

CINNABAR FOUNDATION

2012 LEN AND SANDY SARGENT STEWARDSHIP AWARDEES: *Jeanie Alderson, Mark Fix and Beth Kaeding*

Fearless. Tireless. Passionate. Compelling. Those are a few of the words that describe the 2012 recipients of the Cinnabar Foundation's Sargent Stewardship Award: Jeanie Alderson, Mark Fix and Beth Kaeding. The Foundation honored the three Montana conservationists for their efforts to protect the Tongue River Valley and defend family agriculture, clean water, and a healthy environment against the onslaught of threats posed by the fossil fuel industry.

For many years, these individuals have been prominent community leaders in defending the ranching way of life against the Tongue River Railroad. As members of the Northern Plains Resource Council, they also continue to challenge the Otter Creek coal leases against those who would condemn their land and livelihood, stripping Montana's natural wealth and exporting it to China.

These battles will continue to be waged for the foreseeable future, and the Cinnabar Foundation applauds their persistence and stewardship.

Jeanie Alderson and Mark Fix are ranchers in the Tongue River Valley who have opposed Big Coal's perennial plans to use federal eminent domain laws to condemn private land so that large corporations can drive a railroad through a beautiful valley without the consent of the ranchers who own the land. Beth Kaeding, a volunteer in Bozeman, has reached out to Montana communities along the western route by which coal companies plan to ship coal from the Tongue River Valley to Pacific ports, where, ultimately, the coal would be loaded on ships bound for China.



L to R: Beth Kaeding, Mark Fix and
Jeanie Alderson

In presenting the award to the three conservation leaders, Cinnabar Foundation President Robin Tawney Nichols wrote:

“Jeanie, you carry on your family’s rich legacy as an advocate for agriculture and conservation. You are an eloquent and passionate leader. You build cultural bridges with your tribal and non-tribal neighbors, creating a social network that must not be divided. You defend your beautiful valley against strip mines and a railroad, but you also make the global connection: Burning Montana coal in China will hasten climate change, posing profound risks to Montana’s future.

“Mark, you have long served as your valley’s fearless ambassador to the rest of the world. You are smart, strategic, driven, and successful, standing up unapologetically to those who would take your land and sacrifice Montana’s rural values. You are a compelling communicator about the importance of clean water. Your adversaries have more wealth and political clout, but none are as powerful as you.

“Beth, year in and year out, you have been a tireless advocate on behalf of the NPRC. This year, you recognized that the proposed TTR would be just the first leg for transport of coal to Asia. You’ve reached out to educate many other Montana communities that would be harmed by the westward march of coal trains. You are an effective organizer, organizational leader, and NPRC’s public face in the media and at countless public hearings and meetings.

"Jeanie, Mark and Beth, the Cinnabar Foundation is pleased and honored to recognize the three of you for outstanding achievements in conservation. We thank you for all you have done, and continue to do, for Montana’s rural communities, environment and way of life."

Since 1999, the Cinnabar Foundation has presented the Sargent Stewardship Award to recognize outstanding achievement in environmental advocacy, preservation, and education within the Montana and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The award keeps alive the memory of the Foundation's founders, Leonard and Sandy Sargent, who were environmental activists, ranchers and philanthropists in Montana until their deaths in 1997.

The award includes a grant of \$5,000 to Northern Plains Resource Council in honor of the three volunteer leaders.