



THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION

P.O. BOX 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 275-2700
FAX (406) 275-2806
www.cskt.org



A People of Vision

A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreille
and Kootenai Tribes

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JUN 03 2018
Board of County
Commissioners

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June 5, 2018

Missoula Board of County Commissioners
200 West Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

RE: 2018 Missoula Open Space Bond

Dear Commissioners Curtiss, Rowley, Strohmaier,

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes wish to extend our support for the proposed Missoula County Open Space Bond. While a portion of the Flathead Indian Reservation is located in Missoula County, our aboriginal territory includes all of Missoula County, lands and waters that are of upmost importance to all of our people. This bond action will support conservation projects with high fish and wildlife uses and help restore trail corridors and access through lands with significant cultural importance.

The Open Space Bond will protect habitat for native plants and sensitive species, including bull trout, cutthroat trout and grizzly bears. In addition to protecting land and waterways directly, an open space bond provides indirect benefits that can reduce government spending and improve the overall function of the lands that sustain people here. Open space bonds reduce inappropriate development which can bring significant costs to governments in terms of road maintenance, police services, and other costs. Poorly planned development on forested lands adjacent to public lands, tribal lands and protected areas also increases costs associated with managing large wildfires. Buffering forested lands from inappropriate development may also allow land managers the space they need to safely restore fire back to the landscape through prescribed burns and thereby bring back a fire regime characterized by more frequent low intensity fires instead of the less frequent high intensity fires of today.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes strive to be good stewards of natural resources and we appreciate Missoula County efforts to do the same, and to partner with us at every opportunity. This proposed Open Space Bond will support the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and Missoula County's efforts to protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and wildland resources for continued use by generations of today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Ronald Trahan, Tribal Council Chair