



# Eastern Wildlands Chapter Newsletter



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## From the Chapter President

The past several weeks have been difficult for our community, but we find solace in our public lands.

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## Exploring the Terry Badlands

Read about the spots in eastern Montana's prairie grasslands and scenic badlands that you should explore this summer.

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## 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.

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## MWA Launches Oil & Gas Campaign

MWA launched a \$25,000 advertising campaign in March calling on Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to respect Montana and restore multiple use on public lands.



# From the President

In these uncertain times, find solace in our public lands

The past several weeks have been difficult for our community. COVID-19 has cast a long shadow over our daily lives. For some, it's a jarring disruption in routine and for others, much more. In times like these, we hope that our wilderness community can find solace in our wild places. Even if public lands aren't accessible to you right now, our relationship with them is profound, as are the memories we've created exploring – and protecting them – together.

That's why now more than ever it's important to continue to fight for our wild places and public lands in whatever way we can. Write a letter to the editor for your local paper. Share our action alerts and news about our wild public lands with your friends and family. Stay connected with the people and places that shape our lives, and keep nurturing each other's passion for wilderness.

Despite the turmoil that this pandemic has created, agencies and officials are still making decisions that will determine the future of our public lands, which means MWA and our supporters have to remain vigilant and active.

Public lands are central to our way of life and our sense of place, and they will play a crucial role in our economic recovery once this crisis passes, which makes their protection all the more essential for the future of Montana and our quality of life.

We hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe and taking care of each other during this difficult time, and hope you can find comfort in our wilderness community. We encourage you to share your photos and stories about our wild public lands with each other on MWA's social media pages. We'll get through this together.



**Roger Otstot**

Eastern Wildlands Chapter President

### Monthly Meeting

Every third Tuesday  
6:30 p.m. (online for now)

### Chapter Leadership

**President:** Roger Otstot

**Vice President:** Kayhan Ostovar

**Chapter Representative:**

Rita Harding

**Secretary:** Claire Overholt

**Treasurer:** Sondra Arnold

**Board Member:** Carole Boerner

### Contact Us

[mwaewc@wildmontana.org](mailto:mwaewc@wildmontana.org)



**MONTANA WILDERNESS  
ASSOCIATION**

Eastern Wildlands Chapter

## Exploring the Terry Badlands

### Must-see sights and how to get there

By Roger Otstot

I have a real affection for stark landscapes.

The mountains are scenic, the foothills are pretty, and babbling brooks running through meadows are nice. But the usually arid, rugged, barren, and wide-open landscapes that can be seen throughout eastern Montana is where I find nature's beauty at its finest.

One of the best, and perhaps least known of these landscapes is the Terry Badlands. Roughly 44,000 acres, the Terry Badlands are a swathe of public land just a few miles northwest of Terry. The land has been managed as a wilderness study area by the Bureau of Land Management since the 1970s, so the wilderness character of the land has been maintained.

One can go any number of directions in the Terry Badlands, but there are couple of areas that you should make sure to see if you explore this wild landscape.

#### Terry Badlands Overlook

To get to the first area, leave Terry heading north on Highway 253 for 2.1 miles until you reach Scenic View Road. Turn left and head down Scenic View Road until the road ends (5.9 miles) and park your vehicle on top at the Terry Badlands Overlook. When you get there, you'll be greeted with an amazing view of the badlands, as well as the prairie wildlands that stretch for miles. You can also catch a glimpse of the Yellowstone River here and there. One can camp, do some off-trail hiking, or just sit and absorb the view.

#### Natural Bridges

The other area I'd recommend visiting is the natural bridges. To get there take the Calypso Trail, which bisects the WSA from the southeast to the northwest. To access the Calypso Trail, travel west out of Terry on Old Highway 10 for approximately 2 miles, turn right, or westward, on Milwaukee Road for a little over



The Terry Badlands on a sunny day (photo by Ted Brewer)

three miles, then drive over a one-lane bridge across the Yellowstone River which originally served as a bridge for the Milwaukee Railroad. A kiosk about a half mile past the river features info about the area and marks the beginning of the Calypso Trail. (note: the road is impassible when wet).

The natural bridges hike begins at the end of the Calypso Trail and takes hikers one can catch glimpses of beautiful badlands and abundant wildlife. The trail is mostly easy to follow because of BLM posts that mark the trail, however in some places, these posts may be down or

damaged. Retrace your steps and carefully scan the horizon for the next post if you lose the trail. At one point the trail will come to a gate. Hikers can pass through this gate as it still resides on public land. Past the gate, the trail will curve southwest, crossing downstream of a broken earthen dam. Soon you will come to the natural bridges. There will be an eroded valley with natural bridges to explore.

Both of these areas are worth the time and effort to get there. One must be very deliberate to visit the Terry Badlands, but the rewards of this stark landscape are worth it.

## A Wild Land Ethic:

### The Story of Wilderness in Montana

By Rita Harding

What better thing could a bunch of old-timers leave for us before taking to those fabled "happy hunting grounds" than to tell us the story, and maybe show us a few pictures as well, of the most remarkable places they've been, the marvelous things they've seen, and the deep respect they've gained for everything wild in Montana.

Dale Burk of Stevensville and Wayne Chamberlin of Helena, along with over 70 other writers and photographers, have done just that in the new book, "A Wild Land Ethic – The Story of Wilderness in Montana."

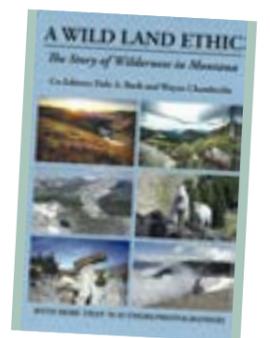
This exciting new book is dedicated to the late Ken and Florence Baldwin of Bozeman, early advocates in Montana for

Wilderness preservation and founders of Montana Wilderness Association.

#### Stories from Eastern Wildlands include:

"The Terry Badlands and Natural Bridges" by Karen Stevenson of Terry

"A Kaleidoscope Love Affair" by Teddy Roe of Billings



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

# MWA Launches Campaign Calling on Bernhardt to Restore Multiple Use

This comes after BLM releases plan opening 95% of public lands in central Montana to oil and gas



On Feb. 14, the Bureau of Land Management released a resource management plan (RMP) for the 650,000 acres of public lands in central Montana administered by the agency's Lewistown Field Office.

Contrary to the BLM's mandate to manage multiple lands for multiple use, the plan allows for oil and gas development on 95% of the Lewistown resource area's surface lands and offers hardly any conservation measures for some of the last intact prairie grasslands in the country.

This RMP will enable the sale of oil and gas leases on some of our wildest public lands in central Montana and some of the most productive habitat in North America for big game and upland birds.

That's why we held a telephone press conference about the RMP on March 19 with several reporters, which generated articles in the Billings Gazette, Great Falls Tribune, and other statewide and national news outlets. That's also why we launched a \$25,000 advertising campaign that same day calling on Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to respect Montana and restore multiple use on public lands. The campaign included a television ad on Fox News in several Montana markets, a radio spot on more than 40 stations across the state, two billboards in Billings, and extensive social media.

It was important for us to shine a spotlight on this RMP and hold Sec. Bernhardt accountable because the RMP will enable oil and gas companies to exploit some of our wildest public lands by engaging in noncompetitive oil and gas leasing, whereby oil and gas companies pay \$1.50 an acre for leases that are not bid on during BLM auctions. The Lewistown RMP would invariably lead to noncompetitive leasing because many of the lands addressed in the RMP hold low oil and gas potential, making it likely that companies will be able to pay that low price for the leases and manage their public land parcels as they see fit for the duration of the leases, to the detriment of wildlife habitat, public access, the outdoor recreation economy, and our way of life.

The combination of so much land being available to private industries for their exclusive use and a system that allows leases to be purchased off-the-shelf for only \$1.50 per acre, plus the RMP's lack of wilderness management, is a recipe for disaster for central Montana's most iconic landscapes.

In 2018, 72% of oil and gas leases in Montana were sold noncompetitively at \$1.50 per acre.



**"WHEN YOU FOLLOW THE MONEY, IT'S CLEAR THAT MONTANANS ARE LOSING OUT."**

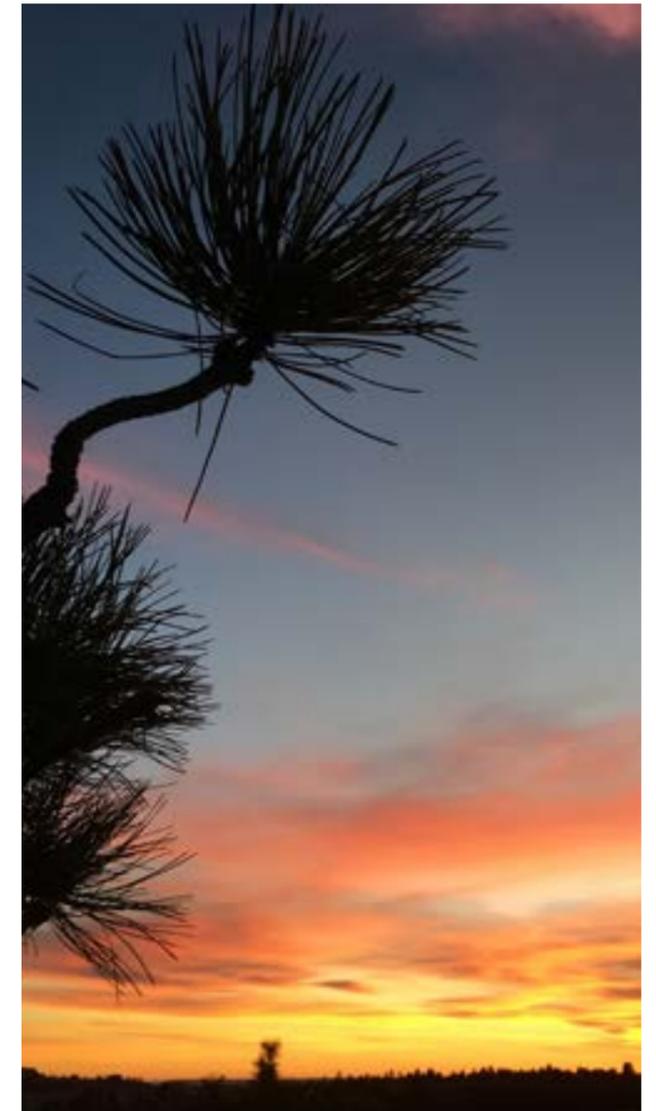
**- AUBREY BERTRAM,  
MWA EASTERN MONTANA  
FIELD DIRECTOR**

Right now, over 260,000 acres of our publicly owned natural resources in Montana have been leased out to private interests for next to nothing, resulting in millions of dollars in lost revenue to our local communities and in lost opportunities to manage public lands for the protection of wildlife habitat, clean water, quiet recreation, and other values Montanans hold dear.

Please join us in our efforts to end noncompetitive leasing by signing this letter to Senator Jon Tester and Senator Steve Daines, asking them to support existing legislation to fix parts of the outdated oil and gas leasing system, and to step up as leaders, and introduce a bill to specifically end noncompetitive leasing once and for all. You can do so by signing up at [go.wildmontana.org/ActNowOilGas](https://go.wildmontana.org/ActNowOilGas)



Weasel along Quinnebaugh Meadows Trail (photo by Ray Masters)



Sunset in eastern Montana (photo by Mary Southworth)

## Music for the Wild is May 2

Join us for a virtual celebration of outdoor adventures, public lands advocacy, and local music: MWA's Eastern Wildlands Chapter is hosting our annual Music for the Wild celebration featuring music from local Billings artist Jessica Eve.

Spring into Summer: Music for the Wild is Saturday, May 2 from 6-7:30 p.m.

It'll be a little different this year, though, in light of physical distancing guidelines. Join us from the comfort of your own home with your favorite

beverage for this intimate Zoom concert!

Eastern Wildlands Chapter board members and MWA staff will also share updates about MWA's work in eastern Montana and across the state.

We'll also give away an Oboz Footwear gift certificate and a beautiful print of Lost Lake in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. You must pre-register and be present on the webinar to win!

We can't wait to "see" you there!

Please register at this link and we'll email you a link to the Zoom concert:

[go.wildmontana.org/wildmusic](https://go.wildmontana.org/wildmusic)

