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LightHawk's monthly update, WayPoint, was created to share some of the good news we on staff learn about daily. These success stories illustrate the critical role we play in conservation efforts throughout North and Central America through the unique perspective of flight. We hope you enjoy WayPoint and will share with others our success stories from above.

### **Unnatural Gas – Photographers Capture Clash Between Nature and Industry in Wyoming's Red Desert**

The increasing spread of natural gas development in western Wyoming drew an influential audience in May, as the International League of Conservation Photographers (ILCP) set their sights on publicizing the impacts of industrialization on the Upper Green River Basin. ILCP organized a Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition or RAVE, to bring together photographers and writers from around the world to quickly illuminate the region's conservation issues and spotlight the challenges of conservation in the region.

Working to capture the stark contrast between the Red Desert's soaring scenic landscapes and majestic wildlife and the industrial footprint of widespread natural gas development, photographers from the ILCP fanned out across the Upper Green River Basin, capturing stunning images of the pristine hills and wildlife of the Wyoming Range and the tangle of roads and drill pads fragmenting hundreds of thousands of acres in the Jonah Field and Pinedale Anticline.

Making use of the ILCP's contacts in the national media, the RAVE was designed to bring attention to these areas in Wyoming and the harsh consequences that are occurring – including diminished air and water quality, detrimental effects to human health, and dramatic declines in wildlife populations, in particular this ecosystem's indicator species – mule deer, sage grouse, and pronghorn. This effort is especially important



LightHawk flew nine missions over two days with the International League of Conservation Photographers (ILCP) to illuminate natural gas development in Wyoming's Red Desert. Renowned photographer, Tom Mangelsen of Jackson, WY and some of his cameras in front of Chris Boyer's plane at the Pinedale airport. *Boyer/LightHawk*

because further development is imminent, not only compounding the decimation already seen in the existing gasfields, but spreading to areas like the Wyoming Range, which currently maintains its scenic beauty and intact habitat.

"Photography is a witness to history and the RAVE is the tool that allows us to provide our joint testimony in the court of public opinion. As photojournalists, we are the bearers of that witness. Our hope with this Wyoming RAVE is not to judge or criticize, but to capture simple moments eloquently and to translate them visually so that universal human experience is recorded for future generations to see and judge for themselves – one image at a time." – Cristina Mittermeier, Executive Director of ILCP

LightHawk volunteer pilots Steven Garman, Chris Boyer and David Kunkel flew nine missions over two days to add the aerial perspective to the RAVE experience. Photos from these missions, combined with photos from ground exploration, video and nature writing were on display following the RAVE, and throughout the summer, at the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson.

ILCP has held RAVEs in Mexico and Africa, and planning is underway for a Borderlands RAVE in early 2009 to investigate the ecological and cultural impacts of the border wall along the United States/Mexico border. LightHawk plans to fly in support of the RAVE to help investigate what ILCP describes as, "many relatively intact and continentally rare ecosystems—including Arizona's last free flowing river, the San Pedro, some of the last undeveloped grasslands on the continent in the Janos/Hidalgo area along the New Mexico border, the single most diverse birding area in the United States along the Lower Rio Grande River, and habitat and migration corridors for some of both nation's most imperiled species including the jaguar, Sonoran pronghorn, ocelot, bighorn sheep and Mexican gray wolves."



Seen from a bird's-eye vantage point, gas fields near Pinedale, Wyoming illustrate the environmental footprint of natural gas drilling. *Shattil/Rozinski Photography/LightHawk* [www.dancingpelican.com](http://www.dancingpelican.com)

***LightHawk once again provided a very useful perspective for our campaigns in western Wyoming with experienced pilots and well-organized logistics."***

- Peter Aengst, Deputy Director, Northern Rockies Office, The Wilderness Society

***"ILCP's Wyoming Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition (RAVE) was a complex event which benefitted greatly from [LightHawk's] flexibility and willingness to adjust to our needs. The pilots, planes and LightHawk logistics couldn't have been better, making it possible for ILCP's aerial photographers to concentrate completely on our task. This resulted in a thorough and effective documentation of the critical environmental locations in our focus area. Thank you again for your exceptional effort."***

- Wendy Shattil, ILCP photographer



44,000 acres of pristine mountain landscapes like this one in the Wyoming Range between Pinedale and Jackson Hole have been proposed for drilling. *Shattil/Rozinski Photography/LightHawk* [www.dancingpelican.com](http://www.dancingpelican.com)

## About LightHawk

Founded in 1979, LightHawk is a nonprofit, volunteer pilot-based organization that flies environmental missions in collaboration with a large network of pilots and hundreds of partner organizations throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and Central America. LightHawk flights provide a powerful and effective platform for research, ground-truthing, environmental awareness, and education.

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