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## Wild and Scenic rivers: We have an opportunity to protect

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Conservation measures associated with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act benefit Montana's healthy trout populations, wildlife and the Montanan way of life. For those in doubt, please allow me to explain:

I grew up paddling the pristine Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. Since 1999, I have rafted and kayaked the Rockies' amazing rivers in Colorado, Utah and Montana. My outstanding childhood memories involve camping, skiing, recreation on lakes and rivers and wildness. Montana is home to outstanding rivers and is one of the reasons why I live here. I am in favor of Wild and Scenic River designation in Montana, including U.S. Sen. John Walsh's recent East Rosebud Wild and Scenic Bill that protects one creek on public land on the Beartooth Front.

While I am admittedly biased toward my values, I suggest that they reflect a shared sentiment across all of Montana. We all value clean water for human use and healthy rivers for our fish and wildlife populations. We all value affordable, clean, exciting, healthy and honest family recreation. Who doesn't? Whether you're canoeing, fishing, hunting, kayaking or arafting, we all benefit from Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Montanans also value free-flowing rivers on our public lands. Wild rivers, however, have become a rarity in our modern age. But here in Montana, free-flowing rivers are still our legacy and a source of pride. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ensures our rivers remain free-flowing, clean and remarkable. Let's keep them this way and use the act to protect iconic rivers like the Gallatin, Rock Creek and the remarkable East Rosebud.

For the first time since 1976 we have an opportunity to bring much-needed protection to a free-flowing stream. I encourage my fellow Montanans to support this important and agreeable occasion.

*Brandt Welborn, Missoula*

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