

Message From MOGA

Things seem to be changing very quickly these days and our understanding of the impacts of Corona Virus are equally dynamic. The challenge to the you as an Outfitter business has been to sort the most important points and act on them. We have fielded many many calls from our members ranging from the latest information on the Drawing to what is the latest I need to know about the upcoming season.

Some of these stories have been tragic to listen to and others are from members seemingly unaffected by the last months events. Regardless of your position we need you to know that MOGA, as the lead trade association for the industry, has been working on many fronts to:

- 1) help keep members informed,
- 2) provided specific recommendations of actions that Outfitters need to do NOW,
- 3) ensuring you have the tools and support to act on those recommendations, and
- 4) work with state and federal officials on plans to mitigate the economic impacts while being mindful of the health and safety risks we all place first.

To be crystal clear, MOGA has no influence on when or how people will be allowed to travel to Montana to participate in outfitted services. We are not the experts in that area and will rely on medical professionals and our elected leaders to sort that policy out. Presumably some of the Bullock Administrations restrictions will be lifted beginning the 24th, we simply do not know which ones.

It has been said that ***"Uncertainly rewards preparedness!"***. With that in-mind, we have been VERY active in preparing for the time when incremental relaxing of restrictions on businesses and services are considered and instituted that we have helped to do this in a thoughtful and effective manner. To that end, MOGA has issued several critical communications to our federal and state leaders and they are included in this newsletter.

We continue to share these communications with the entire industry because we know that information is vitally important. Your business, regardless of membership affiliation, is important to the mission of MOGA; to protect, enhance and effectively represent Montana Outfitting in ALL its forms and to Montana.

Sen. Daines Announces Support for Trails Stimulus Package

MOGA has been coordinating a Federal program as part of the Fourth Stimulus package being considered by Congress that would put Outfitters to work clearing thousands of miles of public trails and conducting noxious weed control under simple and efficient contracts with the USFS. Senator Daines has taken a lead role and has been joined by others from the Montana delegation and those around the nation in embracing the program, including the the Under Secretary of Agricultural. We expect to have draft language soon and will share that with you as well as a letter from the Western Associations to the leadership of the Senate and House. Read the project description [HERE](#).

Senator Daines Announcement

Outfitter Waivers and Corona-virus

Federal Agencies are mandating the inclusion of Corona virus notification in Waiver and Release documentation. Such language needs to be immediately included as an update to your current document. The MOGA Board has directed that the requisite language be available as follows:

FREE to any MOGA member as an addendum, or an update to their current waiver and release documentation IF that material was obtained through MOGA.

Cost \$50 for the Waiver Addendum Language if you are not a MOGA member.

Full Waiver and Release documents tapered to your specific business needs are still available and highly encouraged. Contact the MOGA office for an order form

For help with any of this please contact Kashia at the MOGA Office via email.

[Email the MOGA Office](#)

Outfitted Tourism Recommendations to Governors Corona-virus Relief Fund Task Force

Governor Steve Bullock has announced the establishment of the Corona-virus Relief Fund Task Force to provide guidance and advice on how to best use \$1.25 billion appropriated to Montana through the Federal CARES Act to assist workers, businesses, and sectors of the economy impacted by COVID-19.

Over the next two weeks, the task force will examine all sectors of the economy to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on Montanans and consider the unique needs of each region of the state and support a long-term path to economic recovery.

We understand that Montana and other states are still waiting on federal guidance on how the \$1.25 billion can be spent. The Treasury is expected to release the approximate \$1.25 billion appropriated to the state by April 24. The task force will provide its final recommendations to Governor Bullock on April 30.

[VIEW DOCUMENT](#)

MOGA Blueprint for Reopening Outfitted Tourism

Gov. Steve Bullock announced on Friday that the state plans to begin a phased reopening of the Montana economy following the April 24 expiration of the stay-at-home order and other directives. We do not know exactly what the Governor's team has proposed but [expect to hear this week of some of his plans.](#)

There is clearly a need within Montana business community to see phased in relaxation of the shutdown/in orders. Re opening actions should be accompanied with industry adopted standards that will minimize risk of transmission and spread of Corona-virus. The following are a set of recommended actions that will have immediate positive impacts for the Outfitted tourism industry and afford minimal risk of transmissions or spread of Corona-virus.

[SEE FULL DOCUMENT](#)

MOGA also requested the Governor and Director of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks consider issuing non-resident big game licenses to all applicants this year as a means to stimulate the Montana economy, particularly in rural Montana. Under the MOGA proposal the addition of 3,600 more licenses (provided to all non-residents that applied in 2020) will create \$10 million in commerce and \$2.8 million in license sales. If only outfitted clients were licensed the additional number issued could be reduced by 50 percent to 1,800 (an 8% over subscription) and over 80% of the forecast economic yield would be maintained.

[READ THE MOGA RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

MDFW&P Temporarily Suspends sale of 2020 F.A.S. Permits

Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks has temporarily suspended selling the 2020 Fishing Access Site (F.A.S.) Permits for licensed Outfitters and Guides. This is in response to the COVID-19 measures being implemented from the Governor's office.

If you are an Outfitter or Guide and are trying to purchase this F.A.S. 2020 Permit online, you will not find it listed in the normal menu of items. You will have to check back periodically or wait until after the State is re-opened, which is currently scheduled for April 24th. Please refrain from calling the Helena Licensing Office, as they have been experiencing an abnormally high call-volume.

Please note, once the State is re-opened you will still be required to have the 2020 F.A.S. Permit to use State owned Fishing Access Sites, as a licensed Outfitter or Guide.

Montana Outfitter & Guides Association has been working closely with Governor Bullock's and Director William's offices, to aid in a safe and incremental re-opening of outfitted services when deemed appropriate.

Greater Helena Gives Giving Campaign

In recognition of the financial impact that COVID-19 is having on all of the Big Hearts under the Big Sky supporters across the nation we will be suspending our Greater Helena Gives 24-hour online giving campaign this year. As members of the Big Hearts Family, you have done so much in the past and you likely have your own families and businesses to attend to at this time.

We thank you for your past contributions and generous support and we look forward to next years Greater Helena Gives Campaign.