

Rethinking Forest Regulations

Lubrecht Experimental Forest, Montana

May 20, 2015

Blackfoot Challenge

Collaboration across landscape and ownership

Local Community Forest Governance & Regulation



Better Rural Communities *through* Cooperative Conservation



Crown of the Continent Ecosystem

Glacier
Waterton
National Park

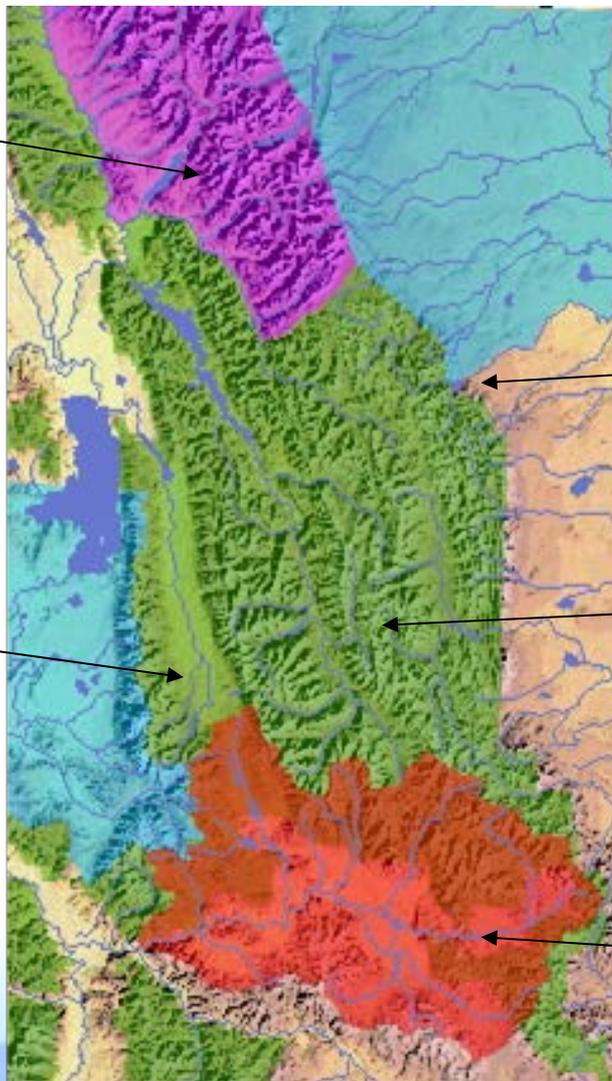
Rocky Mountain
Front

Swan
Watershed

Bob Marshall
Wilderness

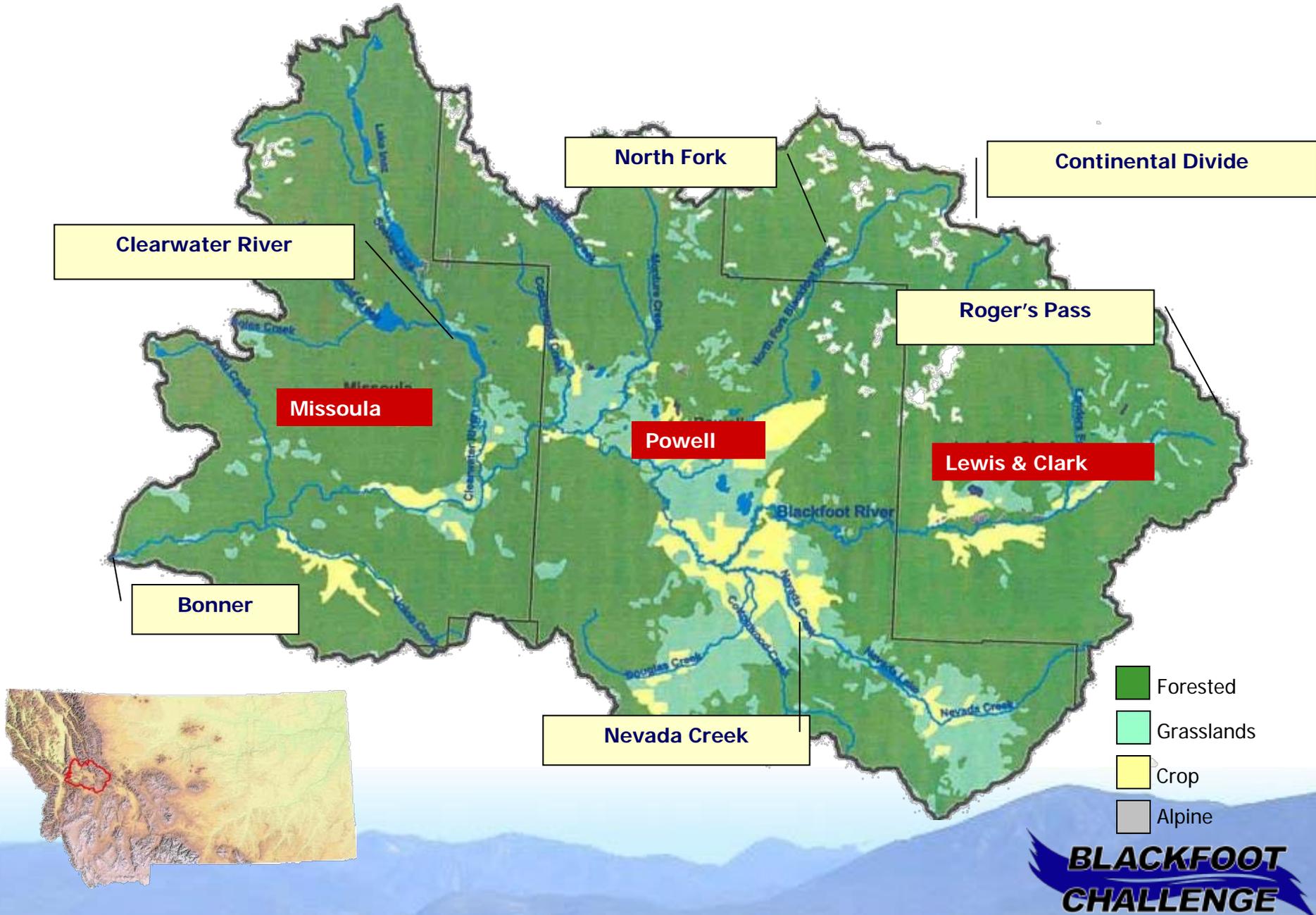
(10 million acres)

Blackfoot
Watershed



**BLACKFOOT
CHALLENGE**

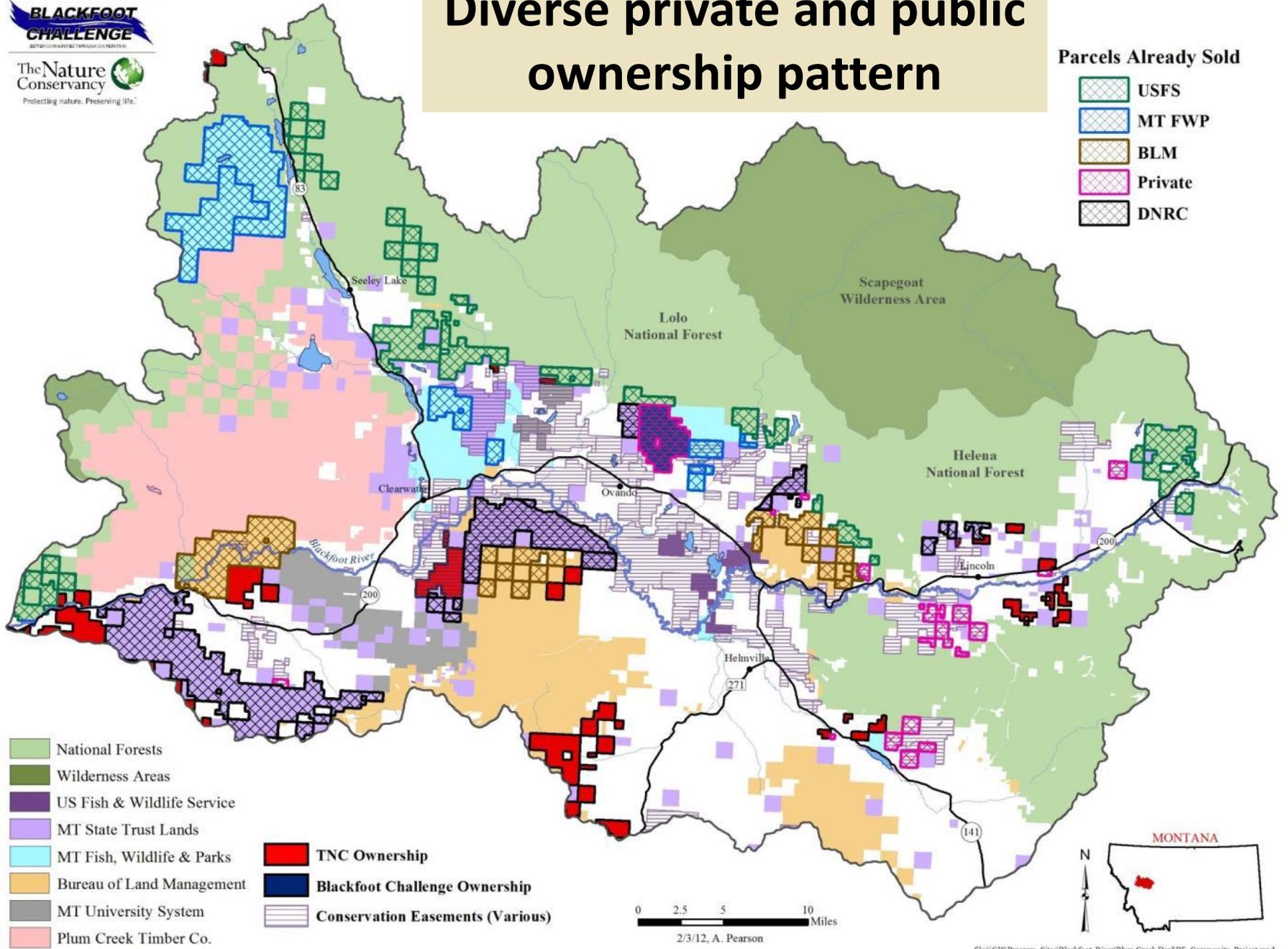
Blackfoot Watershed ~ 1.5 million acres



Diverse private and public ownership pattern

Parcels Already Sold

-  USFS
-  MT FWP
-  BLM
-  Private
-  DNRC



-  National Forests
-  Wilderness Areas
-  US Fish & Wildlife Service
-  MT State Trust Lands
-  MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  MT University System
-  Plum Creek Timber Co.
-  TNC Ownership
-  Blackfoot Challenge Ownership
-  Conservation Easements (Various)

0 2.5 5 10 Miles
 2/3/12, A. Pearson



Supported by an abundance of natural resources



All the wildlife Meriwether Lewis might have seen in 1804



1970s – Shared access to the Blackfoot River and private land through partnership of landowners and MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks



1971 – Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks was granted an in-stream flow right for the Blackfoot River



1992 – the Blackfoot River was listed as one of the ten-most endangered rivers in the United States



1992 – community meetings held in response

1993 – formation of the Blackfoot Challenge

Mission

Coordinate efforts to conserve and enhance the natural resources and rural way of life in the Blackfoot Watershed for present and future generations



Our Approach

- **Private and public partners**
 - **Private landowners**
 - **Business owners**
 - **Conservation groups**
 - **State agencies**
 - **Federal agencies**
- **Work on common values – the 80/20 rule**
- **Develop trust**
- **Create durable solutions**
- **Support with good science**



Our Structure

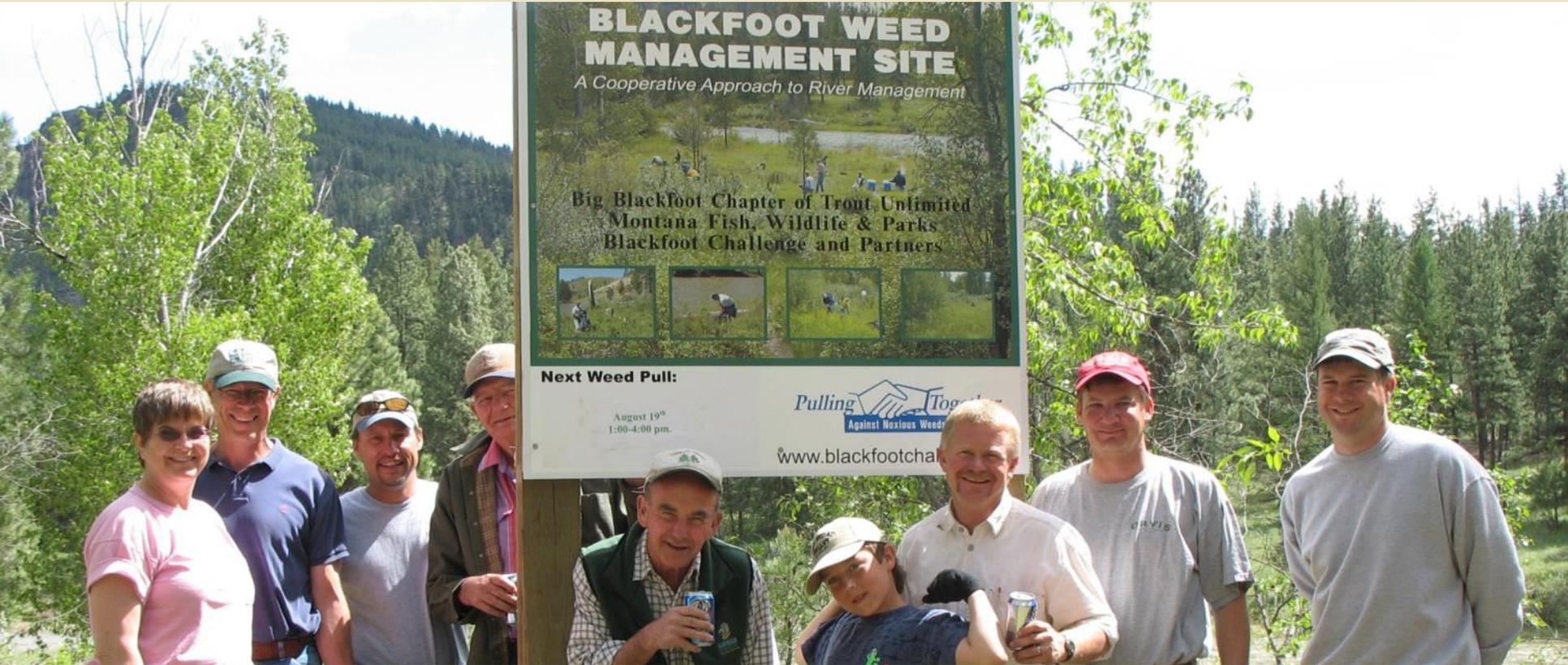
Volunteer committees and work groups of diverse stakeholders.

Identify community and resource concerns and coordinate response.

- **Weeds** – Controlling invasive and noxious weeds through holistic approach
- **Education** - Reaching all ages through place-based education
- **Water** - Balancing water needs and availability through shared conservation
- **Wildlife** - Reducing human-wildlife conflict using proactive strategies
- **Conservation Strategies** - Intact working landscapes by coordinating conservation
- **Forestry** – Making forests healthier and communities safer from wildfire
- **Outreach** – Generating participation and sharing lessons learned



Mid-1990s – early consensus on invasive weed management in partnership with BLM and private landowners



1993 – Weed Committee forms

- 13 community-based vegetation management areas



Educating the next generation of land stewards



1993 – Education Committee forms

- Adopt-A-Swan Program
- community education events
- hands-on natural resource education

Late 1980s – First drought following 1971 in-stream flow right



**Blackfoot River
at 667 cfs**



- 2000 - Blackfoot Drought Committee forms in reponse
- sharing water resources



Water program develops solutions for irrigation efficiency

2003 – Total Maximum Daily Loads work begins with Montana DEQ following national Clean Water Act



We are coordinating voluntary responses to identified conditions

Early 2000s – People and predator conflicts escalate



Carcass Pickup



Range Rider



Fencing



2001 – formation of the Landowner Advisory Group and Wildlife Committee – and 93% reduction in conflict

Late 1990s/early 2000s – land conservation activity increase

2002 - Conservation Strategies Committee forms to coordinate land trust outreach to landowners

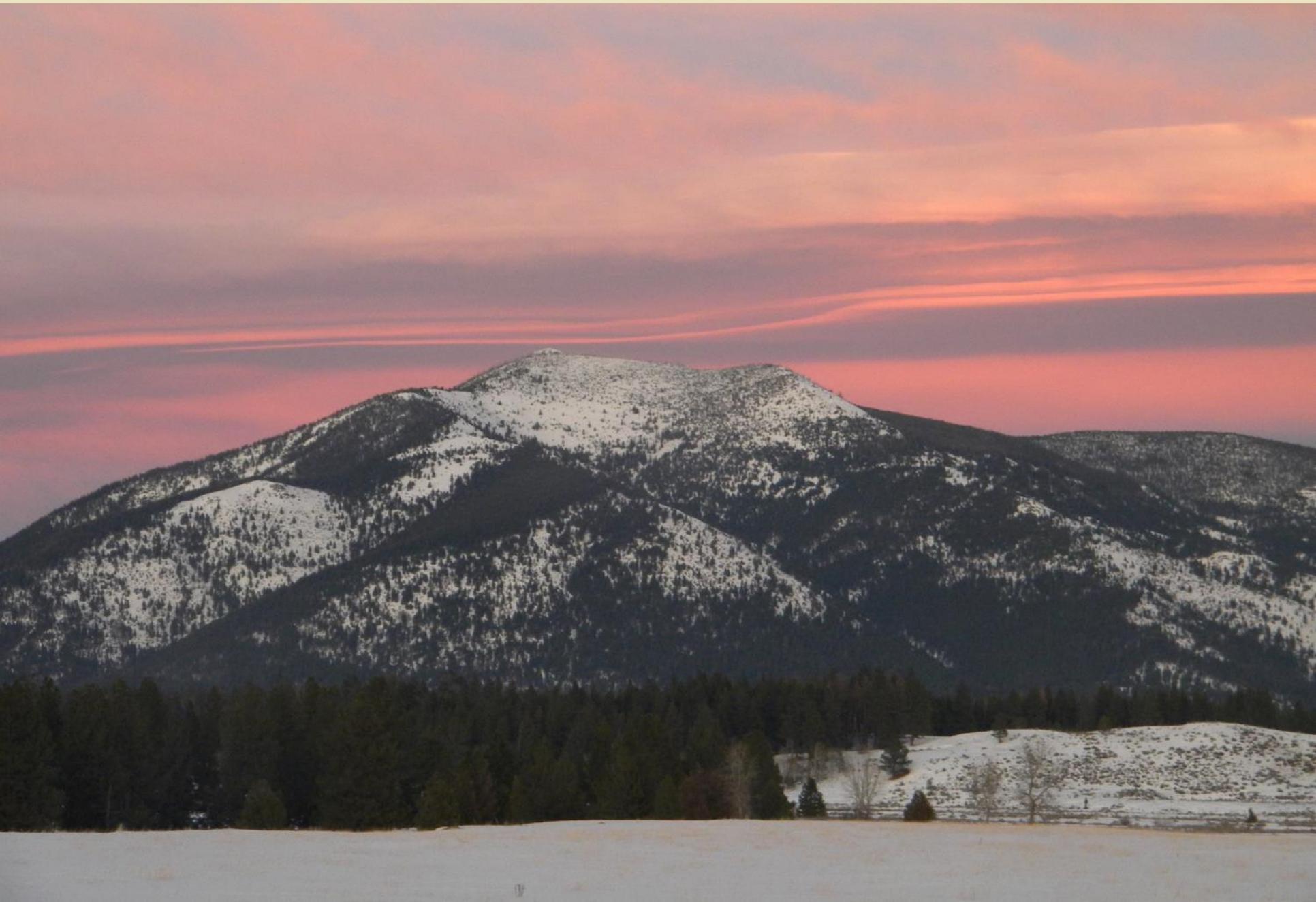
A Guide to

Land Conservation *and* Conservation Easements

in the Southern Crown of the Continent

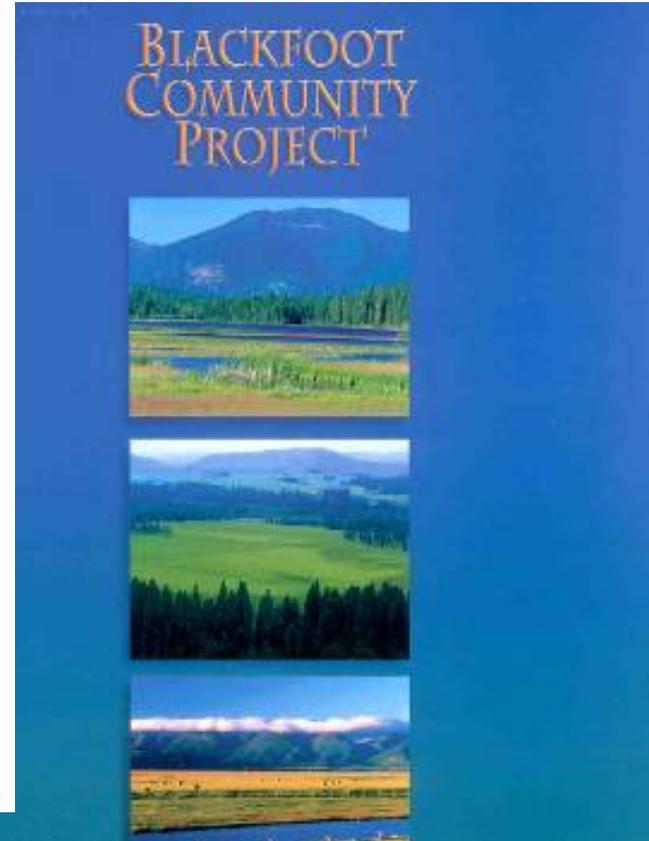
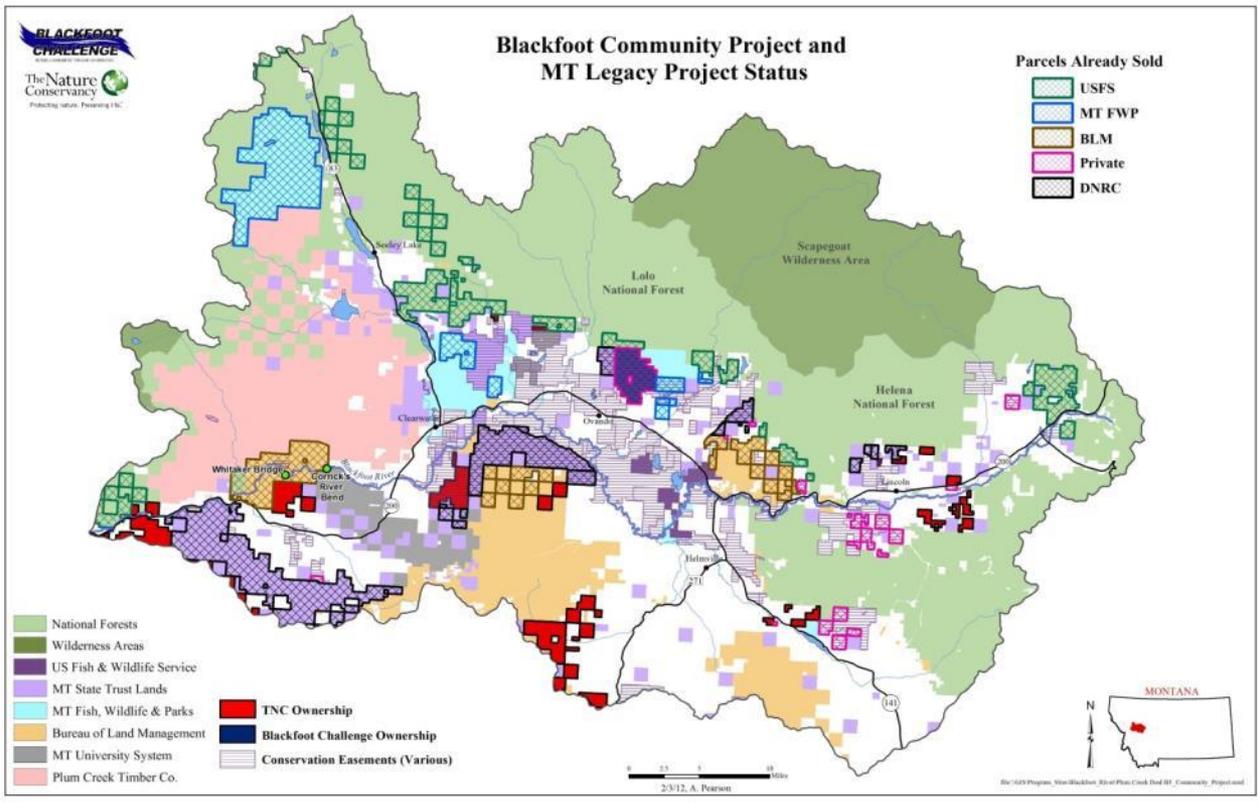


2003 – pending sale of corporate timber lands



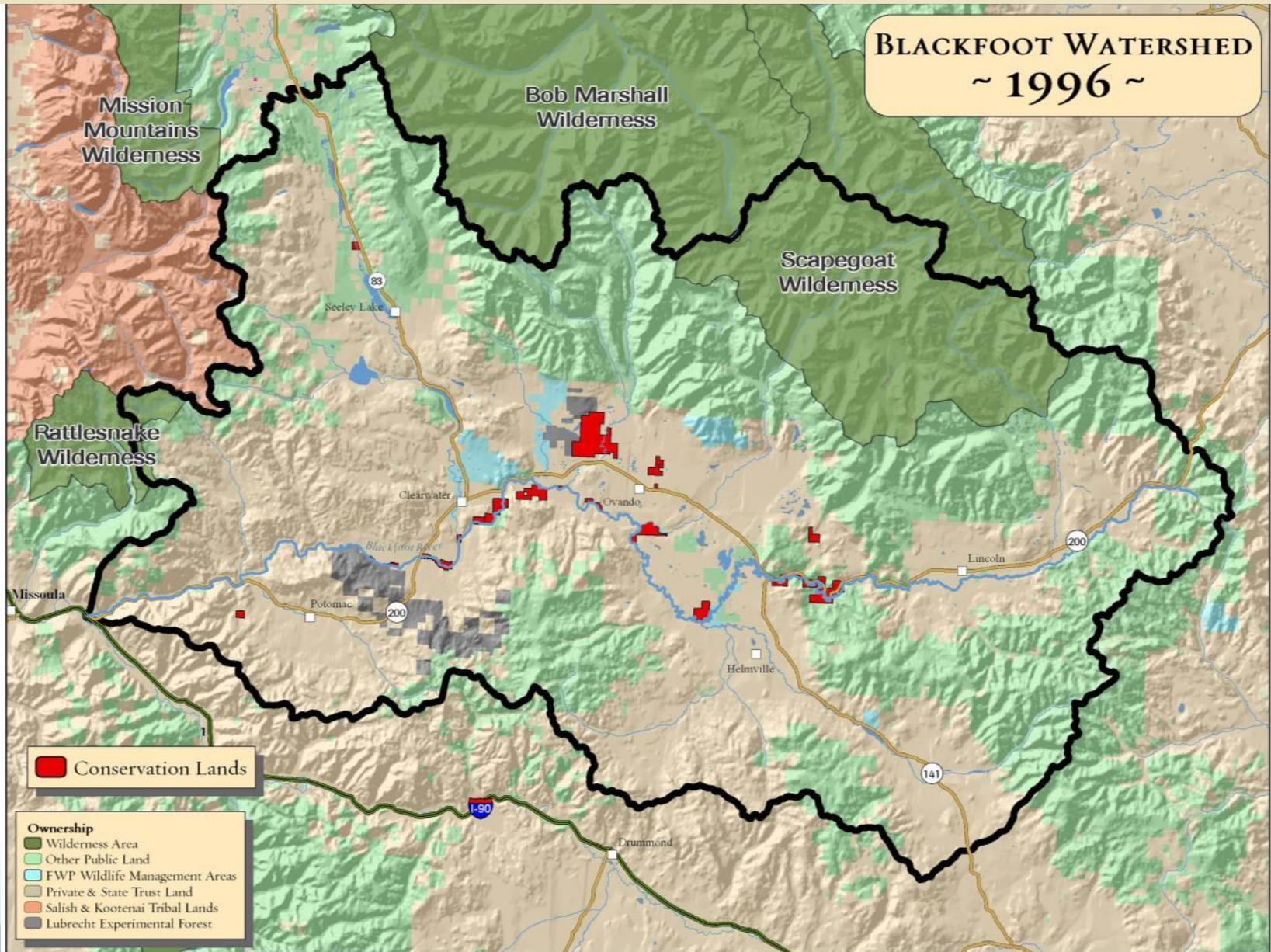
2004 – Blackfoot Community Project

Community shaping its future through resale of 89,000 acres of corporate timber lands to new private and public conservation owners

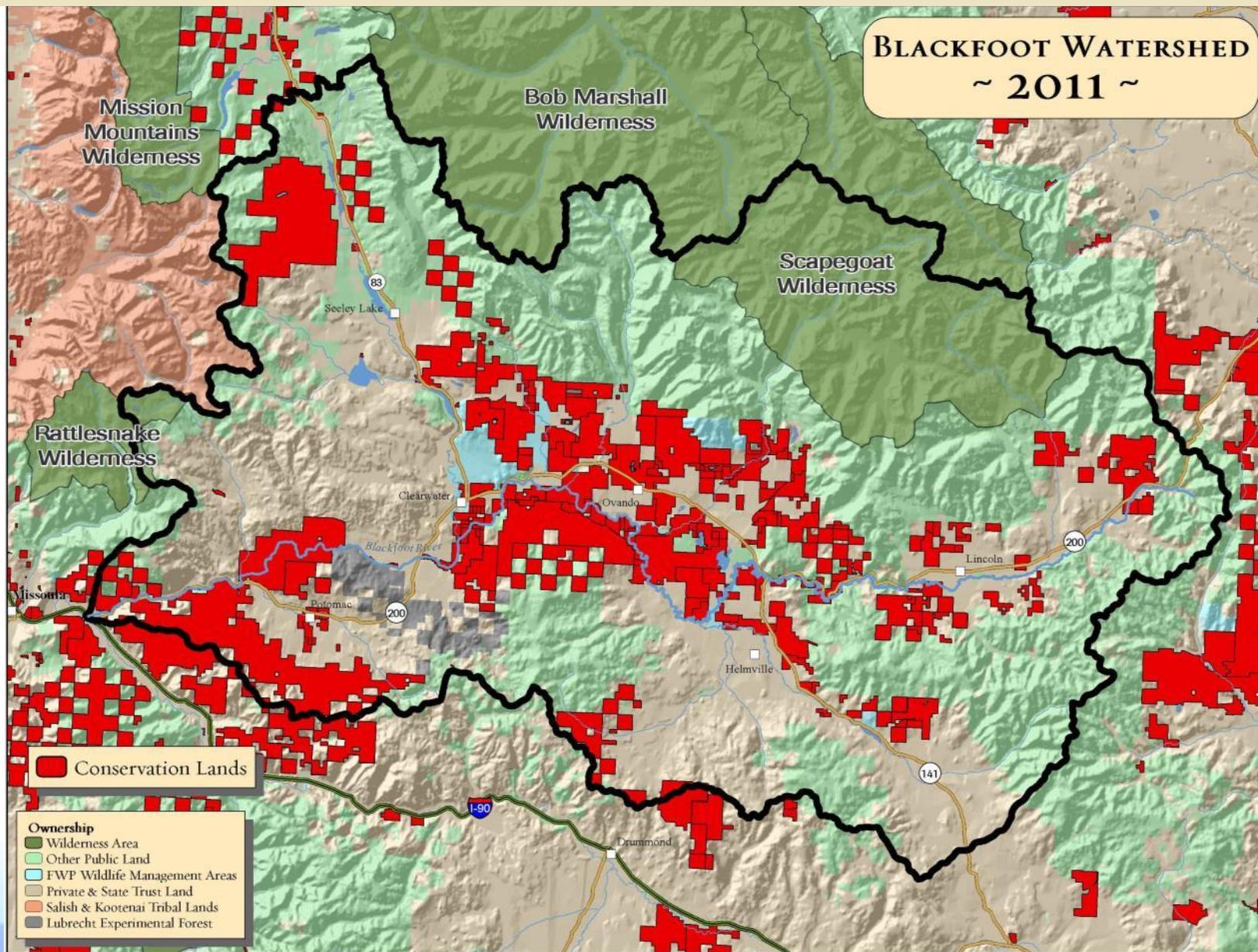


2007 – Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Council formed to manage 41,000 acres cross ownership

Conservation of working land



Landscape level conservation of working land



Resulting in recognition that this approach delivers

"At the national level, that's what we're most excited to see; work being done on the ground that's locally-led and community-based."

Astor Boozer, Western Regional Conservationist, NRCS – June 5, 2014



Save the Date

Community Discussions

It's been 20 years since the Blackfoot Challenge formed to address community concerns and opportunities around conserving natural resources and the rural way of life in the Blackfoot Watershed.

We would like your help evaluating our progress. This fall we will host a series of community discussions. Please join us to share your ideas and inform priorities for the next 20 years.

Join us at one of these locations:

Bonner Mon., Sept. 23, 7:00pm Bonner School Library	Potomac & Greenough Tues., Sept. 24, 7:00pm Paws Up Ranch	Ovando & Hainville Wed., Sept. 25, 7:00pm Ovando School
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Lincoln Thurs., Sept. 26, 7:00pm The Montanan Steakhouse	Sedley Lake Mon., Sept. 30, 7:00pm Double Arrow Lodge
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Hearty appetizers and refreshments provided.

If you are unable to attend, please visit our website to complete a brief survey, or feel free to contact us by phone or email.
www.blackfootchallenge.org/articles/survey · 406-793-3900 · outreach@blackfootchallenge.org



A Research Paper by



Economic Opportunities in the Blackfoot Watershed

Ideas for local growth and development based on conversations with residents



WINTER 2014



Involving all private and public values takes time. There are no short cuts to building trust. This approach is proven to conserve natural resources and support rural economies.



But our watershed is a small place, and we need our neighbors – right across the fence and clear across the county. So lately we've been working to take our local action to scale.



Building bridges between local stakeholders and decision-makers to create durable solutions that benefit people, wildlife and the land.



www.blackfootchallenge.org
outreach@blackfootchallenge.org