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For Immediate Release

Press Release

The Lands Council awarded \$20,000 to Reforest Spokane

After competing in nation-wide competition, Spokane non-profit comes in second of twenty

Spokane, Wash., October 6, 2011: Appeasing the building anticipation within The Lands Council was an important phone call from Tom's of Maine regarding the final results of the "50 States for Good" competition that the Spokane-based environmental group had competed in. It was good news. Out of 20 diverse, nation-wide causes, The Lands Council's project to Reforest Spokane by planting 10,000 native Ponderosa pines in one day had come in second, awarding the organization \$20,000 and providing it with the opportunity to fulfill its plan.

"We're absolutely thrilled," said The Lands Council's Executive Director, Mike Petersen. "After weeks of hard work and thousands of votes put toward winning this competition, placing second was a much-needed relief and nod to what Spokane was able to accomplish."

Beginning on August 3rd, the "50 States for Good" competition wrapped up on Tuesday, September 13th. One week prior, Tom's of Maine removed the ranking page from the website, at which time The Lands Council was sitting in first place.

"From the beginning of this competition, the voting was really close," said Amanda Swan, The Lands Council's Development Director, explaining that though they debuted in third place, they spent time in fourth and fifth place before beginning their climb up the rankings. "It took us a couple weeks to really engage the Spokane community, but once we were able to, we were blown away by their commitment and support," she added.

Among the many individual supporters, Swan explains that a number of local businesses and groups also rose to the occasion, asking their followers and employees to vote. "We were ecstatic about the number of groups that stepped forward to help promote Reforest Spokane Day," she said. "It became less about us, and more so about doing something wonderful for our community – which was the end goal for us."

Making the decision to plant 10,000 trees no matter the outcome came nearly two weeks before the end of the competition. Due to the nature of the competition and The Lands Council's confidence in its efforts, the decision came easy. "One of the best things about the '50 States for Good' contest is that they award funding to the top six organizations," explained Petersen of Tom's of Maine's commitment to giving \$50,000 to first place and \$20,000 to second through sixth place. "We knew our project could be completed as long as we were in the top six, and felt confident we would be, so we began planning."

On Saturday, October 22nd, The Lands Council and several hundred volunteers will spend the morn-

ing planting the 10,000 Ponderosa pine seedlings throughout Spokane. “As you’d expect, it takes a substantial amount of space to plant 10,000 trees,” said Kat Hall, TLC’s Conservation Programs Director who is currently working with the City of Spokane’s Urban Forestry team and a handful of other agencies to identify a list of confirmed planting sites. At this time, The Lands Council has verified that it will be planting at sites along the Spokane River and Latah Creek for restoration purposes, as well as on several City properties and along the North Spokane Corridor.

Although The Lands Council has nearly 400 individuals signed up to join it for Reforest Spokane Day, the organization estimates that it will need close to 750 volunteers to complete the large-scale planting. “Because this project is based directly on a need within our community, we are really urging everyone in Spokane to get involved in this exciting day of restoration,” said Swan, explaining that children, service groups – anyone is invited to grab a shovel and show their support.

“In only three hours we will plant 10,000 trees throughout our community. Imagine if we did the same thing even twice more throughout the year,” said Petersen. “Being a winner in this competition really opened our eyes to the tremendous support within our community for native tree restoration. It is now our goal to form an annual event out of this opportunity, continuing to plant 10,000 seedlings year after year,” he added, noting that the organization would turn to business partners and individual supporters to underwrite planting costs for years to come.

To sign up for Reforest Spokane Day, visit The Lands Council’s website at www.landscouncil.org where a link to the Volunteer Registration form allows individuals to choose their preferred planting location for October 22nd.

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About The Lands Council:

In 1983, John Osborn, then an intern at Sacred Heart Medical Center, decided something needed to be done to protect the land he called home. And thus The Lands Council, a local grassroots, non-profit dedicated to protecting the quality of life in the Inland Northwest, was born. Since our humble beginnings, The Lands Council has protected thousands of acres of public land, and in the process worked to preserve the forests, water, and wildlife we all depend on for life.