



2019

Annual  
Report



# Forever Wild

**B**efore we look back at 2019 accomplishments, we bring you a special 2020 update: You conserved 11,000 acres at Klickitat Canyon.

There's nothing quite like the first glimpse across a vast canyon—the deep breath that comes when taking in the sheer scale and rugged beauty of such a sight. At Klickitat Canyon, you can listen for the faint rushing of the river and cascading tributaries below and trace the aerial acrobatics of Vaux's swifts, vultures, and perhaps even a golden eagle. Bring binoculars and you might even spot the fuzzy white outline of a mountain goat perched impossibly on a jagged cliffside.



“Protecting this reach of the Klickitat River has long been our highest priority on the east side of the Cascade Mountains. The beauty of this conservation achievement is how it connects to Yakama Nation and public lands in a way that ensures fish and wildlife have room to roam and a place to call home.”

**Cherie Kearney**, Forest Conservation Director, Columbia Land Trust

Top image: Penstemon in bloom above the Klickitat River. Photo by Brian Chambers Photography. Left image: Cherie Kearney

This July, we succeeded in conserving 4,900 acres along the Klickitat River Canyon in Yakima County, Washington—by far the largest land conservation success through acquisition in our 30-year history. This landmark achievement represents the final step of the multiphase effort to permanently conserve the 11,000-acre Klickitat Canyon Conservation Area. The occasion also represents the culmination of 12 years of planning, research, fundraising, and partnership.

Klickitat Canyon is a landscape of transitions as well as a place of deep ecological and cultural importance. Phil Rigdon, superintendent of Yakama Nation Natural Resources, describes the Klickitat River as an essential artery that supports the Yakama people's culture and way of life. The varied landscape, including oak woodlands, pine forest, basalt cliffs, rushing waters, and grasslands, sustains hundreds of wildlife species as climate change and land fragmentation threaten habitat across the region.

Whether you are new to Columbia Land Trust's work or you've been supporting us since the beginning, you are vital to successes like the Klickitat Canyon Conservation Area. At a time when it's easy to feel small and helpless in a changing world, you can take heart in knowing you're making a real, lasting, and tangible difference here in the Northwest. 🌲

# Resilience is in Our Nature

## BOARD PRESIDENT'S LETTER



By Wendy  
Gerlach

One thing I have learned from my involvement with the Land Trust is that nature is ever changing, and that our mission of conservation must include responses to change. More than ever, we need to create opportunities for natural resilience, for both wildlife and human communities dependent on natural systems.

As the Land Trust preserves land, it also makes our communities more resilient by strengthening their connection to nature. In Hood River, the Powerdale conservation project protects a river corridor while extending a trail network linking the town to natural areas upstream. At Pine Creek, on the southern slopes of Mount St. Helens, innovative forest management preserves a watershed for fish and wildlife as well as for communities downstream. The Backyard Habitat program supports city dwellers in their desire to have their gardens and green spaces serve as healthier habitats for many species, including us.

“As the Land Trust preserves land, it also makes our communities more resilient by strengthening their connection to nature.”

Your support of the Land Trust allows us to forge these bonds that make all of us, and the natural world, more resilient. I think of the trail we are building, with local partners, around Lacamas Lake in Washington's rapidly developing Clark County. As we walk that trail together, our awareness of the natural world, both timeless and changeable, will help us to be better people and give us strength in meeting the challenges of the future. 🌿

*With thanks, Wendy*



# Conservation Highlights

You conserved and restored some stunning places in 2019, while also setting the stage for landmark successes in 2020.

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## 1. HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

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### Columbia Stock Ranch

As part of Phase 1 of this project, in long-term partnership with Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Columbian white-tailed deer restoration, the Land Trust removed more than a mile of dangerous dilapidated fences and constructed twice that length in deer-friendly fencing at Columbia Stock Ranch. In addition, we prepped 30 acres for the planting of nearly 63,000 native trees and shrubs in 2020.

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## 2. BACKYARD HABITAT CERTIFICATION EXPANSION

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### Portland-Vancouver Metro Area

In 2019, the Backyard Habitat Certification Program expanded into Clark County, Washington, and the eastern half of Washington County, Oregon (Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin, unincorporated Washington County). BHCP, a collaboration between the Land Trust and Portland Audubon, empowers participants to work in their outdoor spaces to improve the health of local watersheds, support wildlife, and build community. Currently, more than 6,000 people are active in the program, spanning about 1,450 acres. Participants planted more than 15,800 native plants and shrubs on properties certified in 2019 alone!



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### 3. FOREST RESTORATION

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#### Mount St. Helens and Beyond

The year 2019 was a big one for forest restoration and stewardship. We planted 102,271 native trees and shrubs, 42 percent of which were coniferous trees planted in the Pine Creek East region near Mount St. Helens. Forest management efforts, including the creation of 300 snags, will help increase biodiversity and forest health, and expedite younger forest stands toward old-growth characteristics. By allowing the unharvested trees and snags to persist within the landscape, we provide critical habitat conditions for spotted owls, bull trout, gray wolves, and a myriad of other forest-dependent species.

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### 4. FOREST CONSERVATION

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#### Wind River

In early May 2019, Columbia Land Trust completed conservation of this 100-acre property of mature forest, which includes 35 acres of old-growth forest habitat and more than a mile of shoreline along Wind River in Skamania County, Washington. The healthy Douglas-fir and western redcedar forest is home to black-tailed deer, mountain beavers, bats, bald eagles, and a host of other plant and animal species. The acquisition expands the Land Trust's existing Double Bend Conservation Area to 236 total acres and is adjacent to Washington State Department of Natural Resources lands already set aside as spotted owl habitat.

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### 5. CONNECTING PEOPLE AND NATURE

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#### Hood River Bluffs

With the Hood River Bluffs project, we saw an opportunity to both conserve habitat and increase public access to nature for Hood River residents. In March 2019, we acquired 40 acres of land along the Lower Hood River, adding to 400 acres already conserved along the river's Powerdale corridor. These steep bluffs feature Douglas-fir and oak forests that offer important riverside habitat for local wildlife, including black bears, ospreys, eagles, and waterfowl. The Land Trust and Hood River Valley Parks & Recreation District are partnering to build a scenic trail along the bluff that will connect to the existing city trail system.

*Left to right: Hood River Bluffs, Hood River; Natural Area Manager Kate Conley along the Wind River; Wisdom of the Elders' Wisdom Workforce Development crew and Bonneville Power Administration archaeologists install new deer-friendly fencing.*

## 2019 By the Numbers

### Conservation & Stewardship



**270** Acres Conserved

**102,271** Native Trees and Shrubs Planted by Volunteers, Crews, and Staff

**3,700** Feet of Levee Removed

**10,280** Feet of Fencing Removed

**90** Acres of Floodplain Reconnected

### Backyard Habitat Certification Program\* (BHCP)



**220** Acres Enrolled in 2019

**1,047** Properties Enrolled in 2019

**6,252** Properties Enrolled in Total

**15,871** Native Trees and Shrubs Planted

**310** Properties Certified or Upgraded

**971** BHCP Volunteer Hours Logged

### Volunteers



**60** Volunteers

**559** Volunteer Hours

**11** Site Stewards

**14** Board Directors

**31** Advisory Council Members

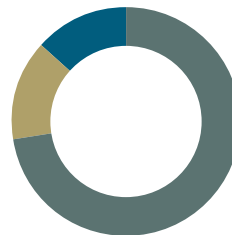
## Financial Overview

### Contributions by Donor Type



73.6%	Individuals
9.8%	Foundations
11.8%	Bequests
4.8%	Events (Net)

### Total Programmatic Efficiency



72.5%	Program
14.3%	General & Administration
13.2%	Fundraising

# Growing Strong & True

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR'S  
LETTER



By Glenn  
Lamb

One of the last times that I camped, I slept beneath 300-year-old trees. Measuring them with my outstretched arms, I found them to be at least 15 feet around. They were perfect in form: straight and strong, towering, reaching toward the sun.

Think of what these trees have seen. Their lifetimes encompass the arrival of Europeans and settler colonialism, the formation of the U.S. government, and the entirety of the Industrial Age. These trees survived multiple human pandemics and a nearby volcanic explosion. Through all of this, they thrived, drawing nutrients from land, from water, and from air.

As we grow the Land Trust, we too look to withstand the tests of time—to grow strong and true, to flex in the storms of cultural and economic upheavals, and to continually adapt as we keep our commitment to caring for our special Northwest places.

“...our health as an organization comes from the diverse communities in which we live and work.”

We are certainly being tested now. And yet in this last year we have made more headway than ever before, plus we have remarkable opportunities ahead. The primary reason for our health? People, like our amazing staff and our dedicated board and volunteers. But more than anything, our health as an organization comes from the diverse communities in which we live and work.

Communities provide our basic nutrients, and hence our health depends on the thriving of our communities. We are constantly

learning what that means, in cities, small towns, and rural areas, through thick and thin. We must keep our commitments to ensure that our work helps all people thrive, as well.

Thank you for your support, for helping to grow an organization that will keep its commitments beyond all of our lifetimes, on the scale of our biggest, oldest trees. 🌲






*A salmon charges upriver. Photo by Brian Chambers Photography*



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