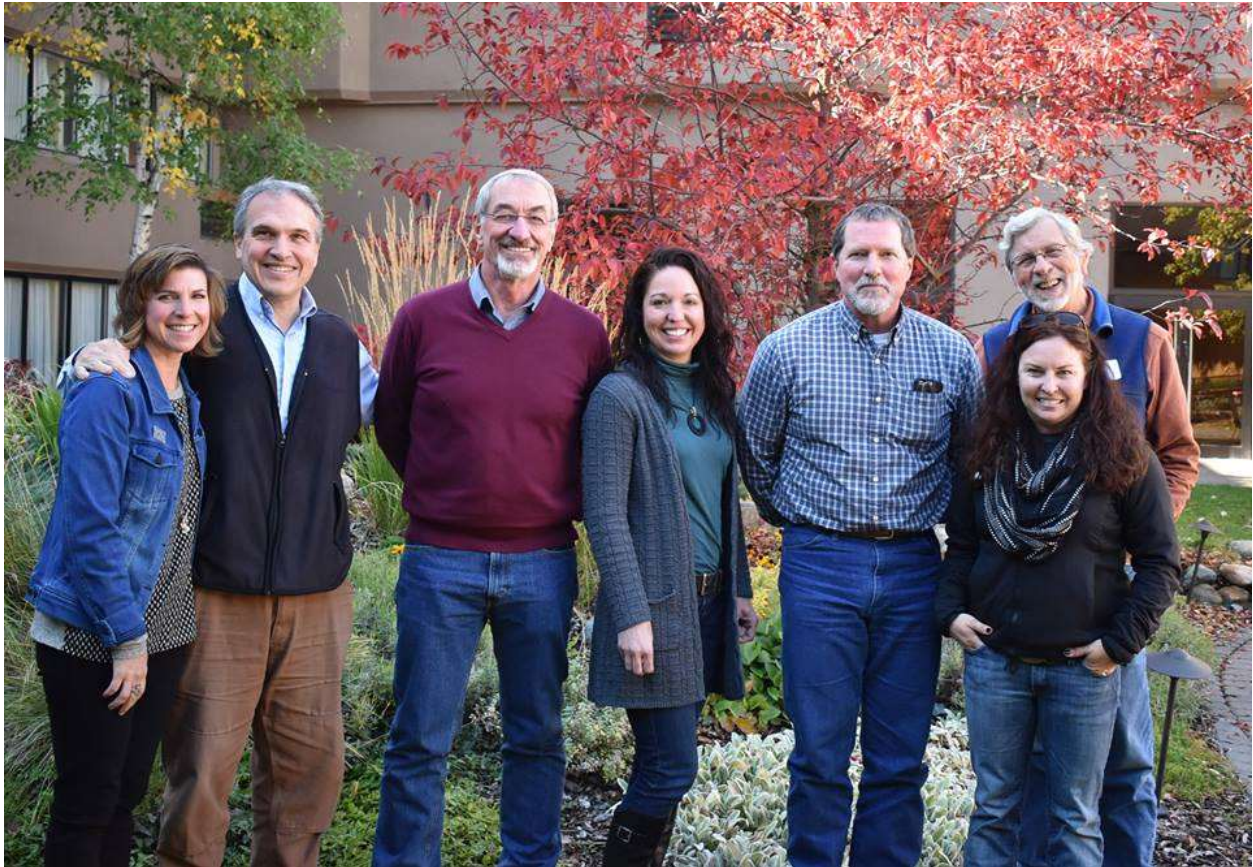


HEART OF THE
ROCKIES INITIATIVE
A land trust partnership

**Succession Update:
New Director Gary Burnett starts Nov. 27**



Members of the Heart of the Rockies board with our incoming and outgoing executive directors: (R to L) Kristin Troy, Chris DeForest, Michael Whitfield, Heather Greene, Gary Burnett, Jim Owens, and Joselin Matkins.

November 2017 -- We are thrilled to announce that we have hired Gary Burnett as our next Executive Director. Many of you know Gary from his leadership with the Blackfoot Challenge, which is a model for community-based conservation in Montana and throughout the West. He has been their executive director for the past ten years and has coordinated complex and innovative responses to a host of challenges faced by rural communities in the Blackfoot Valley.

Gary will take the reins on November 27 after some transition period with retiring executive director Michael Whitfield. By mid-December, Michael will officially retire and move in to a volunteer role with Heart of the Rockies.

"It has been my honor to serve and learn for the past decade from the community-based model of the Blackfoot Challenge," said Gary. "I am looking forward to working across the larger landscape of Heart of the Rockies Initiative members and partners by supporting local action at landscape scale."

In addition to his experience with collaboration and sustainable solutions, Gary will bring to Heart of the Rockies a deep background in non-profit governance and fundraising, private land conservation, wildlife biology and forest management.

Gary has 30 years of experience in natural resource management and nonprofit development. He has worked with and for public and private landowners/managers on land protection and stewardship; prescribed fire; and natural areas, wildlife and habitat management. Gary has developed and directed annual fund, major gift and planned giving programs for local, regional and national organizations. He holds a Masters Degree in Wildlife Biology from University of Montana, and has served as the Blackfoot Challenge's Executive Director since May of 2007.

Gary serves as co-chair of the Southwestern Crown Collaborative of the landscape restoration program, on the leadership team for Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, the coordinating committee for the Network for Landscape Conservation, volunteers on the local fire department as a fire fighter and board member, and serves on the Executive Committee for the Board of Sustainable Northwest.

"I am excited to have Gary on board," said Heart of the Rockies board chair Heather Greene. "He has been in private land conservation for decades and brings a deep understanding of its importance and solid relationships to Heart of the Rockies. I look forward to where he will take us in the future."

We want to extend a monumental thank you to the succession committee (Heather Greene, Joselin Matkins, Karen Rice, Kristin Troy and Jim Owens) for their thoughtful, patient, and attentive spirit throughout this process. And enormous appreciation to Michael for his years of visionary leadership and deep commitment to Heart of the Rockies, and for extending his tenure with us to ensure a strong and successful leadership transition.

Gary's contact information: gary@heart-of-rockies.org 406-360-0254