



## Alliance Supports Clean Energy



by Jason Pretty Boy  
Program staff

The Snake River Alliance has formally intervened in Idaho Power's proposal to change the rate structure for people with rooftop solar. The legal proceeding is now before the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. The Alliance joined with the Northwest Energy Coalition and hired attorney John Hammond to represent us in front of the Commission and help save Idaho's "net metering" program.

Idaho Power's action reminds me of a Lakota story about Duck and Coyote.. The short version is that sneaky Coyote took advantage of a group of ducks by telling them to close their eyes while he sang a song accompanied by the sound of a soothing drum. Coyote sang that everything was ok and then got the drop on them.

We are all supposed to learn from Coyote stories. Idaho Power customers who install solar panels thinking that their rates aren't going to go up could be sitting ducks. Idaho Power has brought this case before the Idaho Public Utilities Commission asking for a new rate class to be created for customers using net meters. While the company has not asked for a rate increase, clearly the bedrock is being laid for such a thing to happen in the future.

That is why ten interventions were filed from public interest groups and solar companies in this seemingly small case. We intend to keep our eyes open and fight for fair access to the grid for all green energy producers. Idaho Power has a right to fair compensation for its costs, but not to gouge people just for installing solar panels.

Three years ago Idaho Power tried to go much farther and proposed a steep monthly fee increase rate for net metering customers. The Alliance and other groups intervened, there were hearings, and after a large public outcry we won. Please help us do the same again this time. You can follow this issue by subscribing to our online newsletter Net Metering News (NEM News) -- by sending an email to me at [jprettyboy@snakeriveralliance.org](mailto:jprettyboy@snakeriveralliance.org).

## Idaho Could Get Hanford Waste

Within two years, the INL Clean up Project will be finished packaging much of the targeted plutonium that was dumped in the desert decades ago by the federal government. This should spark a small celebration! Sadly, the empty facility at the Advanced Mixed Waste Project may fill up again with plutonium-laden waste sent here from Hanford, Washington, for treatment. So, this will be a test. Will the requirements of Idaho's Nuclear Settlement Agreement stand? The Agreement clearly says that this waste could only come into Idaho if it were treated and then shipped out within one year. Let's see if INL can do that. But, members of the Governor Otter's Leadership in Nuclear Energy Commission have indicated they may want to accept the waste to be processed at the facility, whether or not the State's limits are respected. Stay tuned!



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## Executive Director's Corner



Dear members and supporters,

We know what we want – a safer earth and a future built on clean energy. So, it has been a tough year.

Safer? Not yet.

Above the Snake Plain Aquifer, the liquid nuclear waste that most concerned late-Governor Cecil Andrus is still being stored in aging tanks. The billion-dollar facility that was to have finished stabilizing it is still at least a year away from start up. Facing new technical difficulties, it is unclear if it will ever work. And plans are in the works to bring more nuclear waste to Idaho -- hundreds of thousands of barrels from Hanford, Washington.

Cleaner? Well that's been put on hold.

After several commercial solar projects were successfully brought on line, Idaho Power shortened contract terms for solar farms -- essentially closing the door to future projects. Now, the company has taken another big step and also wants to toss out the program that helps individuals invest in rooftop solar.

Every day, the Alliance's staff, board and volunteers respond to these threats and more. We don't always win, but we have many victories to share.

Our Solarize the Valley campaign created \$2,000,000 of local investments in solar power. Now, we are working to expand that boom and protect customers from unfair rate hikes.

Our work promoting nuclear clean up is an ongoing success story. This year we took 40 people to the cleanup operations at the Idaho National Laboratory. We helped present a art show at the Ming Gallery about nuclear materials. And our spring "D.C. Days" event generated 61 meetings with Congressional and Federal officials in the Trump Administration.

Yes, the problems facing our earth are huge. But, the Alliance brings out the best in people, especially in a crisis. Thank you for being part of the solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Wendy Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Wendy Wilson

# Up Against the Nuclear Menace

by Beatrice Brailsford

**Nuclear Programs Director**

The Alliance was proud to host the fall meeting of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA) in Idaho this October. Representatives from grassroots groups came from ten states and were joined by a peace ally from Hamburg, Germany. Many of our visitors toured the Idaho National Laboratory and the nuclear cleanup operations. Everyone appreciated bright blue skies, fall colors, hot pools, and snow skiffs during our 3 day meeting in Lava Hot Springs.

ANA is a nationwide coalition of groups whose members live downstream and downwind from US Department of Energy nuclear facilities. Most sites have had radioactive releases at some point. All could create a potential nuclear menace.



The Snake River Alliance helped establish the network in the late 1980s and continues to be part of the national leadership team. Our discussions at Lava Hot Springs focused on our work for the coming year. We have some steep challenges ahead including how to address nuclear weapons, waste, and power. We plan to fight together against a number of misguided schemes to transport and “consolidate” nuclear waste in places where it can most easily be forgotten. We brainstormed and mapped out our work fighting nuclear weapons in both national and international arenas.

Looking forward, we are planning ANA’s 30th Annual DC Days, which are scheduled for May 2018. There will be an excellent opportunity to celebrate some of our achievements. The ANA has been a crucial part of our successes in Idaho, such as stopping new weapons plants, including the Special Isotope Separator. Together we exposed the life-threatening contamination at nuclear sites to the public and helped launch DOE’s cleanup program.

## Hold the Government to Its Word

In 2017, we’re seeing our government ignore its own commitments. The US backed out of the Paris Climate Agreement and now stands alone and isolated in the world. In Idaho, it is even more important to hold the DOE to its word to remove nuclear waste: If nuclear waste comes to Idaho for treatment, it must leave within one year.

Some people in Idaho’s political world are trying to build public support for a project at the Idaho National Laboratory that might violate the 1995 Nuclear Settlement Agreement. This raises many other concerns as well.

The plutonium-contaminated waste at the Idaho National Lab doesn’t go directly to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, the deep geologic repository in New Mexico. One reason is that it can contain explosive or flammable chemicals not allowed in WIPP. Since 2009, workers at the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP) have treated such waste and used the facility to compress it so it takes up less room when it finally goes to WIPP.

Idaho’s Nuclear Settlement Agreement allows for waste to come to INL from other sites. But the Agreement stipulates that INL has only one year to treat other sites’ waste and ship it out of Idaho. Up to now, INL has treated waste from 15 other DOE sites at AMWTP and has abided by the time limits.

That system of bringing nuclear waste “in-and-out” may soon change. Site boosters and many Idaho politicians want to bring in large shipments of plutonium-contaminated waste and stage it for treatment at AMWTP. The DOE at the Hanford Site has more than 20,000 cubic meters that could be sent to Idaho; Los Alamos has nearly 7,000 cubic meters.

The Snake River Alliance is concerned for many reasons. Just for starters: What if a mechanical problem forces the AMWTP to shut down? Will that leave piles of waste untreated? Also, since the accidents at WIPP in 2014, shipments there are much slower. Waste will start accumulating at INL and we’ll be back where we started. “Interim storage” will stretch toward permanent.



Solarize the Valley Success!



Solarize the Valley by the Numbers

Solarize eliminated the CO2 emissions of burning 19,704,244 pounds of coal.

2016	2017	Total
49 Homes	56 Homes	104 Homes
314 Kilowatts	416 Kilowatts	730 Kilowatts
\$981,117 Invested	\$1,199,014 Invested	\$2,180,131 Invested

Photos top clockwise: Whilhelm Home, Wheatherly-White Family, Ellen Reynolds, The Thatchers.  
 Photos opposite page: Taylor House and Gains Home



# Idahoans Invest in Clean Energy with Solarize the Valley

by Liz Paul



More than one hundred Idaho families are now producing clean, renewable energy after installing rooftop solar with Solarize the Valley. In a remarkable show of enthusiasm over 350 families signed up to learn if solar would work for them. Solarize the Valley exceeded our expectations in 2017, just as it did in 2016.

City and country residents installed solar. Working families and retirees installed solar. Solar panels were installed on homes, garages and stables, too.

Solarize the Valley demonstrated that Idahoans from all walks of life are eager to produce their own clean energy. It's a smart investment with immediate benefit to the environment, the economy and home values.

Here are some success stories: **Charles and Melissa Gains designed their high-efficiency, all-electric home for rooftop solar when they built it in 1981. With the installation of a 6.33 kW system by Bluebird Solar and Light, their long-awaited dream was realized, and they had enough capacity for an electric car.**

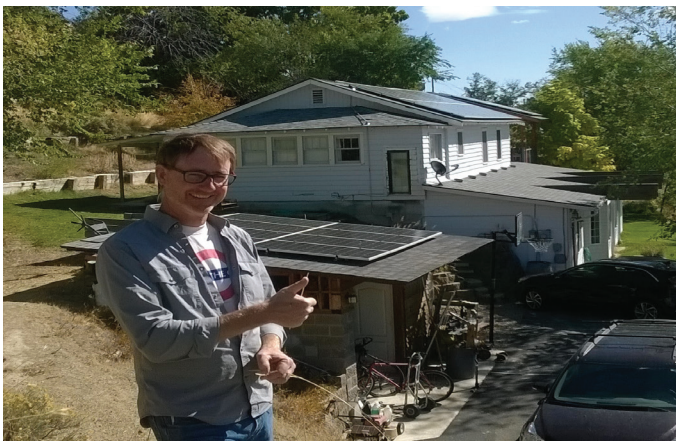
**Matt and Pascale Warren wasted no time after buying a home on the bench early this year. AltEnergy installed a 3 kW system that was producing clean power by the fall.**

**Dick and Natalie Thatcher's home on a sunny hillside south of Boise is surrounded by beautiful landscaping. With the installation of an 8.63 kW system by Bluebird Solar and Light, they'll be using solar power to pump water from their well.**

**Gordon and Julie Eldredge will be heating their greenhouse and home in Meridian with solar energy with a 10.5 kW system installed by AltEnergy. Many Solarize participants will be driving electric cars charged by their solar panels, including Jeff Wilhelm, Michael Smith, and Cameron and Jamie Crow.**

Solarize the Valley was a partnership between the Snake River Alliance and two local solar installation companies, Bluebird Solar and Light and AltEnergy. The Alliance recruited interested homeowners and the installers provided site assessments and system installation. Homeowners who had been solar shopping for decades and those who just heard a Solarize radio ad were attracted by the low prices and top quality components used in the program.

The Alliance appreciates the support of our community co-sponsors: Idaho Conservation League, Conservation Voters for Idaho, Idaho Smart Growth, Idaho Organization of Resource Councils, Sierra Club, US Green Building Council Idaho Chapter, Boise Co-op, League of Women Voters, North End Organic Nursery, Atomic Taco and Idaho Rivers Sports.



## Special Thanks To Our Donors!

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## Member Corner - Eilen Jewell

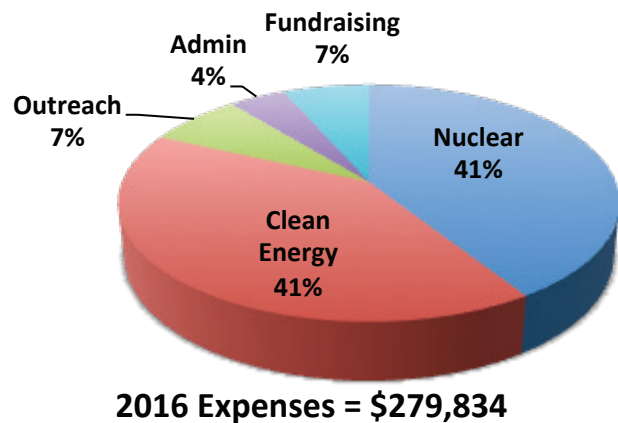
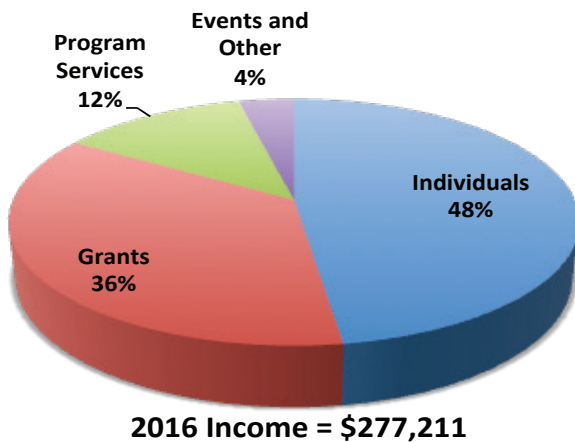
### Join me and get RAD!

"I'm proud to be RAD. I hope you will become a **"Radically Awesome Donor"** in support of the Snake River Alliance. I often travel the world as a musician and love to come home to this wonderful community of local activists. The more I see of this beautiful world, the more I appreciate what we have right here in Idaho. And I become more and more convinced of the need to protect our natural resources. The Alliance does great work and Idaho is safer and cleaner because of it. We need your help to build more clean and renewable energy

for the future. Please become a RAD by going online at [snakeriveralliance.org](http://snakeriveralliance.org) and making a monthly or quarterly financial pledge to the Alliance."

## 2016 Financial Review

Full Financials are available upon request



## Welcome John to the Alliance!



Hello from John!

Summer storms. That's what I miss about my home state of Ohio. Idaho doesn't have summer storms like the ones I remember. Rolling banks of doom. Storms that catch you riding your bike on a sunny, humid, ninety-degree day, suddenly darken the sky, drop the temperature thirty degrees and batter you with wind as you frantically pedal home. I miss them because they were my first glimpse into the awe-inspiring power and beauty of nature.

Now I want to help harness the power of the natural world through promoting clean energy. I'm interning with the Alliance for the winter months. I'm looking forward to meeting a lot of you and helping in whatever ways I can. I know a bit about biology, electrical engineering, publishing, firefighting, journalism, coding and financial compliance. If you need a hand with any project around the Alliance, just ask!

--John Plisga has joined us as our winter intern



# Behind the Volunteer Curtain



by Leigh Ford

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.” — Elizabeth Andrew

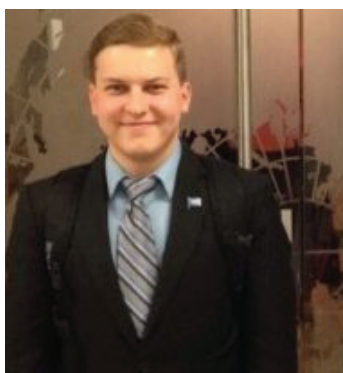
We cannot thank our volunteers, interns and board enough for their dedication to Idaho, to our community, and to protecting our quality of life. Every task, however seemingly small, contributes significantly to our effectiveness as Idaho’s only grassroots nuclear watchdog and leading clean energy advocate. Thank you so much everyone!

Andy & Pat Acks, Cargie Aitchison & Steve Bublitz, Tim Andrae, Marianne Barker, Rose Beebe, Max Bell, Patti & Phil Bellan, Fred Belzer, Fritz Bjornsen, Amy Bingham, Tyler Brewington,

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## Matt Reed, Clean Energy Intern 2017

We had the great fortune of having Matt Reed, Solarize intern extraordinaire, at our Boise office this summer. Matt was invaluable to the Solarize the Valley campaign. Matt spent his entire summer break from Colgate University making calls, meeting with Solarize participants, delivering signs, and attending meetings. With Matt’s can-do attitude and hard work, the Alliance surpassed our goals. Matt, your



positive impact on the Treasure Valley and on the staff, board and members at Snake River Alliance will be felt for some time to come. Best of luck and keep in touch!

## Amy Hilton, Nuclear Program Intern 2017

For the past year, Amy Hilton has pitched in on the nuclear side of the Alliance’s work. Amy is working on a MPA with an emphasis in Energy Policy at Boise State University. She hails from Hancock Park, California and is a recent



transplant to Idaho after doing her undergrad work in Environmental Engineering and Managerial Studies at Rice University. She is always willing to lend a hand and has volunteered with numerous organizations in the Boise area. She recently joined our delegation for DC Days and helped during a tour of INL and at the fall meeting of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability. Thank you, Amy!