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NEWS FROM THE MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTER



**MEIC Board Elections, Page 12**

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Victory for Grizzly Bears
- 3 Smith River Copper Mine
- 4 EPA Carbon Limits
- 7 Colstrip: Unreliable and Expensive
- 8 Grantsdale Subdivision in Bitterroot Valley
- 9 Montanore Mine
- 10 PPL Spinoff
- 12 Board Elections
- 14 Clean Energy Jobs Report
- 15 Renewable Energy Standard Review
- 16 Montana Futures Raffle
- 18 Oil Train Safety

# Victory for Grizzly Bears in Federal Court

by Kyla Maki

**O**n August 21st, U.S. district judge Donald Molloy issued a ruling that will help protect grizzly bear populations and their critical habitat in northwest Montana. MEIC, Friends of the Wild Swan, and Natural Resources Defense Council, represented by Earthjustice, prevailed in

their claim that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) violated the Endangered Species Act (ESA) when it issued a “take” permit to the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) for grizzly bears in northwest Montana’s Stillwater State Forest. “Take” refers to activities that can result in habitat degradation and harm populations of threatened and endangered species.

In December 2012, FWS approved DNRC’s 50-year Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and issued the State a

take permit under the Endangered Species Act for bull trout and grizzly bears on over 500,000 acres of Montana school trust lands. Part of DNRC’s plan proposed building a network of new roads across vital, roadless grizzly bear habitat known as the “Stillwater Core.” These roads would have opened the Stillwater Core to increased logging over the next 50 years. In March 2013, MEIC and the other plaintiffs challenged FWS’s decision in federal court.

In his ruling, Judge Molloy determined that FWS’s decision to issue the take permit to DNRC for grizzly bears was “arbitrary and capricious” and in violation of the Endangered Species Act. Judge Molloy’s Order states that “despite limited scientific support for the [DNRC’s] proposed

management approach, the Service [FWS] found mitigation measures under the [HCP] were sufficient. The Service has not rationally justified its finding that the approach under the Plan constitutes a complete offset – much less a net benefit – such that additional mitigation measures did not even need to be considered.”

FWS’s decision to approve new road building in the Stillwater Core without additional protections for grizzly bears was not based on rational analysis of accepted science. Instead, federal officials relied solely on DNRC’s claim that maintaining the security core area for grizzly bears would violate the agency’s mandate to maximize revenue for State trust beneficiaries. Judge Molloy rejected this assertion, saying that it is “undermined by the fact that the Montana Supreme Court has held that the trust mandate is not limited to financial return, but requires efforts to ensure long-term sustainability.” Molloy’s affirmation that DNRC’s trust mandate requires it to balance long-term sustainability with short-term revenue generation is important for future decisions related to State school trust lands in Montana.

The plaintiffs also challenged FWS’s decision to issue DNRC a take permit for imperiled bull trout populations, based on the impacts of road construction and climate change. Judge Molloy ruled in FWS’s favor regarding its approval of a separate portion of DNRC’s plan related to bull trout. He accepted the agency’s argument that the HCP properly mitigated harm to the imperiled fish species under the ESA.

Judge Molloy’s ruling remands back to the agency the FWS decision related to grizzly bear habitat in the Stillwater Core. His ruling prohibits DNRC from implementing that portion of the HCP until it meets the requirements of the ESA.

Ultimately, this ruling is a key victory for grizzly bears, their habitat, and future management decisions that affect the long-term sustainability of State trust lands. 🌱

Grizzly Bear. Photo by MEIC.



Cover Photo: Solar Montana installing a PV system on a Helena, Montana home. Photo by Anne Hedges.

# DEQ Approves Smith River Copper Mine Pump Test

by Derf Johnson

On August 7th, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) authorized Canada-based Tintina Resources to move forward with a pump test for its proposed Smith River copper mine. The test involves drilling three wells to determine the quantity and quality of the water that the mining operation, if permitted, would have to deal with.

The proposed mine has already generated an enormous public outcry due to its location in the headwaters of Montana's cherished Smith River. The Smith River is a "blue-ribbon" trout stream, and Montana's only river that requires a permit to float. It is known for its canyon scenery, clean water, and incredible recreational opportunities.

The environmental assessment that DEQ issued will allow Tintina to drill into three different geologic zones at the proposed mine site. Unfortunately, a good portion of the water is likely to contain toxins such as arsenic. The pump test is a necessary step for Tintina to gather the data needed to apply for a full-scale mine operating permit.

As a condition of its approval, and as a result of public comments, DEQ did require the company to temporarily store the pumped water in tanks rather than lined pits. This is a small step in the right direction, as lined pits associated with industrial projects almost always leak, and have the potential to breach and contaminate adjacent ground and surface water.

Unfortunately, DEQ authorized Tintina to use a risky and outdated method for final disposal of the tainted water: land application disposal (LAD). While this term may sound ambiguous, the process is relatively simple – Tintina will spray the water on a pasture. DEQ asserts that this method will prevent ground water contamination, as the water will be applied gradually, allowing for evaporation and "agronomic uptake" to occur. However, DEQ can't point to even a single LAD system in Montana

that it has permitted which hasn't contaminated ground and/or surface water.

The approval of Tintina's pump test wells comes on the heels of a mine catastrophe in British Columbia, in which an unprecedented 2.5 billion gallons of contaminated water breached a tailings pond impoundment and were discharged into a nearby waterway. The water was laden with toxic metals such as arsenic, mercury, lead, copper, and cadmium, and will severely impact the salmon fishery in the vicinity for decades and perhaps centuries. This type of disaster shows exactly why a copper mine on the headwaters of the Smith River is a bad idea. No amount of copper can justify the potential devastation that the mine could inflict on the river.

Montana has a sad history of failed mine projects that have caused perpetual pollution, decimated aquatic habitats, and required taxpayers' money to try to clean up. MEIC will not let the Smith River become another casualty of the mining industry, and is committed to doing everything in its power to protect the river.

We also urge you to take action: visit [www.SaveOurSmith.com](http://www.SaveOurSmith.com), to learn more about the Save Our Smith campaign, and sign a petition that urges Governor Steve Bullock and DEQ Director Tracy Stone-Manning to protect the Smith River. 

*"The proposed mine has already generated an enormous public outcry due to its location in the headwaters of Montana's cherished Smith River."*

Show your support! Save Our Smith has produced thousands of bumper stickers. Send your name and address to [meic@meic.org](mailto:meic@meic.org), or use the online form at [www.SaveOurSmith.com](http://www.SaveOurSmith.com), and we will send you a bumper sticker (or several) for free!

*Smith River. Photo by D.H. Brown Photography.*



## EPA Proposes Carbon Pollution Limits on Existing Power Plants

by Anne Hedges

In early June 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took the historic step of proposing the first-ever carbon pollution limits for the nation's existing power plants. Coal and natural gas-fired power plants are the largest sources of human-caused carbon pollution today. The coal-fired Colstrip plant in Montana alone emits about 15 million tons of global warming pollution each year,

nearly half of Montana's total greenhouse gas emissions.

In June 2013, President Obama had directed EPA to develop rules to limit greenhouse gases from existing power plants. Since that time, with unprecedented public involvement, industries and states have begged EPA to create a system that is flexible, allows each state to determine the most efficient path to carbon reductions, and considers the existing regulatory structure in each state.

Remarkably, EPA did just that. Its proposed "Clean Power Plan" rule is long, complicated, and brilliantly crafted. Even though there are some flaws in the proposal that need correcting, EPA

*"By 2030, the proposed rule will achieve a 30% reduction from 2005 levels in greenhouse gas emissions nationwide."*

Judith Gap wind farm.  
Photo by Pat Judge.



has proposed a standard that is unique to each state's circumstances. By 2030, the proposed rule will achieve a 30% reduction from 2005 levels in greenhouse gas emissions nationwide.

EPA designed a carbon pollution reduction target for each state that is based upon four building blocks:

First, EPA considered case studies and technical literature to determine whether power plants could produce electricity more efficiently. EPA determined that on average each plant could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 6% by operating more efficiently.

Second, EPA assessed each state's nuclear and combined-cycle natural gas plants to determine if these plants could increase their output, since these types of plants produce less carbon pollution per unit of energy than coal plants. EPA then assigned some amount of carbon reduction potential based upon how much nuclear and gas excess capacity existed in each state. Since Montana does not have either type of plant, Montana's carbon budget was not changed by this building block.

Third, EPA considered how much renewable energy each state could produce by 2030. Unfortunately, EPA's renewable energy goals are based on state renewable energy standards

that were passed as long as a decade ago. These standards have been met in most states, including Montana, and therefore do not reflect any new renewable energy potential.

Fourth, EPA analyzed potential energy efficiency gains in each state and proposed a very modest 1.5% annual increase in efficiency for each state. For Montana, EPA estimated a cumulative 10.9% savings from energy efficiency by 2030.

EPA then considered each state's overall pollution in 2012, and used the building blocks to determine how much reduction each state was capable of achieving by 2030. That calculation resulted in the state's overall reduction target, with interim goals starting in 2020.

Although EPA created a unique target for each state, the proposed rule allows states approximately one year after the rule is finalized in June 2015 to develop state-specific programs to meet the targets. States are not required to use EPA's building blocks to attain their reductions.

*"Fourth, EPA analyzed potential energy efficiency gains in each state and proposed a very modest 1.5% annual increase in efficiency for each state. For Montana, EPA estimated a cumulative 10.9% savings from energy efficiency by 2030."*

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## Who supports the rules to limit carbon pollution from power plants?

- **Montana scientists.** 102 scientists who have lived, worked, and/or studied in Montana. These advanced degree scientists, two-thirds with Ph.D.'s, called on elected officials to address climate change and support actions such as EPA's proposed power plant rules. These scientists are concerned about the current impacts of climate change on Montana's natural environment, including the predicted impacts of increasing beetle kill and pests, decreasing water availability, shorter winters, decreased snowpack, hotter and drier summers, and more.
- **Montana medical providers.** Over 57 Montana medical providers have signed on to a public letter. These medical professionals support limiting carbon pollution because it will have a significant benefit for public health.
- **Montana veterans.** Montana veterans across the state recently urged support for EPA's power plant rule because of the impact climate change is having on national security and the well-understood impacts a changing climate will have on national security in the near future.
- **Montana businesses.** So far 21 businesses have publicly supported EPA's efforts to curb carbon pollution from power plants because climate change is already impacting our economy with decreased snowpack, river closures in Summer, increased wildfire season, and more.
- **Montana-based organizations.** To date 27 organizations have expressed concern about the wide-ranging repercussions of climate change on natural habitat, the economy, Montanans' livelihoods, and public health.

## EPA Carbon Limits *(continued from page 5)*

They could decide to meet their targets using 100% renewable energy or 100% efficiency, or whatever combination of methods seems most suitable to the state's circumstances. Starting in 2020, states will need to prove to EPA that they are on a path to meeting their 2030 targets.

*“MEIC will be urging EPA to increase Montana’s target because attaining a 21% reduction in greenhouse gas pollution by 2030 can be done easily. The state is already on a path to beat that target.”*

In sum, the states are “in the driver’s seat” about how best to reduce greenhouse gas pollution from power plants.

Unfortunately, Montana received the second weakest

reduction target in the nation. The target of a 21% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is based on calculations that underestimated the state’s renewable energy and energy efficiency potential. EPA’s current goals represent the

floor, not the ceiling, for Montana’s actual clean energy potential. MEIC will be urging EPA to increase Montana’s target because attaining a 21% reduction in greenhouse gas pollution by 2030 can be done easily. The state is already on a path to beat that target.

Comments are due on EPA’s draft proposal by October 16, 2014. It’s more essential than ever that people who want to solve the climate crisis speak up. Industry has been gearing up for over a year.

Go to MEIC’s web site for more information on how you can comment. We need to prove to EPA that Montanans support solving the crisis by taking the critical first step of reducing greenhouse gas pollution from the largest human-caused sources in the world – power plants. If we can’t get this one right, we’re in big trouble. ☺

## EPA Rules Receive Strong Support at Denver Hearing



On July 29, 2014, in Denver the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held one of several hearings on its Clean Power Plan. MEIC’s Kyla Maki attended the hearing to testify about the tremendous clean energy opportunities in Montana. EPA’s Plan marks the first major step the United States has taken to reduce carbon pollution from power plants and to address the crisis of global warming.

Supporters of the Plan at the Denver hearing significantly outnumbered opponents. People who spoke in favor of the Plan came from diverse backgrounds, perspectives and professions, including scientists, ranchers, nurses, wildland firefighters, former military personnel, clean energy businesses, ski areas, and many more. Several supporters of the Plan, including MEIC, commended EPA for moving forward to address carbon pollution from power plants but encouraged the agency to set stronger reduction goals for certain states.

Montana is one of those states. MEIC’s testimony highlighted Montana’s remarkable wind, solar, and energy efficiency potential. Despite this potential, Montana’s emission reduction goals under the Plan are the second weakest in the nation. MEIC urged EPA to strengthen Montana’s 2030 emission reduction target based on the state’s clean energy potential, not just on what the state has already developed.

EPA will be accepting written comments on the draft Plan until October 16, 2014.

# Colstrip's Electricity: Expensive and Unreliable

by Anne Hedges

If electricity generated with coal is cheap and reliable, then why did NorthWestern Energy (NWE) just ask the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC) for a \$32 million rate increase to pay for Colstrip Unit 4 breaking down for 6 months...again? Contrary to popular rhetoric, electricity from Colstrip Unit 4 is neither cheap nor reliable for Montana ratepayers. In July 2014, MEIC and Sierra Club, represented by Earthjustice, asked to intervene in the PSC docket on whether to allow that temporary rate increase to become permanent.

There are four electricity-producing units at Colstrip. They are mainly owned by PPL Montana, and utilities in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. NWE was allowed to purchase a 30% share of Unit 4 in 2009. Almost immediately after NWE bought that share, Unit 4 broke down for about six months.

In July 2013, Unit 4 went down for another six months. NWE recently asked the PSC to allow it to temporarily increase rates by \$32 million, largely to cover the cost of the breakdown. The PSC voted 4-1 to allow the temporary increase.

Commissioner Travis Kavulla from Great Falls was the only dissenter. He pointed out that when NWE was granted approval to buy its share of Unit 4 the company promised the plant was "an extremely well-

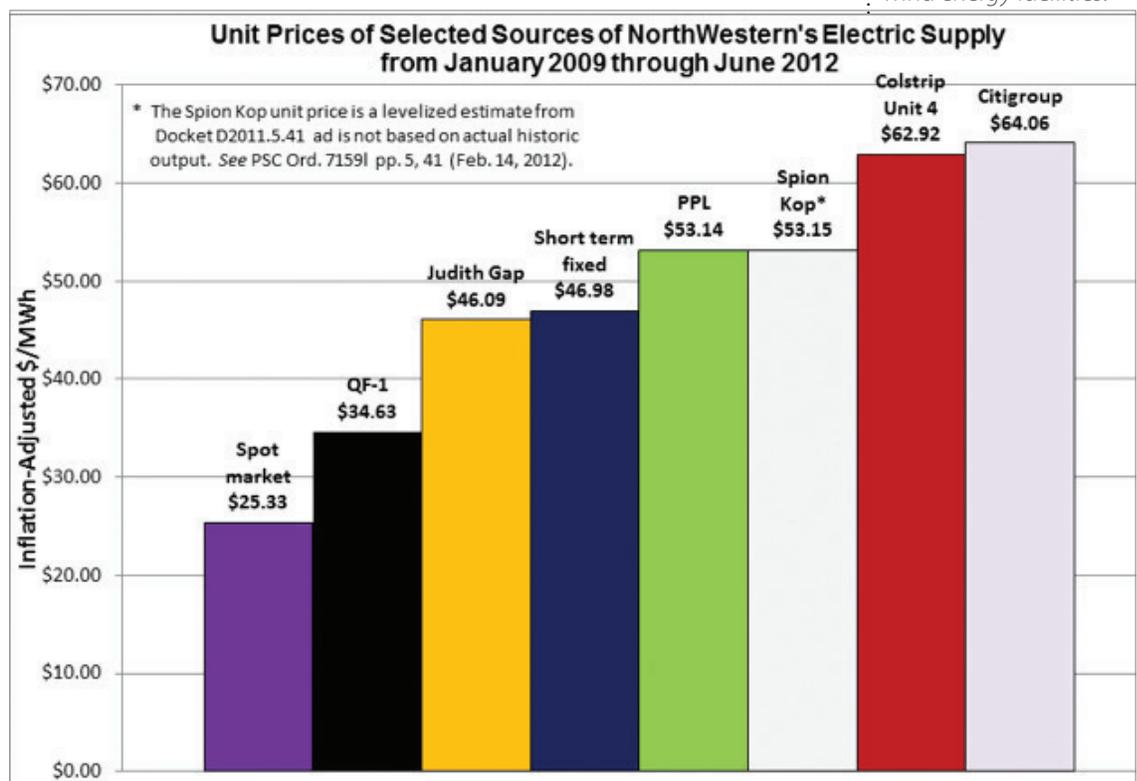
maintained facility to which the owners have made, and continue to make, systematic capital improvements, making the plant at least as good as when it was new, if not better." In the five years that NWE has owned part of Unit 4, the opposite of that claim has proven to be the case.

Unit 4 has been broken down for nearly 20% of the time NWE has been an owner. During those down times, the company has had to pay to for repairs, to maintain the idle plant, and to purchase replacement power. NWE thinks Montana's ratepayers should have to pay many of these costs. MEIC believes NWE's shareholders should be financially responsible for this "lemon."

The electricity from Unit 4 is already costly for NWE's customers (see graph below). Colstrip has been among the most expensive power for NWE for several years now, according to the PSC. In fact, it's twice as expensive as the wind

*continued on page 19*

*PSC chart comparing different unit prices for NorthWestern Energy's electricity supply. Spion Kop and Judith Gap are both wind energy facilities.*



# MEIC Joins Lawsuit to Protect the Bitterroot River

by Jim Jensen

The Bitterroot River is one of Montana's gems. A blue-ribbon trout fishery, it flows north for 75 miles from its origin near Conner, Montana, between two majestic mountain ranges, through the postcard-

picturesque Bitterroot Valley, and into the Clark Fork River just west of Missoula.

This beautiful valley has attracted substantial residential growth over the last

30 years. The related pollution has caused the river to be listed as an impaired water body for nitrates, the chemicals that fertilize algae and often result in serious degradation of the river in late Summer. That process is called eutrophication.

Since 1998, the Montana Department

of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has been participating in something called the Tri-State Water Quality Council. The goal is to develop a cooperative agreement among all the polluters in the Clark Fork River basin to reduce nutrient pollution in order to avoid eutrophication. After much investment by taxpayers up and down the river through upgraded sewer treatment plants and other measures, significant progress has been made.

Thus it should stand to reason that DEQ would be requiring the most protective water treatment systems for all new developments to avoid pollution of the Bitterroot River. One might reasonably expect that the agency would at least study the cumulative effects of any additional nutrient discharges into the river. One might especially think this in light of the fact the current DEQ director, Tracy Stone-Manning, was for many years the executive director of the Clark Fork Coalition, an organization that was (and remains) a formal party in the Tri-State Water Quality Council.

Well, in 2006 along came one Brad Mildenerger of Hamilton, who wanted to subdivide a large parcel near the river. He called his project the Grantsdale Addition. It was to be a 181-lot residential development on 70 acres, with commercial development included. It was located two and one-half miles south of Hamilton. Mildenerger proposed to treat sewage from the project with two central septic tanks, and drain fields that would pour into the groundwater that is – unfortunately – directly connected to the Bitterroot River.

DEQ granted Mildenerger the required pollution permit. At the time MEIC was stretched too thin with its other work to be able

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*"This beautiful valley has attracted substantial residential growth over the last 30 years. The related pollution has caused the river to be listed as an impaired water body for nitrates ...."*

*Kelsey Milner, President of Bitterrooters for Planning, testifies at the hearing on the Grantsdale Subdivision. Photo by MEIC.*



# Montanore Mine CEO Charges Brian Schweitzer With Extortion

by Jim Jensen

The Montanore mine project near Libby has been in the news again, but not because of environmental concerns. Instead, a legal dispute about the ownership of mining claims at the proposed mine site has been the subject of much reporting.

Mines Management, Inc. (MMI) of Spokane bought the mine project from Canadian mining giant Noranda Minerals in 2002. Noranda had pursued the mine through the permitting process and had secured all the required permits. However, the mine was not thought to be economical, and so it remained dormant until the purchase by MMI.

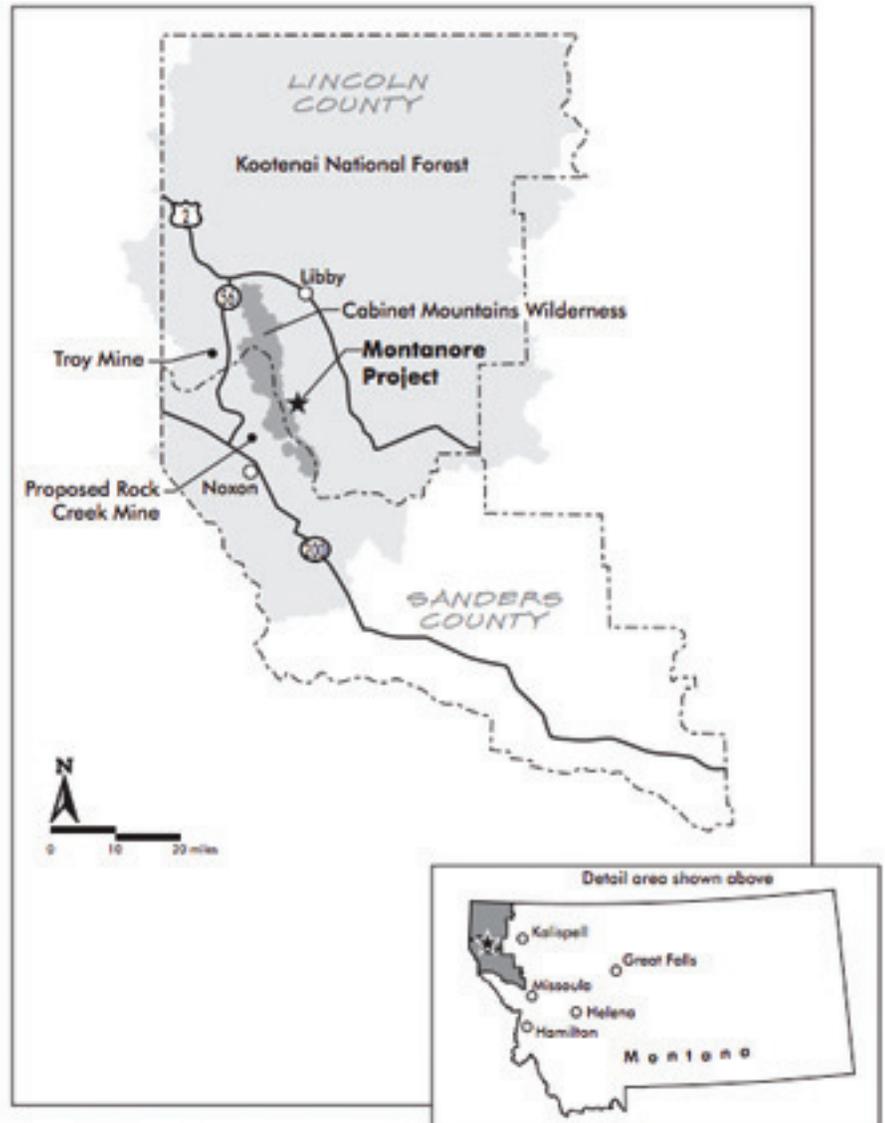
Because the project's environmental impact statement was so dated by the time the ownership was transferred, a new one was required. It will not be completed by the U.S. Forest Service until some time in 2015.

However, MMI seems to have overlooked a critical fact. That is that Noranda did not own all the claims needed to proceed with the mine. Instead some local miners asserted that they had validly staked claims on federal land before Noranda came along, and that MMI had not sought a new agreement with them for those claims. One of those owners is a Libbyman named Arnold Bakke.

After the sale to MMI, Bakke erected "No Trespassing" signs on his claims, but MMI ignored them. Instead, MMI tried to bully Bakke into submission, but he wouldn't budge.

MMI then hired some "big gun" lawyers and sued Bakke in state district court, claiming that his claims were not valid. Bakke hired his own lawyer to fight back – and he won.

Meanwhile, former Gov. Brian Schweitzer, along with some investors, had formed a company called Optima, Inc. Among the investors is Bakke, who apparently was able to become a shareholder by putting up his mining claims in exchange for Optima stock. Thus, Optima now



owns the claims that MMI needs to go forward with the Montanore mine.

After losing its state court case, MMI filed a condemnation suit in federal court to force the sale of the Optima claims. It did so under the authority given to mining companies to condemn the holdings of any private property owner that are needed in order to be able to mine. Yes, that's

*continued on page 20*

# PPL Wants to “Ditch” its Montana Coal Plants

by Anne Hedges

It's clear: PPL wants out of the coal-fired power plant business in Montana. On June 10, 2014, it announced its intention to spin off all of its unregulated electricity generating sources nationwide, and merge them with similar facilities owned by Riverstone, a very large private equity firm involved in energy development. These plants will end up being owned by a new company, Talen Energy Corporation. In Montana that means that Talen will own the Corette coal-fired plant in Billings

Corette coal plant in Billings, MT. Photo by MEIC.



and PPL's share of the Colstrip coal plant. Talen will be managed mainly by existing PPL executives, and PPL's shareholders will own a majority share of Talen's stock.

Last year PPL tried to sell its interest in its Montana coal-fired power plants but failed to find a buyer. It then did what so many companies have done in the past; it proposed to spin off its least profitable assets and the related liabilities, and focus on its more profitable ventures.

So what could this re-organization mean for Montana? Nearly all of the generation plants that will be dumped into Talen's portfolio are far from Montana

– 5 natural gas plants in Texas and nearly 2 dozen power plants in the Northeast. Montana's coal plants would be outliers in Talen's portfolio. Corette is slated to be mothballed in March 2015, so Colstrip would be Talen's only generation asset outside of Texas and the Northeast. That's probably why Colstrip and Corette are little more than a footnote – sometimes literally – in the documents describing the proposed creation of Talen.

Those familiar with Montana's long history of large corporations avoiding liability by playing shell games with toxic waste sites are concerned about what this all might mean for future cleanup at the plant. There are 800 acres of toxic coal ash impoundments at Colstrip that have been contaminating ground and surface waters for decades. The cost of that cleanup will be enormous. If Talen does not have the resources to clean up its share of the massive contamination, what will happen? Who will be responsible?

Some say that Colstrip is likely become a federal Superfund site; if so, all of the existing and previous owners will be on the financial hook for the cleanup. But what happens in the meantime, or if the site is not listed under the Superfund? A plant cannot be on the federal Superfund list until it is closed and, even then, it can take years after closure to be added to the list. Then there is the inevitable litigation to determine how the costs of the cleanup will be divided among all the responsible parties. This litigation takes years to resolve, and could cost the State of Montana enormous amounts of money, resources, and time. All the while Colstrip, the community that has the toxic mess contaminating its ground and surface water, suffers.

PPL not only owns the second largest share of Colstrip, it also operates the plant on behalf of the other owners (Puget Sound Energy, Portland General Electric, Avista, NorthWestern Energy, and PacifiCorp). With PPL out of the picture, who

will operate the plant on a day-to-day basis and take the lead in the cleanup activities? The West Coast utilities are under increasing public and regulatory pressure to decrease their reliance on coal, in particular the electricity from Colstrip. It doesn't seem likely that their state regulators will allow them to become more involved in the plant. It is equally hard to imagine that Talen, a new company with



very limited financial resources, will want to invest much in a plant that has been a financial drag on PPL's portfolio and is far removed from Talen's other operations.

There remain some legal and regulatory hoops that have to be jumped through before

the spin-off transaction is finalized and Talen owns Colstrip and Corette. PPL predicts the process will be completed by the middle of 2015.

And then, what? That is the \$64 – well, perhaps \$64,000,000 – question. ☺

*Colstrip coal plant and Rosebud Mine. Photo by Anne Hedges.*

## MEIC Staff in Transition: Welcome to MEIC's New Donor Relations Manager

Molly Severtson, who served wonderfully for 2½ years as MEIC's Director of Major Gifts, has departed MEIC to work for the Montana Wilderness Association. We wish her well. She is a true asset.

Replacing Molly is Mel Griffin. Mel landed in Helena as a resident artist at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts and decided to stay in Big Sky Country. She has decided to also apply her other considerable skills at MEIC and we are delighted at the prospect.

Mel is a graduate of Carleton College, received an MFA degree from the University of Minnesota, and is a licensed art teacher.



*MEIC's new Donor Relations Manager, Mel Griffin.*

# MEIC's 2014 Board of Directors Election

## *Cast your ballot today!*

It's time for the annual MEIC Board of Directors election. This year we have one incumbent director and seven new candidates running. Please vote. It may seem like a formality, but it is an important part of keeping MEIC a viable and legal organization.

Instructions:

- 1) Only MEIC members can vote; subscribers and business corporations are not eligible.
- 2) Mark a "yes" or "no," or abstain from voting, for each candidate on the enclosed postage-paid card.
- 3) Mail the card back to MEIC in time to arrive by September 25, 2014.

*Thank you for your participation.*



**Erin Farris-Olsen, Helena**

I am running for the Board of MEIC because I strongly believe in strengthening our constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. In my experience as a field surveyor, activist, and lawyer, I have observed the inequity that results from limited access to environmental information. As a board member, I would like to apply my organizational and legal skills and be actively involved in MEIC's lobbying and litigation efforts as well as development strategies.



**Greg Findley, Bozeman**

I founded and run a tourism business that sends travelers on sustainable adventures in Latin America. I have spent the past 35 years exploring wild places in the U.S. and overseas, and have guided numerous clients on some of the world's best and most remote rivers and trails. Although I often travel overseas for work, I have deep roots in Montana and the Yellowstone ecosystem, having lived in the area since 1982. My wife and I are raising two young sons in Bozeman, and keeping Montana's rivers, lakes, forests and mountains pristine for future generations is of great importance to me.

Everywhere I go in my travels I see the impacts of environmental destruction, including climate change, and am determined to fight to protect Montana's amazing natural resources. In particular, I am extremely concerned about global warming, as we know that we cannot allow our planet to warm much more before Montana's natural resources are impacted forever. I strongly believe that MEIC should continue to lead the fight against global warming here in Montana, and that is why I am running for the MEIC Board of Directors.



**Stephanie Kowals, Seattle**

There is something about place. In the Summer of 1975 I came to Montana for the first time. I had never been somewhere that felt so comfortable. The Blackfoot Valley just felt like home. Upon my return to Seattle (and college matriculation), I related the story of my Summer in that idyllic place to my grandfather (who was not much of a talker). His response was: "I'm from there." I went on to learn that our family had homesteaded, mostly in the Ovando area, from about 1870 to 1930, but life was hard and eventually the thousands of acres of ranchland were sold off, leaving just one lot in the town of Ovando.

So, despite the lack of significant acreage, and even my knowledge of the family history, the attachment was still there. My forebears rest in the Ovando cemetery and I feel a connection to the place that is reinforced every visit. For me, the Blackfoot Valley and Montana are, indeed, home. Protecting, preserving, and restoring this special place is not something that can wait. It has not been an easy fight and promises to get only more difficult as corporate pressure for resource extraction escalates in the guise of economic promise and we are asked to trade our offspring's legacy for a few shortsighted dollars.



**Dustin Leftridge, Kalispell**

As Montanans, our right to a clean and healthy environment is fundamental. To address the multifaceted challenges posed to our environment requires an approach that combines grassroots, political, and legal advocacy. Few organizations have achieved the capacity to integrate these methodologies of advocacy as seamlessly as MEIC.

It would be my pleasure to serve on the Board so I can utilize my passion and experience to assist MEIC in its continued advocacy on behalf of Montanans who love the natural beauty of their state. My love of the outdoors began while growing up in the mountains and rivers of western Montana and the Redwoods country of Northern California. After 10 years as a river guide and a law degree from the University of Montana, I moved to the Flathead Valley to work as an attorney with McGarvey, Heberling, Sullivan and Lacey.

**Bill Madden, Chicago and Augusta**

I would be honored to serve on the MEIC Board and help continue the thoughtful and aggressive agenda this entity has carried out for over 40 years. As a conservationist, and a native Montanan, I am concerned about the future of the climate and the impact of continued fossil fuel use not only for Montana but the entire country and the globe.

If chosen as a member of the Board I will dedicate the time necessary to become effective in protecting and restoring Montana's natural environment, utilizing what I've learned in working with other boards over the last 20 years. As a designer and owner of a passive solar house on the Rocky Mountain Front, and with education as a physicist, alternative energy sources are of particular interest. I look forward to the possibility of working with the Board and staff in carrying out MEIC's mission.



**Bob Ream, Helena**

I would like to serve on MEIC's Board because I am very interested in the role of climate change on Montana wildlife. I am Professor Emeritus of Wildlife Biology, College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana, where I served for 28 years, starting in 1969. I founded the Wilderness Institute at UM and its interdisciplinary Wilderness and Civilization academic program. I initiated the Wolf Ecology Project at UM in 1973. I also served in the Montana House of Representatives from 1983 through 1997. Most recently I chaired the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission from 2009 through 2013.

In my free time I like to enjoy many of Montana's outdoor activities, include skiing, sailing, backpacking, hunting, and canoeing.

**John Rundquist, Helena**

I love Montana. How lucky we are to live close to the rivers, streams, lakes, plains, mountains, wildlife, small towns, and colorful history that make Montana unique and special in the world. She deserves our protection for all generations, present and future.

Much of my professional career involved working with municipal governments to implement state and federal rules originating with the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act. I am recently retired, but still very committed to bringing my experience and perspective to water quality and water policy in our state.

I've admired MEIC and its accomplishments for many years. I feel that no other organization in Montana has done more to preserve our constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. Its record of success is unprecedented. I would like to do my part to help MEIC continue strongly in its mission, and hope you will support me for membership on the Board.

**David "Kim" Wilson, Helena**

I am running for the MEIC Board because MEIC is the only state organization in Montana effectively and comprehensively focusing on the most important issue of our time, climate change. Its work on this issue over the years has been groundbreaking and effective, a breath of fresh air, so to speak, in a very dysfunctional political system dominated in Montana by forces and political parties who refuse to face the reality of climate change and their responsibilities as leaders to do something about it.

I've been actively involved in MEIC since I first became a board member in 1986, beginning a four-year stint on the Board and serving as president for the last two. Since then I have represented MEIC in numerous lawsuits seeking to enforce Montanans' unique rights to a clean and healthful environment and to know about our governments' operations. I'm always in awe of the MEIC's staff, and their commitment to the organization and its causes. MEIC has stayed true to its vision during the past quarter-century of my involvement with the organization, and I want to work with MEIC while it continues this vital work into the future.



# Clean Energy Could Create Thousands of Montana Jobs

by Kyla Maki

Montana has tremendous clean energy potential. Renewable energy and energy efficiency opportunities are abundant and available—all it takes is capturing and developing the state’s vast wind, solar, and energy efficiency resources. Developing Montana’s

clean energy resources is demonstrably beneficial to clean air, clean water and healthy communities. Consumers also benefit because renewable energy and energy efficiency already cost

consumers considerably less than coal power (see the chart on page 7.

A new report commissioned by MEIC and Sierra Club confirms that job creation is

another key benefit of developing Montana’s abundant renewable energy and energy efficiency resources. Synapse Energy Economics, a nationally recognized energy economics consulting firm, authored the **Employment Effects of Clean Energy Investments in Montana** report. The report evaluates the job creation potential in energy efficiency, rooftop solar, wind, and utility-scale solar in Montana. This is the first report to use Montana-specific data to consider the job creation potential in these specific energy sectors. Synapse evaluated construction and operation and maintenance job potential for each of the clean energy sources in the report.

Multiplying the report’s total jobs per average megawatt by conservative projections for Montana’s potential for each source yields over 4,000 clean energy jobs that could be created in Montana in the next 20 years.

Projecting thousands of new jobs in the next 20 years is optimistic, but it is not out of the question. Since 2005, Montana has created over 1,000 direct construction and permanent jobs in wind energy alone. Further developing the state’s wind, solar and energy efficiency will produce significant additional employment opportunities.

If Montana takes advantage of the state’s wind, solar, and energy efficiency potential, the state will certainly reap permanent environmental and economic benefits. Job creation will only happen if Montana captures these opportunities and shifts towards cleaner, more reliable, less expensive, and renewable sources of energy.

*“Multiplying the report’s total jobs per average megawatt... by conservative projections for Montana’s potential for each source yields over 4,000 clean energy jobs that could be created in Montana in the next 20 years.”*

Solar panels in Helena, MT.  
Photo by Jessica Jones/  
Solar Montana.



# Interim Legislative Committee Won't Strengthen Renewable Energy Standard

by Kyla Maki

Over the past year, the interim legislative Energy and Telecommunications Committee (ETIC) has examined the costs and benefits of Montana's Renewable Energy Standard (RES). The RES was enacted in 2005 and requires certain electric utilities to meet 15% of their customers' needs with eligible renewable resources by 2015. With the 2015 target date approaching, the legislature decided to produce a report with its findings and conclusions on the effects of the RES in Montana. Additionally, ETIC was to decide whether to recommend an increase in the standard for the future.

At its July 18, 2014, meeting, the committee discussed what information and findings should be included in a draft report on the RES. ETIC is made up of four Democrats and four Republicans, with equal representation of the House and Senate. Committee members agreed that the RES has contributed to economic development and has had a neutral impact on consumers in Montana. This conclusion is not surprising, considering the over \$1 billion dollars in capital investment the RES has caused, and the hundreds of jobs, and the landowner lease payments that renewable energy projects provide for Montana. Consumers also benefit from renewable energy. Electricity from the Judith Gap and Spion Kop wind farms has proven to be some of the least expensive for NorthWestern Energy customers (see graph on page 7). Even though ETIC's conclusions do not go as far as acknowledging that the renewable standard is a benefit to consumers, a "neutral" impact is not the "job-killing energy tax" that renewable energy detractors often claim the RES is.

ETIC members could not agree, however, on whether the RES has had public health or environmental benefits. Credible data shows that the renewable energy projects utilities are

using to meet Montana's standard have avoided carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury pollution. For example, the RES has helped avoid CO<sub>2</sub> emissions equivalent to taking 600,000 cars off of the road for one year. Despite this clear evidence, ETIC refused to acknowledge that fossil fuels increase pollution, that these pollutants are harmful, and that the RES helps to decrease pollution. Therefore, the committee removed certain references to fossil fuels, pollution, and climate change in the latest draft of its report.

Shockingly, nearly all of the committee members decided to recommend that the RES remain at a mere 15%. Despite their own conclusion that the RES has generated economic activity and had no negative impacts on consumers, committee members decided that a 15% RES is enough. ETIC's misguided recommendation ignores Montana's tremendous renewable energy potential and the significant benefits of the current standard.

The committee will meet again on September 8th to take a final vote on its draft report, conclusions, and recommendations. ☺

*"Despite their own conclusion that the RES has generated economic activity and had no negative impacts on consumers, committee members decided that a 15% RES is enough.."*

*Martinsdale wind project. Photo by Derf Johnson.*



## MEIC's Montana Futures Raffle: Do YOUR Part and Make Us All Winners!

The 2015 legislative session isn't far away. That means it's time to get ready for MEIC's Montana Futures Raffle! The Raffle is the principal source of funding for MEIC's lobbying work during the session. Major environmental challenges loom on many fronts and MEIC needs to be at the Capitol every day, ensuring that your voice is heard to protect the Montana we all hold dear.

To conduct the Raffle we need many prizes, so that we can sell many tickets! Our goal is to sell 250 \$100 tickets, and raise \$25,000 to fund MEIC's four lobbyists during the session.



### *You can help by:*

#### **1) Donating a Prize to the Raffle.**

We know there are many talented and generous MEIC members out there who could contribute a prize (and many already do). But we need more! Prizes run the gamut: artwork, gift certificates, float trips, sides of beef, baskets of produce, massages, concerts, outdoor gear, guided tours. We suggest a minimum value of \$50 and we aim for an

average prize value of \$100.

Prize donors receive publicity on our web site and in the several mailings we make to our members. Those who are not already MEIC members receive a two-year membership.

#### **2) Purchasing Raffle tickets now!**

The raffle drawing is in December (you do not need to be present to win), but buying tickets now is greatly appreciated. If we could sell all our tickets through **Down to Earth**, it would save trees and money!

**Supporting the Raffle makes us all winners – you, MEIC, and Montana's environment.**



Please fill in one or both forms below and return in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

**MEIC**  
**P.O. Box 1184**  
**Helena, MT 59624**

Or you can call Sara Marino at MEIC at **406-443-2520** or e-mail her at **smarino@meic.org**.

**YES! I want a chance to win a great prize AND  
the certainty of helping the environment!**

I'll buy \_\_\_\_\_ Montana Futures Raffle Tickets @\$100 each. Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make your check payable to MEIC. Because the funds are raised to support MEIC's  
lobbying efforts, the cost of the Raffle ticket is not tax-deductible.**

**YES! I'll help protect Montana's environment at  
the 2015 session by donating a Raffle prize.**

Description of Prize (Please be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Retail Value (\$50 or more): \_\_\_\_\_ Date Prize is Available: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person (if a business): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Bomb Train” Information Released to Public

by Derf Johnson

Due to the recent dramatic increase in oil production in eastern Montana and western North Dakota, Montanans have seen an increase in the number of potentially volatile oil trains crossing the state. Unfortunately, due to substandard and outdated rail cars and the unstable and explosive nature of Bakken crude,

*“In a commendable decision, the administration of Gov. Steve Bullock placed the safety of Montanans above the requests of the oil and rail industries, and released information on the volume and distribution of trains across Montana.”*

the trains represent a significant threat to public safety for the residents of Montana and the greater Northwest. There have been three recent and notable disasters in North America

involving oil trains, the worst involving a train that derailed and exploded in Lac-Mégantic, Canada, incinerated a large portion of the downtown, and killed 47 people.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has concluded that Bakken crude oil is particularly dangerous because it contains higher levels of combustible gases, such as methane and propane, than traditional oil. This, coupled with the aging infrastructure of the U.S. rail system, creates very serious causes for concern. The federal government now has stepped in, and

Oil train near Joplin, MT. Photo by Aart Dolman.



the Obama Administration recently issued a proposal that calls for several changes to improve the safety of oil trains.

Montanans should be especially concerned about the potential for an oil train to derail and ignite, considering that railroad tracks and rail yards are located in the heart of some of our largest cities and towns. What’s more, according to the Federal Railroad Administration, Montana has suffered 16 train accidents (excluding accidents involving highway crossings), including a derailment in July involving airplane fuselages that spilled into the Clark Fork River. Coal trains have derailed near the towns of Terry, Olney, and Worden. It may be only a matter of time before an oil train goes off the tracks, with potentially devastating results.

In the immediate future, there are several steps that the industry and government regulators can take to assure that the public is safe. These include: phasing out the older, more dangerous tank cars (which Canada has already begun to do) known as DOT-111s; implementing lower speed limits near crossings and in high-density population centers, and assisting cities and towns to develop emergency response plans in the event of a disaster.

In a commendable decision, the administration of Gov. Steve Bullock placed the safety of Montanans above the requests of the oil and rail industries, and released information on the volume and distribution of trains across Montana. The railroads had taken the position that the information should be kept confidential. However, the information is critical for communities to develop safety measures and emergency response plans in the event that a train accident causes a fiery catastrophe.

The most recent data reported by BNSF, for example, showed that Flathead County had 12 oil trains travel through it in the single week of June 5th-11th, 2014. Data on the number of BNSF and MRL oil trains for each Montana county is now available online at [transparency.mt.gov](http://transparency.mt.gov).

## Bitterroot Subdivision *(continued from page 8)*

to engage in this issue. But as the economy would have it, the subdivision was never built.

In 2013, Mildenerger re-applied to DEQ for the same authority to pollute. But this time John Rundquist, a recently retired Helena public works director and MEIC member, analyzed the permit and called it to MEIC's attention. He also contacted local community leaders in Ravalli County who are dedicated to protecting the valley and its namesake river. Many people were concerned, and they demanded a public hearing on the permit request.

A hearing was held. With the solid help of Western Environmental Law Center's Helena attorney Shiloh Hernandez, all parties provided sound scientific and legal facts to DEQ to justify the outright denial of the permit, or at least to

justify a more thorough study of the project's impacts. DEQ ignored the testimony in its entirety and blithely re-issued the permit.

As a result, MEIC has joined with Bitterrooters For Planning and the Bitterroot Protective Association in a lawsuit challenging DEQ's decision. Attorneys Jack Tuholske of Missoula and Erin Ferris-Olsen of Helena represent the plaintiffs. The suit was filed in Helena district court before Judge Kathy Seeley.

To read the full formal complaint, please go to MEIC's website.

We will keep you posted on the case's progress and its outcome. ☺

*"As a result, MEIC has joined with Bitterrooters For Planning and the Bitterroot Protective Association in a lawsuit challenging DEQ's decision."*

## Colstrip Costs *(continued from page 7)*

power NWE receives from the Judith Gap and Spion Kop wind farms. Given that Montanans' energy bills already reflect the high cost of coal operations, the move by the PSC to add another \$32 million to consumers' bills because of Unit 4's breakdown seems unjustifiable.

In early August 2014, with no public notice, the PSC debated whether MEIC and its allies should be allowed to participate in this rate case. After about an hour of heated debate, the PSC postponed making a decision. The law is clear. Advocacy groups are allowed to participate in these types of decisions, and no one can remember an instance in which the PSC denied an intervention request. Considering the lack of information before the PSC when it approved the temporary

\$32 million rate increase, it is important to make sure that ratepayers and environmental interests are well represented in the discussion of whether to permanently increase customers' bills to pay for the lemon known as Colstrip Unit 4. ☺

*Colstrip power plant.  
Photo by Anne Hedges.*



## Coal Ash “Fly-in” Trip to Washington, DC

A Colstrip-area rancher and a staff member of MEIC recently braved 90+ degree heat and 80% humidity during a sweltering July to visit the nation’s capital. Why? They went to lobby the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal representatives to encourage them to adopt strong regulations governing the disposal of toxic coal ash.

Coal ash is a by-product of burning coal, and often contains toxins and heavy metals. Currently there is no federal regulation of coal ash disposal; the job of regulation is largely left to the states. Inadequate state regulation has led to air and water contamination at coal ash disposal sites across the U.S., including massive amounts of contamination at the Colstrip power plant in Montana.

Wally McRae of Colstrip and Derf Johnson joined others citizens impacted by coal ash across the country for a two-day lobbying event. The delegation met with Montana Senators Jon Tester and John Walsh, as well as with staff from EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The message was clear: support strong regulations for coal ash. EPA is set to release proposed regulations on that topic in December 2014.



*Wally McRae (top center) and Derf Johnson (top left) in front of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.*

## Montanore (continued from page 9)

correct; the Montana legislature has granted the power of eminent domain to private companies for purely private purposes.

That’s when things began to heat up. Optima/Schweitzer asked the federal court to value Optima’s claims at \$10 million. According to an article in the **Billings Gazette**, he made the offer by telephone to MMI chief executive officer Glenn Dobbs, who told the Associated Press that during the call the former governor threatened some sort of retribution if his demand was not met. “It was an extortion call,” Dobbs said. “They were going to announce to the world that we didn’t have access to the project. They would create controversy and

depress our share price.... It’s really gutter-type gangsterism.”

Schweitzer denied Dobbs’ allegations, calling them “silly” and “not true.”

In response to the \$10 million dollar demand, U.S. district judge Dana Christensen wrote that the “amount and basis for the statement of claim are more than suspect.” He said he would appoint a commission of experts to decide the fair value rather submit the question to a jury.

Dobbs told the Associated Press that Christensen’s ruling showed the court recognizes that the claim from Schweitzer and his fellow investors is “clearly motivated by personal greed.” 

## A Variety of Ways You Can Help MEIC

### 1. Join MEIC's monthly giving program

The Pledge Program is a simple but very effective way you can support MEIC. You design the program to best fit your budget and lifestyle. You can pledge any annual amount you choose and make payments in 12 or fewer installments. You could pledge \$240 for the year, and pay just \$20 a month—**that's only 66 cents a day!**

And it gets even easier. You can sign up to pay monthly with your credit card, or by automatic withdrawal from your bank account, and MEIC will take care of the rest. Pledge members help provide the staying power that keeps MEIC at the forefront of environmental advocacy in Montana.

### 2. Leave a bequest to MEIC

You can provide the financial security and long-term stability MEIC needs to weather unpredictable and cyclical funding by contributing to MEIC's Permanent Fund, our endowment. All gifts to the Permanent Fund are invested. Only the income earned on these investments is spent, and all of it goes to MEIC. Here are two ways you can contribute to MEIC's endowment:

1) The Permanent Fund accepts cash or property including stock, real estate, and life insurance. These contributions can be made directly to MEIC and are deductible as charitable contributions.

2) MEIC also has an endowment account at the Montana Community Foundation, which greatly expands the ways you can help MEIC while taking advantage of a Montana State income tax credit. Call the Montana Community Foundation at 406-443-8313 for more information.

### 3. Encourage others to join MEIC or give a gift membership

Members are the heart and soul of MEIC, and who better to spread the word than you give an MEIC gift membership or tell your friends and family why you joined MEIC and about the difference they can make for Montana's environment by joining with you. Every member means a lot. **Take advantage of our 2-for-1 gift membership program when you renew your MEIC membership -- when you renew, you can give an MEIC membership to a friend for FREE!**

I want to help protect Montana's environment by:

- Becoming an MEIC member.
- Renewing my MEIC membership.
- Joining the monthly pledge program.
- Donating to MEIC's permanent fund.
- Giving a gift membership.
- Making a special contribution.

Here are my dues or gift membership:

- \$250 (Sustainer)     \$45 (Contributor)
- \$120 (Donor)         \$30 (Basic)
- \$60 (Supporter)     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to:

MEIC  
P.O. Box 1184  
Helena, MT 59624

**Thank you!**

## Join or Renew Today.

**(406) 443-2520 • [www.meic.org](http://www.meic.org)**

Or use the postage-paid envelope enclosed.

Donate NOW by  
Smartphone:



## Presidents Letter



*by Roger Sullivan*

### Think Locally, Act Globally

As my six years of service on the Board of MEIC is quickly coming to an end, it provides me with the opportunity to take stock of what

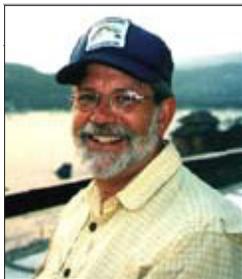
has been for me an enormously meaningful experience. I can't help but start with expressing my deep appreciation for the amazing work done by MEIC's staff. Jim, Adam, and Anne have dedicated most of their professional careers to the mission of MEIC, bringing to our organization a stunning array of important skills ranging from analyzing complex environmental issues, to developing effective strategies to address those

issues, to the implementation of those strategies through effective organizing and advocacy, as well as tending to the financial stewardship of MEIC. Sara, Kyla, Derf, and Gail will help ensure that this legacy perseveres.

I have also had the great pleasure of getting to know the dedicated environmentalists with whom I have served on the Board. And looking at the profiles of our new board candidates (see pages 12-13) I am delighted to report that this tradition will continue as well. Between our outstanding staff and our dedicated Board, MEIC is indeed in good hands, which is fortunate because the environmental challenges we face have never been more daunting.

For forty years MEIC has been at the forefront of forging into reality the constitutional right of this and future generations of Montanans to a clean and healthful environment. Historically

## Thoughts from the Executive Director



*by Jim Jensen*

**B**ob Stevens died in May 2014 at the age of 89 and I miss him.

It was August 1988 (the year of the Yellowstone, Scapegoat, and Elkhorn Mountain fires) on a Thursday afternoon that Bob Stevens called MEIC, desperate for help. Years earlier his father had leased oil and gas development rights on the family's historic American Fork Ranch south of Two Dot in the Crazy Mountains. Out of the blue, he and his wife Hopie had just been notified that a drilling rig was to arrive the following Monday and set up roughly 300 feet upwind from the ranch's headquarters buildings.

Bob had called a local Bozeman environmental group that referred him to

MEIC. Could we help? The answer was yes. He had rights and we helped him exercise them. The well was not drilled. After this initial "introduction," he and his wife Hopie were stalwart MEIC supporters.

After retiring from a very successful travel agency business they had built in Bozeman they moved to a wonderful place near Marysville that they named Little Falcon Farm. It became a demonstration project of how to live in harmony with nature.

On the farm Bob was a renewable energy pioneer and energy efficiency zealot. He and Hopie built an off-grid solar and wind powered, super-insulated, house. He just did not waste things. He was "old school" in that he worked hard with his hands, mind, and heart. He wasn't flashy and he did not suffer fools lightly. He was an avid reader and wrote in a way that reflected his well-educated and disciplined mind.

But it was at regular lunch meetings with Bob and Hopie that I learned the most from

these efforts fit within the rubric of the slogan purportedly coined decades ago by David Brower: "Think globally, act locally." That was sage advice for the times, and MEIC was at the forefront in advocating in the legislature for the passage of sound laws such as reasonable standards for subdivisions, clean water, clean air, and mining reclamation in Montana. And when agency decision-makers charged with reviewing proposals have ignored those environmental standards, MEIC has joined with local concerned citizens and organizations and vigilantly held those agencies accountable in the courts.

But despite MEIC's best efforts on so many fronts over the years, the pernicious threats from global warming have been growing all the while. This human-caused scourge is born of a mindset that allows the use of our atmosphere as a sewer for the waste gases that result from the combustion of fossil fuels. Here in Montana a growing chorus of scientists from an array of disciplines, including climate scientists, forest

ecologists, wildlife biologists, and agronomists, have chronicled a host of "local" impacts across the Montana landscape, ranging from melting glaciers, to increasing insect infestations and devastating fires in our forests, to the alteration of wildlife habitat, to drought across our croplands. Similar impacts (and worse, for those millions living on coastal plains) are being chronicled at locales all around our planet.

And so an important element in shifting the dominant paradigm that treats the atmosphere as a sewer is for people in communities around the world to think critically about the local impacts they are experiencing. They need to "connect the dots" that lead inexorably to the realizations that global warming is real, that it is human caused, and that it is critically important to act now to decrease the pollution of earth's atmosphere with greenhouse gasses. Perhaps if David Brower were alive today he'd urge us to "think locally, act globally." 🌱

Bob. I always knew that he would have new ideas, a creative point of view, and challenging questions to be discussed. He had a mind that just did not turn off. And, coupled with Hopie's "fire in the belly" attitude, I always came away even more motivated for my work.



*Bob Stevens.*

I am very grateful for having known Bob. He was an amazingly interesting man with a facile intellect who never quit trying to solve problems. 🌱

### Join our list!

Want to know the latest way you can help protect Montana's environment? Want to take action during the upcoming 2015 Montana legislative session, and help MEIC defend Montana's environmental laws? Join MEIC's Action Alert Network, stay tuned in, and make a difference. Sign up today at: <http://meic.org/get-involved/join-our-network/>

### Get social with MEIC!

MEIC regularly updates its social media with the latest news about Montana's environment. We also offer unique action items for ways that you can help protect Montana's air, land, and water. Friend or follow us, whichever you prefer, and keep in the loop!

**MEIC** - a nonprofit environmental advocate

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MEIC's purpose is to protect Montana's clean and healthful environment. The words "clean and healthful" are taken from the Montana Constitution, Article II, section 3 - Inalienable Rights, which begins: "All persons are born free and have certain inalienable rights. They include the right to a clean and healthful environment . . ."

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## **CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

### **Are You Up For a Challenge?**

MEIC has been awarded a \$25,000 challenge grant for working to move Montana beyond coal and toward clean energy. We have met most of the match but need to raise \$8,000 by September 30th. That's where YOU come in!

Take advantage of this special opportunity to double your money while helping to keep Montana clean and healthful for you and your family. Here are a few of the things we are doing to keep coal in the ground where it belongs:

- The coal-fired Colstrip Power Plant is the #1 polluter in the entire state of Montana. MEIC has made it a top priority to transition dirty coal to clean energy.
- MEIC is committed to preventing the destruction of the uniquely beautiful Otter Creek Valley by a massive coal strip mine. Most of this coal will head to Asia, and burning it will release more than 2.5 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the air.
- MEIC is opposing in court the expansion of several operating coal mines, including the Rosebud and Bull Mountain mines.
- The most common-sense sources of new energy are increasing energy conservation, improving energy efficiency, and developing solar and wind power generation. MEIC promotes reliance on clean energy, including commissioning a report on potential job creation and clean energy development in Montana.

MEIC is making great progress in its fight to move away from coal, to create jobs, and to diminish the devastating impacts of climate change – but we can't do it without you. Please donate today using the enclosed postage-paid envelope or online at [www.meic.org](http://www.meic.org). Thank you!

