Solar Powered 40 Acre Mountain Top Retreat with Views and Privacy including a one Bedroom Main House and a one Bedroom Guest House, a Pool and Deck with an office/bunkhouse building located just 25 minutes from Sandpoint or Coeur d’Alene. (If self-sufficiency with comfort and joy is your goal, keep reading.)

It is the perfect mixture of a remote Hideaway with Wildlife and Privacy, but also with 10 minute Access to SilverWood Amusement & Water Park as well as nearby shopping in Coeur d’Alene or Sandpoint.

**Construction of the houses is a combination of Straw bale and Earth Ship (tire house) technology, recycled and low impact material—tile and stone used throughout.**

**For over 25 years** this complex of 2 homes and an office/bunkhouse has provided a secure and reliably peaceful place for family and friends. For over 25 years there have been NO UTILITY bills. Water, electricity, heating and cooling were all supplied without help from the outside world. Abundant timber and firewood to build with and heat with and abundant wildlife including moose, deer, mountain lion and an abundance of bird life have entertained us. The log bed in the guest house was made from logs cut from this property. The wood shed is stocked with logs harvested from both standing and downed timber and provides the fuel for the woodstoves found in each of the two houses.

**Enjoyment of nature** and all it offers to body and soul is front and center on the 2 wooden decks (one at the main house, the other at the pool) as well as on the walking trails and 2 track driveway that circles thru the 40 acres and climbs the hills that lead to the Mountain Top main and guest houses. If you are a dog lover, the shed doubles as the indoor section of the kennel as well as storage area with a chain link enclosed outdoor run attached to it. If you are a hiker, walk down to the swamp and pond on adjacent property or walk up a steep trail to a lookout point that yields views of surrounding territories stretching to over 10 miles on a clear day. And all the while be surrounded by the Conifer forest and lupine laced Meadows that are typical here. Watch, as I have, how the forest reclaims land that was cleared and Huckleberries and thimble berries fill in the freshly cut areas before the trees start to grow.

**Moose, deer, Elk, Bob cat** and even a Mt Lion every so often will forage on the land. A quiet walk in the morning will almost always surprise on of the 4-legged inhabitants if not a 4-legged one with a baby in tow. For many years we have hosted a Mother moose and her young and she seems to like the forage near the bottom of the hill off the driveway.

**The creature comforts** of the buildings are a welcome resting place whether in the heat of the summer day or in the cold of the other seasons. Buildings constructed of massive materials as both houses are, will keep naturally cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The main house is a passive solar design with 6 foot high glass covering the entire façade captures enough heat even in the dead of winter to not freeze inside even tho no heat other than the sun’s radiance keeps it warm. For over 25 seasons, I have left the water on in the main house and never had a freeze problem. During summer the awning and path of the sun keep the heat out and the in-ground sides and rear of the house keep the walls and floors cool, cooling the house itself. Even on 100 degree days, the temperature in the house rarely exceeds 82 degrees. Openable sky lights coupled with window/vents under the front façade keep a gentle and natural flow of air at all times they are opened via a chimney effect movement that needs to fan or other power.
Perhaps the most comfortable feature of the main house is its blanket like warmth and its openness to the outside provided by the expanse of 6 foot high windows set in the façade. My father once remarked that the house felt like the security of a cave with the light and airiness of being outdoors at the same time. The kitchen/living room is an open floor plan with easy access to all you need to live, but no upper cabinets to block the views and light that naturally pours in. The front windows give way immediately for the a 3 foot deep planter that covers all but 5 feet of the façade and provides a riot of flowers and green for the benefit of all that come to sit, eat or sleep in the house. Over the years, we learned that planting it with low growing flowers and herbs was best to allow the view and enjoyment of the growing things. The rosemary plant that dominates the eastern end of the planter is over 20 years old and, like the ivy growing up the rock wall adjacent to the entry, has grown without any assistance of watering or pruning except in the summer months when we were there. All of the planter is fully open to the earth underneath. There is no concrete slab under the planters. The planter is naturally irrigated by the Bathroom sink. The sink drain connects to a tile that runs underground beneath about half of the planter.

Water in the main house and guest house is supplied by rainwater caught on the roof and directed into concrete tanks located adjacent to both houses. Since rainwater is naturally soft water, it is a fine source for laundry, bathing and cooking needs. It can be used as drinking water when properly filtered, but otherwise drinking water can be imported via 5 gallon jugs. Testing of the water revealed no bacteria or harmful pollutants as concrete tanks are bacteria-static—that means that do not support the growth of bacteria. I clean the tanks every 3 or 4 years as they collect sediment over time. With the exception of planters and pots, we have not used the water system for irrigation as it was not designed for that. It has reliably provided our needs for over 25 years when typical conservation measures are taken—low flush toilet, low flow shower heads and the like. Both houses have septic systems. These have functioned well over the years.

The electrical system was installed in a small shed before we began construction over 25 years ago. It has been upgraded with new batteries (about 6 yrs ago) and new inverter technology about 15 years ago, but otherwise has reliably served without incident or upgrade. It has long been a source of amazement that as my neighbors have had power outages due to wind or storm, our system has kept producing and storing energy. We have more uptime than the utility company! With the battery upgrade, we increased the capacity of the system but kept the lead acid battery technology. These batteries require watering once or twice per season, but otherwise just need to be cleaned and inspected. Since installation, we have done nothing other than routine maintenance. The solar panels themselves have no maintenance except to hose them off once or twice per season and inspect wiring for insulation and connectedness. We have done nothing to them except normal maintenance over the past 10 years when we added panels. Current capacity is about 600 watts and that has been adequate for spring summer and fall. Winter operation here is not realistic without generator supplementation. From April thru October, the system will supply normal needs without generator augmentation. But from November thru March, you would need to run the generator at least a couple hours each day. In seasonal use, over the years, I have run the generator only to test its functionality and not to supplement as the summer sun is more than adequate to meet our needs.

So there are no utility bills except for the need to fill the propane tank every few years. It is a 150 gallon tank and provides fuel to stove, water heater and refrigerator. Obviously these are very small
needs as we only fill the tank every year or 3. I keep a pony tank (3 or 4 gals) as a backup for when the large one runs out. It can be hooked up for a few days before the trunk comes to fill the main tank. Guest house, office/bunk house have small propane tanks for water heating and stove in guest house and space heating in office/bunk house.

**Heating** in main house is primarily via the wood stove. Insurance required we have a heater on a thermostat, so there is a propane “wall” heater in the main house with a thermostat. I have only used it on the rare winter visits to keep house warm when I was not there to feed the wood stove. There is only the wood stove in the guest house as heat and this rarely used as in summer it is not needed. In winter, it does an excellent job of keeping the place warm. The office/bunk house is really unheated. It has a small unvented propane heater I used in fall and spring to take off the morning chill, but the building is not designed for year around use and would need to have a wood stove or different vented propane heater installed to use it in winter.

**Lighting** in all 3 buildings (and even in the garage) is all designed for no supplemental lighting needed in the daytime. Each building has windows and skylights that provide adequate daytime lighting. This was designed this way for 2 reasons: First, I love sunlight and wanted it to be inside to light me up as well as outside. Second, from an electrical perspective, the daylighting technology allows us to store almost all of the energy provided by the sun each day so it can be used at night for lighting. The advent of LED lighting has made this last task very easy as the amount of power used for lighting has decreased to less than half of what it was with florescent technology that we used when we first completed the house.

**The pool** is simple and practical. It is 6 feet deep in the center and is 18 feet in diameter. It has a two speed pump and filter system that is like any other. There is a solar pool heater that in June, July and August will keep the pool above 80 degrees. In July and August there are times you must turn off the heater or you will have 95 degree water—more like a bath than a pool. Filling and cleaning the pool is a seasonal task. I usually have water trunked in to fill it. I usually empty it and clean it before filling it. I use a standard sump pump to empty it and good old soap and water to clean it.

Finally, if you fall in love and buy this property, I will give you all of the phone time and even face time to help you master any of the systems of the house. Each is simple but the details of how to maintain and operate are important to know. I will assist you in getting up to speed. Please call my agent if you have questions that I have not answered here.