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Montana Outfitters Support Key Land Conservation Bills

Helena, Mont.— Montana Outfitters and Guides Association (MOGA) announced support today for two critical conservation bills being considered by Congress.

S 364: *Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act of 2013* brought forward by former Montana Senator Max Bacaus affords necessary conservation protections to preserve the integrity and character of the Rocky Mountain Front fish and wildlife populations and their sustaining habitats.

Of the endorsement, MOGA Board Member Dusty Crary said “MOGA’s endorsement of the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is a welcome addition to the very long and diverse list of supporters. Protecting the integrity of this incredible landscape while insuring existing uses continue is a win win for all Montanan’s.”

Under the bill recreational and agricultural uses, including grazing, that exist today will continue to be enjoyed by future generations. The bill prioritizes noxious weed control and limits new road building while preserving motorized recreation and public access for hunting, biking, and forest thinning and grazing.

“The proposed Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is a common-sense approach that will help keep the Front the way it is for our kids and grandkids. It also provides

a degree of certainty for our businesses and the tradition of wilderness outfitting" said Pat Tabor, MOGA President-Elect

MOGA Directors also voted to endorse **H.R. 1526, the *Restoring Healthy Forests for Healthy Communities Act***, sponsored by Montana Representative Steve Daines, renews the federal government's commitment to actively managing federal forests for the benefit of all.

Broadly, H.R. 1526 requires suitable timber harvest on USFS land to take place, streamlines NEPA, includes legal protections, and links payments to counties directly to receipts from timber sales, among other provisions. It will also temporarily extend Secure Rural Schools to allow time for the transition to renewed timber harvests/revenues to take place.

By assuring active management of federal lands, forest health will improve, the threat of wildfires will be mitigated, and insects and disease controlled before they destroy more of Montana's valuable natural resources.

Of the action Mac Minard, Executive Director of MOGA said "As Montana's Outfitters and Guides Association, we make our livings by showcasing our forests and the wildlife they support to visitors from around the world. We see firsthand how vulnerable wildlife habitat can be. Our forests are infested with beetle kill and are dry and overstocked making them susceptible to devastating wildfires. We are happy to join Congressman Daines in working toward that goal."

In endorsing HR 1526 MOGA joins other conservation groups in support including Boone and Crockett Club and the Mule Deer Foundation.

"MOGA and its members have for generations served as stewards of Montana's natural resources. I am very pleased that we were able to examine and then support these bills based on merit and not simply through the lens of political affiliation or partisanship" said MOGA president Rob Arnaud.

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