



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

Wilderness Walks Sponsorship Proposal

Description of Wilderness Walks program

Wilderness Walks is one of the Montana Wilderness Association's oldest and best-loved programs. Since the early 1960s, volunteers have organized and carried out thousands of hikes into pristine wildlands across Montana. In addition to serving as a safe and fun introduction to the outdoors for many of the participants, *Wilderness Walks* also provide a vital means of informing and educating participants about threatened wild places and the steps that can be taken to protect them.



This program serves any person who wants to explore our beautiful public wildlands using foot power, and includes individuals of all ages and physical abilities. The target population for the *Walks* programs is everyone who cares about public wildlands in Montana. The *Walks* represent a tremendous opportunity to learn about Montana's wildlands and the issues associated with them in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Participants become informed about the very ground they are traveling on and learn about actions they can take to ensure the land is protected in the future.

Goals for Wilderness Walks program



The goal for the *Wilderness Walks* program is to ensure its continuing success by retaining many experienced volunteer hike leaders, recruiting new leaders, and engaging an expanded number of *Walks* participants. The key to recruiting participants is to produce quality *Wilderness Walks* guidebooks that effectively describe all of the hikes and focus our efforts on media to get the word out about the *Walks* program and guidebook.



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Sponsorship will aid in the following activities

- Design, printing and distribution of the *Walks* guidebooks; Montana Wilderness Association will produce easy-to-use guidebooks, with full color jackets, that describe the hikes and tell potential participants how to sign up. The guidebooks also contain relevant information on Montana wildlands and suggested clothing and equipment to bring on a hike. The guidebooks will include a special “thank you” to the program’s sponsors—thereby offering an opportunity to include your business logo in this publication that receives wide distribution in and outside Montana.
- Staff support in organizing the program and its volunteers; Montana Wilderness Association will work to retain past *Walks* leaders and recruit first time leaders with direct personal contacts, and through articles in our newsletter. Through its more than 5,000 members, a strong emphasis is placed on recruiting qualified leaders.
- Media outreach; Critical to the success of *Wilderness Walks*, Montana Wilderness Association field organizers will get the word out to all corners of Montana. Many of the five local chapters will host a special *Wilderness Walks* kickoff event, with leaders invited to present descriptions of hikes offered.

Partner Organizations

While Montana Wilderness Association organizes and implements *Wilderness Walks*, we look for ally organizations to partner with whenever possible. In past years Friends of Scotchman Peaks, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Yaak Valley Forest Council, Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and others have co-hosted hikes. For the 2010 *Walks* season, Montana Wilderness Association will once again seek opportunities for organizational partners.

Montana Wilderness Association Mission and Vision Statement

The mission of the Montana Wilderness Association is to protect Montana’s wilderness heritage, quiet beauty, and outdoor traditions, now and for future generations. Our vision for the future is one in which pristine public lands in Montana are permanently protected as congressionally designated Wilderness.

Brief Organizational History

Montana Wilderness Association was established in 1958, by hikers, backcountry horsemen, Forest Service employees, hunters, skiers and many other public land users, all of whom were concerned about losing Montana’s last remaining roadless lands. Our founders were instrumental in the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act and led the fight to win designation for every Wilderness area in the state, including Absaroka-Beartooth, Rattlesnake, Lee Metcalf, Great Bear, and Welcome Creek, as well as Wild and Scenic designations for the Flathead and Missouri Rivers. With 5,000 members, the State Council elected by the membership, an active volunteer structure based in five local chapters, and thirteen full-time staff members, Montana Wilderness Association helps communities safeguard some of the most intact wild country in the contiguous United States.