



Photo by Steve Muller



Photo by Fred Thorne



Photo by John Lambing

SPRING 2017

# VIEW *Points*

*"An optimist is the human personification of spring" - Susan J. Bissonette*



**FLATHEAD  
LAND TRUST**  
Conserving Our Legacy of Land and Water



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Kalispell, MT 59903  
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www.flatheadlandtrust.org

## OUR MISSION

*Flathead Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation of northwest Montana's land and water legacy through voluntary agreements with private landowners.*



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

I have been involved on a professional basis with the Flathead Land Trust for about 20 years. Recently, as I wean myself from my environmental consulting business and ease into retirement, I wanted to engage in volunteer work. Because of my experience with the Flathead Land Trust and their mission, I expressed an interest, and was elected to the Board of Directors, and now serve as Board President.

In November, the board and staff sequestered themselves for a weekend of strategic planning to assist us in establishing direction as we move forward. The plan establishes realistic goals and objectives consistent with our mission. The plan provides a base from which progress can be measured.

The planning process focused on defining the goals of the Flathead Land Trust and determining the resources necessary to achieve those goals. Achieving a vision requires coordinated efforts that adhere to a broader organizational plan. This is enabled through consistent strategies that are supported by staff and the board. The strategies outlined in our plan not only reach individual targets but collectively will strengthen the function of the Flathead Land Trust, and expand the awareness of the organization. The ultimate benefit of strategic planning would be that it contributes, in some measurable way, to improving overall organizational performance.

Your continued financial support of the Flathead Land Trust is paramount. We are at a very critical junction in the valley as we experience record growth and development. The population in Flathead County grew by roughly 2,000 people from 2015 to 2016, the largest year-to-year increase in a decade and one of the biggest gains in Montana, according to data released March 23 by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The board, staff, and the community that supports the Flathead Land Trust all have a similar vision. Each of us are environmentally conscious residents concerned about saving open space and farmland, preserving community character, protecting wildlife habitat, and conserving the natural value of the valley. The Board of the Flathead Land Trust recognizes the correlation between mission, strategy, and board composition, and they understand the importance of fresh perspectives. We have a plan. Focus is powerful.

Bill Corwin  
Board President



# PAINTING DONATION TO LONE PINE STATE PARK BY CONSERVATION EASEMENT DONOR



The Guest family donated a pastel painting to Lone Pine State Park in January to commemorate the conservation of Sandy Guest and Charles Van Riper's 40 acre property which was added to the State Park in 2007. The painting was done by Sandy's grandmother and Sandy donated it to the Park for display and dedication to her grandmother, who was one of the earliest pioneers in the Flathead, and her parents, who were prominent business people in Kalispell.



I picked wildflowers for our dinner table and afternoon wild strawberries from the forest floor. I knew the best places to see a coyote, or a bobcat or a deer. I counted the stars at night from the meadows and watched the valley pass by from the cliffs. No life problem was ever too large to face on that hill, under a tree, under the sky, inside my soul.

- Sandy Guest Van Riper

## WEST VALLEY WETLANDS PROJECT UPDATE

Thank you so much to those who have donated to our West Valley Wetlands project so far. We are overwhelmed by the incredible support from this community which has made all the difference in bringing in some of the final dollars needed to complete it.



Photo by Steve Muller



Photo by Penny Soi

We are excited to be so close to finalizing the permanent conservation of these unique pothole wetlands along with the surrounding farmland that supports some of the highest numbers and diversity of wetland birds in the Flathead Valley. This complex of wetlands is incredibly important for birds while also being one of the only known staging areas for sandhill cranes in the Valley. With the ice gone now, the birds are back and we've enjoyed wonderful birding trips to the area on April 2nd and May 13th with our partners at Flathead Audubon.

We're almost there but we still need your help to get us over the finish line. Help us reach our goal to complete this conservation project by the end of the year. Find out more and donate to the West Valley Wetlands project at [www.flatheadlandtrust.org](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org).

# HELPING TO ENSURE A COMMUNITY VISION FOR TRAILS AND CONSERVATION

View of Whitefish Lake from overlook on lower Haskill Trail. Michele Irelan photo.

Get your hiking boots and bike ready because there's a new trail that is being constructed this summer connecting Whitefish to Whitefish Mountain Resort through Haskill Basin. The new Haskill Trail will be located on two pieces of important conserved private land - the Haskill Basin conservation easement owned by F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. and the Iron Horse conservation easement which is held by the Flathead Land Trust.

**This exciting trail project will add two new trailheads and 5.5 miles to the Whitefish Trail system thanks to the partnership of Whitefish Legacy Partners (WLP), the City of Whitefish, Iron Horse, Flathead Land Trust, and Winter Sports, Inc.**

The lower trailhead will be located on City of Whitefish land at the water treatment plant on Reservoir Road, within a half mile of the paved bike path on Wisconsin Ave. The new trail will go north through the City of Whitefish property and the Iron Horse conservation easement. It will then continue along the western portion of the 3,022-acre Haskill Basin conservation easement which was completed in 2016 with the help of the Trust for Public Land and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks with F.H. Stoltze to protect the working timber lands, recreational access and the Whitefish community water supply. The trail will then access the upper trailhead which will be located on Winter Sports Inc. land near Whitefish Mountain Resort. The Upper Haskill Trailhead, in partnership with Glacier Nordic, will have groomed cross country ski access during the winter.

The 51-acre conservation easement on the Iron Horse

property provides a key link of protected land that helps make this trail project possible. "Connecting the trail from Whitefish and the paved bike path along Wisconsin Avenue would not be possible without the Iron Horse/ Flathead Land Trust conservation easement parcel. This property provides a perfect link into the area, and the trail experience on these lands will be one enjoyed by the most users" explains WLP Executive Director, Heidi Van Everen.

The Iron Horse conservation easement project was completed in 2000 as a partnership between Flathead Land Trust and the City of Whitefish to creatively protect open space and future public trail access. The City of Whitefish had required conservation of this open space and future access as a condition of approval of the Iron Horse subdivision. Through partnership with the City of Whitefish and the Iron Horse development, Flathead Land Trust was able to ensure this open space and future public access would be maintained in perpetuity with the conservation easement. These community benefits are now culminating in the construction of the Haskill Trail through the property this summer.

This is the second project Flathead Land Trust has been involved with which has facilitated the Whitefish Trail system. The Lupfer Loop of the Whitefish Trail is located



Partners at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Haskill Trail.



Hikers on the Lupfer Loop of the Whitefish Trail.



Bluebells, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*

on a 570-acre conservation easement held by Flathead Land Trust which was conserved in partnership with the Stillwater Land Company in 2002. The property was conserved to protect its native wetland and intact forested habitat important for a rich diversity of wildlife species. Mike Goguen purchased the property in 2006 and entered into a land exchange with the State of Montana in 2009 which resulted in the present trail system being established when it became State land. The Lupfer trail is 4 miles long and includes a 3-mile loop through forest interspersed by wetlands and a spur trail to a scenic viewpoint of the Salish Range and Stillwater Valley.

On May 9th, we celebrated the convergence of community, trails, and conservation at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Haskill Trail. Without a doubt, the biggest benefit of the Whitefish Trail is that it brings community together through conservation and recreation on one of our greatest assets – an intact and beautiful landscape. Flathead Land Trust is proud to play at least a small part in ensuring the protection of this legacy in partnership with the community, Whitefish Legacy Partners and many others.

Find out more about the new Haskill Trail and the Whitefish Trail system at [www.whitefishlegacy.org](http://www.whitefishlegacy.org).

# WHY WE GIVE

**“It is very simple. Our donations to the Flathead Land Trust are not gifts but investments in the kind of Flathead Valley that we want to live in.”**

- Bruce Tannehill & Gail Cleveland



## THE VISION WE SHARE... THE LEGACY WE CREATE

Your commitment to Flathead Land Trust reflects the vision we share for the Flathead’s future – where our working farms and ranches, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities continue to be inseparable parts of our heritage. With good stewardship of these extraordinary natural values, together we’re ensuring that generations to come will continue to enjoy our “Flathead Way of Life.”

Listening to the rattling call of sandhill cranes in the West Valley. Casting a fly to a hungry trout on the Middle Fork. Or simply taking in the last light of a perfect Montana sunset on the Mission Mountains. Together we’re working to make sure gifts like these remain the birthright of future generations.

You can ensure your lifelong values and love for the Flathead will be part of your personal legacy by including Flathead Land Trust in your will or trust. It’s one of the simplest ways to help insure our work and the values you cherish will continue to endure.

*For more information and examples of specific bequest language please contact us at (406) 752-8293 [ptravis@flatheadlandtrust.org](mailto:ptravis@flatheadlandtrust.org) or contact your attorney or estate planner.*

# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS 2016 MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

FOR MAKING THE CONSERVATION OF OUR INCREDIBLE LAND AND WATER  
LEGACY IN NORTHWEST MONTANA POSSIBLE. WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

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 - Vivian J. Birchall  
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 In Memory of Coco Lazenby  
 - Bruce and Cheryl Lazenby

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 Tamarack Brewing Co.  
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 Whitefish Stage Organic Farms  
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 The Bibler Foundation  
 The Cinnabar Foundation  
 Flathead Conservation District  
 Intermountain West Joint Venture

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Cadeau Foundation  
 Land Trust Alliance  
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 Travelers for Open Land

**UP TO \$5,000**

BNSF Railway Foundation  
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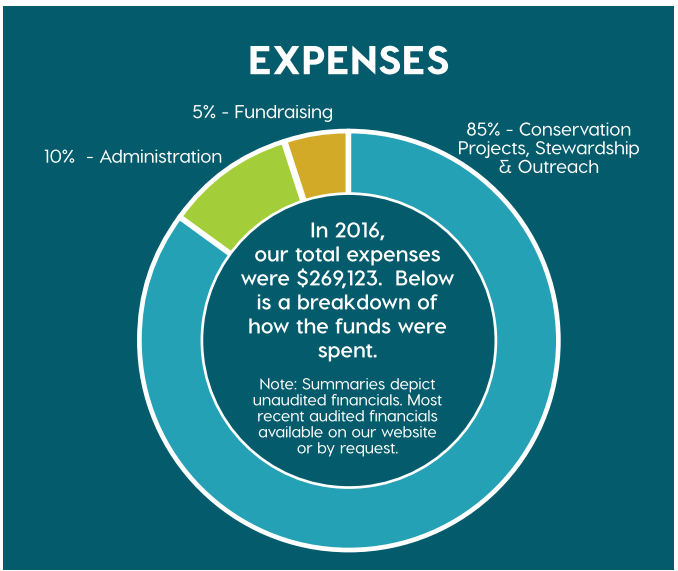
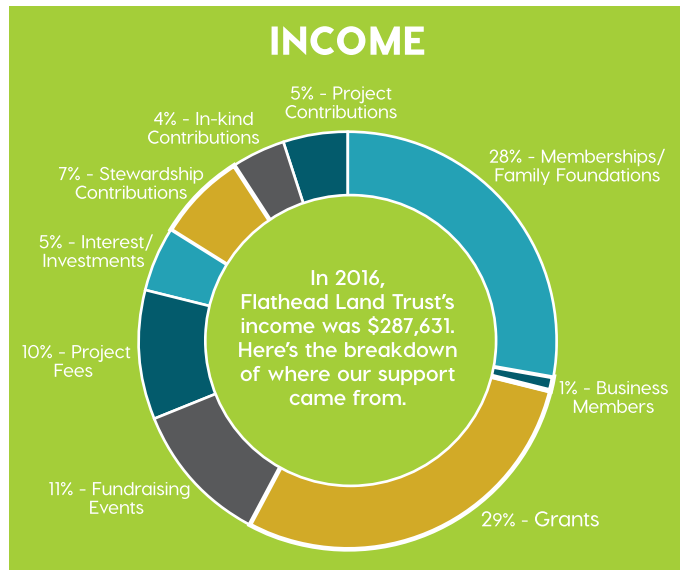
**STEWARDSHIP OR PROGRAM FEE CONTRIBUTIONS**

Valerie Bebee  
 Roy, Reed and Karen Darrow  
 Richard and Kaye Hoffmaster  
 Jane and Joe Iovino  
 Iron Horse Development

**MEMORIAL GIFTS**  
 In Memory of Glenn Johnston:

**2016 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

This past year, your support helped conserve 77 acres of farmland and wildlife habitat along the North Shore of Flathead Lake with MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks; conserved 155 acres along the Flathead River in partnership with Montana Land Reliance; secured a 200 acre conservation easement near Bigfork; protect 75 acres of important grizzly bear habitat in the Mission Valley in partnership with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe; and released a new Conservation Plan which will guide our future conservation work in northwest Montana.





**FLATHEAD  
LAND TRUST**  
Conserving Our Legacy of Land and Water

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## — UPCOMING EVENTS —

### JUNE 7 – NRCS CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP



Do you own agricultural land? Find out how you can participate in the NRCS conservation easement programs with this free, informational workshop at the Hilton Garden Inn from 9AM to noon.

Contact us for more details at 752-8293.

### SEPTEMBER 23 – 3RD ANNUAL BARN BASH



The 3rd Annual Barn Bash – Bluegrass, Brews & Views is an event you won't want to miss at the beautiful Diamond B Ranch. This year, we're excited to bring original bluegrass and folk/country music to the stage with The Acousticals. You'll also enjoy local, farm raised food by Piggyback BBQ, silent auction items, and other fun.

For details and to purchase tickets, go to [www.flatheadlandtrust.org](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org) or call 752-8293.

### JUNE 15 – ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS FILM SCREENING IN BIGFORK



Join Flathead Land Trust, Montana Land Reliance, and the Montana Association of Land Trusts for a special screening of On the Shoulders of Giants: The Story of Montana Private Land Conservation on Thursday, June 15 from 6:00–7:30 PM at the Marina Cay Resort in Bigfork.

For details, go to [www.flatheadlandtrust.org](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org)

### OCTOBER 7 – WEST VALLEY WETLANDS SANDHILL CRANE WATCHING TOUR



Join us on Saturday, October 7 from 6–8 PM to watch the amazing sandhill cranes at their fall staging area in the West Valley with a bird expert from Flathead Audubon. The tour is co-sponsored by Flathead Audubon and West Valley Naturalists Association.

Details at [www.flatheadlandtrust.org](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org) or call 752-8293.



FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND AT [FLATHEADLANDTRUST.ORG](http://FLATHEADLANDTRUST.ORG) TO FIND MORE ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS.