MONTANA OUTDOOR HALL OF FAME 2020 INDUCTEES | 11

ob Kiesling, perhaps the nation’s !rst
conservation real estate broker, is unique
among MOHF inductees.
To protect Montana land and water, Bob has
sought to connect like-minded buyers and sellers.
A native of Havre, Kiesling graduated from
the University of Chicago in 1970 and followed that with an environmental science master’s degree from the University of Montana.
For 20 years, he’s served on UM’s adjunct faculty, teaching a fall semester course in conservation strategies to environmental studies graduate students.
Bob’s career began with work on natural resource policy issues as the executive director of the Montana Environmental Information Center, a cornerstone of environmental advocacy.
That led to creating nature sanctuaries and conserving natural areas as founding executive director of the Big Sky—Montana and Wyoming— o"ce of The Nature Conservancy, 1979 to 1990. Because of Bob’s insights, Montana boasts
the Pine Butte Swamp Preserve, home to plains grizzlies west of Choteau; Crown Butte near Simms; Poindexter Slough on the Beaverhead; Aunt Molly Fishing Access Site on the Blackfoot; Flathead Lake’s Wildhorse Island State Park; and Dancing Prairie Preserve, north of Eureka—all under public or nonpro!t ownership.
While at TNC, Bob also lobbied to create Montana’s Natural Resource Information System and the Natural Heritage Program, which allows degreed and citizen scientists to track Montana’s biological diversity.
Bob’s most in#uential endeavor, however, was

in conservation real estate. He co-founded the American Conservation Real Estate Company, the !rst brokerage of its kind in the country. ACRE specialized in private and public land protection that included tax, investment, and estate planning counsel.
Later he established Outlandish, a conserva-tion brokerage with a tight business focus on the northern Rockies and Plains.
Bob intuitively sensed that real estate agents working in rural land markets needed a nuanced understanding of local communities, their amen-ities, and their unique personalities.
That allowed him to contract with the City of Helena to assist with its !rst $5 million Open Space Bond program that preserved much of the city’s rugged south hills. Additionally, Bob provided counsel for the creation of the Gallatin Valley Land Trust, Flathead Land Trust, American Prairie Reserve, and engineered the donation of the !rst conservation easements held by Helena’s Prickly Pear Land Trust.
Additional cases in point include a years’ long planning effort for the succession of a family farm that, in part, became the Lost River Wildlife Management Area north of Havre. In the Black-foot River Valley, Bob helped secure permanent conservation easements to protect the river, which spurred Montana’s conservation easement statute. Bob’s stamp is not only on wild places but in the hearts of the people he’s worked with to conserve vital swaths of Montana’s landscape.
Few have contributed more—or had more fun— while preserving and protecting Montana than
Bob Kiesling.

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2020 INDUCTEE

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