

ISSUE 09 | SPRING 2022

THE CHANGING TIMES

NATURE CONNECTION - CLIMATE ACTIVISM
CREATIVITY - EDUCATION - CULTURAL CHANGE
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE - LOCAL FOOD



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FROM THE editors

I've heard it said before that spring in Montana is like a hit of endorphins for everyone living here.

Light,

warmth (sort of),

green,

longer days,

the snow receding to the mountain tops.

By mid-March, winter's charm and beauty has faded and there is a collective energy around change.

Spring brings with it all of the classic cliches: new growth, new life, rebirth. (Is anyone else having flashbacks to their high school English classes on symbolism? Or just me?)

But, more than anything, those spring tropes hold a collective energy, a restless fidgeting ready for change, action, motion.

That's what spring means to me. And, what you'll find inside this issue.


Our contributors wrote of movement: neighborhood projects, busy bees and flies, and poems and art with direction/force/action.

Art like this, writing like this, is from people paying attention. And, while we all wish we could pay that close attention all year long, there is a beauty in letting winter be rest, just rest, and using the natural energy of spring to turn our attention to the world with the energy to bear it on our shoulders once more.

This energy, this collective deep breath to fill the soul, holds me up while I create space in my mind and heart for war, for pandemic loss, for global climate change.

May we hold the great privilege it is to be in the position to moderate our intake of these global problems. May we choose, when the energy returns to us, to hold them and take action. And, may we be gentle with ourselves when the energy has not returned with spring, and be grateful that in this big world there are plenty of shoulders if we all take turns.

— Meg Smith, Editor



“Climate change is already further marginalizing disabled and chronically ill populations; disability justice demands that our individual and collective responses stop doing the same.

where disability justice meets climate justice

SARAH CAPDEVILLE

The elk, that winter morning, were acting odd. The sky was, too, ballooning cobalt behind wedges of stratus to the north. And so was my body, heavy with an ache like hot aluminum foil packed against my limbs—but that, at least, was pretty normal.

My dog and I were headed down the wind-rounded crest of Waterworks Hill, and as usual, I had my focus turned to Mount Jumbo, where I could make out half of the winter elk herd grazing below the treeline. The other half, though, had moved all the way up the mountain, almost to its summit, bunched together on the snowy ridge like a row of sentries.

Over the Rattlesnake Mountains to the north, where the elk spend the rest of their year, tangles of clouds stretched thin against a wall of deep blue. The air—its color, its hollow stillness—spoke of an approaching front. And my body, with its low buzz of fatigue from autoimmune disease, was a mirror to that pressure drop. I'd seen the forecast earlier, but now I was enveloped in it—the looming cobalt horizon, the elk clustered on Jumbo's crest, the cells of my immune system, also on edge.

It's nearly impossible to attribute any

single storm to climate change. And this winter storm, in particular, was more of a norm and a necessity to the Northern Rockies than an outlier. Still, when it comes to any dramatic swing in weather these days, I can't help but think of the reality of climate change: more severe storms, more floods, more wildfires, more drought, more moisture churned up into the atmosphere, sometimes dropping on the right places, sometimes not. Even as more people experience these events firsthand, moving the abstract into physicality, I can't help but think of the unavoidable physicality of climate change for chronically ill and disabled people.

Conversations on climate change often reflect broader societal and systemic inequities, and the exclusion of chronically ill and disabled voices in these conversations is no exception. Last year, on the first day of COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, the energy minister of Israel, Karine Elharrar, was unable to participate in the talks because the building was inaccessible for wheelchair users. In recent years, movements to ban plastic straws have continually overlooked and silenced people with disabilities who rely on single use, plastic straws to safely consume liquids. Conversations about the staggering

carbon footprint and environmental impacts of different food industries often shame disabled and chronically ill people for dietary needs that are out of our control.

In these examples, a troubling narrative crops up—that accessibility and addressing climate change are at odds. This perspective not only isolates disabled and chronically ill people from engaging critically in conversations about our shared futures, but fuels real-world harm. In 2013, a federal judge found that New York City had discriminated against disabled residents in its failure to include them in rescue and recovery plans after Hurricane Sandy; similarly, the National Council on Disabilities wrote that “people with disabilities, especially those living in poverty, were disproportionately left behind in Hurricane Katrina.” In 2019, when California’s Pacific Gas & Electric

Disabled and chronically ill bodies and minds are barometers to change at the smallest scales, and above all reflect the complexity of how that smallness augments a larger whole.

cut power across the state in the face of extreme wildfire conditions, it failed to communicate those shut-offs to hundreds of customers living with chronic conditions. One of them, a man named Gerald Niimi, suddenly found himself without a functioning ventilator. He died after two days of searching for one in vain.

The lack of preparedness, response, effective communication, and intentionality for those living with chronic illness and disability in the wake of these disasters point to how broad lack of accessibility compounds in the face of climate change. Equally important, too, is how a changing climate directly impacts chronic illnesses and disabilities in the body. Maintaining some semblance of balance on an individual level is a daily struggle for many chronically ill and disabled people, and adding climate change driven events drastically tips the scale. During record-setting temperatures in July of 2018 in Montreal, a quarter of all people in emergency rooms had schizophrenia, 500 times higher than their representation in the general population. These people were facing highly disproportionate rates of heat-related illnesses because their medications used to manage schizophrenia heightened susceptibility to heat, further compounding social stigma and isolation.

Heatwaves in general, increasingly common in our warming world, are especially damaging for those with chronic and underlying conditions. Last June, when a heatwave inundated much of the Northern Rockies and Pacific Northwest, I felt my body reach its tipping points, one after another, until they were all knocking against each other in my non-air-conditioned Missoula home. Chronic inflammation means I struggle to regulate my



temperature, and with outside temperatures scaling into triple-digits, my blood flow scattered like fast snowmelt. Heartbeats pattered in matching triple-digits. Blood and oxygen drained from my digestive system and brain, leaving me nauseous, spacey, weary. Side effects from my own medication worsened. Sleep was fitful, fleeting, sweat-drenched. All this deregulation of various systems put further stress on my immune system, which tripped into a stronger flare of autoimmune disease activity, which, in turn, exacerbated the imbalances we were all struggling with that week in late June.

A metaphor often used in conversations about climate change is the snowball effect—this idea that the more momentum gained, the harder it is to stop, and the more damaging any impacts will be. But the scope and

starting points of that complex snowball often fail to take into account vulnerabilities present to begin with. And when it comes to the absence of disability justice in conversations about climate change, that means that those and other inequities will continue to silently parallel—and never rightfully intersect—with the individual and systemic injustices exacerbating them in the first place.

“I can sense a wildfire coming before most people because of how my respiratory system is built,” writes disability rights advocate Alice Wong. “My diaphragm, which is slowly weakening over time, gives me a heightened sensitivity to secrets in the air.” Disabled and chronically ill bodies and minds are barometers to change at the smallest scales, and above all reflect the complexity of how that smallness augments a larger whole. Excluding the needs and wellbeing of disabled and chronically ill people in climate change disaster preparedness, recovery, and mitigation is a direct result of ignoring these perspectives, especially from Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. Climate change is already further marginalizing disabled and chronically ill populations; disability justice demands that our individual and collective responses stop doing the same.

That afternoon on Waterworks Hill, in the presence of the elk and deep swath of sky, my body pulled attention to the moment before the snow started falling. And I was grateful, despite the growing fatigue that would later drop me to the couch as pointedly as the storm ricocheting outside, for the physicality of that moment, surrounded by secrets and sentries of land and body. I was grateful to be intertwined—rather than at odds—with the larger world, even as it continued and continues to snowball in so many ways.

Spring Rains

STAR JAMESON

Someone weeps within today
for paths untraveled
vistas never seen, friendships dissolved
conversations unspoken, books unread
poems never written, babies unborn
beloveds passed on.

The tears come gently in the mystery
of choices made so subtly
they're not even lodged in memory:
a contraction here
a reaching there, like
shifting weight in a good canoe
until I am downriver
and the banks gone by
seem frozen in time
while I drift on.

Who weeps? Who chooses?
Who shifts? I and not I
Eye and tear, boat and current,
Raindrops passing through
wet ground, soaking old roots.

red-winged withering

JULIAN COSTANTINI

The smoke from our burning land
coagulates in a milky fog
The mountains disappear with no promise
of return
The cows gaze as they graze,
with cautious curiosity

And I stick to dishes like a leech
chucking them with disdain into the water basin
a caustic curl of my mouth mixed in with suds

As a Fool is wont to do,
I wandered to the edge of the abyss

And you;
why didn't you cling to me
digging fingers
as I slipped off the tip?

Was it the flowering
of my unruly garden?
overgrown and abandoned
where fruit grows swollen and rots
in an endless cycle of rapid rebirth
I must move too fast
in between fences half-painted and splintered

Was it grotesque?
The algae that crusts over itself
on the surface of my pond
The desperate way I dizzy
my head, the empty moon spinning around
any given sun
watching birds on telephone wires
with crimson shoulder pads
the way they uncork themselves and scream
I tighten my lips
to keep themselves out
to keep themselves in

This piece was written in July 2021, a time when my AmeriCorps VISTA service that brought me out to Montana and the Flathead Reservation was coming to an end. I felt very unsure of my next steps, and I was also grieving the loss of a long-distance relationship that just didn't work out. I saw some of my tumultuous energy reflected in the nature around me; the clouds of smoke from wildfires obscuring the mountains and the red-winged blackbirds trilling at me on my daily walks. I thought of the garden in my childhood home back in New Jersey, long since abandoned and overgrown. I wanted this poem to convey a bit of my despair but also an acceptance of the natural flow of things, and a bit of hopeful energy moving into the next chapter of my life.

YELLOW IS THE COLOR OF EARLY SPRING

PETER LESICA



Buttercup



Biscuitroot

For three years I lived each spring on Finley Point, a peninsula on the southeast side of Flathead Lake. During April and May I went for a walk along the road through the open ponderosa pine-Douglas fir forests at least every other day and recorded when I first saw a native wildflower blooming. By doing this, I noticed an interesting pattern. In April nearly half of the species that came into bloom had yellow flowers, while in May fewer than 10% of the species had yellow flowers. Why should yellow-flowered species be proportionately so much more common in the early spring than later?

We know that flowers generally serve the function of attracting pollinators. In Montana, these pollinators are insects or sometimes hummingbirds. During much of the year and in most habitats, bees are the most common and most efficient pollinators. Workers of colonial species, such as bumblebees, tirelessly visit flower after flower in order to gather nectar and pollen to feed their young. Nonetheless, during very cold and cloudy weather so common in spring, flies may be more active than bees. Is this because colonial bees are fair-weather friends? Not really. For bumblebees as well as colonial species of wasps, only the queens live through the winter. So in the spring, only the queens are present, and they are busy selecting a site for their colony or building a nest. It takes a while to get those workers big enough to go out into the cold, cruel world and start collecting pollen and nectar. On the



Yellow Bells

other hand flies, which often mature into adults in early spring, are ready to go and are often abundant early in the season. As a result, they may be just as important as bumble bees for pollination in early spring.

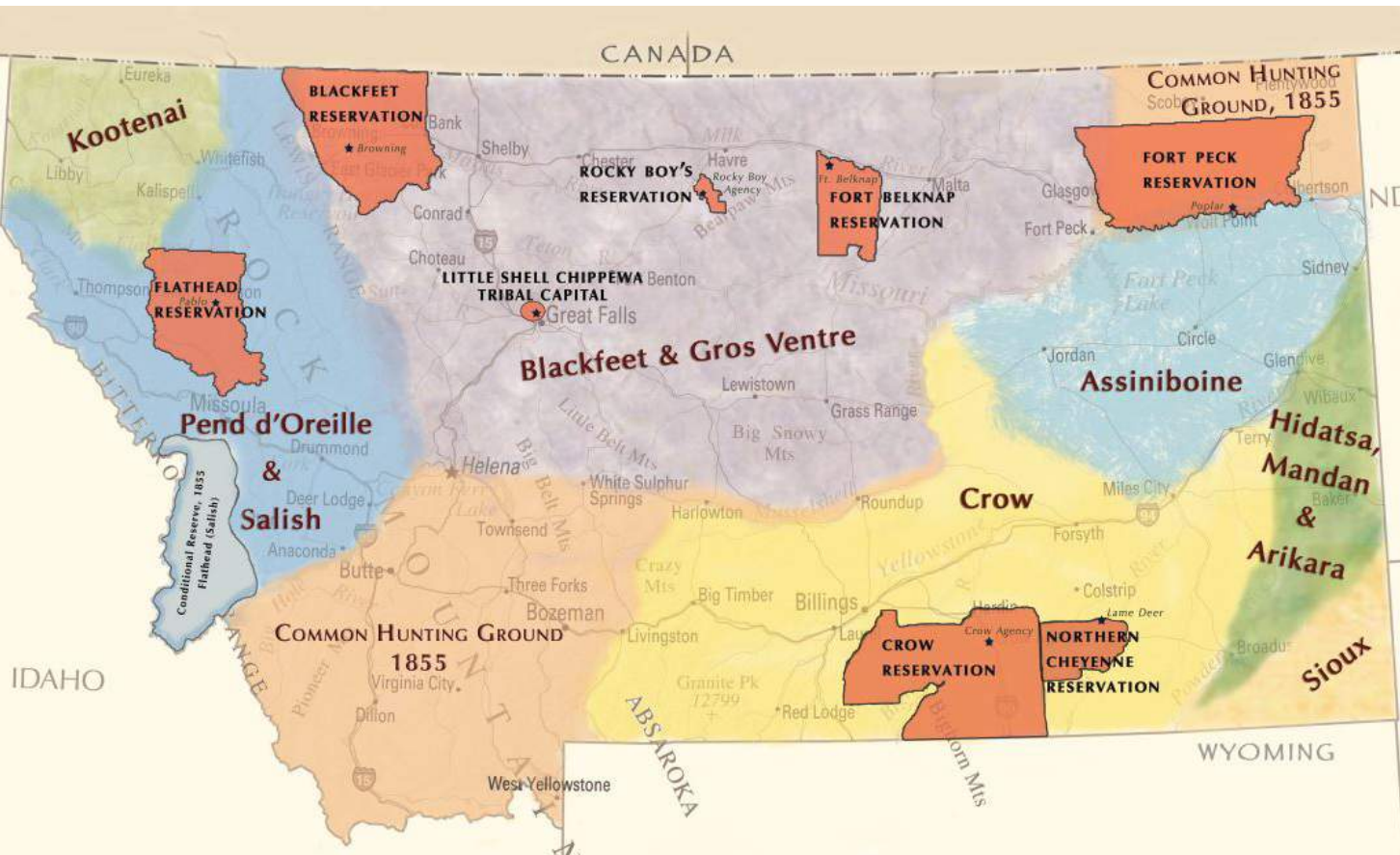
But how does this help explain the abundance of yellow-flowered species? Researchers who study insect behavior have shown that, in general, flies are attracted to yellow more than other colors, while bees are most attracted to blue and white. Have you noticed that those sticky, fly-catching strips are usually yellow? Although we can't know for certain, these observations suggest that the abundance of yellow-flowered plants in early spring may be due to the relatively greater availability of flies to act as pollinators. Once warmer weather arrives and bees are more abundant, we see fewer yellow-flowered species relative to the number with blue or white flowers.

Closer to home on the south end of Mount Jumbo, the pattern is similar although everything is earlier. Forty percent of the plants that start blooming in the first half of April have yellow flowers but that drops to 17% in the second half of the month. Of course there are lots of yellow flowers in the Aster Family in late summer, but that's another story.

A similar article appeared in Kelsey, the newsletter of the Montana Native Plant Society in 1992.

Meet Mary Plumage, MCPS Native American Specialist

MEGAN THORNTON



Tribal Territories in Montana

Boundaries as defined by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, and the Flathead and Blackfoot Treaties of 1855.*

Reservations today shown in red. ★ Star indicates location of tribal capital.

Names Tribes Call Themselves: A Key

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Salish / Sélish | Blackfeet / Niitsitapi (Pikuni) | Gros Ventre / A'aninin | Northern Cheyenne / Tsetsêhesestâhase and So'taa'eo'o |
| Pend d'Oreille / Q'ispé | Chippewa (Ojibwe) / Annishinabe | Assiniboine / Nakoda, Nakona | Crow / Apsáalooke |
| Kootenai / Ksanka | Plains Cree / Ne-i-yah-wahk | Sioux / Lakota, Dakota | Little Shell Chippewa / Annishinabe and Métis |

Reservation Lands in Montana, and American Indian Tribes based on those lands

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Blackfeet Reservation: Blackfeet | Crow Reservation: Crow | Flathead Reservation: Salish, Pend d'Oreille, Kootenai |
| Fort Belknap Reservation: Gros Ventre and Assiniboine | Fort Peck Reservation: Assiniboine and Sioux | Northern Cheyenne Reservation: Northern Cheyenne |
| Rocky Boy's Reservation: Chippewa Cree | Landless, but headquartered in Cascade County: Little Shell Band of Chippewa | |

Happy Spring everyone! Recently, I had the pleasure to meet and speak with Mary Plumage, who is one of six Native American Specialists teaching at MCPS schools. Mary has visited and shared in my son's 1st grade classroom at Russell. I feel so glad, and deeply honored, that we have the gift of Mary and the whole team Native American Specialist teachers to be a presence in the lives of our children in Missoula's public schools.

Megan Thornton: What is your name and age?

MP: My name is Mary Plumage. My given name is Timpse na wiya. I am 41.

MT: What is your tribe? And/ or where do you consider home?

MP: I am an enrolled member of the Bitterroot Salish. In my blood I have Nakoda, Aaniih, Pend d'Oreille, and Bitterroot Salish. I was born and raised on the Ft. Belknap Reservation with my dad's people, but when we would travel across the mountains to visit my tuyepe at the Flathead Reservation, she would always tell me "this is your home, my little tuyepe". Tuyepe is great grandmother on my mother's side in Salish. I value the traditions, language, and culture from my lineage. I consider Montana my home.

MT: At which schools do you teach?

MP: I have four schools that I bounce around, three elementary: Chief Charlo, Russell, and recently added Jeanette Rankin. I have one middle school and that is Meadow Hill.

MT: What do you enjoy about your job as a specialist? What kind of activities do you do with the kids? Anything specific you can share about what you are doing?

MP: I really enjoy my job, this is actually my first year as a Native American Specialist but I have worked with MCPS since 2015. Some of the activities that I do in the elementary classroom are learning about the Montana tribal flags, reading Native American stories or oral stories, the importance of the buffalo. My middle schoolers and I gather

* Boundaries shown on this map reflect the demarcation of territories by non-Indian officials at treaty time, and do not necessarily accurately represent tribal territories occupied in the 1850s.

© 2015 Regional Learning Project, the University of Montana, Missoula

for lunch group and chat, tell stories, listen to music, and use that time to getting to know one another and where we come from. As a department we host public events like a winter and spring pow wow, family fun nights, and have a senior dinner for our Native American students. With 17 schools in our school district we are pretty busy.

MT: Tell us something about yourself! What is your favorite food? Hobby? Do you have kids or pets? Any fun summer plans?

MP: I am a special needs mom and consider myself an advocate for special needs families. My youngest son Max, is my special needs child. He was born with a rare genetic syndrome. He is in middle school in the 6th grade. My oldest is my daughter Sage and she will be finishing her degree in Social Work at the University of Montana this summer. My middle child is my son Landen. He is a senior at Big Sky High School and played football all through high school. I am very proud of my children and the road they walk. I do not think I have a favorite food, I do not discriminate on food because I love all types of food. I like to do puzzles. During the summer I enjoy visiting family. There is nothing more awesome than the sound of hearty laughter when family visits one another. I also like to plant flowers and hang out in my yard on long summer days.

MT: Is there anything caregivers and community members can do that would help bridge kids learning at school with home learning (you can

The mission and goal of the Native American Student Services department is to "Help Native American students achieve academically, culturally, and socially to graduate and become successful lifelong learners."

The "Indian Education For All" department of OPI provides schools and staff with knowledge, skills, and content to ensure Indian Education for All means cultural enrichment, academic engagement, and equitable pedagogy for students. Every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, should be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner.

include resources here such as website/books/ movies/ visiting reservations, etc!)

MP: Absolutely, I think we can always be educating ourselves and our children about our Montana tribes. There are so many resources out there on the internet. Each tribe in Montana has their own website that leads to many other links.

MT: Anything else you'd like to share?

MP: I present to the classes the Montana tribal flags. We look at each tribal flag and what is on the flag. The colors, the pictures, the symbols. We discuss the importance of the animals represented. We look at the similarities and the differences of each tribe. The kids and teachers are very active participants during this presentation. After I am done I have the students make their own flags. I ask them to put things on it that makes them who they are. Their own cultures and traditions. They really enjoy it. We have our tribal flags in all the schools and I believe it is important to understand why they are there and where they come from. Even for me as a child growing up, I did not learn this in school. So I feel in this position it is extremely important to educate our students on our tribes and our people. This activity can be done at home as well, I think it would be great for a family to come up with their own flag that represents them.



Facing the West

ELIZABETH MAMI

The piece is called: Facing the West. In native American traditional sweat lodges, the West is the hottest..it represents our darkest fears and challenges..Our family..our fears.

The bear is the animal totem for the west..the open arms suggests facing our fears and opening ourselves to the challenge..We must fight back, in any way possible.

I was blessed to be a Fire keeper in the Sweat Lodges..It changed my life..As an artist before I could read, my work has always tried to express the connection between man and earth..

Painting, original in oil

SAMISH BAY

Katelyn Scholle

We go down to the shore in the morning,
Quickly deciding to find the small, flat rocks that carry nothing.
We bend, and flick, and release
And send stones to the sea
And with it I send away the expectations laid out for me
I hope you send them out too

Like the sea you've carried and kept
A bay full of heavy memories
And still, rising with the waves
Your brave bones bend with me.

I glance over, your curved back at ease
Smiling a little, from freedom
Or maybe—
Molded from this moment with me.

I finally skip one, and we hoot and holler
Hooray!
Finally!

Finally we have found this shore together.
We are mother and daughter,
shepherding our kindness in scattered skips,

We are big and whole and proud of who we are.

We are women by the sea.

So, the stubborn stones ripple and sink
As we step over seaweed tangled at our feet.

Visitors to these trembling tides
Visitors to our arms—
Side by side.

May our journey ahead glow from the magic of the Samish.
And may your warmth forever fuel my heart.
I love you, mom.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH NATIVE PLANTS

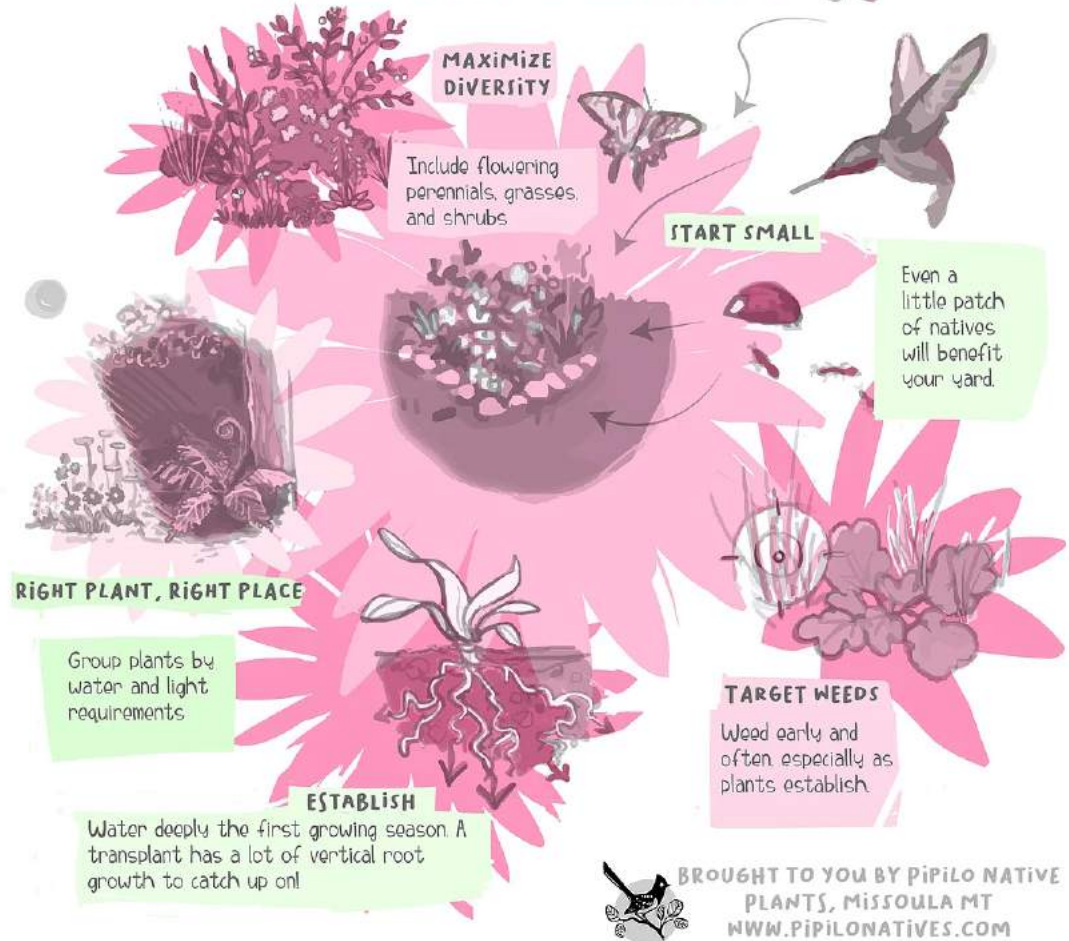


Illustration: Elliott Conrad

WHY DOES ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE FEEL SO DIFFICULT?

Just as money exchanges hands everyday, we too exchange our thoughts, words, and actions for what we value most. Values drive our collective and individual actions. As a nation, we historically value time, security, power, comfort and convenience. Where we are now is a reflection of the values of the past. But it is important to mention that these values weren't and aren't always expressed equally, often promoting what the wealthy and powerful value most. Therefore, it is no surprise that single-use plastics and other environmentally hazardous consumables thrive, reducing costs, saving time, and making our lives more "convenient". As the world became more and more global, shipping products became possible and highly profitable, allowing us the privilege to experience the goods of the world. In turn, landfills and incinerators became the most convenient way to handle all that excess waste. Big companies continue to promote gas powered vehicles and carbon energy to bolster their values of power and money.

Does all this sound familiar? It should, since we have been living in that world and there is no denying it affects our actions too. I am no energy mogul, but I see these interests expressed in my own actions as I buy imported foods and expect short shipping times from the things I order online. We participate in activities that directly impact our planet everyday - often in small, but measurable ways. I mention this, not to shame, but to recognize that we too are part of this value-driven society.

CAITLYN LEWIS

Making meaningful and lasting changes is difficult for a number of reasons. I believe this is so difficult because our goals aren't yet aligned with our values that may still be stuck in the past. To move forward with our environmental goals, I have found that self-reflection can allow us to exchange values more easily. If we can identify what values are behind our thoughts, actions, and words, we can become more aligned with our purpose to help the planet. Self-reflection and action from within an environmental crisis requires great humility, bravery, and sacrifice. *kudos to those still reading*

While recently leading a high school class during a service learning trip, a handful of students refused to help feed our worm bins, explaining the process was just too gross. Plugging their noses and making gagging noises, I became upset that they weren't willing to do something simple for the benefit of the Earth. Reflecting on this situation, I was reminded about the sacrifices we all chose to make for what we care about most. The best part is that sacrifices don't have to look the same for everyone. Those students reminded me that not everyone has to sling rotten food around to help the Earth...just some.

Sacrifice can look like financially supporting the people and organizations that are doing the work you do not or cannot do yourself. Sacrifice can be the extra time it takes to mend your clothes

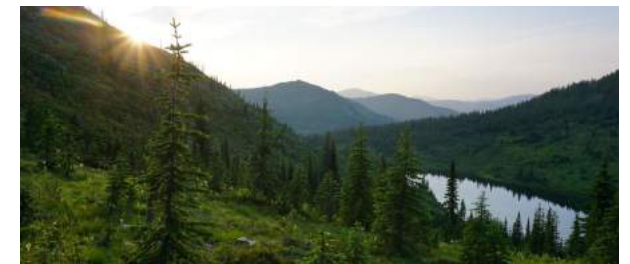
IF WE CAN IDENTIFY WHAT VALUES ARE BEHIND OUR THOUGHTS, ACTIONS, AND WORDS, WE CAN BECOME MORE ALIGNED WITH OUR PURPOSE TO HELP THE PLANET. SELF-REFLECTION AND ACTION FROM WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS REQUIRES GREAT HUMILITY, BRAVERY, AND SACRIFICE.

instead of donating them. Sacrifice can look like going without certain foods that only come in single-use plastic. The sacrifices we chose to make for the betterment of our planet can offer us more reward than we ever imagined losing in the process, but it can take time to identify where your values and actions best align.

When I look at my own actions, I see my personal values reflected. When I began biking for transportation, it was not just for the environment's sake. Biking to

school was also a means to get free campus parking. My values of frugality, time-saving and sustainable transportation aligned, making sacrificing the comfort of driving an easy and long-lasting choice. The actions that provide both personal and planetary benefits are the easiest to implement, meaning we can adopt the change longer or permanently. If we can see that our personal choice can also benefit the planet in a tangled way, it is much easier for us to act.

I believe the world is filled with hopeful people, who want to make changes; people who want to change but are stuck in the value frameworks of the past. In my experience, the changes people tell us to make, don't stick. It is much more powerful when we can exchange and align our values with the planet. The real changes come from our personal choices and sacrifices. We need to stop perceiving change as a threat and sacrifice as a loss. My hope is that environmental change can become easier as we see it as an opportunity and see sacrifice as a gain for ourselves and the planet.



THE WEST IN MOTION

two poems by Megan Vorse

WHEN THE SANDHILL CRANES RETURN

They find the valley became a stomach.
old oat fields sopping wet
with the fires of digestion.
Turned earth in last year's wetlands
is a tender, muddy tripe,
pockmarked for sucking.

Despite "Residential/ restaurant/ commercial" zoning
the cranes sign no lease.
With Mesozoic croaks they mock
the cheap siding, the HOAs,
and street signs which now demarcate
where rhizomes danced wildly.
When their colts hatch
they refuse to name them
Keller Williams, Tyvek, or CAT.

Riparia ebbs
under the force of metabolism.
Particularity washes up:
all land tastes the same, loses face.

Should the cranes grow steel necks,
pivot side to side?
Should they scratch up earth?
For now, they tread gingerly,
transitory, stepping over dog waste.

Though the cranes arrive starving and traveled
they will fly away, nestless,
facing the Tobacco Roots,
knowing better than to stay.

THE MAN IN FRONT OF ME

in line at Big Mike's barbeque truck
has West Elm drawer pulls
where his eyes used to be
(he pulled them out
during a bad trip, he says).

I have no such signpost, I think,
no elevated memory,
like this man who recalls
the Men's Halfpipe at the Salt Lake Olympics
as the last grandstand
he would see, instead of playing
over black like second of anticipation
in a darkened theater, stretched
to perpetuity.

I ask him what he does
with his ceramic stare.
Our town is already brimming with prophets.

He tells me more of when he had his eyes—
backcountry skiing, Romanian cinema,
spring in Santa Fe—
all now locked behind the impasse
of cerulean and white. My own life
slips through my pupils.

As he speaks I zone out.
My eyes dilate until inside them
appear images like two cameos—
in my left a houseboat drifts by,
holding fifty men,
all talking about Lost in the Funhouse.
In the right, my forearm stretches
away from me as I trade Sobek
my artichoke dip
in exchange for my life
at the dead end
of a box canyon.

The man with the drawer pulls
sees only my quietude:
"You know, you seem pretty cultured
for someone from around here."



The Strategy Team for the Common Good Missoula Founding Celebration is made up of core members of several of CGM's organizations including FLC, All Nation's Health, The Missoula Food Bank, Welcome Back, and several area congregations. The team itself is a great example of how successful broad based organizing can be. Representatives from local and state governments as well as the mayor also plan to join!

COMMON GOOD MISSOULA FOUNDING DAY

TASSIA TKATSCHENKO

This event, happening at the Missoula Fairgrounds on Thursday, May 19th, from 5 to 8 pm, will be fun, family-friendly, and food fabulous. Expect to be moved and inspired to re-commit and commit in new ways to your community.

The organizers believe Founding Day will be a historic event and envision 500 people in attendance. So please do mark your calendars! It is a free, zero-waste event that will include food trucks, a people's market with arts and crafts, time to mingle, and a program with a wonderful line up of music and speakers. Oh, and be sure to BYOC—that is, Bring Your Own Chair (as well as your own water bottle and utensils)!

MORE ABOUT FOUNDING DAY

This founding celebration recognizes the work leaders and organizations across Missoula have been doing for over six years, first in the interfaith world, and for the last three years across the whole civil sector of Missoula - nonprofits, neighborhood associations, unions, and faith communities to build these relationships at a time when maintaining, let alone building, relationships was challenging. It celebrates the work these organizations and leaders have done toward Truth and Reconciliation, via Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization, to begin

acknowledging the truth and moving toward a true inter-racial, broad-based organization built on trust. It is a moment in the history of Missoula in which citizens are coming together, through their organizations, to commit to one another to work together for the long term toward engaging their members, neighbors, and each other in building a healthy democratic space in Missoula. It is a public commitment to stick together and build shared power. It is a public commitment to put aside some differences and work within our shared interests for the common good of Missoula.

MORE ABOUT COMMON GOOD

Common Good Missoula is a broad-based community organization that brings people together, through their organizations and across traditional divides like race and class, to act on their lived experience and shared interests together to enact systemic change. We believe that through building and committing to relationships with each other, training leaders, and building communities in action, we address structural inequities and activate a civil sector engaged in healthy public democracy.

Electrifying Everything

LET'S DO THIS

ALLISON DE JONG

2022 has been a bit rough, so far. Ukraine. Covid. Two years and counting of pandemic stress. And, always, climate change, almost every piece of news more sobering than ever. Most days I feel like I'm not doing enough—and that even the things I am doing are useless, the tiniest drop removed from the overflowing bucket of worldwide carbon emissions.

But there are glimmers of hope. While doom scrolling before bed a few weeks ago, I stumbled across the nonprofit organization Rewiring America (rewiringamerica.org), which is working to electrify...well, everything, starting with the 121 million households in our country. Their free guide, "Electrify Everything in Your Home," gives recommendations for homeowners and renters alike, shares information on rebates and financing, and covers everything from purchasing renewable energy to installing solar panels and home battery storage.

As I scanned the guide, I realized two things. One, that all these little steps we take do make a difference. Forty percent of U.S. carbon emissions come from our homes and vehicles. This doesn't negate what needs to be done on the policy/

global/industrial/governmental scales, but it underlines the value of individual action. Two, I realized that the changes my husband and I have made to our home over the past 13 years have added up—as I looked down the ten-point list, I was amazed at how many I could check off: upgraded electrical service, heat pump heating and cooling in a couple of unducted rooms, electric stove, electric dryer, electric vehicle, electric vehicle charger, solar panels.

I'd love to have a heat pump water heater instead of our regular electric one; we'd love to change out our natural gas furnace for a heat pump heating and cooling system; and someday we may install more solar panels and add home battery storage. But the steps we've taken so far have not been insignificant. And we are committed: to prioritizing electrification, to making the changes we can, to donating to climate organizations, to using less energy, to talking with friends and family about the changes we're making—and why.

Here's to those infinitesimal drops in the bucket. Here's to a hell of a lot of them.

Editor's note: Be sure to check out electrifymissoula.org as well, hosted by our friends at Climate Smart Missoula.

Growing Hope

CAROL "KATE" WILBURN

Sometimes I lose hope. The threats and scope of climate challenge loom so large. I doubt that what I am doing counts enough.

Restoring a holistic ecosystem, creating wild creature corridors, inspiring towards water resilience and away from fossil fuels: these energize me.

It turns out they count hugely, as does the building of human community. Native plants, bees, butterflies and moths are "keystone" pieces to resilience and a hopeful future.

I had an urban greening idea that addresses these. An enthused team of 35 folks in our "Franklin to the Fort" neighborhood made it happen. Across the 2021 growing season, we "made habitat" with an incredible amount of physical work and collaboration. Our "Place-Making Together" grant seeded it.

We created large planters to bring native ecosystems of living greenness to our asphalted neighborhood.

These oases also quiet the traffic on 2 residential streets that have been used dangerously by motorists: they'd looked more like expressways than residential roads. NOW there is greater safety for people of all ages who bike and walk here where sidewalks are rarities.

Voilà! Seven sets of planters on their hopeful way to Certified Wildlife Habitats! Five are in new "quick build" traffic calming circles along Kemp and Schilling. Sometimes a single, alternately a pair, they are 5' in diameter and 3' high. These give enough depth of soil in tough on-pavement locations to support perennial natives through scorching summers and frigid winters.

The others are permanent "parklets"- the first in Missoula. We suggest people think of them as wooden trucks along the street! Each occupies a normal parking space but grows habitat, makes oxygen and hosts native bees and butterflies, unlike their metal, diesel-burning counterparts.

Twenty feet long, set 3' away from the curb, a parklet planter box creates a buffer between curb & traffic. This spring we expect to install a bench in that safe space so walkers can perch and look at

flowers—maybe butterflies?—in the midst of asphalt.

Each planter has adopting neighbors who live nearby, committed to weeding, watering and renewing mulch. They host 31 Montana-native species, and 140 individual plants: sun-loving, hardy, xeric & drought-tolerant.

May through October, our planter-habitats will bloom in shades of purple, yellow, green, white and orange for our native bees, butterflies & moths. Humans too! The amazing assemblage includes rubber rabbitbrush, white sage, bluebunch wheatgrass, fringed sage, showy milkweed, roundleaf alumroot, aspen daisy, mountain sandwort, Maximilian sunflower, rosy pussytoes, lanceleaf stonewort, smallflower penstemon, evening primrose, slender cinquefoil, Missouri goldenrod, cushion buckwheat.

First came 200 LONG re-purposed cedar and redwood boards from Waste Less Works, with 16 used sheets of plywood. Via work parties at MUD's tool library project area: we sorted boards by length to cut to 3' and 10' pieces while we drilled more than 1200 holes in heavy bands of steel as hoops for the round planters and transformed the plywood into seven planter bottoms. Neighbors moved all of it twice again, first into backyards awaiting assembly, then into place on the streets.

Next came many cubic yards of chipped elm wood mulch from a friendly arborist, soil from Garden City Compost, Boyce Lumber's donation of 1000 screws, beautiful plants from Pipilo Natives, borrowed tools from MUD, trailer and truck from friends, with planting & building events at Sunday Streets on a wildly wet August day.

MORE work parties. Friendships hatching over the "conversation pieces" of tangible acts of hope, oxygen and wild-habitat-in-the-midst-of-asphalt.

Visit Kemp & Burlington, Kemp & Central, Kemp & 12th, Schilling & Strand, Schilling & 13th; the 1600 & 1700 blocks of Kemp!

You can reach out to Franklin to the Fort Neighbors in Action (F2FNiA) via: facebook.com/F2Fneighbors, f2fneighbors@gmail.com, or by mail at PO Box 2999, Missoula, MT 59806.



from director Winona Bateman

ARE YOU A PARENT OR CAREGIVER?

DOES YOUR BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION SERVE FAMILIES?

SEND A MESSAGE TO NORTHWESTERN ENERGY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Like many Montanans, we were curious and hopeful when we received NorthWestern Energy's recently released net zero plan. The wind turbines on the cover and back looked promising, but when we dug into the numbers, we had major concerns about the plan when weighed against the facts of what's required for a safe world for our families, and the families we serve:

- NorthWestern's plan outlines the company's intent to build fossil-fuel infrastructure through 2035, and not retire other fossil-fuel infrastructure until 2040 or later, despite global scientific consensus that says all sectors must decarbonize as rapidly as possible. The cities of Missoula, Bozeman, and Helena have already made ambitious commitments to move to 100% clean electricity by 2030.
- Beyond 2035, the plan looks to "hydro, pumped storage, geothermal, small modular nuclear reactors or hydrogen fueled generation." While we appreciate the inclusion of pumped storage and geothermal, they offer no benchmarks, nor do they address the serious consequences and safety issues of nuclear energy, or discuss the type of hydrogen they will employ,

which is extremely important for climate impacts.

- Despite the marketing choice to feature wind turbines throughout the publication, we were shocked that NorthWestern has no plans to increase investment in wind power or solar energy. While the rest of the world develops these areas of their economies and job markets, these key solutions were strikingly missing in the plan. Given Montana's potential, this is truly startling:
 - According to the 2021 "Montana Wind Jobs" report from Renewables Northwest, Montana, "Montana ranked 48th out of the 50 states for the number of jobs in wind energy production, despite being 5th in the nation for land-based wind potential...North Dakota has twenty times more jobs in wind energy, compared to Montana." North Dakota has 1,764 wind jobs compared to Montana's 86.
 - Looking at data from the National Solar Jobs Census and U.S. Energy and Employment Report, Montana ranks 25th in the nation for solar potential, and yet, as of 2020, we ranked 49th in total solar jobs, with only around 300 in the state. While markets in other states are growing, Montana is idling with a large amount of untapped potential. Without investment and support, Montanans will be left behind as this booming industry offers quality careers in neighboring states in our region and across the nation.

Lastly, their plan is framed on an outdated (and globally rejected) goal of 2°C warming. According to the Montana Climate Assessment, Montana is warming more rapidly than the global average, and depending on emissions we will face very different futures. As Steven Running, emeritus regents professor of global ecology at the University of Montana and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, said in his Mar 13, 2022 op-ed for the Helena Independent Record:

The difference in climate disruption and impacts from 1.5 deg to 2.0 deg is huge, and clearly quantified in the recent IPCC reports. In Montana, going from 1.5 C of global warming to 2 C means a breakdown of our forest and river ecosystems, with a longer, drier fire season, more megafires, and the death of our cold-water fisheries. It means our winter sports, skiing, snowmobiling etc will be minimal. The result will be a precipitous decline in our prime economic industries, agriculture and tourism.

Montana families will bear the burden of climate impacts with wildfire and drought impacting our health (especially grandparents, pregnant mamas, and kids), our businesses, homes, and ways of life. Montana families will bear the burden of the underdeveloped renewables market, and the outrageous costs of further fossil fuel investments.

Join us in sending a message to NorthWestern Energy's Board of Directors. We need 1,000 signatures to make an impact! Read and sign our letter at www.livableclimate.org/nwe.

who we are

"The Changing Times" is a seasonal (quarterly) publication of Families For A Livable Climate that invites community-wide response to these turbulent and revolutionary times, seeking submissions from people of all ages and backgrounds. In this space, we share stories, express love for the world around us, and offer ways for everyone to get involved in answering the call to change - in ourselves, our families, our communities, and our country. We know this work happens by challenging our systems and leaders; conversing on racial justice, resiliency, grief work, activism, youth empowerment, education, intergenerational support, local living, and traditional knowledge; and connecting with one another through our relationship with nature and the creative arts. While the magazine is based in Missoula, MT we consider "conversations with the peripheries," throughout Montana and beyond to be vital, so anyone is welcome to subscribe and/ or submit.

Families for a Livable Climate is a project of Social and Environment Entrepreneurs (SEE) a non-profit public charity exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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contributors

SARAH CAPDEVILLE, 29, is an alum of the University of Montana and Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A nonfiction editor at *The Hopper*, her writing has been published in *Orion*, *The Normal School*, *Flyway*, *Fourth Genre*, *Camas*, and others. Always in search of wild places, she's rambled high desert, glacial basins, and boreal forests two-hundred miles north of the arctic circle. For five seasons, she was wilderness ranger in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, Welcome Creek Wilderness, and Rattlesnake Wilderness, her home of homes. Currently, she lives in Missoula, Montana with her partner, greyhound, and chaotic kitten, where she navigates chronic illness and daydreams about the crosscut saw.

ELLIOTT CONRAD, 36, is the owner of Pipilo Native Plants, a small native plant nursery in Charlo, Montana. He grew up in a nomadic military family and thus can claim no point of origin, but has spent the most time in Colorado, New Mexico, and Montana. Formerly an aerospace engineer for the Air Force, he now studies why living plants burn for the US Forest Service. His hobbies include collecting seeds, growing native plants, drawing, birdwatching, and enjoying the farm life with a partner, cat, and two elderly horses.

JULIAN COSTANTINI, 26, is a gender fluid poet who came out to Montana to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA on the Flathead Reservation. They now reside in Missoula and work as a cook at The Poverello Center. Julian is a founder and organizer of the Honeybee Poets Society, a poetry collective that aims to foster creative collaboration and queer identity. They hope to spend their time in Missoula connecting with their community and bringing together voices for empowerment, inspiration, and expression.

ALLISON DE JONG, 42, is the Communications Coordinator and Editor of *Montana Naturalist* magazine and *Field Notes* on Montana Public Radio at the Montana Natural History Center. In addition to finding ways to make her home more sustainable and nerding out over everything from renewable energy to botany to Harry Potter, she loves exploring Montana's mountains, forests, and rivers with her husband, Greg, and four-year-old son, Rowan.

As a retired social worker, **STAR JAMESON, 77**, has had ample opportunity to reboot in nature and observe humans! Her poetry has been published in small press collections. Her book, *Medicine Rock, a Journey of Vision and Healing*, describes her unusual experiences in the seventies. Hiking the Bitterroots feeds her heart with hope and creativity.

PETER LESICA, 71, has been a consulting biologist in Montana for the past 40 years, a member of the Montana Native Plant Society, and a Faculty affiliate at UM for the past 30 years.

CAITLYN LEWIS, 29, is the director of Soil Cycle, a Missoula bicycle-powered composting nonprofit. Her passion for composting was born out of environmental

concerns regarding wasted food and has grown into a love for all things soil! Caitlyn wants to make sustainable living more accessible to those who wish to lessen their personal environmental impacts.

ELIZABETH MAMI, 60, is an artist and writer, living in the Catskill mountains of New York. A lifelong animal rescue person, she has a house filled with rescued cats and works with local animal charity groups and the ASPCA. She is a lifelong hospice and healthcare worker and climate advocate who is protesting government and inspiring communities to do what they can. We are all in this together.

KATELYN SCHOLLE, 29, is a Washington native transplanted to Missoula through her mother's roots. She loves campfires, long hikes, and lots of cheese. She is inspired by our Earth and how we fit into it.

MEG SMITH, 27, is local Montanan with a deep wonder for the more-than-human world. She has a BA in English Literature and Teaching from the University of Montana and an MA in Environmental Humanities from Bath Spa University, Bath, England. When she isn't out finding new trails, she loves to write poetry, cook without recipes, and find new ways to use less.

MEGAN THORNTON, 36, is mother to 3 little humans (Samuel, Willa, Ben). Megan grew up in Butte, lived in Bozeman for a spell, and is now settled for the long haul in the Russell district of Missoula, where she and her husband Orion navigate the bumpy terrain of parenting alongside beloved family, friends, and neighbors (including the deer, squirrels, trees, and birds of the block!).

A local Missoulian, **TASSIA TKATSCHENKO** attributes her love for the natural world, and her life in activism, to her mother Nancy Dunne. With a BA in Psychology, and nursing degree from the University of Montana, Tassia serves 12-18 year olds who require psychiatric stabilization within a hospital setting. Tassia's climate activism is intrinsically connected to her dedication to her home, and the health of its future generations. She is grateful to the land, and strives to live in service to her.

MEGAN VORSE, 30, writes and grows things in western Colorado. Her reviews have appeared in Pinyon and her poetry is forthcoming from Camas. She holds an MA in English from Montana State University.

CAROL "KATE" WILBURN, 67, cherishes the wild Land, is keenly aware of legacy across generations. Her life's terrain is diverse: engineering, homesteading, single parenting, permaculture design, teaching, activism. She endeavors to stand as an Earth-protector and as a settler-ally to Indigenous neighbors. A naturalist at her core, she celebrates nuanced Life and its intense beauty. Her art & poetry offer vivid contrasts in words, strong shapes, light, dark. Passionate over current challenges, she also illustrates & writes children's stories that imagine new possibilities.

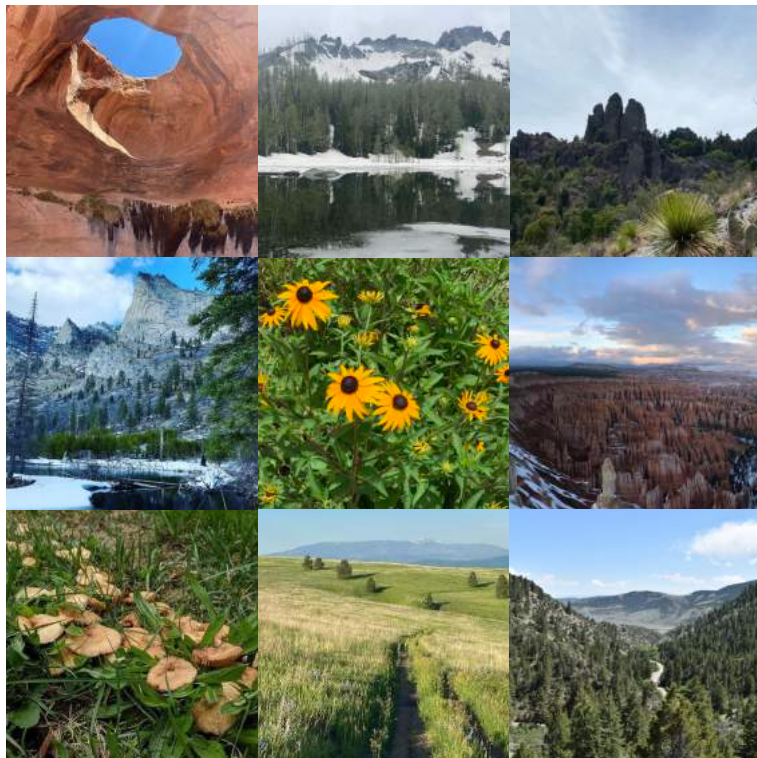
#TCTGETOUTSIDE

This summer we will release our second annual **ART ISSUE!**

Last year, we loved hearing your stories about how you get outside, so we wanted to see what adventures Summer 2022 will bring. Tag photos on Instagram with

#TCTGETOUTSIDE

for a chance to be featured in the 10th issue of *The Changing Times*.



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