



News Release

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Negotiations Fail on North Shore

Kalispell, MT - The Flathead Land Trust announced today that it has been unable to reach an agreement with developers Keith Simon and Sean Averill to purchase the North Shore Ranch/ Kleinhan's Farms Estates property near Somers.

Negotiations have been ongoing since March 8, when the Flathead County Commissioners accepted a settlement agreement to end a lawsuit filed by the developers. The lawsuit challenged the Commission's earlier decision to deny the proposed North Shore Ranch subdivision. An amendment to the settlement agreement allowed the Flathead Land Trust and its partners 30 days to attempt a purchase of the property to preserve the environmentally sensitive parcel.

"We worked hard to reach some common ground throughout the negotiation," said Jim Regnier, FLT Board President. "We made an offer that we felt was fair to both the developers and to the public. Unfortunately, our price fell short of the developer's expectation."

Funding for the proposed purchase would have come from a variety of sources and would have included federal, county, and private funds, Regnier explained. Had the land trust been able to buy the property, ownership would have ultimately been transferred over to the people of Montana.

"That way, the people would have gotten a very tangible return for their money," he added.

"We will continue to hope that sometime in the future an agreement can be reached that will preserve this environmentally sensitive area for future generations. Unfortunately, most of the federal money we have right now has strict time limits for its use and we're right up against those deadlines. Those dollars will now likely go on to projects elsewhere," Regnier said.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved in these negotiations for all their hard work. Our funding partners, in particular, were able to secure the necessary financial commitments in a matter of days, commitments that often take months to put together. It took an extraordinary effort to put this firm offer on the table and we regret that, in the end, it wasn't enough."