



**FLATHEAD
LAND TRUST**
Conserving Our Legacy of Land and Water



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks finalizes purchase of 772 acres near Columbia Falls for the new Bad Rock Canyon Wildlife Management Area

Kalispell — This week, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) finalized the purchase of 772 acres of intact forestland along the Flathead River near Columbia Falls from former landowner Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC), a subsidiary of Glencore, Inc. FWP will now manage the property as the Bad Rock Canyon Wildlife Management Area and safeguard critical wildlife habitat while allowing public access.

“CFAC is extremely pleased to see the unanimous support for this project and we are pleased to be a partner in the project,” said Cheryl Driscoll, Head of US Corporate Affairs for Glencore, Inc. “The Bad Rock Canyon Wildlife Management Area will preserve a section of Montana that residents, visitors and future generations can enjoy. I congratulate everyone who worked so diligently to make this a reality. The Flathead Land Trust and FWP are to be commended for leading this collaborative effort.”

“The City of Columbia Falls is thrilled to have the Bad Rock Canyon Wildlife Management Area purchase finalized. This area greatly enhances and gives the citizens of Columbia Falls and the surrounding area a wonderful opportunity to recreate and enjoy the pristine nature of this land and access to the beautiful Flathead River, right next door to our community,” said Don Barnhart, Mayor of Columbia Falls and members of the Columbia Falls City Council. “The City of Columbia Falls would like to give a hearty thanks to all who made this project possible.”

“Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is grateful for the outpouring of community support and hard work by our partners to achieve this exciting project,” said Jim Williams, regional supervisor for FWP. “Collaboration is the key to successful conservation. This new protected forestland will benefit the entire watershed, wildlife and the public for generations to come.”

The property is located just east of Columbia Falls and south of the Flathead River and is one of the Flathead Valley’s largest remaining undeveloped riverfront properties. This property serves as critical winter range for elk, moose and white-tailed deer, and provides important habitat connectivity for grizzly bears, bull trout and 43 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. In addition, the wetlands and quality riparian habitat on the property help safeguard the healthy function and excellent water quality of the Flathead River and Flathead Lake. The protected

property will add to a 12,000-acre network of conserved land along 50 miles of the Flathead River and Flathead Lake downstream of Columbia Falls.

The acquisition also secures permanent public access to the property, which will include a limited opportunity for hunting and a 3-mile community trail constructed by Gateway to Glacier Trail, Inc. for use by hikers, bikers, birdwatchers and others.

FWP's Wildlife Management Areas are managed with wildlife and wildlife habitat conservation as the priority. The property will be closed to the public Dec. 2 through noon on May 15 each year to protect big game winter range.

FWP partnered with the Flathead Land Trust to purchase and conserve the outstanding habitat and natural values of the property. Two years ago, CFAC entered into an option agreement with the partners allowing until the end of 2021 to raise the necessary funds and complete the purchase.

The appraised value of the acquisition was \$7.26 million. Funding for the purchase includes \$4 million from the US Forest Service Forest Legacy Program which is funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and \$2.5 million from Habitat Montana, which uses big game license fees for habitat conservation. Flathead Land Trust was tasked with raising the remaining \$590,000 with help from funding partners, the Flathead Lakers. The majority of the donations were from local individuals and organizations as well as large grants from Heart of the Rockies Initiative, The Kendeda Fund, Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust, AGL Foundation, Cinnabar Foundation, Cross Charitable Foundation, Whitefish Community Foundation, Headwaters Montana, Montana Trout Unlimited, Flathead Valley Trout Unlimited, Flathead Wildlife, Flathead Audubon, and Vital Ground Foundation. Large donations from individuals were also received from Dean Marsh, David and Chet Barclay, Bob and Betty Moore, Molly Miller and Mark Jungerman, Walter Rowntree and Laura Reynolds, George and Kimberly Ruhana, and an anonymous donor. Over 250 individuals stepped up to financially contribute to the project.

“We have finally reached the finish line of what was only a dream two years ago”, said Paul Travis, Flathead Land Trust Executive Director. “The extraordinary level of local support is truly why this critical block of land is now conserved and in public hands. Thank you to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, CFAC, and our many other partners and donors for ensuring this wild place would be protected for this and future generations to enjoy.”

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