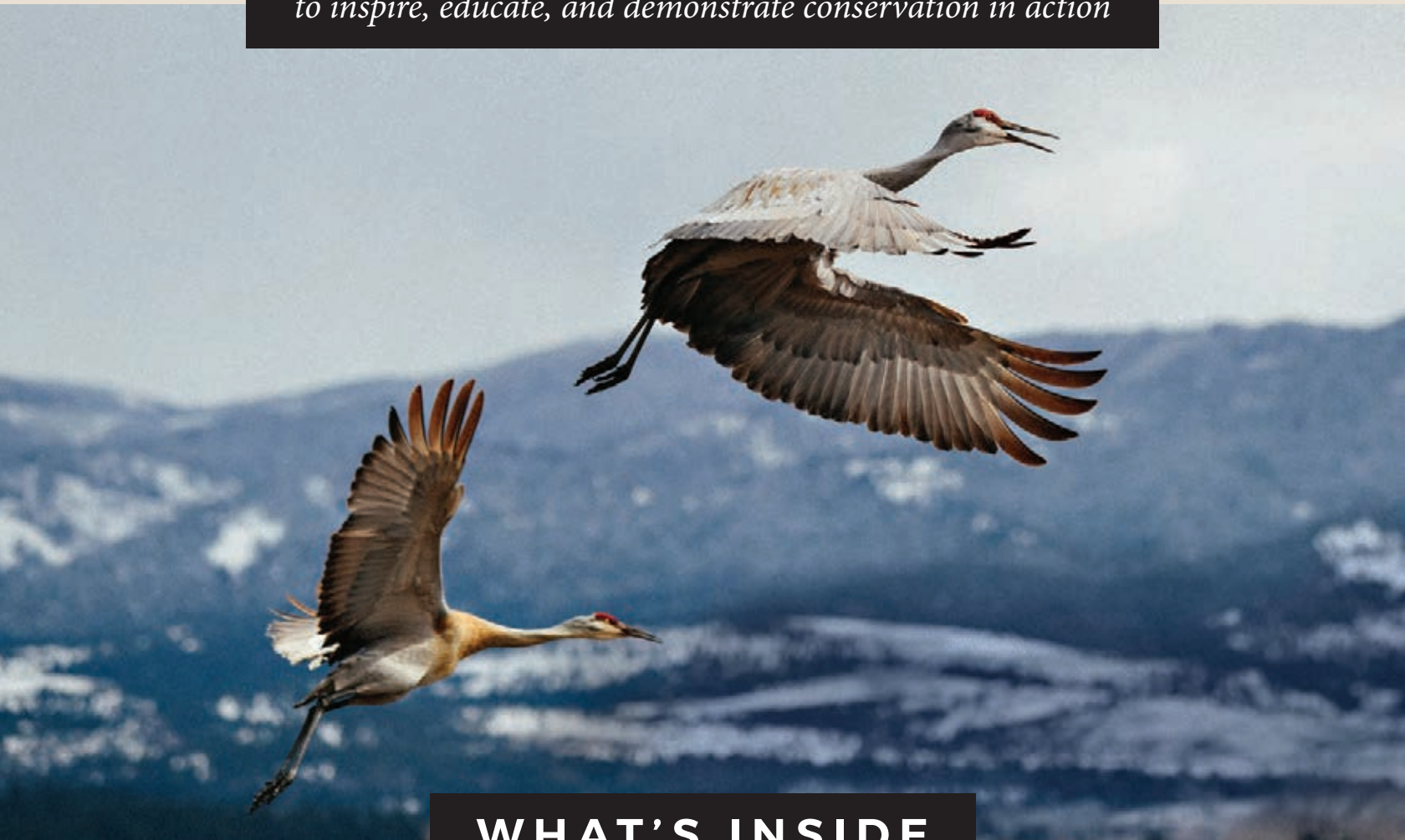


spring 2018

Teller

WILDLIFE REFUGE

to inspire, educate, and demonstrate conservation in action



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A WORD FROM FROM THE CHAIR

Herb Depp

I was reminded how fast time flies when this winter I was notified that my first 2 year term as Teller's board chair was expiring. It did not take long during the December board meeting for me to renew my commitment for 2 additional years. I am excited to see Teller embrace a new Executive Director and staff and feel the Teller talent remains strong. The board and I were very thrilled with the recent addition of 32 acres to bring Teller's total acreage of conservation lands over 1,300 acres. We are equally excited to see the promotion of Karen Zumwalt to the Education Coordinator and have no doubt that Teller's conservation education programs will be strengthened. As we celebrate Teller's 30th year, the board remains committed to seeing the mission delivered at new levels while ensuring the fiscal health of the organization. In closing I want to thank my fellow board members, volunteers, donors and friends of Teller for all that you do. Let's make 2018 a year to remember! See you at TnT!



NEW FACES: In February Teller welcomed Heather Tellock to the team. With a background in graphic design, photography, and nonprofit work, she is excited to bring her skill set to a team passionate about conserving our beautiful backdrop. Heather looks forward to utilizing her skills to enhance Teller's visual media, growing our already thriving donor and volunteer base, as well as gaining and sharing new knowledge in conservation education.



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Karen Zumwalt, *Education Coordinator*

Pete Lindbergh, *Lands Manager*

Heather Tellock, *Program Manager*



GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

While I officially stepped down as Teller's Director of Conservation in 2010, I never really left Teller. When one spends 5 years of their life at a place as special as Teller, it is hard to let go. I cherish the Teller memories, my daughter's wedding at Slack, middle daughter winning her first shotgun at Teller and watching my twin 6-year old daughters painting wood duck boxes with their grandpa. Today the twins are in college, grandpa has passed and not a day goes by where I don't recall those memories.

Having completed numerous conservation projects, I remained connected to Teller and assisted Kim and Lauren where I could. I was thankful for the great work that Kim and Lauren did to make lasting connections between Teller and the community. Still, even though I visited Teller from time to time, I always felt I needed to return full time someday. In fact, spending time at Teller made my desire to return even fiercer. It was with great pleasure that following Kim's retirement, I was invited to return to Teller this December as the Executive Director. So what does that mean in terms of Teller's future?

First off, I can assure you that the Teller board of directors is made up of 11 dedicated conservationists who believe in the Teller mission. I look forward to working with the board and feel Teller not only has their financial support, but their institutional knowledge of what Otto and Anne Teller really inspired to create.

Second, I am surrounded by a very talented staff; Karen Zumwalt, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Heather Tellock, Program Manager and Pete Lindbergh, Lands Manager. Each of these individuals brings a special talent and commitment to furthering the Teller mission. If you have not met any of the new faces, please stop by and say 'hello.'

Finally, Teller continues to have a tremendous following of creative, hardworking volunteers and donors. With the energy brought forth from these committed individuals, Teller's hard work is made easy with many hands.

So what does that mean for the Executive Director? My vision is plain and simple, and I ask all of you to help me guide this vision to fruition.

- Collaborative Conservation is the key. Whether it falls in the arena of education or conservation, partnerships are the way to make things happen. Teller needs to expand its reach through partnerships with public and private interests
- Maintain, restore and enhance the conservation values on Teller, including adding critical land acquisitions to our existing conservation footprint.
- Expand the Conservation Education reach to all ages through creative education programs and partnerships.
- Expand the Teller network of volunteers and supporters and host new events to thank and teach our supporters about Teller's mission.
- Maintain a transparent fiscally sound organization.

Together, with the board, volunteers and the community, I have no doubt that Teller's best years are in front of us! I pledge, as the Executive Director, that I will do whatever I can to ensure that Teller continues to Inspire, Educate and Demonstrate Conservation in Action!

TELLER CELEBRATES ITS 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY WITH THE JONES WETLAND ACQUISITION:

On February 28, 2018, Teller Wildlife Refuge closed on a 32.2 acre conservation property that lies contiguous to Teller's Main property. Previously owned by Sue Jones, the property is an excellent addition to Teller as it features 2 acres of permanent wetlands, 10 acres of seasonal wetlands, and 20 acres of grassland with nearly one quarter mile of Spring Creek and other flood irrigation features. The acquisition includes portions of 4 separate surface water rights. From a wildlife perspective, the wetland features provide yearlong waterfowl foraging and loafing habitat. On numerous occasions, Tundra swans have been observed using the wetlands, along with numerous other ducks and geese. Teller is hopeful that funding from grants, donors and foundations will assist in permanently protecting additional habitats that adjoin Teller lands.



POLLINATOR PROGRAM

This spring, Natural Resources Conservation Service approved Teller's application to participate in the Honey Bee Pollinator Initiative. This initiative provides financial assistance to producers who pledge to increase the available flowering plants to honey bees and other pollinating insects. Teller will be participating in this program by converting approximately 10 acres of perennial grass cover and barley strips to a pollinator seed mix. The seed mix will include grass and flowering forb species that have distinct seasonal bloom periods from spring through summer and fall, each providing honey bees with critical forage. Pollinator plantings additionally provide a rich insect base for ground dwelling birds like pheasants and quail. Research has shown a hen pheasant will guide her brood miles to find insect rich habitat which can lead to increased predation. Teller's pollinator plantings will provide pheasants broods insect rich foraging areas in close proximity to nest sites with the hope of increasing chick survival. We are preparing the site with barley plantings this year, with follow-up pollinator seeding in the fall or spring, 2019.



TELLER TALES

In November, 2017, several thousand Snow Geese migrated through the Bitterroot Valley. That migration sparked an idea to submit monthly articles to the local newspaper highlighting a wildlife species found in the Bitterroot. Teller contacted the Ravalli Republic, and we launched the concept "Teller Tales" with monthly articles. To date, we have published articles on Snow Geese, California Quail, Canada Geese, Ring-necked Pheasants, Short-eared owls, and Sandhill Cranes. A special thanks to volunteer, Mel Holloway for beautiful images accompanying the articles.

IN REMEMBRANCE



On December 5, 2017, Teller lost a longtime supporter and friend, Richard Kice, who passed away in Whitefish, Montana from an extended illness. Dick always gave his all to Teller and even in his last few years, while not in the best of health, showed up for work days never complaining and only leaving when the job was done. In March, 2018, Teller was notified and received a generous cash donation from the Kice Estate as one of many charities named in Dick's will. A portion of Dick's obituary says it best about this long-time Teller friend.

Rich, Dick, Richie as he was known to his many friends around the world volunteered and worked for the community with the Teller Wildlife Refuge, the Marine Corps League, and First Presbyterian Church. He traveled to over 60 countries and all of these United States; and though handicapped his last few years he walked Machu Picchu, fished Christmas Island and traveled by train across Europe to China. Pipe in hand he was known for his tremendous sense of humor and wonderful stories; a raconteur of the first order. Richard will be forever missed by all those who had the pleasure of his friendship.



TELLER PARTNERSHIPS



In an effort to partner with other non-governmental conservation organizations (NGO's), Teller submitted grant requests to Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and Bitterroot Trout Unlimited. The Five Valleys Chapter of Pheasants Forever provided a cash donation in support of the Wildlife Friendly Agriculture program. The chapter, that held it's fundraiser in March, 2018, in Missoula, has supported the Teller Youth Pheasant Hunt for many years. Jon Lee, banquet chairman, was pleased to provide a check to Teller stating, "We recognize the importance of Teller and what it means to conservation and youth hunting opportunities, and we are glad to support the Teller mission." Ducks Unlimited Bismarck Office approved a request for funds to acquire and restore the recent Jones

wetland acquisition. Bob Sanders, DU's Director of Conservation said, "Partnering with Teller to conserve and restore wetlands in the Bitterroot is a welcome partnership." Lastly, the Bitterroot Chapter of Trout Unlimited approved a cash donation to support stocking trout in Thomas Pond and equipment to host Tellers first Young Adult Fly-Fishing Workshop. The workshop will target young adults who have never fly fished by providing instruction along with rod and reel for each student. Teller views these NGO conservation partnerships key to delivering successful education and restoration programs.





STEWARDSHIP DAY

The sun showed up along with a nice crowd of volunteers for Teller's Stewardship Day on April 21st. After a quick run down of the day's projects everyone disbursed to various locations on the refuge and took to their tasks. We were able to complete the following:

- Willow exclosure removal
- Old barbwire fence removal on new property
- Weeding around electric fence exclosure
- Planting 50 ponderosa seedlings
- Teller trail work with Corvallis Classroom Without Walls students
- Recycled 1 ton of metal
- Gardening around the Teller office, Slack home, and Chaffin home
- Pruned the apple trees at Chaffin
- Refilled the mallard nesting tubes

With our work accomplished we gathered back at the Slack Barn and enjoyed chili and cornbread (made special for us by Paula Burrier). During lunch each group shared what they had worked on and Sam led us in a game of Teller Trivia with winners receiving applause and prizes. Special thanks go to the volunteers who were able to join us and for anyone still interested in volunteering please visit our website or contact us here for a list of future volunteer projects.

IN AN ATTEMPT to determine best management practices for establishing milkweed plots, the NRCS state office in Bozeman is working with Teller to try several planting methods using a portion of the Chaffin Garden area. Since milkweed is vital to the life cycle of the monarch butterfly, biologists throughout the western Monarch range are interested in determining the best methods for establishing milkweed stands. Decline in milkweed is thought to be a major factor in the 90% decline in western monarch populations since 1996. Viewed by many as a weed, Teller hopes to establish Showy Milkweed in areas other than its agricultural sites. This establishment will provide critical milkweed foraging sites for monarch caterpillars who solely depend on this plant for food.





24th Annual

TNT

Dinner & Auction

JUNE 16TH | 5 PM
TELLER SLACK BARN



Join us!

Overlook the stunning Bitterroot Mountain landscape as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Teller Wildlife Refuge. The TnT Dinner & Auction is Teller's signature fundraising event, consisting of gourmet cuisine, auctions, raffles and more!

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS: \$75

EVENT SPONSOR: \$500

WILDLIFE SPONSOR \$2,500

- purchase your tickets online! visit www.tellerwildlife.org or call 406.961.3507 -

YOUTH EXPO

The success of the 5th Annual Youth Conservation and Education Expo is a testament to the dedication of many volunteers, sponsors, and conservation groups who understand the need to preserve our outdoor heritage. Whatever drives this group be it the R3 Initiative to Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate outdoorsman and women, or the No Child Left Inside movement, everyone involved wants to make sure that the next generation feels the joy of being outside and a part of their natural surroundings, and has an understanding of the responsibility of becoming stewards of the land themselves. That said, it is an amazing sight to see all of the trailers and tables set up, the kids and their parents wandering the grounds at the Slack Barn having a lot of fun and learning about the fun of outdoor recreation! This year over 50 conservation groups participated and number of attendees grows every year. The popularity of the event has boosted our sponsorships and this year we will be sending approximately 120 kids

to outdoor summer camps across Montana free of charge. In addition to our previous year's outdoor camps we have an exciting addition to our camp list this year. Scripps Ranch has generously offered to build a camp on his ranch up the West Fork where the Kamp Montana Matters sponsored by the Mule Deer Foundation will be held in July. Donations like these boost our energy and reinforce the need to continue to grow this event. If you know of an organization that would like to be involved next year please contact Karen@tellerwildlife.org and let her know. We look forward to reporting on the campers' experiences in our fall newsletter.



Bitterroot Barn Weddings

AT TELLER WILDLIFE REFUGE



2019 Wedding Package

Our wedding package includes use of the historic Slack Barn and acres of surrounding grounds for an entire weekend, along with lodging for 14 people at our heritage homes.

Host a rehearsal dinner, ceremony, reception and your family or friends all in one place!

Also included in the package:

- park-like grounds -
- volleyball court and croquet -
- new tables and chairs for 200 -
- assorted wooden benches, tables, chairs and stands -
- dance floor -
- trash removal -
- indoor restroom facilities -

\$3,900
(paid in 3 installments)

CONTACT BITTERROOT CABINS

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THANKS AGAIN to a generous donation from Mike and Nancy Canning. Teller participated in selection of Greater Ravalli Foundation's Scholarship recipients for spring of 2018. The Teller-Steve Powell Memorial scholarship was named to honor well known conservationist and valley resident Steve Powell, who passed away in 2014. The scholarship is made available to Ravalli County high school seniors who have chosen to pursue a natural resource-wildlife conservation major. This year's recipient is Caitlin Dillon of Hamilton High School. Caitlin maintained a 3.9 GPA and is a member of the National Honor Society. She will attend Montana State University in the fall of 2018. Caitlin's senior project is aimed at planting honey bee friendly plants, which will complement Teller's pollinator initiative. Teller will track her progress and looks forward to assisting her launch her wildlife career.



30 YEARS: A LOOK BACK

Allen Bjergo

My first connection with the Refuge was several years before Otto Teller began acquiring the property. My hunting partner and I were buying cattle and went to look over heifers along a feed bunk on the north side of the access road from Chaffin Road. That land came up for foreclosure and Otto bought it.

The buildings were worn and some have been removed and others upgraded. The land west of Chaffin Road was severely overgrazed all the way to the river. After Otto excluded grazing, knapweed took over. There had been some irrigation, but the systems had to be restored. Fallen fences and old machinery lay all over the property. The land was criticized as being a source of weeds, but improved management lots of volunteers has reduced infestations and much of the debris have been removed.

Otto wanted a non-profit board to help manage the property. Otto had originally come for the fishing, but in our touring around, he began to see the need to address forest management and to acquire land to preserve wildlife and agriculture as subdividing and construction expanded.

I had been invited to be one of the first members of the Montana Land Reliance Board of Directors and Otto had been looking for land upon which to place conservation easements. Our Land Reliance staff in Helena worked with Otto and Phil Tawney to start the easements, and in the middle of that, Otto called me and said: "Bjergo, I am going to form a Board of Directors to make this land into

a refuge and you are to be on it!" being ex-military, all I could say was: "Yes, Sir!" and he recruited others to form the Board. He hired Chris Miller as the first manager and we began taking inventory and developing programs.

From humble beginnings, the Refuge's Board, staff and volunteers have faced financial and environmental challenges and initiated programs which have brought thousands of people to see conservation in action and plan for more work in the future. Today the fiscal health of the organization has never been stronger, and our Mission delivery continues to focus on education and conservation. Looking back to the old days, I am sure Otto would be pleased with all of the habitat improvements and the mark that Teller continues to leave in the Bitterroot. I know, I am sure thankful to have been a part of the Tellers 1st 30 years!



*Lodging at
Teller Wildlife Refuge*

Teller's historic farm houses and rustic fishing cabins are booking fast for the 2018-2019 seasons! For rates, details, calendars and online booking, please visit:

www.bitterrootcabins.com/teller

TRAIL TALK

During our initial meeting with Jeff Kaiser, the Corvallis Classroom Without Walls (CWW) teacher, told us that he was working on a project with his students to study human impact on the trails in the Bitterroots. Students designed experiments and collected data on how people at their school responded to different types of signage and direction aimed toward keeping them on the path and discouraging shortcuts. Jeff mentioned that it might be difficult to transport the students to the wilderness trails and that is when the light went on! Teller Trail is within minutes of the school and we could use their help! The Ravalli Republic recently published an article about some of the trespassing issues on the trail. The students were excited to partner with Teller and see if their studies could help make a difference. The class began with a few field trips to the trail to map the trail marking GPS points, track the side trails and assess the human impact in the area. Nicholas Wetzsteon, a student in the class said, "We at CWW are trying our hardest to find and report the issues that the Teller Wildlife Refuge is facing. We hope to one day find out the cause of all the human impact." After analyzing their data the students presented their findings and ideas that could help improve the trail. They felt that defining the trail was first and foremost. Suggestions included using logs and rocks to divert people away from side trails; using informational signs informing people where they were on the trail and pointing them in the correct direction to continue on the trail. The class decided to continue with their studies by researching wildlife and plants found along the trail. The information can be posted in kiosks creating an educational experience for hikers as well. The group plans to partner with the art and shop classes to create signs and posters. It is an ongoing project and we are thrilled by Corvallis School's involvement.

FALL FUN



The Teller garden is an ever changing project, giving us the opportunity to touch groups of all ages: Art in the Garden, individual gardener's personal endeavors, and the Corvallis FFA to name a few. This year we had the opportunity to reconsider the best use. Voila! A pumpkin patch! Our plan is to partner with local businesses and schools to plant a pumpkin patch that will serve two purposes. First, a thick plot of pumpkins is a great way to keep the weeds at bay and second...Free pumpkins for kids! This fall we will invite local youth to pick a free pumpkin from our patch. That's fun!!











KUDOS TO JENNY WEST and her team who once again took time out of their busy schedules to hold the Casting for Conservation Clinic. The clinic, held May 6th at the Slack Barn, was a one day event for women to learn fly fishing essentials. Topics covered are fly casting techniques, reading the water, tying knots, fly selection and entomology, equipment selection, and knowledge of the Bitterroot River. The event is so popular that attendance topped off at an all-time high of 48 participants! In addition to running the event, Jenny donates event proceeds to the Bitter Root Water Forum and Teller Wildlife Refuge! Now that is demonstrating conservation in action!

NATIONAL POLLINATOR WEEK is June 18th-24th.

Teller is joining forces with many organizations across North America to help protect pollinators. Take some time this summer to find out about pollinators in your own backyard, and if we all work together, we can create a lot more buzz in the Bitterroot!

POLLINATION SCAVENGER HUNT

 <input type="checkbox"/> bee	 <input type="checkbox"/> butterfly	 <input type="checkbox"/> moth	 <input type="checkbox"/> fly
 <input type="checkbox"/> hummingbird	 <input type="checkbox"/> white flowers	 <input type="checkbox"/> flowering tree	 <input type="checkbox"/> colorful flowers

www.tobeakidagain.com

take the pollinator challenge!



Pollinators are important because hundreds of different types of food we eat need them in order to grow. If it weren't for pollinators we wouldn't have many fruits, veggies, nuts, cocoa beans, coffee, and plants that we use to feed livestock or make clothes. The next time you sit down to a meal, count all the items on your plate that are the result of pollination. Here are some foods to look for:

apples, peaches, strawberries, green beans, walnuts, almonds, celery, tomatoes, broccoli, watermelon, cantaloupe

Q M G Y K W H H D R R S P Q S
M H A B L A S E B C I H H C H
L M Q H B F E E B V Z C E F R
G E I I I W R J E A Q R A I Z
N F T J K Y U E H B S A S D S
L A Y L S I T R T Q H N A S Q
T W I L D L I F E T N O N M X
C M R E L L E T M A U M T G H
R O T A N I L L O P N B M K I

bees
monarch
milkweed
pollinator
teller
wildlife
pheasant
butterfly
habitat



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