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**Board of Directors**  
**Date October 23, 2024**  
**Zoom Meeting, 7:30pm**

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**MONTANA QUARTER HORSE ASSOCIATION**

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Board members present: Tyrell Burklund, Michele Shaw, Josh Shengle, Britt Kissock-Robinson, Michele McGuigan, Cathy Dekker

National Directors: Ruth McDonald-Gates, Marilyn Randall

Meeting replaces the October 16, 2024 postponed meeting. Meeting called to order by President Tyrell Burklund. Britt made a motion to approve the September 18, 2024 minutes. Cathy seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finance: Laura distributed electronic copies of the financial report. Cathy made a motion to approve the financials as distributed. Second to the motion by Michele S. Motion carried.

**Old Business:** Laura reported the newly purchase MQHA Backdrop was utilized at the Metra during the Nile. Tyrell will submit receipts for the decorations at the Metra booth.

**Committee Reports:**

**Show Committee: Big Sky Classic:** Tyrell reported the dates for the show are June 6-8, 2025. Laura reported the judges: John Briggs, Sharon Wellman and Cindy Chilton-Moore for the 2025 Big Sky Classic have been sent contracts. As of this writing, all have verbally committed to the Show with one returning her contract. Laura also reported some of the scribes are not available. Will Lyons will be searching for help from the Billings area. Laura reported the Show Committee met and one of the continuing issues utilizing the Cottonwood venue is lack of communication at the barns. Suggested to talk to Mark about outside speakers or MQHA possibly purchasing a Bluetooth system to alleviate this issue. Tabled for Convention. Discussion about volunteers. Laura and Josh will be talking to surrounding counties FFA Judging teams for additional help. Marketing was also discussed and will be brought to the Convention meeting.

**Nile Committee:** Marilyn reported Nile VRH was the largest in history. Adding an additional day was a benefit. Laura reported there were 8 new members, 6 renewals and 1 lifetime member were done at the Show. The booth at the Metra was a success, with the skooter raffle tickets was not as successful due to the price being higher than the Nile raffle filly tickets. Possibly having any future raffles be comparable. Contestants at the VRH Show from Idaho, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado as well as Montana. MQHA cash payout to contestants from sponsorships was \$6,000. Kimes provided bags for the first place winners of the VRH classes and were well received. Hi-point award winners were reported timely and allowed winners recognition. More participation for help at both booths is needed and considered for the future show and Metra location. Britt has provided a constructive write-up for suggestions for the 2025 VRH Show and Metra booth. Discussion at the Convention round-table meeting to continue this issue. Marilyn and Laura reported entries were up from 2023, estimated 625 entries during some point during the VRH Show, reportedly some of the classes had tripled in size.

**Marketing/Membership Services:** Laura reported there are currently 115 new or renewal members, 36 Lifetime members, 17 MQHYA members, 2 new from the VRH Show. Laura would like the Board to consider photographs for the 2025 Directory and 2025 Membership Card. Discussion utilizing Steve Devenyns artwork. Tabled for General Membership meeting. Laura submitted a proposal to the Board for the Directory. Current advertisers having a 2 for 1 ad, with a 10% discount for new advertisers with their paid ad. If a current advertiser brings a new advertiser, that advertiser would get an additional 10% off their ad. Laura reminded the Board that a portion of the AQHA Affiliate Funding fees were to be allocated to the Directory. Britt brought forward adding additional organizations getting their results in the 2025 Directory. Britt made a motion to accept the Directory proposal brought forward by Laura. Second to the motion by Cathy. Motion carried.

**Amateur:** Cathy reported she would like a survey sent to the MQHA Amateurs concerning possible participation for a clinic for 2025. Cathy will forward the survey onto Laura for distribution to the Amateurs via email. Discussion regarding moving the Sparks Some Fun back to Billings. Cathy has contacted the Metra regarding utilizing their venue for the Show.

**Youth:** Michele S. reported the Youth were asked to donate for the Region 2 auction and Michele S. re-gifted the St. Ignatius tower to the auction. MQHYA gained two new members at the Nile VRH Show. Michele also reported about the MQHYA CD which was reinvested short term until Convention Youth meeting. Next MQHYA meeting will be at Convention Laura reported the 9 month CD interest was \$668.49. Laura will bring the CD paperwork to Convention. Laura also reported the Region 2 Show Consignment allocated \$305 to MQHYA.

**Breeders/Ranching:** No report.

**By-Laws:** No report.

**Legislative:** Britt reported she has sent an email to Laura with a full Legislative report which will be an addendum to these minutes. Laura will forward onto the Board. Briefly, Britt reported she did not find any new AQHA rule changes, random items going on in the State.

**Recreational Riding:** No report.

**Awards/Points:** Michele M. reported she and Laura will finalize the points that have been submitted from the Audit Committee in order to get the awards ordered for presentation at Convention. Laura reported there was \$1,303 with an additional \$417 for VRH Open awards available for the Open awards, Nile \$1/entry still had not been reported or received. The VRH funds have been allocated to Open, Amateur and Youth. Laura reported Cindy Coe contacted Laura regarding her points. The WMQHA May Show points indicated Cindy rode in AQHA Amateur Ranch Riding and not the VRH Amateur Ranch Riding, which were run concurrently, possibly Cindy being placed in an incorrect class. Laura requested both the judge's cards as well as scoresheets from WMQHA. Laura told Cindy this is an AQHA and WMQHA issue. Discussion regarding how MQHA could assist with this issue; Michele S. asked about Cindy's receipt from the Show. Cindy indicated she does not have her receipt but does have her entry for that show stating she did entry the VRH Amateur Ranch Riding Class. The Board suggested Laura contact AQHA to find out how to rectify this situation. Follow-up: October 25, 2024 Laura talked with Joshua at the AQHA Show Department. He stated all judges need to re-record their cards and scoresheets scratching Cindy out of the AQHA Amateur Ranch Riding class and re-entering her in the VRH Amateur Ranch Riding class. After reviewing all the documents, Laura

called Cindy and reported to her that, according to her WMQHA entry, she did in fact enter the AQHA Amateur Ranch Riding Class and not the VRH Amateur Ranch Riding class. Situation was resolved.

**Region 2:** No report.

**2024 Convention:** Tyrell reported he is working on getting Auction items; a quilt and talking to Neptune Aviation for a flight over the Mission Valley. Discussion about the schedule; adding a Member Appreciation Friday evening and a Round-Table discussion before the General Membership meeting. Discussion regarding wine on the tables. Laura will contact Cindee to get a decision about this. Laura also asked that the block of rooms be moved to later in the month of November. Laura also reported the Convention packets have been mailed out to the General Membership later in the week. Michele S. would like to see the Youth meeting moved to later in the day. Laura will contact the Youth members and let them know the meeting will be at Noon on Saturday instead of the 8:00am.

**Hall of Fame:** No report.

**New Business:** No new business.

**Correspondence:** Laura has thank you cards were received from the MT State 4-H Horse Show recipients.

All agenda items have been satisfied. Britt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second to the motion by Cathy. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Bakker  
2024 Secretary/Treasurer

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**Next meeting – December 6, 2024 Convention, MQHA Suite  
6:00pm; Best Western Great Northern, Helena, MT**

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## **Legislative Addendum:**

### **STATEWIDE BALLOT MEASURES**

**September 16:** As of September 16, three statewide ballot measures were certified to appear on the ballot in Montana on November 5, 2024:

- **CI-126 The Montana Top-Four Primary Initiative:** This ranked choice voting would amend the Montana Constitution to create a top-four primary system for elections for governor, lieutenant governor, state executives, state legislators, and congressional offices, in which all candidates would run in one primary and the top-four vote getters would advance to the general election regardless of party.  
[https://ballotpedia.org/Montana\\_CI-126\\_Top-Four\\_Primary\\_Initiative\\_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Montana_CI-126_Top-Four_Primary_Initiative_(2024))
- **CI-127 Majority Vote Required to Win Elections:** This initiative would amend the Montana Constitution to require that a candidate for governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, state legislature, and congressional offices must win a majority of the vote (rather than a plurality) to win the election as provided by law. The state legislature would need to pass a law providing for an electoral system with majority vote winners. Examples of majority-vote systems include runoff elections and ranked-choice voting. Currently, state offices in Montana are elected in a plurality system, where the candidate with the most votes wins, even if

the candidate did not receive a majority of the vote.

[https://ballotpedia.org/Montana\\_CI-127, Majority Vote Required to Win Elections Initiative \(2024\)#Text of measure](https://ballotpedia.org/Montana_CI-127,_Majority_Vote_Required_to_Win_Elections_Initiative_(2024)#Text_of_measure)

- **CI-128 Right to Abortion:** This initiative would amend the Montana Constitution to provide an explicit state constitutional "right to make and carry out decisions about one's own pregnancy, including the right to abortion," and allow the state to regulate abortion after fetal viability, except when "medically indicated to protect the life or health of the pregnant patient." Currently, the Montana Supreme Court has held that the state constitution's right to privacy includes a right to abortion until fetal viability.

[https://ballotpedia.org/Montana\\_CI-128, Right to Abortion Initiative \(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Montana_CI-128,_Right_to_Abortion_Initiative_(2024))

- **Supporters:** Sen. Jon Tester (D), Candidate Ryan Busse (D), ACLU of Montana, Forward Montana, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana, the Fairness Project, Think Big America.
- **Opposition:** Gov. Greg Gianforte (R), Candidate Tim Sheehy (R), Montana Family Foundation.

### **FROM GOVERNOR GIANFORTE'S OFFICE**

**October 9:** In the letter to USFS Chief Randy Moore, Governor Gianforte criticized the Forest Service for not honoring longstanding cost share agreements, a lack of transparency, and for not aggressively attacking fires under its jurisdiction. The governor also raised concerns about the leadership and effectiveness of Regional Forester Leanne Marten. Specifically, he pointed to instances where Marten framed fire monitoring as full suppression. <https://governor.mt.gov/24.10.09-Ltr-to-Chief-Moore-USFS.pdf>

### **ST MARY SIPHON FAILURE ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO FARMERS/RANCHERS**

**October 10:** The Diversion and Conveyance Works, which was completed in 1915, had a catastrophic failure of a concrete drop structure in 2021. That was repaired by late summer and the system reopened. The failure of two siphons in June, again shut the system down. Work has begun on the repairs of the siphons, which is expected to take into next summer to complete.

Some help is available for farmers and ranchers in Blaine, Glacier, Hill, Phillips, and Valley counties including the Blackfeet Nation and the Fort Belknap Indian Community directly impacted by the St. Mary Canal siphon failure. They should visit their local NRCS office now to apply. The final application batching date for the initiative will be Feb. 28, 2025.

<https://www.havredailynews.com/story/2024/10/10/local/initiative-provides-assistance-to-farmers-and-ranchers-directly-impacted-by-the-st-mary-siphon-failure/546744.html>

### **RANCHERS UNITE AS THE ELK FIRE THREATENS MONTANA-WYOMING LIVESTOCK**

**October 11:** A fire along the Montana-Wyoming state line is prompting firefighting and community efforts to protect local livestock, as flames threaten grazing areas. Fire crews continue efforts to contain the blaze, while ranchers and community members are actively moving cattle to safety. While the situation is concerning, the response highlights Montana and Wyoming's strong community spirit and willingness to support one another. For those with information about available fields or the ability to assist in protecting livestock, reaching out to local contacts is encouraged.

[https://www.kulr8.com/montana/ranchers-unite-as-the-elk-fire-threatens-montana-wyoming-livestock/article\\_81ae1e02-87d7-11ef-9768-cb9e7314fdf5.html](https://www.kulr8.com/montana/ranchers-unite-as-the-elk-fire-threatens-montana-wyoming-livestock/article_81ae1e02-87d7-11ef-9768-cb9e7314fdf5.html)

### **MONTANA LAND BOARD TO VOTE ON LARGE CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

**October 17:** The Land Board will either confirm or deny the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks proposal to purchase **the first phase of the Montana Great Outdoors Conservation Easement project** — 32,981 acres — from Green Diamond Resource Company. The first phase is in the Salish and Cabinet mountains between Kalispell and Libby. The second phase, which project organizers hope to see secured next year, would bring the total for the easement to 85,792 acres. The easement would preclude development in perpetuity, maintain timber industry production, protect habitat and connectivity and provide permanent free public recreation access. Chunks of the easement are located in Lincoln, Flathead and Sanders counties. Green Diamond would still retain ownership of the parcel once the conservation easement is complete. The land would remain available for forest management,

as the goal of the easement is to preserve working timber lands. The property currently produces approximately 2 million board feet per year; the goal is to increase that to 9 million by 2064.

<https://cdapress.com/news/2024/oct/17/montana-land-board-to-vote-on-large-conservation-easement-west-of-kalispell/>

### **GRIZZLIES IN MONTANA**

**October 18:** The grizzly population in the Lower 48 has been federally protected since they were listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1975. But that could soon change as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said it will release a decision on whether the species should be delisted in January 2025. Since the 70s, grizzly bear populations have largely trended upward in both the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide ecosystems, two of six recovery zones identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The NCDE recovery zone now has the highest grizzly population in the Lower 48, with recent estimates of roughly 1,110 bears; the GYE recovery zone has roughly 965 bears.

<https://www.outdoorlife.com/conservation/new-montana-grizzly-bear-management-plan/>

### **MONTANA MAN SENTENCED FOR CLONING GIANT HYBRID SHEEP**

**October 20:** Arthur "Jack" Schubarth of Vaughn, Montana, and owner of Sun River Enterprises LLC, was sentenced to six months in federal prison for illegally using tissue and testicles from large sheep hunted in Central Asia and the U.S. to create hybrid sheep for captive trophy hunting in Texas and Minnesota. The animal is being held in an accredited facility until it can be transferred to a zoo.

[https://www.coloradopolitics.com/news/montana-man-gets-6-months-in-prison-for-cloning-giant-sheep-breeding-it-out-west/article\\_634b1d72-8a64-11ef-8cc4-9722bcafd73b.html](https://www.coloradopolitics.com/news/montana-man-gets-6-months-in-prison-for-cloning-giant-sheep-breeding-it-out-west/article_634b1d72-8a64-11ef-8cc4-9722bcafd73b.html)

### **WATER COURT TO ASSESS LOWER CLARK FORK RIVER WATER RIGHTS**

**October 22:** About a week ago, water rights owners in Basin 76M, the lower Clark Fork between the Blackfoot and Flathead rivers, received notification of the decree. Those who received a notification with an abstract attached are directly affected by the decree. An abstract contains issue remarks from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation highlighting any problems related to water rights created before July 1, 1973. The issuance of the decree started a 180-day objection period when water rights owners can file an objection to clear up their own water rights or object to others.

Prior to 1973, landowners claimed water all over the state for at least 100 years, and disputes among small groups of water rights owners were settled separately in various district courts. The 1972 Montana Constitution mandated a uniform water-use system, so the water rights filed after 1973 were recorded with the DNRC; they don't have to be proved, and adjudication isn't necessary. The adjudication has taken 45 years so far, and Judge Brown said it would take at least 10 more years, partly because some basins have to be re-evaluated.

<https://www.kpax.com/news/western-montana-news/water-court-to-assess-lower-clark-fork-river-water-rights>

### **GALLATIN, SILVER BOW COUNTY RESIDENTS SUE MT DOR OVER PROPERTY TAXES**

**October 23:** Residents from Silver Bow and Gallatin counties are asking a state district court judge to force the Montana Department of Revenue to recalculate residential property taxes in the Treasure State because the DOR has violated the law and the state Constitution by allowing taxes for homeowners to skyrocket while most business classes saw a reduction. The lawsuit claims that the Department of Revenue had an obligation to equalize the rates to make property taxes more equitable. The attorneys also argue that the taxable residential rate, by the MTDOR's own calculations, should have been adjusted downward from 1.35% to 0.94%. The lawsuit is also seeking a class-action certification on the lawsuit, as well as asking the district court judge to halt anymore residential property tax collection until they say the rates can be equalized.

[https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/greg-gianforte-montana-governor-property-gtaxes/article\\_c07c6312-915c-11ef-b87b-3b45caf3d5d6.html](https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/greg-gianforte-montana-governor-property-gtaxes/article_c07c6312-915c-11ef-b87b-3b45caf3d5d6.html)