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## Have you considered the Flathead Land Trust in your will?

The Flathead Land Trust Conservation Legacy Society recognizes supporters who have invested in the future of the Land Trust with a planned gift. A planned gift is the ultimate expression of commitment to private, voluntary land conservation in the Flathead Valley.

Your planned gift can be as simple as a sentence or two in your will.

Other ways are life income gifts which can take the form of a charitable lead trust or charitable gift annuities. Many other gifts can take the form of life insurance, retirement accounts, or real estate. We recommend that you talk to your financial advisor about the best option for you.

For more information about including the Flathead Land Trust in your future plans contact Lindsay Biedel at (406)752-8293. Some of you may have already included us in those plans and if that's the case, please let us know. Thanks for your support!



Photo courtesy of Karen Nichols, Daily Inter Lake

A glorious fall sunset looking northeast above the Flathead River

(406) 752-8293

www.flatheadlandtrust.org



FLATHEAD  
LAND TRUST  
Conserving Our Legacy of Land and Water

# View Points

Winter 2007

## Protecting the "W's": Water, Wildlife, and Working Farms and Forests



Photo by Susan How, Sunrifi Media

A leisurely day of fly fishing on the Flathead River

In order to help identify the projects that will have the greatest impact on the landscape we leave to our children and grandchildren, The Flathead Land Trust created a Conservation Plan to identify the organization's land conservation priorities from 2006-2011.

At the heart of this Conservation Plan is Flathead Land Trust's Mission: To conserve the working and scenic landscapes, open spaces, river corridors, wetlands, and vital habitats found in Northwest Montana.

In its 20-year lifetime, FLT has protected 38 properties including over 8,000 acres. The projects are found throughout Flathead County with one project located in Sanders County. In 2005, FLT completed an ambitious project to protect 1800 acres of farmlands associated with significant wetlands in the Flathead Valley (McWeneger and Weaver Slough Projects), marking our evolution from a mostly opportunistic driven land trust to

one that pro-actively seeks high priority projects.

### The Working Group

In March 2006 a Conservation Plan/Strategies Working Group was established to identify the "what and where" of our conservation efforts and to recommend ways to strengthen our conservation programs. The Working Group consisted of FLT staff and board members along with representatives of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Flathead Lakers, the American Bird Conservancy, and the Sustainability Fund.

It was agreed that FLT conservation efforts should focus on protecting the Three "W's" – Water, Wildlife, and Working Farms and Forests.

The Working Group reached a consensus on the top three focus areas to be considered for conservation action in the immediate five-year timeframe:

1. Upper Flathead River
2. Lower Flathead River
3. North shore of Flathead Lake

It became clear to the Working Group that FLT, with its success stories of Weaver Slough and McWeneger Slough, is perfectly positioned to take a substantial role with its partners (Flathead Lakers, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and others) in private land conservation of the mainstream Flathead River and the lands along the north shore of Flathead Lake.

Many other areas were identified as important for conservation but we found that other organizations and initiatives have taken the lead in those areas. Flathead Land Trust will be an important partner in these areas, but need not take a leading role.

### The River to Lake Project

The "River to Lake Project" is now FLT's primary conservation initiative, reflecting its interest in protecting the most important lands necessary to secure water quality and critical habitat for fish and wildlife. The mainstem of the Flathead River from Columbia Falls to Flathead Lake including the north shore area has critical wetlands, important fish and wildlife habitat for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, and runs through land that is still actively farmed on prime soils. It is also an area that the general public would like to have protected for recreation and scenic value. As would be imagined, some of these areas are very desirable for development and are under pressure to do so.

The River to Lake Project is off to a great start after numerous meetings to get it underway. We have already been in contact with a number of landowners along the river and north shore that are interested in conservation.

"The Flathead River with its pristine waters and highly valued fishery truly defines our special valley. We are very excited about this project and the long term impact it will have

Continued on page 2

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President

Myrt Webb  
Vice President

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Diane Conradi

Bill Dakin

Alan Elm

Mike Fraser

Jim Regnier

Alison Young

Flathead Land Trust Staff

Marilyn Wood  
Interim Executive Director

Lindsay Biedel  
Development Director

Dan Vincent  
GNESA Director

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Flathead Land Trust is dedicated to voluntary conservation and thoughtful stewardship of private lands. We initiate and support conservation easements that enhance Northwest Montana's working and scenic landscapes, open spaces, river corridors, wetlands and vital wildlife habitats.

# Message from the President

The last few months have been very busy at Flathead Land Trust. We have lots of exciting projects in the works and have really started planning for the next five years and beyond. There's a lot of work to be done!

I am pleased to announce Marilyn Wood as our Interim Executive Director. Marilyn started with us in August 2005 as our Conservation Director and has an extensive background in land conservation. The Board is very excited that she is willing to take on this role. I am also pleased to welcome Mike Fraser to our Board of Directors. Mike's bio is included in this newsletter and as someone who is well-connected and passionate about this community, we are very excited to get him involved.

Our conservation plan has been finalized, and we have already started moving on our priority areas. The cover article summarized this plan and introduced our primary focus, the River to Lake Project. We have already started working with some of our partners to strategize and create a plan for this critical project. We have also been in contact with a number of landowners in our focus area that are interested in conservation.

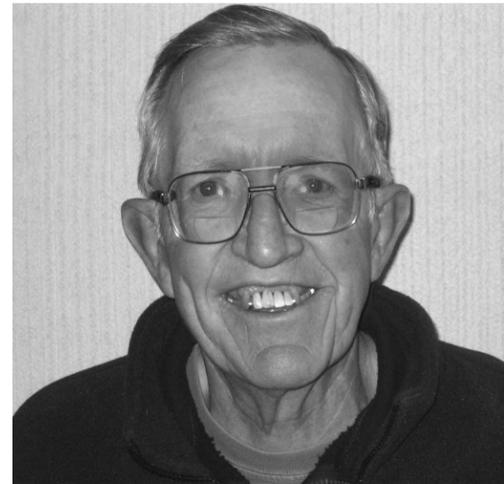
It's an important time for our work with the county growth plan being completed and demands for land increasing every minute. You'll see in the Montana conservation report (Page 4) that there have been many conservation successes across the state in recent years, but we can't stop there. The current tax incentives for voluntary conservation easements will help us achieve our goals of protecting critical areas in the Flathead

### Protecting the Ws from page 1

on our water quality, wildlife habitat and rural and scenic character," said Marilyn Wood, Interim Executive Director.

### Other Priority Areas

The Conservation Plan also identifies two other priority initiatives for our work. The first one involves work on Community Initiated Projects. FLT will work to develop or participate in a selected number of community efforts to provide trails, parks or other recreational access or new proposals that reflect the needs and values recognized during the county's Growth Policy process. These types of projects provide great public benefits while helping



Valley, but we also need continued support from community members.

Thank you for all of your support in 2006 and through the years. As our individual and business memberships increase every year, those operation funds continue to be key to the success of our organization.

I hope you will continue to support the Flathead Land Trust, both financially and with your time, in the greatest capacity that you can. We are always looking for community members to join one of our many Board committees so let us know if you're interested. Your continued support will ensure that generations to come will have opportunities similar to ours to live, work and play on the rich lands of the Flathead. Call if you want to get more involved in our work.

Ken Siderius  
Board President

us achieve other conservation goals. To date, FLT has been at least peripherally involved in both the Whitefish State Lands and Foy's to Blacktail Trail Projects.

The other focus area involves strengthening FLT's existing conservation portfolio. Our current 34 properties, including several fairly isolated parcels, could be enhanced by protecting additional properties adjacent to these tracts. Identifying those tracts and adjacent landowners who might be interested in conservation easements will build on our existing portfolio and create a bigger conservation impact in those areas.

Continued from page 6

Larry Schulz  
Rose and Don Schwennesen  
James and Christine Scott  
Michael and Marie Shaw  
Roger and Sue Sherman  
Charles and Jenny Lou Siderius  
Ken Siderius and Cathy Malarchick  
Richard and Joan Siderius  
Tom and Terry Siderius  
Lucy Smith  
Don and Phyllis Snow  
Mary Stanaway  
Gerry Stearns and Richard Wackrow  
Howard Stephenson  
Cas Still and Andy Baxter  
Dia Sullivan  
John and Alix Sullivan  
Bruce Tannehill and Gail Cleveland  
Carrie and Mike Thiel  
Patrick and DeAnn Thomas  
Art and Diane Thompson  
James and Betty Thompson  
Steve Thompson and Kerrie Byrne  
Connie Valentine  
Dr. Loren and Sherry Vranish  
Susan Waldron and Clark Reynolds  
John and Amy Waller  
Myrt and Sharon Webb  
Kyle and Susan Weber  
Dan and Gayle Weinberg  
Robert and Nancy Westberg  
Scott and Jane Wheeler  
Alan and Katherine Williams  
Chuck and Karen Williams  
Paul and Suzy Williams  
Rebecca and Larry Williams  
Jim and Jean Wix

Chad Wold  
Dick and Sarah Wollin  
Marilyn Wood  
Lynn and Frank Woods  
Brad Wright  
Gerald and JoLynn Yenne  
Alison Young  
Andrew Zimet and Linda Farmer

### Businesses

Air Works, Inc.  
Ameriprise Financial - Dawn Oehlerich  
Bigfork Physical Therapy and Sports Rehabilitation, Inc.  
Bruce Boody Landscape Architect  
Christensen Moore Cockrell  
Cummings and Axelberg  
D.A. Davidson - Kalispell  
D.A. Davidson - Missoula  
EarthSong  
Eisinger Honda  
Eisinger Motors  
Flathead Bank of Bigfork  
Freedom Bank  
Glacier Bank  
Grouse Mountain Lodge  
Harbor Mountain Properties  
Illi Real Estate Appraisal & Consulting  
Insty Prints  
Iron Horse Development  
Johnson, Berg, McEvoy, & Bostock  
JTL Group, Inc  
LC Staffing Service  
Lion Mountain, Inc  
Merlin Data Publishing Corporation  
Montana Academy

Moose's Saloon  
North Country Builders  
Old Style Log Works  
Provident Financial  
Raymond James Financial - John Lentz  
Re/Max of Mountain View  
Re/Max of Whitefish  
Roger K. Newman, DDS  
Schwarz Construction, Inc.  
Snappy Sport Senter  
Third Street Market  
Thomas, Dean & Hoskins, Inc.  
Trails West Eagle Bend Realty  
Wheaton's  
Whitefish Credit Union

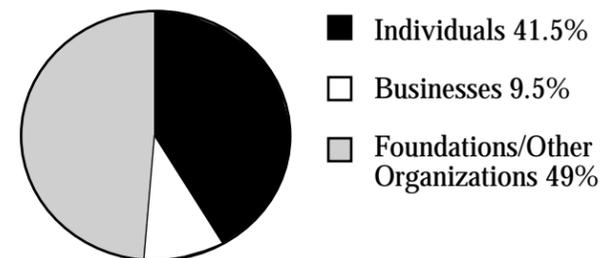
### Foundations/Other

The Bibler Foundation  
Cinnabar Foundation  
First Interstate BancSystem Foundation  
Flathead Community Foundation  
Flathead Lake Protection Association  
Homer A. and Mildred S. Scott Foundation  
Plum Creek Foundation  
The Sustainability Fund  
The Sahan Daywi Foundation  
Turner Foundation

We apologize for any errors that may appear in this listing. Please contact us at (406) 752-8293 to report any changes or corrections for future reference. Thank you!

## Operating Funds - Where do they come from?

In 2006, we received operating funds from the following sources:



The money that we receive for operating funds is

absolutely key to our success. It's what keeps us moving ahead on important conservation projects, keeps the lights on, and allows us to hire professional staff to get the job done. Funds from individual donors are increasingly important as foundation money for operations becomes more difficult to obtain. Our need for operating funds will continue to increase as we take on additional conservation projects in the Flathead.

Please continue to support our work through annual membership and consider making an additional gift throughout the year. A special thanks to The Sustainability Fund, Cinnabar Foundation and Turner Foundation for supporting our work through operating funds in 2006!

Visit our Website: [www.flatheadlandtrust.org](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org)

Please send us your email address!

# ~ Thank you Donors ~

Sincere thanks to every individual, business, foundation and other entity that supported Flathead Land Trust's work in 2006. Your support is critical to our success in protecting Flathead Valley's legacy of land and water.

## Individuals

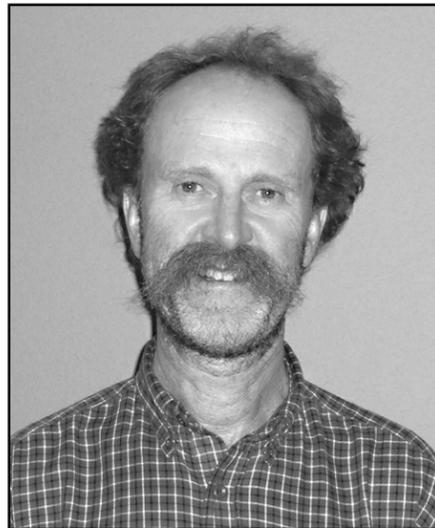
Anonymous (4)  
Susan and Charles Abell  
Jennifer and Jamie Armstrong  
Jennifer Asebrook  
and Richard Menicke  
Ian Bailey  
Will and Margaret Baird  
Barb and Chance Cooke  
David and Chet Barclay  
Donald Baughman  
Randy and Rayne Beach  
Tom and Sharon Bengtson  
Carol Bibler and Jim Watson,  
*In memory of Dorothea Darwall*  
Lindsay Biedel and Dave Nelson  
Bill and Ann Jones  
Ben and Ann Binger  
Gael Bissell and Rick Mace  
D. Linnell Blank  
Carroll Blend  
Rebecca and Robert Blickenstaff  
Nathaniel and Barbara Blumberg  
Dr. William Boehme  
John and Katherine Bourne  
Mark Bratz  
Bill Breen  
Lynne Brett  
Kathryn and Michael Britton  
Jerry Brobst  
Rebecca and Jerome Broussard  
Harry and Nancy Brown  
Patricia and Ralph Brown  
Virginia Burns-Sloan and James Sloan  
Sara and Ryan Busse  
Jennifer Byers  
Chris and Maureen Byrd  
Gerard and Loretta Byrd  
Cameron Blake and Sandy Gray  
Pat and Mary Carlross  
Milt and BJ Carlson  
Tom and Kris Carlson  
Gary Carver  
Patricia and John Case  
Bubba and Leta Chustz  
Allan and Phyllis Clark  
Connie Cohen  
Richard Cohen  
Ian and Claudia Collins  
John and Anne Collins  
Mike and Diane Conner  
Steve and Gerry Connolly  
Paul and Karol Conrad  
Diane Conradi and Steve Braun  
Margaret Cook  
Kerry and Arla Culver  
Rausie Cummings

Steve and Sue Cummings  
Bill and Sarah Dakin  
Maggie Dakin  
Christina Darwall and Robert Kaplan,  
*In memory of Dorothea Darwall*  
Edward DeBartolo  
Tami and Mike DeGrosky  
Dick and Mickey Rosa  
Dennis and Terry Divoky  
Michael and Jordonna Dores  
Dave and Janet Downey  
Greg and JoAnn Dramer  
Francie Droll and John Webster  
Valley Ellingsen  
Stephanie and Alan Elm  
Debra and Anders Engdahl  
Charles Ensign  
Daniel and Kathryn Fischer,  
*In memory of Dorothea Darwall*  
Fred Fox  
Michael Fraser  
Bob and Ann Frauson  
Linda and Wade Fredenberg  
Scott and Heidi Gaiser  
Gail and Scott Galloway  
Mike Galvin  
Mary Jo Gardner  
Mary and Don Garner  
Lou and Clarice Gates  
Hi and Mary Gibson  
Bill and Jana Goodman  
Richard Gordon and Cheryl Watkins  
Alan and Sallie Gratch  
David Hadden  
James and Kathleen Hadwin  
Dale Harris  
Lee Harris  
Gary and Lynn Havens  
Brace and Kathleen Hayden  
Dave Heine  
Karin Hilding and Robert Gordon  
Richard and Suzanne Hildner  
James and Wanda Hollensteiner  
Susan How  
Warren and JoAnn Illi  
Larry and Patricia Ingvalson  
Trish and Chuck Issel  
Bob and Tabby Ivy  
Dr. M.E.K. and Rita Johnson  
Erika Johnson and David Sandler  
Kyle and Mary Johnson  
Dr. Glenn and Hazel Johnston  
Bert and Ida Jones  
Gilbert Jordan and Kim Pinter  
Bill and Sharon Kahle  
Eric Kaplan  
Jack and Almeda King

Mike and Sandy Kones  
Loren Kreck  
Walter Kuhn  
Linda and Dave Kurfess  
Jim and Launa Lackey  
Kurt and Carol Larson  
Donna Lawson  
Peter and Tana Leander  
Dr. Tom and Gerene Little  
Ben Long and Karen Nichols  
Diane and Bill Lundgren  
Bruce and Colleen Lutz  
Robin and Joe Magaddino  
Stanley and Elizabeth Makman  
Gerald and Martha Mason  
Ron Matelich and Swithin McGrath  
Pat and Riley McClelland  
Sue and Greg McCormick  
Allan and Valeri McGarvey  
David and Rita McNutt  
Rhona and Jerry Meislik  
Joe Mendelsohn  
Richard and Beverly Menz  
Terry and Katy Meyers  
Janet Morrow  
Sylvia Murphy  
Barbara and Don Murray  
Samuel and Ruth Neff  
William Nicholls  
Nathaniel and Kristen Pulsifer  
Mike and Sherry O'Hearn  
Carle F. and Joyce O'Neil  
Robert O'Neil  
Alanna and Michael Ober  
Karl Oehrtman MD  
Dan and Jeanne Olson  
Dan and Jean Paschke  
Jack and Rachel Potter  
Alan and Christine Quint  
Karen Reeves and Doug Chadwick  
Jim and Linda Regnier  
Brian Reid  
Dave and Cheryl Reynolds  
Sam and Beverly Reynolds  
Marilyn Reynolds and Bruce Harris  
Sue and Hank Ricklefs  
Allen Rodgers  
Rox and Hugh Rogers  
Steve and Sue Roling  
Ed and Marge Rothfuss  
Suzanne Royer  
Horace and Patricia Sanders  
John and Carol Santa  
Peter Saunders  
Sun and Franklin Schroeter

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# Welcome Mike Fraser to the Flathead Land Trust Board



Mike Fraser

Mike Fraser was born in Great Falls and moved to the Flathead Valley in 1976. He recently retired as a Regional Manager for Thomas, Dean & Hoskins, Inc. in Kalispell, Montana after working for the firm since January 1973.

While working for Thomas, Dean & Hoskins, he completed a wide range of projects involving nearly all areas of the firm's services – civil, municipal, geotechnical, structural, and industrial.

Mike has B.S. in Civil Engineering from Montana State. He is a past Chairman of the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee, as well as past President and Director of Glacier Orchestra

and Chorale, a past member of the Kalispell Planning Board, and a member of both the Montana Rural Water Users Association and the American Public Works Association.

When he's not working, Mike enjoys doing just about anything in the outdoors. Mike became aware of the Land Trust a number of years ago and feels there is a lot of land that needs to be protected because "not all land is meant for development." Mike wants to give back to the community and Flathead Land Trust is a perfect fit because he knows that he will feel great about what has been accomplished by the organization.

## Thank you to past Board members

It's always tough to say goodbye to Board members that have had such an impact on the success of our organization and **Milt Carlson** is definitely that guy. Milt has been involved with the Board for 17 years and during his time with us has made a huge impact on the success of Flathead Land Trust and land

conservation overall. He will be greatly missed but we hope he'll still stop by and visit from time to time!

**Steve Connolly** has also left the Board and we will miss his expertise and passion for conservation. Steve served on our Board for four years and during the time, participated on many of our Board committees. Steve

will be spending most of the year in a warmer climate down South but promises to be available when we need to bounce ideas off of him.

Thank you to both Milt and Steve for their dedication and commitment to land conservation in the Flathead Valley!

## Why is the Flathead Valley worth protecting?

The Flathead Basin area served by FLT is one of the most highly valued watersheds in the lower 48 states. The Flathead River drainage is the largest tributary to the Clark Fork River and part of the headwaters of the Columbia River. The Flathead's three forks – North, Middle, and South – together supply approximately 80 percent of the water carried within the watershed. Other rivers in the basin include the Stillwater, Whitefish, and Swan. These rivers all flow into Flathead Lake, one of the 300 largest and cleanest lakes in the world and the largest natural body of fresh water in the United States west of the Mississippi River.

The Basin contains remarkably pristine and diverse communities of plants and animals, including over 300 species of aquatic insects, 22 native and introduced species of fish, as well as the full complement of large carnivores (wolves, grizzly bears, mountain lions) found at the time of European settlement. It is also a continentally important bird migration corridor. Much of the public lands within the Basin have received the highest degree of protection in recognition of their incredible resource values: Glacier National Park, now a World Heritage Site; the Bob Marshall Wilderness

Complex; Wild and Scenic Rivers; Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem for Grizzly Bear Recovery; and the Flathead National Forest.

The Flathead Valley lies at the heart of this incredible landscape and is the focus of FLT's conservation initiatives. While much of the surrounding landscape enjoys federal protection, the low-elevation private lands contain many of the habitats necessary to ensure high water quality of Flathead Lake as well as providing secure habitat for wildlife.

These lands also support a booming and diverse economy for its residents and visitors, who for the most part recognize that the Flathead Valley's environmental quality is one of our chief economic assets. Water quality, open space, and access to public lands have all been identified by our citizens as critical quality of life values worthy of protection. Flathead County is the third fastest growing county in Montana, with a population increase of 26% from 1990 to 2000. Some suggest that this is amenity driven growth, stressing the importance of our clean water, wildlife, and public lands access to our economic health.

## New report shows landmark gains in land conservation in Montana

A new report issued by the Land Trust Alliance in Washington, D.C., cites record numbers of acres being conserved by private nonprofit land trusts across the U.S., with an increase of 96% nationally from 2000-2005. This trend proved true across Montana as well, which reported an increase of 88% in acres conserved over the same period.

### Montana's Trends in Conservation: 2000-2005

- Land trusts in Montana have protected 442,554 acres since 2000; this represents a 88% increase in acres conserved.
- As of 2005 there are now 15 land trusts operating in Montana, a 67% increase since 2000.
- Montana land trusts have increased their full time and part time staff 25% in five years.
- Land trust supporters and volunteers in Montana went up 4133%, to a total of 169,461 in 2005.

Land trusts in each state are working to conserve important land in their communities, including farms, waterways, scenic vistas, forests, urban gardens and parks. These protected lands serve to safeguard water quality, protect wildlife habitat, preserve working family farms, and create opportunities for kids and adults alike to enjoy green space in their neighborhoods.

The National Land Trust Census provides an in-depth picture of America's private voluntary land conservation movement and is the nation's only tabulation of this progress. Over the past five years, the number of land trusts has grown by 32% to a total of 1,667.

### National Trends in Conservation

- America's 1,667 local and regional land trusts doubled the acreage conserved between 2000 and 2005, from 6,056,624 acres in 2000 to 11,890,109 acres by the end of 2005, meaning land trusts protected, on average,

more than 1 million new acres each year.

- A record 6.246 million acres have been protected by using the private voluntary land conservation agreements, often called conservation easements. That's 148% more than what was protected just five years ago.



Photo by Susan How, Sunrift Media

- The 11,890,109 acres that local and regional land trusts have protected nationwide represent an area twice the size of New Hampshire.
- Top 5 States for Acres Conserved as of 2005 were California, Maine, Colorado, Montana, and Virginia.
- In 2005, the three land types reported as being the primary focus of land trust efforts were: important natural areas or wildlife habitat, open space and water resources including wetlands.

The full census report can be found at [www.lta.org/census](http://www.lta.org/census).

## New tax incentives through 2007 are a great victory for conservation

Family farmers, ranchers, and other moderate-income landowners can now obtain a significant tax benefit for making the charitable donation of a voluntary conservation easement. The new incentive will also help Americans who want to pass their working family farms and ranches on to their children and grandchildren.

On August 3, 2006 the Congress approved a tremendous expansion of the federal conservation tax incentive for conservation easement donations. On August 17, the President signed it into law. This is a great victory for conservation!

The incentive is a strong message that both Congress and the Administration value private, voluntary land conservation and its place in preserving our natural heritage. The victory is due in large part to the work of individuals from hundreds of land trusts across the country, who made this a local issue for their Senators and Representatives.

### The new law

1. Raises the deduction a landowner can take for

donating a conservation easement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;

2. Allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and

3. Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

It is also important to note that this only applies to easements donated in 2006 and 2007. LTA (Land Trust Alliance) and other organizations are working hard to make this change permanent.

A little more than a year ago, the land trust community was working hard to defend against draconian proposals by the Joint Committee on Taxation to end tax incentives for conservation donations. Today we are celebrating a tremendous victory for conservation.

More information at:

[www.lta.org/publicpolicy/tax\\_incentives\\_updates.htm](http://www.lta.org/publicpolicy/tax_incentives_updates.htm)

## Gratch restoration preserves three early 1900's cabins...



Alan and Sallie Gratch  
in front of the main cabin on the property



On August 21st, Flathead Land Trust staff and Board members headed down Logan Creek Road towards Ashley Mountain to visit one of our protected properties. Alan and Sallie Gratch, who spend the winter months near Chicago, purchased the 160-acre property in 1981 and knew they wanted to put a conservation easement on it.

In December of 2000 the couple worked with the Flathead Land Trust to put the easement in place.

The property had three old cabins built in the early 1900s, which they carefully restored.

Alan and Sallie invited a few of their neighbors over to learn more about conservation easements, and it turned into quite a gathering. What a fabulous way to enjoy a hot summer night in the Flathead!

