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InLandNEWS



Blissful moments of mindful waking

Photo by Angela Marie

Letter from the Executive Director

By Dave Schaub, Executive Director

In the last couple of years, I have adopted a morning meditation practice to help start my day off right. I wake up pre-dawn, drink a quick cup of coffee, and walk out to the treehouse I built for my kids 13 years ago. There I settle onto my cushion and aspire to rest my busy mind, notice the dawn unfolding around me, and let my awareness sway in the wind. Sometimes I find myself softening; I loosen my clenched fist of identity, productivity, and judgment and I connect to the steady flow of experience that surrounds me. These are blissful moments of mindful waking.

Innumerable times, however, I find that, instead, I've wandered down well-worn paths of distraction – dwelling on the workday ahead or behind, remembering chores undone and obligations to come, re-hashing some incident in my marriage, parenting, or friendships. These are the mundane distractions that pull me away from my awareness of the present.

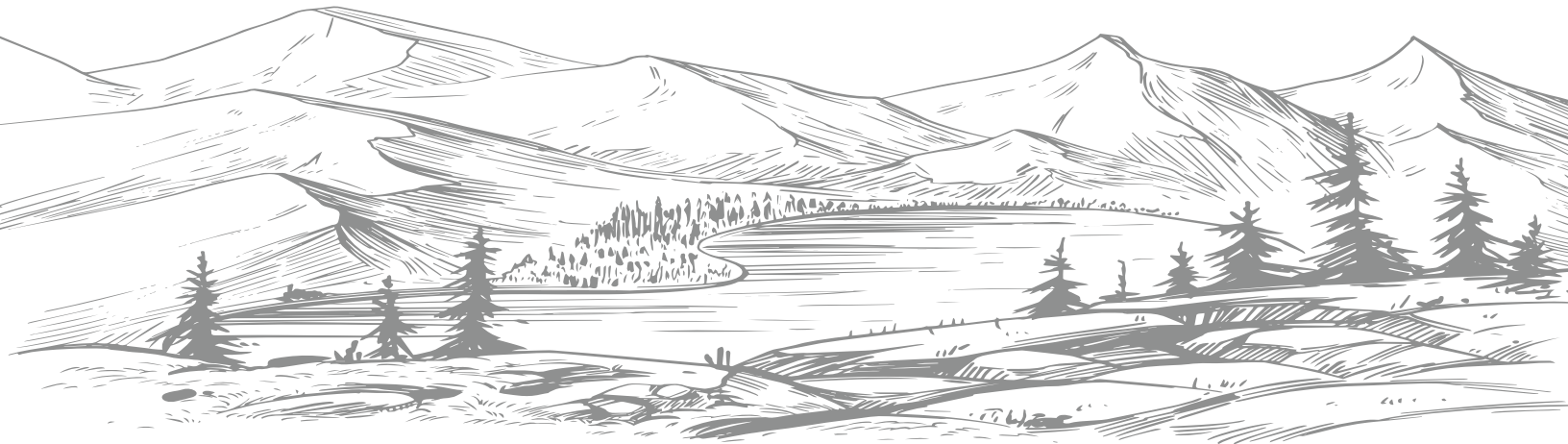
Practicing mindfulness is hard enough when pursued with intention – like sitting with eyes closed on a meditation cushion. It's way harder throughout the rest of the day. Our busy lives, full of noisy distractions coming at us from all sides, can leave most of us anxious and distressed much of the time.

I'd suggest that the same is true for an organization. Here at the Conservancy, it is so easy to find ourselves sprinting on the treadmill of productivity, spurred on by the urgency and need for our impact. When we're constantly rushing ahead, however, we can lose track of the core connection to our work, our deep love of nature, and direct connection with the lands and waters that sustain us.



As spring blossoms around us I want to encourage us all to pause. Take a breath. Step outside and feel the wind move us. Recognize all that we have to be thankful for in the songs of birds, the fractal unfolding of new growth on trees, the trickling melody of water meandering across the landscape.

We are grateful to be part of this conservation community with you. Thank you for the generous investments you make to help achieve the lasting impact cataloged throughout this edition of our newsletter. Thanks to you all, the Conservancy is protecting more vital habitat, engaging more folks on the land, and caring for more of the special places we love than ever before. There is so much to celebrate in that. But I also want to remind us all to take our foot off the gas pedal and mindfully engage with our surroundings. We are in this for the long haul, and our pace must be sustainable. ■



Meditating in Nature

By Andi Chatburn, Conservancy Volunteer and Spiritual Companion with Chatburn Companionship and Rewilding Retreats

Meditation is the moment of noticing, without judgment, that your thoughts have wandered away from the present moment. This can happen anywhere and at any time throughout your day. Walking among the trees and birds is one of my favorite ways to meditate – to be present in my body in each moment. Here are three of my favorite exercises that bring me back when my monkey mind starts to run away with the circus of modern life.

Breath

There are several ways to get back into the present moment in nature with your breath. One is through a walking meditation. Here you can match your inhale and exhale with a steady number of steps at any speed. Maybe start with taking four steps for every phase of breath and play with your cadence, lengthening the number of steps per exhale or shortening your inhale.

Feet

The late Zen Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh uses the phrase “kiss the ground with your feet.” Walk slowly and tenderly, maybe even barefoot, moving your heels and toes in a way that reflects the soil, the body of the Earth, as a lover. How might you move if you were kissing the ground with your soles?

Heart and Imagination

Talking across the species barrier is a meditation that comes from the work of psychologist Bill Plotkin, PhD, in his books on nature and the human soul. As you walk through wildish lands, begin to introduce yourself to members of the more-than-human world, greeting them as friends. Listen as you wander and pay attention. Notice with all your senses and intuitive knowing. This knowing is like a gut feeling, one that is not based on direct evidence or reasoning.



PHOTO CREDIT: Sonja Aletter

About the Author: *When she's not working in ethics at area hospitals, Andi (pictured right) volunteers as a hike docent with your Conservancy and guides personal rewilding retreats honoring the turning of the seasons over the equinoxes and solstices. Learn more at andichatburn.net*



10

Volunteers leading guided hikes for the Conservancy



89

Plant species found and identified during citizen science projects

Hike Docent Profile: Mark Merhab

By Mark Merhab, Conservancy Volunteer

Many people who have recently retired ask themselves, "What do I do now that I have such an open schedule?" I've personally asked myself this question. Fortunately, my wife knows Todd Dunfield, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy's Public Lands Protection Specialist, whom I met with to discuss the Conservancy and its need for volunteers. With my background as a forester for the US Forest Service, and my love of nature and hiking, the Hike Docent program with the Conservancy was a perfect fit.

For several months, I attended Conservancy hikes on lands it played a part in protecting. I studied the region's history and geography by reading local writer Jack Nisbet's wonderful series of books. In 2023, I led a few hikes as an official Hike Docent. Now in 2024, I look forward to continuing this new chapter in my retired life!

My love of nature and the outdoors was born while tent camping as a child with my family in Ohio and Michigan. In my adult life, I pursued a career in forestry, moved to the great Northwest and worked in the forests of Montana and Idaho. While my career focus changed, my love of nature did not.

Hiking and being in nature have always brought me a sense of peace, tranquility and a closeness to the natural world, something that gets lost in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Learning of the Conservancy, it was clear to me that being a Hike Docent could get me back into nature, while spreading the word about the important work this organization is doing for our region. ■

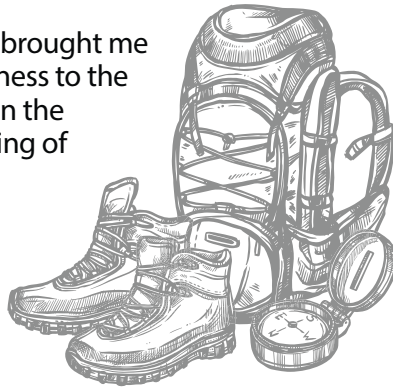


PHOTO CREDIT: Sonja Aletter

▶ Mark Merhab enjoying a sunny day at Palisades Park



"If you're interested in learning more about the Conservancy and you enjoy getting outside, consider joining one of our guided hikes! My experience with this program has been just wonderful. You meet folks of all ages and backgrounds who share their experiences in nature as we trek along the trail. Laughter, some exercise, and frequent sightings of local flora and fauna result in a great way to spend part of a day." - Mark Merhab

Visit inlandnwland.org/events to join a guided hike!



297

People engaged in hikes or other events on the land in 2023



Photo by Sam Richardson

Take Pause with Tiny Nature: The Long-toed Salamander

By Rose Richardson, Stewardship Director

As winter slowly releases its grasp on the Little Spokane River Valley and the soils and duff begin to thaw, so too does one of our many native, amphibious friends: the Long-toed Salamander.

His little heart thumps a bit faster now, warmer and ready for movement. His tail is thin after a long winter of brumation, a state of sluggishness or inactivity exhibited by reptiles during cooler months. His kin awaken as he does and quickly disperse. They've all got cabin fever after being cooped up in their underground dwelling for so many months.

His green back arches out of the dirt, colored like fresh moss after a good rain. It's as if he's encouraging the budding plants to open their leaves and join him in his verdancy. His underside, is like a starry night sky: dark and speckled with thousands of fine white dots that form galaxy-like swirls on his soft belly. His long toes stretch in the warming spring air.

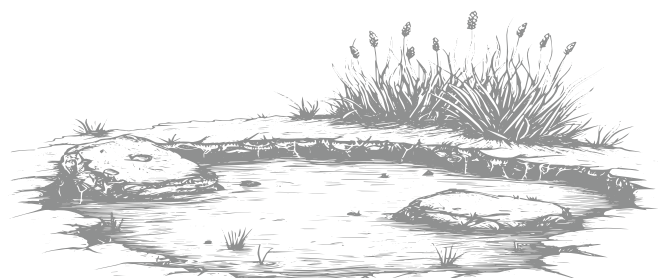
It's as if he's encouraging the budding plants to open their leaves and join him in his verdancy.

The Long-toed Salamander is common in Washington and northern Idaho. A highly adaptable species of mole salamander, it can live in a wide variety of habitats from coastal rainforests to sagebrush plains to alpine meadows. All they need is a secluded place with a little water and an old rodent burrow in which to take shelter

in. As waters begin to warm, these salamanders will feed on insect larvae found in puddles, reducing the overabundance of pests like mosquitoes. Throughout the spring, they will mate and lay eggs, large orbs of jelly suspended in still water close to shore. Salamanders, like many amphibians, are indicators of ecosystem health. If habitat health declines, so too will the population of salamanders.

It is up to each one of us to respect species like the Long-toed Salamander. Like all amphibians, salamanders rely on clean water, a debris-free environment, and space to roam the moist habitats of our region without stress or unnecessary handling by humans. As you spend time outside, keep your four-legged friends on a leash and pick up (and pack out) their waste to reduce physical or environmental disturbance. Remove any trash you find and give the salamanders space if you see them. Their skin is highly sensitive and must remain moist and toxin-free in order to take in oxygen. Handling them can introduce toxins, bacteria, or infection and compromise their ability to absorb oxygen through their moist skin.

As we welcome spring, we hope you'll join us in celebrating the return of our amphibious friends, too. ■



Support for People and the Planet

By Gillian Rowe, Philanthropy and Communications Assistant

As you stroll through your local grocery store aisles you may recognize popular natural food brands such as Bob's Red Mill and Primal Kitchen. This is partially due to natural and organic food broker GreenSpoon. GreenSpoon works with grocery stores and brands to promote products that positively impact people, community and the environment.

"As time goes on you really have an understanding of how important it is to protect that land." -Brett Bowman

As a member of 1% for the Planet, GreenSpoon commits to donating at least 1% of annual sales to environmental organizations. It also encourages its employees to take a break from work and get involved in their local communities.

GreenSpoon's Promotion Support Manager Brett Bowman found the Conservancy on 1% for the Planet's directory of non-profit organizations to support. After rallying his team, Bowman met with the Conservancy's Preserve Manager, Steven Eddington, at Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve to remove invasive species and stage plants for an upcoming event.

Having visited Waikiki Springs before, Bowman already had a special connection to the land. "When I was younger, I just took it for granted. Especially living in

Spokane my whole life, we just had all of these outdoor spaces to go. Then as you watch a city grow, like Spokane has, you see places disappear," says Bowman. "As time goes on you really have an understanding of how important it is to protect that land."

Bowman is grateful to work for an organization that prioritizes giving back to the community and protecting the environment. He hopes to spread his love for the outdoors in his personal life as well as through his work at GreenSpoon.

We're grateful for all our local 1% for the Planet businesses who choose to support the Conservancy. Our work is powered by your partnership. ■



GreenSpoon employees volunteering at Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve

Powered by Partnership

Measure Meant

The Conservancy's partnership with Measure Meant, a social impact consulting group that guides businesses toward a more sustainable future, landed us in the 1% for the Planet non-profit directory last year, enabling companies like GreenSpoon to find us. Learn more about how Measure Meant is helping businesses live out their passion for people and planet right here in the Inland Northwest at [measurepnw.com](https://www.measurepnw.com)

KSPS PBS

This March, local television station KSPS PBS offered their listeners a special way to give back to the community and local environment. Each person who became a public television sustainer starting in mid-March also contributed to planting one native plant at the Conservancy's Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve. A huge shout out to all our new members who joined during this member drive! Thank you KSPS for being a fantastic advocate for the Conservancy and our local natural spaces.



945

Native trees planted at Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve in 2023

North Idaho Green Summit

The Idaho Panhandle is arguably one of the most beautiful places to live in the Lower 48! The crystalline rivers and lakes, towering forests, verdant meadows, and big skies make this a special haven for those wanting to live close to nature. But with populations increasing and the environment under constant threat, it can seem like the way of life we've come to love is under attack. But all is not lost! The North Idaho Green Summit brings together experts who offer answers to the question of what average citizens can do to create a healthy, sustainable future for this region. A keynote address by Hemene James of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe will frame the day through the eyes of people who lived in harmony with land and water for time immemorial, inspiring attendees to attend various break-out sessions in which they'll be given concrete knowledge and actions to care for the home we all love.

Saturday, May 18 | 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church,
521 E Lakeside Avenue, Coeur d'Alene, ID
.....
Tickets are \$15 for individuals and \$25 for families
Purchase at: kealliance.org

Inland Northwest Land Conservancy will be one of the presenting sponsors!

She'll Ski There Too

By Carol Corbin, Philanthropy and Communications Director

"When h*ll freezes over, I'll ski there too." The sticker on the back of the Subaru in the parking lot wasn't surprising at all, now that I know just a bit about Sonja Aletter. An avid skier, passionate pet mom, and Chief Executive Officer of eTT Aviation based in Boise, Idaho, Sonja has also recently named Inland Northwest Land Conservancy in her estate plan. "It's the trees; I just love the trees," she told me over coffee on a dreary day in January. Most years, every Tuesday during the winter is ski day, but this year there have been slim pickings on the hill. Her last visit to 49 Degrees North resulted in long waits, over-skied runs, and slush. But her love of skiing still shines through.

Born and raised in Germany, she fell in love with nature in a small patch of woods on the outskirts of her hometown. Here she spent endless days playing and exploring with her cousins and neighborhood kids. When she moved to Texas at 18, the foreign feeling was less about people, culture, and language and more about the absence of trees. More than two decades later, after sleeping with the windows open in Santa Cruz, California in July, she knew it was time to leave the mosquito-ridden, treeless oven of San Antonio for someplace green with four seasons and her beloved trees.

That was eight years ago, and even though her remote career would allow her to work from anywhere, Sonja confidently

continued on page 15 >



▶ Sonja Aletter hiking with her pack, Lily and Tavi, at Waikiki Springs.



6-82

Age range of volunteers who worked with us in 2023

Your Impact in 2023

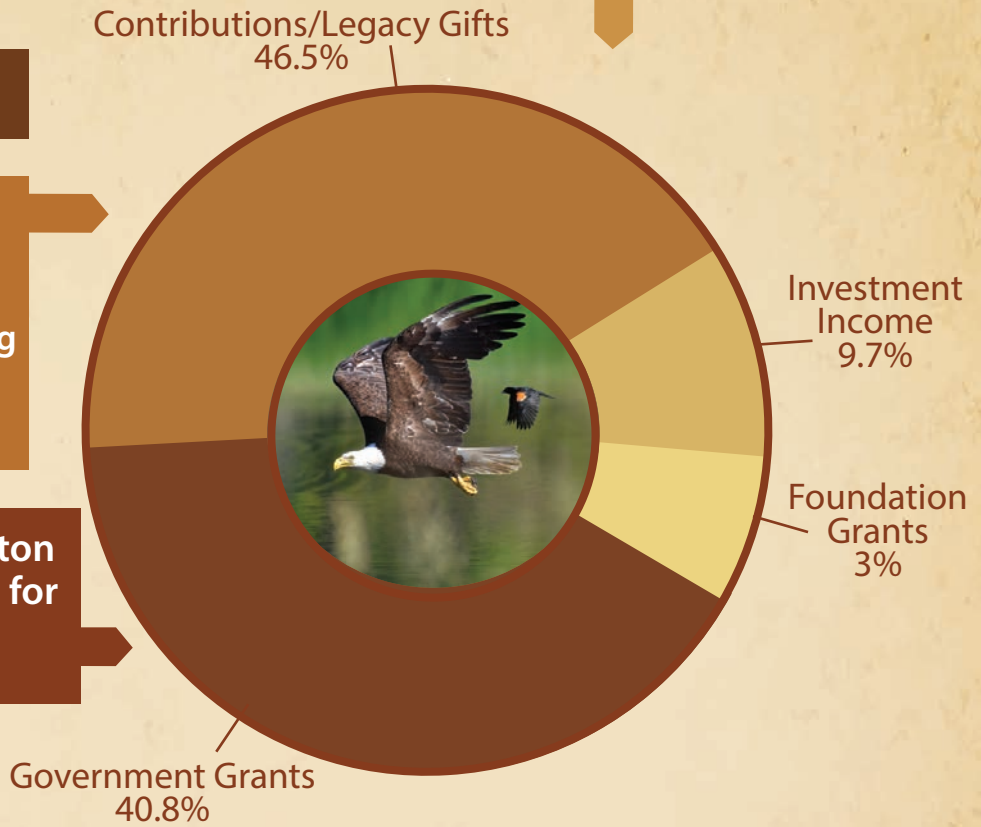
January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

That's YOU
Thank you!

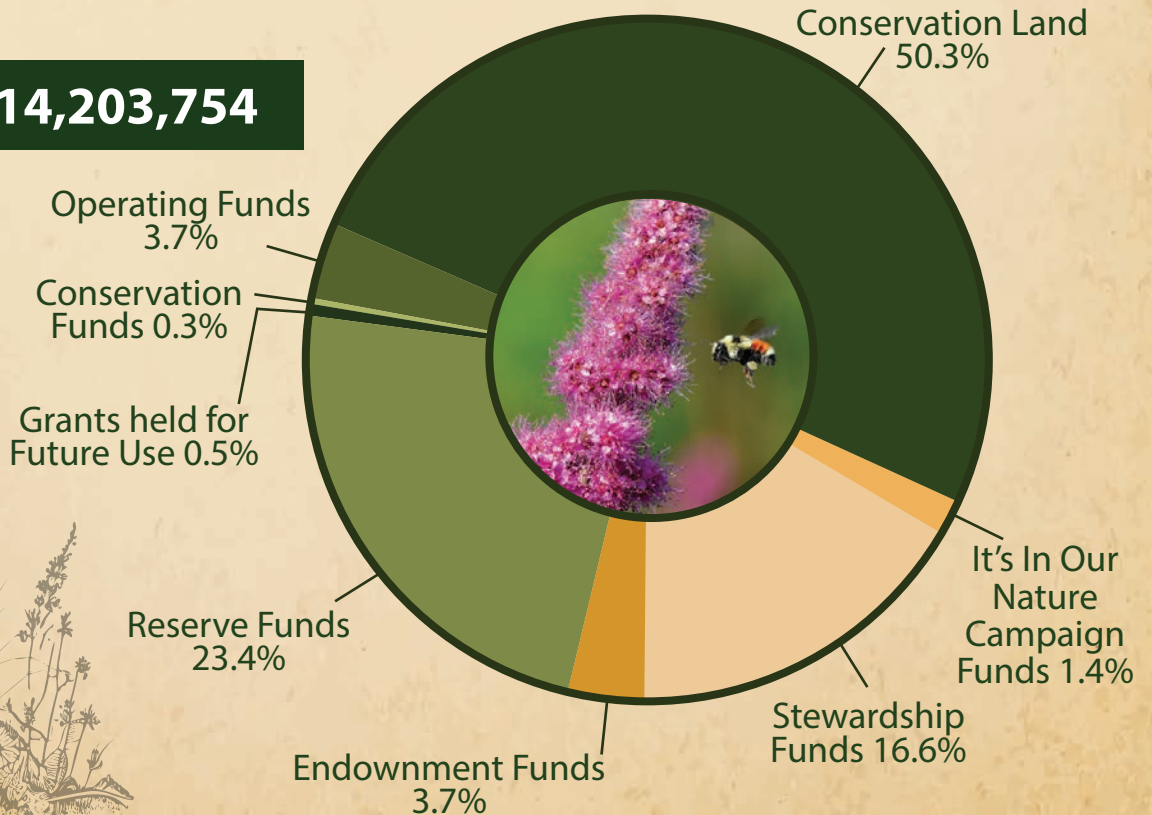
REVENUES: \$7,371,890

A generous donor who's been giving to the Conservancy since its inception in 1991 made an early estate gift of \$2M, supporting our Stewardship and Operating Support Funds

Includes \$3M from the Washington State Department of Commerce for the Glen Tana purchase
see page 13

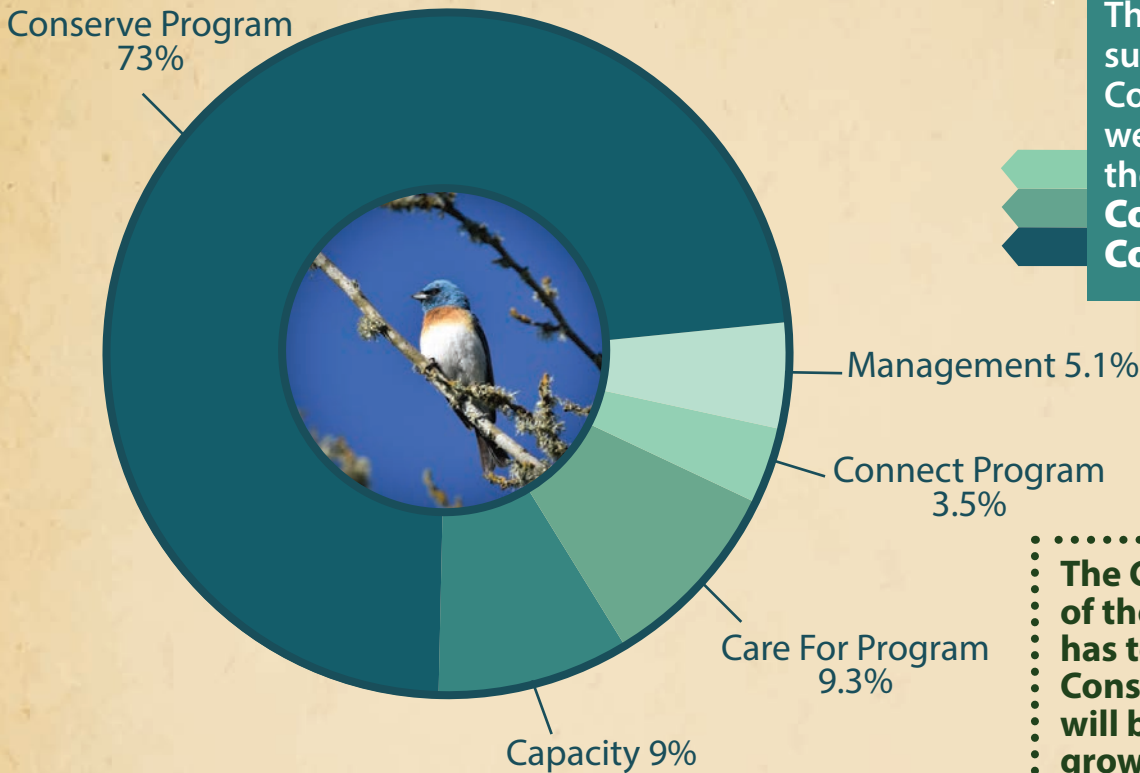


NET ASSETS: \$14,203,754





EXPENSES: \$2,878,261



Thanks to your generous support, nearly 75% of the Conservancy's expenses went straight back into the land, through our **Conserve, Care For and Connect Programs.**

The Conservancy's purchase of the Glen Tana property has temporarily reduced our Conservation Funds, which will be built back up, and grown, through our sale of the land to Washington State Parks and the Spokane Tribe of Indians along with the proceeds from our capital campaign.

see page 13

REVENUES: \$7,371,834

Contributions/Legacy Gifts.....	\$3,427,728
Government Grants.....	\$3,008,109
Foundation Grants.....	\$222,188
Investment Income.....	\$713,865

EXPENSES: \$2,878,261

Conserve Program	\$2,101,386
Care For Program.....	\$257,758
Connect Program	\$101,548
Management	\$157,462
Capacity	\$260,107

NET ASSETS: \$14,203,754

Operating Funds.....	\$521,927
Reserve Funds.....	\$3,329,062
Stewardship Funds	\$2,358,332
Conservation Funds	\$43,056
Endowment Funds.....	\$526,476
Conservation Land.....	\$7,147,301
It's In Our Nature Campaign Fund.....	\$200,962
Grants Held for Future Use.....	\$76,638

Complete audited financial reports are available upon request

Photos by Angela Marie



Westwind Timber and Wildlife Conservancy

By Caroline Woodwell, Conservancy Volunteer
Photos by Lorenzo Menendez



When Bob and Cindy Oswald moved 20 miles north from Hayden to the base of Bernard Peak in 1995, they knew they were moving to a beautiful piece of Kootenai County, Idaho. Their new place had everything: farmland, a mix of forest types, a panoramic view of Mount Spokane and the Valley, home to elk, deer, and moose that roam the land.

What they didn't know then was that nearly 30 years later they would join with the Conservancy to protect their new home. In December of 2023, the Oswald family placed a conservation agreement that allows development of only one more lot on their 117-acre parcel. The remaining land will be undeveloped for all of time.

Westwind, as the Oswalds call their land, is just one mile from Buttonhook Bay at the south end of Lake Pend Oreille. It's adjacent to working timberlands and national forests, making the parcel part of continuous habitat for several threatened or endangered species. A stream across the property disappears underground to recharge the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, and a mix of grasses, shrubs and towering trees provide a varied landscape for wildlife.

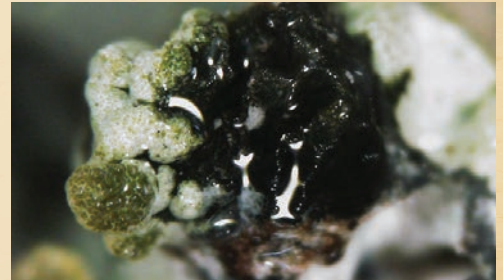
Todd Dunfield, Public Lands Protection Specialist at the Conservancy notes that the property is one of the last hundred-acre parcels of private land bordering the Coeur d'Alene National Forest. There's a place along the county road, he says, where people stop to watch herds of elk "feeding in the field, against a backdrop of forest and mountains. It's got that captivating beauty; the kind of beauty people drive to—to sit and be gobsmacked by nature."

Cindy was a magazine journalist and then a social worker in Spokane and Coeur d'Alene. She was drawn to work with youth in juvenile detention and taught life skills to youth who were leaving foster care. Cindy was also a 4H Horse leader for 15 years. With the density of housing in Hayden, this beautiful land became a place to ride and raise horses. For years she and Bob grew their own hay, until the elk were eating more than they could harvest for the horses. Now they enjoy the herd of elk, the deer, the moose and occasionally, a lynx.

Zoom In: Capturing Nature's Details

Photos by Gavin Christensen

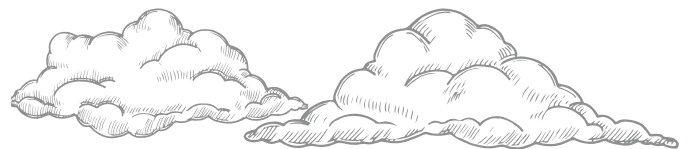
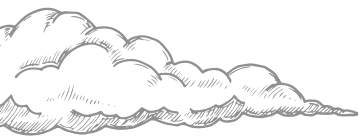
Take a closer look at what nature has to offer. Can you identify the six images below?



1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

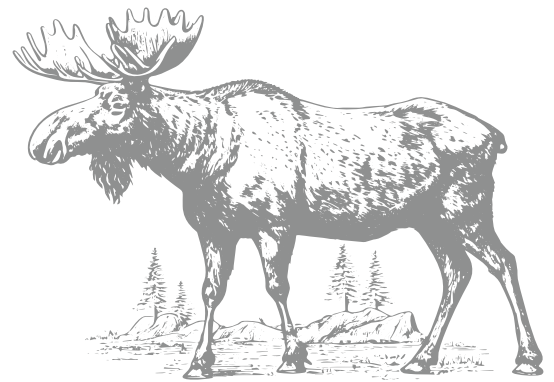


Bob, who runs a foundry in Hayden, appreciates the changes in the landscape over time including burned stumps still left after the fire of 1910 (read *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan to learn more), the mix of wildlife over the years, and the blend of small shrub vegetation and mature trees. Not long ago, Bob says, they got a personal-looking letter in the mail, that offered to buy their property. They realized that they could become part of the new development filling the Rathdrum Prairie and the Route 95 corridor, or they could protect their land.

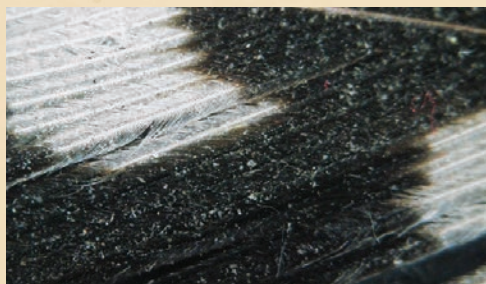
With this conservation agreement, Cindy and Bob become part of a legacy themselves. In 2007 Cindy's mother, Phyllis Mott, protected her 52 acres at Lake Cocolalla with help from the Conservancy. Like the Oswalds' land, Phyllis' property is forested, with extensive wetlands and a cedar grove. Although Phyllis did not live to see the Oswalds sign their conservation agreement, she would have been proud of them. These two projects, finalized nearly 20 years apart, are the first mother-daughter conservation deals with the Conservancy. ■

**"We're here for only so many years of our own lives and we need to leave a legacy."
-Cindy Oswald**

Mindful of the global threats to land and wildlife, Bob and Cindy recognize the role of local preservation. "We need to preserve this land," says Cindy. "We're here for only so many years of our own lives and we need to leave a legacy."



Key on page 14



4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

Walking Glen Tana

By Gay Witherspoon, Landowner and Conservancy Volunteer

Walking Glen Tana over the years has enriched and enlightened me. I am Gay Witherspoon, married into the family who grew up on this land. Every day the landscape is familiar but never the same. Discoveries (I think of them as secrets) are in the changing but also in the enduring features.

Recently I've been pondering how nature seems to measure success in terms of perseverance. The big field just north of Rutter Parkway was purchased well over a hundred years ago from the Lockhart family to become part of Glen Tana. It is remarkable how few signs of the people have survived but there are three apple trees and a yellow rose bush sitting in one upper corner. No person has watered, fertilized or tended them for decades. One tree died not too long ago but the other two bloom and produce apples still. The rose bush is covered in flowers every spring. Pines slowly repopulate the field's upper portions and creep toward the lower field. Living plants endure as the metal junk rusts and is covered in dirt. There is neither "good" nor "bad," just what survives. The capacity to last--another day, another year, another challenge--and a bit of luck are what matter. Look up at the rocky cliffs and marvel at the small and huge pine trees emerging from the rocks.

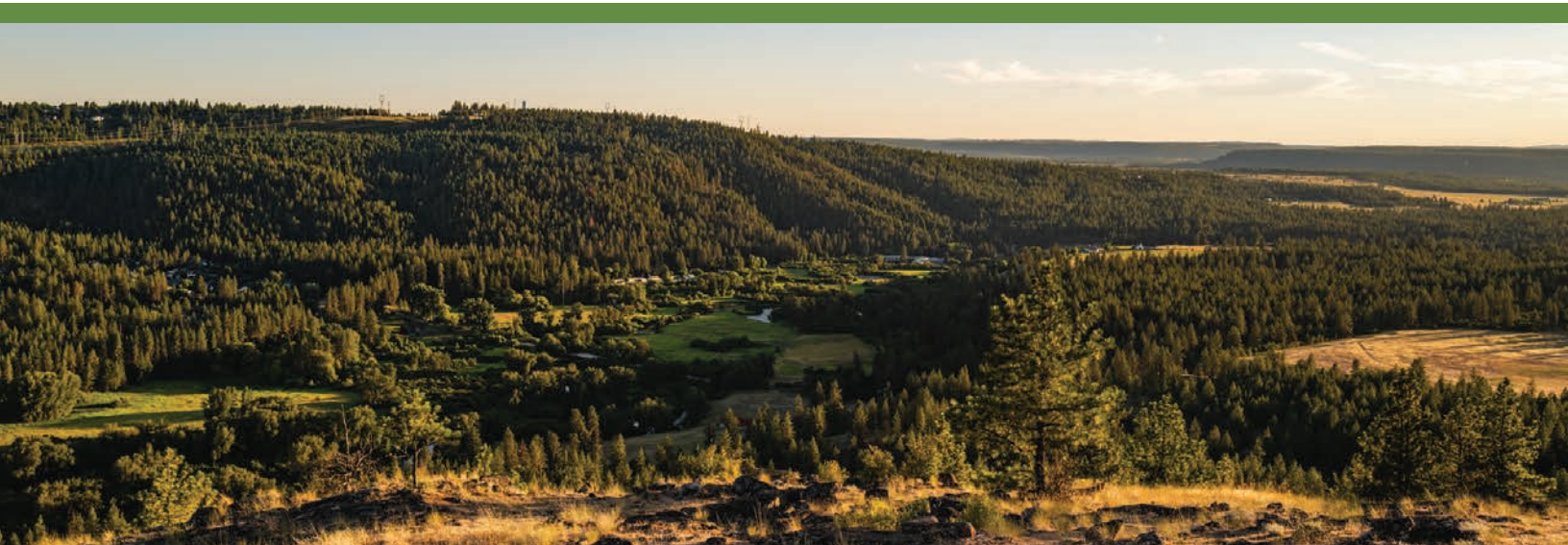
I cross this field almost every walk, with no lasting impact on the surroundings, but I am acknowledged. I am a part of the picture. The coyote watches from afar; the deer may or may not run from my presence and the hawk might cry and move to another tree. It is somehow comforting to just exist as a tiny part of a much larger scheme. How much older are the trees and rocks? My passing is insignificant.

"Perspective" is a closely related gift and tied to perseverance, but what a gift it is. The human worries and concerns carried on a walk that are so urgent at first diminish as you progress. Sometimes it's like finding the puzzle piece that's eluded you. After you walk away for a while, then take a new look, it is right there. You find that an answer suddenly appears. As new things catch your eye, wonder begins.

The changing things, the surprises, are often the most fun: the first sight of yellow, blooming arrowleaf balsamroot, dewy small webs at the tips of pine boughs on a foggy morning, falling frost glittering the air on a blue-sky day. Don't even get me started on the animals! There's not enough space. But I will tell you I once locked eyes with the closest of three mule deer twenty feet from me and the two preoccupied German shepherds I had on leashes in front of me. The deer stood frozen, wary but not terrified. We looked into each other's eyes as we passed and came to an agreement and an acknowledgment. The dogs never saw the deer. It was unforgettable.

Surprises and secrets are better discovered than revealed. Take a walk in the wild, not a run or a bike ride, but at a human pace, a walk. Become a part of the wild but only a tiny piece.

I look forward to sharing this place with more visitors: the big dramatic vistas from the high spots, the little gifts close at hand and all the spaces in between. When the time comes, Glen Tana will be there much as it has always been because it has persisted and will endure. It is with a very full and grateful heart, that I thank all who have participated, and all who will participate, in the preservation of this beautiful piece of Spokane. ■





IT'S IN
OUR
NATURE



“Changing but enduring”

By Sally Pritchard, Conservancy board member and capital campaign committee chair

The Glen Tana property that Gay Witherspoon describes so beautifully is changing. Ownership has changed from the Witherspoon family to Inland Northwest Land Conservancy and will eventually change again to Washington State Parks and the Spokane Tribe. Management practices will change, as the land is actively managed for habitat protection and restoration. Public access will change, once the funding is appropriated for most of the property to become part of Riverside State Park. But the land will endure. The pine trees will continue their march to reclaim former pastureland, and the mule deer and other wildlife will thrive.

As many of us do, Gay finds herself in nature. “I am part of the picture.” As Conservancy staff and volunteers work over the next several years to complete the project of protecting Glen Tana forever, we will be turning to community members to see themselves in the Glen Tana picture as well. Look for opportunities to attend Conservancy events to learn about what’s planned for the property, explore the land on a docent-led hike (the land remains closed for public access until it is transferred to State Parks), and yes, contribute funds to help make the vision of enduring open space and wildlife habitat along the Little Spokane River a reality.

Together, we’re writing the next, enduring chapter of the Glen Tana story. **It’s in our nature.** ■



51 | Chinook salmon released into the Little Spokane River at our newest Glen Tana project area



4,558 | New acres protected through legal agreements and land purchase in 2023

Harnessing the Power of Qualified Charitable Distributions: A Gift for Nature Conservation

By Megan M. Lewis, JD, LLM in Taxation

As stewards of the land, we are constantly exploring innovative ways to preserve the beauty and biodiversity of our natural spaces. One unique and impactful method for supporting Inland Northwest Land Conservancy that not only benefits the environment but also provides you with financial advantages is a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

A convenient and hassle-free way to contribute to the causes you care about

Qualified Charitable Distributions are distributions made by people aged 70½ or older from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) directly to eligible non-profit organizations, such as Inland Northwest Land Conservancy. This method presents a win-win scenario, offering advantages for both donors and land conservancy efforts.

Making a QCD to Inland Northwest Land Conservancy is a powerful way to support its mission of protecting natural habitats. Your generous contributions directly contribute to the acquisition, legal protection, and stewardship of critical lands, ensuring they remain untouched by development and are safeguarded for generations to come.

Moreover, QCDs come with significant financial benefits for donors. Typically, when you make a distribution from your IRA to your bank account, that amount is treated as

income and taxed accordingly. Distributions from IRAs are required starting when you turn 73 years old, even if you don't need to use the distribution for your support yet.

However, when you make a qualified charitable distribution, the amount is excluded from your taxable income, reducing your overall tax liability, and potentially decreasing your tax bracket. In 2024, you may give up to \$105,000 to a qualified charity using a QCD. This tax-efficient strategy allows you to maximize the impact of your contribution, enabling you to give more while potentially lowering your tax burden. It's a thoughtful and strategic way to align your philanthropic goals with your financial planning.

To explore the possibility of making a Qualified Charitable Distribution to Inland Northwest Land Conservancy or including it in other estate planning tools, I encourage you to consult with your financial advisor, IRA administrator, and estate planning attorney. ■

About the Author: *Megan M. Lewis of Megan Lewis Law, PLLC has practiced estate planning, probate, business and tax law for over 15 years. She graduated from Gonzaga University School of Law and earned an advanced degree in tax law from the University of Washington. She serves clients across Washington State and often works virtually while sailing the world. For estate planning assistance, she can be reached through her website at www.meganlewislaw.com*



KEY FOR MACRO IMAGES

1. Deer leg bone
2. Tree bark

3. Bone Lichen
4. Sylvite

5. Flicker feather
6. Redwing Blackbird feather

< continued from page 7

calls Spokane home. She and her dogs, Lily and Tavi (short for Octavius) walk nearly every day on the trails at Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve. When she moved to the Mead area almost two years ago, she was just desperate to find a home but was delighted to find a trail system less than a mile from her front door. Now, other early morning hikers and dog walkers at Waikiki Springs recognize Sonja and her “pack,” greeting her, chatting about life, and exchanging text messages and visits during off-hiking hours. The sense of community, paired with the serenity of the Little Spokane River in the morning keeps her coming back.

And that’s how she found out about the Conservancy. One day on her hike, she noticed a booth with a Conservancy volunteer who shared information about who we are and what we do with local land conservation. For Sonja, the fit was clear. Protecting wild, natural spaces in which people could connect with something bigger than themselves in perpetuity is at the core of who she is. In her estate plan, taking care of her pets who may outlast her is top priority, and making sure that this community has parks, trails, and wild places is a close second.

Sonja told me about a moment on the trail when she paused to absorb the blessing of nature and honor the animals of the four directions. As she closed her eyes, arms outstretched, and connected with the earth, she sensed the

presence of the buffalo and the wolf. The spiritual power of being such a small part of something so much bigger, she says, is a critical piece of being human, of finding empathy and compassion, of being well and whole. Those are the experiences that she hopes her legacy gift will provide long into the future.

“If others can set aside any amount,” she said of estate planning, “in support of the Conservancy’s work, that can go a really long way to preserving what we are currently able to experience in nature.”

As Director of Philanthropy, but more importantly, as a lover of the natural world, I (Carol) am deeply grateful to everyone who decides to include the Conservancy in their estate plan. The trust you’ve placed in our collective vision for the future is humbling and inspiring.

Dozens of local people just like you have made a permanent commitment to the vision of conservation by including Inland Northwest Land Conservancy in their estate plans. If you would like to learn more about what an estate gift could mean for local conservation, call our office at (509) 328-2939 or email me at ccorbin@inlandnwland.org. I'd love to learn more about your story and how Inland Northwest Land Conservancy could help to realize your vision for the future of our community. ■



**RAISE
YOUR
GAZE**

**BREATHE
IN YOUR
LOVE OF
NATURE**



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For more information visit our website at www.inlandnmland.org or follow us on Facebook and Instagram at [InlandNWLand](#).



24,417

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**Visitors to
 Waikiki Springs Nature
 Preserve in 2023**



Photo by Sonja Aletter

Your financial support makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the Inland Northwest every day!

YOUR SUPPORT IN THE LAST YEAR MEANS:



3

Benches installed at Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve



52

Active volunteer land stewards engaged on protected properties



2,900

Feet of new protected shoreline



933

New acres of wetland protected