



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 15, 2018

Montana Summit Brings in Officials and Activists for Liberty

WHITEFISH, MONTANA — A historic conference brought together activist leaders, public officials, ranchers, business owners, concerned citizens, and lawmakers from at least three Northwestern states to discuss land rights, federal overreach, forest management, the Deep State, and many of the problems facing the American West. The “This West is Our West” event on Saturday featured high-profile speakers such as Ammon Bundy of Bundy Ranch fame, as well as [Representative Matt Shea](#), who leads the Washington House GOP Caucus. But while fringe far-left extremists and a handful of unethical reporters tried to stir up controversy with smears and fake news, organizers and attendees said the event was a great success. The optimism was overwhelming.



The final speech of the conference was given by Ammon Bundy (shown), who was involved in the historic showdown against the [disgraced](#) U.S. Bureau of Land Management at his father’s ranch and has been frequently demonized by the media. First, Bundy thanked wife, who cared for the couple’s six children while Bundy was locked up — much of the time in solitary confinement — on bogus charges that have since all been thrown out. Then, he showed a video featuring various news clips about the ordeal in which people from around the country showed up at the Bundy Ranch to help protect the family from heavily armed, militarized bureaucrats trying to seize the Bundy’s cattle.

Introduced jokingly as an extremist right wing radical in response to all the hysteria from the “fake news” media, attendees laughed. The Bundy family has been on the ranch for almost 150 years, “since my forefathers arrived in their wagons,” he told the crowd. The family has owned water and grazing rights there since the state of Nevada first established a registry to track them in 1890. And yet, under the guise of protecting a “desert tortoise” and other such pretexts, the federal government fully intended to shut down the ranch — the last one standing after more than 50 in the region threw in the towel in the face of constant federal bullying.

Bundy gave the history of Nevada and its entry into the union. And he used that as a springboard to explain the American system of government, which separates and distributes power between the federal government and the states. “The states are not subsidiaries under the federal government, but the creators of the federal government,” he explained, noting that the U.S. Constitution’s 10th Amendment reserves all powers not delegated to the feds to either the states or the people. “So the states and the federal government have different jurisdictions.” While the federal government has



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authority over territories, they do not have constitutional authority or jurisdiction over the states and the lands within them unless that authority has been specifically surrendered by states.

“We don’t want to get rid of the federal government, we need it,” Bundy said. “We just want it to align with the jurisdictional limits our Constitution imposes.” In an interview with *The New American* before his speech, Bundy also explained that wealth ultimately comes from the land. That is why the federal government and the United Nations are working so hard to erode private property rights and secure control over ever more vast areas. And that is also why it is so crucial that Americans never surrender their control over their lands and their property. Without access to the land, it becomes impossible to even survive, much less thrive.

Bundy also recounted some of his personal struggles in the battle. After the showdown at his family’s ranch, which made headlines worldwide and sparked fury from out-of-control bureaucrats [later exposed by a whistleblower](#), Bundy and others went to Malheur in Oregon. There, they occupied a federal nature preserve to protest the unjust imprisonment of the Hammonds, a ranching family unjustly thrown in prison for five years over a controlled burn on their property. Trump has since pardoned them. While at Malheur, much of the far-left media demonized the occupiers, but activists and families from across America came to show their support.

Bundy could barely contain his emotion as he recounted — for the first time in some cases — a few of the most meaningful experiences he had during the occupation. He opened a bag, for instance, and showed some of the gifts given to him by people who came to the Malheur refuge. One man, a longtime law-enforcement officer, gave Bundy his duty badge. Another man gave Bundy the flag that was from his brother’s military funeral. “He felt we were standing up for the very purpose that his brother gave his life for,” Bundy said. Yet another man gave him a military medal he earned. When Bundy objected, the man said: “Never say you are not worthy of it again.”

Like virtually everyone else who spoke at the gathering, Bundy had some words for the assembled journalists. “In a way, the media is responsible for the death of one of the best men of our generation, LaVoy Finicum,” Bundy said, referring [to the rancher who was executed by federal and state officials at a road block](#). “They were calling good evil, and evil good. And a good man lost his life. And liberty and freedom was pushed down.”

Kicking off the event, after many of the lawmakers and officials in attendance were introduced by moderator Dan Hoppel, was a film about LaVoy by Mark Herr of the Center for Self-Governance (not to be confused with the unethical Citizens for Self-Governance). The dramatic film, entitled *LaVoy: Dead Man Talking*, was about the late rancher and patriot hero who participated in the Malheur occupation and was executed in an ambush on his way to visit a local sheriff. Herr slammed what he described as the establishment media’s “label lynching,” which was used to demonize Finicum as some sort of “domestic terrorist” ahead of his assassination.

The film, though, showed the real Finicum, in his own words, using videos he created called “One Cowboy’s Stand for Freedom.” *Dead Man Talking*, which had much of the audience in tears, showed the real face of the gentle cowboy. It showed his beautiful family — 11 children and even more grandchildren. It showed how he and his loyal wife served as foster parents to more than 50 boys over the years, some of whom they eventually adopted. It highlighted his love of God, his family, the land, his country, the Constitution, and the freedoms the Constitution protects. It showed how he was a gentle soul who loved peace and everybody he met. And tragically, it showed how he was killed by the Obama administration and its minions amid a violent demonization campaign in the press.



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Despite the enormity of the tragedy and the wrongs she suffered, Lavoy's widow, Jeannette Finicum, did not sound bitter when she got up to speak. In fact, she praised law enforcement, and thanked the brave men and women who honorably serve and put themselves at risk to protect their communities and the rights of citizens. In particular, she thanked [BLM law enforcement supervisor Larry Wooten — universally regarded as a hero at the conference — who at great risk to himself blew the whistle on his colleagues for their shocking and almost certainly criminal behavior](#) in a variety of "law enforcement" cases that have attracted national scrutiny, including the Bundy ranch. The full memo is worth reading.

But while she may not be bitter, Jeanette's work is not done. One of her missions, she said, is to defend her husband's good name from the vile smears put out by the media. She also spoke about the legal case against one of the officers involved in the slaughter of her husband. The officer was put on trial for lying and obstruction of justice in the case. But considering the outrageously biased judge, the case was doomed from the start. The widow described her husband's killing as a "murder" and vowed to continue seeking justice. She also slammed all the "journalists" who blatantly lie and smear, including some who lied about some of the conference speakers, especially Bundy, in the days before it began. Of course, Bundy was acquitted of all charges in federal court.

"I'm sick and tired of the media lying and dividing us," the heartbroken widow said. "Freedom is colorblind. God doesn't see color."

Representative Matt Shea of Washington State also blasted and ridiculed the press for their dishonesty, calling on everyone to "become the media" to help get the truth out. Among the stories being suppressed by the press was the establishment of "counter-states" by Islamists from the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as Marxists and communists. These schemes threaten the freedom and security of the American people, he warned. Citing a [now-famous memo](#) produced for President Trump by Rich Higgins, who was director of policy and planning at the U.S. National Security Council at the time, Shea said the danger was very real. However, with awareness growing, Shea sounded optimistic about the future of freedom — at least in some areas of America. And he had a number of solutions and suggestions on what to do, including a return to America's long and indisputable Christian heritage.

Also speaking was Representative Kerry White of Montana, the executive director of Citizens for a Balanced Use. The main subject of his talk was federal mismanagement of public lands and the massive problems — especially fires — that it produces. He spoke of efforts to stop or limit the use of natural resources, which has devastating impacts on local communities and families through destruction of jobs, the environment, and more. Ironically, he offered much evidence showing that federal attacks on logging were actually causing a surge in wildfires, which destroys the environment. And he showed the horror unleashed by wildfires. It seemed like those in attendance, some of whom have suffered through raging fires nearby in recent years, knew exactly what he was talking about.

During the question and answer session, Ammon Bundy and Representative White got into a friendly debate about the constitutional limits on federal power as it relates to land. Bundy argued that under the Constitution, the feds should have no power to own or control public lands across the American states. He quoted repeatedly from the U.S. Constitution. Representative Kerry, by contrast, argued that the people had delegated such authority through their elected representatives, and that the solution was to replace bad members of Congress if the public was unhappy with the status quo. He also explained that the government is like an elephant. "You have to take it piece by piece," he said. "If you just charge at it, you'll bounce off and it will trample you."



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More than one speaker traveled from overseas to conference. Filmmaker Mark Sutherland, who produced a 10-minute dystopian film called "[Between Lions and Lambs](#)," came from the United Kingdom to speak at the event. But he said he was not coming alone: Many more in the United Kingdom support Trump, America, and the emerging liberty movement. The United States is at the center of the battle worldwide, he added. If the United States goes down, freedom everywhere will go down with it, Sutherland said. "I assure you that across Europe, there are many people praying for this nation," Sutherland explained, asking attendees to pray as well.

In his speech, Sutherland said that no matter what the fake media might claim, and no matter what globalists may want, Brexit was "definitely" going to happen. In fact, he had just come from the "Alternative Brexit" conference, where the mood was upbeat. Sutherland explained, too, why it was so important for the United Kingdom to reclaim its sovereignty and self-government by seceding from the European Union. "If you don't control your borders, you don't control anything, and you're not a real nation anymore," he said. Sutherland also exposed the EU, and the lies used by shadowy elites to steal the sovereignty of nations and peoples. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) played a key role in the process, he explained.

Also speaking was Norm Semanko, who has served as everything from chairman of the Idaho GOP to general counsel of the Republican National Committee (RNC). Like most speakers, Semanko also ridiculed members of the media for their wild claims. He also described ongoing litigation he is involved with to battle federal overreach in Idaho. "Why do we need the federal government to come in and say 'we're going to take care of your lake'?" he wondered. "We already have the lake protected. We have had state laws protecting this lake since 1920.... We've got to fight the fight. We have got to fight back on excess federal control. We don't need the federal government doing it for us. We can do it ourselves." He called for preserving state sovereignty and local control, and noted that he would soon be arguing the case in front of the Idaho Supreme Court.

Another speaker, [Elaine Willman, who is of Cherokee descent and is married to a direct descendant of Sacajawea, exposed some of the abuses perpetrated under the guise of federal Indian policy](#). Among other concerns, Willman noted that Indians living under tribal governments are often deprived of the constitutionally protected rights enjoyed by other Americans — something she works hard to fix. Especially troubling, she said, is how federally funded tribal governments trample on the parental rights of tribe members who have issues with their tribal leaders. She also slammed the gambling monopolies granted to tribal governments, noting that much of the money is funneled back into the political coffers of politicians and lobbyists. For those ideas, she has been mercilessly demonized by fringe leftwing groups, their media allies, and powerful tribal governments.

Also commenting on some of the problems with federal Indian policy was Chris Kortlander, the founding director of the Custer Battlefield Museum and a very close friend of the late Joe Medicine Crow. One problem he pointed to was that state authorities have no jurisdiction over polling places and elections on Indian reservations. One particularly troubling example he gave surrounded irregularities on a reservation in Montana in an election that put Democrat John Tester in office by a razor-thin margin and flipped control of the Senate. Kortlander, a former Montana lawman, also described a terrifying ordeal in which the BLM raided his museum with machine guns over a button it sold him. Some of those experiences are recounted in his new book, [Arrow to the Heart: The Last Battle at the Little Big Horn](#).

The true nature of the globalist agenda and the "Deep State" was also a topic on the agenda. This writer gave a speech [exposing the Deep State](#) and some of the tactics it uses in its war on America, the



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American West, ranchers, farmers, liberty, humanity, and, ultimately, God. Conference moderator Dan Happel, a longtime liberty activist and former public official, also gave a speech in which he highlighted quotes from leading globalists, environmentalists, communists, and others showing their true agenda: global governance using various pretexts.

An awards ceremony took place during which Clarice Ryan, a longtime Montana activist who has dedicated many decades of her life to the freedom fight, received an award recognizing her heroic efforts. The humble, gentle, soft-spoken freedom fighter said she was not sure what she had done to be so honored, but the crowd and the organizers knew very well about the importance of her efforts. She also got the crowd roaring with laughter. "My whole life I wondered whether I was a Republican or Democrat," she said, "Now I wonder whether it makes much difference."

A number of "fake news" reports, some of them citing fringe left-wing extremist groups known for dishonesty, falsely claimed the conference would attract "anti-government" activists, "conspiracy theorists," or, pointing to Willman, who is married to an Indian and is herself of Cherokee descent, opponents of the rights of American Indians. This writer did not observe anyone who fit those descriptions throughout the event. In fact, not a single "conspiracy theory" was offered from the stage, and more than a few speakers specifically said they support or even "love" government. Not one "anti-Indian" or "anti-government" comment was heard throughout the entire full-day conference.

The entire gathering prayed together that God would soften the hearts of the dozen or so journalists in attendance, if it was in accordance with His will. They also prayed that those reporters would see the truth and report honestly about the conference. And remarkably, the articles that have emerged since the conference took place have been more balanced and honest than what came out before the conference, reports that cited discredited fringe groups such as the Montana Human Rights Network or the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which has [been widely condemned as a hate group and a money-making scam.](#)

In an interview with *The New American*, reporter Jason Wiles for the U.K. *Guardian* was apprehensive about the fact that polls show almost nobody believes the media anymore. He wondered which came first, the "chicken or the egg," suggesting that the demonization of the media might have led to the loss of its credibility, rather than the unhinged reporting and overwhelming left-wing bias. When asked whether he considered the conference "extreme" or "extremist," he conceded that those subject labels were subjective. However, despite the election of Donald Trump and a growing resurgence of support for limited constitutional government, Wiles suggested that some of the views expressed from the podium at the event were probably still outside of what would be considered "mainstream." Aside from [the headline](#), which he probably did not write, his article was less biased than many of the bizarre pieces in the local press before the conference.

The event was such a success that organizers are planning to do more. Lawmakers from three states and other officials in attendance told *The New American* that it was an excellent opportunity to learn about the many issues facing communities and families in the American West. This magazine will have some additional reporting and some exclusive video interviews in the days ahead.

Photo of Ammon Bundy: AP Images

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