From Our Executive Director

2020 certainly proved to be a year of change and growth in so many ways. I am proud of our staff for accomplishing so much for conservation in Idaho during a demanding year...

This year pushed our organization to think outside the box, remain nimble in times of uncertainty, and reflect on the things that matter most. We navigated the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, celebrated our 15-year anniversary, and joined the nation in calling for racial justice and equity.

The coronavirus pandemic challenged us to pivot and adapt all of our programs and work in ways that allowed us to continue to serve communities in Idaho in a safe and appropriate manner. We shifted to working from home to protect the health and safety of our staff, moved our annual Green Tie fundraiser to a digital format, and cancelled our planned statewide tour commemorating our 15th Anniversary.

Thanks to your support, together we accomplished significant victories for conservation, clean air and water, voting rights, and public lands despite these challenges, as you'll read in this report.

In the spring, an unprecedented 100% absentee ballot primary election required CVI to develop a substantial public outreach campaign to make sure Idahoans were aware of the changes and knew how to cast their vote by mail. We continued that trend for the General Election, and are proud to have significantly contributed to the highest voter turnout in decades. Along with our voter outreach efforts, CVI worked to ensure a complete census count for Idaho, which will guarantee Idaho gets the federal resources we need and that our 2021 redistricting process is fair and balanced.

Throughout it all, the support of members like you has encouraged and driven our work.

We spoke with many of you early in the pandemic, reaching out to see how you were holding up and if we could help. Throughout the year, we continued to check in with you about the issues that matter most. These conversations with Idahoans continue to remind us of just how important our work is - work which I am proud to lead - in creating a better future for Idaho's lands, air and water, and citizens.

Thank you for joining us in this work.

- Rialin Flores
Change is hard, but it also provides a valuable chance to prove resiliency. 2020 started off with major changes for CVI even before the impacts of the pandemic were felt in Idaho.

Last January Rialin Flores was named CVI’s Interim Executive Director after the departure of our previous Executive Director, Courtney Washburn. After a robust application and interview process, the members of CVI and CVIEF’s Board of Directors determined that there was no one better suited to this essential leadership role than Rialin, and we couldn’t be happier that she accepted the permanent position of Executive Director in March.

Rialin brings a bold and transformative vision to CVI’s work. She leads the organization in a manner that is thoughtful, inclusive, and determined. The first major test of her leadership came very quickly as the COVID-19 pandemic presented a new paradigm of work for us all. With grace and steady leadership, Rialin guided CVI’s staff through the uncertainty and dynamic challenges that the early days of the pandemic presented.

As the pandemic unfolded, CVI quickly adapted to remote work, Zoom meetings, virtual fundraisers, and a 100%-absentee primary election. In spite of these challenges, our work continued and, together, we made a real impact for Idaho as you’ll read throughout this report. CVI proved that, despite the unprecedented difficulties of the last year, we will remain a strong, nimble, and vital organization. We were able to maintain our financial health while working to expand our reach, in large part because of the generosity of supporters like you.

We are proud to serve as the Chairs of the Board of Directors of Conservation Voters for Idaho and Conservation Voters for Idaho Education Fund, and we thank you for your strong support of this resilient and remarkable organization!

Conservation Voters for Idaho is a 501(c)4 organization. Because we engage in electoral work and endorsements, donations made to CVI are not tax deductible.

Conservation Voters for Idaho Education Fund is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations made to CVIEF are tax deductible.
2020: By The Numbers

- 157,904 Idahoans reached
- 10,000 Bilingual texts to voters
- 32 Endorsed candidates
- 18,048 CVI supporters
- 250 High school students registered to vote
- 4 Clean energy commitments
Building a Clean Energy Future

In 2020, CVI proudly supported ambitious clean energy commitments in Ketchum, Hailey, Blaine County, and Meridian - building on our previous clean energy work in places like the City of Boise, Idaho Falls, and Pocatello. The Wood River Valley commitments included transitioning to:

- Clean electricity for city operations by 2030,
- Clean electricity for the community by 2035,
- Clean energy for the community by 2045, and
- Fleet electrification by 2030.

We laid the groundwork for future clean energy commitments and climate action by building relationships with almost 500 new supporters in key communities across the state. During a contentious 2020 legislative session, we organized supporters to protect Idaho's science standards and the energy standards in our building codes.

Additionally, CVI supported the creation of Boise innovative new Climate Action Division and the funding for significant climate initiatives to address equity and jumpstart the local economy as we recover from COVID-19.

Standing Up for Your Public Lands

We achieved significant victories for public lands and outdoor spaces during 2020. In July, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), co-sponsored by Congressman Mike Simpson, was signed into law. The GAOA will provide permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a critical vehicle for conservation projects across the country, including right here in Idaho.

Our digital and phone campaign encouraged over 200,000 voters to voice their support of the bill with our congressional delegation. Funding from the LWCF has helped protect and enhance many of Idaho's cherished outdoor spaces, including Hell's Canyon, the Middle Fork of the Salmon, the Boise Greenbelt and Foothills, Wood River Trails, and Tubbs Hill in Coeur d'Alene.

During the 2020 legislative session, we mobilized public lands supporters to defeat anti-public lands legislation. We built public awareness and support around public lands issues throughout the session and worked to hold elected officials accountable throughout the year.
Elections

In the 2020 primary and general elections, CVI won key victories, making us one step closer to achieving our long term goal in securing a pro-conservation majority in the Statehouse.

During the primary, our endorsed candidates challenged several anti-conservation candidates around the state. Four of CVI's endorsed conservation candidates won their primary, preventing several anti-public land extremists from heading to the Idaho Legislature.

In the general election, CVI endorsed 32 candidates for state, county, Ada County Highway District (ACHD), and one mayoral race—the most in CVI's history. Our team utilized mail, digital media, phones, texting, and radio to support our candidates, 22 of whom won. For the first time, Idaho surpassed more than 1 million registered voters, and a record 867,250 ballots were cast.

CVI solidified pro-conservation majorities in Latah, Teton, and Blaine counties a key win to advance strong conservation policies across the state.

2020 Census

Our voting rights coordinator, Antonio Hernandez, served in a leadership role on Idaho’s Complete Count Committee, where he worked to make sure every Idahoan was counted in the 2020 Census. For his leadership, Antonio was commended by Idaho Governor Brad Little.

We produced census materials in both English and Spanish, with a focus on reaching under-counted Latinx communities. Thanks in part to this work, Idaho had one of the highest self-response rates in the nation.

A complete census count will ensure Idaho communities get their share of federal resources and inform a fair redistricting process.
Introducing the Boards & Commissions Fellowship

In 2020, we launched a new leadership development program in partnership with the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund. The Boards and Commissions Fellowship is intended to develop the skills and capacity of Idaho leaders and build the power of underrepresented groups to serve on relevant boards and commissions.

Underrepresented communities are often most impacted by voter suppression efforts, economic injustice, and environmental exploitation. Being at the frontlines of these issues makes leaders from these communities equipped to make meaningful, long-term changes that benefit all of Idaho. The inaugural cohort of fellows includes remarkable individuals who are committed to serving their community.

CVI Commits to Racial Justice and Equity

In the summer of 2020, George Floyd’s murder spurred national protests for racial justice. These protests elevated the need for a national dialogue around racial justice and equity, and pushed organizations like ours to examine what we can do better to advance racial justice and equity and ensure our organization reflects these values.

CVI recognizes that the conservation movement has historically been centered around white voices, and that environmental and democracy issues like polluted air and water, and restrictions to the ballot box, disproportionately impact people of color.

As an organization and as individuals, we are examining how we have or have not lived up to our core values and our commitments to equity and justice. CVI’s staff and board of directors worked to accelerate our racial justice and equity work outlined in our 2019-2022 strategic plan and to create space as a team for these conversations.

We know that to change the world we must first change ourselves and are committed to this ongoing work.
2020 has been a particularly challenging year on so many fronts. Beyond the pandemic, we’ve also seen threats to our democracy and public lands, both here in Idaho and across our nation.

Your support for CVI directly contributes to a better democracy and future. Your dollars in support of CVI's work protects our electoral process and our environment AND they have an outsized impact on our societal benefit. A report by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy shows that for every $1 we invest in policy and civic engagement, we get $115 in community benefit!

Here are three accomplishments related to civic engagement and policy your support helped CVI achieve in 2020:

- Bilingual census outreach work, which resulted in Idaho having one of the highest self-response rates in the nation.
- 160,000 Idaho voters contacted, leading to record voter turnout in the 2020 General Election.
- Bilingual voter resource website - the only such site in the state.

We can all feel good about these accomplishments. From the bottom of my heart thank you for your support for this work!

Together, we walk towards a better future.

Bray Beltrán
Vice Chair
CVIEF Board of Directors
As a member of CVI, you are critical to the ongoing success of our work. You call your legislators to share your opinions, cast your vote at the ballot box, and talk to your neighbors about what matters to you.

CVI works to keep you informed on the conservation issues you care about and to ensure Idaho is a state where every citizen can easily access clean water, beautiful places to play outside, and has access to the ballot box.

We work to ensure our elected officials truly do represent their constituents, and that the health of our environment is as highly valued as the health of our economy.

We could not accomplish all we have over the last year without you. There are many ways to support Conservation Voters for Idaho, and your donations are vital.

Please consider making a gift to CVI today to ensure that this work continues now and into the future. Visit CVIdaho.org/donate/ to learn how.