

Happy September, Montana Conservation Voters!

Today marks one week since I started as Executive Director of Montana Conservation Voters. I'm both humbled and energized to serve this community of Montanans — people who care deeply about the future of our land and our democracy.

For me, this season is a homecoming. I fell in love with Montana's wild places back in 1997. From serving in the U.S. Army, conservation work with the State of Montana, and nonprofit leadership in the University of Montana and other Montana nonprofits, I've always been anchored here by the values this state cultivates.

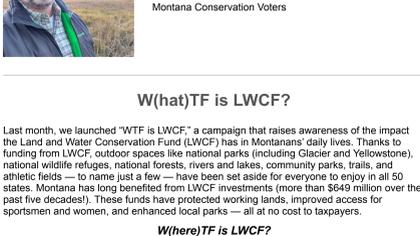
What drew me — and what I believe draws so many of you — to MCV, is the conviction that protecting our land, water, and democracy is not merely a cause but a duty. From the sweeping Big Sky horizons to the deep public lands legacy, Montana has shaped our lives, and we must fight to protect it for future generations.

This fall brings one of the MCV Education Fund's most joyful traditions: the Pups for Public Lands photo contest. Each September for the past four years, Montanans celebrate Public Lands Month by sharing photos of their dogs exploring trails, peaks, and rivers. It's a fun reminder that some of our best conservation ambassadors come with wagging tails and muddy paws. When we enjoy these places responsibly — picking up after our dogs, keeping them safe on the trail, and respecting wildlife — we help ensure that future generations of people and pups can enjoy them, too.

We're also looking ahead to the 2025 municipal elections. Local races may not always grab the headlines, but the officials we choose shape the future of our communities, from clean water policies to smart land use decisions and everything in between. That's why MCV is proud to support candidates across Montana who will stand up for conservation values in city halls and council chambers. You can find our first endorsed candidates in this newsletter, and more endorsements will be announced throughout September. Learn more below and then share your voice and your vote in November.

In the weeks ahead, I'll be hitting the road around Montana visiting communities so I can listen, learn, and share in your love for this place and this work. You are the heartbeat of MCV, and I am honored to move forward with you. If you're in the Livingston area next month, read below for more information on how to snag your ticket to our Annual Gala and join me, our team, and conservation champions in October.

Thank you for welcoming me into this role. Together we will stand up for Montana's conservation values, the democracy that protects them, and the future generations yet to join us on these landscapes we all love.



Yours in conservation,

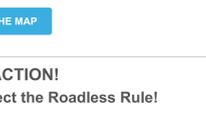
Ben Super  
 Executive Director  
 Montana Conservation Voters

### W(hat)TF is LWCF?

Last month, we launched "WTF is LWCF," a campaign that raises awareness of the impact the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has in Montanans' daily lives. Thanks to funding from LWCF, outdoor spaces like national parks (including Glacier and Yellowstone), national wildlife refuges, national forests, rivers and lakes, community parks, trails, and athletic fields — to name just a few — have been set aside for everyone to enjoy in all 50 states. Montana has long benefited from LWCF investments (more than \$649 million over the past five decades!). These funds have protected working lands, improved access for sportsmen and women, and enhanced local parks — all at no cost to taxpayers.

#### W(her)eTF is LWCF?

Outside Glacier National Park last month, our Program Director Kearnstyn Cook helped lead a rally of community members raising awareness about cuts to park staff and threats to LWCF — which has provided nearly \$8 million in funding to Glacier. In Missoula, Regional Organizer Lindsay Wancour-Torres led a tour of Mittown State Park to showcase how LWCF has invested in our local parks. And our Billings Regional Organizer Jesse Gallegos hosted an event at This House of Books highlighting how LWCF investments strengthen communities and protect access to the outdoors by funding projects such as Billings' Downtown Skatepark.



In short, LWCF is *everywhere* in Montana — from the baseball field down to the street to the national parks that draw millions of visitors every year. To view a map of LWCF projects in YOUR community (and across the U.S.), click below.

[VIEW THE MAP](#)

### TAKE ACTION!

#### Tell the USDA to Protect the Roadless Rule!

At the end of August, the Trump administration announced that they have taken the next step in [repealing the Roadless Rule](#), which protects nearly 60 million acres of National Forest land across the country from logging and development. Roughly 37% of Montana's Forest Service land — 6.4 million acres — qualifies as inventoried roadless Forest Service land. Rescinding the Roadless Rule could impact iconic landscapes such as the Crazy Mountains, Madison Range, Bob Marshall Wilderness edge, Whitefish Range, Cabinet Mountains, and Bitterroot/Selway areas.

Make your voice heard: tell the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that rescinding the Roadless Rule risks turning wild public land into industrial zones, undermining Montana's outdoor way of life. **The comment period is now open and will end on September 19.**

[SUBMIT A COMMENT ON THE ROADLESS RULE](#)

Below are some **talking points** you may find useful in drafting your comment. Please include what feels most relevant for you, and also know that **personal stories** (e.g., fishing in secluded streams, family traditions in the backcountry, concerns about wildfire near your home) tend to be the most impactful.

- 1: Roadless protections ensure Montanans can continue to hunt, fish, hike, ski, camp, and recreate in pristine backcountry.
- 2: Roadless areas are vital for clean drinking water, watershed health, and fisheries. They also safeguard wildlife corridors for species that Montanans value — from elk and moose to grizzly bears and trout.
- 3: Claims that the Roadless Rule hinders wildfire suppression are misleading — the rule already allows firefighting and fuel reduction activities. Building new roads can actually increase fire risk, by spreading invasive species and making forests more fragmented and harder to manage.
- 4: The Forest Service itself has documented that the Roadless Rule reduced timber harvests by less than 1%, so claims that it stifles the timber industry are overstated. Furthermore, tourism and recreation contribute far more to Montana's economy than expanded logging.
- 5: Road building is costly to taxpayers, and maintaining the Forest Service's existing 370,000+ mile road system is already underfunded.

### TELL THE EPA TO UPHOLD THE ENDANGERMENT FINDING

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently [announced a plan](#) to repeal the **2009 Endangerment Finding** — a foundational scientific and legal determination that greenhouse gases (GHGs) endanger public health and welfare. This proposal would strip the EPA of its authority to regulate GHG emissions under the Clean Air Act and reverse nearly two decades of climate policy.

This proposal to repeal the Endangerment Finding is not based on new science. Instead, it ignores decades of GHG research and puts us at high risk of environmental degradation and deepening public health crisis. This repeal is the latest of a wave of the Trump administration's efforts to roll back environmental protections and disregard scientific consensus.

This proposal is not yet final, and public input is critical. The EPA is accepting comments **until September 22, 2025. Tell the EPA to uphold the Endangerment Finding and protect our clean air, clean water, and public health!**

[SUBMIT A COMMENT ON THE ENDANGERMENT FINDING](#)

If you're looking for a way to start your comments, consider some of the **talking points** below. Include what feels most relevant for you, and be sure to include your **personal stories**. Comments with solid information and clear personal connection tend to be the most impactful.

- 1: Without the Endangerment Finding, the EPA would have no legal authority to regulate GHG emissions from motor vehicles, power plants, or the oil and gas industry.
- 2: Unfettered GHG emissions are a compounding crisis that intensify existing health and environmental issues.
- 3: Montana's forests, rivers, and agricultural lands are becoming increasingly vulnerable to wildfires, droughts, loss of snow pack, and other extreme weather patterns — resulting in large part from GHGs trapping heat in our atmosphere.
- 4: Extreme weather patterns also affect Montana's economy, as unpredictable weather patterns disrupt hugely critical industries, such as ranching, farming, and tourism.
- 5: Increases in ozone smog and wildfire smoke are also worsening respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, and extreme heat is now a leading cause of weather-related deaths in the United States.

### TELL THE PSC: DON'T RAISE OUR ENERGY RATES!

This June, The Public Service Commission (PSC) heard NorthWestern's case to raise Montanans' residential energy rates by 20% in order to fund their acquisition of the Yellowstone Generating Station in Laurel. The request would cost customers hundreds more per year, and this comes shortly after the PSC approved a 28% residential rate increase in 2023. Montanans continue to face some of the highest electricity rates in the region — a fact largely driven by monopoly utility NorthWestern Energy's costly fossil fuel investments. The PSC is currently deliberating whether or not to approve the rate increase, and they're expected to make a decision sometime this fall.

NorthWestern Energy is pursuing the most expensive energy sources to increase shareholder profits on the backs of struggling Montanans and at the expense of air and water quality. At a time when the cost of necessities like housing and food is skyrocketing, Montanans can't afford another rate increase.

[TELL THE PSC TO REJECT NORTHWESTERN'S RATE HIKE REQUEST](#)

### ELECTION SEASON IS HERE

Local conservation policies have considerable impact in our neighborhoods, towns, and cities, so electing strong conservation champions to municipal offices is more important than ever. City councils and county commissions shape our communities through decisions on zoning, permitting, and public funding that directly affect clean air, clean water, public lands, and access to parks and open spaces closest to us.

MCV proudly announced its first round of municipal endorsements in late August. The list of initial endorsements is below, and more endorsements will come throughout September. So stay tuned to our email and social media for updates!

Then, make a plan to make your voice heard! Election day is November 4. Ballots will be sent out on October 15. Make sure to return your ballot as soon as possible once it arrives. To check your registration status, check <https://mtvotersportal.mt.gov/WhereToVote.aspx>.

See the first endorsed candidates below, or visit [mtvoters.org/resources/endorsements](https://mtvoters.org/resources/endorsements) to learn more:

- Billings**  
 -Mark Nicholson, City Council Ward 1  
 -Amy Aguirre, City Council Ward 3  
 -Andrew Lindley, City Council Ward 4  
 -Patrick Oip, City Council Ward 5  
 -Mike Nelson, Mayor
- Columbia Falls**  
 -Marjike Stob, City Council
- Havre**  
 -Wade Bitz, Mayor
- Kalispell**  
 -Kyle Waterman, City Council Ward 3  
 -Bruce Guthrie, City Council Ward 4
- Whitefish**  
 -Andy Feury, City Council  
 -Nathan Dugan, City Council

### PUPS FOR PUBLIC LANDS IS IN FULL SWING!

This September, the MCV Education Fund is thrilled to host our **fourth annual Pups for Public Lands photo contest** in celebration of Public Lands Month!

Montana is home to more than **30 million acres of public land** — nearly one-third of the state — and they're central to our lives, communities, and economy. Pups for Public Lands is all about celebrating these wild places responsibly with our most loyal adventure companions — our dogs!

**Enter your pup's photo between now and Sept. 30** for the chance to win one of three **Grand Prize Packages** of supplies from our generous sponsors like Dee-O-Gee Missoula, Toffer Pet Outfitter, and Dee-O-Gee Kalispell. Plus, 10 winners will be featured in our 2026 calendar and receive an official Pups for Public Lands bandana!

Remember to include your dog's name and the rough location of your photo in the caption. Winners will be selected by our panel of judges — Wes Siler, Sam Lungen, Working Dogs for Conservation, and the Humane Society of Western Montana. Dogs are chosen based on **cuteness, natural setting, and doggy attitude**, so show off your pup's best side!

Don't have Instagram? You can still [enter the contest here](#).

We can't wait to see your pup in the running!



### JOIN US FOR A NIGHT TO CELEBRATE MONTANA'S PUBLIC LANDS

Montana Conservation Voters' biggest night of the year is almost here! **Join us on Friday, October 11** in beautiful Livingston for an evening of celebration, connection, and commitment to protecting the Last Best Place.

This year's Gala will feature a delicious dinner by Sadie's Catering and local craft brews from Katabatic Brewing, making it a true taste of Montana.

Our program will be announced soon, but here's a hint: we'll be shining a **spotlight on Montana's public lands** — and the leaders, advocates, and everyday Montanans working tirelessly to protect them.

**Even if you can't attend, you can still make a difference!** Consider [donating an item to our silent auction](#) or [submitting a sponsorship](#) and donating your tickets back to the community. We'll ensure those tickets go to community members who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend, helping us broaden the movement for conservation and democracy across Montana. Reach out to Jessica Lillie to learn more ([jessica@mtvoters.org](mailto:jessica@mtvoters.org)).

Tickets are going fast, and space is limited. Don't wait, secure your spot today, and be part of this unforgettable evening supporting the landscapes we cherish.

[BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW](#)

Together, we can ensure Montana's wild places are protected for generations to come.

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 Reilly Neill  
 Protect Our Winters

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 Roy O'Connor  
 OnSite Energy  
 C.B. Pearson  
 Karla Raettig  
 Juanita Vero

### FIELD NOTES

This month's field note is a comes from the Janie Roberts, who is canvassing with MCV for her second season. Janie is a part of the "Billings Besties," our nickname for the Billings Field Team, whose closeness and camaraderie make them a strong force in the community. In her field note, Janie reflects on returning to the doors, reconnecting with voters, and the small details that help spark conversations.

"It is great to be canvassing with the MCV Action Fund again! It feels both familiar and new, and my first day out on the doors, I was nervous. My fellow MCV vets helped me jump right back in and feel the exciting energy of being in the community again. I am so glad we are picking up where we left off last year by supporting Dr. Mark Nicholson. He is a great advocate for those in need, which makes him a great candidate to chat about with voters.



Janie Roberts, Billings, MT

As the Billings Besties all know, I love plants and flowers and will always comment on ones I see in voters' yards. It is a great way to ease people into talking politics! I hope to see many thriving plants and funny doormats this election cycle, and I'm so happy to be back on the Billings Besties team!"

### MEMBER of the MONTH



Steve Caldwell  
 Livingston, MT

**Why are you an MCV member?**

MCV sets the gold standard for the support of conservation minded candidates for every level of local and state office in Montana. You cut through the chaff that surrounds each election season with a clear focus on the issues and questions that matter most for conservation, and your documentation of legislator votes on key bills is second to none in enlightening our elected officials' sector positions on those issues. Nobody does it better.

**What's your top conservation issue and why?**

Keeping public lands in public hands is becoming increasingly challenging as historic public accesses are closed off, landowner permissions for responsible access are no longer assured, and federal agencies abandon claims to public easements on historic routes. It's critical that we prevent these trends from leading to the de facto privatization of public lands.

**Where is your favorite outdoor spot in Montana?**

My favorite outdoor spot is anywhere in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness!

### SAVE THE DATES

**September 9:** Municipal Primary Election Day

**September 16:** National Clean Energy Week

**September 22:** National Voter Registration Week (Check your registration [HERE](#))

**September 27:** National Public Lands Day

**September 30:** Stop Towards Stewardship, 6-7 p.m at [Blue Mountain Trailhead](#)

**September 30:** Last day to submit a photo of your dog in the [Pups for Public Lands photo contest!](#)

**October 11:** 2025 Annual Gala, Livingston Depot in Livingston ([RSVP HERE](#))

**October 13:** Indigenous Peoples' Day

**October 15:** Watch for ballots in the mail!

**November 4:** Municipal Elections

### STAY CONNECTED

School is back in session and summer is dwindling, but that doesn't mean we're slowing down. Our Pups for Public Lands photo contest runs this whole month (head on over to Instagram to enter), and municipal elections are coming up soon. To stay in the know with all things Team MCV, like the 2025 Annual Gala and field events, click the links below and follow us on social media.



Paid for by Montana Conservation Voters  
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