

Lee (00:03):

Hey, welcome to the Knit Picks Podcast. This is Lee, Knit Picks' Books' Graphic Designer. I'm here with-

Stacey (00:10):

Stacey as always. I'm the outreach director, which means I basically work with all the designers. Today we're talking about one of our favorite things, and that would be wool.

Lee (00:19):

Wool! Wool is my favorite fiber to knit with, what about you?

Stacey (00:25):

Same.

Lee (00:25):

Same. Yeah. It's the best. I mean, I'm sorry if you're allergic, it's not for everyone. It's not for everyone. But it is for a lot of us. And it has so many great things going for it.

Stacey (00:37):

Yeah. I really love working with wool. It reinvigorates my love of knitting because it feels so comfortable in the hands. And when I'm knitting, it just has that nice springiness, but not too springy like elastic or whatever. It's what I use. And it works for so many different kinds of projects and especially stuff I wear and stuff I use around the house. It's the perfect fiber personally.

Lee (01:04):

Yeah. I'm always cold so I can pretty much always wear wool and be fine and not overheat. My husband does overheat. He can't wear a wool hat unless it's in an ice storm, the coldest of cold, can he put wool on his head, but I can all the time.

Stacey (01:21):

That's funny. That's the same thing with my partner. Yeah. My partner is the same way. He won't wear wool hats. I've made him hats before and he never wears them. Even if it's cold out.

Lee (01:31):

He's like oh, I love it but I'm overheating instantly the second I put it on. I can wear wool hats around the house. I mean, not in the summer obviously, but yeah, I can wear wool hats all the time. And the itchiness doesn't bother me too much. I'm not too sensitive. But I think even if you do have not a full allergy, but just a wool sensitivity then usually Merino's going to be fine. So there's a wool for everyone, there's the harder wools, and the softer wools, and all the different sheep breeds have their own kind of qualities.

Stacey (02:01):

Yeah. Obviously as we've discussed in many podcasts, I knit and wear a lot of hand knit socks. And I also love wool, you do... Well, it is warm. My feet don't get really overheated with it because it's a good temperature control. And also the other great thing about wool is if it gets wet, it doesn't soak through as quickly as with cotton. I mean, we live in Oregon, it rains a lot. I wear hats in the rain. It doesn't get as soaked. You know what I mean?

Lee (02:38):

Yeah. Yeah. You can wear a wool hat out in the rain if it's a light drizzle for a long time, or if it's a heavy rain for a short time left, without getting your hair and head underneath wet.

Stacey (02:48):

Yeah. Which Oregon...

Lee (02:52):

All the time. Very applicable. Yeah. So when we're talking about wool, here in the US, I think it varies by country. We're talking about specifically sheep wool as opposed to a cashmere, mohair, something. So there's different animal fibers, generally speaking wool and other animal fibers too, but especially wool is extremely sustainable because sheep grow wool every year over and over, and then you shear it off and knit with it. And it uses very low resources for processing. Again, very generally speaking as opposed to plant fibers like cotton and bamboo, it uses a lot less water, a lot less chemicals, less harsh on the earth, on the ground. It's generally very good for the earth. Very sustainable. Good for breaking down afterwards just all these kinds of things. I think wool is the best of all factors, everything weighed. Pros and cons, wool is the winner of them all. According to me, I think, yeah.

Stacey (04:00):

I'm exactly the same way. I also love that, depending on the type of yarn and the twist and everything, it also lasts a lot longer and holds its shape and color better than other wools. I mean, I do love alpaca for certain things, but it can get stretched out. Cotton is the same way. Sometimes the cotton colors will fade more rapidly than a wool. And also, I don't know. I love wool. I really do. It's nice. And there are so many different kinds of wool. We mentioned I think that Merino is a good one for people with wool sensitivities, which I do have, if I wear something like next to the skin. But it's also a great way, you can also wear something underneath it, like a big warm wooly sweater. If it's irritating your skin wearing a cotton T-shirt or something underneath is what I end up doing. Or you can even do stuff like for hats, adding a liner in cashmere or something that won't irritate the wool.

Lee (05:06):

Even just like cotton, if you have sensitivity to animal fibers. I know we have an old coworker who's no longer with us, but she has wool sensitivities, but she would do a cotton lining layer on a hat to have a super warm hat with the qualities of wool, but without it touching the skin.

Stacey (05:22):

Yeah. So I think it's the best. Do you have a favorite of our wools that you love?

Lee (05:27):

Oh, man. I have very low sensitivity, so I'm good with basically any kind of wool. We at Knit Picks don't have a wool that's too scratchy for me personally. And I've knit with wools that are a lot scratchy, just used as a descriptor really like earthy. I've spun with Shetland wools, are more like scratchy. I don't have a list in front of me, but sometimes they get a little bit too itchy. But Knit Picks, the itchiest one is fine for me. I'm fine with it. So it depends on the project. I love twill because of stitch definition and softness, but I also love Wool of the Andes just for classic. And I love tweeds, pretty much any wool I'm good with.

Lee (06:19):

And my new favorite is what we're going to be talking about in this episode, which is High Desert, it's a Merino/Rambouillet blend. So it has the softness of Merino, but the more hardy sturdiness and not as... Merino can tend to be pretty pilly sometimes depending on how it's sewn. So if you blend Merino with something else and it can cut down on the pilliness and make it hardier and last longer, that's best of all types of wool blended together, basically.

Stacey (06:51):

Yeah. I absolutely love High Desert. To be honest, when we first started talking about Merino, I was like, oh, I don't know if we need another wool because honestly for me, twill and Hawthorne are the perfect yarns and those are the ones I use. And I'm like, oh, do we need another one? But then I started using it more and I've knit like several hats and it is so wonderful. It's a nice blend between... I mean, for people who've tried our yarns before, I'd say it's a really great blend between Swish and Wool of the Andes, that rustic wool mixed with a Merino, as you were saying. But with a slightly tighter twist, but shows up the stitch... I don't know, it's the best of all. I love it.

Lee (07:35):

Yeah. It really is like they took the best qualities of all the different kinds of wool and just smashed it into one yarn magically. Yeah.

Stacey (07:43):

Yeah. And it's cool because the Shaniko ranch, where we get most of it, is located about 100 miles from here. So it's our first 100% American grown and spun yarn, which was very exciting. I've spent a lot of time in Central and Eastern Oregon. So I haven't actually been to Shaniko, which is actually a cool story. It's a ghost town actually. And that's what they named it after. There's a big story on their website about it. It's just really interesting to me.

Lee (08:13):

Cool. Yeah. I haven't been there either, but I'm excited to take a road trip out there sometime I think.

Stacey (08:19):

I know those photos that were taken at the photo shoot there a few months ago. They're so beautiful. I'm dying to go back there.

Lee (08:30):

I mean, I'm biased because I chose to live here, but Oregon is the best state. Isn't it? Oregon is the best. We have everything. We have every kind of nature you could want here in our state.

Stacey (08:40):

Yeah, it's great. I mean, not to turn this into, we love Portland, but like you go 50, 100 miles in any direction and you get a different kind of scenery. 80 miles to the coast or 80 miles to the High Desert area of Oregon. And I don't know. It's...

Lee (09:01):

Up to the top of the mountain, in the afternoon. Yeah. It's the best. Yeah. But the High Desert region is not what people think of when they think of Oregon. Right? When people think of Oregon, they think of the forest, and the rain, and the moss and stuff, but we also have a High Desert. Yeah.

Stacey (09:19):

Yeah. Yeah. It's funny for people who move here, especially moving to Portland and realizing, oh no, there's this whole other part of the entire state that is just as beautiful in a completely different way. So anyway, we love our state. To be clear, Washington State is the same as... It's very similar to Oregon where it has the mountains and the forest, and then the High Desert of Washington State.

Lee (09:49):

Because Knit Picks is technically located in Washington state, but it's right over the river from Oregon so it's all kind of the same. Anyway... So in today's episode of the Knit Picks podcast, Knit Picks and WeCrochet's chief marketing officer, Ursula Morgan, interviews Jeanne Carver of the Shaniko Wool Company about the creation of our newest line Knit Picks High Desert, which is 100% American grown and spun Merino and Merino/Rambouillet wool.

Stacey (10:22):

High Desert comes in an earthy jewel-toned spectrum of 12 beautiful colors inspired by the landscape and skyline of Oregon's High Desert. A smooth rounded yarn with a soft hand available in sport and worsted weight, High Desert is ideal for knitting texture, cables, and color work. All right. So let's take a listen to the interview.

Lee (10:42):

Yay.

Ursula (10:48):

Hello everybody. I'm Ursula Morgan. I am the CMO here at Knit Picks in Vancouver, Washington. Lovely to be with you all here today. My background is in knitting and seams to string. I grew up in a crafting family in Ireland, which we just call that every day. And then I've done a master's in business and I've been in the crafting business for nigh on 20 years now.

And today I'm extremely excited that I've got Jeanne on the call here with me today. And Jeanne Carver is an awesome woman. She is an amazing lady who runs a ranch up here in the High Desert in Oregon. Welcome Jeanne. Do you want to tell us a little bit about you?

Jeanne (11:42):

Thank you, Ursula. I didn't know you were from Ireland. That was really fun to learn. So yes, well, I'm just an Oregon girl. I'm a native Oregon girl who grew up very rurally, always been a tomboy, horses were my first love and will always be a love. And I've always felt most alive outdoors, whether it's in the desert or the mountains, that's where I'm at home. So it's been a great privilege for me to be part of our historic ranching operation for a number of decades now. And we've owned and operated the Imperial Stock Ranch since the late 1980s. And since the early 1870s, this ranch has produced sheep, which we're talking about today with the beautiful wool, but also cattle, grains and hay.

Jeanne (12:32):

And our headquarters is a national historic district. It's the only ranch in Oregon with that designation that is still operating. So we're living history every day. We're a living history museum. But the work we do today is a continuation of the timeless skills and traditions of tending land and tending animals and harvesting beautiful fiber, like the wool and your High Desert yarns. The land inspires us every day, and I think the beautiful wool has inspired Knit Picks to create this incredible yarn that you guys have just put on the market.

Ursula (13:11):

So how did you get into ranching sheep? What happened in your life or was it a family thing? How did this all happen?

Jeanne (13:21):

Well, actually, no. I went to high school right where I am, in the closest town, which is 27 miles away. And then went off to college and went into a career. But when I met my husband and married him, I came home to my roots. That's what happened. And his dream had always been to ranch in the Oregon desert. And when he had the opportunity to take over this historic ranch, he took it. And so when we married, our dreams came together and I left my career and joined him and never looked back. And so you take on whatever is required of a ranch wife, that's what you do. But it was true to my nature and my roots to come to this place, which turns out to be really, really important. This place is very important.

Ursula (14:12):

So true confessions, I've only been living in this part of the world since January, 2020, and I did do a road trip to Bend and we did pass through the High Desert. And I didn't know what High Desert was. Can you explain to me what is High Desert and what makes it special?

Jeanne (14:32):

Well, the High Desert means that our elevation is higher and we're in a semi-arid interior. Around the world, you have weather that moves from over the oceans coming inland, and it hits

mountain ranges and it drops all its moisture. And in our part of the country, that means the Cascades and of course, West of the Cascades, between the Pacific and our country is that rich Willamette Valley, and all that Western Oregon kind of country in Washington. But you cross through the Cascade mountains into the interior and it's a whole different world. And so we get about eight to ten inches of rain per year. If that, every drop is precious and it truly impacts how you think, how you live, and how you work.

Jeanne (15:23):

It's a very rich place that unless you walk the land and into the canyons, I mean, on our ranch, when people drive by on the paved roads, which are not on our place, but you have to leave pavement to get into where we are. But driving by this country, it looks pretty barren. People might think, wow, there's nothing out here, but it's so untrue. You walk that land and go into the canyons and up the ridges and the rim rocks, you'll see a whole variety of vegetation communities. We have numerous creeks, we're the birthplace of two creek systems that feed the wild and scenic Deschutes River, which is this incredible desert river. So we're the birthplace of two creeks, both Buck Hollow Creek and Bakeoven Creek, are two separate drainers that are born on our ranch. And you walk down through those creeks as they begin and come clear. If you could have the time to walk to where they dump into the Deschutes River, you would pass amazing communities of wildlife and plants. It's just an amazing landscape. And it's my inspiration every day.

Ursula (16:31):

Oh my God. That is so amazing. I did not know that. So tell me then about... because you talk about your happy sheep. And I lived in California for a while and there was an ad on the telly for happy cows in California. They all wanted to move from Texas. So I want to know this landscape and the soil that you have, then all of that, how did you pick a breed of sheep or how does that affect the sort of wildlife and the stock that you have and all of that?

Jeanne (17:04):

That's a lot to unpack. Let me just say that, a lot of the Western United States is not good land for cropping, for intensive farming. We are too arid. And so there are many, many different soil types. In fact, on our place, we have our own soil type. It's called the Bakeoven biscuit complex and it's its own soil type. You'll see mounds of soil. And then you'll see these, what we call scabs of rock. This is not farming land, right? Although the early founder did clear rocks with a sled and a horse and established some of the fields that we still farm today, but it's all dry land. There's no irrigation. You work with what the creator has given us. And every drop is precious.

Jeanne (17:54):

And so when the founder came here, his name was Richard Hinton and he left the Willamette Valley to come east to the mountains to be a stockman. That was his dream as a young man. Right? And he knew that these higher elevations with colder temperatures and semi-arid would be perfect for raising fine wool sheep, because fine wools don't do really well in very wet climates. That's why you all have coarser wools. So if you're raising a fine wool, the high elevation interior, more arid country is perfect.

Ursula (18:30):

Oh my God. That makes so much sense.

Jeanne (18:33):

Yeah. And so the sheep, they... Well, so let me go back to his story. So he knew this, but he didn't really have the breeds that he needed. So he came into the mountains in 1871 to the interior, filed on 160-acre homestead claim where our ranch headquarters is. He lived in a cave for his first many years. In fact, his first wife, he brought home to the cave dwelling, right? The first Mrs. Hinton, her and I are much alike, right? We stitch everything to make it work. Right? And so he began importing French Merino, which were known as Rambouillet in the 1880s, to the interiors of Oregon to establish his fine wool flocks. And these sheep graze native ecosystems. So this is what I mean about, you can take all this interior, American west and farm it, it's grazing land.

Jeanne (19:32):

It works well as grazing land. And in fact, it's the intention of the creator that plants and grazing animals, there's a synergy there that benefits both. And so grazers are very important to the health of the ecosystems, right? And so our sheep graze these native ecosystems and the plant communities they graze vary by land and soil type. And grazing is really a critical element to the health of the ecosystem when it's well managed. So when they're raised in this kind of a climate, the fleece is more dense and more lofty, and it remains very clean for one thing. So you'll only see dirt in the very ends of the fiber. You won't see it down next to the skin because of the density of the fleece. And these climate conditions really contribute to the quality of the wool, as well as your breeding. Breeding, of course is very key.

Jeanne (20:30):

So the genetic selection of replacement stock and the rams that you choose, the qualities of the fleece, meaning the Micron, which is the fiber diameter, that's really key. And your High Desert yarns, the wool, and that is primarily Merino or Merino/Rambouillet cross. And the ranchers in our Shaniko Wool Company farm group have been working for many, many decades. Each family in our group is much like us. We have so many parallels. I'm so humbled and honored to have these families join this effort with me to scale a supply of certified wool for companies like Knit Picks, because they have been working on their genetics and their breeding choices for many, many years, for the best Micron, the length of the fiber. So it makes a strong yarn. You want a nice, substantial fiber length. It's very important. The color and the cleanliness are all contributing factors, as well as the conditions they graze under.

Jeanne (21:37):

And the climate factors we've talked about. All these things contribute. And then the care, the sheep graze today. And I don't know if this is going beyond your question, but we have seven families in Shaniko Wool Company, and together we are stewarding. We are tending together about one and a half million acres of land. That's a pretty big impact. It's all under certification to this global standard. And we're at about a little over 20,000 head of sheep under certification. And it's amazing the quality of management of these families in nurturing both the landscape and the quality of life of the sheep.

Ursula (22:25):

Wow. And talk to me a little bit more about this certification and the impact that you want to have on the environment because you touched on it with the ecosystem, but a little bit more?

Jeanne (22:37):

Ursula, I don't know how far back you want to go in the story, so you'll just have to stop me.

Ursula (22:41):

You go away. You've just educated me on something that I will wrap up on the end with it. I just had like a jaw dropping moment of things making sense in my life as well. So keep going.

Jeanne (22:52):

We have to realize first it starts with my husband and his dream of ranching in this country. And he's always wanting to see the land win because all of us, anywhere in the world, we can look around every day and see where the earth is losing. We can't keep doing that as a population. And so his goal on this piece he controlled was to see the land win. And back in 1989, with the help of some wonderful agency resource specialists, we created a conservation management plan. And we have operated under that management plan since 1989 with continuing monitoring and adjustments, right? First mindset changes. That's how it has to start. And then practices on the land, changing how we did things. That in the end, combined over 20 years returned salmon to our creeks and record numbers in the desert.

Jeanne (23:51):

This is a huge, huge victory. The wake up call came when the salmon were almost extinct. The work that we were motivated to do has led to in our own lifetime, the return of these salmon to these creeks. Okay, salmon are perhaps the greatest indicator species of health of an entire system. This work is what we were focused on until I found it necessary to find a new way to sell our wool harvest. I don't think we can go to that story, but that began for me back in 1999. And it led me into taking our wool as a rancher all the way to the runway, from ranch to runway. I took wool. Finding the supply chain, the spinning mills, the knitters, the people, whatever it took to do it.

Jeanne (24:44):

And finally, about 2015, I was contacted by a very global leading brand who happens to be leading also in their environmental sustainability, their footprint. And they asked me in providing our wool to them, if we wouldn't be willing to come under a third party auditing but voluntary global benchmark program that was built to improve the sustainability of yarn and textiles in the world. And that program is called the Responsible Wool Standard. So we looked at what its requirements were and said, well, this is great. These are the things we already believe in. Of course we're willing to be audited by a third party, to see that we're actually doing what we say we're doing. And so it was the beginning for me of being involved in the RWS, the Responsible Wool Standard developed by Textile Exchange. And our ranch, Imperial Stock Ranch actually became the first ranch in the world certified under that program. So we've been certified since it

was launched. In the fall of 2018, I had pulled back from my textile business and yarn business at that point. And I think you know that, I've told you this story.

Jeanne (26:07):

I had to step away and sell that business or close it down in order to care for my husband who had increasing health issues. And so I was on the sidelines, Ursula. It was during that time, I believe I spoke at an event and someone from Knit Picks heard me speak and thought, wow, wouldn't it be great if we could ever make a yarn in the US with wool coming from those kinds of ranches, right? They care for the land and animals like that. Okay. So in the fall of '18, I decided that I would step back into this industry differently. Especially the needle arts, because all of the knitters and crafters who came alongside me in the early 2000s to help me learn. And they taught me so much, they became my family, mostly women, but also men who knit, and crochet, and felt, and weave and spin.

Jeanne (27:06):

It was an amazing community of people. And so I decided to step back in, but this time I would come in differently. I would just find some other ranches willing to go through this third party audit that I knew had the same kind of practices. And I would scale up a supply of certified wool for those companies like Knit Picks who wanted to trust their sourcing of the fiber, as well as the care that you give in the development of the yarn with your partners that spin it and dye it and bring it from your warehouse into the homes of all these knitters that are loving it. Right? And so I said, I can. So I reached out to a couple of ranches and I told them about this.

Jeanne (27:53):

And I said, you don't have to do it. It's voluntary. But if you will, there's a couple of things I can guarantee you. One, the pride you will feel in bringing a wool produced with this care to the consumer and two, instead of just selling your wool at an auction and having it go in a container somewhere, and you never know where your harvest, your life's work ends up, you will know where it is. And today, those guys are touching the High Desert yarn made with their wool. And that feels really good, right? That's probably the greatest victory right there. So that's what the Responsible Wool Standard is. So Shaniko Wool Company, I essentially work with the ranches to find out how they do things and then if all of their practices meet the standard, the requirements that they are RWS, then we sign an NDA, a nondisclosure agreement, because their private family details are confidential.

Jeanne (28:58):

And then I help them with all of the actual documentation that it takes to be ready for an auditor. And Shaniko Wool pays all the fees and what do they get out of this? They have a chance to be part of a very credible program. It costs them nothing to be part of Shaniko Wool. They get a premium for their wool and 100% of that goes to their bottom line. So it's really supporting family ranches who raised sheep in the American West. And it's supporting our US manufacturers who are still remaining here, fighting for every order they get. And because all of Shaniko Wool is processed into a product like the High Desert yarn right here in the US.

Ursula (29:43):

Oh my Lord. So I'm going to tell all you listeners that it was April last year, so a little over a year ago, I was talking to Hannah from Knit Picks and I said, "Hannah, wouldn't it be great to have an American yarn?" And she said, "Oh, you've got it." This has been my dream. Always wanted to work with Jeanne. She is awesome. So I emailed Jeanne and said, "Knit Picks wants to produce from your sheep". And she said yes. I'm like, oh my God, this is amazing. It happened all so fast. And it's been a marriage made in heaven.

Ursula (30:28):

And the High Desert yarn that I am squishing right now to my face because it's so gorgeous, took a year to develop because getting the fleeces to the mill and then the dye batching and all of that. So it's been a year in its birth, and you just made the penny drop from you Jeanne. I grew up in Ireland. So I grew up wearing Aran jumpers or pullovers as you call them here, itchy, scratchy. And I couldn't understand how you developed a yarn that was so soft. And it's this sheep and the fiber you produce.

Jeanne (31:06):

Yes. Yes. Well, Ursula, I was not a fiber artist. And I wasn't involved in anything to do with manufacturing wool. I was close to the soil, tending sheep and raising the fiber, harvesting it and us too. We would sell it every year. And for 130 years on our ranch, almost, it was sold as a commodity and went away. And that was it. You didn't think about it again. This journey I took in 1999, we called up our wool buyer. We had sold to the same company for 100 years and we said, we're ready to haul the wool. What price will you give us this year? What will we get? Let's see, we had a very good wool, a finer wool, a courser wool because of where we are in the desert. And because of the early breeding of the founder of our ranch, the homesteader in 1871, who was the visionary who created this, right?

Jeanne (32:05):

We're simply carrying on, but I knew nothing about the processes. And this began a journey that taught me so much. And your comment right now of growing up in Ireland and what you wore, I've been blessed with an opportunity in the last two years to do a book. And it will actually be out in early October and it's called Stories of Fashion, Textiles and Place. Because it turns out place is really an important part of the story. But in my research for the book, because I got to write the story of Harris Tweed, which is in the outer islands Hebrides of Scotland. And so I went there last summer and I visited... Well, I guess it was the summer before, before COVID and visited the hand weavers and all the mills.

Jeanne (32:57):

And they do raise a much coarser wool, but they've been very successful with that wool in certain applications. What happened for me in the yarns, and then I took it on to apparel and home textiles in my earlier efforts, was I took a fine wool into all those applications. So all of a sudden you have a fine wool in this beautiful heather yarn and you knit it up and it's not scratchy, right? Or this beautiful rich blue or a gray or whatever it is. And it feels good.

Ursula (33:32):

Oh my Lord. And also it's... I'm knitting at the moment for my grandson with it. And I explained it to Matt Petkun. Who's our president because he's always asking me what I think about things. And I said to Matt, it was the Monday before last on a one-on-one. And I said, it's almost like knitting with ice cream or feels like a knitting hug, but it's lovely and springy. And it brings a joy to that touch. That it's fabulous. And, oh my Lord, we are so privileged and so honored to be partnering with you Jeanne on this High Desert range of yarn. And you gave me goosebumps. I've got a tear in my eye right now as well. That so touched by this history and being a part of that. So thank you so much.

Jeanne (34:23):

Well, thank you because it takes a company, which is people. It's the people inside a brand or a company that brings it to life, right? And it takes people with vision and the courage to walk something new forward to make it happen. But that's one of the greatest lessons I've learned in this journey of trying to bring our world to the market ourselves, right? Is that when you actually do that, all those supposed divides between urban and rural fall away. They all disappear because for each of us, in our histories, our grandparents, our great grandparents, they raised their own fiber and their own food. But as our society "advanced" we got disconnected from that. And it first became important in our foods. But today it's more so in the fibers, it's in all things. And so it takes people inside the companies with the vision to reconnect this, to bring this back together.

Jeanne (35:33):

And in doing that, by bringing this High Desert yarn, you've also connected all of the people out there knitting with it, to us. You can't believe how many of your people I'm hearing from, and it's terrific. It's terrific. They're reaching up. They're sending me an email, I'm getting phone calls. They can go to my website and they... My phone number is there, so we talk about the sheep and the land. All of a sudden, it's more relevant. It means something, they feel a part of. And truly they are. When you buy our wool, you are part of making a difference on the land and with animals at our ranches, for this group of ranches and Shaniko Wool Company. And the customers who are knitting with it, same thing when you purchase it, you are part of the solution of environmental stewardship and humane animal handling.

Jeanne (36:32):

And with our new carbon initiative actually documenting our true climate impact of how much carbon we're sequestering, on an annual basis on the lands that we manage. So that step to identify clear to the source of your fiber and making your yarn, is a very leading step for Knit Picks. And I'm so grateful that you did that and honored to be a part of it. And to support you because without you, we have nothing. Without you, we have raw grease wool. And what can you do with that? Right?

Ursula (37:12):

You make beautiful desert yarn.

Jeanne (37:14):

Yes. There you go. But it takes you to make it a reality. Without you, we're nothing. The same thing's true with our milling partners, right?

Ursula (37:22):

Yes. Yeah. We have great milling partners. Yes.

Jeanne (37:24):

We have to have them. Without them, we have nothing. Now, there are the forgotten makers in our world. There's our forgotten makers, the women and men who are... It's the stay at-home knitters that taught me the value of traditional skills. I know that the skills of tending land and animals are timeless, and they're as important and as critical today, maybe more so than they've ever been. I didn't realize the importance of knitting and spinning and crochet and weaving. I didn't. And some of your listeners, I'm sure are all of those.

Jeanne (38:05):

They're knitters, but they also spin, they weave, they may dye yarn and all, right? Those traditional skills have also become disconnected, unimportant in our culture for a period of time. And that's so unfortunate because in this journey, I have learned that they are absolutely as critical today as they've ever been and how important it is to teach that to a new generation and carry these skills on because they are important to the survival of every culture and every country. And that means here today and around the world.

Ursula (38:43):

Jeanne, I think you brought us home beautifully. Absolutely beautifully. And I think what you're saying resonates to so many people and having these skills and using these skills now have become so important to us. And I think even in the last year, what we've all been through has really spotlighted that and brought that home as well. Thank you so much for sharing.

Jeanne (39:06):

Yes. One day when there's nothing on the shelf at the grocery store and the retail stores are empty, we better know how to make some food and make some hats and gloves. We better know how to do that.

Ursula (39:21):

Thank you so much for sharing that wonderful story, I could stay on with you for hours. So Jeanne, can you tell us how can people find out more about your mission and your vision and maybe find some little bit more tidbits that we haven't had to touch on today?

Jeanne (39:40):

Yes. Well, I wouldn't say that's my greatest strength, okay? But I do have a website. It was built to be very simple. And that is Shaniko which is S-H-A-N-I-K-O shanikowoolcompany.com all spelled out all the words. And I am going to be improving that, to put more of the stories of the ranchers behind it and the carbon initiative on it, but it is there and it does give background and it does give contact information. And then I do have a Shaniko Wool Company page on my

Jeanne Carver Facebook. And I have Instagram and Twitter. And I'm really lousy at all of this. I'm trying, but I've got to tell you, and maybe, I don't know if this is time or not, but I was doing a lot better with that before 2014.

Jeanne (40:35):

And when Ralph Lauren, I don't know... You know that I was the face of their maiden America Olympic uniforms. Right? I lost control of the whole... I became paralyzed by the whole social networking. It just exploded and I hid for a number of years. So I'm out of the closet again, but I'm not really good at it. So I would love for people to follow Shaniko Wool Company on Twitter, Instagram, and find my Facebook page on Jeanne Carver, and I'm trying to do better. So yeah, I'm trying to do better, but I'm not really good at all that. Maybe it's my age.

Ursula (41:17):

No, it's not. Do not say that at all. So I think we can probably help out with a few tips and tricks on Instagram, Knit Picks is quite good there. But also I would not underestimate this news, go to the Shaniko website. It is beautiful. There are lovely images. Google the town as well. It's a fantastic little town. It's a ghost town, it's a cowboy town. It's like the Oregon trail town. So yeah, just do all of that and you're going to get deeper and deeper into this story and you're going to love it.

Jeanne (41:57):

Well, thank you all very much. Thank you.

Ursula (41:59):

It's been a pleasure and maybe we have to do a part two at some stage, but thank you so much. And thank you for being part of the Knit Picks family and being such a great partner to us and helping us do something pretty amazing. So you are appreciated and thank you for all the hard work that you're doing with the other ranchers as well.

Jeanne (42:20):

Thank you. Well, it's a privilege and I'm honored to work with you, and I'm certainly humbled and honored to work with the ranchers in the Shaniko farm group. They are amazing.

Ursula (42:32):

Thank you, Jeanne.

Jeanne (42:33):

Okay.

Stacey (42:34):

This podcast was originally created by Kelley Petkin.

Lee (42:38):

It is produced and hosted by me, Lee Meredith and Stacey Winklepleck.

Stacey (42:43):

With additional content from Ursula Morgan and Jeannie Carver.

Lee (42:46):

It is produced and edited by Sarah Nairalez and produced by Heather Mann.

Stacey (42:51):

Production assistance by Remi Ostermiller.

Lee (42:54):

Special thanks to Hannah Maier.

Stacey (42:56):

We recorded this episode while wearing our favorite wools.

Lee (43:00):

A big thank you to our friends at Connecting Threads podcast and WeCrochet podcast where we're all keeping the craft in crafting.

Stacey (43:07):

From everyone here at Knit Picks, thank you for joining us.

Lee (43:10):

Everything mentioned in this episode, along with all the yarn tools and inspiration a knitter could need, can be found on our website at [knitpicks dot com](http://knitpicks.com).

Stacey (43:18):

If you'd like to be on our podcast, leave us a voicemail. We'll be checking it regularly and using your calls in later episodes. To leave a voicemail call, 360-334-4847 and record your message. You can also record a voice memo on your phone and email us that audio file at podcast@knitpicks.com.

Lee (43:40):

Like and follow us on your favorite social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube at Knit Picks.

Stacey (43:48):

Rate and review us wherever you listen to this podcast.

Lee (43:51):

Until next time, happy crafting.

Ursula (43:56):

I got goosebumps.