

Stephen Saunders

Stephen is the founder and president of the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization.

At RMCO, Stephen has been the primary author of the organization's 13 reports on climate change and its impacts, has testified before Congress, and has been quoted in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Boston Globe*, *Arizona Republic*, *Miami Herald*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *USA Today*, among many other news publications and outlets. He conceived of and has managed such RMCO projects as its Colorado Climate Project and the Colorado Climate Network. The Colorado Climate Project was the first and is still the only project in the nation by a nonprofit to convene a stakeholder process to develop a statewide climate action agenda. The blue-ribbon panel's recommendations served as a foundation for the official Colorado Climate Action Agenda subsequently adopted by Governor Bill Ritter, Jr. The Colorado Climate Network is RMCO's program that supports local climate action programs by local governments in Colorado (and one in Utah) and the related work of other organizations, including the Colorado Municipal League.

Stephen founded RMCO after a previous career in government and politics, which included service in the Clinton Administration as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior over the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—two agencies that together have budgets of \$2.5 billion, 25,000 employees, and manage lands equal in size to Texas. Stephen was recommended for appointment to that position by 42 Members of Congress. While at Interior, he authored the first-ever official agency interpretation of the National Park Service Organic Act, included in the NPS's *Management Policies*. Efforts in the next administration to water down that interpretation led to public and internal NPS outcries that ultimately led to the resignation of top Interior and NPS officials and the re-adoption of the interpretation Stephen authored. At Interior, Stephen also managed the January 2001 rule to phase out snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park.

Stephen was policy director in Governor Howard Dean's presidential campaign and policy advisor and/or speechwriter in the presidential campaigns of Senator Gary Hart, Congressman Richard Gephardt, and Senator Barack Obama. Stephen has managed seven statewide and congressional political campaigns in Colorado.

He served for nearly 20 years in senior congressional staff positions, including as executive director of the Democratic Study Group, a policy and congressional reform organization of the U.S. House Democratic Caucus; staff director for two members of the House; and a member of the professional staffs of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Appropriations.

Stephen has a law degree from the University of Denver and a bachelor of arts from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where he was recognized by the university as the most outstanding man in his graduating class.