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Wild & Scenic River Act a Montana idea that needs to be put to use on East Rosebud

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Some of Montana's best exports are our ideas and it's time we bring a great idea back home.

Growing up in Havre, I had abundant opportunities to explore some of Montana's wild rivers. My love of wild spaces was born on trips with the Boy Scouts canoeing the Missouri river, or rafting the Middle Fork of the Flathead River as a child. River experiences shaped my life. As I grew older I sought out rivers for recreation and for work, instilling in me the importance of protection and stewardship.

On May 22, U.S. Sen. John Walsh introduced a bill to establish 20 miles of the East Rosebud as a Wild and Scenic River on public land in the Beartooths. The bill would prevent the construction of dams and major water diversions, preserving water quality and protecting critical habitat. The last time Montana used the Wild and Scenic River Act – a protection crafted 50 years ago by Montana's own Craighead brothers – occurred in 1976 with the protection of the three forks of Flathead River and the Upper Missouri River Breaks. Clearly, we are long overdue for protection of more of our free-flowing rivers. With hundreds of river miles still eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation across the state, now is the time to show support for maintaining Montana's iconic healthy streams like the East Rosebud, as well as promoting protection for other rivers like the Gallatin, Stillwater and Boulder.

We Montanans know how important rivers are to our heritage, to our fish, wildlife and to our agriculture, but wild rivers are also critical to our economy. Recreation brings in \$5.8 billion dollars, much of that linked to our beautiful rivers. Free-flowing, clean and cold rivers are a Montana legacy. It is time we re-embrace a great Montana idea by supporting the designation of the East Rosebud for future generations of fish, wildlife and Montanans.

Josh Olsen,

Bozeman

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