

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



SEE THE RIPPLES WE MAKE



OUR MISSION



M.C.E. WORKS TO
EMPOWER FUTURE GENERATIONS
OF VIGOROUS, PASSIONATE & EFFECTIVE
✧ CONSERVATION LEADERS ✧

THROUGH
EDUCATION,
STORYTELLING
& MENTORSHIP.



WHO WE ARE...

WE ARE A COLLECTIVE OF
MONTANA ELDERS
WHO HAVE SPENT OUR LIVES DEFENDING WILD PLACES.

WE ARE OF THE LAND & ON THE LAND.
WE ARE RECREATORS, ADVENTURERS & NATURALISTS,
WRITERS, TEACHERS, RANGERS & PACKERS,
PARTNERS, NEIGHBORS & FRIENDS.

WE COLLABORATE WITH
FEDERAL & STATE LAND MANAGERS,
NONPROFITS, EDUCATORS & SCHOOLS TO
FACILITATE & FUND
OUTDOOR CAMPS
FOR KIDS OF ALL FINANCIAL MEANS.

WE RAISE OUR VOICES TO
EDUCATE, INFORM & GUIDE
MONTANANS (OF ALL AGES) ON CONSERVATION
& PUBLIC LANDS ISSUES.

& HOW WE DO IT

MONTANA MATTERS YOUTH OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE



WAS FOUNDED IN THE
BITTERROOT VALLEY IN 2013
& THE BEGINNINGS OF M.C.E.
TOOK ROOT.

TODAY, THE CORE WORK OF THIS
BRANCH OF M.C.E. IS IN THE
ANNUAL YOUTH EXPO
& OUTDOOR CAMPS.

MEET OUR ★ OUTREACH ★ PROGRAMS

M O N T A N A C O N S E R V A T I O N N E X T G E N

WAS FOUNDED IN
JANUARY OF 2024
AS A BARN FULL OF FRIENDS,
YOUNG ADULTS & ELDERS ALIKE,
DISCUSSED HOW TO BEST
RECRUIT, EDUCATE & SUPPORT
YOUNG ADULTS TO BECOME
CONSERVATION LEADERS.



THIS YEAR WE...

FUNDED
\$54,517
IN CAMP
SCHOLARSHIPS!

HOSTED
THREE
CAMPS OF
OUR OWN!

SENT
225 KIDS
TO OUTDOOR CAMPS
FOR FREE!

SINCE
2018

SCRIPPS

WILDERNESS
BACKPACKING
SKILLS



MAGRUDER

HORSE PACKING,
FLY FISHING,
ARCHERY



SINCE
2016

NEW
THIS
YEAR



RUBY RIVER

FLY FISHING
WITH PRO GUIDES!

CAMPS WE SUPPORT

JACK CREEK PRESERVE

AGES 11-17

BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF MONTANA

AGES 11-24



THEODORE ROOSEVELT RANCH

AGES 11-17

RAISED AT FULL DRAW

AGES 11-17

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS
FOR PARTNER CAMPS
PAID FOR BY M.C.E.

\$35,100

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS
FOR OUR OWN CAMPS
PAID FOR BY M.C.E.

\$19,417

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP

\$54,517

FUNDS COVERED

We love getting thank you cards!

Dear Montana Conservation Elders,
Thank you so much for the opportunity to go to Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp! I had such a wonderful time and was able to learn so many amazing things about how ecosystems function. This camp was amazing and I am so thankful and appreciative that you helped me get there. Thank you so much!!!
Sincerely,

I am writing to show my appreciation to all the volunteers that helped put on the magnum camp. First I want to thank Tom Powers for all the checkins at camp and directing it. Next I want to thank Fred and Mark for all the fly fishing information. I loved the food and all the presentations. Highlights I took away from camp are the experience of watching the chinook salmon swim past my leg. My last thanks are to Bob thank you for helping with the presentations and Shane for helping with fly fishing also. This was a great opportunity and experience that has positively impacted me and I look forward to returning next year.

GET TO KNOW US

LOU BRUNO, RETIRED TEACHER, NATURALIST GUIDE, ACTIVIST. FOUNDER OF *GLACIER-TWO MEDICINE ALLIANCE*. EAST GLACIER PARK & MISSOULA, MT.

TAMMY ELSER, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, TRAINING CURRENT AND FUTURE TEACHERS AT SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE. PABLO, MONTANA.

AL LUEBECK, RETIRED TEACHER, FOUNDER OF BEAVERHEAD FOREST CONCERNED CITIZENS, HUNTER, BIRDER. BUTTE, MT.

JOAN MONTAGNE, ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER WITH *MADISON GALLATIN ALLIANCE*, *MT WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION*, *GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION*. BOZEMAN, MT.

MIKE PENFOLD, RETIRED FOREST SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT RANGER, BLM STATE DIRECTOR. PRESIDENT OF *OUR MONTANA*. BILLINGS, MT.

JOE PERRY, RETIRED FARMER, LANDOWNER, FOUNDING MEMBER OF *MONTANA SPORTSMEN ALLIANCE*, LIFETIME CONSERVATIONIST, BIOLOGIST. CONRAD, MONTANA

GREG SCHATZ, STOCK PACKER, RETIRED HOME BUILDER, BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN, MENTOR, PROTCTOR OF WILD COUNTRY. AUGUSTA & COLUMBIA FALLS, MT.

GENE SENTZ, RETIRED WILDERNESS RANGER, PACKER, GUIDE, TEACHER, FATHER. CHOTEAU, MT.

MEET OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Wayne Chamberlin, MCE President.

"I am feeling fortunate to have lived in Montana for nearly five decades. I've always loved the outdoors and want to do my part to maintain protection of our public lands. Over the years, I have been active in several conservation groups as a volunteer, member and with board membership.

I'd like to leave a legacy of respect and love for Montana's wild places. I believe it is a duty to consider those generations following us."



Bill Cunningham, MCE Vice President.

"Wilderness has always been a common denominator for me, from when I roamed Montana's Bitterroot Mountains as a boy to my professional career to my present status as one of Montana's "Wilderness Statesmen". I have represented Montana for The Wilderness Society, worked as the first full time employee of the Montana Wilderness Association (now Wild Montana), taught wilderness field courses for the University of Montana and oversaw the Wilderness and Civilization Program at UM's Wilderness Institute. I operated a Wilderness backpacking guide service throughout Montana for 40 years and I have authored numerous magazine articles and books about Wilderness and roadless areas in Montana including "Montana Wildlands" and "Wild Montana".

I especially enjoy sharing wilderness stories and adventures with young people, the Next Generation."

Arnold "Smoke" Elser, MCE Founder.

"I formed my love of nature in my youth as a very active Eagle Scout. Moving from Ohio as a young man, I worked for the Forest Service, graduated from U of M and started my own outfitting business. I wanted my guests to feel the "hush of the land", to learn about the flora and fauna, the geology and the history of the area they were riding through. I practiced "light on the land" techniques and went on to teach packing, horsemanship and wilderness ethics to thousands of people over 50 years, teaching winter classes in my home barn as well as contracting with Nine Mile Remount Station, USFS.



Although retired as an outfitter, at the age of 91 I am still teaching and advocating for wilderness use and understanding with the young people, the Next Generation."

Tom Pedersen, MCE Secretary.

"I have lived in Helena, MT for the past 48 years. I am a retired Biology teacher and Track and Field coach at Capital High School. I have used nature as a classroom in my Honors AP Biology II and science seminar classes with field research in forestry and water quality, leading excursions into Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. I worked with the USFS as a water quality crew leader (YFMP) and field instructor with the Forest For Every Classroom initiative for teachers. I've served on several boards that encourage people, especially kids, to get outside and enjoy our beautiful public lands and become a voice for nature.

This is my passion, and I encourage others to advocate for wild things in wild places... to be a strong voice for a healthy environment and diverse planet."

Tom Powers, MCE Treasurer.

"I live in the Bitterroot Valley of Western Montana with my wife, Karen. I am most proud of my involvement in conservation organizations dating back to the 70s, some of that time in key leadership roles. In the last twenty years I have been awarded for my service by MT Wildlife Federation, Foundation for North American Sheep, Wild Sheep Foundation, Missoula Conservation Round Table, and the Stevensville Civic Club.

**I am most proud of the work that we have all done to promote the next generation of conservationists.
This is now my (our) main focus."**



**HAPPY
TRAILS**

& SEE YOU NEXT SEASON!