

Rosemary McKinnon



I first laid eyes on the Flathead Valley in 1999 and was ecstatic over glorious views of the front range of the Rocky Mountains even in March. I was raised in England and in the Middle East and was reminded of my childhood visits to the Alps. My husband, John, and I fell in love with this valley and decided to move here with our 3 daughters later that same year. We bought a house on Orchard Ridge looking east towards the mountains and south towards Flathead lake. Herron Park became our closest playground, the place where we took walks, skied and always took our out of town guests. We spent the next decade raising our daughters who attended local schools and then left the valley for college and life away from Montana, at least for now. In 1997 we started Montana

Academy, a private therapeutic boarding school for troubled teenagers, together with our partners, John and Carol Santa, and continue to run this school for 70+ students 40 miles west of Kalispell in the lovely Lost Prairie valley.

Once both the school and my daughters were launched it became time for me to look around and think about how I might give back to the place which had brought me a great deal of happiness. This was around the time that the Foys to Blacktail trails group had recently formed and when I found out that this wonderful piece of land, which my family and others thought would be always available to us, was in danger of development I knew that I needed to help to save it. I joined the FTBT board in 2002 and continue to invest my energy in this project. The original FTBT group was small; the vision grand. I can now say that I believe that we will indeed accomplish the task of saving this stunning piece of property so close to Kalispell for the pleasure of generations to come.