Foothills Campaign Wraps up, Exceeds all Goals

Steve Maher, Foothills Campaign Volunteer

They arrived at the base of Saddle Rock on April 20 by themselves, as couples, in groups of 10 or more. All with one goal in mind: Hike up the hill to their assigned spot as part of the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust’s Hands Across the Foothills event.

A short time later, young and old, Anglo and Latino, folks from every corner of the Wenatchee Valley — more than 1,000 strong in all — were holding hands from the top to the bottom of the iconic landmark.

It was a sight to behold. And telling.

Held just two months after the Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land publicly unveiled their $8.1 million campaign to double the land in the Wenatchee Foothills for people and wildlife, the Hands Across the Foothills event clearly signaled the community was passionate about enhancing and preserving its open space.

It also provided an indication of what was to come.

When the three-year campaign wrapped up this past December, a total of $8.6 million had been raised from more than 600 donors — including $2.2 million from 300 donors over the past nine months.

“The passion people feel for the Foothills is very real,” says Eliot Scull, one of three volunteer campaign co-chairs. “The Foothills are for everyone and the community really rallied around that notion.”

While the campaign’s main goal was to raise the needed funds to protect and care for the land, it also was about inviting everyone to experience the Foothills. Hands Across the Foothills served that purpose but so did other campaign initiatives, such as the Foothills Hiking Challenge, which outlined five hikes for people to do.

Kathy Wyles, a medical assistant at Confluence Health, and her husband, Jason, manager of Horizon Air at Pangborn Airport, were among those who took advantage. Motivated by a desire to lose weight, they ended up hiking dozens of times.

Both grew up in the valley but had never really ventured into the Foothills. Their initial hikes quickly led to family, friends and co-workers joining them at Horse Lake, Sage Hills, Saddle Rock and Dry Gulch. Along the way, the Wyles’ each lost 50 pounds.

“They’ve lived here almost our entire lives but had never experienced all the beauty of the valley,” says Kathy Wyles. “I enjoy being in the Foothills. It is extremely convenient for us and it’s obviously very beautiful. We
Fifty years ago, the community rallied behind an innovative idea: to use a natural bowl on a nearby ridge as a locally-supported and managed downhill ski area. At that time, they envisioned that Mission Ridge would become a tremendous asset that contributes enormously to our economy and quality of life—and they were right.

Step ahead another thirty years, and again, the community envisioned what could be done with one of our nearby natural features. They saw that the degraded and practically-inaccessible shoreline of the Columbia River could be managed for parks, trails and protected natural areas. Today, the Apple Capital Loop Trail is a beloved treasure used by a broad spectrum of people in North Central Washington, regardless of economic background or perspective.

Indeed, these two well-managed natural areas spur tremendous economic activity in our region, both through direct spending and indirectly through retail and support services. At critical stages, when the time was right, we have embraced the Art of the Possible, and accomplished something that has lasting benefits to our quality of life.

Now, through that same sense of community pride and vision for the future, the Wenatchee Foothills is established as an immediately-accessible natural area that is a great source of recreation, inspirational beauty, and civic pride. Into the future, we can view the Foothills as a resource for all that will be woven into the fabric of our community and our sense of place—and this is possible because of your vision and generosity.

Along the way, the campaign had fun. Who can forget Hands Across the Foothills, Foothills Day, the Hiking Challenge, and the My Foothills Art Contest? Or the Foothills Forever Online Auction and the title of King of Saddle Rock that was auctioned off (with cape, walking stick and city proclamation)?

This much is certain: Three, five or 10 decades from now, the Wenatchee Foothills will be just as beautiful as they are today. They will continue to serve as habitat for wildlife and native plant species, and as an outdoor classroom for children. They will continue to attract recreationists and those seeking a healthy and active lifestyle. They will continue to serve as a stunning skyline. They will continue to serve as an underpinning of the local economy.

There is still much work to be done, of course. Trailheads to construct. Land to restore and maintain. Wildlife and plant life to protect. Trails to build and decommission.

But everyone associated with or touched by the Wenatchee Foothills Campaign — and that means, in one way or another, just about everyone in the community — should feel good about what has been accomplished.

Really good.
CDLT recently completed a key acquisition in the most productive spawning and rearing area of Nason Creek for endangered Spring Chinook and threatened steelhead. Working closely with the landowners for several years, CDLT recombined three previously subdivided, but still undeveloped adjoining parcels. The resulting 15 acre acquisition includes an amazing 2,000 feet of streambank and an alcove that was the former main channel as recently as 1975.

The land along Nason Creek has been heavily impacted by Highway 2, the railroad, and two sets of power transmission lines. In addition, the area was subdivided decades ago to provide scenic residential lots easily accessible over Highway 2. Despite these impacts, Chelan PUD redd (egg nest) counts show that this reach has the highest number of Spring Chinook spawners in the entire Wenatchee Basin, and the most steelhead redds other than the Chiwawa River, making habitat protection a very high priority. CDLT’s acquisition ensures that this property will permanently provide healthy habitat for fish, and contribute to clean water for communities downstream.

Sellers Stone and Sharlynn Parker said, “We are delighted to have such a significant open space project in our neighborhood and to have been a part in creating it. We wanted to see this wildlife corridor remain as is, and full of things to enjoy.”

This area of Nason Creek has been the focus of considerable salmon recovery efforts. This year, the Yakama Nation opened more off-channel habitat, added complexity, and restored native trees and shrubs to a streambank on this property that had eroded due to historic grazing and devegetation. Chelan County completed a nearby project to restore flow to off-channel habitat disconnected by the BNSF railroad. CDLT’s acquisition was completed with funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and The Tributary Committees, and the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee, and generous stewardship contributions from the landowners.

Key Stretch of Nason Creek Permanently Protected!
Mickey Fleming, Lands Project Manager

Our new property protects the epicenter of Spring Chinook and steelhead spawning on Nason Creek.

Comings & Goings

Last November we were sad to say farewell to Kelsey Schuttie, Membership Coordinator, who stepped down to focus her prodigious energy and talent on her family and her growing business, CrossFit Wenatchee.

We are delighted to be able to welcome Kelsay Stanton as our new Membership Coordinator. Kelsay is a geologist who instructs part-time at Wenatchee Valley College, and was formerly also working in science and outdoor education for the Wenatchee School District. Kelsay has been leading field trips for us for several years, so perhaps you have been fortunate to have already enjoyed her contagious enthusiasm for our landscape.

This fall we created a new part-time Accounting Manager position to have one person responsible for all financial and accounting functions. We were incredibly fortunate to hire Tiffany Brine, CPA, to fill this critical role. Tiffany is helping us to streamline our financial processes and has already significantly improved our reimbursement from grants.

Welcome Kelsay and Tiffany!
Upcoming Outings & Events

Sign up online for Land Trust events and volunteer opportunities! Go to cdlandtrust.org and click What's New for a detailed list of events & outings and to register — or call the Land Trust office at (509) 667-9708.

Feb 15 9:00AM – 12:00PM  GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
Join biologist Phil Archibald for the Great Backyard Bird Count at Entiat Stormy Preserve. Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. Limited to 6. RSVP required

Feb 18 7:00PM – 9:00PM  ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL: WATERSHED
This film tells the story of the threats to the once-mighty Colorado River and offers solutions for the future of the American West. Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center, 127 S. Mission. Sponsored by Trout Unlimited Washington Water Project. $5 suggested donation

Feb 20 5:00PM – 9:00PM  20% THURS AT SOUTH RESTAURANT, LEAVENWORTH
Join us for dinner in Leavenworth. South will generously donate 20% of all food proceeds to CDLT! South Restaurant, 913 Front St., Leavenworth

March 1 9:00AM – 3:00PM  INGALLS CREEK FOREST ECOLOGY HIKE
Join photographer and fire ecology enthusiast John Marshall & entomologist Connie Mehmel for a winter hike on the Ingalls Creek trail to enjoy the winter wildlife and discuss forest health. Limited to 12. RSVP required

March 15 10:00AM – 11:30AM  STEER’S HEAD HIKE AT SAM HILL
Join Ann & Don Schaechtel on a short hike at CDLT’s Sam Hill property to look for the novelty wildflower, Steer’s Head (Dicentra uniflora) as well as other early wildflowers. Limited to 12. RSVP required

March 18 7:00PM – 9:00PM  ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL: PALE MALE
This film is a true account of a young man from Belgium’s unexpected encounter with a wild Redtail hawk in Central Park. Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center, 127 S. Mission. Sponsored by NW Audubon Society. $5 suggested donation

April 11 7:00PM – 9:00PM  LAND TRUST SPRING SOCIAL
Join CDLT at the Cashmere Riverside Center for a fun evening featuring desserts, savories, coffee & conversation! This evening is an opportunity to invite your friends to come learn about the Land Trust and socialize with others who care about conserving our natural heritage. FREE!

April 22 7:00PM–9:00PM  ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL: TEACHINGS OF THE TREE PEOPLE
This film is a tribute to the life and work of Skokomish elder Gerald Bruce Miller (subiyay), a nationally prominent cultural leader and teacher who brought his talents home to lead a cultural renaissance in the Pacific Northwest. Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center, 127 S. Mission. Sponsored by Chelan-Douglas Land Trust. $5 suggested donation
Welcome New Members

Since August 2013, these individuals have joined the Land Trust. Welcome, and thank you for your generous support!

Vicki Allen
Alpine Aire Heating & Cooling, Inc.
Armada Corporation
Ron & Claudia Balzer
Don & Karen Bates
Randy & Lynne Benton
Blue Spoon Yogurt
Gail Boothe
Carey & Kelly Boreson
Jane Bousman
Sandi Brady
Allison Brodine
Oliver & Pam Brulotte
Christina Burch
Ferdi Businger
Diana Carty
Jim & Cathy Click
Bob & Ginger Clough
Wanda Corey
Cycle Central
Ron & Rachelle Darnell
Fred & Ann Deal
Brian Derrick
Dave & Jan Devnich
Robert & Bonnie Duretto
Shirley Einarsson
Debra Ellers
Joyce Fikkan
Mari Foreman-Groff
Marie Franklin
Len Geren
Michael Gnagy
John Griffin
Teresia & Michael Grubbs
Don & Deborah Gurnard
Steve Gustafson
Peter Haase
Joan Hagerty & Larry Petersen
Claudia Hallmen
Suzanne Hartman
Charles & Phyllis Hayes
Pam & Paul Heidenfelder
Erik & Kristin Holmberg
Susan & Stephen Hufman
Jerry Winters, DVM
Allen & Nita Jones
Katy Joslin & John Scarafiotti
John & Patricia Kamerschroer
Alan & Anne Kirpes
Steve & Karen Knox
Sean Koester
Thomas & Victoria Kohr
Michelle & Caleb Kossian
Alfred & Barbara Koury
Casey Leigh & William Gilmartin
Scott & Nancy Leonhard
Lee & Sara Lippert
Greg & Lisa Loomis
Kris Loomis
Taro Masuda
Ruth May & Margee Laney
John & Vera McArthur
Christopher & Carrie McCarthy
Searles & Wanda McCarver
Allen & Marlene McCulloch
McGlinn’s Public House
Terri & Charles McKay
Jerry & Robin McManus
Patricia & James Mugg
Noel & Shani Nadeau
Janet Nazi
Éric & Jean Nelson
Cathy & Chuck Novak
Olson Family Fund
Overcast Law Offices, PS
Beverly Owen
Debra & James Palmason
Stone & Sharlynn Parker
Roger & Joni Pepperl
Kyle Peterson
Plauche & Carr, LLP
Evan Plews
Mark & Laurie Preston
Beth & Lars Ringsrud
Susan & Robert Risinger
Daniel & Billie Ritzke
Marshall & Joyce Roberts
Saddle Rock Pub & Brewery
Jason Jablonski
Louise Simons
South at Pybus
Garry Sparks
Steve & Mary Ellen Sparman
Hugh Spitzer & Ann Scales
Betsey Stahler
Kathryn Stevens
Bob & Marlene Stoehr
Catherine Straub & Kristofer Larsen
Chuck & Connie Strawn
John & Wendy Syrstad
Patricia Taylor
Frances Titus
Rich Ulrich
David Urban
Ron & Deb Walter
Barbara Woods
Casey Wyatt
Brenda & Chris Yankovski
Daniel & Lois Yant
Betsy Yount
Bill & Pennie Zacharko

Thanks to your support, key lands in the Wenatchee Foothills are secured, and a permanent land stewardship fund has been established. Now, let’s focus on creating a sustainable network of trails with well-managed access points—to allow all users to have a safe, convenient and rewarding experience. Here’s what you can expect in the near future: First, we will soon release a Foothills Trails Plan which will identify locations and designs of trails that will benefit all users—hikers, bikers, equestrians, and those with limited disabilities.

And secondly, we will begin work on trailheads. The Land Trust recently held meetings with the neighborhoods of Saddle Rock, Castle Rock, and Broadview areas to discuss trailhead options that fit the needs of each area. Thanks to the services of Project Groundwork, we have conceptual designs for each trailhead and the trails themselves. We will continue this work in the next few months, beginning with a follow-up meeting with Castle Rock neighbors in February to finalize that trailhead design.

Wenatchee Foothills Next Steps — Sustainable Trails with Well-Managed Access Points
Bob Bugert, Executive Director

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Taro Masuda
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Catherine Straub & Kristofer Larsen
Chuck & Connie Strawn
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Patricia Taylor
Frances Titus
Rich Ulrich
David Urban
Ron & Deb Walter
Barbara Woods
Casey Wyatt
Brenda & Chris Yankovski
Daniel & Lois Yant
Betsy Yount
Bill & Pennie Zacharko
Volunteer Opportunities

With the successful completion of the Foothills Campaign, we have a very exciting and ambitious year ahead to get the newly acquired lands ready for visitors! We have field work opportunities for everyone, from physically demanding to gentle walking. Call Neal Hedges or Hanne Beener at (509) 667-9708 or email hanne@cdlandtrust.org for details as spring approaches and to RSVP. You can also sign up online - go to cdlandtrust.org and click What’s New for details.

Wenatchee Foothills Trails:

♦ Throughout the Foothills: March–April. Annual maintenance to repair erosion or other damage. Sign up for one of our maintenance events and get a good hike and some trail work in!

♦ Castle Rock Trail & Trailhead: April. We will be building a new trail and a simple trailhead at Castle Rock! After the heavy equipment phase, we will have hand finish work to do, including plantings, trail work, and sign installation.

♦ Horse Lake: May–June. There are exciting new trails to be built at Horse Lake Reserve this spring. These will be hand-built single-track trail—wildflowers should serve as an outrageous backdrop for our work parties!

♦ Saddle Rock: March–May, September–November. It will be another busy year of continued restoration of the Saddle Rock trail system, with the potential of working on some new trails as well.

Seed Collecting: May–June. Want to pick the flowers? We will be collecting wildflower seeds for our Horse Lake shrub-steppe restoration project. It’s a great time to be in the hills.

Horse Lake Barn Stabilization: May–June. Help finish building support walls inside the Wallace/Barnhill barn to ensure it stands into its second century. Need people with basic carpentry skills and to carry lumber and equipment.

Foothills, Leavenworth, and Entiat River: April–July. It’s not glamorous work but noxious weed control is essential to maintaining our lands and trails. Hand-pulling and backpack spraying are our methods of control.

Mountain Home Ridge: May–June. We are doing an experimental introduction of the rare Wenatchee Mountains Checker-mallow. We need help cutting and hauling brush from our test plots.