



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's been ten years since John Norton and several like-minded friends founded the Palouse Land Trust. During that time, we have signed easements on three properties, Berman Creekside Park, the Fosberg property along Mountain View, and the Sharp property five miles east of Moscow. Another easement is near completion. In addition, we have assisted numerous other landowners, policy makers, and concerned members of the public understand conservation easements and how they can play a part in preserving the quality of life in our area. Some of these landowners donated easements to other organizations, such as the Inland NW Land Trust in Spokane and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. In each case, the property and the organization were very well suited for each other.

PLT is now poised for significant growth. Owners of two properties have indicated they intend to donate or transfer ownership of the properties to PLT. You have all heard of Idler's Rest, and may be aware that the transfer is nearly complete from The Nature Conservancy. Another property is part of an estate, and the heirs have indicated they intend to donate the land to PLT.

These are indications of success for our work. We adopted a Strategic Plan last year, and have begun implementation. The Board of Directors updated the by-

laws of the organization to reflect the goals of the Strategic Plan. We now have four officers, President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. New officers were elected to these positions at our Fall board meeting in October. Please welcome Gerry Wright as the new President, Steve Hollenhorst as Vice-President, Jay Pengilly as secretary, and Ken Stinson as Treasurer. Terms begin January 1, 2004.

Two board members have been putting the final touches on a grant proposal, which would enable PLT to hire support staff. For many land trusts, the addition of paid staff marks the beginning of significant growth in the organization. As past-president, it will be a priority for me to expand board and advisory board membership, and to enhance the presence of the Palouse Land Trust in the area.

I invite each of you to attend the annual membership meeting next month, and to renew your commitment to the Palouse Land Trust. We are in the business of protecting open space, farm and forestland. These are particularly important to our quality of life here in the Palouse.

Thank you sincerely,

Archie George
President

IDLER'S REST TRANSFER NEARS COMPLETION

The Palouse Land Trust is in the final stages of a cooperative effort with The Nature Conservancy to transfer ownership of the Idler's Rest Nature Preserve to the PLT. The Nature Conservancy has been working nationwide to transfer its smaller holdings to local groups to optimize management and stewardship of these lands. For the past several years, the PLT has worked collaboratively with TNC to manage the property and ensure its availability to local users. The intent of the negotiations has been for the Palouse Land Trust to become the full owner of the property.

Representatives of the PLT and TNC hope to finalize the agreement by mid-December. They are currently reviewing the language of the transfer documents to ensure that there is an accurate property description, and that both parties will be able to meet all the terms and conditions of the agreement. Under the agreement, PLT will be owners of Idler's Rest into perpetuity, responsible for maintaining the property for conservation purposes and for the enjoyment of the public. TNC will provide an endowment fund that the PLT use to maintain the property.

Both the PLT and TNC are excited about the benefits of this agreement. Idler's Rest will have on-site ownership responsible for its upkeep, focused on enhancing the quality of outdoor experience for users of the site. Some of PLT's goals for the property are to

restore trail quality, spruce up the self-guided tour markers, and improve signage along the road to enhance visibility for the public. The PLT will also develop an on-going maintenance plan for the preserve. If you are interested in being part of this on-going project, please contact Gerry Wright, PLT President.

RESTORING THE SHARP AND FOSBERG EASEMENTS

Members of the Palouse Prairie Foundation (PPF) have had several meetings and consulted with ecologists in order to develop plans for Palouse Prairie restoration for the Sharp and Fosberg easements.

Maynard Fosberg applied for supplemental funding for the restoration through the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and is working with PPF members and staff of the Latah Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service on his restoration project. The two-acre site is an upland area on Palouse Prairie soils and is currently in non-native smooth brome grass. The restoration plan is complicated and will involve a staged installation over several years. Maynard's high level of knowledge, skill and commitment are going to be crucial to a successful outcome, and the PPF is delighted to be working with him and the Palouse Land Trust on this project. Maynard has been collecting seeds of the native plants that persist on his property, and has agreed to allow

part of the area to be used to test a variety of restoration techniques.

Peggy Quesnell, daughter of the late Lee Sharp, has been in contact with PPF and District staff concerning goals for the Sharp property, which is on thin forest soils and was planted to intermediate wheatgrass. PPF members are concerned about the potential for erosion if the cover were removed, and the subsequent threat of invasive species. There has been an expression of interest from the UI College of Natural Resources to assist with the implementation and maintenance of the restoration project. PPF members are proceeding cautiously in the planning for this site in order to develop a plan for presentation to the Sharp family that simultaneously meets the needs and wishes of the family and contributes meaningfully to the restoration of Palouse Prairie in the region. A set of trial plots to investigate restoration techniques and a series of planting of native forb seedlings to increase diversity over the entire property is being considered. Depending on availability of volunteer labor and the wishes of the family, the Sharp property might also be a good site for seed increase plots.

UI WILDLIFE PROFESSOR EARNS MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

University of Idaho wildlife Professor incoming PLT president R. Gerald Wright

recently was recognized for meritorious service by the Department of the Interior for his contributions to land-use planning and wildlife management in national parks. He directed the development of a computerized bibliography of resource information that gives national park managers easy access to historical records and literature on their parks. His book, "Wildlife Research and Management in Parks" is recognized as the definitive historical book of wildlife management in parks and is used in National Park Service (NPS) resource management training courses and in college classrooms across the country. For more on Wright, go to: <http://www.today.uidaho.edu/details.asp?id=2398&sctn=news>

PROTECTING NATIVE PLANTS AT ROSE CREEK NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK

For several years the PLT has been a partner on projects involving public outreach, education, and research at Rose Creek Preserve, a five-hectare Nature Conservancy reserve located about three miles northwest of Albion. This preserve contains remnants of Palouse Prairie and aspen groves, which provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species, making the preserve a favorite spot for bird-watchers and hikers.

Because of the important native vegetation represented at the preserve, it has been designated a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service, which has funded several

Challenge Cost-Share projects on which the PLT has served as the fiscal agent. During the past year, work continued on one such project and funding was obtained for another.

Under the direction of Advisory Board Member Bertie Weddell, groups of volunteers from WildOnes and AmeriCorps, as well as numerous individuals, assisted with management activities including controlling weeds, clearing trails, and protecting young aspens from herbivory. Bertie also led several tours of the preserve and gave presentations on restoration to the Palouse Audubon Society and to biology students at Pullman High School.

Restoration efforts at the preserve focus on eliminating non-native plants and getting natives established in their place. Young plants grown from seeds collected at the preserve were recently transplanted back into the restoration plots. In addition, Mary Fauci, a research technician at WSU, is studying the effects of weeds on soil structure

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.

FRIENDS OF MOSCOW MOUNTAIN

The PLT has continued to provide financial services to support the efforts of Friends of Moscow Mountain. Note that Wayne Fox has considerably updated the FOMM website. We encourage you to visit and find out more about their current projects. <http://moscowmountain.palouse.net/>

VISIT THE PLT 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.

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 Wednesday, December 3rd. It will begin at 7:00 pm at the Unitarian Church in Moscow. Our first speaker will be **Ken Nuhn**, owner of Moscow-Whitman Appraisals and a partner with Columbia Natural Resource Analysis, LLC. Ken is a general certified R.E. appraiser in agricultural, commercial and residential property to talk about the economic and tax benefits of conservation easements. Then, **Dennis Murphy**, Manager, Property Management and Business Development for the Resource Management Division of Potlatch Corporation, will give an overview of some of Potlatch's large-scale conservation efforts. 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!

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.

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