

Bozeman's Outdoor Legacy: A Debt of Gratitude to Senator Jon Tester

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In Bozeman, like much of Montana, where outdoor recreation is more than just a pastime – it's woven into the fabric of everyday life. From skiing at Bridger Bowl to hiking Hyalite Canyon to fishing the Gallatin River, or camping in the surrounding wilderness, folks in Bozeman enjoy unparalleled access to some of the best public lands in the country. And behind much of this access is one of Montana's fiercest champions of conservation: Senator Jon Tester.

For nearly two decades, Jon Tester has been a tireless advocate for Montana's wild places, ensuring that areas like the Bridger Range, the nearby Gallatin National Forest, and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem remain protected for future generations like my six year old son Henry. His efforts have not only shaped the outdoor opportunities we cherish today but define Bozeman's outdoor legacy in perpetuity.

Defending Public Access to Public Lands

Senator Tester's dedication to protecting Montana's public lands stretches back to his earliest days in the U.S. Senate. One of his most significant achievements was securing protections for the Gallatin Range, which borders Bozeman to the south. In 2009, Senator Tester's leadership culminated in the passage of the *Montana Wilderness Study Areas Protection Act*, a bill that safeguarded 400,000 acres of wilderness study areas in the Gallatin National Forest. Thanks to Senator Tester's work, these lands have been kept free from industrial development, protecting their beauty for hiking, hunting, and wildlife watching.

Further expanding his commitment to conservation, Senator Tester spearheaded the bipartisan *Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act*, which shields some of the most iconic areas of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from drilling and mining. This critical piece of legislation has ensured that the watersheds feeding the Gallatin River and Yellowstone remain pristine, protecting the landscapes that so many of us enjoy.

Championing Outdoor Recreation

Jon Tester's advocacy extends beyond land protection – he has also worked to ensure that public lands are accessible and well maintained for all Montanans. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Tester secured significant funding for public lands infrastructure, benefiting not only Bozeman's surrounding areas but communities across the state. Whether it's trail maintenance in Hyalite Canyon, improvements to access roads for recreation, or safeguarding vital water resources, Senator Tester's efforts have enhanced the outdoor experience for residents and visitors alike.

A notable achievement in this regard was securing the full funding and reauthorization of the *Land and Water Conservation Fund* (LWCF), a program that has been instrumental in expanding and improving public lands in every single county of Montana. Through LWCF

funding, the creation and expansion of access points to popular spots like Hyalite Reservoir have made outdoor activities such as fishing, camping, and hiking more accessible to the public.

A Legacy of Balance and Conservation

Jon Tester's legacy in the Senate is one of balance—ensuring that Montana's public lands are not only protected for future generations but also remain accessible to the people who rely on them. Thanks to his leadership, Montana's wild places are protected, and the outdoor recreation economy – vital to Bozeman and beyond – continues to thrive. Whether you're skiing down the slopes of Bridger Bowl, casting a line in the Gallatin River, or climbing the rugged Hyalite Canyon, you're experiencing the lasting impact of Jon Tester's decades of work to protect Montana's public lands.

As Montanans, we owe Senator Jon Tester our gratitude for his steadfast leadership in protecting the lands and waters we love and depend on. His tireless efforts ensure that my son and the generations after will have the same opportunities to experience Montana. Join me in thanking Senator Tester for a job well done – his legacy will echo for generations to come.

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