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North Fork Reception (1)

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**Statement of Senator Max Baucus
North Fork Reception
April 28, 2010**

- **Thank you to our hosts: the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Wildlife Federation, American Rivers, Earthjustice, and The Wilderness Society.**

- **Special welcome to Canadian Ambassador Gary Doer, who graciously accepted my invitation to attend.**

- **His presence demonstrates new partnership between US and Canada to protect the North Fork.**

- **Thanks to:**

- **Jon Tester**

- **Secy. Salazar (visited in Aug. 09)**

- **Secy. Clinton**

- **Thanks to folks on the ground – too numerous to mention all – Dave Hadden, Will Hammerquist, Ric Hauer, Tom France, Land Tawney, Scott Bosse.**

- **Everyone who experiences the Flathead Valley is awed by its pristine waters, larger than life landscapes, and raw wilderness.**

- **For 35 years, we've worked to protect this outdoor treasure.**

- **Ladies and gentlemen – we are making progress.**

- **Today, we have:**
 - **a new partnership with Canada;**

 - **consensus legislation to preclude future oil and gas/mining, AND.....**

 - **the largest leaseholder in the North Fork, Conoco Phillips, voluntarily relinquishing their share of leases covering 169,000 acres in the North Fork – 71% of the leased acres in the watershed.**

- **Conoco Phillips should be commended for its stewardship of this very unique, special place.**

- **I want to recognize Mr. Red Cavaney, Senior VP, and Mr. Jim Ford, VP, at Conoco Phillips and thank them, and Jim Mulva, the CEO of Conoco Phillips who I spoke with about this in March, for their work on this initiative.**

- In 1975, I introduced the bill to designate the Flathead as a Wild and Scenic River – it took one year and I began a lifelong effort to protect the North Fork.

- At that time I said:

“A hundred years from now, and perhaps much sooner, those who follow us will survey what we have left behind...let us leave the Flathead as we found it. Let us prove that we care about those who will come after us.”

- **We proved it today.**

- **Together, we will ensure that every Montanan, every American, and every Canadian who follows us will have the opportunity to survey the North Fork and share our feeling of awestruck wonder that such a place still exists.**

- **Thank you.**