



# America's Great Outdoors Crown of the Continent Demonstration Landscape

## Interagency Strategic Plan FY2013-FY2018

### Overview

---

The 18-million-acre Northern Rockies Crown of the Continent (“Crown”) landscape is one of North America’s most biologically diverse and intact ecosystems. Spanning the United States and Canada, it includes a remarkable assemblage of high peaks, aspen glades, dense conifer forests, clear and cold rivers, native grasslands, and numerous small communities heavily invested in the land and its health.

While the Crown lies within a uniquely intact ecological region with relatively high ecological integrity, the forest and stream ecosystems have been impacted by human land use and management, invasive species, and climate change. These changes threaten the ability of the region to continue to provide ecosystem services in the future, especially given the uncertainty of climate change. The existing, but strained, ecological integrity of this landscape makes it an excellent candidate for landscape-level ecological restoration.

### Background

America’s Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO) was launched in 2010, calling on the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> Century conservation agenda that will protect America’s natural and cultural resources, and connect people to the outdoors through jobs, education, recreation, and service.

A key component of the AGO is conserving and restoring large landscapes. Successful landscape-scale conservation efforts, inherently cross-jurisdictional, require collaboration across federal agencies and with state and local partners to achieve more effective alignment and leveraged resources. In the fall of 2011, the Council on Environmental Quality convened an AGO workgroup and established five regional interagency landscape conservation teams to



promote coordination, improved communication, and collaboration with local partners.

In 2012, an AGO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the heads of nine federal agencies for the “Coordination of Landscape and Watershed-scale Conservation Demonstration Areas” with a focus on the five AGO demonstration landscapes, including the Crown of the Continent. The 2012 MOU calls for each AGO landscape to develop a multi-year strategic implementation plan that establishes a shared vision, metrics, goals, objectives, and reporting.

## **Intent of this Strategic Plan**

This document provides an overview of the Crown of the Continent Demonstration Landscape vision, goals, and strategies to enhance locally identified and locally led conservation initiatives to accomplish the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of this region. The goal in developing this strategy is to strategically identify where even greater project-level success

can be achieved by increased agency alignment and coordination, not to supplant existing efforts. It is not a planning document in that it does not compel or prohibit any specific action, rather it is intended to be visionary, identifying where more can be done through better alignment and coordination. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and other laws and regulations will occur at the local level, when projects are implemented, as applicable. This is intended to be a “living document,” revisited and updated annually by the federal agencies. Actions identified in this document capture some existing initiatives, emerging initiatives in the region, and projected actions (specific actions beyond fiscal year 2013 may be dependent upon available funds.)

## **Working Collaboratively**

Successful landscape-scale management and conservation in the Crown requires collaborative and coordinated efforts among government jurisdictions, local communities, and non-government organizations

### **Vision Statement for the AGO Crown of the Continent Demonstration Landscape**

An ecologically healthy Crown of the Continent ecosystem where:

- Rural lands—including working farms, ranches, and forests—continue to thrive and remain productive through local partnerships and incentives.
- The public has access to the lands and waters of the Crown where they are able to recreate, play, explore, and dream.
- The national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and other public lands are managed for resiliency using stewardship principles delivered through a collaborative approach.
- The waterways—whether public or privately owned—are healthy, resilient, and provide for both human and wildlife needs.
- Community and Tribal efforts are encouraged and championed by the federal agencies, resulting in robust local solutions.
- Federal agencies work collaboratively, resulting in coordinated and effective landscape conservation outcomes.

(NGOs) in the U.S. and Canada. Federal, provincial, and state agency collaboration is exemplified by the Crown Managers Partnership (formed in 2001), a transboundary group of Canadian and U.S. land managers that remains active today. A good example of collaboration between private landowners and federal agencies is the Blackfoot Challenge (formed in 2000). Both groups served as a model for this AGO Crown Federal Partner Working Group in the development and implementation of this strategy (for a list of Working Group members, refer to Appendix A). Numerous other grass-roots initiatives and NGOs have been working together in the region for many years (see Appendix B for a description of the Crown Managers Partnership, the Blackfoot Challenge, and other collaborative groups associated with the Crown).

It is widely recognized, however, that these groups cannot achieve their objectives independently—they would all greatly benefit from agency alignment, fortified collaborative efforts, and technical and resource assistance from federal, state, and provincial agencies. The action items in this plan are intended to address these challenges and achieve goals identified in the AGO report. AGO's emphasis on linking community conservation with federal agency efforts, and encouraging and enabling public-private partnerships, will help ensure success. Investing in building trust and understanding, communicating effectively, and working together is critical to the collaborative implementation of conservation action.

## Challenges

Due to the large geographic scope of this region, the number of agencies and organizations involved, and the complexity of the issues (natural and cultural resources, socioeconomic conditions, and stressors on the landscape), some challenges exist to collaborative, large-landscape conservation. Some of these include: working across jurisdictions, limited government resources, and legal and administrative barriers.

Additionally, specific barriers to coordination in this region include:

1. Priority lands (public and private) across jurisdictional boundaries, which are required for successful conservation of the Crown have not been identified.
2. Federal programs in the U.S. that support land protection, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Farm Bill, are due to expire in the next few years.
3. There is a relative lack of consistent and coordinated data gathering and information sharing, or incompatible databases on resources and threats, such as weeds, wildlife connectivity corridors, and water quality.
4. There is a relative lack of consistent language for determining ecosystem potential, status, and restoration opportunities across agencies and organizations in the Crown.
5. There is not one representative, local sounding board for new initiatives; rather there are many groups with which to coordinate.
6. There is no single, established process for effective and efficient program outreach to federal, state, and county agencies, private landowners, and other interested parties. Tight-turnaround deadlines greatly hinder true community involvement.
7. There is a dearth of skilled and affordable project managers and facilitators for designing, planning, and implementing collaboration and coordination between local communities and agencies for conservation efforts.
8. There are local and international travel restrictions that add greater difficulty to conducting collaborative work in this transboundary ecosystem.

In spite of these challenges, collaborative conservation in the Crown is demonstrating some success. The following action items build on existing collaborative success and provide strategies to overcome the challenges and barriers. They are consistent with meeting the national goals of AGO, strengthening the LWCF, conserving rural lands and working landscapes, conserving and restoring our federal lands, and striving to make government action more effective.

## AGO Crown of the Continent Action Items

The following action items were shaped by input from stakeholders, on-the-ground needs, and available resources. They were developed by federal agencies with input from state agencies and Crown partners. These items are of mutual interest to the agencies and can be implemented in the short, mid, and long term by various combinations of agency and partner participation. Each action item fits one or more national goal or recommendation identified in the document, America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations (February 2011; see Appendix C for a table showing the relationship between these action items and national goals).

### Action Item 1: *Connect public and private lands in the Crown of the Continent.*

By 2015, 58,556 acres private lands maintained ecologically intact; intact, interconnected landscapes and restored fragmented or degraded habitats; science-based strategy developed for prioritizing wildlife-highway mitigation; enhanced species conservation for grizzly bear, wolverine, lynx, goshawk, willow flycatcher, sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, burrowing owl, Lewis' woodpecker, trumpeter swan, yellow-billed cuckoo, cutthroat trout, arctic grayling, and Columbia spotted frog.

**Support needed:** \$51,880,000

### Action Item 2: *Coordinate and align invasive species data and management within the transboundary Crown of the Continent landscape, emphasizing terrestrial invasive plants and aquatic invasive species.*

In place will be synthesized, transboundary databases for targeted invasive species; standardized aquatic invasive species monitoring protocols; collective prioritization of targeted treatment areas and invasive-free areas; coordinated prevention and containment approaches; and coordinated transboundary management protocols for targeted invasive species.

**Support needed:** \$1,100,000

### Action Item 3: *Maintain and enhance coordination and collaboration of natural resource issues across federal agencies and nonfederal partnerships throughout the transboundary Crown of the Continent landscape.*

By 2018, all conservation partners—federal, state, tribal, and private—are working collaboratively toward conservation in the Crown; Tribes in the Crown are fully engaged in landscape conservation efforts; and federal agencies demonstrate alignment in policies and collaboration in implementing projects.

**Support needed:** \$5,245,000





USDA FOREST SERVICE

# America's Great Outdoors Crown of the Continent Demonstration Landscape

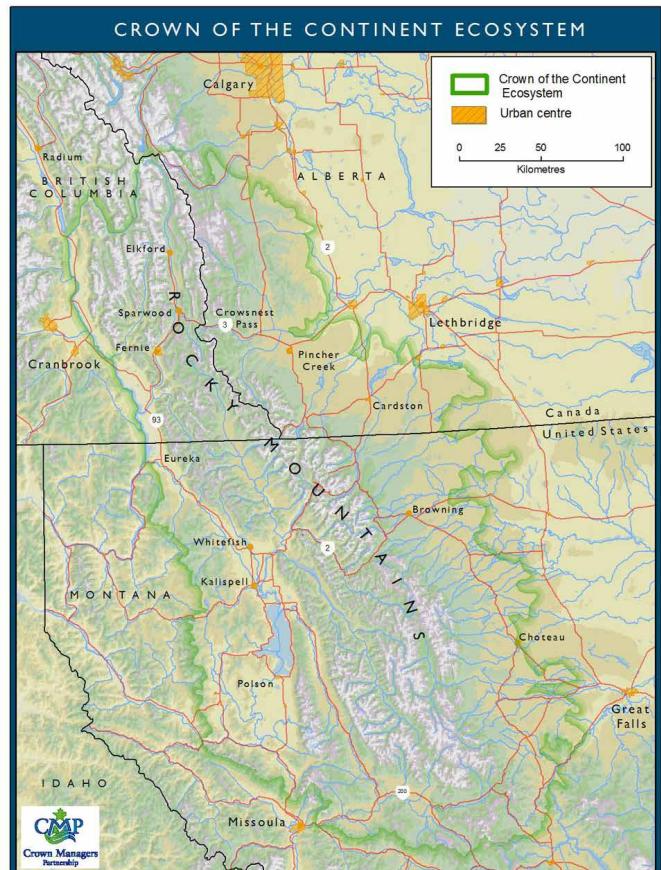
## Interagency Strategic Plan FY2013-FY2018

### Interagency Action Items

The 18-million-acre Northern Rockies Crown of the Continent (“Crown”) landscape (see map) is one of North America’s most biologically diverse and intact ecosystems. Spanning the United States and Canada, it includes a remarkable assemblage of high peaks, aspen glades, dense conifer forests, clear and cold rivers, native grasslands, and numerous small communities heavily invested in the land and its health.

While the Crown lies within a uniquely intact ecological region with relatively high ecological integrity, the forest and stream ecosystems have been impacted by human land use and management, invasive species, and climate change. These changes threaten the ability of the region to continue to provide ecosystem services in the future, especially given the uncertainty of climate change. The existing, but strained, ecological integrity of this landscape makes it an excellent candidate for landscape-level ecological restoration.

The Crown of the Continent is located on the U.S.-Canada border shared by Montana, Alberta, and British Columbia.



## Landscape Partnerships

Particularly noteworthy in the Crown is the wide variety of local- and large-scale collaborative efforts. These efforts cover a wide range of interests with many focused on restoring, conserving, and protecting healthy ecosystems and providing sustainable economies for resource-dependent communities. (For a list of some of the partnerships in this region, refer to Appendix B). The following action items are intended to strengthen and link the existing partnerships, rather than create something entirely new, and to address conservation challenges at the scale of the entire Crown Landscape. Many organizations and individuals belong to multiple collaborative groups working at all scales—national, regional, watershed, and local.

### National

The federal agencies in this region are committed to working together to implement this strategic plan. Nongovernmental organization partners active in this region also have a national and international scope, including the Wildlife Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy, and others. Together they have identified common priorities in the Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative.

### Regional

Regional-scale partnership initiatives may include the entire Crown (and beyond), such as the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative and The Crown Roundtable; or large sub-regions of the Crown, such as



the Crown Managers Partnership, the Southwest Crown Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project, or the Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front.

### Watershed

At the watershed level, there are many groups focused on conditions specific to their watershed, such as the Blackfoot Challenge, the Clearwater Resource Council, and the Jocko River Native Trout Restoration project on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

### Local

At the local scale, landowners, state and federal land managers, and other partners work together on local restoration and stewardship priorities. Examples of local groups include the Swan Ecosystem Center and the Working Lands Council.

Coordination and collaboration across all these scales is critical to achieve mutual landscape conservation goals. While linkages and communication across the many partners in the Crown exist, one of the goals of this effort is to strengthen and expand the linkages of this network of groups.





GARY TABOR

## Action Items and Benchmarks

The following action items were shaped by input from stakeholders, on-the-ground needs, and available resources. They were developed by federal agencies with input from state agencies and Crown partners (see Appendix A for a list of the Crown Federal Partner Working Group members). These items are of mutual interest to the agencies and can be implemented in the short, mid, and long term by various combinations of agency and partner participation. Of the many actions that are planned and implemented in the region, these are the actions most aligned with and dependent upon the America's Great Outdoors Demonstration Landscapes Initiative for success.

### **Action Item 1: *Connect public and private lands in the Crown of the Continent.***

The Crown is one of North America's most jurisdictionally fragmented ecosystems spreading across two nations, one state and two Canadian provinces, numerous aboriginal lands, municipal authorities, public lands, and private properties. The approximately 10 million acres in the U.S. portion of the Crown includes Glacier National Park; portions of the Kootenai, Flathead, Lolo, Helena, and Lewis and Clark National Forests; portions of Missoula, Butte, and Lewistown Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands; Montana State lands; the Flathead Indian Reservation; the Blackfeet Indian Reservation; the aboriginal lands of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation and the Blackfeet Nation; and private working landscapes. Approximately 20% of the region is in private ownership, and while many of these lands are protected through conservation easements and ongoing traditional uses, many critical areas remain susceptible to development and fragmentation.

The federal partners work together to build resiliency in ecological systems, so that even as climate conditions change, the landscape will continue to support a full range of native biodiversity. Building ecological resiliency includes maintaining intact, interconnected landscapes. These funds will allow all four collaborating agencies to promote intact, interconnected landscapes and restore fragmented and degraded landscapes in the Crown of the Continent, including the Rocky Mountain Front, Blackfoot Valley and Swan Valley Conservation Areas, Flathead/Lolo National Forests, and Glacier National Park.

Private working lands—forests, farms, and ranches—often have high conservation value, and the stewardship of these lands can create important linkages between mountain ranges and habitat types used by wildlife. Conserving and maintaining sound stewardship practices on these lands is an important strategy for landscape-scale conservation and may include maintaining working ranches and forests by acquiring conservation easements, as well as purchasing lands in fee, which will consolidate public land holdings, improve wildlife habitat connectivity, and provide better public access for outdoor recreation opportunities.



Maintaining and restoring habitat connectivity is essential for a variety of wildlife species, including movement to food, water, and shelter; reproduction requirements; dispersal to maintain healthy populations; and movement from summer to winter range. Wildlife that live in the Crown—from elk to grizzly bear, bighorn sheep to mule deer—must cross a patchwork of public and private, developed and undeveloped lands, and five major highways to maintain this connectivity. (The five major highways are Highway 93, Highway 2, Highway 200, Interstate 90, and Highway 3 in Canada.) The science of wildlife corridor conservation provides a foundation for coordination between land management agencies, private landowners, transportation agencies, and community planners. In order to restore wildlife connectivity across highway corridors and different land ownership, ongoing corridor conservation work must be completed and identified additional work made a priority.

**Project Leaders:** Gary Sullivan (USFWS), Tom Olliff (NPS), Richard Kehr (USFS), Rich Torquemada (BLM)

**Federal Partners:** National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

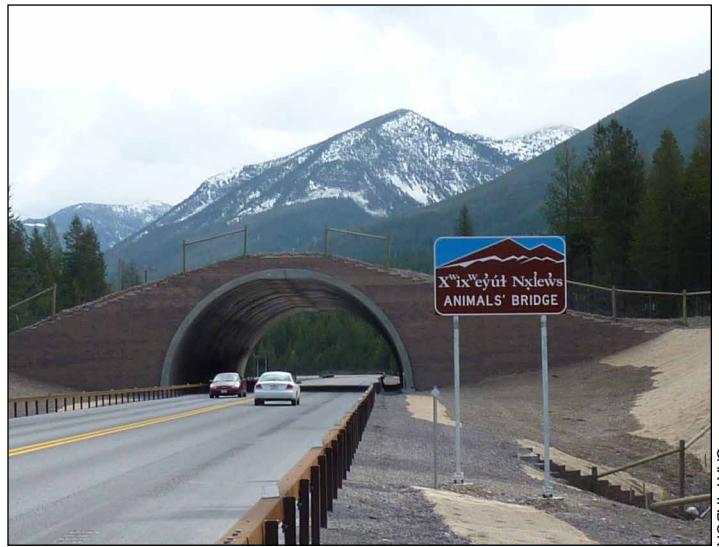
**Other Partnerships:** Crown of the Continent Collaborative Conservation Initiative, Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Crown Managers Partnership, Working Lands Council, Western Transportation Institute, Montana Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration, Missoula County, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, The Nature Conservancy, local and regional land trusts

**Total Funding Needed:** \$51,880,000

Intermediate Benchmarks	Date	Funding Needed
A webinar hosted on “Wildlife Issues for Transportation Planning on Federal Lands” to help managers understand wildlife-transportation conflicts and solutions, including the new transportation act’s (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century or MAP-21) provisions for wildlife and connectivity and recent progress by the Western Governors Association on providing state- and region-wide wildlife corridors and crucial habitats mapping and information.	FY2013	\$0
Current wildlife science, reports, and data synthesized to strategically identify locations in the Crown where wildlife habitat and movement intersect roadways.	FY2014	\$40,000
58,556 acres under conservation easement or purchased with Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) to protect them from ecological fragmentation.	FY2014	\$51,370,000
A partnership between Montana Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration, NPS, BLM, USFWS, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, the USFS, and other agencies as needed to mitigate wildlife-vehicle collisions on the Highway 83 Seeley/Swan divide area, Highway 200 and Highway 2. The partners will study, evaluate, and select a course of action to mitigate wildlife-vehicle conflicts. Decision on a course of action for Highway 83 will be analyzed and documented as a part of the USFS upcoming Beaver Creek planning area.	FY2014- FY2015	\$0
The effectiveness of the 41 fish and wildlife-crossing structures is evaluated. They consist of 40 underpasses and one overpass, wildlife fencing, jumpouts, and wildlife crossing guards along 56 miles of Highway 93 constructed as part of the “People’s Way Partnership,” the U.S. Highway 93 North reconstruction project on the Flathead Indian Reservation.	FY2014	\$470,000
Coordinated, collaborative proposals and opportunities developed throughout the Crown to address shortfalls in LWCF funding.	FY2015	TBD
A partnership is formed between all relevant agencies and partners and collaborative, strategic proposals are developed for wildlife-highway mitigation actions.	FY2015	\$0

### Final Deliverables/Metrics:

- 58,556 acres private lands are ecologically intact, interconnected, or restored
- Working ranches and forests provide a balance of conservation, open space, traditional land uses, and public access
- Enhanced species conservation for grizzly bear, wolverine, lynx, goshawk, willow flycatcher, sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, burrowing owl, Lewis' woodpecker, trumpeter swan, yellow-billed cuckoo, cutthroat trout, arctic grayling, and Columbia spotted frog
- Science-based strategy developed for prioritizing wildlife-highway mitigation



GARY TABOR

The Animal's Bridge crossing Highway 93 on the Flathead Reservation; below, photos of wildlife use of crossing structures.



Courtesy of CSKT, MDT, & WTI-MSU



Courtesy of CSKT, MDT & WTI-MSU



Courtesy of CSKT, MDT, & WTI-MSU



Courtesy of CSKT, MDT & WTI-MSU

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBES, MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, WESTERN TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE, AND MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

### Action Item 2: Coordinate and align invasive species data and management within the transboundary Crown of the Continent landscape, emphasizing terrestrial invasive plants and aquatic invasive species.

Invasive species represent one of the most severe threats to the ecological health of the Crown ecosystem. The objective of this action item is to work together across jurisdictions and boundaries to collaboratively identify, treat, and manage terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. The result will be a strategic Crown-wide management approach that will more effectively protect critical lands from invasion, treat and manage targeted invasive species infestations, and create a comprehensive and coordinated approach to public education and communication about invasive species.

**Project Leaders:** Mary Riddle (NPS), Rich Torquemada (BLM), Steve Shelly (USFS), Lindy Garner (USWFS)

**Federal Partners:** National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Other Partnerships:** Crown Managers Partnership (which includes U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, the state of Montana, provincial government agencies, tribes, and first nations), Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium, British Columbia Invasive Species Council, Working Lands Council, Flathead Basin Commission, Missoula County, Montana Weed Control Association, Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign

**Total Funding Needed:** \$1,100,000

Intermediate Benchmarks	Date	Existing Funds	Funding Needed
Enhanced enforcement of Lacey Act and other legal tools to protect the Crown from invasive species.	FY2013	0	0
Shared invasive species information and database across jurisdictions; information gaps identified.	FY2013	\$10,000	
Coordinated strategies and transboundary management protocols developed for targeted aquatic and terrestrial invasive species across the Crown with all key and appropriate agencies.	FY2013	\$28,000 <sup>1</sup>	
Shared priorities agreed upon for treatment areas and weed-free sites. Crown-wide targets identified for invasive species treatment for targeted aquatic and terrestrial invasive species.	FY2014		\$150,000 <sup>2</sup>
Enhanced interagency capacity for invasive species management through contract crews, cooperative agreements with youth corps, volunteers, and leveraging in-kind support and equipment across agencies for 3-5 years to ensure consistent effort.	FY2014		\$450,000 <sup>3</sup>
Regional communication strategy of key messages and actions to educate the public and prevent the spread of invasive species.	FY2014		\$50,000 <sup>4</sup>
Online tool developed to track the distribution of invasive species and model suitable habitats to facilitate information sharing using a set of "core attributes" that visually indicate degree of infestation, monitors progress, and predicts areas of new invasion or areas of high risk for future invasion.	FY2014		\$80,000 <sup>5</sup>
Develop faster and less expensive ways to detect aquatic invasive species, such as DNA protocols.	FY2014		\$20,000 <sup>6</sup>
Collaborative projects developed with Tribes using the Crown-wide prioritization framework for inventory and treatment of invasive species on Tribal lands.	FY2014		\$100,000 <sup>7</sup>
Interagency Invasive Species Strike Teams and Exotic Plant Management Teams formed to inventory and treat priority areas across agency boundaries, based on risk to sensitive areas, impact to endangered species habitat, and feasibility of control.	FY2015		\$250,000

<sup>1</sup>FY2013 DOI, Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative to the Crown Managers Partnership

<sup>2</sup>FY2014 President's Budget: \$50K USFWS, \$100K NPS

<sup>3</sup>FY2014 President's Budget: \$200K USFWS, \$150K NPS, \$100K BLM

<sup>4</sup>FY2014 \$50K NPS

<sup>5</sup>FY2014 \$50K USFWS (for habitat suitability model only), \$30K NPS (for other tools)

<sup>6</sup>FY2014 \$20K NPS

<sup>7</sup>FY2014 \$100K USFWS

## Final Deliverables/Metrics:

- Synthesized transboundary databases for targeted invasive species.
- Standardized aquatic invasive species monitoring protocols.
- Collective prioritization of targeted treatment areas and invasive-free areas.
- Coordinated prevention and containment approaches.
- Coordinated transboundary management protocols for targeted invasive species.



Vegetation monitoring.

**Action Item 3: Maintain and enhance coordination and collaboration of natural resource issues across federal agencies and nonfederal partnerships throughout the transboundary Crown of the Continent landscape.**

To be successful in large landscape-scale conservation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must work in partnership, starting from the ground up while being supported at the administrative level. Many partnership organizations and initiatives exist in the Crown to address specific resource priorities and geographic areas. Conservation actions include management for forest health, water quality, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, sustaining and maintaining rural working lands, and comprehensive landscape- and watershed-level natural resource management. The purpose of the AGO initiative is to enhance these efforts and create greater linkages among them.

Within the U.S. boundaries of the Crown of the Continent lay two American Indian reservations, those of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) and the Blackfeet Nation. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes reservation, known as the Flathead Reservation, includes over 1.3 million acres and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation includes 1.5 million acres. Together they total close to 3 million acres, nearly a third of the U.S. portion of lands within the Crown. Both tribal governments are concerned about and actively involved in natural and cultural resource management, on and adjacent to their reservations, particularly within their respective aboriginal territories (as defined by treaty, legislation, and Executive Order, including the Lame Bull Treaty of 1855 and the Hellgate Treaty of 1855). This action item intends to enhance involvement of the CSKT and Blackfeet, as well as other partnership initiatives.

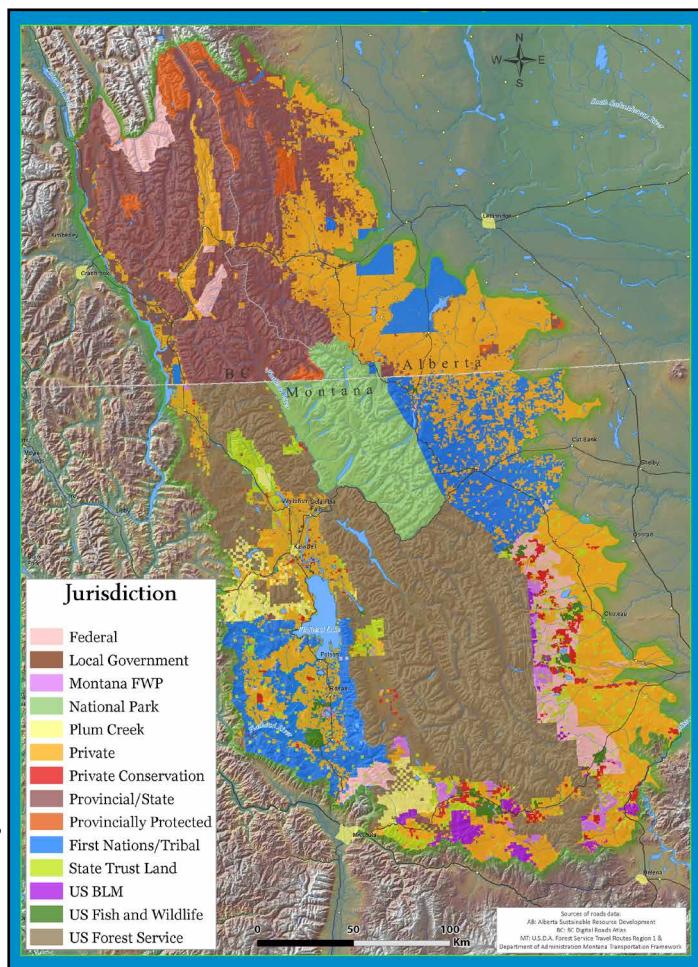
Local initiatives and regional partners benefit from greater federal agency alignment and coordination. Government agencies within the Crown will use existing funds and agency expertise to improve existing community and agency landscape conservation partnerships.

**Project Leaders:** Greg Neudecker (USFWS), Julia Riber (USFS), Gene DeGayner (USFS), Cheryl Vanderburg (USFS), Margie Ewing (USFS), Tom Olliff (NPS), Cynthia Manning (USFS), Craig Engelhard (NRCS), Julie Sacks (NRCS), Rich Torquemada (BLM)

**Federal Partners:** National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

**Other Partnerships:** Working Lands Council, Blackfoot Challenge, Clearwater Resource Council, Northwest Connections, Rocky Mountain Front Advisory Committee, The Crown Roundtable, Swan Ecosystem Center, Blackfeet Nation, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Great Northern LCC

**Total Funding Needed:** \$5,245,000



MAP COURTESY OF THE CROWN MANAGERS PARTNERSHIP

Map of the jurisdictional complexity in the Crown of the Continent.

Intermediate Benchmarks	Date	Existing Funds	Funding Needed
Strengthened collaboration with the Crown Managers Partnership, the Blackfoot Challenge, and the Southwest Crown Forest Collaborative, and the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative and continued support through the Crown Federal Partner Working Group.	FY2013	\$4,745,000 <sup>1</sup>	
Opportunity for partners to meet annually at the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent.	FY2013	\$10,000	
	FY2014-annually		\$4,715,000 <sup>2</sup>
	FY2013	\$183,000	\$15,000
Coordinated landscape conservation of private, rural working lands adjacent to public land in the North Fork of the Flathead River, and the Blackfoot and Swan watersheds. Joint efforts and resource priorities of watershed groups and federal agencies will be supported through financial assistance of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, 2013 AGO Special Initiative to enhance forest health, water quality, and wildlife habitat.	FY2014-annually		
Supported and expanded (to the northern Crown) Working Lands Council to enable transparent and regular communications between working landowner interests and USDA and DOI Leadership; review progress toward shared community-based landscape conservation objectives; troubleshoot administrative impediments to achieving those objectives; and anticipate evolving shared objectives.	FY2014-annually		\$15,000
Expanded coordination for landscape conservation of private, rural working lands adjacent to public land in the Rocky Mountain Front watershed efforts, as well as continued assistance on the North Fork of the Flathead River and the Blackfoot and Swan watersheds. Joint efforts and resource priorities of watershed groups and federal agencies will be supported through financial assistance of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, 2014 AGO Special Initiative to enhance forest health, water quality, and wildlife habitat.	FY2014		\$500,000
Tribal representation and participation in landscape-scale conservation and management decisions that impact them. (Yet to be determined. Participation of Tribes will be determined by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and individual Tribes.)	FY2018		TBD

<sup>1</sup> FY2013 existing funds include, \$15K for the Crown Managers Partnership, \$800K for the Blackfoot Challenge, \$3.94 million for the Southwest Crown Forest Collaboration (these are federal funds only; totals do not include private funds leveraged by these groups)

<sup>2</sup> Estimated annual support includes \$15K for the Crown Managers Partnership, \$800K for the Blackfoot Challenge, \$3.9 million for the Southwest Crown Forest Collaborative

### Final Deliverables/Metrics:

- All conservation partners—federal, state, tribal, and private—are working collaboratively toward conservation in the Crown
- Tribes are engaged in Crown landscape efforts
- Federal agencies demonstrate alignment in policies and collaboration in implementing projects

### Next Steps

These strategic actions are intended to strengthen and leverage existing efforts. As these actions are implemented, continued engagement from partners will refine these strategies. The Crown Federal Partner Working Group is tracking benchmarks, meeting monthly to assess progress, and will report accomplishments at the end of each fiscal year.



GARY TABOR

Indian Days on the Blackfeet Reservation.



GARY TABOR

# America's Great Outdoors Crown of the Continent Demonstration Landscape

**Interagency Strategic Plan  
FY2013-FY2018**

## Appendices

---

### Appendix A: AGO Crown Federal Partner Working Group

#### Team Co-Leads

Tom Olliff

Julia Riber

National Park Service, Intermountain Region Chief Landscape Conservation and Climate Change  
USDA Forest Service Northern Region, Regional NEPA and Litigation Coordinator

#### Team Members

Eugene DeGayner

Craig Engelhard

Margie Ewing

Lindy Garner

Richard Kehr

Cynthia Manning

Mary Manning

Clayton Matt

Greg Neudecker

Rick Northrup

Mary Riddle

Julie Sacks

Phillip Sammon

John Shannon

Steve Shelly

Paula Short

Gary Sullivan

Rich Torquemada

Cheryl Vanderburg

Nina Chambers

USDA Forest Service Northern Region, Renewable Resource Management Director

Natural Resource Conservation Service-Montana, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

USDA Forest Service Northern and Intermountain Regions, State and Private Forestry Specialist

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mountain-Prairie Region, Invasive Species Coordinator

USDA Forest Service Flathead National Forest, Swan Lake District Ranger

USDA Forest Service Northern Region, Regional Social Scientist

USDA Forest Service Northern Region, Regional Vegetation Ecologist

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Director of Tribal Services

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Habitat Selection Supervisor

National Park Service, Glacier National Park Chief of Planning and Compliance

Natural Resource Conservation Service-Montana, Resource Conservationist

USDA Forest Service Northern Region, Public Affairs Officer

USDA Forest Service Northern and Intermountain Regions, State and Private Forestry Deputy Director

USDA Forest Service Northern Region, Regional Botanist

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Forestry Assistance Bureau

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Realty Program, Montana State Coordinator

USDOI Bureau of Land Management, Field Manager, Missoula Field Office

USDA Forest Service Northern Region, Tribal Relations Specialist

Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Writer/Editor



## Appendix B: Local and Large-scale Collaborative Partnerships

Federal agencies operating within the Crown participate in a wide variety of local and large-scale collaborative efforts aimed at restoring, conserving, and protecting healthy ecosystems and providing for sustainable economies for resource-dependent communities. Many organizations and individuals belong to multiple collaborative groups at all scales. One of the challenges in the Crown is identifying all the collaborative groups. Some examples (not a comprehensive list) include the following.

### The Blackfoot Challenge

The Blackfoot Challenge is a landowner-based group that coordinates management of the Blackfoot River, its tributaries, and adjacent lands. It is organized locally and known nationally as a model for preserving the rural character and natural beauty of a watershed. The mission of the Blackfoot Challenge is to coordinate efforts that will enhance, conserve and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyles of the Blackfoot River Valley for present and future generations. It supports environmentally responsible resource stewardship through cooperation of private and public interests. Private landowners, federal and state land managers, local government officials, and corporate landowners compose the informal membership. All share a common vision of how the Challenge operates in the Blackfoot watershed and believe success can be achieved by building trust, partnerships, and working together.

<http://blackfootchallenge.org/>

### Clearwater Resource Council

The Clearwater Resource Council (CRC) works to engage the community and facilitate efforts that will enhance, conserve, sustain, and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Clearwater Watershed for present and future generations.

<https://crcmt.org/>

### Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front

Our coalition is made up of folks who live, work, and use the Front. We may not agree on everything, but we share a common bond and understanding that the Rocky Mountain Front symbolizes what is best about Montana. The work this coalition does is based on a rich tradition that began over 100 years ago when Montanans came together to designate the state's first wildlife preserve on the Front in 1913.

### Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative

The CCCI is a coalition of 15 non-government conservation organizations in the U.S. and Canada promotes a single vision for the Crown of the Continent ecosystem as part of their collective efforts to advance the Crown as a regional and potentially national conservation priority. Over the past year, the CCCI developed a comprehensive Conservation Agenda and Conservation Plan to achieve long-term conservation goals and vision for the Crown in a time of climate change, as well as comprehensive and collaborative conservation strategies in four key areas: climate science, policy framework, communication and outreach, and capacity building. Climate change is the overarching theme of the CCCI.

<http://www.conservemontana.org/content/crown-of-the-continent-conservation-initiative>

### Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium

The COCEEC promotes the importance and collective integration of educational opportunities in the Crown ecosystem. Individuals representing 30 different state, federal, and private conservation and natural resource organizations are involved in education centered in the region. COCEEC participants strive to provide a bioregional focus and understanding of a larger ecosystem.

### Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council

The Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council is a regional network of communities, tourism bureaus, conservation and business groups, educators, First Nations, government agencies, and others working together in the region that includes and surrounds Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in southwestern Alberta, southeastern British Columbia,



and northwestern Montana. Established in 2007, the partnership's focus to date has been collaboration with National Geographic Society on the Crown of the Continent MapGuide and the development of a website.

The Council serves as a source of information about the Crown of the Continent region for visitors and residents to understand, appreciate, and help preserve its geographic character, including historical, cultural and environmental heritage. Looking forward, the Council intends to pursue cooperative projects that promote regional understanding and appreciation, encourage sustainable businesses, support community well-being, advance landscape stewardship, and provide outstanding visitor experiences. Participation in the Council is voluntary and without cost. As an educational and information-sharing network, it is open to all groups and individuals who embrace our vision and goals.  
<http://www.crownofthecontinent.net/about.php>

### Crown Managers Partnership

The CMP was created in 2001 as a transboundary, inter-agency forum for Tribes, First Nations, federal, provincial, and state land management agencies in Montana, British Columbia, and Alberta. This voluntary partnership seeks to demonstrate leadership in addressing the environmental management challenges in the Crown by adopting transboundary collaborative approaches to environmental management. The CMP seeks to improve the management of this large, complex ecoregion containing multiple jurisdictions through agency land managers working together and serves as an information, science, and data coordination forum for land management agencies with direct responsibilities for land stewardship in the Crown ecosystem.  
<http://www.crownmanagers.org/>

### Flathead Basin Commission

The Flathead Basin Commission was established by the Montana State Legislature and is a Montana-based collaborative body of 23 federal, state, and citizen representatives; British Columbia has one seat as a liaison member. Created in 1983, the purpose of the commission is to monitor and protect the aquatic

resources of Flathead Lake and its tributaries. Although not a formal decision making body, the commission supports U.S.-led efforts to maintain and improve the Flathead Basin aquatic ecosystem, and at times, makes informed recommendations to government bodies concerning protection and management of these resources. In recent years, the commission has played an important role in developing agreements between the U.S. and Canada to protect the ecological health of the region, including critical wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors. Specific water quality protection and monitoring activities include:

- Ensuring water quality, economic, land use, and natural resource data is gathered, analyzed, interpreted, and disseminated to the public and responsible agencies.
- Facilitating policies and actions that have a positive result on water quality and natural resources.
- Providing leadership, including recommendations to governments, in making the case for basin water quality and protection of its natural resources.

<http://www.flatheadbasincommission.org/>

### Flathead Community of Resource Educators

Flathead CORE is a network of individuals and organizations working together to increase awareness and understanding about the natural, historical and cultural resources of the Flathead Region. The group seeks to:

- Serve as a communication network between resource educators and the community.
- Provide practical tools, training and materials for educators in the Flathead Region.
- Be open to all resource educators and professionals to promote the diversity of ideas and cooperation.
- Promote knowing more about the place we live.

[www.flatheadcore.org](http://www.flatheadcore.org)

### Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative

The GNLCC is a meso-regionally scaled partnership of federal, state, Tribal, Canadian, and non-government conservation organizations working together to develop a collective landscape vision, shared goals, and measurable objectives for specific resource priorities.



The Great Northern area includes the interior Columbia Basin, the Rocky Mountains from Wyoming northward into British Columbia and Alberta, and the sage-steppe arid lands of the interior Columbia Basin and Rocky Mountain regions. LCCs are a national network of large-landscape partnerships following an outcome-based adaptive management framework for large-landscape conservation. The purpose is to add value and fill gaps in governance and capacity for making progress toward inter-jurisdictional, transboundary conservation efforts, particularly as they pertain to the over-arching priorities of the GNLCC partners.

<http://greatnorthernlcc.org/>

### **Heart of the Rockies Initiative**

The HOTR was launched in 2002 as a partnership of local, regional, and national land trusts with the goal of increasing the pace of strategic private land conservation in the Northern Rockies. HOTR efforts focus on protecting high priority lands through collaborative planning, capacity building, and capital fundraising.

<http://www.heart-of-rockies.org/>

### **Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee**

The IGBC consists of representatives from the USDA Forest Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Geological Survey, Tribal Nations, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and representatives of the state wildlife agencies of Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. Their mission is to restore and conserve the grizzly bear, whose habitat includes Crown of the Continent land.

<http://www.igbconline.org/>

### **Jocko River Native Trout Restoration, Flathead Indian Reservation**

The Jocko River watershed has been substantially disturbed by agriculture, irrigation, livestock grazing, transportation infrastructure, and residential and commercial development. The river restoration effort, started in 2008, targeted the lower 22 miles of the river, and is being led by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). The goal of the restoration is

to re-establish the natural river processes that existed before the watershed was disturbed and to re-establish natural linkages between the terrestrial, riparian, and aquatic parts of the ecosystem. The CSKT have achieved half of their restoration goal, and thus restored important habitat for bull trout and west-slope cutthroat trout. The tribes have coupled the effort with an outreach effort to educate the public and youth on the importance of river ecology for not only imperiled fishes, but all species that depend on the system including human resource users. The outreach effort has included the production of an interactive educational DVD for middle and high school students highlighting the ecology of the river, the importance of the aquatic communities, and the interaction of river ecology with native culture and traditions. The USFWS has recently become involved as a source of funding for additional river mile restoration along the boundary of the National Bison Range via the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and specifically the Western Native Trout Initiative partnership.

### **Montana Forest Restoration Committee**

MFRC is primarily a volunteer, consensus-based collaborative group, formed in January 2007 to help guide restoration of Montana's National Forests. Work is supported by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forestry Division in partnership with the USDA Forest Service. The MFRC articulated a collective vision of ecologically appropriate, scientifically supported forest restoration through a set of 13 principles that represent the "zone of agreement" where controversy, delays, appeals, and litigation are significantly reduced.

<http://www.montanarestoration.org/home>

### **The Multi-Agency Integrated Restoration Strategy Group**

The MA-IRS includes federal and state agencies working together to develop processes and frameworks for working collaboratively on forest resource management activities. There is cooperative utilization of each agency's GIS-based prioritization models for identifying and implementing work in critical watersheds.



## **Northwest Connections**

The mission of Northwest Connections is to integrate science, education and community in the conservation of rural working landscapes. Their engagement in the Crown includes involvement in the collaborative restoration efforts on the Flathead National Forest, including Swan Valley Innovations.

<http://www.northwestconnections.org/>

## **Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent**

The Center for Natural Resources and Environment Policy (CNREP) at The University of Montana and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (LILP) initiated the effort in 2007. The objective of the Roundtable is to establish a multi-stakeholder forum to exchange ideas, build relationships, identify shared values and interests, and facilitate working relationships. In addition to organizing periodic forums and workshops, CNREP and LILP intend to hold annual conferences with policy leaders representing the major jurisdictions within the Crown to create a national pilot project on how to implement large-landscape conservation. The Roundtable has a focus on engaging community-level interests and other non-traditional partners in discussion and development of a vision for the Crown including Tribes and First Nations or other under-represented communities with a natural resource interest. They have recently received a large umbrella grant from the Kresge Foundation to facilitate the collaboration and fund those projects and activities.

<http://www.crownroundtable.org/>

## **Southwest Crown Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project**

The Southwest Crown CFLRP is a large-landscape collaboration covering portions of the three National Forests located in the Crown. Multiple partners work to focus restoration activities on this landscape and to provide for sustainable jobs and economies. Projects are funded with non-federal funds and in-kind matches to federal funds. Work is focused on conserving and restoring healthy ecosystems.

## **Swan Ecosystem Center**

SEC is a community-based nonprofit organization. Like other places in the West, the Swan Valley Community is shaped by the surrounding landscape. The Swan Lands Coordinating Committee (SLCC) is made up of representatives of the agencies and organizations that have a role in the Swan Valley and residents who meet about twice annually to share information. This committee oversees development of a Watershed Restoration Plan for the Swan Valley, working through its subcommittees: Conservation Strategies; Forest Stewardship; Native Fish; Water Quality; Wetlands and Wildlife.

A partnership with the Flathead National Forest provides us with an office in the U.S. Forest Service Condon Work Center, where we also offer a Visitor Center and Trails.

<http://www.swanecosystemcenter.org/>

## **Working Lands Council**

The WLC is an unincorporated collective of private landowners representing the southern Crown, including the Rocky Mountain Front, and the Blackfoot, Clearwater, and Swan Valleys. The WLC is focused on community-driven working lands conservation delivered on a landscape scale, including protection, management, restoration, education, and innovative approaches to land management.



## Appendix C: AGO Federal Goals and Recommendations Related to Crown Action Items

AGO Goals and Recommendations	Crown Action Items		
	1	2	3
<b>Goal 4: Engage Young People in Conservation and the Great Outdoors</b> Recommendation (4.1) Engage young people in the implementation of AGO.	X	X	X
<b>Goal 5: Strengthen the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)</b> Recommendation (5.2) Focus a portion of federal LWCF funds on projects that achieve AGO goals related to large-scale land conservation, urban parks and community green spaces, and river restoration and access.		X	
<b>Goal 7: Conserve Rural Working Farms, Ranches, and Forests through Partnerships and Incentives</b> Recommendation (7.1) Support collaborative landscape conservation through competitive processes, including increases in LWCF funding and other programs. Recommendation (7.2) Support landscape partnerships by targeting existing federal dollars, policies, and other resources toward conservation of private and tribal working lands and coordinating expenditures, where appropriate, across federal agencies.		X	X
<b>Goal 8: Conserve and Restore Our National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, Forests, and Other Federal Lands and Waters.</b> Recommendation (8.1) Manage federal lands and waters within a larger landscape context to conserve and restore ecosystems and watershed health. Recommendation (8.2) Manage federal lands and waters to increase their resilience to climate change. Recommendation (8.3) Manage federal lands and waters to create and protect critical wildlife corridors and maintain landscape connectivity in collaboration with other public and private stakeholders.	X	X	X
<b>Goal 9: Protect and Renew Rivers and Other Waters</b> Recommendation (9.4) Coordinate and align federal water resource management programs and resources.		X	
<b>Goal 10: Make the Federal Government a More Effective Conservation Partner</b> Recommendation (10.1) Establish an interagency AGO Council to achieve more cooperation and collaboration among federal agencies engaged in conservation and recreation.	X	X	X