



MCV MATTERS

Hello, Montana Conservation Voters!

Summer is in full swing and across the Big Sky State, there's incredible energy in the air. Our teams have hit the pavement canvassing and are busy hosting community events statewide. A huge thank you to everyone who joined us at our Livingston and Billings events last month! It was wonderful to see so many new and familiar faces, and we're gearing up for our Conservation Celebration coming up on Wednesday, September 23 at the Union Club in Missoula.

There is a lot happening in the conservation world this summer. Supporting MCV-endorsed candidates and ballot initiatives is our top priority. During the primary election, Judge Amy Eddy demonstrated that her independence and highly-regarded record as a district court judge will carry her to victory in November. Furthermore, CI-132 (Montanans for Nonpartisan Courts) and CI-133 (Montanans Decide) will be on the ballot. Both are critical initiative that defend our constitutional rights and democratic processes. In federal races, we're standing by federal candidates Seth Bodnar for U.S. Senate and Sam Forstag for U.S. House. We trust these leaders will be dedicated, effective champions for conservation in Washington, D.C. At the local level, we are closely monitoring data center developments across the state and working with coalition partners to protect Montanans' right to know and ensure we all have a say in decisions about our communities and environment.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed, but no one is protecting Montana alone. You don't have to sit on the sidelines doomscrolling. We've made it easy with a list of ways you can get involved right here. United, our actions make a huge difference on conservation issues facing Montana today.

Thank you for standing with us, and get out there!

Ben Super
Executive Director
Montana Conservation Voters



GET INVOLVED TODAY

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MCV Members: Serve on an endorsement panel!
See Page 2 for info

Apply to join a Field Team!
Find a link on Page 4

THANK YOU for adding your name to get **CI-132** and **CI-133** on the ballot.

Reach out to the PSC demand transparency around data centers.
See the QR code on Page 3

Research data center ballot initiatives in your area.
Learn more on Page 3

Visit mtvoters.org/donate to power our work with your membership!

Join us at upcoming events!
Find events on page 4

Follow & Share our work on socials, all @mtvoters!

COMMON GROUND: MCV'S ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

Montana Conservation Voters takes the process of endorsing candidates very seriously. The staff, board and MCV members have a voice and a point of view to consider. MCV is looking for the best candidate in a given race. The one that is best on our issues has the best chance of being an effective elected official, and running a viable campaign. Ultimately, the interview process is the start of a relationship between the candidate and MCV. Like all relationships; personal, professional or otherwise, the dynamics can be complicated. So what's the goal? Why do it?

MCV endorses candidates so that our members and all Montana voters can make an informed choice on the ballot. That's obvious and I think most people get that. What often gets lost in discussion, and is so critical, is that the endorsement forms a positive relationship between the candidate and MCV. That positive relationship enables MCV to better influence that candidate on policy.

The fact is, MCV endorses candidates that we do not agree with 100%. That's how most, if not all, relationships work. But because of the goodwill we generate, MCV is in a position to move that candidate towards our preferred policy position.

Find more about our endorsement process and opportunities to serve on local endorsement committees at mtvoters.org/endorsements. It's one of the most important elements of being an MCV member. We value your participation.



Top: Team MCV at a summer event in Billings, MT
Bottom: Field team members Jen Gross and Jesc Gallegos

MONTANANS' CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS DON'T DEFEND THEMSELVES

For MCV, protecting Montana's Constitution is conservation work. Courts that apply the law fairly are essential to defending Montana's constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. And the citizen initiative process gives Montanans a path forward when elected officials fail to act.

After several legislative sessions marked by efforts to carve away at Montana's judiciary and restrict the citizen initiative process, two constitutional initiatives — CI-132 and CI-133 — launched to, respectively, protect our independent judiciary and preserve every Montanan's right to bring issues directly to the ballot.

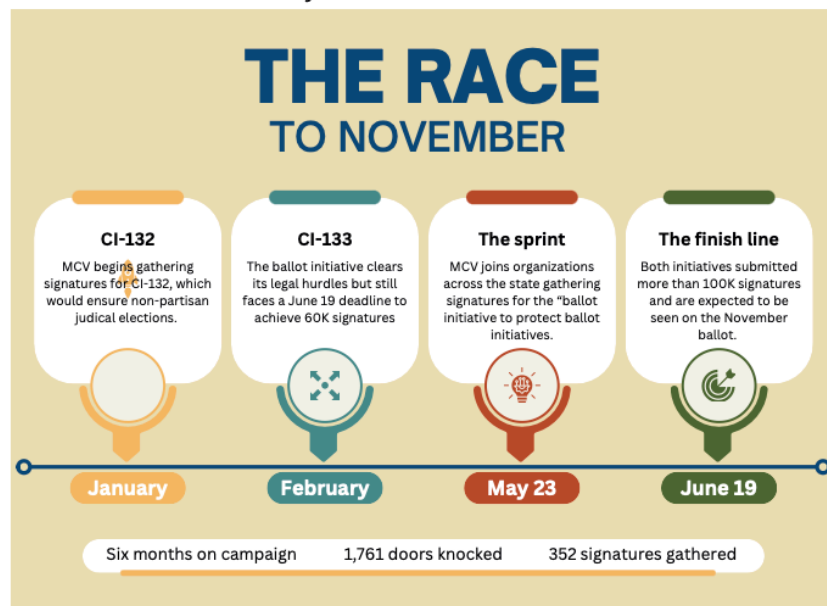
MCV stepped up for both campaigns.

Billings Regional Organizer Jesc Gallegos led MCV's on-the-ground signature gathering effort, training canvassers and keeping the field program moving. CI-132 was approved to circulate in October 2025, giving the campaign eight months to collect signatures. Team MCV gathered signatures from January through March. CI-133 was different. Although it launched that same October, the campaign spent the winter in court and could not begin collecting signatures until after a February ruling. The deadline never changed: June 19.

The irony was unmistakable. CI-133 would require adequate time for signature gathering and prevent petitions from being rejected over minor technical errors, yet the campaign itself nearly lost its opportunity to gather signatures.

MCV joined the effort on May 23. In less than four weeks, we built and trained our teams, completed all the necessary registration, and spread the word door-to-door across Yellowstone County. On Primary Day, the team road-tripped to Red Lodge for our highest-yield signature gathering event of the campaign. By June 19, every signature packet had been quality checked and submitted before the deadline.

Statewide, both campaigns submitted more than 100,000 signatures each to Montana's county election offices.



FIGHTING FOR TRANSPARENCY: DATA CENTERS IN MONTANA

Data centers are all the rage right now. Companies are scrambling to build them, residents are rallying against them. Every day, we open our phones and there's a flood of articles touting them and decrying them, and maybe you're tired of hearing about them. If that's the case, sorry, but bear with me for a moment.

In early June, I went to Butte to talk to residents about data centers and interview them for social media. And for all the articles I've read and news stories I've watched of communities talking about this behemoth issue, it doesn't come close to sitting down with people and hearing it firsthand.



Communications Manager
Anna Shaffer

Confusion. Fear. Indignation.

"What exactly do these data centers do?" I was asked.

In another conversation, someone called them "inhuman."

There were questions about what they could even do to stand in the way of these tech giants. It made me realize even I don't have a full grasp of the ins and outs.

What do I know? I know that showing up matters. Saying something matters. There are so many ways to get involved. But it can feel overwhelming, so start local. Show up at a city council or county commission meeting, contact the PSC, look up petitions in your area. Change takes action.

I'm writing this on July 10 just after watching the Missoula County Commission meeting from July 9. The Commission unanimously passed a 1-year moratorium on data centers. It came just after the owner of Bonner Mill pulled support from a data center company looking to build on the land. Before that, a petition was started. It sits at 49,503 signatures at the time I'm writing this.

Love them or hate them, data centers are moving too fast. Government bodies need to take a page out of the Missoula County Commission's book and listen to their constituents. At every level of government, Montanans need their elected officials to think about the people, the land, the water, and the critters that make up this place we call home. Our leaders need to learn what I did from the folks I met in Butte. This issue is too big, too complex, and communities too unsure for data centers to move forward in Montana without measured, transparent conversations and meaningful regulation.

On June 24, Montana Conservation Voters hosted a webinar featuring Governor Brian Schweitzer where we discussed the impact of data centers in Montana and ways residents can get involved.

AI data centers are massive facilities that can use as much electricity as 100K households. As multiple projects are proposed across the state, they raise serious questions about energy use, water consumption, infrastructure costs, and community impacts. Without proper safeguards, a surging demand could strain the state's power grid, raise costs for ratepayers, and pressure water systems.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) recently conducted hearings on the proposed merger between NorthWestern Energy and Black Hills Energy. NorthWestern executives have openly stated the merger is about positioning the company to "capture data center opportunities" and expand energy infrastructure to meet growing AI demand. Yet regulators and the public still have not been given critical details about these projects or their impacts. NorthWestern CEO, Brian Bird, will receive a \$16 million bonus if this merger is successful and the top five executives will get \$30 million in bonuses, so the company has an incentive to hide the ball.

There is still time to contact the PSC and let them know that Montanans want the commission to step up and demand transparency around data centers before any merger is approved. Scan the QR code here to tell the PSC that Montanans have a right to know.



Scenes from Butte, MT



LOCAL VOICES MATTER

MCV is calling on the Yellowstone County Commission to put our citizen-driven data center initiative on the November ballot. For weeks, hundreds of volunteers gathered signatures to hit the August 12 deadline officially set by the county elections office.

At the last minute, the county reversed course, claiming the real deadline was actually July 13 based on a 2025 state law they had failed to enforce for over a year. This isn't an isolated mistake — it follows a months-long pattern of pushback, including the county suing to block its own approved petition and attempting to restrict signature gathering at public events.

What can you do? Residents of Yellowstone County can contact the Commission and urge them to put the initiative on the ballot. Find your local commissioner and meeting materials at www.yellowstonecountymt.gov/Commissioners/.

Montana Conservation Voters CONSERVATION CELEBRATION

SEPTEMBER 23 + 6-8 PM + UNION CLUB + MISSOULA

Team MCV is heading to Missoula this fall! On September 23, we're gathering friends and conservation leaders downtown at the Union Club for a fun evening of community and conversations about the future of Montana. We're especially excited to be joined by special guest Sam Forstag, MCV-endorsed candidate for U.S. House. Space is limited, so snag tickets for yourself and friends at mtvoters.org/events.

Want to help bring this event to life? You can support the conservation community and MCV's mission as an event sponsor. More information is available at mtvoters.org/events or by contacting Development Director Jessica Lillie at jessica@mtvoters.org.



Billings Lead Canvasser Nathaniel Carter

OPENING DOORS IN BILLINGS: MEET NATHANIEL CARTER

I have been canvassing since 2019, leading teams and working with environmental nonprofits across Montana. Over the years, I've knocked on doors throughout south-central Montana, talking with people about environmental issues and the candidates who will protect our state's natural value. From Lame Deer to Bozeman, I've had the opportunity to meet Montanans from all walks of life, and I'm excited to bring the skills and experience I've gained to MCV.

When I'm not canvassing, you'll find me wandering Montana's remote wilderness in my signature oversized sunhat and a writing journal full of mostly illegible notes that I hope will eventually become a science fantasy novel. I live with my partner, Jackie, and our two rescued cats, Squinton and Sakira.

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Does Nathaniel's passion sound familiar to you? Interested in leading conservation conversations in your neighborhood? We are actively looking for canvassers in the Bozeman area! Visit mtvoters.org/opportunities for more information!

SAVE THE DATES

Sep. 1: Enter our Annual Pups for Public Lands Contest to kick off Public Lands Month! Visit mtvotersedfund.org/pups for more details.
Sep. 3: 62nd Anniversary of LWCF
Sep. 15: National Voter Registration Day
Sep. 23: MCV Conservation Celebration
Oct. 5: Regular voter registration closes



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