



Newsletter
FALL 2023

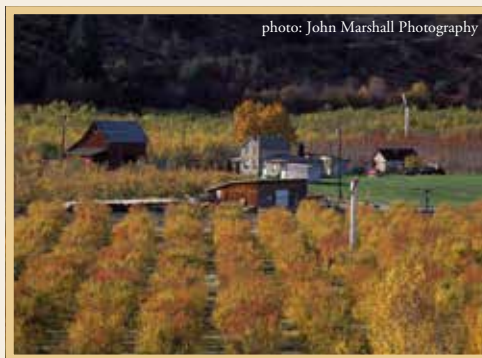
EXPLORING NEW INITIATIVES

by Eunice Youmans

Over the course of my first six months at the Land Trust, I spoke to current and former staff and board members, donors, partners, and community stakeholders across Chelan and Douglas counties. Four questions arose again and again.

- Does the Land Trust have a role in protecting working agricultural land?
- Does the Land Trust have a role in supporting Indigenous land conservation?
- Is the Land Trust using the best available climate and conservation data to manage our land and inform our land acquisition strategy?
- Is there a sustainable funding model for the maintenance of outdoor recreation assets?

All four topics are referenced in our Strategic Plan and Guiding Principles but there was little agreement on what role CDLT could or should play. We were awarded a grant from the Icicle Fund for three of these initiatives to hire project leaders for a year who will outline how CDLT currently addresses these issues, what is at risk if we do not address these



topics and what the opportunities and funding sources are for CDLT to pursue each. These groups will report their findings to the CDLT Board of Directors quarterly and will make recommendations to the board in September of 2024.

Working Lands Group

The lands under the greatest threat from development in the Wenatchee Valley are small orchards and other small produce operations. The high market demand for housing development and the increasing challenges of small-scale farming continue to drive widespread orchard and farm loss. Every farm or orchard converted for development often represents an exponential loss of agricultural lands as the reality of living next to working lands are not compatible with homebuyer expectations and adjacent farm practices always seem to lose.

Many land trusts include agricultural lands in their portfolios, and while CDLT has long recognized the cultural and economic value of agriculture in the valley, we have not made agricultural protection a priority. While CDLT's current

...continued on pages 3

2 GREETINGS FROM EUNICE

4 NEW CASTLE ROCK RIDGE ACQUISITION

5 NEW MEMBERS BLUEBIRD HOMES

6 PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN FOR SADDLE ROCK

7 GALLING SOLUTION
8 FUTURE OF CONSERVATION

POISED
AND
EXCITED
FOR THE
FUTURE!

Hello Land Trust Family,

Wow, I can't believe it has been a year since I moved to North Central Washington and joined this extraordinary community! I am so grateful for your kindness, generosity, and patience as we worked through some unique challenges and found new opportunities this past year. For nearly forty years, the Land Trust has continued to evolve from a handful of passionate conservationists huddled around a kitchen table to a thirty-one-million-dollar organization. The Land Trust is now much more operationally and financially complex and the bulk of our work in the last year has been to shore up our internal systems to support the architecture of the CDLT of today.



Eunice Youmans
Executive Director

In the last year we finalized the transition from a working to a governing Board of Directors, updated our compensation and benefits package, rebuilt our accounting system to create more accessible and transparent financial reporting, and streamlined our technology platform to increase efficiency and security.

We also had to make some hard choices. Our deficit in 2022 required us to eliminate and combine staff roles. We have gone from a staff of seventeen to a staff of eleven. To support staff in this transition and to build our bench strength we promoted and gave merit increases to key staff, provided leadership and management training to senior staff, and hired *Jennifer Hadersberger* for the newly combined role of Director for Climate, Access, & Stewardship.

We have also sought out new sources of funding. As you know, CDLT has always relied upon the generosity of our community and grant funding to deliver our mission. Beginning in January 2023, we have actively pursued new grant funding resulting in \$510,000 in additional, unbudgeted grants to CDLT. The Land Trust has a long history of managing land for other entities including the Chelan County PUD and the City of Wenatchee. In 2024, CDLT Foothills maintenance will be a line item in both the City of Wenatchee and the Chelan County PUD's budget. We are back on solid financial footing and well-positioned for new opportunities to continue achieving conservation success in our beautiful corner of the world. CDLT is ready for the future!

With Warmest Regards,

Eunice
eunice@cdlandtrust.org

New Initiatives *(continued from page 1)*

portfolio includes agricultural land, these dryland wheat farms were protected for their endangered species habitat rather than agricultural value. The goal of this group is to explore the drivers of small farm loss, identify the conservation values of farmland, and recommend a course of action for the Land Trust and other stakeholder groups in conserving small farms in the Wenatchee Valley.

Climate Change Working Group

Climate change is impacting forests, floodplains, shrub steppe and the species that call North Central Washington home. As land and water managers, CDLT is working to develop and implement climate mitigations to create more resilient landscapes and watersheds. We have hired Washington Conservation Science Institute to evaluate our lands portfolio. Their work will apply GIS layers to assess climate vulnerability and develop site-specific climate mitigation and monitoring plans for all lands managed by the Land Trust. They will also expand these data layers to all lands in Chelan and Douglas counties to identify opportunities for climate resilient interventions which could drive CDLT's land protection strategy moving forward.



Public Funding Working Group

The Land Trust is committed to public access to open space in Chelan and Douglas counties, forever. TREAD evolved out of Our Valley Our Future's (OVOF) Action Plan that identified the need for an organization to convene and support outdoor recreation land managers. The Land Trust has partnered with TREAD to develop regional financial support for the protection, operation, and management of public access across multiple owners across Chelan and Douglas counties. Our community has created numerous reports including the Chelan County Pathways Plan, Upper Wenatchee Community Lands Plan, OVOF Action Plan, and many others exploring recreational land collaboration. Little has changed in ten years because there was no clear management model or sustainable financial path. Our approach aims to create new opportunities for recreational access for all through building the economic case for outdoor recreation and identifying funding at scale to steward our recreational portfolio. We will explore various management and

funding models. The goal of this project is consistent public access funding forever, for recreational land in Chelan County and specifically sustainable funding sources for recreation in the Foothills.

Indigenous Led Conservation Working Group

Land Trusts across the country are beginning to explore Indigenous land conservation. There are two elements driving this work. The first is social justice—the aspiration to begin to rectify the wrongs done to Indigenous Peoples in the name of the American conservation movement. The second is science—across the earth, Indigenous land management practices result in the highest levels of biodiversity and carbon storage (*among many other conservation benefits*) than any other management system. Or, as **John Sirois** (CDLT board member and Traditional Territories Advisor for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation) puts it, “*everything we do is conservation.*” CDLT has been working with the Yakama Nation on riparian restoration projects and with the CTCR on several different projects for years.

CDLT has a clear strategic goal of collaborating with the tribes on conservation work

in NCW, yet we still have much to learn about local Indigenous history and culture before we can begin to approach collaboration on shared conservation goals. The working group is exploring how other land trusts are working with tribal partners, receiving guidance from CTCR on conservation priorities, and reviewing current CDLT/CTCR projects. The group plans to offer educational opportunities for the board, recommend actionable items and raise awareness within our broader CDLT community.

Next Steps?

The result of some of these working groups might be that CDLT has no role. Other working groups might identify a multi-year strategy to achieve goals. These projects are *explorations*.

We are excited about the opportunities that these initiatives may bring! If you have an interest in any of these projects, please reach out to me as we would love to hear your thoughts. 🍃

CASTLE ROCK RIDGE

AN ADDITION TO A BELOVED FOOTHILLS LANDMARK

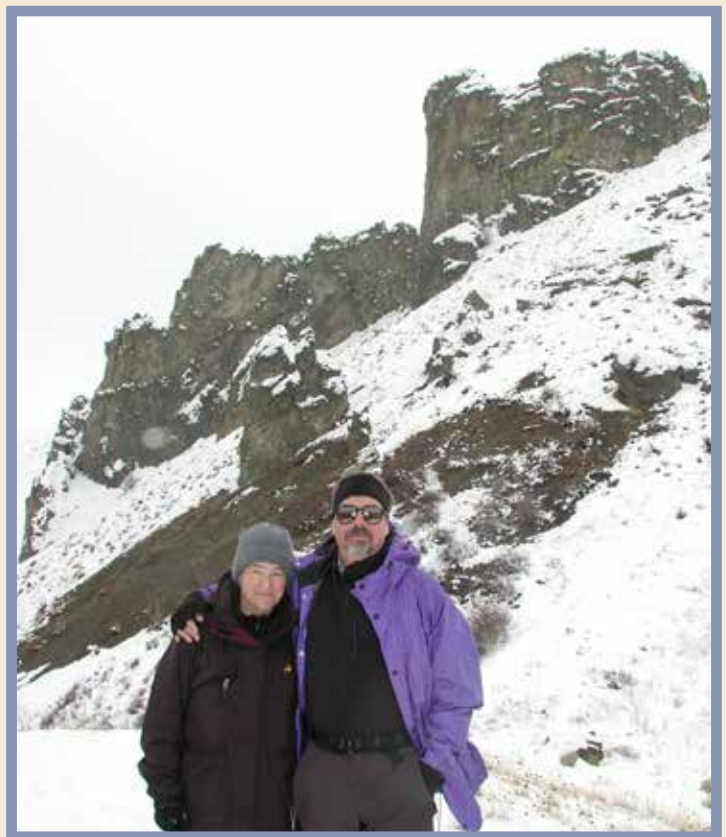
Thanks to the deep conservation ethic and generosity of Frank Peryea and Betsy Beers, CDLT has added 398 acres to the permanently protected land in the Wenatchee Foothills. Over 20 years ago, Frank and Betsy saw that the land straddling Number 1 and Number 2 Canyons was for sale and threatened with development. They stepped forward to purchase 398 acres from two different landowners, saving this property from piecemeal subdivision.

When CDLT and the City of Wenatchee secured 36 acres for the Castle Rock Natural Area and trailhead in 2013 through the Foothills Campaign, Frank and Betsy donated a hiking trail easement to reach the iconic Castle Rock, a volcanic rhyolite formation created some 44 million years ago by the cooling of magma. The property gains substantial elevation from 1,200 to 2,500 feet and joins Forest Service lands at its western boundary. With slopes that face every cardinal direction, the property hosts many animals and native plants, and is critical habitat for wintering mule deer. Frank has been a dedicated steward of the property for two decades, using only human power and hand tools to maintain the trails and habitat.

CDLT now owns and will manage the entire 398 acres for wildlife habitat and compatible public access. The landowners made this possible by donating 50% of the property's fair market value to match a grant from the State of Washington's Wildlife and Recreation

“When we purchased this land 23 years ago, we weren't sure what our end game was, but we knew we wanted to protect the viewscape and make it available for hiking. When we learned about the Land Trust, we knew we had found its eventual home. We have an emotional connection to this property and knowing it will be forever protected and stewarded by the Land Trust is exactly what we wanted for this very special place.”


—Frank & Betsy



Frank out on the trail.



Program. Please bring hiking poles to enjoy the challenging upper reaches of this protected land. This Castle Rock Ridge preserve, along with the City-owned Lower Castle Rock Natural Area, are for foot traffic only.

This is another example of successful collaboration between landowners with foresight and CDLT. Upper Castle Rock will now and forever be protected as a natural wildland and a place for the entire community to enjoy. *Thank you, Frank & Betsy!* 

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

April 1 through October 2023, these individuals & businesses have joined the Land Trust. Thank you for your generous support — and welcome!

Amanda Adkins	Maggie Ellings	Linda Larsen	Dave Purdon
Stacey & Paul Alley	Antonio Giacobbe	Patrick Monnahan	Austin & Sophia Rohl
Lesa & Dale Bergey	Amanda Goodmanson	Joan Olsen	Vanessa Saavedra
Christina Clark	Douglas Gordanier	Megan Parish	Cheryl Sizov
Peter Clark	Asha Hawkesworth	Michele Peltonen	Erin Smith
Kathleen & John Colvard	Nancy Hulse	Warren Perry	Studio South
Dan Curry	Tyler Judevine	Lu Ann Price	Ken & Jan Yalowitz

ALONG THE BLUEBIRD TRAIL

This spring, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust volunteer *Paul Rachey* built and donated 20 bluebird boxes to be placed at Horse Lake Reserve. The boxes were installed this fall along Fairview Ridge. Nest sites are often a limiting factor for cavity nesting birds such as bluebirds. **Western Bluebirds** have been identified by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife as a “*Species of Greatest Conservation Need.*” Western Bluebirds have been seen nesting at Horse Lake Reserve. With bluebirds already nesting in the area it shouldn’t take long for more pairs to take up residency with the newly available nest sites.

Several other species will also benefit from the boxes including Mountain Bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches, and swallows. To decrease the chance of introduced species using the boxes, Paul made the hole size small enough to exclude European Starlings. By placing the boxes far from human habitation, the chance of House Sparrows using the boxes is greatly reduced.

Three years ago, 13 bluebird boxes were placed at Cashmere Canyons Preserve. In two years, tree swallows began using some of the boxes. This spring one box fledged four Mountain Bluebirds!



Volunteer Paul Rachey


CDLT is happy to host a bluebird trail at Horse Lake Reserve. CDLT would like volunteers to check nest boxes once per week during the nesting season and record species use and if nests successfully fledged young. In addition, volunteers will be needed to clean out nest boxes in the fall. If you are interested in helping monitor the Horse Lake bluebird trail in 2024, please email Jennifer Hadersberger at jennifer@cdlandtrust.org. 



photo: Dave Hillestad

Western Bluebirds are among the birds that nest in cavities—holes in trees or nest boxes. Their bills are not equipped to dig out their own holes. They rely on woodpeckers or other processes to make their nest sites for them. This is one reason why dead trees are a valuable commodity in many habitats.

A COMMUNITY ASSET: PUBLIC ACCESS PLANNING FOR SADDLE ROCK

by Hanne Beener

Saddle Rock is one of the most important places CDLT has worked to protect over the decades the Land Trust has been active in our region: it welcomes the most diverse group of users of any of the wildlands close to our regional population center, it has rich historical and contemporary cultural significance, and it boasts a surprising biodiversity given the human impacts on the area. Land Trust staff knew that developing a plan for long-term public access goals and management for Saddle Rock would need to be a careful and inclusive process.

The completion of remediation work required to remove historical mining waste that posed human health concerns and prevented any soil-disturbing work from occurring on the property happened to correspond with successful efforts to protect additional adjacent property that more than doubled the size of the original Saddle Rock Natural Area. The time when the City of Wenatchee, the Land Trust and other partners could and needed to manage the public access more proactively at Saddle Rock had arrived.


To build awareness around the planning efforts at Saddle Rock, and to gather important data from the community of current and potential Saddle Rock visitors, the Land Trust conducted a community input survey in 2022. CDLT engaged a local outreach specialist to ensure input from the Latino community was well-represented. The process took most of the year in 2022, and there were some obvious trends in the input we received: people visit Saddle Rock for exercise and enjoyment of nature, usually on foot. People choose not to visit Saddle Rock due to overcrowding, poor trail maintenance, or lack of information about different routes—or even a lack of awareness that the area has public access.

Starting in 2023, CDLT convened a curated group of enthusiastic community members representing the diversity of our community, including runners, mountain bikers, equestrian users, educators, dog owners, adjacent property owners, advocates for greater accessibility and inclusivity, and others. This group met for 6 months to consider the feedback we received from the community from their own unique perspectives,

to learn about management practicalities and constraints from the landowners and land managers, and to anticipate future needs, challenges, and opportunities. Through a deepening relationship with tribes on whose homelands Saddle Rock is located, CDLT and the City of Wenatchee continue to explore how to manage the Saddle Rock area that respects and upholds the long-standing cultural significance of this site.

The resulting **Saddle Rock Recreation and Access Plan** focuses on inclusive access, utilizing existing trails on site where possible and improving them, providing good information about routes through maps and signage. Preserving the natural character and biodiversity of the site by concentrating trail use to maintained corridors and avoiding overdevelopment of infrastructure or amenities is also a priority.

The Land Trust has secured funding to begin making improvements to the Saddle Rock trail system soon. Work to improve the rutted old roadbed that connects the summit of Saddle Rock to CDLT's Jacobson Preserve in Number 2 Canyon will begin soon. Other projects to continue improving the main route from the Saddle Rock Trailhead to the summit and to develop a easier and more accessible loop trail near the Trailhead are high priorities for implementation.

We hope you'll join the Land Trust, the city and other partners in improving recreation and access opportunities at Saddle Rock over the coming months and years! You can view the Saddle Rock Recreation and Access Plan and maps showing proposed trail improvements on the CDLT website. 

Community input was an important element in crafting the Saddle Rock Access & Recreation Plan.



SCAN FOR
MAPS



A WEED PROBLEM WITH A GALLING SOLUTION

by Tiffany Theden, CDLT Stewardship Asst.

Do you know what a gall is? They are so interesting! A gall is an abnormal growth on a plant that can be caused by a variety of organisms. Many types of insects can create galls including wasps, moths, flies, beetles, and aphids. Other non-insect organisms can also create galls such as mites (related to spiders or ticks) and nematodes (tiny parasitic worms), as well as fungi and bacteria. You can think of a gall as a tumor or a wart—it's made entirely of plant cells but is created when the insect (or other organism) injects a chemical into the plant when they lay their eggs inside of it.

Here in North Central Washington, we have many native plants that have native galls—part of the **natural ecological balance**. We also have a large issue with invasive plants in the area. In our effort to control these non-native, invasive weeds, we use a multipronged approach. In addition to using chemical controls and hand-pulling, we like to enlist the help of *galling insects* that attack the invasive plant we are trying to eradicate. These insects are not available for use as biological controls until they have undergone rigorous testing and have been approved for release by the USDA.

A worrisome invasive species in the Foothills is **Russian knapweed** (*Acroptilon repens*) which is native to central Asia. This plant spreads through underground rhizomes

and also through seeds produced by its flowers. You can't just pull it out of the ground, since it will continue to grow and spread from any little rhizome or root fragment left.

Russian knapweed has a gall inducing insect—the **Russian Knapweed Gall Wasp** (*Aulacidea acroptilonica*).



Russian knapweed
(boo-hiss)



A wasp gall on Russian knapweed.

Earlier this year we received 3 little containers of these wasps in the mail from the WSU Integrated Weed Control Project and released them at known Russian knapweed sites around upper Horse Lake Reserve. We released 600 of these tiny, black, flea-sized wasps in an effort to establish breeding populations here in Wenatchee to help control Russian knapweed.

So, how do galls help decrease invasive Russian knapweed? When these galls form, they inhibit the stem from producing flowers, hence no seeds. They also weaken the plant, making it less able to thrive and spread.



Tiny Russian Knapweed Gall Wasps being released on a knapweed at Horse Lake.

A few months after the release, I went back to check on the status of the little wasps and lo and behold, they have created galls and are reproducing! Several months later, I saw galls on knapweed in another area, which means they have reproduced and spread to other knapweed populations in just a few months. **Success!** 🌱



A fantastic website to ID galls is **Gallformers.org**. Click on "identify" in the top right and input the plant species to see a list of known galls on that plant.



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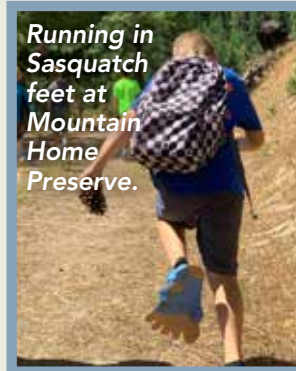
Kathy Peven
Communications Manager

Hannah Riggs
Administrative Assistant

Tiffany Theden
Stewardship Assistant

THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION

The future of our natural spaces depends on positive memories and experiences in the outdoors. This year, CDLT was involved in leading youth outdoors to learn and play outside at Mountain Home Preserve and Lower Sleepy Hollow Preserve. Brave summer camp explorers went in search of signs of “Sasquatch” at Mountain Home and learned about plant diversity in the forest.



Near the Wenatchee River at CDLT’s Lower Sleepy Hollow Preserve, students from Mission View Elementary’s after-school program planted sumac and installed trail cameras that have captured images of deer, raccoon, coyote, and a beaver! Experiences like these will help create the conservationists of the future! 🌿

INTRODUCING... We welcome three new staff members to CDLT!



Jennifer Hadersberger

Jennifer is the Director for Climate, Access & Stewardship here at the Land Trust. She has over 20 years of professional work experience in natural resources management and holds an MS in Botany.



Hannah Riggs

Hannah joins us as CDLT’s Administrative Assistant. She recently earned her AA in natural resources and is excited to continue learning about the natural world in NCW.



Dania Contreras

We welcome Dania as our Communications Coordinator. She earned her BA in Communications with a minor in Spanish and is excited to put her skills to work for CDLT.

Have you read something that inspires you in this newsletter?

Please consider making a gift to the Annual Campaign today and help protect and care for our local land and water. Visit our website www.cdlandtrust.org or scan the QR code.

Give before **Dec. 31** and your gift will be **DOUBLED!**

