



THE LAND REVIEW

INSIGHTS ON IDAHO CONSERVATION

Spring 2020



Nature in the Time of Pandemic

On this 50th anniversary of Earth Day, I hope this letter finds everyone safe, healthy, happy and outdoors.

Recently, my wife Kara and I have discussed many quarantine-inspired topics. One recurring subject - how fortunate we are to live in McCall during this pandemic. As I participate in video calls from around the state and country, I hear the same questions. "How's it going where you are?" "Have you been able to get out?", "Are you going crazy being cooped up all day?" As I listen to stories of crowded trails and potential closing of parks and paths due to overuse, I'm thankful for the open space that surrounds me. We can easily go out our front door and walk through our neighborhood, listen to the Sandhill Cranes in nearby meadows, watch a Bald Eagle fly along the river. The funny thing is, it is normal for us. Being outside is an essential part of living in McCall, a standard even.... maybe something I took for granted pre-COVID.

As we each deal with the individual challenges brought upon us by the pandemic, nature offers reassurance that resiliency lies just under the surface. The natural world has become central to the Nation's daily lives again. Being outside is a coveted activity. Something deep in us requires it, telling us nature is essential. She has reasserted herself and shown how much we've been missing. Suddenly, we see what nature will do when given the chance, which I have come to think of as the "Venice Effect". When the boats were moored, the canal water became clear and we were in awe. With freeways deserted and the smog gone, the view became a glorious blue skyline. When we were told not to go anywhere, we went outside, and it saved us from ourselves.

Central Idaho is sparsely populated, but it won't last. I think of all the people who visited McCall. Those who had a good time, wished they lived here, said "someday I'll move here". I think of them quarantined in their house or apartment and wonder... do they feel fortunate? If not... will they move? It happened to me. I came to fight fire for one summer then move on.... 15 years later, I work for the Payette Land Trust trying to balance conservation and development because of people like me... and perhaps even you

The question is this: Is McCall lucky or is it by design? We are lucky to still have natural and undeveloped places in the Valley to conserve, but I am not sure they will exist into the future. Seeing how much the community needs open space right now tells me there's big job ahead and the PLT is ready to do our part. Not just for us, but for the generations to come.

As we create our post-isolation existence, I stand for the value of connection. Connection of our lives to the natural world around us. Connection through trails and access to open spaces. Connecting our neighborhoods to rivers and lakes. Connection between friends and neighbors.

On this 50th anniversary of Earth Day, in the midst of a global pandemic, I hope we all take the time to see how dependent we are on the natural world around us. I hope we come away with the understanding that having the ability to get outside is crucial to the health of our minds, bodies, and souls. And now more than ever, essential to the health of a community.

If you have the ability or desire, please consider helping fund the Payette Land Trust's work and keep us moving ahead into the future.

Happy Earth Day....Earth

Craig Utter



HANSBERGER'S SOUTH FORK RANCH

PAYETTE LAND TRUST LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT



- Conserving the rural landscape of west central Idaho for the benefit of our community and future generations.
- Promoting an ethic valuing working agricultural and timberlands in balance with thoughtful development.
- Working to maintain the region's pristine rivers, streams, meadows and lakes for present and future generations.
- Envisioning dedicated areas of open access and connectivity.
- Encouraging people to take part in their environment.



HELP CONTINUE OUR WORK BY SUPPORTING THE PLT

**MAIL DONATIONS TO:
309 EAST LAKE ST
McCALL IDAHO 83638**

**OR VISIT
PAYETTELANDTRUST.ORG**

HANSBERGER'S SOUTH FORK RANCH PARTNERS WITH PAYETTE LAND TRUST CONSERVING THE ICONIC SALMON RIVER PROPERTY

The 100-acre *South Fork Ranch* is quintessential in the Salmon River's remarkable history. Pit home sites on the Ranch tell a story of ancient peoples. In 1880 the first settler, Threefinger Smith, filed a mining claim hoping to strike it rich. This property had inspired dreams of big business and riches while handing out tough times and heartache. For anyone who has spent time on the South Fork of the Salmon, you know what a rough yet intriguingly beautiful country it is.

Accessible year round by plane and car in the summer, this secluded ranch is surrounded by the steep hillsides of Payette National Forest and is across



the river from the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The property has changed hands multiple times, evolving from a onetime mining and timber claim to a homestead ranch and eventually inspiring the idea of a logging mill. Plans were made and in summer of 58' a D8 caterpillar punched a road along the steep hillsides down from Warren summit, allowing for equipment to come in and logs to go out. The mill was constructed in the in the early 60's just as the logging permits were restricted and a moratorium put in place. It became a losing venture and the vision of industry on the South Fork never came to fruition. The mill equipment was sold and hauled away, leaving only the wigwam burner as a reminder of what almost was. The land would now enter into its next chapter, narrowly avoiding major development.

The Hansberger family purchased the property in 1978, naming it the South Fork Ranch. It became a pivotal location for their guide and outfitting business, using it for the breeding and development of the Salmon River Sportsmen's pack string along with a wintering home for livestock. Over the past 40 years, multiple generations of the Hansberger family have experienced the beauty of the canyon and majesty of the river. They hold a deep understanding of the precious resource they steward. Working to return the land to its natural state, they have devoted time and money to the ecological restoration of the Mill site. The old burner has been dismantled and hauled away, removing the last vestige of industry.

144 years after "Threefinger" Smith, the Hansberger children have partnered with the Payette Land Trust to conserve the heritage of this iconic riverfront property through a conservation easement. Now, as you float past the ranch you can hear the words of Frank Church echo off the canyon walls,

"I never knew a man who took a bedroll into an Idaho mountainside and slept there under a star-studded summer sky who felt self-important that next morning. Unless we preserve some opportunity for future generations to have the same experience, we shall have dishonored our trust." – Frank Church



ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISING DRIVE

In this new existence, all of us are being challenged in fundamentally different ways. The Payette Land Trust is no exception. April and May have always been the traditional start to our fundraising season, full of annual BBQ's, get togethers and fundraisers. This year is different.

Typically, Earth Day conjures thoughts of green grass and sunny days. We get outside after a long winter, feel the warm sun on our face, hear the birds and reflect again on how important nature is to us.

This spring might seem different. It may feel surreal and out of touch, with no sense of reality.... Until you step outside into the sun or the sting of windblown ice-pellet rain, we are in Idaho after all. Either way, nature keeps moving, the flowers emerge from under the snow and the animals move about letting us know an ongoing, and maybe comforting, cycle exists.

Whatever you may be going through, we hope that being outside makes it a little better. Imagine living somewhere without a connection to wildlife, trails, lakes, rivers, and no view of the mountains.

PLT needs to continue our work, now, as we have for the past 26 years. Providing a local voice for balance in conservation and development, while working for a future with open landscapes and majestic views.

This may seem like an unusual time for fundraising, but for the PLT, donations during this season are central to another year of existence. If you're struggling and can't support us, we fully understand. But if your doin' OK, we could use your help continuing our mission:

- CONSERVING THE RURAL LANDSCAPE OF WEST CENTRAL IDAHO FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR COMMUNITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**
- PROMOTING AN ETHIC VALUING WORKING AGRICULTURAL AND TIMBERLANDS IN BALANCE WITH THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT.**
- WORKING TO MAINTAIN THE REGION'S PRISTINE RIVERS, STREAMS, MEADOWS AND LAKES FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**
- ENVISIONING DEDICATED AREAS OF OPEN ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY.**
- ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO TAKE PART IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT.**

Consider making a commitment to conserve what has brought you solace by supporting the PLT

**HELP CONTINUE OUR WORK BY DONATING TO
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MCCALL IDAHO 83638**

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PAYETTE LAND TRUST (PLT) WORKS WITH THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) THROUGH THE FARM BILL TO HELP CONSERVE AGRICULTURAL LAND IN IDAHO COUNTY

Changes in the 2018 farm bill have made it easier for the Payette Land Trust (PLT) to work with landowners in the West Central Mountains of Idaho to help conserve the agricultural heritage of the region. According to the Land Trust Alliance, Farm Bill conservation programs taken in total, are the largest single federal source of funding for private land conservation, these programs create significant opportunities for land trusts to protect high-priority farm and ranch lands, grasslands, wetlands and forests. The programs provide matching funds to conservation partners, so federal investments go further to protect America's productive land.



Jared Everson from the Grangeville NRCS office talks with Darrel Uhlorn about conservation on his farm

Under the Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) component, the National Resources Conservation Service helps organizations, like PLT, protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land, through their existing easement programs. NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. In the case of working farms, the program helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture.