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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST ACQUIRES EAST FORK RIVER  
LAND IN SULA FROM LOCAL PARTNER BITTER ROOT LAND  
TRUST; COMMUNITY RECREATION ACCESS HIGH PRIORITY**

The Bitterroot National Forest has acquired a 12.5-acre parcel on the East Fork of the Bitterroot River in Sula from the Bitter Root Land Trust (BRLT), a local non-profit organization working to conserve water, wildlife and working farms and ranches throughout the Bitterroot Valley. The land will provide future public recreational access in the Sula area.

Visible from Highway 93 and located just west of the Sula Store, the property is bordered by US Forest Service land to the south, west and east. The East Fork of the Bitterroot River flows through the property, which holds native westslope cutthroat and bull trout as well as rainbow and brown trout. The upland portions of the property consist of wetlands, riparian areas and Ponderosa Pine forest, which provide habitat for moose, elk, deer, bighorn sheep, and a variety of birds.

The property was originally gifted to BRLT by landowners Kurt and Debbie Thomas in 2017 for the purposes of open space conservation and public recreational access. BRLT acted as the interim landowner for the past five years, while working to transfer it to public ownership. Purchased with funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Bitterroot National Forest will now serve as the public owner and steward of the property.

“The conservation value of this property makes it a great community asset for the future of the south valley,” said Kyle Barber, BRLT Conservation Director. “We’re grateful to Kurt and Debbie for their generous gift and excited to partner with the Bitterroot National Forest to honor their vision for public use and enjoyment of this special property.”

“We are excited to have this parcel in the forest system to provide public access for recreation and conservation,” said Matt Anderson, Forest Supervisor. “While it is now public land, future actions will be considered to maintain the integrity of the site, refine and implement recreational use, and to provide the public with safe access. We look forward to continued work with the Bitter Root Land Trust.”

To learn more about the Bitter Root Land Trust, visit [www.bitterrootlandtrust.org](http://www.bitterrootlandtrust.org). To learn more about the Bitterroot National Forest, visit [www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot).

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The Bitter Root Land Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that partners with landowners and the community to conserve clean water, wildlife habitat, and working farms and ranches in and around the Bitterroot Valley for present and future generations. For more information, visit [bitterrootlandtrust.org](http://bitterrootlandtrust.org) or call 406-375-0956.