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InLandNEWS



IT'S IN OUR NATURE

PHOTO CREDIT: ANGELA MARIE

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Toni Pessemier, *Board President, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy*



As the air cools and the leaves begin to change color, I think about how seasonal changes reflect our growth as an organization. Just like the changing landscape, we are entering a new phase of our work; one that builds on everything we have achieved together.

Since 1991, thanks to your support, we have permanently protected 129 special places and approximately 28,000 acres of land in the Inland Northwest. Each site shows the strength of community and the dedication of people who care enough to give, volunteer, and partner for the lands and waters that support us all.

This past year has been full of milestones, including the success of securing Glen Tana. The commitment of supporters, partners, and the community has moved our mission forward. Each acre protected, every mile of stream restored, and each relationship built serves as a reminder of what we can accomplish when we work together with a shared purpose.

Now, with the launch of our Strategic Plan, we are giving that purpose a clearer direction and commitment to the future. At its core is this: to protect and care for the lands and waters essential to life and the well-being of communities in the Inland Northwest.

That's why we've set a bold goal to conserve 15,000 more acres by 2030 — adding 50% more to the 28,000 already conserved in the last 34 years. It's a big number, but it's exactly what is needed. To preserve the clean air, water, and natural beauty of the Inland Northwest — and to protect thriving wildlife, healthy forests, and resilient grasslands, we must take action. This work has never been more urgent.

Our goal is also about connection. You are a vital part of the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy. It's about the ties we share with our neighbors, with volunteers, landowners, and partners, and with the places that support us. Together, we are caring for the landscapes we love, ensuring they continue to provide beauty, wildlife, and peace to our communities for generations to come.

I am grateful to everyone who has contributed, in many different ways, to what we have collectively achieved since 1991. I look forward to continuing these partnerships and new connections yet to be developed. As we embrace this new season, I hope you feel as inspired as I do about the future we are creating together.



PHOTO CREDIT: LORENZO MENENDEZ

RETURNING TO THE LAND

Repatriation and Conservation in Partnership

By Carol Corbin, *Philanthropy Director,
Inland Northwest Land Conservancy*

Since time immemorial, the Kalispel Tribe has stewarded their homeland with one clear principle: do right by the land. That ethic still drives their work today.

“The land has always been part of who we are as Kalispel people. With this return, we move forward together, caring for the land, strengthening our community, and keeping our stories alive,” says Curt Holmes, Vice Chair of the Kalispel Tribe and Executive Director of Public and Governmental Affairs.

Although the reservation is just 4,700 acres, the Tribe has restored or conserved nearly 6,500 acres of additional land. One property — a 752-acre parcel near the reservation where Cee Cee Ah Creek flows — has been a longtime priority. Cee Cee Ah, or in Salish, Sisiyé (pronounced see-see-yeh), is named after a highly respected Kalispel, known for his mastery in canoe making. The land is culturally and ecologically significant, home to native fish, camas meadows, and a cave called Bear Nostrils.

The opportunity to protect it came through an unexpected partner: Teck Resources. As part of their Pend Oreille Mine closure, Teck committed to a “nature positive” goal — restoring more land than their operations disturb. When they asked the Tribe for a meaningful conservation project, this place was at the top of the list.

The Kalispel Tribe brought in Inland Northwest Land Conservancy (INLC) to hold a permanent conservation easement. This collaboration honors Indigenous land stewardship and ensures long-term ecological protection.

“This is the first time we’ve been able to solidify our relationship with INLC through an easement,” says Ray Entz, Director of Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources. “It’s built on trust and shared values.”

“This project checks all the boxes,” adds Dave Schaub, INLC Executive Director. “It returns land to its original stewards, protects critical habitat, and builds a resilient future.”



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This isn't just land protection. It's a model for doing better — together. A promise to future generations that nature, culture, and community are worth investing in.

PHOTO CREDIT: NICK JAMES

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CONSERVATION

Inland Northwest Land Conservancy has launched its 2030 Strategic Plan — a roadmap guiding the next five years of conservation in the Inland Northwest. Developed with input from community members, it reflects our updated vision, mission, and values while setting clear priorities to protect the lands and waters we all cherish.

Values

Love of Nature, Relationships, Discernment, Perpetuity

Vision

People across our region collaborating to conserve the natural lands, waters, and open spaces that sustain and enrich life, fostering nature's resilience for generations to come.

Mission

Protect and care for the lands and waters essential to life and the well-being of communities in the Inland Northwest.

Goal

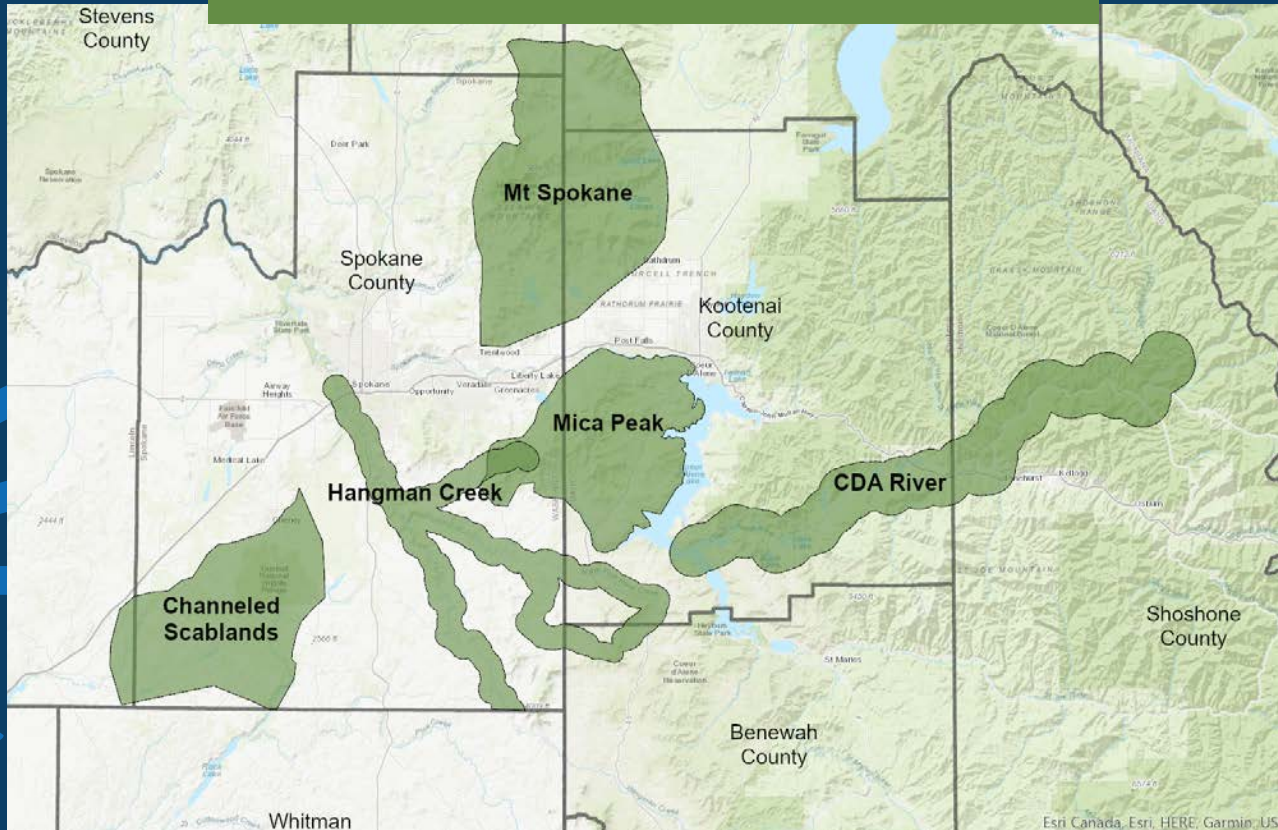
Accelerate the permanent protection of 15,000 acres of priority lands, habitats, and open spaces in the region.



PROTECTING
THESE LANDS
MEANS WORKING
TOGETHER
TO SECURE
A RESILIENT,
THRIVING FUTURE
FOR GENERATIONS
TO COME.

PHOTO CREDIT: LORENZO MENENDEZ

INLC PRIORITY AREAS



At the heart of the Conservancy's new strategic plan is an ambitious goal: to permanently protect 15,000 more acres of priority lands, habitats, and open spaces across eastern Washington and north Idaho. We've already conserved 129 properties and more than 28,000 acres.

Using a science-based approach, we've pinpointed the places that matter most — landscapes rich in ecological value and facing the greatest threats.

Through careful assessment of migration corridors, watersheds, wildlife habitats, forest resources, and climate resilience, five Priority Areas have been identified: Mt. Spokane, Hangman Creek, Coeur d'Alene River, Mica Peak, and the Channeled Scablands.

The need for land conservation in the Inland Northwest has never been greater. As population growth, development, and a changing climate put pressure on our open spaces, the very landscapes that define our region are at risk. These are the forests that keep our air and water clean, the wetlands and grasslands that store carbon and stabilize our climate, and the corridors that connect wildlife — from moose to migratory birds.

While the Conservancy will invest resources in achieving conservation successes in these five priority areas, we will remain responsive to exceptional conservation opportunities throughout our service area.

Protecting these lands means working together to secure a resilient, thriving future for generations to come.

Find Out More about our Priority Areas by visiting inlandnwland.org.

THROUGH THE LENS

A Conversation with Photographer James Richman

Photographer James Richman has spent years capturing the beauty of the Inland Northwest through his lens. From sweeping landscapes of the Palouse to the intimate moments of hummingbirds nesting in his backyard, James brings a deep appreciation for both the grandeur and the small wonders of the natural world. Since retiring, he's been exploring the trails near his home at our Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve almost daily, always with an eye for wildlife and the stories nature tells. In this conversation, James shares what first drew him to photography and how his work has shaped his perspective of the land.

Q. How did your journey in photography begin?

A. I've been interested in photography most of my life, but I didn't get my first real camera until high school. I grew up in Walla Walla and moved to Spokane in 1991 to go to Gonzaga Law School. My wife Cindy and I live in north Spokane, very close to the Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve. Since I retired a year ago, I walk our dogs on the Waikiki Springs trails nearly every day.

Q. What first sparked your interest in nature photography?

A. For the past 15 years or so, I have primarily focused on landscape photography. Eastern Washington is such a diverse and beautiful area. I had also been fascinated by the Bald Eagles that congregate in Coeur d'Alene every winter, while the Kokanee are spawning, but I didn't have the camera lens needed to take nice pictures of the eagles. A couple of years ago, I discovered a hummingbird nest in our backyard and decided to invest in a longer camera lens so I could capture pictures of the mother taking care of her babies. The mother hummingbird used the nest two years in row,



raising two babies both years. I like to think the hummingbirds I see at our feeders this year are her offspring.

Q. How has photography changed the way you think about land and the natural world?

A. I think it has given me a better appreciation of the challenges faced by nature and wildlife. I learned that the little Calliope Hummingbirds nesting in our backyard travel up to 5,000 miles each year between their breeding ground here in Spokane and their wintering habitats in Mexico and Central America.



PHOTO CREDITS: JAMES RICHMAN AND RENE GUERRERO



A LEGACY OF CARE

Randy Mickelsen's Gift to Future Generations

By Maria Vandervert, *Communications & Engagement Director, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy*

For longtime Spokane resident and retired educator Randy Mickelsen, nature has always been more than scenery — it's been a place of peace and reflection.

Randy's connection to nature began decades ago at Waikiki Springs before the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy (INLC) acquired the property. Born and raised in Spokane, Randy taught math at Mead High School for 37 years before retiring in 2021. As a cross-country coach at Mead in the late 1980s, he brought his athletes to Waikiki for workouts, drawn by the quiet beauty of the area. In retirement, he returned to the same trails, this time with his dog Lola by his side. There, he met INLC staff and saw firsthand the care and improvements being made to the land.

"Waikiki Springs will always hold a special place for me — it's simply in my backyard," Randy shares. "Nature is my quiet place, a place for me to reflect, think, pray, and meditate."

For Randy, this place carries a deep meaning. After his nephew passed away suddenly, Randy placed a bench in his memory in a spot at Waikiki that the two often visited together. "It will always hold a special place in my heart for him," Randy says. "We don't know who will walk these trails in the future and benefit from the efforts to preserve the beauty and nature we are all so blessed to enjoy."

That desire to protect Waikiki led Randy to include Inland Northwest Land Conservancy in his estate plans. "I want to make sure the lands around Spokane can be protected for future generations to enjoy. It would be too easy for

these spaces to be developed and lost," he said. He hopes that his gift will help purchase and protect more land, ensuring that future generations have the same opportunities to explore and enjoy their beauty. To anyone considering a similar estate gift, Randy offers encouragement: "This is a chance to leave a legacy that protects our public lands in Spokane. It's simple to do, and its impact will last forever."

Looking ahead, Randy imagines an Inland Northwest with "an abundance of places to go and explore regardless of the time of year." He hopes his contribution will be remembered not by his name, but by the joy people feel while experiencing the lands he helped protect. "Knowing that our lands are protected for all to enjoy — that's the legacy I want to leave."

What Will Your Legacy Protect?

For more than 30 years, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy has been caring for the forests, rivers, and open spaces you love. With a simple act of planning, you can help that care continue for generations to come.



By including INLC in your estate plan — including a percentage of your estate, a life insurance policy, or appreciated assets like real estate or stocks, you make a lasting difference forever.

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Wes Hanson's Commitment to Conserve Life and Land at Cougar Bay

By Caroline Woodwell, *Conservancy Volunteer*

Neither Wes Hanson nor Gertie (Carder) Gosselin knew how to play tennis. But when she appeared at his dorm room door looking for his roommate, she spotted a canister of tennis balls. Wes didn't tell her it was full of coins. When she asked if he'd like to play sometime, he said yes.

He didn't play tennis, and "she was horrible," Wes said. "So that worked out. We hit it off."

A few years later, they were married and building a house on Gertie's family land in Coeur d'Alene. And twenty-four years later, months before Gertie died of cancer in 1998, they signed a conservation easement with the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy (INLC), protecting 158 acres of forest and meadow above Lake Coeur d'Alene's Cougar Bay. It was INLC's third easement.

What's a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a permanent legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization, such as Inland Northwest Land Conservancy, that permanently limits development to preserve conservation values and traditional uses. Easements remain in private ownership.

In the early 1990s, they learned about land preservation together, visiting protected lands and listening to lectures on conservation easement law. They worked for years to keep Cougar Bay's shoreline undeveloped. The now publicly owned Cougar Bay Preserve saved much of the natural shoreline. Its land was purchased by the Idaho Nature Conservancy in 1997 and eventually transferred to the federal Bureau of Land Management.

Since then, Wes, a retired high school English teacher, has devoted himself to additional land protection around Cougar Bay.

"Wes has anchored INLC's efforts to save land in the Cougar Bay area and beyond," says Chris DeForest, INLC's sole employee at the time, "first by preserving Carder Farm, then by helping others to imagine preserving their lands."

A life-long painter and writer, Wes' first book, *Hardscrabble: Life on the Land*, was published this summer, its title taken from Gertie's father's description of their land. Recently, Wes has put up swallow boxes on that land. He's raising red oaks from acorns, he's planting white oak trees, and of course, he's chopping wood to heat the house. When he roams, it's to the meadow, the forest, and sometimes, to the "Buddha rock" where there's room for one person to sit and look out over the countryside.

The only thing missing, this avid fisherman says with a laugh, is a trout stream.

For Wes, land conservation and stewardship exist seamlessly with writing poetry and painting, and doing good work in the world. Gertie's family, Wes said, seemed to know intuitively that this land should never be developed. And Wes, who recently urged his son-in-law to "do good while you still can," has his own immutable belief in the importance of goals that reach beyond the span of a human life.



How the Farm Is

By Wes Hanson, *Author*,
Hardscrabble: Life on the Land

Let me tell you how the farm is.
The dog shows up,
Shaking off water from the weeds.
She leans against the sliding door.

I finish breakfast.

Swallows glide in and out of sunlight.
My wife's coffee, boiling in an enameled pan,
Flows over the lip and hisses through the burner.

I call the dog's name, call again.
Her eyes stare at me through the glass.
I cinch bootlaces and slide suspenders on,
Grab my felt hat.

By now she is frenzied.
Racing down the steps
She scatters juncos.
Morning has begun.



Did You Know?

When you purchase Wes' book *Hardscrabble: Life on the Land* through Cave Moon Press, part of the proceeds go directly to supporting the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy and its work to protect our lands and waters.

Scan to Learn More



CHANNELED SCABLANDS PRIORITY AREA

Safeguarding Biodiversity for the Future

By Lisa Langelier, *Retired Wildlife Refuge Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Land Protection Committee Member, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy*

Dedicated to protecting critical landscapes and ecosystems for wildlife and people, the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy chose five priority areas where it plans to focus its conservation efforts. The Channeled Scablands Priority Area (CSPA) is one of these unique environments that includes both Palouse prairie remnants and portions of the easternmost tract of the Scablands near Cheney.

This geologically unique area underwent numerous changes over millions of years, including volcanoes that laid down a bedrock of lava, followed by wind deposited soils and ash that created fertile rolling hills. The Channeled Scablands were formed during the Pleistocene Ice Age when the ice dam of glacial Lake Missoula broke, sending water surging across the landscape from northeast to the southwest to the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean. The force of the water scoured the bedrock, creating deep channels or coulees that became lakes and wetlands. It's estimated that these floods occurred more than 80 times over the course of more than 10,000 years. Early farmers dubbed the rocky areas scablands, dismissing them as useless since they could not be farmed.

At the core of this area lies the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge — 23,000 acres of diverse habitats, from tall Ponderosa pine and deep sloughs to grassland steppe and scattered aspen. This mix of habitats creates a stunning wildflower parade from February through August and results in matchless wildlife and plant diversity. The Refuge harbors hundreds of bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian species, as well as uncounted numbers of insect species. From the massive Moose to the tiny Western jumping mouse, Turnbull offers protected homes for diverse animals, but is best known for its abundant birdlife, particularly migratory waterfowl.

Scattered within the CSPA are fragments of Palouse grassland. Only small patches exist because they were either too rocky or steep for agricultural development. The Palouse is the most endangered ecosystem in the continental United States, with only 1% of the original habitat left. These unique and vulnerable lands harbor imperiled species and are under threat from fragmentation, development, and non-native plants. It is important to protect what remains.

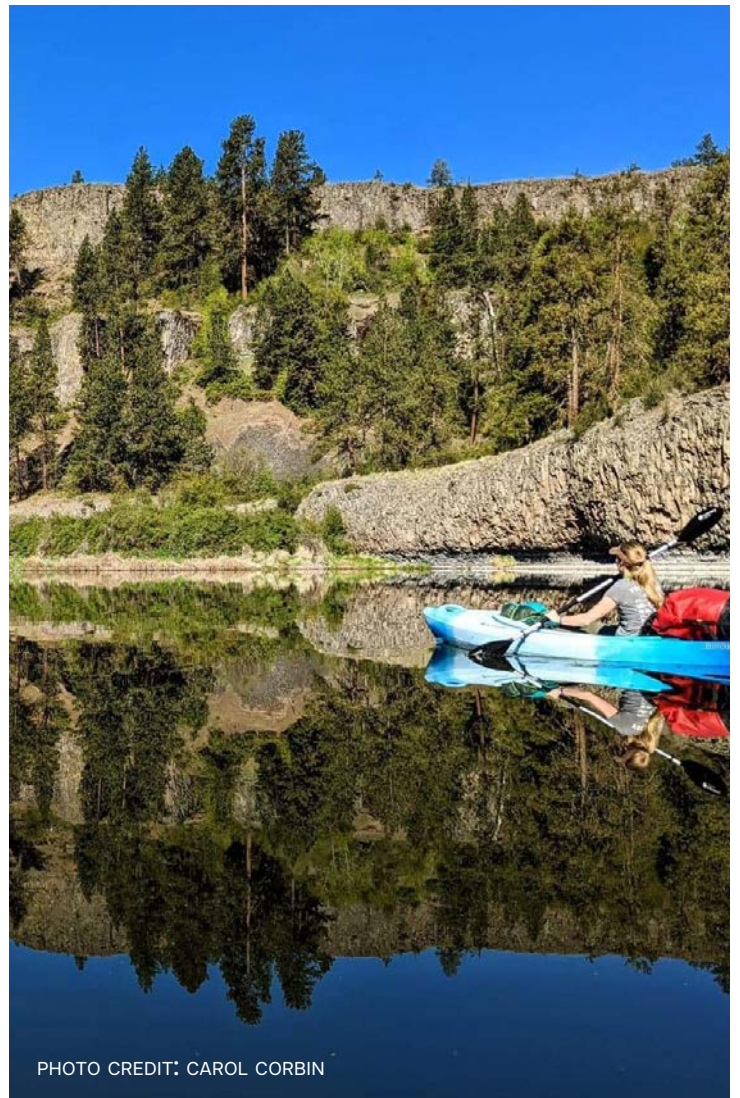
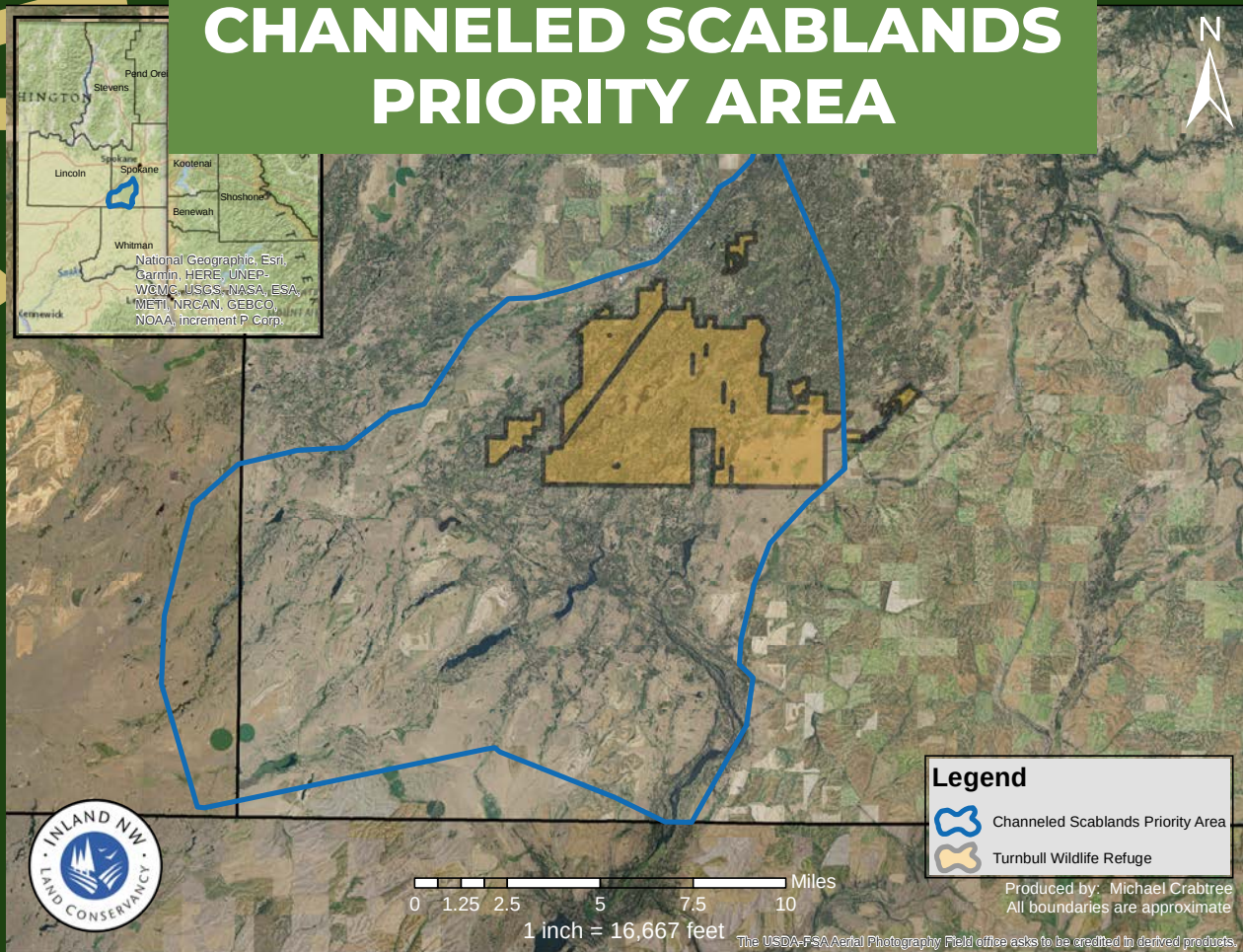


PHOTO CREDIT: CAROL CORBIN

CHANNELED SCABLANDS PRIORITY AREA



The Conservancy selected the CSPA because it is a large, connected landscape with healthy habitats and migratory corridors for wildlife that can prosper despite changing weather patterns, extreme temperatures, drought conditions, and heavy precipitation. Within this priority area, the Conservancy collaborates with landowners and partners, contributing to land protection

and habitat restoration. The area also offers opportunities near Spokane for outdoor education and recreation.

With the four other priority areas, the Channeled Scablands provides vital land for the Conservancy to contribute to preserving biodiversity and sustaining both wildlife, plant, and human communities.



The Palouse is the most endangered ecosystem in the continental United States, with only 1% of the original habitat left.

BE A DOER

Volunteer Hike Docent Sherry Bentley

By Garrick Bateman, *Conservancy Volunteer*

Sherry Bentley found Inland Northwest Land Conservancy at a time when many of us were turning to the outdoors as an escape. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Sherry had been a regular volunteer with local food banks, but with such opportunities coming to a decisive halt in the summer of 2020, she was forced to look elsewhere for her calling. Getting outside to hike became not only a necessary reprieve for her amidst a remarkably turbulent time, but also a private call to action — the importance of protecting our shared lands came into sharp relief during that time of crisis.

“I love being outdoors in nature. Nature has always been there for me throughout my life, from sitting underneath a tree reading in my backyard when I was eight years old, to hiking up a steep mountain, **my hope is that others have opportunities to connect with nature just as I have.**”

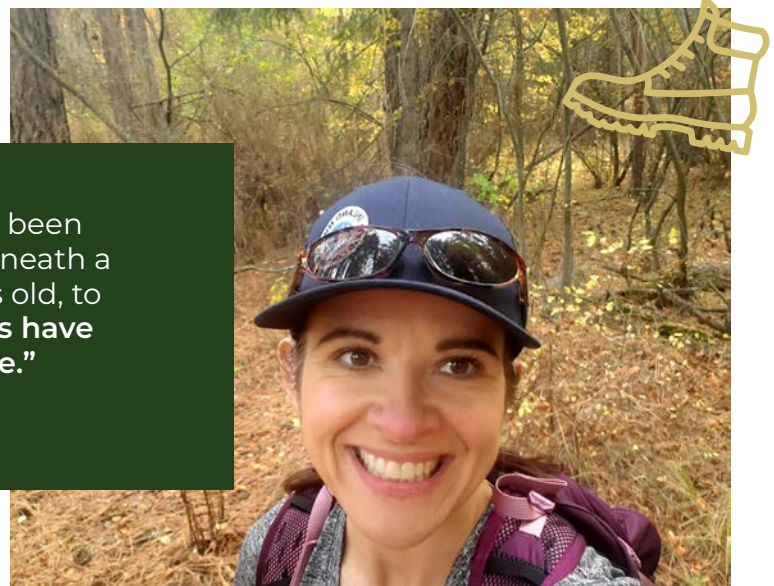
— Sherry Bentley, *Volunteer Hike Docent*

Once pandemic-related regulations began to relax, Sherry got her start volunteering with the Conservancy, first with a trash pick-up session at our Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve. For Sherry, as is often the case, the cause became addictive and she quickly became a regular volunteer, invigorated not only by the sense of community the organization fosters but also by its mission of protecting the natural resources we all rely on, whether we realize it or not. It wasn't long before she moved beyond volunteering only her time and began to contribute financially to the Conservancy's goals. Wanting to maximize her contributions, Sherry turned to her employer, Avista, a fixture of the Spokane community.

Sherry speaks fondly of Avista — the active role it plays in local initiatives and its steadfast support of employee community priorities. Avista offers to match the charitable donations

the employees make to non-profits of their choosing. And Avista isn't alone. Offering to match the donations of employees is becoming an increasingly popular benefit among companies in the 21st century.

Of course, not everyone is in a position to contribute to their favorite non-profits financially. Luckily, some employers are willing to incentivize non-monetary support for local non-profits as well. Avista's grant program known as “Dollars for Doers” allows the corporation to fiscally sponsor their employees' volunteer hours up to a certain amount. So, when Sherry spends an hour of her time planting willows at Waikiki Springs, Avista will, in turn, pay a fixed amount to the Conservancy on her behalf.



For Sherry, it's all about being a part of a cause bigger than herself. She shares an especially deep passion for the work being done to preserve Glen Tana, the famous “missing link” in protecting the Little Spokane River and a potential keystone in the effort to reintroduce chinook salmon to the Inland Northwest. Whether she's contributing her time or her finances, everything Sherry does is about making that dream get a little closer to reality.

WHAT'S THAT PLANT?

We know that every acre of conserved land tells a story, and often, those stories are rooted in the plants and wildlife that define a place. Conservancy Stewardship Director and plant aficionado Rose Macaulay brings a keen eye and deep appreciation for the wildflowers, grasses, and trees that shape our region's landscapes. These native plants play an essential role in healthy ecosystems. Here, she gives us some insight into one local native plant seen across our region.



Silky Lupine (*Lupinus sericeus*)

When I'm out walking through dry meadows or forest edges in late spring into fall, one of the plants that always catches my eye is silky lupine. Its tall spikes of purple-blue flowers rise above the grass, and the silvery hairs on its leaves shimmer in the sunlight. This plant is tough and beautiful and is a standout in western wildflower communities.



Distinctive look: Tall spikes of purple-blue, pea-like flowers bloom in late spring and summer. Silvery hairs on its palm-shaped leaves give it a soft, "silky" glow.

Drought ready: Deep roots help it survive hot, dry summers and stabilize loose soils.

Soil builder: Like other members of the pea family, it adds nitrogen to the soil, boosting the health of surrounding plants.

Pollinator favorite: Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds flock to its nectar; birds and small mammals enjoy its seeds.

Where it thrives: Found from the Great Plains to the Pacific Northwest, especially in dry meadows, grasslands, and forest edges.

PHOTO CREDITS: MARIA VANDERVERT AND CODY BARNHART

GLEN TANA

A Future of Trails, Salmon, and Recreation Space

By Maria Vandervert, *Communications & Engagement Director*



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK JAMES

A sweeping stretch of ponderosa pine forest and meadow along the Little Spokane River has a new chapter, thanks to a partnership between Inland Northwest Land Conservancy, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, Washington State Parks, and a community of supporters who wanted to see it conserved.

Those supporters helped the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy complete a \$4 million capital campaign earlier this year to protect Glen Tana, a 1,060-acre piece of land that connects Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve and Riverside State Park.

Once proposed as a housing development, this ambitious project was instead secured for ecological restoration, wildlife habitat, and future public access.

For now, Glen Tana remains closed to the public. But behind the scenes, stewardship of the land has been underway. Conservancy staff and volunteers have been busy pulling invasive weeds, planting native vegetation, and reducing wildfire risk. The plant nursery on site is also complete and holds 1,000's of native plants.

At the same time, plans are beginning to take shape with partners. The Spokane Tribe of Indians has purchased a portion of its 120 acres of the property. Its primary focus will be to develop the site as a salmon acclimation

area, where young fish will spend several months growing and imprinting on the river before being released. This process helps them recognize the watershed as “home,” guiding them back as adults to spawn.



PHOTO CREDIT: ROGUE HEART MEDIA

Washington State Parks will purchase most of the remaining acreage and open the land to recreation. Plans include an estimated 7.5 miles of trails connecting Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve to the east and Riverside State Park to the west. When complete, Glen Tana will anchor a 20-mile protected corridor along the Spokane and Little Spokane rivers.



Habitat restoration, salmon recovery, community learning, and public recreation all lie ahead for Glen Tana. Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of supporters like you, the campaign committee, and campaign lead Sally Pritchard, as well as many others, the heart of the Little Spokane River valley is now protected for generations to come.

Did you know?

Dozens of native plants and wildlife live and thrive at Glen Tana, including moose, elk, deer, coyotes, cougars, and eagles.



PHOTO CREDIT: LORENZO MENENDEZ



129 PROPERTIES
PROTECTED FOREVER

125 MILES OF WATERWAYS
AND SHORELINE

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OF LAND

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