020 Governor Mark Gordon recommended that all schools in the state of Wyoming close to safeguard against the Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of students were back in school by Sept. Until Feb. 2021, four counties were offering students the choice to come in person or stay virtual. Wyoming was early to reopen schools for in person learning compared to the rest of the country.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 1/20/23 at 3pm and 1/22/23 at noon.

**Topic:** Data shows that over the last ten years about half of Wyoming high school graduates left the state, and many say it is because of a lack of opportunity. Rock Springs’ economy has long been driven by the nearby coal plants and natural gas fields – neither of which are booming like they had 10 to 20 years ago. But there are jobs opening up in other energy sectors, like the nuclear power plant that is being built at a former coal plant in Kemmerer. It is expected to create 2,000 jobs, including welders, mechanics, plant operators and electricians.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 2/24/23 at 3 pm and 2/26/23 at noon.
**Topic:** Students and staff at Newcastle High School have had to adapt to a virtual learning environment for some of their math classes. That’s because a teacher resigned in early September and the school was unable to find an in-person replacement.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 3/24/23 at 3 pm and 3/26/23 at noon.

**ISSUE: Sports**

**Topic:** Two-hundred-and-fifty canines are taking over western Wyoming’s snowy mountain terrain this week. The 28th annual Pedigree Stage Stop Sled Dog Race recently kicked off in Jackson.

Time: 4 min  
Date: 2/3/23 at 3pm and 2/5/23 at noon.

**Topic:** One of the hardest endurance adventure races in the lower 48 is right here in Wyoming, in the Wind River Mountains. Due to an extreme winter storm, this year was the hardest version of the race to date.

Time: 6 min  
Date: 3/17/23 at 3 pm and 3/19/23 at noon.

**Topic:** This week’s Special Olympic Games were an opportunity for athletes to see their friends from across the region after a three-year hiatus.

Time: 3 min  
Date: 3/17/23 at 3 pm and 3/19/23 at noon

**ISSUE: Archeology**

**Topic:** Wyoming legislators may soon protect a little-known archeological site in eastern Wyoming. The state doesn’t know a lot about it yet, but officials say it’s worthwhile to preserve now for future study.

Time: 7 min
Date: 1/20/23 at 3pm and 1/22/23 at noon.

**ISSUE: Music**

**Topic:** We talked with project producer Carl Gustafson from Laramie about "MOJA: A Music Saga." It's the story of African-influenced music through seven generations.

Time: 9 min  
Date: 2/24/23 at 3 pm and 2/26/23 at noon.

**Topic:** The performance at the Center for the Arts was part of a new program from Community Entry Services and Teton Music School.

Time: 5 min  
Date: 2/24/23 at 3 pm and 2/26/23 at noon.