

Bureau of Land Management
FY 2027 LWCF Land Acquisition Requested Project List

(Dollars)

Priority	Project	State(s)	Funding⁽¹⁾	Acres
1	Pioneer to Soldier Mountains Recreation Area	ID	2,000,000	61
2	Blackfoot River Watershed	MT	13,950,000	3,550
	FY 2027 Requested Project List		15,950,000	3,611

(1) Bureau line item funding amounts are Net Budget Authority, the amount available to execute after sequester and pop-up adjustments. All mandatory LWCF funding is subject to a sequestration reduction of -5.7% across all programs.

Agency: Bureau of Land Management

Fiscal Year: 2027

Project / Unit: Pioneer to Soldier Mountain Recreation Area

Priority: 1

State(s): ID

Congressional District(s): ID-2

Location:

Property is located approximately one mile northeast of the town of Bellevue, Idaho.

Project Estimates:

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
Estimate for FY 2027	61.01	\$2,000,000
Acquired to Date	0	\$0
Remaining to be Acquired	0	\$0

Project Description:

The Pioneer to Soldier Mountains Recreation Area in Idaho was established to conserve key wildlife habitat and expand recreation across a connected landscape spanning the Pioneer Mountains, Soldier Mountains, and Wood River Valley. The Area includes sagebrush-steppe, forested terrain, and perennial streams, as well as the Silver Creek watershed, a globally recognized spring-fed ecosystem supporting high-value fish, wildlife, and recreation. Local communities and partners have supported these efforts through public processes, a county conservation levy, and private land protections exceeding 50,000 acres, strengthening habitat connectivity across public and private lands. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has identified priority land acquisitions to improve access and habitat connectivity, including parcels identified in the Dingell Act Priority Access List and the 2021 Wood River Valley Recreation and Access Plan. These areas support species such as mule deer, elk, pronghorn, greater sage-grouse, Canada lynx, and wolverine, while offering expanded opportunities for hunting, angling, and other recreation.

Purpose / Need:

Acquisition of the City of Bellevue’s Strahorn Parcel would secure legal access to 61 acres of new public land and improve access to approximately 1,400 acres of adjacent BLM lands in Blaine County, addressing increased recreational demand. Located in Slaughterhouse Canyon, a Dingell Act priority area, the parcel would replace informal access across private land with permanent, managed public access and expand use on the canyon’s southern side. Recent trail construction nearby (2023–2024) creates opportunities to develop loop and connector trails linking Bellevue, Hailey, and surrounding backcountry areas. These connections, identified in the 2021 Recreation and Access Plan, support tourism and provide early-season access when higher-elevation trails remain closed. Acquisition would also protect riparian areas and wildlife habitat while advancing ongoing conservation efforts led by the BLM and partners since 2010, including over 95,000 acres conserved and stream restoration following the Sharps Fire. Incorporating the parcel into public ownership ensures coordinated, long-term management of its resources

Cooperator(s):

Wood River Land Trust assisting the BLM with the acquisition. Letters of support were received from Blaine County Commissioners, City of Bellevue, Blaine County Recreation District, Wood River Trails Coalition, Senator Ron Taylor (Idaho State Senate), and the Nature Conservancy.

Operations & Maintenance:

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$0	\$1,500

Describe O&M:

Conduct natural and cultural resource inventories; construct/improve facilities to make property universally accessible (roads, trails, boat ramps and/or buildings, etc.); install wayfinding, interpretive or regulatory signage; prepare a management; prepare maps and brochures; remove buildings, known hazards and/or garbage; maintain facilities (signs, roads, trails, boat ramps and/or buildings, etc.); maintain, monitor, or restore resources; monitor for compliance, trespass, overuse, hazards, etc.; treat noxious and/or invasive plants.

Agency: Bureau of Land Management

Fiscal Year: 2027

Project / Unit: Blackfoot River Watershed

Priority: 2

State(s): MT

Congressional District(s): MT-1

Location:

The proposed acquisition is located approximately 20 miles east of Missoula, Montana, in Missoula County.

Project Estimates:

Land/Cost	Acres	Cost
Estimate for FY 2027	3,550	\$13,950,000
Acquired to Date	61,000	\$80,000,000
Remaining to be Acquired	0	\$0

Project Description:

The Blackfoot River Watershed project are former industrial timberlands that helped to build the economies of Western Montana for the last 100 years. By continuing the ongoing active management of these forests, this acquisition will continue to provide economic benefits to local communities in the wood products industry. Active forest management is creating healthy forests and reducing wildfire risk in the wildland urban interface. The private industrial timberland owners all had an "open lands" policy for recreational access; thus, generations of the public have enjoyed these lands as if they were public lands.

The proposed acquisition ensures legal public access for recreational use and enjoyment ensuring present and future generations can continue to access these lands for hunting, fishing, and camping. The acquisition is located on ceded lands of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), and along an important travel route that many Tribes in Western Montana and Idaho/Eastern Washington used. It is two miles south of the South Fork Jocko Tribal Primitive area on the CSKT reservation and contains culturally important areas to the CSKT. BLM and TNC have been working with CSKT to reconnect to some of these areas that they were not able to access under private ownership. Additionally, through BLM's multiple use mandate, the proposed acquisition includes managing important resource and resource use values such as wildlife habitat for big game and other species and ensuring proper watershed function for aquatic species.

Purpose / Need:

The Blackfoot River Watershed project is a multi-phase acquisition opportunity to increase recreation opportunities, practice active forest management, and protect natural resources. The BLM is working on acquiring the last phase of project, which is the Gold and Twin Creek project, approximately 17,000 acres. In 2024, the BLM closed on the Upper Gold Creek East

acquisition (3,264 acres), which is the first phase of the Gold and Twin Creek project. The BLM has an approved appraisal for the entire Gold and Twin Creek area, as well as NEPA that covers the entire project.

The proposed acquisition maintains access to public lands for recreational opportunities. Recreation use is increasing in this area due to proximity to Missoula, Montana. Recreation uses include, but are not limited to hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, off-highway vehicle, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, hiking, biking, and horseback riding. The project area maintains active working lands including current forestry treatments designed to create healthy forests and reduce wildfire risk in the wildland urban interface. This acquisition would reconnect local Tribal nations to important cultural areas of their ceded lands. All the land possesses either public or administrative access.

Cooperator(s):

The Conservation Fund (TCF) is the main partner. The BLM and MT Fishing Wildlife Parks co-manage campgrounds, day-use sites, and boat launches. MT Chapter of Back Country Hunters and Anglers work on stewardship projects like fence pulling and beaver dam monitoring and Clark Fork Coalition work on culvert and stream projects. Letters of support include Missoula County Commissioners, Montana Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, MT Fish, Wildlife Parks, MT Trout Unlimited Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Wild Montana, Montana Wildlife Federation and the Conservation Fund.

Operations & Maintenance:

Savings/Cost	Start-up	Annual
Estimated O&M Savings:	\$0	\$0
Estimated O&M Costs:	\$0	\$150,000

Describe O&M:

Conduct natural and cultural resource inventories; construct/improve facilities to make property universally accessible (roads, trails, boat ramps and/or buildings, etc.); install wayfinding, interpretive or regulatory signage; prepare a management plan; prepare maps and brochures; remove buildings, known hazards and/or garbage; maintain facilities (signs, roads, trails, boat ramps and/or buildings, etc.); maintain, monitor, or restore resources; monitor for compliance, trespass, overuse, hazards, etc.; treat noxious and/or invasive plants.