

## THE FUTURE AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE!

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Montana's demographic landscape is comprised of three states within a state: The rapidly growing West, the modestly growing Central and the shrinking East. Close examination of each reveals important value shifts affecting fish, wildlife, recreation and habitat protection. Among these shifts are reduced opportunities for access to private lands for hunting and fishing, producing either a corresponding increase in pressure on public lands or fewer people choosing to hunt and fish. In response, managers will have to re-evaluate geographic and demographic priorities. The state's new demographic profile, which includes counties with high population growth rates that also have high rates of population turnover, means that traditional perspectives about wildlife and fish are in flux and influenced to an inordinate degree by values honed outside Montana or in an increasingly media-influenced world. Change elsewhere in the country, including that precipitated by a shifting climate, new resource demands, immigration, wealth transfer and the desire to live where the quality of life is high, could overwhelm the traditional bottlenecks that have moderated population growth in Montana, including winter weather, limited employment opportunities, and shortcomings in communication and transportation infrastructure. Demographic trends in Montana will necessitate new types of fish and wildlife managers, with different skill sets, tools and priorities that focus more on effective communication with greater attention to ecosystem protection, non-consumptive wildlife and fish values and equitable access to public resources possibly resulting in less attention to traditional management that focuses on hunters and angler's as primary beneficiaries.