

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST

WRIT

The Dirt

Protecting the
Places You Love

FALL 2018

Year in Review

Species Profile: Elk
Community
Conservation

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST



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Hailey, Idaho 83333
208-788-3947

www.WoodRiverLandTrust.org

Wood River Land Trust (WRLT) is a public benefit Idaho company and is tax exempt under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our Tax ID # is 82-0474191.

Contributions to WRLT are tax deductible as allowed by law. Public financial information is available on our website or by contacting our office.

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ON THE COVER

Lori McNee takes part in the Kneeland Gallery's Plein Air Exhibit at Draper Wood River Preserve. Photo by Mike McKenna.

DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY

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Mike Howard, Scott Boettger and friends at Good News River Alaska

A letter from Scott Boettger

Whenever we talk about the work the Land Trust has accomplished over the last quarter of century, we tend to focus on the deals. But our success is really about relationships—the relationships we've built with our community and the relationships the community has created with the land. These relationships are ultimately how we are able to protect the places we love.

That's why the real heroes of everything we accomplish are people like you and the relationships we've created.

Some of relationships are locally based and personal, like my friendship with Mike Howard. We met because Mike and his family shared our passion to protect the special places in our Valley like the Howard Preserve in Bellevue. We met because we both wanted to do something great for our community, for local wildlife and local families, and we have been rewarded by not only saving and steadily expanding the preserve, but we have a great friendship, too. I was honored to be the Best Man at Mike's wedding, and that it took place on the land our relationship helped save. You can read more about Mike's great story in this issue of The Dirt.

Some of the work we've been able to accomplish is thanks to our relationships on regional and

national levels. We are proud of the relationships we've created through the Heart of the Rockies (HOTR) initiative. The HOTR has coordinated conservation efforts for the Northern Rockies in order to protect the vital wildlife corridors that run from the Camas Prairie and our backyards all the way to the Canadian Rockies.

Our pride for the HOTR was on full display at this fall's annual Land Trust Alliance Rally conference when our friend and partner, Michael Whitfield, was presented with the esteemed Kingsbury Browne Conservation Leadership Award. As Michael said during his acceptance speech, "I am grateful for this award, but can accept it only with recognition that in our work, no individual person accomplishes much alone. All the success that I have enjoyed has come through partnership with many people ... **We often facilitate complicated land transactions, but we are not simply real estate agents. We are community builders. The work that we do helps communities become healthier and happier and more socially sustainable.**"

It's work that we cannot accomplish without our relationships with people like you. Thank you for having a relationship with me and the Land Trust. I cherish it and know that nothing can be accomplished without your help and the relationships we have with places we love—because, in the end, we protect what we love.

THANKS

to your support, 2018 was another banner year for the Land Trust and our community. You helped us make tangible and lasting impacts—and you helped make sure local kids had a chance to join the cause, too. Here are a few of our favorite numbers from the last year.

1,278

acres were protected as a conservation easement for wildlife habitat and recreational use in Quigley Canyon just east of Hailey.

9

 acres added to the Colorado Gulch Preserve

300

beneficial insects released by local kindergartners at our Howard Preserve in Bellevue.

62

Students helped create and install a kiosk at Colorado Gulch Preserve.



300+

pounds of trash removed at our 1st Annual Big Wood River Cleanup Day with our partners from Environmental Resource Center, Idaho Conservation League and Trout Unlimited.



3,200

people and their pets visit our protected lands at Bow Bridge and the Draper Wood River Preserve each month.

Year in Review

Thanks to your choice to support the Land Trust, we were able to save more land and open it to the public in 2018. We were able to protect and restore wildlife habitat and guide future leaders on their first steps in conservation. Thanks for making sure we can continue doing extremely important work in a world where open lands and treasured places are disappearing everyday –especially here in Idaho, the fastest growing state in the Union.



Photo by Scott Bottger

Conserving Land

While open space and wildlife habitat are disappearing across the world, you're helping us save these special places here at home. Over the past year we have **added 9 more acres to our popular Colorado Gulch Preserve** in Hailey. The new Bench Parcel not only preserves the traditional agricultural feel of Broadford Road we also hope to one day have it be home to a Community Orchard.

We are also happy to report that we have partnered up with Blaine County Recreation Department and Hennessey and Company to place **1, 278 acres at Quigley Canyon into a conservation easement.** We hope to announce more great news like this soon.



WOW Students get excited about conservation.

Fostering Future Leaders

It was an exceptional year for fostering future leaders in the conservation world. Students of all ages spent time helping our land. Our Student Conservation Council (SCC), which consists of local high school students, teamed up with Wood River High School's Architectural Construction and Construction Academies to build an informational kiosk at the new Colorado Gulch Preserve Bench parcel. The SCC also began this school year by removing No Trespassing signs at Quigley Canyon. Two college interns spent the summer learning how to become conservation leaders through their work with the Land Trust.

Hundreds of WOW Students donated time to the Land Trust. From cleaning up trash to re-seeding damaged areas on our preserves, their assistance was invaluable and showed them that they can make a difference. And an impassioned group of 6th Graders from the Syringa Mountain School even teamed up with us to start a campaign to get people to be more responsible about dog waste. The Poop Patrol proudly put up signs around Draper Wood River Preserve this spring. We were thrilled to be able to help them make a positive impact for our community.



Adding Kestrel boxes at Colorado Gulch

Restoring Habitat

The first Big Wood River Cleanup Day we put on this fall was a big success. Dozens of volunteers showed up and collected over 300 pounds of trash along the river from Ketchum to Bellevue.

Hundreds of students and other volunteers spent time this year helping us do everything from fight invasive weeds to plant native grasses and clear trails of debris at our numerous preserves and easements.

We teamed up with local landscape industry representatives, community organizations and governmental planning staffs to create a set of Water Conservation Guidelines that have now been adopted by every city in the Valley. The non-binding guidelines represent best practices for soil, mulches, irrigation efficiencies and choice of vegetative matter, which have already been successfully implemented throughout much of the arid West. A couple new local housing developments have already signed on to follow the guidelines.

Volunteers also put kestrel boxes on some of our preserves last spring, as we continue to make the most out of your support to help every species we can, from trout and big game, like moose and elk, to America's smallest falcon.

Your Gift Saves Land



With your support, we can protect the cherished places that make our Valley so special.

Your gift helps our community ...

- foster collaboration
- advance science
- create places to play
- inspire future leaders
- conserve land
- restore habitat
- safeguard nature
- protect the places you love.



Learn more at
woodriverlandtrust.org
or contact Courtney Jelaco:
(208) 788-3947 or
courtney@woodriverlandtrust.org

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

Species Profile

The Mighty Elk

By Matthew Steinwurtzel

Photo by Nills Ribi

Elk: *Cervus elaphus*

Average Size: Bull – 700 lbs

Cow – 500 lbs

Newborn Calves – 35 lbs





For many, autumn is marked by crisp air, vibrant color changes and the flavors of the seasonal harvest. But for residents of the Wood River Valley, autumn is often defined by another spectacle—the sights and sounds of the mating season for elk.

Each fall, as air in the higher elevations turns cold along with the occasional early snowfall, elk are signaled to migrate down to lower elevations as the mating season begins. This process, known as the “rut,” occurs when bull elk herd cows and calves into groups. These groups are called “harems.”

The Wood River Valley hosts a relatively small—yet important—resident population of elk. Valley-goers and residents note that it is not uncommon to see elk feeding in their backyards during this time of year. And while the sight of majestic wildlife in one’s yard provides convenient viewing opportunities, it also portrays an even larger issue at hand: habitat scarcity.

The struggle to preserve and protect open spaces that act as migration corridors for migratory species such as elk is not only a local issue, but one that spans across North America.

That’s why the areas you help us protect within the Wood River Valley are so important. The Wood River Land Trust’s mission to protect and restore land, water and wildlife habitat enables critical species like elk to thrive, while allowing visitors and residents to enjoy the breathtaking scenery of the rut and migration within natural landscapes.

The importance of protected migration corridors for elk cannot be understated. In particular, the Rinker Rock Creek Ranch provides an alternative corridor for migration habits that have been displaced as a result of development along the Big Wood River. The Porcupine Creek Preserve (which was unfortunately burned as a result of the Sharps fire), also serves as a vital migration corridor and is even designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The recent damage to Porcupine Creek only reinforces the need to conserve these sensitive areas.

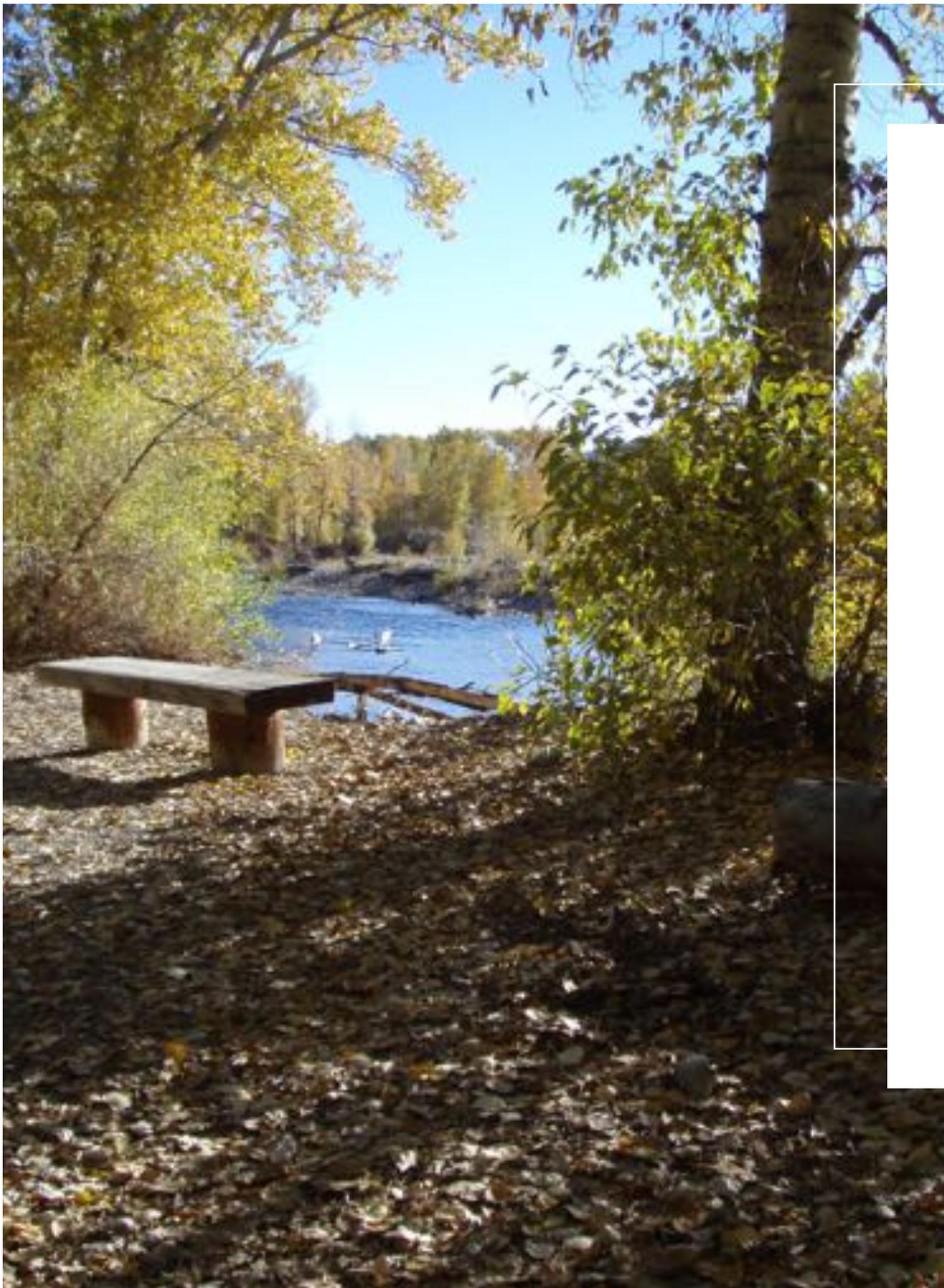
Through the collaboration with partners like The Nature Conservancy, the University of Idaho, the Pioneers Alliance, and of course, supporters like yourself, we are able to ensure that these vital areas of elk habitat stay protected.

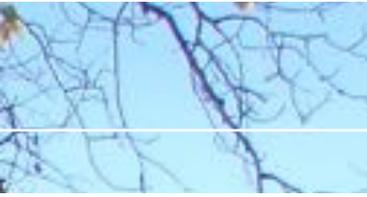
By actively working to protect habitat, you are not only providing species like elk with an opportunity to thrive, you are also helping create opportunities for people to experience these majestic creatures in their natural setting. Thanks to the choices we make together, the sounds of elk bugles will continue to serve as a reminder of all the great work we are accomplishing for our community

APPEARANCE: In the summer, Rocky Mountain Elk sport a copper brown coat color. Once the seasons change, this color turns to a light tan.

DID YOU KNOW? A set of antlers on one mature bull can weigh up to 40 pounds.

PLACES TO SEE ELK: Critical areas like Rinker Rock Creek Ranch, Cow-Catcher Ridge in Bellevue, and the newly protected Quigley Canyon in Hailey, and the Sellgren Trail in Ketchum provide excellent viewing opportunities for those who wish to see these magnificent creatures in their natural setting.





Howard Preserve, Bellevue, Idaho

The Joy of Saving Open Spaces

By Mike McKenna Photos by John Finnell

You can look up “joy” in the dictionary, but it really doesn’t do the word much justice. Joy is more than a word, it’s a feeling. It’s a feeling Mike Howard has learned all about ever since his family donated land along the river in Bellevue so that it could become a public preserve.

“Watching kids walk down to the Howard Preserve to go fishing. Now that’s joy,” Mike said.

Mike’s family originally came to Idaho from Virginia at the turn of the 20th Century as homesteaders and miners. After first setting up camp in Pine, they moved over to the Wood River Valley. While most of the family eventually moved to California, Mike’s grandparents bought property along the river in Bellevue in 1971. That’s where Mike’s Grandma Lena became an active member of the community, partaking in games of penny-ante poker and socializing with local legends like Cora Lee and Roberta McKercher.

Mike was raised in the Golden State and began

visiting the Valley as a kid. Some of his best and earliest memories were watching his Grandpa Ellis go off to the river with his bamboo fishing rod to chase after the Big Wood’s legendary trout.

Mike learned to fish on those same waters and fell so in love with the place that he’s been regularly coming back ever since. He fondly recalls taking trips up to Ketchum to fish the Big Wood with high school and college buddies.

The family eventually decided that it would best to build upon their land in Bellevue. Designs for a housing development were drawn up and the open



“Dad was the real hero. He realized there was another way to do it, that it didn’t have to be developed to still be valuable.” Mike said.

space was set to be paved. But the process went slower than planned, and so Mike’s dad, JB Howard, asked the family if they had any other ideas for the land.

As Mike fondly recalled, Grandma Lena had always talked of wanting to see this land stay open—to remain a place where kids could play and animals could roam free. She wanted it to have trails and benches. This led Mike and JB to discover Scott Boettger and the Wood River Land Trust.

In 2004, shortly before she passed away while in her early 90s, Grandma Lena got see her dream come true. The land she loved, 12-acres along the river in Bellevue, had been saved forever. The Howard Preserve now covers more than 36 acres and is one of the most popular places in the Valley to take a hike, walk dogs or go fishing, especially for families.

“It’s magical how it all happened. Dad was the real hero,” Mike said. “He realized there was another way to do it, that it didn’t have to be developed to still be valuable. The tax benefits from donating the land were worth it and you just can’t put a price on something this special.”

Mike now owns a home just down the street from the Howard Preserve and loves watching people enjoy what his family preserved.

“So many people benefit from the Howard Preserve. The whole community can enjoy it. The place is beautiful and now that the Land Trust and the City of Bellevue have it, it’s cared for how it should be,” Mike said. “There’s more to it than just the land. You need to think for the long term, especially if it someplace you love.”

Mike loves the preserve so much that he decided to get married there on September 25, 2010. As

fate would have it, when they walked down by the preserve’s monument to begin the ceremony, they realized that it had been dedicated to Ellis and Lena Howard on the exact same day, six years earlier.

There was little doubt that Grandma Lena was smiling down on them that day, just like she must do now every day that kids, families and wildlife enjoy what she helped saved.

“You’ve got to do the right thing, “ Mike said. “If you do it will give back to you ten fold.”

The land that now makes up Howard Preserve in Bellevue had long been owned by Mike’s family. It’s where his grandfather and dad fished and where he learned to cast for trout. It’s where countless generations of kids grew to love fishing, but it was almost closed off. Thanks to the Howard family, this land will now bring joy to countless more families for generations to come.



Terry Bullock and Mike Howard at the Howard Preserve expansion fundraiser. Photo by Mike McKenna



Give Your Love of Land

Wood River Land Trust achieves our mission of protecting land, water and wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities through the generous gifts of land donations.

With your support, we can protect those cherished places that make this valley in the heart of Idaho so special.

**WOOD
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Learn more at
woodriverlandtrust.org or
contact Courtney Jelaco at
(208) 788-3947 or
courtney@woodriverlandtrust.org

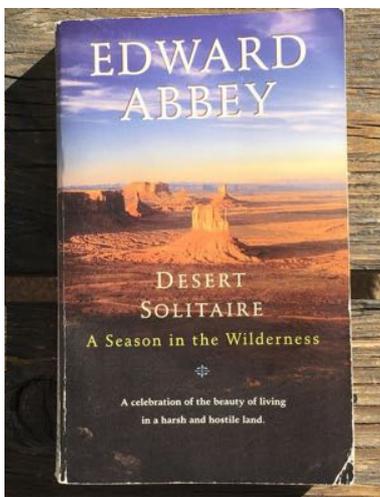
We work cooperatively with private landowners and local communities to ensure these areas are protected now and for future generations.



Suggested Reading

BY COOPER DART

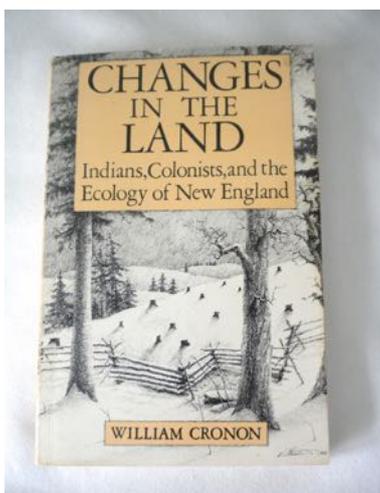
FALL AND WINTER ARE GREAT TIMES TO CATCH UP ON YOUR CONSERVATION READING! THE FOLLOWING BOOKS SPAN THREE CENTURIES AND EVERY CORNER OF THE COUNTRY. THEY ALL CHAMPION THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACE IN THEIR OWN WAY, SO PLEASE GIVE THEM A READ.



***Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey (1968)**

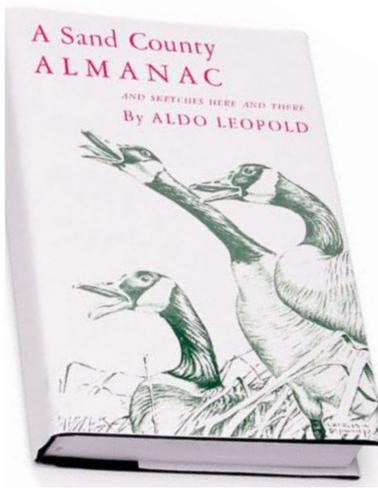
“...most of what I write about in this book is already gone or going under fast. This is not a travel guide but an elegy. A memorial. You’re holding a tombstone in your hands. A bloody rock. Don’t drop it on your foot — throw it at something big and glassy. What do you have to lose?”

This quote from the book’s prologue makes it apparent that Abbey weaves a different kind of conservationism in the pages of *Desert Solitaire*. The dust of the desert southwest blankets his blatant, jaded cynicism of tourist RVs and dam builder concrete. *Desert Solitaire* is an irreverent yet spiritual reflection on what’s already been irreparably damaged in the desert southwest, and what values we must carry while moving forward with conservation.



***Changes in the Land* by William Cronon (1983)**

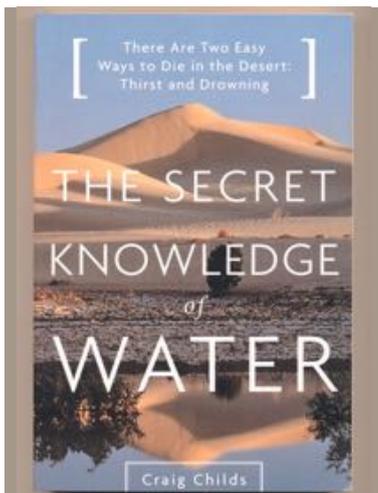
This book by environmental historicist William Cronon looks at the initial interaction between colonists and Native Americans in New England during the 1600s. Cronon examines Native American usufruct resource management and the subsequent European commoditization of the Northeast’s nature. The book works to deconstruct the wide-held, colonialist conception that Native Americans did not and could not alter the environment around them. This book interjects a cultural relativist argument into the conservation movement. It brings a “new” perspective on land management.



***A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold (1949)**

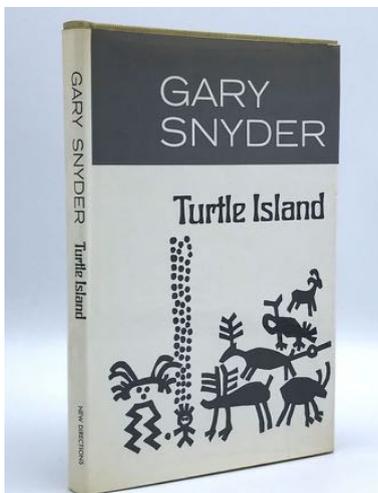
“I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in. Of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?”

Leopold is the idyllic American naturalist. With wire-rimmed glasses and notebook in hand, he writes this jarringly simple and flowing account of a natural year in his life on the Wisconsin plains. Accompanied with essays on his travels and his “land ethic,” *A Sand County Almanac* encourages all who read it to slow down, watch the birds and think twice about just how woven into natural systems they are.



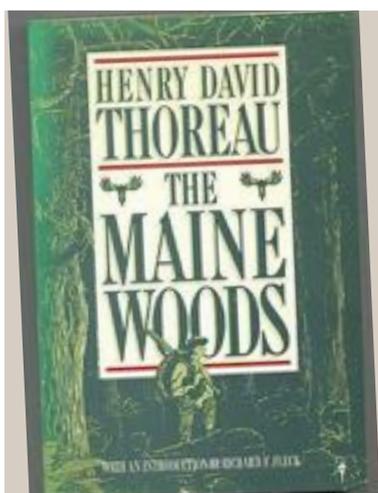
***The Secret Knowledge of Water* by Craig Childs (2000)**

Childs’ narrative dives into the deserts of the American West, flowing through sandstone and rolling with thunder. Through his years surveying water holes and hiking across arid wilderness, Childs finds that it’s water, not the lack thereof, which defines the desert.



***Turtle Island* by Gary Snyder (1974)**

This Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of poems and essays outlines Snyder’s desire for humans to live in harmony with nature’s animals, processes and ideas. The title of the work, *Turtle Island*, comes from a term used by some Native American tribes to describe North America, emphasizing the power of place and natural neighbors. Get back to the ecocentric with these poems!



***The Maine Woods* by Thoreau (1864)**

“The tops of mountains are among the unfinished parts of the globe, whither it is a slight insult to the gods to climb and pry into their secrets, and try their effect on our humanity.”

Less of a philosophical meditation on land than *Walden*, *The Maine Woods* is a travelogue of Thoreau’s excursions through central Maine. He canoes, hunts, fishes, and climbs Maine’s tallest mountain, Mt. Katahdin, all in the mid-1800s. It’s a rugged encounter with one of the final residual open spaces in the Northeast, and is far from bereft of Thoreau’s Walden-esque natural musings.

Staff Spotlight

Get to Know Courtney Jelaco, Director of Development



HOMETOWN: Born in Idaho Falls, spent most of my adult life in Seattle and, most recently, in Montreal, Canada.

EDUCATION: Undergrad degree in Accounting at University of Idaho with an MBA from Seattle University

FAMILY: Husband, Ron Jelaco, and grown daughter, Louisa, who lives in New York City.

TIME WITH WRLT: One year

REASONS YOU CHOSE THE LAND TRUST: My roots are here in Southern Idaho and I am here to protect and nurture them. My great-grandparents arrived in southeast Idaho the 1880s and led the initiative to plant tens of thousands of trees in Idaho Falls. My grandparents were ranchers near Bliss. My Idaho heritage has inspired my passion for maintaining the land and rivers for future generations.

WHAT'S YOUR SUN VALLEY STORY: As a child, my family would drive across the Arco desert to spend weekends in this beautiful valley. In the winter we would come to ski and in the summers we would swim at Easley Hot Springs, where my cousins owned a cabin. I met my husband, a Pocatello native, at the University of Idaho and we were married in Ketchum in 1980. We have returned for vacations nearly every year since, to ski, bike and fly fish. We love this place so much! So when we were considering a move from Montreal, we decided to

return to the Wood River Valley and reconnect with our family and homeland.

FAVORITE PART OF WORKING FOR THE LAND TRUST:

Connecting with our donors and the community in “protecting the places we love!” It’s really a pleasure to share the history and the accomplishments of the Land Trust over the past 20-plus years. I love to talk about how I feel about Idaho and the importance of preserving our land and fisheries.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF WORK: I grew up skiing in Idaho’s perfect snow and that’s my favorite pastime. During the summers I enjoy fly fishing, mountain biking and hiking. I have also recently rekindled my interest in making pottery at Boulder Mountain Clayworks.

FAVORITE LOCAL FOOD: Appetizers at the Pioneer Saloon while sitting at the bar and talking to the bartenders and other guests. Breakfast at The Kneadery, lunch at Perry’s and dinner at Rickshaw.

FAVORITE LOCAL HANGOUT SPOTS: The Limelight Run on Baldy and the “S Turn” at Silver Creek Preserve.

PART OF IDAHO YOU’D LIKE TO EXPLORE: Middle Fork of the Salmon River. I have been on many river trips but I have to wonder why I haven’t yet taken a float trip on that stretch of the river. What am I thinking?

FAVORITE LAND TRUST PRESERVE OR EASEMENT: The Colorado Gulch Preserve is just unbelievable with the access to the river and the natural landscape.





Thank you
for making all this
important work happen. We
look forward to even more
success in the coming year
thanks to your support.

Photo by Linda Parker

Trout Friendly 2018



2018 was another positive and impactful year for our Trout Friendly Program. We are thankful for all our Trout Friendly members and partners. Together, we are making a difference, one lawn at a time—conserving water, reducing chemical use and keeping our river healthy!

We expect 2019 to be our best year yet and will be increasing the amount of our free Trout Friendly Workshops, starting with landscape design seminars again in January. To find out more, please make sure to follow our monthly e-blasts or contact Ryan Santo at rsanto@WoodRiverLandTrust.org or call 208.788.3947.

We 'd like to thank all our Trout Friendly Partners for making 2018 such a successful year.

Advanced Irrigation Solutions, Arborcare , BigHorn Landscaping, Big Wood Landscape , Blaine County Recreation District, Blaine Soil Conservation District, Branching Out Nursery, Cooper Landscapes, City of Hailey, City of Ketchum, City of Sun Valley, C-U next Storm, Clearwater Landscaping, Clemens Associates, Engelmann Partners LLC , Evergreen Landscaping, Garden Space Design, Greenscape Lawn and Garden, Inc, Hemingway Chapter Trout Unlimited, Native Roots, LLC, Magic Valley Turfgrass, Mountain High Landscapes, Native Landscapes, Organic Solutions, Sawtooth Botanical Garden, Silver Creek Supply , Sun Valley Water and Sewer, The Turf Company, Thunder Spring, Webb Landscaping , Whitehead Landscaping, Winn's Compost

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.



The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST



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Big Wood River courtesy of Michael Edminster