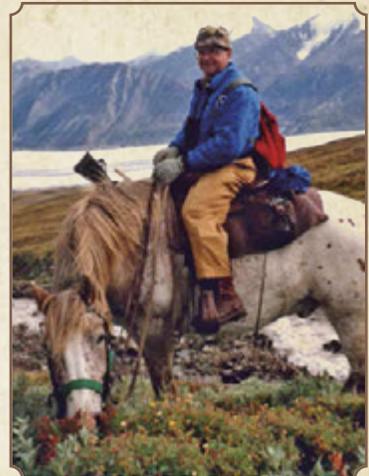


2018 INDUCTEE

JACK ATCHESON SR.

1932-2018



For a kid from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, there were no similarities between Jack Atcheson Sr. and the town's famous mid-winter groundhog.

Unlike Punxsutawney Phil, Atcheson wasn't afraid of his own shadow—or much of anything.

Atcheson arrived in Butte as an adolescent on a family move west. He joined the Army as a teenager and volunteered for Korean War combat duty.

When he returned home, he and his wife, Mary Claire, worked to build a Butte taxidermy business into a worldwide hunting enterprise: Jack Atcheson & Sons, Inc.

While it's true Atcheson was an international hunting authority—he guided and befriended outdoor luminaires from Alaska to Zimbabwe—it was an incident on Montana's Hi-Line that ignited his outdoor activism.

The year was 1978. Atcheson was hunting on what he believed to be state-owned public land when he was booted off.

Atcheson, ever the hunter, plowed through the legal statutes that provide for Montana's State School Trust Lands.

Across Montana, school trust lands, marked in blue on plat maps, are sections 16 and 36 of each township. In some places, such as state forests in western Montana, trust lands are consolidated into large blocks.

Atcheson recognized school trust land rules differed from most other public lands. Grazing fees for their use, or mining fees, for instance, help fund Montana's public schools. Still, Atche-

son surmised state-owned lands ought to be accessible to all.

With friends Jack Jones and Tony Schoonen (*MOHOF 2016*), Atcheson formed and funded what became the Montana Coalition for Appropriate Management of State Lands. That group cleared a path through arcane legalities that eventually allowed the public to pay a small fee to use school trust lands for recreation.

The effort created the potential to open 5.2 million acres to more than a million resident and nonresident hunters, anglers, bird watchers, and many others.

Later, Atcheson joined the Montana Coalition for Stream Access that led to the Montana Stream Access Law that allows people to have full use of most natural waterways between the high-water marks for fishing, floating, and other activities.

His uncanny insight into wildlife and its needs spurred Atcheson to document shortcomings in BLM and U.S. Forest Service fencing rules. That work resulted in the renewed enforcement of existing fencing regulations and compelled Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to launch a wildlife-friendly fencing program for private landowners.

Atcheson even championed public-land grazing leases to guarantee winter forage for wildlife and insisted that certain land exchanges keep traditional public lands, and access to them, available for future generations.

In 2000, Atcheson received the *Outdoor Life* magazine's Conservation Award for public access advocacy and for his "lifetime of achievement in the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat." ■

