



Montana Outfitters and Guides Association Supports the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act

June 13, 2024 - Helena, MT

Here in Montana, our rivers and streams support every facet of a long-standing and cherished way of life. Montana's waterways provide a living for hundreds of business owners and their employees in the guiding and outfitting industry, which is a large part of the state's \$7.1 billion outdoor recreation industry. To protect these assets is to protect our heritage, our economy, and future generations' ability to continue, in many cases, a long-held family business or trade.

The mission of the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association (MOGA) is "to protect, enhance, and effectively represent the Montana Outfitting Industry in all its forms." To achieve this mission, we work to foster a vibrant professional outfitting industry, in part through promoting the conservation and sustainable, scientifically based, management of Montana's natural resources. One way we see this vision being achieved is through permanent protection of the state's most pristine, high-quality streams flowing through public lands.

This is why MOGA's board of directors unanimously endorses the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act (MHLA). If passed, the MHLA will create new Wild and Scenic River protections for some of southwest Montana's most important headwaters rivers and streams. Wild and Scenic designation would protect sections of rivers like the Upper Yellowstone, Gallatin, Stillwater, and others, so that current use and enjoyment will be maintained for generations to come. It does this by protecting their free-flowing nature, water quality, and other values that make them unique.

In addition to advocating for sound conservation, MOGA is a very strong advocate for private property rights. In the case of the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, we believe we can attain our goals WITHOUT threatening water rights, public access, or private property rights.

Water is something that all political stripes can get behind. No matter your leaning, Montanans have shown time and time again that clean water and healthy rivers are of shared importance. For instance, the East Rosebud Creek Wild and Scenic River Act was passed in August 2018 with the bipartisan support of former Rep. Gianforte (current Governor of Montana), Sen. Tester, and Sen. Daines. A March 2020 University of Montana survey conducted by a bipartisan research team from New Bridge Strategies (Republican) and FM3 Research (Democrat) shows nearly eight of ten Montanans (79%) support the draft Montana Headwaters Legacy Act.

MOGA believes that MHLA is our chance to invest in Montana's rivers and streams, thereby securing a viable livelihood for our children and grandchildren who want to carry on work in the

world of guiding, outfitting, and ranching. It allows the rest of us to continue to enjoy Montana's and the country's wildest places in the same ways we always have. Please join me and the MOGA Board of Directors in asking our Montana Delegation to introduce and pass the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act. Simply call and tell them who you are and why they need to introduce (and pass) the act.

Reach U.S. Sen. Jon Tester at 202-224-2644, and U.S. Sen. Steve Daines at 202-224-2651.

Will Israel
Executive Director, MOGA