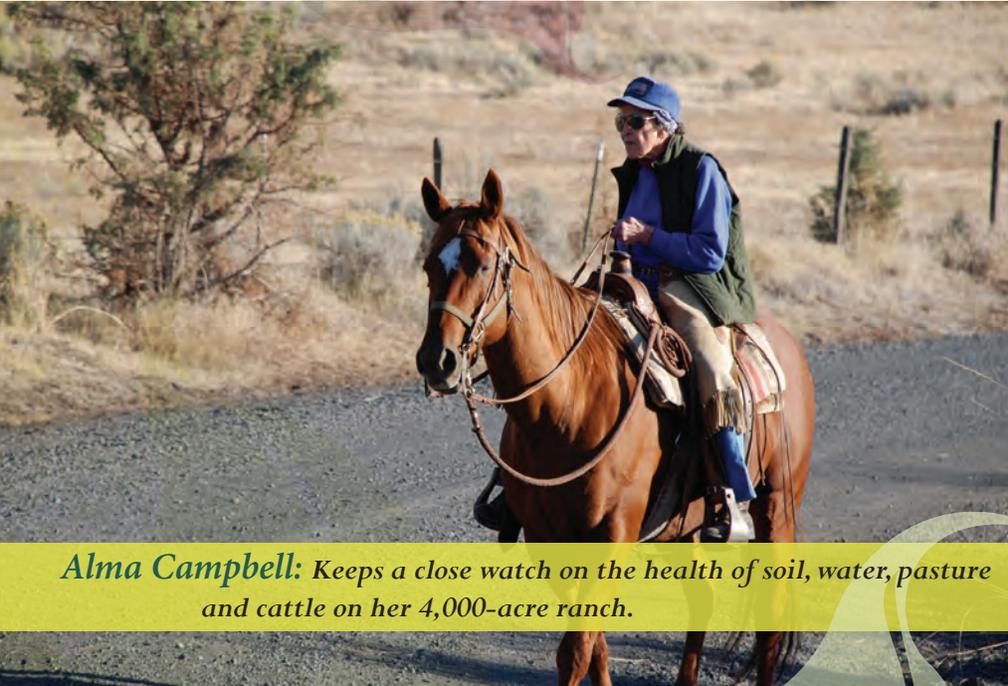


O · R · E · G · O · N *Conservation showcase*



Alma Campbell: Keeps a close watch on the health of soil, water, pasture and cattle on her 4,000-acre ranch.

because it will benefit you in the long run.”

According to Nate James, USDA-NRCS District Conservationist, Alma and three other landowners in Lonerock are working together on a Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) with USDA-NRCS to restore watershed health. The two-phase CCPI project will enhance range conditions on thousands of acres as it removes infestations of Western juniper, reseeds disturbed soils to avoid infestations of noxious grasses, such as Medusahead, and develops seven springs among other actions. Nate says, “These steps will recover some hydrologic function, and the quality, quantity and duration of stream flow in Lonerock Creek, which is a tributary of Rock Creek and part of the John Day River System.”

CCPI is a voluntary conservation initiative that enables the use of certain conservation programs along with resources of eligible partners to provide financial and technical assistance to owners and operators of agricultural and nonindustrial private forest lands. Alma’s neighbor Raymond Harrison is also participating in the CCPI program and wants to see his land return to its natural landscape. Raymond points to photos of the land taken in the early 1900s that show no juniper

*Take half,
Leave half:
Alma Campbell’s
Golden Rule
of conservation.*

Lonerock, Ore. —

Alma Campbell’s blue eyes twinkle as she talks about her ranch, her cows and her commitment to conservation. The 86-year-old rancher is passionate about the preservation of the land and water that was in her family and passed down to her care. Alma rides her chestnut horse daily to check on her 4,000 acres of Eastern Oregon rangeland and 80 brood cows. Alma urges everyone with land to use good conservation practices: “Even if you have just a small amount of property, and a few horses and cows, you need to take care of it

Juniper Removal: Rangeland experts at Oregon State University estimate a single juniper tree consumes 30 to 50 gallons of water daily.



in the plant mix and streams flowing year round.

Nate anticipates that agriculture production, riparian health and the fishery will improve. “Removing juniper from the landscape will allow the grassland ecosystems to capture, store and slowly release 100 percent of the effective precipitation in the watershed, which will increase grass production per acre and raise water tables,” says Nate. As the water quantity and quality improve, spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead and resident rainbow trout will be enhanced.

Alma is pleased with how the project is helping her help the land: “The nicest part of the program is it gets rid of the junipers. It takes a lot of water to keep a juniper going.” Rangeland experts at Oregon State University estimate each tree consumes 30 to 50 gallons daily. With the Lonerock Valley receiving a sparse 16” of rainfall each year, Alma maintains the junipers draw up more than their fair share. “They take so much of the moisture from the rain or snow that there is nothing left for the grass. They’re just a bad, bad weed.”

Walt Powell, manager of the Gilliam Soil and Water

Conservation District (SWCD), explains the impact: “With the removal of water-consuming juniper trees and by increasing water flow from seven springs and riparian habitat improvement, I estimate an additional 1,050 acre feet (350 million gallons) of water will be available annually for ground water recharge.”

The willingness to partner with others was imperative to the CCPI program success. Each landowner had to work collaboratively on a focused effort with neighbors, federal and local government agencies and the Tribes. Walt feels the best part of the whole project has been working with Alma, her nephew Tim and the other landowners. He says, “The valuable

lessons learned during the planning and implementation of this NRCS grant project will be transferred to future projects.” Plans for a similar landscape project in another watershed are currently in the works with NRCS.

Walt commends Alma for her long-term use of best conservation practices. “Her work is the sterling example of how a legacy of conservation improves your land.” Alma says you have to make smart choices because, “This is an economic unit you are running. Improving the land with ponds and the removal of juniper makes your land more productive.” Alma is also astute about the management of cattle grazing on the rangeland pastures: “You put your cattle in there, and they take half and then you need to leave half.” Her philosophies of conservation and her ability to lead by example are her legacy that will live on in Lonerock.

NRCS

Helping People Help the Land

Range Diversity: Ponds on the Campbell land keep the cattle dispersed around the property.

