November 2026

ITEM 227-1003-R1126

Request for Authorization to Award an Honorary Doctorate to Arnold "Smoke" Elser – University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

The University of Montana requests authorization from the Montana Board of Regents to award an Honorary Doctorate of Forestry and Conservation to Arnold "Smoke" Elser.

EXPLANATION

Smoke Elser is a University of Montana alumnus, as well as an author, educator, conservationist, wilderness outfitter, and one of the foremost authorities on mule- and horse-packing. The author of *Packin' In on Mules and Horses* (now in its tenth edition), and co-author of *Hush of the Land: A Lifetime in the Bob Marshall Wilderness*, his writings and work are the basis for the Montana accreditation exam for professional outfitters and the industry standard for the outfitting industry. A dedicated advocate for the protection of public lands, Elser testified before the U.S. Senate in support of the preservation of the Lincoln-Scapegoat Wilderness in 1972. He also played an important role in both the passing of the Wild and Scenic River Act in 1968, and the congressional designation of the Great Bear Wilderness in 1978. Beyond his significant contributions to numerous organizations, Elser has had a significant and ongoing impact on UM through his teaching and mentoring of students and helping create the Grizzly Riders International group to support UM.

ATTACHMENTS

No Attachments