



May 1, 2018

Montana Natural Resource Damage Program
ATTN: Greg Mullan
P.O. Box 201425
Helena, MT 59620-1425

RE: HHA Support for Purchase of Dry Cottonwood Creek and Clark Fork River Ranch
Conservation Easements

Dear Greg,

Hellgate Hunters and Anglers and Anaconda Sportsmen's Club would like to express our support for the NRDP funding recommendation to purchase Dry Cottonwood Creek and Clark Fork Rivers Ranch conservation easements. This project represents a unique opportunity to both protect the recent restoration investment and provide public access on over five miles of Clark Fork River riparian corridor. There are very few places in western Montana that can match this level of opportunity for wildlife habitat and public access to fish, hunt, and recreate in large river valley bottomlands.

In addition to the benefits for the Clark Fork fishery and wildlife by protecting this riparian habitat, the project will also protect the rural character of the Deer Lodge Valley, continue to support local agriculture, protect wildlife habitat and offer public hunting opportunity on over 3,000 acres of uplands.

This reach of the Clark Fork River has historically been a popular destination for anglers and waterfowl hunters many of which enjoyed access provided by these landowners through FWP's Block Management program. With the recent and ongoing remediation and restoration of these properties, the improved fish and wildlife habitat should continue to attract even more visitors in the future. This project will safeguard public access to these properties for generations come.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your on-going efforts to protect and restore valuable fish and wildlife habitat in the Upper Clark Fork. We look forward to seeing this project implemented and enjoyed for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kit Fischer", written over a white background.

Kit Fischer, President HHA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Ouldhouse", written over a white background.

Gary Ouldhouse, President ASC

