TRAILKEEPERS OF OREGON

A New Legacy Builders Challenge:
Help Match a Remarkable Gift For Oregon's Trails



A Trail Worth Bringing Back

Pete and Bonnie Reagan are helping a long-closed Gorge trail begin again. Now, they are inviting TKO's Legacy Builders community to match their generosity for trails across Oregon.

For decades, Perdition Trail was part of Pete and Bonnie Reagan's family landscape. Pete and Bonnie moved to Portland when they were in their early twenties. In the years that followed, Perdition became one of the places where they introduced their children and visiting friends to the Columbia River Gorge. The trail offered sweeping Gorge views and an experience Pete remembers as adventurous, beautiful, and manageable for a young family. Their children began hiking it when they were four or five years old.

"It was a wonderful trail," Pete said. "We would take all of our visitors up on that little loop."

Then the trail disappeared from public use. A fire in the early 1990s damaged a wooden staircase that carried hikers through a steep gully. A replacement structure was later lost to a landslide before the trail could reopen. Perdition remained an official Forest Service trail, but for more than three decades, it has existed primarily on maps and in the memories of the people who had known it. Pete was one of those people. He was also becoming someone with the experience to help bring it back.

After retiring from a long career as a Portland family physician, Pete began volunteering with Trailkeepers of Oregon. He worked on trails throughout the Columbia River Gorge, including restoration at Angels Rest and Elowah Falls after the Eagle Creek Fire. After becoming a TKO crew leader, he helped with the long effort to reopen the Oneonta Trail from Larch Mountain to the Gorge. One day, while walking down the newly reopened trail near Triple Falls, Pete saw two people getting engaged at an overlook.

"They had no idea," he remembered thinking. "I built this trail, and now they're getting married on it."

That quiet moment captured something Pete had come to value about trail stewardship. Volunteers may work far from public view, but what they build and restore becomes part of other people's lives. Several years ago, fellow TKO volunteer leader Hope McKee asked Pete about an old trail she had noticed. Pete immediately knew it.

"Oh, that's Perdition," he told her. "We should get it back."





Pete Reagan poses with fellow TKO Crew Leader Hope McKee, Pete's daughter Anika, and her husband Leisandro.

Pete and Hope later explored the old route as part of TKO's authorized trail scouting. Other TKO volunteers and staff assessed its condition and what restoration would require. These were project visits, not public hikes: **Perdition Trail remains closed to the public and is not safe for independent travel at this time.** Pete kept making the case for the trail, while TKO built the relationships, plans, and approvals needed to undertake such a complex project responsibly.

The argument for Perdition was not based on nostalgia alone. Restoring it could bring back a remarkable trail experience in the heart of the Gorge, create another route in one of Oregon's most heavily visited recreation areas, and offer a lower-elevation trail where crews can work during much of the winter. After years of persistence and coordination, TKO received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to move the project forward. **That permission allows organized restoration work; it does not reopen the trail to the public**.

Pete and Bonnie Are Now Making a Special Gift to Help the Work Begin

Crews will face a significant undertaking. The route needs extensive brushing, tread work, and removal of large fallen trees. Its final stretch crosses a steep slope, and the gully where earlier structures failed will require careful technical planning. Pete hopes to be there as a volunteer as the work gets underway. As TKO trail parties begin this winter, people who want to help can join an organized volunteer event through TKO.

"It's just such a beautiful trail," he said. He implored, "Put this trail back on the map."

And so TKO is ready to step up. Pete and Bonnie's gift is rooted in one family's connection to one trail, but its meaning reaches much farther. It reflects what becomes possible when people bring the places they love into a larger community of stewardship. TKO provides the partnerships, technical knowledge, trained leaders, and volunteer power needed to turn that care into responsible, lasting work.

An Invitation to the TKO Legacy Builders community to match their generosity.

Together, we are working to raise an additional $25,000 from TKO's Legacy Builders. Gifts to the campaign support TKO's broader trail stewardship work, giving crews the capacity to care for trails across Oregon, respond when urgent needs arise, and keep building the next generation of skilled volunteers and crew leaders.

"It's really important to get people out in the woods so they'll treasure it," Pete said. "So they'll want to preserve it."

The trails that shape us are rarely ours alone. When we care for them together, they can become part of someone else's family story, first hike, quiet afternoon, or unforgettable view.

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