WILDERNESS AND COMMUNITY
OUR COMMITMENT TO PLACE

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
MISSION
The mission of the Montana Wilderness Association is to work with communities to protect Montana’s wilderness heritage, quiet beauty, and outdoor traditions now, and for future generations.

VALUES

VISION
The Montana Wilderness Association envisions a future where from the rugged mountains to the vast prairies Montana’s wild places are protected, connected, and restored because Montanans value wilderness as essential to our heritage and way of life.
Dear Friends,

**Montana’s natural heritage and way of life are defined by wild places.** They provide for values that are essential to life—values such as clean air and water that replenish our bodies and vast open spaces that renew our spirits. They sustain us. They inspire us. Montana’s wild places are strongholds for wildlife such as grizzly bears, wolverines, wolves, lynx, elk, bighorn sheep, and native trout. For people and wildlife, Montana’s wild places sustain a community of life.

Because our wild places are far too valuable to be lost to entrenched ideologies and the politics of division, the Montana Wilderness Association is committed to bringing people together from all walks of life to craft place-based solutions that result in the permanent protection of our wild natural heritage. By reaching out and engaging people from all walks of life, we are building community.

Thanks to your generous support the Montana Wilderness Association has built a growing community of wilderness advocates by engaging businesses, recreationists, churches, hunters and anglers, ranchers, students, and recent war veterans. This diverse community finds common ground based on a shared commitment to the lands that define a way of life.

In 2013 the Montana Wilderness Association stood arm in arm with this diverse community of advocates to:

- Significantly advance the *Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act* and the *Forest Jobs and Recreation Act* toward passage in the U.S. Congress;
- Garner considerable recognition from the U.S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Land Management for the protection of vast stretches of prairie wildlands;
- Guide local residents toward a vision for the protection of the northern extension of the Yellowstone ecosystem—the Gallatin Range;
- Engage more volunteers than ever before in stewarding the Continental Divide Trail—a trail that ensures solitude for people and safe passage for wildlife such as grizzly bears and lynx;
- Lead a community partnership to unanimously support the protection of over 83,000 acres of wilderness in the Whitefish Range;
- Deepen local residents’ connection to the Scotchman Peaks and Cabinet Mountains; and
- Help students and recent war veterans experience Montana’s wild places and become a voice for the protection of those lands.

Protecting wilderness by building community is the Montana Wilderness Association’s commitment to place. Thank you, for your commitment to place—a commitment to protect the very lands that make Montana, Montana.

Brian Sybert, Executive Director

Scott Friskics, State Council President
The Montana Wilderness Association envisions a future where from the rugged mountains to the vast prairies Montana’s wild places are protected, connected, and restored because Montanans value wilderness as essential to our heritage and way of life.

PROTECTED, CONNECTED, RESTORED
This year, MWA defined our values and crafted a bold vision that requires us to lead with hope and passion, to bring together our fellow citizens and establish an enduring wilderness ethic that is resilient to changes in technology, demographics, and politics.

PRAIRIE WILDERNESS INVENTORIES
MWA worked with students from Rocky Mountain College to inventory prairie lands for their wilderness characteristics. The surveys results were put into maps and pictures and presented to the Bureau of Land Management to be considered in their management plans.

WHITEFISH RANGE PARTNERSHIP
This unprecedented agreement between very diverse interests could be the basis of solution-oriented legislation that designates 83,000 acres of wilderness in the Whitefish Range, opening doors that protect places like Mount Hefty and Thompson-Seton.

From left, landowners and friends John Frederick, Larry Wilson, Frank Vitale, and Bob Brown take in the views form atop Mt. Thompson-Seton in the Whitefish Range.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL
The CD trail projects in Montana built greater awareness in local communities as well as throughout the nation. We had significantly more participation this year, as more people recognize the importance of the spine of the continent and the lands that shape this trail.

SUMMER OF LEE
Celebrating was a perfect way to connect the broader Gallatin County community with wildlands’ vital role in providing clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Events emphasized how the Lee Metcalf Wilderness came to be protected, and urged participants to complete the legacy/vision of Senator Lee Metcalf.
STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION AT UM-MISSOULA
This was our first year of leading small groups of young war veterans on safe, guided backpack trips, in hopes they may find wildlands to be a place of healing and restoration.

STRONG YOUNG LEADERSHIP
NexGen helped young people become effective citizen advocates by fulfilling their civic duty of voting. MWA’s Montana Outdoor Heritage Project amplified our voices through nonpartisan voter engagement designed to increase support for Montana’s Great Outdoors.

LOOKING FORWARD

We face formidable challenges from those who would drill, develop, and overrun existing wildlands. We stand firm in the conviction that Montanans with diverse interests can find significant common ground and support policies that protect our clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and wild essence that makes Montana, Montana.

BADGER-TWO MEDICINE
Oil and gas developers are trying to force energy drilling in the Badger. MWA has partnered to intervene in the legal challenge, and is reaching out to the Blackfeet Tribe in an effort to craft a long-term vision for protecting the priceless Badger-Two Medicine region.

BEARTOOTH FRONT
Chilling words from an oil and gas exploration company compared the Beartooth Front to the Bakken oilfields. With our new office in Billings, MWA is uniquely positioned to mobilize members, locals, and partners to prevent energy development from impacting the wildlands of the Beartooth Front.

DIVIDED NO MORE
Many positive indicators point to developing a strategy to permanently protect the roadless areas that stretch from Butte to the southern end of the Scapegoat Wilderness. Connected landscapes are essential for wildlife to thrive, and MWA is fully engaged in the Helena and Lewis & Clark forest and travel planning processes.

ISLAND RANGES
Decades of work and upcoming forest planning provides an important vehicle to define and protect the ecological integrity of our island ranges. MWA’s outreach to locals and landowners will help craft a vision for long-term conservation of these irreplaceable, isolated roadless areas.
From the ridges of the Gallatin Range to the halls of the Montana State Capitol, the NexGen Wilderness Leaders Program is connecting Montana youth with wild places and harnessing new energy for our campaigns.

Passion for wild country begins with quiet horseback rides through the woods, canoe trips on placid lakes, and cross-country skiing through winter wonderlands. Our innovative partnership, the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program, is introducing underserved and underprivileged youth to the joys of outdoor recreation on 30 trips in Missoula, Helena, and Bozeman, and it is rapidly becoming a national model.

Meanwhile, MWA’s University of Montana and Montana State University Wilderness Associations have hit their stride. Through the Montana Outdoor Heritage Project, a nonpartisan collaborative effort to mobilize voters in support of Montana’s great outdoors, MWA student volunteers educated thousands of Montanans by canvassing door-to-door and targeting large events. Their efforts turned out 72 percent of voters contacted between the ages of 18 and 29 to the polls, far exceeding the statewide average of 40 percent. The trend-setting UM W.I.L.D. Haus (Wilderness Integrated Living Dormitory), founded by the UM Wilderness Association, is the first wilderness-themed dorm in the nation, attracting 50 students to weekly meetings where they foster a campus-wide culture of wilderness stewardship, advocacy, and adventure.

We may be educating young people to carry the torch forward, but the reality is that they are already on fire.

“It’s really about the passion young people bring to us. Our dedication to inspiring, training, and mobilizing tomorrow’s wilderness leaders is, hands down, what makes MWA such a unique and effective advocacy group.”

–Zack Porter, NexGen Wilderness Leaders Program Director

TRISTAN PERSICO

MWA is reaching out to veterans, to connect them with wild places as a source of real healing and solace, goodwill, and positive political strength.

Tristan went into the military right out of high school. This combat veteran now lives with his growing family in Missoula, where he took on MWA’s fledgling veterans outreach for his college internship. “This program gives everybody a chance to get out with other veterans, with somebody they can relate to,” he said. “Wilderness is a perfect place to do that.”

Tristan helped build their family cabin in the Garnet Mountains and goes to the mountains throughout western Montana as often as possible. “One of the coolest things I’ve ever seen was a golden eagle running and hopping along the ground, chasing a small mammal under a heavy forest canopy.” (It got it.)

“Wild land in Montana is Montana,” he continued. “That’s where all the tourism money come from. It’s our watersheds, our pulse, the carotid artery for the state.”
The Continental Divide Trail program grew this year. More 20- and 30-somethings stepped up their volunteering (50% of volunteers were under the age of 40), adding zest and youthful humor to the band of experienced volunteers. CDT will be nearly a thousand miles of non-motorized trail and provide safe passage for wildlife.

At-risk youth from the Salish-Kootenai Upward Bound program and youth from Dillon’s Montana Youth Challenge Academy amazed the CDT staff and volunteers. “It’s unbelievable to hear where they were in life and the struggles they have overcome,” said Shannon Freix. “I’m glad CDT Montana has the chance to offer them additional life skills before they head out on their own.”

CDT volunteers are young, they are old. They backpack, they dayhike. They love horses, they love bicycles. Together, they created miles of new trails, salvaged damaged trails, posted signs, diverted runoff, moved rocks, built fences, and ate every single thing offered. Boy howdy, did they eat.

“Every place on the Divide has a different personality. This year I really started to learn more about the Big Hole, that quintessential Montana landscape where our waters begin, where the animals migrate, where people live off the land. It’s what I think Montana really is.”

—Shannon Freix, CDT Program Manager

Montana currently has the greatest shortfalls in trail linkages, but also the most on-the-ground activity compared to other CDT states. When complete, the northern CDT will provide safe passage for wildlife including elk. A complete CDT will provide safe passage for wildlife including elk.
This was a year of focused attention on the two thirds of Montana that is not mountains. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released three draft Resource Management Plans (RMPs) spanning 5.6 million acres, and MWA was ready to participate. Our new staffer in Billings, Cameron Sapp, hit the ground running, helping Rocky Mountain College students who—undeterred by the greatest downpour seen in decades—braved the gumbo to add significantly to the 2011 prairie inventories. MWA members wrote letters to the editor, testified at hearings, and organized to help in numerous ways.

MWA had a deeply rewarding moment when BLM’s Hi-Line staff held up our wilderness inventories as an example of “substantive new information” necessary to the RMP process, which will help determine how these areas will be managed in the future. As a result of MWA’s advocacy and inventory work, the acreage of lands identified as having wilderness characteristics is likely to increase in all three districts.

Mark Good, MWA Field Representative, “Next we’ll focus on inventorying wild lands in the BLM Lewistown district. Rocky Mountain College students will again help, but we also will partner with students at the University of Great Falls.”

MWA staff is also spearheading a multi-partner geotourism project that promotes tourism in southeastern Montana by highlighting the little-known wild lands, history, culture, and recreational opportunities of this diverse landscape. Equally important, this collaborative undertaking will help foster local alliances.

“I was staffing our table at the Farmers Market in Billings when someone stopped by to say what he thought about our “big anti-hunting, lock-up-the-land” group. I told him we’re actually about preserving traditional uses across our landscape, and we talked some more. And some more. And then he joined MWA.”

–Cameron Sapp, Prairie Wildlands Outreach Coordinator

Bernard Quetchenbach

Bernie teaches at MSU-Billings, a city he notes is “connected not only to Yellowstone and to major ranges of the Rockies, but to several island ranges, to badlands, and to the prairies.”

Bernie loves to hike, and has volunteered with MWA for about seven years. “MWA is working for the protection of rare prairie ecosystems and large stretches of wild mountain country; as the climate continues to warp, both are going to be crucial,” he said.

He recalled watching a huge prairie storm during an outing to Halfbreed Lake National Wildlife Refuge. “It was impressive,” he said. “The light was coming in under the clouds and landing on the sage and rabbitbrush. It was spectacular.” Unbeknownst to him, that same storm was busy dropping a tornado that ripped the roof off the Billings Metra arena.
Our work in northwestern Montana has everything to do with meeting people where they are. We built more connections this year, with mountain bikers, loggers, motorized users, and landowners, and tried to bridge gaps between opposing points of view. After working for months on a Whitefish Range Partnership subcommittee, talking and talking until we could find some common ground, our facilitator finally called for a vote. When it was positive, you could feel the gigantic relief in the room. That’s 84,000 acres that we recommend stay wild, complete with lines on a map.

Wilderness is out of the basement in northwestern Montana; we’re proud of MWA’s practical, collaborative solutions that can help inform and influence the Forest Service in land management practices. We moved the field office to Whitefish and opened a new part-time office in Libby, partnering with Friends of the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness for the upcoming 50th anniversary of The Wilderness Act. Staffers organized four brewery tours to engage existing and new members and publicize the Wilderness Walks. And, we sponsored high quality educational programs. We saw all new people at Brian Baxter’s compass- and map-reading course in Libby and Kalispell, offered a popular Wilderness First Aid 101 class in Libby, and led an interpretive hike, “A Naturalist’s View of the Whitefish Range.” These really brought new people into the fold, people who love to get outside and learn.

We are keeping our members engaged, establishing allies, and attracting new advocates. It’s good to work with diverse partners.

“The day after our Whitefish Partnership vote I received all sorts of phone calls expressing appreciation for all the hard work. One North Fork landowner dropped by the office and gave me a historical cookbook that was signed by numerous people to show appreciation. What a sweet gesture!”

–Amy Robinson, Northwest Montana Wilderness Campaign Director

Our commitment: Northwest Montana Community

BRIAN BAXTER
Currently a writer and outdoor educational instructor, Brian Baxter believes human life, wildlife, and the ecosystems of wild places are fragile, and deserve delicate care and good stewardship. He has spent many of his diverse careers in the outdoors, about which he said, “I’ve been very fortunate to have sold most of my nine lives at a dear price, surviving a standoff with a mountain lion, a close call with death from heat exhaustion, being treed by a black bear, chased off an elk kill by a grizzly, turned around in a blizzard while hunting, and a fall through the ice into 40 feet of water while fishing, among other adventures. Happily, my more numerous encounters have been beautiful, magical, and soul-stirring moments!”

A grizzly wanders near the North Fork Flathead River.
The population here is booming, and MWA intends to create a booming public demand for wilderness in the Gallatin Range. Residents already recognize that their cherished wildlife needs protected habitat, and that they themselves want wide open spaces for their descendants. MWA is also emphasizing the critical issue of pristine watersheds: more than 85 percent of Bozeman’s drinking water originates in the range we are working to protect.

We are building alliances with traditional and nontraditional partners: hunters, recreationists, river enthusiasts, wildlife advocates, and more. Our support from businesses is growing, and we are engaging the community to emphasize that we work to protect wildlands and we work to enhance our communities.

The Summer of Lee was a grand success, with hundreds of people participating in events and outings celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, lots of media coverage, and thousands signing on as Facebook fans in just a few months. We are proud that former staff and citizens who worked to get that bill passed were finally provided a platform to tell their stories of past success. Many of those stories had never been heard, adding double value for old-timers and the new generation of wilderness advocates who were hearing them for the first time.

“I feel a lot of creative freedom to come up with new ways to approach our work. We’ve launched mini-campaigns, big celebrations, and just showed up in as many places as we can. Our persistence is paying off. And, it’s fun.”
~John Todd, Southwest Montana Wilderness Campaign Director

More than 85 percent of Bozeman’s drinking water originates in the Gallatin Range.

FAITH DOTY
Faith Doty, MWA’s NexGen Wilderness Fellow for the MSU-Bozeman Campus, grew up near Flathead Lake, and now lives in Bozeman. She invites college students to use public lands and wild lands, and then provides opportunities to be involved in wilderness initiatives. She is proud of the MSU student group, saying that students are engaged and interested in advocacy. For instance, she hosts letter-writing parties at her house, where they have a potluck, look at maps, and then write stories and collect pictures of their times in the wilderness.

As part of the Bring Them Together initiative, Montanans statewide have written 450 letters, and at 500 the letters will be packaged and delivered to Congressman Steve Daines.

Why does she do all this? “Wilderness exemplifies the character of Montana,” she said, “it keeps our state alive and functioning. Knowing I can go to the great expanses of wildlands gives me peace of mind.”
Thanks to Montana Senators
Max Baucus and Jon Tester, the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act and the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act are moving through Congress, buoyed up via letters, testimony, phones calls, and letters to editors. We are seeing tremendous support from business partners, sportsmen, recreationists, and others who care deeply about these uniquely collaborative, Montana-made solutions. More and more, the business community is seeing the local economic value of wilderness, as well as its essential role in a healthy ecosystem. We believe we have an excellent forecast of designating the first new wilderness in Montana in three decades, of protecting 1.3 million acres in various ways.

Meanwhile, we are not holding still. MWA continues to talk with new stakeholder groups, always looking for new ways to partner. Here at home, in the 2013 session, a bipartisan majority of Montana legislators stopped—three times!—a proposal to oppose the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act. Those legislators understood that Montana’s intact landscapes hold immense significance.

Our Rocky Mountain Front field office established a solid relationship with the Glacier Two Medicine Alliance, sharing the goal of permanent protection for the Badger-Two Medicine area. Staff is reaching out more in Great Falls, building partnerships across lines of interest. We intend to earn respect from the Blackfeet Tribe, hoping to partner with them on protection efforts for the Badger-Two Medicine, their sacred land.

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“MWA looks through the eyes of a community, respecting the importance of sportsmen, ranchers, tourism, and businesses. We look at whole communities in order to plug into different levels of problems—environmental, social, economic—to find out where it makes sense to build partnerships across lines of interest. I love it.”
—Casey Perkins, Rocky Mountain Front Campaign Director

PERMANENT PROTECTION

OUR COMMITMENT:

DANA GLEASON

There are certainly cheaper places to build backpacks than Montana, but in case you haven’t been paying attention Dana Gleason and Mystery Ranch aren’t in the business of building cheap products. “We got our start in 2000 with a handful of dedicated employees. Now we have over 100 folks working in Bozeman,” Gleason said. But the rugged mountains of southwest Montana serve as more than a source of inspiration for Mystery Ranch products—it’s home to a growing workforce that relishes wide-open places after they clock out.

Making quality outdoor gear requires great skill, but the work of Mystery Ranch and Gleason doesn’t end with backpacks. The company is part of Businesses for Montana’s Outdoors, a new and growing movement that is recognizing how our public lands are providing Montana with a real business advantage. Like Dana, other entrepreneurs around the state are realizing that access to recreation opportunities, including world-class hunting, hiking, and skiing, is attractive to potential employees.

Dana Gleason loves Montana’s Madison Range, “plain and simple.” In fact, it was the Spanish Peaks that inspired him to brand one of his packs after the area’s namesake: The Metcalf. Gleason reflects on his climbing and skiing adventures when asked about his conservation ethos, “If we don’t act now to protect access to clean water and land it will be too late.” That’s why Mystery Ranch is Mystery Ranch is a strong supporter of the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act and the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act.
$25,000 AND ABOVE
Campion Foundation
Liz Claiborne
& Art Ortenberg Foundation
Conservation Alliance
Chuck & Jerry Jennings
Kendeda Fund
Mary Starr
PEW Charitable Trusts
State of Montana Dept.
of Registration & Licensing
U.S. Forest Service
Wilburforce Foundation
Wyss Foundation

$10,000 – $24,999
Cinnabar Foundation
Cross Charitable Foundation
Mollie Kieran
Solberg Manufacturing, Inc.
Weeden Foundation

$5,000-$9,999
Anonymous Donation
Christian & Nora Hohenlohe
Jill Baumlter
& Robert Mannisto
Jerry Metcalf Foundation

$1,000-$4,999
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Community Foundation
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& Linda Schmidt
Addrien Marx
Peter & Kathleen Metcalf
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and Family
Jim Munoz
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Foundation
Laura & David Roe
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Tim & Kathy Crawford
Wiliam & Kristina Udall
Robert & Jaccquinot
Weisenbach
Peter White
Donald & Bente Winston

$500-$999
David & Sandi Ashley
Base Camp
Jim Beeman
Black Diamond Equipment
Blackfoot River Brewing Co.
Lex Blood
The Boeing Company
Lee & Judy Boman
Bridge Brewing Company LLC
Gretchen Carrick
S. Wayne Chamberlin
Sheila Coy
Kimberly Dale
Joseph & Elizabeth Davidson
Jo Ann & Bert Eder
Jesse Feathers
Norman & Sue Ann Fleet
Scott Friskics
& Jennifer Smith
Alan & Deborah Gill
Barbara & Jerome Glickman
Good Food Store
Daniel & Margorie Harper
Charlie & Catherine
Hasskamp
Daniel Bennett
& Judith Hinders-Bennett
M. Brooke & Maria Hunter
Ann & Paul Jeremiassen
Martha Johnson
Caroline & Willis Kurtz
John Larson & Carol Barnes

Thank you to each and every member for your commitment to place—a commitment to protect the very lands that make Montana, Montana.
A bull moose wades on the shallow shores of Cracker Lake in Glacier National Park.
On September 30, 2013, the Montana Wilderness Association had:

- Total assets of $3,933,419, liabilities of $624,193, and net assets of $3,309,206.
- $2,520,498 unrestricted and $198,854 temporarily restricted assets
- $724,987 in fixed assets, and
- $589,874 in permanently restricted endowment funds

Revenues for the year were $1,658,864 and expenses were $1,437,834.

Notes: The Montana Wilderness Association is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

This financial information is drawn from audited financial statements by the accounting firm Anderson Zurmuehlen.
MWA state council and staff gather at Loon Lake near Bigfork for their annual retreat.