March 18, 2009

Carol Fox, Administrator
Natural Resources Damage Program
1301 East Lockey
P.O. Box 201425
Helena, MT 59620

RE: NRDP Funding for the Peterson Ranch Project

Dear Ms. Fox:

We are writing to express our support for the Peterson Ranch Project that is currently under consideration by the Upper Clark Fork River Basin Restoration Grant Program. We support this project because it protects important avian habitat that includes a mixture of conifer species, aspen, grasslands and riparian areas. These vegetation types provide habitat for several species of conservation concern including Long-billed Curlew, Red-naped Sapsucker, Calliope Hummingbird, Lazuli Bunting, and Willow Flycatcher.

We also believe it is important to protect areas that not only support valuable wildlife habitat but also provide agricultural benefits. This ranch does both. It demonstrates how a working ranch can also provide significant wildlife benefits. One of our Society's primary goals and activities is to promote environmental education for school-aged kids. The ranch offers an opportunity to show others a variety of wildlife and their habitat and that ranching and wildlife can coexist. For these reasons we think the Peterson Ranch is an exciting and worthwhile project.

We believe this project is highly deserving of being funded. Thank you for your time and consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Paul Loehnen, President