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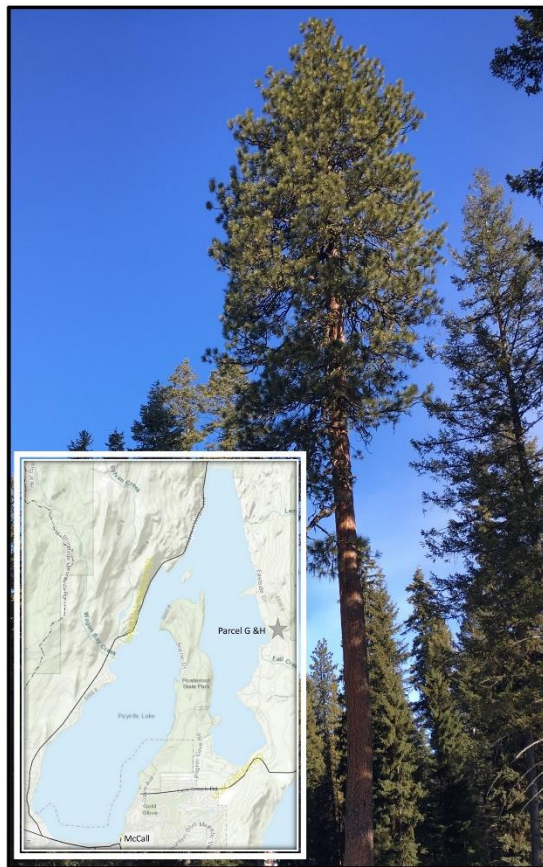
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'Payette Land Trust submits applications to Idaho Department of Lands for conservation easements on Parcels G and H'



Parcel G and H – East Side Drive Payette Lake, McCall

On Friday March 12th, 2021, Payette Land Trust (PLT) submitted two applications for conservation easements on Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) Parcels G and H. Accessible by East Side Drive, they constitute essentially what remains of the undeveloped public land along the eastern shoreline. PLT submitted the applications in response to the call from the State Board of Land Commissioner asking stakeholders to “think outside the box” and help solve Endowment land-use issues in the McCall area. “PLT wants to develop on the ground solutions which will work for McCall and the rest of the state” said Rick Fereday, PLT Board President “We might as well start trying to solve this problem here and now. These issues only get worse as the state grows, no sense kicking the can any further down the road.”

Payette Land Trust began investigating a path to conservation around iconic Payette Lake in 2018, eventually making the Payette Lake Conservation Project the centerpiece of their 2019 Payette River Basin Initiative. In 2020, the discussion surrounding the Land Boards fiduciary duty in relation to traditional uses elevated as development values continued to rival timber value. This prompted the Land Board to place a moratorium on land use activities in the McCall area and requested IDL seeks out solutions. When IDL reached out to local stakeholders, PLT became heavily involved in developing new and innovative ideas.

“We heard Governor Little’s call for workable solutions loud and clear.” said Craig Utter, executive director for PLT. “PLT submitted the applications as a direct response to the request for proposals to increase the long-term revenue for the beneficiaries on these lands while conserving the traditional uses, natural habitat, access and water quality.”

Born in 1993, out of the need to balance conservation and development, PLT now wants to bring its 28 years of experience weaving together agriculture, timber and recreation into conservation easements as a tool to help manage Endowment Lands around the Lake.

PLT understands people need places to live and work but believes there are exceptional areas which deserve to be permanently shielded from development.

East Side drive is a fantastic example of how an easement could be used to conserve this unique area. It would ensure traditional activities could continue while being managed in harmony with the natural environment. This can include sustainably managed grazing and timber harvest, hazardous fuels reduction, low impact recreation and day use activities such as hiking, biking and walking.

PLT’s application calls for the purchase of a perpetual non-development conservation easement from the Endowment Trust. The easement purchase price would require a determination based on a fair market appraisal, using Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice standards.

By purchasing the easement at fair market value, the fiduciary requirement of the Land Board will be met. The Endowment will continue to own the land and benefit from any future revenue derived from the leasable activities remaining under the easement. If the Endowment chooses to sell or trade the land in the future, the easement will remain attached to the property and the Payette Land Trust would continue to steward the deed into the future.

Purchasing a conservation easement on Idaho Endowment land has never been done before. Given the time to work on establishing the necessary protocols, IDL and PLT could successfully create this management tool resulting in a win for the Land Board, a win for the community and most importantly a win for the Lake and the Land.

The Payette Land Trust (PLT) works with landowners in Adams, Idaho, Valley and Washington counties to further their conservation ethics and working to balance conservation and development in the region. The PLT believes in conserving the rural landscape of West Central Idaho for the benefit of our community and future generations.

Currently, the PLT owns two properties and holds ten conservation easements on private land. To learn more about PLT and its work in the West Central Mountains of Idaho, visit <http://www.payettelandtrust.org>