

Moraine: New ways for the public to contribute

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That phone number belongs to the Wallowa Land Trust. They and their partners want to invite you to contribute any amount, large or small, to help the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership complete the purchase of the Yanke Property—1800 acres on the southern portion of the East Moraine and Mount Howard. The partnership is a public/private non-profit collaboration that includes the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners, Wallowa Resources, the Wallowa Land Trust, along with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.



The Yanke property consists of 1800 acres on the East Moraine. Property is outlined in yellow. For years, the Yanke family has permitted hikers to go through their green gate and follow a roadway to the top of the moraine. Purchase of the property by the Moraines Partnership would ensure public access.

“The Land Trust and our partners have been focused on large contributions and grants to get the project started in the right direction with the right momentum,” said Wallowa Land Trust Conservation Program Manager Eric Greenwell. “But we invite everyone who loves the moraines and Wallowa County to support this project at a level they can afford. This is a community effort. The property will belong to us all—to Wallowa County—and be managed both as a working landscape and for recreation. And we encourage everyone to be part of its purchase.”

In addition to contributing through the morainecampaign.org site, donors can also provide funds through the Ben Boswell Memorial Fund. “Ben’s family wanted to set up a fund that would support a worthy cause,” said Wallowa

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO SAVING THE EAST MORAINES’ YANKE PROPERTY

How to help save the East Moraine’s Yanke Property:

1. Contribute any amount to the Campaign for the East Moraine: www.morainecampaign.org
2. Contribute any amount to the Ben Boswell Memorial Fund at Wallowa Resources: <https://www.wallowaresources.org/index.php/support-us/boswell>
3. Send a check to the Wallowa Land Trust or call them with credit card information: The Wallowa Land Trust P.O. Box 516, South River Street, Enterprise Oregon 97828 541-426-2042
4. Send a check made out to the Ben Boswell Memorial Fund to Wallowa Resources, 401 NE First Street, Suite A, Enterprise, Oregon 97828 541-426-8053.
5. Contact either of these organizations if you have questions about their role in the campaign and/or future management and public access to the moraine.

Resources Executive Director Nils Christoffersen. “They asked us to determine what that might be and we all decided that saving the moraines would have been one of Ben’s highest priorities.”

Boswell, a teacher at Joseph middle school, believed in optimizing use of local resources for the benefit of the local economy, and mixed uses of landscapes, including harvest, grazing, recreation and education. Donations of any amount can be made to the Ben Boswell fund through Wallowa Resources Boswell Memorial Fund website: <https://www.wallowaresources.org/index.php/support-us/boswell>

The Yanke Property, which sprawls across the top of the moraine and laps up onto the densely forested north slope of Mount Howard, is a critical component of protecting the East Moraine from development, and providing public access to the spectacular East Moraine landscape. But the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership has only until January 3, 2020 to raise the 6.5 million dollars to cover the purchase price as well as establishing a fund for planning and perpetual management. If they cannot pay

ABOUT THE EAST MORAINES

Wallowa County Chieftain—The moraines of Wallowa Lake are among the most accessible and best preserved glacial moraine features of the Ice Age in North America. Their preservation from further development is critical to ongoing and future research about the Ice Age, and the geologic history of the Northwest.

About 20,000 years ago, the area we know as Wallowa Lake was a mass of moving, grinding, groaning glacial that towered more than 100 feet above the barren gravel deposits that we know today as the moraines of Wallowa Lake. A “moraine” is a deposit of gravels and large rocks known as “erratic” that have been eroded by glaciers and deposited as the ice moves or melts. The moraines along the sides of Wallowa Lake are “lateral” moraines. The lower moraines at the north end of the lake, including most of Iwetemlaykin Natural Area, are “terminal” moraines—gravels deposited at the front of the glacier as the ice there melted.

Cosmogenic dates that tell how long a freshly polished rock has been exposed to the sun indicate that both the east and west moraines were barren pole of gravel in the final stages of formation about 19,000 years ago. The spectacular moraines are among



Balsam root blooms in profusion on the East Moraine. Ellen Morris Bishop

the best-preserved and certainly most accessible Late Pleistocene (Ice Age) glacial features in North America, and rank high on the scale of such features globally. They are important because of their aesthetics and habitat, and they also preserve geologic records of Pleistocene glaciation and climates.

To the east of the young, steep-sided East Moraine, the corrugated landscape includes older moraines that record the gradual erosion and unroofing of

the Wallowa Mountains over perhaps the past 1.5 to 2 million years. The geologic history of this larger Ice Age landscape is currently a research project of the University of Oregon geology field camp. By examining the rocks in these moraines, geologists can begin to craft a picture of what the Wallowa Mountains might have looked like 2 million years ago. The older moraines may also preserve pollen and other clues to past climate and vegetation.

off the purchase price by that date, this prime part of the scenic and geologically important east moraine risks development: up to 15 homes, a conference center and associated facilities, and a private dock. Public entry would likely be barred. And the moraines landscape as we know it would be lost.

When the Partnership succeeds in purchasing the land, ownership will transfer to Wallowa County. The partnership is working together to establish a comprehensive management plan, with each member contributing time and expertise. Included in the

6.5 million dollar price tag are funds so that Wallowa County can hire a manager for the property in perpetuity who will ensure that the final management plan is carried out.

‘...IT’S THE SMALLER DONATIONS THAT FOSTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP. THAT’S WHERE THE HEART OF THE PROJECT LIES.’

Wallowa Resources Executive Director Nils Christoffersen

Wallowa Resources would develop the management plan for sustainable timber harvest on the forested portion. The Wallowa Land Trust would help develop a plan for sustainable grassland grazing and management. They would also ensure compliance with the conservation easement requirements. Oregon Parks and Recreation would provide a manager, funded by the money raised to purchase and manage the moraine, to keep things running smoothly.

To date, Greenwell said, the partnership has raised almost \$3.9 million, including a \$3.6 million dollar grant from the U.S. Forest Service’s Forest Legacy Program. But that is only about 60% of the amount

needed, and time is short. The partnership continues to seek grants. And they are planning additional fundraising events, including a possible presentation in Portland later in the summer,

said Wallowa County Commissioner John Hillock.

“What’s important to the county is that the moraines remain a working landscape,” he said. “It’s a place we can demonstrate how a working landscape can support a community as well as wildlife and habitat and recreation.” And once the Yanke property purchase is complete, the county will establish several committees that provide oversight management of forestry, grazing, and recreation. “If people want to get involved in one of those committees once we acquire the land,” Hillock said, “that would be one great way to help.”

“Every contribution, no matter what the size, is important,” said Christoffersen. “To help ensure success, it’s important to capture large grants and funders. But it’s the smaller donations that foster community engagement and ownership. That’s where the heart of the project lies.”

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Chris Dunn, PhD
Research Associate, College of Forestry
Oregon State University

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Dr. Christopher Dunn has spent eight years in fire suppression and fuels management prior to pursuing research on contemporary fire effects and ecosystem response to mixed severity fires. Today his research focuses on the safety and effectiveness of large fire management through collaborations with the Wildfire Risk Management Science Team of the Human Dimensions Program at the Rocky Mountain Research Station. This allows him to leverage his operational experience and research training to bridge the gap between science and management in an effort to better prepare land and fire managers for the changing fire environment.

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