



NORTHERN PLAINS
**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**



CAMPAIGNS & SUCCESSES

2023 was a year of impact for Northern Plains! Here is just a small snapshot of what Northern Plains members accomplished together.

Thanks to years of hard work by Northern Plains members, **Talen Energy, the Colstrip power plant operator, agreed to fully excavate the ash ponds associated with Units 1&2, and store the coal ash high and dry.** This is a big win for clean water in Colstrip!



We're solarizing Montana; **our affiliates' solarize campaigns surpassed 700KW of solar in our local communities this year.**

Northern Plains continued to fight NorthWestern Energy's construction of an expensive, polluting methane plant in Laurel by holding **two rallies, three community meetings**, and a multi-day canvass where we signed up **65 Laurel residents to stay informed, and 24 to display yard signs.**



Thanks to the Good Neighbor Agreement, **Sibanye-Stillwater Mining Company committed resources to protect water quality in the Stillwater and Boulder valleys after the mines close operations.**



We turned out **265 people to public meetings telling the DEQ to defend the Montana Environmental Policy Act.**

Three member-ranchers participated in a D.C. "livestock fly-in" where they met with decision-makers about needed policy reforms to prevent multi-national agriculture corporations from abusing U.S. laws and manipulating markets to squeeze independent farmers and ranchers out of business.

Members continued working to stop air pollution from orphaned and abandoned oil and gas wells in Montana. **Almost 50% of the identified orphaned wells throughout Montana have been plugged and the rest will be plugged by fall 2024!**



THE 68TH MONTANA LEGISLATURE: Grassroots Democracy in Action

Since our founding in 1972, Northern Plains members have had a strong influence on Montana's laws and policies. We fully embody our democratic values during the legislature, and 2023 was no different.

47 BILLS

Members took action on **47 individual bills** via the Northern Plains' website.

2,842 MESSAGES

996 people from nearly every legislative district in Montana sent **2,842 messages** to legislators.

26 BILL HEARINGS

31 Northern Plains members testified in at least 26 bill hearings throughout the session and lobbied legislators, sharing personal stories and unique perspectives.

We defeated **3 dangerous bills** that would have killed solar energy opportunities in Montana. We also testified in support of **7 ag bills** to restore Country-of-Origin Labeling for beef, supply food raised by Montana farmers to food banks, and to give farmers and ranchers the right to repair their own equipment.

67 PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

19 Introduced
9 Battled by
Northern Plains
0 PASSED!

More than 250 Montanans braved winter roads and highway closures to rally in support of Montana's Constitution.

We stood in solidarity with Montana's Native communities supporting **3 successful bills** to address the **Missing and Murdered Indigenous People's crisis** and to acknowledge the harm done by **Indian Boarding Schools**.



WE PASSED 1 RESOLUTION

Montana Soil Health Week and Day celebration every April.



AFFILIATE



Golden Triangle Resource Council (GTRC)

GTRC members focused on outreach to their membership and broader communities through a successful Solarize campaign with 78 sign-ups and 5 contracts signed for installations. The group also held informal gatherings in both Cascade and Chouteau counties to build community and awareness of the organization.

Sleeping Giant Citizens Council (SGCC)

SGCC members successfully made their voices heard this year by speaking out against the Northwestern Energy Rate Case before the Public Service Commission in April, organizing around the historic Held v Montana case in June, and testifying at the DEQ Montana Environmental Protection Act hearing in October.

Cottonwood Resource Council (CRC)

CRC participated in and influenced the Draft Environmental Impact Statement process on the proposed new tailings/waste rock storage facility at the East Boulder Mine and helped the mine craft its MT Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) permit.

Yellowstone Bend Citizens Council (YBCC)

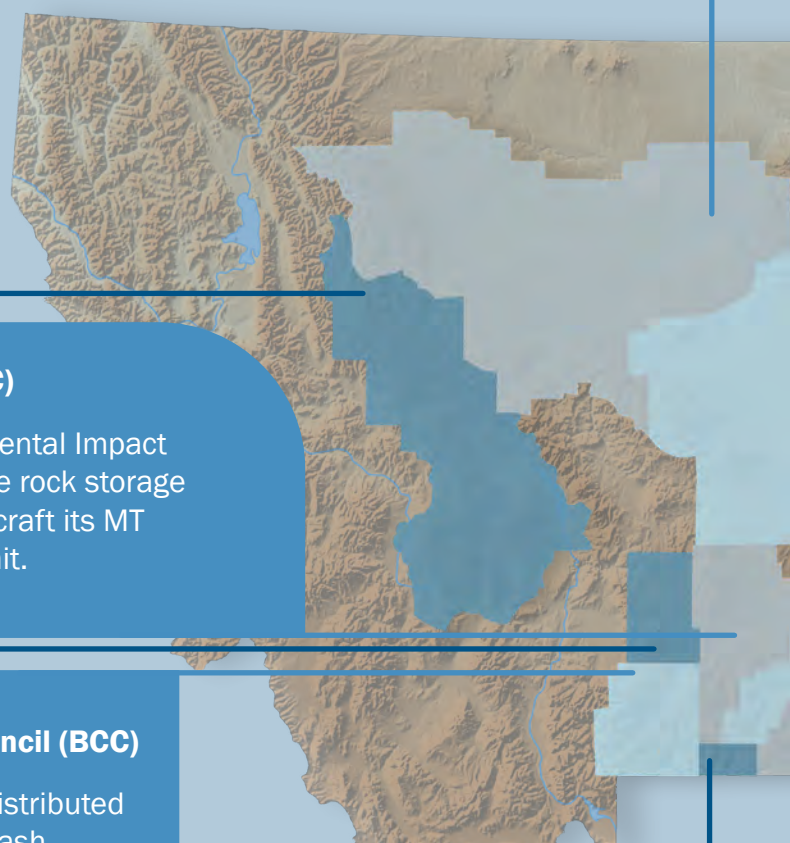
By supporting John Mills for the Park Electric Co-op board, YBCC was successful in driving 15% higher co-op election turnout and spreading forward-thinking ideas about climate issues and energy affordability throughout the county.

Bear Creek Council (BCC)

BCC members distributed 108 bear safe trash cans and worked with 15 businesses to get dumpsters or other waste solutions to protect both the area's bears and the community through their Bear Awareness Gardiner program.

Beartooth Alliance (BA)

BA contributed \$20,000 over the past three years to combat invasive weeds in the Beartooth Mountains, concluding with a well-received report to Montana Department of Agriculture.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Central Montana Resource Council (CMRC)

CMRC succeeded in lobbying the Fergus Electric board to protect net-metering and adopt a more equitable rate structure for all members.

Bull Mountain Land Alliance (BMLA)

BMLA members' organizing efforts to protect our land and water from the impacts of Signal Peak's mining activity were covered by *The New York Times*!

Dawson Resource Council (DRC)

DRC members built a big-tent coalition of eastern Montana citizens to fight the proposed MDU rate increase and succeeded in cutting the increase in half, saving rural eastern Montana communities \$4.5 million a year.

Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council (YVCC)

YVCC played a pivotal role in securing a \$1 million urban forestry grant for the city of Billings.

Rosebud Protective Association (RPA)

YVCC/BMLA

Stillwater Protective Association (SPA)

SPA successfully organized in opposition of a proposed gravel pit which would have been developed on a scenic parcel of land right outside Nye that is important to wildlife, livestock, and recreators alike.

Carbon County Resource Council (CCRC)

CCRC members completed their second season of water collection to establish a baseline of water quality for Rock Creek which will further CCRC's advocacy efforts to guide responsible development in Carbon County.



MEMBERSHIP & PRESS

3,294 MEMBERS
from 48 states

2,769 MEMBERS
from across Montana

145 COMMUNITY LEADERS

“We tried to put the public into this whole process. And I think we were successful. Other groups chimed in, but Northern Plains, I think really led the way because our members lived down there. We’ve been involved in Colstrip before it was even built.”

– Beth Kaeding, quoted in the Billings Gazette on the expired deadline for Talen Energy to propose a different clean-up plan for the Colstrip ash ponds.

Shaping the Public Discourse

Our stories are shaping public narratives about the issues most important to our work. They are powerful because we are powerful.

In 2023, 39 Northern Plains members were featured in press stories at the national, statewide, and local levels.

The New York Times

A Faked Kidnapping and Cocaine: A Montana Mine’s Descent Into Chaos

The Signal Peak Mine was embroiled in a web of criminal activity. Now, environmental groups want to shut it down.

In January, ***The New York Times* chronicled the tenacious organizing of our Bull Mountain Land Alliance affiliate members** as they fight to protect their land and livelihoods in the face of widespread corruption from Signal Peak Energy, the owners of Montana’s only underground coal mine. Shortly after the story was published, a federal judge blocked the mine’s expansion plan.

116 TOTAL PRESS HITS ABOUT NORTHERN PLAINS AND OUR MEMBERS, including:

- **103 Newspaper stories**
- **9 TV Stories**
- **4 National News stories:** *The New York Times*, *Reveal Radio*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Rolling Stone*
- That’s **an average of over 2 media stories every week of the year**

In June, **National Public Radio distributed a 1 hour-long piece feat. Northern Plains** to over 350 radio stations, exploring how legislators and state agencies are rigging the system for the coal and gas industries.

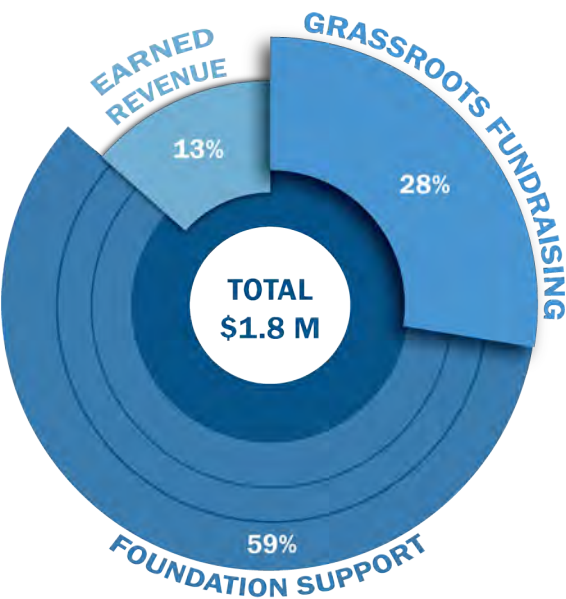
Our work to stop the Laurel Methane-Fired Plant was featured 11 times in the Montana state press and once in the national media where our story was broadcasted on at least 564 public radio stations and distributed to over 1 million people via podcast.

FINANCIALS

Our three most recent 990's can be found at NorthernPlains.org/Financial-Information. Audit available upon request.

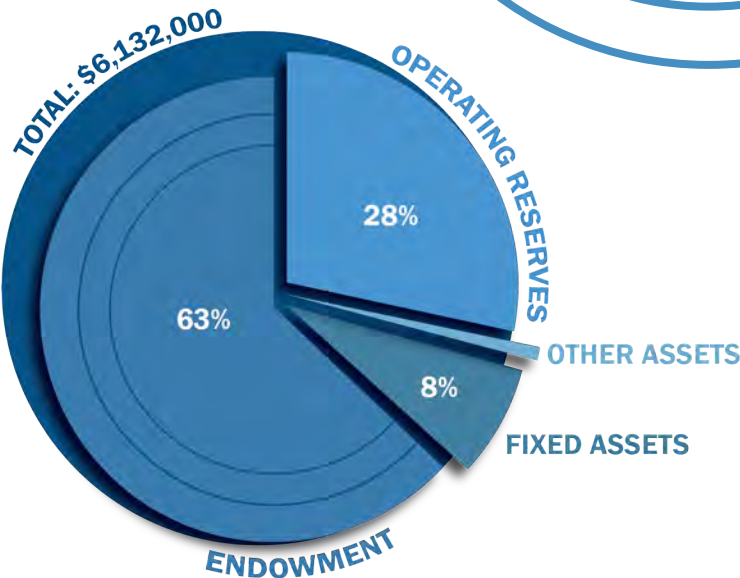


Income



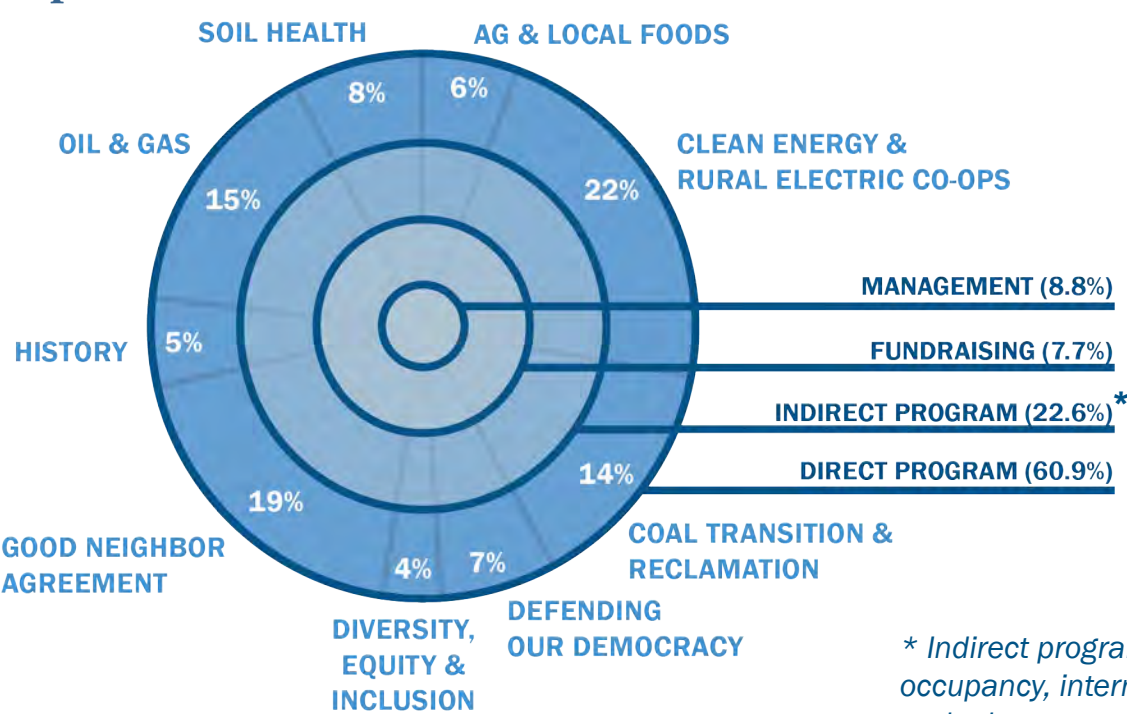
Grassroots donations from our members are the heart of our fundraising program. On top of that, we bring together a diverse group of other funding sources to help advance our work.

Assets



Northern Plains operates from a strong, fiscally responsible position that balances critical program expenses with smart investment strategies. We use up-to-date practices for financial management and compliance.

Expenses



Northern Plains focuses on nine campaign areas to achieve our mission. Investing in responsible management and effective fundraising is at the core of everything we do in order to meet our operating needs and maximize the impact every dollar has on our program work.

* Indirect program expenses include occupancy, internet and phone, insurance, and other operational requirements.



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We are proud to have achieved the highest level of compliance from the two foremost non-profit financial watchdog groups, so you can rest assured that Northern Plains will utilize all funds effectively and responsibly.