

Conserve

News from Lemhi Regional Land Trust & the Salmon School Garden

From Carmen Creek to Conservation Milestones

High in the hills above Salmon, at the very top of Carmen Creek, friends and neighbors gathered on a warm summer evening to celebrate something extraordinary: twenty years of conservation by Lemhi Regional Land Trust (LRLT). The Working Lands Celebration, hosted on Tom and Teresa McFarland’s ranch, was more than just a milestone – it was a moment to look back on two decades of partnerships, perseverance, and care for the lands that make this valley home.



A bird’s-eye view of the Working Lands Celebration at McFarland’s Ranch.

The setting itself was perfect. Rolling hay fields and mountain peaks framed the celebration where families shared drinks and laughter. Children participated in hands-on activities while longtime ranchers and new supporters swapped stories about the changes – and the constants – they’ve witnessed in this place. The lively tunes of the Blue Sage Ramblers floated through the air, adding the perfect soundtrack to an evening of connection. In the midst of laughter, music, and shared conversation, LRLT’s purpose was unmistakable – building community through a shared commitment to the land.

One of the evening’s most moving moments came with an announcement that touched everyone present. LRLT has secured funding for a conservation easement on Tom and Teresa’s ranch – the very land where the celebration was held. Their commitment to protecting their property for future generations was met with heartfelt applause, a living example of why the LRLT work matters (Read more about the McFarland Conservation Easement on page 3). Another highlight of the night was the presentation of the inaugural Mike Overacker Conservation Leadership Award. Named for a beloved local conservationist and LRLT founder whose legacy continues to inspire, the award honors individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership, innovation, and dedication to protecting the lands and resources of Lemhi and Custer Counties (Read more about the Mike Overacker award and recipient on page 2).

As the evening wound down and the sun dipped behind the mountains, the celebration felt less like an anniversary and more like a family reunion. Two decades of conservation is no small feat, but for LRLT, this moment was just as much about the future – the acres still to be protected, the partnerships yet to be built, and the next generation that will inherit these lands. Heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who attended, as well as those who generously bought and donated auction items – your support keeps this work moving forward.



Guests browse and bid during the Working Lands Celebration silent auction.

Save the Date

Mark your calendars... our upcoming fundraisers are shaping up to be the perfect date night (or girls’ night!) – details coming soon.

SEPTEMBER 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4



NOVEMBER 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6



Honoring a Legacy: Mark Davidson Receives Inaugural Mike Overacker Conservation Leadership Award

LRLT is proud to announce Mark Davidson as the inaugural recipient of the Mike Overacker Conservation Leadership Award. This annual award honors individuals or organizations who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and dedication to land and resource conservation in Lemhi and Custer Counties.



Charli Williams, Tom McFarland & Mark Davidson

Named in memory of Mike Overacker, a devoted conservationist and LRLT founder and advocate for the working lands, wildlife, and open spaces of central Idaho, the award recognizes those who share his deep commitment to protecting this region for future generations. Mark Davidson has been a driving force in advancing land conservation throughout our community. Over the course of his career, he worked for The Nature Conservancy from 2000 through 2020, with a two-year tenure at Trout Unlimited from 2013–2015. His leadership, collaborative spirit, and commitment to practical, place-based solutions have helped shape the conservation landscape of central Idaho. Mark has developed innovative strategies to protect our natural resources while also working closely with landowners and agency partners to ensure those solutions are effective and enduring.

Davidson's impact extends beyond his professional roles. He has supported LRLT since its founding, working closely alongside LRLT founding Executive Director, Kristin Troy, and the organization's early leaders to establish a strong foundation for its mission. Kristin fondly describe their partnership as "anything but formal", reflecting a unique camaraderie that has fueled decades of conservation successes. Mark has also championed public land stewardship and access, understanding that healthy landscapes depend on cooperation, balance, and shared responsibility. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the Blaine County Recreation District and is on the board of directors for the Southern Idaho Land Trust, further demonstrating his ongoing dedication to the region's open spaces and recreation opportunities. His work reflects a deep personal investment in the future of this region – from its working farms and ranches to its abundant wildlife and iconic open spaces.



Mark Davidson & his wife,
Jenny Emery Davidson

"We're thrilled to honor someone who has been a part of LRLT's story since the very beginning," said Executive Director Charli Williams, while presenting the award at LRLT's 20th annual Working Lands Celebration.

Following the award presentation, longtime collaborators Tom McFarland and Kristin Troy shared personal stories and reflections on Mark's contributions and the impact of his work throughout the region.

Conservation Corner: Facts vs. Fiction?

Fiction: When a family places their land under a conservation easement, they lose all control and future generations can't use it for agriculture.

Fact: Many families use conservation easements to preserve their agricultural heritage. It's a way to ensure future generations can continue ranching or farming as part of the family's legacy.

Fiction: Conservation easements turn private land into public parks that anyone can use.

Fact: Easements do not automatically grant public access or change ownership – the land remains private and is managed by the landowner. None of LRLT conservation easement properties have public access.

Fiction: Conservation easements mean fences go up, signs appear, and the land suddenly looks "protected."

Fact: Conservation easements are invisible. The land still looks and functions the same – the protection happens behind the scenes through a legal agreement that keeps it available for agriculture, wildlife habitat and open space forever.

Carmen Creek Ranch to be Permanently Protected

Lemhi Regional Land Trust (LRLT), in conjunction with Tom and Teresa McFarland and their family, is delighted to announce that funding has been secured to place a conservation easement on their Carmen Creek ranch. The McFarlands and LRLT first began working together in August 2023, when LRLT submitted an application to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Agricultural Land Easement Program. That application was successful and those funds were secured in January of 2024 and in April of 2024 LRLT, began conversations aimed at securing the required matching funds from a private foundation. In June of 2024, a representative from the foundation visited the ranch, meeting with LRLT staff, Tom McFarland and a representative from Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Following this visit, LRLT began to assemble and application package, which was submitted in May of 2025, and the funding announcement came in on June 26, 2025--just in time to celebrate at LRLT's 20th anniversary celebration held on the McFarland Ranch.



The McFarland Ranch is the uppermost private parcel on Carmen Creek and has functioned as a ranch for nearly 100 years. Today, day to day ranching operations are managed by Tom McFarland, and his son, Seth. The McFarlands are well known for their thoughtful approach to management, running a successful cow-calf operation, while managing the land in a way that benefits the big game, non-game and fish species found on their property. Placing a conservation easement on this ranch will permanently ensure that in the future, the ranch will look much as it does today. It cannot be subdivided, future buildings can only be constructed in designated areas and the ability to continue ranching on the property will be explicitly protected, along with the open spaces, fish and wildlife habitat and other important features that make this property unique.

LITTLE HANDS, BIG BLOOMS

Last spring, Salmon Pioneer Elementary kindergarteners got their hands dirty in the Salmon School Garden, carefully planting zinnia seeds. After watching their tiny sprouts grow, the kids helped transplant them into their own flower bed at the Garden – and now their hard work has paid off!

All summer, their zinnias have been blooming in a brilliant mix of colors, adding cheer to the Garden and creating a beautiful welcome for students heading back to school. It's a sweet reminder that even the smallest seeds (and gardeners!) can grow something amazing!



SALMON SCHOOL GARDEN

DID YOU KNOW?

The Salmon School Garden is a nonprofit organization, operating independently from school budgets and taxpayer funding. All of the growth you see – from blooming flowers to curious young gardeners – is made possible through the generosity of community donations and the time and talents of dedicated volunteers.

Thank you for helping us cultivate a space where kids can learn, grow, and thrive outdoors!

GROW WITH US!

The Salmon School Garden thrives because of community support. There's a place for everyone to dig in and make a difference!

Volunteer with Us

Help with planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, or leading student garden lessons. No experience needed – just a love for learning and the outdoors!

Sponsor a Bed or Program

Local businesses and families can sponsor a garden bed or help fund seasonal projects. It's a great way to give back and be recognized in the community!

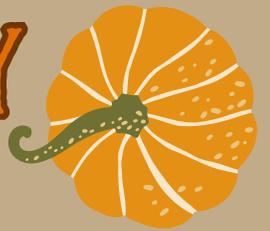
Donate Supplies or Funds

We accept in-kind donations of tools, seeds, soil, and more – or you can support us directly with a cash donation. Every little bit helps our garden grow!

Donate TODAY by scanning the QR code:



PUMPKIN PATCH PARTY



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23RD
4:00- 6:00PM

Featuring pumpkins grown by Pioneer Elementary 5th graders, fall decor, other fall vegetables, games & desserts!

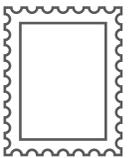
SALMON SCHOOL GARDEN
1309 MINNIE STREET
{BEHIND WILD SIDE SPORTS}



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Summer 2025

Lemhi Regional Land Trust
105 S. Center Street
Salmon, Idaho 83467



Lemhi Regional Land Trust

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(208)756-8879

Click "Donate" or scan the QR code below
to make a contribution to LRLT!



Lemhi Regional Land Trust



@lemhilandtrust



Salmon School Garden

www.salmonschoolgarden.org
1309 Minnie Street
P.O. Box 382
Salmon, Idaho 83467

Click "Donate" or scan the QR code below
to make a contribution to the SSG!



The Salmon School
Garden Project



@salmonschoolgarden

