

A photograph of a raccoon caught in a wire trap. The raccoon is positioned in the center-right of the frame, looking directly at the camera. Its body is pressed against the wire mesh. To the left, another raccoon is partially visible, also in the trap. The background consists of a dense thicket of dry, brown branches and some green leaves. The ground is covered with dry grass and twigs.

MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS

SPRING 2025

**RACCOONS
OF WESTERN
MONTANA**

SPRING RENDEZVOUS RESULTS

Contents:

Page 2

Presidents Message	Tom Fieber	Page 3
Calander of Events	Tom Fieber	Page 3
News from Idaho	Rusty Kramer	Page 4
Raccoons in Montana	Tom Fieber	Page 5
Rendezvous By Scott D Smith		Page 6
Montana Fur Harvesters Spring Rendezvous		Page 7
Through		Page 13
Montana Fur Harvesters Spring Rendezvous		Page 14
Tribute to others	Charter Members	Page 15
Back Page		Page 16

Advertisers:

Idaho Trappers Association
Montana Power Products

Page 4
Page 16

Montana Fur Harvesters

2025 SPRING Magazine

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Montana Fur Harvesters PO Box 3481
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Cover Photo; Raccoon numbers seem to keep growing in Western Montana.

Below; Check out page 7



Walleye fishing, good eating and scrapes for trapping bait.

Notes from the president.

My apologies for not getting this out sooner.

I am still behind on just about everything. I keep thinking that I will catch up once I get the next project done, it just doesn't work that way. We just completed our Mountain Men Spring Rendezvous. That will give me a chance to see a little more daylight.

Our **Website**, the "*Montanafurharvesters.com*/" is up and running. Now people can join our membership, shop for furs, learn more about trapping, keep updated on events, request our furbearer show or download past MFH magazines. The site has been working well, I am hoping that you might have some suggestions on improving it. Here is a link to the [Website](https://montanafurharvesters.com/).
<https://montanafurharvesters.com/> Stop in and look around. We are always looking for articles and photos for the site and future magazines. A hardy welcome to our new members that have signed up on the website.

Our Spring **Trapper Ed Field Day** Classes in Kalispell and Missoula went really well last month. We were just right on instructors in Missoula and found out that we could still produce a good class for the 50 students. We normally like to have 2 instructors for each of the three stations. Kalispell's class was smaller and we had a couple of new instructors that assisted for the first time. We are lucky that we have such a dedicated and experienced group here in Western Montana to offer these classes. We are always looking for new instructors so if interested contact me or FWP, love to have the help.

Grizzly bear recovery in Montana has reached a level that needs addressing. We are seeing what people are doing to twist reality around facts to restrict outdoor uses. Taking lawsuits to sympathetic Judges to get rulings in favor of their views, despite science will cost dearly. Now we are faced with the wolverine listing. Montana is still working on this.

Calendar of Events

See the calendar of events that we will be facing soon. If you ever start getting bored, I am sure you will find something that you could take part in.

Watch your emails for up-and-coming events that I will be sending out. Advanced Skills programs this summer that need to be scheduled.

Upcoming events; We are working on getting into the Columbia Falls Community Market this summer. They are held each Thursday from 5pm to 8pm. We did attend the market in 2024 and had good results. Sold lots of raffle tickets and furs. People from around the world and out of state stopped by the booth. We agreed we need to return a few more times this summer.

August???? NW Montana Fair & Rodeo in Kalispell

Wolf management on **private lands in Montana** is vitally important. We as sportsmen need to do everything, we can do to foster good relations with landowners.

A hearty thanks to all that stepped up and donated the time to put on the **Spring Rendezvous**. This was an amazing feat for all involved. I am so blessed and proud of everyone that helped put the event on. Without all of you this would've been impossible. From set up to tear down my appreciation cannot be said enough, all of you worked so hard. The banquet was amazing, and Dan Yoder, the auctioneer, saved our bacon. My mind is still trying to process all of this.



Tom Fieber 🐾

Protecting, Preserving and Promoting Trapping

IDAHO TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION



continue to keep moving the location of our events to represent the ITA members in this giant state of ours.

Our Fishers for Tomorrow project will be kicking off in a few short weeks. We are looking for large sponsors from groups or corporations. Individuals that are looking to help can send \$50 and get a limited-edition patch and listing in the magazine. This program will be a groundbreaking opportunity for ITA to work with IDFG on a reintroduction program. What



better PR than trappers helping the department work on reestablishing a population of furbearers. You always read about trappers wanting to kill everything and this will be a opportunity to show trappers do care about the wildlife.

Mark your calendars! The 2025 kids camp will be in Fairfield on Aug 8th and 9th. We still have some spots open for kids and are looking for more sponsors. The 2025 NTF/ITA banquet will be held at the Fort Hall Casino in Fort Hall Idaho on Sep 6th. For more information on both of these events, please contact Missy Kramer at 775-401-0717. .

Thank you

Rusty Kramer

Idaho Trappers Association President

For those that don't know, Rusty Kramer of the Idaho Trappers Association, will be taking over as National Trappers Association President. Rusty has taken our trapping community nationwide to a whole new level. I wish him all the luck in the world and plan on supporting him all the way. Tom Fieber

Greetings from Idaho.

Greetings from Idaho,

As I type this it is getting into convention season. Next weekend will be our first stop for the "Fur Across America Tour" at Elko Nevada at the NTA Western convention. This is the brainchild of our VP Ron Martell. Ron has collected full body mounts of every species of furbearer in Idaho and will have them on display at 4 conventions. He will be dragging this trailer of mounts to Elko, Nevada then Salmon Idaho then Harrisburg Virginia for the National and then finally to Spencer Iowa for the Fur Takers of America convention. Ron has a goal of getting 50 new members from this display and I hope he makes his goal. If nothing else, folks will know the ITA booth and Idaho Trappers Association will be recognized nationwide. Last year we received the award for best booth at the NTA national convention in South Dakota.

Speaking of Salmon convention I am hoping for a record setting convention. We have done a ton of advertising and with our local celebrities at the show we are hoping for a ton of people and get new members and make some income. Next year's convention location is up in the air so please let me know if you have a good location. We like to

Raccoons in Montana

By Tom Fieber

FWP says,

“Raccoons, the ring-tailed, masked bandits of the night, are found across Montana. Raccoons can be interesting and compatible neighbors, unless food sources associated with a home or agricultural operation bring them into conflict with people. By limiting access to your home and garden, the damage caused by raccoons can usually be avoided.

Raccoons are intelligent, inquisitive, and excellent climbers and will adapt and take advantage of their surroundings. They will seek out the easiest meal, which could be your garden or pet's food dish. Raccoons eat fish, insects, small mammals, fruit, berries, and corn. They will also eat eggs and birds.

Raccoons are most active at night. You may not see them, but you can identify raccoon activity by their distinctive footprint. The track may be identified in damp ground in the garden. On hard or dry surfaces, sprinkle some flour over the area to verify the footprint.

NOTE: *Raccoons are not pets! It is illegal to possess a raccoon. They can carry rabies and other diseases that are harmful to humans and pets.”*

In search of warmth and shelter, they can cause damage to your home as they dig and scratch their way in. If they get comfortable, they'll transfer their litter to your property. Having raccoons around your house can be problematic. Raccoons can carry diseases like rabies and other parasites, and they can cause significant damage to your property by entering attics, damaging insulation, and chewing on wiring. Additionally, they can be destructive to yards and gardens and may attack pets if they feel threatened. bites. Their feces can contain diseases, which can spread to pets and humans.

- **Rabies:** Raccoons are known carriers of rabies, a potentially fatal disease in humans and animals.
- **Raccoon Roundworm:** Raccoons can carry and transmit this intestinal parasite to humans.
- **Other Diseases:** Raccoons can carry other diseases, like Salmonella and leptospirosis, as well as parasites like fleas, ticks, and mites, which can be transmitted to humans and pets.

Feeding them can lead to problems. Remember, they are cute but a bite by one may lead to a very painful series of rabies shots.

Few animals are cuter than raccoons. Are there reasons to avoid them?

As show,, unplanned consequences can happen.

Feeding wild animals can develop into a nightmare. Beside being illegal, this can happen quickly. Usually this leads to wildlife services being called in at the person's expense or Fish Wildlife & Parks with citations.



People feel good that they are feeding them and think of them as pets. When it gets to this all their pets will need to be destroyed. This is a common problem for both the people feeding them and the raccoons that end up dying. A lot of times when this happens, due to overcrowding, disease sets in and then it is a long suffering that the animals endure.

As the cycle continues, sometimes the raccoons get really aggressive.

We need to make sure that our management of all the species maintains a good balance.



Tom Fieber 

MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS MOUNTAIN MAN RENDEZVOUS 2025 by Scott D Smith

I would like to start by thanking everyone that helped to put on our first Montana Fur Harvesters-mountain man rendezvous. Without all of our volunteers and supporters this would have been a monumental task, and an impossible feat. Like most of you, I belong to many organizations. But I have never been part of anything like the MFH. The members of this organization are amazing, and we are all part of a family. This family means the world to me. Every single one has the same goal in mind, education for the entire family. Our main goal is conservation through sustainable wildlife management. We are all very passionate about this.

Last Labor Day, Paul Antczak and I spoke about putting on an event that was different from the ordinary trapper's rendezvous. We wanted to gather like-minded people that had the same interest in wildlife management and conservation. By putting together this team of educators, we were able to reach out to people of all ages and walks of life. One of our goals was to educate them on the Best Management Practices, or BMP'S. The BMP'S were implemented after years of research and scientific studies from professionals in their field of expertise.

To say that we met and exceeded our goal is an understatement. I cannot tell you how "proud" I am of our team. We had volunteers that worked very hard to make things happen. The team did not complain once. When they saw something that needed to be taken care of, they rolled up their sleeves and dug in. From start to finish, they were truly amazing. I love them all dearly. If I could change one thing, it would be to have a few more volunteers to give these people a break. My hope was for them to relax and enjoy some of the events. So, for next year's rendezvous, I am asking for a few of you to volunteer and be part of this amazing family. Just a few hours of your time would mean so much and go a long way.

I want to thank all the vendors that signed on for our first event. These vendors came from all across the



country. This was a gamble for them as this was our first event. I am proud to say that they were very pleased with a 1000 people attending in two days. Like most of you, I attend many rendezvous and events across the country. I have never attended anything like this small state MFH organization before.

I truly believe that because we are about family and education, this has put us in a special category.

I also want to thank all of the experts that showed up to put on demos. We were really blessed to have this top line up of people. From trapping, precision shooting, horse packing, houndsmen and yes even muzzleloader shooting demos. This was an action-packed event. By putting on a team of educators together like we did was a great success. With this I want to thank the team that put all the hard work in the demo area, great job!

“A HUGE THANK YOU” to the cast of the History Channel-Mountain Man show. To my knowledge this is the first time that the celebrity cast was ever in one place together. What an amazing time for all those who attended this little event put on by the MFH. From Montana- Tom and Nancy Oar, Jake Herak, wife and baby Jett. Also, Paul and Chance Antczack. And yes, all the way from Alaska-Bret and Ivy and Iditarod musher, Lauro Eklund. One of my goals next year is to be better organized. I know I missed things like advertising, signage and posters. This would have helped attendees know when and wear to be at a set time. My apologies.

I also want to say “THANK YOU” to the team of volunteers that organized all the meals to feed the volunteers and vendors. This was amazing to have a great meal provided by the staff, the food was outstanding. Yes, to prepare breakfast they had to get up really early, so thank you. Our pot luck Friday was a wonderful time. We had the pleasure to listen to great music by Russell and his daughter Katie, what a Lovley time by two very gifted musicians.

Along with this I want to thank the all the help from the staff that put the banquet together. This was a monumental task, I can't say thank you enough. Our first banquet, after a two-day rendezvous was really asking a lot of our team. These people only had a few hours to put it together! To say that they pulled it off is an understatement. They nailed it and what a fantastic time it was, a great job!!

All the contests that went on throughout the rendezvous were a blast. Mountain man and mountain women contest like the team put together

were very well attended. Many of these contests were first time ever contest. We have a newer and more exciting contest planned for next year. If anyone has ideas or wants to volunteer for this, please feel free to contact us.

So please plan on attending next year's rendezvous, it promises to be bigger and better than ever. We here at the MFH feel that as a growing organization, we are on the right track. By focusing on family and education we have something very special, with your continued support we can accomplish many things. So, thank each and every one of you for all you do in helping us with our mission.

In closing I would like to thank a few of the people that helped make this one of the best rendezvous ever. Our tireless president, rock and pillar-Tom and wife Maryann Fieber. The entire board and officers of the MFH. All of the volunteers and new friends we made for their help with getting this event together from start to finish. I know I missed some of the accomplishments of our team. So please don't feel hurt or left out. Each one of you have a special place in our family. I want to thank my lord and savior for watching over us and allowing this time for all to gather.

Thanks again. Be blessed, Scott
D. Smith-Tail Dragger

We seem to have everything accounted for. Bills are paid, thank you letters have been mailed, and things have settled down. We had our appreciation dinner on Friday evening for the volunteers. We disclosed all the expenses and income, and all seemed pleased with the results. Discussions covered suggestions and complaints. Notes were taken on how to improve future events. All the cast from the Mountain Men said they had a great time and are hoping to return next year. The consensus was that the event was a success, so it looks like we will be doing another one next year. The support from you and Montana's sportsmen is overwhelming. Tom

2025 Rendezvous is in the books!

*Paul Antczak- Mink Demo

Join us in Northwest Montana

*Visit with Montana's, Tom and Nancy



***Lauro Eklund- Alaska Iditarod**

Montana Fur Harvesters

Visit and Learn from these who live the life on The 'History Channel'! **Mountain Men!**

Visit our Website
www.montanafurharvesters.com/

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Larry Rattray: rattpak@centurytel.net, 406-261-7199
Tom Fieber: tfieber@bresnan.net, 406-250-3386

***Bret & Ivy- Alaska Marten trapping**

***Jake Herak- Hound Hunting**

We have exceeded our expectations!

I am so proud of our group. Members, Scott D Smith and Paul Antczak, had a vision, we had a dedicated team to support the plan.

Without Larry Rattray, Mort Hill, John and Jen Dana, Scott S Smith, Victor Perez, Kim Davie, Brad James and Monica, Dan Thingelstad, Chance Antczak, Russell Swindall and family, Tyler and Hannah Anderson, Bill Garcia and Leah Lemner, Steve Hoffman, all of it would not have happened.

And very important for us, Tressa Schutter, she was our anchor at the sign-in and bookkeeping. Not only that, but she was also there helping clean up Sunday.

So many helped throughout the event that I hope I haven't missed too many. This doesn't include all the

support from the local community, vendors and donors from across the nation.

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Vendors came from across the nation. Jason Lauery from Georgia, brought his Nighthawk Pro Gear.



We had thirty some vendors that filled two of our buildings. We started with one building but that one filled up in the first couple of weeks. The demand kept coming so we offered the only other building, a barn. That also filled up and presented a rustic venue. Some of the vendors liked it but others took notice.

Tim Viano visits with Jr Strand and Jeff Durrah at the Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife booth





Life in the barn turned out good as people got in and met the different vendors.



Above: Kim Davie provided a wonderful variety of game that the kids took part in. Below: Sharon Seals of Seals Art had an wonderful booth that fit right in.



Even though the barn was a little cool in the mornings, as it warmed up everything came to life.



Top, Montana Trappers Association, Tristan Jurek greets visitors, Left the Foundation 4 Wildlife Management was great.



Above: Brad and Monica did a great job running the Montana Fur Harvesters Booth.



Mt Fish Wildlife & Parks booth was hosted by Dillon Tabish one day and Nathan Kluge the next.



Some of the outdoor contests drew the biggest crowds. From axe throwing to a gruesome trap setting contest had the fans cheering and laughing. One of the tests was setting a trap in a tub of ice cubes under water to start off the competition, not unlike beaver trapping under ice. Hunter Dana won that.

The Mountain Men from the Flathead Kootenai Muzzleloaders had an awesome setup for Saturday that everyone enjoyed. They did various demos on firing muzzleloaders. I felt really bad for the people on Friday that missed out on that. Pictured left: Brian Ginsmore took first and Amber Hewitt second in the Mountain Man re-enactment contest.

Montana Cowboy Hall Of Fame- BILL WORKMAN. Brought stock from Forest Service with blessings. He did 2 demos on Saturday, in rodeo grounds on horse packing and what they do.





The Demos going on in the Arena were well attended and setup realistically to depict what we see in the field. They started at 8am and ran until 4pm each day. Many facets were covered by some of the best.



Our Kids portion of the barn had many kids working on all kinds of projects that Kim Davie had setup. From guessing what was inside boxes, coloring, making fire starting kits to running a obstacle course.

The Banquet was well attended on Saturday evening. Those attending were able to vie for bucket raffles, silent auction items and Live auctions. Dan Yoder, auctioneer, entertained the crowd and auctioned off thirty some items and a crowd pleasing 6pack of beer that had the whole room cheering. Top selling items were Cast Member signed prints, a fur though and a Henery Golden boy commemorative rifle. Thanks to the many doners that made it possible.



The banquet was a total success. After two days of vendors and demos, it was a chance for guests, vendors and staff to get together and share a good meal.



L to R- Bret & Ivey, Jake Herak, Vendor Ted Burnell, Tom & Nancy Oar, Paul & Chance Antczak, Lauro Eklund
Members of the cast from the Mountain Men Series on the History Channel greeted over a thousand visitors at the event.



WE PROMOTE AND PRESERVE FUR HARVESTING AND ITS HERITAGE IN MONTANA AS BOTH A SPORT AND AN INDUSTRY THROUGH EDUCATION AND REGULATORY ACTIVISM. WE SUPPORT FUR HARVESTING AS A SUSTAINABLE USE TOOL FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT, AND FIGHT TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE WILDLIFE AND HABITAT. WE WORK WITH MT FWP TO SUPPORT THEIR MANAGEMENT GOALS.

Activities*****

Active with FWP shaping regulations that shape our trapping.

Trapper Education

Booths at Family Forestry Expo

School Shows

Northwest Montana Expo

Newsletters

Local County Fairs

Fur Handling Clinics

Public events

- ✕ Montana Fur Harvesters represents Trapper, Houndsmen and Predator Hunters**
- ✕ Consider becoming a member of The Montana Trappers Association and The National Trappers Association. Every dollar raised will help to fight for trappers across the nation. Go online to their websites to join.**

Memberships run from January 1 to December 31

Please Complete this form and send to: MFH, PO Box 3481, Kalispell MT 59903

Please Print Clearly

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Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

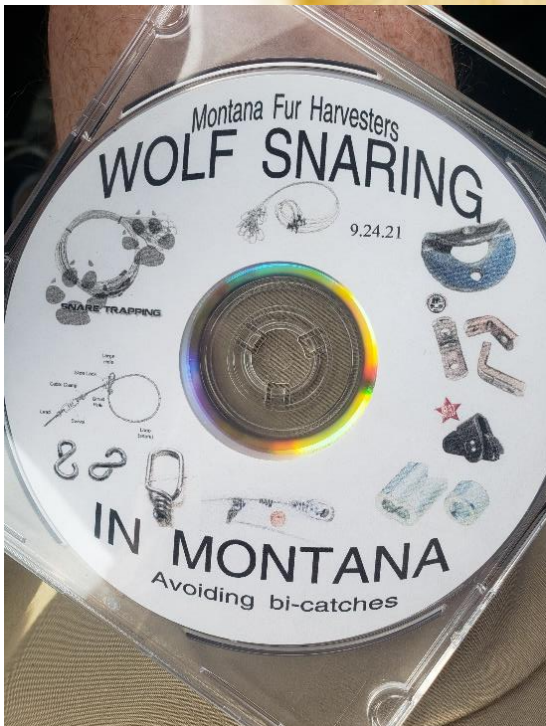
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Please check one ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Pro-rate for 2020 balance.

☐ Sustaining Membership \$20.00 annual dues ☐ Junior (under 18) \$10.00 annual dues ☐ Family Membership \$30.00 annual dues ☐ Charter Member \$100.00 annual dues **Add a magazine to your membership at a discounted price** ☐ Trapper Post Magazine \$14.00 ☐ The Trapper \$12.00 ☐ Trappers World \$18 Predator Extreme Free. Goto

www.grandviewoutdoors.com/order/subscriptNote: ☐ Check here to receive your Newsletter by Email ☐ Check here to have Newsletter mailed. **This very popular video** is a must see for anyone thinking of snaring in Montana. I have sent them out to Alaska, Idaho and Montana. If you can't make one of your local classes, at least take time to view this before you start buying or making snares. It could save you money from buying wrong supplies or worse making a bad set.

To purchase a video: Pick one up at a local class for \$20 and save \$5 postage. Send a **check** for \$25 in the mail to, Tom Fieber, 507 Bayview Dr, Polson Mt 59860. For **Credit Card** sales at \$25. Send me your contact info then call me at 406-250-3386 Our Wolf Snaring Education Video on Avoiding By-catches has been shown to over 400 prospective wolf snaring trappers. The video has been sold in multiple states as well. Evening classes were held in a dozen local communities and in online FWP Wolf Certification Classes. The video is available to all.



Tom Fieber **Thanks to The Meuli's of Columbia Falls.** They are always willing to share their facility for our events. Shawn, Amber, and Kimberly are great sportsmen!

Contact; Scan QR Code to buy Tickets
Website

mtfurs@gmail.com www.montanafurvesters.com/

Montana Fur Harvesters works closely with local FWP personnel. Game warden, **Jon Obst**, is one of the first to work with trappers and is a valued asset to the trapping community. He knows trapping, regulations, how traps function, what trappers are dealing with.

Wildlife biologist, **Jessy Coltrane**, has been heading up the fisher denning box project in the Cabinet Mountains. She has been great to work with and is a hard worker herself. Wildlife biologist for region one.

Neil Anderson, he has been another one that attends public meetings and sportsman events. He has been working to address road and trail issues as well as other issues that affect sportsman. Neil really listens to people's concerns and acts on them.

Biologist, **Tyler Parks** in Region Two is also very good to work with. Tyler runs the region 2 spring trapper meetings and is a member of the trapping education committee.

Dillon Tabish from Region 1 is always doing what he can to get things organized and get out press releases.

Nathan Kluge is our new Furbearer biologist for FWP in Helena. Nathan has been active at the Trapper Education Class and has been really good to work with and knowledgeable as a trapper.

Ben Chappelow, game warden from the Flathead, has been filling in for Jon Obst in that capacity. Ben has been assisting with the Trapper Ed Classes and doing a great Job.

Vivica Crowser IO from Region 2 has been a big help with our trapper education events.

These are just a few of the many local personnel that I work with and appreciate.

Thanks to each and every one of them!

Charter Members for 2025

Donating \$100 or more!

The following members have gone the extra mile to support MFH. Without this commitment, it would be hard to publish this and host the fur shows.

Bill Boehme, Bill has been supporting us as a charter member for years. He is a great seminar instructor and a real member of the trapping community.

Idaho Trappers Association, This Association is a real asset to the entire US Trapper Community. Thanks to Rusty Kramer for all he does.

Ed Schweitzer. Ed attended our booth at the Kalispell Gun Show and signed up as a charter member. This is deeply appreciated.

Scott S Smith, Director from Whitefish has been supporting the Fur Harvesters in many ways, manning booths as well.

Kenneth Cordoza, our past President still goes out of his way to support his organization.

Rusty Kramer, Idaho Trappers Association President has been a strong supporter here in Montana.

Mark Williams, from Florida has his second term.

Bob and Nickie Clyde of St Regis have supported wolf trapping since 2011.

Brook Lincoln, from Haugan has been a strong supporter of predator management for years.

Hunter Shima, Hunter and his family have been supporting us from Montana Power Products.

Jeff Schlink, from Cut Bank just joined our Charters

Eric and Susan Clark from Lolo just joined Charters

As you can see, we still have room for more!

Montana Fur Harvesters
PO Box 3481
Kalispell MT 59903



Montana Power Products not only sells great products, but they have a full-service shop to repair and maintain your equipment. They are also great supporters of the sportsman community. Like ours, Montana Sportsman for Fish & Wildlife and the Foundation For Wildlife Management. Thanks, from all of us.

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