

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.

www.landscouncil.org



Brian Walker...Someone Who Gives a Dam

By Siarah Myron, Lands Council Volunteer

Brian Walker, The Lands Council's Watershed Program Director, grew up in Grand Coulee, next to a great big dam. "Half my family worked there," Brian says. "I got more than enough tours in there and got to see exactly how a dam operated."

After getting his Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Environmental Science from Washington State University, Brian ended up at The Lands Council, where he is now studying a different kind of dam – beaver dams – as a natural water storage solution that will hopefully eliminate the need for any more concrete dams like the one he grew up next to.

The Lands Council's Beaver Solution is simple, yet brilliant: Instead of a big concrete dam, a million little beaver dams throughout Eastern Washington would give the same benefit of water storage as a massive dam project – but also many more benefits for much less money, including complete wetland restoration and increased ground water tables.

The Department of Ecology recently gave The Lands Council a \$30,000 grant to research the potential of beavers as water storage, which will include working with landowners to find places to relocate beaver families.

"I don't think anybody at Ecology really wants to see a big concrete dam," Brian says, "It's just they're easy to build, they're easy to permit, and there are some guarantees...whereas, with a beaver dam, you can't install a phone line out to a beaver dam and say, hey, release a little bit of water today."

Growing up in arid Central Washington, Brian has had first-hand experience with water issues as far back as he can remember. When he was in Boy Scouts, he



Brian heading up the tree planting efforts at Campion Park last fall

recalls, kids from Yakima would talk about how their irrigation systems were slowly losing water, causing their parents stress. Brian also got to see how Lake Roosevelt was managed and how the size of the snow pack affected its recreation areas. For Brian, it was easy to decide what to study in college.

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Executive Director's Report



Water is the critical link that ties the mountains with our cities and farms. It creates the pathway for salmon and trout to travel up and down our rivers and streams, it fills our aquifers and reservoirs and the abundance of it keeps our forested landscape looking very different from the deserts of the Southwest. Here at The Lands Council, we take water very seriously. A number of our projects are focused on the challenges to storing, conserving and protecting water. You might have heard about our Beaver Solution. I wanted to let you know about a couple of other projects we are doing that involve water.

Up near the Canadian border in Pend Oreille County, The Lands Council is part of the negotiation team for the Sullivan and Mill Pond dam relicensing. The Sullivan Dam raises the level of Sullivan Lake, which is a popular fishing and recreation destination. While it seems everyone wants to keep the lake at current levels, there are opportunities to improve the fishery and recreation by minor changes in operation. Mill Pond dam is another matter. It blocks Sullivan Creek below Sullivan Lake, and provides an impediment to paddlers and may have a spectacular falls buried under it. It also costs the Pend Oreille County ratepayers to maintain it and provides no water storage or hydropower. One option in the negotiation process would be to restore Sullivan Creek by removal of the Mill Pond dam. Steve Llewellyn and I are on the negotiation team, along with a diverse group of local, tribal, business, and agency interests.

In Spokane, the efforts to reach an agreement on how to best remove phosphorus from the Spokane River continue. The Lands Council is a member of the stakeholder group that also consists of industrial and municipal dischargers, Center for Justice, Department of Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency. We helped start a collaboration process several years ago, and after a small set back in the process, everyone seems to be back on track. The modeling of discharges along the river, as well as all the phosphorus that comes in from Hangman Creek and the Little Spokane River is expected to be completed by the end of the summer. At that time we expect to work closely with the other stakeholders to establish permit limits and move forward on this significant effort to improve water quality in the river.

Finally, I wanted to tell you about efforts to restore Hangman Creek, which is a significant contributor of pollution to the Spokane River. Over the past few weeks, The Lands Council, Spokane Conservation District, and many great volunteers have planted over a thousand trees on two sections of Hangman Creek. These willows, aspen and other species should help stabilize the banks and make the river cooler and cleaner. We think this will also make Hangman Creek viable for beaver in the future, which could further improve water quality. We may do some more willow planting this spring and in the fall, so check our website for volunteer planting parties. Have a great summer! Maybe I'll see you out enjoying the great rivers of our region!

Member News

The Lands Council's 14th Annual Dinner & Auction held on April 17th was a great evening. 330 guests attended the event to help raise a net total of more than \$40,000.

Thank you to all of our volunteers and sponsors that made this event possible. Please visit www.landscouncil.org/events for a list of item donors and event sponsors.



Mike Petersen, Executive Director of The Lands Council, and other auction guests bid on items



Over 300 guests view the world premiere of The Lands Council's Beaver Solution video

Lands Council Members (left to right) Gail Duba, Steve and Mary Llewellyn, Kathy and Barry Barnes, and Wanda Daehlin having a good time together at the auction



Education



Welcome to our New Legacy Circle Members!

(January – April 2009)

Susan Allen

John Baumann

Pam and Bruce Gallaher

Fred Schrupf and Golie Jansen

Legacy Circle Summer Party

Thursday, July 23rd

5:30-8:00 p.m.

Saranac Building 2nd Floor Rooftop Patio

What is the Legacy Circle?

The Lands Council's Legacy Circle is made up of exceptional donors who provide the resources and guidance to sustain our long-term environmental protection work in the Inland Northwest. Members pledge to donate \$250 or more annually.

How do I join the Legacy Circle?

To learn more about the Legacy Circle, please contact Amber Waldref, Development Director, at 509-209-2407 or awaldref@landscouncil.org.

Water Watch

(Continued from page 1)

Brian's knowledge of watersheds will come in handy when relocating beavers, but the beavers are also going to need food. Lucky for TLC, Brian is working on that too. He inherited a green thumb, having started gardening when he was 4 years old, with his own little plot in his parents' huge garden. From there, Brian says, "it snowballed."

He now has a 2,000-tree nursery in his backyard, where he keeps trees for TLC's tree-planting



Lands Council volunteers working to pot 2,000 trees to create the nursery that now stands in Brian Walker's backyard

restoration events. "I don't know how the heck that got started," Brian laughs. "This year we got close to 2,000 trees from the Conservation District, and last weekend we had 20 cubic yards of dirt dumped in my backyard."

TLC's restoration projects have really taken off since they started three years ago, going from a single event with a dozen volunteers and 50 plants, to more than 100 volunteers and 1,000 plants at multiple planting events throughout the year, after TLC received a grant from REI to purchase trees.

Brian volunteered his backyard after discovering that the roof of the Saranac Building was a less than ideal place to raise plants, due to the direct sunlight and lack of shade that comes with the abundance of

concrete downtown.

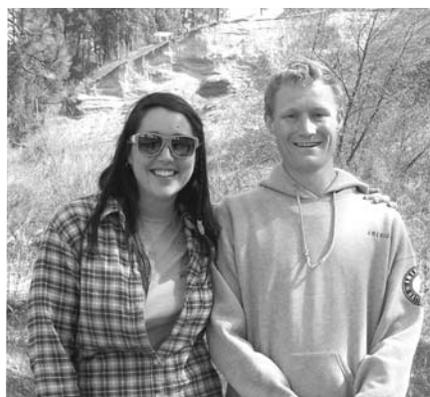
So, what does Brian's husband Steve think of having their yard turned into a nursery? "He thinks I'm nuts," Brian laughs. "I've been a big gardener all my life, but trying to deal with 1,000 ponderosa pine trees – holy cow. That's insanity on a grand scale."

But Brian's "insanity" is really just a passion for his work and a love of the tangible results he sees from TLC's restoration projects. He enjoys getting out on the weekends with Steve and his dog Sadie, and looking at the areas where he and TLC volunteers have planted trees. "They're looking great," he says.

On a recent walk through Campion Park, however, Brian saw something that gave him mixed emotions. "We lost one tree to a beaver," he says, and then adds with a smile, "I can't complain. I would like to, but I can't complain. I was kind of upset, but at the same time, I understand."

Brian says he really likes the direction TLC's watershed program is heading, with less focus on litigation and policy, and more focus on restoration than in the past. "This is restoration on a shoestring budget and lots of very dedicated volunteers who are helping out," he says. "There's something to be said about going out and getting your hands dirty, seeing people actually realize, you know, I planted this tree... Is it gonna be here next year? Can I bring my kids back 20 years down the road and say, 'hey, I planted that tree?'"

For more information about our Watershed Restoration Program, contact Brian at (509)209-2408 or bwalker@landscouncil.org



TLC staff, Amanda Parrish and Brian Walker, at Campion Park planting event

Community Engagement

Smuggling Soap Across the Stateline

By Jordy Byrd, Lands Council Volunteer

Spokane's dishwashers have become a household name. People as far as The Los Angeles Times, ABC News, The Chicago Tribune and the BBC have read all the intimate details about what soap Spokanites are using, how their getting it, and who's smuggling it across borders. But what's all the fuss about?



"The smuggler stories appeal to people because you have a classic story line," said Cathy Cochrane, communications manager with the Washington Department of Ecology, Eastern Region. "It's the smuggler mom pitted against big government." In most cases, the smuggler mom is a Spokane resident wanting to keep her dishes clean. The big government, well that's Washington State's Legislature.

Since passing a ban which decreases the amount of phosphates in dishwashing detergents, Spokane has seen a tidal wave of national media attention. Thus far, the attention has focused on the smugglers – people crossing into Idaho to purchase phosphate rich detergent. Less attention however, has focused on the ban itself.

Phosphate ban:

Phosphorus is used in dishwashing detergent to reduce mineral levels and prevent food particles from depositing on dishes. It get's the job done, even with Spokane's hard water, but what it's also doing is polluting the Spokane River.

Phosphorous is a pollutant that acts as a fertilizer which stimulates the growth of algae and other aquatic plants, said Mike Petersen, Executive Director with The Lands Council.

According the Washington State Department of Ecology, one pound of phosphorus can grow 700 pounds of algae. In turn, the plants use up the oxygen in the water and make it difficult to support a healthy fish population, Petersen said.

Because of this, phosphates have been banned in laundry detergent nationally since 1993. "Logically the next target was dishwashing soap," Petersen said. "Spokane has been working to decrease the amount of phosphorus in our river and one of the easy things to target is the products that we use."

Pioneering the ban:

Cochrane and Petersen said Spokane has received national attention because the city is pioneering the phosphate ban. Washington State adopted the first national phosphate ban in July, 2008 in Spokane, Clark and Whatcom counties. Washington's ban will be extended statewide by July 2010.

Following suite, other states are imposing phosphate restrictions. The Soap and Detergent Association backed legislation in Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont and Virginia, and Washington; all of which pledge to reduce the use of phosphates to 0.5 percent by July, 2010. Currently, most states allow up to 9 percent phosphorus in their dishwashing detergents.

Every action counts:

Petersen and Cochrane agree that media attention – whether good or bad – is beneficial to the community. "All this national attention is good because it makes people think about the issue and the actions of other people," Petersen said. "Hopefully other people are thinking, wow that's stupid to smuggle a pollutant into our community."

Cochrane said it's too bad the smugglers don't see that each person has the ability to be part of the solution or part of the problem. "The Department of Ecology and I'm sure The Lands Council would like people to understand that their individual actions do make a difference."

For more information on phosphate low soaps or how to decrease your use of phosphates visit:

www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2009news/2009-083.html

Volunteers in Action

Do you like to bike or walk in Spokane?

We do!

As part of our EPA CARE (Community Action for a Renewed Environment) grant, we have been working with numerous partners to promote active transportation and reduce automobile emissions here in Spokane.

We are exploring the possibility of conducting pilot walkability audits throughout Spokane neighborhoods. Walkability audits consist of a group of neighborhood residents who walk on an identified route and complete surveys containing questions pertaining to whether the route is pedestrian-friendly. This information is then collated and summarized.

The goal, ultimately, is to build awareness of pedestrian issues, improve pedestrian infrastructure, help make our streets safer and more walkable, and get people walking!

Please contact Kat, 509-209-2403/khall@landscouncil.org, if you are interested in participating in one of these audits, and stay tuned for similar “bikability” audits in the future!

Visit, www.landscouncil.org/water/reducing_toxics.asp, for more information.

3rd Annual Earth Day Tree Planting: What a Success!

On Saturday, April 25th, in honor of Earth and Arbor Days, The Lands Council hosted its' 3rd Annual Earth Day Tree Planting at Campion Park. Over 60 volunteers arrived to get their hands dirty and plant a variety of native trees. In fact, our volunteers were so enthusiastic and hard-working that we were able to plant 250 quaking aspen and black cottonwood in only one hour!

The trees planted along Hangman Creek are essential to overall watershed and riparian ecosystem health. The trees and plants surrounding a river are just as indicative of watershed health as is the water chemistry. A healthy river has a corridor of trees and vegetation, known as the riparian zone, along the stream banks.



Lands Council volunteers planting trees at the 3rd Annual Earth Day Tree Planting event

These trees offer wildlife habitat for migratory birds, deer, beavers, and other rodents. They also

stabilize streambanks and increase sediment retention. The tree canopies provide shade that keep water temperatures low enough for healthy dissolved oxygen levels and fish populations, and the leaves and branches provide new sources of nutrients and habitat in-stream.

Though there are healthy communities of trees in places along Hangman and the Spokane River, The Lands Council wants to see the entire riparian corridor restored along or local rivers. We will

continue our efforts with four more tree-planting days in September and

hope you can join us! To all those who participated in April, thanks again! Your help is what keeps The Lands Council going.

For more information contact Amanda Parrish, Volunteer & Restoration Coordinator at (509)209-2852 or aparrish@landscouncil.org



TLC volunteer getting ready to plant trees at Campion Park



TLC staff Amanda Parrish, Brian Walker, and Amanda Haid at Campion Park

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"Kids Run Better Unleaded"
World Premiere



On Friday May 1st, The Lands Council hosted the premiere of the documentary "Kids Run Better Unleaded" at the Magic Lantern Theatre. Produced by Community-Minded Television, this documentary tells the story of our efforts to, in cooperation with community partners such as the City of Spokane and SNAP, reduce childhood lead poisoning in Spokane through neighborhood outreach and education, blood lead testing of kids 6 and under, and home lead testing and abatement. Roughly 60 people attended the documentary premiere, which was preceded by our quarterly open house and reception. Look for the documentary on our web site and on Community-Minded Television, Channel 14.

To date, we've screened 542 Spokane kids. So far, 2 children were found to have lead poisoning, and 31 kids had "elevated" levels of lead in their blood.

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

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Water Conservation Tips

- Don't leave the water running.
- Check faucets and pipes for leaks.
- Equip faucets with aerators.
- Upgrade to an efficient clothes washing machine.
- Wash only full laundry loads.
- Detect leaks.
- Check your toilet flapper.
- Take shorter showers.
- Install low-flow showerheads.
- Change everyday habits. Turn off the tap.
- Replace your old toilet and replace it with a low-flow toilet.
- Check sprinkler heads, valves and drip emitters once a month, make sure heads are aimed correctly.
- Water lawn and plants in the early morning. Many irrigation experts feel the best time to water is between midnight and 6 a.m. because evaporation is kept to a minimum.
- Use a broom to sweep off pavement. Using the hose to wash down sidewalks, driveways, and patios wastes a lot of water and money.
- Use a spray nozzle with a shut-off handle on your hose so water doesn't flow continuously.

