



THE PLAINS TRUTH

VOICE OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS RESOURCE COUNCIL

VOL. 55, ISSUE 3 | SUMMER 2026

WINNING IN EASTERN MONTANA

EXXON PULLS OUT OF
CARBON SEQUESTRATION PROJECT

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MCOOL ON THE RISE

DATA CENTERS

ELECTION PROTECTION



NORTHERN PLAINS

RESOURCE COUNCIL

Northern Plains Resource Council 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. Our 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 Resource Council's 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 Resource Council 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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THE BARONS HAVE RETURNED

Board Chair **NORANE FREISTADT**

We all know the story. America's Gilded Age was a time of profound transition and disruption. As industrialization swept the nation, the titans of industry used their wealth and influence to amass astonishing riches, steamrolling anyone who tried to impede their path to increased power and wealth. These robber barons bought and sold politicians, government agencies, and the press, ruling with an iron fist as their individual fortunes grew to rival the wealth of entire nation-states. Here in Montana, the Copper Kings exercised total control over our legislature, courts, and newspapers while exploiting workers and pillaging our resources, only to leave behind a path of environmental devastation in Butte, Anaconda, and beyond. Eventually, Montanans stood up, organized, and demanded better.

In 1972, everyday Montanans drafted a new state constitution with expanded rights and protections. After multiple generations of backroom deals and shady agreements between politicians and corporate executives, we enshrined the right to know what our politicians were up to and the right to participate in government decisions. The very same year, Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC) was founded by a group of farm and ranch families who banded together to protect their land and livelihoods from widespread, industrial coal extraction. They were responding to the North Central Power Study, a plan hatched between wealthy energy corporations and compromised politicians to create a "Sacrifice Zone" across eastern Montana for massive fossil fuel development. Thanks to NPRC and our new constitutional rights, we put a stop to the plan. The legacy of the Copper Kings became part of our past.

Northern Plains Resource Council organized people from cities, towns, and rural communities across Montana to testify at hearings, submit public comments,

and demand that their leaders listen to their concerns. We were instrumental in the passage of landmark legislation at the state and federal level to ensure protections against the destructive acts of previous eras. We proved that people power could triumph over corporate power. In recent years, however, something has shifted.

We find ourselves entering a new Gilded Age. Like the Copper Kings before them, tech billionaires are colluding with enabling politicians and corporations like NorthWestern Energy. Once again, they want to pillage our resources and exploit our rural communities by forcing enormous industrial data centers on us. Much like the developments proposed in the North Central Power Study of the 1970s, these behemoths threaten to drain our aquifers, drive up our energy bills, and pollute our communities with the expansion of fossil fuel plants across the state. Our history provides guidance for how to respond.

Just like the farm and ranch families who sat with neighbors and made plans over kitchen tables to create this organization, we are recommitting ourselves to the core fundamentals of grassroots community organizing. For the past 18 months, we have convened members across Montana for deep discussions, strategizing, and trainings to meet this moment. As I write this, we are planning a statewide Day of Action on Aug. 22, to demand a two-year moratorium on data centers. This is the first step of an organizing plan that will culminate in a 1,000 person rally in Helena on Feb. 10. Please save the dates, and I hope to see you there!

We've done this before, and we'll do it again. We must all dig deeper, honoring the hard-fought victories our forebears won so that we could continue the fight today. We will not allow the next generation of would-be Copper Kings to run roughshod over Montana. Not on our watch.

VOIEYES

PROTECT MONTANA'S DEMOCRACY

This November, vote YES on 132 and 133!

THESE INITIATIVES ARE ENDORSED BY:



CI-132

Judges should be elected based on their record and qualifications, *NOT POLITICS.*

CI-132 is a simple initiative that puts one sentence into Montana's constitution: **"judicial elections in Montana shall remain nonpartisan."** This simple measure protects that long-standing tradition so we can keep judges accountable to the people's interests, not deep-pocketed political interests.

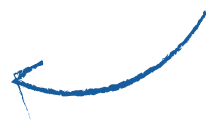
CI-133

Montana has a rich history of standing up to political corruption through the CITIZENS INITIATIVE process.

Citizens Initiatives are an important right for Montanans, and they're reliant on YOU as Montanans to help gather signatures to get them passed. CI-133 protects the citizen's fundamental right to propose ballot initiatives and prohibits unjustified interference by the government.



TAKE THE PLEDGE



A BRIEF HISTORY:

- The Corrupt Practices Act was passed in 1912 by a citizens initiative.
- It prohibited corporate contributions to candidates.
- Citizens United overturned our law.

WHY GIVING MONTHLY MATTERS: ANNIKA HIRMKE

BY MADISON CLARKE



Meet Annika Hirmke! As Annika navigated her career in academia, she became interested in community organizing and wanted to explore how that may connect with her Montana based, ethnographic research project.

Despite already working diligently to explore the opportunities that community solar projects present for Montana communities, she still felt the desire to fight for change and give back to her community in other ways. Fortunately, through her previous work, she had gotten to know of a grassroots organization who had a long history of creating statewide change through community organizing and decided to become a member.

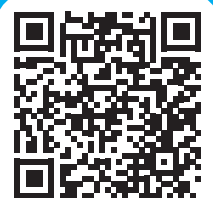
Annika has been deeply engaged in Northern Plains Resource Council over the last year – being a

voice in our communities, and building relationships through mutual values. One of her favorite things about Northern Plains Resource Council is our “grassroots people power and the focus on building something together.” The opportunity to connect with others who are willing to stand together, to support a shared mission, and create ways to advocate on behalf of our communities have been just a couple of the reasons why Annika feels it is important to support grassroots organizing each month. For Annika, giving monthly is an easy way to provide the support in a meaningful and consistent way. Monthly giving is a great way for people to be engaged in our work! Thank you, Annika, for being a leader, a voice, and a Northern Plains Resource Council Monthly Sustainer.

DON'T DELAY, BECOME A MONTHLY SUSTAINER TODAY!

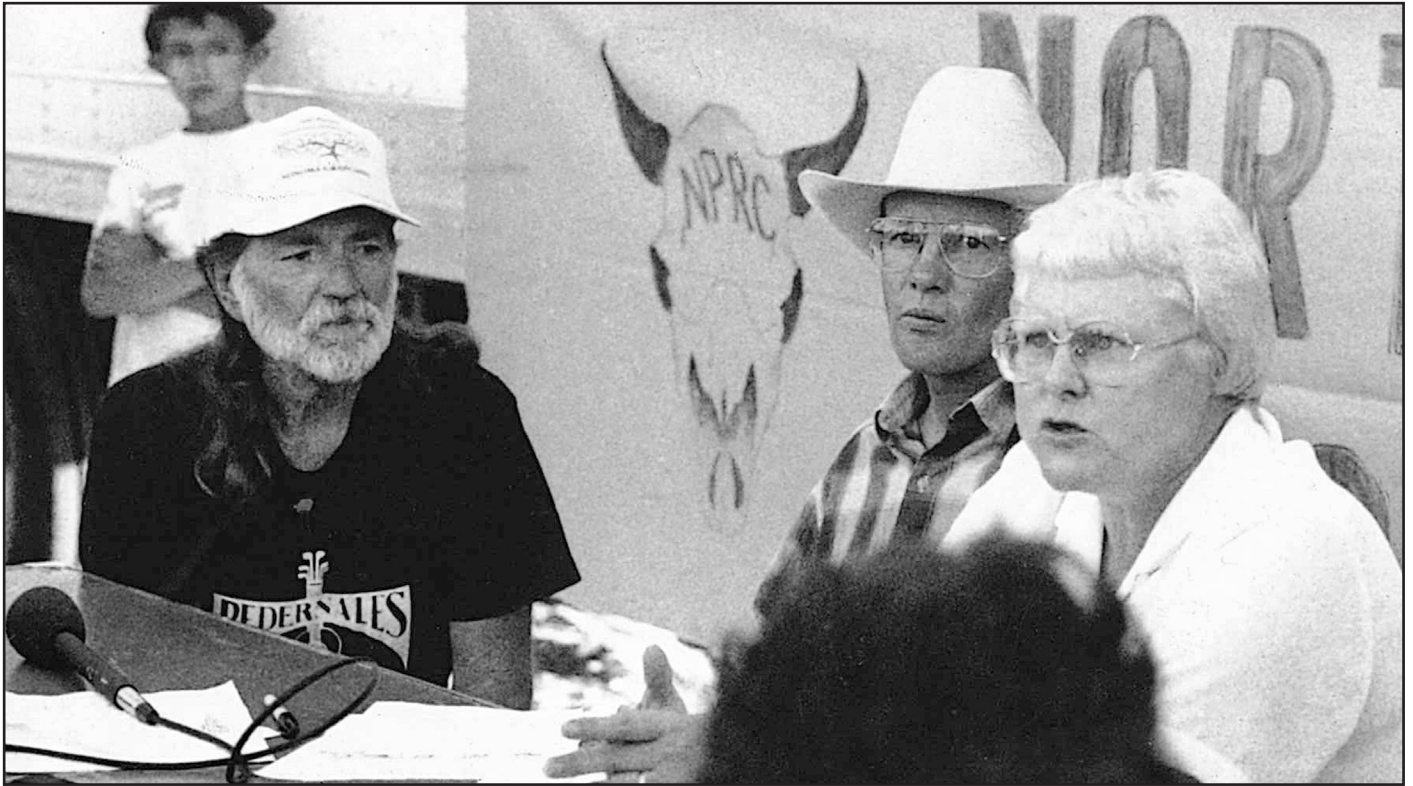
Monthly sustainers provide Northern Plains Resource Council with a reliable source of income that supports our grassroots organizing throughout the state, year-round! You do not have to worry about keeping up with yearly renewals and you can change the donation amount whenever you would like! Become a monthly sustainer for just \$5 a month, today! Joining is easy – click the Donate Now button on our website or give us a call at (406) 248-1154.

SCAN HERE



IN MEMORIAM

Helen Waller, 1934-2026



Former Northern Plains Resource Council Chair Helen Waller seen here with member leader Steve Charter and famed singer/songwriter Willie Nelson (left), who she worked alongside in 1985 to organize the first Farm Aid concert. The funds raised by the concert allowed her and others to establish the National Family Farm Coalition.

We lost longtime leader Helen Waller in June of this year. She was 92.

Helen Quick married her high school sweetheart, Gordie Waller. They were busy raising five children, as well as wheat and cattle, when a pair of companies announced plans to develop coal strip mines in McCone County.

The companies told landowners that it was their patriotic duty – their “contribution to society” – to allow their land to be strip-mined. Helen and her neighbors formed the McCone Agricultural Protection Organization and then affiliated with Northern Plains Resource Council. Before long, she was elected as Board Chair.

Helen read EISs and other documents to become an expert on coal mining. She discovered the coal was of such low quality that it couldn’t be economically shipped... coal-fired power plants would have to be built next to the mines. Using the

industry’s own figures, Helen demonstrated that they couldn’t even show a need for the electricity they proposed to generate from the coal!

In 1977, she was invited to the White House for the signing of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.

Helen’s nationally recognized leadership on farm issues led to the formation of the National Family Farm Coalition, which she also chaired.

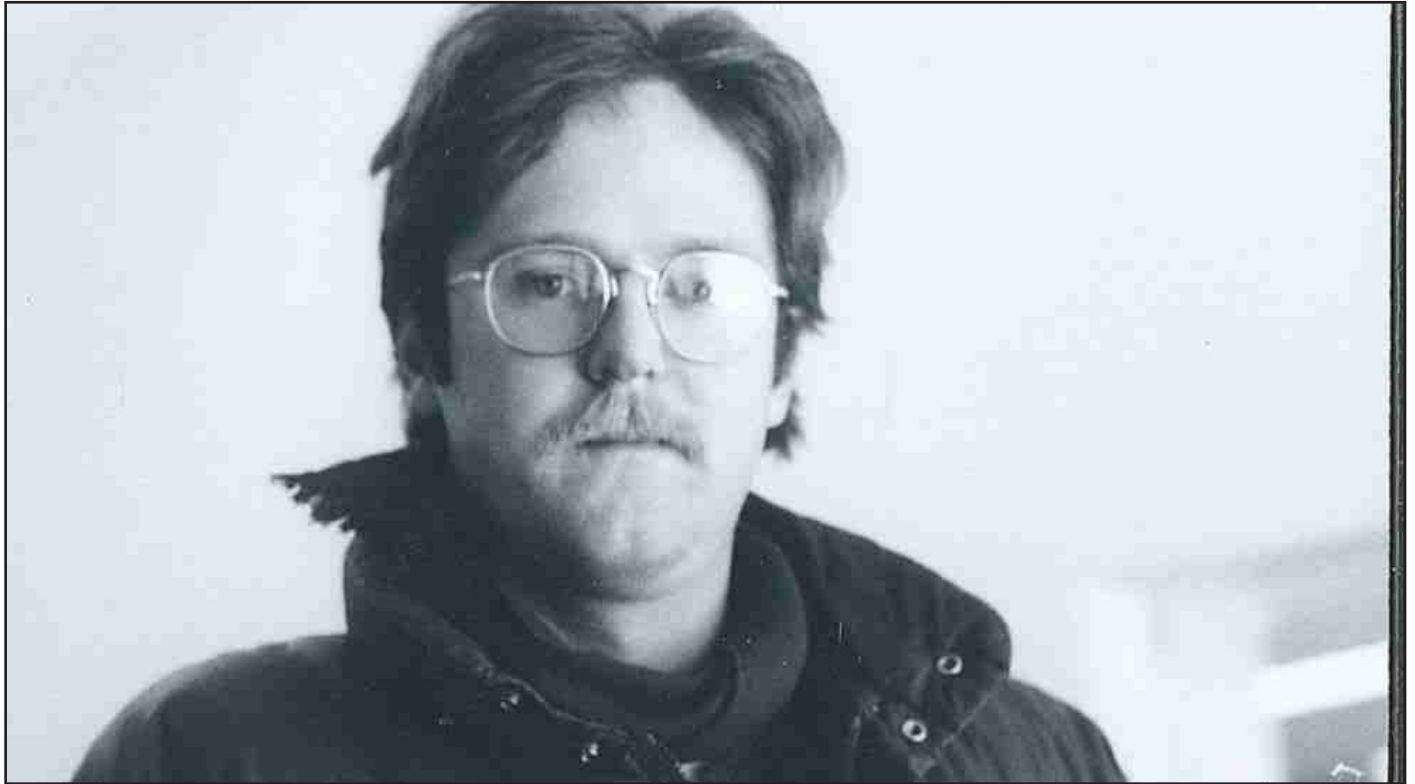
She was a leader with Farm Aid, becoming good friends with Willie Nelson and Kentucky writer Wendell Berry.

Some years later, Helen reflected, “I think it was a surprise to the opposition that we as member organizations had the power to overcome whatever it was that they wanted to do to us.”

She added, “It’s been proven over and over again that if you want change, it has to be people power that does it.”

IN MEMORIAM

Steve Doherty, 1952-2026



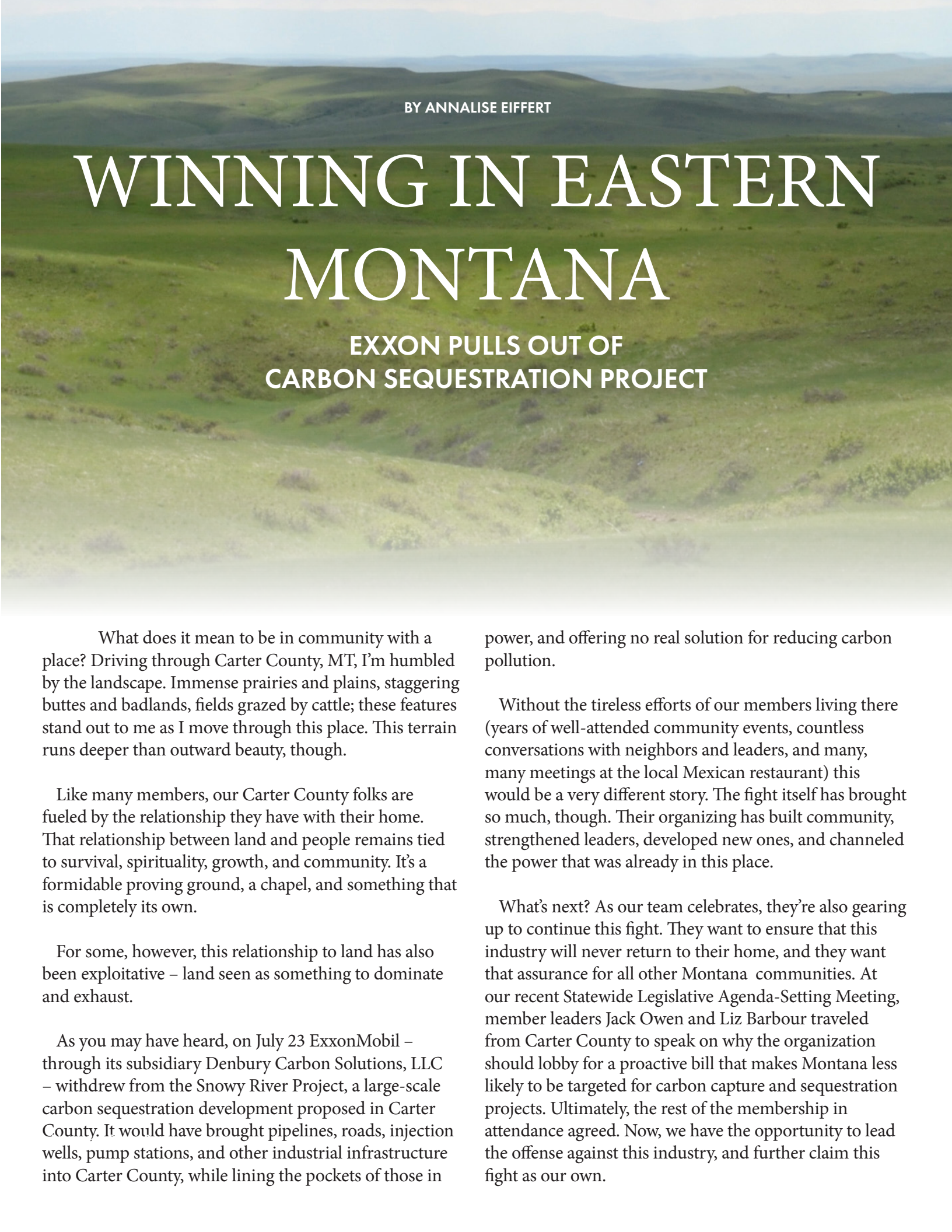
Steve Doherty worked with the Northern Plains Resource Council for five years (1976-1981), as an organizer and lobbyist. It was when Colstrip was in full development and other towns were being targeted for energy extraction. Steve learned from watching small towns challenge international energy corporations. He worked with rural people who became experts on energy issues and strategic thinking, and who became respected leaders to their neighbors. He helped this organization build a reputation for expertise among state lawmakers.

Steve earned a law degree and focused his practice on Indian law. Then came 12 years in the

Montana Senate, where he championed Montana's natural heritage and social justice.

Steve later chaired the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission (2005-2009). In 2010, he was appointed as Special Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior.

During that work, Steve was diagnosed with throat cancer. He spent several years building his health, and he never lost his love for justice and for Montana along the way. It took more than a decade for cancer to take him from us this past May. People knew Steve Doherty for his *joie de vivre* and his passion for, among other things, the Northern Plains Resource Council.



BY ANNALISE EIFFERT

WINNING IN EASTERN MONTANA

EXXON PULLS OUT OF CARBON SEQUESTRATION PROJECT

What does it mean to be in community with a place? Driving through Carter County, MT, I'm humbled by the landscape. Immense prairies and plains, staggering buttes and badlands, fields grazed by cattle; these features stand out to me as I move through this place. This terrain runs deeper than outward beauty, though.

Like many members, our Carter County folks are fueled by the relationship they have with their home. That relationship between land and people remains tied to survival, spirituality, growth, and community. It's a formidable proving ground, a chapel, and something that is completely its own.

For some, however, this relationship to land has also been exploitative – land seen as something to dominate and exhaust.

As you may have heard, on July 23 ExxonMobil – through its subsidiary Denbury Carbon Solutions, LLC – withdrew from the Snowy River Project, a large-scale carbon sequestration development proposed in Carter County. It would have brought pipelines, roads, injection wells, pump stations, and other industrial infrastructure into Carter County, while lining the pockets of those in

power, and offering no real solution for reducing carbon pollution.

Without the tireless efforts of our members living there (years of well-attended community events, countless conversations with neighbors and leaders, and many, many meetings at the local Mexican restaurant) this would be a very different story. The fight itself has brought so much, though. Their organizing has built community, strengthened leaders, developed new ones, and channeled the power that was already in this place.

What's next? As our team celebrates, they're also gearing up to continue this fight. They want to ensure that this industry will never return to their home, and they want that assurance for all other Montana communities. At our recent Statewide Legislative Agenda-Setting Meeting, member leaders Jack Owen and Liz Barbour traveled from Carter County to speak on why the organization should lobby for a proactive bill that makes Montana less likely to be targeted for carbon capture and sequestration projects. Ultimately, the rest of the membership in attendance agreed. Now, we have the opportunity to lead the offense against this industry, and further claim this fight as our own.

Things We Understand on America's 250th birthday

BY STEVE PAULSON

For 54 years, no matter the issue at hand, Northern Plains Resource Council members have stood for that most American of values – rule by the People.

We've all seen – through all those years – that those who would despoil America and inevitably try to shut the public out of the decision-making process. Northern Plains Resource Council has not, and will not, let that happen.

We understand the meaning of the Declaration of Independence:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-
-That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

All of us understand in a deeply personal way what Katherine Lee Bates was writing about:

*O, beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties,
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*

We understand, as did historian Bernard DeVoto, that:

This is your land we are talking about.

We understand, as did Frederick Douglass, that democracy is not a given, that it must continually be earned:

Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its waters.

We understand, as did Justice Louis Brandeis, that:

We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we cannot have both.

We know the truth in the words of Wendell Berry (who spoke at our Annual Meeting some years ago), that:

The great centralized economic entities of our time do not come into rural places in order to improve them by "creating jobs." They come to take as much of value as they can take, as cheaply and as quickly as they can take it.

Boyd Charter, one of our founding members, was very clear in his concerns:

When it comes to people who have respect for the land and are trying to save the land from being destroyed, when people like us die, who will stand up here and fight for it...turn their money down and stand for what they think is right?

But, as citizens, we understand that our rights also give us responsibilities. Annual Meeting speaker Sandra Steingraber emphasized in her book *Living Downstream*:

From the right to know and the duty to inquire flows the obligation to act.

We understand, as did conservationist David Brower, that:

Politicians are like weather vanes; our job is to make the wind blow.

We understand and live by Henry David Thoreau's admonition:

Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence.

We understand, as did national parks champion Stephen Mather, that:

Every one of us must pull our oar.

And we also understand what Carl Sandburg meant, when he wrote:

We'll fight till hell freezes over and then write on the ice, "Come on, you bastards."

Our people understand the truth spoken by Rep. John Lewis when he said:

Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America.

And we understand as well the words of James Baldwin:

For this is your home, my friend, do not be driven from it; great men have done great things here, and will again, and we can make America what America must become.

ANNUAL MEETING

Distinguished Keynote Speaker

 **CLAYTON
TUCKER**

JOIN US NOV. 13-14





CARBON COUNTY SELECTS ISSUES FROM DEEP LISTENING CAMPAIGN

BY MAX MAYNARD

On the evening of June 17th, Carbon County Resource Council (CCRC) held a public meeting following a two and a half month listening campaign conducted county-wide. Over 60 one-on-one conversations had been held, and 50 concerned citizens turned out for the meeting. During the listening campaign, CCRC members asked folks questions like "What do you value in your community, and what problems do you see you and your neighbors facing?" "What keeps you up at night?" "What would you like to see change for you and your community?"

The first three themes of concern were determined to

From these listening efforts, three major areas of concern and two auxiliary themes emerged:

- Affordability/Housing
- Sense of Safety Net/Access to Social Services
- Environment/Sustainability
- Community Cohesion and Connection (Aux)
- Education (Aux)

be actionable issues where real impacts could be made. The two auxiliary concerns, Education and the desire for greater Community Cohesion and Connection, were widely felt and seemed to be an important part of the fabric of all the concerns. The presenters—CCRC members who were on the core team that carried out the community listening conversations—sought to highlight and present the identified major concerns to the meeting attendees. After the initial presentations, those attending entered into facilitated small-group discussions about how the presented themes related to their experiences within the community. Reactions to the presented concerns were discussed by each small group with most participants agreeing that the issues raised were of critical importance within Carbon County.

Following the table conversations, a CCRC presenter explained the next step in this process: conduct a series of intentional meetings in which interested community members listen to and discuss the identified concerns with local decision-makers as well as those in the community who have specific knowledge and expertise. These research meetings will provide greater understanding of the issues at hand and will help identify pathways toward winnable solutions to these community problems. If people would like to know more or jump into the work, contact Max at max@northernplains.org

SAFEGUARDING OUR ELECTIONS

BY CAITLIN CROMWELL



Northern Plains Resource Council members are taking on big fights and corporate power in communities across Montana. At the same time, potential threats to the integrity of the upcoming midterm elections are playing out in the background - and reminding us that protecting our democracy is work we all share. No matter who you're voting for or what party you side with (if any!), we all have a stake in ensuring our elections are free, fair, and trusted.

Earlier this month, more than 70 Northern Plains Resource Council members from across the state came together for an Election Protection training to prepare for exactly these challenges. Joined by allies from the League of Women Voters, local Indivisible chapters, Big Sky 55+ and more, we explored what we know or can reasonably anticipate about efforts to disrupt, challenge, or undermine confidence in election results. We worked through realistic scenarios, practiced how we'd respond, and developed local plans to ensure Montanans are equipped to take calm and effective action in our own communities if the need arises.

The first step in that plan? A public letter to Montana's elected officials and the media declaring why protecting democratic participation and community self-determination matters to our members. The letter lays out our expectations for free, fair, and secure elections and stakes out our commitment to respecting legitimate election

outcomes, regardless of who wins. As training attendee Keegan Nashan from Livingston put it, these are high-stakes times, and we need to "say it with our bellies."

Next, our members are spreading out across the state to meet with local election officials in their own communities. Our goal is to understand how they're preparing for potential risks and challenges, and to offer our support. These are hardworking folks, and for many of us, they're also neighbors - people in our towns who we already know. They shouldn't feel alone in this important work. We all have a role to play in ensuring our elections remain safe and secure.

Want to get involved? Join one of these meetings, attend a future training, participate in poll watching, or plug into other election protection efforts. Let us know your interest here:



**SCAN HERE TO
GET INVOLVED**

"IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY"

A VISIT WITH MIKE McDEARMON ON THE FUTURE OF DATA CENTERS

BY JORDAN BUSER



Northern Plains Resource Council was founded on the natural belief that the people of Montana should have authority over the decisions that impact their lives. This belief dates back to 1972, when regular citizens entered the halls of power to repudiate the extractive industrialists of the Copper King era and ensure Montana's rural communities were not sacrificed for profit.

The State finds itself once again in the crosshairs of developers, this time hell-bent on building industrial-sized data centers to cash in on the mania of Artificial Intelligence. Few understand what is at stake better than Mike McDearmon. After fifteen years working in the tech industry, he understands what Silicon Valley's motto of "move fast and break things" means for his community in Lewistown if left unregulated.

Mike originally became involved in our work through a volunteer water monitoring program aimed at protecting the health of the Judith River watershed. After learning that his congressional delegation was debating a moratorium – not on data center construction but on regulations of data centers – Mike organized with local leaders to deliver a petition to the Fergus County Commissioners demanding protections for residents.

"Even if you don't live right next to one of these facilities," he said, "the statewide implications are still there in terms of how much power these [projects] need, how much water they'll consume. One individual project is of the scale that it has statewide or multi-state impacts."

Now at the forefront of our grassroots efforts to pass protections at the 2027 legislative session, Mike is

working to remind folks that "it doesn't have to be this way."

"It takes people paying attention and pushing in order to see change. None of the things that I grew up taking for granted just happen. It's because there are people who are whistleblowing, passing legislation, running for office. That's how this happens."

What Mike is talking about is organizing – talking with your neighbors, developing a clear set of demands, and pressuring your elected officials to take action. After doing this work in Lewistown, Mike noted that "the biggest surprise is how delightful conversations can be with somebody that you might look at and assume you'll disagree".

When politics becomes fraught with polarization and division, organizing presents a practical way for people to find common ground, rebuild community, and improve the material conditions that impact their lives. What Mike has found in his one-on-one conversations is that "there's a lot more shared perspective than difference". It is that shared perspective and common ground that provides the foundation for lasting change.

Industrial data center development is yet another iteration in Montana's history of extractive development. Thanks to local leaders like Mike, communities across the state are demanding guarantees that our resources and rural economies will not be sacrificed for Big Tech's profit. Join our local organizing efforts to hold this industry accountable and protect Montana's interests.

MCOOL ON THE RISE!

BY GUSTY CATHERIN-SAUER

Excitement in the Ag community is building following the 17-6 approval of the MCOOL amendment by the Senate Ag Committee on Aug. 6. The amendment, led by Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.), passed by a broad bipartisan voice vote, making it the only bipartisan amendment adopted during the day's markup. The vote represents significant momentum for restoring consumers' right to know where their beef was born, raised and harvested, and for allowing American cattle producers to distinguish their product in the marketplace.

As Congress moves towards final a vote on the next Farm Bill, the future of country-of-origin labeling for beef and pork is once again at the forefront of agricultural policy. However, the committee recessed without passing the full Farm Bill package as discussions regarding SNAP provisions continue. Once the amended Farm Bill is reported out of committee, it will advance to the full U.S. Senate for consideration.

The U.S. now has its smallest cattle herd since 1951 and consumers are paying record beef prices. It's worth asking whether eliminating country of origin labeling in 2015 truly benefited the industry—or simply reduced costs for the largest meatpackers while accelerating the decline of independent U.S. cattle producers. Although many factors—including drought, herd liquidation, and market conditions—have contributed to today's historically small

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FOR YOU TO HELP!
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SENATORS TODAY!



cattle herd, mandatory labeling could help strengthen demand for domestic beef over the long term by giving consumers greater transparency.

Critics of mandatory country of origin labeling focused on the expense of implementing the policy for large meat companies. But those analyses failed to account for the costs of not distinguishing American-raised livestock from imports. While many ranchers have spent years urging Congress to restore M-COOL, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's opposition has fueled questions about whether the organization is speaking primarily for cattle producers or for the large meatpacking companies that also make up part of its membership.

For ranchers across Montana and other cattle-producing states, the issue is about more than labels on grocery store shelves. Mandatory labeling would give consumers the information they need to distinguish American-raised beef from imported products while creating a fairer marketplace for U.S. cattle producers. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently strengthened voluntary "Product of USA" labeling requirements, however those changes do not go far enough because imported beef can still enter the U.S. supply chain without mandatory origin disclosure at the retail level. Mandatory labeling would allow consumers who prefer U.S.-raised beef to identify it easily and pay a premium for products raised domestically.

TAKE A STAND ON THE FARM BILL TODAY!

Our food system in the US today is considered by most standards to be more concentrated than at any point in the last century around a handful of multinational corporations and their subsidiaries. Current federal farm policy generally supports the status quo, at the expense of family farmers and the average consumer. Small-scale family farms are the backbone of rural America, making up 89% of all US agricultural operations. Despite their importance, many agricultural producers face challenges such as fluctuating markets and variable product prices, increasing corporate consolidation, unbalanced trade policies, environmental degradation, and barriers to land access. Take a moment to tell congress, "no Farm Bill without M-COOL" and share your support for the programs that you care most about by visiting the link **at the top of this page.**

COUNCIL ROUNDUP



CCRC seeks out decision makers

By Max Maynard

Carbon County Resource Council is continuing to move through their ongoing grassroots organizing arc that started in early April! CCRC conducted a series of one-on-one conversations with county residents, then a vibrant public meeting on what people value about life in Carbon County and what concerns people have.

Member leaders are now holding intentional conversations with local decision-makers and “power players” to better understand the existing power structure in Carbon County. This knowledge will help to inform what winnable issue campaign CCRC will pursue.

Do you want to be a part of meaningful and material change? Contact Max at max@northernplains.org.



CRC starts strong for 2026

By Gusti Catherin-Sauer

Cottonwood Resource Council’s membership celebrated in style at the Boulder Roadkill Saloon for their annual summer gathering! Punctuated by conversation about the Good Neighbor Agreement, data center organizing, energy efficiency financing and so much more, it was the party of the summer up the Boulder drainage! The affiliate continues to host “Cottonwood Connects.” The event series goal is to raise the visibility of community connections with CRC and the GNA and discuss issues that directly impact citizens! Events in the works include a presentation from the director of *Citizen Nation* with the local school district, a geology field trip, and a film screening of the locally made film *Mother Range*, to name a few!

Central Montana Resource Council

CMRC takes aim at data centers

By Jordan Buser

Central Montana Resource Council members continue to raise the alarm on data center development across the state, convincing their County Commissioners to submit a letter to the Public Service Commission demanding protections for ratepayers. Now members are planning a public event for August 22nd as part of Northern Plains Resource Council’s statewide day of action.

In addition, Summer Harvest is in full swing at the Green Share Garden – a community project that donates an abundance of fresh produce to the community. In addition, CMRC members are set to complete their third year of water monitoring on Ross Fork Creek.



Eastern Montana
RESOURCE COUNCIL EST. 1978
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Community concerns top of mind

By Annalise Eiffert

EMRC leaders are deep in the second phase of their organizing trajectory! Beginning last November, members have spent the last months sitting down with countless neighbors and building relationships. Now, they've spent the summer bringing folks together for meetings with local leaders and experts, to learn more about the top issues they heard from the community: agriculture, healthcare, and education. Additionally, the statewide data center fight galvanized them. They got involved for the August 22nd day of action, and are excited to join this battle. Ultimately, members here are leading two robust efforts grounded in building real people power.

Golden Triangle builds their base

By Bryce Johnston

Golden Triangle Resource Council is in full swing on protecting their vital community resources. They've been working hard on preventing a local biofuels company from injecting potentially dangerous waste water into their local aquifer, hoping to preserve this regional water source for generations to come. Their data center team has been moving and shaking in the community, collecting hundreds of signatures for a petition for a local 2-year moratorium and taking their fight to the local County Commissioners.

SPA brings experts to engage with residents

By Carla Nordlund

Stillwater Protective Association is in the midst of their popular "Stillwater Speaks" summer program series, hosting community presentations on a variety of regional topics. This series is the main fundraiser for SPA's scholarship fund to benefit local students and has garnered strong community attendance and support.

SPA also participated in the public comment period on Sibanye Stillwater's proposed expansion of the Hertzler Tailing Storage Facility and East Side Waste Rock Storage Facility at the Stillwater Mine. We'll continue to stay informed and involved throughout the permitting process.

COUNCIL ROUNDUP



Sleeping Giant keeps ear to the ground

By Bryce Johnston

Sleeping Giant Citizens Council has been building vital connective tissue in their communities, and engaging citizens to protect their local resources. The Sleeping Giant Core Team has been meeting with dozens of different Helena area citizens to discover what is being both deeply and widely felt, and how we give Helena a chance to make it's voice heard. Their local data center team has been building the ground work to get a local 2-year moratorium passed, and educating on the potential damage that a proposal could have.



Give-A-Hoot fundraiser a success

By Jack Leuthold

Yellowstone Bend Citizens Council (YBCC) just recently wrapped up their annual participation in the Park County Community Foundation's Give-A-Hoot fundraiser – a month-long event where the county comes together to support the causes and organizations that they hold close to their heart. YBCC wants to extend an immense thanks to everyone who gave this year. Your support will aid YBCC in continuing their organizing efforts and continue to help build leaders in our community. Thank you!



YVCC members are sharpening their organizer skills

By Caitlin Cromwell

Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council concluded our listening campaign in April with "Pressures on Our People," a public meeting where we shared what we learned in more than 200 one-on-one conversations with community members across Billings.

Four themes emerged: mental health; housing affordability and access; kids and public education; and outdoor access, parks, and trails. YVCC members then met with more than 20 local decision-makers and stakeholders to better understand the landscape around each of these issues.

Ultimately, members voted to focus on housing access and affordability. YVCC is now hard at work developing a campaign around this issue, while building a growing base of members!

STEP 1: DECLARATION OF VALUES LETTER

- Public letter declaring our values around democracy + our expectations around free, fair, + secure ^{and healthy} elections

SAY IT WITH OUR BELLY

- Letter needs to be timely - Time for allies to say
- Some orgs (LWV) have ~~written~~ ^{signed} values already
- Who
 - News papers
 - Social media
 - Websites
 - Radio
 - Everyone we're doing a research action with
 - Allies
 - Unions
 - Churches
 - Fraternel orgs

- Res...



A composite image featuring two photographs. The larger photograph on the left shows a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a blue blazer over a patterned shirt, speaking into a microphone at a podium. He is gesturing with his left hand. In the background, several people are seated at long white tables in a room with large windows and exposed ceiling beams. The smaller photograph on the right shows a woman with long brown hair, wearing a green top, speaking into a microphone. She is smiling and has a ring on her finger.





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NorthernPlains.org/plan-your-legacy

Contact Caleb Lande at caleb@northernplains.org

SCAN HERE

