

## Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation Wetlands: Protected but Accessible

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Greetings from your neighbor!

The Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation owns two lots that run along the river in front of many of the Harbor Village homes. I wanted to share a little about our Foundation and let you know our plans for the lots (shown on the map below as outlined in red).

Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation's goal is to protect wild places while bridging public access and private enterprise. We want to ensure that the outdoor experience that defines Montana is not only kept wild and cared for but is accessible for the enjoyment we have all come to expect and that defines Montana. We work through funding wildlife management, education and access/common ground projects.

Wildlife management is a delicate balance between outdoor recreationists, land owners and the wildlife that we are blessed to have in Montana. Maintaining a healthy balance of species, avoiding human & animal conflicts and educating people about how to live with wildlife is a big job. We work to provide the tools and seasonal university interns and technicians to help our wildlife biologists do their work. In the Bigfork area, for example, bears are a challenge (although we've not seen any on our property in Harbor Village). Thanks to the help of a great young technician this summer, we have managed all the conflicts to reach a resolution that was good for both bears and people!

Our educational efforts are multi-faceted. From supporting youth who could not otherwise afford outdoor camps to programs at our local state parks, hunter's education, angling workshops and Montana Wild, we work to ensure that young people are engaged in outdoor activities. We also sponsor local bear fairs and outreach activities by Fish Wildlife and Parks to give people a safe and enjoyable experience in Montana's unpredictable outdoors.

Access is the priority that is best represented by the lots we have at Harbor Village and our relationship with the Montana Fish, Wildlife Trust. We receive donations of property and access easements (much like these lots) to protect wildlife habitat and at the same time allow people to walk the property and enjoy the flora and fauna that make the land their home.

Our Harbor Village lots are prime wetlands and we get reports of birds, raptors and fox on this special parcel.



So while we invite you to enjoy, we also invite you to make your impact and daily footprint very minimal in order to preserve this special wetlands. As wetlands, docks or other structures will inhibit the flow of waters, wildlife and wetland health which is not in line with the goal of the property. We have greatly appreciated the willingness of residents to understand and work with us on protecting this space. Thank you.

We also work to find common ground for recreationists to utilize private lands for hunting, snowmobiling and other outdoor activities that cross public and private lands. We support initiatives like Hunt Right to help educate people about respecting private lands when they are made available by the landowners and being good conservationists. This is quite relevant to our lots in Harbor Village as our work is aimed at helping teach people to respect your properties while embarking on a walk on public lands. While this may seem like common sense, the largest complaint from landowners is trash and disrespect for the land.

Currently our goal is to maintain ownership of these lots. Taxes have been our biggest hurdle in keeping the property as it is taxed at rate comparable with land suitable to build on. We have not been able to get the county to understand the fact that these lots are unsuitable for building and therefore be taxed in accordingly. We will continue our efforts to have the lots re-assessed. We appreciate our donors who understand that maintaining such properties requires maintenance and taxes and encourage your support as well. We look forward to a great relationship with you and hope you will enjoy the wildlife that frequents this area.