2 From the Chapter President

Extending a warm welcome to our new members and a heartfelt thank you to our new chapter board members.

3 Spring into Summer Webinar is May 27

Join MWA’s Wild Divide Chapter for our virtual Spring into Summer event to celebrate our vibrant wilderness community and wild public lands.

3 Book Release: ‘A Wild Land Ethic’

This exciting new book is dedicated to the late Ken and Florence Baldwin, early advocates in Montana for Wilderness preservation and founders of Montana Wilderness Association.

4 A New Wilderness Proposal

Public lands in Lewis and Clark County are at the center of a Lincoln-based collaborative MWA helped launch.
Greetings to all members of MWA’s Wild Divide Chapter and an especial welcome to the additional 149 members that joined MWA and our local chapter this past year. If you’re new to MWA, local chapters are based on geographical areas and are the heart of our wilderness community.

They’re where volunteers, members, and outdoor enthusiasts meet up, lead and learn from each other, and celebrate our wild places. Under the auspices of MWA, they are “advocacy in action.”

While our in-person events have been put on hold due to Covid-19 concerns, we hope you’ll join us for our Spring into Summer webinar on May 27. Join us in celebrating Montana’s wildest places with readings and conversation about “A Wild Land Ethic,” a new book about the history of wilderness in Montana.

The Wild Divide Chapter Board will not meet in person until further notice, but we’ll continue to operate our meetings through conference calls on the second Wednesday of each month.

We elected a new board at our April 8 meeting. I’d like to welcome our new board members and thank them for dedicating their time and passion to our mission.

Are you interested in volunteering for Montana’s oldest grassroots wilderness conservation organization? We’re currently seeking additional board members and we’d love to meet you! If you are interested and committed to our mission: “working with communities to protect Montana’s wilderness heritage, quiet beauty, and outdoor traditions, now and for future generations,” please give me a call at 406-443-0994.
Join MWA’s Wild Divide Chapter for our virtual Spring into Summer event to celebrate our vibrant wilderness community and wild public lands.

And what better way to honor Montana’s special places than with a discussion about the history of wilderness conservation in Montana with the editors of “A Wild Land Ethic: The History of Wilderness in Montana.”

“A Wild Land Ethic” is an exciting new book that tells the story of the wilderness movement in Montana. More than forty writers and thirty photographers contributed to this book detailing how Montana’s wilderness came to be protected and the work that remains to preserve our state’s unprotected wildlands.

Throughout the book, writers share their personal experiences, sentiments, and first-hand knowledge of some of Montana’s wildest and most iconic places.

Wayne Chamberlain and Dale A. Burk, the editors, will join us to discuss this new book, and Dale and Lou Bruno will share excerpts from their contributions. Readings will be accompanied by photographs of Montana’s beautiful wild landscapes.

We’ll also share how and where you can purchase a copy of the book.

We can’t wait to see you there! Please register and we’ll email you a link to the virtual Zoom event.

SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE TO REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

Or type this URL into your browser:
[p2a.co/OxyIJTu](p2a.co/OxyIJTu)

Find at a local book or gift store near you, or purchase directly from Stoneydale Press at [www.stoneydale.com](http://www.stoneydale.com)
Another Wilderness Proposal Takes Shape

Public lands in Lewis and Clark County are at the center of a Lincoln-based collaborative MWA helped launch

Set along the Big Blackfoot River in the shadow of the Continental Divide, the small town of Lincoln is the birthplace of the nation’s first citizen-initiated wilderness, the Scapegoat.

It’s also where Montana Wilderness Association, the Lincoln-based Ponderosa Snow Warriors snowmobile group, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks signed an agreement over cake and coffee at the Lincoln Community Hall in 2005. The agreement identified areas appropriate for snowmobiling and those that should be set aside for quiet non-motorized recreation and wintering wildlife.

Eight years later, the Lincoln Ranger District officially adopted the 2005 agreement as its winter travel plan. Years of dialogue had overcome bureaucratic obstacles to produce strong outcomes for wildland conservation and recreation, both of which are so vital to Lincoln’s economy.

That success set the stage for more collaborative conservation efforts. In 2015, building on the success of the winter travel plan, a group of recreationists, loggers, local officials, conservationists (including MWA), hunters, and anglers began to discuss developing a comprehensive and unified approach to managing wildlands, fire, logging, fish, wildlife, water, and recreation in the Lincoln area.

Over the course of the next four years, the group discussed, debated, and slowly shaped elements of a common vision. At times, common ground seemed so close; at other times, it seemed implausible to think we could ever bridge such wide chasms of opinion.

Ultimately, we managed to find common ground and forge a plan with which all of the involved parties were comfortable. In January of 2019, a dozen representatives signed a large map in the Lincoln Public Library, agreeing to pursue a unified management agenda incorporating wilderness, conservation areas, motorized recreation, mountain biking, fire mitigation, and forest restoration.

Three major elements comprise the proposal.

Wildland Conservation Areas (119,000 acres)

The proposal would designate the new 40,000-acre Nevada Mountain Wilderness, an area abundant with wildlife – including grizzly bears, Canada lynx, and wolverines – that straddles the backbone of the Continental Divide northwest of Helena. An additional 16,000 acres of wildlands in Arrastra, Red, and Falls Creeks would be protected as additions to the Scapegoat Wilderness.

“The proposal would designate the new 40,000-acre Nevada Mountain Wilderness, an area abundant with wildlife that straddles the backbone of the Continental Divide northwest of Helena.”

- John Gatchell, MWA Senior Conservation Advisor
Join Us!

We're currently looking for volunteers to join our board

We’re looking to grow our chapter membership base – and that includes inviting volunteers to join the Wild Divide Chapter Board.

Our board is made up of passionate wilderness stewards. If you’re passionate about protecting Montana’s wild places and public lands, we’d love to meet you.

Please call Ray at 406-443-0994 to learn more about volunteer opportunities

The proposal would also designate 63,000 acres of conservation management areas along the Continental Divide and surrounding Stonewall Mountain and the Alice Creek National Historic District, which encompasses the prehistoric trail followed by Meriwether Lewis in 1806.

Like the conservation areas designated in the 2014 Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, these areas would be managed to prevent new roads and development while allowing existing uses. CMAs would not be available for mining and oil and gas leasing.

**Forest Restoration Areas (69,000 acres)**

The agreement would establish the Lincoln Gulch and Ogden Mountain Forest Restoration Areas upwind of Lincoln to better prepare communities for wildfire, reduce fuel loads, and improve fisheries and water-sheds to protect grizzly, lynx, and wolverine habitat.

**Recreation Areas and Assets (15,800 acres)**

The 5,200-acre Copper Bowls Winter Recreation Area would be established, allowing snowmobiling consistent with current travel plans. Likewise, the agreement would establish the 10,600-acre Bartlett and Sandbar Creek Recreation Areas north and south of Highway 200, allowing OHV use on designated routes consistent with travel plans.

Finally, an 18-mile non-motorized trail would connect Lincoln to the Continental Divide at Stemple Pass.

The proposal has already gained key endorsements from Lincoln businesses, the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, and the Lewis and Clark County Board of Commissioners. I’m confident that it will continue to pick up steam.