

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee Meeting  
Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
9:00 – 11:30 am  
Summer Tour - Moon-Randolph Homestead

Members Attending: John Pierce, Giles Thelen, Kevin Verlanic, Bert Linder, Paul Parson

Staff Attending: Morgan Valliant Rita Hackett

Public Attending: None

**Action Items:**

Approval of minutes for March & April– Bert Lindler moved that we approve minutes, Kevin Verlanic seconded motion passed.

**Discussion Items:**

Brief discussion of Committee member reappointments. Morgan will contact members that are up for reappointment via email and encourage them to reapply if they are interested.

Tour of the Moon-Randolph Homestead:

The group took a tour of the Moon-Randolph Homestead.

Tucked in behind Waterworks Hill is a throw back to another time and one of Missoula's most sacred of treasures. The homestead was originally purchased in 1889 by Ray & Luella Moon and consisted of 13 acres. Within months of purchase Ray homesteaded an additional 160 acres. He spent the next 5 years "proving up" the land and sold the property to George and Helen Moon. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Moon family would only utilize 80 acres and remain on the land until 1907 when they sold the property to William & Emma Randolph.

Further land purchases were made as follows:

- 1907 - west 80 acres of the original claim
- 1913 – 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the quarter section

For the next 45 years, William and Emma not only increased the size but also the scope of their operation, taking on dairying, cattle ranching, coal mining, growing fruits & vegetables to take to town for market and producing over 800 lbs. of honey! At it's, peak, the homestead grew up to 75 apple trees, 45 of which still stand today. John Pierce recalls that his parents bought the original apple press (still used today on loan from John Pierce) from the Randolph's, who created Apple Jack from its pressings to sell.

The Randolph's managed to squeak out a living for their family during a most difficult time in our country using every ounce of creativity and every scrap of metal or wood that came to them; nothing went to waste.

The William & Emma had five children: Keith, Robert, Worden, Emma and Bill. In 1992, Bill approached Five Valleys Land Trust and together they place a conservations easement on over half of his family's property. He passed away in 1995 and the following year, the City of Missoula bought all 470 acres of the Randolph property with open space bond funds. In 2000, the property was re-homesteaded under a five year cooperative agreement between the City of Missoula and the North Missoula Community Development Corporation (NMCDC).

Further history can be found in a book titled "Butterflies and Railroad Ties, A History of a Montana Homestead" written by Caitlin DeSilvey.

Today, the homestead is still co-managed by the City of Missoula's Conservation Lands Management Program and the North Missoula Community Development Corporation. Caretakers, Matt and Meredith La Rubbio live onsite and emulate the homesteading lifestyle by gardening, raising livestock and bees. The caretaker's contract is annually reviewed by all parties to ensure that every ones needs (but mostly the homestead) are being met. Currently, the City, NMCDC, and the Hill and Homestead Collation ( a volunteer group who help care for the homestead) are updating the strategic plan for the property. This plan will address the unique needs of the homestead and develop plans for revenue generation, special events, education outreach and restoration of historic structures.