

Wood River Land Trust

Spring 2015

Protecting the heart
of the valley...now
and for the future.

WOOD
RIVER
LAND
TRUST


20 years!



David Anderson ©Thia Konig

What a Year—Thanks to You

A Message from David Anderson, Board President

AS WE APPROACH the end of our 20th Anniversary, we can look back on the most exciting, dynamic and successful period in Wood River Land Trust’s history. And, none of our successes this year would have been possible without the support of you—our donors and volunteers. Thank you.

With funding from our conservation partners The Nature Conservancy, Blaine County’s Land, Water and Wildlife Program and endorsements from the County Commissioners, another exciting and recent development was receiving final approval in February to protect nearly 2,000 acres through six easements on Molyneux-family farmland and ranching lands. This multigenerational farming and ranching family has owned several thousand acres in the Bellevue Triangle and near Carey for the past 60 years. We are indebted to the Molyneux family for their contribution to conservation, and more importantly their commitment to permanently protect local lands—lands valuable to their family, to wildlife and our community.

The Land Trust recently completed our first land acquisition in the Stanley Basin, which is highlighted in the following pages. Protecting Valley Creek, which provides critical habitat for several endangered fish species, including Chinook salmon, was made possible by leveraging funds through various grants. With the City of Stanley’s support, the Land Trust will work to develop a long-term plan for this scenic area highly valued by the Sawtooth Valley community.

Staff and the Board have been working diligently on a new Strategic Plan, which will incorporate a new focus on land projects that provide water-conservation benefits—protection of historic water rights, protection of in-stream water flows for the benefit of fish and wildlife habitat, water conservation through our Trout Friendly program, as well as educational outreach programs. And, of particular note, is the recent hiring of a new staff member Lisa Huttinger as our Development Manager. Lisa brings proven skills to our fundraising and public outreach efforts. I am pleased to welcome her to the team.

Lastly, please join us after the Hailey Parade this 4th of July for the Draper Preserve River Festival—only blocks west from Main Street. The Land Trust is hosting the Draper Preserve River Festival to celebrate You and the community for 20 years of support. Here’s to the next 20!



In the Heart of Stanley Partners Leverage Funds to Permanently Protect Valley Creek

IMAGINE A CREEK winding freely through wetlands. Spring run-off keeps the channel vital by creating new eddies, scoured spots and pools. Salmon and bull trout flash crimson and silver as they spawn and rear their young. Songbirds call back and forth from the banks.

Now, picture all of this right in the heart of Stanley.

On Friday, February 6, it became a permanent reality. With your support, a generous donation from Valley Creek LLC, and funding from The Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program, 34 acres—visible from Highways 75 and 21—are protected from development today and always.

This land, which includes wet meadows and a one-mile stretch of Valley Creek, was the largest undeveloped tract along the creek in the City of Stanley. “Valley Creek is critical habitat for several species of salmon, all of which are listed under the Endangered Species Act,” said Keri York, Director of Conservation. “When we see development in these areas, the nature of the stream changes—banks harden, the channels get deeper, they fill with sediment and temperatures rise. All of this impacts the fish and other species that rely on these waters.”

The land owner, Valley Creek LLC, approached the Land Trust to protect this special place. A variety of organizations joined the Land Trust to build a case for support, including Trout Unlimited (TU), The City of Stanley and the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. With this united front, we were able to leverage your support with a grant from the Snake River Basin Adjudication Habitat Trust Fund, through The Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program.

Mark Davidson of TU’s Hemingway Chapter expressed his thoughts about the acquisition’s positive impact, “This acquisition will permanently protect one of the major tributaries Chinook salmon can access to spawn. This reach also protects vital habitat for steelhead trout, bull trout and west slope cutthroat trout. The effects of development on healthy rivers are nowhere more pronounced than this section of river. In addition to protecting Valley Creek from future impacts, the Land Trust will be providing an opportunity for all of us to see Chinook salmon complete their life cycles and enjoy this wonderful resource.”

The Land Trust has begun working with the community and stakeholders to develop a long-term plan for this critical habitat. The plan will ensure that the fisheries habitat, open spaces, scenic views, and educational opportunities are valued and preserved.

Steve Botti, Stanley City Council member, was eager to see this land preserved. “This is something that the residents of the City have hoped for years would happen. We all value the wetlands, salmon habitat, and environmental character along the creek. None of us wanted to see it developed. We’d be excited to see this area turned into a limited access park of some sort, where the public could enjoy the natural beauty while still preserving the health of the creek and wetlands, but we’re happy just knowing that it will remain open forever.”

If you would like to learn more about the Valley Creek acquisition, please contact Keri York, Director of Conservation at 208.788.3947 or kyork@woodriverlandtrust.org.

Stewarding the Land So Nature Can Evolve in Healthy Ways

Croy Creek Wetlands: A Conservation Story Still in the Making

Land Stewardship—this means more than simply performing routine maintenance. While park maintenance requires upkeep, such as cutting grass, pruning shrubs and repairing sprinklers, stewarding a nature preserve is distinctive. Unlike parks, preserves are better suited to a holistic approach—one based on caring for the ecological value of the area in a way that encourages public enjoyment, while also allowing the land to evolve naturally.

The Draper Wood River Preserve is a wonderful conservation success story, and one that embodies this idea of stewardship. The story of the Preserve has unfolded for more than a decade, and continues to evolve as opportunities for enhancements and community involvement present themselves.

Historically, the area on the west side of the Preserve was used as a town dump, and in 2008 more than 600 cubic yards of waste was removed. Many opportunities

for restoration and enhancement were identified in the years that followed, including the Croy Creek Wetlands Boardwalk and the Bow Bridge of the Big Wood River. While the Bow Bridge physically connects both sides of the Preserve, the idea behind the Boardwalk was to install a low-impact way to connect our community (without getting wet) with the abundant wildlife that call the Wetland home. And, with incredible support from the community, in 2011 the Boardwalk went from a dream to reality.

Today, action is needed. An invasive grass has established itself in the Wetland and is choking out other native sedges and rushes. This invasive species is reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), and removal is necessary if the Wetland is to exist in its natural state. The Land Trust has received a \$50,000 matching grant from the Draper Family Foundation to eradicate the reed canarygrass. As with the Boardwalk, we

hope to continue the tradition of inviting the community to play an important role with this ambitious restoration effort, both with fundraising and volunteer opportunities.

Our goal is to return the Wetland to a healthy state so it can sustain itself with minimal manmade influence. This spring, the Land Trust will begin Phase 1 of a comprehensive, multi-year restoration effort to eradicate and control this detrimental grass surrounding the Boardwalk.

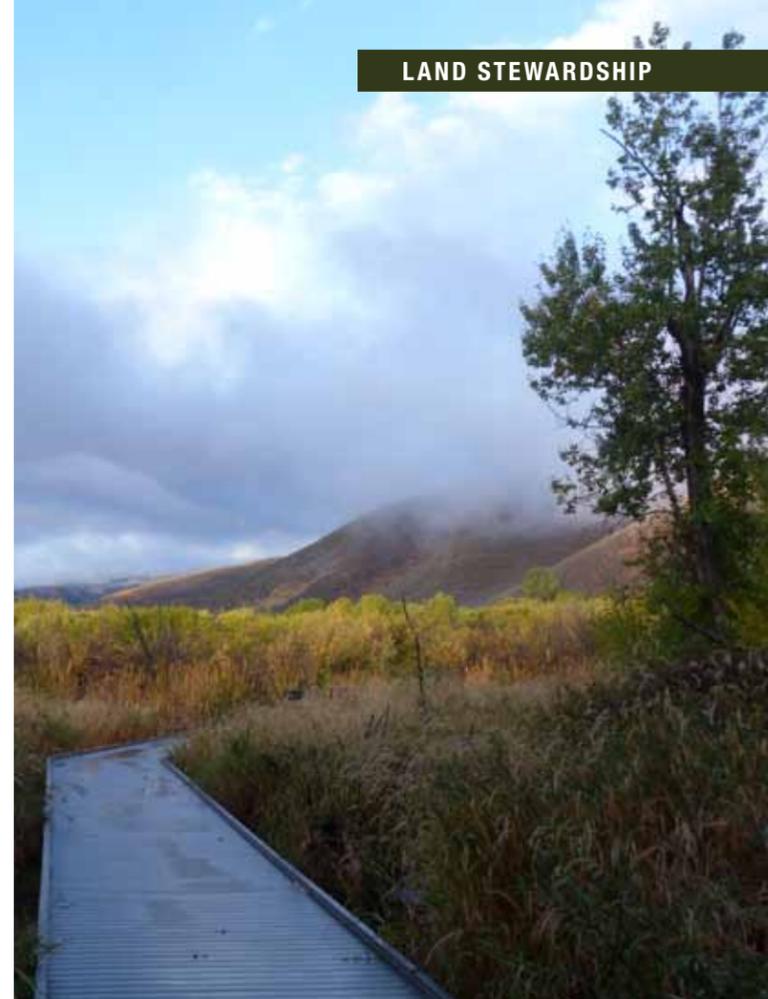
The Wetland restoration will have three distinct phases:

- Phase 1:** Eradication of reed canarygrass (RCG)
- Phase 2:** Revegetation with native species
- Phase 3:** Ongoing stewardship

The first phase of the restoration will involve terminating the plants and their root systems with proven methods, including controlled burning, solarization, and possibly excavation. Due to the persistent nature of RCG, follow-up after the eradication will also include targeted herbicide applications to eliminate the root systems of any remaining plants. As the Land Trust is a strong proponent of responsible herbicide use, care will be taken to use herbicides that are approved for use in close proximity to water, and only at necessary application rates.

Phase 2 will entail helping the native species that are already present become reestablished. This effort will be bolstered with additional methods which could include planting wetland sod, introducing plant plugs, seeding the area, or a combination of all three. With the community's support we hope to raise enough matching funds to facilitate the most successful revegetation possible, thereby quickly restoring the site back to the character and quality that our community and visitors enjoy and wildlife thrive. The replanting process and ongoing Preserve stewardship will also provide multiple opportunities for volunteers to dig in the dirt—helping to restore this beautiful landscape.

The last phase includes nurturing the desirable plant species through ongoing weed control and by suppressing any RCG that attempts a comeback. As a place that is beneficial to wildlife, we aim to continue our partnership with the community as good stewards of this local treasure. For more information on how you can help with the Preserve restoration projects, please contact Chad Stoesz, Stewardship Coordinator at cstoesz@woodriverlandtrust.org.



Images clockwise from facing page: Croy Creek Wetland; Croy Creek Wetland Boardwalk ©Larry Barnes; Bow Bridge of the Big Wood River ©Dev Khalsa; Former Board President and current Board Member Trent Jones and his daughter Airey after planting native shrubs at the Draper Wood River Preserve.

REED CANARYGRASS: An Invasive Species

INVASIVE SPECIES ARE NON-NATIVE and often threaten natural biodiversity and native plant survival. Several subspecies of reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) have become prevalent invasive species in wetlands throughout the United States. Initially, with good intentions, reed canarygrass was planted as a forage crop for cattle and to stabilize stream banks. Unfortunately, the plant often forms dense monocultures that prevent diversity of native rushes and sedges.

In the Croy Creek Wetland, reed canarygrass has become the dominate wetland plant along the Boardwalk. Unfortunately, controlling reed canarygrass is difficult and costly. This spring, the Land Trust will undertake a comprehensive, multi-year control effort to eliminate the reed canarygrass and their root systems. Native plants will then be reintroduced and cultivated to revegetate the Wetland and return it to its diverse natural state.



A Volunteer's Perspective

Monitoring Water Below Magic Reservoir

by John Finnell

I WAS THINKING ABOUT FISHING Wagon Wheel Hole and drove out through the sagebrush south of Timmerman Junction. I pulled off the dirt track and stepped out on the basalt overlooking a 100-foot drop created by the Big Wood River as it flows from Magic Reservoir. Below is a beautiful riparian environment full of life, quite unexpected amidst the sage. I have witnessed all sorts of creatures thriving down there, including deer, river otters, muskrats, beavers, mink and numerous bird species. And, let's not forget, fish. As I stood looking down, a canyon wren popped out of the rocks not 10 feet from away, keeping me company. I can see large fish circling in the deep pool below. I'm excited!

This is a place full of potential and needs our help. All life here depends on water and, after the irrigation flow from the dam is shut off, there is not enough. For the past two years I have helped document large fish kills when the big flows ceased. This has been an annual occurrence.

As a Land Trust volunteer, I help monitor the water temperature and oxygen levels Below Magic, and have done so for the past couple of years. I drive down once a week after the flows from the dam are closed and record the water temperature and dissolved oxygen content in seven distinct locations (I must admit, I sometimes take my fly rod). The intent is to establish a baseline about the health of the stream, including the fish counts, after the water drops. This is only the first step. Next is finding more water when the data shows where it's most needed.

Accruing the science and finding solutions takes time and work, but this place is worth it. These quiet corners are what make our part of the planet special. Tending them is our responsibility. Of course, spending an afternoon on a remote Idaho stream is our reward.

For more information about our water-conservation efforts Below Magic Reservoir, visit www.WoodRiverLandTrust.org.



MOOSE, MUSKRATS AND MALLARDS... SAY CHEESE!

Technology Offers New Windows into the World of Wildlife

THE DRAPER WOOD RIVER PRESERVE is not only tranquil, but ecologically rich with diverse habitats. As the home to a variety of wildlife, including moose, beavers, songbirds, muskrats and ducks, the Preserve holds a feast of sights that you can now enjoy remotely from a computer, tablet or smart phone.

To access two new Wildlife Web Cameras, one overlooking the Bow Bridge of the Big Wood River and the other of the Croy Creek Wetlands, visit our Home page at www.WoodRiverLandTrust.org. This unique experience is made possible by an anonymous donor.

The Wetland water levels have been fluctuating more than normal over the past two years. The Land Trust plans to use data from the Wildlife Web Camera videos, along with water sensors, to draw attention to the depleted aquifer, river health and other significant water issues we are facing in the Wood River Valley. "The

cameras are already a great asset to the Preserve," said Chad Stoesz, the Land Trust's Stewardship Coordinator. "We now have the capacity to monitor the Big Wood River and Wetland water levels daily from our office computers."

In addition to actively viewing the River's changes in character and monitoring water levels, what better way to observe PHASE 1 of the Wetland restoration project scheduled for this spring? Eradicating the massive amounts of reed canarygrass is our first priority. This species of grass is not suited for the Wetland's ecosystem, and for its overall health, eradication of this invasive plant is necessary.

A place transformed from wasteland to wonderland, the public is urged to visit the Draper Wood River Preserve located on either side of the Big Wood River and within walking distance from downtown Hailey.



Images from top: Bigwood River below Magic Dam; Volunteer John Finnell monitoring water and oxygen levels Below Magic Dam Reservoir.; Below Magic Reservoir is a popular destination for anglers, young and old.



Introducing Lisa Huttinger

Wood River Land Trust's New Development Manager



A COMMITMENT TO STEWARDSHIP

JOHN FINNELL is a much-appreciated—and busy—Land Trust supporter, volunteer and photographer. Not only has John provided fabulous photos to use in our publications, but for the past two summers he has spent countless hours of his personal time monitoring the water and oxygen levels below Magic Dam. We are indebted to John for his continued service and commitment to the Land Trust's mission.

Historically, Magic Reservoir was built for agricultural use, and the Big Wood River below the reservoir supports an abundant fishery. Since 2008, the Land Trust has worked with the Big Wood Canal Company and other partners to find innovative solutions to conserve water in the irrigation system below Magic Reservoir, while providing sufficient year-round flows for fish and the river ecosystem. Our ultimate goal is to provide more water for both the fishery and agricultural uses. For more information about our conservation efforts Below Magic Dam, visit our website at www.WoodRiverLandTrust.org.

JOIN US ON THE LAND AS A VOLUNTEER!

ARE YOU INTERESTED in volunteer opportunities? We need people who want to get their hands in the dirt, to plant native species, and to be advocates for our River restoration efforts.

Workday volunteers help with weed removal, trail maintenance, trash pick-up and general preserve management. If you would like to hear more about becoming a stewardship volunteer, contact Chad Stoesz at cstoesz@woodriverlandtrust.org.

SCHEDULED WORK DAY

BOXCAR BEND with TROUT UNLIMITED
Sat., May 16th, 2014 • Time: 10 a.m.–Noon
Meet in parking lot next to the bike path at
Boxcar Bend (1/2 mile north of East Fork Road)



Images counterclockwise from top left: Volunteer John Finnell fishing Below Magic Reservoir.; John Finnell and his wife Daralene have supported the Land Trust's mission for more than 10 years.; Chad Chorney with Trout Unlimited's Hemingway Chapter volunteering at the Box Car Bend workday. ©DMuehle.

WITH A LOVE FOR THE LAND and passion for conservation, Lisa Huttinger joins the Wood River Land Trust as our new Development Manager. Lisa began her work with the Land Trust at the end of January, and has been working diligently to help meet year-end fundraising goals.

"Lisa hit the ground running when our former Director of Development, Daphne Muehle left for an opportunity with a foundation in California," said Scott Boettger, Executive Director. "Lisa's expertise and enthusiasm is crucial to help us meet our conservation goals. Her passion for open space protection makes us proud to announce her as part of the team." Lisa will work closely with Scott and the Board of Directors to develop and implement fundraising and donor-outreach strategies.

For Lisa, the opportunity to work for the Land Trust has been an aspiration since moving to the Valley in 2008. "I have a debt of gratitude to all of the Land Trust's supporters—the volunteers, donors, and partners—who ensure that the natural landscapes that make the Wood River Valley so special remain sustainable and accessible," said Lisa. "I am looking forward to connecting all of our supporters with the legacy they are creating."



Lisa Huttinger ©Thia Konig

Lisa speaks fondly about where her interest in connecting people to the land began—in New York City. "I was volunteering with Sierra Club's Inner City Outings, and it was those kids who really started it all," Lisa recalled. "I hiked to the top of Bear Mountain with a group of teens from the inner city, and they were amazed by the beautiful river below. They asked what it was, and I let them know it was the Hudson. They couldn't conceive that this wild river was the same one that slunk past Manhattan." Lisa recognized the disassociation and loss of connection to the land, and more importantly, what kids gain from the outdoors.

"From that point forward, I made it my life's work to connect people to nature," Lisa acknowledged.

After graduating from the University of South Carolina, Lisa completed the professional residency program of the Teton Science Schools and her Master's in Natural Science at the University of Wyoming. You may find Lisa (and shelter dog, Raven, in tow) hiking, cross-country skiing, trapshooting, fly fishing and hunting. Send Lisa an email if you have questions or want to say hello at lhuttinger@woodriverlandtrust.org



A New Invasive—Horary alyssum

FREE WEED WORKSHOP: Learn about Practical and Preventative Weed Control Practices

WITH THE SNOW MELTING and spring upon us, we are all eager to dig in and create beautiful landscapes and public spaces that can be enjoyed by all. In this FREE workshop, learn how to effectively manage and control weeds while protecting our soils and environment.

Join the Wood River Land Trust, ERC and Blaine County Weed Department for a FREE

Weed Control and Prevention Workshop
Thursday, April 9, from 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Community Campus in Hailey.
Coffee and snacks will be provided.

This workshop is open to all homeowners, landscapers and property managers. Participants will learn about Integrated Pest Management and how it is being effectively implemented in the Wood River Valley, new weed invaders and how to identify them, as well as practical and preventative weed control.

Speakers include Juerg Stauffacher, the City of Ketchum's Parks and Natural Resources Superintendent; Dan Morishita, Professor of Weed Science at the University of Idaho; and Bronwyn Nickel of the Blaine County Weed Department.

Three pesticide credits are available and no registration is required.
For the agenda call 208-788-3947 or visit www.WoodRiverLandTrust.org.



IS YOUR LAWN TROUT FRIENDLY?

LAWN CARE INFLUENCES the health of the Big Wood River and our groundwater. Become part of the Wood River Land Trust's Trout Friendly Program.

How you benefit:

- Saves money on your water bill
- Safer for your children and pets
- Attracts more birds and wildlife
- Protects our water quality



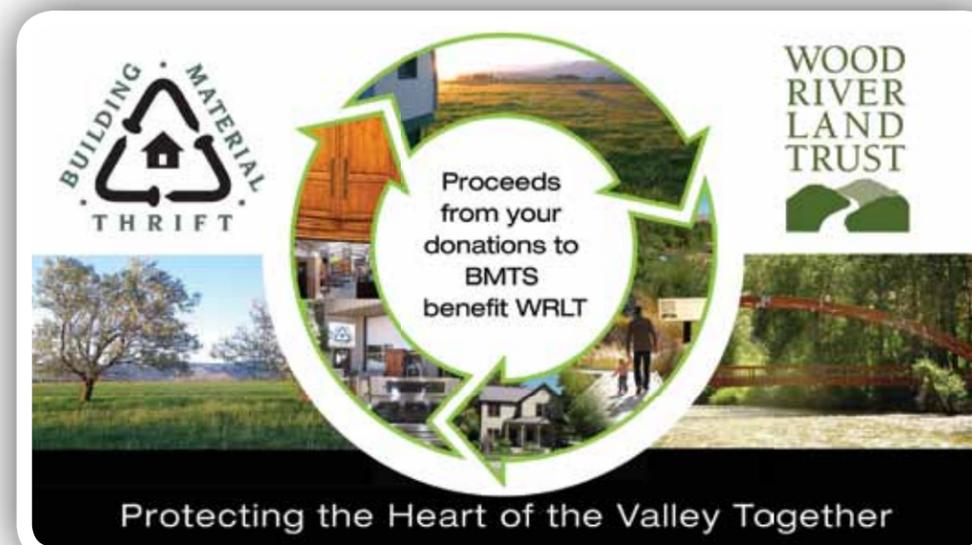
To certify your landscape and increase the awareness of protecting our water resources contact Patti Lousen, Project Coordinator, at plousen@woodriverlandtrust.org, or find us at www.TroutFriendly.org

BUILDING MATERIAL THRIFT STORE

Protecting the Heart of the Valley

IF YOU ARE IN THE MIDST OF SPRING CLEANING, now is the time to recycle at Building Material Thrift Store (BMTS). BMTS is a service-oriented (we pick up your stuff!), recycling outlet for high-quality construction materials, furniture and home accessories.

Proceeds from sales support the work of the Wood River Land Trust. Visit BMTS's store at 3930 S. Woodside Blvd. and see what's new! Call us at 788-0014 or visit the website: www.BuildingMaterialThriftStore.org.



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★ DRAPER PRESERVE RIVER FESTIVAL ★

After the Hailey July 4th Parade—

Enjoy Big Wood River activities, music, food and more!

What are your plans after the City of Hailey's July 4th parade? Continue your Independence Day celebration with a stroll down to the Draper Wood River Preserve for some sun and family fun!

The Draper Preserve River Festival will

feature food, music, River activities, face-painting, educational nature programs and more. So, bring your friends and family down to the Preserve right after the parade.

Event details will be announced in the coming months, so mark your calendars.

Wood River Land Trust protects and restores land, water, and wildlife habitat in the Wood River Valley and its surrounding areas.

We work cooperatively with private landowners and local communities to ensure these areas are protected now and for future generations.



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20years!

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EVENTS



Heart of the Valley

Announcing
the 11th Annual
Heart of the
Valley Contest

*Photos & Prose Due
Monday, May 4th*



SEND US YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY AND PROSE ILLUSTRATING HOW THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY INSPIRES YOU.

Prizes Awarded for first place, honorable mention, staff favorite and the most facebook "likes."

For guidelines and an entry form visit our website: www.WoodRiverLandTrust.org, stop by our office at

119 E. Bullion Street in Hailey
or call Jill at 788-3947