



September 26, 2018

Attn: Samantha Neill
Open Lands Program
Lewis and Clark County
316 N. Park Ave, Room 240
Helena, MT 59623

**RE: Falls Creek Acquisition, MT
Lewis & Clark County - Open Space Program Proposal, Level II**

Dear Lewis and Clark County Open Lands Program and Ms. Neill:

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is pleased to present Lewis and Clark County's Open Lands Program the attached Level II application to fund the 442-acre Falls Creek Acquisition in Lewis and Clark County, Montana. Located within the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest, the Falls Creek Acquisition will protect habitat for fish and wildlife, and alleviate access challenges in Dearborn Canyon.

Once complete, the Falls Creek Acquisition will support the following Lewis and Clark County Open Lands Program objectives:

1. Conserve approximately 442 acres of strategic habitat for a suite of game and nongame species such as elk, white-tailed and mule deer, mountain lion, black bear, Mountain Grouse, and Bald Eagle;
2. Conserve approximately two miles of instream habitat in the Upper Dearborn River, Falls Creek and unnamed intermittent streams, and protected approximately 44 acres of buffer habitat adjacent to these stretches; and,
3. Improve public access to 442 acres of new public land, improve access to approximately 26,000 acres of adjacent U.S. Forest Service-administered lands, and secure access to approximately one mile of Falls Creek Trail No. 229.

Please contact Mike Mueller, our Senior Lands Program Manager, at (406) 493-6650 or mmueller@rmef.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

R. Kyle Weaver
President and CEO

**Lewis and Clark County Open Lands Program
Level Two Application**

Landowner and Agency Identification

Please state the name, address, and telephone number of the landowner and of the sponsoring land conservation organization.

Landowner Identification: Daniel Barrett
P.O. Box 609
Augusta, MT 59410

Sponsor Land Conservation Organization Identification: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Inc.,
5705 Grant Creek Road
Missoula, MT 59808
Project Contact: Mike Mueller
(406) 493-6650
mmueller@rmef.org

Please submit this application by digital media accompanied by one complete paper version.

Note: When submitted to the County, this application will become a public document and all information contained in it may be viewed by any member of the public that may request to do so.

General description of the property:

a. The size of the property – total acreage and amounts by sub-ownership categories (i.e. deeded, leased, permitted public land, etc.)

The Falls Creek Property is located along the Rocky Mountain Front, approximately 30 miles southwest of Augusta in Montana's Lewis and Clark County. The 442-acre Falls Creek Property is owned by Daniel Barrett. RMEF will purchase all 442 acres as funding becomes available, with the goal of acquiring the entire property by 2020 per our purchase option. Once acquired, the entire 442-acre Falls Creek Property will be conveyed to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for inclusion in the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest (HLCNF). A 160-acre parcel with a cabin north of the Property will be sold privately as a recreational property, and will not be included in this project.

b. Size of the area to be included in the conservation easement or land purchase – total acreage and percentage of deeded land

The entire 442-acre Falls Creek Property will be acquired and conveyed to the USFS for inclusion in the HLCNF. The Property may be acquired in phases depending on funding availability.

c. Permitted home sites – identify any existing home sites and future home sites that will be permitted in the conservation easement

Not Applicable.

d. Water/Mineral Rights – identify any other rights appurtenant to the property and whether they will remain with the property

No water rights are appurtenant to the Property. The mineral rights are all reserved by the United States of America except for a 20 acre parcel. RMEF received a letter of remoteness for the minerals on the Property, including the 20 acre parcel, and the likelihood of any economically developable minerals is so negligible as to be remote.

e. Hazardous materials - confirm that no hazardous materials, as defined by the federal government, are known or believed to be present on the property both above and below ground. If the land is contaminated, the contamination has been identified and a description is included as to how the material can be removed from the property and the site reclaimed.

The landowner informed RMEF there are no hazardous materials on the Property and no historic mining occurred to their knowledge. RMEF staff visited the Property and did not identify any concerns. A hazardous material report will be completed by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the due diligence process and will be available for review when completed in late 2018.

f. Other Conservation Easements and Public Lands – adjacent or nearby existing or proposed conservation easements and/or public land would enhance the purpose of this application.

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will expand upon an extensive network of public land spanning across the Bob Marshall – Scapegoat Wilderness Complex from the Seeley-Swan Valley to the Rocky Mountain Front. The approximately 2.8 million-acre HLCNF spans approximately 1.25 miles along the southern boundary of the Falls Creek Property and will provide access to the Lolo and Flathead National Forests west of the Property. The nationally renowned Bob Marshall Wilderness Area and the Scapegoat Wilderness Area sit within this massive swath of public land, and attract recreationists from across the nation. Approximately 2,270 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and approximately 1,300 acres of Montana State Trust Lands managed by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation sit within close proximity to the Property. Approximately 0.14 miles of the Dearborn River and 0.88 miles of Falls Creek span the Property. Acquisition will allow improved access to these public lands and waters for hunting, hiking, wildlife watching, fishing, boating, and other recreation opportunities. Once conserved, the Falls Creek Property will also expand and augment these existing protected lands and expand a continuous protected landscape for wildlife movement.

g. Commercial Activities - identify and describe any existing and/or proposed commercial activities occurring on the property.

The Property does not support any commercial activities or buildings. The Property's grasslands have been periodically grazed by the landowner and remain in good condition. The Property was part of a USFS grazing allotment, which may not include this Property once under public ownership. The Property is not the base property for the USFS grazing permit. The landowner has not conducted any significant logging activity on the Property.

Funding: Describe the general budget of the project and any of the following that apply.

What funding is requested from the County and how will they be applied?

RMEF and landowner respectfully request \$2,000,000 from the Lewis and Clark County's Open Lands Program to acquire and convey the Property to the USFS for management as public land. The requested funding will be applied to the purchase price of all 442 acres, unless a phased acquisition is necessary, and will not be used for transaction costs such as an appraisal, title commitment and closing costs.

Will the County's funds be matched through donation of land value and/or other funding sources? If so, what amounts have been approved or requested, or are pending approval?

The Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust (MFWCT) awarded \$207,000 to the Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition in 2018. RMEF anticipates applying for additional funding from MFWCT in the coming year. RMEF anticipates exploring other funding sources to complete the project such as the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' (MFWP) Access to Public Lands Account, the Land and Water Conservation Fund through the USFS, Mule Deer Foundation, private donors and other partners.

If applicable, describe the total project costs, including transaction costs and stewardship fees.

The appraised value of the 442-acre Property is \$2,460,000, based on a qualified appraisal dated April 25, 2018. RMEF anticipates contributing approximately \$60,000 toward the purchase price and approximately \$6,500 in transaction costs to cover due diligence documents such as the appraisal and title commitment.

Conserve Working Farms and Ranches: Describe the value of the property in terms of continuing or restoring the historic land use, and identify any of the following characteristics that apply.

Does the property contain "prime, unique, statewide or locally important" agricultural soils, as defined by NRCS?

Not applicable.

Is the property contiguous with other working lands?

The Property is not contiguous with other working lands.

Is this property currently a working farm or ranch?

The Property's grasslands have been periodically grazed by the landowner as part of a USFS grazing allotment and the private land remains in good condition currently. The landowner has not conducted any significant logging activity on the Property since the 1980s or -90s when it was selectively thinned.

Is there an existing farm or ranch management plan in place?

A farm or ranch management plan is not in place on the Property. Once conveyed to the USFS, the Property will be managed under the 1986 Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan (pending revisions).

Conserving Working Forests: Describe the value of the property in terms of protecting or improving forest uses, and identify any of the following characteristics that apply.

Is the property located within the urban/wildland interface?

The Property is not located within the wildland-urban interface.

Is the location deemed to be an area of high risk for wildfire?

The Property is adjacent to the HLCNF and the Bob Marshall – Scapegoat Wilderness Area complex. Wildfire has burned thousands of acres within this public land complex in recent years, and a wildfire could impact the Falls Creek Property in future years. According to Headwaters Economics, one in eight homes have been built in areas with high wildfire risk across Western Montana. Residential development in Lewis and Clark County follows this trend. According to Headwaters Economics, 26.8% of homes built in Lewis and Clark County between 1990 and 2016 were constructed in areas with high or moderate wildfire risk. The scenic, dramatic beauty of the Rocky Mountain Front and the close proximity of the Falls Creek drainage to Augusta and U.S. Highway 200 makes the area attractive for residential development. The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will prevent residential development of the Falls Creek Property and maintain a wildfire buffer between the HLCNF and existing development.

Is there a current forest management plan?

RMEF anticipates the USFS will include the Falls Creek Property in the HLCNF and will manage the land in accordance with the 1986 Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan (pending revision).

Is the property, or a portion of it, classified as forest land / commercial timber for tax purposes?

According to the Montana Cadastral, the Falls Creek Property is classified as agricultural and forest land with an acre type/commodity listed as “grazing” and “forest”.

Is the forest being actively managed for current or future timber harvest?

The Property is not being actively managed for current or future timber harvest.

Protect Habitat for Fish and Wildlife: Describe the value of the property as fish and wildlife habitat, and include any of the following that apply.

Does the property contain significant wildlife habitat?

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will protect 442 acres of strategic seasonal and year-round habitat for a suite of game and nongame species. The Property is primarily forestland, grassland meadow, stream and riparian habitat. Approximately 2.05 miles of mountain streams, including approximately 0.14 miles of the Dearborn River and 0.88 miles of Falls Creek, channel water across the Property. The downhill side of the Property parallels 1.22 miles of the Dearborn River, filtering sediments and other pollutants from overland water flow before it enters the River. The 1986 Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan defines “riparian area” as “areas within a horizontal distance of 100 feet from the edge of perennial streams and other water bodies.” This definition expands the riparian

habitat acres from 23 acres identified through the U.S. Geological Survey's Gap Analysis Program to approximately 44 acres; please see the attached table titled *Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition Crucial Habitats* for additional information.

Conservation of the Falls Creek Property's 442 acres and approximately 2.05 stream miles will support Montana's 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). The SWAP identifies Community Types of Greatest Conservation Need (CTGCN) and prioritizes CTGCN by tiers ranging from Tier I (greatest conservation need) to Tier III (lower conservation need). Tier I CTGCN indicate "[t]here is a clear obligation to use resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these community types." Tier I CTGCN cover approximately 373 acres (84% of Property) of terrestrial habitats, including (1) conifer-dominated forest and woodland (xeric-mesic); (2) deciduous dominated forest and woodland; (3) sagebrush steppe; (4) montane grassland; (5) floodplain and riparian; and, (6) mountain stream. The SWAP identifies the project area's mountain streams and approximately 44 acres (1% of the Property) of riparian habitat as Tier I CTGCN. To prevent fragmentation of CTGCN, the SWAP identifies acquisition of land adjacent to other conserved properties to protect habitat linkage across a large landscape. Permanent protection of the Falls Creek Property will directly support the SWAP.

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will expand habitat connectivity across the landscape for wildlife movement, and provide access for active management of habitat on the Property and surrounding lands for the benefit of fish and wildlife. The Falls Creek Property's southern border is adjacent to approximately 1.25 miles of the HLCNF, which links to the Lolo and Flathead National Forests through the nationally renowned Bob Marshall-Scapegoat Wilderness Complex. The entire eastern boundary is bordered by the scenic Falls Creek and a residential subdivision across the Creek's canyon. The west and north boundaries are bordered by other private property, a slice of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and the iconic Dearborn River. Approximately 2,270 acres of Bureau of Land Management-administered land and approximately 1,300 acres of Montana State Trust lands managed by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation are dispersed north and east of Property. Once secured, the Falls Creek Property will expand and augment these existing protected lands for wildlife movement.

Is there a diversity of habitat for wildlife or fish on the property?

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will protect 442 acres of strategic seasonal and year-round habitat for a suite of game and nongame species. Species such as elk, white-tailed and mule deer, mountain lion, black bear and other iconic game species may be found on the Property and surrounding lands. Nongame species including a variety of birds (raptors and passerine birds), amphibians, reptiles and small mammals are present on the Property or in the immediate surrounding area. The SWAP identifies an extensive list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) associated with the Tier I CTGCN listed above including the fisher, hoary bat, wolverine, Black-backed Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, Ferruginous Hawk, and Northern Goshawk. Please see the attached table titled *Select Special Status Species and Associated Habitat on Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition* for additional information on species diversity. Permanent protection of the Falls Creek Property will protect diverse habitat across multiple elevation gradients for the benefit special status, game and nongame species alike.

Conservation of the Falls Creek Property will benefit existing and future fish populations. According to the area fisheries biologist, MFWP has not collected recent fisheries data on the Upper Dearborn River and Falls Creek due to the lack of access. Data collection efforts in the past indicate Falls Creek

supported a healthy rainbow and brook trout fishery, likely as a result of MFWP's stocking efforts between 1931 and 1953. Survey work completed by MFWP and USFS in the early 2000s identified Falls Creek as an excellent candidate stream for introducing genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout and noted quality fish habitat exists throughout the drainage. Protecting Falls Creek and the upper reaches of the Dearborn River will support existing fish populations, conserve quality habitat for fish and other aquatic wildlife, and open access for biologists to study and enhance suitable fish populations.

Has the property been identified as an area critical to the lifecycle of some wildlife species? (Summer or winter range, migration corridors, spawning habitat, etc.)

MFWP indicates the Property is quality habitat for elk, moose, white-tailed deer, grizzly and black bear, mountain lion, and many other species. The Property is important spring, summer and fall range for several hundred elk. In 2018, MFWP observed just over 1,300 elk within the Hunting District (HD) 422, many of which use the Falls Creek Property as seasonal range. According to MFWP, the Property also supports year-long habitat for upland game birds, small mammals and birds, and seasonal habitat for numerous migrating birds. Acquisition of the Falls Creek Property will permanently protect habitat for resident and migratory wildlife species.

Is there habitat for Threatened or Endangered, or Sensitive species of wildlife or fish?

The Falls Creek Property provides habitat for a suite of special status species. Please see the attached table titled *Select Special Status Species and Associated Habitat on Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition* for a brief list of sensitive wildlife species. Grizzly bear (federally-threatened), Canada lynx (federally-threatened), and wolverine (potential federally-threatened species) have been observed in the project area and on the adjacent HLCNF. Multiple state species of concern have been observed in the project area and on the adjacent HLCNF including Townsend's big-eared bat, Clark's Nutcracker, Evening Grosbeak, and Northern Goshawk. Acquisition will conserve habitat for these special status species, and provide access for habitat management activities that benefit existing and future populations.

Are there streams or rivers with high habitat ratings from MFWP?

Approximately 2.05 miles of mountain streams, including 0.14 miles of the Dearborn River and 0.88 miles of Falls Creek, listed as Tier I CTGCN in the SWAP flow through the Property, and will be permanently protected through the Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition.

Is there intact native riparian habitat?

Approximately 44 acres of riparian habitat exists on the Property based on the U.S. Geological Survey's Gap Analysis Program land cover types and the 1986 Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan's definition of a "riparian area."

Provide Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation: Describe the value of the property for outdoor recreation, and identify any of the following that apply.

Will the proposed project maintain or increase legal and physical access for the public to existing public land or waters?

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will increase public access to 442 acres acquired and approximately 26,000 acres of the adjacent HLCNF in an area with limited public access. The Falls Creek Property has legal and physical access from Dearborn Canyon Road. Falls Creek Trail No. 229, an important trail, extends approximately 1 mile from Dearborn Canyon Road through the Property to the HLCNF and ties into the extensive trail network in the Bob Marshall – Scapegoat Wilderness Complex. RMEF and MFWP estimate securing access to Falls Creek Trail No. 229 will improve access to approximately 26,000 acres of adjacent USFS lands and approximately 600 acres of State lands. The USFS lands include an extensive trail network leading recreationists up the West and East Forks of Falls Creek to the Continental Divide. Once under USFS management, approximately 1 mile of Falls Creek Trail No. 229 will be accessible to the public for the first time in years and will provide diverse recreation opportunities on neighboring public land.

Permanent protection of the Falls Creek Property will enhance fishing opportunities on Falls Creek and the Dearborn River. The Property’s eastern boundary is bordered by approximately 1.25 miles of a fish-bearing stream called Falls Creek, known for its scenic waterfalls and views. Falls Creek is a tributary of the Dearborn River, which flows past the northern boundary of the Property and eventually empties into the Missouri River. Transferring the Property from private to public ownership will secure direct access to Falls Creek and the stream’s excellent pool habitat for anglers along Falls Creek Trail No. 229. Improving access to the HLCNF opens up additional miles of Falls Creek and other mountain streams for anglers to explore. Acquisition will also enhance fishing opportunities on the Dearborn River between two existing access sites: downstream from the Property where the Dearborn Canyon Road crosses the River and upstream where a pack bridge on USFS Trail No. 206 (Devils Glen) crosses the River. Inclusion of the Property in the HLCNF will enhance public access to the Dearborn River and Falls Creek for the public’s benefit.

Does the proposed project include legal access for the public on the private land proposed for conservation?

Currently, the Falls Creek Property is under private ownership and inaccessible to the public. Under USFS management, the public will have legal and physical access to 442 new acres in the Dearborn River Watershed and along the Rocky Mountain Front, a highly popular recreation area.

Will the project secure access for the public to an existing, long-standing recreation or access site?

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will secure access to approximately 26,000 acres of the adjacent HLCNF. The approximately 2.8 million-acre HLCNF sits along the southern boundary of the Falls Creek Property and links to the Lolo and Flathead National Forests. Access to the nationally renowned approximately 1 million-acre Bob Marshall Wilderness Area and the approximately 240,000-acre Scapegoat Wilderness Area located within 1 mile of the Property will be improved through the acquisition. Once complete, the project will improve access to approximately 26,000 acres, an estimated 40 sections, of the HLCNF and may include a newly designated wilderness area via the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, if enacted.

Does the site and type of access offer the possibility of recreation for people with physical limitations?

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition does not improve access for individuals with physical limitations, specifically. However, the project does improve access to the Dearborn River, Falls Creek and HLCNF for all members of the public, and the USFS, MFWP and other entities may improve the Falls Creek trailhead and construct an access site to the Dearborn River that provides access for individuals with physical limitations.

Will the project create or maintain a trailhead or trail for use by the public?

Acquisition of the Falls Creek Property will secure access to approximately 1 mile of Falls Creek Trail No. 229, a trail that runs from Dearborn Canyon Road along the eastern boundary of the Property to the HLCNF. Once included in the HLCNF, the USFS will manage the trail for public access in a manner consistent with the 1986 Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan (pending revision). A private trailhead currently exists on the Property, and may be improved by the USFS once protected. The improved trailhead could include a parking area for vehicles and horse trailers. MFWP, the USFS, and other fishing and boating organizations expressed interest in improving fishing access to the Dearborn River and Falls Creek.

Does the project support an existing, adopted outdoor recreation plan or initiative?

The USFS’s 2016 Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act Non-Motorized Trail Improvement Study identified securing “a public easement through private land from the Dearborn Canyon Road to the Falls Creek Trail No. 229” as a priority project. The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will directly support the Study by securing approximately 1 mile of the Falls Creek Trail No. 229 and 442 acres of adjacent private land.

Protect Water Resources and Water Quality: Describe the value of the property in terms of Water Resources and Water Quality, and identify any of the following that may apply.

Does the property contain high-quality wetlands?

The Falls Creek Property does not contain high-quality wetlands.

Are there lakes, ponds or springs located on the property?

The Falls Creek Property does not encompass any lakes, ponds or springs.

Does the property contain riparian areas with intact vegetation?

According to the U.S. Geological Survey’s Gap Analysis Program land cover types, the Falls Creek Property contains 23 acres of Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane Riparian Woodland and Shrubland. Approximately 2.05 miles of mountain streams and rivers flow across and alongside the Property. The 1986 Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan defines “riparian area” as “areas within a horizontal distance of 100 feet from the edge of perennial streams and other water bodies.” Based on this definition, the Property contains approximately 44 acres of riparian habitat that supports diverse terrestrial and aquatic species.

Are there rivers/streams with perennial flows?

Approximately 2.05 miles of perennial and intermittent streams flow through the Falls Creek Property, including 0.14 miles of the Dearborn River, 0.88 miles of Falls Creek and 1.03 miles of unnamed intermittent streams. The downhill side of the Falls Creek Property parallels approximately 1.22 miles of the Dearborn River. Conservation of the Property will protect natural filtration processes that maintain cold, clean flows into these perennial and intermittent streams and river.

Does the property contain land in the 100 year floodplain?

The location of the Property along the Dearborn River suggests a portion of the Property lies within the 100 year floodplain. A significant flood event in the spring of 2018 left a high water mark along the Property; although, the Property itself did not experience impacts from flooding.

Are there water rights appurtenant to the property?

There are no water rights appurtenant to the Property.

Is the property within a watershed that is the source of a public water supply system?

RMEF is not aware of any municipalities that use the Dearborn River as their primary water supply. The Dearborn River flows into the Missouri River near Craig, Montana. The Missouri River serves as a public water supply system for many cities across the country such as Bismarck, North Dakota and Omaha, Nebraska.

Is the property in an area that has been identified by a local, state or federal government agency as particularly sensitive in terms of its geology, soils or risk to an aquifer?

The Falls Creek Property has not been identified as sensitive in terms of its geology, soils or risk to an aquifer.

Has DEQ classified the waterway on the property as A-1 or better (per ARM 17.30.606-614)?

The Dearborn River is classified by the State of Montana as a "B-1" surface waterbody. According to the Administrative Rules of Montana, "waters classified as B-1 are to be maintained suitable for drinking, culinary, and food processing purposes...; bathing, swimming, and recreation; growth and propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, waterfowl and furbearers; and agricultural and industrial water supply."

Preserve Open Lands, Natural Areas and Historic Value: Describe the value of the property in terms of Open Lands, Natural Areas and Historic Value, and identify any of the following that may apply.

Does the property contain scenic features that are strongly associated with the county's identity and sense of place?

The Falls Creek Property ranges in elevation from 4,655 to 6,161 feet. The rise in elevation provides public recreationists a sweeping view of the Dearborn River drainage and the dramatic mountains that span the Rocky Mountain Front. The Property is within 4 miles of State Highway 434, which brings

travelers north/south along the Rocky Mountain Front, and within 11 miles of State Highway 200, a major travel corridor for tourists traveling from Missoula to Great Falls and many towns in between. The Property, and surrounding developments, are highly visible from State Highway 434. Acquisition of the Falls Creek Property will protect the existing viewshed from further development for visitors and residents traveling through the area.

Will the project conserve unique geologic or geographic features?

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will protect the breathtaking, approximately 40-foot tall, waterfall on Falls Creek.

Does the proposed project help implement an adopted community plan or neighborhood vision?

As noted above, the Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Access Acquisition will support Montana’s 2015 SWAP and the USFS’s 2016 Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act Non-Motorized Trail Improvement Study. Due to the project’s rural location, the project does not support an adopted community plan or neighborhood vision.

Does the property adjoin a city, town or unincorporated community?

No, the Falls Creek Property does not adjoin a city, town or unincorporated community.

Are there threatened or endangered species, or species of concern on the property?

The Falls Creek Property and surrounding public lands support federally-threatened species and State species of concern. Please see the responses above and the attached table titled *Select Special Status Species and Associated Habitat on Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition* for additional information.

Is there a particularly good example of a native habitat (e.g. native grasslands, healthy stands of aspen or limber pine, riparian plant associations)?

Native instream habitat within Falls Creek and the Dearborn River, and healthy groves of aspen woodlands represent exemplary native habitat on the Property. Please see the habitat descriptions above for additional information on these native habitats.

Are there historic, archeological or prehistoric sites located on the property including historic or prehistoric corridors and trails?

To the best of RMEF’s knowledge, there are no historic, archeological or prehistoric sites on the Falls Creek Property. The Falls Creek Property sits within 5 miles of the popular long-distance trail, the Continental Divide Trail, and within close proximity to the Lewis and Clark National Trail.

Are there any other outstanding or unique features of the property you would like to describe?

The Falls Creek – Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition will alleviate significant public access challenges in the Falls Creek drainage and into the HLCNF. In 2013, ongoing access challenges in the Falls Creek drainage resulted in the loss of human life after multiple court cases and on and off law

enforcement presence. Securing access to the Property will benefit the public by resolving this access challenge and eliminating the potential for future controversy.

Required Supporting Documentation: Please refer to the 'Required Attachments for Level Two Application for Projects Funded by the Open Lands Program, Lewis and Clark County, Montana' document.

RMEF will provide the required supporting documentation as it becomes available.

I/we have prepared this application to the best of our ability and knowledge and request that Lewis and Clark County evaluate this request for funding based on the information contained herein. I/we understand the project selection process described in the Lewis and Clark Open Lands Program Guide. I/we understand that a recommendation that this project move to the Due Diligence Phase is not a guarantee of funding. If any information or circumstances changes substantially the project may be subject to reconsideration or reapplication, as described in the Program Guide.

I am authorized to sign this application as the applicant/landowner or a representative of the Sponsor.



Landowner Signature

9-24-2018

Date

And/or



Sponsor Representative Signature

9/26/18

Date



ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT ACCESS – FALLS CREEK ACQUISITION

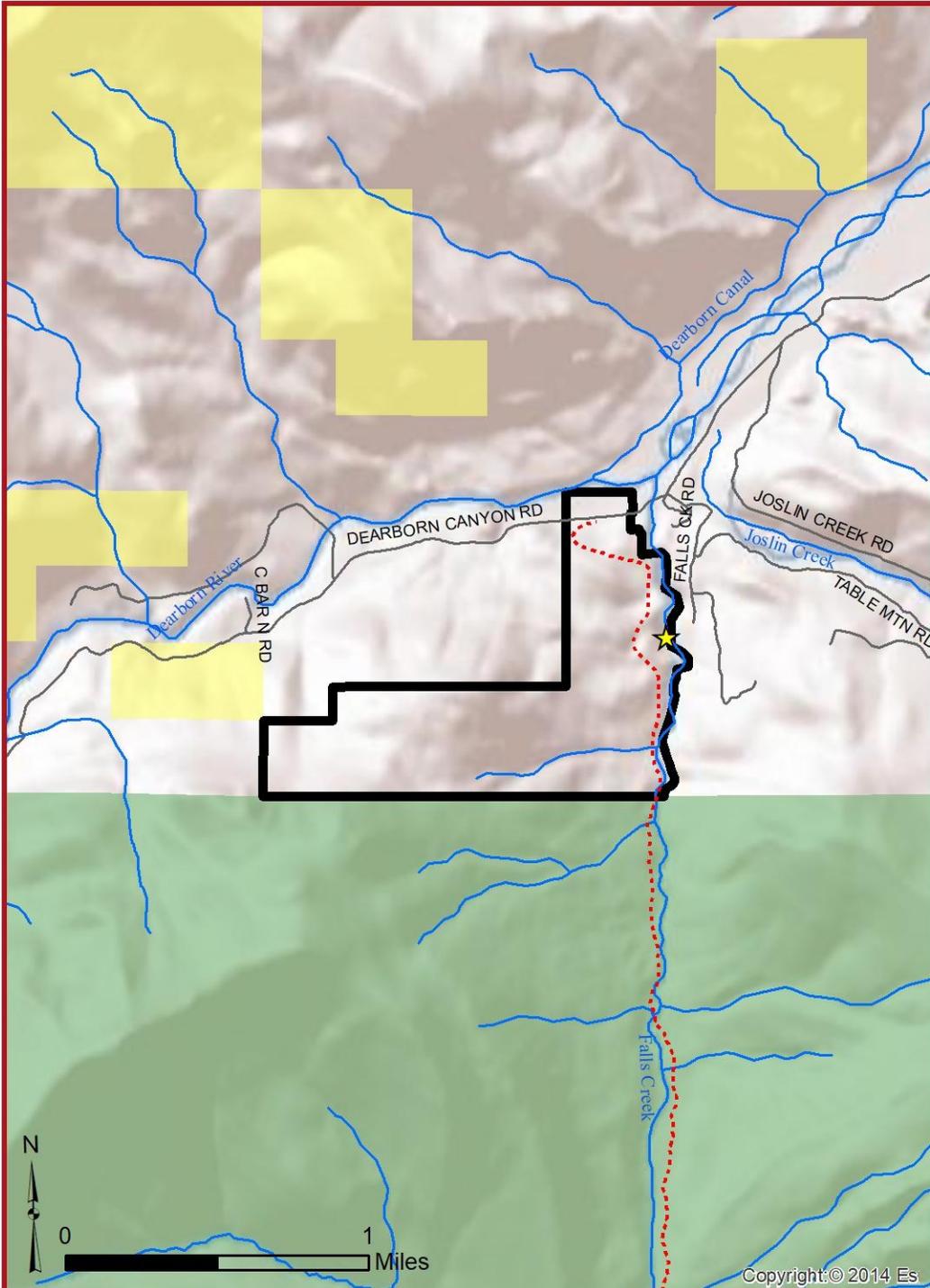
Lewis & Clark County, Montana

Legend

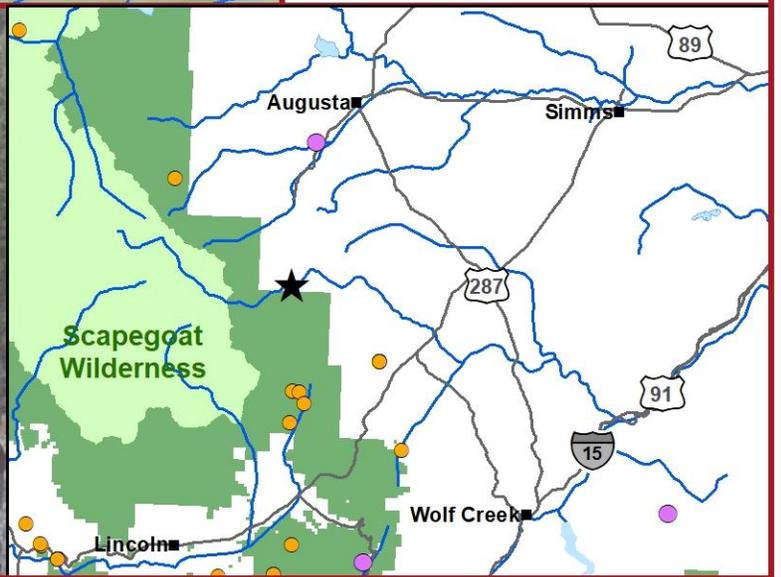
- Falls Creek Waterfall
- Land Protection Project
- Habitat & Wildlife Stewardship Project
- Trail
- Stream
- Road
- Rocky Mountain Front Access – Falls Creek Acquisition
- Bureau of Land Management
- Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

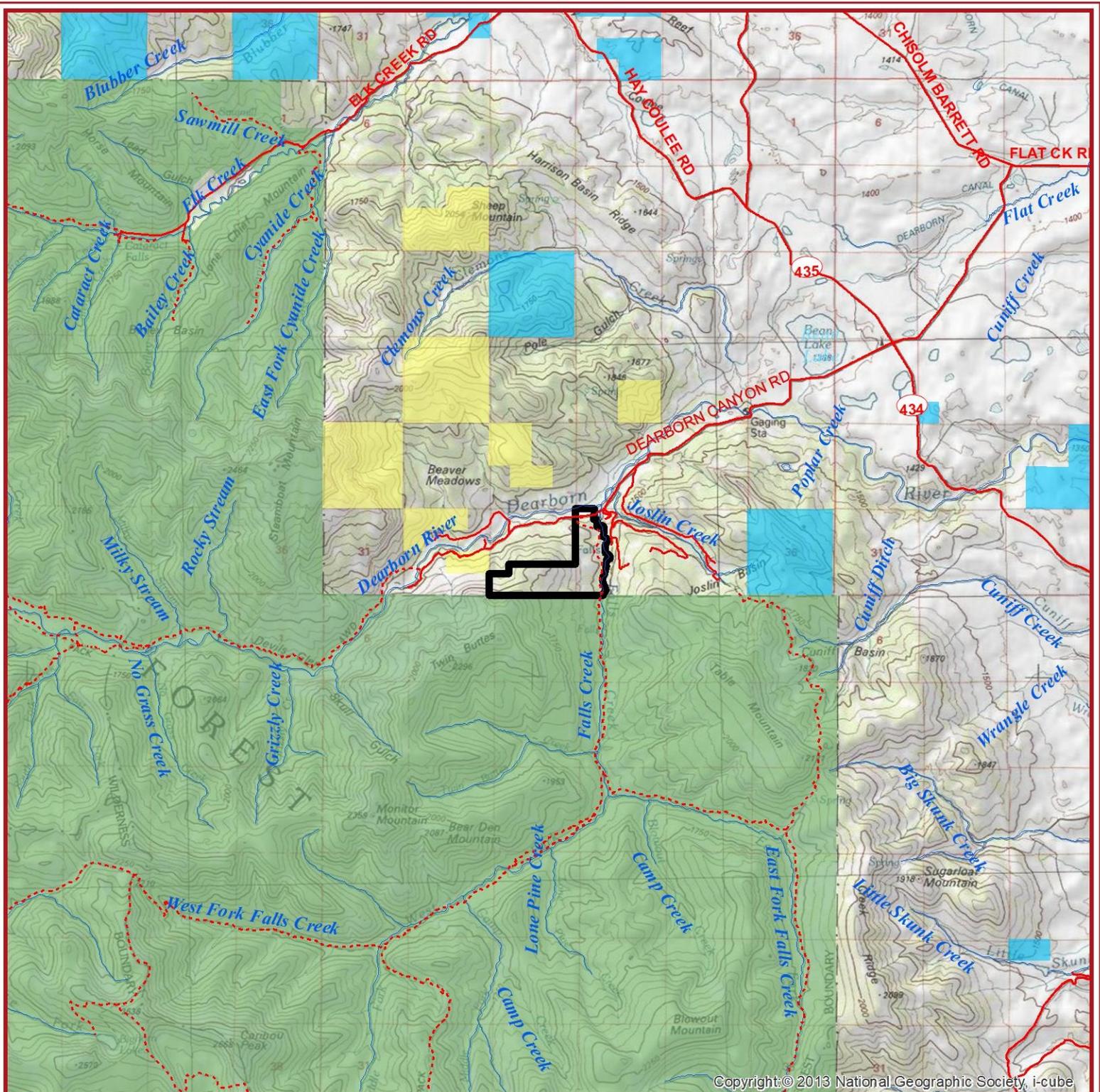


Note; This map is intended as a general visual reference only.
FallsCreekMT_BoardMap.mxd
8/14/2018



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FALLS CREEK ACQUISITION

Lewis & Clark County, Montana



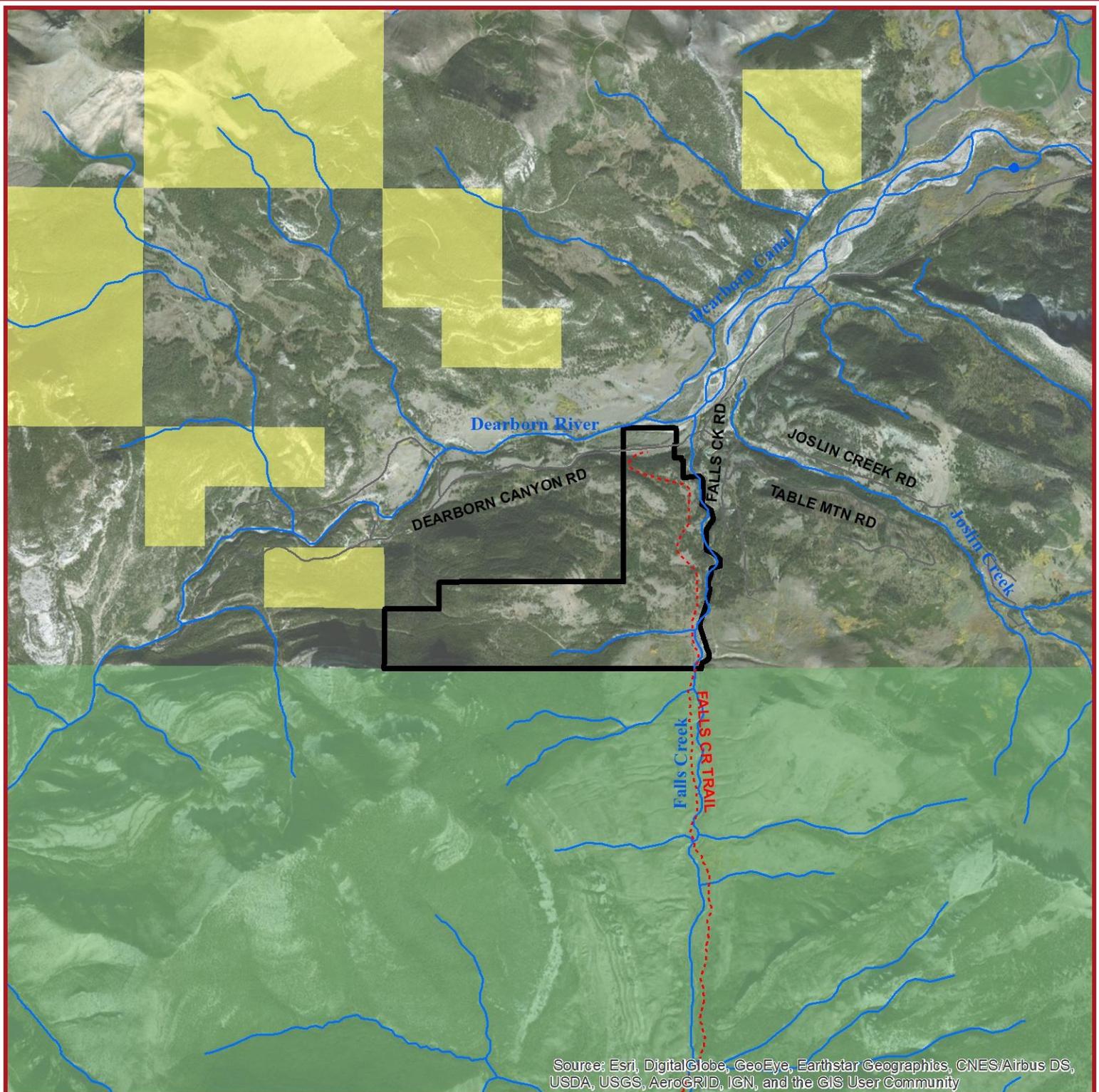
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Note: This map is intended as a general visual reference only.

FallsCreekMT_Topo.mxd
4/3/2018

LEGEND

- - - - - Trail
- Stream
- Road
- Falls Creek Acquisition
- Bureau of Land Management
- Helena - Lewis & Clark National Forest
- Montana State Trust Lands



FALLS CREEK ACQUISITION

Lewis & Clark County, Montana

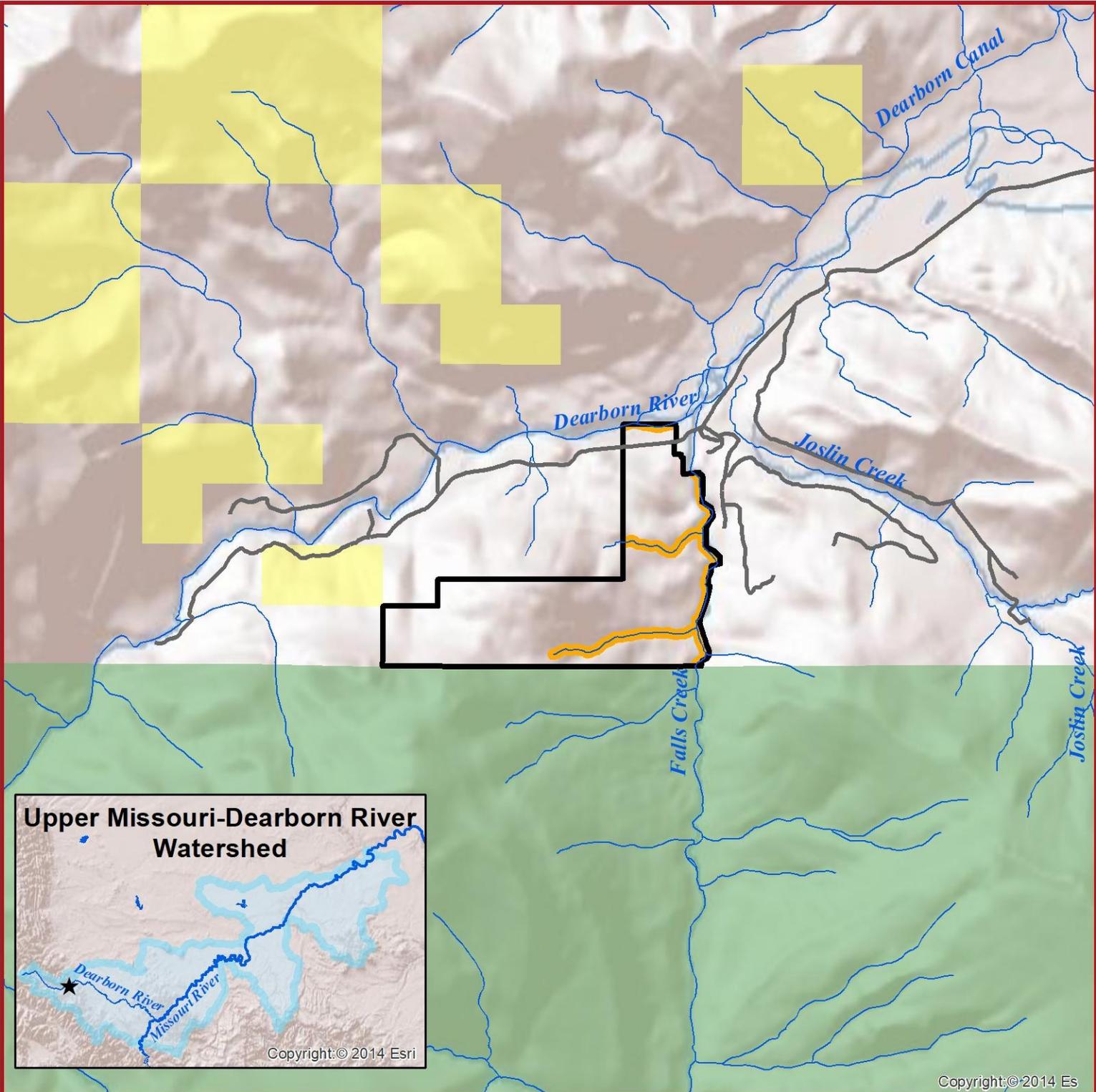


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Note: This map is intended as a general visual reference only.
 FallsCreekMT_AerialMap.mxd
 3/30/2018

LEGEND

-  Trail
-  Stream
-  Road
-  Falls Creek Acquisition
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

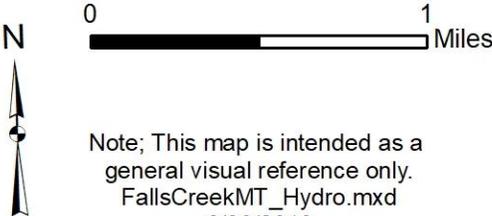


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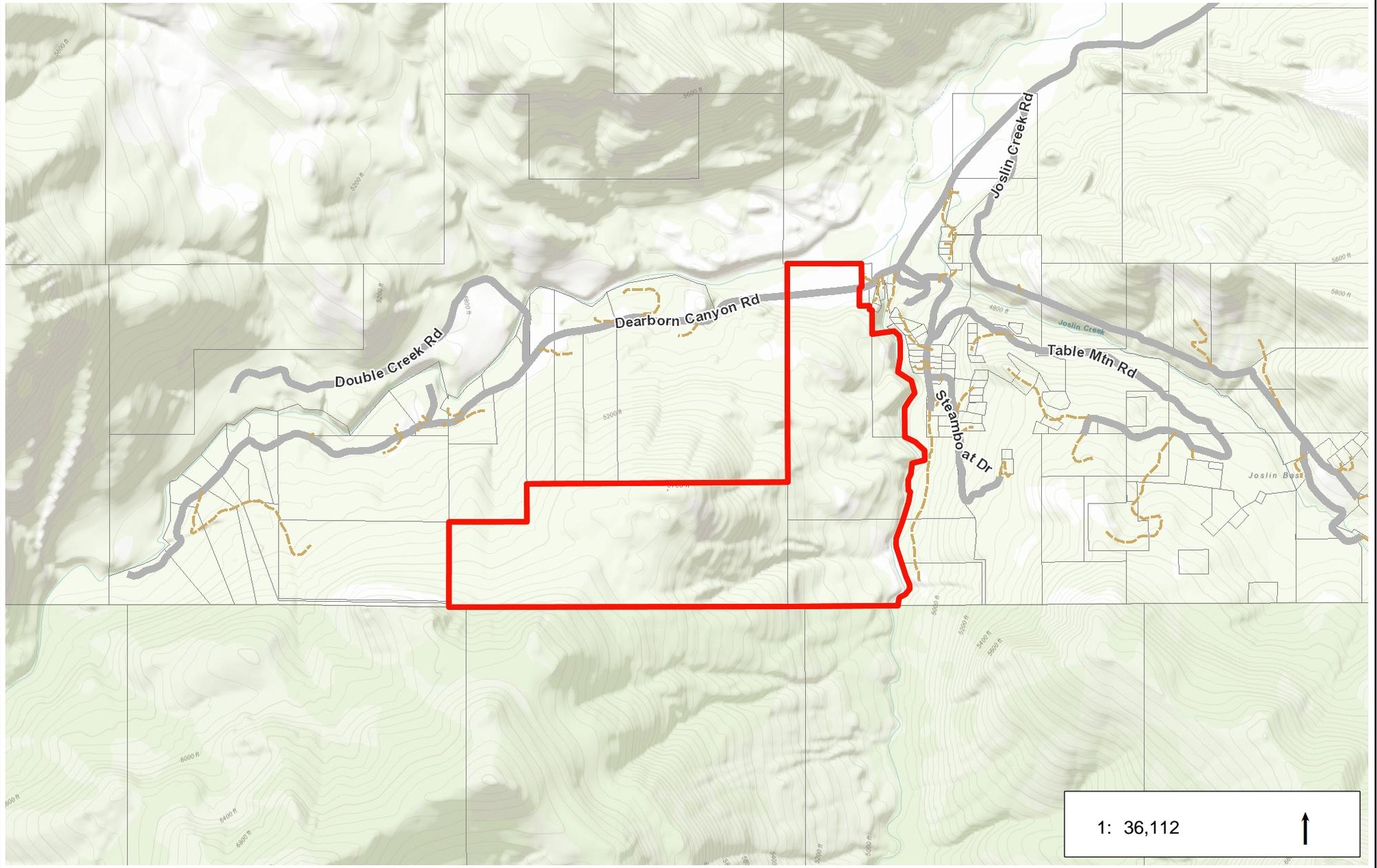
FALLS CREEK ACQUISITION

Lewis & Clark County, Montana



Legend

- Road
- Stream
- Falls Creek Acquisition
- 100 foot buffer on both sides of Perennial and Intermittent Streams
- Bureau of Land Management
- Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest



1: 36,112 

1.1 0 0.57 1.1 Miles




This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

Select Special Status Species and Associated Habitat on Falls Creek Rocky Mountain Front Access Property			
Species	Habitat	Status	Migration
Mammals			
<i>Canada Lynx</i>	Lodgepole pine-dominated or mixed subalpine forests	FT ; SOC/SGCN ; USFS Threatened	Year-round Resident
<i>Fisher</i>	Mixed conifer forests	SOC/SGCN ; USFS Sensitive ; BLM Sensitive	Year-round Resident
<i>Grizzly Bear</i>	Conifer forests	DM ³ ; SOC/SGCN ; USFS Threatened ; BLM Sensitive	Year-round Resident
<i>Hoary Bat</i>	Conifer and hardwood forests, and riparian corridors	SOC/SGCN	Summer Resident
<i>Townsend's Big-eared Bat</i>	Caves in forested habitats	SOC/SGCN ; USFS Sensitive ; BLM Sensitive	Year-round Resident
<i>Wolverine</i>	High mountain forests	PT ; SOC/SGCN ; BLM Sensitive	Year-round Resident
Birds			
Bald Eagle	Riparian areas and forests along rivers and lakes	DM ; SSS ; USFS Sensitive ; BLM Sensitive ; MBTA ; BCC	Year-round Resident
<i>Black-backed Woodpecker</i>	Conifer forest burns	SOC/SGCN ; USFS Sensitive ; BLM Sensitive ; MBTA	Year-round Resident
Clark's Nutcracker	Conifer forests dominated by ponderosa pine or Douglas fir	SOC/SGCN ; MBTA	Year-round Resident
Evening Grosbeak	Mixed conifer and spruce-fir forests	SOC/SGCN ; MBTA	Year-round Resident
Ferruginous Hawk	Sagebrush steppes, grass-sagebrush complexes, shrub-grasslands and mixed-grass prairies	SOC/SGCN ; BLM Sensitive ; MBTA ; BCC	Spring, Summer and Fall Resident
<i>Flammulated Owl</i>	Dry conifer forests	SOC/SGCN ; USFS Sensitive ; BLM Sensitive ; MBTA ; BCC	Spring, Summer and Fall Resident
Great Gray Owl	Conifer forests near open meadows	SOC/SGCN ; BLM Sensitive ; MBTA	Year-round Resident
Northern Goshawk	Mature forests with large trees, a dense canopy and an open understory	SOC/SGCN ; MBTA	Year-round Resident
Pacific Wren	Moist conifer forests	SOC/SGCN ; MBTA	Year-round Resident

¹Species listed currently occupy or will likely occupy the Falls Creek property and surrounding Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest if recovered. Abbreviated species list is based on data pulled from the Montana Natural Heritage Program for Lewis and Clark County, Montana. Species italicized indicates they are known to exist on the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest per the Montana Natural Heritage Program data.

² Abbreviations used are as follows: FT = Federal Threatened Species under Endangered Species Act (ESA), PT = Potential Threatened Species under ESA, DM = Recovered, delisted and being monitored under ESA, SOC/SGCN = State Species of Concern/State Species of Greatest Conservation Need, SSS = State Special Status Species, USFS Sensitive or Threatened = U.S. Forest Service Sensitive or Threatened Species, BLM Sensitive = U.S. Bureau of Land Management Sensitive Species, MBTA = Migratory Bird Treaty Act Protected Species, and BCC = Bird of Conservation Concern. Montana's 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies SGCN and explains how Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks determined SGCN species; please see the SWAP for additional information. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identifies species listed under ESA and as MBTA and BCC; please see their website for additional information.

³ According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Distinct Population Segment of the grizzly bear is delisted under the ESA. Populations outside of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Distinct Population Segment remain listed as Threatened under the ESA.

Falls Creek Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition Crucial Habitats			
Community Types of Greatest Conservation Need	Land Cover and Measurements		Associated Species
Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland	Rocky Mountain Foothill Limber Pine-Juniper Woodland	19.79 Acres	Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Lynx, Clark's Nutcracker, Evening Grosbeak, Ferruginous Hawk, Fisher, Flammulated Owl, Great Gray Owl, Grizzly Bear, Hoary Bat, Northern Goshawk, Townsend's Big-eared Bat, and Wolverine
	Rocky Mountain Lodgepole Pine Forest	24.46 Acres	
	Middle Rocky Mountain Montane Douglas-fir Forest and Woodland	47.59 Acres	
	Rocky Mountain Subalpine Dry-Mesic Spruce-fir Forest and Woodland	105.19 Acres	
	Northern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland and Savanna	5.78 Acres	
	Northern Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest	34.47 Acres	
Deciduous Conifer Forest and Woodland	Rocky Mountain Aspen Forest and Woodland	3.56 Acres	Clark's Nutcracker, Evening Grosbeak, Ferruginous Hawk, Fisher, Great Gray Owl, Grizzly Bear, Hoary Bat, and Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Deciduous Shrubland	Northern Rocky Mountain Montane-Foothill Deciduous Shrubland	30.47 Acres	Canada Lynx, Clark's Nutcracker, Evening Grosbeak, Ferruginous Hawk, Grizzly Bear, Hoary Bat, and Wolverine
	Northern Rocky Mountain Subalpine Deciduous Shrubland	3.11 Acres	
Sagebrush Steppe	Inter-Mountain Basins Montane Sagebrush Steppe	13.57 Acres	Ferruginous Hawk, Hoary Bat, and Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Montane Grassland	Northern Rocky Mountain Subalpine-Upper Montane Grassland	5.34 Acres	Clark's Nutcracker, Ferruginous Hawk, Fisher, Great Gray Owl, Grizzly Bear, Hoary Bat, Townsend's Big-eared Bat, and Wolverine
	Rocky Mountain Subalpine-Montane Mesic Meadow	4.00 Acres	
	Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane, Foothill and Valley Grassland	52.26 Acres	
Floodplain and Riparian	Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane Riparian Woodland and Shrubland	23.57 Acres ⁴	Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Lynx, Clark's Nutcracker, Evening Grosbeak, Ferruginous Hawk, Fisher, Flammulated Owl, Great Gray Owl, Grizzly Bear, Hoary Bat, Northern Goshawk, Townsend's Big-eared Bat, and Wolverine
Mountain Streams	Falls Creek, Dearborn River, and unnamed intermittent streams	2.05 Miles	Westslope Cutthroat Trout
Total Tier 1 Community Types of Greatest Conservation Need	Acres and Miles		

¹ Montana's 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies Community Types of Greatest Conservation Need (CTGCN) and associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). All CTGCN listed above are identified as Tier 1 CTGCN, which means "there is a clear obligation to use resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these community types." Each CTGCN profile in the SWAP identifies associated SGCN, which are listed in the *Associated SGCN* column in the above table. Please see the SWAP for additional information.

² *USGS Land Cover* based on the U.S Geological Survey's Gap Analysis Program and aquatic data based on the U.S. Geological Survey's National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). Data sets generated in March, 2018.

³ Please see Footnote 1 for more information.

⁴ As noted above, the *USGS Land Cover* listed above reflects data generated using the U.S. Geological Survey's Gap Analysis Program. The 1986 Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan defines "riparian area" as "areas within a horizontal distance of 100 feet from the edge of perennial streams and other water bodies." This definition expands the riparian habitat acres stated above to 44 acres.

Falls Creek - Rocky Mountain Front Access Acquisition
Photographs by Laura Verhaeghe, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



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