

**Montana Voices: Homegrown Support**

*The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act Resource Guide*

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*October 2011*

***What People Saying about the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act:***

“My family has been ranching here for 128 years and the Heritage Act will help protect the Front’s wild lands and working landscapes for generations to come.”

**-Karl Rappold, Dupuyer Rancher**

“..for the last six years a group of ranchers, hunters, tribal members, and conservationists have worked collaboratively to develop the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act. These local Montanans have spent countless volunteer hours crafting this proposal never losing sight of the need to ensure that the proposal does not adversely affect the livelihood of those that live and work along the Front.”

**- John Bohlinger, Lt Governor**

“The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is a common-sense idea crafted by Montanans. Now is the time to move it forward and leave a legacy for those hunters and anglers who will follow in our steps.”

**-Randy Newberg, Bozeman, host of television series [\*On Your Own Adventures\*](#)**

“Continuing to maintain the Front the way it is today is the best assurance the land will continue to be a rock solid economic driver for local communities, and ensure our best hunting grounds remains intact.”

**- Jack Chambers, Montana Wild Sheep Foundation**

“The Front is a vital part of our Blackfeet history and culture, and it continues to give us an opportunity to experience the life of our ancestors. The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act would help protect the wildlife and sacred country of the Badger-Two Medicine from noxious weeds. Requiring the Forest Service to come up with a plan for fighting weeds and providing opportunity for the Blackfeet Nation to be a part of developing the plan is a step in the right direction.”

- **Keith Tatsey, Blackfeet tribal member, natural history instructor at the Blackfeet Community College, and chair of the Badger-Two Medicine Committee**

***Continued: What People Saying about the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act***

“Local people from all walks of life have worked together to come up with the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act. As mayor of Helena I am committed to sustainable economic development. The Heritage Act provides certainty that the best ranching, outdoor recreation and hunting areas will be protected. Hunters, working landowners, wildlife watchers and outdoor enthusiasts contribute greatly to our local economy. The Heritage Act is a sound investment in our natural heritage and prosperity.”

**-Jim Smith, Helena mayor**

“Earth’s backbone (the Rocky Mountain Front) is a traditional refuge for my Blackfeet Indian people. I welcome and embrace the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act because it recognizes and delivers the protections needed to maintain both the pristine and mystical character of our shared landscape.”

**- Jack Gladstone, Blackfeet tribal citizen and Poet-Singer**

"Wild country means jobs. Here at Mystery Ranch, we're growing because of the demand from backcountry hunters and anglers. We employ people who are all dedicated to ensuring our hunting and angling heritage remains intact, and that there will always be a place where you can strap on a pack, and hit the trails to escape roads and development. Let's get this done. Our sporting legacy has proven that the Front is the epicenter of wildlife conservation, and the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage continues that long standing tradition."

**- Mark Seacat, Mystery Ranch Backpacks**

“I have watched the Coalition develop the Heritage Act since 2009. Every step of the way I’ve been impressed by their commitment to transparency and fairness. They have listened and responded to folks who have asked questions and made suggestions. The Coalition is made up of diverse group of citizens who care about the Rocky Mountain Front and have invested an enormous amount of sweat equity working to protect it. To me that is how democracy and government should work. I support the Heritage Act and the people who live and work along the Front.”

**- Derek Brown, Lewis and Clark County Commissioner**

***Continued: What People Saying about the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act***

“My business relies on visitors and locals alike. By helping protect the Front’s wildlife and working lands the Heritage Act helps my bottom line.”

**- Jeannine Burk, small business owner in Choteau**

“The Front keeps bringing me back. The Heritage Act would ensure future generations the freedom of a traditional fair-chase hunt in these wildlife rich mountains.”

**-Tony Porcarelli, carpenter in Fairfield**

“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**

***Continued: What People Saying about the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act***

“As I watch our public lands slowly being consumed by noxious weeds, I cringe. We cannot wait until elk and deer have no food source, fish have no clear water and our native plants have nowhere to grow. This is not an acceptable long range vision for our public lands. We must act, and act now. The Rocky Mountain Heritage Act is a step towards recognizing a major threat, placing a high priority on the noxious weed problem, and finding a solution. ”

**- Paul Wick, Teton County Weed District Coordinator**

“The Rocky Mountain Front offers a window into the history and heritage of Montana—a way of life that is hard to find in a modern fast-changing world. I believe the Front symbolizes what’s best about Montana and it’s up to us to keep it that way.”

**- Chuck Blixrud, owner of the 7-Lazy-P Guest Ranch**

“Without reservation, the limestone reefs and fescue flats of the Rocky Mountain Front make up the top 1% most productive habitat in the nation. As proof, its home to the nation’s second largest elk migration, largest bighorn sheep herd in the lower 48, one of the largest concentrations of wintering raptors in North America, and contains a higher diversity of animal and plant life than anywhere else in the Rockies from Canada to Mexico.”

**- Mike Aderhold, Retired FWP Region 4 Supervisor**

“Hunters really started to get the connection between good, unbroken habitat and restoring game populations one hundred years ago when they lobbied for the Sun River Game Preserve, the first of its kind in Montana. It’s what makes the Front so special, and why we need our representatives to help us finish the work that we began so long ago.”

**-Gail Joslyn, Retired Rocky Mountain Front Biologist**

***Continued: What People Saying about the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act***

“The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is a home grown, made-in-Montana proposal that will help keep the Front the way it is and protect a way of life that we all have grown to enjoy. It's a pretty straightforward and common-sense deal without any complicated provisions or departures from existing laws.”

**-Fred Fitzpatrick, East Slope Backcountry Horsemen**

“The Heritage Act isn't perfect but it's a fair deal with over 300 miles of roads and trails remaining open to mountain bikers. This proposal has sought input from everyone under the sun and when it comes to land management this is as close to a consensus as you can get. I support it and it is time to get it done.”

**- Anders Blewett, Mountain Biker and state legislator**

“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**

"I support the Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front because they've developed a proposal from the ground up, involving people with a wide variety of interests. This Montana partnership has been marked by give and take, with an eye on the larger goal: Respecting all uses and users, preserving our hunting and angling heritage. This effort makes me proud to be a Montanan."

**- Stan Meyer, former Chairman, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission**

***Continued: What People Saying about the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act***

“Big Game needs big country and hunters across the nation know the Rocky Mountain Front has some of the best of that big country,” he said. “The state, federal, and private lands along the Front together make up some of the highest quality connected wildlife habitat in the lower 48 states and that translates into a vibrant economic engine.”

**- Ryan Busse, Hunter**

“The Teton River Watershed Group (TRWG) would like to go on record supporting the Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front’s proposed federal legislation to place a high priority on the prevention, eradication, and control of noxious weeds on the Rocky Mountain Front. Although the TRWG will not take a stance on other components of the federal legislation, we do feel supportive of the process and of the noxious weeds component of this proposal.”

**- Cliff Heuscher, President, Teton River Watershed Group**

"It's sort of a special place. A wide variety of people have been working together for a long time and I think they've done an outstanding job."

**- Dale Bosworth, Former Chief of the Forest Service under President Bush**

***Continued: What People Saying about the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act***

“Support for the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is shared by ranchers, farmers, tribal representatives, and outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. The collaborative process used to develop this plan was unprecedented, and a spectacular example of how sometimes disparate groups can come together to find common ground... Noxious weed management practices will benefit not just the backcountry users, but the many ranchers living along the Front. The spread of noxious weeds is often by waterway and preventing their establishment in the headwaters areas will reduce spread to outlying private lands...I support the fine work of those who crafted the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, and although I cannot speak for the entire Cascade County Commission, this commissioner supports the proposal. “

**- Jane Weber, Cascade County Commissioner**

“IMBA supports this Act for two reasons. First, the Act would establish 208,112 acres as the Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Management Area, an innovative designation that will protect and enhance the recreational, scenic, and ecological values of our public lands. In addition, the Act calls for a study to improve the opportunities for mountain bicycling on the Front.”

**-Ashley Korenblat, Public Land’s Director for the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)**

## Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act Endorsements and Supporters

October 2011

- **Anaconda Sportsmen's Club**
- **Backcountry Horsemen of Montana**
- **Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Montana Chapter**
- **Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, National**
- **Big Sky Upland Bird Association**
- **Defenders of Wildlife**
- **East Slope Backcountry Horsemen**
- **Friends of the Rocky Mountain Front**
- **Five Valleys Chapter of the Audubon Society**
- **Great Falls Archers**
- **Great Bear Foundation**
- **Helena Bicycle Club**
- **Hellgate Hunters and Anglers**
- **Helena Outdoor Club**
- **Last Chance Chapter of the Audubon Society**
- **Last Chance Backcountry Horsemen**
- **Lewis and Clark Retired Educators Association**
- **Libby Rod and Gun Club**
- **Montana Conservation Voters**
- **Montana River Action**
- **Montana Wilderness Association**
- **Montana Wildlife Federation**
- **Mystery Ranch Backpacks**
- **National Parks and Conservation Association**
- **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**
- **Sitka Gear**
- **Sustainable Obtainable Solutions**
- **Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**
- **Teton River Watershed Group (*noxious weed component only*)**
- **The Wilderness Society**
- **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**

Jack Ward Thomas, former Chief of the Forest Service

Michael Dombeck, former Chief of the Forest Service

### **Dale Bosworth, former Chief of the Forest Service**

Gene Terland, former State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Larry Hamilton, former State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Matt Millenbach, former State Director, Bureau of Land Management

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

Dave Mari, former BLM field manager (Lewistown)

Mike Aderhold, former Region 4 Supervisor

Gayle Joslin, former FWP Regional Biologist, Region 4

Larry Davis, former Game Warden, Region 4 (Augusta)

Dan Carney, Blackeet Tribal Fish and Wildlife biologist (bear specialist)

## Montana Voices: Recent Editorials

- 1) ***“We all win with Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act”*** - Great Falls Tribune Editorial Board: Oct 4, 2009
- 2) ***“Crowning achievement for Front”*** - Missoulian editorial Board: April 28, 2010
- 3) ***“Heritage Act deserves center stage”*** -Missoulian editorial Board: June 3, 2010
- 4) ***“Get moving on Rocky Mountain Heritage Act”*** - Great Falls Tribune Editorial Board: August 19, 2011

# **We all win with Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act**

*Great Falls Tribune Editorial Board – Oct 4, 2009*

Call it a classic case of “politics as the art of the possible.”

It’s been 26 years since new wilderness was designated in Montana — the Lee Metcalf Wilderness in the Madison Range signed into law, in 1983, by President Ronald Reagan.

Five years after that, Congress passed a bill that would have given wilderness protection to an additional 1.4 million acres of federal land in the state, but in a summer of massive forest fires and with sponsoring Democratic Sen. John Melcher in a fight for his political life with Republican Conrad Burns, Reagan vetoed it.

In the intervening decades, conservationists’ and politicians’ strategies have evolved from the often-partisan development of forest management plans to a grassroots, kitchen-table approach that attempts to find consensus before legislation is even introduced.

It’s what the Blackfoot Challenge is accomplishing in that west-of-the-Divide drainage, and it’s what’s been happening in the Beaverhead and Deerlodge forests of southwest Montana.

And now the long-standing Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front is doing it in our part of Montana: the Front in the Lewis and Clark and Helena national forests.

The coalition has been working for several years to find solutions on the Front by talking to virtually all of the stakeholders and finding out what it would take to get their support for a plan that, finally, has one thing at its heart: keeping the Front the way it is.

The result is the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, a locally produced solution that preserves the present uses and management of the almost 400,000 acres up and down this stunning landscape.

The measure embodies the “art of the possible” by drawing and redrawing lines and allowing uses that have been painstakingly worked out with the folks who use the area the most.

Further, it seeks to head off a threat that everyone can agree upon: the spread of noxious weeds.

Now the coalition is in the middle of a series of public meetings — sessions in Great Falls and Helena were last week; sessions in Choteau and Augusta will be Monday and Wednesday of the coming week.

Proving that the proposal is the result of compromise and collaboration, it drew criticism at the Great Falls session for being either too heavy-handed or too light-handed. Some critics wanted more roads; others wanted fewer.

What the measure does, in fact, is perpetuate the existing L&C Forest Travel Plan, as well as the existing temporary ban on further oil and gas leases, both of which are key to keeping this important area the way it is.

The plan includes a modest 86,000 acres of additions to the existing Scapegoat, Bob Marshall and Great Bear wilderness areas, and 307,000 acres of a new, less restrictive status the authors call “conservation management areas.”

CMAs will give land managers the flexibility they need to deal with such problems as fire near private land and the pine beetle infestation.

We commend the approach and the result of the coalition’s efforts.

We would have liked more wilderness in the proposal, but in light of practicing the art of the possible, the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act will get the job done.

Along with the Missouri River, the Rocky Mountain Front is at the core of the “true Montana” to which Great Falls is gateway.

Its preservation is key to the future and the soul of Great Falls and the region

# Crowning achievement for Front

*Missoulian editorial Board - April 28, 2010*

During the past several months, while Sen. Jon Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act has been grabbing most of the headlines and capturing a great deal of attention in Montana, another collaborative effort to preserve one of the state's last best places, long in the making, was finally unveiled.

It is called the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, and it is being championed by a group called the Coalition to the Protect the Rocky Mountain Front. While it is similar to the three plans that make up the basis for Tester's act in its collaborative approach, it differs from them in several key ways – and it is deserving of Montanans' support in its own right.

Like the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, the Rocky Mountain Front proposal is the result of a collaborative effort involving public and private stakeholders, and the intense involvement of those who live, work and recreate on the Front. Like Tester's bill, the proposed legislation would break new ground – and like Tester's bill, it isn't going to completely satisfy everybody. Some people will want more wilderness, and some people will argue for less.

The Rocky Mountain Front plan would lock in existing motorized uses and add protections to more than 300,000 acres of roadless areas, in addition to about 86,000 acres of wilderness to the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wilderness areas, without requiring any amount of “mechanical treatment” or logging. The Rocky Mountain Front, renowned for its sweeping vistas, is not especially sought-after for its timber values.

Instead, the plan calls for a comprehensive attack on noxious weeds, and would create a weed-management area within the span from Rogers Pass up to the Old Man of the Hills area. This effort, which would depend upon coordination among local and federal land managers, would be funded with \$200,000 a year if Congress votes to approve it.

Members of the coalition are hoping to bring the Heritage Act before members of Congress soon, either as a stand-alone bill or as part of an omnibus land protection bill. To that end, they have been conducting a series of presentations in Montana, hoping to provide useful information and answer Montanans' questions so that when the act is introduced in Congress, it will come with strong statewide support.

As Montana Crown of the Continent Initiative director Rick Graetz noted in his public presentation earlier this month, the Rocky Mountain Front region boasts a rich history as well as current values that ought to live long into the future. Now that nearly all the oil and gas exploration leases in the region have been bought out or retired, the Front should be kept exactly the way it is in order to preserve that future and allow our children a chance to learn from its rich history. That's why many supporters of the draft Heritage Act refer to it as the “keep it the way it is bill” – and why those of us who love the Front hope the draft bill will soon accomplish exactly that.

# Heritage Act deserves center stage

*Missoulian editorial Board - June 3, 2010*

Let's take a page from the Blackfoot Challenge, and start with the 80/20 rule. That, as explained by Ovando rancher David Mannix at a high-profile conservation-minded meeting this week, means first talking about the issues on which we can all agree, which typically covers about 80 percent of the discussion, before tackling the more contentious issues - that last 20 percent.

So here is what we can all agree on, the big stuff: That the Rocky Mountain Front is a unique place, both within Montana and to the wider world; that it is one of the last largest swaths of untouched land in the state; that it has been and is currently under threat; and that it warrants protection.

Fortunately for all of us, the remaining kinks of disagreement over how best to go about protecting the Front have been ironed out - thanks to the ongoing collaboration of local private landowners, public land managers, conservationists and many others for many years. Draft legislation backed by a group called the Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front, has been readied and offered to the people of Montana for review in a series of statewide public meetings.

It now awaits only a champion in Congress. And the sooner one steps forward, the better.

Once the Heritage Act is approved, all current uses and protections on the Front will be locked into place. About 86,000 acres of wilderness will be added to the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wilderness areas, and protections will be added to more than 300,000 acres of roadless areas. The proposal also provides \$200,000 a year to establish and oversee a specially designated weed-management area.

See? The hard part has already been resolved. The coalition has brought a diverse group of stakeholders to the table to adjust a weed-management boundary here and tweak an acre of wilderness there - and then brought them back to the table again and again, until all parties were satisfied.

In fact, in many ways the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is a less controversial proposal than some of the other plans offered to Montanans in recent months - among them U.S. Sen. Jon Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, which is primarily based on the results of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership, the Blackfoot-Clearwater Stewardship Project and the Yaak Valley's Three Rivers Challenge.

Now, the only real danger facing the proposed Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is that, competing for attention with the crowd of more heavily disputed land management efforts, it might get put on the back burner. There is no reason to wait, and every reason to get this legislation into place now. Contact our U.S. Sens. Max Baucus and Jon Tester, and U.S. Rep. Denny Rehberg, and tell them so.

# Get moving on Rocky Mountain Heritage Act

*Great Falls Tribune Editorial Board – August 19, 2011*

The Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front believes a plan to put new protections for the Rocky Mountain Front, one they've spent five years crafting, is ready to be introduced to Congress. We agree.

The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act would designate 67,000 acres of land in five areas: the headwaters of the West Fork of the Teton River, Our Lake and its basin, Deep Creek valley, Patrick Basin and Falls Creek valley as wilderness.

It also defines areas for noxious weed control.

This is critical to prevent plagues such as spotted knapweed and leafy spurge from taking over native foliage and endangering grazing for both wildlife and livestock.

The third part of the act includes areas with custom-tailored designations to allow existing uses, such as prescriptive logging near roads and in areas close to private property and motorized use on some trails, to continue.

More than 500 people attended four public meetings on the act earlier this month, including Sen. Max Baucus, who was at the one held in Great Falls.

We agree with Montana's senior senator, who said he is impressed with the effort that's gone into the proposed legislation, especially with the efforts to compromise.

With camps such as the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act pushing for wilderness designation for the entire Front on one end and others such as Rep. Kevin McCarty, R-Calif., who is proposing HR1581 that would strip existing protections from all roadless areas, which are what make up 90 percent of the Front now on the other end, the Heritage Act is indeed a commendable middle-ground.

The Heritage Act is actually a product of Rocky Mountain Front oil and gas and travel plan wars over the past 20 years, said Mike Aderhold, a former regional supervisor for the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and a coalition member.

"All that knockin' around during those debates, we formed relationships with people on the other side of the fence," he said.

That's fertile ground for a fair, common-sense compromise to take root and we think The Rocky Mountain Heritage Act is just that.

Baucus said he wants more information about the economic benefits of outdoor activities on the Front and imminent threats to it before making up his mind about whether to carry the bill in Congress.

Supporters are providing such answers.

For example, hunters alone spend \$10 million annually while pursuing the activity on the Front.

That trend continued throughout the recession.

And as far as threats go, administrations change and land management policies shift.

The Heritage Act puts sidebars up and prevents eroding of what many consider a pretty good management plan, especially as far as access into roadless areas go.

There are 400,000 acres of public land under threat from noxious weeds on the Front now, and there is no plan to deal with them. The Heritage Act requires the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to come up with a comprehensive plan within one year.

Coalition members are working with Baucus and others through a separate appropriation request to secure funding to implement weed control measures.

It's time for the Rocky Mountain Heritage Act to be introduced to Congress, Sen. Baucus.

## **Montana Voices: Share Your Ideas with Max**

Fill out a special Rocky Mountain Front Heritage web form at [www.baucus.senate.gov](http://www.baucus.senate.gov) or send ideas, input or questions to:

MAIL:

511 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

PHONE:

202-224-2651