



File Code: 5420

Date: March 23, 2018

Ravalli County Board of Commissioners  
215 S. 4th Street, Suite A  
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dear: Ravalli County Commissioners,

This letter is to notify you that the United States of America, working in partnership with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), is acquiring 120 acres of land from Farmers State Bank adjacent to the Bitterroot National Forest in Ravalli County, Montana (see enclosed map). The acquisition will be completed in Fiscal Year 2018.

The offered lands are located directly adjacent to the popular Bass Creek Recreation Area (BCRA), which draws approximately 60,000 visitors annually for a variety of quality year-round outdoor recreation opportunities including camping, picnicking, horseback riding, nature trails, interpretive trails, mountain biking, hiking, running, photography, hunting, fishing, Wilderness access, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing (see attached map). Variable terrain provides recreation opportunities for all ages, from small children to grandparents.

The BCR Area is a low elevation, easily accessible forested area between Missoula and Hamilton. The area is cherished for its scenic beauty and is located at the base of the beautiful Bitterroot Mountains and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area. Its close proximity to the Missoula and Bitterroot population centers makes this one of the most popular recreation areas on the Forest, providing a quality "backyard community" recreation experience. This property, which is at risk for development, will make an excellent addition to the BRCA ensuring that the BRCA continues to serve the Bitterroot Valley into the future.

The legal description of the property is:

Principal Meridian, Montana

T. 10 N., R. 20 W.,  
Section 20, S½SE¼;  
Section 21, SW¼SW¼.

**RECEIVED**

**MAR 29 2018**

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Consolidation of the 120-acre parcel with existing surrounding federal ownership would provide connectivity of lower elevation public lands across the Bass Creek, Larry Creek, and Sweeney Creek watersheds. The acquisition, when completed, will provide the following public benefits:

- Public access to public lands. Secure, safe, and legal public access on existing trails which are currently actively used by the public;





- Provide additional summer and winter recreation opportunities;
- Provide access and connectivity across public lands to the Sweeney Creek drainage, especially for hunters and anglers;
- Open access and dispersed recreation opportunities on approx. 3,000 to 4,000 acres of National Forest System lands via a natural travel corridor along Sweeney Creek into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness;
- Provide a travel corridor for documented fisher activity between the Larry and Sweeney Creek drainages;
- Provide expanded opportunities for educational workshops on different ecosystems and forest types; and.
- Potentially bring in additional visitors with new trails which may contribute to the economic development of the local communities.

If you have any questions or concerns about this pending land donation, please contact Robin Edwards, Realty Specialist, at 406-329-3833.

Sincerely,



JULIE K. KING  
Forest Supervisor

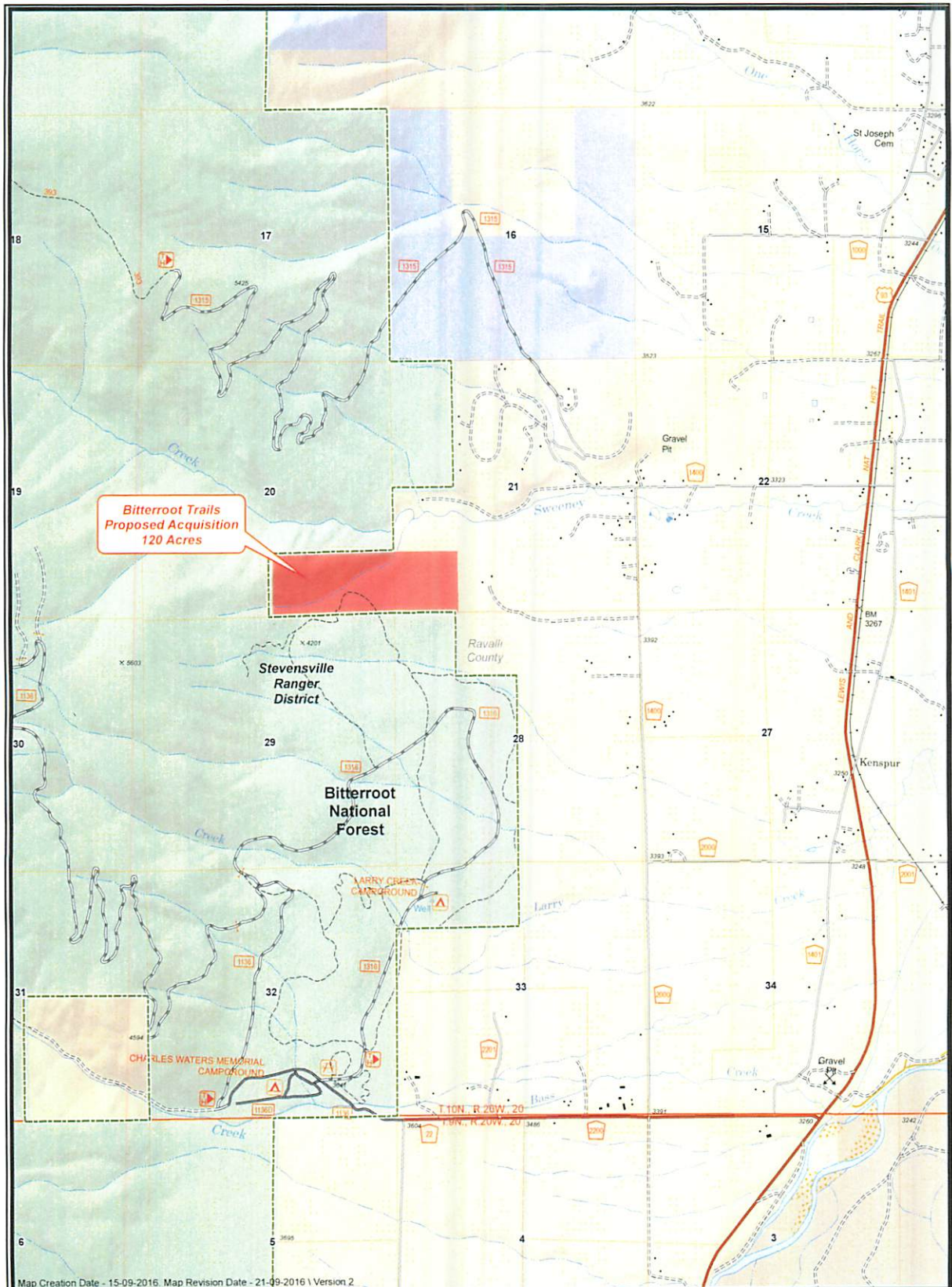
Enclosure: Map

Cc: Robin Edwards, Project Manager

Tami Sabol, District Ranger, Stevensville Ranger District

Mike Mueller, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation





Map Creation Date - 15-09-2016. Map Revision Date - 21-09-2016 \ Version 2



**References**  
 PLSS and Forest boundary data from R1 Automated Lands Program (ALP). Transportation and hydrography data from USFS FSTopo database. Parcel ownership data from Ravalli County, Montana Cadastral Features represented by data may not represent accurate geographic locations

**Disclaimer**  
 The USDA Forest Service makes no warranty, expressed or implied regarding the data displayed on this map, and reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace this information without notification.

**Legend**

- Bitterroot Trails Proposed Land Acquisition
- Administrative Forest
- National Forest System Lands
- Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge
- State Lands
- Other Land Ownership

Scale: 0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Sheet 1 of 1

**Bitterroot Trails Acquisition Project Map**

Proposed Purchase = 120 Acres  
 Located in Ravalli County, Montana

U.S. Forest Service - Northern Region  
 Bitterroot National Forest  
 Montana At-Large U.S. Congressional District

Copies of this map are available for public inspection in the Office of the Regional Forester, Northern Region, Missoula, MT.