



## I HUNT - I FISH - I VOTE

“**W**ithin the framework of our North American System of Wildlife Conservation, we hunters use government as the instrument to keep opportunity fair among millions of nimrods. Government is the tool we use to study wildlife and make the rules that will keep sustainable populations of game animals for the future.”

*“Government is the common forum in which we meet to agree what values of right and wrong we will expect of each other as we engage in the hunt.” “In short, our government IS NOT the problem any more than a hammer causes bent nails. Our failure as citizens to govern IS the problem.” “...government is simply the toolbox...” —MWF Member, Ron Moody (Montana Wildlife 2006)*

The political power and influence on our government by hunters and anglers has been stunning. Some states document a 70 to 80 percent voter turn-out by their registered resident sportsmen and sportswomen. We have influenced local elections, state legislative seats, governor appointments, and who we send to Washington as state congressional delegates. Across the nation, we are a powerhouse for conservation and wildlife policies.

At the state level hunters and anglers are sometimes disenfranchised when a state legislator does not vote for well intentioned hunting, fishing or wildlife and land management policies. Our choice, our voice, our power begins in voting.

Montana Wildlife Federation takes pride in the fact that historically 85 to 93 percent of our registered, resident members vote. The challenges we face in attempting to freely enjoy the outdoors and wildlife in a dwindling landscape can be influenced by MWF members.

Some candidates attempting to gain a vote use trigger words in their platforms such as public access, stream access, hunter and gun rights and then turn around in support of measures that devalue wildlife, and sportsmen or restrict public access or commercialize our public wildlife.

This year, MWF is asking its members to not only vote but to get involved in the political process. We ask that you talk with your hunting and fishing friends as well as candidates. Encouraging a friend to vote or having a conversation with a candidate can make a difference. Every vote, every exchange on points of view – counts!

The point is, “The politically active citizen-hunter can walk away from his or her truck toward a wild hunting experience knowing they’ve helped shape the world in which they seek their game.” – MWF Member, Ron Moody (2006)

*“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead*