From the Archives

The Wallowa Lake Monster

compiled by Heather Hall, GRMW

ABOVE: Wallowa Lake
Image courtesy Finetooth, Wikimedia Commons

Wallowa Lake, located in Wallowa County, Oregon, sits at an elevation of 4,442 feet above sea level. It is about one mile across, five miles long, and 283 feet deep. The Lake is home to several species of fish and, according to legend, a creature called the Wallowa Lake Monster. The creature is described as having a serpent-like neck with humps on its back, and some folktales claim it even has horns on its head. Reports of the Wallowa Lake Monster can be traced back to American Indian legends and early settler stories.

One legend tells of a young American Indian warrior traveling through the mountains above Wallowa Lake who stumbled upon a large creature. Startled, the creature headed for the lake and plunged into the water, with the warrior following in hot pursuit. The warrior's tribe members witnessed the chase and were in awe of his bravery. Before the warrior could strike the monster, it plunged beneath the surface, leaving the warrior alone in the water. As the warrior swam back to shore, he was suddenly grabbed from below the surface and pulled beneath the lake's waters, never to be seen again.

Another 1885 account of the Monster involves a prospector who was halfway across the Lake in his rowboat when he saw the Monster 50 yards away. The prospector described a long serpent-like creature with a flat head that made a noise resembling the sound of a cow bellowing.

Sightings of the creature are still reported today. There are several theories as to what the creature is and where it came from. Some say the creature is a sturgeon that swam into the Lake from an underground stream between the Snake River and Wallowa Lake. Others surmise that it is a giant freshwater eel.

Our Mission

The mission of the Board of Directors of the GRMW is to develop and oversee the implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of coordinated resource management that will enhance the natural resources of the Grande Ronde River Basin.

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Grande Ronde Model Watershed

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Ripples in the Grande Ronde

RIVERS UNITING NEIGHBORS·QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE GRANDE RONDE MODEL WATERSHED

OWEB in the Grande Ronde Basin

by Coby Menton, GRMW

For more than a decade, the Grande Ronde Model Watershed (GRMW) and other natural resource management organizations have partnered with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to develop, fund, and implement watershed restoration activities in the Grande Ronde Basin (GRB). Projects vary in size, scope, and activity but all have the same goal: to improve watershed conditions. OWEB is a state agency that provides grants to help Oregonians take care of local streams, rivers, wetlands, and natural areas. Community members and landowners use scientific criteria to prioritize what needs to be done to conserve, restore, and improve rivers and natural habitat in the places where they live. OWEB grants are funded from the Oregon Lottery, federal dollars, and revenue from the sale of salmon license plates. A 17-member citizen board drawn from the public at large, tribes, and federal and state natural resource agency commissions leads OWEB and determines grant awards.

OWEB grant funding is divided into several types, including watershed council support, education, restoration and protection, technical assistance, and monitoring.

» *Council support:* These grants provide support for local efforts to work with volunteers to protect and enhance clean water as well as fish and wildlife habitats.

» *Education:* Education grants support the development and implementation of field-based learning opportunities for youth and adults, workshops and training for watershed restoration groups and volunteers, and landowner outreach and education efforts.

» *Restoration and protection:* These grants support activities that enhance fish habitat, improve water quality, keep livestock out of streams, remove invasive weeds, and plant native trees and shrubs.

» *Technical assistance:* These grants support the technical aspects of habitat restoration, including assessment, design, and effectiveness monitoring.

» *Monitoring:* Monitoring grants provide support for watershed assessments, data compilation and analysis, and monitoring of resource conditions to determine changes over time and the effectiveness of watershed restoration activities.

These funds support local contractors and material suppliers, design and consulting firms, and coordination activities in the GRB. It is this distribution of funds that promotes the mission of OWEB, which is to help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

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By the Numbers

The Economic Impact of OWEB Grants in the Grande Ronde Basin

$1,492,254: Dollars granted to conservation organizations in the GRB in the 2007-2009 biennium

$124,259: Dollars in the 2007-2009 biennium granted to GRB council support efforts

$1,216,949: Dollars in the 2007-2009 biennium granted to GRB restoration and protection efforts

$90,886: Dollars in the 2007-2009 biennium granted to GRB technical assistance projects

$60,160: Dollars in the 2007-2009 biennium granted to GRB monitoring activities

$1,835,560: Estimated value of current OWEB projects in the GRB

ABOVE: The Wallowa River/6 Ranch Habitat Restoration project, completed in 2009, is an example of cooperative restoration in the GRB. This project near Enterprise, Oregon, combined several funding and production partners to restore 3,800 feet of the Wallowa River channel. OWEB contributed $246,000 to this effort that not only improved river and riparian habitat conditions but also enhanced the local economy by paying for local construction, design, and materials providers. Photo by Mary Edwards, MaryEdwardsphotography.com.

Project Type	Grantee	Project Name	County	Project Amount	Primary Activity
Restoration	Union Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)	Starkey Ponds	Union	$105,333	Grazing Management
Restoration	GRMW	Ladd Creek and Marsh Wildlife Area Channel Reconstruction and Wetland	Union	$81,793	Channel and Bank Alteration
Technical Assistance	Wallowa SWCD	Lostine River Fish Passage Enhancement	Wallowa	$49,000	Technical Assistance
Restoration	Wallowa SWCD	Wallowa County Fuels Treatment and Forest Restoration	Wallowa	$82,235	Upland
Restoration	GRMW	Wallowa River/6-Ranch Habitat Restoration (pictured below)	Wallowa	$273,900	Riparian Enhancement
Restoration	Union SWCD	Little Indian Creek Riparian Exclosure Fence	Union	$18,590	Upland
Restoration	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Zumwalt Prairie Preserve Riparian Restoration Project	Wallowa	$260,433	Riparian Enhancement
Monitoring	GRMW	Grande Ronde Basin Gauging Stations Operation	Union	$95,099	Monitoring
Monitoring	The Freshwater Trust	Migratory Assessment of Spring Chinook Salmon in the Lostine River Using Radio Telemetry Techniques	Wallowa	$43,915	Monitoring
Restoration	Wallowa Resources	2008 Upper Joseph Creek Restoration	Wallowa	$102,775	Riparian Enhancement
Technical Assistance	Ducks Unlimited Inc.	Chadwick Farms	Union	$19,954	Technical Assistance
Technical Assistance	TNC	Camp Creek Diversion Restoration Design Project	Wallowa	$27,500	Technical Assistance
Restoration	Wallowa Resources	Rock Creek Aspen Restoration	Wallowa	$36,150	Riparian Enhancement
Technical Assistance	GRMW	Upper Wallowa River Stream Bank Stabilization	Union	$46,971	Technical Assistance
Restoration	Tri-County Co-op Weed	Upper Grande Ronde Invasive Weed Control	Union	$40,000	Riparian Enhancement
Restoration	Wallowa SWCD	Patton Pivot/Culvert	Wallowa	$32,384	Instream
Restoration	Wallowa SWCD	Big Bend Ditch Pipeline	Wallowa	$139,263	Upland
Council Support	GRMW	Grande Ronde Council Support	Wallowa	$119,628	Council Support
Restoration	Wallowa Resources	Wallowa Canyonlands Weed Partnership	Wallowa	$40,000	Restoration
Monitoring	GRMW	Phase II Wallowa Mountains Bull Trout Redd Monitoring (2010-2011)	Wallowa	$24,000	Monitoring
Restoration	GRMW	Wallowa River/Cross-Country Canal Diversion Replacement	Wallowa	$124,740	Restoration
Education	Wallowa Resources	Watershed Evaluation Teams (WET) Program	Wallowa	$11,992	Education
Monitoring	The Freshwater Trust	Continuation of Migratory Assessment of Spring Chinook in the Lostine River	Wallowa	$19,905	Monitoring
Restoration	Tri-County Co-op Weed	Upper Grande Ronde Invasive Weed Control	Union	$40,000	Restoration

ABOVE: A review of the OWEB project database reveals that there are 24 active projects in the GRB. Of those 24 projects, 14 are restoration efforts, 4 are for technical assistance, 4 contribute to monitoring activities, and one grant is for education and council support. When completed, these activities will contribute up to $1,835,560 to the Union and Wallowa County areas. The table above provides additional detail by active project.

6 Ranch Project Before Restoration

LEFT: Photo taken in October 2006 showing predominant channel type prior to construction. The river through the 6-Ranch property is 90% riffle and lacks pools, wood, and other habitat complexity.

RIGHT: Photo taken on June 3, 2010, from same spot at flood stage. The floodplain is activated, large wood has been recruited, and revegetation efforts are showing robust results for all objectives of the project.

6 Ranch Project After Restoration

Meet the Project Partner

Oregon Agriculture Foundation

by Howard Hansen, OAF

Farms in Union and Wallowa Counties have experienced dramatic transformations over the past century. Nowhere are these transformations more evident than in the evolution of the McKenzie Farm, which has been guided by the Oregon Agriculture Foundation (OAF). The original homestead title for the McKenzie Family Farm passed to Tolbert T. Glenn (Glen McKenzie's grandfather) on January 5, 1875, and the deed was signed by then-President Ulysses Grant. Glen McKenzie and his wife, Jean, took over farm operations in the 1950s and remained active in the community, especially Eastern Oregon University (EOU), for the rest of their lives. Both were honored with the naming of the Glen and Jean McKenzie Theatre in Mary Jane Loso Hall.

In the early years, the McKenzie Farm crops included wheat, barley, oats, and hay, which were harvested by machines pulled by horses and up to seven men working for a dollar a day plus room and board. Over the decades, raising Palomino horses, milk cows, and Herefords were added to the farm's operations. After Glen passed away, the title to the farm's real estate, machinery, equipment, and cattle were transferred to the OAF, which Glen established in 1992 as a vehicle to continue operating the farm for the benefit of EOU.

Based on the amount of productive croplands, the deteriorating condition of machinery and equipment, and the high cost of labor, it became apparent that further evolution of the farm had to take place. The OAF board decided in 2007 to liquidate the cattle, machinery, and equipment and lease the crop lands. A significant part of this evolution has involved environmental stewardship, which Glen pursued in his lifetime but was unable to complete before he fell ill. The OAF has continued in his stead, seeking ways to correct damage caused by cattle grazing and flooding that has occurred over many years to the forested/riparian habitat of Willow Creek on the McKenzie Farm property.

Toward this goal, the OAF has partnered with the GRMW to help make Glen's dreams for the property a reality. With support from the Union County Soil and Water Conservation District, the OAF and GRMW have developed a plan for a restoration project in the Willow Creek watershed that not only benefits natural resources like fish and wildlife but also assures the maintenance of a commercially viable agricultural operation and provides an opportunity for use by educators and students. The total acreage of the McKenzie Farm is 853 acres, with an estimated 322 acres devoted to the restoration effort. Approximately 237 acres, or 75 percent, of the restoration site is not prime farm land. Therefore, OAF will not significantly devalue the income or the value of the prime farmland, demonstrating how farmland restoration projects can be balanced to benefit both agricultural and natural resources management interests.

Willow Creek is a major contributor to habitat for summer steelhead spawning and juvenile fish populations. Currently, Willow Creek suffers from severe stream bank erosion, low summer flows, and high water temperatures in the summer. The restoration project will reduce stream bank erosion, stabilize the stream banks, decrease summer moderate water temperatures, increase winter moderate water temperature, improve habitat and diversity, and restore stream conditions to a more naturally functioning state. Restoration is scheduled to begin in 2011 and conclude in 2012.

The restored McKenzie farmland will be enrolled into the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), a federal fund that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners interested in conserving and enhancing the wetlands on their properties. The WRP financially compensates the land owner for conservation efforts on their properties; the per-acre rate for the McKenzie conservation easement will be approximately $2,000 per acre, which will clearly benefit both the OAF and the EOU Foundation, to which the OAF contributes significantly.

The OAF is also cooperating with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) by allowing the ODF to use a small amount of property (approximately nine acres) behind the Quonset hut for the establishment of a Western Larch Seed Orchard (WLSO). The WLSO has selected 66 parent trees with a goal to graft and establish 600 five- to six-foot-tall trees within the orchard. The ODF harvests branch tips from 2010 new growth and grafts this growth to root stock. Western Larch trees do not produce cones until they are 50 to 55 years old. The WLSO approach "tricks" baby trees into thinking they are old trees through grafting so that they will begin producing seed cones. The benefit of producing Western Larch seed is that one pound of seed is worth several thousand dollars, and demand for the seed is high. The first half of the orchard was planted in late April, and the second half of the orchard will be planted in 2012. This project will offer educational opportunities to EOU and Oregon State University forestry program students.

Back in the 19th century, Tolbert Glenn probably could not have imagined the ways in which the McKenzie Farm would evolve in the years to come, but the OAF and its partners are confident that his grandson Glen McKenzie would be proud of how his family's farmland has been transformed. Through the comprehensive Willow Creek restoration efforts and the innovative Western Larch Seed Orchard project, the evolution of the McKenzie Farm property fulfills Glen's wishes to improve ecosystem health, repair Willow Creek, provide on-the-ground educational opportunities, and contribute to EOU.

Fish Online!

www.grmw.org

- Adult salmon counts at the dams
- Snow and precipitation reports
- Habitat enhancement projects
- Meetings, activities, and events
- Past issues of *Ripples* and more!
- For real-time stream flow data, visit: http://apps.wrd.state.or.us/apps/sw/hydro_near_real_time/

Grande Ronde Model Watershed

Upcoming Board Meetings

The public is welcome to attend

- **Tuesday, July 26: 6:30 p.m.**
  Wallowa Community Center
  204 East Second Street
  Wallowa, Oregon

- **Tuesday, September 27: 6:30 p.m.**
  Elgin Community Center
  260 North 10th Street
  Elgin, Oregon

Meeting dates are subject to change. Please call 541-663-0570 to confirm. Thank you!

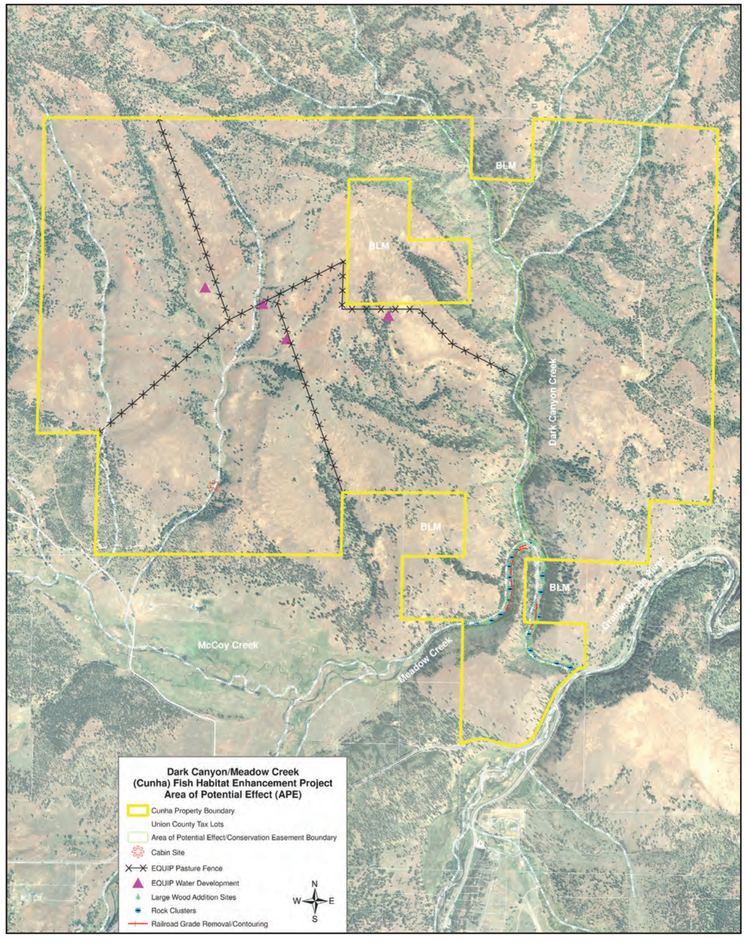
Continued from page 3

The Grande Ronde Model Watershed (GRMW) has partnered with PCI on more than one occasion. Most recently, in July 2010, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and the GRMW worked with PCI to enhance in-stream habitat complexity for threatened Grande Ronde summer steelhead and spring Chinook salmon in the Dark Canyon-Meadow Creek area (see project vicinity map at right). The project was completed in conjunction with other federal conservation programs that were designed to improve livestock grazing practices. Floodplain contouring and shaping reconnected project streams with historic habitat and helped in the recovery of stable stream channels and riparian habitat. Allen Childs of the CTUIR served as the Project Leader and biologist for the enhancement project, and Joe Partney served as Job Superintendent.

How Do They Do It?

PCI's work away from the area is about half of their business, and projects with local entities make up the other half. The logistics of traveling to another state and working with agencies for the first time can be daunting, so Joe considers each job carefully. "I won't bid a job that I don't think we'll perform well on," said Joe. "I won't do that to myself, and I certainly won't do it to agencies." Thus, if there is an opportunity to bid on a restoration project anywhere in the Pacific Northwest, then Joe and Carol have multiple determinations to make beyond the actual bid itself. Some of these considerations include whether to transport their own equipment or find suitable rentals in the area, how long workers will be away from home, and what will be involved in terms of climate, terrain, and isolation.

Are there pressures and problems in their work? Of course. It is interesting to note, however, that Joe believes that the greatest pressure is internal. "When you have two or three projects going at once," he reflected, "sometimes you're up against it, and that type of situation can bring in a lot of stress." Carol appreciates the fact that Joe stays focused through it all. She believes that because Joe is very organized and certainly not afraid to work, he is confident that he will figure out the logistics. "Yes, we sometimes run into problems," Joe agreed, "but our jobs are engineered, and the agencies do a good job of covering the majority of the bases…and they're good to work with." It is a bit ironic that the biggest weather problem facing PCI projects is water. Rain can affect equipment and create issues with the terrain and with crew morale.



ABOVE: Dark Canyon-Meadow Creek fish habitat enhancment project. The icons resembling green trees, blue dots, and red lines symbolize construction work completed by PCI.
Image courtesy of the CTUIR.

Both Joe and Carol believe that in large part their crew has helped make them successful. Their core workers are experienced and understand the level of quality that is expected. "When I throw a set of plans on the hood of the pickup, they're in, interested, and most of all, they know what I'm about." The crew includes several crew members, four heavy equipment operators, and a truck driver. Their combined years of experience total more than a century's worth of time working on construction sites, and each has a specialization, ranging from completing cross-section excavation and rock and wood structure installation to working with project sponsors and conducting grade control. Joe and Carol appreciate working with a crew whose members have the integrity to complement their years of experience.

The Partneys believe it is impossible to isolate a single spectacular job. "Having completed hundreds of restoration projects over the years, it would be hard to isolate one… that is more significant than another. They have all been important for the benefits they provide to habitat." This theme of improving habitat was expressed often by both Joe and Carol. "The benefits of restoration projects are endless," they said.

Next Steps for PCI

Recently, PCI was awarded the contract to construct the Upper Walla Walla River Lampson Reach Enhancement Project in Umatilla County. The agencies involved are the CTUIR and the Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Program. The project proposal is truly educational, as it discusses previous projects, addresses ecological issues and subsequent solutions, and is replete with job site photos. It also fully explains best practices for watershed management and how PCI employs them to minimize impact on the environment. Lists of equipment and funding sources as well as a step-by-step explanation of the project's construction sequence make the proposal an interesting read.

The Partneys also believe that it is a positive step that schools and agencies are educating the public about restoration work. Outdoor schools, field trips, and public forums about projects can only enhance the future of good land management. "I give kudos," Joe said, "to organizations that get people out to look at what's happening in restoration. Obviously, you're not going to convert everyone, but…well, waterfowl, aquatics, fish, wildlife, or what have you…restoration is a type of construction that is going to be a very important part of our future." And this month, PCI will continue to be part of that future as they begin work on a state-of-the-art fish habitat restoration project in the Walla Walla Basin. ■

BEFORE

ABOVE: Before the Ladd Marsh restoration project in 2007.
Photo courtesy of ODFW.

AFTER

ABOVE: After the Ladd Marsh restoration project in 2010.
Photo courtesy of ODFW.

RIGHT: Ladd Marsh construction work by PCI.
Photo courtesy of ODFW.

Mark Your Calendars!

35th Annual Union County Crops and Conservation Tour

What: A half-day bus tour of selected sites in Union County to view first-hand and learn about agricultural production, research, and conservation efforts in the area. Topics of interest include:

- 2010 Conservation Farm of the Year: Kirk & Mikki End
- McKenzie Farm Conservation Projects and Oregon Agricultural Foundation
- Specialty crop production

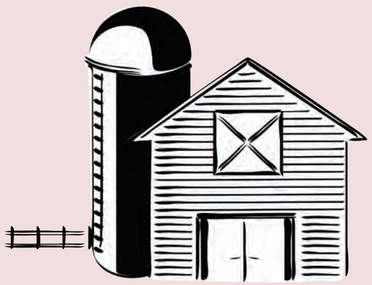
When: **Wednesday, June 22**

- Coffee and donuts at 7:00 a.m.
- Program starts at 7:30 a.m.
- Traditional lunch consisting of barbecue steak, baked potato, and salad served at 12:00 p.m. at a site along the tour route
- Bus returns to Crop Production Services at 2:00 p.m.

Where: Crop Production Services on Booth Lane, 2.6 miles northeast of Island City on Highway 82.

Who: Growers, ranchers, agricultural service providers, university faculty, local businesses, the general public, and anyone else interested in Union County agriculture are welcome to attend.

For more information: Please contact Darrin or Lenard Porfily, Crop Production Services, at 541-963-3735.



Catherine Creek Landowners Open House

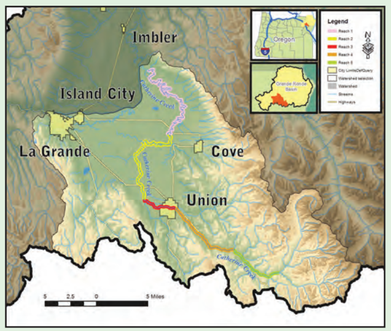
What: An informational gathering designed for Catherine Creek landowners whose properties are part of the Catherine Creek Tributary Assessment (CCTA). All of the members of the research crews who have been conducting surveys on Catherine Creek will attend to help answer any questions as well as provide information on survey findings. It will be a very relaxed setting for landowners to gain specific information pertinent to their properties.

When: **Tuesday, June 28**
Open house from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Where: Kimsey Commons at the Cove Ascension School
1006 Church Street
Cove, Oregon

Who: Individuals who own property along Catherine Creek that is part of the CCTA project.

For more information: Please contact Leigh Collins of the GRMW at 541-663-0570.



ABOVE: Map of the Catherine Creek Tributary Assessment area.

Making a Difference

Partney Construction's Work to Build Better Fish Habitat

By Janet Scoubes

Images courtesy of Evelyn Spikes, CTUIR (Meadow Creek), and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Ladd Creek)

ABOVE: Joe and Carol Partney of Partney Construction. Image courtesy of Evelyn Spikes.

In November 2010, Partney Construction Inc. (PCI), based off of Hunter Road just north of La Grande, Oregon, completed a restoration project in the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. This project involved the demolition of a 125-foot-wide dam, stream channel excavation, and additional efforts, such as re-vetting, to ensure that the work is maintained. Partnering with Trout Unlimited and the Wyoming Department of Fish and Game, PCI's major goal was to restore access to more than 50 miles of historic habitat for Snake River fine-spotted cutthroat trout and other native fish. The three-month-long project was just another step in what has been PCI's journey of several years to help agencies and organizations restore fish habitat.

PCI's first project was the Ladd Marsh wetland restoration effort in 1999, which marked the beginning of a multi-phase, five-year project and provided the inspiration for the eventual development of a construction team that specializes in working with agencies to restore habitat. Over the years, connections with major players in restoration have provided opportunities for PCI to work in several states. PCI has developed a reputation for treating each project with a high level of professionalism.

About the Partneys

PCI is owned and operated by Joe and Carol Partney of La Grande. Joe Partney is vice president of PCI and is responsible for the bidding and management of projects. He grew up in Pilot Rock, learning much about project stewardship from his father, who was a contractor. His wife, Carol, is the president and office manager and is responsible for all accounts, permits, payroll, taxes, and a variety of other paperwork critical to the day-to-day operation of the business. Her father was also in construction, owning a rock pit and crushing business, so Carol's understanding of earth-based work contributes significantly to the partnership. Both Carol and Joe have a sincere appreciation for the opportunity to own their business and be involved in work that has positive long-term effects on the ecological balance of their local environment. "I can't imagine us doing anything else," said Carol, "as it means so much to us to work on these types of projects that result in a high-quality finished product."

The Partneys' Partnerships

What makes PCI's projects different from most construction efforts is that they work with a variety of agencies, including private groups, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies. This is not a small task, as each project brings with it its own politics, standards, expectations, and logistical requirements. PCI's local-area client list alone comprises 12 entities, which does not include the engineers, biologists, and other individuals who are deeply involved with each project. With each project, then, there are layers of requirements and procedures that have to be peeled away before a bid can be made. Over the years, however, PCI has recognized that agency requirements are actually an asset. Joe knows that PCI "understands what agencies need…and while every project is different, throwing a different learning curve each time," PCI can meet agencies' needs.

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