

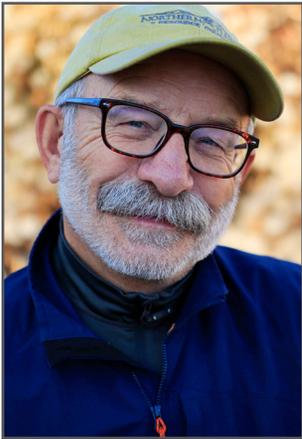


# 2025

## ANNUAL REPORT



# CAMPAIGNS & SUCCESSES



## FROM THE CHAIR

*Edward Barta, Past Chair (2024-2025)*

Northern Plains had a very busy 2025! In addition to all the great work done by our members, we were fully engaged in our state legislature, where we fought hard, won on our issues, and learned valuable lessons along the way. Of course, we do not retreat from challenges, as we spent nearly six months developing a new strategic plan to dig deeper into organizing to build the people power we need to create lasting change. We are confident that building strong relationships across Montana will better prepare us for the historic and significant challenges that 2026 will bring. We are ready and determined to have our voices heard to protect our land, water, air, our unique quality of life, and yes, our democracy.

### OLD-SCHOOL ORGANIZING ON THE ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL (UGLY) BILL

In response to the OBBB, Northern Plains members sprang into action by:

- Learning about the bill's sweeping cuts to our communities and environment, and reaching out to their Congressional Delegation to stop it. We are just starting to see the impacts to Montanans as they lose healthcare, and rural economies lose critical funding.
- Organizing members from Milltown to Ekalaka to physically visit 15 local offices of our congressional delegation to demand that they take Montanans seriously about the impacts of reckless legislation. Over 50 Northern Plains leaders had extended conversations with congressional staffers about our concerns with the legislation.
- Gathering over 800 signatures in opposition to the bill at the No Kings Rally in Billings and following up with them to join our organizing work.

### HONORING 25 YEARS OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENT

The GNA has endured for a quarter century thanks to the unwavering commitment and hard work of Northern Plains members. The shared commitment to the agreement with Sibanye Stillwater allows for responsible mineral development while protecting the water quality, natural landscapes, and rural communities for folks living in Stillwater and Sweetgrass counties.

### FIGHTING CARBON CAPTURE POLLUTION IN CARTER COUNTY

Citing public opposition (largely organized by Northern Plains members), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) placed strict limits on testing for the proposed Snowy River Carbon Sequestration Project in Carter County. This win is a clear recognition that our members made an impact.



*Edward Barta (above, right) gathering signatures at the "No Kings" rally on Oct. 18.*



*(Above) MT COOL Coalition members meet with Rep. Ryan Zinke at his home to discuss MCOOL legislation on Aug. 22.*



*Members learn about soil health at the Soil Crawl event hosted by Bart and Heather Bilden (front right) at Coulee Creek Ranch.*

## RESTORING INTEGRITY IN OUR FOOD SYSTEM WITH MCOOL

After meeting with our members at his home in Whitefish, Rep. Zinke announced his co-sponsorship of Congresswoman Hageman's (WY) *H.R. 5818 Country of Origin Labeling Enforcement Act of 2025 (COOL Enforcement Act)*. Members really struck a chord with their testimony about how restoring mandatory country-of-origin labeling (MCOOL) for beef and pork would benefit Montana producers and consumers.

## CELEBRATING MONTANA'S 2ND ANNUAL SOIL HEALTH WEEK

We had a blast celebrating Montana's 2nd Annual Soil Health Week in April, where we honor the importance of soil conservation in our culture, history, and economy. The event featured activities like our Legislative Luncheon, Common Ground film screening, and workshops and listening sessions for agricultural producers and backyard gardeners alike.

# A BOLD NEW VISION

## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN



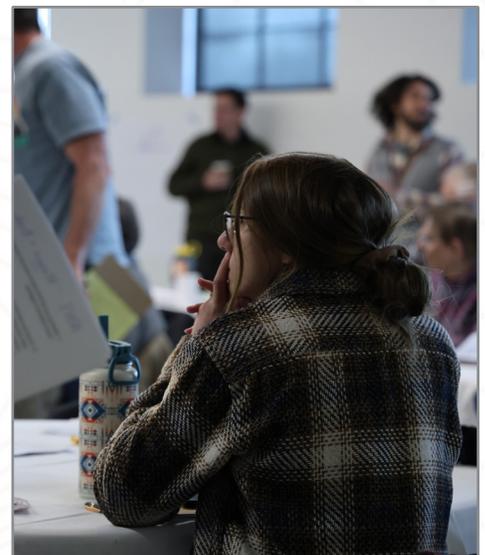
Fifty-five of our top leaders and staff met throughout 2025 to re-envision how Northern Plains will rise to meet this critical moment in history. We surveyed our membership, listened to experts across Montana and beyond, and developed a bold new vision for our next chapter of organizing and power building. This vision is more than a plan of action, it is a spark that will light up people's hearts and minds, and it will guide our way to grow our power and effectiveness. Because at its core, power is neither good or bad – and as Martin Luther King Jr. taught during the civil rights movement:

“POWER IS  
SIMPLY THE  
ABILITY TO  
ACHIEVE  
PURPOSE.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Northern Plains is responding to the challenges we face by getting clear about the power our people want to build in Montana. We are doubling down on organizing people and developing leaders. And in order to do more organizing, we need more leaders in all of our communities who are part of a statewide strategy to build our collective power. In 2026 we're hosting trainings both locally and statewide, to train everyday folks who want to build power with Northern Plains. Key topics will include:

- **Understanding power and self-interest**
- **How to have a one-on-one conversation**
- **Choosing an Issue (after talking to a lot of people)**
- **Public actions with decision makers**
- **Canvassing, candidate forums, or other electoral activities**





# THE 69TH MONTANA LEGISLATURE: GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION



SB 224 Sponsor Shane Morigeau, Indigenous Peoples Day Montana co-founder Marsha Small, and supporters at the Capitol.



Rally for Montana Constitution and our fair and independent courts.



MCOOL will support family farmers and ranchers like member Jeanie Alderson.

## ESTABLISHING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY WITH OUR ALLIES

Northern Plains is proud to have played a key supporting role in the Native-led effort to pass legislation establishing Indigenous Peoples Day in Montana.

## TURNING UP THE HEAT ON COMMUNITY SOLAR

Northern Plains members led efforts to design and pass the bipartisan *Solar Shares Act* – which would have opened the door to community solar development in Montana. Despite its many merits (both for the environment and our pocketbooks), Gov. Gianforte sided with monopoly energy corporations and vetoed our bill that had passed both houses easily. But this isn't the end for community solar in Montana. We're just getting started.

## DEFENDING OUR NON-PARTISAN COURTS

Montana's fair and impartial courts were relentlessly attacked this session. Thanks to organizing and testimony of Northern Plains members, Montana's courts and the democratic system they underpin emerged unscathed.

## PASSED: A COOL RESOLUTION

Thanks to us and our allies, the Montana Senate and House passed a joint resolution urging the U.S. Congress to restore mandatory country-of-origin labeling (MCOOL) for beef and pork.

## ACTION IN HELENA

- Members sent over 7,000 messages to legislators about bills related to our most important issues!
- Dozens of members traveled to Helena to testify in hearings and lobby legislators directly. Dozens more testified online.
- Over 145 members participated in our Legislative Phone Tree, jumping into action and making calls at critical junctures in the legislative process.

# AFFILIATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## GOLDEN TRIANGLE RESOURCE COUNCIL (GTRC)

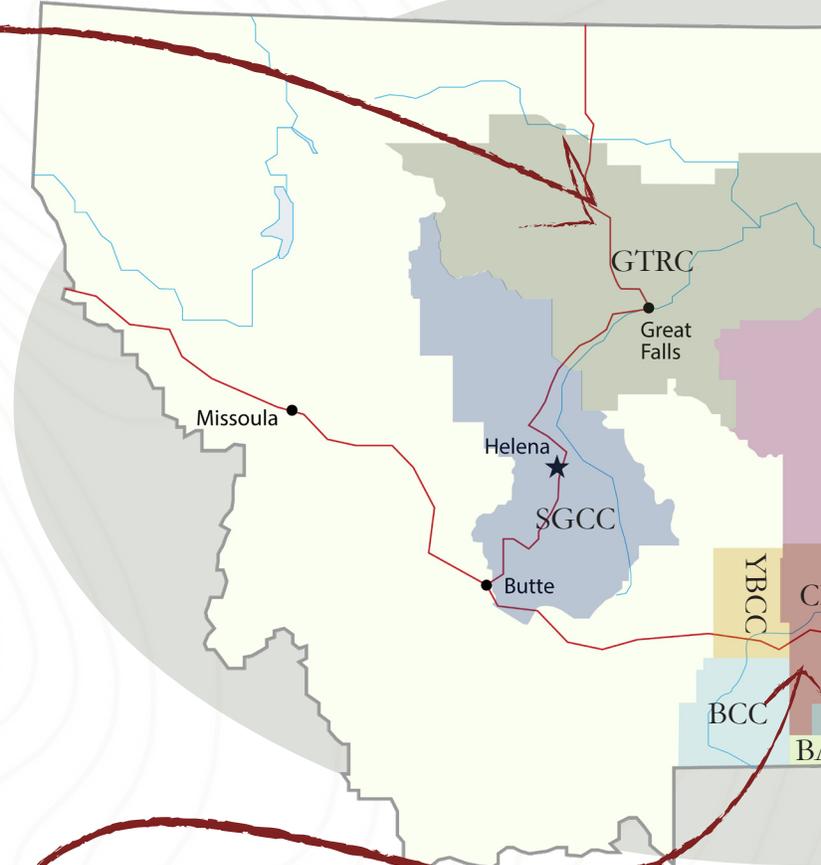
Golden Triangle Resource Council continued work fighting the proposed injection of biofuel wastewater into the Madison Aquifer. At public hearings, members provided dozens of comments to the EPA calling out the danger and uncertainty of injecting wastewater at high pressures into a region-wide aquifer. Alongside this work, Golden Triangle supported local food producers at the Montana Food Hub.

## SLEEPING GIANT CITIZENS COUNCIL (SGCC)

Sleeping Giant Citizens Council members engaged with lawmakers at the Capitol on important issues during the legislative session, and fought for a new city growth plan to create a durable and well-designed transportation system to accommodate the Helena valley's growing population. Along with that, they continued working with the Helena High Green Group by providing opportunities for them to get civically engaged and supporting their local efforts in sustainability and climate awareness.

## COTTONWOOD RESOURCE COUNCIL (CRC)

Cottonwood Resource Council continued to participate in and uphold the Good Neighbor Agreement through water monitoring on the East Boulder River, participating as voting members on their oversight committee, speaking at conferences across the West, and celebrating the GNA's 25th Anniversary. The legally binding contract between Stillwater Mining Company and local community organizations has been around for 25 years. Cottonwood Resource Council also hosted a series of lectures pertinent to community members, with participation from over 100 individuals, including, but not limited to, a presentation on the Montana Constitution and a lecture from Montana's Poet Laureate.

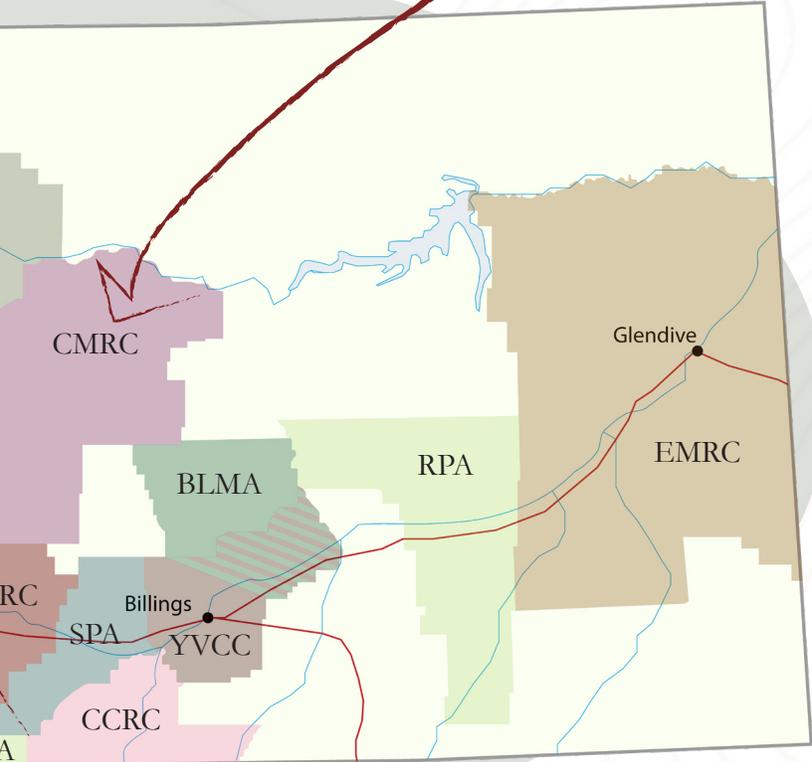


## YELLOWSTONE BEND CITIZENS COUNCIL (YBCC)

Yellowstone Bend Citizens Council continued to expand clean and renewable energy development in Park County, bringing considerable financial and environmental benefits to the community and its residents. YBCC also organized around the 2025 Montana legislative session, with members testifying at bill hearings, traveling to Helena to participate in citizen lobby days, and hosting a community event to hear from local legislators during the mid-session recess.

## BEAR CREEK COUNCIL (BCC)

Bear Creek Council responded to a proposed logging project in Jardine by rallying members to express concerns to the Forest Service, increasing local, in-person participation, and advocating for the needs of the local community.



## CENTRAL MONTANA RESOURCE COUNCIL (CMRC)

CMRC completed its second year of water monitoring on Ross Fork Creek, worked to fully remediate the Green Share Garden - a project that donates fresh food to the community - from herbicide contamination, and continued to grow the “Solarize Central Montana” campaign with over 50 installations to date!

## BULL MOUNTAIN LAND ALLIANCE (BMLA)

Bull Mountain Land Alliance ramped up its water monitoring efforts by installing devices in members’ wells that will measure any future drawdown in the water level caused by coal mining, and recently filed suit against the Montana DEQ to defend our constitutional right to participate in public decision-making. Now, BMLA is re-committing to deep organizing by listening to community members and building power with folks around the issues that are most deeply felt in Musselshell County.

## EASTERN MONTANA RESOURCE COUNCIL (EMRC)

Eastern Montana Resource Council members continued their fight against utility rate increases from Montana-Dakota Utilities, testified in support of bills such as the Montana Solar Shares Act and Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling, and organized a seminar with a property rights attorney to inform landowners on how to negotiate beneficial deals with energy developers. They’ve also attended two organizing trainings and launched a new listening campaign in their communities to connect with others and build more people power.

## YELLOWSTONE VALLEY CITIZENS COUNCIL (YVCC)

Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council members are going back to their roots – to deep organizing grounded in a grassroots base of people working together to build real power in Yellowstone County. They’re planning 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.

## CARBON COUNTY RESOURCE COUNCIL (CCRC)

Carbon County Resource Council has continued working toward amending the county’s five-year growth plan to incentivize more sustainable and dense growth, responsible management of local water resources, and development of affordable housing. CCRC has also recently received and shared a thorough data analysis of Rock Creek’s water quality from MSU Bozeman after years member-led of water testing and monitoring.

## STILLWATER PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION (SPA)

SPA hosted a successful summer speaker series that addressed an array of issues important to the local community, provided scholarships to local students interested in pursuing a career in environmental stewardship, and continued to uphold the Good Neighbor Agreement; proving that it is possible to protect our natural landscapes and rural quality of life while allowing responsible mineral development.



**3,300+**  
members from

**165+**  
community leaders

**48**  
states & D.C.

Leaders who regularly  
engage in campaigns, take  
action, and participate in  
decision making

**MEMBERSHIP**  
BY THE NUMBERS

**IN THE PRESS**

**Bill to Make Montana Judicial Elections Partisan Gets First Hearing**

“We want justice, not politics. Courts with political agendas or courts that are more tainted with outside forces won’t get us any closer to impartiality.” - Norane Freistadt., Northern Plains (then) Vice Chair

**Gianforte vetoes community solar bill**

“Gov. Gianforte is clearly out of touch, and this veto puts the interests of wealthy, corporate energy executives above the needs of Montana’s families, small business owners, farmers, and ranchers.” - Scott Sweeney, CMRC Member

**How Investors Are Getting Rich Off Of This Montana Town**

Investor-owned utilities are building expensive & polluting energy projects to drive up shareholder profits. The scheme enriches massive firms like Blackrock and Vanguard. Meanwhile customers are forced to pay higher and higher energy bills.

**Coal, Con Men and a Kidnapping Scheme**

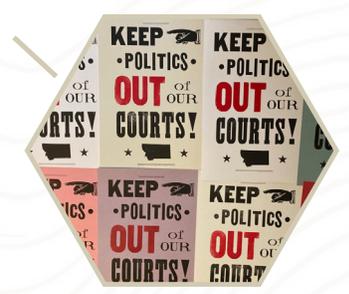
When a Montana coal mine executive goes missing it exposes the dirty underbelly of one of America’s largest coal mines. Now, with the help of President Donald Trump, the mine is trying to expand – unless a group of cattle ranchers can stop them.

**Groups sue DEQ again saying Laurel gas plant review ignores climate harm**

“It is deeply disappointing that the Montana DEQ granted NorthWestern Energy an air quality permit based on a flawed and misleading assessment that ignored the daily harms this plant inflicts on Laurel’s community.” - Steve Krum, Northern Plains Leader

**For the first time, Montana celebrates Indigenous Peoples’ Day**

Montana will recognize Indigenous Peoples Day for the first time this year, thanks to a new law that recognizes both this holiday and Columbus Day together. This interview featured Northern Plains member leader Tom Mexicancheyenne.



**Flathead Beacon**



**More Perfect Union**



**Helena Independent Record**



**Montana Free Press**



**Lawless Planet**



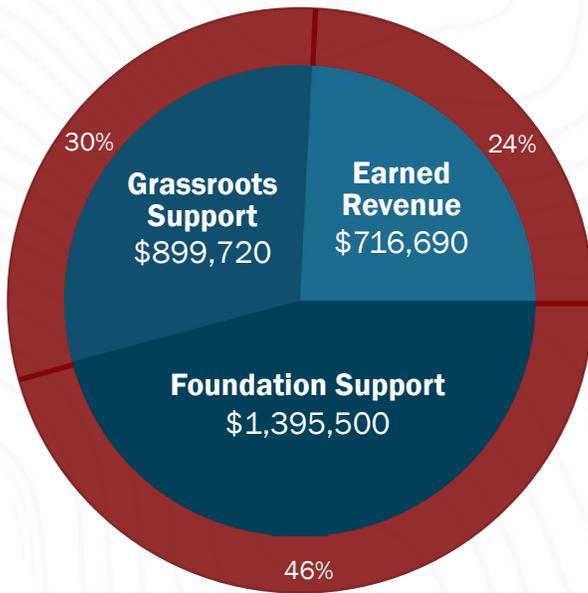
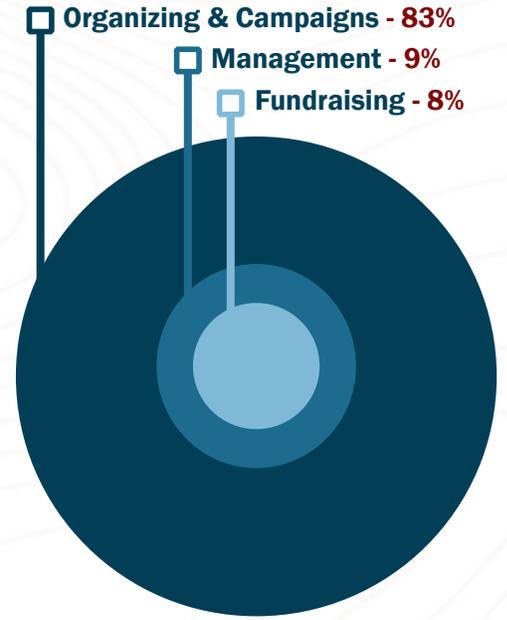
**PBS News Hour**

# FINANCIALS

## 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.

● Fundraising	\$177,820	8%
● Management	\$201,820	9%
● Organizing & Campaigns	\$1,837,210	83%
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$2,216,850</b>	



## INCOME

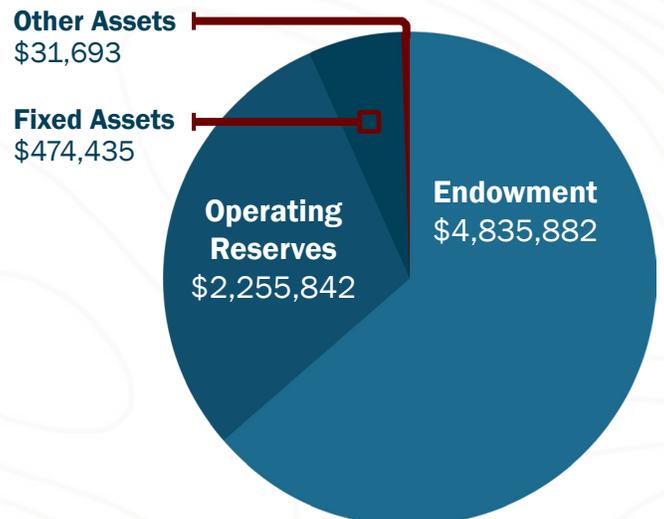
Grassroots donations from our members are the heart of our fundraising program. On top of that, we bring together a diverse group of other funding sources to help advance our work.

● Grassroots Support, Endowment Donations, Bequests	\$899,720	30%
● Foundation Support	\$1,395,500	46%
● Earned Revenue	\$716,690	24%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,216,850</b>	

## 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.

● Endowment	\$4,835,882	64%
● Operating Reserves	\$2,255,842	30%
● Fixed Assets	\$474,435	6%
● Other Assets	\$31,693	0.4%
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$7,597,851</b>	



# MEMBERS IN ACTION

A LOOK BACK AT 2025



**RALLY TO FIGHT NORTHWESTERN ENERGY'S RATE HIKE**



**CAPITAL RALLY DEFENDING  
NON-PARTISAN COURTS**



**BMLA MEMBER AT THE CAPITAL FOR A  
COAL HEARING**



**SOLAR INSTALLATION AT LIVINGSTON  
FOOD RESOURCE CENTER**



**25TH GNA ANNIVERSARY PARTY**



**TECHNICAL ADVISORS, NORTHERN PLAINS MEMBERS,  
AND PAST AND PRESENT MINE STAFF AT THE GNA  
25TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY**



**SOIL CRAWL AT COULEE CREEK RANCH**

# NORTHERN PLAINS

RESOURCE COUNCIL

220 S. 27th St., Suite A  
Billings, MT 59101

Charity  
Navigator



+ FOUR-STAR +

Platinum  
Transparency  
2025

**Candid.**

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 donations effectively and responsibly.

