



Working Circle Media Page

www.WorkingCircle.org

Who We Are – Mission Statement:

Working Circle is dedicated to ensuring wolves, livestock, and people can successfully coexist and thrive on shared lands. We envision healthy, resilient, and ecologically diverse wild-working landscapes, managed by ranch families, that include large predators.

How We Accomplish Our Mission:

1. We support ranch families as stewards of the open space through meaningful collaboration.
2. We work directly on-the-ground to co-develop and support implementation of comprehensive, long-term, and sustainable strategies to reduce wolf-livestock conflict and increase ranch viability.
3. We forward outreach programs that increase social capacity for shared landscapes that includes greater understanding and respect for diverse values and perspectives surrounding large carnivore conservation and sustainable ranching.

Common Questions:

Q) *How was Working Circle formed?*

A) Working Circle was formed in 2016 as a program of California Wolf Center in partnership with California and Oregon ranchers. The goal was for wolf advocates and ranchers to come together in trust and sincerely in order to find a better way forward wolves, livestock, and people—to change the historical paradigm for how wolf recovery is forwarded that includes a more comprehensive and unifying approach based on comprehensive and sustainable strategies on-the-ground.

We became an independent entity in 2018; in 2020 we became a Colorado Non-Profit Corporation and in 2021 received our federal 501(c)3 status.

Q) *Who leads Working Circle?*

Working Circle's current leadership is comprised of both livestock producers and wolf conservationists. The leadership has over 70 years combined experience in conservation, wolf recovery, ranching, and wolf-livestock conflict risk management. The on-the-ground team possess extensive experience in wolf, wildlife, and landscape surveying, ranching and livestock



management and operations, and in supporting the implementation of long-term, sustainable wolf-livestock conflict risk reduction strategies. For details on individual team members, please visit: www.workingcircle.org/peopleofworkingcircle

Q) Where is your current focus of work?

Working Circle currently works in the states of Colorado, California, Oregon, Montana, and Wyoming. We are also involved in an advisory capacity with the Red Wolf recovery program.

Q) How do you support ranch families?

Working Circle is focused on serving ranching communities to proactively reduce the potential of wolf-livestock conflict by supporting sustainable ranching practices rooted in herd management, stockmanship techniques, grazing practices and operational management. These approaches also provide co-benefits in improving livestock husbandry, economic viability, landscape health, and diverse wildlife populations. We strive to honor the ranching heritage while conserving the gray wolf through ranch-specific management actions that promote ranch sustainability, resiliency, and healthy ecological systems.

Q) What are the conflict reduction strategies that you focus on?,

Working Circle's comprehensive approach focuses on a regenerative model that allows ranchers to see greater returns on their efforts vs a continued output of resources energetically and financially. This includes progressive stockmanship, resource stewardship, and rancher knowledge of the landscape. It merges these elements with predator ecology and behavior to enable ranchers to not only successfully operate with wolves on the landscape, but experience co-benefits of herd and land health, and economic viability—the focus is on managing livestock, not wolves or other predators.

Q) How do you increase social capacity?

Through our outreach programs and by supporting the ranchers' voice, we focus on the realities of today's world as it relates to our wild and working landscapes. We bring diverse values and perspectives together to promote meaningful conversation and deeper understanding in order to get at the root of the social conflict and work toward solutions instead of against each other.

Q) Who do you work with other than ranchers?

We believe in the need to support wildlife agencies responsible for gray wolf conservation and who have direct landowner interaction. We also partner with other NGO's when it makes sense.

Q) Why is your approach unique/different?

1. We work directly on-the-ground to empower ranch families to lead, manage, and forward the conflict reduction strategies we promote—setting up livestock communities for success long-term without continued outside reliance on resources.



2. Our approach is focused on long term, sustainable and comprehensive strategies that not only benefit the wolf but benefit ranchers in terms of economic viability and efficacy.
3. We focus on a **regenerative model** that allows ranchers to experience a higher return overtime energetically and financially, than output of resources invested.
4. We work to neutralize the polarizing debate vs. fueling the social conflict surrounding large carnivore conservation and sustainable ranching. We don't believe that people need to make a choice in either supporting wolves or supporting ranching - we support both and by supporting and honoring both, a better way forward is found.

Q) What is a 'Working Circle'?

Community of livestock producers working together to:

- Share information
- Support each other
- Implement conflict reduction strategies
- Continue to learn, experiment, and discover
- Ensure ranchers can stay ranching in the modern world

The 'Working Circle' may also include state wildlife agencies and trusted NGO partners based on individual 'Working Circle' needs and desires of the community.

Q) What is your ultimate vision?

A) To finally create a lasting environment where wolves, livestock, and people can successfully share the landscape and thrive. To neutralize the polarizing debate that has historically hindered wolves, livestock and people ability to experience lasting solutions.

Q) How is WC different from other NGO's working on this issue?

A) Working Circle is both pro-wolf and pro-rancher. Our efforts are comprehensive in that they address both the biological and social challenges surrounding wolf conservation and sustainable ranching. Working Circle values the role that ranchers play as stewards of much of the open space that wildlife depend on. We believe ranch lands are key to ensuring wildlife habitat connectivity and diverse ecosystems that include large predators. We don't believe that ranching has to exist as the expense of predators, nor do we believe that predators have to exist at the expense of ranching—we believe each can benefit from each.

We focus on a **regenerative model** that breaks the historical coexistence paradigm. Coexistence between livestock and predators has required a constant one-way outpouring of resources energetically, financially, and physically - this is not



sustainable. Working Circle introduces a regenerative approach that over time, leads to an equal if not greater return on output, benefiting ranch operations, livestock, people, and wildlife.

Q) *Are you wolf advocates?*

We are both wolf and rancher advocates with a focus on strategies that unite vs divide the values and views of rural communities and environmental advocates. Our work is primarily focused on-the-ground within ranching communities.

Q) *How do you support ranchers?*

We provide a wide variety of support based on the individual community and landowners needs. A comprehensive list of [activities](#) and [resources](#) can be found on our website.

Q) *What is the purpose of your field surveys?*

In order to be well informed and create viable coexistence plans, one must first understand the landscape that you are working in. This includes understanding the topography and terrain, cattle use, and how the wildlife, including wolves and their prey, utilize the landscape. This critical information empowers us and the ranchers we work with to be able to respond quickly to changing circumstances on the ground, be proactive in our efforts, and create viable and tangible strategies to reduce wolf-livestock conflict.

Q) *What is a Range Steward?*

Range Stewards are rancher partners who work directly on the ground supporting their communities to monitor, implement and manage conflict reduction strategies—they are Working Circle's version of *range riders*. Our Range Stewards are provided on-going support and comprehensive training in the stockmanship, herd and land management strategies that promote.

Q) *What do you think needs to change in order to make this work?*

A) Only a change in mindset can bring about a change in action. This applies to wolf advocates as it does to the ranching communities. Working Circle endeavors to expand the conversation and thus understanding between those who support wolves and those who live and work in wolf country. Only through deeper understanding and acceptance of the realities of the modern world, along with greater awareness of our actions can we forward needed change in how we approach wolf conservation and sustainable ranching.

Focusing on a regenerative model (see above) for coexistence vs. doing things how "they have always been done" is key to success. We must recognize that strategies have evolved overtime including more sustainable approaches rooted in herd management and stockmanship.



Q) Do you think the reintroduction of wolves into Colorado is a good idea?

Whether through reintroduction or natural recolonization, wolves are coming back to Colorado and that is the reality we must focus on. There exists an opportunity in Colorado to finally get it right if we are willing to look forward instead of backwards and focus on newer, long-term and sustainable strategies that benefit all stakeholders - wolves, livestock, and people.

Q) What do you think about compensation programs?

Compensation programs are good in providing short-term supplemental support to help offset initial costs of implementing longer term, sustainable strategies such as herd management practices to reduce vulnerability in cattle to predation. Compensation programs are not sustainable long-term and should not be used as a long-term solution. Compensation programs are a reactive approach vs focusing on proactive strategies. Compensation can create over reliance and inhibit motivation for implementing beneficial herd and land management strategies that better promote economic viability and ranch resiliency. Compensation programs need to be re-evaluated and adjusted over time as changing circumstances on the ground dictates. However, each region is different and level of compensation needs vary - it is important for those living and working in wolf country to have a voice in what compensation programs look like.

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