

# Annual Report 2014

(July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014)



McMeans' conservation easement.



SCLT Board and Staff during our Board Retreat.



UNPLUG event at South Park.



Trail planning on-the-ground.



Red Grade Landowner Open House.



View from a proposed trail.



Soldier Ridge Trail at sunrise.

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



I had a call a few weeks ago from a landowner in Campbell County who was interested in learning more about conservation easement options for his property near Gillete. It's not uncommon for us to receive calls from landowners in adjacent counties and while we're quick to point out that we serve landowners and residents in Sheridan County, we are happy to start them in the right direction. Before this particular caller hung-up, he bemoaned the fact that Campbell County wasn't lucky enough to have its own local land trust.

However, luck isn't the reason SCLT is here. Rather, our work is possible because of the vision and investments of community members like you who realize the value that a local land trust brings to a place. Because of your support, SCLT is able to work on your behalf to protect local landscapes and historic places in Sheridan County for the future, while creating new trails and recreation opportunities for those here now.

Nine years after charting unknown waters, the continued sustainability of SCLT is a testament to our community's foresight. It shows that we remain committed to influencing our future today by investing in projects that pay dividends tomorrow. On behalf of our Board of Directors, I would like to say thank you to the greater Sheridan County community for your continued investment in SCLT. Your support ensures that the place we call home only gets better with time.



Colin Betzler  
Executive Director

Sheridan Community Land Trust works to preserve our heritage of open spaces, healthy rivers and creeks, working ranches, wildlife habitat, and vibrant history, while expanding non-motorized recreation opportunities to connect people with the places they love.



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*Executive Director*

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*Communications & Development Associate*

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**FY 2014 FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

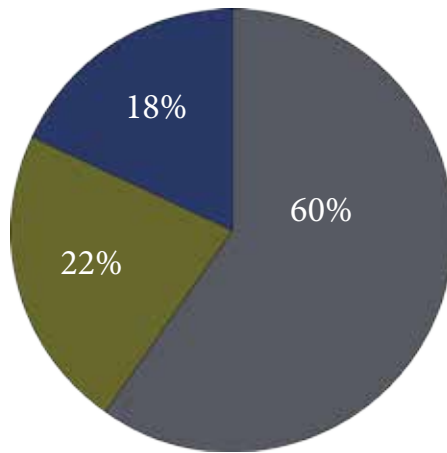
SCLT's work continues to be made possible through direct support from our community. Over 60% of the funds SCLT received during this past fiscal year were spent directly on developing and managing projects.

I'm pleased to report that SCLT finished Fiscal Year 2014 in a strong financial position, which allows our Board and Staff to continue our work on projects that directly benefit members of our community, as well as the local economy.

**OPERATING EXPENSE**

**BY PROGRAM**

**\$146,135.<sup>97</sup>**

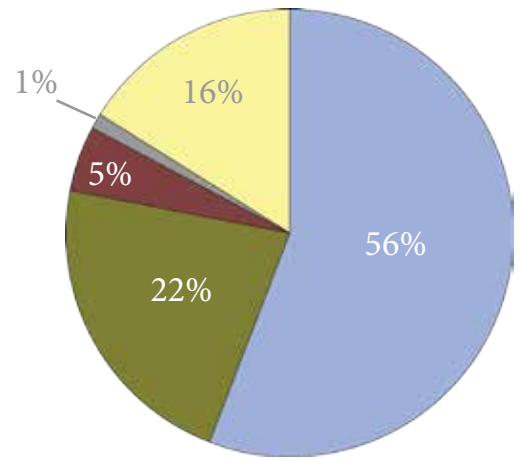


- Project Development  
\$87,647.<sup>22</sup>
- Management & Administration  
\$32,489.<sup>08</sup>
- Fundraising & Communications  
\$26,049.<sup>67</sup>

**OPERATING INCOME**

**BY SOURCE**

**\$164,887.<sup>12</sup>**



- Individual/Business Members  
\$92,452.<sup>44</sup>
- One Cent Funding  
\$36,420.<sup>50</sup>
- Project Specific Grants/Gifts  
26,152.<sup>45</sup>
- Events, Other  
\$7,972.<sup>87</sup>
- Investments  
\$1,888.<sup>36</sup>

*\*SCLT's most recent tax return (990) is available at our office during regular business hours.*

SCLT continues to adhere to the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices, reviewing our various policies annually for completeness and keeping them up-to-date with any changing requirements, including those pertaining to financial reporting.

Whether you are an annual member, business member, event sponsor, granting entity, government contributor, or individual project donor, you can remain confident that your investment in SCLT continues to be strategically used to protect and enhance the best of Sheridan County for current and future generations.

Susie Ponce, Treasurer

# FY 2014 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

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## MCMEANS' TONGUE RIVER CONSERVATION EASEMENT

In the second quarter of the fiscal year, we closed on an 80-acre conservation easement with Mike and Vicky McMeans west of Dayton. This process took over a year, as it was Sheridan County's first-ever conservation subdivision.



Looking west across the McMeans' property.

This beautiful property along the Tongue River will remain working ranchland and wildlife habitat forever as a result of this conservation easement. We hope it is the first of many similar projects that combine conservation with smart-growth principles.

## TONGUE RIVER INITIATIVE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The Tongue River Initiative (TRI) is a partnership conceptualized by SCLT with The Nature Conservancy and Sheridan County Conservation District. Our goal is to preserve the scenic beauty, ranching heritage, and wildlife habitat of the Tongue River Valley, while also working to improve the water quality of the Tongue River.

This fiscal year, TRI produced the Landowner Resource Guide, which is a compilation of information designed to connect landowners in the valley to entities with funding and technical assistance regarding land management practices. The guide was sent to more than 200 landowners and has led to over a dozen conversations about conservation opportunities on properties in the valley. TRI recently received a grant award of \$1.8 million from the National Resource Conservation Service's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, detailed in our Winter 2015 newsletter.

## RED GRADE TRAILS SYSTEM PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



This fiscal year, SCLT announced plans to create a 33-mile trail system on State, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and US Forest Service (USFS) lands along Red Grade Road.

Many hours were spent meeting with landowners and partners to refine and develop the conceptual trail plan. We also spent a considerable amount of time on-the-ground with a professional trail designer creating a master plan and implementing much of the feedback received from local partners and landowners involved with the project.

Our focused work paid off. This fall we were granted a 25-year State lease for trailhead and trail development and look forward to breaking ground on Phase I in 2015. Meanwhile, planning continues for BLM and USFS phases of the project.

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**80 ACRES**

*of agricultural and riparian land protected by conservation easement*

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**123 MILES**

*of trails planned and assessed, including the Red Grade Trails System and the Tongue River Water Trail*

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**1,632 HOURS**

*of volunteer work, including Board Members, work group members, trail stewards, and event volunteers*

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**\$30,591 DOLLARS**

*generously given by our Board of Directors to support our work*

# FY 2014 MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS - THANK YOU!

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**Tribute Gifts:** Shiva Polefka *in honor of* Kathleen and Daniel Weber • Jolene Forbes *in honor of* Storie Nelle Betzler

**All donor gifts reflect contributions received July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014. If your name is missing or incorrect we sincerely apologize for the error. Please notify us of any corrections by calling (307)673-4702 or [claire@sheridanclt.org](mailto:claire@sheridanclt.org).**