

Gianforte's family trust supported groups that want to sell Montana's public lands off to the highest bidder

Susan And Greg Gianforate Have Donated More Than \$100 Million To Their Foundation. “The Gianforte Family Foundation formed in 2004 as the charitable outlet for the amassing wealth of Bozeman tech entrepreneurs Susan and Greg Gianforte, who grew the nonprofit into Montana's second largest foundation behind only the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, according to a Lee State Bureau analysis of federal nonprofit records. [...] Although the Gianfortes have given more than \$100 million to their foundation, only about a third of that has been spent. Flint did not respond to two requests for details on foundation giving in 2014 and 2015. He has previously said that all the family's personal giving is done through the foundation.” [Missoulian, [3/27/16](#)]

Greg Gianforte Was A Trustee Of The Gianforte Family Charitable Trust. [IRS form 990-PF for Gianforte Family Charitable Trust, 2007]

Montana Has Over 30 Million Acres Of State And Federal Land, Some Of Which Is Used For Public Recreational Activities. “Montana boasts over 30 million acres of state and federal lands, nearly one third of the state. Much of that land provides excellent hunting opportunities. ... Montana Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) are owned and managed by the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and provide free public hunting opportunities statewide. ... National forests in Montana comprise nearly 16 million acres. Most national forest lands that are legally accessible via a public road, navigable waterway, or adjacent state or federal land are open to hunting. ... The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages over 8 million acres of mostly range land and some forested land across the state. Most BLM lands that are legally accessible via a public road, navigable waterway, or adjacent state or federal land are open to hunting.” [Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, accessed [4/28/17](#)]

Gianforte Family Charitable Trust Donated \$1,000 To The Property And Environment Research Center (PERC). According to 2014 tax documents, the Gianforte Family Charitable Trust donated \$1,000 to PERC. [IRS form 990-PF for Gianforte Family Charitable Trust, page 20, 2014] – *See Gianforte Family Charitable Trust 2014 990*

PERC Was Founded In Montana, And Is The “Home Of Free Market Environmentalism.” “PERC—the Property and Environment Research Center—is a research institute dedicated to improving environmental quality through property rights and markets. Founded 35 years ago in Bozeman, Montana, PERC is the home of free market environmentalism (FME) and the Enviropreneur Institute.” [PERC, accessed [4/28/17](#)]

Free Market Environmentalism Believed Environmental Quality Could Be Improved Using Property Rights And Markets. “Free Market Environmentalism (FME) is an approach to environmental problems that focuses on improving environmental quality using property rights and markets. It emphasizes three important points: Markets, property rights, and the rule of law are fundamental to economic growth, and economic growth is fundamental to improving environmental quality. There is a strong correlation between treatment of the environment and standards of living. Property rights make the environment an asset rather than a liability by giving owners an incentive for stewardship. Markets and the process of exchange give people who have different ideas and values regarding natural resources a way to cooperate rather than fight. When cooperation supplants conflict, gains from trade emerge.” [PERC, accessed [4/28/17](#)]

PERC Policy Paper Argued That Montana Forests Would Be Better Managed By Local Regions Or By Shifting Ownership To State Or Private Owners. “As part of this heritage, Montana's federal forests are neither “natural” nor well-managed. Their condition today is the result of a political history that is absent from the story that Diamond has presented in Collapse. A large majority of Montana's forests have not been controlled by local people or private interests but by federal officials who have tended to centralize, rather than decentralize, control. In doing so, the federal government has undermined local incentives to manage forests. [...] This could be done by

devolving management to local regions while retaining federal ownership or by shifting ownership of some land to the state or even to private owners.” [PERC Policy Series, Montana: On The Verge of Collapse, [March 2006](#)]

PERC Senior Fellow Explained How His Montana Roots Led To The Development Of Free Market Environmentalism. “As part of the Montana Ethic Project, PERC senior fellow Terry Anderson explains how his Montana roots led to the development of free market environmentalism, which is about finding a way to respect one another’s rights and then cooperate. This means relying more on individual decision making, on property rights, and on people engaging in trade.” [PERC, [4/13/13](#)]

PERC Fought Against Right Of Public Access To Waterways In Montana. ‘The state Supreme Court says a landowner’s claims that he can control access to a portion of the Ruby River don’t hold water. On Thursday, the court rejected James Kennedy’s appeal of a lower judge’s decision. The ruling affirms the constitutionally protected right of public access to waterways. Director of Applied Programs at the Property and Environment Research Center (PERC) Reed Watson said this is not the victory that appears on the surface. ... ‘The concern here is that the Supreme Court that the legislature has gone too far in eroding private property rights in the name of public access,’ Watson explained. The PERC filed an Amicus brief, or friend of the court brief, in support of Kennedy, describing the public benefits of private restoration efforts. Watson said Kennedy invested millions of dollars on the stretch of the Ruby River that runs through his property in order to improve the river habitat. ‘The primary concern is that this decision sends a signal to other private landowners throughout the state that says if you invest in stream restoration or wildlife improvements or environmental stewardship generally, you may lose some of your property rights,’ Watson said. Watson said this decision will hurt, not help, people trying to use the river, explaining ‘it discourages private landowners from investing in stream restoration.’” [NBC Montana, [1/16/14](#)]

Gianforte Family Charitable Trust Donated \$8,000 To The Heritage Foundation. According to tax documents, from 2007 to 2014 the Gianforte Family Charitable Trust donated \$8,000 to the Heritage Foundation. [IRS form 990-PF for Gianforte Family Charitable Trust, 2007-14] – *See Gianforte Family Charitable Trust 990s*

Heritage Foundation Advocated Selling Land in the West. ‘A recent Heritage Foundation report details some areas ripe for privatization: ‘The federal government currently owns and controls vast assets, including huge swaths of commercial land, especially in the West; power generation facilities; valuable portions of the electromagnetic spectrum; underutilized buildings and financial assets. Given the federal government’s huge debt, it makes sense to sell at least a portion of these assets...’ [Library Economics and Liberty, [7/04/11](#)]

Heritage Land Advocated for Privatizing Public Land. From the Heritage Foundation: ‘To that end, Congress should ensure that the federal government manages only public land possessing unique historic, recreational, or biological qualities. Privatizing land that should not be under government control would both ease the financial burden that inappropriate federal holdings inflict on taxpayers and the U.S. Treasury and encourage local interest and investment in conserving America’s land resources.’ [Heritage.org, [5/17/99](#)]

Heritage Foundation Report Advocated “Privatization” And “Transferring Appropriate Lands To Individuals, Corporations.” “Facilitate the privatization of land that should not be under federal or state control. ... To ensure better local conservation and utilization of land that does not have unique historical, recreational, or biological qualities, or that should not be devolved to the states, Congress should pursue privatization. Transferring appropriate lands to individuals, corporations, or organizations would facilitate strong local stakes in economically and environmentally beneficial activities. Concerns about the prices to be paid for the land or restrictions on its use, if any, can be addressed during the process. Privatizing land that should not be under federal or state control would relieve the financial burden inappropriate federal holdings inflict on the taxpayers and U.S. Treasury.” [Heritage Foundation, [5/17/99](#)]

Heritage Foundation Report: “State And Private Ownership Of Public Land Would Tie The Responsibility For Land Use Policies To Those Who Bear The Impact Of Those Policies.” “In most cases, where the public land has no overriding national interest, Congress should consider an arrangement that allows privatization as well as state and local flexibility and experimentation to devise practical ways to manage and protect the land. State and private ownership of public land would tie the responsibility for land use policies to those who bear the impact of those policies. Differences in geography, economies, politics, and other factors would be addressed more appropriately. Until management of public land is made simpler and more efficient, America’s land resources will continue to suffer.” [Heritage Foundation, [5/17/99](#)]

Gianforte Family Charitable Trust Donated \$27,500 To The Foundation For Research On Economics & The Environment (FREE). According to tax documents, from 2007 to 2013 the Gianforte Family Charitable Trust donated \$27,500 to FREE. [IRS form 990-PF for Gianforte Family Charitable Trust, 2007-13] – *See Gianforte Family Charitable Trust 990s*

FREE Advocated for the ‘Charter Forest Plan’ to Transfer National Forests to ‘Users.’ In 1997, John Baden, chairman of the Foundation for Research on the Economics and the Environment (FREE) advocated for a plan to transfer national forests, later known as the ‘Charter Forest Plan.’ According to Baden: ‘A public, non-government trust could oversee the management of noncommercial areas. Endowment boards, like those running museums, hospitals and private schools would operate under a legal charter to steward individual forests.’ [FEE.org, [10/01/97](#)]

Charter Forest Plan Would Privatize National Forests. From *Milwaukee Business Journal*: ‘The Charter Forest Plan transforms nature into commodity. The people’s forests would become mere production units. Producing what? Why, whatever yields the most money-whether trees, minerals, game, Jeep trails or family-fun operations.’ [Milwaukee Business Journal, [4/14/02](#)]

FREE Was Founded In Montana To “Critique Prevailing Natural Resource Management Systems,” Including Federal Bureaucracies Like The Forest Service, As Causing Poor Environmental Results. “Founded by current Chairman John Baden in 1985, FREE has its roots in the Center for Political Economy and Natural Resources, which Baden established at Montana State University in 1978. Much of the pioneering work on the ‘New Resource Economics’ was done by Center personnel. Using public choice economics, they critiqued prevailing natural resource management systems. Sorry results were explained not as aberrations, but rather as the predictable consequences of incentives and institutional arrangements. [...] Federal bureaucracies, such as the Forest Service, were irate that they, the apostles of ‘scientific management’ (and supporters of university research), were attacked with solid data on government malfeasance and causal models explaining it: incentive structures that lead agency budget maximization to trump the public interest.” [Free-Eco.org, accessed [4/28/17](#)]