

Building a dream team

Success in conservation, just as in building a winning team, requires dedication, talent, cooperation, and a steadfast commitment to a shared goal. When it all comes together – that’s when real magic happens.



Pro-level partners

Managing land and waters for health, sustainability, and resiliency is a tall order for any landowner. Coupled with the added complexities of fragile ecosystems, public use, and the impacts of a changing climate, stewarding important landscapes is a monumental task. And one we can’t do without some A-team, all-star, pro-level partners.

Partners like Mike McManus and the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). Mike and his crew, based out of the Deary office, are indispensable partners providing technical assistance, highly skilled labor, and expertise.

This summer, the IDL team held chainsaw training on the Olson Family Conservation Preserve. Not only did PLT staff get a refresher on safe chainsaw use, but the crew put their training to work thinning dead trees and reducing fire fuels along Highway 8. They

felled dead trees, cut logs to burnable lengths, and stacked the wood to make it available to members of the community. Working together, IDL helped to reduce the threat of wildfire and helped warm homes of neighbors in need.

“We have helped PLT with some beetle-killed timber removal and blowdown removal within Idler’s Rest in the past, and when we heard about the new preserve potentially coming to fruition on the Olson property, we saw it as a great opportunity.

“For me I recreate and enjoy these areas as a member of the community, and ensuring they are around for all of us to use and enjoy I see as the real benefit. I look forward to a continued partnership with PLT and the Idaho Department of Lands,” shares Mike.

When they’re not busy training at the Olson Preserve, IDL is a powerhouse of help at Idler’s Rest, too. This fall, the crew helped to sort slash piles from the major

Above, from left to right: IDL crew collecting logs at Olson after felling; slash pile burning along Highway 8, October 2024; IDL crews at Idler’s Rest sorting piles, collecting usable wood for firewood, and preparing the piles for a future burn.

safety project in the Cedar Grove to prepare for controlled burning this winter. From the piles, they salvaged usable firewood, and again cut and stacked the wood for free use by the community.

Raising up the next generation of conservationists

Even before the creation of Judy's Trail and the Neuman Environmental Learning Pavilion, students from the Troy Schools were eagerly welcomed to the Neuman Conservation Forest to learn in nature's classroom. It was so important to landowner Judy LaLonde that children (and EVERYONE) have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, and learn in nature.

Judy's dream has been realized time and time again over the past year. Students from Troy High School have continued to add native plants around the outdoor classroom. The cross country team not only loves running on the trail, but even elected to take team photos there! Partnering with the Troy Branch of the Latah County Library District, young learners had access to STEAM learning kits specially designed for adventuring and playing along the trail and in the forest.

Below: Whitepine School eighth graders releasing native milkweed seeds in the strip-row field, which alternates rows of traditional crops and native flowers, forbs, and grasses at the Olson Preserve.

Above right: Cross Country runners participating in an October meet at Judy's Trail.



Eighth graders from the Deary School adventured on the Olson Preserve early this fall to learn about conservation, wildlife habitat, and native plants. With their boisterous help, hundreds of milkweed seeds were released to restore habitat near Olson Loop Road. It promises to be the first of many, many more learning and restoration opportunities to come.

Building and developing a love of nature in the next generation is a critical cornerstone of the land trust mission, and one that we are honored to share with landowners like Judy and partners like the library and Troy Schools.

If you'd like to play a pivotal role in shaping these future conservation leaders and building community, we're always on the lookout for experts and guides to lead activities and hikes. Team PLT needs you!

