

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST

WRILT

The Dirt



Protecting the
Places You Love

SPRING 2018

Assisting
American Kestrels
Colorado Gulch
Preserve Expands!
Rock Creek Revival

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST



119 E. Bullion Street
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

Photo by John Finnell

DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY

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Scott, Cyd, Patti and Courtney check out the new addition to the Colorado Gulch Preserve.

The bad news is that means more people, more traffic and more strain on our resources. The good news is that the Land Trust has an answer.

We want to welcome people, and we want to inspire them to care about Idaho as much as we do. At the same time, we also want to make sure we don't lose what we all fall in love with here – the open spaces, the wild places, the wildlife and the endless recreational options.

This is why your investment to save and restore land and water, to protect habitat and recreational opportunities, has never been more important.

Being the #1 growth state in America may be cause for alarm. But with your support, the Land Trust is doing everything we can to assure that growth for our region is smart, balanced, responsible and environmentally conscious. Yes, we need places to live, but we also need places to explore and the ability to access the natural wonders of our region.

We can see the challenges, but we can also see the solutions.

Thanks to people like you, who care, we can help create win-win situations for our local communities.

The Quigley Canyon project just east of Hailey is a recent example of the smart growth we endorse. Instead of covering the canyon with five-acre home-sites, we now have an agreement for a mixed-used development that includes new homes, as well as 1,100 acres of protected open space, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Your support also allows us to work with the developer to implement the new Water-Wise guidelines throughout the project (See the story on Page 3).

Our newest addition to the Colorado Gulch Preserve, the nine acre bench property (covered on page 4), is another example of a development compromise that protects the open spaces and character of our Valley, while still supplying our need for more housing.

We want people to love Idaho as much as we do. In order to assure that happens, we need to be wise and thoughtful and to make sure we protect the places we love as we continue to grow.

Idaho may be the fastest growing state in the country, but this doesn't mean it has to be bad news.

Working together, we can make it good news. We can help come up with solutions so that we can grow and still save and protect what makes this place so special.

A letter from Scott Boettger

Idaho was recently named the fastest growing state in the country. This is a good news/bad news scenario.

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Exciting News

Partnerships at Work

Knowing that drought, climate change and conflicts over water are now a part of our everyday lives, we have been working with partners across the Valley to come up with practical solutions.

Since November 2016, the Land Trust has been coordinating a Valley-wide effort with planning staffs from Blaine County and the cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley as well as from the Sawtooth Botanical Garden and local industry experts to collectively address water conservation in the residential and commercial landscapes of the Wood River Valley.

The Water-Wise guidelines represent best practices for soil, mulches, irrigation efficiencies and plant selection. Practices that have already been successfully implemented throughout much of the arid West. The cities and county are looking to implement these guidelines on new development projects. The guidelines will help educate our communities on sustainable resource use and can also be cited when applying for state, federal and private grants involving water conservation.

The city of Hailey, Quigley Farms Subdivision (200 lots) and Colorado Gulch Preserve Subdivision (27 lots) are the first two subdivisions in the Valley to incorporate these guidelines as part of their plat or CC&R requirements.

“We have worked collaboratively across jurisdictions with the Land Trust and with industry specialists to come up with a consistent set of guidelines. We believe this will make it easy to move the needle countywide towards increased water conservation,” said Lisa Horowitz, the Community Development Director for the City of Hailey.

The Land Trust is thrilled with this first step. We believe that sustainable use of our resources will enable us all to thrive as we continue to look for solutions to address our limited water resources.

Did you Know?

- **Compost and mulch conserve water!** Soils with 25% compost can hold four times more water than soils without composted matter.
- **By covering garden beds and exposed soils with mulch we can keep plants cool, prevent soil crusting, minimize evaporation and control weed growth.** Irrigation uniformity and use of smart technologies can also save water.
- **Interest is growing!** Since 2013, over 1,100 People have attended Water-Wise workshops, seminars and home tours hosted by the municipalities, the county, the landscaping industry, and the Land Trust.

Please see Page 10 for upcoming workshops.



Colorado Gulch

Expanding Land & Hearts

By Mike McKenna

We know that saving places like Colorado Gulch Preserve and opening them to the public will make the world a better place for local families and their pets, for wildlife and for the health of the Big Wood River.

But we don't always understand just how far reaching and impactful these positive actions are.

The recent news about the addition to the Colorado Gulch Preserve (nine more acres are being added to the bench along Broadford Road), has inspired people to reach out to let us know what it means to them.

Jill Bryson has lived by Colorado Gulch for close to a half-century now. There's no place on the planet she loves more. Jill was delighted when we acquired 150 acres there in 2016, and is thrilled that late this winter we were able to protect more land in this beautiful stretch of Hailey.

“This is very important and wonderful for our community,” Jill said. “Once land like is gone, it's gone forever. You can never replace it. That's why saving it and keeping it open means so much. It makes life better here for everyone.”

Jill's sentiments have been echoed throughout our community. They have been heard and appreciated. The public response to the protection of the Colorado Gulch Preserve last year even inspired the team at Colorado Gulch Partners LLC. (CGP) to sell the southern section of their new housing development above the preserve to the Land Trust. A silent donor and big fan of the Colorado Gulch Preserve stepped up to help us make the purchase.

“This is really a win-win for both our company and the community. It not only allows us to provide some of the quality family housing our valley needs, but also helps the Land Trust save open space and provide river access that everyone can enjoy,” Preston Ziegler of CGP said.

“We're excited about this acquisition because it allows us to create something that adds to the cultural fabric of our community, while still maintaining open space and improving public access,” said the Land Trust's Executive Director, Scott Boettger.

The good news of the new Bench Property quickly spread.

Davin Hanson grew up in the Della View subdivision, which borders Colorado Gulch. He has fond memories of playing in and exploring the area with his friends.

“We used to go down there all the time searching for adventure. We would fish and build forts, search for wildlife, go snowshoeing and hiking and hunt for morels,” Davin said. “It's always been a special place to me.”



Davin now lives in Boise with his family. A few years ago he came back to visit and tried to take his wife and kids to the same places he used to enjoy as a youth, but there was no access to them anymore. He headed home dejected. A place he loved appeared to be lost.

When Davin saw the newspaper coverage about the addition of the Bench Property to the preserve, with the artistic rendering of the photo, he instantly recognized it. It was the old farmland by the river that he and his buddies had traversed countless times and it wasn't lost after all. The community that he grew up in stepped up to save the place he loved as a child. Davin reached out to the Land Trust to find out more, and to say thanks.

"I didn't have the opportunity to take my kids there and show them the places we built tree forts and had adventures, places that were so important to me when I was a kid. Places that have a lot of sentimental value to me," Davin said. "It's really nice to have access there again, that's it now a place that's kid-friendly and dog-friendly. It's just awesome. Thank you. Thank you very much!"

Davin has even had the photo of the property blown up, framed and put up in his house to remind him of the great days of his youth—and to give his family the hope that these places still exist.

Thanks to your support, we will keep providing reasons to be hopeful and keep positively touching the lives of more people than we'll ever know.

Vision & Hope

for the Colorado Gulch Bench

The vision for the new nine-acre parcel being added to the Colorado Gulch Preserve includes creating a better parking area for the preserve and adding a multi-use trail that will connect to the Hailey Greenway. We would also like to save the historic, but currently unsafe, structure left over from the farm's dairy days. The Land Trust's Student Conservation Council, comprised of local high school students and teachers, is creating an informational kiosk and audio walking tour of the Colorado Gulch Preserve that will be installed this spring. The new acquisition includes water rights as well, so we're hoping to eventually create something special for the community, like an orchard.

Limelight Staff Pitches in at Sellgren Trail

The Land Trust owes a debt of gratitude to the Limelight Hotel in Ketchum. Their management team donated an afternoon last fall to fix up the bench on the Sellgren Trail. The trail runs along a public Recreation and Scenic View conservation easement the Land Trust holds along the White Clouds Golf Course above Sun Valley. Donated by Sun Valley Resort in 2008, the Sellgren Trail is a popular place for hikers, dog walkers and mountain bikers. Thanks to your support, along with some muscle and elbow grease from the team at the Limelight, the bench has been restored and is once again a great place to watch the sunset over Bald Mountain.



Rebirth of Rock Creek

Photos by John Finnell

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT, MAGIC HAS BEEN HAPPENING OUT AT ROCK CREEK RANCH.

If you go out there after the snow melts and the mud dries this spring, you might think that you've gone back in time.

The creek is beginning to look like the important tributary to the Big Wood River it once was and cattle are again grazing the 10,400 acre ranch.

Located to the west of Hailey and north of Magic Reservoir, Rock Creek is entering its third season under the unique management agreement between the University of Idaho (UI), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Land Trust.

While the UI continues its important and unique research on the impacts of grazing on the "Sagebrush Sea," the Land Trust has been focusing on rehabilitation work on the creek itself. The once solid fishery was given an Impaired Waters 303d listing by the Environmental Protection Agency for excess sediment, high temperatures and poor nutrients. That's why our restoration work has focused on reducing and even reversing these impairments. Our efforts are starting to pay off as Rock Creek is getting close to becoming delisted!

Last winter, Cameron Packer, our Stewardship Coordinator, gave an update on the rehab process to the Blaine County Commissioners. A grant from the county has helped fund some of the work.

"A lot of exciting things have happened at Rock Creek over the last two seasons. We're really starting to see some great progress out there," she said, as she explained the work, which she broke down into four categories.

RECONNECT: Over the years, the flow of water in Rock Creek had been diverted from its channel into irrigation ditches. The dilapidated ditches were unhealthy for the fishery and contributed to the overall degradation of wildlife habitat. Last fall, we returned the stream flow from the last of three troubled stretches back to its historic channel.

REPLACE: A troubled culvert by what is known as "Cow Camp" has been replaced. The new culvert allows for a more natural stream flow, decreases erosion and provides much better passage for fish.

REPAIR: Dilapidated irrigation diversions were wasting lots of water, the final 3 troubled ones were repaired.

REWORK: A dysfunctional stock water impoundment was also reworked and is now properly functioning again.

The great news is that most of the major rehabilitation work for Rock Creek has now been completed. With time, Mother Nature will help complete the work.

Thanks to you, we've been able to team up with you, with government agencies and with our partners at UI and TNC, to turn back the clock and help return Rock Creek to the healthy stream it once was. Together, we've made a big difference and have made positive impacts that we should all be proud of.

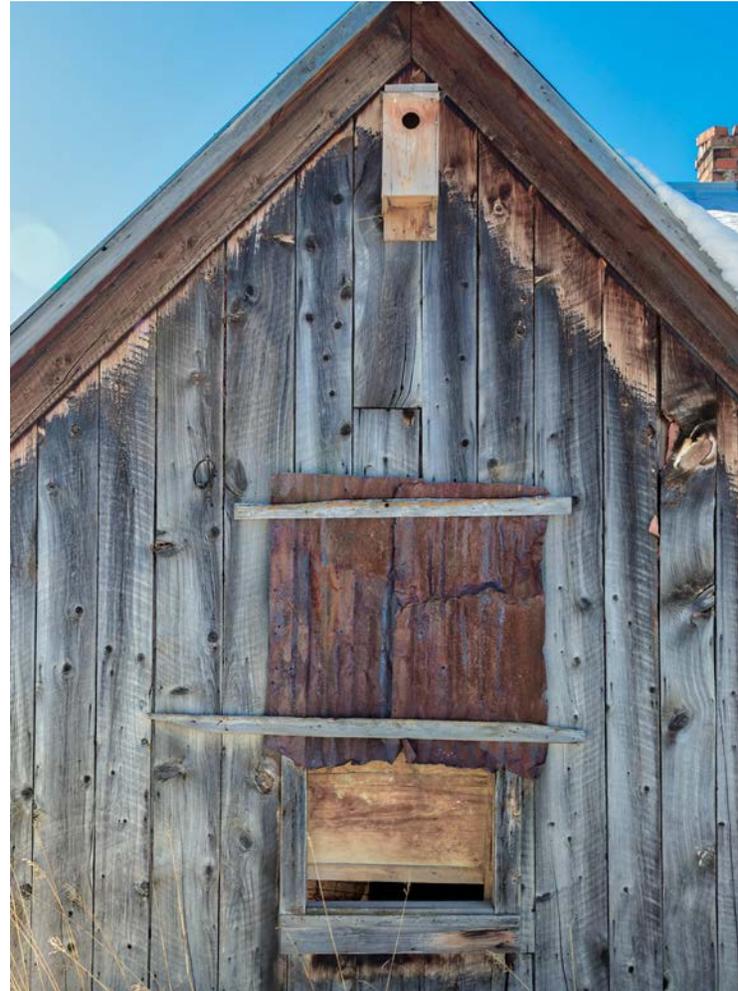
Restoring the historic barn on Rock Creek Ranch is our next goal, and thanks to your help, we know it's only a matter of time until we accomplish that, too. On behalf of the Rock Creek Ranch team and all of those people and animals that love the place, thank you.

Images top right clockwise: before, during, two after



See the Short Film!

To find out more about what's going on at Rock Creek Ranch check out the short film from the Life on the Range series called "Collaboration Thrives at Rock Creek Ranch." You can find the film at www.lifeontherange.org/range-stories/central-idaho/collaboration-thrives-at-rock-creek-ranch/ or by going to our website WoodRiverLandTrust.org.



American Kestrels

Species Profile

By Mike McKenna

Photos by John Finnell

WE'VE GOT A LOT OF INTERESTING NEIGHBORS HERE IN THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY. WILDLIFE LOVE OUR OPEN SPACES AS MUCH AS WE DO. BUT IT TURNS OUT THAT ONE OF OUR SMALLEST AND YET MOST IMPRESSIVE NEIGHBORS COULD USE OUR HELP.

Standing less than a foot tall and weighing about as much as a hamburger at the Pioneer Saloon, American kestrels are the smallest falcons in North America. They are also more colorful than most raptors, which is why they are considered by many to be the most beautiful birds of prey on the continent.

The most widespread falcon in the Western Hemisphere, American kestrels can be found from the tip of South America to the tundra of Alaska. Kestrels were once prevalent throughout the country, but their population has been in a steady decline for decades now and no one's exactly sure why.

All we know for certain is that the American Kestrel needs our help.

"When we search for reasons a species is in decline, we like for there to be one reason, but kestrels are not that simple," Wood River High School biology teacher Larry Barnes said. "Providing habitat is, of course, one of the most important things we can do."

Larry is one of the valley's most well respected wildlife biologists. In addition to teaching he still does some fieldwork, helping out with bird counts at places like the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Larry also serves as an advisor on the Land Trust's Student Conservation Council (SCC).

Several years ago, SCC students in Larry's wildlife biology class built and put up a baker's dozen worth of nesting boxes for kestrels around the valley. Each spring, after the birds return to these boxes to rear their young, the students use cellphones on extremely long selfie sticks to take videos and of the next generation of the small raptors. It's part of a nationwide citizen science study called the "American Kestrel Partnership."

American Kestrels

Falco sparverius

Length: 8-12 inches

Weight: 3-5 ounces

Wingspan: 2 feet

Diet: mice, voles, grasshoppers, smaller birds

Land Trust locations: Colorado Gulch, Draper Wood River Preserve, Howard Preserve, Rock Creek Ranch as well as numerous conservation easements from the farmlands of the Bellevue Triangle to ranchlands along the Salmon River.



“Providing habitat is, of course, one of the most important things we can do.”

“It’s a fun experience that the kids enjoy and it helps the kestrels because finding nesting cavities may be a limiting factor for them,” Larry said. He explained that kestrels are cavity nesters, often using hollows created in rotting tree limbs by woodpeckers to nest.

Unfortunately, humans often remove dead limbs or trees from landscapes not realizing how important they are for nesting birds.

“The most valuable real estate for cavity nesting species are the dead limbs of living trees,” Larry said, explaining why it’s so important to save lands that can stay wild and open. Places where nature and kestrels can be themselves.

While some American kestrels migrate long distances, many others do not migrate at all. That’s why they can be seen around our neighborhood in the heart of Idaho year-round.

In our area, they begin nesting in March and their babies fledge in June. They prefer any kind of open or semi-open situation, from forest clearings to farmland to the high desert. Anywhere they can find prey and raised perches is

what they like. They can often be seen sitting atop fence posts or along power poles.

Like other falcons, kestrels have long, pointed wings and long tails, but they have more color than other species. Both genders have rusty hues on their backs and wings as well as a pair of “sideburns,” or black vertical slashes, on each side of their faces. Females are slightly larger and have reddish-brown wings, while males have blue-gray wings. About the size of morning doves, kestrels are sometimes called “sparrow hawks” or “mousers” for their preferred food source.

Even though they may not be as prevalent in our area as they once were, American kestrels are hanging in there locally. Thanks to your support, the Land Trust and our Student Conservation Council is doing what we can to help continue to be good neighbors with the American kestrel.

To find out more about the SCC program, please check out our website: WoodRiverLandTrust.org/student-conservation-council/



Photos: Amy Trujillo fishing the Big Wood River tailwater by John Finnell

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP? I moved around a bit, but my formative years were spent running through the woods and wading the creeks and rivers of Virginia.

WHERE DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE? I earned a degree in Ecology from the University of California San Diego.

FAMILY? I've got 2 amazing kids, Justin (14) and Isabel (11), and 3 little nephews and a niece all under 6 years old. All of whom are looking forward to visiting our new home—and hopefully seeing a moose!

WHY DID YOU CHOSE TO WORK AT THE WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST? I've known Scott and some of the staff at the Wood River Land Trust for a while, through our Idaho Coalition of Land Trusts. I've always been impressed with WRLT. It is seen as a leader not only in Idaho conservation, but also on a national level. When the opportunity to join such a solid and well-respected group opened up, in this truly beautiful place, I knew I couldn't turn it down. I feel really lucky to be here.

WHAT GOT YOU IN TO LAND TRUST WORK AND WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING? At first it was that I loved marshes and playing in the mud. I had an opportunity to intern with a land trust in San Diego right out of college, where I'd be out in the San Elijo Lagoon, conducting fish surveys and monitoring

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Get to Know Amy Trujillo Deputy Director

wildlife and water quality. I stayed on there for 10 years and learned more about private land conservation and thought it was a really great way to protect important habitat. Then in 2011, I moved to Moscow, Idaho, and worked at the Palouse Land Trust. We were busy protecting native prairie and helping families pass their farms on to the next generation. And then at a land trust conference, author Barry Lopez kind of blew my mind. He told us, "You all think you're in the business of saving land, but you're not. You all are in the business of spiritual recovery."

It took me a little while to understand what he meant, but then I realized he was right. How many times had I been puzzled by some life decision and the answer came to me while out in the woods? How many times had I experienced pure, deep-in-the-chest contentment while standing in a river or sitting around a campfire? Then I realized, what if places like these didn't exist to have these moments of clarity or presence?

We are in the business of saving land, but we're also in the business of creating memories and finding joy. I see it here in this valley with the work that the Land Trust is doing, and I'm proud to be a part of it.



Events

We hope you'll join us for some of these upcoming events. For more information about any of these events, please call 208.788.3947 or visit woodriverlandtrust.org/events.

WEED WORKSHOP

April 11 — FREE

at the Community Campus in Hailey. The Land Trust, Environmental Resource Center and Blaine County Noxious Weed Department offer a morning of weed-control based workshops.

EARTH DAY

April 22

DO IT YOURSELF

April 26 — FREE

Steps for Irrigation Efficiency from 6:30-8pm at Hailey City Hall. Travis McBride of Silver Creek Supply will show you how to save 20-40% water in your existing landscape.

NATIVARS IN THE HOME LANDSCAPE

June 8

from 5:30-7:30pm at the Sawtooth Botanical Garden. Steven Paulson, owner of Native Roots in Twin Falls, will discuss the University of Idaho's development of selected native plants, called nativars, and their abilities to enhance the usefulness in the home landscape.



Cyd and John at Estes Park

HOMETOWN: Helena, Arkansas

FAMILY: Husband, John, and sons, Seth (18) Tate (14)

COLLEGE: Undergrad at Delta State University, graduate school at Idaho State University

STUDIED: Political Science and Public Administration-Environmental Policy

ROLE AND TIME WITH THE LAND TRUST: Director of Operations for the last 2 ½ years.

REASONS YOU CHOSE THE LAND TRUST: I started my career at a small non-profit doing EPA 319 grants and working on Portneuf Greenway projects during graduate school. After 20 years of working in the government and university arenas, I wanted to return to that kind of work. My husband's job brought us to Hailey, but I chose the Land Trust very intentionally.

WHAT'S YOUR SUN VALLEY STORY: John and I first visited Sun Valley in college for President's Day weekend and I loved the vibe and energy here. I had just left D.C. the year prior and Sun Valley was hip and laid back in comparison! The

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Get to Know Cyd Pearce Director of Operations

scenery was amazing. At the time, we were too broke to ski, but we came back to the valley 20 years later and are lucky enough to get to call it home now.

FAVORITE PART OF WORKING FOR THE LAND TRUST: I drew a river permit in 2016 for the Main Salmon and had never been on a multi-day, white water adventure. The Land Trust staff and their families taught us so much and we all had a really good time. It is something my boys will never forget. I also enjoy working for a non-profit that gets tangible results and really makes things happen, instead of working on policies and bills that may never get enacted like I did earlier in my career.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF WORK: Golf, skiing, concerts, gardening and I am a bit of a home renovation junkie.

FAVORITE PROJECT YOU'VE HELPED THE LAND TRUST WITH: Doing operations and finances for the Land Trust means I don't do a lot of project work. I just like to think I keep the train moving down the track. The Colorado Gulch purchase in November of 2016 was a whirlwind—it was like campaign work, so it was fun.

FAVORITE LOCAL FOOD: Anything at Dang's.

FAVORITE LOCAL HANGOUT SPOT: My family loves to watch the NFL on Sundays at Wise Guys.

PART OF IDAHO YOU'D LIKE TO EXPLORE: Oddly enough, I've never been to McCall so that's next on my list.

FAVORITE LAND TRUST PRESERVE OR EASEMENT: I spend the most time at the Draper Wood River Preserve since it's so close to my home and office. I love to zip over there after work during the summer with my nine year old lab, Harley, who loves the Big Wood River.

FIELD TOUR OF A NATIVAR GARDEN

June 9

from 10am-2pm at the Native Roots nursery in Twin Falls. The UI's Dr. Steve Love will discuss his life's work, developing selected native plants called nativars, while a site tour will introduce folks to nativars and their usefulness.

FOURTH ANNUAL RIVERFEST AT DRAPER PRESERVE

July 4

Celebrate our beautiful spaces right after the 4th of July Parade.



SAGEBRUSH SATURDAYS AT ROCK CREEK RANCH PRESENTS

June 16
Summer BBQ Kickoff

July 21
Stories of Rock Creek Ranch

August 11
Wildfire and Wildlife

September 8
Cowboy Coffee

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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Camas Prairie by Dirk Zondag