

Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Survey

Your views on future use, ownership and management

Executive Summary of Results - April 1, 2005

The survey was mailed in October 2004 to adjacent landowners and residents in the project area. For more information on how the survey was conducted, further results and comments, please see the Preliminary Report, posted on the Blackfoot Challenge website at www.blackfootchallenge.org.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED BY FILLING OUT A SURVEY!

What land values and uses are most important?

A majority of survey respondents ranked wildlife habitat (2.87), weed management (2.86), wetland/riparian areas (2.62), and public access (2.60) as very important on a scale from 1 to 3 (3 as very important). Recreation (2.58), aesthetics (2.46), and linkage to public lands (2.43) were ranked next in importance. Rangelands/grazing (2.37) and timber (2.35) ranked the lowest.

What recreational uses are most important?

Hunting (2.69), wildlife viewing (2.64), hiking (2.66), and private enjoyment (2.63) were ranked as very important to approximately two thirds of respondents on a scale from 1 to 3 (3 as very important). Fishing (2.51), horseback riding (2.47), skiing (2.28) and snowmobiling (2.15) were ranked next as very important. Vehicle access (1.70), ATV access (1.66), and commercial/for profit (1.56) recreational use of the area ranked the lowest.

Should the Blackfoot Challenge become the legal owner of the 5,600-acre BCCA?

Nearly half of the respondents (46.1%) said that they need more information related to whether or not the Blackfoot Challenge should become the legal owner of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area. The next frequent response were those that said that they do support Blackfoot Challenge ownership (40.9%). The least frequent response was those that do not support Blackfoot Challenge ownership (10.4%).

Should a long-term management plan be developed for the proposed BCCA?

An overwhelming majority of respondents said they support developing a management plan for the proposed BCCA: 83% said “YES,” 1.6% said “NO,” and 16.1% said “NEED MORE INFORMATION.” Regarding who should develop a long-term management plan, 68% of the respondents support the Blackfoot Challenge with community input developing a long-term management plan. 21.8% left the response blank.

Who are the people you see as comprising the “community” for whose benefit the BCCA should be managed by and for?

38% said all residents of the Blackfoot Valley, 18% said property owners adjacent to the area, 11% said specific communities (Ovando, Helmville, etc.), 13% said anyone who wants to use the area, and 2% said other.

Defining the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area

What should the BCCA become?

A sampling of the comments include:

- The BCCA should support diverse wildlife, wildlife habitat, and minimal impact recreation. With regard to the latter, respondents wanted access for activities that have occurred in the past.
- Leaving the area as natural as can be while others envisioned well-managed.
- The BCCA should be a “showcase” of good, cooperative stewardship and collaborative management.

What other community benefits may be important considerations for the BCCA?

A sampling of comments include:

- Educational benefits, a type of “outdoor laboratory” for local schools and researchers.
- BCCA contributing to the local economy, from taxes, seasonal tourists/travelers, recreation and sustainably managed timber.

What concerns do you have with the BCCA?

A sampling of comments include:

- Fear that activities with strong impact will be permitted (ATV, farming, ranching, logging); but also fear that it would be “locked up” to public use.
- Concern that it does not become an elitest area, controlled by “narrow-focus minority groups or groups;” that a few might profit by its purchase.
- Desire to see the governing body elected and representative of the majority of views of landowners in the Blackfoot Valley.
- Concern that as population grows and changes, and community management is emphasized, the new community will not care about wildlife and rural lifestyles.
- Concern that financial returns don’t become the highest priority rather than protection of the resources.



Should the concept of a wider forest cooperative and the possibility of expanding the area to include up to 20,000 acres be explored?

Over half of the respondents (57.0%) support the concept of exploring the concept of developing a wider forest cooperative on up to 20,000 adjacent acres. 28.5% reported that they need more information. 8.8% reported that they do not think the concept should be explored.