



# Conservation Report

**2021**







2021

# STEP OUTSIDE!

**B**ird song fills the air. Butterflies and bees flit from flower to flower. Old Douglas-fir trees tower over both city neighborhoods and rural highways. Massive old cedar trees grow along riverbanks or in low flooded plains. Oak woodlands and grasslands carpet the hilly Willamette Valley and the arid lands east of the mountains.

Creeks and streams cascade noisily from the high country, gathering together in bigger and bigger channels until they form the massive silent push of the Columbia itself, meeting the saltwater while both delivering and receiving our amazing Columbia River salmon.

Throughout it all, people live, work, and play. And yet, there are signs that the natural world that we so rely on is fraying. Species are dying off, forests are lost to explosive wildfires, water quality is diminishing, habitat is disappearing.

Columbia Land Trust envisions a future where natural areas and our lives intertwine and where people know, love, and respect nature's beauty and importance in a reciprocal way. Human communities, including neighborhoods, businesses, farms, ranches, and working forests, complement the natural world, providing all people well-being and an unrivaled quality of life.

We all depend on each other. The health of every part is required for the health of the whole.

Columbia Land Trust is advancing a 25-year Conservation Agenda to support our rivers, forests, grasslands, and the creatures that depend on them. This report describes our progress in bringing us closer to our vision. In summary:

WE ALL DEPEND ON EACH  
OTHER. THE HEALTH OF EVERY  
PART IS REQUIRED FOR THE  
HEALTH OF THE WHOLE.

We completed the first phase (2017-2020) of our 25-year Conservation Agenda, raising \$108 million and conserving more than 20,000 acres.

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 by illuminating our relationship with nature through tours, events, and storytelling.

We are kicking off the second phase of our Conservation Agenda (2021-2025), continuing to focus on conserving the nature of the Northwest while striving to address climate change and inequitable access to the benefits of nature.

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, and with your generous support, we will succeed.

## THANK YOU!

Front page: Conboy National Wildlife Refuge. This page: Mill Creek Ridge. Photos by Brian Chambers.



# 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 comprehensive, collaborative projects.

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



Columbia Land Trust

## FIVE WAYS YOU

MADE THE COLUMBIA RIVER  
REGION BETTER IN 2020

conserved 7,056 acres  
of rivers, forests,  
and wildlife habitat



PLANTED

172,426

NATIVE TREES  
AND SHRUBS



managed  
400 acres  
of crops

TO BENEFIT  
SANDHILL CRANES



Realized a

**12 YEAR VISION**

to protect 11,000 acres at Klickitat Canyon



Bought a dam to be

**REMOVED**

in partnership with  
the Cowlitz Indian Tribe





# OUR APPROACH

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## 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.

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## Conservation Areas

Columbia Land Trust has identified nine priority conservation areas across five ecologically distinct regions. These geographies are critical to our region's ecosystems and wildlife. To establish conservation areas, we analyze the current presence of wildlife species and habitat, landscape connectivity, and climate resilience. We seek expert opinion and honor local knowledge. The color-coded map on the next page depicts our highest-priority conservation areas.

### COLUMBIA LAND TRUST LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the lands and waters of the Columbia River region we care for are ancestral homelands to Indigenous peoples of the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Grand Ronde, Warm Springs, Yakama, Cowlitz, and Chinook tribes. We honor these Indigenous peoples who have been living and working on this land from time immemorial and as traditional stewards of this land.



## Ecoregion Overview

 = Conservation Area

Pacific Ocean

Long Beach

Columbia River Estuary

Astoria

Coast Range  
& Estuaries

WASHINGTON

West  
Cascades

Mt. St.  
Helens

Mt. Rainier

Mt. Adams

East  
Cascades

Hood River

● Goldendale

Columbia  
Plateau

OREGON

Mt. Hood

● The Dalles

Willamette Valley  
& Puget Trough

● Vancouver

● Portland





## Conservation Agenda

### 4 YEARS OF GROWTH

Ultimately, our success is not measured in dollars raised or acres conserved. We will know that we have succeeded when we see that the Northwest's ecological integrity is maintained year in and year out in a healthy relationship with people. At the heart of this process is building strong and trusting relationships and a willingness to change how conservation work happens. This graphic highlights the strategic steps necessary for achieving ecological integrity across our service area and lists what we have achieved in the last four years.

## Secured anchor habitats and a landscape of connecting lands.

We maintained and stewarded large, intact landscapes of naturally functioning habitat systems with connectivity within and across habitat systems and ecoregions.

Conserved areas critical to habitat in the Upper Klickitat River Canyon, linking to other conserved lands; along several tributaries to the Columbia River estuary; along the East Fork Lewis River; and along the Tualatin River.

Conserved lands from canyon rim-to-rim in our Hood River conservation area.



Saved some of the last oldest trees in the Wind River watershed, adding to our conservation area.



Supported the integrity of Oregon farmland through creation of the Oregon Agricultural Trust.



Set aside old forests in the Oregon and Washington coastal rainforest and in the estuary habitat along Willapa Bay.

## Maintained and restored ecological processes.

We achieved hydrologic regimes that support native aquatic plant and animal communities in river and wetland systems and we promoted landscape-scale disturbance regimes necessary to sustain naturally functioning habitat systems.



Restored forest function to support healthy wildfire in oak woodlands in the East Cascades.



Completed removal of 8 miles of road and subgrade to allow full Klickitat River function.



Removed aggressive weeds and planted native vegetation throughout all ecoregions.



Began engineering for removal of a Washougal River dam important to habitat.

Restored tidal function to key lands in the Columbia River estuary and restored habitat along several Columbia River tributary rivers.

Developed a method of measuring ecological integrity and a supportive database.

## Increased broad, enduring support for the conservation of nature.

We achieved this by engaging partners and communities in collaborative restoration and enhancement projects, by engaging people to build long-term support for conservation and foster a culture of stewardship, and by engaging people to remove social, political, and economic barriers to land conservation.



Doubled participation in the Backyard Habitat Certification Program and expanded the program to new community groups.



Developed partnerships to conserve and restore land with the Yakama and Cowlitz tribes.



Expanded tours and events to include hundreds of additional people.

Successfully advocated for more incentives and funding for conservation.

Continued to build and strengthen relationships across urban and rural communities.



# LAND MANAGEMENT

## Working Lands

### OUR CHALLENGE

Conservationists and landowners who manage natural resources, such as agriculture and forestry, are too often at odds, fighting rather than collaborating. When this happens we miss out on increased funding and incentives that come from having strong relationships between all those invested in conserving the land.

### OUR SOLUTION

Columbia Land Trust builds relationships and crafts strategies based on our shared goals and our vast common ground of caring for the natural resources of the Northwest.

### OREGON AGRICULTURAL TRUST

The Land Trust is playing a leading role in an Oregon statewide strategy to increase the capacity for conserving farms and ranches. Building on our previous work to foster positive relationships between land trusts and agricultural landowners, we laid the groundwork for the new Oregon Agricultural Trust, 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 incubated the Agricultural Trust for two years and are excited to announce that in 2020 the Oregon Agricultural Trust became a stand-alone organization, creating its first board of directors and hiring staff. Columbia Land Trust is excited to have the Oregon Agricultural Trust as a conservation partner in 2021 and beyond.

### COMMUNITY FORESTRY

The community forestry movement continues to grow in the Northwest, and Columbia Land Trust has helped champion community forests through visioning, technical support, and policy development. Washington State completed a first round of pilot funding for four community forest projects. Staff helped with rounding up 20 community forest proposals around the state, developing the legislation, and advocating for funding in 2020. That work has led to establishing a grant category under the Recreation and Conservation Office of Washington, and we will help seek funding for that category in the 2021 legislative session through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.



Columbia Land Trust has helped communities like Klickitat County assess the potential for a community forest in the Simcoe Mountains. We also acquired as a bridge purchase and facilitated the sale of 430 acres of forest in Klickitat County to Mt. Adams Resource Stewards, a community forest group based in Glenwood, Washington.

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## Enduring Forests

### OUR CHALLENGE

The region we serve is ecologically dominated by forests. From the coastal temperate rainforest, to the Cascades, to the oak and pine woodlands in the arid regions, every forest is threatened with conversion to development, unsustainable harvest regimens, catastrophic fire, and habitat degradation.

### OUR SOLUTION

We are focusing on large-scale forest conservation that will store carbon, contribute to climate resilience, act as wildlife habitat, filter water, clean the air, ensure tribal access to cultural and traditional areas, and provide renewable products.

In 2021, we will launch a pilot carbon-sequestration project on approximately 10,000 acres of forestland and establish a Forest Climate Fund dedicated to investing in more forest-

land. Through our history and strong relationships across the landscape we are well positioned to conserve forest on a scale we've not done in the past. We are building a watershed-size conservation strategy in the Grays River using GIS technology to analyze the relationship between forest cover and water quantity. In the Columbia Gorge, we are partnering with a national conservation organization and the Yakama Nation, along with other community organizations, to create bold strategies for forest conservation and stewardship. Additionally, we continue our focus on legislation for Washington State Department of Natural Resources land trades to benefit timber-reliant counties, as well as conservation of old forest habitat for the marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl through the Willapa Hills and Skamania Forest Strategy. The Willapa Hills in Pacific and Wahkiakum counties, where forestry is core to the local culture and economy, serve as an area of focus for this strategy. 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 focused on a creative solution 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.

*Kandoll Farm on the Grays River.*



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## Conserving Habitat Corridors

### OUR CHALLENGE

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

### OUR SOLUTION

Forming collaborative partnerships provides education, incentives, and support for better land management of critical habitats.

### TUALATIN RIVER PARTNERSHIP

Tualatin River is the Portland-Vancouver region's largest watershed, supplying one-quarter of the area's water needs. It contributes a high amount of essential habitat and ecological functions relied upon by urban residents and wildlife. It is also experiencing significant pressure as the urban growth boundary and population of Portland continues to expand west. Recognizing the unique pressures and opportunities within the Tualatin River watershed, Columbia Land Trust has prioritized it 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

In early 2021 the East Cascades Oak Partnership completed a oak habitat conservation strategic plan. This plan was based on two-years of partnership-building and meetings involving dozens of presentations on topics ranging from planning processes, regulatory and incentive mechanisms, management and restoration challenges, and climate change. The plan is based on understanding what drives the decisions people make in the oak landscape and identifying opportunities to influence those decisions in order to improve outcomes for both oak systems and the people who rely on them.

Networking among partners has increased dramatically since the partnership's inception, with many new collaborations now in place. 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 and connectivity.







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## Land Management Systems

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

### **OUZEL**

In 2020, the Land Trust continued to roll out and improve Ouzel, our land conservation and stewardship web application. Staff continued to test, improve workflows, and use Ouzel to document our annual monitoring and other work on our lands. A big focus this year was ensuring all annual compliance monitoring could be effectively documented in Ouzel and getting land protection tools refined and online to make sure acquisition staff can utilize Ouzel as they work through due diligence on land protection projects.

The Ouzel application is designed to be adaptable for use by land trusts of all types and sizes. In 2019, staff developed Ouzel partnership and subscription agreements to formalize the work of the partners and to make Ouzel available to other organizations. Since then, two other land trusts have joined in using Ouzel to support their work, and a third has signed up and is onboarding currently. In the coming year, we will continue to refine Ouzel's workflows and add features with collaboration and input from these other land trusts. In addition, our Ouzel team—made up of staff and our partner, Tall Oaks Environmental Research—plan to sched-

ule regular webinars for users to have opportunities to collaborate and share tips and information about Ouzel, as well as public webinars for potential users to share information outwardly with folks looking for a land-conservation software solution.

### **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 collect aerial data to 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 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Program added another UAV to its fleet. The Land Trust utilized this technology for weed mapping prior to the intertidal wetland weed-control efforts in the estuary to help monitor distribution of purple loosestrife and to create high-resolution imagery of several stewardship units for monitoring.



ECOREGION

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# Coast Range & Estuaries



## REGIONAL 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.

*Knappton Cove*



## LAND PROTECTION

40

ACRES

### Grays River Watershed

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary, Grays River

The Land Trust acquired an additional 40 acres on the Grays River in 2020. This property adds to over 1,000 acres the Land Trust has already conserved in Grays Bay. With the acquisition of additional properties, the Land Trust will be able to complete three large-scale intertidal wetland-restoration projects benefiting salmon, steelhead, eulachon, and numerous migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. These projects are funded by Bonneville Power Administration.

The Land Trust is also in the beginning phases of two acquisitions in the upper Grays River watershed totaling 1,600 acres. These acquisitions will conserve important stretches of the West Fork Grays River and main stem Grays River that support salmonids plus conserve older forests with the potential to support marbled murrelet.

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



working on developing watershed-scale, community-based conservation strategies. In 2021, the Land Trust and Cowlitz Indian Tribe will continue this work and engage in a broader partnership across the region and state toward this vision.

**610**  
ACRES

## Middle & South Nemah Rivers

**PACIFIC COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Willapa Hills

In mid-2020, the Land Trust acquired a 610-acre forest property in the Middle and South Nemah area, on the western end of the Willapa Hills. It was donated to mitigate for a wind energy project near Vale, Washington. Entirely forested, the property will be managed as marbled murrelet habitat.

**6**  
ACRES

## Lower Elochoman River

**WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust purchased a 6-acre inholding on the lower Elochoman River just off the Columbia River near Cathlamet, Washington. This acquisition adds to the 123 acres acquired since 2018 and will allow for better management and restoration of our conserved properties on the lower Elochoman. The project was funded by Bonneville Power Administration.

**82**  
ACRES

## South Tongue Point

**CLATSOP COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

We are in the process of acquiring an 82-acre property on the Columbia River in Astoria, Oregon. The land will be owned by Clatsop Community College, which owns a marine education facility next door and will use the property 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, plus the Land Trust has received support from individuals and foundations. With the acquisition of the property in early 2021, the college will be able to work with partners to complete a large-scale intertidal wetland restoration project benefiting salmon, steelhead, eulachon, and numerous migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.



*Grays River from canyon looking at Crazy Johnson and the West Fork.*





## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

### Indian Jack Slough: Wetland Enhancement & Wildlife Monitoring

**WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

In their sixth year on the site, the two purple martin gourd colonies (total of 36 gourds) produced 83 eggs, of which 69 hatched and only 57 eventually fledged. A cold, wet June and an unfortunate cold spell in September resulted in a decrease of fledged martins as compared to 2019. In addition to the monitoring and banding of birds (66 banded), work on the site in 2020 included coordination of removal of hybrid poplar trees, permitting, and initial planning for additional wetland restoration. Efforts in 2021 will finalize permitting of the proposed restoration work (ditch filling and wetland swale creation), fence removal, and site preparation for future plantings (hybrid poplar removal and mowing).

### Nelson Creek Swamp: Tidal Wetland Restoration

**WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

Design work to restore 145 acres of altered intertidal floodplain progressed in 2020. Elements include the relocation of Nelson Creek to its historic floodplain from a roadside ditch, restoration of in-stream channel complexity and barriers to improve access for salmonids, and restoration of the historic spruce swamp vegetation community. Over 90 acres of weed control was accomplished in 2020 to begin the revegetation process. Future restoration work will include installation of a new 50-foot-span bridge connecting to a county road, the contouring of the altered floodplain topography, and removal of stream barriers. The project is being implemented primarily on conserved land, but a unique partnership with a neighboring landowner will help us accomplish the restoration. Construction work is planned for summer 2021 with a diverse team of contractors as part of the Land Trust's equity commitments. This project is supported by funding from Bonneville Power Administration.



*Columbia Land Trust Staff, Helen, in coastal forest*



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## Lower Elochoman Forest: Wetland Restoration

**WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

In 2020, work on the Lower Elochoman Forest unit included planting of additional native trees and shrubs in areas where restoration efforts occurred in fall of 2019. The Land Trust also treated 27 acres of knotweed and blackberry and continued plant maintenance on the over 40,000 native trees and shrubs planted in 2019. Monitoring of water levels, vegetation, and topography is ongoing to inform project success and needed interventions. In addition to effectiveness monitoring, work in 2021 will include plant maintenance and further weed control.

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## Kandoll Road North: Wetland Restoration

**WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Grays River

In 2021, the 33-acre Kandoll Road North unit will undergo freshwater wetland restoration, using heavy equipment to excavate and lower the elevation of approximately seven acres along an existing freshwater channel, in order to increase inundation and surface-water retention throughout the property. These efforts, along with weed control and planting of approximately 35,000 native trees and shrubs, will support a variety of wildlife, including migratory waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species. Long-term maintenance of plantings and weed control will be ongoing through 2024, with grant funds from both the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to support the project.

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## Chinook River: Forested Wetland Restoration, Road Removal

**PACIFIC COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

The Land Trust in 2021 will be implementing a large-scale weed-control and planting-preparation effort across 213 acres of freshwater emergent and forested wetlands associated with the Chinook River floodplain. The planting of native grasses, forbs, trees, and shrubs will occur in the winter of 2022-2023. In addition, approximately 13 road-removal locations have been identified along an old abandoned logging road located within the Chinook River



floodplain. The road-removal areas will allow high water to freely flow throughout the floodplain, providing critical freshwater habitat access for salmonids and restoring natural hydrologic functions. This project is federally funded by the NAWCA with support from the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program of the USFWS.

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## Seal Slough: Forest Stand Enhancement

**PACIFIC COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Willapa Hills

In 2020, Columbia Land Trust staff advanced a plan to enhance forest structure and diversity on 160 acres of a 40- to 50-year-old Sitka spruce plantation forest along Willapa Bay. The overall goal of the project is to help expedite current forest conditions toward more old-growth characteristics that support threatened marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl. Project planning began in spring of 2020 and included extensive on-the-ground evaluation and marking of riparian buffers, measuring current stand

*Forest swamp*





metrics, surveying property boundaries, and developing harvest prescriptions. The Land Trust will be implementing a variable density thinning in 2021, to enhance existing forest habitat in the Seal Slough unit.

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## Abernathy Creek: Riparian Forest Enhancement

**COWLITZ COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Tidelands

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 2020, Columbia Land Trust continued to support the property owners in restoring streamside forest habitat, including invasive weed control led by the Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control Board.

*Columbia Land Trust Staff, Austin, on North Nemah marking trees*

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## Lower Columbia River Estuary: Intertidal Marsh 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 2020, the Land Trust continued efforts 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 fifth 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, with the results informing restoration practitioners working in freshwater tidal habitats throughout the Northwest region. Experimental treatments to date demonstrate very positive results in restoring native intertidal marsh habitat.



# Willamette Valley & Puget Trough





## REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

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

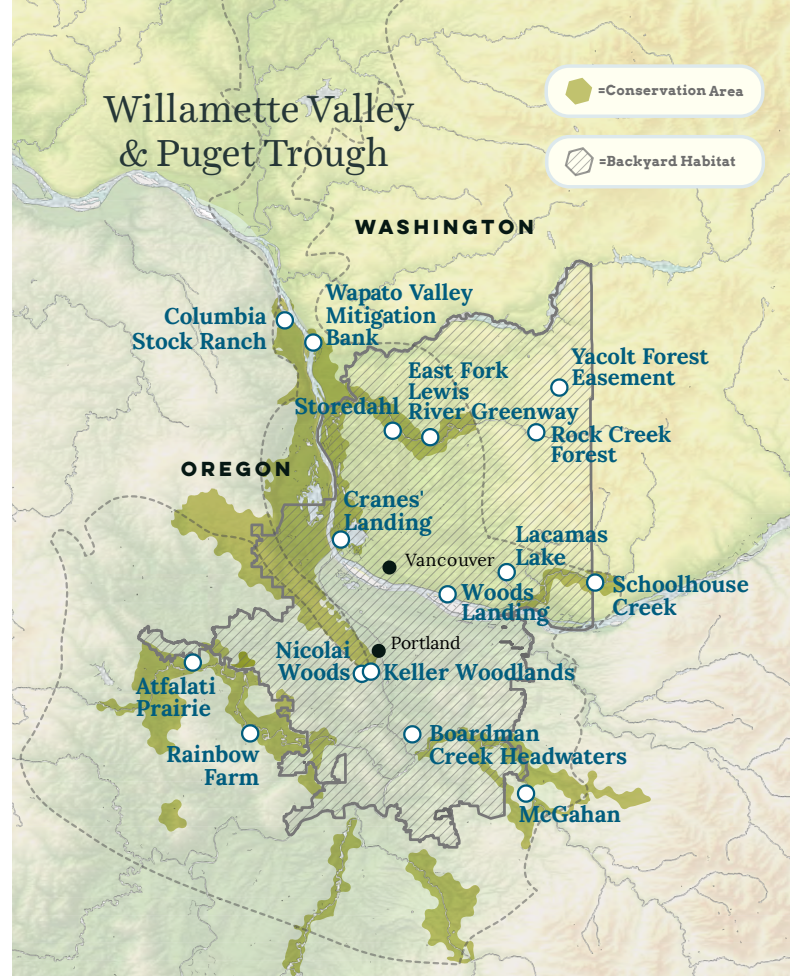
**PROTECT**, maintain, and restore oak and prairie habitats.

**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.

*Backyard Habitat Certification Program*



## LAND PROTECTION

### Backyard Habitat Certification Program

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

The Backyard Habitat Certification Program (BHCP), co-managed by Columbia Land Trust and Portland Audubon, is widely recognized as an integral component of conservation education and habitat enhancement across the region, and the added value of community building makes it an important asset. 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, more than 7,000 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.

**43  
ACRES**

## East Fork Lewis River: Greenway Expansion

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

The Land Trust is acquiring a conservation easement on 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.

*California poppies and quaking aspen cheerfully welcome passer-byers to this gold certified home.  
Photo Credit by Gaylen Beatty.*

**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.

**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 132 acres in support of the city's vision of a multi-use loop trail around Lacamas Lake and a forested backdrop protecting the viewshed of the north shore. It has also protected the historic Pittock-Leadbetter House.

**876  
ACRES**

## Wapato Valley: Mitigation Bank

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Lowlands

The Land Trust is in the process of acquiring an 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 Endangered Species Act-listed juvenile salmon and other native species.





## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

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

#### COLUMBIA COUNTY, OR

Conservation Area: Columbia River Lowlands

Land Trust staff continue to collaborate with Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in completing four phases of restoration (2019–2022) on the historic 500-acre Columbia Stock Ranch floodplain, to benefit federally threatened Columbian white-tailed deer. The work is part of the federal recovery plan for this species and includes restoring the floodplain habitat to provide cover and forage for the deer, and translocating deer from the Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge onto the conservation property.

In the winter of 2019–2020, a total of 10 deer were successfully established on the property or surrounding vicinity. In December 2020, two more deer were released onto the ranch. Translocation efforts will continue through February 2021. Phase I planting was completed in February 2020, with nearly 56,000 native trees and shrubs installed on 50 acres. In the fall of 2020, at least 2.5 miles of dilapidated fences were removed and 2 miles of deer-friendly fencing installed which will allow a rancher to continue his cattle operations while protecting critical habitat for the deer. Site preparation of 125 acres within phases II and III was completed, which included controlling competing vegetation, such as pasture grasses, canarygrass, and blackberries.

In December 2020, among the completed planting was the installation of 20,050 willow stakes on 87 acres. In 2021, an additional 38,250 native trees and shrubs will complete the phase II planting efforts. Throughout 2021, the Land Trust will begin implementing the third phase, which will include removing additional dilapidated fences, constructing more deer-friendly fences, preparing an additional 23 acres for the planting of nearly 27,000 native trees and shrubs in 2022, and maintaining over 114,000 existing native trees and shrubs (phase I and phase II) in an area exceeding 100 acres.

*Columbia White-tailed deer.  
Photo by Michael Kipp.*





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## Cranes' Landing: Sandhill Crane Habitat Management

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Columbia River Lowlands

The Land Trust continues to manage a variety of crops and natural habitats to benefit thousands of wintering sandhill cranes that begin arriving from their breeding grounds in early September. The 2020 season marked the fifth year of farming the property for the cranes since the Land Trust took ownership in March 2016. A total of 410 acres were tilled, mowed, and planted with alfalfa (65 acres), corn (33 acres), spring wheat (207 acres), oats (18 acres), or soybeans (7 acres). The remaining farmed area (80 acres) continues to be managed for a native nutsedge as a preferred forage resource for cranes. A local dairy cut and baled the alfalfa fields and utilized harvested oats, spring wheat, and straw to support local dairy operations. Additionally, a local beekeeper stored 100 beehives on the property to assist with pollination of native floral species in the general area.

Screening berms constructed in 2018 to shield the foraging habitat from adjacent uses were planted in February 2020 with nearly 14,000 native trees and shrubs. Existing native planting areas (about 18 acres) established in 2017–2018 were replanted throughout the spring with over 5,000 native trees and shrubs.

The Land Trust continues to implement a comprehensive monitoring program to evaluate crane use and inform man-

agement. This has involved monitoring crane numbers and behavior three days per week during the winter season. In October 2020, a six-day live trapping experiment was conducted to determine the small mammal composition and distribution utilizing the different crop types. Further studies and monitoring will be needed to understand the importance of small mammals as a potential food resource for sandhill cranes. In total, 100 small mammals were caught or recaptured, including Oregon vole, deer mouse, and Keen's mouse.

As with previous years, the Land Trust will assemble a team of crane experts to review the lessons learned from previous years and develop a farming plan that will optimize benefits to cranes. Seed sowing will commence in late spring 2021. Native tree and shrub establishment efforts will continue on over 34 acres. Additionally, over a mile of overhead power lines are scheduled to be buried in midsummer to significantly reduce crane mortality from line collision.

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## Keller Woodlands: Habitat Restoration & Community Engagement

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Forest Park

Working with the local group West Willamette Restoration Partnership, the Land Trust continued the second phase of forest habitat restoration and community engagement at the Keller Woodlands site with grant funding from Metro.

*Sandhill Cranes. Photo by Brian Chambers.*



In spring of 2020, we implemented an online community survey to learn about people's needs and preferences around urban trails and natural areas. We heard from more than 530 people who live, work, or play in Southwest Portland. Our survey respondents included members of the Arabic-, Chinese-, Spanish-, and Slavic-language-speaking communities, whom we reached through a partnership with Community Engagement Liaison Services. The Land Trust and Portland Parks & Recreation will use the results of the survey to guide our planning process for a walking trail in Keller Woodlands and adjacent natural areas in 2021. We also completed a second round of invasive weed control on 16 acres of Keller Woodlands and will plant the area with native trees and shrubs in early 2021.

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## Boardman Creek Headwaters: Urban Habitat Restoration

**CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: N/A

We continued to partner with a private landowner to restore streamside vegetation and oak habitat at the Boardman Creek Headwaters property in Oak Lodge near Milwaukie, Oregon, where the Land Trust holds a conservation easement. In 2020, we planted 1,275 native trees and shrubs, maintained 800 trees and shrubs that were planted in 2019, and continued to remove invasive weeds.

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## McGahan Property: Forest Enhancement

**CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Clackamas River

The Land Trust continues to control invasive plants, care for native plantings, and maintain trails at the forested McGahan site along the Clackamas River near Estacada, Oregon. The weed-control work was completed in collaboration with the Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership, a group of local and regional advocates working to strategically monitor and manage invasive species throughout the Clackamas River basin. Through the partnership, the Land Trust is also tracking and supporting changes to invasive species management across the Clackamas watershed following this year's wildfires, which have dramatically altered the landscape. We are grateful that the McGahan forest and surrounding neighborhoods did not burn.



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## Woods Landing: Habitat Restoration

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: N/A

For the last several years, the Land Trust has partnered with Hewlett-Packard, which has adopted Woods Landing as part of its sustainability department's volunteer program. This site is located along the Columbia River just east of the I-205 bridge and supports important chum spawning habitat. Typically, volunteers come out to Woods Landing several times a year to weed, maintain plantings, and do other restoration site work on the terrace above the spawning grounds. After many years of volunteers donating time to focus on significant weed control work, staff, interns, and volunteers installed about 900 plants in a portion of the property in March, just prior to the start of the coronavirus lockdown. While the pandemic paused our typical volunteer routine at Woods Landing, our dedicated volunteer site steward continued working at the site, clearing significant areas of ivy and blackberry singlehandedly and spending over 118 hours from March to June. Contractors followed up this work in the fall, preparing the site for additional planting and follow-up weed control in 2021. Hopefully some of our longtime volunteers will be able to return safely in 2021 to resume their great work.

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



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## Nicolai Woods: Habitat Restoration

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Forest Park

Staff and contractors have been conducting weed control on Nicolai Woods, a small site in the west hills of Portland, for the past several years, focusing on large stands of blackberry and ivy, patches of garlic mustard, and scattered, mature English holly and English hawthorn. In 2020, staff continued the long-term project of pulling garlic mustard, and a contract crew conducted other weed work, with a site-wide treatment of the blackberry, ivy, holly, and hawthorn, including cutting down old stands of dead blackberry canes to make way for future planting and treating numerous Norway maples. While this is a small, 1.5-acre site, the crew lead reported that he logged over 9,000 steps the day they worked at Nicolai Woods, going up and down the steep slopes with a chainsaw. Follow-up weed work will continue in 2021, and 1,000 plants will be planted in areas where invasive species have been removed to begin diversifying the understory and establishing the next cohort of trees.

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## Rainbow Farm: Riparian Enhancement

**WASHINGTON COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Tualatin River

Rainbow Farm is a 76-acre floodplain property located along the Tualatin River and across the river from Metro's Quamash Prairie. When the Land Trust acquired the property, it had been fallowed for many years and was predominantly an old farm field full of weeds. Much of the property is now being farmed by a tenant farmer as a site-preparation strategy, while the Land Trust secures funding for restoration, and portions of the property have significantly improved.

Over the past few years, the Land Trust initiated the first phase of restoration at Rainbow Farm on the roughly 25 acres of remnant forest along the river. Since 2018, work has focused on invasive species control, primarily blackberry, thistle, and reed canarygrass. Staff and contractors continued these efforts in 2020 to prepare for planting in 2021 and 2022. Additional work in 2020 included removing two old garbage dumps that were unearthed during blackberry control and testing the soil to ensure there was no contamination that needed to be addressed (happily, there was none).

This year, approximately 13,000 plants will be planted throughout portions of the remnant forest and farm-field perimeter, and additional weed-control work will focus on the areas not yet ready for planting. The Land Trust







anticipates initiating additional phases of enhancement to restore wet prairie and oak savanna habitat in the next few years, pending funding.

## Atfalati Prairie: Upland Restoration

**WASHINGTON COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Tualatin River

Atfalati Prairie is a 213-acre property along the Tualatin River, upstream from Rainbow Farm. Most of the property is in active agricultural production, which will be phased out as part of future restoration activities once funding has been secured. In the meantime, work has focused on restoring the remnant riparian forest, releasing remnant oaks at the margins of the farm field, and upland weed control. In 2020, upland weed control continued in preparation for future oak restoration. While this is a small portion of the property, restoring this buffer will provide important oak habitat and will also be critical to the future wet prairie and oak restoration in the floodplain. Adding to the work the Land Trust did this year, the two adjacent neighbors to the floodplain were inspired to extend blackberry control onto their properties as well, which was an exciting step in further enhancement of this important buffer area. In 2021, work on the upland buffer will continue, along with partnership development with the neighbors on their weed-control projects. In addition, the old falling-down house will be demolished to make way for restoration.



## Green Cathedral: Habitat Restoration

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: N/A

In 2020, the Land Trust worked with a contractor to remove a large pole barn from Green Cathedral, a 10-acre, open-space property in Clark County, WA. This was an exciting step, creating more space for habitat restoration. In addition, staff continued weed control efforts on what has been a multiyear effort to remove blackberry, control shiny geranium, and maintain plantings. In 2021, weed control will continue, and approximately 3,000 plants are slated to be introduced at the old barn site and throughout the remainder of the property to infill previous planting efforts.

*Left: Edith's Checkerspot. Photo by Brian Chambers.*



ECOREGION

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# West Cascades





## REGIONAL 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 habitat 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.

Mt. St Helens



## LAND PROTECTION

**9,000  
ACRES**

### East Fork Lewis River: Yacolt Forest, Phases I & II

#### CLARK COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

In 2020, the Land Trust secured an additional \$3.6 million in funding to purchase conservation easements on approximately 9,000 acres of forestland adjacent to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest along the East Fork Lewis River. This is the first of four planned phases in what is expected to be a 34,000-acre forest conservation project to be completed in the next few years. To date, we have now secured a total of \$6.7 million. We anticipate closing on the first phase in late 2021 or early 2022. 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.

**13,000**  
ACRES

## East Fork Lewis River: Yacolt Forest, Phase III

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

This year we submitted the single largest project funding request in our organization's history, \$9 million, to the federal Forest Legacy Program to complete the approximately 13,000-acre third phase of this four-phase easement. The application was advanced at the state and regional levels and is now awaiting a funding decision at the national level.

**1,288**  
ACRES

## Washougal River: Wildboy Creek Forest

**SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: Washougal River

At the end of March 2020, amid the initial coronavirus lockdown, we completed fee acquisition of the 1,288-acre Wildboy Creek Forest property, including the 55-foot-tall, 400-foot-wide Kwoneesum Dam. Located in the heart of the Washougal River watershed, the property includes important reaches of the West Fork Washougal River, Wildboy Creek, and Texas Creek. But its dam creates a fish passage barrier to 6 miles of spawning habitat, and its 10-acre reservoir heats water temperatures to lethal levels for native salmon and steelhead. With the property permanently protected, the Land Trust is now partnering with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe to remove the dam within three to five years. This project closed using a loan from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Land Trust has nearly completed its fundraising plan to successfully repay the loan.

**21**  
ACRES

## East Fork Lewis River: Horseshoe Falls

**CLARK COUNTY, WA**

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

Described as the single most important location for wild steelhead conservation, on a river that is itself managed as a gene bank for wild steelhead, Horseshoe Falls is a vital conservation property. In 2020, it was ranked the highest priority in the southwest region of the state by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Pending approval of a Clark County fund-matching award in winter 2021, this project is anticipated to move forward to completion by the end of the year.

**823**  
ACRES

## Sandy River Basin: Nestwood Forest at Ross Mountain

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: N/A

In 2021, the Land Trust will advance the conservation of Nestwood Forest, located just east of Corbett in Multnomah County, in partnership with the landowner and East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District. Only 30 minutes from Portland, Nestwood Forest spans 823 acres across Ross Mountain and Howard Canyon. Almost entirely forested, it stands out in a region that is increasingly parceled and developed. It is also one of the largest remaining pieces of family-owned forestland in the county. The property contains old forests, open meadows, breathtaking views, and critical riparian and wetland habitat. The goal is to conserve the property with a mix of fee acquisitions and conservation easements.





## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

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### Wind River: Riparian Enhancement

#### SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Wind River

Columbia Land Trust's forested property along the Wind River includes 1.7 miles of river frontage. The riparian zone hosts diverse native species as well as invasive Scots broom. In 2020, we completed follow-up treatment of Scots broom along half a mile of the river, where our treatments from previous years had significantly reduced the infestation. We also scouted the portion of shoreline acquired more recently (in 2019) to assess weed populations and begin planning for 2021 weed-control work.



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### Pine Creek East: Forest Stand Enhancement

#### SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: N/A

The Natural Resources Conservation Service assisted with funding in 2020 to execute replanting efforts (77 acres) and weed control (340 acres) on young or thinned forest stands. Over 20,500 Douglas-fir seedlings were planted in 2020. Weed-control efforts focused on eradicating Scots broom and competing vegetation around existing coniferous trees along forest roadways and in future planting areas. All forest management strategies executed in 2020 and proposed in 2021 will help increase biodiversity and forest health to provide critical habitat conditions for spotted owl, bull trout, gray wolf, and a myriad of other forest-dependent species. Efforts in 2021 will focus on updating the forestry management plan, weed control within young forest regeneration areas, potentially executing a commercial thin, and general maintenance of roadways, bridges, culverts, and gates.

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### Wildboy Creek: Restoration and Management Planning

#### SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Conservation Area: Washougal River

In 2020, the Land Trust acquired the 1,288-acre Wildboy Creek property for its conservation and forestry values, as well as for the opportunity to restore over seven miles of salmonid habitat through the removal of Kwoneesum Dam in collaboration with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Initial work has been focused on managing infrastructure, monitoring public use, preparing land management plans, and working with the Cowlitz staff to advance the dam removal and stream-habitat restoration plans. This work will continue in 2021 in addition to initiating weed control and pre-commercial thinning of overstocked forest stands.

*Wind River on Double Bend/Birkenfeld*



ECOREGION

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# East Cascades





## REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

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

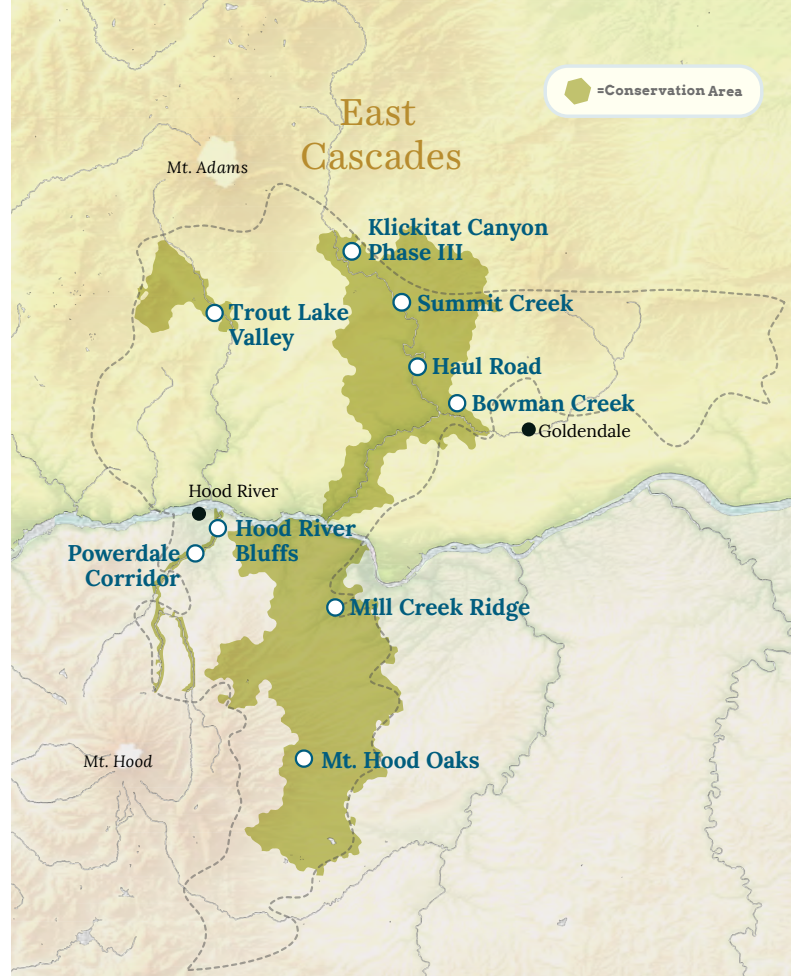
**PRESERVE** oak woodland habitat systems and opportunities for wildlife migration and movement.

**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.

*Southeast view at dusk of Mt. Adams*



## LAND PROTECTION

### East Cascades Oak Partnership

**Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River and Wasco Counties (WA and OR)**

Conservation Area: All in the East Cascades Ecoregion

The East Cascades Oak Partnership (ECOP) completed a strategic plan, a professionally designed strategic plan summary, a funding plan, and new guidance documents, effectively transitioning ECOP from planning to implementation. ECOP partners will be collaborating on high-priority projects in 2021, while ECOP-dedicated staff at Columbia Land Trust will be filling important regional gaps in partner capacity and expertise, in order to:

1. Continue to coordinate partners, develop funding, and advance statewide policy and outreach initiatives
2. Develop a rapid assessment tool to prioritize properties for conservation and restoration
3. Develop monitoring protocols to measure oak response to thinning, wildfire, and prescribed fire
4. Develop messaging for each priority strategy, to improve communication with stakeholders



5. Advance relationships with tribal partners and incorporate First Food security and resource management into strategy development
6. Develop a framework for adaptive best management practices.

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**4,900**  
ACRES

## Klickitat Canyon Phase III

**Klickitat County, WA**

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

The Land Trust completed the largest single fee acquisition in its 30-year history this past summer with the purchase of the third and final phase of the Klickitat Canyon Forest. This property conserves approximately 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 mainstem Klickitat River. 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. Total fundraising to complete the purchase exceeded \$9 million and included nationally competitive awards.

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**280**  
ACRES

## Trout Lake Valley: Mount Laurel Jerseys, Phase I

**Klickitat County, WA**

Conservation Area: Trout Lake Valley

Acquisition of this conservation easement added 280 acres to Columbia Land Trust's agricultural conservation in the Trout Lake Valley—bringing the total to 700 acres. The Mount Laurel Jerseys easement protects a multi-generation family farm for future generations and ensures that the scenic gateway to the community of Trout Lake will forever retain its iconic character. The project also contributes to regional food security in the Pacific Northwest by securing land for an Organic Valley cooperative farm that supplies milk products to the Portland/Vancouver metro area. The Land Trust anticipates working with the farmers on the next phase of easements on their land in 2021.



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**1,950**  
ACRES

## Mount Hood Oaks

**Wasco County, OR**

Conservation Area: Wasco Oaks

The Mount Hood Oaks project, located at the nexus of ODFW and USFS conservation lands, and an outgrowth of the East Cascades Oak Partnership, advances a landscape-level, cross-boundary vision for restoring oak habitat function in the East Cascades ecoregion. Due to circumstances internal to the seller, the project was not able to proceed to closing in 2020. Land Trust staff remain optimistic that with new management and priorities for the seller in 2021, we will be able to advance this long-held conservation priority.



## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

### Powerdale Corridor: Wetland Restoration

**HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Hood River

In 2020, the Land Trust partnered with the Hood River Watershed Group to obtain a grant that has enabled us to work together on the latest phases of wetland restoration in the Powerdale Corridor of the Hood River. Along the shore of a pond, we completed final site preparation, and volunteers planted 700 native shrubs to replace the previously impenetrable, nonnative blackberry that had dominated the site. We also treated invasive yellow flag iris throughout the wetland complex. At a second riparian wetland site in the Powerdale Corridor, we worked with the Watershed Group to maintain previous native plantings and plan for another round of planting in 2021.

### Powerdale Corridor: Community Partnership for Public Access

**HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Hood River

In 2020, the Land Trust partnered with the Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District to plan and design a public trail across our latest addition to the Powerdale Corridor, a property perched on the bluffs above the Hood River. This trail will allow community members to access the forestland and views on our property even though a new residential subdivision is under construction just outside its boundary, filling in previously open space and blocking public access to our natural area if a trail were not provided. The new trail, currently in the permitting phase, will also link to existing community greenways beyond Land Trust property.

### Mill Creek Ridge: Grassland Habitat Enhancement

**WASCO COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Wasco Oaks

In 2020, we continued our multiyear effort to monitor rush skeletonweed distribution and response to different herbicide treatments in the grasslands at Mill Creek Ridge. We also treated this tenacious weed across 40 acres, following up on a 140-acre treatment done the previous year. We are gearing up to plan a prairie restoration project that will not only remove noxious weeds but also restore native perennial grasses to a disturbed site at the ridge.

### Bowman Creek: Acorn Planting

**Klickitat County, WA**

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

In 2020, a volunteer site steward conducted surveys of plant survival in a recently restored fallow agricultural field at Bowman Creek. Most of the acorns we installed had germinated. As of mid-July 2020, the seedlings appeared healthy and vigorous. We anticipate thinning the seedlings next year to prevent competition. Many pines were dead due to drought, but a sufficient number are establishing to meet target stand densities.





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

### Klickitat County, WA

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

Stewardship in the Klickitat River Haul Road corridor continues, as the site recovers from intensive restoration work completed over the previous decade. A post-project habitat assessment completed in 2019 indicated a 33% increase in mid-channel features important to fish, like islands and gravel bars, and a 29% increase in secondary channel length (side channels), important for juvenile fish rearing and sheltering from storms. But along shorelines and disturbed uplands adjacent to the stream channel, the native plant community needs careful tending for many years. In 2020, Columbia Land Trust and partner Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife received a grant from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to engage in four years of intensive weed management and supplemental planting to ensure native plant establishment in disturbed areas. Growing large, native trees and plants along shorelines is critical for shade, insect production, and future recruitment of large pieces of dead wood in streams, which change how water flows, providing important cover, nutrients, and forage for aquatic life. The grant will allow us to control noxious weeds that might prevent native plant

recovery, including aquatic species like reed canarygrass, which might also impede important floodplain processes and habitat features. In 2020, Columbia Land Trust also designed and installed five interpretive signs explaining the project to visitors. These signs are placed along two miles of pavement leading to the project area from the southern, most heavily trafficked gate.

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## Klickitat Oak Enhancement: Effectiveness Monitoring

### Klickitat County, WA

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

Partnering graduate student Nicholas Lewis is helping Columbia Land Trust implement studies on stump sprout and oak regeneration impacts from grazing in oak woodlands. These trials will help us understand how stump 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 also it will help inform development of best management practices for the oak landscape more broadly. Nick and Co-

*Klickitat Canyon*





Columbia Land Trust staff effectively gathered post-treatment data from the project area in 2020 and expect to have data analysis results in 2021.

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## Summit Creek: Forest Health Treatment Planning

**Klickitat County, WA**

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

Columbia Land Trust is collaborating with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' new Forest Health Program and the Yakama Nation to implement fuels reduction and habitat enhancement treatments in second-growth, mixed-conifer forests and oak woodlands on Summit Creek. These forests transition to oak woodland in shallower soils and southern aspects, and in the absence of fire (due to fire suppression), conifer have encroached on mature oak. Treatments to reduce fuels were implemented on 40 acres, with another 40 acres planned for 2021. These treatments will also help buffer an old-growth conifer stand on adjacent Yakama Nation property from elevated fire risk and improve conditions for flammulated owl, identified as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's State Wildlife Action Plan. Multiple flammulated owls were detected during surveys in spring 2020. A Land-

scape Scale Restoration grant was submitted in partnership with WSDNR to treat another 300 acres over the next 3 years. Future grant phases are anticipated in the region on partner and Columbia Land Trust property to expand landscape readiness for fire.

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## Harris Forest and Green Ranch: Planting

**Skamania County, WA**

Conservation Area: Little White Salmon River

In 2020, Columbia Land Trust installed 1,400 grand fir and 2,800 ponderosa pine seedlings in a fallow agricultural field where we've been battling Scots broom for over a decade. The broom population has been chemically and mechanically controlled annually, exhausting the seed source and reducing the need for broadcast chemical treatments. Planting was the next phase of the restoration plan. These seedlings should grow to shade out remaining Scots broom and set the path for forest recovery and long-term carbon sequestration. Reforestation is one of the most important tools in our toolbox for natural climate solutions.



ECOREGION

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# Columbia Plateau



## REGIONAL 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.

## LAND PROTECTION

In 2020, Land Trust staff continued to invest in relationships in the Columbia Plateau ecoregion by working with landowners and conservation partners to share knowledge about conservation opportunities and threats to habitat. We supported emerging, state-level conservation programs focused on rangeland conservation that could have important benefits for shrub-steppe habitat in Washington State, and we worked with Eastern Oregon land trusts to develop more robust climate-change-related planning and project implementation. We will further these efforts and our investments in relationships in 2021, and we will continue to seek awareness of conservation opportunities.

*Black-tailed deer at Four Sisters.*  
Photo by Brian Chambers.



## STEWARDSHIP & RESTORATION

### Four Sisters Natural Area: Grassland Habitat Enhancement

**WASCO COUNTY, OR**

Conservation Area: Wasco Oaks

Through the last few years at Four Sisters, we have worked on controlling rush skeletonweed, a tenacious invader of native grassland habitats. Site monitoring in 2020 revealed significant progress toward reducing the skeletonweed infestation, along with a need to continue our efforts. We completed another treatment in fall 2020 and plan to do follow-up control work in 2021. We are focused on using targeted methods that will maintain or increase native forb diversity while reducing competition from this invasive species.



# NATURE TOGETHER



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*We believe in a world, built on sound science and strong relationships, where people and nature thrive together. We are accelerating our pace of conservation by innovating on our traditional approaches to conservation.*

**T**he acceleration of our changing climate threatens the conservation achieved in these pages and the very nature of life in the Northwest. The carbon-storing capacity of Northwest forests makes conserving them a national, and even global, priority.

We know we can unlock the great potential of the people here, and across the country, to save the nature of the Northwest by bringing people and nature closer together. And we can do it in just and equitable ways that alter the progression of climate change and show a way forward.

We believe in a world, built on sound science and strong relationships, where people and nature thrive together. We are accelerating our pace of conservation by innovating on our traditional approaches to conservation. New and unlikely partners are joining us to effect change through strategies new in the history of conservation.

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.

By supporting Columbia Land Trust, you drive conservation at a scale our times demand—today, and into the future.



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 @ColumbiaNature

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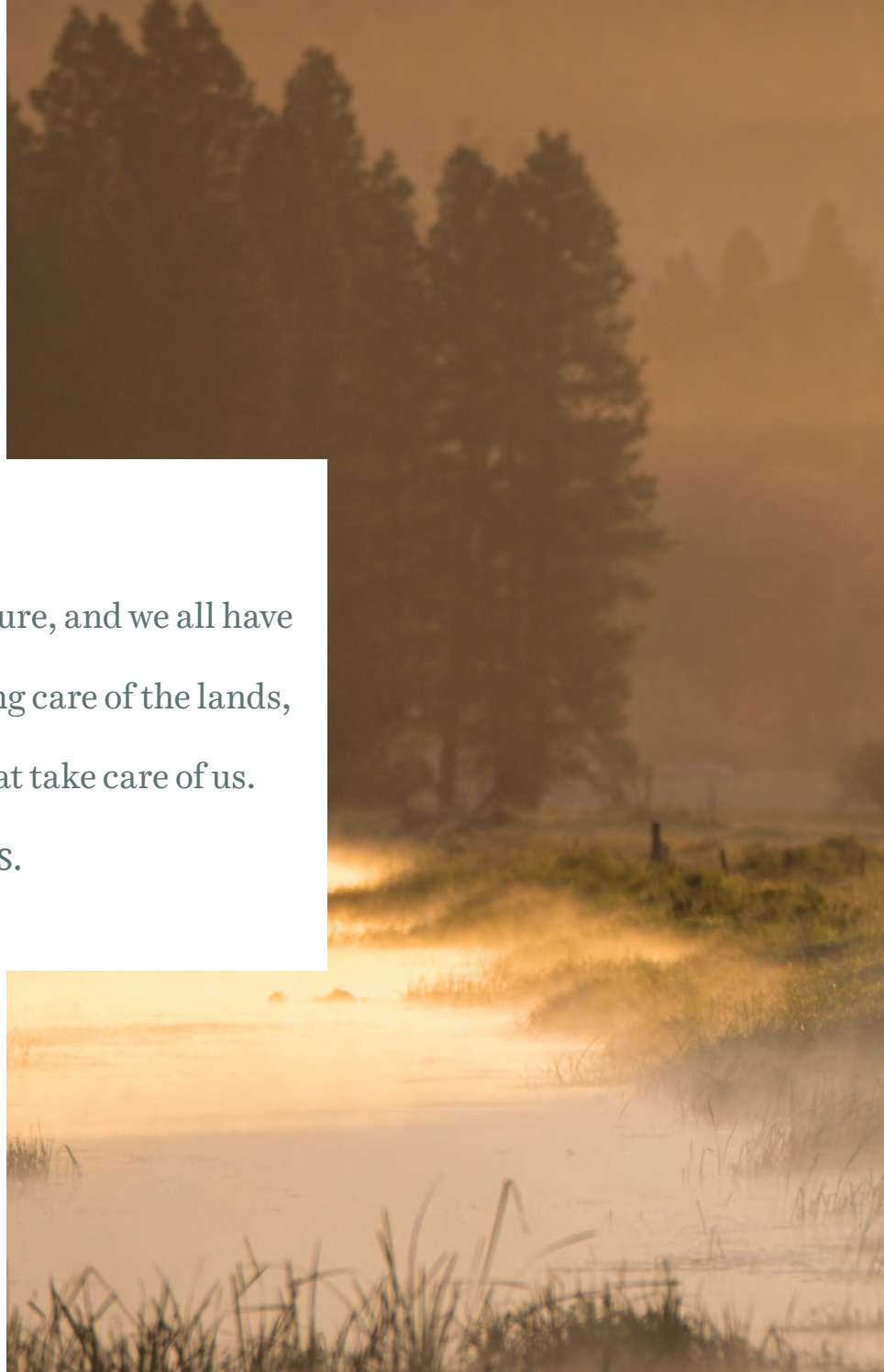




Columbia Land Trust

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.*




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 Columbia Land Trust

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Also in: Astoria, Portland, Hood River