

Nominee for the Special Service Award

Nominee:

Jill Workman

Group: Columbia

Chapter: Oregon

Entity:

Chapter Chair: Jill Workman

ExComm support: yes

The nominee deserves this award because:

Jill began her commitment to honor her mother's legacy of volunteering with the Sierra Club, but we are grateful she stayed because of her extraordinary ability lead, organize and inspire volunteers and staff - in the words of one nomination supporter - "to get things done."

Jill love of wilderness led her to join the Oregon Chapter's High Desert Committee. She was one of the key players in shepherding into law the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act in October of 2000.

The legislation providing additional protection to approximately 900,000 acres of Federal land in southeastern Oregon, was signed into law, including 175,000 acres designed as wilderness. The majority is set aside as livestock free. Most importantly, the top of the Steens Mountain, which is the area most sensitive to disturbance, will be managed to safeguard its pristine environment. The entire 900,000 is also designated as off limits to mineral and geothermal extraction.

The Act also designated three new Wild and Scenic Rivers (Wildhorse Creek, Little Wildhorse Creek, Kiger Creek); adds two new segments to the already designated Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River, and creates the first ever Redband Trout Reserve to improve stream health and fish habitat.

Whether meeting with ranchers, BLM officials, Congressmen, other environmental groups or spending her weekends in Chapter outings dedicated to pulling out hundreds of miles of barbed wire on Steens Mountain, Jill is tireless in her love and passion for wilderness. Her enthusiasm is infectious, as she inspires, leads, cajoles, persuades and encourages volunteers and staff to achieve important public lands protections.

Simply put, when Jill is involved, conservation goals become success stories. As Oregon Chapter Chair, she was one of the principal players in Oregon worked for over eight years pass the Mount Hood Wilderness Act. She worked closely with Oregon's Congressional Delegation to foster bipartisan support for the legislation, as well as leading Sierra Club efforts in working with other Oregon wilderness groups to achieve a package that was worthy of being including as part of our nation's wilderness.

Signed into law in March of 2009 as part of the Omnibus Public Lands Act, the Mount Hood Wilderness Act permanently protects more than 200,000 acres public lands in Oregon, and

provides wilderness designation to 127,000 acres surrounding Mount Hood, and designates more than 80 miles of rivers at Mt. Hood and the Columbia Gorge as Wild and Scenic Rivers. These include the White River, Fifteenmile Creek, Roaring River and the Hood River's East Fork.

Appointed to Sierra Club's National Wildlands Committee in 2003, her organizational skills were perfect for strategically putting together a series of lobby weeks in Washington DC over the next several years to campaign not only on the Mount Hood Wilderness proposal but on over a dozen other wilderness bills and other public lands legislation.

She helped to pioneered the successful format of volunteers from strategic states and congressional districts arriving on Saturday, with a day of lobby and key message point training on Sunday, immediately followed by and two to three days of direct lobbying of key House and Senate Members and their lead staff - often with each volunteer successfully completing well over ten Hill meetings per day. Jill continued this responsibility throughout her future tenure AWL's Chair.

The results were amazing. Working closely with DC Lands Team staff and between 15 to 35 volunteers, Jill paired experienced volunteer lobbyists with new ones and made sure that every lobby week was accountable to its budget, while also talking on her own share of lobbying appointments for the Pacific Northwest states.

Her efforts achieved results. Year after year of lobbying created the momentum for final passage of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, signed by President Obama on March 30, 2009, which included over 160 bills designating more than 2 million acres as wilderness with protected areas in California, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Oregon, Virginia, West Virginia, New Mexico, and Michigan – and has been described by Sierra Club and other key conservation organizations as the most important lands protection legislation in decades.

Jill would be the first to say that she was only one of many hundreds of volunteers working on these wilderness bills, but what sets her apart is her amazing ability to bring together volunteers and staff to achieve extraordinary results in lobbying for public lands legislation. Without question, Senate and House Leadership cited Sierra Club leadership in bringing in persuasive, effective and volunteer constituents to Washington to build the support and momentum need to achieve final congressional passage. The numbers speak for themselves with the final bill passing the Senate at 66-12 and the House 285-140.

Her Sierra Club lobbying organizing efforts have also been widely credited towards advancing the Borderlands Conservation and Security Act and the Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act

The former Conservation Governance Committee appointed Jill as Chair of its America's Wild Legacy Conservation Initiative Committee in late 2005. During the next three years, Jill supervised the distribution of hundreds of thousands of dollars directing towards projects at both the national and chapter level that promoted AWL's three issues of national concern that were approved by the Board: expand and protect wild places, protect wildlife and their habitat; and prevent destructive energy development.

Another example of Jill's consistent dedication to conservation is her steadfast support of Public Lands Day – a day set aside each year at the end of September to get people to become reacquainted with our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and state and city parks. Jill created Sierra Club's logo "Public Lands in Public Hands" and worked with her Oregon Chapter and its Groups to create events throughout the state.

When she became Chair of AWL, she championed small grants between \$250 and \$500 given to Chapters and Groups to create their own Public Lands Day event – which usually would involve wetland restoration, trail building, or some other "hand on" conservation work.

The 'Public Lands in Public Hands' Project was a huge success that underscores how much Americans care about their wild places and open spaces. Local Sierra Club volunteers teamed up with local, state and federal government agencies as well as faith groups, hunter angler, and other conservation groups for the day on important projects and forming continuing partnerships. During the last three years, Chapters and Groups held well over 50 restoration events – many with successful media outreach with coverage of Sierra Club's activities in local papers, radio and television stations.

Perhaps the most ambitious Public Lands Day event was held in September 2007 where Jill was able to persuade Sierra Club volunteers throughout the nation to travel (on their own dime) to New Orleans to help restore a public green space in the lower ninth ward. Jill arranged for dormitory housing at a local church and budget motels, organized the activities, and worked closely with DC Lands Team staff to promote and supervise the event.

The National Board's Annual Meeting was the same weekend. AWL had to present its campaign framework to the Board and identify its successes and challenges from the past two years. Jill asked me to present the report as AWL Vice Chair, and I will never forget Jill calling me at midnight Saturday, after an exhausting day of restoration work, to see how everything went. The only place where she could get a cell phone signal was in a very dark hallway, far away from her room. Her concern for my success in front of the Board that day is one of many, many examples of why anyone who works with Jill, whether they are volunteer or staff, wants to work with her again.

In 2007, Jill began to work closely with Bruce Hamilton to create the framework for the Resilient Habitat Campaign. AWL became the nursery to flesh out the key components of the Campaign, and its members were deeply involved and committed to seeing the Resilient Habitats Campaign ultimately approved by the Board. Jill organized two key meetings that helped to create this success. The first in November of that year on Mt. Hood to finalized the Campaign's strategic plan at that time. The second is an extraordinary summit at Sundance Resort the following May where the best of Sierra Club staff and volunteers with key Club public lands and wildlife experience came together to discuss our work and hear from leading scientists the newest research about climate change. The Sundance Summit helped to launch Sierra Club's final stages of planning for the Resilient Habitat Campaign. Facilitating such a diverse group of staff and volunteers with such an ambitious agenda required a facilitator of amazing skill.

Among the more than 40 summit attendees, Jill was universally praised for her leadership, her

humor, her commitment, and her attention to detail. Jill even created the slogan on the now highly coveted low cost organic tee-shirts that were designed for participants. Above a series of photos that included a polar bear and a Canada lynx, was the headline “Air conditioning may cool your habitat – but what about theirs?”

All of this was done while Jill served as Chapter Chair in Oregon, and maintained a full time job as a banker and relationship manager at Wells Fargo. Vacations and days off were arranged around Sierra Club Lobby weeks, National Board Meetings, National Committee Meetings, and service outings.

When I became Chair of the North Star Chapter in 2005, I was fortunate in finding a mentor in Jill, who had been Chair of the Oregon Chapter for some time. She was an amazing resource and I became a much better volunteer and far better leader for knowing her. It has been my honor to serve as her AWL Vice Chair. She has taught me and many others the value of relationships, of accountability, of passion and joy in doing the hard work to protect the wild places we love. Protecting wilderness and public lands may be why we joined the Sierra Club, but it is people like Jill who make us want to stay.

Previous recognition

no (or unknown)

Local newspapers to notify:

The Oregonian; The Portland Tribune

Group Newsletter:

Overlook

Jeff Fryer (email is jeff.fryer@oregon.sierraclub.org)

Chapter Newsletter:

Conifer

Jim Flynn (email is jimflynn@efn.org)

Nominator:

Sharon Stephens

North Star Chapter Chair (2005-08) AWL Vice Chair (2006-08)

Past Notes & Comments:

Support letters from Steve Crowley, Joe Fontaine, Greg Haegele, Borden Beck, Allen McReynolds, Athan Manuel, Jerry Sutherland, Kristina Johnson, Elizabeth Walsh, Bob Bingaman, Maribeth Oaks, Michael McCloskey, Alan Carlton, Karl Forsgaard, Carolyn Carr, Sean Sullivan, Heidi Dahlin, Wayne Hoskisson and Bart Serncer