

*The land shall not be sold in perpetuity for the land is mine;
with me you are but aliens and tenants.
Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for
the redemption of the land.
– Leviticus 25: 23-24*

Montana is truly God's country. From the Flathead to the Golden Triangle to the Eastern Plains, Montana is a wondrous display of God's creation.

God has entrusted all Montanans with the joint stewardship of this land. The central challenge of this shared task is balancing the rights of individuals with the responsibilities of those individuals to their community *and* balancing the rights of a community with the responsibilities of a community to its individuals. The people of Montana live daily with a sense of this internal balance: we are fiercely independent and value self-sufficiency, yet we are also a people who readily answer a call to help our neighbors in need.

Mindful of this balance, the **Board of Directors of the Montana Association of Churches** support conservation of a portion of lands as wilderness based on the following principles:

- Immersion in wilderness is a special source of spiritual revitalization
- Wilderness symbolizes the wild frontier, an important landscape in our social history
- Untouched Montana wilderness is treasured by people from around our country and world
- Montana features unique and irreplaceable geologic and thermal elements
- Tourism related to the enjoyment of wilderness is an important part of local economies
- Habitat protection provided by wilderness areas are important for maintaining biodiversity of our local flora and fauna
- Current generations have a responsibility to conserve these vital and irreplaceable places for the enjoyment of future generations

We also support equitable access to natural resources through wise public land management based on the following premises:

- This soil, water, timber, game and minerals of this land sustain local and international economies
- Utilization of wilderness recreation areas is also an important part of local economies