

MCV MATTERS

CONNECT. PROTECT. ELECT. TURNING MONTANA VALUES INTO PRIORITIES.

Happy Valentine's Day Montana Conservation Voters!


We hope you're feeling the love and know how grateful we are to have you on Team MCV!

It's week seven of the Montana Legislature and the temperature is turning up. With much of our work on defense to protect the recreational marijuana funding set aside for our public lands by Montana voters as well as our Montana constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment, there is no shortage of threats.

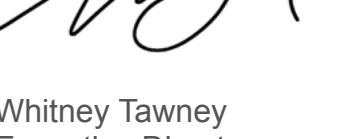
We have three upcoming in-person opportunities in Helena to show your support. Join us to testify against House Bill 462 that seeks to permanently block Habitat Montana funding through recreational marijuana sales this Thursday, February 16. Come Rally for Public Lands on February 23, and party at MCV's Annual Member Celebration on March 3 (more info about both events below).

We can't emphasize enough that this is not a drill. Our outdoor way of life is under attack and we can't let the next generation down.

Thank you for your continued commitment to MCV and our work to protect Montana's public lands, clean air, clean water, and unique communities.



Yours in conservation,



Whitney Tawney
Executive Director
Montana Conservation Voters

[P.S. Make the Montana Constitution your Valentine by donating TODAY!](#)

NEWS FROM THE STATE CAPITOL

All hands are on deck fighting to uphold the will of the voters as we push back against attempts to remove marijuana tax money from Habitat Montana.

A new bill under consideration by Montana lawmakers would permanently restrict the State's ability to enhance public access, protect critical wildlife habitat, and support working farms and ranches.

House Bill 462 seeks to redistribute how recreational marijuana tax revenue is spent in Montana. Over the next two years, it would strip over \$30 million in voter-approved revenue from the Habitat Montana Program and permanently block the program from tapping those funds again.

When voters approved recreational marijuana, they were promised part of the money would go to Habitat Montana. Redirecting this funding goes against the will of the voters.

HB 462 has its first hearing at the House Appropriations Committee *this* Thursday, February 16. [Give public comment in person](#) at the State Capitol (Room 102) at 3:00 pm or give public comment remotely via [Zoom](#). To give testimony remotely, you must sign up by Wednesday, February 15 by using the link [HERE](#).

Voters were right to broaden the funding base of Habitat Montana. Habitat Montana was established to protect habitat and winter-range that wildlife depend on for survival while also providing financial options for landowners to protect traditional land uses including agricultural and timber production. Habitat Montana protects Montanans' access to hunt and fish, including the recently acquired Big Snowy Mountains.

There is no excuse to raid this program during a revenue windfall. HB 462 would reverse the will of voters and strip over \$30 million in state revenue from Habitat Montana over the next two years. We don't need to rob Peter to pay Paul. Montana has a historic budget surplus of over \$1 billion. There is more than enough revenue to pay for new budget priorities without sacrificing our commitment to fund wildlife conservation, public access, and programs that keep farms and ranches economically viable.

Protect our way of life. Don't reallocate our habitat dollars. With new growth, skyrocketing real estate prices, and increasing pressure on our limited and fragile wildlife habitats, we need more conservation funding, not less. Protect the funding that keeps our lands in agricultural production. Protect the funding that passes on the Montana way of life. Protect the conservation funding from recreational marijuana taxes that Montanans voted for.

Can't make the hearing? Take action now by contacting your legislator and the Governor today by following the link [HERE!](#)

We've also ramped up efforts at the Capitol to stand against attacks on democracy, science and public lands. In the last week, we testified against Senate Bill 235 to establish requirements for science instruction in public schools. This bill would require only instruction related to scientific fact, removing any instruction concerning scientific theories. We also testified against Senate Bill 200 which would revise nonpartisan races to allow party affiliation for candidates for judicial, school board, and county commission races to declare a party affiliation.

We also testified in support of Senate Bill 141 to create Indigenous Peoples' Day and House Bill 383 to establish the Montana hunters and anglers community fund. This bill would allow hunters and anglers to opt into a donation when buying their licenses that would give back to the rural Montana towns that support these outdoor pursuits.

Team MCV will continue to stand against attacks on conservation and our constitution. Learn more via [MontanaPushback.org](#).

It's time for Montanans to show up, raise our voices and show these legislators that **we won't tolerate ANY attacks on the lands, waters, wildlife, and outdoor way of life that we love - for our kids and generations to come.**

Join Team MCV and our partners to deliver that message loud and clear – and in person – at the 2023 Rally for Public Lands.

[RALLY FOR PUBLIC LANDS](#)
Thursday, February 23
Noon - 1 PM
Montana Capitol North Lawn, Helena

[RSVP HERE](#)

Plus we've got a great lineup of speakers for the Rally: Ryan Callaghan (MeatEater's Conservation Director and host of "Cal's Week in Review"), Hannah Muszkiewicz (Helena College Student) and Cole Mannix (8th generation rancher, President and Founder of Old Salt Co-Op). And Helena's own Mary Tuckerman Hollow of Prickly Pear Land Trust will be MCing.

Have you heard? We have just a few tickets left to our 2023 Member Celebration on Friday, March 3! [Snag your ticket today!](#)

This beloved annual event is your chance to mingle with fellow members and changemakers passionate about conserving our Last Best Place. We're happy to be back at the Holter Museum in Helena, with delicious food from Savor & Graze, music by beloved local artist Marly Kendrick, and of course your first drink is on us!

This event wouldn't be possible without a dedicated team of sponsors including:

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Renewable Northwest
Sally Ericsson

Please thank these MCV supporters in your communities and at the event. If you're interested in joining as a sponsor - it's not too late! Visit our website [HERE](#) or contact Renee Kelley today.

See you in March!

A WIN FOR THE TREASURE STATE


Last week, Montana's independent Districting and Apportionment Commission approved a legislative map (TCP-3) that is fair and does not unduly favor one party over another. Our Program Director, Jocelyn Laroux, testified at Friday's final hearing in favor of the winning map.


Thank you for your calls and testimony to the Commission - you made a difference. Because of your efforts, Montana communities will have more fair legislative representation for the next ten years and hopefully more conservation champions in Helena.

TEAM MCV'S NEW TEAMMATES

Team MCV is thrilled to welcome our new Program Director, Jocelyn Leroux, and our first ever Communications Director, Anthony Licata.

Jocelyn will be based in Helena for the session and permanently in Missoula. Jocelyn came to Team MCV after three years working for federal lands and wildlife protections as Western Watersheds Project's Washington and Montana Director. Prior to that, Jocelyn spent four years with The Mountain Pact working with local elected officials in the West to unify action on federal public lands and climate change policies. When not working, Jocelyn can be found on a trail, river or skin track with her adventure pup, Pachco.






Anthony is based in Bozeman. Over a 20-year career in outdoor media, Anthony served as the long-time Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Director of Field & Stream and Outdoor Life magazines. With a focus on outdoor recreation and nature, conservation storytelling has always been a big part of his writing and work. Although he has hunted and fished all over the world, he thinks nothing beats chasing mule deer on Montana's public lands and catching trout in his local rivers. He and his two kids also spend as much time as possible camping, canoeing, hiking, skiing, biking, and otherwise exploring Montana.

JOIN TEAM MCV!

MCV is looking for our next dynamic Development Director to help take our work to the next level. Do you enjoy a fast-paced environment working with donors at all levels to make a lasting impact? Learn more [HERE](#).

The MCV Education Fund is also hiring! Join Team MCV as our next Communications Intern. This is a paid temporary position dedicated to grassroots education and advocacy in the context of one of the most important state legislative sessions in Montana's history. Learn more about this position [HERE](#).

Member of the Month



Norane Freistadt

Helena, MT

Why are you an MCV Member?
I am a Montana Conservation Voters member because I applaud all efforts to have an informed electorate and conservation is a top priority for me. While I try to be a well-informed voter, there is no way we can track all candidates and elected officials; it is so helpful to have the MCV's candidate endorsements as a trusted reliable source of information. I am also appreciative of the scorecard ratings to see how elected officials really vote!

What's your top conservation issue?
My top conservation issue is climate change and we need to find ways for every individual to be a part of the solution. On a smaller scale, keeping our public lands intact and available to all.

What's your favorite outdoor spot in Montana?
My favorite spot in Montana is anywhere along the Rocky Mountain Front, where the vastness of open space is so apparent.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

We simply cannot achieve wins for the Big Sky State without supporters like you and a strong Board of Directors. Each year, new board members or those up for reelection must be voted in officially by our members. If you're a current MCV member, watch your inbox this week for more information on our 2023 board candidates and how to cast your vote!

Not a member yet or want to renew? Visit [HERE](#) and donate \$35 or more today!

SAVE THE DATES

February 23 - Rally for Public Lands at the Capitol (Learn more and RSVP [HERE!](#)) + Lobby Day at the Capitol





March 3 - Annual Member Celebration at the Holter Museum in Helena (Get your tickets [HERE!](#))

March 15 - Constitution Day + Lobby Day at the Capitol

October 13 - MCV's Gala at the Depot in Livingston

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We're on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) — all @mtvoters! Follow us and share with your friends!



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