



Montana Matters Campaign

Montana's diverse natural wealth, its natural beauty, abundant wildlife and quality of life available because of our open spaces and diverse landscapes are central to what Montana is. The challenges of maintaining this natural wealth today are far different from those of the past. New, powerful and profound threats to Montana's ecological integrity and our outdoor recreation opportunities loom on the horizon. Montana is at a crossroads.

Do we move forward, with the knowledge and understanding of our past, our victories and our defeats? Do we simply forget those hard learned lessons in favor of quick, short-term financial gains, long-range damage to our natural resources, and less accountability from those who would exploit Montana for personal gain?

What we have heard and learned during the last century is that Montana matters, the state-of Montana matters, not just for those that live in Montana but globally. So what can we do as stewards entrusted to care for all that Montana is, as champions for wildlife, wild places, and the Montana hunting and fishing traditions and heritage?

How do we ensure all that is so valuable to so many?

Montana Matters – The Project

The Montana Constitution reinforces and upholds what is held so dear: "...the quiet beauty... the grandeur of our mountains, the vastness of our rolling plains, and our desire to improve the quality of life for this and future generations..."

MWF and the International Wildlife Film Festival have agreed to work together to raise visibility, awareness, and funding for wildlife and wild places, for the conservation of what makes Montana one of the most special places on earth and because...*Montana Matters*.

Initially both organizational board of directors had to give it some thought – collaborations are often great in theory but sometimes implementation is another story. A small group, including both Executive Directors and board members have talked about organizational principles, missions, and goals, shared project ideas and explored roles, responsibilities and outcomes. If ever there was a perfect melding of minds, it is perhaps the fateful outreach and collaboration between MWF and IWFF that have as a core belief-- *Montana Matters*.

Now, on the eve of the public launch of the *Montana Matters International Campaign*, everything is falling into place as clearly as a blue sky on a Montana summer day.

Beginning with the MWF Annual Meeting and Banquet in Helena April 18, followed by the IWFF Festival in May in Missoula, *Montana Matters* will be a joint project to ensure that Montana's next century follows progressive action to maintain and enhance what matters most to Montana. The project will raise national awareness for the values and importance of conserving Montana, it will support and enhance the effectiveness of both organizations that have agreed to work jointly to ensure that Montana remains the last, best place; a place that provides an inheritance for our children's children and generations unborn.

Together, MWF and IWFF can make a marked difference not only in the politics and policies of Montana, but in how Montana matters to the world. Our goal is simple - our changing world demands new approaches and new strategic partnerships. This campaign will strengthen the credibility of both the IWFF and MWF as visionary leaders in shaping Montana's wildlife and natural wealth future.

Montana Matters is the perfect melding of two organizations' missions - MWF and IWFF, and together we will bring the best of both organizations to bear, we will strengthen and enhance our individual and our collective efforts and we will foster effective outcomes for the future of Montana, to leave a legacy because...*Montana Matters*.

Launching this collaborative effort, we thought we should explore various personal points of view why *Montana Matters*. The following are a collection of comments received from individuals responding to the question, "Why does Montana matter to you?"

Why does Montana Matter to you? If you would like to share your thoughts on why *Montana Matters*, please email them to csharpe@mtwf.org.

In the meantime, we ask you to support the Montana Matters campaign by visiting the web-site –you can make a difference in Montana – www.montanamatters.com.