

Formal Agenda
Missoula City Council Special Meeting

November 6, 2024, 10:00 AM

Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)

Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app*:

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

* You may be prompted to download the Teams app

Or call in (audio only)

406-384-6960

Phone Conference ID: 239 973 987#

Press *5 to raise your hand to be recognized for public comment, *6 to mute and unmute

Watch the meeting only:

[Web stream \(live or on demand\)](#) Open this meeting on the calendar and select "View Live Stream" or "Video."

For more ways to watch the meeting and submit public comment, see the Citizen Participation Guide.

Issues? Call the City Clerk 406-552-6078.

If anyone attending this meeting needs special assistance, please provide 48 hours advance notice by calling the City Clerk Office at 406-552-6078.

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

3. PUBLIC HEARING

3.1	Indreland Conservation Easement Joint City-County Open Space Project	Zac Covington	1
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Recommended motion:

Adopt a resolution authorizing expenditure of up to \$344,000 of open space bond funds towards the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Indreland property consisting of 1,667 acres, to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust, as presented. Motion following hearing: Approve the expenditure of up to \$344,000 of open space bond funds towards the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Indreland property consisting of 1,667 acres, to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust.

4. ADJOURNMENT



City of Missoula, Montana
City Council Committee Agenda Item

Committee: Climate, Conservation and Parks

Item: Referral – Indreland Conservation Easement Joint City-County Open Space Project

Date: June 17, 2024

Sponsor(s): Zac Covington

Department or function: Parks and Recreation

Prepared by: Zac Covington

Ward(s) Affected:

Ward 1 Ward 4
 Ward 2 Ward 5
 Ward 3 Ward 6

 All Wards N/A

Action Required:

Set a joint City-County public hearing and Special Meeting of City Council for November 06, 2024, to consider adopting a resolution authorizing expenditure of up to \$344,000 of open space bond funds towards the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Indreland property consisting of 1,667 acres, to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust.

Recommended Motion(s):

I move the City Council: Set a joint City-County public hearing and Special Meeting of City Council for November 06, 2024, to consider adopting a resolution authorizing expenditure of up to \$344,000 of open space bond funds towards the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Indreland property consisting of 1,667 acres, to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust, as presented. Motion following hearing: Approve a resolution for the expenditure of up to \$344,000 of open space bond funds towards the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Indreland property consisting of 1,667 acres, to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust, as presented.

Set a **Special Meeting of City Council** for August 28th at 3:00 PM to hold a joint City-County public hearing for the Inderland LaValle Creek open space project.

Timeline:

Committee discussion: June 26, 2024
Council action (or sets hearing): October 21, 2024
Public Hearing (if required): November 6, 2024
Special Meeting of City Council November 6, 2024
Deadline: Click or tap here to enter text.

Background and Alternatives Explored:

The Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement property will cover approximately 1,667 acres, and the easement will be held and stewarded by Five Valleys Land Trust, with the property remaining in the ownership and management of Rory Indreland. This open space bond fund

request by Five Valleys Land Trust is for \$344,000 each from City and County, and this project is a joint City-County project.

The Indreland conservation easement preserves important conservation and open space values by limiting development across the property by creating building envelopes around the homesites that belong to the family. The Conservation Easement will also create 2 additional homesite building envelopes. In total, 2 the encumbered portions of the Property will allow for 5 homes—2 existing and 3 new— spread across 4 total building envelopes. The combined acreage of all the building envelopes will be 20 acres or fewer (1.2% of the total easement property). The Property is primarily comprised of conifer forestlands, grasslands, and rangelands that are used to graze cattle and horses. The landowners are managing these heavily-wooded portions of the Property through ongoing timber management and thinning projects. The lower elevation portions of the Property include hay and small grain fields. The landowner intends to continue these uses. The Property is approximately 40% forest land, 21% grassland, 32% rangeland, and 5% pastureland (Appendix 3). There are currently 4 homes located on the Property.

The Property is situated adjacent to large swaths of conservation lands. To the north is a vast array of USFS lands that connect to Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribe and State of Montana lands. These lands border two Five Valleys conservation easements, 186-acres and 90-acres each, approximately 1 mile north of the Property. This array of conservation lands provides connectivity from the valley bottom the Rattlesnake Wilderness to the east. To the south, the Property is bordered by a 160-acre conservation easement that is held by Five Valleys. A 1,015-acre conservation easement held by Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is approximately 1 mile to the west.

The property includes critical wildlife habitat for many species including whitetail deer, mule deer, elk, moose, big horn sheep, black bears, mountain lions, wolves, coyotes, and foxes. According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, habitat on the property hosts a suite of native species of concern including Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Flammulated Owl, Evening Grosbeak, Black Backed Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, Varied Thrush, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Pacific Wren, Long-legged Myotis, Veery, Fisher, and Wolverine. Crucially, the Property provides key winter habitat for the North Hills-Evaro elk herd. The Property also provides habitat for two endangered or threatened species: Grizzly Bear and Canada Lynx. In addition to diverse wildlife, the Property boasts several native plant communities that are of conservation concern. These include species such as Limestone Larkspur, Cup Clover, and Missoula Phlox.

The Property has a deep tradition of agricultural use has been under the stewardship of the Indreland Family for over eight decades. The family's conservation ambition is to preserve and perpetuate their agricultural legacy for both present and future generations. The land is currently used for crop production and livestock grazing. This includes approximately 15 acres of irrigated cropland with along with dryland alfalfa and grass hay production. The hay crop is regularly rotated with barley and winter wheat to support soil nutrient abundance and health. Approximately 223 acres, or nearly 14% of the Property, is comprise of agricultural soils of local or statewide importance. The Property is zoned as agricultural working land. The forest has been managed for timber through thinning projects, and the landowners intend to continue forest management to optimize forest health, promote wildlife habitat, and mitigate the wildfire risks within the wildland urban interface. The landowner is working with the DNRC to develop a timber management plan that will meet these goals.

LaValle Creek, a perennial tributary of the Clark Fork River, runs through the eastern edge of the Property. LaValle Creek contains a genetically pure species of cutthroat trout along with other important riparian habitat. Johnson Creek, a seasonal stream, bisects the Property from east to west. Conservation on the Property will serve to protect the Johnson Creek drainage and this stretch of LaValle creek and the habitat it supports. No negative impacts to water resources are anticipated. Grazing activity does not occur adjacent to LaValle Creek due to its position on the Property and proximity to LaValle Creek Road.

On Thursday, April 11, 2024 the City Open Space Advisory Committee and County Open Lands Committee each unanimously recommended the Indreland conservation easement project as a good use of open space bond funds.

Alternatives Explored: The main alternative to approving the use of open space bond funds for this project is not approving the funds. If funding is not approved, the project will either require the use of other funding sources, or the project may not be successful.

Financial Implications:

Up to \$344,000 of City-administered open space bond funds.

Links to external websites:

N/A

Missoula City Council
435 Ryman St
Missoula, MT 59802

June 18, 2024

RE: OSAC Support for the Indreland-LaValle Creek Conservation Easement

Dear Members of the Missoula City Council:

The Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) enthusiastically recommends that the City Council approve an expenditure of up to \$344,000 from the City's portion of the 2018 Open Space Bond funds toward the acquisition of a conservation easement (CE) on 1,667 acres owned by the Indreland family. OSAC has visited the property, performed robust public discussion, and voted unanimously to determine that the expenditure is in the best interest of Missoulians.

The Indreland-Lavalle Creek CE is in a unique location in the valley and holds many valuable traits that OSAC believes make it an excellent candidate for permanent protection, including:

- Supports a working agricultural operation.
- Located prominently in the Missoula Valley viewshed and protects scenic vistas.
- Prime habitat for many species, including various ungulates, bears, birds, and others.
- Situated near the urban interface with the Lolo National Forest and other easements controlled by Five Valleys Land Trust, providing habitat connectivity.
- Identified by MT FWP as a Tier I Focus Area, having the highest need for conservation efforts.
- Within a Cornerstone targeted by the Missoula Urban Area Open Space Master Plan (2019).

In addition, OSAC believes that the project applicants have done a very commendable job creating project value through a broad partnership that minimizes the reliance on the City's Open Space Bond funds, including significant cost sharing with other grants and Missoula County's Open Space Bond Fund. According to information submitted by the applicant, the City's bond expense for the project represents only 13% of the \$2,601,100 total project cost. It is also worth noting that Five Valleys Land Trust will steward the property in perpetuity, thereby creating no long term additional costs to the City.

With the considerations above, OSAC believes that this is a quality project that helps maximize the impact of 2018 Open Space Bond funds. OSAC thanks you for your time and we hope that the City Council will consider supporting this funding request.



Eric Anderson, Chair
Open Space Advisory Committee

DRAFT RESOLUTION -----

A resolution of the Missoula City Council authorizing expenditure of up to \$344,000 of 2018 Open Space Bond funds towards the purchase of a conservation easement on the Indreland property consisting of 1,667 acres, to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust.

Whereas, Section 76-6-104, M.C.A. defines open-space land as any land which is provided or preserved for: park or recreational purposes; conservation of land or other natural resources; historic or scenic purposes; or assisting in the shaping of the character, direction, and timing of community development;

Whereas, in November 2018, 63% of Missoula County voters approved the Open Space Bond measure, which authorizes the Missoula County Commissioners to use the bond proceeds for the purposes of conserving, enjoying, and enhancing open-space land, to include providing public access to water and land; conserving agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat, and rivers, lakes, and streams; paying costs of purchasing land, easements, or other interests in land from willing landowners and of improvements and costs related to or serving lands acquired or designated as open space; and protecting scenic views;

Whereas, Article II, Section 2.1 of the May 20, 2020 Interlocal Agreement between the City of Missoula and the County of Missoula Related to Use of 2018 Open Space Bond Proceeds (Interlocal Agreement) establishes the general purposes, roles, and administration of the open space bond, including the allocation of half of the total bond (\$7,500,000) to the City for projects in the Missoula Planning Region, and includes provisions for the allowance and management of joint City-County open space projects;

Whereas, this project will carry out the purposes of the 2018 Open Space Bond by providing permanent protection of 1,667 acres of open space, conserving agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat, local streams, scenic views, and other important open space values;

Whereas, the City of Missoula adopted the 2019 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan (“Open Space Plan”), which provides a vision for continuing to expand upon community open space systems throughout the greater Missoula area and identifies the “Butler and LaValle Creek Cornerstone” as a high-priority community open space and encourages the preservation of scenic open space, wildlife habitat, and rare and unique plant communities;

Whereas, the City of Missoula is guided by the three strategic decision-making lenses of Climate and Resilience, Equity, and Housing, and this project protects critical natural resources in the face of climate change, protects local watershed resources, prevents development in sensitive wildlife habitat, preserves local farm and ranch lands and existing agricultural soils, and protects local scenic views from Missoula Valley of the property and surrounding public lands;

Whereas, the proposed conservation easement is consistent with City and County climate adaptation objectives, as it eliminates the threat of residential development in a high wildfire risk area and mitigates wildfire risk related to both structures and first responders; allows for active forest management as necessary by the landowners and/or public agency partners; and helps to protect the headwaters of Butler and LaValle Creeks which are tributaries of the Clark Fork River, allowing for improved water quality and aquatic wildlife habitat;

Whereas, the Indreland conservation easement promotes and furthers City goals of managing growth and maintaining a base of affordable housing by limiting development to the urban core where services can be provided in a cost-efficient manner, as opposed to the wildland urban interface or other rural-urban fringe areas where service provisions are much more costly;

Whereas, on July 13, 2023, a quorum of the County Open Lands Committee (OLC) and a quorum of the City Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) voted in a joint meeting to recommend the use of up to, but not to exceed, three hundred forty four thousand dollars (\$344,000) each of City and County allocated Open Space Bond Funds towards the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Indreland property to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust;

Whereas, the Indreland property has a deep tradition of agricultural use has been under the stewardship of the Indreland Family for over eight decades, and the family's conservation ambition is to preserve and perpetuate their agricultural legacy for both present and future generations;

Whereas, the Indreland properties are adjacent to Lolo National Forest, an existing Five Valleys Land Trust conservation easement, and is within one-mile of Confederated Salish and Kootenai Reservation land;

Whereas, the property is encompassed by the Evaro-Hill-North Hills Tier I Terrestrial Focus Area, as identified in Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' State Wildlife Action Plan, areas identified as having the highest need for conservation efforts; is associated with supporting 43 Montana Species of Conservation Concern; and wherein a genetically pure population of cutthroat trout currently live in LaValle Creek which runs through the eastern edge of the property;

Whereas, as of the date of this resolution, the population of Missoula County and the City of Missoula has grown by 9.5% and 18.4%, respectively, since 2010 and continues to grow, creating an inherent need to protect open space for current and future residents;

Whereas, the total project cost for the Indreland conservation easement acquisition will be provided by a combination of Open Space Bond funds, grants, and private donations;

Now therefore, be it resolved that the Missoula City Council hereby approves the expenditure of up to \$344,000 of open space bond funds towards the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Indreland property consisting of 1,667 acres, to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

Claire Trimble
Legislative Services Director/City Clerk

APPROVED:

Andrea Davis
Mayor

(SEAL)

E-mail from Bert Lindler
blindler@montana.com 2-9-24

Zac,

I'm thrilled to see the Indreland conservation easement proposal being considered by Missoula's Open Space Advisory Committee and the County Open Lands Citizens Advisory Committee. And I'm delighted that so much funding has been secured from the U.S. Department of Agriculture with the Heart of the Rockies in position to bring the project over the financial finish line.

I organized volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Hellgate Hunters and Anglers, and the Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to help Rory Indreland and his family build five miles of wildlife-friendly fencing to keep his cattle out of Marent and LaValle Creeks on the family's Lolo National Forest grazing allotment. The fence has three strands of smooth wire, set at 18, 30, and 42 inches, with gates at elk crossings.

I'm so thankful that Rory wants an easement prohibiting development of his property, key habitat for elk, deer, bear and turkeys. Wildlife wanders freely between his property and the adjoining Lolo National Forest.

I've attached group photos of the wildlife-friendly fence volunteer projects I organized, along with a photo of Rory and a 2018 Christmas photo of the family.

Wonderful family.

Wonderful habitat.

Wonderful project.

Thrilled.

Bert



Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement



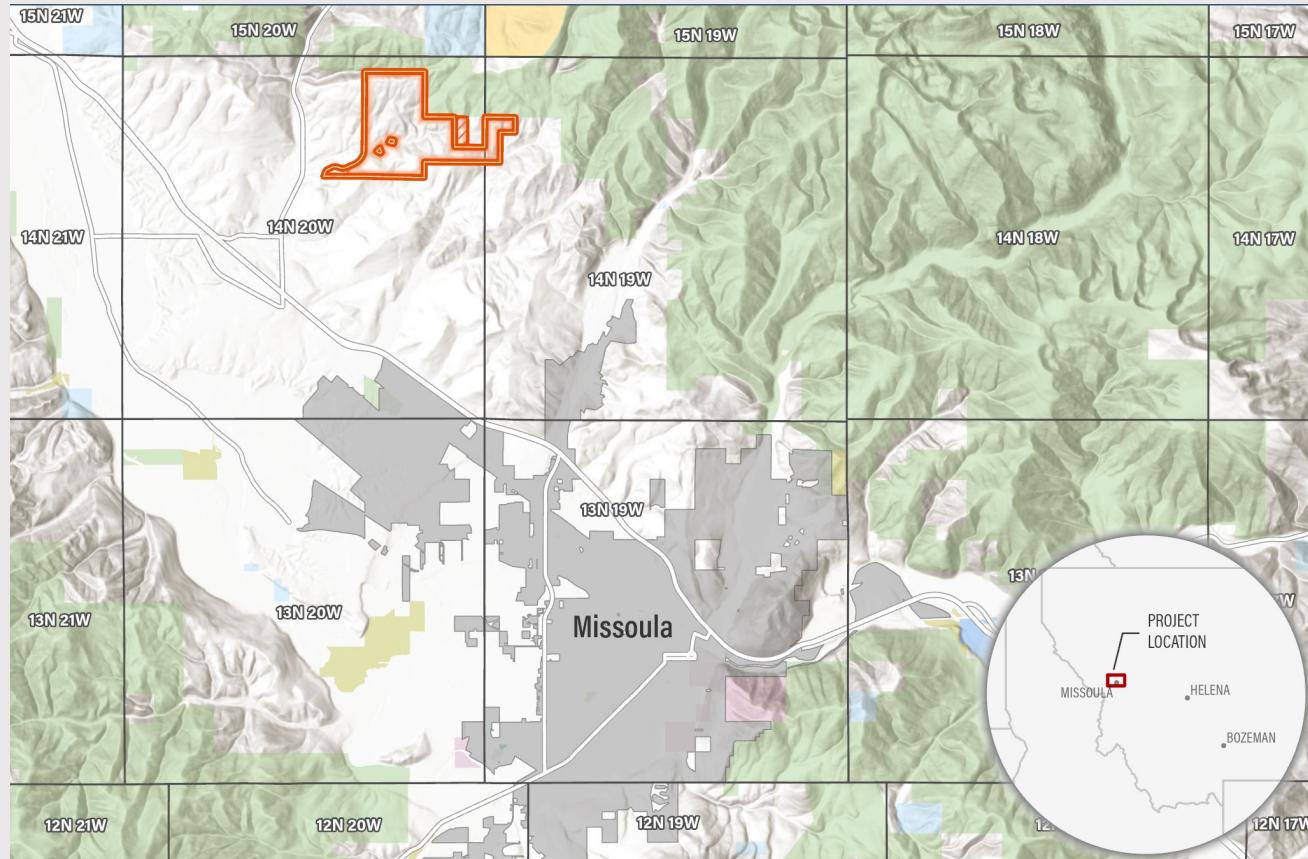
Level 2 Open Space Bond Presentation

Open Space Advisory Committee
March 14, 2024

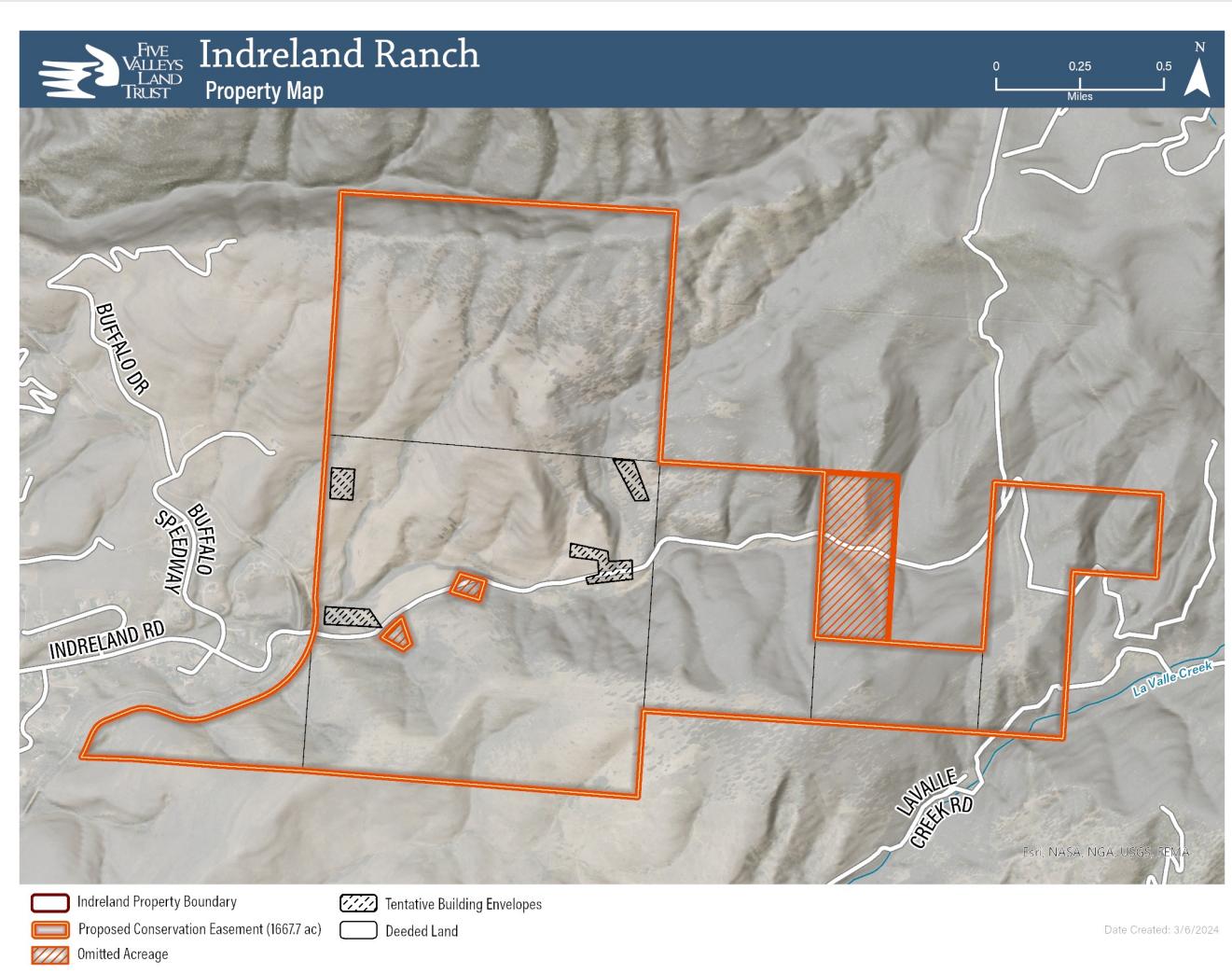
Derek Goble – Five Valleys Land Trust



Property and Project Background

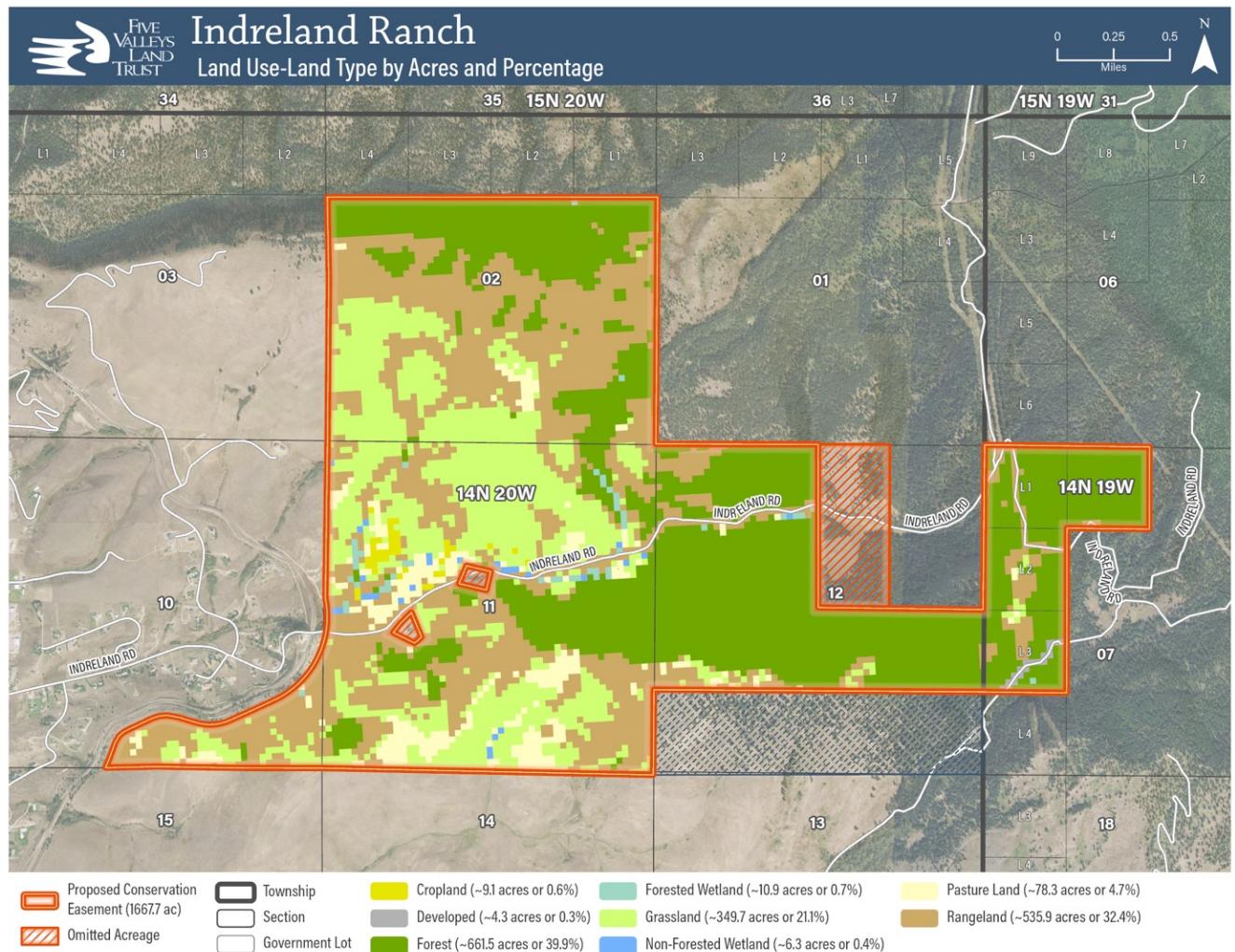


Project Summary

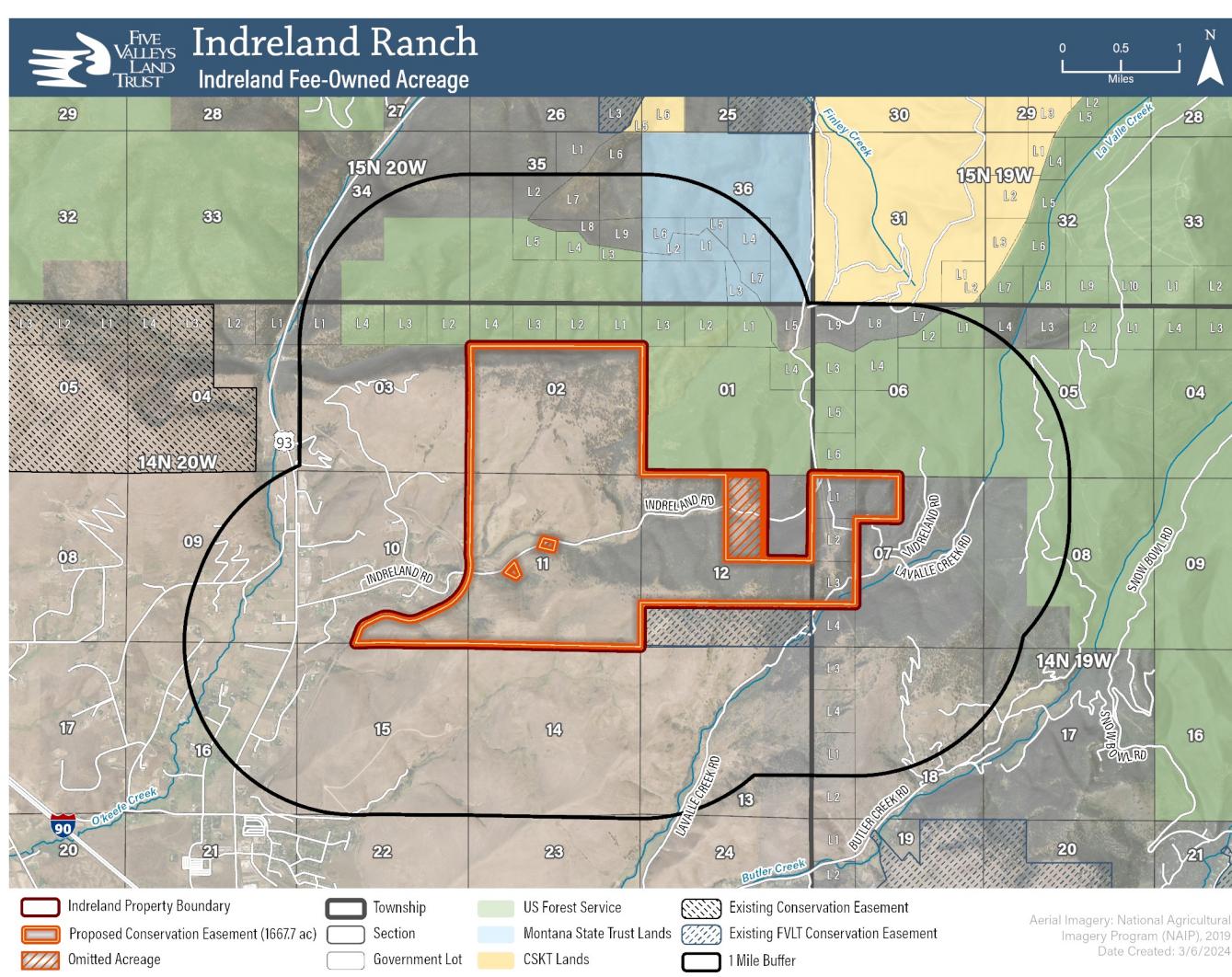


- Conservation Easement protecting agriculture, wildlife habitat, and scenic views
- 1667 Acres
- 6 Contiguous Parcels
- 4 Building Envelopes – 20 acres

Current and Proposed Uses



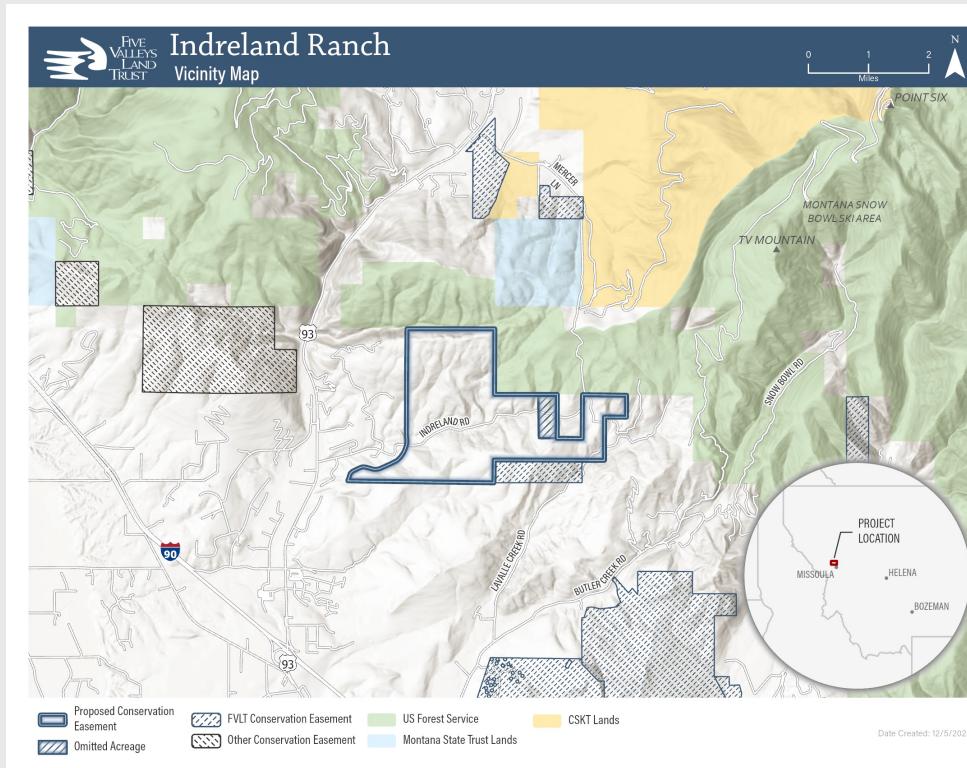
Property and Nearby Land Use



- Adjacent to Lolo National Forest
- Adjacent to existing Five Valleys easement
- Within 1 – mile of CSKT Reservation land
- Zoned as Agricultural Working Land



Wildlife and Plant Communities

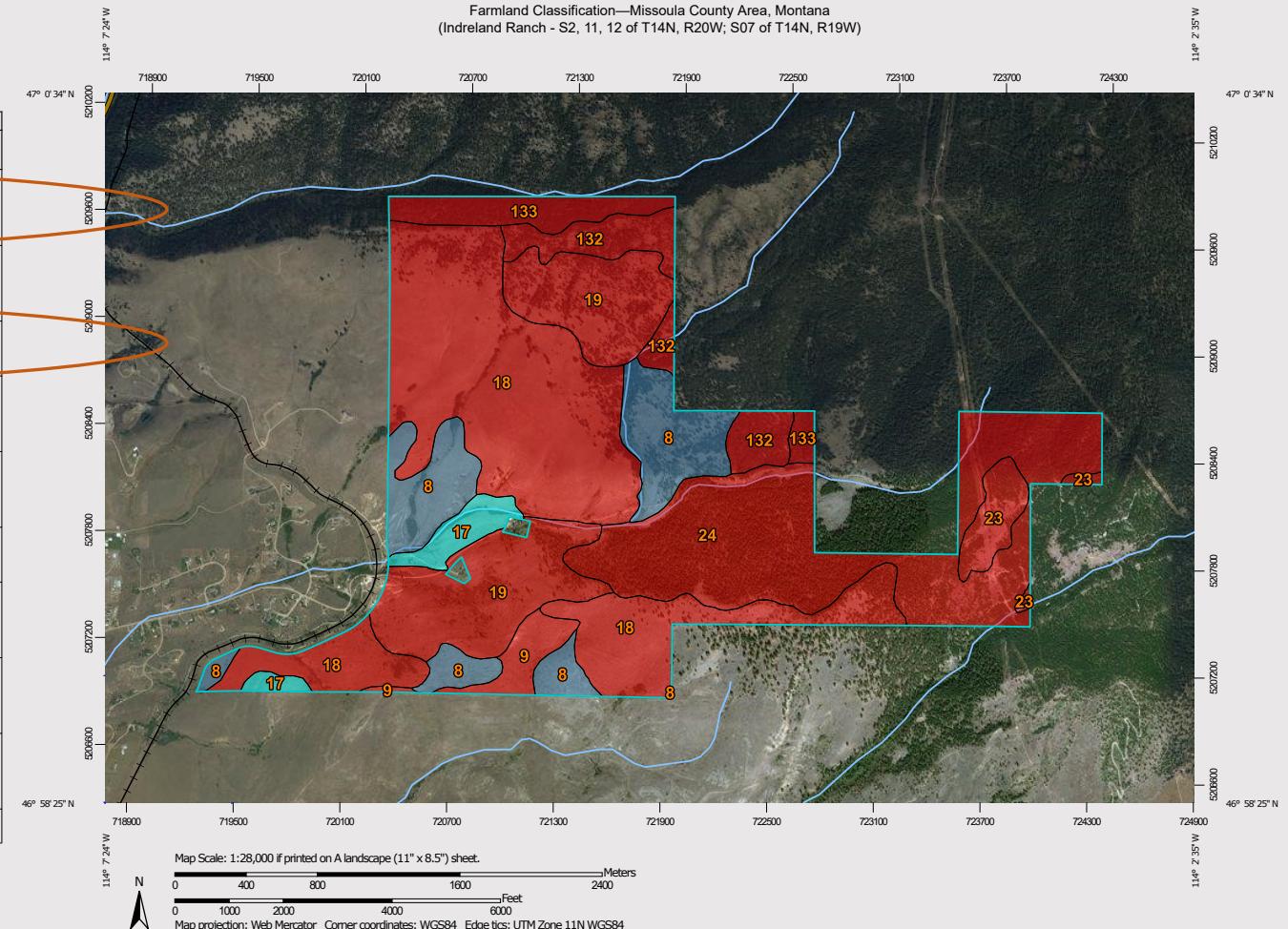




Agricultural Soils

Farmland Classification

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
8	Minesinger-Bigarm complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of local importance	188.5	11.4%
9	Bigarm-Minesinger complex, 15 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	34.2	2.1%
17	Bigarm gravelly loam, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	39.0	2.4%
18	Bigarm gravelly loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	567.8	34.2%
19	Bigarm gravelly loam, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	260.6	15.7%
23	Bignell gravelly loam, 8 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	40.9	2.5%
24	Bignell-Winkler, cool, complex, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	373.3	22.5%
132	Winkler gravelly loam, cool, 8 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	86.2	5.2%
133	Winkler-Kadygulch family, complex, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	67.5	4.1%
Totals for Area of Interest			1,658.0	100.0%



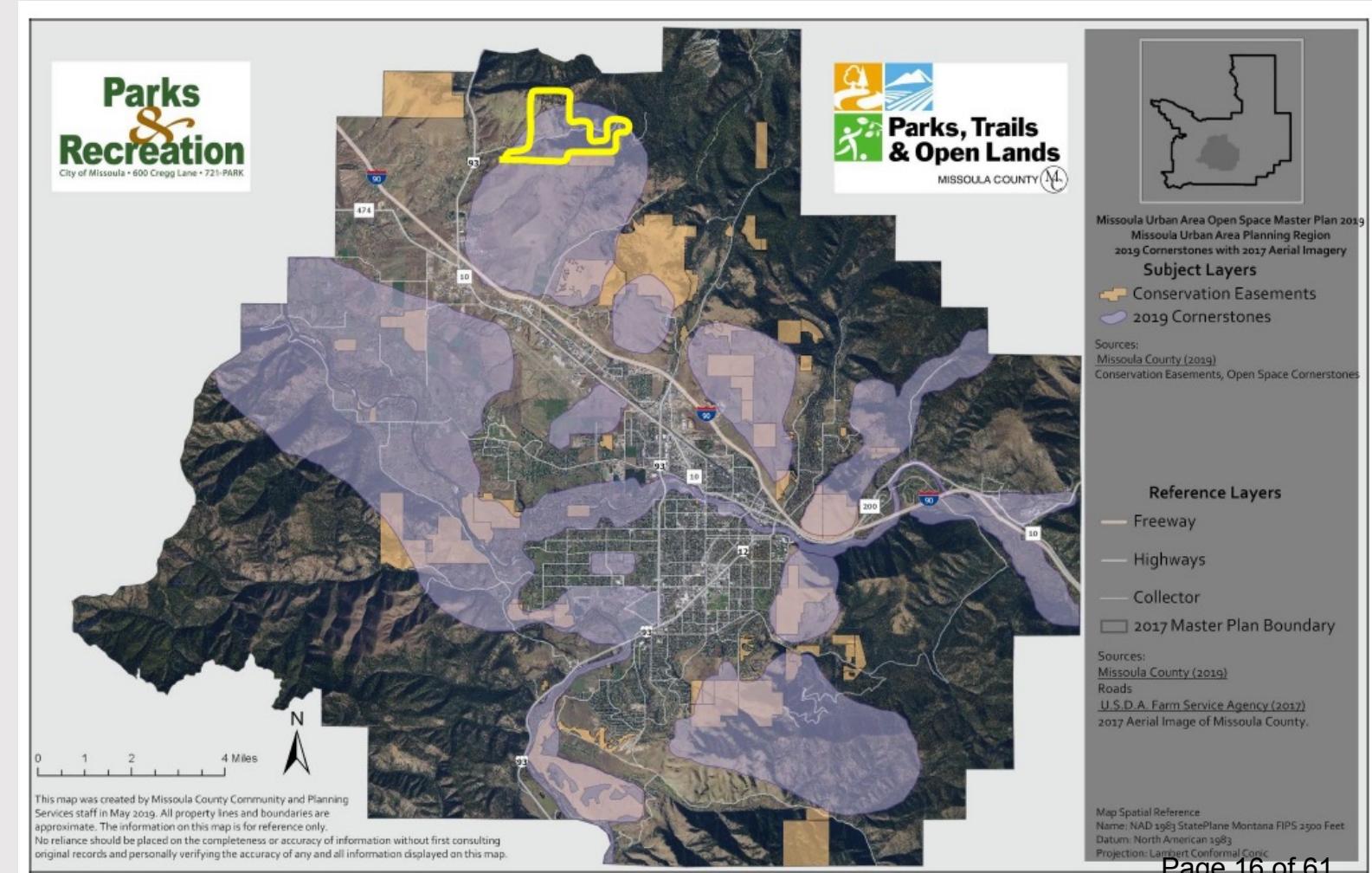


Agricultural Working Lands



Public Benefit

- Missoula Growth Policy
 - Protect natural landscape and open spaces important to Missoula County
- Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan
 - Vision of conserving, protecting, and connecting Missoula's system of open space lands

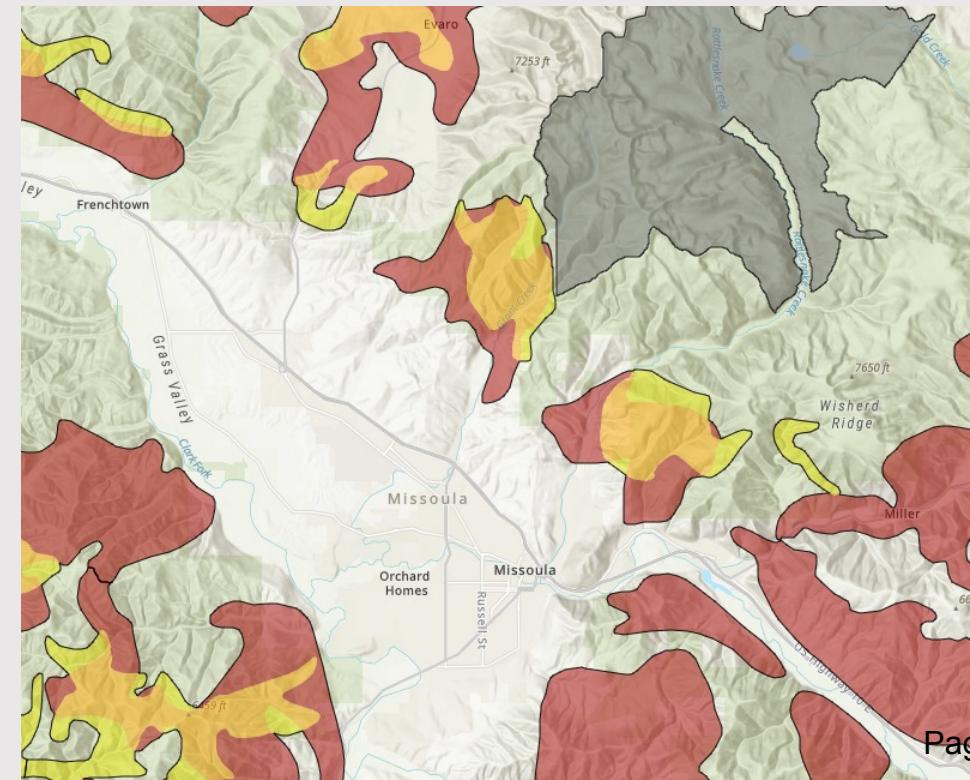


Public Benefit

Montana State Wildlife Action Plan Tier I Terrestrial Focal Area: Evaro Hill-North Hills



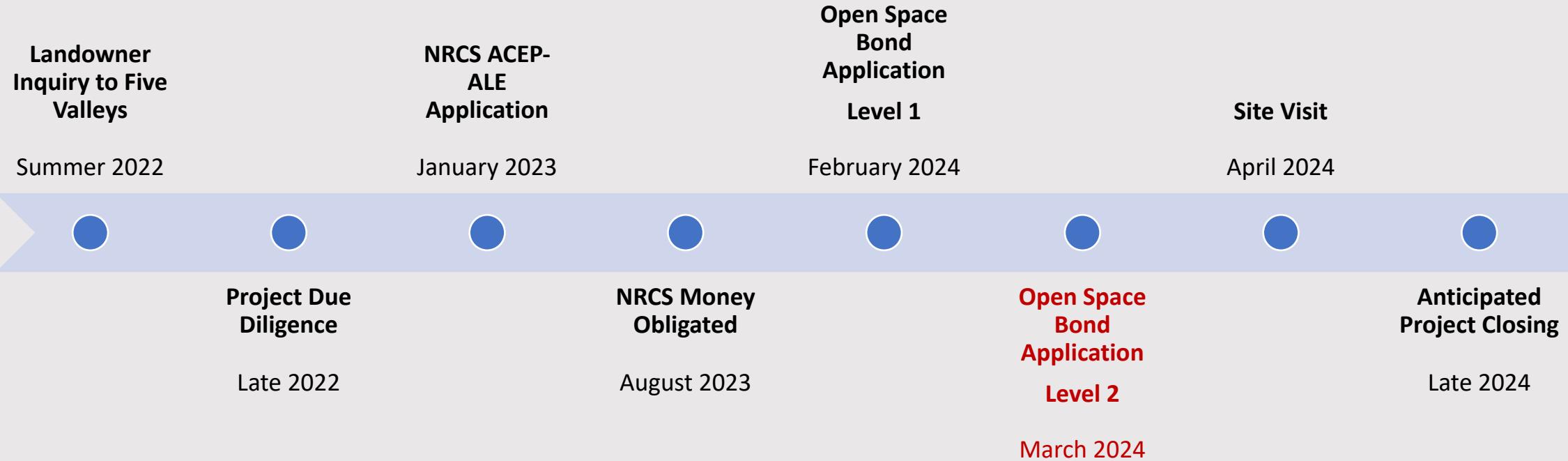
Montana Forest Action Plan Priority Area with elevated wildfire risk



Budget

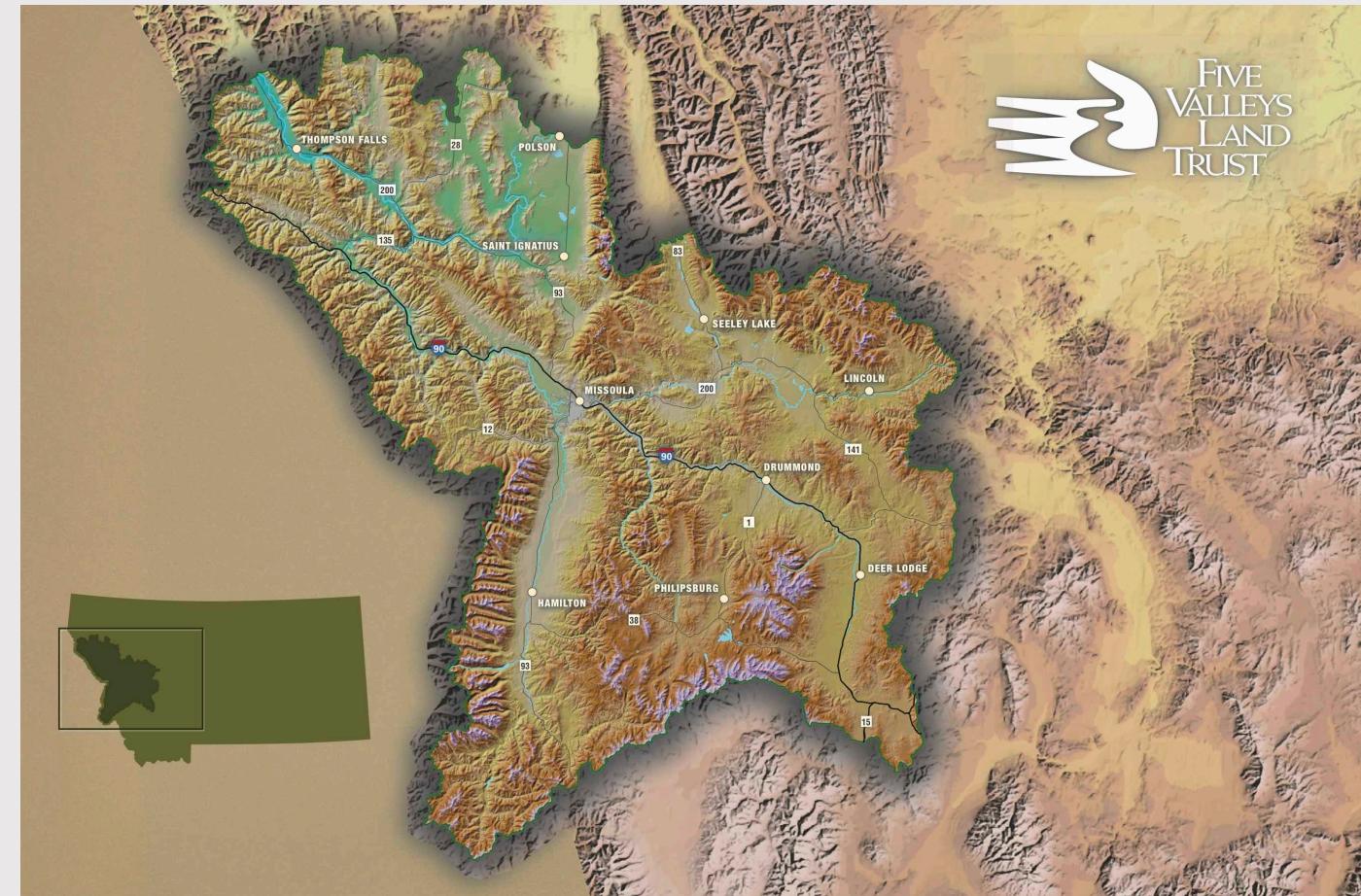
Expenses			
Estimated Project Budget	Amount	Percentage of Total Cost	
Estimated Easement Value	\$ 2,502,000	96%	
Staff Time	\$ 38,000	1%	
Legal Fees	\$ 15,000	< 1%	
Estimated Transaction Costs	\$ 10,100	< 1%	
<i>Title Insurance</i>	\$ 3,700		
<i>Minerals Research</i>	\$ 350		
<i>Baseline and Contaminant Report</i>	\$ 4,500		
<i>Recording and Closing Fees</i>	\$ 1,050		
<i>Other</i>	\$ 500		
Appraisal	\$ 18,000	< 1%	
Stewardship Contribution	\$ 18,000	< 1%	
Total:	\$ 2,601,100		
Income			
Source	Amount	Percentage of Total Cost	Status
NRCS ACEP - ALE	\$ 1,251,000	48%	Committed
Five Valleys and Other Private Funding Sources	\$ 231,100	9%	Committed
Five Valleys Staff Time	\$ 38,000	1%	
Landowner Stewardship Contribution	\$ 18,000	< 1%	Committed
Heart of the Rockies - Keep It Connected	\$ 375,000	14%	Pending
Missoula Open Space Bond	\$ 688,000	26%	Requesting
Missoula Open Space Bond (City Portion)	\$ 344,000	13.2%	Requesting
Missoula Open Space Bond (County Portion)	\$ 344,000	13.2%	Requesting
Total:	\$ 2,601,100		
Project Price per Acre			
Estimated Project Budget	Amount		
Total Price per Acre	\$ 1,560		
Total Price per Acre (excluding facilitation and transaction costs)	\$ 1,501		
Open Space Bond Request per Acre	\$ 413		
Open Space Bond Matching Ratio	1 : 3.7		

Timeline



Ability to Steward and Manage Land

- Five Valleys Land Trust has been active since 1972
- Our qualified staff stewards over 200 conservation easements throughout our service area
- This easement will border an existing Five Valleys held conservation easement





Questions and Discussion



Five Valleys Land Trust
120 Hickory St . Suite B
(406) 549-0755

Derek Goble – Conservation Project Manager
derek@fvlt.org

Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement Proposal



Level 2 – Application for Funding Missoula Open Space Bond

Submitted by:



FIVE VALLEYS
LAND TRUST

120 Hickory Street, Suite B
Missoula, MT 59801
406-549-0755

Landowner and Agency Identification

Landowner:

Rory Indreland
6400 Indreland Road
Missoula, MT 59808

Supporting Organization:

Five Valleys Land Trust
120 Hickory Street, Suite B
Missoula, MT 59801

Project Overview

Project Context

- Size of the Property and Area to be Conserved

The Indreland Ranch consists of 7 contiguous parcels totaling approximately 1,730 acres in the LaValle Creek drainage in the hills just north of the Missoula Valley (Appendix 1). The property is owned and managed by Rory Indreland and has been in the Indreland family for 80 years. At its peak in the 1950s, the ranch encompassed a total of 2,220 acres.

Approximately 500 acres were sold off between the 1980s - 2000s. An overarching goal of the landowner is to reunite the historic ranch through reacquisition of these lost parcels.

The Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement property (hereafter “the Property”) will cover approximately 1,667 acres. A 70-acre parcel to the northeast, and two 5-acre inholding parcels where homesites for Rory and his brother, Dean, are located, will be omitted from the easement (Appendix 2). Once complete, the conservation easement will prohibit any subdivision of the Property.

- Current and Proposed Uses

The Property is primarily comprised of conifer forestlands, grasslands, and rangelands that are used to graze cattle and horses. The landowners are managing these heavily-wooded portions of the Property through ongoing timber management and thinning projects. The lower elevation portions of the Property include hay and small grain fields. The landowner intends to continue these uses. The Property is approximately 40% forest land, 21% grassland, 32% rangeland, and 5% pastureland (Appendix 3).

There are currently 4 homes located on the Property. In addition to Rory and Dean’s 5-acre inholding homesites (which will be omitted from the easement), Rory and Dean’s adult children live in 2 other existing homes. The easement will limit development across the property by creating building envelopes around the homesites that belong to these adult children. The easement will also create 2 additional homesite building envelopes. In total,

the encumbered portions of the Property will allow for 5 homes—2 existing and 3 new—spread across 4 total building envelopes (Appendix 4). The combined acreage of all the building envelopes will be 20 acres or fewer (1.2% of the total easement property).

- Long-Term Management and Stewardship of the Property

The conservation easement will be held and stewarded by Five Valleys Land Trust. The Property will remain in the ownership and management of Rory Indreland. The landowner will provide a contribution to Five Valleys' Stewardship and Legal Defense Fund upon closing, which will provide funding for Five Valleys to steward the property in perpetuity. All easements held by Five Valleys are enrolled in Terra firma, a charitable risk pool owned exclusively by participating land trusts which insures its members against the legal costs of defending conservation easements.

- Other Conservation Easements and Public Lands

The Property is situated adjacent to large swaths of conservation lands. To the north is a vast array of USFS lands that connect to Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribe and State of Montana lands. These lands border two Five Valleys conservation easements, 186-acres and 90-acres each, approximately 1 mile north of the Property. This array of conservation lands provides connectivity from the valley bottom the Rattlesnake Wilderness to the east.

To the south, the Property is bordered by a 160-acre conservation easement that is held by Five Valleys. A 1,015-acre conservation easement held by Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is approximately 1 mile to the west.

- Nearby Land Use

Lands to the west of the property are primarily residential. Significant subdivision occurred to the west of the Property in the 1970s, and there has been additional recent subdivision and residential construction in that area since. All land directly to the north of the Property is public open space. There are parcels to the south and west that are in private ownership but remain undeveloped; these parcels vary in size from 7 to 700+ acres.

- Water and Mineral Rights

There are 2 water rights associated with the Property for agricultural irrigation and stock use. These date back to 1885 and 1913 and include surface diversion from Johnson Creek and LaValle Creek, respectively. The Johnson Creek drainage runs through the middle of the property while LaValle Creek is on the eastern most edge of the Property boundary.

At this time, it is unclear whether the subsurface mineral rights have been severed from the surface rights of the property. A mineral remoteness test will be completed in May 2024 by a qualified geologist to determine the likelihood of mineral development on the Property.

- Hazardous Materials

To Five Valleys' knowledge, there are no hazardous materials, contaminated sites or other federally identified hazards on the Property. An Environmental Site Assessment will be conducted on the Property prior to the finalization of the conservation easement.

- Connection to other open space bond funds requests.

There are no planned future requests for additional Open Space Bond funds for this Property. An overarching goal for the landowner is to reunite parcels of the ranch that have been sold off over time, with the intent to conserve those lands. If the landowner is successful in reacquiring past ranch parcels there could be a request to help conserve those additional parcels, however there are no concrete plans to do so at this time.

The adjacent Boehmler conservation easement was donated to Five Valleys in 2011. The project's transaction costs were covered by the City using the 2006 Open Space Bond.

Project Funding

Five Valleys is applying for \$688,000 of Open Space Bond funds, with the request that the City and the County split the cost evenly at \$344,000 each. The requested funds would be to help pay the landowner for the full cost of the conservation easement, and cover some of the project's transaction costs.

The total cost for the project is estimated to be \$2,601,100. The value of the conservation easement is estimated at \$2,502,000, at \$1500/acre. The project budget includes \$99,100 in transaction and project facilitation costs, including: \$15,000 for attorney and legal fees, \$18,000 in appraisal fees, \$10,100 in transaction costs (closing and recording fees, mineral assessment, etc.), \$38,000 for project facilitation staff time, and \$18,000 for the landowner's stewardship fund contribution.

Five Valleys has secured significant funding from the NRCS through the ACEP-ALE program, \$1,251,000, to help purchase the conservation easement. Five Valleys is bringing forth \$231,100 of its own and other privately raised money, the landowner is contributing \$18,000 to cover the stewardship contribution. There is an outstanding request to the Heart of the Rockies Initiative's Keep It Connected Program for \$375,000. The request from the Open Space Bond program is \$688,000, with \$344,000 requested each from the City and County.

Five Valleys carefully evaluates conservation easements to align with our goals and those of our partners across 10 counties. All projects incur significant costs to uphold our standard as a nationally accredited land trust. The process, starting from initial landowner inquiries to potential project realization, is resource intensive. Typically, only one in every 10 to 15 leads to a feasible project, often hinging on funding.

The Open Space Bond Program provides essential support from the outset, offering a clear pathway for both landowners and our organization. This program is pivotal when choosing project like the Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement, allowing us to dedicate our resources to protecting valuable open spaces for the benefit of Missoula County residents.

Conservation/Open Space Values and Resources

Wildlife Habitat/Native Plant Communities

The Property encompasses a significant expanse of relatively untouched land that provides habitat for a wide variety of species. It plays a vital role in the local ecosystem by offering essential connections between different protected areas.

Geographically, the property is strategically located to facilitate the movement of wildlife in the region. Its northern boundary adjoins National Forest land, which in turn links to Flathead Reservation land further north and the Rattlesnake Wilderness to the east. This forms critical connectivity from the Mission Mountains to the north and the Rattlesnake Wilderness to the east with the Ninemile Range to the west. The Property enhances the connection to a crucial wildlife connectivity corridor spanning Highway 93, aligning with the anticipated movement patterns of grizzly bears within the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem.

The Property is encompassed by the Evaro-Hill-North Hills Tier I Terrestrial Focus Area, as identified in Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' State Wildlife Action Plan. Tier I Focus Areas are those that have been identified as having the highest need for conservation efforts. The Evaro-Hill-North Hills Tier I Terrestrial Focus Area habitat type is associated with supporting 43 Montana Species of Conservation Concern. LaValle Creek, which runs through the eastern edge of the Property, is home to a genetically pure population of cutthroat trout.

The landowners have reported seeing whitetail, mule deer, elk, moose, big horn sheep, black bears, mountain lions, wolves, coyotes, and foxes on the Property. According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, habitat on the property hosts a suite of native species of concern including Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Flammulated Owl, Evening Grosbeak, Black Backed Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, Varied Thrush, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Pacific Wren, Long-legged Myotis, Veery, Fisher, and Wolverine. Crucially, the Property provides key winter habitat for the North Hills-Evaro elk herd. The Property also provides habitat for two endangered or threatened species: Grizzly Bear and Canada Lynx.

In addition to diverse wildlife, the Property boasts several native plant communities that are of conservation concern. These include species such as Limestone Larkspur, Cup Clover, and Missoula Phlox.

The property is included in the Montana Forest Action Plan Priority Areas. Priority Areas are defined as “areas in need of active forest health and fire adaptation, community protection, industry retention and economic development, recreation and tourism, wildlife and aquatic habitat, watershed restoration and other areas as identified by the Council”. The property has a high fire risk due to its location within the Wildland Urban Interface and degraded forest health. The landowner intends to continue active forest thinning to improve forest health and decrease the risk and impact of wildfire.

Water Quality and Water Resources

LaValle Creek, a perennial tributary of the Clark Fork River, runs through the eastern edge of the Property. LaValle Creek contains a genetically pure species of cutthroat trout along with other important riparian habitat. Johnson Creek, a seasonal stream, bisects the Property from east to west.

Conservation on the Property will serve to protect the Johnson Creek drainage and this stretch of LaValle creek and the habitat it supports. No negative impacts to water resources are anticipated. Grazing activity does not occur adjacent to LaValle Creek due to its position on the Property and proximity to LaValle Creek Road.

Agriculture and Working Lands

The Property has a deep tradition of agricultural use has been under the stewardship of the Indreland Family for over eight decades. Rory's grandfather plowed the fields using only horses the entire time he farmed the property from the 1940s through the 1970s. Rory is dedicated to advancing soil and plant vitality by utilizing sustainable practices in his agricultural management. The family's conservation ambition is to preserve and perpetuate their agricultural legacy for both present and future generations.

The land is currently used for crop production and livestock grazing. This includes approximately 15 acres of irrigated cropland with along with dryland alfalfa and grass hay production. The hay crop is regularly rotated with barley and winter wheat to support soil nutrient abundance and health. Approximately 223 acres, or nearly 14% of the Property, is comprised of agricultural soils of local or statewide importance (Appendix 5). The Property is zoned as agricultural working land.

The forest has been managed for timber through thinning projects, and the landowners intend to continue forest management to optimize forest health, promote wildlife habitat, and mitigate the wildfire risks within the wildland urban interface. The landowner is working with the DNRC to develop a timber management plan that will meet these goals.

Public Benefit

While this project does not include a public access component, there is immense public benefit to conserving the Property. The Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement would support the goals of city, county, and state policy plans as described below.

Missoula County Growth Policy: The Missoula County Growth Policy seeks to protect natural landscape and open spaces that are important to Missoula County while preparing for growth and promoting the economic well-being of Missoula County residents. It also recognizes that a healthy agricultural sector is essential to the well-being of the community due to benefits such as food security, open space, wildlife habitat, economic activity, health promotion, and quality of life. The Growth Policy establishes the objective of conserving agricultural lands to sustain and promote agriculture in Missoula County. The Property is zoned as agricultural working land.

Montana's Statewide Wildlife Action Plan: The Property is located in an area designated by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks in the State Wildlife Action Plan as the Evaro Hill-North Hills focal area, which is a Tier I Terrestrial Focal Area that the State has recognized as having significant fish and wildlife communities that are in greatest need of conservation in the State, and this Easement is consistent with the State's Plan by Protecting open Space Lands within that Focal Area

Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan: In 2019 the city of Missoula adopted an updated Open Space Plan that called for an expansion of the open space system in a way that addresses conservation of public resources and private agricultural areas, increases connectivity areas and provides high quality habitat for wildlife. The plan defined cornerstone areas within the Missoula Valley as areas that contain a combination of resources and open space values that make lands in that cornerstone a priority for protection. The Indreland Property falls almost entirely within one of these cornerstones (Appendix 6). The open space and scenic features of the Property are consistent with the sense of open space provided by the hillsides that frame the Missoula Valley.

State Forest Action Plan: In 2020, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation established the Montana Forest Action Plan. This comprehensive strategy evaluates the states forest conditions and delineates critical areas for targeted treatments. These Priority Areas are characterized as regions necessitating proactive measures to bolster forest health and fire resilience, safeguard communities, enhance economic development, and support recreation and tourism. Furthermore, they are vital for the conservation of wildlife and aquatic habitats. The Property falls within one of these designated Priority Areas and is recognized for its elevated wildfire risk and location within the Wildland-Urban Interface. The conservation objective for forest management will be instrumental in mitigating the State identified risks and promoting enhanced forest health.

Scenic and Aesthetic Values

Much of the property is visible from Highway 93, Interstate 90, and the western side of the Missoula Valley. The hillsides on the south side of Evaro Hill provide crucial open space aesthetic value. The Property's conservation aligns with multiple objectives set forth by the 2018 Open Space bond including "conserving, enjoying, and enhancing open space land; conserving agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat, and rivers, lakes, and streams; and protecting scenic views".

Project Timeline

Five Valleys has been working to move the project forward in partnership with the landowners, project partners, and contractors since Summer 2022. Funding from the NRCS was obligated in August 2023. Funding through the Missoula Open Space Bond program will allow the project to close on time in November 2024.

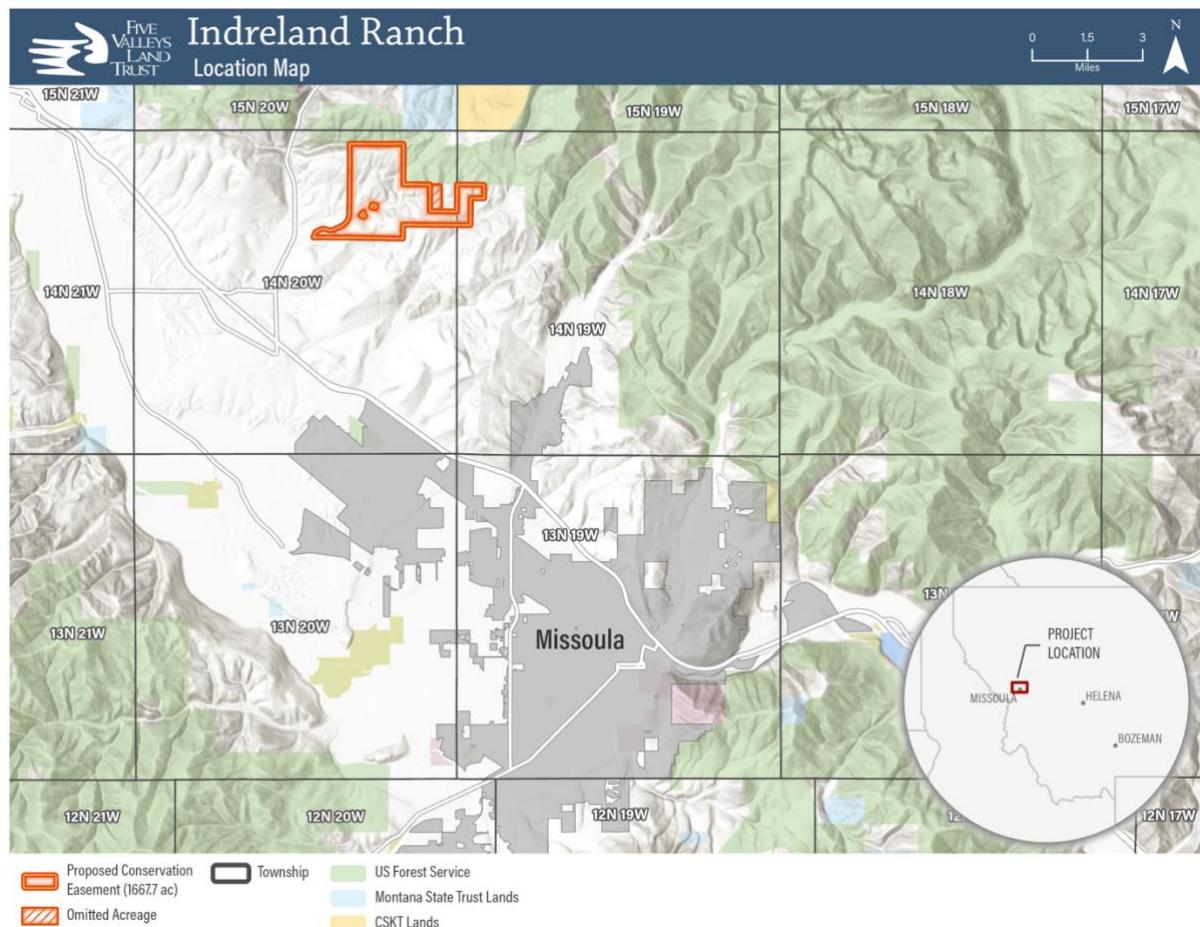
Estimated Project Budget

Estimated Project Budget	Amount	Percentage of Total Cost
Estimated Easement Value	\$2,502,000	96%
Staff Time	\$38,000	2%
Legal Fees	\$15,000	< 1%
Estimated Transaction Costs	\$10,100	< 1%
<i>Title Insurance and Research</i>	\$3,700	
<i>Minerals Research</i>	\$350	
<i>Baseline and Contaminant Report</i>	\$4,500	
<i>Recording and Closing Fee</i>	\$1,050	
<i>Other</i>	\$500	
Appraisal	\$18,000	< 1%
Stewardship Contribution	\$18,000	< 1%
Total:	\$2,601,100	

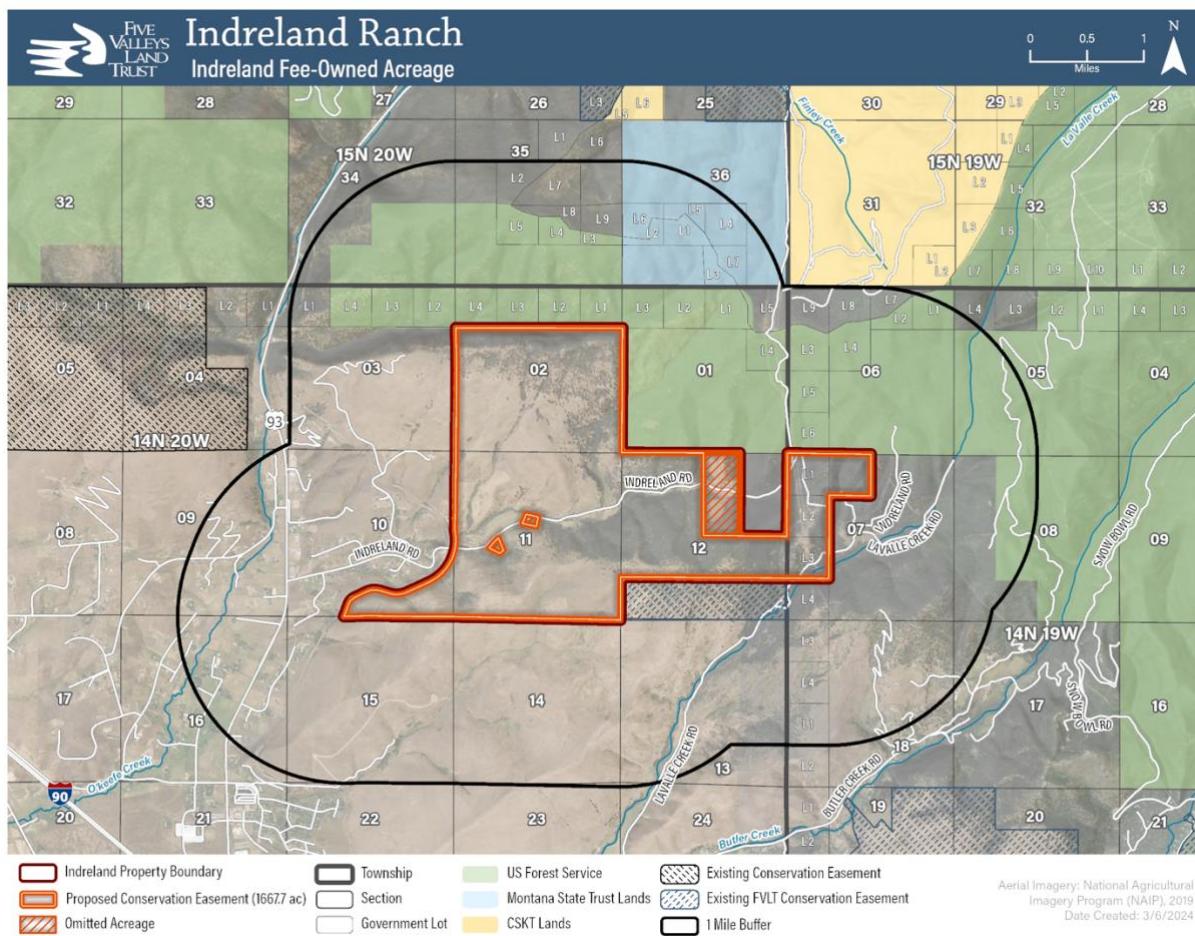
Estimated Project Funding

Anticipated Funding Sources	Funding Type	Dollar Amount	Percent of Total Cost	Status
NRCS ACEP – ALE	Cash	\$1,251,000	48%	Committed
Five Valleys and Other Private Funding Sources	Cash	\$231,100	9%	Committed
Five Valleys Staff Time	In Kind	\$38,000	2%	Committed
Landowner Stewardship Contribution	Cash	\$18,000	1%	Committed
Heart of the Rockies - Keep It Connected	Cash	\$375,000	14%	Pending
Missoula Open Space Bond	Cash	\$688,000	26%	Requesting
Missoula Open Space Bond (City Portion)	Cash	\$344,000	13%	Requesting
Missoula Open Space Bond (County Portion)	Cash	\$344,000	13%	Requesting
Total:		\$2,601,100		

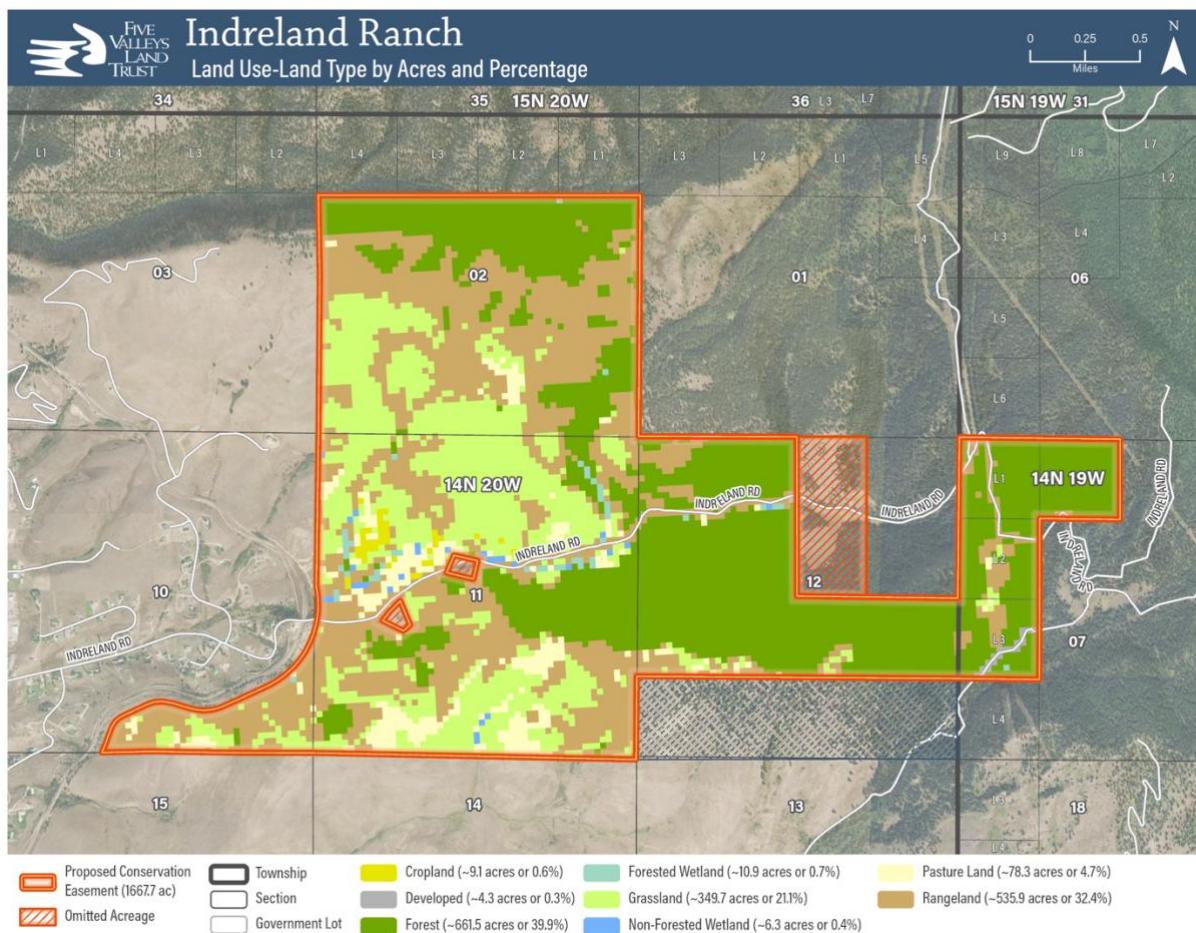
Appendix 1 – Vicinity Map



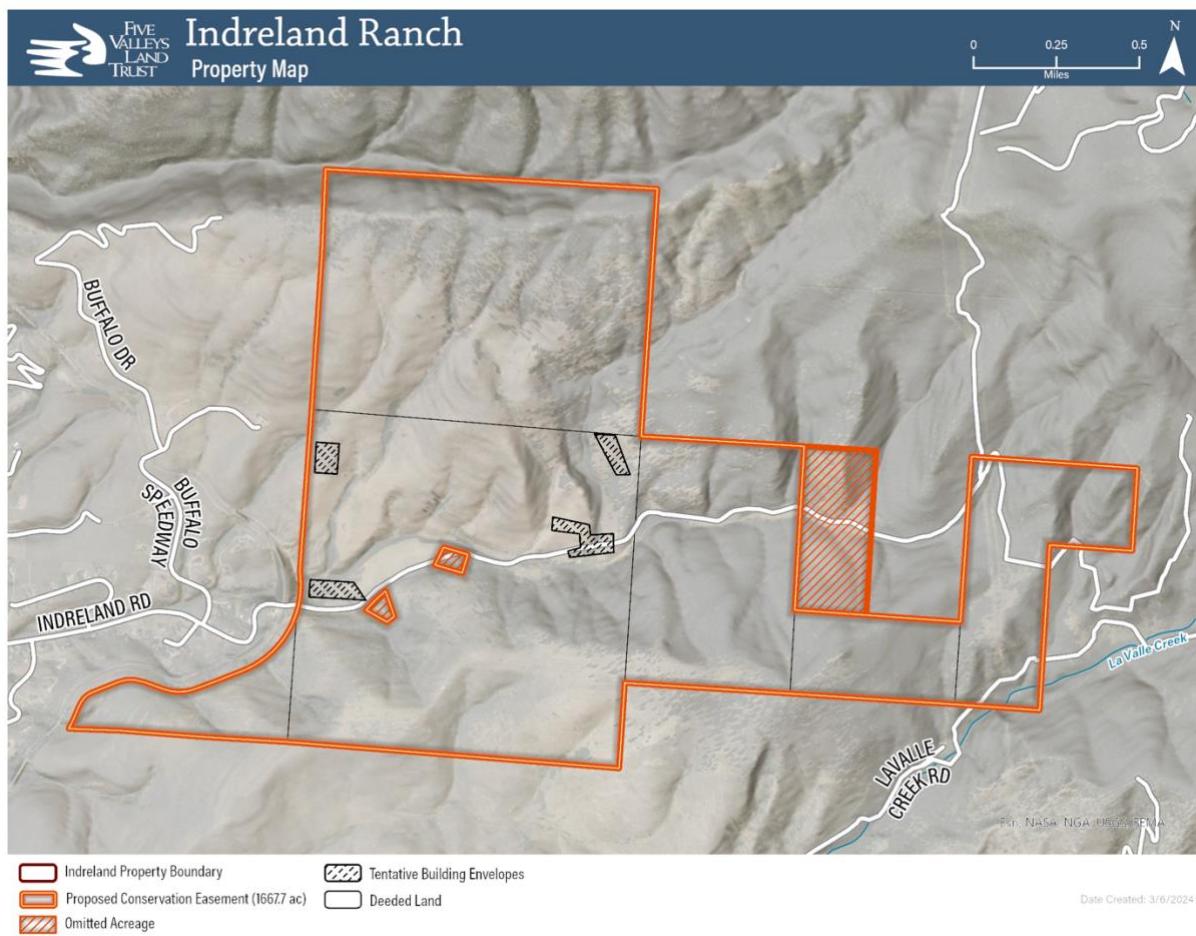
Appendix 2 – Property Map



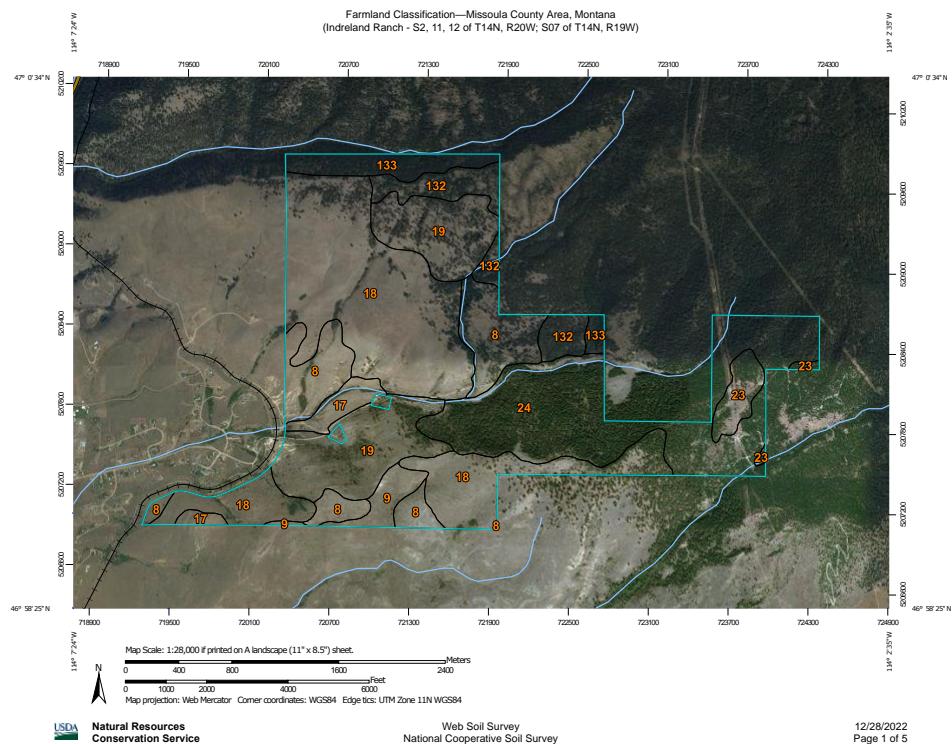
Appendix 3 – Land Use Map



Appendix 4 – Property and Parcel Map



Appendix 5 – Soils Map



Farmland Classification—Missoula County Area, Montana Indreland Ranch - S2, 11, 12 of

Farmland Classification

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
8	Mesinger-Bigarn complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Fairland of local importance	188.5	11.4%
9	Bigarn-Mesinger complex, 15 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	34.2	2.1%
17	Bigarn gravelly loam, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Fairland of statewide importance	39.0	2.4%
18	Bigarn gravelly loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	567.8	34.2%
19	Bigarn gravelly loam, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	280.6	15.7%
23	Bigarn gravelly loam, 8 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	40.9	2.5%
24	Bigarn-Winkler, cool complex, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	373.3	22.5%
132	Winkler gravelly loam, cool, 8 to 30 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	86.2	5.2%
133	Winkler-Kangaroo family complex, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	67.5	4.1%
Totals for Area of Interest			1,658.0	100.0%

Description

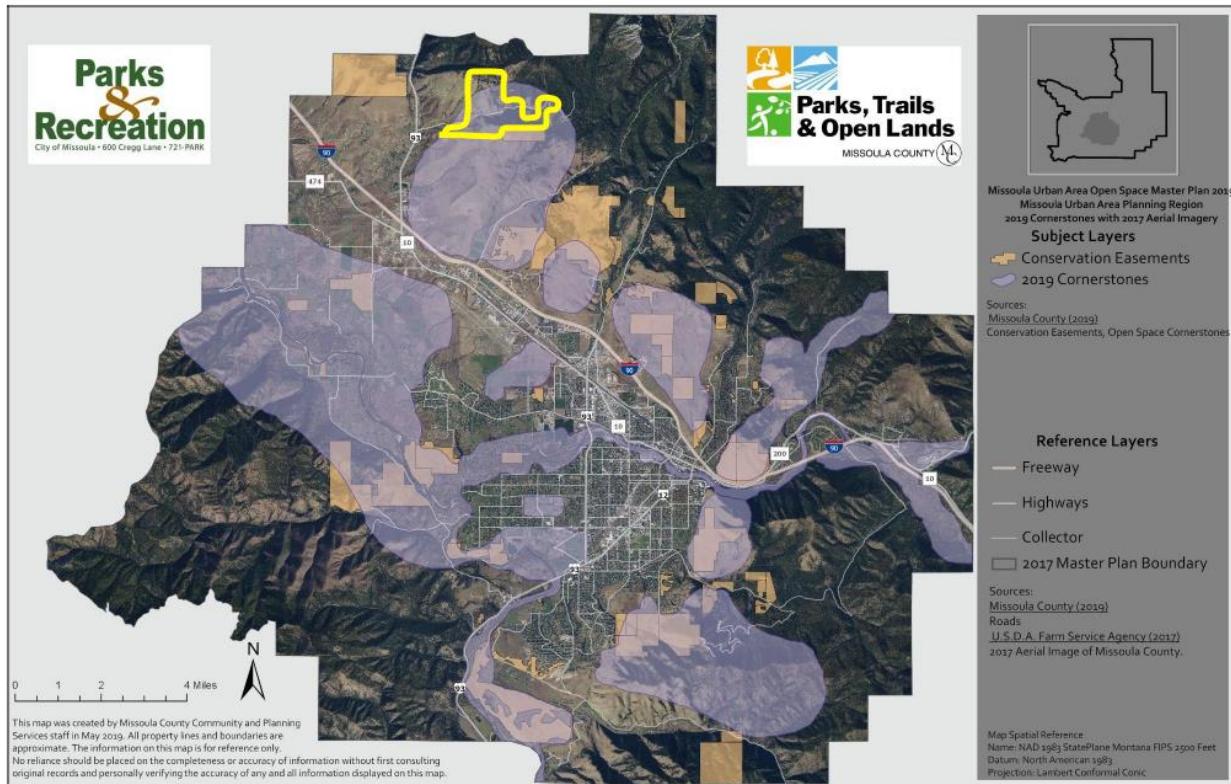
Farmland classification identifies map units as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, farmland of local importance, or unique farmland. It identifies the location and extent of the soils that are best suited to food, feed fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. NRCS policy and procedures on prime and unique farmlands are published in the "Federal Register," Vol. 43, No. 21, January 31, 1978.

Rating Options

Aggregation Method: No Aggregation Necessary

Aggregation Method: N

Appendix 6 – Open Space Value



Appendix 7 – Legal Description

The S1/2 of Section 2, the S1/2N1/2 of Section 2, and that part of the South one-half of Section 10, lying South and East of the present Northern Pacific Railway Company's right of way; All in Section 11, Township 14 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

All of Section 7, Township 14 North, Range 19 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

The NW1/4 and the N1/2S1/2 of Section 12, Township 14 North, Range 20 West, M.P.M., Missoula County, Montana

LESS AND EXCEPT a parcel of land in the NE1/4 of SW1/4 of Section 7, the N1/2 of SE1/4 of Section 7, and SE1/4 of NE1/4 of Section 7, Township 14 North, Range 19 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana. Together with an easement for access and utility purposes 60 feet in width, 30 feet on either side of the center line of the existing roadway known as "La Valle Creek Road", where it crosses the property of the Grantor in the S1/2 of the S1/2 of Section 7, Township 14 North, Range 19 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

LESS AND EXCEPT the South one-half of the Southwest quarter of Section 7, Township 14 North, Range 19 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

LESS AND EXCEPT the South one-half of the Southeast quarter of Section 7, Township 14 North, Range 19 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

LESS AND EXCEPT the North one-half of the Northeast quarter; the Southwest one-quarter of the Northeast quarter and the Southeast one-quarter of the Northwest one-quarter of Section 7, Township 14 North, Range 19 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

LESS AND EXCEPT Tract 1 of Certificate of Survey No. 5229, located in the SW1/4 of Section 11, Township 14 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

LESS AND EXCEPT Tract 2 of Certificate of Survey No. 5610, located in the NW1/4 of Section 11, Township 14 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Missoula County, Montana.

Appendix 8 – Proof of Ownership



Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement



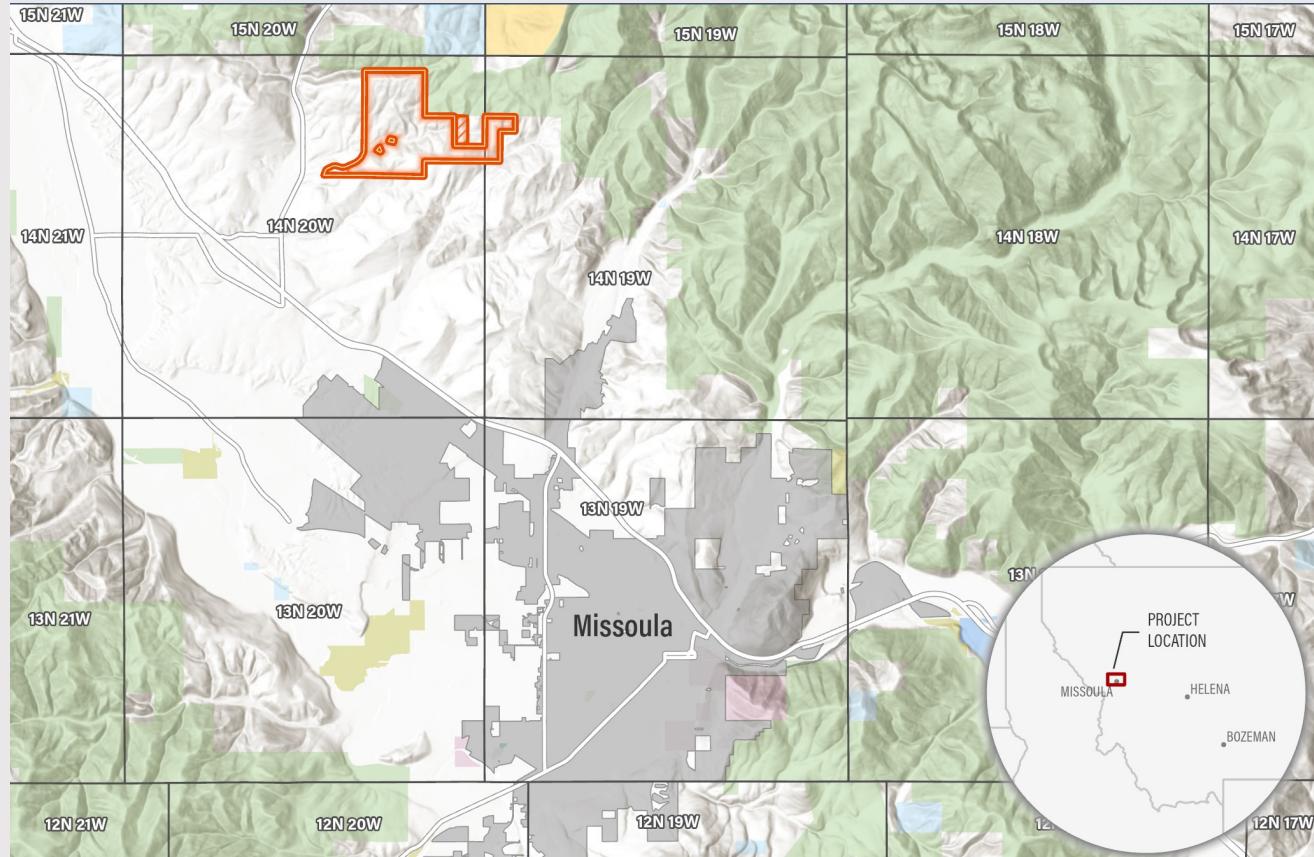
Level 1 Open Space Bond Application

Open Space Advisory Committee
February 8, 2024

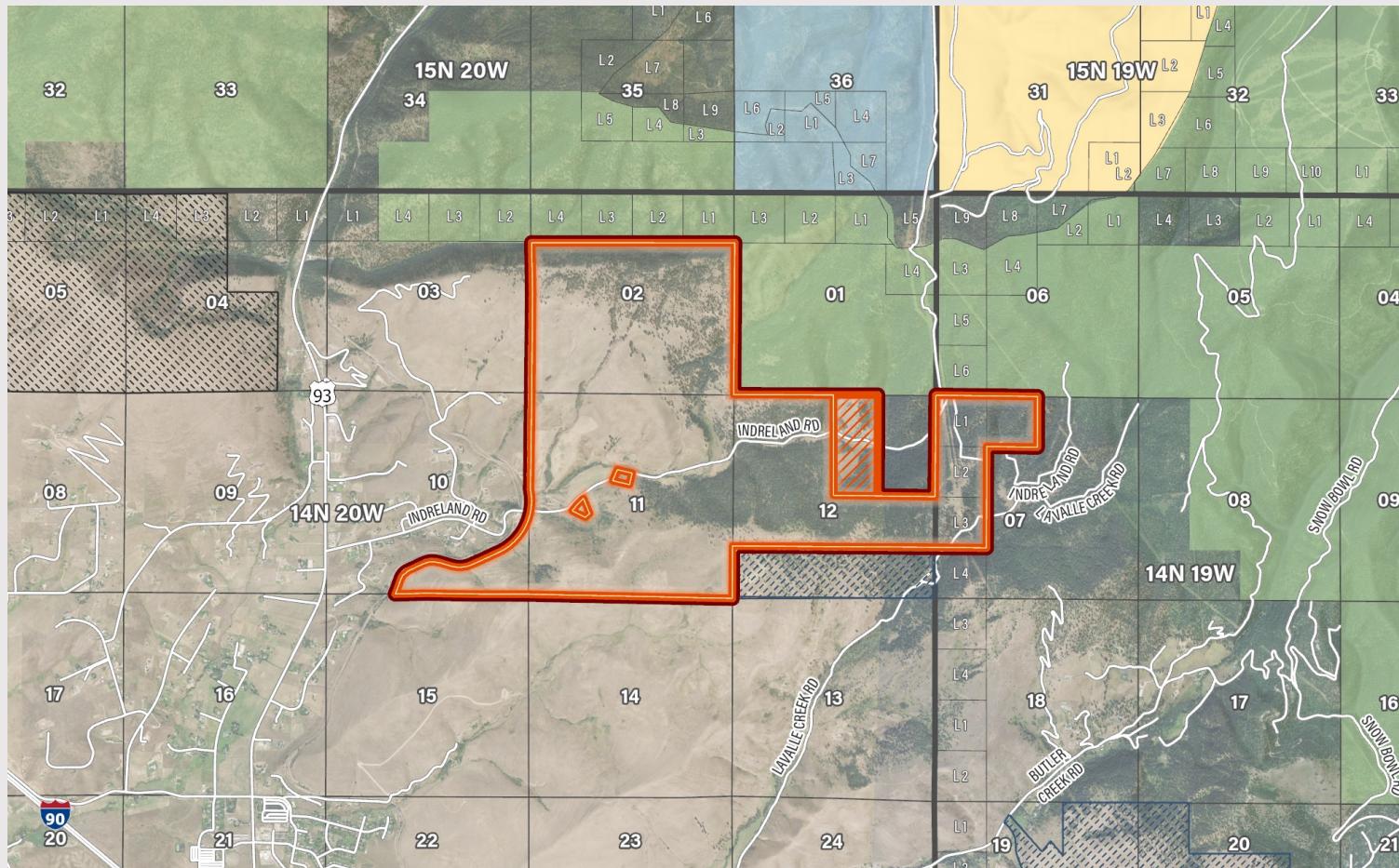
Derek Goble – Five Valleys Land Trust



Property and Project Background



Property and Project Background



Project Summary

Project Location: LaValle Creek, Evaro Hill, north of Missoula

Acreage: 1667

Project Type: Conservation Easement

Open Space Values Protected:

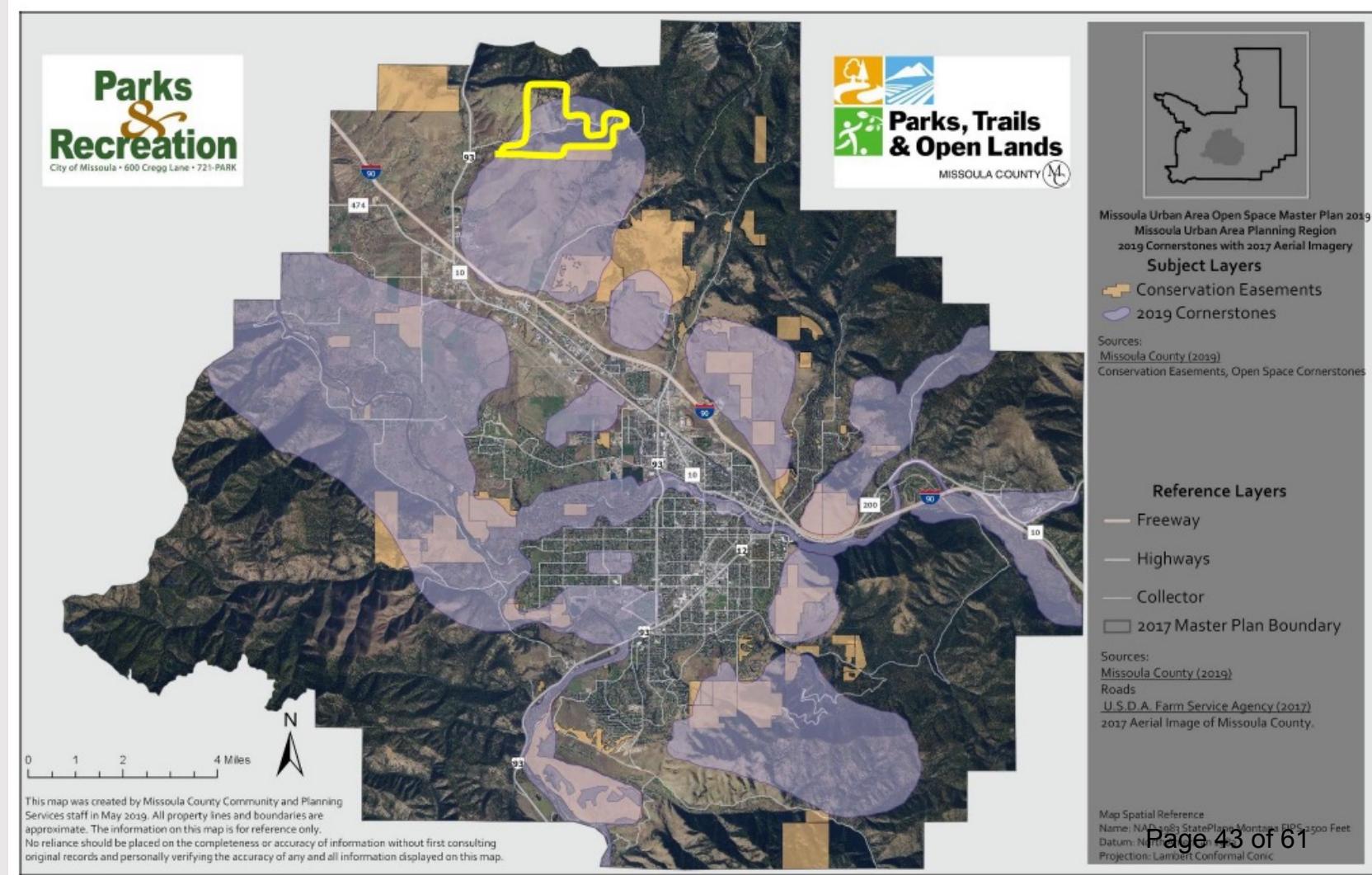
2018 Open Space Bond Goals	Conserving, enjoying and enhancing open space land, and providing public access to water and land	Conserving Agricultural land, fish and wildlife habitat, and rivers, lakes and streams	Protecting scenic views	Making improvements to lands acquired or designated as open space that are accessible to the public
2019 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan	Conservation Lands (Resources, Habitat, Scenic)	Parkland/ Developed Parks	Historic or Scenic Lands	Agricultural Lands



Project Summary

Open Space Elements

- Rural Agricultural Land
- Scenic Views and Vistas
- Wildlife habitat and connectivity
- Falls within the 2019 Urban Open Space Plan Cornerstones



Conservation Values



Budget

Expenses			
Estimated Project Budget	Amount	Percentage of Total Cost	
Estimated Easement Value	\$2,502,000	96%	
Project Facilitation and Legal Costs	\$53,000	2%	
Estimated Transaction Costs	\$10,100	< 1%	
<i>Title Insurance</i>	\$3,700		
<i>Minerals Research</i>	\$350		
<i>Baseline and Contaminant Report</i>	\$4,500		
<i>Recording and Closing Fees</i>	\$1,050		
<i>Other</i>	\$500		
Appraisal	\$18,000	< 1%	
Stewardship Contribution	\$18,000	< 1%	
Total:	\$2,601,100		
Income			
Source	Amount	Percentage of Total Cost	Status
NRCS ACEP - ALE	\$1,251,000	48%	Committed
Five Valleys and Other Private Funding Sources	\$100,000	4%	Committed
Landowner Stewardship Contribution	\$18,000	1%	Committed
Heart of the Rockies - Keep It Connected	\$525,000	20%	Pending
Missoula Open Space Bond	\$707,100	27%	Requesting
<i>Missoula Open Space Bond (City Portion)</i>	\$353,550	13.6%	Requesting
Missoula Open Space Bond (County Portion)	\$353,550	13.6%	Requesting
Total:	\$2,601,100		
Project Price per Acre			
Estimated Project Budget	Amount		
Total Price per Acre	\$1,560		
Total Price per Acre (excluding facilitation and transaction costs)	\$1,501		
Open Space Bond Request per Acre	\$424		
Open Space Bond Matching Ratio	1: 3.7		

Timeline

**Landowner Inquiry
to Five Valleys**

Summer 2022



**Project Due
Diligence**

Late 2022



**NRCS ACEP-ALE
Application**

January 2023



**NRCS Money
Obligated**

August 2023



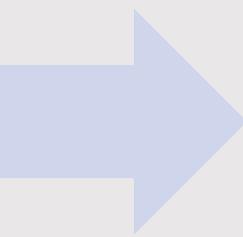
**Open Space Bond
Application**

February 2024



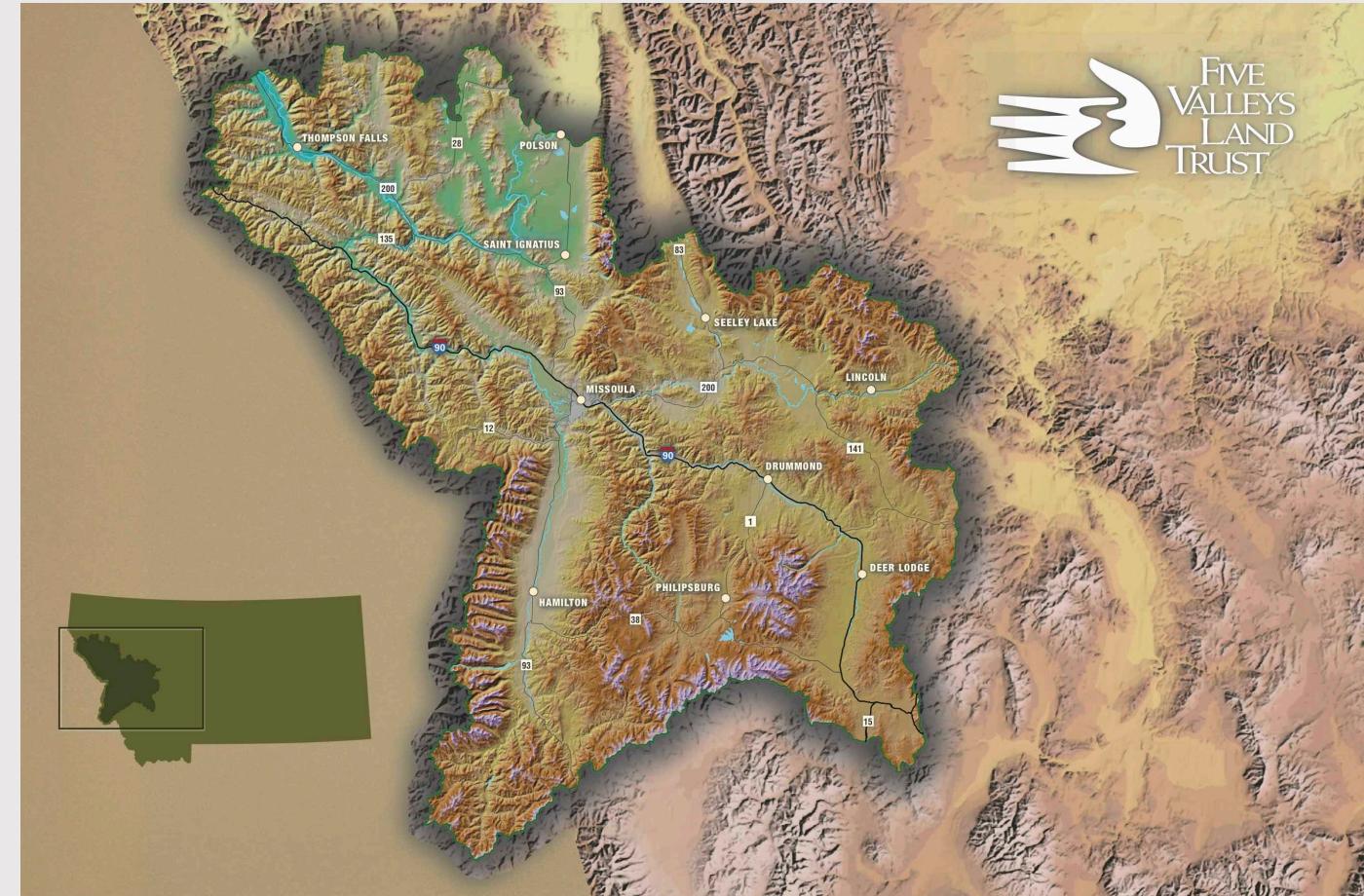
**Anticipated Project
Closing**

Late 2024



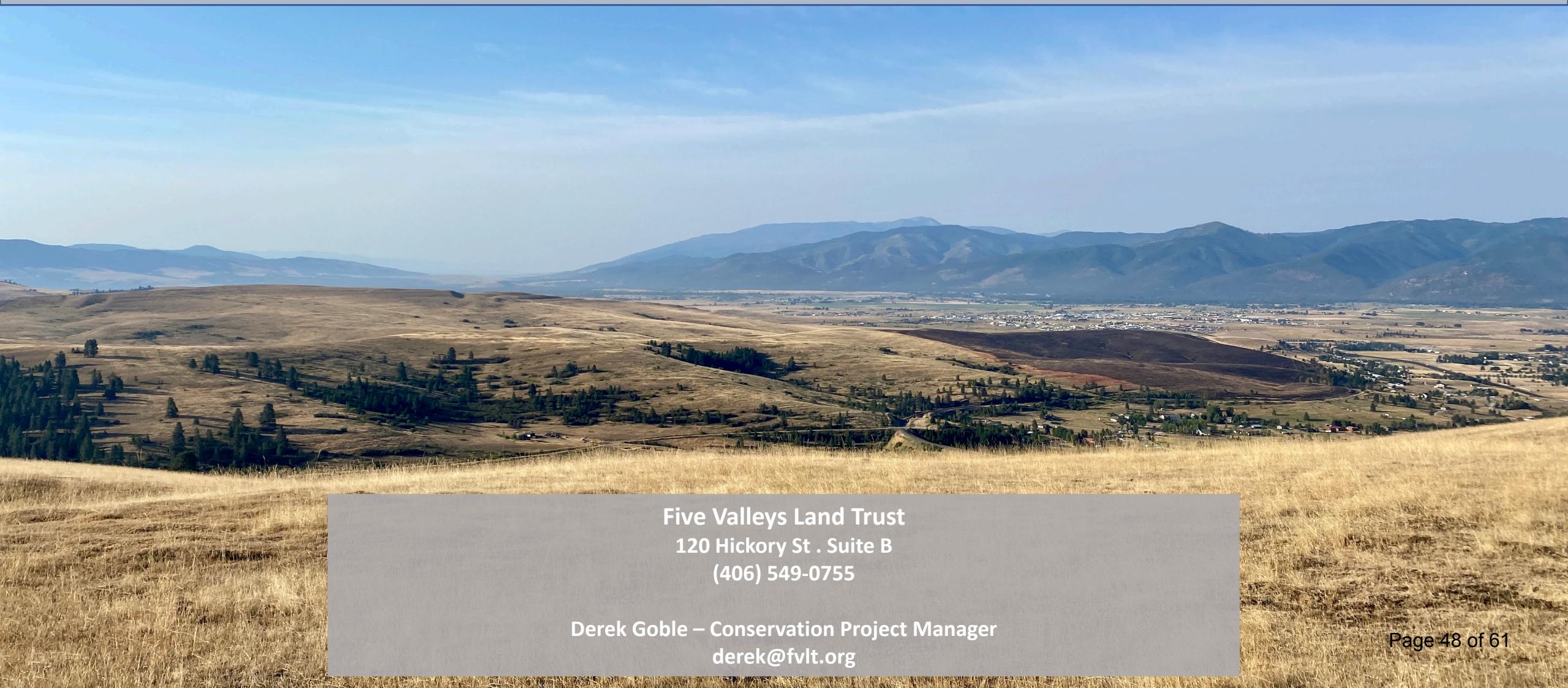
Ability to Steward and Manage Land

- Five Valleys Land Trust has been active since 1972
- Our qualified staff stewards over 200 conservation easements throughout our service area
- This easement will border an existing Five Valleys held conservation easement





Questions and Discussion



Five Valleys Land Trust
120 Hickory St . Suite B
(406) 549-0755

Derek Goble – Conservation Project Manager
derek@fvlt.org



FIVE VALLEYS
LAND TRUST

Indreland – LaValle Creek Conservation Easement

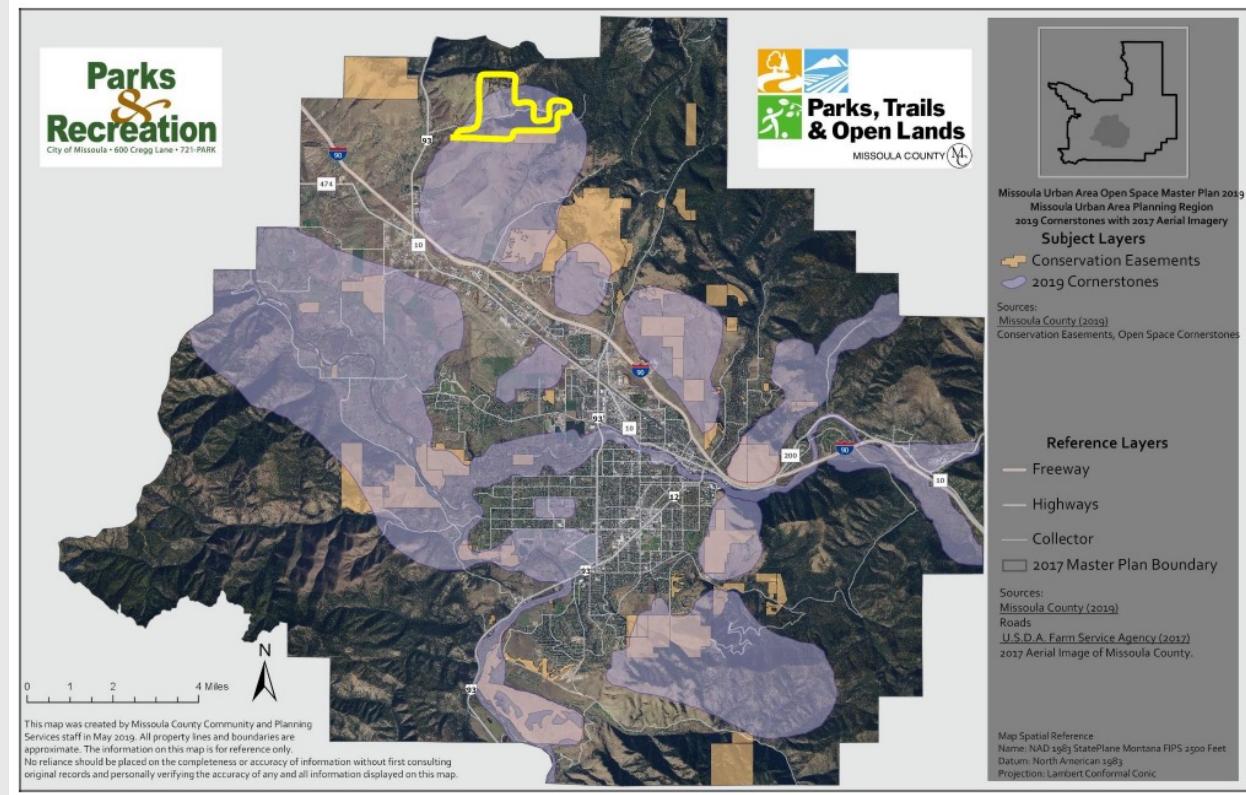
Climate, Conservation, and Parks Committee

August 7, 2024

Derek Goble – Five Valleys Land Trust

City of Missoula Application and Vetting Process

- Per MCA 76.6 and MMC 12.56, conservation easements are an eligible use of City-administered Open Space Bond Funds
- The Open Space Advisory Committee unanimously voted to recommend the use of Open Space Bond funds for this project
- The general consensus is that this is the type of project OSAC envisions when vetting open space projects including the following:
 - Large acreage
 - Protects local views and vistas
 - Critical wildlife habitat
 - Protecting local agriculture
 - Within the wildland-urban interface and adjacent to USFS lands
 - FWP Tier 1 Focal Area
 - Within an open space cornerstone in the Missoula Urban Planning Boundary
 - High amount of leverage funds (only 13% coming from City OSB funds)
- Enthusiastic consensus during joint meetings with County OLC



Missoula County Process

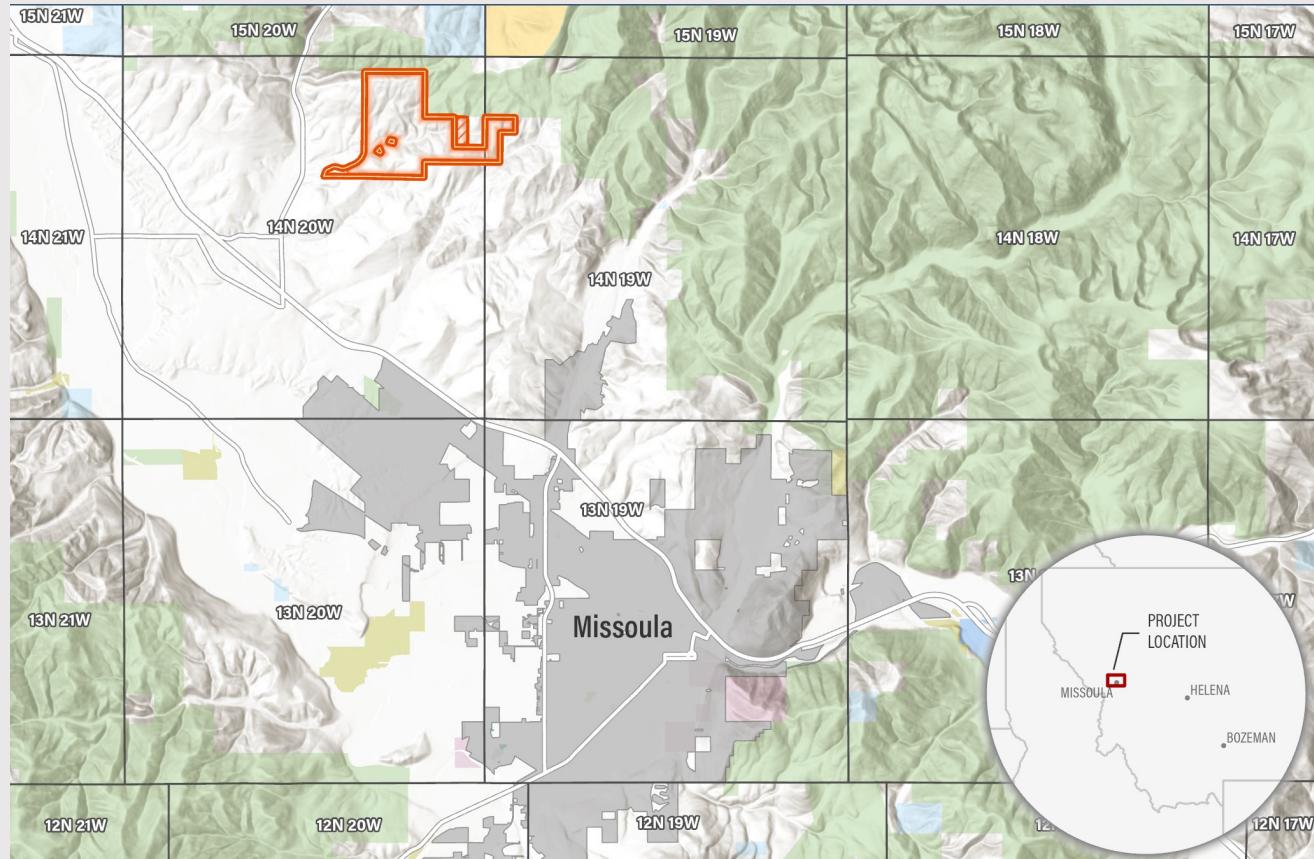
- Project lies near the Missoula Valley Planning Region boundary, jurisdictional boundary established in the City-County interlocal agreement related to the 2018 Open Space Bond
- Designated as a joint project, and has followed the process as laid out in the interlocal agreement
- Joint OLC-OSAC site visit on the property was held on April 2nd Joint OLC-OSAC meeting was held on April 11th; OLC voted unanimously to recommend requested amount of OSB funding for this project
- OLC during their evaluation ranked the project high in wildlife habitat, native plants, agricultural lands, and scenic/aesthetic values
- Per staff review, the proposed project is a qualified project and meets multiple purposes of the 2018 Open Space Bond





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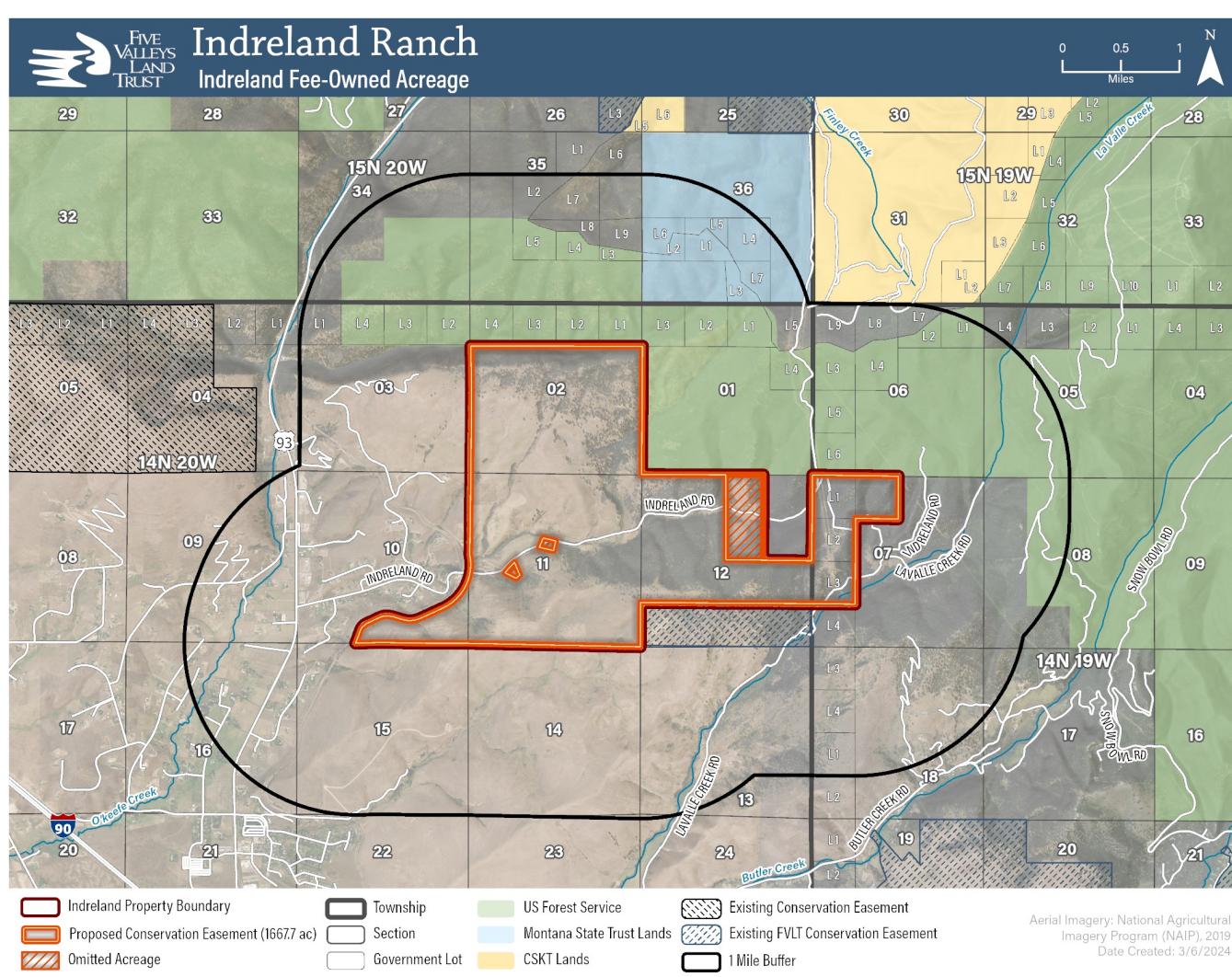
Property and Project Background





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Property and Nearby Land Use

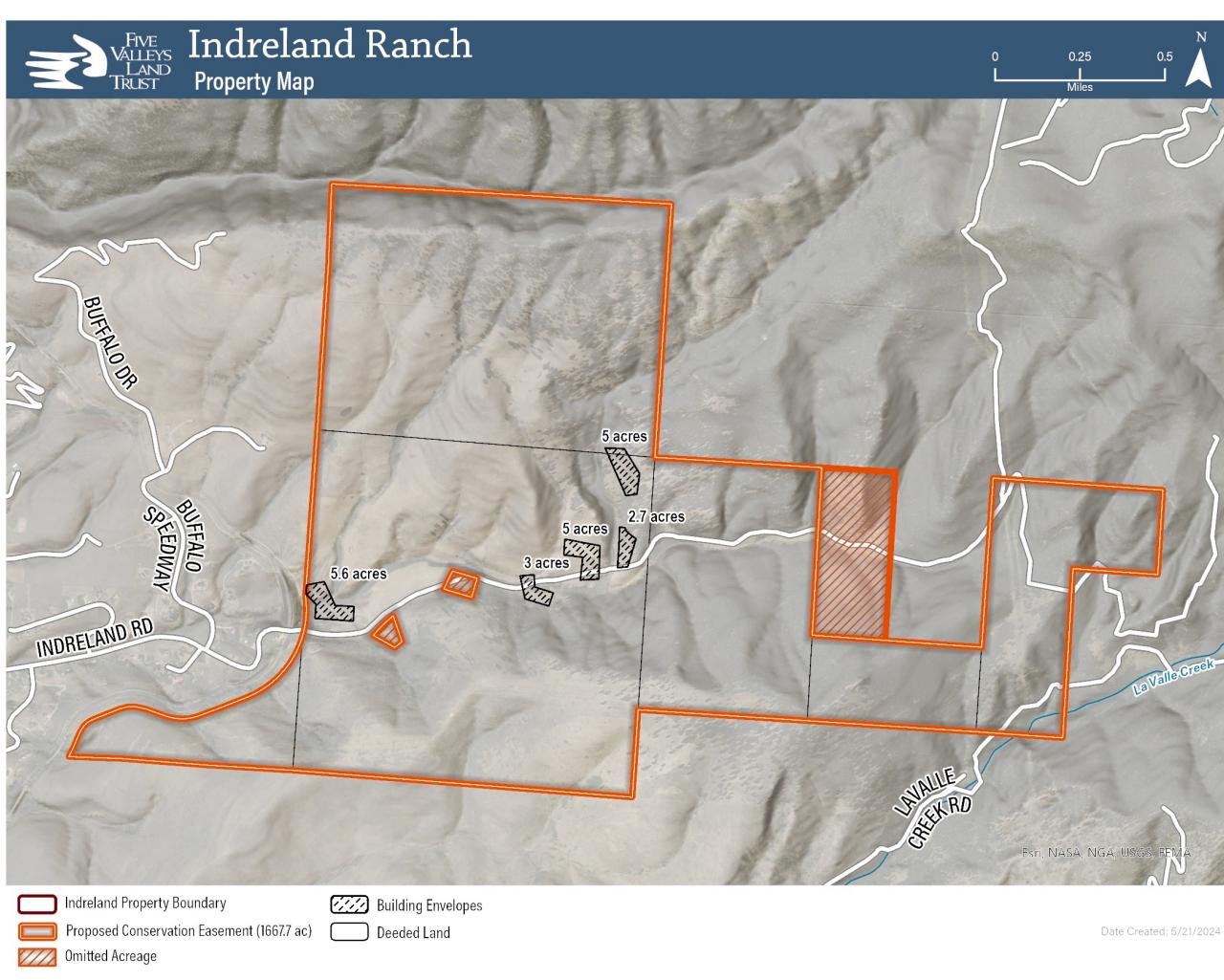


- Adjacent to Lolo National Forest
- Adjacent to existing Five Valleys held Conservation Easement property, supported by 2006 Open Space Bond Funds
- Within 1 – mile of CSKT Reservation land
- Zoned as Agricultural Working Land
- LaValle Creek runs through eastern edge of property



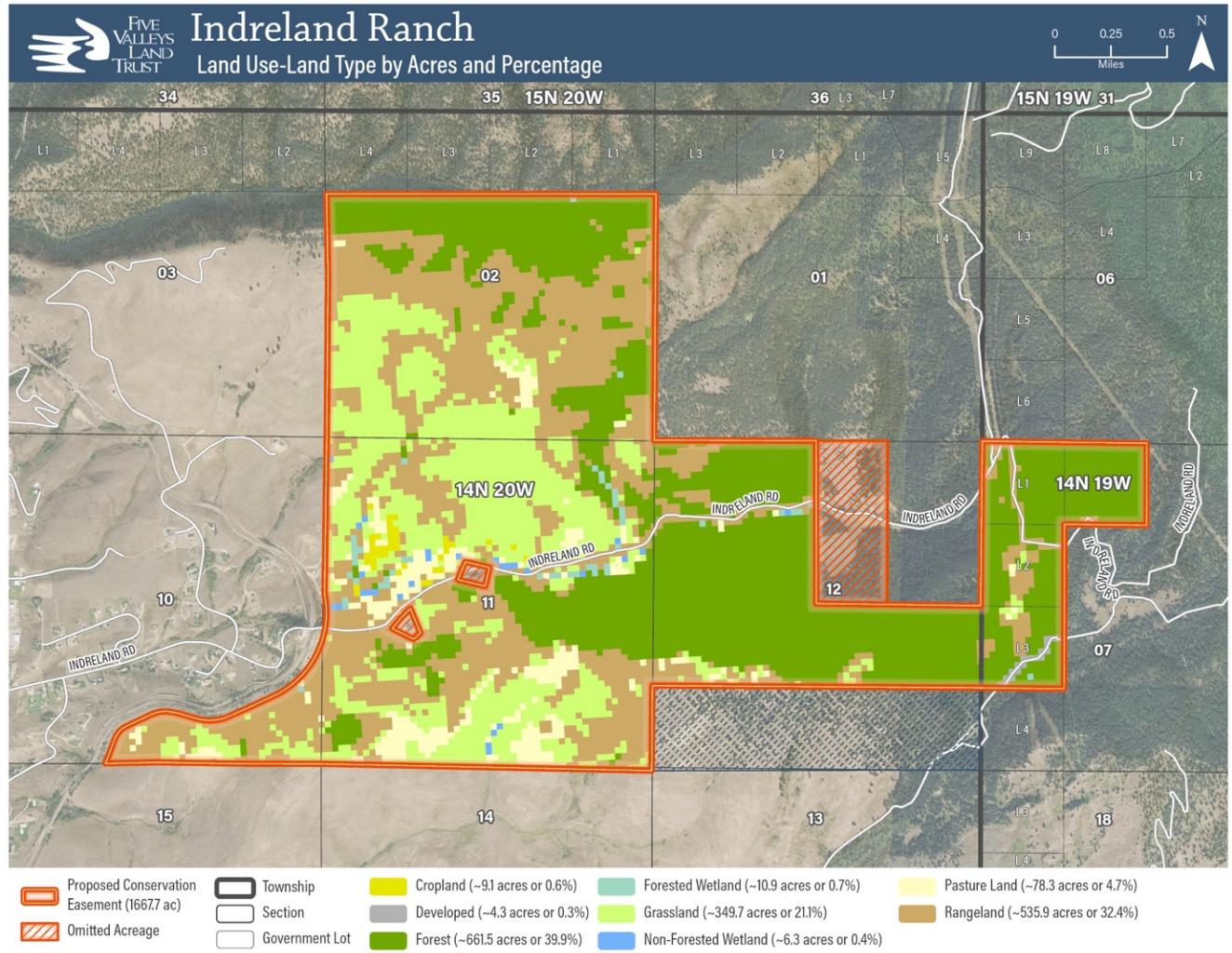
FIVE VALLEYS
LAND TRUST

Project Summary



- Conservation Easement on private property protecting agriculture, wildlife habitat, and scenic views
- Approximately 1660 Acres
- 6 Contiguous Parcels
- 4 Building Envelopes – 20 acres
- Agricultural working lands

Land Uses



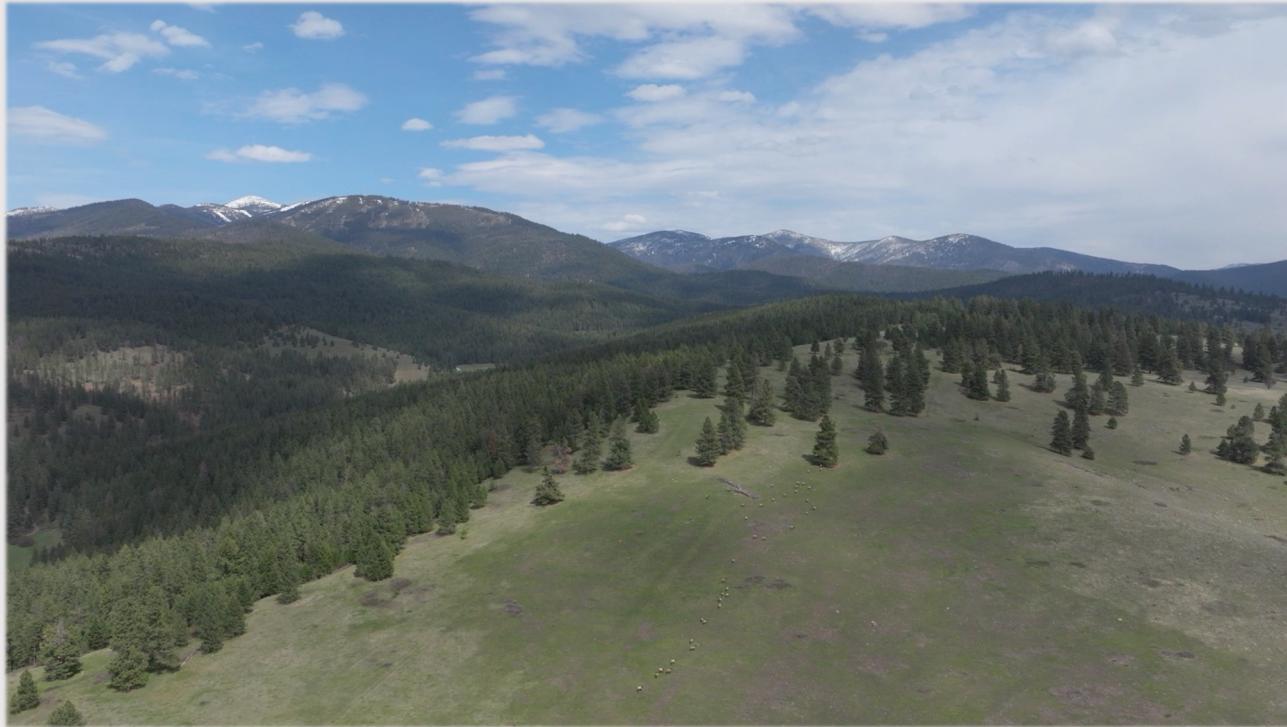
Wildlife and Plant Communities





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Climate and Resiliency

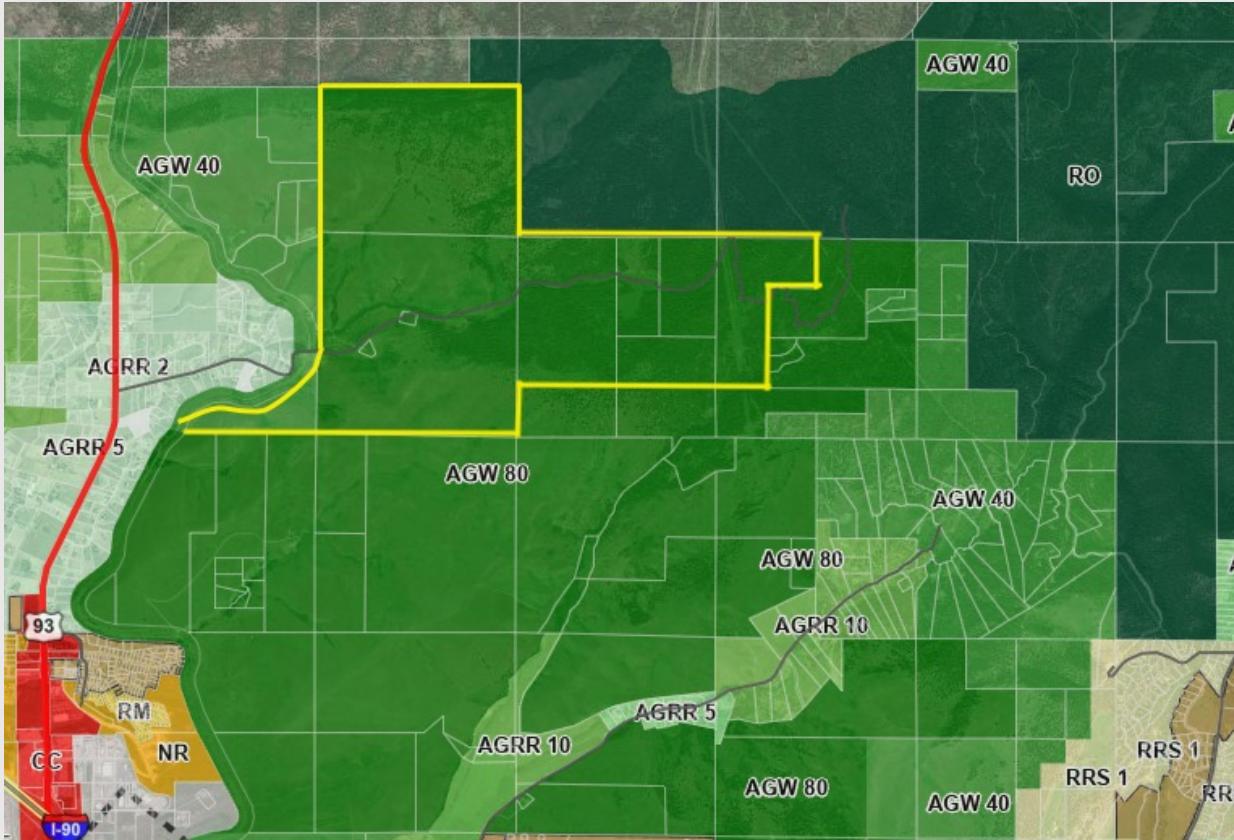


- Riparian area along LaValle Creek supporting water supply to the valley
- Climate Flow – Provides landscape scale connection for the gradual movement of plants and animals as the climate changes
- City of Missoula - Conservation and Climate Action Plan (2015)
 - “Conserve existing carbon pools in forests, soils, or rangeland vegetation through a host of activities... including land protection”



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Equity and Housing



- Guiding growth and development to existing infrastructure by preserving sensitive landscapes and working lands benefits all residents and protects critical ecosystem services
- Sufficient number of building envelopes to accommodate housing for family on property
- Zoned as Agriculture, Working – 80
 - “Rural areas with limited infrastructure and few services... [that] include areas that contain both pristine natural landscapes and waterways”
 - Development on working lands “is designed to protect important resources such as agricultural lands, sensitive natural landscapes and waters, fish and wildlife habitat movement corridors, and avoid hazards such as floodplains and wildfire”



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Open Space and Public Benefit

- Property consists of significant open-space land, as defined in Montana's Open-Space Land and Voluntary Conservation Easement Act, Section 76-6-104(3) M.C.A
- Scenic views of open-space and agricultural land for members of the public traveling along U.S. Highway 93 and Interstate 90
- Relatively natural habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants
- Consistent with Missoula County Growth Policy (2019)
 - Policy recognizes a healthy agricultural sector as essential to the well-being of the community due to benefits such as food security, open space, wildlife habitat economic activity, and quality of life
- Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan (2019)
 - Vision of conserving, protecting, and connecting Missoula's system of open space lands. The Open Space Plan establishes the goal of "conserv[ing] natural systems through purchase and stewardship of land, conservation easements, and other available tools
- Montana State Wildlife Action Plan – Tier I Terrestrial Focal Area
 - Recognized as having significant fish and wildlife communities that are in greatest need of conservation in the State





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Budget

Expenses			
Estimated Project Budget	Amount	Percentage of Total Cost	
Estimated Easement Value	\$ 2,502,000	96%	
Staff Time	\$ 38,000	1%	
Legal Fees	\$ 15,000	< 1%	
Estimated Transaction Costs	\$ 10,100	< 1%	
<i>Title Insurance</i>	\$ 3,700		
<i>Minerals Research</i>	\$ 350		
<i>Baseline and Contaminant Report</i>	\$ 4,500		
<i>Recording and Closing Fees</i>	\$ 1,050		
<i>Other</i>	\$ 500		
Appraisal	\$ 18,000	< 1%	
Stewardship Contribution	\$ 18,000	< 1%	
Total:	\$ 2,601,100		
Income			
Source	Amount	Percentage of Total Cost	Status
NRCS ACEP - ALE	\$ 1,251,000	48%	Committed
Five Valleys and Other Private Funding Sources	\$ 431,000	17%	Committed
Five Valleys Staff Time	\$ 38,000	1%	Committed
Landowner Stewardship Contribution	\$ 18,000	< 1%	Committed
Heart of the Rockies - Keep It Connected	\$ 175,000	7%	Pending
Missoula Open Space Bond	\$ 688,000	26%	Requesting
Missoula Open Space Bond (City Portion)	\$ 344,000	13.2%	Requesting
Missoula Open Space Bond (County Portion)	\$ 344,000	13.2%	Requesting
Total:	\$ 2,601,000		
Project Price per Acre			
Estimated Project Budget	Amount		
Total Price per Acre	\$ 1,560		
Total Price per Acre (excluding facilitation and transaction costs)	\$ 1,501		
Open Space Bond Request per Acre	\$ 413		
Open Space Bond Matching Ratio	1 : 4		



FIVE VALLEYS
LAND TRUST

Questions and Discussion



Five Valleys Land Trust
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Derek Goble – Conservation Project Manager
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