

Annual Report – Montana Fibershed 2023

Our Mission Statement

Montana Fibershed is a grassroots, non-profit organization that supports Montana-based natural fiber and dye systems. We seek to connect producers to end-users of fiber, to encourage new and strengthen existing textile manufacturing systems in Montana, and to do so in regenerative and sustainable ways that support the health of our people, our soils, our economies and landscapes.

Organization Overview

2023 has been a year of leadership transition for Montana Fibershed. Several Board Directors stepped down within the first and second quarters, citing personal reasons. Their duties were spread to remaining Board Directors who kept up the essential work of the organization until the fall campaign for new Directors of the Board. During the second and third quarters, our Board underwent training from the Montana Non-Profit Association, as we sought to strengthen leadership skills and clarify policies to align with best practices that will guide us as we work to fulfill our mission. In the fourth quarter, we appointed four new Directors and began orienting them to begin their terms in January of 2024.

Board of Directors

As of the fourth quarter, our Board of Directors consisted of Barbara French, Interim Chair, Angela Tollerson, Interim Treasurer, Helen Harris, Events and Education Committee Chair, and Amanda Shine, Treasurer, who's resignation was accepted as of year end, due to her return to graduate school and family move out of state. Our call for new Board Directors in the fall was very successful; we received many strong applications. By year end, we had appointed Elizabeth Bean, Karen Heyneman, Alayna Rasile, and Alyssa Roggow as new Board Directors. Their myriad skills, diverse backgrounds and fresh energy will be a boon to Montana Fibershed as we move forward toward our goals.

Outreach Activities

Creating connections through our Wool-Along.: In the second year of this initiative, we changed the name from Knit-Along to Wool-Along, hoping to encourage spinners, weavers, and other fiber artists to join in with a project of their choice. We also added a focus on education, inviting several Montana Fibershed producer members to share information about the specific

sheep breeds that they raise. Member Madeline Keller-King joined us again as co-host of this informal on-line event, which took place weekly over six weeks of winter.

Pushing back against fast fashion: the Happy Hour Mending Bars: This sustainability initiative took place over the course of several months in Bozeman, Missoula and Ennis. An informal gathering of members and interested guests, the mending bars took place in community gathering spaces to promote the mending of our clothing for greater longevity and less waste.

Meeting, greeting, sharing and listening: maintaining a presence at Montana Fiber Events: As part of our state-wide outreach and connection building, Montana Fibershed had a table with educational materials and samples of textiles created with Montana fibers at the Crazy Mountain Fiber Fest in Big Timber (May), the Eureka Fiber Fest (August) and the Montana Woolgrowers Convention (December).

Promoting our vision through educational presentations: Board Directors Helen Harris and Barb French presented an informational slide show for the Montana Library Network, supported by the Montana State Library, in a program shown in public libraries throughout the state entitled *Connecting Montana Folks with Montana Fiber*. This presentation, geared toward the general public, introduced the principles and mission of our organization. Montana Fibershed was also invited to speak to Family & Consumer Science teachers state-wide through an MSU continuing education class. Board Director Helen Harris and Montana Fibershed member Lisa Rickenbaugh led this presentation and discussion with teachers of the important role of local, natural fibers in our world today.

Reaching out to our members: Our first Member Meet-Up. In December we held a Zoom session for our members, with guest speakers Angela Tollerson (Board Director) on her ranching practices, and Madeline Keller-King (Business Member) on her natural dye practices. Due to some technical challenges, our meeting time was cut short, however, we believe that the Meet-Up is a valuable format for connecting and listening to our members state-wide, and we plan to continue them regularly in future.

Membership

2023 saw continued growth in our membership, as our Business members increased by 50% and our Supporting Members tripled in number this year. We continued to add Business Members to our web Directory, as we work toward the goal of greater connection state-wide. Our business members include farmer/rancher producers, artists and makers, mills, manufacturers, and retailers large and small. It is with gratitude that we acknowledge our generous 2023 member donors.

Our Business Members: Montanans who are producers and makers within the Montana textile economy. Find their listings in our web Directory, and support our Business Members!

Alena Felt & Silk - Alena Larson
Blooming Joy Farm – Julie Conrad
Crazy Head Creek Farm - Amberly Huttinger
DaMohr Fiber Arts - Danielle Loomer
Duckworth – Helle Family
Earthstar Farms - Chad & Susan Waite
Fiber LLC - Cindy Ruprecht
Foothills Farm Woolens - Justine Gilchrist
Fox Farm Homestead - Angela Tollerson
Harvest Calling Farms – Brad & Stephanie Isbell
Harvest House Farm - Amber Mauriello
Helen J. Harris, Fiber Artist
Hoof & Paw Farm - Jon Moore
IND Hemp - Trey Riddle
Joseph's Coat Yarn & Fibers – Janet Sullivan
Kolin Ranch Fiber Arts – Deborah Hayes
Little Creek Lamb - Caroline & Justin Nelson
Lone Pine Wool Emporium - Mona Hylton
Mee & Ewe Fiber & Yarn at Everett Ranch - Marie Everett
Mountains of Wool - Barbara French
Nevermore Ranch 406 - Heather Smith

Painted KC Ranch - Maelynn Velin
Ranch Goddess Estates - Robin "Cat" Billau
Ranching Traditions Fiber - Kami Noyes
Roving Ram Ranch – Seth & Amanda Shine
Shepherds Gulch - Kammy Johnson
Sophies Farm and Orchard - Kathee Dunham
Steitzhof Merinos – John Steitz & Carol
Treadwell- Steitz
Stix Yarn - Cameron Hildreth and Tracy St. John
Stone Cottage Pottery and Farm - Patty Gregerson
T & C Farm - Tytus Harkins
The Wool Barn – Paul & Cheri Shaw
The Wool Mill - Lavonne Stucky
Turan's Corriedales - Turan Albini
Unicorn Fluff – Shannon Longfield
Wild HomeSteaders - Jesscy Dean
Wooly Witch of the West - Madeline Keller-King
Allison Grove Fiber Arts – Allison Grove
Wuthering Flats - Anne Camper
Yarn & Honey - Carrie Jensen
Yarnbar LLC - Sue Baker

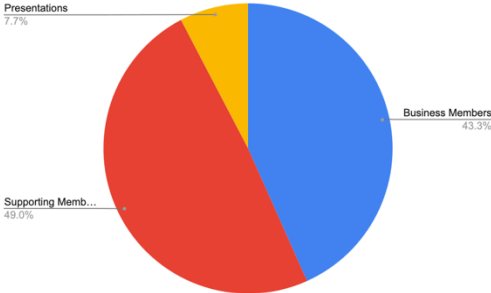
Our Supporting Members: individuals with a passion for local Montana fiber, the promotion of the Montana textile economy, and sustainable practices for a healthy environment.

Almee Alexander
Alyssa Roggow
Barbara Nye
Callie Boyle
Cheryl Santos
Dana Holzer
Daniel Crowser
Deb Rennich
Dell Reistadt
Denise De La Garza
Elizabeth Bean
Elizabeth Olson
Heidi Soper
Holly Fretwell
Janine Slanina
Jennifer Thompson
Julie Cleary & AJ Edgar
Julie Pflieger

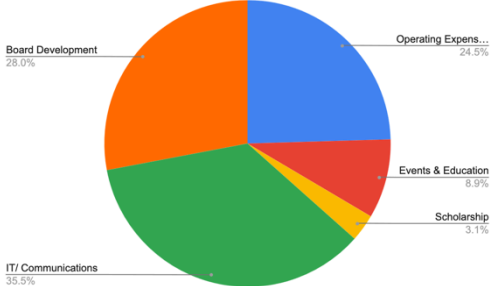
Julie Tome
Karen Heyneman
Karen Ketcha
Kathy Johnson
Kelly Pollack
Linda Shelhamer
Lisa Rickenbaugh
Liz Maxwell
Marcha Klaumann
Maria Cates
Mary E. Romenasko
Mary Hardin
Mary Warner
Matt Moore
Melissa Blessing
Sherry Gold
Shirley Love
Terri Rositch

Financials 2023

Income: \$3,911



Expenses: \$2,961



Year-End Balance: \$4,838

Thanks to all for your interest and support of Montana Fibershed.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara French, Secretary