Eliza Wiley
LEG RA N D E STRATEG Y
might get a little bigger. At the base of
M O U N T H ELEN A C ITY PA RK
our beloved landmark, roughly 90 acres
of gentle foothills may soon gain official
value of the property is worthy enough
protection. The property straddles the
edge of Helena, south and west of
the historic LeG rande C annon 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.

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 carries
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
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see more families out in nature.

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
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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!

AN OUTSIDE CHANCE

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
in helping to make this property public.

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
then work with the city to
formalize access and provide routine
maintenance. To get involved, call
PPLT at 442-0490.

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inches closer!
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 baseman 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 director 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 every day. 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. It became a life-goal to live here. It became a life-goal to live here. Visit pricklypearlt.org to get involved!

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.

The entire project is about 11 miles and 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 Tennille 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 Tennille 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 Mutt station and trash can.

Thank you to all those who have helped Tennille Creek Park stay clean and awesome.

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!
**WALK WITH PURPOSE OR JUST RUN WITH IT**

**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.

**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.

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.

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

**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 set up. 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.

**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

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

**Ov e rlo ok o f Seven mil e Creek and Tenmil e Creek Park from Mount Helena**

**Andrea Silverman Michael Chapman**

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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 Deconie
Tim & Dalia Fitzpatrick
Andrew Funk
Doug Habermann
Brian Hare
HJ Hudson Consulting - Heather Hudson
Sylvia Jackson
Peter Larsen
Garrett & Kristen Martin
Mary Lou McGarrah
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 Community Trail Work Night
May 11 19th annual Don’t Fence Me In Trail Run
May 14 Family Hike
May 21 Community Tour of Sevenmile Creek Restoration
RSVP to Nate@pricklypearlt.org
May 23 Wildflower Walk with PPLT and Discovery Foundation
June 1 National Trails Day
June 17 Community Trail Work Night
June 28 – 30 Kading Re-Route with Montana High Divide Trails
RSVP to Evan@pricklypearlt.org
July 15 Community Trail Work Night
August 19 Volunteer Appreciation Event
Sept. 16 Community Trail Work Night

PHOTO CONTEST

Submit your photos for the chance to be featured on the cover of our summer newsletter! If you snap 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 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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