

## **High Divide for the Next Generation:**

*What can we do today to leave a legacy of vibrant communities and healthy lands and resources?*

**When: March 15, 2016      10am-5:00pm**  
**March 16, 2016      8am-4:30pm**

**Where: Lewis & Clark Room, University of Montana Western, Dillon, MT**

*We believe that conservation at the landscape scale starts locally, includes civil and open dialogue among all interested stakeholders, is coordinated collaboratively, and looks to science to support the conversation.*  
*Gary Burnett, The Blackfoot Challenge*

### **Workshop Goals**

- 1) Start a process for High Divide Stakeholders to express their vision for the desired future condition of the High Divide Landscape, a vision that sustains vibrant local communities, economies and resources. To this end we will:
  - Confirm stakeholder community and conservation goals for the High Divide
  - Share knowledge of current and projected human populations and development
  - Share current information on the status of some of our High Divide priority resources and issues: Water, Communities and Wildfire, Sage Grouse, Wildlife Connectivity
  - Update one another on resource issues and conservation
  - Learn stakeholder perspectives of the future for: Water, Communities and Wildfire, Sage Grouse, Wildlife Connectivity
- 2) Advance the High Divide Collaborative
  - Continue to build trust and credibility within the collaborative and amongst stakeholders
  - Continue to discover added value through collaboration
  - Discuss a more formal governance for the Collaborative

### **The High Divide Collaborative's seven primary conservation goals, as stated by Collaborative stakeholders, are to conserve:**

- Working rangelands central to the region's communities, economy and way of life.
- Ecological linkage between protected core areas to conserve wide ranging wildlife such as elk, antelope, and wolverine and respond to climate change.
- Nationally important dispersed recreation lands and waterways. Get people into nature.
- A legacy of Nez Perce, Continental Divide, and Lewis and Clark national trails.
- Restored headwaters for sensitive fish species and quality water for human uses.
- Crucial core and migratory sage grouse habitats.
- Open land in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to protect life and property and reduce community fire-fighting costs.

## **Workshop Agenda**

**March 15, 2016**

**10:00 – 10:15 Welcome, Agenda and Purpose of the Workshop**

*Michael Whitfield*

### **The Why, How and What of the High Divide Collaborative?**

- How and why we formed the Collaborative
- Our overarching tenets for how we work collaboratively: trust, respect, tolerance for disparate viewpoints, safe place to talk about new ideas
- Collaborative goals and accomplishments to date

### **10:15 – 11:15 Working Together to Form a Conservation Vision for the High Divide**

- Our next steps for Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding proposals
  - Very brief summary of FY2016 and FY2017 LWCF results
  - Initiate the conversation regarding LWCF proposals for FY2018. We may have one more year to achieve our goals, we have some unfilled gaps, and we may have some great opportunities.
- The Value of describing our shared values & vision for the High Divide future
  - The Washington D.C. question—what is the end game for conservation?
  - Start a planning process to enable stakeholders to express their vision for the High Divide future. Logical steps we would like to follow:
    - Bring stakeholders together to learn their issues, goals and objectives.  
**THIS WORKSHOP WILL FOCUS ON THIS FIRST STEP**
    - Assess current conditions for resources of interest to stakeholders
    - Map spatially what achievement of conservation goals looks like on the ground—evaluate trade-offs.
    - Develop collaborative strategies to achieve goals and priority objectives. Add value through collaboration.
    - We want long lasting outcomes from our conservation decisions with planning to respond to a changing climate.
- Confirmation of our shared goals and landscape as developed to date. What are the priority values in this landscape? Presentation and discussion of our shared large landscape goals.

### **11:15-12:00 The Collaborative form and function, next steps**

- Shared Collaborative Governance. Is it timely to make the High Divide Collaborative more formal—create governance that better shares decision making, keeps people engaged, continues to build trust among participants, adds value to shared goals?
  - A suggestion for representative High Divide Collaborative Governance
  - Discussion and next steps

### **12:00 – 1:00 Lunch provided on site**

### **1:00 – 1:45 What we know about communities & the human footprint in the High Divide**

*Patty Gude, Headwaters Economics.*

People, communities and the human footprint in the High Divide. Current status and future trends.

Stakeholder Questions and discussion

*Concurrent Sessions on Water and Fire:*

**1:45 – 4:15 Drought Resilience and Water Resource Conservation**

Facilitators: Ann Schwend, Montana Department of Natural, Upper Missouri Basin Water Planner; and Brandon Hoffner, Executive Director, Henry's Fork Foundation, Ashton, Idaho.

*The Current State of Water Resources in the High Divide, Idaho and Montana*

Rob Van Kirk, Henry's Fork Foundation

Water availability and trends, issues, opportunities

*Introductory Update on how High Divide communities are addressing water conservation issues. Future directions. Panel Discussion:* Ann Schwend and Brandon Hoffner with representatives from both Idaho and Montana watersheds (Dale Swensen – Fremont Madison Irrigation District, Roger Chase – Idaho Water Resources Board, Tom Rice – Beaverhead County Commission)

- Planning for drought and community resilience
- Planning for stream and aquatic resource conservation
  - Successes and challenges—what can we learn from one another? Leverage opportunities

*Breakout discussion.* Our stated High Divide conservation goal is restored headwaters for sensitive fish species and quality water for human uses. Increasingly we recognize the need to understand and develop community resilience to drought. What is our vision for achievement of this goal, what does it mean, what are our objectives?

**1:45 – 4:15 Communities and Wildfire**

Facilitator: Barb Cestero

*Wildfire Threats and Responses in the High Divide, Idaho and Montana;*

*Panel Presentations and Discussion:*

- Ray Rasker, an overview of Wildfire Risk and community costs in the current and future Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
- Karin Riley and Jessica Haas. *Wildfire Risk Assessment, Modeling and Planning for the High Divide. Examples of wildfire risk assessment, modeling wildfire threats to communities and natural resources and potential benefits from wildfire*
- Gina Knudson, Salmon Valley Stewardship, Salmon, Idaho; Jim Tucker, Salmon-Challis National Forest; Elizabeth Davy, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Ashton, Idaho. *Update on how High Divide communities are addressing wildfire threats*

Breakout discussion. Our conservation goal is to conserve open land in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to protect life and property and reduce community fire-fighting costs. What is our vision for achievement of this goal, what does it mean, what are our objectives?

**4:15 – 5:00 Report from break-out groups**

**5:30 -- 7:00 Reception -- Location: Patagonia Store – 16 S Idaho St, Dillon**

Co-hosted by Heart of the Rockies Initiative and Center for Large Landscape Conservation

**March 16, 2016**  
**THE HIGH DIVIDE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION**

**8:00 – 9:15 Sage Grouse and Sage land Conservation**

The Current State of Sage Steppe Habitats and Sage Grouse in the High Divide, Idaho and Montana. The High Divide features highly significant sage grouse habitats in both Idaho and Montana. How are we managing the resource? Future directions?

*Panel Discussion:* Facilitator: Kyle Tackett, NRCS; Lara Fondow, Pheasants Forever, NRCS; Mary D'Aversa, BLM.

Questions from stakeholders.

*Fish and Wildlife Connectivity in the High Divide*

**9:15-10:15 Current knowledge of wildlife movements through empirical research about key species (Posters of information for people to view)**

What is wildlife connectivity and why does it matter. Steve Schmidt

Panel Members: Steve Schmidt, Region Six Supervisor, Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Dean Waltee, wildlife biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Jeff Burrell, Northern Rockies Program Coordinator, Wildlife Conservation Society; Kyle Cutting, wildlife biologist, Red Rock Lakes NWR

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

**10:30-11:30 Collect local knowledge—map together what people know.**

Break-out into geographically oriented groups to map local knowledge.

**11:30 - 12:15 Share modeling results, the current science. Introduce expected future impacts of a changing environment**

Meredith McClure, Spatial Ecologist, Center for Large Landscape Conservation, Bozeman, MT

**12:15 - 1:15 Lunch provided on site**

**1:15 - 2:15 Collecting People's Values and Perceptions, facilitated break-out session to get at what wildlife connectivity means for local stakeholders**

**2:15 - 3:15 People and Wildlife, conflicts and tolerance**

*Facilitator:* Kris Inman, Community Partnerships Representative, Wildlife Conservation Society.

*Panel Members:* Dean Waltee, Wildlife Biologist, Region 3 Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; John Crumley, Rancher, Madison Valley, MT; Chance Story, Rancher, Madison Valley, MT; Rebecca Ramsey, Ruby Valley Conservation District; Rob Ament, Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University and Center for Large Landscape Conservation

*Discussion about wildlife conflicts, impact to local communities and wildlife, challenges to overcome, and how to resolve issues.*

**3:30 - 3:45 Tools to address wildlife connectivity issues**

Sam Williams, Center for Large Landscape Conservation. A methodology to display potential wildlife connectivity conservation tools.

### **3:45 – 4:30 Our next steps in development of a community vision for the High Divide Landscape.**

- Discussion of next steps to identify our vision and strategies for all High Divide goals
- Expression of an identity for our shared High Divide landscape.
  - The High Divide Identity, video project proposal and progress, next steps

### **High Divide Collaborative – 2016 Workshop Planning Committee**

Brooke Erb – Rancher – Dillon  
Matt Pieron – IDFG Mule Deer Initiative – Idaho Falls  
Ann Schwend – DNRC Upper Missouri Basin Water Planner - Helena  
Virginia Kelly – Gallatin Custer NF - Bozeman  
Karen Rice – retired BLM Liaison – Idaho Falls  
Melly Reuling – Center for Large Landscape Conservation – Bozeman  
Kris Inman – Wildlife Conservation Society – Ennis  
Patty Gude – Headwaters Economics - Bozeman  
Yvette Converse – GNLCC Coordinator, USFWS – Bozeman  
Michael Whitfield – Heart of the Rockies – Driggs

### **Speaker Biographies**

**Ann Schwend**, Montana Department of Natural, Upper Missouri Basin Water Planner. M.S. (MSU) in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences. Ann lived and worked in the beautiful Ruby Valley for over 20 years and has spent a career planning and building community based collaborative natural resource projects in SW Montana. Current work focus is supporting and connecting the local, state and federal partners as part of the National Drought Resilience Partnership in the Missouri Headwaters Basin.

**Brandon Hoffner**, Henry's Fork Foundation      Brandon has been the executive director since September 2011. Brandon is a life-long conservationist who has focused his education and career on protecting and restoring some of the West's most idyllic landscapes. Born in an eastern Colorado farming community, he earned a B.S. at Colorado State University in wildlife biology and rangeland ecology, with additional training in agricultural business management and GIS. He has worked at Colorado State University, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Pheasants Forever, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

**Chance Story**, Rancher      Chance Story is a seventh grader at Ennis Junior High. He has been surprised at the different conversations his *Wildlife Friendly Fence* Science Fair project has sparked. Chance has enjoyed watching wildlife interact with different fence construction and problem solve how to make the fence safer for wildlife but still suitable for the landowner. Having lived on a ranch all his life, he has encountered wildlife fence entanglements ranging from a calf moose that needed cut out as its mother stood nearby, to elk and deer. These encounters have left a big impression on Chance to explore what he can do to help with wildlife and landowner fence issues.

**Dean Waltee**, Wildlife Biologist, Region 3 Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks      Dean was born and raised in Butte, Montana. His interest in open space and wildlife management began when his father took him on his first hunting outing at the age of four. Although he did not harvest an animal on that day, his father taught him how to walk quietly in the snow, build a fire, and appreciate that he had the opportunity to do such things in such places. Dean received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biological Sciences from Montana Tech and a Masters of Interdisciplinary Studies, including Wildlife Biology, Wildlife Disease Ecology, and Research Design, from the University of Montana. Following graduate school, he accepted a Wildlife Conservation Technician position with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) in Miles City, where he worked on completion of non-game species of greatest conservation need inventory studies. In October of 2010, he accepted a Game Management Biologist position with MFWP in Broadus. Four years later he accepted his current position as a Game Management Biologist with MFWP in Sheridan – an area where he caught his first fish and harvested his first deer.

**Gina Knudson, Salmon Valley Stewardship** Gina joined the staff of Salmon Valley Stewardship in July 2006 and became the executive director in January 2007. She has continued to work as a freelance journalist, publishing articles in High Country News, Big Sky Journal, Sun Valley Magazine, the Horizon Air inflight magazine, and the Idaho Falls Post Register in recent years. She has served as a Salmon City Council member and on the board of directors for the Salmon Arts Council and the Lemhi Afterschool Promise nonprofit organizations. In 2010, she was appointed to the Lemhi County Planning and Zoning Commission and in 2013 named the vice-chair of the commission.

**Jeff Burrell, Wildlife Conservation Society** Jeff Burrell is the Northern Rockies Program Coordinator for the Wildlife Conservation Society. Jeff joined WCS in 2003 and has a Master's of Science degree in Range and Wildlife Management and a Master's of Science degree in Geology and Geophysics from Texas Tech University. He has more than 30 years of experience with federal and state agencies and Texas Tech University in stream and riparian habitat restoration science in the western U.S. In addition to developing and overseeing implementation of WCS conservation strategy in the Northern Rockies, Jeff leads WCS efforts to bring stakeholders together to conserve and restore wildlife connectivity within the Northern Rockies.

**Jessica Haas, Rocky Mountain Research Station, US Forest Service** Jessica Haas is an ecologist with the Rocky Mountain Research Station where she conducts research on wildfires, natural hazards, and community planning. Her work has been used nationally to support hazard mitigation by major land managers such as the US Forest Service, the BLM, the Nature Conservancy, and various state forestry departments throughout the United States. Her research on community wildfire risk assessments is published in a number of peer-reviewed scientific journals and has appeared in various news media sources from the Wall Street Journal to the Boston Globe. She received her Masters of Science degree in Resource Conservation in 2010 from the University of Montana, where she is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Forestry.

**John Crumley, Madison Valley rancher** John is a leader of the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group, who work to preserve the ranching way of life in the Madison Valley. It accomplishes this by developing ways to enhance the economic viability of family ranches; preserving traditional rural community and family ranch values; working cooperatively with groups, agencies and individuals who share its goals and commitment to the land; and ensuring productive agriculture through the protection of private property rights and open space, and by maintaining healthy grasslands, wildlife habitat and watersheds.

**Karin Riley, Rocky Mountain Research Station, US Forest Service** Dr. Karin Riley is a Research Ecologist with the Rocky Mountain Research Station of the US Forest Service in Missoula, Montana. Her research focusses on better understanding the interplay between wildfires, climate, and weather. During wildfire season, she works as a Geospatial Analyst, predicting wildfire spread and extent for fire suppression crews. Her work has recently appeared in a number of peer-reviewed publications and the US Department of Agriculture's drought synthesis. She serves as the Vice President of the Association for Fire Ecology, a non-profit that works to advance fire ecology research. She holds a degree in Earth and Planetary Science from Harvard University, and received a PhD in Geosciences from the University of Montana in 2012.

**Kris Inman, Community Partnerships Representative, Wildlife Conservation Society** Kris Inman is a community partnerships representative with Wildlife Conservation Society where she supports the development of community-based conservation actions to meet the challenges of expanding human and wildlife populations in SW Montana. Kris has worked on wildlife research projects that monitored population status of black bears, wolves, and wolverine and thus can add her wildlife science perspective to the collaboratives she works on. She also brings a human-dimensions of wildlife perspective to her work, as the focus of her master's thesis involved providing data to understand the impact of houndsmen when ballot initiatives across the nation were challenging the privilege to hunt bears. While collecting data to understand this contentious issue, she saw how forging relationships can transform a disengaged group into one that plays an integral and positive role in conservation. She brings these experiences to the WCS Conservation and Communities program to help build local collaborative solutions that consider both the social and ecological implications of conservation actions.

**Kyle Cutting** is a Wildlife Biologist for Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana. He, along with colleagues from Montana State University – Bozeman and others, are currently conducting a research project assessing the influence of seasonal-habitat, sagebrush type, and cattle grazing on the reproduction and survival of the Greater Sage-Grouse. Over the past 5 years, he has (co)authored several peer-reviewed publications on a variety of management related issues spanning the scope of breeding biology of migratory birds, timing of cattle grazing on invertebrate communities, competition among endemic Arctic Grayling and other native and non-native fishes, and interactions among sagebrush songbirds related to a food-resource pulse. His work primarily focuses on bridging the divide between management and science application.

**Kyle Tackett, NRCS** Kyle is the District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Dillon and the Sage Grouse Initiative Coordinator for Montana NRCS. Kyle moved to Dillon in 2007 after spending 3 years with the NRCS in southeast Idaho. Kyle's work in Dillon has revolved around working with private landowners and partners on arctic grayling and sage grouse conservation.

**Lara Fondow, Pheasants Forever, NRCS** Lara Fondow moved to Southeastern Idaho in 2014 to become a Sage Grouse Initiative Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Pheasants Forever. She works with local private landowners and conservation partners to protect and enhance habitat for greater sage-grouse while improving the sustainability of working ranches. She is a native of rural Wisconsin, whose woods and waters instilled in her a love of the outdoors from an early age. She obtained both her B.S. and M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and is an avid Badger and Packer fan. Her career has taken her many places, including Nebraska, Mississippi, Florida, and Mexico. Southeastern Idaho is fast carving a very special place in her heart.

**Liz Davy, District Ranger, Ashton-Island Park RD, Caribou-Targhee National Forest** Liz has worked for the Forest Service for 30 years. She graduated from University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point in forestry, and forest ecology is her background and training. She is a certified silviculturist. Liz has spent most of her career in the Greater Yellowstone area working on the Targhee and Bridger-Teton National Forests and as well as a fuels manager on the Salmon-Challis National Forest. Currently Liz serves on the Board of the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation. In the past Liz has served as a Board member for the Teton Regional Land Trust, Teton Valley Animal Shelter, Family Safety Network, and the Teton Valley Recycling Center. Liz and her husband and two dogs share their time between Driggs and Ashton Idaho. Liz is an avid cross-country skier, biker and hiker.

**Meredith McClure, PhD**, is a Spatial Ecologist with the Center for Large Landscape Conservation in Bozeman, where she helps partner organizations and agencies focus limited resources on conserving crucial connections across the Northern Rockies and beyond. Her scientific perspective also helps to inform CLLC's conservation policy work. Currently, Meredith works jointly with CLLC and our partner organization, Conservation Science Partners. Meredith completed her graduate research in landscape ecology at Montana State University in 2012, testing models commonly used to predict corridors against actual wildlife movement data, and her past and ongoing work has explored connectivity-related processes in diverse settings.

**Michael Whitfield, Executive Director, Heart of the Rockies** Michael served on the national Land Trust Accreditation commission with the Land Trust Alliance. He was the founding board president and long-term executive director of Idaho's Teton Regional Land Trust. He's also a conservation biologist and research associate for the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative, through which he investigates the ecological needs of sensitive wildlife species, like the bald eagle and bighorn sheep, and partners with management agencies to conserve their habitats. He is a recipient of the Craighead Conservation Award.

**Patty Gude, Headwaters Economics** Patty specializes in research on land use, land management, and ecosystems. She works with Geographic Information Systems and is the principal programmer of software for mapping and exploring socioeconomic and geographic relationships. Patty holds a M.S. in Ecology from Montana State University and a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida.

**Ray Rasker**, Headwaters Economics Ray has written widely on rural development and the role of environmental quality in economic prosperity, and is well known in policy circles in the U.S. and Canada. He has a Ph.D. from the College of Forestry, Oregon State University, M.Ag. from Colorado State University, and B.S. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Washington.

**Rebecca Ramsey**, Ruby Valley Conservation District Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, Rebecca moved to the Ruby Valley in 1998. She was appointed to the Ruby Watershed Council during her career in real estate in 2005, and became the Ruby Watershed Coordinator in 2009. She coordinates technical and financial assistance to do conservation projects on the ground with public land managers and private landowners, as well as planning and executing educational events and workshops for the community. She has a BS in Mass Communications from Stephens College. She is passionate about conservation of natural resources & preservation of rural life.

**Rob Ament** is a Senior Scientist with Center for Large Landscape Conservation. Rob leads their efforts in advancing wildlife corridors and ecological connectivity, drawing on over 30 years of experience in ecology, natural resource management, and environmental policy to develop and implement wildlife-friendly policies across scales.

Complementing his work with the Center for Large Landscape Conservation, Rob is the Road Ecology Program Manager for the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University. He currently serves on Montana State University's Campus Sustainability Advisory Council, as a member of IUCN's International Connectivity Conservation Network and on the steering committee for the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation.

**Rob Van Kirk**, Senior Scientist, Henry's Fork Foundation Rob Van Kirk joined the Foundation as a senior scientist in 2012. Rob has fished the river since 1977, and helped define HFF's work as the Foundation's first research director from 1994 to 1998 before pursuing an academic career. Rob grew up in Arcata, California and received a B.A. and M.S. from Humboldt University. He holds a Ph.D in mathematics from the University of Utah, where he focused on mathematical modeling of fish and wildlife populations. He is a past recipient of HFF's Conservation Award and the Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries Society's Native Fish Conservationist of the Year Award.

**Sam Williams** is a Conservation Associate with the Center for Large Landscape Conservation in Bozeman, MT. Sam's interest in the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic health informs his current work at CLLC, as well as previous endeavors with the State of the Rockies Project, an environmental and economic research and education institution at Colorado College. Sam completed his under-graduate degree in Environmental Policy at Colorado College in 2014, with a research thesis about federal land management across the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

**Steve Schmidt**, Region Six Supervisor, Idaho Department of Fish and Game Steve is the Upper Snake Region Supervisor for Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game. He also serves as Chairman of the Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group, and is a member of the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee.

**Tom Rice**, Beaverhead County Commissioner Tom was appointed to the county commission in July 2005 and re-elected for a six-year term 2014-2020. He is chairman of District 12 for the Montana Association of Counties (MACo), representing Anaconda-Deerlodge, Beaverhead, Butte-Silverbow, Granite, Madison & Powell counties. Her represents MACo on the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee (mission: delisting grizzly bears). He has also been appointed to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Elk Brucellosis Working Group representing counties adjacent to Yellowstone National Park. He has been the director of Clark Canyon Water Supply for more than 25 years, and serves as chairman for the Clark Canyon Water Supply/East Bench Irrigation Joint Committee. Tom participates in the Beaverhead Watershed Committee and serves as Associate Director of the Beaverhead Conservation District. He and his wife of 42 years, Sharon, operate Windmill Livestock ranch which has been in the family since 1901.