

Overview of School Trust Lands

Source: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/Trust/AboutUs/Overview.asp#>

Enabling Act of 1889:

<http://www.restoring-america.com/Documents/The%20Enabling%20Act%201889.pdf>

By the Enabling Act approved February 22, 1889, the Congress of the United States granted to the State of Montana, for common school support, sections sixteen and thirty-six in every township within the state. Some of these sections had been homesteaded, some were within the boundaries of Indian reservations, and yet others had been otherwise disposed of before passage of the Enabling Act. To make up for this loss, and in lieu thereof, other lands were selected by the State of Montana.

[State of Montana Land Ownership Map](#)

The Enabling Act and subsequent acts also granted acreage for other educational and state institutions, in addition to the common schools. The original common school grant was for 5,188,000 acres. The additional acreage provided for other endowed institutions included 668,720 acres, for a total of 5,856,720 acres. The [total acreage](#) figure fluctuates through the years due to land sales and acquisitions. Mineral acreage now exceeds surface acreage because the mineral estate has been retained when lands are sold. Surface acreage at the end of FY 2010 totals over 5.1 million acres; mineral acreage exceeds 6.1 million acres.

The Enabling Act provided that proceeds from the sale and permanent disposition of any of the trust lands, or part thereof, shall constitute permanent funds for the support and maintenance of the public schools and the various state institutions for which the lands had been granted. The Montana Constitution provides that these permanent funds shall forever remain inviolate, guaranteed by the State of Montana against loss or diversion.

The Enabling Act further provided that rentals received on leased lands, interest earned on the permanent funds arising from these lands, interest earned on deferred payments on lands sold, and all other actual income shall be available for the maintenance and support of such schools and institutions.

Each section of state trust land is assigned to a specific trust. [Distribution of revenues](#) is handled in different ways depending on the section of trust land that generated the revenue.

The trust beneficiaries are as follows:

- [Common Schools \(K-12 Education\)](#)
- [University of Montana](#)
- [Montana State University – Morrill Grant Montana State University](#)

- [Montana State University – Second Grant](#)
- [Montana Tech \(Butte\) of the University of Montana](#)
- [University of Montana \(Western\)](#)
- [Montana State University \(Billings\)](#)
- [State Reform School \(Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility\)](#)
- State Normal School
- [Montana School for the Deaf and Blind](#)
- [Montana Veterans Home](#)
- Public Buildings

The Trust Land Management Division administers land for some other state agencies, in addition to state trust land. Revenue generated from that land is transferred directly to the state agency.

The purpose of the Trust Land Management Division is to administer and manage the state trust timber, surface, and mineral resources for the benefit of the common schools and the other endowed institutions in Montana, under the direction of the [State Board of Land Commissioners](#). The board consists of Montana's top elected officials:

2009-2013

Governor



[Brian Schweitzer](#)

Attorney General



[Steve Bullock](#)

Superintendent of Public Instruction



[Denise Juneau](#)

Commissioner of Securities and Insurance



[Monica Lindeen](#)

Secretary of State



[Linda McCulloch](#)

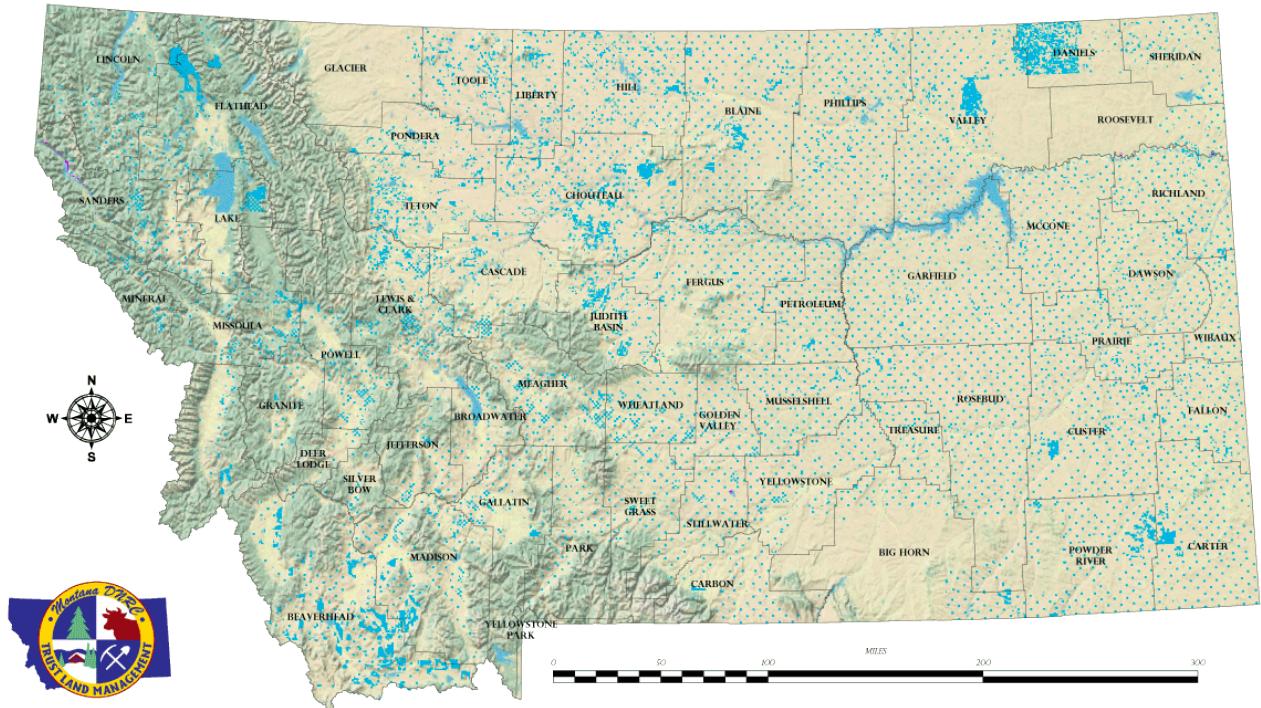
Board Secretary

[Lucy Richards](#)

The division is divided into four bureaus: [Agriculture and Grazing Management](#), [Forest Management](#), [Minerals Management](#), and [Real Estate Management](#).

The department's obligation is to obtain the greatest benefit for the school trusts. The greatest monetary return must be weighed against the long-term productivity of the land to ensure continued future returns to the trusts.

MONTANA TRUST LANDS



Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
 Trust Land Management Division
 Forest Management Bureau
 Technical Services Section
 January 29, 2009

TRUST LAND RIVERBED OR WATER



- ▲ Field Office
- ◆ Fire Dispatch
- Headquarters
- ★ Land Office
- Multiple Offices
- Unit Office

Northwest Land Office	Southwest Land Office	Central Land Office	Southern Land Office	Northeast Land Office	Eastern Land Office
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