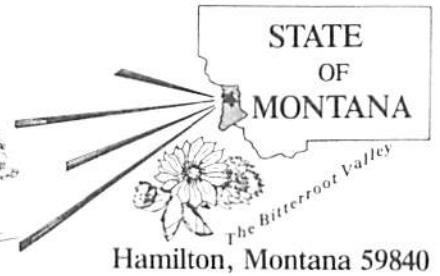


# COUNTY OF RAVALLI



Ravalli County Commissioners  
215 S. 4th Street, Suite A  
Hamilton, MT. 59840  
406-375-6500  
commissioners@rc.mt.gov

April 24, 2013

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Flathead Agency  
P. O. Box 40  
Pablo, MT 59855

Re: Acquisition of Land by the U.S. to be held in trust for the use and benefit of the CSKT  
Certified Mail No. 7010 3090 0002 9045 6785

To Whom It May Concern:

By letter dated March 26, 2013, the Flathead Agency requested comments and certain information from Ravalli County concerning the proposal that certain property located in Ravalli County be acquired by the United States to be held in trust for the use and benefit of The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

This request pertains to the following property:

The SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$  and all that part of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$  which lies East and North of the right-of-way of U.S. Highway 93, all in Section 22, Township 2 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Ravalli County, Montana.

And

A tract of land in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 22, Township 2 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Ravalli County, Montana, as shown by the shaded area on the plat attached and made part of Instrument No. 544781.

The following is in response to the specific information requested:

(1) The annual amount of property taxes currently levied on the property is \$808.00 per year.

- (2) There are no special assessments currently assessed against the property.
- (3) Governmental services that are currently provided to the property include such governmental services as generally provided to all properties in the vicinity, including police through the Ravalli County Sheriff's Office, and fire through [ ].
- (4) The subject property is not currently zoned.

The subject property consists of approximately 58.1 acres, and is located more than 125 miles from Pablo. Title is held in the name of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

Under 25 C.F.R. § 151.3, land may be acquired in trust status only when such acquisition is authorized by an act of Congress. No information regarding any particular act of Congress was provided in the above-referenced letter. Ravalli County requests that this information be disclosed and reserves the right to further comment once disclosed.

Under 25 C.F.R. § 151.10(c), the Secretary is to consider purposes for which the land will be used. No information concerning this was provided in the above-referenced letter. Ravalli County requests disclosure of this information and reserves the right to further comment once this information is disclosed.

Under 25 C.F.R. § 151.10(g), the Secretary is to consider whether the Bureau of Indian Affairs is equipped to discharge the additional responsibilities resulting from the acquisition of the land in trust status. No information regarding how the Bureau intends or is equipped to discharge these responsibilities was provided in the above-referenced letter. Ravalli County requests disclosure of this information and reserves the right to further comment once this information is disclosed.

The above-reference letter indicated an intent to remove this property from the tax rolls. Ravalli County objects to any such removal on the following grounds: (i) as it stands, this property is minimally taxed, and would not qualify for removal based on state law; (ii) due to declines in the real estate market and for other economic reasons, the County's budget has already been severely stressed necessitating restrictions, including layoffs; and (iii) over 70 percent of the real property in the County is currently owned by the Federal Government, thus additional acquisitions are not in the County's best interest.

For the foregoing reasons, Ravalli County objects to the request to place the above-referenced land in trust status. Further, Ravalli County requests that the information not disclosed, as noted herein, be disclosed and that the County be afforded an additional opportunity to comment once disclosed.

Sincerely,

  
Board of County Commissioners  
Chairperson

cc: Howard F. Recht, County Attorney's Office