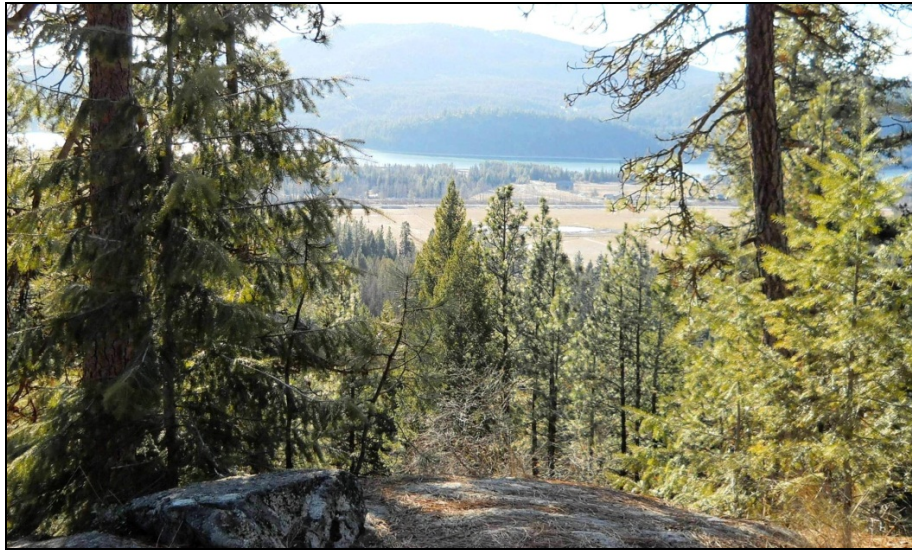


BONNER COUNTY DAILY BEE

Easement Deal Protects Trails

By CAMERON RASMUSSEN Staff writer | Thursday, January 10, 2013



View of Dover and the Pend Oreille River from Sherwood Forest

SANDPOINT, ID— Bicyclists and hikers will be able to enjoy the popular Sherwood Forest trails for a long time to come thanks to a new conservation easement.

A longtime favorite among bicycling enthusiasts like the Pend Oreille Pedalers, the naturalistic playground will remain that way with owners Mark and Susie Kubiak's donation of a conservation easement through a partnership with the Kaniksu Land Trust in December. According to Kaniksu Land Trust director Eric Grace, the contribution is a significant act of generosity that will remain an asset to the area for years to come.

"We are thrilled that the Kubiaks have agreed to permanently protect this important resource," he said.

"This donation is a testament to their dedication and commitment to the community."

Now that the Dover property is protected as a conservation easement, it is restricted in the ways it can be used. While every conservation easement is tailored by the purposes in mind for the specific property, they generally include prohibitions against subdividing the land or developing it to any commercial, residential or industrial use. The Kubiaks' easement retains most of their rights as land owners with the important addendum that the natural resources be retained. According to Kaniksu Land Trust associates, the couple and any future land owners can still harvest timber from the property, but it must be congruent with a sustainable, approved forest management plan. Similarly, the owners can use the southern end of the property for agriculture.

Kaniksu Land Trust will simply be involved to make sure the open space and greenery is retained.

That all adds up to good news for fans of the great outdoors. The 142-acre Dover property, commonly known as Sherwood Forest, is located on the north side of Highway 2 and is popular among the public for being accessible through a path named “Greta’s Segway” near West Pine Street at Pine Street Hill. As frequent visitors to the property, the local bicycle group Pend Oreille Pedalers has offered to help with the maintenance of the trail. After all, the conservation easement doesn’t guarantee that the property remains open to the public, so it’s important that visitors treat the area with respect to keep that privilege open.



Volunteers Jim Mellen, Pronto the dog, Yvonne Savarise and Arelene Cook help with the trailhead sign

“The landowners have been remarkably generous to the community to open up this land for recreation,” Grace said. “Now it’s up to us — the public — to treat the land and the landowners with the respect that they deserve.”

Although the donation of a conservation easement can bring along some tax benefits, Grace said there is very little reason for the Kubiaks to establish the easement outside of a desire to keep the land unspoiled for future generations.

“It’s a wonderful thing they’ve done for the community,” Grace said. “They have what we call a ‘Conservation Ethic.’”