

Okanogan Valley Land Council e-Newsletter  
April 2008

**OVLC NEWS:**

**OVLC Partners to Protect Working Lands and Riparian Habitat**

**Working Lands:** OVLC and Okanogan County are working together to seek state funds for the purchase of an agricultural easement in the Okanogan Highlands. These funds are available through the Farmland Preservation Program, administered by the state Recreation and Conservation Office. Agricultural easements allow working lands to remain in private ownership and ensure that they will remain available for agriculture into the future. Okanogan County participated in this program with the Methow Conservancy when it began two years ago; this project proposal will be the first time these funds have been sought for protection of agricultural working lands in eastern Okanogan County

**Riparian Habitat:** OVLC and the Colville Confederated Tribes are partnering to complete a conservation easement project at Wildhorse Spring Creek. The creek flows directly into the Okanogan River north of Ellisforde and provides important habitat for steelhead spawning and rearing. The project will place a conservation easement on property containing a quarter mile of the creek which will provide permanent protection and enable restoration of the riparian area. This is the first OVLC project focused on protection of endangered species habitat.

**OVLC Upcoming Events**

**Two Opportunities for Learning about the Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse:**

Okanogan County is home to the rare subspecies of grouse known as the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Noted in the 1806 journals of Lewis and Clark, its population has been dwindling since that time. Take advantage of two free opportunities to learn more about the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse—its behaviors, habitat needs, and importance!

**Presentation:** Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m. at the Okanogan PUD Auditorium, 1331 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North, Okanogan. Presenter is Jeff Heinlen, Wildlife Field Biologist for the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife.

**Field Trip:** Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m. at property near Molson. Jim Olson, Manager of the Chesaw Wildlife Area, will lead this Sharp-tailed grouse field trip as well as provide information about the nearby Chesaw Wildlife Area and opportunities available there. OVLC will highlight an on-site habitat enhancement project for the grouse that was completed in 2007. *Take Chesaw Road east of Oroville 9 miles; left on Molson Road 4 miles to right on Mary Ann Creek Rd. follow signs to turn-off.* Call the OVLC office at (509) 486-2765 or 1-877-486-2765 if you have any questions about these events.

**OTHER CONSERVATION NEWS:**

**Regional Land Conservation Conference in Winthrop, Washington**

A regional conference hosted by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) will be held in Winthrop on May 1-3. The conference provides an excellent opportunity for learning and

discussion. While the speakers and workshops are primarily aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and professionalism of land trusts from northwestern states, workshops and seminars may be of interest to others as well. A brochure and schedule of events is available by clicking on the links to “Your Region” and “Northwest” at [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org). LTA is an umbrella group that helps ensure excellence and standardization between over 1,500 non-profit land trusts across the United States.

## CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES:

### Two Programs Available to Landowners for Habitat Improvement

Looking for funding to help improve wildlife habitat on your land? Two sources have cost-share programs which can be of assistance. The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is a competitive grant program designed to provide financial assistance to private landowners for the protection, enhancement or restoration of habitat to benefit species at risk on privately owned lands. More information is available online at [www.wdfw.wa.gov/lands/lip](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/lands/lip). A second program, the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), assists projects that benefit upland wildlife habitats, riparian habitat, small wetlands, and threatened and endangered species habitat (including animal and plants). More information is available through a local Natural Resources and Conservation Office (NRCS). The NRCS Okanogan Service Center is at 1251 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. South in Okanogan, (509) 422-2750.