



PRICKLY PEAR  
LAND TRUST

2015 ANNUAL REPORT





## mission

**Protect the natural diversity and rural character of the Prickly Pear Valley and surrounding lands in Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, Broadwater and Powell counties through voluntary and cooperative means. The land trust is dedicated to perpetuating the recreational, wildlife, scenic, agricultural and historic values of the land.**

**In support of our mission, the core values of Prickly Pear Land Trust define our organizational culture:**

- Support the enhancement and restoration of conservation values of strategically identified lands.
- Protect and steward strategically identified open spaces in perpetuity.
- Provide easy trail access and open spaces that interconnect our community for all to enjoy.
- Provide information to the community on resource conservation and open space issues.
- Conduct and communicate our business with openness and integrity.
- Serve those in our community who have interests in open space and conservation.
- Instill a connection with the land that fosters its permanent protection.



**We remain true to  
our roots — working  
alongside dedicated  
people to protect  
open lands for future  
generations.**

Dear Members, Volunteers, Supporters and Friends,

Thanks to each of you, Prickly Pear Land Trust saw through a successful leadership transition and continued to build on our conservation successes in 2015. In December, we completed the first phase of our 10-year Backdrop Initiative. Secured piece-by-piece, this landscape embraces our state capitol and boasts one of the best trail networks in Montana. Over the years, PPLT helped to grow Mount Ascension and Mount Helena natural areas which now rival the size of Central Park in New York City! Thanks to you, this public land will forever be a place where future generations will enjoy the outdoors.

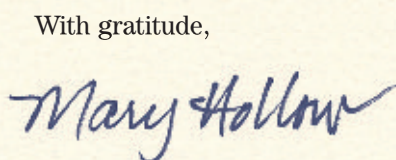
Our private land conservation work, aimed at key wildlife habitat and agriculture, grew with the protection of an easement at the mouth of the Wolf Creek Canyon — and even larger projects for 2016 promise key wildlife and working ranch conservation where it matters most.

Communities with robust land trusts thrive in many ways. Every day, PPLT works to improve our quality of life by protecting working agricultural land important to our state's economy and heritage, building new trails to make the outdoors more accessible to all and making active lifestyles an easy option. We live in Montana for many reasons, but one that remains consistent is the incredible beauty and connection to the lands and waters we love. There is so much joy in our world, but that joy becomes especially intimate when we watch kids enjoy the outdoors — splashing in water, skiing, fishing and playing on the trails. Forming connections to our lands and waters will forever lay important foundations for the values that our children will one day pass down to new generations. Every day and through the eyes of our youth, we can — and will — make our place better.

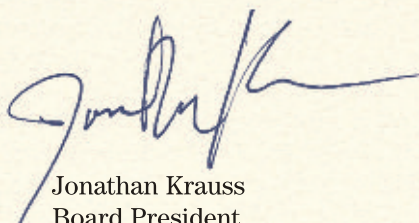
In 2016, PPLT celebrates its 20th anniversary, a milestone that deserves reflection and celebration. One of our first board members, when asked why the land trust was formed, will tell you, “We did it for the kids.” Starting with an original budget of \$25,000, our organization has grown and thrived through expanding community partnerships, volunteerism and support. Although we have grown and are preparing for our biggest year yet, we remain true to our roots — working alongside dedicated people to protect open lands for future generations. Join us this year, as we take community conservation to new heights with major land acquisitions that will connect our communities to our waterways, provide pivotal conservation education and open new outdoor recreation opportunities.

In 2015, PPLT saw more support than ever before. We can all see our world changing, but investing in lasting conservation will maintain the values we as Montanans hold dear. We are so deeply appreciative of the support of our partners, communities and volunteers that make this work possible.

With gratitude,



Mary Hollow  
Executive Director



Jonathan Krauss  
Board President





**What began as a neighborhood meeting in the living room of a Mount Ascension home changed the way Helena and the surrounding areas were able to protect the land and way of life so critical to Montana and the greater community.**

That small group of individuals volunteering their time has since evolved into a flourishing conservation organization that strives to protect our community's open space and recreational values and opportunities.

We owe our successes to those who laid the groundwork, to the community members who had vision and drive to help make our area's open space what it is today, something that we all enjoy and cherish.

We invite you to reflect on these past 20 years with us and to celebrate and look toward the future, one that is sure to bring more community conservation projects, more partners to the table and greater conservation value for our treasured region.



- **Genesis:** In 1995, the City of Helena's open space bond passed, enabling years of open space conservation and access!

- First living room meeting of the founders of Prickly Pear Land Trust.

- Hired the first paid employee, **Jerry DeBacker**.



- Played a critical role in bringing 180 acres on **Mount Ascension** into the city as a natural park.
- Permanently protected 122 acres of the **South Hills** skyline through a conservation easement, thanks to the generosity of the Wetherby family.
- Secured a conservation easement on a 34-acre parcel in the **Montana City** area to provide permanent protection to a small wetland and a public trail corridor.
- Developed, using volunteer labor and in cooperation with the Helena National Forest, a connector to the **Waterline Trail**.
- Completed the acquisition of 173 acres on Mount Ascension and 15 acres atop **Meatloaf Hill** to be later transferred to the city of Helena for its parks.



- Purchased the 457-acre **Spring Hill Claim Block** just south of downtown Helena.
- Received a gift of several lots on **Quarry Hill** with important trail connections to Mount Ascension trails.

1996

1997

1998

1999

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

- **First board meeting** on February 29.



- Protected 309 acres of prime wildlife habitat in the **Elkhorn Mountains** through conservation easements.

- Facilitated the transfer of 119 acres from the Bureau of Land Management to the **City of Helena** for its recreational parks.

- Purchased a 10-acre parcel and, in cooperation with the Helena National Forest and PPLT volunteers, developed a public trail providing access to the **Waterline Trail**.

- Received a gift of a 122-acre parcel that helped retain a **scenic public trail corridor** in the South Hills.



- Hired the first full-time employee, **Andy Baur**.
- Began serving as **trail coordinator** to the city of Helena.
- Collaborated with Montana Audubon, the Mikal Kellner Foundation for Animals and the city of Helena to acquire two and a half acres of **wetlands** in the Helena Valley.
- Facilitated the purchase of 40 acres at the crest of **Bompert Hill** and dedicated it to the city of Helena for its parks.
- Protected 160 acres of **key elk habitat** in the Elkhorn Mountains with conservation easements.

- Secured five acres on Mount Ascension for the city of Helena to allow for a **trail connection** to Bompert Hill.



- Produced the first **trail map** for the South Hills of Helena, demonstrating the breadth and opportunity of the backdrop of the city.
- Facilitated the acquisition of the **Swaney Parcel**, 13 acres of highly developable lands adjoining Mount Helena City Park, by the city of Helena.
- Secured a conservation easement on 75 acres of **prime winter elk habitat** adjoining state lands west of Helena.





- Added a full-time **Land Protection Coordinator** to staff, allowing increased focus on PPLT's private voluntary land protection program.

- Received the gift of two one-acre buildable lots adjoining the Swaney Parcel, which were added to **Mount Helena City Park**.

- Secured conservation easements on 251 acres of prime elk habitat adjoining the Helena National Forest in the **Elkhorn Mountains**.



- Purchased two key parcels at the base of Mount Helena to secure **trail access**.

- Transferred the remaining 157 acres of the Spring Hill Claim Block to the Helena National Forest.

- Protected an additional 20 acres of Mount Ascension to be included in the city of Helena's public open space and protecting a portion of the **Entertainment Trail**.

- Facilitated a **land exchange** of seven acres, enabling the extension of the Far East Trail and connectivity to the Eddy McClure Trail.

- Secured a conservation easement on a 670-acre ranch near **Wolf Creek**, protecting this working ranch forever.



- Protected an additional parcel on Mount Ascension that secured 20 acres and a significant portion of the **Entertainment Trail**.

- Conveyed four additional parcels on Mount Ascension (for a total of 10) to the city of Helena to be included in the **city's open space lands**.

- Acquired the 11th and final parcel in the first phase of the Backdrop Initiative.



- Donated 36 acres on **Prickly Pear Creek** to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to facilitate the opening of the Helena Valley's first Fishing Access Site on Upper Prickly Pear Creek.

- Acquired the 58-acre **Alpine Meadows** lot 21A on Mount Ascension to be conveyed to the city of Helena.

- Conveyed 400 acres in **York Gulch** to the U.S. Forest Service.

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015



*What's in store for 2016? See page 10.*



- Secured a conservation easement on 117 acres protecting the scenic and wildlife values of the **Mount Helena Ridge** just south of Helena.

- Purchased 40 acres on the summit of **Mount Ascension** for inclusion in Helena open space.

- Became host organization for the **Montana Association of Land Trusts**.

- Transferred 301 acres of the **Spring Hill Claim Block** to the Helena National Forest.

- Led the effort for the coalition to get the **Lewis and Clark County Open Space Bond** passed, bringing new opportunity for open space and recreational protection in the county.

- Purchased 45 acres on Mount Ascension to be included in public open space, protecting a portion of the popular Entertainment Trail.

- Secured a conservation easement on an **historic 1,500-acre ranch** near Mullan Pass, protecting critical wildlife habitat.



- Conveyed the sixth lot in the **Alpine Meadows** subdivision to the city of Helena for inclusion into Mount Ascension Natural Park.

- Secured a conservation easement on 260 acres of native grassland, agricultural land and a mile of **Sevenmile Creek**, and a donation of 10 acres of beaver pond wetlands near Birdseye.

- Protected 266 acres in the Helena Valley — 230 acres of agricultural land, wildlife habitat and scenic open space that were protected through a conservation easement and 36 acres that later became the first **public fishing access site** on Prickly Pear Creek in the valley.

- Accepted the generous donation of a key two-acre parcel along Prickly Pear Creek — the first acquisition of the **Helena Valley Heritage Initiative**.

- Secured 20 more acres as part of the **Helena Backdrop Initiative** — leaving only one more parcel to go!

- Gained **national accreditation** from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent entity of the Land Trust Alliance. PPLT was among the first 10 percent of land trusts accredited in the nation.



- Completed the 500+ acre **Johnston Easement** at the confluence of Big Sheep Creek and Little Prickly Pear Creek, protecting important riparian areas, critical wildlife habitat and beautiful open space.

- Transferred over 150 acres of Mount Ascension to the city of Helena, the **largest single transfer** in PPLT history, thus marking the completion of phase one of the Backdrop Initiative.

- Worked with **250 volunteers** for a total of more than 1,200 volunteer hours to build and maintain trails in the South Hills.

- Began the feasibility study on the **Prickly Pear Creek Greenway**, bringing the connection between Montana City, East Helena and the airport one step closer to reality.



# for the love of trails

**Year after year**, volunteers come out en masse to help Prickly Pear Land Trust build new trails and maintain those that they love. With the help of these hard-working volunteers, PPLT had another productive trail work season in our 15th year as manager of the city of Helena's South Hills Trail System. In addition to usual summertime maintenance, PPLT and volunteers added over a mile of new trails to the system, including the Arrowroot Trail, which connects the Arrowroot parking area with the Entertainment Trail on Mount Ascension.

During 2015, PPLT hosted 24 events that involved more than 250 volunteers and provided nearly 1,200 hours of labor. Hats off to all the volunteers who reported maintenance needs or contributed their labor or other commitments to the trail system we all enjoy. Specific thanks go to Boy Scout troops

#214 and #208 who completed new sections of trails including the Arrowroot connector and the connection of a social trail to the Old Chevy Trail on Mount Helena. We also want to thank all the volunteers who attended PPLT's Trail Workdays, not only the individual volunteers but also groups representing Girls Thrive, Helena Dynamos, Carroll College, World Montana, Deloitte Consulting, both Helena middle schools, and PPLT's Adopt-a-Trail and Trail Committee volunteers. The Montana Conservation Corps provided invaluable professional assistance and volunteer efforts. In addition, PPLT was pleased to lend our trail-building expertise and tools to an Eagle Scout project at the Forestvale wetlands.

Weed control continues to be a topic of concern to trail users, land managers and PPLT. The city of Helena was essential in offering its



Corey Baker

professional expertise at the annual Weed Pull event and in its involvement with the Noxious Weed Trust Fund for weed control activities, as was the Helena National Forest in its contribution of weed spray chemicals.

PPLT continues to work with the city of Helena, the Helena and Lewis & Clark National Forests, private landowners and the Bureau of Land Management. Each entity has its own goals for its property, and PPLT attempts to identify public needs and coordinate the trail system across all ownerships. We continue to refine the signage inventory (new and replacement) and provide coordination with other groups engaged in wayfinding signage that includes access to trailheads.

Other 2015 trail highlights include the International Mountain Bike Association's recognition of Helena's trail system as a silver level ride center. We also helped host more than 100 middle-schoolers for another successful Mount Helena Kids' Day.

**2015 was PPLT's 15th year as manager of Helena's South Hills Trail System.**

**Hats off to all the volunteers who contributed their labor or other commitments to the trail system we all enjoy.**

"I enjoy the outdoors very much, and the trail system provides a wonderful opportunity to hike and bike. As a result, it was a privilege to build a trail as an Eagle Scout project. The trail connected areas otherwise difficult to get to, so I was happy to serve others who also enjoy the Helena trail system. The expert trail builders from the Prickly Pear Land Trust provided the project, the knowledge to build the trails and the tools to make the work go quickly. All at the Prickly Pear Land Trust, especially Mr. Rasmussen and Emmett, were most helpful and encouraging. They have a spirit for joyful service that is contagious."  
—Walter Evans,  
Eagle Scout volunteer



Bruce Capdeville



# backdrop initiative benefits all

**Since 2006**, PPLT's Backdrop Initiative has contributed greatly to the open space needs of the Helena community. PPLT proudly closed out 2015 with the completion of the first phase of this initiative, conveying four lots totaling more than 150 acres to the city of Helena for inclusion in Mount Ascension Natural Park. This transfer expanded the park to a little over 900 acres, essentially doubling the size of the park's initial footprint.

This newly preserved area supports portions of our South Hills Trail System and provides critical habitat for numerous wildlife, bird and plant species. This could not have occurred without the significant contributions of generous landowners, the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Recreational Trails Program and the Lewis and Clark County Open Space Bond.

PPLT will continue to pursue opportunities for expansion of the park area and will work to preserve public access throughout the trail system. These activities will benefit all trail users (hikers, bikers, runners, snowshoers, dog-walkers, photographers, etc.), as well as wildlife and other open space needs.

"Of all the reasons to live and own a business in Helena, the South Hills Trail System is among the top. On a personal level, the trails provide endless opportunities to recreate and spend time with my family. And as a business owner, I appreciate the economic boost the trails bring to this community. They are always a great incentive in recruiting and retaining employees."  
—Chelsey Frank, President, George's Distributing

**This newly preserved area supports portions of our South Hills Trail System and provides critical habitat for numerous wildlife, bird and plant species.**



# a vision for linking communities

**Since the mid-1800s**, Prickly Pear Creek has been impacted by mining activities, agriculture and development. Despite these impairments, the creek and its riparian area provide significant ecological benefits that support populations of brown and rainbow trout as well as native fish species, many different birds and a multitude of other wildlife. From a recreation standpoint, the creek corridor offers a beautiful place to get away from urban life for fishing, walking and wildlife viewing. Since the stretch of Prickly Pear Creek from Montana City to East Helena is closely linked with both communities, the creation of public access and further ecological restoration would provide great benefit to the citizens of the entire region.

Many years ago, Ash Grove Cement Company in Montana City established the Sunderland Park and Trail to benefit area residents and offer a place for them to recreate and enjoy the outdoors. There is currently just over a mile of trail in place starting across from the Ash Grove Plant headquarters and heading north along Prickly Pear Creek.

Prickly Pear Land Trust proposes to extend this trail south to the school and existing trails in Montana City, as well as north to East Helena and west to the airport, where it would link to the existing trail there. These extensions would create at least seven miles of new trails, link the communities of Montana City and East Helena and tie into more than six miles of existing commuter trails. This would allow for alternate ways to travel between all three towns, as well as create longer loop trails, some of which will provide ADA accessibility.

PPLT was awarded funding from the Natural Resource Damage Program (NRD) Early Restoration Fund in 2015 to initiate a planning and visioning process for the trail corridor with the help of an engineering and planning firm. The CTA group out of Bozeman was retained in late 2015 to conduct the feasibility study itself. They have been meeting with landowners and stakeholders, looking at everything from constraints imposed by highways and railroads to stream restoration opportunities, developing a conceptual design for the future trail corridor and conducting public outreach to get input on the design from area residents. The final report for the Prickly Pear Creek Greenway will be ready this fall.

“The East Helena School District has always been a proponent of healthy lifestyles. The great thing about the walking paths being explored by the PPLT is that it ties directly into the Safe Routes to School sidewalk project that was completed 10 years ago and the walking paths and tracks already built by the East Helena School District. Expanding the places to walk in our community gives us a way to be grounded and connected to our community.”  
– Ron Whitmoyer,  
Superintendent of East Helena Public Schools

**The creek and its riparian area provide significant ecological benefits and offer a beautiful place to get away from urban life for fishing, walking and wildlife viewing.**



# easement marks strong conservation ethic

**Prickly Pear Land Trust** proudly completed its 16th conservation easement in March 2015, bringing the amount of private land protected by the land trust to 4,200 acres. Thanks to the vision and dedication of landowner Don Johnston and his family, more than 500 acres at the confluence of Big Sheep Creek and Little Prickly Pear Creek are now permanently preserved. The property contains grasslands, forest, beaver ponds and riparian areas that provide valuable wildlife habitat for the trout, elk, deer, moose, bighorn sheep, bears, mountain lions, wolves, bobcats and many bird species that frequent the property. This habitat is also important in terms of wildlife connectivity, allowing a variety of species to travel up and down the nearby Continental Divide and interact with other populations.

The Johnstons have worked hard over the last decade to care for their land, and they've partnered closely with the Wirth family on the neighboring Rocking Z Ranch to reach that goal. This has meant everything from careful grazing of horses and cattle, to stream restoration, riparian fencing and eliminating noxious weeds. The new conservation easement is the result of many years of deliberation and discussion between the two families and reflects their strong collective conservation ethic. In fact, the 1,000-acre Rocking Z Ranch has been protected by a conservation easement since 1995.

Funding for the purchase of the conservation easement came from the Lewis and Clark County Open Space Bond and a donation of value from the Johnston family. PPLT felt that this project was a great fit with the Open Space Bond criteria, meeting four of the six objectives: conserving working farms and ranches, protecting habitat for fish and wildlife, protecting water resources and water quality, and preserving open lands and natural areas. The ranch is currently used for residential, low-impact recreation, guest ranching (in association with the Rocking Z Ranch), irrigated hay production and grazing. The terms of the conservation easement are designed to be flexible enough so that the conservation values of the property will be protected, while also allowing future landowners different ways to earn their living off the land.

Located in a quiet corner of the Little Prickly Pear Valley, it's exciting to think that this landscape will still look much the same 200 years from now. Looking back on the valley's history is equally intriguing. A local historian believes that Captain William Clark and Sergeant John Ordway of the Lewis and Clark Expedition walked up this valley in July 1805. Jesuit priests owned a ranch here in the 1860s, and the Hilger family spent their first years in Montana living on that property. In 1869, the family helped build the Hilger-Johns Toll Road from the lower Little Prickly Pear Canyon to Silver City on the Mullan Road, saving a long journey over the mountains to the south. Then Colonel Broadwater built the Montana Central Railway through this canyon in 1886. The Wirth family has lived in this area since the early 1940s, and the third and fourth generations now actively steward the land.

All in all, the beautiful land of the Johnston Easement encompasses a truly Montana story, and one that we are proud to be a part of.

The property is important in terms of wildlife connectivity, allowing a variety of species to travel up and down the nearby Continental Divide and interact with other populations.

"A conservation easement became a tool in the Rocking Z Ranch's tool box that resulted in our family's ability to continue into the future. I have a belief that agriculture is the best use of that land and I wanted to maintain a low ag value when the property passes down to the next generation. I wanted to reduce family pressure to add another home site. And, I wanted to enhance the complementary aspect of the agriculture to wildlife relationship."  
— Zack and Patty Wirth

**This project is a great fit with the Open Space Bond criteria, conserving working farms and ranches, protecting habitat for fish and wildlife, protecting water resources and water quality, and preserving open lands and natural areas.**



John Lambing



## 2016: what's in store

### 2016 started off with a bang and set us in motion for our biggest year yet.

We kicked off our Peaks to Creeks project — which was identified by the national Land Trust Association as one of the best examples of Community-Based Conservation in the nation. Community-Based Conservation means something for everyone, which is exactly what this project has. New commuter routes connecting to the Centennial Trail, access to Tenmile and Sevenmile creeks, outdoor education opportunities for our area youth, and new trails for all are just a few benefits of this initiative. This project also achieves major goals for Fort Harrison, veterans in our community, access for individuals with disabilities, and connections to the growing user-base at Spring Meadow Lake State Park. Conservation is important to all Montanans, and projects like this embody the goals of Prickly Pear Land Trust.

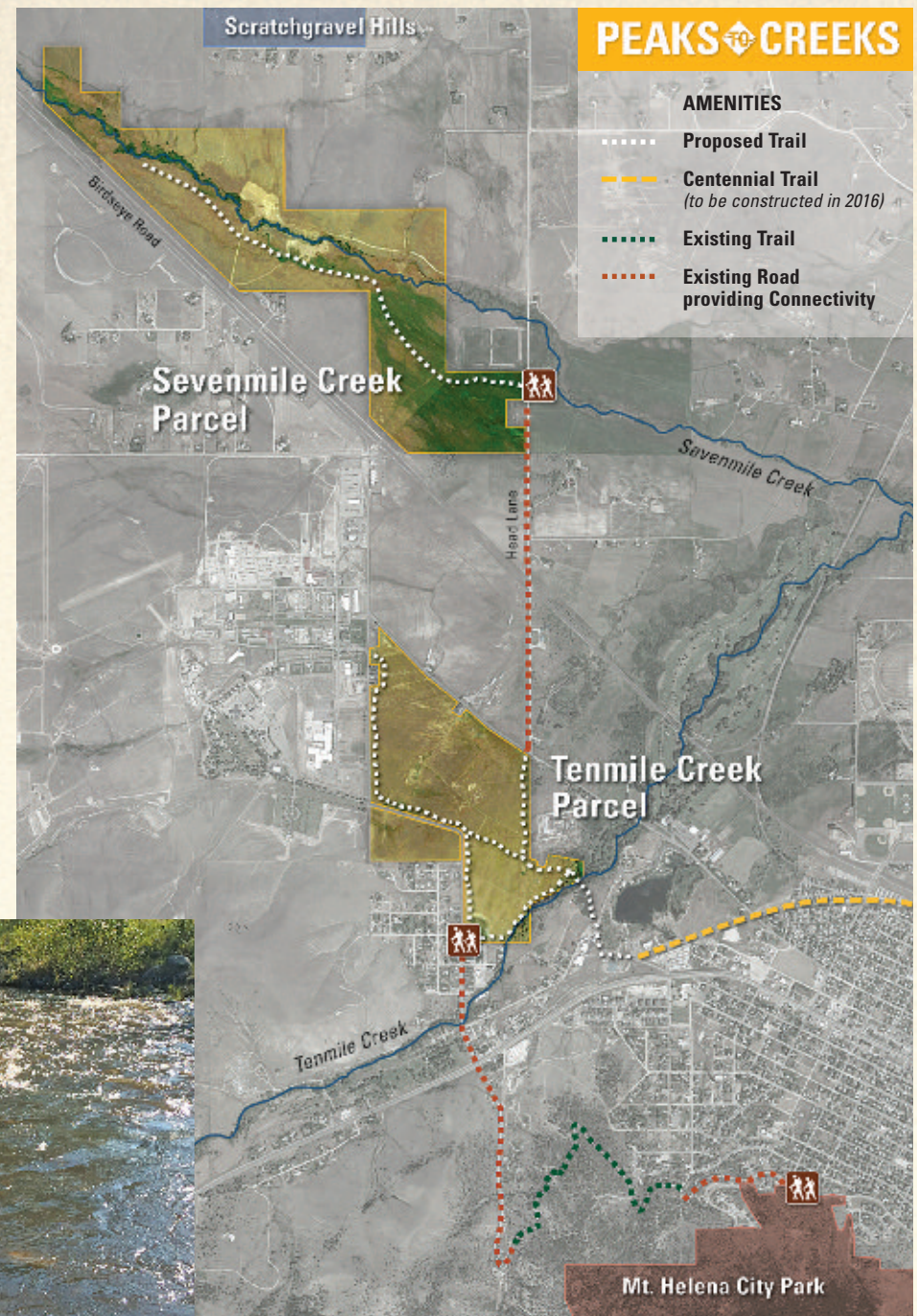
Alongside this transformational project and continued work on the Prickly Pear Creek Greenway (see article, p. 8), we are working on two very strategic private land conservation projects — the largest that we've ever undertaken. These projects will protect open space, working farm/ranch operations and critical wildlife habitat and corridors in our service area. Private land conservation is one of many “tools in the toolbox” land trusts use in places where agriculture is the main economic base and where those operations have key habitat for the species that Montanans embrace — elk, mule deer, bears, wolverines, lynx and bird species of all types.

Prickly Pear Land Trust will continue our stewardship of the South Hills trail system, maintaining and building trails right out our backdoor that provide outstanding community health options, a boost to Helena tourism and the positive economic impact that comes with it. We are thrilled to continue to work with our partners in the South Hills and to open up doors for new and exciting partnerships through Peaks to Creeks and the Prickly Pear Creek Greenway. Here's to a phenomenal year ahead!

**Community-Based Conservation means something for everyone... projects like this embody the goals of Prickly Pear Land Trust.**



Mary Hollow



The Peaks to Creeks project includes access to Tenmile and Sevenmile creeks.



# planned giving: the key to our future



Eliza Wiley

**With a growing budget** and bigger projects than ever before, PPLT is focusing on our long-term sustainability and financial strength. We have continued to work toward building our endowment — the best tool for this goal — and ask that each of our supporters consider your giving options, and whether a legacy gift to the land trust is right for you.

## Giving options

### Outright gifts

- provide immediate support
- may be funded with cash, securities or real estate
- provide income tax deduction and other possible tax savings

### Life-income gifts

- provide an income stream for you and/or a loved one
- may be funded with cash, securities or real estate
- provide income tax deduction and other possible tax savings
- qualify for recognition in PPLT's Summit Club

### Estate gifts

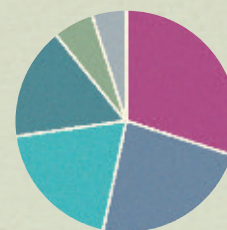
- transfer to us after your lifetime
- include bequests and retirement plan gifts
- allow continued use of your assets
- provide charitable estate tax deduction (bequests)
- qualify for recognition in PPLT's Summit Club

**Please contact the PPLT office at 406-442-0490 to talk about your giving options today.**

## 2015 financial summary

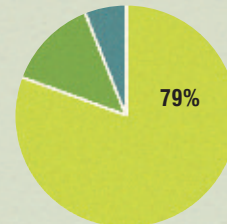
<b>Fiscal year ending December 31, 2015</b>	Total assets .....	\$1,158,738
	Liabilities .....	\$ 45,461
	Net assets .....	\$1,113,277
	Unrestricted net assets .....	\$ 879,824
	Restricted net assets .....	\$ 233,453
	Conservation land held .....	\$ 407,752
	Investments .....	\$ 412,247

## Revenue



Donated conservation easements ...	\$ 360,000
Grants .....	\$ 279,261
Fundraising events .....	\$ 233,516
Dues and contributions .....	\$ 195,305
Investments and other .....	\$ 70,803
Sales and program fees .....	\$ 57,954
<b>Total Revenues .....</b>	<b>\$1,196,839</b>

## Expenses



Trails and conservation programs ...	\$1,168,158
Fundraising .....	\$ 219,198
Administration .....	\$ 95,585
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$1,482,941</b>

## Notes

Prickly Pear Land Trust is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

This financial information has not yet been audited.



## 2015 grantors

The Turner Foundation  
Natural Resource Damage Program  
Helena Outdoor Club  
Missouri River Resources Advisory Committee  
Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust

The Cinnabar Foundation  
The Helena High School Green Group  
Western Conservation Foundation  
Fanwood Foundation  
Army Compatible Use Buffer Program  
Lewis & Clark County Open Space Bond

## 2015 partners

### Big thanks go to the organizations and partners we worked with on land protection projects in 2015:

Buck MacLaurin & Wilmac Corp.  
City of Helena, Parks and Recreation Dept.  
CTA  
Don Johnston  
First Montana Title Company  
Friends of the Centennial Trail  
Helena Abstract & Title Company  
Helena National Forest  
HOLMAC (Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee  
Hydrosolutions, Inc.  
Kim Colvin, Terra Western Associates  
Lewis & Clark County  
Lewis & Clark County Commission  
Lewis & Clark County Open Space Bond  
Citizens' Advisory Committee  
Montana Association of Land Trusts

Montana Conservation Corps  
Montana Dept. of Justice Natural Resource Damage Program  
Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust  
PPLT Trails Committee Volunteers  
Richard & Naomi Jones  
Tim Moore, Moore Appraisals, Inc.  
Travelers for Open Land  
USDA Forest Service  
Westech Environmental Services, Inc.  
Boy Scouts of America volunteers  
C.R. Anderson Middle School volunteers  
Carroll College volunteers  
Deloitte volunteers  
Helena Dynamos volunteers  
Helena Middle School volunteers  
World Montana volunteers

## new members

Katherine Aldrich  
Teresa Asleson  
John Begley  
Richard & Drea Brown  
John Burbidge  
& Claire O'Connell  
Chris Caniglia  
Russ Cargo  
Mitch Carroll  
Doug Compton  
Donald Cornish  
Ann Curlee  
Eric Dahlgren & Joslyn Hunt  
Allison Dale-Riddle  
Mary Dalton  
Carl Deitchman  
& Bob Morgan  
Chad Dexter  
James Edmunds  
Chris Emerson  
Energy Laboratories, Inc.  
Dr. Thomas & Lisa Evans  
Judy Fay & Philip Campbell  
Chelsey & Mike Frank  
Mary Gray  
Cheryl Grey

Don Grinsell  
Amy Hall  
Leah Hathaway  
Anna & Nicholas Hill  
David & Laura Holien  
Melissa Hornbein  
Philip Howeth  
Donald Jacques  
Donna Jensen  
David Johnson  
Mark Kreisberg  
Chad & Lindsey Krywaruchka  
Tobie Lienes  
Dan Lloyd  
Mindy McCarthy  
Ann McLaughlin  
Betsy Miller  
Julie & Doug Mitchell  
Richard Moisey  
Louise Moore & Halden Aasen  
Gerard Murphy  
Rita Nason  
Greg Normandin  
Glenn & Courtney Oppel  
Cara Orban  
Shawn Pennartz

Mathew S. Pettit  
Karen Amy Pfeifer  
Elizabeth Richardson  
Rennan & Deborah Rieke  
Michael Roberts  
Paul Roos  
Mark & Andrea Scherting  
Christiana Schweitzer  
Bev Sickert  
James Skinner  
Howard Skjervem  
Sarah Slapnicher-Lyytinen  
Mark M. Smith  
Jim & Colleen Stone  
Sugar Salon  
Derek Sullivan  
Drew Swayne  
Joleen Tadej  
The Drake Law Firm PC  
Paula Thiede  
Ben Tintinger  
Melanie Trost  
Elizabeth Walton  
Derek & Marci Williams  
Mike & Laura Williamson  
Steven Zehntner

## 2015 donors

### \$2,500 and above

Dick & Margaret Anderson  
Anderson ZurMuehlen & Co.  
Dave & Sandi Ashley  
Betsy & Andy Baur  
John & Debra Beaver  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana  
Derek Brown & Tia Nelson  
Russ Cargo  
The Elizabeth & Michael Cummings Charitable Foundation  
Andrew & Leah Cupino  
First Interstate Bank  
Heather Grahame & Ken Ford  
Great Divide Cyclery  
Barb Howe & Jim Hunt  
Jane Kollmeyer & Terry Chute  
Ron & Barb Marcoux  
LeRoy & Diana Schramm

### Andrea & Joel Silverman

Specialized Bicycle Components, Inc.  
The Speyer Family Foundation  
Sullivan Financial Group  
The Boeing Company  
Timothy Ballweber Orthodontics  
Jim & Cindy Utterback

### \$1,000 – \$2,499

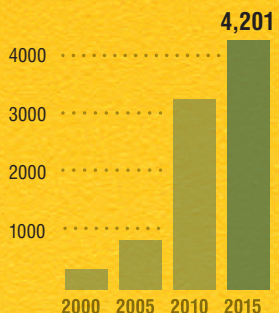
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### Special thanks to all of our conservation easement landowners

#### Cumulative Easement Acres



Thanks to the vision and dedication of landowner Don Johnston and his family, more than 500 acres at the confluence of Big Sheep Creek and Little Prickly Pear Creek are now permanently preserved (story on p. 9).

Andrea Silverman



**“Including Prickly Pear Land Trust in our estate planning was an easy decision for us. It’s a local organization doing local conservation projects that we can enjoy on a daily basis and will be enjoyed in perpetuity. We also love the energy and dedication of the staff at PPLT.”**

**– Renee & John Kowalski**



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**“Our children grew up exploring the hills. We didn’t know that when we worked to save open space that it would become PPLT as it is today. We just did it for the kids... and grandkids too.”**

**–Russ & Karen Cater**

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**“We love teaching our children through interacting with the outdoors—trail running, hiking, and mountain biking. We are grateful for PPLT's foresight in conservation.”**

—Cassie & Daniel Trost

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PPLT staff, board, and members work together to connect land and people.

Our membership is the backbone of our success and we're grateful.

As a member, you'll receive our newsletter three times a year, as well as special notices about our projects and successes. But most important, you'll receive the priceless benefit of knowing you can help protect the rural character of Helena and surrounding communities.

Please use the attached envelope or visit [www.pricklypearlt.org](http://www.pricklypearlt.org) to make your membership contribution today.

**thank you!**

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Prickly Pear Land Trust is proud to be the fiscal sponsor of the Montana Association of Land Trusts (MALT). Created in 2005, MALT is a group of 12 separate nonprofit land trust organizations working on private land conservation and voluntary conservation agreements throughout Montana. MALT, headquartered at PPLT's offices in Helena, helps to coordinate association membership to achieve legislative, administrative, communications, and policy goals.

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On the cover: Sunset  
over Helena's South Hills,  
from Mt. Helena.  
Kevin League Photography  
Inset: Corey Baker