



SOUTHERN  
OREGON  
LAND  
CONSERVANCY

# Terra Firma Times

Spring 2015

## Conserving the Heart of the Rogue



Back in 1936, Robert Ruhl, a prominent local journalist who was the publisher and editor of the Mail Tribune, purchased a summer home for his family along the Rogue River. Today, after nearly 80 years, his grandchildren are selling the property to the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy to preserve the habitat and history of this magnificent refuge. The family wants to conserve the land for

but now lives closer to her children on the East Coast.

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy has an option to purchase the property. A Steering Committee was formed to help guide the acquisition process, which will include submitting grants to State and Federal agencies, and building partnerships with conservation organizations, user groups such as fishing, boating and recreational organizations, and private foundations.



*Robert Ruhl*

“This property is just gorgeous, and so important to save,” says Craig Harper, Conservation Project Manager for SOLC. “The middle Rogue is a high priority area for us. Conserving this piece will help open doors to more conservation along the river over the next few years.”

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy is determining how the property will be used in the future. The uses will be determined, in part, by what is permitted by the County, the capacity of our organization, and the requirements of the funders.

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people and wildlife and ensure that their family’s legacy of conservation is carried forward.

The property lies along the Rogue River, upstream from the Jackson County Dodge Bridge Park. It’s a wild 352-acre property with over 1½ miles of river frontage. It hosts diverse habitats including oak savanna, vernal pools, meadows, streams and the second largest streamside forest on the Rogue upstream of Galice.

The summer home, built in 1922, remains intact along with other outbuildings on the property.

“We’re very happy at the prospect of passing on our family land to the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy to use as a resource for education and stewardship,” says Alicia MacArthur, daughter of Robert and Mabel Ruhl. Alicia, along with her six children, have hoped for nearly twenty years that SOLC would help them conserve the land. They often visit the property from their homes throughout the country. Up until recently, Alicia resided in Medford during the summer,





I made my first journey to India this winter and traveled independently with my husband for 4 weeks. I had heard a lot about India prior to the trip from people who either loved it or hated it; I was prepared for either. Luckily, I loved it, the people, the food, the culture, and the beautiful crafts.

However, what I wasn't prepared for was the impact on the environment of having the second largest population in the world. There is little open space or undeveloped land in India. The 1.25 billion people who live there are using nearly all available land for living and feeding themselves. It's crowded. Even in rural areas, within a mile or two of leaving one town, you run smack dab into another. Cars, people, exhaust ...it's pervasive.

Upon returning home I became acutely aware of how fortunate we are to still have wide open spaces here. Our wildlife aren't limited to a diminishing number of national parks. Farm and ranch land is still available, and forests that provide economic vitality for rural communities as well as habitat for wildlife are abundant. But all these places are at risk, or most likely will be at some point in the future. So, thinking ahead and acting now to ensure that working lands and natural spaces continue to exist is critical. Land Trusts across Oregon and the US are taking the lead to ensure that these treasured places define our future rather than fade into the past. We can learn from those places on earth where it's already too late.

Sometimes it's hard to see that what we're doing today is making a difference. But one only has to look to India, or any of the many places in our own country that have lost their natural areas to know how important this work is.

Thanks for making this possible. Together, we're making a difference that can, and will, last for many years to come.

For the land,

*Diane*

## Saying Goodbye

We lost a graceful activist and conservation leader earlier this year, when Barry Snitkin passed away at his home in Cave Junction.

Barry was a community person through and through, a skillful networker, and a kind man of integrity. He was the founder and coordinator of the Siskiyou Film Festival, one of the founders of the Siskiyou Field Institute as well as a current board member, and one of the core staff people at the Siskiyou Project. He also served on the board of the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy in the 1990s and was instrumental in many conservation projects we completed in the Illinois Valley. Most recently he volunteered and worked for the library system in the Illinois Valley and donated a conservation easement on his property along the river.

Fortunately, Barry had some time to celebrate his life with friends and family during his last months, and spent his final days in grace and love.

We will miss this gentle man who devoted his life to protecting the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion and to building community throughout our area. Rest in peace, dear friend.



## VOLUNTEER FOR THE MONUMENT

**Wednesday, June 17, 9 am - 12:30 pm**

Help protect the biodiversity of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument by removing starthistle from a privately protected property along Pilot Rock Rd.

Email [teresa@landconserve.org](mailto:teresa@landconserve.org) if you'd like to help.

# Rare Flowers Survive on Conserved Lands

Next time you drive on I-5 over Sexton Pass north of Grants Pass, consider the Sexton Mountain Mariposa-lily. It was last seen in 1947 and is believed to be extinct. Why? Habitat destruction & degradation, caused mostly by humans.

In this time of accelerated plant and animal loss, there is some good news. In 1973, President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act (ESA); we now lead the world in our attempt to halt species extinctions.

Due to the ESA, California Condors can be spotted soaring in the wild in a few places in California and Arizona and may be re-introduced to the Klamath Canyon. Bald Eagles and Ospreys are doing much better, thanks to positive human interventions. And here in the globally significant Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion, with over 280 rare and endemic plant species, a number of spectacular plants have been listed under the ESA as Rare and Threatened.

Here at the Land Conservancy, we are honored to hold conservation agreements on lands in Jackson & Josephine Counties that support some of these rare plants.

Gentner's Fritillaria, a striking lily found in southwestern Oregon and northern California, is federally and state listed as Endangered. The largest concentration of this red flower is in and around Jacksonville, especially in the Jacksonville Woodlands. In partnership with the City of Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, we conserve over 130 acres of the Woodlands, including Gentner's habitat. This land will always be a natural area with trails that wind around beautiful rare and common wildflowers. It cannot be bulldozed, subdivided or clear-cut. A few years ago, we also discovered Gentner's Fritillaria on conserved land in Sams Valley, growing in an opening surrounded by chaparral and oak woodland.



*Sexton Mt. Mariposa Lily*



*Large Woolly Meadowfoam*

Large-flowered Woolly Meadowfoam is a federally Endangered plant that only grows in the Agate Desert, a unique landform of vernal pools and mounded prairies near White City and Eagle Point.



*Cook's Lomatium*

Less than 23% of the Agate Desert is still intact. We join with groups like The Nature Conservancy and the Oregon Department of Transportation in protecting critical habitat for this sweet annual flower. We conserve 170 acres on two adjacent private lands, supporting Large-flowered Woolly Meadowfoam as well as the federally Threatened Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp.

The federally Endangered Cook's Lomatium grows in only two valleys in the world: the Rogue Valley and the Illinois Valley in Oregon. This pale yellow flowering member of the carrot family was recently described as a new species in 1986. It grows in vernal pools in the Agate Desert and in vernal alluvial deposits outside of Cave Junction. On a beautiful private property by Woodcock Mountain near Cave Junction, we protect a remnant population of Cook's Lomatium.

These three rare plants grow on valley floor and foothill habitats, primarily on private lands. Thanks to being listed under the ESA, they have a chance for survival. Thanks to your support, we are able to conserve critical habitat so that hopefully, rare plants will be blooming for many years to come.

## Glossary

**Endangered:** species which are in danger of becoming extinct within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

**Threatened:** those likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

**Rare:** a group of organisms that are very uncommon, scarce, or infrequently encountered.

# Committee Helps Guide Rogue River Project

What do eleven men and women from state and federal agencies and conservation organizations all have in common? They are passionate about SOLC's newest project, the Rogue River Preserve, and are volunteering their time to help guide the acquisition over the next year. The Steering Committee meets monthly to assist with grants, develop partnerships with funders and conservation partners and help determine the future uses and management of the property. Members include Chrysten Lambert of Trout Unlimited, Craig Tuss of the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Eugene Wier of The Freshwater Trust, Brian Barr of the Rogue River Watershed Council, Mark Amrhein, a geotechnical engineer, Clint Driver of the Laird Norton Family Foundation, Kevin Talbert of RCC, SOLC Board members Donald Rubenstein,

Dan Kellogg and Keith Emerson and SOLC Lands Committee member and fish biologist, Randy Frick.

In addition, others are serving as advisors to the project. They are: Su Rolle (retired US Forest Service), Bob Hunter (Attorney, WaterWatch) Paul and Ann Hill (SOLC members), Steve Lambert (Jackson County Parks) Cherie Kearney (Columbia Land Trust), Claire Fiegenger (Greenbelt Land Trust), Owen Wozniak (Trust for Public Land), Dave Picanso (ranch manager), Jim Thraillkill (US Fish & Wildlife), Dalton Straus (rancher) and George Kramer (historic preservation consultant).

Many thanks to all these talented individuals for giving their time and expertise to see this project through.



*George Kramer evaluates the buildings on site at a recent visit to the Rogue River Preserve.*

## Welcome New Members

Mark and Amy Amrhein  
Barbara Andrews  
Paul and Priscilla Arnold  
Patricia Brown  
Elizabeth N. Caldwell  
Thomas Collett  
June Collins  
Steven B. Colman  
Robert and Carolyn Craig  
Thomas Craig  
Margaret Dole & Don Walton  
Susan Elsom  
Matt Fawcett  
Ellen Fowler  
Ryan Gallagher  
Steven and Susan Glaser  
Adrienne Graham  
Linda Green  
David Haight  
Greg and JM Holmes

Anna Howe  
Judi and David Howlett  
Jim Huber  
Judd and Gaylene Hurley  
Beth Jandernoa  
Rebecca Kagan  
Simon Klevansky  
Patti Kramer  
George Kramer and Joyce Van Anne  
Linda and Peter Kreisman  
Deirdre Krumper  
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Jack and Sarah Seybold  
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Doug Smith  
Craig Smith  
Cynthia Thorin  
Annette Trujillo  
Johan Visser and Judith Wright Visser  
Teresa Webster  
Dickie Wilson  
Midge Raymond & John Yunker

## Become a Member and Double Your Gift!

During our SPRING MEMBERSHIP DRIVE every new membership gift will be matched, thanks to two local foundations.

**That means your gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more will be DOUBLED!**

Not only will you be helping conserve more land in Southern Oregon, you'll receive discounts to local businesses, an invitation to our member picnic and special hikes just for members.

### Business Partners with Perks:

Plant Oregon  
Northwest Outdoor Store  
The Nature Shop  
Wooldridge Creek Winery  
Red Lily Winery  
Medical Eye Center

Join or donate at [landconserve.org](http://landconserve.org)  
or call 541-482-3069 for more info.

## LandMatters in Oregon



The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), our statewide association that serves its 20-member organizations, hosted a joint conference in April with the Washington Association of Land Trusts. More than 150 staff and board members gathered in Corbett, Oregon, at Menucha, a retreat center that sits above the Columbia with spectacular views of the mighty river, to learn, network, connect with the land and share ideas.

At the Board meeting, COLT Executive Director Kelley Beamer shared new developments in Salem that affect land trusts in the state:

- 1) Funding for conservation is down due to a decrease in lottery dollars. The lottery supports acquisition and restoration grants for land conservation awarded through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.
- 2) A proposal to create an Outdoor Education Account, which would offer students in Oregon a week-long outdoor education program, is being sponsored. Funding for this would come from unclaimed bottle deposits and an increase in solid waste tax.

We are fortunate to have a statewide presence in Salem working on behalf of Oregon's Land Trusts. Thanks COLT and staff for supporting our work conserving Oregon's beautiful lands.

## STATS

- Nationally, those who identify as "conservation concerned" fell from 58% in 2007 to 26% in 2013
- In Oregon, 57% of people believe protection of the environment should be given priority
- 78% of Oregonians mentioned the environment in "things they value".
- Out of 3.9 million Oregonians, only 1% are familiar with Land Trusts

From a poll conducted by The Nature Conservancy in 2013



*Board member Keith Emerson and staffer Craig Harper overlooking the Columbia River.*

# These Kids Just Love the Land

It doesn't take much for a 4th or 5th grade student to get excited about a field trip. And when it includes putting on boots and getting in a creek, well.....that might just be the best field trip of the year!

That was what many of the students had to say about the Loving the Land program that the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy hosted in April for 254 students from the Ashland and Phoenix/Talent School Districts. Now in its eleventh year, this outdoor education program is a one-of-a-kind experience, and sometimes

a child's first experience in the woods.

"I had one student tell me he had never been in the forest before," said Julie Lockhart, SOLC Board member and a volunteer for the program.

This hands-on exploratory trip is a favorite of many teachers, too, some of whom have come back year after year, like Jeff Westergaard's bilingual class from Talent Elementary. What better way to love the land!

Many thanks to all the volunteers and to the Ashland Parks Foundation for their support of this program.



*Volunteer, Clyton Gillette, guiding a lesson in local geology.*

## *Rogue River, continued from front page*

"We plan to host tours on the property over the coming year to get as many people out to see it as possible," says Harper. "We want to show the property off and let people see for themselves what makes it so special."

"This is a really exciting project for us," adds Executive Director, Diane Garcia. "We've been hoping a property like this would come along, one that is located in the center of our service area with high conservation values that would appeal to a lot of people. The fact that it lies along the Rogue River makes it even more special. It's the heart of the Rogue."



*Elk herd seen at the Rogue River Preserve*

## Bob Hunter Honored

Bob Hunter will be presented with the 2015 Conservation Award at this year's Member Picnic and Meeting on June 6th, in honor of a lifetime of conservation achievements.

Bob served on the Land Conservancy board in the 1980s and has a long history of working to protect the environments of Southern Oregon and beyond.

Bob worked with WaterWatch of Oregon to make sure that the State's rivers and streams had water for fish as well as for irrigation and drinking. It was in this capacity, as an attorney for WaterWatch, that Bob led the effort to remove the Savage Rapids Dam, the Gold Hill Diversion Dam, and the Gold Ray Dam on the Rogue River.

His work earned him the highest honor from the Medford Rogue Flyfisher's Association for outstanding contributions to fish conservation and national recognition from Trout Unlimited.

In 2012 Bob was presented with the US Forest Service "Rise to the Future" award during a ceremony at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The award is given to individuals whose exceptional work enhances fisheries and watersheds on national forests.

We are honored to know Bob and present him with this year's Conservation Award.



*Bill Hering has been a member and loyal attendee at our annual Conservation Celebration. He has twice been the high bidder on a dinner for 10 donated by Dick and Elaine Sweet. We decided to ask Bill about his interest in our work and find out more about him.*

### **When and how did you arrive in Southern Oregon?**

My wife Suzanne and I came from San Francisco. I was an educator there; I worked in the field of ophthalmology managing the development of educational materials for doctors at the Academy of Ophthalmology in San Francisco.

We had very close friends in Grants Pass, and we would come up to visit them and loved the area. So, when I retired in 2006 we moved up here. We live above the college in Ashland.

### **What kinds of outdoor activities do you enjoy?**

I think staying in a non-chain hotel is roughing it! So no, I don't camp. I'm a birder; it's my passion. The final year of my doctorate in Illinois I was taking a walk and there were a lot of snowy owls in the trees. I was astonished. I went right out to

get a book; there was no internet back then. From then on, I started taking my binoculars with me on my walks. Later on, in San Francisco, I joined the Golden Gate Audubon Society and got very active. I was never an expert birder. The reason I got good was because I went out with people who knew a lot.

### **Are you involved with other organizations or groups?**

I'm also very involved with the Chamber Music Concert Series. We go to most of the plays at OSF (sometimes more than once) and all the plays at the SOU theater. There's so much to do in a town that's not so big. A traffic jam is two cars at a stop light. I just love it here.

### **What made you become a supporter of our work?**

Environmental concerns are also my concerns. I'm involved with many organizations that do lobbying and try to change legislation. And we need those kinds of groups to be watchdogs and bring about change. You're not trying to do that. You see land that should be saved, not necessarily as parks or reserves, but different kinds of private lands and working lands, and if a landowner wants to do that, they work with you. It's quality work, and it just seems so right.

### **How are we doing?**

I think you're doing very well. You seem to be very successful. You're acquiring properties every year and you seem to be on a roll. It seems to me that's the case.

### **What do you care about most?**

Obviously I care about birds. They are real indicators of how the environment is doing. I care about how we go about man-

aging the process so that we don't destroy and pollute everything. There's been a lot of success, but obviously, there's still so much more to do.

*We couldn't agree with you more, Bill. Thanks for all that you're doing to support our work and other important causes in the Rogue Valley!*



*Bill and Suzanne Hering and friends enjoy a dinner donated by Dick & Elaine Sweet (standing) to the 2014 Conservation Celebration auction.*



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Founded in 1978, the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy protects and enhances precious land in the Rogue River region to benefit our human and natural communities.



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*Join Us!*

**2015 Member Picnic & Meeting**  
**Saturday, June 6th**  
**on the Rogue**

RSVP by June 1 to: [info@landconserve.org](mailto:info@landconserve.org)