



# openviews

**Our mission** is to protect the natural diversity and rural character of the Prickly Pear Valley and adjoining lands through voluntary and cooperative means. The Land Trust is dedicated to perpetuating the recreational, wildlife, scenic, agricultural and historic values of the land.

## Why It's Up to Us

by Sarah Jaeger, Board President



Recently I was on North Montana Avenue, driving south toward Helena. The sky was the silver violet of early winter behind the South Hills. As I looked at those snow-flecked hills behind the Capitol, I was struck—as I have been many times—by their quiet beauty, and I was grateful that thanks to the efforts of Prickly Pear Land Trust, the beauty of those hills will remain intact for generations to come.

A few years ago, with development pressure looming, PPLT began to explore ways to acquire the private property above the Capitol that is traversed by the popular Entertainment Trail (we all assumed that was public land, didn't we?). At first it seemed impossible—the cost of those lots—but through perseverance, cooperative landowners, ingenuity and a bit of luck, PPLT has come close to complete success. We have purchased more than 130 acres of land and transferred it to the City at no cost.

Furthermore, with loans (on very favorable terms) we have secured four more lots totaling 82 acres, which will also eventually belong to the public, providing scenic beauty, wildlife habitat and recreation. But, yes, I did say LOANS: more than \$400,000, and we only have a few years to pay them off. While we are strong candidates for some grant funds, we are also relying on our members to help us reach this goal.

Now PPLT is looking outward to our greater service area: Lewis & Clark, Broadwater, and Jefferson Counties, and the area around the Continental Divide in Powell County. With development pressure in our service area double that of the state overall, we believe we must be proactive to work with willing landowners on private land conservation easements. We have exciting projects in the works, in the Helena Valley and beyond, to preserve working agricultural land, riparian areas and wildlife habitat. We are in a very exciting collaboration to create trail corridors along Prickly Pear Creek as part of the ASARCO cleanup project.

PPLT is the only land trust focusing on this particular area. Because we are local, we can take on projects that are too small for other land trusts, but make a huge difference to our community. But this also means that we are the only ones who can do this work, and if we don't help conserve valuable open lands in our area, no one else will! It really is up to us to see to it that the qualities we so treasure here in our corner of the earth are preserved for the future.

We are grateful to you for the support you have given PPLT in its first 15 years. We hope that you will continue to support our work as we grow to meet new opportunities and challenges.

## Why It Matters NOW

by Andy Baur, Executive Director

Did you know that 2011 is PPLT's 15th year in operation? Looking back, it is pretty amazing to see where this organization has come in those 15 years—hundreds of volunteers mobilized, thousands of acres protected, tens of thousands touched by our work to protect open vistas, recreational access and wildlife habitat.

It has truly been a great 15 years. And PPLT's ability to survive and thrive over that time is due only to the consistent and generous support from you, our amazing members and donors.

But this is no time to rest on our successes—PPLT is at a crucial moment in its history—ready to go to the next level to meet the many opportunities and challenges ahead.

With our past successes in protecting places like the Spring Hill Claim Block and the Mount Ascension Ridge, we also have to remember that PPLT's service area is not just Helena but 7,500 square miles of some of the wildest, most productive and beautiful land in the wildest and most beautiful state in the lower 48.

Many of our partner organizations are doing some amazing work here. But it is PPLT's responsibility as the only local land trust to fill that special niche to meet the local community's and landowners' needs. This means protecting important open lands and stream corridors in the Helena Valley, securing better access to public lands and looking for new opportunities in places like the Boulder Valley or Canyon Creek. This means introducing PPLT to new communities, new audiences and landowners that we have not reached out to before.

Just this fall we took an important step in this direction when one of the most accomplished conservation practitioners in Montana, Ron Marcoux, agreed to join our staff putting his many years of experience with FWP and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to work to help PPLT cast its net farther than ever before. Welcome Ron!

But don't worry. Prickly Pear Land Trust will not turn its back on the projects and programs that have built this organization and why many of you are connected to us. PPLT will continue to target key parcels that connect our neighborhoods to our extensive public lands. And we will continue to add to and enhance the best trail system in the region so that more of our community has the same access to trails and open lands that many of us currently do. In short, for PPLT to thrive into the future we need to build a bigger tent to do projects that otherwise will not get done!

And, of course, all of that new canvas takes resources.

I can't emphasize enough how critical your investment in PPLT is to sustain our current work and to help this organization flourish into the future—to not only be Helena's land trust but all of Lewis & Clark County's land trust, and Jefferson County's land trust, and Broadwater County's land trust—you get the picture.

Can we do this in one year? No, but this is the time for PPLT to start the journey to the next level and your investment is so critical to help us get there. Please consider a generous year-end gift to help us meet our goals.

Thank you again for your help in making PPLT's first 15 years the success story that it was. You have built the foundation for the next 15 years and beyond.



# Making the Connection

THE STAFF AND BOARD of PPLT never cease to be amazed by the incredible generosity of our community at the Harvest Moon Banquet and Auction. Year after year, hundreds join us at the Civic Center to peruse high-end auction items, enjoy delicious food and drink, and help celebrate the incredible place we are so fortunate to call home.

We had many exciting packages on the block this year, including a trip to the Galapagos donated by Detour Destinations. In an amazing turn of events, PPLT's newest staff

member, Claudia Davis, won the trip. She's more than happy to support PPLT while enjoying all of the incredible opportunities available in Ecuador.

"I mentioned to my husband that a trip like that would be fun and he took me seriously. Jerry had not won an auction bid before and he was determined not to lose this one. We are excited to take the trip and to support Prickly Pear Land Trust now and in the future," said Claudia.

New this year, we brought in professional auctioneer, Kristine

Fladeboe, of Minnesota. She was a major factor behind the successful live auction, engaging and entertaining the crowd, and helping us to one of our most successful Call for Cash giving moments ever. The funds raised during the Call for Cash are going directly to help pay down the significant debt PPLT incurred in order to permanently protect the cherished Entertainment Trail corridor.

The incredible support of local businesses was a huge part of the success of the event. Because of the generosity of our corporate partners, the entire cost of hosting the banquet was covered. This means the cost of admission, drink and raffle tickets, and all winning bids go to work where it counts—on the ground! We truly value the commitment of our corporate partners. When you're out and about, please remember that these businesses support a cause you believe in.

We extend a hearty thank you to the many, many people who made this event a reality. Our hardworking volunteers, our auction donors, and our members and guests all played a key role in the success of Harvest Moon. The banquet is a great night that has a lasting impact on PPLT's ability to protect what we love about our area and to continue our work of "connecting land and people."

We look forward to seeing you at next year's banquet, so save the date—Harvest Moon 2012 will be held on September 22.

## We thank our Harvest Moon business sponsors

— PRESENTING SPONSOR —



— PLATINUM —



**Timothy C. Ballweber, DDS, MS**  
Creating Smiles for Over 25 Years



— GOLD —



— SILVER —



— BRONZE —

- Anderson ZurMuehlen**
- Crowley Fleck Attorneys**
- D.A. Davidson & Co.**
- Hub Coffee**
- Galusha, Higgins & Galusha**
- Helena Independent Record**
- Morrison Maierle**
- Sussex Construction**
- Taco Del Sol**
- Valley Bank**
- PPL Montana**
- Total Dynamic Balance**
- Hughes, Kellner, Sullivan & Alke PLLP**

### Volunteers Play Key Role in Harvest Moon

PPLT extends a huge thank you to all those who volunteered to help make Harvest Moon such a great event. Harvest Moon only happens with the tireless efforts of our committee and the volunteers the day of the event. We truly appreciate your support of our efforts by donating one of your most valuable resources—your time. Thank you!

#### The Harvest Moon Committee

- Mardell Ployhar, Volunteer Chair
- Stuart Segrest, Publicity Chair
- Maleen Olson, Arrangements Chair
- Jane O'Driscoll
- Candace Durran
- Liz Gerhart
- Chris Hunter
- Sarah Jaeger
- Jane Kollmeyer
- Bob Walker

#### The Banquet Volunteers

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Ana Pederson      | Joel Silverman     |
| Julieta Pederson  | Jon Morgan         |
| Andrew Chanania   | Kara Sperle        |
| Ann Gilbert       | Kathleen McElwain  |
| April Grady       | Katie Guffin       |
| Barb Furlong      | Leah Tietz         |
| Bill Wood         | Mardell Ployhar    |
| Candace Durran    | Mark Fowler        |
| Carolyn Keller    | Martha Vogt        |
| David Cole        | Mary Guokas        |
| Dawn Harmon       | Mary Madison       |
| Deb Sattler       | Michele Harrington |
| George McCauley   | Paula Jacques      |
| Grant Bronk       | Rachel Weiss       |
| James Colegrove   | Sarah Jaeger       |
| Jane O'Driscoll   | Theresa Green      |
| Jennifer Bezanson | Theresa Parkis     |
| Jim Greene        | Dave Risley        |

### The Helena Valley

## What's Out There?

Quite a lot, actually. Since our new Conservation Director, Ron Marcoux, came on board in September, he has hit the ground running. Ron and Land Protection Coordinator, Andrea Silverman, have been hard at work contacting landowners, visiting properties and mapping out strategies for protecting riparian corridors in the greater Helena Valley.

This effort is part of PPLT's initiative to increase its

conservation reach into a greater portion of its service area. This includes protection of agricultural lands and wildlife habitat. In addition, PPLT is committed to providing the same access to trails and open space that is enjoyed by those living near the South Hills. Currently, there are very few of these amenities available to those living in the Valley.

"The diversity of resources and conservation opportunities that

exist in the Helena Valley are amazing," said Andrea. "From productive ranches to intact riparian areas with incredibly productive fisheries, there is more to the Valley than meets the eye."

The timing for this effort is good for a number of reasons. First, there are funding opportunities from several sources including the Lewis & Clark County Open Space Bond and the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust. In addition,

as development pressure has slowed (likely temporarily) there may be more time to negotiate with landowners on prospective projects.

PPLT is excited to embark on this new initiative and looks forward to reporting our progress in future issues of Open Views. And please know that we can't do this without the help of our members and supporters. We appreciate your continued faith in our work.



Andy Baur

# Staff Transitions

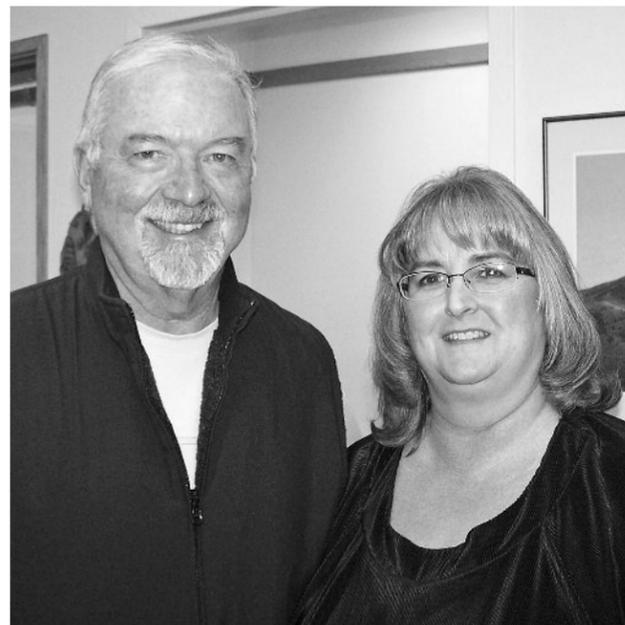
AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER, PPLT bid adieu to Joanne Martonik, our Administrative Services Coordinator for over two and a half years. Joanne was a key part of the team and led PPLT's exhaustive effort to develop its application for Land Trust Accreditation. In addition, Joanne tirelessly led coordination of our tremendously successful Don't Fence Me In trail runs and Harvest Moon banquets. Joanne is heading back East to be closer to family and hopes to continue working in the land conservation field. We already miss her and wish her luck in her future endeavors.

We are pleased to announce the addition of two new members of the PPLT team. **Ron Marcoux** joins us as our new Conservation Director. Ron

was with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks for over 20 years, completing his tenure there as the Deputy Director. Ron then spent 15 years with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, acting as the Senior Lands Program Manager before leaving to begin his own consulting firm in 2004. Ron's 40 years of experience in land conservation has already been a tremendous boost to PPLT's efforts to expand its conservation work to a larger swath of its 3½ county service area. Working closely with PPLT Land Protection Coordinator, Andrea Silverman, Ron is working to engage landowners in developing conservation projects, including protection of future trail corridors in the Helena Valley. It is an honor to have a veteran

conservationist like Ron bringing his expertise to our work.

Also joining the team is **Claudia Davis** as our new Administrative Services Coordinator. Claudia jumped in with both feet after Joanne's departure. Previously, Claudia managed a satellite office for Lifetouch NSS, a commercial photography company. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge as well as a hearty sense of humor which means she fits right in at the office. Claudia and her husband, Jerry, are longtime supporters of open



lands and access for hunting and fishing. Claudia also volunteers her time with numerous groups and clubs, and brings this spirit to her work here at PPLT.

Welcome aboard Ron and Claudia!

## Trails Season Wrap-up

Once again, PPLT was blessed to have another dynamite trail season. Our efforts to expand and improve the South Hills Trail System were rewarded with dozens of volunteers coming out to get their hands dirty and make a difference in the community.

Crews of helpers came out to provide crucial man- and woman-power on several key projects this year. In April, the re-route of the Archery Range Trail was completed, allowing a larger buffer between trail users and archers. As an added

bonus (at least to some), several nasty switchbacks were removed in favor of a more flowing trail alignment. May's project was a long overdue reroute of the very funky Reeders Village Trail. Again, several switchbacks were removed and the trail was widened and more sustainably routed. This trail connects South Park Avenue to the Dump Out Trail and accesses the lightly used east side of Mount Helena Park. Hordes of volunteers showed up on this beautiful spring night. We wonder if it had something to do with the fact that it was also PPLT's

community night at the Blackfoot River Brewery, where the trail crew headed after completing the reroute. (Thanks, Blackfoot!)

Perhaps the most ambitious project of the season was a long reroute of the Wakina Sky Ridge Trail (known as Bushwhack Ridge to some) on September 24. With help from the Montana Conservation Corps, this trail was constructed to bypass private lands while creating a new access to the Wakina Sky Meadow. You can

**Thanks again to all the amazing volunteers who showed up to make PPLT's trails program such a success.**

check it out by heading up Wakina Sky Gulch to the first two track road on the

right. The trail takes off from there and parallels the gulch as it heads up.

Thanks again to all the amazing volunteers who showed up to make PPLT's trails program such a success. We also thank the City of Helena and the Helena National Forest for their partnership and providing the opportunity to do this work.

*Give the gift of open space for the holidays*

### Looking for that unique and perfect gift idea?

Why not give a Prickly Pear Land Trust membership package! Share your excitement for open spaces and trails with your friends and family, and help us share our mission with others in our community and beyond.

We have three different packages available:

#### Package A: \$50

Knitted beanie, cloth tote bag, 2 license plate frames and a one-year membership to PPLT. (Retail value: \$85)

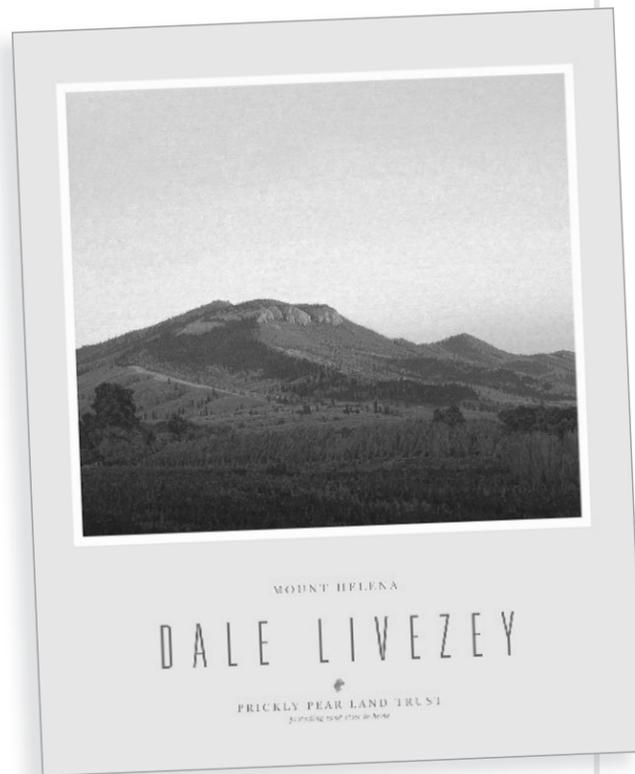
#### Package B: \$50

Ball cap, cloth tote bag, 2 license plate frames and a one-year membership to PPLT. (Retail value: \$81)

#### Package C: \$75

Includes all items in Package A or Package B plus a beautiful poster by Dale Livezey. (Retail value: \$113)

Give us a call at 406-442-0490 so we can prepare a gift package for you. Don't wait too long—the holidays are right around the corner!



### A Special Date for DFMI 2012

Don't Fence Me In 2012 is brewing already and planning will be getting underway soon for this ever-growing trail race. There is some good mojo around DFMI this year as it's the 12th race on the 12th day of May in 2012. For those of you who are into numerology, the 12th day of the month's "day number" is 3. The numerology of 3 makes one intelligent, hard working, diligent and honest; expecting punctuality, discipline and obedience.



Sounds like the makings of a hard core trail runner! So lace up your running shoes and get some runs in before the snow flies—Don't Fence Me In will be here before you know it!

### PPLT is Hiring!

Ever wanted to play a key role in the work of PPLT? We are seeking applicants for a part-time Events and Outreach Coordinator position. The successful candidate will have incredible attention to detail, the ability to work well with others, and has a flexible schedule.

Please refer to our website at [pricklypearlt.org](http://pricklypearlt.org) for a full position description.

### Farewell to long-time Board Members

PPLT was truly honored to have the service of **Terry Cohea** and **Tom Likens** on its board and is saddened to see them leave.

Serving on the board since 2004, Terry helped build a solid foundation for PPLT's governance and financial policies. She also provided critical guidance to the Executive Committee regarding crucial decisions related to PPLT's strategic growth. Terry had laser-like focus in meetings, resolving issues quickly and deliberately, and always treated everyone with graciousness and respect.

Tom Likens and his wife, Peggy, have both been huge supporters and volunteers for PPLT since the early 2000s. Tom's love of the trail system drew him naturally to the organization. Tom's skill with a GPS unit was extremely helpful in helping PPLT map and catalogue trails and trail marker locations in the South Hills. Tom's keen eye for finances was also critical in the board's decision-making process on many land transactions. Tom and Peggy will remain in Helena during the summer months

but will be spending more time hiking the trails of Sedona, Arizona in the cooler seasons.

### Thanks to Lands Program Volunteers!

A big thank you to Tony Smith and Sumner Sharpe for volunteering their time this summer to help Land Protection Coordinator, Andrea Silverman, with the annual monitoring of PPLT's conservation easements. These visits are an important part of PPLT's perpetual responsibility to protect these lands. They offer an opportunity to reconnect with landowners, verify that the terms of each easement are being upheld and discuss management strategies—and a good excuse to spend time on some beautiful properties! If you're interested in helping out next field season, please contact Andrea at 442-0490 or [andrea@pricklypearlt.org](mailto:andrea@pricklypearlt.org).

### What's on Your Plate?

PPLT is serving up style with its snazzy license plate! Do you have it on your wheels? If not, be sure to ask for it next time you register your ride. Remember—if it's not in stock, it's easy to order, so get yours now!



### PPLT welcomes new members

We're sure glad to have you on board. Membership dues are the backbone of our ability to complete important projects—thank you for supporting our efforts with a membership contribution.

- Mark & Nanette Annas
- Ashley & Richard Basten
- Kristian Blackwell
- Donna Campbell
- Todd & Connie Christofferson
- Jerry & Claudia Davis
- Kathleen Ely
- Constance Enzweiler
- Kirk Ermels
- Robert & Marylis Flipovich
- Daniel Gaughan
- Kathleen Gowen
- April Grady
- Michelle & Russell Hill
- Lisa Johnson
- Kimberly Kallestad
- Diana Koch
- Joe Kolman
- Carmen Kurushima
- Mary Leffers
- Georgia Lovelady & Mike Franklin
- Tom Mandeville
- Ron & Barb Marcoux
- Ananda L. Morse Abelin
- Laurie Neils
- Jane O'Driscoll
- Richard Opper
- Berma Saxton
- Sterling Smith
- Charlie & Tammy Sperry
- Tom & Colette Strizich
- Shaini Van Wyk
- Ann Waickman
- Levi Young & Traci Kalien

