

Ravalli County Commissioners
215 S. 4th Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

May 16, 2014

Dear Commissioners,

I am asking your support for \$150,000 of Open Lands funds to be used for the Lazy Burnt Fork Ranch, owned by Stephen Peckinpaugh. This purchase equates to \$450/acre on 335 acres, a true bargain of land values.

The addition of Lazy Burnt Fork Ranch to other conservation easements in the Burnt Fork will further enhance the agriculture and wildlife habitat of this drainage. Last night we had 5 cow elk grazing in *our* hay meadow. Without the linkage of these open spaces I doubt we would see elk grazing so far west on Sunset Bench.

While I realize Ravalli County is experiencing financial difficulties, the Open Lands program was approved by voters in 2006, and does not impact the general operating capabilities of the county. Citizens requested Commissioners to preserve open lands that protect working farms and ranches, water quality and important wildlife habitat.

I am a member of the Open Lands Board, but write to you today as a citizen of Ravalli County, and a resident of the Burnt Fork.

I regret that I will not be able to attend the meeting on Monday, May 19, 2014. I ask for your support of this project.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon Schroeder

Via email

CC: Bitterroot Land Trust