

the COUNCIL NEWS

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The Lands Council preserves and revitalizes our Inland Northwest forests, water, and wildlife through advocacy, education, effective action, and community engagement.



FOREST WATCH URBAN FOREST COUNCIL WATER WATCH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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Solving our Water Storage Dilemma in Eastern Washington: Can Beavers Help?

By Brian Walker, Watershed Program Director

Eastern Washington needs more water. Because of climate change, the spring runoff has begun occurring earlier in the year when demand for water is fairly low. This leaves relatively little water in the Columbia River when peak water demand occurs in June, July and August – demand from farmers, residents and salmon needing to swim upstream.

The Washington Department of Ecology was tasked by Governor Gregoire with finding new storage options to meet peak demand needs. Last year, The D.O.E. proposed to construct several massive dams on canyon tributaries to the Columbia River. Specifically, they were looking to build dams at Hawk Creek, Sand Hollow or Crab Creek. These dams would have water pumped up to them in the spring, then released in the summer – but one dam would cost up to \$10 billion and flood thousands of acres of farmland and wildlife habitat. The Lands Council submitted written comments to Ecology strongly opposing the potential construction of these dams on ecological and economic grounds.

What can we do to store more water?
Are concrete dams the only solution?

The Lands Council is seeking to answer this question by researching

a unique alternative – utilizing beavers to build dams to store spring runoff. While this may sound a little far fetched, the principles are sound. In Washington, historic beaver populations numbered in the tens of millions; but, through trapping in the late 1800's, the populations were almost wiped out. Today, it is estimated that there are roughly 400,000 beavers in Washington; a far lower number than the historical levels.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

At The Lands Council, we make every dollar of your donation last.

Over 80% of your giving goes to on-the-ground advocacy, education and community engagement – with big results for our local environment.

We know these are uncertain economic times.

If you are able, please consider a gift at year's end to help us continue to preserve the forests, water and wildlife we all depend on.

Use the enclosed envelope or look for a special appeal card in your mailbox next week.

May your holiday season be filled with joy and celebration!



Earth Share
OF WASHINGTON

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Executive Director's Report



It is impossible to look ahead without factoring in the just-concluded elections. While The Lands Council cannot be involved in supporting any candidates, we will be impacted by results at the federal, state and local levels. That said, I am very optimistic of the change that is coming. Over the next year we have an exciting opportunity to protect hundreds of thousands of acres of wild lands in the Colville National Forest. The Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, which we helped found, is making significant gains in support of new Wilderness and better forest management. Our other two

forest collaborations, one on the nearby Idaho Panhandle National Forest, and the other on the Kootenai National Forest of NW Montana are also moving forward and I am hopeful that both will bring about change in the way we protect the forests and wildlife of our region.

The Lands Council has become a leader in the blossoming sustainability movement in Spokane. Our work at cleaning up the Spokane River, on taking real action to conserve our precious water and protect the aquifer, on making sure kids are safe from lead and other toxics, and our leadership on climate change are all making a difference. This year we planted hundreds of trees and native plants along the shores of the Spokane River and Hangman Creek, next year we will plant hundreds more, and increase our efforts to keep our native Ponderosa Pine as the keystone tree in Spokane County.

One of the most exciting new projects at The Lands Council weaves our forest and water programs together – Beavers as Water Storage. With a startup grant from Washington Department of Ecology we aim to show that beavers can go head to head with concrete dams and play a significant role in storing the snow and rain that falls in winter and spring for use in the late summer. Along with finding out the best places to bring the beaver back will be working with willing landowners, using conservation easements and water banking so that those beaver ponds will be embraced by the owners of the land.

I hope to see many of you at our annual Holiday Party – this year it will be downstairs from our offices on 25 W. Main at the Saranac Art Gallery on Wednesday, December 3rd from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We have much to celebrate this season and having you all attend would be a great present for all of us here. Thank you all so much for your support, and if you can find a little extra this year we will promise to multiply its effect with our hard work and dedication to our region.

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Environmental Health

Using Health Impact Assessment as a Tool to Improve Spokane County's Quality of Life

The Lands Council's Environmental Health Program, through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is continuing to create sustainable community partnerships to help modify our "built environment" in order to enhance our natural environment and improve people's physical health in Spokane County. We've brainstormed four draft targets to address three built environment categories (active transportation, green building and energy efficiency, and land use). These include:

- Increase bicycle trips 5% and pedestrian trips 15% in 10 years.
- 5% annual increase in "Built Green" certification for new residential home development in the next 3-5 years.
- Maintain urban growth areas (UGAs) as currently adopted for the next 10 years.
- Increase health awareness in decision-making by at least 10% in 5 years.

We are using a new, cutting-edge approach to help us assess how to best reach our targets: Health Impact Assessments (HIA). Imagine an entity is planning to build a new motorway. A health impact assessment would answer the question, 'How would this new development affect people's health?' An HIA is a combination of procedures, methods, tools, and processes by which policies, plans, programs, and projects are evaluated as to their potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population. An HIA places public health on the agenda, results in better-informed decisions with respect to health, aids in addressing environmental justice, promotes collaboration, and encourages sustainable development.

Only a few dozen HIAs have even been completed in the U.S. In collaboration with the Spokane Regional Health District and the City of Spokane, The Lands Council is presently in the process of conducting a rapid HIA on the "Pedestrian" strategy of the Multi-Modal Transportation portion of the Downtown Spokane Plan Update. We are looking specifically at potential actions such as one-way conversions, sidewalks and crosswalks, new pedestrian connections, and the Centennial Trail within the framework of our first target (increase bicycle trips 5% and pedestrian trips 15% in 10 years). Additionally, the Spokane Regional Health District and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are sponsoring a two-day workshop on health impact assessments in early-December. We will be participating in this and have been helping to organize it.

Visit, http://www.landscouncil.org/water/built_environment.asp, for more information about our built environment work.

Keep Me Lead- Free!

Update on Lead Screening and Education

The Lands Council has concluded this year's door-to-door outreach on childhood lead poisoning in targeted, at-risk neighborhoods (e.g. West Central, East Central, Chief Garry Park, Nevada-Lidgerwood, and Hillyard). In total, we reached 1,297 families and distributed 2,884 educational packets in 2008!



The Lands Council, The City of Spokane, and the Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP) worked together to build awareness of childhood lead poisoning and encouraged the Spokane community to celebrate National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 19th-25th) by getting kids and homes tested for lead. We distributed an informational flyer to District #81 kindergarten classes, and held additional blood lead screening events in both Spokane and Spokane Valley. We received excellent coverage by KHQ-TV, and were even invited to conduct a live blood lead screening of their morning news anchors and staff an evening on-air telephone help line!

To date, we've screened 339 Spokane kids. So far, 2 children were found to have lead poisoning, and 25 kids had "elevated" levels of lead in their blood.

Keep abreast of our numerous activities to reduce childhood lead poisoning in Spokane by visiting http://www.landscouncil.org/water/reducing_lead.asp.

If you have any questions please contact: Kat Hall, Environmental Health Program Director at khall@landscouncil.org, 509-209-2403 or Nicole Powell, Environmental Health Program Assistant at npowell@landscouncil.org, 509-209-2404

The Lands Council Staff



TLC Staff at Chain Lake for a retreat: standing in back: Amber, Kristi, Brian, Mike, and Jeff; sitting in front: Nicole, Kat, Debbie, and Crystal (Kat's dog)

The Lands Council Board of Directors



TLC Board at Chain Lake for a retreat: Janice, Caroline, Mary Ann, Mike, Bart, Jeff, Anne, and Tim (not present: Jim H., Rein, Neil, Jim H., Steve, Jim M., and Mark)

(Continued from page 1)

At The Lands Council, we believe that if we can find locations for half a million beavers, we can essentially eliminate the need for additional large dams on the Columbia River. If each beaver constructs a dam that holds back three or four acre feet of water, then the goal that DOE was tasked with will be met. We have received a grant from the Department of Ecology that will allow us to partially fund our research and to begin working with landowners to find locations for beaver reintroduction throughout all of Eastern Washington. This study will not only look at the physical places for beaver dams, but also the social and economic opportunities of water banking and conservation easements. We welcome any ideas or suggestions that will be helpful to this exciting new project.

Please contact Brian at, (509)209-2408 or bwalker@landscouncil.org, for more information.



Can this fella help solve our water storage problems?

Community Engagement

Blue Alder Timber Sale: A Lesson in Collaboration

Bolstered by success with the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, The Lands Council entered into the Coeur d'Alene Forest Coalition process about two years ago, knowing that North Idaho forests have traditionally been a battleground between conservationists and the timber industry. The Coalition's first goal was to find common ground on the Blue Alder Project, a timber sale located about 15 miles east of Coeur d'Alene.



Blue Alder field trip, August 2008
photo taken by Serena Carlson

Idaho Panhandle National Forest officials originally envisioned Blue Alder to be a large new timber sale in a watershed that had already been heavily logged and roaded. But since their own original plans were to "require that 40% of a harvest unit will not have any harvesting activities and 60% will have retention ranging from individual trees to large clumps of trees" it seemed that forest practices would be implemented that are much lighter on the land, and common ground might be realized via the collaborative process.

Following several coalition meetings over roughly two years, it indeed seemed that the Forest Service would empower our coalition by being responsive to our concerns over cumulative

effects of logging on wildlife and fisheries. The Forest Service agreed to drop new roads, and seemed to agree to further change prescriptions that would forgo new large openings in this already fragmented forest.

But following a field trip to the area early this summer, that agreement nearly fell apart. By comparing Forest Service's logging recommendations with actual forest conditions, it became clear that many areas of the forest would end up resembling clearcuts with only a few trees retained. What ensued was as polarizing as ever, with a news release accusing the Forest Service of renegeing on the deal and the Coeur d'Alene Press accusing us of harboring a zero cut agenda. It appeared the Blue Alder project and even the Coalition were blowing apart.

The Lands Council decided to break the stalemate by convening some coalition members, without Forest Service attendance. By coming together as a coalition, the vision of common ground for the project has now come back into focus, and at this time it appears the Forest Service is making significant changes and will limit openings as per their original prescription.

The Lands Council's involvement with the Coeur d'Alene Coalition has been a challenge, but we feel that implementing our vision of sustainability by working with diverse interests in communities across the inland northwest is well worth the effort.

For more information about this case please contact Jeff Juel, Forest Policy Director, at jjuel@landscouncil.org or (509)209-2401.

Urban Forestry



Spokane Preservation Advocates (SPA) planted 10 large canopy trees in the Logan Neighborhood on Saturday, October 18th. The trees were purchased by the Urban Forest Council from the Spokane County Conservation District with money donated by the New Priorities Foundation. The goal of this project is to preserve the character of historic neighborhoods in Spokane by keeping large canopy trees. This particular tree was planted in the front yard of Amber Waldref and Tom Flanagan, Lands Council members.

Volunteers in Action

The Lands Council's 2008 Watershed Restoration - A Major Success!

The Lands Council hosted three tree and shrub planting projects to restore riparian areas along the Spokane River and Latah Creek. During the three planting days -- one this spring at Sandifur Bridge and two this fall at Campion Park and People's Park -- we saw some amazing volunteer turnout. Our final planted tree/shrub count for this year stands at 1056 with more than 165 volunteers donating almost 700 hours of service to get the trees in the ground or potting bare-root plant stock. To say the least, the support from the community has been amazing!

With a recent \$5,000 grant from REI and additional donations of planting materials, we are hoping to continue these types of planting projects to improve the health of the Spokane River and Latah Creek.



Lands Council Volunteers at People's Park River Restoration and Clean-up event

When out at the planting sites, we were often asked why it was important to do these types of planting projects along river shorelines. In the early 1900's, farming in Spokane area focused around river and stream bottoms where water was plentiful and built-up silt provided excellent topsoil. To farm in those areas, trees were often removed and shoreline vegetation was also destroyed to gain access to the stream. Now, more than 100 years later, these stream and river areas have not been able to repair themselves because of continued disturbances at other locations. By taking the time to plant native trees, shrubs and ground covers, we are helping these areas to finally recover.

The trees that The Lands Council planted this year will eventually mature and shade the streams and river banks to help cool the water for several native fish species. The roots of these trees and shrubs will also hold soil in place along the banks and help reduce erosion that can damage Lake Spokane. These same roots can also help filter contaminants from water that makes its way into the stream and river, effectively cleaning our water resources.

For those of you who took the time this year to help us -- our greatest thanks! We hope all our local members will participate in our tree planting activities planned for the next several years. Without your help, we couldn't affect such positive change in our watershed.



One of the many student volunteers planting trees at People's Park



Spokane Mayor, Mary Verner, and TLC's Watershed Program Director, Brian Walker, planting trees at People's Park



TLC staff Caitlin Jones and Nicole Powell planting trees at the Campion Park Restoration

For more information about The Lands Council's restoration efforts contact Brian Walker, Watershed Program Director, at (509)209-2408 or bwalker@landscouncil.org.

Business Partners and Supporters

Thank you to our major
Business Partners in 2008!



OutThere



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2008 Summer Raffle Winners!

1st Prize – 2 adult season passes to
49 Degrees North – Jaque Dashiell

2nd Prize - \$500 Mountain Gear
shopping spree – Dr. Peggy Parker

3rd Prize – Chaco Footwear – Tom
Flanagan

Congrats to our winners and thank
you to all who participated in this
year's raffle!!

Have you checked out
TLC's website and
e-newsletter?

The Lands Council has an
exciting website. Visit us online
for up-to-date information about
environmental issues affecting
the Inland Northwest in our news
section, the latest information about
all of our environmental programs,
project updates, upcoming TLC
events, volunteer opportunities, and
much more! Please visit our website
at www.landscouncil.org.

The Lands Council launched its
new e-newsletter, *The Lands Council
News Online*, one year ago. You can
visit The Lands Council's website
at www.landscouncil.org/contact,
to sign up for e-mail alerts and
our e-newsletter. Our e-newsletter
is a great way to receive updates
from The Lands Council about our
programs, events, and volunteer
opportunities on a bi-monthly basis.
Please sign up today!

THE LANDS COUNCIL

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**The Lands Council
Annual Holiday Party**

**Wednesday, December 3rd
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**The Saranac Art Gallery
25 W. Main Ave.**



Join us for hors d'oeuvres and wine
as we celebrate the season and
thank you for your ongoing support.

14th Annual
THE LANDS COUNCIL
Dinner and Auction

**Save the Date!
Friday, April 17th, 2008**

Watch our website for upcoming
details at www.landscouncil.org!

If you're interested in donating an
auction item or volunteering on
the Auction Steering Committee
to help with the event planning,
please contact events coordinator,
Kristi Fountain, at kfountain@landscouncil.org
or 509.209.2851.