

During a winter outing, Michael shares his vast knowledge of the valley's ecology during a tour of a recently conserved property.



Conservation Heroes



TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Like many, the Teton Regional Land Trust (TRLT) staff have spent the last month working remotely. Every day, our team gathers for an hour-long video chat. We use these daily gatherings to discuss priorities, coordinate projects, and most importantly to stay connected. While these calls are about work and maintaining our projects and productivity, we are also using this time to learn more about each other, our passions, and the reasons behind our shared commitment to conservation. On a recent call, we shared our conservation heroes.

The first thing I learned is that Tamara and I share a conservation hero in the valley's own Michael Whitfield. Like Tamara, I have always been impressed with Michael's deep love of the landscape and respect for its heritage. As a founding member of TRLT, he has long recognized the ecological value of the region, as well as the threats to its sustainability. In addition to his long list of accomplishments, he has also developed and inspired young conservationists, sharing his skills and knowledge and his passion for people and wildlife.

"If it's wild to your own heart, protect it. Preserve it. Love it. And fight for it, and dedicate yourself to it, whether it's a mountain range, your wife, your husband, or even (god forbid) your job. It doesn't matter if it's wild to anyone else: if it's what makes your heart sing, if it's what makes your days soar like a hawk in the summertime, then focus on it. Because for sure, it's wild, and if it's wild, it'll mean you're still free. No matter where you are." - Rick Bass

I met Michael for the first time in 2008 just as I took on the role of the first Executive Director of the Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust (SSLT) based in Pocatello, Idaho. Young and green, I looked to Michael, who at the time had just left his role of ED of TRLT and became the Executive Director of the Heart of the Rockies Initiative, a regional partnership of land trusts that provides support to its land trust members across the northern Rockies.

Throughout my tenure at SSLT, Michael was one of my biggest advocates, serving as a mentor as I worked to establish a base of support for SSLT and develop its conservation programs. In 2013, I left that role and joined the TRLT team. One of the biggest thrills of my life was to follow in Michael's footsteps when I took on the role of ED in 2015. After five years, I am still trying to fill his shoes and am grateful that Michael continues to share his knowledge and passion with our community. I took the selfie to the left with Michael while skiing up the Teton River during the 2019 Christmas Bird Count.

On the next page, you will see some of the other individuals whose work has inspired our team. Many of us shared the same conservation hero, and as we shared, other heroes came up. Chris, our Operations Manager, highlighted two figures saying, I choose Teddy Roosevelt for making the rules and Edward Abbey for breaking them. Kate, our Outreach and Events Coordinator, an English Major, shared that her inspiration came through writers. Kate and I share a common respect for writer and conservationist Rick Bass. Through our daily gatherings, I have learned so much about our staff and am inspired by their passion and talent they bring to TRLT every day. I hope you find some inspiration from learning more about our conservation heroes. Wishing you well, *Joselin*

VISIT THE LINK BELOW FOR MICHAEL WHITFIELD'S RECENT PAPER REFLECTING ON CONSERVAITON IN THE 21st CENTURY

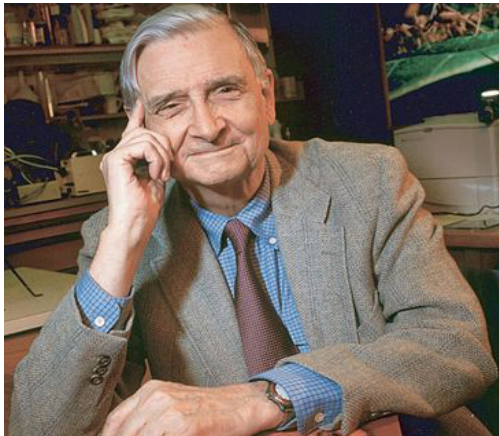
<https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/working-papers/toward-holistic-landscape-conservation-21st-century>



JANE GOODALL - *“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”*

Listening to Jane Goodall share her story at a conference last October, it was hard not to be inspired by her life story and see her as one of this generation’s greatest conservation heroes. Both Jeske and Hilary agreed. For Jeske, Goodall embodies everything Jeske wanted to be as a little girl and admires the way Goodall relates what she learned through her research of chimpanzees to the human experience. Goodall started her journey as the secretary to famed anthropologist Louis Leakey and in 1960 began studying chimpanzees in Tanzania. Goodall is a lifelong conservationist and advocate for wildlife.

Learn more about the work of the Jane Goodall Institute:
<https://www.janegoodall.org/>



E.O. Wilson - *“We have decommissioned natural selection and must now look deep within ourselves and decide who we want to become.”*

E.O. Wilson is an entomologist specializing in myrmecology, or the study of ants. Early in his career, he studied the social dynamics of ants, later publishing many papers on sociobiology. Like the Land Trust’s Stewardship Coordinator, Kimberly Holmes, E. O. is a fellow Alabamian, as well as a lifelong naturalist and conservationist. He is known as the father of biodiversity. He has made it his life’s work to promote the importance of biodiversity and the role of all living things in our biosphere and how they work together. He believes it is the human race’s moral and ethical responsibility to set aside land for nature.

Learn more about the work of the E.O. Wilson Foundation:
<https://eowilsonfoundation.org>



JOHN MUIR - *“The Mountains are Calling and I Must Go.”*

John Muir was a farmer, inventor, shepherd, naturalist, explorer, writer, and conservationist whose influence inspired the protection of millions of acres across the US. In 1903, Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt spent several days exploring Yosemite finding common ground on their passion for nature and conserving landscapes and wildlife. Energized by the experience, Roosevelt worked to make Muir’s Yosemite dream a reality by eventually adding Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to Yosemite National Park. He also inspired Josh and Nicole to name him their conservation hero. Muir helped form the Sierra Club reasoning “do something for wildness and make the mountains glad.” He was their first president until he passed away in 1914.

Check out the Sierra Club’s John Muir Exhibit:
https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit



TEDDY ROOSEVELT - *“Wildlife and its habitat cannot speak, so we must and we will.”*

Teddy Roosevelt was chosen by Renee and Chris as their conservation hero for having the foresight to set aside so many national parks and other public lands for all of us to enjoy. As President, Roosevelt established 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, four national game preserves, five national parks, and 18 national monuments on over 230 million acres of public land. Roosevelt was bookish and sickly as a child but quickly discovered a passion for the outdoors. His favorite activities included hiking, horseback riding, bird-watching, hunting and taxidermy.

Learn more about Roosevelt’s Conservation Legacy at :
<https://www.doi.gov/blog/conservation-legacy-theodor-roosevelt>

CHECK OUT THE VIDEO LINK BELOW - JACK DANGERMOND INTERVIEWS JANE GOODALL AND E.O. WILSON.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSNG0h__OUI&feature=youtu.be