

High Divide Collaborative 7th Annual Workshop



When: February 12, 2020 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
February 13, 2020 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Where: Fairmont Hot Springs
Fairmont, Montana

Purpose: The annual High Divide Collaborative Workshop brings together people working on and concerned about land and communities across the region. The workshop framework encourages peer-to-peer communication and learning, and helps identify shared opportunities and challenges.

The High Divide Collaborative's eight primary conservation goals, as established by Collaborative stakeholders, are to conserve:

- **ECOLOGICAL LINKAGE** among core habitat areas to conserve wide-ranging fish and wildlife populations that are resilient to climate change
- A **CULTURAL LEGACY** of traditional food sources, tribal treaty lands, and travel ways such as the Nez Perce, Continental Divide, and Lewis & Clark Trails
- **WORKING RANGLANDS** that are central to communities, economy and way of life
- Nationally important dispersed **RECREATION** lands and waterways where people enjoy nature
- **CLEAN AND ABUNDANT WATER** for headwaters fisheries, wildlife, healthy riparian communities, and human uses.
- Intact, resilient **SAGEBRUSH STEPPE ECOSYSTEMS** that support sustainable ranching communities and are critical for many wildlife species, including the greater sage grouse
- **HEALTHY FOREST LANDS** managed for sustained economic, social and ecological values
- Open land in the **WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE** to protect life and property, reduce fire costs, and allow wildfire to play its natural role.

Wednesday, February 12

7:00 - 8:00 **Registration with Continental Breakfast and Coffee**

Introduction and Policy Updates

8:00 - 8:15 **Welcome and Introductions**

8:15 - 10:15 **Panel: Relevant Updates in the High Divide**

Moderator: Jim Berkey - High Divide Headwaters Director, The Nature Conservancy, and High Divide Collaborative Coordinating Committee Member

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
Dick Dolan - Northern Rockies Director, Trust for Public Land
- Farm Bill
Tom Mallon - Montana Association of Land Trusts
Jerry Shows - Assistant State Conservationist, NRCS
- Secretarial Order 3362 in Montana and Idaho
Renee Lemon - Land Use Planner, MT FWP
Frank Edelman - Wildlife Habitat Program Director, IDFG
- Brucellosis in Madison County, Montana
Linda Owens - Executive Director, Madison Valley Ranchlands Group
- Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council - MT
Cole Mannix - Associate Director, Western Landowners Alliance

Purpose: Learn about policy, legislation and events that impact our work and livelihoods in the High Divide.

10:15 - 10:30 **Break**

Wildfire and the Wildland Urban Interface

10:30 - 11:45 **Reintroducing wildland fire in the Wales Creek Study Area**

Michael Albritton - Fuels Specialist, Bureau of Land Management

Purpose: Explore a case study on reintroducing wildfire on the landscape: What did it take to make this project happen? Who were the partners? How did it go, and what did they learn?

11:45 - 1:00 **Catered Lunch**

1:00 – 3:00

Panel: Wildfire and the Wildland Urban Interface

- Tri-County FireSafe Working Group (TCFSWG)
Ray Prill - Executive Director, TCFSWG
Pat McKelvey – TCFSWG
- Grassy Ridge post-fire restoration; update on partnership work on Sand Creek Desert Fuel Breaks and subsequent Habitat Management Plans
Jeremy Casterson - Upper Snake Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management
- Tribal use of Fire and WUI Research Updates
Dr. Serra Hoagland - Liaison Officer (Biologist), Missoula Fire Sciences Lab & Salish Kootenai College
- Cost Share Program for Landowner Fuel Reduction
Byron Bonney - Community Forester, Bitterroot RC&D
Kim Maynard - Landowner
Dyrk Krueger - Contractor

Purpose: Hear multiple perspectives, learn about available resources, and spark a conversation around what it means to live, work, and manage resources in the Wildland Urban Interface

3:00 – 3:20 **Break**

Crafting Solutions around Common Conservation Issues

3:20 – 4:30 **Breakout Groups**

- Navigating the Social Climate within the High Divide
Self-facilitated: Conversation prompts will be available
- Working Lands Narrative
Self-facilitated: Conversation prompts will be available
- Stitching the pieces together: Landscape Conservation Design
Sean Finn - Science Coordinator, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Moving the High Divide Collaborative Forward
Emily Harkness - Project Coordinator, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Purpose: Create an opportunity for small groups to better understand some of the issues that impact our work in the High Divide, and move toward solutions that we can implement in our individual work, and as a collaborative.

4:30 – 4:50 **Report Out to Large Group**

4:50 - 5:00 Closing Remarks

5:00 - 7:00 Happy Hour w/ Hors d'oeuvres

Thursday, February 13

7:00-8:00 Hosted Breakfast

Conservation Tools in the High Divide

8:00 - 8:15 Welcome Back

8:15 - 9:00 Source Water Depletion in Montana's High Divide: A Partnership Approach at Landscape Scale

Moderator: Emily Harkness - Project Coordinator, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

- *Pedro Marques - Executive Director, Big Hole Watershed Committee*
- *Ted Dodge - Executive Director, Watershed Restoration Coalition*
- *Jodi Brandt - Assistant Professor, Boise State University*
- *Nick Kolarik - PhD Student, Boise State University*
- *Kali Hannon - Development Director, Heart of the Rockies Initiative*

Purpose: Hear from partners in the High Divide who submitted an application for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to address source water depletion by means of conifer removal, beaver dam analogs, and low-tech riparian restoration.

9:00 - 9:45 Using GIS to Estimate Fence Locations for Wildlife Passage

Simon Buzzard, M.S. Candidate, University of Montana

Purpose: Learn more about a modeling tool to estimate fence locations and densities across large landscapes using expert opinion and publicly available GIS data. This tool can help landowners and conservation practitioners prioritize fence modification efforts for wildlife passage. It can also help inform land use planning.

9:45 - 10:00 Break

10:00 – 11:45 World Cafe Conversations: Conservation Tools

- Depredation Handbook
Linda Owens - Project Director, Madison Valley Ranchlands Group

Join Linda and Madison Valley Ranchlands Group for a discussion on their newly created Depredation Handbook. This handbook was designed for ranchers and producers as a guide to address livestock depredation, with helpful steps and tools to get a positive predator ID and compensation.

- Master Hunter Program
Kelly Beevers - Landowner Retention and Recruitment, One Montana
Dave Delisi - Outreach Coordinator, Ruby Habitat Foundation

Designed by Montana farmers, ranchers, and sportsmen, the Master Hunter Program intends to address some of the primary challenges faced by landowners in managing wildlife and opening their properties to hunters. The program certifies participants by offers participating hunters skills mastery combined with conservation and stewardship education, and specialized ballistics and marksmanship training, and tailors each landowner partner experience to the landowner's goals and preferences.

- Restoration for Natural Water Storage
Pedro Marques - Executive Director, Big Hole Watershed Committee

In this roundtable discussion, Pedro will show examples of different techniques to restore degraded systems with a specific focus on naturally storing water. From hand-built BDA structures to complete floodplain reconstruction, we'll discuss the project results BHWC has seen, as well as dive into permitting and other regulatory considerations.

Purpose: Have conversations about available tools in the High Divide. Learn how they work, why they were created, and how they could play a role in your work.

11:45 - 12:00 Closing

Brandon Hoffner - Executive Director, Henry's Fork Foundation and High Divide Coordinating Committee member

12:00 Catered Lunch

1:00 Future West Workshop begins