

Accomplishments for

2009

Changing the Forecast for Wildlife





Yellowstone Pronghorn © NPS

Global Warming Solutions

“Like it or not, global warming is the defining issue of the twenty-first century, and this may be the defining moment for an all-out effort to avoid a climate crisis,” writes Larry J. Schweiger, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, in *Last Chance: Preserving Life on Earth* (Fulcrum, 2009). Three years ago, recognizing the growing threat to our nation’s wildlife, NWF’s board of directors approved a strategic plan aimed at confronting the challenge of global warming.

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In 2009, NWF successfully completed an ambitious effort to raise \$35 million in philanthropic funds to support the new strategy. In the same year, we took decisive actions to advance our strategic goals in three areas: global warming solutions, global warming safeguards, and connecting people with nature.

This work has helped foster the diverse conservation movement now driving national efforts to reduce global warming pollution and create a new energy economy. Here are selected highlights of our accomplishments in 2009.

“Students are really concerned about global warming,” says Hannah Clark, a 21-year-old senior at the University of Michigan. “It’s our future we’re talking about. It’s the world we’ll inherit. People are really scared.”

Hannah and thousands of others took part in **Power Shift 2009**, an unprecedented gathering of student leaders demanding government action on global warming. NWF helped mobilize the project in collaboration with the Energy Action Coalition and youth partner groups. At both a Washington, D.C. national conference and nearly a dozen regional summits, including one that Clark helped organize in Lansing, youth activists engaged in workshops and programs focused on clean energy and environmental justice.

The mobilization was part of NWF’s concerted effort in 2009 to provide solutions to global warming by bringing together leaders from universities, business, hunters and anglers, religious groups, and other sectors. Together, they are demanding action to reverse the buildup of global warming pollution and stabilize our climate.

Hannah Clark says Power Shift’s three-day Michigan event helped bond disparate youths around the climate issue. “We attracted students from Greek life, the business school—from all parts of the campus,” she says. Participants chanted “Green jobs—now!” as they marched to a rally at the state capitol.

Through our National Advocacy Center, NWF helped spur **Congressional action on a climate bill** in 2009 through its efforts to unite and empower diverse constituencies. Groups of sportsmen, African Americans, evangelical Christians,

and others from around the nation took part in NWF “fly-ins” to Washington, D.C., for briefings on opportunities for climate change legislation and meetings with members of Congress. In the spring, the House passed the **American Clean Energy and Security Act**, which includes significant funding for wildlife and ecosystem conservation. Major provisions include a cap-and-trade global warming reduction plan to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 17 percent by 2020 as well as new renewable energy requirements for utilities, studies and incentives regarding new carbon capture and sequestration technologies.

It’s our future we’re talking about. It’s the world we’ll inherit.

Our movement building also helped secure inclusion of billions worth of **clean energy investments in the economic recovery package**. Funding was devoted to energy efficiency, low-income weatherization, modernizing of the electrical grid, green jobs programs, and tax credits for renewable energy. The Senate began considering similar legislation.

To help reduce global warming’s disproportionate impact on communities of color, NWF hosted meetings of African American leaders at **Fair Climate Summits** in New Orleans and Detroit to discuss how they can advance a shared climate policy agenda. Jason Parson, an Iraq war veteran and small business owner in Kansas City, Missouri, says the Detroit meeting initiated a much-needed “strong base of support for Midwesterners who want to advocate for change.” The summit included discussions of topics from “Faith and Climate Change” to “Rural Communities and Coal” as well as ways to create green jobs in the region.

The Detroit meeting made new connections possible for Midwestern activists, reported writer Courtney E. Martin in *The American Prospect*. Often working in isolation, they could now “not only cross paths but swap stories of parallel struggle and resilience.” The NWF Fair Climate program’s goal is to build a network of African American global-warming activists, bring members to meetings on the Hill in Washington, D.C., and foster leadership for a nationwide movement.

“There’s a welcome feeling of strength in numbers when you’re visiting Congress with like-minded individuals,” says Jason Parson, who met with both his senator and representative on NWF fly-ins. “We shared our views and got important information to bring to people back home.”

In support of such advocacy work, NWF published a series of **highly accessible, scientifically based mini-reports** showing how global warming will affect-- and in some cases already is

affecting-- the lives of Americans. Topics covered in the four regional “Extreme Weather” publications were: the uncertainty of water supplies in the Southeast U.S.; increased flooding in riverfront communities; more extreme heat waves in large metropolitan areas; and global warming’s public health and social outcomes.

NWF also acted on the international front. In efforts to update the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and complete a **new global treaty on climate change**, we sent a team to negotiations in Poznan, Poland, where NWF President and CEO Larry Schweiger chaired a coalition of 29 of America’s leading conservation groups. We will also be represented in December 2009 when delegations from 192 countries meet at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.



Polar Bear © Lois Settlemeyer

With perhaps one-third of global warming resulting from deforestation and agriculture, NWF worked to develop **sustainable forestry practices** with farmers and landowners in Brazil. We also chaired the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels, an international group of farmers, NGOs, governments, and others seeking to ensure the sustainability of biofuels production.

NWF’s “**Chill Out: Campus Solutions to Global Warming**” video for 2009 was nominated for an award from the Imagen Foundation for its positive portrayals of Latinos and Latino culture in entertainment. The award program was created by TV producer Norman Lear. The Chill Out webcast showcased winning campuses in NWF’s Chill Out competition for the best college projects to reduce global warming emissions. More than 30,000 individuals from U.S. universities participated. The award-nominated video was narrated by an all-star cast, including actor Jose Yenque.



Global Warming Safeguards

View from St. Mary Visitor Center, Glacier National Park © Matthew Schuttloffel

Throughout the year, NWF also worked to safeguard wildlife and people from the most devastating impacts of climate change—declining snow packs, drought, forest fires, rising sea levels, and intensified storms. We engaged land managers, outdoor enthusiasts, volunteer leaders, and policy makers across the country.

In June 2009, NWF hosted the three-day **Powder River Basin Summit** in Billings, Montana, to help launch a first-ever regional coalition to protect wildlife habitat and water resources from coal bed methane mining. The basin extends for more than 14 million acres from Wyoming’s Bighorn Mountains to the Yellowstone River in Montana. More than 150 representatives from business, government, ranching, and Native American tribes discussed ways to safeguard the region’s cultural, historic, and environmental values.

The coal-rich region provides more than 40 percent of America’s coal. In removing the natural gas trapped in coal deposits, energy developers use large amounts of water, which depletes the water supplies in artesian wells that ranchers and farmers have relied on for generations for their livelihoods. The mining also threatens wildlife and historical sites of cultural importance.

“The summit was a great beginning—it brought together everybody with an interest in protecting the integrity of the region, and allowed us to work on an action plan to promote responsible energy development” says participant Steve Brady, chair of the Northern Cheyenne Cultural Commission. “And that’s important, because we are all affected by what happens hundreds of miles away. Much of our water on the Northern Cheyenne reservation, in Montana, comes from Wyoming, so coal mining there as well as nearby affects us.”

NWF mobilized hunting and fishing activists and our state affiliates to support one of the most sweeping pieces of conservation and public land management legislation in decades--the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009. The bill, signed by the president in March, designates **2.1 million acres of new wilderness areas** across nine states. It protects treasured places from the Appalachians of Virginia and West Virginia to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula; from the canyons of Idaho to the sandstone cliffs of Utah; from the Sierra Nevadas in California to the Badlands of Oregon. In addition, the act established three new national park units; 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers; and three National Conservation Areas.

The Summit... it brought together everybody with an interest in protecting the integrity of the region

NWF took the lead on introducing a **\$500 million community college green jobs bill** in the U.S. Senate in 2009. The bill would authorize the Department of Energy to fund programs at 1,200 American community colleges to train men and women -including many inner-city residents--for work as wind energy technicians, energy auditors, and geothermal energy technicians in the growing sustainable and alternative energy field.

NWF’s new Chesapeake Mid-Atlantic Regional Center was instrumental during the year in forming the **Chesapeake Bay Coalition**, whose more than 100 member groups are creating a more coordinated approach to protecting and restoring

threatened habitats in the watershed. The new NWF regional center focuses on conserving the Chesapeake Bay; the Appalachian forests, rivers and flyways; and the extensive shoreline and coastal bay habitats of the Mid-Atlantic.

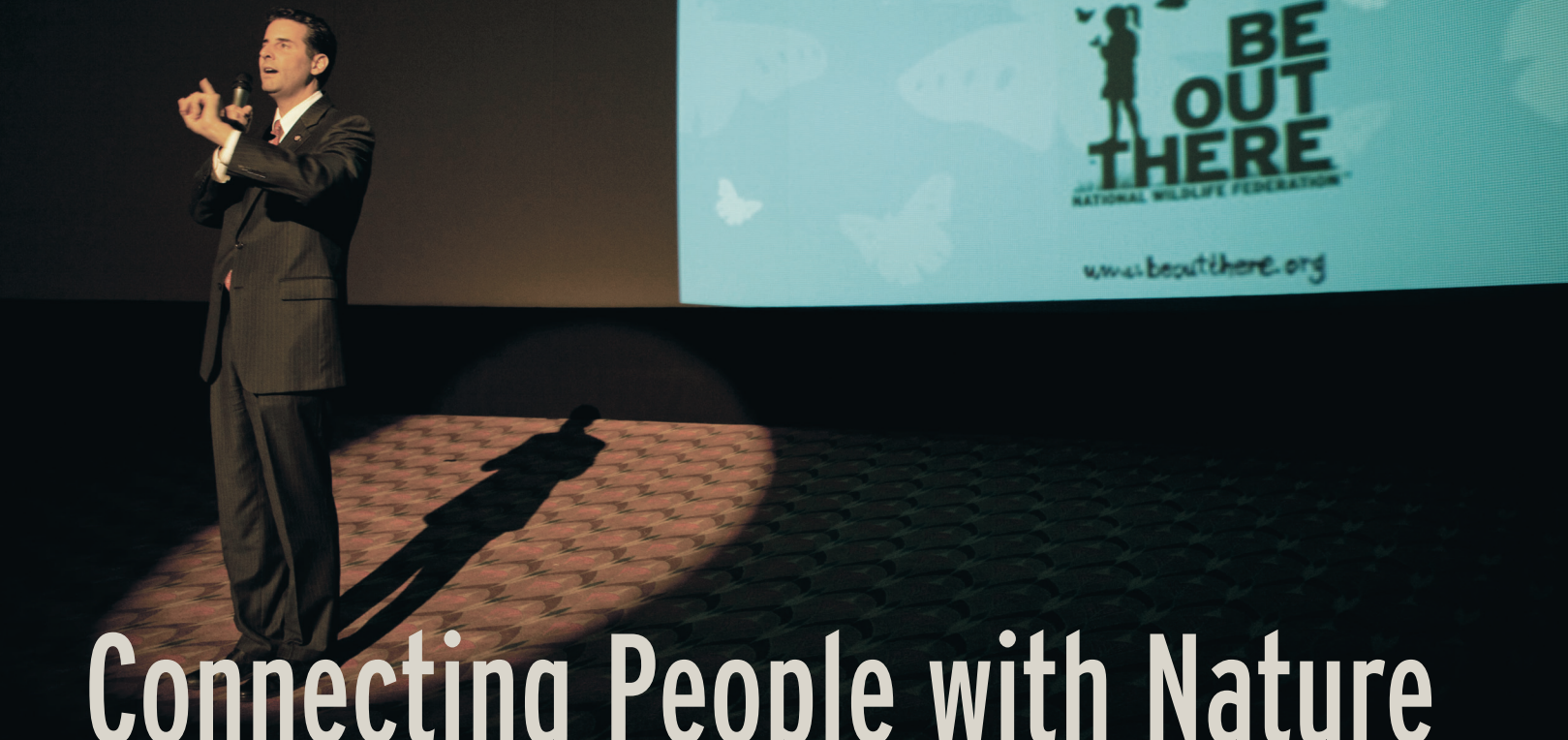
In several efforts, **NWF helped advance the well-being of major aquatic ecosystems.** We hosted the Great Waters Restoration Summit, in New Orleans, which brought together restoration leaders from across the country in June to launch a **new national restoration coalition for the recovery of aquatic ecosystems.** The group plans to speak in a strong collective voice on behalf of great waters from the Great Lakes to Washington’s Puget Sound. NWF also played a key role in obtaining President Obama’s 2009 pledge to commit **\$5 billion to restoring the Great Lakes.** The president’s first-year restoration budget of \$475 million was passed by the U.S. House, and close to that amount was approved by the Senate. With additional funds for regional sewer system improvements, the first-year Great Lakes restoration budget totals more than \$1 billion--an unprecedented amount. Finally, we launched a three-year, \$5-million campaign to advance the **restoration of Louisiana’s deteriorating coastal wetlands.** The initiative will preserve essential habitat for waterfowl, fish and other wildlife and better protect coastal populations from hurricanes, floods and rising sea levels.

We also took **action to safeguard floodplains and coasts** against the risk of climate change-related flooding. We won a major appeals court victory protecting the Key deer and other endangered species in the Florida Keys from development fueled by federal flood insurance subsidies. We also partnered with reinsurance companies as well as taxpayer, consumer and

environmental groups to defeat proposals that would create new incentives for development and re-development in coastal areas and floodplains. And we **launched a new coalition working to better protect people and communities** from hurricanes, sea level rise, flooding and other climate impacts.

In a pilot effort, NWF led coalitions to help water, land, and wildlife managers revise state wildlife action plans in ways that will **safeguard wildlife and ecosystems from climate change impacts in 10 states** across the country. In New York, New Jersey and Vermont, NWF workshops on guarding wildlife against climate change attracted more than 750 people. The sessions encouraged the Northeast states to work together on the issue. We also helped advance the nation’s understanding of ecosystems and climate change at a two-day NWF conference in Washington, D.C. attended by 130 experts in science, natural resource management, and policy.

In Colorado alone, we acted on several occasions to halt unwise oil and gas development. First, we moved in Colorado Water Court to prevent Shell Oil Company from depleting flows in Colorado’s Yampa River in order to export water for oil shale development. (The Yampa is one of the few undammed, free-flowing rivers remaining in the West, with habitat for four endangered species of native fish.) Second, we filed litigation to prevent excessive and poorly planned natural gas development on the Roan Plateau, which contains some of western Colorado’s best remaining undeveloped habitat for mule deer, elk, and rare Colorado River cutthroat trout. Lastly, NWF mobilized grass-roots activists and took legal action to minimize the effects of oil and gas development on sage grouse, mule deer, elk, and other wildlife in the region.



Connecting People with Nature

Left: At the Uptown Theatre in Washington D.C. The Honorable John Sarbanes speaking © Jeffrey MacMillant Right: Be Out There, encouraging people to get outside more © Laurie Hardwick

Today's young Americans are growing up isolated from nature. They spend less than half the time outdoors as previous generations. Much of their time - more than six hours each day - is spent indoors plugged into electronic media. In 2009, **NWF stepped up efforts to encourage families to get outside** so that kids can have positive outdoor experiences and become stewards of the environment.

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Toward this end, we launched the **Be Out There** campaign aimed at inspiring Americans to spend time in the wild. The program provides activities and useful tools for families, educators, healthcare practitioners, corporate leaders, policy makers, and the media. In an educational partnership with Warner Bros., we timed the launch to coincide with the October national release of the feature film **Where the Wild Things Are**. Based on Maurice Sendak's classic children's book and directed by Spike Jonze, the film tells a story about childhood and the place we go to understand the world we live in.

As Renne Limon, a Portland homemaker with two children, ages 7 and 5, explains, the NWF program helps encourage kids to view the outdoors as their favorite play space. “It's one thing to stand on the sidelines at your kids' soccer game - probably using your blackberry - and quite another to actually do things with them outside in the garden” she says. “When we do that, even in inclement weather, the kids suddenly get creative. They dig in the dirt, picking up worms, jumping and laughing. Honestly, when we go outside, my kids become their best selves.”

NWF also worked to build **federal and state “No Child Left Inside” (NCLI) coalitions** while engaging volunteers to ensure that children value and enjoy the outdoors. The coalitions seek to help students gain a basic environmental literacy so they can understand climate change and other challenges facing the natural world. We supported new legislation that would provide \$500 million in NCLI funding at the U.S. Department of Education for state environmental literacy plans and action projects. The bill was passed by the House in late 2008 and re-introduced in 2009. At the same time, we led 12 state coalitions aimed at forcing action by governors and state legislatures. In Kansas, we secured a gubernatorial NCLI executive order directing schools, health agencies, and park/recreation agencies to develop comprehensive plans to get kids outdoors. We also secured passage of an NCLI bill in the Texas Senate.

NWF certified **schoolyard habitat programs** in some 300 K-12 schools in 2009. This brings the total number of certified schools across America to 3,350. They enroll one million young people, about 40 percent of whom come from racially and culturally diverse backgrounds. The certification brings NWF assistance with curriculum and volunteer habitat stewards.

We are now working on school-system wide approaches for schoolyard habitats in four of the country's 12 largest school systems – Chicago, Houston, Broward and Fairfax.

Internationally, NWF won official U.S. host status for the **worldwide Eco-School program** aimed at fostering a greater sense of environmental stewardship among youth. The acclaimed initiative involves 27,000 schools and six million students in 43 countries. The program uses school-based action teams of students, administrators, educators and community volunteers to ensure effective “green” management of the school grounds, the facilities, and the curriculum.

NWF certified schoolyard habitat programs in some 300 K-12 schools in 2009

We also certified **14,000 new backyard habitats** ranging from wildlife gardens on urban apartment balconies to 50-acre refuges at a major airport. NWF now has certified or registered some 80 U.S. cities, counties and towns, with populations totaling six million as certified community-wide wildlife habitats. In 2009 Austin became the largest city ever certified. The Texas city now offers havens for native species at municipal facilities, businesses, parks, and places of worship. In addition, some 900 homeowners use sustainable gardening practices and provide food, water, and cover for wildlife.

In June, we hosted the national **Great American Backyard Campout**, engaging thousands of families - about 100,000 individuals - to come together for a night spent sleeping under the stars and enjoying the sounds of nature. Each year the number of campers has grown steadily, with participants sleeping out in backyards and public campsites around the country. “It was our first camping outing and we had a great time!” one parent camper told NWF. “My favorite part was watching the kids; they were so excited about the whole adventure.” Wide media coverage reached more than 15 million readers and viewers.

NWF's prize-winning children's magazines reached 1 million homes and 2.5 million young readers each month. Ranger Rick was a top-four nominee for the prestigious Golden Lamp award as the best educational periodical in America.

To help people connect with nature near their homes, **NWF launched a new web resource for finding outdoor spaces and events.** NatureFind (www.naturefind.com) allows users to enter their zip code or community name and obtain free information about upcoming events and activities, walking and biking trails, parks and much more, all located anywhere from one mile to 500 miles from their home.



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