

PROTECTING WILD SPACES & HAPPY PLACES

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST

WINTER 2022



WOOD
RIVER
LAND
TRUST



BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

Learn how we can harness the power of growth to give our community the freedom to retain its unique character.

BUGS SHOW US THE HEALTH OF AN ECOSYSTEM

Read about the Land Trust's new macroinvertebrate sampling program.

A DREAM REALIZED

2022 saw the realization of three projects that were over 15 years in the making.

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST



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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.

Cover Photo: Roland Wolfram; Photo on this page: Molly Vance

A LETTER FROM THE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



When I moved here 25 years ago, I was amazed at the abundance and accessibility of open space in this Valley. From miles of river access for fishing to hillsides rich with wildlife to trails leading to gorgeous mountain vistas - it felt like there was enough room for everyone to thrive.

As the Wood River Land Trust has engaged in efforts to preserve the iconic lands in our Valley, and as we've worked with partners to restore and connect critical habitat, it's made me see the natural wonders of the Valley with new eyes.

Our community couldn't have foretold the changes that this place would see when they started the Land Trust in 1994, but they knew that change was inevitable. Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, is quoted as saying "change is the only constant in life" and it's a sentiment we can all see in our daily lives.

In order to preserve what we love about this place, it is imperative to understand what we have, and dig in for the long fight to protect it.

The Land Trust, and our community of supporters, is no stranger to perseverance. As you can read about on page 8, we are celebrating the completion of projects that started 15 to 20 years ago. With a clear vision to protect and restore the wild open spaces that make this Valley so special, and the dedication to see those projects through decades of hard work, the Land Trust is uniquely positioned to look toward the future, and ask "what can we do now to build a future that continues to hold the same special moments that we have today?"

This year, we embarked on the first steps toward building a community vision for the future of the Wood River Valley. As you read about these initial efforts on page 6, I urge you to see these lands and our river as the precious "green heart" of this Valley. So precious, in fact, that engaging with regional planning isn't seen as a only a place for governments and agencies, but as the most essential next step in our long fight to protect and restore the Wood River Valley.

Will you join the movement to stand for this special place we all call home?

Scott Boettger, Executive Director



Bugs: Biological Indicators that Show us the Health of an Ecosystem

The Land Trust launched a new macroinvertebrate sampling program to track trends in water and habitat quality that affect our natural resources.

“Really important for people to think about this in a big picture kind of way. It’s not the water running through somebody’s backyard, It’s not A run on the river that’s important, it’s the entire system from top to bottom. And when that snow melts in Galena and it comes down through the valley, what happens with that water is of the utmost importance - every drop of it.”

-John Huber

As we work to restore the health of the Big Wood River, it is critical to look at the overall system health - from top to bottom - to design restoration projects that can have the greatest impact on creating a healthy Big Wood River.

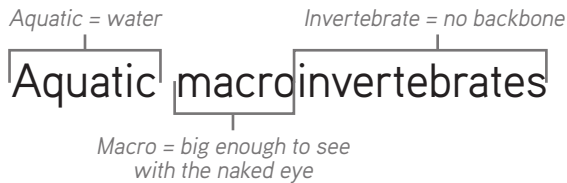
As our community has learned, the Big Wood River is not the river it once was - the fishery began deteriorating when settlers first moved into the area and has continued to suffer to this day.

In fact, the river doesn't meet a number of water quality standards set by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, further proving the overall degradation of the watershed.

The Wood River Land Trust is working to address these issues, and the first step in fixing any problem is to better understand it.

This winter, we launched a key program that will give us the ability to measure the health of the river by looking at the creatures that live within it.

This new key tool in our arsenal is our aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling program. This program will allow us to monitor trends in the health of the Big Wood River over time.



Aquatic macroinvertebrates are small animals living in water; are big enough to see with the naked eye; and have no backbone. These animals include many types of insects, as well as worms, mollusks, and crustaceans. Most aquatic macroinvertebrates make their homes in between rocks, leaves, and in the sediment of streambeds.

Looking at macroinvertebrates in a system offers certain advantages for monitoring such as their abundant nature, spectrum of environmental responses, longer life cycles, and easy sampling methods.

These bugs are important because they are an integral part of the food chain. They provide food for fish and other aquatic organisms. Many of them are also key indicator species. They can tell us about the quality of the water where they are found. Bugs with a low tolerance to pollution tell us the water they are found in is relatively healthy. If we do not find these bugs, then it could possibly be due to some sort of pollutant or other impairment to the water body.

Because of this, monitoring aquatic macroinvertebrates has become the standard method for government agencies, scientists, and organizations like the Wood River Land Trust to keep track of trends in aquatic ecosystem health.

WHERE WE SURVEY

When the Land Trust launched our first macroinvertebrate survey, we chose sample sites previously surveyed by the USGS in 2014. While our monitoring differed from the work done by the USGS, there were enough similarities that we will be able to compare our work with the baseline USGS data.

It is important for us to align with this USGS data because it is the only known macroinvertebrate survey that has been done in the Big Wood watershed.

HOW WE SURVEY

Five samples are taken at each site, using a “stratified sampling design”. This means that we choose sample sites that are as similar as possible, aside from the variable we’re testing for. In our study design, we want to test the different effects of stream velocity, so we make sure other variables (water depth, bed surface) are the same across sample sites.

This allows us to analyze the effects of stream velocity - as velocity is a driver for much of the variation in macroinvertebrate communities.

RESULTS

After analyzing the results, WRLT staff can produce summary statistics and trend reports for the season. To an extent, these summary statistics can be compared to the 2014 USGS data, and will provide a baseline for our annual trend monitoring program.

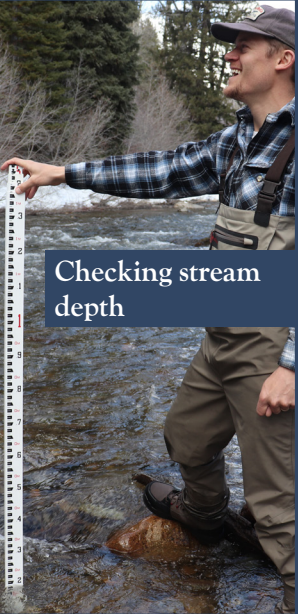
Support from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and donors like you make it possible to collect and analyze this data to inform science-based management decisions about our river.

GET INVOLVED!

If you’d like to continue to see these and other critical science based techniques used on the Big Wood River, get involved today! Send a donation, or sign up to volunteer to help when we begin surveying in late February/early March.



A Day of Macroinvertebrate Sampling



Checking stream depth



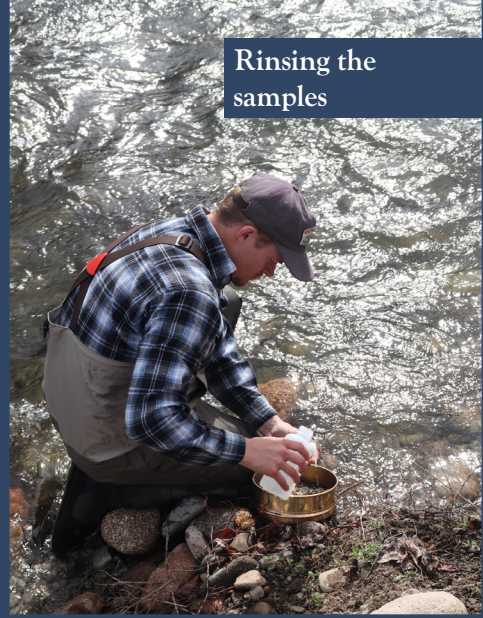
Carefully labeling samples for the lab



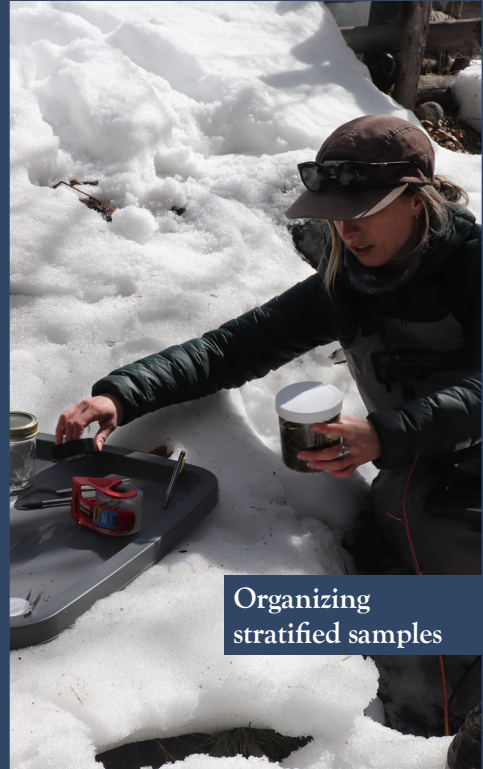
Recording our findings



Examining the macroinvertebrates!



Rinsing the samples



Organizing stratified samples



Analyzing the streambed

Make a Lasting Impact

Join the Founders' Circle

Join the Wood River Land Trust in protecting the Valley through your will or estate plan. If your estate plans include a gift to the Wood River Land Trust, please let us know so that we can thank you for your generosity, honor your wishes, and recognize your impact as part of the Founders' Circle.

How Will You Protect the Future of the Valley?

- **Charitable Bequest:** Designate a gift in your will or trust
- **Life Insurance:** Make a gift with little cost to yourself and a potential tax deduction (some restrictions may apply, please contact us)
- **Retirement Assets:** Name WRLT as a beneficiary of your IRA
- **Gifts of Real Estate or Other Tangible Property:** Donate real estate and potentially reduce estate taxes
- **Life Income Gift:** Establish a Charitable Remainder Trust or consider other options
- **Securities or Other Property:** Donate stock, bonds, or other securities

We are grateful for our members of the Founders' Circle:

David Anderson
Victor Bernstein
Bernard and Kathy
Brown

Amy Browning
Brooke Bonner
Barry Bunshoft
Dan and Micki Chapin
Kelly Curtis and
John Marsh
Ed Cutter
John and Daralene
Finnell
Maureen Groper
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Connie Cox Price
Cheryl and Vern Rollin
Gail Severn
Gayle Stevenson
Barbara Thrasher and
Rick Koffey
Amy Trujillo
Roland Wolfram and
Patti Zebrowski
Keri York
Anonymous

For more information or to contact us with information about your own planned gift, please contact Courtney Jelaco at 208-788-3947 or cjelaco@woodriverlandtrust.org

Before It's Too Late

Learn how we can balance growth and other community resources to give our community the freedom to retain its unique character

As another year goes by, we note the passage in time by the changes we see around us.

The child who was once a toddler is now old enough to help with decorating the tree.

The summer puppy is now a full grown winter dog.

While it tugs at our heart to see anything we love grow and change, we can celebrate each new phase while honoring the past.

This fall, we asked you - our community - to have these kinds of heartfelt conversations about the changes we all feel to our beloved home here in the heart of Idaho.

First, in October, we held a number of public presentations to City Councils and the general public about how land use economics is tied to building better cities and protecting important open space and resources.

Then, in November, we held charrette sessions in Bellevue, Hailey, and Ketchum, where conversations ranged from protecting viewsheds and our water resources to ensuring an economically viable future for young people in the Valley.

Between all of the events, a few key themes began to emerge:

- a) directing growth to infill areas within cities will help create vibrant places where people want to live, reducing the need for single vehicle trips for work, shopping, and dining;
- b) directing growth to infill areas within cities will also help increase tax revenue, providing more public funds for city and county, creating a more climate resilient community;
- c) directing growth to cities also helps preserve areas that our community values, such as wildlife corridors, agricultural land, and areas along the Big Wood River and its tributaries.



While increasing density in our cities isn't the only solution to the unprecedented change our Valley is facing, it is increasingly clear that it will be a critical part of sustaining the unique character of our Valley by balancing infill and protection of iconic landscapes.

The Wood River Land Trust is teaming up with Future West, Idaho Smart Growth, and local municipalities to develop a comprehensive regional vision for the Wood River Valley.

This regional vision will take all of the comments and thoughts we gained from our community, and will make recommendations about how we can best harness the power of growth to give our community the freedom to retain its unique character.

This final presentation will be presented in the spring, after compiling all of the data. If you have thoughts, questions, or concerns, we want to hear from you! Email Keri York, keri@woodriverlandtrust.org with your thoughts about growth in this Valley.

And while growth and change will happen, it doesn't mean we can't all cherish and fight to protect what makes our Valley so special while building a vision for what it will be - together.



GIVE THE GIFT OF OPEN SPACE

Did you share a special moment with someone out in our preserves this year? Renewing your commitment to conservation protects the wild spaces and happy places we love.

Please make your year end gift today and consider making a donation to the Land Trust in the name of someone special!

A gift that reflects your shared memories is a lasting way to show how much you care. When making your gift, simply add a note that it's a gift with the honoree's name and contact information, and we will send a special letter to them.



Make a gift at
woodriverlandtrust.org/donate

A Dream Realized

2022 saw the realization of three projects that were over 15 years in the making

Where were you 20 years ago? In 2002, Nokia was the king of phone manufacturers, Google was just debuting its search appliance, and we were still listening to music on our iPods.

In the fast-paced world of technology, 2002 was a lifetime ago, but here at the Land Trust, many of our most ambitious projects can easily take 20 years or more to see fully realized.

From the long relationship building we do with landowners and their families, to the lengthy government administrative processes many of our projects require, our projects often take decades of foresight and diligent work and perseverance.

Here at the Land Trust, we know we must look 20 years or more into the future and start projects today, that will be beneficial to our community even as it witnesses years of change.

The three projects below (Warm Springs Creek, river restoration at Colorado Gulch, and seeing

open space protected between Hailey and Bellevue), were all first imagined between 15-20 years ago.

And this year, they've seen major headway! The restoration at Warm Springs Creek is in it's public comment phases, the river restoration at Colorado Gulch was completed, and an open space buffer between the cities is in place.

We couldn't have done any of these ambitious projects without the support of the community, and of our donors. To the donors who have been with us the whole time, and the donors who just joined the movement this year, these successes are yours as much as ours!

Where will our community be in 20 years? No one can know for sure, but the Land Trust and our community know that no matter what - wild spaces and open places will always be the living soul of this Valley we all call home.

This year, we were able to:

Partner with the City of Ketchum to initiate the restoration of a half-mile of Warm Springs Creek (over 20 years in the making).



Complete the long awaited river restoration at Colorado Gulch. This is the first step toward replacing the pedestrian bridge connecting the Preserve to the Bureau of Land Management trails to the west (first imagined 15 years ago).



Support the Friedman Memorial Airport Authority in the purchase of 375 acres of land between the Cities of Hailey and Bellevue, creating an open corridor between the cities (realizing a 20 year vision).





Ignite the Love of Nature!

Nature Passport Provides Fun Outside

Are you or someone you know looking for ways to get kids excited and active in the outdoors? Our nature passports guide you and your young adventurers through Draper Wood River Preserve in Hailey or Howard Preserve in Bellevue. Treasure map included! Passports are available in English and Spanish and are appropriate for kids and kids at heart.

Download your own Nature Passport using the QR Code below, or by visiting woodriverlandrust.org



SCAN ME



All photos on this page by Molly Vance www.mollyvance.photography





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2023

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 19**



"NUTRIENT CYCLES IN MACRO INVERTEBRATES"
WITH DR. PATRICK EDWARDS
Senior Instructor
Portland State University
Environmental Science and Management

**THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 16**



"CREATING AN INCLUSIVE OUTDOORS WHILE ELEVATING LATINO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM"
WITH OLIVIA JUAREZ
Public Lands Program Director, Green Latinos

**THURSDAY
MARCH 16**



"EXPANDING OUR COMMUNITY GREEN HEART AS OUR VALLEY CHANGES"
WITH DR. JAAP VOS, PH.D.
Professor of Planning and Natural Resources, Interim Head of the Department of Natural Resources and Society

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TIMES AND HOW TO REGISTER VISIT COMLIB.ORG

