

# Please Donate & Support Our Lawsuit Against the Mega-Load Project

Dear members and supporters,

Please help our fight against the mega-load transport project and tar-sands mining by submitting a financial contribution\* to the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club. Please use the enclosed self-addressed envelope and mail your financial contribution to

**Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club  
PO Box 7201,  
Missoula, MT 59807**

Any level of giving is greatly appreciated. Your assistance is welcomed with a hearty thanks and full assurance that every penny will be devoted to fight the mega-loads and tar sands oil production.

Please read " MT Chapter-Sierra Club Files Lawsuit and Seeks Full Environmental Review of Mega-Load Project" and "June 18--Take Action against Canada's Tar Sands" on page 6.

*\*Please keep in mind your donation to this project won't be tax deductible.*



**Over 100 anti-megaload demonstrators gather near Lolo Pass on February 13, 2011.**

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Spring/Summer 2011

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# The Montana Sierran

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## Wolves Benefit Elk and All of Montana

By Jonathan Matthews, Energy & Political Campaign Volunteer



"Camas Meadow," Watercolor by Kendahl Jan Jubb  
Photo Credit: Ram Murphy of Murphy-Jubb Fine Art, [www.kendahljanjubb.com](http://www.kendahljanjubb.com)

for elk. They can no longer hang out in the creek bottoms, living a drowsy, half-alive existence, like characters posing for tourists in a theme-park simulation of Montana. Wolves are now helping elk to relearn how to be the fully alive, fully functional, marvelous creatures that they were meant to be in a naturally genuine Montana. They're running more. Aside from the aberration of the diminished decades of the 20th Century, this is what it has always meant to be elk in Montana. The return of wolves is helping elk to again become who they truly are.

The return of wolves is also helping dozens of species of plants and other animals native to Montana. With elk no longer able to graze lazily in the river bottoms, they are no longer eating willow

See "Wolves," page 4

Governor Schweitzer's recent statement about wolves was likely a response to constituent concerns: for this, he cannot be faulted. However, his call for wolves to be killed in the Bitterroot Valley to "protect elk" reveals a misunderstanding about the relationship between elk and wolves.

The elk of Montana depend on wolves for their health. Over thousands of years the two species have evolved together. How wolves need elk is easy to see: they eat them. It may be harder to see how elk need wolves, but prey species need their natural predators as surely as predator species need their natural prey.

The strongest elk are not killed by wolves. Wolves take the easiest

meal. They eat weaker and slower elk. In contrast, human hunters prefer to take the most impressive looking, robust individuals. Wolves help insure that the healthiest elk thrive and reproduce just as surely as the competitive marketplace helps the best products to succeed and the best opponents draw the most spectacular performances from the top athletes. Generations of elk have suffered functional decline during the decades that wolves have been missing from Montana.

The return of wolves is good news



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

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# Montana Chapter Leaders 2011

Many heartfelt thanks to the Executive Committee for their time, expertise and dedication to the mission of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club.

### Executive Committee

Otto Braided Hair\*\*\*Larry Evans\*\*\*Bruce Hunner\*\*\*Rod Jude\*\*\*Jonathan Matthews  
Jeff van den Noort\*\*\*Owen Weber\*\*\*John Wolverton

### Chapter Officers

Rod Jude, Chair  
Jonathan Matthews, Vice Chair  
Gia Randono, Treasurer  
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CCL Delegate, Owen Weber

Elections/Nominations, co-Chaired

Energy/Coal, Jonathan Matthews  
• Coal Subcommittee, Owen Weber  
• Dirty Fuels Campaign, John Wolverton

Finance/Webmaster, Jeff van den Noort

Membership/Fundraising, Rod Jude

MT Smart Growth, Bruce Hunner

Newsletter, John Wolverton

Nominating/Elections, Owen Weber

Outings, Mary Owens

Political, Jonathan Matthews  
• Political Compliance Officer, Owen Weber

For more information about the

- Montana Chapter activities and meetings
- Contact Jeff van den Noort at (406) 582.1871
- Missoula/Bitterroot area activities and meetings
- Contact John Wolverton at yodelingdog(at)hotmail(dot)com

Visit our Chapter website at [www.montana.sierraclub.org](http://www.montana.sierraclub.org)

# Newsletter Information

The Montana Sierran is published twice a year by the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club, a division of the national Sierra Club.

Please send your letters, articles, photos and illustrations to

maire-mt@earthlink.net

or Maria Ibarbia, TMS Editor  
P.O. Box 277, Milltown, MT 59851

The Montana Sierran reserves the right to edit or reject submissions at its discretion.

Submissions must include first and last name with city/town (and state if outside of Montana). Please include your phone number and email address, so we may contact you. Ad sizes and fees follow:

- Full (8"wx9"h).....\$200
- .50 (8"wx4.375"h).....125
- .25 (3.875"wx4.375"h).....55
- Business card.....30

Send digital photographs at 300ppi in .jpg format. Including a caption and credit are always appreciated.

**Deadlines** for content submission are April 15 and October 15.

Please contact me via e-mail if you have questions.

Thank you for your support of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club!

*Maria*

# 2011 Outings of the MT Chapter of the Sierra Club, continued

By Mary Owens, Outings Coordinator/Volunteer



A Beautiful Summer's Day at Summit Lake in the Spanish Peaks of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness  
Photo Credit: John Wolverton

we'll hit trail elevations up to 8,600 with lots of up and down between. Strenuous, so lightweight backpack gear recommended. Led by Steve McArthur and John Wolverton. Email John at yodelingdog(at)hotmail(dot)com.

**Thursday, August 11--Fastpacking Workshop.** This class will introduce participants to ultralite camping equipment and fastpack techniques. The course and the overnight hike (below) up Sheep Mountain will be led by Michael Jarnevic, a 38-year veteran of Army Special Forces and a backcountry medic, survival instructor, and experienced guide. Email Michael at jarnevic@earthlink.net for time and place.

**Friday to Saturday, August 12-13--Fastpacking Up Sheep Mountain Under the Full Moon.** Watch the full moon rise and illuminate the trail and summit of Sheep Mountain. We'll camp overnight at the top with time to relax, eat and explore. This hike will be approximately 12 miles roundtrip with a moderately strenuous elevation gain of 2000 feet. The area has wonderful views of the Missoula Valley to the south and the Rattlesnake NRA and Wilderness to the north. There is no water on top, so pack accordingly. This will be the field portion of the fastpacking workshop that demonstrates ultralite camping equipment and techniques. Limited to 8 people. Email Michael at jarnevic@earthlink.net.

**Saturday, August 27--Service Outing, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.** In partnership with the Selway-Bitterroot Foundation, we will hike to Baker and Gem Lakes to do campsite restoration and eradication. The lakes sit in a spectacular valley below Trapper Peak, and are popular for overnight camping due to their proximity to the trailhead. The campsite restoration and clean-up is important to help keep the lakes in a primitive and wild state. 2.5 – 4.5 miles round trip with 1000 feet of elevation gain. Limited to 10 participants. Contact Mary Owens at mowens320(at)gmail(dot)com.

Get Involved! To find out more about participating in the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club outings program, or if you'd like to share your favorite wild places by leading a hike or canoe trip in your region, please contact the Outings Coordinator, Mary Owens at mowens320(at)gmail(dot)com.

## Legislative Lobby Day & "For the Love of Montana" Rally

In late February, more than a dozen Sierra Club volunteers spent the day in Helena to learn how to lobby on behalf of the environment in the Montana Legislature. Participants received a short training, courtesy of Anne Hedges from Montana Environmental Information Center, engaged State House and Senate Representatives and the governor, sat in on floor votes--and joined the lunch-time rally - For the Love of Montana.

Lobby Day was especially exciting this year because we were able to join other supporters of the environment from around the state at a rally - For the Love of Montana – which drew some 300 citizens from around the state.

Special thanks to executive committee members Rod Jude, Jonathan Matthews, and John Wolverton. Other volunteers who participated included Steve McArthur, Rachel Jennings, Brigita Wohlsein, Ann Maechtlen, Carol Marsh, Whitney Byrd, and Robbie Liben.



## 2011 Outings of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club

By Mary Owens, Outings Coordinator/Volunteer

Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club Outings are free and open to the public. Liability release signatures required. Please sign up in advance with outing contact person(s). No companion animals, please.

**Saturday, June 4--Sioux Charley Lake, Beartooth Mountains.** This easy to moderate trail winds steadily upward through a steep walled canyon carved by the Stillwater River. It is one of the most spectacular sections of trails in the Beartooth Mountains, dramatically ascending alongside powerfully cascading rapids. As the trail eventually levels out alongside the river, meadows abound with wildflowers. We will lunch at lake's edge. 6 miles round trip, 600 feet elevation gain. Limited to 15 participants. Contact Donna Craig at 328-4386 or benannod@aol.com.

**Saturday, June 18--Lost Lake, Beartooth Absaroka Wilderness.** This hike follows a beautiful mountain stream through a lodgepole pine forest as it steadily ascends alongside a series of lakes. Moose are frequently seen close to the stream along the lower portions of the trail. At 0.3 miles the trail enters the Beartooth Absaroka Wilderness. Silver Falls can be seen high up on our left as we approach Broadwater Lake, a wide, smooth part of the river. Our destination, Lost Lake, is a left turn off of the main trail, at a distance of 5 miles from the trailhead. 10 miles round trip with 600 feet of elevation gain. Limited to 15 participants. Contact Donna Craig at 328-4386 or benannod@aol.com.

**Saturday, June 25--Fred Burr Reservoir, Bitterroot Mountains.** This easy hike follows Fred Burr Creek to the reservoir. Expect to see wild flowers along the trail. The Bitterroot Mountains will provide a beautiful backdrop as we lunch at the reservoir. 9 miles round trip, 1000 feet elevation gain. Limited to 15 participants. Contact Mary Owens at mowens320(at)gmail(dot)com.

**Friday through Sunday, July 15-17--Great Burn High Country Backpack.** Just 30 miles west of Missoula lies the Great Burn Proposed Wilderness. This trip showcases jagged granite peaks and expansive sub-alpine meadows, along the Bitterroot Divide in this 275,000 acre roadless area. The high mountain lakes along the crest of the Bitterroot Range are critical habitat for threatened bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout. The hike will begin and end at the Schley Mountain trailhead. This is a moderately strenuous 15 mile, round-trip, two-night backpack. Space is limited. Email trip leader Bob Clark at bob.clark(at)sierraclub(dot)org.

**Saturday, July 16--Peterson Lake, Bitterroot Mountains.** This moderately strenuous hike will take us through one of the more scenic canyons in the Bitterroots to Peterson Lake. The trail climbs steeply in parts, then descends to Peterson Lake where we will have lunch. On the return trip, we will make a short detour to an awesome overlook of Sweeney Canyon and the Bitterroot Mountains. 11 miles round trip with 1800 feet of elevation gain inbound, and 1300 feet of elevation gain on the return. Limited to 15 participants. Contact Mary Owens at mowens320(at)gmail(dot)com.

**Saturday, July 23--Service Outing, Sawmill Gulch Restoration Project, in the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area.** Help continue the Sierra Club's commitment to improving winter elk habitat. Over the past several years, volunteers have helped remove several miles of barbed wire; clip and bag the seed stalks from hounds-tongue weeds; and pile thinned trees for burning. We will continue their work during this summer's service project. Long sleeve shirt, long pants, sturdy footwear, work gloves, and glasses of some sort will be required. We'll have some glasses and gloves on hand for those who don't have their own. Meet at the main Rattlesnake Trailhead north of Missoula at 8 a.m. for free muffins and coffee. We'll be done by 1:00 pm. Contact Bert Lindler at 542-7645.

**Thursday to Sunday, August 4 to 7--Pintler Loop Trail.** 4 day / 3 night, 24 mile backpack in the little-used Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. This beautiful wilderness is full of high mountain cirques and hanging valleys with dozens of alpine lakes. We'll plan to base camp one spot for 2 nights to have a day to relax and explore a summit, pass or the lakes. Starting around 6,000 feet,



Panoramic View of the Missouri River  
Photo Credit: John Wolverton

## Montana-Idaho Wolves Lose Endangered Species Act Protection

By Jonathan Matthews

To our great dismay, President Obama recently signed a budget bill that included a non-related rider removing wolves in Montana, Idaho, eastern Washington, eastern Oregon and northern Utah from protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). (Wolves in Wyoming remain under ESA protection pending development of a federally-approved management plan).

This 'legislative solution' marks the first time that a species has been delisted due to a mandate by Congress, thus setting the terrible precedent of politics trumping science. Wildlife management decisions should and must be based on sound science, not the whims of politicians. The State of Montana has long wanted to be responsible for management of wolves within its borders, and vowed it can manage them responsibly. Now the State has the chance to prove it, and many including the Sierra Club will be watching to ensure they do so. With the delisting, fall wolf hunts are now proposed again in Montana and Idaho.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is presenting its proposal for this fall's wolf hunting season to the FWP Commissioners on May 12. If the Commissioners vote to move forward with this proposal, FWP will be taking written public comment on it until June 20. FWP is proposing to allow hunters to take up to 220 wolves this fall.

Background information on the State's wolf hunting proposal:

- The year-end 2010 minimum count for wolves in Montana was 566

- FWP is proposing to issue a hunting quota of 220 wolves for Fall 2011

- FWP's modeling predicts that this quota will result in a 25% reduction from the 2010 minimum count, to 425 wolves at the end of 2011

For more detail go to: <http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/insideFwp/commission/meetings/agenda.html?si&coversheet&id=20431963>

General Talking Points on Wolves



"Wandering Wolves," Watercolor by Kendahl Jan Jubb  
Photo Credit: Ram Murphy of Murphy-Jubb Fine Art, www.kendahljanjubb.com

- The return of the gray wolf to the Northern Rockies is a remarkable achievement in wildlife restoration and an Endangered Species Act success story. Wolves have a long history in the West and are part of our unique wildlife heritage.

- According to a University of Montana study, people who visit the Yellowstone region hoping to glimpse a wolf spend around \$35 million annually in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

- We should manage wolves like other wildlife, such as mountain lions and bears, instead of treating them like pests and actively reducing their numbers to minimum levels.

- Elk & Wolves: Contrary to popular myth, most elk herds in the Northern Rockies are thriving. Elk numbers in the region have increased 18% since wolf reintroduction and 60 percent statewide in Montana, according to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Today, there are nearly 400,000 elk in the Northern Rockies and only about 1,700 wolves.

- Livestock & Wolves: Livestock lost to wolves represent less than 1% of total livestock losses in wolf country. Disease, coyotes, domestic dogs, and even winter weather kill many times more cattle and sheep than wolves.

NOTE: Jonathan's article "Wolves Benefit Elk and All of Montana," reprinted on pages 1 and 4 of this newsletter, was recently published in the *Helena Independent Record* and the *Missoulian*.

Jonathan Matthews is a professor at Carroll College, the Vice Chair of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Chair of the Chapter's Political and Energy committees.

## "Wolves," continued from page 1

and cottonwood sprouts, so the unnaturally bare banks are greening. With stream-bank bushes and trees returning, beavers are returning and building dams from the recovered vegetation. The newly thriving combinations of water and plants that wolves have caused are creating habitats that support insects, fish, reptiles, amphibians and mammals.

When wolves kill elk to feed themselves, they also feed other animals. Dozens of animals depend on wolves to make the kill. Other animals feed on the carcasses. Though many of these animals are smaller, even the mighty Grizzly, who cannot bring down big game as easily as a pack of wolves, is

thriving due to its access to wolf kills.

Wolves, grizzlies and cougars are all great predators that thrive in the same environment because they occupy different niches. Humans are also top predators that can thrive in the same environment with these magnificent animals. Just like elk, we need to be at our best to thrive with wolves. We can protect our livestock by keeping more people near them (cowboys, shepherds), by fencing them at night with electrified wire and fladry, by using guard animals, by keeping them away from wolf dens and moving them to allotment areas with less predator activity: there are dozens of approaches that have proven effective.

All plants and animals—and all other environmental factors—are interdependent. There are not independent species so much as there is an interdependent web of life. Humans are part of this natural web. We may not be able to easily see or understand it, but when we threaten the existence of a part of this life web, we threaten our own existence. The leaders who created the Endangered Species Act realized this truth.

Actions designed to circumvent this Act threaten us and the long-term health of our extraordinary Montana home.

We are fortunate to be living in the era of the recovery of Montana. With wise stewardship, our Last Best Place will thrive as never before.

## MT Chapter Welcomes New Organizer Zack Waterman

By Bonnie Rice

We are thrilled to announce that Zack Waterman will be joining our Greater Yellowstone (GYE) Resilient Habitats Campaign team on May 16, based out of our Bozeman office.

Zack will join staffer Bonnie Rice and the GYE Resilient Habitats local "delivery team" of volunteers and staff in MT, WY and ID in the Club's efforts to build the resilience of this spectacular region to the impacts of climate change.

Zack will bring much-needed organizing capacity to the Campaign, mobilizing people throughout the region on GYE issues including protecting intact wild areas and wildlife corridors, reducing non-climate stress factors such as inappropriate oil and gas development and motorized use, and increasing public tolerance toward bison migration outside of Yellowstone National Park.

Zack comes to the Club most recently from Greenpeace in Austin, Texas, where he worked closely in south Texas with the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign as well as

other community and environmental groups. He successfully challenged toxic releases from chemical plants, lobbied elected officials to support coal ash cleanup and organized a large rally against coal for 350.org's International Day of Climate Action. Zack has also been an Americorps/VISTA volunteer in Hawaii working with the Council for Native Hawaiians, and a White House intern.

Zack's awakening to the environmental cause happened years earlier while working at a remote fishing lodge in Alaska and living in a tent beside a river. He experienced firsthand both unspoiled wilderness and the effects of climate change on the surrounding ecosystem and, as a result, shelved plans for



Zack in the La Sal Mountains in southern Utah  
Photo Credit: Kelly Waterman

business school and instead became a passionate advocate for the natural world. He is a self-described "mountain junkie" and fly fisher, and his travels have taken him through the Greater Yellowstone region and other wild country of the West.

Please welcome Zack and his wife Kelly to Montana.

## Look to Scientists, Not GOP, for Climate Change Facts

By Bruce Hunner, MT Smart Growth Campaign Volunteer

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was set up by the United Nations to address the reality of climate change. It is the largest peer-reviewed scientific collaboration in the history of the world. The IPCC has repeatedly verified a global need to reduce green house gases (GHGs) 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. This 80% figure is one we have been hearing for over 15 years and one which has been repeatedly verified by greater data recovery and hundreds more computer simulations. However, most Republicans refer to the research and recommendations as "junk science," a reference akin to calling the Great Pyramids shoddy construction.

The closing document for the 1992 Earth Summit (the Rio Declaration) was signed by 165 nations. This document rightly rejected the neoliberal ideology delaying environmental protection on the pretense of a demand for absolute proof. Instead, the manifest insightfully promotes the Precautionary Principle because time is a wasting asset. The Rio conference declared, "Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall NOT be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." 20 years later, the case is stronger than ever that the planet is radically warming because of us. At this point, a CO2 reduction of 2% a year would keep the world below 450ppm (the absolute tipping point). Delay until 2040, and a reduction of 35% a year is required. Precautionary Principle, anyone?

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol asked for a flaccid 5.2% GHG drop below 1990 levels by 2012. This minimal gesture would not be signed by the Republican corporate party. Ever since 1980 and Reagan's war on regulations, his GOP has constructed a brick-wall caucus stopping legislative protection for air and water quality, wilderness

expansion, protection of biodiversity and endangered species and, now, any sincere laws to prevent climate breakdown. Republican Joe Read (Ronan) presented HB549 declaring global warming beneficial to Montana. Read's HB 550 denies the EPA the ability to regulate GHGs. Apparently, Republicans fancy themselves smarter than thousands of atmospheric Ph.Ds. The Bush/Cheney team were prime protagonists for global warming denial. Their Frank Luntz Memorandum "provided both general and specific guidance on how Republican candidates should justify opposing programs to address climate change." Here, we have an entire political party being directed on how to deceive voters and deny the legitimacy of cutting-edge science. It appears Rehberg and the rest of Montana's Republicans retained copies of the bogus Luntz Memorandum for future use.

Highly regarded atmospheric scientist Steve Running (a local Joe) and Kerry Emanuel have said at various times, "We can no longer simulate climate changes seen over the last 30 years without including in the simulations mankind's input of GHGs and sulfate aerosols." Earth's oblique orbit and Milankovitch cycles (crudely alluded to by right wingers) DO NOT add rationale to what is being witnessed: stronger hurricanes, increased oceanic acidity, 40% reduction of arctic ice cover, Glacier National Park's named glaciers reduced from over 120 to under 25, Missoula's average temperature 4.66F higher since the 1950's, a west Montana spring snowpack with a 40% reduction and the annual number of days over 95F in Missoula have quadrupled-- and the GOP puts horse blinders on.

The principled in Montana regard it their "derivative duty" for future generations to set aside wilderness, protect biodiversity, block polluters of air or water and fight for climate stability. All of these are economic

power houses bringing over \$2 billion to our state from citizens' pursuit of natural beauty. As climate change is leading to habitat loss, forest kill and reduction of summer water flow, we as a Club regard CO2 outputs as a "collective harm." To offset occasional vehicle use we tax ourselves \$10/ton (x2 for plane miles). Kyoto only asked for \$3/ton. The Stern Review, (a British check on IPCC evaluations), put an optimal 2005 carbon tax at \$30/ton, rising to \$85/ton by 2050. Is this mitigation catching on? CO2 offsets recently sold on the Chicago Exchange for 0.25c/ton.

C. Cranor (UC. Riverside) correctly said, "Leaders of a country have a political responsibility to see to it that collectively caused problems are addressed and solved."

But guidance from Montana Republicans is nonexistent. They recently sent in SB226 to repeal a 15% renewables grid requirement by 2015. To move forward, mass transit use, bicycling, upgrading drafty homes and buying offsets help. As a club, we fight against the millions of tons of CO2 emitted at power plants like Colstrip. Native Energy wisely uses offset funds (Also, view: americanforests.org, carbonfund.org, treecanada.ca, chooseclimate.org, climateneutral.com and cleanairpass.com.)

The Flat Earth Society says being proactive on climate change is meaningless; future generations need less debt. Remind them their Almighty Reagan increased our national debt from 1 to 3 trillion dollars for bombs, not health care. I'll take the latter and blue sky in perpetuity, thank you. We are in a global village and, as the phrase illicitly sneers from the uneducated opposition, the image gains authority with a glance at the famous photo by astronauts showing a distant earth floating in a very thin atmospheric cocoon. Republicans are ignoring this indisputable fact at our future generation's peril.

## MT Chapter-Sierra Club Teams Up with Boom Swagger for Mercury Testing

By Rachel Jennings, Mercury Testing Volunteer

Recently, the Sierra Club launched a national campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of mercury and its presence in our everyday lives.

Most people don't realize how much mercury we consume, mainly through fish. Montanans, myself included, don't think we could have high levels of this toxic chemical in our fresh water lakes and streams. The facts are surprising. Fish caught in lakes around the state have dangerously high levels of mercury, which can cause serious health problems when consumed. Once ingested, mercury acts as a potent neurotoxin and can damage the brain and nervous system. The main source of mercury in the environment is emissions from coal-fired power plants, which operate across the state.

The Sierra Club undertook the mercury campaign to show how important emissions regulations for coal-fired power plants are. They comprise the largest domestic source of federally unregulated mercury emissions in the United States. We hope raising

### Protect Our Communities from Toxic Mercury!

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing long-overdue Clean Air Act standards to protect our nation's communities from the threats of toxic air pollution produced by power plants.

Power plants are the largest source of toxic air emissions in the United States, yet no national standards exist to protect communities from mercury, arsenic and other toxic air pollution from these sources.

Power plants emit some of the most hazardous air pollutants known to us. In addition to mercury and arsenic, power plants emit lead, other heavy metals, and dioxin and acid gases. Even in small amounts these extremely harmful air pollutants are linked to health problems such as cancer, heart disease, brain damage, birth defects, asthma attacks and even premature death. The greatest

awareness of the serious consequences for the lack of regulations will increase legislative action to stop these irresponsible polluters.

To demonstrate how mercury is present in our bodies at potentially dangerous levels, we provided free mercury testing to interested individuals. We worked with Boom Swagger Salon in Missoula where hair samples were taken and then sent to a lab at the University of Georgia. Test results took about a month to process. Our main demographic focus was younger women planning to become mothers or were currently pregnant. Mercury is particularly dangerous for them. Even if a woman does not suffer symptoms of high levels of mercury, this toxin can still cause serious birth defects and other complications in their unborn child.

We administered 36 tests. Most of our participants fit our target demographic. It was great to see young women come out to get tested as it showed how much they care about their own wellbeing and their

concern is exposure to women of childbearing ages, nursing mothers or children 6 and under. Without strong protections from the EPA, thousands of people will continue to suffer.

Montana already has a mercury problem, as evidenced by the many Montana waterbodies with fish too contaminated with mercury to be eaten safely. There are 49 waterbodies in Montana that have been determined by the Department of Environmental Quality to be "impaired and threatened waterbodies in need of water quality restoration" due to mercury contamination. These waterbodies, located in 20 different counties, comprise 418,837 lake acres and 1,235 river miles.

For more specific information on mercury levels in different types of fish in Montana, visit: <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/Food-consumer/pdf/>

family.

Talking to participants about mercury and how easily it enters the body was very rewarding. Through education and awareness, we can bolster support for stricter emissions regulations and immediate action against senseless pollution. The event was a big success locally and nationally.

Thank you to all who came out in support of our right to healthy lives and the important work of the Sierra Club.



Parents Advocating for Strict Regulations for Mercury and other Toxins

#### fish2005.pdf

The EPA needs to adopt the strongest air toxics protections possible and stand its ground against industry pressure to weaken the proposed standards. Urge the EPA to continue to defend public health and protect our communities and children from mercury and other toxic air pollution.

Send a comment online through our website: [www.sierraclub.org/mercury](http://www.sierraclub.org/mercury).

Or, send a handwritten letter to the following address:

**EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson**  
c/o Sierra Club  
408 C Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002-5818

**ATTN: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0234**

## Yellowstone Bison Get More Room to Roam

By Bonnie Rice

Last week, driving south down highway 89 to Yellowstone National Park, I was treated to a rare, and indeed historic sight: dozens of wild bison roaming free in the Gardiner Basin.

Winter is a hard time for bison in Yellowstone. Though these iconic creatures have evolved to withstand much of the harsh winter weather and deep snows for which Yellowstone National Park is well known, in some heavy snow years, such as this one, hundreds of bison attempt to migrate out of the Park, as they did historically, to lower elevations in search of food.

But for many years, bison trying to migrate and find sustenance to survive the winter have been hazed back into the Park, captured and corralled, or shot at the Park boundary. Why? Primarily because the state of Montana and some in the livestock industry fear a disease called brucellosis, which causes cattle to abort their young, will spread from wild bison to livestock. So, each year, bison are either hazed back into the Park when they attempt their historical migration to the west or north, or captured and corralled until spring, or shot. Yellowstone bison, the only remaining genetically-pure bison population, is the only wild species confined to the boundaries of a national park. There has never been a case of wild bison transmitting brucellosis to livestock. (In fact, research shows that bison very likely first contracted brucellosis from cattle). Indeed, many more elk carry brucellosis than bison – and migrate freely – but one doesn't see elk being killed at the Park boundary.

Last week, however, there was good news for bison that we hope ushers in a new era of tolerance for wild bison in Montana and growing awareness that they deserve to be treated like the wild and special creatures they are. For the first time, an historic agreement signed last week by federal and state agencies and Tribes allows bison to migrate out of the Park in the winter and spring. Under

the new agreement, bison will be able to migrate up to 13 miles north of the Park, over 75,000 acres in the Gardiner Basin. Because this lower-elevation habitat doesn't receive the heavy snow that the Park does, it provides critical winter forage for bison.

Each year, the sight of hundreds of wild bison on the high plateaus of Yellowstone National Park thrills millions of visitors. Wild bison are a key part of what makes Yellowstone a unique and wonderful place. With the exception of Yellowstone bison, the plains bison is considered ecologically extinct across North America. Conservation of the migratory and nomadic tendencies of Yellowstone bison, as well as their genetic integrity, is therefore absolutely crucial for the long term well-being of the species.

Sierra Club believes that bison should



Bison Grazing Peacefully in Yellowstone National Park  
Photo Credit: Michael Jarnevic

be managed like other wild species, not like livestock. Wild bison – or any other species – should not be confined to the boundaries of a national park. Earlier this year, Sierra Club joined a citizens advisory group to help find solutions to what has been, for a long time, an intractable problem and national disgrace. It's been a long time coming, and there's a lot more to do to build increased public tolerance for the bison in the areas surrounding Yellowstone National Park. However, today we have something to celebrate.

As I was coming home from the Park, I reflected on the single bison I snowshoed past in the Lamar Valley earlier that day and felt hope knowing that, next winter, that bison would be able to leave the Park to find what it needed to sustain itself through the winter, and come back – when it chose to – to spring in Yellowstone.

# MT Chapter-Sierra Club Files Lawsuit and Seeks Full Environmental Review of Mega-Load Project

By John Wolverton, Dirty Fuels Campaign Volunteer

On April 1, the Montana Chapter along with the Montana Environmental Education Center, National Wildlife Federation and Missoula County filed a lawsuit in Montana District Court to protect Montana's citizens, eco-systems and recreation economy from the eminently harmful impacts of Imperial Oil - Exxon/Mobil's proposed industrial corridor mega-load transport project.

In February, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) erroneously concluded there would be no environmental or economically significant impacts from a project that seeks to drive over 200 mega-sized oil refining equipment loads across Montana's highways to the tar sands in Alberta, Canada.

The tar sands mining and oil corporations' exploitation of northern Alberta has been expanding at a break-neck pace, ramping up to become the

most destructive industrial activity on the face of our planet. Impacts from tar sands oil production runs a broad gamut from strip mining of virgin boreal forests, risky pipeline projects, rare human cancers and poisoned waterfowl, on to greenhouse gas emissions 3 to 4 times that of conventional crude oil production.

We are asking for MDT to conduct a full environmental impact statement on Imperial Oil's Kearsarge Module Transport Project through Montana. We are further asserting that this transport project should be evaluated regarding its intended facilitation of carbon intensive tar sands mining and consequent heavy-crude oil production which contributes profoundly to the impacts of climate change in Montana and worldwide.

The Montana Chapter strongly believes that facilitating more dirty fuels production and co2 emissions on the backs of Montana citizens, waterways,

wild-lands and recreation areas is absolutely the wrong way we should be headed to fulfill our energy needs.

As this issue of the *Montana Sierran* goes to press, we are awaiting the court's decision on a preliminary injunction. The injunction would stop permitting and construction activities related to the project until the court can undertake a full consideration of the case.

Please see the back cover for how you can support our fight against the Exxon/Mobil mega-loads and against tar sands mining through a financial contribution. Your support continues to be a critical factor in our endeavors to halt one of the worst environmental disasters on earth.

## June 18--Take Action Against Canada's Tar Sands

Across North America, activists will take creative action on June 18 to stop the expansion of Canada's Tar Sands. Get involved! Contact Adam Gaya at [Adam@Forestethics.org](mailto:Adam@Forestethics.org) or 360-734-2951, ext . 206.

Canada's dirty Tar Sands destroy forests, poison our atmosphere and threaten community health. Meanwhile, U.S. corporations ship their products via transportation fueled by this destruction. On June 18, ForestEthics will join people around the world on the largest day of action ever against Canada's Tar Sands. We'll show global companies that supporting Canada's Tar Sands is as toxic to their brands as the black sludge is to Earth.

Whether its forest destruction of areas that ultimately could equal the size of Scotland, toxic lakes that can be seen from space or the poisoning of Canadian and US communities living near Tar Sands operations, turning Tar Sands into transportation fuel hurts our environment and communities. The Tar Sands have been called one of the most destructive projects on Earth. By the end of this decade, the Tar Sands will triple their production. Read more about the Tar Sands devastating impacts at: <http://forestethics.org/tar-sands-the-facts>.

American companies are literally driving the expansion of the Tar Sands by shipping their products with fuels from refineries processing Canada's Tar Sands. On June 18, we'll target prominent American companies that refuse to remove Canada's Tar Sands from their transportation footprints. We'll send a message to these companies and decision makers that no company should have Tar Sands in its transportation or products. Join us on June 18.



Imagine If This Happened around the Globe Against the Tar Sands

## Big RiG Haul

By Rita Jankowska-Bradley

*Dedicated to the wild & scenic rivers in the path & those citizens working against the shipments. (My apologies to Jimmy Dean....)*

**BIG RIGS** haul 'em thru don't care 'bout the view superloads monopolize the road forget about the endangered toad

Haul 'em along scenic rivers trucks so BIG road bed quivers NO accidents predicted 'cause we're oil addicted

♪Big RIGS ♪Big BAAAD RRRIGS

Contingency plans are for wimps or so say the company pimps Citizens can't make claim

We're Exxon-----erated from blame Scenic rivers out of luck when we lose a giant truck

no need to make settlement we corporations got entitlement

♪Big RIGS ♪Big BAAAD RRRIGS

**BIG RIGS** haul 'em thru no need for EIS review don't worry 'bout climate wreck Imperial has ultimate check

Department of transportation must ignore citizens who have the floor Oil companies just too big to fail so officials told DO noT derail even if degrades Lewis & Clark Meriwether Trail!

Governor and other officials have signed their initials on the D.O.T.'s so citizens back down corporations own the town

Imperial Exxon-----erated before the fact so citizens be prepared to act

before the disastrous roadside spill you'd better start the disobedience drill.

♪Big RIGS ♪Big BAAAD RRRIGS ♪

NOTE: *Permission will be given to use for appropriate public and planetary good, with credit to poet. Please make request prior to use.*

Rita Jankowska-Bradley, social/economic justice/peace activist and poet, lives in Missoula, MT. She often performs her poetry as protest.

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