



Photo by Brad Weltzien

BLACKFOOT COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA

- Developed an off-stream solar-powered stock water system.
- Completed 140 acres of forest restoration.
- Continued rest/rotation cattle grazing system with two adjacent landowners.
- Treated more than 100 acres of noxious weeds using herbicide and biological control.
- Provided year-round public recreation, including 1.5-mile nature trail, 6-week motorized use season, and hunter access via the Block Management Program.

EDUCATION

- Created lessons about trumpeter swans for elementary school students for remote or in-person learning, including videos from the field.
- Reached 100 students from five watershed schools with rotating Naturalist Speaker Series, sharing presentations on mountain lions and cavity-nesting birds.
- Coordinated 10 citizen science volunteers who collected data on three rare bird species: long-billed curlews, common loons, and great gray owls.
- As part of Pure Montana Tales, hosted a family-friendly field trip on birds and native plants.



Photo by Elaine Caton

FORESTRY

- Provided on-site forest health and fuel reduction education to nearly 30 landowners.
- Coordinated 261 acres of hazardous fuel reduction around homes to improve forest health and community resilience to wildfire.
- Supported local forestry jobs and provided wood products to local sawmills.
- Accomplished two prescribed burns on a total of 16 acres of private property.
- Continued collaborative, cross-boundary prescribed burn planning across thousands of acres for implementation in 2021 and beyond.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

- Completed grazing management plans on several properties - totaling approximately 1,000 acres - to improve riparian area health and wildlife habitat.
- Hosted Soil Health Work Group Tour for more than 30 participants, visiting several properties to learn about soil health concepts and innovative management tools being used by landowners.
- Collaborated with NRCS on the second year of a conifer encroachment removal project near Helmsville, with the goal to restore more than 2,500 acres of native prairie before 2023.

SWANS

- Five pairs of trumpeter swans nested and successfully fledged 20 cygnets.
- Released three yearling trumpeter swans in the Blackfoot in June.
- Fitted two non-nesting adult swans with GPS radio collars, allowing us to track their summer habitat use, fall migration, and wintering site locations.



Photo by Eliza Wiley



Photo by Karen Laitala



Photo by Sara Schmidt

VEGETATION

- Offered treatment recommendations to landowners including native and exotic plant identification, herbicide products, biological control, and reseeding practices.
- Created a “Noxious Weeds and their Native Plant Look-A-Likes” video for remote education during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Hosted two weed pulls at the Russell Gates Fishing Access Site for the 22nd year in a row.
- Worked with a local contractor using drone technology to apply an herbicide trial on cheatgrass.

WATER

- Hired a drought technician who helped dozens of landowners update their individual water conservation plans to prepare for changes to the Blackfoot Drought Response Program.
- Created weekly irrigation water management and soil health reports, guiding 100 landowners on improving soil health and operating with limited water.
- Conducted irrigation pump efficiency evaluations on two ranches to provide landowner guidance on improving energy and water use efficiency.
- Installed soil moisture monitors on three area ranches covering 11 irrigated fields to help producers improve irrigation water efficiency, especially in drought years.

WILDLIFE

- Provided homeowners with conflict reduction information and tools related to attractants such as fruit trees, garbage, livestock feed, outside freezers and pet food.
- Constructed six electric fences around calving yards, beehives, chicken coops, and homesites, as well as the carcass composting facility, to prevent grizzly bear conflicts.
- Picked up carcasses year-round throughout the Blackfoot watershed, Powell County and Granite County to minimize attracting bears and wolves onto ranches.
- Three seasonal Range Riders monitored carnivore activity and increased herd supervision on ranches and grazing leases across the watershed.
- Elk Hunt Coordinator responded to information requests from hunters and scheduled hunts on participating ranches during the elk hunt shoulder seasons.
- Installed two temporary turbo-fladry fences around ranch calving areas to deter wolves.



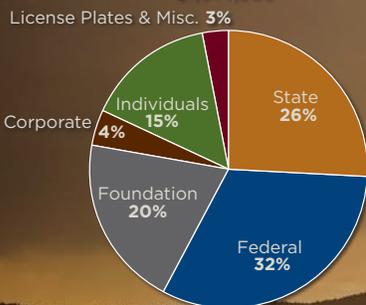
Photo by Elaine Caton

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FINANCIALS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2020

SOURCE OF FUNDS

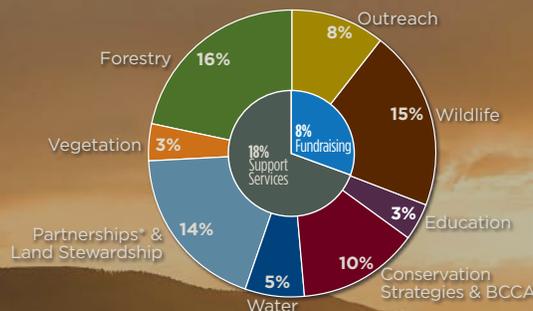
\$1,614,955



Includes Covid-19 relief funding.

USE OF FUNDS

\$1,347,097



Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all 2020 donors. Please see our online annual report for the donor list.

Blackfoot Challenge, Inc

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Ovando, MT 59854

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

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