



# Conservation Report

2020

# UP FOR THE CHALLENGE

COLUMBIA LAND TRUST CONSERVES THE NATURE OF THE NORTHWEST THROUGH SOUND SCIENCE AND STRONG RELATIONSHIPS. WE DO THIS WORK TO BENEFIT BOTH NATURE AND PEOPLE.

**W**e envision a future where natural areas and our lives intertwine, and where people know, love, and respect the beauty and importance of nature. Where human communities, including neighborhoods, businesses, farms, ranches, and working forests, complement the natural world, which provides all people well-being and an unrivaled quality of life.

This is a bold vision indeed. And together, we are making important progress. This report shows our on-the-ground work in 2019 and 2020 to move us closer to that vision.

## IN SUMMARY

We are on track to achieve the 2017–2020 phase of our 25-year Conservation Agenda. We raised \$75 million in the last three years, on our way to our four-year, \$100 million goal.

We anticipate conserving about 20,000 acres of our most important and threatened lands by the end of 2020 through this Conservation Agenda.


We are building support for nature like never before by doubling the size of the Backyard Habitat Certification Program, by developing a larger, more diverse workforce, and through tours, events, and storytelling.

And yet, national conservation leaders and scientists say that land trusts must increase our pace by ten times to respond to the urgent threats of sprawling development and climate change, and to make conservation work relevant to a far broader population.

That's why, going forward, we are developing a climate action plan that expands our proven success with natural climate solutions like forest conservation. And why we are developing an equity vision that guides both the evolution of current programs and the creation of new initiatives to address natural resource inequities that impact our region's communities of color, indigenous communities, and rural communities.

Yes, as you will see on the following pages, we move forward with the same strategies that have proven so successful, strengthened through a focus on climate change and equity. And we will develop new strategies that meaningfully engage far more people. As always, at the core of our work is listening and the willingness to create and support new solutions based on what we hear.

## TOGETHER WE WILL SUCCEED.



Columbia Land Trust

# FIVE WAYS YOU

MADE THE COLUMBIA RIVER REGION BETTER IN 2019

conserved **270 acres** of rivers, forests, and wildlife habitat

**PLANTED 118,142 NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS**



**BANDED 87 PURPLE MARTIN NESTLINGS**  
to inform our conservation efforts



**90 acres of floodplain RECONNECTED**

on the Elochoman River to benefit salmon and other wildlife

**enrolled 1,047 yards and greenspaces**

in the Backyard Habitat Certification Program\*



## You Make a Difference

**W**e are grateful to have donors like you who are committed to conservation in the Northwest. Your courage to give ensures our success in protecting, restoring, and stewarding the lands and waters of our beloved region—from the coast, through the mountains and forests of the Cascades, to the arid eastern landscapes. With you by our side, our natural wonders will thrive for generations to come.

Every dollar you donate to Columbia Land Trust gets leveraged into \$20 for conservation. We do this by securing private and public grants to fund comprehen-

sive, collaborative projects. Entering the fourth year of our Conservation Agenda, we are already poised to leverage your gifts into \$100 million of conservation. This unprecedented campaign calls on the entire community to come together, bold and united for nature.

*Thank you for giving fearlessly to protect the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River Region, conserving the nature you love.*

\* The Backyard program is a collaboration with Portland Audubon. Art by Cassandra Thompson.

# OUR APPROACH



## Our Agenda at Work

Columbia Land Trust is committed to fundamentally changing the pace and scale of conservation in the Northwest through collaboration and community engagement. These programs and initiatives build on our core approaches of conserving, restoring, and stewarding discrete lands.

### LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

**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.

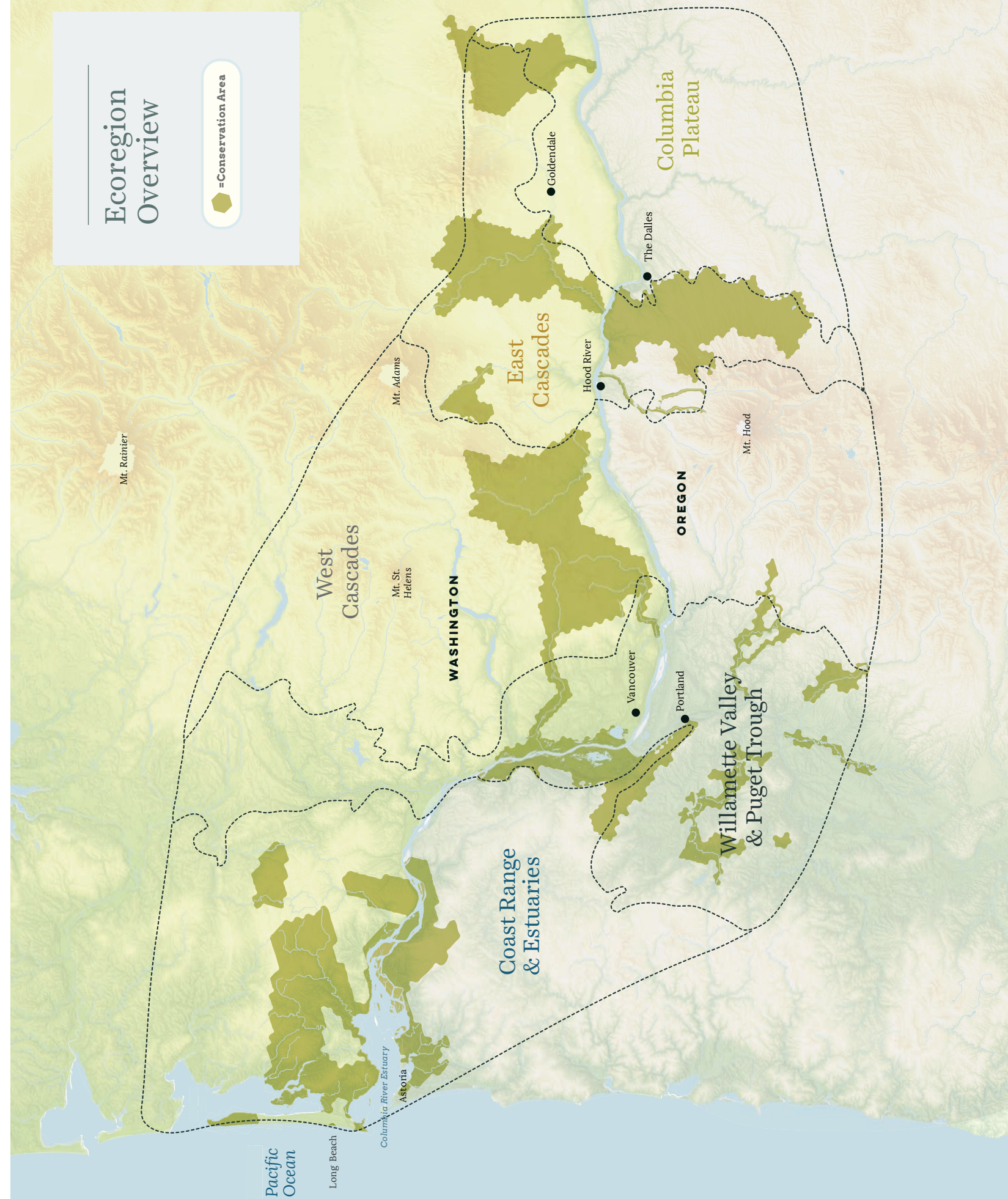
**INCLUDE** partners and communities in decision-making to improve ecological conditions through collaborative restoration and enhancement.

**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.

## Conservation Areas

Columbia Land Trust identifies conservation areas—geographies critical to our region's ecosystems and wildlife. To establish conservation areas, we analyze the current presence of wildlife species and habitat, landscape connectivity, climate resilience, expert opinion, and local knowledge. The map on the next page depicts our highest-priority conservation areas across five ecologically distinct regions. Throughout this report, we've noted when site-specific projects exist within conservation areas.

*During our Coffee with the Cranes tour, a sandhill crane forges in the croplands of Cranes' Landing, a 527-acre property on the outskirts of Vancouver. Photo by Tara Lemezis, Tiny Seed Photography.*





## Avenues of Engagement: Keeping People Connected to Nature

### ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

As we navigated various engagement opportunities in 2019, it gave us a chance to try new things, experiment, and refine our process and priorities along the way. It also allowed us to explore engagement as a concept, to see where our strengths and weaknesses were as we changed gears slowly throughout the year. While considering the Land Trust's role in climate action, one thing became clearer: engagement should be and feel authentic, and in order to truly resonate with the public on crucial conservation issues and topics such as climate change, we must prioritize community voices and needs. As we transition into 2020 with our community engagement program, we remain agile in our thinking about how Columbia Land Trust can keep connecting people to nature in meaningful ways.

Our goal is to invite, educate, and inspire. Yes, engaging the public on conservation carries urgency, but building relationships and trust does as well. As we take a look at who historically has benefitted from conservation work, and is well aware of the impact, we also look to those who are not as familiar with it. We invite them to learn more about conservation, and we remain curious and responsive to how conservation shows up throughout our lives.

As Columbia Land Trust embarks on another year of engaging with diverse communities, we hope to offer programming and events that reach people in authentic ways, provide access to nature and learning, and inspire people to keep conservation woven into how they think about, move in, and see the world.

### EXPANDING THE BACKYARD HABITAT PROGRAM

2019 marked ten years since Columbia Land Trust and Portland Audubon first partnered to establish and manage the Backyard Habitat Certification Program (BHCP). The program is widely recognized

*Vamos Afuera: a spring wildflower hike with Comunidades, a group of emerging Latinx environmental leaders based in Portland and the Columbia Gorge.*



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. BHCP encourages habitat stewardship at homes, apartments, businesses, schools, community organizations, and other institutions throughout the Portland metro area. Participants are partners in conservation on their urban and suburban properties to improve the health of local watersheds and support wildlife by planting native plants, removing invasive weeds, eliminating pesticide use, managing stormwater on site, and stewarding wildlife. We provide each participant with technical assistance, incentives (coupons and certification signs), and encouragement. Then they create and implement a plan to enhance habitat on their property.

The BHCP works throughout the urbanized areas of Multnomah, Clackamas, Clark, and Washington counties and enrolls more than 900 new properties each year. Currently, over 6,000 participants are active in the program, spanning about 1,450 acres. Together,

the actions taken by these individuals and community groups make a significant impact on the quality of air and water throughout our region, improve habitat for urban wildlife, and provide physical and mental health benefits not only to the program participants but to our local communities as well. Annually, over 100 volunteers contribute more than 1,900 hours to support program operations, such as making certification visits and sending benefits to newly certified participants.

The Backyard Habitat program continues to be seen by local natural resource managers as important to supporting municipal conservation efforts. In 2019, the program expanded into Clark County, Washington, and the eastern half of Washington County, Oregon (Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin, unincorporated Portland). We worked with program partners to

*Backyard Habitat Certification Program participants celebrate with their coveted Certified Backyard Habitat sign.*



plan the next leg of our regional expansion, planned for spring of 2020, into the western half of Washington County (Cornelius, Forest Grove, Hillsboro, Sherwood) and two final cities in Multnomah County (Troutdale, Wood Village).

#### OFFERING TOURS AND EVENTS

Connecting people with nature is at the core of our mission. With our lineup of tours and events for 2020, we aim to get people out on the land, to show our appreciation for their support, and to raise critical funds to help us continue to protect and preserve the nature of the Northwest.

Exploring Willapa Bay by kayak, stargazing at the base of Mount Adams, and sipping hot chocolate on the shore of the Columbia while watching chum salmon spawn are just a few of the experiences we are currently leading. In 2020, we will continue these efforts to increase supporter engagement and to make connecting people with the land more accessible. This will include free meetup-style gatherings, half-day tours, and child-friendly outings.

Our annual events include multiple ways for us to show our appreciation and acknowledge our supporters. Our Heritage Circle luncheon and Guardian

*Farms and Stars tour at the Schmid Farm in Trout Lake, WA. Photo by Lenkerbrook Photography.*



Circle, our major donor appreciation event, highlight the support of those who are making a significant impact on local conservation through their annual giving or inclusion of the Land Trust in their will or trust. In addition, as many as 200 supporters gather for our annual membership picnic, and our fall gala typically brings together over 300 supporters, corporate sponsors, and conservation leaders to raise crucial funds for the Land Trust's conservation work.

#### STORYTELLING

Each year, the Land Trust shares stories about the myriad ways in which people connect to the nature of the Northwest. In 2019, our print publication *Fieldbook* chronicled efforts conservation stories from the mouth of the Columbia, to urban backyards, to the oak woodlands of the East Cascades. We also produced a short film about our effort to remove a dam from the Washougal River watershed and the cultural significance of restoration for our project partners, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

#### DEVELOPING A DIVERSE CONSERVATION WORKFORCE

In 2019, Columbia Land Trust began a new partnership with Wisdom of the Elders' Wisdom Workforce Development Internship Program. The program provides conservation and restoration training as well as

*We hope to offer programming and events that reach people in authentic ways, provide access to nature and learning, and inspire people to keep conservation woven into how they think about, move in, and see the world.*

career pathways for Portland's Native adults. Since January, the Land Trust has hired the Wisdom Workforce Development crew to implement tree planting, planting maintenance, invasive plant control, site cleanup, fence construction, and other stewardship projects on Land Trust conservation lands in the greater Portland metro area. The Land Trust will continue to provide training and work opportunities for the crew in 2020.

The Land Trust has also focused on broadening the diversity of contractors, particularly on some of our most significant restoration construction work. The Land Trust joined the Oregon chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors to foster relationships with minority-owned engineering and construction companies. This effort has resulted in the first design-build request for qualifications for engineering and construction teams to develop the Lower Elochoman Phase III restoration project, which substantially integrates the Land Trust's equity commitments into our selection process.

In addition, the Land Trust is partnering with Forest Park Conservancy (FPC) on its Green Jobs Training and Internship Program in 2020. Through the program, four interns are working with Columbia Land Trust as part of rotating placements with environmental organizations around the Portland-Vancouver area. In addition to the Land Trust and FPC, internship program partners include Blueprint Foundation, Wisdom of the Elders, Ecotrust, Tualatin River Keepers, and West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District. The internship allows the participants to gain hands-on experience in field work and shadow experienced professionals, while earning a living wage and developing a professional network. Already in 2020, the intern cohort is supporting planting and restoration efforts alongside members of the Land Trust's stewardship team.

*Community Engagement Manager Dez Ramirez volunteers at a planting in Portland's Jade District.*



## Working Lands

The Land Trust is bridging divides between conservationists and landowners in agriculture and forestry, building trust and strategies based on our shared goals and common ground of caring for the natural resources of the Northwest.

### OREGON AGRICULTURAL TRUST

Columbia Land Trust is playing a lead role in a statewide strategy to increase Oregon’s capacity for conserving farms and ranches. Building on our previous work to foster positive relationships between land trusts and agricultural landowners, we are laying the groundwork for Oregon Agricultural Trust (OAT), a statewide organization that partners with farmers and ranchers to preserve and pass on their land, and to keep it in production for future generations. We have been incubating the Agricultural Trust for the past year and are celebrating its 2020 evolution to a stand-alone entity serving farmers and ranchers across Oregon.

### COMMUNITY FORESTRY

There is a movement afoot for culturally diverse communities across the Northwest—rural and urban, west and east of the Cascade Mountains—to share 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 in the 2019 Washington legislative session we helped champion first-time state funding for four community forests. In 2020, we will lead the coalition through a new phase of growth and strategic development. Land Trust staff are traveling throughout the Northwest region, building relationships and having conversations with communities about their visions for local forestry. The goal is to inform federal and bistate legislation to increase funding, financial tools, and participation from tribes, counties, nonprofits, and municipalities for community forestry—thereby keeping sustainable, grassroots management of Northwest forests.

The coastal city of Ilwaco, in Pacific County, inland in Skamania County, and the Simcoe Mountains in Klickitat County, Washington, are a few examples of Northwest regions developing community

*An aerial view of Oregon farmland.*



forests. Land Trust staff are in these areas helping them develop community forest strategies that reflect their values, hold forests in production, and prevent conversion to development.

## Sustainable Forests

We are engaging with key state, federal, and private company leaders to help strike a balance in public forest management, supporting sustainable management practices on some publicly owned forests while ensuring protection of our remaining old-growth stands.

### WASHINGTON STATE FOREST TRADE LANDS

Forests in the Northwest are among our most important natural resources, providing forested communities county revenue, jobs, and recreation. Forests are essential to our economy and for wildlife habitat. We support both of these goals.

Columbia Land Trust spearheaded a concept that became a Washington State steering committee, which includes diverse representation of county commissioners from three forest-reliant counties, state legislators, and leaders from the Department

of Natural Resources, the Office of the State Superintendent, and the American Forest Resource Council. The team proposed legislation in 2019 for state forest land trades that would release working forests for harvest and ensure conservation of old forests for endangered species, such as the marbled murrelet. While that legislation did not pass, the team has a 2020 strategy that includes a legislative field tour and a budget request for \$24.8 million as a pilot phase. It is anticipated that because this is not a capital budget year, the pilot may be successful in 2021.

### WILLAPA HILLS AND SKAMANIA FOREST STRATEGY

Willapa Hills in Pacific and Wahkiakum counties, where forestry is core to the local culture and economy, serves as an area of focus when it comes to sustainable practices. Another area is Skamania County, Washington, where the national forest, state forest, and Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area have been at the core of forest management disagreement and conflict. With Skamania County leaders, the Washington lands commissioner, and congressional representatives, the Land Trust is seeking creative solutions that may be a model for the nation. Our goals are to ensure forestry revenue to the county while protecting critical old forests for habitat and recreation.

*Basalt cliffs along Washington's Klickitat Canyon. Photo by Dennis Wiancko.*

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## Conserving Habitat Corridors

In vast critical habitat corridors, the Land Trust is forming collaborative partnerships that provide education, incentives, and support for better land management of critical habitats.

### TUALATIN RIVER PARTNERSHIP

The Portland-Vancouver area's largest watershed by area, the Tualatin River basin contributes 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 as a geography in which we will focus significant effort over the next several years. We will continue to deploy land acquisition, restoration, partnership, and engagement strategies in this area.

### EAST CASCADES OAK PARTNERSHIP

The East Cascades Oak Partnership is wrapping up its two-year strategic planning process. During four formal partnership meetings in 2019, partners heard from an additional 18 presenters on topics ranging from planning processes, regulatory and incentive mechanisms, management and restoration challenges, and climate change. We continued our efforts to understand what drives the decisions people make in the oak landscape and to identify opportunities to influence those decisions in order to improve outcomes for both the oak systems and the people who rely on them.

Networking among partners has increased dramatically since the partnership's inception, with several new collaborations emerging in 2019 and planned for 2020. The partnership continues to hear from interested landowners and managers hungry for more information about how to oversee their oak responsibly to improve habitat condition as well as connectivity.



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## Land Management Systems

With each newly conserved swath of land, the Land Trust's responsibility to monitor, manage, restore, and steward habitat grows. To stay ahead of the demand, our nimble stewardship team is investing in emerging technologies to collect data, track our efforts, and measure our impacts on the land.

### OUZEL

In 2019, after several years of development, we released a functional iteration of Ouzel, our lands database. Ouzel is an application tailored specifically to the work of land trusts of all types and sizes and has been designed to be adaptable. Staff are continuing to test and improve the application to ensure this new tool is additive, providing improved workflows, flexibility, and information tracking over our old system.

Also in 2019, staff developed Ouzel partnership and subscription agreements to formalize the work of the partners and to make Ouzel available to other organizations. In the coming year, staff will continue to refine workflows and improve the tool and work with other land trusts to "onboard" them as users.

### UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE MONITORING PROGRAM

The Land Trust has begun to take greater advantage of UAV 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 assess large and complex sites, plan restoration and management activities, map weeds, characterize forest stands, document projects, and even develop a three-dimensional land-surface model. In 2019, the Land Trust's monitoring program added another UAV to its fleet. We have utilized this technology for weed mapping prior to the intertidal wetland weed-control efforts in the estuary, monitoring for distribution of purple loosestrife, and to create high-resolution imagery of several stewardship units for monitoring.

*Top: Late-day light across Trout Lake Farm beneath Mount Adams. Photo by Lenkerbrook Photography. Bottom: Oak and pine forests in the foothills of Mount Hood. Photo by Brian Chambers Photography.*

# Coast Range & Estuaries



## ECOREGIONAL OBJECTIVES

**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.

*The site of efforts to restore Sitka spruce forest and swamp conditions along Grays River. Photo by Whitney Dawson.*



## LAND PROTECTION

### 23 ACRES Grays River Watershed

#### WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA

**Conservation Areas:** Columbia River Estuary, Grays River

In November of 2019, the Land Trust acquired a 23-acre property on Crooked Creek and Grays Bay and is now in the process of purchasing another 40-acre property on Grays River. These properties add to the more than 1,000 acres the Land Trust has already conserved on Grays Bay. With the acquisition of additional properties, the Land Trust will be able to complete three large-scale intertidal wetland restoration projects benefitting salmon, steelhead, eulachon, and numerous migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. These projects are funded by Bonneville Power Administration.

The Grays River watershed is a critical resource for fish, wildlife, the forestry economy, and clean water. Collaborating with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Land Trust is beginning conversations with communities who are invested in this watershed with the goal of developing watershed-scale,



community-based conservation strategies. In 2020, the Land Trust and Cowlitz Indian Tribe will continue to engage in a broader partnership across the region and state toward this vision.

20  
ACRES

## Chinook River PACIFIC COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust acquired two more properties on Chinook River in Pacific County, adjacent to the 285 acres acquired in 2017. The acquisitions added 20 acres of wetlands, benefitting listed salmonids, bear, elk, and migratory birds. The project was funded by the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program.

89  
ACRES

## Lower Elochoman River WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust purchased two properties, totaling 89 acres, on the lower Elochoman River just off the Columbia River near Cathlamet, Washington. This adds to the 34-acre property purchased in 2018. The three properties were historically wetlands and floodplain of the Elochoman, supporting salmonids. With these last two acquisitions, the Land Trust will be able to complete a restoration project benefitting listed Columbian white-tailed deer, salmon, steelhead, eulachon, and numerous migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. The projects were funded by Bonneville Power Administration.

82  
ACRES

## South Tongue Point CLATSOP COUNTY, OR

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust continues to work toward acquiring a 82-acre property on the Columbia River in Astoria, Oregon. The Land Trust will transfer the property to Clatsop Community College, which owns a marine education facility next door and will use the property as a living laboratory for its students. The majority of the project is being funded by the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), plus the Land Trust has received support from individuals and foundations. In June 2019, the Land Trust and Clatsop Community College hosted a reception at the college and tours of the property for community members. With the acquisition of the property in 2020, 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. The project is a win-win, protecting habitat while helping to train the next generation of scientists and land managers in Astoria.

Top: View around the bend from South Tongue Point in Astoria, OR. Photo by Doug Gorsline. Bottom: Land Monitoring Assistant Sanoë Keliinoi wades across the water on a site visit to the Kerry Island restoration site.

## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

### Indian Jack Slough: Wetland Enhancement

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA  
Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

In their fifth year on the site at Indian Jack Slough, two gourd colonies (nest habitats) for purple martins produced 87 hatched nestlings, with 84 presumed fledged—more birds than ever before. Work at Indian Jack Slough, which is a tributary of the Elochoman River, also included site prep for additional wetland plantings in early 2020. Work in 2020 will include removal of hybrid poplar trees and permitting and coordination of wetland swale creation with further planting into 2021.

### Lower Elochoman Forest: Wetland Restoration

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA  
Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

The Lower Elochoman Forest unit was the focus of intensive restoration work in 2019. More than 40,000 native trees and shrubs were planted early in the year, weed control took place throughout the year, and more than 5,000 feet of fencing was removed. In August, 3,700 linear feet of berm was removed from along the Elochoman River to allow for natural overbank flooding, and the material was used to fill 1,600 feet of ditches, restoring wetland conditions and creating additional forage for Columbian white-tailed deer. Monitoring of water levels, vegetation, and topography is ongoing to inform project success and needed interventions. In addition to effectiveness monitoring, work in 2020 will include planting of areas disturbed during construction, plant maintenance, and ongoing weed control.

### Kerry Island: Planting and Weed Control

COLUMBIA COUNTY, OR  
Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

In 2019, the third year since a large tidal floodplain restoration effort on Kerry Island, the Land Trust undertook an additional round of planting and weed control. Crews and local school-age volunteers installed 3,600 trees and shrubs early in the year to infill previously planted areas as well as expand the planted footprint. Weed control efforts have also continued, targeting priority weed species throughout the property. In 2020, the Land Trust is planting additional cuttings and continuing to control weeds as well as monitor vegetation, water levels and temperature, sediment accretion rates, and channel dynamics.

### Nelson Creek Swamp: Weed Control and Restoration Design

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA  
Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

Last year marked the closing of the remaining two of three acquisitions in this project area within the Lower Elochoman River system, opening the door for large-scale floodplain restoration. Work began quickly in 2019 to control

weed species, primarily blackberry and knotweed. Several structures were also removed, including salvaging of a barn by a local resident. Since we are aiming to implement floodplain restoration in 2021, the majority of design work will take place in 2020, by a design-build team selected in accordance with the Land Trust's equity commitments. The restoration project involves ditch filling and other drainage infrastructure removal, channel creation, vegetative restoration, and a large culvert or bridge installation to benefit all life stages of salmonids, Columbian white-tailed deer, and many other wetland-dependent species.

## Wallacut River Confluence: Planting and Weed Control

### PACIFIC COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

In our third year since a hydrologic restoration effort, we conducted an additional and final round of planting in 2019. More than 3,000 trees and shrubs were planted in the early months of last year by local contractors and volunteers, to help supplement areas that were treated for weeds during the previous summer months and help refine the species composition throughout the property. The Land Trust also continued weed-control work, targeting priority weed species throughout the property. Weed control, particularly for gorse, and maintenance around planting areas will be ongoing in the years to come.



## North Nemah: Forest Stand Enhancement

### PACIFIC COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Willapa Hills

In the fall of 2019, using federal grant funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Columbia Land Trust thinned approximately 33 acres of coastal forest near the North Nemah River. This forest stand was previously managed as an industrial Douglas-fir plantation. Using local contractors, the Land Trust was able to reduce the overstocked stand from a range of 600 to 900 trees per acre (TPA) to 220 TPA. This reduction and the targeting of specific tree species allows for greater diversity and understory growth while placing the forest on a better trajectory toward old-growth conditions that support the threatened marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl. Contractors were also tasked with creating 123 wildlife piles using the downed material from the stand enhancement. These piles form cavities and hiding places in the understory for small mammals as well as perching areas for a variety of bird species.

## Long Beach Peninsula: Water-Level Monitoring

### PACIFIC COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Northern Long Beach Peninsula

The intertidal wetlands and lakes of the Long Beach Peninsula play a crucial role for migratory birds, resident amphibians and mammals, and rare and threatened plant species. The unique and important ecosystem also serves as the main freshwater aquifer utilized by communities along this stretch of coastline. Climate change, sea level rise, development pressure, and flooding all have the potential to affect these habitats and communities. In 2019, the Land Trust began a surface water-level monitoring program to better understand current trends and disruptions within this system. In 2020, the Land Trust plans to engage with local stakeholders to promote the development of a comprehensive water-monitoring and oversight program that can assist communities in making best-management decisions as well as plan for future impacts.

*An osprey looks on at South Tongue Point in Astoria, OR. Photo by Doug Gorsline.*



## Abernathy Creek: Forest Enhancement

### COWLITZ COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Columbia River Tidal

Columbia Land Trust holds conservation easements on seven private properties along lower Abernathy Creek. These legal agreements protect a corridor of riverside forest, helping to improve watershed function and habitat for coho salmon and steelhead. In 2019, Columbia Land Trust continued to support the property owners in restoring streamside forest habitat through partnerships with Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control Board and the Cowlitz Conservation District.

*Restoration efforts along the lower Elochoman River include reconnecting historic floodplain by removing a berm and controlling weeds. The banks of the lower river are thick with invasive knotweed.*

## Columbia River Estuary: Invasive Species Control

### MULTIPLE COUNTIES IN OR AND WA

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

Invasive species represent a constant threat to ecological function on natural lands throughout the Columbia River Estuary. Invasive plants such as purple loosestrife, gorse, yellow flag iris, and reed canarygrass are typical targets for annual control on conserved estuary habitats. In 2019, the Land Trust began a concerted effort to control purple loosestrife on multiple properties from Grays Bay to Cathlamet Bay, treating over 200 acres of intertidal habitat. The Land Trust is also in its fourth year of a six-year reed canarygrass control experiment on the Kandoll Farm and Kerry Island properties. This experiment is being conducted in partnership with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and the results are informing restoration practitioners working in freshwater tidal habitats throughout the Northwest region.

ECOREGION

# Willamette Valley & Puget Trough



## ECOREGIONAL OBJECTIVES

**RESTORE** the health and function of the floodplains, 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 both cities and natural areas.

*The Land Trust is working with the City of Camas to conserve land along the north shore of Clark County's Lacamas Lake.*



## LAND PROTECTION

### Backyard Habitat Certification Program

**MULTNOMAH, CLACKAMAS, WASHINGTON COUNTIES, OR, AND CLARK COUNTY, WA**

See page 7–8 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 Portland Audubon.



*Certified Backyard Habitat signs can now be found in neighborhoods across four counties in the Portland-Vancouver metro area.*



**43  
ACRES** East Fork Lewis River: Greenway Expansion

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

The Land Trust is in the midst of a review process to acquire a conservation easement on roughly 43 acres of recreation and forest land on the East Fork Lewis River. This planned acquisition is adjacent to Lewisville Park and will extend the Clark County East Fork Lewis River Greenway. It will prevent subdivision and residential development and ensure access to the East Fork Lewis River by visitors from across the region.

**135  
ACRES** East Fork Lewis River: Lewis River Ranch Greenway

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River (Lower)

The Land Trust is providing transactional and due diligence support for Clark County's acquisition of the 135-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 neighboring Lewisville Park, the most heavily used park in the county's ownership.

Volunteers of all ages help out during a volunteer stewardship day led by Hewlett-Packard employees at Woods Landing.

**132  
ACRES** Lacamas Lake: North Shore

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Lacamas Prairie

Lacamas Lake North Shore is a collaborative conservation and park project underway with the City of Camas, Clark County Conservation Futures, and Columbia Land Trust. Camas has acquired 65 acres of this project and will acquire the remaining 67 acres in 2020. This project supports the city's vision of a multiuse loop trail around Lacamas Lake and a forested backdrop protecting the viewshed of the north shore. It will also protect the historic Pittock-Leadbetter House.

**876  
ACRES** Wapato Valley Mitigation Bank Easement

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Lowlands

The Land Trust is working to acquire a 876-acre conservation easement at the confluence of the Lewis and Columbia rivers. The easement will be donated as part of a conservation and wetland mitigation bank under development by a longtime family landowner. The property is adjacent to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and across the Columbia River from Oregon's Sauvie Island Wildlife Area, making it an important and heavily 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 federal-listed juvenile salmon and other native species.

**STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION**

**Columbia Stock Ranch: Habitat Restoration**

**COLUMBIA COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Lowlands

Land Trust staff continue to coordinate with Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in completing the necessary four restoration phases (2019–2022) within the historic floodplain to benefit federally-threatened Columbian white-tailed deer. In the spring of 2020, 30 to 50 white-tailed deer will be translocated to the property from Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge in an effort to help establish another subpopulation within the deer's historic range along the lowlands of the Columbia River Estuary. For phase one, in 2019, Land Trust staff hired multiple contractors to remove over a mile of dilapidated fences, mulch nearly 20 acres of blackberries, and construct nearly 2 miles of deer-friendly fencing that will allow the existing rancher to continue his cattle operations. In addition, 30 acres of the floodplain were mowed to prepare for the planting of nearly 63,000 native trees and shrubs scheduled for the spring of 2020. Over 20 different native species will be planted within 50 acres to provide future cover and foraging habitat for the deer.

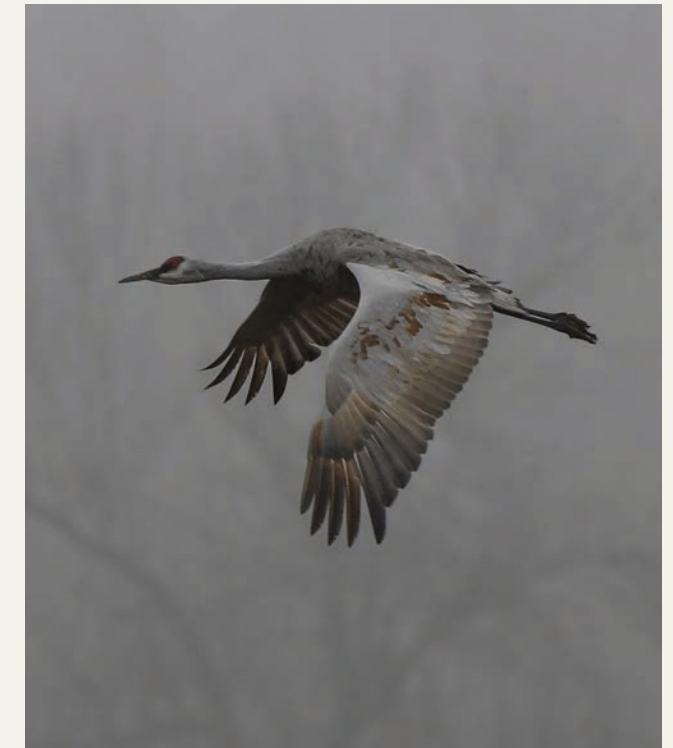
Throughout 2020, the Land Trust will begin implementing the second phase, which will include removing additional dilapidated fences, constructing more deer friendly fences, and preparing 50 further acres of the property to be planted with nearly 62,000 native trees and shrubs in 2021.

**Cranes' Landing: Forage Plantings and Native Tree Establishment**

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Lowlands

The Land Trust, in cooperation with our contract farmer, planted a variety of crops to benefit the thousands of migrating sandhill cranes that begin arriving from their breeding grounds in early September. The 2019 season marked the fourth year of farming the property for sandhill cranes since the Land Trust took ownership in March 2016. A total of 410 acres were tilled, mowed, or planted with alfalfa (80 acres), corn (60 acres), spring wheat (23 acres), and winter



wheat (188 acres). The remainder (59 acres) continues to be managed for a naturally occurring plant called yellow nutsedge. Yellow nutsedge produces underground seeds called nutlets, and cranes vigorously probe to unearth these highly caloric nutlets.

The screening berms constructed in 2018 (12 acres in total) will be planted with nearly 14,500 native trees and shrubs in early spring 2020. Existing native planting areas that were established in 2017 and 2018 (nearly 18 acres) will also be interplanted as a strategy to replace native flora that perished over the summer. Continued farming will commence in late spring 2020 with the crops most preferred by cranes based on an analysis of the 2019–2020 crane-monitoring data and general crane observations by staff, volunteers, contractors, and other invested partners.

**Storedahl Property: Riparian Forest Enhancement**

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

In 2019, the Land Trust installed and maintained 650 plants (in addition to 1,500 plants installed in 2018) within this previously disturbed area. In 2020, we will continue with weed control efforts and the maintenance of tree plantings.

A sandhill crane takes flight at Cranes' Landing. Photo by Tara Lemezis, Tiny Seed Photography.

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## Keller Woodlands: Habitat Restoration

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Forest Park

With funding from Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods grant program, Columbia Land Trust began a second phase of forest habitat restoration work at the Keller Woodlands site. This project builds on more than a decade of habitat restoration and community outreach implemented by the West Willamette Restoration Partnership, a group of public and private organizations and community groups working in Portland's Southwest hills. In addition to restoring forest habitat, the Land Trust is working with the partnership to develop a community engagement project that will help land managers better understand how local communities use trails and natural areas. In this project, the Land Trust will engage with English-language-learning communities and other groups in Southwest Portland that have not historically been included in decision-making related to natural areas and outdoor recreation. The results of the community engagement project will be used to develop a new public trail in Keller Woodlands that will connect to existing trail networks in public parks. Trail planning will be completed in 2020, and trail construction is slated for 2020 or 2021.

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## Boardman Creek Headwaters: Urban Habitat Restoration

**CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR**

In 2019, the Land Trust planted more than 800 trees and shrubs, 60 ferns, and 300 wetland plants at the Boardman Creek Headwaters property in Oak Lodge near Milwaukie, Oregon. The Land Trust holds a conservation easement on the property and is partnering with the landowner to restore streamside vegetation and oak habitat. More planting and invasive species control are planned for 2020.

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## McGahan: Forest Enhancement

**CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Clackamas River

The Land Trust is continuing to control invasive plants at the forested McGahan site along the Clackamas River near Estacada, Oregon. This work was completed in collabora-



tion with the Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership, a group of local and regional partners working to strategically monitor and manage invasive species throughout the Clackamas River basin. Staff also planted 100 trees, shrubs, and ferns to establish native vegetation in areas that were once dominated by grasses and invasive weeds.

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## Woods Landing: Habitat Restoration

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

For the past four years, the Land Trust has been partnering with Hewlett-Packard, which has adopted Woods Landing, located along the Columbia River just east of the I-205 bridge, as part of its sustainability department's volunteer program. Several times a year, employees from HP volunteer time at Woods Landing, pulling weeds, main-

taining plantings, and maintaining a path. HP employees returned in 2019 to continue their transformation of the north forest at Woods Landing, pulling the last of the large English laurel trees out of the creek, eradicating piles of ivy, mulching plantings, and tackling blackberry and other weeds. Our incredible volunteer site steward joined the HP staff in removing English holly, laurel, ivy, blackberry, and an assortment of other weeds throughout the property as well as tending plantings. This year the Land Trust also tested out goats as a blackberry control tool and worked with our contractor, Wisdom Workforce Development, to build on the progress made by the volunteers. The Wisdom crew moved a mountain of mulch to improve the path for site visitors and tours, removed blackberry near the chum spawning grounds, maintained plantings, and uprooted weeds in the north forest. In 2020, work will continue with additional weed control and plantings throughout the forest where volunteers and crews have been working for the past few years.

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## Nicolai Woods: Habitat Restoration

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Forest Park

In 2019, the Land Trust continued a full-site weed control effort that was started in 2017. This involved controlling blackberry, ivy, English holly, English hawthorn, and any other invasive species present throughout the 1.5-acre property. In 2020, this work will continue along with the beginnings of a revegetation effort, which will include 200 trees and shrubs installed as well as an effort to get seeds established to help compete with non-native species.

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## Rainbow Farm: Riparian Enhancement

**WASHINGTON COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Tualatin River

In 2018, the Land Trust began riparian enhancement work on the remnant riparian forest at Rainbow Farm, a 76-acre floodplain property located along the Tualatin River and across the river from Metro's Quamash Prairie. The majority of the property is being farmed by a tenant farmer as a site preparation strategy while the Land Trust seeks funding for restoration. The Land Trust was awarded funding through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) to initiate the first phase of restoration at Rainbow Farm on the roughly 25 acres of remnant forest along the river. In the summer of 2019, our tenant farmer mowed all of the blackberry that had invaded along the forest's edge, and staff and contractors followed up later in the year to further control the blackberry and treat weedy trees scattered throughout the forest. In 2020, additional weed control will be conducted to prepare the project area for planting in early 2021. The Land Trust anticipates initiating additional efforts to restore wet prairie and oak savanna habitat in late 2020 or 2021, pending funding.

*It's an ongoing challenge to keep invasive blackberry under control along the banks of the Tualatin River at Rainbow Farm. We'll seek to restore this historic oak and prairie habitat in the years ahead.*

# West Cascades



## ECOREGIONAL OBJECTIVES

**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 by removing barriers to migration, improving river conditions, and restoring floodplains.

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

*“All of these forest management strategies will help increase biodiversity and forest health, and expedite young and older forest stands toward old-growth characteristics...”*

*The spillway at Kwoneesum Dam on Wildboy Creek creates a pleasant-looking waterfall, but it represents an impassible barrier for salmon and steelhead. The Land Trust is conserving 1,300 acres of forestland with the goal of removing the dam in partnership with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Photo by Lenkerbrook Photography.*



## LAND PROTECTION

**9,000 ACRES** East Fork Lewis River: Yacolt Forest

### CLARK COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River (Upper)

The Land Trust is working to negotiate the acquisition of two conservation easements, totaling roughly 9,000 acres, on forestland located along the East Fork Lewis River and adjacent to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. This property is the largest privately owned forestland in Clark County, and its continued use as timberland is essential to support the local, forestry-based economy. By linking public and private forestlands, this project will maintain a continuous forest landscape and provide important habitat for elk, bear, and cougar.

100  
ACRES

## Wind River: Double Bend Phase III

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Wind River

In early May 2019, the Land Trust completed conservation of this 100-acre, mature, west-side forest property, which includes 35 acres of old-growth forest habitat and protects over a mile of wild shoreline habitat along the Wind River. The acquisition expanded the Land Trust's existing Double Bend conservation area to 236 total acres. It also lies entirely within a northern spotted owl nest circle, bordered on two sides by Washington Department of Natural Resources lands set aside for owl habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided \$1 million in funding for this project.

1,288  
ACRES

## Washougal River: Wildboy Creek Forest

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Washougal River

This forested property is owned by a timber company and has been managed for industrial timber since the 1980s. Located in the heart of the Washougal River watershed, the area includes important reaches of the West Fork Washougal River, Wildboy Creek, and Texas Creek. Today, a 45-foot tall dam on Wildboy Creek creates a 10-acre reservoir on the site. The stagnant water heats to temperatures lethal to native salmon and steelhead, and the dam blocks access to approximately 6 miles of high-quality spawning habitat upstream. The Land Trust is partnering with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe to acquire the property and remove the dam. We are in the middle of successfully executing a complex fundraising plan and will acquire the property in March 2020, while the Tribe is creating a dam removal and fundraising strategy. Dam removal and site restoration is anticipated within three to five years. The Land Trust has raised \$2 million toward the \$3 million purchase price.



Spring brings bright green foliage to the banks of Wind River near Carson, WA.

## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

### Wind River: Riparian Enhancement

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Wind River

Columbia Land Trust's forested property along the Wind River includes approximately 1.5 miles of river frontage. The riverside zone hosts diverse native species as well as a band of thick Scots broom and other non-native invaders. In 2019, we controlled Scots broom along half a mile of the river, and in 2020, we will continue our 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

In recent years, the Land Trust's forestry contractor, Integrated Resource Management (IRM), coordinated and managed the thinning operation that harvested nearly 90 acres of predominantly Douglas-fir stands at Pine Creek on the southeastern flanks of Mount St. Helens. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assisted with funding to execute thinning within nearly 145 acres of young plantations. Furthermore, IRM oversaw the creation of over 300 snags within the previously thinned forest stands. Lastly, nearly 43,000 coniferous trees (Douglas-fir, western red cedar, western hemlock, and western white pine) were planted within failed plantations and previously harvested timber stands. All of these forest management strategies will help increase biodiversity and forest health, and expedite young and older forest stands toward old-growth characteristics, allowing the unharvested trees and snags to persist within the landscape as critical habitat for spotted owl, bull trout, gray wolf, and a myriad of other forest-dependent species. Efforts in 2020 will focus on updating the existing forestry management plan, reforestation efforts within additional failed plantations, weed control, and general maintenance of roadways, bridges, culverts, and gates.



### Pierce Island: Shoreline Habitat Enhancement

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Columbia Gorge

In 2019, the Land Trust completed the second year of weed treatment under a two-year grant from the Washington State Department of Agriculture to eliminate invasive false indigobush from the Pierce Island shoreline. This work is particularly important to maintain habitat for the rare Columbia yellowcress (*Rorippa columbiae*), which grows on the island's shore. To preserve the indigobush reduction we've achieved over the past few years, in 2020 we will begin the long-term project of periodically pulling new indigobush seedlings to prevent the plant from recolonizing the island.

### Rock Creek: Habitat Restoration

CLARK COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

In 2019, the Land Trust continued weed control and plant maintenance activities at the Rock Creek site to ensure that riparian and upland forest stands continue to develop into healthy forest habitat after the existing logging roads were decommissioned in 2016.

Natural Area Manager Kate Conley notes observations during a site visit to the forest at Wind River.

ECOREGION

# East Cascades



## ECOREGIONAL OBJECTIVES

**PROTECT** and restore major east-side rivers and key tributaries.

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

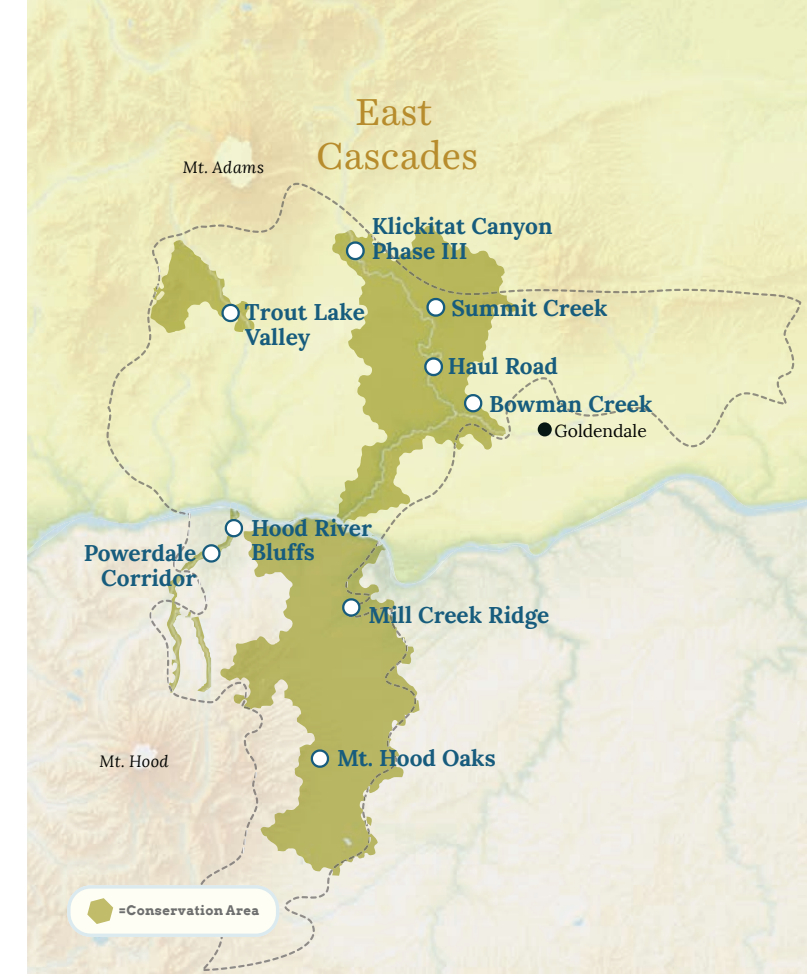
**MAINTAIN** the integrity of unique transition zones between riverside and upland habitats, high and low elevations, and wet and dry climates.

**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.

*“In 2019, our volunteer site stewards removed barbed wire from several unnecessary cross fences within our Mill Creek Ridge Natural Area, opening up the entire 400+ acres to unobstructed wildlife movement.”*

*A red-breasted sapsucker looks for food along the Powerdale Corridor on the lower Hood River. Photo by Linda Steider, Steider Studios.*



## LAND PROTECTION

### East Cascades Oak Partnership

**Conservation Areas:** All in the East Cascades Ecoregion

The East Cascades Oak Partnership (ECOP) focused its energy over the last year on wrapping up its strategic planning process, establishing geographic priorities, identifying roles for partners—including determining the role the partnership will play during implementation of the plan in 2020 and beyond—and creating a long-term funding framework. ECOP has amassed important data and map products for partners to access and has identified spatial priorities to conserve intact, functional oak habitat, connectivity, and climate resilience through land protection, stewardship, outreach, and advocacy.





**4,900  
ACRES** Klickitat Canyon  
Phase III

**Klickitat County, WA**  
Conservation Area: *Klickitat River*

The Land Trust has successfully raised more than \$5 million for acquisition of the third and final phase of the Klickitat Canyon Forest. This phase will conserve 4,900 acres of open pine forest, high-elevation oak woodlands, volcanic basalt flows, and 11.5 miles of riparian habitat, including 2 miles of the main-stem Klickitat River. These totals reflect an increase in 2019 of 1,000 acres and 2 miles due to successful negotiations with the landowner. The property hosts habitat for 3 federally threatened or endangered species and 21 additional state or federally protected species. Its remote location, adjacent to the Yakama Indian Reservation and protected by the Klickitat River, provides a very high degree of long-term wildlife habitat potential. We anticipate closing in October 2020.

**37  
ACRES** Hood River Bluffs  
**HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OR**  
Conservation Area: *Hood River*

In February 2019, the Land Trust added 37 acres to the 400-acre lower Hood River Powerdale conservation area. The project ensured that the entire pipeline trail along the river is now under Land Trust management. It also protects intact oak uplands and, through a partnership with the Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District, will enable extension of the district's Indian Creek trail system. The project fulfills the Land Trust's commitment to pursuing ways to both benefit wildlife and encourage people's engagement with nature.

**280  
ACRES** Trout Lake Valley:  
Mount Laurel Jerseys

**Klickitat County, WA**  
Conservation Area: *Trout Lake Valley*

This project will acquire a conservation easement on an additional 280 acres in the Trout Lake Valley and will become the fifth agricultural easement the Land Trust has completed in the valley, bringing the total to 700 acres. It protects a family farm for future generations and ensures the scenic gateway to the community of Trout Lake will forever retain its iconic character. Due diligence and fundraising progress required most of 2019, but this work is now complete, and the transaction is anticipated to proceed in 2020.

**1,950  
ACRES** Mount Hood Oaks  
**WASCO COUNTY, OR**  
Conservation Area: *Wasco Oaks*

In 2019, the Land Trust was granted the largest land acquisition funding award by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board since The Nature Conservancy's Zumwalt Prairie purchase over a decade ago. This funding, for the Mount Hood Oaks project, will help to conserve high-quality old-growth oak habitat and intact understory grasslands located at the nexus of existing state and federal conservation lands. The project employs the Land Trust's strategy of working at scales sufficient for target habitats to function on their own. Through relationships developed via the East Cascades Oak Partnership, conservation will be followed by a landscape-level, cross-boundary management plan for restoring oak habitat function. Project development is underway.

*A snag towering above the Klickitat River in Klickitat County, WA. Photo by Brian Chambers Photography.*



**STEWARDSHIP  
& RESTORATION**

Powerdale Corridor:  
Wetland Restoration

**HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OR**  
Conservation Area: *Hood River*

In 2019, we continued work on a habitat restoration project at an off-channel wetland complex in the Powerdale Corridor on the lower Hood River. We completed the critical second year of weed control on the pond's shoreline and had a native plant nursery collect and propagate native species for planting in fall 2020. Earlier in 2020, we will continue with site preparation and take a first stab at controlling invasive yellow flag iris in the ponds.

Powerdale Corridor:  
Hood River Bluffs Restoration

**HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OR**  
Conservation Area: *Hood River*

As noted earlier, the Land Trust added the Hood River Bluffs parcel to our Powerdale Corridor ownership in 2019. We carried out initial weed control work in 2019 but have much more weed work to do in 2020 and beyond. In 2020,

we will plan and possibly implement a project to save a threatened Oregon white oak stand from conifers that are overtopping it due to fire suppression. On a different note, we negotiated in 2019 a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District for their development of a public trail across our property. In 2020, we will work with them to finalize the trail design and begin construction.

Mill Creek Ridge: Weed  
Control and Wildlife Passage

**WASCO COUNTY, OR**  
Conservation Area: *Wasco Oaks*

In 2019, we continued our multiyear effort to monitor rush skeletonweed distribution and response to different herbicide treatments. We also sprayed rush skeletonweed on 140 acres. In 2020, we will monitor the results of that treatment and plan our next round of treatment based on what we learned. We also plan to partner with the Institute for Applied Ecology to refine our skeletonweed research protocol. In 2019, our volunteer site stewards removed barbed wire from several unnecessary cross fences within our Mill Creek Ridge Natural Area, opening up the entire 400+ acres to unobstructed wildlife movement. Next steps for 2020 include removal of fence posts and hauling away old fence materials for recycling.

*The Klickitat River cuts through Klickitat Canyon, where the Land Trust is working to complete the third phase of a 11,000-acre conservation effort.*



*“We also commissioned a series of interpretive signs, in partnership with the Yakama Nation, to help the public understand the project’s intent and the cultural history of the corridor.”*

*An early fall morning on Mill Creek Ridge.*

---

## Bowman Creek: Acorn Planting

**Klickitat County, WA**  
Conservation Area: *Klickitat River*

In 2018, we installed over 5,000 acorns collected on site, treated with mycorrhizal fungi, and planted under weed mats. Informal monitoring in 2019 suggested approximately 50 percent germination and survival over the first summer, which is far more success than we anticipated. We will monitor in the fall of 2020 to see how seedlings fare through their second summer. Oak crowns can die back during periods of drought remain dormant for up to two decades before successfully establishing.

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## Haul Road: Planting, Weed Control, and Restoration

**Klickitat County, WA**  
Conservation Area: *Klickitat River*

In 2019, we installed additional native plants and conducted aggressive weed control on the entire 8-mile restored



corridor of Haul Road, targeting particularly invasive weed species. In addition to site work, hydro-fluvial geomorphologist consultant and project designer Will Conley completed a technical report on the geomorphic change that occurred as a result of project activities. We also commissioned a series of interpretive signs, in partnership with the Yakama Nation, to help the public understand the project’s intent and the cultural history of the corridor.

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## Klickitat Oak Enhancement: Effectiveness Monitoring

**Klickitat County, WA**  
Conservation Area: *Klickitat River*

Following a successful research project with Portland State University graduate student Kara Caselas in 2017 and 2018, Land Trust staff engaged another student, Nicholas Lewis, to implement studies on stump sprout and oak regeneration impacts from grazing in oak woodlands. These trials will help us understand how the sprouts influence stand structure over time, how they are affected by cattle and deer, and how they respond to herbicide and mechanical treatment. Not only will this project help us move the stand toward a desired regenerated condition but it may also answer important management questions and provide in-

formation to our local, state, and federal partners, who are grappling with how to help with decision-making processes.

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## Summit Creek: Forest Health Planning

**Klickitat County, WA**  
Conservation Area: *Klickitat River*

Columbia Land Trust is collaborating with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources’ new Forest Health Initiative and the Yakama Nation to implement fuels reduction and habitat enhancement treatments in second-growth mixed-conifer forests on Summit Creek. These forests transition to oak woodland in shallower soils and southern aspects, and in the absence of fire suppression, conifer have encroached on mature oak. Fuels reduction treatments planned for 2020 will be followed by release from conifer encroachment and prescribed fire in subsequent years. These treatments will also help buffer an old-growth conifer stand on adjacent Yakama Nation property from elevated fire risk.

*Summit Creek. Photo by Brian Chambers Photography.*

ECOREGION

# Columbia Plateau



## ECOREGIONAL OBJECTIVES

**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.

*“The property hosts a significant number of federal priority sage grouse as well as perennial riparian habitat utilized by the grouse.”*

*A coyote makes its way through flowering balsamroot at the Four Sisters conservation area near The Dalles, OR. Photo by Brian Chambers Photography.*



## LAND PROTECTION

As planned in the Conservation Agenda, in 2019 the Land Trust continued to be a presence on the ground in the Columbia Plateau ecoregion. This involved meeting with conservation partners and sharing knowledge about conservation opportunities and threats to habitat. That work will continue in 2020. Due to limited funding for habitat conservation in the ecoregion, efforts are likely to continue to focus on assistance to partners, such as the Yakama Nation and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, through relationship building with elected leaders and local landowners.

**1,200 ACRES** **Glade Creek**  
**Klickitat County, WA**

The Land Trust used its relationships in the Glade Creek region to introduce a large landowner to staff at the Yakama Nation, facilitating the sale of a habitat-rich portion of the landowner’s farm to the tribe. The property hosts a significant number of federal priority sage grouse as well as perennial riparian habitat utilized by the grouse. These birds are culturally important to the tribe and are thriving due to tribal wildlife staff reintroduction measures. The project also protects connectivity to a remote road that tribal members depend on for access to the Yakama Reservation. There is no timeline for acquisition by the tribe, but all parties are committed to its implementation.



Tourgoers traverse the spine of Mill Creek Ridge during the 2019 Making Meadows tour. Although Four Sisters and Mill Creek Ridge are technically in different ecoregions, they share similar vegetation, including native wildflowers and invasive plants such as rush skeletonweed. Photo by Helen Gavrilov.

## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

### Four Sisters Natural Area: Invasive Plant Management

#### WASCO COUNTY, OR

Conservation Area: Wasco Oaks

In 2019, we began testing the feasibility of using aerial imagery captured from a drone to monitor the extent of invasive plants at Four Sisters. Initial review of the imagery indicates that the method might be useful for tracking the distribution of rush skeletonweed and possibly some annual grasses, but further digital analysis is needed in 2020. In 2019, we treated rush skeletonweed on approximately 40 acres. In 2020, we will continue to monitor impacts of treatment and compare findings with data from skeletonweed monitoring at our Mill Creek Ridge property.



## THE FUTURE, TODAY

Columbia Land Trust's mission is to conserve the very nature of the Northwest, across its many landscapes. Foresters, farmers, fishers, and city dwellers. Immigrants and refugees, recent West Coast transplants, lifelong residents, and indigenous peoples. We all have a place in nature, and we all have a role we can play in taking care of the lands, waters, and wildlife that take care of us.

"The Earth is faster now," explains Inuit elder Mabel Toolie, quoted in a book with the same title. Where the Earth was once more predictable in its seasons and weather, we now hear of "the hottest," or "the wettest," or "the driest"—or "the largest," as in fires that consume our forests.

*The pace of climate change continues to increase, and the carbon-storing forests of the Northwest make conservation a national and even global priority.*

Bald eagle. Photo by Calley Lovett, Scry Eye Photography.

The acceleration of our changing climate is a clear and present danger not only to the conservation achieved in these pages, but also to the very nature of life in the Northwest. The pace of climate change continues to increase, and the carbon-storing forests of the Northwest make conservation a national and even global priority.

#### COLUMBIA LAND TRUST IS UP FOR THE CHALLENGE.

We know we can unlock the great potential of the people here and across the country to save the nature of the Northwest. And we can do it in just and equitable ways that alter the progression of climate change and show a way forward for other parts of the country to follow.

By supporting Columbia Land Trust you drive conservation at a scale our time demands. Today, and into the future.



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## Columbia Land Trust

We all have a place in nature, and we all have  
a role we can play in taking care of the lands,  
waters, and wildlife that take care of us.

*Join us.*






*Chum salmon return to  
their spawning grounds  
where a cold spring meets  
the Columbia River in  
Clark County, WA.*



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