



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

# WILD MONTANA

SUMMER 2015

**THE SACRED  
BADGER-TWO MEDICINE**





# MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

**Montana Wilderness Association works with communities to protect Montana's wilderness heritage, quiet beauty, and outdoor traditions, now and for future generations.**

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## PROTECTING THE BADGER-TWO MEDICINE

Managed by the Lewis and Clark National Forest, the 130,000-acre Badger-Two Medicine lies along the Rocky Mountain Front, directly south of Glacier National Park. Known as Miistakis, the Backbone of the World, the Badger is sacred to the Blackfeet people and directly tied to their culture and traditions. The mountains, valleys, and prairie that define the Badger support healthy populations of grizzly bears, wolves, elk, and mountain goats. Its cold rivers and streams support the last pure population of westslope cutthroat trout east of the Continental Divide. Thanks to the persistence of the Blackfeet and conservation advocates, the Badger remains a haven of wild and sacred country.

But the Badger-Two Medicine faces the imminent threat of oil and gas development.

Protecting the Badger from industrial development has been a 30-year saga going back to the early 1980s, when the Department of the Interior, under Secretary James Watt, illegally issued 47 oil and gas leases in the Badger. Watt went on to found the Mountain States Legal Foundation, which is now representing an oil company that is suing the Department of Agriculture in its bid to drill in the Badger. A Washington, D.C. district court judge will decide this summer whether to allow it. An adverse decision could open more than 40,000 acres to development.

In partnership with the Blackfeet, Montana Wilderness Association is prepared to help defend the wild integrity and cultural significance of the Badger in the courts. In the meantime, we are joining with the Blackfeet and other tribes in calling on the Department of the Interior to cancel all remaining leases in the Badger. In the months to come, MWA and Blackfeet members will continue mobilizing Montanans and others across the country in support of canceling the leases, so that our voices are heard in the halls of the Department of the Interior and help persuade the Obama administration to protect the Badger from the desecration and destruction industrial development would bring to this special place.

***In partnership with the Blackfeet, Montana Wilderness Association is prepared to help defend the wild integrity and cultural significance of the Badger.***

MWA is also joining with the tribe in an effort to connect Blackfeet youth to this wild and sacred area, something the tribe views as essential for the survival of their culture. In partnership with the Blackfeet Community College, we're offering an innovative trail stewardship program, whereby crews of Blackfeet youth will have the opportunity go into the Badger for a week at a time to maintain key trails and learn about the area's cultural and ecological significance. MWA is honored to be part of this program.

MWA is a community of people who love the outdoors and champion wild places like the Badger. Thank you for being a part of our community and standing up for the wild places that define Montana and our wilderness heritage. Enjoy the rest of your summer and please consider joining us for one of our 150 Wilderness Walks, Continental Divide trail projects, or wilderness inventories. You can learn more about these adventures at [wildmontana.org](http://wildmontana.org).



Lee Boman,  
MWA President



Brian Sybert, MWA  
Executive Director

**WILD**  
M O N T A N A

SUMMER 2015

### SACRED GROUND

On the cover: Badger Creek in  
the sacred Badger-Two Medicine

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# sacred ground

The fight to protect  
Badger-Two Medicine and  
the Blackfeet identity

***At the end of last year we celebrated one of the biggest conservation victories Montana has seen in a long time when Congress passed the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, permanently protecting all but a portion of the Front. That portion is the Badger-Two Medicine, sacred to the Blackfeet Nation and important in just about every way a place can be.***

In a letter to President Obama requesting cancellation of all oil and gas leases in the Badger, Earl Old Person, chief of the Blackfeet Nation, explained the profound significance of this area:

“The Badger-Two Medicine for thousands of years has helped shape the identity of the Blackfeet people,” he writes. “This area has been utilized as a sanctuary for not only the wildlife, but also for our people to come together and realize their spirituality and to be in touch with their creator.”

MWA stands with the Blackfeet in declaring the Badger-Two Medicine off-limits to oil and gas drilling. As Tribal Business Council Secretary Tyson Running Wolf put it, “Drilling the Badger-Two Medicine will never be an option.”

“If we allow oil and gas development in the Badger-Two Medicine, the very foundation of who we are will be gone,” Running Wolf says.

Nineteen tribes have echoed the call for lease cancellation, as have the Blackfoot Confederacy, the National Congress of American Indians, and the Montana and Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council.

*continued*



*Leanne Falcon*

*The painted designs on Blackfeet tipis (or lodges) have special significance. Bottom designs represent Mother Earth, with round shapes referring to hills and sharp shapes to mountains. The middle section shows animals who are the owner's spirit-helpers. The upper part represents heavens and the stars. (Source: Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB)*





In May, Sen. Jon Tester, joined by Pearl Jam bassist and Montana native Jeff Ament, also called for the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to cancel all remaining oil and gas leases in the Badger.

Cancelling the leases could vanquish the menace hanging over the Badger—a bid by Louisiana oil company Solenex to develop one of 47 leases the Department of Interior illegally granted back in the 1980s. Solenex holds one of 18 leases that haven't been retired yet, and if its bid to drill is successful, the other leaseholders could follow suit, bringing devastation to the Badger.

Home of the Blackfeet creation story and a place of continuous

human use going back 10,000 years, the Badger-Two Medicine provides vital habitat for grizzly bears, wolverines, Canada lynx, pure westslope cutthroat trout, the rare Bitterroot flower, and a number of other species on or not far from the Endangered Species List.

The Blackfeet celebrated both the cultural and biological uniqueness of the area on July 27, when it hosted Badger-Two Medicine Day.

*Above: Terry Tatsey, Blackfeet Community College administrator  
Below: Badger-Two Medicine, home of the Blackfeet creation story*



Preparations for the celebration began a days earlier with a ceremony at Mittens Lake, where prayers were offered throughout the night for the Badger and for the people working to protect it.

On the day before the celebration, tribal members guided flights for media over the proposed oil and gas well site before joining in the dedication of the new skateboard park in Browning. Recognized at the event for his leadership in protecting the Badger and for bringing the skate park to the community, Sen. Tester was definitive about drilling in the Badger. "I am going to make sure it doesn't happen," he said.



**"If we allow oil and  
gas development in  
the Badger-Two  
Medicine, the very  
foundation of who  
we are will be gone."**

—Tyson Running Wolf, Blackfeet Tribe

Despite the unseasonably hot weather, more than 100 people arrived at Mittens Lake, near Heart Butte, for the celebration. Participants were treated to several presentations throughout the morning, including talks by Tribal Historic Preservation Officer John Murray and University of Arizona archaeologist Maria Nieves Zedeno, who discussed her decade of work studying the Badger. Blackfeet Community College administrator Terry Tatsey told stories of the experiences he's had in the Badger going back to when he was a boy. The crowd also witnessed a special song sung in honor of the Badger, led by Chief Old Person.

Many of the attendees spent the rest of the day hiking and riding horses in the Badger, gaining an appreciation for how truly special this area is and feeling inspired to help finish the job of protecting all of the Rocky Mountain Front.

"After working together to pass the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, we must build upon that collaboration to protect the Badger-Two Medicine for future generations," Sen. Tester says. "Preserving the most unique places in Montana is critical to our heritage, our economy, and our future."





# A SEASON OF ADVENTURE, BEAUTY, AND COMMUNITY WITH MWA

Every summer, Montana Wilderness Association offers a bevy of opportunities for folks to explore our state's wonderful wildlands. You can join a Wilderness Walk, volunteer to help build the Continental Divide Trail, or help build the case for wilderness protection by participating in a wildlands inventory. Here are some snapshots and impressions from a few of the 150 adventures we're offering this summer. There are still plenty of outings left this summer and fall. For more information and to pre-register, visit [wildmontana.org/walks](http://wildmontana.org/walks).



"Seven lady artists and one lucky guy gathered together to beat the heat and try their hand at art in the wild as our special guest co-leader Terrel Jones of Fine Art Studio in Troy coached our budding artists in the cool shade of old growth cedars. Each of us found our own special spot and went straight at our quiet interpretations, which all turned out quite well! We hope to finish these pieces and display at a fall event."

—Brian Baxter of Libby, co-leader of the **Plein Air Art Field Day in the Kootenai National Forest**



"I've wanted to climb the iconic Sleeping Giant for twenty years. The MWA-organized hike finally provided that opportunity. The hike was memorable, both for the incredible vistas so close to Helena and the wonderful group of fellow hikers. Gazing out from the Giant's soaring nose over the sweeping bends of Holter Lake, the limestone cliffs of the Big Belt Mountains, and the views west toward the Continental Divide was an experience I'll never forget."

—Jeff Erickson of Helena, hiker on the  
**Sleeping Giant Wilderness Walk.**

Photo taken on the tip of the  
Sleeping Giant's nose.





# A SEASON OF ADVENTURE, BEAUTY, AND COMMUNITY WITH MWA

"Fifteen hikers, including a family from Virginia, enjoyed a leisurely and shady hike to Grotto Falls in the Gallatin Range. The ages ranged from a 65-year-old grandpa to an 18-month-old grandson. The kids enjoyed a scavenger hunt that included birds, pine cones, flowers, rock cairns, wild mushrooms, animal tracks, and flying bugs. Family-friendly hikes are a terrific way to get kids excited about the amazing world of wilderness and bring families together."

—Steve Anderson of Bozeman, hiker on the **Grotto Falls Family Hike and Picnic**



"Though only a two-and-a-half-hour or so drive from Bozeman, the Pryors feel like a world apart. I got to see fossils, what may have been old Indian pottery or tools, wildflowers of every variety blanketing the hillsides, bear sign, and, most importantly, complete silence and solitude."

—Christy Oliveri of Bozeman, volunteer on the **Pryor Mountains wildlands inventory**

John Todd







Steve Anderson

"I volunteered on the CDT because I am intrigued by the trail itself and thought this opportunity would allow me to learn more and also give back to the great trail system we have in Montana. The experience was extremely rewarding, from the good sweat the work induced to the laughs and knowledge our group shared. We had an amazing diversity of backgrounds and interests and genuinely enjoyed each other's companionship, while also getting a lot of good work done in the meantime!"

—Toni Henneman of Valier, an MWA volunteer who helped build the Granite Butte portion of the **Continental Divide Trail**



Sonny Mazzullo

"The weather was perfect for this year's hike in the Badger-Two Medicine, with blue skies and a slight breeze. We had a leisurely walk from the South Fork of the Two Medicine River to Hall Creek, through shady forests and sunny meadows. It was exciting to come across grizzly, moose, and wolf tracks. It was very clear that many creatures besides us were enjoying this trail!"

—Leanne Falcon of Browning, project coordinator at Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance and co-leader of the **Hall Creek Wilderness Walk**



Leanne Falcon

# UPDATES FROM THE FIELD



## THE GALLATIN COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE TAKES A BIG STEP FORWARD

Everyone who lives in Livingston, Bozeman, Big Sky and beyond knows the Gallatin Range is more than just our big, wild backyard — it's the backbone of a strong community. That's why a group of dedicated citizens have been working together for the past three years to find a lasting solution for one of Montana's last best places.

Last month, the Gallatin Community Collaborative agreed to a shared interest statement that highlights the range's ecological, economic, and recreation values that make it special. The collaborative also recognized the value of maintaining wilderness character and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

There's much at stake. The Gallatin Range is a source of clean, clear water for local communities and a place where grizzlies and wolverines still roam. And it's the location of an extraordinary recreation experience for outdoor enthusiasts of every stripe.

But Montanans know that if we head down the path with an "anything goes" attitude on our public lands, we'll soon find there's nothing left to enjoy. The wild Gallatin Range is why we live here, but its future depends on the decisions we make today.

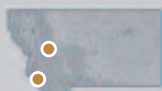
At the end of the day nearly 40 people unanimously approved the interest statement. You can read it in its entirety at [gallatincollaborative.org](http://gallatincollaborative.org). It's a breakthrough for a landscape that's been mired in decades of debate. But there's still more work to be done.

This summer, four working groups will continue meeting over cups of coffee at fire halls to craft recommendations that not only respect an outdoor way of life, but protect the wild backcountry of the Gallatin Range for the next generation of Montanans as well.

To get involved or learn more, contact me at [jtoddwildmontana.org](mailto:jtoddwildmontana.org).

*—John Todd, acting state program director*





## FOREST SERVICE RELEASES TWO INSPIRING TRAVEL PLANS

April brought some great news for two of Montana's forests. The U.S. Forest Service released inspiring draft travel plans for the entire Bitterroot National Forest and for the Continental Divide portion of the Helena National Forest, offering bold conservation measures that sustain quiet enjoyment and protect vital wildlife habitat in some of Montana's wildest places.

Both of these plans reaffirm what you can achieve when you write letters, provide comments, attend meetings, and otherwise take a stand on behalf of our wild places.

The Bitterroot travel plan guarantees exceptional wildlife habitat and restores historic quiet recreation in the Sapphires and Blue Joint Wilderness Study Areas by eliminating motorized and mechanized use within these areas. It maintains the potential for wilderness quality lands to be included in the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Areas. And it protects backcountry hunting, fishing, and quiet enjoyment of the Sapphire Mountains by removing motorized use from the wild Stony Mountain Roadless Area.

The Divide travel plan ends decades of lawlessness along the Divide and its slopes, where off-road vehicles have trampled native plants, spread weeds, exposed bare soils, and blazed illegal routes across roadless areas. The plan makes the Continental Divide Trail corridor, the Sweeny Creek-Priest Pass area, Kading Ridge, and the Nevada Mountain proposed Wilderness, with its wildlife-rich cirque basin, mostly off-limits to off-road motorized vehicles securing habitat for elk, grizzlies, wolverines, and lynx.

Let the U.S. Forest Service know you appreciate and support these two travel plans. For the Bitterroot travel plan, you can thank Forest Supervisor Julie King at [jkking@fs.fed.us](mailto:jkking@fs.fed.us). For the Divide travel plan, you can thank Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests Supervisor Bill Avey at [wavey@fs.fed.us](mailto:wavey@fs.fed.us).

*—Zack Porter, western Montana field director & John Gatchell, conservation director*



## TWO BLM MANAGEMENT PLANS FAIL TO PROTECT MONTANA'S EASTERN WILDLANDS

The Terry Badlands Wilderness Study Area has appeared on billboards, bus boards, and semi trucks from New York to Seattle promoting Montana as the marvelous tourist destination it is. Smaller than the Terry Badlands, but just as rugged and colorful — with views just as sweeping — is North Fallon, located a short distance from the Yellowstone River in southeast Montana.

North Fallon is just one of the many wild areas that the Bureau of Land Management has, unfortunately, failed to protect in its current resource management plans (RMPs) for the 2.8 million acres it manages in southeast Montana and the 2.4 millions acres it manages along the Hi-Line. Together, these two BLM districts hold some of the largest, most intact prairie wildlands remaining on all the Great Plains. Running through these lands is a vibrant history going back thousands of years.

As anyone who has hiked North Fallon in southeast Montana or spent any time in Black Elk Coulee or in the Lamere/Lambing Coulees near the Hi-Line knows, these areas offer no shortage of solitude and provide no lack of opportunity for having an experience every bit as primitive and wild as you can have in the mountains of western Montana. They need protection so they stay that way.

MWA is protesting these two management plans and asking the agency to honor its multiple-use mandate and restore some balance by protecting the last remaining wildlands across eastern Montana.

You can help by sending an email to Jamie Connell, the BLM state director, at [BLM\\_MT\\_HiLine\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_MT_HiLine_RMP@blm.gov). Urge her to take a more balanced approach to the Miles City and Hi-Line plans and tell her that North Fallon, Wrangler, Ridge, Whitetail, and Rough in southeast Montana, as well as Black Elk and Lamere/Lambing Coulee along the Hi-Line, all deserve to be managed to protect their wilderness character. Also request that the BLM update its wilderness inventory in southeast Montana so it's in compliance with the agency's own wilderness criteria.

*—Mark Good, central Montana field director*

# WILD FEST 2015

**CELEBRATE MONTANA'S  
WILD PLACES WITH FUN  
FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2015 • FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS  
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**Join us for activities, food, and live music.** Enjoy hikes to Humbug Spires, Storm Lake and Goat Flats, German Gulch, Stimac Homestead Cabin, and Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area. Or go on an historic driving tour of Butte.

**From 2 to 4 p.m., the indoor program** includes *The Missouri Headwaters – 80 Years Wild*, a presentation by Wilderness historian and author Frederick Swanson. Fred will share stories of the sportsmen, ranchers, wildlife biologists, and Forest Service officials who worked with MWA members to protect roadless lands in the Anaconda Range, Sapphire Range, and the unspoiled watershed of the Big Hole River.

**Fun, kid-centered outdoor activities start at 2 p.m.**

**Live music begins at 5 p.m.** with traditional Irish band Dublin Gulch and continues at 7:30 with bluegrass band The Kitchen Dwellers.

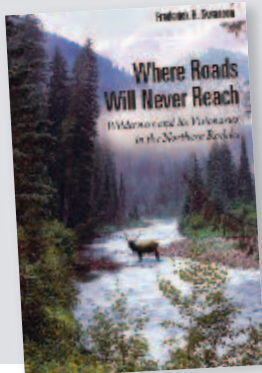
**Silent Auction:** Beginning in mid-August, visit [www.wildmontana.org/wildfest](http://www.wildmontana.org/wildfest) to bid on art, adventure packages, outdoor gear, and more. The online auction will close on Friday, Sept. 11 and bidding will resume on Saturday, Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. at Fairmont Hot Springs.

For more information, visit [wildmontana.org/wildfest](http://wildmontana.org/wildfest) or call (406) 443-7350 ext. 110.



## ***Where Roads Will Never Reach: Wilderness and Its Visionaries in the Northern Rockies***

by Frederick H. Swanson



Every great trip deserves an equally good book. For your next journey down a wild river or up to a high mountain lake, bring along a copy of Frederick Swanson's latest page-turner, *Where Roads Will Never Reach*, and there's a good chance you'll be reading about the land or water under your feet. Swanson's book is a history of efforts to protect wildlands and wildlife of the Northern Rockies.

The visionaries he profiles include MWA founders Ken and Florence Baldwin, as well as past MWA presidents Doris Milner and Cecil Garland. Prepare to be compelled to take action on behalf of your favorite wild place. A former MWA council member, Fred will give a presentation at this year's Wild Fest.



## MEMBERS MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE

Thanks to the new members who joined Montana Wilderness Association from April 1 to June 30, 2015.

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By selecting the "Wilderness" plate next time you visit your licensing bureau, you're not only displaying your pride in our special wild places, but you're helping to protect Montana's wilderness and traditional recreational opportunities for everyone.

For more information, call 406-443-7350 or drop by your county licensing bureau. Go wild with the "Wilderness" plate from the Montana Wilderness Association today.

# JOIN THE WILD BUNCH

Whether you've been a member for years or you just discovered your love of wilderness, you're invited to join the Wild Bunch, a group of amazing people who give monthly to support wilderness. Monthly giving means that your generosity is having a year-round impact on protecting the places you love. It also saves you from having to remember to renew your membership each year.

**Joining the Wild Bunch is easy and secure.** Simply sign up once with a credit card or bank info. If you'd like to adjust or suspend your giving later, we're just a phone call away.

You'll receive all the benefits of membership, including:

- A guide to more than 150 free guided hikes, sent to members each spring
- Our informative newsletter, *Wild Montana*
- Opportunities to get involved with local conservation efforts

In addition, Wild Bunch members receive:

- Personal updates from our executive director
- Invitations to exclusive events
- The satisfaction of knowing you're helping protect wild country throughout the year

**To join the Wild Bunch**, visit [wildmontana.org](http://wildmontana.org) and click on "Wild Bunch" under the Donate tab or call 406-443-7350.

**Thank you for your generous support!**



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