

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
between  
**PROFESSIONAL WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
and  
**BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF MONTANA**

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**PURPOSE and NEED**

The Professional Wilderness Outfitters Association (PWOA) was formed in 1959 to organize outfitters operating in wilderness in a professional manner.

Back Country Horsemen of Montana (BCHMT) was formed in 1973 to perpetuate the traditional use and enjoyment of horses and pack stock in Montana's backcountry.

PWOA's mission provides for continued commitment to partnership with the United States Forest Service to promote the wise stewardship of our national forests and wilderness areas; to work together with the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department and promote regulated hunting and fishing as management tools to maintain healthy and viable fish and wildlife populations; and to work with local, state and national conservation groups on issues of mutual interest.

BCHMT's mission provides for the continued commitment to assisting public wildland management agencies with trails maintenance and wildland management decisions protecting Montana's wild places, while also educating all users in wise and ethical stock use, using latest "Leave No Trace" principles on Montana's wildlands.

Members of Back Country Horsemen of Montana and the Professional Wilderness Outfitters Association pledge to support the ethical and traditional use of pack and saddle stock in wilderness and public lands "as part of the mountain way of life."

For more than a quarter century, members of BCHMT and the PWOA have worked in parallel to safeguard and pass on undiminished our western heritage and freedom to enjoy Montana wilderness, quiet mountain trails, and outdoor traditions.

Members of PWOA and BCHMT recognize the important historical role of public land outfitters, the legal recognition of commercial outfitting in the 1964 Wilderness Act, and the need for commercial outfitting services in Wilderness areas and other wildlands in the future. Members of PWOA and BCHMT recognize the important historical role BCHMT members play in the conservation of Montana's Wilderness heritage and outdoor traditions and the need for BCHMT members to continue their efforts to conserve Montana's great outdoors for future generations.

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For generations, members of BCHMT and PWOA have worked in parallel to conserve Montana's Wilderness heritage and outdoor traditions with recognition and respect for the services that commercial outfitters provide to facilitate public land access and educate members of the public on the stewardship of public lands.

**TRADITIONAL MONTANA TRAILS**

Montana pack, saddle and foot trails were originally established and maintained for generations as quiet mountain paths for traditional travel by people and pack stock.

Today there is increasing pressure for mountain pack trails to be converted into all-terrain vehicle roads, increasing conflicts and displacing traditional trail uses. Results of the Montana Trail User Survey<sup>1</sup> show that less than 16% of backcountry equestrians agree that off-road vehicles are compatible with horseback riding on Montana trails.

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are neither historic nor established traditional uses of Montana backcountry trails. Modern ATVs were effectively prohibited on all national forest trails by the "forty-inch rule"—until this rule was eliminated by the Washington Office of the U.S. Forest Service on June 25, 1990.

Without responsible limits and effective management, unmanaged OHV traffic will reduce public access to the traditional mountain solitude and backcountry character cherished by so many national forest visitors.

PWOA and BCHMT agree that the first step for restoring wise management is to set effective and responsible limits to off-road vehicle uses that safeguard wilderness, nonmotorized backcountry areas and quiet mountain trails.

In order to protect traditional use and enjoyment of Montana's roadless backcountry, the U.S. Forest Service, National Park System, BLM, and other government agencies should manage historic mountain pack, saddle and foot trails for traditional, nonmotorized uses.

**HERITAGE TRAILS**

Montana is home to outstanding mountain heritage trails that traverse multiple ranger districts, parks and national forests. Examples include the Sapphires Crest Trail, Stateline Trail, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, Nez Perce Trail, Gallatin Crest Trail, and Swan Alpine Trail. These are historic mountain trails established for traditional foot, pack and saddle travel that merit a special commitment to maintain and manage for traditional foot and pack stock travel, uses and enjoyment.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Montana Trail Users Survey, Aug. 1994, Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, p13 "Horseback Riding"

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Members of PWOA and the BCHMT pledge to work in common purpose to so protect and perpetuate the traditional use and enjoyment of Montana's quiet mountain trails and backcountry.

Further, members of PWOA and the BCHMT will assist federal land managing Agencies in identifying, restoring and maintaining in perpetuity a system of Montana heritage trails.

**PRIMITIVE ROADLESS BACKCOUNTRY**

The U.S. Forest Service has inventoried approximately 6.4 million acres of unroaded backcountry lands, traversed by trails. These roadless backcountry lands and trails offer a multitude of outstanding recreational opportunities including backcountry hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and travel by foot and pack and saddle stock. The presence of backcountry trails and conditions is increasingly recognized as a valuable recreational asset, a defining feature of Montana's western heritage.

Members of PWOA and the BCHMT pledge to work together to encourage and support efforts by the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management to manage large tracts of public lands as wilderness and high-quality primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation offering traditional backcountry enjoyment by foot and pack and saddle stock.

**PARTNERS IN MONTANA'S WILD PUBLIC LAND HERITAGE**

For several decades, members of PWOA and the BCHMT have worked in parallel to safeguard and pass on undiminished our western heritage and freedom to enjoy Montana wilderness, quiet mountain trails and outdoor traditions on public lands.

In the 1980s and 1990s, BCHMT and PWOA leaders worked along with others in the Montana Wildlands Coalition to press for passage of legislation to help complete Montana's unfinished wilderness legacy. Individual members of PWOA have also played central roles in the passage of landmark public land conservation legislation with bi-partisan support, including the nation's first citizen initiated Wilderness area, the Scapegoat, in 1972, and the passage of a legislative withdrawal of federal mineral leases on the Rocky Mountain Front in 2006.

Members of PWOA and the BCHMT have a long and honorable history of working for the benefit of future generations to conserve, maintain and enjoy our western mountain heritage. The parties now desire to do so more in collaboration with each other.

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**DURATION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) becomes effective upon signature by BCHMT and the PWOA and, unless terminated, shall be in force for two years from the date of the last signature, at which time this MOU shall automatically terminate unless renewed by both parties hereto. Any party to this MOU reserves the right to withdraw from this agreement, or any part thereof, at any time upon 30 days prior written notice to the other party at the addresses set forth below.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION**

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be deemed to be a commitment or obligation of funds from BCHMT or PWOA.

**PARTNERSHIP**

We pledge to foster a partnership for the wise use, conservation and enjoyment of Montana wildlands, wilderness and quiet backcountry trails as stated herein,

*Patrick M. Tabor*  
Patrick M. Tabor, President  
Professional Wilderness Outfitters Association  
(address here)

May 6, 2013  
Date

*Mark Himmel*  
Mark Himmel, Chairman  
Back Country Horsemen of Montana  
PO Box 4864  
Butte, MT 59701

April 6, 2013  
Date