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InLandNEWS

& 2025 Impact Report



IN BLOOM

PHOTO CREDIT: ANGELA MARIE

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Dave Schaub, Executive Director, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy

One recent weekend morning, I pulled on my boots and walked from my front door to the Glenrose Trailhead, just as I have hundreds of times before. On this beautiful spring morning, the hills were electric. The balsamroot was out in full glory — waves of yellow covering the slopes, each bloom part of a community larger than itself. And so were the people. Individual hikers, friends catching up on the trail, kids running ahead of their parents. Everyone smiling. Everyone, it seemed, called outside by the same irresistible announcement that spring had arrived, and it was time to be out celebrating the land.

There's more to arrowleaf balsamroot than meets the eye. What you see above ground, that blaze of yellow that transforms our hillsides every April, is supported by a taproot that can reach six feet into the earth. It takes years to establish. But once it does, it returns faithfully, season after season, spreading slowly until it fills a hillside with color. It doesn't do this alone. The display that makes you smile is always a community of plants, each one part of a whole, so much larger than itself.

I've been thinking about that a lot lately.

Inside this spring newsletter, you'll find stories of people whose roots in this region run just as

deep — Mary Weathers, whose lifetime outdoors inspired her to protect the places she loves; Gary Verbrugge, whose gift of land to the Kalispel Tribe of Indians will protect wildlife and clean water forever; and conservation partnerships that support our Mica Peak priority area. Read about the community helping expand our native plant nursery and the many other ways your support is helping protect and care for more of what we love.

You'll also find an announcement on the back cover that I want to speak to directly. INLC leadership has been in conversation with Dishman Hills Conservancy about our collective future. My own conservation journey began as a neighbor of the hills, led to my service on the Dishman Hills board, and then on to my current role at INLC, which is why I want to approach this conversation carefully, and with you. Our two organizations are considering merging. We have planned two community meetings for you to learn more, and I hope you'll join us. We want to share and listen.

What's blooming in the Inland Northwest right now — on the hillsides and in our communities — is the result of roots laid down over many years, by many hands. Thank you for being part of it.



MAKING A LASTING DIFFERENCE

How a Lifetime Outdoors Led Mary Weathers to Protect the Places She Loves

By Carol Corbin, Philanthropy Director, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy

Not everyone begins their life outdoors from the back of a horse at two years old. But that's exactly how Mary Weathers' story starts. One of her earliest memories is of her father catching a fish in a mountain pond — their dinner on her first horsepacking trip. Spending summers in and around Sequoia National Park, Mary spent her childhood and teen years roaming freely, scaling peaks, exploring valleys, and developing a deep, lasting connection to the natural world.



That connection only grew stronger over time. After meeting her husband, Larry, backpacking became central to their life together. With more than 100 trips behind them, Mary still remembers standing at Image Lake, watching Glacier Peak reflected in still water. She often carried her camera along the way, capturing the landscapes she loved — while, she notes with a smile, Larry carried most of the rest.

When they moved to the Inland Northwest in 1978 to start their careers as psychologists, Mary and Larry found exactly what they were looking for: a place where wild lands were close at hand. They joined the Spokane Mountaineers, and Mary began leading hikes and backpacking trips, introducing others to the same sense of wonder she had known since childhood.

But for Mary, loving the outdoors was never quite enough. Early on, she saw how easily special places could be lost, and how important it was for people to step in and protect them. Over the years, she gave her time and leadership to that work, including 14 years on the board of Dishman Hills Conservancy. She also found small, personal ways to connect others to the land, sending handwritten notes to fellow supporters, often paired with her own photographs from the trails.

After Larry's passing, Mary found herself facing decisions she hadn't spent much time considering before. Then, by chance, she ran into her friend Janni Hills, who was navigating

a similar path. What began as a chance meeting turned into long conversation-sharing stories, comparing notes, and reflecting on what it means to plan for the future.

As Mary puts it, **“You work hard to make it, and then you have to work hard to give it away.”**

That conversation helped shape Mary's next steps. Like Janni, she chose to create a plan that reflects the values that have guided her

life — ensuring that the places and causes she cares about will continue to be supported for years to come.

“I appreciate that INLC works to conserve land in many different ways — for people, and for plants and animals, too,” Mary says. **“It just feels like a natural fit.”**

Mary encourages others who are considering their own plans to start with what matters most. Think about the places and organizations that have shaped your life, and the difference you have made.

And for those who love the outdoors as she does, a planned gift to Inland Northwest Land Conservancy can help ensure the landscapes we cherish today will still be here for generations to come.

If you'd like to talk about how your estate gift can help the forever work of land conservation, please contact Carol Corbin, Director of Philanthropy at ccorbin@inlandnwland.org or call (509) 328-2939, ext. 4.





A GIFT OF LAND AND A PROMISE TO THE FUTURE

A Landowner's 885-Acre Legacy and a Tribal Partnership that will Steward Forests, Waters, and Wildlife Forever

By Cara Carlton, Carlton Communications

The Little Spokane River bends through a deep, forested valley north of Spokane, carrying cold water, birdsong, and the tracks of animals for millennia. Along a one-half-mile stretch of the river, Gary Verbrugge, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, and Inland Northwest Land Conservancy (Conservancy) joined forces to ensure this land remains protected forever for wildlife, clean water, and Tribal cultural connection.

"The unique thing about the property is how many different environments there are, river bottom, marsh, steep forest, high

ridges, so you get a whole variety of habitats in one place," says Gary.

The Verbrugge family has cared for nearly 900 acres along the Little Spokane River for nearly a century. Moose, elk, deer, cougar, bobcat, goshawk, bears, and wolves move through the forest, shrub fields, and open areas. Industrial logging came and went, and Gary, often with volunteers, responded by replanting trees by hand, restoring streamside vegetation, stabilizing banks, creating shade, and improving habitat, efforts that he continues today.

The Conservancy first partnered with Gary in 2007 to place a permanent conservation easement on his 605 acres. Later, Gary purchased an adjacent 280 acres and added it to the conservation easement, a project that finished in late 2025.

During this time, the Kalispel Tribe was creating its first Tribally owned and managed community forest, focused on natural resource education. Gary's vision and the Kalispel Tribe's goals aligned, and a conversation began about the Kalispel Tribe becoming the long-term owner and steward of Gary's land. "I believe that the Kalispel Tribe will do a great job of caring for the property and the wildlife," says Gary. "They brought a silviculture expert in to do a forest plan, so there's detail about everything that's growing, or eating, or flying out here."

According to Ray Entz, director of Wildlife and Terrestrial Resources for the Kalispel Natural Resources Department, a "love for wildlife" prompted Gary to donate his land to the Kalispel Tribe. "The strength of the Tribe is that we're not going anywhere," he says. "The connection to the land is forever." Regaining ownership of lands like Gary's gives Tribal members space to hunt, fish, gather, and engage in other cultural activities that need real, functioning landscapes.

"The Kalispel Tribe is committed to being a good steward to the land and natural resources," said Curt Holmes, Vice Chairman, Kalispel Tribal Business Committee and Executive Director of Public & Governmental Affairs. "We've made a promise to future generations that we will do good things with the land, things to benefit nature, our culture, and the community. It's rewarding when people acknowledge our stewardship by donating their land to the Tribe. When a gift of land is received, it's very meaningful — it shows that we've earned the trust of the landowner. They understand we will do right by the land."

Ray's team spent several years developing a formal forest management plan, helping secure state funding for pre-commercial thinning and fuels reduction, and guiding work on roughly 40 acres.

"Everything is based on improving habitat conditions and protecting the forest from catastrophic wildfire," Ray says. The goal is to create "a better fire-adapted community

of forest ecosystems that are more resilient to fire," where fire can move through as a lower-intensity, beneficial force instead of a devastating event.

Ray describes the Verbrugge property as part of a "really, really productive forest landscape" that feeds cold, clean water into the Little Spokane River. Upstream, the Tribe and the City of Newport have protected most of the Little Spokane River's headwaters wetland. Downstream, the Conservancy has helped safeguard key river segments and hundreds of acres of other conservation properties.

This continuous chain of protected lands is vital for native fish and the region's resilience. The Little Spokane once supported healthy populations of native westslope cutthroat trout, and cold water from its headwaters and forests now helps support ongoing efforts to restore salmon and steelhead.

For the Conservancy's senior conservationist, Chris DeForest, the Verbrugge property is "such a lovely, diverse collection of habitats." It is also one of many projects along the Little Spokane that, together, are "bringing more cool water and shade and habitat downstream." Having worked alongside the Kalispel Tribe for over 25 years, Chris sees this as a natural extension of a long-standing partnership built on trust, science, and shared purpose.



ROOM TO BLOOM

Glen Tana's Native Plant Nursery Grows through the Power of Partnership

By Mitchell Clark, Conservancy Volunteer

In 2024, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy built a native plant nursery at Glen Tana, a place where up to 4,000 plants have room to grow, an automatic watering system, and as much sun or shade as they need.

Since then, plants grown in the nursery have made their way all over the area. They've been sown in James T. Slavin Conservation Area, Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve, and Hangman Creek.

Some even ended up within sight of the nursery: last fall, over 120 volunteers came to help plant native species in the former grazing pastures that sit a stone's throw away, as part of a goal to restore the field back to native shrubland habitat.

Now, the Conservancy is working to vastly expand the operation, using the land at the Conservancy's Glen Tana property to build three additional plots, which should provide ample room for up to 12,000 plants at once. It's not just about capacity, though. The extra space, ability to use larger pots, and improved flexibility when it comes to providing plants with water and shade should help even more of them survive the hot summers and cold winters.





PHOTO CREDIT: SPOKANE AUDUBON SOCIETY

“Our motive to expand the nursery is that every plant we produce is another plant that’s going in the wild to be habitat,” says Steven Eddington, preserve manager at INLC. If we’re able to maximize our efforts, we’re creating more habitat for native wildlife species in our area.”

The extra planting space won’t just be useful to the Conservancy. “Part of our goal with expanding the nursery is to bring in partners,” Steven says. “We have a commitment from three organizations looking to house plants here: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program — their private lands program is integral to the expansion and a lot of the planting projects around Spokane — The Lands Council, and Pheasants Forever.” Washington Conservation Corps team members have also dedicated time to help with the build, and Spokane Audubon Society has generously donated funds for the expansion, recognizing that a thriving native plant community means a thriving bird community.

There’s been a lot of work done to turn an empty field into a hospitable home for native plants. A pump house has been built to manage water and electricity for the irrigation systems; new foundations have been poured for the nursery plots; tarp and gravel have been laid; and an automated sprinkler system has been installed.

Getting a project of this scale done in a very short time this spring was a group effort, with help from partners — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Lands Council, and Pheasants Forever, pitching in to make it happen.

“One of the most fascinating things about this whole project is how many folks are willing to help,” Steven says. “Especially with the power and water hookup and the foundation for the future pump house — there’s so much I didn’t know, but there are so many folks in the community willing to volunteer their time and expertise. It’s a unique part of working at a land trust; at most jobs, you don’t have a bunch of people saying, ‘I want to do a bunch of free work for you, and I’m going to enjoy it.’”

Did you know?

Native plants have evolved alongside local wildlife and are adapted to our climate, making them the foundation of a healthy, thriving ecosystem. Want to learn more? Check out the Washington and Idaho Native Plant Societies at idahonativeplants.org and wnps.org.

Community volunteers will be essential to maintaining the nursery. The Conservancy’s plan is to start a nursery volunteer group to help control weeds and to move the plants around, ensuring they get the proper amounts of water and sunlight (or shade!). It’s an accessible volunteering opportunity that’s close to the city, and that won’t require as much physical effort as, say, building trails or thinning forests for fire prevention. Stay tuned to the INLC website for more information on future volunteer opportunities at Glen Tana.

Thank you, Partners!

Pheasants Forever
Spokane Audubon Society
The Lands Council
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners Program
Washington Conservation Corps

CRAIG TRUEBLOOD

Decades of Priceless Advice

By Chris DeForest, Senior Conservationist,
Inland Northwest Land Conservancy

Photo by Sophia Trueblood



Craig Trueblood and his son Isaac

He's our Madonna, our Bono, our Sting. He's Craig, our mononym, our rock star attorney.

Since the late 1990s, Craig Trueblood has donated thousands of hours of top-drawer legal counsel to your Conservancy, ending with his retirement from KL Gates in December 2025.

Craig guided the fledgling land trust and its newbie executive director (me) through countless gnarly questions. "Ask Craig" was always our bulwark. I never regretted putting the question. Often, he affirmed my instincts. Often, he had a better way to phrase things. Other times, Craig would straightforwardly and, gulp, firmly, set me straight on my mistakes or my too-generous instincts.

Today, the Conservancy has a priceless, bulging folder titled "Craig Trueblood and Peter Smith gems." Peter is Craig's successor as our legal counsel. The gems run heavy to facets of conservation deals, but Craig and his law partners also advised the Board and executive director on every imaginable legal topic.

Thank you, Craig!!

Q: Craig, what first sparked your connection to the land or outdoors?

I grew up back East, spending a lot of time outdoors with my family – hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping. My father, brother, and I were all Eagle Scouts, so that connection to the land started early. That stayed with me, and when I moved to Spokane in the late 1980s, I was looking for a way to give back to the community in a way that aligned with that love of the outdoors.

Q: How did you first get involved with Inland Northwest Land Conservancy?

I got involved in the early 1990s, when INLC was still known as the Inland Northwest Land Trust

and had no paid staff. I knew Randy Gaylord, who was on the board, and he asked me to provide pro bono legal support for what would become INLC's first conservation easement with Lollie Turner. I was actually on the other side of the table for that deal. It was successfully completed, and it remains one of the most meaningful projects of my career. I agreed to serve as pro bono legal counsel in that role for about 25 years, until the end of 2025 when I retired from K&L Gates LLP. I now have a small solo practice-Trueblood Law LLC.

Q: Why did you donate your time and expertise to this work?

INLC's mission was compelling, and the people involved were clearly dedicated. My legal work focuses on environmental law and land use, and I was looking for a way to contribute without conflicts of interest. Serving as pro bono counsel for INLC was a natural fit. It allowed me to use my professional skills in a way that supported something I deeply care about — protecting open spaces and habitat.

Q: Is there a project that has stayed with you over the years?

There are a few. One was a conservation easement along the Coeur d'Alene River, where we had to structure the deal carefully to avoid liability from historic mining contamination while still protecting the land. Another was Glen Tana along the Little Spokane River — an exciting and impactful project for the Spokane community, and we eventually transferred some of the property to the Spokane Tribe for long-term stewardship.

Find ways your professional expertise can help the cause of conservation at inlandnwland.org/get-involved/volunteer.

Your financial support protects the iconic landscapes and unique ecosystems of the Inland Northwest in perpetuity.

Each member of this community plays a vital role in caring for nature. It's part of who we are. And your gift means a safe den for bear cubs in the spring, wintertime browse for hungry elk, and crystalline waters for fingerling trout. Not just today, but for generations to come.

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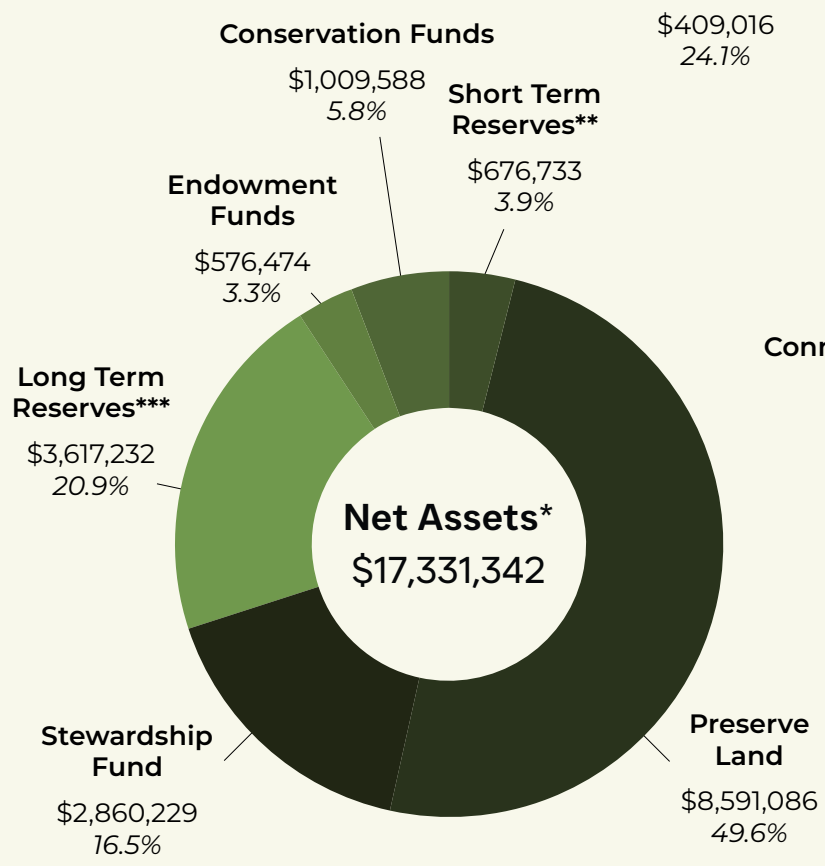
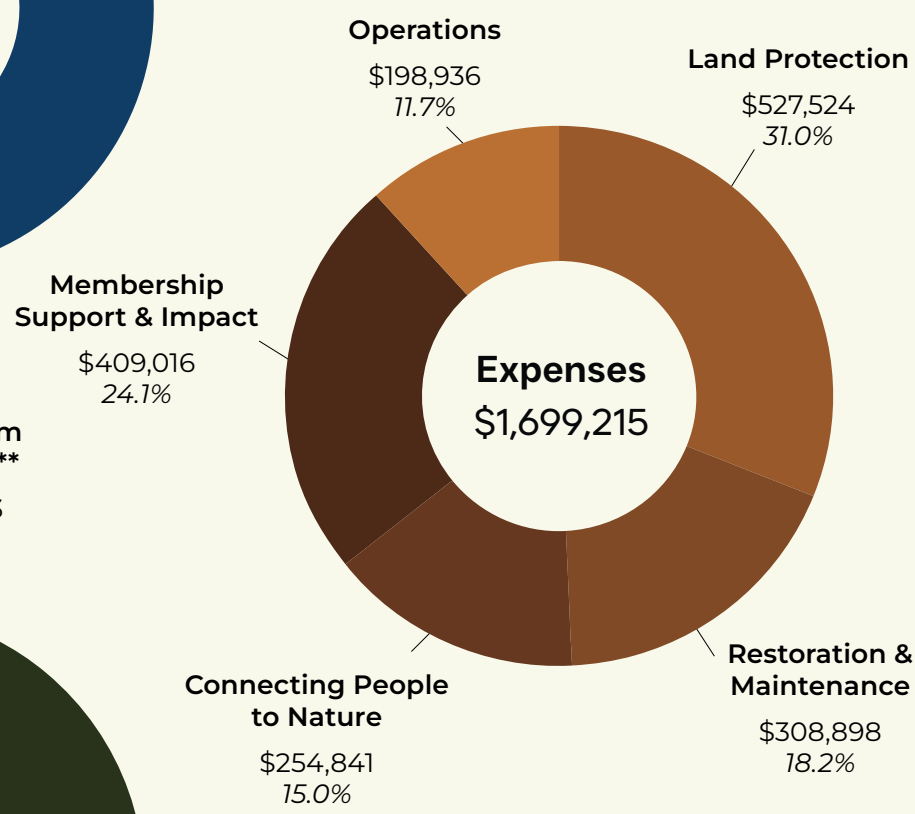
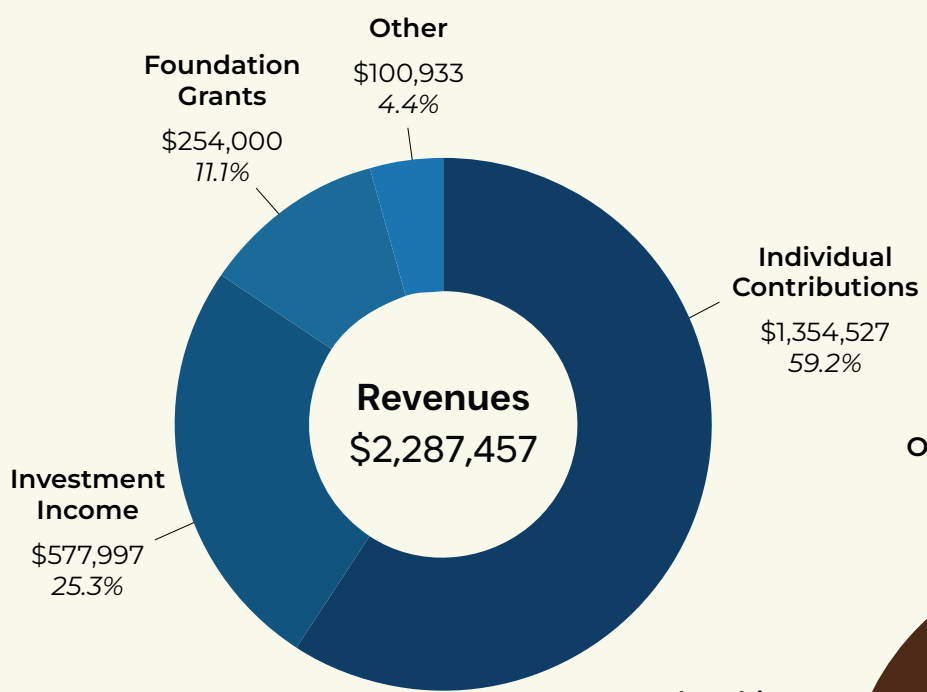
YOUR 2025 IMPACT



PHOTO CREDIT: JACK BARATTA

INVESTING IN WHAT MATTERS

When you invest in what matters, you help create lasting impact. Every dollar supports the protection and care of lands and waters across the Inland Northwest in perpetuity.



MISSION

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

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.

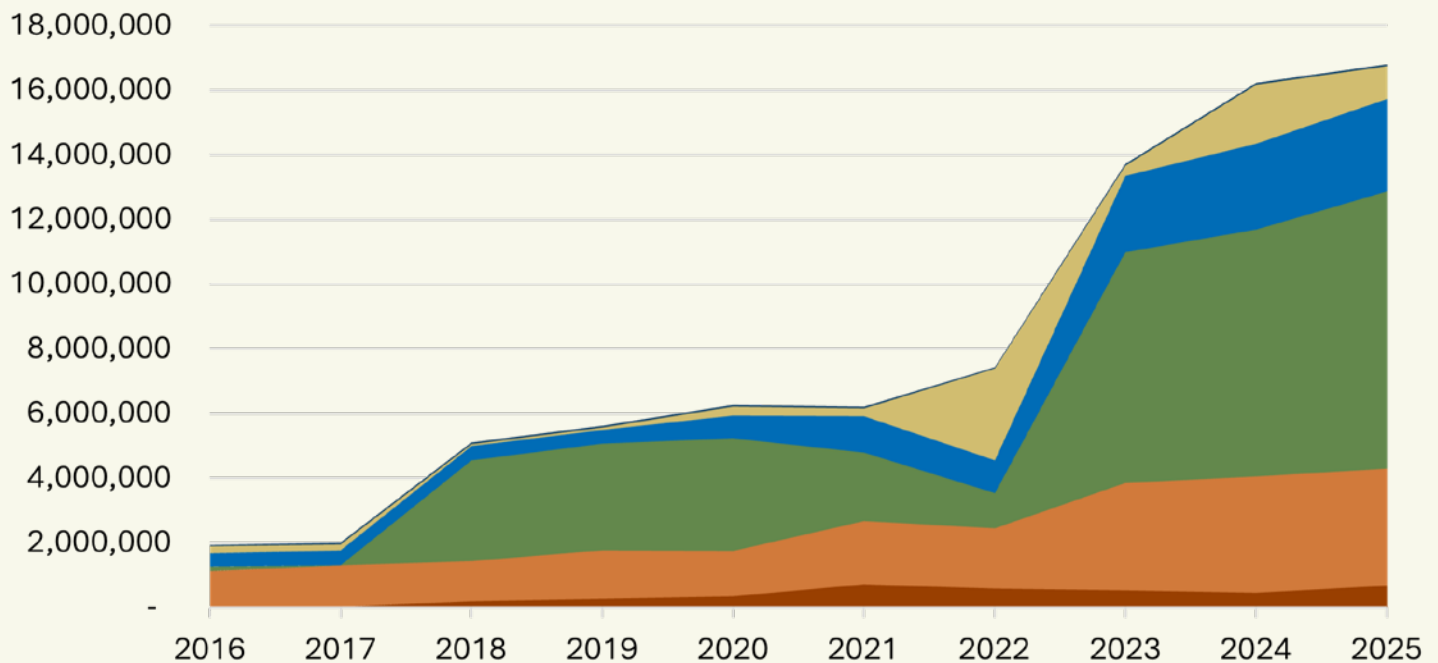
VALUES

Love of Nature, Relationships, Perpetuity, Discernment

Net Asset Growth

Fiscal Year 2016 - Fiscal Year 2025

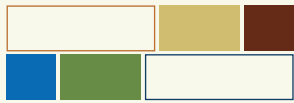
- Short-Term Reserves
- Endowment Funds
- Long-Term Reserves
- Stewardship Funds
- Preserve Land
- Conservation Funds



*Figures as of December 31, 2025

**Short-term reserves: cash on hand to support current operations

***Long-term reserves: invested assets to sustain future operations



30,000 acres of land permanently conserved since 1991



More than 800 members making conservation possible



200 volunteers caring for the land



30,000 visited Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve



134 conserved properties

128 miles of waterways & shorelines protected



4,200 trees planted



73 Land Stewards clocked more than 1,000 hours

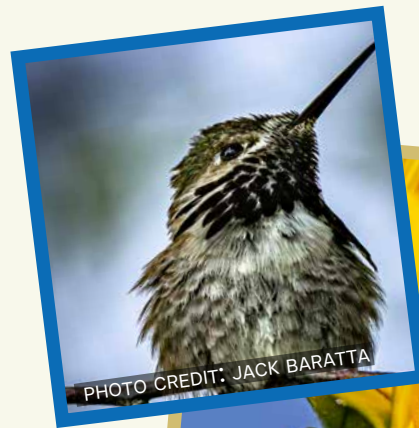


20 hike docents led 65 hikes

105 events connected more than 1,600 people to the land



YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE IN 2025!



QUAIL HAVEN

A Family Forest Becomes a Conservation Legacy

By Maria Vandervert, Communications & Engagement Director, INLC



PHOTO CREDIT: MARIA VANDERVERT

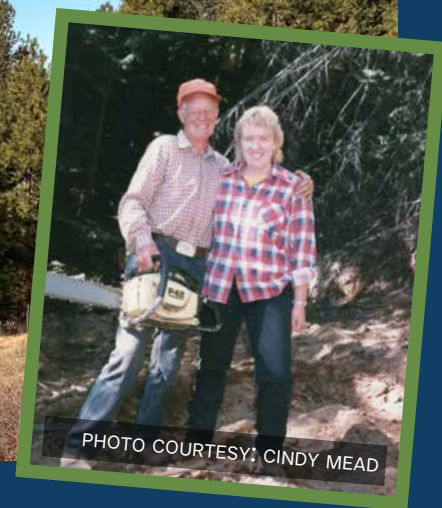


PHOTO COURTESY: CINDY MEAD

Nestled in the foothills of Mica Peak in North Idaho is a stretch of land that has shaped one family for generations. Today, that land, 300 acres known as Quail Haven, is permanently protected through a conservation easement with Inland Northwest Land Conservancy. For landowner Cindy Mead, the decision to conserve her property grew out of a lifetime of memories, a commitment to safeguarding wild habitat, and a desire to ensure the land remains protected from development.

Cindy grew up on the property with her two sisters. After her father passed away, she inherited a portion of the property now known as Quail Haven, where she still lives today. Some of her clearest memories are of working out in the woods with her father learning how to care for the forest. Those early experiences shaped her connection to the land and her desire to see it remain whole. As development pressure increased, she knew she didn't want to see the property subdivided and grew increasingly concerned about the future of the land she loves.

"At some point, if we want wildlife around, we have to give them a place to be," Cindy said. "I grew up walking these hills with my dad. I don't want to see it broken up or lose the healthy forest and wildlife that make it special. Protecting it forever felt like the right thing to do."

Over the years, Cindy has actively managed the forest with professional guidance to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk.

Quail Haven sits in a strategic ecological position on Blossom Mountain in the Mica Peak complex. Its forested slopes, seasonal draws, and stretches of Skalan Creek support a wide range of wildlife — elk, moose, deer, black bears, cougars, bobcats, ruffed grouse, turkey, snowshoe hare, and countless songbirds and raptors. Several Species of Greatest Conservation Need also rely on these woodlands, including the common nighthawk, monarch butterfly, western bumblebee, and native bat species.

This easement was years in the making, but the federal funding needed to complete the project was unexpectedly cut, leaving a gap that required additional private support. When they learned about the opportunity to conserve Quail Haven, Mark, Cory, and Eric Odegard chose to make a gift. As long-time supporters of sustainability and healthy communities, they saw a chance to protect a critical piece of land that might otherwise be lost to development.

"One modest gift can make a substantial impact," said Mark Odegard. "INLC is preserving land that will never be developed, and that's vital for the health of our region. The results are visible — you can see the land, walk its ridges, and know it's protected in perpetuity."

For Cindy, protecting the land comes down to keeping it intact, ensuring the full 300 acres remain whole and healthy. Because of Cindy's commitment and the Odegards' generosity, Quail Haven will be protected forever.

A MOUNTAIN THAT SHAPED A COMMUNITY

By Cara Carlton, Carlton Communications

Mica Peak is the kind of place that hides in plain sight — a familiar blue-gray silhouette on the horizon that keeps half a million people drinking clear, cold water. Just 647 feet shorter than Mt. Spokane, Mica Peak is the southernmost peak in the Selkirk Mountain range.

For longtime Northwest leaders like Sandy Emerson and hydrologist Rob Lindsay, both Inland Northwest Land Conservancy Land Protection Committee members, Mica Peak represents a landscape where local lore and science converge. Sandy grew up in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho,



where he spent his career as a land appraiser specializing in estate, timber, and waterfront parcels, knowing its ridgelines, timber stands, and watershed intimately.

Sandy recalls a ski hill on the east side of Mica Peak in the 1950s-1960s, featuring a motorized rope tow that regularly “ate” gloves and coat sleeves. “It was called Signal Point because the U.S. Air Force operated a radar station on top,” he recalls.

“Signal Point was a community project, built from donated materials into a multi-level lodge, groomed slopes, and rope tows.” Volunteers kept the hill running, and it became part of a homegrown outdoor culture stretching from the lake to the mountains.

But Mica Peak is more than a place where people skied. It is part of a system sustaining the region’s most critical water resources. The Mica Peak Priority Area spans the Washington–Idaho border south of I-90 and includes industrial timberlands, tree farms, and growing pockets of rural residential development. Several creeks feed directly into regional lakes, the Spokane River, and the Spokane Valley–Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, the main drinking water source for more than 500,000 people in the Coeur d’Alene–Spokane metro area.

Rob describes Mica Peak’s role simply: it serves as “the reservoir,” the long-term source that ideally “melts slowly in spring,” flows downslope, seeps into the ground, and “recharges the aquifers.” Natural forests and soils hold snow longer, shade it from rapid melt, and filter water. What happens on those hillsides shows up in the Spokane River. Last summer, in 2025, stretches of the river near Barker Road became impassable to fish for the first time, highlighting how thin the margin has become in late August.

When forested hillsides are cleared for houses, roads, and logging, the canopy that shades snow and slows melt disappears. “Cleared areas tend to drain very rapidly and then cause erosion,” Rob explains. “Fast-moving water erodes soils, washing sediments downstream,” degrading habitat. Instead of gradual, steady water release into creeks and groundwater, the area experiences short-term flooding and reduced river and well levels later in the season.

Conserving Mica Peak keeps natural systems in place. Winter snowmelt from these slopes feeds multiple small watersheds that are part of the Spokane River system and the Columbia River. Protecting this landscape means the same snowpack that sustains wildlife also recharges aquifers, rural wells, and municipal taps from Coeur d’Alene to Spokane. The Spokane Valley–Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer is fed by water draining from the Spokane River, direct rain and snowmelt, and runoff from hillsides on both sides. “Mica Peak provides a significant portion of that runoff,” Rob says. As upper areas develop, natural filtration systems are disrupted, and runoff reaches the



PHOTO CREDIT: LORENZO MENENDEZ

river and aquifer earlier, leaving less water for late-season flows.

Over the past decade, partnerships have played a key role in conserving land around Mica Peak. Spokane County Parks and the Coeur d’Alene Tribe have protected significant portions, while federal funds support timberland conservation. The Conservancy is advancing easement projects, making Mica Peak a priority area. Yet the window to protect land is closing, with significant development pressure threatening forests. “Overdeveloping, not protecting water, we could lose what we have,” Sandy warns.

For Rob, who has watched regional population growth since the 1970s, the stakes are clear. Our community is a “victim of our own good fortune,” he says, having taken abundant water for granted. Protecting Mica Peak is about honoring its history and ensuring generations have clean, clear water year-round. By working with willing landowners, Tribal partners, and public agencies within the Mica Peak Priority Area, the Conservancy can strategically conserve forested areas that serve their vital functions: slowing snowmelt, filtering water, providing wildlife habitat, and creating a lasting legacy.



PHOTO CREDIT: LORENZO MENENDEZ



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Inland Northwest Land Conservancy and Dishman Hills Conservancy Merger Exploration Moves to Phase 2: Community Feedback

With decades of conservation work across our region, we remain grounded in the values that guide us — a love of nature, meaningful relationships, careful discernment, and an enduring commitment to protecting land forever. You have been an essential part of this work, helping protect the places we all care about.

That commitment continues to shape our path forward. INLC and Dishman Hills Conservancy have been exploring a merger that would broaden and strengthen our collective impact. We are now entering a community feedback phase, listening closely to our members, partners, and supporters — and we want to hear from you.

You are invited to attend an upcoming member informational session on June 8 and June 9.

Find out more and register at inlandnwland.org/communityfeedback



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