

**Chris Taggart**

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Dear commissioners,

Attached is letter of support for the South Burnt Fork Ranch Open Lands Project.

Thank you,

Alan Maki

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**MAR 04 2021**

**Ravalli County Commissioners**



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HP Team

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3/3/21

Dear Commissioner Burrows, Chilcott and Huls,

This letter is written in support of the applicants for the final phase 5 of the South Burnt Fork Ranch Open Lands Bond project. I was fortunate enough to get a tour of this wonderful ranch and strongly feel that it fits well into why the community supported the Open Lands Bond (OLB) in the first place.

The scoring criteria for the OLB was originally set up to reward the diverse attributes of open lands that the community said they valued. This project really scored high because it has so many of the factors that the community supported with the OLB. It's a productive ranch with a lot of live water, wildlife, views and conservation around it, all of which directly shows up on the scoring sheet.

It especially should be noted that this ranch is known for its spring creeks which are so important to downstream water use for agriculture, wildlife (Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge) and municipal (Town of Stevensville). As Stevensville grows as a town/city it will CONTINUE to need its water recharged by ranches such as this, so that when they do have large subdivisions, they can still provide water for old and new citizens alike.

It was my understanding that the landowners only recently "put together" the ranch with several purchases in the last number of years. They certainly did not have to sign in to this program, but chose to largely because of their neighbors and neighborhood around them. They have offered a wonderful gift for the citizens of Ravalli County, please accept it and finalize the South Burnt Fork Project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Alan Maki

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Corvallis, MT 59828