



BLUE

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CONSERVATION | EDUCATION | RECREATION



Photo by Bill Rodgers

CANYON CREEK: GATEWAY TO THE PAINTED HILLS

Years in the making, the Canyon Creek Ranch is now preserved forever

Amanda Martino, Conservation Director

When Terry and Peggy Long purchased Canyon Creek Ranch, 6,783 sprawling acres in Mitchell, Oregon, they embarked on a 20-year-long journey to protect and restore the ranch to the high-functioning ecosystem that it is today.

“When we purchased the property in 2001, it was evident that it had been overgrazed, and

Bear Creek had very little cover or riparian vegetation. We immediately started working on improving the land and bringing it back to a level that would sustain agriculture and fish and wildlife habitat,” said Peggy Long.

The property contains 3.1 miles of Bear Creek, an Endangered Species Act-listed salmon and

steelhead spawning stream. The Longs worked with partners including the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District to build a new bridge and culvert, plant the riparian areas which are the floodplains between water and grassland, fill the creek with Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs), and fence it off from grazing cattle.

The landowners have also removed thousands of acres of juniper in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service

(NRCS) and treat invasive annual grasses. Under the Longs’ stewardship, the grasslands have improved to a condition that cattle ranching has returned to the property. Bear Creek’s riparian area has filled in with native plants. A few beavers have even returned to the creek – a sign that habitat restoration has been successful.

In December 2020, Blue Mountain Land Trust acquired a conservation easement on Canyon Creek Ranch, which permanently protects the property and its restoration. The acquisition more than doubles the Land Trust’s protected

acreage to date. The easement will prevent any future development or subdivision of the Ranch.

Canyon Creek Ranch is the largest, and one of the most ecologically diverse, conservation easement projects Blue Mountain Land Trust has worked on. This ranch includes important water resources in Bear Creek, thousands of acres of sage brush steppe, and incredible geologic features. The property is adjacent to the Painted Hills National Monument, one of the “Seven Wonders of Oregon,” known for its vibrantly colored hills composed of fossilized soils. The same red and purple fossilized soils can be found throughout Canyon Creek Ranch. The property also provides habitat for elk, mule deer, upland birds, and cougar.

Under the conservation easement, investments in habitats improvement are also protected. The Longs worked with Blue Mountain Land



Peggy and Terry Long

Trust, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and NRCS to develop a conservation easement and an accompanying property management plan that will guide the continued stewardship of the ranch into the future.

“OWEB is pleased to be an investing partner in the permanent conservation of Canyon Creek Ranch. The conservation easement follows decades of habitat restoration and conservation initiatives implemented by the landowners and partners. It takes a deeply held commitment to the land and to conservation to have an effective conservation easement that will stand the test of time. We really appreciate the efforts of the partners, and our grantee, Blue Mountain Land Trust, in extending the Longs’ conservation vision in perpetuity,” said Eric Williams, Grant Program Manager at OWEB.

The acquisition took over three years and brought together OWEB and NRCS as project funders for the first time in recent years. These funders worked with Blue Mountain Land Trust to blend ecological protections and goals with the needs of working lands.

“BMLT has been a tremendous partner and asset in protecting native rangeland in Wheeler county. This easement will protect vital steelhead habitat and, at the same time, ensure that future generations will be able to utilize this land for agriculture,” said Damon Brosnan, NRCS District Conservationist for Wheeler and Gilliam counties.

Under the working lands easement, the property will continue to be grazed and 55 acres of crops will be grown. The landowners will manage the rangeland and riparian areas to maintain healthy ecosystems.

“Once we learned about the working lands conservation easement, we realized that this



Canyon Creek Ranch

was a perfect way to protect our improvements and ensure good stewardship of the land into the future. Protecting this land from development or fragmentation allows future generations the ability to continue farming and to enjoy the wonderful natural resources this property has to offer,” Terry Long explained.

Blue Mountain Land Trust is grateful for the support of the project funders and the perseverance of the Longs in completing this historic project. Protecting this land from development or fragmentation will benefit generations to come by preserving its ecological and agricultural resources.



This is our Planet

From the introduction to *Our Planet* by Alastair Fothergill and Keith Scholey, 2019.

Here is the bad news. Planet Earth is now our planet, and we humans are running amok, killing its wildlife and trashing its life-support systems. But inside the bad news lies the good news. For if we finally recognize the peril we are in, then we have the chance to redeem ourselves – to begin a great restoration of nature on our planet. And the best news is that we still can.

It is clear that we have not been good tenants of our home. The fridge is poorly stocked. The furniture is broken. The plumbing no longer works properly and there have been floods. There is a hole in the roof. Someone has been playing with the temperature controls. And the garden has been concreted over. You get the picture. We need to grow up. We need to get house-proud, write ourselves a cleanup list, and get on with the job.

COURAGEOUS CONSERVATION

What the pandemic taught us about protecting the natural world we love, and how much more we have to learn

Tim Copeland, Executive Director

Twelve months ago, none of us had heard of COVID-19. We were enjoying a beautiful winter, anticipating a glorious spring, and then reports of a mysterious disease in Wuhan, China began to get our attention. You know all too well what happened next.

Now it's February, 2021. Over 27,000,000 Americans have contracted the virus. 465,000-plus have died. And while vaccines are becoming available, it will take most of this year until COVID is behind us. Unless something goes wrong.

We live in serious and challenging times. They demand that we do what's right and best, not just what we want. As a conservation organization, we're taking that responsibility to heart.

As the pandemic demanded that we live and work in new ways, we asked ourselves, very seriously, what is it that we are trying to preserve? What should we be thinking about every time we see a piece of land, a herd of elk or birds in flight?

We boiled it down to five things: Climate, soil, food, water, and species. The Five Imperatives.

Climate tops the list because everything else depends on it. If we lose the battle against global warming, its impacts on our soil, food, water, and species will be devastating.

That's why we are dedicating much of this year to learning what it will take to reverse global warming and share that education with you.



To that end – helping people understand climate change - the Blue Mountain Land Trust will present a series of 10 seminars on reversing global warming beginning late this spring. This series will discuss three important aspects of global warming.

First, we'll explore the causes of climate change of which many are man-made. The impacts of global warming on our local and global environments will also be addressed.

Second, using the research and guidance of **Project Drawdown**, we'll explore what can be done to reduce global warming. The good news is global warming is still reversible. But to win that battle, we have to dramatically change our behaviors now. The actions required are those that reduce the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere and increase the storage of CO₂ in the soil and trees. Reducing emissions and increasing sinks.

Seminars two through five will explore how to reduce airborne emissions of CO₂ by changing practices in electricity generation, powering transportation, producing food, and constructing buildings. Seminars six and seven will discuss how airborne CO₂ can be drawn from the atmosphere and stored in various carbon sinks including forests, farms, grasslands, coastal waterways and oceans. And seminar eight will explain how increasing levels of global education and health dramatically reduce carbon emissions.

Finally, we'll discuss the actions we need to take to be part of the solution to climate change. Reducing our personal carbon footprints is part of the solution. But the climate problem won't be solved without massive governmental action. That will only happen if millions of us demand it. From now on, none of us can afford to sit on the political sidelines. The series will conclude with four seminars that explore how you and

we can secure the governmental actions we need for our collective survival.

What happens after the last seminar will largely be determined by our audience. We hope that many learning circles will be formed by seminar participants who want to put what they've learned into action. This may prove to be the most impactful component of this series.

The climate series should wrap up in the fall. After a brief break, we'll roll out a second series on soil. Then one on food. And so on, until we all have a good grounding in all of the Five Imperatives.

This is our land trust's 22nd year. In that period, we've done a great deal of land protection in the Blue Mountain region. We're poised to continue our important farm, grassland, river, stream and habitat protection for years to come. But it will all be futile if we don't reverse global warming in the next 30 years. Conservation easements on farmland are valueless if droughts and floods destroy

their agricultural productivity. Conservation easements on forests don't stop wildfires. Focusing on conservation easements with no regard for the climate is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

This article's title, **Courageous Conservation**, is an acknowledgment that not everyone will agree with us as we do our work. From time to time, as Congressman John Lewis said, we'll get into "good trouble." That comes with the territory of reversing global warming.

To get a head start on these important discussions, please go to **bmlt.org/climate** for links to important publications including the works of **Project Drawdown**, the **Climate Reality Project** and **Our World**.

Thank you in advance for joining us as we learn together how we can better protect the natural world we love.

The reality of climate change is no longer in doubt by anyone who trusts science. Rising temperatures created by increased levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is the existential threat of our lifetime. More dire than COVID-19. More deadly than nuclear fallout. Yet climate change is not well understood by millions of people who would think and act differently if they knew more. I count myself among those who need to learn much more about global warming.





Photo by Bill Rodgers



Photo by Mark Hussein

THROUGH THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE

A unique glimpse of the rugged John Day River Basin

Terry Lawhead

The John Day River Basin is a vast landscape under a huge sky, and if you intend to photograph it you had better want to keep moving.

Bill Rodgers and Mark Hussein are predisposed to photographing wild remote places throughout the west and know how to get around on foot off-road. They also prefer camping in order to see dawn to dusk light and shadows and in sustaining patience in all kinds of weather to better feel out where they find themselves.

They look in their camera viewfinders as they dance across open ground seeking the lyrical composition they intuitively know comes together as suddenly as it vanishes, and then reappears in the foregrounds, edges, and horizons. The sight of Bill and Mark moving about must humor the soaring hawks overhead.

It is easy to say you need to be in the right place at the right time, but nobody knows where or when that happens until it does. Ansel Adams said you don't take photos, you make

them. And in John Day country you make your luck through persistence, confessing that the winning shot often occurred because you were ready for the unexpected.

The photographers visited widespread areas of the Northeast Oregon counties recently added to the Blue Mountain Land Trust's service area. The northern boundary of the John Day service area roughly coincides with the southern slopes of the Blue Mountains north of the John Day River. The southern limits roughly parallel the southern sides of Grant, Wheeler, and western Baker Counties. The western and southwestern boundaries consist of the eastern slopes of the John Day River watershed, and the eastern boundaries of the areas photographed consist of the western portions of Baker and Union Counties.

Bill and Mark's routes went through prairies, mountains and meadows, centuries old

homesteads and communities dating back to the early settlers of Oregon. The thousands of years of the presence of tribal life left few artifacts and, once understood, yield a sense of wonder and respect.

The silk-blue summer sky of eastern Oregon appears in this book and Bill and Mark also like the lighting, colors and feeling of turbulent more suggestive skies. One image was taken at the very end of a long day of shooting as a broad dark cloudburst entered a valley dramatically enhancing the colors of the trees, grass and sagebrush. Sometimes nature offers an outright invitation, and you accept.

A photograph is a product of reality and imagination and landscape photography presents a visual narrative that transcends the literal subjects. There are stories hidden in plain sight that a well-composed photograph reveals of memories and associations.



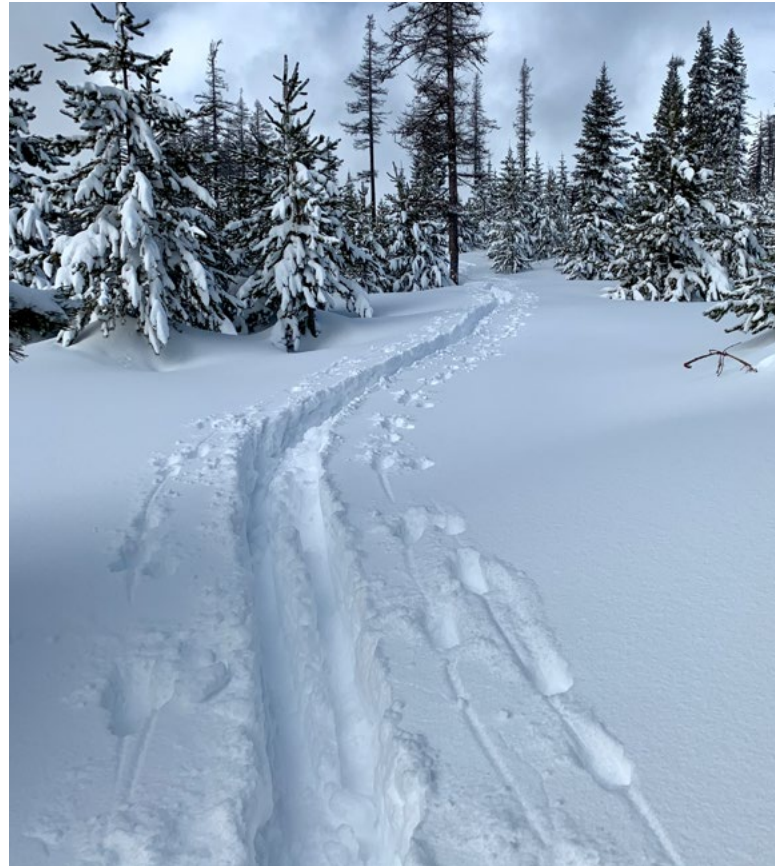
Photo by Bill Rodgers

For myself, images of gold tamarack in fall and balsam root in spring fold me into the turning of the seasons. Seeing the snow-dusted forested mountains disappearing into low clouds and the tens of millions of years-old basalt outcrops on lower ridges lift me into reflections of my own years in the region.

John Day is remote empty country. It can, for some people, feel desolate. The rugged panorama and colorful geology can result in an interesting vertigo because we see extreme, timeless beauty without us in it. For many, this experience is a sublime solitude. For some, it is unsettling. Fortunately, such a viewer can round a few bends in the road, or turn a few pages of the book, and see prairies of purple flowers, slopes of alpine wilderness as well as productively managed farms and ranches. Careful stewardship is the lifework of people interacting with this country and the mission of the Blue Mountain Land Trust. Bill and Mark illuminate this practiced stewardship with photos of the ongoing activities of the residents and their sturdy investments of buildings, fence lines, safe corrals for cattle and horses and mitigating the impact of natural cycles of fires and erosion.

Outside work completed, the photographers then head for home where they load their pictures on screens and devote time to study what they have. In the field they shoot in “raw format” which contains little processed data and shows the direct image from the camera sensors. They access their mastery of artistic digital technologies which optimize color, lighting and shadows to ensure they draw the viewer’s eyes to what are the most striking aspects of their images.

They made themselves available and attentive to witness the land and sky. What they saw they are sharing with you.



Photos by Greg Brown



WINTER PLAYGROUND

Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Ski Area finds a reinvigorated purpose with the Blues Crew as stewards

Dr. Greg Brown, Board Director and Blues Crew Co-Founder

Winter transforms the Northern Blue Mountains. Snow arrives early and at remarkable depths. Last year, snow accumulations exceeded eight feet in the highest elevations. Because of this, the area in Northeast Oregon near Tollgate is especially popular for a variety of snow sports and activities.

The Spout Springs area has a long history of Nordic skiing. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was home to the US and Norwegian Olympic Nordic Ski teams. Then in the 1990s and 2000s the Whitman College Nordic team used the area to shape skiers of National, World Cup, FIS Marathon, and Olympic caliber. Holly Brooks and US National Champion



Original Hoseshoe Prairie Map

Silver and Bronze medalist Laura Valaas both got their start skiing at Whitman.

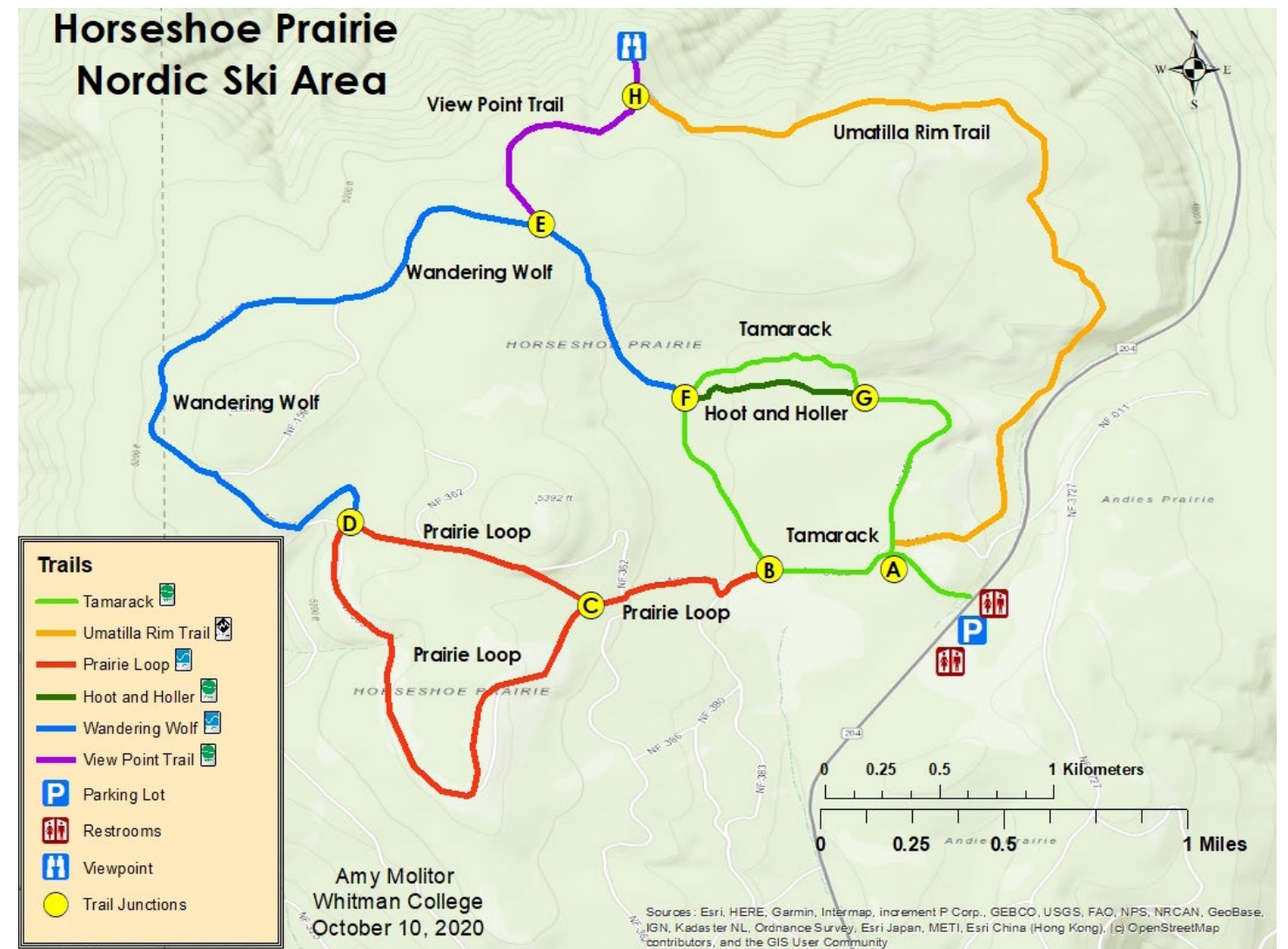
Since the late 1990s a number of factors contributed to the loss of a dedicated Nordic Ski Patrol that had assisted skiers and maintained trails. Fortunately, a few miles east of Spout Springs, another Nordic area at Horseshoe Prairie was enhanced in 1990s by a group of Eagle Scouts from Pendleton. At age 17, Martin Nelson led the project for the Scouts working with Mike Northrup of the US Forest Service. Upon approval they mapped the area and placed blue diamond markers to guide the winter enthusiasts.

Over the next ten years, despite an informal agreement to use separate areas, conflicts between skiers and snow machine users grew. In 2000, USFS staff engaged representatives from the Inter-Mountain Alpine Club (I-MAC) of the Tri-Cities and four regional snow machine clubs to agree on an area of protected use.

By September 2002, a three-year preliminary agreement was developed, and the Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Area restrictions were formally established by the US Forest Service. In 2005, a total of 3,570 acres of national forest was permanently dedicated to cross country ski and snowshoe enthusiasts and off-limits to motorized vehicles each winter from December 1 to March 31.

In 2020, the Blue Mountain Land Trust signed a partnership agreement with the Forest Service to maintain 10 miles of trails and provide grooming services on selected trails in this area. Forty Blues Crew volunteers have spent over 600 hours clearing brush and obstacles. They scrambled up ladders to place new blue diamond markers high on trees so paths can be followed when the snow cover rises. Trail intersection posts were upgraded with new directional signs and a map showing “You are here!” - placed high for visibility in the deepest winter snows. A new informational kiosk greets visitors as they enter from the Andies Prairie Sno-Park. The kiosk’s map contains a QR Code that will allow skiers to load an upgraded map that provides color-coded trail identifiers with difficulty levels.

In late 2020, the Land Trust invested in a significant upgrade in grooming equipment by purchasing two powerful snow machines and an advanced grooming sled. This new equipment is capable of creating a variety of groomed surfaces supporting classic and skate-skiing styles. These robust improvements have resulted in an area transformed for safe winter enjoyment by our community.



The trails at Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Ski Area provide a range of experiences in terrain and snow landscapes.

- The **Tamarack Trail** is a 2.5-mile loop. It is ideal for those new to the sport. It will be groomed regularly and follows existing forest service roads.
- The **Hoot & Holler Trail** offers a short traverse between groomed sections for those wishing to try an ungroomed trail. It travels within a wonderful dense forest section of pine, fir and tamarack trees.
- The **Viewpoint Trail** will take one out to an overlook of the North Fork Umatilla Wilderness’s spectacular canyon.
- The **Wandering Wolf Trail** is a corridor bounded by tall pine and fir trees and users may see tracks of the area’s wildlife on freshly fallen snow. After about 2 miles it connects with Prairie Loop Trail.
- The southern part of the **Prairie Loop Trail** courses over a vast open slope marked by seasonally placed orange poles to guide the route.
- The **Umatilla Rim Trail** segment will provide the ultimate challenge for the back-country skier as it dips and climbs through the forest ultimately connecting to the Viewpoint Trail.

Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Ski Area is located off Oregon Highway 204, 26 miles east of Weston, Oregon and 14 miles west of Elgin, Oregon. A downloadable pamphlet with a trail map is available at bmlt.org/horseshoe-prairie where you can also find regular updates on snow conditions and grooming.

THE SPARK OF COLLABORATION

Volunteer Kyle McFarley is one of the Bluew's Crew's most inspirational and resourceful leaders

Terry Lawhead, Blues Crew Volunteer

If our public and private lands could talk, they would ask for more people with grit who can get things done. Such attentive work creates a virtuous circle because the land reciprocates generously by providing opportunities for solace and fun. No surprise that Blues Crew member Kyle McFarley believes that recreation is a key therapy that works well for the community.

The outpouring of enthusiasm, support and engagement with the Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Ski Area by the regional community certainly reaffirms this idea. "Horseshoe Prairie, a plateau on the upper rim of the North Fork Umatilla Wilderness and watershed, is a regional recreation gem that draws all ages from rural Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington communities," said Kyle.

"A year ago Kyle ignited about Horseshoe Prairie, and we have all been driven in part by his passion." Blues Crew leader Greg Brown added that Kyle has been an inspiration to everyone, particularly in his enthusiasm for thinking outside the box. On the trail, middle of a workday, middle of the night, Kyle is exploring ways to get things done. "How else can you get people, over a certain age, lifting up 150-pound 16 foot 6x6s after digging three

foot holes in rocky soil and laughing all the way?"

Kyle finds a specific calling in improving and sustaining access to public lands for all citizens, of which racial and financial inclusivity are key considerations. Kyle's wife Heidi has frequently witnessed him implementing his vision of helping people. "He is kind of a humble Pied Piper, always encouraging and helping, empowering parents and their kids, buying useful gear and sharing it generously."

A Walla Walla childhood spent enjoying the Blue Mountains greatly influenced Kyle's perspective. He is grateful for mentoring he received from older people, including his parents. "I was allowed the freedom to be outside and to be independent. It gave me the seeds of how to work and a knowledge from a different time."

The value of good work and utilizing opportunities to learn led Kyle into experiences respecting how groups interact. "When I was young," he said, "I met a retired smokejumper who operated a little sawmill with his fellow retirees and for me, it was like experiencing a jazz quartet."

During a National Outdoor Leadership School trip to the Himalayas, Kyle learned to plan and carry out expeditions and to identify locals with regional knowledge to get work done. The activity affirmed he had a knack for it and returning to university life he found academic success but admits he kept going feral due to his love of the outdoors. Then, shifting economic winds got him into construction. Contractor skills necessarily expanded rapidly. "I had a natural affinity for problem solving, usually ending up being the guy who says, 'I'll try' and leans into the challenge."

Kyle brought those skills to the Blues Crew with his understanding of the benefits of collective wisdom giving everybody a chance to bring creativity to a project. He is confident that the Blues Crew's success and the continual enjoyment of volunteers without any injuries is



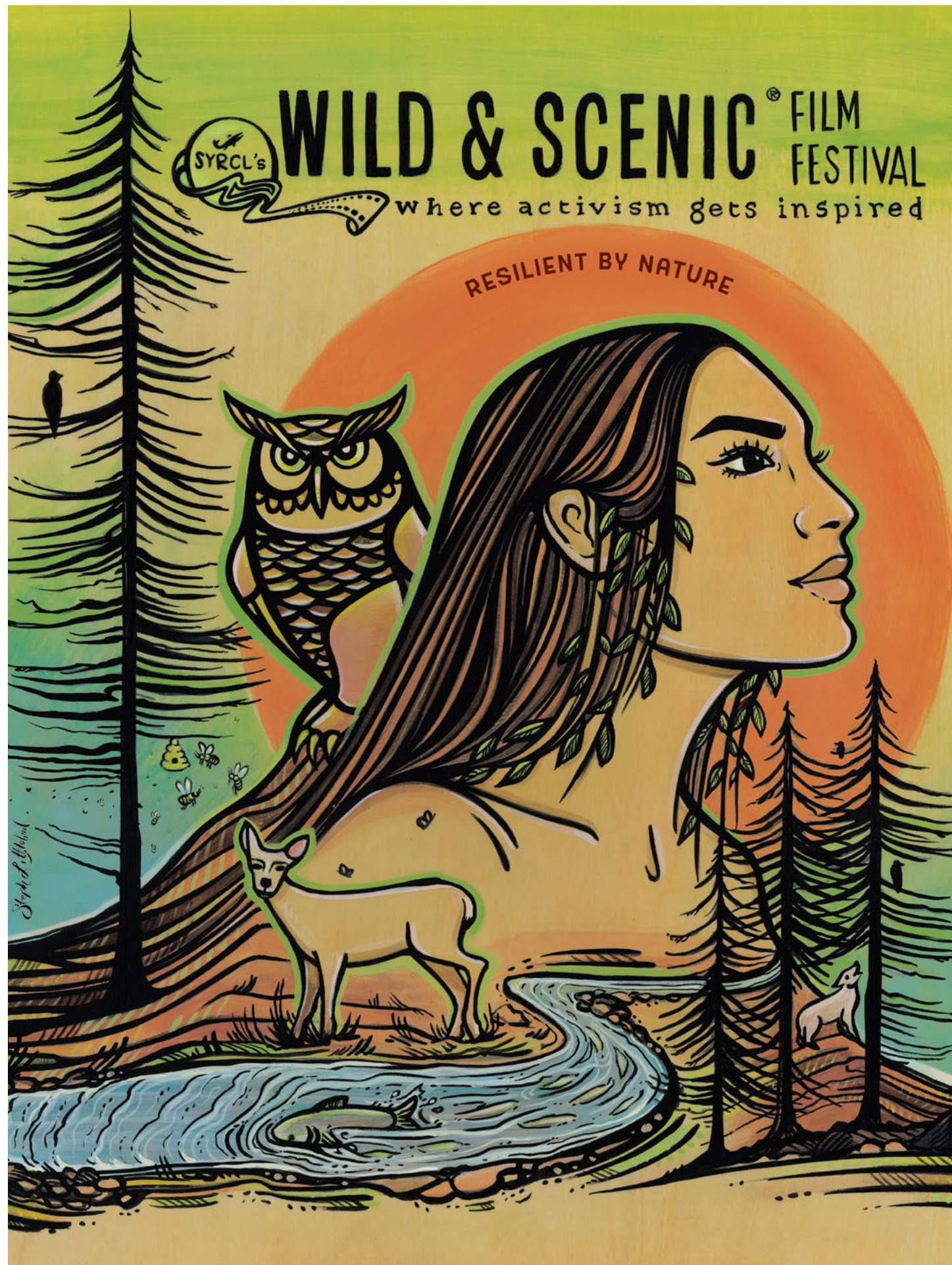
Kyle with his son, DeLos

due to a supportive sensitivity to each other. Linda Herbert, president of the Land Trust, said Kyle quickly earned the reputation of being the most connected man anyone had ever met. "From Missoula to Meecham to Weston and locales in between, he networks with scores of individuals, bringing us invaluable information, materials, equipment, allies and good will and leaving a trail of folks interested in the work of Blue Mountain Land Trust and the Blues Crew," she said. "He's astonishingly resourceful and so very generous with his time and talents."

Herbert notes how thoughtfully McFarley defers to any group he is working with. "I would say that as thrilled as Kyle is to see the Horseshoe Prairie project take off and blossom as it has, he is even more excited by the collaboration and volunteerism which has made it happen. When anyone expresses appreciation to him for all that he does, he is quick to point out that it has all been possible because of the work of many."

Cecil Berry, a vital Blues Crew partner and one of the team of Horseshoe Prairie ski trail groomers said, "Kyle is gung ho all the time! He rides on the grooming machines and then hops off to shovel snow so that the trail is just a little bit flatter and better. Never seen anybody do that before!"

Kyle believes that recreation itself is a good therapist. "Outdoor activities strengthen resilience and are good for the soul," he said. "Public lands also help our leadership get out there, heal and come back better at what they do. Having people there helps save public lands from deterioration because there needs to be a critical mass of eyes and ears on the ground. Protecting public lands is ever more important. I'm definitely taking the long view."



A CELEBRATION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

Blue Mountain Land Trust celebrates its seventh year screening the **Wild and Scenic Film Festival**

Katy Rizzuti, Education Specialist

For the last six years Blue Mountain Land Trust has welcomed you to the **Wild & Scenic Film Festival** at Maxey Hall. Last year, because of health and safety guidelines, the one-night event became an eight-week-long online film festival. Fifty-two films were screened right to your home with new ones coming out each week.

Wild and Scenic Film Festival will be online again, but we are making this an extra special event. Viewers can join the one-night film festival from the comfort and safety of their homes on April 1. The recorded event will be available to stream for the next six days.

This **Wild & Scenic Film Festival** will be an event you will want to attend. Partnering with local restaurants in our region, we will give you the full experience from your very own living room.

With the support of local sponsors, our film festival celebrates the beauty and wonder of our natural world, and is a natural extension of Blue Mountain Land Trust's work to inspire people to act on behalf of the environment.

6TH ANNUAL WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

Join us LIVE on **Thursday, April 1, 2021** for food and films, from the comfort of your home.

Visit bmlt.org/wild2021 for more information.

NEW FACES AT THE LAND TRUST

Earlier this year, we added two new staff to our ranks. We asked them a little about themselves so you might get to know them.

Katy Rizzuti Education Specialist

Katy Rizzuti is a mother, artist, and educator with a family background of farmers and cattle ranchers. In addition to spending time in her studio, she teaches art and science to youth. With experience in event planning and curriculum development, she hopes to spark healing and nurture curiosity, and connect to nature for our community.

What is your favorite trail in the Blue Mountains?

Grouse Mountain and Zig Zag Springs hold a vivid memory of squeezing tight into the saddle as my horse hastily vaulted over a fallen tree. These trails boast an expansive vista overlooking the deep blue colors and forested lands within the Blue Mountains. A sense of awe and calm wash over me with every visit.

Katy with her oldest son, Bailey, at the Hiawatha Bike Trail



What is the best book you've read recently?

I am currently immersed in the fascinating argument of wolves being reintroduced into the northwest in *Howl of Woman and Wolf*. In her book, Susan Imhoff Bird shares ranchers, hunters, biologists, and wolf watchers' diverse perspectives. It is clear that education is essential for fear to recede, compromises to happen, and nature to become balanced. I look forward to reading more about the topics she touches on, such as land connectivity through the Spine Column, where several agencies, land trusts, and private landowners are working to establish one unimpeded migration trail running through Northern America's Rockies.

What inspired you to take your position at BMLT?

Following trails and discovering tracks left by elk and deer were a part of my childhood adventures. They were pivotal in developing my curiosity and respect for nature. As an educator and nature-lover, I am drawn to BMLT's robust educational offerings. They offer a chance to connect to our region by exploring, honoring, and awakening a sense of wonder. Meaningful learning experiences allow us to become true stewards of our land.

What is your favorite season to spend in our region?

Autumn colors fill my palette and inspire the paint to flow. The luminous springtime greens, colorful new growth, and regal trees stretching toward the sky remind me to do the same.

Jess Portas Development & Marketing Specialist

Jess spent her childhood camping all over the Sierra Nevada mountains and her young adulthood wandering the beaches of the California Central Coast and Southwest England before moving to Walla Walla eight years ago. She is passionate about the outdoors and social justice advocacy. When she's not working hard for the Land Trust, you'll find her gardening, in her pottery studio, off on a bike ride, in a political meeting, playing games with her two ever-energetic boys, or sitting by a bonfire somewhere.

What is your favorite trail in the Blue Mountains?

I have two. I love Lick Creek to Grouse Mountain in late Spring. I've never been somewhere in the wild that was so full of flowers. The views on the trail are just stunning. My kids even enjoyed it.

My second is the Sinks trail at Jubilee Lake. Most of the trail goes through lush, damp forest. The earthy smells and muffling of sounds from the undergrowth while you're racing downhill on a bike between the trees is such an incredible experience.

What is the best book you've read recently?

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer. It literally changed my life and I recommend it to everyone I talk to about books. It's so beautiful and RWK is a wonderful storyteller. I've become so conscious of the source of everything I touch and that surrounds me—plastic and metal computer, woodpulp paper, stone mug, leaves in tea, — and paying homage to the earth for all that it's constantly giving to me and to the things that gave their lives so that I could have my paper, house, table, shoes, and so on.



Jess and her family at Bennington Lake

What inspired you to take your position at BMLT?

I really enjoy marketing and fundraising, but the idea of doing these things I enjoy for an organization whose mission is close to my heart is such an exciting prospect. Who wouldn't want to do work they love for a cause they care deeply about?

What is your favorite season to spend in our region?

As someone who hails from the milder weather of California, anything but winter! I have a difficult time deciding between the fresh, budding trees in the spring, the incredible bounty both in food and activity this region provides in the summer, and the rich colors that sweep across the landscape in the fall.

The cover photo was taken by Bill Rodgers at the Painted Hills National Monument.

PLANNED GIVING

By making a legacy gift to the Blue Mountain Land Trust, you will have an important role in the protection of our region's land, water, and habitat for generations to come. You and your heirs may also receive significant tax and financial benefits.

No matter your income level, planned giving offers you a way to support what you care about in life. There are many ways to leave a legacy gift to the Blue Mountain Land Trust.

For more information about planned giving, go to our website bmlt.org/plannedgiving or contact Development & Marketing Specialist Jess Portas at (509) 525-3136 or jessica@bmlt.org.

LEADERSHIP

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Blue Mountain Land Trust is a nonprofit organization that collaborates with communities and landowners to conserve the scenic, natural, and working lands that characterize the Blue Mountain region.

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The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.