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Pine Street Woods, protected forever

Kaniksu Land Trust announces new community forest and trails

SANDPOINT, ID – Kaniksu Land Trust announced today that, after six years of planning and more than two years of fundraising, the land trust recently purchased the Pine Street Woods property. Located just west of Sandpoint and within Dover city limits, this land provides sweeping forests and rolling meadows with views of the Cabinet Mountains and Pend Oreille River. The 180-acre Pine Street Woods Community Forest will now be protected forever as a place where people can hike, picnic, walk their dogs, cross country ski, snowshoe, mountain bike, and explore. The land will also become a permanent home for the land trust's affordable, nature-based summer camp, Camp Kaniksu.

Pine Street Woods will soon be open to everyone, at no cost, year-round. The land will be protected forever and KLT will continue to pay the property taxes and manage the forest.

Pine Street Woods has received overwhelming community support, including that of local companies like Idaho Forest Group. As well as making a significant donation to help complete the purchase, IFG will work in collaboration with KLT to ensure that Pine Street Woods will be maintained as a healthy forest. Marc Brinkmeyer, IFG's owner, said that "Pine Street Woods is a great project and IFG is excited that we could assist with the purchase and to be part of the ongoing management of the forest."

Over the course of the spring and summer, representatives of the land trust will be working with local contractors and volunteers on initial improvements, including upgrades to the access road, a parking area, signage, fencing, and trails. The timeline for these improvements is weather dependent but the work is expected to be completed by mid- to late-summer, at which time the property will be opened to the public. KLT requests that people wait to visit until a formal opening has occurred, this will be announced via press, social media and the land trust's free electronic newsletter. Visit the KLT website at www.kaniksu.org for a description of the project and to subscribe to the e-news.

The response from our community, including families has been enthusiastic.

John Gaddess, a parent who lives here in Sandpoint, was particularly excited when he learned about the project. "A place near our largest town where people can freely engage in the outdoors is essential," said John. "We really need a place that will allow people to get outdoors after work, or for a few hours on the weekend, to hike, mountain bike, or experience the woods with their kids. It's been a challenge for families like ours to take a longer distance trip when we are juggling other activities like work, school soccer, or getting things done at home. This will be a great complement to our in-town parks."

The land purchase and initial improvements at Pine Street Woods were made possible through the generosity of a long list of community members and foundations, including a small group of dedicated volunteers who spearheaded the fundraising campaign. “This is an example of what can happen when people see an opportunity to enhance our community and provide a place to connect with nature, close to home,” explained Regan Plumb, the land trust’s interim executive director. “Many people who donated to the project have lived in the area for generations, some are newer to Sandpoint. It’s incredibly inspiring to see our community jump at a once-in-a-lifetime chance like this to conserve a special place as a community treasure.”

Without conserving the property, it likely would have been developed over time. One neighbor, who became inspired by the vision of providing a place for kids, families, and people from all walks of life, donated his adjacent 20 acres of land to become part of Pine Street Woods and protect a portion of the adjoining Greta’s Segway hiking trail.

Kaniksu Land Trust also acknowledges the leadership and support of the LOR Foundation, the Equinox Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Grant Program, Idaho Forest Group, the Innovia Foundation, the Family of Luther and Jessie Cunningham, LE Krause, The Lightfoot Foundation, Middle Fork River Tours, and the Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation, each of which provided critical funding for this community-based project.

This spring, the land trust will be working to secure funds to provide scholarships for their nature-based summer camp. Now in its third year, for the first time this camp will be held at Pine Street Woods this summer. For more information about Camp Kaniksu, please visit KLT’s website: www.kaniksu.org. Donations can be earmarked for camp scholarships.

Kaniksu Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization that promotes healthy communities and healthy lands in north Idaho and northwest Montana. KLT facilitates voluntary land conservation by working with landowners to keep valuable lands intact, connects communities to nature so they can enjoy the health benefits of time outdoors, and uses innovative educational programs to encourage a love of nature and an ethic of long-term conservation and stewardship. In 2018, KLT helped six different families protect farms, lakeshore and places for wildlife in three counties and two states. Over the past 15 years KLT has completed 26 unique projects that protect some very special places in our rural landscape. The land trust also brings hands-on outdoor learning to hundreds of local children each year through in-school education programs at Clark Fork Junior/Senior High School and Washington, Farmin Stidwell, and Kootenai Elementary Schools, as well as out-of-school programming year-round

If you have questions or comments about the Pine Street Woods project, contact Regan Plumb, KLT’s interim executive director, at (208) 263-9471, or send email to regan@kaniksu.org