There is no doubting that the summer of 2015 was one of the hottest on record. Vegetation, parched by heat and drought, was primed to burn and unfortunately it did when a man-caused spark started the devastating Sleepy Hollow Fire on June 28. Compared to the lightning-caused Canyons Fire that burned much of the same area in September 2012, the Sleepy Hollow Fire moved faster and burned hotter with disastrous consequences.

Fire ecologists considered the Canyons Fire of 2012 to be a “good fire” that burned low and slow removing dead and decadent vegetation that, in places, had accumulated for over 100 years. At the Land Trust’s Horse Lake Reserve it travelled through grass and shrubs under the ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir trees without climbing into the tree canopies and spreading as a high intensity crown fire. Contrast that to 2015 where the fire burned so hot in places that only white ash remained.

Despite the bleak appearance of the Foothills after the fire, plants are resilient and some re-sprouted within days. By November, recovery began in earnest following nearly 1.5 inches of rain. Sumac, lupine, and other hardy perennials pushed through the ash and annual species germinated from seeds that survived in the soil. Arrowleaf balsamroot, one of our most photographed wildflowers, will appear in March as clusters of large arrow-shaped leaves begin to unfold from their root crowns. Some balsamroot plants will produce flowers this year but many will restore their energy reserves and delay flowering until the following year when the hills will again be carpeted with yellow blooms. Other perennial wildflowers such as lupine and phlox might follow a similar pattern as they recover from the intense heat of the fire.

Big sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush, both dominant shrubs in the shrub-steppe plant community, did not fare as well. Most were killed by the fire and will remain absent until they are restored from seeds. Sagebrush seeds are extremely small (2.5 million seeds per pound) and are carried in the wind. They will begin reseeding from mature surviving plants to the west, the direction the prevailing wind, and once established, the new plants will provide the seed source for further expansion.

Bitterbrush seeds, large and heavy, don’t fall far

...continued on page 6
As you likely have heard, we currently are searching for our next Executive Director—the third in our thirty-year history. To implement the ambitious goals of our Strategic Plan and take advantage of some new opportunities, the time is right to increase our staff capacity. We are adding a new half-time leadership position, Director of Strategic Partnerships, and I am going to transition into that role when we find the right person to serve as our next Executive Director.

Our Board has deliberated much on what attributes we are looking for—certainly there are specific skills needed for management of a non-profit with the complexity and diversity of issues underway.

The key traits that we seek are a sense of community and a commitment to collaborative conservation.

So, why are we restructuring? One unexpected outcome of our collective work is the fact that North Central Washington—and Wenatchee in particular—has caught the attention of many in our region, and throughout the state. We are known as a community with a sense of place. We are viewed as a community that recognizes the simple principle that conservation and economic prosperity are inextricably linked. We are seen as having our act together.

That recognition has brought opportunities. Non-profits that we admire want to partner with us. Funding organizations are willing to invest in our work. Public agencies reach out to us. We can now create linkages with others that will yield great benefits to our region. Cool stuff. Really cool stuff.

Through our leadership succession planning, our Board made arrangements for me to focus my energy on pursuing these opportunities. At this point, it clearly makes sense to pass the leadership position to someone with the skills and passion to take our organization to the next level of service to our communities and our region.

Serving this dynamic organization has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life and it is something that I will always treasure. Yes, I know: everyone says that when they step down from a job, but I truly mean it. I cherish this organization, and I will continue to serve in this new role with all I’ve got. Thank you for everything that you do to make it what it is.
The white-tailed jackrabbit, found on Land Trust shrub-steppe properties, is an important prey species for predators like golden eagles and coyotes. It can reach speeds of 50 mph and leap 15 ft in the air.

Photo by Ferdi Businger
Children in the Wenatchee Valley have a lot to look forward to this Spring Break – no school, lots of free time, and for some, the chance to travel and explore the wonders of other places with their families. But for some kids, exploring the natural wonders of the Foothills close to home will bring just as much excitement.

We had the pleasure of connecting with hundreds of children and their families through our Kids & Nature Connections program in the last year – from learning about salmon in the Entiat to exploring the effects of fire on our local ecosystems, to learning about the importance of snow and the fascinating lives of animals during the winter.

To continue these efforts, the Land Trust will offer a four-day Foothills Spring Break Nature & Hiking Camp in partnership with the City of Wenatchee Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services. On April 4-7 from nine to noon, kids in 3rd to 5th grade will dive into hands-on games, crafts and explorations that help them understand how our local ecosystem works.

We will explore non-living components that make our region so unique – from fascinating geology to fire ecology to why we get so much more sunshine than Seattle. Next, we will move on to living things that rely on our unique climate and natural history to make ends meet – including us humans! Most activities will take place on Wenatchee Foothills trails that were protected and built by Land Trust members.

We hope experiences like this one encourage kids and their parents to return time and again to these special places close to home.

Last fall, Campfire Girls (top) learned about Entiat River ecology and kids (left) explored the world of insects at Saddle Rock Natural Area.
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

September 2015 through February 2016, these individuals have joined the Land Trust. Thank you for your generous support!

Kay Alberg  
Michael Alberg  
Aurora Alexander  
Chris Avey  
Ford & Marlys Barrett  
Kaylin Bettinger & Tucker Havekost  
Leslie & Daniel Bigos  
Dave & Vicki Binge  
William & Beatrice Booth  
Molly Boyter  
Roy Buck  
Amy & Reed Carlson  
Katie Carpenter  
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Nick Rohrbach  
Elizabeth Ryen  
Alex Schmidt & Stacey Barnhill  
Ted & Tricia Schroot  
Amanda Sherling  
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Charlie & Martha von Ries  
Walkie Talkies  
Michelle Weaver  
Lisa & Fred Wilson  
Ralph & Sonya Womack  
Linda Wood & Carl Leuck  
Jan Woodley  
Sandra Youngsworth

WELCOME SUSAN BALLINGER, CONSERVATION FELLOW!

Biologist and educator Susan Ballinger has joined the Land Trust team thanks to a grant from the Land Trust Alliance. She fills a 12-month Conservation Fellowship, a new practice that gives experienced professionals an opportunity to contribute to nonprofits in a time-limited, part-time “encore” capacity. CDLT’s position is designed to enhance the staff’s capacity to implement initiatives prescribed by the Strategic Plan. We think this pilot program has the potential to continue as an annual program that can amplify CDLT’s impact in our community.

This year, Susan will be lending her expertise and boundless energy to a number of ongoing CDLT projects. Some of these include: implementing citizen science bird monitoring projects at Horse Lake Reserve and Mountain Home, leading a series of short trailhead outings to introduce both new and existing users to properties and trails, providing professional development to teachers whose classes will be taking fieldtrips to the Foothills, helping to create a new Trail Ambassador program to support our regular hikes and outings, and helping the Trails team create a way-finding sign system for CDLT trails in the Foothills.

If any of these projects strikes your fancy, Susan welcomes new volunteers. Contact her at susan@cdlandtrust.org to learn more.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOREVER – include the Land Trust in your will

“Forever” . . . that is how long we have promised to take care of the precious lands and waters that you have helped protect! The fulfillment of that promise depends on the long-term financial strength of the Land Trust. As part of that commitment, we are increasing our focus on legacy giving to ensure we are here for a very long time.

Are you interested in helping provide for the secure future of the Land Trust, but perhaps cannot make a significant gift today? Including the Land Trust in your will or as a beneficiary of a retirement or bank account is a simple, yet powerful way to strengthen this community organization at the same time you provide for your loved ones.

We have information available to assist you in planning future gifts. Legacy gifts are not just for the very wealthy – bequests of any size will help ensure that future generations enjoy the trails and nature close to home, quality habitat for fish and wildlife, and the healthy rivers that we cherish today.

Please contact Sharon Lunz at 509-667-9708 or sharon@cdlandtrust.org, or visit the newly improved Legacy Giving section of our website (cdlandtrust.org/legacy) to learn how easy it is to convey your values through a future gift to the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, or to let us know if you have already included the Land Trust in your plans.

FIRE RECOVERY IN THE FOOTHILLS

(continued from p. 1)

from their source and are too big to be scattered by the wind. But they are a favored food of mice and chipmunks that bury them in underground caches that become the source of future plants. If these caches survive, they can create the colonies that will help restore bitterbrush to the community.

One undesirable plant that regretfully thrives following fire is cheatgrass, an annual weed that begins growing in the fall and can dominate burned areas the next year. In a year or two, perennial native species will begin to push it out but it will continue to dominate areas where burn intensity was high and native species were weakened or killed. Without active restoration with biological controls, herbicides, mowing, cultivation, and planting of preferred species, cheatgrass can persist long into the future.

Aided by a platoon of eager volunteers, CDLT began planting sagebrush and bitterbrush seedlings last fall to establish islands of shrubs that will become the seed sources of the future. The Bureau of Land Management, whose land also burned last year, is leading further restoration by using a helicopter to spread native grass to areas vulnerable to erosion, and will plant thousands of additional sage and bitterbrush seedlings next fall.

Nature eventually heals itself, but we can aid in this recovery. If you are interested in learning more about our restoration activities and would like to volunteer, check our website for upcoming work parties or call the Land Trust office.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We are very grateful to the following individuals, businesses, and grantors whose generous contributions were received in 2015. Your support is key to our ability to protect our land, our water, and our future - Thank You!

$300,000 and above
Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Habitat Subcommittee

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The Icicle Fund • WA State Salmon Recovery Funding Board

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2015 ANNUAL REPORT — ABBREVIATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND ABBREVIATED SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE THIS SUMMER AFTER COMPLETION OF OUR ANNUAL AUDIT.
TRAILS NEWS
DIGGING IN: EXCITING SPRING TRAILS SEASON

Longer and warmer days signal the return of spring after a hearty winter, and that means we’ve been planning our 2016 trail work projects! As always, we have our spring maintenance to do on most of our routes, which is good to get done while the soil is moist and workable. We also have a new trail planned for construction at Horse Lake Reserve: the Stuart View Trail! This route will likely be close to two miles in length, and meanders along a gently sloping ridge-line on the west boundary of the Reserve. It will connect to the existing trail system from the Old Ranch Road near the Wallace Barn to the lower end of the Apricot Crisp Trail above, swinging out to the west to take advantage of stunning views of the Cascades and some unique rock formations in foreground canyons.

We still have work to do to repair the Horse Lake Trailhead after wildfire damage in 2015: a fence around the perimeter of the trailhead needs to be rebuilt, and some interpretive signs need to be replaced. Land Trust members were incredibly generous during the Fall Campaign, and the Land Trust received a $2000 grant from Northwest Farm Credit Services’ Rural Community Grant program that will greatly assist with these costs. But, as you know, nearly all of our labor for these projects is volunteered! We could not come close to having the successful trail access system that we do without our trusty volunteer corps, and we’d love to have you join us on some of our rewarding adventures this year if you’re interested! Please contact Hanne for more information on upcoming volunteer opportunities: hanne@cdlandtrust.org.

BOARD & STAFF COMINGS & GOINGS

The Land Trust is delighted to welcome Bill Gaines to our Board of Directors. Bill lives in Leavenworth and is a scientist working in the field of resource conservation. He was a wildlife biologist with the US Forest Service for 27 years, and is now the Executive Director of the Washington Conservation Science Institute, a small natural resource research firm.

We’d also like to introduce two new staff members. Judy Cleveland, Accounting Manager and Vicki Binge, Donor Relations Assistant. They both bring a wealth of professional experience to our organization!

We extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to Paul Hessburg who has served his 3-term limit on our Board of Directors. Paul brought tremendous knowledge, passion and expertise to our organization.
OUTINGS EVENTS & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Join us for outings, learning opportunities and work parties. For details, updates, and to sign up, go to: cdlandtrust.org/get-involved or call 509-667-9708.

VOLUNTEER
RSVP Required

TRAIL THURSDAYS
Afternoon restoration work from 3 - 6pm
• Mar 31 Horse Lake Trailhead fence repair
• Apr 7 Balsamroot Trail
• Apr 14 Stuart View Trail
• Apr 21 Stuart View Trail
• Apr 28 Horse Lake Reserve
• May 5 Horse Lake Reserve

FRIDAY/SATURDAY WORK PARTIES
Trail & restoration projects.
• Apr 1 (Friday) Sage Hills, 3-6pm
• Apr 9 NEW! Stuart View Trail, 9am-6pm
• Apr 16 Stuart View Trail, 9am-3pm
• Apr 23 Stuart View Trail, 9am-6pm

HORSE LAKE TRAIL RUN
Help with Run Wenatchee’s trail run!
• May 1 7:30am-noon

STEWARDSHIP
Weekly Weed Warrior work parties!
• mid-April, details TBA
Fence Removal at Horse Lake Reserve
• May, details TBA

OUTINGS
RSVP Required

GEOLOGY WALK
Saddle Rock Natural Area
• Apr 29 11:30am-3:00pm

TRAIL RIDES & RUNS
@ Horse Lake Reserve
• Apr 29, 13 May 11, 25 early evenings

BUTTERFLIES, BIRDS & BLOOMS
• May 21 9am-12pm @ Stormy Creek Preserve

FULL MOON WALK
• June 20 time TBA @ Saddle Rock

WILDFLOWER WEDNESDAYS
Weekly walks in the Foothills
• Apr 13 - June 8 times/locations vary. Details online

LEAVENWORTH SKI HILL WILDFLOWERS
• Apr 7, 21, May 12, 31, June 2, 9 times vary. Details online

BIRD ID SKILLS BUILDING
Beginner to expert - hone your birding skills!
• Apr - end of year: 7:30-9:45am @ Walla Walla Park
• Apr - June: 6-7:30am @ Number 2 Canyon, Wenatchee Details online

EVENTS

NEW! WALK & TALK SERIES
Nature Photography, Yoga on the Trail, Poem Writing, Native American Stories and more! Easy walks at trailheads in the Foothills on Thursdays
• Apr 28 through June 6-7pm

eBIRD 101 WORKSHOP
Learn to be a Citizen Science birder!
• Mar 29 7-9pm @ CDLT office
• Mar 30 9-11am @ WRI office
RSVP required

SPRING SOCIAL
• Mar 30 7-9pm @ Cashmere Riverside Center

SPRING BREAK CAMP
Kids explore nature
• Apr 4-8 @ Leavenworth Foothills

FILM SERIES
“Olmsted and America’s Urban Parks”
• Apr 19 7-9pm @ Wenatchee Valley Museum

EARTH DAY SCAVENGER HUNT
Fun for the whole Family!
• Apr 22 4:30-6pm @ Jacobson Preserve
Peshastin Mill
Waterfront/Valley Trail
letter enclosed!

Join Us!

SPRING SOCIAL
CASHMERE RIVERSIDE CENTER
MARCH 30, 2016, 7-9PM
MEET NEW FRIENDS, CONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS

Photo by Tina Duffey