



2020-2024  
IMPACT REPORT



Celebrating 30 years  
connecting land and people

**PRICKLY PEAR  
LAND TRUST**



## CONNECTING LAND AND PEOPLE



### PRICKLY PEAR LAND TRUST

#### PARKS AND TRAILS

We're dedicated to making land, water, wildlife, and trails accessible to everyone in our community. That's why we build parks, maintain trails, and protect public access. Abundant recreation opportunities connect people to the land and enhance our quality of life.

#### LAND PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP

We honor our heritage and strengthen our future by protecting land and water forever. Land protection agreements help landowners protect what they treasure about their property. From family farms and ranches to forests and grasslands, land protection is our most effective tool for conserving the clean water, wildlife habitat, and agricultural heritage of our region.

#### EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

We inspire joy and connection through environmental education and outreach. Our staff and volunteers have built a robust year-round education program for students of all ages. We're also dedicated to growing the Happy Trails community through volunteering and events. We greet everyone with a smile, and we find joy in service and celebration.

*On the cover: The Avalanche Cultural and Conservation Easement – see story on page 4.  
Kevin League photo*

Prickly Pear Land Trust recognizes that the lands we conserve are the traditional and contemporary territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfeet), the Sélish (Salish), the Ktunaxa (Kootenai), the Métis (Little Shell Chippewa), the Apsáalooke (Crow), and the Shoshone-Bannock peoples.

The Indigenous Nations who continue their connections with this ground, these waters, and all creatures have always and will always be the original stewards of the land.

We prioritize Indigenous partners and actively seek projects that respect their cultures, honor their values, and create a collaborative conservation vision.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**T**his year, as Prickly Pear Land Trust celebrates 30 years, I am grateful for and continue to be inspired by the passion and dedication of our incredible community of volunteers, supporters, partners, and, most of all, my staff.

I couldn't be more proud of our work and our team. In just five years, during an unprecedented land rush, you've helped us protect more than 17,000 acres and complete the first cultural conservation easement in the state. We're honored to work with East Helena to help envision and create 330 acres of parkland and new creek access. For 30 years, we've expanded public lands and maintained trails across the South Hills while fostering a Happy Trails community that loves the land, the trails, and the people who share them. You've also helped us grow an education program that connects youth and adults with the outdoors.

**We do one thing every day that drives this work** – we seek to understand our community. Then, we take that understanding and make the most creative, lasting impact possible – out of every single dollar, trail, or acre of land. This practice of first considering our community's needs will always be at the heart of our mission. Everyone needs connection – to each other and to the lands and waters that define us. We will stay focused on programs and projects that connect us long into the future.

I promise that no matter what the future brings, we have no intention of slowing down. This team has energy, passion, and integrity, and we are going to keep swinging for the fences. When it comes to land, water, and outdoor recreation, we understand that so much of what we love about Montana is at a tipping point. We are all dedicated to doing our best work right now for the places we love.

**Thank you for your support.** Please join us in making the next five years unforgettable.

See you on the trail,

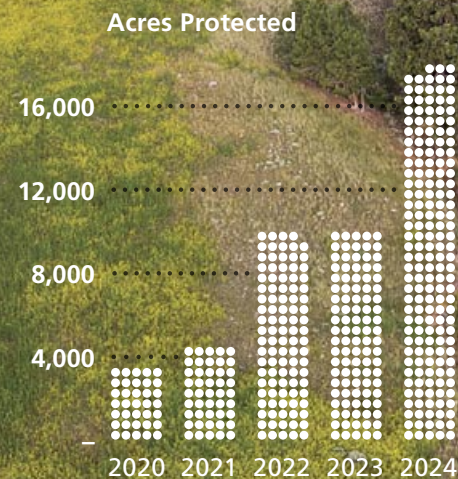
Mary Hollow



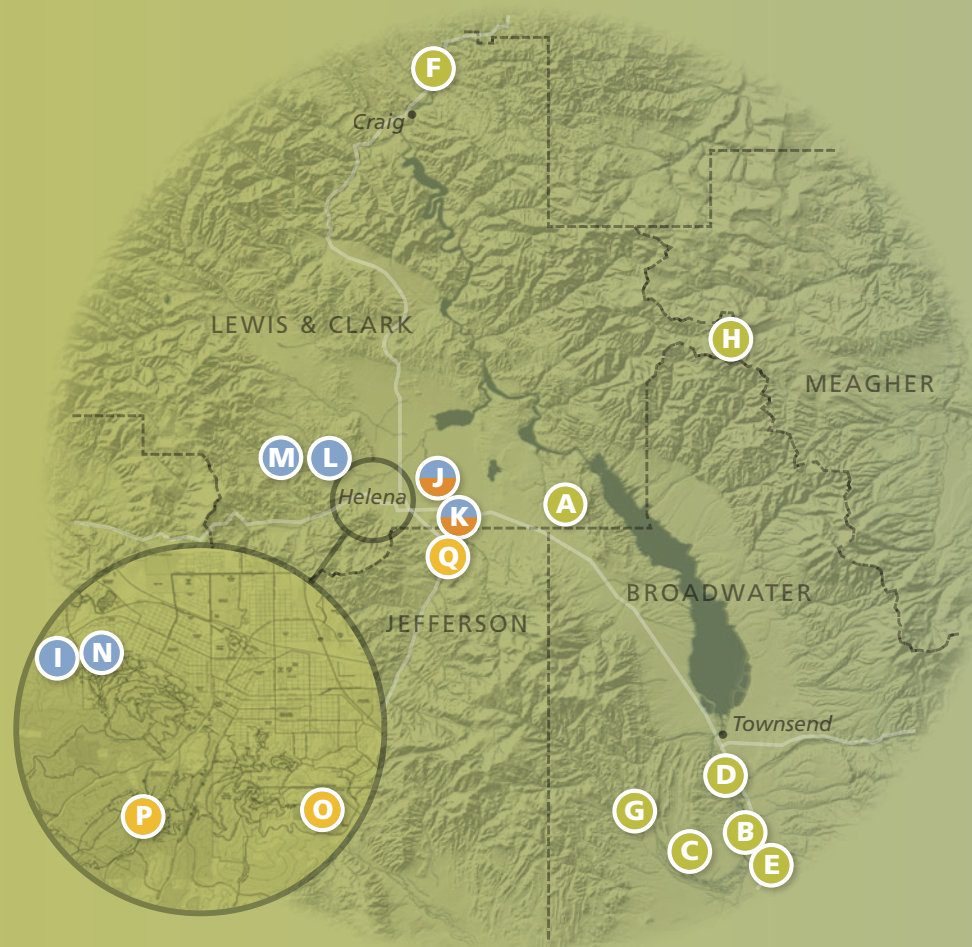
*The practice of first considering our community's needs will always be at the heart of our mission.*

# 2020-2024 MILESTONES

**17,815**  
ACRES PERMANENTLY  
PROTECTED



The demand for open space, wildlife habitat, parks, trails, and stewardship has increased beyond anything imagined by the friends and neighbors who started Prickly Pear Land Trust thirty years ago. We are grateful for the sturdy foundation they laid, which prepared us to meet the needs of our growing community.



Granite Creek on Birdseye Ranch is home to aspen, mule deer, elk, and pronghorn.

## 8 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

PROPERTY	ACRES
A Potter Ranch	3,109
B Tri G River Ranch	1,029
C Crow Creek	713
D Deep Creek Confluence	446
E Missouri Oxbow	337
F Canyon Cattle Ranch	3,905
G Prairie Gulch	960
H Avalanche Ranch	5,341

## 6 PROPERTIES ACQUIRED

PROPERTY	ACRES
I West Point	82
J The Grove	80
K Prickly Pear Park	242
L Paso Fino	43
M Birdseye Ranch	1,472
N Mount Helena - LeGrande	56

## 3 TRAIL EASEMENTS

TRAIL
O Eddy McClure East
P Evans Trail
Q Bessler Easement

## 2 PARKS IN EAST HELENA

PARK
J The Grove
K Prickly Pear Park <i>Opening in Spring 2025</i>

## PROTECTING LAND FOREVER

Land trusts use two primary tools to protect land forever – we place conservation easements on land or we acquire it through donation or purchase.

### What is a conservation easement?

A conservation easement is a legal private property agreement between a willing landowner and a qualified conservation organization, like Prickly Pear Land Trust, designed to permanently prevent the land from being subdivided or developed and make it available to wildlife and working farms and ranches.

Each conservation easement agreement is unique and tailored to the landowner's needs and the land's conservation attributes. Landowners who place a conservation easement on their property continue to own the land and operate their farms and ranches, and often, the agreement helps them pass land on to their heirs.

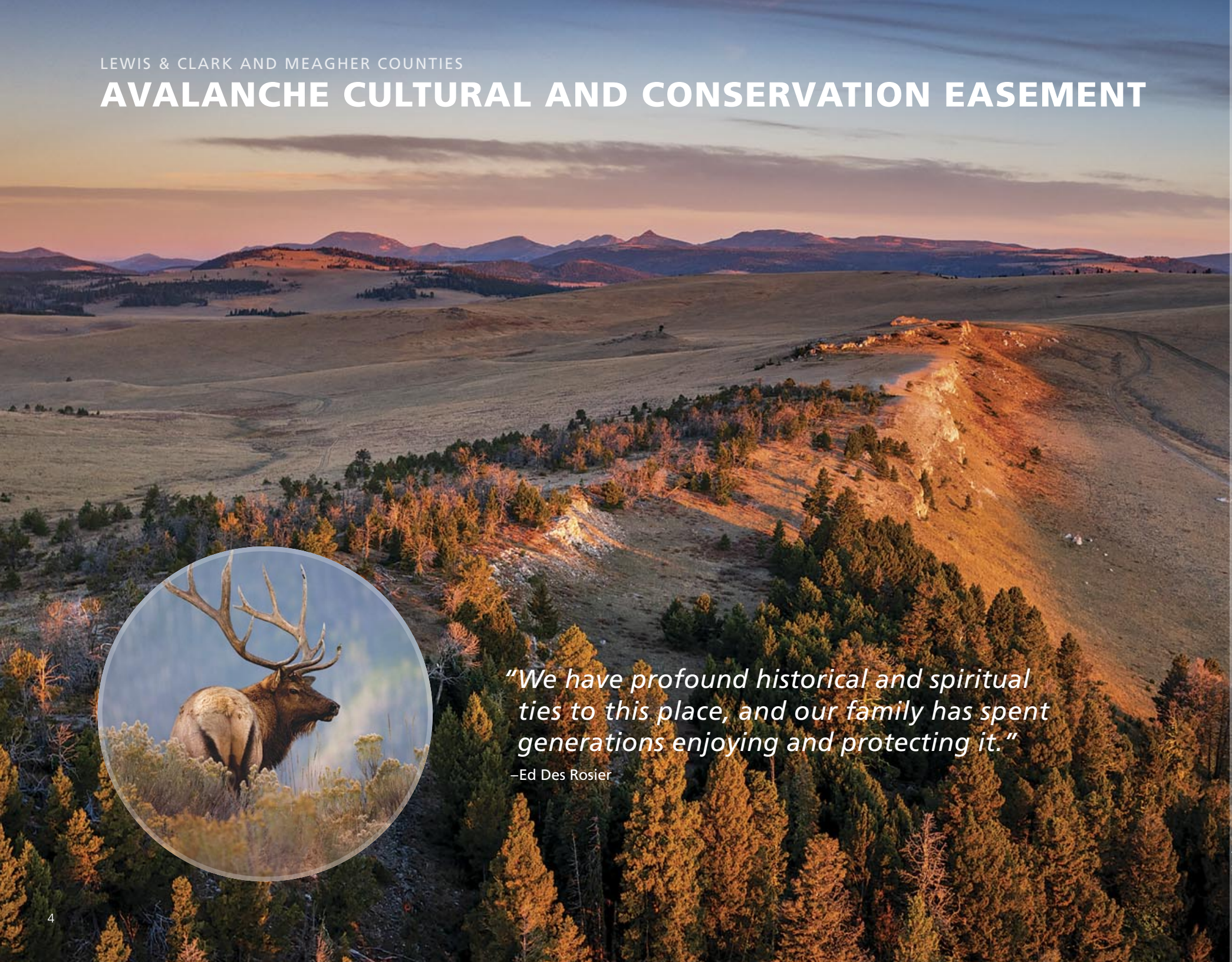
### Why does a land trust acquire property?

If land protection meets a community need, like public access or clean water, and if funding is available, land trusts may buy land to hold for conservation and public access or to donate to public lands. When a conservation easement is not an option, Prickly Pear Land Trust partners with public and private stakeholders to purchase land and own land for a variety of community reasons.



**PRICKLY PEAR  
LAND TRUST**

# AVALANCHE CULTURAL AND CONSERVATION EASEMENT



*“We have profound historical and spiritual ties to this place, and our family has spent generations enjoying and protecting it.”*

—Ed Des Rosier

Kevin League

## Blackfeet Landowners Honor Culture on Aboriginal Territory

**In 2024**, the Avalanche Corporation, representing six members of the Fred and Ramona Des Rosier Family, entered into a landmark conservation agreement with Prickly Pear Land Trust. To our knowledge, this is the first conservation agreement off reservation lands in Montana to explicitly protect and perpetuate traditional practices, cultural sites, and Indigenous ceremony, formally recognizing them as aligned with preserving the land’s conservation values.

The Avalanche Cultural and Conservation Easement protects 5,300 acres of open lands in the historical *ãamskãapii piikünii* (Southern Blackfeet) territory. The *ãamskãapii piikünii* have practiced sustainable management of these lands as part of a diverse and dynamic ecosystem since time immemorial. Long before Fred Des Rosier’s grandfather, Fred Choteau Campbell, ran a large sheep-ranching operation on the expansive property, generations of Native Americans not only traveled freely across it but spent extended periods of time there, living, hunting, and gathering.

**“Our stories and traditions** state that our people were created on the Rocky Mountain Front at least 16,000 years ago,” says Ed Des Rosier, Avalanche Corporation president. “We have profound historical and spiritual ties to this place, and our family has spent generations enjoying and protecting it. Our parents never wanted the future of this land and our ability to enjoy it to be compromised in any way by permanent development.”

The *nitsitapiksi* (Real people) managed the *ksááhko* (land) and *ksááhkoom* (Earth personified) for centuries as a life-sustaining ecosystem – a place where even the stones spoke to them. From *ksááhkoom*, they gained valuable knowledge to pass down. The family sought a conservation easement after their father brought up the idea to honor his mother’s wishes. They wanted the land to stay intact for future generations.

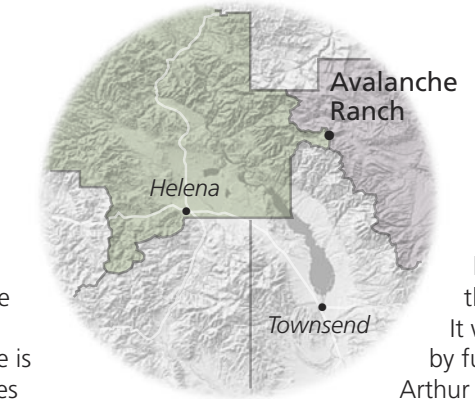
**The Avalanche property** sits high above Helena, White Sulphur Springs, and the Missouri River on the crest of the Big Belt Mountains. The mosaic of mountain meadows, sagebrush steppe, and mixed forest provides vital habitat for a resident elk herd, pronghorn antelope, bears, and bats. The headwaters for Trout Creek, Rock Creek, and Antelope Creek – tributaries of the Smith and Missouri rivers – provide climate refuge for westslope cutthroat trout. It’s also a migration corridor between the Rocky Mountain Front and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem for grizzly bears and golden eagles.

Western conservation traditionally tries to “save” the natural world from humans, but Prickly Pear Land Trust agreed with the family’s premise that Indigenous practices, traditions, and people are consistent with conservation.

“As members of the conservation community, we sometimes make the mistake of implying that we’re trying to protect vacant land, but there were people here before settlers arrived,

and they lived intertwined with these landscapes for generations,” says Mary Hollow, executive director of Prickly Pear Land Trust. “Avalanche is one of those rare places where that connection has continued. This easement recognizes what the Des Rosier family has always done and tries to fortify their vision of the future for that landscape.”

Few native landowners have large properties outside of reservations. The family hopes this agreement can serve as a model for other landowners seeking to honor cultural uses, perpetuate Indigenous relationships to the land, and maintain stewardship activities on their properties.



The Des Rosier family donated a portion of the land’s value to make this project possible. It was also supported by funding from the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, The Cinnabar Foundation, Heart of the Rockies Initiative, The Kendeda Fund, Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation, Prickly Pear Land Trust, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, and other foundations.

***Fred and Ramona Des Rosier wanted the Avalanche property to remain undeveloped and intact for future generations to enjoy and steward.***



Courtesy of Des Rosier family

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY  
**MOUNT HELENA  
 CITY PARK**



*“The more people who value the remarkable gift that we have in Helena in the form of access to nature, the better.”*

—Brad Robinson



Emily Winn

Kevin League

**Brad Robinson and Obi find community and connection hiking Mount Helena’s trails.**

How to Go on a Journey of a Thousand Miles – and Never Leave Your Backyard

**Brad Robinson was enjoying** a glorious morning hike on the Helena Ridge Trail with his loyal labrador, Obi, when he decided to hike 1,000 trail miles by 2025. For Brad, who has hiked Mount Helena’s trails for over 20 years, this achievement was more than just a personal goal – it symbolized a deep connection to the land and the people who enjoy it.

Mount Helena, one of Helena’s iconic landmarks, rises 1,300 feet above Last Chance Gulch. The popular open space grew by 145 acres in 2020 when Prickly Pear Land Trust donated two properties on Le Grande Cannon

to the city. The donation enhanced public access, preserved stunning views, and added vital connections to open space for the surrounding community.

In 2022, Prickly Pear Land Trust staff and volunteers built five trails on this new section of Mount Helena City Park.



When trail markers began appearing, Brad felt a sense of excitement and possibility.

“It was just kind of life-changing to have all these new trails,” Brad says. He started a website – [helenaoutdoors.com](http://helenaoutdoors.com) – filled with trail descriptions and photographs and began sharing his daily adventures with Obi on social media.

“The more people who know, understand, and value the remarkable gift that we have in Helena in the form of access to nature, the better,” he says.

In his pursuit of 1,000 miles, Brad encountered more than beautiful landscapes. Each mile brought new faces and connections, like an 80-year-old neighbor who walks the trails daily and an avid runner clocking his 650th mile. Brad felt a growing sense of connection, not only to the land but also to those who use the trails.

“It’s been a journey and a fun one at that,” Brad says.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY  
**SEVENMILE  
 CREEK**



Eliza Wiley

Keep Calm and Otter On

**Otters are symbols** of resilience, adaptability, and community, so when an otter took up residence on our Sevenmile Creek property in 2021, it felt like the restoration project on two creek miles had received a seal of approval from Nature itself.

When Prickly Pear Land Trust acquired the 358-acre property in 2016, the creek had been moved out of the floodplain and reduced to a ditch. It was one of the top contributors of sediment to Lake Helena, and it was inaccessible to fish and wildlife. The restoration moved the creek back into the floodplain, added a half mile of meanders, stabilized the banks, raised water levels by seven feet, and created new wetlands and ponds. Birds, fish, and even otters returned to the riparian zone.

And then, on a windy day in 2021, a wildfire tore across most of the property. It was an eye-opener for PPLT staff, who started



brainstorming an upland restoration project. Board member Tyrrell Hibbard developed a land management plan utilizing rotational grazing to improve soil health, reduce invasive weeds, and help native plants rest and recover. A Montana Watershed Coordination Council grant helped protect the riparian zone and build irrigation systems.

Thanks to funding from Northwestern Energy, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Trout Unlimited, Montana Freshwater Partners, and other partners, Sevenmile now encompasses wildlife habitat, grasslands and stream restoration, agriculture, and education. Education Coordinator Audra Shropshire brings students from Helena School District to Sevenmile to learn about water quality, practice bird identification (160 bird species have been spotted there), and help with the ongoing restoration by planting native trees and shrubs.

**Birds, fish, and wildlife have returned to Sevenmile Creek thanks to an ongoing stream and grasslands restoration project.**

## A Wonderful Place to Live, Work, and Play

**Most everyone** who lives in Broadwater County loves the land. Whether their family homesteaded in the 1800s or moved in after the pandemic, residents appreciate the agriculture, wildlife, and open spaces that define the county. Located between two of the fastest-growing counties in Montana, Broadwater is ripe for development. The community is working to balance its agricultural heritage with the pressure for new housing.

Recently, thanks to the availability of National Guard funding for conservation, five of Broadwater's farm and ranch families decided it was now or never for their land. They sought conservation easements with Prickly Pear Land Trust not just so they could keep working the land, but so their friends and neighbors could too.

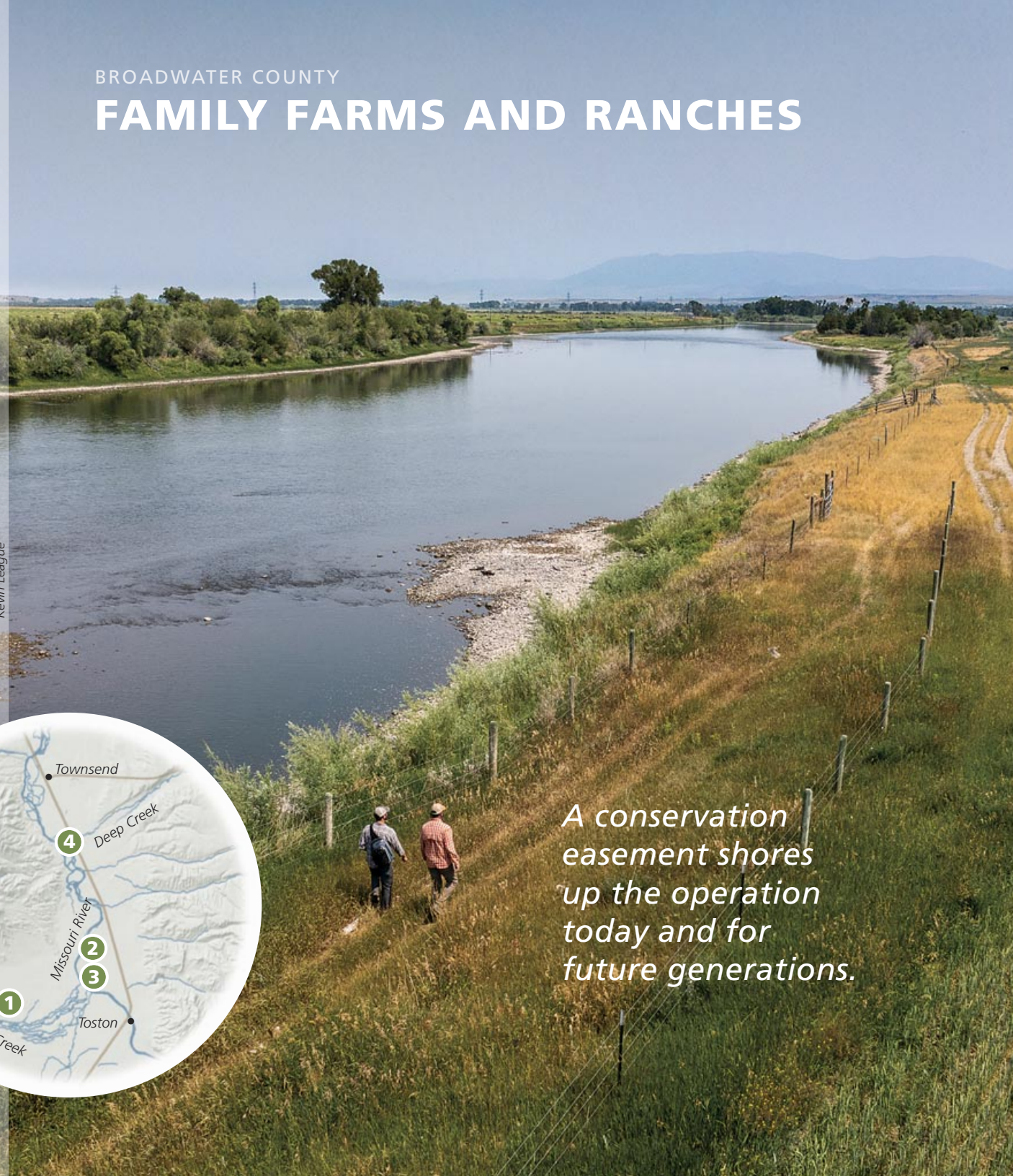
A family farm surrounded by subdivisions is usually the sole survivor of a long war of attrition, and its days are numbered. However, family farms and ranches that share borders and resources are far more likely to survive and flourish. A conservation easement shores up the operation today and for future generations. Four conservation easements in the same valley improve the future of the whole community.

"Projects like these help keep Montana a wonderful place to live, work, and play," said Chuck Hahn, longtime Broadwater County farmer and rancher.

These working lands don't just help farmers and ranchers. They're good for soldiers, too. The Army funds conservation around forts and other facilities so soldiers can prepare to defend our country day or night.

**Four conservation easements in the same valley improve the future of the whole community.**

## BROADWATER COUNTY FAMILY FARMS AND RANCHES



Kevin League



*A conservation easement shores up the operation today and for future generations.*

### 1 CROW CREEK

This 700-acre ranch protects three braids of Crow Creek, cottonwood galleries, grasslands, wetlands, and the orchards of the historic Poe Ranch. The ranch spreads across an alluvial fan downstream of the Elkhorn Mountains and provides habitat for deer, moose, and antelope.

### 2 TRI G RIVER RANCH

The Tri G River Ranch has over 1,000 acres of river bottom land and 1.6 miles of Missouri River shoreline. Located between Townsend and Toston, the working ranch is a key property for the farming community and the National Guard. Their nearby Limestone Hills training facility is essential to their mission to protect the nation. The Army's open space buffer program supported all five conservation easements.

### 3 MISSOURI OXBOW

This farm bridges a long stretch of the Missouri River adjacent to state land and the Tri G River Ranch. The easement protects 330 acres of irrigated, high-value crops and just over a half mile of Missouri River shoreline.

### 4 DEEP CREEK CONFLUENCE

This farm has over 100 years of Montana family history and stewardship. This prized property includes .8 miles of the Missouri River and Deep Creek, a well-known tributary where cold water meets the warmer currents of the Mighty Mo. Much of the open space on this ranch has been set aside for wildlife habitat for generations of elk, antelope, moose, and trout.



## All-Weather Friends

Since 2016, the partnership between Prickly Pear Land Trust and the National Guard has permanently protected 5,787 acres in Lewis & Clark and Broadwater counties. The National Guard's open space program provides funding for land protection around military sites, like Fort Harrison and the Limestone Hills training facility.

Experience has taught the military that open space and working lands are better neighbors than homes and subdivisions. In states like Nevada and Oregon, residential development has made it so difficult to complete their mission that the military sends soldiers and equipment to Idaho and Montana for training and service. That can cost the military – and local economies – tens of millions of dollars.

Thanks to abundant open space, Fort Harrison can still train soldiers, use artillery and aircraft, and hire locals to maintain equipment. PPLT completes conservation easements by matching Army funds with local



funding. The most crucial source is landowner donations. Conservation easements are made possible by landowners who generously donate up to 100% of their property value. The Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Lewis & Clark County Open Space Bond, and the Cinnabar Foundation have contributed to projects like Birdseye Ranch and Sevenmile Creek.

When a project meets a local community need, but a conservation easement isn't possible, PPLT may use National Guard funding to purchase land and manage it for conservation and public access. PPLT is committed to responsible land ownership, including restoring and managing waterways, grasslands, and forests for wildlife, water resources, and agriculture. Land management is expensive, but military funding is also available to support the highest degree of conservation on properties like Birdseye Ranch and Sevenmile Creek.

*Experience has taught the military that open space and working lands are better neighbors than homes and subdivisions.*



Sarah Ryan

## BROADWATER AND LEWIS & CLARK COUNTIES CONSERVATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

## LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY BIRDSEYE RANCH



Kevin League

*Prickly Pear Land Trust may use National Guard funding to purchase land and manage it for conservation and public access.*



Emily Winn



Emily Winn

## Room to Roam – Big Enough for Balance

On a cold spring morning, a herd of pronghorn stands on a grassy hill overlooking the Helena Valley. The herd is a rare sight these days. New housing developments and roads mean pronghorn and other species have less room to roam than ever before. Habitat loss and fragmentation are the leading cause of declining wildlife populations in Montana.

In 2024, Prickly Pear Land Trust protected local grassland habitat by purchasing and protecting Birdseye Ranch with the support of funding from the National Guard, the Lewis and Clark Open Space Bond program, and the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust. This 1,472-acre property is one of the last large tracts of undeveloped land in the Helena Valley, and it adjoins tens of thousands of acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the state. This type of open space is vital for wildlife moving between the Continental Divide, the Scratchgravel Hills, and the Missouri River corridor.

**“Birdseye Ranch is an ideal example** of how conservation is compatible with community needs,” says John Beaver, a hunter, ecologist, and former board member at Prickly Pear Land Trust. “It’s not about closing off the land. It’s about balancing public access with conservation.”

**The 1,472-acre tract of undeveloped land is vital for wildlife moving between the Continental Divide, the Scratchgravel Hills, and the Missouri River corridor.**

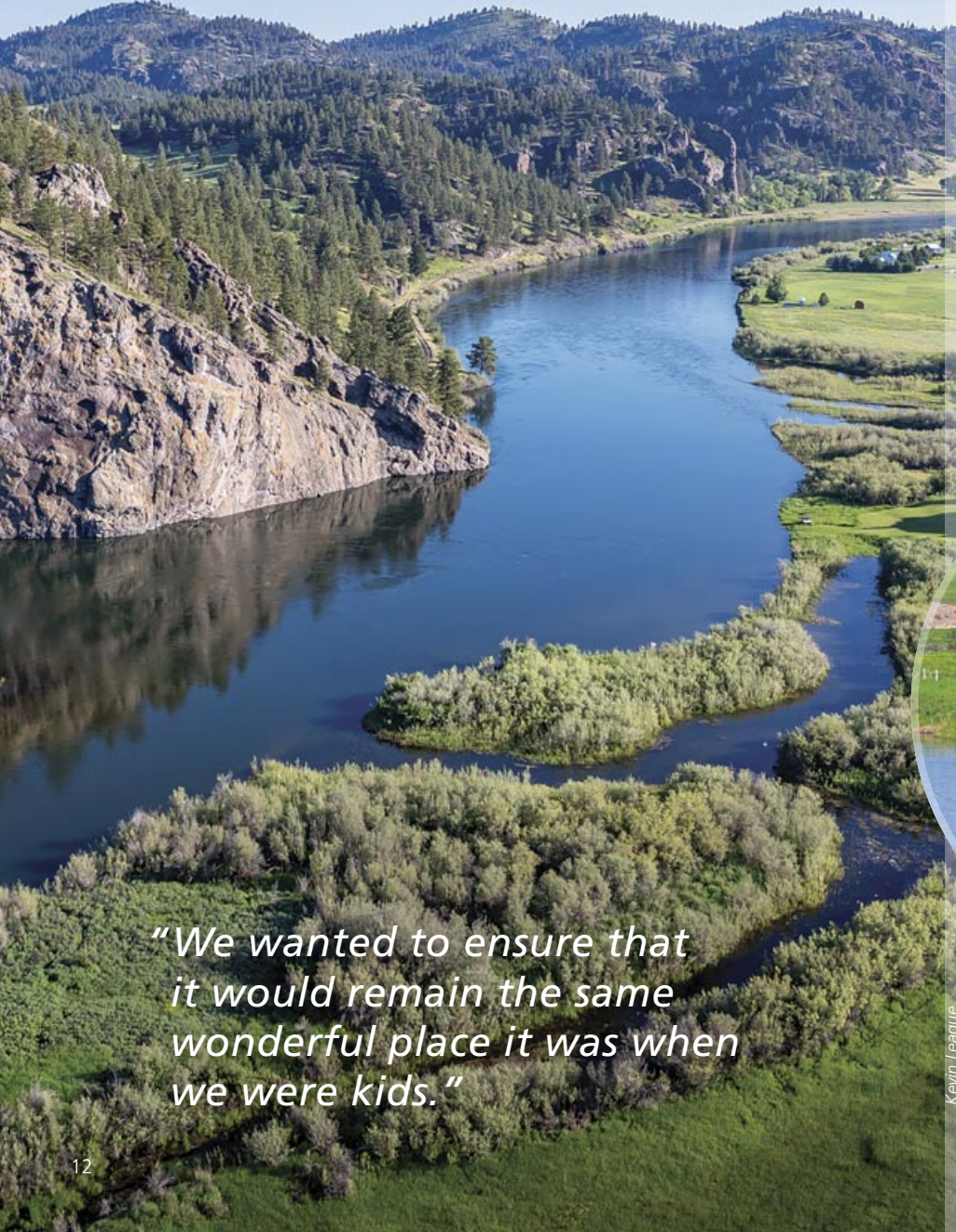


Block Management is a crucial tool in the public access toolbox. Managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, this program makes private property available for limited, seasonal public hunting with game warden support. It’s a crucial program in Montana, where the demand for hunting licenses is rising, yet the number of landowners who enroll in Block Management each year is declining. Birdseye Ranch was an excellent candidate for the program because it adjoins so much public land.

“We were very excited to enroll Birdseye Ranch as a Block Management Area. PPLT is committed to opening public access when and where appropriate while protecting wildlife during the more vulnerable seasons. In the future, we’ll have limited grazing at Birdseye, too,” says Travis Vincent, lands director for PPLT. “Agriculture, critters, and public access strike a nice balance.”

Birdseye Ranch also supports the National Guard’s air and ground training mission by protecting open space around Fort Harrison, ensuring a future where recreation, agriculture, and national security all benefit wildlife.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY  
**CANYON  
 CATTLE RANCH**



*"We wanted to ensure that it would remain the same wonderful place it was when we were kids."*

Kevin League

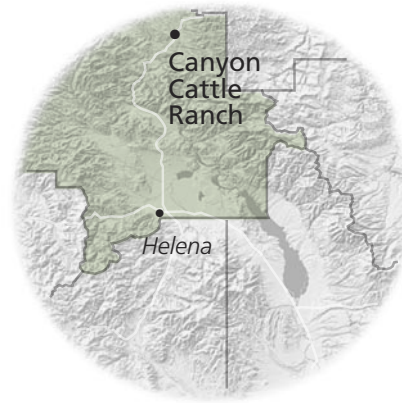
All in Good Time  
 on the Mighty Mo

**The mighty Missouri River** carved Wolf Creek Canyon into the Adel Mountains millennia ago. If you float down the river from Craig or drive Recreation Road from Wolf Creek to Cascade, you'll be awed by the volcanic cliffs and outcroppings that soar above the river's slow, deep waters. The patchwork of meandering riverbanks, rolling ranchlands, and craggy hills feels timeless. Thanks to the Juedeman family, now a five-mile stretch of the river is timeless.

The Juedemans own the Canyon Cattle Company and began ranching along the Missouri River in the 1970s.



**The Canyon Cattle Ranch protects working lands, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities along the Missouri River.**



"The family ranch is something that we all tremendously value, and we just couldn't contemplate that not existing forever," Mark Juedeman said. "We wanted to ensure that it would remain the same wonderful place it was when we first saw it when we were kids."

In 2022, hundreds of Lewis & Clark County residents voiced support for a conservation easement on the 4,000-acre cattle ranch. The county commission approved funding from the Lewis & Clark County Open Space Bond program. The Juedeman family donated a very generous portion of the assessed value of the land to complete the project, one of the largest conservation easements in the Prickly Pear region.

Many conservation easements are tucked out of sight. The Canyon Cattle Ranch, however, is a notable exception. More than 150,000 people enjoy blue-ribbon trout fishing on that stretch of the Missouri River every year, and 2.3 million vehicles drive down the canyon. Canyon Cattle Ranch and its abundant wildlife – whitetail and mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, black bear, wolves, and wild turkey – are essential to their shared experience.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY  
**SOUTH HILLS  
 TRAIL SYSTEM**



*"It's about building strength, confidence, and community, one girl at a time."*

Blair Haseman

Girls Thrive Here

**Prickly Pear Land Trust** started as a grassroots movement to protect a mountain and grow the trails and open space of Helena's South Hills. Since 1995, PPLT has helped build over 80 miles of singletrack trails and protected nearly 700 acres of open lands in the South Hills. Today, the South Hills trail system is one of the best in the state, and runners, hikers, and bikers flock here to enjoy it. But Helena's homegrown trail system can offer far more than leg-burning workouts and scenic views. For young women in the Girls Thrive program, the trails mean community and connection.

Founded in 2010, Girls Thrive encourages girls to make friends and be authentic while they try new activities – like trail running, mountain biking, and snowshoeing. "We wanted to create more opportunities for girls to get outside and move, to take care of their whole selves," says Blair Haseman, executive director of Girl's Thrive. "It's about building strength, confidence, and community, one girl at a time."

Natalia Sublette joined Girls Thrive tentatively, unsure if she'd enjoy running. "When I started running, it was difficult,"

recalls Natalia. "However, I loved the atmosphere created by the coaches and other girls."

With time, Natalia discovered new spaces and learned to appreciate the beauty around her. Her participation in Girls Thrive led her to try out for her high school cross-country team, where her connection to the trails deepened. "Even though there have been tough workouts on the trails, I've had so many fun conversations and moments with teammates," she shares.

Natalia trained for one of her biggest accomplishments in the South Hills. She ran the Just for the Helena of It half-marathon and placed second in her age group. Like many graduates of Girls Thrive, Natalia is confident in her ability to set goals, break barriers, and inspire others.

"Something magical happens when kids are outside. They're able to regulate their nervous nervous system. They're calm. They can communicate better," Haseman says. "Thanks to Prickly Pear's work, we're raising up the next generation of trail stewards."

Running Wild for Happy Trails

Kris Larson thought a trail race would be the perfect way to rally support for Prickly Pear Land Trust, but she didn't know the first thing about races or running. So Kris recruited her buddy Martin Miller and together they turned a hair-brained idea into one of Helena's greatest springtime traditions.

**In 2025, the Don't Fence Me In Trail Run celebrates its 25th anniversary.** The race has become an enduring symbol of community, conservation, and Happy Trails culture. All funds raised support parks, trails, and open space in west-central Montana.



**50K, 25K, 12K, and 5K  
 Saturday, May 10, 2025**

**Register Today**



Floating Leaf Studios



## Bridging Past and Future in East Helena

**For lifelong East Helena resident** Ashley Torgerson, the town's new parks and open spaces are more than just places. As a child, she roamed this land, creating a sense of self and belonging. Now, she stands by Prickly Pear Creek, watching her high school students discover the same wonder she felt years ago.

"We have such beautiful scenery," Ashley says. "And teaching students to appreciate it is teaching them to be a part of this place."

Ashley's connections to East Helena run deep. Her father was a brick mason at American Smelting and Refining Company for 17 years, and her uncle was an electrician for the company. ASARCO built East Helena and, in many ways, supported families like Ashley's. However, it also left behind environmental challenges. Ashley witnessed the community heal and transform the former ASARCO lands into schools, housing, parks, and trails. The parks and trails along the creek now bridge past challenges to future opportunities.

Ashley teaches high school science in East Helena and partners with Prickly Pear Land Trust's education program.

**The parks and trails along the creek now bridge past challenges to future opportunities.**

From observing wildlife to monitoring water quality, students directly engage with their environment, connecting with the landscapes that shape their community and developing a sense of belonging and responsibility. Many return with their families, excited to share what they've learned.

"There is something special about the outdoors," Ashley says. "It's an instant relaxer and helps the mental well-being of anyone who gets outside."

Looking to the future, Ashley hopes to have more spaces like this for the community to enjoy. For her, they're not only a resource. They're a legacy for future generations.



Emily Winn

## LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY THE GROVE & PRICKLY PEAR PARK



Eliza Wiley



**From observing wildlife to monitoring water quality, students engage with and learn from their environment at the new parks in East Helena.**

*"Teaching students to appreciate beautiful scenery is teaching them to be a part of this place."*



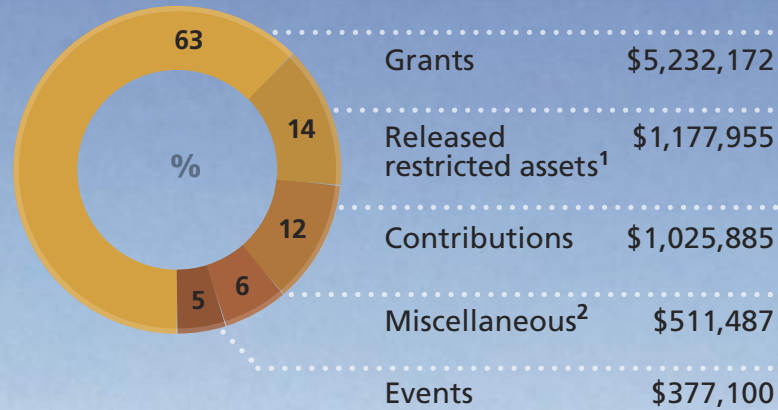
Emily Winn



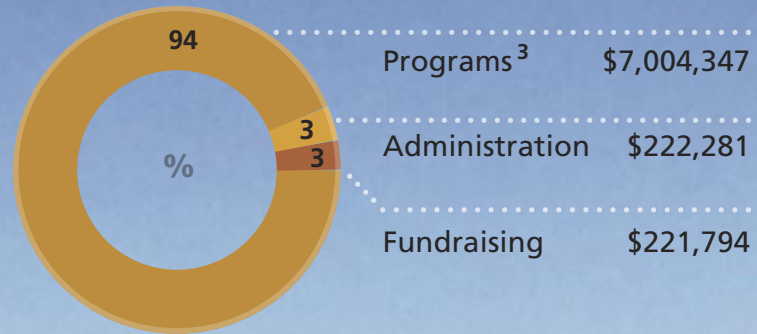
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fiscal year ending December 31, 2024

**TOTAL REVENUE** **\$8,324,599**



**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$7,448,422**



### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Released restricted assets are typically grant funds received in a prior year and used in a later year.

<sup>2</sup> Miscellaneous revenue includes investment income, contract fees, merchandise, and other income sources.

<sup>3</sup> Program expenses include land conservation and management, trails and parks, and education. 2024 program expenses included the \$2.9M Birdseye land purchase.

*Prickly Pear Land Trust is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. This financial information has not yet been audited.*

Andrea Silverman

## FOR MONTANA, NOW OR NEVER

For 30 years, Prickly Pear Land Trust has connected land and people because what's good for nature is good for all of us. The demand for this work has never been greater. Here are some reasons why it's now or never for conservation in Montana.

- POPULATION GROWTH**  
 Our region in Montana is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. The influx of new residents is good for local economies, but growth places pressure on agriculture, rivers, wildlife, and trails. PPLT is focused on protecting those values and our quality of life.
- LAND RUSH**  
 Farms and ranches define Montana's heritage, but skyrocketing land values combined with drought, wildfires, and rising costs can squeeze family operations. Land trusts provide critical tools to family operations to help them stay in business and pass their land on to the next generation.
- SEVERE WEATHER**  
 Increased temperatures, prolonged drought, reduced snowpack, intense wildfires, and flooding change landscapes, wildlife habitat, and communities. We are expanding our stewardship efforts and working with partners to grow local resiliency and sustainability.
- LOVED TO DEATH**  
 Our booming outdoor recreation and tourism industry supports Montana's economy and creates jobs. However, its popularity has also strained limited land management and recreation resources and impacted wildlife. We will continue to work with public managers to promote Happy Trails for all.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- JOIN THE CACTUS CLUB**  
 Cactus Club members are the foundation of our conservation work. Your automatic monthly donation supports community conservation in west-central Montana. Cactus Club members enjoy great perks.
- MAKE AN ANNUAL GIFT**  
 Your annual gift is a critical investment in our community's future. Your support will help us protect land and wildlife habitat, invest in family farms and ranches, and build parks and trails so that every Montanan can enjoy the outdoors.
- MAKE A PLANNED GIFT**  
 Planned gifts help Prickly Pear Land Trust meet the growing demand for conservation, recreation, and education. You can include PPLT in your will or designate it as a beneficiary of your retirement or life insurance plan. Please let us know if you have included PPLT in your estate so we can properly thank you for your gift and honor your wishes.
- DONATE LAND OR REAL ESTATE**  
 Gifts of real estate contribute to our mission in many ways. Land, homes, condos, and rental properties are invaluable resources as we strive to connect land and people. When you donate real estate, 100% of its value benefits Prickly Pear Land Trust while you receive an income tax deduction and avoid estate taxes.



Emily Winn

*If you share our vision, join us with a monthly, annual, or planned gift.*

- MAKE A GIFT**  
 Scan or visit [pricklypearlt.org](https://pricklypearlt.org) today.



**LEGAL LANGUAGE AND TAX ID**  
 For all legal purposes, please refer to our organization as:  
 Prickly Pear Land Trust  
 40 W. Lawrence Suite A  
 Helena, MT 59601  
 Tax ID number: 81-0506868



## OUR VISION

In 1995, friends and neighbors gathered in a Helena living room to figure out how to protect the mountain behind Montana's Capitol.

Since then, Prickly Pear Land Trust has protected over 2,000 acres in Helena's South Hills and built most of today's trails. We've opened parks, partnered with farmers and ranchers, and fostered a new generation of trail and land stewards.

We're creating a healthy future for all Montanans by protecting the places where we work, play, and learn.

*Meet the Prickly Pear team (left to right): Tim Lawrence, Lucas Orth, Audra Shropshire, Travis Vincent, Emily Winn, Kevin League, Mary Hollow, Collin Ahlmeier, Rachel Rountree, Becca Dudek, Sherry Berrin, Emmett Purcell, Sarah Ryan, and Renae Schulte, (not pictured: Nate Kopp)*



Floating Leaf Studios



Celebrating 30 years  
connecting land and people

**PRICKLY PEAR  
LAND TRUST**

40 W. Lawrence, Suite A  
PO Box 892, Helena, MT 59624

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