



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

# VIEWPOINTS

 FALL 2014

## ONE PERSON CAN AND DID MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Darrell with the painting "Darrell's Gift" at the North Shore Celebration in August

Tabby Ivy, a local artist, was so moved by the beautiful property being conserved, she painted a photo of an aerial view of the land and donated the painting to Flathead Land Trust. The Trust in turn gave the art to Darrell in gratitude for making a difference with his property and the historic barn.

"My husband had property on Flathead Lake in Hockaday Bay when we married in 1990," said Tabby. "We

spent our honeymoon in a tent on the property and spent weekends in a tent during the summers before we started construction of our house there. Those summers were so special, giving me such an appreciation for the treasure that is Flathead Lake and the open spaces and magnificent shoreline along the north shore. Over the years development started around the lake, and at times it looked like the north shore would be changing as developers discussed potential projects. The open spaces for farming and the wetland's home to wildlife at times can be viewed as a given to those of us who drive across the valley enjoying the views down the lake or the glow of a sunset. But, I know all it takes is one person to decide to sell or for a land owner to opt for development over conservation. Darrell did his part to make sure his land will not be developed and hopefully this action will inspire and motivate others to do the same. There is a place for development, I know that in time some areas will change but the north shore, in my mind, is in a different category and should be protected. This project, conserving the north shore of Flathead Lake, makes me appreciate how very special the Flathead Valley is and how we are all stewards of this land. We all, in our own

***"Protecting migrating birds is important to me. It always delights me to see such a variety of birds moving through in the spring and hear them returning south in the fall. It has been this way for time immemorial. We need to make sure their habitat remains intact."***

*-Jean Triol, North Shore Celebration attendee*

way, can make our views known, and while we all are not in a position to do an easement on a large parcel of land, we can voice our gratitude for people like Darrell who, when faced with a choice, chose conservation to preserve his land rather than sell it to developers. The painting, which I called, 'Darrell's Gift' was my way of honoring that decision."

*Continued on page 7*

**Darrell Worm made two decisions which have had cascading positive effects and will continue to make a difference for generations to come.**

**Decision #1:** Darrell wanted to sell his 189-acre property on the north shore of Flathead Lake and had it on the market for a few years, but could not bring himself to sell to developers. Darrell decided to work with Flathead Land Trust to facilitate a conservation outcome for his property that resulted in adding it to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Wildlife Management Area. This decision was vital to tens of thousands of migratory birds that use the north shore of Flathead Lake as a refueling stop on their long journey each year and to the people of the Flathead and beyond.

**Decision #2:** Darrell only had one concern moving forward with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks becoming the new owner of his north shore property – what would happen to its historic barn? To ensure the barn would be preserved into the future, Darrell generously decided to use some of the proceeds of the bargain sale of the property to restore the barn.

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## OUR MISSION

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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE By Alison Young, Board President

What a ride it has been! My year of being the Interim Executive Director is now over with the hiring of Paul Travis as a bona fide executive director. On December 31st, my two years as Board President and my nine years of service on the board will come to an end. The "ride" of being associated with the increasingly visible and successful Flathead Land Trust has been an extremely rewarding experience.

Many thanks are in order. The staff gave me invaluable guidance as I endeavored to lead the organization. Ryan Hunter and Laura Katzman are now seasoned and skilled land protection specialists and Dar Wassink recently added her competence as office manager. Board members come and go, but over the past couple of years the board solidified into a very committed group donating hours well beyond the usual expectations for board members. The Land Trust Alliance, the Montana Association of Land Trusts and the Heart of the Rockies gave considerable support in sorting out the needs and future of the land trust. Our loyal members stood by and in many instances increased their financial donation.

I am very pleased to leave the Flathead Land Trust in exceptionally good hands! Paul Travis has extensive experience in exactly the skills the land trust needs to move forward. The great staff continues to be dedicated and several new board members will be joining in January 2015. Open land in the Flathead Valley continues to be threatened as development surges yet again. I shall be on the sidelines of conservation involvement but will nevertheless be cheering the Flathead Land Trust forward as it delves into "saving" the Valley over the next years.

## LOOKING FORWARD By Paul Travis, Executive Director

The inevitable changes of fall are in the air as I take my 2½ year old out for a little father-son bonding time on the river. It's a perfect autumn day and the cold, crystal clear waters of the Middle Fork are almost outmatched by the unlimited visibility of the blue sky overhead. Today we are scouting for new fishing hideaways, although neither of us thought to bring a rod (and a 2-year-old would much rather throw colorful rocks into the current anyway). Yet, our ultimate purpose for the day is to just share time together in our incredible landscape. Not to pine for the fleeting days of summer, but to look forward towards the freshness of a new season in northwest Montana.



As such, we are entering a new season in the life of the Flathead Land Trust. In July, I came on board as the new executive director and feel so fortunate to join an organization that I have admired for years. With a busy three months under my belt, I already see ripe opportunities for what your local land trust can do to further preserve our special places in the Flathead. These opportunities do not present themselves by accident though. Since 1985, Flathead Land Trust has been quietly working to preserve things that many of us inherently take for granted – our open spaces, rivers, lakes, farms and forests. We are fortunate to be standing on the shoulders of so many whose vision and hard work have made it possible to conserve over 13,000 acres forever - from the North Fork to the north shore of Flathead Lake. We now have the opportunity to take the next step forward, and I am very excited to be part of those efforts with you and our many other partners.

Ultimately, conserving our legacy of land and water is doing our part as stewards for the benefit of our kids, grandkids, and great grandkids. Our fall newsletter is dedicated to sharing some personal stories of why landowners and families have chosen to preserve their land in perpetuity. I invite you to listen, and then think about your own story. Then, I encourage you to get involved by joining us at our upcoming Conservation Plan public meeting in October, our membership meeting in December, and in further supporting our efforts. Working together, we will make a collective impact for conservation in the Flathead that will send positive ripples well into the future.

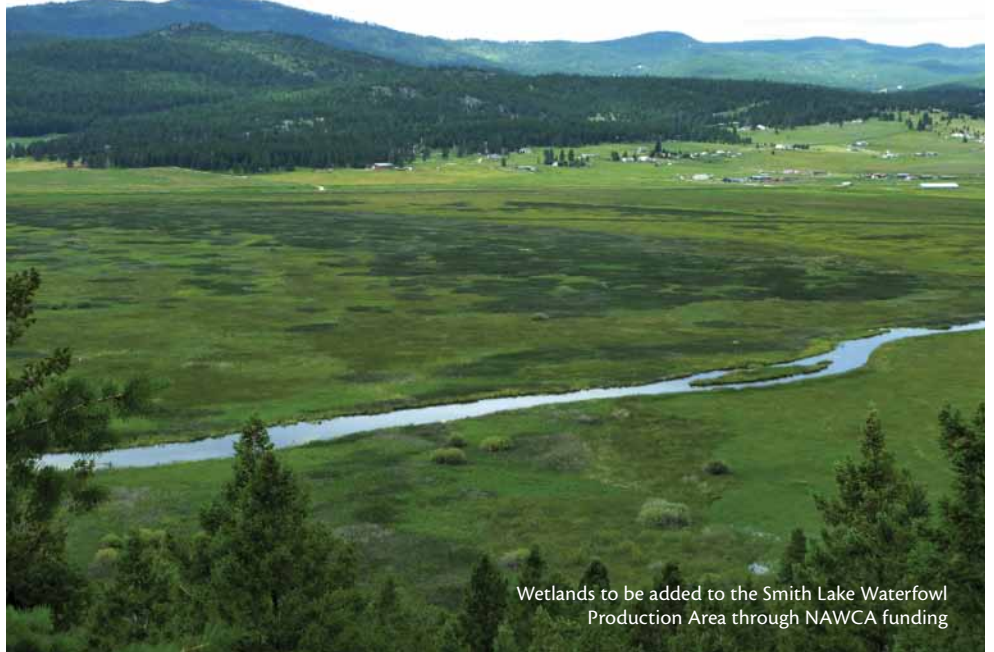


# KEY WETLANDS TO BE PROTECTED

## THROUGH NORTH AMERICAN WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT GRANT

Flathead Land Trust and its partners received approval by the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) Council in July to fund the \$1 million grant proposal submitted in December to conserve important wetland habitat. Five projects were proposed to conserve 525 acres of wetlands and associated uplands and restore 125 acres of wetland habitat used by migratory birds in the Flathead and Mission valleys. These projects include adding wetlands to the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area, increasing protection of the north shore of Flathead Lake by adding to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Wildlife Management Area, helping the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes protect wetlands along the Mission Mountain Front, protecting wetlands just east of the National Bison Range, and restoring a wetland/spring creek complex east of Columbia Falls.

“Many partners and landowners helped us obtain NAWCA approval to fund the \$1 million grant,” said Laura Katzman of Flathead Land Trust. “It takes a team to put together the complex grant application and meet the numerous grant requirements.” The Flathead Lakers, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, American Bird Conservancy, Montana Land Reliance, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all partnered to complete the grant application. The grant required significant matching funding and land conservation



Wetlands to be added to the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area through NAWCA funding

contributions as well largely provided by conservation easements donated by the Roth and Johnston families. Two Bear Air and Mike Goguen funded a helicopter tour of the Flathead and Mission valleys for a visiting NAWCA Council member in May, which was key in giving a bird's eye view of the importance of the proposed projects to migratory birds.

Upon final approval by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and an approved Federal budget for 2015, the partners will implement these important migratory bird habitat conservation projects.



## WE NEED YOUR INPUT TO GUIDE OUR CONSERVATION EFFORTS INTO THE FUTURE

The Flathead Land Trust is at a critical point in deciding our strategic conservation goals for the future and we need your input. We are currently updating our Conservation Plan which will guide our conservation efforts into the future. We have reached out to our partners to get their input, but we still need to hear from you. We encourage our members, supporters and anyone that cares about the future direction of conservation in the Flathead to attend our public meeting on October 15th.

Three main focus areas are being explored for the new plan. These include: 1) community projects (e.g. trails and public recreation projects) 2) habitat conservation projects (e.g. migratory bird habitat) 3) agricultural conservation projects (e.g. prime soils). We hope you can join us to give your feedback at the upcoming Conservation Plan meeting to set the direction of Flathead Land Trust for future conservation success.

**PUBLIC MEETING - WEDNESDAY, OCT. 15, AT 7 PM AT THE CENTRAL SCHOOL MUSEUM- 124 2ND AVE. E, KALISPELL  
PLEASE RSVP TO RYAN AT RHUNTER@BIGSKY.NET OR 752-8293.**

# IT WAS THE BEST DECISION WE'VE EVER MADE



**In 2008, the Helen C. Foreman Trust completed a conservation easement for their family's 225 acres near the North Fork Flathead River on Garnet Lake about three miles south of the Canadian border. Now years after the easement has been put in place with Flathead Land Trust, Jason Cohn, one of the thirteen heirs of the Trust says, "It was the best decision our family ever made."**

"The North Fork, and our small piece of it, is a truly unique and special place," says Jason. "The remote, wild beauty of it is important to protect both for its value as wildlife habitat and for its place in our family history. Five generations of my family have enjoyed the

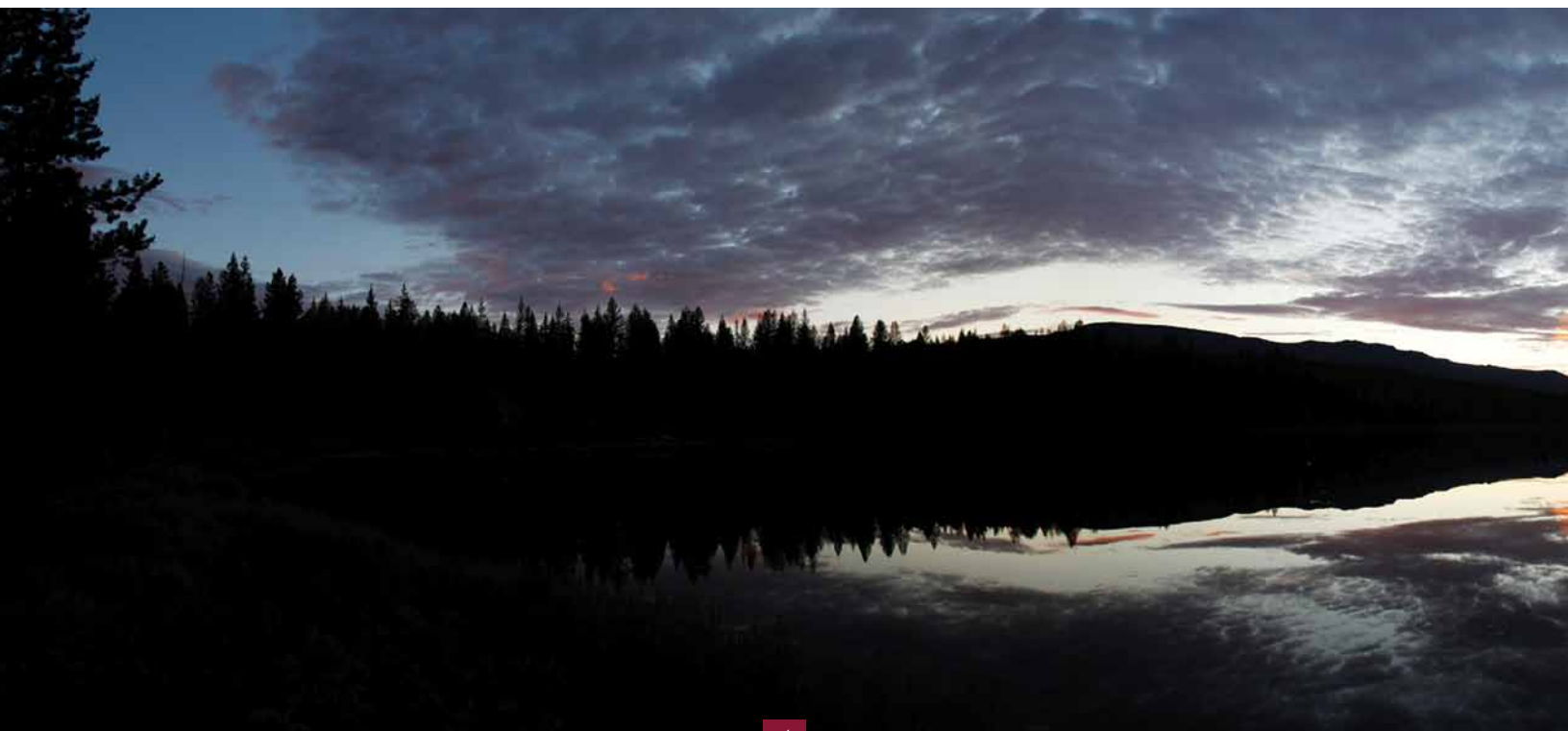
property so it is the geographic center of the family in many ways, even for those who can't visit as often as they would like." Jason's family has owned land in the area since the 1940s and the Foreman name is well known and respected in the North Fork. In fact, Jason's grandmother Helen had an uncle named L.O. Vaught after whom Glacier's Mt. Vaught is named.

"I have been visiting the North Fork since I was just a few years old, and in many ways it's more home than the town in Ohio I grew up in. My only memory of my grandfather is playing horseshoes in front of the main cabin in Montana. All my best memories of my grandmother are from the ranch fishing, walking in the woods, cooking on the wood stove and spending rainy days playing cards in front of the big fireplace. I learned to drive on an old 1958 Willies Jeep that is still there, although not running anymore! As a kid, whenever I was stressed or worried, my mom would tell me to close my eyes and think of Montana to calm me down...I still do that to this day! I shared that with my wife who has grown to love the ranch as much as I do and she does the same thing! I've learned so many things about how to improvise and be more self-sufficient by spending time in the

woods, and I can't imagine how different my life would be without having been privileged to spend time in such a beautiful place."

Because the natural values of the land had been appreciated by the Foreman family for generations, when Jason's mother and uncle learned about conservation easements, they felt a responsibility to preserve the family's remote North Fork property as their parents would have wanted. In fact, Jason's grandfather was a founder of the North Fork Compact, one of the first land use planning agreements in Montana, formalized in 1971. The compact grew out of the concerns of some residents about the threat of subdivision and potential environmental harm that could come with no land use plan in place. This compact that was created from Jason's grandfather's vision is still in effect today with slight revisions.

But, even with a common conservation value, how did a family trust with 13 heirs come to an agreement about the future of their property? Jason explained, "we've always wanted to keep our property in as close to a natural state as possible, because it is in the center of important grizzly habitat and adjacent to a Wild and Scenic River corridor.







Jan Wassink photo

My mother and uncle negotiated the easement details, making sure that we would have the ability to do what we needed to in order to manage the forest for fire safety, but with the idea of having as light an impact on the land as possible. They shared the terms with the rest of us and I think we were all on board with it. I don't recall any debate or dissent as we all recognize the natural value of the land is far greater than the financial value. The benefit to us of the easement is peace of mind in the knowledge that no matter what happens with our family and our ownership of the land, the land will be protected for many years to come."

"I regard the easement as the best thing we

have done as a family for several reasons," said Jason. "The first reason is that with it, we have protected a small but important piece of property for the future. I'm proud that we chose to do that, and I think my grandparents and my great great uncle Vaught would be pleased. The second reason I'm glad we have the easement is that family trusts, by their very nature, are tricky. The more people that own something together the harder it is to maintain. While everything is going well currently, as time passes and more people become owners, things can get very complicated and the possibility that the property will no longer be able to stay in the family becomes more likely. Thanks to the conservation easement, we know that no matter what

happens down the road related to ownership, that we've done everything we can to protect the land for the future."

What advice does Jason have for others considering a conservation easement? "My advice is...DO IT! Make sure all the owners discuss the uses they would like to preserve so that you don't over restrict yourself, but have the courage and foresight to ensure that the ecological value of your land is protected for the future. The more people that do it, the better off we'll all be. There is so much environmental damage that is happening to the wild and scenic places in the world...if you can do something to protect a special place, please consider doing so. You won't regret it."



Mud (Garnet) Lake as seen from the protected property owned by heirs of Helen and Orville Foreman (pictured above)  
Jason Cohn photo

# HIGHLIGHTED BUSINESS SUPPORTERS



## WHEATON'S – Long Term Supporter

We appreciate the long-term support of Wheaton's as a business member. Wheaton's bike shop established in 1918 is a cornerstone of the Flathead Valley. This spring, owner Margaret LeKander, assisted us with the Bike and Bird event in the lower Flathead Valley. She was extremely helpful when a participant needed a part for their bike before the ride began. Margaret immediately called the shop and had an employee bring the needed part before the introduction for the ride had been complete. The participant did not miss a minute of the event. You can help thank Wheaton's for their loyal support by visiting their business in downtown Kalispell.



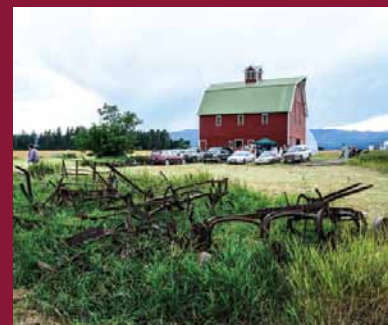
## SOMERS BAY CAFÉ – Event Supporter

Somers Bay Café has been especially involved with Flathead Land Trust this year, but has a history of support. Owner Dennis Hatton served on the Board from 2009 to 2011 and this year helped with two Flathead Land Trust events. The Bike and Bird event in the lower Flathead Valley ended with lunch at Somers Bay Café and a Dennis donated 15% of each meal's cost to support Flathead Land Trust. At the North Shore Celebration in August, Dennis donated a delicious huckleberry-BBQ pork sandwich meal for over 100 of those that attended the celebration. Visit Somers Bay Café for breakfast or lunch and show your gratitude for their support.



## NORTH COUNTRY BUILDERS – Highlighted Supporter

North Country Builders has been a long-standing supporter of Flathead Land Trust as a business member. Owner Leo Keane also served on the Flathead Land Trust Board of Directors between 2000 and 2005. North Country Builders recently completed the restoration of the historic barn that was part of the conservation project on the north shore of Flathead Lake and did a fantastic job. "We at North Country Builders would like to thank Darrell Worm and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for involving us in this most important and interesting project. We can't imagine a better outcome then to have these lands conserved and protected for wildlife and public use, and the old McClarty barn brought back to life as a new staging area and work station for MFWP." North Country Builders is proudly celebrating their 30th year of building custom homes in the Flathead area. Thanks so much to North Country Builders for their continued support of land conservation in the Flathead Valley.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Conservation Plan Update public meeting

Wednesday, October 15, 7:00 PM

Central School Museum, 124 2nd Ave East, Kalispell

(See Page 3 for Details)

### Membership Meeting and Holiday Party

December 7, 4:00-6:00 PM

Details coming soon

## STAY TUNED

for upcoming Winter and Spring Events in 2015



Find us on Facebook  
and at [flatheadlandtrust.org](http://flatheadlandtrust.org)

to find more about upcoming events.

Also, be sure to check out photos from past events on our Flickr page.



# One Person Can and Did Make a Difference – CONTINUED



Donetta McClarty Antonovich sharing her family story at the North Shore Celebration on August 21

## A step back in time, stories of the McClarty homesteaders...

At the North Shore Celebration in August, Donetta McClarty Antonovich gave an emotional presentation about her family's deep connection to the land, its historic barn, and how much it means to have it protected. "I stand on the worn, squeaky boards of the barn and feel a moment in time...a moment when all stands still and I watch a small, red-haired boy [her father] tending the family horses" said Donetta tearfully. "It feels really good to me that this place has been protected. I can go back and feel history whispering to me. It's so nice this treasure has been protected and not exploited."

In her presentation, Donetta explained that the area surrounding the homestead was quite different when her great grandfather, Joseph McClarty, came from Canada in the late 1800s to farm the rich soils on the north shore of Flathead Lake and raise a family. A ferry operated across the Flathead River about a mile east of the McClarty property at Holt which also had a store, a post office with a dance hall on the second floor, a bar, and a blacksmith shop. Somers was a bustling town due to its new lumber mill providing railroad ties needed for thousands of miles of new

track being constructed. "The Rousselle School was two miles away from the McClarty home and the 17-year old teacher of the school lived with the McClarty family," said Donetta. "She walked with the McClarty children to school in the snow and mud huddling together for warmth. Accompanying them was the family's pet goose who sat in school next to the children in class."

People were tough but kind back then, especially the McClarty family. Donetta shared the story of how Joseph lost his left arm in a farming accident. Joseph was part of a family threshing crew and his job was to slip the belt onto the elevator pulley. One morning the sleeve of his new jacket caught on a set screw and in moments his forearm was twisted off. A 40-oz. bottle of whiskey was fetched from the house. As Donetta explained, there are two stories of what happened with the whiskey: 1) the men with Joe drank all of the whiskey before they got to the doctor, and 2) the men held Joe down for the operation and drank the whiskey afterward. Either way it was good Joe was unconscious for the ride and operation. Donetta explained that Kate, Joseph's wife, had three children of her own and also raised a niece whose father died young. Even in those busy times when life was harder, Kate always had a special homemade gift for all the children who came to visit.

Eventually, one of Joseph and Kate's sons took over the family farm and raised two children of their own which included Donetta's father. Having the land open to the public and the barn restored has helped Donetta truly

***"It feels really good to me that this place has been protected. I can go back and feel history whispering to me. It's so nice this treasure has been protected and not exploited."***

***- Donetta McClarty Antonovich***

understand her family's history. "It's the only way one can see what it was like, not just hear what it was like during the time this area was first being settled."

In 1928, the license proposal for Kerr dam south of Polson threatened to change the McClarty farm. The family worried the farm would be flooded due to the increased lake level caused by the dam. Donetta said property owners were given three choices by Montana Power: 1) they could do nothing, 2) they could sell to Montana Power, or 3) they could get a stipend of one dollar per acre for damaged property. "The decision was made by my family to sell, and so the beautiful property was sold for a song to Montana Power," said Donetta. The Wittlake family purchased the property in 1953 and added the metal quonset hut to the barn for a swine raising operation. The Wittlakes continued to farm the property, but divided the property into five parcels. Donetta ended her presentation by exclaiming that, "luckily for all of us, the property was purchased by Darrell Worm in 1992 saving the valuable land from being developed."





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## IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO WIN THIS BACKPACK!

The Flathead Land Trust is excited to launch a new membership campaign August 13 – October 15. Join or renew during our campaign and you will be eligible to win this incredible Osprey Backpack, generously donated by Rocky Mountain Outfitter.

What's even better – you can double your chances to win by getting a friend or family member to join and we'll enter your name again. Contact us to find out how.

Double your impact! Your membership contribution will be matched during our campaign, thanks to a generous grant— providing even further capacity for private land conservation in the Flathead.



**Become a Member at  
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or contact us directly at  
[flt@bigsky.net](mailto:flt@bigsky.net) or 406-752-8293**

**Help Conserve Our Legacy of Land  
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