

# MONTANA'S \$8 BILLION GAMBLE

THE HIGH STAKES OF TRANSFERRING  
FEDERAL LANDS TO THE STATE



*Photo credit: Eric Ian*

BY JOHN TUBBS IN CONJUNCTION WITH:



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial implications of transferring federal public lands to state control are staggering and disproportionately impactful for a rural state with large swaths of national public lands. Montana taxpayers could face a conservatively estimated **\$7.9 billion** hit over the next 20 years. This massive new state tax burden would be primarily driven by the state's need to take on wildfire management, the deferred maintenance backlog, and abandoned mine reclamation on public lands. The state would be left shouldering a massive fiscal burden, with no capacity to manage the soaring costs of wildfire suppression, a ten-fold increase from current federal support, an ever-growing **half-billion-dollar** maintenance backlog, and nearly a billion dollars of abandoned mine reclamation work.

Montana currently shares wildfire mitigation and response costs with federal agencies, but transferring federal lands to the state will shift the financial burden largely onto state taxpayers, potentially costing Montana **\$5.5 billion** over the next 20 years. This estimate does not account for the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires due to climate change, nor the uncertainty of continued federal cost-sharing through FEMA.

Furthermore, Montana's reliance on federal funding for local governments and schools would be severely disrupted. The federal government currently provides over **\$40 million annually** through Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT), which helps fund county services and school programs to make up for lost tax revenue. Without these payments, rural counties would be at risk of bankruptcy, school closures, and cuts to essential services.

The ranching economy would be hit hard. Federal grazing lands are crucial for Montana's cattle industry, offering affordable leases that keep ranching operations viable. A shift to state control would see **grazing fees increased by over 1,600%**, throwing the state's agricultural sector into disarray.

"The financial implications of transferring federal public lands to state control are staggering and disproportionately impactful for a rural state with large swaths of national public lands."

Finally, Montana's robust tourism industry, valued at **\$5.45 billion annually**, is heavily reliant on federally managed lands like Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks. The national and international appeal of these landscapes could be severely diminished by state ownership, potentially undermining the state's tourism-driven economy.

### *Considerations/Disclaimer:*

*Key topic areas were selected based on available data and do not reflect the full scope of federal land management responsibilities and associated costs.*

*Additionally, the secondary and tertiary financial ripple effects of a federal land transfer on Montana's foundational ranching economy and growing outdoor recreation are not tabulated in this report and deserve further research. This report also does not address the sizable economic implications of land transfers on wildlife, habitat management, and public access - all of which also deserves further analysis. There are budget impacts related to the payroll and human resources management of the current federal employees who are responsible for the management of federal lands within Montana's borders, which would significantly increase the cost and complexity of a land transfer.*

THE HIGH STAKES OF  
TRANSFERRING FEDERAL LANDS TO  
THE STATE

\$8

BILLION

A conservative estimate of the increased state tax burden on Montana over the next two decades.

\$5.5

BILLION

The increased burden if wildfire mitigation and response were to become the responsibility of Montana taxpayers.

\$5.4

BILLION

Federal public lands help fuel Montana's outdoor recreation economy which generates \$5.45 billion annually.

1,600%

INCREASE

\$1

BILLION

This would be a sizeable new strain on the state budget as reclamation of abandoned mine sites in Montana is only done with federal dollars.

State control of federal grazing leases would spike throwing Montana's agricultural economy into a downspiral.

\$40

MILLION

Lost federal funding for schools and local governments in rural communities through PILT every year.

\$623

MILLION

The cost to Montana taxpayers to pick up the tab for deferred maintenance on roads, bridges, culverts, campgrounds and other infrastructure on federal public lands.



# THE THREAT

## A Brief History of the Land Transfer Movement

The proposal to transfer federal lands to state control in Montana is not a new concept. Historically, Western states have pushed for more control over federal lands, most notably during the Sagebrush Rebellion of the 1970s and 1980s. This movement, which sought to transfer public lands to state or local governments, was driven by the belief that local control would better manage resources and promote economic development. However, the Sagebrush Rebellion and other such attempts ultimately failed due to an overwhelming backlash of American public land advocates. Nevertheless, there continues to be a steady, strategic, and powerful land transfer agenda at every level of government that has gained some traction in Montana during the 2025 legislative session with the introduction of House Joint Resolution 24. Montanans have made it clear they do not support these efforts, as evidenced by the recent 43 - 66 vote against the resolution in the Montana House. Years of polling supports this sentiment: the land transfer concept is unpopular with Montanans, and a solution looking for a problem.



*Hundreds of Montanans gathered at the Capitol to rally against efforts to privatize public lands.  
Photo credit: MCVEF, Helena, Mont. February 2025*

Although the land transfer proposal may appear to offer increased state control, historical context and financial considerations indicate that it would likely result in negative outcomes, particularly for a sparsely populated state with a high proportion of federal lands per capita. Ultimately, the financial and logistical pressures of managing such a vast portfolio of land would leave Montana with no viable option but to sell off portions of the public lands this movement seeks to control. This process, known as land divestment, would likely begin as the state realizes the unsustainable position it has placed itself in. With the state already struggling with tax reductions and growing fiscal demands, selling

**"It is abundantly clear that special interests see a moment in time to finally enact a federal land transfer scheme."**

these iconic lands could seem like the only solution. However, such a move would come at a high cost—one that undermines the state's ranching and tourism economy while eroding Montana's outdoor heritage. In the end, the transfer of national public lands to state control would jeopardize nearly 27.4 million acres - an area larger than the state of Virginia - of our national parks, pristine wilderness, and working forests and grasslands.

Across the West, the movement to privatize federal public lands is on the rise and is reaching a fever pitch following the 2024 election. Today, the movement is pressing forward at every level of government in the Administration, in Congress and at the state level.

It is abundantly clear that special interests see a moment in time to finally enact a federal land transfer scheme as evidenced\* by:

- The Trump Administration is referring to federal public lands as part of "America's balance sheet"
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Interior Secretary Doug Burgum have announced plans to sell public lands under the guise of affordable housing projects.
- Proponents of a so-called American Sovereign Wealth Fund are eyeing federal public lands as capital
- Rule changes and development proposals are advancing in the U.S. Congress
- State legislative resolutions, including Montana, have been introduced in support of Utah's lands lawsuit aimed at transferring federal lands to the state.
- Republicans in Congress are pushing bills that would transfer lands to states or sell off public lands outright.

*\*See appendix for sources*

## Wildfire Mitigation and Response

Right now, Montana is liable for just a fourth of the expenses associated with wildfire mitigation and response on its 30 million acres of national public lands managed by the USFS and the BLM. Wholesale federal-to-state transfers of these forests will shift the cost of future wildland fire suppression to the state taxpayer.

Over the past two decades, Montana has spent about half a billion dollars towards these efforts, but left alone as federal land management agencies leave the state following a transfer, Montanans at every income level will feel the effects as the state government is made to spend, at a bare minimum, **\$5.5 billion** over the next two decades in wildfire mitigation and response, a ten-fold increase. (Montana State Legislature, Fiscal Division, 2025)

**"Montanans at every income level will feel the effects as the state government is made to spend, at a bare minimum, \$5.5 billion over the next two decades in wildfire mitigation and response, a ten-fold increase."**

This is the "bare minimum cost" because this figure does not fully take into account the increasing frequency, intensity, and therefore costs of wildfires as a result of climate change and also assumes the state would still be able to leverage the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a cost-share partner, which is not at all a given.



**30 million acres of public land in Montana are managed by the USFS and the BLM.**



**\$5.5 billion in new wildfire fighting and mitigation for Montana taxpayers.**

### ANALYSIS

*Over the last 20 years Wildland fire suppression costs in Montana exceeded \$2.3 billion, 75% Federal 25% State share (Montana Legislative Fiscal Division, 2024).*

*This equates to an average annual cost of \$117.67 million. Assuming an annual increase in wildland suppression costs of 10% per year, due to a higher than inflation cost increases and an ever-increasing fire threat.*

*Massive federal-state land transfers will eliminate the responsibility of federal land management agencies to pay the cost of wildland fire suppression in Montana leaving FEMA as Montana's only federal cost share partner.*

*Assuming FEMA will continue to provide cost share with states, land transfer will flip the cost share from 75% Fed 25% State to 25% Fed 75% State.*

*Using the assumptions listed above Montana can expect to pay \$5.5 billion over the next 20 years with FEMA cost share paying for \$1.85 billion.*

## Abandoned Mine Reclamation

The reclamation of abandoned coal and hard rock mining sites in Montana is only done using federal dollars. There are nearly 5,000 abandoned mines in Montana.

As such, transferring federal lands to the state would result in yet another massive expense directed at Montana taxpayers.

The most recent cost estimate is from a decade ago - on the low-end, reclamation of every site in Montana would cost 474 million dollars, and on the high-end, as much as one billion dollars. (Center for Western Priorities, 2015)

While updated analysis is needed, the cost of reclamation only goes up the longer sites are left to sit and deteriorate, this figure is almost certainly closer to the high-end, if not higher today.



**\$1 billion** in added costs for Montana taxpayers associated with the reclamation of 5,000 abandoned mines in Montana.

## Disruptions to the Agriculture Economy

Montana ranches rely on low-cost federal grazing lands and their federal grass to make ends meet. Over generations, low-cost federal grazing leases became critical for ranch operations. The combination of federal, state and private grazing units is more important today as all other input costs are rising for Montana ranchers.

Under a federal-to-state land transfer, the 24,250 grazing leases currently managed by the BLM and USFS would see a **1,600% increase in rates** once adjusted to the state's statutorily required market-based rate. Costs per animal unit month (AUM) would multiply seventeen times, sending shockwaves through the Montana cattle industry and the associated banking industry. (Northern Agricultural Network, 2024)

***"The impacts of the federal land transfer movement would be a disaster and cause untenable economic consequences for working family ranches in Montana."***

-Liz McFarland, Rancher  
Powder River County, MT



**1,600% increase** in grazing costs in Montana associated with transferring federal lands to the state.

In Montana, where the banking industry maintains close financial connections with the ranching economy, replacing the below-market federal grazing rates with the state's minimum market rates would send the **entire economy into a tailspin.**

**Analysis:** The 2025 federal grazing rate is \$1.35 per animal unit month (AUM) for both BLM and the Forest Service. Agencies reported "18,000 active grazing permits and leases administered by the BLM and nearly 6,250 permits administered by the Forest Service." (Northern Ag Network 2/6/2024) On the other hand, Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation charged a rate of \$23.00 per AUM for state grazing leases. Market based lease rates are required. DNRC administers 9,000 agriculture and grazing leases on 4.7 million acres of State Trust Land. Applying the state's minimum rates in place of the below market federal rate would increase lease costs by 1,600% for over 24,000 federal grazing leases.

## Deferred Maintenance Backlog

The most recent estimate for addressing the deferred maintenance on the roads, bridges and infrastructure on Montana's federal public lands is well over half a billion dollars - which would be a sizable new burden on the shoulders of the state and Montana taxpayers to bear.

The federal government's land management agencies - primarily the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Forest Service - have a multibillion-dollar backlog of deferred maintenance - maintenance on infrastructure on public lands under their stewardship that was not performed as scheduled and put off to a future date.

Some examples of the backlog include infrastructure that many Montanans access regularly such as trailheads and trails, visitor centers, restrooms and campgrounds. But it also includes the high value and expensive road and bridge repairs and maintenance on the extensive network of U.S. Forest Service and BLM roads throughout Montana. This network includes more than 35 thousand miles of roadway. (Montana Environmental Quality Council, 2016 and Bureau of Land Management, 2006)

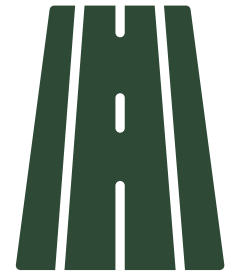
In FY22, the cost estimate for deferred maintenance and repairs on the 27.4 million acres of land in Montana managed by federal agencies was put at \$623 million. This is well over the \$125 million in federal funding the state was given in FY22 and FY23 as a part of the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund to address the backlog. (Government Accountability Office, 2024)

The bulk of the costs originated from projects on land managed by the National Park Service (\$206 million dollars), Bureau of Land Management (\$201 million), and Forest Service (\$164 million), while a small portion of the cost fell with the Fish and Wildlife Service (\$41 million) and the Bureau of Indian Education (\$10 million). (Government Accountability Office, 2024)

Given that from FY19 through FY22, reported costs of deferred maintenance and repair projects went up for every federal agency eligible for the Legacy Restoration Fund, it is safe to assume the costs continued this same upward trajectory through FY23 and FY24. (Government Accountability Office, 2024)



**\$623 million** in deferred maintenance and repairs on lands managed by the federal government in Montana.



**35,000 miles** of roads in need of repair and expensive maintenance.



**Upward trajectory** for deferred maintenance and repair projects on federal public lands.

### EXAMPLES OF DEFERRED MAINTENANCE ON FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS

*Some examples of the backlog include infrastructure that many Montanans access regularly such as trailheads and trails, visitor centers, restrooms and campgrounds. But it also includes the high value and expensive road and bridge repairs and maintenance on the extensive network of U.S. Forest Service and BLM roads throughout Montana.*

## Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Much of the money Montana's county governments use to fund public education, finance public infrastructure projects, and keep the lights on in county offices comes from payments made to them by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (USFS) to compensate for the presence of large tracts of tax-exempt public lands within their jurisdictions. (Montana State Library, 2025)

In FY24, the BLM provided more than \$40 million in these federal payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) payments to every one of Montana's fifty-six counties, and Montana's rural school systems were on the receiving end of about \$14 million from the USFS. (Forest Service, 2024 and Montana Association of Counties, 2024) It's absurd to suggest the state could take over the federal PILT program and replace that federal revenue with state revenue. With a massive federal-to-state land transfer, the state government will be in crisis. It would be confronted with an "all hands on deck" effort needed to respond to the largest unfunded mandate in U.S. history. There will be no capacity for a state-based PILT program.

Without the \$40 million+ annual federal contribution to counties and schools, several of Montana's counties would be bankrupt - in particular, the eleven counties in which more than half of the acreage is owned by the federal government.

This would mean Montanans throughout the state would have to deal with the consequences of reductions in the local public sector workforce, the possibility of school closures, indefinite delays on public works projects, and more.

Some have argued revenue from transferred federal land would far outweigh PILT funding, however it is important to note that in the land transfer movement - there is no mention of transferring the mineral estate with the federal surface lands. In vast regions of Montana, a split estate between surface and mineral exists today.

In fact, the Administration is currently promoting the value of drilling, mining and timber harvesting on federal public lands as a way to pay down the national debt.

This would leave Montana with the land management responsibilities

without the revenue generated through oil and gas extraction, coal mining and timber harvests. Congress could require mineral estate transfer. However, the CBO estimate on the increase to the national debt would be staggering.

### Analysis

*DOI records show payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) payments to Montana's fifty-six counties totaled \$40,330,577 for Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023 and \$43,301,694 in FFY 2024.*

*U.S. Forest Service's "Secure Rural Schools" program provided \$14,206,407 in federal funding to Montana schools in FFY 2023.*

*Federal land ownership in eleven Montana counties exceeds 50%, making county government highly dependent upon federal PILT payment.*

*Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation does not have a PILT program.*

*DNRC Trust lands are in all 56 counties and in a small number of counties, more than 50% of the land is owned by the state.*



**\$40 million** in PILT payments were made to Montana Counties in FY 24



**100% of Montana Counties** received funding through PILT.



**\$14 million** in PILT funds from the U.S. Forest Service went to rural Montana schools.

**"Without the \$40 million+ PILT annual federal contribution to counties and schools, several of Montana's counties would be *bankrupt*."**



## Impact on Montana's Tourism Economy



**The land transfer movement threatens the national public lands that are the anchor to multi-billion dollar recreation tourism economy in Montana.**

Montana is a must-visit state for millions of tourists every year, and the state's national parks are its main attraction, generating more than a billion dollars of economic activity every year.

But considered in its entirety, the state's recreation-tourism industry brings in \$5.45 billion annually. These dollars account for \$414 million in state and local taxes, directly support the employment of 48.3 thousand people, and provide \$1.5 billion dollars in direct employee compensation. (University of Montana, 2024)

The visitors who come to Montana and make this economic activity possible knowing the state's national public lands represent the best opportunity to experience everything Montana's outdoors has to offer.

Beyond our renowned national parks, whether it's the Upper Missouri River National Monument, Bob Marshall Wilderness, or Charles Russell National

Wildlife Refuge, visitors know the protections afforded by Congressional and executive action reflect the national importance of these landscapes. The designation as a National Monument, Federal Wilderness Area, or National Wildlife Refuge means outstanding natural resources with significant historic and cultural value.

**\$5.45 billion dollars annual recreation tourism economic impact threatened by the federal land transfer movement. \$414 million in state and local tax revenue at risk.**

National public lands are the anchor to this multi-billion-dollar industry, and without a doubt, federal-to-state land transfer puts this industry on the line.

Enter the inevitability of land divestment.

# THE INEVITABLE OUTCOME

## Divestment

### Public Lands for Sale


If the proponents of federal-to-state transfer of national public lands were to have their way, Montana, which does not presently operate a PILT program and depends on the federal government to foot the bill for wildfire mitigation and response, deferred maintenance and repairs, and abandoned mine reclamation would inevitably see divestment of the national public lands as the only viable way forward.

It would not likely happen all at once, but in time, as the state's political leaders realize the unsustainable position they have put themselves in - particularly with their recent push to provide taxpayers at all income levels the largest reduction in income taxes in the state's history, raise the state's earned income tax, and lower property taxes for both homeowners and small businesses - would begin to see merit in privatizing much of the public land they have just inherited.

County governments would see their property tax revenues enlarged and the state's treasury would find in the private sector new cost-share partners for land management, but at major costs to one of the cornerstones of the state's economy - the recreation-tourism industry.

Consider this alongside the recession-inducing disruption to another of Montana's economic cornerstones - the ranching and banking industries - and anything gained from national public land sell offs would be more than offset by huge losses to these industries along with the negative downstream economic impacts to other industries.

**“The financial implications of transferring federal public lands to state control are staggering. As a result, Montana would inevitably begin selling off our federal public lands to the highest bidder.”**



# THE INEVITABLE OUTCOME

## Divestment

**"The loss of these national assets would be a tragic diminishment of the nation's heritage and future – a cost that is beyond calculation."**



### Nation's Character at Stake

The lands and waters of Montana embody the nation's character and history, serving as national assets that transcend state boundaries. Many of these resources hold global significance, with their value recognized worldwide. A federal-to-state land transfer would fragment these national treasures, reducing them to isolated and likely underfunded state parks if they are not sold off to the highest bidder.

Montana is home to some of the nation's most iconic landscapes. Glacier National Park, along with Canada's Waterton Lakes National Park, forms the world's first International Peace Park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Each year, three million visitors from around the

world explore Glacier, while Yellowstone National Park, primarily located in Wyoming, draws millions more through its popular Montana entrances.

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the largest territorial expansion in U.S. history, and landmarks such as the Lewis and Clark Historic Trail and the Upper Missouri River National Monument, highlight America's early history. These sites preserve the experiences of the nation's founders, including the remoteness faced by Lewis and Clark as they navigated the Upper Missouri River Wild and Scenic River.

Montana also hosts the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area, the most renowned among the state's 16 Wilderness Areas, which total over 3 million acres. These areas, established by the Wilderness Act of 1964, represent lands "untrammeled by man" where nature thrives undisturbed.

The idea of federal-to-state land transfers, often portrayed as simple land deals, overlooks the historical and environmental significance of these lands. Such transfers would not only fragment iconic landscapes but also sever the deep ties to America's past and its conservation efforts. The loss of these national assets would be a tragic diminishment of the nation's heritage and future – a cost that is beyond calculation.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while the idea of transferring national public lands to state control in Montana may appear to be a solution to a perceived problem, the reality is that it would place an untenable financial burden on the state.

The costs associated with maintaining national public lands at the state level—ranging from wildfire operations to the loss of essential federal funding for rural counties—would be far too great for Montana to bear per capita. The state simply cannot afford the responsibility of managing such vast swaths of land without significant financial strain.


As a result, Montana would inevitably begin selling off national public lands to private interests, potentially reversing the very principles of public land conservation that have defined the state and the West for generations. The most immediate consequence of Montana's divestment of its federal public lands would be the loss of access to these lands for hunting, fishing, and recreation. Montana's national public lands are a cornerstone of the state's outdoor culture and recreation economy, providing access to world-class hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping to all. These lands support not only the state's economy—through tourism and outdoor recreation—but also the traditions and livelihoods of those who rely on these resources for subsistence and enjoyment.

If these lands were sold off to private interests, public access for outdoor recreation would be severely restricted. What was once open space for all would become privatized, with access granted only to those who can afford it. The public's ability to hunt and fish on these lands, often free of charge or for a minimal fee, would be limited or eliminated. This would have profound effects on Montana's recreational economy, which contributes billions annually, as well as on the quality of life for Montanans who value these spaces for their personal and cultural significance.

Montana's national public lands are more than just parcels of land. They are integral to the character, economy, and identity of Montana and the United States. The inevitable sale of these lands would be a tragic step toward dismantling the very foundation of what makes Montana, and the nation, great. Just as other states have learned, the consequences of selling public lands extend far beyond immediate financial concerns and can erode the long-term viability of local economies, conservation and public access for generations to come.

A federal land transfer is a nearly \$8 billion gamble on Montana's future.

**"A federal land transfer is a nearly \$8 billion gamble on Montana's future."**





## STATEMENTS

**Frank Szollosi****Executive Director  
Montana Wildlife Federation**

"The land transfer movement isn't just misguided—it's dangerous, and this report proves it. At least \$8 billion in new costs would fall on Montana taxpayers, putting pressure on lawmakers to sell off public lands just to balance the books. That means lost access, higher grazing costs, and damage to rural communities. **For hunters and anglers, it's a direct threat to the places we rely on for tradition, sustenance, and our outdoor heritage. Montanans shouldn't have to pay more to lose what's already ours.** Public lands are part of our identity, and we can't afford to let them slip away."

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**Devin O'Dea****Western Policy & Conservation Manager  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers**

"Hunters and anglers have repeatedly opposed misguided attempts to transfer our public lands. These proposals prioritize short-term interests at long-term public expense, diverting vital resources away from fire resilience, access, and conservation. **The insurmountable fiscal burden to states would likely to lead to privatization or sale of our shared inheritance – something all Americans should strongly reject.**"

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**Erin Benedict****Montana State Director  
Mountain Mamas**

"In Montana, we are lucky enough to live in a place that many people just dream of visiting. This isn't just about preserving these places for our own uses; this is about maintaining a way of life for our children and a character of place that is unique to Montana. Transferring these lands to state control puts them at risk of being sold off. Once they are gone, we cannot get them back. **This is our wake up call.**"

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**Whitney Tawney****Executive Director  
Montana Conservation Voters  
Education Fund**

"This analysis is critical as momentum builds behind the land transfer movement. Shifting management of Montana's vast national public lands to the state would create an overwhelming financial burden, draining essential resources from conservation efforts and the protection of fragile ecosystems. **The stakes couldn't be higher—land transfer isn't just an economic risk, it's a direct threat to our shared outdoor way of life and its legacy.** Such a move would pave the way for the eventual sale of our public lands to private interests. We cannot afford to let that happen."

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With 40 years of professional experience in natural resources management, John E. Tubbs continues to provide natural resources policy leadership. Currently, Mr. Tubbs represents the United State as Special Liaison to the International St. Mary / Milk River Study Board. Appointed by the International Joint Commission in 2022, Mr. Tubbs provides policy advice to the Study Board and co-chairs the Government Forum where he and his Canadian co-chair convene Federal, Tribal, State and Provincial agencies providing study updates and seeking agency input.

Mr. Tubbs was appointed Director of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) in 2013 and served as Director for eight years. Montana DNRC is the state's land and water management agency overseeing 5.2 million acres of state trust land, providing wildland fire protection for state and private lands, managing water resources including management of Montana's water right programs and working with tribal, state and local agencies to find solutions to natural resource challenges. Major achievements include passage of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Water Compact, securing a state fire fund with sustainable funding, leading the state's response to invasive mussel detection, establishing the state's sage grouse conservation program, and setting new forest management policy.

Prior to serving as DNRC's Director, Mr. Tubbs served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior overseeing the U.S Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Geological Survey. In this position, Mr. Tubbs led on many policy issues facing the Department of the Interior including implementation of the WaterSMART program and working on emerging energy and climate policy.

Mr. Tubbs participated in many multi-agency teams addressing national policy including the revision of the Water Resources Principles and Guidelines, EPA Clean Water Act guidance and rules, Urban Water Federal Partnership and negotiations on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.



Credit: Tubbs Photos

### *John Tubbs*

Before serving in Washington D.C., Mr. Tubbs held several leadership positions in the Montana DNRC. From 2005 to 2008, Mr. Tubbs served as the Water Resources Administrator overseeing budget, policy and operations for Montana's water rights system, water management programs, safety of dams and flood management programs, and the operations of 27 dams and 250 miles of irrigation canals and infrastructure.

From 1990 to 2005, Mr. Tubbs served as Chief of the Resource Development Bureau providing financial assistance to state, tribal, and local governments with a portfolio of over \$500 million. Mr. Tubbs started his career in 1985 as the sole water resources economist in the agency.

This report was produced in conjunction with Montana Wildlife Federation, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Mountain Mamas, and the Montana Conservation Voters Education Fund.

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