

**GALLATIN COUNTY OPEN LANDS  
BOARD HISTORY AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

**JANUARY 1, 2008**

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This document is part of the strategic planning process that is being conducted on behalf of the Gallatin County Open Lands Program. It contains pertinent historical documents, reports, statistics, laws and regulations that pertain to the Open Lands conservation in Gallatin County. This document will also serve as a guidebook to board members and interested parties who are involved in the Gallatin County Open Lands Program now and in the future.

Gallatin County has been working for many years to implement Open Land conservation systems through various county plans, task force reports and regulatory changes. The most recent and specific was the 1998 Open Space Task Force that outlined recommendations for the conservation of open lands through a variety of practices and programs implemented through the County Planning Department, County Commission and Open Lands Board. Currently, Gallatin County has or is in the process of implementing the tools and recommendations of the Open Space Task Force. This report will serve as a strong baseline to design the direction of the Open Lands Program in the near future.

The Gallatin County Open Lands Board in conjunction with the Open Lands Coordinator, the Gallatin County Commission, Gallatin County Planning Department, Gallatin Valley Land Trust, The Trust for Public Lands, Montana Land Reliance, Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other stakeholders will all be providing input and information throughout the strategic planning process on behalf of the Open Lands Program. The outcome of this plan will be a guide for the direction of the Open Lands Program for the next two to five years.

### **MISSION**

The Mission of the Gallatin County Open Lands Board is to work with the County Commissioners and the citizens of Gallatin County to preserve natural lands and encourage the economic viability of agriculturally productive lands. This is accomplished through voluntary programs, which ensure the protection open-space lands, either in perpetuity or for a term of years; and through the identification or establishment of funding sources, tax measures or other incentives.

### **COUNTY STATISTICS**

Gallatin County covers over 2,500 square miles of mountain lands varying in topography and climate from temperate river valleys to snow-capped peaks and open ranch lands. Nearly half of all the land in Gallatin County is under public ownership by the Gallatin National Forest, State of Montana, Bureau of Land Management or the National Park Service.

The population of Gallatin County as reported by the 2000 Census is 67,831 people, an increase of 17,000 people since 1990. The projected population growth in the next ten years will be an additional 16,000 people. If the current rate remains constant Gallatin County could reach over 100,000 people by 2030.

The county seat is Bozeman and this center of commerce also attracts considerable tourist traffic destined for Yellowstone National Park, the Blue Ribbon Trout Streams, and other vast outdoor activities. Agricultural remains the county's number one industry with significant

numbers of sheep and swine raised in the county, while cattle remains the number one livestock production industry. Gallatin County is the top producer in the Montana for potatoes and also supports barley, wheat and hay crops. Other newer niche agricultural industries include native seed production and local produce farms.

Agriculture as the number one industry has still experienced a decline in its net income, dropping from \$31.1 million in 1970 to \$7.1 million in 2000. This change in economic conditions coupled with the increased pressure from new people moving in have made selling agricultural lands for development more attractive. From 1994 through 2000 the Gallatin County Planning Department reported more than 9660 acres of land being subdivided. Currently the [American Farmland Trust](#) has ranked Gallatin County as the number one "at risk" county for loss of ranchland to development pressure. (**Appendix A**) This was based on 236 counties in seven states across the Rocky Mountain West.

## **NATIONAL TRENDS**

In recent years there has been an increasing trend in land conservation initiatives through local governments. While these programs have been around many urban areas on the East and West Coast, initiatives have been slowly progressing as rural areas are seeing increasing pressures from loss of critical lands to development. Because of this increasing pressure we are finding more activity in Montana and surrounding states towards public funding initiatives for the acquisition of parks, recreational lands and open spaces. The Trust for Public Lands, a San Francisco based national conservation organization produces annual reports on the status of public funding measures across the nation in their publication [Land Vote 2006](#). (**Appendix B**)

With each passing year billions of dollars are funded through public sources for the purchase of real property or conservation easements across the country. Additionally, each year more lands are protected through a variety of private, nonprofit and public entities.

The [2005 Land Trust Census](#) (**Appendix C**) conducted by the Land Trust Alliance reported significant increase in the total acres protected through Conservation Easements, Land Trusts and Governmental entities.

This trend of increased funding measures adopted by voters and increased acreages being protected through conservation initiatives is proof of a significant change in mindset of people towards land conservation and the importance of protecting open lands on a national scale.

We have also seen change in support for land protection by the federal government. In the 2002 Farm Bill the U.S. Congress included increased funding of land conservation programs aimed at the protection of lands through conservation easement agreements, and added the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and the Grasslands Reserve Program. These new programs coupled with increases in existing agriculture conservation programs like the Wetland Reserve Program have become significant sources of matching funds for local land conservation initiatives.

Gallatin County was a major recipient of funds from the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program over the past four years. Currently the new Farm Bill is up for debate, however because of national disasters and wartime spending significant increases in funding for these Federal programs may be limited.

Additionally, stemming from the work of the Montana Land Reliance and other national

conservation groups pilot projects have been implemented to allow increased tax advantages for landowners who utilize conservation easements as a tool for land conservation. The old rules only allowed six years to use up tax credits from the donation of a conservation easement. The new rules will allow for up to 16 years for a landowner who can prove they make over 50% of their income from agriculture. At this time the pilot program is scheduled to sunset, however they are currently negotiating its renewal.

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF GALLATIN COUNTY OPEN LANDS

The importance of protecting open lands in Gallatin County has evolved over time. The original spotlight of conservation in Gallatin County was centered on the need for "Open Space" as it related to public access, parks and recreation. Only after considerable increases in development pressure from 1990 to 2000 did we see the focus of "Open Space" protection change for the preservation of our agricultural and natural resource lands.

The overall concept of the protection of "Open Space" is difficult for some to define. The term "Open Space" in itself is somewhat of a slang term with broad interpretation. Prior to 1979 "Open Space" was a slang term used to define the concept of scenic landscapes, parks, trails, mountains, rivers and streams.

However, in 1979 the State of Montana passed the [Open Space Land and Voluntary Conservation Act](#). This enabling act gave us the regulatory authority and definition we use today. The Legislature specifically defined the legal meaning of "**Open Space**" as: ***"any land which is provided or preserved for: park or recreational purposes; conservation of land or other natural resources; historic or scenic purposes; or assisting in the shaping of the character, direction, and timing of community development."*** (Appendix D)

Soon after the passage of the Open Space Act, Gallatin County began its first venture into addressing the needs for the protection of open lands that would lead us to where we are today. The first Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan was conducted in 1980 and updated in 1989. These plans were aimed primarily at the needs of Parks and Recreation and the recreational value of Open Space. The plans were completed not as a specific focus on the preservation of open lands, but as a required recreation plan and inventory of parklands as required by Montana law.

### 1980 PLAN

The first countywide recreation and open space plan was completed in 1980, the Gallatin County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The main focus of the 1980 plan was to deal with the growing need for public parks and recreation. The incorporated communities like Bozeman and Belgrade had shouldered the burden for recreation and public open space at the time, however the plan recognized that the growth of the county outside of incorporated cities would soon be a burden that the County would need to address.

The 1980 plan did address the issues of open lands and the need for its protection in two separate problem statements. While the recommendations were not as extensive as the current Open Lands Program, the report did address: What types of open space are needed in Gallatin County? and "Who in County Government should be responsible for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of County parklands, recreation areas and open spaces?"

The 1980 plan was an extensive report of recommendations to the County on how to approach the needs of recreation and open space. This report had not yet begun to address the needs of land conservation in agricultural communities to the scale we are working today.

It is notable that one of the original recommendations of the 1980 plan was to create an "Open Space Board" that would act as an advisory committee to the County Commission on the matters of parks, recreation and open space, thus beginning the discussion on what would eventually lead to the creation of the Open Lands Board. Even though the County adopted the 1980 plan its implementation was limited and not closely followed.

## **1989 PLAN**

In 1989 an update was completed to the 1980 plan in response to changing recreational needs, population growth, and a lack of funding for parks and "open space," the 1989 Recreation Plan. (**Appendix E**) Similar to the 1980 plan, the general focus of the 1989 Recreation Plan was to identify needs and methods to provide access to parks and recreation and the protection of important lands.

While the 1989 plan did focus on the need to preserve open lands, its primary relationship with open land conservation was from a recreational and public access perspective. Nonetheless, it was clearly identified in the report that agricultural and natural resource lands were becoming increasingly important.

Although farmland preservation is not the focus of this plan open space associated with agriculture is an important issue that deserves mention. Incentives to preserve farmland associated with open space can be offered through land use planning, farm support programs, tax incentives, and other land conservation programs. There are techniques now available, which can increase a farmer's land value, decrease his development costs and preserve large tracts of open space farmland.

Several of these techniques, including transfer of development rights (TDRs) and conservation easements will be discussed later in this plan.

The 1989 plan went on to recommend the use of Conservation Easements and Transfer of Development Rights programs as one method of beginning to conserve agricultural lands. The County adopted the 1989 Plan, but like its predecessor its implementation slowly diminished due to the lack of a central entity to oversee its execution.

## **OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE**

In June of 1997 the Gallatin County Commissioners formed the Gallatin County Open Space Task Force. This fifteen-member task force was given the responsibility to develop a range of methods that the county could use to protect open lands in the county.

The County Commission asked a diverse group of county residents to sit on a task force, whose purpose would be to develop a range of tools that the county could use to protect "open space". This task force was made up of residents of Gallatin County from all walks of life.

The Task Force met two to three times per month for a year. They had extensive meetings with as many stakeholders as possible, including presentations to civic groups, booths at the winter and summer county fairs, meetings in different communities, plus radio spots and guest editorials in several papers.

They invited speakers from across the country to share with the group the methods and programs that have been tried and their outcomes. From their research the task force developed a "toolkit" with mechanisms for preserving open lands. They consisted of a combination of incentives, market mechanisms, and support for directing development in Gallatin County in a way that preserves the unique character of the county.

They intended that the tools described by the Task Force Report be used to protect our area from the urban sprawl and landowner conflicts while at the same time encouraging the type of growth and development that is consistent with preserving our quality of life.

The Task Force was facing some alarming statistics while looking at the trends of growth in Gallatin County: From 1978 to 1992, 295 square miles of farm and ranch land in Gallatin County were converted to non-agricultural production. This equals about one-fifth of the approximately 895,000 acres of privately owned lands in Gallatin County.

Since January 1993, more than 17,000 acres of the land within Gallatin County have been divided for development purposes. Approximately 2,000 new parcels have been created for development since April 1993.

From 1970 to 1997, the population of Gallatin County grew by 88 percent. However, since 1970, the population in the rural areas of Gallatin County has seen a 138 percent increase, while the urban population only had a 64 percent increase.

Given this type of growth rate, if the County failed to take effective action, the Task Force estimated that in 5 to 10 years it might be too late to preserve "open space" to the extent needed to maintain quality of life and a significant agricultural community.

Another underlying factor, which contributes to the sense of urgency, is that virtually all the land, which the County can hope to preserve, is privately owned, most of it is in agricultural production, and thousands of acres may soon pass to the next generation subject to estate taxes. This led to the conclusion that one of the most effective ways to preserve "open space" in the County is to take maximum advantage of the limited ways in which the county can make it easier for agricultural producers to stay in business.

The Task Force submitted their report that represented over 12 months of public outreach and public input for land preservation ideas with the following recommendations for possible solutions and potential funding mechanisms. (**Appendix F**)

In looking for the tools the Task Force applied six filtering criteria to determine which tools could be considered truly effective. Through the filtering process they establish sixteen possible methods or "tools" that could be used for the preservation of open lands in Gallatin County. Each of the methods had both opportunities and challenges that could make them difficult. Each had to be considered carefully as they needed various steps of public input and support; new regulatory changes at the county and state levels, and most importantly would have monetary provisions that would need to be met. The tools were outlined with specific project descriptions, reasons for being selected and recommended actions.

The third and final recommendation made by the Open Space Task Force was an outline of possible funding mechanisms for the implementation of the tools available. Since the Task Force recognized that the best approach to the preservation of open lands was to be market driven they understood the importance of financial resources to provide incentives and compensation for open land conservation. The following funding mechanisms were listed for their advantages and the steps that were needed to make them successful. Like the tools, many of the eleven funding sources required changes or local action, or at the statewide levels, either through new regulations or legislative changes.

As part of their final report the Task Force outlined two additional actions for open lands conservation. These actions like the 1980 and 1989 Recreation Plans included the County hiring of a professional coordinator to oversee the program, and establishing an Open Lands Advisory Committee.

The Task Force report included a suggested timeline for implementation of the recommendations by the County. The County began implementation of some of the tools while others have not closely been adhered to. One of first and most important tools to be implemented was the creation of the Gallatin County Open Lands Board, although, originally the Task Force recommended an advisory committee appointed by the Planning Board, not a separate Open Lands Board appointed by the County Commission.

### **OPEN LANDS BOARD**

The Commission in 1999 formed the Open Lands Board. The Commission designed the board to have 15 citizen members from Gallatin County. Originally, eight of the fifteen members or a majority of the members had to be from an agricultural background. Later the requirement was shifted to only five members due to some difficulty in recruiting individuals from the agriculture community to serve on the board. The purpose for mandating a majority or set number of agricultural landowners on the board was to ensure that people from the agricultural

community had the greatest input in the decisions made regarding preservation of open lands in Gallatin County.

Each board member serves a term of two years after being appointed by the commission and are governed by a standing set of by-laws. **(Appendix G)** Currently we have had 26 dedicated citizens from all walks of life serve on the Open Lands Board. **(Appendix H)**

The Open Lands Board was saddled with the challenge of determining the best way to preserve open lands with the tools that were outlined by the Open Space Task Force. Given the limited regulatory ability of the Open Lands Board, many of the tools outlined by the Task Force could not be utilized by the board as they were under the jurisdiction of the County Planning Department and would take significant changes in planning and zoning in the county to fully implement them.

The Board made the decision to begin work a program to purchase development rights through conservation easements in the county. The concept had been widely utilized in other states and had been implemented by several groups in Montana.

After working with the Gallatin Valley Land Trust, the Montana Land Reliance and the Nature Conservancy, the three land trusts working in Gallatin County on the purchase of conservation easements, it was evident that one of the biggest obstacles to obtaining conservation easements from private landowners was a lack of funding for compensation.

### **OPEN SPACE BOND 2000**

In order to build a stronger conservation easement program the board determined that they needed to find a funding source for the purchase of development rights from willing landowners. Knowing they needed to develop a large funding source for the PDR program the Open Lands Board began to analyze what options were available to raise funds. It was clear that considering the amount of cash they needed to raise that a public funding measure of some form would most likely work the best in the shortest amount of time. With the input from the Sonoran Institute, Trust for Public Lands, Gallatin Valley Land Trust and other groups and individuals the board had to determine what types of funding had the greatest potential for being accepted by the voters.

With a grant from the Trust for Public Land the Moore Information Public Opinion Research Company conducted a survey of the public to determine the support for the Open Space Bond measure. **(Appendix I)** The report outlined several options for funding of an easement program. It was clear that a general obligation bond had the greatest potential for success among the Gallatin County voters. Second was a per household fee. The Moore Survey outlined that the public was willing to support a \$10 million bond for preservation of "open space" if it would cost the average homeowner a \$28 increase (per \$100,000 home) in their property taxes 68-

20%. The overwhelming difficulty of the bond being successful was the high property tax increase that would impact agricultural landowners, up to \$500 in some cases. This increase on agricultural landowners completely reversed the support for the \$10 million bond, 60-22%.

The poll also indicated support for a per household fee of \$25, 63-29%. In order to use a per household fee special legislation would have to be passed to allow county governments to impose this type of fee under the Open Space Act. The board was facing a difficult situation in trying to implement a public funding proposal through a bond or per household fee. The public and just as importantly the County Commission, did not support the tax increase that the bond would cost agricultural landowners, and a per household fee would require waiting until the 2001 Legislative session to attempt to change the Open Space Act.

After careful consideration the board determined that they might be able to gain support for a bond if they could guarantee that agricultural landowners could be compensated or exempted from the payment of the bond. With this in mind the board determined that asking the voters for a \$10 million general obligation bond was the best approach for funding their program.

The board began work on a campaign to submit a \$10 million Open Space Bond to the voters in 2000. They worked with the Friends of Regional Parks (FORParks) organization, Gallatin Valley Land Trust, Trust for Public Lands and other citizens on a campaign to pass the \$10 million bond.

One of their first obstacles was to gain the support of the Gallatin County Commission and the agricultural community. In order to gain the unanimous support required from the County Commission to place the bond initiative on the ballot, the bond supporters had to find a way to compensate agricultural landowners for the increased property tax burden.

The board determined that a private fundraising campaign would be used to reimburse qualified agricultural landowners from the property tax increase caused by the Open Space Bond. With that commitment Commissioners Phil Olson, Jennifer Mitchell and Bill Murdock voted to place the Open Space Bond on the ballot for the November 2000 election. (**Appendix J**)

The bond measure was passed in November of 2000 by 56% of the voters. With its passage the board now had a funding mechanism in place to purchase conservation easements and parkland in Gallatin County. However, the board was still obligated to compensate agricultural landowners for the increased taxes they would incur from the Open Space Bond.

The board soon found that it was difficult to raise the amount of money needed for the landowner tax reimbursement program. As a solution the board proposed legislation during the 2001 Montana Legislative session that would amend the Open Space Act to exempt the

agricultural landowners from paying for the Open Space Bond. The legislation was passed and allowed Gallatin County to exempt certain property from being taxed under the Open Space Act.

Once the exemption legislation had taken effect the board began the process of selling \$3,200,000 of the \$10 million in bonds for land and easement purchases. With the funding source in place the board began working on criteria and an application process to fund conservation easements and purchase lands for parks and recreation.

The Board first developed a list of criteria that applicants had to meet in order to qualify for funding from the Open Space Bond. **(Appendix K)** After three easements and the purchase of a regional park had been completed the board made adjustments to the application and developed two separate applications for Parks and Recreation and Conservation Easements. **(Appendix L)**. The Board and Commission also added two levels of review for each applicant to ensure that all conditions had been met before final funding was authorized. Another slight change was made in the Open Space Application in 2007 to fix an issue having to do with the donation of a new or additional conservation easement as part of the scoring. Because the way we review our applications is based on our percentage versus the overall value the question didn't match our applications. It was changed to the current form in **(Appendix M)**.

Another important issue is that the Open Space Act does allow a local government to fund the operation and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities purchased with funds or designated under the Open Space Act. However, in Gallatin County the bond that was approved by the voters did not include language that allowed the funds to be used for administrative purposes, operation or maintenance. That is why we did not accept any applications for funding from groups seeking money to improve parks or recreation facilities.

### **OPEN LAND LICENSE PLATES**

Even though the Open Space Bond had been a success and the County had begun purchasing land and conservation easements with the funds, the Open Lands Board still faced a critical problem. The language of the bond did not specifically allow using bond funds for general administrative purposes. The board and the board coordinator were faced with the difficult challenge of how to fund the administration of the program.

After struggling with attempts to raise funds from private foundations and limited financial support from the County Commission, the board determined that a possible source of funding would be to design a specialty "Open Land" license plate that the people could purchase with all of the proceeds going to the open land program.

In the 2001 Legislative session the [Specialty Generic License Plate Program](#) (MCA 61-3-472 through 481) was created which allowed organizations to design and sell license plates across Montana.

In order to design the Open Land license plate the Board held a competition asking local artists to submit designs for a license plate. There were eight different license plate designs that were submitted to the Board (**Appendix N**). In order to select the most popular plate the board put up displays and ballot boxes in the County Courthouse, locations around town and in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle asking people to vote for which license plate design they liked the best.

Once all votes were collected, the first plate design was chosen. However when submitted to the Montana Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division the first choice of license plates did not meet their design standards criteria. Eventually the current Open Land license plate design was chosen and accepted by the Department of Justice. It was actually the fourth choice among those surveyed.

Upon seeing the success of the Open Land plate the board took extra steps in advertising the license plate. Initially a promotional card was developed that showed the attractive design of the license plate and described the importance and benefit of an individual purchasing that plate for their car. Additionally the board purchased advertising space on the back of every license renewal card that was sent out by the State of Montana. The board purchased \$7483 worth of cards to ensure that every renewal card for a year would have a picture of the Open Land license plate and a description of the benefit it brings Montana.

The success of the Open Lands License Plate was greater than once anticipated, however with increasing numbers of new specialty license plates becoming available it is important to recognize that revenues might not always be this high and the appeal of the Open Land plate might change among the consumer. The license plate program needs closely follow the development of new license plates and determine when a new plate design is warranted for Open Lands.

#### **OPEN LANDS COORDINATOR**

In September of 2002 the County Commission hired a full time Open Lands Coordinator, to head up the Open Lands Program. The Commission determined it would be best if the program were housed within the County Government and expanded the role of the Open Lands Program to incorporate not only work on Conservation Easements, but also other projects important to Gallatin County. The intent of the Commission was to marry the work of and success of the Open Lands Board with other departments dealing with land use issues.

#### **OPEN SPACE BOND 2004**

During the first four years of the Open Lands Program we had seen a significant amount of interest and success with the first \$10 million. However, even though we were leveraging bond funds at 20% for Conservation Easements and 30% overall, our funds were still being depleted. The \$2.3 million dollar purchase of the Regional Park was a significant drain on resources and easement requests were on the increase.

With the help of the Trust for Public Lands and the Gallatin Valley Land Trust the Open Lands Board decided it should review the possibilities of a second open space bond to coincide with the 2004 General Elections. In order to demonstrate the support of the community towards a second Open Space Bond the County in partnership with the Trust for Public Lands commissioned a second public opinion survey from Moore Information Inc. The results of the survey showed a considerable level of support for a second Open Space Bond (Appendix O.)

Upon presentation of the results of the survey, Commissioners, Murdock, Mitchell, and Vincent approved a second \$10 million Open Space Bond to be placed on the November Ballot. The results were better than expected. The first Open Space Bond passed by 56% with a majority of those votes coming from the Bozeman and urban areas. The Second bond passed by 63% with a significant increase in the more rural areas of the county.

The results of the Poll, the Bond Language and elections are in (**Appendix P**).

## **CHAPTER 3 : TODAY'S SITUATION**

### **Administration**

The Open Lands Program has come a long way with the hard work and dedication of individuals who volunteer their time and energy to make a difference in Gallatin County. We are progressing towards what could turn out to be one of the most successful land conservation programs in Montana. Some of the tools available to the Open Lands Program have been implemented while others are still in their preliminary stages.

The Open Lands Program is comprised of three entities. At the top is the County Commission, who is responsible for making all decisions related to the Open Lands Program. They are the legal decision makers and as elected officials are there to ensure that the focus of the Open Lands Program suits the needs of the people.

Working with them are the Open Lands Board and the Open Lands Coordinator. Together, with cooperation with other county departments, citizens groups, state associations, and other governmental and nongovernmental agencies, the Open Lands Program is working to better preserve our history and culture through the conservation of open lands.

The Board serves as an advisory body to the County Commission, making recommendations for the expenditure of bond funds and determining the direction that the Open Land Program will take in the future.

The Open Lands Coordinator is the professional officer hired by the commission to administer and promote the Open Lands Program and serves as the department head of the Open Lands office. The Coordinator is a county employee hired by and works directly for the commission and bound by all policies and procedures of Gallatin County. The Coordinator is responsible for all duties assigned by the Commission involving the Open Lands Program and is responsible for working with the Open Lands Board to ensure that the Open Lands Program is a continued success.

The Coordinator carries out the recommendations made to the Commission by the Board through resolutions at the regular board meetings, Executive Board meetings and through the board work plan. The Commission may instruct the coordinator to take on other issues that they see as important to the Open Lands Program or to Gallatin County as a whole but the coordinators primary responsibility is to ensure that the needs of the Open Lands Board are the highest priority.

The entire administrative budget is funded from the sale of specialty license plates. The current financial breakdown for administrative funds can be seen in **Appendix Q**.

### **Bond Funded Projects**

To date we have funded 22 conservation easements and three park projects. The detailed description of the current project status is included in **Appendix R**.

Additionally, the Open Lands Program has been administering the collection and distribution of funds for the 300-acre Schaplow conservation easement and has recently used funds from the Open Lands License plates to bridge fund the remaining \$11,370.

Of the three park projects funded, two were highly leveraged and one being the Regional Park had no upfront leverage, however a significant amount of resources for individual projects and infrastructure improvements are being donated with cash and in-kind contributions from other sources for the Regional Park. The eventual outcome of that project will be highly leveraged.

An important point to recognize with the issue of parks and recreation is that much of the support that came for the Open Space Bond may have been from people who believe that they would be able to access the lands that are being protected. We are often criticized for the public not being allowed to access conservation easements that were purchased with public dollars. Conservation easements are not designed to allow unlimited public access, however,

maintaining involvement in the parks and recreation issue and making funds and support available from the Open Lands Program may help continue our high levels of support.

To resolve the issue with Parks and Recreation the County Commission formed a County Board of Park Commissioners to oversee the Park and Recreational issues for the County. The Open Lands Coordinator also serves as staff for the Park Commission. The Open Lands Board has in the past and is currently offering support for the Park Commission in administrative funds until they can be self funded.

#### **Other Land Conservation Tools**

Growth Policy Implementation – the county is currently working to update the Growth Policy and implement the tools that were suggested by the Open Space Task Force. Among those include Transferrable Development Rights, Zoning Districts and County Wide Zoning, Neighborhood Plans, and Cluster Development Regulations.

See **Appendix S**.

## APPENDIX

Appendix A. AFT STUDY [American Farmland Trust](#)



Adobe Acrobat  
Document

Appendix B. LAND VOTE 2006 [APB.LANDVOTE06.pdf](#)



Acrobat Document

Appendix C. LAND TRUST CENSUS [APC.LTACENSUS05.pdf](#)



Acrobat Document

Appendix D. OPEN SPACE ACT [APD.THEACT.pdf](#)



Adobe Acrobat  
Document

Appendix E. 1989 PLAN [APE.1989 PLAN.pdf](#)



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Document

Appendix F. TASK FORCE REPORT [APF.Task Force.pdf](#)



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Appendix G. BYLAWS [APG.BYLAWS.pdf](#)



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Appendix H. PAST AND CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS [APH.BOARDMEMBERS.pdf](#)



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Appendix I. 2000 MOORE SURVEY [API.2000 SURVEY.pdf](#)



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Appendix J. 2000 BOND LANGUAGE [APJ.2000.ELECTION.pdf](#)



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Appendix K. ORIGINAL APPLICATION [APK.FIRSTAPP.pdf](#)



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Appendix L. REVISED APPLICATIONS



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## Appendix M. CURRENT APPLICATIONS



**Gallatin County  
Open Lands Project Rating Chart**

Project Identification # \_\_\_\_\_  
Funding Cycle: May/November, 200\_\_\_.  
Scoring Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This project rating chart shall be used by Gallatin County Open Land Board members to rank and compare applications for funding. The maximum number of points that a project can receive is 100.

There are six major categories reflecting the goals of the Gallatin Open Lands Program. Each major category may have a maximum of 20 points, but must have a minimum of 8 possible points and the cumulative total must equal 100 points. The reviewer allocates points to the categories based on their judgment of the most important values. For example, if a reviewer allocates 20 pts each to categories 1 and 2(40 pts.) and 15 points to categories 3 through 5 (45 pts.) the total is 85, which means that category 6 can have a total of 15 points to equal 100 possible points. In order to be fair to all applicants in a review cycle, all applications must be judged on the same allocation of points to the categories and subcategories. The points available for a specific category should be placed in the box to the right of the category heading.

Within each major category there are 2 to 5 subcategories. The number of possible points you allocate to a major category should be allocated among the subcategories. (Note: We can allocate the points to the subcategories equally or at the discretion of the reviewer. The process works either way. It is simpler to allocate equally but perhaps more responsive to reviewer concerns if it is done at reviewer discretion. For this illustration I have assumed that they are equal.) To allocate points to the subcategories divide the category points by the number of subcategories. The allocation to the subcategories should be in the boxes below the category box.

Each of the subcategories is further broken down into ranking criteria, with the highest value at the top and the lowest value at the bottom. Once the points available for each subcategory have been determined, points are awarded based on where the applicant falls within the range of criteria. For example, if the property size is 800 acres and there are 5 points available in subcategory 1a, the maximum amount that you can allocate to this particular subcategory is 4 (1 less than the maximum). Only the highest number of points can be allocated to the highest criteria in each subcategory. Points are recorded in the appropriate subcategory box and then the total for the subcategories is entered in the category score box. When all the categories have been scored, the total of all categories is entered at the end of the form.

To illustrate how to apply the points, consider the following example. Assume that you had allocated 20 points to category 1, with 5 points then allocated to each of the subcategories. The property you are reviewing is an 800-acre ranch with a 550-acre

Appendix N. MONTANA SPECIALTY LICENSE PLAT ACT AND PLATE DESIGNS



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Document

Appendix O. BOND 2004



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Appendix P. BOND LANGUAGE 2004



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## Appendix Q. CURRENT STATUS REPORTS



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Appendix R. GROWTH POLICY UPDATES