From: Watson, Vicki
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: There was Good News in 2020 -- thanks to the work of many
Date: Wednesday, December 30, 2020 6:14:20 PM

Hi friends of the earth:

2020 was a hard year for people and the planet. Yet there were good news stories also.
Below are positive stories to help you prepare to work for more progress in 2021.
UM Environmental Studies alums and students had a hand in many of these.
All involved hard work by many people.
Be sure to check out the hopeful video at the end of the list.

Missoula area news

Mountain Line mill levy was passed by voters, and Mountain Line committed to being carbon neutral by 2035.
Missoula City & County adopted *Climate Ready Missoula* plan in 2020.
The Missoula Footprint Fund was launched by Climate Smart.
Missoula strengthened its illegal trapping ordinance & posted No Trapping signs on city lands.
Footloose MT
Rattlesnake Creek dam was removed and the creek channel restored for fish passage. More here.
Funding was secured for a non-motorized trail to Milltown State Park
New study shows that dangerous highway supports in Blackfoot River can be removed.
Free Cycles Missoula provided over 500 free bikes to Missoulians.
Clark Fork Coalition and Bitterroot Water Forum carried out many stream restoration projects, education projects and clean-up projects. See CFC report and BWF report.
Garden City Harvest met increased needs of food banks & community garden plot requests (2020 annual report coming).
New energy efficient lights in UM's Adams Center will cut power consumption by over 50% & repay costs in 5 years.
More public land acquired for wildlife & public use in the Blackfoot watershed.
New public trail near Anaconda acquired and opened.

Montana News

MT DEQ & BER adopted tougher selenium standards to protect Lake Koocanusa from Canadian coal mining. More
MT Watershed groups spent $6 million on projects to benefit 646 stream & lakeshore miles & 405,000 watershed acres.
See the MT State of the Watersheds Report
Montana strengthened its Clean, Drain, Dry program to protect MT waters from aquatic invasive species. More here.
MT Supreme Court blocks mining near Yellowstone and proposed mine in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness Area.
FERC rejects attempt by utility groups to dismantle state net metering programs.

Western MT Tribal Compact passed Congress. And the National Bison Range will be returned to the CSKTribes.
Land was acquired along the Kootenai River near Troy for wildlife travel corridor.
Wind & Solar farm near Broadview, MT will power over 80,000 homes.
Alliance for the Wild Rockies lawsuits remove grazing from public land purchased for wildlife habitat in Elkhorn Mtns

Montana Environmental Information Center reported this good news in MEIC's Dec 2020 Down to Earth:

Successful federal court challenge reinstated BLM methane waste rule that Trump admin rolled back.

Successful legal challenge cancelled oil/gas leases on over 145000 acres of public land in MT & WY due to env impacts.

MT Supreme Court struck down Public Service Commission decisions that undermined renewable energy projects.

Permanent Closure of Colstrip plants 1&2 in response to economic pressure.

PSC decision will return $ to NW energy customers overcharged for operations at Colstrip.

Northern Plains Resource Council reported this good news in NPRC's Plains Truth :

Montana adopted rules regulating radioactive oil waste disposal;

MT DEQ selected the most thorough cleanup plan for ash ponds at Colstrip 3 & 4;

Northwestern Energy dropped plans to acquire more of Colstrip;

NPRC's adaptive management plan for the Stillwater Mine was adopted.

Courts denied Keystone XL pipeline fast track water crossing permit.

National news

Federal Courts blocked offshore drilling in the Arctic Ocean
Great American Outdoors Act passed Congress fully funding the Land & Water Conservation Fund.
Federal Investment Tax Credit for Solar & Wind projects extended; some funding for storage R&D.
US Emissions dropped 9% in 2020 and a new survey by Yale shows more people concerned about the climate crisis.
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied a permit for the massive Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska.
Despite COVID and federal funding cuts, Planned Parenthood served almost 2 million patients seeking to limit their family size responsibly.

President-elect Biden & VP-elect Harris have promised meaningful action to address climate change and create green economy jobs. Cabinet nominees include experienced, diverse people, including first indigenous woman to head DOI and first black man to head the EPA.

International news

- The COVID 'arthropause' reduced air travel and car traffic, and wildlife reappeared.
- Himalayas visible for first time in 30 years as pollution levels in India drop.
- 14 nations vowed to manage their coastal areas sustainably.
- Some whale species had population increases (blues and southern right whales).

Investors moved towards greener investments and refused to fund drilling in ANWR.
- Globally, renewable energy use grew by 14% (now supplying 1/10 of electricity use).
- US/Canadian study shows migration path of antelope – for better conservation management.
- Jane Goodall Institute & One Tree Planted announce chimpanzee habitat restoration project.
- "Too Good To Go" App reduces food waste in Europe.
- Italian cities see bicycle boom after COVID-19 lockdown.
- Initiative pays farmers and ranchers to keep the Amazon forest standing.
- NASA supercomputers improve carbon storage estimates.
- New company puts foot on the gas to reduce cows' methane
- UN makes strong clear statements on the need to make peace with nature

2020 inspired a great story poem (The Great Realization) --

The story is set in the future, when a child asks his parent to tell the story about life before COVID -- and the man tells of how people consumed and fouled the earth and spent more time on technology & less with each other. He told about poverty amidst plenty.
Then when COVID came, it was hard, but people started going outside more, and wildlife started coming back.
And people started caring for each other again.

The story poem shares the hope that after the pandemic is managed, people will continue practicing the good changes and not go back to the bad parts of the old way.
2020 hindsight.

Here's a link to the video of THE GREAT REALIZATION: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw5KQMXDiM4
Also available as a children's picture book, but the video has great live action clips.
(You might have to skip an ad).

So Take Heart ! Wishing you a healthy, hopeful 2021.

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