



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

**CITATION**

**COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION AWARD**

**GREAT NORTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AREA**

In recognition of a long history of successful collaboration by the Great Northern Environmental Stewardship Area partnership in conserving the natural values and facilitating continued use in the Middle Fork Flathead River Corridor.

The Middle Fork Flathead River Corridor traverses unparalleled natural landscapes in Montana between the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park. Diverse wildlife, a pristine river, and vital transportation and utility routes contribute to its value. The Great Northern Environmental Stewardship Area partnership was galvanized by a series of unfortunate grizzly bear deaths associated with rail transportation in the Corridor around the turn of the 1990s. To help resolve conflicts caused by the co-occurrence of endangered species, pristine habitats, and vital transportation corridors, Glacier National Park and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad formed a partnership to collaboratively address issues. Today, that partnership has expanded to include over 20 organizations, public and private, that have interests within the Corridor. An early success of the partnership was development of a rapid response protocol that eliminated large grain spills and subsequent train strikes as a source of grizzly bear mortality in the ecosystem. This and subsequent grizzly bear management efforts have reduced bear-human conflict in the Corridor almost 100 percent. Additional activities of the partnership include establishing guidelines for safe transport of hazardous materials through the corridor, facilitating interagency cooperation for responses to accidents involving hazardous materials, developing a Web based, multiagency system to streamline applications for activities that impact stream banks, coordinating a Corridor GIS mapping effort, supporting the scientific study of wildlife habitat connectivity in the Corridor, and coordinating the preservation of local knowledge about wildlife habitat use. For its many years of collaboratively providing effective stewardship while acknowledging the importance of human activities in the Middle Fork Flathead River Corridor, the Great Northern Environmental Stewardship Area partnership is granted the Cooperative Conservation Award of the Department of the Interior.

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