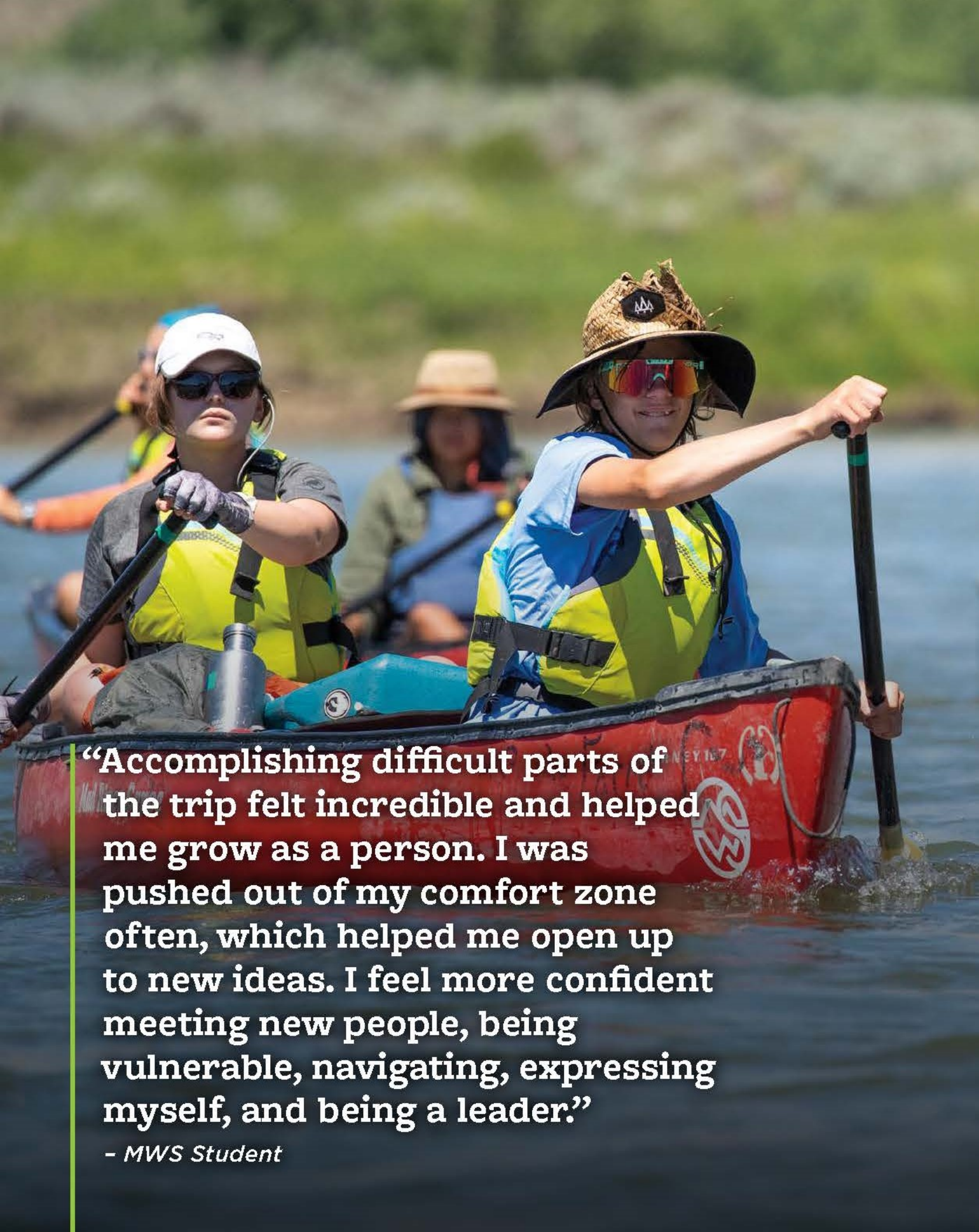




**MONTANA  
WILDERNESS  
SCHOOL**

IMPACT REPORT 2021





**“Accomplishing difficult parts of the trip felt incredible and helped me grow as a person. I was pushed out of my comfort zone often, which helped me open up to new ideas. I feel more confident meeting new people, being vulnerable, navigating, expressing myself, and being a leader.”**

**- MWS Student**



## Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Just over 7 years ago MWS launched our first expedition. Five students and two instructors hiked out into the Taylor-Hilgard mountains on our first mountaineering expedition: 21 days in the Montana backcountry. One student struggled and eventually went home, but the other four students found their mountain legs and grit and successfully completed what was for most of them a life-changing experience.

In 2021, more than ever before in my lifetime, I feel like these experiences are crucial. I've often had folks say why don't you just do short overnight or weekend trips instead of these longer more involved experiences. The answer for me is easy. The "realness" doesn't surface until you are really in it, committed, raw, exposed, tired, and smelly. On a backcountry expedition every day you have to earn it, and the power and confidence that comes from doing hard things is something you will take with you the rest of your life.

MWS ran our busiest and most impactful season ever this year. Not only did we triple the number of students served in past seasons, but we added new courses, partnered with 5 other organizations to run expeditions together, provided over \$138,000 in financial aid to local Montana students, more than ever before. MWS also continued to build bridges - increasing the diversity of our students in terms of culture, gender, race, and socioeconomic. Not only has MWS survived as a new local nonprofit organization in just 7 years, but we are thriving right now at a time when youth need these experiences more than ever.

I continue to be extremely grateful for our amazing community: our participants and their families, our staff and volunteer board members, our grant and business sponsors, and all the donors that make all of this possible. Thank you again for being important in our family here at the school. Without all of you MWS would never have made it and thank you for continuing to be here and help us move forward to impact the lives of more youth in the years ahead.

Stay Wild,

**Gar Duke**

*Co-founder and Executive Director*

**Our Mission** is to provide empowering expeditionary wilderness courses to youth that foster personal growth and cultivate a conservation ethic through connecting with remote landscapes and wild places.

**Our Vision** is to develop the highest quality expeditionary outdoor education program in the United States. We strive to serve diverse and motivated youth in communities throughout Montana. Through challenging and empowering experiences on our courses, youth will develop a deeper connection to the natural world, and will return to their communities as more skilled, confident, and compassionate leaders.

# 166

MWS STUDENTS

# \$138,045

AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS

# 1,447

PROGRAM DAYS

# 34,728

PROGRAM HOURS

# 1,424

USFS/BLM/NPS/USFWS  
PUBLIC LAND USER DAYS



## 2021 Youth Wilderness

# PROGRAM REPORT

The 2021 season was a tremendous year of growth for MWS as we more than doubled our student numbers and tripled our expedition offerings. We maintained the 2020 implementation of the policies, procedures and guidelines to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, including pre-course testing. MWS successfully ran twelve open enrollment expeditions and five contract expeditions. We overcame numerous logistical challenges from wildfires to staffing shortages and I am happy to report that 166 students had fundamentally transformative experiences in the unique wild lands of Montana and Idaho. Students were immersed in wild places from 4-25 days and educated about wilderness self-care and community building, camp craft, Leave No Trace ethics, leadership and communication skills, mountaineering, rock climbing, canoeing, packrafting, horse packing and backpacking. We successfully offered and ran three new course types this year: The Introduction to Packrafting Adventure, Montana Expedition, and Yellowstone Backpacking Expedition. We also worked in a new course area for our Wilderness Backpacking and Packrafting expedition running the Salmon River in Idaho.

The 2021 field season provided a number of learning opportunities for MWS from organizational growing pains to logistical challenges. With the health of our staff and students as our foremost priority, we maintained our comprehensive COVID-19 protocols and guidelines for students and staff. We also continued our rigorous medical screening and testing we applied to all students and staff in an attempt to create “Covid-free cohorts” for each expedition. In addition, the wildfire season was long and created a number of logistical challenges and

health concerns with unhealthy air in many of our course areas and was the result of a cancellation of one contract course. Like many other sectors of the national and local community, MWS also experienced a shortage of qualified workers and made some hires mid-season that were critical to a successful summer. A very strong commitment to the program by invested staff members maintained the high caliber of MWS expeditions, and feedback from students and parents indicate that we made a very positive impact in the lives of our participants. Enrollment was strong with our expanded course offerings, and the outreach and enrollment team did an exceptional job with limited in-person and substantial online recruiting.

The contract course program grew substantially from previous years. By and large most of these trips were very successful. We look forward to working with some of our partner organizations again next year and the groundwork is already being set for collaborating with SEO Scholars, NYC, and BYEP in Bozeman again.

Once again, we were able to provide full or partial scholarships to over 66% of our Montana students and no interested participant was turned away from MWS for financial reasons. As 2022 approaches we also look forward to getting our feet under us, as we become a larger organization and will work to continue improving the program’s operations. We remain committed to making MWS more diverse, inclusive and equitable, with a goal of improving enrollment particularly in underserved urban, rural, and native communities around Montana.

Onward,

**Josh Olsen**

*Co-founder and Program Director*





**MONTANA  
WILDERNESS  
SCHOOL**



# CONTRACT EXPEDITIONS

## The Traveling School

- 14 days canoeing the Missouri River
- 11 students + 4 TTS instructors

## Wellfit Girls, Florida

- 6 days Backpacking + local service project
- 24 students + 6 Wellfit staff

## Sussex School, Missoula, MT

- 4 days canoeing the Missouri River
- 14 students + 2 Sussex staff

## SEO Scholars, NYC

- 12 days canoeing the Missouri River
- 11 students

## Big Sky Youth Empowerment, Bozeman, MT

- 6 days canoeing the Missouri River
- 6 students + 2 BYEP staff

## Staff

**Gar Duke**

*Co-founder and Executive Director*

**Josh Olsen**

*Co-founder and Program Director*

**Martha Sellers**

*Development Manager*

**Claire Kleese**

*Communications Manager*

**Erin McCleary**

*Operations Manager*

**Hannah Marshall**

*Youth Program Manager*

**Kodee Cloninger**

*Outreach and Admissions Manager*

**Ross Lesslie**

*Student Outreach and Program Support*

**Hannah Karn**

*Student Outreach and Program Support*

**Ryan Peters**

*Student Outreach and Program Support*

## Board of Directors

**Jon Christensen**

*Board Chair*

**Chris Bunting**

**Gar Duke**

**Bill Stoddart**

*Board Treasurer*

**Jessie Wiese**

**Mike Wolfe**

**Deborah Love**

*Board Secretary*

**Justin Short**

## Advisor Team

**Ashton Snyder**

**Damien Powledge**

**Dave McEvoy**

**Dr. Steve Halvorson**

**Kate Burnaby Wright**

**Kestrel Neathawk**

**Mike Fiebig**

**Robert Campbell**

**Shane Doyle**

**Sheri Blackwood**

**Steve Smith**

**Whitney Milhoan**

## Wranglers + Field Instructors

**Andrew Harvison**

**Becca Elliott**

**Colin Burdsall**

**Eliza Donahue**

**Eric Falconer**

**Hannah Karn**

**Hannah Marshall**

**John Stember**

**Jordan Allen**

**Katie Darrow**

**Lexi Kyro**

**Lily Johnston**

**Megan Compton**

**Ross Lesslie**

**Ryan Peters**

**Sarah Ebright**

**Shannon Regan**

**Taryn McGovern**

## Volunteers

**Ashton Snyder**

**Greg Smith**

**Justin Short**

**Randy Newberg**

## Field Intern

**Logan Daughetee**

## Ops Support

**Molly Spencer**

# FINANCIALS

## Income

5%	General Fundraising: \$44,063
6%	Federal and State Grants: \$52,022
7%	Business Donations: \$62,099
20%	Foundation and Community Grants: \$172,580
30%	Individual Donations: \$247,419
32%	Student Tuition Fees: \$267,744
<b>\$845,927</b>	

## Expenses

84%	Programs: \$629,215
12%	Fundraising: \$91,786
4%	Management & Administration: \$32,913
<b>\$753,914</b>	

# PARTNERS

## ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIPS

Aerie Backcountry Medicine  
Big Sky Youth Empowerment  
Centennial Outfitters, Inc.  
Colorado Youth Mental Health Treatment Act  
Experiential Consulting, Inc.  
Mountain Sky Guest Ranch  
Nathan Norby - Videography/Photography  
SEO Scholars, NYC  
Shane Doyle - Native Nexus Consulting  
SOAR Northwest  
Sussex School, Missoula  
The Traveling School  
Wellfit Girls  
Yogesh Simpson Design

## PUBLIC LAND AGENCIES

Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest  
Bureau of Land Management - Butte Office  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Sand Creek Station  
U.S. Government - West Fork Ranger District  
U.S. Government - UMRBNM Management Station  
U.S. Government - Yellowstone National Park  
U.S. National Forest Service - Rocky Mountain Ranger District  
United States of America - Beartooth Ranger District

# CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

## WOLVERINE LEVEL (\$5,000+)



## GRIZZLY BEAR LEVEL (\$2,500 - \$4,999)



## MOUNTAIN LION LEVEL (\$1,000-\$2,499)

Barnard Construction Co  
Foundant Technologies Inc  
Moonlight Basin  
OnX Maps  
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club

## BISON LEVEL (UNDER \$1,000)

ACRE Kitchen  
Amazon Smile  
Banfield Pet Hospital  
Bend Beyond Yoga  
Betty's Bottle Shop  
Blackbird Kitchen  
Bozeman Cottage Inc  
Bozeman Real Estate Group  
Brick Bound Leather  
Bridger Bowl  
Brome Design Build  
Bronwen Jewelry  
commonFont  
Cosmic Pizza  
Crosscut Mountain Sports  
Dave's Sushi  
Dee-O-Gee  
Duckworth  
Folk Dog Art  
Gallatin Alpine Sports  
Ghost Town Coffee Roasters  
Pat Hoffman Artworks  
Intrinsic Architecture  
Jam on Main  
Lone Mountain Ranch  
Map Brewing Co  
Meateaters Inc  
Mint Dental  
Montana Fishing Outfitters  
Montana Whitewater  
North Bridger Bison  
Oboz Footwear  
Olivelle  
Oracle  
Practice Power Yoga  
Revelry  
Schnees Boots, Shoes and  
Outdoors  
SK4 Designs  
Stronghold Fabrication  
Studio Coffee Roasters  
The Humble Design Co  
The Mountain Project  
The Wild Blume  
Tori Pintar Photography  
Treeline Coffee Roasters  
Wild Crumb  
Your Yoga



# 2021 DONORS

## WOLVERINE LEVEL

(\$10,000+)

Chris & Rebekah Bunting  
Robert Duke  
Michelle & Robert Friend  
Friend Family Philanthropic Fund  
Patricia & Craig Jilk Fund  
Mariposa Philanthropic Fund  
Victoria & Sam Phares

## GRIZZLY BEAR LEVEL

(\$1000-\$9,999)

Mark Albrecht  
Donald & Betty Alder  
Anonymous  
Chuck & Jana Arnold  
Robert Campbell  
Jon & Elizabeth Christensen  
Sarah & Bo Ewald  
Andrew & Victoria Field  
Endowment Fund  
Doug & Leni Herst  
Brian & Caroline Fromm Lurie  
Tim & MaryAnne Mayeda  
Colleen & Andrew McCreary  
Bernard Osher  
Jennifer Peters  
David & Deborah Peters  
Mary & Mark Rudder  
Justin Short  
Bill Stoddart  
Sas & Stuart Weber  
Jennifer & Elliot Weissbluth

## MOUNTAIN LION LEVEL

(\$500-\$999)

Don & Caroline Bitz  
Anne & George Bunting  
Jerry & Sue Campana  
Diane & Rob Cassil  
Jock & Sara Donaldson  
Draper Family Fund  
Jeffrey Frey  
Philip Hess  
Michael Jenkins  
Claire Kleese  
Chris & Michael Kleese  
Josh Olsen & Bina Peters  
William & Geraldine Olsen  
Luke Rice  
Martha Sellers  
Jessie Wiese

## BISON LEVEL

(\$250-\$499)

Andy Austin  
Kaitlin Bear  
Bill Blackburn  
Jimmy & Marianne Capra  
Deidre Combs  
Cary Costello

Thomas Donovan  
Pam Farmer & Bev Benson  
Judith Gregory & Alan Goldin  
Jenny Grossenbacher  
Dr Stephen Halvorson  
Jeff & Sarah Ho  
Michelle Kendziorski  
Grant Kier  
Karen & Terry Kreitzberg  
Maggie Lesslie  
Deb Love  
Megan Melief  
Louise Mercier & Mark Lehman  
Kathleen Heitz Myers  
Amanda Obery  
Jennifer, Jeff, & Will Olsen-Krengel  
Sandra Prusiner  
Christina Schoenberger  
Meghan Sherman  
Matt & Betsy Tadwick  
Lydia & Jeff Trom  
Jeannie Wall  
Jeff Welch & Kelly Niles  
Jess & Andy Wickstrom  
Wendy Wilson  
Kate Wright  
Adrienne Wrona  
Ben Yeomans & Kristin Jordan  
Dave Zinn & Amy Pakula

## BIGHORN SHEEP LEVEL

(\$100 - \$249)

Carolyn & Steven Albrecht  
Karen Alexander  
Scott & Ivaly Alexander  
Jessica & Jackson Alvey  
Anonymous  
Heidi & Jeff Begin  
Sue & Tony Bell  
Suzanne & Eric Bendick  
Allie Braun  
Boyd & Johanna Brown  
Patrick & Kim Burke  
Patty Ceglio  
Adam Chenoweth  
Dan & Jennifer Clark  
Diana & Larry Cloninger  
Theresa Corelli  
Sharon & Alan Dalton  
Lillian Deford  
Jason Delmue  
Gia Duke & Justin Tassone  
Max Fancher  
Lee & Andrea Gearllach  
Geoff Greenfield  
Kristen Grimm  
Carrie Holder  
Amber Hughes  
Mary Ingebrand & Lori Fisher

Lena & Keir Johnson  
Jenny Johnson & Jen Rademacher  
Karen Kahanek  
Katherine Kaminski  
Tara & Sven Krauss  
Stace Lindsay  
Whitney Lonsdale  
Matthew MacKenzie  
Rebecca MacNeice  
Jake Maenpa  
Kristie McDowell-Karn  
Jono McKinney  
David McWethy  
Ivy Merriot  
Whitney Milhoan  
John Neathawk  
Kristofer & Allison Olsen  
Ryan Peters  
Will Pratt & Bret Hanna  
Justin Rawls  
Debra & Michael Redburn  
Pam & Rey Rodriguez  
Jennifer Rood  
Jennifer Royall & Rick Alexander  
Aaron & Lynelle Schuerr  
Betsy & Greg Sedig  
Mark Snyder  
Steve Spain  
Justin Stalpes & Lindsay Beck  
Lucille Sutton  
Marti Tobias & Carla Boyington  
David Weinstein  
Jerry Weisbach  
Michael & Stephanie Wolfe

## ANTELOPE LEVEL

(UNDER \$100)

Paula Alexander  
Stephanie Baer  
Donna Betzner  
Scott Bosse  
Dan Center  
Megan Compton  
Kristen & John Corelli  
Brian & Kari Cornell  
Jamie Cornish  
Patrick Cross  
Tammy & Greg Dalling  
Domenica Di Piazza  
Kristine & Mark Ferriter  
Marylis Filipovich  
Jeff & Janet Fox  
Susan & Cal Fraser  
Audrey Gagnon  
Jill & Ryan Hamilton  
Daniel Hunter  
Kelley Jazdzewski  
Tara Johnson

Geraldine & Peter Karonis  
Dan Keslin  
Joyce Klees  
Martha Kranes  
Bo & Alice Kurle  
Hilary LaFoley  
Cameron Lesslie  
Matt Lewis  
Elizabeth Martin  
Dara McDevitt  
Peter Metcalf  
Susan & Josh Miller  
Mollenkamp  
Cara & Michael Moholt  
Marshall Moses  
Martha Peters  
Kelly Ramirez  
Douglas Richmond  
Mat Solso  
Elisa Southworth  
Ryan Todd  
Dulce Trujillo  
Amanda Weber  
Mary Westby  
Nicole Wild  
Lynn & Seth Williams

## GIFTS MADE IN HONOR/ MEMORY OF

Carmen and Roman Borgerding  
Luke Clark  
Robert Friend  
Kirk Johnson

## FOUNDATION GRANTS

AMB West Philanthropies  
American Rivers  
Billings Community Foundation  
Bunting Family Foundation  
Cinnabar Foundation  
Elizabeth Wakeman  
Henderson Foundation  
First Interstate Bank  
Community Development  
Foundant Technologies  
M.J. LaFoley Foundation  
Northwestern Energy  
Community Works  
O.P.&W.E. Edwards  
Foundation  
Pleiades Foundation  
Sitka Gear Ecosystem Grant  
The Kendeda Fund  
The Otto Bremer Trust  
The Wilderness Society  
Treacy Foundation  
WalMart Community Fund  
Wyola Development Fund



**MONTANA  
WILDERNESS  
SCHOOL**

P.O.Box 1183 | Bozeman, MT 59771  
info@montanawildernessschool.org  
406.388.4610

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Begin the adventure at  
**montanawildernessschool.org**

“It opened up my eyes to a new world and I learned things  
I would never learn in a classroom.” *– MWS Student*