

Conserving Treasured Landscapes in America's Great Outdoors

Crown of the Continent

Montana

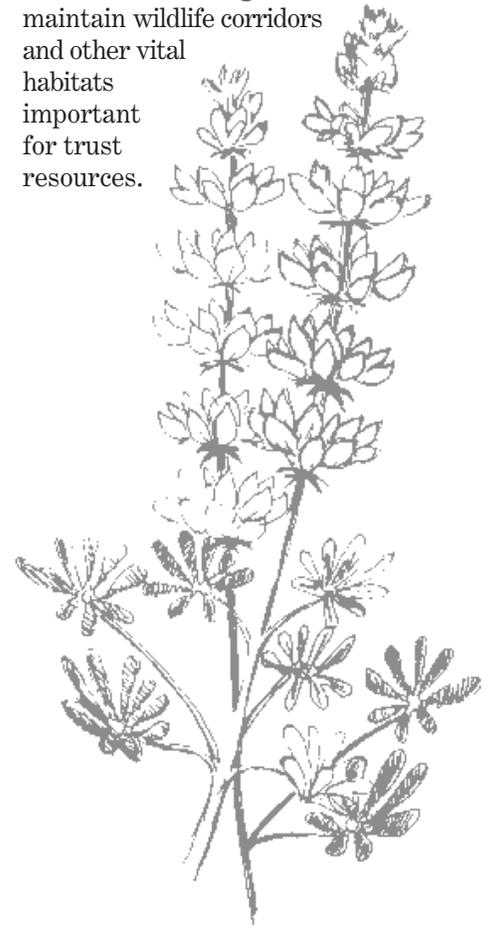
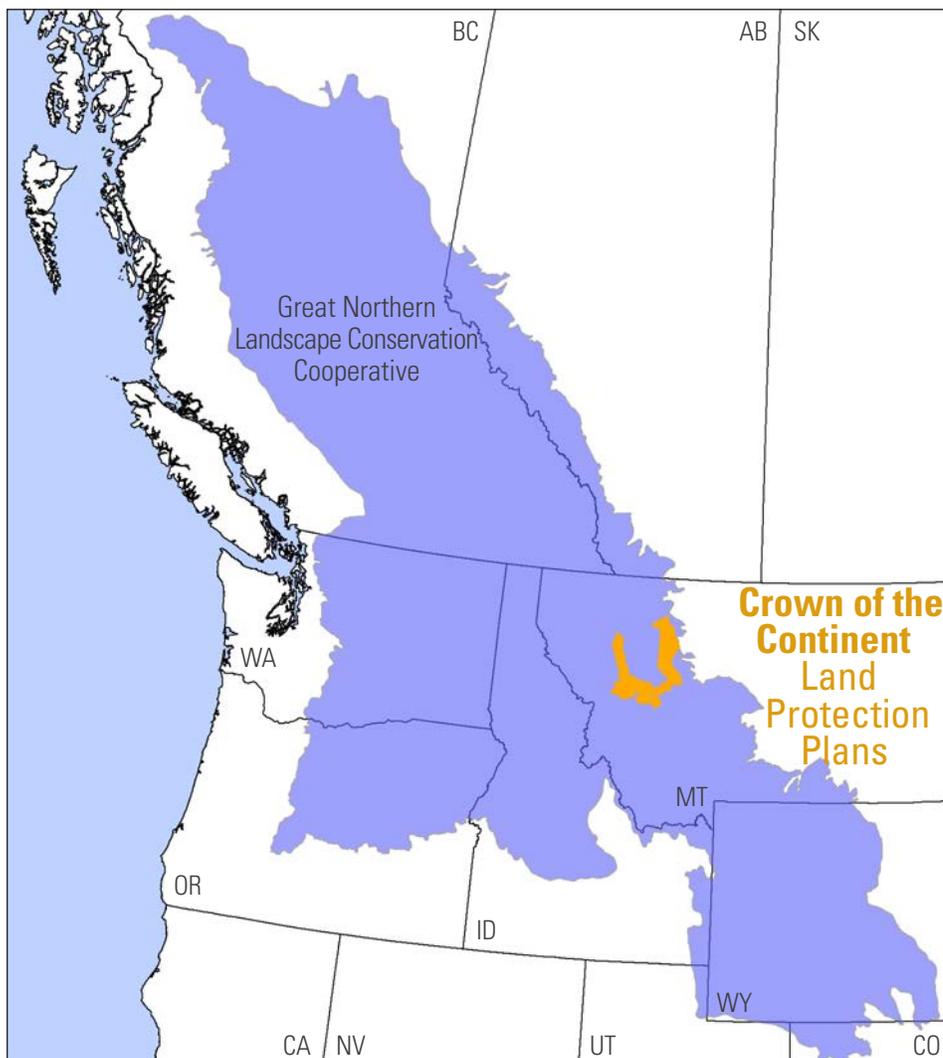
Under the leadership of Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, the Mountain–Prairie Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with partners on landscape-level conservation projects.

The Crown of the Continent project will protect up to 216,000 acres, conserving important ecosystems for wildlife and for the enjoyment of the American people.

The Service is using a strategic habitat conservation model that integrates scientific information with management concerns to set priorities and achieve the greatest possible conservation and management benefits.

This project will be delivered with our partners via landscape conservation cooperatives, addressing the challenges of climate change and other wildlife

habitat concerns. The resulting priorities will guide the Service in sound conservation actions designed to maintain wildlife corridors and other vital habitats important for trust resources.



Perpetual conservation easements with private landowners will be the primary means of habitat protection. Important habitats under grassland and wetland conservation easements will be protected from development to ensure their restoration or preservation. Additionally, these lands will remain private property with easement provisions that will generally allow for continued agricultural uses such as livestock grazing and haying.

Crown of the Continent Land Protection Plans



USFWS

Blackfoot Valley Wildlife Management Area, Montana

The Crown of the Continent in western Montana is recognized as one of the most intact ecosystems remaining in North America and is home to notable species such as grizzly bear and native cutthroat trout.

The Crown of the Continent project will primarily use conservation easements to protect vital wildlife habitat. Corridors connecting existing blocks of protected habitat on public and private conservation lands are increasingly important in providing an adaptation strategy for fish and wildlife resources in the face of a changing climate and increasing human influence. A proven effective approach to conserving habitat in Montana, conservation easements are also designed to sustain traditional values including the area's ranching heritage.

The Service has completed three land protection plans, one for each of the following areas within the Crown of the Continent:

- The Blackfoot Valley Wildlife Management Area will protect up to 80,000 acres in one of the last undeveloped, low-elevation, river valley ecosystems in western Montana.
- The Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area was successfully established in 2005 and this project would expand protected lands by 125,000 acres.
- The Swan Valley Conservation Area will protect 11,000 acres of one of the last undeveloped, low-elevation, coniferous forest ecosystems in western Montana.



October 2010

