

RESOLUTION 2016 - 106

**RESOLUTION APPROVING FUNDING OF THE OPEN LANDS PROGRAM
SHOCO RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECT**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution 2008-97, in November 2008, voters in Lewis and Clark County, Montana, approved the Land, Water and Wildlife bond measure, a \$10 million general obligation bond measure for protecting drinking water sources and ground water quality; protecting water quality in and along rivers and streams; conserving working farm, ranch and forest lands; protecting wildlife areas; preserving open lands and natural areas; providing for recreation; and managing growth and development; and

WHEREAS, the primary purpose of the Open Lands Program is to conserve resources on private lands in Lewis and Clark County that fulfill the objectives of the bond measure; and

WHEREAS, funds generated by sales of these bonds are distributed through the County's Open Lands Program; and

WHEREAS, the County's Open Lands Program has received and processed an application for Open Lands funding from the Montana Land Reliance (Sponsor), on behalf of the landowner/applicant, Sally Shortridge; and

WHEREAS, in this project, referred to as the Shoco Ranch Conservation Easement, the Sponsor proposes to apply County open space bond funds to the purchase price of a 836 acre conservation easement west of and partly adjacent to Secondary Highway 435 and south of Smith Creek Road outside of Augusta, Montana; and

WHEREAS, the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Open Lands (CAC) held a public meeting on this proposal on October 4, 2016, and voted 10-0 to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners that the Shoco Ranch Conservation Easement Project be considered for approval, contingent upon County legal staff's review of the Level 2 application's compliance with the due diligence requirements of the Open Lands Program. The motion also included that the project has considerable merit, including conservation of working farms and ranches, habitat for fish and wildlife, water resources, and open lands, and that the conservation easement will positively impact patterns of growth and development, in addition to contributing to the conservation of large blocks of land and protecting an important riparian wildlife corridor; and

WHEREAS, the CAC held a public meeting on this proposal on November 3, 2016, and voted 9-0 to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners that the Shoco Ranch Conservation Easement be approved with a funding amount of \$769,200, contingent upon County legal staff's review to confirm the application's compliance with the due diligence requirements of the Open Lands Program Guide

WHEREAS, the Commission held a public meeting on the proposal and opened a public comment period on November 10, 2016;

WHEREAS, the Commission considered the recommendation of the CAC at a regularly scheduled public hearing on December 13, 2016, along with County Legal staff's due diligence report; and



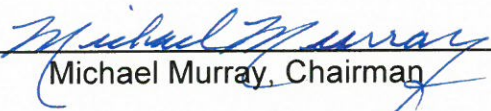
WHEREAS, the Commission determined that this project meets multiple purposes of the bond, substantially complies with the legal requirements, and may not be achieved without the involvement of the County; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners


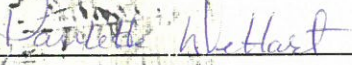
- Accept the recommendation of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Open Lands; and
- Approve funding the Shoco Ranch Conservation Easement Project in the amount of \$ 600,000.00

DATED this 15 day of December, 2016.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Michael Murray, Chairman

ATTEST



Paulette DeHart, Clerk of the Board