

Ravalli County Right to Farm and Ranch Board

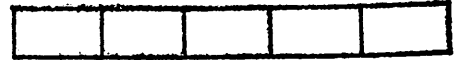
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November 4, 2019

Bitter Root Land Trust
 PO Box 1806
 Hamilton, MT 59840

NOV 22 2019

Ravalli County Commissioners



Dear Bitter Root Land Trust:

Please document that the Ravalli County Right to Farm and Ranch Board supports the Bitter Root Land Trust’s (BRLT) proposal to the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The Ravalli County Right to Farm and Ranch Board is familiar with the proposal, understands the general expectations, and supports the efforts to address the natural resource concerns identified.

The Ravalli County Right to Farm and Ranch Board exists to advocate for the interests of Bitterroot farmers and ranchers and the lands in which they live and work. Among our many accomplishments, is the lead role we took in the creation of Ravalli County Open Lands Bond Program. The Open Lands Bond has provided matching funds to the NRCS’s Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) and Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Programs for nearly a decade. Thousands of acres of agricultural conservation are in place through easements thanks to the Bitter Root Land Trust and what the Ravalli County Open Lands Bond offers. The Bitterroot RCPP proposal developed by BRLT compliments this success and amplifies the overall impact of both the County’s and NRCS’s prior contributions. In particular, we are excited by the ability of this project to conserve smaller properties that also are agriculturally valuable, ones with deep rich soil that are already producing crops, but do not meet the other existing programs because of their size. Often these properties lie within existing corridors of perpetually conserved farms and ranches. The opportunity to complete projects with beginning farmers and ranchers starting with a smaller scale diversified agricultural operation, is an important factor as well. These opportunities will facilitate generational transfers of agricultural land and help conserve the land base necessary to support the agricultural economy in our county.

If this RCPP proposal is selected for funding, the Right to Farm and Ranch Board will provide in-kind partner contribution equal to the total amount of \$1,050 over five years to this project. The Right to Farm and Ranch Board’s contribution to this project will help connect landowners to the opportunity offered by the Bitterroot RCPP in order to ensure its success. Our expected contributions include:

- Thirty hours of in-kind time dedicated to receiving two project updates annually over the five-year project, during which we will learn about the progress made on the project, discuss how it is being implemented in our community and provide guidance and support on implementation.
- Twelve hours of in-kind time to help plan, promote and attend three landowner outreach events over the course of the proposal, in order to provide opportunities for landowners to learn about the project.

Year	Specific Activities/Deliverable (Action)	Associated Local, State, or Federal Program or Initiatives	Amount	Limitations	Contribution Type		
					FA	TA	(Cash or In-Kind)
2020	Semi-Annual Project Updates*		6 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind
2020	Landowner Outreach Event		4 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind
2021	Quarterly Project Updates		6 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind
2021	Landowner Outreach Event		4 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind
2022	Quarterly Project Updates		6 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind
2022	Landowner Outreach Event		4 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind
2023	Quarterly Project Update		6 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind
2024	Quarterly Project Update		6 hrs @ \$25/hr				In-Kind

* The Right to Farm & Ranch Board will receive a report from BRLT on RCPP progress and an opportunity to provide feedback, guidance and support. Semi-annual updates will be 30 min each, with an estimated 6 board members in attendance.

The Ravalli County Right to Farm and Ranch Board is committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a strong part of the culture and economy of the Bitterroot. For this reason, we are in strong support of the Bitterroot RCPP proposal and are committed to helping with outreach efforts to make it successful.

Sincerely,

Jay Meyer

Chairman, Ravalli County Right to Farm and Ranch Board