

Bob Anderson

1943–2013



Bob Anderson was born in Seattle and raised in Livingston, Montana and spent his formative years hiking the Absaroka and Beartooth country.

He said he “wanted to know what was over the next ridge” and he found out soon enough by painstakingly drawing the boundaries of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, an experience that was “like flying over the landscapes,” and “the most wonderful thing.”

With no background in political activity – but trained as an engineer – Bob was among the few primary activists whose work led to the designation of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness in 1978.

He formed the Absaroka-Beartooth Task Force in 1970, wrote a lands inventory that vastly expanded the area under consideration for Wilderness, and prevented the wilderness from being split in two by a road corridor through Slough Creek.

Today, the extraordinary, nearly one-million-acre lake-strewn landscape contains the highest, wilderness elevation expanse in Montana and, thanks in large measure to Bob’s efforts, it’s permanently protected.

Bob spoke lovingly of “that high place” and shared his knowledge of it in Beartooth Country – Montana’s Absaroka and Beartooth Mountains, a definitive book published in 1984 by the Montana Geographic Series and reprinted by Farcounty Press in 1995.

Bob also was a founding member of “Citizens for the Great Bear,” formed to protect lands between Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The Great Bear Wilderness, like the Absaroka-Beartooth, was designated in 1978.

In tandem with others, Bob battled against the Allenspur Dam on the Yellowstone River. The 380-foot tall earthen dam would have been just upstream of Livingston, Bob’s hometown. He wrote a detailed analysis for the Livingston Enterprise, “The Challenge of Allenspur,” which informed the scientific basis for resistance. In the end, even the Montana Legislature was opposed to flooding the Paradise Valley with a dam on the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states.

Additionally, Bob was a founder of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition in 1983 and served as its executive director. The GYC works to conserve the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem – which includes Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Bob was elected to statewide office in 1990, 1994 and 1998 as a member of the Montana Public Service Commission. He led on issues of energy conservation, non-renewable clean sources of energy and efficient distribution of production.

Bob continued his conservation work after leaving Montana, striving to maintain the purity of Lake Tahoe waters. He achieved much before a tragic vehicle accident claimed his life in Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, Africa following a successful ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro in celebration of his 70th birthday.