

COWICHE CANYON
CONSERVANCY

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WWW.COWICHECANYON.ORG

COWICHE CANYON COLUMNS



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Cowiche Canyon Conservancy celebrates its 25th anniversary this year and starts planning for another 25 with the creation of an endowment.

From a short 3 mile trail to over 2000 acres and more than 14 miles of trails in two separate locations, Cowiche Canyon Conservancy is rocking, literally. (Sound the horns and cue the band!)

Over 225 diverse supporters came out to attend our "Cowiche Canyon Rocks!" celebration commemorating our 25th anniversary. The visionary attributed with originating the concept of the rails-to-trails project that became Cowiche Canyon Conservancy back in 1985, Dan Patten, accepted the founder's rock while supporters sipped local wine, rocked to the music of the Blue Tropics, and filled up on chili, cornbread and salad.

Now that the tent is packed up and the musicians have gone home, it's time to start thinking about the next 25 years. As we embark into tomorrow, we are launching a new level of investment in making sure this great institution has a long and successful life. This is why CCC is looking to leave a conservation legacy by establishing an endowment to ensure a funding base into the future.



Balsamroot & Cowiche Mtn. Photo taken by David Hagen

When local State Farm Agent, Dennis Hasslinger heard about CCC creating an endowment, he wanted to be first on board. Together with ten of his colleagues from Yakima, Selah and the Lower Valley they started pledging.

"The Cowiche Canyon Conservancy is a town favorite. We wanted to see CCC on a firmer foundation," said Dennis Hasslinger in regards to why he wanted to get involved. Dr. John and Mary Place along with an Anonymous donor have also pledged funds to the CCC endowment.

What started out as a vision, turned into an action and is now a sprawling 2000 acre recreational paradise, Cowiche Canyon Conservancy has come a long way. In looking back, we wouldn't be where we are today without the 5 original signers of our creation documents: Christine (Bond) Jewett, Tom Rehfield, Douglas W. Johnson, Marie Hoffman and Dan Patten.

Cheers to another 25 years and watching Cowiche Canyon Conservancy rock on far into the future!



Kiddin' Around in Cowiche Canyon

"4 busloads of kids from the Lower Valley explored Cowiche Canyon for the first time"

What a great day for 150 youngsters and their parents in Cowiche Canyon on May 15th! In partnership with the Yakima Greenway summer Kiddin' Around program, CCC volunteers, Leslie and Bob Wahl (in their new CCC t-shirts!) teamed up with the Yakima Health District on a guided hike through the canyon. Rev It Up program coordinator, Jessica Brown, brought in 4 busloads of kids from the Lower Valley who explored Cowiche Canyon for the first time. CCC provided a

scavenger hunt of eight features the kids could search for along the way. The Health District handled the logistics, volunteers, snacks, water, and lunch for the enthusiastic bunch. The group took in fresh air, sunshine, a bit of exercise and experienced nature along the way. Could it get any better than this?



Leslie Wahl (pictured far right) leads a group of youngsters in the Cowiche Canyon





Greetings to all of you, the members, friends, volunteers, donors and future leaders of your land trust, the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy. We are all now entrusted with a mission that has been passed down for the last twenty five years. The twenty five years that lay ahead are now in our care, and from my vantage point as the first full time Executive Director, I am ignited by the passion, dedication, and deep sense of place all of you share. Our vision for the next twenty five years sees us with a completed

Letter to you, the Cowiche Canyon Community, from the Executive Director

tapestry of the “best of the rest”. Together, we will conserve precious habitats, high vistas, trail corridors and free-flowing streams that will knit together our current landscapes. We will have a board and staff that reflects the diversity of our community, and have a broad base of support coming from individuals, corporations, foundations, and public grants. We will build upon the foundation laid for us, and become one of the best known land trusts in the region.

Have you hugged a Cowiche Canyon Conservancy board member lately? We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to these community leaders. All of the great experiences you have enjoyed in the Canyon and Snow Mountain Ranch over the last twenty five years have been made possible by our board members. Land has been purchased, bridges built, signs put up, weeds attacked, parking lots swept (well, most of the time...) grants have been secured, events have been pulled off—all done largely by succes-

sive generations of board members who loved the land, and wanted to help. We now own over 2,000 acres of land and have an ambitious plan to grow our Conservation, Recreation, Education and Enduring Institution agenda. To give you a sneak peek at what lies ahead, we are working on new acquisitions critical to our mission, actively restoring the floodplain meadows and stream banks at Snow Mountain Ranch and lower Cowiche Creek, taking the William O. Douglas Trail project into our organization for sustainable management and implementation, convening a landowner-based watershed council in the Lower Cowiche basin, starting an endowment to assist you with leaving a legacy, and launching a new land-based education program for underserved communities called “Foster an Acre”. You will be hearing about all of these exciting developments in our newsletter, Cowiche Columns. For those longtime readers, you will see a new format, with articles reporting on our Conservation, Recrea-

tion, Education and Enduring Institution activities, issues and successes. You will be receiving a substantive Summer and Winter hard-copy edition of the Cowiche Columns, and additional online newsletters throughout the year.

The Cowiche Canyon Board and our staff, Colleda Monick and I, are working together to make you proud of belonging to the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy. This is a great place to serve, and we will be looking to you to help us build our organization in the coming years. In the words of our President, Curtis Sundquist: Cowiche Rocks On!

Go out and enjoy—*it's on us!*
Betsy Bloomfield

“Cowiche Canyon Rocks!”

At twenty-five years of age Cowiche Canyon Conservancy celebrated with a coming of age party at Wilridge Winery overlooking the Cowiche Canyon amid flowering Balsamroot. Over 225 diverse supporters sipped local wine, rocked to music of the Blue Tropics, while eating chili, cornbread and salad.

The first time event, “Cowiche Canyon Rocks!” exceeded expectations in terms of participants, money raised, celebration and weather.

Whether you are a birder or fisher, hiker or biker, matriarch or young mom, young or old, all guests had a connection to Cowiche Canyon. Our committee members, Betsy Bloomfield, Colleda Monick, Barb Smith Gilbert, David Hagen, Phil Hoge, Jean Keeler, Cec Vogt and myself thank you all for your enthusiastic support. Cowiche Canyon Conservancy has come of age. Rock on.

Helen Riehl, Chairperson



Helen Riehl pictured with Dan Patten at our “Cowiche Canyon Rocks! Event

Restore It!

Our conservation program follows two really big principles to achieve lasting results—we **acquire** selected parcels from willing sellers to protect the most critical habitat, and we **restore** lands that are too degraded to support habitat. Acquisition and restoration are the precocious twins of the conservation family. Thanks to our Board and partners, over the last 25 years we acquired the valuable habitat in Cowiche Canyon and Snow Mountain Ranch. And thanks to our partners at the City of Yakima, more targeted lands along the route of the William O Douglas Trail have recently been purchased. Some of these lands were overtaken by weeds, some had been converted to other uses in past times, some had structures that needed to come down. These kinds of conditions drive our restoration strategy: finding the biggest threats to habitat, and doing restoration activities that return the land to a condition that supports the birds, fish, mammals, butterflies, and yes, snakes, that make our preserves so rich.

We have two big restoration programs underway that you have likely seen in your travels to the Canyon and Snow Mountain Ranch. The new sites along lower Cowiche Creek acquired for habitat and trail development require a long-term restoration program, and we're working with our many partners to restore stream banks and floodplain habitat. Funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, and the Mid-Columbia Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group has made it possible to get this work done. Higher up the watershed at Snow Mountain Ranch, you may have seen the big fields across the creek go brown and barren. We are embarked on a six year long restoration project funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore all the old fields along Cowiche Creek. Rex Schenck, a local contractor who special-



izes in restoration work is doing the majority of the work for us. We have been helped by the North Yakima Conservation District and the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group on this project, and as always, are delighted by the great partnerships that make all of this work. We need to eliminate all of the weeds that invaded the old farm fields, which means multiple years of broadcast treatments to knock out the current and future crops of weeds. Once the weeds are in full retreat, we'll reseed and replant the fields to native grasses and shrubs, allowing the natural vegetation to reclaim its old territory. And of course, we would never be able to get all this work done without our amazing volunteers and board members. These volunteer hours are not only great for the land, but help us secure grants by providing our share of the project costs. Keep on pulling!



New Kiosk for the Canyon...

Check out the new kiosk at the Weikel road entrance to Cowiche Canyon.

A huge thanks goes to Davis High School sophomore, Russ Shean, a member of Boy Scout troop #251. Since June of 2009, Russ has been working on this Eagle Scout project including the design and fundraising for the building materi-

als. He completed the kiosk this spring.

Additional thanks to Sara Cate and David Hagen, two Cowiche Canyon Conservancy Board members who helped with coordinating the completion of the kiosk.



Russ Shean (left) pictured with his dad, Blair Shean (right), in front of the new kiosk



Graphite Markers placed along the Riparian Trail-West



Graphite Trail Marker, Riparian Trail-West, Snow Mountain Ranch

Graphite trail markers were placed along the route of the Riparian Trail – West at Snow Mtn Ranch earlier this spring by David Hagen & Mike Hiler. Going counterclockwise from the kiosk, this trail goes west along the north side of the old pasture/lowlands to the west of the Cowiche Mtn Loop Trail as it heads to the ravine. The first marker is placed where the route enters the native vegetation (largely basin wild rye & antelope bitterbrush) at the west end of the old pasture. It continues west (generally straight ahead) through an oak-cottonwood grove, crosses a large, dry streambed, then angles southwest (left) to the

elk fence at the boundary between Snow Mtn Ranch & the Oak Creek Wildlife Area. It then follows the fence south (left) to the bottom of the hill where it turns east (left) and follows the base of the hill to the mouth of the ravine & a junction with the Cowiche Mtn Loop Trail. Since this route has had little use this spring, it is quite overgrown with grass and in places there is no clear trail. But if you watch for the graphite markers you should have little difficulty following the route.

A short connector trail between the Cowiche Mtn Loop Trail near the mouth of the

ravine and the Ditch Bank Trail where it meets the hillside has also been marked. There is a trail sign at each end of the trail and a graphite marker where the trail enters the vegetation by the old irrigation canal. By combining these two trails with the Riparian Trail – East and the Ditch Bank Trail, one may now hike the entire perimeter of the Snow Mtn Ranch lowlands lying between the South Fork of Cowiche Creek and the bottom of Cowiche Mountain.



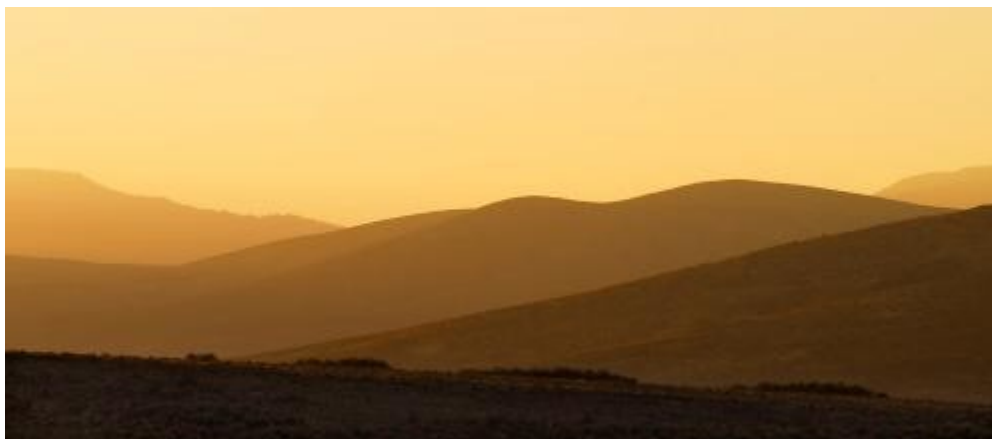
Conserve, Recreate, Learn

With land comes the responsibility to manage our recreation and education programs to be consistent with our conservation mission. Our recreation program is crafted to provide a great outdoor experience, while preserving the delicate ecosystem that many of us don't even realize is there when wandering through the fragrant forest of sage on Snow Mountain Ranch. We have miles of Cowiche Creek riparian ecosystems entrusted to our care.

And we have large numbers of school children visiting us every year, getting a literal bird's eye view of what these ecosystems are about. Much of our land was purchased with grant sources that restrict the kind of uses we can offer, and we work as a group to provide a very high quality recreational experience with the lightest touch possible. The core function of our work is to strike the correct balance among our three mission elements: conservation,

recreation and education. We are looking to you to help us manage that balance. Volunteer to serve on one of our committees, or become part of the leadership of our organization by joining our board. It's fascinating, rewarding and important.

To find out how you can get involved, call our CCC offices at 509-248-5065.



WILDLIFE CORNER



The Western rattlesnake is common in much of eastern Washington. It has a broad, triangular head that is wider than its neck. The diamond-shaped pattern along the middle of its back and the rattles on the tip of its tail help to identify it. Color patterns vary with habitat and they can measure anywhere from 18 inches to 4 feet at maturity! (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.)

Although often viewed as “threatening” and “scary”, snakes are one of nature’s greatest cohorts. They are an important indicator of a healthy ecosystem and they also serve as a natural form of pest control and help manage rodent populations. Remember to give them distance and give them respect as they are an important member of the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy community.

How to stay safe in snake country:

With the temperature increasing, your chance of spotting a rattlesnake or other types of snakes is also increased. But don’t let your fear of these reptiles keep you from enjoying the great outdoors. Follow these simple steps to help keep you, your family, and pets safe this summer:

- Wear good hiking boots and loose fitting pants
- Stay on established trails
- Always walk with your dog on a leash, even if they are well behaved
- Don’t let children run ahead
- Be aware of your surroundings—watch where you are walking
- Most snake bites occur when they have been provoked or startled—

if you see one, leave them alone

- If a rattlesnake does bite, get medical help immediately—keep the victim calm, restrict movement, and keep the affected area below the heart

“It has a broad, triangular head that is wider than its neck.”

FUN FACTS:

1. The number of segments on the rattle does not indicate the true age of the snake, since rattlesnakes lose portions of their rattles as they age.
2. Rattlesnake fangs are hollow.
3. Rattlesnakes cannot spit venom.
4. Their fangs shed and are replaced several times during their active season.
5. Rattlesnakes forked tongues deposit air molecules on receptors in the mouth—snakes “taste” the air.
6. The gopher snake is often mistaken for a rattlesnake due to its similarity in coloration, coiling, striking, and loud hissing. It can also vibrate the tip of its tail in dry grass or leaves.
7. Young are self-sufficient from birth.
8. Snakes are not deaf, but do lack external ears. Sound is transmitted to the snake’s inner ear through bone & muscle.

(Dept. of Fish & Wildlife)



The gopher snake, also known as the bull snake, is often mistaken for the rattlesnake because of its impressive mimicking abilities. It is not a poisonous snake. It kills its prey by constricting.



Summer Concert: *Noel Hill* at the Seasons

WHO: Noel Hill, has taken the humble concertina from the house dances of County Clare on the west coast of Ireland to stages throughout the world. The concertina, like Irish music itself, is currently enjoying a tremendous increase in popularity, and Noel Hill is at the forefront of this movement, not only as an awe-inspiring performer but as teacher and a well respected authority on Ireland's music.

WHAT: A concert fundraiser for the CCC that will have you dancing like you've never danced before!

WHEN: August 15th at 7:00 pm

WHERE: The Seasons, Yakima

...Noel Hill pushes the possibilities for our music beyond all expectation. What better thing than this could be said of a musician?

—Tony MacMahon, musician, T.V. producer/broadcaster

UPCOMING EVENTS



Juried Art Exhibit

Entry Deadline:

August 2, 2010

Cowiche Canyon & Allied Arts present: Juried Art Exhibit

Project: Cowiche Canyon Conservancy and Allied Arts are joining forces for a Cowiche Canyon Juried Art Exhibit and we are looking for artwork that will be a reflection on the landscape and environment of the 2,000 acre Cowiche Canyon Conservancy. We welcome participation from established and emerging artists, or if you would like to help in other ways, please share this event info with friends & family. The exhibit is open to all artists working in sculpture, drawing, jewelry, pottery, fine-art prints, fiber arts, painting, and mixed media. No photography is eligible for submission. Only original work, designed and executed by the exhibiting artist in the past three years is eligible for entry. Pieces previously shown in the Peggy Lewis Gallery (formerly the Allied Arts Gallery) will not be accepted.

Juror: Gail Gibson, owner of the G. Gibson Gallery in Seattle, WA. The gallery exhibits national and international artists in painting, sculpture, and fine art photography.

Fees: Maximum of 3 pieces per artist/\$15 per piece for current Allied Arts and/or Cowiche Canyon Conservancy Members, \$20 per piece for non-members.

Application and Proposal Guidelines: Prospectus/application available in the Allied Arts Office.

Contact: For more information call 509-966-0930

CCC Docent Program

The Cowiche Canyon Conservancy Docent Program will be starting up this year. Join us for an introductory meeting on August 31 at noon at the CCC office to learn more about this opportunity.

The meeting will provide an explanation of the docent program as well as the roles and responsibilities of future docents. The role of the docent is intentionally defined in a broad way at this time and can include various forms of outreach from leading guided walks to giving educational presentations. There could also be recreational docents who may lead a hike or bike ride and include a little interpretive material or just answer questions about the Conservancy. The opportunities to participate in this program will only be limited by the available volunteers and their individual interests. A docent will not be expected to be an expert, but through the docent training and manual, will be able to answer questions about the social and natural history of the Conservancy properties.

The only requirement to be a docent is to be a CCC member and be willing to commit to a few hours a year. The goal is to have many available docent volunteers so that there will not be a large time obligation for any one person.

A Docent for Cowiche Canyon Conservancy is defined as a volunteer who represents the Conservancy by communicating our mission to the general public.

THANK YOU: The following is a list of individuals and businesses whose contributions we received between October 1st, 2009 and May 25th, 2010

Zenith

Bill Shields, Rainer Plastics

Corporate

Anonymous | Boyd, Tom and Becky Lang-Boyd | Cascadians, The | Dolson, Bill and Rhonda | Frank, WD and Betsy | Granite Northwest | Kirk, Jane | Licht, Hamilton and Carol | Maier, Russell and Sara Cate | Place, John and Mary | Richl, Helen | Sundquist, Curtis and Mary | Yakima Valley Audubon Society | Yakima Valley Community Foundation

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Volunteers: (Individuals who have volunteered January 2010 - May 2010)

Bloomfield, Betsy | Boyd, Becky Lang | Boyd, Tom | Cate, Sara | Clausing, Zac | Drew, Becky | Drew, Dick | Drumhiller, Tim | Gilbert, Barb | Hage, David | Hertel, Jim | Hiler, Mike | Hoge, Phil | Keeler, Jean | Kolbe, Jerry | Lolley, Kara | Lolley, Reece | Morrison, Chuck | Nunes, Art Jr. | Nunes, Art Sr. | Nunes, Brenda | Nunes, Rachael | Paoletta, Raymond | Paoletta, Susan | Richl, Helen | Schenck, Rex | Spiegel, Ann | Stotsenberg, Karen | Strathmann, Katrina | Sundquist, Curtis | Vogt, Cecilia | Wahl, Bob | Wahl, Leslie | Wayenberg, Karen | Weise, Steve | Willis, Ann

Endowment Giving:

Anonymous | Joel Goesch | Ava Grajeda-Allard | Dennis Hasslinger | Linda Roth | Gil Mathias | John and Mary Place | Jerry Sallee | Ben Sartin | Bruce Sears

Organizational Support:

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Easement Donations:

Ron Anderson
The Heckart Family

We are a member-driven organization and completely reliant on our members, volunteers and partners to accomplish our goals. If you are not already a member or wish to renew your membership, we invite you to join us today. Contact CCC for more information at 509-248-5065

We have made every effort to acknowledge all donors correctly. If we have listed any names incorrectly, we apologize. Please contact Colleda at: 509-248-5065 with questions or corrections. Thank you.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Volunteer extraordinaire, Mike Hiler

Mike Hiler is a man of action. For seventeen years he worked as a wilderness ranger in the Goat Rocks, William O. Douglas and Norse Peak Wilderness. He also spent five years as a Forest Service fire lookout, giving him a wealth of knowledge and practical skills to utilize in his role as a long term volunteer for the CCC.

Stewardship committee members have become spoiled by his words: "I'll take a look at it" or "Let's double team this one" in response to an immediate crisis or a long term conservation goal. Those who know Mike well may believe his art degree from San Francisco State University provides the foundation for his resourceful and creative repairs. He is self reliant and persistent as he grubs weeds, posts signs, or repairs fences and trails. He has covered a lot of ground at Snow Mtn. Ranch in the process of gathering together and sorting through old ranch debris: barbed-wire, tires, metal, posts, etc. In addition to working "in the field", Mike attends committee meetings and supervises other volunteers. Notepad in hand, he organizes his thoughts and his work as he talks about the next project...always with a smile.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication!

If you have left us in your will, be sure to let us know so we can thank you in your lifetime....

**COWICHE CANYON
CONSERVANCY**

P.O. Box 877
302 N 3rd Street
Yakima, WA 98907

Phone: 509-248-5065
Fax: 509-248-5065

E-mail: info@cowichecanyon.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Bob Wahl
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Betsy Bloomfield
Executive Director
Colleda Monick
Operations & Special Projects Coordinator

The word Cowiche, sometimes spelled Cowychee, is said to mean "footbridge between the valley and the mountains"

Our stories touch on each of our mission drivers. Look for these symbols to read stories relating to Conservation, Education, Recreation and Sustainable Business.



CONSERVATION



EDUCATION



RECREATION



SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

The Snow Mountain Ranch Trails Dedication will be on October 23, starting at 10am. This will also be the second annual Celebration of Autumn Color at Snow Mountain Ranch. There will be guided hikes and walks of varying lengths from easy to strenuous. These hikes will give everyone the opportunity to learn about the trail system and about Snow Mountain Ranch. More information will be available on the CCC website and in the Yakima Herald-Republic before this event.



“The mission of CCC is to promote a healthy future for our community by conserving our heritage of open space, scenic vistas, and riparian corridors from Yakima to the Cascade foothills with connected recreational trails and natural landscapes.”

P.O. Box 877
Yakima, WA



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