

*Connecting People Connecting Places*

2010



The soil is the great connector  
of lives, the source and  
destination of all.

– Wendell Berry

## President's Letter

by Board President, Jim Cusker



KEVIN FREDENBERG



NELSON KENTER

I grew up on a family ranch in Grass Valley between Missoula and Frenchtown. Ours was one of hundreds of small family farms and ranches that dominated the river bottoms of our part of western Montana. To this day I cannot think of a more wonderful place and a finer and more exciting time to grow up.

With rich and productive soils, agriculture naturally served as one of the engines driving the local economy. We all worked hard to tend the land, our cattle, and our crops. The work and the land blessed us with many rewards. With mountains and rivers so close at hand, and the daily reminders of the productivity of the soil and the web of life that relied upon it, our connection to the land was inescapable.

Now, of course, things have changed. The economy has diversified

and agriculture and other traditional natural resource-based industries play lesser roles in it. Our growing community has gradually converted to residential and commercial uses some of those productive lands that once stretched as far as the eye could see. And we continue to learn about the many costs and benefits of these changes.

One thing has not changed: the people who choose to live in western Montana still do so because of a strong feeling of connection to our rivers and mountains, the clean water and rich soils they offer, and the quality of life these all afford. Your continued support for the work of Five Valleys Land Trust proves that.

At Five Valleys Land Trust, 2010 was another successful year



of working with landowners who recognize the importance of keeping our connections to the land intact.

The results?

A banner year for land conservation, as we worked with landowners to protect more than 12,000 acres including river bottoms, family farms, abundant wildlife habitat, and publicly accessible recreational lands. These protected lands will always be here to enrich lives of and provide livelihoods for generations yet to come.

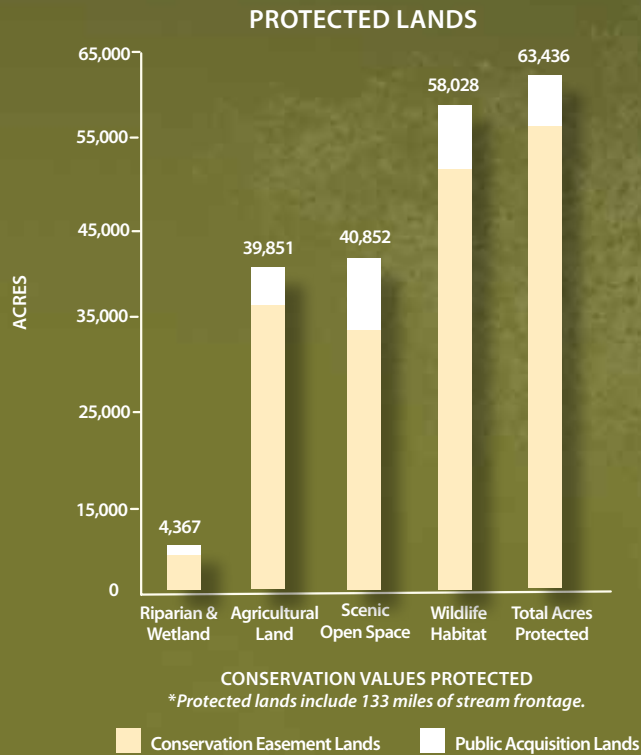
I still live on the family place where I grew up, always aware of the daily pleasures and responsibilities that come with it. I have also watched the changes that have come over the years to our valleys. Even though change is often difficult to accept, I know that we can learn to accommodate —and even

benefit from —it, as long as we strive to keep our basic connections with the land.

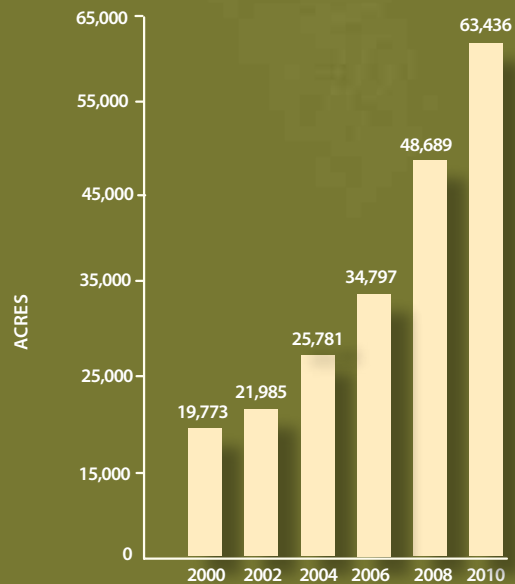
That is exactly the work of Five Valleys Land Trust, now and for many years to come. Thanks so much for maintaining your connection to our land and rivers and expressing it through your support. That's why this still is a wonderful place for a kid to grow up.

Jim Cusker  
President

# 2010 Conservation Projects



**PROTECTED LANDS BY YEAR**



## North Hills Open Space

*Missoula*



This year Missoulians joined together with landowner Allied Waste and Five Valleys to conserve an important part of what makes Missoula so beautiful – the North Hills. With the help of the City County Open Space Bond program, over 300 acres were protected in the heart of the North Hills. Its grasslands provide habitat for elk, Swainson’s Hawks, Peregrine Falcons and many other wild animals. Productive agricultural soils afford opportunities for growing food close to town. In the future a public trail will wind through the property. Year after year, we will be able to look up at the North Hills knowing that their special conservation values will be protected forever.

## Kim Williams Trail Extension to Milltown State Park

*Missoula*

For 30 years community members have dreamed of extending the Kim Williams Trail east. Over the years this dream has neared realization, with right-of-way being identified for all but one remaining trail segment. This year Five Valleys purchased a trail corridor that secures that final link. The property also provides access to the outstanding recreational and interpretive opportunities that will be developed at the future state park at Milltown. In the near future Five Valleys hopes to transfer the property and its trail corridor to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks as part of the planned Milltown State Park.





JIM STREETER



PAUL LABEL



CAROLINE BYRD

## Exceptional Elk Habitat

### *Missoula*

Five Valleys Land Trust was pleased to accept a conservation easement on 118 acres of prime forested elk habitat in the Grant Creek Valley north of Missoula. The landowner generously donated the easement to Five Valleys this winter, preserving forever what had been one of the last unprotected large parcels of open land in upper Grant Creek, and a key piece in maintaining the connectivity of summer and winter elk range for the North Hills herd at the edge of the Missoula Valley. The thick hillside forests of Douglas fir, larch and ponderosa pine also provide excellent cover for a host of other local wildlife, and the easement will ensure that future generations of Missoulians continue to enjoy views of a wild and open valley sweeping up to the edges of the Rattlesnake Wilderness.

## Key Big Blackfoot Wildlife Corridor

### *Blackfoot*

In a letter announcing Jim and Sylvia Johnson's intent to donate a conservation easement on their 108-acre property, Jim Johnson wrote, "Sylvia and I want to forever preserve this parcel of land for the local wildlife and birds to inhabit, and for wildlife to use as a safe corridor to cross the valley." In December, Jim and Sylvia signed a conservation easement that will protect a key wildlife travel corridor providing safe passage, cover, and forage for elk, deer, grizzly bear and other wildlife that move across the upper Blackfoot Valley east of Lincoln. The easement lands also provide important year-round habitat for white-tailed deer, fox, and other small mammals, and numerous bird species. A spring fed pond supports westslope cutthroat trout, to the delight of local school children who sample the fishing with their classmates from time to time while also getting some on-the-ground natural history education.

## Treasured Recreational Lands

### *Blackfoot*

Throughout the last century Montanans have travelled up the Blackfoot to hike through the forests above Sunset Hill Road. While hunting there for deer and elk they watched eagles flying above ponderosa pines and saw where grizzly bears had ripped up stumps in search of food. Sons and daughters hopped over small streams where cutthroat trout spawned. And the very lucky few spotted lynx or wolverine weaving through the forest at higher elevations. These opportunities to hike and hunt and to enjoy wildlife were protected this year through a wide ranging partnership with Five Valleys and the Blackfoot Challenge; The Nature Conservancy; Missoula County; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; the US Fish & Wildlife Service; the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust; and the Potter Family. All together nearly 17,000 acres of wildlife habitat (and working forest) were protected and public access was secured to assure future generations of Montanans will continue to enjoy them.

## South Fork of Davis Creek

### *Bitterroot Valley*

Five Valleys protected 1,440 acres in the Sapphire Mountains this year as part of our partnership with The Nature Conservancy to conserve over 310,000 acres in western Montana. This unique project was an exceptional opportunity to protect integral wildlife habitat as well as the entire watershed, from ridge-top to ridge-top, of a creek home to a dense population of westslope cutthroat trout. The conservation easement drafted for this property protected important habitat in the Bitterroot-Sapphire wildlife corridor, and in addition, it created long-term protection for the rehabilitation and restoration that is slated to occur throughout the property in the upcoming years.

KIP SIKORA



## Connecting Conserved Lands

### *Clark Fork River Valley*

JIM STREETER



Just north of the Upper Clark Fork River, on the south-facing slopes of the Garnets lies 3,000 acres of the Dutton Hereford Ranch now protected by a conservation easement. This conservation project is unique – not only does it protect the excellent wildlife habitat comprised of verdant meadows, expansive aspen groves, and healthy forests, but it also lies adjacent to 7,000 acres of lands already conserved with conservation easements, and sits in close proximity to another 2,500 acres of conserved lands. The proximity of this project to other protected lands multiplies its benefits across an entire wildlife corridor used by grizzly bear, lynx, elk and moose.

## Another Jewel in the Crown

### *Rock Creek*

When Fred Madsen decided that the time was right to place a conservation easement on family land near the mouth of the legendary Rock Creek, a cheer went up among many who have been working for generations to protect the unique natural values and wild beauty of western Montana's crown jewel trout stream. For many years, the Madsens had made clear their intent for the future of their precious 160 acres of prime Rock Creek, so it was no surprise when the family decided that the time had come. Even so, the protection of this richly diverse and beautiful parcel straddling Rock Creek less

than a mile above its confluence with the Clark Fork River was something worth celebrating. This bargain sale easement was made possible with funding from the Missoula County Open Space Bond Program, the State of Montana's Upper Clark Fork River Basin Remediation and Restoration Program, and Five Valleys' Rock Creek Special Protection Fund. All who love Rock Creek will enjoy the benefits of this cooperative effort for generations to come.

## Peterson Angus Ranch

### *Flint Creek Valley*

The 3,774-acre Peterson Angus Ranch in the foothills of the John Long Mountains offers some of the healthiest native short grass prairie in the Upper Clark Fork watershed while simultaneously hosting a healthy and stately Angus herd. In the late summer of 2010, Five Valleys placed a conservation easement on the entire ranch, with help from a generous contribution from the landowners and funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Montana Natural Resource Damage Claim Program. In addition to protecting this property's fertile soils and grasslands for long-term agricultural use, this conservation easement also secures the future of the headwaters of Antelope Creek, a native cutthroat tributary to the Clark Fork River, and will allow for seasonal public access to the summit of Beacon Hill where visitors will be able to look out over the surrounding mountain ranges.





PAUL LABEL

# Director's Update



*Five Valleys Land Trust has protected a total of 63,436 acres, including 133 miles of stream frontage.*

*I want you to know that ownership of this special place has been a great privilege for me, and I hope I left the soil, water and vegetation better than I found it.*

Rock Creek Landowner

Just a year ago we were celebrating the successful completion of a major fundraising campaign. Five Valleys asked you to invest in refining and expanding our programs to better deliver conservation for western Montana communities. Your generous investment is paying off. 2010 marks another record year for Five Valleys' conservation of western Montana's clean water, wildlife habitat, family farms and ranches, and recreational treasures.

**According to Plan-** You'll remember that a year ago we were working with community members, landowners, and partners to identify our very best natural resources. The cleanest tributaries, richest soils, and secret places you take your family or friends for a quiet walk. We completed this conservation plan and now use it to guide our work, prioritize our resources, develop strategic partnerships, and establish better communication with key parts of our service area.

**Every Acre Counts-** Our plan identifies approximately 250,000 acres of highest priority conservation lands. If we focus, this is a goal we can accomplish in this generation! Having the resource values of these lands catalogued allows us to better serve conservation landowners, matching their goals and management practices to appropriate and effective conservation options. The plan also allows us to assure our members and partners that record-breaking years protect more of the very best resource values on every acre and every inch of stream.

**Connecting People to Places-** Five Valleys' stewardship commitment is forever. We are sensitive to the importance of maintaining the culture of stewardship in our community. It is that culture that makes this place what it is today and keeping it that way tomorrow means nurturing this commitment in the next generation. Protecting and restoring those places where our families play together, and providing enriching opportunities to explore new places is an important part of this.

This year we protected land on the edges of Missoula, enhancing our city's backdrop immediately and expanding our recreation opportunities in the years ahead. But recognizing that these recreation opportunities aren't just urban values, we completed easements in the Flint Creek, Blackfoot, and Clark Fork valleys that offer public access for all types, from song bird watchers to big game hunters.

**More strategic moving forward-** In the past four years we have nearly doubled the acres protected by this 39-year old organization. We know that you count on us to deliver tangible results that reflect your passion for this place, passion that is as intangible as it is overwhelming. As we approach our 40th anniversary, our board and staff are more committed than ever to delivering the greatest conservation successes—honoring the time, talent, and treasures that you generously entrust to us.

## SUNDANCE RANCH RESTORATION



6700 plants and 1900 cuttings were planted on the Sundance Ranch near Ovando in 2007 and 2008. The overall survival rate is 77.25%. Plants survived at a much higher rate than cuttings, with 85.47% survival versus 48.26%. Five Valleys will continue to nurture these plantings to ensure the continued enhancement of Dry, Salmon and Rock Creeks.

## ASHBY CREEK RESTORATION



In September, faithful volunteers spent an evening watering and fixing the browse protectors of riparian shrubs that were planted to help stabilize the banks of Ashby Creek, which was restored to its original floodplain after years of absence. It is gratifying to see this field transformed back into a thriving riparian zone.

# HANDS ON THE LAND



GRANT KIER

## Mount Jumbo Wire Pull – A High School Senior Project

Last fall, due to the combined efforts of Hellgate High School senior Liza Crockett, the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department, Five Valleys Land Trust, and many volunteers, the wildlife on Mount Jumbo now have a quarter mile less barbed wire to tangle with.

One day while hiking, Liza found deer bones entangled within some downed barbed wire and was inspired to focus her senior project on removing the hazardous wire from Mount Jumbo. She approached Five Valleys with her proposal and Stewardship Manager Ryan Chapin agreed to assist her with the project.

Liza became interested in conservation early on, when her parents exposed her to camping, hunting, and fishing. They explained the importance and benefits of land conservation every step of the way. As a result, Liza is blessed with a love for the outdoors and a conservation ethic that helped form the basis of her senior project idea.

Here's how Liza sums up the intention and motivation of her project:

“Mount Jumbo is very important to me and to



the community as a whole. I've grown up on both sides of the mountain and love it very much. My goal is to remove this dangerous wire for the benefits of elk, deer and other wildlife.”

Liza coordinated the schedules and project involvement of the City of Missoula, private property owners, and Five Valleys. Once all of the logistics were worked out, Liza organized a group of volunteers that included friends, family, and some members of the group GUTS (Girls Using Their Strengths). These hardy folks spent a day in December fighting zero degree temperatures to roll up and haul frozen wire off the mountain. Five Valleys, the City of Missoula, and the wildlife of Mt. Jumbo thank Liza and her volunteers for their hard work.

## Featured Partnership- TU Kids' Camp on Restored East Fork of Rock Creek Fishery



PAUL LABEL



ALINA NIKLISON



ALINA NIKLISON

Sometimes the most satisfying partnerships evolve over time. This one started in 2006, when Jeff and Laurie Cadieux approached Five Valleys Land Trust for assistance restoring the stretch of the East Fork of Rock Creek that runs through their ranch, which had been intensively grazed in the past. Five Valleys contacted frequent allies Trout Unlimited (TU) and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) for technical and funding assistance. The team designed a restoration plan to install wildlife-friendly fencing and plant riparian shrubs along 2.5 miles of the East Fork of Rock Creek to exclude cattle from the stream corridor and allow woody vegetation to re-establish. In 2007, the project received \$15,000 from the Montana FWP Future Fisheries Program, with the balance of the \$27,000 price tag furnished by the Cadieux family, Five Valleys and Trout Unlimited. Fencing was completed in September of 2009 and aspen shrubs were planted in October of 2010.

During the implementation phase of the project, partners have kept in close contact. Trout Unlimited

restoration coordinator Rob Roberts asked former FVLT Stewardship Manager Alina Niklison to be an instructor for TU's weeklong kids' camp at Georgetown Lake.

*The kids have a lot of fun here. Last year, one of the campers caught an eager cutthroat by just dangling his fly in the water as he walked along.*

– Penny Ritchie, Director, Trout Unlimited Kids' Camp

Under Alina, Rob and their fellow instructors' tutelage, students from around the state learned about flyfishing, biology & entymology, stream restoration and conservation through hands-on experiences and real-life examples.

It was only natural that the campers' first real flyfishing expedition be to the newly restored portion

of the East Fork of Rock Creek. For two out of the last three years, campers have tested their newly-minted skills on the banks of the East Fork. Camp Director Penny Ritchie enthused, "The kids have a lot of fun here. Last year, one of the campers caught an eager cutthroat by just dangling his fly in the water as he walked along. With the riparian fencing that Jeff's been doing, along with his restoration plantings, the good fishing will just get better!"

The partnerships forged over the last five years will ensure that the fishing does get better. Five Valleys has a long-term cooperative agreement with the Cadieux family to ensure that the riparian restoration continues to progress. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Trout Unlimited are integral to the ongoing success of the project. The Kids' Camp is scheduled to visit the property in July, and the East Fork stands at the ready to provide the kind of memories that build lifelong anglers and conservationists. This restoration project serves as a model for other potential projects in the area in the years to come.



## Five Valleys Land Trust

Five Valleys Land Trust is a community-based non-profit conservation organization with a mission “To preserve and protect western Montana’s natural legacy—our river corridors, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, and scenic open spaces.” We work with landowners and other partners to find collaborative solutions to conservation challenges and opportunities.

The tools of the trade for Five Valleys are conservation easements, facilitation of public land acquisitions, and on-the-ground stewardship assistance that improves the health and vitality of the land. Since becoming a land trust in 1989, we have accepted easements conserving more than 51,438 acres and have played a central role in the protection of more than 11,998 additional acres of wildlife habitat and prized recreational lands. In total, including transactions related to parcels we hold or have held title to, Five Valleys Land Trust has helped conserve over 63,436 acres of our precious Western Montana landscape.

With eight full-time and two part-time employees, as well as a dedicated cadre of volunteers lending their valuable time and expertise, we serve a ten county region from our office in downtown Missoula. Our areas of special focus include the Missoula Valley, the Blackfoot Valley, Rock Creek and Flint Creek, the Upper and Lower Clark Fork watershed, the Mission and Jocko Valleys and the northern Bitterroot Valley.

### Our Vision

Five Valleys’ vision for western Montana’s future is to continue to see communities with unobstructed views of the natural skyline; open hillsides supporting native grasslands and forests that provide habitat; open and productive family farms and ranches; intact river and wildlife corridors; accessible trail networks connecting green spaces to urban areas; conservation-sensitive development; and a clear demarcation between one community and the next. We envision an interconnecting mosaic of open lands and river systems surrounding urban and developed areas, designed to nurture and sustain the historic interdependency between humans and the landscape that has long characterized the Rocky Mountain West.

### Our Partners—Private Landowners

Private landowners who share in our vision are the lifeblood of Five Valleys. Their love of the land and their commitment to wise stewardship fuels our efforts. Their patience and dedication enables us to follow each project through to completion. We help landowners achieve their dreams for the future of their land. Five Valleys’ goal with every landowner is to build a durable and interactive relationship, based on trust. We believe such relationships are essential to achieving long-lasting and meaningful conservation.



# 2010 Financial Report

As a 501(c)(3) organization, Five Valleys Land Trust depends on private contributions to finance our land protection work. We accept donations at any time for our general operations or for any of our restricted funds. Many of our projects span two or more fiscal years, which can create the appearance of a significant operational surplus or deficit when reporting on a single fiscal year.

Our tax identification number is 23-7182055.

**In 2010, FVLT raised \$673,591 to support our operating expenses of \$709,694.**

As of 12/31/10, FVLT had assets of \$4,422,522. These assets include:

Cash/Reserve Fund	\$554,704
Heart of the Rockies Cash/Reserve Fund	\$322,265
Special Protection Fund	\$1,957,421
Opportunity Fund	\$470,575
Stewardship/Legal Defense Fund	\$869,994
Operating Endowment Fund	\$146,994*
Other Assets (Equipment & Plant)	\$100,569
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,422,522</b>

Special Protection Funds can be allocated towards any FVLT "special protection" project including bargain sale conservation easements, donated easements, and acquisitions. The purpose of the fund is to accomplish high-priority conservation projects that couldn't be done without funding assistance in some form.

Opportunity Funds can be used to respond to conservation opportunities through unique expenditures that fall outside of Five Valleys Land Trust's ongoing operations.

The Stewardship/Legal Defense Fund is available only if it becomes necessary to take formal action to enforce an easement. Interest from the fund may be used to cover monitoring and stewardship expenses.

\*\$17,145 of these funds are held for us by the Montana Community Foundation. MTCF owns and manages an additional endowment of \$170,034 for the benefit of FVLT.

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Patrick Sheehy, *Heart of the Rockies Major Gifts Coordinator (through Oct. 2010)*

Greg Tollefson, *Conservation Director*

Michael Whitfield, *Heart of the Rockies Coordinator*

# 2010 Members and Contributors

Names listed in bold identify Stewardship Society members

## \$20,000 and above

**Dave and Sandy Burner**  
**Don and Janemarie King**

## \$10,000 to \$19,999

Anonymous  
**Paul and Jeanne Moseley**  
**Sue and Randy Peterson**  
**Pam and Sandy Volkmann**

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**Larry and Laura Brehm**  
Jane Byard  
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**Eric Johnston and Julia Riber**  
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**Andy and Melanie Puckett**  
**Russ Read and Judy Frey**  
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**Brian and Karen Sippy**  
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**Betty duPont**  
Barry Dutton and Susan Molaris

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**William and Lee Ballard**  
Jon and Becky Barlow  
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## \$250 to \$499

Anonymous (3)  
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## Doug Ammons

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Orrin Johnson  
Gwen Jones  
Kelly Karmel  
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