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CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACE

Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust

For Generations To Come

SPRING 2021

Our mission is to celebrate, connect, protect and enhance natural lands and waters, wildlife habitat, working farms and ranches, community spaces and recreational lands in Southeast Idaho, now and for future generations.

Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust

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Mission

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Cover Photo

The Egley homestead conservation easement established in 2019.

Remembering JOSELIN MATKINS

By Matt Lucia

Joselin Matkins passed away on January 8, 2021.

Joselin was my friend and adventure buddy, and I knew from the first time I met her that she cared deeply about this part of the world. Joselin grew up in Idaho and moved away for several years during undergraduate and graduate school.

She worked for Wood River Land Trust in Hailey, Idaho, and for Placer Land Trust in California before moving back to Idaho in 2008 when she accepted the first paid Executive Director position offered by then Sagebrush Steppe "Regional" Land Trust.

The first conversation I had with Joselin was about river rafting and over the years we developed a close kinship with a small group of friends that enjoyed extended road trip adventures, rivers, skiing, mountain biking, and exploring the Teton and Sawtooth Mountains.

Joselin was an inspiration to me in her professional life. She loved Idaho and was extremely motivated to do her part in preserving it. She helped organize and launch a statewide coalition of land trusts and was instrumental in laying the foundation for Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust. It took a special leader in the early days of SSLT who could wear every hat, and she did just that. She was the fundraiser, project manager, stewardship director, land protection director, grant writer, administrator, and volunteer coordinator at the same time she was closing conservation easements and completing the requirements for accreditation that SSLT received under her leadership. I have tremendous respect for what Joselin was able to accomplish in her short time with us and most impressed with her ability to connect with people from all walks of life.

Joselin left us a legacy of conservation easements and an organization that I am proud to be part of and humbled by the responsibility. When I come across a document with her name on it, or see the original SSLT logo in the office, or see the picture she took of Deep Creek in the spring, it makes me happy to reflect on her and remember why she did this work. It is because she cared. Joselin cared about this organization, this landscape and its people, and about leaving a better place for our future.

We will honor Joselin's legacy of 'leaving a better place for our future' by building a stronger organization to conserve more important places in Southeastern Idaho. I think she would be proud of Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust and the direction we are headed.

Volunteer Extraordinaire
BETH JOHNSTON

By John Sigler

Beth Johnston is a Pocatello native, born and raised in the Pocatello Valley.

She attended grade school, high school and Idaho State University, graduating with a degree in Business Administration and a Minor in Marketing.

In 2004, she began working for AMI Semiconductor (now ON Semiconductor) and currently serves as the corporation's Marketing Communications Manager for the Americas and Global Campaign Manager. Her work centers on introducing new technologies and products to the market through public relations and events.

In her personal time, Beth is an avid hiker. She and her family make yearly trips to the Sawtooth and Teton ranges and an annual rim-to-rim hike in the Grand Canyon each fall. These are in addition to many local hikes, including Blackrock Canyon and Scout Mountain.

With her partner Shannon, Beth enjoys remodeling, gardening and yard work. Beth has two adult boys and a high school junior who is active in debate. She and Shannon live in the University neighborhood and share their house with a dog and a one-eyed cat.

Since Beth has joined the Land Trust team, she has provided excellent ideas on marketing, branding and community outreach. Her connections with local community and media have proven invaluable in getting the Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust message to communities in Southeast Idaho and beyond.

Additionally, Beth has volunteered to take charge of the Land Trust Fundraising and Outreach Committee. This Committee is responsible for all fundraising and event planning within the organization, as well as outreach and community education. In the fall of 2020, Beth provided generous assistance to Land Trust staff for the first ever online auction and raffle, which was a success both financially and in attracting new members.

Beth is a valuable member of our team and we cannot thank her enough for her hard work and dedication to preserving land in Southeast Idaho!

A Determined Spark
HANNAH SANGER

By Jennifer Cornell

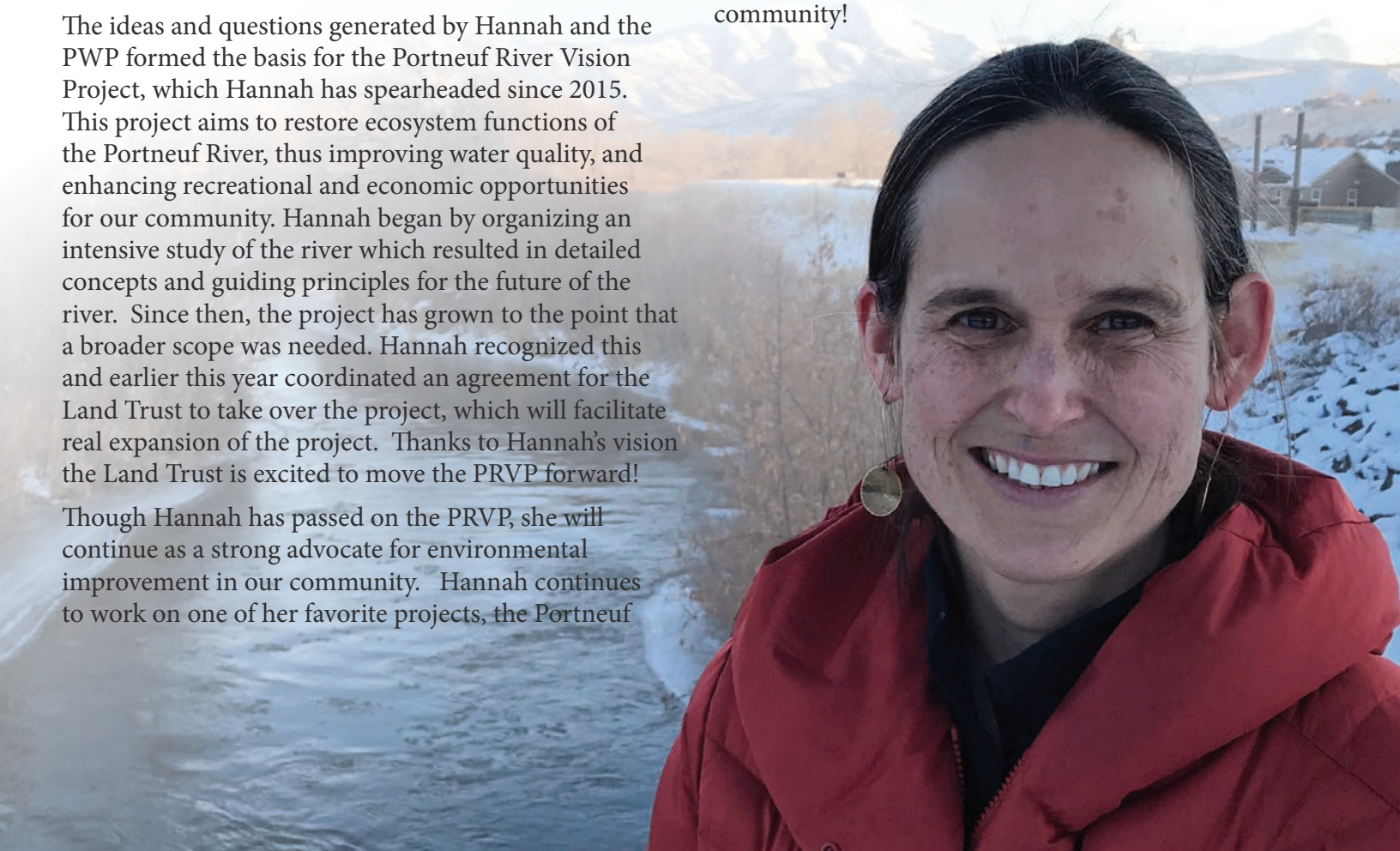
It takes a lot of people to keep a big project in motion. However, it takes a really determined spark to get big things going. For the Portneuf River Vision Project (PRVP), there's no doubt, that spark is Hannah Sanger!

Hannah is the Environmental Administrator for the City of Pocatello, and has worked for the city since 2008 participating in projects to improve storm water management and water quality in the Portneuf River, while also working on other environmental issues in our community. Hannah also coordinates the annual Pocatello Environmental Fair and Portneuf River Cleanup, both popular community events. As part of her position, Hannah leads the Portneuf Watershed Partnership (PWP), which includes the City of Pocatello, federal, state and Shoshone-Bannock tribal agencies, and other stakeholders interested in making improvements to the Portneuf River. As head of the PWP, Hannah leads this group to ask the big questions to better understand what real changes are needed to bring the river closer to its' natural ecological state.

The ideas and questions generated by Hannah and the PWP formed the basis for the Portneuf River Vision Project, which Hannah has spearheaded since 2015. This project aims to restore ecosystem functions of the Portneuf River, thus improving water quality, and enhancing recreational and economic opportunities for our community. Hannah began by organizing an intensive study of the river which resulted in detailed concepts and guiding principles for the future of the river. Since then, the project has grown to the point that a broader scope was needed. Hannah recognized this and earlier this year coordinated an agreement for the Land Trust to take over the project, which will facilitate real expansion of the project. Thanks to Hannah's vision the Land Trust is excited to move the PRVP forward!

Though Hannah has passed on the PRVP, she will continue as a strong advocate for environmental improvement in our community. Hannah continues to work on one of her favorite projects, the Portneuf River Water Trail, which conducts annual tree and debris removal from the river for safe floating, and is putting in new boat ramps to facilitate access. As part of this project, Hannah and many partners orchestrated the first annual Poky Portneuf Paddle in July 2019, an overwhelming success! Hannah is beyond excited to see people continue to float the river in increasing numbers, creating a stronger connection between our community and this important natural resource. Hannah plans to continue with the Centennial Park Wetland project until completed and has several projects in the City Creek Drainage, including improving the road to Kinport Peak to reduce sediment inputs to the stream, a collaborative study with ISU on the effects of artificial beaver dams on water quality, and administering a grant to remove Russian olive trees throughout the drainage. Along with these Hannah has many other projects planned!

The Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust would like to recognize all of Hannah's efforts on the Portneuf River Vision Project along with all she does for our community!



The Importance of COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

By Jaime Campbell

Community Conservation is not a new concept, but it is a new endeavor for the Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust. In recent years, our great state of Idaho is experiencing intensified recreational pressure on our landscape. Despite this increased demand, not everyone can interact with nature and their local landscapes in the same ways. Community conservation brings land protection principles to an urban setting - creating new and accessible opportunities for the community to experience the environment and connect with one another in spaces close to home.

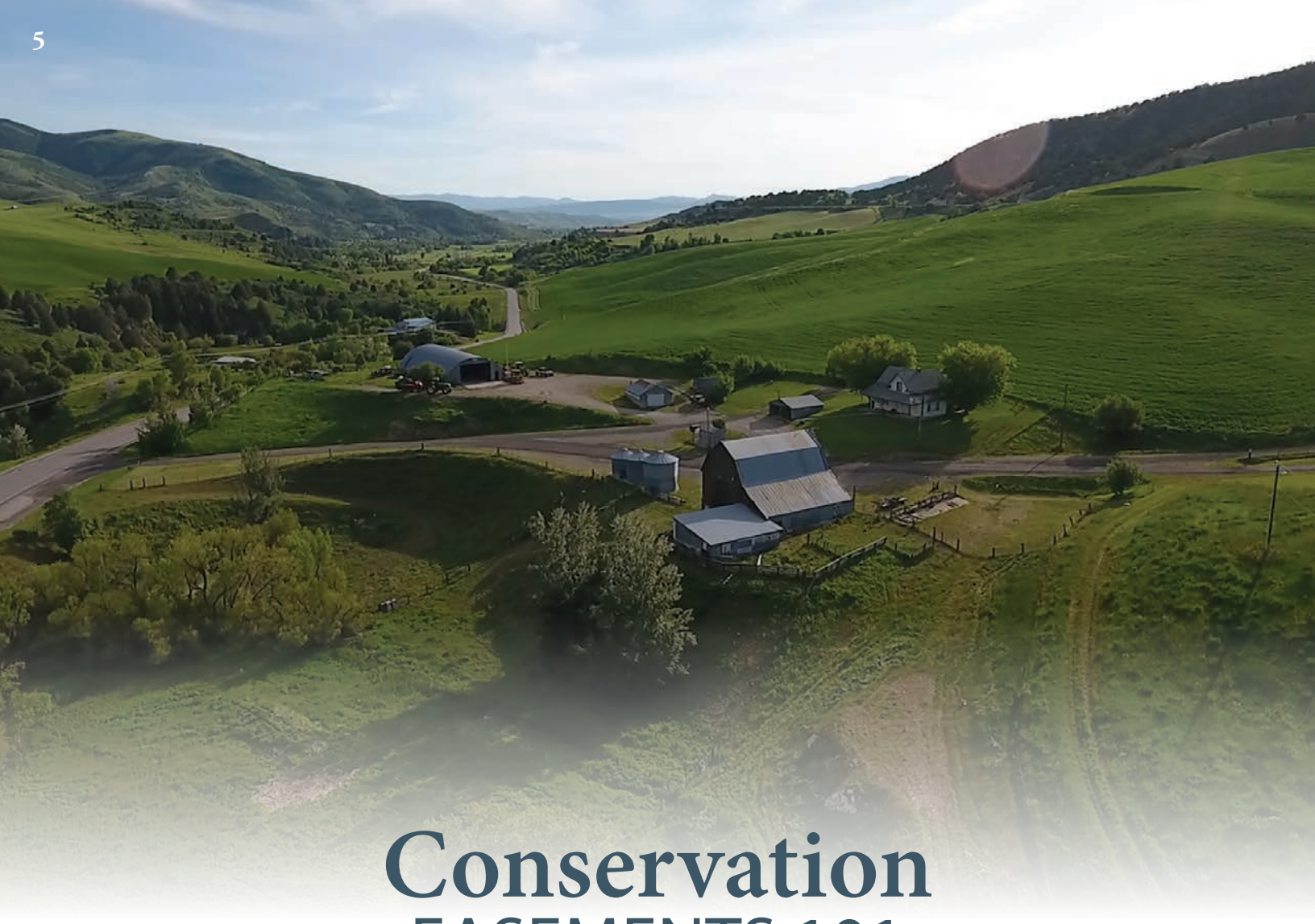
Community Conservation depends on the needs of individual communities. It is an approach to land conservation that incorporates the perspectives of all participants rather than a single landowner. By identifying where common interests and values intersect, it is possible to establish a shared identity around place. In Pocatello, the Portneuf River represents just such a place-based focal point for the community to establish a unique identity. As part of a collaborative with the Portneuf River Vision, the Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust is developing a Community Conservation Program. This is intended to support the education and community engagement components necessary to successfully implement the River Vision and restore Portneuf River health.

Our Land Trust's mission is to help willing landowners protect and enhance the conservation values of their land. This means limiting development through a conservation easement agreement and monitoring the health of properties we steward throughout time. To best serve these goals, we work to connect protected lands to each other across the landscape in order to create larger areas of open lands and natural space. By contrast, Community Conservation seeks to support and provide quality of life benefits to everyone within and throughout the community by creating opportunities to connect with the natural world and one another. This difference is an important one because the positive impact of efforts such as the Portneuf River Vision, go beyond providing access and recreation. A positive outcome of community conservation is an overall enrichment of experience among residents. This has a direct impact in supporting the social structure that makes Pocatello the beautiful and unique place that it is.

The Portneuf River Vision promotes a broad and permeating theme of connecting and protecting the places that Pocatellans care about – this is the foundation of our Community Conservation Program. From trails, viewsheds, and walking paths, to river access, and restoring ecosystem function, our commitment is to engage directly with the community throughout the process of implementation. Just like a river ecosystem, we are stronger and more resilient through diversity. Perhaps now, after social responsibility has required us to stay apart to keep each other safe, the idea of community-based conservation is more important than ever.

Pocatellans take pride in the beauty and recreation right here in our own backyard and have demonstrated that they are committed to preserving it --not just for themselves but for everyone. The land trust is here to help encourage and deliver on that mission for a brighter Pocatello for us all.

Support our efforts to build lasting and meaningful relationships that better our communities by donating today.



Conservation
EASEMENTS 101

By Jaime Campbell & Kiley Heaps

A conservation easement agreement is a voluntary land protection tool that provides options to landowners that desire to preserve the natural and/or traditional values of their land by limiting development on their property. Within this legal agreement, the landowner establishes protections for these conservation values in perpetuity, meaning that the entity holding the conservation easement must be able to provide for the stewardship of that land throughout time. Only qualified organizations are legally authorized to hold conservation easements - the Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust is a qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization and is accredited through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

While all areas possess unique importance, certain lands are of higher conservation value. Properties may qualify for a conservation easement based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Wetlands, floodplains, and riparian habitats
- Productive farms and ranches
- Important wildlife habitat and/or migratory routes
- Recognized historic value
- Valuable open space in proximity to developing areas
- Educational or recreational access opportunities

Your donation will enable Land Trust staff to provide conservation easements to the growing number of interested landowners within our service area.

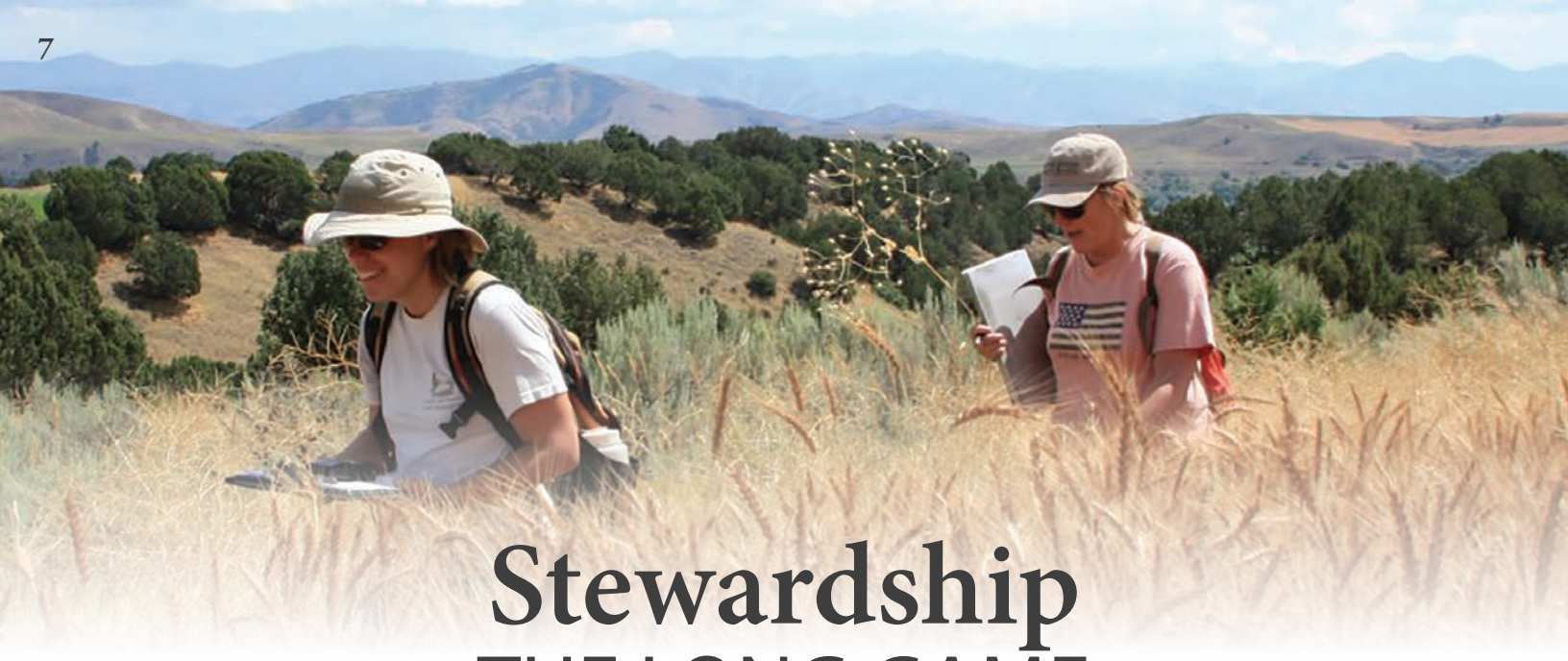
It is important to understand that developing a conservation easement agreement is an involved process which often requires significant funding and always requires time to coordinate the due diligence to complete these complex real estate transactions.

Once a property is established as a good candidate for a conservation easement, landowners should obtain legal and financial counsel. As a Land Trust, we build partnerships for raising funds, facilitate the approval process, coordinate surveys, letters of intent, baseline reports, title reports, deeds, appraisals, mineral reports and work with the landowner to develop an agreement that works for all parties. The Land Trust does not provide legal or financial advice.

Once a conservation easement has closed on a property, circumstances by which those protections can be extinguished are exceedingly rare. For this reason, easements are established on a voluntary basis to meet the long-term needs of the landowner(s) and their future goals, and are crafted to provide an enduring conservation benefit.

Lands protected by a conservation easement can still be used by a landowner in ways that are consistent with the goals and intent of the conservation easement agreement. This means that landowners and their families can live there, farm or ranch there, and manage the property in ways that sustain the conservation values through time. This property can be transferred as part of a family estate or even sold to another party, although the restrictions on development and uses follow the property deed.

Ultimately, conservation easements are just one tool in supporting SSLT's mission to protect, connect, and enhance working lands and wildlife habitat. If you would like to find out more about this process, or to see if your land qualifies for a conservation easement, feel free to contact the Land Trust at (208)240-6045. We are happy to provide more information.



Stewardship
THE LONG GAME

By Kayla Bass

Ensuring land is protected in perpetuity goes far beyond the establishment of a conservation easement. Sagebrush Steppe, as the holder of the easement, is duty-bound to work with the landowner to ensure that the terms of the agreement are upheld and that the conservation values of the property are maintained – forever.

Developed in accordance with Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices, and the Policies and Procedures adopted by our organization's Board of Directors, the Stewardship Program ensures the lasting protection of Southeast Idaho's open spaces.

What is stewardship? Though academically defined as the job of supervising or taking care of something; perhaps it is better to think of conservation easement stewardship as a culture of care shared between the landowner and the Land Trust. Together, we ensure that the conservation values (e.g., wildlife habitat, working farms and ranches) of the property will be conserved for future generations by establishing or maintaining sustainable land management practices, working with partners to complete restoration projects, organize volunteer clean-ups, and so much more.

Through the Stewardship Program, Sagebrush Steppe is able to provide a variety of unique experiences to our community. Under staff leadership of Conservation Manager, Jaime Campbell, and board leadership of Dave Pacioretty, the Stewardship Committee serves as the on-the-ground field crew for the Land Trust. This committee of conservation leaders contribute innovative ideas for restoring habitat or function through land management practices, help find solutions to easement compliance issues, and contribute time and knowledge to developing robust and comprehensive annual monitoring reports.

Although the annual monitoring of conservation easement properties falls under the responsibility of the Conservation Manager; volunteers, interns and committee members play a huge role in our monitoring visits by identifying local plants and wildlife, building knowledge of landscape features, and educating the Land Trust on landscape history. In return, our supporters are provided the unique experience of touring private and public properties throughout Southeastern Idaho while learning about Land Trust and partner projects in the landscape. This program provides Sagebrush Steppe with an ability to showcase a paperwork heavy job and connect them to the landscape we love.

Interested in becoming a stewardship volunteer? Please contact kayla@sagebrushlandtrust.org for more information.

An Evolving ORGANISM

By Jaime Campbell, Kiley Heaps & Matt Lucia

Like everyone, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust has been through our share of trials and triumphs this past year. The pandemic slowed our ability to complete conservation projects at the pace we strive to operate at. We found ourselves shorthanded at times and asking a lot of our team to keep things moving forward. The necessity of social distancing made it difficult to interact with our conservation partners and maintain the relationships that are so important to Sagebrush Steppe culture. Despite these relatable struggles, hard work and a positive outlook have us well positioned for an exciting and productive future. In this last year we were able to bring on 4 new staff members, and we are all ready to get to work protecting, connecting, and enhancing natural spaces: together.

This year, Sagebrush Steppe will be focused on updating policies and procedures, finding operational efficiencies, and working to formally develop what is already a positive and equitable workplace culture. This means emphasizing internal team support, engaging directly with the communities we serve, and being committed allies to the diversity that Southeast Idaho holds. It is important to our team that we are mindful of incorporating best practices and always striving to be better at what we do.

As part of this effort, our organization will begin an overarching strategic planning process this summer that will chart our course for the next three years. This will give us the tools to be successful and provide measurable benchmarks to help us be sure we meet our goals. Strategic planning requires a constructive approach to self-reflection. Land Trust supporters should expect to see us incorporating a greater focus on social issues and the role we can play in affecting strides toward inclusivity. We believe it is our responsibility as members of Southeast Idaho culture to consider people as active participants in the ecological areas we serve. These types of collaborative relationships and diverse perspectives enable our organization to thrive.

Spring is a time to welcome new beginnings and breathe fresh life into all we do. In acknowledgement of that, we are dedicated to personal and professional growth as part of Sagebrush Steppe's commitment to creating an organization of excellence. We believe that people from all walks of life should feel welcome and benefit from land conservation. Through partnerships, hiring and mentorship, respect for historic and current uses and ownership of the land, and access to lands and waters designed to connect people to their local landscapes, we work to inspire an inclusive culture of conservation.

We're excited to embark on this strategic planning process for our organization - to better serve our needs, your needs, and Southeast Idaho's needs. We are grateful for your support and pledge to continue our conservation work for a better future of us all.

Welcome NEW STAFF & BOARD

JAIME CAMPBELL – CONSERVATION MANAGER

Jaime is originally from rural Maine but relocated to the Pocatello area in 2010. Since she began living and recreating here, she developed a passion for Idaho's wild places. As she interacted with these places and became immersed in fly fishing, she began to wonder more specifically about the impact people were having on natural places. This prompted Jaime to change her educational focus from ecology to anthropology. The Anthropology Department at ISU offered her the tools to consider ecological questions while incorporating the influence of human interactions with each other and the environment. Similarly, the realm of conservation work benefits from a holistic approach to solving modern day problems. Jaime is thrilled for the opportunity to use this expertise in support of the Land Trust mission and as a way to give back to the community.

Since 2017, Jaime has enjoyed teaching Anthropology courses at ISU, and working in student support and engagement for Idaho's Career and Technical Education programs. She also serves as a board member in a local chapter of Trout Unlimited and as a mentor for the Southeast Idaho Mayfly Project.

She completed her MA in 2019, focusing on applied methods for addressing modern social-ecological issues. Her Master's research concerned the intersections between local subsistence usage of salmon and sport fishing the Alaska Peninsula region. As an Anthropologist, Jaime is most interested in understanding the human relationship with the environment and how to establish positive relationships between user groups to promote resilient ecosystems and communities. She hopes to serve Southeast Idaho by applying the same principles to supporting landowners in protecting and enhancing land, as well as being an advocate for community engagement with the local landscape. Her background in social science lends itself to accomplishing the community conservation goals that the land trust has for the future.

KAYLA HOBBS – IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY CAREER PATH INTERN

Kayla Hobbs was born and raised in the Pocatello area. Having grown up enjoying many outdoor experiences and recreation activities, Kayla has developed a passion for nature and the wildlife it supports. After working as a hydrology intern for Aberdeen and Springfield Canal Company, Kayla found a new curiosity for ecology and scientific research. She received a General Associate's degree at Brigham Young University- Idaho, and is now a junior at Idaho State University working towards a bachelors in Ecology and Conservation Biology. After graduation, she hopes to continue working in the conservation field and pursue a MS in Wildlife Biology.

As our newest stewardship intern through the Idaho State University Career Path Internship program, Kayla Hobbs will help the Land Trust develop educational materials, monitor protected properties, and assist with grant writing and other tasks around the office.

KILEY HEAPS – CONSERVATION COORDINATOR FOR THE BEAR RIVER WATERSHED

SSLT is excited to announce that we hired a new employee for a brand-new position. Kiley Heaps is the new Conservation Coordinator for the Bear River Watershed. In this unique position, Kiley will coordinate conservation efforts in the Bear River Watershed spanning 12 counties in SE Idaho, Northern Utah, and SW Wyoming across a diversity of stakeholders and entities. While Kiley is officially an SSLT employee, funding for her position was pooled through multiple NGO's, federal and state entities, and private partners. She is eager to work with and build strong relationships with willing landowners in the region. Kiley brings a wide diversity of skills and expertise in this position and we are eager to see how this position can accelerate the pace of land protection throughout the Bear River Watershed – an area critical to 270 different species of birds, fish, wildlife, and plants and a key migration corridor connecting the Northern and Southern Rocky Mountain ranges.

Kiley is a recent graduate from Idaho State University with dual master's degrees in Anthropology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Throughout her educational career, she focused on the relationships between people, lands, and natural resources. Under Dr. Katherine Reedy, she worked on a federally-funded research project in the Aleutian Islands to measure the use of land and marine resources by rural and remote communities for subsistence and commercial purposes. Her graduate research focused on evaluating the socio-ecological relationships between people, public land, and natural resources in the US. Specifically, she evaluated how values, uses, and perspectives of stakeholders change relative to their proximity to public land. Her aim was to generate useful data to bridge communication gaps between rural residents and land management agencies. She is excited to use her skills and expertise in this new way.

MICHELLE BIELENBERG - MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Michelle was born and raised on a farm and ranch North of Rigby, Idaho. After high school, she spent time in Moscow, Idaho attending the University of Idaho. Michelle moved to Pocatello in 1985 then to McCammon in 1993 where she has resided since. Michelle and her late husband raised two children and developed a successful electrical contracting business in Pocatello. She is currently raising her 10-year-old granddaughter and figuring out the next chapter of her life.

Growing up on a farm and ranch, Michelle knows firsthand the importance of natural resources and fostering healthy interactions with our environment. She was involved in planting, irrigating, and harvesting crops, as well as feeding and calving cattle. Michelle understands the competing needs of farming and ranching and she has a deep appreciation for both sides.

Michelle's family owns cattle grazing land in Kilgore, Idaho where she spent many memorable times helping her dad fix fence, chase cattle, and enjoy one of the most beautiful and untouched places in the state. She is committed to helping others maintain and preserve their land.

As Membership Coordinator, Michelle looks forward to meeting you and getting to know you and your story. Michelle loves Southeastern Idaho and can't imagine living any place else. She is excited to be involved with Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust and welcomes your questions about membership.

KARLA DREWSEN – BOARD MEMBER

Recently retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Karla Drewsen worked for a variety of agencies and organizations across the United States over the years. After graduating with a BS in Science and an MS and a PhD in Psychology, with a specialty in Animal Behavior from the University of Massachusetts (Amherst, MA), Karla was a field technician on the black bear project in western Massachusetts and the gray wolf project at Glacier National Park. Later, she managed the Behavior Lab at the New Mexico Regional Primate Research Center in Alamogordo before moving west to Crouch, Idaho where she co-owned and operated a hunting and fishing outfit. Towards the end of her career, Karla worked for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game managing USFWS grant programs to benefit endemic and threatened species and their habitats.

Originally from New England, Karla developed a love for the outdoors early in life whilst enjoying activities such as hiking, skiing, rock climbing and camping. Today, the outdoors continues to be a place of peace and wonder where she can recharge her internal batteries as she explores the wild places of Oregon.

"I feel very strongly about the important of place, space, and the value of partnerships." says Karla, "I am excited about this opportunity to become more involved with the amazing work that the Sagebrush Steppe LT envisions for the future of Idaho."

JENNIFER ELLIS – BOARD MEMBER

Jennifer Ellis is an Idaho rancher in Bingham and Caribou Counties. She has been involved with many agricultural and natural resource groups in Idaho and nationally. Over the course of 25 years of involvement with these organizations she has come to appreciate the complex relationships between the agricultural communities and those who recreate on, and move to them. The stunning pace at which agricultural lands are being converted to commercial and residential areas is of grave concern to many farmers and ranchers, and the Ellis' are no exception.

As a fourth generation Idahoan, the people, places, and critters of Idaho mean a tremendous amount to Jennifer and her family. She looks forward to working with the Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust to ensure her grandkids have the same quality of life and access to the great natural wonders Idaho has to offer that she has enjoyed throughout her lifetime.

Jennifer is married to Shawn and mother of Kassidy, Devon and Chandler and grandmother of Sloane and McCoy- who will hopefully be the 6th generation of Idaho cowboys in the family.

Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization incorporated in 2004, and a "qualified organization" within the meaning of section 170(h)(3) of the IRS Code.
Federal Tax Identification Number: 82-6092501.

Donate today through our secure website at https://sagebrughlandtrust.org/ or by mailing in a check to Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust, PO Box 1404, Pocatello, ID 83204.

2021 Event Calendar

Due to COVID-19 regulations, all events are subject to cancelation or rescheduling and attendance may be limited.

Saturday, June 5th - Plant Identification
Interested in furthering your plant identification skills? Join us for a truly educational experience as we hike our Century Heights preserve, right here in Pocatello, with retired BLM biologist, Geoff Hogander. Please contact kayla@sagebrushlandtrust.org for more information and to RSVP today!

Friday, June 25th – Poky Paddle
Join us for a leisurely float along the Portneuf River at this year's Poky Paddle! The Land Trust is excited to be hosting this beloved community tradition in partnership with the City of Pocatello. The event may be in-person or virtual depending on COVID-19 regulations. Stay tuned for more information!

Friday, August 13th - Bill Davidson Memorial BBQ
Help celebrate conservation heroes! Bill Davidson's lifetime of service will be honored by awarding the Bill Davidson Conservation Award to a local conservation hero – a dedicated, long-term volunteer steward of southeastern Idaho's wildlife, waterways and landscape. Please contact kayla@sagebrushlandtrust.org for more information and to RSVP today!

Saturday, September 18th – Fall Hike
Fall brings about a myriad of spectacular colors and there is no better place to view them than on our Oneida Canyon conservation easement. With spectacular views of the canyon and the Bear River, you will fall in love with Idaho all over again! (Note: Please be prepared for a steep climb and descent.) Please contact kayla@sagebrushlandtrust.org for more information and to RSVP today!

TBD – Water Rights Adjudication
Interested in what it takes to get your water rights adjudicated as a landowner in in the Bear River Watershed in Idaho? Randy Budge, a local water rights attorney will help us learn about the adjudication process. Join us for an informative presentation and discussion later this fall. Stay tuned for more information.

TBD – Holiday Auction
Join the Land Trust in a competitive, yet friendly, round of bidding on a variety of unique items and outdoor experiences at this year's holiday auction. Event is to take place online. Stay tuned for more information.