

## Conservation Fund Allows Access at Morgan Bridge on the Blackfoot

The Bureau of Land Management, in partnership with The Conservation Fund and landowners Gordon and Theresa Prouse, has permanently protected 400 acres within Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area. Thanks to \$900,000 in funding from America's premier conservation program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the conservation of this property will enhance public access to the area's high quality recreational opportunities, such as fishing, camping, hunting and boating.

Located in Southeast Idaho, east of Pocatello, the Blackfoot River flows below the Blackfoot Reservoir, through rolling hills, canyons and breath-taking scenery. The BLM's newly acquired 400 acres, known as the "Morgan Bridge parcel," are mostly surrounded by BLM-administered public lands. Its protection secures new public access to the Morgan Bridge Campground and approximately 1.5 miles of frontage along the Blackfoot River, including one of the highest quality put-in and take-out locations on this section of the river.

"Obtaining these 400 acres en-

ures access to Morgan Bridge Campground and continued use of these lands for a variety of recreational opportunities," said Dave Pacioretty, Pocatello Field Manager.

"The Blackfoot River Corridor is a popular spot for recreation, especially for the local community. We are grateful for both The Conservation Fund and the private landowner that made this possible."

To assist the BLM, The Conservation Fund purchased the property in 2012 from Gordon and Theresa Prouse, willing sellers who were seeking a permanent conservation solution for their land. The BLM acquired this priority parcel using FY 2016 LWCF specific funding for projects that increase recreational access for the public. An intensively used recreation area, annual visits to Blackfoot River SRMA ranged from 73,000 to 102,000 between 2012 and 2015.

LWCF is a bipartisan, federal program that uses a percentage of proceeds from offshore oil and gas royalties—not taxpayer dollars—to acquire critical lands and protect our best natural resources. LWCF is annually funded by the U.S. Congress, including Idaho's U.S.

delegation representing Bingham County: Sen. Mike Crapo, Sen. Jim Risch, and Rep. Mike Simpson.

In this 51st year of the LWCF, many supporters are calling for full, permanent funding and permanent reauthorization, recognizing that LWCF is one of the nation's most effective tools for conserving natural landscapes for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment across the country; preserving and protecting rivers, lakes and other water resources; and expanding the interpretation of historic and cultural sites.

Consultant Mark Sommer, of American Public Land Exchange, who worked on behalf of The Conservation Fund to complete the project said, "We cannot thank Gordon and Theresa Prouse enough for their willingness to work with The Conservation Fund in conserving this parcel of land for the public to enjoy into the future. We're grateful to all of our partners for their cooperation and to the Idaho Congressional delegation for their support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which gives us the opportunity to protect important river access areas like these before they are lost forever."