MONTANA
Landmarks
WHERE WE WORK

1. Dancing Prairie Preserve
2. Safe Harbor Marsh Preserve
3. Swan River Oxbow Preserve
4. Pine Butte Guest Ranch & Swamp Preserve
5. Crown Butte Preserve
6. Centennial Sandhills Preserve
7. South Fork Madison Preserve
8. Matador Ranch
9. Comertown Pothole Prairie Preserve

The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

COVER PHOTO Canada Lynx ©Daniel J. Cox/NaturalExpressions.com
Year’s end is often a time to reflect on the past months, but it’s also an excellent time to look ahead. Our 2012 Annual Report definitely does both. In addition to all of our ambitious conservation work, this was the year for serious strategic planning. It was an excellent process that brought in our staff, Board of Trustees, and partners. The resulting plan charts the course for the next four years and we thought as friends and members, you would like to see where we are heading.

This new road map for conservation is grounded in the Conservancy’s “whole systems” approach to our work. Simply stated, Whole Systems conservation encompasses all the natural components of any ecosystem – water, air, plants, animals, geology, climate, and so on – but it includes people in the mix. Whole systems are large enough to sustain healthy and resilient populations of native plant and animal communities as measured in scientific terms; but they have an important social aspect as well. Whole systems provide us with clean water and air. They’re the places where we work and play. And, very importantly, they are natural icons... places that people know, cherish, and are, therefore, inspired to protect.

While the moniker “whole systems” may be new, the approach is one we’ve been employing in Montana for many years. In fact, our work on the Crown of the Continent is an example of whole systems conservation at its best! But then, who’s surprised that we’re out ahead of the pack?!

As always, we have set ambitious goals for our next four years. Yet, even as we reach high, our aims are grounded in the science and economic and social research to keep them realistic. We also know that we have the commitment of a stellar community of supporters who help us each step of the way.

I hope you will be as excited about the journey as we are and I thank you for being onboard!
NORTHERN PRAIRIES

We have protected another 640 acres of extremely high quality grassland near Glasgow with a conservation easement. The land sits as a small inholding within a larger block of public land, so the benefits of this easement reach well beyond its boundaries.

On our Matador Ranch, crews continue to restore streams following the floods of 2011. We’ve removed dams and culverts that were blocking passage of fish on Beaver and Big Warm Creeks. We also made improvements for fish movement at road crossings that are critical for operation of the ranch and grassbank.

Researchers completed a second year of grassland bird surveys; and our efforts to remove and modify fencing so it no longer presents sometimes-fatal obstacles to wildlife also continue to make great strides.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

In an impressive effort with two neighboring ranches, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, we completed a complex plan to help improve the health and habitat for Greater Sage-grouse on nearly 45,000 acres in the Centennial Valley. As part of the national
Sage-Grouse Initiative, we’ll use science to guide cattle grazing and stewardship as tools to accomplish this goal.

With help of great volunteers, including teens from the Ecology Project International and the Conservancy’s Leaders in Environmental Action for Future (LEAF) program, we removed or modified more than 11 miles of fence to make it safer for wildlife. Volunteers also helped us restore about ten acres of old-growth Douglas fir and aspen woodlands. These lands are important for wildlife migration and as a buffer between homes and wild lands. This work lays a great foundation for allowing natural fires to burn beneficially under safe conditions.

In the Big Hole River Valley, we’ve placed a conservation easement on the 2,013-acre Steel Creek Ranch. The ranch harbors more than four miles of critical habitat for fluvial Arctic grayling, a native cold-water fish whose last wild home in the lower 48 states is in the Upper Big Hole.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT

We continue our fight to protect the land we own and the rights we hold through easements on private land in the face of oil and gas development. Surface land and subsurface mineral rights are frequently owned by different parties, and the laws surrounding the assertion of those rights are quite complex and varied. We’re committed to asserting our property rights and empowering others to do the same. We’re working hand in hand with landowners to minimize impacts from exploration on their land, even when protections are not mandatory. We’re also consulting with industry and our public and private partners to develop best management practices for exploration activities. During seismic exploration activities this year, companies avoided several Conservancy-protected properties entirely. On other properties, we were able to maintain some exclusion zones and successfully guided companies to implement weed prevention measures, vehicular travel restrictions, and other best management practices.

WESTERN CROWN

One of our exciting transfers of Montana Legacy Project land was in the Deer Creek area just outside of Missoula. Our sale of 2,189 acres of this former industrial timberland to the U.S. Forest Service is helping connect some of the town’s most popular recreational trails. The property at the lower end of Deer Creek Road and around the base of University Mountain has long been valued by hikers, bicyclists, runners, picnickers, and folks just looking for a scenic getaway close to town. The creek is also a valuable tributary for westslope cutthroat trout. In fact, these waters are unique in that they support a genetically pure population of this native fish – classified as a “species of concern” in Montana due to its decreasing numbers and distribution. Prior to the sale, the Conservancy and Forest Service cleaned up tons of trash that had accumulated over years of illegal dumping. The agency has also stepped up regulation of destructive off-road use.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The Nature Conservancy has been awarded accreditation through the national Land Trust Alliance. This honor was bestowed on TNC only after a rigorous review that proved our steadfast commitment to meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust, and ensuring that our conservation efforts are permanent.
The future will see us broadening our footprint in Southwest Montana. Building on the tremendous foundation we’ve established in the Centennial Valley, we are expanding to the north and west – guided by the movement of the wildlife we are committed to protect. In one case, the Big Hole Valley, we are reactivating the conservation efforts we initiated there some 20 years ago. We’ve also begun exploring how to best work with landowners in other headwaters of the Upper Missouri River that flow out of the “high divide” between Montana and Idaho. Conserving this sagebrush habitat is vital not only for the health of the fish such as threatened native trout, but animals as diverse as Greater Sage-grouse, wolverines, Trumpeter Swans, and grizzly bears. Our ultimate goal is to work with landowners to maintain the pathways needed by wildlife to move through the Greater Yellowstone system from Montana into Idaho as well as north to the Crown of the Continent and Canada. By protecting the headwaters of the great Missouri River, and the natural values of places where people hunt, fish, hike, and ranch, our work in Southwest Montana yields benefits far beyond our project boundaries.

In addition to protecting land through purchase and conservation easements, we will continue to restore and maintain the rich habitat in this region. Our tools will include attacking noxious weeds, using grazing as a means of keeping grassland healthy for wildlife, restoring and protecting vital streamside vegetation, removing and modifying fences that inhibit wildlife activity, and controlled fire.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We are aiming to raise $4 million in private donations by 2017 for use on capital projects such as land acquisitions and conservation easements. To make a donation directly for our work in Southwest Montana, call (406) 443-6728.
View of the Centennial from our Murphy Creek Headquarters ©Chase Warden

LEAF intern Justice Davis checks pebble size in Hellroaring Creek. ©Joanna Pinneo

Were We Work

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

LEARN MORE AT nature.org/montana
Northern Prairies

Montana’s Northern Prairies offer the opportunity to conserve one of the largest, unbroken stretches of native grassland left in the country, protecting both wildlife and a way of life that has persisted for generations of American families. The Nature Conservancy in Montana has launched the Northern Montana Prairies Campaign to help stop the loss of this rich resource. The campaign combines our partnership with local ranchers, cutting-edge grassland research, and on-the-ground stewardship. Having secured some of the very first conservation easements in the region, we hope to grow on that success by placing easements on another 32,000 acres by 2017.

Our 60,000-acre Matador Ranch is a hub of grassland research and home to our innovative grassbank. It is here we’re melding science and stewardship into successful conservation. In the next four years, we’ll work hand in hand with neighboring ranchers to remove an additional 60 miles of livestock fencing that poses a serious obstacle to, or causes the death of, pronghorn, Sage-grouse, and other prairie wildlife. We’ll continue to use cattle to maintain and improve habitat for threatened grassland birds. Through relationships forged with ranchers in the grassbank, the reach of our conservation extends to more than 240,000 acres of private ranchland. Working with partners, we hope to export this enormously successful cooperative ranching model to another location on the Northern Plains.

Fence Cam
We’ve installed camera traps on fence posts at various locations around the Matador Ranch as part of our research on wildlife-friendly fencing. The photos help us understand how different animals react to fences, gates, and the modifications we employ to make fences work better for wildlife movement. But, some of the images we get are just plain cool! Pictured here are a bull elk, pronghorn, and a Swainson’s Hawk.
We aim to raise $2 million in private donations by 2017 for capital projects such as land acquisition and easements. To make a donation directly for our work on the Northern Prairies, call (406) 443-6728.

The cattle that use the Matador Ranch Grassbank are rotated according to an annual grazing plan that’s created to maintain ideal grass conditions for wildlife. Conservancy staff also work with grassbank members to design similar wildlife-friendly grazing strategies on their own ranches. ©Charlie Messerly

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We aim to raise $2 million in private donations by 2017 for capital projects such as land acquisition and easements. To make a donation directly for our work on the Northern Prairies, call (406) 443-6728.

LEARN MORE AT nature.org/montana

Annual Report 2012 7
CROWN OF THE CONTINENT

Partnership, protection, and stewardship will continue to be the hallmarks of our efforts across the Crown. Conservation of this global natural treasure helps ensure clean water, places for people to work and play, and a home for the magnificent wildlife that characterizes the Northern Rockies.
East of the Divide: The Rocky Mountain Front

Conservation easements continue to be an invaluable tool in conserving tens of thousands of acres of private ranchland on the Rocky Mountain Front. In conjunction with our partners, we hope to place an additional 60,000 acres under easement over the next four years – securing this land for both wildlife and future generations of family ranchers. The trust and respect that we have gained over nearly two decades of work on the Front are paying off with more requests for easements than we have been able to fund. It has also helped this community become a model for cooperative action to combat noxious weeds and in successfully coexisting with grizzly bears as they expand eastward regaining historic range that was lost to human settlement.

We are also joining efforts to re-invigorate the Blackfeet Indian Land Trust, a community conservation effort that focuses on vital habitat between the Front and Glacier National Park.

The Conservancy will remain very actively engaged in the defense of our easements against the threats of energy exploration, leasing, and development. We are developing a comprehensive assessment of the threats posed by energy development as well as evaluating the need for statewide strategies on oil and gas, biofuel, wind, and energy transmission.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We are aiming to raise $8 million in private donations to support the purchase of additional easements on the Front. To make a donation directly for our work on the Rocky Mountain Front, call (406) 443-6728.
**West of the Divide: The Blackfoot, Swan, and Flathead Valleys**

This lush side of the Crown is distinguished by its clear trout streams and mix of forests and grasslands. It supports an amazing array of wildlife as well as ranching, logging, and outdoor recreation. It’s also characterized by a complex jumble of intermingled public and privately owned land. Beginning with our first conservation easement in the Blackfoot and continuing with the landmark Montana Legacy Project, the Conservancy continues to help re-order the fractured ownership into a pattern that makes management of the land more effective and beneficial for both people and wildlife.

More than two-thirds of the 310,000 acres purchased as the Montana Legacy Project have been transferred to state and federal ownership, and the rest will be similarly conveyed as funds become available. In the meantime, the Conservancy will continue to maintain and improve the condition of the land by attacking noxious weeds and removing fences, roads, and developments in streams that have a negative impact on wildlife and habitat.

We are also aiming to restore fire as a natural part of the low-elevation Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine forests in western Montana. In consultation with neighboring public and private landowners, we are considering conducting controlled burns on forests we own in the Blackfoot Valley. Bringing fire back to the valley is an ambitious goal, but we believe our close relationships in the area and expertise gained through the Conservancy’s Fire Learning Network make this an excellent time to move forward.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

We hope to raise $6.125 million for the purchase of land and easements on the Western Crown by 2017. Additionally, a gift to our Montana Annual Fund helps support the science and stewardship work across the Crown. (see page 13)
It's A Small World
The Nature Conservancy in Montana

FINANCIAL SUMMARY
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2012

SUPPORT & REVENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dues and contributions</td>
<td>9,600,494</td>
<td>14,209,163</td>
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<td>Government awards</td>
<td>1,029,643</td>
<td>466,719</td>
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<td>Investment income or (loss)</td>
<td>(126,019)</td>
<td>1,949,786</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
<td>1,381,550</td>
<td>1,613,304</td>
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<td>Gifts of Conservation Land &amp; Easements</td>
<td>688,000</td>
<td>357,540</td>
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<td>Land sale proceeds</td>
<td>17,308,681</td>
<td>65,832,263</td>
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<td>Support (to)/from other TNC Units</td>
<td>(5,924,205)</td>
<td>(5,749,495)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Support &amp; Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,958,144</strong></td>
<td><strong>$78,679,283</strong></td>
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EXPENSES & CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

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<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of Conservation Land &amp; Easements</td>
<td>3,489,800</td>
<td>144,322,588</td>
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<td>Conservation programs</td>
<td>4,414,060</td>
<td>6,056,588</td>
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<td><strong>Total conservation program expenses &amp; capital allocations</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,903,860</strong></td>
<td><strong>$150,379,176</strong></td>
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<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>709,690</td>
<td>684,716</td>
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<td><strong>Total Administration &amp; Fundraising</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,438,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,396,230</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses &amp; Capital Allocations</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,341,960</strong></td>
<td><strong>$151,775,406</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NET RESULT

| Support & Revenue over Expenses & Capital Allocations | $14,616,184 | ($73,096,123) |

ASSET, LIABILITY & NET ASSET SUMMARY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservation land</td>
<td>104,917,774</td>
<td>136,679,116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation easements</td>
<td>93,479,345</td>
<td>89,916,545</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments held for land acquisitions</td>
<td>9,688,735</td>
<td>10,807,081</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowment investments</td>
<td>11,279,124</td>
<td>11,893,441</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property &amp; equipment (net of depreciation)</td>
<td>646,524</td>
<td>902,141</td>
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<td>Current assets</td>
<td>989,763</td>
<td>979,114</td>
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<td>Other assets</td>
<td>2,921</td>
<td>656</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$221,004,186</strong></td>
<td><strong>$251,178,093</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$127,061,099</strong></td>
<td><strong>$142,225,223</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$93,943,087</strong></td>
<td><strong>$108,952,870</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
1) Major changes in the Financial Summary from 2011 to 2012 were driven by the 310,000-acre Montana Legacy Project.
2) The figures that appear in the Financial Summary are for informational purposes only. The complete audited FY 2011 financial statements for The Nature Conservancy can be seen at nature.org/aboutus/annualreport or can be ordered from The Nature Conservancy at (406) 443-0303.
Montana’s Annual Fund: The Quiet Engine of Conservation

Raising dollars for the Montana Annual Fund may be the most difficult job in the chapter. It’s easy to explain landmark conservation campaigns such as the North Fork NOW! and Montana Legacy Project. Everyone understands how we need funds to buy land or mineral rights. But, the Annual Fund? Although it doesn’t have a flashy name, this fund is the powerful engine driving our work. None of our extraordinary conservation successes are possible without it. The Annual Fund covers such basic, yet essential, expenses as staff salaries, rent, and keeping the lights turned on. It also pays for most of the vital science and stewardship work that turns ideas and strategy into on-the-ground conservation. Every acre of land or easement we purchase requires hours of staff time ensuring due diligence and commits us to years of ongoing stewardship. Field staff log tens of thousands of miles of travel every year. Our conservation requires good science, sturdy boots, reliable tires, and, sometimes, a lot of hardware! Without donations to the Annual Fund, our work might well come to a grinding halt.

How you can help

Your contribution can help us reach our $2.5 million Annual Fund goal for 2013. Become a monthly donor and have your gift automatically deducted from your checking account or credit card. Sign up at nature.org.

Science guides our mission... you make it happen!

Using GPS to plot location of weed patches ©Bebe Crouse

Just look at some of the things our Annual Fund buys:

NEW WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY FENCING
$6,000 – $16,000 / mile *

TREATING NEW PATCH OF INVASIVE WEEDS
$100 – $200 / acre

REMOVING CULVERTS TO IMPROVE FISH HABITAT
$1,000 – $20,000 **

OBLITERATING OLD FOREST ROADS
$1,500 – $3,000 / mile *

PLANTING WILLOWS
$2 – $150 / tree (depending on size)
We plant hundreds every summer!

STOCK WATER TANK
(to keep livestock out of streams)
$4,500

HANDHELD GPS UNIT
(essential to all our field work)
$150 – $200 each

COST TO PROCESS AND STEWARD A CONSERVATION EASEMENT
$50,500 (purchase cost is extra)

*varies according to terrain
** varies according to size and water flows

Dale, who’s also a Montana trustee, describes growing up near Malta and attending the Second Creek School. Alumni of our Pine Butte Guest Ranch will likely recognize the Bellview Schoolhouse, which was built in 1906. It had been in disuse since the 1940s and was in derelict condition; in 1990, the building was moved to the Conservancy’s Pine Butte Preserve. After many staff and volunteer hours of cleaning, sanding, and painting, it became a base for natural history education and community events. Guests of the ranch often visit it on their tour of the Pine Butte Swamp Preserve.

While some of the one-room schoolhouses featured in the book are still active and thriving parts of the local communities, others have not seen children or teachers for decades. As Dale, a fourth-generation rancher in Phillips County, points out in his interview, Montana’s rural communities are shrinking, and young families who want to work on the land face particularly difficult challenges. The Nature Conservancy is proud to work with ranchers like Dale and his wife, Janet, to help keep multi-generation families on the land, working in traditional agricultural occupations, and protecting habitat at the same time.

Copies of *Visions and Voices: Montana’s One-Room Schoolhouses* are available through the Montana History Foundation at (406) 449-3770. All proceeds benefit the Preserve Montana Fund for the preservation of Montana’s historic one-room schoolhouses.

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**“MONTANA’S LIVING LANDSCAPES: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY”**

In *Living Landscapes*, eight nationally recognized Montana photographers capture the interaction of wildlife and rural communities across the state. The photographs present an intimate portrait of family ranchers and grizzlies, Sage-grouse and cattle, loggers and lynx, whose fates are all intertwined.

**January 18 – April 14, 2013**

Special Nature Conservancy Reception
February 8, 2013 ♦ 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Holter Museum of Art ♦ 12 East Lawrence Street ♦ Helena, MT 59601 ♦ (406) 442-6400

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Montana residents considering a gift to a permanent endowment fund may wish to take advantage of the “Montana Income Tax Credit for Endowed Philanthropy” available through 2013. Individuals and business entities can take advantage of this credit against state tax liability.

For more information contact Debra Sattler at (406) 443-6730 or dsattler@tnc.org
Kenneth (Ken) Kedzior

A Passion For Nature

Perhaps the fact that he was born and raised as a city boy in Chicago made Ken Kedzior especially passionate about nature. Somehow, he knew it was special. For him, it was spiritual. As a boy, Ken got his first taste of the grandness of nature on his family’s vacations. From a very young age, he inspired his family to care about nature, encouraging them to recycle and be aware of their use of resources. His first real hands-on relationship began at the age of eight when he took up gardening, eventually taking on responsibility for the family garden. By the time he was an adult, his devotion to preserving nature and protecting the environment would grow to an even grander scale.

Ken was also passionate about protecting people. He received his college degree in zoology and criminal science and pursued a career with the Illinois State Police. He had achieved the rank of Master Sergeant by the time he died. But, he never abandoned his devotion to nature. Ken even planted trees and prairie grasses outside the State Patrol office!

In 1995, Ken purchased 300 acres in rural Illinois. He harvested trees from the property to build his home, restored five acres to natural prairie, and left the rest in forest. He allowed hunting on the land but only non-motorized, since he wanted to have a minimal impact.

Ken married his wife, Dawn, in Gustavas, Alaska, in 2004, honeymooning in kayaks on Glacier Bay. It was one of his favorite places to visit, along with Montana and Wyoming. The two loved to backpack and camp and they continued his family tradition of adventure in the National Parks. In fact, other than outdoor gear and woodworking tools, Ken spent his extra money on land or donations to environmental causes.

Unfortunately, Ken passed away far too young – at the age of 47. But his devotion to conserving the places he cherished didn’t end with his death.

Along with the prairie which he loved so much, Ken was enchanted by Montana and its spectacular wildlife. That’s why, before his passing, he made a bequest for the protection of Montana’s Crown of the Continent. His gift will help ensure that this magnificent place, and the wildlife it shelters, will endure for many generations to come.

We thank Ken for leaving such a wonderful legacy.

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You, too, can leave a lasting legacy for conservation by remembering
The Nature Conservancy in Montana in your estate planning.
To find out more, contact Debra Sattler at dsattler@tnc.org or (406) 443-6730.

Photos courtesy of Dawn Kedzior.
Thanks to the many donors who made gifts to our Montana programs in FY 2012 (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012)

ANNUAL FUND & CAPITAL GIFTS OF $1000 OR MORE

Anonymous (23)
3M
3M Foundation
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N. Kirby & Janice M. Alton
Bernier & Marcia Anderson
Nancy D. Anderson
Paul Asper & Nancy Weidman
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Bakstran
James A. Banister
Andrea & Michael Banks Nature Fund
Chet & David Barclay
Neil W. & Robin D. Baumann
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Mr. & Mrs. James Binger
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Mr. & Mrs. W. S. Murray
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur K. Neill
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Paul & Antje Newhagen
Alan & Nancy Nicholson
Angela Nomellini & Ken Olivier
North Fork Preservation Association
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Mr. & Mrs. Michael O’Hearn
Gil & Marge Ordway
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Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts Program
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Karen H. Putnam
Tom & Teresa Quinn Fund of the Whitefish
Community Foundation
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