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The North Fork Watershed Protection Act: *Everyone Gets a Piece of This!*

December 24, 2014

Dear Dave:

You're aware, no doubt, that the President of the United States signed the massive Defense Appropriation Act last Friday, and that that legislation included the **North Fork Watershed Protection Act**.

Pun intended, the completion of this legislation *is* a watershed event, protecting a majority of the



Links to news about the NFWPA:

[Missoulian](#)
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Whitefish Range from future oil, gas, and energy development.

At *Headwaters Montana* we wish to express our sincere thanks to the countless people who made this success possible. Including you who have sustained the effort with your volunteer time, and financial, moral, and spiritual support.

This effort goes back many years - about 40, actually. **Here's a short list of some of the key groups and players that helped create this success:**

Please Donate

We continue to make our way to meeting our **Annual Fundraising Campaign Goal of \$17,000**. Please click [here](#) if you can [help](#) us reach our target. **Thank You!**

- *Senator Max Baucus who pursued this goal since 1975 starting as a U.S. Congressman*
- *Former Governor Brian Schweitzer who negotiated the breakthrough deal with B.C.*
- *Senators Jon Tester and John Walsh, and Congressman Steve Daines who closed the deal*
- *The staff of our Congressional delegation who tirelessly bird-dogged the issue*
- *The Flathead Basin Commission*
- *Every Montana Governor since 1975 (Judge, Schwinden, Stephens, Racicot, and Martz)*
- *The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)*
- *The North Fork Preservation Association*
- *North Fork Landowners*
- *Glacier National Park leadership*
- *The Flathead Coalition*
- *National Parks Conservation Association*
- *Wildsight*
- *Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative*
- *Sierra Club of British Columbia*
- *Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society of British Columbia*
- *North Fork Landowners Association*
- *North Fork Compact*
- *Montana Wilderness Association*
- *Countless citizens from both sides of the border who donated money, time, effort, and commitment to this special place*



*Bull Trout in the North Fork Flathead River.
Photo: Wade Fredenburg/National Geographic
and USGS*

Thank you one and all!!!

After almost four decades, Montana and B.C. have closed some of the gap with respect to the appropriate level of protection for the international North Fork Flathead watershed.

However, this is what Canadian conservationist John Bergenske of Wildsight had to say about the passage of the NFWPA:

"Passing this legislation represents a truly significant accomplishment for the BC-Montana relationship, and for the health of our shared Waterton-Glacier Peace Park region. It was vitally important for the U.S. government to pass this legislation to balance similar legislation passed in BC in 2011 that banned mining and energy development in the transnational Flathead watershed.... Now that we have a complementary ban on oil and gas and mining on both sides of the Flathead, we need to have a national park in the Canadian Flathead to match the American one." (Emphasis added)

You read that correctly: **the work's not done.**

Our international [Flathead Wild](#) Team still has its collective eyes on the remaining goals:

In B.C.:

-

Doubling the size of Waterton Lakes National Park into B.C.;

- Establishing up to three new provincial wilderness areas in B.C. between the border and Banff National Park; and
- Establishing a legislated Wildlife Management Area in the same reach of land to protect the wildlife corridor.

In Montana:

- Converting the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area designation to a permanent **Wilderness** designation;
- Establishing the **Whitefish Range Wilderness** in the north end of the Whitefish Range, as well as the other goals of the Whitefish Range Partnership; and
- Withdrawing *the remaining oil and gas leases* in the North Fork Flathead (yes, several thousand acres of leases remain as does the possibility of mineral leasing on the Coal Creek State Forest near Polebridge).



Flathead Wild Goals

Click [here](#) for larger map image

As I think you would agree, the Flathead Wild Team has been very effective at moving the ball down the field and achieving results. It has taken much longer to get this far than any of us would have predicted. But the way forward now stands in clear relief: Everyone acknowledges the importance of the transboundary Flathead for wildlife and clean water. The success of the NFWPA has created momentum for all us us to succeed with our final goals.

So it's time to take the next steps, and we look forward to taking those steps with you!

Have a wonderful and joyful Holiday Season and end of 2014! See you 'round the corner in 2015!

Cheers!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steve Huddle'.

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Protecting the Water, Wildlife and Traditional Outdoor Heritage in the Crown of the Continent!

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