



Community Development and Planning
Lewis and Clark County

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STAFF REPORT

Date: April 11, 2024
To: Board of County Commissioners
From: Phil Gonzalez, Planner II

RE: Birdseye Ranch - Open Lands Application

Applicant:
Prickly Pear Land Trust
P.O. BOX 892
Helena, MT 59602-8161

Owner:
RV Ranch Company
Jim O’Connell
6531 W US HWY 12, MT 59601

County Commission Meeting: April 18, 2024 --- 9:00 a.m.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Birdseye Ranch Open Lands application submitted by Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) (See Attachment A) to acquire a 1,457 acres of ranch land from the RV Ranch CO. The property is adjacent to Fort Harrison to the south and approximately 2,000 acres of BLM land to the west. It is one of the last remaining large tracts of land in the Helena Valley. Nearly all the remaining private land adjacent or nearby has been subdivided and developed for residential use. (See Attachment B)

The property has been and is currently used for the seasonal grazing of cattle. A large contiguous block of grassland, tame pasture and hay land that is punctuated by four main drainages that cross the property west to east including Granite and Cherry Creek and two unnamed. On the property exist one large calving barn, several small cow sheds and one historical stone faced “keep” constructed into a hill. The “keep” structure functioned as a holding keep for locals that were buried on site, bodies could be held until the ground thawed. There are two two-track roads that exist through the property that originate from Birdseye Road and Barrett Road.

PPLT has entered a fee-title purchase agreement with the property owner RV Ranch CO. to purchase the property for the appraised value of \$2,900,000. PPLT will be utilizing three funding sources including the Department of Defense Army Compatible Use Buffer program

and the Montana Fish Wildlife Conservation Trust, PPLT is requesting \$1,000,000 from the Lewis and Clark County Open Space Bond: 33.8% of the total land cost.

A Level Two application (expedited review process) was submitted on March 6, 2024. The project was presented to the Citizens Advisory Committee on Open Lands (CAC) on April 2, 2024. This meeting was followed by a site visit to the property with the CAC and Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) members and Board of County Commissioner Tom Rolfe on April 8, 2024. The CAC held a public meeting on April 9, 2024 to provide a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). During this meeting, the CAC reviewed the application and found that it met the Project Evaluation criteria found in the Open Lands Program Guide (Amended May 3, 2018). Following this evaluation, the CAC voted (7-0) to recommend the BoCC approve the project.

II. REQUEST:

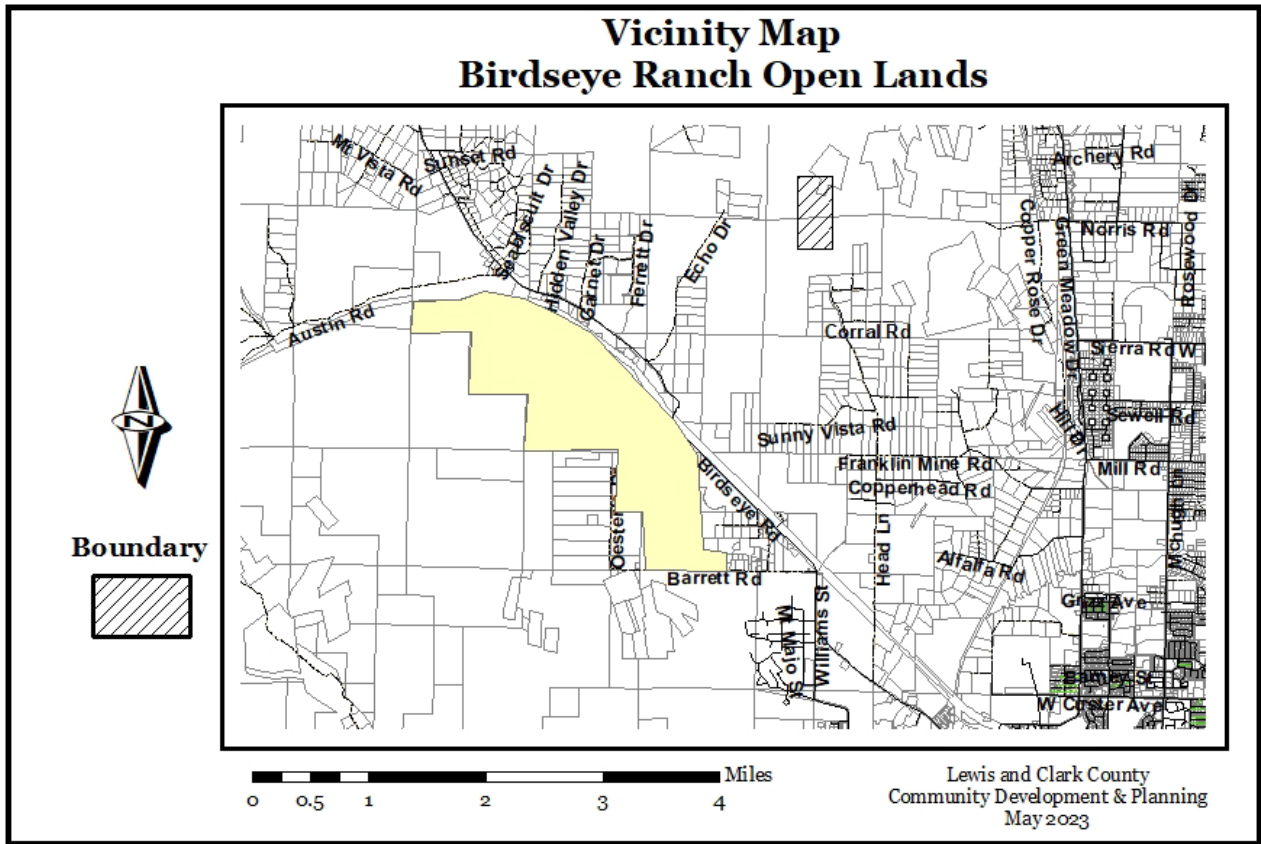
- PPLT is requesting **\$1,000,000.00** (33.8% of total land cost) from the bond to assist in the purchase of the property from RV Ranch CO.
- **Appraised Value of land is \$2,900,000.00.**
- **Estimated Total Project Cost is \$2,962,200.00.**

III. RECOMMENDED BOARD ACTION:

Accept the recommendation of the CAC for the proposed assistance in the purchase of the RV Ranch CO. property and move forward with the 30-Day Open Comment Period.

IV. LOCATION

The property is located west of Helena, MT, along the southern side of the Birdseye Road and North of Fort Harrison within Lewis and Clark County. The 1,457-acre ranch is owned by the RV Ranch CO and is addressed off Barrett Road.



V. EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND USES:

The property is currently a working ranch used for cattle grazing. The property is minimally developed with one large calving barn along Barrett Road, several small cow sheds and one historical stone faced “keep” constructed into a hill side.

Existing Zoning Regulations.

The property is zoned within the Fort Harrison #7 Zone District and Fort Harrison Rural Growth Area.

Adjacent Land Uses.

- North: Residential
- East: Residential/Ranch
- South: Fort Harrison
- West: Residential/Ranch/BLM

VI. Land, Water and Wildlife Bond Measure & Open Lands Program - PROJECT EVALUATION:

The Land, Water and Wildlife Bond Measure prioritizes projects that are consistent with its purpose, and which can be summarized as follows:

- a. Conserve working farms and ranches;
- b. Conserve working forests;
- c. Protect habitat for fish and wildlife;
- d. Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation;
- e. Protect water resources and water quality;
- f. Preserve open lands and natural areas; and
- g. Manage growth and development.

In addition to the basic goal statements listed above, County staff, CAC and BOCC will consider other factors to help them evaluate projects. This information may be observed during a site visit, provided in the application narrative, learned in the course of the presentation by the sponsor or known from prior conservation experience. Consistency with one or more of the bond issues conservation goals is one essential element of the County's project selection process, but is not the only deciding factor. To accomplish the purposes of the bond measure, the following factors will also be considered:

- a) Conserve large blocks of land: Input from all sources indicated that many of the resources valued by citizens of Lewis and Clark County depend on large-scale conserved areas and corridors to connect them. Accordingly, preference will be given to bigger tracts or parcels that can link protected areas. However, scale is an important consideration only if appropriate for the purpose of the project. Some types of projects will not require extensive acreage to achieve their conservation and public benefit objectives.

The application states the project, if approved, will conserve 1,457 acres from development in relatively well developed area close to the City of Helena.

- b) Expand and connect existing open land holdings: Similarly, opportunities to add to existing protected or publicly-owned lands to create large conserved areas will be prioritized. The project selection process elevates and supports opportunities to piece together expansive conserved landscapes, whether the property proposed for conservation is currently contiguous with other protected land or not.

The application states the project is adjacent and provide an access point to over 2,000 acres of public BLM land.

- c) Maximize the public benefit return on the County's fund: Projects that offer multiple benefits to increase the return on each dollar invested in conservation will be prioritized. Leveraging each dollar through matching funds, in the form of money from other sources or reduced purchase prices offered by landowners is important. The higher the level of match, the higher the level of priority for funding.

The application states that if the Birdseye Ranch Open Lands application is approved it will use other sources of funds to purchase the property, these notes funds from the Department of Defense Army Compatible Use Buffer Program and the Montana Wildlife Conservation Trust will leverage Lewis and Clark County dollars at a 1:2 ratio.

- d) Conserve working farms and ranches: Recognizing that farms and ranches are essential to the County's heritage, history, economy, culture, appearance, desirability and natural features, the Program supports landowners who want to conserve their agricultural properties. Accordingly, when working lands projects are evaluated, factors such as how long a property has been owned by members of one family, how the project could help make the current agricultural operation more sustainable, the current condition of the land (as a way of judging the stewardship practices of the operation) and whether the business provides products and jobs for local communities will be considered.

The RV Ranch is a historic family-owned ranch that operated at this location. Historically the property has been used for cattle grazing. If the application is approved PPLT will initiate an are-wide restoration of the grasslands and riparian areas, a future grazing and management plan will incorporate sustainable grazing practices and support the land's wildlife habitat conservation values and reduce wildland fire hazards.

- e) Conserve working forests: Working forests and the timber/wood products industries have also been an important part of Lewis and Clark County's heritage. Despite the current downturn in the wood products market, county leaders realize that forests contribute in a meaningful way to local culture, scenery, water quality and the health of the environment. Therefore, supporting landowners' efforts to retain and steward their forest lands is significant. As part of helping secure the heritage of the County, the Program's project selection process incorporates factors such as how long a property has been in family ownership, how the project could help address fire risks, the current stewardship practices and contributions to the local economy.

The application states there is a limited number of wooded areas, mostly along riparian areas as the landscape consists of mostly grasslands. The applicant states that the wooded areas along riparian areas will be protected from grazing in order to enhance wildlife habitat.

- f) Protect habitat for fish and wildlife: Hunting and fishing are beloved activities for many Lewis and Clark County residents and visitors. Others are equally enthusiastic about watching birds or other wildlife. For another subset of stakeholders, it is very valuable to maintain the full complement of Montana's creatures and their habitats. These interests will be supported through the County's conservation investments. Based on the input of experts, priority fish and wildlife projects will contain high-quality (i.e. generally undisturbed) habitat, a diversity of habitat types and sites that contribute to healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

The application states the property contains important habitat primarily for the greatly threatened local pronghorn herd. The westernmost hills support black bear, mountain lion, rough legged hawk, and a robust mule deer population.

- g) Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation: There is a broad spectrum of recreational interests in Lewis and Clark County and those recreational opportunities contribute to the economy. The CAC, the staff and BOCC feel that public access is a very important goal for any publicly funded project. Although it is not a requirement, all applicants are encouraged to consider the possibility of some form of public access, even if limited. Accordingly, projects that expand the public's ability to engage in outdoor activities of all types will be given additional consideration. Where access is provided, the County will work with the applicants to ensure that it is well-managed and maintained by an appropriate and capable partner.

The application states that the project will increase legal and physical access for the public to 1,457 acres of property and the adjoining BLM land.

- h) Protect water resources and water quality: Lewis and Clark County is a dry place with limited supplies of clean fresh water. Polling prior to the bond measure showed strong local interest in ensuring that those supplies are kept healthy. Bond funding provides the County with limited financial resources to compensate landowners for caring for this irreplaceable resource. To make the best possible use of the limited funds, lands that protect ground or surface water that feeds private or public water sources will be prioritized. Locations where development – and its corresponding changes to the land – would most impact drinking water will have preference.

The application states that wetlands are focused along Granite creek and the property's northern boundary along Sevenmile Creek. The areas along Granite Creek have potential for improvement and restoration in future years. There are several springs scattered across the property. Though local water typically comes from the Tenmile Creek watershed, this property affects local wells and may affect the backup/ temporary water supply to Helena.

- i) Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways: During project selection, factors that support healthy waterways will be considered. These factors include native riparian vegetation, natural watercourses and dedicated buffers to keep pollutants out of the water. Experts have counseled that water quantity and quality are inextricably linked. Therefore, to the degree legally possible, keeping water in rivers and streams will have priority. Other desirable characteristics include protection of both banks of a waterway, longer stretches of frontage, current restoration efforts and other evidence of good or improving water quality.

The application states planned restoration work around riparian areas could allow Granite Creek to a perennial flow. The property's northern boundary is adjacent to Sevenmile Creek for 3 miles, restricted development on the property will act as a buffer against pollutants and maintain natural watercourse.

- j) Preserve open lands and natural areas: Area residents have repeatedly expressed their desire to retain the landscapes, expansive vistas, unique resources, local culture, open space and natural environment that make Lewis and Clark County a desirable place to live, work, recreate and visit. Accordingly, when considering projects, conservation of properties that contribute to the character of the County such as iconic landscapes, especially good examples of natural features, or helping communities achieve their established open space objectives will be prioritized. Where appropriate, and as defined by the Growth Policy, consideration will be given to how a project might contribute to creating a buffer or green space around a community's important conservation values.

The application states the project area is adjacent to approximately 3 miles of Birdseye Road, a well traveled area relatively close to the Helena Valley. If approved the project will help preserve an iconic landscape that is highly visible and adds to the character of the county, making Lewis and Clark County a desirable place to live.

- k) Manage growth and development: By implementing the other conservation purposes of the bond measure the Program will automatically accomplish this goal. Conserving lands that contain the natural, scenic, cultural and recreational resources targeted for funding will be a step toward directing growth and development to sites that are less sensitive or locally valued. During the project selection process, consideration will be given to the type and level of threat a property (such as imminent subdivision) and associated resource values is facing and the relative urgency of conserving it. The program will also consider the long-term viability of the conservation values.

The application states that the property is at high risk for development, given the encroachment by subdivisions from the north. A number of other area ranches have been sold and divided into residential housing areas, ceasing agricultural use and eliminating habitat. The property was listed for sale in 2020. Several offers for the property fell through, but at least one offer was to develop the property into a residential subdivision.

- l) Ensure permanent conservation outcomes: Conserving land in perpetuity is an implicit objective. Accordingly, the terms and conditions of the transaction will be carefully and completely scrutinized to ensure that this objective is met. A property may contain fine resources but if the project will not adequately conserve those resources it may not be deemed a priority for funding.

The application states that Prickly Pear Land Trust has a long and established history of successful lands conservation projects. PPLT plans to manage the property to ensure the

conservation of natural resources on site. If the property is ever transferred to a private entity, PPLT will first encumber the property with a conservation easement to include a single homesite stipulation as well as the minimum deed terms outlined in the Open Lands Bond Program guidance. PPLT must also abide by the Department of Defense's 2684a authority limiting development of the property either through a conservation servitude or conservation easement.

VII. CAC RECOMMENDATION:

The project was presented to the CAC on April 2, 2024. This meeting was followed by a site visit to the property with the CAC and PPLT members on April 8, 2024. The CAC then reconvened on April 9, 2024 to discuss the project in consideration of the application, staff report, site visit, and public comment. Individually, CAC members used the Project Evaluation criteria found in the Open Lands Program Guide to complete the Project Evaluation Matrix. (See Attachment D) After discussing the criteria and completing the individual Matrixes, a motion was made and approved (7-0) to recommend that the BoCC approve the application from the Prickly Pear Lands Trust to assist in the purchase of the RV Ranch. (See Attachment C)

VIII. STAFF ANALYSIS:

The application from Prickly Pear Land Trust, if approved, will conserve approximately 1,457 acres of contiguous block of a working cattle grazing ranch, protect a large holding of land adjacent to the highly developed Helena Valley. Additionally, the project will support Fort Harrison in providing a buffer of development allowing the Fort to continue in its mission.

Additionally, the project will ensure the continued protection of habitat for numerous species of native wildlife. Staff believes the application meets the Project Evaluation criteria found in the Open Lands Program Guide and the Land, Water, and Wildlife bond and can move forward with the 30-Day Open Comment Period.

IX. ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Birdseye Ranch Open Lands Application
- B. Map of Proposed Project Area
- C. CAC Draft Minutes April 9, 2024
- D. CAC Members Project Evaluation Matrix

Lewis and Clark County Open Lands Program Level Two Application

Birdseye Ranch - Prickly Pear Land Trust

Landowner and Agency Identification

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

Project Applicant: *RV Ranch Company, 6531 W US Highway 12, Helena, MT 59601, Jim O'Connell, Executive Director*

Sponsor Organization: *Prickly Pear Land Trust, PO Box 892, Helena, MT 59624, 442-0490.*

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.

These criteria summarize the objective, quantifiable, desirable characteristics sought by the Open Lands Program as established by the Land, Water and Wildlife bond measure passed by voters in 2008. These criteria will be used by County Staff and the Citizens Advisory Committee on Open Lands (CAC) as an objective means to guide the evaluation of specific projects to determine if they meet the voter-approved goals for conservation funding. The CAC recognizes that not all these features will be present on each property.

General description of the property:

- A. Size of the area - *The subject property is approximately 1,4557.05-acres off of Barrett Road and Birdseye Road, adjacent to Fort William Harrison in Lewis and Clark County.*
- B. Permitted home sites – *A maximum of a single home site will be allowed on the property, should the property or portion of the property be transferred to a private entity. Should such a case arise, Prickly Pear Land Trust will first encumber the property with a conservation easement to include this single home site stipulation as well as the minimum deed terms outlined in the Open Lands Bond Program guidance. If approved for funding, PPLT will sign a grant agreement including these terms and conditions. In addition to Lewis and Clark County standards, PPLT must also abide by the Department of Defense's 2684a authority limiting development of the property either through a conservation servitude (if interest is held in fee-title) or conservation easement.*

The property has historically served as a cattle ranch and hosts very few improvements. There is one old, large calving barn, several small cow sheds, and one historical underground room, aka a 'keep,' (with an ornate, above-ground entryway). The keep was possibly used by the residents of the once nearby and no longer existing town of

Tobin and the property may have hosted the town's cemetery, which reportedly was moved off site long ago. These improvements will likely continue to exist on the property in the near and possibly long-term future.

- C. Water/Mineral Rights – *The property hosts three agricultural wells and one surface water right (411-120893) off of Sevenmile Creek for 3.13 cfs that irrigates an approximately 80-acre hay field. A mineral rights has been completed on the property and 100% of the rights will be transferred to PPLT. A minerals assessment has also been performed on the subject property and no marketable mineral presence was noted, though active claims exist on neighboring BLM lands. These results will be submitted to the County Planner and Attorney prior to final approval for funding.*
- D. Hazardous materials – *A formal environmental survey has been performed on the subject property and found no evidence of hazardous materials or contamination. These documents will be forwarded to the County Planner and Attorney before final approval of funding.*
- E. Other Conservation Easements and Public Lands – *The proposed fee-title project is 1,457.05 acres in size and is adjacent to Fort Harrison, approximately 3,000 acres of BLM land. It is one of the last remaining large tracts of land in the Helena Valley. The width of Birdseye Road and the paralleling railroad separate the property from additional BLM land that comprises the Scratchgravel Hills and PPLT's Sevenmile Property. The PPLT-protected Sevenmile Creek Preserve (401 acres), Milburn Conservation Easement property (260 acres), and PPLT Birdseye Beaver Pond fee property (10 acres) are nearly adjacent, separated from the subject property only by the railroad and or Birdseye Road. Nearly all of the remaining private land adjacent to or near the property has been subdivided and developed for residential uses. (See attached map).*

It's noteworthy to point out that immediately west of the property is the above-mentioned BLM tract of land. The BLM land is separated from vast areas of the Helena National Forest and Mullan Pass along the Continental Divide by only a handful of larger undeveloped tracts of land. In fact, the Birdseye property lies only less than 7 miles east of the Divide.

- F. Commercial Activities – *The property has historically served as a cattle ranch. PPLT plans to continue to allow cattle grazing through lease agreements with nearby landowners.*

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?

The total project cost of Birdseye is estimated to be around \$3 million. The fee-title property alone is valued at \$2.9 million (\$1990/acre) per a September 5, 2023 appraisal by Tim Moore Appraisal Company. But, as outlined in the budget below, full costs include

staff time, land management activities, due diligence. While real estate transaction fees typically are often 6% or more, (~\$174,000 in this case) PPLT has limited these transaction costs to \$62,200.

For this project, \$1,000,000 is requested from the county, which is just 33.8% of the total project cost. County funding will only be applied to land cost. All additional due diligence, partner costs, and endowments for future conservation work on the property by the Land Trust are covered by the other funding partners.

- 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?

Yes, the Land Trust is seeking funding from both the Department of Defense Army Compatible Use Buffer Program and the Montana Fish Wildlife Conservation Trust. Prickly Pear Land Trust is providing all project management services as an in-kind donation. The County's funds will be leveraged heavily at a 2:1 ratio.

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

The quotes/estimates for these costs are as follows:

Request - Birdseye			
Activity/Tasks	Total Cost	L&C County	Partner Request
Pre-Acquisition			
Appraisal	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Boundary Survey	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Phase 1-ESAs	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ 6,000
Baseline Documentation Report	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Title Search	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Attorney's Fees	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Mineral Search	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
Mineral Remoteness Test	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Totals	\$ 31,000	\$ -	\$ 31,000
Acquisition			
Purchase Price	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,900,000

Legal Defense	\$ -		\$ -
Landowner Assistance Program	\$ -		\$ -
Monitoring	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Totals	\$ 2,902,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,902,000
Recordation			
Titles and Settling Fees	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
Recording Fees (County)	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200
Title Insurance	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Totals	\$ 4,200	\$ -	\$ 4,200
Natural Resource Management			
Land Management Actions*	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Natural Resource Management Plans	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Land Management Endowment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Totals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Personnel and Other Costs			
Labor - Project Management	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000
Labor - Coordination with Installation ACUB POC	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Mapping/GIS	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Indirect Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Totals	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000
Totals	\$ 2,962,200	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,962,200
% of Project Totals	100.0%	33.8%	66.2%

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? *Yes, Approximately 50% of property is considered by the USDA, 'Farmland of Local Importance.'*

- Is the property contiguous with other working lands? *No.*
- Is this property currently a working farm or ranch? *Yes, the property is currently used for seasonal grazing of cattle. The Land Trust plans to continue this practice.*
- Is there an existing farm or ranch management plan in place? *The Land Trust has initiated an area-wide restoration and recreation program near Fort Harrison. As a part of this planning, funded primarily through the Department of Defense, the Birdseye property may undergo restoration of the property's grasslands and riparian areas. The future grazing and management plan will incorporate sustainable grazing practices and support the land's wildlife habitat conservation values and reduce wildland fire hazards.*

Conserve 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? *Yes, according to Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire Program (Lewis and Clark County, 2017) and Tri-County Regional Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2020)*
- Is the location deemed to be an area of high risk for wildfire? *Yes, the property and its surroundings is in the high category for wildfire risk according to the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire Program (Lewis and Clark County, 2017)*
- Is there a current forest management plan? *No, with the exception of the property's extreme northwest corner, the majority of the property is grassland. Part of the restoration effort will include an aspen regeneration project along Granite Creek.*
- Is the property, or a portion of it, classified as forest land/commercial timber for tax purposes? *No*
- Is the forest being actively managed for current or future timber harvest? *No*

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? *Yes. The size of the property and the fact that it is contiguous with other parcels of public land makes it that much more robust for wildlife use. This property contains important habitat primarily for the greatly threatened, local pronghorn herd. The westernmost hills support black bear, mountain lion, rough legged hawk, and a robust mule deer population and the portion of Sevenmile Creek that borders the property hosts a vibrant beaver population that also make use of the Milburn Easement and Beaver Pond property (earlier L&C County Projects).*

- Is there a diversity of habitat for wildlife or fish on the property? *The property is primarily grassland, but the Granite Creek, Sevenmile riparian zone and ponderosa-dotted hillsides break up this landscape for a greater species diversity.*
- 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.) *A portion of the property lies along Sevenmile Creek, a Lake Helena tributary that Fish Wildlife and Parks, Prickly Pear Land Trust, and the local chapter of Trout Unlimited have restored for to improve native trout populations and connectivity. The property does bolster prime habitat for a wildlife-rich area and can provide a critical, future link for wildlife between the Continental Divide and the Helena Valley.*
- Is there habitat for Threatened and Endangered, or Sensitive species of wildlife or fish? *A variety of community types and habitats on the property are key to supporting both a variety and abundance of native species, some of which are rare. Elk, mule deer, whitetail, coyote, black bear, mountain lion, badger, pronghorn, Richardson's ground squirrel, Clark's nutcracker, rough legged hawk, and bald eagle are regularly observed on the property. The property is suited for and potentially inhabited by fringed myotis, hoary bats, mountain cottontail, red fox, great gray owl, black backed woodpecker, short eared owl, sage thrasher, prairie rattlesnake, Canada geese, common poorwill, eastern meadowlark, western milksnake, Columbia spotted frog, and a variety of songbirds, raptors, and small mammals.*
- Are there streams or rivers with high habitat ratings from MFWP? *Yes. The property's northern boundary is adjacent to Sevenmile Creek for 3 miles. Sevenmile Creek is identified as Tier 1 aquatic focal area by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks State Wildlife Action Plan (2015) for habitat for westslope cutthroat trout.*
- Is there intact native riparian habitat? *Yes, According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, approximately 2% of the property is considered Riparian or Wetland. The majority of this habitat is along Granite Creek, the largest drainage that crosses the property from west to east on its path towards Sevenmile Creek.*

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? *This project will increase legal and physical access for the public to 1,4557 acres of private land and provide access to adjoining BLM land.*
- Does the proposed project include legal access for the public on the private land proposed for conservation?
Yes
- Will the project secure access for the public to an existing, long-standing recreation or access site? *Yes, across the property to BLM land*

- Does the site and type of access offer the possibility of recreation for people with physical limitations? *Yes. Because of the property's gentle terrain, the opportunity to develop recreational amenities that are suitable for people with physical limitations is strong.*
- Will the project create or maintain a trailhead or trail for use by the public? *Yes, at least one trailhead/parking area is proposed for this project.*
- Does the project support an existing, adopted outdoor recreation plan or initiative? *Yes, the project supports the goals and initiatives of the Lewis and Clark County Parks and Recreation Plan (2017).*

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? *Wetlands are focused along Granite Creek and the property's northern boundary along Sevenmile Creek. The areas along Granite Creek have great potential for improvement and restoration in future years after acquisition by PPLT.*
- Are there lakes, ponds, or springs located on the property? *Yes, there are several springs scattered across the property.*
- Does the property contain riparian areas with intact vegetation? *Yes. According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, approximately 3% of the property is considered Riparian or Wetland.*
- Are there rivers/streams with perennial flows? *Yes, Sevenmile has perennial flow and Granite Creek may, after some restoration efforts, though not yet.*
- Does the property contain land in the 100 year floodplain? *Yes, a short portion along Sevenmile*
- Are there water rights appurtenant to the property? *The property hosts three stock water wells and one surface water right (411-120893) off of Sevenmile Creek for 3.13 cfs that irrigates an approximately 80-acre hay field.*
- Is the property within a watershed that is the source of a public water supply system? *Yes. Though local water typically comes from the Tenmile Creek watershed above town, this property affects local wells and may affect the backup/temporary water supply to Helena.*
- 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? *No.*
- Has DEQ classified the waterway on the property as A-1 or better (per ARM 17.30.606-614)? *No, Seven Mile and Grainte Creek are classified as B-1*

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?
Yes, the property is one of the last large ranch properties in the Helena Valley. The property is adjacent to the busy Birdseye Road, a popular route for commuters, hunters and skiers, which sees 1,574 vehicles a day on average (over a half million per year), per 2022 Montana Department of Transportation data. These motorists enjoy the bucolic grasslands and open Montana views of this property.
- Will the project conserve unique geologic or geographic features? *No.*
- Does the proposed project help implement an adopted community plan or neighborhood vision? *Yes, the project will help implement the Fort Harrison Rural Zoning District's goals adopted by the County recently. With a maximum of one residence permitted, nearly 1500 acres will automatically abide by the growth policy.*
- Does the property adjoin a city, town or unincorporated community?
Yes, the property is approximately 2 miles outside of the Helena city limits.
- Are there threatened or endangered species, or species of concern on the property?
Possibly, the property is habitat to the following species of concern: Pinyon Jay, Bald Eagle, Northern Hoary Bat, Little Brown Myotis, Missoula Phlox, Klaus' Bladderpod. The property is one of the last refuges of the once abundant Helena Valley herd of Pronghorn Antelope
- Is there a particularly good example of a native habitat (e.g., native grasslands, healthy stands of aspen or limber pine, riparian plant associations)?
Yes. The diverse topography and physiognomic types across the property provide important habitat for numerous wildlife species. Elk, black bear, and turkey are all frequent visitors as well. While most of the property is grassland varying from native to tame pasture, dispersed pockets of ponderosa, douglas fir and limber pine are mixed among the hillier portions of the property. The property lies adjacent to Sevenmile Creek buffering the riparian areas along this important waterway's course. The riparian vegetation community along the creek is relatively intact and hosts a variety and abundance of native riparian species.
- Are there historic, archeological or prehistoric sites located on the property including historic or prehistoric corridors and trails?
There is one historical underground room, aka a 'keep,' (with an ornate, above-ground entryway) used to store the remains of the deceased over winter until spring. The keep was possibly used by the residents of the once nearby and no longer existing town of Tobin and the property may have hosted the town's cemetery, which reportedly was moved off site long ago. County historians have been alerted to the presence of the keep. PPLT hopes they will be invited along the County visit to inspect the site.

Are there any other outstanding or unique features of the property you would like to describe? *This property is at a high risk of development, given the encroachment by subdivisions to the north. A number of other area ranches have been sold and divided into residential housing areas, ceasing agricultural use and eliminating habitat. The property was listed in 2020. Several offers for the property fell through, but at least one offer was to develop the property into a residential subdivision.*

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.

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 circumstance 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.



March 6, 2024

Mary Hollow, Executive Director Prickly Pear Land Trust

Date

Sponsor representative signature

A. This appendix lists the required items to be submitted as part of the application process. However, depending on project specifics, not all these items may be required. If a sponsor has questions or would like clarification of what items are necessary, please contact staff of the Open Lands Program at the Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning Department.

1. Title Commitment and copies of Schedule A and B lists of documents

Provide the County with a copy of an American Land Title Association (ALTA) form commitment for title insurance and with copies of all documents referenced in the Schedule A list of requirements and Schedule B list of exceptions to title.

- The commitment must propose to insure the interest of the Grantee (holder of the easement), which in most cases will be the Project Sponsor, and Backup grantee (Lewis and Clark County), except where a federal or state agency’s regulations prevent the County from being named Backup Grantee, in the event that Backup Grantee becomes the primary holder.
- The commitment must propose to insure an amount not less than the total project cost, including the full amount from all funding sources.

Required Document for this project? Yes X or No
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes X or No

2. Boundary descriptions of the property proposed for conservation and any proposed building envelopes

The County needs to ensure it has adequately specific information detailing exactly what property the bond funds are supporting for conservation. For that reason, a legally adequate boundary description of the property proposed for conservation, and any areas within the conserved property boundaries designated as building envelopes, is required by the County. The County understands that conducting a survey of an entire property or a survey of building envelopes provides a high level of accuracy for a property description; however, in many cases this methodology may be prohibitively expensive. Therefore, the County provides the following alternatives for boundary descriptions of properties proposed for conservation and for any building envelopes:

a. Boundary description of the property

If the boundaries of the property proposed for conservation are already surveyed and recorded with Lewis and Clark County, the previously recorded survey may be sufficient to meet this requirement. Similarly, if the boundaries of the property proposed for conservation are already defined by a legal description (metes and bounds, aliquot part, et al) recorded

with Lewis and Clark County, the previously recorded legal description may be sufficient to meet this requirement. Since title insurance for the property proposed for conservation is also required, the legal description within the title commitment may also be sufficient to meet this requirement, depending on the Schedule B exceptions to coverage.

Please include with the legal description any information related to the adjacent properties, such as ownership, misplaced fencing, boundary discrepancies, or other known or potential problems.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No

Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

b. Boundary description of any building envelopes

If any building envelopes are proposed, the locations of those envelopes must be clearly described in the easement and supporting materials and must be identifiable in the field (unless the conservation easement allows for floating building envelopes that will be located at a future date). Such description may be provided by a survey, an aliquot part description, or a metes and bounds description, or a combination of those three. Alternatively, the locations of the building envelopes may be designated on other maps or aerial photographs that clearly identify the building envelope and allow it to be identifiable in the field. The acceptable methodology will be dependent upon the size and location of the building envelopes, the size, location and surroundings of the entire property, the proposed use of the building envelope, and the accuracy of the proposed method for identifying the envelope in the field.

Note that these descriptions of property are for purposes of implementing the Open Lands Program and do not create a "division of land" as defined in Section 76-3-103, MCA.

If no legally adequate boundary description is provided and boundary discrepancies are a concern, the County may ask for a survey of the property or part of the property proposed for conservation.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No

Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

3. Environmental Report

All Applicants proposing a conservation easement must submit an Environmental Report (ER or Report). This Report should contain information about the property, its known prior uses and potential contamination.

To complete the ER, the Applicant or Sponsor must:

- ‡ Interview the current landowner and any available and known prior owners to determine known prior uses of the property;
- ‡ Perform an investigation of the property. This investigation should be performed by someone with experience in looking for obvious signs of environmental contaminants (please include a CV or resume with ER); and
- ‡ Check the Title for environmental cleanup liens against the property.

County staff will solicit comments from and review records of appropriate federal, state, county, and municipal health/environmental officials and local, state and federal courts about known contamination at the site.

Required Document for this project? Yes X or No ___
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes X or No ___

If the Environmental Report indicates the potential of contamination and recommends further investigation, the Applicant shall conduct additional review to determine the nature and extent of any contamination, and whether remediation is needed to protect the property's conservation values.

If remediation is recommended, the Applicant shall develop and provide the County the following information for the purpose of ensuring that environmental contamination will not interfere with the conservation purposes of the Project.

- ‡ A remediation plan that has been certified by a qualified environmental engineer or environmental agency to reasonably protect the public health and environment,
- ‡ The estimated cost of funding the plan and a schedule for implementation of the plan, and
- ‡ A description of how implementation will be funded.

Required Document for this project? Yes ___ or No X
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes ___ or No X

All Applicants proposing a fee title acquisition for conservation with County Open Lands bond funds will be asked to provide a Phase I environmental site assessment in accordance with ASTM E 1527 -05.

Required Document for this project? Yes X or No ___
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes X or No ___

4. Appraisal Information

Applicants must provide a qualified appraisal to the County. The appraisal must meet the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP).

In order to comply with MCA § 7-8-2202, the County Attorney, County Commissioners and Landowner all must participate in the selection of the appraiser. For this reason and to expedite the appraisal process, the County Attorney and County Commissioners have prepared a “Preselected list of qualified appraisers” from which the Sponsor/Applicant can select their appraiser. The appraisers on this list will all be experienced, independent, and certified as general real estate appraisers.

Note that if the land contains structures or improvements, the appraisal should separately present the value of the land from the value of the structures/improvements. Generally, the County will not help purchase structures or other improvements on the land.

Applications under the Standard Review Process will typically provide an appraiser’s statement of value when submitting a project for preliminary approval. The complete qualified appraisal is to be provided with the remaining due diligence materials submitted in accordance with Section F, paragraph 6, of the Program Guide. Applications under the Expedited Review Process will provide a complete qualified appraisal as part of the Level Two project submission, in accordance with Section G, paragraph 1, of the Program Guide.

Note, however, that for either the standard or expedited review, the County may decide to accept the appraiser’s statement of the appraised value of the property without a completed appraisal report if, for good cause, the completed report cannot be ready in time for closing. In such circumstance the completed appraisal report must be submitted at a later date, as specified by the County.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

5. Signed Purchase and Sale Agreement

This will be an agreement between the Applicant/landowner, the Sponsor (if the easement holder), and the County. County will provide a template agreement. Once agreement is acceptable to all parties, the County will provide the Project’s contact person four copies of the agreement. Once the applicant and sponsor sign and return all four copies of the agreement, the authorized county staff will sign all four copies, file one in the County Commissioners Office, return one to the Project’s contact person and one to the Applicant/landowner, and keep one for the County’s Open Lands Program file.

The representative of the Sponsor organization, and the representative of the landowner/applicant, if landowner/applicant is an organization, must provide a resolution from their board or certificate of authority to sign and accept the Agreement.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

6. Mineral Remoteness Letter

If the mineral rights are severed from the surface estate, the County will ask the Sponsor to provide a mineral remoteness letter.

Required Document for this project? Yes ___ or No X
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes X or No ___

7. Water Rights Information

Attach a General Abstract from the State of Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). The applicant or sponsor may order a General Abstract by calling DNRC or visiting: www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_rts/records_unit/default.asp. Click on the NRIS Water Right Query System under "Research for Water Rights," plug in the landowner's name, and order the General Abstract. The DNRC will compile a list of all domestic wells, stock water, irrigation water, surface or subsurface water in a particular area, if given a legal description.

Required Document for this project? Yes X or No ___
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes X or No ___

8. Supplementary Maps

‡ **Site Location Map:** On a Lewis and Clark County base map, clearly identify the location of the proposed acquisition. In the digital version of the application, provide a jpeg or pdf of the same map and location information. For a County base map, click here: <http://www.co.lewis-clark.mt.us/departments/information-technology/gis-maps/wwwhelenamontanamapsorg.html> scroll down, read and accept the Terms of Use. On the next page, click on "Launch Lewis and Clark Viewer. Use the layers on the right hand side of the page or the tools at the top of the page for zooming and finding your property.

‡ **Project Boundary Map:** On a map of sufficiently large scale to see the property; identify the boundaries of the proposed project. Provide a digital version of this map. If reserved building sites are contemplated in your proposal, please identify their proposed locations and approximate size. Similarly, if your proposal contemplates excluding or subdividing land please indicate. For mapping assistance, use the County base map described in (a) above.

‡ **Aerial Photo Map:** Include the property boundaries over the most recent aerial photo available.

Required Document for this project? Yes X or No ___
 Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes X or No ___

9. Color Photos

Provide at least six (6) digital color photos (in .jpeg format) of the property proposed for conservation. The photos should show important terrain, waterfront, man-made features, access roads, wetlands, unique characteristics, or other elements that make the property a good candidate for funding.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No

Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

10. Baseline Documentation Report

This report should contain all the information necessary to enforce the terms of the conservation easement.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No

Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

11. Draft deed of type stipulated in application**a. Draft of Conservation Easement**

If a conservation easement is the legal tool proposed for the Project, the Sponsor/easement holder must submit to the County a proposed draft of conservation easement for the County's legal review and to work out mutually satisfactory terms. This will be a grant from landowner (grantor) to land trust or public agency (grantee) with the County indicated as the backup grantee. The draft conservation easement submitted to the County should incorporate the Conservation Easement Provisions prepared by County legal staff.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No

Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

b. Draft deed of other property interests conveyed.

If a conservation easement is **not** the legal tool proposed for the Project, the Sponsor must submit to the County a proposed draft of the deed conveying the agreed to property interests for the County's legal review and to work out mutually satisfactory terms.

Required Document for this project? Yes or No

Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes or No

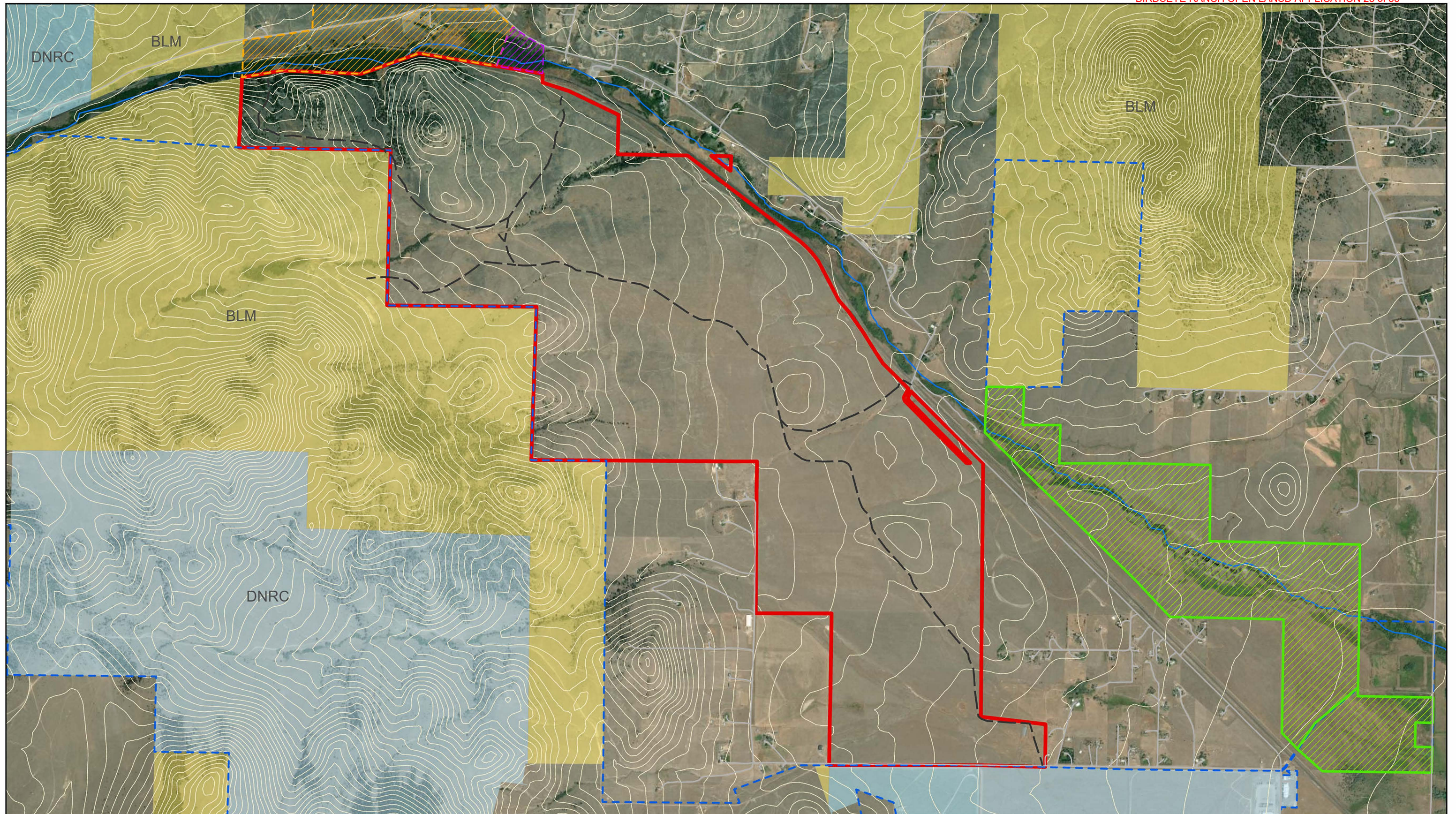
*This will be provided with the proposed grant agreement.

12. Notification of the Closing date.

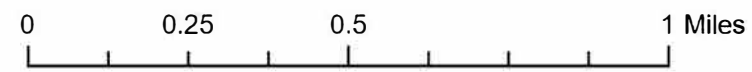
Notify the County as soon as you are aware of your project's anticipated closing date. Please coordinate with the appropriate County staff member before selecting a closing date if you are planning to use county funding at the closing.

Required Document for this project? Yes X or No ___

Submitted with Level Two Application? Yes X or No _



- Birdseye (RV) Ranch
- Fort Harrison Administered Lands
- Birdseye Ranch Roads
- Sevenmile Creek (PPLT Fee-title)
- Milburn (PPLT CE)
- Beaver Pond (PPLT Fee-title)



Minutes

Open Lands Citizen Advisory Committee
Lewis and Clark County

Meeting

April 9, 2024, 5:30 p.m.



CAC Members Present:

Sarah Christopherson,
CAC Chairman
Zachary Wirth, CAC
Joe Cohenour,
Jeff Claassen, CAC
Jane Collmeyer, CAC
Jeremy Fadness, CAC
Susan Giese, CAC

County Staff Present:

Phil Gonzalez, Planner II

Greg McNally, Director, Community Development &
Planning

Project Representatives:

Chairman brought the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

A. Call to Order

B. Roll Call

A quorum was established.

C. Approval of Minutes

No minutes to approve.

Action Items

Birdseye Ranch Open Lands application

Presentation on a Open Space Project from Prickly Pear Land Trust

Sarah Christopherson started the meeting by discussing the action item for the evening, which is a recommendation assessment for the Birdseye Ranch open lands project brought before the CAC by Prickly Pear Land Trust. County Staff and CAC members began reviewing the assessment rubric criteria to determine if a recommendation should be made to the Board of County Commissioners to approve funding for the project. County Staff explained the CAC members responsibilities regarding how this project is presented to the BOCC, and what the steps should be to determine if a recommendation is a reasonable idea.

The first criteria discussed was regarding conserving large blocks of land. And after a discussion of the size, location, and the sizes of the various abutting properties, including BLM property the CAC members determined that this project has a high rating.

The second criteria the CAC members had to consider is if this project expands and connects existing open lands holdings. And as this has been discussed very thoroughly up to this point by CAC members, County staff, and PPLT Reps only a brief discussion was needed before this criterion was also given a high rating by the CAC members.

The third category, was whether this project would maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds, and the discussion revolved around if this property were ever sold, would that be considered a way of maximizing the public benefit return, and County Staff confirmed that could be taken into consideration when reviewing this line item, as well as the benefit that will come from conserving such a large piece of land for Fort Harrison's mission and this criterion was also given a high rating. Susan Giese recommended that this particular item be moved to the very bottom, because she believed that upon viewing this through the lens of a former County Commissioner, the other questions put forth in the Project Evaluation Matrix would be better suited as precursors to the question of Public Benefit Return, as opposed to follow-up questions to it.

The fourth category considered was whether the project conserved working farms and ranches: This question was given a very resounding "absolutely", and another high rating, as it secures land for ranchers to graze their livestock.

The fifth criteria discussed was if the project conserved working forests, and this was given a low rating, as PPLT's focus in this instance is securing land for wildlife, recreation, and working ranches.

The sixth criteria if the proposed project area protected habitat for fish and wildlife, and this too was given a resounding affirmative, and a high rating, as this area is a major habitat that provides security from predation, and is considered a major travel corridor for Elk, and other ungulates, as well as a variety of other wildlife that call the area home.

The seventh criteria is if the area provides access for recreation? This is also a high rating, as this property is a mixed use project with opportunities for hiking, hunting, camping, fishing, and bike riding, etc.

The eighth category discussed is if the area provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, and this question was answered when the CAC members discussed the seventh criteria, and this was also given a high rating.

The ninth criteria discussed is whether the proposed project area would protect water resources and water quality. This was given a high rating, as the area has few water resources, and this makes it a fragile eco system, by conserving this property, and

protecting its already scant water resources from development, the project is securing and preserving water resources, as well as quality.

Tenth criteria asked if the proposed project area would protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways, and this was given a high rating, as the reps from PPLT explained, the areas surrounding the waterways will be fenced to restrict access and preserve its integrity.

Will this project area contribute to preserving open lands and natural areas? This was also given a high rating, as the entirety of the property will be devoted to preserving the natural areas located in this proposed project area.

Will this project manage growth and development? This was given a high rating as well because the area has been secured from any development for the foreseeable future.

And finally, will this project ensure a permanent conservation outcome? This was designated as a high rating, because PPLT has stated that they will be placing a conservation easement on this property to secure it as an open space, and it will stay that way until they choose to sell the land to a private entity IF they choose to do so. PPLT intends to keep the land, or gift it to MT FWP.

A motion was made to send a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve funding for the Birdseye Ranch Open Lands project. That motion was seconded, and all CAC members voted yea for the recommendation. (7-0)

D. New Business

No new business

E. Announcements

County Staff Phil Gonzalez discussed the next steps in the approval process and stated that he will be bringing his presentation staff report to the commission Thursday 4/11/24.

F. Public comment on any matter within the scope of the CAC that is not on the agenda.

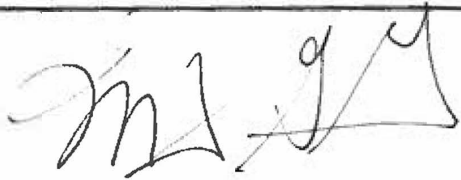
No public comment.

G. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion Seconded. Approved. Meeting adjourned.

Project Evaluation Matrix: This document serves as a qualitative evaluation of a level 2 application. CAC members will place their vote for each criteria in either a low, medium, or high ranking. The final rank will represent a summary of the ranking by the CAC chair (or designee) based on discussion.

Criteria	Low	Medium	High	Final Rank
Conserve large blocks of land			✓	
Expand and connect existing open land holdings			✓	
Maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds			✓	
Conserve working farms and ranches			✓	
Conserve working forests	✓			
Protect habitat for fish and wildlife			✓	
Provide access for recreation			✓	
Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation			✓	
Protect water resources and water quality:			✓	
Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways			✓	
Preserve open lands and natural areas			✓	
Manage growth and development			✓	
Ensure permanent conservation outcome			✓	
Totals:				



4/9/2024

M. Susan Geise

Jeff Claassen

Project Evaluation Matrix: This document serves as a qualitative evaluation of a level 2 application. CAC members will place their vote for each criteria in either a low, medium, or high ranking. The final rank will represent a summary of the ranking by the CAC chair (or designee) based on discussion.

Criteria	Low	Medium	High	Final Rank
Conserve large blocks of land			X	
Expand and connect existing open land holdings			X	
Maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds			X	
Conserve working farms and ranches			X	
Conserve working forests <i>Does not apply</i>				
Protect habitat for fish and wildlife			X	
Provide access for recreation			X	
Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation			X	
Protect water resources and water quality:			X	
Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways			X	
Preserve open lands and natural areas			X	
Manage growth and development			X	
Ensure permanent conservation outcome			X	
Totals:				

Project Evaluation Matrix: This document serves as a qualitative evaluation of a level 2 application. CAC members will place their vote for each criteria in either a low, medium, or high ranking. The final rank will represent a summary of the ranking by the CAC chair (or designee) based on discussion.

Criteria	Low	Medium	High	Final Rank
Conserve large blocks of land			X	
Expand and connect existing open land holdings			X	
Maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds			X	
Conserve working farms and ranches			X	
Conserve working forests	X			
Protect habitat for fish and wildlife			X	
Provide access for recreation			X	
Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation			X	
Protect water resources and water quality:			X	
Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways			X	
Preserve open lands and natural areas			X	
Manage growth and development			X	
Ensure permanent conservation outcome			X	
Totals:				

Project Evaluation Matrix: This document serves as a qualitative evaluation of a level 2 application. CAC members will place their vote for each criteria in either a low, medium, or high ranking. The final rank will represent a summary of the ranking by the CAC chair (or designee) based on discussion.

Criteria	Low	Medium	High	Final Rank
Conserve large blocks of land			X	
Expand and connect existing open land holdings			X	
Maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds			X	
Conserve working farms and ranches			X	
Conserve working forests		X		
Protect habitat for fish and wildlife			X	
Provide access for recreation			X	
Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation			X	
Protect water resources and water quality:			X	
Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways			X	
Preserve open lands and natural areas			X	
Manage growth and development			X	
Ensure permanent conservation outcome			X	
Totals:			X	

Give a buffer to the Fort -

Jane P. Kollmeyer
4/9/2024

Jeremy Fadness

Project Evaluation Matrix: This document serves as a qualitative evaluation of a level 2 application. CAC members will place their vote for each criteria in either a low, medium, or high ranking. The final rank will represent a summary of the ranking by the CAC chair (or designee) based on discussion.

Criteria	Low	Medium	High	Final Rank
Conserve large blocks of land			X	
Expand and connect existing open land holdings			X	
Maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds			X	
Conserve working farms and ranches			X	
Conserve working forests	X			
Protect habitat for fish and wildlife			X	
Provide access for recreation			X	
Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation			X	
Protect water resources and water quality:			X	
Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways			X	
Preserve open lands and natural areas			X	
Manage growth and development			X	
Ensure permanent conservation outcome			X	
Totals:				

Joe Cohen

April 9, 2024

Project Evaluation Matrix: This document serves as a qualitative evaluation of a level 2 application. CAC members will place their vote for each criteria in either a low, medium, or high ranking. The final rank will represent a summary of the ranking by the CAC chair (or designee) based on discussion.

Criteria	Low	Medium	High	Final Rank
Conserve large blocks of land			*	
Expand and connect existing open land holdings			*	
Maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds		Very important to Buffer Ft Harrison From development	*	
Conserve working farms and ranches			*	
Conserve working forests	*			
Protect habitat for fish and wildlife			*	
Provide access for recreation			*	
Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation			*	
Protect water resources and water quality:			*	
Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways			*	
Preserve open lands and natural areas			*	
Manage growth and development			*	
Ensure permanent conservation outcome			*	
Totals:				

Project Evaluation Matrix: This document serves as a qualitative evaluation of a level 2 application. CAC members will place their vote for each criteria in either a low, medium, or high ranking. The final rank will represent a summary of the ranking by the CAC chair (or designee) based on discussion.

Criteria	Low	Medium	High	Final Rank
Conserve large blocks of land			X	
Expand and connect existing open land holdings			X	
Maximize the public benefit return on the County's funds			X	
Conserve working farms and ranches			X	
Conserve working forests	N/A ⁺			
Protect habitat for fish and wildlife		X		
Provide access for recreation		X		
Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation			X	
Protect water resources and water quality:			X	
Protect and restore riparian corridors along waterways		X		
Preserve open lands and natural areas			X	
Manage growth and development			X	
Ensure permanent conservation outcome			X	
Totals:				

ZACK WIRTH

insulate military mission of Fort Harrison -

