

**MONTANA
WILDERNESS
SCHOOL**

IMPACT REPORT 2017





“My experience with Montana Wilderness School was overall pretty incredible. I felt that I grew as a person, while also improving my backcountry skills.”

– Clara, 2017 Yellowstone Expedition student

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Thank you for being an important part of the MWS community and for caring about Montana's youth, our public lands and wild spaces, and the future of our region. In December of 2017, MWS celebrated our 4th year as an organization. I am thrilled to see how far we have come and excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Without your help and support we truly wouldn't be able to accomplish so much and impact the lives of so many amazing young people!

I am proud and humbled to witness the early success and growth of our empowering youth program. In the last two years, the MWS Youth Wilderness Program has grown 306%; from 16 students to 65. And when you consider that we work with students for 24 hours a day our student program hours increased from 6,888 hours in 2015 to 19,368 in 2017. That is over 19,000 hours of these young people being outside without their screens, living, eating, solving problems, and working together. They learn leadership,

communication, and technical skills while increasing their knowledge about relevant conservation issues and the importance of our public lands and wild spaces.

With your support MWS continues to be inclusive to ALL motivated Montana students 14-18 years of age that differ culturally, geographically, racially, and socioeconomically. The MWS Scholarship Fund is instrumental in making this happen. In 2017 we awarded 25 deserving Montana students a total of \$76,340 to attend our Youth Wilderness Program. We are proud to say since MWS' inception, we have NOT had to turn a deserving student away because of financial need. Thank you for continuing to make this possible.

As we move towards our fourth operating season providing transformational experiences for our young future leaders we hope you will continue to be part of our important work. We couldn't do it without you. Thank You!

In Gratitude,

Gar Duke

Co-founder and Executive Director





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Program Assistant
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Student Outreach Coordinator and Field Operations Manager

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Edward Gall
Heather Waterous
Janine Welton
Matthew Zia
Quinn Mawhinney
Robert Kane French

Field Intern

Eric Falconer

Volunteers

Dr. Steven Halvorson
Volunteer Medical Director
Greg Smith
Julie Anderson
Dr. Kathryn Franklin

THE MISSION

of the Montana Wilderness School 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.

65 | MWS STUDENTS

\$76,340 | AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS

807 | PROGRAM DAYS

780 | USFS/BLM/NPS/USFWS USER DAYS

2 | GRIZZLY BEAR SIGHTINGS

1,228 | MILES HIKED

486 | RIVER MILES PADDLED

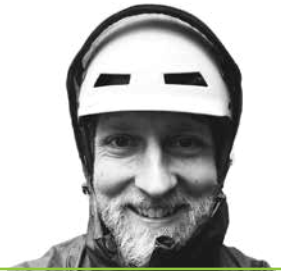
63 | STUDENTS RECEIVED LEAVE NO TRACE (LNT) TRAINING CERTIFICATIONS

8 | STUDENTS RECEIVED WILDERNESS FIRST AID (WFA) CERTIFICATIONS

**Served on the Board until 2017. Thank you for your service to the MWS organization!*



2017 PROGRAM REPORT



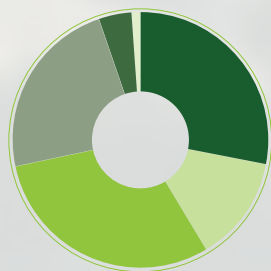
Once again, 2017 was year of significant growth at the Montana Wilderness School. Our enrollment over the last two years has increased by 300%. MWS successfully ran seven open enrollment expeditions and two contracted courses for youth-focused organizations. Sixty-five students had fundamentally transformative experiences in seven unique wild lands of Montana. Students were educated about wilderness self-care, camp craft, Leave No Trace, wilderness medicine, leadership, communication, mountaineering and whitewater paddling. Students were challenged by terrain and weather in addition to developing cohesive expedition teams and lifelong friendships.

The 2017 field season provided both organizational successes as well as instructive challenges which helped us identify the path forward as MWS continues to grow. MWS was also able to successfully run two contracted courses which were overwhelmingly positive. We expect the contract course aspect of MWS programming to continue to grow in 2018. In addition, 2017 demonstrated that with our focus on improved student outreach, recruitment, and retention and with the addition of high-quality staff in those outreach areas MWS significantly increases student numbers. The introduction of expedition wranglers (course supervisors) proved to be extremely beneficial to achieving desired organizational sustainability and further mitigating risk for the school. The resoundingly positive feedback from participants and parents underscored a season of substantial growth and remarkable accomplishments for MWS.

- Josh Olsen, Program Director

FINANCIALS

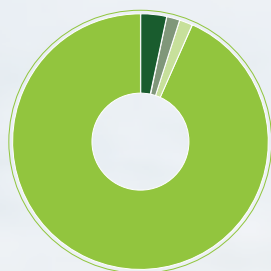
CONTRACT EXPEDITIONS



Income

- Individual and Business General Donations: \$84,407
- Grants: \$40,000
- Student Tuition Fees: \$90,702
- Individual and Business Scholarship Donations: \$69,064
- In-Kind Contributions: \$12,522
- General Fundraising: \$2,889

Total: \$299,584



Expenses

- Administration: \$10,951
- Fundraising: \$4,326
- MWS Scholarship Fund: \$5,809
- Youth Wilderness Program: \$282,607

Total: \$303,693

MWS + Bozeman Field School

The new Bozeman Field School kicked off their first-ever expedition with MWS. They paddled the Missouri river for five days, building their new school community and learning about expedition travel.



Industry + Organization Partners:

Aerie Backcountry Medicine
 American Prairie Reserve
 Bozeman Field School
 Bureau of Land Management
 Colorado Mental Health Treatment Programs
 Duckworth Clothing
 Kokopelli Packraft Company
 Mountain Sky Guest Ranch
 Oboz Footwear
 SEO Program Scholars, NYC
 U.S. Forest Service
 Wilderness River Outfitters
 Bureau of Land Management
 Yellowstone National Park
 Charles M Russell National Wildlife Refuge

Foundation Grant Awards

The Kendeda Fund
 Yellowstone Club Community Foundation

In-Kind Support

Aerie Backcountry Medicine
 Arc'teryx
 Blackbird Kitchen
 Bozeman Reel
 Bronwen Jewelry
 Claire Kleese Design
 Duckworth
 Brian Koenig
 Kokopelli Raft Company
 Oboz Footwear
 Map Brewing
 Reid Morth Photography
 Mountain Yoga Bozeman
 Mystery Ranch Backpacks
 REI Bozeman
 Schnee's Boots, Shoes and Outdoor
 Simms Fishing
 Sitka Gear
 Spire Climbing Center
 Spruce and Honey
 Walcrik - Andrew Morehouse and Tim Baucom
 Wild Crumb Bakery
 Yogesh Simpson Design
 Rabia Zeitner Massage Therapy

MWS + SEO Scholars Program, NYC + American Prairie Reserve

SEO Scholars from New York joined MWS for 12 days to paddle the Missouri river, learn about conservation career opportunities, and complete a service project with the American Prairie Reserve.



2017 DONORS

\$1000+

Anonymous
Anonymous
Andy Boyd
Douglas and Carolen Herst
Philanthropic Fund
Robert Duke
Robert and Michelle Friend
Nicole Friend and Gar Duke
Brian and Caroline Fromm
Lurie
David and Deborah Peters
Justin Stalpes and Lindsay
Beck
Gia, Justin, and Tobin Tassone
The Friend Family Foundation
The Mariposa Fund
Sarai and Talmage Trujillo

\$500-\$999

Donald and Betty Alder
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Sue and Jerry Campana
Diane Cassil
Intrinsic Architecture
Mint Dental
Josh Olsen and Bina Peters
William and Geraldine Olsen

\$250-\$499

Gisela Gosch
Jennifer Kisker
Karen and Terry Kreitzberg
Map Brewing Company
Ivy Merriot
Sandra Prusiner
Wellfit Institute

\$100 - \$249

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Bozeman Real Estate Group
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Jon Christensen
Mischelle Darragh
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Charles Drimal
Blake Dunmire
Deb Earl
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Andrew Gabor
Craig Groves
Ryan and Jill Hamilton and
family
Christopher Heaton
Tanya King
Paul Langworthy

Devin Loudon
Meike Meissner and Mike
McMahon
William and Geraldine Olsen
in Memory of Ronald Olsen
Barbara Pennington
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Danny Robinson
Meghan Sherman
SK4 Designs
Mark Snyder
William Stoddart
Donna Werner and Randy
Bailey
Benjamin Zavora

Under \$100

Keith Armstrong
Mark and Meg Baker
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Pamela Bittner
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Daniel Center
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Heather Mancini
Robert Morton
Mountain Yoga Bozeman
Allison & Kris Olsen
Michelle Pardis
Douglas Richmond
Michael Rubovits
Joe Schmitt
Andrea Thomas
Jim Todd
Geraldine Tookey
Carol Weaver
Kimberly White
Jess and Andy Wickstrom



“Totally awesome and life changing experience. The skills I gained here will help me with further adventures and hopefully finding a career in the outdoors.”

– Jerrica, 2017
Mountaineering student



**MONTANA
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Begin the adventure at
montanawildernessschool.org