

# land we love

TEXT BY Glenn Lamb

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF Columbia Land Trust



# “UP THE RIDGE WE GO”



**T**hirty years ago Bruce Lumper hiked along a spectacular wildflower ridge southwest of The Dalles, where the view stretches out to Mt. Hood. Years later, after dozens of times walking the same ridge, Bruce learned that it was in private hands, and some of it was on the market to be developed. He envisioned this beautiful land set aside for all time.

Bruce and his wife, Marolyn Wilks, called Columbia Land Trust (OR, WA). They had ecologists document the habitat values of the site. They wrote letters seeking funding. They made large-scale maps for reference. And, when one property seemed poised for subdivision, they took out substantial new

mortgages against their own home so that they could step in on an emergency basis if needed.

Marolyn, quoting Mark Twain, said, “Why not go out on a limb? That’s where the fruit is.”

Columbia Land Trust has now conserved its second major property on the ridge. This is an extraordinary story because Bruce and Marolyn are decidedly ordinary people. They had no big bank account and they didn’t know any foundation trustees. They didn’t have any experience in conservation whatsoever. But they did have a deep love of the land.

“It takes a village to protect the Earth, and we will continue our work to meet Bruce’s vision,” says Marolyn. “Up the ridge we go!”

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