

LEN & SANDY SARGENT STEWARDSHIP RECIPIENT

2024

Paul Hawks & Jerry Iverson

Paul Hawks and Jerry Iverson were selected as the 22nd Len and Sandy Sargent Stewardship Awardees for their many years of distinguished volunteerism that has resulted in two pristine and intact watersheds.

Nominated for this award by Northern Plains Resource Council, both conservation activists were instrumental in negotiating the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA), a one-of-a-kind arrangement between a community and a hardrock mine. Considered the gold standard, it is a model for how extractive industries can uphold a commitment to the environment and local communities.

Paul and Jerry spent countless hours becoming GNA experts, pouring over documents, learning how to negotiate with the mine and their neighbors, asking hard questions, and showing up in difficult situations to defend the GNA. They pushed the mine to develop better practices and hold higher standards when the company's plans didn't benefit the community. This resulted in developing a unique Adaptive Management Plan for water management, ensuring waste rock rinsing to reduce nitrogen impacts in the water, forcing world class tailings impoundments, limiting mining traffic and much more. Paul and Jerry monitor every aspect of the environmental footprint of these mines, and hold a respected, strong position in negotiations with the mine staff and management.

A retired rancher and an accomplished artist, respectively, Paul and Jerry have stood together as leaders, neighbors, and friends for over 40 years. They both share a diehard commitment to the success and future of NPRC and continue to remain involved with the GNA Task Force, while others have come and gone. They take on the extra work of orienting new leaders, sharing important history, and maintaining critical relationships at the mine.

Paul dates his involvement back to the NPRC's inception when he was hired as a staff organizer. Later, he served as a member and then chair of its board of directors. Jerry was a founding leader of the Cottonwood Resource Council, an affiliate group of NPRC, which formed due to concerns about impending impacts of hard-rock mining and other large-scale development in Sweet Grass County.

Paul and Jerry's recognition for outstanding conservation advocacy, volunteerism, and for leaving an indelible imprint on Montana, their communities, the Stillwater and Boulder rivers, and NPRC was accompanied by a \$5,000 special grant that they designated to Northern Plains Resource Center.



Paul Hawks (center) and Jerry Iverson (right) were instrumental in negotiating the Good Neighbor Agreement, a one-of-a-kind arrangement between a community and a Stillwater Mining Company representative.