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## **Montana ‘Wilderness Companion’ Provides Outdoors Enthusiasts with Online Wilderness Planning Resources**

(HELENA)---The Montana State Library has developed a web site that provides easy-to-access information about Montana’s Wilderness areas to help commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act. The “Wilderness Companion” can be found at <http://msl.mt.gov/wilderness>.

The “Wilderness Companion” is a streamlined access point for the basic information every recreationist needs for a successful Wilderness experience. The site was launched in response to librarians reporting an increased need from their patrons for assistance in finding relevant recreation information online.

“As librarians, our goal is to help people find the information they need easily and quickly,” said Jennie Stapp, Montana State Librarian. “By sifting through all of the information that is available from many different sources, we are able to locate the best resources that provide accurate, reliable and easy-to-use information so that people can move forward with what they’re doing, whether that’s hiking, back-country camping, hunting, fishing, or something else entirely.”

The “Wilderness Companion” is designed to provide resources that recreationists will need to maximize their outdoors experiences, including:

- What to know before you go
- What to do and
- Where to go

The “Wilderness Companion” site has an easy-to-use interface and simplistic design and provides information from resources ranging from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the Montana GIS community, the Montana State Library, and a growing coalition of federal agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and other wilderness user groups whose purpose is to plan and eventually implement local, regional, and national events and projects, specifically designed to elevate the profile of Wilderness during the 50th anniversary celebration. The site is also mobile friendly so recreationists can use it on the go.

“We hope that recreationists will come to rely on the ‘Wilderness Companion’ as the optimal one-stop-shop for information on enjoying the areas that have been designated as Wilderness areas in Montana,” said Stapp

The Wilderness Companion is part of a larger, ongoing project by the Montana State Library that seeks to condense all of Montana’s most important geographic and natural resources information and make it available in easy-to-access subject guides, such as hunting, fishing, water resources, and more. Information on these broad subjects is often found in multiple sources, including the

web sites from multiple state and federal agencies. In addition to the “Wilderness Companion,” the State Library has launched the “Hunting Companion” and the “Fishing Companion.”

For more information about the Wilderness Companion, contact Sara Groves at (406) 444-5357 or via e-mail at: [sgroves@mt.gov](mailto:sgroves@mt.gov).

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**About the Montana State Library**

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information about the Montana State Library, visit <http://msl.mt.gov>.