



Water, Wildlife, Way of Life

Photo by
Gravity Shots

Conservation Funding for Landowners

Flathead Valley landowners have successfully used various funding programs to conserve over 5,000 acres in the Flathead Valley, helping achieve their management goals for their properties.



Flathead River bend near Kalispell

WHAT CAN WE DO?

River to Lake Initiative partners work with interested landowners to secure funding from government programs, foundations, and private donors. We prepare and submit competitive funding applications for conservation and restoration projects. These partnerships have led to successful conservation and restoration projects, helping conserve farms, fish and wildlife habitat and clean water.

Following are some programs and grants that can help landowners conserve valuable resources in the Flathead River to Lake area:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is the federal agency that distributes power generated by 31 dams in the Columbia River Basin. BPA is charged with mitigating, or offsetting, the impacts dam operations have on rivers and associated native fish and wildlife. In the Flathead Watershed, landowners have used BPA funding to purchase conservation easements on high quality habitat, such as streamside forests, wetlands, floodplain areas and adjacent uplands. For more information contact Kris Tempel, Fisheries Lands Conservation, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 751-4573.



River to Lake partners help landowners with riparian forest restoration

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

US Fish and Wildlife Service provides funding through NAWCA to purchase lands or for voluntary conservation agreements that protect wetlands, streamside forests and adjacent uplands and other critical habitats for feeding or nesting waterfowl. For more information visit www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA.

RIVER TO LAKE INITIATIVE: Conservation Funding for Landowners

Funding for Farmers, Ranchers

Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCS works with landowners to provide planning assistance and funding to conserve soil, water, plants and animals that result in healthy and productive lands. Voluntary programs include:

- **Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP).**

This program provides funds to purchase conservation easements and keep valuable farm and ranch land in production. This program targets productive and erodible lands. It can fund half of project costs. Non-federal funding must cover the other half.

- **Environmental Quality Investments Program (EQIP).**

This program provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers through contracts that have a maximum term of 10 years. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, or air resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forest land.

- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).** This program provides funding to farmers/ranchers to conserve and restore manipulated wetlands associated with agriculture. The restored wetlands and qualifying adjacent uplands are retired from agriculture and then managed for wetland and wildlife habitat purposes. Perpetual or 30-year easements are offered. NRCS pays 100% of the easement value and restoration cost on perpetual easements. It pays 75% of those costs on 30-year easements, with the landowner providing the remaining 25%.

Jerry and Aileen Brosten placed a conservation

easement on the Diamond B Ranch – a 192-acre working farm along one-and-a-half miles of the Flathead River, with a family Wedding business.



The land has been in the family for four generations. “We have deep roots here,” Jerry Brosten told the Bigfork Eagle. A conservation easement “was a good opportunity to protect the land long after we’re gone, and you don’t get the opportunity to do that very often.”

They could not have done it without the help of the Flathead Land Trust and River to Lake Initiative partners who secured funding through several grants.

“For us, it was important to keep this because we didn’t know if they (their kids) would come back or not. You know, 200 acres isn’t enough to make a living,” Brosten said. “This way at least they’ll have it.”

WHERE CAN WE LEARN MORE?

For more information visit: <http://www.flatheadrivertolake.org/index.php/landowner-resources/grants-programs/>, contact the individuals listed above regarding specific programs, or call our land trust partners: Flathead Land Trust - 752-8293 & Montana Land Reliance – 837-2178.