

MCV MATTERS

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

October 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy October, Montana Conservation Voters!



It's a big month at MCV and the start of all fall things!

On October 13, we threw our largest Gala ever, with nearly 200 conservationists from across the state. Highlights of the night were hearing from U.S. Senator Jon Tester and a one-of-a-kind performance by Native American dancer and hip hop artist Supaman — all made possible by our very generous supporters and sponsors.

MCV also entered the month with our biggest team yet — with the recent hire of field organizers in Billings, our new Field Manager Kearstyn Cook, and a new Board of Director

to serve on MCV and the MCV Education Fund's boards.

Finally, this month we're rolling out our final endorsements for the 2023 municipal elections. It's a good reminder that local elections are important and have a big impact. Please note, all endorsements are made by our independent political action committee board. Enclosed in this newsletter, find who we've endorsed in your community or visit mtvoters.org/endorsements.

Remember, Election Day is November 7, and please return your mailed ballots immediately to avoid mail delays – better yet, drop off your ballots in-person by Election Day to ensure your vote counts. From municipal elections to field organizers and local input for bills like the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act, starting small is often the best way to make big things happen - so please get out and VOTE!

Yours in conservation,

Whitney Tawney
Executive Director
Montana Conservation Voters

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Join or renew for \$35 today and get a new MCV sticker to show off your support!
mtvoters.org/join

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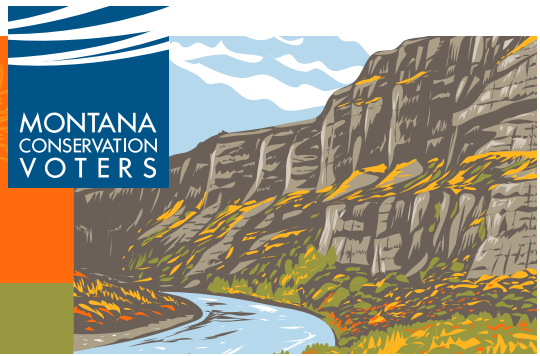
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GALA

A PARTY TO PROTECT THE LAST BEST PLACE



2023 Gala: The Biggest Ever!

Because of you and our sponsors, MCV's 2023 Gala on October 13 was our **BIGGEST EVENT EVER!**

Montana's senior U.S. Senator Jon Tester, several state legislators, municipal candidates and conservation partners from across the state gathered with nearly 200 fellow conservationists in Livingston to support MCV's mission to protect Montana's public lands, clean air and clean waters. At the event, MCV Executive Director Whitney Tawney also announced the endorsement of Senator Tester for his 2024 reelection.

"Montana Conservation Voters is an organization that gets the job done through its tireless work to keep Montana the Last Best Place," Tester said. "It's because of work like yours that we're going to pass common sense solutions for Montana like the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act. I'm proud of this endorsement, and I'll continue to stand with Montanans as we fight to protect our public lands and ensure future generations enjoy our clean air and water."

Gala attendees were treated to a fun evening of local food prepared by Sadie Morales, local brews from Katabatic Brewing Co., and a noteworthy performance by our special guest, Supaman – an internationally acclaimed Native American dancer and hip hop artist.

Thank You, Silent Auction Donors

Andrew McKean & Nellie	Logjam Presents
Bailey Zook Ceramics	Missoula Symphony
Big Sky Resort	Missoula Wine Merchant
Blake Nursery	Norris Hot Springs
Bozeman Symphony	Oboz Footwear
Chico Hot Springs Resort	Showdown Ski
Christina & Don Ragsdale	Steepworld Climbing and Fitness
Claire Emery Art	Stonetree Climbing Center
Crystal Images	The Patagonia Outlet in Dillon, MT
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Thank You, Gala Sponsors

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2023 MUNICIPAL ENDORSEMENTS



“Protecting Montana’s clean air, clean water, public lands, and democracy starts at the local level. We feel confident that these candidates will fight for conservation while they work for the betterment of their communities.”

— MCV ACTION FUND CHAIR JILL LOMBARDI

The MCV Action Fund proudly endorses the following candidates for the 2023 municipal elections:

BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL



Ward 1:
Kendra Shaw
(Incumbent)



Ward 2:
Dustin Hanson



Ward 3:
Bill Kennedy



Ward 4:
Mary Hernandez



Ward 5:
Mike Boyett
(Incumbent)

BOZEMAN CITY COMMISSION



Mayor:
Cyndy Andrus
(Incumbent)



At Large:
Jennifer Madgic
(Incumbent)

GREAT FALLS CITY COUNCIL



Mayor:
Casey Schreiner



At Large:
Shannon Wilson

KALISPELL CITY COUNCIL



Ward 3:
Ryan Hunter
(Incumbent)

LIVINGSTON CITY COMMISSION



At Large:
Melissa Nootz
(Incumbent)

MISSOULA CITY COUNCIL



Mayor:
Andrea Davis



AND
Mayor:
Mike Nugent



Ward 1:
Eric Melson



Ward 2:
Mirtha Becerra
(Incumbent)



Ward 2:
Sierra Farmer
(Incumbent)



Ward 3:
Gwen Jones
(Incumbent)



Ward 4:
Amber Sherrill
(Incumbent)



Ward 5:
Lynn-Wood Fields



Ward 6:
Sean McCoy

WHITEFISH CITY COUNCIL



At Large:
Nathan Dugan



At Large:
Rebecca Norton
(Incumbent)

Endorsements and information about each candidate is available online at mtvoters.org/endorsements

About the MCV Action Fund's Candidate Endorsement Process



The Montana Conservation Voters Action Fund, MCV's affiliated political action committee, has announced its final round of endorsements for pro-conservation municipal candidates running across the state in 2023.

To ensure MCV endorses the best possible conservation candidates, our volunteer PAC board conducts a rigorous endorsement process. Candidates seeking endorsements complete written questionnaires – which are reviewed by staff and the PAC board. Candidates in competitive races then take part in an interview with a panel of local MCV members. Our panels make recommendations to the PAC board who ultimately makes all final endorsement decisions.



BIG SKY CIRCLE Monthly Giving Program



Did you know, for as little as \$10 a month you can join a special group of members who provide steady support to Team MCV?

Not only does an automatic monthly donation create less hassle for you, it also lightens the load for our staff and helps to provide financial stability to our organization through a consistent and reliable stream of resources.



Business partners across the state help bring our mission to life!

Through our Partners for the Outdoors Program, you can support the MCV Education Fund in engaging, educating, and empowering Montanans to protect our Last Best Place while getting your brand out statewide throughout the year! Interested in learning more? Contact Jessica Lillie at jessica@mtvoters.

Connect with us on social media! @mtvoters   

Do you want to learn more about municipal candidates or see a spectacular video from an adventure into the area that will be protected by BCSA? Check us out on Instagram, Facebook and X for all things Team MCV!

Your Dogs Love MCV

Last month was Public Lands Month and we asked Montanans of all stripes to put their best pooch forward and take part in our Pups for Public Lands photo contest – both to win cool doggy swag but also to celebrate and educate Montanans about the public lands we love. And you and your dogs answered the call with our biggest contest ever!

The record number of submissions showed how many spectacular places and handsome hounds there are in Montana. Watch our social media accounts or check mtvotersedfund.org/pups to find out if your pup is a winner. Winners will be announced October 20.

Our upcoming 2024 Pups for Public Lands Calendar will feature our top-12 contest winners, and calendars will be available for purchase just in time for the holidays – what a fun gift! Along with a calendar, the top 12 dogs will get cool leashes from Mtn Straps, dog bandanas from the MCV Education Fund, and West Paw goodies (including treats sourced from local Montana ranchers).

Miss the contest? Donate \$50 or more to the MCV Education Fund and we'll ship a Pups for Public Lands dog bandana right to your pup!

Visit mtvotersedfund.org/donate today to support our work.

Two Public Lands Bills – One Good, One Bad



In September two Montana public lands bills passed out of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee – Senator Jon Tester’s Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act (BCSA) and Senator Steve Daines’ misleading Montana Sportsmen Conservation Act (MSCA).

While both are backed by a Montana Senator, the goals and histories of the bills couldn’t be more different. Senator Tester’s BCSA is a responsible, community-driven solution to protect Montana’s clean water, wildlife, and outdoor resources for all of us to enjoy. Senator Daines’ insider-deal to give away our prized public lands, however, is legislation crafted by DC lobbyists in back offices rather than the kitchen tables of Montanans.

Here’s a quick look at how these bills differ.

What do they do?

BCSA: Will add nearly 80,000 acres of wilderness to the Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Mission Mountains wilderness areas and create two recreation management areas for snowmobiling and mountain biking.

MSCA: Will eliminate protections from more than 100,000 acres of the Middle Fork Judith, Hoodoo Mountain and the Wales Creek Wilderness Study Areas.

Community Involvement

BCSA: The Montana-made proposal was part of a collaborative effort that brought together recreationists, timber companies and conservation advocates starting in 2005. They hammered out a compromise that has already produced timber and land restoration projects north of Seeley Lake and north of Ovando.

MSCA: Local communities were not involved in the proposal to remove protections from our public lands.

Montana Support

BCSA: 84% of Montanans support BCSA, up from 79% a year ago, according to the Colorado College Conservation in the West poll released in February of this year.

MSCA: The bill has little support among Montanans. A 2022 voter survey found that only 6% of Montanans supported eliminating protections from Wilderness Study Areas.



A view of some of the areas that would be protected by the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act.

Senator Tester, Still Getting it Done

Montana Senator Jon Tester is consistently ranked in the top three most effective Senators, and in August he was rated the most effective member in all of Congress, being the only lawmaker out of 535 members of the 118th Congress to have multiple bills signed into law!



Through the Inflation Reduction Act, Senator Tester brought millions in investments to the state to create jobs and secure energy freedom. A few examples: \$26 million in public lands investments for the Blackfoot/Clark Fork Valley Missouri Headwaters/Big Hole Valley, and the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge area, \$1.3 million for Rural Montana Renewable Energy Development Projects to help farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses install renewable energy infrastructure or improve their energy efficiency. This grant funding has been used by ranchers to add solar panels to their ranch to offset energy costs, and is being used by Discovery Ski Area to power one of its main chairlifts with solar.

You can find out all the ways that Senator Tester is getting it done for Montana on our updated website, TesterGettingItDone.org.



Want to show your support and ask Senator Tester to keep going?

Donate \$25 or more via TesterGettingItDone.org, and we’ll send you your very own flattop yard sign.

We are growing, allowing us to do more work for Montana and YOU.

Team MCV Gets Bigger and Better with Additions to Board and Staff



Left to right: Zachariah Tollison, Jesc Gallegos, and Kearstyn Cook

First, we're thrilled to introduce MCV's new Field Manager, Kearstyn Cook. Kearstyn will be responsible for overseeing the field organizers that MCV is deploying in Billings, Bozeman, and the Flathead, and will lead our community engagement and volunteer initiatives. Prior to joining MCV, Kearstyn spent three years as a ranger on public lands including Lone Pine State Park, Glacier National Park, and Flathead National Forest. She holds a bachelor's degree with a concentration in Environmental Policy from the University of Pennsylvania. Kearstyn enjoys running, skiing, and climbing mountains in Glacier.

Next, we'd like to welcome our new field organizers, Zachariah Tollison and Jesc Gallegos.

Zachariah has been active in field work since August 2019. He's worked around the country since then but now calls Montana home. He graduated from Coastal Carolina University with a bachelor's in communications.

Jesc serves as Team MCV's lead field organizer in Billings. Her family moved to Montana when she was five and she has spent the majority of her childhood in the wilderness. Her father taught her to hunt, fish, and have a true appreciation of the land she lives on. Prior to joining MCV, Jesc was known as the 'Billings megaphone girl' because she uses her voice to advocate for others.

Finally, we'd like to celebrate Brendon Cechovic, joining both the MCV and MCV Education Fund boards. Brendon is the CEO of Western Conservation Foundation, a public charity that works to advance protections for our public lands and climate. Prior to that, he was the Executive Director of Washington Conservation Voters. Brendon is a board member of the national League of Conservation Voters, and although he lives in Denver, considers himself a proud Montanan. He's a University of Montana Grizzly who is happiest with a fly rod in his hand. Learn more about Brendon in our Member of the Month profile.



Brendon Cechovic

MCV Member of the Month

Why are you an MCV member?

I can't think of an issue that matters more to me personally than the future of Montana politics. There is not a more important organization in the State, or even the country, if you care about Montana, its people, its communities, wildlife and public lands.

What's your top conservation issue and why?

Keeping access to public lands free and open to everyone. Protecting Montana's right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment. These things are the birthright of every Montanan, and right now these freedoms are under attack.

Where is your favorite outdoor spot in Montana?

I'm not going to blow up my favorite trout river, but I will say I think the Mission Mountains are a hidden gem. They make you work for it. The climbs are straight up. But this keeps the crowds at bay, and you're rewarded with landscapes that rival any in the state.