

The mission of Montana Audubon leads us to interact with numerous federal agencies that have mandates regarding their management of our public natural resources. The Environmental Protection Agency has the primary federal authority over air quality, water quantity, and water quality regulations, including those pertaining to climate change, emissions standards, wetland and riparian



areas, navigable waters, environmental pollutants, and much more. Multiple federal agencies are involved in the process of permitting mines, oil, gas, and other forms of energy development and the development of large infrastructure like transmission lines and highways. The Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management and the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service have the primary authority over federal public lands and their uses in our state, though they work closely with the state's parallel authorities. These agencies, in addition to the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) that manages the wildlife refuge system, all have connections to issues regarding wildlife disease, wildlife damage, and invasive or feral species. Though the USFWS has the primary authority over threatened and endangered species, many federal agencies' operating procedures are impacted by these listings. As agencies carry out regulations, permitting processes, and other mandates, administrative procedures acts call for requisite public involvement along the way. Freedom of information requests are an additional way to track agency activity.

Federal agency funding involves the passage of a congressionally approved annual budget. Many special interests, funding sources, earmarked allocations, and politicians mold the outcome of each year's budget, that contains funding for agency capital improvements, technological improvements, staffing costs, and much more. For broad-scale environmental regulations to be properly executed and effective, the agency administering them must be funded in whole. Budget "riders," funding contingent upon the passage of additional policies, and funding connected to natural resource extraction are subject to the influence of political interests.

The policy of Montana Audubon regarding Federal Agencies, Accounting & Funding is to:

- Educate the public and decision makers about what relevant agencies do regarding policies that impact our mission and about what agencies do and how they obtain their funding
- Act as a strong partner and thoughtful critic during policy setting, rulemaking, project creation, project implementation, and monitoring
- Educate and encourage decision makers to use high caliber science to inform their policy and management decisions
- Encourage data sharing between stakeholders to make the best and most current science available to decision makers
- Follow the permitting processes of each agency that is relevant to our public policy work
- Advocate for full funding so that important programs can be appropriately administered
- Track the process of agency budget setting