



## Tom Esch

Tom Esch moved to the Flathead in 1974 when he was 16 to work for the YCC in Glacier National Park. That summer he met two loves of his life: his wife and Whitefish native veterinarian Charlene Esch, and the mountains of Montana.

After completing law school at the University of Montana Tom served as a Deputy District Attorney in Colorado while Charlene attended Veterinary School, then in 1984 they moved back to the Flathead and Tom served as a Deputy County Attorney then as the Flathead Attorney from 1992 to 2002. He now has a private practice of law in Kalispell.

Tom has helped on numerous boards and committees: the Flathead DUI Taskforce, Violence Free Crisis Line Advisory Board, Kalispell Daybreak Rotary Board and President, Glacier National Park Associates, Flathead Youth Shelter Advisory Board, Samaritan House Board, as an elder in First Presbyterian Church and a board member of Foy's to Blacktail Trails.

Tom and Charlene with their son Logan have enjoyed their home in Foy's Canyon not far from the trails of FTBT. They often walk with their dogs, or Charlene and Logan ride their horses.

“What I like about the Foy's to Blacktail Project is that it is truly Kalispell's front-door recreation area.” Tom says. “It is quickly accessible with little effort, and a tremendous resource.”

Tom thinks the project will have more significance in the years ahead. “As the Flathead Valley continues to grow, the vision of a trail that connects Herron Park with Blacktail Mountain will be increasingly important.” He said. “It may even provide an economic boost similar to the Trail of the Coeur d'Alene or the Hiawatha Trail.”

The immediate need of acquiring adjacent land next to Herron Park is the most important priority. “When that land is secured, we'll be able to ‘connect the dots’ on to Blacktail” Tom says. “Future generations of forest users will benefit from our efforts, just like we enjoy the work of the visionaries that protected Glacier and the Bob Marshall.”

Tom has high praises for the other members of the FtBT board. “They're a hard working, dedicated bunch of trail dogs” he says in jest. “And they're fun too! I would encourage other interested people to join us to help make this happen.”