

BITTER ROOT



LAND TRUST

BITTER ROOT LAND TRUST

Legacy

FALL 2017

WATER, WILDLIFE, & WORKING LANDS FOR ALL GENERATIONS



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20 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

Shared values, shared vision and shared success

2017 has been a lot of fun. On June 10, we celebrated the Bitter Root Land Trust's 20th year of local conservation efforts with about 300 of you at Middle Bear Farm in Victor. The event was the culmination several months of activities paying respect to BRLT's first 20 years and preparing us for the 20 to come. It has been a fun, reflective time here at BRLT. How do we summarize the passion, perseverance, and accomplishments of an entire community's efforts to protect the place we love? Is it numbers of easements, acres, or money raised to make this work possible? Those are all important measures of success, to a certain extent, and you'll see those captured in the proceeding pages of this edition of Legacy. Really, though, it's the stories of real people that create the mosaic of 20 years of local conservation success: It's the journey of a fledgling organization created by local citizens based on a shared vision of the Bitterroot we will pass on to the next generation. It's the story of young farmers and ranchers taking on the responsibility of local food production as they take over from their retiring family members and mentors. It's the story of how a belief in voluntary, landowner-driven conservation with humble beginnings, has grown to include a county-wide investment in water, wildlife, and working lands that we will be proud to pass to our children and grandchildren. And it's the story of your local land trust coming of age to provide additional services to the growing and changing needs of our valley (cooperative weed management, land management resources in response to catastrophic wildfires, and natural recreational areas available to all Bitterroot residents that help better connect us to this place we love. Thank you for continuing to help us expand the vision of what's possible when we work together as a community to identify challenges, opportunities, and a common vision of the Bitterroot Valley we will pass on to the next generation. In the spirit of community and in anticipation of the next 20 years of local conservation success, enjoy the enclosed stories of the great work you make possible every day.

2 DECADES

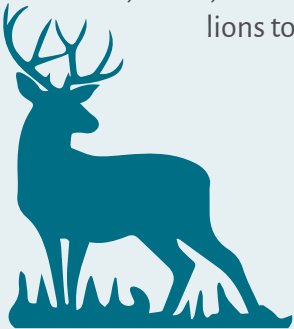
**OF CONSERVING THE WATER,
WILDLIFE, AND WORKING
LANDS YOU LOVE.**

WATER

nearly 20 miles of cold, clean rivers and
creeks where native trout abound

WILDLIFE

over 6,000 acres of pristine
meadows, forests, hillsides,
and fields for moose, elk,
deer, eagles, osprey, bears,
fox, otters, and mountain
lions to flourish



9:1

year in and year out,
for every \$1 donated
by YOU, the land trust
leverages 9 more
dollars toward private
land conservation here
in the Bitterroot Valley.

COUNTLESS

the number of generations
that will see the Bitterroot of
tomorrow as it is today



WORKING LANDS

over 4,500 acres of farm and ranch land
that contribute to our local economy and
sustainable food sources



New land trust
leadership, same great
land trust conservation



PETE SEIFERT

*"This has been an insightful learning experience,
reminding me of the value our community places in
conserving our water, wildlife, and working lands."*

As president, Pete Seifert led the land trust board over the past three years through some new territory. We grew our capacity to complete more conservation in the valley with an additional conservation staff member, we had an awesome Barn Dance on a conserved working farm, we celebrated our 20th Anniversary partnering with landowners to protect this beautiful place, and we hired our first summer intern which helped to expand our outreach efforts. Thank you, Pete, for your leadership of the land trust. We look forward to many more years with you on the board.



JEAN STEELE

*"My goal is to not only build on our excellent work of
the past 20 years, but also increase awareness of how
this work preserves and enhances the quality of life for
our entire community."*

Moving from the office of vice president, Jean Steele will step into her new role as president of BRLT. Jean is looking forward to building on her leadership role with the board and is excited about what the future holds for the organization and the land trust mission. We anticipate great things with Jean at the helm.

Families honor the past, present, & future



Lazy Burnt Fork Ranch, Stevensville

Steve and Catherine Peckinpaugh and the Bitter Root Land Trust recently completed a conservation easement on the 333-acre Lazy Burnt Fork Ranch, located just outside of Stevensville. The Peckinpaugh Ranch offers a diverse mix of irrigated pasture and hay meadows, stream and riparian habitats, and native sagebrush shrub land, much of which is visible throughout the surrounding area. The Burnt Fork drainage is among Montana's first settled agricultural communities. It's managed to retain its open, agricultural character for well over a century, in large part thanks to landowners like the Peckinpaughs, who have dedicated their love and time into caring for and enhancing their ranch.

The Peckinpaugh Ranch also provides habitat for wintering and calving elk and mule deer, spawning and rearing habitat for cutthroat trout, and varied habitat for migratory songbirds, upland birds and raptors. Steve and Catherine are honored to preserve this special piece of Montana for future generations.

Weber Ranch, Corvallis

For about a century, the Weber Ranch has overlooked the Corvallis agricultural area. It's been home to the Weber family for four generations, and Brien and Gayle Weber, just made sure this ranch will be here forever. It all started with Brien's grandparents, James and Nellie, who raised 13 children and ran a dairy farm on the land. Brien's dad and grandpa fostered a love and appreciation for the ranch over a life-time of raising cows, haying, and spending time together.

When the dream of preserving the land and his family's legacy became a real option, Brien knew the next step was to enlist the Bitter Root Land Trust as a partner. Brien and Gayle worked closely with land trust staff over 18 months and crafted a promise—a conservation easement—to protect the 467 acre ranch. Not only a working ranch, the vast,

open space of the property provides ample room for wildlife like elk to roam between the Calf Creek Game Range, which sits directly adjacent the Weber Ranch, and the Sapphire Mountains. The entire area provides critical elk wintering grounds needed during harsh Montana winters.

It means the world to Brien and Gayle to be able to protect their ranch for the future, their family, and the people of the Bitterroot.

This gift of conservation gives the Webers peace of mind to know the ranch will always be open and beautiful for the future—while honoring their family heritage. James and Nellie, the young couple that planted roots in this valley in 1907, started it all. And thanks to generous supporters like YOU, we can preserve family traditions, honor the past, and protect open land for the future. Your support makes it all possible!





Alan and Lesley Maki



Dan and Sari Kerslake



Reed and Kari Trexler with sons Cash and Cole

NEXT GEN Working Lands

A lot can happen in 20 years. New generations come along with their own styles, slang, and fads. One thing has stayed true in the Bitterroot: we need farmers, ranchers and working lands. There's a new generation of farmers and ranchers, and they are steadfast in their determination to keep these traditions alive. They are building on the legacy the first generation of BRLT conservation easement donors created over the last 20 years. Meet Alan and Lesley Maki; Dan and Sari Kerslake, and Reed and Kari Trexler. These are the faces of the next generation of Bitterroot farmers and ranchers.

Alan and Lesley own and operate Maki Farms, where they sustainably raise beef cows on the James Property in Corvallis, conserved with BRLT and Jean James in 2003. Jean passed away long ago, but the lush green pastures of her land still provide the open space needed for Alan and Lesley to raise their cows today.

Dan and Sari have a thriving cattle operation in the Burnt Fork, on the outskirts of Stevensville. The ranch they now own and operate, was originally conserved with BRLT by Hattie Farrell in 2015. Hattie's vision was to make sure the ranch she and her late husband George had worked for over 50 years, would be there for the next generation of rancher to carry on its working lands heritage. Hattie lives in town now and remains close friends with the Kerslakes.

Reed and Kari managed the Wood Ranch in Corvallis over many years, all the while raising their young family. As next-generation landowners of the Wood Ranch, which was conserved in 2009 by the Wood family, Reed and Kari are making it possible for their sons, Cash and Cole, to follow in their footsteps someday.

Together, these families manage 469 acres of conserved working lands in the Bitterroot Valley. Thank You—Alan and Lesley, Dan and Sari, Reed and Kari—for being the next generation! We are so grateful to be working with these families, carrying on the traditions of working lands—lands that contribute to our local economy, local food sources, and way of life. And it's all possible because of your generous support!

It's more than your valley, it's your legacy.

Make a Difference in your community today with a gift to the Bitter Root Land Trust

WAYS TO GIVE:

Give a financial contribution by mail, on line, or in person. BRLT graciously accepts gifts of appreciated stock and gifts of land.

Become a sustaining member with a recurring monthly gift.

Give the gift of your time and expertise by volunteering for stewardship projects, at events, or in the office.

BITTER ROOT LAND TRUST ACCEPTS PLANNED GIFTS

You can build your own legacy representing your lifelong values and love for the landscapes of the Bitterroot Valley through a variety of planned giving options.

Planned gifts allow you to support the Bitter Root Land Trust's conservation work, while planning for your own future as well as that of your loved ones.

Types of Planned Gifts include, but are not limited to:

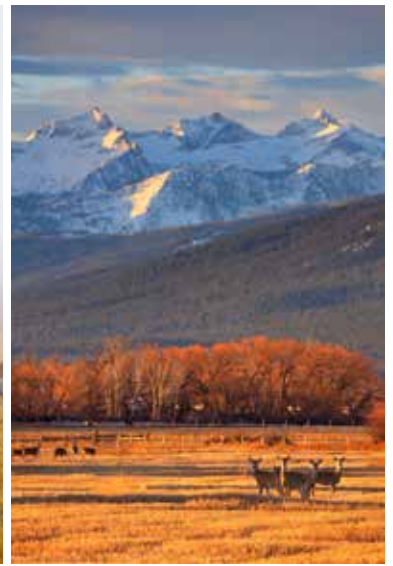
Bequests, Beneficiary Designations, Charitable Gift Annuities, and the Montana Endowment Tax Credit.



"A local land trust is so important to our Valley. I am so proud and thankful that I was given the opportunity to make a small contribution to this legacy by working with the Bitter Root Land Trust."

—Dan Severson, 4th generation Bitterroot rancher.





YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

In 2017, an additional 700 acres of open lands that stretch from Florence to Sula and include productive agricultural ground, wildlife habitat and scenic vistas will be conserved!

- Bitterroot Valley farms and ranches will continue production and remain an integral part of our economy and make sure the next generations of farmers can keep doing just that—farming.
- In Stevensville, the Sixty-One Bar Ranch will add an additional 510 acres of working lands to the existing 1,000 acres of BRLT conserved lands in the Burnt Fork area. We look forward to celebrating the completion of this project with the Smith family very soon!
- In Corvallis, 2 more families are adding their ranches to the 6 ranches already in conservation with BRLT!
- The Curdy-Rodriguez Ranch sits along Quast Lane, and will protect over 100 acres of hay ground, including a public amenity—Summerdale Park.
- The Auch Angus Ranch anchors the Corvallis agricultural corridor, continuing to piece together the conservation mosaic in the heart of the Bitterroot Valley.

There's More! Families partnering with BRLT are making sure these important places are protected:

- Approximately 1/3 mile of the Hedge Irrigation Ditch
- 600+ acres of agricultural grassland habitat that support elk, mule deer, raptors, sandhill cranes, bobolink and other locally important species can thrive in!
- 4 miles of Bitterroot River tributaries, including Burnt Fork Creek and Soft Rock Creek, Robertson Creek, North Swamp Creek, Spring Creek and Mill Fork—WOW!
- 25 acres of riparian habitat and 23 acres of pocket wetlands and ponds
- Scenic views along more than 3 ½ miles of County roads and ½ mile of Eastside Highway

Thank You for making this all possible with your support!

Letting Us Know

Whether you choose to inform us of your decision to include Bitter Root Land Trust in your will or estate plans is up to you. However, we greatly appreciate being informed so we can thank you and recognize your generous commitment.

For more information about any of these types of gifts, please contact us at (406) 375-0956.

The information provided herein is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to be tax or legal advice. Prior to making a gift to Bitter Root Land Trust, please consult a qualified financial advisor.

gavin.ricklefs@bitterrootlandtrust.org | 406.375.0956

Celebrating 20 years with a community barn dance

Out on the land was the place to be June 10th, 2017. The land trust and Cindy Jimmerson welcomed the community to the first ever Land Trust Barn Dance at her conserved farm in Victor. Middle Bear Farm was the perfect spot to celebrate all that Bitter Root Land Trust stands for: The clean, clear, trout-laden waters of Middle Bear Creek; the grassy meadow and elk calving grounds at the forest's edge; and the apple orchards, cultivated fields, and sheep operation - examples of working lands heritage and agricultural innovation. Middle Bear Farm's 117 acres showcase the incredible beauty present on BRLT's conservation projects from Florence to Sula which cover nearly 7,000 acres.

Despite the cold and blustery weather, we Bitterrooters braved the elements while a bit of sunshine, lots of warm smiles, and great conversations prevailed. 300 of you from all over the valley and beyond came together for an inspiring evening to celebrate 20

wonderful years of land conservation in the Bitterroot Valley. Everyone enjoyed a locally sourced barbecue dinner, walked around the farm, learned about its history and current agricultural innovations, and danced

the night away to a rockin' local country band—all on a beautiful conserved working farm! Proceeds from the barn dance went directly to more conservation work so we can continue protecting the places you love.





On The Big Screen

On Earth Day, April 22, 2017 the Bitter Root Land Trust partnered with Bitterroot Audubon, Montana Association of Land Trusts, Heart of the Rockies Initiative, and Victor School for an inspirational evening that highlighted the story of Montana private land conservation through the beautiful art of film. About 230 community members arrived at the Mary Stuart Rogers Performing Arts Center at Victor School to watch breathtaking and heartwarming films about regional and local private land conservation. The star of the night was *On the Shoulders of Giants*, a film that relates the history of our state's private land conservation pioneers through candid interviews and stunning cinematography. The bonus for the evening was a presentation by Kate Stone with Bitterroot Audubon about bald and golden eagles that make their way through the Bitterroot Valley, stopping along the Bitterroot River and wide open ranch-lands. A combination of photographs and video wowed the crowd (there were audible oohs and aaahs!) and illustrated just how important large expanses of open land—public and private alike—are to these majestic migrating birds of prey. After the show, everyone walked over to Cowboy Troy's for a bite to eat, a nice cold drink, and inspired conversation. Just in case you missed it, find out how you can watch these amazing films by contacting the land trust today!

Summer Intern And So Much More

The land trust was lucky enough to have a high school intern this past spring, coming in a few days a week to work on administrative projects, dive into social media content creation, and add a fun and vibrant presence to the office. Little did we know Elise Striebel would do all those things, and give so much more. Elise worked over the course of a few months, making a positive impact in the office and at our events. With our events ramping up, and summer break starting, we saw a fantastic opportunity to continue Elise's work at the land trust. Naturally, we pinched ourselves when we were able to hire her as our summer intern—thanks to a generous donor! Elise continued to be an asset to the land trust, promoting events, welcoming visitors into the office, and connecting the organization to the young people of our community.

We learned a lot from Elise. We learned young people of this valley care deeply about this place. They believe in the intrinsic value of our rivers, wildlife habitat, and working lands. This connection is why we all are passionate about and support this work. It's so we, and the future generations of this valley will have these open spaces—FOREVER. Our time with Elise has re-energized and re-affirmed our commitment to protect this wondrous place for the future; for young people like Elise.



TOUR OF THE BITTERROOT

65 RIDERS

30 VOLUNTEERS

41 BUSINESS SPONSORS

\$21K NET FUNDS RAISED

Local businesses, riders, and volunteers all came together on July 16, 2017 and raised over \$21,000 toward more conservation of local farms and ranches, open land for wildlife to roam, and cold clean, water in our rivers and streams for native trout. Thank you to the 65 riders, 30 volunteers, and 41 generous Bitterroot Valley businesses for a celebration of open lands! What better way to spend a sunny summer day than on your bicycle, riding alongside the Bitterroot River, Sleeping Child Creek, and conserved ranchlands.



BIG CREEK COFFEE ROASTERS • BIG SKY EYE CARE • BITTERROOT LAUNDRY • BITTERROOT VET CLINIC • BOB WARD AND SON'S • BOYLE, DEVENEY, & MEYER, P.C. • BRADLEY O'S • CANYON'S ATHLETIC CLUB • EVANS ACE HARDWARE • FARMERS STATE BANK • GENTLE DENTAL • HAMILTON PHYSICAL THERAPY • JONES KORMAN INSURANCE • KINETICO QUALITY WATER SYSTEMS • LAKELAND FEED AND SUPPLY • MARCUS DALY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL • MIKESSELL'S FINE JEWELRY • MILDENBERGER MOTORS • MURDOCH'S • NORMAN C WHEELER & ASSOCIATES • PAPER CLIP • PAYNE WEST INSURANCE • RAVALLI COUNTY BANK • RAVALLI FAMILY MEDICINE • RAYMOND JAMES • RIVER RISING • ROBBINS ON MAIN • SMITH CONSTRUCTION • SPICE OF LIFE • TAKE TWO SALON • VALLEY IRRIGATION

GSK

ORANGE DAY

The land trust once again gets to thank GlaxoSmithKline for contributing to community conservation and stewardship by celebrating its annual “Orange Day” – a day of community-service for employees. In late June, nearly 80 GSK employees turned out in orange t-shirts with shovels, gloves, and smiles to give the City of Hamilton’s parks—River Park, Hieronymous Park, and Steve Powell Park—some much needed attention. GSK employees stained benches and picnic tables, cleared trails and fallen debris and pulled a mountain of the noxious weeds, including hounds tongue. Some built bird nesting boxes and hung them throughout the parks. While others protected and mulched recently planted trees.

A community conservation project that established a new, natural park for the City of Hamilton in 2014, Steve Powell Park lacked signage welcoming visitors and displaying information about the natural resources of the park. As part of the GSK Orange Day, One group of volunteers also built frames for the newly completed signs for Steve Powell Park, and another mounted the signs to the frames. The Bitter Root Land Trust partnered with the City of Hamilton and Hamilton High School to create signs for the park. Two high school seniors, Ryan Thomas and Kevin Reeves, with the direction of their CAD/CAM teacher, Brent Holmes, hand crafted signs in exchange for college scholarships. The seniors built the signs from scratch, programmed the imagery, then printed and stained the wooden signs. Local artists, Jennifer Ogden and Karen Savory created custom artwork for the signs. GSK volunteers erected the frames and hung the beautiful informational signs during the volunteer event.





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