LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY
OPEN LANDS FUNDING LEVEL ONE APPLICATION

Please respond in writing to the questions below. Responses should be forwarded to Community & Planning Department, City-County Building, Room 220, Helena, Montana 59623. For additional information, please contact Community Development & Planning at 406-447-8374.

Landowner and Sponsor Agency Identification: Landowner – Douglas and Ronda Potter
Sponsor - Prickly Pear Land Trust

Project Name: Potter Conservation Easement

Planning Area (Circle one): Augusta, Canyon Ferry/York, Craig/Wolf Creek, Helena, Lincoln, Marysville

Project Address: 6192 Matt Staff Road, East Helena, MT

Project Legal Location:
S19, T10 N, R01 W, LTS 1-2, E2NW
S19, T10 N, R01 W, E2
S20, T10 N, R01 W, N2, SW4, LTS 2 & 4, SWSE
S21, T10 N, R01 W, W2NW, NWSW
S20, T10 N, R01 W, SESE
S21, T10 N, R01 W, S2SW
S30, T10 N, R01 W, N2NE SENE
S29, T10 N, R01 W, NE4 N2NW N2SE N2N2SENW SWNW
S28, T10 N, R01 W, NW4 N2SW SWNE NWSE
S29, T10 N, R01 W, SESE
S28, T10 N, R01 W, SWSW
S28, T10 N, R01 W, SESW
S32, T10 N, R01 W, N2SW4, W2SE4, NE4NE4, W2NE4, NW4
S33, T10 N, R01 W, W2NW
S33, T10 N, R01 W, NENW
S32, T10 N, R01 W, E2SE4
S32, T10 N, R01 W, S2SW4
S05, T09 N, R01 W, NW2 G.LOT 3, ALL G.LOT 4
S05, T09 N, R01 W, SW4NW4; SW4SE4NW4
S06, T09 N, R01 W, LT 1
S06, T09 N, R01 W, SE4NE4

Project Type: (easement, acquisition, etc.): Conservation Easement

Owner Signature: [Signature]
Sponsor Agent Signature: [Signature]

Date: 1-2-19

Please elaborate but do not use more than two attached pages (total) for your responses.
1. Briefly describe the conservation values on the property and explain how the completion of this project will protect the conservation values of the property and meet the goals of the Open Lands Program to:
   a. Conserve working farms & ranches; Yes
   b. Conserve working forests; No
   c. Protect habitat for fish and wildlife; Yes
   d. Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation; No
   e. Protect water resources and water quality; Yes
   f. Preserve open lands and natural areas; and, Yes
   g. Manage growth and development. Yes

By protecting the historic Potter Ranch, the proposed conservation easement will achieve six of the seven goals of the Open Lands Program. One of the remaining working ranches of its size in the Helena Valley, the Potter Ranch occupies an important view shed between Highway 12 and Canyon Ferry Road. It is one of the two largest private portions of the Spokane Hills on the Northwest edge of Canyon Ferry and provides habitat for a variety of wildlife. The property is home to elk, whitetail and mule deer, pronghorn, black bear, mountain lion, bobcats, ermine, turkey, blue, roughed and franklin grouse as well as Hungarian partridge. While the property’s timber is not merchantable, much of the upper elevations remain as intact woodland and grassland. The property contains about a 1/3-mile section of the perennial Spokane Creek, as well as several of the creek’s tributaries. Despite the area’s high wildfire risk and poor access to water, roads and service, the property is facing immediate subdivision pressure from the North and West sides. Finally, this property offers public access in the form of hiking through to Bureau of Land Management property (the former McMaster Ranch) along Canyon Ferry. The landowners currently provide recreational access for this purpose on the northern edge of the property.

2. Describe how the history of the sponsor agency allows it to be capable of the long-term stewardship and management of the conservation values of the property.

Prickly Pear Land Trust has been working to acquire and steward open spaces since its formation in 1996. PPLT is nationally accredited, and its practices continuously meet the highest level of professional standards set by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission for excellence in both daily operations and long-term land stewardship. To date, PPLT has worked with Lewis and Clark County Open Lands program more than any other partner (on seven projects). PPLT has a trained and dedicated stewardship staff and has proven its capacity for active and quality long-term stewardship through its annual oversight of nineteen conservation easements.

3. State why the applicants consider the property to be of sufficient size to be commensurate with the type of open space values being protected.

The proposed project is around 3,100 acres in size which provides a rare opportunity to set aside a significant amount of land for protection in an area that is at heightened risk of subdivision and development. The Potter property combined with the adjacent BLM McMaster Hills and grass bank, will mean roughly 8,000+ acres of contiguous protected land in the Spokane Hills.
4. State if the land is or is not contaminated by hazardous or toxic substances from previous on or off site uses. If the land is contaminated, please identify the contamination and describe how the materials can be removed from the property and the site reclaimed.

To the best of PPLT’s knowledge, as well as the landowner’s, there is no contamination by hazardous or toxic substances on the property. If necessary, a Phase I environmental assessment will be conducted prior to the project’s closing to verify this.

5. Please declare if the property is associated with a subdivision or any other land use development. If so, explain how the subdivision/development is compatible with the goals and policies of Lewis & Clark County, the surrounding local community, and the open space values contained in the Open Lands Program listed above.

This property is not associated with any subdivision or other land use development.

6. If the project will be funded by sources other than the Lewis & Clark County Open Lands Bond, please identify the sources and extent of the funding.

PPLT has reached an agreement with the landowner to donate some portion of the easement. PPLT also intends to partner with other agencies to procure additional funding. The amount requested from the Lewis and Clark County Open Space Bond will be formalized after an appraisal of the property is performed.

Thank you. Projects passing the Level 1 review will be forwarded to the Lewis & Clark County Open Lands Citizen Advisory Committee only when accompanied by a Level 2 application.