

Happy April, Montana Conservation Voters!

The big melt has finally begun and we're starting to see flowers begin to pop - not only are these signs of true Spring but also signs that the end of the 68th session of the Montana legislature is near!

A lot has happened over this last month, but there is one big bright spot that stuck out to us here at MCV-- WE PROTECTED OUR MONTANA CONSTITUTION! That means we have successfully defended our constitutionally guaranteed right to clean air, clean water, and a healthful environment.

You are the reason we preserved what we hold so dear. You showed up to committee meetings, bill hearings, and rallies and made your voices heard. So thank you!



But it's crunch time, folks. The next few weeks are sure to be intense as it's when bills will die or become law, so the stakes are HIGH. We all need to continue our diligence in opposing bad bills and supporting good ones. From public land funding to our rights as citizens, there is a lot to fight for.

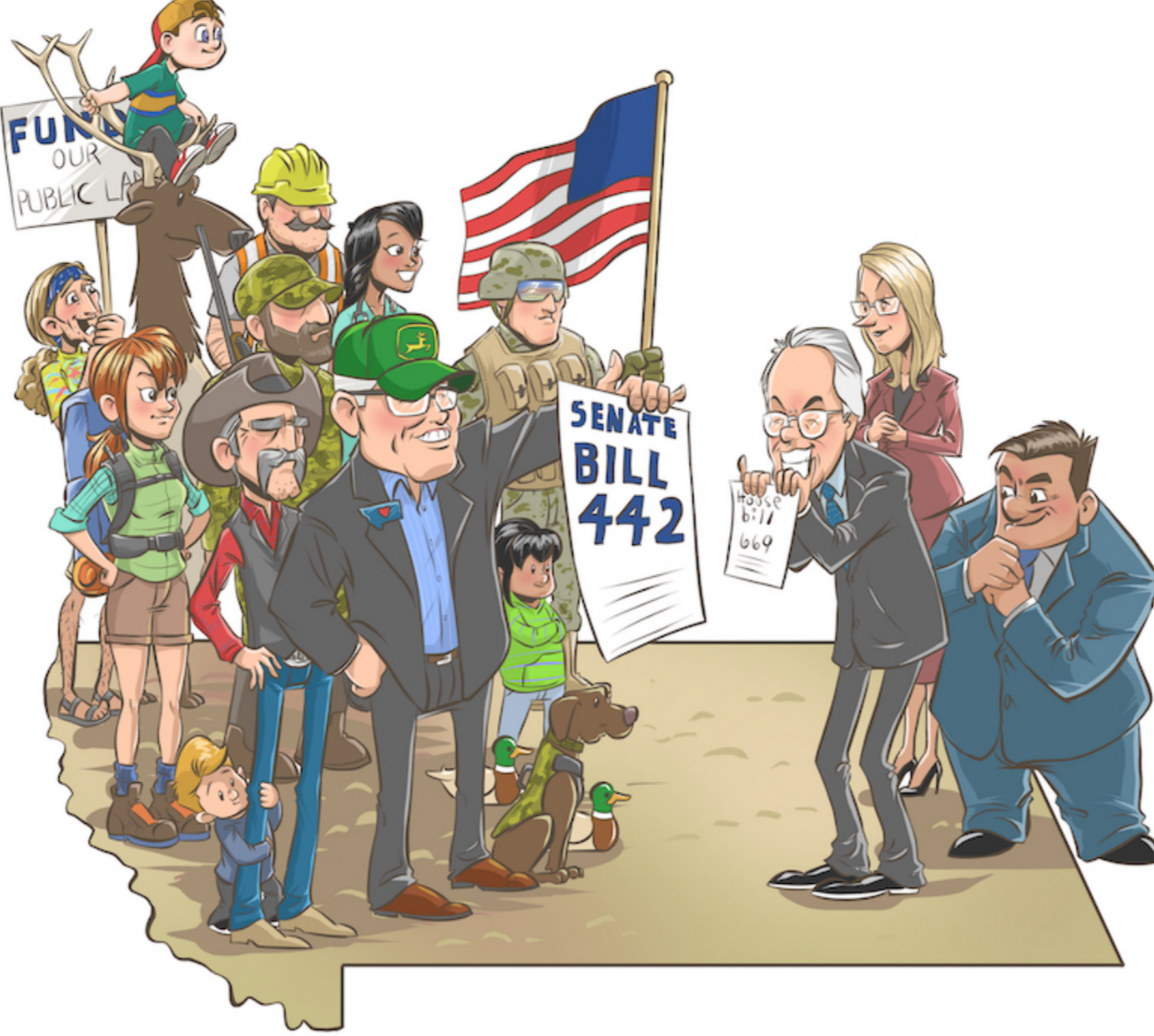
After the legislative session MCV will be releasing our annual scorecard, holding our elected officials accountable, which means both praising the good and criticizing the bad. Let's hope we head into May with more of the former. It is important now more than ever for conservationists statewide to support and elect local officials who will protect our Montana way of life and public lands!



Yours in conservation,

Whitney Tawney
Executive Director
Montana Conservation Voters

NEWS FROM THE STATE CAPITOL



Marijuana Revenue Update

The fight over recreational marijuana money is coming down to two competing bills, one good and one terrible. Let's start with the good, SB 442. A bipartisan coalition of legislators and key stakeholders from across Montana have come together with a plan to redistribute marijuana tax revenue in a way that protects public lands, funds Habitat Montana and funds state parks and wildlife programs while simultaneously providing more resources for county roads, veterans, and other priorities. The amendments made to SB 442 now make it the best plan to distribute marijuana revenue in a way that protects and supports our public lands, rural communities, and traditional Montana values.

SB 442 just passed a second reading on the House floor with a 84-16 vote, and now it's moving on to House appropriations. It came out of the House taxation committee with a 17-4 vote following an incredible hearing last Friday with over 45 proponents from all across Montana showing up in support. SB 442 passed the Senate 49-1 before making its way to the House. We still have work to do to get it across the finish line, but [with continued calls to your legislators](#) we might see this once-in-a-generation bill become law.

Now the bad, HB 669 sends all marijuana tax revenue to the general fund instead of to important programs that support the Montana way of life. With enough pressure we can make sure [this bill never gets to the Senate floor](#).

Democracy Protections Update

Team MCV is fighting for Democracy at the state Capitol. As the session draws to a close, we've fended off attacks on the nonpartisan judiciary and efforts to close our primaries. Here are a few bills we've opposed and defeated:

[SB 200](#) and [SB 302](#) would have injected partisanship into judicial races. Judges don't wear red or blue robes- they wear black robes. The concept of the independent judiciary is one of the bedrock principles on American Democracy and we must preserve impartiality in the courtroom.

[SB 484](#) would have required Montanans to register with a political party to vote in our primaries. Montanans value our independence and this bill would have limited our freedom to vote for our preferred candidate- no matter what party they represent.

The session isn't done yet though and we are still working to defeat bills in the anti-Democracy space. Keep checking [montanapushback.org](#) for updates and ways you can get involved.

It's Our Right! Montanans Stand Up and Defeat the Attack on the State Constitution

Well folks, it's official--together, we DEFENDED Montana's constitution. With the help of each and every one of you, we defeated the effort to amend Montana's Constitution to take away our right to clean air, clean water, and a healthful environment. Montana has one of the most protective constitutions in the United States when it comes to issues like our environment and public resources.



In 1972, delegates to Montana's Constitutional Convention enshrined a right to a "clean and healthful environment" in our state Constitution. For 50 years the Montana Constitution has protected our environment and public lands, and for the first time in that 50-year existence, ALL of it was at risk. However, we successfully defeated big corporations and powerful interests who were looking to exploit our public lands and resources, and we can attribute that to YOU.

You rose to the occasion, met the moment, and PROTECTED our Montana constitution. You are the reason we preserved all of what we hold so dear. You showed up to committee meetings, bill hearings, and rallies and made your voices heard. And for that, we THANK YOU for your hard work and dedication.



VETERANS SPEAK UP TO DEFEND FUNDING AND PUBLIC LAND

Some fired-up Montana veterans spoke to MCV about the fight over marijuana revenue, their needs, what Habitat Montana gives to them, and what's at stake in this fight. You can hear from them directly by checking out their videos at [mt.voters.org/protectmt](#).



CELEBRATING MONTANA'S MONUMENTS

We celebrated "Montana Day" (April 6th, or "four-oh-six day" named after the state's sole area code of 406), with the release of Montana Conservation Voters Education Fund's [new white paper](#) celebrating Montana's National Monuments. In a state blessed with a wide variety of public lands, our three National Monuments-- Little Bighorn, Pompeys Pillar, and Upper Missouri River Breaks--play a unique role in our communities and public land system.



The Antiquities Act, enacted in 1906, is one of our nation's most important conservation tools. Used to safeguard and protect public lands and cultural and historical sites for all Americans to enjoy. Eighteen presidents from both political parties, including most recently Presidents Biden and Trump, have designated 150 national monuments under this authority. According to a recent Colorado College poll, 82 percent of Montanans support presidents continuing to use their ability to designate existing public lands as National Monuments to maintain public access and protect the land for future generations.

You can [read the white paper](#), [download a PDF copy](#), and [find out more ways to engage with our National Monuments at mtvotersfund.org](#).

MCV Elects New Board of Directors

In late March, the MCV and MCV Education Fund Boards of Directors voted for officers to guide us through 2023. These annual elections resulted in a solid mix of new passion and tested experience from incumbents and newcomers alike. Please join us in welcoming our 2023 leadership teams and thanking each of our dedicated board members for their guidance!

- Jock Conyngham, Chair of the MCV Board
- Sally Ericsson, Vice Chair of the MCV Board
- Chris Saeger, Treasurer of the MCV Board
- Dani Howlett, Assistant Treasurer of the MCV Board
- Jock Conyngham, Chair of the MCV Education Fund Board
- Jeanne Marie Souvigny, Treasurer of the MCV Education Fund Board
- Nicola Laverack, Secretary of the MCV Education Fund Board

FACT OF THE MONTH



Did You Know...
Through the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Senator Jon Tester secured \$2.8 Billion for Montana's roads and bridges.

What else could that much money get Montana motorists? Approximately:

- 22,566 Subaru Outbacks
- 15,148 Ram 1500 Bighorns
- 7,368 Tesla S models
- 4,001 Sprinter Vans

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Deb Fassnacht
Missoula Executive Director Watershed Education Network
MCV Member Since 2008

Why are you an MCV Member?
I feel like MCV echoes my voice and my values and makes it heard in the legislature and in politics. It's such a wonderful gift, and so it's really important to me to protect our stream access rights and keep public access to waters for Montanans of all types and backgrounds.



What's your top conservation issue?
Growing up in Montana, I was able to spend so much of my life playing in rivers, lakes, and streams. It is such a wonderful gift, and so it's really important to me to protect our stream access rights and keep public access to waters for Montanans of all types and backgrounds.

What's your favorite outdoor spot in Montana?
Now that I'm spending more time in Northwest Montana, I've been spending a lot of time on Flathead Lake, where I sail. I also love rafting and camping the pristine and clean branches of the Flathead river. It's a remarkable watershed.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

How much do you spend a month on coffee, trail snacks, and plastic bags to pick up after your dog? Probably way more than you'd spend a month becoming a sustaining member of MCV. Becoming a supporting member is one of the best ways to ensure that we have the resources to keep fighting for Montana.

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

SAVE THE DATES

- June 5 - Pint Night, GILD Brewery, Missoula
- August 10 - Pint Night, Thirsty Street Brewing @ The Garage, Billings
- 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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MCV is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization. Membership dues and contributions are not tax-deductible. Tax-deductible contributions may be made to the MCV Education Fund, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Visit [mtvotersfund.org](#) to learn more.

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