

PLWA PROGRAMS

Since 1985, the mission of PLWA has been to maintain, restore, and perpetuate public access to the boundaries of all Montana's public lands and waters.

Program Areas

**Public Access
Investigation
Program**

**PLWA Education,
Outreach, and
Action Program**

**Public Access
Legal Services
Task Force
(PALS Task Force)**

**Public Land/Water
Access Association, Inc.**

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PLWA is a Montana registered 501(c)3



PLWA is Public Access

Our organization works every day to make sure access to your public lands and waters is safe for tomorrow. PLWA is a member-driven, Montana-based organization and our objectives include:

- Educating and informing the public about their ownership and access rights and empowering grassroots advocacy.
- Monitoring public access routes and identifying access issues.
- Initiating legal action when access has been illegally blocked.
- Monitoring public land sales, exchanges, and purchases to ensure that no transfers are made without full consideration of conservation and recreational values.
- Initiating programs and policies to safeguard public land and water access.
- Pursuing every legal and ethical avenue to protect and maintain access to public lands and waters.

PLWA has a storied history, made up of individuals who believe that access to public lands and waters is fundamental to the identity of Montana. Join the movement today.



Public Access Investigation Program

PLWA's Public Access Investigation Program investigates public access complaints brought to the organization from concerned users when access to their public lands and waters is encumbered or blocked. The program provides public access advising and consulting services and helps to oversee land transfers, sales, and other negotiations where public access may be lost or compromised. Members of the team also advise and provide testimony at local and state levels on access issue investigations and cases. Program elements include a full-time Public Access Investigator to investigate complaints, the Access Investigation Legal Team to provide counsel and advice on legal and legislative issues, and our landmark AIRS Program.

PLWA has established partnerships with law firms that work with us as part of our Access Investigation legal team on cases that do not meet the level of formal intervention at the courts. The AIRS Program tracks, analyzes, and

responds to access complaints across the state, collecting data over a 3 year period to help governmental bodies improve enforcement and awareness while also reopening access points. Partnerships with Montana universities for law and policy research and work allows for both PLWA and students to benefit, mentoring the next generation of access advocates.

PUBLIC ACCESS INVESTIGATION PROGRAM ORGANIZATION:

- PLWA Public Access Investigator
- Access Investigation Legal Team
 - *Legal Consult Group*
 - *Partnership work with Montana universities for law & policy studies students*
- Access Issue Reporting System (AIRS) Program

Examples of access issues handled by PLWA:

- Reopening of illegally closed Hughes Creek Road in Ravalli County.
- Illegal fencing at bridge access site in Lolo National Forest.
- Illegal gating of Adobetown Road in Madison County.

PLWA Education, Outreach, and Action Program

PLWA's Education, Outreach, and Action Program combines opportunities for community engagement led by members of our outdoor community while offering opportunities for PLWA to educate the public about their access rights. The Public Access Volunteer Corps is made up of public land and water users who investigate access issues in their communities, partnering with organizations and others to advocate for access. The PAIC program grants volunteer investigators a certificate in access investigation after completing a month-long course.

The Ambassador, Advocate, and Partner programs build community, amplify the public's voice on important access issues, educate members on their access rights, and help shape PLWA's mission and vision to meet Montana's present and future needs. Through on the ground events, partnerships with like-minded organizations and ethical businesses, member-led campaigns, awareness projects, and regular self-assessment, PLWA works to ensure that our efforts meet the needs of Montana while constantly engaging with our community.

PLWA EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND ACTION PROGRAM ORGANIZATION:

- Public Access Volunteer Corps
 - Public Access Investigation Certificate Program (PAIC)
- Community Engagement Programs
 - Access Ambassador Program, PLWA Partner Program, Access Advocate Program
- PLWA Access Issue Awareness Project
 - Community Education & Outreach Campaigns
 - Event & Engagement Planning
 - Issue Awareness Building & Grassroots Action Networking
 - Public Access Rights Community Education Program
- PLWA Intern Program



Public Access Legal Services Task Force (PALS Task Force)

In collaboration with the findings and work product of the Public Access Investigation Program and the Access Investigation Team, the PALS Task Force takes cases of merit where public access or the precedent of public access in Montana is challenged to the Montana legal system on behalf of the citizens of Montana.

PLWA Legal Defense Fund

The goal of the PLWA Legal Defense Fund is to provide funds to meet legal challenges to the public's public access rights to their lands and waters. PLWA goes to court as a last resort, and only with the highest level of evidence (attained initially through the Public Access Investigation Program). Yet at times, such as with our work through the Stream Access Law demonstrates, court action is necessary. The legal defense fund allows the organization to meet public access challenges in a timely fashion and with sustained effort.



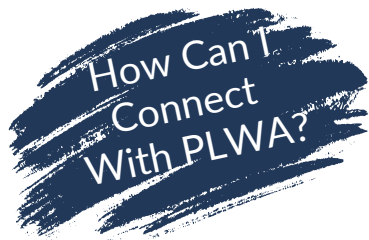
What are students saying about the PAIC program & PLWA?

"This is a course every Montanan who cares about public lands should take. We must all be able to spot issues and act on them."

"A wonderful course that I would urge all supporters of public lands to take in order to protect and preserve access now and into the future."

"Great course! Worth taking to be able to effectively communicate and protect your access."

"PLWA is the tip of the spear in public access work in Montana. If you care about access, THIS is an organization you should be part of!"



@plwamt



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@publiclandwateraccess



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Other Ways To Get Involved with PLWA's Access Advocacy Work

PLWA wants everyone to join in our efforts to protect equitable public access to all of Montana's public lands and waters. Here are a few other ways you can contribute:

- Join our Business Sponsorship program and contribute financially, partner on a program like AIRS, or donate in-kind for auctions or events.
- Volunteer in one of our needed areas.
- Become a member or help raise funds for one of our programs.

Reach out to us at plwa@plwa.org for more information or visit our website at www.plwa.org

