



Columbia Land Trust

CONSERVING THE NATURE YOU LOVE

# CONSERVATION REPORT

2017-2018





Columbia River Gorge  
© Brian Chambers Photography

# A Shared Blueprint

## Building a Northwest where all life thrives

We live on an amazing planet, one of a kind in the known universe. We have a protective atmosphere, abundant water and rich soil, minerals, and highly complex, diverse, and interconnected life. The Pacific Northwest plays a critical global role in fish and bird migratory systems and in overall planetary health. The people of the Northwest, from indigenous times to present day, take a special pride in knowing, loving, and caring for nature.

Still, human impacts to the planet and to the Pacific Northwest have been accelerating and people are more disconnected from nature than ever before. Species are going extinct at record rates, our air and water is often fouled, and our atmosphere is undergoing dramatic change. Locally and around the globe, this generation will play a crucial role in determining the fate of all life on earth. As a dominant presence on the planet, we have an obligation to behave in ways that support this precious, interconnected life.

Fortunately, across our diverse human communities we share common values in support of nature. In the Pacific Northwest especially we can be fearless role models for the rest of the country and world. Columbia Land Trust is one of the Northwest's leading conservation groups mobilizing people to act to conserve our amazing nature, from our backyards to our farms, forests, and wild places.

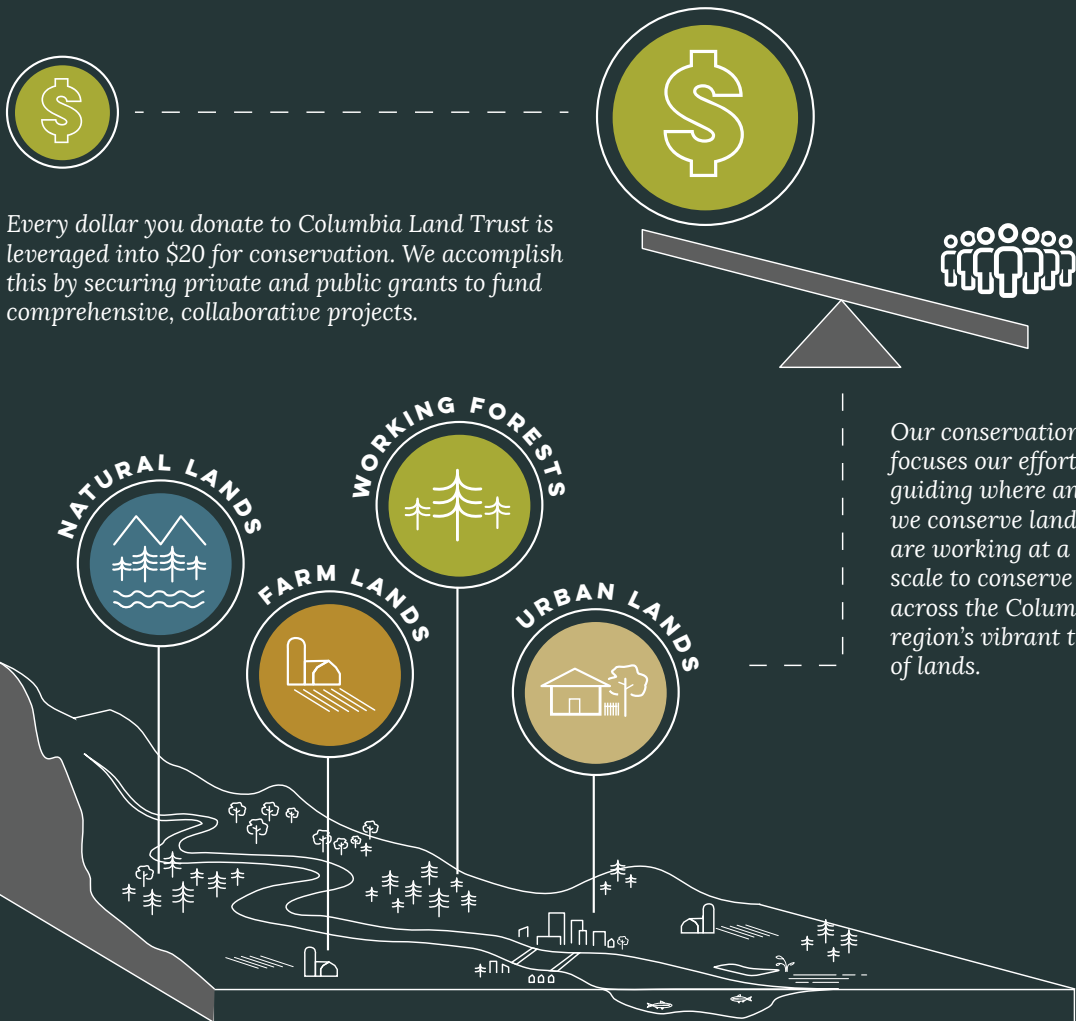
In 2017, Columbia Land Trust adopted a conservation agenda that offers a shared blueprint for taking action to conserve the Pacific Northwest. This agenda shows how we can unite people from rural and urban communities in support of the nature of the Northwest. In order to succeed, we all must play a role. We must look beyond our own perspectives to consider the needs and threats to all human and non-human life.

This report shows our 2017 successes and 2018 actions to implement this new agenda. First, we'll look first at our broad conservation initiatives, then visit each of the five ecologically-distinct regions, or ecoregions, in which we work for detailed accounts of our work on specific sites.

# How your gift grows

The four-year objectives outlined in our agenda require \$1.2 million per year, which we're poised to **leverage into \$100 million worth of conservation**. Thanks to generous individual donors, foundations, and funding agencies, we met our goal in 2017. Over the next three years, we need to dig even deeper. This unprecedented capacity-building campaign calls on more Northwesterners to be fearless. If you enjoy all the good that the Northwest's wetlands, forests, mountains, meadows, high deserts, parks, and trails have to offer, join us in taking action. Support the places that we're losing to development at a mind-bending pace.

Your investment today will help permanently protect the nature of the Northwest, funding more conservation in the next three years than in our previous 27 years combined. We have the plan, the staff, and the determination to make it happen. All we need is you.





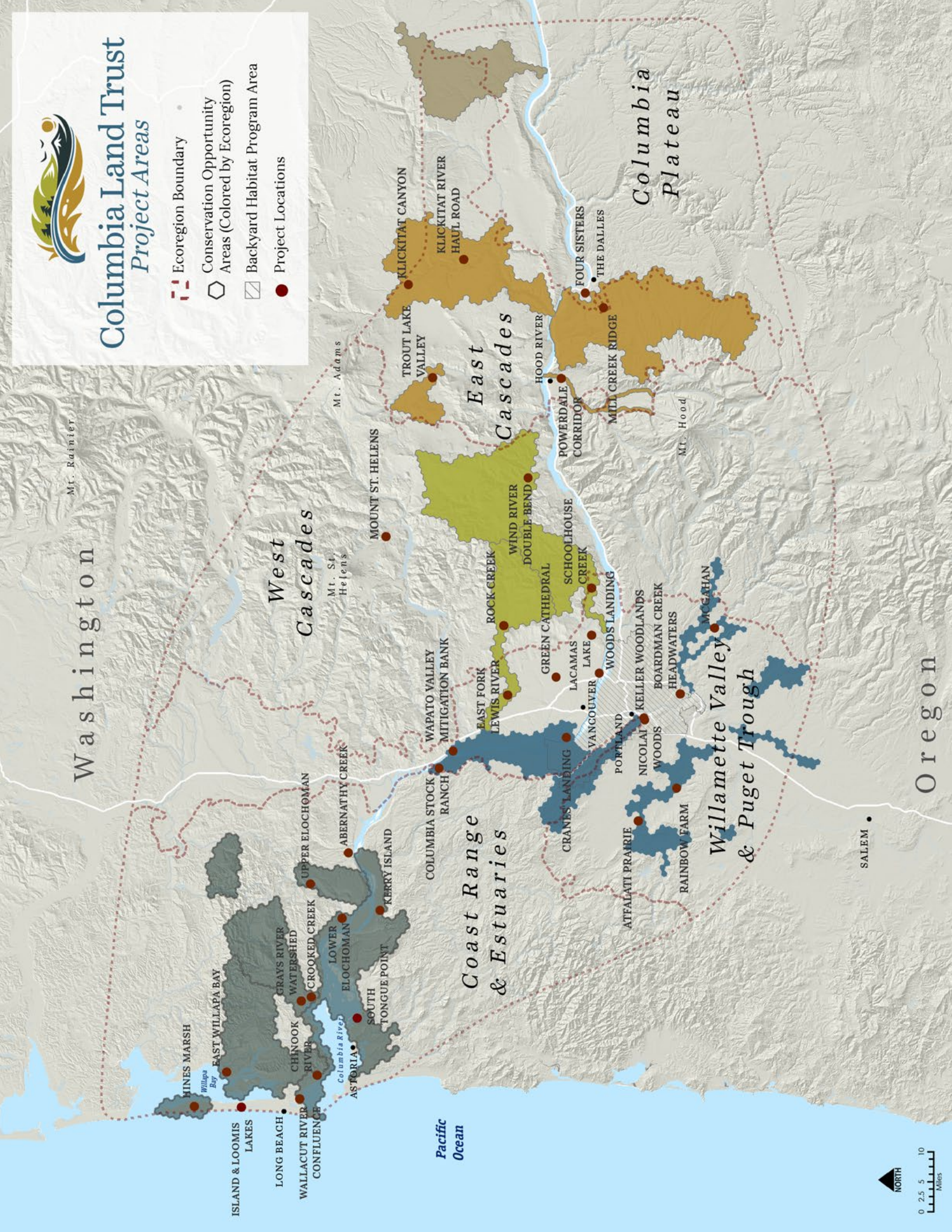
## About Conservation Opportunity Areas

When drafting our conservation agenda, we identified geographies most vital to our region's wildlife, which we dubbed conservation opportunity areas (COAs). When establishing COAs, we analyzed the current presence of wildlife species and habitat, landscape connectivity, climate resiliency, expert opinion, and local knowledge. The map on the next page depicts our highest priority COAs color-coded by ecoregion. Throughout this report, we've noted when site-specific projects exist within COAs. Increasingly, new projects will fall within these areas of strategic focus.



# Columbia Land Trust Project Areas

- Ecoregion Boundary
- Conservation Opportunity Areas (Colored by Ecoregion)
- Backyard Habitat Program Area
- Project Locations





# OUR AGENDA AT WORK

*A scene from a cattle drive in the Simcoe Mountains, Klickitat County, WA. Photo by Gabriel Olson*

## Innovation at a Grand Scale

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Our 25-year conservation agenda describes ambitious goals to conserve the broad landscapes of the Northwest. Traditional land trust tools such as acquiring, restoring and stewarding land, while essential, aren't enough to achieve these goals. In addition, we face significant social impediments to fundamentally changing the pace and scale of conservation. This section describes the innovative approaches that we will use to gain far bigger conservation outcomes. Our long-term objectives are:

**REMOVE** social, political, and economic barriers to land conservation.

**ENGAGE** thousands of people in the Land Trust's work to build long-term support for conservation and foster a culture of stewardship.

**INCLUDE** partners and communities in decision-making to improve ecological conditions through collaborative restoration and enhancement.

**ENSURE** that the agenda represents a shared, inclusive vision for the region, and that it is implemented by a culturally-diverse set of partners and individuals.

## Working Lands

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### Our Challenge

Conservationists and working landowners are frequently at odds, fighting rather than collaborating. We are missing out on increased funding and incentives that could come from building strong relationships between all those invested in caring for the land.

### Our Solution

Build strong trust and listening based on our shared goals of caring for the nature of the Northwest.

### Oregon Agricultural Outreach Program

Columbia Land Trust is playing a lead role in an Oregon state-wide strategy to build positive relationships between land trusts and agricultural landowners after years of increasing political tensions and legislative attempts to curtail land conservation and wetland restoration efforts across Oregon. In 2016, we commissioned a study as a first step toward this goal.

As recommended by the report, Columbia Land Trust, the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, and the Land Trust Alliance are working to improve the relationship between farmers and land trusts, forging a partnership based on shared goals of protecting farms and ranches, and ensuring they continue to provide a myriad of ecological and economic services into the future. We are seeking to increase the effectiveness of conservation tools on these working lands in the Willamette Valley, to reduce opposition to our work, and to grow new funding and incentives for conservation in Oregon.

### Klickitat Simcoe Mountains Community Forest

There is a movement where communities across the Northwest in rural and urban, both west and east of the Cascades Mountains, see the benefits of bringing forestland ownership closer to home. Columbia Land Trust has been a leading voice in this movement. We helped create the Northwest Community Forest Coalition and now we are helping develop funding and support programs for community forestry.

The Simcoe Mountains in Klickitat County are a case in point for a potential community forest that could provide benefits of forest revenue, public access, clean water, habitat, and grazing. Spanning nearly 70,000 acres in the foothills of Mt. Adams, this forest is cherished as a viewshed and resource for Klickitat County. Columbia Land Trust, with Klickitat County commissioners and community leaders, is sharing this story in the State's capitol to help advance understanding, support, and funding for community forestry with the goal of helping Washington State develop a grant program for community forests.

## Sustainable Forests

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### Our Challenge

Forests in the Northwest are one of our most important natural resources. They are essential to our economy and for wildlife habitat. Columbia Land Trust supports both of these goals. The challenge is supporting sustainable forest management practices on some of our publicly-owned forests while ensuring protection of our remaining old-growth stands. Forested communities in the Northwest are bound to their surrounding forests, relying on them for county revenue, jobs, and recreation. Our goal is to help strike a balance in public forest management.

### Our Solution

Columbia Land Trust spearheaded a concept that has now become a Washington State



*A patchwork of forestland visible beyond Pine Creek, Skamania County, WA*

Steering Committee, which includes diverse representation of three forest-reliant counties, Department of Natural Resources leadership, Office of the State Superintendent, and forestry and habitat advocates. The team is developing forest land trades that would release working forests for harvest to provide revenue and provide protection status for older habitat forests.

## **Willapa Hills and Skamania Forest Strategy**

One area of focus for this strategy is in the Willapa Hills in Pacific and Wahkiakum counties where forestry is core to local culture and economy. The other area is Skamania County where the national forest, state forest and Columbia Gorge National Scenic area have

been at the core of disagreement and conflict over how to manage the forest. With Skamania County leaders, the Land Trust is creatively seeking a solution that will include working forestry revenues for the county as well as habitat protection.

## **Conserving Habitat Corridors**



### **Our Challenge**

In certain areas, critical habitat corridors are so vast that traditional conservation strategies are ineffective.



## Our Solution

Create collaborative partnerships that provide education, incentives, and support for better land management of critical habitats.

### Tualatin River Partnership

The Tualatin River watershed is the Portland-Vancouver region's largest watershed, comprising one quarter of the region. It contributes a high amount of essential habitat and ecological functions relied upon by urban residents and wildlife. It is also experiencing significant pressure as the urban growth boundary and population of Portland continues to expand west. Recognizing the unique pressures and opportunities within the Tualatin River watershed, Columbia Land Trust has prioritized it a geography in which we will focus significant effort over the next four years. We will deploy land acquisition, restoration, partnership, and engagement strategies in this area.

### East Cascades Oak Partnership

In September 2017, the Land Trust received a \$100,000 OWEB Focused Investment Partnership grant to initiate the East Cascades Oak Partnership. The partnership was ranked first among eight applications across the state of Oregon. The partnership has over 80 active individual members and is a two-state, three-county, multi-agency effort to prioritize oak habitat conservation and restoration in the East Cascades ecoregion. Land Trust staff conceived of and initiated the partnership, which is the first regional-scale effort to prioritize increasingly threatened oak habitats east of the Cascades. Over the next two years, this group will lead mapping, classification, outreach, education, and conservation prioritization efforts in the East Cascades.

# Connecting More People to Nature

## Our Challenge

People are increasingly disconnected from nature. Support for new public funding and incentives is weak. We need to ensure that the next generation knows, loves, and cares for nature.

## Our Solution

Dramatically increase the number of people supporting nature conservation.

### Engage One Million People in Conservation

In a project led by the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, Columbia Land Trust will play a key role in a statewide communications strategy to expand public knowledge about nature and conservation. The Coalition envisions Oregon land trusts as beloved and essential institutions representative of their communities, listening to and addressing their citizens' needs, moving hearts and minds, and creating a rising tide of lasting public support that will make conservation an imperative issue for all communities in Oregon. We have a unique opportunity to initiate this work in Oregon and then extend this work by sharing it in other states across the country. This work could also inform a national campaign spearheaded by the Land Trust Alliance.

The first three years of the Coalition campaign will focus on understanding land trusts' current collective capacity, developing statewide messaging to build greater awareness, building capacity to engage with more people and new diverse audiences to support land conservation, and initiating a statewide communications and engagement initiative to build a strong, diverse foundation of support.



Nearly 30 volunteers came out to Cranes' Landing for a planting event. Photo by Paul Peloquin

## Expand the Backyard Habitat Program

Columbia Land Trust has partnered with the Audubon Society of Portland to manage the Backyard Habitat Certification Program (BHCP) since 2009. The BHCP is an initiative within Multnomah and Clackamas counties to preserve privately held green space in the developed landscape. The program is widely recognized as an integral component of conservation education and habitat enhancement across the region, and the added value of community-building makes it an important asset.

Specifically, the BHCP educates city residents about natural habitats and empowers them to

make meaningful changes to their communities one yard at a time. The work members are doing in their yards is crucial to habitat in the urban center, an area very much in need of green space, and supports migratory birds and other wildlife by providing sanctuaries needed to thrive. Moreover, this work is critical in that it educates those who live in urban areas of the importance of stewarding and maintaining healthy ecosystems.

BHCP currently works in eight cities in Multnomah and Clackamas counties and enrolls over 700 new properties each year. Currently, the



*Korina received gold certification for her efforts planting a mix of native and ornamental species in her yard.*

program has nearly 4,500 properties enrolled and covers over 1,200 urban acres. Annually, 80 volunteers contribute 1,200+ volunteer hours to support program operations and work with local green businesses to provide tens of thousands of native plants to participants.

The Backyard Habitat program is increasingly being seen by local natural resource managers as important to supporting municipal conservation efforts. In 2016, we worked with the City of Gresham to expand our services into Gresham and Fairview. In 2017, with funding from local agencies serving Clackamas county,

we expanded into new areas of Clackamas County, including West Linn, Milwaukie, Oak Grove, and Jennings Lodge. In spring of 2018, we will complete our expansion into the urban parts of Clackamas County by adding Oregon City, Wilsonville, Happy Valley, Gladstone, and Damascus to our service area. We anticipate expanding into Washington and Clark counties within the next few years.

# ENGAGEMENT



*Emerging Leaders Council and friends at Klickitat Canyon*

## Building a Stronger Movement

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In 2017, we at Columbia Land Trust made a commitment to practice fearless conservation. This meant evolving and expanding beyond our traditional approaches to conservation, as well as having earnest conversations in search of common ground.

We asked how to arrive at enduring, equitable conservation solutions. To get a better sense of how best to serve the communities of the Columbia River region, we connected with more people in more ways than ever before. We made strides in 2017, but we're at the outset of a long journey.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In 2017, The Land Trust staff formed an interdepartmental committee to advance equity and inclusion across the organization. In its first year, the committee worked with a consultant to establish a committee charter and conduct multiple trainings with the entire staff and well as the board of directors. In addition, the committee published equity commitments that will be core to the Land Trust's efforts moving forward. Within these commitments, we at the Land Trust acknowledged that we have been slow to elevate equity as a value, that the organization doesn't currently reflect the diversity of the Columbia River region, and that it can and should do better.

## Tours, Volunteering, and Events

We led many tours and volunteer events to connect people to the land in 2017. Tours explored Columbia River Gorge pika habitat, coastal wetlands and plants, backyard habitats, and sandhill crane-filled croplands. Meanwhile, our volunteers helped us in the office, took amazing photographs, planted willow cuttings, cleaned up litter stranded along the Columbia River, and wrangled invasive blackberry, holly, and English ivy. In 2017 alone, volunteers with HP visited the Woods Landing property near their office on four occasions to maintain the landscape.

We convened supporters to celebrate the launch of our conservation agenda and raise crucial funds at our Wild Splendor gala in September 2017. In addition, nearly 200 supporters turned out for our annual picnic and member appreciation event, and in February, we held another addition of our Habitap happy hour as a way to introduce our work to more people in the Portland/Vancouver metro area. The 2018 schedule is already full of immersive tours experiences and volunteer stewardship activities on our conserved lands.

## More and Deeper Stories

Through three issues of its Fieldbook magazine, monthly issues of the Moss e-newsletter, vibrant social media communities, and web content, the Land Trust delved deeper into complex conservation issues in 2017. We also produced a 10-minute film tied to the release of our conservation agenda that highlighted the five ecoregions in which we work, as well as the diversity of ways in which people along the Columbia River take action on behalf of nature. *One River | Five Voices* underscores the need for more people to take action, as educators, advocates, scientists, and community leaders. In 2018, the Land Trust will continue to highlight a diversity of perspectives on conservation through its various media channels.

## Next-Generation Conservation

The Emerging Leaders Council (ELC), a group of volunteers dedicated to building support of conservation among their peers, made major strides in 2017. They built the foundation for a stronger council by formalizing their commitments, while also organizing a successful Habitap outreach event and a handful of hands-on volunteer opportunities. In 2018, the group is committed to growing its capacity through active recruitment.

## Access and Engagement Opportunities

Engaging people in the work and the benefits of conservation is integral to our mission. To this end, we recruit volunteers to assist with monitoring and site work. We are hiring seasonal staff and interns to help train the next generation of conservationists, and we provide and manage lands for public access. We continue to expand our thinking regarding engagement to include a larger focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as the engagement of youth in our work. Developing strong partnerships is a key strategy to broadening the base of support for nature and its protection.

## Adding Capacity for Engagement

In 2017, the Land Trust secured partial funding to hire an engagement program manager, a new position charged with formalizing and strengthening our efforts toward building stronger community relationships.

This position will be filled in early 2018, at which time the program manager will begin evaluating our current programs, partnerships, and stakeholder groups, and develop a road map for meeting more people while building broader support for conservation.

# Land Management Systems

As the Land Trust succeeds in conserving land, its responsibility to monitor, manage, restore and steward habitat grows. To stay ahead of the curve, our stewardship team is investing in leading-edge systems and technologies.

## Meet Ouzel

In 2017, staff continued to work with a contractor to build a new and improved iteration of our lands database. This iteration promises to be much more useful and flexible, as well as more affordable for other land trusts to implement. Staff presented at Land Camp, a conference of Washington and Oregon land trusts, to share the new application.

Staff voted to name the new database Ouzel and its migrations and release for staff use is imminent. The large system will improve functionality and workflows. Staff will be testing the database in the early part of the year, and working with the contractor to refine the system, while concurrently adding new functionality. In 2018, staff will be working to develop the Ouzel Partnership and subscription agreements, which will help other land trusts and groups develop tailored versions of the database. This vision would bolster land conservation by creating a common and shared understanding for land management tracking.

## Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Monitoring Program

The Land Trust has begun to take greater advantage of this technology by investing in its own equipment and training staff to fly and process data. With this equipment, the Land Trust can quickly and efficiently collect aerial data to assess large and complex sites, plan resotation and management acitivites, map weeds, characterize forest stands, document projects, and even develop a three-dimensional land surface model. The power of this technology to aid in land conservation is significant and growing every year.

## Habitat Classification Assessment Program

The Stewardship Program has adopted a new habitat classification system that provides a rapid system to better understand the condition and status of our conserved lands. This system is based on the professional judgement of land managers and gives us the ability to understand and plan for the future needs of the program. It informs on what type of property the program is responsible for (i.e sensitive habitat lands vs more recreation-oriented green spaces), the condition of the natural land (i.e. degraded vs functional), and its trend (i.e. is it declining, at risk or getting better). All of this information, on an acre-by-acre basis, provides critical information regarding how the resources of the program should be deployed and what the overall effort for responsible stewardship looks like.

## Ecological Integrity Assessments (EIA)

Supporting the habitat classification system is a science-based, structured method of assessing the ecological integrity of our habitat lands. This method gives the Land Trust a more detailed way to assess the condition of conserved habitats and a means to measure the progress of the stewardship program in fulfilling its responsibilities. This effort is a collaboration with the Washington DNR Natural Heritage Program to refine and adapt the EIA method for Land Trust use in 2017. For 2018, staff will continue to implement EIA work on conserved properties with a focus on the East Cascades and the Columbia Plateau. We will also be reaching out to other land trusts in the region to provide orientation and training on the method with the hope that more conservation partners will adopt the approach. If successful, we will have developed a consistent and broader understanding of the condition of conserved lands in both Oregon and Washington.



*Stewardship staff members conduct a field test of their EIA methodology.*



# COAST RANGE & ESTUARIES

Walluski River, Clatsop County, OR

## Ecoregional Objectives

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**GIVE** rivers room to move and flood naturally, enabling them to support healthy salmon runs and riverside habitat without threatening communities and infrastructure.

**PROTECT** older forests, ensuring that large expanses are managed in ways that connect critical habitat areas, set the stage for more old forests, and support the survival of endangered species.

**INCREASE** the prevalence of tidal wetlands in the Columbia River Estuary and continue managing invasive species.

**CONSERVE** and restore the last remaining large, undeveloped properties containing coastal interdunal wetlands and lakes, associated forests, and beaches.

**STRENGTHEN** local economies and expand public awareness of conservation benefits by providing healthy and functional natural areas.



# Conservation Successes: 2017

285  
ACRES

## Chinook River

Pacific County, WA  
COA: Columbia River Estuary

Columbia Land Trust acquired a 285-acre property in January 2017, protecting one mile of the Chinook River, three fish bearing tributaries, and 245 acres of associated wetland habitats. Moving forward, we'll engage in habitat restoration, including road removal, weed control, native planting, and habitat structure construction for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. We'll also encourage wildlife such as beaver to help shape the landscape. The project will support local and out-of-basin salmonids, including 13 listed Columbia River salmon and steelhead as well as listed eulachon.

31  
ACRES

## Crooked Creek

Wahkiakum County, WA  
COA: Columbia River Estuary

In January, the Land Trust conserved with the support of the Bonneville Power Administration 31 acres along Crooked Creek and the Columbia River at Grays Bay in Wahkiakum County, Washington. The property is situated just south of the Crooked Creek Bridge on Altoona-Pillar Rock Road near Rosburg. This acquisition builds on 120 acres of conserved lands owned by Columbia Land Trust upstream along Crooked Creek, which is part of the broader Grays Bay watershed. This historic spruce swamp habitat was disconnected from the river by a dike and the land converted to pasture. The Land Trust is working with conservation partner CREST to develop a tidal wetland habitat restoration strategy for the property.

54  
ACRES

## Hines Marsh

Pacific County, WA  
COA: North Long Beach Peninsula

In March, the Land Trust acquired 54 acres of wetland property on Skating Lake near Oysterville for the purpose of conservation and wildlife habitat protection. The acquisition builds on the habitat of the neighboring 340-acre Skating Lake State Park.

27  
ACRES

## Hines Marsh

Pacific County, WA  
COA: North Long Beach Peninsula

In June, the Land Trust permanently protected a relatively small piece of land with significant importance to shorebirds and migratory waterfowl near Leadbetter Point State Park. This 27-acre site, consisting of interdunal forests, lakes, and wetlands, builds on 120 acres of wildlife and fish habitat previously conserved by the Land Trust. The property is also home to impressive trumpeter swans, which migrate from Alaska to the state of Washington each year to overwinter.

190  
ACRES

## East Willapa Bay

Pacific County, WA  
COA: Willapa Hills

In June, the Land Trust also conserved 190 acres on the east side of Willapa Bay in Pacific County, Washington. The conserved property builds on the 365-acre Seal Slough property Columbia Land Trust conserved directly north, in addition to 900 acres of habitat managed by Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and Forterra. The property consists of a mile of Willapa Bay shoreline and coastal forest. Willapa Bay is of national significance for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl—it was designated as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Site of International Importance in 2017. We will focus stewardship activities on restoring the forest to old growth characteristics to better support wildlife, including federally-listed nesting marbled murrelet.



*Streaked horned lark, Photo by AD Wilson*

**55**  
ACRES

## Island and Loomis Lakes

Pacific County, WA

In September, the Land Trust conserved 55 acres in the interior of Long Beach Peninsula. The conserved wetland property builds on 750 acres Columbia Land Trust previously conserved along Island Lake and Loomis Lake directly north, in addition to 460 acres of habitat managed by Washington State Parks and the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. The area is comprised of interdunal lakes and freshwater wetlands, a unique environment of national significance for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl, including trumpeter swans.

## Upcoming Projects

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### Grays Bay Watershed

Wahkiakum County, WA

COAs: Columbia River Estuary, Grays River

The Land Trust is in the process of purchasing multiple properties at the confluences of the Grays River, Deep River, and Crooked Creek and the Columbia River at Grays Bay. We will acquire a small property on Deep River in February, which is the fourth of five planned acquisitions to allow a tidal restoration project to move forward. Additional properties are currently being evaluated along Crooked Creek and the Grays River to move forward in 2018. With the acquisition of additional properties, the Land Trust will complete three large-scale intertidal

wetland restoration project benefitting salmon, steelhead, eulachon, and numerous migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. These projects are funded by the Bonneville Power Administration.

122  
ACRES

## Lower Elochoman River

Wahkiakum County, WA  
COA: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust is in the process of purchasing three properties on the lower Elochoman River just off the Columbia River near Cathlamet, Washington. Totaling 122 acres, the properties were once wetlands and floodplain of the Elochoman, supporting salmonids. Fifty to 100 years ago, they were cleared and hydrologically altered for grazing. With the acquisition of the properties, we will be able to complete a restoration project benefitting listed Columbian white-tailed deer, salmon, eulachon, and numerous migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

23  
ACRES

## Hines Marsh

Pacific County, WA  
COA: North Long Beach Peninsula

The Land Trust is in the process of acquiring several properties at the northernmost tip of the Long Beach Peninsula, Leadbetter Point. The Land Trust has conserved 355 acres there and in 2018 we expect to accept the donation of 23 more acres. The land will support Endangered Species Act-listed nesting snowy plover and streaked horned lark, as well as Roosevelt elk and black bear, among other wildlife.

24  
ACRES

## Chinook River

Pacific County, WA  
COA: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust is in the process of acquiring two more properties (23 acres) on the Chinook River, adjacent to the 285 acres acquired in 2017 in Pacific County, Washington. The acquisitions will add 20 acres of wetlands and additional Chinook River frontage, adding benefit to listed salmonids, bear, elk, and migratory birds. The project is funded by the USFWS Coastal Wetlands Program.

90  
ACRES

## South Tongue Point

Clatsop County, OR  
COA: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust is in the process of fundraising for a 90-acre property on Columbia River in Astoria, Oregon. The land will be owned by Clatsop Community College, which owns a marine education facility next door and will use the property for a living laboratory for its students. Likely funders include the USFWS Coastal Wetlands Program and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). With the acquisition of the property (estimated 2018), the College will be able to work with partners to complete a large-scale intertidal wetland restoration project benefitting salmon, steelhead, eulachon, and numerous migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

## Stewardship Successes: 2017

### Kerry Island: Floodplain Enhancement

Columbia County, OR  
COA: Columbia River Estuary

In 2016, the Land Trust restored the hydrologic connection to the 109-acre property by removing sections of levee and excavating tidal channels. To continue these restoration efforts, nearly 50,000 trees and shrubs were planted in early 2017 in order to expedite the establishment of native species throughout the property. Restoring native plant communities here is in part an experiment: the site has subsided (lost elevation) due to past diking and draining of the property so restoring the historic plant community is not currently possible. The floodplain currently exists below the lowest elevational extent at which woody vegetation can survive, so the Land Trust is watching closely to see what species recolonize the restoration area. This will inform necessary weed control and seeding activities into the future.



*A day of dike breaching to reconnect historic floodplain at Kerry Island, Columbia County, OR*

In the meantime, higher ground consisting of the remaining levee and areas filled for topographic complexity have been planted with woody species. Weed control efforts are also ongoing, including a significant effort during fall 2017 to control the blackberry population.

## **Wallacut River: Tidal Restoration**

**Pacific County, WA**

**COA: Columbia River Estuary**

The Land Trust continued planting, monitoring, and weed control work over the last winter to ensure that this restoration project continues on a good restoration trajectory. Planting took place in February beginning with the installation of approximately 20,000 plants.

We continued to control gorse, our primary invasive species of concern on this site, through early spring. Additional planting will take place over the winter and weed control will be an ongoing effort until woody vegetation becomes well established. Monitoring of site hydrology, channel morphology, vegetation changes, and sediment dynamics on the site will continue for five years post-construction as part of a larger action effectiveness monitoring program.

## Kerry Island & Kandoll Farm: Reed Canarygrass Trial Treatments

**Columbia (OR) & Wahkiakum (WA) Counties**  
**COAs: Columbia River Estuary, Grays River**

The Land Trust has been working in partnership with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Sequim, Washington to advance the science of estuary restoration through a structured review of specific challenges facing restoration practitioners in the Columbia River Estuary. One significant challenge is the difficulty in controlling reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) in freshwater tidal habitats, a species that often invades and takes over mid- and higher-elevation tidal marsh communities. After conducting a review of available scientific literature in 2016, the project team designed a five-year experiment to implement control trials on several tidal restoration sites in the lower Columbia River estuary. The first trial was initiated in 2016 on the Kandoll Farm restoration site in Wahkiakum County, Washington.

In 2017, we continued trial treatments and data collection, and added a second trial site on the Kerry Island restoration project in Columbia County. We hope the information gained from these trials will assist the Land Trust and other habitat managers in the estuary to restore important habitat communities productive for a wide variety of fish and wildlife species.

## Estuary Restoration Action Effectiveness Monitoring

**Multiple OR and WA counties**  
**COA: Columbia River Estuary**

The Land Trust manages its conservation lands using the best available science and by implementing an adaptive management approach that informs staff regarding the effectiveness of our work. In the Columbia River Estuary, where the Land Trust has implemented significant tidal floodplain restoration, we are contributing to a larger effort to understand the effects of the work being done to restore habitat function. Working with partners and supported by the Bonneville Power Administration, staff is regularly collecting and sharing data, including water surface elevation, water temperature, sediment accretion and tidal channel metrics.

## Upper Elochoman Forest: In-stream Enhancement

**Wahkiakum County, WA**  
**COA: Elochoman River**

Originally slated for 2015, Columbia Land Trust completed the enhancement of a stretch of mainstem Elochoman River and two of its tributaries in 2017. Fifteen engineered log jams were installed within the mainstem Elochoman River, and twenty smaller structures were installed within two of its tributaries. Additional work included re-meandering Cat Creek into a historic channel.

The large wood provides channel roughness, aids in floodplain activation, provides shading, increases prey production and nutrient availability, and helps create additional spawning habitat through gravel sorting. Historic forestry activity and land use in the watershed greatly diminished the amount of wood available to the streams, which creates and maintains habitat that juvenile fall chinook salmon and steelhead use for rearing and spawning. The forest stand enhancement work completed in 2016 provided over 350 logs used for in-stream enhancement, and approximately 10,000 more trees were planted in thinned areas in early 2017. Priority weed species on the property were also treated in 2017.

## Stewardship Projects: 2018

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### Upper Elochoman Forest: In-stream Enhancement Follow-Up Planting

**Wahkiakum County, WA**  
**COA: Elochoman River**

As a last piece of follow-up work for the in-stream restoration, all disturbed areas will be planted with 4,000 trees and shrubs in early 2018 to approximate reference conditions. This will help restore native vegetation as well as prevent a flush of invasive species common after ground disturbing activities. Weed control throughout the property will also take place during summer 2018.



Pacific treefrog observed at Kerry Island, Columbia County, OR

## Kerry Island: Planting and Weed Control

Columbia County, OR

COA: Columbia River Estuary

Two years after completing a hydrologic restoration project, the Land Trust is taking on an additional planting and weed control effort in 2018. Over 14,000 trees and shrubs will be installed early in the year to account for mortality and refine the species composition based on planting success thus far. Weed control efforts are also ongoing in an attempt to prevent colonization by invasive species after restoration.

## Wallacut River Confluence: Planting and Weed Control

Pacific County, WA

COA: Columbia River Estuary

In the second year following a major restoration project, the Land Trust will plant the Wallacut property with over 6,000 trees and shrubs to supplement initial planting from 2017. Weed control, particularly for gorse, is ongoing as invasive species attempt to colonize the site.



Abernathy Creek,  
Cowlitz County, WA

## Abernathy Creek: Riparian Forest Enhancement

### Cowlitz County, WA

Columbia Land Trust holds seven conservation easements on private properties along lower Abernathy Creek. These easements protect a corridor of riparian forest along the creek, helping improve watershed function and habitat for coho and steelhead. For the last three years, Columbia Land Trust has partnered with the Cowlitz County Weed Board to control invasive weeds in this riparian corridor. In 2018, the Land Trust will begin working with the landowners to reforest areas formerly infested with Armenian blackberry. Weed control will also continue in 2018.



# WILLAMETTE VALLEY & PUGET TROUGH

Lacamas Lake, Clark County, WA

## Ecoregional Objectives

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**RESTORE** the health and function of the floodplains, riverside forests, and wetlands associated with our rivers.

**PROTECT**, maintain, and restore oak and prairie habitats.

**MAKE** urban areas more conducive to wildlife through thousands of nature-scaped properties that allow pollinators, resident and migrating birds, and other wildlife to move across the landscape.

**BUILD** strong partnerships between agriculture and conservation communities to benefit wildlife habitat, movement, and migration.

**PROVIDE** meaningful opportunities for people to connect to nature throughout cities and natural areas.





*Contractors free trees from English ivy vines at Keller Woodlands.*

## Conservation Successes: 2017

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### Conservation Futures Funding

**Clark County, WA**

**COAs: East Fork Lewis River,  
Columbia River Lowlands, Washougal River**

Columbia Land Trust worked closely with the Clark County Legacy Lands Program and the Clark County Treasurer to secure approval from the Clark County Council for \$7 million in Conservation Futures bonds to be used for

the purchase of parks, open space, forests, and farmland.

These bond funds will be leveraged to protect over \$12 million in conservation lands across Clark County. The county, all municipalities, and the Land Trust were invited to submit projects for consideration in the funding package. Three Land Trust-led and two Land Trust-supported projects were approved as part of the bonding approval.



Board member Janet Gifford speaks at a tour of backyard habitats in Portland, OR

## Backyard Habitat Certification Program

Multnomah, Clackamas Counties, OR

See page ten of the *Our Agenda at Work* section for details on how the Land Trust’s innovative Backyard Habitat Certification Program fits into our region-wide efforts to engage more people in conserving and caring for the nature of the Northwest. The Land Trust co-manages this program with the Audubon Society of Portland.

## Upcoming Projects: 2018

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90  
ACRES

### East Fork Lewis River: Greenway Expansion

Clark County, WA  
COA: East Fork Lewis River

The Land Trust is continuing to work with Clark County to build a connected greenway along the lower 13 miles of the East Fork of the Lewis River. This planned acquisition is adjacent to Lewisville Park and will allow for expansion of

hiking trails while also protecting important wildlife habitat.



## Lewis River Ranch Greenway

Clark County, WA

COA: East Fork Lewis River (Lower)

The Land Trust is providing transactional and due diligence support for Clark County's acquisition of the 160-acre Lewis River Ranch Greenway. This project will build on the 90-acre shoreline property adjacent to the Greenway acquisition. The long-term vision for this property is to expand the county's neighboring Lewisville Park, the most heavily used park in the county's ownership.



## Lacamas Lake North Shore

Clark County, WA

COA: Lacamas Prairie

Lacamas Lake North Shore is a collaborative conservation and park project underway with partners at the City of Camas, The Conservation Fund, and Columbia Land Trust. This project will acquire roughly 30 acres to support the City of Camas's vision of a multi-use loop trail around Lamacas Lake and a forested backdrop protecting the viewshed of the north shore. The project will also protect the historic Pittock-Leadbetter House.



## Wapato Valley Mitigation Bank Easement

Clark County, WA

COA: Columbia River Lowlands

The Land Trust is in the process of acquiring a 876-acre conservation easement at the confluence of the Lewis River and the Columbia River. The conservation easement will be donated as part of a conservation and wetland mitigation bank under development by a long-time family landowner. The property is adjacent the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and across the Columbia River from Oregon's Sauvie Island Wildlife Area, making it an important and heav-

ily used property for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. Through the mitigation bank, the property will be restored to increase riverine wetlands and tidally-influenced freshwater rearing areas for Endangered Species Act-listed juvenile salmon and other native species.

## Stewardship Successes: 2017

### Cranes' Landing: Sandhill Crane Foraging Habitat

Clark County, WA

COA: Columbia River Lowlands

The Land Trust has successfully implemented its second year of forage crop production to benefit wintering sandhill cranes in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands. Approximately 125 acres of corn, 32 acres of alfalfa, 90 acres of peas, 84 acres of annual and perennial ryegrass, and 8 acres of sorghum were planted in June 2017 based on the lessons learned from prior farming efforts and monitoring surveys. We adapted our 2017 planting plan based on the extensive monitoring data collected in 2016-2017 (crops, soils, and avian utilization), land manager observations, and consultations with local and regional crane experts. Through these amendments, we will increase efficiencies and production, and configure the fields to maximize crane utilization of the available food resources. The results continue to be spectacular with hundreds of cranes, in addition to tens of thousands of other waterfowl species utilizing the site on a daily basis. Additionally, ten acres of land surrounding the fields were reforested with over twenty species of native trees and shrubs in April 2017.

### Keller Woodlands: Urban Forest Restoration

Multnomah County, OR

COA: Forest Park

Heavily infested with invasive ivy, this natural area in southwest Portland began to see major changes in 2017. We worked with contractors to remove ivy from trees, and cut down invasive



*Sandhill cranes at Cranes' Landing in Clark County, WA photo by Al Bernstein*

holly and laurel trees, allowing native trees to thrive across the 40-acre site. Dense ground ivy was controlled on ten acres, and native trees and shrubs will be planted in its place in 2018.

## **Boardman Creek Headwaters Easement: Urban Restoration**

### **Clackamas County, OR**

In 2017, the Land Trust continued to partner with a private landowner to control weeds at the headwaters of a small creek in Milwaukie, Oregon. Land Trust staff, the landowners, high school volunteers, and local contractors have all contributed to weed control efforts. Weed control will continue in 2018 in preparation for planting the site in winter 2018-2019.

## **Atfalati Prairie: Initial Stabilization**

### **Washington County, OR**

#### **COA: Tualatin River**

Work in 2017 included weed control in the remnant riparian forest. Portions of the forest were heavily infested with blackberry, among other weeds. Weed control will continue in 2018, along with oak release in a portion of the forest. Additional work at Atfalati Prairie in 2017 included management and restoration planning. Future larger-scale work at this site will include restoring diverse wet prairie, oak woodland, and riparian forest habitats through restoration of the natural hydrologic regime and planting.

## Rainbow Farm: Initial Stabilization

Washington County, OR

COA: Tualatin River

In 2017, the primary work at this site included the cultivation by a lessee farmer. The farmer's work, which includes tilling, weed control, and planting, is important site preparation for future habitat restoration. The farmer began cultivating the site in 2016. Additional work in 2017 included management planning, fencing repair and gate installation to prevent trespass, and restoration planning.

## Nicolai Woods: Habitat Restoration

Multnomah County, WA

COA: Forest Park

Outreach to neighbors and weed control efforts were the focus at Nicolai Woods in 2017. Blackberry stands, a garlic mustard infestation, English ivy and weedy trees were all treated in late 2017. In 2018, we will follow up weed control efforts and begin to plan for native plant recolonization and stabilization.

## Woods Landing: Habitat Restoration

Clark County, WA

We continued weed control at Woods Landing in 2017, with the support of dedicated volunteers. We created a new path to access a viewing platform that overlooks a portion of Columbia River shoreline that serves as a chum spawning area. In addition, we removed English ivy, English laurel, English holly, and Himalayan blackberry throughout the restoration area. We will continue our weed control efforts with volunteers in 2018. Our goals include the strategic removal of ivy along stream banks, planting ferns and shrubs to prevent erosion, as well as expanding the new path. Staff have been experimenting with removal techniques for hard-to-control species.

## Green Cathedral: Urban Greenspace Restoration

Clark County, WA

Weed control and maintenance of previous plantings at this urban greenspace occurred in 2017, along with ongoing control of shiny geranium. This weed control work will continue in 2018, along with additional plantings to increase native species diversity, and seeding of native grass species as a test to compete with shiny geranium.

## Schoolhouse Creek: Habitat Restoration

Clark County, WA

COA: Washougal River

Following several years of weed control and planting efforts, another round is scheduled for the property in 2018 including installation of 1,250 native trees and control of high-priority invasive species. The work will continue to restore and enhance a hillslope directly adjacent to migratory and rearing habitat for listed coho salmon.

## Columbia Stock Ranch: Restoration Forestry

Columbia County, OR

COA: Columbia River Lowlands

In 2017, the Land Trust implemented a second phase of forest restoration thinning in partnership with Trout Mountain Forestry. We thinned 16 acres to release growth in the remaining trees and to allow space for planting a more diverse understory cohort of trees. This work increases the long-term habitat function of this forest and has generated revenue that supports the stewardship of the property. Other work implemented included ongoing weed control, planting and plant maintenance, and maintenance of the road infrastructure.



*A volunteer at Woods Landing discovers a rubber boa.*

## McGahan Property: Habitat Enhancement

**Clackamas County, OR**  
**COA: Clackamas River and Tributaries**

Efforts to control weeds and restore native vegetation since 2012 are beginning to transform the McGahan site. Located a few hundred feet from the Clackamas River, this 23-acre forest is treasured by the neighbors for its walking trails and wildlife. In 2017, the Land Trust joined the Clackamas River Basin Invasive Species Partnership, a group of public and private land managers working to track and manage invasive plants throughout the Clackamas River watershed. Through this partnership, weed control and revegetation will continue at the McGahan property in 2018.

## Stewardship Projects: 2018

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### Columbia Stock Ranch: Columbian White-tailed Deer Habitat Restoration

**Columbia County, OR**  
**COA: Columbia River Lowlands**

Restoring the hydrologic connectivity of the Columbia Stock Ranch lowlands has proven to be a very complicated effort that will take a number of years to adequately resolve. In the meantime, there is opportunity to restore the floodplain habitat for a myriad of other wildlife species including the federally threatened



*Corn for cranes grows just a few hundred feet from the Columbia River in Clark County, WA*

Columbian white-tailed deer. Beginning in late 2018, the Land Trust will begin to restore the floodplain habitat from pasture to a mix of woodland and scrub-shrub communities preferred by deer as well as many neotropical migratory birds.

## **Cranes' Landing: Berm Construction & Planting**

**Clark County, WA**

**COA: Columbia River Lowlands**

The next phase of sandhill crane habitat work will begin in 2018, including efforts to reforest an additional eight acres with an assortment of native trees and shrubs, and to construct approximately two and a half miles of berms to create visible barriers along high traffic

areas (walking path and roadways). These visible barriers (berms) are essential in order for the sandhill cranes to feel secure while foraging within the property. These berms will then be planted with native trees and shrubs to create elevated, native hedgerows.

## **Storedahl Property: Riverside Forest Enhancement**

**Clark County, WA**

**COA: East Fork Lewis River**

In 2018, our work will include planting 1,675 plants across nearly three acres that are currently dominated by blackberry and pasture grasses. We will control the weeds and maintain tree plantings through the summer.



*Wind River, Skamania County, Wa.*

## Regional Objectives

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**ENSURE** large swaths of both public and privately owned forestlands are intact and functional, connecting habitat for migratory species.

**HALT** the net loss of older forests and increase the number of forested acres managed toward old-growth forest habitat.

**PROTECT** important rivers for salmon and steelhead habitat by removing barriers to migration, improving river conditions, and restoring floodplains.

**CULTIVATE** local and regional public support for conserving working forest lands by demonstrating their economic and recreational value.





Pine Creek East Property, Mount St.  
Helens in Skamania County, WA

## Conservation Successes: 2017

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Columbia Land Trust secured two important grants for conservation in the West Cascades in 2017. We were ranked number one for our Rock Creek Forest project in the inaugural round of Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Forestland Preservation grants and we were ranked highly in the state and national evaluations of Section 6 Endangered Species grants for our Wind River: Double Bend Phase III project. These sources will provide \$1.35 million for significant conservation in the West Cascades in 2018.

## Upcoming Projects: 2018

362  
ACRES

### Rock Creek Forest Easement

Clark County, WA

COA: East Fork Lewis River (Upper)

The Land Trust is working to negotiate the acquisition of a roughly 360-acre conservation easement on forestland located at the confluence of Rock Creek and the East Fork Lewis River. One of the most important steelhead streams in the state, Rock Creek cuts through the property and the project would protect



Rock Creek, Clark County, WA

riparian areas on both sides. The conservation easement will prevent the development of over 40 legally permissible lots and ensure property remains forested in perpetuity.

Double Bend project area lies just to the north and this phase would expand the entire project area to 236 acres. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers this a high priority northern spotted owl habitat conservation project.

100  
ACRES

## Wind River, Double Bend Phase III

Skamania County, WA  
COA: Wind River

This 100-acre, mature mixed forest property includes 35 acres of old-growth habitat. It also protects over a mile of west bank riparian habitat for wild steelhead along the Wind River. The property lies entirely within a northern spotted owl nest circle and is surrounded on two sides by WA Department of Natural Resources owl habitat lands. The Land Trust's

## Stewardship Successes: 2017

### Mount St. Helens, Pine Creek East: Forest Conservation

Skamania County, WA

The Land Trust completed a third phase of forest restoration thinning in 2017 in partnership with Integrated Resource Management. We thinned 59 acres of overstocked stands, removing approximately half of the trees and a third of the standing volume. Additionally, snags were created to enhance the forest stand structure for wildlife such as woodpeckers and other cavity nesting species. Work also continued on weed control, infrastructure maintenance, and planting of previously thinned or understocked areas. This work furthers the overarching goals for this 2,500-acre property: older growth forests and healthy riparian corridors supporting priority wildlife.

### Rock Creek: Forest Enhancement

Clark County, WA

COA: East Fork Lewis River

In 2017, 1,500 trees and shrubs were planted as part of riparian and upland forest restoration at the Rock Creek property. This restoration project began in 2016 and involved decommissioning failing logging roads, reforestation of the road corridors, and forest enhancement to improve forest habitat and protect water quality in Rock Creek. Rock Creek is a tributary to the East Fork Lewis River and provides important habitat for winter steelhead.

## Stewardship Projects: 2018

### Wind River: Riparian Enhancement

Skamania County, WA

COA: Wind River

Columbia Land Trust's forested property along the Wind River includes half a mile of river frontage. The riparian zone includes diverse native species as well as a band of thick Scotch broom and other non-native invaders. In 2018, we will work to systematically reduce the riparian weed populations to allow native species to recolonize this critical zone, improving wildlife habitat and increasing future shading and large wood recruitment for the Wind River, an important salmon and steelhead stream.

### Pine Creek East: Forest Stand Enhancement

Skamania County, WA

The Land Trust will continue controlling weeds and maintaining infrastructure, as well as thinning overstocked stands and enhancing stand diversity through planting and creating large wood resources such as snags.

Our largest planting effort on the property will be initiated in late 2018 to replant areas of failed 'plantations' with a diverse mix of conifer species. In addition, upland riparian corridors associated with riverine waterways will be interplanted with hardwoods and conifers as a strategy to improve critical in-stream conditions for bull trout.



# EAST CASCADES

*Mount Hood from the Four Sisters  
property, Wasco County, OR*

## Regional Objectives

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**PROTECT** and restore major eastside rivers and key tributaries.

**PRESERVE** oak woodland habitat systems and opportunities for wildlife migration and movement.

**MAINTAIN** the integrity of unique transition zones between riverside and upland habitats, high and low elevations, and wet and dry climates.

**COLLABORATE** with local stakeholders and increase public awareness about the benefits of oak woodlands, sustainable forestry, river conservation, and ecological processes.

**SUPPORT** community leaders in championing conservation strategies and leading implementation.



*One of our land stewards monitoring in our Rowena stewardship area, Wasco County, OR*

## Conservation Successes: 2017

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### Funding Update

In 2017 the Land Trust was successful in competing for some of the largest national and regional conservation funding sources for East Cascades projects. However, our ability to close on these projects was frustrated by unprecedented delays and uncertainty surrounding the release of funds. These delays were tied to national political trends, not issues with the Land Trust projects, and our project partners, including sellers and matching funders, agreed to delay closings until funding was released. The state of Washington passed its capital

budget in January 2018, restoring access to four million dollars in critical funds (as well as an additional four million in matching funds) for projects now slated for 2018.

**130**  
ACRES

### Trout Lake Valley Phase II Easement

**Klickitat County, WA**  
**COA: Trout Lake Valley**

In September 2017, the Land Trust purchased a conservation easement on 130 acres of the Justesen family farm, effectively ensuring that the property will stay in agriculture for future generations. The iconic Justesen site provides pasture for cows that are part of the first Organic Valley dairy in the state of Washington.



An irrigation pivot spraying below Mount Adams in Trout Lake Valley

The Justesens are the fourth landowners to work with the Land Trust in establishing easements in the Trout Lake Valley, and we are already working with a fifth and sixth to set aside more farmland. To date, we've protected 423 acres of agricultural land in the area.

### East Cascades Oak Partnership

COA: All COAs in East Cascades Ecoregion

Reference page nine of the *Our Agenda at Work* section to learn about our groundbreaking, collaborative effort to advance science and public awareness around the vital and threatened corridor of oak woodland habitat in the East Cascades.

## Conservation Projects: 2018

280 ACRES

### Mt. Laurel Jerseys and Gladstone Easements

Klickitat County, WA  
COA: Trout Lake Valley

This project will acquire conservation easements on an additional 280 acres in the Trout Lake Valley. These will be the fourth and fifth agricultural easements the Land Trust has completed in the valley, bringing the total to 700 acres.



*Penstemon above the Klickitat River*  
© Brian Chambers Photography

The Mt. Laurel Jerseys easement conserves a fourth-generation farm for the fifth and future generations, and it ensures that the scenic gateway to the community of Trout Lake will forever retain its iconic character. The project ranked third out of 24 projects in Washington. We expect to finalize both easements by the end of 2018.

and canyon habitats, 1.1 miles of the main-stem Klickitat River, and 1.5 miles of tributary streams. These riparian corridors complete protection of over 40 percent of observed wild steelhead spawning ground in the Klickitat watershed. Because this project is a fee acquisition, Columbia Land Trust will be able to manage for old-growth forest characteristics, fire resilience, and improved wildlife habitat on this property. We anticipate closing on this purchase by July 2018.

3,200  
ACRES

## Klickitat Canyon Phase II

**Klickitat County, WA**  
**COA: Klickitat River**

Building on the success of Klickitat Canyon Phase I, the second phase will conserve 3,200 acres of adjacent ponderosa pine forest, talus



The Lower Hood River, Hood River County, OR

## Stewardship Successes: 2017

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### **Haul Road Removal: Floodplain Restoration**

**Klickitat County, WA**

**COA: Klickitat River**

After ten years and six phases of construction, we've effectively removed an eight-mile, two-lane paved road from the active floodplain of the Klickitat River. The project was completed in October 2017 with the sixth and final phase of construction. Three miles of road fill was removed or regraded, reconnecting tributaries, isolated floodplain, and bedrock features to the primary channel of the Klickitat River.

These features are the drivers of habitat complexity and formation in the Klickitat River that supports Endangered Species Act threatened steelhead and culturally important Chinook and coho salmon. The entire project area was seeded with native grasses, large wood was placed in the floodplain to improve habitat complexity, and native plants were installed. The corridor is now an eight-mile-deep roadless wilderness "on the road" to recovery.

### **Powerdale Corridor: Wetland Restoration**

**Hood River County, OR**

**COA: Hood River**

The Powerdale Corridor on the lower Hood River includes an off-channel wetland complex.



Two ponds in this area have been overtaken by non-native plants along their shorelines and within the wetlands themselves. In 2017, Columbia Land Trust worked with an advisory committee to develop restoration plans for this site that will benefit resident and migratory birds, fish, amphibians, and other wildlife.

## Powerdale Corridor: Public Access & Recreation Management

**Hood River County, OR**  
COA: Hood River

The Powerdale Lands Advisory Committee, coordinated and facilitated by Columbia Land Trust, presented the Powerdale Recreation and Access Plan at a public meeting in June 2017. We gave follow-up presentations to the Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District Board and the local Lions Club. These presentations have helped to educate the public about the constraints on recreational development at this popular recreation destination and to build support for recreation management strategies that would allow for better public access while protecting natural resources. These presentations have also spurred plans for further community collaboration in 2018.

## Mill Creek Ridge: Weed Control

**Wasco County, OR**  
COA: Wasco Oaks

In 2017 we conducted several rounds of vegetation sampling and data analysis as part of a new vegetation monitoring project. By closely tracking status and trends of noxious weed infestations and native plant cover across approximately 400 acres, we are improving management of prairie sites for native plant protection. In addition, we treated the persistent and aggressive rush skeletonweed infestation on two sites at Mill Creek Ridge.

# Stewardship Projects: 2018

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## Powerdale Corridor: Wetland Restoration

**Hood River County, OR**  
COA: Hood River

In 2018 we will begin implementing our new plan to restore habitat at the off-channel wetland complex in the Powerdale Corridor on the lower Hood River. We will begin invasive plant removal in 2018, to be followed by replanting of native species in future years. We will also carry out bird surveys and wildlife monitoring using trail cameras to document habitat uses and values.

## Mill Creek Ridge: Weed Control

**Wasco County, OR**  
COA: Wasco Oaks

In 2018 we will continue the skeletonweed monitoring and control work that has been our focus on the property for several years. We will refine and expand the monitoring methods that we developed in 2017 as we seek better ecological data to inform our future weed management decisions.



John Day River  
© Brian Chambers Photography

## Regional Objectives

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**PROTECT** intact and functional prairie and shrub-steppe habitat from land use conversion and degradation.

**RESTORE** native plant species, habitat functions, and ecological processes on affected lands.

**RAISE** awareness of the benefits of conservation in prairie and shrub-steppe landscapes.

**INVEST** time in the area to learn more and build relationships to determine how we can be most helpful in local conservation efforts.

## Conservation Successes: 2017

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In 2017 the Land Trust continued to develop important relationships with landowners, support organizational partners through information and knowledge sharing, and explore new project opportunities in the Columbia Plateau ecoregion. While we remain actively engaged, to date we have played a supporting role for conservation partners including the Yakama Nation, Klickitat Conservation Districts, and Sacred Earth Foundation.

## Conservation Projects: 2018

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In 2018, the Land Trust will continue learning and from our partners to identify areas where our skills and expertise would be most helpful. We do not have any active conservation projects in the Columbia Plateau at this time.

## Recent Stewardship Successes: 2017

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### **Four Sisters Natural Area: Invasive Grass Control Trials**

**Wasco County, OR**  
**COA: Wasco Oaks**

In spring 2017 we collected vegetation data in our invasive grass control plots for the third year in a row. We analyzed and reviewed data from the three-year trial period to inform future weed management decisions at the site.

## Stewardship Projects: 2018

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### **Four Sisters Natural Area: Invasive Plant Management**

**Wasco County, OR**  
**COA: Wasco Oaks**

In 2018 we will conduct spring vegetation surveys in our invasive grass control plots and use this final year of data to decide next steps in invasive grass management. We will also work on rush skeletonweed control on this grassland site based on research from rush skeletonweed control at our Mill Creek Ridge property in the East Cascades.



Photo by Gabriel Olson,  
Owl-N-Tree Photography

## The Dawn of a New Day

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Together, in 2017 we conserved or successfully raised funds to conserve 10,100 acres of critical lands from the desert to the ocean. We have leveraged your annual gifts into about \$16.3 million for conservation. The Backyard Habitat Certification program grew to involve more than 4,500 households. On the land, we completed removal of the eight-mile-long Klickitat River Haul Road and many other important restoration projects in forests, rivers, meadows, and wetlands.

Most important, in 2017 we prepared, adopted, and began to implement a 25-year conservation agenda for the region. This agenda assures that our work is focused on important places where we can have the greatest, lasting impact.

The region we serve is vast and varied, and so are the ways in which nature can enrich our lives. Regardless of our reasons, we're united in a desire to see nature thrive. Be bold and generous in supporting these lands. They do so much to support us.



Volunteers board a vessel en route to Pierce Island on the Columbia River for a trash clean-up day.

There's only one  
Pacific Northwest.

Count Yourself  
Among the Fearless.

Join us in ensuring that all  
life thrives here today and  
for generations to come.



Columbia Land Trust

[COLUMBIALANDTRUST.ORG](http://COLUMBIALANDTRUST.ORG)

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