

**2019 Montana Historic Preservation Award for
Outstanding Historic Preservation Stewardship to
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region**

**Mark Baumler
Montana State Historic Preservation Officer
2019 Preservation Award Ceremony
Myrna Loy Center, Helena**

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The 2019 award for Outstanding Historic Preservation Stewardship goes this year to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region. In many ways in recent years, this federal agency has demonstrated how heritage preservation and agency mission can co-exist and even thrive together.

The National Historic Preservation Act frames how all Federal agencies manage their cultural resources. It establishes the National Register program, mandates stewardship of historic Federal property, and outlines consultation between the agency and SHPO. Nearly all agencies own historic properties, and like most agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service doesn't have historic preservation as its primary mission. Nonetheless, Fish and Wildlife and a few key staffers go beyond fulfilling the Preservation Act's intent. We commend the agency and its people on good-faith consultation with SHPO, its empathy for historic resources, and for establishing collaboration as a way to accomplish more.

Good stewardship is evident both in routine actions as well as those that require special consideration. At the Bozeman Fish Technology Center, for example, the agency was faced with replacing lead-paint-coated cedar cladding on one of its historic residences. After demonstrating that the 100-year-old siding would not withstand paint stripping, Fish and Wildlife committed to a customized, in-kind siding replacement in painstaking deference to the hatchery's historic character. And again in 2018 at the Lost Trail Refuge in Flathead County, Fish and Wildlife partnered with the Montana Preservation Alliance and the National Park Service to host a week-long window preservation workshop that successfully repaired and preserved – rather than replaced - the failed windows at the refuge's Jackson Homestead House. Employing arcane techniques for repairs that will outlast us all, the workshop also trained staff from six different agencies and organizations who will put to work elsewhere what they learned at Lost Trail.

Special recognition goes to agency archaeologist Allison Parrish of Bozeman who has done much to bring a strong preservation ethic to U.S. Fish and Wildlife projects in Montana. Her attention to detail and consideration of alternatives has consistently resulted in better preservation outcomes.

SHPO and all Montanans who value historic places in unspoiled natural settings appreciate Fish and Wildlife's good work in historic preservation that goes beyond their primary mission. We look forward to their continued support for the preservation of Montana's significant historic, archaeological, and traditional cultural places.