



TREASURE STATE
RESOURCES ASSOCIATION
OF MONTANA

P.O Box 1700, Helena, Montana 59624

Phone: (406) 443-5541

TREASURE STATE RESOURCES ASSOCIATION NEWS
December, 2016

Space is filling fast – Register now for the Treasure State Resources Association 2017 Legislative Reception and Showcase of Montana’s Natural Resource Industries – Tuesday, January 3, 2017 Radisson Colonial Hotel, Helena, MT

January is approaching quickly – and with it the start of the 2017 Montana Legislative Session at noon on January 2nd. One of the best ways to kick off the New Year is to sign up for TSRA’s Legislative Reception and Showcase - an event that’s become a “must attend” tradition for both legislators and TSRA members.

The event will be held on **Tuesday, January 3, 2017 from 5:30 – 8:30 pm. at the Radisson Colonial Hotel** in Helena. The Showcase offers a great opportunity for your company or organization to be recognized and to discuss your issues with Montana legislators before they get too busy with other session activities. Nearly every legislator and many other elected officials and agency representatives attended this event at the 2015 Session.

Don’t miss the opportunity to be part of the 2017 TSRA Reception and Showcase. There are options to have a booth or table display, as well as be widely recognized as sponsors. Individual attendees are welcome to register as well.

Contact TSRA Executive Director Peggy Trenk if you need more information. Ready to register? The Sponsorship and Booth Reservation Form can be found on the TSRA website at: treasurestateresources.org.

Thank you to our growing list of Legislative Showcase Sponsors and Exhibitors:

Montana Mining Association – Bar Sponsor

BNSF

MDU Resources Group, Inc.

Montana Snowmobile Association

CDM Smith

Citizens for Balanced Use

F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company

Montana Farm Bureau Federation

Montana Grain Growers Association

Stillwater Mining Company

Weyerhaeuser

Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association

Montana Wood Products Association

IBEW Local 44

Montana Chamber of Commerce

TSRA Will Hold Its First Weekly Legislative Breakfast Meeting on Thursday, January 5, 2017 at 7:00 a.m. at the Montana Contractors' Association Office located at 1717 11th Avenue in Helena, MT

Attendees are encouraged to share information about legislation or other issues that impact the use of our natural resources. Those interested in participating can contact Peggy Trenk at ptrenk@tsria.net to make sure you are on our email list for more information. TSRA will make arrangements for "breakfast" each week and participants will be invoiced for their share of the costs at the end of the session.

Another Legislative Note...

The Capitol shuttle will be running again this session. The shuttle is a great option for those who have struggled with finding a parking place in the past. The City of Helena Capital Transit, the Department of Administration, and the Legislative Services Division are joint sponsors of the shuttle service that will operate from 6:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. starting the first day of the session and will run between the Capitol Hill Mall east parking lot and the south entrance of the Capitol building.

2017 Legislative Leadership

On November 14, 2017 Republicans and Democrats elected their leadership for the 2017 Session. They are as follows:

House Leadership

Speaker of the House: Austin Knudsen (R-Culbertson)

Speaker Pro Tempore: Greg Hertz (R-Polson)

Majority Leader: Ron Ehli (R-Hamilton)

Majority Whips: Seth Berglee (R-Joliet), Alan Doane (R-Bloomfield), Theresa Manzella (R-Hamilton), Brad Tschida (R-Missoula)

Minority Leader: Jenny Eck (D-Helena)

Minority Caucus Chair: Tom Woods (D-Bozeman)

Minority Whips: Nate McConnell (D-Missoula), Shane Morgieau (D-Missoula), Casey Schreiner (D-Great Falls)

Senate Leadership

President: Scott Sales (R-Bozeman)

President Pro Tempore: Bob Keenan (R-Bigfork)

Majority Leader: Fred Thomas (R-Stevensville)

Majority Whips: Mark Blasdel (R-Kalispell), Edward Buttrey (Great Falls) Cary Smith (R-Billings)

Minority Leader: Jon Sesso (D-Butte)

Minority Whips: Tom Facey (D-Missoula), JP Pomnichowski (D-Bozeman)

The following individuals were appointed as Committee Chairs by the Committee on Committees (Senate) or the House speaker-elect (House):

House Committees

Agriculture, Alan Redfield (R-Livingston)

Appropriations, Nancy Balance (R-Hamilton)

Business and Labor, Mark Noland (R-Bigfork)

Education, Seth Berglee (R-Joliet)

Ethics, Bill Harris (R-Winnett)

Federal Relations, Energy, and Telecommunications, Daniel Zolnikov (R-Billings)

Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Kelly Flynn (R-Townsend)

Human Services, Kirk Wagoner (R-Montana City)

Judiciary, Alan Doane (R-Bloomfield)

Legislative Administration, Vince Ricci (R-Laurel)

Local Government, Ed Greef (R-Florence)

Natural Resources, Kerry White (R-Bozeman)

Rules, Jeff Essman (R-Billings)

State Administration, Forrest Mandeville (R-Columbus)

Taxation, Jeff Essman (R-Billings)

Transportation, Steve Lavin (R-Kalispell)

Senate Committees

Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation, Brian Hoven (R-Great Falls)

Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs, Ed Buttrey (R-Great Falls)

Education and Cultural Resources, Kristin Hansen (R-Havre)

Energy, Duane Ankney (R-Colstrip)

Ethics, Nels Swandal (R-Wilsall)

Finance and Claims, Llew Jones (R-Conrad)

Fish and Game, Jennifer Fielder (R-Thompson Falls)

Highways and Transportation, Gordon Vance (R-Belgrade)

Judiciary, Keith Regier (R-Kalispell)

Legislative Administration, Bob Keenan (R-Big Fork)

Local Government, Roger Webb (R-Billings)

Natural Resources, Chas Vincent (R-Libby)

Public Health, Welfare, and Safety, David Howard (R-Park City)

Rules, Fred Thomas (R-Stevensville)

State Administration, Dee Brown (R-Hungry Horse)

Taxation, Mark Blasdel (R-Kalispell)

Montana Infrastructure Coalition Adopts Legislative Package

Source: Montana Infrastructure Coalition News Release, November 15, 2017 By: Darryl James, Executive Director

At their recent membership meeting, the Montana Infrastructure Coalition adopted a package of tools to address the declining condition of our most critical infrastructure, including consistent funding mechanisms for roads, bridges, water and sewer projects...

The package includes the following major components:

Fuel Tax Increase:

With a \$0.10 per gallon increase in the fuel tax and additional adjustments in the fuel tax revenue distribution formula, Montana can fully leverage available federal highway funds, and provide a long-overdue funding increase for City and County roadway and bridge improvements.

Local Option Tourism Tax:

With an emphasis on local control, each community would be empowered to decide whether a local tourism tax is appropriate in their area. This tool requires local voter approval and re-approval upon a mandatory sunset, applicability to a limited range of luxury items, at least five percent of the revenue returned to local residents through property tax relief, and a commitment of revenue to be invested in infrastructure.

Enhancing Infrastructure Assistance through the Coal Tax Trust Fund:

The Legislature has struggled in recent years with issuing bonds for infrastructure that are backed by the General Fund. As an alternative, the Coalition proposes that the Coal Trust be capped at \$1 billion and new revenues used to back bonds issued specifically for vetted and prioritized infrastructure projects, such as those that might qualify for the Treasure State Endowment Program.

Additional Tools:

The Coalition is developing enabling legislation to provide local governments with the ability to leverage private investment through *Public Private Partnerships* (P3s), and will also support a reasonable and balanced *Bonding Bill* focused on critical infrastructure needs across the state.

About the Montana Infrastructure Coalition

The Montana Coalition is an association of over 70 public and private organizations involved in the design, construction, finance, operation and maintenance of our most critical infrastructure in Montana. The purpose of the Coalition is to help change public policy and improve the manner in which State and local governments build and maintain these essential community assets. (Editor's Note: TSRA is a non-voting member of the Coalition)

Montanans Show Support for Using the Coal Tax for Infrastructure in Annual Chamber Poll

Source: Montana Chamber of Commerce News Release, December 2, 2016 Contact: Bridger Mahlum

The Power-Base (P-base) is an annual scientific survey of 800 Montana voters on a variety of business and political issues with a margin of error of plus or minus 3%. The poll was conducted during the month of November 2016. It has been commissioned by the Montana Chamber of Commerce since 1992 to determine what ordinary Montanans think about the business community and important economic issues.

The poll found that Montana voters would support legislation that would cap the Coal Tax Trust Fund at a balance of \$1 billion and have future funds invested in critical infrastructure proposals around the state (69% support, 14% oppose). The proposal finds majority support throughout the state, among all voter subgroups, including Republicans, Democrats and Independents.

The poll also found that there is widespread support for mining today among seven in ten voters (73% support mining in Montana, 20% oppose, 7 % don't know)

Helena – Lewis and Clark National Forest Releases Draft of Revised Forest Plan

The Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest has announced the release of the draft revised plan for managing the forest. The comment period will open once the Notice of Intent is published in the Federal Register in the next few days and last for 120 days.

The plan analyzes the forest's 2.9 million acres and sets the stage for future uses such as recreation, timber, wildlife, and mining. It sets standards and guidelines for achieving "desired conditions" or goals for future management. Once review of the draft plan is complete, the Forest Service will issue a set of alternatives that again will be subject to public comment. The current timeline for completion is the Fall of 2018.

A series of public meetings have been scheduled to provide updated information on the forest plan revision process, offer an overview of the proposed action, and allow opportunities for the public to ask questions and share information. The current meeting schedule is as follows:

Workshop Location	Date	Time	Venue
Lincoln	January 23, 2017	5-7 pm	Lincoln Community Center, 1569 Highway 200
Helena	January 24, 2017	4-7 pm	Radisson Colonial Hotel, 2301 Colonial Drive
Townsend	January 25, 2017	5-7 pm	Townsend Library, 201 N. Spruce Street
White Sulphur Springs	January 26, 2017	5-7 pm	WSS High School Library, 15 1st Ave. SE
Harlowton	January 30, 2017	11-1 pm	Harlowton Library, 13 Central Avenue North
Stanford	January 30, 2017	5-7 pm	Stanford City Hall, 102 Central Avenue
Great Falls	January 31, 2017	4-7 pm	Great Falls Civic Center, 2 Park Drive South
Browning	February 1, 2017	5-7 pm	Holiday Inn Express, 50 Museum Loop
Choteau	February 2, 2017	5-7 pm	Stage Stop Inn, 1005 Main Avenue North

For those who have an interest in how the forest will be managed over the next decade or longer, it's important to comment along each step of the way as the forest plan and alternatives are developed.

More information can be found at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/hlc/forestplanrevision>

Custer Gallatin National Forest Also Updating Plan

The Custer National Forest has announced the Draft Assessment of Existing Conditions is available for review and feedback through January 6, 2017. According to a Forest Service news release, the Assessment of Existing Conditions is a snapshot in time of current forest conditions.

It is meant to be looked at as a summary and serves as a starting place for the rest of plan revision.

“Information from the public is a key step in revising our Forest Plans. With these documents we are looking for new information, publications, reports or reasoning and rationale behind feedback and content that is pertinent to the Existing Conditions on the ground, in a broad sense or the Need to Change topics,” said Virginia Kelly, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader. To see the draft document, or learn more about how to comment, visit: www.fs.usda.gov/custergallatin.

Bullock Eyes Carbon Capture Plan

Source: [Helena Independent Record](#) December 3, 2016 By: Tom Lutey, Billings Gazette

BILLINGS – Montana Gov. Steve Bullock has identified opportunities for putting power plant pollution to use by improving oil wells.

Bullock cited Montana’s Bell Creek Oil Field as a potential destination for carbon dioxide pollution from power plants. Wells in the area currently accept carbon dioxide from a Wyoming natural gas processing plant...

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead joined Bullock in listing the carbon capture opportunities of the dual state project, which is included in a 14-state report. “Capture of CO2 from power plants for use in enhanced oil recovery can provide economic, environmental and national security benefits long into the future,” said Bullock. “The report Gov. Mead and I are releasing today will help inform policy makers and the business community how we can shape our energy future by design, not happenstance,” Bullock said in a press release.

The governors recommended tax credits as a carbon capture incentive, as well as tax exempt bonding and policies that assure the price of oil isn’t driven up by the cost of carbon capture... The report, titled “Putting the Puzzle Together: State and Federal Policy Drivers for Growing America’s Carbon Capture and CO2-EOR Industry,” stems from a Western Governors Association resolution calling for federal incentives to accelerate the deployment of carbon capture from power plants and industrial facilities...

Montana Board of Environmental Review Meets December 9th – Will Consider Moving Forward with Rulemaking to Adopt Changes to the State’s Water Quality Standards in accordance with the Triennial Review

The information for the December 9, 2016 Board of Environmental Review meeting has been posted. One of the BER’s action items is consideration of the final Montana Administrative Register (MAR) notice for the proposed water quality standards changes. Those interested can visit the BER website: <http://deq.mt.gov/DEQAdmin/ber>

To access the rule amendment packet directly go

to: <http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/DEQAdmin/BER/Documents/2016Agendas/12092016/III.B.1..pdf> The MAR notice begins a little past the halfway mark in the packet. The executive summary, triennial review public comment letters, and response to comments are included first.

If the MAR notice is approved, this will initiate a formal comment period on the rule changes.

Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team to Consider Initiation of Rulemaking for Habitat Quantification Tool and Mitigation

On Tuesday, December 6, the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (MSGOT) will be meeting in Helena to consider approving administrative rules on the Habitat Quantification Tool and mitigation. If approved by MSGOT, the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program would be authorized to initiate formal rulemaking and solicit public comment. The proposed rules would be published in the Montana Administrative Register later in December. Three hearings are anticipated: January 12, 2017 in Roundup, January 16, 2017 in Dillon, and January 17, 2017 in Malta. Public comment would close on January 22, 2017 at 5:00 pm.

A group of stakeholders representing a wide range of interests including federal and state agencies, industry and conservation groups has been working together to craft the proposed rule language and develop the methodology needed to assess habitat. The rules are needed to continue implementing the state's habitat conservation strategy.

The Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program works to sustain viable sage grouse populations and conserve habitat, enabling Montanans to maintain control of their lands, wildlife and economy by avoiding a listing of the greater sage grouse under the federal Endangered Species Act.

REAL Montana Application Process Opens March 1, 2017

Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership (REAL) Montana is a comprehensive two year program offering in-depth education and training in the agriculture and natural resource industries. Class seminars address:

- Agriculture institutions and agencies
- Energy development
- Leadership development/mentoring
- Communication skills
- Economics and policy
- International trade
- Urban/rural relationships

- Labor & production costs
- Regulations and permitting
- Transportation and water issues

The program is administered by the MSU Extension Service in Bozeman. This will be the third session of the training program. The class includes one international seminar and features panel presentations by practitioners in the different industries as well as on-site tours. Program guidance is provided by an advisory panel representing different industry interests. Those interested in becoming a member of the next class should contact either Janelle Booth, Program Director at janelle.booth@montana.edu or Tara Becken, Program Coordinator at tara.becken@montana.edu.

Upcoming Events/Dates

December 6, 2016 Legislative Finance Committee State Capitol	January 2, 2017 Montana Legislative Session Begins
December 7, 2016 Montana Taxpayers Assoc. Annual Meeting Radisson Colonial Hotel	January 2-3, 2017 Montana State Chamber Days Helena, MT
December 9, 2016 Board of Environmental Review DEQ Headquarters, Helena	January 3, 2017 TSRA Legislative Showcase Radisson Colonial Hotel, Helena