

# Conserve

*News from Lemhi Regional Land Trust and Salmon Valley Stewardship*

A Quarterly Newsletter Summer 2011

## Farmers Market Turns Three

*The Idaho Department of Agriculture reports that farmers markets in the state have jumped from 24 in 2006 to 57 this year. Many attribute the increase to a combination of economic opportunities for vendors and growing consumer concern about food growing practices.*

Now in its third year, the Lemhi County Farmers Market has also grown. Around two dozen vendors are registered as season-long market members, and dozens of others sell their goods on just a weekly basis. The pre-season interest prompted a change to assigned booth space at Town Square Park.

Although several market vendors have stepped up vegetable production, the market still struggles to meet consumer demand. Many families in Lemhi County garden, but either don't have the time or surplus to sell at the market. "When we finally see a farmers market that has an abundance of fruits and vegetables and other food items, I'll feel better about this community's ability to feed itself," commented

Gina Knudson, SVS director. "And the more people buy at the market, the more vendors will be encouraged to grow. It's a delicate balance."

New this year, market manager Rachel Layman now posts a bulletin board where people can make connections to buy local meats and other goods. And several regular vendors offer prepared foods at the Saturday market, making it a terrific stop for breakfast or lunch.



*Shannon Weaver and family are just some of our 3rd year vendors making fantastic local food and fiber products.*



*The Hayden Creek Ranch has some of the most important fish habitat in the Lemhi system.*

## Premiere Fish Habitat, Ranches Conserved

Lemhi Regional Land Trust is within days of closing a deal with Fran Tonsmeire and family that protects the future of anadromous fish in the Lemhi Valley, as well as the future of working lands.

The Tonsmeires placed a conservation easement on their Hayden Creek Ranch, preserving water quality and quantity of what biologists consider to be the most important tributary of the Lemhi River. Hayden Creek has been documented as home to 50 percent of all Chinook salmon spawning activity in the Lemhi Basin. Of that 50 percent, up to half of all Chinook salmon spawning occurring on Hayden Creek has been observed on the 1,040-acre Hayden Creek Ranch, making the protection of this critical habitat a priority.

**See Ranches Conserved, pg 2**





Freeman Creek Rancher and SVS board member Dave Ellis talks to students about how he uses grazing to improve range health and encourage biodiversity.

## World's Most Scenic Classroom

A group of college students from Northwest Connections' Wildlife in the West course spent a week in Salmon this summer learning about our valley's considerable Endangered Species challenges and successes.

One student from the University of Vermont noted after her trip here, "The challenge of managing wildlife is that their habitat not only lies on public land, but private as well. For this reason, I've learned that communities play a vital role in conservation. In each town we've traveled to, it was clear that a species, whether it was grizzlies, lynx, wolves or salmon, could only recover if the community supported it."

Special thanks to all our partners who shared their experiences and expertise with students, and especially to the Nancy Cummings Center who provided lodging for their entire stay.

## Policy Update

Both Salmon Valley Stewardship and Lemhi Regional Land Trust are committed to sharing our place-based experiences with policy makers.



In May, LRLT Director Kristin Troy and new board member Merrill Beyeler, rancher from Leadore, traveled to Washington DC with SVS Director Gina Knudson and members of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition.

## Ranches Conserved, From Page 1

In exchange for donating the conservation easement, the family acquired the 600-acre Kenney Creek Ranch. Using Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery and Snake River Basin Adjudication Habitat funding, LRLT had acquired the main Kenney Creek Ranch in 2009, and in 2010 purchased 3 additional parcels that had been subdivided from the original ranch.

The Tonsmeires will use Kenney Creek to expand their existing cattle operation. A plan to manage the water differently ensures that Kenney Creek will maintain flow and connectivity to the Lemhi River.



Aerial view of Kenney Creek Ranch, 17 miles southeast of Salmon.

LRLT Executive Director Kristin Troy said the transaction would not have been possible without the perseverance of the Tonsmeire family, the support of partners at The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project and its Technical Team. "With the influx of mitigation funding available to protect critical habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Upper Salmon region, Lemhi Regional Land



Chinook salmon on Hayden Creek.

Trust has worked to leverage that funding to keep working ranches working while providing significant habitat protections for the fish our community was named after. Keeping area ranches whole while ensuring that the fish have a place to spawn has a very real impact on our economy and our way of life," Troy said.

### Save the Date!

LRLT and SVS's annual fundraisers are not just a blast -- they are critical to getting our important conservation projects done. Please mark your calendars for the following dates and watch for more information soon:

- \* LRLT Annual BBQ and Fundraiser  
September TBD.  
Look for your invitation in the mail.
- \* SVS Fall Harvest Celebration  
October 22, 2011  
(Tickets go on sale soon!)

# Forest Restoration Means Jobs

When the Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group formed, we agreed to goals that included making communities safer from the threat of wildfire, restoring forest resilience, and providing benefit to the local community. As work continues in the collaboratively designed Hughes Creek project area, we're monitoring to make sure these goals are being met.

Salmon resident Sean Bascom has been helping us track social and economic indicators of Hughes Creek. *What he's found provides exciting evidence that forest restoration work means jobs for Lemhi County and the region.*

- Between 2008 and 2010, \$454,897 worth of work in Hughes Creek went to 63 workers.
- During a period in which the local unemployment has been

rising sharply, the activities on public and private land in the Hughes Creek project area have resulted in the *direct employment of 38 individuals from Lemhi County totaling over \$215,000 in revenue.*

Results from 2011 have not yet been factored in, and these may represent the biggest year yet. Local hunting outfitter Dave Melton is putting his crew to work thinning trees along the Hughes Creek Road, making ingress/egress to the area safer. Melton says his Bighorn Outfitters crew loves physical work and the Hughes Creek job gives his crew something to do in between his busy spring and fall hunting seasons.



Brian Johnston of Bighorn Outfitters working on a thinning unit near the Hughes Creek Road, making ingress and egress safer from wildfire.

Bighorn benefitted from a contracting process that is different than typical Forest Service contracting methods, which makes it harder for small contractors like Melton to successfully bid. The Salmon-Challis National Forest entered into an agreement on Hughes Creek with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF). RMEF is

using the collaboratively developed Best Value criteria when selecting contractors. *Best Value allows items other than price to be factored in, including utilization of local workforce.*

"When we constantly bring in workers from outside the area to do forestry work, we lose our local ability to steward our forests and provide high quality employment for our residents," said SVS director Gina Knudson. "Hughes Creek is a great start at reconnecting our people with our forests."



Members of the Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group learn how to monitor for weeds since the group's goal is "no net increase in weeds" resulting from the project's activities.

## If You Love the Salmon River, Honk!

No, Don't Honk -- Join us for a Massive River Cleanup from Clayton to Corn Creek (downriver from North Fork)

Volunteers are needed to adopt segments of our Wild and Scenic Salmon River, Saturday, Aug 20 from noon - 5.

Please register at the Public Lands Center in Salmon, the North Fork Ranger Station, or the Challis BLM office.

Great prizes for most (and most interesting) junk collected and a free BBQ for volunteers starts at the BLM Morgan Bar campground at 5 pm.

**Saturday, August 20, 2011**

For more questions or to register, call Trish Callaghan, 756-5115 (Salmon), Linda Walton, 865-2737 (North Fork) or Jeff Christensen, 879-6212 (Challis).



# Moving and Shaking

*Thurs, August 18 - Upper North Fork scoping meeting, Gibbonsville*

*Salmon-Challis Natl Forest officials invite you to the Gibbonsville Improvement Assoc building at 6:30 pm to hear your thoughts on this important forest restoration project as it moves into environmental analysis. For more info, contact Maggie Milligan at 865-2711.*

## *LRLT staff on the move*

*Congratulations to Breann Westfall. Breann is a new mom to beautiful baby Zane and is the new project planner for the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project. Welcome to Charli Williams, LRLT's new administrative assistant!*



Summer 2011

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