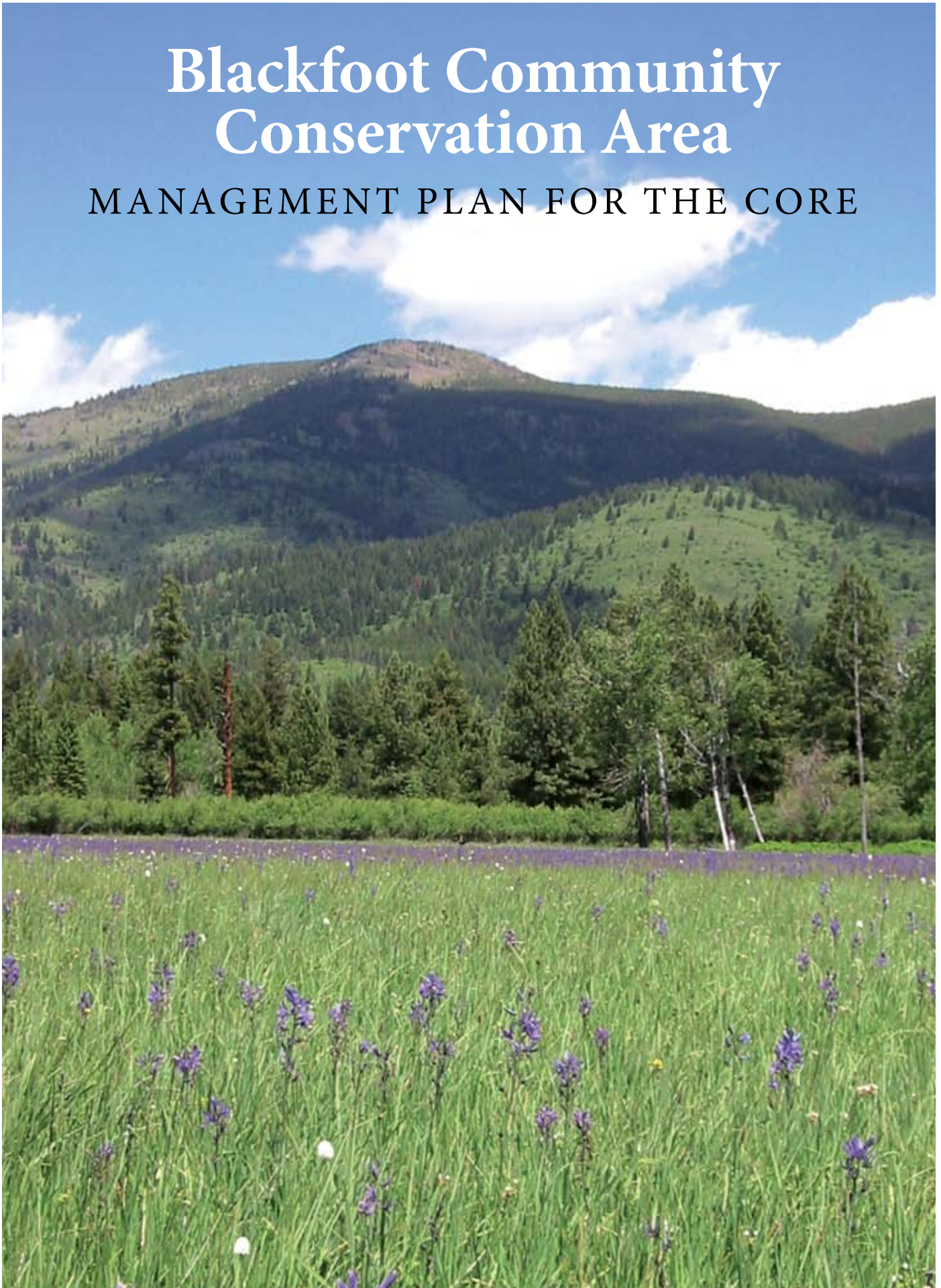


Blackfoot Community Conservation Area

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CORE



Blackfoot Community Conservation Area

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CORE

Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Council

Blackfoot Challenge

PO Box 103

405 Main Street

Ovando, MT 59854

Phone/Fax: (406) 793-3900

Email: info@blackfootchallenge.org

Web: www.blackfootchallenge.org

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Community Vision for the BCCA Core:

Develop a working landscape that balances ecological diversity with local economic sustainability for the future benefit of the Blackfoot watershed community. Management will entail activities that seek to conserve, enhance and maintain a balance of wildlife habitat, wetlands, water, grasslands and timber resources with traditional uses including hunting, recreation, agriculture, and forestry. These shared values for the land will be complimented through working cooperatively with surrounding agencies and private landowners.

The Blackfoot Community Conservation Area (BCCA) is an innovative effort involving community forest ownership and cooperative ecosystem management across public and private lands in the heart of the 1.5 million acre Blackfoot watershed. Located at the southern end of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, the BCCA borders the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness areas and encompasses an important transition zone between wilderness, national forest and productive private valley bottoms, with lush riparian and wetland areas and important wildlife habitat. Historic uses of the area include livestock grazing, timber harvest, and recreational activities including hunting, trapping, horseback riding, hiking, snowmobiling and skiing.

The BCCA project involves two distinct phases. The first phase involves local ownership and management of 5,609.37 acres of former Plum Creek Timber Company lands that will be transferred from The Nature Conservancy to the Blackfoot Challenge in 2008, also referred to as the BCCA Core. The second phase involves joint management of the Core with the larger BCCA itself—the surrounding public and private lands that comprise a 41,000-acre multiple-use demonstration area for the watershed. It will pilot innovative access, land stewardship and restoration practices. Land owners in this larger BCCA include the USFS-Lolo National Forest, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and a number of private landowners. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

provides the legal framework for public agencies and private landowners to partner in cooperative cross-boundary ecosystem management (Appendix 1).

The BCCA Core will be managed and administered by the BCCA Council—a committee of the Blackfoot Challenge—consisting of fifteen members representing agencies owning land within or adjacent to the Core, private landowners, recreational user groups, local businesses and/or commercial outfitters (Appendix 2). The Council was appointed by the Blackfoot Challenge Board of Directors in July 2005 to coordinate a baseline inventory of the property, create the Management Plan for the Core, and develop the MOU for cooperative management of the 41,000-acre BCCA.

In 2005, a conservation easement was purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the Core's conservation values and perpetuate its value as a working landscape. In accordance with the conservation easement, an Ovando Mountain Habitat Conservation Easement Baseline Inventory Report was completed in February 2007 to identify the BCCA Core's natural resources and assess current conditions for future management decisions and monitoring. The Baseline Inventory summarizes the property's climate and physiography, vegetation, wildlife, and land uses, with forest and habitat types surveyed and mapped.

The purpose of this plan is to guide land management decisions on the BCCA Core—the 5609.37 acres located in the heart of the conservation area. This docu-

¹ "Ovando Mountain Habitat Conservation Easement: Baseline Inventory Report," February 2007. Baseline data for the conservation easement granted by The Nature Conservancy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on property near Ovando, Montana. Report prepared by Rich Lane & Associates.



JAN FARRAR

ment defines the community's vision for the property, characterizes the natural and cultural landscape, documents the public involvement process and administration of the property, and establishes management goals, objectives and issues requiring future study to guide stewardship and restoration activities.

Based on a number of biological and social assessments, the Council identified the following resources, uses, and issues as central to management of the Core: wild-life, forest and forest products, fire, riparian and wetland areas, range and native grasslands, noxious weeds, recreation, travel

management, education, in-holdings and neighbors, and economics.

The plan is intended to be a dynamic document that pools technical planning resources and local community-based knowledge. It is based on understanding historic landscape patterns, assessing current conditions, and establishing a roadmap for the future. Management goals, objectives, and activities as defined by the plan will be adapted as needed based on monitoring, landscape changes, and/or new information. Potential changes to the plan will be prepared by the Council, presented to the community for comment,

FIGURE 1. *Sunrise on Ovando Mountain*

Management goals for the Core include:

- 1. Manage habitat to promote diverse and sustainable populations of wildlife;
- 2. Promote a diverse multi-age forest using sustainable forestry practices;
- 3. Manage fuel levels utilizing prescribed fire, thinning or other land management practices to reduce the chance of catastrophic wildfire;
- 4. Implement riparian and wetland restoration and conservation strategies to benefit local fisheries, wetland and riparian area dependent species, and downstream resources and users;
- 5. Promote healthy range management practices while balancing the ecological and economic values of the area;
- 6. Prevent, control and/or eradicate noxious and invasive weed infestations through the practice of integrated weed management;
- 7. Provide for responsible recreational use at sustainable levels to benefit the public and the health of the resource;
- 8. Maintain a trail and road network for various forms and levels of administrative and recreational use that do not unduly degrade natural resource values;
- 9. Promote natural resource education, research and learning about local ecology and management through field observations, hands-on exploration and interaction with resource managers and researchers;
- 10. Maintain a cooperative relationship with private landowners who have in-holdings, adjacent or neighboring parcels of land; and,
- 11. Develop an economically self-sustaining resource that supports management of the BCCA and local community viability.

approved by the Council and presented to the Blackfoot Challenge Board of Directors for final approval and adoption.

The BCCA provides a unique opportunity to coordinate private and public land management activities at the landscape scale, supporting the Blackfoot Challenge’s mission to enhance, conserve and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle

of the Blackfoot River Valley for future generations. As a community-based forest, the cornerstone of the project is sound resource stewardship and sustainability for the benefit of local communities. The model of cooperative land management is based on the Challenge’s legacy of building private and public partnerships across the watershed, from “ridge to ridge.”

Adaptive Management: Adaptive management is a structured, iterative process for optimal decision-making in the face of uncertainty, aimed at reducing uncertainty over time by systematic monitoring. In this way, decision-making simultaneously maximizes one or more resource objectives and produces the information needed to improve future management. Adaptive management is often characterized as “learning by doing.”

Best Management Practices: Standard, well-defined methods for harvesting and managing forested lands in compliance with federal and state regulations regarding conservation of soil, water, plants, and animal habitats.

Block Management: A cooperative program between private Montana landowners and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Block Management helps landowners manage hunting activities and provides the public with free hunting access to private land, and sometimes to adjacent or isolated public lands.

Conservation Easement: A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a private landowner and a qualified organization that limits the uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. In donating or selling a conservation easement, the landowner gives up certain rights (usually associated with development), but continues to own and use the land and retain the right to sell it or pass it on to heirs.

Ecosystem Management: An approach to natural resource management which aims to sustain ecosystems to meet both ecological and human needs in the future. It is based on an adaptive, collaboratively developed vision of desired future conditions that integrates ecological, socioeconomic, and institutional perspectives, applied within a geographic framework, and defined primarily by natural ecological boundaries.

Integrated Weed Management: The aim of integrated weed management is to use of a combination of different practices to manage noxious and invasive weed populations in a manner that is economically and environmentally sound. Such strategies include cultural, mechanical, chemical, and biological methods.

Pre-Commercial Thinning: Cutting trees from a young stand so that the remaining trees will have more room to grow to marketable size. Trees cut in a pre-commercial thinning have no commercial value and normally none of the felled trees are removed for utilization. The primary intent is to improve growth potential for the trees left after thinning.

Quaternary Glaciation: Glacial activity taking place in the geologic time period from the end of the Pliocene Epoch roughly 1.8 million years ago to the present. The Quaternary includes three geologic subdivisions: the Pleistocene, Holocene, and Anthropocene Epochs.

Species of Concern: Montana Species of Concern are native animals breeding in the state that are considered to be ‘at risk’ due to declining population trends, threats to their habitats, and/or restricted distribution. See fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/concern/default.html.

Streamside Management Zone: Montana law prohibits certain timber harvest activities within at least 50 feet of any stream, lake, or other body of water. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) must approve any exceptions to these prohibited practices.

Sustainable Harvest: The practice of forest harvesting in a manner which meets the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCCA:
Blackfoot Community
Conservation Area

TNC:
The Nature
Conservancy

MT FWP:
Montana Department
of Fish, Wildlife and
Parks

MOU:
Memorandum of
Understanding

MT DNRC:
Montana Department
of Natural Resources
and Conservation

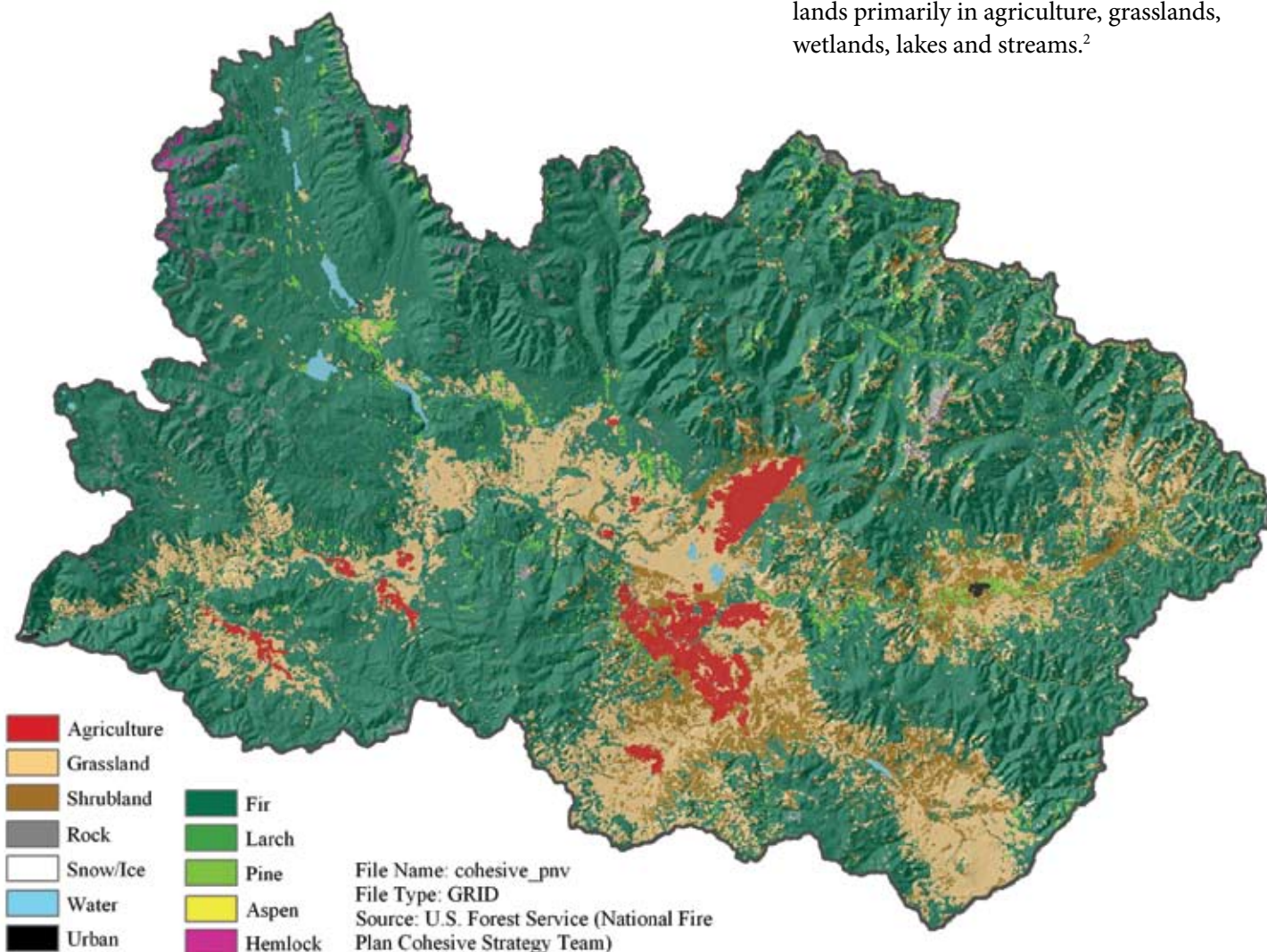
USFWS:
United States Fish and
Wildlife Service

Background and History

The 1.5 million-acre (2,400 square mile) Blackfoot watershed in northwestern Montana is comprised of a diverse and ecologically rich combination of habitats due to its geologic and hydrologic features. Located at the southern edge of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, the area is part of a ten-million acre ecosystem that extends north into Canada. A tributary of the Columbia, the Blackfoot River flows 132 miles from its headwaters on the

Continental Divide to its confluence with the Clark Fork River just east of Missoula, a growing urban center. Four main tributaries and numerous creeks flow into the river with diverse and complex connections to wilderness areas, national forests, and private ranchlands in valley bottoms. Prairie grasslands, sagebrush steppe, coniferous forest, and extensive wetland and riparian areas characterize the internal reaches of the watershed. Over eighty percent of the watershed is covered with mixed species forests, with the remaining lands primarily in agriculture, grasslands, wetlands, lakes and streams.²

FIGURE 2. *Vegetation of the Blackfoot Watershed*



² Blackfoot Challenge. 2005. *The Blackfoot Watershed State of the Basin Report: Understanding Our Natural Resources and Rural Lifestyle*.

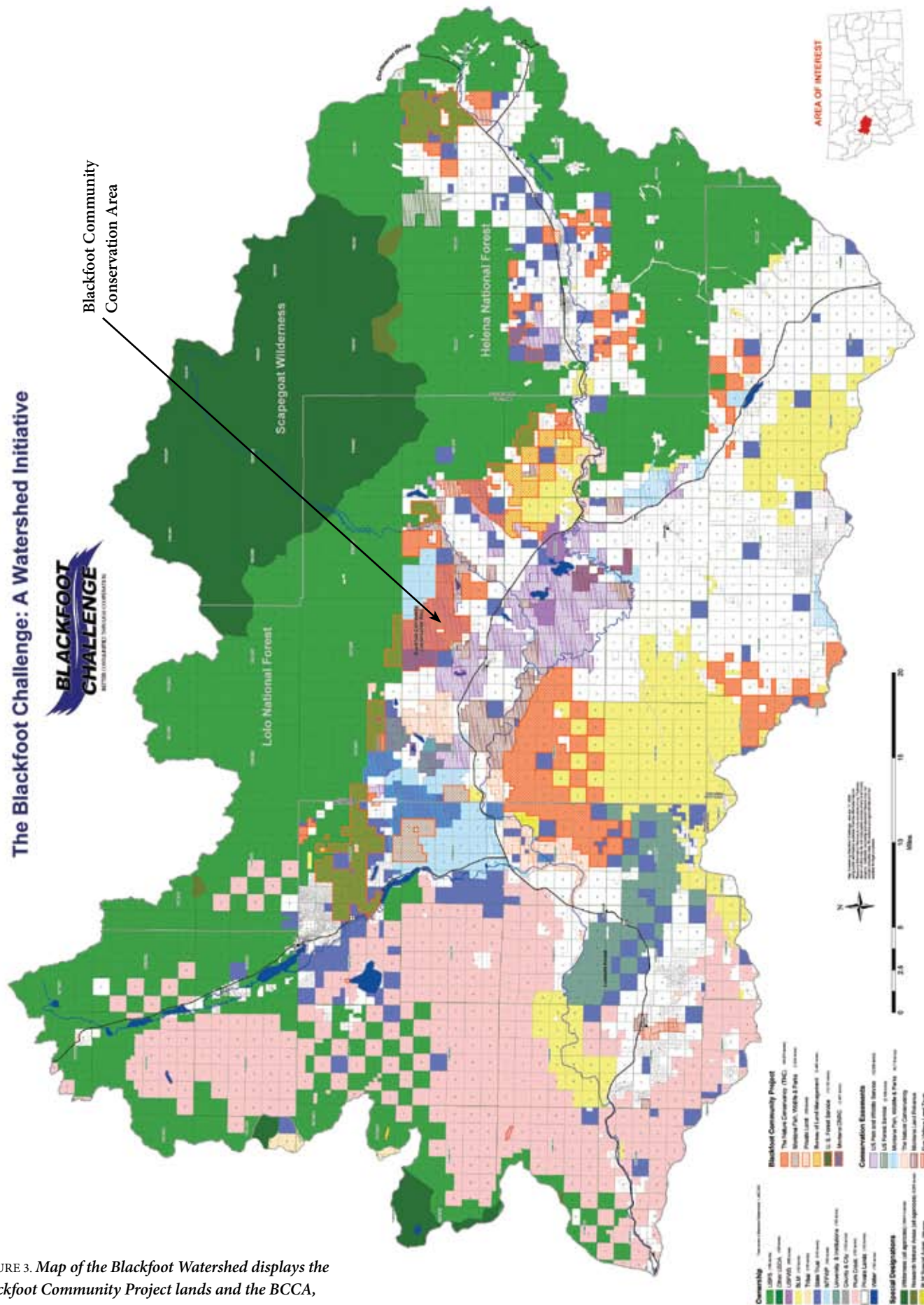


FIGURE 3. Map of the Blackfoot Watershed displays the Blackfoot Community Project lands and the BCCA, located in the heart of the valley.

For centuries, the mid-elevation ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and western larch forests and associated vegetative communities in the Blackfoot watershed have contributed significant biological, agricultural and cultural value to human communities living throughout the valley. Beginning with Native American Salish, Kootenai, Nez Perce, Shoshone, Blackfeet, and Crow tribes followed by homesteaders and ranchers of European descent and continuing to the present day, these forested habitats continue to provide forage and cover for wildlife, forest products, grazing, hunting, and recreation opportunities.

In 2003, recognizing the conservation value and increasing potential for habitat fragmentation of some of these mid-elevation private forest lands, the Blackfoot Challenge and The Nature Conservancy initiated a land acquisition effort known as the Blackfoot Community Project to purchase 89,215 acres of Plum Creek Timber Company lands, stretching from the headwaters at Rogers Pass on the Continental Divide to the Clearwater drainage.³ The goal of the Blackfoot Community Project is to conserve and keep these former corporate timber lands relatively intact through re-sale to both public and

private interests based on a community-driven plan. The land acquisition effort paved the way for the development of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area (BCCA).

Location

The Blackfoot Challenge Community Conservation Area (BCCA) is located in the mid-reaches of the Blackfoot watershed, near Ovando Mountain. (For a more complete property description and directions, see Appendix 3). Forming the southern border of the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness areas and lying north of the Blackfoot River, the area encompasses an important transition zone between wilderness, national forest and productive valley bottoms, containing important wildlife habitat with lush riparian and wetland areas. Land ownership in the BCCA is comprised of Lolo National Forest (59%), State of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation lands (7%), State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks lands (13%), private lands (7%) and community-owned lands (the Core) through the Blackfoot Challenge (14%). Lands in the BCCA are still subject to the legal and administrative rules and regulations of their respective owners. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Appendix 1) provides the legal framework for public agencies and private landowners to partner in cooperative cross-boundary ecosystem management. The BCCA will function as a multiple-use area implementing innovative access, land stewardship, and restoration practices.

FIGURE 4. *The BCCA is located in the mid-reaches of the Blackfoot Watershed, providing a critical transition zone between national forest and private valley bottoms.*



JIM STEINBERG

³ Communities Shaping Their Future: The Blackfoot Community Project. See References Cited for full citation.

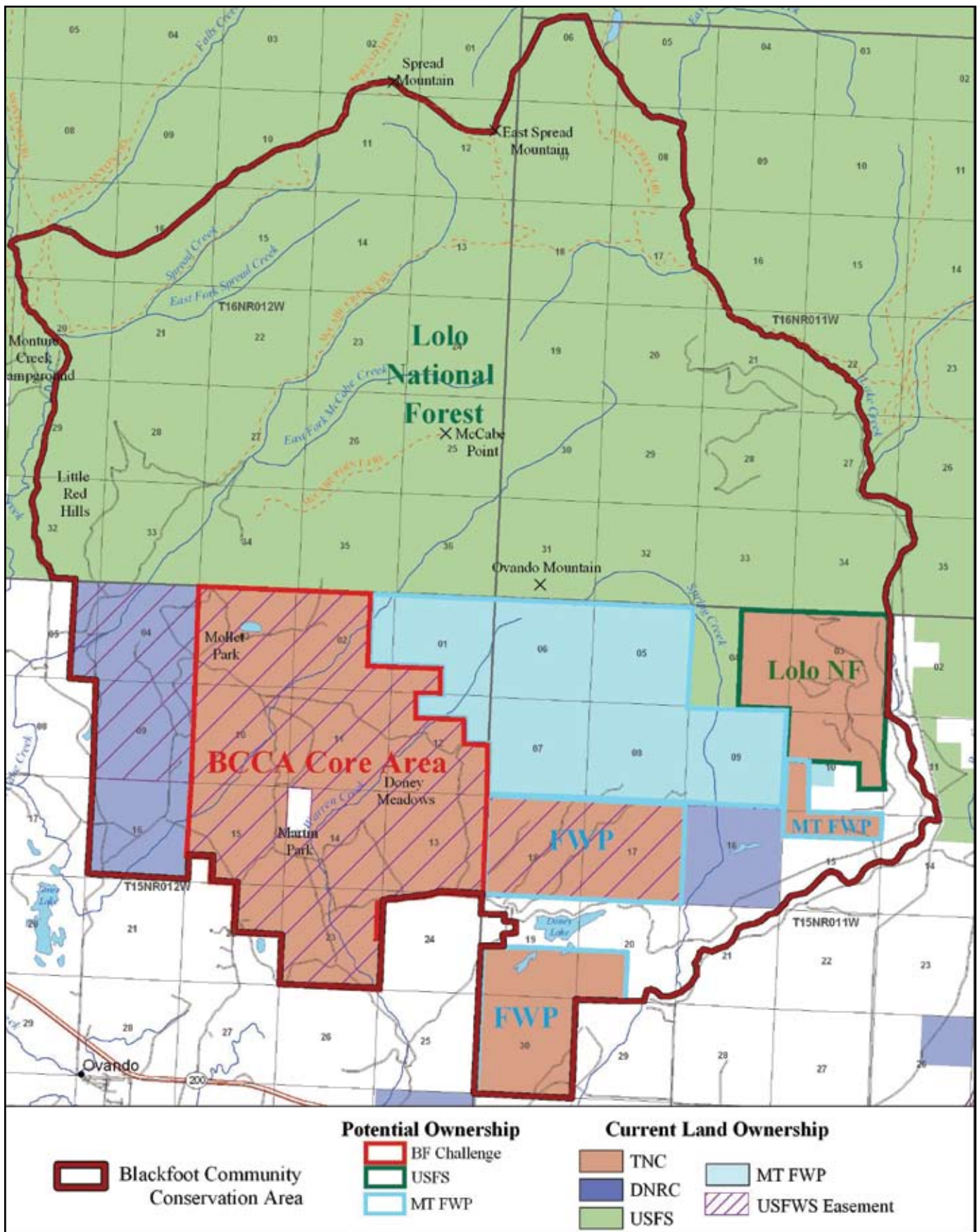


FIGURE 5. BCCA

The BCCA project formed around what is now called the Core—5,609.37 acres of private working forest lands that will be transferred from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to the Blackfoot Challenge for community-based ownership and management. The BCCA Core is subject to the conditions of a conservation easement purchased by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).⁴ The project pioneers innovative governance structures for local ownership and management of sustainable forest resources, exploring the intricate balance between conservation and community needs and viability. Building from this effort, management practices will be extended to include surrounding public and private lands.

The BCCA links social, ecological, and economic values together and is rooted in the efforts of the Blackfoot Challenge to bring public and private partners to the table to build trust and forge relationships. The goal is to work cooperatively to conserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Blackfoot River Valley. Hallmarks of the project include building long-term capacity for land management activities, collaborating with partners, continued public engagement in the process, enhanced resource stewardship, economic benefits to local communities, adaptive management and monitoring, and education about best management practices.

Plan Purpose

This document is intended to guide land management decisions on the BCCA Core – the 5609.37 acres located in the heart of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area. The plan defines the community's vision for the property, characterizes the natural and cultural landscape, documents the public involvement process and administration of the property, and establishes management goals and objectives to guide annual stewardship and restoration activities.

The plan was developed by the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Council (Appendix 2), a 15-member

The plan seeks to:

- Meet the requirements of the conservation easement held by the US Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Identify the range of resource issues, values and uses that are key to sustainable management and community use of the BCCA Core;
- Establish guidelines, measurable targets and funding priorities for annual management, stewardship and restoration projects;
- Emphasize the on-going balance and correlation between managing the landscape for both community and conservation purposes;
- Lay the foundation for cooperative management of the 41,000-acre BCCA by public and private partners;
- Provide mechanisms for ongoing community engagement in ownership and management of the BCCA Core;
- Integrate new knowledge and best available science; and,
- Adapt to ecological, social, and economic changes that affect the landscape.

⁴ The full conservation easement can be found in: "Ovando Mountain Habitat Conservation Easement: Baseline Inventory Report," February 2007. Baseline data for the conservation easement granted by The Nature Conservancy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on property near Ovando, Montana. Report prepared by Rich Lane & Associates.

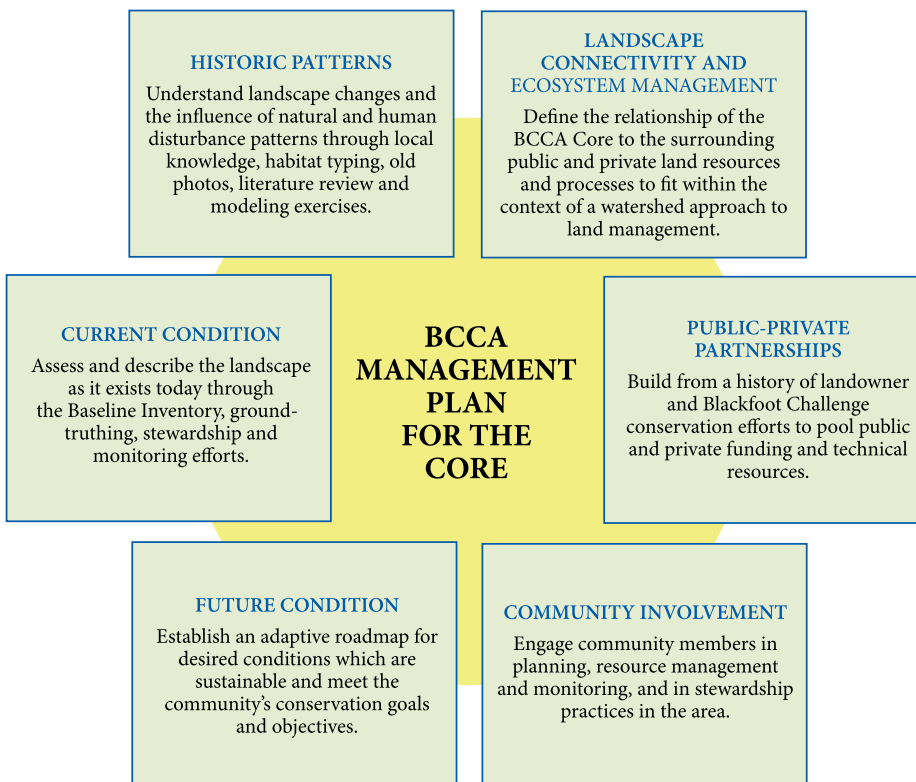
community-based group appointed by the Blackfoot Challenge Board of Directors, with comments and input sought from Blackfoot Valley landowners, residents and user groups through public meetings, work groups, surveys, and mailings. Community involvement and collaboration with public and private partners will continue to provide a solid foundation for future management decisions.

A key reference document for the plan is the Ovando Mountain Habitat Conservation Easement Baseline Inventory Report, completed in February 2007.⁵ The Baseline Inventory documents current conditions as a reference point for future observations and measurements related to the landscape's physical and biological characteristics.

The community vision for the BCCA Core is to:

Develop a working landscape that balances ecological diversity with local economic sustainability for the future benefit of the Blackfoot watershed community. Management will entail activities that seek to conserve, enhance, and maintain a balance of wildlife habitat, wetlands, water, grasslands, and timber resources with traditional uses including hunting, recreation, agriculture, and forestry. These shared values for the land will be complemented through working cooperatively with the surrounding agency and private landowners.

The plan is intended to be a “living” document that integrates technical planning resources and local community-based knowledge. Figure 6 shows the principles that will guide land management decisions and activities:



⁵ Ibid.

Geography

The Blackfoot River watershed lies at the southern end of what is known as the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, a 10 million-acre area of the Northern Rocky Mountains extending from Canada to the United States. The Crown is one of the most intact ecosystems found in North America, including the Bob Marshall-Great Bear-Scapegoat Wilderness Complex, Canada's Castle Wilderness, and Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park.⁶ The Blackfoot watershed acts as the Crown's

base, providing an important biological connection to other mountain ranges and watersheds in Montana.

The 41,000-acre BCCA is located in the north-central region of the Blackfoot watershed, and is dominated by Ovando Mountain (elevation 7,799 feet), a feature visible from much of the middle Blackfoot region. The 5,609.37-acre Core encompasses the lower southwest slopes and foothills of Ovando Mountain, with elevations ranging from 4,200 to 5,200 feet.

FIGURE 7.
Blackfoot River



JIM STEINBERG

The Blackfoot River

The Blackfoot River, sometimes called the Big Blackfoot River to distinguish it from the Little Blackfoot River, is a snow-fed and spring-fed freshwater river originating near Rogers Pass on the Continental Divide. The river's canyon and the valleys it flows through were formed by the Missoula Floods, cataclysmic events at the end of the last ice age.

The river starts ten miles northeast of Lincoln and flows 132 miles to the confluence with the

Clark Fork River just east of Missoula. It is a fast, cold river with many deep spots, making it prime habitat for several species of trout. The Blackfoot is renowned for its recreation, including fly-fishing, canoeing, inner-tubing, and rafting. Montana Highway 200 runs parallel to the river from McNamara to Milltown. The river was featured in the 1976 novella *A River Runs Through It* by Norman Maclean, as well as the 1991 film that was based on it.

⁶ The Nature Conservancy. 2007. Crown of the Continent.
URL: <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/montana/preserves/art14843.html>



STEVE KLOETZEL

FIGURE 8. *This view from the top of Ovando Mountain shows the critical linkage to higher elevation National Forest lands.*

Within the 41,000-acre BCCA are the headwaters to several tributaries of Monture Creek, itself a major tributary of the Blackfoot River, including McCabe, Spread, and Dick Creeks. Warren Creek and Spring Creek drain the south face of Ovando Mountain and surrounding foothills. The BCCA is bounded by Lake Creek on the northwest and the North Fork of the Blackfoot River on the southeast. The Core area includes portions of the Dick and Warren Creek drainages.

Geology

The Blackfoot River valley was formed by continental glaciation when the Cordilleran ice sheet advanced through northern Montana.⁷ Quaternary glaciation and sedimentary deposition has led to the Blackfoot valley's geologic complexity.⁸

Alpine glaciation in the Scapegoat Wilderness and mountains to the north of the valley occurred during the Bull Lake and Pinedale glacial periods. Large continuous ice sheets extended from the mountains southward into what is now the middle Blackfoot and Clearwater River valleys.⁹ Large deposits of till, outwash, and kame-terraces were left behind when the glaciers receded. More recent alluvium and stream deposits originated from reworked glacial deposits, adding to the current geomorphology of the area.¹⁰ Formations are made up of a combination of volcanics, siltstone, carbonates, and glacial deposits. Glaciated features, such as terraces, alluvial fans and pothole wetlands, are common to in the Middle Blackfoot, BCCA and on the Core Area.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Whipple et al., 1987; Cox et al., 1998. See References Cited for full citations.

⁹ Witkind and Weber, 1982. See References Cited for full citation.

¹⁰ Tetra Tech, 2004. See References Cited for full citation.

FIGURE 9. *In 1806, Meriwether Lewis referred to this glacially-carved landscape as the “prairie of the knobs.”*



USFWS

Vegetation

Geologic, hydrologic, and geographic features combine to produce a wide array of vegetative communities within the Blackfoot watershed, including forests, grasslands, and wetlands. Low and mid-elevation forests in the BCCA Core are dominated by ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, and western larch. In the higher regions, forest composition



MARIA MANTAS

shifts to subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce, especially on cool moist northerly aspects. Floodplain forests are comprised of Engelmann spruce, black cottonwood and aspen. In the watershed’s valley floor, meadows and native bunchgrass prairies dominate the landscape. Here, rare species can be found, such as Missoula phlox and Howell’s gumweed, globally imperiled regional endemics with population cores in the Ovando Valley, including the BCCA.¹¹ For a complete list of vegetation species found in the BCCA, please see Appendix 4.

FIGURE 10.
Missoula Phlox

¹¹ Montana Natural Heritage Program, 2005. Species of Special Concern Database, Helena, MT.

Portions of the middle Blackfoot Valley region are dominated by sagebrush communities. The greatest source of biological diversity in the watershed arises from wetland features such as glacial lakes, vernal ponds, basin fed creeks and spring creeks, marshes, shrubby riparian areas, and cottonwood forests – features common to the BCCA. It is estimated that 600 vascular plant species occur within the valley, nearly 30% of which are associated with wetlands.¹² Salinity of pothole wetlands varies greatly, creating unique associations between water and vegetation. Seven plant species of special concern have

been documented in wetlands of the Blackfoot region. Fen peatlands, a rare wetland type in Montana, also exist throughout the middle Blackfoot.

The vast majority of the watershed and the BCCA remain in native vegetation. 76% of the BCCA is characterized as coniferous and deciduous forest, 5% as native grasses, and 19% as riparian areas and wetlands with less than 1% in deciduous and mixed forests and agricultural land. Within the Core area, approximately 56% is characterized as coniferous forest, 14% as grasslands, and 30% as riparian areas and wetlands.¹³



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BCCA Forest Lands

Coniferous forest is the major vegetation type in the BCCA Core. Six major tree species are found—Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, western larch, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and sub-alpine fir. These forest stands were historically managed to provide saw timber and other softwood fiber for the region's forest products industry. Over the last 75 years or

more almost all of the merchantable timber has been harvested, including selective logging and some areas that appear to have been clear cut. Only a few areas were left unaffected by timber harvesting activities. Currently, small younger trees dominate the landscape in many areas of the property; natural and artificial regeneration have resulted in very successful reforestation.

FIGURE 11.

BCCA Forest Lands

¹¹ Lesica, Peter. 1994. See full citation in References Cited.

¹² National Land Cover Dataset. 2007.

FIGURE 12. *This area, known as Little Doney Lake, forms the southern boundary of the BCCA. Nearly 150 acres of depressional wetlands can be found interspersed between ridges, knobs, and forested uplands on this property.*



STEVE KLOETZEL

FIGURE 13. *Black Bear*

Wildlife

The Blackfoot watershed maintains an abundance and diversity of wildlife that includes 236 species of birds, 50 species of mammals, five species of amphibians, and four kinds of reptiles. There are 12 native and 13 non-native (exotic) fish species living in the streams and lakes of the watershed. The Blackfoot River is a world-renowned native trout fishery, providing habitat for the complete life cycles of westslope cutthroat trout, a state species of special concern, and the federally threatened bull trout. The threatened bald eagle, grizzly bear, Canada lynx,



BOB SHEPPARD

water howellia, and the endangered gray wolf are other federally listed species found in the Blackfoot.¹⁴ All of the threatened and endangered animal species occur on both the larger BCCA and the Core area. For a complete list of wildlife species found in the BCCA, please see Appendix 4.

The valley's glacial pothole wetland complexes attract breeding and migratory birds. Of the 236 bird species known to occur in the valley, twelve are species of special concern. The river provides year round habitat for bald eagles and includes a number of nest sites. The Blackfoot Valley's riparian areas, wet meadows, and forests provide excellent grizzly bear habitat as well as supporting black bear, mountain lion, smaller forest carnivores, elk, and both mule and whitetail deer. The Blackfoot as a whole is important to the integrity of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and



BOB SHEPPARD

FIGURE 14. *Mountain Lion*

provides crucial links for wildlife from this ecosystem to other landscapes on its southern periphery. The BCCA enhances and maintains several wildlife habitat linkages.

¹⁴ Montana Natural Heritage Program, 2005. Species of Special Concern Database, Helena, MT.

FIGURE 15. *Outfitter Joe Murphy took this photo of Mary Katomee, hauling firewood to her camp in the mountains north of Ovando in the early 1920s.*

Native American History

Until recent history, the Blackfoot valley was occupied by the indigenous peoples of western Montana for thousands of years. Known as Cokahlahishkit or the “Road to the Buffalo,” the Kootenai, Salish, Nez Perce, Shoshone, Blackfeet, and Crow tribes utilized the valley for its plant, animal, stone and mineral resources, as well as for cultural ceremonies.

The importance of the Ovando area is documented both in Pend d’Oreille and Salish oral histories and in the archaeological record.¹⁵ The Salish and Pend d’Oreille name of the Ovando area is Sntntnmsqa, meaning “Place-where-you-rein-your-horse-back,” because the trail dipped down through a creek—probably referring to Monture Creek—Native Americans had to hold back on the horse’s reins as they passed there. It is but one of numerous traditional Salish-Pend d’Oreille place names still used today by Native Americans to refer to the Blackfoot River corridor and surrounding areas.



OVANDO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Ovando Valley contains numerous trails that led Native Americans to the many resources there and beyond. The trail up the Blackfoot River was used by the Pend d’Oreille and Salish to access the Rocky Mountain Front to hunt buffalo at least twice a year. Trails led north to what is now the Bob Marshall Wilderness and south to the Clark Fork valley. Just before the western movement of settlers, many groups of Pend d’Oreille and Salish occupied these valleys year-round. The open

FIGURE 16. *The Blackfoot River Corridor was an important hunting area for Native Americans. Buffalo enjoyed the forage on nearby Monture Hill.*



OVANDO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

¹⁵ Native American history documented by Tim Ryan and reviewed by the Culture Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe. Salish Culture Committee, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Pablo, Montana, September 2007.

There are memories of hard winters, hunting expeditions, bobsled travel to the Monture Schoolhouse, and root cellars storing potatoes and cabbage. The first major logging in the 1950s by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company generated stories of logging camps, big old red Macks, and corduroy roads, Rosignohl's landing strip, and the Cat Shed located at the Rodeo Park. Local names like "The Blind Corner and the Cattle Guard," "Duck Pond Hill," and "Red Fender Corner," as well as "Muchmore Park," "Valiton Ridge" and the "Moonshine Cabin" were never put on maps but were definite landmarks and reference points of their time. The area offered a variety of opportunities—families gathered gunnysacks of pine cones for sale by the bushel; cutting firewood was often a multi-family chore similar to haying. Besides local livestock grazing, large bands of sheep moved to summer range from the Pauly Ranch in Deer Lodge through Helmville to Ovando Mountain and west to Placid Lake.



OVANDO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FIGURE 17.
*Brunett Homestead,
located near Doney Lake.*



OVANDO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FIGURE 18.
*Former Moonshine Cabin
and Old Still on the BCCA
Core.*

valleys of the Ovando area were vital for camping, horse grazing, plant collection and hunting as well as other activities; it was an area that had sufficient resources to sustain a large group.

Settlement History

According to oral history accounts and other documentation¹⁶, the BCCA was used for a variety of purposes that were common across the Ovando and Helmville areas. The landscape provided resources for local ranches and farms, including hunting and food gathering, livestock pasture,

hay meadows, firewood, and logging opportunities. Early settlers recall old cabins scattered across the landscape with some long-forgotten mines and numerous outfitting camps. Starting on the east side of the property, Swede Hansen's cabin was located between the Haul Road and the river. Further west, the Doney family came to the area in the 1890's and homesteaded on what is now East Warren Creek. Other ownerships located along the BCCA border included Elija Hoyt, Anton Jacobsen, Elmer Staves, Henry McNally, Clate Johnson, Claire Eaton and Joseph Hanzel.

¹⁶ Ovando Historical Society. 2006. Oral History Account from Jim Bauer and Woody Needles of the Ovando Mountain Area.

Land Ownership of the Core

County records indicate that the BCCA Core was initially owned by Anaconda Forest Products and subsequently by Champion International. With the exception of one 80-acre private in-holding, there are currently no residences or buildings on the BCCA Core. In 1993, Plum Creek Timber Company acquired the land for timber management purposes. Plum Creek sold the property to The Nature Conservancy in January 2004 as part of the Blackfoot Community Project.

A conservation easement was granted to the USFWS in 2005, preventing subdivision and development for residential, commercial or other industrial purposes. The USFWS acquired the conservation easement for the purpose of preserving and protecting fish and wildlife habitat in perpetuity, including the wetland, riparian, and upland communities. Temporary living quarters, development of game, fir, fish or bird farms, commercial feedlots, and refuse dumping are also prohibited. New road construction is tightly regulated. The easement grantor, TNC, agreed to limit the use of the property to ranching and other agricultural uses such as livestock grazing, hay production, noxious weed control, irrigation, and small amounts of soil and gravel extraction for non-commercial uses. Commercial timber harvest and other forest management practices are also allowed, as are hunting and fishing.

Public Participation Process

Public input and community involvement have been instrumental to designing and implementing the Blackfoot Community Project and the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area. In December 2002, nine months prior to the signed agreement between The Nature Conservancy and Plum Creek Timber Company, the Blackfoot Challenge hosted a community meeting in Ovando to acquire feedback on the large-scale acquisition of timberlands and the development of a community-based disposition plan. The Challenge hosted follow-up meetings in Ovando, Greenough, Seeley Lake, Helmville, and Lincoln between February and May 2003 to develop a list of community preferences for re-sale of the proposed project lands. At each meeting, landowners and community members were given a project update, an overview of the lands proposed for purchase and, most importantly, were asked to comment on a variety of issues including grazing leases, timber management, public

access, natural resources, development, cooperative management, and private versus public ownership.

As part of the process, in May 2003, community members met in Ovando to discuss the opportunity of developing a community conservation area at the base of Ovando Mountain. Landowners expressed support for keeping the area open for future generations and maintaining traditional uses including grazing, sustainable timber management, public access through block management, foot and horseback use, and snowmobile trails. Many community members also highlighted the value of the area for wildlife habitat and travel.

The next phase of public participation involved the distribution of a mail survey to local landowners and residents in the Ovando and Helmville areas in October 2004. A total of 347 surveys were successfully mailed of which 193 were returned for a 55% return rate. The purpose of the survey was to collect information on the



FIGURE 19. *BCCA Council*

ALI DUVAL

opinions of landowners related to future use, ownership, and management of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Core. The survey helped provide a baseline for community values related to the project.

Implementation of the Blackfoot Community Project and BCCA continues to involve direct participation of local landowners and residents through committees, work groups, one-on-one discussions, a semi-annual newsletter, and website updates.

Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Council

A key strategy for engaging the public in the BCCA project was the development of the BCCA Council, a committee appointed to represent the broader community and establish and oversee the management policies and practices for the area. In early 2005, an ad-hoc working group comprised of Blackfoot Challenge board and community members met to establish a slate of candidates and process for appointment to the BCCA Council.

Community Comments from the Survey:

"The Blackfoot Community Conservation Area should be a model of collaborative management for sustained multiple use with conservation values on an equal footing with other values."

"A well managed rural area that is open to the public but allows wildlife to flourish."

"A 'showcase' of stewardship and a well-managed healthy forest, one that the Blackfoot community can take pride in."

Some of these candidates were identified from survey responses sent in by people interested in a high level of participation in the project. Other people stepped forward after receiving community mailings and updates. The major qualification necessary to serve on the Council was an interest in the area and a commitment to volunteer as a member for a two-year period.

Based on the ad-hoc working group's recommendations, the Blackfoot Challenge Board of Directors appointed a fifteen-member Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Council in July 2005. To represent the diversity of community values and opinions, the BCCA Council is comprised of three categories:

CATEGORY #1 AGENCIES

Five representatives from agencies that own or manage land adjacent to the Core, including Lolo National Forest, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and The Nature Conservancy. (The representative from The Nature Conservancy will be replaced by a representative from the Blackfoot Challenge when the Core lands are transferred to the Challenge).

CATEGORY #2 PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

Five individuals representing both newer landowners and multi-generation ranch families, and

CATEGORY #3 USER GROUPS

Five individuals representing recreationists, local businesses and/or commercial outfitters.

¹⁷ Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Community Survey. For more information see www.blackfootchallenge.org.

The charge of the BCCA Council is to develop and implement cooperative management of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area.

Delegated responsibilities of the Council are to:

- 1 develop and implement the Management Plan for the Core
- 2 develop an annual budget and workplan for the Core
- 3 fundraise for the annual budget and special projects
- 4 consider community proposals for uses or projects on the BCCA Core, and
- 5 form an MOU and policy plan to coordinate management of the 41,000-acre BCCA.

The Board of Directors of the Blackfoot Challenge retains authority to:

- 1 approve the Management Plan for the Core
- 2 approve the annual budget and workplan for the Core
- 3 approve membership, new appointments or dissolution of the BCCA Council
- 4 establish an endowment fund and operating procedures to support long-term stewardship of the BCCA and appropriate areas throughout the watershed
- 5 endorse the MOU and policy plan for the 41,000-acre BCCA, and
- 6 provide liability coverage, administrative and general support for the BCCA Council.

Council positions are filled annually as terms expire. The BCCA Council and Blackfoot Challenge solicits nominations from the community to represent Categories 2 and 3 (private landowners and recreational groups) as positions become available. Notices are distributed to the watershed community and posted on

the Blackfoot Challenge website at www.blackfootchallenge.org. Members serve two year terms, beginning January 1st of each calendar year. Agency members may serve consecutive terms; others are eligible for up to two consecutive terms and may seek reappointment after not serving for at least two years. Selection is based primarily on three criteria: 1) the individual's ability to be an active participant for their term of appointment, 2) the individual's willingness to work positively and cooperatively to reach management decisions that best meet the goals of the BCCA, and 3) diversity of representation.

The Council is administered by a Chair and a Vice-Chair, who serve on an annual basis. These officers must be represented by community members (Categories 2 and/or 3). A part-time Land Steward (by contract or partnership efforts) coordinates and implements on-the-ground projects specified in the annual workplan. A Management Committee, comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and one agency member, provides day-to-day oversight of the Land Steward and annual workplan activities.

The Blackfoot Challenge Board of Directors provides staff support to assist the Council as deemed necessary by the Board and Council. Three subcommittees have been formed, including 1) Forestry; 2) Grazing/Noxious Weeds; and 3) Recreation/Education, to complete preliminary work on given tasks and develop recommendations for full Council consideration and decisions.

The Council endeavors to reach management decisions through consensus. To assist in realizing this goal, the Council will use the “thumbs rule” when a vote is required. Council members in favor of the decision or proposal will give a thumbs up; those who may not be in favor the decision or proposal but can accept it in spirit of compromise will give a thumbs sideways to indicate their position; and finally those who cannot accept the decision or proposal as presented will give a thumbs down. If a Council member gives a thumbs down, he/she will be encouraged to present an alternate proposal to meet the needs of all Council members. If the Council is unable to reach a decision using the “thumbs rule,” a decision shall be decided by a majority of votes of the members present and absent, requiring 80 percent approval for passage – 12 yeas with at least 3 positive votes from each membership category. The Council may use paper ballot, depending on the issue. Votes shall be recorded in the meeting notes.

Community Engagement

The Council will provide ample opportunities for public involvement and engagement in future land management and stewardship of the BCCA. A meeting schedule will be established to enable them to conduct their duties in an open and efficient manner. All meetings are open to the general public, and the public is afforded an opportunity to speak. Efforts will also be made to maintain positive relationships with adjacent and neighboring landowners.

Key strategies for community engagement:

- Regular communication with neighbors will be used in order to discuss management issues.
- The public will be notified about and encouraged to attend BCCA Council meetings.
- Public meetings will be held annually to report Council actions and to gather comments, feedback, and ideas. On certain projects and issues that warrant immediate feedback from the broader community, the Council will host special community meetings to acquire input.
- Communication and outreach tools will be developed to update the community on BCCA activities, i.e. newsletter, Blackfoot Challenge website, and post office notices.
- Community events and tours will be hosted on the BCCA Core to familiarize the public with the land.
- Members of the community will have the opportunity to be appointed to and serve on the BCCA Council as specified in term rotation procedures above.

Community members may develop and submit proposals to the BCCA Council for special projects and uses. Each proposal must include a project description, scope of the area affected by the use, timeframe and duration of use, estimated number of users, and method for addressing liability concerns. The Council will assess whether the request increases or expands the level of existing uses or creates new uses on the BCCA Core, and whether the request is consistent with the overall vision for the Core. A set of general guidelines and criteria will be used to examine whether the use is compatible with the Management Plan for the Core (See Appendices 5 and 6).

Overview

The purpose of this plan is to guide land management decisions on the BCCA Core. The plan defines the community's vision for the property, characterizes the natural and cultural landscape, documents the public involvement process and administration of the property, and establishes management goals and objectives to direct stewardship and restoration activities. The Council will develop an Annual Work Plan that defines specific projects and prioritizes activities, based on the budget and funding opportunities. The following section identifies resources, issues, and uses important to management of the BCCA Core along with future desired conditions.

The resources, issues, and uses addressed for management planning are:

- wildlife
- forest and forest products
- fire
- riparian and wetland areas
- range and native grasslands
- noxious weeds
- recreation
- travel management
- education
- economics

Each item is discussed in this section with management goals, objectives and issues requiring future study.

A number of social and biological assessments provide the foundation for this section of the plan, including 1) the

BCCA Survey,¹⁸ 2) the Ovando Mountain Land Management Evaluation,¹⁹ 3) the Ovando Mountain Habitat Conservation Easement Baseline Inventory Report,²⁰ 4) the Lolo National Forest Management Plan Revision,²¹ 5) management policies and activities during TNC ownership, as well as BCCA monthly and other public meetings.

RANDY SMITH



Wildlife

The BCCA Core is an important wildlife area, providing an abundance of seasonal and permanent habitat for a wide variety of species due to its topographic, vegetative, and hydrologic diversity. Species include grizzly bears, gray wolves, elk, whitetail and mule deer, lions, great gray owls, Lewis's Woodpecker, Northern

FIGURE 20. *The BCCA Core provides year-round habitat for resident elk and is classified as important winter range for ungulates and other species.*

¹⁸ Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Community Survey, 2004. www.blackfootchallenge.org

¹⁹ Blackfoot Challenge, Ovando Mountain Land Management Evaluation, 2005.

²⁰ Rich Lane and Associates, 2007. See References Cited for full citation.

²¹ Lolo National Forest Management Plan Revision, 2007, see References Cited for full citation.

goshawks, bald eagles, wolverines, common loons, westslope cutthroat and bull trout. The area has also been identified as an important wildlife habitat linkage corridor based on current travel routes and the proximity to public lands.²²

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To manage habitat that will promote diverse and sustainable populations of wildlife.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain identified wildlife travel corridors through the Core.
2. Maintain and/or recruit forested cover of large diameter trees for raptor nesting sites by promoting uneven-aged timber management for the appropriate tree species.
3. Maintain a range of forested forage such as tree lichen and understory grasses, sedges and shrubs for elk, whitetail, mule deer and moose on a year-round basis.
4. Maintain and recruit large diameter snags and standing burned trees to provide nesting and forage habitat for cavity-nesting birds and arboreal mammals. (Trees will be marked and off-limit to firewood cutting.)
5. Maintain and recruit large woody deadfall for small mammal populations.
6. Manage for a generally mature forest structure that is critical for elk escape cover by retaining adequate large diameter trees, carrying medium-sized saw timber trees to larger diameters (20

inch DBH and larger), and thinning pole-sized stands to increase growth rates in retained trees.

7. Maintain and expand aspen stands, particularly for cavity-nesters.
8. Identify sensitive elk calving areas and implement seasonal closures to motorized vehicles (May 1-June 15).
9. Manage habitat to benefit threatened and endangered species.
10. Conduct wildlife surveys to monitor the diversity and number of species with habitat requirements.
11. Update and maintain a list of wildlife species found on the Core.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Assess special species needs not being fulfilled by the above management.

Forest and Forest Products

A tremendous amount of vegetative diversity is evident on the BCCA Core, with a majority of the land characterized as coniferous forest.²³ Over the past 75 years almost all of the merchantable timber was harvested (with the exception of hardwoods). Timber harvest regimes included selective logging as well as some areas that appear to have been clear-cut. Some limited areas that approach old growth condition can be found along Dick Creek and in the western portions of Sections 12 and 13. Currently, small younger trees dominate the landscape in many areas. Natural and artificial regeneration have resulted in very successful reforestation of the property.

²² Blackfoot Challenge, Ovando Mountain Land Management Evaluation, 2005.

²³ Rich Lane and Associates, 2007. See References Cited for full citation



STEVE KLOETZEL

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To promote a diverse multi-age forest using sustainable forestry practices.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain and recruit forested cover of large diameter trees.
2. Maintain and recruit large diameter snags and burned trees.
3. Maintain and expand aspen stands.
4. Follow State of Montana Best Management Practices and Streamside Management Zone regulations on all timber treatments.
5. Pre-commercially thin timber on the most productive forest stands with the highest growth potential in a manner which will promote a diversity of species.



STEVE KLOETZEL

FIGURE 21. *Mixed Age Coniferous Forest*

FIGURE 22. *Aspen Stands*

FIGURE 23.
Hot Boot Fire, 2006



STEVE KLOETZEL

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Identify existing forest stands that are limited in scope or size and develop silvicultural prescriptions to increase their range and vitality.
2. Develop general silvicultural prescription plans for each of the eight stand types identified in the Baseline Inventory.
3. Delineate management units within the eight stand types.
4. Identify and prioritize stands where pre-commercial thinning will be required.
5. Using the forest inventory and rates of growth, identify sustainable harvests for the BCCA Core.
6. Identify stand types that may have existed previously.

Fire

Wildfire can play an important role in maintaining diverse plant communities. However, the proximity of the BCCA Core to private lands and structures requires that extreme caution be exercised in utilizing fire as a forest management tool. On three occasions in 2006 and 2007, DNRC fire crews, as well as the Ovando Volunteer Fire Department, suppressed human-caused fires in the BCCA. The early part of the fall hunting season is the time when the area is most likely to have problems with human-caused fires, when recreational use is at its highest. Historically, particularly during recent years, all naturally caused fires in the BCCA have also been suppressed. Controlled fire or fire-surrogates may be used in the future to manage plant growth and forest recovery as time and resources allow.

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To manage fuel levels utilizing prescribed fire, thinning or other land management practices to reduce the chance of catastrophic wildfire.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Protect human life, property and forest resources through fire suppression and fuels management.
2. Continue the fire protection agreement with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.
3. Utilize prescribed fire or fire surrogates to enhance forest health and fire protection.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Develop a BCCA “Strike Team” to conduct prescribed burns on the BCCA.
2. Identify specific areas for the burns listed above.

Riparian and Wetland Areas

While only encompassing approximately 3% of the Core Area, riparian and wetland areas are critical to the health of the larger area and its plant and animal inhabitants. Wet areas range from stream-side belts to large numbers of glacial moraine potholes with water near the surface in late summer and evident above the surface in spring.

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

Implement riparian and wetland restoration and conservation strategies to benefit local fisheries and downstream resources and users.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Remove native fish passage barriers, providing connectivity from tributaries to the Blackfoot River.
2. Make improvements to riparian and wetland areas as resources permit.

STEVE KLOETZEL



FIGURE 24.
Mollet Park Wetland

3. Protect water sources, such as springs and pothole wetlands, from grazing and livestock watering impacts.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Identify and monitor those riparian/wetland areas that are critical for livestock water and/or that need protection or special management practices (fencing, season of grazing, etc.)
2. Identify any wetland/riparian areas that are of special value in the BCCA and develop a plan for protection and enhancement.

Range and Native Grasslands

Range and native grasslands comprise 5% of the BCCA Core. Discrete grassland communities include Mollet Park, Martin Park, Doney Meadows and McNally

Meadows. The dominant habitat type of the major grassland parks is rough fescue/Idaho fescue (excluding Doney Meadows which is dominated by timothy). There are also significant scattered “range areas,” where forage is available due to logging clearings or open-canopy forest types.

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To promote healthy range management practices while balancing the ecological and economic values of the area.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Enhance native range conditions where native plant communities are determined to be in a degraded condition through livestock rotation, pasture rest, weed control, controlled burning, or other suitable means.

STEVE KLOETZEL

FIGURE 25. *Grasslands comprise 377 acres of the Ovando Mountain Conservation Easement Area. The dominant habitat type of the major grassland parks is Rough fescue/Idaho Fescue. Doney Meadows is comprised mainly of timothy and other tame grasses.*



POWELL COUNTY WEED DISTRICT



FIGURE 26. *Biocontrol is a key integrated weed management strategy. This photo shows a biorelease site on yellow toadflax.*

2. Conduct range inventories, as needed, to assess range conditions and sustainable livestock stocking rates for grazing leases.
3. Monitor livestock and wildlife grazing in order to manage for healthy range conditions.
4. Where revegetation is necessary, use only weed-seed-free native plant seed mixes.
5. Remove conifer encroachment on grasslands by hand or mechanical treatment, and controlled burns where possible.
3. Identify sources of funding for grazing-related projects on the area.
4. Determine best monitoring protocols for grazing leases.

Noxious Weeds

In many areas across the Core, noxious weeds are prevalent, particularly along roadsides, old logging decks, and slash piles. The principal noxious weeds are spotted knapweed, common toadflax, houndstongue, sulfur cinquefoil, common tansy, Canada thistle, and St. Johnswort. No known leafy spurge or hawkweed infestations are present at this time. There are also populations of invasive weeds including musk and bull thistles, reed canarygrass, cheatgrass, bulbous bluegrass, and common mullein.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Identify watering sites on grazing leases that are critical for livestock watering.
2. Identify wetlands and riparian areas where livestock watering and use is detrimental to the resource.

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To prevent, control and/or eradicate invasive and noxious weed infestations through the practice of integrated weed management.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participate in the Blackfoot Weed Management Project with Powell County Weed District as a landowner within the Middle Blackfoot Weed Management Area.
2. Treat new invader species as the highest priority for eradication and control.
3. Control weeds along all travel routes and monitor all travel routes for control needs on an annual basis.
4. Spot treat and monitor sensitive native plant communities such as riparian areas and native grasslands.
5. Utilize an integrated weed management approach including chemical application, biocontrol, revegetation, grazing, hand-pulling, mowing, and other innovative practices.
6. Require the use of weed-seed-free livestock feed by the recreating public, as well as weed-seed-free mixes for revegetation efforts.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Develop requirements for washing/cleaning vehicles traveling or using the BCCA Core.
2. Map specific new invader species.
3. Develop priority areas for weed treatment (and possible non-treatment).
4. Map existing aspen stands so that chemical herbicide treatments can be directed away from them.

Recreation

The BCCA Core provides a range of recreation opportunities including hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, horseback riding, camping, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, snowmobiling, dogsledding, berry gathering, and other activities. The main snowmobile route connecting Seeley Lake and Lincoln traverses the BCCA Core.

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To provide for responsible use at sustainable levels to benefit the public and the health of the resource.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain and enforce the Public Use and Recreation Policy (Appendix 7) which incorporates objectives detailed herein.
2. Allow for a range of appropriate forms of non-motorized public recreation, such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting and camping, at all times of the year while promoting resource health.
3. Allow for reasonable motorized public access while promoting resource health. Access is limited to open, established roads. Some roads may be seasonally closed due to sensitive wildlife areas, road conditions, and to accommodate grazing lessees.
4. Develop and/or maintain infrastructure necessary to support and manage recreational uses, such as roads, parking areas, gates, trails, camping areas and signage.
5. Work with local user groups and MTFWP to maintain the existing snowmobile trail system.

STEVE KLOETZEL



FIGURE 27. *The Ovando BMA is one of the most highly-used block management areas in MTFWP's Region 2.*

6. Allow non-commercial, legal, and sustainable animal and plant harvest (including firewood and Christmas tree gathering) by the public.
7. Cooperate with MTFWP to ensure that the Ovando Mountain Block Management Area (BMA) is well managed and consistent with the Core's resource management and recreation objectives.
8. To minimize conflicts with bears, human, pet and livestock food, garbage and all other attractants shall be acceptably stored at all times in accordance with the Lolo National Forest Food/Attractant guidelines.²⁴ Attractants shall not be buried, discarded or burned in an open campfire.
9. Educate and encourage recreationists to avoid introducing or exacerbating the spread of noxious and invasive weeds.
10. Educate and encourage recreationists to leave the Core in as clean or a cleaner condition than they found it.
11. Allow for reasonable special-use-permits for educational, community, and commercial uses.
12. Monitor recreational use and impacts to the resource.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Cooperate with public agencies to fund and research annual hunting and trapping harvest numbers and big game herds on the BCCA.
2. Assess the impacts of off-trail snowmobile use or other forms of recreation on soils, wildlife, and plant communities.

²⁴ Lolo National Forest Food/Attractant Order #F06-003-LOLO-D6;
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead/wildlife/documents/f06-003-lolo-d6%20foodstorage.pdf>

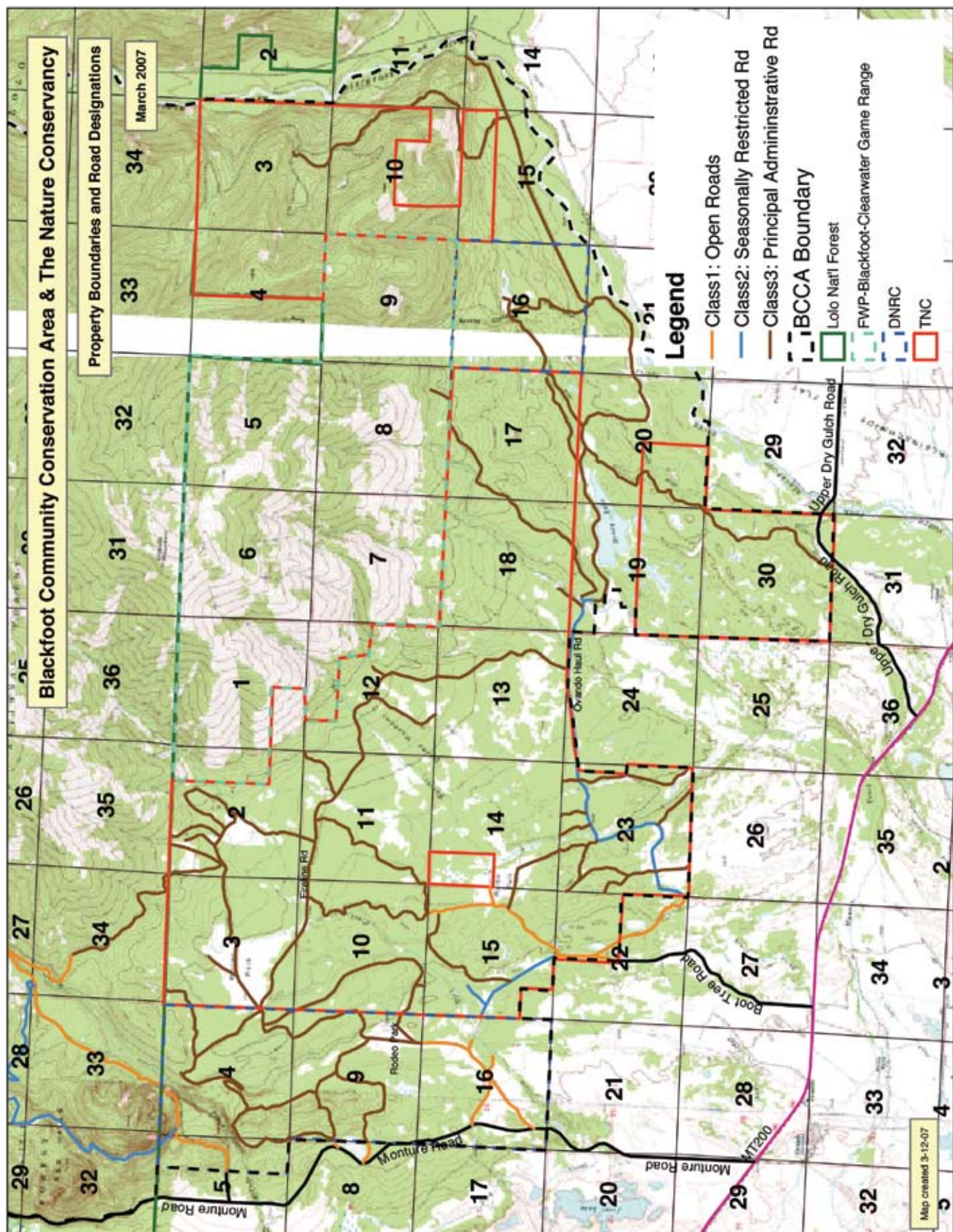


FIGURE 28. Road Designations on the BCCA Core

STEVE KLOETZEL



FIGURE 29.

Ovando Haul Road

Travel Management

Two primary roads traverse the property, including the Ovando Haul Road and the Fireline Road. Public access is managed through a variety of open, seasonally open, and closed roads and trails (see Figure 28).

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To maintain a trail and road network for various forms and levels of management and recreational use that does not unduly degrade identified natural resource values.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop a restricted, limited-use guided motorized travel policy.
2. Install and maintain gates or other road closure devices, parking areas, signage, and maps at major entry points to the BCCA.
3. Maintain three classes of public and administrative-use roads:
 - CLASS 1: Open roads, which are open year-round to motorized public use.
 - CLASS 2: Restricted use roads, which are used principally for maintenance, and which are open to the public for motorized use only during specific times of the year.
 - CLASS 3: Closed roads, which are other maintenance routes that are closed to wheeled motorized use by the public on a year-round basis.
4. Encourage non-motorized public uses such as skiing, hiking, and horseback riding.

5. Monitor various road and trail uses to ensure that uses are balanced, and levels of use are compatible with each other and the resources of the Core lands.
6. Maintain seasonal motorized use closures to protect sensitive wildlife resources.
7. Plow parking areas in winter.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Investigate the development of signed trail routes.
2. Explore development of signed loop route from the Board Gate to Mollet Park and back utilizing existing Class 3 roads and/or short connector trails.
3. Explore construction of a horse/hiking trail to the summit of Ovando Mountain.

Education

One of the key priorities for the BCCA is to utilize the area for education, research, and learning opportunities to demonstrate innovative land management and restoration practices and partnerships.

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To promote natural resource education and research opportunities for learning about local ecology and management through field observations, hands-on exploration, and interaction with resource managers and researchers.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Engage local schools in projects related to the BCCA Core, with opportunities for biologists and agency representatives involved in land management on BCCA to share observations in classrooms.

ALI DUVALL

FIGURE 30. *Field Tour 2006*



2. Encourage use of the BCCA Core as a demonstration site for innovative land management practices.
3. Develop records of natural and cultural change over time.
4. Encourage research by local universities on the BCCA Core.
5. Work with the Blackfoot Challenge Education Committee to develop specific education projects.

ISSUES REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Document cultural and natural history (i.e. logging, grazing, historic Rodeo Grounds, cabin sites, etc.) with schools and community.
2. Explore Adopt-An-Acre project.
3. Explore opportunities to develop the BCCA as an outdoor learning site with an interpretive trail system for education purposes.

In-holdings and Neighbors

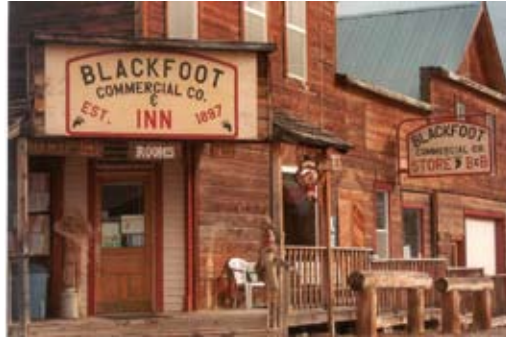
Maintain a cooperative relationship with private landowners who have in-holdings, adjacent or neighboring parcels of land.

OBJECTIVE:

1. Facilitate regular communication with neighbors.

Economics

The rural communities of the Blackfoot watershed are experiencing shifts in demographics and economic structure. Although many of these changes are occurring at a regional scale, the BCCA Core provides the opportunity to link commu-



TERI GARRISON

FIGURE 31. *Blackfoot Commercial Company in Downtown Ovando*

nity viability with natural resource sustainability. Opportunities include utilization of the wood processing facility in Seeley Lake, providing recreation and tourism activities for local restaurants, promoting business for inns and guest ranches, and hiring local contractors to complete projects on the Core.

MANAGEMENT GOAL:

To develop an economically self-sustaining resource that supports management of the Core and local community viability.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop a long-term financial plan to fund annual costs for BCCA Core land management and stewardship.
2. Support local businesses and provide jobs or contracts for natural resource workers as opportunities arise.

ISSUE REQUIRING FUTURE STUDY:

1. Explore innovative funding opportunities related to natural resource and recreation income, future growth, capacity and/or funding partnerships with agencies and other non-profit organizations.

FIGURES 32. *BCCA Council Members Evaluating Dick Creek Riparian Condition*



ALI DUVALL

Plan Implementation

The BCCA Management Plan for the Core will be implemented by the Council through three standing Work Groups: Forestry, Grazing/Weeds, and Recreation/Education. Projects will be determined annually or as needed by 1) the goals, objectives and issues identified in the management plan, 2) special requests from community members or BCCA partners, 3) reaction to natural occurrences such as wildfire, insect infestation and/or drought, and 4) grant or funding opportunities for restoration and land management.

Project proposals will be submitted to the Council and appropriate Work Group for review using a set of guidelines and criteria that analyzes the proposed action and its impact(s) to the resource (See Appendices 5 & 6). If the project meets the criteria, the Work Group will develop an implementation plan that addresses the project purpose, scope of work, cost, funding sources and monitoring. The BCCA Council will review and approve the project plan with implementation supervised by the Management Committee and Land Steward.

The following projects have been identified as priorities for implementation: 1) Forestry Work Group - identify and quantify existing stands along the main Ovando Haul Road that require treat-

ment to improve forest health and reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire, 2) Grazing/Weeds – develop a pasture-based rotational grazing plan for the north portion of the Core, and 3) Recreation/Education – develop an implementation plan for a wheeled motorized use trial on the Core in addition to increasing signage for kiosks at major entry points.

Monitoring

Land management and restoration projects will be monitored by the Council, Land Steward and/or BCCA partners with results tracked and reported on an annual basis. Monitoring will be based on applicable standards developed by public agency partners, local experts, and related research. The Council may develop a community-monitoring program for specific projects to generate learning and understanding about natural resource responses to biological processes and disturbance patterns, human use and impacts.

The Management Plan for the Core will be revised as needed based on monitoring results and adaptive management (“learning while doing”). Potential changes to the Plan will be prepared by the Council, presented to the community for comment, approved by the Council and presented to the Blackfoot Challenge Board of Directors for final approval.

BCCA Policy Plan

The Council will develop a policy plan for the 41,000-acre BCCA (See Figure 5). As outlined in the BCCA Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 1), the plan will include a “cooperative written policy for Access and Roads, Recreational Use, Vegetation Management, Integrated Noxious



FIGURE 33. *Scenic Photo of BCCA Core*

Weed Management, Wildlife Management and Water and Wetland Management.” The policy plan will address a number of issues identified above, in a manner that reflects the wishes of the community, and the interests, concerns and decisions of MOU partners. Specific projects will be developed using similar procedures identified in the Management Plan for the Core.

“The BCCA should be maintained as a natural representative area where human use is balanced with preservation of the native animal and plant communities. Human use should be allowed and encouraged, but this should be done with a continual monitoring and analysis of needs of native population of plants and animals in order to provide for mutual survival. This should be an exemplary area for new management ideas for private land management.”

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APPENDIX 1
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
 For the
BLACKFOOT COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA
 Between the
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
 And the
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
 And the
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION
 And the
BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE
 And the
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF MONTANA
 And
PRIVATE LANDOWNER
 And
PRIVATE LANDOWNER
 And
PRIVATE LANDOWNER
 And the
USDA FOREST SERVICE, LOLO NATIONAL FOREST

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is hereby made and entered into by and between the following parties: The USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), the Blackfoot Challenge, the Nature Conservancy of Montana (TNC), Private Landowners, and the USDA Forest Service, Lolo National Forest (Forest Service).

I. BACKGROUND

A. Setting

The 1.5 million-acre Blackfoot watershed in northwestern Montana is comprised of a diverse and ecologically rich combination of habitats due to its geological and hydrological features. Located at the southern edge of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, the Blackfoot is part of a ten million acre ecosystem that extends north to Canada. As a sub-basin of the Columbia River, the Blackfoot flows a 132-mile course from its headwaters on the Continental Divide to the Clark Fork River, just east of Missoula. Over eighty percent of the watershed is covered with mixed species forests, with the remaining lands in agriculture, grasslands, wetlands, and streams.

The Blackfoot Community Conservation Area is located in the north-central portion of the watershed, approximately three miles northeast of the small town of Ovando. Forming the southern boundary of the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas and north of the Blackfoot River, the area encompasses an important transition zone between wilderness, National Forest, and productive valley bottoms, with lush riparian and wetland areas and important wildlife

habitat. Generational uses of the area include livestock grazing, timber harvest, and recreational activities including hunting, trapping, horseback riding, hiking, snowmobiling and skiing.

B. History

The Blackfoot Community Conservation Area (BCCA) is the culmination of 30 years of private- public cooperative conservation in the Blackfoot River Valley of western Montana. The effort began in the mid 70's with the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor Agreement and the establishment of two Walk-In Hunting areas in the vicinity of the confluence of the Clearwater and Blackfoot Rivers. The Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited began in the early 90's and more federal and state agencies joined the landowner/ conservation organization effort to protect the cold water fisheries of the watershed. In 1993 private landowners, federal and state land managers, local government officials, corporate landowners, and conservation organizations came together to form the Blackfoot Challenge. The mission of the Challenge is to coordinate efforts that will enhance, conserve and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyles of the Blackfoot River Valley for present and future generations.

The Challenge and TNC formed a partnership in 2003 to initiate the Blackfoot Community Project (BCP). The BCP is a joint effort to purchase 88,000 acres of Plum Creek Timber Company (PCTC) land in the valley and re-sell it to a variety of public agencies and private individuals according to a community-based plan.

As part of the BCP, TNC purchased 11,208 acres of PCTC land south of Ovando Mountain in 2004. After numerous public meetings and internal discussions, TNC agreed in principle to transfer a 5,609 acre core area to the Challenge, who would manage the land on behalf of the community as a conservation area. The remaining acreage has been or is slated to be sold to the public agencies, who managed existing land adjacent to the former PCTC land. The agencies included the Forest Service, DNRC, and FWP. Prior to any of the sale transactions, TNC has sold or plans to sell a conservation easement that prohibited home sites on the 8,316 acres of the land slated for sale to the Challenge and the state agencies.

As the various parties discussed the disposition of the former PCTC parcels around Ovando Mountain, they agreed that this may be an historic opportunity to expand the concept of cooperative land management across ownership boundaries. They also concluded that it would be beneficial to include additional Forest Service land to the north of the mountain and to ask the private landowners on the south side of the area to join in the cooperative effort. The resulting 41,000 acre block, which is called the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area, is a coherent landscape that includes a wide spectrum of land from working forests through proposed wilderness.

II. PURPOSE

This MOU documents the intent of the parties to develop and implement a policy management plan for the BCCA. This document will outline general goals and identify several programs that are supported by the parties to this MOU. It will also serve as a framework to add other programs that may be of interest to the parties during the term of this MOU. It is understood by all that this MOU does not bind any party to a financial or other resource commitment, but rather is the framework from which specific participating and cooperative agreements can be developed as deemed appropriate by any combination of the partners. It is also understood by the parties, that decisions made on projects on federal or state lands are made by the individual agencies following their existing policies and procedures.

This MOU may serve to leverage resources and demonstrates an ongoing collaboration among the parties, which may strengthen the individual program areas, bring a greater public awareness of the need for the programs of the BCCA, and provide additional opportunities for increased funding.

III. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTEREST

All of the parties have responsibilities and interests in the conservation and management of the BCCA and have expressed a desire to work cooperatively to accomplish mutual goals and objective.

IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Goals

1. Treat the 41,000 acre BCCA as one land management unit with a number of common management objectives.
2. Establish a consistent set of designations that describe the uses and management activities that are generally suitable on each ownership.
3. Provide a formal forum (the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Council) to discuss issues of mutual concern and develop cooperative programs to address these issues across property boundaries.
4. Develop strategies that will enhance and promote support and funding of interagency/private projects.
5. Share experiences of our partnership with other groups that are developing cooperative conservation approaches to natural resource issues.

B. Specific Objectives

1. Establish a cooperative written policy for :
 - a. Access and Roads
 - b. Recreational Use
 - c. Vegetation Management
 - d. Integrated Noxious Weed Management
 - e. Wildlife Management
 - f. Water and Wetland Management
2. The participants may, as circumstance dictate, add topics to the list outlined in B.1.
3. Develop a policy management plan for the BCCA that addresses the issues outlined in B.1. above in a manner that reflects the wishes of the community and the interests, concerns, and decisions of the participants.
4. Implement a management plan that will have specific recommendations for roads and access, recreational use, vegetation management, integrated weed management, wildlife management and stream/wetland management.
5. Develop joint operating plans on a project by project basis.

V. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

The participants agree to use the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Council as the public forum to fulfill the terms of this agreement. The BCCA Council will be responsible for developing and implementing the policy management plan. The policy management plan will also describe the BCCA Council and the procedures under which the Council will operate.

VII. IT IS MUTUALLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED BY ALL PARTIES THAT:

- A. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA). Any information furnished to the individual agencies under this instrument is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).
- B. PARTICIPATION IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES. This instrument in no way restricts any of the parties from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- C. RESPONSIBILITY OF PARTIES. The agencies and Partners and their respective agencies and office will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing these objectives. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.
- D. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS. The principal contacts for this MOU are listed in the attached and hereby incorporated Exhibit A. Exhibit A may be modified at any time without formal modification to this MOU. The most current Exhibit A will automatically be incorporated into this MOU.
- E. NON-FUNDING OBLIGATING DOCUMENT. Nothing in this MOU shall obligate the agencies or Partners to obligate or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and Partners will require execution of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.
- F. ESTABLISHMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY. This MOU is not intended to, and does not create, any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.
- G. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES. By signature below, the parties certify that the individuals listed in this document as representatives of each party and are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement.
- H. MODIFICATION. Modifications within the scope of this MOU shall be made by mutual consent of the parties, by the issuance of a written modification, signed and dated by all parties prior to any changes being performed.
- I. TERMINATION. Any of the parties, in writing, may terminate this MOU in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration.
- J. COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRATION/TERMINATION. This MOU is executed as of the date of the last signature and is effective through December 31, 2011 at which time it will expire.

The authority and format of this MOU has been reviewed and approved for signature.

US Fish & Wildlife Service Contact

Kevin Ertl
 US Fish & Wildlife Service
 967 Marsh Lane
 Helmville, MT 59853
 406-793-0048
 kevin_ertl@fws.gov

Montana FWP Contact

Jay Kolbe, Biologist
 Montana FWP
 PO Box 1288
 Seeley Lake, MT 59868
 406-295-4693
 jaykolbe@hotmail.com

Montana DNRC Contact

Sara Pierce, Forester
 DNRC, Clearwater Unit
 48455 Sperry Grade Road
 Greenough, MT 59823
 406-244-5857
 spierce@mt.gov

Blackfoot Challenge Contact

Ali Duvall, Coordinator
 Blackfoot Challenge
 PO Box 103
 Ovando, MT 59854
 406-793-3900
 ali@blackfootchallenge.org

The Nature Conservancy of Montana Contact

Steve Kloetzel
 TNC Montana
 3270 Kleinschmidt Road
 Ovando, MT 59854
 406-793-0038
 skloetzel@tnc.org

Private Landowner

Harry and Cindy Poett
 3065 Kleinschmidt Flat Road
 Ovando, MT 59854
 406-793-5107
 poetts@blackfoot.net

Private Landowner

John and Stephanie Tubbs
 900 University
 Helena, MT 59601
 406-449-2724
 jtubbs@mt.gov

Private Landowner

John and Sandra Roe
 2101 Old Trailhead Lane
 Ovando, MT 59854
 406-793-5503
 sroe@blackfoot.net


Forest Service Project Contact

Tim Love
 Seeley Lake Ranger District
 3583 Highway 83
 Seeley Lake, MT 59868
 Phone: (406) 677-2233
 Email: tlove@fs.fed.us


Forest Service Administrative Contact

Lynne Sholty
 Western Montana Acquisition Zone
 Building 24, Fort Missoula
 Missoula, MT 59804
 Phone: (406)329-3842
 Email: lsholty@fs.fed.us

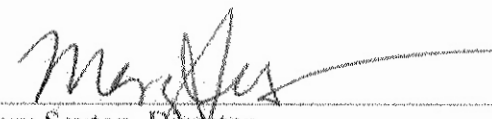
In witness whereof, the parties hereto have executed this MOU as of the last date written below.


Kathleen A. Burchett, Refuge Manager, Benton Lake
US Fish and Wildlife Service

2/1/08
Date


Kenneth P. McDonald, Wildlife Division Administrator
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1/8/08
Date


Mary Sexton, Director
Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

1/14/08
Date


Gary Burnett, Executive Director, Blackfoot Challenge

12-13-07
Date


Bee Hall, Acting State Director
The Nature Conservancy of Montana

12-13-07
Date


Harry and Cindy Poett, Private Landowners

12-13-07
Date


John and Sandra Roe, Private Landowners

3/5/08
Date


John and Stephanie Tubbs, Private Landowners

2/29/08
Date


Deborah L.R. Austin, Forest Supervisor
USDA Forest Service, Lolo National Forest

1/22/08
Date

APPENDIX 2
BLACKFOOT COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA
Council Members
Terms and Contact Information

CATEGORY/NAME	TERM EXPIRES*	PHONE	EMAIL
Private Landowners			
Bob (Chair) & Dawn Rowland	2008	793-5103	N/A
Ralph Allen (Vice Chair)	2008	793-5828	woodpiled@yahoo.com
Dean Bennett	2009	793-5804	hlm5804@blackfoot.net
Don & Barb McNally	2009	793-5685	N/A
Jonathan & Mary Sheets	2009	793-0795	N/A
User Groups			
Alyssa Daniels	2009	793-3003	alyssa@blackfoot.net
Donna Hawkins	2008	793-5657	dghawkins@fs.fed.us
Betty Miller	2009	793-5002	bettylm43@aol.com
Jack Rich	2008	677-2317	richranch@blackfoot.net
Bob Sheppard	2009	793-5885	tjsheppard@blackfoot.net
Representatives from Public Agencies & Private Organizations**			
Kevin Ertl (USFWS)	2009	793-0050	kevin_ertl@fws.gov
Steve Kloetzel (TNC)	2008	793-0038	skloetzel@tnc.org
Jay Kolbe (FWP)	2009	677-0162	JKolbe@mt.gov
Sarah Lyngholm (DNRC)	2009	244-2385	slyngholm@mt.gov
Tim Love (USFS)	2009	677-2233	tlove@fs.fed.us
Staff Support			
Hank Goetz	N/A	793-5589	hank@blackfoot.net
Ali Duvall	N/A	549-8122	ali@blackfootchallenge.org

* All members serve on an annual basis with terms expiring December 31 of each calendar year.

** Agency members may serve consecutive terms.

APPENDIX 3

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION & DIRECTIONS TO THE SITE

Legal Description of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Core

Township 15 North, Range 12 West, Montana Principal Meridian

Section 1: S1/2SW1/4, 80 Acres

Section 2: Govt. Lots 2-4, S1/2NW1/4, SW1/4, SW1/4NE1/4, W1/2SE1/4, SE1/4SE1/4, 515.45 Acres

Section 3: Govt. Lots 1-4, S1/2N1/2, S1/2, 634.80 Acres

Section 10: All, 640 Acres

Section 11: All, 640 Acres

Section 12: SW1/4NE1/4, W1/2NW1/4, SE1/4NW1/4, S1/2, 480 Acres

Section 13: All, 640 Acres

Section 14: NE1/4, E1/2NW1/4, S1/2, 560 Acres

Section 15: N1/2, N1/2SW1/4, SE1/4SW1/4, SE1/4, 600 Acres

Section 22: N/E1/4, 160 acres

Section 23: All less tract in E1/2NE1/4 containing 16.16 acres, 623.84 acres

Section 24: That portion of N1/2NE1/4 and the NE1/4NW1/4 described as follows: Beginning at the Northwest corner of the NE1/4NW1/4 of said Section 24, the point of beginning; thence South 439.56 feet, along the West line of the NE1/4NW1/4 of said Section 24; thence North 79 degrees 30 minutes East, 1902.12 feet; thence South 89 degrees East 949.54 feet; thence South 84 degrees East, 1204.43 feet, to a point on the East section line of said Section 24; thence North 246.84 feet along the East section line of said Section 24, to the Northeast section corner of said Section 24, thence West along the North section line of said Section 24, a distance of 3985.0 feet to the Northwest corner of the NE1/4NW1/4 of said Section 24, the point of beginning. Recorded in Book 60, Page 361, Deed records of Powell County, Montana. TOGETHER WITH a portion of the NW1/4NW1/4 of said Section 24, Township 15 North, Range 12 West, more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Northwest corner of said Section 24; thence South 620 feet; thence North 86 degrees 49 minutes East, 1342 feet; thence North 446 feet; thence West 1328 feet to the point of beginning. Records in Book 53, Page 311, Deed records of Powell County, Montana. 35.28 acres.

Directions to the Site

There are two main gateways to the BCCA Core, with kiosks located at each entry point. From Highway 200, two gravel county roads access the property. From the west, turn onto Monture Creek Road at mile marker 44 and travel approximately two miles. Enter through DNRC State Section 16. Turn right through a green gate and follow the winding road north to the Rodeo Park Gate.

To access the property from the south, turn onto the Boot Tree Road which is located just before mile marker 46 and proceed north for 1.5 miles. Look for the Boot Tree. At this point, the road forks and a person can either travel north 1.5 miles to the Board Gate (Martin Park) or southeast .5 miles to the Haul Road Gate.

An additional option includes entering the BCCA from the north via DNRC and Lolo National Forest land. To access the property from this point, follow the Monture Creek Road past the green gate for another two miles and turn right on the McCabe Creek Road. (For more information on public access, see Figure 29.)

APPENDIX 4

List of Plant & Wildlife Species

The following vascular plant species are found in the Ovando Mountain Conservation Easement area or at other locations within the Blackfoot Valley:

TREES

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Subalpine fir	<i>Abies lasiocarpa</i>
Rocky Mountain Juniper	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>
Western Larch	<i>Larix occidentalis</i>
Engelmann spruce	<i>Picea engelmannii</i>
Lodgepole Pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>
Ponderosa Pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>
Black cottonwood	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>
Quaking aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga mensiesii</i>

SHRUBS

Mountain Alder	<i>Alnus incana</i>
Big sagebrush	<i>Artimesia tridentata</i>
Three-tipped sagebrush	<i>Artimesia</i>
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>
Kinnikinnick	<i>Artostaphylos uva-ursi</i>
Bog Birch	<i>Betula glandulosa</i>
Rubber rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>
Red –osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>
River hawthorn	<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>
Silverberry	<i>Elaeagnus argentea</i>
Common Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>
Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia repens</i>
Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>
Shrubby cinquefoil	<i>Pentaphylloides floribunda</i>
Wild currant	<i>Ribes spp.</i>
Prickly Rose	<i>Rosa acicularis</i>
Thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>
Red raspberry	<i>Rubus ideaus</i>

COMMON NAME

Bebb willow	<i>Salix bebbiana</i>
Sandbar willow	<i>Salix exigua</i>
Other willow species	<i>Salix spp.</i>
Soapberry/Buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia canadensis</i>
Western snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>
Gray Horsebrush	<i>Tetradymia canescens</i>

FORBS

Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Rosy pussytoes	<i>Antennaria microphylla</i>
Heart-leaf arnica	<i>Arnica cordifolia</i>
Fringed sagewort	<i>Artimesia frigida</i>
Aster species	<i>Aster sp.</i>
Milkvetch species	<i>Astragalus sp.</i>
Sego lily/mariposa	<i>Calochortus apiculatus</i>
Camas	<i>Camassia quamash</i>
Musk thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>
Elk thistle	<i>Cirsium scariosum</i>
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Hound's tongue	<i>Cunoglossum officinale</i>
Common Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>
Wild buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum spp.</i>
Howell's gumweed	<i>Grindellia howellii</i>
Curly-cup gumweed	<i>Grindellia squarrosa</i>
Cow parsnip	<i>Heracleum maximum</i>
Yellow toadflax	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>
Yellow puccoon	<i>Lithospermum ruderales</i>
Lupine species	<i>Lupinus sp.</i>
Pineapple weed	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Buttercup species	<i>Ranunculus sp.</i>
Dock species	<i>Rumex sp.</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Common mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>

GRASSES AND GRASS-LIKE PLANTS

Quackgrass	<i>Agropyron repens</i>
Slender wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron trachycaulum</i>
Smooth brome	<i>Bromus inermis</i>
Nebraska sedge	<i>Carex nebrascensis</i>
Wooly sedge	<i>Carex lanuginosa</i>
Beaked sedge	<i>Carex rostrata</i>
Orchard grass	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Tufted hairgrass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>
Common spikerush	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>
Rough fescue	<i>Festuca campestris</i>
Idaho fescue	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>
Northern mannagrass	<i>Glyceria borealis</i>
Foxtail barley	<i>Hordeum jubatum</i>
Meadow barley	<i>Hordeum brachyantherium</i>
Baltic rush	<i>Juncus balticus</i>
Junegrass	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>
Basin wild-rye	<i>Leymus cinereus</i>
Western wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>
Reed canarygrass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>
Kentucky bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>
Bulbous bluegrass	<i>Poa bulbosa</i>
Sandberg's bluegrass	<i>Poa sandbergii</i>
Bluebunch wheatgrass	<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>
Hardstem bulrush	<i>Scirpus acutus</i>

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Needle and Thread	<i>Stipa comata</i>
Green needlegrass	<i>Stipa viridula</i>
Broadleaf cattail	<i>Typhia latifolia</i>

The following wildlife species have been reported in the Blackfoot Valley. The list of bird species was developed for the Blackfoot Challenge. The Montana Natural Heritage Program prepared lists for the mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Several of the species observed (visual sightings, calls, tracks, scat and other signs) during the inventory for the Baseline Report for the Conservation Easement are marked with an asterisk.

BIRDS

Common loon	Barrow's goldeneye
Pied-billed grebe	Common goldeneye
Red-necked grebe	Bufflehead
Eared grebe	Ruddy duck
Western grebe	Common merganser
Clark's grebe	Red-breasted merganser
White pelican	Turkey vulture
Double-breasted cormorant	Osprey
Bittern	Bald eagle
Great blue heron	Golden eagle
White-faced ibis	Northern harrier
Trumpeter swan	Sharp-skinned hawk
Tundra swan	Cooper's hawk
Canada goose	Northern goshawk
Snow goose	Ferruginous hawk
Ross's goose	Rough-legged hawk
Greater white-fronted goose	Swainson's hawk
Mallard duck	*Red-tailed hawk
Gadwall	*American kestrel
Harlequin duck	Merlin
Northern pintail	Peregrine falcon
Green-winged teal	Prairie falcon

Blue-winged teal	Gray partridge	Caspian tern	Warbling vireo
Eurasian wigeon	Ring-necked pheasant	Common tern	Blue jay
American widgeon	*Blue grouse	Black tern	Gray jay
Northern shoveler	*Ruffed grouse	Forster's tern	*Stellar's jay
Wood duck	Sharp-tailed grouse	Mourning dove	Clark's nutcracker
Redhead duck	Spruce grouse	Barred owl	Black-billed magpie
Ring-necked duck	Virginia rail	Flammulated owl	American crow
Greater scaup	Sora	Great-horned owl	Common raven
Lesser scaup	American coot	*Great gray owl	Horned lark
Surf scoter	*Sandhill crane	Long-eared owl	Bank swallow
White-winged scoter		Northern pygmy owl	Barn swallow
American golden plover	Belted kingfisher	Northern saw-whet owl	Cliff swallow
Semipalmated plover	Northern flicker	Short-eared owl	Northern rough-winged swallow
*Killdeer	Red-naped sapsucker	Western screech owl	Tree swallow
Black-necked stilt	Williamson's sapsucker	Black swift	Black-capped chickadee
Avocet	Black-backed woodpecker	Vaux's swift	Mountain chickadee
Greater yellowlegs	Downey woodpecker	White-throated swift	Chestnut-backed chickadee
Lesser yellowlegs	Hairy woodpecker	Calliope hummingbird	Pygmy nuthatch
Solitary sandpiper	Lewis's woodpecker	Rufous hummingbird	Red-breasted nuthatch
Willet	Pileated woodpecker	Clay-colored sparrow	Brewer's sparrow
Spotted sandpiper	Three-toed woodpecker	White-breasted nuthatch	Chipping sparrow
Upland sandpiper	Cordilleran flycatcher	Brown creeper	Fox sparrow
Whimbrel	Dusky flycatcher	House wren	Grasshopper sparrow
Long-billed curlew	Hammond's flycatcher	Marsh wren	Harris sparrow
Marbled godwit	Least flycatcher	Rock wren	Lark sparrow
Sanderling	Olive-sided flycatcher	American dipper	LeConte's sparrow
Western sandpiper	Willow flycatcher	Golden-crowned kinglet	Lincoln's sparrow
Least sandpiper	Western wood pewee	Ruby-crowned kinglet	Song sparrow
Long-billed dowitcher	Say's phoebe	Mountain bluebird	Savannah sparrow
Common snipe	Eastern kingbird	Western bluebird	Song sparrow
Wilson's phalarope	Western kingbird	Townsend's solitaire	Vesper sparrow
California gull	Loggerhead shrike	Veery	White-crowned sparrow
Bonaparte's gull	Northern shrike	Hermit thrush	Dark-eyed junco
Franklin's gull	Cassin's vireo	Swainson's thrush	Bobolink
Herring gull	Red-eyed vireo	Varied thrush	Western meadowlark

APPENDIX 4

American robin	Brewer's blackbird	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Gray catbird	Red-winged blackbird	Vagrant shrew	<i>Sorex vagrans</i>
European starling	Yellow-headed blackbird	Water shrew	<i>Sorex palustris</i>
Water pipit	Brown-headed cowbird	Northern pocket gopher	<i>Thomomys talpoides</i>
Cedar waxwing	Bullock's oriole	Yellow-pine chipmunk	<i>Tamius amoenus</i>
Audubon's warbler	Lasuli bunting	Least chipmunk	<i>Tamius minimus</i>
MacGillivray's warbler	Snow bunting	Red-tailed chipmunk	<i>Tamius ruficaudus</i>
Nashville warbler	Black-headed grosbeak	Hoary marmot	<i>Marmota caligata</i>
Orange-crowned warbler	Evening grosbeak	Yellow-bellied marmot	<i>Marmota lateralis</i>
Yellow warbler	Pine grosbeak	Columbian ground squirrel	<i>Spermophilus columbianus</i>
Yellow-rumped warbler	Cassin's finch	Golden mantled ground squirrel	<i>Spermophilus lateralis</i>
Townsend's warbler	Gray-crowned rosy finch	Northern flying squirrel	<i>Glaucomys sabrinus</i>
Tennessee warbler	House finch	Red squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>
Wilson's warbler	Red crossbill	American beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>
American redstart	White-winged crossbill	*Western jumping mouse	<i>Zapus princeps</i>
Common yellowthroat	Common redpoll	Deer mouse	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>
Northern waterthrush	Hoary redpoll	Southern red-backed vole	<i>Clethrionomys gapperi</i>
Western tanager	Pine siskin	Bushy-tailed wood rat	<i>Neotoma cinerea</i>
Rufous-sided towhee	American goldfinch	Meadow vole	<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>
American tree sparrow	House sparrow	Long-tailed vole	<i>Microtus longicaudus</i>
MAMMALS		Montane vole	<i>Microtus montanus</i>
COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	Water vole	<i>Microtus richardsonii</i>
Fringed bat	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	Heather vole	<i>Phenacomys intermedius</i>
Yuma bat	<i>Myotis yumanesis</i>	Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>
Little brown bat	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Norway rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>
Long-eared bat	<i>Myotis evotis</i>	House mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>
Long-legged bat	<i>Myotis volans</i>	Porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>
Western small-footed bat	<i>Myotis ciliolabrum</i>	Pika	<i>Ochotona princeps</i>
Big brown bat	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	Mountain cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus nuttallii</i>
Silver-haired bat	<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>	Snowshoe hare	<i>Lepus americanus</i>
Hoary bat	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	White-tailed jackrabbit	<i>Lepus townsendii</i>
Townsend's red-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Grizzly bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>
Preble's shrew	<i>Sorex preblei</i>	Black bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>
Masked shrew	<i>Sorex cinereus</i>	Gray wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>
Dusky shrew	<i>Sorex monticolus</i>	Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>
American marten	<i>Martes pennanti</i>
Least weasel	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>
Ermine	<i>Mustela erminea</i>
Long-tailed weasel	<i>Mustela frenata</i>
Mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>
Wolverine	<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>
Northern river otter	<i>Lutra canadensis</i>
American badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>
Striped skunk	<i>Mephitis taxus</i>
Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>
Bobcat	<i>Felis rufus</i>
Lynx	<i>Felis lynx</i>
Mountain lion	<i>Felis concolor</i>
Mule deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>
*White-tailed deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>
Elk	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>
*Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
REPTILES	
Painted turtle	<i>Chrysemys picta</i>
Bullsnake	<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>
Racer	<i>Coluber constrictor</i>
Western terrestrial garter snake	<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>
*Common garter snake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>
Rubber boa	<i>Charina bottae</i>
Western rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus viridis</i>
AMPHIBIANS	
Western Toad	<i>Bufo boreas</i>
Tailed frog	<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>
*Columbian spotted frog	<i>Rana lateiventris</i>
Long-toed salamander	<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>

APPENDIX 5
PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM
Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Core

1. Name of Project:

2. Project Sponsor:

Name:

Affiliation:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail Address:

3. Project Description:

4. Project Location:

Location: (Subdivision, Section)

Specific Area of Use: (Include Map)

Size of Area Affected:

5. Project Timing:

Season of Use:

Length of Use: (Beginning & End)

Continuous or Intermittent Use:

6. Project Implementation:

Type(s) of Equipment Used:

Number of People Involved:

APPENDIX 6

GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PROJECT PROPOSALS ON THE BCCA CORE

General Guidelines		
	YES	NO
A. Is the proposed action prohibited by the Conservation Easement?		
B. Is the proposed action compatible with the BCCA Core Vision? <i>A working landscape that balances ecological diversity with local economic stability for the future benefit of the Blackfoot Watershed Community. Management will entail activities that seek to conserve, enhance and maintain a balance of wildlife habitat, wetlands, water, grasslands and timber resources with traditional uses including hunting, recreation, agriculture and forestry.</i>		
C. Is the proposed action compatible with the 4.1 General Forest: Mixed Use Emphasis, Moderate Intensity Management Classification for the Core? <i>Moderate Intensity General Forest (and non-forested) areas emphasize a balance of sustainable ecosystems and resource uses with lands that are suited for timber production. These areas are generally suitable for providing a mix of fish and wildlife habitat; a relatively natural visual setting with moderate evidence of human management activity; a wide range of recreational opportunities, and a variety of other goods and services. Landscapes appear modified with roads and vegetation management activities evident at moderate levels.</i>		
D. Does the proposed action adversely affect resource management policies of BCCA agencies and private landowners?		

If Questions A and D = NO and B and C = YES, continue to next section. If not, review proposal objectives to see what may be amended to meet Guidelines.

A. Physical Environment - Land Resources		
	Impact	
	Unknown	Rate on a Scale of 0 - 4 0=No Impact, 4=Significant
<i>Will the proposed action result in:</i>		<i>Impact Can be Mitigated</i>
(1) Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, or moisture loss		
(2) Destruction or modification of any unique geological or physical feature		
(3) Change that may modify the channel of a stream or bed or shore of water body or affect wetlands		
(4) Changes in drainage patterns or rate and amount of surface runoff		

A. Physical Environment - Land Resources (continued...)			
	Unknown	Impact	
		Rate on a Scale of 0 - 4 0=No Impact, 4=Significant Impact)	Impact Can be Mitigated
<i>Will the proposed action result in:</i>			
(5) Increase in risk or contamination of surface or groundwater			
(6) Effects on any existing water right			
(7) Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species or communities including trees, shrubs, grasses, or aquatic plants			
(8) Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species.			
(9) Establishment or spread of noxious weeds			
(10) Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat			
(11) Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species			
(12) Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species			
(13) Introduction of new animal species into area			
(14) Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals			
(15) Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, other activity)			
(16) Affect to threatened & endangered species or their habitat			
B. Human Environment			
	Unknown	Impact	
		Rate on a Scale of 0 - 4 0=No Impact, 4=Significant	Impact Can be Mitigated
<i>Will the proposed action result in:</i>			
(1) Conflict with any existing land use of the area (either its productivity or profitability)			
(2) Creation of any human health hazard or potential health hazard			

B. Human Environment (continued...)											
	Unknown	Impact									
		Rate on a Scale of 0 - 4 0=No Impact, 4=Significant	Impact Can be Mitigated								
<i>Will the proposed action result in:</i>											
(3) Alteration of the level of BCCA revenue and/or impact the economy of local communities											
(4) Effect to commercial activity											
(5) Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings											
(6) Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, cultural or paleontological importance											
C. Significance Criteria											
	Unknown	Rate on a Scale of 0 - 4 0=No Impact, 4=Significant	Impact Can be Mitigated								
<i>Will the proposed action considered as a whole:</i>											
(1) Have considerable cumulative adverse effects?											
(2) Establish a precedent or likelihood for future actions with significant adverse environmental impacts?											
(3) Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created.											
D. Conservation Easement											
(1) Does the proposed action require a conservation easement permit or letter of authorization?		YES	NO								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>Summary of Categories</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td># of Unknown</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Impact Score</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td># of Impact that Can be Mitigated</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				<i>Summary of Categories</i>		# of Unknown		Total Impact Score		# of Impact that Can be Mitigated	
<i>Summary of Categories</i>											
# of Unknown											
Total Impact Score											
# of Impact that Can be Mitigated											

APPENDIX 6

Describe and analyze reasonable alternatives to the proposed action if necessary and how alternatives would be implemented.

Evaluate and list mitigation measures, stipulations or other control measures that can be reasonably enforced for the project and by whom.

APPENDIX 7

PUBLIC USE & RECREATION POLICY FOR THE CORE

Recreation has been identified by the community as a key historic and existing use of the BCCA Core. The overall goal is to provide for responsible use at sustainable levels to benefit the public and the health of the resource. The following regulations exist for use on the BCCA Core:

- 1) Non-motorized public access is allowed on the BCCA Core, at all times of the year.
- 2) Motorized access is limited to open, established roads. Some roads may be seasonally closed due to sensitive wildlife areas, road conditions and to accommodate grazing lessees.
- 3) No unauthorized motorized use of closed roads or trails is allowed. Closed roads and trails are posted as such. A closed gate or other closure device (such as a log barricade or earthen berm) with no sign is closed to all motorized vehicles. Road restrictions apply even if a sign, gate or closure device has been vandalized or damaged.
- 4) Gates and roads must not be blocked. Administrative or emergency traffic may need to pass through.
- 5) No off-road or off-trail motorized use is allowed by the general public; however,
- 6) Snowmobiles are allowed from December 1 through May 1, except where signed closures exist. If resource damage occurs on soils, vegetation or wildlife, the BCCA Council may require that snowmobilers stay on groomed or signed snowmobile routes.
- 7) Hunting, fishing, trapping and all forms of legal animal harvest in accordance with relevant law are allowed; however, trapping requires a permit for use by the BCCA Council and numbers may be limited.
- 8) Personal-use plant, berry and mushroom harvesting are allowed.
- 9) Personal-use firewood gathering of dead or down wood is allowed; a \$15 permit is required with a 3-cord limit. Personal-use christmas-tree cutting is allowed; a \$5 permit is required. Vehicles must stay on established, open roads for wood and tree retrieval.
- 10) Camping is limited to 14 days per campsite. During this time, the campsite must not be left unattended for more than 3 consecutive days. Camping beyond 14 days requires relocating to a new site at least 5 miles from the original site. To minimize conflicts with bears, human, pet and livestock food, garbage and all other attractants shall be acceptably stored at all times (see Lolo Nat'l Forest Food/Attractant Order #F06-003-LOLO-D6). Attractants shall not be buried, discarded or burned in an open campfire. During campsite occupation, firewood may be cut only for use within the campsite. No live trees may be cut by campers.
- 11) The use of certified weed-seed-free livestock hay, forage and bedding is required for all livestock users. Do not tie livestock to trees; instead use a post, high-line or hitch-rail.
- 12) Pack out all garbage. Leave the BCCA Core lands as clean or cleaner than you found them.
- 13) Avoid polluting with human waste. Pack out or bury all human waste at least 6" deep. Toilets located within 300 feet of water must be self-contained. Groups of 4 or more campers are requested to build and use a common latrine.
- 14) Special use permits may be allowed on a case-by-case basis for education, commercial or administrative use.
- 15) Hazards exist, so recreationists must use caution and enter at their own risk. The Blackfoot Challenge and BCCA Council assume no liability or responsibility of any kind with respect to any of the activities described above or otherwise.

It is your responsibility to know whose property you are using and that property's regulations. Avoid trespassing on private property. Please report violations or vandalism to the Blackfoot Challenge at 406-793-3900, or Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 406-542-5500 or 1-800-TIP-MONT.

For more information or to purchase a permit, please contact the Blackfoot Challenge at 406-793-3900.