



Brian Schweitzer, Governor

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July 27, 2009

Dear ECOS Members and Friends:

On behalf of the Big Sky State of Montana and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, it is my pleasure to invite you to share in one of the most beautiful areas of the country during the 2009 ECOS Annual Meeting. The meeting is planned for September 21-23 in the City of Whitefish.

Unless you are allergic to exhilarating mountain air, you can't help but enjoy all the treasures found in Whitefish and the Glacier National Park region of western Montana. Whether your idea of entertainment is strolling through art galleries or hiking mountain trails, it will all be within close reach during your visit.

Whitefish is a beautiful and short (by Montana standards) drive to the "Crown of the Continent" –Glacier National Park. And September is a great time to visit. The crowds will be thinned and the bears already full, leaving you plenty of room to enjoy all the breathtaking scenery this natural treasure is renowned for. I encourage you to come early to the meeting to take full advantage of the park as some of the facilities will be closing for the winter on September 20. The park itself will be open and awash in the colors of fall. With good weather, the Going to the Sun Road, one of the most beautiful drives in the country, will be open too. To further tempt you, I've attached a couple of photos that my son took during our recent trip to Glacier.

The City of Whitefish is well-known for its charming shops and galleries full of local crafts and arts. The Hockaday Museum of Art is here, featuring displays of the art and culture of Montana with an emphasis on the artists of Glacier National Park. The Museum even offers a Discovery Gallery with hands-on activities for children.

Some of Montana's best restaurants are located in the area. Choose from western specialties such as bison, elk and organic, homegrown beef as well as favorites you wouldn't expect to find like award-winning sushi from locally-produced octopus.

Montana weather in the fall can be full of surprises so bring along some warm clothes. September afternoons are often delightfully warm. By the time the sun goes down, a glass of locally brewed ale in front of a crackling fire will be the perfect end to a day in the "Last Best Place."

So make sure you come early, stay late, bring your family, and spend lots of money here. You'll be treated to a wonderful trip in addition to a very productive ECOS meeting.

For much more information about what Whitefish and Glacier Country have waiting for you please visit the Travel Montana site at www.visitmt.com or contact us at (406) 444-2544. I look forward to seeing you all in September!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard H. Opper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard H. Opper,
Director

**Ahern Pass in Glacier National Park
July 17, 2009**



**Glacier Lillies in Glacier National Park
July 16, 2009**

