



A TRAIL TO REMEMBER

New loop honoring a brother's life opens at Tenmile Creek Park

FRANK GRUBER WAS JUST FOUR YEARS OLD when his brother William "Bill" Gruber left their home in Toston to join the Civilian Conservation Corps. Just six years later, Frank and his seven remaining siblings learned that their brother died at the Cabanatuan POW Camp after serving in World War II in the Philippines and suffering through the Bataan Death March.

Frank, now 84 and the youngest of the Gruber siblings, says he mostly remembers Bill through the stories his older brothers told him. "They said he was mechanically inclined," Frank said. Frank remembers hearing a story of a "bullgine" the brothers cobbled together from a weathered Model T and the rare chassis of a solid rubber-tired chain drive truck.

Seventy-five years have passed since Bill's death, but Frank and other family members never gave up hope of bringing Bill's remains back home to Montana for a final resting place. When Bill died, his remains were buried at the Cabanatuan POW cemetery along with the remains of 10 others who died that same day. "We visited that cemetery," Frank said. But the exact location of Bill's remains was a mystery until earlier this year when his remains were positively identified through DNA testing.

In August of this year, Bill Gruber returned to Montana in a casket draped with an American flag. A memorial was held in his honor at St. Helena Cathedral before he was laid to rest, with full military honors,

at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Cemetery near Boulder.

"It was a closure to us," Frank said, "to think that he is home."

Frank said he and his wife of 64 years, Bonnie, visit Bill's grave in Boulder, but now Frank and Bonnie have a place closer to their Helena home to honor Bill's memory. Recently, the William Gruber Memorial Loop was completed at PPLT's Tenmile Creek Park. The 1.7-mile trail begins across the

street from the VA Hospital and connects with the Creek Loop trail.

Along the William Gruber Memorial Trail will be a plaque with these words: "William Dawson Gruber was

born on January 25th, 1920, in Townsend, Montana. The third child born to Ed and Dora Gruber, he attended schools in Toston and Townsend while being raised on their ranch in the Crow Creek Valley. He enlisted in the Army Air Force in October of 1940 and was shipped out to the Philippines one year later. He survived the Bataan Death March and later died from inanition in a Japanese prison camp on September 27th, 1942. His remains were identified and returned on August 8th, 2017, and are now interred with his parents at St. John the Evangelist Cemetery in the Boulder Valley. May God grant him eternal peace."

The Gruber family has been a great partner to PPLT. Until about six years ago, Frank owned the Head Ranch (which included

what is now PPLT's Sevenmile Creek parcel). Frank approached PPLT about placing a conservation easement on about 400 acres of the property, but the details of the easement were never finalized and the Grubers ended up selling the ranch.

When PPLT acquired the Peaks to Creeks land, which includes Tenmile Creek Park and the Sevenmile Creek parcel, in 2016 with financing help from the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program and The Conservation Fund, Frank was paying attention.

"I read in the paper that PPLT was building a trail," Frank said. "I thought it would be a good place to leave a memorial to my brother."

Frank contacted PPLT Executive Director Mary Hollow and several ideas were tossed around.

"I didn't have a specific thing in mind," Frank said. "I was going to make a donation with the idea that

something would be named after him."

As Tenmile Creek Park evolved, Frank became instrumental in helping things come together — from securing a good deal on the decomposed granite used on the trails to planning the parking lot.

"One goal for Tenmile Park was to bring the benefits of open space and creek access to a broader number of stakeholders in the community — veterans being treated at Fort Harrison, soldiers training there, people with limited mobility, as well as school groups and families," Mary said. "This is an incredible piece of open space — and working with the Fort, with Frank and other veterans has been a wonderful partnership in highlighting the veteran population, which is huge in Montana."

A memorial celebration and plaque dedication is planned for the spring of 2018 for the William Gruber Memorial Trail. Frank said he is happy with the way things worked out.

"I just didn't want him to be forgotten," Frank said of his brother. "I just wanted to do something."

Frank and Bonnie Gruber look through a scrapbook of photos, letters and news clippings of Frank's brother, Bill.



William Gruber



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Several PPLT staff members and I recently attended the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Rally conference in Denver with 2,000 of our land trust counterparts from across the nation. The conference offered great educational opportunities for staff and our organizational development.

LTA manages the national process by which land trusts become accredited, and PPLT was honored during the conference this year as one of the 300 accredited land trusts in the U.S. PPLT continues to be recognized among our land trust peers for our Peaks to Creeks project and our partnerships with the military and disabilities communities to expand the benefits of conservation.

These recognitions... belong to you — our members, supporters, and communities.

LTA invited PPLT to join its leadership council, which gathers 40 of the "top-performing" land trusts to share best practices and advise the LTA board.

We are proud of these recognitions, but I mention them because they belong to you — our members, supporters, and communities. The sky is the limit when we all pitch in.

Increasingly, land trusts are becoming key components in community planning discussions, which is something I have been thinking about a lot lately in light of our population growth, demands on outdoor amenities, and recent natural disasters. My head has been full of questions. Where does residential development make

sense? What areas are important for wildlife corridors? How do we manage recreation in a way that doesn't compromise the integrity of our existing trails and open space?

Along these lines, PPLT has been engaging more and more with the goal to preserve the integrity of our conservation and recreation resources/investments in the face of increasing/changing use and development pressures. PPLT increased our trails staffing this year to increase coordination, and we partnered recently with the Helena Tourism Alliance and the City of Helena on a trail-use study. The information from the study will provide useful data that will help us all make the most informed



decisions going forward. More to come soon.
Each of you has been integral in the work that PPLT is doing — on your next hike or run, I hope you'll take a minute to celebrate!

—Executive Director Mary Hollow

HARVEST MOON SETS ANOTHER RECORD

THANKS TO SPONSORS, auction item donors, auction item buyers and all attendees and volunteers, the 2017 Harvest Moon Banquet and Auction was yet another record breaker. Tickets for the event, which took place Sept. 23 at the Helena Civic Center, sold out well in advance and the room was abuzz with the energy and passion of folks coming together to support trails, community

conservation and a legacy of open space for future generations. New for this year's Harvest Moon was the Golden Raffle. Up until the live auction started, folks had the chance to buy a Golden Raffle Ticket. There were only 100 tickets sold and each ticket cost \$100. The winner of the Golden Raffle won the opportunity to choose any live auction item, excluding Dale Livezey's beautiful painting, "Mount Helena Over Ten Mile."

The winner of the raffle was Venus Villalva, who chose the Glacier Adventure for Four, which includes a stay in a cabin on Lake McDonald, homemade Italian cuisine, a guided adventure in Glacier National Park and dinner at the Belton Chalet. The auction item was donated by Aidan Myhre and Laura Sanders.



Jason O'Neill

Attendees respond generously during the live auction's Direct Giving Moment. Left: PPLT's Lanie White shows Dale Livezey's "Mount Helena Over Ten Mile" to prospective bidders.

A.L. Swanson surprised the room when he doubled his auction donation. Because of his generosity, two bidders were successful in winning his "Buildable Feast" — the opportunity to design and build a one-of-a-kind piece under Swanson's tutelage and have a celebratory dinner served up by him.

"Harvest Moon this year was incredible," said PPLT Executive Director Mary Hollow. "Tickets sold out weeks in advance, and the event raised more funds for conservation and trails than it ever has

in previous years. Perhaps though, the most important things were the many new faces in the crowd mixed in with our longtime supporters. We are expanding our base and bringing new people into the conservation tent. That is critical for the future of Prickly Pear Land Trust."

Special thanks goes to our Harvest Moon committee members: Jonathan Krauss, Bob Walker, Ann Mary Norton, Stuart Segrest, Kate Logsdon, Janet Robinson, Robert Rasmussen, Jane O'Driscoll, Jane Kollmeyer, Laura Sanders and Sheila Habeck.

"We are expanding our base and bringing new people into the conservation tent."

—Executive Director Mary Hollow

Jason O'Neill



WELCOME ABOARD

PPLT BOARD WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS

Janet Hedges
Janet was born in Missoula and lived in Billings most of her early years. She moved to Helena in 1989 where she worked for the Montana State University System for 10 years. Janet is a graduate of Carroll College with a bachelor's degree in business management and finance. She has been in the financial service industry since



January of 2000. As a Certified Financial Planner™, she runs the Helena Branch of Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. Growing up, her playground was centered in the Beartooth and Absaroka mountains as her family camped, rode horseback, hiked and fished almost every other weekend. She appreciates the ability to recreate in open lands and wants to

make sure that option is available for future generations to come.

Eliza Frazer
Eliza first fell in love with Montana as a teenager, enchanted by the brilliant stones sparkling in the rivers (not at all like Pittsburgh's), the unimaginable space and the smell of sagebrush. She came often to ski, fish and bird hunt, and finally moved to Helena in 1992. The move "home" to Montana was delayed



by a BA at Wesleyan, an MBA at the University of Chicago, and a dozen years of desk jobs, mostly in finance. In Helena, she has been on the boards of several nonprofits including the Holter Museum and the Montana chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Eliza and her husband Barry Hood are thankful to have raised their son, Jack, in Helena. They continue to enjoy Montana's outdoors most every day.

EXPERIENCE THE AFTERSHOCK

Check out the newest trail in the South Hills system

THERE IS A NEW ADDITION to the Mount Ascension landscape that is giving hikers, runners, bikers and dogs alike big single-track smiles. After a long summer of construction, Aftershock Trail, named after the earthquake that shook construction crews out of bed this summer, is finally open to the public. The 1.1-mile long contour-style trail is a nice, easy climb for those that do not want to go all the way up the 2006 switchbacks and provides a contrast to the steep Entertainment Trail. Along the way, you will see interesting rock outcrops, mature and young forest stands, and beautiful views of Rodney Ridge. On the south end, the City of Helena is working with a contractor to build a 40-foot long bridge over a gully that makes for a seamless transition between Aftershock and Entertainment trails. The city will be reclaiming the land/route where construction crews accessed the bridge area... it could take a while due to weather.

Many hands got dirty building this trail. Initially planned and designed by City of Helena Open Lands and PPLT,

the trail was constructed by PPLT staff, Helena Open Lands crews, Montana Conservation Corps crews and numerous volunteers. This trail is yet another example in the South Hills of trail users and stakeholders coming together to make our trail system even better. If the enthusiasm that went into building this trail is any indication, the South Hills will be in great shape for years to come.



AFTERSHOCK TRAIL

Length: 1.15 miles

Rock Retaining Walls: 8

Number of people who helped build it: 107

Number of Volunteer Hours: 397

Tools Broken: 2

TRAIL EASEMENTS BENEFIT TRAIL USERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

THE SOUTH HILLS ARE A TREASURE as much for their trails, wildlife and views as for the ease of access for the community. Many South Hills trail-users walk or bike from their front doors to the trails, while others are just a short drive away. The vast majority of trail mileage in the South Hills is on public land owned by the City of Helena, U.S. Forest Service or BLM, but some miles traverse private property.

Where trails cross private property, PPLT does its best to step in to help landowners and trail-users achieve the best outcomes. In some cases, this requires closing trails and rerouting users onto nearby public lands. In others, landowners may grant some form of public access either via informal

agreement or by signing a formal trail easement.

No matter the agreement, as trail users and PPLT members we must remember to thank these land owners personally and respect their agreements by staying on the trail over their property and being good stewards of the little slice of land they have given us access to.

One formal type of agreement is a trail easement. A trail easement is a legal instrument that grants public access to a piece of private land into perpetuity for an agreed upon activity.

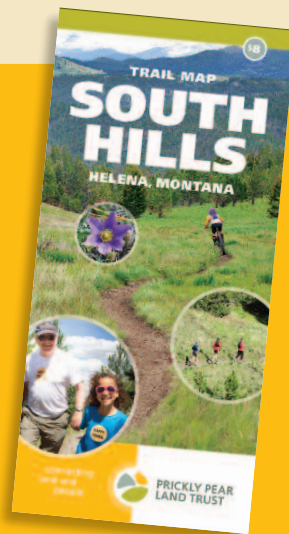
One local resident recently donated a trail easement to PPLT that gives public access to a piece of trail running through his property for non-motorized recreational use.

Meet our newest land steward, Dan Warhank

Tell us a little about yourself.

I am a Helena native and work at Montrose Air Quality Services as an environmental engineer. I love backpacking, mountain biking and skiing, but recently I became a dad, so I spend most of my time enjoying my kids!

What inspired you to donate a trail easement to PPLT? I grew up hiking and running the trails in the South Hills. I decided to donate a trail easement because I think the trails are good for the community and I want to do my best to support them.



TRAIL MAP UPDATE AVAILABLE SOON

A new and improved version of the South Hills Trail Map will be available just in time for Christmas! The new map will include the new trails — Aftershock and the Pinchot Trail reroute, updated land ownership and other design improvements. Maps are \$8 and will be available in local outdoor stores and the PPLT office.

PLANNED GIVING IS A GIFT FOR PPLT'S FUTURE

Looking for a way to show how much you love Helena?

Lynda Saul has a suggestion — consider setting up an endowment through the Montana Community Foundation. Lynda did just that 12 years ago. When Lynda moved to Helena after graduate school in 1986, she was

smitten. "I feel lucky to have found Helena," Lynda said. "I love Helena."

After she participated in a job exchange that took her to Washington, D.C. for a year, Lynda returned to Helena and learned about the Montana Endowment Tax Credit. The Montana Endowment Tax Credit allows people who make a qualified planned gift to a qualified charitable endowment (like Prickly Pear's at the Montana Community Foundation) to receive a valuable tax credit, which is dollar-for-dollar at the state level in addition to the charitable deduction on one's federal taxes.

"I learned about the tax credit and said 'I want to do that,'" Lynda said. "I started my own endowment: the 'I Love Helena Endowment.' The cool thing about it is you don't need a truckload of money to start an endowment; you can contribute

annually and, assuming you have tax liability, you can take the tax credit with your donation."

PPLT is among the beneficiaries of Lynda's endowment. Planned gifts, like Lynda's, are gifts that benefit PPLT's future every year and help us continue the work of connecting land and people for generations to come.

"The purpose of it for me is about leaving a legacy for the future," Lynda said. "I encourage everyone who is philanthropically inclined and wants to leave a legacy of open space and trails and view space—join me in making a planned gift to Prickly Pear Land Trust."

You can make a difference in PPLT's future through tax-credit eligible planned gifts at the Montana Community Foundation or through PPLT's own endowment managed at D.A. Davidson. Contact Lanie White, Development Manager, at 406-442-0490 or lanie@pricklypearlt.org to talk about the option that's best for you!

"I encourage everyone who wants to leave a legacy of open space to join me in making a planned gift to Prickly Pear Land Trust."

—Lynda Saul



PLANNED GIVING OPTIONS

Setting up an endowment is just one way to help PPLT through planned giving. Other planned giving options include:

- Designating PPLT as a beneficiary of your IRA, ROTH, 403(b), 401K or deferred compensation
- Deferred gift annuities, eligible for the Montana tax credit
- Bequests through your will
- Designating PPLT as a beneficiary on a paid-up life insurance policy
- Real estate gifts
- Stock gifts
- Transferring all or part of your IRA RMD (for donors 70 ½ and older) through an IRA Rollover Gift

TRAIL MIX

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

These members joined between Aug. 17 and Oct. 31, 2017. We're so glad you share our vision of connecting land and people! Together we will continue our work in private land conservation, trails and community conservation!

We warmly welcome:

- Holly Alastra
- Lura Brown
- Joe Connell
- Jason & Rebecca Davidson
- Tom Furlong
- James & Lori Marlen
- Colleen Martin & Kevin Ward
- Bob Morgan
- & Carl Deitchman
- Arlene & Neil Parisot
- Dave Perkins
- & Nancy Mackinnon

SAVE THE DATE

The 2017 Volunteer Appreciation Celebration will be December 6 at Free Ceramics, 650 Logan Street, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Come warm up with a bowl of chili or soup, drinks and friendly company.

All volunteers are invited. Whether you worked on the trail system, participated on a committee, were an Adopt-a-Trail volunteer, participated in the Don't Fence Me In trail runs or Harvest Moon Banquet and Auction, worked in the PPLT office, or helped in any other way, please plan on joining us. It is our way of acknowledging all the volunteer efforts that make PPLT successful. Family members are also invited. It's never too early to RSVP so we can plan food and beverages. Call 442-0490 or email peggy@pricklypearlt.org. See you soon!

PPLT SCHWAG MAKES PERFECT STOCKING STUFFERS



Get your Christmas shopping done all in one spot and get a warm fuzzy feeling for supporting your local land trust. PPLT has all kinds of gear in all kinds of sizes for all kinds of trail users. Check this list, you'll find something for the naughty and nice:

- T-shirts: \$20
- Sweatshirts: \$40
- Ball caps (in new colors!): \$20
- Trail maps: \$8
- License plate frames: \$2
- Happy Trails beer glasses: \$10

Stop by our office; we have new gear coming in soon.

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connecting land
and people

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FALL 2017

A TRAIL TO
REMEMBER

EXPERIENCE THE
AFTERSHOCK

HARVEST MOON
SETS RECORDS



Eliza Wiley