

## Flathead Land Trust: Saving the Land and Water We Care About

*Marilyn A. Wood, Executive Director  
Flathead Land Trust*



**C**lean water, abundant wildlife, and a rich agricultural heritage all help make the Flathead Valley a unique place to live and to visit. However, a rapidly growing population and accompanying residential and commercial development, though positive in many ways, brings a risk that we will lose much of what makes our valley so special.

The Flathead Land Trust partners with local landowners to permanently protect sensitive wetlands, wildlife habitat, and working farms and ranches through voluntary conservation easements. We collaborate with people from all walks of life – family farmers, ranchers, foresters, and outdoor enthusiasts. We help ensure that future generations will have opportunities similar to ours to live, work and play on this rich land.



Source: Flathead Land Trust, 2010

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The community benefits from clean water, protected wildlife habitat and enhanced quality of life. In addition to possible tax benefits, landowners gain the assurance that their family's land will remain intact.

The Flathead Land Trust is dedicated to protecting a network of critical habi-

tat including wetlands, riparian areas and adjacent farmland within the Flathead River corridor to the North Shore of Flathead Lake. When completed, the River to Lake Initiative will ensure that our community will retain our heritage of clean water, abundant wildlife, and working farms and ranches that makes the Flathead Valley unique. With our help, future generations of Montanans and our many visitors will have the same opportunities to work and to play that we enjoy today.

The decisions we make now about where we allow development and where we conserve land will have a lasting effect on the quality of life in the Flathead Valley for centuries to come. In cooperation with our partners and with the support of individuals and groups both public and private, the Flathead Land Trust can help lead the effort to identify and protect the interconnected lands that are critical to sustaining our ecosystems and to the preservation of clean water, abundant wildlife, and our agricultural heritage.

The Flathead Land Trust is a local organization, and our efforts benefit our local community. Our successes prove our ability to achieve our goals, but our role as a local land trust has never been more important nor the projects before us more compelling. We have the capacity to reach more landowners, take on more and larger projects, expand public and private partnerships within our community and, ultimately, protect our vital resources. We must act now to conserve for future generations our legacy of land and water. ([www.flatheadlandtrust.org/](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org/))