

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts Is Hosting A Group Of Grifters And Extremists To "Spoil... Earth Day" And Spread Lies About Commonsense Conservation Policies In Lincoln

SUMMARY: Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts is hosting an event in Lincoln on April 22 with a group of anti-conservation grifters and extremists like US Rep. Lauren Boebert, Utah State Rep. Ken Ivory, American Stewards of Liberty (ASoL), the event's organizer. ASoL is an extremist, anti-public lands group from Texas.

ASoL is largely funded by taxpayer dollars, raking in over \$700k from county governments in recent years. It also received a \$54,000 forgivable loan through the Paycheck Protection Program in 2020. The nonprofit uses the vast majority of its money – 94%-- to pay hefty salaries to its husband-wife executive duo, Margaret and Dan Byfield. They nonprofit has a record of poor financial management with its 2020 IRS 990 form showing them \$16,000 in the red.

American Stewards of Liberty has also received at least \$120,000 from the Koch-backed dark money network and worked directly with oil and gas industry associations to oppose protections for public lands and wildlife.

Other speakers at the event include extremist Colorado US Rep. Lauren Boebert and former Utah State Representative Ken Ivory, who made a name for himself as a "snake oil salesman" by traveling county to county, encouraging local governments to give his nonprofit money to encourage the elimination of federal public lands, which Ivory said would solve many problems.

Governor Pete Ricketts Is Hosting An Anti-Conservation Event To "Spoil... Earth Day." His Guests Include Out-Of-State Grifters And Extremists.

Governor Pete Ricketts Is Hosting A "Stop 30 x 30" Event In Lincoln With Out-Of-State Grifters And Extremists

Ricketts Plans To "Spoil... Earth Day" By Hosting A Group Of Anti-Public Lands Grifters In Lincoln On April 22.

Governor Pete Ricketts Is Hosting A "Stop 30 x 30" Event To Oppose Conservation Policy With The Group American Stewards of Liberty In Lincoln This Month. "The program is set to open with a keynote presentation from the Summit host, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts. Governor Ricketts led the letter signed by 15 Governors opposing 30x30 last year, and has continued to actively oppose the agenda, protecting Nebraskans from the federal overreach." [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [04/12/22](#)]

- **Pete Ricketts Is The “Summit Host.”** [Stop 30 x 30 Summit Agenda, accessed [04/12/22](#)]
- **30 x 30 Is A Framework Goal To Protect Land And Water To Mitigate Climate Change And Protect Species.** [The Wilderness Society, accessed [04/12/22](#)]

Organizers Selected April 22 For Their Event To “Spoil Environmentalists’ Earth Day.” “The conference organizer, American Stewards of Liberty, selected Earth Day for the Summit date to send the clear message that America’s landowners would not be “voluntarily” surrendering their property rights to the environmental agenda.” [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [04/12/22](#)]

The Event Will Also Feature Anti-Public Lands Speakers Like Trump Interior Secretary David Bernhardt And Lawmakers Like Colorado US Rep. Lauren Boebert And Utah State Rep. Ken Ivory

The All-Day Event Will Feature Anti-Public Lands Speakers And Sponsors. “It is going to be a full day of expert commentary and insight from National, State and local leaders, all working to stop 30 x 30. [...] Keynote by David Bernhardt, Former Secretary of the Department of the Interior, [...] Utah State Representative Ken Ivory: The Impact of 30x30 on our Energy Security [...] U.S. Representative Lauren Boebert (Colorado).” [Stop 30 x 30 Summit Agenda, accessed [04/12/22](#)]

American Stewards Of Liberty (ASoL) Is A Texas-Based 501(c)(3) Funded Largely By Taxpayer Dollars That Pays Big Salaries To Its Husband-Wife Executive Duo

American Stewards Of Liberty’s Director Is Margaret Byfield, The Daughter Of Infamous Dues-Dodging Rancher Wayne Hage, And Her Husband Dan Byfield. They Are The Only People On Its Payroll.

The Texas-Based American Stewards of Liberty Is The Stop 30x30 Event Organizer. “The conference organizer, American Stewards of Liberty, selected Earth Day for the Summit date to send the clear message that America’s landowners would not be “voluntarily” surrendering their property rights to the environmental agenda.” [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [04/12/22](#)]

American Stewards For Liberty Is Run By Margaret Byfield, The Daughter Of Deceased Rancher Wayne Hage... “Margaret was raised on a large cow calf operation in central Nevada purchased by her parents, Wayne and Jean Hage in 1978. Her family experienced unprecedented regulatory pressures that eventually led to Hage v. United States, the first federal lands grazing case filed in the United States Court of Federal Claims. The case was in litigation for 27 years, during which time Margaret launched the property rights organization Stewards of the Range.” [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

- **And Her Husband, American Stewards of Liberty CEO Dan Byfield.** “Margaret holds a Bachelors degree in English and Music received from the College of Idaho.

She is married to Dan Byfield, CEO of ASL, and has one daughter and three step children." [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

Despite Losing Money, American Stewards Of Liberty Pays 94% Of Its Revenue To Its Husband-Wife Executive Duo As Salary

American Stewards Of Liberty Is Losing Money And Is \$16,000 In The Red

American Stewards Of Liberty Is A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit. "American Stewards Of Liberty" is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization that was formed through the merger of the American Land Foundation(ALF) and Stewards of the Range (Stewards) in 2009." [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [03/05/21](#)]

As Of Its Most Recently-Available Filings, American Stewards Of Liberty Had -\$16,181 In Net Assets. [American Stewards of Liberty 2020 IRS form 990]

In 2020, American Stewards Of Liberty's Revenue Is Declining.

- **In 2020, American Stewards Of Liberty Had Revenue Of \$203,556, Down From \$321,338 In 2019.** [American Stewards of Liberty 2020 IRS form 990]
- **American Stewards Of Liberty Is Losing Money.** In 2018, American Stewards of Liberty Had revenue of \$299,393 and expenses of \$334,730. [American Stewards of Liberty 2018 IRS form 990, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

Most Of American Stewards Of Liberty's Budget Goes Straight Into The Pockets Of Its Executives. In its most recent 990, American Stewards Of Liberty spends over 94% of its budget on salaries for its husband-wife executive duo.

- **Executive Director Pay: \$91,128.** In 2020, the most recent year for which records are available, American Stewards of Liberty paid Executive Director Margaret Byfield \$91,128. [American Stewards of Liberty 2020 IRS form 990]
- **CEO Pay: \$101,253.** In 2020, the most recent year for which records are available, American Stewards of Liberty paid CEO Dan Byfield \$101,253. [American Stewards of Liberty 2020 IRS form 990]
- **Total Revenue \$203,565:** In 2020, the most recent year for which records are available, American Stewards of Liberty Had revenue 203,565. [American Stewards of Liberty 2020 IRS form 990]

American Stewards Of Liberty Has Given Costly Presentations To A Plethora Of Western States, Raking In Over \$700K From County Governments And Taxpayers In The Process

Utah Counties Banded Together To Pay American Stewards Nearly A Half Million In Taxpayer Dollars

American Stewards Provided "Consulting And Legal Services Regarding Public Land Management"

Utah Counties Have Paid ASoL Nearly A Half A Million Dollars For Consulting And Legal Services Over Public Lands Issues. "Utah's Kane County has handed nearly half a million dollars in recent years to a Texas-based nonprofit for consulting and legal services regarding public land management. The spending comes on top of the millions it has spent litigating legal claims based on 'R.S. 2477,' a frontier-era law that allowed counties to own roads built across public land." [Salt Lake Tribune, [05/14/21](#)]

- **Utah Counties' Total: \$492,423.** [Utah Office Of The Auditor, accessed [03/22/22](#)]
- **American Stewards Sued The Federal Government Over Resource Management Planning.** "Today, counties in six western states and a soil and water conservation district filed suit in federal district court in Utah challenging new resource planning rules adopted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The group maintains these new rules will severely impair their ability to work with the BLM on future planning and management issues, while changing the way public lands are managed to the detriment of their citizens." [American Stewards, [12/12/16](#)]

New Mexico Counties Have Paid ASoL Nearly \$200,000, With New Contracts Underway

In Exchange For 6 Figure Contracts, ASoL Offered "Advise On Land Management And Endangered Species Issues."

Chaves County, New Mexico, Has Paid ASoL Over \$185,000 For Advice On Land Management And Endangered Species Issues. "Chaves County has paid \$185,000 since 2016 to the American Stewards of Liberty for contracts to advise on land management and endangered species issues." [Albuquerque Journal, [03/15/22](#)]

- **In December, 2021, Chaves Signed A New Contract With ASoL For Up To \$20,000.** "The commissioners approved a contract with American Stewards of Liberty, a property rights advocacy group based in Georgetown, Texas, for up to \$20,000 a year. The

Company will advise and assist the county regarding endangered species and federal land planning issues." [Rdrnews.com, [12/25/22](#)]

Otero County, New Mexico, Hired ASOL For Contract That "Is Not To Exceed \$20,000 Per Fiscal Year." "Otero County is against changes proposed by the Lincoln National Forest in a Draft Forest Plan. To help the County handle the aspects of its opposition to the Forest Plan, it hired a consultant in the American Stewards of Liberty. The Otero County Commission entered into an agreement with non-profit organization American Stewards of Liberty to assist the County in 'dealing with issues involving all aspects of endangered species and Federal land use planning,' the agreement states... American Stewards of Liberty can provide Otero County with technical advice and guidance on land planning and endangered species issues for the benefit of Otero County, Nichols said. The contract is not to exceed \$20,000 per fiscal year depending on what American Stewards of Liberty's services Otero County decides to use, Nichols said. The Otero County Commission unanimously approved the contract at its regular meeting March 10." [Alamogordo Daily News, [03/23/22](#)]

ASoL Took At Least \$26,000 From Garfield County, Colorado To Fight Sage-Grouse Protections

Garfield County, Colorado, Paid ASOL \$20,000 In 2012 To Fight Sage Grouse Protections. "Garfield County commissioners are turning to a Texas-based private property rights organization to assist in their efforts to influence a federal land management decision aimed at protecting the greater sage grouse. But the commissioners' decision Monday to sign a contract for services with the nonprofit American Stewards of Liberty was criticized by some local citizens who question the organization's motives and its ties to the oil and gas industry... Commissioners voted 2-0 at Monday's meeting to contract with the organization for an amount not to exceed \$20,000." [Post Independent, [07/17/12](#)]

- **Garfield County, Colorado, Has Paid The Group More Than \$26,000 Since 2012.** "Garfield County, Colorado, has paid the group more than \$26,000 since 2012." [High Country News, [05/11/15](#)]

Custer County In Idaho Paid ASoL Over \$23,000

Custer County, Idaho, Has Paid American Stewards More Than \$23,000. "Custer County, Idaho, had paid American Stewards more than \$23,000 as of August 2014, an HCN open-records request revealed." [High Country News, [05/11/15](#)]

- **The Byfields Hosted A Workshop In Custer County In 2013.** "Members of the county's Natural Resources Advisory committee (NRAC) worked with county commissioners and consultants Dan and Margaret Byfield of American Stewards of Liberty during a daylong workshop March 26 to draft a plan, NRAC Chairman Jim Hawkins said." [Challis Messenger (Idaho), 04/04/13]

Washington Counties Paid ASoL Thousands For Advice On Opposing Grizzly Bear Protections

Skagit And Chelan County, Washington, Hired ASoL For No More Than \$10,000 For Grizzly Bear Advice In 2017. “Several area residents have expressed concerns about Skagit County’s choice of consultants in its effort to have more input on an Environmental Impact Statement regarding the restoration of grizzly bears in the North Cascades... The county contracted with the organization for help in setting up an April 24 meeting for public comment on the federal government’s plan to reintroduce grizzly bears to the North Cascades. According to the contract with the American Stewards of Liberty, Skagit and Chelan counties agreed to pay no more than \$10,000 for services.” [Goskagit.com, [06/07/16](#)]

- **Skagit County Paid Full \$5,000 Contract To ASoL.** “The Board of Skagit County Commissioners agreed Monday to recommend against reintroducing grizzly bears into the North Cascades, citing public safety concerns. The commissioners also promised to end the county’s financial relationship with the American Stewards of Liberty with the conclusion of a \$5,000 contract... The group’s executive director, Margaret Byfield, was paid \$5,000 by the county to facilitate a meeting between the three counties and the federal government.” [Goskagit.com, [08/08/17](#)]

One Wyoming County Paid ASoL \$5,000, While Another Hired Them For A Presentation On 30x30

American Stewards Of Liberty Was Paid \$5,000 By Bighorn County Wyoming In 2016. According to meeting minutes from November, 2016, Bighorn County Wyoming paid American Stewards of Liberty \$5,000. [Bighorncountywy.gov, [11/15/16](#)]

Cherry County Nebraska County Hired ASoL For \$1,500/Month In 2021

Cherry County Nebraska Hired Margaret Byfield, Of ASoL, For \$1,500 A Month To Consult On Zoning Regulations In 2021. The county’s minutes read, “the board had a zoom call with Margaret Byfield about becoming a secondary consultant for the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations update that they are currently working on with Keith Marvin. Margaret will be helping in the areas of Conservation Easements, endangered species and wetlands protection plus others as needed. She told the board that they work with boards two ways \$100/hour or \$1500/month. Discuss/ Act on hiring Margaret Byfield as a Secondary Consultant... Duane made a motion to hire Margaret Byfield as a Secondary Consultant at the \$100/hour rate and if need to change to the \$1500/month... Motion carried 5-0.” [Co.cherry.ne.us, [06/08/21](#)]

In June 2021, Cherry County, NE Hired Margaret Byfield For \$1,500 Per Month To Consult On Conservation Easements.

Cherry County’s Planning And Zoning Board Hired Byfield To Oppose Conservation Easements For \$1,500 Per Month. “The board had a zoom call with Margaret Byfield about becoming a secondary consultant for the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations update

that they are currently working on with Keith Marvin. Margaret will be helping in the areas of Conservation Easements, endangered species and wetlands protection plus others as needed. She told the board that they work with boards two ways \$100/hour or \$1500/month.” [Cherry County Planning and Zoning Meeting Minutes, [06/08/21](#)]

Modoc County, California, Was Part Of Lawsuit Organized By ASoL Which Byfield Estimated Cost \$300K

Modoc County Was One Of Six Counties Which Hired ASoL For A Lawsuit Against The BLM. “Six Western counties and a soil and water conservation district filed a lawsuit in federal court Dec. 12 seeking to nullify a new rule governing Bureau of Land Management decision-making. Litigants include Kane County, Utah; Big Horn County, Wyo.; Chaves County, N.M.; Custer County, Idaho; Garfield County, Colo.; Modoc County, Calif.; and New Mexico’s Dona Ana Soil and Water Conservation District. American Stewards of Liberty – a private property rights organization that helps local governments coordinate with federal agencies – will manage the lawsuit, alleging the new rule improperly excludes local governments from BLM planning, affecting 175 million acres in 11 Western states.” [Capital Press, [12/13/16](#)]

- **Byfield Estimated The Lawsuit Would Cost \$300K, And “Established A Special Account For Legal Fund Donations.”** “Byfield anticipates the new rule will result in “more decisions based on the environmental agenda and those that oppose productive use of the resources.” She said three counties will shoulder most of the estimated \$300,000 in legal fees, but she’s established a special account for legal fund donations.” [Capital Press, [12/13/16](#)]

Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District, Arizona, Hired Byfield To Speak At An Event, And Hired ASoL As A Consultant In 2014

Margaret Byfield Was A Keynote Speaker At An Event Hosted By HNRCD In 2014. HNRCD hosted a “Coordination, Conservation, & Local Expertise” event at which Byfield was a keynote speaker. [Herefordnrcd.com, Accessed [03/31/22](#)]

Byfield Was Hired By HRNCD As A “Consultant On Coordination” In 2014. “This year the District has already hosted three coordination meetings. The first meeting was with the USFWS on the issue of listing and critical habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo and the northern Mexican gartersnake. Four supervisors from the District, District clerk, Margaret Byfield, American Stewards of Liberty (consultant on coordination).” [Herefordnrcd.com, Accessed [03/31/22](#)]

Group Was Part Of 2016 Petition For BLM Coordination Filed By ASoL. The HNRCD was one of a group of counties and conservation districts represented in a petition for BLM coordination filed by American Stewards of Liberty. [Americanstewards.us, [04/12/16](#)]

American Stewards Of Liberty Got A \$54,071 Handout From The Federal Government In 2020 As A Paycheck Protection Program Loan

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American Stewards Of Liberty Got A Forgivable PPP Loan Worth \$54,071 From The Small Business Administration. ASoL received its loan on March 8, 2020. [USA Spending, accessed [04/22/22](#)]

American Stewards Of Liberty Gets A Substantial Portion Of Its Money From Koch-Backed Sources And Has Worked On Behalf Of The Oil Industry

American Stewards Of Liberty Has Received Money From Koch-Related Entities.

Donors Trust And Donors Capital Fund Has Given More Than \$400 Million To More Than 1,000 Conservative And Libertarian Groups. “Founded in 1999, Donors Trust (and an affiliated group, Donors Capital Fund) has raised north of \$500 million and doled out \$400 million to more than 1,000 conservative and libertarian groups, according to [Whitney Ball](#), the group’s CEO.” [Mother Jones, [02/05/13](#)]

The Koch Brothers Have Donated To Donors Trust. “Donors Trust is not the source of the money it hands out. Some 200 right-of-center funders who’ve given at least \$10,000 fill the group’s coffers. Charities bankrolled by Charles and David Koch, the DeVoses, and the Bradleys, among other conservative benefactors, have given to Donors Trust. And other recipients of Donors Trust money [include](#) the Heritage Foundation, Grover Norquist’s Americans for Tax Reform, the [NRA’s Freedom Action Foundation](#), the Cato Institute, the American Enterprise Institute, the Federalist Society, and the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, [chaired](#) (PDF) by none other than David Koch.” [Mother Jones, [02/05/13](#)]

American Stewards Of Liberty Has Received At Least \$120,000 From Donors Capital Trust.

- In 2018, Donors Capital Trust Gave \$50,000 To AMERICAN STEWARDS OF LIBERTY. [Donors Capital Trust 2018 990, accessed [03/05/21](#)]
- In 2017, Donors Capital Trust Gave \$40,000 To AMERICAN STEWARDS OF LIBERTY. [Donors Capital Trust 2017 990, accessed [03/05/21](#)]
- In 2015, Donors Capital Trust Gave \$30,000 To AMERICAN STEWARDS OF LIBERTY. [Donors Capital Trust 2015 990, accessed [03/05/21](#)]

American Stewards Of Liberty Teams Up With Oil Industry Associations To Oppose Endangered Species Protections

American Stewards Sued With The Independent Petroleum Association Of America And The Osage Producers Association To Delist The American Burying Beetle

American Stewards Of Liberty Joined The Independent Petroleum Association Of America And The Osage Producers Association In A Lawsuit Regarding The American Burying Beetle. “Three oil and natural gas-associated groups on Thursday sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over its classification of the American burying beetle. The Independent Petroleum Association of America, American Stewards of Liberty and Osage Producers Association filed the lawsuit after the government did not issue a required 12-month finding on the groups' petition last year to remove the beetle from the endangered species list. The suit was filed in federal district court in Muskogee. The groups in February filed a notice of intent to sue the service for violation of the Endangered Species Act because it did not respond within a year to an August 2015 petition filed with the agency.” [*The Oklahoman*, [09/22/17](#)]

American Stewards Helped The Permian Basin Petroleum Association Keep The Dune Sagebrush Lizard From Endangered Status

American Stewards Of Liberty Helped The Permian Basin Petroleum Association Keep Organize Landowners To Oppose Protection For The Dune Sagebrush Lizard. “In some cases, American Stewards of Liberty has won traction, helping the Permian Basin Petroleum Association organize landowners to stave off the listing of the dune sagebrush lizard, whose habitat overlaps some of the state’s richest oil and gas drilling territory.” [*Austin American Statesman*, [10/18/15](#)]

Utah State Representative Ken Ivory, A “Snake-Oil Salesman” Who Once Went County To County Throughout The West To Allegedly Defraud Counties Into Paying His Nonprofit To Oppose Public Lands Will Also Be In Lincoln

Former Utah State Rep. And Public Land Sell-Off Advocate Ken Ivory Is Back In The State Legislature And Teaming Up With Another Traveling Anti-Public Lands Group

Ivory Earned A Reputation As A “Snake-Oil Salesman” By Traveling Around The West And Charging Utah Counties “Membership” To His Nonprofit, Which He Promised Would Cure Economic Troubles By Eliminating Federal Public Lands

After Leaving The Legislature In 2019, Former Utah State Rep. Ken Ivory Is Back In The Legislature. “The siren call of an open seat in the Utah House of Representatives proved too much for former Reps. Bruce Cutler and Ken Ivory as they faced off in West Jordan on Monday

night. Delegates in HD47 chose Ivory to fill a sudden vacancy in HD47 caused by the sudden resignation of Steve Christiansen late last month. Christiansen was picked by many of these same delegates to replace Ivory when he resigned in 2019. [...] Ivory was first elected in 2010, knocking off incumbent Republican Steven Mascaro to win the GOP nomination. Ivory resigned from the HD47 seat in the summer of 2019 to take a job with a Silicon Slopes company that scored a lucrative state contract he helped shepherd through the Legislature before he stepped down." [Salt Lake Tribune, [11/15/21](#)]

Ken Ivory Was Compared To A "Snake Oil Salesman" When He Used To Travel County To County To Allegedly "Scam Local Governments Into Giving Taxpayer Dollars" To His Anti-Lands Nonprofit. "This is not the first time Utah Rep. Ken Ivory has been accused of selling 'snake oil.' But now his critics are calling him a crook. In formal complaints filed Monday in three states, a watchdog group alleges Ivory, a West Jordan Republican, uses phony facts and arguments to scam local governments into giving taxpayer dollars to American Lands Council (ALC), the nonprofit he started in 2012 to champion the transfer of Western public lands to states." [Salt Lake Tribune, [06/02/15](#)]

- **Ken Ivory Argued Through His Nonprofit American Lands Council That Eliminating Federal Public Lands Is "The Only Solution Big Enough" To Solving A Host Of Problems.** "...We'd like to set the record straight about how and why ALC is leading the charge to transfer control of federally mismanaged public lands to the states under the leadership of Rep. Ken Ivory who serves tirelessly as the president of ALC. Local, state and national organizations, including Jordan School District and the National Association of Counties, to name just a few, have passed resolutions supporting the transfer of public lands. We invite people of goodwill everywhere to investigate the facts about this issue at <http://www.AmericanLandsCouncil.org> which presents the only solution big enough to fund education, better care for the environment, protect public access, and grow the economy locally and nationally." [American Lands Council Op-ed, [05/30/14](#)]

Now, Ken Ivory Is Scheduled To Speak At An Event With Another Anti-Lands Group That Travels County

Ivory Will Be Speaking At An Anti-Lands Conservation Event With The Group American Stewards For Liberty In April 2022. "Utah State Representative, Ken Ivory will discuss the impact of 30 x 30 on our energy resources, and how the program threatens our national security. Two additional speakers will be announced in the coming weeks as the schedule is finalized." [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [03/18/22](#)]

- **American Stewards Of Liberty Selected April 22 For Its Event With Ivory To "Spoil Environmentalists' Earth Day."** "'Stop 30 x 30 Summit' Set to Spoil Environmentalist's Earth Day. Stop 30x30 Summit The "Stop 30 x 30 Summit" agenda is packed with

national leaders and frontline fighters who are gathering together to stop the international 30×30 agenda on American soil. The Summit will take place Friday, April 22, 2022, in Lincoln Nebraska." [American Stewards of Liberty, accessed [03/18/22](#)]