

Jacquelyn Corday

From: Mary Manning [mary@caratti.net]
Sent: Sunday, January 23, 2005 10:14 PM
To: Jacquelyn Corday
Subject: Re: Habitat MT

~~DATE~~ 12
~~DATE~~ 1.25.05
~~NO.~~ 79

At 09:48 AM 1/4/2005, you wrote:

Jackie, I am writing you in support of HB 79, which would make the Habitat MT program permanent. As a long standing member of the Missoula Open Space Advisory Committee, I have seen what this program can do first hand, during the campaign to acquire large contiguous acreages on Mt. Jumbo. This critical chunk of habitat is essential to elk during winter, as accessible winter range. In the summer, people in Missoula value the conservation and recreation qualities of Mt. Jumbo. As we continue to grow in population throughout Montana, the need for open space and wildlife habitat will steadily increase. As a vegetation ecologist for the Forest Service, I know the significance of these intact open space lands, that often are developed on the fringe of cities. In particular, foothill grasslands and riparian areas are desirable areas to develop, and often are not in federal ownership. These open hillsides and riparian corridors are used by so many wildlife and insect species, including, for example, a certain species of butterfly that relies entirely on a certain cushion plant species for pollen. Nighthawks and several grassland songbirds depend on intact grasslands, which, if developed, are no longer available to these species.

These foothill and riparian areas are being nickled and dimed by development. This program will provide a mechanism to identify those critical lands. Agricultural land and ranch land also provide important habitat for so many species, particularly raptors that feed on rodent populations, and large ungulates. They are also prime for development as either ranchettes or subdivisions. Again, this program allows land owners an opportunity to set aside these lands in their natural state as habitat.

Message transport security by GatewayDefender.com
12:14:09 AM ET - 1/24/2005