



Howard Prairie–Working Forest

A Legacy of Balancing Conservation with Harvesting Timber

Like the trees on his land, Jud Parson's roots run deep. From the moment his orchard-pioneering grandfather Reginald Parsons purchased a 162-acre Howard Prairie property, his family has managed it for a host of values, including **wildlife and timber**.

That is the true demonstration of a working forest. Forests where the sustainable production of timber is carefully balanced with protecting other important resources such as wetlands and wildlife habitat are known as working forests.

Reginald first started camping and hunting on the property in 1911 and Jud first stepped foot onto it when he was just three years old. Reginald visited for years with a tent and pack animals before he bought the property in 1937. In 2012, Jud and several family members signed a conservation easement with the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy (SOLC) to ensure the land will remain intact and not be subdivided or developed, while allowing for continued selective thinning and sustainable harvest to promote healthy native forest species and structure. This is, in fact, how the Parsons family has managed the land for decades.

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Jud. He does this by working closely with forester Marty Main.

Jud currently has conservation easements with SOLC on five of his Oregon properties. Earlier this year, Jud earned The Wildlife Society's top landowner stewardship award, the 2019 Private Landowner Stewardship Award. The Society's Oregon Chapter honored him with this award as a result of a lifetime spent advocating for sound stewardship of private working lands to enhance wildlife, water quality, and other characteristics of working lands.

"Our goal is to protect the property's natural habitats and scenic values over time and to maintain the working forest with an emphasis on healthy forest ecosystems and wetland protection," says Marty.

The property is located on the Dead Indian Plateau in the Southern Cascades ecoregion, a gently sloping region of around 100,000 acres. Historically, paleo-hunters used the area and numerous archeological sites show continuous use by Native Americans. The plateau was a trading crossroads for the Takelma,

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Director's Message

We are extremely proud to announce the permanent protection of 40 acres of private land on the Siskiyou Summit. This land is a small but mighty parcel located on the Siskiyou Crest near the Siskiyou Summit—the land bridge between the Cascade and Siskiyou Mountains. It is in the SOLC Colestin-Siskiyou Summit Focus Area where we have already conserved 2,035 acres of private lands. Situated just 1.6 miles to the west of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, this land is home to special status species including the Pacific fisher, Band-tailed Pigeon, Mountain Quail, Pileated Woodpecker, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. This beautiful property has priority habitats such as older forest, chaparral,

and wetlands, plus it provides vital wildlife connectivity for plants and animals. The property straddles two watersheds: the Rogue, which drains everything on the property north of the Crest, and the Klamath, which drains everything to the south.

The Shasta, Klamath, and Takelma people used a trail over the Siskiyou Summit to the north, a low point in the mountains between the Rogue Valley, Colestin, and Shasta Valley. Today, you and your friends are likely to traverse this area on the iconic Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). This conservation easement protects a 0.75 mile section of the PCT, providing a wild and scenic corridor for thousands of hikers to enjoy. The Pacific Crest Trail Association provided funding towards the



completion of this conservation easement to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the natural beauty of the Siskiyou Crest.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

Cathy

Cathy Dombi,
Executive Director



FUN FACT #1: It may be impossible to pinpoint the first person to propose the Pacific Crest Trail but published accounts tend to acknowledge the following people: Catherine Montgomery at the State Normal School in Bellingham, Wash.; a former Supervisor of Recreation for the U.S. Forest Service, Fred W. Cleator; and Clinton C. Clarke of Pasadena, Calif. According to author and mountaineer Joseph T. Hazard, Catherine Montgomery suggested the idea of a border-to-border trail to him in 1926.

(Excerpt from the PCTA website)

FUN FACT #2: Grazing was extensive along the Siskiyou Crest and the Colestin in the late 1880s and early 1900s. Sheep in particular grazed the Siskiyou Crest through 1924 and were affectionately called "range maggots;" they may have totaled over 100,000 individuals in the eastern Siskiyou. Logging began in the area in the late 1800s, but large-scale commercial logging operations weren't initiated until after World War II.

Rogue River Preserve Highlights from 2019

- **46 middle and high school students visited the Preserve** for education and stewardship activities
- **17 Southern Oregon University students floated to Elk Island and pulled Scotch broom** as part of a capstone project for two Outdoor Recreation Leadership students
- **Let's Pull Together, a regional noxious weed and awareness event**, took place in June and volunteers removed 1.5 acres of

Scotch broom and 0.2 acre of yellow starthistle. Event partners included Rogue Basin Partnership, Bureau of Land Management, Siskiyou Chapter Native Plant Society of Oregon, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Forest Service

- **A management plan** has been completed
- **Three new birds were added to the list:** Gray Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, and the Common Nighthawk
- **Rogue Valley Audubon Society installed a Purple Martin structure** in hopes of augmenting a nearby population

- **Rare plants were censused, a professional bird point count was completed**, and the data was reported to local research networks
- **We commissioned an intensive rare lichen, moss, and flowering plant survey**, so far resulting in documentation of new populations of white fairypoppy, in the process of being listed under Oregon's Endangered Species Act, and special status popcorn flowers
- **We received a USFWS species grant** to help with federally listed species recovery at the Preserve
- **A colorful metal SOLC logo**, created by board member Keith Emerson, was **installed on the entrance gate**
- Board President Kevin Talbert managed a **driveway improvement**





Beautiful Bunchgrasses, Beautiful Seeds—A Partnership

We partnered with Rogue Native Plant Partnership (RNPP) to collect native bunchgrass seeds at Rogue River Preserve with 14 volunteers this summer. The California oatgrass and Lemmon's needlegrass seeds will be used for upland habitat improvement projects on site and will also be shared with a regional network of restoration organizations. Kathryn Prive, RNPP coordinator, when asked about this project said, "Native seed is the currency of ecological restoration. Without diverse and genetically appropriate sources of seed, our efforts to restore landscapes may fail. Volunteer-based seed collection events are important because they provide restoration practitioners with locally sourced native seed, involve the public in the restoration cycle, and lead (we hope) to better restoration outcomes in the future."

For more info: roguenativeplants.org.

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Students Find A Common Nighthawk at Rogue River Preserve

Last June, Grants Pass High School teacher Debra Berg brought her terrestrial ecology class to Rogue River Preserve to go birding with volunteers from Siskiyou Audubon Society. They split into four groups and went, well, birding! The 34 birders detected 34 bird species in the oak woodlands, grasslands, and floodplain forest. They even added a new bird to the Preserve's list of 107 species—a Common Nighthawk! Name notwithstanding, Common Nighthawks are uncommon in Jackson County and are not even hawks.

A cryptic bird in the nightjar or goatsucker family, Common Nighthawks are challenging to spot during the day since they are generally only active at dawn or dusk while foraging for insects on the wing. The 2014 State of the Birds Report lists it as a Common Bird in Steep Decline. Populations have decreased by almost 2% per year between 1966 and 2014, with an overall decline of 61% in the United States. It is listed as Sensitive by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in the Klamath Mountains and other regions. Falling populations are correlated with loss of grassland and gravel bar habitat and a decline in prey, mosquitoes and other aerial insects, associated in part with the widescale use of pesticides. We are thankful that this group of volunteer community scientists found this special bird.

Photo by Frank Lospalluto



Photo by Phil Hicks



Top: Common Nighthawk

Bottom: Grants Pass High School students with Siskiyou Audubon Society volunteer

Tribute to Pat Acklin

Our 41st annual member meeting and picnic was held on June 1, 2019 at the beautiful Rogue River Preserve next to the rambling river, and amongst lush spring vegetation, butterflies, and nesting raptors.

Members participated in hikes guided by enthusiastic naturalists and listened to songs by the talented Tish McFadden and Native American stories related by the animated Thomas Doty. Some members even worked up a sweat pulling invasive Scotch broom. We are grateful to our many event volunteers for helping make the day so special.

A highlight of the day was the

presentation of the Conservation Award to former SOLC board member (and current Lands & Development Committees member), Pat Acklin. The length of Pat's employment, service resume, and list of previously received awards, recognition and accolades for her dedication to the environment and surrounding community rivals that of the Dead Sea Scrolls and would give anyone a bad case of carpal tunnel to list here. So, suffice it to say, she was well deserving of this award. At SOLC alone, Pat has served on the board for 13 years (four of those as President of the Board), various committees and as a presenter on pertinent topics. Pat's



Photo by Mary Wilkins Kelly

leadership and continued guidance and support is a treasure to SOLC.

In her own words, "I was drawn to our organization [SOLC] because it is playing an essential role in the conservation of the region by assisting private landowners to implement their conservation values in perpetuity."

It was a brilliant day filled with nature, friends, and fun.



Howard Prairie–Working Forest (continued from front page)

the Klamath, and the Shasta people. Europeans first came to the area in the 1840s. After the Gold Rush began, ranching, grazing, and logging ensued. Today, the property contains state-listed sensitive and vulnerable species such as the White-headed Woodpecker, breeding Sandhill Cranes, and the Keene Creek pebblesnail.

Common birds heard in the forest include Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, Common Raven and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Black bear, coyote, elk, cougar, and black-tailed deer also use the property.

This property has been selectively logged since 1954 and some logging occurred before then. The conservation easement protects a mixed conifer forest, several springs, a 20-acre meadow and several small aspen stands. Aspen stands in southwest Oregon west of the Cascade Crest are uncommon, small, and often threatened due to fire suppression and overgrazing.

Mature conifers are widely scattered and some trees are more than 400 years old. One sugar pine tree is greater than five feet in diameter. The forested area also supports small openings and dry meadows.

The easement is bordered to the north by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and part of the eastern border is adjacent to Bureau of Reclamation land, also managed by the BLM. As a result, connectivity for species dispersal is excellent through



the forests and large meadow to Howard Prairie Lake. Howard Prairie Lake is an important flyway for migratory birds such as Bald Eagles, Great Gray Owls, and Osprey.

Approximately 40 to 50 percent of the nearby Jenny Creek Watershed has been clearcut since World War II, which removed the largest ponderosa and sugar pines, incense-cedar, and Douglas-fir trees. Frost pockets resulted in reforestation challenges and, around 1963, clearcuts were generally replaced with shelterwood cuts on public lands in the area.

Forests provide clean water, abundant wildlife and fish, forest products, employment, carbon-storage, clean air, protected soils, and beautiful views. Private forest landowners face pressure to develop their lands. With development or changes in use, forestlands are taken out of production and the benefits they provide diminish. SOLC works with landowners to keep forests intact and vibrant.

We provide a way for willing land owners to protect these forest resources through conservation easements. SOLC also preserves and cares for farms and ranches, oak woodlands,



Photo by Karl Schneck

Top left: Jud Parsons, Karen Hussey, and Marty Main with Mt. McLoughlin in the background

Top right: White-headed Woodpecker

Left: Elephantheads flowering in a wet meadow

forests, streams, and native habitats throughout the Rogue River region, with a strategic focus on lands within Jackson and Josephine counties. Conservation easements such as the one on Jud's Howard Prairie property ensure the land remains in a natural state, no matter who owns it.

Maintaining the cultural and economic stability of rural communities by conserving working forest landscapes, as well as protecting social values such as recreation, cultural, scenic, and historical values are just a couple of the compelling reasons for conservation.

Nearly 60 percent of U.S. forests are privately owned. Working forests create jobs and contribute to county tax rolls. Working forest conservation easements reward landowners for their stewardship of wildlife, water, and climate resources, allowing them to reinvest in local economies. Approximately 2500 acres of productive forestland are being maintained as working forests thanks to six conservation easements secured by SOLC. Bravo to people like you who support this work and to land owners like Jud who value its critical importance.

Board Member & Staff Updates

Please join us in expressing our sincerest gratitude to **Barbara Allen** who recently concluded her service as an SOLC Board Member. At SOLC, Barbara served on the Development Committee and was instrumental in the Heart of the Rogue Campaign, bringing her many years of experience and community connections to the team.



We are excited to announce the addition of two new staff members! **Kelly Gonzales** stepped into the role of Development Director in April. She's happy to be able to combine her more than 20 years of experience in fundraising, communications, marketing, and member engagement with her lifelong passion for conservation. When she's not in the office, you can find her paddling big whitewater and exploring trails.

Lyndia Hammer joined SOLC in June as Land Steward where she'll be conducting baseline assessments, monitoring conservation easements, and supporting landowners in their effort to steward the land. Lyndia brings 20 years of field biology and forestry consulting experience to the SOLC team. She is fascinated by the natural history and disturbance ecology of the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion and enjoys hiking, observing nature, and spending time with friends and family.



Southern Oregon
LAND
CONSERVANCY

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

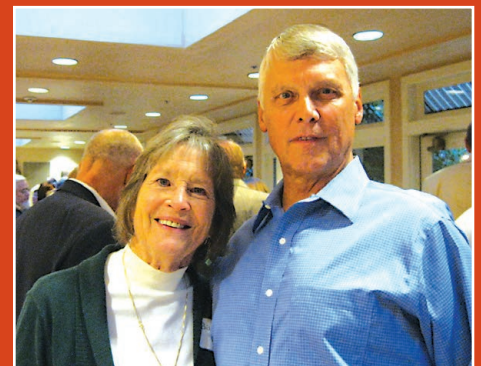
Gifts that Keep on Giving

Planned Giving allows you to create a legacy of land conservation. It ensures SOLC continues to flourish in the future. Everyone, regardless of means or age, can make a lasting impact on maintaining the natural, cultural, and economic value of the Rogue River region.

Planned Giving can be as simple as including SOLC in your will or designating a portion of your retirement assets to SOLC. Including SOLC in your will provides crucial support for SOLC to maintain its position as a leader among regional land trusts,

ensuring the natural wealth of the wild and working lands of the Rogue River region endure forever. When you designate a portion of your retirement assets to SOLC, you create a better future for the land you love while avoiding harsh taxation.

For more information on creating a legacy of land conservation, or to let us know you have included SOLC in your estate plans, call Kelly Gonzales at 541-482-3069, ext. 104 or email her at kelly@landconserve.org. We would be honored to help ensure your wishes are respected.



"We are pleased to establish a legacy gift to SOLC in our estate plan. With SOLC's stewardship, our gift will last, quite literally, forever."

—Jeff & Barbara Beaupain

UPCOMING EVENTS



Photos for this article by Jesse Smith



Save the Date *for the* Conservation Celebration!

Save the date for SOLC's annual gala and fundraising event on **Friday, October 18, 2019** at the Ashland Hills Hotel from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This is our big night of fun celebrating conservation and saluting *you* with an evening of wine, food, music, and delight.

Tables seat eight guests. Tickets are \$85 per guest or \$600 per table. For more information and to register for this event, visit the Events section on our website, landconserve.org or call **541-482-3069**.



Photo by Addington Pro Photos

Landmark Members, Mark Your Calendars!

On **Saturday, September 28** from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., SOLC Landmark and Life members are invited to be honored at a very special location, the C2 Ranch in Eagle Point. Members who give \$500 or more each year or who are conservation easement donors have the opportunity to tour the land, learn more about this landmark property, and enjoy a complimentary lunch.

To register, visit the Events section of our website at landconserve.org. For more information on becoming a Landmark Member, call Kelly Gonzales at 541-482-3069, ext. 104 or email kelly@landconserve.org.

Vaux's Swift Migration Carnival

During their annual migration, thousands of swifts darken the otherwise bright blue summer sky as they swirl acrobatically overhead and enter the Hedrick Middle School chimney in a tornado-like fashion to spend the night before continuing south to Mexico and Venezuela. Bring a blanket for this natural *must-see* phenomenon on **September 9**, starting at 6:00 p.m. at 1501 E. Jackson St. in Medford. This is a free family carnival-style event that includes food trucks, booths, activities, and games. The event is coordinated by Rogue Valley Audubon Society and Hedrick Middle School teachers. Stop by our booth to say hello!

