

THE PLAINS TRUTH

VOICE OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS RESOURCE COUNCIL

VOL. 54, ISSUE 4 | FALL 2025



NOT-SO-BEAUTIFUL

Montanans brace for the devastating effects of the "One Big Beautiful Bill"

Also Inside:

BIOWASTE WATER

DATA CENTERS

MCOOL

NORTHERN PLAINS

RESOURCE COUNCIL

Northern Plains is a grassroots conservation and family agriculture group that organizes Montanans to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and unique quality of life.

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THE PLAINS TRUTH

The Plains Truth is published by Northern Plains Resource Council. Northern Plains members receive *The Plains Truth* as a benefit of membership.

Membership Dues

\$1200+ Rider of the Big Sky
\$600 - \$1199 Bottom Line Rider
\$51 - \$599 Rider
\$50 General Member

Endowment

The Northern Plains Endowment is a permanent fund established to help sustain Northern Plains' work into the future. If you want to make a donation, a memorial gift, or a bequest to this fund, please contact the Northern Plains office.

Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)

Northern Plains is a founding member of the Western Organization of Resource Councils. WORC is a regional network of ten grassroots community organizations that include 15,200 members in eight Western states. WORC helps its member groups succeed by providing training and coordinating regional issue campaigns. Visit www.worc.org

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FREE FILM SCREENING
ART HOUSE BILLINGS

Join members of Northern Plains Resource Council for a special screening of **UNEARTH** - a powerful documentary highlighting the controversial permitting and development of the Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region of Alaska. The film highlights the influence of local leadership and community organizing in the face of natural resource extraction.

**THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 6
7:00 - 9:00 PM**

UNEARTH
BENEATH THE SURFACE LIES THE TRUTH

Directed by: JOHN HUNTER, NOLAN
Produced by: ERIN BRACKNOVICH
Screenplay by: AUBREY STRICKLAND, DUNE STRICKLAND

"The Strickland brothers skillfully balance natural beauty, commercial fishing, native community, mining history, road tripping, spy vs. spy suspense - all wrapped into an honest story about the impacts of mining in the western US. There are no easy answers. A must see!" - Jerry Tuverson

NORTHERN PLAINS
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ArtHouseBillings.com / Cinema-and-Pub / Movies / Scan for free tickets



A Bright Future

Board Chair **EDWARD BARTA**

As most of you know from previous newsletters, Northern Plains has been engaged in an intensive strategic planning process during the last 10 months. Many of our staff and a number of Board and affiliate members participated — over 50 people. The conclusion of this initial planning took place in Billings where we had a three-day retreat at which we made clear decisions on the pathways we will walk to take our organization to the next level. Details of these pathways will be shared at our annual meeting on November 7 and 8. This planning process has been quite the experience and it has really highlighted for me reasons why Northern Plains is truly a remarkable organization. Let's start with leadership.

As usual, our leaders and staff rose to the occasion and did what was necessary to bring this work to a successful conclusion. Led by Executive Director Maggie Gordon and Director of Organizing and Campaigns Caitlin Cromwell, we navigated tension, we debated, we called on our history. Northern Plains voices are seldom quiet

and demure. This was particularly true here as the stakes for the organization are particularly high — what it will take to have a stronger, more effective and powerful voice in our somewhat dystopian world.

Northern Plains has among its membership a number of folks who have been in the organization from the start — over 50 years ago. Steve Charter, Gilles Stockton, and Jeanie Alderson (all ranchers) have been with us a long time and their importance and commitment to our organization became clearly evident in our meetings in Billings. We wrestled with what it will take to build more leaders at Northern Plains, and bring more people into the work. Reaching beyond the choir will be difficult, but it is essential.

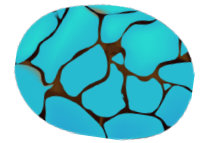
Discussions were passionate and sometimes contentious as change is hard. Steve, Gilles, and Jeanie were like a beacon of light in helping us navigate through our fear of the unknown. They did this by sharing stories of how Northern Plains has undergone big changes in the past and how we have always not only survived but became stronger as a

result. Their leadership guided our team to be rooted in our longtime tradition of organizing, and our values.

Yes, we rose to the occasion. It was truly amazing to see the dedication these leaders have to Northern Plains as they attended countless hours of Zoom meetings and then showed up for the three-day confab in Billings. Why were they so committed? Well, number one, they believe in the core mission of Northern Plains — protecting our family farms and ranches, our land, water, way of life, and, especially in this moment, our democracy. Second, they believe that the integrity and moral and ethical values our leadership team brings is a reflection of Northern Plains as a whole. A huge thank you to all of you who have helped in this strategic planning!

As I finish this, my last contribution to Plains Truth as chair, I know that as we implement our plan, our boots will land firmly on the ground and we will be better prepared to walk across the beautiful Montana landscape and “kick some butt.”

Don't delay, be a GEM of a Monthly Sustainer today!



Be a GEM this year (Generous Every Month) by becoming a Monthly Sustainer — and receive an adhesive gem for your Annual Meeting name tag at check in! Already a Monthly Sustainer? You get a gem too! Monthly Sustainers make a BIG impact! With as little as \$5 a month, they provide Northern Plains with a predictable source

of income to sustain our work. You'll never get behind on your membership (say goodbye to renewal letters!), and it is simple to change the donation amount whenever you would like. Joining is simple—click the **Donate Now** button on our website or give us a call at (406) 248-1154. We would love to welcome you into the fold!



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BUILD A BETTER TOMORROW, TODAY!

Join other members like you! Become a part of **Northern Plains Legacy**. Our planned giving program offers clear ways to support Northern Plains and will sustain your values for years to come.

Whether you're from the plains, mountains, cities, or towns, all of us share a common goal: To protect this place we love and call home so that future generations may thrive and prosper.

To learn more about Northern Plains Legacy and all the ways you can make a lasting gift, visit: NorthernPlains.org/plan-your-legacy or contact **Caleb** at caleb@northernplains.org

SCAN HERE



FINALLY, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY IS HERE!

Marsha Small and Senator Shane Morigeau at this year's Indigenous Peoples Day celebration in Bozeman (Above). Photo courtesy of Western Native Voice.

(RIGHT) Photo by Caitlin Cromwell

Celebrations took place across the state on Oct. 13, in honor of Montana's first Indigenous Peoples Day. After a decade-long fight, led by Marsha Small (Above) of the Indigenous Peoples Day Montana, and in collaboration with Northern Plains, members of Montana's American Indian Caucus and others, the state of Montana passed IPD, which will coincide with Columbus Day each year.



MEMBERS STAND UP FOR CLEAN WATER IN CONRAD

EPA Holds Hearing on Biofuels Wastewater Injection Wells

BY CAROLINE CANARIOS

Officials from the EPA traveled to Conrad High School in Conrad, Mont., at the end of September to host a hearing on expansion of the Madison aquifer exemption for a biofuel wastewater injection wells project. In response, more than 50 community members showed up in force to defend their pristine water source from this imminent threat.

Steve Grout, a Golden Triangle Resource Council member, said he views the EPA's expansion of the aquifer exemption as "validating our earlier concerns about potential seepage of high-strength industrial waste-water into the aquifer. On top of that, neither we nor the EPA knows exactly what is in the waste-water, as no samples have been provided to the EPA or for independent testing."

The wastewater injection wells pose several risks to the health of an otherwise undisturbed rural community dependent on clean water, and project managers do not currently have a plan for ensuring the injectate (injected fluids) is contained within their proposed radius, instead relying on conjecture.

Montana Renewables' environmental



The EPA took comments from the community Sept. 24, at Conrad High School, as they consider an expansion permit for biofuels wastewater dumping into the Madison Aquifer. More than 50 concerned citizens turned out to the EPA hearing and voiced their concerns.

assessment estimates that its pretreatment unit will produce as much as 232,000 gallons of wastewater each day once the facility is fully expanded, into two inactive oil wells near Lake Frances.

"The Record of Decision states that Montana Renewables' pre-treatment system is under construction and final water quality data are not available for EPA consideration," Grout testified before the EPA at the hearing. "What, then, has Montana Renewables been shipping to Idaho or other destinations if it's 'unavailable?' And why has the EPA not sampled from those trucks or railcars? I encourage the EPA to think safer."

Following the hearing, members gathered hundreds of comments from the region to submit to the EPA in response to the impacts of the Madison aquifer. While Montana Renewables, the company creating the biofuels, has committed to build a wastewater treatment plant to reduce contaminants, the public has yet to receive that guarantee or confirmed plan from the EPA. Golden Triangle Resource Council members continue to work in coalition and take action to protect rural clean water.



**Bull Mountain
Land Alliance**

LEARNING FROM LOSS

Building Real Power in the Bull Mountains

BY BRADY MCGINLEY

This year has been a challenging one for Northern Plains members across Montana – just ask members of Bull Mountain Land Alliance (BMLA). The new year began with the loss of rancher Steve Charter’s land to the Signal Peak coal mine, followed quickly by the inauguration of a new administration that promises to expand the coal industry – a frightening prospect for the folks who live just beyond the mine’s boundary. During Montana’s legislative session, a slate of bills were signed into law that dismantle water protections and relieve mining corporations of their environmental responsibilities. Then in June, federal approval was handed down for Signal Peak to mine an additional 57 million tons of coal from beneath the Bull Mountains. Indeed, BMLA members have been kicked while they’re down.

We’ve all heard the old adage about the definition of insanity: something about doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. So, after this series of setbacks left us feeling directionless, we knew it was time for some honest self-reflection on our organizing. At a meeting this past summer, members were confronted with a question: “Do we, the current active members of BMLA, have the power we need to win on our issues?” The answer: a resounding no. From this uncomfortable epiphany came another question: “What does BMLA need in order to have winning power?” It didn’t take long to coalesce around one solution: more people.

So, we’ve gone and met with folks. We’ve spoken to our neighbors, our former members, our local elected officials and community leaders – and we’ve listened. Folks don’t always say what we might want them to. But oftentimes, wedged between their quips about BMLA’s radical environmental agenda or their praise for Signal Peak’s philanthropy, we’ve heard something more insightful. Retirees worry about affording their ballooning property taxes. Rural landowners are



BLMA members meet to evaluate their power as an organization and discuss how they can win by engaging with more people and growing their power.

frustrated by the county’s failure to keep gravel roads in shape. Community leaders acknowledge that, if and when the coal mine closes, there is no economic contingency plan in place.

There are about a dozen BMLA members who’ve devoted years trying to hold the mine accountable and protect their land, air, and water. Like lots of Northern Plains members, these folks have read mining permits front-to-back and know Montana’s Environmental Policy Act like the back of their hand. But when it comes to organizing, expertise only matters when you have the people power to leverage it. Organizing demands us to go meet folks where they are – but not to leave them there. So as BMLA’s next campaign around local economic development takes shape, we are reminding ourselves why this strategic pivot is so important. It’s not because our longtime members decided they no longer cared about standing up to Signal Peak, but because we realized the only way of doing that is by building real power with and for local people. And if a powerful base of people working to strengthen their rural community poses a threat to the stature of a bully coal mine – well, that would be alright with us.



PEOPLE OF THE PLAINS

Member Jack Owen

BY ANNALISE EIFFERT

The proposed Snowy River Carbon Capture and Sequestration project in Carter County is a threat that echoes the historic fights that now shape Northern Plains pillars. The project would extend off of an existing pipeline and transport carbon dioxide (CO2) to mainly BLM land for injection and sequestration underground.

Carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) is often presented as an environmental solution that would mitigate greenhouse gases. In reality, this process allows the oil industry to use pressure from CO2 to increase the amount of crude oil extracted from reservoirs, and receive tax credits while doing it. CCS is dangerously underregulated, and lacks the safety procedures needed to protect people, lands, and water systems. Additionally, carbon dioxide for the Snowy River project would come from Wyoming, turning eastern Montana lands into yet another dumping ground for waste from other states. The area that the project is set to take place in is a mix of public, private, and federal land, and is one of the few untouched places remaining in Montana.

Residents across Carter County connected with each other and Northern Plains on this issue a little over two years ago, and they’ve been involved ever since. Reflecting on the efforts the community takes to fight this project, Jack Owen, a Northern Plains member from the area, encourages us to recognize the value in finding alliances rather than acting as a lone ranger.

“We still have the same people who volunteered in the first place, and we’re glad to have them,” Jack says. “We wouldn’t be where we are if everyone wasn’t pitching in.”

Jack appreciates the group of members he fights this project with because of their shared values, tenacity, and the unique talents that each person brings to the table. From late night letter stuffing to group strategy meetings, each member of this team carries a deep commitment to showing up for each other, the land, and their community, and while this is an arduous fight, the team finds gratification in collaborating with people who share the same concerns.

“We love our way of life. We love how we’ve shared this part of the world here,” Jack explains. “We’re happy with the responsibility of passing it to the next generation and we want to leave them with the same opportunities that we had in this part of the world. We can go out and enjoy the silence, watch the little fingernail moon turn into a full moon and back again.”

As time goes on, Jack finds hope in the fact that their efforts are gaining support every day. He also finds hope in the camaraderie and collaboration that built a silver lining around this threat.

“Northern Plains had people at the very first meeting and there have been people at those meetings ever since,” Jack says. “Northern Plains connections teach us how to put ourselves in positions where we can be heard by policy makers.”

This group and their determination is a testament to how building external power relies on building internal fellowship, and why we should all appreciate each other and the values we share.

Let us recognize the Northern Plains members that have fought this project alongside Jack:

Liz Barbour
Sharon Carroll
Llane Carroll
Myron Johnston
Melissa Johnston

Lacey Keith-Wilson
Rosina Owen
Steve Summers
Rodney Walker
Tyler Wilson



You can support these efforts by signing their petition and telling our decision makers that you don't support carbon capture sequestration!

SCAN HERE

DATA CENTERS: THE AI GIANTS KNOCKING ON MONTANA'S DOOR

BY JACK LEUTHOLD

Electricity demand in the U.S. has stayed relatively flat for the last couple of decades. However, this trend is about to be flipped on its head as technology companies rapidly roll out plans for new AI tech and the development of new data centers. All across the country, states are facing decisions that have the potential to severely impact ratepayers' pocketbooks and the country's electric grid for years to come. Here in Montana, our local leaders have found themselves smack dab in the middle of these conversations.

First, what is a data center? In simple terms, a data center is a giant warehouse or a campus of many warehouses that is full of computer servers, computer chips, and other technology equipment that powers artificial intelligence and other technologies that we use in our everyday lives. They are often owned by the uber-wealthy tech corporations that rely on collecting and storing data to run their businesses.

Data center construction is not as simple as building the warehouse and turning on the computers. These centers will require massive amounts of energy and water to run, and in the case of the proposed Montana projects, hundreds to thousands of acres of land to be built on.

Along with the threat to our water and energy supply, these data centers could also pose serious problems to ratepayer's wallets. Unlike you and I, the developers of these projects are able to 'shop around' for below-market electricity rates with public utilities through special contracts. Because of their ability to look for the best price of energy they can get, utilities are incentivized to

What is a data center anyhow?

In simple terms, a data center is a giant warehouse or a campus of many warehouses that is full of computer servers, computer chips, and other technology equipment that powers artificial intelligence and other technologies that we use in our everyday lives.



“score” a big data center deal by potentially having ratepayers subsidize their investment with our energy bills. This means more profit to the utility and the tech company, and higher monthly bills for us.

A variety of developers have announced plans for six new data centers in Montana. Combined, these six projects could require a total of around 2,100 more megawatts of power. For context, NorthWestern Energy currently provides an

annual average of 760 megawatts of power to all of its existing Montana customers.

The proposed locations include

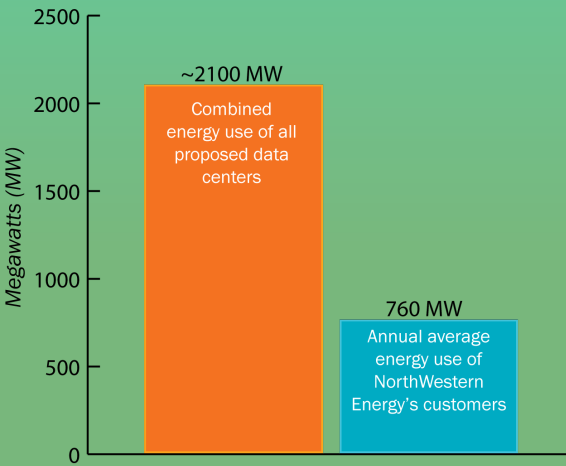
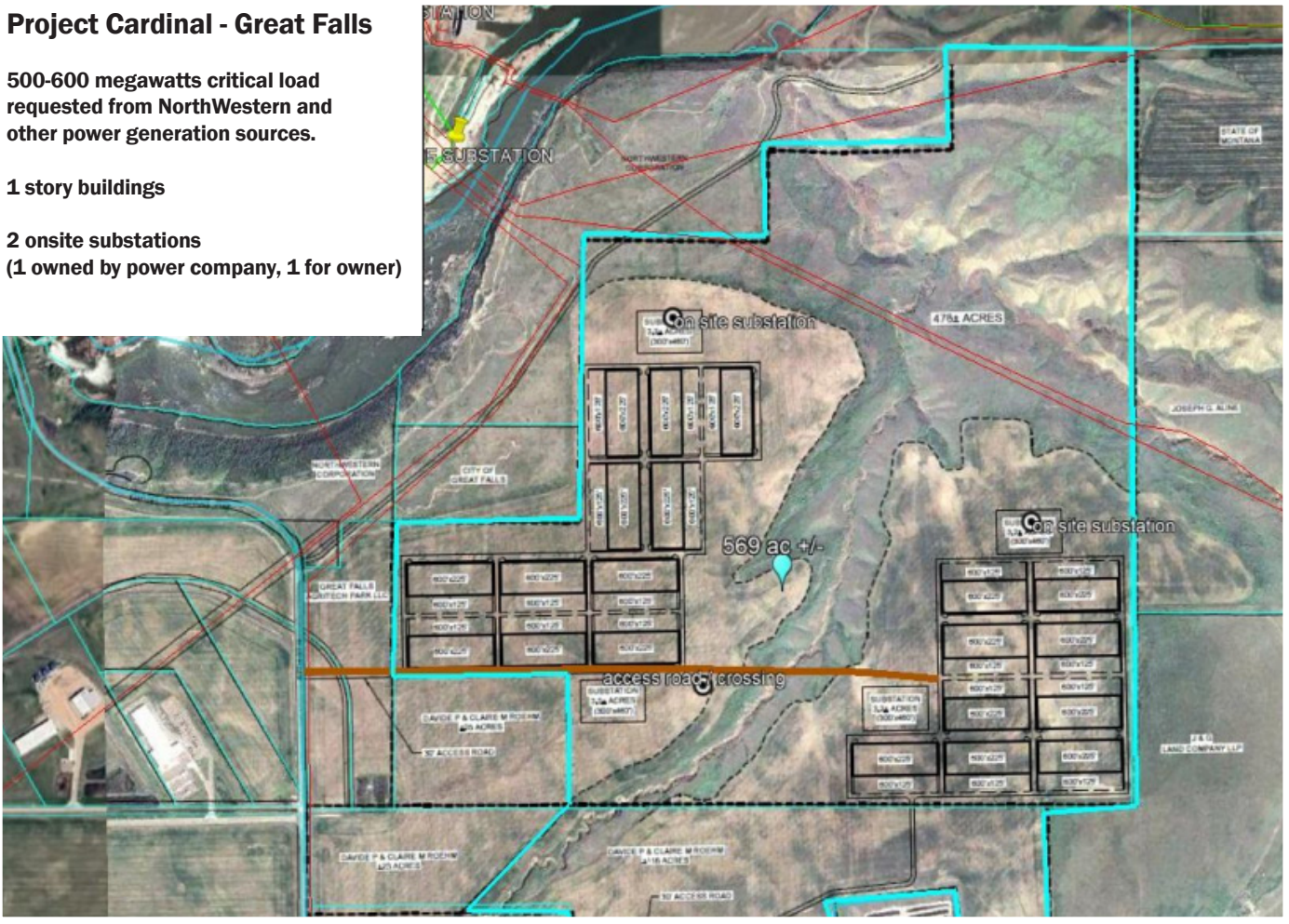
- Great Falls (600MW | 569 acres)
- Broadview (1000MW | 5,000 acres)
- Butte #1 (150MW)
- Butte #2 (250MW)
- Unknown area (100MW)
- Unknown area (164MW)

Project Cardinal - Great Falls

500-600 megawatts critical load requested from NorthWestern and other power generation sources.

1 story buildings

2 onsite substations
(1 owned by power company, 1 for owner)



(Above) The Great Falls Development Alliance (GFDA) announced in June, 2025, that a "hyperscale data center campus" is planned for just outside the city.

(Left) Data centers consume a shocking amount of power. The graphic illustrates the combined energy use of the six (6) proposed Montana data centers as compared to all of Montana's current energy consumption.



Made in America Should Mean Something — **Label Our Beef**

MCOOL: Why Labels Matter More Than Ever

By Gusty Catherin-Sauer

Cattle producers depend on a fair price for their livestock; an increase in foreign beef imports puts them and consumers at risk. Right now, a handful of transnational corporations are manipulating cattle markets. One of the ways these corporations are manipulating markets is by mislabeling where beef and pork is born and raised. This is why Northern Plains, working together with Montana agricultural producers and organizations statewide, are fighting for fairness and transparency in the cattle market. We are asking all four members of Montana's congressional delegation to reinstate mandatory country-of-origin labeling (MCOOL).

This legislation's inclusion in the upcoming farm bill is the best vehicle, via the *American Beef Labeling Act*, which Senate Majority Leader John Thune is the sponsor of, and companion legislation in the House is sponsored by Wyoming Representative Harriet Hageman, through which Congress can make Montana COOL again.

During the congressional recess this past August, this sentiment was shared time and time again by Northern Plains rancher members who met with several of

Montana's congressional delegation. Their meeting with Representative Downing included a tour of the Montana Premium Processing Cooperative in Havre where they discussed in detail the right for consumer choice to USA beef and pork and ranchers' right to an honest market. We appreciate Representative Downing's actions in support of Montana's livestock producers.

In a meeting with Representative Zinke in Whitefish, members hit on what restoring MCOOL would mean: that beef would be labeled with the country where the cow was born, raised, slaughtered, and processed. This type of labeling already exists in most other industries -- just look at the tag on your t-shirt. During the seven-year span when the law was previously in effect, beef prices for family ranches and feeders hit an all-time high and provided stability in a volatile market.

Separately we met with Senator Daines agricultural liaison, and discussed the real issue of land acquisition and access to local meat processing facilities. American agriculture continues its steady march towards industrialization and consolidation. In plain language, this means more industrial feeding operations, more air and water pollution, and fewer people on the land in rural communities. Fortunately, small and medium-sized family ranches still stand a chance - the beef industry has not been completely consolidated.

We are grateful for this opportunity to uplift the perspective of the majority of both ranchers and consumers across Montana, who are in support of mandatory country of origin labeling!

Now our Montana congressional delegation needs to hear from you, that you support MCOOL. Everyone, farmers, ranchers, conservationists, consumers, and community members alike can benefit from this policy and should prioritize MCOOL right now. The good stewardship of land and food depends on it. Not to mention the economic prosperity of our rural communities! It is long past time that retail beef proudly proclaims -- born, raised, and processed in the USA.

"Ranchers and consumers deserve honest markets"



Northern Plains members have MCOOL meetings with Representative Downing and Zinke over congressional recess.

Visit mtcool.org to send a comment letter in support of MCOOL to Montana's congressional delegation today:

If you're a cattle producer, send each of Montana's four Congressional delegates an email urging them to support mandatory COOL.



Send email to delegates from a rancher **SCAN HERE**

If you're a consumer, you can also send Montana's Congressional delegates an email urging them to support mandatory COOL.



Send email to delegates from a consumer **SCAN HERE**

SNAP BENEFITS

Currently, 78,000 people in Montana receive SNAP benefits and because of the OBBB, 12,000 of them are at risk of losing their benefits. The reductions in benefits and the implementation of stricter eligibility rules will leave many rural households without access to nutritious food. Additionally, SNAP is one of the largest economic drivers of U.S. agriculture. The over \$180 billion worth of cuts from the OBBB will hamper demand for beef, wheat, barley, and pulse crops like lentils and chickpeas — core commodities that Montana farmers and ranchers grow and raise to feed families across the country. **(Map, SNAP by County)**

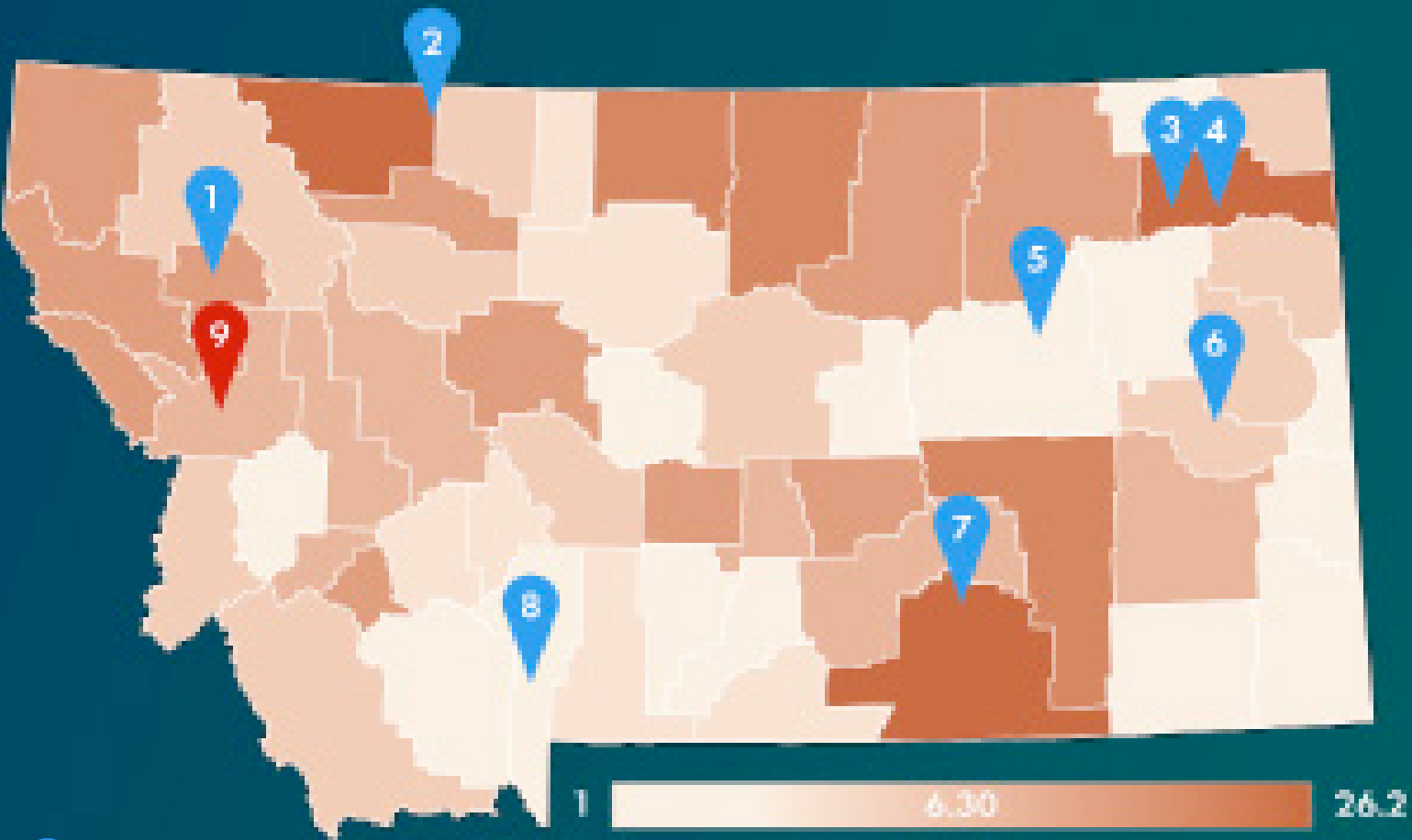
HEALTHCARE

Due to Montana’s rural makeup, our state is set to be one of the hardest hit in the nation. It is estimated that around 40,000 Montanans could lose health coverage because of the funding cuts and policy changes outlined in the OBBB. Rural people will feel these affects the most, as 60% of those who could lose coverage will likely be from rural areas. Additionally, Montana ranks as one of the worst states in the country in terms of application processing times. The OBBB will only supersize this problem adding a huge amount of additional bureaucracy for Medicaid recipients to wade through. Additionally, several rural hospitals are listed as "At Risk" for closure. **(Map, Balloons)**

ENERGY PROJECTS

A large number of clean energy tax credits were slashed in the OBBB - a move that will make it harder for residents to install solar on their property, make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes, or save some extra money by buying an electric car. These tax credit recissions provide a big blow to a booming economic sector, take away chances for families and small businesses to save money, and will stifle investment and innovation. All of this at a time when NorthWestern Energy is asking for rate increases more and more frequently.

The One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) delivers some of the most severe and monumental funding cuts in our nation’s history. This legislation will have devastating impacts across our healthcare systems, food assistance programs, and energy bills. Millions of Americans will lose their healthcare coverage, millions will lose their access to food assistance, and future generations will be left to deal with the \$3 trillion worth of debt the bill creates. Worst of all, these devastating cuts are being made so that the wealthiest Americans can enjoy big tax cuts that they certainly do not need. No matter how this legislation is framed, it is far from beautiful. Rather, it’s a betrayal of hard-working people and the communities that we care so much about.



H

RURAL HOSPITALS AT RISK OR CLOSED

- 1. PROVIDENCE ST JOSEPH MEDICAL CTR, **Polson**
- 2. LOGAN HEALTH CUTBANK, **Cut Bank**
- 3. NORTHEAST MONTANA HEALTH SERVICES, **Wolf Point**
- 4. NORTHEAST MONTANA HEALTHCARE-POPLAR, **Poplar**
- 5. GARFIELD CO. HEALTH CENTER, **Jordan**
- 6. PRAIRIE COMMUUNITY HOSPITAL, **Terry**
- 7. BIG HORN HOSPITAL, **Hardin**
- 8. BIG SKY MEDICAL CENTER, **Big Sky**
- 9. **PROVIDENCE ST. PATRICK HOSPITAL FAMILY MATERNITY CENTER, Missoula**

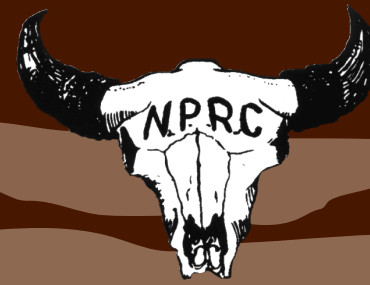
2025 Data from Protect Our Care

SNAP Use Percent By County
2022 Data from Center for American Progress

NOT-SO-BEAUTIFUL

Montanans brace for the devastating effects of the "One Big Beautiful Bill"

BY JACK LEUTHOLD



Sleeping Giant has been hard at work on the issues impacting their communities. Recently, the City of Helena adopted C-Pace, a program that Sleeping Giant has worked hard on advocating for to bring better energy efficiency and reliability to local businesses. Alongside wins in local government, Sleeping Giant helped plan

SGCC brightens up the community

By Bryce Johnston

and connected with neighbors at the annual Sun Run; a fundraising run started by affiliate members a decade ago, raising thousands of dollars for solarizing local community organizations. Members look forward to the next year with new officers and a new staff organizer, tackling tough issues on the front range of the Divide.



Eastern Montana
RESOURCE COUNCIL
Custer • Dawson • Fallon • McCone • Prairie • Richland • Wibaux

Following their recent expansion into surrounding counties, Eastern Montana Resource Council (EMRC) is welcoming a fresh look at recruitment. Rather than “recruiting for recruitment’s sake,” as EMRC Chair Melissa Holt puts it, the group is thinking about what it means to show newcomers that they are valued members and friends. EMRC is committed to

EMRC beats the recruitment drum

By Annalise Eiffert

entering these new communities, and listening to people there. They’re seeking the start of relationships that will give way to a strong and dedicated membership. At their recent 1-on-1 training, the group learned about connecting with strangers to uncover the issues that foster unity.



BEARTOOTH ALLIANCE

Beartooth Alliance members met this summer for their annual meeting at the Range Rider Lodge in Silver Gate. The meeting led to three new officers, important community updates, and, of course, a delicious lunch! BA also engaged their membership in

BA members elect new officers, comment on forest proposal

By Jack Leuthold

an important Forest Service comment period regarding proposed fuel reduction and logging in local forested areas – a topic that is top of mind for many BA and other community members.



Stillwater Protective Association welcomed four speakers over the course of the summer to Stillwater County as part of their Speaker Series. Resoundingly a success, the series touched on a variety of important topics that were of interest to the community. Stay tuned

SPA Speaker Series a success!

By Jordan Buser

for next year! In addition, this Fall as part of the Good Neighbor Agreement members of SPA are working diligently to protect the interests of the environment and their community as the Stillwater Mine pursues expansion.

Central Montana Resource Council

In September, Central Montana Resource Council participated in Lewistown’s annual Chokecherry Festival – engaging with members of the community about the importance of clean water, clean energy, and local food! This Fall members are working to analyze and share with

Another summer in Central Montana!

By Jordan Buser

the community the results from their second year of water monitoring on Ross Fork Creek. Then in the Green Share Garden, a community garden in Lewistown organized and maintained by CMRC members, volunteers are hard at work preparing the beds for winter.

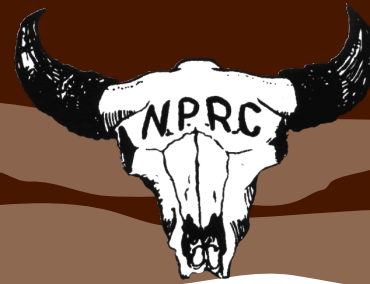


CCRC members just wrapped their fourth year of water monitoring on Rock Creek and three of its tributaries. The group is figuring out how to share the data they’ve collected with the community at large, and hopes to begin pushing local decision makers to use this information to more proactively guide development in

CCRC water monitoring influences county development

By Caitlin Cromwell

Carbon County. In particular, CCRC wants to see the county develop a plan to manage the explosive growth of subdivisions and the impacts of those subdivisions on water quality. “We are the new Bozeman,” said CCRC member Deb Muth, “but no one is making a plan to do anything about it.”



Cottonwood Resource Council celebrates on the Boulder!

By Gusty Catherin-Sauer

Cottonwood Resource Council's annual summer gathering was a hit! Held at the newly re-opened "Boulder River Roadkill," over 60 people attended to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Good Neighbor Agreement and chat about CRC's work over a delicious and locally sourced meal!

Cottonwood Resource Council continues to host a speaker series for community members. In October, we celebrated Indigenous Peoples Day by hosting a Film screening of "Bring Them Home" a Montana

made film that chronicles a decades-long initiative by members of the Blackfoot Confederacy to bring wild buffalo (Blackfeet: iinnii) back to the Blackfeet Reservation.

We have stayed up to date on the recent deliberations at the Big Timber City Council, regarding the sale of water and water management policy. We plan to have a presentation regarding this topic at our November membership meeting.



YBCC celebrates accomplishments at annual meeting in Livingston

By Jack Leuthold

Yellowstone Bend Citizens Council recently just held their 12th annual meeting in Livingston where members looked back on the year and celebrated what they have accomplished. From spending down a \$250,000 grant on various solar projects around the community, to holding a town-hall event during

this year's state legislative session, Yellowstone Bend has a lot to be proud of. As we begin to confront the year ahead, it's exciting to think about what sort of accomplishments YBCC members will be celebrating at the next annual meeting.



YVCC recommits to deep organizing & power building

By Caitlin Cromwell

YVCC is going back to its roots – deep organizing grounded in a grassroots base of people who share a clear and compelling self-interest in something they're advancing together. We've done great work over the past several decades, but we're tired of organizing the same set of overtapped leaders around increasingly niche issues that don't seem to resonate more widely with the rest of our community. YVCC members are

exploring shifting our approach in order to more deeply orient our organizing around the community that we claim to represent. We plan to spend the fall and winter building relationships with our neighbors, listening to what people are affected by in their daily lives, and getting clear about the power we want to build together. This will require us to stretch and grow in many ways. Stay tuned!



GTRC works to protect their land and communities

By Bryce Johnston

Over the summer, Golden Triangle Resource Council has been fighting hard against a proposed biofuel wastewater injection into the Madison aquifer. This came to a flashpoint, when the EPA held a hearing on expanding the area of allowed pollution, at the local school in Conrad, MT. Golden Triangle came out in force, leaving

dozens of comments opposing the expansion and putting pressure on EPA to deny the permit and protect their water. Alongside this, they helped host a Clean Energy Fair in Great Falls, meeting with and encouraging their neighbors to adopt renewable energy and electrify their lives.



Bull Mountain Land Alliance

Over the last few months, members of Bull Mountain Land Alliance have been hard at work connecting with new folks and hoping to hear from those beyond our existing base. Next on our to-do list is getting ready for the neighborhood meetings we are putting on. Members have been knocking on doors

BMLA gets serious about power

By Brady McGinley

and sending invites around as we hope to hear what questions, concerns, and issues are top of mind for folks in the Bulls. Getting clear-eyed about what issues are widely and deeply felt in the community will shape how our next campaign comes together.

Check the date at the upper right of your address label to see when your membership is due for renewal. Your membership pays for all the work you read about here!

THE ROAD AHEAD:

CULTIVATING THE FUTURE THROUGH
CONNECTION AND PERSISTENCE

54th Annual Meeting
November 7-8, 2025
The Pub Station
2502 1st Ave N, Billings

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

10:00 am	Registration Opens
10:30 am	Community Organizing Training
12:00 pm	Registration and Social Time
1:00 pm	Meeting of the Membership
4:30 pm	BREAK
5:30 pm	Prairie Spread now at the Pub Station!
6:30 pm	Evening Activities

Our favorite event of the year is almost here! Join us at Northern Plains' 54th Annual Meeting, The Road Ahead: Cultivating the future through connection and persistence. The two-day event allows us to reconnect with old friends, meet new ones, celebrate the year's wins, and learn about all the great work that's happening across the state. You won't want to miss it!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8

8:30 am	Registration Opens
9:00 am	Opening Remarks
9:15 am	Critical Minerals, Responsible Futures; Lessons Learned from the Good Neighbor Agreement
10:15 am	BREAK
10:30 am	Talks at the Watering Hole (community conversations)
11:00 am	Building a Bigger We: A Vision for the Next Five Years of Power Building
12:00 pm	Lunch, Keynote , and Awards
2:00 pm	BREAK
2:30 pm	Connecting Corporate Power to Community Health
4:00 pm	Northern Plains Legacy Flash Talk
4:15 pm	Social Hour
5:30 pm	Dinner and Fun

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

JON TESTER

(FARMER AND FORMER U.S. SENATOR)

Register today by going to NorthernPlains.org/2025-Annual-Meeting or calling (406) 248-1154 until Thursday, November 6 at noon! After that, head to the Pub Station to register in person on November 7 and 8!

SCAN HERE

