

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.

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Remnants of ancient trees

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**Breaking Down the Borders of Landscape and Culture**

For ten years we've held our vision for the south side of Mount St. Helens—20,000 acres of forest conservation. While at the outset we didn't know what conservation of such a landscape would look like, what eventually emerged was community conservation. Along the way, we heard wide-ranging opinions from the community, indicating that forestry is a vital cog in our Northwest economy, stands of old-growth are inimitable and necessary, and the volcano and Lewis River are beloved. At times sonorous and at times dissonant, these voices strengthened our conservation strategy. The past decade of somewhat impromptu community conservation illustrates how we have done business: listening to people while relying on science and data. But the Land Trust is purposefully changing. Increasingly, our conversations throughout the region include more culturally and racially diverse perspectives. We intentionally listen to under-sung voices, from people who may not have had the privilege of easily being heard. When we intone community we ask: Who is missing? Through this expanded lens, diverse stories emerge, and ultimately this inspires conservation that is boundless and boundary-less. A primary tenet of our recent Conservation Agenda is to engage people. If people are connected to nature and if communities are generating ideas for conservation that are culturally-responsive, then the outcome will be enduring. Conservation boundaries go beyond a national forest, extend farther than the line of an American Indian reservation, are broader than a community forest, and reach across different—but connected—communities who feel they belong in these landscapes. This is happening in Klickitat River country. In this *Fieldbook's* story about the Klickitat Canyon Forest you'll see that conservation is indeed about more; it entails stepping across borders of both landscape and culture. Without knowing the end of the story, I have confidence that the collaboration in Klickitat and throughout our Columbia River region will reflect the enduring wisdom that we can achieve more together.

Cherie Kearney, Forest Conservation Director

“When we intone community we ask: Who is missing? Through this expanded lens, diverse stories emerge, and ultimately this inspires conservation that is boundless and boundary-less.”



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.

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: Western red cedar and Douglas-fir stumps within Pine Creek forestland. Inside cover: Wildflowers on the south side of Mount St. Helens. Photos by Lenkerbrook Photography*



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# Slow and Swift

a |



**W**hile Douglas-firs dominate the landscape on the southern flanks of Mount St. Helens, the stumps of massive cedars lining the forest floor tell a deeper story. They are reminders that, in nature and in human endeavors, lasting change takes time.

Case in point: Columbia Land Trust, in partnership with Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), recently helped facilitate the conservation of 7,800 acres surrounding the east end of Swift Reservoir south of Mount St. Helens.

This achievement didn't happen overnight. In 2006, an unexpected development boom threatened to transform the remote forestlands around Swift Reservoir into a sprawling complex of cabins and resort communities.

## Columbia Land Trust Realizes a Bold Vision More Than a Decade in the Making

BY JAY KOSA

Alarmed Skamania County commissioners considered down-zoning the entire area, which prompted Pope Resources, a timber group and the area's largest private landowner, to threaten litigation. A decade after the timber wars of the Pacific Northwest subsided, a conservationist and a timber executive began talking in search of common ground.

Cherie Kearney, Columbia Land Trusts' forest conservation director, and Jon Rose, president of Olympic Property Group, a subsidiary of Pope Resources, represented different interests. While the Land Trust wanted to avoid the commercial development that would fragment 20,000 acres of productive forestland, Pope Resources wanted to secure some ability to develop their land while continuing their forestry operations. They came together around a shared desire to avert a crisis of development.

"The plan we put forward represented a shift in the Land Trust's approach to landscape-scale strategies that take time," said Kearney.

The unlikely pair negotiated an up-front, 10-year agreement in good faith, and they held true to their word. Across four phases, the deal kept 17,600 acres in working forestry through conservation easements, including the recent 7,800-acre conservation easement held by Washington DNR.

"To build an informal partnership between a county government, a conservation group, and a timber group, we all had to challenge our preconceived notions a little bit," said Rose. "It required a great deal of trust."

The agreement also conserved the forests along Pine Creek, a cold, swift-moving stream relied upon by threatened bull trout. In 2013, during the second phase of the deal, Columbia Land Trust purchased and began restoring a 2,330-acre property from Pope Resources dubbed Pine Creek East.

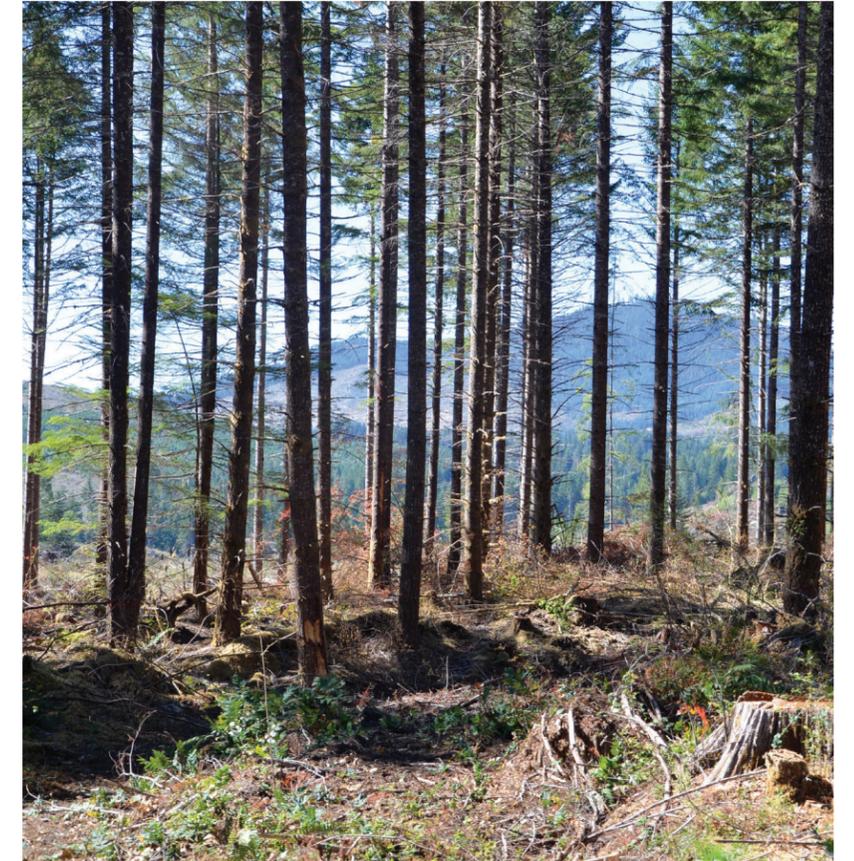
Five years later, forest restoration efforts on the site are showing early returns. With the help of a forester, several areas of the forest have been thinned, meaning they've been selectively logged to allow remaining trees more room to grow large. Over time, these areas will develop the complex characteristics of a natural, old-growth forest with varying ages and species of trees. The thinning work employs local loggers while also generating income to for the Land Trust to care for this landscape.

By permanently preventing development on 20,000 acres, the Land Trust is filling a gap in protected lands between Gifford Pinchot National Forest and the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, patching the fabric of iconic forests, streams, and peaks that make up Washington's southern Cascades.

In addition to supplying southwest Washingtonians with myriad recreation opportunities, these vast tracts of forest serve as crucial corridors for wildlife. Our trail camera at Pine Creek East has spotted elk, deer, black bears, coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats. Species long extirpated from the region, including wolverines and fishers, have also been showing signs of recovery in the area. At a time when most environmental news highlights painful losses, Pine Creek East is a place that is only growing wilder.

While Kearney looks forward to conserving more vital lands, Columbia Land Trust stewardship director Ian Sinks contemplates the future of Pine Creek East in particular. "It's an entirely different world," said Sinks. "I've crawled all over most of that place in the past five years. There are ghosts up there in the form of old cedar stumps. I won't say it's magical, but there's enough out there to spark my imagination for what's to come."

If the forests of Mount St. Helens offer the adage "Change takes time," the massive



b |

**"Over time, these areas will develop the complex characteristics of a natural, old-growth forest with varying ages and species of trees. The thinning work employs local loggers while also generating income to for the Land Trust to care for this landscape."**

boulders strewn about its slopes during the 1980 eruption suggest that change can also be sudden. Today, we at the Land Trust are acting with urgency and purpose protecting and restoring forests at Mount St. Helens. We know development threats can crop up without warning, and once an area is developed, we risk losing places, species, ecosystems, natural resources, and experiences that we cannot replace. ❧

a | A view of intact forest along Pine Creek.  
b | Tree thinning helps remaining Douglas-firs grow larger, faster, eventually contributing to forest complexity and old-growth characteristics.  
Photos by Sarah Richards

# BE FEARLESS

Save the Dates

## 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

## FARMS & STARS

Saturday, August 18

TROUT LAKE VALLEY, WA

Enjoy a summer evening at the base of Mt. Adams at the bucolic Mountain Meadows Dairy farm in Trout Lake Valley, one of Washington's first organic dairies. Meet the Schmid family, their dairy cows, and enjoy a night of stargazing with local astronomer Jim White and Land Trust Executive Director Glenn Lamb.

Tour

\$75

## SALMON & SANDY RIVER RESTORATION

Saturday, October 13

CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR

Join us for a day along the banks of the dynamic Sandy River at the conserved Barlow Trail site. Learn about salmon restoration with Land Trust Natural Area Manager Jen Zarnoch and Executive Director Steve Wise of the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council.

SIGN UP | [ColumbiaLandTrust.org](https://ColumbiaLandTrust.org)

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

@ColumbiaLandTrust | #FEARLESSNATURE

Sandy River at Barlow Trail. Photo by Jay Kosa



c |

# KLICKITAT ALWAYS

Conserving a Canyon Rich with Wildlife and Cultural Significance

BY SARAH RICHARDS

**W**e talk about Washington's Klickitat River a lot. That's because there aren't many places with intact forests, unfettered rivers charging with salmon and steelhead, and more than 200 species of wildlife in the Northwest that still exist within one watershed.

This summer, Columbia Land Trust conserved its single largest, fully-owned site to date—3,200 acres in Klickitat Canyon. The stretch of habitat was purchased from the Hancock Timber Resource Group. This effort completes the second

phase of the Klickitat Canyon project and brings its conservation total to approximately 6,000 acres of a broader 10,000-acre goal.

In the northern reaches of Klickitat country and at the site, sun-baked basalt cliffs and talus slopes are augmented by a base of winding white oak, ponderosa pine, and dry grasslands. The land connects a key wildlife corridor between low elevation habitat to the east and high elevation habitat on the Yakama Indian Reservation and Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

"The Klickitat Canyon is important because it provides high-quality habitat on two levels," said Land Trust Conservation Lead Nate Ulrich. "It hosts transitional pine and oak woodlands at the site scale, and open connectivity between summer and winter range at the landscape scale."

The lands and waters also provide respite for recreationists, economy through forestry, and are deeply intertwined with the history, culture, and lives of the Yakama people.

Forest Biologist Mark Nuetzmann with the Yakama Nation Wildlife, Range, & Vegetation Resource Management Program says threatened northern spotted owl use the site, goshawk nests have been observed along the river, and peregrine falcons nest in the soaring rock.

While this project has culminated with great success, it had to overcome significant hurdles along the way that required creative problem solving. We are grateful to all the project funders for their patience and persistence in saving an irreplaceable ecosystem.

The Land Trust has sights on completing the third and final phase of conservation in the Klickitat Canyon in 2019. The timeless river, forests, people, and wildlife of the canyon will always remain at the core of this work. 🌲

► Thanks to our funders including: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, The Nature Conservancy, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, The Conservation Alliance, private donations made by generous individuals and lending by Craft3.

c | Basalt cliffs and oak-pine forests typical of the Klickitat Canyon region. Photo by Doug Gorsline

### THE VISION

2016  
PHASE 1  
2,400 acres

2018  
PHASE 2  
3,200 acres

2019  
PHASE 3  
4,000 acres



Columbia  
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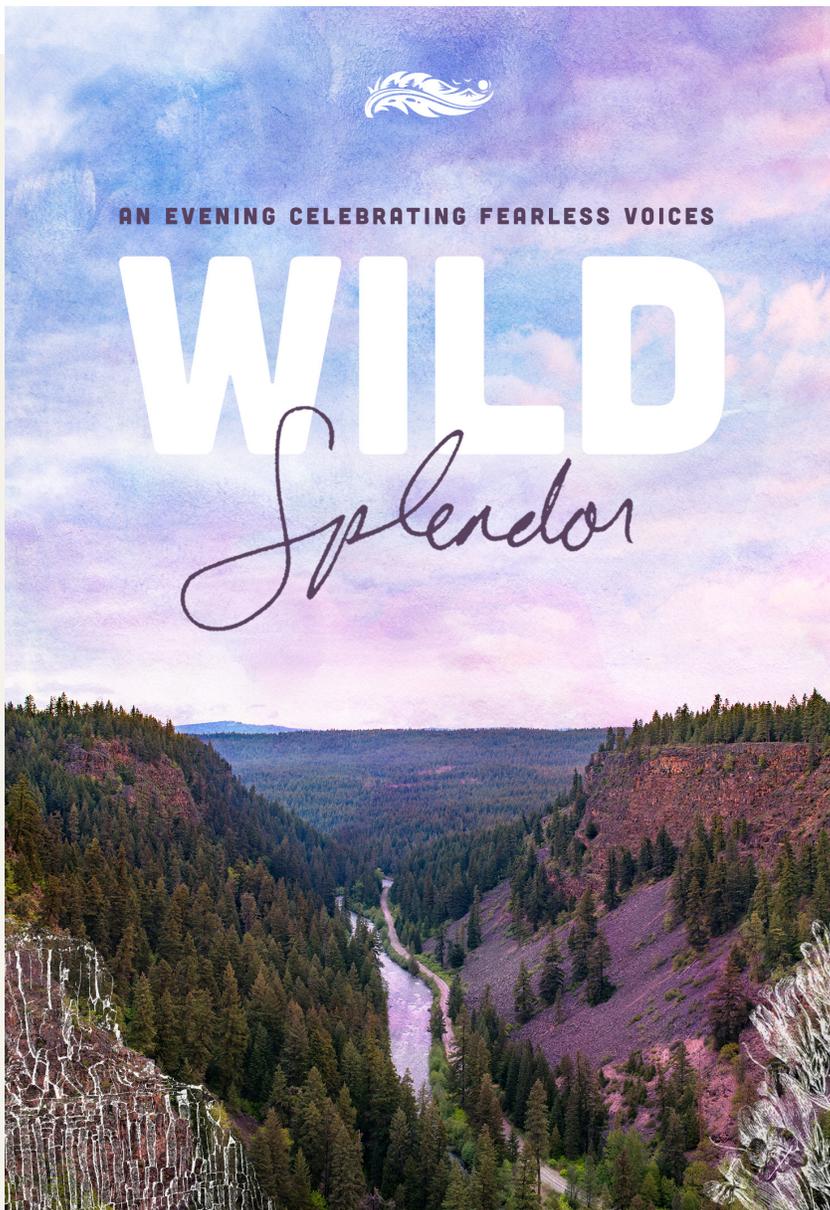
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