

ENVIRONMENTAL news

Palouse - Clearwater Environmental Institute

Local High School Students Contribute to University Research

By Johanna Kalmus

Do you ever wonder how clean Paradise Creek water is? Chris Sappington, Leif Colson and Andrew Haarsager do. These three Moscow High School students have been collecting water quality data from Paradise Creek once a week since November. Working with PCEI Education staff Tiffany Cooper and myself, the student scientists have been testing water at two locations on Paradise Creek - one near Mountain View Park, the other next to Moscow's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

All three students are members of Moscow High School's Environmental Club and active members of the high school community. They wanted to learn more about quality of water in Paradise Creek because it effects everyone from bugs, fish and frogs to birds, deer and beavers to the people who live in the watershed. By keeping track of changes on such a regular basis, we can learn about our impacts on the stream, and modify our practices to improve water quality.

The students have been testing the water for temperature, pH, nitrate, dissolved oxygen and alkalinity. The data collected by the students will be given to Dr. Jan Boll, a University of Idaho Professor from the Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department. Dr. Boll has been conducting research to determine long term trends in weather and water quality in the Paradise Creek Watershed. The student's data will be compared to data collected by Dr. Boll's automated water testing system.

Dr. Boll is using Paradise Creek as a training ground to help educate students and the public. It will serve as a tool to help state and federal agencies tackle water quality problems in hundreds of other streams across the state. Support for these water studies come from Dr. Boll's research grant from the National Science Foundation.



Moscow High School Students, Chris Sappington and Leif Colson, sample water from Paradise Creek in Moscow. Photo: Johanna Kalmus.

Check out our web site:

www.pcei.org

Where Have all the Bicycles Gone?

by Dave Peckham

Here in the US, the most powerful and wealthy society in history, it is hard to comprehend what an ordinary bicycle can mean to someone in Africa. Only 1% of Africans own cars. A bicycle represents a level of mobility and freedom beyond the reach of many people, a symbol of status and wealth. In Africa, people go to incredible lengths to keep an old bicycle running. I've seen people sew up blown-out inner tubes with needle and thread. Blacksmiths spend half a day making one replacement fork drop-out. Mechanics splice together several pieces of old chain to make one usable. All of this can be explained in economic terms; income is so low and bike parts so scarce and expensive that delicate, painstaking repairs of "junk" is worthwhile. This is recycling at its finest.

Africa is the planet's biggest loser in the race for globalization. "Free" trade has forced the closure of state subsidized industry, while ironically forcing open markets to America's subsidized agriculture. In Ghana, for example, imported rice is now cheaper than locally grown rice. This agricultural crisis is driving millions of farmers off the land and into the cities, where there is no work. There, idle and restless youth are easy recruits for banditry, substance abuse, prostitution, mercenary armies and terrorism. An important factor fanning the civil wars around Africa today is the large numbers of idle young men with nothing to do, and nothing to lose.

In a very small way, the Village Bicycle Project (VBP) directly addresses this African crisis. Our village workshops promote rural development. We have delivered over 300 bicycles to villages in Ghana, helping hard-working rural people be more productive for their efforts. Where rural economic development is successful, fewer young people need to leave for the cities. If Ben Onyamiema can be successful in his home village of Liati, (see photo) then perhaps he will have something to leave for his children, who will be able to stay in Liati and make productive lives there for themselves.



Sara Aidor is a high school student and member of the Abura Keep Fit Club, a local health ed group, especially devoted to HIV/AIDS awareness. "I love my new bike. It's blue, which is my favorite color... We have ridden our bikes to lots of local villages to do plays about hygiene/sanitation and health education. The people need to learn more about these things so they do not get sick.... You do good work... Can we have more bikes soon?" Photo: Dave Peckham.



Ben Onyamiema is a farmer and carpenter in Liati, Ghana. His farm is about 2 miles from his home. In the past he had to wake before day break to reach his farm at a reasonable time. Since the VBP, Ben has reduced transportation time to and from his farm, helping him concentrate more on his carpentry work. Because he is able to spend more time constructing, he is earning more of a stable income. Photo: Sunni Rodgers.

"The project is doing what's right for the environment, what's right for the economy and what's right for the community," according to PCEI Director Tom Lamar. "The project is a perfect opportunity for us to think globally and act locally and have an impact in another part of the world."

The project is also having a cultural impact. The less-developed world is bombarded with Western images. Hollywood, advertising, and major donors like the World Bank, all send strong messages about the desirability of automobiles. The sad reality is that the personal auto is an impossible dream for the vast majority of Africa's honest people. VBP promotes a different model. The bicycle is attainable for many; it is clean, healthy, and doesn't need expensive roads. The sight of Western development workers promoting bicycles in Africa makes people think differently. It's a new transportation paradigm.

VBP is now in its fifth year of improving access to bikes in Africa. The bikes we've distributed in rural areas through our maintenance workshops are helping make village life more sustainable in these rapidly changing times. PCEI and the Palouse community have been instrumental in the project's success, donating over 400 bikes (of the 2,049 total sent), thousands of dollars and thousands of hours of volunteer time.

The next bicycle round-up and shipment is in mid-March. Collection and packing will be March 8 and 9. Transfer to Seattle and loading for shipment will be the following weekend, March 14-16. See the slide-show update of the project at PCEI's annual membership meeting, Tuesday, April 22nd (see calendar for details). Call 208-892-2681 for more info, or email ghanabikes@yahoo.com

VBP Project totals through January 30, 2003

2,049	bikes sent to Ghana, in 5 shipments
29	workshops held (24 communities)
378	discounted bikes distributed
464	people trained to repair bikes
1,500	bicycle repair tools distributed

Think Globally, Act Puppetly

by Michelle Swinehart

Have you seen a fifteen-foot tall person walking down Main Street, wearing pink, polka dots, and plaid? How about a dragon with eleven feet? No? Some of those larger than life creatures will be coming to Moscow soon!

PCEI kicks off a new project this winter involving people, puppets, and performance. Known as the EcoCultural Arts Project, we aim to bridge environmental education with the arts. Through the EcoCultural Arts Project, PCEI staff and volunteers will teach puppetry workshops at both Lapwai High School and Moscow High School. Puppetry groups will be formed at after-school programs at both schools. Students in the puppetry groups will begin the project listening to stories from community members, including Nez Perce elders, senior citizens from the Good Samaritan Village, local artists, and community activists. We hope these stories will lead to both formal and informal discussion among students, in turn strengthening ties with diverse segments of our communities.

There will also be free community workshops offered on weekends, introducing interested people to the process of making large-scale masks and puppets. Some are so tall they nearly touch the sky. Some are so small you might need a magnifying glass to see them. Participants will mold clay, newspaper, wood, paint, fabric, found objects, and imagination into masks and larger than life puppets. Imagine a puppet made out of nearly all recycled materials. Stilted creatures are also rumored to make an appearance soon. Keep your eye out for these infamous puppets around town (they can even ride bicycles).



An example of larger than life puppets on parade. Photo: Whitman College.

Our first performance was February 1, hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse. "TreeV", a puppet show, was part of a winter fundraiser-Poetry Slam, with the proceeds of the event donated to the PCEI EcoCultural Arts Project. To learn more about the project or to volunteer, contact Michelle at puppets@pcei.org or 882-1444.



Puppets "Coyote" and "Spectacular" watch a Puppet "Tree-V" during a fundraising event for the EcoCultural Arts Project on February 1. Photo:PCEI

Help Puppets, get rid of stuff:

Want to help the puppet project? Look for any of these items you want to get rid, and then email Michelle at puppets@pcei.org or call 882-1444

Partial list of materials needed to build puppets: external frame backpack frames, soft backpacks, brown bag paper, wall paper paste, white glue, fabric, sheet plastic, painting "drop" cloths, masking tape, duct tape, clay, saran wrap, lumber for puppet frames, acrylic paint, house paint, bike tubes/rubber, pvc pipe, foam, plaster cloth, wire (variety of gauges), junk metal, woodglue, nails and screws, hats and helmets, plastic buckets and containers, plywood or tagboard

List of Equipment: drill, drill bits, jigsaw, hammer, brace clamps, handsaw, creature staplers, creature staples, paint brushes, glue guns, hot glue sticks

This newsletter (ISSN# 1087-9374) is published quarterly by the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI). 3rd Class postage paid in Moscow, ID. The Mission of PCEI is to increase citizen involvement in decisions that affect our regional environment. Through community organizing and education, we strive to enable members of our community to find effective and sustainable solutions to local and regional environmental problems. PCEI is a non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible. Articles for publication and letters to the editor are welcome and must include the name and address of the author. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of individual authors and not necessarily those of PCEI.

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People interested in being on our mailing list should join PCEI (see page 7).

This newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper with 30% post-consumer content.

Education "Spiced-Up"

by Johanna Kalmus and Greg Fizzell

The spring semester looks exciting for elementary school students that work with the PCEI education staff, due to new and expanded program offerings. The PCEI Education Program now offers 20 lessons from which teachers may choose, in addition to customized lessons.

The "Owl Pellet Study" curriculum, a lesson for grades 3-6 where students learn about food webs by dissecting an owl pellet, is just one of the many new lessons that PCEI is offering this winter and spring. Other lessons include old favorites like "Growing Green", a curriculum designed to enhance student awareness and knowledge of local waste, energy, and water-use issues and "Stream Ecology & Restoration", which connects students with their local watershed through hands-on activities. New, more physically active lessons include "Team Building", which consists of activities and initiatives focusing on effective communication, problem solving, and working with people of different learning styles, and "The Compass Game", where students learn the valuable skill of using a map and compass.

Additional lessons include the "Complete Kinder Series", "EcoArt", "Palouse Wildlife", "Scavenger Habitat Hunts", "Seed Study", "Plot Study", "Pond Ecology", "Birds", "Rainforests", "GLOBE Curriculum", "Habitat Explorations", "Tree Identification", "Weather Station", "Cemetery Study", and "Forest Measurements".

Idaho teachers are required to teach an extensive list of specific topics within each subject area in order to address *Idaho's Academic Achievement Standards*. In an effort to reach more students in the local schools and help teachers meet their classroom goals, PCEI has designed lessons to meet these standards and to be flexible enough for easy adaptation to specific classroom needs. In order to make signing up for classes even easier for teachers, PCEI now has a web-based *Program Request Form* for all our education lessons. Teachers can now quickly and easily fill out and submit a request form through our web page. Visit www.pcei.org/education/programs.htm to check it out!



The PCEI Education Program is also pleased to introduce the first in a series of 3-4 *Learning Modules*. The "Watershed Learning Bin" contains monitoring equipment, books, field guides, and lesson plans for comprehensive watershed studies by classrooms of any grade (see photo, to the left). The bins will be available for Moscow schools to borrow starting in Fall 2003. Hallie Reikowsky, a University of Idaho senior in Environmental Science, has begun designing and equipping the second "Habitat Learning Bin" as part of her senior thesis project. Funding for the *Learning Modules* project comes from the Idaho Community Foundation and the Latah County Community Foundation.

For any questions regarding PCEI's Education Program, please contact Program Coordinator Greg Fizzell at 882-1444 or fizzell@pcei.org.

Hallie Reikowsky displays the contents of our "Watershed Learning Bin". Bins like this are available from PCEI for use by teachers. Photo: Johanna Kalmus.

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PCEI Board Report - In search of new board members

by Mary Silvernale Shook, Board President

With the start of 2003, the board of PCEI is looking forward to another great year for our organization. There are currently 10 board members of PCEI and each person brings important skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to their position. The board of PCEI provides oversight of the organization, its programs and policies. It is also a working board, with each member undertaking projects and responsibility for some fundraising activities.

The nominating committee of the board is currently hard at work reviewing the membership list of PCEI and developing a list of potential new board members. Those interested will be asked to submit a short letter of interest. After reviewing applications, the board forwards their nominations to the full PCEI membership. PCEI members vote on the new board members at the annual membership meeting in April.

The board of PCEI is just one of the many important components to making PCEI a success. We look forward to serving in the coming year. To contact Mary, Board President, email silvernale@moscow.com.

What's on PCEI's Plate?

Here's a list of our 2003 projects, with contact info:

Transportation

Project (3 routes) - Moscow to Lewiston, Lewiston to Moscow, and Moscow to Lapwai *Contact: Polly Fulford, PCEI Office Manager, pcei@pcei.org*

Bikes round-up for Africa: *Contact Dave Peckham, ghanabikes@yahoo.com*

✓ Other bike promotions: *Contact PCEI at bikes@pcei.org*

Environmental Education

✓ Learn and Serve - programs in Moscow School District classrooms

✓ Moscow Charter School environmental studies curriculum

Development - funding from the Idaho Community Foundation and the Latah County Community and others can access for quick, easy and fun environmental education classroom lessons (*page 4*)

McCall Science Camp - a regional outdoor learning center for kids state-wide

National Science Foundation - weather and water monitoring with local schools

Project - a new project where students design and build large puppets (*see related article, page 3*)

Summer Programs - summer outdoor camps for kids (times and dates to be arranged)

Watershed - an outdoor daylong open house for area elementary kids about the local watershed issues

Contact: Greg Fizzell, PCEI Environmental Education Coordinator, fizzell@pcei.org

Moscow Community Garden

10 plots ready for growing food and flowers! *Contact: makeitgrow@pcei.org*

Watersheds Restoration

✓ Kellogg/Coeur d'Alene River Restoration in the Silver Valley

✓ Annual Paradise Creek Clean-up April 26

Projects for Paradise Creek: Urban Restoration (working with landowners within the City of Moscow), Waste Prevention (keeping it out of Paradise Creek), Roadside Erosion, Rural Riparian Restoration (working with landowners outside City limits), Wetland Restoration. With funding from the US EPA, City of Moscow and the Latah Soil and Water Conservation District.

✓ South Fork Palouse River Restoration (funding from Idaho DEQ)

✓ Renaissance Charter School/Idaho Fish and Game outdoor classroom

Contact: Amanda Cronin, PCEI Watersheds Coordinator, cronin@pcei.org

PCEI's Commuter VanPool Update

by Laurie Gardes

Last fall, PCEI worked with University of Idaho Business and Engineering students to promote the PCEI vanpool and to evaluate our pricing structure in light of hefty increases in insurance rates. The finished products, from students Jesse Simmons, Brian Peterson, Eric Skaugset and John Meyer, included a cost analysis of the elements that go into driving a car, research and web site info on tax benefits for VanPool commuters, and a brochure for our VanPool.

Also fueling our VanPool program for 2003 is a grant from Idaho Transportation Department. The money is specifically for driver training, media (printing new brochures), computer equipment and personnel (to oversee the driver training and new brochure production).

For now we've decided to keep our rates where they are (\$90/mo for routes between Moscow and Lewiston, and \$100 for the Moscow to Lapwai route), and hope that with the brochure we can attract more riders. Currently, only one route, from Lewiston to Moscow, is full. If you would like info on joining our group of VanPool commuters, or if you know someone who travels these routes on a regular basis and might like to ride with us, please contact Polly Fulford, our Office Manager and VanPool Coordinator at 882-1444, or pcei@pcei.org.

Ice Stop or no Ice Stop

By Tiffany Cooper

In recent years, both the City of Moscow and the Idaho Transportation Department have adopted a new method of de-icing our streets and highways. Instead of relying on traditional measures of applying sand and basalt to control ice and snow, they have started using a new anti-icing application called *Ice-Stop*. According to manufacturer Reilly Industries, it is time-tested and considered an environmentally safe alternative to conventional methods of ice removal. Ingredients include magnesium chloride hexahydrate (25-35%), water (65-75%) and a corrosion inhibitor (2500-3000 ppm). The Idaho Transportation Department considers *Ice-Stop* less toxic than salt and tests have shown that the proper application of magnesium chloride produces no negative effects on ground water, surface water or vegetation. How does it work? Magnesium chloride solution prevents frost, ice and snow from bonding to the surface, but only when it is applied before snowfall.



The manufacturer of this particular product states that it is less corrosive than water; but how can that be? Peter G. Snow, a researcher at Burns Concrete, Inc. of Idaho Falls, monitored the magnesium chloride de-icer and found it to corrode concrete. In 2000-2001, corrosion was 10 times that of the previous 9 winters in Idaho Falls. Snow was able to link the magnesium chloride de-icer to the scaling of the concrete surfaces. He explained, "The magnesium ions accumulate and react with the cementitious compound calcium-silicate-hydrate, converting it to magnesium-silicate-hydrate (or a mineral called brucite), which is non-cementitious in nature. In other words, a fundamental major mineralogical product of solidified concrete has now been chemically altered (completely changed). Formation of magnesium-silicate-hydrate breaks down the "glue" that binds aggregates together and concrete surfaces begin to deteriorate. The net effect is we now have a chemical and physical attack that concrete is not designed to withstand, nor be subjected to".

To remedy this particular problem, the manufacturers have added a corrosion inhibitor, but a joint study by the Colorado Transportation Department and a National Trucking Association did not find the formula to be effective. In addition, citing "proprietary privilege" the manufacturer could not provide the environmental effects or actual ingredients of this inhibitor. In the book *Fateful Harvest*, Duff Wilson reveals that a subsidiary of the largest aluminum company in the world, Alcoa, sells a toxic industrial waste as Ag-Mag, a fertilizer, and as "Road Clear", a road deicer. As Wilson put it, "different labels, same material". How do we know if this is or isn't in the liquid the City of Moscow uses on our city streets. The manufacturer refuses to provide this information.

To get to the bottom of this de-icer dilemma, PCEI contacted the Washington Toxics Coalition. Doug Collins, an Information Specialist, brought up some interesting points about liquid de-icers. First, the chemicals found in liquid de-icers are more or less found in nature. Despite this fact, Collins states, "Potential problems might occur due to their ability to dehydrate organisms. . . . Changes in the conductivity (a measurement of soluble ions in water) must certainly occur when these salts are washed into waterways. These ions will then become available for plant and phytoplankton growth and may contribute to eutrophication (increased nutrients, leading to oxygen reduction in water)."



So what are the effects? There is no recorded data that proves the eutrophication theory or that a change in conductivity will occur or that there is toxic waste in this de-icer. What we do know is that magnesium chloride allows toxic heavy metals in the soil to become soluble. Studies on road salts prove that eutrophication does occur, along with a plethora of other effects. Meanwhile, the manufacturer does not want to let the public know what is in the corrosion inhibitor. With these three things put together, there could be a cause of concern for people, watersheds, and wildlife.

To learn more, go to the PCEI website (www.pcei.org) for links to *Ice-Stop* reports. Photos: ITD.

Volunteer Center open and looking for a few good volunteers

by Polly Fulford

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities within Latah County, please contact the Latah Community Volunteer Center (LCVC) at (208)883-6486 or send an email to latahvolunteers@yahoo.com. Feel free to visit our office to discuss your needs and to obtain volunteer registration forms. The Latah Community Volunteer Center is located at 225 E Palouse River Drive. We can also make arrangements to visit you at your office. If you are in a business that encourages volunteerism, call today for information on how you can become a volunteer site through the Latah Community Volunteer Center.

You are invited to the Second Annual Volunteer Recognition Event. This fundraising event will be held on April 15th at the Kenworthy Performing Arts Center at 6:00 pm. Information regarding the nomination of volunteers for the event will be available in February through the Moscow Chamber of Commerce newsletter and local newspapers. Please support the LCVC as we honor our outstanding volunteers. Hope to see you there!

PCEI Seeking Community-Minded Members

by Polly Fulford

We are looking to the community-minded people of the Palouse-Clearwater Region to increase our membership base. PCEI has nearly 800 members, with over 400 who have been involved for more than a decade. Since our inception in 1986, 1,816 people and businesses from Florida to Alaska have become members of PCEI.

We have set a membership goal of 1,000 by July 2003. New memberships support daily operations, ongoing projects, and future programming. The article on page 5 provides an update of current projects at PCEI. Membership involvement over the last year alone has helped PCEI to:

- * Improve the water quality of Paradise Creek
- * Share knowledge of the water cycle and the conservation of water with local elementary, middle, and high school students
- * Dedicate garden space at the Community Garden
- * Increase clean air through the operation of the VanPool
- * Offer educational forums for the Palouse-Clearwater region
- * Provide internship experiences for area college students
- * Expose community members to the positive experiences of volunteering.

Please help PCEI reach its membership goal of 1,000 members. Spread the word to family members, friends, and businesses. As a member of PCEI, you will be kept up-to-date on current environmental issues affecting the Palouse-Clearwater region, receive our quarterly newsletter "Environmental News", become connected to like-minded community members, and be kept aware of countless volunteer community service opportunities. A PCEI membership is also a great way to meet new friends, whether you are new to the area or a long time resident. Memberships also make a great gift. Join today!



Scenes from the 2002 Holiday Thank You Party. PCEI members visit the ever popular food table (above), while others talk near a picture display of PCEI projects (right). Don't miss the 2003 Holiday Thank You Party! Join PCEI today and guarantee your spot at the front of the line! Photos: PCEI.



The Toilet Papers

If every household in the U.S. replaced just one roll of 500 sheet virgin fiber bathroom tissues with 100% recycled ones, we could save: 297,000 trees, 1.2 million cubic feet of landfill space (equal to 1,400 full garbage trucks), 122 million gallons of water (one year's supply for 3,500 families of four).

Become a Member of PCEI!

- Yes I want to support the *Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute*
- Yes I want to renew my membership
- Name _____
- Address _____
- City _____
- State _____
- Zip _____
- Phone _____
- Email _____
- Please contact me about volunteering
- Please keep my membership anonymous
- \$25 Basic Membership
- \$60 Palouse Protector
- \$120 Friends of the Palouse-Clearwater
- \$12 Limited income/Student
- Additional gift of \$ _____
- Please direct my gift to the following program:
 - Environmental Education
 - Community Garden
 - Watersheds
 - VanPool/Transportation
- Endowment gift of \$ _____

Mail to: PCEI POBox 8596 Moscow, ID 83843

Calendar of Events (for updates, visit www.pcei.org):

March 8 & 9, Saturday and Sunday Village Bicycle Project bikes round-up for Africa. Donate your old bikes and help prepare them for packing. Drop site is in the alley behind the Latah Credit Union, 900 South block, between Washington and Jefferson, Moscow. Bike packing (tools provided) will be Sunday afternoon, from 2 pm on. For more information, contact: ghanabikes@yahoo.com, or 892-2681.

March 14 -16 Friday- Sunday Village Bicycle Project, Bike Convoy to Seattle and loading the container. It's all fun! For more information, contact: ghanabikes@yahoo.com, or 892-2681.

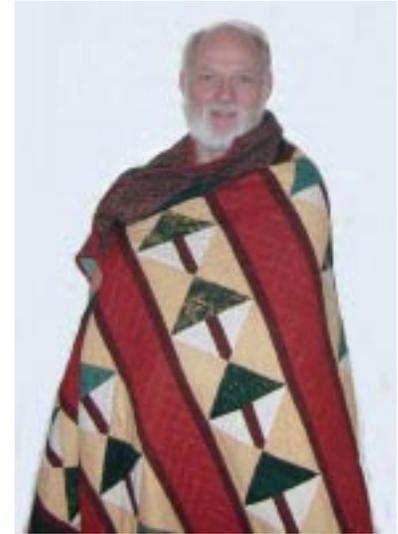
April 15, Tuesday 6:00pm Latah Community Volunteer Center Second Annual Volunteer Recognition Event, Kenworthy Performing Arts Centre.

April 22, Tuesday 6:00pm PCEI Annual Membership Celebration. Potluck, Board elections, Puppet Show and a slide show update of Village Bicycle Project's work in Africa. Avalon House, 111 N. Washington, Moscow. Also bike to work today.

April 26, Saturday 10 AM to 1 PM Paradise Creek Clean-up. For more information, contact Amanda Cronin at cronin@pcei.org or 882-1444. Bike ride follows.

April 26, Saturday 10 AM to 3 PM. Bicycle spring cleaning at the Moscow Food Co-op, with free repairs and instruction. For more information, contact: ghanabikes@yahoo.com, or 892-2681.

May 3 & 4, Saturday - Sunday. PCEI Booth at the Moscow Renaissance Fair. Also Bicycle Resurrection, with free bike repair, 10 till dark, both days. Call Polly at PCEI to volunteer to help with our food booth: 882-1444 or pcei@pcei.org.



Nick Gier, quilt winner, is shown with his new quilt. The grand total for PCEI's Quilt Raffle was \$1459.15. A special thanks to board member Rosemary Streatifeild for her organizing efforts, to the anonymous quilt donor, and to all those who bought a ticket to help support PCEI. Photo: PCEI.

**Palouse-Clearwater
Environmental Institute**
PO Box 8596 Moscow, ID 83843

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- Choices in Community Giving
- Washington Environmental Council
- United Vision for Idaho
- Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

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