

Outfitting Services Suspended until April 10th

Dear Montana Outfitters and Guides,

Outfitting Services Suspended until April 10 and Likely Longer

On March 26, at 4:30 p.m. Governor Steve Bullock today issued a Directive requiring Montanans to stay home and temporarily closes all nonessential businesses and operations to curtail the spread of COVID-19. [The order](#), went into effect at 12:01 a.m. on March 28.

On March 30 Gov Bullock issued a second directive closing Montana to all interstate travel by requiring all travelers coming into Montana from another state or country for non-work-related purposes must undergo a 14-day self-quarantine. You can read the Directive [HERE](#).

Most industry representatives we have spoken to embrace the Governors orders. However, it is increasingly likely that the order may be extended to the end of April. With that in mind, MOGA approached the Governor's office seeking an exception for the Outfitting industry to continue services in accordance with the Directives. MOGA provided [recommended protocols](#) for serving early-season clients should services be resumed. Our requests were presented and were denied by the Governors Office. It remains a bit of a puzzle as the Governor's decree specifically states that outdoor activities are exempt, yet the industry is summarily closed.

We will continue to work for an exception should the decree be extended and we are hopeful that our work on developing and refining best practices will allow the Governors office to make a positive finding and get people back to work as soon as possible in a manner that is safe for clients, staff and communities.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, [reach out](#) to the MOGA office. We're here to help and we will get through this together.

Mac Minard,
Executive Director

Senator Daines is hosting a call in program for you to ask very specific questions regarding the SBA Loan package. Call is scheduled for Wednesday at 12:15 pm MST and the numbers are:.

Call 877-229-8493

Pin: 113969#

An Outfitters Guide to the CARES Act

MOGA has reviewed a massive number of documents and the best description of the CARES Act is found in this document. [VIEW DOCUMENT](#)

The programs and initiatives in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, recently passed by Congress, will assist Outfitters with whatever needs you have right now. Not all the programs are a perfect fit and all will require analysis. Don't Worry MOGA has you covered with assistance for that analysis.

Under some programs your loans for payroll will be forgiven if they are used in the manner as prescribed within the program. There is \$350 billion dollars set aside to fuel this effort and we recently heard from Senator Daines that the enrollment for Single Proprietor Business will commence April 3 and for Independent Contractors on April 10. SBA Loans serve as one of the most direct ways for you as a business owner to keep your business a float and protect your employees.

Act Now to Register for SBA Loans – DO IT!

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) prioritizes millions of Americans

employed by small businesses by authorizing up to \$349 billion toward job retention and certain other expenses.

Small Outfitter businesses and eligible nonprofit organizations, Veterans organizations, and Tribal businesses described in the Small Business Act, as well as individuals who are self-employed or are independent contractors, are eligible if they also meet program size standards.

Some Basic Information:

- High-Level Summary of the Paycheck Protection Program: [CLICK HERE](#)
- Information for Lenders: [HERE](#)
- Information for Borrowers: [HERE](#)
- Application for Borrowers: [HERE](#)

SBA APPLICATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE THROUGH MOGA

MOGA has retained a subject matter expert who will help individual Outfitters with navigating the PPP process at a very reasonable rate of \$30 per hour. Jami Welch will be using a MOGA generated template (thank you Pat Tabor!) to accurately assess your qualification status and assist you, the Outfitter, with making application for these loans/grants. **This service is available to ALL Outfitters**, regardless of membership status. To take advantage of this offer and arrange to have Jami help you please contact:

Jami Welch
jwbooks1606@gmail.com

MOGA Policy Updates

We continue to work on several policy updates to help the outfitted tourism industry and everyone in it navigate through this storm. The following are updates and additions to help keep you informed on the most current actions that we are taking.

1. Declaration of Emergency Authority. Things are changing quickly and to help us be able to make decisions in the timeliest manner possible, the MOGA Board of Directors is voting on a declaration of emergency authority to be given to our Executive Committee and Executive Director. **DONE**

2. Madison River Planning. MOGA formally withdrew from this process. It is our position that the release of any kind of EA by the Department that is tied to addressing "social issues" on the river is completely unwarranted and out of date. The circumstances that originally motivated the Department to press for restrictions on guided use have been completely overshadowed by an economic and environmental condition that looks nothing like the planning landscape a month ago. For the EA to be valid it must be redrafted to address the current situation and that of the enforceable future.

The prospect of dragging this process into spring when affected business communities are already facing economic disaster and potential health challenges was cause for the MOGA Board of Directors to unanimously agree to defer work in the issue indefinitely. You can see the [news release here](#). **DONE**

3. [Trails Clearing Economic Stimulus](#). We continue to work with key Congressional leaders to move this proposal ahead as part of the Fourth Stimulus package. We are working with lead staffers and the Forest Service to develop a mechanism for this to happen. The goal with this is to put outfitters and their crews, who will otherwise be filing for unemployment, to work clearing trails of blowdown from years of neglect. This is not a new concept and was something America did during the depression to deliver work and public benefits. As we work through this, we'll continue to keep you updated on our efforts and latest news. **ONGOING**

4. Managing Early Season Clients. Our request to the Governor's office to seek an exemption for the Outfitting industry, tied to the exemption for outdoor recreations, was denied by the Governor's Office. MOGA provided recommended protocols for managing early season clients engaged in turkey, black bear hunting and early season fishing. The goal was to successfully manage getting clients into the field and while meeting social

distancing and other mandated requirements while continuing to provide for some level of commerce. Should the Governor's directives extend past April 10 we will approach his office again.

5. Broaden Communication Reach. Our efforts to gain a clean line of communication with ALL licensed Guides and Outfitters ran squarely into the bureaucratic brick wall. As such, MOGA was left no option but to build the list ourselves, which we did. We are now able to communicate with nearly all the active Montana Outfitters and most of the guides. We are willing to add people to the list so the industry as a whole can benefit from the work we are doing everyday to help keep this industry afloat. We're all in this together and now is the time for the entire outfitting community to be working side by side to protect, sustain and support this industry. **DONE**

6. Outfitter Toolkit COVID 19. A comprehensive toolkit has been created to help outfitters and guides navigate through the coming weeks. We encourage you to review it and use it. If you have questions call the office or one of the MOGA Mentors. [Toolkit LINK.](#) **DONE**

7. Assistance with SBA Loan Program. We know that filling out applications and assembling the information necessary to apply for these business related loans and grants can be intimidating. We have assembled a team to help guide you through this process. Individual Outfitters may contact **Jami Welch via email jwbooks1606@gmail.com** and contract with her directly for personalized assistance. **IN PROGRESS**

Spring Retreat & District Meetings are Cancelled

At this time, spring retreat and all district meetings are cancelled until further notice.

If you have made hotel room reservations at The Calvert Hotel in Lewistown, please call/email and cancel your reservation (406) 535-5411 or info@thecalverthotel.com

We are currently exploring other meeting options like face-to-face meeting rooms via internet such as Zoom. More information coming soon.

Senior Mentors Program

Six experienced MOGA member outfitters stand ready to offer their personal assistance and help guide you through decisions you are faced with TODAY. If you feel the need to reach out, please call on one of the MOGA senior mentors and avail yourself to their assistance.

Pat Tabor, Swan Mountain Outfitters (406) 249-1401

pat.tabor@swanmountainoutfitters.com

Donna McDonald, Upper Canyon Outfitters (406) 842-5884

donna.uco@gmail.com

Wagner Harmon, Montana River Ranch (406) 769-2404

mtrivrch@nemontel.net

Rob Arnaud, Montana Hunting Company (406) 585-9051

rob@montanahuntingcompany.com

Chris J. Francis, C. Francis & Co. Sporting (406) 581-0437

cjf@c-francis.com

Dusty Crary, 7 Lazy P Outfitting (406) 466-2245

7lazyp@3rivers.net

Chuck Rein, Anchor Outfitting (406) 537-4485

anchor@ttc-cmc.net