

# BEHIND THE SCENES: PEOPLE PROTECTING THE LAND

*Kristan and Scott Collins became aware of the Land Trust's efforts slowly, hearing bits and pieces about a nascent organization and its attempts to preserve and restore habitat.*

Then, in 2005 when they purchased a home above Camp Polk Meadow Preserve, the efforts of the Land Trust became personal. Seven years later, the Collins are passionate supporters of the Land Trust: pulling weeds, hosting house parties, and sharing the Land Trust's mission with others. The Collins reside and work in the Portland area but they share a second home above Camp Polk with Scott's parents and Land Trust members, Pat and Don Collins. Together, the "Collins four" enjoy the outdoor bounty that the Sisters' area has to offer from their part primary residence, part vacation home, and complete nature retreat.

Scott learned his love of the outdoors during summers spent in the high mountains of southern Utah. There he learned to fish, then fly fish, and honed his hiking and exploring skills. During an eight-year stint in Houston, Texas, he developed his love of bird watching. His passion for road biking then morphed into a passion for mountain biking; his favorite outdoor activity.

Kristan grew up in Texas, but she was not outdoor-centric. Early in their relationship Scott decided to introduce her to the grandeur of nature with a backpacking trip to Yosemite. As Kristan hiked the last mile out in bare feet because of ill-fitting boots, Scott assumed his bride -to -be would forever forsake the outdoors. But some magic happened on that adventure and it kindled a long lasting love for the natural world.

Scott's parents, Pat and Don, also played a key role in Scott's love of the outdoors. To this day, they are both active birdwatch-



ers, and Don is a skilled fly fisherman. Don has helped release young steelhead at Camp Polk Meadow (eagerly hoping for a chance to catch one on its return), and both he and Pat have joined Land Trust birding trips at Camp Polk and beyond.

The beauty of the Land Trust is that there are so many ways to be involved. Kristan, with a love of gardening, found being a Weed Warrior was a natural fit. The time weeding allows her to clear her mind...she calls it productive meditation. Scott helps on occasion (there are trails to ride, after all), and, when he can't, he insists that Kristan be prepared for the unexpected cougar encounter. "It's lovely he cares, but it's hard to be Zen with an AM radio blaring and bear spray strapped to my side."

Time with nature and the relaxed pace of life hold the Collins' hearts. "I always leave a part of me when I head back to Portland," says Kristan. "Connecting with the Land Trust has eased that ache. I know the place I love will be cared for well in my absence." —



## THE FIVE RIVERS SOCIETY

The Five Rivers Society is made up of visionary individuals dedicated to investing in the organization conserving and protecting land in Central Oregon: the Deschutes Land Trust. Society members' gifts of \$1,000 or more protect land for wildlife and local communities and make a powerful statement about the importance of land conservation in our community.

*If you'd like to join this select leadership circle, please contact Brad Chalfant, Executive Director at (541) 330-0017 or [bsc@deschuteslandtrust.org](mailto:bsc@deschuteslandtrust.org).*