

Conservation Report

2022



2022

Investing in Hope

It is easy to be discouraged these days. Ecosystems are suffering from our warming climate. Species are going extinct. Favorite natural places are being subdivided and developed. And while all this happens, political discourse is more about fighting and power than about collaborating and problem solving.

But as you will see in this report, thousands of people are throwing their weight behind the practice of listening, learning, and taking simple, decisive actions to protect the nature of the Northwest—and the results are impressive.

Our Land Trust was formed 32 years ago with the belief that working together we could achieve something far greater than any of us could alone. We put aside our fear of the unknown, and now three decades later we have a staff of nearly 40 people and have conserved more than 55,000 acres in both Oregon and Washington (an area 3.5 times the size of Manhattan)! The challenges ahead of us are great, but the opportunities are far greater. I ask you to join us to invest in hope, and to help Columbia Land Trust take those small, thoughtful steps that transform complex challenges into problems we can solve.

What does hope look like? For us in 2021 it looked like:

1,600 new households improving wildlife habitat in their own yards as part of the Backyard Habitat Certification Program (See page 15 for full story)

A new conservation easement on 2,500 acres of working coastal forest that will prevent future

fragmentation, improve water quality, and allow more trees to grow to maturity (See page 10, Clatsop Ridge)

Burying 4,300 feet of overhead powerline at Cranes' Landing to prevent deadly collisions for migrating sandhill cranes and the many other bird species that utilize the site (See page 17, Cranes' Landing)

There are many more examples of hope in the pages that follow, and I trust you will enjoy learning about our successes as well as our future priorities. Each of you makes a difference and your commitment to the nature of the Northwest is essential to the work of the Land Trust, from the East Cascades to the Pacific Ocean. Every dollar donated supports collaborative, transformational conservation projects.

In both conservation and community building, change happens over decades not days. If we want a healthy and vital future for the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River, the time for hope—and action—is now. I invite you to explore this report and to join Columbia Land Trust in our work. You may just find that it is the best thing you've ever done. I know it has been for me.

GLENN LAMB, Executive Director

Front page: A moody autumn day in a forest of the Columbia Gorge. This page: Peering toward a bright future. Both photos by @ianshivephoto/@tandemstock



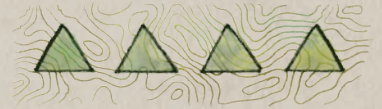
Columbia Land Trust

CONSERVATION SUCCESSES

ALL THE WAYS WE WORKED TOGETHER IN 2021 TO CONSERVE THE NATURE WE LOVE

**1,628
additional
households
enrolled**

*in the Backyard Habitat
Certification Program,
bringing total participants to 8,000+*



**82 acres
conserved**

*and transferred to
Clatsop Community
College to educate the
next generation of
environmental leaders*



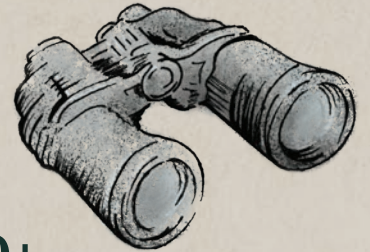
**4,300 feet
of powerline
buried**

*at Cranes' Landing to reduce
hazards to cranes, geese,
ducks, herons, and raptors*



**2 rare
orchid species**

*—the mountain lady's slipper
and the clustered lady's
slipper—monitored along West
Major Creek in Klickitat County*



**300+
Wild Splendor
tour attendees**

*who came together to learn about
and admire two of the Northwest's
great migrations*



3,831 acres

*of newly conserved rivers, forest,
and wildlife habitat throughout the Columbia River region*



Chehalis Tribes

Shoalwater Bay
Tribe

Long Beach

Columbia River Estuary

Astoria

WASHINGTON

Mt. S.
Hele

Coast Range
& Estuaries

Cowlitz Indian Tribe

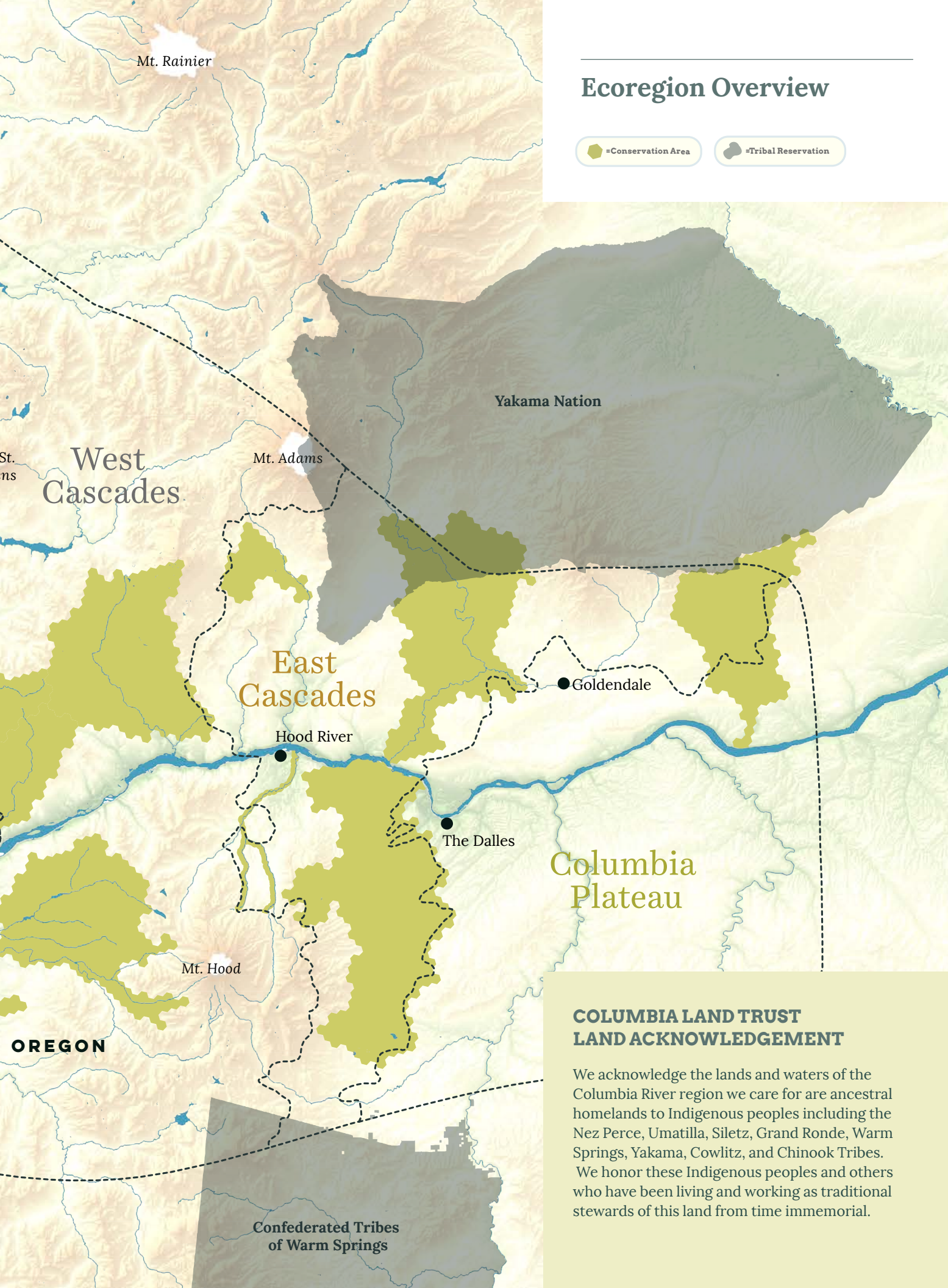
Vancouver

Portland

Willamette Valley
& Puget Trough

Confederated Tribes
of Grand Ronde

Confederated Tribes
of the Siletz Indians



Ecoregion Overview

Conservation Area

Tribal Reservation

Yakama Nation

West
Cascades

East
Cascades

Columbia
Plateau

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 including the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Siletz, Grand Ronde, Warm Springs, Yakama, Cowlitz, and Chinook Tribes. We honor these Indigenous peoples and others who have been living and working as traditional stewards of this land from time immemorial.



Our Approach

Columbia Land Trust has established priority conservation areas throughout the region we serve by analyzing the current presence of wildlife and habitat, noting landscape connectivity, and assessing climate resilience. While each of the five ecoregions is distinct, from rainy coastal mountains to the arid Columbia Plateau, they are interconnected and the Columbia River unites these landscapes, and our work.

We are committed to fundamentally changing the pace and scale of conservation in the Northwest through collaboration and community engagement. Ultimately, our success is not defined by dollars raised or acres conserved, but measured in progress toward the four priorities listed below.



ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

A state in which the nature of the northwest is intact, functional, and supports a diversity of habitats, species, and processes. Landscapes with ecological integrity are self-sustaining; able to evolve and self-regulate within a natural range of variability.



CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Resiliency means that a system is able to deal with change (like fires and flooding) and continue to develop. Our definition includes human systems, and we work to build climate resilience by restoring natural systems that are capable of adapting to changing weather and climate. For example, a mature restored forest can reduce flood risk for downstream infrastructure.



CLIMATE MITIGATION

Mitigation is taking action to limit the magnitude or rate of global warming and its related effects. The Land Trust aims to leverage natural climate solutions like forests and certain types of wetlands, which increase the rate of carbon sequestration by natural systems.



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Connecting with people and building relationships is at the core of our work. Our conservation strategies will not be effective over time if we do not build broad, enduring support for conservation. Furthermore, our conservation work needs to respond and adapt based on mutual learning and understanding.

*Both micro and macro forest views are important.
Photos by @ianshivephoto/@tandemstock*

Our Focus on Forests

Forests have always been at the core of our conservation vision, but recently we have strengthened our commitment to this area of our work. The characteristics of Northwest forests differ as you move across the landscape, but they all offer profound benefits for wildlife and for humans. Forest conservation is climate action, and we aim to ensure that the footprint of forests across our region does not diminish.



Coast Range & Estuaries





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.

A stream runs through the Clatsop Ridge coastal forest. Photo by GreenWood Resources

LAND PROTECTION

Cedar Creek Forest

Conservation Area: Oregon Coast Range

COLUMBIA COUNTY, OR

**640
ACRES**

Last year the Land Trust received a donation of more than 640 acres of intact forest in Columbia County, Oregon. The Cedar Creek Forest is home to a mix of Douglas-fir and western hemlock trees, with western redcedar, bigleaf maple, and red alder completing the overstory. Some of the trees are more than one hundred years old. There are very few invasive species present, and the large trees shade a vibrant understory of vine maple, salal, red huckleberry, Oregon iris, clubmoss, sword fern, and other species.

This older forest is an important habitat area and provides a range of other ecological functions, including water catchment. It also will contribute significantly to our climate action goals, as the mature Douglas-fir and hemlock trees pull carbon out of the atmosphere and store it in their leaves, bark, and roots, even after they fall and begin to decay. Minimal restoration work is needed at this site, and our stewardship efforts will focus on allowing the forest to continue to grow and thrive.

Clatsop Ridge

Conservation Area: Oregon Coast Range

CLATSOP COUNTY, OR

**2,500
ACRES**

In fall of 2021, Columbia Land Trust purchased a conservation easement that protects 2,500 acres of forestland along Highway 101, between the towns of Astoria and Seaside, in collaboration with GreenWood Resources, North Coast Land Conservancy, and Sustainable Northwest. GreenWood continues to own and manage the property for forestry, preserving jobs, timber supply, and tax revenue for the county.

We were eager to protect this large swath of coastal Oregon forest because, in addition to ensuring beloved scenery, jobs, and recreational opportunities, these forests store carbon, provide fresh water for coastal communities, and generate sustainable wood products. The easement agreement also enlarged protected riparian areas around streams to enrich salmon habitat and improve water quality.

South Tongue Point

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

CLATSOP COUNTY, OR

**82
ACRES**

After several years of project development, Columbia Land Trust acquired, and immediately transferred to Clatsop Community College, 82 acres of land on the lower Columbia River. The property is adjacent to where the college's Marine and Environmental Research Training Station (MERTS) campus sits and will preserve critical habitat for salmon and other wildlife, while being used as a living laboratory by students.

The riverfront parcel provides one of the last feeding opportunities for juvenile salmon migrating downriver before they enter the open ocean. The college, Columbia Land Trust, and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST) are partnering to restore this crucial habitat, which will also provide a place for community college students to observe and monitor ecological processes in real time. The college plans to develop classes and curriculum specifically to take advantage of this access.

Restoration plans include expanding the area of tidal inundation through targeted shoreline excavation in order to create additional tidal channels and vegetated wetlands that will provide food and shelter for amphibians, birds, and juvenile salmonids.

Pacific ninebark, "Physocarpus capitatus" grows in the Coast Range & Estuaries ecoregion. Photo by Doug Gorsline





STEWARDSHIP

Lower Elochoman Forest

Conservation Area: Lower Elochoman

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA

Restoration work continued in 2021 at this 308-acre site, following the 2019 removal of a berm along the Elochoman River and the filling in of drainage ditches. Goals for 2022 include the continued establishment of native trees and shrubs in the reconnected floodplain and site preparation of over 100 acres for an additional 60,000 trees and shrubs.

Indian Jack Slough

Conservation Area: Lower Elochoman

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA

Ongoing work at this site is part of the Land Trust's long-term restoration efforts along the lower Elochoman River. Last year we conducted 15 acres of weed control as the first phase of a larger restoration project, which in 2022 will restore topographic diversity to the floodplain and create habitat improvements for Columbian white-tailed deer, amphibians, and waterfowl.

Kandoll Road North

Conservation Area: Grays Bay

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA

Wetland restoration began this fall on Columbia Land Trust's 37-acre Kandoll Road North property along the lower Grays River, a more recent addition to the hundreds of acres the Land Trust has already restored along the Grays River. The project moved 3,000 cubic yards of material to create freshwater channels and ponds in an old pasture that stood overgrown for years. The goal is to transform the habitat area to include emergent, scrub-shrub, and forested wetlands with water features providing diverse habitat for waterfowl and amphibians.

A large, historic tidal channel runs through the center of the property. It holds water throughout the year and is enhanced by beaver activity. The excavation created two additional channels connecting to this main central channel, and the dirt spoils from the dig were used to build up micro topography in the surrounding floodplain. These new chan-

Marshland Road

Conservation Area: Columbia River Estuary

COLUMBIA COUNTY, OR

**520
ACRES**

In late 2021, Columbia Land Trust acquired 520 acres along the Westport Slough in Columbia County, Oregon with funding provided by Bonneville Power Administration. The site is currently a poplar plantation and our main goal will be to restore functional and intact North Pacific Lowland Riparian forest and shrubland to support Columbian white-tailed deer. Removing poplar will be an intensive project, as the trees resprout when cut. In 2016, we completed salmon habitat restoration at the nearby Kerry Island site, about three miles downstream.

The winding waterways of the Columbia River Estuary. Photo by Doug Gorsline



nels were designed to support freshwater habitat but will also accommodate future tidal re-connection if feasible.

The planting of Sitka spruce trees, willows, emergent grasses, rushes, and a variety of wetland and upland shrubs is slated to begin in early 2022. Because of the invasive reed canarygrass, thistle, and blackberry currently growing there, close attention will need to be paid to ensure the new plants survive.

Nelson Creek Swamp

Conservation Area: Lower Elochoman

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY, WA

Restoration of Nelson Creek represents the third phase of habitat enhancement taking place along the lower Elochoman River. The project includes the expansion and enhancement of off-channel rearing habitat for salmonids, in addition to habitat improvements for endangered Columbian white-tailed deer. In 2021, we conducted 90 acres of weed control in preparation for the installation of 200,000 native plants in early 2023. This year will see the reconnection of Nelson Creek to its historic confluence with the Elochoman River. Currently, it is diverted into a roadside ditch and flows through a series of undersized culverts which impair fish passage. This hydrological reconnection will also protect an existing 30-acre Sitka spruce swamp, a once common but now relatively rare habitat on the lower Columbia River. Currently, the stand of Sitka spruce trees is regularly flooded by the creek diversion and dozens of mature trees are dying off. The project will see the installation of a new bridge on a county road,

which will allow the creek to be relocated from the ditch to its historic floodplain, in addition to the filling of old drainage ditches, excavation of tidal channels, and habitat enhancement measures such as the placement of logs and riparian plantings.

Seal Slough

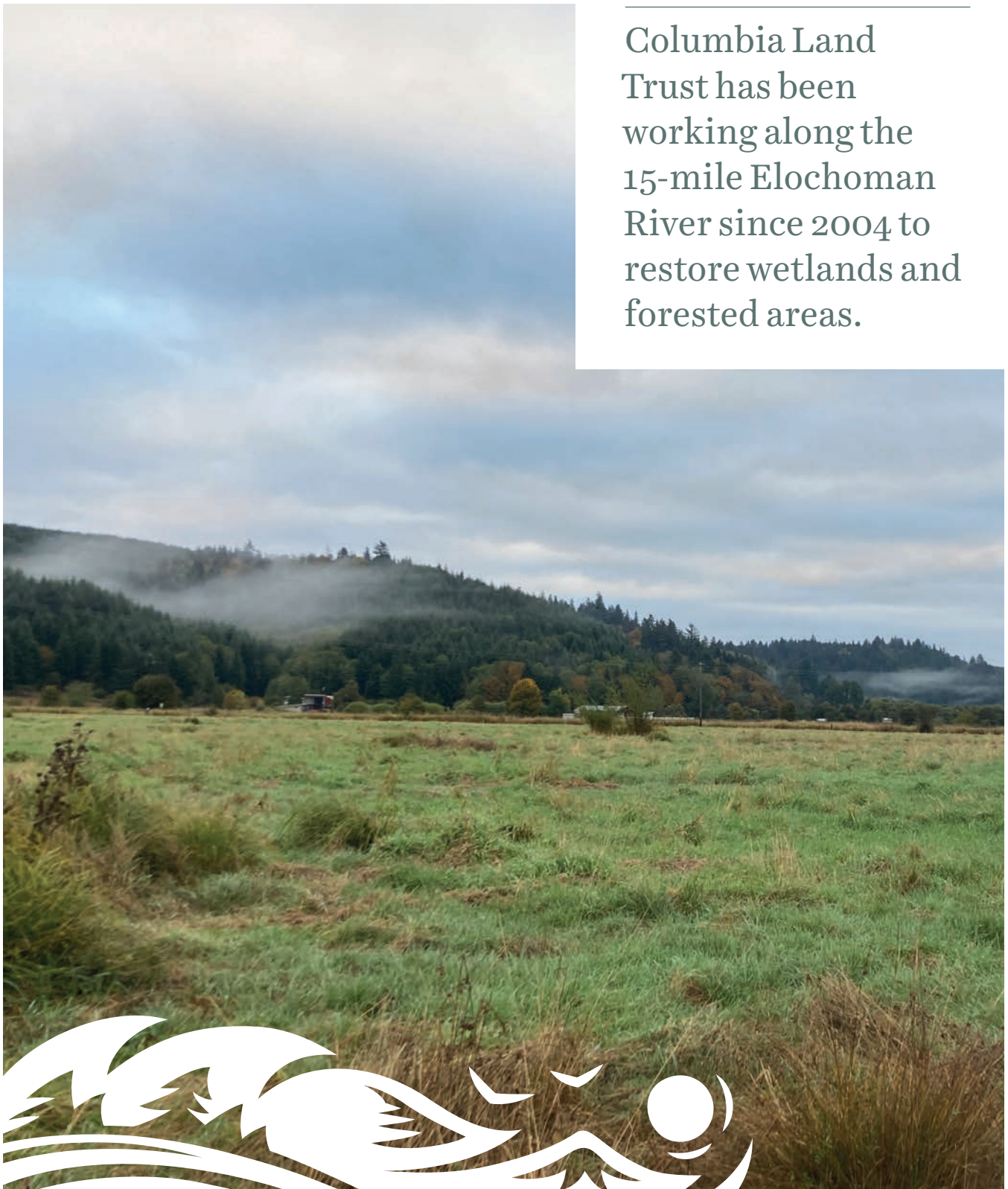
Conservation Area: East Willapa Bay

PACIFIC COUNTY, WA

Seal Slough encompasses 564 acres of former industrial timberland, including tidal wetlands and numerous fish bearing streams. Last summer, work began to thin 130 acres of dense Sitka spruce forest to foster older forest conditions and transform the dark, tightly packed forest into a more open forest with diverse structure. The thinning also enhanced habitat for wildlife by allowing sunlight to filter in and encourage understory growth. The thinning prescription was developed in partnership with forestry contractor Pacific Forest Management, taking native species and habitat into consideration to determine an ideal number of trees per acre to leave, while preserving the largest existing trees. This included retaining imperfect trees, such as those with curves or with split or broken tops, to create structural diversity and enhance wildlife habitat. Revenue generated from the sale of the thinned trees will be invested into the Land Trust's stewardship fund to support future land management.

Timber is stacked during forest thinning at Seal Slough

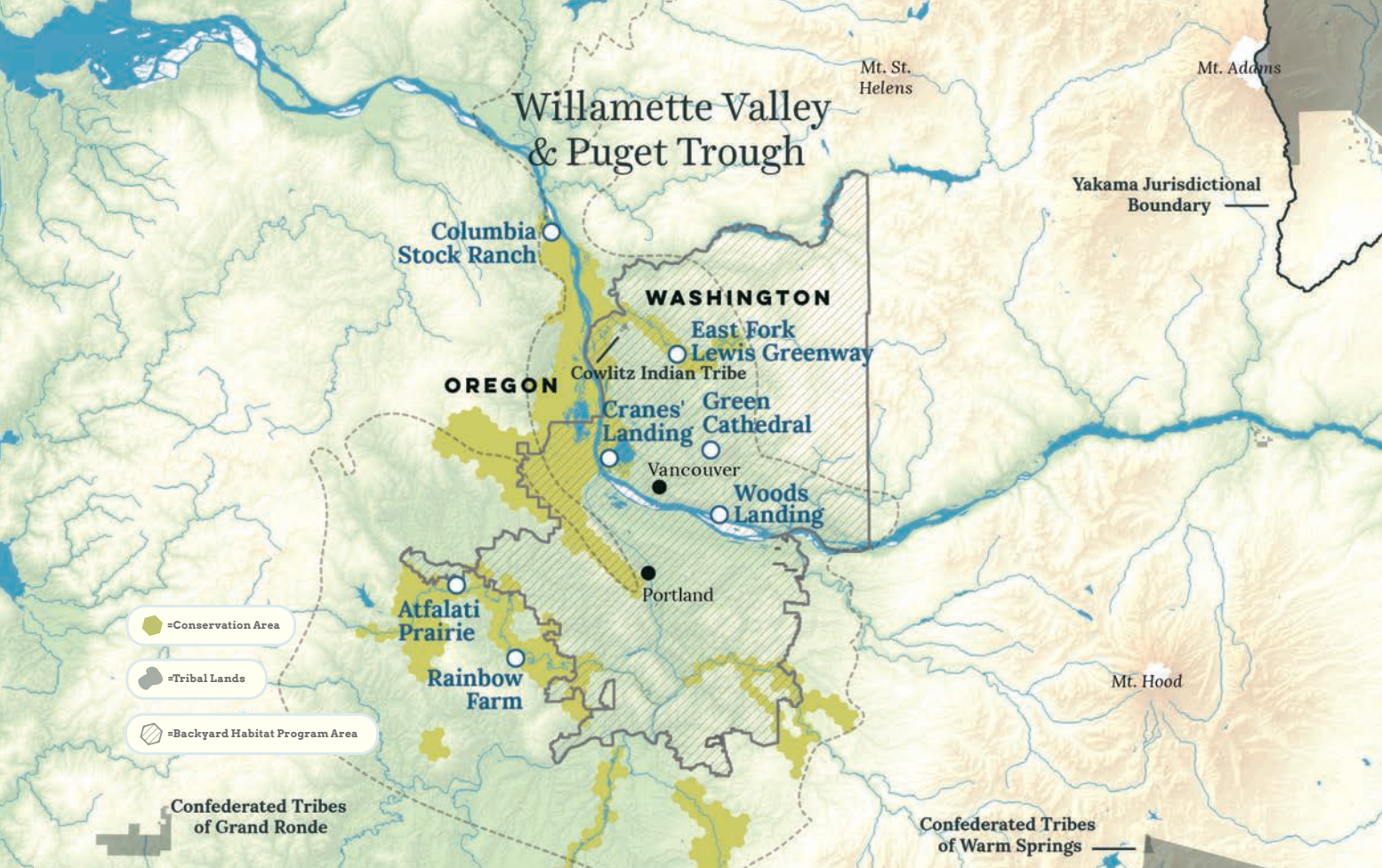
Columbia Land Trust has been working along the 15-mile Elochoman River since 2004 to restore wetlands and forested areas.



Nelson Creek Swamp along the lower Elochoman River

Willamette Valley & Puget Trough





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.

Woods Landing along the Columbia River

LAND PROTECTION

Backyard Habitat Certification Program

MULTNOMAH, CLACKAMAS, AND 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. The program now operates throughout the urban and suburban parts of four counties in Oregon and Washington. In 2021, more than 1,600 new properties enrolled, bringing the participant total to nearly 9,000 active households stewarding more than 2,000 acres.

Participants act as partners in conservation by planting native plants, removing priority weeds, eliminating pesticide use, managing stormwater on site, and stewarding wildlife. Each participant receives technical assistance, incentives like coupons and certification signs, and encouragement. Then they dig in to enhance habitat on their property. BHCP gets neighbors talking and working to-



gether to build wildlife corridors, with the added benefit of building community. Individuals, apartments, businesses, schools, places of worship, and community organizations are all encouraged to participate.

Over the last few years, the program has deepened relationships with culturally-specific community groups to create habitat-enhancing projects led by those most impacted by environmental degradation and climate change, and in 2022 is poised for even more growth in this area.

Together, the actions taken by 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 program participants but to our local communities more broadly.

A Backyard Habitat Certification Program participant proudly displays their yard sign following a certification visit

STEWARDSHIP

Columbia Stock Ranch

Conservation Area: Columbia River Lowlands

COLUMBIA COUNTY, OR

As part of the four-phase plan to restore this historic 500-acre floodplain to benefit Columbian white-tailed deer, the Land Trust is continuing to transform the habitat from grazing lands to a mix of natural and managed habitats. Over the past year, Land Trust staff completed planting on 73 new acres, with 37,945 native trees and shrubs, and re-planted 15 acres with about 2,440 trees and shrubs to replenish previous plantings that had not survived. Additionally, over 100 acres of weed control and 23 acres of planting site preparation was completed. To build the local deer population, the Land Trust continued to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to translocate 12 deer from the



Julia Butler-Hansen National Wildlife Refuge, bringing the total population of Columbia Stock Ranch and surrounding properties up to approximately 20-25 deer. We plan to release another 12 deer in 2022, which will complete the translocation efforts.

Nearly 5,000 feet of new underground waterlines will provide water for cattle in four different areas of the site, allowing a local rancher to continue operations after fencing around reforestation areas blocked access to the cattle's traditional watering areas. About 4,500 feet of deer-friendly fence (low enough that deer can safely jump over but tall enough to still contain livestock) was installed to protect 23 acres to be planted in 2022, and 300 feet of existing fencing was removed to facilitate deer passage.

Cranes' Landing

Conservation Area: Vancouver Lowlands

CLARK COUNTY, WA

A major victory for wildlife at Cranes' Landing was replacing 4,300 feet of overhead powerlines with underground lines to prevent deadly bird strikes and protect the cranes, geese, ducks, herons, and raptors that flock here. In 2022, we hope to move another 1,500 feet of powerline underground. Clark Public Utilities shared the cost of powerline burial with the Land Trust, and the Washington Department of Transportation assisted with permitting.

More than 400 acres continue to be farmed for sandhill cranes. This past season we planted 75 acres of alfalfa, 30 acres of corn, 130 acres of tall fescue and 54 acres of spring wheat, in addition to three acres of lowland wetland swales and 118 acres that are managed for native plants or as fallow areas.

Crane season here runs from October through mid-April and by the end of November 2021, we had already exceeded the total number of cranes and crane use days for the entirety of the previous 2020-2021 season, putting this season on pace to bring the most cranes ever recorded at Cranes' Landing since we began monitoring in 2016. This indicates that the habitat improvements and adaptive farming plan are having the intended result of supporting a strong and vibrant population of cranes over-wintering on the lower Columbia River.

In addition to the planting, we removed 50 acres of weeds, prepared another eight acres for planting, and inter-planted an additional 13,933 trees in previously planted areas.

Sandhill cranes feed in the fields of Cranes' Landing. Photo by Beth Marlin Lichter



East Fork Lewis Greenway

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River

CLARK COUNTY, WA

The Land Trust conducted two acres of plant maintenance and site preparation on this 18-acre site near Daybreak Park. This site is located along the East Fork Lewis River and is part of a reclaimed gravel mining area. New plantings will enhance existing oak woodland and riparian forest stands. Part of the East Fork Lewis River greenway, this area supports habitat, scenic, and recreational goals in partnership with Clark County.

Green Cathedral

Conservation Area: Clark County

CLARK COUNTY, WA

The 2020 removal of a large pole barn created more space for habitat restoration on this 10-acre property in Clark County. In 2021, planting and weed control efforts continued to improve habitat on this urban open space. Roughly ten acres of weeds were treated and 3,315 native plants were planted across two acres, including the old pole barn location. Restoration work will continue in 2022 with a focus on controlling weeds, maintaining plantings, and monitoring habitat.

The forested Keller Woodlands site during an ivy pulling volunteer event

Keller Woodlands

Conservation Area: Forest Park

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR

The Land Trust has been restoring forest habitat at this 40-acre site in Southwest Portland since 2016. After years of work removing invasive ivy, we planted 27 acres with more than 10,000 new native plants. This project has brought together a large group of collaborators and partners including Bonneville Environmental Foundation/One Tree Planted, Ash Creek Forest Management, Portland Parks & Recreation, Metro, Wisdom Workforce Development and Friends of Marquam Nature Park. The public will soon get to enjoy this urban forest—we are planning a pedestrian trail project that will connect Keller Woodlands to nearby nature trails.

Nicolai Woods

Conservation Area: Forest Park

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR

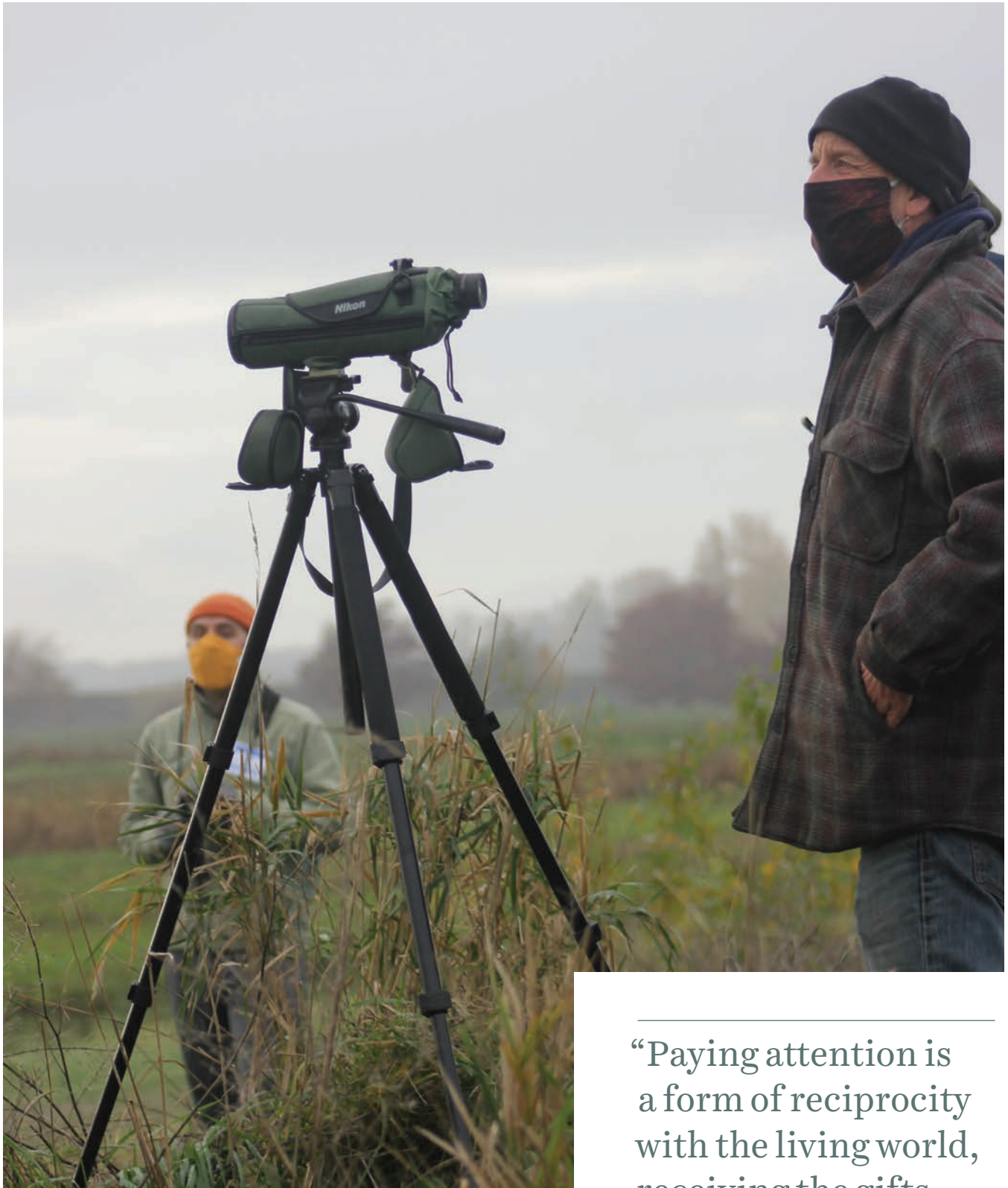
After several years of weed control to remove garlic mustard, blackberry, ivy, holly, and hawthorn, 1,000 new plants were installed across 1.5 acres at this site in Portland's west hills. These native plants will build diversity in the understory and establish the next cohort of trees.

Rainbow Farm

Conservation Area: Tualatin River

WASHINGTON COUNTY, OR

The Land Trust has been working since 2016 to restore this 76-acre floodplain along the Tualatin River, located across the river from Metro's Quamash Prairie. As part of our preparation strategy, a local farmer continues to grow crops on 50 acres of what was once a fallow field of weeds. In 2021, 13,000 native bare root plants were interplanted in the remnant riparian forest and across 14 acres where large strands of invasive blackberry were previously removed. In addition, weed control efforts progressed, with about 20 acres of weed control occurring, in addition to the 46 acres of weeds controlled through farming. Restoration work will continue in 2022.



Executive Director Glenn Lamb looks out for sandhill cranes during a day of Wild Splendor tours

“Paying attention is a form of reciprocity with the living world, receiving the gifts with open eyes and open heart.”

– Robin Wall Kimmerer

West Cascades





OBJECTIVES

ENSURE large swaths of both public and privately owned forestlands are intact and functional, connecting habitat for migratory species.

HALT the net loss of older forests and increase the number of forested acres managed toward old-growth forest habitat.

PROTECT important rivers for salmon and steelhead by removing barriers to migration, improving river conditions, and restoring floodplains.

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

*Beacon Rock from the Columbia River shoreline at Pierce National Wildlife Refuge, one of the sites that Columbia Land Trust staff surveyed for the rare plant “*Rorippa columbiae*” in 2021*

STEWARDSHIP

Barlow Trail

Conservation Area: Sandy River

CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR

At this 23-acre forest along the Sandy River near Brightwood, Oregon, the Land Trust stewardship team and contractor crews removed invasive Scots broom and planted 7,550 native plants across five acres. The new plants will create better wildlife habitat and help grow a new generation of trees to shade and cool the Sandy River. This work is the continuation of a project implemented in 2016 in partnership with the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council to restore side channel and floodplain habitat for salmon and steelhead.

Pierce Island

Conservation Area: Beacon Rock

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

Land Trust staff members, with the help of nine volunteers, mapped populations of the rare plant Columbia yellowcress (*Rorippa columbiae*) on Pierce Island in summer of 2021. This diminutive plant found on sand and gravel shoreline of the Columbia River is listed as a threatened species and can only be found at two locations in Washington State, which is why protecting this species is our main stewardship goal at Pierce Island.

The damming of the Columbia River destroyed most habitat for this plant, which requires the natural cycle of spring flooding and summer/fall low water to survive. The two remaining populations are found along “free-flowing” stretches of the Columbia, in the Hanford Reach, and in the area around Pierce Island, which is downstream of all the Columbia River dams.

Double Bend

Conservation Area: Wind River

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

We removed and treated about two acres of invasive Scots broom along the Wind River floodplain, as part of our riparian restoration work at this forested site.

Wildboy Creek

Conservation Area: Washougal River

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

In partnership with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, planning continued for removal of the Kwoneesum dam, which stands 45-feet high and almost 400 feet wide, on the 1,288-acre Wildboy conservation site. The removal of the dam in 2023 will be the centerpiece of a larger restoration effort that will restore nearly a mile of Wildboy Creek, as well as provide access to nearly seven stream miles of salmonid habitat in the upper watershed. New gates are being built to protect the site from motorized use, while still allowing passive recreation such as hiking and bicycling.

A beaver dam and the wetland complex it creates on a tributary of Wildboy Creek in Skamania County. Photo by Helen Gavrilov





Clouds above the Columbia River

East Cascades & Columbia Plateau





EAST CASCADES 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.

COLUMBIA PLATEAU 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.

Looking out at Mt. Adams across an oak woodland



LAND PROTECTION

Klickitat Canyon

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

Klickitat County, WA

**42
ACRES**

The Land Trust prioritized this 42-acre site because it was the last private inholding within the 11,000-acre Klickitat Canyon landscape. This acquisition also protects the last quarter mile of White Creek that was not previously under conservation ownership. White Creek is the most productive trib-

utary for federally threatened mid-Columbia steelhead in the Klickitat River watershed. This site also provides important northern spotted owl and peregrine falcon habitat, and will contribute to incredible habitat connectivity of the Klickitat region.

Columbia Gorge Forest

Conservation Areas: Columbia Gorge, Conboy Lake, Klickitat River, Little White Salmon River, Lower White Salmon River, Major Creek, Rattlesnake Creek, Wasco Oaks, and Wind River

Klickitat, Skamania Counties, WA and Hood River and Wasco Counties, OR

In 2021, Columbia Land Trust celebrated an initial step towards securing conservation outcomes for nearly 90,000 acres in the Columbia Gorge. A consortium including The Conservation Fund and timber company Green Diamond Resource Company purchased 96,000 of forestland in Washington and Oregon in Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River and Wasco counties. These forestlands are critical for timber, watershed health, oak habitats, climate resilience, and community benefits of recreation and jobs. The landowners are working collaboratively with Columbia Land Trust and community partners toward long-term conservation outcomes that will ensure continued forest operations, prevent conversion to development, and protect sensitive oak woodlands and wildlife habitat.

East Cascades Oak Partnership

Conservation Area: East Cascades Ecoregion

Klickitat, Skamania Counties, WA and Hood River and Wasco Counties, OR

Operating in Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River, and Wasco Counties in Oregon and Washington, the East Cascades Oak Partnership welcomed more than 130 attendees at quarterly partnership meetings in 2021! The partnership completed four outreach pieces for specific stakeholder audiences, intended to educate and increase engagement among local landowners and ranchers. The group created a disturbance monitoring tool specifically for oak systems that measures change after disturbances like wildfire, prescribed fire, mechanical thinning, and fuel reduction. The information from the monitoring effort will be used to adapt management guidance that ECOP provides to partners and the public.

ECOP partners initiated monitoring on four sites, and with consultant Washington Department of Natural Resources, drafted a new current conditions assessment tool that will help landowners understand and compare historic conditions with current conditions, and chart a management path to help them reach their goals and foster a healthier

Fall colors in Klickitat Canyon. Photo by Doug Gorsline



oak woodland. Monitoring is a core strategy of the partnership, as it aims to learn, innovate, adapt, and conserve.

In 2021, ECOP and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Natural Areas Program hosted a field tour of the White Salmon Oaks site to discuss the removal of large conifers that are growing over the tops of mature oaks. This is important across the region as conifer encroachment due to fire suppression and conversion for commercial use threatens as much as 40% of oak habitat in the East Cascades.

STEWARDSHIP

Bear Creek

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

KLICKITAT COUNTY, WA

This pine savanna was historically shaped by periodic wild-fire. In the recent absence of fire—due to decades of suppression—young trees and shrubs grow, which increases the risk of higher intensity fire that could damage mature trees and soils and increase sediment delivery into important salmon streams. We visited this site with partners from Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Mount Adams Resource Stewards, and the Yakama Nation

to discuss cross-boundary management opportunities and evaluate the suitability of a prescribed burn at the Bear Creek Natural Area.

Four Sisters

Conservation Area: Chenoweth Creek
(Columbia Plateau)

WASCO COUNTY, OR

Continuing a multi-year saga of weed control at this grassland habitat in the Columbia Plateau ecoregion, 2021 brought additional targeted weed treatments with a focus on controlling invasive cereal ryegrass along roadside areas.

Harris Forest

Conservation Area: Little White Salmon River

SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA

After planting 1,400 grand fir and 2,800 ponderosa pine seedlings in 2020, we continued the reforestation process by controlling weeds and grasses that compete with the seedlings across 15 acres of old agricultural fields.

A group of volunteers assist with a round of planting in the Powerdale Corridor along the lower Hood River. Photo by Great Old Broads

Haul Road

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

Klickitat County, WA

A two-lane derelict paved road used to run along the shoreline of the Klickitat River, but over the last decade Columbia Land Trust and the Yakama Klickitat Fisheries Project worked together to remove the road to restore the river system and watershed. Recently, our efforts focused on mapping weeds and monitoring native plant recovery along the eight-mile stretch of restored shoreline.

Powerdale North

Conservation Area: Lower Hood River

Hood River County, OR

The Land Trust completed a two-year wetland and riparian vegetation restoration project at two sites: River Mile 1 ponds and Whiskey Creek confluence. In partnership with the Hood River Watershed Group and about 35 volunteers, we planted 700 more native shrubs, adding to thousands planted over past years to replace nonnative weeds that once dominated these sites. At another location within Powerdale North, we completed final planning, design, and neighbor outreach for a trail construction project that is set to occur in 2022. Planned in partnership with the Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District, the new trail will link our site with existing community greenways.

Summit Creek

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

Klickitat County, WA

After implementing treatments to reduce fire fuels on 36 acres in 2020 with funding support from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources Forest Health Program, our team completed another 74 acres of cutting, piling, and burning in this important mixed oak-conifer habitat to increase the site's fire readiness. After thinning the forest, we planted 60lbs of fire-adapted native grass seed across 95 acres. These projects help reduce fire risk and improve habitat conditions at Summit Creek and help protect old growth pine and fir trees on the adjacent Yakama Nation Indian Reservation.

Stewardship team member Sanoe Keliinoi surveys the Klickitat River Haul Road corridor for priority weed species to treat and remove





West Major Creek

Conservation Area: West Major Creek

Klickitat County, WA

Two species of uncommon lady's slipper orchids grow on this 40-acre site along West Major Creek: mountain lady's slipper (*Cypripedium montanum*) and clustered lady's slipper (*Cypripedium fasciculatum*), which Land Trust staff monitors annually. The orchids grow in the understory of forests that have a canopy of large, old Douglas-fir trees. They require specific microclimates and are highly sensitive to disturbance. With few suitable old forest sites remaining to support these orchids, the Land Trust's protection of known lady's slipper locations is very important.

Youngs Wetland

Conservation Area: Klickitat River

Klickitat County, WA

Lodgepole pine seedlings established rapidly in the higher elevation portions of this meadow, making the seasonally flooded wetland area that sandhill cranes use for forage and nesting less appealing to the birds, who prefer open spaces where they can see predators approaching. To make the landscape more welcoming to the migrating cranes, Land Trust staff and volunteers cut and piled encroaching seedlings.

*The rushing White Salmon River. Photo by
@ianshivephoto/@tandemstock*



“I am energized by this landscape, because there’s so much to learn and discover, because it is so biologically rich, so remote, and so beautiful.”

– Lindsay Cornelius

Natural Area Manager Lindsay Cornelius takes notes during a site visit in the East Cascades. Photo by @ianshivephoto /@tandemstock

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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.
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Photo by @ianshivephoto/@tandemstock



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