



## Turning the Corner on Coal

Idaho utilities deserve credit for realizing that “resistance is futile” and beginning to plan for life without coal.

By Ken Miller, Clean Energy Program Director



It's been four years since the Snake River Alliance launched our anti-coal campaign. Since our 2011 report, “Idaho’s Dangerous Dalliance with King Coal,” we have called upon Idaho’s big three electric companies to shed planet-baking coal plants.

Our efforts are now bearing fruit --big time! In 2015, more community members and conservation groups than ever joined together to make coal an important public issue. That public outcry was heard.

Idaho Power is saying it is on a “glide path” away from coal plants in Oregon, Nevada, and Wyoming. In fact, all three of Idaho’s electric utilities now acknowledge that coal’s days are numbered and the sooner we start planning the easier the transition will be. This is an important beginning.

One reason for this remarkable change is that Obama’s

Clean Power Plan sets greenhouse gas reduction targets for all states. At the state level we are advocating for a robust state plan. We appreciate that Idaho officials have at least not joined the 26 states suing the EPA over the Clean Power Plan!

Coal is only cheap if we don’t consider its full costs. The utilities also see that they will have to spend hundreds of millions more to control toxic coal-plant emissions as well as carbon. When those costs are added to the public health costs – coal becomes a poison pill.

The campaign for a smooth transition away from coal continues. Utilities nationwide are rushing to dump their plants. Even in Idaho, we can see through the smoke toward a clean energy economy.

The Alliance and our allies are now working with the utilities to identify carbon-free alternatives. We remain resolute in our call for coal-free electricity. Thanks to all of you, the end of coal is more real than ever!



Jim Bridger Coal Plant, Wyoming

# Making a Difference

By Wendy Wilson, Interim Executive Director



Hello Snake River Alliance members,

I'm so pleased to serve as the Interim Executive Director of the Snake River Alliance during this time of organizational transition. I've been a member of the Alliance for many years and believe there is lots of potential here for me to make a difference.

Many know me because I founded the organization *Idaho Rivers United* -- with the help of many people including Alliance board member Liz Paul. Later, I worked for many years with the national group *River Network*, where I taught others to run organizations and plan campaigns. I have been deeply inspired by the Alliance's efforts to keep nuclear waste out of Idaho and want to help.

The Alliance has a track record of leadership on safe energy issues. But, despite our efforts -- Idaho is falling behind. We are still dependent on coal for more than 40% of our electricity, and are one of only 12 states without any renewable energy standards of any kind! Despite having plenty of sunshine, the state gets an "F" for solar energy policies and economic incentives ([solarpowerrocks.com](http://solarpowerrocks.com)).

We can't let this slow us down. For the next several months, I will work closely with your board and staff to align ourselves within a new strategic framework. We will explore new campaign ideas, funding, and how to assure the success for our next permanent director.

Your thoughts are very important to us in this process. Please let me know how we can "be the change we want to see"!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy".

Wendy Wilson  
Interim Executive Director  
[wwilson@snakeriveralliance.org](mailto:wwilson@snakeriveralliance.org)  
208-344-9161

# Thank You and See You Soon!

By Kelsey Jae Nunez

This fall, I decided to fully engage in my law practice to support social entrepreneurs and the growing cooperative, sharing economy. As I step down from the executive director role, I am so grateful for this experience and the many wonderful people I met. The Snake River Alliance community is composed of hundreds of thoughtful, passionate leaders with very big hearts and expertise. Together, we spent 2015 expanding our collective knowledge base, protecting Idaho from nuclear waste shipments, and accelerating the decline of coal usage. Our community will continue to grow and our good work will be leveraged with new opportunities. I'm eager to explore more ways to contribute to our movement, and am very supportive of our board, staff, and new interim ED, Wendy Wilson. She is an amazing person and I've enjoyed spending the last couple of weeks with her as we transition into our new roles. Thank you to everyone for all that you give each other.



Kelsey Jae Nunez

# One Win on Spent Fuel!

By Beatrice Brailsford, Nuclear Program Director



The Snake River Alliance has long worked to stop shipments of spent nuclear fuel from coming to Idaho. Our work paid off on October 23, when Idaho’s Attorney General, Lawrence Wasden, blocked a shipment of 25 spent fuel rods from Virginia’s North Anna reactor. Idaho’s AG refused to

consent to a waiver of the 1995 Settlement Agreement with the Department of Energy (DOE).

Commercial spent fuel is banned in Idaho under the 1995 Agreement. But there is a framework for accepting “research quantities.” Earlier this year, Idaho’s Governor and Attorney General seemed to have given the green light to two such shipments – one from Virginia and another from Illinois. But the Attorney General soon realized that DOE was less likely to meet some of its core cleanup obligations than he had been led to believe and withdrew his consent.

Even before Mr. Wasden reconsidered, former Idaho governors Phil Batt and Cecil Andrus threatened to sue with the help of our ally, Advocates for the West. We provided technical support for the governors’ legal actions. We publicized DOE’s contractor Battelle’s full plan for the North Anna spent fuel. It hoped to send 25 rods to Idaho now, and another 20 tons within a decade!

Newspapers across the state published our guest opinions. We delivered petitions signed by our members and supporters. We told our Congressional representatives our concerns. And we spoke with service clubs, local governments, and political gatherings from Pocatello to Caldwell.

As the DOE threatened to take its waste somewhere else, we investigated where “somewhere else” would be. So now we are helping groups in Tennessee -- which is now targeted to receive the waste from North Anna instead. And we are talking with nuclear proponents and the Nuclear Waste Council of the Bipartisan Policy Center, explaining the concept of state “non-consent” and urging respect for it.

There still is a second shipment waiting in the wings. We have to keep working. The public’s broad and well-informed opposition is encouraging. But we are uneasy about some of the proposals Mr. Wasden seems willing to consider in potential negotiations.

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**“The canceled shipment of nuclear material is a win for the nuclear watchdog group Snake River Alliance, which has opposed it since the news of the shipments broke in January.”**

**– Idaho Falls Post Register 10.28.2015**

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Last month was a win for Idaho. We need to keep working to repeat it!

## Beatrice Brailsford Receives 2015 Nelle Tobias Award

Congratulations to our own Nuclear Program Director, Beatrice Brailsford, on Pocatello, for receiving the Fund for Idaho’s 2015 Nelle Tobias Award. This award honors special people with a “passionate vision for a better world and a better Idaho” – a quality shared with the late Nelle Tobias, an Alliance member from McCall. Beatrice’s environmental advocacy work helps untangle nuclear waste

issues in Idaho for all of us. This work is often difficult and complicated. Her goals and accomplishments are to protect Idaho’s Snake River Aquifer from nuclear contamination and represent Idaho’s experience developing safer national policies on nuclear waste clean up. The award ceremony will be held in Boise on November 19th. You can learn more at [fundforidaho.org](http://fundforidaho.org).

# The Story Behind the Alliance's 2015 Energy Work

By Ken Miller, Clean Energy Program Director

**Solar:** Idaho ranks 12th nationally in potential solar generation, but still has not developed a single kilowatt of grid-connected, utility-scale solar. Idaho's regulated electric utilities have never been fans of solar power, which is viewed by clean energy advocates as the state's most important, untapped energy resource. But, they took that antipathy to a new level in 2015. The utilities convinced the Public Utilities Commission to chop the contracts they provide to developer of utility-scale solar from 20 years to just two years -- all but making projects impossible to finance and further crippling solar development.

**Electric Vehicles:** It's good news that more EVs are taking to the roads. On Earth Day (April 22) the Alliance were part of a team effort to install a free public EV charging station at Boise's Whole Foods (with the Idaho Conservation League and Idaho Power Company). And, dozens of EVs squeezed into the M.K. Nature Center parking lot for a National Drive Electric Week event (September 20). The event enticed hundreds of curious future owners. EVs are in for a good ride in Idaho! Now if only we can get our electrical grid to be carbon free!

**Idaho Power Shareholders:** After years of often-contentious shareholder meetings -- where advocates challenged the utility on its commitment to clean energy-- the May 2015 confab was cordial and productive! Company CEO Darrel Anderson willingly fielded diverse questions from green shareholders organized by the Alliance, and went so far as to say that his company is seriously considering retiring some of its coal plants. What a change!

**Integrated Resource Plan:** For the first time, retiring a coal plant has taken a top spot in Idaho Power's planning scenarios. The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is a roadmap showing how the company will meet future electricity demands and it is updated every-other year. The 2015 version was -- by most accounts -- the best yet. The company's preferred portfolio of energy resources envisions an early shut-down of the North Valmy (NV) coal plant. The company projects this to happen by 2025, although the Alliance wants to see at least one unit shut down by 2019. The IRP also calls to complete the big Boardman-Hemingway transmission line (from southwest Idaho to the Columbia River) by 2025 -- in part to replace energy from closed coal plants. Best yet, the plan doesn't include building new fossil fuel plants through the 2020s!

# High-Level Nuclear Waste — An Unabated Risk

By Beatrice Brailsford, Nuclear Program Director

A key part of the 1995 Settlement Agreement between Idaho and the Department of Energy (DOE) is the schedule it lays out for some of the major cleanup projects at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL). Although INL's cleanup program has made substantial progress, some of the most important deadlines are now being missed.

By the end of 2012, INL was to have completed drying the 900,000 gallons of liquid high-level waste that are still stored in buried tanks on the Site. To do so, the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit (IWTU) was built -- with an original price tag of \$461 million. IWTU's first big test, in June 2012, failed miserably. After extensive modifications and a total cost creeping north of \$800

million, INL tried again this August. That test, too, failed. Idaho's Attorney General Lawrence Wasden noted in a letter to the agency that there is "growing concern among DOE staff as to whether this technology will ever be deemed safe enough to begin treatment of radioactive waste."

But, somehow, the liquid high-level waste must still be removed from the buried tanks.

High-level waste is one of the hardest kinds to treat. The DOE has increased the difficulty by choosing a different treatment technology at each of the agency's three high-level waste sites. The DOE has just commissioned an alternative analysis to help decide if IWTU's technology will work and, if not, what will.

# Win this Beautiful Painting!



Marsh Valley and Clouds · Original art by Tim Norton

## Thank you to our generous donors!

Your membership and donations are what make the Alliance succeed. You have been challenged! The Alliance needs your help to match a \$20,000 challenge grant. Your gift this holiday season protects Idaho's clean water and safe-energy future, and will have twice the impact!

Your generous spirit is encouraged by artist Tim Norton, who has offered this spectacular original oil painting FREE to a lucky Alliance supporter.

Every \$100 gift you make by January 31st automatically enters you to win this painting. A \$500 gift qualifies you for five entries. Every gift of any size will be matched by our challenge grant!

You can help create a safe and fossil-free energy future for Idaho. **Please, make your donation to the Alliance online at [snakeriveralliance.org](http://snakeriveralliance.org) or by mail at P.O. Box 1731, Boise, Idaho, 83701. No consideration is required for participation\*.**

*\*Simply send us a note by mail indicating you wish to be placed in the drawing with your name and phone number. Entries must be received by January 31st, 2016.*



# Idaho's Climate Action Community!

By Kelsey Jae Nunez

This year, hundreds of Boise residents made October 24th a Day of Climate Action.

The Alliance was part of a coalition of groups creating the successful Climate Action Rally & Party. The event brought hundreds of people together to share music, food, dance and align around a common purpose – ensuring swift action on climate change! The Boise event raised awareness through reports all over social media and in many newspapers, television, and radio programs, including Idaho Statesman, Radio Boise, Boise State Public Radio, Channel 2, Channel 6.

We send a huge **thank you** to our partners and sponsors: Idaho Sierra Club, 350 Idaho, Doing What We Can, Citizen's Climate Lobby, Earth Song Healing Arts, Idaho Conservation League, Mandala Domes, Idaho Green Fest, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Idaho Peace Coalition, Citizens Allied for Integrity and Accountability, Celeste Bolin Dance, Marimba Boise, Earth Holders Sangha,

Auric Solar, the Boise EcoVillage Project, To Entertain U, Idaho Poster Distribution, Burgerlicious, Ben & Jerry's, and NYR Organic! And an extra-special thanks to our rally speakers: Zack Waterman, Aimee Christensen, Reed Burkholder, Paul Kreider, Michelle Tae, and Lisa Luna Stravers. What a team!

Idaho's growing Climate Action Community is strengthening the bonds between many groups and working to amplify our collective voices. We embrace the strength of having many different avenues for our advocacy, and are committed to building a bigger and broader community of people who know what's going on, care about it, and act.

Our next effort is to get organized around the Northwest Power & Conservation Council's 7th Power Plan (please come to the November 19th hearing in Boise) and the UN Conference on Climate Change (November 30 to December 11). Please join us! Call the Alliance office at 208-344-9161 and get involved!

This April, Eilen Jewell and friends and *We've Got You Covered* held a special concert at the Visual Arts Collective and donated the proceeds to the Snake River Alliance! We had such a fun time and truly appreciate the gift of song and camaraderie! Thank you to everyone who came and danced with us!



Photo: David Meadows

# Thanks to our Volunteers!

By Leigh Ford

I cannot tell you enough how much we love our volunteers. The Alliance must be truly loved and appreciated because so many people give so much of their time to help out.

Thank you Kirk and Hillary Anderson, Ivy Arnold, Marianne Barker, Rose Beebe, Max Bell, Aaron Berenson, Amy Bingham, Fritz Bjornsen, Deb Brown, Melissa Clark, Frances Close, Katherine Daly, Jeff Davies, Buck Drew, Dawn and Mike Echanis, Bill Foxcroft, Sallee Gasser, Ann Hausrath, Julie Hoefnagels, Maureen Jenner, Jan Joseph, Libby, Danika Lustre, Don Merrill, Oz Monrroy, Tim Norton, Margo Proksa, Jerry Reiner, Diane Ronayne, Kathy Ruyts, Jeriann Sabin, Dani Siegel, Jenn Siegel, Hannah Smay, Margaret Stewart, Aaron Swisher, Ralph Thurston, Deb Tidball, Nick Tock, Kaye Turner, and Liz Woodruff. We had so many helping hands - if we neglected to name you, we apologize profusely.

The Snake River Alliance board is the most dedicated, intelligent and enthusiastic group of people of any board. Ever! They donate countless hours to help us stay strong and move Idaho toward cleaner, renewable, non-nuclear energy. Thank you Tim Andreae, Kerry Cooke, Steve Crowley, Jasmine Furnish, Beth Jacob, Molly Kukachka, Lou Landry, Brent Marchbanks, Liz Paul, Vicki Watson, Liz Woodruff and our newest board member Chad Worth. Thank you Kate Thorpe for your service on the board - we miss you!

Last but not least, thanks to Kelsey Nunez, our outgoing Executive Director. It has been so fantastic getting to know you. Your boundless energy, beautiful heart, and extraordinary mind have been gifts to Snake River Alliance and to Idaho. Thank you so very much!

## Alliance Art Exhibition Debut

### Holding What Can't Be Held: Our Radioactive Backyard

The Snake River Alliance helps artists create place-based art and interactive exhibits about our nuclear age. In this project we recruit artists to tour the Idaho National Laboratory and provide them with historical and technical background as they respond and communicate through their desired mediums. The resulting artworks tell powerful stories of the human elements of nuclear waste and weapons.

This exciting project is raising public consciousness, political and cultural issues, and underscores the need to choose peace and safer energy. The intersections between nuclear energy, renewable energy, nuclear waste, climate change, government secrecy, and the war-machine are complex. It's a big story to tell. We hope to broaden the way people see and think about the nuclear waste complex, start conversation amongst people we've never reached, and educate in new ways.



Artist: Laura Ahola-Young

The moving and meaningful exhibition debuted this summer at Ming Studios, in Boise, and was held at the AKI Gallery in Blackfoot this fall. It will be at the Idaho State University Transition Gallery next spring. If you're connected with a gallery and would like to participate, please let us know!

You can explore the exhibition online at [www.thefeelingbody.org](http://www.thefeelingbody.org).

# Volunteers Needed!

By Beth Jacob, Board President

I joined the Alliance at an activist-training program and then began volunteering for mailings and dinners. In 2013, I was asked to be on the board and I joined. Board work is not a sexy form of environmental action -- not as cool like the “tree sits” I read about as a teenager. But board membership is one of the most effective things a person can do for the movement.

I am asking you to consider if you can help. Please attend a board meeting to learn more about our board. Being an active member takes just 8 hours a month.

It is easy for people with busy schedules to overlook requests like this and think “someone else will do it” – but please know that the Alliance needs more volunteers!

I have cherished my time on the board and am happy to answer any questions about my own learning and service experience. Thank you for your membership and support!

# Intern Action!

By Marcelina Williams

I have been interning at the Snake River Alliance for the last five months. I am currently pursuing an undergraduate degree at Boise State University in Geoscience with an emphasis in Hydrology.

My focus since the summer has been on the first Climate Action Party & Rally. Putting on this event was no small task and I could not have done it alone. Kelsey Nunez played a key role in showing me all the tricks of the trade. Through her guidance I was able to see what it really takes to pull people together for a common goal. Everyone has different talents and views. In order to create a coalition like Idaho’s Climate Action Community, organization, patience, and passion are a must. This coalition is truly a mechanism in which we can bring the scientists and the public together.



Being a part of the Snake River Alliance’s team helped me accumulate tools that will make me a well-rounded researcher. Data and numbers mean nothing to the public without someone there to translate. With that being said, thank you Snake River Alliance for giving me this opportunity to widen my field of knowledge on a big issue our community is facing.

## ALLIANCE STAFF

**Beatrice Brailsford**  
Nuclear Program Director

**Leigh Ford**  
Office Administrator

**Ken Miller**  
Clean Energy Program Director

**Wendy Wilson**  
Interim Executive Director

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Beth Jacob**

**Molly Kukachka**

**Lou Landry**

**Brent Marchbanks**

**Liz Paul**

**Vicki Watson, LCSW**

**Liz Woodruff**

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**Snake River Alliance**  
[www.snakeriveralliance.org](http://www.snakeriveralliance.org)

**223 N 6th St, Boise, ID 83702**  
**PO BOX 1731, Boise, ID 83701**  
**(208) 344-9161**

**PO Box 425, Pocatello, ID 83204**  
**(208) 233-7212**