

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

October 2009

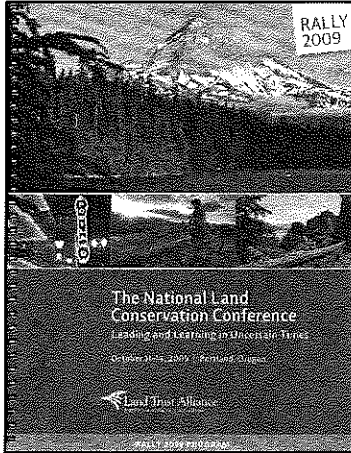
RALLY MONTH

This month the Association had several of its board members attend the national Rally of the Land Trust Alliance in Portland. The conference was an intensive four days of workshops, sessions, and lectures that was generously funded for us with grants from the Alliance to cover registration cost. Quite a bit of "eye opening" information was received and we met many wonderful people from around the nation that are working hard towards similar goals. The following is a brief summation of things learned.

One of the overall themes of the Rally was how to counter the trend in our nation of people being disconnected from the land. The issue is the quality of life in our communities and there were a number of sessions on how to do this in a time of dwindling resources, environmental pressures, and social changes. Some of the more obvious issues involved more land conservation, improving public access, and better growth management. Questions were asked of how many acres in your community are open to the public, are our natural areas fragmented, are there neighborhood powered green spaces, and how many organizations are supporting our goals? Some of the more unobvious issues involved sensing community needs, increasing the relevance of natural spaces, and celebrating our unique local features. Topics like view sheds, biodiversity, sustainability, coalitions, carbon sequestration, thread trails, and holistic land protection had us scrambling to learn as much as possible.

Much of the Rally involved the nuts and bolts of land conservation such as harnessing volunteer power, fund raising (now more important than ever), environmental education, landscape management, contained liability, and media contact. We were tasked to look inward at our own organization to assure meaningful mission and policy statements, a clear vision of core values and future goals, and better methods of resolving internal conflicts. Maybe one of the more interesting aspects of the rally were meeting the people there that shared many of the same goals, challenges, and problems as our Association. We shared experiences, solutions, and a vast amount of ideas of how we can succeed in saving our communities' and nations' natural spaces. Anyone talking to our Rally attendees should be prepared to be bombarded with new ideas and views on land conservation and stewardship.

At times, the feeling of smallness overcame us as we sat amongst land trusts with hundred of thousands of protected acres, professional staffs that we can only dream of, and resources that seemed to be able to solve all our problems in minutes! But soon the feeling would pass as we remembered that we are living, working, and saving nature in a really special place, and that our modest efforts can make a difference.



GRANTS AHOY

The Association and the Dream Trail Planning Team, with which we participate, have received several grants this month in addition to the one mentioned in the previous article and the wonderful assistance from the Washington Trail Association in their trail work on Tower Mountain. The Access Fund of Boulder Colorado has awarded us a \$5K grant to improve the road and parking areas adjacent to our new Big Rock land acquisition. We really have work to do here and this big project will have to be accomplished in a number of smaller steps. This grant will get us started.

The National Park Service awarded a technical assistance grant to the "Dream Team" to help with developing a strategy for community involvement and plan development. The Dream Trail is our project to connect the Natural Area with the Tower Mtn. Conservation lands to the south both with a recreational trail and with open space for animal migration. Their assistance will consist of assigning us a NPS Community Planner to work with us for the next year. With all these generous grants we are obliged to commit matching resources to match their assistance.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

We are a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization dedicated to saving nature areas in the Spokane region for public enjoyment and education. Call Michael Hamilton, 747-8147, if you have questions. Our board meets every other month on the third Tuesday. Our next meeting will be November 17th. We will meet at the Moran Prairie Spokane County Library, 6004 South Regal St.. Members and the public are always welcomed to drop by to see what is going on with the Association.

The following are our September donors that have consented to be listed: Nancy Cashon, Stanley & Bernice Fahlgren Fund, Charles Gillingham, Traci & Jeffery Hanegan, Lois Hansen, Mary Alice Jones, Gloria Krebs, Stephanie Lambert, Marilyn Miller, Helen Stowell, and one anonymous donor. Thank you one and all for your support.

*Come forth unto the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.*

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

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