



DRAFT 3
4-3

Eliza Wiley



On the banks of Tenmile Creek, PPLT executive director, Mary Hollow, asks students about the source of their drinking water.

AN OUTSIDE CHANCE

WE ALL KNOW IT – getting outside is important. For some of us, including many of Prickly Pear Land Trust's supporters, it is a fundamental part of our day. But even though we live in an outdoor mecca, not everyone in our community has opportunities to explore outside. Others may not feel safe or comfortable. This year, PPLT is making a concerted effort to expand our outdoor education and experiential programming to overcome these obstacles and get more folks – especially young people – out in nature, by a creek, or on a trail. The future of our wild places and open lands depends on future generations of stewards and advocates.

It's a natural fit, too. For decades now, PPLT has led hikes, taken school groups to explore Mount Helena, acquired land and creek access that benefit the public, and grown an outstanding corps of trails and education volunteers.

With PPLT's purchase of the Tenmile and Sevenmile properties, there are opportunities for residents to interact with our landscape in new ways. Tenmile Creek Park has easy creek access and is being developed as an outdoor playground for all, and Sevenmile Creek is an outdoor classroom where students can watch a new floodplain take shape in real time.

PPLT needed some help turning our outdoor classroom dreams into reality, and turned to the Americorps VISTA program. The Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) program marries federal funding with management by the state of Montana to offer non-profits a talented volunteer for one year of service. Help us welcome Callie Schultz to Montana! Outlining the program and piloting projects this spring and fall, she will piece together an educational roadmap to guide PPLT staff and education volunteers for the next several years.

Counter to screen time and additional stressors, everyone experiences health benefits from being outdoors - lower blood pressure, better heart rates, and improved moods. The positive impacts, however, are far greater when exposure to the outdoors begins at an earlier age. Environmental education programs and intentional outdoor play targeted at youth have been shown to lower stress and treat mood disturbances that lead to mental disorders, as well as treat ADHD, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. And we're betting that when kids start asking their parents to go outside, we'll see more families out in nature.

There is a practical component to a youth-focused outdoor education program that goes beyond public health. To address the challenges of the 21st century – population growth and pressure, drought, wildfire, habitat loss,

and the loss of agricultural land – we need an entire generation comfortable and confident with the outdoors and its natural systems. We need to grow our future conservation and outdoor leaders. That starts by helping kids connect with and understand the environment – and you make this possible.

The future of our wild places and open lands depends on future generations of stewards and advocates.

Expanding on existing programs at the Montana Wild Education Center, the Montana Conservation Corps, and the Montana Discovery Foundation,

Callie is reaching out to teachers and volunteers, and is creating curriculum for learning science first hand. We are excited to host classes for monitoring and stream work at our Sevenmile and Tenmile properties this spring. Callie is also developing summer challenges for families. Keep an eye out for new programs and events as summer inches closer!

LeGRANDE STRATEGY

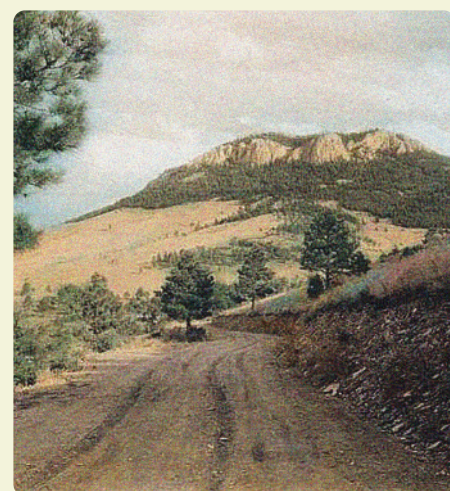
MOUNT HELENA CITY PARK might get a little bigger. At the base of our beloved landmark, roughly 90 acres of gentle foothills may soon gain official protection. The property straddles the edge of Helena, south and west of Kessler Elementary. While the open space value of the property is worthy enough as public space, it is also bisected by the historic LeGrande Cannon Trail, one of Helena's original carriage routes. The relatively flat trail is retired from motorized use, and remains one of the only accessible trails in the South Hills, serving to connect neighborhoods and pedestrians to the park.

Prickly Pear Land Trust has been talking with the landowners for years, trying to hammer out how best to protect this property, which has been in their family for generations. We are excited the landowners continue to show interest in selling the property in a way which benefits conservation and recreation.

The neighborhoods around the LeGrande property also deserve credit for their years of commitment to making the property public. Two of the neighbors, Ken Eden, a long-time supporter and former board president of PPLT, and his wife, Liz, have

organized the residents to support PPLT's efforts. Projects like these are increasingly costly – thank you to the many supporters who have committed a critical \$45,000 towards the due diligence, acquisition, and staffing to help this become a reality.

Once purchased, PPLT plans to donate the parcels to the City of Helena to be added to city open lands. As with several properties in the past, PPLT can then work with the city to formalize access and provide routine maintenance. To get involved, call PPLT at 442-0490.



Historic photo of Mount Helena from LeGrande Cannon Boulevard

WELCOME ABOARD!

Prickly Pear Land Trust's Board of Directors recently added two long-time playmakers to its ranks. Welcome Bill Shropshire and John Doran! A huge thank you to Jim Utterback who has finished his term as president and is handing over the presidential reins to John Beaver. Jim will stay on the board and heavily involved in PPLT's leadership.

JOHN DORAN

A native of Salem, Oregon, John Doran grew up on a baseball field. John's talent as a switch-hitting second basemen took him to the University of Portland, where an injury to his throwing hand turned fortunate, leading him to meet his wife, Anna. After college, he began a career in journalism and coached a little college ball. Writing and editing brought the family first to Missoula,



then Helena, where John took the helm as executive editor of Helena's *Independent Record*. To give back to the outdoors he so immensely enjoys, John got involved with PPLT. He is a member of the former trail work group, the Trail Ninjas, and sunk scores of hours into the Waterline Trail. John is now Blue Cross Blue Shield's VP of External Affairs and is on the trails with Anna and their two kids, Ellie and Finn, hiking, biking, or running almost everyday. He is excited to help PPLT in his new role as a board member. While incredibly grateful for PPLT's work protecting Mount Ascension, John is also impressed with the work PPLT does to open up more access to "all outdoor enthusiasts – children, people with disabilities, or folks who might be intimidated by the steep and rough trails in the South Hills."

BILL SHROPSHIRE

Bill began his visits to Helena in 1976, first to see family, but later to explore. It became a life-goal to live here.

He has worked for American Chemet Corp. (in Helena, E. Helena, Deerfield, IL, and Maryville, TN) since he left the trading floors of the Chicago Board of Trade in 1998. As Bill's responsibilities at American Chemet increased, so did the frequency of his visits to Helena and East Helena. By 2013, Bill and his wife of 20 years, Audra, decided: "Hey, let's go live there"! Bill and Audra have been PPLT supporters since their arrival, and are delighted they and their three kids, Ella, Maya, and Will, get to call Helena home. A long-time skier and cyclist, Bill's road bike has been feeling increasingly neglected as he spends more and more time on fatter, knobbier tires. Bill is honored to serve on the board, noting he loves not only the trails and conservation efforts, but that Prickly Pear stays true to its motto of "connecting land and people."



JOHN BEAVER - Board President

Farming, ranching, and gardening brought both John Beaver and his wife, Debra, from Medford, Oklahoma, a little town on the edge of the prairie, to Iowa, Aspen, and finally to Montana. After completing his range science degree at MSU, John moved to Helena and is now a partner at WESTECH Environmental Services, a biological consulting firm. John is the quintessential Helenan, spending his free time skiing, running, biking, hiking, hunting, and even painting. He and Deb's daughters, Emma and Kate, both grew up exploring the outdoors around Helena and the South Hills. Of course, he has also spent years working with PPLT and serving on the board, and now he's excited to lend his expertise and leadership in all things outdoors as our new board president. It is John and PPLT's goal to make a connection with the natural world available to everyone in our service area.



TRAILS AND STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

HAVE YOUR GLOVES READY and pulaskis sharpened – the trail and stewardship season will keep us all sweating this year. While continuing to provide maintenance support and labor to both the Forest Service and City of Helena in the South Hills, we're spicing things up and working on projects around the valley and in the backcountry. Here's a snapshot of what we're looking at for the service season.

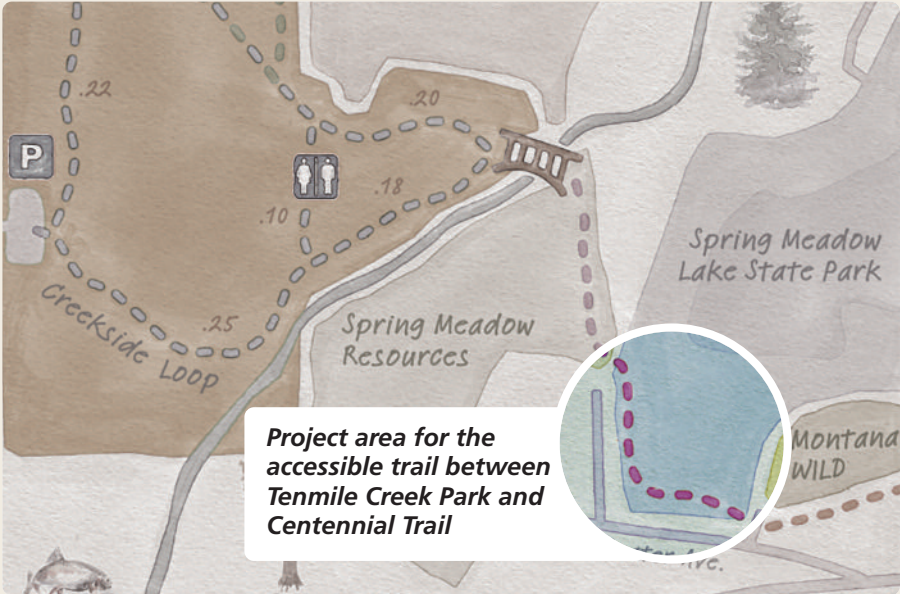
Interested in volunteering? Visit pricklypearlt.org to get involved!

PPLT has a robust lineup of volunteer events and maintenance projects in the South Hills. In addition to the routine activities of cleaning drainage structures on fall-line trails, PPLT will work to reclaim widening and braided trails, surface community trails with decomposed granite, build up entrenched trails and generally encourage dirt and people to stay on the trails. Also, keep your eyes out for PPLT volunteers and groups on

and around the trails doing noxious weed monitoring and abatement throughout the summer.

At the southern extent of the South Hills we've been asked to join a new project. PPLT is the project partner on behalf of the Helena Ranger District for the proposed trails connecting the Mt. Helena Ridge Trailhead to the Brooklyn Bridge area, along SkiHi Peak, and back to the South Hills via Tucker Gulch. Project work in 2019 includes establishing the final trail alignment as well as working to clear the corridor for the new trail from Brooklyn Bridge to Tucker Gulch. The entire project is about 11 miles and will be built as directed by the Forest Service over the next three to five years.

Meanwhile, west of Helena, PPLT and volunteers will be helping out with the re-route of the old Kading Grade trail near the Kading Campground in partnership with the Montana High Divide Trails Group and the Helena National Forest. The overall scope of the project involves completing a trail from Kading Campground to



Cottonwood Lake that skirts the proposed Electric Peak Wilderness. This project is in collaboration with Montana Bicycle Guild, Montana Wilderness Association, and Last Chance Backcountry Horsemen. Work in 2019 will focus on clearing the trail corridor in anticipation of a 2020 trail build.

For those who like to stay a little closer to home, a major maintenance project and upgrade at Tenmile Creek Park is on the docket. With the help of an army of community volunteers and Montana Conservation Corps members, PPLT built a 900-foot section of natural surface trail connecting the Centennial Trail to Tenmile Creek Park in 2018. This year, PPLT will widen this trail to meet

universal accessibility standards and surface the path with decomposed granite to complete the connection. In response to last year's flooding at the park, we will rebuild the flooded trails to meet the same accessibility standards and incorporate new drainage structures to prevent impacts from future floods. To encourage folks to linger a little longer, we will be adding a new staircase down to the creek and providing wheelchair accessible pads next to the picnic tables. Lastly, we are equipping the park with a Mutt Mitt station and trash can.

Thank you to all those who have helped Tenmile Creek Park stay clean and awesome!

Coming Summer 2019: PPLT's trail etiquette campaign!



Illustrations by local artist, **Mel Griffin**, advocate for keeping the trails happy. Follow the release on PPLT's social media.

WELCOME ANA CORTEZ

Prickly Pear Land Trust is excited to welcome Ana Cortez as Helena's new City Manager. We are impressed by the energy, professionalism, and creativity she has shown as she gets up to speed. As one of PPLT's longest partnerships, the City has been central to our land protection work, and remains critical to our efforts to acquire, protect, and steward lands in the Helena area.

Today, PPLT is contracted by the city as the primary maintenance provider in the South Hills, organizing volunteers, contributing trail expertise, and coordinating public outreach in terms of maps, trail etiquette, and much more. We will also be participating in the upcoming update to the city open lands plan. Welcome, Ana, we look forward to working closely with you in the years to come!



DON'T FENCE ME IN

2019 TRAIL RUN

30K – \$75
12K – \$40
5K Run or Walk – \$30
5K Dog-Walk – \$35
As always, kids under 17 register for free

Registration and course information can be found on our website: pricklypearlt.org/events

Michael Chapman

MONTANA'S TRAIL running season kicks off once again with PPLT's 19th annual Don't Fence Me In Trail Run on **Saturday, May 11**. This major community event celebrates our local wild lands and our connection to them. And what better way to celebrate the outdoors than wandering the switchbacks and natural terrain with your fellow outdoor enthusiasts! Everyone is encouraged to join us on the nationally renowned South Hills trail system, whether pushing through the 30K dash over two peaks,

scrambling through hills and trees with the 5K or 12K races, or taking time to sniff the wild roses in the non-competitive 5K Dog-Walk. The awards ceremony will take place around noon near the finish line – friends, family, and all PPLT supporters, come join us!

Avoid the Saturday morning registration lines by attending Friday's pre-party and packet pick-up at Blackfoot River Brewing from 3 PM to 7 PM on May 10. Get a rare peek behind the scenes at Blackfoot's production facility (north

of the taproom) where there'll be live music and food trucks to accompany the release of the legendary E-trail Pale Ale. Mingle with fellow racers and pick up your race t-shirt, race bib, and packet materials.

Cheers to the start of trail season!

If you are unable to pick up your packet on Friday, there will be race day pick-up and late registration at the start/finish area at Pioneer Park from 6:30 AM to 10:30 AM.

Thanks to our generous business sponsors, all proceeds from the event directly support PPLT's conservation and trail work. Find the sponsors listed on page 4.

Above: Three moms and the next generation of trail lovers hiking the 12K course of the Don't Fence Me In Trail Run

STEADY AS SHE FLOWS

The restoration project on Sevenmile Creek continues! After an exciting year of flooding, the full reconstruction and relocation of Stream Reach Three, and a quicker-than-expected pond creation, 2019 will be a year of resource-building at the site. Not only will PPLT allow the floodplain to begin re-establishing its vegetative base, we are now preparing for the final phase of creek reconstruction on Reach Four.

Northwestern Energy has led the charge on funding for the final

permitting and design work to take place this year, while the Pat Barnes Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Montana Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the Cross Charitable Foundation completed the package.

We're elated to have partners who jump at the chance to support the project. This continued support has allowed us to refocus our attention on funding 2020's final construction push while our contractor, Confluence, Inc., outlines a healthy floodplain.



PPLT volunteers shore up the new Sevenmile ponds using wattle barriers.

Michael Chapman

KEEP THE OUTDOOR TRADITION ALIVE WITH YOUR TRADITIONAL IRA

PPLT recently received an interesting call from one of our longtime supporters. With tax season looming, he had penciled out a way to stretch his savings, specifically his traditional IRA. He wanted to pass along this discovery so that supporters in similar circumstances can avoid negative effects on their finances while making their dollars more impactful at the same time.

Here's how it works: Individuals 70½ and over, with a traditional IRA, must take a yearly distribution, a "Required Minimum Distribution" (RMD). For those who may not need the distribution to supplement their income, the RMD and its associated taxes can sometimes have a negative influence on finances.

So here's the trick: to avoid paying any taxes whatsoever on required distributions, individuals can have the distribution paid directly to a charity of choice – PPLT loves receiving these! This "qualified charitable distribution" is easy to setup. Donors simply contact their finance management company and request an IRA distribution form.

It is the same form that people use to collect their distributions. On the form, the donor will request that the RMD be paid to Prickly Pear Land Trust. The following year, when doing taxes, the donor will report this on his/her tax form or to his/her CPA. And DONE! Your finances are untouched but you've given a huge bump to your outdoor legacy.



Overlook of Sevenmile Creek and Tenmile Creek Park from Mount Helena

Andrea Silverman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Thanks for joining us!
These members joined
between November 1,
2018 and March 13,
2019

Theo & Metta Barnhart
Katie Beall
Scott Cook

Margaret Corcoran
& James Madden
Bruce Desonia
Tim & Darla Fitzpatrick
Andrew Funk
Doug Habermann
Brian Hare
HJ Hudson Consulting -
Heather Hudson
Sylvia Jackson

Peter Larsen
Garrett & Kristen Martin
Mary Lou McGrath
Margaret McIntosh
Marcia Miller
Amy & James Moran
John Henry
& Katherine Seale
Morgan & Lori Smith

PENCIL US IN

You can look forward to our upcoming events and find more information online at pricklypearlt.org/events:

- April 29
May 11
May 14
May 21
- Community Trail Work Night
19th annual Don't Fence Me In Trail Run
Family Hike
Community Tour of Sevenmile Creek Restoration
RSVP to Nate@pricklypearlt.org
- May 23
June 1
June 17
June 28 – 30
- Wildflower Walk with PPLT and Discovery Foundation
National Trails Day
Community Trail Work Night
Kading Re-Route with Montana High Divide Trails
RSVP to Evan@pricklypearlt.org
- July 18
- Membership Party on the Downtown Walking Mall
(Membership Week)
- July 15
August 19
Sept. 16
- Community Trail Work Night
Volunteer Appreciation Event
Community Trail Work Night



PHOTO CONTEST

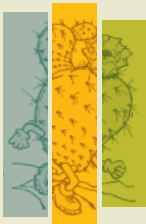
Submit your photos for the chance to be featured on the cover of our summer newsletter! If you snag the ideal shot while out and about enjoying anywhere in west-central Montana's public lands, let us know where you got it and email your submissions to breena@pricklypearlt.org with the subject line "Photo Contest."

Or, post your photos on social media with **#HappyTrailsHelena** and tag [@pricklypearlandtrust](https://twitter.com/pricklypearlandtrust) for a chance to be featured in our posts.

PPLT loves to see all of the ways you enjoy open space!

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connecting land
and people

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SPRING 2019

AN OUTSIDE
CHANCE

TRAIL
UPDATES

DON'T FENCE
ME IN COMING
MAY 11

Jason O'Neil

