



## One Montana – Executive Summary May 2016

### Creating A Vibrant Montana by Connecting Rural and Urban Communities

**Mission and Background:** One Montana’s mission is to create a vibrant Montana by connecting rural and urban communities. One Montana is a non-partisan, 501(c)3 that was started by former Republican Senator Jim Peterson of Buffalo and Bill Bryan, who is known as a democrat and founder of Off the Beaten Path in Bozeman.

**What We Do:** One Montana convenes people who may have different viewpoints but need to work together to address common challenges.

Our current collaborative projects include:

**Common Ground** – an initiative to build trust and better working relationships between landowners and sportsmen in Montana. This program has helped improve Montana’s Block Management Program, and One Montana is now working on a new project to develop an advanced hunter education curriculum and to secure permission for hunters who complete the curriculum to access up to 100,000 acres of private land in the first year.

**Mental Health** – a new initiative with MSU’s new Center for Mental Health Research and Recovery to develop a viable base for rural mental health prevention programs (including YAM – Youth Aware of Mental Health) to address the issues of depression and suicide in rural Montana. Montana has one of the highest suicide rates in the nation, and YAM is the only clear evidence-based suicide prevention program in the world that shows a 59% reduction in suicide attempts and a 52% reduction in suicidal thoughts. One Montana was asked by the Center to help identify and assist in training facilitators for the YAM program which will be implemented into 12 schools across the state in the 2016-2017 school year.

**Montana Way** – a communications initiative that helps maintain community stability and reduce potential conflicts among current and new landowners when the often unspoken Montana land stewardship best practices are not understood. Thus far, One Montana has interviewed more than 30 ranch managers and landowners, produced a 20-page report and convened 16 landowners, ranch managers and representatives to determine next steps for communicating the information to new large landowners.

**Ranch Management Undergraduate Degree Program** - More than eight years ago, one of One Montana’s major projects was to develop a ranch management undergraduate major for a rural land grant university in the West. This was done because there was perceived to be a real need for such a program by owner/operators, nontraditional landowners, existing ranch managers, ranch realtors, and community leaders.

While strongly supported by a wide variety of interests, including Montana Stockgrowers, the dean of the college of agriculture at MSU at that time decided not to go forward for what he perceived as internal political issues.

In December 2015, the new dean of MSU's College of Agriculture, at One Montana's urging, established a committee to come up with an ambitious strategy to develop and implement a "cutting edge" program in ranch management for the Northern Plains and Northern Rockies. We are well represented, with Executive Director Bill Bryan, One Montana board member Eric Wickens, and our former contractor Scott Hibbard (who came up with a proposed undergraduate curriculum and implementation strategy eight years ago), serving on the committee. Bill has been asked to facilitate committee meetings.

**Resilient Montana: The Water, Agriculture and Climate Program** – an inclusive and robust dialogue about climate impacts and adaptation strategies. One Montana is facilitating exchanges between the agriculture community, climate scientists, University of Montana, Montana State University, Montana Extension Service, non-governmental organizations and agencies. Within the last 12 months, we've connected with more than 300 agricultural producers and advisors from across the state and shared science-based information that informs the agricultural community's decisions and leads to measurable adaptation across Montana.

**Rural-Urban Student and Entrepreneur Exchange** – This is a hands-on program that develops entrepreneurial spirits and skills in high school students and forges long-lasting connections for economic development. One Montana's work has impacted 10 communities, more than 300 students and 17 teachers across the state. More than 150 site visits to local businesses have taken place, and five in-school business enterprises have already been created by the students. Communities for the 2016-2017 school year are anticipated to include: Ashland, Bainville, Billings, Bozeman, Fort Benton, Great Falls, Helena, Miles City, Missoula, Plentywood, St. Ignatius and Simms.

### **Why One Montana?**

- One Montana has built relationships with people from across the state and has earned the respect of rural and urban communities, government agencies, trade organizations, the universities and other nonprofits.
- One Montana has developed a reputation as a non-partisan organization that reaches out to new constituencies, bring rural and urban interests together, and spurs action to successfully address challenging issues.
- One Montana needs continued support to meet the increased demands for our help.

**Your Involvement:** If you are interested in supporting the continuation of this important work, please contact Bill Bryan at [billb@onemontana.org](mailto:billb@onemontana.org) or 406.522.7654.