

Montana's Outdoor Heritage: Hunting
The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act Resource Guide

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"I truly believe that the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage proposal is one of the most thoroughly thought out plans I have ever seen. It doesn't offend anyone or any group in any way. It truly leaves one of the world's grandest remaining landscapes intact for future generations to experience and enjoy."

-Roy Jacobs, hunter from Pendroy

"The Front has some of the very best wildlife habitat in the world. Elk, deer and bighorn sheep herds along the Front are legendary. This proposal helps maintain our hunting and fishing heritage on the Front, while protecting this unique and magnificent landscape."

- Joe Perry, farmer and hunter from Brady

"Big Game needs Big Country. The ability to manage lands for their roadless characteristics and their wild qualities are part of the core competency of our company. Grassroots driven proposals like the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act help ensure not only the future of elk, deer, bighorns and Rocky Mountain goats, they help insure the future of our company. Let's finish the job that Hunters started over 100 years ago and protect the Rocky Mountain Front."

- Jonathan Hart, founder of Sitka (hunting and archery) Gear

**Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act
Sportsmen's/Backcountry Organizations
Endorsements and Supporters**

- Anaconda Sportsmen's Club
- Backcountry Horsemen of Montana
- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Montana Chapter
- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, National
- Big Sky Upland Bird Association
- East Slope Backcountry Horsemen
- Five Valleys Chapter of the Audubon Society
- Great Falls Archers
- Helena Hunters and Anglers Association
- Hellgate Hunters and Anglers
- Last Chance Chapter of the Audubon Society
- Last Chance Backcountry Horsemen
- Libby Rod and Gun Club
- Montana Wildlife Federation
- National Wildlife Federation
- ORION, The Hunter's Institute
- Pat Barnes Missouri River Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association
- Russell Country Backcountry Horsemen
- Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- The Wildlife Society, Montana Chapter
- Upper Missouri Breaks Chapter of Audubon Society
- Wild Sheep Foundation, Montana Chapter
- Wild Sheep Foundation, National
- Yellowstone Valley Chapter of Audubon Society

Wildlife Professionals and Land Managers

- *Three former Chiefs of the Forest Service:* Jack Ward Thomas, Michael Dombeck, and Dale Bosworth
- *Two former Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisors:* Leslie "Spike" Thompson and Gloria Flora
- *Three former Bureau of Land Management State Directors:* Gene Terland, Larry Hamilton, and Matt Millenbach
- Tony Bynum, Professional Photographer, board member Professional Outdoor Writers Association - East Glacier
- Randy Newberg, Host, *On Your Own Adventures* - Bozeman;
- Mark Seacat, Principal, Seacat Creative, Bozeman

**CONTINUED: Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act Endorsements and Supporters
Sportsmen's/Backcountry Organizations**

Various state wildlife professionals:

- Stan Meyer, former Chair, FWP Commission; Jeff Hagener, former Director FWP; Pat Graham, former Director FWP; Jim Flynn, former Director FWP; Rich Clough, former Chief of Operations; Larry Peterman, Deputy Director; Arnie Olson, former Parks Division Administrator; Jim Posewitz, former Environmental Services Chief ; Glenn Erikson, former Wildlife Bureau Chief; Mike Aderhold, former Region 4 Supervisor; Gayle Joslin, former FWP Regional Biologist, Region 4; Larry Davis, former Game Warden, Region 4 (Augusta); Dave Mari, former BLM field manager (Lewistown); Dan Carney, Blackeet Tribal Fish and Wildlife biologist (bear specialist)

Select Timeline of Sportsmen Conservation on the Rocky Mountain Front

1913 – Sun River Game Preserve established by an act of the Montana State Legislature. Sportsmen pressure lead to the establishment due to low herd numbers. While the State of Montana originally established several Game Preserves, only the Sun River Game Preserve remains in existence today. Currently , hunting is off limits in the preserve, and it is fully encompassed by the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

1938 – C.R. Rathbone, a rancher on what is now the Cobb Ranch, guns down elk wintering on his ranch. The ensuing decision from the Montana Supreme Court paves the way for the current management prescriptions adhered to by the modern agency, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. This ruling establishes that wildlife are held in trust for all, and that all landowners must tolerate wildlife. This decision also establishes criteria for helping mitigate impacts to private land owners from concentrations of wildlife such as elk. It is the basis for Montana’s highly successful management of wildlife.

1948 – The Sun River Wildlife Management Area is purchased for its high value winter range. This area was almost lost to the state when the Fish and Wildlife department was unable to produce the necessary down payment for the ranch in time for the bank to close. Rather than lose the opportunity to protect critical winter range for the Sun River Elk Herd, Choteau rancher Carl Malone and Great Falls businessman Tom Messalt ponied up the funds for the down payment. Today, the Sun River Wildlife Management Area is a destination for 3,000 head of elk, and many, many more recreationists looking hunt upland game birds, deer, elk and wolves. It is also a highly popular area for shed hunting of elk antlers.

1976 – Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) acquires the Ear Mountain Wildlife Management Area and sets it aside for hunting, and winter habitat for elk, mule deer and other species.

1978 – FWP purchases the Blackleaf Wildlife Management Area to help conserve Grizzly Bears and Black Bears. Today, the Blackleaf WMA is inside of one of Montana’s most sought after Elk Trophy hunt districts: Elk Management Unit 441.

1997 – Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisor Gloria Flora issues a decision to withdraw the Rocky Mountain Ranger District from oil and gas leasing. The decision is litigated, but upheld. This landmark decision was a bold step towards finally conserving the Rocky Mountain Front.

2001 – The Roadless Area Conservation Rule, adopted by the Clinton Administration, helps keep elk habitat secure and stable for elk as they migrate through the Rocky Mountain Front and on to winter range.

CONTINUED: Select Timeline of Sportsmen Conservation on the Rocky Mountain Front

2007 – Senator Max Baucus introduces, and passes, legislation that permanently withdraws the Rocky Mountain Front from oil and gas leasing, out to six miles from the forest boundary. This landmark legislation is in direct response to hunters and anglers, along with the tens of thousands of Montanans who cherish the Rocky Mountain Front who kept the pressure on Congress to conserve the “best of the best.”

2008 – The Birch Creek South Travel Plan is released by the Lewis and Clark National Forest. This plan places high priority on elk security and wildlife connectivity. The plan is hailed as a positive and uncontroversial step forward in ensuring our hunting heritage, and the continued use of these lands as a migration corridor for the Sun River Elk Herd and the Sun River Bighorn Sheep Herd.

2008-2011 – The Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front spends four years drafting and redrafting a plan that would respect all uses, and place a high value on the wildlife and hunting heritage of the Rocky Mountain Front. The plan is subjected to eight public meetings, and dozens of individuals meetings as well as many more presentations to local rod and gun clubs, hunting organizations and civic organizations.

2011 – Senator Max Baucus once again steps up for the Front and introduces the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act.

HUNTING ON THE FRONT: ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT

Along the Rocky Mountain Front, expenditures by hunters have held steady through the most recent recession, making this popular outdoor pursuit a rare bright spot when compared to the struggles of the broader economy.

According to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks data, hunter expenditures along the Front, over a five year period from 2006 to 2010, have held steady despite the broader economic challenges facing other industries during the recent recession.

In real terms, during 2006, at the peak of the last business cycle, sportsmen hunting along the Rocky Mountain Front spent \$9.8 million; growing to \$10.4 million in 2008 in the middle of the recession; and falling only slightly in 2010 to \$10.1 million.

Using a well vetted formula, Fish, Wildlife and Parks conservatively determines the approximate dollar amount spent directly related to hunting opportunities. No other expenditure data from other outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, summer outfitting, or fishing were included in their analysis.

These impressive numbers demonstrate that the high quality of the hunting resources on the Rocky Mountain Front is known not only to local residents but also to hunters from across the region and the country. In 2010 alone, Fish, Wildlife and Parks measured more than 90,000 hunter days on its districts along the Front.

According to Fish, Wildlife and Parks, most hunters visit the Rocky Mountain Front for upland game birds, deer, and elk while a smaller number of sportsmen hunted antelope, big horn sheep, moose, and mountain goats. In 2010, sportsmen hunting upland game birds spent more than \$4 million and those hunting deer and elk spent more than \$5 million.

OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MONTANA

Montana's fish, wildlife, and habitats annually contribute \$2.5 billion to the state's economy through hunting, fishing, and all forms of outdoor recreation. These activities sustain 34,000 jobs and generate more than \$118 million in state tax revenue.ⁱ

Wildlife viewing alone is one of the most popular activities in Montana, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) estimates that an astonishing 755,000 Montanans engage in this practice annually. This participation rate brings in significant amounts of local revenue, and USFWS notes that, in 2006, wildlife watching expenditures and economic impacts totaled 9,772 jobs, \$376 million for retail sales, and \$213 million in wages, salaries, and business income.ⁱⁱ

Looking at hunting, fishing, and wildlife-viewing on U.S. Forest Service lands alone in Montana, another study from 2007 found that these activities generated \$383 million in retail sales and 8,851 jobs.ⁱⁱⁱ

CONTINUED: OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MONTANA

To put the economic importance of tourism and recreation for rural communities into context, a study by the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that “recreation and tourism development contributes to rural well-being, increasing local employment, wage levels, and income, reducing poverty, and improving education and health.” Job earnings in rural recreation counties, for example, are \$2,000 more per worker than for those in other rural counties.^{iv}

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC LANDS

Conserving one of Montana’s assets, the Rocky Mountain Front, is a foundation for both economic vibrancy and quality of life. A sustained effort to protect wildlife, increase outdoor recreation, and remove noxious weeds provides direct benefits, including hundreds of jobs in local communities.

Keeping the Rocky Mountain Front the way it is now will provide an immediate return through employment and revenue, while also helping to promote long-term economic growth and development that extends beyond tourism. Conserving lands, for example, helps safeguard and highlight the amenities that attract people and business.^v

Research published in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* also has shown that, nationwide, protected natural amenities—such as pristine scenery and wildlife—help sustain property values and attract new investment.^{vi}

The counties in the West with protected public lands, like national recreation areas or Wilderness, have been more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and as a result grow more quickly, on average, than counties without protected public lands.^{vii}

ⁱ The habitat employment and taxation statistics from this paragraph all come from Outdoor Industry Foundation. (2006). “The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy: A \$730 Billion Annual Contribution to the U.S. Economy.” The farm and forestry information comes from the U.S. Department of Commerce. 2011. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, Washington, D.C. Table CA25N.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (2008). “Wildlife Watching in the U.S.: The Economic Impacts on National and State Economies in 2006.” Washington, D.C.

ⁱⁱⁱ American Sportfishing Association (2007), “State and National Economic Effects of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Related Recreation on U.S. Forest Service-Managed Lands.” Prepared for the U.S. Forest Service, Washington, D.C.

^{iv} The information for this paragraph comes from Reeder, R.J., D.M. Brown (2005). “Recreation, Tourism, and Rural Well-Being.” Economic Research Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Washington, D.C.

^v Lorah, P. R. Southwick, et al. (2003). Environmental Protection, Population Change, and Economic Development in the Rural Western United States. *Population and Environment* 24(3): 255-272; McGranahan, D. A. 1999. Natural Amenities Drive Rural Population Change. E. R. S. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Washington, D.C.

^{vi} Deller, S. C., T.-H. Tsai, et al. (2001). “The Role of Amenities and Quality of Life in Rural Economic Growth.” *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 83(2): 352-365.

^{vii} Rasker, R. (2006). An exploration into the economic impact of industrial development versus conservation on western public lands. *Society & Natural Resources*, 19(3), 191–207.

BIG GAME HUNTING

“Big” is one excellent way to describe the Rocky Mountain Front: the landscape, the reefs, the sky, and the critters. The herds—elk, sheep, and deer—are big and healthy because of the history of smart conservation and smart ranching. The animals themselves are big. Proof is in the tables below, which show the record Boone and Crockett Club scores for the Rocky Mountain Front and the plains next door. The Club’s scoring system is a standardized system for objectively measuring big game animals.*

Elk (Typical):

| <u>Score</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Sportsman</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 398 5/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1953 | Mosher, Richard |
| 384 0/8 | Willow Creek | 1958 | Miles, Mike |
| 376 6/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1964 | Mielke, Camron |
| 367 6/8 | Teton Co. | 1994 | Ward, Gene |
| 360 2/8 | Teton Co | 2005 | Horn, Kyle |
| 352 7/8 | Teton Co. | 1972 | Howard, Jack |
| 332 5/8 | Teton Co. | 1995 | Lawrence, Wayne |

Big Horn Sheep:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Sportsman</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 196 5/8 | Sun River | 1961 | Anderson, Don |
| 195 7/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 2001 | King, Steven |
| 192 5/8 | Sun River | Pkup | (Yearout, Leyton Z) |
| 192 3/8 | Teton Co. | 1995 | Scott, Darwin |
| 190 7/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1992 | Eaton, Rodney |
| 190 3/8 | Sun River | 1957 | Murray, F |
| 190 0/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 2002 | Freeman, Robert |
| 190 0/8 | Lewis & Clark Co | 2006 | Norby, Eric |
| 89 6/8 | Teton Co. | 1979 | Remien, Don |
| 189 6/8 | Teton Co. | 1988 | Wentworth, Lloyd |
| 189 6/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1981 | Swang Jr, Ralph |
| 189 3/8 | Teton Co. | 1983 | Kennedy, R |
| 189 2/8 | Sun River | 1958 | Pfeifer, J |

| | | | |
|---------|-------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| 188 5/8 | Sun River | 1955 | McCracken, Bruce |
| 188 2/8 | Sun River | 1912 | Neal, Bruce |
| 187 0/8 | Lewis & Clark Co | 2004 | Stevens, Jim |
| 186 1/8 | Sun River | 1961 | Roberts, Glen |
| 186 0/8 | Lewis & Clark Co | 2002 | Weber, DeEtte |
| 185 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1980 | French, Tim |
| 185 2/8 | Teton Co | 2007 | Steffes, Troy |
| 185 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1998 | Larson, Douglas |
| 184 4/8 | Sun River | 1948 | (Stecker, W H) |
| 183 6/8 | Teton Co. | 1992 | Gilbert, Greg |
| 182 5/8 | Sun River | 1955 | Alzheimer, Martin |
| 182 4/8 | Teton Co. | 1998 | Johns, Josh |
| 182 3/8 | Sun River | 1957 | (MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks) |
| 182 3/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1989 | Gebhardt, William |
| 182 3/8 | Sun River | 1980 | Anderson, Kristen |
| 182 2/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1996 | Arps, Ben |
| 182 0/8 | Teton Co | 2006 | Taranto, Timothy |
| 182 0/8 | Teton Co. | 1993 | Swanson, Kirby |
| 181 7/8 | Teton Co. | 1991 | Conway, Deborah |
| 181 7/8 | Teton Co. | 1990 | Hinderager, Scott |
| 181 5/8 | Teton Co. | 1990 | Hamm, Neil |
| 181 5/8 | Sun River | 1965 | Bodie, Walter |
| 181 5/8 | Sun River | 1989 | Bennett, Pamela |
| 181 3/8 | Teton Co. | 1997 | Bouma, Chad |
| 181 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1996 | Balazs, Joseph |
| 181 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1986 | McKinley, Bill |
| 180 1/8 | Sun River | 1958 | Reichelt, Dennis |
| 180 0/8 | Sun River | 1991 | Dzort, Calvin |

Mule Deer:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Sportsman</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------|--|
| 207 7/8 | Teton Co | 2004 | Unlawfully taken—now in FWP possession |
| 195 2/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1966 | Alfson, Donald |
| 195 0/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1966 | Lyman, Dick |
| 194 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1973 | Schlosser, Frank |
| 191 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1971 | Groth, Richard |
| 189 7/8 | Teton Co. | 1962 | Gollehon, Wayne |
| 188 6/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1976 | Lightlizer Sr, Robert |
| 188 6/8 | Teton Co. | 1967 | Clark, Leonard |
| 188 6/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1955 | Lovley, Kurt |
| 188 0/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1966 | Fuller, Vernon |
| 187 3/8 | Pondera Co. | 1991 | Fowler, Shawn |
| 182 1/8 | Teton Co | 2004 | Rued, Kurt |
| 180 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1987 | Alfson, Orville |
| 180 2/8 | Teton Co. | 1992 | Bledsoe Jr, Ralph |

Mountain Goat:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Sportsman</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 52 2/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1981 | Johns, Charles |
| 51 6/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1963 | Beard, Jim |
| 50 4/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1986 | St. Clair, Don |
| 50 4/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1974 | Thelen, Robert |
| 0 4/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1995 | Anderson, Glenn |
| 49 6/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1963 | Snyder, Roy |
| 49 4/8 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1994 | Bleskin, Peter |
| 47 0/8 | Teton Co. | 2004 | Root, Gary |
| 14 9/16 | Teton Co. | 2008 | Mahoney, Dylan |

Black Bear:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Sportsman</u> |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| 20 00/16 | Ear Mountain | 1980 | Russell, Ed |

Grizzly Bear (pre-Endangered Species Act listing):

| <u>Score</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Sportsman</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 24 12/16 | Teton Co. | 1975 | Carlson, David |
| 23 05/16 | Teton Co. | 1969 | Meade, Homer |
| 23 11/16 | Lewis & Clark Co. | 1969 | Goss, Ray |