



January 2021

Message from MCV's New Executive Director



With the first few weeks of 2021 already under our belt, the conservation community faces a whole new set of challenges and opportunities. While we have a lot to look forward to with a new administration in Washington, we also have our work cut out for us as the new Montana Legislature, new governor, and new Land Board get to work in Helena.

As MCV's new Executive Director, I want all our members to know we'll always hold our elected leaders accountable to Montanans who value our public lands, clean air, clean water and communities. That's why this newsletter focuses on how we're pushing back against all efforts to undermine what makes Montana the Big Sky State and the place we choose to live.

And we invite all Montanans to check out our new accountability website, MontanaPushback.org, to stay informed about the work and decisions of those in power--and how we can either push back or celebrate them.

This month we also welcome MCV's newest team member, Program Director Whitner Chase. And we just launched our fourth season of our podcast, MCVcast. Are you tuning in? If not, I encourage you to find MCVcast wherever you get your podcasts or on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/) and have a listen.

Thank you, as always, for your financial support, and for being the most important part of MCV.

Yours in conservation,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Whitney Tawney'.

Whitney Tawney

Political Update

Whenever the Montana Legislature is in session, MCV is inside the Capitol, making sure our elected leaders understand exactly what we expect of them. We proudly serve as a resource for conservation champions, and as a thorn-in-the-side to all lawmakers who turn their backs on our environment, our public lands and our voting rights.

We raised a concern in various news outlets as soon as Governor Greg Gianforte released his budget proposal. Though we're pleased to see his budget fund many of the state agencies and outdoor programs we care about, we're disappointed that he chose to divert new revenue approved by voters away from our public lands and conservation.

Though we quickly praised the work of the outgoing Land Board as it approved a new state park on Flathead Lake, we've been equally quick to criticize legislation (SB 115) that would require all land acquisitions to be approved by the Montana Land Board. This unnecessary step would insert politics into an already lengthy and intensive process for willing landowners trying to conserve wildlife habitat and expand public access through conservation easements.

And while we are eager to work with any lawmaker--regardless of political party--on priorities that focus on protecting Montana for future generations, we strongly oppose efforts like HB 176. That bill would end same-day voter registration in Montana, setting voter participation in our state back decades. It saddens us to report that Montana's new secretary of state, Kristi Jacobsen, recently came out in support of HB 176.

We will never stop fighting for what we stand for. We'll do it by organizing, by educating and by engaging all Montanans to be a part of the political process. That's why we invite you to partner with MCV as we keep holding our elected leaders accountable, collaborating with them when-

MCV Newsroom

Along with the launch of our new accountability website, MontanaPushback.org, MCV also recently shared guidelines through that site for how all Montanans can participate in the 67th session of the Montana Legislature.

At MontanaPushback.org, we have quick information on how to find and contact your state lawmakers, and tips for how best to communicate with them effectively. We have pointers on how to engage our lawmakers on social media, and even how to testify for or against bills remotely--from the safety of your own home.

The best way we can push back against policies that harm our environment, our public lands and our voting rights is for all of us to get involved. We invite you to join us in that effort. It's a simple click away.

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ever we can, and pushing back whenever we must at MontanaPushback.org.

Meet MCV's New Program Director: Whitner Chase



Whitner Chase joined Montana Conservation Voters in January, and he jumped right into the deep end!

Whitner is MCV's new Program Director. His job during the state legislative session will be to do whatever he can to work with lawmakers and other stakeholders to ensure our state budget is aligned with Montana's conservation values.

Whitner comes to Montana from The Wyss Foundation, where he managed grants to protect land in Africa and Australia.

Whitner looks forward to running, camping, and skiing in Montana's backcountry.

Whitner and Whitney are working hard to avoid being confused with each other, which is why his email address is a little different than other MCV addresses. Contact him at wchase@mtvoters.org.

Follow MCV to stay connected! Find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). And tune into our weekly podcast, MCV-cast, on [YouTube](#) or wherever you download podcasts. Don't forget to like and share our content. Every share means more views, which means more participation, which means another ally in the tough work ahead. Thank you in advance for helping us spread the word!

Montana Conservation Voters is a statewide non-partisan membership organization dedicated to fighting for Montana's air, water, open spaces, wildlife and public health. MCV provides voter participation services to tens of thousands of Montanans.

Visit mtvoters.org for more details.

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Montana Conservation Voters

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