

Conserve

News from Lemhi Regional Land Trust and Salmon Valley Stewardship

A Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2014/15

Lemhi Land Trust Restores River Bank

In early November, LRLT completed our ninth conservation easement on a six acre piece of property owned by Rodger Swanson along the Lemhi River near Tendoy. This Mabey Lane conservation easement is unique in that it is designed specifically to protect another LRLT project — the restoration of the river bank and creation of a new side channel off the Lemhi River.

Over the years, the building of the railroad and subsequently Highway 28 has meant that the formerly meandering Lemhi River is confined in many places by the highway and private property boundaries. This limits the river's natural access to the floodplain and important side channel habitat.

The type of habitat that is being re-created will provide much needed overwintering and rearing habitat for native and ocean going fish along the Lemhi River.



Before Restoration. The bank on this section of the Lemhi River in need of stabilization and riparian plant enhancement.



After Restoration. Willows and other native plants are used in combination with a re-engineered slope to stabilize this section of Lemhi River bank.



Heavy equipment staged at Mabey Lane ready to dig the fingers of the side channel.



For the second year in a row, Breann Westfall, LRLT's Stewardship Coordinator, visited Salmon High School's Environmental Science class to talk about restoration projects & the class then took a field trip to the Mabey Lane Project. Breann explains how a turbidity meter is used and the importance of monitoring turbidity when completing in-stream restoration work.



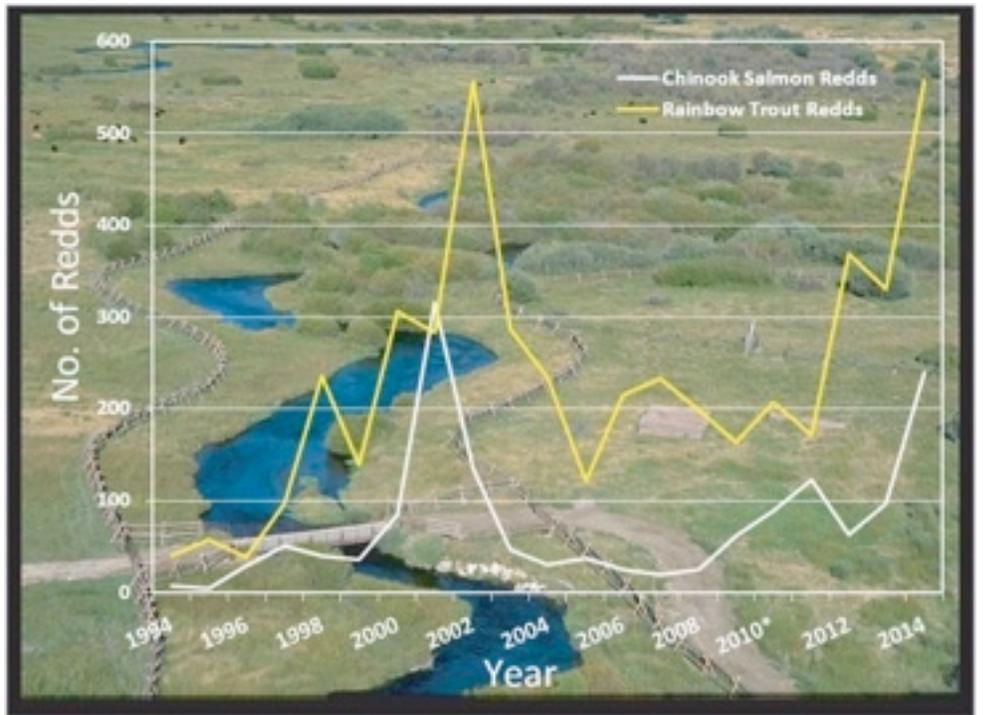
Students learned about the permitting and engineering necessary to complete these types of projects, and helped plant the native plants used to stabilize the stream bank. Since the field trip, the stabilization of the stream bank and side channel to the Lemhi River have been completed. This channel will allow the Lemhi River to access the side channel and its natural floodplain during high water.

Spotlight Shines on Lemhi Ranchers

Earlier this fall, LRLT Executive Director Kristin Troy and Board Chair Merrill Beyeler joined representatives of the Idaho Cattle Association to spotlight Lemhi Valley ranchers' role in recovering native and ocean going fish species.

Members of the media featured Nikos Monoyios, who donated LRLT's first ever conservation easement on Eagle Valley Ranch on Bohannon Creek. Conservation easements like Eagle Valley's and decades of restoration projects are paying big dividends as evidenced by the record breaking number of Chinook salmon redds or nests that have been counted on the Lemhi River and its tributaries this year.

A short video clip from KIVI Local News 8 called "Lemhi Ranchers Restore Fish Habitat" is available on You Tube at <http://youtu.be/w37rKb7FErI> and a 12 minute video is available on the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission's "Life on the Range" website: <http://www.lifeontherange.com/range->



Biologists and public land managers are quick to give kudos to Lemhi Valley ranchers for their cooperation and leadership in improving fish habitat while keeping the agricultural lifestyle alive and well. Photo source: Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission

[stories/lemhi-ranchers-welcome-home-chinook.htm](http://www.lifeontherange.com/range-stories/lemhi-ranchers-welcome-home-chinook.htm)

Meanwhile, veteran Idaho Statesman environment reporter Rocky Barker covered the subject in his article, *Along the Lemhi River Idaho Ranchers Making a Difference for Salmon*. Barker's observation of

the people behind the heroic attempts to save threatened and endangered species seems spot on. "...These guys aren't outliers. They aren't show ranchers. They are beef producers in a county where beef is the center of the economy." Read more of the article at <http://www.idahostatesman.com/>

In Memory of Fran Tonsmeire

Lemhi Regional Land Trust lost a founding visionary and a tireless advocate in November with the passing of Fran Tonsmeire. Prior to her husband Joe's passing in 2007, the husband-wife team led the creation of both Lemhi Regional Land Trust and River Discovery, a non-profit dedicated to strengthening cancer survivors through river adventures.

Joe and Fran successfully funneled their passions for rivers, people, ranching and conservation through the work of these two organizations.

Fran officially served on the LRLT board of directors from 2007 – 2013. Of her many admirable qualities, it is easy to remember her bright, contagious smile and matching dimples that hinted at her sense of fun and adventure. Fran coupled her



positive energy with a calming, grounding presence that made us all feel better to have her in the room. She offered wisdom and reasoning with a firm sense of loyalty to the mission of LRLT, which helped us to see through tough issues more clearly.

Her tenaciousness and courage were vital in building the

solid foundation of LRLT which is expected to last as long as conservation easements – in perpetuity. Fran not only had a clear vision for the exciting potential of private land conservation in our community, but she embodied a deep commitment to actively demonstrate what it means to care for the land and it's critters long before there was ever a land trust.

Fran's legacy will live on through her children, Amy and Seth, and through the permanent protection of their own land in the valley for generations to come. Our hearts go out to her family and we are left with a deep sense of gratitude for having known the lovely, kind and generous Fran Tonsmeire.

-- Kristin Troy

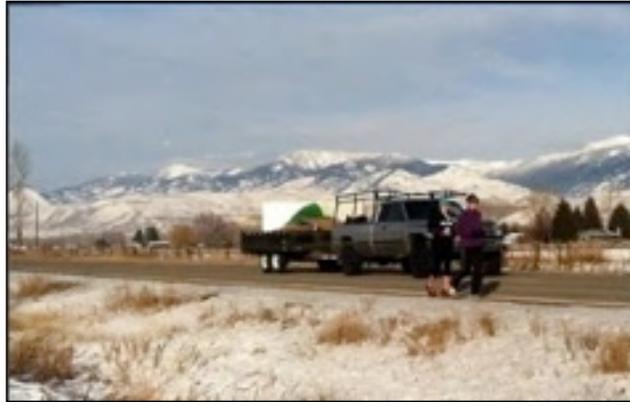


2L Trails: Lemhi County Feasibility Study Goes In-Depth on Highway 93 Corridors

The Lemhi County Trails Feasibility Study will examine a trail corridor along Highway 93 North and South.

After analyzing five candidate trails segments using an initial screening process, the highway segments emerged as the most feasible options, explained SVS director Gina Knudson. SVS is working with other professionals to conduct the study for Lemhi County under a grant from the Federal Highway Administration Western Federal Lands Division.

The five segments originally under consideration included Highway 93 South, Highway 93 North, Discovery Hill to Carmen Creek Road, the Salmon River corridor from Morgan Bar to the Fairgrounds, and the Salmon River corridor from the Idaho Fish and



Highway 93's narrow shoulder creates a hazard for people seeking a non-motorized option to town.

Game Carmen Access Site to Island Park.

"After interviewing landowners, we concluded the Salmon River trail sections will require extensive outreach, investment and time. The public and some of the landowners want to keep talking about these possibilities, but there's no doubt

that these are longer term prospects," Knudson said.

Likewise, Discovery Hill to Carmen has great public support, but some of the soils and slopes on Discovery Hill will pose an engineering challenge.

"The goal of this study is to put a project in the pipeline that is most likely to get constructed. Because a highway trail would get cyclists and pedestrians out of harm's way, these segments emerged as a priority at our public meeting in December."

The final study, expected to be completed in the spring, will include specific locations for the proposed trail, design specifications, estimated costs of construction and maintenance, and potential funding sources.

Lemhi County Hunger Summit Plans Underway

The Salmon Local Foods Group has grappled for years with the fact that for some people, a keen interest in food goes well beyond a love of gardening or gourmet dining. In too many cases, the interest is driven by hunger or food insecurity.

This realization led Salmon Valley Stewardship to approach the Corporation for National and Community Service with a proposal to enlist the help of three full-time VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) Volunteers to help fight hunger in conjunction with our local foods group.

Since August, Suzy Avey, Linda Cung, and Natalie Hughes have been helping local food banks, youth programs, seniors, schools, businesses -- you name it -- trying to address this serious community problem.

What they've seen is that while many people care about this issue and are trying to solve it as best they can, not much coordination is happening between these efforts. After attending a statewide Hunger Summit in Boise, the volunteers agreed to help organize a summit that is specific to the people and needs in Lemhi County. The summit is envisioned as a one-day event where participants walk away with a better understanding of who is working on hunger issues and at least start to put together a unified plan that makes the most of scarce resources.

Dates in early March are being considered. If you'd like to be updated as details are firmed up (or better yet, help us plan the details!), please contact Natalie at nataliehughes@salmonvalley.org or call her at 756-1686.

"If we can conquer space, we can conquer childhood hunger."

- Buzz Aldrin, Astronaut



New Website Makes Collaboration Easier

If a tree gets harvested in Hughes Creek and no one reads the monitoring data, did it still get harvested? The Lemhi Forest Restoration Group just stepped up the answer to these and other ridiculous questions with the launch of www.lemhiforest.org.

Years of Hughes Creek multiparty monitoring data and many other collaborative resources are now available online.

Sharing data effectively has been a challenge for collaborative groups across the country. Hats off to SVS's Michelle Tucker and Matt Heller from the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative for this huge accomplishment!

Rest of the Country Finds Out About Idaho's Outstanding Volunteers

In the Salmon River Valley, we weren't surprised to find out that Idahoans are extremely generous with their time. The annual "Volunteering and Civic Life in America" report found that more than 421,000 Idaho volunteers performed 62.3 million hours of service valued at over \$1.4 billion. Idahoans ranked 2nd in the nation for volunteering.

Two of our favorite examples of Idaho's rock star volunteers are Chuck and Mona Kempner. Octogenarians, this couple is the first to show up when a call for help is made. Chuck shared his secret to longevity with SVS director Gina Knudson recently. "I have two rules: 1) Keep breathing, and 2) Show up." Thank you Chuck and Mona inspiring a spirit of service in all of us!



Mona and Chuck Kempner volunteering at the SVS willow nursery.



Jody Brostrom and Anita Andrus taking tickets at the SVS Harvest Celebration.

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