

CONSERVATION CONNECTIONS

the year in idaho 2012

The Nature
Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

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Hells Canyon



PAUL PLANTÉ

On the cover: Windy Pass by landowner Mark Owens

Back cover photo by Jared France

Editor | Lisa Eller
Contributors | Dayna Gross, Veronika Horton

Designer | Claire Bronson, c2bdesign.com

NEW LEAF PAPER® ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS STATEMENT				
The Nature Conservancy of Idaho saved the following resources by using 1944 pounds of Fibreconversion Matter, made with 60% post-consumer waste and manufactured with electricity that is offset with Green-e® certified renewable energy certificates.				
Annual Report - 4,000 units				
trees fully grown	water gallons	energy Million BTUs	solid waste pounds	greenhouse gases pounds
13	5758	5	365	1277
Calculations based on research by Environmental Defense Fund and Environmental Paper Industry. www.newleafpaper.com				

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- Toni Hardesty, state director
- Lou Lunte, associate state director

IDAHO FIELD OFFICE (HAILEY)

- Caroline Clawson, philanthropy assistant
- Dayna Gross, Silver Creek Preserve manager
- Stephanie Hansen, director of operations
- Trish Klahr, senior policy representative
- Nancie Lange, executive assistant
- Justin Petty, associate director of philanthropy
- Perry Pleyte, director of philanthropy
- Clark Shafer, associate director of philanthropy
- Nathan Welch, GIS analyst

BOISE OFFICE

- Sus Danner, director of protection
- Lisa Eller, director of communications
- Megan Grover, operations assistant
- Bas Hargrove, senior policy representative
- David Lawyer, TIS manager
- Art Talsma, director of restoration and stewardship
- Bob Unnasch, director of science
- Will Whelan, director of government relations

CENTRAL & EAST IDAHO OFFICES

- Mark Davidson, Central Idaho senior conservation manager
- Marilynne Manguba, protection specialist
- Ron Troy, Central Idaho field representative
- Matthew Ward, Flat Ranch Preserve manager

INLAND NORTHWEST OFFICE

- Ryan Haugo, forest ecologist
- Kennon McClintock, Inland Northwest field representative
- Robyn Miller, Inland Northwest senior conservation manager



Lost River

Dear Friends:

This year I have had the exciting opportunity to travel around the state to meet the people who make our work possible and visit the places that inspire everything we do. As someone born and raised in Idaho, I thought I had seen all the wonderful things the state has to offer. But these days I find myself amazed to learn new things and challenged to see Idaho in new, and often, breathtaking ways.

I have seen our work on the ground, from the Pioneer Mountains, where responsible management allows pronghorn, sage grouse and others to thrive; to the Upper Salmon, where we partner with ranchers and other groups to bring back imperiled species like Chinook salmon and steelhead; to the Greater Yellowstone region where we are working to protect the beautiful scenery and critical migration routes used by moose, elk and all the other majestic species that call this area home.

When I visit these landscapes and speak to those with intimate knowledge of them, I can't help but think about all the connections we've made—connecting tributaries to rivers, connecting wildlife corridors and connecting people with shared hopes for the future of Idaho's special places.



I am struck by all the connections we've made—connecting tributaries to rivers, connecting wildlife corridors and connecting people with shared hopes for the future of Idaho's special places.

All these connections have only strengthened my commitment to conservation. They reaffirm why I decided to join The Nature Conservancy as state director earlier this year. I took over for former state director Laura Hubbard, who became the conservation director of the Conservancy's Western Division. It didn't take long to see Laura had done a tremendous job leading Idaho to become an extremely successful chapter making the highest and best use of each dollar. I joined a team whose knowledge, skills and dedication impress me each day.

Most of all, I am humbled by the loyal support of our many donors, members, interns and volunteers. Your support makes it all possible. This year we've accomplished what you have come to expect from us—measurable results and meaningful gains. This year of connections has been a big one. Thank you for your support!

Your friend in conservation,

Toni Hardesty
Toni Hardesty



PAUL PLANTE



TIM CHRISTIE

Connections That Matter



PAUL PLANTE | TIM CHRISTIE | WILLIAM H. MULLINS

This summer I met local ranchers Ray and Carley Baird in the living room of their home in Central Idaho. The room is decorated wall to wall in photographs and paintings depicting their life in and around the Pioneer Mountains. There are photos of the Bairds riding horses in the backcountry, and a painting by Carley of a mountain lake framed by wildflowers. The two have dedicated their lives to caring for a remote part of the Pioneers that Ray's father homesteaded a century ago. Ray inherited the land, and as the Bairds like to say, their stewardship of it has always been less about making a living and more about preserving a way of life.

Despite the financial pressure of keeping and caring for those working lands, the Bairds held onto their property by taking side jobs. They could have sold the land long ago. But because of their dedication and deep connection to the Pioneers and its wildlife, they've built a foundation that now allows us to connect and conserve an even larger landscape. This year they ensured the land would continue to be cared for by signing a conservation agreement to prevent its future development.

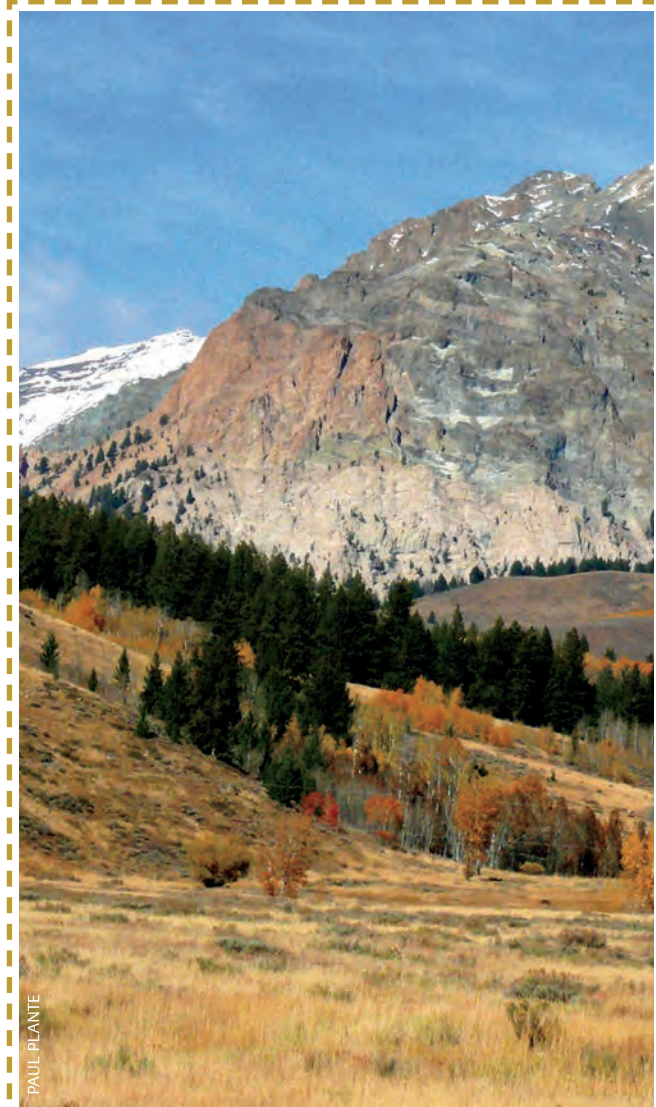
On a map of the Pioneers-Craters of the Moon Landscape, the Baird's property is part of a patchwork of private and public land. Over the years The Nature Conservancy has worked with landowners and government partners to connect these areas, piece by piece. You can think of it as weaving together a giant conservation quilt—one that allows wildlife like pronghorn and sage grouse to roam over large, connected natural areas.

In recent years the Conservancy has shifted its focus to conserving larger landscapes like the Pioneers, the Clearwater Basin, the Upper Salmon Basin and the Greater Yellowstone region. With your support this year we've been able to connect tens of thousands of acres of migration corridor, river miles, spawning areas and brooding and mating grounds. That's why we're celebrating this work with the theme Conservation Connections, because conservation that matters is really about making connections that matter.

You can think of it as weaving together a giant conservation quilt—one that allows wildlife like pronghorn and sage grouse to roam over large, connected natural areas.

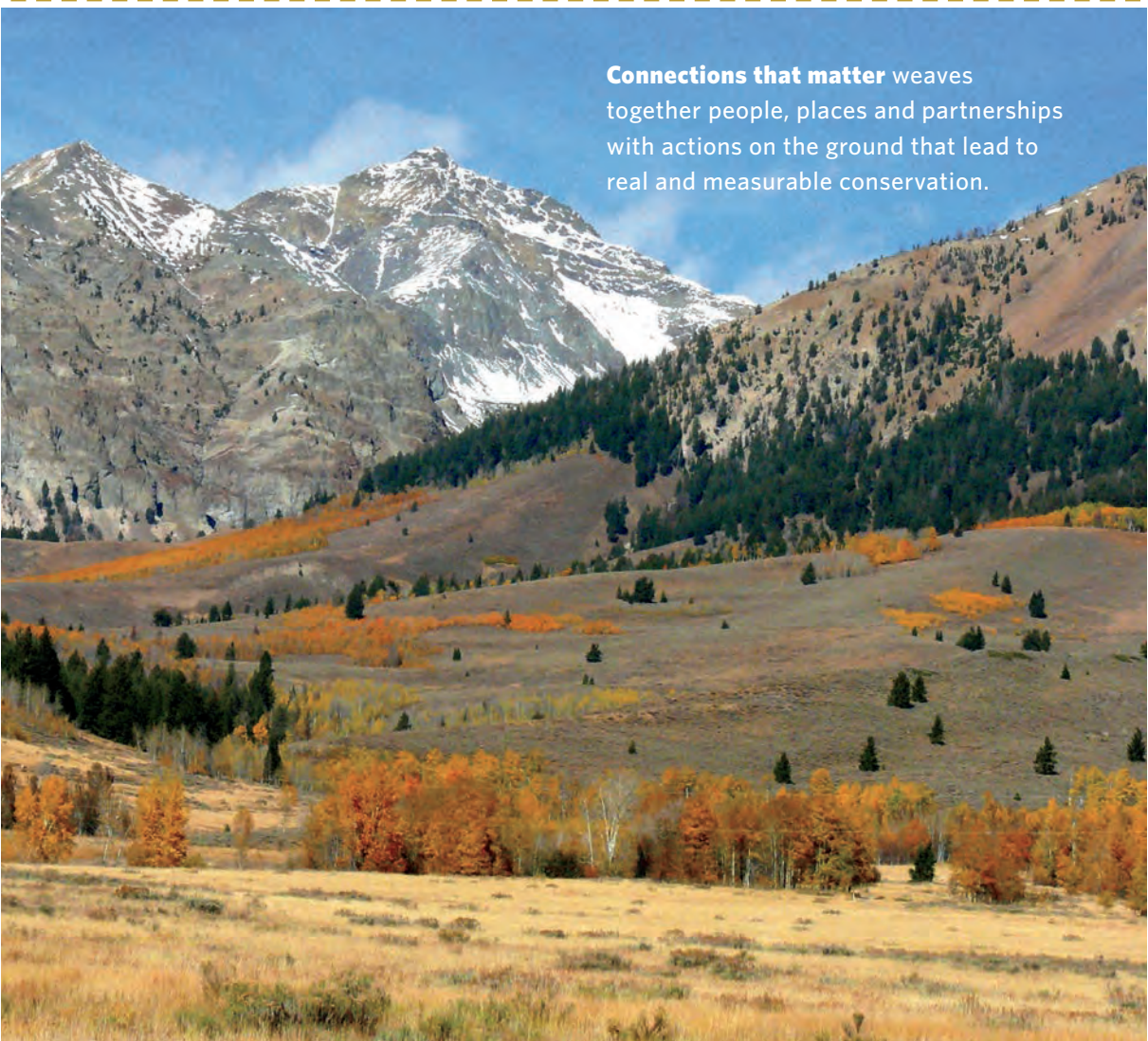
—LISA ELLER

Painting of sheep-herding camp by Carley Baird



PAUL PLANTE



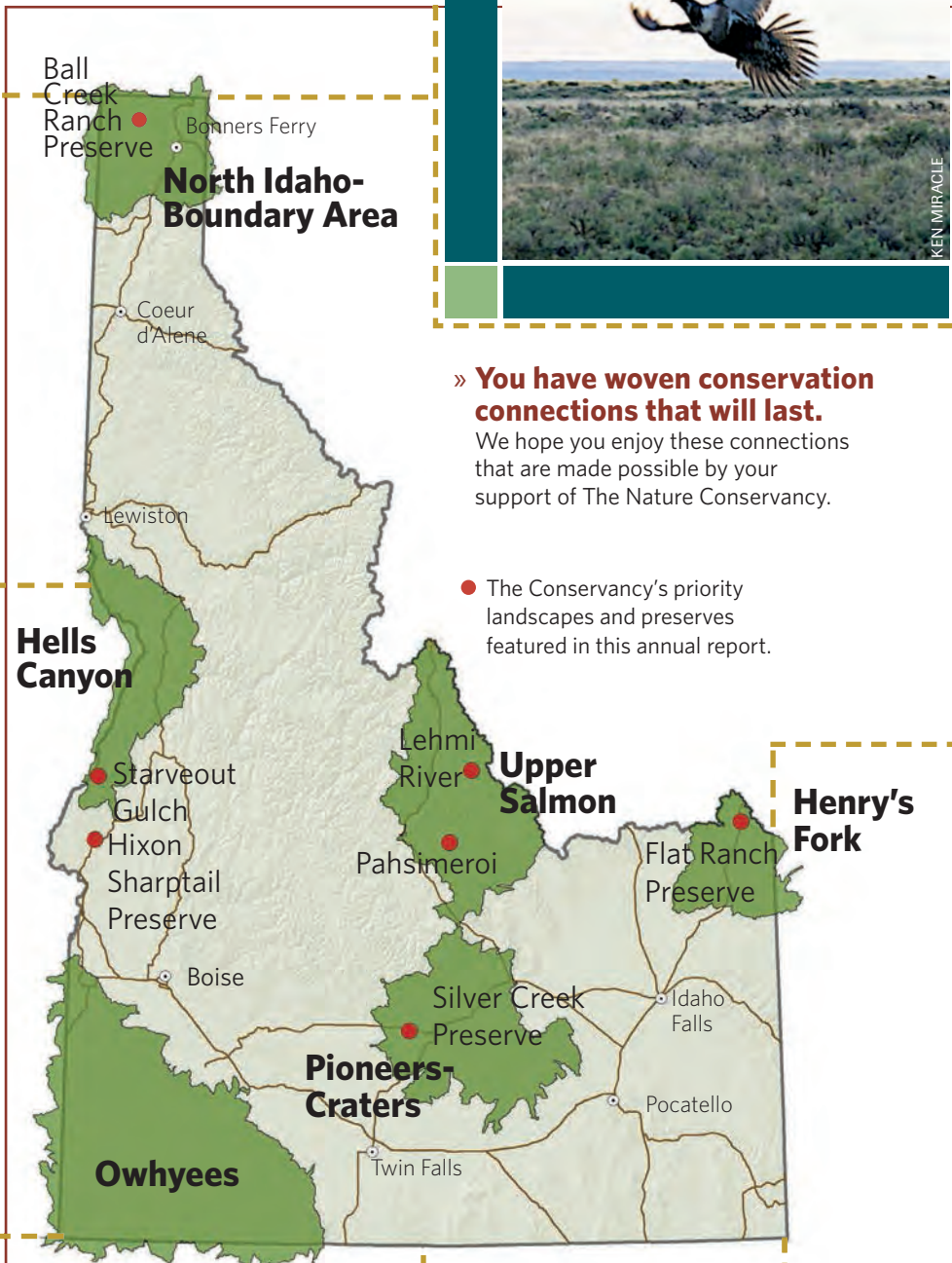


Connections that matter weaves together people, places and partnerships with actions on the ground that lead to real and measurable conservation.

Explore these places at:
www.nature.org/idaho-places

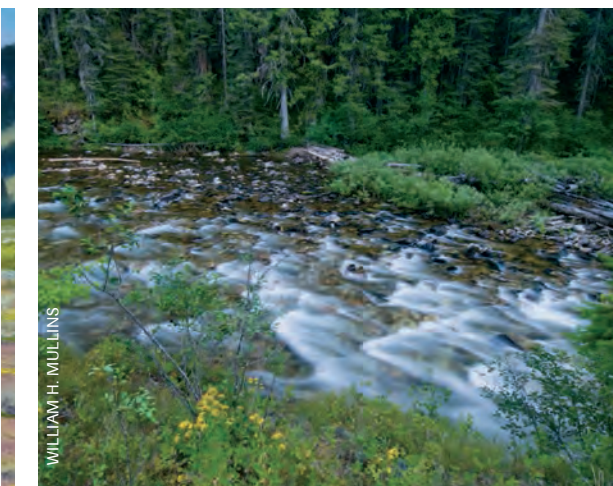


KEN MIRACLE



» **You have woven conservation connections that will last.**
 We hope you enjoy these connections that are made possible by your support of The Nature Conservancy.

● The Conservancy's priority landscapes and preserves featured in this annual report.



WILLIAM H. MULLINS



TIMI CHRISTIE

Forests Forever:

Two Bonners Ferry Families Leave Legacy

Visit our **Ball Creek Ranch Preserve** in Bonners Ferry. Learn more at www.nature.org/idaho-places

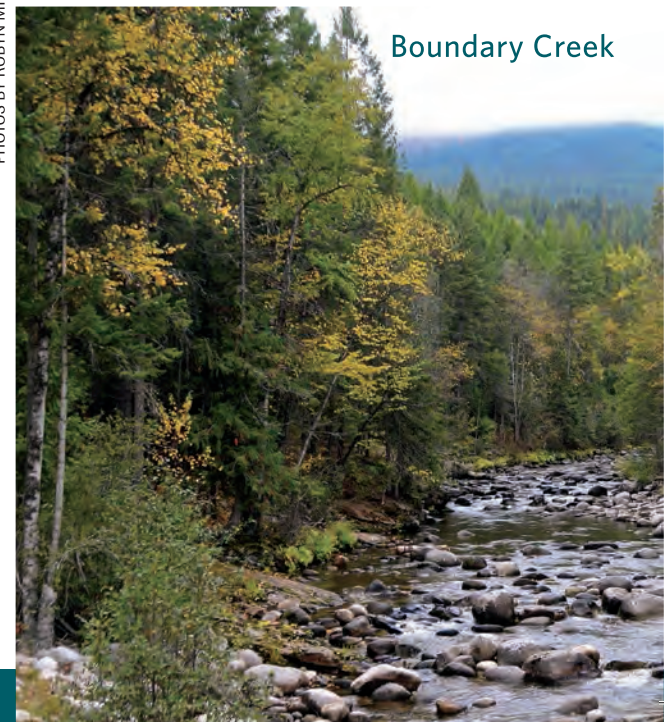


the land around them became increasingly developed. The Hubbard family recognizes the true value of the land and all the living things it sustains.

In the same area, the Wages, an old-time Bonners Ferry family, viewed their property in a similar way. They own 700 acres of mostly forested land in the eastern part of Boundary County. Largely intact and butting up against the Purcell Mountains, the property includes the entire shoreline of Bonner Lake, a highly unique alkaline lake with public access for recreation. Adrian Wages and his wife Marlene inherited the family's property from Adrian's grandfather.

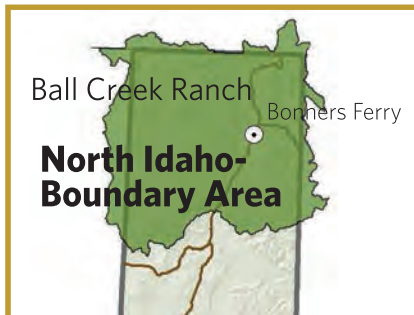
Both the Hubbards and the Wages wanted to keep the land working yet protect it from development. They worked with The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Department of Lands and

PHOTOS BY ROBYN MILLER



Boundary Creek

NORTHERN IDAHO



At the northernmost part of Idaho lies the verdant Kootenai Valley surrounded by bounding forests and productive agricultural lands.

The Kootenai River meanders through most of Boundary County, in a giant horseshoe shape. It's a mountainous green country with free-flowing rivers that attract species such as grizzly bear, elk and sturgeon. The Hubbard and Wages families have sustainably farmed in this majestic landscape for at least three generations. In 2012, they took steps to protect these lands for perpetuity.

Several years ago Wes and Mike Hubbard returned to their 1,000-acre family property in Bonners Ferry to work the farm. The property, overlooking beautiful views of the valley and the Kootenai River, included wheat and canola fields, and forested land. The brothers and their siblings grew up in the area, where they now raise their children. As the family continued to farm over the years,

Curley Creek drainage valley backs to the Purcell Mountains along the Idaho-Montana border.

the U.S. Forest Service to apply for the USDA Forest Legacy Program, which provides funding to protect “working forests”—forests protecting water quality, providing habitat, forest products, opportunities for recreation and other economic benefits to the communities. The proposal was called the “Boundary Connections” Project.

Through a highly competitive national process, “Boundary Connections” ranked ninth nationally and was awarded approximately \$3 million, which will be matched by the landowners. The project will be completed in 2013.

With your support and the generosity of the Hubbard and Wages families, we are making a lasting contribution to forest conservation for Idaho, the nation and the world.



Windy Pass

MARK OWENS



ROBERT W. GRIFFITH

Highlights from Northern Idaho:

Thanks to a wetland restoration project completed this year, Curley Creek will meander as it once did.

The creek’s restoration is part of a larger project on Windy Pass, a 700-acre property in east Boundary County owned by Mark and Delia Owens since the 1990s. The Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement on 200 acres of the Owen’s property. Their remaining 500 acres is protected under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve program. The creek is a tributary to the Kootenai River, which was channelized back in the 1940s.

The installation of several small dams and ponds, designed by the NRCS, will allow the creek to flow in a more natural path. With your support, the Conservancy has helped the Owens realize their dream of restoring this vital piece of wetland and forest habitat in Northern Idaho.

The Conservancy holds a conservation easement on 670 acres of private industrial forestland, with Boundary Creek running through it. This property is excellent grizzly bear habitat with documented use by many bears each year.



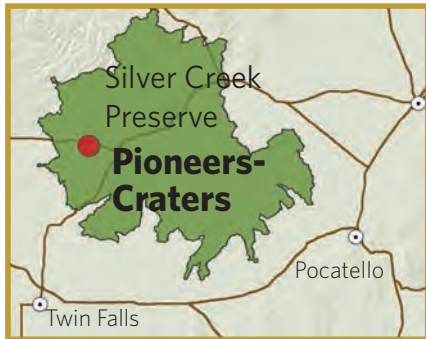
WILLIAM H. MULLINS

Clearwater Basin Collaborative

The Nature Conservancy continues to play an active role in the Clearwater Basin Collaborative, a diverse stakeholder group convened in 2008 by Senator Mike Crapo to address natural resource issues in the Clearwater Basin.

The collaborative and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest created a comprehensive restoration strategy for the 1.4-million-acre Selway-Middle Fork ecosystem in north-central Idaho. The project was one of ten original proposals from around the country selected for funding. It has received over \$8 million over the past three years and is eligible to receive up to \$4 million annually for the next seven years.

CENTRAL IDAHO



The Pioneers: Connecting an Enduring Landscape



Pioneers paintings by Carley Baird

“When my dad homesteaded the land he ran sheep on it. He was pretty much a conservationist, and I guess I inherited that from him,” says Ray Baird.

“When I took it over I vowed I would make it a lot better than it was.” The piece of land Baird refers to is a remote parcel in the Pioneer Mountains he has worked on his entire life.

When ranching didn’t bring in enough money to support his family, he and his wife, Carley, took side jobs so they could keep the land working. Their living room is filled with photographs and Carley’s paintings of the area. Clearly, this landscape means a great deal to both of them. Not just because they make a living from it but also

because it brings them joy. They often talk about the big flocks of “sage hens,” or sage grouse, that spent summers on the property. So when the opportunity arose to protect their ranch and maintain their lifestyle, they signed on.

The Bairds were among the first private landowners in the area to put a conservation easement on their property through the Grassland Reserve Program, which is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A highly respected member of the community, Ray helped convince other landowners in the Pioneers to put conservation easements on their land.



Ray and Carley Baird

THE BAIRDS

Follow the conservation of the Pioneers-Craters Landscape at www.pioneersalliance.org

Down the road Jim Barton, who also inherited his ranch from his family, also put a conservation easement on his property this year. But it took some convincing. Like many ranchers he thought an easement would completely change the way he could use the land.

After listening to other ranchers who had easements and saw positive results, folks such as the Beyelers and McFarlands, from the Salmon area, he decided to participate.

“I could keep it in ranching rather than break it up and put houses on it,” says Jim. The Bartons’ agreement is slightly different from the Bairds’ as some of the funding for it comes from the Blaine County Land, Water and Wildlife program in addition to funds from the NRCS and The Nature Conservancy.

The participation of landowners like the Bartons and the Bairds is paramount to piecing together the expanse needed to truly make a difference in the Pioneers-Craters of the Moon landscape. The Nature Conservancy’s role has been to connect landowners to conservation funding, and, in some cases, to manage the conservation easements.

This year the Conservancy helped protect 33,000 acres—and counting—in the Pioneers. Your support made this possible, and will continue to play a critical role as we work toward our goal of conserving the “heart” of the Pioneers—the ecologically significant working lands that provide the habitat and connectivity essential to an enduring landscape.

(right) Jim Barton with his horse.

(below) The Conservancy’s Central Idaho senior conservation manager, Mark Davidson, on a parcel in the Pioneers-Craters landscape.



“I could keep it in ranching rather than break it up and put houses on it”

—Jim Barton, rancher



PAUL PLANTE

Why protect the Pioneers-Craters of the Moon landscape?

Bordered by the Pioneer Mountains to the north and the Craters of the Moon landscape to the south, this 2.4 million-acre area supports wide-ranging species such as pronghorn, sage grouse, mule deer, elk, wolves, mountain lions, black bears, mountain goats and wolverines. This wildlife diversity is possible because of the landscape’s dramatic elevation range—from 3,000 to more than 10,000 feet—and habitats that include wetlands, rivers, streams, forests and sagebrush steppe.



KEN MIRACLE

The Journey of a thousand miles: Bringing Chinook salmon and steelhead back to the Upper Salmon

Nearly a thousand miles—it's the journey of a lifetime for Chinook salmon and steelhead.

For those returning to spawn and rear in portions of the Upper Salmon Basin in Idaho, that journey—up until recently—was cut short. The journey's completion became impossible because of barriers and lack of water. In much of the Upper Salmon, flows have been diverted for decades from tributaries for agricultural use.

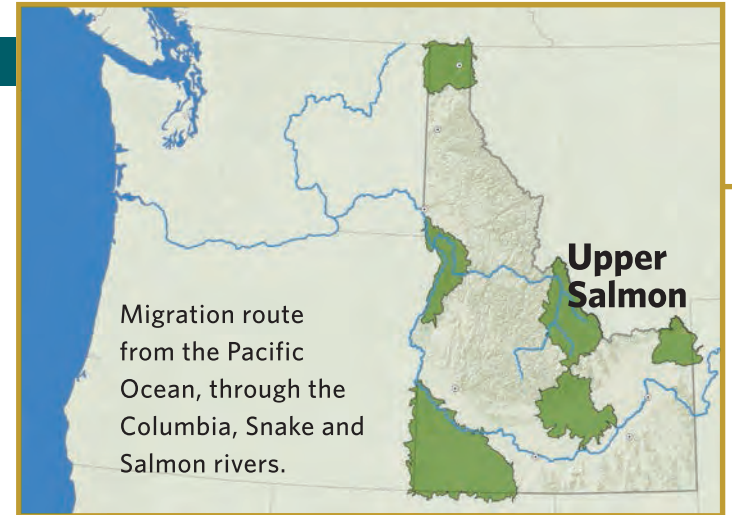
Now, thanks to the work of many willing and dedicated individuals and groups, including The Nature Conservancy, the journey of a thousand miles is possible again. The many springs and tributary streams found along the Pahsimeroi and Lemhi rivers of the Upper Salmon are critical to salmon and steelhead recovery. In these areas, the Conservancy's staff helped build relationships with ranchers and land managers to put water back into and protect tributaries and rivers by creating conservation

easements and finding more efficient ways to use water. This work allowed spawning Chinook and steelhead to return to waters they could not reach for decades.

Take a look at the conservation you helped us accomplish:

The Nature Conservancy secured funding to protect an additional 5,780 acres with easements on four ranches. Once complete these easements will reconnect Mill Creek, Big Creek and Sulfur Creek to the Pahsimeroi River, allowing salmon and steelhead to spawn in these streams. This is an incredible accomplishment for fisheries conservation.

This year, our staff collaborated with Lemhi Regional Land Trust and a number of landowners to put agreements in place to reconnect the waters of Kenney Creek to the Lemhi River. Several adult steelhead returned to Kenney Creek this year to



spawn. These agreements, including a minimum-flow agreement as part of a conservation easement held by the trust, reconnected 18.2 miles of stream and the 15,000-acre Kenney Creek watershed, and ensured the stream had water at critical times of the year.

Our partners: Ranchers, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Bureau of Land Management, Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Office of Species Conservation, Bonneville Power Administration, Lemhi Regional Land Trust, Formation Capital Corporation, Trout Unlimited, Bureau of Reclamation, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Transportation Department, and area Soil Conservation Districts.



PHOTOS BY PAUL PLANTE

Flat Ranch Preserve:

Our hub for conservation in the Upper Henry's Fork

There's much more going on at Flat Ranch Preserve than its modest setting suggests.

If you sat down at the visitor's center porch and fixed your gaze on the land, you would be treated to an ever-changing scene, a place pulsating with life and framed with puffy, transient clouds and waves of grasses, flowers and willows. But beyond the porch, educational and recreational opportunities abound.

As part of its larger commitment to the Greater Yellowstone region, The Nature Conservancy focused this year on increasing visitation, education and recreation to help promote the benefits of conservation for people and wildlife.

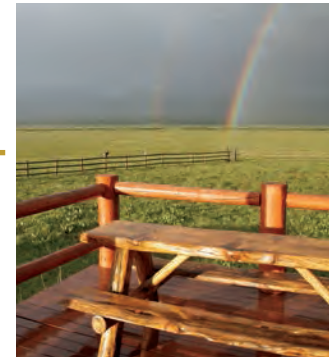
Our commitment to riparian restoration is reflected in the quality of the fisheries at Flat Ranch. More anglers are coming to the ranch and enjoying

a unique angling experience in the headwaters of the Henry's Fork River. This year anglers reported catching Yellowstone cutthroat trout over 20 inches long.

This year also marked the first phase of a project to provide wildlife viewing and access to the Henry's Fork outlet through a two-mile loop trail. The first portion of the trail, connecting the visitor's center to Crooked Creek Spring, was completed this year.

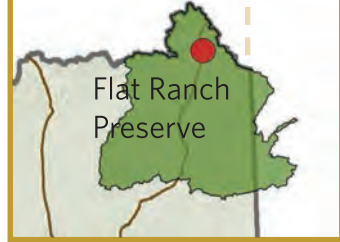
The Conservancy also took steps to safeguard Crooked Creek Spring from the impacts of cattle grazing. Staff and volunteers constructed a new fence enclosure to protect the riparian seeps and springs that provide important habitat to nesting sandhill cranes, willets, killdeer and numerous songbirds. The 150 willows planted this spring in the enclosure are thriving and restoring this important habitat.

In 2012, with generous support from donors, the Conservancy hired a full-time manager for the Flat Ranch Preserve. This year-round position focuses on stewardship and outreach in the Upper Henry's Fork area, thereby allowing other area staff to concentrate on increasing conservation and land protection efforts.



EASTERN IDAHO

Henry's Fork



Visit Flat Ranch:

"Places We Protect" at nature.org/Idaho

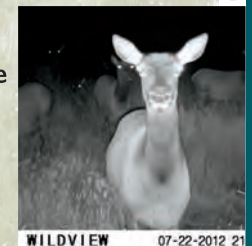
Other highlights from the year:

The Flat Ranch Preserve received the 2012 Dare to Soar Award from Island Park News for its outstanding contributions to community through the ongoing summer educational program.

More than 300 people attended the Flat Ranch Summer Series, an educational program highlighting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem's wildlife, history, fisheries, art and more.

The Nature Conservancy and the Idaho Art Lab co-hosted the 2nd Annual Nature Art Expo, an event promoting conservation through art. Hundreds attended the event, making it a huge success.

A wildlife camera has been installed on the Flat Ranch Preserve to record wildlife activity near one of the ranch's restoration sites. So far, numerous cow and elk calf have been captured on camera.



Get updates about Flat Ranch at our blog: idahonaturenotes.blogspot.com



For the latest on the Kilpatrick Pond Restoration Project, go to “How We Work” at nature.org/Idaho

Resiliency: Silver Creek—a model for today and tomorrow

By Dayna Gross, Silver Creek Preserve Manager

Silver Creek has seen many changes since I started coming in 2003. We’ve added over 500 acres of conservation easements; celebrated our 35th anniversary with more than 150 of our closest supporters and friends; designed and installed a butterfly garden with the local sixth graders; and completed our first agricultural water conservation effort in partnership with MillerCoors. Some of our priorities have changed since The Nature Conservancy came to Idaho in 1975 (water conservation and beneficial insect habitat for instance), but many things have not changed. We are still concerned about sediment. We are still concerned about declining habitat and recreational pressure. We have moved forward in so many ways—miles of

tributary stream fenced and planted, thousands of acres protected through conservation easement—and yet there is still a lot to be done.

I recently came across a folder containing a series of interviews and documents from 1976-1977, when The Nature Conservancy first acquired the Silver Creek Preserve. Included was a speech made by Gordon Beebe where he talks about his first year and a half as the Silver Creek preserve manager. He refers to this time as “fascinating, frustrating and exciting.” Fascinating because of the amazing diversity of Silver Creek—birds, bugs, fish and people—and the daily and constant discoveries everywhere you look. Frustrating because of the scale of the job—Silver Creek is such a complex ecosystem, how do

we possibly “go about restoring this small piece of land to health?” He talks about the frustration of communicating with a variety of people who have different perspectives, of the frustration of spending money on research you hope will help guide you but just poses more questions. The frustration of this question—“if we are to restore, to restore to what?”—and the overarching frustration that these millions of questions may not even be the right questions to ask.

Then to the excitement of the job—how, with all of this diversity and the accompanied frustration of not knowing what to do, there is excitement in the potential to make a great project, “we must generate a dialogue [to include everyone] and out of that dialogue must come



KEN MIRACLE



◀ Kirkpatrick pond yesterday and today.

respect and understanding of each other’s values and interests... if we can do this at Silver Creek, it will serve as a model. It can be both a nucleus of restoration and a catalyst of a gentler, humbler kind of [land use]. We hold promise in our hands. I find this exciting.”

Together, we have made great progress and Silver Creek is a model today, there is no doubt about that. The challenge for Silver Creek lies in what is to come—less water, warmer temperatures, crop demands, invasive species and population growth. How do we ensure Silver Creek can withstand these pressures?

By helping it be as resilient as possible. That’s why we keep coming back to Kilpatrick Pond. The major threats to Silver Creek today are increasing water temperatures, low flows and sediment. They are interrelated and Kilpatrick Pond is a perfect example of how they impact Silver Creek in its entirety. When water warms up through the pond and goes

downstream, the temperatures never recover. This means the majority of Silver Creek has temperatures high enough to stress rainbow trout for much of the summer.

We have been talking about addressing the issues in Kilpatrick Pond for years—we developed a plan in 1997, and examined nine alternatives in 2007, held a spring creek summit in 2008. We are now moving forward, cautiously and optimistically, on the largest restoration project ever on Silver Creek. The same things Gordon Beebee felt—fascination, frustration, and excitement, are mirrored in this project. And, it is my hope, just as it was Gordon Beebee’s hope at the onset, that through dialogue and respect for each other and the ecosystem, this project will be a model. There is promise here and it is exciting.

(below) Students from Ms. Reirden’s and Ms. Gaeddert’s sixth-grade classes visit Silver Creek. They helped raise money and design the new butterfly garden.



PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAYNA GROSS

The Nature Conservancy’s Partnership with the Purdy Family

The Kilpatrick Pond project could not succeed without the cooperation and partnership of the Purdy family. In addition to collaborating in the development of the agreement for this project, the Purdys have also held fundraising events to fund their portion of the project. The family previously donated conservation easements to the Conservancy and continues to play an active role in stream conservation.



Nick Purdy and Dayna Gross

“Through this project we will be able to lower temperatures by decreasing the amount of silt that builds up and washes downstream from the S turns and the Kilpatrick Pond. We have become more concerned with high temperatures each year. In fact, this is one of the warmest summers I have seen in a long time. By working together we can positively affect the health of Silver Creek.”

—NICK PURDY



perfect butterfly
spring flowers

More than 30,000 acres of sage grouse habitat protected with **Farm Bill** funding



ROBERT M. GRIFFITH

The Farm Bill is one of the most powerful laws for wildlife conservation.

When most people hear about the “Farm Bill” they correctly think about the country’s policy of supporting agricultural production. But, few may realize the Farm Bill is also one of the most powerful laws for wildlife conservation.

The Farm Bill is critical to the future of America’s lands, water and wildlife and represents The Nature Conservancy’s greatest opportunity to influence conservation on private lands. The 2008 Farm Bill provided \$60 billion for conservation, more than any other funding source.

Here in Idaho, for example, this funding helped protect thousands of acres of key sage grouse habitat in the Pioneers-Craters landscape. The Sage Grouse Initiative, a program funded through this bill, has been a major driver in the Pioneers Alliance. The Alliance

is a partnership that has protected more than 33,000 acres of habitat already and has another 20,000 in the pipeline.

From Picabo Idaho, to Capitol Hill, the Conservancy works with landowners, agency staff and members of Congress to ensure the Farm Bill programs target critical projects. This year was significant for the Farm Bill as Congress worked to reauthorize the legislation. The Nature Conservancy spearheaded an effort resulting in 500 conservation organizations nationwide signing a letter asking congressional leaders to “hold the line” on further cuts to conservation programs. Bas Hargrove of the Idaho Chapter served on the Conservancy’s Farm Bill advocacy team to help ensure this federal legislation makes a difference here in Idaho.

A look at the work of Idaho’s Sage Grouse Task Force

With declining populations in 11 western states, the sage grouse could be listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The listing would profoundly affect economic and land use activities in the bird’s sagebrush steppe habitat, which includes 15 million acres in Idaho—more than a quarter of the land in the state.

This year, Idaho took a proactive step to protecting sage grouse by initiating a state-led process for the bird’s protection. Governor Butch Otter created a task force to craft a conservation plan strong enough to avoid an ESA listing, involve impacted industries and interests, and ensure sage grouse habitat on public lands remains available for multiple uses.

Will Whelan, The Nature Conservancy’s Idaho director of government relations, served as one of two task force members representing conservation interests. Other interests represented included livestock grazing, electrical utilities, mining, hunting, county government and the Legislature.

After an arduous three-month process, the task force agreed on basic policies to guide sage grouse conservation in Idaho. The state of Idaho is now developing a more detailed plan based on those recommendations. The Nature Conservancy will continue to work with the state for effective actions to conserve sage grouse and their habitats.

From the city to Silver Creek

How internships make a lasting impression

—By Veronika Horton, 2012 intern at Silver Creek Preserve

Never in a million years could I have imagined myself living in or visiting a place like Idaho. It is extremely different from my home state of Georgia, and even South Carolina, where I attended college. From day one, my experience has been new, unique and amazing. Coming from the city of Atlanta to a small town like Picabo was an experience in itself. My feelings toward Idaho progressively changed the longer I stayed. They went from “I can’t live here” to “It’s not a bad place to stay.”

This was definitely the summer of firsts. I learned so much in so little time, like methods for land and stream restoration. My willingness and open-mindedness gave me the courage to try new things like going to a rodeo, learning to drive a stick-shift and fishing—just to name a few. Before I came to Silver Creek I didn’t care to learn a lot of

the things I did. Being here has changed my perspective. Through upland monitoring, spraying weeds and counting birds, I learned to name some grasses, wildflowers, weeds, and birds of Idaho. My visit showed me nature in a whole new light. I became comfortable outdoors and realized not all wildlife will attack me.

With this new level of appreciation I tried camping, which was not as bad as I thought it would be. I never would have imagined myself sleeping in a tent under the stars. Working at Silver Creek minimized my fear and maximized my comfort level when dealing with nature. I have never spent this much time outdoors in my life.

Nature taught me to learn to identify sounds of certain animals. An incident that changed my experience here was when I heard there were rattlesnakes on the preserve at Stalker Cabin. When I heard that I never wanted to go to the cabin again. While watering I heard sounds that I thought were from a rattlesnake but later found out were from a grasshopper. This was a great lesson to learn because had I not become aware of the sound I would have gone home out of fear.

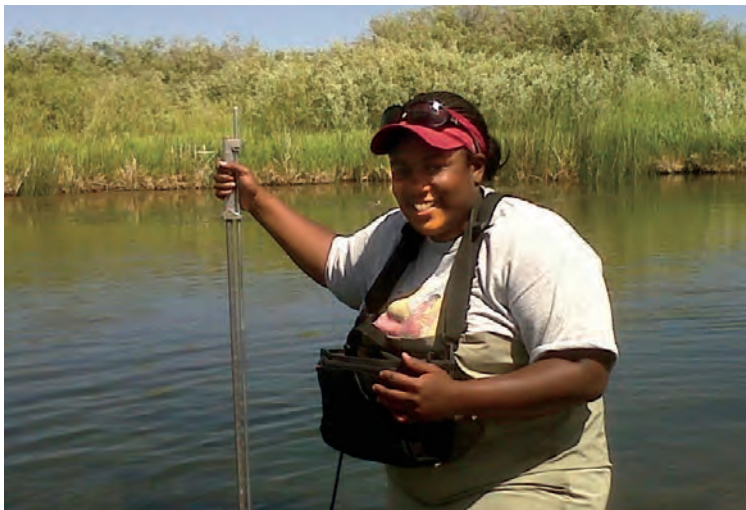
My friends and I all worked this summer but unlike them, I learned something almost every workday. I feel like I have made a bigger step in accepting diversity as opposed

to my peers. I highly doubt most of them would have stayed in Idaho if they were in my shoes. I had people who helped me adjust and survive in Picabo. I had the coolest mentor and supervisor, my own personal tour guide and personal fishing guide. My peers cannot say that much.

One great thing that came from me being here is that I was able to look up and see the stars shine. It’s amazing because they are not that bright in Atlanta.



The Nature Conservancy would like to thank John and Elaine French, Conservancy trustees and donors, for generously hosting Silver Creek’s summer interns at their home in Picabo, Idaho.



Silver Creek landscape by current preserve manager Dayna Gross, herself a summer assistant in 2003.



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A place for the ancient and wild to grow— **The Hixons conserve Starveout Gulch**



COURTESY OF THE HIXONS

“Someday we would like to see wild, free-ranging bighorn sheep restored to this canyon.”

—JOE AND TIM HIXON

In a remote area of West-Central Idaho where forest edge meets deep canyon, wild berries grow in abundance and black bear thrive, an ancient giant fir towers high above the ground.

Here, rooted in the steep terrain of Starveout Gulch, the ancient tree has lived for at least 200 years, maybe longer.

The tree symbolizes how well the property has been cared for over the years, and how the perpetuity of conservation easements make it possible for things to survive and thrive into old age.

Today, few places exist where trees like the giant fir can grow to be a hundred years old. The Starveout Gulch, 110 acres of meadow and forest on a bench overlooking Hells Canyon, is one of those special places.

This year, the property’s owners, brothers Joe and Tim Hixon, signed an agreement to put Starveout Gulch into a conservation easement managed by The Nature Conservancy.

Beside black bears, the area also abounds with elk, mule deer and several families of grouse. The Hixons hope their conservation efforts will one day bring bighorn sheep back to the area.

Though the Starveout Gulch agreement took just a few years to complete, Tim and Joe Hixon considered the idea long before that.

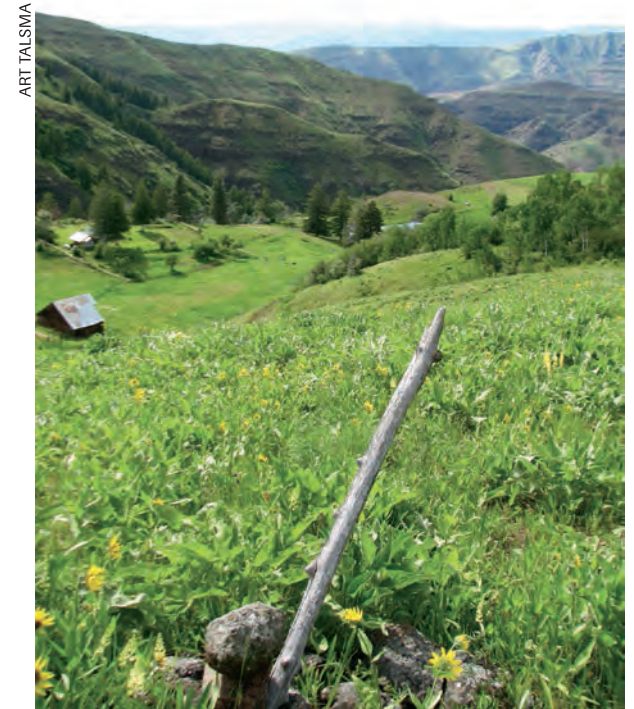
The Hixons and Art Talsma, the Conservancy’s director of restoration and stewardship, often sat together on the cabin porch at nearby OX Ranch talking about protecting this special area. Over the years Talsma and the Hixons forged a friendship over weed control, responsible grazing practices and their love of hunting and fishing.

The Hixons had already donated a conservation easement on 1,828 acres along the Wildhorse River as part of their OX Ranch. The easement protected spectacular wildlife habitat and native Redband trout in the Wildhorse River. At the time Starveout Gulch was owned by another family, the Hixons were Starveout’s only neighbors.

“The only practical property managers were the Hixons. They run cattle up in the range and it’s just so remote, incredibly remote,” recalls Talsma.

So when Starveout came up for sale, the Hixons moved quickly to purchase it. Soon after they wrote a letter to The Nature Conservancy expressing their desire to donate a conservation easement on the property.

“There would need to be an absolute prohibition on dividing the property in any way because it controls access to a larger



ART TALSMAN

area of old-growth forest,” Joe Hixon wrote. “It is really beautiful with several good springs, very remote and a haven for elk and bear.”

Together the two properties put **nearly 2,000 acres in conservation easements**. The Starveout Gulch agreement ensures long-term protection of old-growth forest and native grasslands in Hells Canyon.



COURTESY OF THE HIXONS



TIM CHRISTIE



Visit the Hixon-Sharptail Preserve:
details at nature.org/Idaho



The Hixon-Sharptail Preserve: Revisiting a conservation success 25 years later

The story of the Hixons and conservation in Idaho began long before they protected Wildhorse and Starveout. In 1987 Tim and Karen Hixon made a donation to help The Nature Conservancy purchase a property where the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse was rediscovered. The move helped the species rebound from near extinction in its Western Idaho territory—one of the few places actively used by the grouse in its limited range.

Alan Sands, retired ecologist and current volunteer, managed the Hixon-Sharptail Preserve project during his tenure at the Conservancy.

“Thirty years ago Columbian sharp-tailed grouse in West-Central Idaho were about to join many other populations that have been lost. This grouse can be found in less than 10 percent of the places it once lived. With a focused program of land protection and improved grazing management, I’ve been witness to resurgence in this population,” says Sands. “This conservation effort has greatly improved the chances of this isolated population to persist. This program was made possible by an initial donation by Tim and Karen Hixon. That single donation provided the seed money to carry out an extensive conservation effort that continues today.”



Donor Profile: Rebecca Patton and Tom Goodrich

Rebecca Patton and Tom Goodrich's first exposure to Idaho happened 25 years ago when they were driving over from the Tetons and saw the Sawtooths for the first time.

"We fell in love with them," Patton recalls. Over the years the couple continued to return to Idaho as part-time residents, and Patton went on to work for several years with The Nature Conservancy. Though she eventually moved on from her position with the Conservancy, the couple stayed involved as donors and supporters. Most recently they have begun the process of creating a conservation easement in the Pioneers-Craters of the Moon landscape.

Both Patton and Goodrich discovered their love of nature in childhood. Goodrich grew up in Michigan near Pere Marquette River, a high-quality, blue-ribbon fishery. Patton grew up mostly in Florida, but her mother would take her and her two siblings camping

out west each summer in the national and state parks. "That was a formative experience for me beginning my deep love of the West," she says.

Patton came to The Nature Conservancy after a successful 20-year career in the private sector with companies such as Apple and E*TRADE. She describes meeting Steve McCormick in 2000, who had just become Conservancy president and CEO, as one of her very lucky breaks in life. McCormick hired her as a regional director, a post she held for several years before becoming the director of conservation strategies. "I count my seven and a half years at the Conservancy as a highlight of my life," says Patton. "Working on important conservation initiatives with people who are deeply mission-driven as well as smart was a truly wonderful experience."

In addition to supporting conservation in Idaho, the couple also supports agricultural-land



conservation in Marin County, California, and conservation science. Patton also spends about half her time as the pro-bono chief operating officer for the Wildlife Conservation Network, an organization based in the Bay Area that supports conservation entrepreneurs working on endangered species conservation around the world. Half of the projects are in Africa.

The opportunity to affect conservation on a very large scale inspired the couple's desire to support work in the Pioneers. The center of the 2.4 million acre Pioneers landscape is 160,000 acres of private lands, mostly working ranches. This is the Conservancy's focus for conservation easements, to protect an array of wide-ranging and migratory wildlife, including elk, pronghorn, moose, sage grouse and sandhill cranes.

"Two years ago (the staff) took us out and showed us the work the Conservancy and others are doing. I had never been in this part of the Pioneers—not many people have, it's very remote," says Patton. "We were blown away, not only by how beautiful it is but how intact it is."

The property that will be conserved through an easement is in the heart of the Pioneers. Its water resources—about two and a half miles of Little Wood River, streams and groundwater upwelling—support important wildlife habitat. The properties to the north and south are already protected by easements.

Says Patton, "Our goal is to maximize the quality of that land for wildlife habitat while supporting its traditional use for sheep trailing in the spring and fall."





▲ John Finnel & Ed Northern staining the barn at Silver Creek.

▶ Trout Unlimited and the Conservancy volunteers teamed up to rescue more than 1,000 rainbow trout from an irrigation ditch and move them to Crystal Creek and Spring Creek at Heart Rock Ranch.



◀ Sage grouse restoration: Volunteer Herb Myer points to a sage sparrow nest while working on reseeding an area in the Owyhees.

▼ Volunteers flag more than two miles of fencing near the Crooked Creek Preserve. Flags help sage grouse and pronghorn see fences and avoid harmful collisions.

Thank you to our volunteers and interns!

Together they contributed thousands of hours to education, maintenance, weed control, trail building, habitat restoration, photography, fish rescue and so much more. Our work would not be possible without them.

Jeff Barney

Mary and Jerry Baumunk

Gary Boyer

Kathleen Cameron

Art Dahl

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Marlen Gross

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EDITOR'S NOTE: THE VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS LISTED HERE CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN 20 HOURS A SEASON. IN ADDITION TO THESE VOLUNTEERS, COUNTLESS OTHERS HAVE DONATED THEIR TIME AT OUR ONE-DAY EVENTS. DUE TO LIMITED SPACE, WE COULD NOT LIST EVERYONE HERE. WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED US FOR ANY AMOUNT OF TIME.

*LOOK FOR PAUL AND KEN'S PHOTOS IN THIS REPORT

◀ Silver Creek volunteers Theresa and Jennifer from Caldwell Bankers help out with restoration. Above, Alan Richardson looks up from his restoration work.

▶ Silver Creek volunteer Nan Little takes time to exercise as part of her treatment for Parkinson's.

Find out how to get involved:

www.nature.org/idaho



Staff Spotlight: Bob Unnasch



Bob Unnasch spent much of his childhood outdoors. After feeding him and his brother breakfast, Unnasch's mother would put the boys outside and say, "Don't come back until it gets dark." He quickly developed an all-consuming curiosity about the ways of the natural world. "I spent my childhood roaming around in the woods, becoming comfortable in the natural world, identifying all the birds and collecting snakes and salamanders," he recalled.

His interest never waned. Instead it inspired his study of wildlife biology and ecology at Rutgers and then Stony Brook universities. He wrote his dissertation on seed dispersal and seed predation in shrubland communities. During graduate school he began working part-time for The Nature Conservancy at its David Weld Sanctuary in Long Island, NY.

In 2012, Unnasch celebrated his 25th year with the organization. After working at the sanctuary for four years he moved to Connecticut to serve as preserve

director for the Ordway Preserves, where he lived next door to affluent and famous people including Keith Richards, Paul Newman and Robert Redford. Soon after The Nature Conservancy's national office recruited him to be the national director of monitoring and research. His responsibilities included leading the grazing management program, which brought him out West to Boise. He has served as the director of science for the Conservancy's Idaho Chapter for four years.

What excites you in your day-to-day work?

I have always been and remain committed to conservation, old school conservation—the conservation of species and habitat, biodiversity. I remain very excited to come to my job, especially here in Idaho because what we continue to do is focus on conserving plants, animals and natural communities. I think that's a valid life mission and that's something I always have and remain very excited about.

What do you consider your greatest career accomplishment?

Conservation Action Planning (CAP), which, for a number of years, has evolved. CAP was the first real transparent framework for doing conservation planning. My team and I designed the foundation and initial framework of this conservation action planning process. And CAP has now been implemented by hundreds of organizations in dozens of countries worldwide.

What do you like to do outdoors besides collect data?

I'm an avid fly fisherman—have been my entire life. I'm also an enthusiastic birdwatcher. As a kid, I could lie on my back each spring and see 15 to 20 species of warbler in a single tree. That interest carried me through my master's research, where I spent two summers studying bird behavior. In the winter, I snowshoe, tele-ski and cross-country ski.

What advice do you have for students interested in pursuing science as a career?

Anyone that I've ever known who's been really successful in the natural sciences has spent enormous amounts of time outdoors experiencing the diversity and complexity of the world. Sometimes students decide to study natural sciences because it "sounds interesting." Those students often become overwhelmed by the complexity of the subject at the college level. So, I always encourage students to find something that naturally interests him/her and figure out what subject encompasses those interests. Try to understand [the subject], try to understand all the interactions within that subject and then develop an emotional commitment to the study of it. That commitment is what will sustain you in your career.

Want to read more? Check out the full interview with Bob Unnasch at idahonaturenotes.blogspot.com.



2012 Financial Summary | For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2012

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

	2012	2011
Dues and contributions	\$3,071,767	\$3,943,240
Grants and contracts	923,509	5,961,984
Gifts of conservation land	180,000	236,250
Investment income	401,541	1,668,250
Other income	(15,063)	140,511
Other internal support	(112,020)	256,654
<i>Support & revenue before sales of conservation lands</i>	<u>4,449,734</u>	<u>12,206,889</u>
Sales of land to government agencies and other conservation partners	-	2,049,436
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	<u>\$4,449,734</u>	<u>\$14,256,325</u>

EXPENSES

Conservation programs	\$2,395,131	\$2,349,074
General administrative, communications & fund-raising	1,032,378	963,243
Cost of land sold or transferred to government agencies and conservation partners (Note 1)	-	2,622,220
Support for global priorities and other internal support	541,064	522,927
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$3,968,573</u>	<u>\$6,457,464</u>

NET RESULT, *Support and Revenue over Expenses (Note 2)*

	<u>\$481,161</u>	<u>\$7,798,861</u>
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ASSET, LIABILITY & NET ASSET SUMMARY

Cash in operating funds	\$464,244	\$690,102
Cash in land funds	5,020,364	4,559,875
Land preservation fund	10,373,892	10,373,871
Endowment investments	7,040,672	7,504,497
Book value of conservation land	57,876,838	55,971,838
Other assets	943,648	1,184,404
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$81,719,658</u>	<u>\$80,284,587</u>

Internal loans (Land Fund)	\$485,068	\$131,197
External notes & mortgages payable	10,000,000	10,000,000
Other liabilities	2,000,429	1,400,390

TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>\$12,485,497</u>	<u>\$11,531,587</u>
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Endowment funds	\$7,040,672	\$7,504,497
Land preservation funds	373,892	373,871
Land funds and reserves	61,332,074	60,128,264
Operating funds	487,523	746,368

NET ASSETS	<u>\$69,234,161</u>	<u>\$68,753,000</u>
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$81,719,658</u>	<u>\$80,284,587</u>
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Footnotes:

1. Only includes actual cost of land. Excludes other acquisition costs such as surveys, environmental hazard assessments, appraisals and taxes related to acquisition and sale. Such costs are included in conservation programs as they occur.
 2. The excess of "Support and Revenue over Expenses" provides the funds needed to purchase conservation land and to strengthen endowments and reserves that support long-term land stewardship and support operations.

As always, we are appreciative of the generous support of our donors, including those who remembered us in their estates. We saw a decline of 22% in total private fundraising in FY12 v. FY11. Grants and contracts include grants received from Natural Resources Conservation Service through the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and the Blaine County Levy. These grants enabled us to protect 2,356 acres through the purchase of conservation easements in the southern Pioneer Mountains. We had no land sales or transfers in this fiscal year.

KEN MIRACLE




“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.”

—RACHEL CARSON

KENNON MCCLINTOCK





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for your continued support in building
a legacy for future generations.

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