

News



Southern Oregon
LAND
CONSERVANCY

Photo by Donna Rhee



No Bluffin'—A Tremendous Gift from Harry and Marilyn Fisher

This summer we were honored to acquire an iconic landmark of the southern Bear Creek Valley, the Harry & Marilyn Fisher Preserve at Pompadour Bluff. *Oregon Geographic Names* describes the probable origin of the bluff's Euro-American name:

This bluff is a peculiar, basaltic rock formation in the valley east of Ashland. It resembles, in a general way, the style of haircut made famous by the Marquise de Pompadour and by (boxer 'Gentleman') Jim Corbett. The bluff was probably named during the 1890s when Corbett was the world's heavyweight boxing champion.

Harry Fisher bequeathed this 55-acre property to SOLC in his will. Harry worked outside, caring for the land up to his 90th year and loved

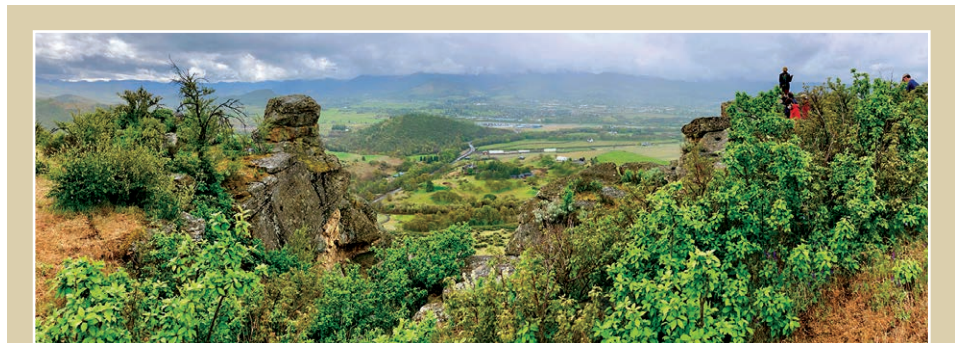


Photo by Harry Brindley

Support the Bluff

Our hope is to allow limited public access—to share this iconic place while also protecting its conservation values. Please consider contributing to help us begin the essential infrastructure upgrades necessary to safely facilitate outreach and stewardship. You can donate on our website at landconserve.org, by calling 541-482-3069, or by mailing a check to SOLC, PO Box 954, Ashland, OR 97520.

his land so much that he worked with SOLC to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the beautiful view of the bluff.

The many treasures of Pompadour Bluff make for a charming mix of habitats: it is a little bit Basin & *(continued on back page)*

From the Executive Director

As record wildfires and a spiraling COVID rebound put Southern Oregon in the national spotlight for the wrong reasons (again), we are reminded (again) that when it comes to addressing major challenges of our changing world, we're not done yet.

Whether we are seeking greater climate resilience, a way past the pandemic, or to achieve enduring, impactful land conservation, the solutions are quite similar. We need to pay close attention to solid science, adapt to evolving conditions, and work persistently to build resilience for all of our living communities.

You'll find in this edition some dramatic examples of SOLC doing

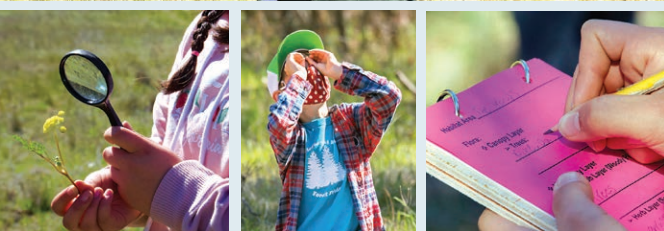
those very things, making steady progress toward our mission—even in challenging times. We've completed our latest conservation easement—a fire-impacted landscape that will help us learn the land's responses to our region's increasingly frequent, intense wildfires. We've added the acquisition of an iconic landmark establishing an accessible preserve at Pompadour Bluff. And we've made strides to bring students and volunteers into greater engagement with protected lands and their ecological wonders.

All this work underscores the essential value that living landscapes contribute to community health. Your support for SOLC delivers a

key part of the long-term solution. Faced with what can feel like recurrent, overwhelming traumas that obscure our skies, threaten our safety, and impede our pent-up desire to gather with each other, we can take heart in remembering that conserving vital places makes us not only stronger together but healthier together too.



Steve Wise
Steve Wise,
Executive Director



Photos by Linda Thomas & Sisalee Levitt

Learning on the Land

After a year of Zoom meetings, digital resources, and YouTube videos, SOLC's in person education programs hit the ground running in spring 2021. We welcomed about 300 students to the Rogue River Preserve and approximately 120 students from nearby Central Point schools to the riparian easement in the Twin Creeks development. During their field trips, students used nature journaling to focus on close observation, curiosity, and connection-building as they explored these open spaces. Some classes also helped with stewardship tasks—using a weed wrench to pull Scotch broom was a highlight for many students!

Beyond our protected lands, SOLC partnered with the Ashland Forest Resiliency Project to facilitate a field trip for 60 Ashland students on the Bear Creek Greenway. We provided environmental education programming at a summer school program in Medford and we were part of a team that hosted the first annual Southern Oregon Regional Envirothon for high school students interested in natural resources careers.

In addition to supporting youth education, we also engaged adults in a wide range of learning opportunities from professional development events for educators to nature journaling gatherings for the general public. And we have continued to grow our Rogue River Preserve Volunteer Site Steward and Docent programs: these volunteers are helping us care for the Preserve and extend our reach in the community during Open Lands Days, events, and field trips.

As we look forward to the 2021-22 school year, we are planning to improve and expand our education programs to connect with even more teachers and learners in our region. For more information about SOLC's education programs, contact Education Program Manager Tara Laidlaw at 541-482-3069, ext. 111 or at tara@landconserve.org.



Kanutchan Creek Property Conserved

SOLC recently conserved a substantial piece of land—an amazing mosaic of oak woodlands, forests, meadows with native bunchgrasses, and chaparral, all situated among rolling hills—with a conservation easement donated by landowner Sandy Pearson that limits development. Life changes have required that Sandy leave the Rogue Valley and so the property is now for sale. “I am delighted that the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy can step in and ensure the land I love will continue to be protected, as much as it can be in this time of climate crisis,” says Sandy.

Kanutchan Creek, a tributary of Little Butte Creek, is a seasonal stream which flows through the property with streamside vegetation. The property itself has several walking paths which wind through the meadows and oak savanna, past two ponds, and over the hills. At high points, there are great views of Mt. McLoughlin and surrounding landscapes.

The mix of habitats on this property is great for wildlife. It is located adjacent to large areas of federal lands, some of which are specially designated areas. Plus,

The property itself has several walking paths which wind through the meadows and oak savanna, past two ponds, and over the hills. At high points, there are great views of Mt. McLoughlin and surrounding landscapes.

SOLC holds another conservation easement nearby, less than a mile down the road. Connecting landscapes is an intentional strategy, to conserve lands that are nearby or adjacent to other protected properties. This property and adjoining lands are important for wildlife connectivity and the area is designated “very sensitive” deer and elk winter range.

This 159-acre gem is located in the lower part of the Little Butte Creek Watershed, east of the town of Eagle Point. The Little Butte Creek Watershed is a high priority for native fish conservation in the Rogue Basin and also one of our SOLC Focus Areas, places where we prioritize conservation.

The property was impacted by the South Obenchain wildfire of September 2020. Some areas of the property burned severely, while others were affected more moderately, and still others not much at all. These landscapes are fire-adapted and resilient: the wildfire seems to have added to the mosaic character of the land. Because we monitor our conserved lands annually, SOLC has a unique opportunity to track and observe the response of the habitats to the fire impacts. Already, we have seen sprouting oaks, abundant wildflowers, and regenerating bunchgrasses.



VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Jim Huber

Jim Huber says his favorite part of volunteering at SOLC is meeting the interesting, intelligent, kind, generous, committed people who are involved with SOLC. Jim certainly fits in with the flock.

He first heard about SOLC from another SOLC all-star, Craig Harper, when they were both involved with the Rogue Valley Council of Governments and Jim was the Planning Department Director for the city of Medford. Soon Jim began volunteering on SOLC's Lands Committee in the spring of 2013 and has covered a lot of ground since!

"It feels great to make a contribution and to meet wonderful people," says Jim. He is currently serving his second term on SOLC's Board of Directors and is the Chair of the Lands Committee. Even before we had officially designated Site Stewards, Jim could always be counted on to help pull noxious and invasive weeds on conserved lands. In addition, he served as a Strategic Plan Subcommittee Member, an SOLC Representative on our guided hikes, and he has been a part of hiring and interview committees.



Photos by Linda Thomas

Jim and his wife Alison have personally donated items to the annual Conservation Celebration auction, and they haven't been shy about soliciting donations from others. Recently, Jim even volunteered to help paint the lodge at the Rogue River Preserve. Three cheers for Jim Huber and everything he has given to help SOLC thrive!

If you would like to know more about volunteering with SOLC, please contact Teresa Fernandez at 541-482-3069, ext. 107 or at teresa@landconserve.org.



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Our Mission

To protect and enhance precious land in the Rogue River region to benefit our human and natural communities.

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- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

No Bluffin' (cont. from front page)

Range and a little bit Rogue Valley woodland and grassland. Basin & Range species include breeding Canyon Wrens and Rock Wrens in the cliffs, Black-billed Magpie, western juniper, and bluebunch wheatgrass. The oak woodland supports some ancient oaks that have been alive since the 1830s. Adjacent to the woodland is an intact grassland remnant—instead of nonnative pasture grasses or annual grasses, this slope is full of bunchgrasses and flowers.

Nesting in the cliffs, a landform

important to wildlife, are Barn Owls, Common Ravens, and Violet-green Swallows. So far, a few rare species have been discovered including a rock lichen, two mosses, and an endemic buttercup. An unusual shrub, hollyleaf redberry, was also recently found, the first record of this rare shrub in the Rogue Valley. From the top of the bluff, the view of the valley and surrounding Siskiyou and Cascade peaks is incomparable. A place for appreciating beauty, a place for studying geology: this is a view we hope to share.

