

Dear Land Trust Friends,

This letter is about YOU. It's about how your love, passion, and support for the Bitterroot Valley have made it possible for the Bitter Root Land Trust to mark its 20th Anniversary in 2016. Together, we've spent two decades protecting the water, wildlife, working ranches, and landscapes of this special place we call home. Your belief in the vision that began around a kitchen table with the founding members of the Bitter Root Land Trust inspires me every day. You have contributed your heart, your time, and your energy to supporting the land trust from that bold vision to where we are today – the leader in preserving the Bitterroot's sense of place.

Now, I ask you to celebrate this 20th anniversary with us, and ensure this positive impact on the future of our valley continues to grow for the next 20 years. **Make your donation today to the Bitter Root Land Trust's 20th Anniversary Campaign, and build on this vision of protecting open land in the beautiful Bitterroot Valley.**

I'd like to share with you the story of our first conservation easement. In 1999, Howard and Patti Eldredge, took those very first steps alongside the newly-formed land trust to protect 38 acres where the cold waters of Sweathouse Creek flow into the Bitterroot River. The Eldredges' patience, persistence, and love for their land paved the way for all the landowners who have made that same commitment over the past 20 years. Each landowner holds in their heart the reasons why they have chosen to leave a conservation legacy to the valley. For Howard Eldredge: "Steve Powell came by one day to survey, and he hooked me. He inspired and confirmed our decision. We wanted to preserve the place the way it is."

Since that first conservation easement, BRLT has:

- Helped 30 additional local families conserve over 6,000 total acres, including 4,200 acres of prime agricultural land, 20+ miles of stream and river frontage, 3,750 acres of elk winter range, hunting access to public lands, and iconic Bitterroot view sheds;
- Listened to community needs and expanded our positive impact to include natural parks and trails, such as Steve Powell Park in Hamilton;
- Helped dozens of landowners restore their land after devastating wildfires, and enhance farm productivity and wildlife habitat through our integrated weed management programs;
- Educated thousands of local kids and adults, connecting them more deeply with the valley that is our home.

**Your contribution today will have immediate and lasting results! In the next year alone, your support will ensure an additional 1,400 acres of rangeland, stream resources, wildlife habitat, and view sheds in our valley will be protected-- FOREVER.** Future generations will experience the open lands, cold clean water, abundant wildlife, and local agriculture that make the Bitterroot so special because of your support today.

Our goal for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign is to raise an additional \$250,000 this year to conserve important local lands for fish, wildlife, agriculture....and for you, your family, and future generations ***Bitter Root Land Trust board members will match the first \$20K received before October 1<sup>st</sup> dollar for dollar, making your donation go further!*** You can help get the next 20 years off to a strong start by making a gift today.

Thank you for your support!

Gavin Ricklefs  
Executive Director

*P.S. At BRLT we are all about the work. We don't spend money on expensive fundraisers, banquets, or auctions. Your generous support goes directly to conserving water, wildlife, and working lands in the Bitterroot – a legacy we can all be proud of. I hope you will consider making a generous gift to our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign. We've come so far in the last 20 years--with your gift, we will do so much more in the next 20!*