

## BLACKFOOT COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA

*A working landscape that balances ecological diversity with local economic sustainability. Established 2005.*

- Completed two prescribed burns across 200 acres together with two adjacent landowners.
- Completed 40 acres of forest restoration to improve forest health and resilience.
- Continued to control invasive weeds along roads and in native prairies.
- Hosted multiple volunteer days to remove conifers from aspen stands, collect old wire, and pull weeds.
- Provided year-round public access, including 1.5-mile nature trail, motorized use season, and hunting via Block Management Program.

## FORESTRY

*Restoring forest health and reducing wildfire risk near communities. Established 2008.*

- Facilitated 508 acres of prescribed burning on private lands and supported public partner burns across more than 3,000 acres.
- Completed 457 acres of forest thinning to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk.
- Created prescribed burn plan templates for common forest fuel types in the Blackfoot.
- Accepted as a “Fire Learning Network” partner, receiving funding, technical expertise, and access to a nationwide network of fire practitioners.



Photo by Brad Weltzien



Photo by Jeremy Roberts



## WATER

*Voluntary water stewardship grounded in shared knowledge and shared commitment. Established 2000.*

- Launched a new Water Committee to help develop a community response to big picture water issues, including increasing impacts from recreation.
- Monitored soil moisture conditions across multiple fields on six properties, using data to help inform water and soil conservation practices.
- Implemented the second phase of a low-impact restoration project (beaver dam analogs) on Chimney Creek.
- Worked with multiple landowners on beaver conflict mitigation projects and installed two pond levelers on one property to mitigate flooding.
- Implemented drought response program with landowners, helping slow the river's decline during a challenging drought year.

Photo by Jennifer Schoonen

## EDUCATION

*Nurturing watershed awareness and stewardship through place-based education. Established 1993.*

- Engaged more than 70 students from five watershed schools in monitoring stream flows, water temperatures and aquatic invertebrates in important streams.
- Hosted all-day Bear Aware events for Seeley, Ovando and Helmville schools with stations on bear biology, securing attractants, recreating in bear country, and more.
- Hosted more than 70 watershed students and teachers for Youth Field Day at Garnet Ghost Town, with presentations on mining, history, and forestry.
- Engaged eight watershed residents in citizen science, monitoring long-billed curlews and common loons.
- Hosted more than 100 people for a Zoom presentation on animal warning systems and 25 people for a bird walk around Lake Upsata.



Photo by Rob Green



Photo by Eric Graham



## WILDLIFE

*Reducing human-wildlife conflicts through proactive and preventative strategies. Established 2002.*

- Removed 885 livestock carcasses from 115 ranches in the Blackfoot watershed and Powell and Granite counties.
- Installed two new electric fences on ranches and rebuilt fences on two additional properties experiencing bear conflicts.
- Conducted field testing of a drive-over electric mat system to keep bears out of calving areas and homesites, with zero bears successfully crossing the mats.
- Hired three seasonal range riders to monitor 4,589 head of livestock across 78,900 acres in the Blackfoot watershed.
- Employed elk hunt coordinator to respond to hunter inquiries and schedule hunts on participating ranches during shoulder seasons.
- Conducted winter rare forest carnivore monitoring together with the Southwestern Crown Collaborative.

## LAND STEWARDSHIP

*Supporting landowners through stewardship assistance to enhance watershed-wide resilience. Established 2016.*

- Hosted 3rd annual soil health field tour on two ranches, discussing soil biology, soil moisture monitoring, and the use of animal compost to enhance soil health.
- Together with NRCS, continued conifer encroachment projects on private lands near Helmville to improve grasslands and bird habitat.
- Partnered with the Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited and US Fish & Wildlife Service on riparian enhancement and grazing management projects along Cottonwood and Nevada creeks.

Photo by Blackfoot Challenge Staff

## TRUMPETER SWANS

*Restoring trumpeter swans to their native habitat on Blackfoot wetlands. Established 2004.*

- Eight pairs of trumpeter swans nested and successfully fledged 17 cygnets. An additional 27 non-nesting swans summered in the watershed.
- Released four yearling trumpeter swans in May at our final Trumpeter Swan Release Day.
- More than 110 students and their teachers attended the final trumpeter swan release, participating in six learning stations on bird biology and wetland ecology.
- One adult swan was fitted with a GPS radio collar, allowing us to track summer habitat use, fall migration, and wintering site locations.

## CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

*Coordinating land conservation and stewardship to keep working landscapes intact. Established 2000.*

- Hosted annual gathering for 20 public and private conservation practitioners to share information and leverage efforts.
- Participated in a Sprint Agility Lab with The Nature Conservancy and partners, establishing a local Partnership Council to develop stewardship opportunities on 40,000 acres west of Seeley Lake.



Photo by Jeremy Roberts



Photo by Karen Laitala

## VEGETATION

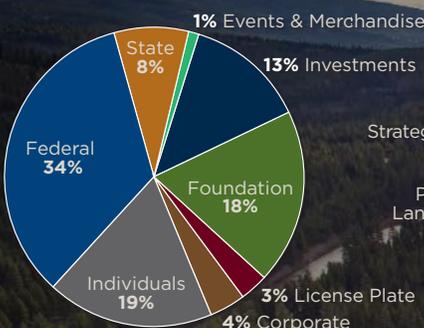
*Integrated, locally-led approaches to invasive plant management across fence lines. Established 1995.*

- Worked with landowners to implement integrative noxious weed management practices.
- Offered treatment recommendations to landowners including native and exotic plant identification, herbicide application products, biological control with insects, and reseeding practices.
- Hosted two weed pulls at the Russell Gates Fishing Access Site for the 23rd year.
- Partnered with the BCCA on noxious weed treatments and youth education field days.

## FINANCIALS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2021

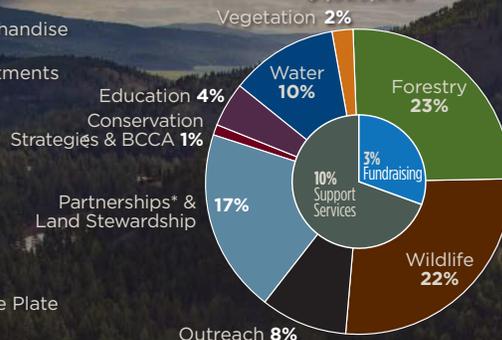
### SOURCE OF FUNDS

\$1,849,613



### USE OF FUNDS

\$1,329,268



\*Includes a cooperative agreement with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, a Memorandum of Understanding with Partnerscapes, and the Blackfoot Challenge is the fiscal agent for Montana Forest Collaboration Network.

Photo by Jeremy Roberts

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