

Hood River — Powerdale Dam decommissioning and conservation work on track

By Ian Sinks and Brad Paymar

A major milestone has been achieved along the Hood River as part of the PacifiCorp Powerdale Dam decommissioning effort. With the completion of major deconstruction work this summer, the Hood River is now flowing freely through the former dam site. All summer heavy equipment moved earth, broke concrete, and re-formed the river channel to restore the river to what it has not been for almost 100 years.

Columbia Land Trust is working with watershed partners and PacifiCorp to monitor the decommissioning work and to continue restoration planning. While the transfer of the 400 acres — including three miles of the river corridor — will not be completed until early 2012, the Land Trust has been working to engage the neighbors and the community in a discussion of what comes next. Under the terms of the federally-approved settlement agreement, protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, maintaining recreation access, and protecting tribal fishing rights are primary management goals. Added to this are maintaining neighbor and community relations and defining goals we hold in common such as managing the land for forest health and fire risk reduction. Making sure we are prepared to take on all the responsibilities that come with land ownership requires effort on many fronts.



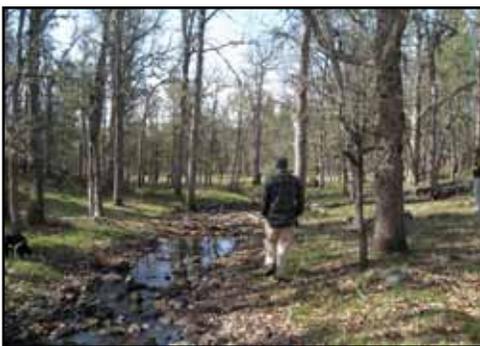
photos: Steve Stampfi

One exciting opportunity our stewardship staff is working on involves the restoration of approximately 20 acres of disconnected floodplain within and along the lower river. The Land Trust is working with regional experts, partners, and neighboring landowners on ways to restore the river's ability to "access" and operate within the currently disconnected areas of its floodplain. If successful, the lower portions of Hood River will flow more freely and natural river processes will develop and maintain habitat for fish and wildlife. Of particular importance is the availability of off-channel rearing habitat for salmonids in a watershed where this type of habitat is limited.

Columbia Land Trust is thrilled to be part of this historic project and looks forward to our continued work with the community to meet restoration and conservation goals. ■

Bowman Creek

photos: Columbia Land Trust staff



By Lindsay Cornelius

If it's true that good things come to those who wait, the newest addition to Columbia Land Trust's Klickitat River Conservation Area—the recently conserved Bowman Creek property—is prime evidence. Home to one of the largest documented concentrations of western gray squirrel nests in Klickitat County, two seasonal streams, wet meadow, rugged Bowman Creek canyon, and maturing ponderosa pine and oak forest, the property has been on the radar of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Columbia Land Trust for years.

Twice the 338-acre property disappeared from the open market before an offer could be made by either of us, but on October 1, 2010, Columbia Land Trust permanently conserved this rich landscape in perpetuity. The purchase was made possible by a combination of public and private grant sources including American Bird Conservancy and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation via The Nature Conservancy.

Fitting squarely into the Land Trust's regional conservation vision, the property is adjacent to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Klickitat Wildlife Area, two miles from the Land Trust's haul road property on the Klickitat River, and a few miles northwest of the Land Trust's Little Klickitat River Conservation Area. The oak and pine forest supports Lewis's woodpecker and the threatened western gray squirrel and attracts neotropical migratory songbirds, while the steep and rugged Bowman Creek canyon, open meadows, and mature conifers make prime habitat for raptors. Black-tailed deer use the area for overwintering. Threatened

steelhead salmon utilize the cold, clean water Bowman Creek contributes to Canyon Creek downstream. A meandering stream rises and falls with the seasons and a wet meadow full of camas flourishes at the base of large ponderosa pine snags. All this occurs in a space that could've been subdivided 67 times into five-acre lots, according to current zoning. With incredible views, proximity to Goldendale, the park-like structure of the forest, the flat terrain, and the sea of subdivisions surrounding it, it's a wonder it was never developed.

If you'd like to visit the Bowman Creek property this winter, participate in the Land Trust's survey on Saturday, December 4 to document the western gray squirrel nests. **For more details, contact Lindsay Cornelius at lindsayc@columbialandtrust.org or (360) 921-1073. Training, materials, snacks, and drinks will be provided.** ■

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Cycles

Glenn Lamb's muse

Here it is, a spectacular fall day — one of those days that makes you especially glad to live in the Pacific Northwest. Of course, by the time you read this it will be pouring rain! But, today, the mountains are out in full glory and the rivers sparkle with the sun, which is noticeably lower in the sky. In my backyard, the chickadees swarm the last of our sunflowers and empty the feeder every day. The mountain ash has dropped nearly all its leaves and its little red berries are mostly a soft mash along our sidewalk and front steps. The nest in the ash's upper branches is now more exposed, home to the neighborhood raccoons for their daily nap.

Indeed, this is a season of great change:

- Steelhead course up our rivers, including Hood River, free-flowing for the first time in 90 years, thanks to the removal of Powerdale Dam, and now safeguarded for the future through the donation to Columbia Land Trust by PacifiCorp of three miles of river corridor.
- The Aspen trees flash their brilliant yellow on the fringes of the Trout Lake Valley, where local organic milk farmers continue to provide more than 25% of the Portland/Vancouver region's organic milk. Recently our grant to conserve this spectacular farm valley ranked #1 in the entire state of Washington.
- Hawks and eagles sail southward, far above the Klickitat River, on their long journey to Central and South America. This fall, we acquired hundreds of acres of additional habitat to add to our thousands already conserved in this valley.

Our newly combined Columbia Land Trust/Three Rivers Land Conservancy is achieving conservation at greater levels than ever before!

And yet, change can be hard, too.

This year Columbia Land Trust had just one large fundraising event, continuing Wild Splendor, but putting Wine & Land on hold, at least for 2010. I'm grateful to those of you who conceived of and executed Wine & Land and know you have felt its absence. As we plan for 2011, we intend to incorporate the best elements from each event and to improve overall.

From a few of you, I've heard fears that the new, combined group will be tugged off course, ignore the mission of either Columbia Land Trust or Three Rivers Land Conservancy, or become too dilute and lose focus. The idea of losing connection to a cause you believe in is upsetting.

The Land Trust will never stray from its core values, or its core project work. We now have the terrific staff and board members of both groups! Last weekend former Three Rivers (and current Columbia Land Trust) board member Jim Thayer led me on a spectacular tour of the area north of Portland's Forest Park — part of his dream of extending Forest Park to the ocean. The weekend before, former Three Rivers members, including former board President Dave Beckett, joined us on a tour of the Hood and Klickitat Rivers and came back deeply inspired.

You may notice some changes, as we also see changes in our seasons, but I ask you to look at those changes, understand them, and recognize the beauty that is inherent in change. The basic work of Columbia Land Trust and Three Rivers Land Conservancy is stronger than ever. We work with landowners to voluntarily conserve land. We protect our wildlife habitat, our forests, our farms and ranches, and our nature close-to-home. For all time.

I already look forward to seeing the hawks' return in the spring. ■

Glenn



Elk in the Trout Lake Valley — Klickitat County, Washington

photo: Eric Bjorkman

Arrivals

Staff

We are thrilled to have **Jen Zarnoch** on board with the Stewardship Program. As a Stewardship Coordinator with the Land Trust, Jen will be involved with a wide variety of stewardship responsibilities ranging from annual monitoring to data management to implementation of restoration and site maintenance. Jen comes to the Land Trust with experience as a Natural Areas Manager with the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and as an environmental consultant and contractor on habitat restoration, mapping, and research projects. We welcome not only Jen's experience and expertise, but also her enthusiasm for and commitment to resource conservation. In her spare time, Jen enjoys crafting, growing food, tending to her feline companions, and exploring with her partner the abundance of outdoor and "foodie" adventures available in the Pacific Northwest.

Board of Directors

Dave Beckett, an MBA graduate of UCLA, recently retired after years as a realtor with Prudential Northwest Properties and over 30 years working in high technology and telecommunications. His prior volunteer activities include serving on the boards of the Lake Oswego School District Foundation and a nursing services organization, as well as three years leading church services. Dave and his wife Margie share a mutual passion for environmental conservation with their four adult children. As avid outdoors people, they hike Columbia Gorge waterfalls; kayak many local rivers; snowshoe at Mt. Hood in the winter and hike there in the summer; and bike around Lake Oswego.

Greg Dardis grew up in the Tualatin Valley, backpacking when he could and working on his grandfather's blueberry farm when he had to. He received a BA in Biology from the University of Portland and an MS in Education from Portland State University. In 2005, Greg joined the board of Three Rivers Land

Conservancy where he served as a member of the Stewardship Committee. Greg has also served on the Committee for the Future of Damascus, the Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators Association, and on the board of the Learning Gardens Institute in Portland. Currently, Greg teaches sustainability and environmental classes at Marylhurst University and PSU, mostly related to watershed and agriculture-based environmental education. He has been involved in local land-use issues at many levels and is passionate to help the Land Trust preserve the ecological as well as cultural richness of the region's landscapes for generations to come.

Jim Thayer is an executive in the energy efficiency consulting business, the former board president of Friends of Forest Park, and a former board member of Three Rivers Land Conservancy where he served on the Executive Committee. He played a pivotal role in the combination of Three Rivers with Columbia Land Trust and helped to guide Columbia Land Trust's current strategic planning effort. Jim is passionate about creating a bridge between urban and rural conservation efforts. Author of the book *Portland Forest Hikes*, he enjoys hiking throughout the Northwest and, on weekends, can be found surveying hiking routes from Portland to the Oregon coast.

Bob Wise is Senior Associate with Cogan Owens Cogan, LLC, and Director of Team Oregon, LLC; both are private firms focused on urban planning and sustainable development. He grew up in Lewiston, Idaho and lived in New York, Washington DC, and Arizona before moving to Oregon in 1982. He received a BA in Political Science from the University of Idaho and a Masters in Public Administration from the State University of New York at Albany. He has also served on the staff of four U.S. governors. In 2007, Bob joined the board of Three Rivers Land Conservancy, and served on both the Strategic Alliance and Nominating Committees. ■



Offered by Columbia Land Trust and the Audubon Society of Portland, the Backyard Habitat Conservation Program provides technical assistance throughout the city of Portland to small lot, private property owners who wish to restore native wildlife habitat in their backyards. Assistance includes a site assessment of the property as well as discounts on native plants.

To learn more and sign up, visit www.columbialandtrust.org/get-involved/act/backyard-habitats or contact Gaylen at gbeatty@columbialandtrust.org.

Historic restoration of the haul road

By Lindsay Cornelius

“I wish I could’ve seen what this looked like before ...”

It’s a common lament, a veritable theme song in the field of habitat restoration, and Columbia Land Trust knows it well. As we try to puzzle through written and oral histories and physical clues on the landscape for some idea of what a place looked like and, more importantly, how it functioned prior to major disturbance, we discover rich histories and difficult challenges that make our goals and the process of reaching them incredibly rewarding.

The restoration project at the Land Trust’s Klickitat River haul road property is one such rewarding process. The haul road is exactly that: a privately-owned, deteriorating paved road historically used for hauling timber from managed forests in the northern reaches of the watershed to the mill at Klickitat, Washington. For 15 miles the asphalt and the fill it’s perched on follows the river, often inside the river’s active floodplain, constituting the only major disturbance to natural, unencumbered river function in that 15-mile portion of the watershed — there are no houses, no other paved roads, no vast clear-cuts or industrial uses, no dikes, no dams, no bridges. The road, in fact, bisects a 14,700-acre wildlife area owned and managed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The other private landowners along the haul road — most of them long-timers in the area — have managed their land with care for generations for ranching and timber production. Needless to say, the place is special with respect to its condition and its potential for improved river function and fish habitat.

While potential might be the first thing a restoration ecologist sees in this landscape, the desired future condition (a restored habitat) is the ultimate goal. In order to determine what actions must be taken to restore the river’s floodplain, we turn to the history of the river. What did it look like before the road was constructed? How did it function without a road in the floodplain?

If we look back far enough, we take into account the geologic history of the Klickitat River — the repeated basalt flows that formed the bedrock of the area, the Missoula floods that scoured deep gorges through it, the spring melts off the glaciers of Mt. Adams and the snowy peaks of Goat Rocks Wilderness that bounced and raged down the river canyon, constantly re-shaping the floodplain. We consider millennia-old fish runs unimpeded on their way upriver, ample debris jams and deep pools, floodplains unrestricted by dams or dikes, and stream banks lush with native plants and the wildlife they sustained.

There is, of course, also a human history to consider on the Klickitat River. The native peoples — the Klickitat and Yakama Indians — lived by and fished and knew the river inside out for millennia. They first altered the surrounding landscape through the use of fire to maintain better crops of acorn and camas and, at higher elevations, huckleberry. Their lives centered on the salmon that ran abundant up the river. Following European settlement, ranchers ran sheep and cattle in the grassy understory of the woodlands, forests and open



photo: Lindsay Cornelius

meadows while timber companies and small landowners managed timber for commercial timber production. These enterprises eventually led to the construction of a railroad corridor down the west side of the river’s floodplain to transport felled trees to the lumber mill in the town of Klickitat. The long-timers in Klickitat, Glenwood, and Goldendale — some of who actually worked on the construction of the road — used to hop on the train as it lumbered up the valley to jump off at their favorite fishing holes. When it became more economical to haul timber by truck, the railroad was converted to a paved haul road, allowing a more direct route and faster trips between the forests and the mill.

When the mill closed in the mid-1990s, everything changed. There was no longer a need to haul timber on a road that was constantly being challenged by the hydraulic forces of a river trying to reclaim its floodplain. The costs of maintaining the failing road were high, and the economic benefits of doing so limited, so when the floods of 1996 completely washed away more than a mile of the road halfway between Dead Canyon and Twin Bridges, it stayed that way, eliminating much of its usefulness to motor vehicles. The absence of vehicles made the road popular for passive recreation — fishing, hunting, hiking, and biking. It was remarkable to stop where the pavement ended, to look over the edge of the washout at a river where a road used to be.

Columbia Land Trust became part of the long history of this reach of the Klickitat River in 2007 when we purchased the private road corridor with intent to restore the functions of the river in the floodplain and essentially bring the physical history of that reach of the river full circle. Working with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Yakama Nation Fisheries Program, neighbors, partners, funders, permitting agencies, county commissioners, and the local community, the Land Trust embraced a vision for the haul road corridor that looks to the river’s history for a direction forward. After

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a long restoration design effort led by the Yakama Nation Fisheries Program, the first major restoration work on the haul road along the mainstem of the Klickitat River began this summer and focused on a mile-and-a-quarter stretch that was isolated by the flooding events of 1996.

In early September, a local contractor rolled in with heavy equipment to break up and remove the asphalt, which was steadily being washed into the river by flooding events and day-to-day erosion. The contractor began re-contouring the slope of the floodplain and uplands to more resemble the pre-road conditions, and will eventually plant the slopes with native vegetation.

Where bedrock exists on the landward side of the road, the road fill is being entirely removed to allow the river to re-contact the bedrock. When water encounters a wall of bedrock it is re-directed by the hard surface of the rock downward and away, scouring out a deep pool where fish can take refuge and benefit from oxygen-rich, colder waters. Where historic floodplain and side channels were previously cut off by the presence of the road, restoration work aims to remove the road from the entrance and exit points of those historic channels to once again allow the river access. These are espe-

cially important areas during floods, as they provide storage capacity for water that otherwise would be channeled downstream at faster velocities and, because the water moves slower through these side channels, allow fish a safer place to reside during flood events. They also teem with insects and wildlife, providing forage and shelter for fish and all sorts of other plants and animals.

As the work progresses, the changes are as large and noticeable as when the road was first constructed. For some, the restoration work is a reminder of the decline of the local timber industry that began with the closure of the Klickitat lumber mill and continued as the road naturally eroded away. For others, the restoration work symbolizes a hopeful future for fish and all the living organisms that rely on a healthy river, including our local communities which depend on the system for economic sustenance, nourishment, recreation, and spirituality. For some of us, it is as close as we may ever come to seeing something that more closely resembles its historic origins. But for all of us, it is change. Inevitable, cursed, blessed change.

For more information on the haul road restoration project, visit our website: columbialandtrust.org. ■

Volunteer spotlight: Legal Team

By Brad Paymar

As most of you know from your personal lives, dealing in real estate is complicated. Over the years, Columbia Land Trust has been incredibly fortunate to benefit from hundreds of hours of donated time from dozens of attorneys across the region. This translates into hundreds of thousands of dollars of pro-bono support, the savings from which we can then direct towards accomplishing our mission: conserving more land. Our team of attorneys helps out on a whole range of topics that are critical to running this non-profit, including land acquisition due diligence and strategy, contract review and development, human resources management, risk management, and corporate and governance policy.

Two of our volunteer attorneys who have been particularly busy of late are Carolyn Vogt and Annie Robertson from Lane Powell, PC. As we reported in the Summer 2010 issue of Trust Talk, Columbia Land Trust recently combined with Three Rivers Land Conservancy; Carolyn and Annie were our advisors for Columbia Land Trust during this process. I don't know if Carolyn fully understood the commitment she was making when she enthusiastically agreed to work on the combining of these two organizations as her first project with the Land Trust. But over a year later, Carolyn and her associate, Annie, have committed hundreds of hours of their time to help work through the challenging legal, organizational, mission, and financial issues that needed to be solved to make this combination a success, and they did it with a positive attitude and disarming style.

The value of Carolyn's and Annie's contributions, along with Three Rivers' long-time volunteer attorney Nancy Murray, is immeasurable to us. The combination may not have been possible without their efforts and, in the years to come, we will continue to reap the benefits of the very generous support that this team provided. In addition, their work with us is serving as a reference to around the country as other land trust explore the possibility of combining.

Other attorneys that we would like to recognize for their incredible support over the last few years include: Linda Frischmeyer from Landerholm, Memovich, Lansverk & Whitesides; Steve Cook, Erik Swanson and Karen Hobson from Bullivant, Houser, Bailey; David Hepler, Greg Fullem, Darius Hartwell from Schwabe, Williamson and Wyatt; John Davis; Ted Gathe; Paul Majkut; Bronson Potter; Travis Thornton; and Alice Williamson.

Our work truly would not be possible without your generous support. Thank you! ■

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photo: Rollin Bamow

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For more information

**call Development Director Eric Allen
(360) 213-1203 or (503) 224-3601**

Reconnecting Haven Island

By Dan Friesz



The unique sound of “weenka, weenka, weenka, weenka” started in close to the operating excavator and then continued to carry throughout the entirety of Haven Island from one Virginia rail to the next. Attention captivated by the commotion created by the noisy intruder, the Virginia rails were seemingly applauding the efforts of a local contractor to restore the eastern edge of the island by removing an old wooden tide gate and breaching five sections of the historic levee. Ted Warila of W and W Logging, who lives on Youngs River only a few miles upstream of Haven Island, was able to commute in his small boat to work on our project during the daytime low tides of mid-September. He frequently stopped his operations to admire the sounds of the elusive and gregarious rail. After about two weeks of careful excavation, approximately 500 linear feet of the historic eastern levee has been removed, providing the ground-dwelling rails a glimpse of Youngs River for the first time in several decades. Five excavated breaches are now allowing daily tidal exchanges to the interior marsh. That

not only has the rails excited, but also benefits the many species of fish, mammals, invertebrates, and other local and migrating birds that frequent this island.

Haven Island, located within Youngs River just upstream of Astoria, Oregon, was acquired by Columbia Land Trust for conservation and restoration in 2006. This 80-acre intertidal scrub-shrub and emergent wetland sanctuary provides extremely important critical off-channel rearing habitat for the federally threatened lower Columbia River coho, Chinook salmon, and steelhead. Diking and land conversion of properties located along Youngs River have diminished other available habitat. This project provides essential rearing habitat for these threatened species. Bald eagles, currently a state threatened species in Oregon, are commonly seen here foraging, roosting, and nesting. Other waterbirds, neotropical migrants, local passerines, shorebirds, river otter, mink, and, of course, the curious Virginia rail will also benefit from daily tidal exchanges of nutrients from Youngs River.

Over 10 years ago Haven Island’s dike failed in two historic channels on the western edge of the island allowing some water back onto parts of the land; with the additional breaches and removal of the tide gate on the eastern edge, the entire island now experiences tidal flows for the first time in over a century. Columbia Land Trust, with the assistance of our AmeriCorps employees, monitored baseline conditions of the property in July of this year and eradicated several species of noxious weeds, such as yellow-flag iris and purple loosestrife. Over 4,000 native plants, including Sitka spruce and native willows, will be planted between the five breaches in early 2011. Funding for this project came from grants awarded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (administered by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership), the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. ■



Membership meeting & annual meeting

By Tammy Bjorkman

This year, we held our combined annual meeting and membership picnic on Saturday, August 14 at the main office of Columbia Land Trust within the Fort Vancouver Historic National Reserve. The temperature hit 95 and shade was a little hard to find, yet 89 people enjoyed lunch followed by a few words from Board President Jennifer Sims and Executive Director Glenn Lamb. We elected four of Three River Land Conservancy’s board members onto Columbia Land Trust’s Board of Directors (see Arrivals on page 3).

Cathi Wright from *Wild on Wildlife* stopped by with the three birds of prey she cares for — the western screech-owl, aplomado falcon, and red-tailed hawk. This was the first time for many of us to see a bird of prey up close. We also offered Bird Bingo as a fun way for participants to learn about birds. Long-time volunteers Wilson Cady and Steven Clark helped picnic participants make the identifications and graciously answered lots of questions. It was a glorious day thoroughly enjoyed by all. ■

Clockwise from top left: Glenn Lamb welcomes guests; Wilson Cady helps with Bird Bingo; red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*); panoramic of picnic; Cathi Wright holding a aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis*)

Upcoming volunteer events

Tree Planting in Washougal, WA – Saturday, November 13

The Krohn property is composed of both upland forest and riparian areas along the scenic Washougal River. The 2,000-foot stretch of the river that passes through our property provides habitat for coho, Chinook, and steelhead, as well as birds of prey and salamanders. We will be working on restoring the meadow portion of the property by planting cedar & fir trees to reestablish bird habitat and to help shade out invasive species. For more information contact Kelly Kay at volunteer@columbianlandtrust.org or (360) 213-1215.

Squirrel Nest Surveys near Lyle, WA – Saturday, December 4

Come visit the newly conserved Bowman Creek Conservation Area on the Klickitat River to help us locate the nests of state-listed (threatened) western gray squirrels. The property holds one of the largest concentrations of nests in the state, but the last survey was done over a decade ago, before a timber harvest that may or may not have impacted the squirrels. Come help us find out! Volunteers need to be prepared for cold, possibly wet weather. No poison oak, though! Terrain is flat, walking is easy, and you will spend your day looking up! Training and materials provided. Please bring a GPS (if you have one), lunch, water, and rain gear. A backpack might be helpful too. RSVP with contact information. Meet at the Lyle Mercantile general store on SR-14 at 9 am (about one hour from Vancouver/Portland). We'll plan to be done by early or mid-afternoon. For more information contact Lindsay Cornelius at lindsayc@columbianlandtrust.org or (360) 921-1073.



Wild Splendor exceeds goals for seventh straight year

By Hollie Allen

We're overjoyed to report that — with many thanks to you — we exceeded our revenue goals for the seventh year in a row and raised over \$180,000 despite having fewer guests than we anticipated. Columbia Land Trust supporters are an incredible and generous group of people!

It was a great evening at the charming Melody Ballroom in Southeast Portland. Michael Curry's lovely butterflies ushered us in the door. And the excitement was palpable during the exceptionally lively bidding on the totem pole, which took our breath away when it sold for \$10,000! During the dinner and program,

speaker Lindsay Cornelius and her son, Lyle, stole the hearts and minds of us all and inspired a remarkably successful special appeal for the good of the cause.

The memory that will stick with us is what wonderful, warm, enthusiastic supporters Columbia Land Trust is fortunate to have. The revenue raised at Wild Splendor directly helps protect the qualities of the Northwest that we all cherish. Thank you all so much for helping make this year's Wild Splendor so successful. ■





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Memberships start at \$25

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Thursday, December 9

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For additional information or to reserve your spot contact Tammy at bjorkman@columbialandtrust.org or (360) 213-1201 or (503) 224-3601