



The MontanaSierran

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Lobbying for the Environment on Capitol Hill

By Jonathan Matthews, Montana Chapter Political Committee Chair

From June 23-25, 2014, I participated in the Sierra Club’s, Great Outdoors America Lobby, on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. My conversations with Representative Steve Daines and Senators John Walsh and Jon Tester of Montana, and subsequent meetings with their staff members were encouraging.

I met with Tom Lopatch, Jon Tester’s Chief of Staff. The message that he communicated was that there was no one more in favor of protecting Montana’s special wild places than his boss, that Sen. Tester is a champion of environmental protection. Tom mentioned that Senator Tester has worked relentlessly to pass his Forest Jobs and Recreation Act. I told him that the Club is glad the bill includes new designated wilderness areas but we also have concerns, such as mandating historically high levels of lumber harvest. Sierra Club believes that harvest decisions should be considered through the normal process, with full scientific review and consideration of environmental impacts.

After explaining the basics of the Healthy Kids Outdoors Act to Tom, I asked him if Senator Tester would co-sponsor the bill. He promised to consider the act and review the materials that I gave him. When he asked about the funding, I estimated the cost of the initiative at \$6 million over three years. The money would be sent to the states to help fund local non-profits who are working to get children engaged in healthy activities in the outdoors.

Several days later I met Senator Tester

at the Montana Coffee, the weekly breakfast gathering of Montana’s congress people, their staffs, and visitors, held in – a congressional meeting room. I thanked him for supporting the protection of America’s public lands.

While in Washington I also met with Ben Ward, Senator Walsh’s Environment and Native American Affairs Legislative Assistant, to discuss the public lands bills currently being considered by the Senate. Ward told me that he planned to make a visit to all of the Montana American Indian Reservations soon. Ben’s connection to American Indian concerns provided me with a natural path to ask him about the Sealaska and Resolution Copper bills, as both of these environmentally bad bills directly involved/impacted American Indians. Ben was very familiar with both bills and said that Senator Walsh was strongly opposed to them. Interestingly, he said that American Indian lobbyists were active on the Hill, arguing against Resolution Copper.



Montana Sierra Club volunteer, Jonathan Matthews, (2nd from right) in Washington, DC meeting with the Montana congressional delegation Jon Tester, Steve Daines and John Walsh.

I asked Ben if he thought that Senator Walsh would co-sponsor the Healthy Kids Outdoors Act. After I explained the act to him, he said

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or

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The Montana Sierran reserves the right to edit
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Submissions must include first and last name,
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Send digital photographs at 300 ppi in .jpg
format. Photos must include credit (e.g.
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The Importance of Wilderness

By Kiersten Iwai

Let your senses succumb to the breathtaking, magical, and wonderful system of our Montana wild backyard. Let your mind wander and your stressful thoughts dissipate, fading away into oblivion.

Do you hear that? The soft sound of rustling leaves, the wind caressing your face, the silence and solitude we seek. Do you see that? The thousands of stars magnifying the night sky, the dark silhouette of pines reaching to the stars, and the faint outline of tiny bugs usually forgotten, but equally important. Do you smell that? Inhale the fresh scents of pine, sage, and the fresh mountain air that fills your lungs with joy. Do you taste that? The juicy delight of biting into huckleberries, or the savory flavors of freeze-dried meals that taste amazing when you are on the trail. Do you feel that? That calming sensation that only wilderness can bring, the energizing rush of climbing to the peak, and that moment when you realize that our planet has so much to offer.

Montana is uniquely situated. Individuals from all political spectrums value our public

lands and cherish the phenomenal landscape stretching out beyond the city. While each of us has our respective reasons for hitting the trails or floating down the river, we cherish the beauty all around us. Many of us live in Montana because of the opportunities to play and heal.

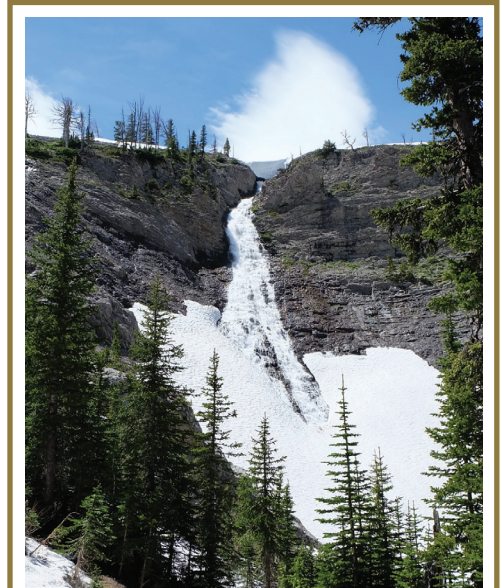
What would Montana be without Wilderness? Will we always have it?

Just south of Bozeman lies the magnificent Gallatin Range and the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area. The range's history and controversy are as complicated as the name, with a community collaborative set on determining its fate. A fast-growing Bozeman is putting increasing demands on the land, making it apparent that the Gallatin Range needs permanent protection. This important wildlife corridor and watershed is Bozeman's big backyard, but it may not be wild for long.

We are blessed to live in a state filled with the magic of wilderness and public lands. Let's

hold on to that magic, and permanently protect the places we love.

To get involved contact Kiersten Iwai at the Bozeman Field Office and/or attend the upcoming Sierra Club n' Beer event in Bozeman, November 18th, from 5pm - 7pm at the Pour House, 15 N. Rouse Ave.



The waterfall from Our Lake along the Rocky Mountain Front. Photo by Bob Hopkins.

Lobbying for the Environment on Capitol Hill, *Continued from Cover*

that Senator Walsh would likely support it. As we parted, he said, "I think the Healthy Kids Outdoors Act bill might provide one path toward addressing childhood obesity, a growing problem among American Indian youth."

Two days later, at the Montana Coffee, I met Senator Walsh and thanked him for speaking on the floor of the Senate, the previous day, about the importance of protecting America's public lands. He had spoken strongly against the suggestions by colleagues across the aisle who favored privatizing some of America's public lands.

I began my meeting in Representative Daines' office by telling his Legislative Assistant, Meghan Marino, that I appreciated

that her boss helped to pass the North Fork Watershed Protection Act of 2014 in the House. I asked her about getting a clean omnibus public lands bill (one that didn't have poison-pill, anti-environmental riders attached to it) to become law. She repeated several times that Representative Daines had done his part in getting the North Fork Act through the House and it was now up to the Senate to complete the process. Her essential position was that the House was doing its job on public lands and the Senate was not.

I asked Meghan if she thought that Rep. Daines would co-sponsor the Healthy Kids Outdoors Act. After I explained the act to her, she said that it may be something that he could support, and she'd study our materials before making recommendations.

Two days later, at the Montana Coffee, I met Representative Daines and thanked him for his support of North Fork Act in the House. He replied, "It was the right thing to do, and sometimes you need to do the right thing, regardless of standard political considerations."

It was a fascinating experience to be on Capitol Hill, lobbying our Senators and Representative and their staff members. The political machinery of Washington, DC, is a mighty edifice and I was a brief visitor. I had a legitimate role to play and I was received with respect. However, I am not confident that ordinary citizens have much effect on it. Still, we must try. I hope there will be some positive residue for the environment from my interactions with our elected representatives.

Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Retreat

By Diana Vanek

The Diamond J Ranch outside Ennis, Montana, was the setting for a September 20th Sierra Club retreat to examine important issues, priorities and goals in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) within the context of SC's national Our Wild America campaign. The Madison Range was starting to show off its fall colors during this last weekend of summer—the perfect backdrop to inspire and underscore the importance of protecting the GYE, arguably the most intact temperate ecosystem in the northern hemisphere.

Bonnie Rice and John Spahr, who co-lead the Our Wild America campaign in the Greater Yellowstone region, led a dozen others in deep discussions about current Sierra Club work on public lands and wildlife in the region happening through the national campaign in the MT and WY chapters. Campaign team volunteer members from WY and MT as well as MT Chapter ex-com members Diana Vanek and Claudia Narcisco attended along with SC staff from Denver, Seattle, San Francisco, and DC. Connecting large landscapes to preserve wildlife migratory patterns and the need to protect the GYE's irreplaceable wildlands and wildlife species in the face of manifold pressures including energy development, grazing, more recreation access and transportation were constant themes over the three days.

For example, the Gallatin Range is the biggest roadless area adjacent to Yellowstone lacking permanent protection. As Bozeman's premier recreational playground, it faces serious problems with maintaining environmental quality and wilderness characteristics. There is widespread public recognition that recreation, wildlife, and scenic beauty are powerful drivers for Bozeman's economic development but these, in turn, are all being threatened by such



Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Retreat Participants

rapid population growth. Recreation access pressures are major points of discussion in ongoing collaborative forest planning processes on the Gallatin and Flathead with the Sierra Club participating as a voice for wildlands and wildlife protection.

In discussions about the importance of connecting large wild landscapes, there was consensus among the group that one of the greatest opportunities is to expand our conservation efforts to include the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE). Our national parks are not islands; in order to allow for wildlife migration and healthy wildlife populations, we need to focus on the bigger picture at the landscape scale. For example, grizzly bears in the GYE have long been isolated and must be able to reach other grizzly populations such as in the NCDE for the long-term health of the population. Scientific tracking methods are able to

demonstrate the critical need to eliminate bottlenecks and allow unimpeded passage for healthy wildlife populations to be able to withstand pressures from climate change and oil and gas development.

Connectivity for wildlife across landscapes—providing adequate room to roam—is a key strategic priority and we hope to engage further with activists, community leaders, policymakers and the general public in support of this goal. We emerged from the retreat energized and ready to expand our work in targeted ways to ensure species like grizzly, wolf, wolverine, lynx, and bison, mule deer and other ungulates have the habitat they need to survive. This will require recruitment and engagement of many new local activists, and we hope you will help us expand our work and grassroots power by becoming involved.

Wolf Update

By Claudia Narcisco

Wolves in Wyoming got a major break in late September, when Endangered Species Act protections were restored for wolves in the state. A U.S. District Court ruled that Wyoming's wolf management plan is inadequate and unenforceable; as a result, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, must go back to the drawing board and work with the state to draw up a new management plan. In the meantime, Wyoming's extremely hostile policies toward wolves are on hold. Earthjustice, Sierra Club and several of our conservation partners challenged Wyoming's 2012 plan. Bonnie Rice, senior organizing representative for the Club said, "We think the court is right to require them to develop a plan that's more science-based and doesn't treat wolves as vermin in the majority of the state."

The Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) failed to move forward with a Wolf Conservation Stamp. The stamp would have given citizens an opportunity to support wolf conservation and management. In August, the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Club's Our Wild America Campaign supported the Stamp, contingent on guarantees that funds would be used for wolf conservation, non-lethal control measures, and detailed accounting. Opposition came mainly from the livestock industry and some in the hunting community who feared loss of influence over FWP decisions. They wanted funds to be used for wolf management beyond conservation purposes, such as collaring activities and lethal control measures.

For the second year the Montana general wolf-hunting season extends from September to mid-March, when females could be carrying or feeding young. A hunter/trapper can kill up to 5 wolves, except in a few areas where the quota is lower. Use of electronic calling devices is allowed. As of October 4, 2014, 16 wolves were reported killed in the state.

Under new rules for Senate Bill 200 passed in 2013, FWP set up to a 100-wolf quota in the state of Montana. Neither the rule nor the quota considers wolf management objectives for a Wildlife Management Area (WMA), including areas adjacent to national parks. In June, the Montana Chapter submitted comments opposing the state-wide quota as excessive and unreasonable, and not based on wildlife management principles or ecological sustainability. In recent years

the number of livestock lost to wolf predation has declined, while the number of wolves that can be killed continues to increase.

In Idaho, the wolf killing continues. A group euphemistically called Idaho for Wildlife requested permission from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to hold a multi-day predator-killing contest on national public lands around Salmon, Idaho, including in wilderness. The request is for a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to hold an annual derby for five years starting in January 2015. In a separate attack, the State of Idaho has contracted with U.S. Wildlife Services to accelerate lethal control of wolves ostensibly to benefit elk hunting.



A rally supported wolves on the weekend of June 28 at Roosevelt Arch outside of Yellowstone NP.

EPA Clean Power Plan Update

By Bob Clark

On June 2, 2014, as part of the President's Climate Action Plan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a draft Clean Power Plan (CPP), which will reduce carbon pollution from power plants. EPA designed a rule that was flexible, state specific, and gave states the authority to design their own reduction programs.

Coal and natural gas-fired power plants are the largest sources of human-caused carbon pollution, emitting about 1/3 of the U.S. greenhouse gases each year. The CPP proposes to reduce carbon pollution from power plants 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. The plan will spur innovation, accelerate the clean energy economy, and create good jobs.

Sierra Club will be working to strengthen the standard, showing we can move from dirty to clean energy much faster than EPA predicts. Solar and wind power are becoming more cost-effective every day and continue to grow exponentially. Clean energy and energy efficiency should be the focus of states' efforts.

Comments are due by December 1, 2014.

You can submit them electronically by email at: A-and-R-Docket@epa.gov

Or mail comments to: Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC), Mailcode 28221T, Attention Docket ID No. OAR-2013-0602, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460.

The reduction goals in the CPP are relative to a 2005 baseline of emissions. The standards started with each state's 2012 energy mix to set that state's goal. These include improving energy efficiency, improving power plant operations, and encouraging low-carbon and zero-emitting electricity generation. Together, these make up what the EPA defines as the best system for reducing carbon pollution. The EPA applied these strategies consistently across every state, but each state's energy mix ultimately leads to a goal



September 5th in Bozeman – happy to support action on climate change!

that is unique to that state.

Unfortunately, Montana received the second weakest reduction goal in the nation. Our 21% reduction goal by 2030 is based on calculations that many feel underestimate Montana's renewable energy and energy efficiency potential.

- **It will not raise electricity rates.** EPA estimates electricity bills will decline by 8% by 2030. That's likely an underestimate for Montana, where coal-fired electricity from Colstrip is consistently one of NorthWestern Energy's most expensive power sources.
- **The lights won't go out** nor will our energy system become unreliable. A commissioner on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the body in charge of grid reliability, told Congress in July 2014 that FERC supports the EPA rule and said FERC is already working to address the energy transition towards lower carbon energy sources that has been underway for several

years already. He is confident that FERC can continue to work with states and regions to meet this challenge by 2030.

Montana's process to develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP)

Last month the State of Montana released a whitepaper called "Options for Montana's Energy Future, which outlines potential ways Montana can comply with the EPA's carbon standard. We need you to urge the DEQ to develop a plan to reduce Montana's carbon pollution beyond the EPA requirement of 21% by 2030. Again, we can do better!

To find the state's outline of several potential alternatives for Montana to meet the EPA's carbon reduction standard, type "Options for Montana's Energy Future" into your computer's search engine.

Ask that Montana's carbon reduction goal be strengthened. You can send a comment to DEQ Director Tracy Stone-Manning at: deqdirector@mt.gov

The EPA and DEQ should:

Increase Carbon Pollution Reduction Goals. We can transition from dirty to clean energy much faster than EPA predicts. EPA anticipates that its proposal will reduce carbon pollution by 30% by 2030 (below 2005 levels). The proposal can and should be strengthened.

Promote Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. Renewable energy, especially wind and solar, and efficiency have been growing at an astonishing rate and costs to deliver renewable power have declined dramatically. Energy efficiency is a cost-effective way to reduce electricity demand and carbon

emissions. Montana has unlimited energy efficiency opportunities. We have the second best wind resource in the country. We have incredible untapped solar potential. EPA and DEQ should encourage the development of small-scale renewable energy, like rooftop solar, and create better incentives for wind developers.

Avoid Use of Natural Gas and Nuclear.

Montana should not use dirty and dangerous energy sources like nuclear or natural gas

to meet its goals, but instead rely on energy efficiency and renewable energy. We urge the EPA and the DEQ to ensure that the final Clean Power Plan for Montana does not incentivize the construction of any new fossil fuel-fired generation, as it now does.

Incorporate Coal Plant Retirements. States could have even more ambitious goals for carbon pollution reduction. Market forces are already impacting the energy system nationwide, forcing market transformation.

The states' scenarios should consider carbon savings from future coal plant retirements.

Empower Affected Workers & Communities.

DEQ must ensure a plan that helps direct both public and industry resources to workers and affected communities as they make the transition to the clean-energy economy.

Children's Book Review

Review by Liz Rantz

Rubix Ruckus Reubenstein Takes Himself on a Hike | By Jen Nitz, Illustrated by Fernando Molinari

This is a stunning children's book about Rubix, a dog, who goes for a hike (slips out the gate). The art work is brilliantly merged photography and drawings, and should captivate a young child. I am going to give it to my granddaughter.

Written in part to undo the negative stereotype fairy tales have given to the wolf, Rubix meets a wolf in the woods, along with a lot of nice cuddly critters. They tell him about how they live together, and "depend on each other for survival." Excellent environmental lessons about the circle of life. The book should defuse fears of young

children about going into the woods (fear they would not have if their parents had not taught them!)

Older children and adults may be troubled by what is unsaid. For example, wolves' hunting is summarized as "Sometimes hunting can be very hard, but when we are successful many other animals have food for families. This is part of living together, sharing and taking only what we need." Nothing about the predator-prey tensions in the woods. I think the book can be an artistically captivating starting point for a lot of family fireside chats.

Join Rubix Ruckus Reubenstein as he leaves the yard and enters the world of his dreams.



Let the photographs and illustrations take you in and out of fantasy as he explores the forest and meets many new friends on the way!



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Montana Sierra Club Holiday Parties

Missoula Holiday Party & Silent Auction

When: Thursday, December 11th, 6:00 pm

Where: Burns Street Community Center, 1500 Burns St.

Celebrate the holidays with staff, fellow members, volunteers and supporters for a great year of activism! Light appetizers, wine and beer with a silent auction. To donate to the Silent Auction contact Janet Fiero at 406-203-2164.

For more information contact Bob Clark at bob.clark@sierraclub.org or 406-549-1142.

Bozeman Holiday Party

When: Tuesday, December 16th, 6 to 9 pm

Where: Baxter Hotel, 105 W. Main St.

Join Sierra Club members, staff, and supporters for a holiday party featuring photographer Tom Murphy. For more information contact Kiersten Iwai at kiersten.iwai@sierraclub.org or 406-582-8365.



*Glacier Lake in the Absaroka-Beartoot Wilderness Area.
Photo by Claudia Narcisco.*