

BLUE MOUNTAIN LAND TRUST

FALL 2016

CONSERVATION BY DESIGN

LEARNING ON THE LAND EXPANDS TO 28 EVENTS

CHAMBER CATALYST AWARD FINALIST

WHITMAN FELLOW AWARD

Farm in Dixie, Washington owned by Don and Anne-Marie Schwerin.



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Tod Crouter
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Conservation by Design

By Jason Bulay
Conservation Director

The conservation mission of the Blue Mountain Land Trust sounds simple: protect the natural, scenic, and agricultural resources that define this area. But with a service area containing 4,000,000 acres of privately-owned land, how do we identify the most important land to protect? Who owns these areas? And how can we connect with these landowners and work with them to protect their land?

The Land Trust began to answer these questions in 2013, when we completed a Strategic Conservation Plan that identified priority habitat areas. This summer, thanks to the hard work of Whitman College intern Emily Aumann, we took the next step: identifying priority **parcels** for conservation. By analyzing the results of the conservation plan in conjunction with county-level parcel

and zoning data, and with habitat data from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Emily was able to look at the potential conservation value of specific parcels.

The result of Emily's amazing work was a list of 532 parcels in Walla Walla and Columbia counties that contain critical fish and wildlife habitat at risk of being lost to development. Together, these parcels include over 100 miles of critical salmon-bearing rivers and streams and 200,000 acres of priority wildlife habitat. They comprise some of the most important areas for protection in our service area.

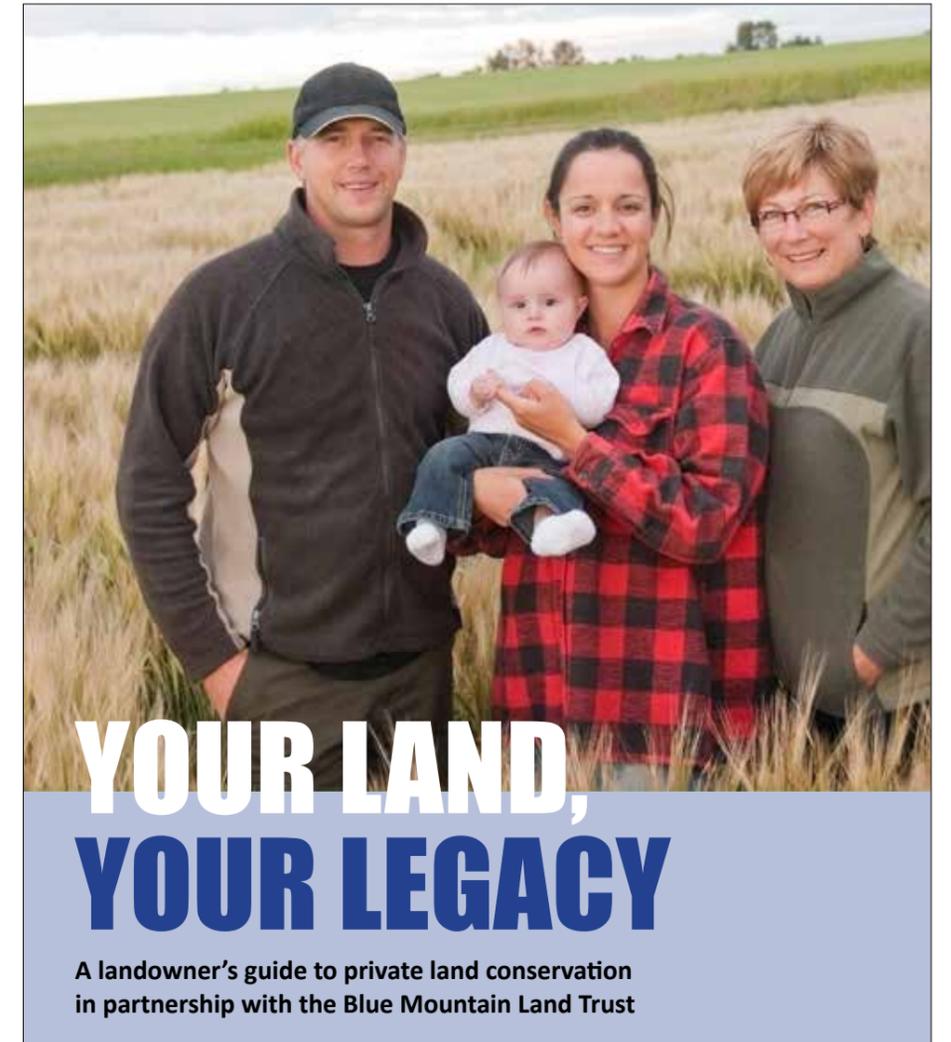
Identifying these parcels is just the first step of this process. To protect this land, we also need to develop relationships with the people who own it. Most landowners in this area care deeply for their land and work hard

to be good stewards, but many have never considered partnering with a land trust to ensure that their land is protected forever.

Drawing on our 17 years of experience conserving private lands, we developed *Your Land, Your Legacy*, a conservation booklet to help landowners make decisions about preserving their land. This 16-page, full-color publication explains some of the options available to landowners interested in protecting their land, and it answers the most common questions we receive about conservation easements and other conservation tools. *Your Land, Your Legacy* is available to anyone interested in learning more about the conservation options. To get a copy, please contact us or download an electronic copy from our website at bmlt.org.

In September we will begin contacting the landowners identified by the parcel analysis and ask them if they would like to discuss their plans for the future of their land. We hope that many of them will share our desire to preserve the natural, scenic, and agricultural values that make their land special, and we look forward to permanently protecting as many of these properties as possible.

This is a good start in implementing our conservation plan but we have much more work to do. The initial property analysis was limited to Walla Walla and Columbia counties, but we need to expand it to the remainder of our six-county service area. This analysis focused on fish and wildlife habitat, and we also need to complete similar analyses of



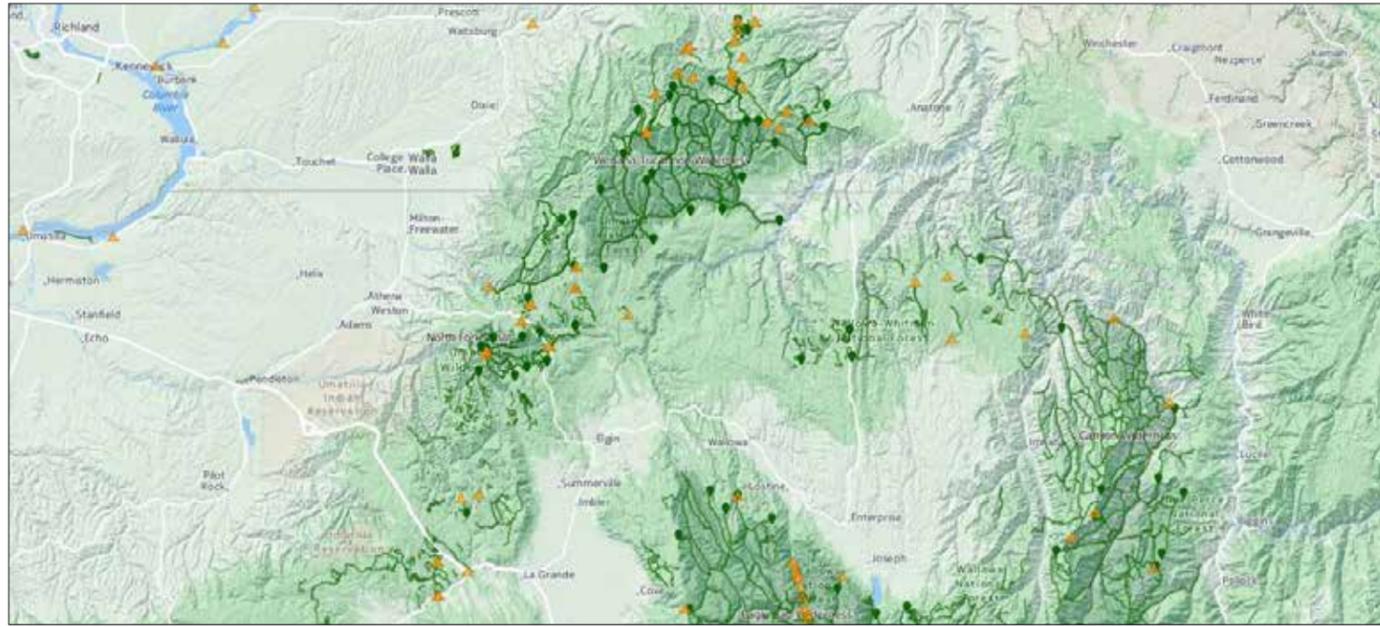
YOUR LAND, YOUR LEGACY

A landowner's guide to private land conservation
in partnership with the Blue Mountain Land Trust

threatened working farms, forests, and rangeland to preserve the agricultural character of our region.

This first round of parcel analysis has given us an initial inventory of land that we would like to protect, but it isn't a complete list. There are many high conservation-value lands beyond this data set. If you are concerned about the future of your land, we want to talk to you.

To learn more about conservation options, arrange a visit from us on your property, or to get a copy of the *Your Land, Your Legacy* booklet, please contact me at 509-525-3136 or via email at Jason@bmlt.org.



Bound for the Blues

By Emily Aumann
Conservation Assistant

In late July, the Blue Mountain Land Trust launched a collection of eight interactive outdoor recreation opportunity maps titled **Bound for the Blues**. Inspired by the Walla Walla Community Council's recent study project on enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, we provide a series of maps highlighting a wealth of recreation locations to explore in our Blue Mountain country.

This mapping project was started by Mitchell Cutter in the summer of 2015. Mitch was our previous intern and is now a senior at Whitman. He collected very thorough data and created an initial set of maps using Google Maps.

I picked up where Mitch left off, and created the next version of the project. We did substantial project planning internally and with Greg Brown, a member of the Community Council's task force.

Several goals were established - some to address now and others to tackle in the future. I researched alternative web mapping platforms suitable for the project, expanded the range of the data into the Wallowa Mountains and Hells Canyon Recreation Area, and created a few additional recreation types. The result was a collection of eight different maps displaying recreation opportunities throughout the Blue Mountain country.

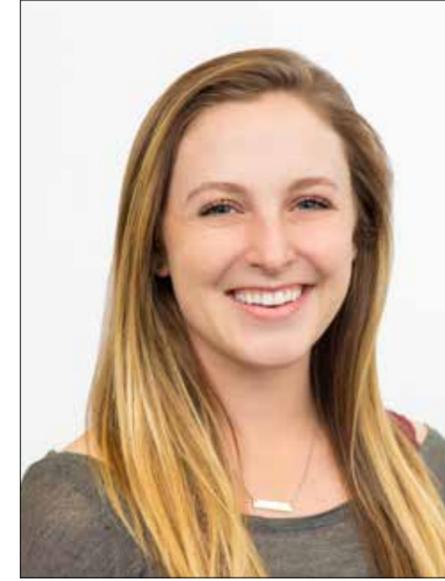
Bound for the Blues is one of the most comprehensive products of its kind. Helpful to anyone interested in getting outside, these maps point the way to hundreds of recreation opportunities in our region. We are committed to the continued improvement of this rich local resource. A set of recreation-enthusiast suggested outings (a Top 10 list) will be added to each map page shortly. I see the Land Trust continuing to foster our community's sense of place. We do that with our *Learning on the Land* series

and with these maps. Outdoor adventures increase our understanding and appreciation of the natural environment in which we live. These recreation opportunity maps will help inform the public about ways they can access and enjoy the land we love.

I am very pleased to have helped advance this part of the Land Trust's mission.



Lydia Petroske



Lou Points



Emily Aumann

Powered by Whitman: Interns Bring Energy and Intellect

One of the keys to our accomplishments has been the extraordinary help we've received from Whitman College students. Through a variety of internship programs, two to three students have worked with us every year for a semester or a summer.

Last spring, **Lydia Petroske** served as our education and development assistant providing support to our *Learning on the Land* series and directing the amazing makeover of our website. Lydia is a senior majoring in Politics - Environmental Studies. From North Bend, Washington, she brings previous internship experience in the environmental field.

This summer, **Lou Points** continued Lydia's work as our Education Assistant. She has managed our *Learning on the Land* series throughout a very busy summer. Lou is a senior majoring in Politics - Environmental Studies from Star, Idaho and is a member of Whitman's varsity golf team.

Emily Aumann also joined us as a summer intern. A senior Sociology-Environmental Studies major from Davis, California, she brings experience from an internship with the Grand Canyon Land Trust.

Serving as our Conservation Assistant, Emily's responsibilities included the creation of a GIS-based database of conservation properties in our service area. Jason Bulay's article *Conservation by Design* discusses her GIS work more fully. She also enhanced our recreation opportunities maps begun by Whitman intern Mitch Cutter last year.

The summer internships are funded by Whitman College's Environmental Studies department. Students majoring in biology, geology, environmental studies or other sciences are often selected, as are social science majors with environmental studies emphases. Each intern typically works with us for 300 hours during the summer and is

paid a stipend by Whitman for that service.

The fall and spring semester internships are provided by the Student Engagement Center. Students with any major can participate in these 100-hour paid internships.

This year, we are pleased to receive a **Whitman Fellow award**. This is a competitive program funded by the Sherwood Trust. The award allows us to have an intern whose service will span both the fall and spring semesters. We will begin visiting with candidates in early September and expect to have an intern on board by September 21.

"We've had five Whitman interns during my time here," said Director Tim Copeland. "Every one has been absolutely terrific. We simply couldn't have accomplished everything we've done without them. They are the best!"



Jason Bulay



Liesl Olson

Blue Mountain Land Trust a Catalyst Award Finalist

We were pleased and surprised to receive news from the Walla Walla Chamber of Commerce that the Blue Mountain Land Trust is a finalist for the Chamber's Catalyst Award.

The Catalyst Award is one of seven awards to be given during the Chamber's Business Awards Showcase on September 14. The other areas of achievement are for the Business of the Year, Not-For-Profit Organization of the Year, Sweet Service Walla Walla, Health & Wellness Award, Vanguard Award and Youth Entrepreneur of the Year.

The Chamber's website explains "the Catalyst Award honors an individual, business or organization that collaborates and motivates to make BIG things happen in the Walla Walla Valley."

"It's great to be one of the four finalists for this award," said Director Tim Copeland. "We don't know who nominated us for it and didn't know we were in the running until Steve Owens called us." Owens is the Chamber's director of member services.

The finalists for all of the awards will be announced in mid-August. The winners will be revealed at the Showcase event on Wednesday, September 14 in the lobby of Baker Boyer Bank's main office. Tickets for the Showcase are available at the Chamber's website - www.wvwchamber.com



New Faces at the Blue Mountain Land Trust

Last year's generous grant from the Donald and Virginia Sherwood Trust allowed us to hire a new conservation director. **Jason Bulay** began this position in January.

A lifelong resident of Maine, Jason came to Walla Walla and the Blue Mountain Land Trust after spending the summer of 2015 hiking the entire Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada.

Jason holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Parks, Recreation, & Tourism from the University of Maine, a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Maine School of Law, and a passion for protecting natural and working landscapes. He is a hiking enthusiast who has logged over 5,000 backpacking mile including a 1999 thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail.

Jason brings five years of experience in conservation and stewardship he gained in his home state with the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance.

Liesl Olson was welcomed to the board in March as its newest member. Liesl has been doing great work on the Conservation, Development, and Education committees since 2015.

A native of Kirkland, Washington, Liesl graduated from Whitman College in 2011 with a Bachelor of Art in geology and environmental studies.

An avid outdoorswoman, Liesl has rafted the Grand Canyon, backpacked through Europe and WWOOFed (World Wide Opportunities in Organic Farming) in Austria.

Liesl brings conservation experience as a former intern at Forterra, a land trust in Northwest Washington, and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition. She is currently an alumni relations officer at Whitman College.

Learning on the Land: 28 events make this season our best ever

By **Lou Points**
Education Assistant

18 down, 10 to go. That's the event count of *Learning on the Land* as of August 15. This season we've discovered everything from the secrets of organic farming and what it takes to raise bees to taking the perfect picture and picking the sweetest blueberries.

I've enjoyed every event, but my favorite so far has been *Mission Day*. Discovering the history of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla tribes at the Tamástslikt Museum and touring the Crows Shadow Art Institute in Mission, Oregon was a humbling and memorable experience. The delicious meal at the Sundown Grill was terrific too!

Last year about 650 people attended our *Learning on the Land* events. This year we've welcomed over 700 guests and we still have 10 more events to present.

The goal of these programs is to spread the word to our community about the importance of knowing and understanding the land we call home. *Learning on the Land* allows us to teach our neighbors the importance of land conservation, education, and recreation in this area.

As an intern for the last three months, I've seen many people express their gratitude and appreciation for *Learning on the Land* events and more importantly for the Land Trust's conservation work. There are many wonderful characteristics unique to the Blue Mountain country. I feel extremely fortunate to have worked in an organization that is so dedicated to maintaining and developing those resources.

In September and October we will present eight events, exploring everything from photography and painting to wine tasting and Walla Walla biggest trees.

It will be fun to see which event turns out to be most popular this year. Last year, over 100 people came to the *Giant Trees of Walla Walla* on a really hot day. We're repeating it this year so we'll see what happens. Bob Carson's two Missoula Floods trips will definitely be contenders.

But attendance isn't everything. Some of our very best events, like Joyce Anderson's and Jean Ann Mitchell's painting classes and the photography workshops were really terrific, even though space was limited. Big or little, all of our events have provided great experiences for everyone.

Please join us for one or more of our remaining programs. You'll be delighted to discover more than you ever imagined about the community in which we live!



1,000 Member March: Launching our 2016 Campaign

Since its formation in 1999, the Land Trust has acquired 12 conservation easements in Columbia, Walla Walla and Union counties totaling almost 4,000 acres. This is a great start but we have much more work to do.

In our service area, we've identified nearly 300,000 acres of private land with high conservation value that would benefit from conservation protection. The need for the land protection we can provide is vast.

In addition to conserving critical rural properties, we work hard to educate everyone in our six-county service area about our abundant natural resources. If you've shared a *Learning on the Land* event with

us, you know how we do that. We also promote outdoor recreation opportunities by hosting an on-line database of the hundreds of recreation locations throughout Blue Mountain country.

While the Land Trust receives funding from federal and state governments to purchase conservation easements, it gets very little public funding for operations. Over 90% of our operating expenses are paid by donations from individuals, businesses and foundations.

The majority of the financial support we receive from individuals is through memberships. If you share our passion for conservation, natural

resources education and outdoor recreation, we invite you to become a new Land Trust member today.

Memberships were re-instituted last December, and over 140 friends have now joined our ranks. In the next three months, we hope to welcome over 200 more members to the Land Trust's rolls.

Will you join us on our march to 1,000 members? We'll hit that goal someday, the question is "when?" Maybe next year. Maybe the year after. But whenever we do, we hope you'll be among our enthusiastic family of friends and supporters. You can join us now by visiting bmlt.org/donate.



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