



2025 INDUCTEE

TEDDY ROE

1934-

Growing up poor in Billings, Teddy Roe didn't have much. But while in high school, he was fortunate enough to have a coworker take him fishing on weekends in the Beartooth Mountains. That early experience would inspire him to save that wilderness a few decades later.

He graduated from the University of Montana's School of Journalism in 1959. During his career in Washington, D.C., Roe completed master's and doctoral degrees in Russian studies.

A fellowship allowed him to spend three months traveling across Russia and all 15 Soviet republics. "I was ALONE and did not encounter an English speaker until fully two months into the trip," he recalled. "It was a spooky time with the sabre-rattling we came to expect."

He's proud that KGB reports surfacing after the fall of the Soviet Union credit his Russian as "excellent."

In 1961, Roe received an American Political Science Association fellowship to work as a congressional intern and that led to a job working for Montana Senator Mike Mansfield, the Senate majority leader, in 1962. Over time, he mastered the ability to work the Senate floor and in the background to get things done.

As Roe was starting his staff work, Lee Metcalf was starting his stint as Montana's junior senator. Eventually, Roe moved over to work for Metcalf and became his legislative director in 1973. Roe said that was his initiation into wilderness legislation.

"All the sudden, I was dropped by parachute into one of the most turbulent periods back when anybody who promoted wilderness was a commie," Roe said

in 2013. "It was the best five years I ever spent."

Roe ended up playing a decisive role in most of Metcalf's wilderness efforts, including the Upper Missouri Wild & Scenic River Act in 1976, and the Montana Wilderness Study Act in 1977. In 1976, Metcalf's Upper Missouri Wild & Scenic River bill was stalled in a House committee chaired by Montana Representative John Melcher, who wasn't a fan of wilderness. At the same time, Melcher was also running to replace the retiring Mike Mansfield. Roe helped Melcher realize it was in his best interest to allow passage of the bill that Metcalf regarded as his proudest legislative achievement.

Roe's deep love for and knowledge of Montana, combined with his political acumen, was increasingly critical as Metcalf's health started to decline. After Metcalf died suddenly in January 1978, Roe assisted Metcalf's widow, Donna, and others (such as Bill Cunningham and Bob Anderson) to put the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness bill over the finish line.

Roe heard that Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Scoop Jackson of Washington wanted to do something to honor Metcalf. Roe was among those who suggested early that Jackson pass Metcalf's Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness bill. Jackson ran with the idea, and within two months, President Jimmy Carter signed the bill into law. Similarly, Rep. Morris Udall of Arizona took up Metcalf's Great Bear Wilderness bill and introduced it in August 1978. It also moved quickly and was passed in October.

Since then, Roe continued to advocate for wilderness and was a founding member of Montana Conservation Elders.

