

the Montana Sierran

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Missoula is 100% In!

BY THE **READY FOR 100 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

In April, Missoula joined the growing list of communities nationwide to commit to clean, renewable energy. On April 8, the Missoula City Council unanimously voted to adopt a resolution to move the city's electricity to 100 percent clean sources by 2030. The week prior, the Board of County Commissioners approved the same resolution for the urban portion of Missoula County. Missoula is the first city in Montana to adopt the goal. For a state that has 49 percent of its energy mix from coal, that is no small matter!

The City's resolution establishes a formal commitment to renewable electricity community-wide, supported by an Electricity Options Report developed by Climate Smart Missoula, along with the City and County. The Report highlights pathways to 100 percent, providing guidance for implementation of the clean electricity goal. Hundreds of Missoulians signed a letter of support, along with several dozen businesses and organizations, including the Missoula Food Bank, and Logjam Productions. Others, including the Missoula Federal Credit Union, American

Lung Association, and Providence St. Patrick's Hospital, wrote their own letters of support. Climate Smart Missoula, 350 Montana, Environment Montana, Forward Montana Foundation, Transition Missoula, and the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club, and several more concerned citizens all partnered in the effort to bring this resolution forward.

Missoula gets most of its electricity from NorthWestern Energy, which is in the midst of revising a long-range plan for how it will produce energy in the coming years. The utility has proposed spending up to \$1.3 billion on new fracked gas plants that could be just as bad as coal for climate when methane leaks are taken into account. The company is taking public comment on their draft plan until May 5.

Another Mountain West city — Boise, ID — adopted a 100 percent renewable electricity goal just a week before Missoula, becoming the first city in the Gem State with the goal. Across the U.S., 117 cities have established bold 100 percent clean, renewable energy goals, with Missoula marking the 117th. Missoula Mayor



Some members of the Missoula 100% Team

John Engen had also previously signed on to the Sierra Club Ready for 100 campaign's Mayors for 100 Percent Clean Energy initiative. Missoula City Council President, Bryan von Lossberg, commented that the resolution promotes customer choice and he is proud to be supporting the move. The resolution should result in economic benefits as well; Boise expects its transition will provide \$610 million in benefits to their community.

We are so proud of Missoula becoming the first in the state with this commitment! The momentum is sure to be carried forward across the state. ▲



Community Dialogues Engage Citizens in Visioning and Planning a Livable, Clean Energy Future

AS PART OF OUR READY FOR 100 CAMPAIGN, the Missoula team hosted two community dialogues in March. The goal: engage a diversity of community members to reflect on how livable the city is, and how clean energy fits into a vision of an even more livable and equitable community. Over fifty people participated in these dialogues, sharing insights and developing a crowd-sourced list of numerous potential action items. Participants ranged from seasoned climate activists to those who had never attended an environmental event or discussion before.

ABOVE: **Volunteer facilitators, Jeremy Drake & Janet Fiero**

Attendees left geared up for action! Their enthusiasm will be rewarded when they attend an Action Forum in early May, where the list of potential action items will be reviewed and evaluated, and action teams form to move priority actions forward. With Missoula's recent commitment to transition to 100% clean, renewable electricity, there will be plenty of opportunity to tie the action items to implementing that commitment as well as expanding on the effort to address other energy uses and ensure the transition is as equitable as possible. Our temporary organizer, Caitlin Pischerchia, and several volunteers crafted the dialogues and facilitated meaningful discussions. Thanks to their heart and ideas, we will be able to offer these in other communities soon.

CONGRATULATIONS MISSOULA!



“NorthWestern Power Primer” and people’s hearing stoke Montana ratepayers

BY **DAVID MERRILL**, Senior Organizing Representative, Beyond Coal Campaign

When NorthWestern Energy cancelled a public hearing on their resource Procurement Plan in November, Montana’s Beyond Coal Campaign organized a “people’s hearing” to take its place. Fifty-three ratepayers and climate activists took time out of their busy holiday schedules to attend.

Montana Beyond Coal and the Montana Chapter are working towards three goals in NorthWestern’s resource procurement process.

1. Don’t build any new gas plants.
2. Prepare for the shutdown of the huge Colstrip coal-fired power plant by 2025.
3. Ensure that Colstrip power is replaced by energy efficiency and renewable energy.

We also wanted to demonstrate that public engagement in NorthWestern Energy’s processes will not be deterred by their less than sincere commitment to public participation.

Increasing numbers of people all across the country are engaging in utility decision-making processes. But the complexity of electric utilities can be intimidating. So we asked Brian Fadie of a partner organization Montana Environmental Information Center to deliver an expert briefing, “NorthWestern Power Primer: How NorthWestern Energy Decides What Kind of Electricity You Get.”



After the briefing, ratepayers were given an opportunity to speak at the microphone about what kind of utility they want NorthWestern to be. Not surprisingly people clamored for wind, solar power and energy efficiency. Tyler Gence, a former U.S. Army officer that led a medical platoon in Iraq, talked about national security and climate change. One local green builder that attended pointed out that 60% of the homes in Missoula, Montana are not insulated. This enormous energy efficiency shortfall underlines an immense job-creation opportunity as insulating homes is skilled work that cannot be outsourced.

Several other people spoke; 31 left written comments directed at NorthWestern Energy CEO Bob Rowe. ▲



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Montana rush to gas hits green wall of resistance

BY **DAVID MERRILL**, Senior Organizing Representative, Beyond Coal Campaign

Twenty-five Missoulians rose before 6:00 AM on a cold, snowy morning for a two-hour trip to the Montana State Capitol to testify before the Public Service Commission (PSC) on January 18. Joining other activists at the hearing, which drew at least 80 people, they carried a simple message: Coal and gas are dirty, expensive and risky and renewables are cheap, clean and low-risk.

The meeting was called by the Montana Public Service Commission, overseer of NorthWestern Energy, Montana's largest electricity provider. NorthWestern recently released its Resource Procurement Plan which describes the energy sources they hope to tap over the next 20 years to produce electricity. Concern is high among the Sierra Club and its partners that NorthWestern wants to join the national "rush to gas." NorthWestern cites wind and solar intermittency as a main argument to continue using fossil fuels.

The well-regarded Rocky Mountain Institute reports that over half of thermal capacity on the U.S. grid is over 30 years old and is expected to reach retirement age by 2030. It is estimated that it would take \$520 billion to replace that capacity with new gas fired power plants and \$480 billion in fuel costs for a total commitment of \$1 trillion dollars by 2030.

There is another way as the institute reveals in its illuminating "Economics of Clean Energy Portfolios" report. This other way includes wind, solar, batteries, and energy efficiency.

The timing of the hearing was fortuitous as it put ratepayers and concerned citizens on public record as being against new gas plants, before NorthWestern released its draft Resource Procurement Plan. NorthWestern will not be able to say it hadn't heard of strong ratepayer resistance to gas and the Public Service Commission won't be able to say they weren't warned about the risks of new natural gas development.

"To avoid the risk of locking in significant ratepayer costs for gas-fired resources that are increasingly uneconomic, regulators should carefully consider alternatives to new gas power plant construction..."

—Rocky Mountain Institute

NorthWestern's position on wind and solar power intermittency is a little bit like saying you can't reach California from Montana by phone because it's too far away. Telephone technology overcame distance a long time ago. And utilities all across the country are demonstrating that energy technology has overcome solar and wind intermittency with batteries and several other strategies such as demand response.

NorthWestern paints a false picture and presents it as a universal energy truth. Well, if it's a universal energy truth then it should apply everywhere, for every utility.



Traverse City Light and Power in Michigan is aiming for 100% renewables by 2040. Michigan and 2040 too far away? The Board of Directors of the Platte River Power Authority in Colorado voted unanimously to achieve a zero carbon supply mix by 2030. XCEL, Consumers Energy, NV Energy, MidAmerican and PacifiCorp are shifting away from fossil fuel investments.

In an impressive display of organizing speed, Abby Huseth of Faith and Climate Action Montana crafted a powerful letter to the PSC, gathering 100 faith leader signatures in a couple of days. Her husband, Pastor Eric Huseth of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Bonner, MT read the letter, while Abby held their nine-month old son in her arms. They owned the room!

Thanks to Montana Environmental Information Center and 350 Montana for organizing support. The draft Resource Procurement Plan was released in early March. A link to the report can be found on the home page of the NorthWestern Energy website. ▲

A NOTE FROM THE CHAPTER DIRECTOR



What a whirlwind of a start to the year! The Montana Legislative session provided

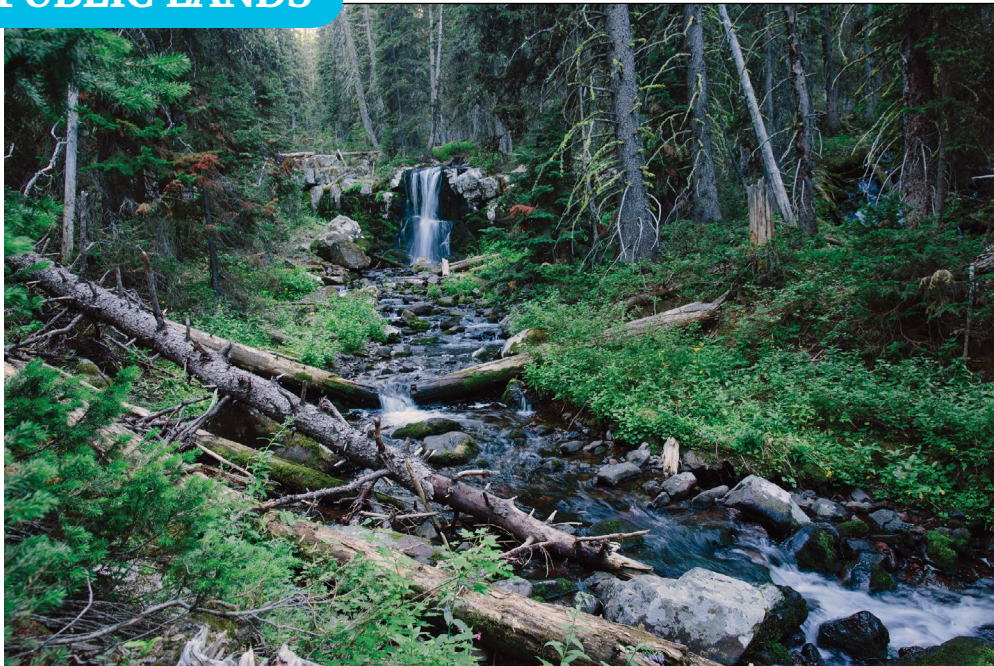
no dull moment, as bills died and returned, were amended or tabled, feared or revered. In those bills we saw wolves in the crosshairs of aerial gunners, extra burdens on approving conservation easements, and a handout for NorthWestern Energy and the potential horror movie "Energy Deregulation, The Sequel." On the flip side, there were bills offering hope: studying the value of wolves and grizzly bears, carbon tax proposals, a requirement that for-profit utilities hold public hearings for long-term resource planning, and trapper education. Unfortunately, many of the positive bills died and the negative ones were scarcely fended off. But the session was not without positive outcomes, and despite it there are other reasons for hope and celebration.

Missoula became the first city in Montana to commit to taking steps necessary to move to 100% clean electricity by 2030! Momentum is building to counter the backwards proposals and lobbying efforts of NorthWestern Energy, and the Public Service Commission's consent to gut its regulatory and consumer protection authority. There are rumblings from other cities hoping to take similar action.

Our outings program is growing, and we have an exciting start to the line-up for this season, with more to be added. And our connections to members across the state are increasing, as we learn of places of importance, like the Pryor Mountains, and hope for a place for bison both through acceptance in the Yellowstone region and recovery on the eastern plains.

Happy spring, everyone, and may it bring encouragement for the opportunities ahead.

Summer Nelson,
MONTANA CHAPTER DIRECTOR



LOUISE JOHNS / LOUISE JOHNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Planning a Forest's Future – An Opportunity to Make a Lasting Impact

BY **SARAH PAWLOWSKI**, Greater Yellowstone-Northern Rockies Campaign

Forest planning is a hard topic to get excited about. It is a long process accompanied by even longer documents. The Custer Gallatin National Forest draft management plan was released in March, 2019 and is no less than 880 pages. So, why take the time out of our busy schedules to wade through these agency documents? Because participating in the process and submitting informed comments is a great opportunity to impact the long-term health of our national forests.

With climate change and a rapidly growing population we need forest plans that preserve the wild character of Montana's national forests and ensure habitat protections for wildlife.

The Custer Gallatin National Forest is 3.1 million acres, with a significant portion of that acreage in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). This forest includes ideal habitat for grizzly bears, wolves, lynx, wolverines, bison, and elk to name a few. Much of the roadless area on the forest should be protected, and the Montana Sierra Club is making it a priority to ask the Forest Service to recommend wilderness status for key roadless areas.

Wild land is in short supply in the lower 48 but it still exists in the Custer Gallatin and we should be fighting to gain the protections necessary to keep it that way.

Securing protection for these areas would go a long way in providing secure habitat in the Forest, as well as habitat linkages for the species of Yellowstone to migrate north to the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE). This is of particular importance for grizzly bear recovery.

To learn more about the Sierra Club's position and how to participate in the forest planning process, visit our website at <https://content.sierraclub.org/ourwildamerica/custer-gallatin-national-forest-planning>. I encourage you to get involved and comment on the draft plan and stay involved as other forests in our region go through the revision process over the next couple of years. We have a great opportunity to affect not just a single forest but the entire landscape of western Montana. I intend to fight for wilderness because in 30 years I want the environment that inspired me to live in this incredible state to not only remain intact but to be thriving. ▲

HIGHLIGHT: Pryor Mountains an Unprotected Gem of the Custer Gallatin National Forest

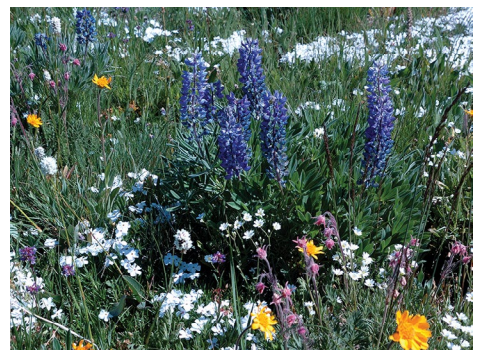
BY **SUMMER NELSON**,
with contributions by **DICK WALTON**

THE PRYOR MOUNTAINS ARE A BOTANICAL HOTSPOT, flush with flowers, and rich in species and community diversity. The region has a high level of plant endemism, meaning that species are unique to that defined geographic location. To members Dick Walton and Susan Newell, the uniqueness of the Pryors is clear and the area is especially deserving of protection. Walton and Newell have been working to inform people about the specialness of the Pryors and to protect the area, for years. Walton hosts a website for the Pryors Coalition, www.pryormountains.org, which is chock full of information.

The Pryor Mountains are part of the Custer Gallatin National Forest, and plans for their management will be established through the Forest Plan revision process. The Montana Sierra Club is recommending that over 47,000 acres be recommended for wilderness, including roadless areas such as Big Pryor, Punchbowl, Lost Water Canyon, and Bear Canyon. Recommended wilderness areas are important for species diversity, protection of threatened and endangered species, watershed protection, scientific research, and solitude.

Wilderness designation in the Pryors would also help preserve important landscape and ecosystem types that are underrepresented in the National Wilderness Preservation System - or not represented at all.

Interested in learning more about the Pryors and taking action to protect that special area? Check out the website, www.pryormountains.org, and also comment on the Forest Plan to request wilderness recommendation in the Pryors.



DICK WALTON

Chapter Members Held the Line at Montana Legislature

The 66th Legislative session was a wild ride. There were numerous battles of the bills, with some wins and some losses. Our volunteer Legislative Chair, Art Compton, maintained a regular presence at the Capital and helped influence several bills along with other dedicated volunteers and members. The Montana Chapter participated in both Conservation Lobby Days, organized by our friends at Montana Conservation Voters, in February and March, engaging in outreach and exchange with legislators. With help from our friends at Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC), the Montana Chapter hosted a Citizen's Lobbying Training in Helena before the session began. This prepared members with information and skills to engage in the legislative process. We also activated members and supporters to contact legislators and Governor Bullock on some of the most threatening, and promising, bills. Thank you to all who took time to participate by attending hearings and calling or emailing legislators to speak out about priority bills throughout the session. As of writing this report, the Legislature was not quite over.

We opposed several bills successfully!

- **HB 279 – Wolf trapper cost reimbursement.** This bill was an attempt to copy a program recently established in Idaho. We testified along with a couple of other groups that it amounted to a bounty on the wolf, which is a game animal, since its hunting is regulated. We pointed out that we don't pay people to hunt game. Our arguments were persuasive, and the bill died on the House floor.
- **HB 551 – Allow night hunting of wolves.** We testified against this bill and it died on the House floor.
- **SB 68 – Allow nonresident aerial hunting of predators.** We testified against this bill, and it was tabled in committee.
- **SB 48 – Allow variances to water quality standards.** It was withdrawn and amended because of opposition from the Montana Chapter and partner organizations like MEIC, Trout Unlimited, Clark Fork Coalition, and Montana Audubon. The amendments improved the bill significantly.
- **HB 552 – Remove trap setbacks on roads that are seasonally closed to highway vehicles by gates.** These roads are often used by recreationists and their dogs, but traps would be allowed anywhere along – even right on – these roads. We fought against this bill, and it had its ups and downs. After some amendments, which made it less bad but not good, it was eventually pronounced “probably dead.”

Unfortunately, others we opposed passed, and we are asking for vetos.

- **HB 265 – Allows the State Land Board to politicize the approval of conservation easements and even block those the Governor would approve.** This issue previously went to the Montana Supreme Court and the Governor won. This year the Legislature changed the law to give the Land Board control and burden the process of establishing Fish, Wildlife and Parks easements.
- **HB 132 – Redefines wild bison to mean only those that have not been in captivity.** This seemingly innocuous bill would make it harder to restore bison in Montana, based on the fact there are no

“wild” bison in Montana and no existing population could be used to restore wild herds on public or tribal land.

- **SJ6 – Reminiscent of the last session, this resolution goes against a federal court decision and asks the federal government to remove Endangered Species Act protections from grizzly bears.**
- **HJ 28 – Undermines American Prairie Reserve (APR) grazing permit modification.** The APR has large acreages south of the Missouri River in central Montana to create open range for bison grazing. The majorities in both Houses of the legislature object to the idea of recreating historic wildlife use on these lands, and are trying to block the existing cattle grazing permit modification that would accommodate open range for bison. We argued that the APR sponsors and managers are environmental and agricultural experts, and the Bureau of Land Management should be allowed to continue its analysis of the proposal as they would with any grazing permit application.

We testified in support of several bills that would have had positive impacts for wildlife and public land users, but they did not make it through the process this round. The ideas contained in these bills may take time to catch on and gain more traction.

- **HB 517 – Establish trapper education program.** Died in committee.
- **SB 185 – Prohibit taking of wolves near Yellowstone.** Tabled in committee.
- **SB 186 – Prohibit predator killing contests.** Missed transmittal.
- **SB 187 – Prohibit vehicular injury of predators.** Missed transmittal.

One more of the positive wildlife bills survived much longer in the process but was tabled on April 16.

- **SJ 7 – Study resolution on value and costs of wolves and grizzlies to tourism, hunting and agriculture.** This would provide helpful information for better decision making and quantify some benefits of ensuring wolves and grizzlies persist and thrive in our state.

Finally, there was the major drama of SB 331 – initially SB 278 – that would have given NorthWestern Energy a blank check to invest further in coal power and pass on all the costs as ratepayers. This would amount to a second round of deregulation, and if we learned anything from the first round, it is that this would be devastating for ratepayers and our state. This bill died, then was resurrected, and had a deal with the Governor which was almost immediately torpedoed by its sponsors in a political stunt regarding Medicaid expansion. Perhaps realizing that holding health care hostage was not a popular strategy, NorthWestern Energy and SB 331 sponsors backpedaled. But the saga continued, as opponents and proponents watched the bill's status change almost hourly. After a resounding “no” vote on the House floor on April 16, there arose the threat of inserting it into another bill and thus forcing yet another consideration. This is one bill that is definitely not over until it's over. ▲



Gallatin Hike

Outings are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. These adventures will combine good times in the outdoors with an educational component where folks will gain conservation-related knowledge about the amazing Montana landscape surrounding us, and issues affecting land, water, wildlife, and energy production. Check our website, Facebook page, and Meetup.com site for additional outings not included in this newsletter.

***Participants must RSVP** to the appropriate contact and sign a liability release to participate in an outing. Sorry, no pets allowed. Participants are responsible for their own food, water, sun/rain gear and other supplies. We will practice 'Leave No Trace' ethics, so be prepared to pack out whatever you pack in! Outings leaders will email or call with more information after you sign up.

Survival Class and Overnight Outing (Missoula area)

Class: June 26 (Wednesday), 6:00 p.m. Missoula Public Library lower conference room

Outing: June 29-30 (Saturday-Sunday), Welcome Creek Wilderness (meet at Missoula public library at 8:00 a.m. Saturday to carpool). RSVP for the OUTING by June 26.

Outings Leader: Michael Jarnevic, 406-544-8671, grossbison@gmail.com

This is a two-part presentation on "down and dirty" basic survival techniques that can keep you alive in the extremes of Montana. Participants can come to either the class or the outing, or both.

Part 1 – Survival Class: The class will cover putting together a survival kit and the Three Priorities of survival: Shelter/Warmth; Water; Signaling.

Part 2 – Overnight Survival Outing: For a follow-on outing we will hike into a local area, set up standard backpacking equipment, and then demonstrate survival techniques. Participants will be given the opportunity to sleep in an expedient shelter, construct a fire, and learn other techniques of survival.

Great Burn Proposed Wilderness day hike (Missoula area)

June 20th (Thursday)

Outings Leader: Bob Clark, 406-529-6706, bobclark1111@gmail.com

Meet at the Missoula Public Library parking lot @ 7:00am to car pool to trailhead, or contact leader for alternate meet up options.

Hikers should expect little elevation gain but a 12-mile round-trip hike with creek crossing(s).

Low elevation old-growth forests of Douglas fir and western red-cedar and clear running creeks highlight this hike. The Great Burn is just 40 miles west of Missoula and encompasses 275,000 acres of wild roadless land on the Lolo and Clearwater National Forests in Montana and Idaho. We will hike the West Fork of Fish Creek and Indian Creek which harbor 500+ year

old western red-cedar trees. The Lolo National Forest will be developing a new Forest Plan that will designate recommended wilderness status to wild, roadless areas on the Forest. Join us and learn more about how you can help!

Bailey Lake Family Friendly day hike (Bitterroot area)

July 5 (Friday)

Outings Leader: Summer Nelson, 406-544-4948, summer.nelson@sierraclub.org

RSVP by June 28. Meet at the trailhead at 10:30 a.m. or discuss carpool opportunities with leader.

This family friendly hike will be at a pace to accommodate young children and the young at heart. We will hike in to the lake for a picnic lunch (bring your own) and time for kiddos to explore and play, then return by mid-afternoon. This hike is relatively easy, 3-miles round trip, with approximately 700 feet elevation gain. We'll talk about the kinds of fish living in the lake, and other aspects of the area's natural history. Participants should be prepared to be patient and enjoy the journey with young children. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Sleeping Giant/Sleeping Giant Wilderness Study Area day hike (Helena area)

July 12 (Friday)

Outings Leader: Pat Bik, p.louisebik@gmail.com

RSVP by July 5 to discuss meeting time and location.

The Sleeping Giant earned its name from the rocks that form the silhouette of a slumbering man on the Helena horizon. This trek takes hikers to the summit of Beartooth Peak, more commonly known as the "Giant's Nose" where one is bestowed with spectacular views of the Missouri River, the Gates of the Mountains, and a half dozen or so more of west-central Montana's mountain ranges. This 4-mile (round-trip) and moderately strenuous hike gains over 2,000 feet in elevation which involves some non-technical

scrambling to reach the summit. Bring plenty of water and sunscreen and layered clothing for variable weather conditions. We will learn about the unique habitats and attributes that make this WSA a prime candidate for Wilderness designation.

St. Mary Peak day hike (Bitterroot Mountains)

(Bitterroot Mountains)

July 24 (Wednesday)

Outings Leader: Mary Owens, 406-529-1916, trekker320@aol.com

RSVP by July 22. Limited to 10 people. The group will meet at the leader's house in Lolo and carpool from there. Directions will be provided to registered participants.

This is a 7.5-mile round trip hike with an elevation gain of 2500 feet. At an elevation of 9351 feet, St. Mary Peak is one of the higher peaks in the Bitterroot and lies within the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. This is moderately strenuous hike, but the view from the top is well worth the sweat equity. The peak has a working fire lookout manned by volunteers. If one is present, we should be able to have him/her talk to us about their lookout duties.

Sapphire Mountains/Kent Pk. day hike (Missoula/Bitterroot area)

August 1 (Thursday)

Outings Leader: Bob Clark, 406-529-6706, bobclark1111@gmail.com

Meet at the Missoula Public Library parking lot @ 7:00am to carpool to the trailhead or contact leader for alternate meet up options.

This is a 12-mile round-trip hike with an elevation gain of about 1600 feet. At an elevation of 8998 feet, Kent Peak is the highest point in the range. The Sapphire Range is part of a 364,000 acre roadless area that includes the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness and contains a National Forest Wilderness Study Area of 107,000 acres, which we will be hiking in. The Range is a critical biological corridor for wildlife. Learn more at the trailhead when Larry Campbell of Friends of the Bitterroot, will give a pre-hike talk about the biological importance of the Sapphires.

Castle Rock/Blue Joint Wilderness Study Area day hike (Bitterroot area)**August 4** (Sunday)**Outings Leader:** Teresa Brock, tabrock123@gmail.com

RSVP by July 21. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Victor Merc in Victor to car pool/caravan to the trailhead.

Castle Rock is what remains of the core of a long extinct volcano, located east of Nez Perce pass along the northern border of the Blue Joint WSA in the west fork of the Bitterroot River drainage. This hike gains approximately 1500 feet elevation over 2.5 miles to the base where the last 200 feet is a scramble to the summit over loose rock and bedrock. This vantage point will provide a commanding view of the Blue Joint WSA to the south and across the bordering Bitterroot Selway Wilderness. We will discuss why this area is of ultimate importance as a wildlife corridor worthy of protection and addition to the existing Wilderness. We will also learn about the historic Native American route to their buffalo hunting grounds to the East and later use by gold miners traveling from Lewiston Idaho to the gold strike in Bannack.

Wales Creek Wilderness Study Area Overnight (Ovando area)**August 17-18** (Saturday-Sunday)**Outings Leader:** Michael Jarnevic, 406-544-8671, grossbison@gmail.com

RSVP by August 14. Maximum of 10 people. We will meet at the Missoula Public Library parking lot @ 8:00am Saturday, then journey to the Wales Creek trailhead close to Ovando. We will be returning by 2:00pm Sunday.

This will be a moderately difficult hike of approximately 10 miles roundtrip into Wales Creek, a BLM Wilderness Study Area of 11,580 acres. The region is heavily forested with stands of lodgepole pine and Douglas fir that provide vegetative screening from other recreationalists that might be in the area. The area supports healthy populations of big game species such as elk, moose, grizzly and black bear, gray wolf, and deer. We will discuss the value of this Wilderness Study Area and what makes it a good candidate for designated Wilderness. Our group will be especially "bear aware" and will take all precautions.

Carlton Lake, Lolo National Forest day hike (Bitterroot area)**August 21** (Wednesday)**Outings Leader:** Mary Owens, 406-529-1916, trekker320@aol.com

RSVP by August 14. Limited to 10 people. We will meet at the leader's house in Lolo and carpool from there. Directions will be provided to registered participants.

This is a moderately strenuous hike of 9 miles round trip with 2800 feet of elevation gain. Our destination is the beautiful Carlton Lake located at the base of Lolo Peak. Much of the hike will be in an area burned during the Lolo Peak fire of 2017. The trail was cleared of downfall in 2018, but it is possible there may be new downfall of burned trees. We will also be hiking in the Carlton Ridge Research Natural Area, the most extensive forest of alpine larch in the United States at about 250 acres. Larch are a deciduous conifer and turn a lovely shade of yellow in the fall. The trees are believed to have been spared burning from the fire. We will briefly discuss the importance of the Research Natural Area and of fire on the landscape. The leader plans to pre-hike the trail and will provide an updated description of the hike to all registered participants.

Interested in leading outings?

We welcome new outings leaders! Leaders must complete Sierra Club Outings Leader Trainings (OLT) every four years: OLT 101 (for day trips and car camping) and OLT 201 (for overnight trips away from cars) and be current in CPR and basic Wilderness First Aid. Additional training is required for those seeking to lead trips specifically for youth.

The Montana Chapter will provide outing leader trainings free and will help cover the cost (or fully cover the cost when feasible) of the first aid and CPR courses for those who can commit to leading at least 2 outings during the year following their certification.

Contact our Outings Program chair, Mike Jarnevic (grossbison@gmail.com), for more information.



JEFF HOLLETT, FLIKR.COM

Tribes Pursue National Bison Range Restoration

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES (CSKT) are in the process of revising a proposal to restore the National Bison Range in Moise, MT, to federal trust ownership for the benefit of the Tribes.

Under the proposed legislation, public access would be statutorily-required, as would continued management for bison conservation. The Tribes released a draft bill for public comment in the summer of 2016, resulting in subsequent revisions to the draft.

The Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club has been an ardent supporter of tribal management of the National Bison Range since 2004.

CSKT already has an extensive network of Tribally-designated conservation areas surrounding the Bison Range; its central location would be a logical addition to Tribal lands and would promote a more holistic management approach.

Many people are unaware that in the mid-1870's, tribal members were responsible for bringing the first bison herd to the Flathead Indian Reservation at a time when the animals were at risk of extinction. Descendants of those bison formed the vast majority of the National Bison Range's original herd. That history, in combination with the Range's location in the center of the Reservation, creates added resonance to the idea of restoring the Range to federal trust ownership for the Tribes. ▲

Hiking the Wild Rocky Mountains

Backpacking guide Bob Clark will take you on a photo tour of some of Montana and Wyoming's most spectacular wilderness areas. Sit back, relax, and inspire your summer adventures with images of clear mountain streams, high peaks, wildlife, and meadows of wildflowers.

When: Thursday, May 9th, 7:00 pm**Where:** LePetite Bakery, 129 S. 4th St. W., Missoula

Sponsored by the Sierra Club Montana Chapter

Open to the Public -

\$3 Suggested Donation

Donations will support our local Outings Program





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MONTANA CHAPTER

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