

“Hello, my name is Ryan Stokes. Most people just know me as Stokes. I am a Florida native who fell in love with Montana nearly a quarter century ago. I am an avid fisherman who decided to start guiding in Florida part time ten years ago. In 2020 it was time to follow a lifelong dream. I quit the HVAC business, and with the support of my amazing wife, I started guiding full time between Florida and Montana. I bought a used Deville from Robert at RO and got to it. The wife and I live in our 5th wheel along with our Great Dane in Twin Bridges for approximately four months a year and then head back to our home in Florida. With the help of some great people, I have been able to gradually fill my schedule to the point of working almost every day. As you know that many days on the river and countless miles of dirt roads will take a toll on a boat. Robert has been kind enough to patch the old girl up for me a couple times over the years. This year time didn't allow for a patch job, so I've been applying duct tape every few days for over 6 weeks in order to keep the leaks to a minimum. The wife and I were trying to figure out how to step into another boat next year when we saw a post from RO about there still being a few tickets left for the UMOWA boat raffle. We figured we had nothing to lose, and why not give to a worthy cause? Having seen the devastation my home waters of Florida have endured over the last decade or more, and the changes we are seeing on our Montana rivers, I am always eager to contribute to any worthy cause that is committed to helping our waterways remain pristine. That being said, boat or no boat, a \$100 raffle ticket was a no brainer. Never did I dream that I would actually win! This boat means the world to me. I had to sit down and hold back tears when the phone rang and you informed me that I had won a new boat. No more duct tape. No more worrying about how to pay for a new boat so I can continue to follow my passion for fishing and share with others the same passion and love for these rivers.

I am truly humbled and grateful. Thank you, Ryan”





