

COLUMBIA LAND TRUST

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Fieldbook

Conserving and caring for vital lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River region through sound science and strong relationships.

SPIDER WHISPERER

pg. 8

*Jumping spider
(Habronattus
americanus)*



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A Better Understanding

When I first started working in parks and conservation, I thought it was a fairly simple job: protect the most important places and ensure they are well distributed. Of course, 30 years of conservation work has taught me that, like the web of life itself, everything is linked to everything else.



One recent insight came from our work in Southeast Portland. The neighborhood defined by SE 82nd Avenue, SE Division Street, I-205, and SE Powell Boulevard does not have a single park or natural area. These are also some of the city's busiest roads. It is not surprising that childhood asthma rates in this area are 28 percent higher than anywhere else in Multnomah County.*

Local residents rallied behind the idea of planting more trees and creating the area's first park. Nature helps clean the air and water and provides many benefits to people, including better health.

Yet as soon as the idea of more green space in the district became public, local residents grew concerned. They feared that as the area became a better place to live, property values would rise, and they would be displaced. Local organizers weighed costs and benefits: Do we want to live without parks and nature, and be able to retain our businesses and homes, or do we want parks and nature and better health at the risk of losing our businesses and homes?

This is a choice people should not be faced with. But this is where conservation work becomes more complex. Multiple state and local policy changes can help reduce displacement, and non-profit and for-profit enterprises can help to overcome these forces. Ultimately, it will take more Portlanders getting involved and working together to ensure that the city's more vulnerable residents can enjoy the benefits of parks and green space.

In the years ahead, we will aim to better understand the broader implications of our work and collaborate with community partners to ensure that conservation doesn't create or reinforce inequities across our service area. We are all connected. Being meaningfully connected entails slowing down, listening, and embracing a more inclusive approach.

Being connected also means elevating underrepresented voices within the world of conservation and challenging our perceptions of where that world begins and ends. That's why in the next several issues of *Fieldbook* we'll be using this space to share more perspectives—some from within the Land Trust and others beyond. I'll still be here, working, learning, and musing. Feel free to give me a ring!

Glenn Lamb, Executive Director

*Multnomah County Health Department, 2011



Columbia Land Trust has earned accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, which recognizes land trusts that adhere to national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust with rigorous ethical standards, and take steps to ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

► Read more about our renewed accreditation at columbialandtrust.org/accreditation-renewed

Columbia Land Trust conserves and cares for vital lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River region through sound science and strong relationships.

Cover photo: Jumping spider, *Habronattus americanus*.
Photo by Thomas Shahan, thomasshahan.com
Inside cover: Four Sisters, The Dalles, OR.
Photo by Brian Chambers Photography



columbialandtrust.org
connect@columbialandtrust.org
[@ColumbiaNature](https://twitter.com/ColumbiaNature)
[@ColumbiaLandTrust](https://www.instagram.com/ColumbiaLandTrust)

Main Office
850 Officers' Row
Vancouver, WA 98661
(360) 696-0131

Portland Office
511 SE Morrison St.
Portland, OR 97214
(503) 841-5918

Hood River
216 Cascade Ave.
Suite B
Hood River, OR 97031
(541) 436-4210

Astoria
818 Commercial St.
Suite 309
Astoria, OR 97103
(503) 338-5263

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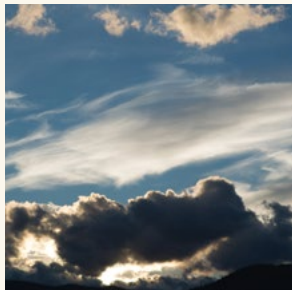
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AN UNLIKELY STORY

Jenny Bruso, Self-Identified Fat, Femme, Queer, Writer, and Hiker, is Challenging the Outdoor World

BY JAY KOSA



#UnlikelyHikers on Instagram

To learn more and to [#diversifyyourfeed](#), follow [@UnlikelyHikers](#) on Instagram and visit [DiversifyOutdoors.com](#), a new platform full of valuable resources.

In social media parlance, Jenny Bruso is blowing up. Through her blog and Unlikely Hikers, her rapidly growing Instagram community, Bruso is on a mission to dismantle preconceived notions of who belongs in the outdoors. We had a chance to connect with Bruso recently to discuss the fateful hike that kindled a love for getting outside, the virtues of group hiking, and the need for better representation and inclusion in the outdoor community.

How did you discover the power of hiking, and how did that lead to the creation of Unlikely Hikers?

It all started accidentally. Six years ago, when I first started dating my partner, we went out on a hike together. Since it was a date, I was feeling self-conscious, breathing hard, and sweaty. At the same time, I felt like I had found something out on the trail. I started spending more and more time hiking the trails in Forest Park and the close-in parts of the Gorge. I felt a sense of place and connection.

I was also aware that I wasn't seeing a lot of diversity on the trail. People made it known that I was out of place. I heard condescending comments, and people talked to me like it was my first hike.

I started a blog to share my experiences, in part because I didn't relate to a lot of articles about hiking. I wanted to build a community of people who also felt like stories of hiking and the outdoors didn't represent them. I used the phrase "unlikely hiker" to describe myself, and people really grabbed on to it.

Someone suggested that I start an Instagram community, but I resisted at first. I had joined Instagram because I wanted to be part of the outdoor culture, but I didn't see anyone like me. I kept seeing the same kind of person. It's not that I don't want to see those people; I just also want to see everyone else!

I created a community for people of color, trans and queer people, fat people, people of all ages, differing abilities, and different bodies. I use the platform to talk about what the outdoors does for us. I talk about mental health and what nature means for people of different abilities. There are so many ways to connect to nature, and it does so much good for us.

The Instagram community has gotten some media exposure, and it has kind of blown up [33,000 followers as of publication]. Eight or nine months ago, I started leading group hikes in Portland, Oakland, and DC. I'm now sponsored by REI to lead these hikes around the country.

What was the impetus for building upon the Instagram community with Unlikely Hikers group hikes?

I just keep responding to what people are asking for. With Unlikely Hikers group hikes, there's definitely a feeling of building community while we're out there, taking up space as a group of people who might feel vulnerable getting out on their own. Not feeling represented in outdoor media can definitely make a person feel unwelcome in the outdoors, subconsciously or consciously.

We have a lot of hike guidelines. We stay together as a group, and we don't talk about things like diet and weight loss that could make people feel bad about their bodies. We want to be a team and be aware of each other's unique vulnerabilities and abilities.

"I use the platform to talk about what the outdoors does for us. I talk about mental health and what nature means for people of different abilities."

What's the most rewarding part of growing the Unlikely Hikers community?

For one, I've met some incredible people. Also, my social media feeds look how I always wanted them to. One of the best things I hear from people is that Unlikely Hikers helped them get outside for the first time, or that it helps them keep getting outside. It's also really hard work

that is not financially rewarded very well. But right now it's all new, and I'm learning a lot.

How can outdoor retailers and environmental groups foster a more inclusive community?

Representation is always the big piece. However, representation is rarely done well when there is not a diverse staff behind the efforts. When people with social capital are talking about people who don't have it, those conversations rarely go well.

People of color, or fat people, or queer or trans people, or people of different abilities or disabilities should be highly consulted by the companies, retailers and otherwise, who are trying to diversify their image. Otherwise the work will be fleeting. I see companies get accolades for having diverse imagery, but there's not a lot holding that up. And people feel tokenized by that, like "Oh great, you're using me to sell your product, but you're not including me in any conversations." There needs to be more diversity behind the scenes. ♾

Top row: Teens on an outing with [@big_city_mountaineers](#), [@jennybruso](#), [@agentlypluckedpetal](#)

Middle row: An Unlikely Hikers group hike, [@gabs_hurt](#), [@mgutjr](#)

Bottom row: Cloudy sky by [Brian Chambers Photography](#), photo of [@jennybruso](#) by [Isaac Lane Koval](#) [@isaackoval](#), wildflower meadow.



“Areas with above-average climate resilience are like nature’s storm cellars. The more storm cellars we can conserve, the better our region’s wildlife will weather the storms of climate change.”

a |

WEATHERING THE STORM

Climate Resilience Guides the Land Trust’s Conservation Agenda

BY JAY KOSA

East of Mount Adams, the Klickitat River flows wild and undammed, a thread uniting a dramatic tapestry of talus slopes, basalt cliffs, pine and fir forests, and rolling hills. These contrasting landscapes are more than just visually striking; conservation science suggests they may hold the key to wildlife enduring in the face of climate change.

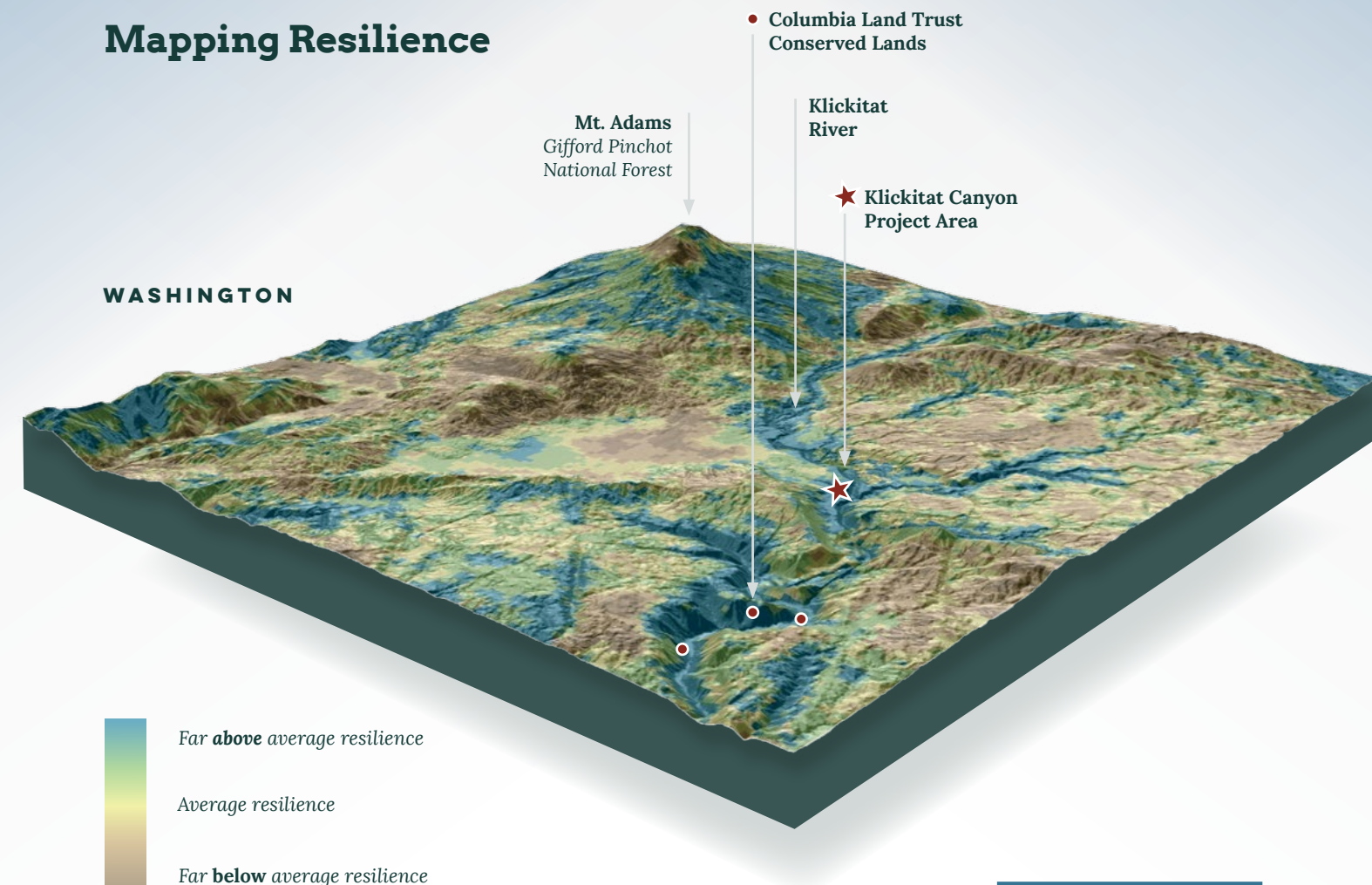
In 2016, when Columbia Land Trust set out to draft a conservation agenda for the next 25 years, its staff faced a vexing question: How do we conserve land for wildlife when the conditions on which they depend are changing in ways we can’t fully predict?

Climate models are useful, but they are limited by our assumptions. Increasingly, conservationists are looking to climate resilience—the measure of a landscape’s capacity for renewal amidst changes in climate—as a tool to identify the places most likely to support wildlife in the future.

“We are mapping resilience,” said Ken Popper, senior conservation planner with The Nature Conservancy, “based on things that will *not* change due to climate change, such as soils, elevation, and slope of lands.” Sites with diverse sets of these characteristics provide microclimates across which species can move in response to change. Moreover, landscapes that are permeable, or free of barriers such as highways, allow wildlife to travel and take advantage of the terrain’s diversity. Places that are both topographically complex *and* permeable are considered more resilient. As Cherie Kearney, forest conservation director for Columbia Land Trust, put it, “Areas with above-average climate resilience are like nature’s storm cellars. The more storm cellars we can conserve, the better our region’s wildlife will weather the storms of climate change.”

To inform the Land Trust’s agenda, GIS Manager Tanner Scrivens created a complex map of the lower Columbia River region. First, he integrated The Nature Conservancy’s climate resilience data with data sets measuring current levels of biodiversity and landscape connectivity.* Then he blended those results with local knowledge to map conservation opportunity areas (COAs), our highest-priority lands over the next quarter century.

Mapping Resilience



Klickitat Canyon, with its steep slopes and changes in elevation, sits within a COA that supports an abundance of life. For migrating mule deer, the area serves as a vital link between lowland habitat and higher summer grazing areas on Mount Adams. This year, the Land Trust is working to acquire 3,200 acres in Klickitat Canyon, which will build on 2,400 acres conserved in 2016.

Looking forward, we know some wildlife species will have to move to survive a changing climate. By leveraging science and working together, conservation groups are improving the odds for wildlife in the Pacific Northwest for years to come. 🌿

**The Land Trust was able to apply The Nature Conservancy’s climate resilience data to its conservation agenda planning thanks to a generous technical assistance grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The foundation is also supporting our second-phase Klickitat Canyon acquisition through a land protection grant aimed at landscapes with above-average climate resilience.*

a | Black-tailed deer navigate steep slopes.

Photo by Brian Chambers Photography

b | Mule deer migrate between lowland and upland habitats in the Klickitat River watershed.

Photo by Brian Chambers Photography

WHAT IS CLIMATE RESILIENCE?

The measure of a landscape’s capacity for renewal amidst changes in climate



b |



HEAR THE CRANES COME

How Farm Experiments Help Migrating Cranes Feel at Home

BY SARAH RICHARDS

It's 7 a.m. and ecologist Rob Dillinger sits in his car alongside a cornfield near the Frenchman's Bar Park in Vancouver, Washington. He's waiting for something magical to occur. A rattling baritone call heralds the approach of sandhill cranes stretching above the lower Columbia River from Oregon's Sauvie Island. They come here for the food, and to relax before they migrate north in April.

Columbia Land Trust's experimental farmed crops in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands, also known as Cranes' Landing, have begun attracting cranes to this location in record numbers. The largest flock (using crops) was recorded this February with approximately 1,150 individuals. We've also seen thousands of snow and Canada geese, as well raptors, coyotes, amphibians, pollinators, and Columbian white-tailed deer.

Since 2016, when the Port of Vancouver donated the 527-acre property to Columbia Land Trust, more than 400 acres of corn, alfalfa, peas, and sorghum have been planted. Cranes have slowly adapted to these fields for landing, staging, and feeding.

Biologists and land managers on the project have made adjustments as they learn what the cranes prefer. Adaptive management on the fly has been essential to establishing baseline data about the behavior and needs of cranes in the region.

"No other organization in the country is doing as intense management with food plots for cranes," said Dr. Gary Ivey, research associate with the International Crane Foundation.

"As we lose more natural habitat, especially in Clark County and the surrounding area, cranes may end up relying on these food sources for survival. The Land Trust's project is going to be an important strategy to maintain in the lower Columbia River for the future of sandhill cranes."

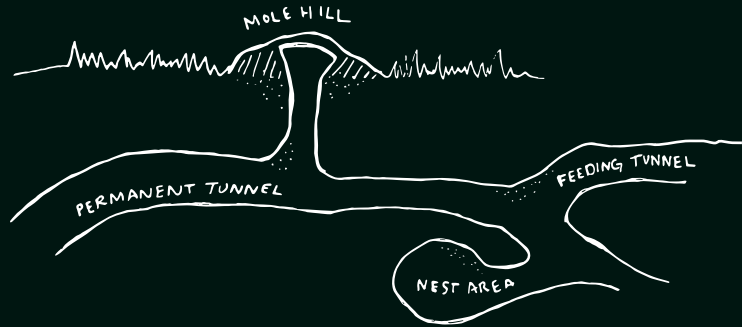
Land Trust Natural Area Manager Dan Friesz says this project goes beyond food, though. He and Dillinger collect and study mapping information, including crop row size and spacing, plus data on soil health, when and from where cranes fly, what fields they land in first, how far into crops they walk, at what times of day they use crops versus wetlands, and finally why, when, and in which direction they depart. All these variables, plus food availability and weather, play a role in determining crane behavior, and inform the team's future planning.

In 2018, nearly two miles of tall berms—raised ground—will be constructed so cranes will feel secure from disturbances, levees will be removed to join fields, and crops and native plants will continue to be installed with the seasons.

Observing sandhill cranes today could be very different from tomorrow and Dillinger's work ends as the light damps out. The cranes head out to roost in wetlands across the river for the night. Tomorrow, we'll hear the cranes come again.🦢

View the crops and sandhill cranes on our website at columbialandtrust.org/heartheccranescome

c | Sandhill cranes. Photo by Al Bernstein
d | Cranes' Landing crops



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Moles

BY SARAH RICHARDS

Walk down the garden aisle of any hardware store and you'll find a dozen products to destroy moles. Mole dirt hills pushed up onto lawns are often viewed as eyesores, plus moles aren't exactly cute. Yet these unloved ground dwellers, often incorrectly labeled rodents, offer more than one might think.

IDENTIFICATION

Two common moles inhabit Oregon and Washington: the Townsend's mole, found in pastures, meadows, and golf courses of the West and East Cascades, and the coast mole, which dwells from the West Cascades to the coast in backyards, forests, prairies, river floodplains, and even sand. Moles have velvet gray to black fur adapted to tunnel movement, minute eyes, and long, tapered pink snouts with powerful small bumps, or nerve centers, called Eimer's organs. Coast moles range from five to eight inches long and weigh about two to three ounces; Townsend's moles are slightly larger. Their incredibly well adapted, fleshy, wide front feet have five long white claws, and a modified wrist that extends like a sixth claw. Mole tunnels are typically two inches wide and three inches to three feet deep.

LIFE

As fossorial mammals, moles dig and live underground. They are insectivores in the Talpidae family, not rodents, and eat mainly worms and other invertebrates. Males travel through newly dug tunnels once their testicles enlarge, and breeding takes place around January, with the birth of two to four pups occurring in March. Juveniles leave their mother's nesting chamber in April or May and venture out for new territory, where they live solitary lives until breeding season.

STATUS

There are no major threats to moles in Oregon or Washington, but they are an irritation to those with tidy lawns. "The presence of moles should be viewed as positive, as their digging benefits soil with natural aeration, composting and drainage, and moles serve as food for owls, snakes, and other wildlife," said Clark College Professor of Biology Steven Clark. "I just golf the dirt piles in my own yard onto the grass and live without friction." 🦡

Scientific names:

Coast mole
Scapanus orarius

Townsend's mole
Scapanus townsendii



SPIDER WHISPERER

One Man's Quest to Redeem one of Nature's Most Misunderstood Creatures

BY SARAH RICHARDS

Chances are you took a look at the cover photo accompanying this story and either got immediately creeped out but kept looking or were instantly drawn in. Spiders are quite sophisticated yet grossly unrepresented in science due to a lack of funding, and in the Northwest, there are few opportunities for students to study and work under arachnologists (spider scientists).

Rod Crawford, one of the only spider researchers in the state of Washington and curator of arachnids at Seattle's Burke Museum, recently visited Columbia Land Trust's Lake Rosannah property (formerly known as Mud Lake), located west of La Center in Clark County. He and field partner Laurel Ramseyer collected more than 40 spider species in total, which were deposited at the Burke Museum for research and identification.

After tapping fallen cones, sifting dead leaves, and sweeping grasses with collection nets, they found a unique species, Washington's first specimen and extremely rare *Gertschanapis shantzi*, an orb-weaving spider of the Anapidae family, which is only known from a few sites in California and Oregon.

Crawford has studied spiders for 47 years, and he writes for a website dedicated to spider education that includes an ever-growing list of more than 80 myths.

Read pages upon pages of spider myth and fact at burkemuseum.org/blog/curated/spider-myths

Visit Rod Crawford's Spider Collector's Journal at crawford.tardigrade.net/journal/index.html

e | *Jumping spider, Phidippus audax*
f | *Rod Crawford collecting spiders.*
Photo by Valentina Anderson

Setting Spider Myths Straight

- 1. SPIDERS ARE NOT INSECTS**
Spiders are arachnids that have two body parts (not three) and four pairs of legs. Identify a spider from other arachnids by its unsegmented abdomen and eight simple eyes.
- 2. IT'S PROBABLY NOT A SPIDER BITE**
A true spider bite is so rare that an average person might be bitten once or never in their lifetime, and it's more likely you were bitten by an insect or have another skin issue entirely. It's also nearly impossible to swallow spiders in your sleep and no spider has ever been documented drinking from a sleeper's mouth or eyes as the legend says.
- 3. THEY DON'T ONLY SUCK JUICES OF PREY**
Many books and even the accounts of spider observers claim that spiders only suck the "juices" or blood of prey and waste the rest like vampires, but spiders actually do eat some digestible solids.

ARACHNOLOGY

The study of spiders



Spiders in Your Home or Garden

Spiders hatch in the spring and fall and benefit gardens and homes as predators of insects. There are many ways to invite spiders into your garden. First, eliminate invasive plants and replace them with a variety of native sheltering habitat for weather that is too dry, wet, or cold for spiders.

Plants such as salal, sword fern, tall grasses, and coniferous trees with dense foliage, plus layers of leaf litter and dead wood, make excellent spider habitat. "If a spider is in your home, it's likely a house spider that is adapted to survive indoors, and has never been outdoors," said Crawford. "Attempting to 'rescue' or throw a house spider outdoors does more harm than good." 🕸️

BE FEARLESS

Save the Dates

GUARDIAN CIRCLE

Thursday, May 17

THE SIDE YARD FARM & KITCHEN
PORTLAND, OR

Guardian-Level Fundraiser & Celebration

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PICNIC

Saturday, July 21

HEGEWALD CENTER,
STEVENSON, WA

Annual Gathering & Board Election

WILD SPLENDOR

Thursday, September 13

THE LOFT AT 8TH AVE
PORTLAND, OR

Annual Gala

Tour

\$75

MAKING MEADOWS

Saturday, April 21

THE DALLES, OR

Spend the day exploring how you can create a native meadow in your own backyard or simply learn to identify your favorite wildflowers at Mill Creek Ridge. End the day with a visit to the Humble Roots Farm and Nursery, where participants may purchase native plants at wholesale prices.

Tour

\$75

SCAT TASK FORCE

Saturday, June 2

MOUNT ST. HELENS

We've teamed up once again with the University of Washington's Center for Conservation Biology program, Conservation Canines, which rescues and trains highly energetic dogs to assist wildlife researchers in learning about a diverse range of wildlife species through scat detection and collection. We will explore our Pine Creek property located on the south side of Mount St. Helens. This area is a stronghold for many important species from northern spotted owl to gray wolf to cougar, and possibly fishers who have been recently reintroduced to the area.

SIGN UP | ColumbiaLandTrust.org

Share photos of the people, places, and wildlife that inspire you.

@ColumbiaLandTrust | #FEARLESSNATURE



Photo of Balsamroot by Sarah Richards



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HABITAP | DOUBLE MOUNTAIN BREWERY

Cheers to the packed room that came out to support nature at our 4th Annual Habitatap. A big thanks to our friends and hosts at Double Mountain Brewery & Taproom in Portland, and to our Emerging Leaders Council for another spectacular get-together.



› Learn more about our Emerging Leaders Council at columbialandtrust.org/elc

Photography by Gabriel Olson