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Tony Schoonen [00:00:10] Well, you know, I started off with a old pole and a piece of string, and I caught mostly suckers, and then I was raised in an orphanage. And then when I went out to the Seidensticker ranch, which is three miles west of Twin Bridges, the old man Seidensticker, Jack Seidensticker, actually had a pole for me an actual fishing rod, which and the right kind of stuff. And he really got me interested in fishing. And the ranch was located on the Big Hole river, it was about a 10 minute walk from the Big Hole river, from the ranch house to the Big Hole River. And then at that time the Beaverhead we had three rivers on the ranch. The ranch was fifty thousand acres total, twenty five deeded and twenty five leased. But we had the Big Hole and Beaverhead that combine on the ranch form the Jefferson. So I had all kinds of really, really good fishing. And when when we're busy and on course ranch, we were working 24/7 practically. But if it rained when we were haying then we could get some time off. And there are numerous sloughs around through the ranch at that time, and when I was raking hay I'd jump off the stop the team and throw had a bunch of grasshoppers and throw in the slough. So when I did have time to fish, just put a hook in there and I had a ready supply of fish cause I chummed them, you know so. But anyway, so fishing has been in my my life since I got out of the orphanage at 13.

Tony Schoonen [00:01:57] So I mean on up through. And then, you know, when I went to the army and came back, I stayed on the ranch for a year, two more years. And at that time, the channels had changed. And Siv Seidesticker, Jack's son got in there with the D9 cat in the Big Hole. It just really, really destroyed a lot of that river and is still still washing. You know, once you disturb the the armor on the river, that original set of gravel, then it just keeps washing and washing. And and is still doing it today. The river still seeking another channel or its own channel. But anyway, so the fishing's been. And then after I got into college, I went down to Western. I finished my Bachelor of Science over at Bozeman. And then I went to Western to get my master to on my masters, and there was a fellow that owned a bar down there called the Club Bar in Snead. He was a hell of a fast driver. And he all he was interested in money but he loved to fish and he had a boat and a truck. And he actually started me on the river. I was just bank fishing all the time I was on the ranch. But he had a boat and I knew kind of how to row pretty good. But he actually taught me how to fish. And a little later on then Fred Koch from David and Charles's dad came to the Beaver Head Valley to look for property. And at that time, they bought the rock.

Tony Schoonen [00:03:46] They named it the Rock Island Oil Ranch, it was 10 miles long and five miles wide. And I actually took Fred Koch fishing. He Snead wanted me to take him fishing. And we went on the Beaverhead. And it was kind of a cloudy day like this, only spending just a little bit of rain. We caught the hell out of the fish. I mean, it was really, really good fishing. And at that time, there's a little bar down there called Pipe Organ Lodge. And we were kind of cold and but we were happy about that. How good the fishing were and went in there, got about half stockered, you know. And but anyway, one one thing led to another, they bought the ranch. And then all of Koch's customers, like all the big outfits like Conoco Phillips, just all the big oil company seats in there. His customers up to me to take fishing. And that's how I got started in the guide business. And so really, the Big Hole was all around in those days are just unbelievable because there are not many people that ever fished it, you know. And so I did run a guide business. I turn it over to my sons. But in the meantime, in 19, I think 65, they proposed building the Wrightly dam. And I went over to a meeting in Whitehall, just a little classroom. That's where I met George Grant. And George is my mentor and we. He was really good at writing articles and stuff. And I write letters to the editor. But he he was we wanted to protect the Big Hole. And

that's really near and dear to us. And so anyway, we wrote letters and went to meetings and stuff. And George was an excellent artist, a beautiful illustrator. Now you have to see when you get in to his books. But anyway, one note that saved us from having the dam on the Big Hole was Mike Mansfield and Lee Metcalf at that time. And Mike was president of the U.S. Senate and he stopped it. It was just a pork barrel. They're going to ship dam the Big Hole, send the water all the way down to towns and Crow Creek bench and evaporation and everything all the way along. And then seepage and have saving seat. But the whole thing was just a boondoggle from the word go. So George and I, that's how George and I got to be such close friends.

Tony Schoonen [00:06:23] And then a little later we got together and with Bob Lenamon and two or three other guys and formed the Butte chapter of Trout Unlimited, we called ourselves the River Rats. That's where that book that they made, the thing that George put out got his name so, and they've changed since then. But I've been involved with. And then in 1975, they proposed the Wrightly dam again, on the Big Hole. And the Big Hole was my favorite because I was raised on there, basically learned to fish there and everything else. And it was unbelievable fishing and people will never believe it. But we had... Try to resurrect the Wrightly dam. But there are so many people at that time recognized how important a Big Hole was, it was blue ribbon trout stream, that it never got off the ground, just never got off the ground. So it's been been like cement. And then a little later on the we had problems down in the Beaverhead. I used to float the Beaverhead, I did float the Beaverhead with Fred Koch and some of the Koch guys. So I knew what the Beaverhead was, but but Hildreth, can't think... Lowell Hildreth put a cable across the river, paddle across the river so that you couldn't float it because a bunch of doctors from Utah offered him at that time, I think it was like nine million dollars and he could keep for the ranch. But with their caveat that he could keep people from floating river. So we put a chain and a paddle across the bridge and the guides and people carry rifles down there with guns in the boats because the sheriff really thought something was going to really be happened, you know, and so he went down, took the chain off.

Tony Schoonen [00:08:32] And at that, just a little ahead of that on the Dearborn, I can't think of the guy's name, Michael Kerr- there's a couple of gals putting a raft in at the bridge and he put his four wheel drive and ran over their raft. That was the best thing that ever happened. Gets hit every major paper in the state. And so that's when Tom and Jerry formed the coalition, Montana Coalition for Stream Access. And at that time, people didn't realize how important it was because you could actually still float anywhere and do anything. But they hired Jim Goetz, and at that time, he only charged thirty five bucks an hour, which you could never do that anymore. But he was just going to take on the Dearborn and Beaverhead. And Tom and Jerry basically said, I give those guys credit because they started Montana Coalition for Stream Access, I came in a couple months later. But anyway, on the... Jim Goetz was only going to take the those two rivers. No, we said we want a blanket stream access, you know. And I was one of the main witnesses down at the Hildreth hearing in Dillon and the district court hearing because I had floated the river and done that. And so but we won both those cases. But they went to the Supreme Court. They challenged them. And I can't think of the attorney from Billings that took on. What's his name? Michael Kerr's part of it. But anyway, we won both district court cases and both Supreme Court cases. So the Montana Coalition for Stream Access was pretty much it was firmly in place. And about that time. But see, the thing of it is you had to have it codified. We won the court hearings, but you had to have it codified so that everything was on the books and legal. And we really worried about the getting through the legislature.

Tony Schoonen [00:10:52] I can't think of that fellow's name that introduced it. I could see him. He used to be on the commission. Fish and Game Commission. And anyway, he introduced in the House. It went through the House fairly easily. But in the Senate, Jack Gault was president of the Senate. And Bruce Crippen from Billings was a developer from Billings. And they said it will never go through the Senate. It'll never go. But we had enough people at that time, too, that were interested in, especially Jim McDermott in the Medicine River Canoe Club from Great Falls. They at the hearing and we got it through the House. When it went to the Senate Medicine River Canoe Club head, they came in with their rowers. You'd never do it now and sat on the balconies all the way around and pound it. And before that, we we collected signatures. And what I did, I heard a bunch of students on St. Patty's Day to go around and get signatures. Christ, everybody who's drunk and got signatures you couldn't believe. We roll that, we had a big butcher roll paper. We roll out off the balcony, down on the floor, damn near hit Gault in the head with it. It was so funny, but it just barely made it through the Senate. But we got it through. But so the stream access law and then Governor Schwinn just signed it into law. And so and it stood up until some Odelle Creek down there, a couple of the landowners challenged it. And remember, way back when I think Reagan appointed James Watts Secretary of Interior and then he made some kind of racial slur. And so he had to resign. But he was the head of the Mountain States Legal Foundation in Denver. So these people asked them to file a lawsuit, which they did. The Mountain States Legal Foundation.

Tony Schoonen [00:12:57] And again, we won it I think it had to go to federal court. I'm not sure then it did. But anyway, then it went to the 9th Circuit. The 9th Circuit approved. I mean, they they ruled in our favor. But then they appealed. At the Mountain States Legal Foundation, what James Watts's outfit appealed it to the U.S. Supreme Court. But because, you know, with our of our Constitution, our seventy-two Constitution, saying that the water within the state atmospheric ground and surface water belongs to the people. I think that they looked at the Supreme Court, looked at it, and it was so well founded in states rights that they refused to hear it. So it has been and we've been challenged, like they say, turned in challenges that were just a matter of fisheries, quality of fisheries, equal, equal or greater on, state land. But Kennedy has challenged it. James Cox Kennedy, from whatever you were Atlanta, Georgia, I think. But he he he when he when he met in Bozeman, I didn't go to the meeting, that perc-outfit out of Bozeman now. They're right wing outfit. Brought him in and said, okay, I know. I know. I understand what it's all about, stream access and so on. But he did everything he possibly could. He put electric wires across the two bridges, the Lewis Lane Bridge and the Sanderlane bridge had goons running people off or intimidating people. So the strea access hasn't been easy. And and we were in court with him for 13 years. We just got to settle last year. So it's just an ongoing issue with stream access. But I've always been interested in showing when I was when I was head of my guide business, I encouraged families.

Tony Schoonen [00:15:08] I like to have shown kids how to fish, young people how to fish. So. So that's basically my history of it and I'm still involved.

Tony Schoonen [00:15:23] Well, I tried to catch trout. But all I could catch was suckers. Oh, it wasn't, it wasn't very good.

James Thull [00:15:32] And then later on was it brookies cutthroats.

Tony Schoonen [00:15:34] And when I went out to the ranch and actually had the right fishing equipment and Jack Seidensticker showed me how to fish. And then I could figure it out. We used bait.

Tony Schoonen [00:15:45] We use lures and flies. So, I mean, we had all three different types of fishing. But it was so good. The Big Hole was so good. I mean, it just it people don't realize it. So I just got infatuated and I just you know, that was my life.

James Thull [00:16:01] Were those cutthroats in there?

Tony Schoonen [00:16:02] No, no. There were no cut. They were originally cutthroats.

Tony Schoonen [00:16:05] But then they brought fish in from the Ennis hatchery and put them in a warm slough outside of Twin Bridges, Mark Marsan-Korsky slough. And those fish, those browns actually went over during high water and got in the river and the browns and then later the rainbows. But it used to be a whole cutthroat fishery. But that's all I got was Browns and Rainbows.

James Thull [00:16:31] And This would have been the 1950s, is that right?

Tony Schoonen [00:16:33] Oh, God. I've got a paper in there on that, too. But yeah. Yeah. I would have been the 50s. Yeah. But it was earlier than that.

Tony Schoonen [00:16:43] Doc John. He sent me all that stuff and I've got it, but I don't have it on my tip of my tongue. But it was earlier than 19. I'd say it was in the 40s. In the 40s that they brought those fish.

James Thull [00:16:56] No. I was wondering when you were there fishing, was that?

Tony Schoonen [00:17:00] I was born in 1930. Yeah, it was a little late 40s that I was there. Yeah. Somewhat. But I mean, they'd been planting and those the browns it about taken out, basically taken over the river by then and displaced the cutthroat. You can still catch cutthroat on and we still catch cutthroat when we're floating, you know, but rainbows and browns and Grayling too, you know. But the grayling were not down as far as the ranch, they're in the upper reaches.

Tony Schoonen [00:17:35] Oh, God. Yeah

Tony Schoonen [00:17:36] They were we caught some. We caught some [unintelligible] big fish. I know that there's when the dam went out to divide it before the dam went out to divide. I think guys like Joe Brooks or some caught a 22 pounder up there and they they actually not too long ago they had a 20.

Tony Schoonen [00:18:03] I think it was either a twenty niner pounder that they shocked. Great big, they're big fish.

Tony Schoonen [00:18:09] But now the pressure. So people found out about how good it was. And so, I mean, it's it's just been hammered down all the time. And so your fish aren't as. Once in awhile you get one that's twenty four inches.

Tony Schoonen [00:18:24] And that's a that's maybe one. We haven't caught one that big for a couple of years when I have the biggest one I've caught was with the Koch bunch, the oil bunch, was about ten pounds. And then one of my guides here about seven years ago, six or seven years ago, caught a nine pounder.

Tony Schoonen [00:18:47] So I mean, you know, there were there there were a lot of big fish early on. And the salmon. And the reason there was because you didn't had the development along the river. And George always talked about, George and I talked about this all the time, the subdivisions and development. And because then they put all this nutrients in the river and for some reason, the salmon fly hatch. If you've ever heard of the saw the salmon flies, I mean, that used to be the sky used to be black with them, just black with them. And now the hatch is very minimal. And all the nutrients, the upper Big Hole basically stayed the same as long as I can remember.

Tony Schoonen [00:19:32] You know. They might fertilize the fields a little bit, but they don't have all that nitrate and stuff coming in the river. It's basically the same as it always has, but it's then houses all the, same as George Town Lake, all the houses along the river know dump these nitrates and stuff in and that is not good. The river, warms the river. And but there is just not the fisheries. It's still a good fishery. Don't get me wrong. And then because of the global warming, two years ago, we had a fungus outbreak that really took a lot of your big, big spawners out. I mean, like your 17, 18, 19 inch spawners kill them. The Browns, not so much the rainbows. It did kill some rainbows. But it's just this warming earlier and often in the warming in the water just really reduce the fisheries. Yeah.

Tony Schoonen [00:20:30] I love the a Big Hole. The fact that you know that. People were starting to challenge people floating the river like Hildreth down there.

Tony Schoonen [00:20:43] And in some of these out-of-staters that were building along, putting up no trespassing signs and stuff. And you could just like, my love of the Big Hole was so great that I just thought that any any thing that would endanger it, I mean, I just felt I had to fight it.

Tony Schoonen [00:21:04] You know, just like George, you know, Grant.

Tony Schoonen [00:21:12] Yeah, there are serious concerns because we in the old days, the runoff. We figured the runoff was over by the time the wild roses bloomed. And that was in the middle of June. And even sometimes we had good snowpack. It was as late as the first of July. Well, you don't have that anymore. The rivers, in fact, I floated the river.

Tony Schoonen [00:21:41] We floated the lower part of the Big Hole this year. And I got on the Beaverhead and Jefferson the first of July. The first of July. Believe it or not. We were catching, on dry flies we were a catchin bass.

Tony Schoonen [00:21:56] That's how bad the rivers, you know, that this nitrates and stuff and that bass that's comeing, The Big Hole is not bad yet. But you can see it. It's changed. It used to just run clear. The ripples are all nice and clear and we had high water till. Well, I I used to, we used to float the Big Hole almost all the way through to August. You don't do it now about the middle of June, July, you're done, first in July where we used to have lots of water, you know, and there is more to bad with water because like I say, these subdivisions are sucking the water. Every one of those pumps pulls 30 gallons per minute out. That's ground water and its. And then your ranchers need their water. They have prior water rights. They pull water off. So there are just a lot of challenges. And it's it's going to get worse before it gets better. I'm telling you.

Tony Schoonen [00:22:56] So, I mean, I'm just glad we had stream access in place because they say it's the best stream access law in the whole country.

Tony Schoonen [00:23:12] Well, I was I remember when I was over at the I went to the Supreme Court hearing over in Helena, and Michael Kerr said his lawyer got up there and testified that they were in an airplane and they flew over the Dearborn River. And they could they they knew it was navigable. When Goetz got up there.

Tony Schoonen [00:23:34] Our attorney said this, this prostitute of information. How can you tell a river was navigable from 5000 feet up or whatever the heck he was? But no, I was in Helena at that time. And then I can't remember, you know, we never celebrated, you know, when Governor Schwinden, my son was a Tony Jr., was a lobbyist for the Montana Wildlife Federation. I've got that picture, Schwinden and I am and my son, all of us around there, all the people ahead of the stock growers. Jim, somebody I can't think he is last name.

Tony Schoonen [00:24:12] Several of us around there got her pictures taken when Governor Schwinden signed it. But we didn't celebrate it that I can remember. I mean, my we might have celebrated individually. I mean, I can't remember the time or the place, you know.

Tony Schoonen [00:24:33] Well, actually, Jerry and Tom started sending out notices in notices to different people to different Trout Unlimited clubs and stuff around the state, and really people just weren't that interested because everybody was floating. That was the only two rivers they've had problems on.

Tony Schoonen [00:24:55] So. But then when when Kerr ran over the gals raft and hit the front page of the paper, woke people up, they thought, well, if that can happen on that river it's going to happen on ours.

Tony Schoonen [00:25:08] And so we had a, Tom and Jerry had a real hard time raising money early on because people just they just didn't think it was going to happen to them yet or their river and but when that hit the paper then people and the guides and outfitters in different areas started sending money in.

Tony Schoonen [00:25:30] And like they say we weren't paying Goetz that much. We're always behind on our payments. You know, when I when I got in, Tom was a bookkeeper and you know, the start setting money and but we're only paying, Goetz 35 bucks an hour a lot of times because he was a fisherman, avid fisherman, and that he didn't. He did. I don't think he billed us as much as he could have you know. But then a little later on, Tom bought a sporting goods shop. So you run that when it went to the legislature, Jerry and I had to go over there and do all the negotiating and the hearings.

Tony Schoonen [00:26:12] And and actually with at that time, they put the legislature, put us on a committee which they don't do anymore. They don't take an average citizen off the street like they did. But there's a whole bunch of us sitting on this particular committee. And Bill Asher was representing ag groups. And I don't know how many groups there were. There were probably several of, you know, the stock growers, woolgrowers, farm bureau.

Tony Schoonen [00:26:42] Good God, you name it all, but there there was quite a few of. But we sat down and we had to compromise on some of this stuff, you know, as you do. But you don't do it now. I mean, you can't do what you want to say the word compromise. But we we sat down and compromised. And and it was kind of ironic. Gault was so upset about it. He thought it was taking a private properties and on and on. When Schwinden

signed the bill, it wasn't two months after that that he filed his own lawsuit. And the Supreme Court was a good Supreme Court just like we have now. And all they did was say that no, no permanent but duck blinds or camping within 500 yards of an occupied dwelling.

Tony Schoonen [00:27:29] That's the only thing we ever had to give up. Otherwise, it's wide open. So.

Tony Schoonen [00:27:37] I just can't remember a lot about the early history. I know we had a hard time getting members and Harvey Eckert an artists from from Ennis, well he was he was here in Butte at that time, he's in Ennis now. But he donated prints and he could sell those prints or give those prints to people who gave us 100 bucks or whatever it was, you know, but it was hard time getting members in money because people didn't realize how important it is now they do.

Tony Schoonen [00:28:14] Now, I think what's really important, that's the sad part about it.

Tony Schoonen [00:28:17] Nobody you know, like I say, all of us are older and very few young guys, course they have to raise a family and make a living. But it's just hard to get younger people to realize what we have and how how important it is to protect it. But I will say, as far as stream access is concerned and and public access in general, they are a lot more educated now than they were a few years back because of these out-of-state interests coming in and blocking public access or like Kennedy on the Ruby. I mean, that hits the paper and all this and makes them lot more aware of how how serious this problem is. And we don't stay active on it you know.

Tony Schoonen [00:29:11] Well, right from the get go, they always gave the coalition money, you know, because we were one of the biggest clubs of the state. Billings had the biggest club, but we were the next biggest.

Tony Schoonen [00:29:23] And and we thought that we...

Tony Schoonen [00:29:29] I've been a director for almost 50 years, I mean, a member for almost 50 years. I've been a director for a long time. We realized how important it was because it was a Butte based thing and we Skyline always gave money and so did Anaconda sportsman and stuff like that. So they did play a big role.

Tony Schoonen [00:29:49] And the other thing was that the legislature, we were very powerful.

Tony Schoonen [00:29:55] Between Butte and Anaconda, you know. So we. That's one of the reasons we can get there, do the things we could in the legislature when they had the all these challenges.

Tony Schoonen [00:30:06] There were some challenges. And I think he mentions that in there afterwards. And I didn't. I kind of forgot about it a little bit.

Tony Schoonen [00:30:14] But there were some challenges later on of stream access, not just mountain states legal foundation.

Tony Schoonen [00:30:25] But that will give you a little more history. And I did take the Koch brothers out too, Charles and David. I should've drowned the bastard.

Tony Schoonen [00:30:40] [Unintelligible] They understand what we're after, they. They have the same values that we have.

Tony Schoonen [00:30:46] So they you can always talk to him and these legislators we have now. I mean, [unintelligible] got to say, the Tea Party bunch, you you can't deal with those people. You know, Terry White from Bozeman, that guy. Good God almighty. There's [unintelligible] at the last session. I mean, there's just terrible people over there. They, in the old days, I'll tell you.

Tony Schoonen [00:31:13] We used to be able to when Jerry and I went over there or on any other access issue of members of our. The Annaconda club and the Skyline club would go over there and sit down after the session at the watering hole at the Jorgensen, said Jorgensen. But and everybody the Republicans and Democrats sat together and, you know, hashed over things and joked and had a good time. And that's where we made the compromises over beer at the Jorgensens. And but boy, now the Democrats are downstairs in the basement and Republicans are upstairs and never the twain will meet. It's just a different. Just like the Congress back there. I mean, just sitting there. I mean, I enjoyed politics in the olden days because you could talk to, you know, not like Jack Gault. Or some of those real right wingers. But now you can't do any of that. We used to drink with those guys and everything. That was, I enjoyed the politics, but not anymore. I don't like to even talk about it.

Tony Schoonen [00:32:25] Well, I'd just like to see people catch fish and the fishing was so good in the Big Hole. I mean, very- I can never remember ever getting skunked, you know. And, you know, we'd have, sometimes we'd have.

Tony Schoonen [00:32:41] Well the best day we had was one hundred fish day with one fisherman. And, you know, dry flies. So I did a lot of times with lures and flies like two boats, each boat to have 65 to 70 fish days. You don't see that anymore. I mean it was just unbelievable.

Tony Schoonen [00:33:08] No, not really, except the fact that I've offered to take him in the boat because basically I was just a boat fisherman and George would never do it. He was always just a wade fisherman and but I'll tell you. He was so, so far sighted that it's just really unbelievable.

Tony Schoonen [00:33:38] Well, I it's changed, the river kind of changed.

Tony Schoonen [00:33:44] I liked that lower end from Glen on down to Twin Bridges, you know, and. But it's changed quite a bit, you know, and just.

Tony Schoonen [00:33:58] Did you see all those facials, guys, from TU? Yes. It's all catch and release now. We don't do that anymore. We turn all our fish back. But guys from [unintelligible] Yes, they would never believe it.

Jen Brown [00:34:15] When did you start practicing catch and release?

Tony Schoonen [00:34:20] Well, I I did it all the time when the people didn't want to fish. I didn't just keep fish. I mean, and George told me that he said he's brought.

Tony Schoonen [00:34:30] He killed a lot of fish in the old days. But then he started catch and release. I think with Bud Lilly way back when, you know, that's been, I took Bud Lilly and his wife out, by the way. Way back when I can't even remember, but I can remember him. But everybody practice kept- the only time that I don't is when I fish lakes where they plant fish because I like the Ruby Reservoir they have this real good fish there to eat. And also the Clark Canyon. It's good.

Tony Schoonen [00:35:23] Well, hopefully that is his dad or mom or dad or Bob will be able to get him the right equipment. Sometimes and get him too heavy a rod or too light a rod or not the right equipment and try to tie time when you take your your kid out when the fish are biting.

Tony Schoonen [00:35:40] If you have to use words, so be it. In fact, the last TU magazine talks about big juicy words, but just anything to get did get him interested. If they if they sit there for an hour, you know, kids' attention span isn't very long, so they don't catch fish. And I remember I went by my Jack.

Tony Schoonen [00:36:03] Now he's taking he's my next my youngest son. He turned the business over to him. When he was young, I took him out when I knew the fish biting put a silver mops' on, went up the fork, rode the boat up there, and he caught one fish after another. Now he's one of the best fisherman, the best guides. I mean, he took over my guide business and my son told me I started him too young. That's one mistake that you don't want to make. Don't start them too young, because I remember I put him in the boat when he was just a little guy and you fall asleep in the bottom of the boat stuff. And then I tried it. And you just don't want to start 'em too young. Wait till they're ready. Wait till you know, and try to educate them on how much fun it is and everything else. But I mean, get him the right equipment. I've seen so many guys get too long a rod or too heavy a rod or not the right spinning equipment and stuff like that. And there is one thing about it that really helps with younger people, they have fish ponds in almost every town now. And if they can just take them out there and let him fish, you know, and usually catch them because they plant, really over plant it. So kids can catch it. So, I mean, there's you got to do it, right. You know?

Tony Schoonen [00:37:36] We really haven't had an issue except Jennifer Fielder, Senator Fielders transferred public lands. And the word gets out to email. Now they have email. Would that happen most early days? But, you know, that ought to all have different clubs. And actually with the sportsman, recreational groups are the strongest lobbying group in the state if we just stick together. But unfortunately, we haven't, you know, don't stick together. Different people say, oh, never happened in my area and stuff like that. But if they could stick together. But on that one bit. There's two bills. The last ones that I went to the hearings on was the Carter Crossing. You know, where you have two pieces of public land, BLM forest service or state land forest service and is still legal to do it. They say. It's not legal, but it is. There hasn't been one case in the state. But anyway, so the emails went around all the different clubs. And there are there's probably five hundred people showed up at that legislative hearing, all dressed in red, you know, and everything. They didn't pay any attention as these right wingers, they don't. They want to privatize everything. Other issue was Jennifer Fielders build and transfer public lands to the state. And there is a big, huge gathering there. Just just here this last section. So but it's all computer now. I mean, I and I don't have any petition's that. It's not like, you know, computers or, you know, everybody's got email. Hell, you click it on you get a couple hundred people, you know, that's really the quickest way to do it.

Tony Schoonen [00:39:29] Well, I did. I've always wondered, like Alaska for those bigger salmon, like the king salmon and halibut because I like to eat halibut. And I did make one trip or actually two trips and did that. But, you know, when you talk to different people like some of my guys that are, my dudes that I've taken fishing. They said they've, they've gone to New Zealand. They've gone to Argentina. But he said it day in and day out. The best fishing is right here in Montana. So.

James Thull [00:40:05] So no need to travel.

Tony Schoonen [00:40:06] No need to travel. I mean, you know, I know there's exotic fish to catch you know in.

Tony Schoonen [00:40:12] But actually we've, my son and I, my son Jack and I can go down in the clear water when those salmon are running.

Tony Schoonen [00:40:22] And we we've caught a lot of salmon over there in the (unintelligible). Once you know how to do it. And boy, do they fight. [Unintelligible] they fight like crazy. I and I've caught a jillion steelhead, but they're no good eat, you know? I mean, they're fun to catch but other than that. That's fine. You know? But I'll tell you if a guy right now, my son and I and one of our other oarsman went over to the gates of the mountain where they plant the fish is right where you put in at the dock and there's hundreds and hundreds.

Tony Schoonen [00:40:55] And some of them I know are 5lbs, you know, four or five pounders. For a kid just to see that. Governor Bullock asked me about it here last year and I said, oh, yeah there- those fish are in there and he'd like to take his two girls out. So but I mean, it's just there are different ways to get kids interested. And that guy at the gates will let kids fish, too. But I don't know how those kids land those big damn things, because they're big. Awesome.

Tony Schoonen [00:41:33] I just told people get involved and protect what we have.