

BYLAWS OF THE MONTANA
PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL
(A non-Profit Corporation)

REVISED:

December 1995; December 1997; December 2004;
December 2014; December 2020; December 2023;

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Montana Public Lands Council is to represent the interests of Montana's state or federal land livestock operators in legislative, regulatory, educational, and cultural activities; and to provide Montana's livestock producers access to important information on land stewardship practices, livestock or forage improvement techniques, and other practices that ensure the continuation of a viable Montana ranching industry.

PREAMBLE:

WHEREAS, the production of an adequate supply of high quality food and fiber is basic to the physical sustenance and good health of the American people; and such production of food and fiber also results in the furtherance of our nation's wealth, and is essential to the economic well-being of ranching families and rural communities throughout the western states including the State of Montana; and,

WHEREAS, a substantial proportion of our national food and fiber production originates in western states that contain high percentages of federal and state lands, through the grazing of the renewable natural resource of native forage by sheep, cattle or other livestock; and,

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the native forage needed to sustain the western ranching industry is only available on state or federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and state land management agencies; and,

WHEREAS, opportunities to graze livestock on such federal or state forage resources is largely contingent on the development of practical, economically viable, and ecological sound grazing practices, and information on these production practices must be shared by the producers who comprise the western ranching industry; and,

WHEREAS, the western livestock ranching industry will continue to be concerned with the wise use of natural resources associated with these lands for livestock grazing, and many other multiple-uses,

NOW, THEREFORE, We the Members of the Montana Public Lands Council, as representatives of the organized sheep and cattle raisers in our state, and on behalf of Montana's federal grazing permittees, and state land lessees and the local communities they support, do hereby establish the Montana Public Lands Council and adopt these Bylaws.

Throughout this document Montana Public Lands Council will be referred to as “Council” and the Board of Directors of the Public Lands Council will be referred to as the “Board”.

Article I Qualification for Membership, Fees, Voting

Section 1: Membership

a) Qualification for membership:

Any individual holding a grazing permit or lease on any state or federal land in Montana is qualified for membership. Grazing Districts and other grazing associations organized for such purposes shall be qualified for membership. The board can approve affiliate or associate memberships for organizations or individuals who support or actively participate in the affairs of the Council, but will not be voting members.

b) Membership Fees:

Any individual, Grazing District, Association, or other organization qualified for membership under paragraph (a) of this section may become a voting member by paying an assessment to the Council in accordance with Article V, Section 2 of these bylaws.

c) Voting:

Each livestock permittee or lessee member will be entitled to one vote. There may not be voting by proxy and associate or affiliate members are not eligible to vote. If an individual is a designated representative of a district, organization, or association, then that person may not vote individually, as that may indicate two votes. If more than one member of the same district, organization, or association are present at the same meeting then neither may vote as a representative of their district, organization, or association but only as individuals.

Article II Meetings

Section 1: Annual and Special Meetings

The membership of the Council shall meet twice each year. One, (the annual meeting), will be held in December or as close as possible, wherein the Directors positions are selected and the Board of Directors officers are reorganized. The second meeting will be held at the discretion of the Board of Directors generally in May or June. Special meetings can be held at such times and places as may be designated by either the Chair, Vice Chair in absence of the Chair, or a majority of the Board of Directors.

Section 2: Quorum

A quorum for a business meeting of the Council shall consist of those present at the meeting; However, If financial concerns or By-law amendments are to be voted on, a quorum will be at least 12 voting members.

Section 3: Notices of Meetings

Notice of membership meeting date, time, location and proposed agenda will be sent at least 30 days in advance to all Grazing District, Association or Organization Secretaries and Presidents by mail or E-mail and to individual members not affiliated with those entities in the same manner. In addition, posting on the Council website of the meeting, date, time and location will also serve notice.

Notices of Special Meetings will be sent in the same manner but must include the agenda with items to be discussed and requiring action as only those items can be discussed at a special meeting.

Article III

Board of Directors

Section 1: The Montana Public Lands Council shall be guided by a Board of Directors selected as follows:

For the purpose of representation on the Board, the State of Montana is divided into three geographic areas: Western district, Northern district, and Eastern district. A map with the geographic boundaries of the districts is attached to these bylaws (As Exhibit A). All Directors must be paid members of the Montana Public Lands Council, whether through an individual membership, grazing district, association, or organization. The Board shall consist of up to 11 members and those directors shall be seated as follows:

1. Three directors shall be appointed by the Montana Association of State Grazing Districts
2. Three directors shall be appointed by the Montana Stockgrowers Association.
3. One director shall be appointed by the Montana Woolgrowers Association.
4. One director shall be appointed by the Montana Grass Conservation Commission.

The remaining three directors, one from each PLC district as attached to these bylaws, shall be elected by majority vote at the annual membership meeting. The PLC Chair shall appoint a nomination committee prior to September 1 each year. The Nomination Committee shall attempt to solicit two individuals for each PLC district in which an elected director's term is expiring, and present this list of candidates to the Chair prior to November 1. Election of directors are held at the annual meeting and nominations from the floor are accepted in addition to those nominations presented by the nominating committee.

All directors serve a term of three years and any director may serve consecutive terms. Should any director fail to carry out the duties and responsibilities of their position, the Chair shall call for a vote by the remaining directors for his/her removal from the Board. Vacancies that may occur on the Board by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise, may be filled by a vote of the remaining members of the Board and serve until the next annual meeting, unless it is an appointed position wherein those entities must reappoint.

Section 2: Quorum for Board of Directors

No vote of the Council Board of Directors shall be taken unless at least 51% of the total number of directors are present at that meeting. Teleconference presence is permissible for quorum purposes so long as all attendees are present for motion, discussion and vote.

Section 3: Notices of meetings

Notices of Board meetings will be sent to all directors at least 7 days prior to the meeting. Notices will include date, time and location. Tele-conference may be used as long as all attendees are able to discuss issues before voting.

Section 4: Election of Officers

- a) The Board shall elect a Chair annually from within the Board.
- b) The Board shall elect a Vice Chair annually from within the Board.
- C) The Board shall elect a Delegate to the National Public Lands Council Board of Directors annually from within the Board.

Section 5: Secretary- Treasurer

The Secretary-Treasurer of the Council shall be chosen by majority vote of the Board and serves at the board's discretion. The Secretary-Treasurer may be bonded in an amount determined by the Board. Compensation for this position will be set by the Board or through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Section 6: Compensation of Officers

Members of the Board shall not receive salaries for their services, but, by action of the Board may receive compensation for travel expenses at special meetings excluding annual and regular membership meetings, but nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any member of the Board from serving the Council in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefore. The Chair will decide the financial compensation to those directors participating in unscheduled meetings.

Article IV

Duties of Directors and Officers

Section 1: Duties of Directors

The Board of Directors shall:

- a) Manage and conduct the affairs of the Council;
- b) Levy assessments upon the members within the limitations prescribed in these bylaws;
- c) Formulate various policies consistent with the recommendations of the majority of the membership in order to carry out the purposes of the Council.

Section 2: Duties of the Chair

The Chair Shall:

- a) Preside over all meetings of the Council as a fully qualified member of the Board;
- b) Call special meetings of the members of the Council and of the Board;
- c) In cooperation with the Secretary-Treasurer, Direct the affairs of the Council, subject to the control of the Board;
- d) Perform all other acts and duties usually required of an executive and presiding officer.

Section 3: Duties of Vice Chair

The Vice Chair shall perform all acts and duties of the Chair in his/her absence or inability to act.

Section 4: Duties of Secretary-Treasurer

The Secretary-Treasurer shall:

- a) Keep a complete record of all meetings and conduct all correspondence of the Council and the Board;
- b) Receive and disburse all funds and be the custodian of all property of the council subject to the direction of the Board;
- c) Keep a complete record of all business of the council and make a full report of all matters and business pertaining to this office to the Board at any time requested and to the members of the council at their annual meeting;

d) Perform such other acts as may be required of this office to properly fulfill the usual duties with approval of the Board.

Article V

Finances

Section 1: Fiscal

The Fiscal Year shall start on the first day of October and end the last day of September of each year.

Section 2: Assessments

General membership assessment shall be set each year at the annual meeting by the Board, provided such assessment does not exceed ten cents for each Animal unit Month (\$0.10 per AUM) of livestock permitted annually; however \$50.00 minimum will be levied annually to any state or federal land permittee or lessee outside Grazing Districts. An assessment not to exceed seven cents for each Animal unit month (\$0.07 per AUM) of livestock permitted will be levied annually to any individual, within a Grazing District.

Special assessments, for the purpose of funding specific projects for the benefit of the council, shall not exceed \$0.03 (three cents) per AUM for any one year. Any special assessment exceeding that amount requires membership approval.

Membership assessments for affiliate or associate members shall be set by the Board.

Section 3: Disbursement of Funds

All monies collected by the Council from assessments shall be placed in a general fund for the Council and shall be disbursed by the Secretary-Treasurer or as directed through a Memorandum of Understanding, in a manner authorized by the Board.

Section 4: Annual Statements

An annual financial statement of the Council business shall be rendered by the Secretary-Treasurer and such statement shall be subject to the approval of the Board. Such statement shall set forth an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.

Section 5 Audit

The financial books and records of the Council shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant or other qualified auditor who shall be approved by the Board.

Article VI

Amendments to the Bylaws

Upon proposal by the Board, these bylaws may be amended, in whole or in part by a majority vote at the annual meeting of the Montana Public Lands Council, provided that a copy of any amendment proposed for consideration shall be sent to the membership at least thirty days prior to the meeting date. Individuals may present amendment proposals to the Board who will then submit the amendment to the membership.

This draft submitted by the MPLC By-Law Review Committee .

Vicki Olson, Chair

Richard Stuker

Tom Sparks

Cheryl Schuldt

Dated September 28, 2025

Exhibit A

MONTANA PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL DISTRICT MAP

