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Three Rivers Land Conservancy

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Wetzel Woods -- Headwaters of the Refuge

"I'm naming these woods for my Grandpa," Carole Andresen says. "He bought this land in 1905. Ever since I was a little kid this was my playground."

Carole and her husband Ron have dedicated 21 acres west of Sherwood as a conservation easement. Four creeks course through the steep woods, lush with enormous old cedar trees and blanketed with ferns. They form the west fork of Chicken Creek, headwaters to the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge.

Carl Axelsen, former program manager for Raindrops to Refuge, who helped establish the easement, describes it as "almost untouched headwaters, a spring-fed, year-round stream. You could be in a wilderness area."

"This always seemed like a good place for an outdoors school," Carole muses. At the national wildlife refuge, "kids have to keep their hands in their pockets. Here kids can touch things, pick leaves. It can be more interactive." They envision gazebos where people can birdwatch, and enjoy the quiet.

Ron Andresen grew up on the other side of Highway 99. When he was young "it wasn't uncommon to have forest right next to you." "I watched the area be all forest," Carole adds, "and now this is the only place left."

The rarity of these woods in the Sherwood area is evidence of this conservation easement's significance to Three Rivers' mission. No matter how the surrounding lands are developed, Wetzel Woods' pristine headwaters will continue to provide a national wildlife refuge with year-round clean, flowing water. By offering access to Boy and Girl Scouts, and church and school groups, Andresens are helping to create future generations of citizens who will appreciate the natural world, and work to protect it.

Carole takes a deep breath. "I love the smell of the woods, the trees, the moss, the creek, the critters. It was a dream of mine as a kid to share this with other kids."

The Place of the Elk

"There's a herd of about 40 elk that come through and like to graze in the open. The first time we saw them, my daughter, who was two then, ran out on the back porch, spread her arms and said, 'Hi, elk!' My daughter and son love seeing the elk here.

"It makes me feel good that it's a natural part of their lives that they experience regularly." Maryellen Hockensmith and Mike McCulloch share in that thrill of seeing the elk herd. She adds, "Most Portlanders don't know that elk live this close to town."

Mike says, "We're at a triangle crossroads of Germantown Road and Skyline Boulevard. These wooded and wildlife corridors are integral to urban living -- fingers of natural areas that are transition zones that help maintain the viability of Forest Park."

Maryellen has noticed that "as we've been removing invasive plants, planting natives, and offering food sources throughout the entire year by strategic plantings, we see more birds and more varieties of birds. When before we'd see one pair of cedar waxwings, now we see a whole flock."

Maryellen's late husband, Bill Hockensmith, looked for a year and a half before finding the property, then died suddenly not long after they moved there. "I feel that this place was a gift from Bill to our family, and that I have a deep responsibility to share that gift with the broader community." She hopes to use the property to educate people about small-scale organic farming methods and forest stewardship.

The family is granting a conservation easement of 19 acres of second-growth forest that encompasses a long stretch of Abbey Creek and its drainage. As a million more people move into the Portland region, this property exemplifies the mission of Three Rivers -- an intact mature forest that helps provide clean water to the Tualatin River, and significant protection for Forest Park wildlife, especially elk habitat. Because of this property, future generations of children can walk in Forest Park and have the opportunity to look up and say, "Hi, elk!"

Working for Wine and Land

"Candace worked so hard!" Emogene says. "Emogene was so passionate!" Candace says. Candace Kramer and Emogene Waggoner, co-chairs of Wine and Land who have collaborated to make the event an ever-increasing success, are quick to heap praise on the other. Over the past three years of working together they increased the tally of the event from \$40,000 to \$128,000 this year.

Candace managed the silent auction, garnering 120 items ranging from bottles of wine to a heli-hiking trip in the mountains of Canada. Ticket sales and the raffle were Emogene's responsibilities. Forty ticket sponsors sold all the tickets before the event for the first time, and costumed Thespians (Kate Garner, Daniel Ebert and Michael Lukins) went around encouraging people to purchase raffle tickets.

The auction raised nearly \$50,000 and the raffle topped the goal of \$6,000. Emogene: "It's been wonderful." Candace: "It's exciting. When it's successful, everyone is happy."

Sidebar:

Buy a brick!

Create a lasting memory -- for yourself, a loved one, a business or an organization -- with an inscribed brick on the Stafford Trail, while supporting the work of Three Rivers. Your donation will help complete the trail, which will connect the cities of Lake Oswego and West Linn. Bricks will be placed near the Stafford Basin Path kiosk.

Bricks are \$100 each and inscription requests(no logos) are subject to final approval. Gift certificates are available.

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Sidebar:

Singing for the songbirds: \$35,000 goal for Year-End Campaign

Habitat loss and reduction in the urban tree canopy are the leading causes of diminishing bird populations in the Portland metropolitan region. Scientists have documented declines in many of our 200 native bird species, especially among neotropical migrants. Nineteen native bird species in the region are listed as "sensitive" or at risk of extinction.

You can help protect songbirds and our region's habitat with a gift to Three Rivers' Year-End Campaign. Your dollars are put to good work, protecting and preserving those landscapes where songbird trills, warbles, chirps, whistles, *chee-winks* and *teedle-eets* bring delight to our everyday lives.

Sidebar:

Kate Brown chooses Three Rivers for \$5,000 Spirit Mountain Community Fund award

At their 10th Anniversary celebration at the Oregon Gardens, Spirit Mountain Community Fund gave each of their trustees an opportunity to make a special award of \$5,000 to his or her favorite charity. Trustee Kate Brown designated Three Rivers as the recipient of her award. Kate said, "There are so many very important causes out there, and I really appreciate the incredible work Three Rivers is doing. I'd read about the turtle project that was in need of research dollars. We tend to forget about the turtles and newts and little creatures, but they're important, too. Three Rivers can have an impact that spreads beyond its membership because they're doing really critical work."