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Land Trust Secures 221.6-Acre Conservation Easement Above Wapato Lake

High-quality shrub-steppe and wildlife habitat protected

WENATCHEE, WA—The Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) proudly announces the acquisition of a new 221.6-acre conservation easement on high-quality habitat land overlooking Wapato Lake near Manson, Washington. This monumental achievement was made possible through the collaborative efforts of CDLT, the Chelan County Public Utility District (Chelan PUD), and the generosity of landowners Denis and Irmi Atam.

Mickey Fleming, CDLT's Land Program Manager, highlighted the long-term efforts behind this project: "CDLT has been working with the Atams for several years to permanently conserve these beautiful 220 acres above Wapato Lake. The shrub-steppe habitat is home to a diverse group of wildlife whose territory is being constricted by development throughout the area. The Atams took the risk of buying the property that surely would otherwise have been developed. They then worked with CDLT and the Chelan PUD to complete a conservation easement that will protect the land forever. We at CDLT are very grateful to Denis and Irmi for their commitment to conservation and their faith in CDLT."

The conservation easement ensures that the Atam property will remain predominantly undeveloped, preserving its natural, scenic, and open-space qualities for perpetuity. The conservation easement will benefit many wildlife species that depend on high quality transitional pine zone habitat. Mule deer, black bear, cougar, moose, elk, western gray squirrel, numerous species of birds, and native pollinators will benefit. The property is adjacent to public lands providing an even greater wildfire corridor benefit.

Prior to the Atams ownership, the property was subdivided into 10 parcels with a plan to develop the area for residential homes. As part of this conservation project, the subdivided lots were consolidated back into one parcel, and utility easements were terminated.

Reflecting on the project, Denis and Irmi Atam shared their thoughts: "We feel blessed living in such a beautiful environment and community. After almost five years of collaboration with CDLT and Chelan PUD, we were finally able to obtain and implement a permanent conservation easement for a 221-acre parcel in the hills of Manson to preserve and protect the wildlife, fauna, and flora. We hope we can inspire others to follow our path—our mantra is: "Not everything which can be developed should be developed."

“Chelan PUD is committed to stewardship and dutiful compliance with our Lake Chelan project,” said Chelan PUD Commissioner Carnan Bergren.

Chelan PUD funded the conservation easement acquisition as part of Chelan PUD’s federal license to operate Lake Chelan Dam.

“After many years of trying to secure a site—we are excited to be celebrating this successful partnership,” Bergren said. “Many thanks to the Atam family for their willingness to enter this conservation easement. This project highlights what can happen when public entities (state and local), nonprofit agencies, and individuals work together with a shared vision and in the public’s best interest.”

The significance of this conservation project extends beyond the protection of habitat and wildlife. It symbolizes a triumph of community collaboration and environmental stewardship, exemplifying the power of collective action in safeguarding our natural heritage.

About the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

Founded in 1985, the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust protects land with high conservation and recreation value in North Central Washington. CDLT has protected forty miles of recreational trails and twenty-six thousand acres of forest, shrub-steppe, wheat fields, and riparian landscapes across Chelan and Douglas counties. CDLT is a membership organization that relies upon the community’s support to continue to protect and care for the landscapes that make the Wenatchee Valley unique.

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