

Newsletter  
**SPRING 2021**



*When the Pearl Hill wildfire swept through CDLT's Spiva Butte Nature Preserve, volunteers stepped up to help.*

## HELP IN RECOVERY

by Dee Riggs

The greater sage-grouse in north central Douglas County are in big trouble.

The 223,730-acre Pearl Hill fire in early September blackened a key habitat called the Spiva Butte Nature Preserve. Gone are almost all the big sagebrush that the grouse depend on for winter survival.

What birds survived the fire are coming into spring with a bleak landscape.

“Everything is gone; it’s just powder,” says Mike Schroeder, a research scientist with the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife. “In some areas, you will find sagebrush skeletons, but in many areas, not only is the skeleton gone, but there is a hole in the ground just filled with ash.”

Normally, after a wildfire, some sections of sagebrush will survive and the wind spreads their seeds to surrounding areas. The Pearl Hill fire burned so hot that a natural comeback is years in the future.

Something more was needed, and the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust stepped

up to make that happen. About 75 volunteers and staff harvested sagebrush seed heads from unburned areas of Douglas and Chelan Counties around Thanksgiving. The seeds, collected from big sagebrush, the same sub-species to those formerly found at Spiva Butte, were then scattered on 25 acres of preserve on December 9 and 10.

A large quantity of the seeds were also set aside to be planted in regional nurseries. More than 10,000 of these seedlings will be planted at Spiva Butte Nature Preserve in November.

“We had amazing volunteers who gave up their time to do something in a really short time window,” said biologist and Land Trust staffer Susan Ballinger. “The uniqueness is that the sagebrush seeds don’t ripen until the end of November, then the wind blows them away. Our volunteers had to catch that window.”

Greater sage-grouse are considered a threatened species, Schroeder said.

*...continued on pages 3 & 4*



photo: WenatcheeOutdoors.org

Volunteers of all ages answered the call to collect sagebrush seeds for the restoration efforts.

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# LOOKING FORWARD WITH OPTIMISM

Every year I look forward to signs of spring – the first buttercup at Jacobson Preserve, the first 50-degree day, and the return of the pair of ducks (*Fred & Ethel*) to the man-made pond in my yard. This year, the change of seasons brings more hope and anticipation than ever before.



*Curt Soper*  
*Executive Director*

I am thankful that the Land Trust is in a good place as we move through 2021. Your loyal support has allowed us to stay strong over the last year and tackle quite a few unforeseen challenges.

For example, last fall, the fires that swept through the eastern half of our region devastated not only human communities but our non-human neighbors as well. However, as you can read in these pages, our members stepped up in more ways than one, and we are eagerly awaiting new growth at Spiva Butte Nature Preserve.

*...our commitment to this land  
is forever –*

This is a good reminder that our commitment to this land is forever – it doesn't end when the project is done. We are in an ongoing process of building a relationship with the land and the people and living things who depend on it, and we are committed to being there to care for it when needs arise.

There is much to look forward to this year. We are working on several projects in the Wenatchee Foothills, and anxious to announce the closing of a few large projects – including a habitat protection project in the Douglas County shrub-steppe that will provide homes for iconic sage-grouse, and a large climate resiliency project later this year.

While I don't want to *count my baby ducks* before they hatch, I am looking at this year with a sense of optimism. I look forward to sharing good news with you as these projects are completed. Your steadfast belief in caring for our natural world is the reason it all happens!

Gratefully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curt".

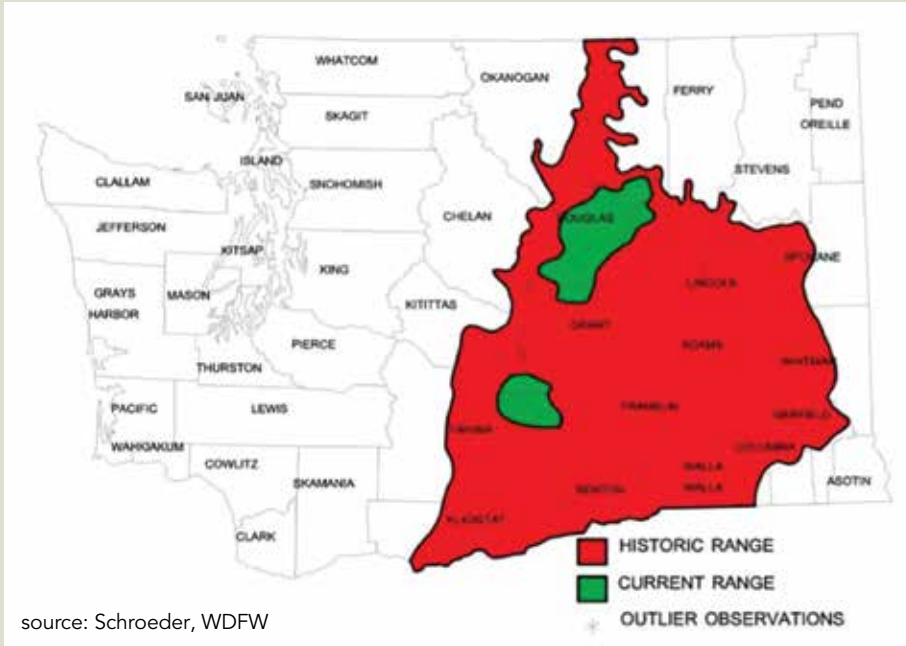


## HELP IN RECOVERING *(continued from page 1)*

### *Why should the public care?*

Schroeder says that sage-grouse have been in North Central Washington since well before the first humans settled here.

“They are part of our history, culture, and environment,” he says.



Ballinger noted that the bird’s presence is a sign of a healthy environment. “Washington’s shrub-steppe is habitat for hundreds of other species, including deer, songbirds, lizards, rabbits, insects and a myriad of wildflowers that thrive in a harsh climate.”

Ballinger said the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates about 770 sage-grouse lived in the state before the September fire. State experts roughly estimate that the fire killed half of them, but they need to wait until spring to conduct a census.

The Spiva Butte Nature Preserve is within one of two key sage-grouse habitats in the state. In 2018, the Land Trust bought the 1,400-acre property to help with land and habitat preservation. The other key habitat is near Yakima.

In late winter, sage-grouse breed in what Ballinger and Schroeder call an amazing interaction.

“The sage-grouse is a charismatic bird,” Ballinger said. “Males get together in March and do this elaborate dance. They have these air sacks that puff up and tails that fan out and they strut around and make really amazing noises as the air is leaving their chests.”

After a couple of weeks of what Ballinger calls *dancing*, “a female will choose one male and it’s usually one male that impregnates most of the females. Most males never get to father young.”

The sage-grouse only gather in groups during this dancing period. Then, they all disperse and live solitary lives.

The female will seek out cover to lay her eggs and rear her chicks. The lack of cover this year will be problematic.

“They have fidelity to their nesting sites,” Schroeder said. “The females will not be able to nest where they nested last year. They’re going to have to go quite a ways.”

The mating season starts in late winter and goes into early March. Schroeder and other officials will be in their

pickup trucks, aiming their binoculars at the traditional mating grounds, called *leks*. They’ll be counting the number of grouse that they see.

Schroeder expects a report on findings will be available in May. “It looks bad, but we don’t know yet how bad,” he said. 📷

*Contributing writer Dee Riggs is a longtime local journalist & a Land Trust volunteer.*



# THE STRONG SMELL OF SUCCESS



Ed & Jet Quaid at last fall's Make-A-Difference Day.

For several days this winter, a strong odor filled the East Wenatchee home of Jet and Ed Quaid.

It was coming from the garage.

“We have a large garage and were able to lay out half a dozen tarps and cover them with seeds,” said Jet. “They had to dry out so they wouldn’t mildew.”

The seeds came from hours of work by the Quaid’s and another 72

volunteers who snipped the seed heads off of sagebrush and stuffed them into bags. Most of the dried seed heads were scattered over 25 acres of prime sage-grouse habitat in December, with some seeds reserved and then planted at nurseries this winter. All are destined for land restoration on Spiva Butte Nature Preserve and in other burned areas of Chelan and Douglas Counties.


That wildland preserve was part of the 223,730-acre Pearl Hill Fire in September. The fire burned so hot that ecology experts say the sagebrush there won’t regrow. That means no food or cover for sage-grouse and hundreds of other species of birds, insects, snakes and lizards.

The Quaid’s have been volunteers with CDLT since 2013 when they moved here from Louisiana. In addition to their drying operation, the couple twice collected sagebrush seeds on Badger Mountain.

“I’ve been at Spiva Butte before it burned, and I saw it after,” Jet said. “It was really heartbreaking. We knew repair had to be done as soon as possible.”

In October, the couple also helped plant cuttings of red-stemmed dogwood, native willow and native grasses at Spiva Butte.

Jet and Ed are cautiously optimistic that all the volunteer work will pay off.

“We’ll know in about three years when the sagebrush is established and the critters come back,” she said. 



The sweet smell of success was overpowering!

## SUCCESS OVERFLOW!




With very little lead time, **74** volunteers devoted **223** hours in just over two weeks to collect, dry and box ripe sagebrush seed heads. They exceeded expectations! As a result,

**31,467 seedlings**

are being grown in nurseries for planting in burned areas at Spiva Butte Nature Preserve, the Wenatchee Foothills and in Northern Douglas County – *with extra to share!*

CDLT purchased 11,776 seedlings for wildfire restoration with help from NCW Audubon Society, the Wenatchee Valley Chapter of WA State Native Plant Society and the Endangered Species Coalition.

The rest of the seedlings will be used by US Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, WA State Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, WA DNR Natural Heritage Program, and Foster Creek Conservation District on more restoration projects. 



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

*September 2020 through February 2021, these individuals & businesses have joined the Land Trust. Thank you for your generous support — and welcome!*

Angelica Acuna  
 Alex Fisher & Marti Lyttle  
 Janet & Bill Armes  
 Sandra Baker  
 Travis Beyerl  
 Reid Brown  
 Kelly Condefer  
 Kimberlee Craig  
 Steve Croci  
 Ross Crollard  
 Ben Curran  
 Michael Daines  
 Pam & Michael DeGrenier  
 Jon Donaghy  
 Jenny Dooley  
 Jason Doten  
 Tonya & D.J. Doughty  
 Eron Drew & Willy Stockman  
 Tom Easley  
 Julie England & William McGlynn

Veronica Farias & Martin Villanueva  
 Keith & Sally Fast  
 Karen Francis-McWhite  
 Hazen Free  
 Paul Gordon  
 David Granatstein & Elizabeth Kirby  
 Karen & Gaylord Haas  
 Greg Heuchert  
 Brooklyn Holton  
 Henry Howard  
 Mollie & Mark Huppert  
 Chris Jeffris  
 Sandra Jensen  
 Brad Johnson  
 Matt Johnson  
 Jim Kassebaum  
 Sonja C. Kastner  
 Virginia Kraft  
 Stephen Krake

Nicole Kristek  
 Randy Lewis  
 Rob Lewis & Mary Big Bull-Lewis  
 Benjamin Mack  
 Anne & Jonah Manning  
 Dave & Tracie Manning  
 Kristin Marcell  
 Loni McKenzie  
 Sara McWilliams  
 Jessi Mendoza  
 Guy Miner  
 Liisa Morrison  
 Robin Moser  
 Megan Nann  
 Lyndsey Nichols  
 Coty Nisbet  
 Bryan & Cyndi Noyd  
 Stephanie Ogden  
 Ashley Olson  
 Alfredo Ortiz

Liam & Genevieve O’Sullivan  
 Monica Pluta  
 Bruce Ranney  
 Renea Roberts  
 Melissa Roe  
 Carolyn Roper  
 Rick Rubin  
 Ruston & Noelle Edwards  
 Felicity Saberhagen  
 Dana R. Sabo  
 Savor Central WA  
 Elizabeth Schmidt  
 Caroline Sieber  
 John & Cassandra Slemmer  
 John Stewart  
 Jamie Stratton  
 Mary & Nate Sutton  
 Jenni & Rick Uhrich  
 Mauricia & Bart Vandegrift  
 Chandra Villano  
 Cheryl & Joseph Wood  
 Zac Woolbright

## LOWER SLEEPY HOLLOW PRESERVE UPDATE

After habitat restoration work is completed, school, cultural and other educational groups will be invited to visit Lower Sleepy Hollow Preserve on the lower section of the Wenatchee River.

Last spring, work was completed on a parking area and entryway to the preserve. Creative privacy screening was designed and built by Zac Woolbright.

A whimsical, nature-themed archway made from repurposed metal objects, was created by artists Anne Gibbons and Natalie Roach and will welcome visitors sometime in the near future.



*Natalie Roach (& little helpers), Anne Gibbons and Zac Woolbright at the entry to the preserve.*



*archway detail*



# LET NATURE WORK — A NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTION

For over 35 years, the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust has been protecting and stewarding land. Our land stewardship has not only benefitted our local human community, it has also benefitted our climate. Protected lands absorb and store carbon in native vegetation and soils, while at the same time curbing emissions that may be associated with more developed land uses.

Protected lands provide habitat corridors for plants and animals moving through landscapes, as their options become increasingly limited. Forest thinning at our Mountain Home Preserve is an effective management tool to prepare the forest for future wildfires and more frequent droughts. We have seen how public forest management can protect habitat for plants and animals and provide a buffer between wildlands and our communities during wildfires.

Floodplain restoration, like that occurring in the Entiat Stillwaters and Lower Sleepy Hollow reaches, plays an important role as more intense rains lead to more frequent flooding. These more functional floodplains can also provide deep cold pools to aid fish passage and store water during peak spring floods, slowly releasing colder water back into our rivers and groundwater supply.



Cashmere Canyons Preserve has diverse habitat and connects to federal land, extending migration corridors for wildlife and plants.

We realize that protecting clean water helps our native fish, but it also safeguards our community against changing water availability.

With your help, the Land Trust will continue to do our part, conserving land and stewarding it effectively. We will continue to seek projects that benefit our human community and the living things we share this space with. 🌿



The White and Wenatchee Rivers meet, forming a broad floodplain before feeding into Lake Wenatchee.

The Land Trust owns much of the land in the White River floodplain, allowing the river to meander, purify and store groundwater, and release cold clean water for everywhere downstream.





# OUTINGS, EVENTS & VOLUNTEERING

We are still limiting our group events, per Chelan-Douglas Health District guidelines. Visit our website for added events and updates — [www.cdlandtrust.org](http://www.cdlandtrust.org)

## APRIL

- 1 Foothills Trails Opening Day!**  
Wenatchee Foothills trails will open pending mule deer status.

**New StoryWalk® Book**  
*My Colors, My World*  
*Mis Colores, Mi Mundo*  
@Jacobson Preserve

**TBA Trail Work Parties**  
Annual trail maintenance  
@ Sage Hills Trails  
@ Balsamroot Trail  
@ Upper Horse Lake Trails  
*registration required - limit 10 people*

- 6 Benevolent Day at München Haus**  
Takeout & dine-in outdoor seating available. 25% of sales will go to the Land Trust! Front St. in Leavenworth  
11AM - 6 PM

**10 SageFest**  
New trail building & trail maintenance on existing trails  
morning/afternoon shifts  
10 people in each shift  
@ Horse Lake Reserve  
*registration required*

**TBA Wildflower Walks**  
Check our website for dates/times as outings are added.

## MAY

**TBA Trail Work Parties**  
Annual trail maintenance  
@ Sage Hills Trails  
@ Balsamroot Trail  
@ Upper Horse Lake Trails

**TBA Weed Warriors!**  
Hand-pulling knapweed “rosettes”  
midweek/2 hr work parties  
@ Lower Sleepy Hollow Preserve

**8 Horse Lake Trail Runs**  
Run Wenatchee holds their annual run with proceeds going to CDLT.  
25K, 10-mile or 5-mile course  
7 AM @ Horse Lake Reserve  
*registration required*

*Visit our website for more info and to register for an event and to get on the Volunteer List!*  
[www.cdlandtrust.org/outings-events/events](http://www.cdlandtrust.org/outings-events/events)

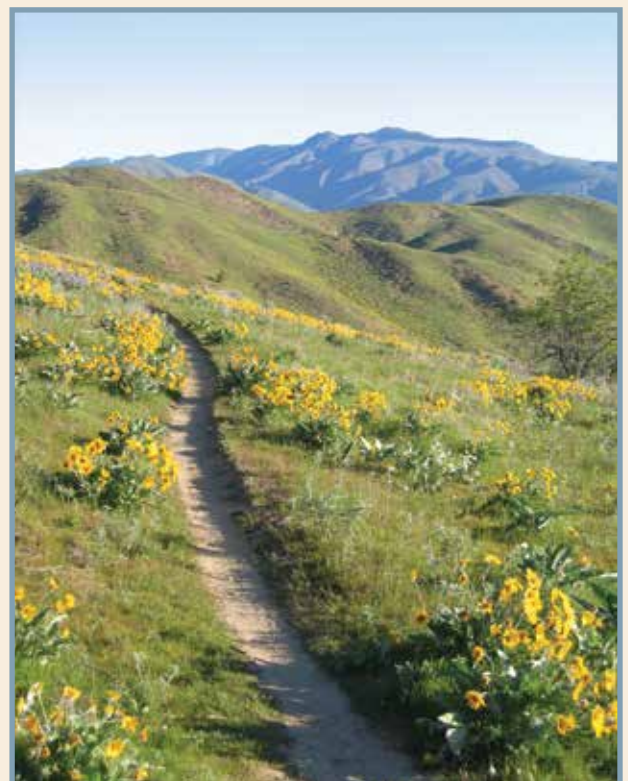
## TRAIL NEWS

In 2020, we learned how important it is to our community to have access to open space close to home, as we saw an increase in use on trails and preserves we manage. In 2021, we have found a way to do our field work and involve volunteers safely, tackling some projects that were put on hold in the past year.

We plan to build a new connector trail segment at Horse Lake Reserve, as well as perform important trail maintenance on most Foothills trails. We are working hard to open the Cashmere Canyons Preserve to you this spring, providing an additional 10 miles of trail and stunning new views.

We will also be seeking wide-ranging community input on a Saddle Rock Trails Plan throughout 2021—stay tuned for various ways to tell us how you use Saddle Rock, and what experiences you seek at Wenatchee’s most iconic Foothills landmark!

Lastly, thank you for respecting the Sage Hills and Horse Lake area trails seasonal closures until on or around **April 1st**.





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Suzanne Hartman  
Past President

Steve Jacobs  
Secretary/Treasurer

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photo: Megan Kathleen Photography

## PLANNED GIFTS LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY DID YOU KNOW...

- ◆ A planned gift allows you to shape your own legacy — all while helping us to protect and care for the land forever.
- ◆ A gift given to the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust through your estate can significantly reduce taxes that would otherwise take a big chunk out your loved ones' inheritance — providing for both CDLT and heirs in ways that maximize the gift while minimizing its impact on your estate.\*

### WHAT IS A PLANNED GIFT?

A planned gift is any major gift that is part of your overall financial planning – from leaving a bequest in your will, or naming CDLT as the beneficiary in your retirement plan.

### WHY IS THIS A GAME-CHANGER?

Planned giving allows anyone to make a substantial contribution to the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust — regardless of income or financial status. It is a way to level the playing field, giving everyone a chance to become a philanthropist and make a difference.

Planned giving opens up a whole world of possibilities for you to make a big difference to our mission while also securing your legacy — all for generations to come.

For more information about leaving a legacy through your estate plan, contact Aimee Sheridan at [aimee@cdlandtrust.org](mailto:aimee@cdlandtrust.org).

*\*Please consult with your professional financial planner or attorney for tax advice. We can only provide you with how to give a gift to CDLT in your estate plan and what impact it will make on protecting and caring for our natural areas.*

## YELLOW BELLS *Fritillaria pudica*

One of the first wildflowers to greet us each spring is this tiny, sweet bell.



Yellow petals quickly fade to orange, getting darker and darker each day. The color change is believed to signal insects that successful pollination has happened and to "visit" another flower!