

*Don't Fence Me
In Trail Run:
Recap!*

WOW!
We did it
a g a i n !

Thanks to the support and participation of many people, the hard work of countless volunteers and the generosity of local businesses, the Land Trust was again able to earn over \$20,000 for its work of protecting land close to home. We look forward to another great race on May 10th, so save the date!



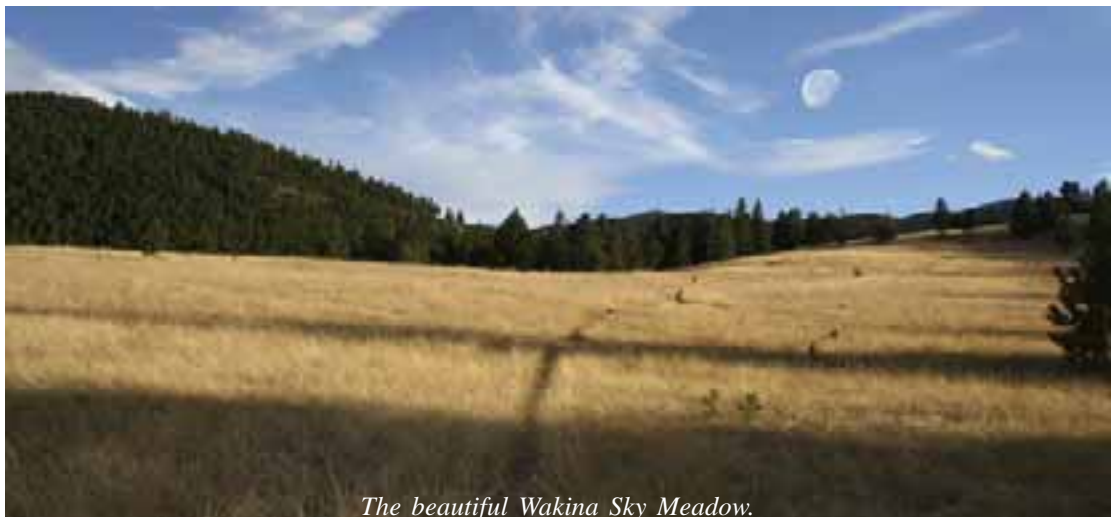
Work Worthwhile

Many of us used to say of Helena “It’s a well kept and treasured secret.” We were describing the good fortune of living in a community blessed with natural beauty, rich history and culture and an open and generous spirit.

Today, we hear more frequently that we’ve “been discovered”, a fact with positive and negative overtones. Well, it seems to me there are still many wonderful “secrets” about our community. Prickly Pear Land Trust’s work is one of them. We’ve not done a scientific survey but I’ll bet many if not most folks walking on Mt. Helena trails and on the wonderful south hills system don’t know what PPLT has done there. We’ve built and maintained new trails, purchased land or obtained easements to connect trails and preserve views. We’ve worked, sometimes over a several year period, to create public- private partnerships. This work has created treasures such as the 400+ acre Wakina Sky biker and hiker’s paradise

minutes from town. Further afield we continue to work with owners of large parcels to preserve working lands, clean air and water. Conservation easements on these properties are something that simply wouldn’t happen if PPLT weren’t here.

Another secret about PPLT is the “how” of these activities. Is there an anonymous billionaire supplying us money for day to day operations. Nope! Do we have a pipeline of grants dedicated to open lands and trails? We wish! What we do have is a small, hard working intensely dedicated staff; a multi-talented volunteer board; a selfless group of volunteer trail builders, walk guides, and fund raisers who make our mission possible. ...and we have a consistently generous membership, event attendees, and corporate sponsors. Please join us on **September 22, 2007** at the **Harvest Moon Banquet and Auction**. It’s our premier fundraiser and a thoroughly enjoyable evening. With your help, PPLT can help make our treasured secret even better. ~ *Guest Author Ken Eden*



The beautiful Wakina Sky Meadow.

Close to Home, Close to Heaven, Harvest Moon 2007

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The very best of everything is what we mean by “heaven” and that’s what is store for the 2007 Harvest Moon Banquet and Auction. Food, drink, music, exciting auction items and good friends will make this a heavenly event right here in your hometown of Helena.

What can you expect at this year’s banquet?

Tempting appetizers provided by Benny’s plus the home-touch of appetizers from Prickly Pear Land Trust volunteers. Blackfoot Brewery beer and other wines will be available for your enjoyment during the social hour. Enjoy a full course dinner with complementary

wine at every table. Select your entrée from Pesto Stuffed Chicken Breast with Tomato Cream Sauce, Slow-Roasted Pork Tenderloin topped with a Mildly-Spicy Apricot Chutney and a vegetarian option of Lasagna Rolls filled with Parmesan and Romano cheeses and topped with Homemade Marinara Sauce. Finish the meal with dessert from Park Avenue Bakery.

The annual Harvest Moon Banquet celebrates the success of preserving open lands around the Helena area. It’s a sell-out event that you don’t want to miss. Make your reservation (your reservation is your event ticket) now at the website www.pricklypearlt.org or by calling the office at 442-0490.

We Want You! and Your Pictures of Open Lands at Harvest Moon

There’s probably no better way to decorate the Civic Center than pictures of the beautiful lands around Helena. If you were at last year’s Harvest Moon, you know we had a continuous loop slide show of moon images. This year, we want to use your images of Helena open space.



Trails Coordinator Emmett Purcell enjoys the trails.



Mount Helena Kids’ Day

In keeping with our theme of “Close to Home, Close to Heaven,” send us your digital pictures that show how truly special open lands are. Pictures can be of vistas, your kids, friends or family, or pictures with agricultural or historical references— anything that shows the special relationship we have with the land around Helena.

Submit your high resolution digital pictures by September 4 to Megan Moore at megan.melissa.moore@gmail.com.

Working to Protect a Key Wildlife Corridor on the Divide: The Mullan Pass Project

PPLT is pleased to be working with a conservation-minded family to protect their 1,600-acre ranch along the Continental Divide near Mullan Pass. This spectacular property has been owned by the landowners' family since 1865. It is characterized by rolling grass meadows that give way to mountain slopes dominated with lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, spruce, subalpine fir, quaking aspen and fourteen natural springs. Approximately 5 miles of mountain streams flow through the property and are home to westslope cutthroat trout, moose, beaver, and a variety



The Mullan Pass Parcel

of birds. Violets, Indian paintbrush, and other wildflowers color the hillsides. Lynx, gray wolves, and grizzly bears have been known to use this special place in the last few years. This private land connects with other ranches, Forest Service, Montana state lands, and Bureau of Land Management lands, and is a key link between them.

The Mullan Pass Conservation Easement is vital to the ecological health of the wildlife and plant communities that thrive along the

Continental Divide. Additionally, this project protects an important traditional area for hunting and fishing, helping preserve an important Montana tradition. The beauty of this project is that the landowners know and value the importance of this land's wildlife, recreation and agricultural heritage and are pleased to see it protected forever.

We are presently fundraising to help cover the costs of obtaining the Mullan Pass conservation easement and are excited to conserve this beautiful landscape so close to Helena. This project will permanently protect traditional ranching uses, will prohibit development of the property, and ensure that it remains open space forever. We'll keep you updated as the projects progresses. If you would like to make a special

contribution to this project or have questions about this or conservation easements in general, please contact Diane Boyd, Land Protection Coordinator in the office at 442-0490.



The Board tours the parcel.

Maggie Moves On

We bid adieu to Maggie Engler, our Development Director. As a member of the PPLT team for a little over a year, Maggie did much to help us with our fundraising and land protection efforts. And she was a hoot to boot! She raised the bar for our Don't Fence Me In Trail Run and the Harvest Moon Banquet & Auction. In order to be closer to her home in Alberton, Maggie left PPLT in July to join the staff at the Women's Opportunity and Resource Development Center (WORD) in Missoula. We'll miss her at the office and wish her the best of luck with her new career.



Groups Come Together to Protect Wild Lands and Quiet Trails

Over the past year mountain bikers, horse groups, hikers and other non-motorized outdoor and conservation groups from the Helena and Butte areas have been meeting with the Montana Wilderness Association to hammer out a new agreement regarding non-motorized trail opportunities and proposed wilderness and backcountry areas along the Continental Divide between the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness and the Scapegoat Wilderness – about 240 miles long. The working group included representatives from: Highlands Cycling Club (Butte), Mile-High Back Country Horsemen, Helena Bicycle Club, MWA Wild Divide Chapter, Last Chance Back Country Horsemen, Prickly Pear Land Trust, Helena Trail Riders, Great Divide Cycling Team, Helena Outdoor Club and the Continental Divide Trail Alliance.

Of particular interest to Helena trail users is the long proposed Little Blackfoot Meadows wilderness and the connecting portions of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST). Mountain bikes are not allowed in wilderness areas as they are considered “mechanized transport” which is prohibited according to the enabling laws. In addition, proposed wilderness areas such as the Little Blackfoot are to be managed much like existing wilderness. This means that if MWA or other wilderness proponents wished to force the US Forest Service to manage Little Blackfoot as a wilderness, cyclists could be precluded from using the area even before it was designated.



MWA felt that forcing this issue would be a lost opportunity to work with other non-motorized recreation groups. Establishing a partnership of users could allow all parties to benefit by creating more opportunities for trail users. By relinquishing the use of the Little Blackfoot Meadows trail and short section of the CDNST, mountain bikers pushed for the designation of other routes in the area that would provide similar experiences. As a result, the group agreed to push for designation of trails that circumnavigate the meadows and offering more loop options from both the north side around the Kading Campground and trailhead, and the south side including White House campground and Cottonwood Lake. These new routes would be comprised of existing trails, restored historic trails and some new trail construction.

In addition to the trails rerouted around the Little Blackfoot Meadows, the group agreed to encourage additional non-motorized trail opportunities for bicyclists, equestrians, hikers to help complete the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail designated by Congress in 1978. This includes reconstructed portions of CDNST between MacDonal Pass and Bison Mountain Closer to home, the group recommends additions to the South Hills Trail system including a connection between the Mt. Helena Ridge Trail, the Brooklyn Bridge Trail and Tucker Gulch. (No specific route has been chosen as yet.) With the exception of some of the CDNST work scheduled to be performed over the next several summers, some of these recommendations need to go through the USFS travel planning process in which the public will be able to comment further.

All in all, this High Divide working group has not only created a comprehensive plan for the future of the Continental Divide trail system, it has successfully forged a partnership among diverse user groups and wilderness interests that will lead to the protection of thousands of acres of critical wildlife habitat while creating new trail opportunities for hikers, bikers and horse lovers.

For maps and more information and maps, please see wildmontana.org.

Land Trust's Membership on the Rise

PPLT is happy to introduce its newest member, Camille Elizabeth Nese, daughter of Heather, Admin. Services Coord., and her husband, Bill. She was born on the very lucky day of 07/07/07 at 8:28 am. Camille has already expressed her thankfulness for the foresight of the Land Trust and its members for protecting open space for hers and future generations. She's sporting her PPLT onesie, her membership premium. We welcome Camille and all new members of PPLT!



Trails update: Volunteers Persevere Through Smoke and Heat

The hot summer weather has not slowed down our trail crews. Indeed we are making great strides in completing new sections of trails around the South Hills. The Nob Hill open space has been the focus of several efforts. On June 18 a volunteer trail crew began construction of a new trail that will circumnavigate the "nob" as well as a spur to the top for some fabulous views of the Valley. The going was slow due to some very rocky terrain so a hearty crew from **HKM Engineering** took over and spent a hot Friday afternoon completing the first phase of the trail. HKM chose a PPLT trail project as way to give back to the community and we are grateful!

The Montana Conservation Corps crew got into the act by continuing the progress on the Nob Hill trail and reclaiming some of the old 4x4 trails scarring the hill. Towards summer's end, Eagle Scout Nick Gangler and his crew will put the final touches on the Nob Hill Trail for his Eagle Scout final project.

Speaking of Eagle Scouts, Ross Marty also chose a PPLT trail project for his grand finale in the troop. His crew got together on Saturday July 28 to begin work on the new west side connector trail to Mt. Helena. This trail will replace a popular access to the mountain on which a new home has been built.

Construction on the Hobbes Hill Trail began on July 16 as a volunteer crew lead by Emmett Purcell and his Corps of Pulaski started on the east end of this long awaited trail link. This Hobbes Hill trail will connect Lime Kiln Road and Mt. Ascension to Martinez Gulch and include some incredible views of the Valley and surrounding hills.



The hardy crew at work.

We are now in production on the long awaited trailhead kiosks and trail access markers. In the works for nearly four years, this project funded by the City of Helena, the FWP Recreation Trails Program and the US Forest Service, will provide trailhead information and maps to help guide trail users through the trail system. Jeff Schuller of Schuller Design and Graphics designed the graphic layout, Jamul Hahn of DJ & A created the beautiful GIS maps and local craftsman, Ross Thiessen is creating the structures. Look for them in the ground starting in September.

*We would like to extend a big THANK YOU to our
Harvest Moon 2007 Sponsors...*



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Reminder: Please be sure to visit our website at pricklypearlt.org. In addition to registering for Harvest Moon, you can learn about our current projects, trail work days and conservation tax benefits and well as the mission and values of the PPLT. Thanks!

PPLT Land Holdings Transferred to the City

Prickly Pear Land Trust recently deeded three parcels of land to the City of Helena to be added to park system. In 2003, long time PPLT supporter Pam Hackley donated several lots on Quarry Hill to PPLT. These lots abut other City open space and provide a key access to the Little Moab Trail to Mt. Ascension. The lots came to Pam through the estate of her mother, Dorothy. Pam donated the lots to PPLT to ensure they would stay open so trail access was preserved. Pam and her husband, Bob Lippman, currently live in Castle Valley, Utah but are still connected to the Helena community.

On Mt. Helena two one-acre parcels were added to Mt. Helena Park. Donated to PPLT by Ken & Liz Eden and Eric & Ellen Feaver, the addition of these parcels protect critical views of the mountain. Being adjacent to the Park, these high value properties could easily have been high-end homesites. The Edens and Feavers had the foresight to protect this important landscape and we all benefit from their generosity.

We thank Pam, Eric, Ellen, Ken and Liz for adding to Helena's incredible open space legacy.



City of Helena

PPLT Supported Through the State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign

We'd like to extend a big thank you to those state employees that have selected the Land Trust to receive donations through the state giving program! Your contributions are a great way to support our efforts!

The State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign (SECGC) encourages state employees to support the efforts of nonprofit organizations throughout the state by having a portion of their earnings deducted and sent to nonprofits of their choosing.

If you are a state employee, please consider contributing to PPLT through the SECGC. The campaign kicks off October 1st for the 2008 calendar year. Talk to your employer or call 406-444-3871. Thank you in advance for your support!

Coming September 22nd...Close to Home, Close to Heaven, Harvest Moon 2007...see inside for details.