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Contact:

Eric Melson, IMBA: eric.melson@imba.com

Jim Stone, BCSP Steering Committee Member: rsranch@blackfoot.net

Seeley Lake, MT: Today, the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project and International Mountain Bicycling Association announced a long sought agreement that modifies the stewardship project's legislative proposal and now brings with it new support for the proposal from mountain bicycling interests that had previously opposed the proposal.

The agreement excludes from proposed wilderness several cherished trails that are currently open to mountain bike use, and calls for new connector trails to provide long-distance loop rides for mountain bikers. As a result of the changes, the International Mountain Bicycling Association and Montana Mountain Bike Alliance announced their support for the legislative proposal.

"The final agreement we've reached is a 'win-win scenario for both conservation and recreation,'" said Eric Melson, the International Mountain Bicycling Association's Associate Regional Director for Montana. "Mountain bikers enjoy continued access to important trails and secure key future trail connectors, while important habitat will be preserved forever as wilderness and through other designations". Eric adds that, "This is a great outcome that advances IMBA's mission, and we extend our support for the agreement and legislative proposal as a result."

Changes to the proposal include maintaining access for bicycles on the Spread Mountain, Center Ridge, and Camp Pass trails, as well as building two new connector routes to create loop trails. Other trails, which present potential for conflict between equestrians and bikers, will be closed to bikes.

"The Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project has always been about collaboration and this agreement demonstrates again our commitment to including all interests." said Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project steering committee member and Ovando rancher Jim Stone. "We are pleased to secure the support of Montana mountain bike leaders, and look forward to working together to see our made-in-Montana proposal signed into law."

The Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project was originally developed a decade ago by a diverse group of mill operators, ranchers, snowmobilers, business owners, conservationists and community members to create locally-driven, grassroots solutions to public lands management issues.

For more information visit: www.blackfootclearwater.org.