

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Palouse Land Trust has experienced a tremendous year. Before our Executive Director, Lynn Tanimoto resigned last year, she worked with Diana Farthing and me on a capacity building grant that we successfully submitted to the Northwest Land Trust. Using the funds, the PLT worked through the early months of this year to revisit and revise the strategic plan.

The results of that planning effort are a revitalized strategic plan, with provisions for permanent staff and office facilities. Our goal is to enhance our service to the Palouse region, improve our outreach efforts and ensure that landowners are aware of the resources and opportunities that land conservation can provide them and their beneficiaries. A copy of the new strategic plan is available at <http://www.palouselandtrust.org>.

I've enjoyed this opportunity to serve as President of the PLT, and I'm extremely proud of the accomplishments the group has achieved this past year. You'll see the highlights of those in this edition of the newsletter. Many thanks for the opportunity to serve. I look forward to being a part of the team as new leadership takes on the challenges of implementing our strategic plan.

Sincerely,
Archie George
President

SHARP EASEMENT

In memory of Lee Sharp, a former University of Idaho Range Science professor, his family donated a conservation easement on 125 acres five miles east of Moscow in December 2001. Lee spent a great deal of time working on conservation projects on his land, and restored the former farmland to grassland mixed with ponderosa forest. He was particularly interested in crested wheatgrass and forage potential on the property.

Conservation runs in the Sharp family. His wife Rose donated the easement with the idea of protecting Lee's vision for the property, and preventing possible subdivision and housing developments. Lee and Rose's daughter, Peggy Quesnell, a 2nd Grade Teacher at St. Mary's Elementary School in Moscow, is also interested in perpetuating her father's dreams, and has been very involved in the management of the property.

This project has been in the works for more than two years. It was spearheaded by PLT founder John Norton and board member Steve Hollenhorst.

The members of the PLT have identified some exciting possible projects for the property. Kenneth Stinson, District Manager of the Latah Soil and Water Conservation District and PLT board member, along with members of the Palouse Prairie Foundation, have looked at establishing a native prairie restoration project on

the property. The site may also be a good location to propagate native prairie seed stock. The PLT thanks the Sharp family for their generous donation. Watch for announcements in local media soon!

IDLER'S REST IMPROVEMENTS

Members of the Palouse Land Trust met one sunny Saturday morning last June at Idler's Rest to roll up their sleeves and restore the trails and public areas at the preserve.

PLT members removed trees that had fallen over trails, repaired the visitor sign-in station and reconstructed fences along the creek. Many thanks to the providers of coffee and donuts!

Idler's Rest was the Nature Conservancy's first acquisition in the state of Idaho. The 35 acres of cedar, pine and fir is just minutes from Moscow. It is both a relaxing retreat and an educational opportunity, with over two miles of informative guided trails. Over the years, the Idler's Rest property has been used by thousands of Palouse residents for recreation, picnicking and pleasant hikes.

Currently, the PLT jointly manages the property under a memorandum of agreement with the Nature Conservancy. This partnership includes working with Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute to provide educational activities on the site. The Nature Conservancy is currently reviewing a proposal to transfer title to the property to the Palouse Land Trust.

The Board of the Palouse Land Trust believes this is a grand opportunity for the citizens of Moscow, but one with potential costs and responsibilities. We plan to promote and enhance Idler's Rest as a key recreational opportunity for the Palouse, and work to insure that the property is maintained and enhanced for light recreation and nature walks.

A substantial amount of credit should go to Archie George, president of the PLT, for establishing the rapport and working relationship with The Nature Conservancy of Idaho.

PROTECTING NATIVE PLANTS AT ROSE CREEK NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK

Rose Creek is a Nature Conservancy Preserve ten minutes from Kamiak Butte. The five hectare preserve is a rare sample of native riparian and steppe vegetation, and is home to a variety of native bird species.

Bertie Weddell, with Draba Consulting and member of the PLT Advisory Board, has a two-prong mission in her work at Rose Creek. To involve and educate the public, Bertie hosted several tours this year, including visits by youth day camps, the Palouse Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Palouse Prairie Foundation, the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute and AmeriCorps volunteers.

To maintain and enhance native vegetation, Bertie is studying weed control methods. Her field research

found that carefully timed application of non-specific herbicides combined with mowing can reduce annual weeds while protecting native perennials and winter annuals. Her laboratory findings also showed that extracts from lichens may be a natural method to prevent germination of medusahead, a problem weed in the region.

The PLT has been pleased to act as financial agent for these studies, and provide cost share support for the research.

PRAIRIE RESTORATION EFFORTS FUNDED

The Latah Soil and Water Conservation District recently received \$25,000 from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to support local Palouse Prairie restorations efforts. Under consideration for small-scale restoration are two sites with conservation easements held by the Palouse Land Trust. In addition to the Conservation District and the Palouse Land Trust, this local collaborative effort will involve landowners, The Nature Conservancy, Palouse Prairie Foundation and federal and state conservation agencies.

CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

Palouse Land Trust board member Gerry Wright, working with the University of Idaho Landscape Dynamics Lab, with funding from the U.S. Geological Survey, conducted a Latah County Conservation Workshop in December 2000. The workshop brought together representatives from Idaho Fish and Game, Natural

Resources Conservation Services, Latah Soil and Water Conservation District, Latah County Planning and Zoning, consultants, teachers and concerned citizens. The objectives were to begin a dialog to identify the important biological, cultural and historic areas in Latah County, discuss land protection strategies, and present and evaluate the mapped data on county resources that had been compiled by the lab. Since that meeting, Gerry and the lab personnel have developed a survey questionnaire that has been sent to land and resources management and planning agencies in the county. The survey contains resource data maps and asks the participants to identify specific areas on a map of Latah County that they feel contain important biological, cultural, or historic resources that should be protected by some means. The results will be presented soon at a second community meeting for all interested participants.

SUPPORT FOR FRIENDS OF MOSCOW MOUNTAIN

One highlight from summer and fall 2001 was cooperation between the PLT and an informal group called Friends of Moscow Mountain. When the U.S. Forest Service turned down a grant application intended to fund a survey of landowners on and around the mountain, PLT stepped in as an alternative funding source. The members of FOMM contributed several hundred dollars, which was matched by PLT, to conduct the survey, assist with development of a comprehensive recreation plan, and

begin educational efforts to reach those recreating on the mountain. More information can be found at <http://community.palouse.net/MoscowMountain>

CONSIDER CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

If you own land containing a prairie remnant, farm or forest land, you are in an excellent position to help preserve these special places. The Palouse Land Trust encourages you to consider a voluntary agreement, or easement, which governs the future development of your land.

These agreements can be customized to fit the particular needs of your family and your situation. Conservation easements enable farmers and other private landowners to protect and conserve open space, wildlife habitat, and favorite views. Because they are very flexible, easements can allow continued agricultural or forest production, or limited development.

Often, conservation easements provide tax benefits, including income and estate tax advantages and reduced inheritance taxes.

For more information or for assistance in completing a conservation easement, contact the Palouse Land Trust on the web at www.palouselandtrust.org, or by mail at P.O. Box 8506, Moscow, Idaho 83843.

PALOUSE PRAIRIE DEFINED

The region called the Palouse has been defined many different ways for different purposes.

However, it is easiest to think of the Palouse as the region of eastern Washington and adjacent parts of Idaho where deep, fertile soils and adequate precipitation make dryland farming possible. This area was not glaciated and was not in the path of major floods that scoured the channeled scablands to the west, so its soils remain deep. The Palouse region is bounded by the forests of northern Idaho on the east, by the Snake River to the south, and by areas of flat terrain and shallow soils to the north and west where glaciers or floods removed the deep topsoil. This unique region is the primary focus of the Palouse Land Trust's conservation efforts.

VISIT THE WEBSITE

Visit the Palouse Land Trust's site at www.palouselandtrust.org. You will find information on conservation easements, the PLT mission statement, a list of the Board of Directors and Advisory Board members, and news of current projects.

IN MEMORY

The Palouse Land Trust and the entire community continues to miss the support, perspective, energy, friendship and leadership of former advisory board member and District Conservationist Ken Houska. Ken died suddenly in his sleep in March 2001. Our continued best wishes go out to his family.

PALOUSE LAND TRUST

Mission:
The mission of the Palouse
Land Trust is to facilitate
private lands conservation to meet the
needs and priorities of Palouse
communities and landowners.

Board of Directors:

Archie George, President
Jay Pengilly, Treasurer
Steve Hollenhorst
Mark Mumford
Ken Stinson
Gerry Wright

Advisory Board:

Stephen Bishop
Roger Blanchard
Steve Drown
Janice Smith-Hill
Penny Morgan
John Norton
Dan Pierce
Jack Porter
Bill Venosdel
Bertie Weddell

Office:

P.O. Box 8506
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<http://www.palouselandtrust.org>

THE PLT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

All of this activity comes at a
price of course, which brings us
to the final news of the year.
We need your continued support for
this important work. We especially
need to build up our stewardship funds,
which enable us to inspect and enforce
the terms of conservation easements we
hold, as well as provide outreach,
assistance and support for land owners
pursuing conservation easements.

So, please bring a guest and join us at
the annual **Wine Tasting and Dessert
Party** on Friday, December 6th. It will
begin at 7:00 pm at the Unitarian
Church in Moscow. See the enclosed
invitation for more information.

And, as you renew your membership
on the enclosed form, please give
generously. After all, your tax-
deductible contributions will preserve
local open space and help local
landowners preserve undeveloped
properties forever!

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