



WallowaLands

News from Wallowa Land Trust

Winter 2019

Keep It
Rural!

New hope for the future of the East Moraine

photo by
Leon Werdinger

A Note from the Executive Director

This newsletter comes to you packed full of good news. From the return of coho salmon in the Lostine River to more land on the East Moraine protected for future generations, there is a lot to be excited about.



Long before I joined Wallowa Land Trust, the community was talking about how to preserve the spectacular glacial landform surrounding Wallowa Lake. Of particular concern was preventing the largest parcel under single ownership on the East Moraine from turning into a housing development and possibly a conference center. The threat is very real. At 1,791 acres, the Ronald C. Yanke Family Trust property encompasses approximately 60% of the East Moraine and has significant development potential. Up to fifteen houses could be built there, including three on the iconic crest. Additionally, a conference center and associated buildings could be built as well as a large private dock on the lake.

In response to this potential development, a partnership of organizations including Wallowa Land Trust, Wallowa Resources, Wallowa County and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department came together in 2011. This partnership, called the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership, has sought to find a way to secure the future of the Moraines landscape, and when the Yanke Family Trust expressed an interest in selling their East Moraine property, the Partnership expressed an interest in buying it.

Fast forward almost nine years, and we simply could not come to an agreement on price. To say that we were feeling frustrated would be an understatement.

Thankfully, even though the Yanke project was stalled, we were hugely honored to receive three donated conservation easements on the East Moraine. Jacob Hasslacher and Chris Antemann donated a conservation easement on 40 acres directly adjacent to the Yanke property on the backside of the East Moraine (2014); the Ham family donated a 52-acre conservation easement also adjacent to the Yanke property but at the north end (2017); and, most recently, Anna Mae Quint donated a conservation easement on 175 acres, (see page 4 for the full story) adjacent to the Ham family's property earlier this year.

So while we were disheartened by the lack of progress on the Yanke front, these other conservation wins kept our spirits high and our hope strong.

Around Thanksgiving of 2018, the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership had a heart to heart meeting about the challenging Yanke project. We had already successfully raised more than \$3.6 million toward the purchase of the property, but we were receiving pressure from our funders. We needed to spend the money or return it. Naturally, we didn't want to do this. In fact, we loathed the idea of returning it, but we also didn't want the project to drag on another five years. Knowing we would never get the more than \$3.6 million back, we thought, why not make the Yankes a final offer before we gave up?

And as you now know, in December of 2018, they accepted (see page 6 for the full story).

Needless to say, 2019 will be a full year for Wallowa Land Trust! We are excited to pursue the protection of one of the most beloved and iconic landscapes in the Northwest, and to achieve one of the primary reasons Wallowa Land Trust came together in 2004: to protect the integrity of the Wallowa Lake Moraines. In the coming months you will be hearing much more about this project, stay tuned!

Kathleen Ackley
Executive Director

Return of the Coho

by Eric Greenwell

Last fall, Wallowa Land Trust got word from the Nez Perce Tribe that coho salmon had returned to the Lostine River in Wallowa County, Oregon—for the first time in nearly 40 years. For several reasons, coho disappeared from the watershed—dams prevented passage and they were heavily fished and preyed upon. Their runs, once in the twenty-thousands, dwindled to none.

Their return was humbling and heartwarming news for all of us who have been rooting for these tenacious and remarkable fish. And we have been rooting for them for a long time. The Nez Perce Tribe's Fisheries Department first received funding to study how to reintroduce coho back in 1988, and they broached the idea of reintroduction to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in 1996. At that time, ODFW had their hands full, protecting endangered species like chinook and steelhead. Meanwhile, circa 2011, the Nez Perce Tribe worked with the Wolfe family to operate a fish weir and research station on the Lostine River which happens to run through the Wolfe family farm. The Wolfe family also worked with Wallowa Land Trust to place two conservation easements on their property in 2011 and 2017. These easements protect



photo by
Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries

the farm as well as one-and-a-half miles of fish habitat and riparian areas along the Lostine River, surrounding the fish weir, in perpetuity.

Eventually, ODFW was able to work with the Nez Perce Tribe. ODFW began rearing coho smolts at their Cascade Hatchery in Cascade Locks, Oregon, and as fate would have it, the fish weir on the Lostine River turned out to be just the place to release them. On March 9, 2017, the Tribe with ODFW held a ceremony on the Lostine River and 500,000 little cohos were shot out of a hose and into the river.

Many didn't know if they would survive.

Unlike their distant wild cousins, they were not acclimated to wild waters. They had to get tough. They had to make the journey—over 1,200 miles to the ocean and back. The usual predators were out there, both freshwater and saltwater. Could these coho "imprint" on the Lostine and learn to navigate a tangle of tributaries to return to their original spawning grounds?

In October and November of 2018, 42 coho came back, and more are expected.

People working together bode well for these Lostine coho. The Nez Perce Tribe and ODFW are experts. Organizations like Wallowa Land Trust and families like the Wolfes are working together upriver and downriver to make sure habitat is protected and restored.

The journey has been long and arduous for all of us, full of obstacles and opportunities as well as misfortune, serendipity and luck. Moreover, it's ongoing. For now, we celebrate, and as we continue to work together in Wallowa County, we hope these coho are poised to return and return and return.

For love of the Moraine

By Katy Nesbitt

A family with strong ties to Wallowa County has donated a conservation easement across 175 acres of prime bunchgrass prairie on Wallowa Lake's East Moraine.

The property encompasses two lateral moraines before rising to the crest of the East Moraine at its westernmost boundary, where it abuts the Ham Family Conservation Easement, a 52-acre easement completed by the Ham family and Wallowa Land Trust in 2017. The Ham and Quint Conservation Easements are part of a larger effort to conserve nearly 2,500 acres across Wallowa Lake's East and Terminal Moraines.

Anna Mae Quint, 85, of Redmond, grew up at the southern edge of Joseph in a house her parents bought when she was in elementary school. Her father grew up on a ranch outside of Joseph on Walker Lane.

"My grandmother and grandfather came into the county in a covered wagon from Gilliam County and homesteaded on Sheep Creek," Quint said.

Quint attended Oregon State University and she and her husband, an engineer, settled in West Linn with five children. Despite the long drive,



the family spent most of their free time in Wallowa County visiting Quint's mother.

Her youngest daughter, Amy Anderson, said, "We would go see our grandmother every holiday and summer vacation. We hiked the Wallows, fished – the whole Wallowa experience." After Quint's mother's home was sold the family continued to gather in Wallowa County,

spending time on the family's moraine property. Anderson said, "It's definitely a place to bring us together as a family. We've had fence building-family reunions – a lot of good times with the next generation."

Visiting Quint's mother on the south end of Joseph was a short walk to a trail that transects the East Moraine. In 1986 Quint and her husband purchased 175 acres on

the moraine to build a home and retire. "My husband and I would take the kids out and walk those hills," Quint said. Unfortunately, Mr. Quint died in 1991 and Anna Mae stayed in West Linn until she moved to Redmond in 2000 to be close to daughter Amy.

The dream of moving back to Joseph didn't come to fruition. Quint and her children have long enjoyed hunting,

hiking and camping on their property and the neighbors graze their cattle on its bunch grass.

Anderson said she believes the conversations with Wallowa Land Trust began because of a proposal to make a heavily used path that trespasses across several properties along the moraine a legal trail with developed trailheads and interpretive kiosks. "We've been going up there since we were children

and hiking those trails our whole lives, through fences and people's properties," Anderson said. "The trail is not on our property, however that's what started the discussion and introduced my mom to the land trust."

“

My grandmother and grandfather came into the county in a covered wagon from Gilliam County and homesteaded on Sheep Creek

”

While the trail does not go through the Quint property, Eric Greenwell, conservation program manager for the trust, said the staff contacted every property owner on the moraine. "We wanted to make sure we were communicating with landowners that had the trail running through it and we wanted to be considerate of adjacent landowners who may feel residual impact from the trail," Greenwell said. After that contact more than 10 years ago Quint

and Wallowa Land Trust began discussing an idea to put the property into a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust which protects a property's agricultural viability, natural habitat, rural heritage, and/or scenic open space in perpetuity.



Helping conserve the moraine was important to Quint long before the Land Trust was formed. She said a proposal several decades ago to build houses on the north end of the moraine near the county boat launch prompted her to write a letter in opposition.

"In the late 80s or early 90s, where the houses are at the foot of the lake, people came in and wanted to put a development behind it," Quint said. "It wakes you up when things like

that happen. I don't write letters, but that was one time I did write one to the planning commission."

The Quints' conservation easement across the entire property is a testament to their commitment to protecting scenic values and crucial plant and wildlife habitat Greenwell said. The Land Trust

staff will ensure the healthy condition of the land through annual monitoring.

Ultimately the management still falls on the landowner, but our obligation is to monitor it once a year at the very least and be eyes on the ground," Greenwell said.

Working with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Greenwell said the management plan lays out a plan for noxious weed control and dictates how many head of cattle the land can sustain and still grow healthy vegetation.

For Quint, the easement will keep the land in the same condition for years to come, as it is today. "The moraine is very important – there's nothing like it on earth," Quint said.

Iconic East Moraine on its way to becoming a community-owned forest

The integrity of Wallowa Lake's East Moraine will be retained for generations to come when nearly 1,800 acres become county-owned land in the coming year.

The Ronald C. Yanke Family Trust has agreed to sell their East Moraine Property to the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership. The Partnership, made up of Wallowa Land Trust, Wallowa Resources, Wallowa County and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, has been pursuing conservation of this landscape for nearly a decade. When the sale is completed in 2020 the land will become a community-owned forest, demonstrating sound forest and range stewardship and contributing to the local economy. Under Wallowa County ownership, the property will remain undeveloped with public access respectful of the unique natural and cultural assets of this iconic landform.

"On behalf of the community, the Wallowa County Commissioners appreciate the opportunity to secure this special area for our citizens," said Wallowa County Commissioner Susan Roberts.

Nearly one million visitors come to Wallowa County each year, many



photo by Leon Werdinger

to enjoy the beauty of the lake and the Wallowa mountain range that frames it. For the county's residents, the lake and its moraines provide fishing, hunting, hiking and economic benefits through agriculture and forestry.

The Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership formed in 2011 when the picturesque Yanke Family Trust property was destined to be sold and potentially developed for a conference center and single family homes, including three on the crest of the East Moraine. The goal of the Partnership is to:

- Maintain sustainable working landscapes of farms, forests and rangeland to contribute to the local economy and rural ways of life;

- Provide public access respectful of the landscape and its scenic beauty; and,
- Protect open space for wildlife, recreation, and natural resources.

Nils Christoffersen, Executive Director of Wallowa Resources, noted that "our community has a strong sense of pride and a commitment to land stewardship – and values its working relationship to the land. From our woodlands, rangelands and watersheds, there's heart, meaning and history there for many people. Turning the East Moraine into a community forest is another win for our residents by maintaining this treasured landscape."

The Partnership has already secured \$3.6 million toward the

purchase of the Moraine property from the Land and Water Conservation Fund's Forest Legacy Program. The Fund is financed by royalties paid by energy companies drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf. Created by Congress in 1964, the Fund was a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources and our cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans.

The Wallowa Lake Moraines have long been recognized as an irreplaceable asset to both residents and visitors alike. Development concerns on 63 acres of the Terminal Moraine resulted in the creation of Iwetemlaykin State Heritage Site in 2007 and

a Moraines Forum in 2008 drew nearly 200 residents out to celebrate this spectacular landform and affirm the community's desire to preserve it.

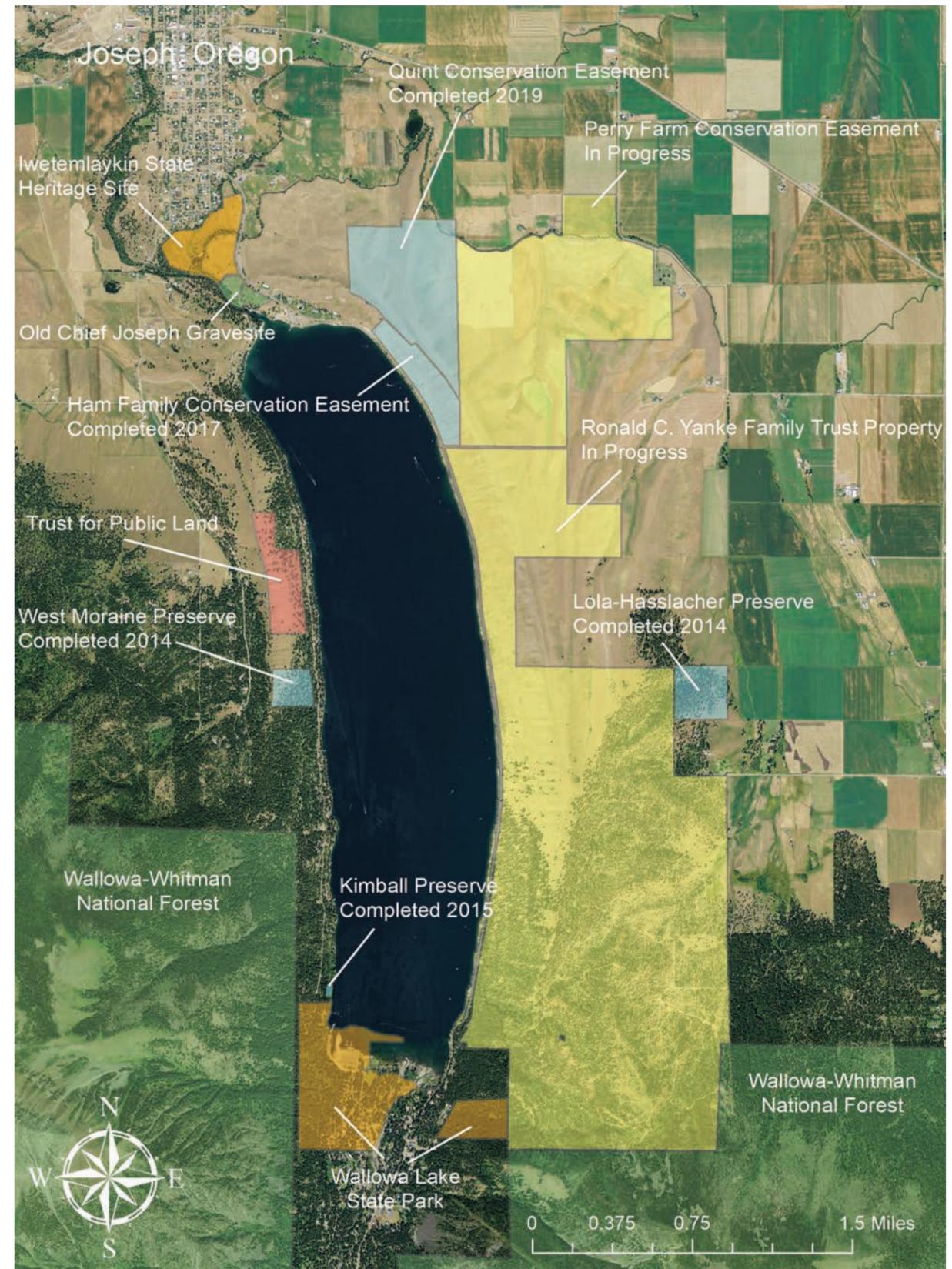
Wallowa Land Trust has collaborated with five separate landowners around the lake to secure the future of five key parcels of land. With the Yanke parcel under County ownership, more than 2,200 acres of the Moraines will be permanently protected.

The Partnership is preparing to launch a capital campaign to raise the remaining funds necessary to close the deal with the Yanke Family Trust by January 2020. "We will be seeking a combination of grant funding and gifts from individuals, families and businesses. We need approximately \$6.6 million dollars and we have already raised more than half of that," said

Kathleen Ackley, executive director of Wallowa Land Trust. "With the help of foundations and gifts from individuals who care about the fate of the

Wallowa Lake Moraines, together we can conserve a true natural wonder."

To learn more about this project visit www.morainecampaign.org



My Oh Myotis!

By Ellie Reed,
Whitman College Intern

This summer, Wallowa Land Trust staff collected bat boxes from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Marr Pond barn. These bat boxes were awaiting their new inhabitants, but just needed some TLC. After alerting Facebook that bat boxes were available for pickup at the Land Trust office, we were happy to see the excitement on the faces of those who came through our door in pursuit of the restored boxes. In order for our little bat friends to take advantage of such fine roosts, we advised that bat boxes be placed near a body of water on either a north facing building or tree.

In the following weeks, our conservation program manager Eric Greenwell and The Nature Conservancy's Mike Beachy teamed up to create a stewardship event involving the placement of the larger bat boxes on the West Moraine Preserve.

On Monday July 23rd, 2018, a small crew hiked up the West Moraine of Wallowa Lake toting three bat boxes as well as a couple bird boxes. With the help of The Nature Conservancy's LEAF program interns and the expertise of Mike Hansen, a retired ODFW wildlife biologist, the group placed each bat box on separate



photo by Ellie Reed

ponderosa pine trees along the crest of the West Moraine. This project will continue as the Land Trust plans to monitor the bat boxes annually to determine whether bats are occupying them.

A handful of different kinds of bats could potentially use the bat boxes placed throughout Wallowa County. According to Hansen, ODFW has placed acoustic bat detection equipment by water sources on the Zumwalt Prairie and near Joseph Creek over the past two summers. Though other bat species were detected, one of the most common calls detected were those of little brown bats. The little brown bat, or *Myotis lucifugus*, can be found throughout the northern states of the US, as well as in Canada

and regions of higher elevations in Mexico. Wallowa County is an ideal habitat for these bats since they tend to live in forested regions, especially near water.

The appearance of the *Myotis lucifugus* is true to its common name; this bat is brown and small. The fur on its underside is observed to be lighter than on the topside, which is glossy and brown. In regions higher in elevation, little brown bats tend to be darker in color, so the small dark brown bats you may see flying around on late summer nights are most likely *Myotis lucifugus*. On average, these bats range in size from 2 to 4 inches long and weigh less than half an ounce. Females are often larger than males, an example of sexual dimorphism, or a distinct difference in size or appearance between the sexes of an animal. This allows for the females to keep their pups warm during cold winters.

The *Myotis lucifugus* hibernates from September until about May, roosting in what is known as a hibernaculum site. Mating often occurs before hibernation, and is random. Female little brown bats are able to delay their ovulation and store sperm during hibernation. Once spring has sprung, the females

finally become pregnant, which allows them to each give birth to one pup in the summer. The ultimate test for a young bat is its first winter as it is not yet full grown.

Bats are nocturnal animals that rely on their echolocation to hunt prey without striking objects in the dark. These bats voice a call and listen for the echo, which will reveal the location of their prey and any other objects in their way. The little brown bat will eat nearly half of its bodyweight in insects daily in order to nourish itself for the long winter. You can thank these little guys for their help with insect control.



Currently these bats are deep in their winter sleep, but keep an eye out for them in late spring when you will see them again, flying the dusky evening skies. With luck they'll make home in the new roosts of the West Moraine.

Volunteer Spotlight: Janet Hohmann

by Kathleen Ackley

Growing up in Minnesota, Janet Hohmann doesn't blink an eye at snowy, sub-zero weather. "This is nothing, I don't mind it," she says, waving her hand at the large snowdrift in her backyard. "I love it!"

Thanks to a career with the US Forest Service, Janet and her husband Ken have lived all over the West. They arrived in Wallowa County in 1980 and decided to stay put. "We always had a big garden and chickens so we could keep expenses low and I could afford to continue to only work seasonally," Janet says.

Many know Janet as the "Nature Lady." It is a nickname well deserved. Janet has a knack for

identifying birds by their song, knowing where to find beaver dens, and the genus and species of pretty much any plant she sees, even though she swears it's not true. "Really, I don't know them all," she demurs. Each summer for many years, she has volunteered her time for Wallowa Land Trust, leading nature hikes, wildflower outings and conducting plant surveys. Her easy-going, friendly manner and obvious joy for the natural world make her a favorite trip leader. She also volunteers her time for The Nature Conservancy and usually she spends a month every winter down on the Snake River caretaking an old homestead for the Forest Service.



photo by Kathleen Ackley

When asked why she volunteers, Janet says, "it's so much fun! I like being able to share what I know about plants and wildlife – spreading the wealth of knowledge around a bit." Janet says she hopes people will get interested and passionate about nature so that they feel a commitment to caring for the land. She appreciates

the role the Land Trust plays in preserving the rural beauty of Wallowa County. "Often people just assume that land trusts are about locking up the land. I like how the Land Trust emphasizes the inter-relationship between people and the land."

Welcome to the Board: David Mildrexler



David grew up exploring farms, forests and wetlands in what used to be a rural area near Portland, Oregon where his family has deep roots thanks to his Grandfather who came to Oregon and got started working in the woods.

After making a go at a professional tennis career, David found a new passion in the natural sciences and conservation. Field work in tropical forests led to a Masters

Degree in Forest Science from the University of Montana. Finding a small cabin in the woods in Wallowa County in 2005 was a dream come true.

He now holds a PhD in Forest Ecosystems and Society from OSU's College of Forestry. David and his wife Andrea were thrilled to return to Wallowa County in 2017 with their two children. He now works as Systems Ecologist for Wallowology.

Tribal Listening Sessions

By Angela Bombaci



photo by Leon Werdinger

Last summer I had out-of-town visitors nearly every weekend because the Wallowa country is such an amazing place. Friends and family are so eager to come here to hike, swim and explore that I've gotten comfortable staying home and letting them come to me. But recently, as so often happens when visiting with a Native American elder, I had a moment of reckoning. Soy Redthunder, whose father, Joe, was a founder of the Chief Joseph Day's

“Remember that the highway to Wallowa goes both ways”

Soy Redthunder, Nez Perce Elder, Nespelem WA

Encampment, offered a simple reminder about how we could do more to welcome dispersed Nez Perce to Wallowa. “Remember that the highway to Wallowa goes both ways,” Soy said. Although obvious at first, his statement prompted me to consider my own privilege as a white, educated woman living in Wallowa County, and the real meaning of buzzwords like “equity” and “inclusion.”

Several months later, and I found myself in the passenger seat of the car, headed to Nespelem, Washington, on the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation together with Wallowa Land Trust Executive Director Kathleen Ackley, Conservation Program Manager Eric Greenwell, and board Chair Paul Flanders. This was the last of three Land Trust tribal listening sessions. We had already hosted all day gatherings at the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Mission, Oregon and at the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation in Lapwai, Idaho. Attendance averaged twelve constituents, and the open agenda allowed us to hear thoughts and ideas about conservation, cultural preservation and the role that we might play as a land conservation organization. Considering what Soy had said to me only months before,

it was very exciting to have the opportunity to reach beyond the existing partnerships with Tribal Governments, and build reciprocal relationships between Wallowa Land Trust and the descendants of the first people of Wallowa.

It's a 300-mile drive to Nespelem, scenic, but long – and expensive. Assuming 50 cents/mile for gas and wear to a vehicle, the cost of every round-trip is \$300, never mind lodging or food. For many Joseph Band Nez Perce living at Colville, the road connecting Nespelem and Wallowa is a route between two homes. They make the trip as they can, when they can, but many members of the band have never seen their ancestral land. It's simply too far. After all, the Joseph Band was intentionally exiled generations ago - as Wenix Red Elk, Education Specialist for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation explained it, “The colonizers, they did a really good job.”

The Nez Perce Reservation in Lapwai may seem accessible by comparison, but the drive is similarly fatiguing, winding and perilous. Road trips can seem fun at first, but as the route becomes more routine, the monotony more punishing, and the fast-food less rewarding, the shine wears off. By the time that Kathleen, Eric,

Paul and I were headed home from Nespelem, our final week on the road, the shine was definitely gone.

Luckily for us, there was another opportunity to connect and learn from tribal members throughout the fall without having to leave Wallowa County. Wallowa Land Trust collaborated with Rich Wandschneider of the Josephy Library to bring in tribal members from all three reservations to share stories and talk with us about their experiences over the course of five weeks. Up to fifty people from partner organizations attended the workshops each week. We were privileged to hear from several Nez Perce speakers and local experts. Elders and professionals included Nakia Williams and Allen



photo by Leon Werdinger

Pinkham Sr. of the Nez Perce Tribe, Wenix Red Elk of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Charlie Moses, Albert Andrews and Veronica Redstar of the Confederated Colville Tribes. In addition to everything I learned in class, (check out our YouTube channel for full recordings, Nez Perce

in the Wallowas) I have a new appreciation for the distances these folks traveled in order to share their story with us. I also have a new understanding of the dedication and intention that has been poured into continuing to tell those stories over generations, against the greatest of odds and regardless of all efforts to

prevent it. By making the effort, literally traveling the extra mile, our goal at Wallowa Land Trust is to honor the years of generational wisdom that our tribal partners are offering us, and to incorporate what we've learned and continue to learn into our plans for conservation in the Wallowa country.

Angela is the Program Coordinator for the Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland and serves on Wallowa Land Trust's board.

Special thanks to Meyer Memorial Trust, Pacific Power Foundation, Soroptimists International of Wallowa County, Yarg Foundation and the Land Trust Alliance for supporting Wallowa Land Trust's tribal engagement work.



photo by Kathleen Ackley

L to R: Veronica Redstar, Rich Wandschneider and Albert Andrews



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Wallowa Land Trust's mission is to protect the rural nature of the Wallowa Country by working cooperatively with private landowners, Indian tribes, local communities and government entities to conserve land.

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photos by Leon Werdinger

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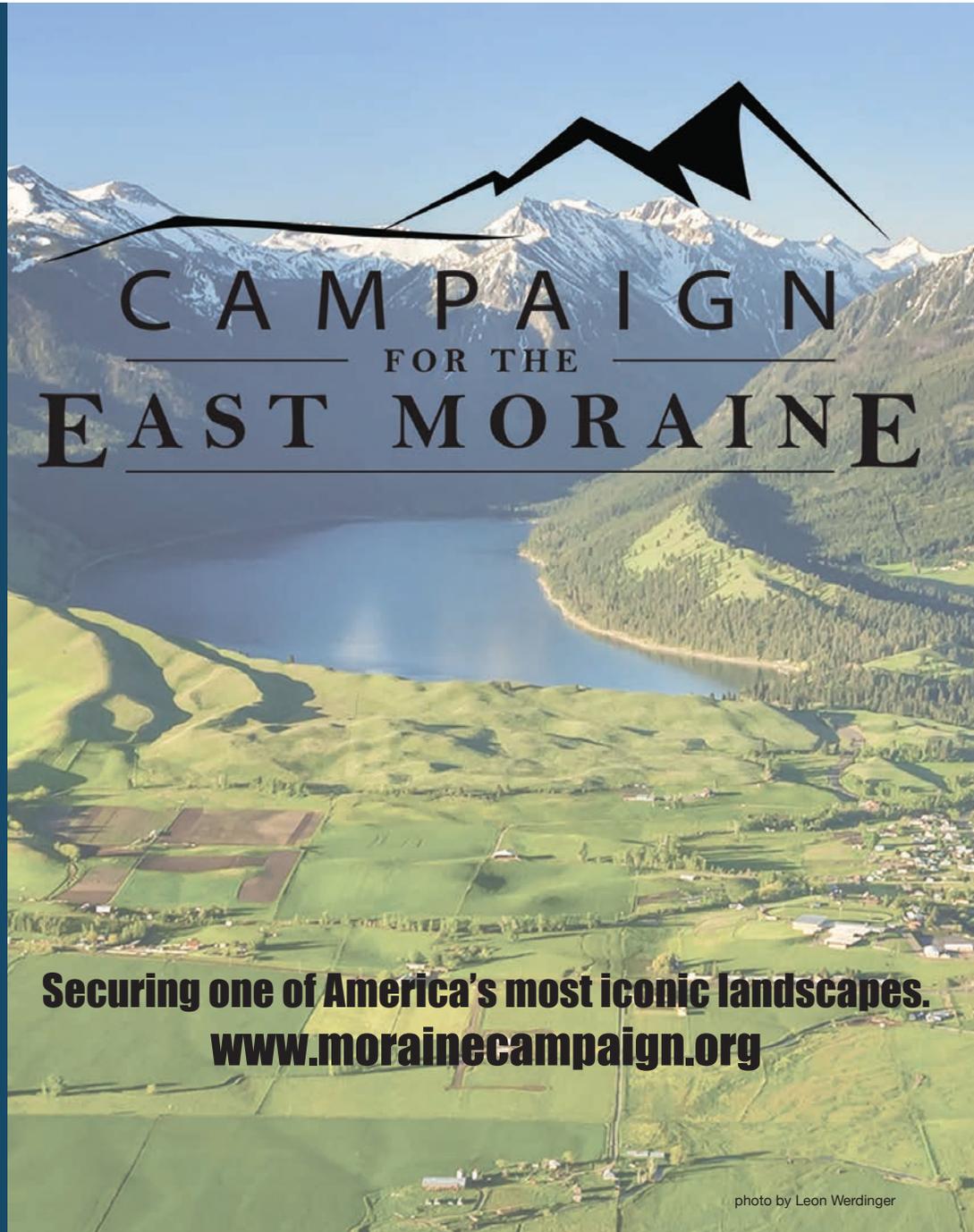
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