



The Kootenai Forestlands Conservation Project builds on a legacy of private forest conservation in the State of Montana. The project put in place a conservation easement (CE) administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to protect 22,295 acres of productive timberland and wildlife habitat. The property remains a working forest in private ownership and provides numerous year-round benefits.

***“Stimson Lumber Company applauds the vision and partnership of multiple organizations to complete this important Forest Legacy project on this unique Montana landscape. Maintaining working forests, protecting wildlife and providing public access are consistent with Stimson’s core values.”***

**— Andrew Miller, Landowner, Stimson Lumber Company President and CEO**

The parceling out of forestlands makes sustainable forest management difficult. Conversion to non-forest uses impacts the local wood product economy, alters the environment, increases wildfire risks, and removes public benefits of forestlands. Wildlife suffer habitat fragmentation and loss of connectivity to larger landscapes, and the public loses access to recreation. Opening the project lands to conversion would have negated cooperative management



opportunities and extended the wildland-urban interface (WUI) further into the Kootenai National Forest.



FLP projects in MT and ID protect a total of 358,000 acres, with 260,000 acres of FLP conservation in MT and another 98,000 acres of conservation in ID.

The Kootenai Forestlands Conservation Project supports a number of conservation initiatives. The property lies within the Cabinet-Purcell ecoregion, one of North America’s largest remaining intact ecosystems and the site of multinational cooperation to advance landscape-scale conservation. The project lands were also identified as critical to the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative and a priority landscape for the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative.



As a working forest, the property supports family-wage employment in the wood products industry and generates millions of revenue dollars for the area. Through the production of 4 million board feet of timber, the project lands support 20 full-time workers and generates an estimated \$5.25 million in economic activity.

The property generates millions in personal income for local residents through free, year-round public access for big game hunting, hiking, bird watching, snowmobiling, and other outdoor activities. It maintains the scenic viewshed marketed by Lincoln County and the Montana Tourism Council as “Rich, Rare, Remote.” The property is also part of an established Archaeological District as a historic trade and travel corridor between the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest.

The project lands are part of the last remaining intact habitat for Endangered Species Act Threatened species, including grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and bull trout. The State of Montana has also identified the area as high priority for habitat protection of gray wolves. The preservation of large, resilient landscapes is critical to the survival of these species. The property also

includes 14.5 miles of spawning and rearing streams for a Montana species of concern, the westslope cutthroat trout. The property provides key habitat for 43 species identified by Montana’s 2015 Wildlife Action Plan as in greatest conservation need.

The Kootenai Forestlands Conservation Project exemplifies Montana’s goal for the Forest Legacy Program: to conserve and enhance land, water, wildlife, and timber resources while providing for working forests and public benefits.

#### Reference:

<sup>1</sup> Short, Karen C. 2017. Spatial wildfire occurrence data for the United States, 1992-2015 [FPA\_FOD\_20170508]. 4th Edition. Fort Collins, CO: Forest Service Research Data Archive. <https://doi.org/10.2737/RDS-2013-0009.4>



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## AT-A-GLANCE



**42 miles of streams** will be permanently protected to preserve the health of the Kootenai River.



**480 acres of riparian habitat** and **331 acres of wetlands** will be permanently protected.



Stimson Lumber is projected to generate **\$53 million dollars** in economic activity over the next decade.



Property includes **14.5 miles** of spawning and rearing streams for a Montana.



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Property provides key habitat for **43 species** identified by Montana’s 2015 Wildlife Action Plan as in greatest conservation need.

**Top L:** Project lands adjacent to Turner Mountain Ski Resort. (Photo: Chris Deming, TPL); **Middle L:** Grizzly bear with her two cubs at a USFWS monitoring site on the project lands. (Photo: Wayne Kasworm, USFWS); **Bottom L:** Expanding private residential development adjacent to the project lands. (Photo: Chris Deming, TPL); **Top R:** Bull trout habitat in Pipe Creek. (Photo: Kim Annis, MFWP)

**For more information, visit**  
<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/habitat/forest-legacy>, <https://y2y.net/>,  
 and <https://greatnorthernlcc.org/>.