

## VOLUNTEER JERRY HAND



When Seattleite Jerry Hand and his wife Dee retired in 1999, he felt the pull of eastern Washington. After all, his family homesteaded in Garfield County in 1871. He grew up on a farm near Pomeroy and attended Pataha Country School.

The Hands chose Walla Walla as home for their retirement years, and now one of the ways Jerry stays close to the land is to volunteer at the Blue Mountain Land Trust. Most recently, he helped plant several hundred willows and redosier dogwood cuttings as part of the wetland mitigation project along Reser Road. In the past, Jerry has also helped with blackberry removal as part of stream restoration efforts to promote native plants and encourage the return of salmon on a property along the Walla Walla. And if you take part in the Crush run on October 8th, it's likely Jerry will be directing you to a parking place near the starting line.

He said he takes great satisfaction from volunteering at BMLT. "Everyone should be interested and involved to the extent they can," he said. "I'm proud to be asked."

Jerry, hale and hearty at 80, said, "I'll love to see these willows grow. They could reach 20 to 30 feet in my lifetime. That will be something to see!"

As he talked, blackbirds trilled from their perches in the cattails. "I love the sound of those blackbirds," he said. "As a

boy, my father always said blackbirds are harbingers of spring – he learned that from the Indians. "I was excited about the return of the robins, but my father said, 'Robins come and go, but it's blackbirds that are the real sign of spring, and he was right. I've never seen an exception to it.'"

A Korean War veteran and graduate of the University of Washington, Jerry spent his professional life as an electrical engineer, but he always had an interest in biology and recalled reading about Charles Darwin when he was nine years old, and later being impressed by the reports of Lewis & Clark, especially their contact with grizzly bears.

"I generally agree with returning whatever land can be returned to pre-contact condition," he said. "We have so degraded nature just by our presence. We've only been here 200 years and look what we've done."

Now Jerry is making changes to return special places to native stands, and thanks to his efforts and that of many other volunteers, many of Blue Mountain Land Trust's easements are the sites of flourishing natural habitats. Places where you might just hear blackbirds bursting into song.

*We have plenty of opportunities for you to become involved as a volunteer for Blue Mountain Land Trust. If you are interested in finding out how you can help, please call us.*

## RETURNING & NEW BOARD OFFICERS

BMLT has several seasoned board members returning as officers for the 2011 term. Cheryl Scholl was re-elected president, and Beth Kreger and Carol Jean Thompson, are returning in the positions of secretary and treasurer, respectively. Andrea Burkhart was elected vice-president.

Cheryl Scholl, Pendleton, OR, has served on the BMLT board for 6 years, and served the past two years as board president.

Beth Kreger, Walla Walla, a board member since 2008 has been BMLT secretary for two years.

Carol Jean Thompson, Walla Walla, became board treasurer last year and has been a board member since 2004.

Andrea Burkhart, Walla Walla, a board member since 2009, is new to her post as vice president.

All of us at BMLT appreciate the extra time and effort that goes into being a board officer and thank these fine folks.



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