

Winter 2016

News



Southern Oregon

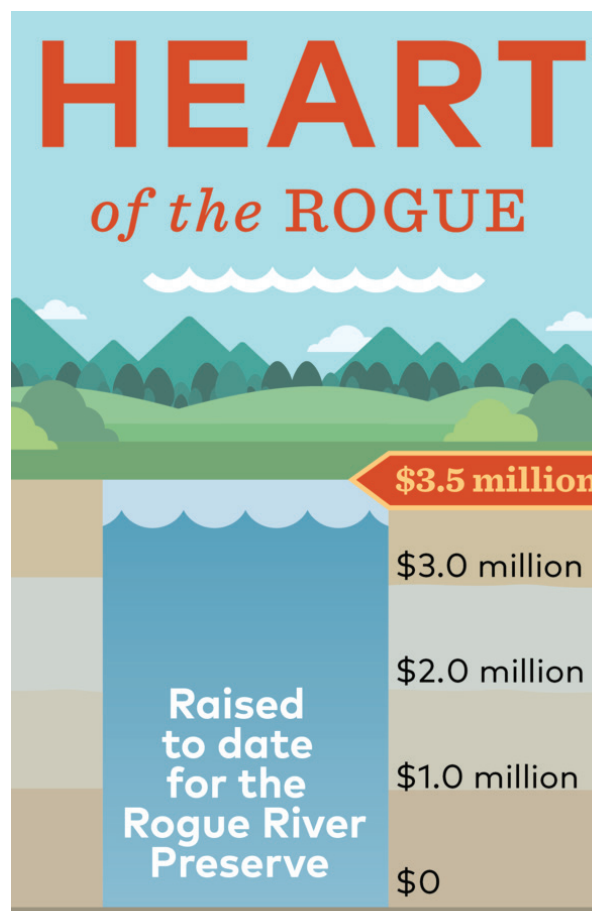
LAND
CONSERVANCY

Heart of the Rogue beats closer to completion

There were those who thought it couldn't be done. Many of us wondered if a small land trust could really pull off such a big acquisition. Friends advised us to start smaller, find a less expensive property for our first purchase. But sometimes, there is serendipity. And magic. And people whose generosity seemed to come from unexpected places. That is the story of the Heart of the Rogue Campaign, which is coming to its end this month. With only a couple weeks left, and less than \$100,000 to raise, the goal is in sight.

In August of 2015 we embarked on our first acquisition project: the purchase of 352 acres along the Rogue River just south of Shady Cove. The property has been owned by the Ruhl/MacArthur family for nearly 75 years. They offered us a bargain sale purchase price so that it would remain one, intact natural area, conserved forever.

We had been seeking a signature property, one on which we could gather, meet, inform, educate, and inspire our community and members. So when this piece of extraordinary land became available, we had to say "yes!" Who could pass on such a conservation rich property with two miles of river frontage and an historic home still standing along its shore?



We knew we needed to have funds not only for the purchase, but also for the ongoing costs of owning the land (taxes, maintenance, utilities, fencing, programs). We determined what amount would be needed for a Stewardship Endowment and added that to the total cost, along with the costs of running a campaign for 16-18 months. The total came to \$3.5 million dollars, a huge sum for a small land trust.

Then, our state and federal partners stepped in, along with several private foundations. Patrick and Carlyn Duffy, neighbors across the river, volunteered to chair our campaign. And hundreds of supporters and donors sent in

their checks, made pledges and dug deep.

Today, we've raised over \$3.4 million and perhaps more by the time you read this. If you haven't donated yet to the Heart of the Rogue, or want to give a little more to help us reach our goal by December 31, please visit our website and make a tax-deductible donation. You will be rewarded with the knowledge that you helped save a very special place that forever will be part of the fabric of Southern Oregon. Future generations will be grateful that you did.

Director's message

Good neighbors



Soon we will be joining many individuals and families along the Rogue River as a neighbor. Recently I came across a book hiding in the trunk of my car called "My Healthy Stream." The publication is written by Trout Unlimited and the Aldo Leopold Foundation. In read-

ing through it, I was reminded of the importance of being a good manager when caring for land that has a river flowing through it. "Rivers and streams are the 'lifeblood' of the land. All life depends on it. The food we eat, our health, and our overall quality of life is inextricably linked to the quality and quantity of water flowing in our rivers and streams," the book reminds us. These words made me think more about the awesome responsibility we'll have once we own the Rogue River Preserve.

We will have a never-ending commitment to practice best management principles we have shared with other conservation landowners over the past 38 years. We'll collaborate with our partners to enhance stream health, improve habitat diversity, monitor water quality, and remove invasive species. Everything we do will have an impact on our neighbors downstream as well as nearby.

We also will ensure that our ownership balances the needs of the land with those of the community. We'll take our time to listen to the land, understand what it needs and respect what we learn. Our goal is to be a good neighbor—to surrounding landowners—as well as to the wildlife and plants we'll share this amazing property with.

The Rogue River Preserve will be a special place for all of us. It is with gratitude that I write this, to all those who helped make this possible and to all those who have yet to discover this magical land. I hope we meet there in the coming year to explore, learn and delight in its wonders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diane".

Diane Garcia, Executive Director



Striped meadowhawk dragonfly at the Rogue River Preserve

by Norm Barrett

"There must be some force behind conservation, more universal than profit, less awkward than government, less ephemeral than sport, something that reaches into all times and places where men live on land, something that brackets everything, from rivers to raindrops, from whales to hummingbirds, from land-estates to window boxes. I can see only one such force: a respect for land as an organism; a voluntary decency in land-use exercised by every citizen and every landowner out of a sense of love for and obligation to this great biota we call America. This is the meaning of conservation."

—ALDO LEOPOLD, 1944

Molly Morison: wine, melons and a love for farming

Terrace Hill Farm is in my DNA. As kids, my sister, brothers and I spent every summer on our family farm in New Hampshire. We were the 6th generation of Morisons to happily explore its hardwood forests and old fields, learn the Terrace Hill Farm sausage recipe, fear the family ghosts, and swat blackflies while planting peas. Now my brothers and their families live and work on the farm and adjacent property, and part of the land is in conservation with a local land trust. Legacy lands are dear to me.

Tales of natural wonders drew me to Oregon in 1987 and led to a botanist position in the Mt. Hood National Forest where I gained appreciation for the challenges of public land management. In 1999 I was lucky to join The Nature Conservancy's SW Oregon Field Office as the Stewardship Coordinator and put down roots in the Rogue Valley. I enjoy my work to protect and restore ecologically significant habitats throughout SW Oregon with support from many wonderful volunteers, members and committed partners.

At home in Talent, perhaps as a result of summers on the family farm, I love growing things. With my business partner Terry, we farm and produce wine from a 4-acre certified organic vineyard. SOLC's focus on the protection of working lands is important to our regional economy and agricultural heritage. And yes, I believe that working with nature is the best way to grow.

As a new board member, I'm eager to dig in, contribute my land management experience and help SOLC with its inspiring work of building a legacy of protected lands, stewardship and community support. Thanks for the opportunity!



Rogue River photo by Eugene Wier

Tis the season for Madrona

Stand in a clump of Pacific madrone or madrona trees during a winter storm, the trunks wet and luscious, creamy green and burnished red, and feast on the beauty. Children pull off the beckoning curly bark strips and stroke the underlying pale green bark, smooth and soothing. Mature trees can support many bark colors and textures: the older rough brown-gray squares, dark weathered curlicues, strips of fresh reds, and the young green underbark. The Klamath Indians tell a beautiful story about Madrone Girl, who lured her lover, the North Wind, back from the embraces of another native tree girl, Chinquapin, by scrubbing her skin pure and new in the Klamath River. She sang a love song while standing proud and gorgeous from a mountaintop; North Wind immediately returned. It has since become a tradition, this sloughing off of flecks and puzzle pieces of bark during the summer, decorating the forest floor.

The first Euro-American explorer and naturalist to describe madrone was Dr. Archibald Menzies who explored the Puget Sound with Captain Vancouver in 1792. The scientific name, *Arbutus menziesii*, commemorates Dr. Menzies. In his journal he aptly described the species:

"...a peculiar ornament to the Forest by its large clusters of whitish flowers & ever green leaves but its peculiar smooth bark of a reddish brown colour will at times attract the Notice of the most superficial observer."

A common understory tree in lower-elevation forests in Southwest Oregon, each madrone tree sports a



Photo by Frank Lospalluto



different wondrous shape from multi-stem octopus trees that have re-sprouted after a fire to grand "girthy" older beauties. Like other plants in the heath family, such as manzanita, the sweet urn-shaped flowers bloom in the spring and are visited by bumble bees.

The leaves are sclerophyllous – thick and sturdy broad-leaf leaves that conserve water during hot summers. Second year leaves drop off during the summer, adding yellows to the bark chip forest floor, while younger leaves provide a canopy of green light all year-round. The leaves also provide a holiday-style contrast to the red pitted berries that droop from branches in the fall. Local indigenous people, like the Takelma, harvest the berries. Band-tailed Pigeons, American Robins, and many other critters eat them, dispersing the seeds to feed future generations. Little kids and crafters make necklaces of dried madrone berries. This year, the berries are extraordinarily abundant. Madrona feeds all of us – poets, dreamers, explorers, birds, and bees.

Kristi Mergenthaler

Neighbors do the impossible

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy and community members from Takilma, a small rural town located ten miles south of Cave Junction, share a dream: that someday the 255 acres now protected along the East Fork of the Illinois River will expand to include many more hundreds of acres. A piece of that dream moved closer to reality recently when a dedicated and passionate group of neighbors resolved to do the impossible.

With their hearts and their pocketbooks, Takilma residents rescued a beautiful and beloved property from an imminent clearcut and into the embrace of committed conservationists and interested buyers, David Stone and Carolyn Taormina.

Here's their story.

In 2014, an 80-acre parcel of land known as the Circle S Ranch, went up for sale at an asking price within reach of David and Carolyn. Sometime later the price increased by more than \$100,000, reflecting the value of timber following a timber cruise.

With the purchase price now beyond the means of David and Carolyn, the land was at risk of being sold and clear cut. But Takilma neighbors envisioned a different outcome. "When I felt the stone in the pit of my stomach, I knew I had to do something," recounted nearby landowner Beth Peterson.

Beth, along with help of other neighbors, decided to attempt to raise the \$100,000+ needed to make up the difference so that Carolyn & David could purchase the land and safeguard it in perpetuity. Their only condition was that Carolyn & David commit to placing a conservation easement on the land, which they willingly agreed to do.

Beth and her husband Mark pledged the first gift, \$10,000 of their own money. Two neighbors quickly followed suit. "Suddenly we raised \$30k in a heartbeat," said Beth. "Within two weeks we had all the money in hand."

"It has meant more than anyone can imagine to save a piece of land for keeps, for the wild," said Carolyn. "We are very grateful, every day." The property abounds in wildlife and is known to be the home of the Northern



Landowners David Stone and Carolyn Taormina

"It has meant more than anyone can imagine to save a piece of land for keeps, for the wild. We are grateful every day."

Carolyn Taormina

spotted owl, several species of salmon including coho, Chinook and steelhead. Many species of trees including Port-Orford cedar, white oak, madrone and Pacific yew abound in the area. "There is so much more that goes unseen by human eyes. As it should be," said Carolyn.

In the end, close to 30 community members stepped up and gave gifts ranging from \$50 to \$10,000. Carolyn and David were able to purchase the land and are currently in the process of setting up a conservation easement with us.

And the neighbors? Peace of mind is all they wanted and now have, knowing that a beautiful stretch of the East Fork of the Illinois River, along with its sensitive forest and riparian habitat, will be protected...and the dream of conserving a big swath along the East Fork region is closer to reality.

Say hello to our new staff



We are pleased to introduce **Della Merrill** as our new Membership Director. Della has an extensive background in non-profit management and administration. She served as General Manager of Sanctuary One and also holds a

Master's Degree in Education. She's held positions in a variety of sectors including education, civic engagement, and journalism. Della is looking forward to engaging more people in our land conservation efforts and appreciates the opportunity to have an immediate and lasting impact on how we care for and manage our region's lands.



Paul Belson joins the staff this month as Conservation Project Manager, a position previously held by Craig Harper, who is now managing the Butte Creek Watershed for the Medford Water Commission. Paul moved to the Rogue Valley in December from the island of Kauai, where he

managed a shorebird habitat restoration project for the State of Hawaii for seven years. He's familiar with Oregon, having received his Master's in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon. Paul is excited to get to know Southern Oregon and begin helping landowners to expand protected lands in our region.

We are also excited to welcome **Leslie van Gelder** back to SOLC. Leslie retired three years ago in order to spend more time traveling and with family. Now she's back in the office keeping our books and serving as office manager.

Our staff is growing to better serve the needs of our communities, thanks to funding from the Land Trust Alliance, the Yarg Foundation and the ACE program. We are thrilled to have such talented and skilled professionals working to conserve lands in our beloved Southern Oregon!

Born to love the land

A native Oregonian, Barbara Allen's connection to the land runs deep, having grown up on a large ranch in Eastern Oregon where her family continues the ranching legacy. Barbara credits her grandmother, Violet Skinner, for developing her ability to connect with people and for her love of Oregon's land.



A licensed real estate broker since 1976, Barbara is a member of the Allen+Gibson Group at John L. Scott Real Estate in Ashland. She also is very involved in the community and has served on many boards in leadership roles including President of the Board of Realtors, President of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, and President of the Board of Trustees of Southern Oregon University. Not surprisingly, Barbara was the first female member and first female president of the Ashland Rotary Club.

At SOLC, Barbara serves on the Fundraising Committee and has been instrumental in the Heart of the Rogue Campaign, bringing her many years of experience and community connections to the team.

We are honored to welcome Barbara to the Board.



Barb (third from left) at the family homestead in Eastern Oregon, circa 1951

Linda Kappen, making things happen



Photo of Linda by Sisalee Leavitt

For the past five years, Linda Kappen (a.k.a. the Butterfly Lady) has been graciously sharing her talents with us as a volunteer. She has participated in most of our community work parties, led popular butterfly walks, written about our work in her regular butterfly column in the Applegator, and conducted long-term butterfly and moth surveys at Williams Creek Reserve and Rogue River Preserve. She also tagged monarch butterflies on our conserved

properties as part of a research project led by Dr. David James at Washington State University in an effort to understand the migration routes of Pacific Northwest butterflies. Kristi Mergenthaler, SOLC Stewardship Director said: "I admire Linda beyond measure. She is a self-taught butterfly expert and shares her knowledge and love of butterflies with her art and after-school students at Applegate School and the general public. She is also a volunteer crew leader for a group that is tagging local monarchs and she's one of the founders of the Southern Oregon Monarch Advocates. One of the best things about my job is working with people like Linda – she's a treasure."

Q. How did you learn about SOLC and why do you volunteer your time with us?

I learned about SOLC while enrolled in a botany course taught by Kristi Mergenthaler at Siskiyou Field Institute in 2011. From there, I went on to earn a naturalist certificate. I believe in what you do and the preservation of lands for the future.

Q. What inspires you?

My interest and the study of lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) is what inspires me. Plus the calming effect of working outdoors.

Q. Were there any special places or experiences that shaped your childhood?

I grew up close to the Rogue River where I could walk along the river for long stretches while rock hounding and just being in nature. I spent most of my childhood summers at Griffin Park swimming and walking in the woods nearby. My parent's property, which stretched through three pastures and to the banks of a portion on the Rogue near Brushy Chutes, was included in the Wild and Scenic act of 1968 when the Rogue River was one of the original eight rivers protected by this act.

Q. What would you like your legacy to be?

I am hoping to make a difference in continuing with the study and conservation of lepidoptera in Southern Oregon as well as the monarch butterfly.

Thank you Linda for bringing your passion and talents to our communities and to SOLC!

2015 NATIONAL LAND TRUST CENSUS AT A GLANCE



56 MILLION

Total acres conserved by state, local and national land trusts as of year-end 2015—an increase of 9 million acres since 2010



47%

Percent of land owned by land trusts that allows public access



77%

Percent of total acres owned and under easement held by an accredited land trust



6,250,000

Number of visitors to land trust properties in 2015



/ 5x

Accredited land trusts added more staff capacity and protected five times as much land as eligible, non-accredited land trusts.



8,184

Full-Time and Part-Time Staff



15,779

Board Members



207,646

Other Active Volunteers



4.6 MILLION

Members & Financial Supporters



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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.

WE WISH ALL OF YOU A HAPPY,
JOY-FILLED HOLIDAY SEASON!



Photo: Pepper Trail

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Office address

84 Fourth Street, Ashland, OR
541-482-3069

Mailing address

PO Box 954, Ashland, OR 97520
info@landconserve.org
landconserve.org