

ADVOCATES FOR THE WEST

# LEAVING A TRAIL



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVOCATES FOR THE WEST

Advocates for the West Executive Director Laird Lucas speaks during an event in the summer of 2024.

## Lucas retiring after 23 years leading Idaho environmental law firm

**CLARK CORBIN**  
Idaho Capital Sun

After 23 years of providing free legal services to protect the environment through the Boise-based law firm that he helped build, Advocates for the West Executive Director Laird Lucas is retiring this month.

Advocates for the West is a nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services for conservation groups, Native American tribes and concerned citizens seeking protection for fish, wildlife, clean water, public lands and communities.

The firm bills itself as “free lawyers for the environment.”

In addition to Idaho, Advocates for the West has attorneys and staff working in Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Montana.

Although Lucas, 70, could have made more money working at private practice, for-profit law firms for his whole career, he said he has no regrets.

He said he is retiring from his dream job, knowing he has dedicated his professional life to protecting the special places in the West — where he loves to hike and kayak — for future generations to enjoy.

“I’ve been blessed to be able to marry

my skills at the law with my passion for nature and for protecting the environment, for the public land,” Lucas said in an interview with the Idaho Capital Sun. “I know a lot of great lawyers, but they represent the clients that hire them. And maybe they believe in them, and maybe not. But we really believe in what we do. So we have a passion for what we do. Combine it with our skills, and I think that makes us effective. It also makes us happier people.”

### Advocates for the West has long history in public land, wildlife protection litigation

Since its founding in 2003, the firm has fought to oppose the sale of public land, win protections for the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness, oppose mines, sued the federal government to protect sage grouse, challenged the air quality permit for the Stibnite Mine in central Idaho, fought the development of highway corridors that threaten wildlife habitat, filed lawsuits over Clean Water Act violations, protected wolves by fighting to ban the use of M-44 “cyanide bombs” statewide and prohibit the use of snares to kill wolves on public

land.

Over the past year, the firm has scored conservation wins protecting big horn sheep in Colorado.

Its clients have included the Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Conservation League, Western Watersheds Project, the Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians, Friends of the Clearwater and more.

Lucas said the law firm’s win rate is 85%, factoring in favorable settlement decisions.

“Our lawyers are able to put on their armor and go into the courtroom and be strong advocates,” Lucas said. “But then at the same time, there’s a time when you have to take that off, step into the settlement room, look across the table and talk to people and figure out: Is there a way to get common ground? And we do that a lot, too. We know that sustainable protections don’t necessarily just come with a court order, they have to be implemented out on the ground. You can strike deals in different ways to get those longer term protections, and we’re always looking for those opportunities.”

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## US, Iran reach deal to end war

Peace framework set to be officially signed on Friday

**PARISA HAFEZI AND PHIL STEWART**  
Reuters

WASHINGTON — U.S. and Iranian officials said Sunday they agreed on a peace framework for a deal to end their war, halt the U.S. blockade of Iran and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, possibly leading to lower energy prices once oil shipments resume through the critical waterway.

“The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete,” President Donald Trump posted on social media at about 5:30 p.m. ET on Sunday. His post came shortly after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose country served as a mediator, announced a deal had been struck early Monday local time.

The pact will be officially signed Friday in Switzerland, Sharif wrote.

The precise terms were not immediately known. Sharif said in a post on X that the pact called for “the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon.”

Lebanon was a sticking point in negotiations, with Israel and Hezbollah ignoring calls from Trump and others to stop their attacks on each other in recent weeks.

Trump said the Strait of Hormuz, a major shipping lane for global energy supplies that Iran effectively shut down for months, would open Friday, and that he had ordered the end of the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports.

“Ships of the World, start your engines. Let the oil flow!” Trump wrote.

Oil prices fell on the news. Brent crude futures fell 4% in early trading Monday, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate slid more than 4.6%.

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AVI OHAYON, REUTERS

Smoke rises near destroyed structures in southern Lebanon, as seen from the Israeli side of the Israel-Lebanon border Sunday in northern Israel.