

Conserve

News from Lemhi Regional Land Trust and Salmon Valley Stewardship

A Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2011

Donor Conserves Salmon River Frontage

In late 2010, Dr. Jesse Cole of Butte, Montana, donated a conservation easement on 300 acres of beautiful Salmon River frontage located just south of Salmon. Lemhi Regional Land Trust holds the conservation easement, which means LRLT assures the terms of the agreement are met. The property borders more than 3 miles of the Main Salmon River and has functioned as a working ranch for hay production and cattle grazing for more than a century. Neighboring rancher Paul Edwards grazes and hays the property year-round, a practice that now remains free from the pressures of development.

The lower 300-acre portion of the 580-acre ranch contains irrigated grazing meadows and acres of healthy cottonwood galleries shading the



South of town near the Shoup Bridge, the Cole Ranch has functioned as a working cattle ranch for more than a century. Dr. Cole's donation of a conservation easement will help make sure the agricultural, scenic and wildlife values will be available for future generations.

Salmon River. The property contains a network of irrigation ditches, upwelling groundwater, two ponds, and Gorley Creek runs through the property into the Salmon River.

The ranch is home to a variety of wildlife, including whitetail and mule deer, rabbits, beavers, squirrels, fox, coyotes, black bears, moose, and a variety of birds. Most notably, one of the Main Salmon River's important heron rookeries is located on the property.

LRLT Executive Director Kristin Troy explained how a donated conservation easement works. "The terms of a conservation easement are



The Cole Ranch's impressive cottonwood galleries provide great blue herons with an important rookery -- sort of a high-rise condo for the large birds.

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individually tailored to reflect each landowner's particular needs, situation and property," she said.

"Land ownership can be viewed as owning a variety of separate rights on the property. These rights include, but are not limited to: the right to farm the land, the right to build on the land, and the right to exclude the public. When a conservation easement limits any of these rights, the value of the land is affected."

Troy explained that an appraiser determines the value of voluntarily limiting rights, such as development, on such a property, and the owner may then be able to gain tax benefits as a result of the donation while still holding title to the land.

The Cole Ranch represents the fourth conservation easement held by LRLT. Troy said of the deal, "Our community will forever appreciate the generosity and foresight Dr. Cole had in conserving his ranch."



LRLT Board Leadership

Last summer, Lemhi Regional Land Trust put out a call to expand our volunteer board of directors. The response from the community was very encouraging. Our board now includes the following members:

- Tom McFarland, Carmen
- Mike Overacker, Salmon
- Fran Tonsmeire, Lemhi
- Richard Smith, Salmon
- Carol Yerden, Salmon
- Trish Downton, Pahsimeroi
- Katie Hoffman, Salmon
- Merrill Beyeler, Leadore

In this month's newsletter, we'll highlight new board member Katie Hoffman and next time, we'll introduce you to new member Merrill Beyeler.

Katie Hoffman

My husband Kevin and I live on his family ranch south of Salmon. Kevin works on the ranch with his parents Roy and Sharon Hoffman, and I am currently the Family Consumer Science Extension Educator for the University of Idaho.

Although my job relates to community development, I have a



Katie Hoffman joined the LRLT board last Fall.

long history in agriculture. I grew up in Salmon and my family has lived here for years.

My father's family ranched and many members of my extended family continue to ranch in Lemhi County. I was happy to be able to return to Salmon after college 4 years ago.

The Lemhi Regional Land Trust appeals to my desire to see the ranching community and history of Lemhi County families preserved. Land Trust conservation preserves the rich agricultural uses and open spaces that make Salmon my home. I am excited to be a part of and organization that preserves our way of life for future generations.

Land Trusts at Lost Trail Powder Mountain

Saturday, March 12

Lemhi Regional Land Trust
and

Bitterroot Valley Land Trust

invite you to learn more about land conservation in Idaho and Montana's High Divide region

Great Fun and Great Door Prizes including a 1-Day Rafting Trip on the Salmon River

Fact or Fiction?

Fact or Fiction? Lemhi Regional Land Trust acquires property and then gives it to the federal government.

FICTION. LRLT holds conservation easements on four ranch properties in Lemhi County that total about 5,800 acres. All of the properties remain under private ownership and continue to be productive, working ranches, contributing jobs and other economic values to the community in addition to harboring outstanding wildlife and fish habitat as they have for millenia.

Fact or Fiction? When Lemhi Regional Land Trust purchased the Kenney Creek Ranch, they took it off the county taxrolls.

FICTION. In December 2009, LRLT did purchase the Kenney Creek Ranch. LRLT paid property taxes on the land and its buildings, and are in the process of putting the ranch, now with a conservation easement, back into private ownership where it will continue to function as a productive, working agricultural property.



**Salmon Inventor Dennis Grieve,
Photo by Open View Photography**

SVS Green Jobs Update ---

Salmon Man's Low-Tech Invention Has Big Energy Savings Potential

On a freezing cold night in Gunnison, Colorado, Dennis Grieve begrudgingly accepted an overtime assignment to go fix a broken-down piece of equipment out in the middle of nowhere.

Grieve's Gunnison Energy Corp. boss singled him out to make a 50-mile drive in 20-below weather to Colorado's Grand Mesa where they were installing a natural gas pipeline.

What Grieve found when he got to the site was a front-end loader with a clogged air filter – and the inspiration that changed his life.

The typical way to clean a clogged air filter is to bang it around a bit, jostling the dust and grit free, or to use compressed air at close range to blow the particles loose. Both methods are hard on the filter, and not entirely effective. A clogged filter can cause equipment or vehicles to burn more fuel; a damaged filter can result in a ruined engine.

As Grieve stared at the filter on that frigid night, the thought occurred to him that blowing air into the filter was backwards. Reversing the process so air forced dust out made much more sense. His mind and heart raced on the trip back to town.

He carved up a Nerf basketball to simulate his design. As he worked on a prototype of the device, self-doubt crept in. "I figured someone else had already thought of this – it was really a simple idea," he said, explaining the technical aspects of a centrifugal air induction chamber.

He tried the concept out on his buddies at the pipeline company. He asked experienced mechanics. Nobody had heard of anyone using the common-sense technique. Grieve scraped up the money to apply for a patent in October 2007.

In 2008, Grieve and his wife Gita moved to Salmon. A former hunting guide and outfitter, he thinks the small, friendly town is the right kind of place to raise his young son.

Grieve is intensely proud of the Made in America label on the top of the funnel-looking contraption.

"It's time to start turning things around in this country," he stated. "It might be a small start, but I'm trying to create jobs here. Even though it will cost more than manufacturing overseas, I'm going to stick to my guns and bring jobs here to America and to Salmon."

Tom Perrigo is Grieve's business partner. A resident of Las Vegas and

member of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, Perrigo said, "This kind of thing is exactly what people are looking for – it's relatively inexpensive (standard units start at \$199), yet has a relatively significant impact on fuel savings," Perrigo said.

"People who come directly from mechanic shops look at it and immediately get it. Heavy equipment operators who are operating machinery that consumes 200 to 300 gallons a day understand what it means to reduce that by even a small percentage," Perrigo said. "And from the field, we're hearing savings more in the 5 to 10 percent range," said Perrigo, who was recently awarded a TogetherGreen fellowship for his work in energy conservation.

"This makes sense if you are a farmer with just a couple of tractors," Grieve added, "but it's magnified if you're a government fleet manager or the executive of a company with a lot of vehicles."

To learn more and watch a YouTube demonstration of the product, go to

www.airfilterblaster.com.

This article was excerpted from Gina Knudson's December 9, 2010 article in the Idaho Falls Post-Register.

A New Year In Salmon



SVS Board Member Toni Ruth reflects on local food, wacky cells, and the great outdoors.

I was so eager to close the door on 2010 and the multitude of unfavorable events it brought that the arrival of 2011 revealed a new meaning for New Year. For the first time I really felt the promise of new adventures and expectations about opportunities that I could sink my teeth into. One of these is to share why I'm involved in the community and excited about all that Salmon has to offer.

When I moved to Salmon in fall 2005, I was energized about the opportunity to become involved in the community. I grew up in a family that liked to hunt, fish, and camp. The outdoors has always made me feel more alive and fostered an appreciation that our health is linked to a healthy environment. Pretty quickly I found Salmon Valley Stewardship and became a board member. I joined in because everyone involved shared a strong sense of community and a belief that by working together we could create jobs while maintaining healthy forests and streams, healthy ranches, and thus, a healthy community.

I've now served on the SVS board for 5 years. We're proud of what we've been able to accomplish in those years. These successes are because we strive to bring diverse groups of people to the table; we have committed hard-working staff and board; and because we've had the good fortune to have some motivated residents offer up some great ideas.

Our mission is pretty straightforward – promote a sustainable economy and a healthy environment. That means we're helping put people to work in a way that doesn't degrade our land and water, but in a way that keeps

our area healthy for all of us. But we don't do this alone. It takes working together and collaborating with others in our community and yes, sometimes from elsewhere because folks have novel examples about what works in their area.

In October 2009, we invited 3rd generation rancher Tyrrell Hibbard with Western Sustainability Exchange to speak at our 2nd Annual Harvest Celebration. Tyrrell shared how their group succeeded at bringing healthy, locally grown food into restaurants, the store, and to the table in their community. The result is more jobs, connecting the people to local farmers, and educating young folks about where their food comes from as well as healthy food choices.

It's easy to say that health is important, but this past year has shed new light on what that means to me. I had no way of knowing that when I moved to Salmon, or not long after my arrival, some of my cells were going wacky. At least I've been informed that the breast cancer started its invasion around 5-8 years ago. All the investigative work to inform myself about what type of cancer I have, how to battle it, and the fact that one in eight women have breast cancer led me to question more concretely, "What influences our health"? Certainly the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat contribute to our health. And, more importantly, these are things we can choose to protect so that we and our children lead healthier lives.

I prefer to eat what I or my family and friends have brought to the table through our hunter-gatherer efforts. But

we don't always have a freezer full of game meat or fresh veggies from the garden. Now that I've learned that organic food contains fewer pesticides than conventionally grown food, I prefer organic or foods grown by my neighbors and local producers. Although many pesticides have never been adequately screened for their ability to cause cancer, new evidence shows that farmers, and farmers' children, have higher rates of certain cancers than the general population.

As cancer survivor, biologist, and author of *Living Downstream*, Dr. Sandra Steingraber noted "...cancer and birth defects are expensive. And here lies the economic sense of organic and locally grown agriculture." So, although it may cost more than conventionally grown food, "Organic agriculture promotes public health." Besides, there's satisfaction in buying your food from those you know in your community, and in knowing you are keeping them in business helping to feed you. What a great simple circle that is.

Did you know that I can travel 150 miles to the Good Food Store in Missoula to buy grass-finished beef grown in Salmon? We don't yet have that option at our local store, but I think the future looks promising. That summer before Tyrrell's visit, Salmon had its first farmers market, helping connect people with local producers and other goods. Janet Fogel and Kali Brothers brought the idea and gumption, and SVS helped make the Farmers Market a reality. Now that I've been through the process, I can tell you I'd much rather spend 12,000 bucks (my portion of the \$70,000 in medical costs) on making sure I stay healthy than on surgery, chemo, and radiation.

In 2006, a group of folks sat down around the table and discussed our forests, jobs, and desired outcomes on issues like old growth species, hazardous fuels, noxious weeds, and stream improvements. The Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group, with coordination by SVS, turned these discussions into work on the ground by 2008. These projects have helped to create more than \$225,000 in revenue for local workers and firms, and that's before the bulk of the work has even begun. In addition to work for local folks, the plan is to promote healthy processes that improve the land for wildlife, fish, and people. The diverse groups involved in the collaborative have come up with something that, for the first time in years, was not litigated by outside groups.

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Remembering the Past, Contemplating the Future: A Message from LRLT Board Chair Tom McFarland

As I try to contemplate what future land uses and cultures will be like, I can't help but review my families' history on Carmen Creek and the changes that have taken place since that time.

On December 6, 1924 my dad turned 16 years old near Gilmore Summit. He was driving a herd of horses to his family's new home on Carmen Creek. The home place then was only 1,000 acres but this was before the Taylor Grazing Act and anyone could graze unrestricted anywhere on federal lands. Consequently, homesteads of 160 acres were scattered throughout. On what is

“My greatest concern is that we do not sit idle and watch as these changes evolve by happenstance knowing that this continued checkerboard pattern of land use will not benefit agriculture, wildlife or the scenic value of the land.”

now McFarland land there were four other homesteads.

The enactment of the Taylor Grazing Act in the 30's led to the starvation or consolidation and disappearance of many of the homesteads. Most ranches were small but very self-sufficient with chickens, sheep, pigs, horses and cows. Large families were needed to deal with all the chores and other manual labor.

My family continues to graze our cattle on Forest and BLM permitted grazing

allotments to the northwest of Carmen. Tower Creek and Fourth of July Creek divide these permits. Up until the 60's these two creek drainages were composed almost entirely of small agricultural operations. Today there is not one functioning ag operation on

either creek.

Subdivisions started to appear on Carmen Creek in the 70's. Directly below us my uncle sold 220 acres that eventually was put into residential development. Then in the 80's the nature of ranches started to change significantly and as profits increased milk cows, sheep, pigs, and chickens disappeared leaving ranches less self-sufficient with smaller families.

Today, the Neal and Daniels ranches on Carmen Creek have been consolidated; there are three subdivisions over 100 acres in size and approximately 60 non-agricultural related residences. Out of ten working ranches on Carmen Creek, only two family members under 30 are returning to ranch.

As I look to the future while thinking about the past, there is one thing I know for certain: the culture of those on the land and land use patterns will change. My greatest concern is that we do not sit idle and watch as these changes evolve by happenstance knowing that this continued checkerboard pattern of land use will not benefit agriculture, wildlife or the scenic value of the land.

How will Lemhi County's economy be affected if our land becomes primarily recreational?

A balanced approach to future land use decisions is possible if landowners have options. LRLT is here to help provide some of these voluntary options and to assist with long-term planning.

If we all work together our future generations, wildlife, and the land will thank us for our vision.



Photos by Open View Photography

Top: Tradition. Tom and Seth McFarland riding the range at Carmen Creek.

Above: Ranch Bouquet.

Aspen Photo Contest

Congratulations to Howard Carroll (photo at left), Jerry Slagle, (photo at center), and Jim Foster (photo at right) who were the finalists in Salmon Valley Stewardship's second annual Fading Gold aspen photo contest. Special thanks to Ilona McCarty who served as our celebrity judge and the Lemhi County Museum for printing the posters for our finalists.



Winter 2011

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While I'm happily closing the door on the dark journey that 2010 brought, I'll always be revisiting parts of it. Heck, I'll have vigilant checkups for years to come and will forever be suspicious about what I consume...where did it come from, how was it grown? I'll also revisit the many unexpected treasures that came along with breast cancer. I wasn't surprised to have people in my corner, I was just surprised how many there were and how much they went to bat for me through 10 months of treatment. The people who are a part of my life here in Salmon are indeed treasures. My wish is that all folks living in Lemhi County have a healthy, prosperous future full of opportunities and adventures in our great outdoors. I know that at SVS, we'll be working towards that goal.

Toni Ruth, Ph.D, is working on a book about her findings studying cougars and their interactions with other large carnivores. She has lived in Salmon and been an SVS board member since 2005.

We're Online!



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www.lemhilandtrust.org

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