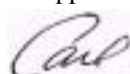


**Letter from the President**

Where does the time go? It seems like just yesterday that we published our summer 2008 newsletter and now we are well into 2009. Our world has changed in those months since last summer. There are significant accomplishments and changes at Blue Mountain Land Trust that you will read about in this newsletter. We are excited to report that we recently signed a conservation agreement and continue to work on a number of other agreements that should be completed in the next few months. See more inside.

We are also happy to report personnel changes at Blue Mountain Land Trust that will help us to accomplish our goals more efficiently and effectively. For the past six years Beth Thiel has done an unbelievable job juggling both the duties of Executive Director and Conservation and Stewardship Director. With our increased workload, the time has come to divide those responsibilities. We have hired Tom Dwonch as our new Executive Director and Beth assumes the responsibilities of the Conservation and Stewardship Director. We think this is a good combination of talent to help Blue Mountain Land Trust meet the growing needs for land conservation in this area.

We have a large number of activities on our plate this coming year and we continue to need your support to achieve our goals. I don't need to tell you about the poor economy. We are all watching how we spend and invest our hard-earned dollars. We have not been immune from the economic downturn. We hope that this year despite financial concerns that you will still consider your donations to Blue Mountain Land Trust as a wise investment in the future quality of life for our region. Thank you for your support of Blue Mountain Land Trust.




**Carl Schmitt**

Ten years ago, Carl Schmitt, along with other visionary members of our community formed the Blue Mountain Land Trust. They all shared a common goal of protecting our unique natural and historical resources for future generations. Carl passed away in February 2008, but his dream lives on through the Land Trust as we celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

We will honor Carl as part of our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration with a tree planting ceremony to be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 25, 2009 at the entrance to the Whitman College Campus located at the intersection of Stanton and University Streets. We hope that you are able to attend to honor Carl and to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Conservation Agreement Signed**

Sixteen acres within the flood plain of Coppei Creek in Waitsburg is now protected under a conservation agreement between Blue Mountain Land Trust and landowners David and Julie Karl. (continued at top of next column)

The voluntary agreement will help prevent the floodplain from being developed and protect fish and wildlife habitat, while keeping ownership in the Karl family. The easement is the result of funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The Karl's originally expressed interest in protecting the land in a SRFB funded survey of landowners conducted by BMLT in 2007. That survey identified landowners that were interested in protecting the unique natural resources on their land including fish and wildlife habitat.



The land being protected by the agreement is on the border of property the Karl's now contract to have farmed for alfalfa. The majority of the property will remain in agricultural production meeting the goals of BMLT and the landowners. The streamside buffer zone will have an average width of about 75 feet. Installed native trees and plants will help anchor the stream banks and protect against erosion, filter runoff into the creek and help shade the water during the summer. The conservation agreement will have another important benefit and that is helping to protect the population of wild steelhead that have made a home in Coppei Creek.

## Ed Lawrence

Blue Mountain Land Trust members are a diverse group but all have one thing in common, a love for the land and a desire to see important resources protected for the future. Ed Lawrence is one example of this diverse group of members.

Ed has lived in the Waitsburg area since he was two years old. His family has been raising cattle and farming in the Waitsburg area since the late 1800's. He spent some time away during his childhood years but was always drawn back. After graduating from Stanford University with a degree in Journalism, Ed returned for good to work the family farm. He learned how to farm by working hard and reading everything he could about being a good steward of the land. He was successful, having twice received Columbia County conservation awards, once for strip cropping, and then for using no till to reduce erosion.

Ed also put his journalism skills to work while he was farming and providing for his family. From 1946 until 1960 he wrote the "This 'n That" column for the Waitsburg Times. He also published his column in the Dayton Chronicle-Dispatch. His columns became very popular because they were stories full of humor about life in those times. A selection of Ed's writings are contained in "Some Good Times" published in 2005.

Ed is retired now but is still connected to the land. He is an avid bird watcher, an interest he acquired from his wife Gloria who passed away in October 2007. He has created several ponds on his land and enjoys seeing the waterfowl and other birds that have taken up residence. His farm is also the home to many turkeys, pheasants, and song birds. One of his favorite daily activities is watching all these wild birds and his five chickens too. He is also interested in renewable energy and would like to use solar and wind technologies on the ranch when they become more available.

Ed has a dream for his land, that in the future it continues to be a productive working farm that has room for wildlife. He has been a great friend to BMLT. He shares the vision that we have for the future of the Blue Mountain area and we're happy to be associated with him.



## Project Status Report

We have a number of projects underway several of which should be complete in the very near future. Following are brief summaries of each project. If you would like more information on any of these, please contact us.

2500 Acres – McCoy Creek - This beautiful property located near Starkey, Oregon contains upland wildlife habitat, restored fish habitat and agricultural values. The landowners are very committed to preserving the qualities that make this land special and plan to donate the easement. Finalization of the project awaits purchase of the property by a buyer who will commit to maintaining the natural resources of the property.

Mill Creek - This property along almost ½ mile of Mill Creek. contains a restored riparian vegetation buffer with the rest of the property in agriculture. The landowner wishes to conserve the buffer and restrict the number of potential home sites. BMLT is working with the landowner on a bargain sale conservation agreement using funds from the SRFB and a portion of the donated value by the landowner. This agreement, in the final stages of negotiation, should be signed in the spring of 2009.

20 Acres SE Walla Walla – WS-DOT mitigation project - BMLT will hold the conservation agreement for this wetland parcel that will be restored as partial mitigation for construction of the new US Highway 12. This agreement is in the final stages of development and should be complete in April 2009.

30 acres on the Walla Walla River - Intact mature riparian habitat and a portion of floodplain will be protected under an agreement using funds from the SRFB. This agreement is expected to be signed by the fall of 2009.

## Project Status Report (continued)

Survey Project - Blue Mountain Land Trust has completed an assessment of landowner interest in pursuing conservation measures for their property. The successful information gathering and sharing project has resulted in one completed conservation agreement and several other agreements that are currently under negotiation or are being investigated. This landowner assessment focused on Mill Creek, the Walla Walla River, Coppei Creek and a portion of the Touchet River between Waitsburg and Dayton where there is important steelhead, bull trout and chinook salmon habitat as well as considerable development pressure.



Sharing information with area landowners about conservation opportunities was a very valuable part of the project. Survey results showed that the majority of landowners that responded to the survey desire to see their property and surrounding property remain undeveloped. Although many landowners were not prepared to pursue a conservation easement now, with the information about conservation options in hand, they can make informed choices in the future about developing or protecting their property.

## Help us save money!

We are always looking for ways to stretch your donations. One thing that would save us on mailing and printing expenses would be the ability to email information like this newsletter to you. If you would like to receive correspondence from us by email write to us at [bmlt-tom@uci.net](mailto:bmlt-tom@uci.net). Just type 'email me' in the subject line. While you are writing though, if you have other suggestions, comments, or questions, send those too. Thank you for your help!

## From the Executive Director

I am excited to assume the position of Executive Director for BMLT. The first thing I want to do in this newsletter is to recognize Beth Thiel for her years of hard work and dedication to the Land Trust. She has done an amazing job with limited time and financial constraints. The change we have made will allow her to dedicate her talents to working with landowners and our partner agencies also involved in natural resource activities.

Beth will be working on our highest priority and that is to secure conservation agreements with interested landowners and to oversee those agreements when they are complete. This is a significant task, especially as we add more easements to our portfolio. I look forward to working with Beth in this area.

One of my priorities is for BMLT to become more visible in the community. We will do this by taking advantage of opportunities to participate in appropriate community forums and activities. I'm hoping that you can help in this area. We want to establish a core group of enthusiastic volunteers who have the time to help out when needs arise. Volunteering is one way to help share your time and to show your appreciation for this wonderful spot in which we live. If you are able to volunteer or would like to learn more, please call me at the office.

Another priority for me is to put BMLT on more secure financial footing. Asking for money at times like this is a difficult thing to do. But it is a must for us as we face diminishing opportunities for funding. In order for granting agencies to leverage their funds many are requiring significant match from grantees. This makes sense in order to spread funds to as many deserving organizations as possible, but it leaves us with a predicament, in that we have limited dollars to meet match requirements. That's why we need your help even more than ever. Without matching funds we may miss the opportunity to apply for grants that could benefit our local area. If you are able to make an additional donation this year it will help us to be more competitive when applying for grants. Thanks you for your continued support.

*Tom*

## Organizational Assessment

Thanks to a grant from the Land Trust Alliance with a match from us, Blue Mountain Land Trust is about to begin an organizational assessment. The assessment will evaluate our operations and identify areas that need improvement before we can receive accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance. Each accredited Land Trust operates under a uniform set of principles and standards. Accreditation ensures that the Land Trust has developed the policies and procedures that enable it to work effectively to achieve land conservation goals. We appreciate the assistance from the Land Trust Alliance to identify ways to help Blue Mountain Land Trust become a more effective organization.

## Continuing Legal Education

Blue Mountain Land Trust will sponsor a continuing education workshop on conservation easements for legal and financial professionals on September 21, 2009 in Walla Walla. The one day workshop will be presented by Konrad Liegel a partner at K&L Gates in Seattle, Washington. Contact us if you are interested in attending this workshop.



## Room for a View

In the Summer 2008 newsletter we announced BMLT's community education program "Room for a View". Dozens of community members have participated in the monthly sessions that focus on our history and the purpose of conservation easements. We continue to hold these 45 minute sessions on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month from 5:15 – 6:00 p.m. at our office in the Drumheller Building. If you or anyone that you know are interested in attending call us and we will provide more details. We hope to see you at one of our meetings this year.



## Art Raffle

Three donors have generously given Blue Mountain Land Trust works of landscape art that we will raffle off as a fundraiser. The works include landscape paintings by Jim McNamara and Fr. Bruno Segatta, and landscape photography by Clyde Strickland. We will begin selling tickets on May 1<sup>st</sup> and the winners will be drawn at our annual meeting in late 2009. To see the art and to purchase tickets, visit us at the farmers market and other community events. The art can also be seen on our website. Tickets may also be purchased by contacting us through our website or calling the office.

## Volunteers Needed

Do you have a few hours to spare? We are looking for people who are able to volunteer in the office, at community events, or outdoor restoration projects. We will provide training as needed. If you are able to help, please call or sign up at [bmlt.org](http://bmlt.org).

## Thank you!

The Paul Richardson Agency has very generously donated their old copy machine to Blue Mountain Land Trust. The Agency has purchased a new color machine and their old black and white copier is still in good working order. The copier, a Minolta DI 250 makes 25 copies per minute, sorts and makes double sided copies. Our 'new' machine will save us time and money because we now will be able to make multiple copies in the office rather than taking it to a printer. Paul Richardson Agency, located at 2nd and Main in Walla Walla, offers insurance, health care, and financial services. Thanks Paul Richardson Agency, we appreciate your support! If you have items that you no longer need and think may help us in our office please call us if you wish to make a donation.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Blue Mountain Land Trust is to protect, agricultural and forested lands, critical riparian and other habitat, and lands of historical significance through voluntary, nongovernmental means with an emphasis on private ownership of protected lands

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

President - Carl Scheeler  
Vice President - Jon Cole  
Secretary - Beth Kreger  
Treasurer - Todd Kimball  
Director - Shirley Muse  
Director - Sue Parrish  
Director - Jim Peterson  
Director - Cheryl Scholl  
Director - Tom Scribner  
Director - Carol-Jean Thompson  
Director - Tom Williams

Executive Director - Tom Dwonch  
Conservation & Stewardship – Beth Thiel

### BLUE MOUNTAIN LAND TRUST CORE VALUES

- ✧ **Commitment:** Carrying out landowner wishes in perpetuity is an enormous responsibility. Landowners and communities count on our commitment.
- ✧ **Generational responsibility:** Our generation has enjoyed access to plentiful natural resources. We feel an obligation to provide future generations similar access to nature's services such as purifying water and air, providing venues for recreation and personal renewal, and sustaining valuable plants and wildlife. We must act now to ensure these services will be available in the future.
- ✧ **Community involvement:** We will strive to engage individual community members, local governments, business interests and conservation partners in our planning, and in completing our mission.
- ✧ **Public trust:** Transparency, neutrality and open communication are considered absolutely necessary for our organization to succeed in meeting its mission
- ✧ **Integrity:** Honesty, sincerity and strength will always be the base from which we conduct our business.

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