

PROTECTING WILD SPACES & HAPPY PLACES

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST

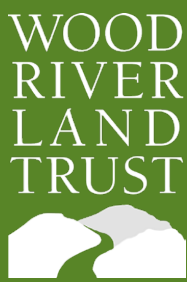
WINTER 2021



PRESERVE CROY CANYON
Together, we're expanding the Hailey Greenway and preserving this special place for generations to come

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES MAKE A DIFFERENCE
Find out how gifts of appreciated stock can be a win-win: for open space and for the donor

WHEN THE RIVER RAN DRY
What factors led to the river running dry through the heart of Bellevue, and can we keep it from happening again?



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*Our mission is to protect and sustain
the treasured landscapes and life-
giving waters of the Wood River Valley
and inspire love for this special place
for generations to come.*



A LETTER FROM THE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I'm excited to share that this fall, the Wood River Land Trust was awarded the 2021 National Land Trust Excellence Award by the Land Trust Alliance. It is an honor to be recognized by our peers as being one of the leading land trusts in the country and I want to share that pride with you since you are a big part of making the Land Trust what it is today!

When I took this job 25 years ago, the mission statement of the Land Trust at that time was strictly to receive donated conservation easements from private landowners in Blaine County. I realized very quickly if we were going to be able to grow this fledgling organization, we needed to do much more if we were going to be relevant to our community.

Coming from the Brandywine Conservancy where I worked in eastern Pennsylvania, the growth pressures in the late 80 and early 90s required different approaches to open space protection. We worked with private land conservation easements, but also through municipal planning, water resource protection, and even worked with developers to protect the most sensitive places. There was an urgency to protect what was remaining before it was gone, and we had to be creative and innovative to make the most of every opportunity.

The unprecedented growth pressure our Valley is facing today is not dissimilar. We need to increase our efforts in public land restoration, water conservation, public access and more as we continue to embrace the challenges of working and living in a resort community in the Rocky Mountain West.

We need to look for ways to partner, with not just our traditional NGO partners, to protect the remaining open spaces before it's too late, but also others to ensure that our work includes partnering with others to tackle challenges like providing affordable housing to retain vibrancy in our community.

As our Valley continues to grow, we need to keep in mind that one of our most important tasks is to protect what makes this place special while ensuring our community can thrive. So, we will continue to "lean in" and ask ourselves "is there a way the Land Trust can help?" We will reach out to non-traditional partners, look for new ways to plan, and collaborate to improve our ever-changing world and local community.

Thank you again, for your continued support of the Land Trust and our efforts to protect this wonderful Valley!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Boettger'.

Scott Boettger, Executive Director



Scan the QR Code to watch a video about our National Land Trust Excellence Award!



PRESERVE CROY CANYON

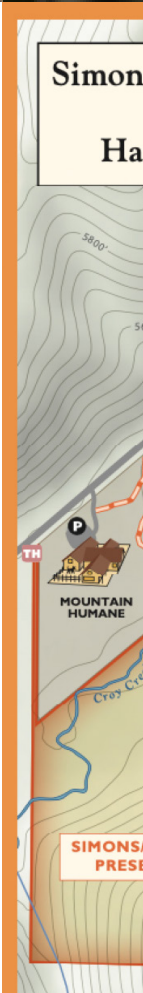
IT ALL BEGAN WITH AN ELK BUGLE

After hearing an elk bugling, Barb Acker grabbed her hiking boots and went tromping out to the Hailey Greenway with her binoculars to find the herd.

“It was amazing; it was early in the morning, and there was this huge herd of elk migrating from Carbonate down to the beaver ponds by the Draper Preserve boardwalk. I just sat and watched them in total awe.”

The elk had been using a migration path used by other wildlife in the area - cutting across Croy Canyon Road through the sage studded bench above the Simons/Bauer Preserve and down into the emergent wetlands and beaver ponds.

They were using a path across what is now known as the Croy Canyon Parcel. This 23-acre parcel of land abuts the Land Trust’s Simons/Bauer Preserve, and connects the Hailey Greenway to Croy Canyon Road - and subsequently - to the hillsides behind Carbonate peak.





In January of 2021, the City of Hailey announced plans to apply for a grant to develop a campground on this parcel. After hearing both concerns and support for the site of the potential campground, the City and the Land Trust hosted a series of public meetings to bring the voice of the community to the planning table.

After the findings were presented, the Hailey City Council engaged in a robust debate - ultimately voting unanimously to work with the Wood River Land Trust to place a conservation easement on the Croy Canyon parcel to protect this important wildlife corridor forever.

That decision led to a flurry of activity at the Land Trust. Working with passionate volunteers, we jumped into action - throwing a fundraising party at Sawtooth Brewery, reaching out to local homeowners, and engaging in a broad based grassroots campaign.

We asked - and the community has come out in droves. This small piece of land struck a chord across all segments of the community. From \$10 donations to \$10,000 donations - gifts of every size have made a difference as we continue to climb toward our goal.

BUT WE STILL HAVE MORE WORK TO DO!

There is still a lot of work to be done. Land Trust staff are working with City staff to ensure that the details of the easement meet all of our shared goals. We will be working on a shared management plan with the City of Hailey to ensure that we can manage the property in alignment with the goals of the Simons/Bauer Preserve and greater Hailey Greenway. Creation of trails and public access are planned for next summer.

We can all feel a sense of pride and accomplishment that together, we can do this. We can work to preserve this parcel of land, ensuring that this land remains open space for wildlife, remains open space for our community, and allows for the restoration of the Croy Canyon wetland and, ultimately, the Big Wood River.

TOGETHER, WE CAN PRESERVE CROY CANYON



WHAT WE VALUE MOST - OPEN SPACE AND RIVER PROTECTION

Together we can protect the Valley we love.

Skiing brought Diana and Steve Strandberg to the Valley, and their love for this place quickly grew beyond the slopes. When that first beautiful wild trout was caught on the Big Wood River, they were hooked!

Over the years, the treasured connections made with friends and experiences in the Valley have only grown. Time spent here confirms the Strandberg's values to protect open space, clean water and a vibrant community. This is what the Land Trust stands for, to ensure the future of our Valley for today and generations to come.

Steve served on the Board of the Land Trust for several years and knows first-hand the complexities of conserving open spaces. These projects don't happen overnight; it has taken over 20 years to create the Hailey Greenway as a community treasure. Connecting the puzzle pieces through land acquisitions, conservation easements, and partnering with the city and other partners takes time and perseverance. And there is so much more to do for the future of our Valley.

This vision is exactly what donors, like Diana and Steve value in the work that we can do together through the Land Trust, and why they give annually with appreciated stock.

"When thinking about a local organization that has the ability to balance many diverse community needs - from wildlife to recreational access - we think of the Land Trust. As a family, we know our gift to the Land Trust will be put to use serving the local community," says Diana.

Open spaces within this Valley are not just a backdrop - they are central to our experiences and connections with friends and family.



GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES OR OTHER APPRECIATED ASSETS - SAVE ON CAPITAL GAINS TAXES

The gift of an appreciated asset, often common stock or mutual fund shares, is a valuable way to make a contribution to the Land Trust and receive tax benefits based on the value of the asset(s).

The capital gains tax implications from selling investments can be significant for some investors. One way to mitigate this tax bite is to donate your appreciated securities to charity, rather than cash. Consider this strategy along with several others to help maximize the benefits of your charitable gifts, both for your family and your favorite charities.

If you have significant unrealized gains in your taxable investment portfolio, consider gifting a portion of your appreciated securities. You avoid the capital gains that you would incur if you sold the shares, and you may be able to receive an income tax deduction equal to the full fair market value of the shares you give away, even if your cost for those securities was much lower.

Consultation with your financial, tax and legal advisors is always recommended.

HOW TO DONATE APPRECIATED STOCK

Your stockbroker can make a direct electronic transfer of your stock certificates to the account of the WRLT with the following information:

Institution: Vanguard

DTC: 0062

For the Benefit Of: Wood River Land Trust Company

Give your stockbroker Wood River Land Trust's taxpayer identification number: 82-0474191

Let Courtney Jelaco at the Land Trust know about the transfer so we can provide you with your tax acknowledgement letter, as your name will not be with the wire of securities. Courtney can be reached at (208) 788-3947 or via email at cjelaco@woodriverlandtrust.org

While a gift of appreciated assets often is stock, other marketable assets, such as land and homes, can be utilized as potential gifts with the possibility of valuable tax benefits.



WHEN THE RIVER RUNS DRY

Guest author Charolette Stevenson examines the factors that converged to culminate in over 2,500 feet of the Big Wood River drying up in the heart of Bellevue

Until this summer, most of us probably had never seen a river run dry. Walking along the Big Wood River in Bellevue in September with Ryan Santo, River Program Director with the Wood River Land Trust, I tiptoed around hundreds of dead trout wedged between the smooth, granite rocks. The river gurgled, channeled into rivulets, and then just disappeared--damp dirt to dusty, dry dirt. The river had stopped. Gray Herons stilted about scavenging the remains of dead aquatic insects and fish.

"I was here on Sunday," said Ryan, clearly upset. "They turned on the water on Tuesday. The fish must have all died between Sunday and Tuesday."

The water to which Ryan was referring to was coming from Irrigation District Diversion 45, otherwise known as the D45 canal. The D45 canal takes water from the river near the Howard Preserve in Bellevue to farms south of Bellevue without river access.

This summer was among the driest on record. Ryan had been monitoring this reach of the river this summer, and then, with the help of John Wright, who manages the D45 canal, he had been working with irrigators who were trying to take less of their legal water rights through the canal, to avoid a fish kill by leaving more water in the river for fish. "All of this was uncharted territory," said Ryan, "we were all doing our best as the situation unfolded."



HOW DID WE GET TO A POINT WHERE A RIVER COULD RUN DRY?

One factor is climate. Southern Idaho is in one of the worst megadroughts in North America since 800 C.E., and climate models from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Forest Service predict declining snowpack and river flows combined with increasing droughts and heatwaves.

Another factor is water demand. Here we can follow a typical storyline for western cities and towns--the discovery of precious metal, the arrival of the railroad, the boom of a population moving West, the displacement of indigenous peoples, and the conflicts over water on a landscape that was never meant to support heavy development.



The first water right in the Wood River Valley was established in 1880. The first lawsuit over water was in 1884; that fact alone should give you an idea of what the next 135 years were like. Through the decades, governed by the Prior Appropriation Doctrine--first in time, first in right--bitter battles between downstream, senior, surface water right holders and upstream, junior, groundwater right holders have ensued when heat has scoured the sagebrush sea and water supply has dwindled. You see, for a long time, no one knew the groundwater and the surface water (rivers, streams) were interconnected. Now they do.



A final factor contributing to the river running dry is what we might call the urbanization of the river. "The Big Wood River has suffered the fate of many rivers in the West," says Ryan. Hydraulic mining, grazing, beaver removal, floodplain development, and river bank hardening have all contributed to an unhealthy river system. Developing, bracing and straightening a river prevents natural and needed seasonal flooding, which creates deep, cool, pools of water to recharge the underground aquifer.

This summer, all these factors came together. After a low winter snowpack, the lack of natural spring flooding and meandering of the river, and the onset of exceptional drought, the state ordered 140 farmers in Bellevue to stop pumping groundwater from their wells because senior surface water right holders downstream near Shoshone were not getting enough water for their crops.

Ultimately, the Idaho Department of Water Resources, the farmers in Bellevue, and the farmers in Shoshone worked out a legal agreement that involved financial compensation for crop losses, imported water from the American Falls Reservoir in eastern Idaho, and allowed some watering to still occur in Bellevue. But everyone agrees, this kind of emergency shut down followed by a patchwork of wheeling and dealing water is not a sustainable, long term solution.

AND THE RIVER STILL RAN DRY.

“We’re in some tough times,” says Watermaster Kevin Lakey of District 37. He worries that on the current trajectory of water supply and use in this area, ultimately there may not be enough water for less critical uses like lawn irrigation. “We’re not there yet. But maybe someday,” says Lakey.

However, Keri York, Lands Program Director at the Land Trust, is hopeful. Before, people did not want to talk about things, other than “through litigation,” says Keri. Since 2015, Keri has been an integral part of a grassroots effort to get all parties to the proverbial table to build relationships and talk through some of these difficult water issues.

These conversations migrated this year to a more formal process, led by the Idaho Department of Water Resources, to develop a Big Wood Basin Groundwater Management Plan by December 2021. Along with other environmental groups like Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and Silver Creek Alliance, the Land Trust is advocating for science-based measures such as the use of predictive modeling to help forecast surface and groundwater flows, establishing minimum flows that must be left in the river for fish health, irrigation efficiency projects to help farmers, and an adaptive water market to facilitate the movement of water when needed.

In parallel to this unprecedented planning process, Ryan has set his sights on river improvement projects which ultimately keep more water in the river longer in the season and provide much needed habitat for native trout populations. These projects will include removal of man-made fish barriers, reconnecting the floodplain, replacement of concrete and rip-rap with more natural flood mitigating measures, and even man-made beaver dams where the beaver populations have not recovered.

Standing in the dried river bed this September, among hundreds of dead trout, Ryan shows me some photos from the 1900’s of local fishermen on the Big Wood River holding trophy fish almost three feet long.

“After this summer, the whole community realized how important the Big Wood is to all of us,” says Ryan, “and I think with the work we are planning, we can come together with a new commitment to protecting and preserving the river.”

AND HOPEFULLY, NONE OF US WILL EVER SEE A RIVER RUN DRY AGAIN.

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

SAVE OUR RIVER

WATCH THE WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST'S NEW FILM ABOUT
THE SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE

OF THE BIG WOOD RIVER

WOOD
RIVER
LAND
TRUST



WATCH THE FILM NOW AT

woodriverlandtrust.org

vimeo.com/woodriverlandtrust



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Contributions are tax deductible
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information is available by contacting
our office.



2022

THINKING GLOBALLY ACTING LOCALLY SPEAKER SERIES

Join the Wood River Land Trust and The Community Library
this winter as we discuss how we can take local action in the face of
global and regional challenges.

THURSDAY
JANUARY 27



**"GROWTH
PLANNING BASED
ON COMMUNITY
VALUES"**
WITH ELAINE
CLEGG
Program Director,
Idaho Smart Growth

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 24



**"RESTORING
TRIBUTARY
HEALTH TO STAGE
ZERO"**
WITH BRIAN CLUER
Fluvial
Geomorphologist,
NOAA Fisheries –
West Coast Region

THURSDAY
MARCH 24



**"DESIGNING AN
INCLUSIVE OUTDOORS"**
WITH KEITH
CHRISTENSEN
Department Head,
Department of
Landscape Architecture
and Environmental
Planning, USU

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TIMES AND HOW TO REGISTER VISIT
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