

MCV MATTERS

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

March 2025

Happy March, Montana Conservation Voters!



It's been a whirlwind month as the Legislature enters the second half of Montana's 69th Legislative Session, with critical issues taking center stage. The good news is that any bill unrelated to revenue, appropriations, resolutions, or constitutional amendments that didn't pass one legislative chamber by the early March transmittal deadline is effectively dead. Thanks to the efforts of folks like you, we've seen some harmful bills fall by the wayside. Unfortunately, several misguided and problematic proposals are still in play and could threaten our freedoms and the values that make Montana the Last Best Place.

But Montanans aren't backing down. Thousands of you have already raised their voices through [MontanaPushback.org](https://montanapushback.org). This winter, we rallied for public lands and our state Constitution, braving winter storms, challenging roads, and flu season. We also had a fantastic time at MCV's Annual Member Celebration in Helena.

Now, we need to keep that momentum going. There's still work to be done to defeat the harmful ideas that remain in the Legislature, including serious threats to our constitutional right to healthy public lands, clean water, and clean air, as well as critical funding for our public lands, state parks, trails, and wildlife. It's time to speak up. Make your voice heard with the Governor and your legislators — let them know where you stand!

And lastly, some personal news. Since joining the team in 2018, it has truly been an honor to work alongside our talented staff and dedicated boards to protect what makes Montana, *Montana*. Looking back, I'm humbled by the impact this organization has made and proud of all we have accomplished together. After much thought, I've decided the time has come for me to move on.

From my first board meeting juggling a four-month-old baby, to now being the proud mom of a first grader with missing teeth, I am deeply grateful for everything Team MCV has given me. After careful consideration, I've decided to focus more on my family, which has led to my decision to step down this summer.

As MCV looks to the future, I believe now is the right time, both personally and for the organization, to identify a new leader who can continue advancing our priorities for Montana's communities, at the polls, in Congress, and in the statehouse. I will continue supporting MCV through the first week of June to ensure a smooth and successful transition. But before that, I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who has been a partner, supporter and friend over the past seven years.

My time with MCV has been an incredible experience — one that has shaped me as a mom, an advocate, leader, and community member. I'm leaving this organization full of pride and gratitude, knowing what's possible when a group of deeply committed people unite together to protect a clean and wild Montana for all to cherish and enjoy.

Onward!



Whitney Tawney
Executive Director
Montana Conservation Voters



To learn more about Whitney's announcement and MCV's next steps, scan the code here

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Tax-deductible contributions may be made to the MCV Education Fund, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Visit mtvotersedfund.org for more information.



Annual Member Celebration Report Out



We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended our Annual Member Celebration on February 28. Your participation made the evening truly unforgettable.

It was an inspiring night filled with meaningful connections between Team MCV, passionate conservation advocates, and key state legislators. Together, we reflected on the progress we've made and discussed how we can continue advancing our efforts to protect Montana's public lands and strengthen our democracy.

A special thank you to Betsy Gaines Quammen, our guest speaker, for sharing invaluable insights. Betsy's perspectives on the history of public lands, along with her expertise as the author of *American Zion* and *True West*, deepened our understanding of the critical role we all play in safeguarding these lands for future generations.

Your continued support and commitment to our shared mission are invaluable. We can't do this important work without you. Let's continue working together to protect the places that make Montana so special.

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Standing Up for Montana's Public Lands

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us at the 2025 Rally for Public Lands in Helena. Your support is a powerful reminder of Montanans' unwavering commitment to protecting our public lands. Together, we are sending a strong message that Montana's public lands are not for sale and must remain in public hands.

On February 19, we gathered at the Capitol Rotunda, where over 1,000 passionate Montanans stood united to defend the places we love — places where we hunt, fish, hike, and camp. At the rally, we delivered over 1,000 petition signatures to Governor Greg Gianforte, the Montana State Legislature, and Montana's Congressional delegation, urging them to reject efforts to privatize our public lands and oppose Utah's lawsuit seeking control of federal lands.

Your presence at the rally, along with the overwhelming support shown through the petition, has made a powerful statement. Montanans have spoken loud and clear: Our public lands are not for sale, and we will fight to keep them accessible for future generations.

But the fight is not over. **LC 2912**, a joint resolution sponsored by Representative Tom Millett, supports Utah's lawsuit, which poses a direct threat to over eight million acres of Montana's public lands, including some of our most cherished places, such as the Missouri Breaks, Lee Metcalf Wilderness, and Pryor Mountain Wilderness. With your help, we can make it clear to our elected officials that Montanans won't stand by while our lands are at risk.

As we move forward, your continued support is essential in keeping this fight alive. Our public lands are not just beautiful landscapes; they are integral to Montana's economy, culture, and way of life. Your voice — whether at the rally, through petitions, or in future actions — will help ensure these lands remain protected.

Thank you again for using your voice. Together, we are stronger. We are more than just a group of individuals — we are a community united in our love for Montana's public lands.

SIGN THE PETITION TO ASK REP. MILLETT TO WITHDRAW HIS DANGEROUS RESOLUTION LC 2912 TODAY



SAVE THE DATES

Register for the Legislative Catch-Ups at MontanaPushback.org or by scanning the QR code below



- MARCH 21:** Legislative Catch-Up, Billings
- MARCH 24:** Legislative Catch-Up, Missoula
- OCTOBER 11:** Annual Gala, Livingston
- NOVEMBER 4:** Municipal Elections



Christian Sawicki/Wild Montana

Want more ways to get involved?

Senate Bill 42 has passed the Senate and is now set to be heard in the House Judiciary Committee after transmittal break. This bill would require both Montana District Court and Montana Supreme Court judges to identify a political party when running for judicial positions. This would introduce unnecessary partisanship into a system that should be focused solely on the law and facts — *free from political influence and biased justice.*

Add your voice by signing our petition and telling the House Judiciary Committee that our courts should remain nonpartisan!

SIGN THE PETITION TO OPPOSE SB 42

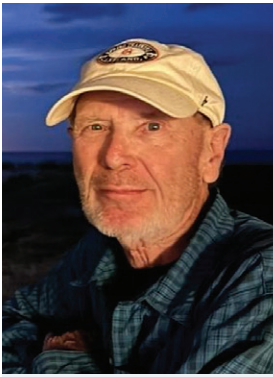


Senate Bill 224 has passed out of the House State Administration Committee and is now headed to the House floor. This important bill would recognize the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples' Day, celebrating the resilience, sovereignty, and invaluable contributions of Indigenous peoples in Montana and across the U.S.

Indigenous communities deserve a day of recognition and honor. Please sign our petition and urge members of the Montana House State Administration Committee to vote YES on SB 224!

SIGN THE PETITION TO SUPPORT SB 224





A Public Advocate: Honoring the Life and Legacy of Jeff Rupp

It is with profound sadness that we mourn the passing of Jeff Rupp on February 20, 2025. Jeff's impact on the Bozeman community was immeasurable, and his unwavering commitment to serving others will forever be remembered.

For over three decades, Jeff's leadership at the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) was transformative. Through his vision and dedication, he helped elevate HRDC into one of the region's largest and most impactful nonprofits. Under his guidance, the organization became a vital lifeline for the community, launching critical services such as the food bank, affordable housing initiatives, and public transportation program that continue to benefit countless individuals today.

Jeff's kindness, integrity, and unwavering passion for improving the lives of those in need left an enduring legacy that stretched across Bozeman and far beyond. His support also extended to MCV and our mission to protect clean air, clean water, healthy public lands, and democracy for all, helping to ensure a brighter, more sustainable future for generations to come.

As we reflect on Jeff's extraordinary life, we offer our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all who were touched by his work. His legacy of compassion and service will continue to inspire us, and his memory will forever guide our efforts to strengthen and uplift our communities.

IMPACTED BY DOGE? Tell Us Your Story

Across Montana and the nation, lives have been upended by the terminations and layoffs of thousands of federal public lands workers — including our friends, family members, and neighbors.

These dedicated individuals are park rangers, hydrologists, firefighters, trail workers, and so much more. They play a vital role safeguarding our public lands and ensuring the safety of those who enjoy them. The loss of these workers is not just a personal hardship — it's a blow to the protection of our natural resources, and the impact will be felt for years to come. These terminations and layoffs put not only livelihoods at risk but also the future of our public lands and the safety of those who rely on them.

We encourage Montanans affected by these actions to share their stories with us at mcv@mtvoters.org. By sharing stories, we can raise awareness of the negative impacts these cuts are having and pressure our leaders to reverse them. Remind our leaders that our public lands are not only a treasure for today, but a legacy we must protect for future generations.

WELCOME to Our Newest MCV Board Member



Sarah Degn, a fourth-generation farmer in the lower Yellowstone River valley, returned to her family's irrigated grain farm in Sidney after a 20-year journey that took her across Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, and Tennessee. Her background in photographic communications allowed her to work in both rural and urban settings while maintaining her connection to the outdoors. Today, Sarah manages her family farm while serving as a school board director, Montana Farmers Union board member, and Next Generation Representative to the National Farmers Union Board. She lives in Sidney with her family, her dog, and a small herd of pampered barn cats.

We are thrilled to have her on our MCV board of directors!

MCV Member of the Month



Madeline Grebb
Missoula, MT

Why are you an MCV member?

I am an MCV member because I feel privileged to be a student voter in our democracy. To make informed decisions, I align myself with groups like MCV, which offer a supportive community with similar values.

What's your top conservation issue and why?

We have the opportunity to power our state with clean energy, yet our administration promotes a "drill, baby, drill" mentality. We must educate ourselves and our neighbors to make informed decisions about clean energy.

Where is your favorite outdoor spot in Montana?

Montana is vast in its beauty. There's nothing quite like hiking through Apgar when the roads are still snowy, but the sun is shining, and you're warm enough to take a polar plunge into Lake McDonald.

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