



PRESS INFORMATION



MONTANANS COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT

CONTACT:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Townsend, MT— Representatives of Montana timber mills, conservationists and sportsmen’s groups applauded the introduction of Sen. Jon Tester’s Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, calling it a bold new vision for providing jobs, while enhancing Montana’s clean water and outdoor heritage.

A broad coalition of Montanans, including Montana sawmills, business advocates, wilderness advocates, motorized riders and rod-and-gun clubs, voiced strong support for the legislation.

“Montanans share one thing in common— a passion for our national forests,” said legendary outfitter Smoke Elser, of Missoula. “This bill means a new day for Montana working families and our freedom to hunt, fish and enjoy the backcountry.”

Senator Tester’s bill is based on local, community-driven stewardship packages developed over several years across Montana. Specifically, it brings together plans for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge and Lolo National Forests and the Yaak Valley of the Kootenai National Forest.

By focusing on light-on-the-land logging, protecting Montana’s clean water, spectacular backcountry, and prime wildlife habitat, and protecting access, the bill has earned high marks from Montana conservationists, loggers, sportsmen, horsemen, mountain bikers, snowmobilers and ATV-enthusiasts.

“Montanans believe we can both use and take care of our forests,” said Sherm Anderson, of Sun Mountain Timber in Deer Lodge. “This bill gives us the tools we need to manage the forest, to restore healthy conditions and better protect communities from wildfire.”

The bill is supported by a host of sportsmen’s groups and rod-and-gun clubs for both enhancing and protecting habitat.



“Our state’s hunting and fishing traditions absolutely depend on public access, clean water and healthy habitats,” said Chris Marchion, past president of the Montana Wildlife Federation. “By conserving these habitats, we will protect and preserve these traditions for our kids and grandkids.”

The bill sets aside special management areas for snowmobile riding and leaves thousands of miles of roads and motorized trails intact. The bill would also protect special places as wilderness areas, including Roderick Mountain in the Yaak, Monture Creek headwaters near Ovando, and Italian Peaks and the Pioneer Mountains in Southwestern Montana.

The following groups helped develop each of the three components of the bill over several years of community meetings:

- On the Lolo National Forest, Blackfoot-Clearwater Stewardship Project. Pyramid Mountain Lumber; Clearwater Resource Council; Montana Wilderness Association; The Wilderness Society; Montana Community Development Corp.
- On the Beaverhead-National Forest, Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership: Sun Mountain Timber; R-Y Lumber; Smurfit-Stone Container; Pyramid Mountain Lumber; Roseburg Forest Products; Montana Wilderness Association; Montana Trout Unlimited; National Wildlife Federation.
- On the Kootenai National Forest, the Three Rivers District (Yaak). Linehan Outfitters; Kurt Rayson, Rayson Logging; Lincoln County Snow Kats; Kootenai Ridge Riders ATV Club; Yaak Valley Forest Council, Troy Snowmobile Club.

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FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT REPORTER CONTACTS (ALL AREA CODE 406)

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BUSINESS & COMMUNITY LEADERS

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Laura Olbert, Broadwater County Commissioner, Townsend — 859.3328



FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT WHAT MONTANANS SAY:

“This bill provides the means for better forest management for the benefit of all.”

— *Sherm Anderson, owner, Sun Mountain Lumber. Deerlodge.*

“Senator Tester’s bill is made in Montana by Montanans for Montanans. It is a bill for the future of our children—their jobs and their outdoor heritage.”

— *Tom Reed, Trout Unlimited. Pony.*

“Our lives are tied to the national forest. It’s where I make my living, out in the forest every day. That’s why it’s so important to me.”

— *Tim Linehan, Linehan Outfitting. Yaak.*

“Ultimately, the greatest success here may be that Montanans of such different backgrounds are working together. These Montanans found a way to sit around the table and work together, not against each other.”

— *Suzie Browning, Granite County Commissioner.*

“Both sides — conservationists and those of us who make their livelihoods from forest products — agree that letting the forests die from insect and disease or burn up is not in our best interests.”

— *Tony Colter, Manager Sun Mountain Lumber. Deerlodge.*

“Senator Tester’s bill rewards Montanans for doing exactly what politicians always urge us to do: Work together to produce solutions.”

— *Bruce Farling, Trout Unlimited. Missoula.*

“In my mind, you are part of the problem or part of the solution. Let’s go find it. You can fix a lot of things with that if you use that spirit.”

— *Joel Chandler, Kootenai Ridge Riders ATV Club, Libby*

“Our state’s hunting and fishing traditions absolutely depend on public access, clean water and healthy wildlife habitats. By protecting and preserving these habitats, we will protect and preserve these traditions.”

— *Greg Munther, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Missoula*



FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT – FAQ

WHAT IS THE FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT?

The bill is a ‘made-in-Montana’ forest stewardship bill. It promotes forestry designed to restore forests and protect communities from wildfire, dedicates areas for motorized recreation and protects pristine backcountry.

WHO IS BEHIND IT?

A broad coalition of Montana business owners, loggers, sportsmen, and conservationists support the bill.

WHERE DID THE FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT COME FROM?

The bill is the result of hard work from Montanans of all walks of life. Sen. Tester united three community-driven efforts to better manage Montana national forests. These areas include the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, the Lolo (Seeley Lake Ranger District) and the Kootenai National Forest (Three Rivers Ranger District.) Each of these community efforts will reduce local fire danger and create jobs for communities such as Drummond, Seeley Lake, and Troy, while protecting access and special places.

WHAT KINDS OF JOBS WILL BE CREATED?

National forests are major engines of Montana’s economy, providing timber, water and recreation. The Forest Jobs and Recreation Act creates and protects jobs in the mills and in the woods by generating a more predictable flow of wood products through stewardship logging. Federal funding sources would also be used to create family-wage jobs by investing in innovative projects that revitalize watersheds and wildlife habitat or create sustainable energy through a new bio-fuels generator in Seeley Lake.

HOW DOES THE ACT RESTORE HEALTHY FORESTS?

Sen. Tester’s bill makes use of stewardship contracts, which have a record of success in Montana. Stewardship contracts foster greater participation between local communities and the Forest Service. Proceeds from any sale of logs or fiber are reinvested in the local forest. Projects might include protecting communities from wildfires or replacing culverts to protect Montana’s clean water or upgrading campgrounds and trailheads.

HOW IS OUR FREEDOM TO ACCESS FORESTS PROTECTED?

Fishing, hunting, riding, and hiking are important traditions for Montana families, and the Forest Jobs Heritage Act will protect access to public lands. Specifically, the Act sets aside specific acres for snow-mobile riding and leaves thousands of miles of roads and motorized trails intact. In addition, the Act adds some of Montana’s most pristine backcountry to the National Wilderness Preservation System, protecting traditional access to prime big game habitat and fishing waters.



FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT – BY THE REGION

WHERE WOULD THE LAW APPLY?

The Forest Jobs and Recreation Act brings together three separate community-based forest projects: the Blackfoot-Clearwater Stewardship Project in the Blackfoot Clearwater drainage of the Lolo National Forest; the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest in southwestern Montana and the Three Rivers District of the Kootenai National Forest in far northwestern Montana. Here are specifics, place-by-place.

BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST

- Directs the Forest Service to conduct stewardship logging, prescribed burning or other treatment on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge.
- Protect 16 areas as wilderness areas. These include the headwaters of Rock Creek, portions of the Pioneers, Italian Peaks, Lima Peaks, West Big Hole, Ross Fork, Stony Mountain, Quigg Peak, the West Big Hole, Snowcrest, Electric Peak, the Highlands and Lost Cabin Lake.
- Designates 10 special management areas. The West Pioneer Special Management Area and the Lost Creek Scenic Area, safeguarding motorized access in the West Pioneers and mountain bike access at Lost Creek.

SEELEY LAKE RANGER DISTRICT, LOLO NATIONAL FOREST

- Uses federal restoration money for projects that restore forests and watersheds in the Lolo National Forest portion of the Blackfoot watershed.
- Authorizes construction of a biomass plant for the community of Seeley Lake.
- Adds areas such include Monture Creek, Grizzly Basin, and the West Fork of the Clearwater into the Bob Marshall and Mission Mountain Wilderness Areas.

THREE RIVERS RANGER DISTRICT, KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST (YAAK)

- Directs the Forest Service to conduct stewardship logging, prescribed burning or other treatment on the Three Rivers Ranger District.
- Protects Roderick Mountain as a wilderness area.
- Designates Three Rivers Special Management Area safeguarding snowmobile access.
- Authorizes a plan for an ATV route.

MONTANA FOREST JOBS AND RECREATION ACT FORESTS IMPACTED BY LEGISLATION

