2 From the Chapter President

Learn about the latest from your local chapter and save the date for our upcoming virtual events.

4 Remembering Jim Posewitz

Poz will be deeply missed by so many and celebrated for his commitment to conservation of Montana's wildlands, wild waters, and wildlife. We can all learn from Poz's "Rules of Leadership."

5 Updates From the Field

A year in review from Central Montana Field Director Zach Angstead.

6 Get More Involved with the Chapter

Learn about all the ways you can get involved with the Island Range Chapter.
Wow, what a year 2020 has been. Together we have faced a pandemic not seen in many of our lifetimes, we have experienced an election not like many that have come before and most importantly we have come together in the face of adversity to help each other successfully adapt to a new normal; all while continuing our fight to preserve the beautiful wildlands of Montana.

My hope is that this letter finds you all in good health and spirit as we enjoy the holidays over the coming weeks. I, personally, want to thank each and every one of you for sticking by Montana Wilderness Association’s and the Island Range Chapter’s sides through the difficult times over this past year. Without you and your never-ending patience, we would have not been able to continue defending Montana’s public lands while providing educational content to our members. MWA is truly lucky to have such a devoted following and it is our goal to keep it that way. Thank you.

While we are still in a holding pattern in this chess game with Covid-19, our in-person events – such as the Winter Adventures – are canceled. However, 2021 is providing a light at the end of the dark tunnel that 2020 has been and we will continue to provide you with updates from MWA, educational webinars on all things wilderness, and an opportunity to intermingle with other members of this wonderful association.

To start, on Wednesday, Dec. 16 the Island Range Chapter will host our annual holiday party online. This year’s party will consist of a combination of events we have held separately in the past. We will begin the evening with our annual meeting, presenting you updates on MWA’s mission and current projects in addition to voting for our 2021 Island Range Chapter Board candidates. The best part of the evening will come shortly after the updates when we will begin our celebration of Mark Good and his 26-year career with MWA. We have gathered a large group of Mark’s closest friends, colleagues, and hiking companions, and each will present a memorable story or two of the adventures they have shared with Mark. We’ll end the evening with a toast to Mark and some mingling between our members. I hope you can join us for this event and look forward to seeing your smiling faces. I will let you in on a little secret – I have been told Santa may make an appearance.

January and the year 2021 are just around the corner and we plan on bringing in the new year with a bang! We will host two must-see virtual events in January - the first event will take place on Jan. 14 when the Island Range Chapter will virtually host Wayne Chamberlin as he presents the book “A Wildland Ethic: The Story of Wilderness in Montana.” Wayne co-edited the book with Dale Burk and was in the process of presenting the book, its importance, and sharing some of the chapters with MWA when Dale passed away. Dale had a long history in the world of journalism and was a member of the Montana Conservation Elders. Wayne will continue these programs with MWA in January and he joins the IRC in inviting you to share the evening and stories together.

The second event of January will take place on Jan. 28 with the release of the Backcountry Film Festival (virtual this year). If you have joined us in years past for the film festival, you will agree that the Backcountry Film Festival guarantees an enjoyable evening of exciting, inspirational, and educational outdoor adventures presented by multiple outdoor enthusiasts of all backgrounds. I have marked my calendar and I hope you will do the same. You can purchase your tickets at wildmontana.org/bcff.

MWA’s Island Range Chapter wishes all of you happy holidays and looks forward to ending the year laughing with you at our holiday party, as well as beginning the new year with you learning and exploring. I look forward to seeing and hearing from all of you – cheers to a new year and the serene beauty of the Montana wilderness!

Stay Safe and KEEP IT WILD!

Andrew Stucker
Island Range Chapter President

Monthly Meeting
Every second Tuesday
5:30 p.m. (online for now)

Chapter Leadership
President: Andrew Stucker
Chapter Rep: Camille Consolvo
Treasurer: Dave Wilsey
Secretary: Sara Bulley
Board Members: Dan Bennett, June Sprout, Ralph Knapp, Gerry Jennings, Mike Enk, Rick Kerr, Gordon Whirry, Peter Johnson, Ambassadors: Jay Eklund, Larry and Betty Salois, Dave Mari, Arlo Skari, Eric Heidle

Contact Us
mwafkc@wildmontana.org

Montana Wilderness Association
Island Range Chapter
Virtual Screening
Jan. 28 – Feb. 18, 2021

Tickets available online at wildmontana.org/bcff
$10/individual or $20/group

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F-STOP
Remembering Jim Posewitz
By Gerry Jennings

The Island Range Chapter newsletter is sharing more on the life of Jim Posewitz, as we consider that Poz is one of the giants of conservation in Montana.

We thank the Fall 2020 issue of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers’ Backcountry Journal for the following excerpts from, “BHA says goodbye and thanks to mentor, friend and role model, Jim Posewitz.”

“While I learned from Jim Posewitz was that most positive things on earth, in life, are also the most subversive. Don’t like the way the world is going? Politics got you down? Despair walls us off from the very thing that will save us. There is joyful energy in the world that is like a mighty river flowing around us all of the time. All we have to do is stop our glooming and step into it. Skip rocks with your sons and daughters and the neighbors’ kids, make mud pies and catch bullheads and suckers and chubs on worms, eat elk jerky, make epic and ill-advised wilderness treks with thrift store gear, climb peaks and small hills and soak in the world with a biologist’s eye and a poet’s heart. Write it if you feel compelled but never forget to live it first. Get your work done. Fight for what you love. And all the way through it, on good days or bad, laugh uproariously.”

– Hal Herring, award-winning journalist

“If you asked my Dad about his biggest win, he would instantly say the Yellowstone River, saved from being dammed by a small group of folks, including Jim. If the Yellowstone was arguably Montana’s biggest conservation win, the Clark Fork was very likely its worst loss. The mining activity in the headwaters killed everything in that river for hundreds of miles. Jim’s favorite river to float and fish was the Clark Fork from Clinton to Turah. Every fish in that stretch was the product of the painstaking recovery from the damage that had been done in the name of economic progress. Those fish were a miracle for him. Poz apologized to the river for being born 100 years too late to save it. He was not going to forget it or abandon it.”

– Andrew Posewitz, Jim’s son

“Through his example and many conversations, I learned that if I didn’t succeed it was because I needed to do a better job of motivating people – the people with whom the power of our society resides. From those lessons, my efforts in conservation have benefited greatly. I remind myself that our success is defined by our ability to lead people, to motivate them to the cause of wild places and wild things. No matter the political landscape, the reality is a small group of informed and motivated individuals can forge the path for conservation as they are “the people” and with them lies the power of change.”

– Randy Newberg, friend and host of “Fresh Tracks”

Poz’s Rules of Leadership
Compiled by Ben Long

1. If you think you want to be a leader and you’re not at the head of the parade, don’t worry. You can lead from anywhere within an organization. All you have to do is know where you are going, and never take your eye off the goal. Choose your goal well and the parade will follow.

2. Never let your critics take your time or energy. Learn from criticism, but don’t let it distract you from your goal. You are never going to please any adversary or all your friends.

3. Never, never, never stray from your grassroots constituents. Be one with them and among them and they will never fail you. I have met with a handful of conservationists at Trixi’s Saloon in Ovando, Montana, an testified before committees of Congress. The former is clearly more important. Martin Luther King and Lech Wales never left the streets.

4. Never let your opponent’s appraisal of your chances influence you. If they say you can’t win, or they will kick your butt, show up anyhow. Surrender nothing; make your opponent take it from you. Just standing there makes a big difference.

5. When you talk to your people, preach hope and possibility. Eric Hoffer said revolution is built on hope, not despair. The conservation community is terrible for wailing on the peril of things - that inspire no one.

6. Make everything work for you, the good and the bad. The best example is how the conservation movement used James Watt to rebuild their movement.

7. Don’t let fear hold you back. This is especially applicable to bureaucrats who too often conclude for the selves what they can and cannot get away with. As Churchill said: Play for more than you can afford to lose and you’ll learn to play the game.

8. Trust your intuition and don’t take yourself too seriously. Cling to your sense of humor. Learn to laugh at troubles and you’ll never run out of things to laugh at. Humor allows you to bite the forbidden truth. Besides, it will drive your enemies nuts.
Well, it has been an incredible, albeit daunting first year with the Montana Wilderness Association. I joined the staff last January after being president of the Island Range Chapter for the previous year and a half. To say it has been a challenging year would be an understatement. Between learning to do my work in the new weird normal of the pandemic, working on two legislative campaigns, and the Helena-Lewis and Clark Forest Plan revision – I have kept busy.

I know this hasn’t been an easy year for any of us, but I wanted to walk through a couple of the bright spots we have accomplished together. First, I want to say thank you to the Island Range Chapter Board for my smooth transition from president to staff member. With their help, I have been able to take on my new role successfully. Thank you also to all the members of MWA who reached out or were willing to sit and talk about the wild places they cherish. During that transition, we hosted a successful film festival with near-record attendance (that seems like a long time ago when we could all get together).

Second, the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest released their final environmental impact statement and draft record of decision of the forest plan. MWA members and supporters submitted over 50 objections to the plan, insisting that the Forest Service protect the wildlands of the Snowies, Middle Fork Judith, Tenderfoot-Deep Creek, and the Badger-Two Medicine. Many of these objectors then attended virtual objection resolution meetings to let the Forest Service know why these areas matter and need protection. We are likely to see the final plan released in early 2021 and I am optimistic that we will see Recommended Wilderness for a large portion of the Big Snowy Mountains, some additions to the Scapegoat and Nevada Mountain along the Continental Divide. Unfortunately, it looks like areas in the Little Belts (including the Middle Fork Judith Wilderness Study Area and Tenderfoot-Deep Creek) were once again overlooked for wilderness recommendation.

There was some good news out of the Middle Fork Judith, though. Mark Good’s tireless work to protect the Middle Fork Judith from vehicle use in the river made major headway. The Forest Service agreed in the 2007 travel plan to move an access route from the creek bottom where it was severely impacting water quality and aquatic life. They drug their feet on implementing this decision but because of Mark’s dogged persistence, the Middle Fork Judith project has made major headway. Of the five-phase project, the Forest Service completed the first two phases over the summer, ahead of schedule and under budget. We hope in 2021 phase three can begin and continue the positive momentum.

Looking forward to 2021, I think we are poised to make some really big conservation gains in the Island Range Chapter area. From possibly designating and expanding wilderness to receiving a recommendation of Wilderness for 160,000 acres in the Helena-Lewis and Clark Forest Plan and continuing important work in the Middle Fork Judith, 2021 could be an important year. The only reason we can do it is your willingness to show up to meetings, write comments, and contact your legislator and your support of MWA. We couldn’t do it without you! So thank you for everything you do for MWA and have a happy holiday season.
Do you want to get more involved in the Island Range Chapter? Volunteers are the backbone of our organization and there are a number of ways to get involved. From joining the Island Range Chapter Board, joining events or membership committees, to attending Issue Committee meetings, we need your help. Here are a few different ways to get more involved:

**Join the Island Range Chapter Board** - The Island Range Chapter of MWA meets once a month to promote advocacy of wild places, plan events to bring awareness of local issues and increase membership of MWA. The chapter board is a place where the rubber meets the road for conservation. For the foreseeable future all board meetings will be held virtually until we can safely meet in person again.

**Join the Island Range Events Committee** - The Island Range Events Committee works to bring film festivals, educational events, Wilderness Walks Kick-Offs and celebrations to Great Falls, Lewistown, Havre and the Rocky Mountain Front. And even now in a time when we can’t be together, the events committee has planned a number of virtual programs, from virtual hikes to learning more about local landmarks like the Sluice Boxes. Join the events committee to help plan and host events that bring people together to protect our wildlands.

**Join the Membership Committee** - MWA’s power to protect our public lands comes from the grassroots activism of our members. Simply, the lands we care so much about would be much worse off if it weren’t for MWA members calling and emailing their congressional delegates, writing letters to the editor, tabling at events and bringing awareness to wildland and public land issues. Join the membership committee to help MWA grow its membership base and increase the grassroots power of MWA!

**Attend a Conservation Committee meeting** - The Conservation Committee is spearheaded by central Montana field director Zach Angstead and is a way to learn about the issues that MWA is tackling. Conservation Committee meetings are generally held once a month and usually focus on issues in central Montana but also work that MWA is doing across the state. You may learn about wildland protection issues in administrative plans like for Forest Plan revisions and BLM resource management plans or a number of legislative proposals that MWA is shepherding.

Any one of these is a great area to get more involved in the Island Range Chapter, or you can participate in all of them! If you are interested in getting more involved in the Island Range Chapter, please reach out to central Montana field director Zach Angstead (zangstead@wildmontana.org/406-899-9955) or Island Range President Andrew Stucker (andrew.stucker19@gmail.com).