

Calendar of Events

April 25
Trail Work Day on the Archery Range

April 30
DFMI 30K course preview led by Martin Miller

May 5
DFMI Packet Stuffing

May 7
International Migratory Bird Day (montanadiscoveryfoundation.org)

May 12
Guided Trail Hike

May 14
Don't Fence Me In

May 23
Trail Work Day on Reeder's Trail followed by PPLT's Community Monday Night at Blackfoot

June 9
Guided Trail Hike

June 11
Helena Outdoors Fest

June 13
Trail Work on Nob Hill

June 18
Strut Your Mutt

June 25 -26
High Divide Trail Work: Bison Mountain

June 29
Third Annual Weed & Seed BBQ

July 14
Guided Trail Hike

August 11
Guided Trail Hike

August 15
Trail Work in the South Hills

September 8
Guided Trail Hike

September 10-11
High Divide II: Flesher to Stemple Pass

September 24
Harvest Moon

October 1
Trail Work in the South Hills

Details are subject to change. Please visit pricklypearlt.org for more information.

Calling All Volunteers!

Our Land Protection Coordinator, Andrea Silverman, is looking for volunteers to help her with conservation easement monitoring this summer. This is a great opportunity to actively engage in protecting special places, get out on the ground and see the other side of PPLT's conservation efforts: private land conservation!

Volunteers should be available for several hours at a time, and be able to hike off-trail on sometimes steep terrain. Let us know if you'd like to volunteer by contacting Andrea at 406-442-0490 or andrea@pricklypearlt.org. Thanks!

Raise a Pulaski, Raise a Pint

Monday, May 23 is both a trail work day and PPLT's Community Night at Blackfoot River Brewing! Get thirsty swinging trail building tools and then head on over to the Blackfoot for a cold one to quench that thirst! For the trail work, meet at 5:30 pm at the Federal Building parking lot on Park Avenue. We'll re-route part of the Reeder's Trail, and then cool off at Blackfoot during Community Monday benefitting PPLT. And if you can't make it for the trail work, you can always just go straight to Blackfoot! For every pint purchased on May 23, \$1 will go to PPLT to continue our conservation efforts. Thanks to Blackfoot for their continued generosity to the Helena community!

A Positive Spin for Conservation

Even the coldest nights of deep winter don't keep die hard cyclists off their bikes. Team Great Divide's Mark Brooke hosted a weekly indoor spinning session in his garage during the winter months. On March 10, Mark invited fellow "spinners" to come pedal on behalf of PPLT. Andy Baur gave a preview of the coming trail season and the group made up for all that exercise with beer and tasty food afterwards. In all, the event raised \$150 for PPLT. Thanks to Team Great Divide for all the support you provide PPLT.

Familiar Faces Honored in Continental Divide Trail Alliance's 2010 Volunteer Service Awards

Our trail partner organization recently announced its Volunteer Service Awards and two of the four landed right here in our neck of Montana. As quoted from CDTA's recent newsletter:

John Gatchell, Volunteer of the Year

Almost always seen on The Great Divide with unofficial trail mascot, Lizzy, John and his four-legged companion spend many hours checking out the CDT for fun and for work. With ties to the Montana Wilderness Association, Gatch (as we all know him) stays busy scouting new routes, writing letters to local agencies and attending community meetings to further positive efforts on the CDT. When does this guy sleep?!



Shannon Freix

Montana High Divide Trails, Partner of the Year

[Note: PPLT is a member of HDT]

Spandex and leather working together! That's the theme of this group. Before you get any ideas, it refers to bikers, equestrians, and conservationists. This unlikely group of clubs and recreation interests have combined their collective forces to make their local trails better for all nonmotorized users. With members from Helena and Butte, these folks rally on the trail with lots of fun, energy and Blackfoot River beer!



Shannon Freix

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THE NEWSLETTER OF PRICKLY PEAR LAND TRUST

Connecting land and people

openviews

SPRING 2011

Oh, give me land, lots of land under starry skies above,
Don't fence me in.

Let me ride through the wide open country that I love,
Don't fence me in.

Let me be by myself in the evenin' breeze,
And listen to the murmur of the cottonwood trees,
Send me off forever but I ask you please,
DON'T FENCE ME IN.

-Cole Porter

Coming
May 14



openviews

Our mission is to protect the natural diversity and rural character of the Prickly Pear Valley and adjoining lands through voluntary and cooperative means. The Land Trust is dedicated to perpetuating the recreational, wildlife, scenic, agricultural and historic values of the land.

Coming May 14

11th Annual Don't Fence Me In Trail Run

30K Now Part of National Running Series

A LITTLE WHILE AGO, two loyal trail running enthusiasts, Kris Larson and Alice Santos, thought of the brilliant idea of a trail run to raise money for PPLT. What a great idea! Just 11 short years later, the run has grown in many ways; from the number of participants to the number of mountains summited. It also hit international status last year with several runners crossing the border from Canada to participate.

We are very excited for the 11th Annual Don't Fence Me In Trail Run (DFMI) on May 14 this year! Register online now on our website at www.pricklypearlt.org for any of the events: 5K Dog Walk, 5K, 12K, and 30K.

La Sportiva, a leading world manufacturer of trail running

and mountaineering footwear, has included the 30K in their annual Mountain Cup Trail Running Series. This takes DFMI to a whole new level, and provides runners the opportunity to win \$5,000. Visit www.mountaincup.com for details. The cost for the 30K is \$50 and the other events are \$25, plus a \$5 fee for each dog in the dog jog.

Since DFMI is a fundraiser, we encourage everyone to raise pledges.



You can create your own fundraising website by following the Pledge links on our website. It's fast and easy! Simply enter in your information and send your



Eliza Wiley

Last year's run saw a record 610 participants, including 253 in the 12K.

personalized link to friends and family. Those who raise \$100 will receive a unique PPLT hoodie. If you raise \$500 in pledges, we'll thank you with a custom DFMI spring jacket! Congratulations to Megan Moore who has raised the most money so far and to Kris Larson who has the highest fundraising goal. Keep up the good work!

The annual Open Space Fair begins at 10:00 am. There will be

food, booths and a free jumping castle for the kids. Be sure to join us for the popular and entertaining Dog Trick Contest.

Thank you, Kris and Alice, for turning a simple idea into a great event that does so much to help further the work of PPLT.

Visit pricklypearlt.org or call 406-442-0490 for more information.

Please see our Don't Fence Me In sponsors on page 5.

Nearing Our Goal on Mt. Ascension



Andy Baur

ALTHOUGH IT ONCE PASSED largely through private land, the Entertainment Trail is nearing full protection and official incorporation into Helena's public open lands. Prickly Pear Land Trust has worked since 2006 to secure this popular trail and recently acquired four additional parcels of land on Mt. Ascension in pursuit of its Backdrop Initiative. This project aims to conserve the scenic backdrop of the Capital city as well as protect and expand the popular South Hills Trail System on Mount Ascension. With these acquisitions, which add up to about 82 acres, PPLT has acquired a total of nine lots. In January of 2010, PPLT transferred ownership

of four of the parcels to the City of Helena and facilitated acquisition of another, adding a total of 130 acres to Mount Ascension Park. The land trust has the option to acquire an additional lot, and once purchased, this lot will complete the protection of the Entertainment Trail along the Mt. Ascension Ridge.

While preserving access to the popular Entertainment Trail, the acquisitions also help protect significant elk and other wildlife habitat in the area. Protecting

these resources and the iconic setting of the State Capitol only enhances the community's pride and strengthens its economy.

This project aims to conserve the scenic backdrop of the Capital city as well as protect and expand the popular South Hills Trail System on Mount Ascension

Yet, these acquisitions do not come without a cost. PPLT was able to make these purchases through a series of loans and owner financing. In all, PPLT must repay

its lenders about \$440,000 plus interest over the next three years. "We are confident our partners and supporters will help us complete this important community project,"

said PPLT Executive Director Andy Baur.

As with the five previously acquired lots, PPLT intends to transfer ownership of these four additional parcels to the City of Helena for inclusion in its prized open lands system. When complete, this project will add about 257 acres to the adjoining Mt. Ascension Park, increasing its size by about 70%. At the time of transfer, PPLT will have raised more than \$1.5 million to secure these critical parcels. With the work of PPLT to secure grants and donations, the City's total investment will be about 2% of the land's appraised value.

The Helena City Commission has preliminarily agreed that the City will assume ownership when the parcels are ready for transfer. Baur acknowledges that PPLT is grateful for the City Parks Department's cooperation to keep this project moving forward.

All but one of these lots is located in the Alpine Meadows Subdivision. Platted in 1992, Alpine Meadows created 23 lots ranging in size from about 20 to 60 acres. The subdivision covers much of the visible open meadows along the ridgeline south of the City of Helena. For various reasons, many of the lots have traded hands

continued on page 2...

Milburn Project Needs Your Voice

Beaver ponds to be made public, Seven Mile Creek and native grasslands to be protected

PPLT IS EXCITED to be working with Dennis and Deb Milburn on a terrific project in the Austin area. If funded, this project will place 260 acres under permanent protection via conservation easement, with the bonus of an amazing 10 acre parcel donated by the Milburns for permanent public access. The proposed conservation easement lands include native grasslands, high-quality wetland and riparian areas and one mile of Seven Mile Creek.

This property has documented value as elk winter range, supports several species of trout, links to both state and BLM lands, and helps to keep open an important wildlife corridor from the Continental Divide to the Scratchgravel Hills, Big Belt Mountains and beyond. The donated parcel has extensive beaver ponds and riparian areas, and would be a great place for a family picnic, a kid's fishing area and educational opportunities for area students.

The project is currently being considered for funding by Lewis & Clark's Board of County Commissioners through the Open Space Bond funds that were approved by voters in 2008. The Citizens' Advisory Committee has already recommended unanimously that the Commissioners approve the project, and the public comment period extends until April 23.

Please voice your opinion on this project.

Submit comments to Rebecca Shaw at RSHAW@co.lewis-clark.mt.us or use the following address: Lewis and Clark County, Community Development and Planning Department, 316 N. Park Ave., Helena, MT 59623.



High-quality wetland and riparian areas are included in the proposed conservation easement lands.

WESTECH Environmental Services

Montana Skiers and Riders Show up in Support of Open Land

Travelers for Open Land (TFOL) partnered with Big Sky Resort to host the first annual Skiers and Riders for Open Land event. For every ticket purchased with a downloadable coupon over the weekend of April 9–10, Big Sky Resort donated \$5 to TFOL. This program collects voluntary donations from tourists in Montana and redistributes the funds through a competitive grant program to Montana land trusts. It was a win-win weekend for conservationists and snow enthusiasts with Big Sky Resort offering nearly a \$20 discount on lift tickets.

Tremendous snowpack with lots of fresh powder made for a perfect weekend.

After a hard day of skiing and riding, the thought of dinner was most welcome. Bucks T-4 hosted a spaghetti feed and invited the Helena-based band, Black Diamond, to entertain the happy crowd. One lucky winner was the recipient of a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana "Wake Up Your Life" Summer Wellness Weekend that was raffled off as part of the festivities.

The weekend was a great success and we look forward to it again next year. A big thanks to the Montana Association of Land Trusts, Travelers for Open Land and Big Sky Resort for supporting the efforts to preserve our open spaces and maintain what visitors appreciate about Montana — the grand openness of it all.

Nearing our goal, continued from page 1

several times, but none of them have been built upon yet. In developing its Backdrop Initiative, PPLT felt this provided an excellent opportunity to protect this popular and scenic area.

"This land was not being actively managed, causing potential issues with weeds, timber management and destruction from unauthorized motorized access. It only made sense that it be included with adjoining City land to provide for the best possible management scenario while at the same time providing for legal public access to this beautiful area," Baur said.

Much of the funding for the Backdrop Initiative has come from the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust, FWP's State Trails program, the City of Helena and PPLT's donors and supporters. "These organizations, our members and our community recognize the importance of these open lands as

a community asset so close to an urban area," Baur said.

Additionally, the majority of the parcel owners were willing to sell their land below the appraised values, providing them the opportunity for potential federal income tax deductions. As Baur puts it, "This important project is challenging in that we have had to negotiate with ten separate landowners on ten separate parcels. Fortunately, all of them have been willing to work with us and most have provided some donation of the land's value to make it more attainable."

PPLT hopes to negotiate one additional acquisition to complete this part of the Backdrop Initiative project. The challenge now is to raise the funds to pay off its loan obligations so that the lots can be transferred to the City of Helena. Baur acknowledges, "we've been successful in the past and we hope to continue the momentum. This project is too important to the community not to be completed."



Fighting the Good Fight

Montana Association of Land Trusts is kept busy this Legislative Session

The Montana Association of Land Trusts (MALT) plays an important role in the work of its members. As you may know, PPLT is the fiscal sponsor of MALT and works closely with Glenn Marx, MALT's executive director. Created in 2005, MALT is a group of 12 separate nonprofit land trust organizations working on private land conservation and voluntary conservation agreements throughout the state of Montana. The Montana Association of Land Trusts, with offices in Helena and Whitehall, helps to coordinate association

membership to achieve legislative, administrative, communications and policy goals.

With the current climate of the legislative session, MALT spent considerable time at the Capitol, staying on the lookout for

bills hostile to land conservation.

Early in the session, MALT informed the membership of seven bill drafts that would negatively impact land conservation efforts, including one that would retroactively remove the perpetuity clause from every conservation easement in Montana! Glenn mobilized MALT's membership, and then waited to see if the need to call on MALT members and land owners to testify during hearings and otherwise fight these bills would arise. Thankfully, none of these bills were formally introduced, leaving private land conservation intact.

On another front, MALT proposed HB 403 to eliminate the mandate of conservation easements within local option cluster developments, which then passed the Senate on March 24. It is now fully through the legislative process and on its way to the governor's desk.

MALT made passage of this bill a priority for several reasons. Montana's open land statute makes it clear that conservation easements are

voluntary and valuable tools for the protection of agricultural lands and wildlife habitat. But the local option cluster development easement requirement was not voluntary. It was mandatory. The concept of mandatory easements is inconsistent with our open lands act and inconsistent in how land trusts work with landowners.

Second, the Local Option Cluster Development Law had not worked well. This section of law has been used twice in ten years in one location. A key barrier to its use is

without doubt the requirement of exacted conservation easements. With passage of HB 403, that mandate and barrier will be removed, replaced with more practical and flexible covenant options for the county, landowner, developer and

homeowner associations.

On March 15, MALT hosted Land Trust Day at the Capitol. MALT land trust members from around the state were present to visit legislators, share with them the importance of what land trusts in Montana do, and encourage them to support legislation that fosters land conservation efforts. After a busy lunch, Governor Schweitzer hosted a listening session for land trust personnel and board members, providing an opportunity for them to share information about current land conservation efforts, and ask questions about the current session. The event was a resounding success, and we're grateful to Glenn for facilitating it.

MALT's considerable efforts this legislative session have been necessary and productive. MALT continues to monitor the session, and will do so until it is over. On behalf of all Montana land trusts we commend MALT for this important work during these critical times.

The Montana Association of Land Trusts helps to coordinate association membership to achieve legislative, administrative, communications and policy goals.

Adopt-A-Trail

If you love the outdoors and you want it to stay in pristine condition and feel like you had something to do with it, volunteer in the Helena Open Lands through the Adopt-A-Trail Program (AAT).

The purpose of the City of Helena's AAT Program is to aid in the clean-up and maintenance of the Helena Open Lands System. This program benefits both area wildlife and all those who utilize the Open Lands System.

Please contact Greta Dige at the City at 406-447-8458 for more information.

Board News

PRICKLY PEAR LAND TRUST welcomes new Board Members Chris Hunter, Jim Utterback and Jane Kollmeyer. We are very excited to have them aboard. In the short time they have been with us, all three have already jumped in feet first. We are very thankful for their time and support, and it is a pleasure to have them as PPLT Directors.



Chris Hunter has worked in Montana as an aquatic ecologist since receiving his Master's degree in zoology at UM in 1974 (Go Griz!). Chris retired from FWP after twenty years, the last eight of which he was Chief of Fisheries. Chris has been interested in land use and water quality/quantity issues for many years, and he teaches a water policy/rights course at UM Helena. In 1995 he formed Open Space Helena, the group that worked to pass Helena's first open space bond. Chris and his wife, Carol, have two married children and three grand-daughters

living in Helena. He spends as much time as possible hiking the trail system. When he is not hiking he is probably traveling, fishing or working on his old house.



Jim Utterback relocated to Montana from Texas after a successful career in public accounting to become a new auto dealer.

The beautiful landscape of the Big Sky country and the opportunities to flyfish and bird hunt were the motivating factors in that decision. Jim and his wife, Cindy, have made Helena their home for twenty years.

Their home is within a stone's throw of the South Hills trail system promoted and maintained by PPLT. They enjoy it almost daily with their Labrador Retrievers. Jim has been an active member of the Helena

community and has served on many boards, including serving as president of the Helena Chamber of Commerce, trustee of the Montana Historical Society, director of St. Peter's Hospital, Crimestoppers and Trout Unlimited.



Jane Kollmeyer was raised in Michigan and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Michigan in 1976. Soon after she graduated, she moved to Oregon to begin her career with the Forest Service. In her early career Jane worked primarily in forestry, recreation, and wildlife and fisheries management. She worked as a line officer for the last 20 years on several forests in California, Idaho and Montana. Jane returned to Helena after retiring as the Supervisor of the Sawtooth National Forest. As Forest Supervisor she worked on

complicated conservation easements and land acquisitions in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Jane's career has given her an understanding of the value of public lands and experience helping to protect those lands.

Two Outstanding Out-going Board Members

The PPLT family bids adieu to Mary Schuller and Artie Keeler as they pursue other interests. They both moved off the Board of Directors this winter.

Our resident real estate expert, **Mary Schuller**, joined the Board in 2003 lending a hand on numerous projects including several of our Mt. Ascension acquisitions. Mary's fun and lively nature was always welcome at meetings, and her input on land transactions was critical in assisting board and staff to make sound decisions. Mary is focusing her time on her real estate business with Pat Franks Real Estate and keeping her horses exercised at her home in the Elkhorns.

Artie Keeler began his board service in 2006 and brought his vast business experience to the Board as the then owner of Capital Sports and Western. Artie's love and intimate knowledge of the South Hills Trail System kept him committed to PPLT's mission, helping on the lands and trail committees. Artie is now owner of Headwaters Rafts and is using his extra time doing some critical "product testing" on some of the West's best rivers.

We thank Artie and Mary for their service to PPLT and wish them the best for the future.

A New Season of Trail Projects on Tap for 2011

YES, IT'S THAT TIME of year again. As the ground thaws our thoughts turn to getting out on the trails and taking in the wonderful views of the South Hills and the Helena Valley beyond. As with all great trail systems we need to do our part to keep the trails in good shape to withstand the test of time. So once again—for the eleventh year—PPLT is hosting or co-hosting a series of volunteer trail work days.

These fun events are a great opportunity to “give back” to the trails that give us so much enjoyment, be with a great group of people and meet some new friends. The dates and venues are subject to change so check our website (www.pricklypearlt.org) or call the office at 442-0490 for the latest information.

In addition to volunteering on Trail Work days, you can help keep trails in good condition and stay safe by following these “Trail Tenets”:

- When approaching puddles or muddy areas, ride or hike through them, not around them.
- Tell us if there is a hazard or problem on a trail.
- Don't cut switchbacks or create new trails. Trails are time consuming and expensive to repair and we all pay.
- Explore new areas. Dispersing use on the trail system will help prevent overuse.
- Respect private property!
- Consider other recreation in high winds. Beetle killed trees are weakened and more prone to blow down.
- Tell someone where you're going or don't go alone. Although close to town, some trails are remote and cell coverage is unreliable.
- Plan for our unpredictable and changing Montana spring weather.
- But most of all, get out there and enjoy what your generous membership dues help support. Go take a hike!



Joanne Martonik

2011 Trail Projects

Monday, April 25 at 5:30 PM Archery Range reroute. Meet at Old Shooting Range TH

Monday, May 23 at 5:30 PM Reeders Village Trail reroute (In association with PPLT Community Pint Night at the Blackfoot). Meet at the Park Ave. Federal Building parking lot

Monday, June 13 at 5:30 PM Nob Hill Trail construction. Meet at Nob Hill Water Tank

Monday, June 20 at 5:30 PM Weed, Seed & Feed. Meet at Old Shooting Range TH

Saturday and Sunday, June 25 and 26* High Divide Trail Jamboree: Bison Mountain Trail signs and turnpikes.

Monday, August 15 at 5:30 PM USFS/South Hills Project TBD

Saturday and Sunday, September 10 and 11* High Divide II - Maintenance on CDT, Flesher Pass to Stemple Pass

Saturday, October 1 USFS/South Hills Project TBD

*Hosted by the Continental Divide Trail Association. You must sign up for these events in advance on the CDTA website: cdtrail.org.

Hit Us With Your Best Shot: Fire away!

PPLT is planning a photo contest, and we need your best shots. We're always looking to expand our limited photo database for newsletters, brochures and presentations, and we're hoping our faithful members like you can help. While we're still determining the fabulous prizes for the winners, we'd love to get the contest started now.

Rules are simple: photos must be taken in Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, Broadwater or eastern Powell counties (our service area), and locations must be identified. You relinquish copyrights to PPLT, and if your shots include people you must have their name and permission. That's it!

Email submissions to ana@pricklypearlt.org. We'll keep this going until our Harvest Moon Banquet where we'll reveal the lucky winner and award the fabulous prize(s). So, get out there, enjoy what your membership dues help protect and fire away!



Go Wild, Go Birding!

EVERYONE IS INVITED to Helena's 10th International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) on May 7. Come and take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate and support migratory bird conservation.

This free event includes:

- Early morning bird hikes around the Regulating Reservoir starting at 6:30 AM.
- A lesson on landscaping for birds
- Live music and theatrical performances throughout the day;
- Classes on how to build birdhouses and weave bird nests;
- A woodcarver, taxidermist and wildlife photographer demonstrating their art;
- An egg race, face painting, and lots of games for young and old to play;
- Live raptors!
- And so much more!

History: Visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology created IMBD in 1993. From 1995 to 2006, the program was under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of its consistent growth, IMBD is now the premier education project of Environment for the Americas.



IMBD continues to focus attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird – its journey between its summer and winter homes. Celebrations will be occurring simultaneously in Canada, across the United States, Mexico and Central America.

For several years now PPLT has provided volunteers from the Membership & Outreach Committee to help some of our key partner organizations run this event. Look for our volunteers at the Making Tracks booth.

For more information, visit montanadiscoveryfoundation.org

PPLT Applies for Accreditation

THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE, a national organization of land trusts, is administering an accreditation process and Prickly Pear Land Trust is submitting its application in May. Accreditation provides public recognition that a land trust is engaged in long-term protection of land in the public's interest. Accreditation increases public awareness of, and confidence in, land trusts and land conservation.

The Board and Staff of PPLT have been working for more than a year to prepare the application. We are excited to submit it and work with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. Accreditation is an important part of our work as it shows we follow sound practices in an ethical and diligent manner. The Commission conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. A public comment period is now open.

Accreditation provides public recognition that a land trust is engaged in long-term protection of land in the public's interest.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comment on pending applications. Comments must relate to how PPLT complies with national quality standards. These standards

address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards, please visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/indicator-practices.

To learn more about the

accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on Prickly Pear Land Trust's application will be most useful if received by June 30, 2011.



Welcome, Ana!

PRICKLY PEAR LAND TRUST enthusiastically welcomes Ana Pederson to the staff. Ana was born and raised in Helena, and after exploring much of the West, from White Sulphur to West Glacier and from Stanley, ID to the Cottonwood Canyons of Utah, she decided the best place to live is right where she started—Helena.

An avid runner and explorer, Ana's passion for open spaces and wild places is a great match for her work with Prickly Pear Land Trust. Growing up in the South Hills, her adventures and explorations mostly followed steep and rutted-out old jeep trails. When she returned ten years later, she was surprised to find an incredible array of connecting, well-engineered trails. It also wasn't

until she returned did she realize the special beauty of the high meadows that provide the backdrop for the Queen City.

Ana's impression is that while Prickly Pear Land Trust has accomplished a lot in just 15 years, its work is

far from exhausted. PPLT's goals are far-reaching and the impact of their work on the local community is impressive. Ana attended Montana State University where she received a degree in Soil Science. She then toured the Rocky Mountain West following rivers, followed by a quick stint working at the state legislature. After enough close calls and tribulations on the river, she returned to The University of Montana for graduate school in 2007 where she received her Master's in Range Science. She is ecstatic to find any work that does not require a nozzle-head mentality.

Ana thanks all community members for supporting open land and our trails. She attests to their value by running them every day and thanks them for her daily well-being!

Show Those Weeds Who's Boss

The third annual Weed and Seed BBQ is scheduled for June 29. The time and place is still being determined but the fun is guaranteed!

The evening starts off with a short tutorial on weeds in the area. Then, while the grill gets fired up and the burgers start cooking, an army of volunteers comb the hillsides filling their bags with weeds. After about

an hour, all volunteers are thanked with burgers, hot dogs, salads and delicious desserts!

Thank you to PPLT's Membership and Outreach Committee and the Trails Committee for their collaborative effort in planning this popular event. For more information please visit our website or call the office at 442-0490.



Joanne Martonik

We thank all of our Don't Fence Me In sponsors



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