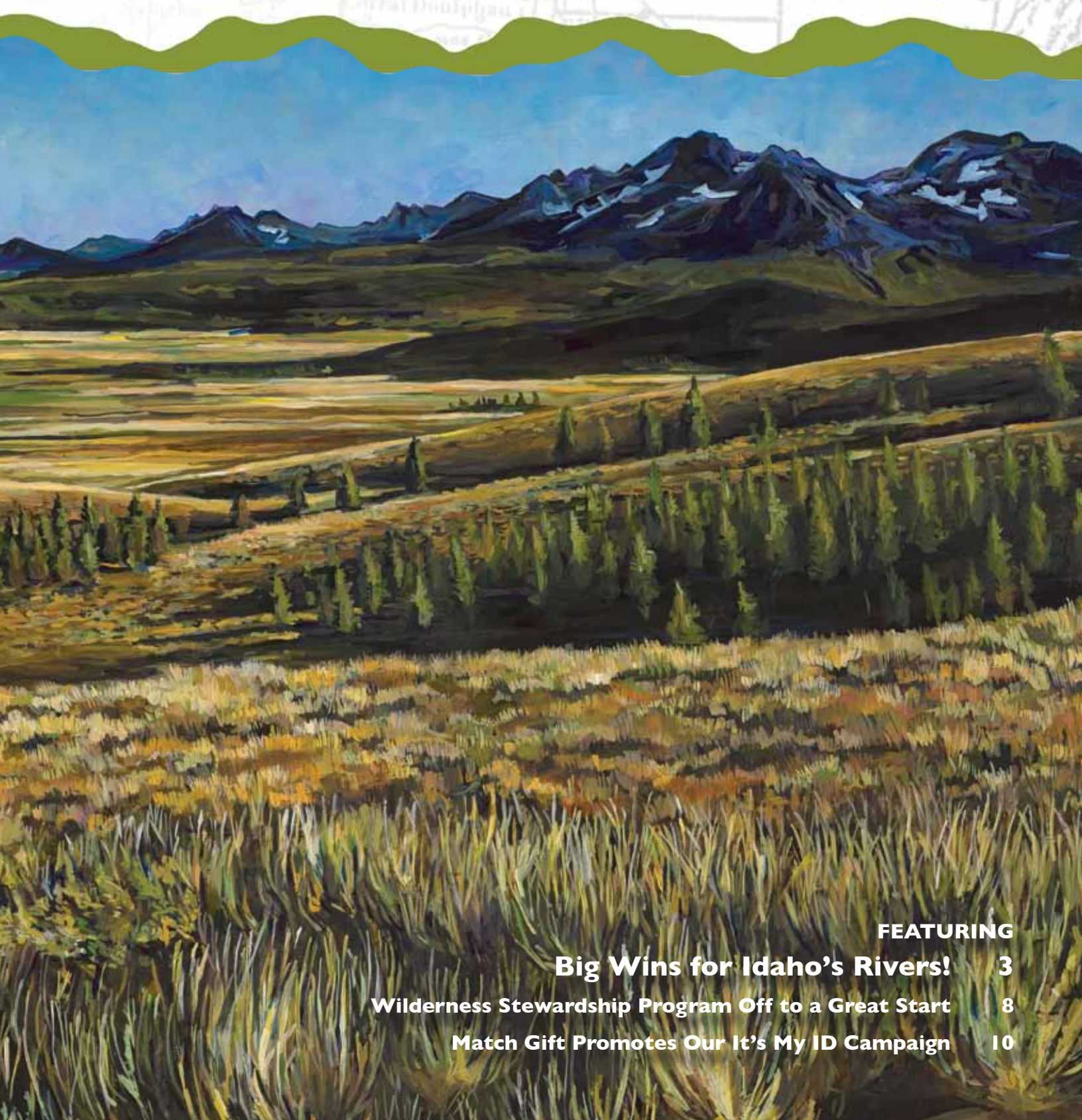




IDAHO  
CONSERVATION  
LEAGUE

Vol XIX No 3  
October 2016

# The Idaho Conservationist



## FEATURING

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# Innovation and Persistence

Glenn Oakley



Rick Johnson

The cover of this issue features the artwork of ICL's artist in residence, Josh Udesen, "Sawtooth Basin."

*How often do leaders of both parties celebrate wins together? How often do federal and state regulatory agencies cheer their collaboration?*

*Not as often as they should. But it did just happen around a river protection project for the Boise and Snake Rivers. Rather than spending millions of dollars to remove a relatively minor amount of added phosphorus at the city's wastewater treatment plant, Boise created a new facility in a downstream county.*

*This facility removes a lot more phosphorus from an irrigation return canal flowing into the lower Boise River right before it enters the overworked Snake. The result—a cleaner river created through innovative and hard-to-accomplish "pollution trading."*

*Sen. Mike Crapo, Rep. Mike Simpson, Boise Mayor David Bieter, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 Administrator Dennis McClarren, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Director John Tippetts all cheered the facility's opening. Each also described the key role that the Idaho Conservation League played in the project.*

*ICL was involved from the beginning. We helped ensure that—for the first time and for the benefit of all Idaho waters from now on—river cleanup can be considered a beneficial use under Idaho water law. ICL also worked with the city of Boise, EPA and DEQ in many other ways on this innovative project.*

*Nearly a decade of persistence created this success. We have a cleaner river, at lower cost and with remarkable government collaboration, making this the first project of its kind in the nation.*

*That's what "Idaho's leading voice for conservation" means.*

**Rick Johnson**  
Executive Director  
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## Big Wins for Idaho's Rivers

Wins against mining companies don't come very often. Under the Mining Law of 1872, mining is the highest and best use of our public lands—more so than drinking water, irrigation, recreation or habitat for fish and wildlife. The U.S. Forest Service cannot deny a permit; it can only apply various terms and conditions to minimize harm to these other resources.

This policy makes this summer's wins against two controversial mining projects even more significant.

The first big win is in the Boise River headwaters. A Canadian mining company, CuMo, hopes to excavate one of the world's largest open-pit molybdenum mines upstream of Boise. Mining is the number one toxic polluter in the United States, and even modern mines have leached contaminants far downstream. This project is of tremendous concern for downstream communities because the Boise River provides more than 20 percent of Boise's drinking water.

This June, the project was put on hold after a federal court determined that the Forest Service had not properly reviewed potential impacts, particularly with regard to baseline surveys for a rare plant, Sacajawea's bitterroot.

The second big win is in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. In 2015, the Forest Service authorized American Independence Mines and Mineral to use dump trucks, bulldozers and drilling rigs to open roads, clear drill pads and excavate trenches within the Frank. The purpose was to assess whether two mining claims were valid. The Golden Hand project is located in the headwaters of Big Creek, which flows into Idaho's famous Middle Fork Salmon River.

This August, the U.S. District Court found that the decision violated several federal laws and directed the Forest Service to find a better balance and work harder to

(continued on next page)



Redband trout / John Robison

*Under the Mining Law of 1872, mining is the highest and best use of our public lands—more so than drinking water...*



Boise River headwaters / John Robison

## Big Wins for Idaho's Rivers (cont.)

protect the public's rights and wilderness values.

ICL has been working on the CuMo project since 2008 and the Golden Hand issue since 2003. Various other proposals have been floated for decades and were worked on by current and previous staff.

*Stay tuned because we will need you to take action in the coming months and years ahead.*

Special kudos for both of these wins go to our attorneys Bryan Hurlbutt at Advocates for the West and Roger Flynn with the Western Mining Action Project.

The issues we raise—and win on—are the need for transparency, accurate baseline information and public involvement in decisions affecting public lands. In this case, the Forest Service received over 16,000 public comments opposing these projects.

Both the CuMo and Golden Hand projects will likely return at some point. While these decisions may not be the final word, if and when the mining companies come back, the Forest Service will have to do a better job protecting the values that we all care about.

Plus, these wins raise the bar for mining projects across the country and help build the case for reforming the Mining Law of 1872. We hope that other mining companies will take note and avoid pursuing projects in controversial locations.

Stay tuned because we will need you to take action in the coming months and years ahead.

**John Robison**

Public Lands Director  
jrobison@idahoconservation.org



# Remaining Hopeful—and Engaged!

As another hot, dry and smoky summer comes to an end here in Idaho, I am reminded of climate change discussions at our annual ICL board retreat. Those discussions centered on the fine work that ICL is doing and work that still needs to be done. Fortunately, we are building the financial resources (thank you, It's My ID campaign contributors) and have the capable staff to address Idaho's many climate challenges.

Even so, we have much to do to adapt to, mitigate and reduce the effects of climate change. Many of us are taking action today, whether we dwell in the state's cities or rural communities.

As an organization, ICL engages with landowners, communities, agencies and other nongovernmental organizations to reduce our carbon footprint—and in turn our impact on the environment.

ICL is embracing low-carbon energy options and encouraging others to do the same by working with our utilities, other consumer groups and the Public Utilities Commission. All of these elements are necessary as climate change makes some of our current practices unworkable.

For example, land management agencies are having to adapt to longer fire seasons, farmers are changing their crop mixes, and many of us are finding ways to conserve energy in our homes.

These adaptations are timely, but more must be done to limit our carbon emissions—both in Idaho and globally. Some say that such efforts are futile. We once heard the same about the damaged ozone layer, yet global efforts to limit chemicals are succeeding. So we remain hopeful!

**Paul Cunningham**, Chair  
Idaho Conservation League Board of Directors



MB Whitaker

Paul Cunningham

*Fortunately, we are building the financial resources and have the capable staff to address Idaho's many climate challenges.*



# Our 2016 Wildfire Season



Boise National Forest

With a deep snowpack in the mountains and above-average spring precipitation, Idaho’s fire season was forecast as moderate to average. So far, that prediction has been on target, though we have learned lessons from our 2016 fires.

Historically, about 75 percent of acreage burned in Idaho and across the West results from lightning-caused fires. This year, many of the larger fires stemmed from carelessness: the Idaho Department of Lands reported that over 66 percent of the fires it has extinguished were human caused. Fireworks, campfires, vehicles and

tracer bullets caused several notable fires, including the Table Rock, Mile Marker 14/ Hilltop, and Gun Club fires.

Investigations are ongoing for Idaho’s largest fires, the Pioneer (over 185,000 acres and \$74 million) on the Boise National Forest and Henry’s Creek (over 52,972 acres) east of Idaho Falls. But initial reports indicate that they are also likely human caused.

Fires can be scary, threaten communities, and fill our valleys with smoke, but fire is a fact of life in Idaho. Our lower-elevation pine forests rely on naturally occurring fires to cleanse the understory and recycle nutrients. At higher elevations, stand-replacing fires are the norm.

In light of climate change, fire seasons are becoming more frequent and lasting longer. So ICL is working with decision makers on how we manage fires, where and how we develop communities, and how we can prevent human-caused fires.

ICL is also addressing the root cause of global warming by helping Idaho transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. Anything less and we will “miss the forest for the trees.”



Pioneer Fire / Kari Greer/USFS

**Jonathan Oppenheimer**  
 Government Relations Director  
[joppenheimer@idahoconservation.org](mailto:joppenheimer@idahoconservation.org)

# Controlling Illegal Mining in the Rivers

ICL is increasingly concerned with illegal suction dredge mining in Idaho's streams because it harms fish habitat and pollutes clean water.

Since 2013, dredgers in Idaho have been required to obtain federal Clean Water Act permits and avoid dredging in sensitive fish habitat. While some miners have abided by these new requirements, others have refused.

In 2016, we took a different approach. Working with Advocates for the West, we notified 12 mostly out-of-state miners that illegal mining carried fines of up to \$37,500 and that ICL was prepared to enforce violations of the Clean Water Act if they dredged without the proper permits.

In response to the legal notice letters that ICL sent, a dredge protest scheduled for the South Fork Clearwater was cancelled and all miners in that area obtained the appropriate permits and authorizations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and state of Idaho.

ICL contracted with a retired law enforcement officer who monitored dredge mining in the South Fork Clearwater River, where dredge miners had caused significant damage in 2015.

Forest Service and BLM staff also checked regularly to ensure that all permit conditions were respected.

As a result, no illegal dredging occurred in the South Fork, and we achieved our goal of protecting this sensitive habitat.

As we've said before, clean water is a priceless asset—just because a small group dislikes the rules, it doesn't mean that they can break them.



Dredge operation / USFS

*As a result of ICL's actions, no illegal dredging occurred in the South Fork Clearwater River.*

J. O.



South Fork Clearwater River / IDFG

# Stewardship off to a Great Start!



Boulder-White Clouds / B. Mizell

Our volunteer stewards are playing a valuable role for the Forest Service and acting as extra eyes and ears for Idaho’s new wilderness areas—the Hemingway-Boulders, White Clouds, and Jim McClure-Jerry Peak—and the Sawtooth Wilderness. With over 493,000 acres of federally protected wilderness in Central Idaho, it’s a big job and ICL is happy to help.

So far this summer, wilderness stewards have gone on 65 patrols; encountered 655 day hikers, 369 backpackers and 4 illegal mountain bikers; packed out 32 pounds of trash; destroyed 41 illegal fire rings; and cleaned 28 fire rings and 5 human waste “deposits.”

These stewards are also documenting violations such as illegal or large fire rings, mountain biking and motorized vehicles in wilderness, groups larger than the size limit, dogs off leash and stock tied to trees. This information goes to the Forest Service, which directs its limited resources to areas that need them most.

Keep an eye out for our wilderness stewards on the trails!

**Betsy Mizell**  
Community Engagement Associate  
bmizell@idahoconservation.org

*ICL partnered with the Idaho Trails Association for a week of trail work in the White Clouds! Thanks to the volunteers and ICL staff who spruced up Born Lakes and Antz Basin.*



White Clouds trail maintenance / Aimee Moran



## Where Are the Bull Trout in Idaho?

With the U.S. Forest Service, ICL staff and volunteers began a project aimed at identifying and protecting habitat for threatened bull trout. The sampling method—known as eDNA—involves filtering stream water to extract DNA and analyzing it to determine which species are present.

Over the next three years, the Forest Service is collecting samples throughout much of the West. The specific goals are to identify where bull trout are living and evaluate efforts to restore bull trout habitat. ICL plans to help collect samples from streams throughout Idaho.

Our first sampling adventure took place in July when four of us hiked the rugged terrain of the Weiser River watershed along the Middle Fork Weiser and collected samples. Though the work was strenuous, the comradery and knowledge that we were helping on an important project made it worthwhile.

We expect to hear soon whether our samples detected bull trout DNA.

**Austin Hopkins**

Conservation Assistant  
ahopkins@idahoconservation.org



Bull trout sampling / A. Hopkins

## Appreciating Our Dark Skies

As Idaho's long summer days fade into earlier sunsets, many in Central Idaho are celebrating its starry skies by exploring creation of the first dark sky reserve in the United States. ICL is part of this ongoing effort, along with several communities, private landowners and public land managers all wanting to support and enhance the starry sky experience.

The quality of Idaho's night sky is something to behold. Research suggests that 95 percent of the United States now lives under a permanent "skyglow" from artificial light pollution. Idaho's

nighttime brilliance is an essential part of our state's wild beauty, right along with our clear lakes, clean flowing rivers, meandering trails and alpine peaks.

This fall and winter, get outside and gaze skyward—you will be amazed! Here are upcoming opportunities to catch meteor showers:

Orionids (Oct 4–Nov 14)  
Leonids (Nov 5–30)  
Geminids (Dec 4–16)  
Ursids (Dec 17–23)

**Dani Mazzotta**

Central Idaho Director  
dmazzotta@idahoconservation.org



Stars in wilderness / Peter Lovera

# Matching Gift Promotes Campaign

You'll remember that ICL is raising \$4 million via our It's My ID campaign—\$2 million for our endowment and \$2 million for our climate fund. And our goal is in sight, thanks to a \$125,000 matching gift from ICL leadership! Now, contributions of \$5,000 or more are matched dollar for dollar.

*Our goal is in sight, thanks to a \$125,000 matching gift from ICL leadership!*

The \$2 million for our climate fund will go a long way in helping ICL make a difference via our water and energy work. To address climate change, one simple solution is to get out of coal plants in neighboring states. The core of our energy work is demonstrating that it is less costly to replace coal with clean energy than to continue burning coal. By investing in Idaho's own clean energy resources instead of out-of-state fossil fuels, we will protect our state and grow our economy.

Each year, Idaho imports nearly 50 percent of our energy from out-of-state coal-fired power plants. We ship money to those states for that energy, but in return, we get pollutants like acid gases, carbon and mercury.

ICL works with the utilities to demonstrate that investing in Idaho's clean energy is better for our air and economy. In 2015, our work showed that closing the North Valmy coal plant in Nevada at least a decade early would save Idahoans tens of millions of dollars. We plan to expand this work to other coal plants like the massive Colstrip and Jim Bridger plants in Montana and Wyoming.

**Elaine French**  
Chair, It's My ID Campaign  
Idaho Conservation League Board of Directors



# Envisioning Idaho's Beauty

Listening to ICL Artist in Residence Josh Udesen, you can almost hear the water and smell the fish. He's just back from floating the Middle Fork Salmon River, where he immersed himself in the wilderness river trip—boating, fishing, soaking up inspiration and snapping photos. We look forward to seeing his experiences translated into art.

Our friends at the nonprofit ARTA River Trips ([www.arta.org](http://www.arta.org)) sponsored his trip. River guide Cortni Haislet says, "Having Josh on the trip was incredible because his view of the river was very unique and you could see it through his paintings. He was always spotting the fish I couldn't see and the bears that were hiding in the bushes."

This year, we are creating opportunities for you to meet Josh and see the work he produces during his residency. Recently,

he participated in the Heart of the West show in Coeur d'Alene and displayed several pieces in our Ketchum office. Check our website for details on exciting winter events in Boise that will feature Josh's work.

The artist in residence program explores the nexus between art and nature, helping ICL reach out to those who love the beauty of Idaho. ARTA's Steve Welch says, "We're proud to host the ICL artist in residence on one of Idaho's majestic rivers each year. The ARTA-ICL partnership goes back a long way and we enjoy the common purpose of protecting Idaho. Adding an artist's perspective and talent to a river trip puts some pretty tasty icing on the cake."

*"Adding an artist's perspective and talent to a river trip puts some pretty tasting icing on the cake." — ARTA's Steve Welch*

**Mary Beth Whitaker**

Editor & Designer

[mbwhitaker@idahoconservation.org](mailto:mbwhitaker@idahoconservation.org)



## Rollin' on the River..

6 days, 85 river miles, 21 friends—new and old. A group of ICL members recently shared the beauty and wonder of the Main Salmon River and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

From the moment our flotilla pushed off at Corn Creek, I felt myself connecting to the river canyon and leaving daily life behind. Laughing and hooting, we splashed our way down rapids, saving our talk about Idaho and ICL's work for the calm river sections.

Our trip theme of literature and the environment was led by Dr. Scott Knickerbocker. Around the fire each night, members joined in hearty dialogue, using stories to build a deeper connection to one another and to place. We camped nightly on white sandy beaches, sleeping under the Milky Way and shooting stars.

Our outfitter was SOAR Northwest ([www.soarnorthwest.com](http://www.soarnorthwest.com)), and our guides were Ari and Dee Kotler, who are deeply committed to conservation and Idaho's rivers. They provided safety, history, stories, music, comfort, delicious meals and more. ICL is grateful to the Kotler family for their generosity and spirit, which made this ICL trip possible.

This type of multiday trip is a new offering from ICL, designed as a special opportunity for members who give \$1,000 or more annually. To be clear, ICL values every membership gift, whether \$15 or \$15,000. To find out how to become a Patron or Leader member and how to receive this special trip invitation next year, give me a holler.

**Aimee Moran**

Development Director  
[amoran@idahoconservation.org](mailto:amoran@idahoconservation.org)

*We camped nightly on white sandy beaches, sleeping under the Milky Way and shooting stars.*



## 50% Advocate, 50% Adventurer, 100% ICL Member

Edward Abbey once opined, “It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it.” ICL member Bryan DuFosse embodies this quote through fervently working to protect the outdoors while taking time to enjoy them as often as possible.

Bryan and his passion for the outdoors are a testament to what it means to love Idaho. His is a familiar face at ICL porch parties, events and trail work. And he recently volunteered with ICL on our bull trout eDNA project (see p. 9). We are happy to have him as an enthusiastic and engaged member of ICL.

Bryan grew up in Pennsylvania but aspired to move west after hearing the call of the mountains while visiting his dad in Boise in the 1970s. After serving four years in the U.S. Marine Corps, Bryan moved to Boise and attended Boise State University where he studied biology and environmental science. While still a student, Bryan interned with the city of Boise, an opportunity that later turned into the

full-time environmental technician position that he holds today.

Bryan cites a balance between community engagement and enjoyment of the things he loves as what keeps him motivated. His commitment to the community is further evident in his serving on the advisory board for the Idaho Trails Association and in Boise’s Central Bench Neighborhood Association.

A. H.

*Edward Abbey once opined, “It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it.” ICL member Bryan DuFosse embodies this quote...*



Bryan DuFosse / Austin Hopkins

# Thanks to Our 2016 Summer Interns

Courtesy Brian Rich



Brian Rich

This summer, intern Brian Rich helped the Central Idaho field office launch the very successful wilderness stewardship program. He recently headed back to Middlebury College in Vermont for his senior year.

Master's student in public administration at Boise State University, Mackenzie Case, interned in the Boise office to reach out to our members and submit comments on public land projects.

Courtesy Mackenzie Case



Mackenzie Case

And Sandpoint native Nathan Faggard interned in the North Idaho field office, organizing our adventure series of hikes and paddles and instructing participants in Leave No Trace principles.

Courtesy Nathan Faggard



Nathan Faggard

**Suki Molina**  
Deputy Director  
smolina@idahoconservation.org

## Remember the Idaho Conservation League in Your Estate Plans

We hope you will consider the Idaho Conservation League in your estate planning. Memorial gifts and bequests are placed in our endowment fund so that these gifts can permanently support conservation in Idaho. We welcome inquiries about bequests to Aimee Moran at 208.345.6933 x 15 or [amoran@idahoconservation.org](mailto:amoran@idahoconservation.org).

If you wish to make a provision in your will, the following general language is suggested:

*"I give, devise and bequeath to the Idaho Conservation League, an Idaho not-for-profit corporation, located on the date hereof at 710 North 6th Street, Boise, Idaho, 83702, the sum of \$\_\_\_" (or specifically described property).*

## So Long, Nancy!

Pam Benham



Nancy Dooley

Nancy Dooley joined ICL in 2011 as outreach coordinator in North Idaho. The fledgling field office was a one-person show until then, and Nancy brought her excellent communication skills and deep ties in the Sandpoint community to the task of broadening ICL's reach.

Nancy came from a varied background, including journalism, real estate, work with a local land trust, and more. Most importantly, she brought passion and responsibility for protecting our natural environment and community for future generations.

Her gregarious personality and organization skills grew ICL's membership in North Idaho and spread the word about what we do in the region and statewide. Nancy organized After Hours events featuring different topics and speakers, our annual adventure series, the now annual Bay Trail Fun Run, and various film festivals.

We will miss Nancy's sense of humor, endless energy and can-do attitude as she takes on new adventures.

S. M.

## Volunteers

Our thanks to the volunteers without whom our achievements would not happen. (6/1/16 – 8/31/16)

Aiden Ackerman  
Colton Ackerman  
Rachel Aramburu  
Janet Beckley  
Tamsen Binggeli  
Payton Bokowy  
Chas Bonner  
Bonner County EMS  
Lauren Brassell  
Jim Brookshire  
Barbara Brown  
Crockett  
Kati Carberry  
Mackenzie Case  
Todd Chavez  
Pam Conrad  
Jared Cooper  
Kathy Cousins  
Alan Crockett  
Alice Crockett  
Larry Davidson  
Matt Davidson  
Patrice Davies  
Karlyn Dennis  
Carrie Despot  
Denise Dombrowski  
Bryan DuFosse  
Bill Eastlake  
Meredith Evenson Lynch  
Emma Gibson  
Karen Glaeser  
Erin Gray  
Jan Griffiths  
Julie Jurenka  
Becky Kanning  
Blayne Kanning  
Nathan Kanning  
Bev Kee  
Tricia Kennedy  
Dylan Kieffer

Susie Kubiak  
Mel Largent  
Mike Larkin  
Terri Lawrence  
Ross Longhini  
Vicki Longhini  
Debbie Love  
Jeff Manley  
Adele Marciando  
Meg Marciando  
Rachel Meyer  
Becky Mills  
Julie Nye  
Liz Paul  
Kaori Parkinson  
Gary Payton  
Tory Pearse  
Danette Phelan  
Barbara Phillips  
Gina Pucci  
Dave Reisenauer  
Cienna Roget  
Deb Ruehle  
Jan Rumore  
Paul Rumore  
Logan Sanborn  
Stephen Snedden  
Michael Spurgin  
Jackie Suarez  
Bob Swandby  
Laurel Taylor  
Chris Thompson  
Judy Thompson  
Susan Valiquette  
Patrick Werry  
Bob Witte  
Michelle Woodward  
Shawn Woodward  
Renee York  
Zena Zaleski

## New in North Idaho

ICL is pleased to welcome Matt Nykiel to our North Idaho office in mid-September to fill the vacancy left by Susan Drumheller.

Matt hails from Colorado Springs and earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Montana. Matt worked for four seasons as a wildland firefighter with the U.S. Forest Service. Witnessing the effects of climate change on the fire line, Matt decided to pursue a law degree at the University of Colorado and become an environmental advocate.

Law degree in hand, Matt has interned for organizations such as The Wilderness Society, the Colorado Attorney General's Office, and WildEarth Guardians. Having most recently completed a judicial clerkship with a Colorado trial court, Matt is excited to join our team.

Matt and his partner Ruth enjoy trail running, cooking and rafting. Welcome aboard, Matt.



Matt Nykiel

Courtesy Matt Nykiel

**Brad Smith**

North Idaho Director  
bsmith@idahoconservation.org

## In Memoriam

Idaho's outdoors and wildlife lost a lifelong advocate with the passing of Fred Christensen. Long involved in conservation, and long a supporter of ICL, Fred was particularly interested in wildlife. In 1978, Gov. John Evans appointed him to the Idaho Fish and Game Commission where he served for eleven years. He was also interested in Idaho's growing wine industry, and as many of us can attest, Idaho's outdoors, especially around a campfire, goes well with a glass. His spirit and commitment will be missed.

**Membership renewal made easier!** Your annual membership renewal date is printed on the mailing label below. Please help save costs by renewing your membership before it expires. Renew online at [www.idahoconservation.org](http://www.idahoconservation.org) or use the enclosed envelope.



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**Wow, ICL Does a Lot!**

The past year has been filled with big conservation wins for Idaho! Thank you for being an ICL member and making our wins possible.

But we are not done. We are still working to protect the air you breathe, the water you drink and the special places you love!

Continue to stand with us and make a gift for Idaho today! We've enclosed a handy envelope to make your gift easy.