Many of you who read the above headline immediately thought to yourself, “there isn’t a conflict between open space and affordable housing.” And that thought would be correct.

Let’s all agree we understand the value of open land to the Missoula economy, lifestyle and local outdoor recreation. Let’s all agree that Five Valleys Land Trust and others have wisely deployed the existing county open land bond to great local economic, recreational and quality of life benefit. And let’s all remember that FVLT cooperatively deferred an open space bond in previous years to Fort Missoula and a library, and then as the bond funding neared depletion, targeted 2018 for a bond vote.

During local governmental consideration of the new open space bond (and city mill levy) decision process, concerns surfaced that the open space bond “will further exacerbate Missoula’s affordable housing crisis.” No, it won’t.

Two excellent quotes in a recent Missoulian article illustrate that.

“I really feel like the affordable housing crisis in Missoula is something we have to pay close attention to, and I’m serving on the mayor’s housing task force,” Julie Gardner said. “It’s something that’s going to have to be addressed, but I don’t think for a second that these two issues are mutually exclusive. We’re never going to put affordable housing on the top of Mount Dean Stone.” Gardner is a Realtor and FVLT board president.

“I think to a large extent, that’s (an open space bond would reduce the available buildable land and lead to higher housing costs) a false dichotomy,” Missoula City Council member John DiBari said. “We have an incredible legacy of protecting all kinds of natural areas and farmland and open space, and we also have an obligation to ensure that we can provide places for people to live - and there’s a commitment on the city’s part and on the county’s part to make that happen. It’s not an either-or proposition from my perspective. We work every day to make sure that’s a possibility to address housing.”

Affordable housing is important. So is maintaining a community people want to build a house in.
Quote of the Week

“As Montana grows and continues to be discovered, pressures on recreation facilities like Montana State Parks – which saw 30 percent growth in visitation during the past 10 years – will challenge state agencies, businesses and outdoor recreation users to cooperate.”

Rachel VandeVoort, Director of Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation

Number of the Week

81%
Percentage of Montanans who say outdoor recreation is an integral part of their life

Photo of the Week

The first ever Wildlands Festival was held on the MSU campus on August 10, and beneficiaries included the Montana Land Reliance (left, Kendall Van Dyk, Gusty Clarke and Jessie Wiese), Gallatin Valley Land Trust (EJ Porth, right), and Yellowstone Forever. Each organization received a check for $5,000 from Eric Ladd (middle) of Outlaw Partners, who produced the event. Musical headliners were Lukas Nelson and Promise of the Real, and Robert Earl Keen. Great fun, great music, for a great cause.

Coming Up

Gallatin Valley Land Trust
Biking With Bob (Sands)
August 14, 6:00 PM, GVLT Office

Prickly Pear Land Trust Kid’s Hike
August 14, 5:30 PM
Diehl Drive Trailhead

Blackfoot Challenge Summer Party
August 15, 6:00 PM, Ovando

Flathead Land Trust
The Land Affair Event
Whitefish, August 16, 5:30 PM
Cypress Yard, Whitefish

Kaniksu Land Trust
“Walk in Pine Street Woods”
August 25, 10:00 AM

Prickly Pear Land Trust
Community Trail Work Day
Sept. 17, 5:30 PM

Prickly Pear Land Trust
Harvest Moon Banquet/Auction
Sept. 29, Helena

Flathead Land Trust
West Valley Bird Viewing Area Opening Celebration, Oct. 6

Land Trust Alliance Rally
Oct. 11-13, Pittsburgh