

contributing organizations



www.idahoconservation.org

Idaho Conservation League



ROCK CREEK ALLIANCE

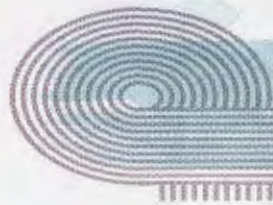


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CONSERVATION CORNER

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As the saying goes, there is strength in numbers. This holds true for the land conservation movement. The Kaniksu Land Trust is one of 1,700 non-profits whose mission is to work with private land-owners to protect open space. Nationally, land trusts have protected over 47 million acres. (Land Trust Alliance census, 2010)

Every state except North Dakota has at least one land trust. Some states have many, such as California and Massachusetts with 197 and 159 respectively. There are also organizations the cover multiple states. Then there are several national organizations that operate throughout the country.

This is great news for land conservation. It also creates confusion for the public. Below is a description of the various groups that do private land conservation in this area. (Note:

There are many other environmental groups providing important services to the region. Some even contribute to this publica-



tion, but I am only including those whose primary purpose is land protection.)

The Kaniksu Land Trust is based in Sandpoint, and we work in Bonner, Boundary and Sanders counties. The work of KLT is broad in scope, as we are driven to do conservation by the people living in our communities. We protect land that has scenic, natural, agricultural, and community significance.

Also local is the Inland Northwest Land Trust based in Spokane. INLT works in eastern Washington state, and Kootenai and Bonner counties.

The Vital Ground Foundation is based in Missoula, and has a mission to protect grizzly bear habitat and migration corridors. VGF works throughout North America, wherever there is grizzly bear habitat. Also based in Missoula is the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, with a mission to protect and restore elk habitat. The RMEF has a large presence in the region because of the high number of sportsmen. RMEF also has a strong advocacy program in Washington D.C. and Boise.

Nationally, the Trust for Public Land has successfully completed projects in the region. Their business model is to assist other organizations in completing a project, and then transfer the land or conservation easement to a public agency. As the name suggests, TPL has a goal of increasing access to land for recreation, thus the model of transferring the land to a public agency for management.

The Nature Conservancy has successfully partnered with timber companies to protect hundreds of thousands of acres in Montana and Idaho. TNC is well-funded and has a large team of professional staff to work on complicated projects. There is great diversity among the various land conservation organizations. Some have a top-down approach (TNC, TPL, etc.), while others like the Kaniksu Land Trust are more community-driven. There is rarely competition for land protection projects, as all of the groups realize that we each fill a different niche and that collaboration will result in a greater amount of protected land.

We are fortunate to have such successful, strong and professional groups that work in our region. Considering the remarkable beauty, there certainly is the need to protect it.