From the Chapter President

Learn about the latest from your local chapter.

Virtual WildFest & Silent Auction

WildFest is going virtual this year! Join us on Oct. 24 for WildFest and don’t miss bidding on fantastic packages in the silent auction. open Oct. 12 through Oct. 25.

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.

Get More Involved with the Chapter

Learn about all the ways you can get involved with the Island Range Chapter.
Summer has come and gone and now we are greeted with the crisp, cool air of Fall each morning. It has been a few months since I have reached out to you all and I hope this newsletter finds each of you in good health and spirit as we march on into the next chapter of this unusual year.

I hope summer treated you well and you spent as much time enjoying the outdoors with family and friends, properly socially distanced and masked up of course.

I, myself, spent a lot of time enjoying the Missouri River in the early parts and coaching Great Falls High Soccer in the latter. I now turn my focus towards the winter activities of skiing and snowshoeing as we creep ever closer to the first snowfall.

As for the Island Range Chapter of MWA, we continue to host virtual events and plan to maintain that as the status quo for a while longer. At the end of September, we were fortunate enough to have Sonny Mazzullo and Colin Maas join us for a webinar and exploration of the Sluice Boxes State Park. The Webinar can be found at the MWA Website and if you have never hiked the Sluice Boxes I highly recommend doing so, it is a beautiful and fun hike that is just a short trip outside of Great Falls.

Also, stay tuned for more information regarding Montana Wilderness Association’s annual WildFest! The event as been moved online and will be held virtually. Keep checking your emails for further information and I hope to “see” you there!

The Island Range Chapter misses all of you and we hope you have enjoyed the webinars we have hosted throughout the year. It always puts a smile on our face when we see so many of you in attendance and we hope that continues for as long as we host our virtual events and well into when we can meet in person again. Enjoy the beautiful Fall colors and make sure to get as many end of year hikes in while the nice weather lasts! Once the snow flies, we are on to cross-country skiing, downhill and snowshoeing!

Personally, I cannot wait!

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 Buley
Board Members: Dan Bennett, June Sprout, Ralph Knapp, Gerry Jennings, Mike Enk, Rick Kerr, Gordon Whirry, Jeff Goodrich, Bonnie Warren, Peter Johnson, Jo Ann Wright
Ambassadors: Jay Eklund, Larry and Betty Salois, Dave Mari, Arlo Skari, Eric Heidle
homemade huckleberry pie at this event. Huckleberries need wild country to grow and thrive – and we need your support to continue to advocate for wild country. This year, we’re keeping this tradition alive while also giving more people the chance to participate! The first 100 people to donate $100 or more by October 25 will receive a huckleberry bear claw from the Polebridge Mercantile just outside of Glacier National Park. Don’t miss your chance for a truly sweet treat – these famous pastries are only available for purchase at the mercantile and community markets in northwest Montana, but we’ll send one right to your doorstep!

WildFest is free to attend for members and supporters alike — so feel free to invite your friends! Register to attend WildFest and to participate in the silent auction at wildmontana.org/wildfest.

Join us for Virtual WildFest on Oct. 24

Never been to MWA’s annual gathering? Here’s your chance! For the first time, members and supporters alike from across the state and nation can join us to celebrate the year’s accomplishments, honor our incredible volunteers, take part in an online silent auction, and learn about the important work protecting Montana’s wild places that lies ahead.

This year’s guest speaker is Kendall Edmo, who works with the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office to document and preserve sacred Blackfeet sites. We hope you’ll join us!

Join us for an optional happy half hour following the gathering. Grab your favorite beverage and enjoy conversations with staff members and fellow wildlands supporters from the comfort of your couch.

Thanks to the generosity and ingenuity of Helen Bolle, MWA has a 35-year tradition of auctioning off slices of a homemade huckleberry pie at this event. Huckleberries need wild country to grow and thrive – and we need your support to continue to advocate for wild country.

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Guest Speaker:
Kendall Edmo

Kendall Edmo is a Blackfeet tribal member with a background in environmental studies. She has worked for the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office for the past four years where she assists the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.

In addition to documenting cultural and sacred sites, forest planning, and NHPA Section 106 consultations, she also helps to maintain the Blackfeet Tribal Register and geodatabase of cultural, historical, and archaeological sites on the Blackfeet Reservation.

2020 Silent Auction
More ways to support your favorite wild places

This year we are hosting an online silent auction. Starting October 12, bid on fabulous adventure packages, art, books, gear, and more. Bid high and bid often to support your favorite wild places. You don’t have to attend WildFest to participate in the auction.

The silent auction opens online Monday, October 12 at 9 a.m. and closes Sunday, October 25 at 5 p.m.

Visit wildmontana.org/wildfest to view items and register to bid.
Jim Posewitz, a name we all know and many of us revere. Who was he and why do we feel such fondness for this one individual?

Poz, as he was known to his many friends, died a month ago at the age of 85, and his reputation and accomplishments will live on. He was born in Wisconsin, but spent most of his life in Montana, having earned a BS from Montana State College (now MSU) and then receiving an MS in Fish and Wildlife Management, also at MSU, after spending two years in the US Army.

He had a long and storied career as a fisheries biologist with MT Fish & Game (now MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks) which began in Great Falls in 1961. A big issue he faced was a proposal for additional dams on the Missouri River upstream from Fort Peck Reservoir. With the proper data and determination, those dams were never built.

In 1969 he moved to Helena where he served as the first and only administrator of the Ecological Services Division of FWP, a position he held for 13 years. Throughout his career, Jim documented and successfully defended the importance of in-stream flows for fish and wildlife against the demands for energy development and agricultural production. He worked tirelessly to protect Montana’s rivers from dams and to prevent coal mines from blanketing eastern Montana.

After he retired from FWP, Poz founded Orion, the Hunter’s Institute, which is devoted to teaching the ethics of hunting. He became a prolific writer, historian and speaker. And he traveled throughout the country to promote hunting ethics and instill a conservation ethic in every child who took up hunting. That was part of Poz’s charm. He was always looking to help foster the next generation of conservationists and impart his vast knowledge of history.

Throughout his career, Jim worked with Montanans to develop inclusive, philosophically and scientifically sound approaches to conservation issues and to encourage public involvement and support for those initiatives. He saw as important the role of what he called “main street conservation”, i.e. grassroots organizing.


Jim never faltered in the face of opposition and he fought hard and usually found a way to achieve his goal. In the end his determination and strategic mind, his relentless humor and hearty laugh, and his unflinching positive attitude ensured success in many arenas.

He will be deeply missed by so many, and yet celebrated for his achievements. And what he would have wanted is that everyone who cherishes wild lands, waters and wildlife keep up the fight that he helped lead for decades.

As his wife Gayle Joslin said to me when asked what we could do in his memory, she said, “Just do something good for conservation in his name.”
Montana is many things. It is a small town with some very long roads. It is a collection of people, culture, faiths and beliefs. It is a history of turmoil and peace. It is a collection of towering peaks dotting the skyline and expansive prairie as far as one can see. It is rivers starting in the alpine tundra as drops of rain on shale and ending on our borders as mighty forces that fuel our United States through food and power. It is a place so unique in the lower 48 that the visitors to our great state outnumber our residents 10 to 1 every year to seek a solitude unavailable for most citizens of the world.

As President Roosevelt so eloquently affirmed more than a century ago, the people of Montana have inherited this great place. How we treat this place will leave an indelible mark on the land and in turn those that come.

Those that inherit the peaks and the prairies, the rivers and the cathedrals from us. Our decisions about the land must be for a greater good, because our decisions will be forever forged into the hillsides.

Through a lifetime of conservation work, I’ve watched the people of Montana continue to build society, as people do, and I’ve watched the Smith River wind its way through the canyon, as the river does. The river is, for the most part, the same. It is the people who change. In 1977, the Council on Natural Resources and Development released a study and report on the Smith, its great bounty, and how it must be preserved. Public hearings with concerned Montana citizens were held. The report captures the sentiment at the time for those with an interest in the river: “The testimony given reflected an exceptional general agreement in principle. The primary concern expressed was that the unique quality of the Smith River and its canyon must be preserved.”

The sentiment of the people, and the report resulted in major conservation measures for the Smith that have withstood the tests of time and kept the river, for the most part, the same. The river meandering through the towering canyon, the bountiful fishery, and the abundant wildlife are still present. The greater lesson here is that the people, and not the river, will make the choice about what the next generation inherits.

The Smith is now in the hands of a new generation, and the decisions it makes will determine the river’s fate. I worry deeply about the possibility of a large copper mine on its headwaters, and the permanent changes to the wild landscape, water quality, and recreation that could result. Allowing for the large-scale mining on the headwaters of the Smith is a decision you cannot go back on. So many places in Montana have been irreparably damaged by the greed of a few, to the detriment of all. Here, the risks are just too great.

It is my wish that the new generation of Montanans become stewards for the Smith and continue its conservation legacy, leaving the next generation with the river’s bounty, as my generation has done for yours.

Between the peaks and the prairies, far off in the distance, we can see a horizon that we have not yet reached but continue to travel towards. As we cross the mighty Smith, we must be careful to leave it intact. We must show we have been worthy of its good fortune.

“We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune.”

- President Theodore Roosevelt

This is one of Jim Posewitz’s last published writings. It appeared in Montana newspapers in June 2020.
Get More Involved with the Island Range Chapter

Do you want to get more involved in the Island Range Chapter? There are a number of ways to get involved and volunteers are the backbone of the organization. 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 are 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 wild lands.

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 wild land 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 wild land 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 pick all of them! If you are interested in getting more involved in the Island Range Chapter, please reach out to MWA Central Montana Field Director Zach Angstead at zangstead@wildmontana.org and 406-899-9955 or Island Range Chapter President Andrew Stucker at andrew.stucker19@gmail.com.