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FROM THE DIRECTOR:
TOGETHER, WE GOT IT DONE

Pres. Barack Obama opened the door of the White House Oval Office and invited us in. With Rep. Mike Simpson and a few others, I stood behind the president as he signed the Boulder-White Clouds wilderness bill. Simpson mentioned how long we had worked on this. “So this must be a pretty special day for you,” Obama said to me. I replied that it was a special day for many people.

Countless people have worked to protect this special part of Central Idaho, headwaters of four rivers. Literally generations of people contributed to this success. Some are no longer with us, including Ernie Day and Robb Brady.

I’m reminded of Lynne Stone, still a tireless defender of this extraordinary place, and Linn Kincannon, who became an excellent ambassador for ICL in the halls of Congress. Also, Tom Pomeroy and Alan Reynolds. This list has no end.

But as Cecil Andrus often reminds me, names are quickly forgotten.

What is remembered afresh with each generation is the joy in first seeing Castle Peak, the thrill of a bugling elk up the Bowery, or the pull of a fish in Boulder Chain Lakes. That mountain goat on the flanks of Merriam Peak doesn’t care about us.

Simpson said, “We do this for your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren, and untold generations yet unborn, who will one day hike up there with their kids. And they’ll lie on the ground and look at the stars....”

That is why we do this work. That is why we DID this.
You have read about our work to permanently protect the Boulder-White Clouds for years. You’ve heard us repeat, “The time is now.” Despite setbacks, we still had reasons to keep working for this special place, to not give up. With your support, we never did.

Idaho Conservation League members have worked for wilderness designations since our founding in 1973. In 1999, newly elected Rep. Mike Simpson first attended our annual *Wild Idaho!* conference, and he and I toured the Boulder-White Clouds in a small plane. Afterward, we talked about how wilderness gets protected.

Simpson ultimately crafted a bill that was rich with compromise. These compromises played well in Idaho but proved challenging in Washington, DC. Compromise? Wilderness advocates partnering with a Republican? For the next decade, Democrats and Republicans in turn held it at bay. Sadly, Simpson’s quest for the political center coincided with a polarizing period in Congress.

In 2006, the bill was certain to pass in the final hours of a lame duck session—until outgoing Speaker Dennis Hastert substituted a pork-barrel provision for a business in his district. In 2009, the entire Idaho delegation introduced the Simpson bill. Again, it was sure to pass until Sen. Jim Risch changed his mind at the Senate hearing. While the ground-breaking pragmatism that ICL pioneered with Simpson made national news and helped set the stage for the successful (continued on page 4)
Owyhee wilderness bill in 2009, we could not get the Boulder-White Clouds bill through Congress.

With the first Obama term underway, former Idaho governor and Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus came to Wild Idaho! and encouraged us to keep the Boulder-White Clouds pressure on but with a changed strategy. While only Congress can create wilderness, a president can create a monument. In 2010, Andrus began his own advocacy with Obama. In early 2013, ICL began a monument campaign in earnest.

The Boulder-White Cloud national monument campaign was one of the first in the Obama administration that was a strategic pivot away from Congress's failed wilderness efforts. The president spoke broadly about Congress's failure to protect public lands and his intention to move forward. He has now created 19 national monuments.

The Idaho monument campaign was unique: Idaho is a red state; we didn't have a supportive governor; and we had a Republican delegation often hostile to the president. Our state legislature and Custer County, where much of the monument would be located, were wildly opposed.

Still, our work elevated the campaign within the administration. We sent teams to DC, identified thousands of grassroots supporters, and developed local and national partners—work modeled on what we’d done years before to support Simpson’s efforts in Congress. We had a great coalition pulling forward.

In September 2014, at a dinner in DC to commemorate the Wilderness Act’s 50th anniversary, we arranged a meeting between Simpson and the White House advisor at that time, John Podesta. We had hoped that Simpson would provide Podesta at least a nod toward the monument. But the morning before, Simpson threw us a curve: “I’m going to talk to him about the monument, but I’m also going to ask for six months at the start of the next Congress to try to pass my bill again,” he told us.

Simpson is a legislator and proud of it, working in a dysfunctional body. We should not have been surprised that he’d try to move his bill again. But we had no reason to expect different results.

In October 2014, at a Boise State University conference, Simpson gave one of the best
conservation speeches since Frank Church and Cecil Andrus were in office. “Within the year,” he said, “one of two things will have happened. The Boulder-White Clouds will be a designated wilderness or a national monument.” By then, the six-month window to which Podesta had agreed was public. This deadline raised the profile for his legislation and validated that a national monument would happen if his bill did not pass.

In December 2014, several largely conservative interest groups reached out to the delegation. Their message was clear: The monument is serious and the Idaho delegation needs to solve this problem. While they had opposed the wilderness bill before, they would support it now. Risch listened and said to Simpson, “We can get this done.”

A new bill was introduced in the House and Senate this February. On my wall hang copies of the 10 bills that Simpson has introduced over the past decade, with a personal note written on each. This last bill says, “The Elvis Version—‘It’s Now or Never!’”

Risch held the first congressional hearing, inviting ICL. I made it clear that ICL had supported a legislative resolution for many years—and still did. But we didn’t believe it would happen. At the hearing, Risch spoke about the values of the Boulder-White Clouds and of another Idaho area, too—Scotchman Peaks. The monument was barely mentioned.

The House hearing had no public witnesses. Rep. Raul Labrador, not an ally of Simpson’s, hit agency witnesses hard, indicating that he might derail this effort. Soon after, we had a private hour-long meeting with Labrador. He said that he would not get in Simpson’s way. While we were still concerned, the bill cleared committee unanimously.

The week of July 27 was huge. On Monday, the House unanimously passed Simpson’s bill. On Thursday, the Risch bill unanimously passed out of the Senate committee. Suddenly, in Simpson’s sixth month, only a floor vote in the Senate was needed.

That afternoon, Senate leadership began a rare “hotline” process to move the bill to the floor. With support from Sens. Mitch McConnell and Harry Reid, senators were asked about having the bill come up for unanimous consent. If one senator objected, it was over. Initially, no objection was raised. Then one emerged—Ted Cruz. Unable to move the bill to the floor, the Senate adjourned and senators headed home for the weekend.

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Lingering drought across much of Idaho set the stage for a hot fire season. In August, powerful thunderstorms triggered hundreds of fires, including the nearly 300,000-acre Soda Fire in Owyhee County and the Clearwater Complex around Kamiah. That fire destroyed 50 homes and 75 outbuildings, making it the most damaging fire of the year. Other fires challenged firefighters on the Boise, Payette, Salmon-Challis, Nez Perce-Clearwater and Panhandle National Forests.

The fires respected no boundaries. Whether forest or sage, whether private, state or federal, fires swept across Idaho when record heat, drought and wind combined, outstripping our capacity to contain them. At the same time, some fuel-reduction efforts put in place around communities proved effective in providing firefighters anchor points to corral the flames.

Besides the effects that these fires had on our communities, the fires are also affecting our bank accounts. The Clearwater Complex alone cost the state $20 million, outpacing the appropriated fire budget, and could cut directly into available funds for education, transportation and other needs. Additional federal costs in Idaho have surpassed $40 million, with more than a month left in the season as I write this.

Because of the severe fire season across the West, federal funds are
This year at our annual board retreat, we discussed how ICL should address the issue of climate change through our energy, water and public lands work.

In the energy area, ICL engages with the Idaho Public Utilities Commission on cases brought by Idaho’s electrical utilities. Our arguments are largely economic, which benefit the environment and save money for consumers. We are urging the PUC to direct utilities away from coal toward cleaner sources of electricity and greater efficiency.

We are also working with communities in the Panhandle on health and safety risks from increased coal and oil train traffic.

Water is a second area for climate change, which is already affecting Idaho as we see in reduced snowpack and proposals for new dams. At local and state levels, ICL promotes increasing water-use efficiency, protecting the environment and fostering sustainability.

Because there are diverse habitats in Idaho, we have some resilience to climate change. Wilderness designation is one way to protect these habitats, and it continues to be an ICL public lands priority. Also given the size and severity of wildfires on our public lands, ICL works with public and private partners to restore burned landscapes.
On Monday, August 3, Risch and Utah’s Sen. Mike Lee broke the Cruz hold. On Tuesday, another appeared and was addressed, this time from an undisclosed Democrat. As Risch stood on the Senate floor, the hold was lifted—and suddenly, it was done. On Friday of the same week, I stood behind Pres. Barack Obama in the Oval Office for the bill signing.

That bill is more than the sum of its parts. Yes, it protects wildlife habitat and allows for grazing buyouts. But the support of our delegation for this Idaho-based solution also limits political backlash—and sets the stage for a Scotchman Peaks wilderness.

Fifteen years ago, ICL began working with a conservative Republican to protect wilderness. As the Simpson relationship developed, we were often invited to speak about it. A national public television program was devoted to our work, as was a cover story for High Country News. Our story was simple: Our job was to make it politically inevitable that the Boulder-White Clouds would be protected. We had to create such overwhelming support, such clear momentum, that political leaders would not just listen to us, they would make the cause their own.

In making the Boulder-White Clouds his own, Simpson focused on diverse Idaho interests that he saw as central to rural Idaho’s future. But as each year went by, the issues that he’d initially engaged distilled to one: He wanted to protect the wilderness. Standing with him in the Oval Office together, we saw that happen.
The Pacific Crest and Appalachian Trails are iconic, long-distance hiking trails. The PCT was recently glamorized by Cheryl Strayed’s book, *Wild*.

But I bet that you haven’t heard of the Pacific Northwest Trail. Designated by Congress as a national scenic trail in 2009, this long-distance route extends from Glacier National Park to the Olympic Peninsula.

The term “route” is an appropriate description of the PNT. Unlike its well-established cousins, the PNT is a combination of trails, roads and trailless segments.

In fact, one of the segments without trails is located in the Selkirk Mountains. I was recently appointed to an advisory council that, among other things, is tasked with identifying where to construct trail segments in areas where they are currently lacking.

I’m looking forward to finding a way through the Selkirks that balances recreation and wildlife concerns. Then perhaps you will hear about the PNT.

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Using Both Carrot and Stick in East Idaho

In southeastern Idaho, the Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to construct the 22-mile, 115-kV Hooper Springs transmission line across Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, private and state land, including the Blackfoot River Wildlife Management Area. The original plan lacked a sufficient mitigation package for fish and wildlife. We worked with the BPA, Forest Service and local partners to develop a package that rehabilitates user-created trails and increases security for wildlife. Using the “carrot” approach, we resolved our concerns.

This summer, ICL also challenged a decision to approve the East Boulder Placer mining operation in the Napoleon Ridge Roadless Area on the Salmon-Challis National Forest. The project involves trenching and drilling along East Boulder Creek, a tributary to the Salmon. In our opinion, this decision violates federal law by causing unnecessary impacts to water quality and fisheries, forcing us to pursue litigation, “the stick.” Now we are awaiting next steps from the court.

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This year was a preview of what a changing climate means for Idaho. It began with a thin snowpack that melted quickly during an early spring. By May, most of the state felt the drought, with almost a third of the state now in extreme drought.

We broke several high temperature records and, more telling, several records for nighttime highs. Salmon are dying by the thousands in warm rivers, and massive wildfires are still burning. This is the future that climate change could bring if we don’t cut our carbon pollution.

Fortunately, we are turning the corner and cleaning up our air every day. ICL ensured that Idaho Power’s long-term planning called for closing the North Valmy coal plant in Nevada early. Solar projects are under construction in Idaho. And electric cars are getting cheaper and charging stations more prevalent.

Because of ICL’s persistence, the utilities’ energy efficiency programs are returning, and savings are on the rise. Most importantly, the first-ever carbon pollution limits on coal plants have been established—and Idaho can have its say on how to meet our limit.

Since 1970, the Clean Air Act has controlled acid gases, particulates and mercury, but not carbon pollution. In August, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued the Clean Power Plan establishing carbon pollution limits for power plants and directing states to craft compliance plans to reduce pollution.

ICL will ensure that Idaho does craft a plan and that it cuts carbon by growing our energy-saving programs and investing in clean energy.

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Protecting North Idaho from Fossil Fuel Trains

If all the oil storage and terminal facilities proposed for the Pacific Northwest were built and operating at full capacity, they would generate more about 100 loaded mile-long trains a week through North Idaho.

That's an average of 14 to 15 fully loaded crude oil trains a day from the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota through Sandpoint and Rathdrum.

That's more oil than the controversial Keystone Pipeline could carry—and more oil than the Northwest can refine. Which begs the question: Will Congress lift the ban on the export of domestic oil?

That was one of the key questions raised during a forum that we sponsored this summer in Sandpoint with the Sightline Institute and Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper. At the forum, Sightline Institute's Eric de Place outlined the big picture of fossil fuel transport through the Northwest, including proposals for two huge coal terminals to export Powder River Basin coal.

The massive transportation of dirty fossil fuel through our backyards leaves us with many local impacts—from the risk of derailment and spills to traffic delays. Plus, there is the global whammy of a warming climate.

Working with conservation partners across the Northwest, we are tracking these proposals and mobilizing the public to influence decision makers.

You can sign up for our email alerts at our website. Stay informed on how you can help staunch the flow of Bakken crude and dirty coal through North Idaho and make the transport of hazardous materials by rail safer.

Susan Drumheller
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Let's put this in perspective. The amount of oil carried by trains passing each week through North Idaho would be more than the Keystone Pipeline could carry—and more oil than the Northwest can refine.
Images of the mine spill on the Animas River in Colorado stunned people throughout Idaho. A once-vibrant, clear blue river was transformed into a toxic orange ribbon. Could anything like this happen to Idaho’s rivers? The answer is yes. For one, it could happen to the Boise River, an important river that provides water for drinking, irrigation, recreation, fish and wildlife and is regarded as the heartbeat of the Boise community.

Historic mining in the Boise headwaters left a maze of tunnels that continue to bleed mine waste. Twenty years ago, the Forest Service allowed a mining company to reopen mine shafts near Atlanta. Their exploration worsened the historic arsenic discharge. Following legal action by ICL, the mining company installed a water treatment facility to remove the arsenic. But the closure plan allows the mining company to plug the tunnel with a cement bulkhead, dismantle the treatment facility and walk away.

We know from the accident on the Animas what can happen next. Contaminated water will likely fill the tunnels until it spills out someplace else and again finds its way into the headwaters. Or worse, an underground structure could fail and release a wave of toxic water downstream.

ICL is reaching out to the Forest Service to develop a closure plan that ensures that toxic floodwaters won’t build up in the mountain. It is far better to keep a river clean than to clean it up after it has been contaminated with heavy metals. Just ask anyone along the Animas.

J. R.
On the Ballot in November

In 2001, the citizens of Boise made history by supporting a $10 million levy to protect our treasured foothills. Through easements, purchase and exchanges, 10,750 acres valued at more than $37 million were protected for future generations.

Those funds are all spent or allocated. So the Boise City Council recently approved ballot language asking voters to renew their commitment to keeping Boise a great place to live, work and raise a family.

The vote on November 3 asks Boise voters to support a two-year levy that will set aside $10 million to protect and enhance clean water, open space and recreational opportunities in the foothills and on the Boise River. The Boise for Clean Water and Open Space levy will cost $2.39 a month for each $100,000 in assessed value.

One of the differences from the 2001 levy is that funds can be used to improve recreational access and restore lands, not just acquire property. In addition, funds can be used to acquire access and protect clean water in the Boise River, the lifeblood of the Boise community.

Prospective acquisitions and expenditures will be reviewed by a citizen advisory committee and subjected to an annual audit. Use for administrative costs will not be allowed.

As a member of the Boise for Clean Water and Open Space steering committee, we are building support for the levy through events and outreach.

If you’re an ICL member in Boise, you can support the levy by voting, volunteering, spreading the word to friends and neighbors, and filling out the absentee voters cards arriving in your mailboxes.

We can’t do it alone! For more information on how to engage, check out www.iloveboise.org.

J. O.

In November, Boise voters will have the chance to support a levy to protect and enhance clean water, open space and recreation.
What I Did on My Summer Vacation

Ten of us were lucky enough to hike into the newly created Boulder-White Clouds Wilderness two days after the president signed the bill! Our headquarters was the Chamberlain Basin, where we learned to cut logs with a 1930s crosscut saw or silky saw. We pounded smaller logs with the iconic Pulaski.

For this adventure, ICL partnered with Jeff Halligan and the Idaho Trails Association to “promote the continued enjoyment of Idaho’s hiking trails.” We cleared the entire length of the Chamberlain Creek trail as well as the trail from Washington Lake to the Chamberlain Divide.

During this weeklong “vacation,” we hiked 65 miles, taking one day off to explore. Many thanks to John McCarthy, Bill Molina, Ian Vrable, Jenny Estes, Peter Lovera, Betsy Mizell, Jenna Narducci, Carla Moran (our revered cook!), Forest Service Ranger Bryce Parker, and Nils Ribi (our photographer).

Around the Office

The Lightfoot Foundation funded three interns this summer. As our water intern, University of Idaho College of Law graduate Jeremy Younggren researched instream flows and groundwater quality.

Sandpoint native Jenny Van Ooyen, an environmental science major at St. Lawrence University, helped out in North Idaho. Her outgoing personality was a perfect fit as she managed our summer outdoor adventure series.

Jenna Narducci hails from Pennsylvania but earned a B.S. in natural resources from Oregon State. She researched federal proposals for management of land and wildlife, reviewed policies that guide resource management, and wrote science-based comments.

We also have a new staffer and some role changes. Jenny Estes, our new development assistant, earned a B.A. in communication studies from California State University at Northridge. Lori Sims is now our development associate and helps ICL with individual fundraising. And Lana Weber now serves as our community engagement associate, working on local issues as well as outreach and events in the Boise area.
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.

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).
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 or use the enclosed envelope.

Give a gift of clean water, clean air and wild places!

Pass along your passion for Idaho and give the gift of conservation!

The ICL community cares about Idaho’s special places. Now is the time to share your love of Idaho with others you know who also love Idaho.

Gift memberships to ICL are perfect for birthdays, weddings, holiday giving and special occasions. Show how much you care for your loved ones—and for Idaho’s water, air and wild places.

Go to www.idahoconservation.org/donate or contact Lori Sims (lsims@idahoconservation.org or 208.345.6933 x 22).