



CONSERVATION REPORT



2022-2023



Work of a Lasting Nature

Every year that I've had the pleasure of working for Columbia Land Trust (15 this February!), I've been inspired by how we've expanded our conservation efforts and built on past successes. Even with that perspective—or maybe because of it—I sit in awe reflecting on what we accomplished in 2022 and what we will accomplish in 2023. The **1,230 acres of wildlife habitat that we conserved last year** included the completion of an 820-acre project that was more than 20 years in the making and set the stage for incredible conservation successes to come.

We began 2023 by **welcoming our new Executive Director, Meg Rutledge**. Meg brings great leadership and scientific expertise that will help us add to the more than 56,000 acres we have already conserved and build on what our organization does so well: *caring for the nature of the Northwest*.

In my role as Conservation Director, I work with our team to implement the Land Trust's strategic, 25-year Conservation Agenda, permanently protecting some of the region's most important natural places—essential salmon spawning sites, old forests that sequester carbon at astounding rates, and oak habitats that provide food and shelter for hundreds of resident and migratory wildlife species. These places are constantly at risk of being lost and we must continue to act urgently, and thoughtfully, to accomplish our goals. The conservation projects we undertake are complex, and it is worth the years of collaboration and problem-solving to see these places permanently protected. Our work today will benefit generations to come.

Despite the threats nature faces, I find hope in the resilience of ecological systems and the holistic nature of conservation. We've seen salmon return almost immediately to restored wetlands in the Columbia River estuary and watched thousands of migrating sandhill cranes utilize newly conserved lands. In 2022, we conserved a **23-acre** and a **342-acre** site along Washington's **Grays River**. On their own, the individual projects we pursue are important, but when you consider that the Land Trust has **conserved more than 2,280 acres along the Grays River** and around Grays Bay and completed numerous tidal wetland and forest restoration projects over two decades as part of a long-term watershed strategy, the significance is multiplied. We work at a landscape scale because, in conservation, the whole is often much greater than the sum of the parts.

Across our ecoregions there was much to celebrate in 2022, including the Backyard Habitat Certification Program adding **1,300 new enrollees and surpassing 10,000 participants!** The following pages contain highlights from all that we accomplished last year and offer glimpses of the incredible impact to come. I hope you find inspiration and join us in the tough but rewarding work ahead.

~ **Dan Roix**, Conservation Director

We work at a landscape scale because, in conservation, the whole is often much greater than the sum of the parts.

Cover: Arrowleaf balsamroot on the Columbia Plateau. Photo by Max Diaz. Above: Winter sun over a wetland along the Lower Elochoman River.

CONSERVATION SUCCESSES

2022 Here's how we worked together to conserve the nature we love:

56,000 total acres conserved across the Columbia River region over the Land Trust's 32-year history



98672 zip code of our new White Salmon office space

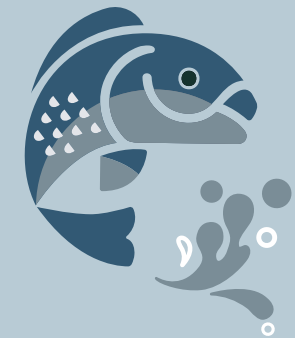
700 kids per year

who visit a rustic camp along the East Fork Lewis River that we conserved in partnership with the Optimist Club of Vancouver



2 miles of fluvial and tidal channel

excavated to restore the Nelson Creek floodplain to historic conditions and improve salmonid habitat along the Elochoman River



60 households

joined us in hosting Mason bees and caring for the super pollinators in their own yards



6 years of research

completed as part of a study on control methods for invasive reed canarygrass in tidal freshwater marshes

WHERE WE WORK

Columbia Land Trust's priority conservation areas span five ecoregions.



Columbia Land Trust Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the lands and waters of the Columbia River region are the ancestral homelands of Indigenous peoples who have been living and working here from time immemorial and are the original stewards of these lands.



OUR APPROACH

Columbia Land Trust has established priority conservation areas that are critical to ecosystems and wildlife throughout the region we serve, from rainy coastal mountains to the arid Columbia Plateau. To establish these conservation areas, we analyze the current presence of wildlife and habitat, landscape connectivity, and climate resilience.

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 measured in dollars raised or acres conserved, but in ecological integrity and healthy relationships between people and nature.



CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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 Resiliency

Resiliency means that a system is able to deal with change (like fires and flooding) and continue to develop. Our definition includes human communities and we work to build climate resiliency 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 the protection and restoration of forests and wetlands, to increase the rate of carbon sequestration by natural systems.

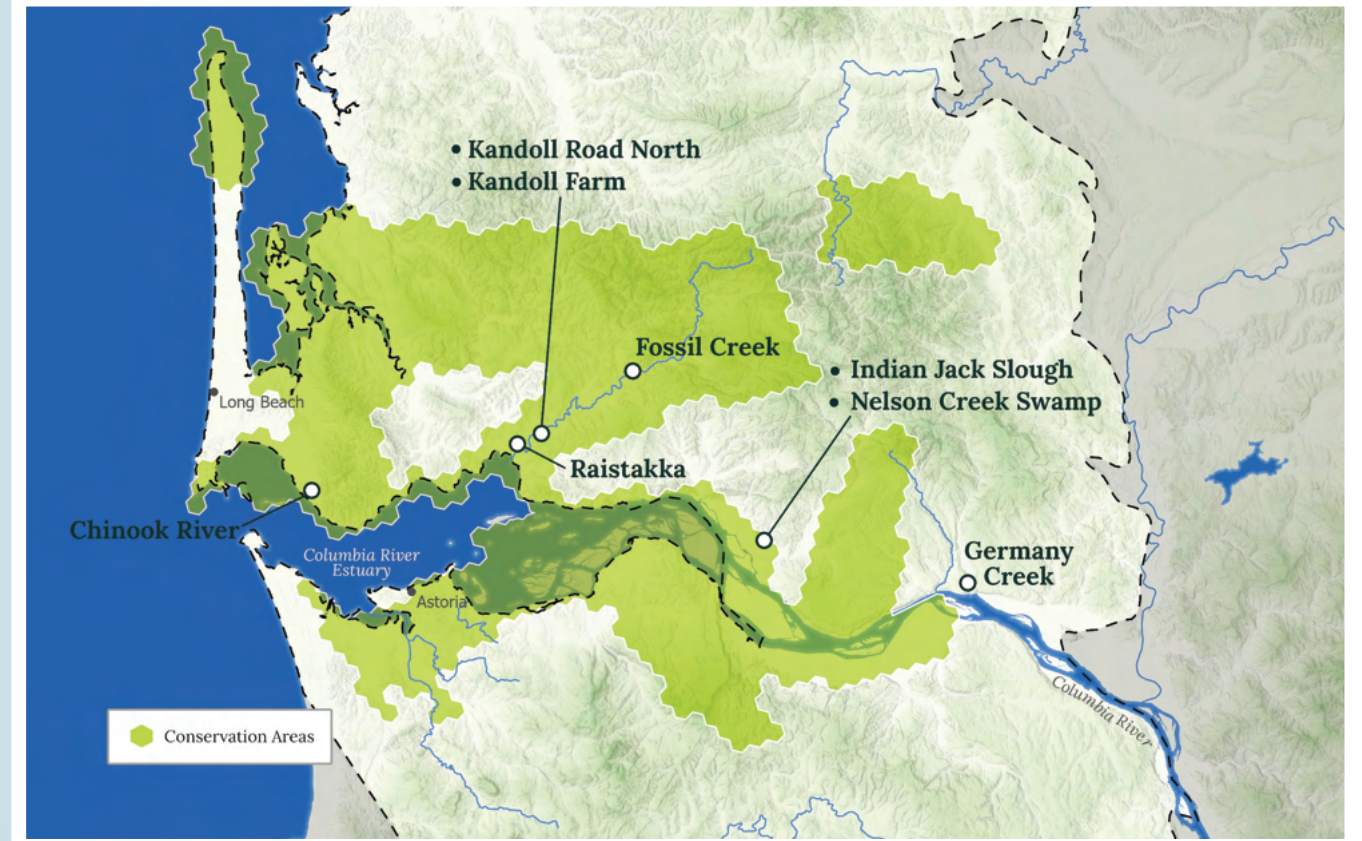
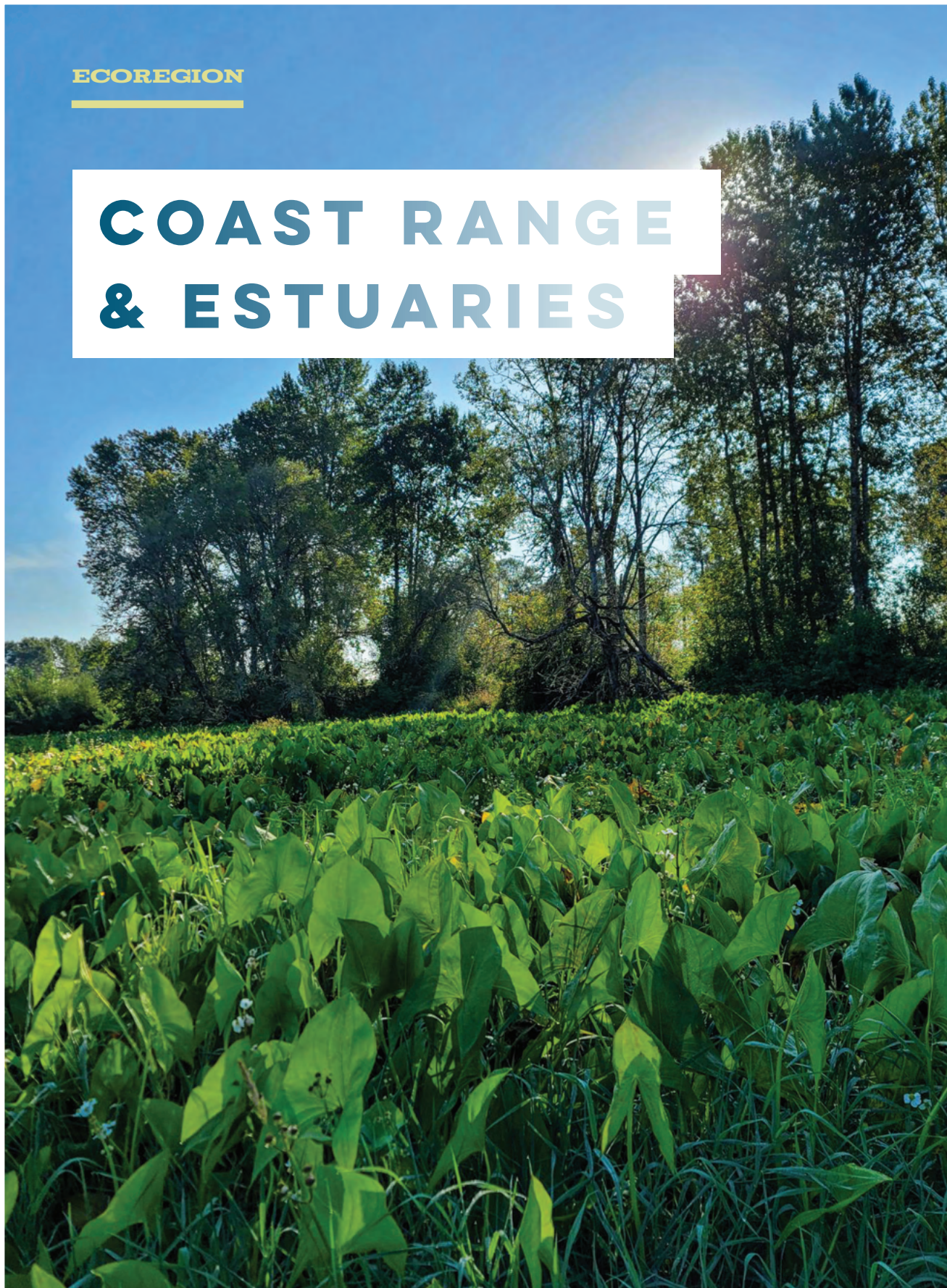
Connecting People to Nature

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.

Your participants enjoy spring wildflowers.

ECOREGION

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.

LAND PROTECTION

342
Acres

Fossil Creek

Conservation Area: Grays River
Wahkiakum County, WA

This conserved site along Washington's Grays River contains the upstream reaches of Crazy Johnson Creek, one of the most important areas for chum salmon in the entire Columbia River basin. During spawning seasons the creek roils with salmon, and maintaining this ecosystem will be a key priority of our stewardship efforts. The site also protects existing marbled murrelet habitat and promotes watershed health, benefiting human communities. Columbia Land Trust has been working in the Grays Bay watershed since 2000, conserving more than 2,000 acres and restoring numerous tidal wetlands, to allow the river to return to its historic floodplain and provide habitat for salmon, waterfowl, and many other species. The 342-acre Fossil Creek acquisition will be merged with adjoining stewardship units, allowing our team to build off existing management goals and build connectivity within the

Wapato growing in a lower Columbia River wetland.



landscape. The ecological processes supported by the Fossil Creek site are aligned with our long-term, community-based strategy for conservation in the coastal ecoregion.

23 Acres
Raistakka
 Conservation Area: Grays Bay
Wahkiakum County, WA

This acquisition was the final major parcel the Land Trust needed to secure before moving forward toward a large-scale tidal wetland reconnection project in the lower Grays River. The recently conserved 23-acre site is adjacent to a 20-acre site we conserved in 2019 and together the two sites will allow us to restore over 40 acres of currently disconnected historic intertidal wetland habitat. We plan to eventually restore natural hydrology to the landscape, remove invasive species, and install native plants on this site and adjoining lands to benefit salmonids and other species.

Above: The newly conserved Fossil Creek site. Right: Land Trust volunteers installing purple martin nesting gourds.

STEWARDSHIP

Chinook River

Conservation Area: Baker Bay
Pacific County, OR

In late winter a small chainsaw crew selectively thinned approximately 40 acres of red alder forest. Crews removed alder adjacent to existing conifer trees in the understory and created gap areas for future planting of native species. This is part of a larger-scale restoration of this 314-acre site, where we also removed eight sections of an old gravel logging road, totaling about half a mile, to reconnect wetlands on either side of the road. Each section was about 10-15 feet wide and, as we removed the road, we returned the land to its historic grade. Dirt spoils from this process were then distributed over the top of remaining road sections to enhance topographic diversity and create a plantable surface with loose soil material. The sections of the gravel road that we did not remove were already heavily worn and scarred from heavy equipment, which will increase water infiltration and create a viable surface for planting. In 2023, crews will install about 12,000 native plants, including Sitka



spruce, western redcedar and salmonberry in the upland forest areas, and Douglas spirea and Hooker's willow in the wet areas to add shrubby diversity to the wetland system. In 2023 we will continue to monitor and maintain this restoration project.

Indian Jack Slough

Conservation Area: Lower Elochoman River
Wahkiakum County, WA

We are preparing to complete the third phase of restoration at this 181-acre wetland, located across the road from Nelson Creek Swamp and within our 645-acre network of conserved sites on the lower Elochoman River. Restoration activities will include the filling of drainage ditches, creation of tidal channels, and regrading of topography to create a diversity of wetland habitats, from emergent seasonal ponds to Sitka spruce forest and willow scrub-shrub stands. The primary beneficiaries of this restoration will be Columbian white-tailed deer and birds, including migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

At this site we also annually install and monitor purple martin gourds. Each spring, we erect two poles supporting multiple nesting cavities. The birds

typically arrive in April and begin building nests inside the gourds, which are painted white to reflect sunlight and prevent overheating in the summer. The birds seek out landscapes with lots of excavated tree cavities (and plentiful flying insects!) and because of habitat loss, these structures provide the martins with a place to nest in a region where natural nesting cavities are scarce. The two poles we install offer 36 nesting gourds, and in 2022 we recorded 19 occupied nests, with 18 nests that had successful fledging!

Middle Nemah

Conservation Area: East Willapa Bay
Pacific County, WA

Early in 2022 a small chainsaw crew pre-commercially thinned a 44-acre Douglas-fir plantation in the Middle Nemah River watershed. This was funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program with the goal of putting the forest stand on a trajectory to support endangered marbled murrelets. This is the first step in a long-term management strategy which will include future tree harvesting, snag creation, and planting. Crews will return in 2023 to create wildlife piles using the downed debris.

Kandoll Farm

Conservation Area: Grays Bay
Wahkiakum County, WA

For the past six years we have partnered with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to complete a reed canarygrass control experiment in intertidal freshwater wetlands. Kandoll Farm and Kerry Island, two restored intertidal wetland sites, served as the test locations for the new experimental treatments. We will continue to monitor and collect vegetation data and, based on the positive results of the study, plan to expand the treatment area in 2023.

We hope the manuscript by Land Trust Stewardship Director Ian Sinks and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory scientist Amy Borde will be published in 2023, sharing the results of this experiment and providing restoration practitioners with valuable information for planning, design, and maintenance of mid- and high-marsh intertidal habitats.



A major construction project was completed in summer 2022 to return Nelson Creek to its historic floodplain after decades of diversion.

Kandoll Road North

Conservation Area: Grays Bay
Wahkiakum County, WA

After moving 3,000 yards of material to excavate freshwater channels and ponds on this 37-acre floodplain site in 2021, last year brought a major planting effort, as we continued to transform land that stood as an unused pasture for years and return it to emergent scrub-shrub and forested wetlands with water features, to provide habitat for waterfowl and amphibians. We installed a variety of native wetland and upland plants, including Sitka spruce trees, willows, emergent grasses, and shrubs. Because of the presence of invasive reed canarygrass, thistle, and blackberry, we are monitoring the survival of the new plantings closely. This work will continue in 2023.

Above and bottom right: The restoration of Nelson Creek included the excavation of fluvial and tidal channels and the construction of a new bridge. Top right: Natural Area Manager Simon Apostol leads a tour of the site during construction.

Nelson Creek Swamp

Conservation Area: Lower Elochoman River
Wahkiakum County, WA

A major construction project was completed in summer 2022, which included building a new, 50-foot bridge to allow Nelson Creek to flow below a county road and return to its historic floodplain after being diverted into a roadside ditch for decades. This third phase of restoration along the lower Elochoman River also included filling in defunct drainage ditches and re-constructing historic tidal channels to restore about 140 acres of floodplain, improve essential salmonid habitat, and enhance salmonid access to upstream spawning habitat.

In the new channels, 61 log jams were added to increase in-stream habitat complexity, which juvenile salmonids need as they rest, feed, and grow on their journey to the Pacific Ocean. After construction concluded, stewardship staff and contract crews installed about 200,000 native plants, including Sitka, Pacific, and Hooker's willow, red-osier dogwood, Sitka spruce, and black cottonwood over the winter. This revegetation will

shade stream channels, replace invasive pasture grasses, and provide cover and forage for threatened Columbian white-tailed deer and other wildlife.

Germany Creek

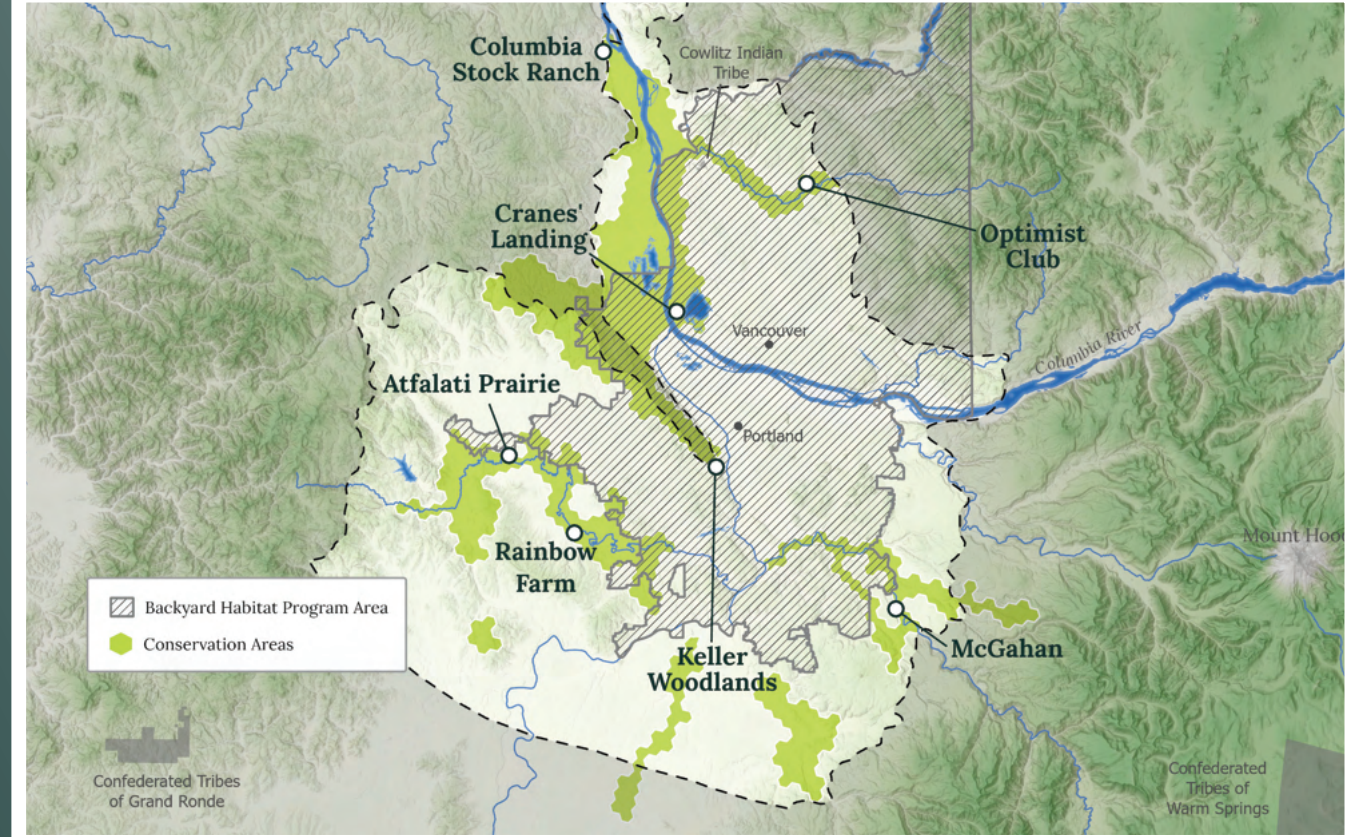
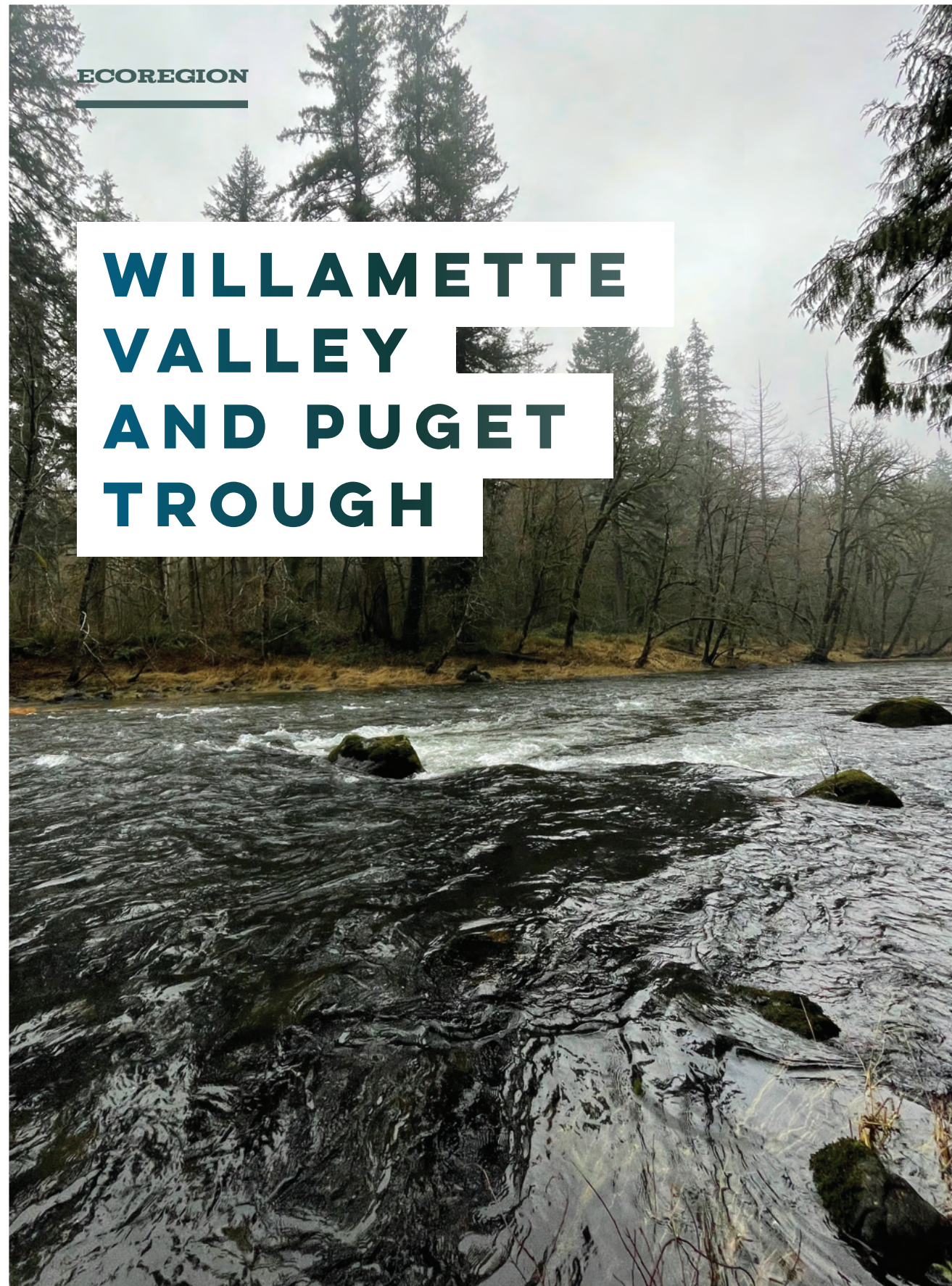
Conservation Area: N/A
Cowlitz County, WA

Last winter we planted 250 Douglas spiraea, 250 Nootka rose, 500 red-osier dogwood, 250 Sitka spruce, and 500 western hemlocks as part of the Land Trust's ongoing work to enhance lower Germany Creek, a 157-acre site outside Longview, Washington. Past restoration efforts significantly improved in-stream channel conditions and habitat for spawning salmon species, but the region's logging history means that the riparian corridor and the floodplain are dominated by hardwoods, instead of what historically would have been a diverse mix of Sitka spruce, western redcedar, Douglas-fir, grand fir, western hemlock, alder, ash, and maple. This year's work supplemented larger planting projects in previous years.



ECOREGION

WILLAMETTE VALLEY AND 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.

The East Fork Lewis River.

LAND PROTECTION

46 Acres

Optimist Club Camp

Conservation Area: East Fork Lewis River
Clark County, WA

Columbia Land Trust helped permanently protect a forested youth camp in the heart of Clark County, in partnership with the Optimist Club of Vancouver. The 46-acre parcel sits along the East Fork Lewis River adjacent to a popular county park, in an area that is a conservation priority for both the county and the Land Trust due to its ecological importance and the development pressures of an increasingly urban setting.

This project built upon decades of work by both the Land Trust and Clark County to create a 14-mile greenway along the East Fork to protect a vital watershed. It also offered an incredible opportunity to ensure that future generations of youth will be able to engage with nature in a powerful way, not too far from home!



The Optimist Club's rustic camp is free to youth-serving organizations and welcomes about 700 campers annually. The new conservation easement will facilitate the camp's continued operation and maintain wildlife habitat values.

The camp remains private property, not open to the public, but interested youth organizations may reach out to the Optimist Club of Vancouver to inquire about utilizing the space.

Backyard Habitat Certification Program

Conservation Area: Multnomah, Clackamas, Clark, and Washington Counties

The Backyard Habitat Certification Program, co-managed by Columbia Land Trust and Portland Audubon, operates throughout the urban and suburban parts of four counties in Oregon and Washington. In 2022, more than 1,300 new properties signed up and 320 additional properties were certified, bringing the

participant total to more than 10,000 households and 2,300 acres enrolled in the program.

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. The Backyard Habitat program gets neighbors talking and working together 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.

In 2022, Friends of Tryon Creek (a longtime Backyard Habitat partner) restored a prominent section of Tryon Creek State Natural Area near the Nature Center and established a community demonstration site designed to inspire new program participants and highlight native plants that grow in the forest but can also thrive in many yards! And after a pandemic hiatus, the in-person Open Garden Project returned, with nearly 1,200 people participating in yard visits!

STEWARDSHIP

Atfalati Prairie

Conservation Area: Tualatin River
Washington County, OR

With support from the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District (TSWCD), we demolished a derelict farmhouse and removed its foundation to prepare for future Oregon white oak habitat restoration work in an upland portion of this floodplain site. Atfalati Prairie is also home to a remnant riparian forest along the Tualatin River, where planting and weed control work is planned for 2023 in partnership with TSWCD. Over the long-term, this site will be restored to native habitats, including Willamette Valley wet prairie, Oregon white oak habitat, and expanded riparian forest. In the interim, much of this site is being farmed by a local tenant farmer as a site preparation strategy while planning and fundraising is underway.

Columbia Stock Ranch

Conservation Area: Deer Island
Columbia County, OR

In 2022, we completed a multi-year relocation of endangered Columbian white-tailed deer (CWTD) in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, moving 12 additional deer from the Julia Butler-Hansen Wildlife Refuge to Columbia Stock Ranch in the final year of the effort.

This 500-acre site is being slowly transitioned from open grazing lands to a mix of natural habitat with some grazing. In 2022 we installed roughly a half mile of new fence and removed a half mile of old fencing to keep remaining grazing operations separate from 20 acres of new CWTD restoration areas. This is the final phase of four year project to restore approximately 150 acres of habitat. We are planning to install 35,000 plants and continue habitat restoration to benefit the deer in 2023.

Columbia Stock Ranch recently received Salmon-Safe Certification, which is an independent verification that our management practices protect habitat and water quality.

Backyard Habitat Technician and participant Weina Dinata working in her certified garden.

Cranes' Landing

Conservation Area: Vancouver Lowlands
Clark County, WA

Cranes' Landing also received Salmon-Safe Certification! After previously replacing 4,300 feet of overhead powerlines with underground lines to prevent harmful bird strikes, we are continuing to partner with Clark Public Utilities and plan to bury another 1,700 feet of powerlines to allow the migrating sandhill cranes easier and safer access to the 400 acres we farm as foraging habitat.

We closely monitor how and when cranes utilize this site and use these learnings to make incremental changes in our adaptive management plan and work toward creating the best possible habitat for feeding and loafing. This means that the crops change slightly from year to year. In 2022, spring wheat fields were particularly popular amongst the cranes; we suspect that this was because the wheat was planted in the innermost fields, which affords the cranes protection from predators and disturbance. The wheat was also cut and harvested right before the cranes arrived, leaving behind wheat stubble and freshly turned soil that the cranes were able to pick through and probe for food. We also grew oats, corn, alfalfa, and sunflowers that were particularly popular with songbirds!

Cranes utilize Cranes' Landing roughly between October and April each year, and during the 2021-2022 season we saw the highest number of cranes using the landscape since we began monitoring in 2016. Crane numbers have continued to be very high so far in the 2022-2023 season, with an average of 788 cranes in October, 1,261 in November, and 1,148 in December.

Our stewardship plans for 2023 include continued weed control and native shrub and tree planting, with a focus on in-filling areas that need more vegetation cover, like key berms that shield the crane habitat from the road and where taller vegetation will encourage the birds to fly higher and avoid the outer power lines.

McGahan

Conservation Area: Clackamas River
Clackamas County, OR

Weed control is an ongoing effort at this forested 23-acre site just off the Clackamas River, where the Land Trust has been working with the Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership, a group of local and regional



partners led by the Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District. Through the partnership, land managers throughout the Clackamas River watershed collaborate to identify, control, and prevent the spread of the most damaging weeds in the watershed, as well as restore the habitats impacted by those weeds.

Rainbow Farm

Conservation Area: Tualatin River
Washington County, OR

In 2022, we completed the second phase of planting at this 76-acre riparian site. We installed 10,000 native plants to fill areas that were not planted in 2021 and were lacking in woody vegetation. Among the many native species planted were serviceberry, red-osier

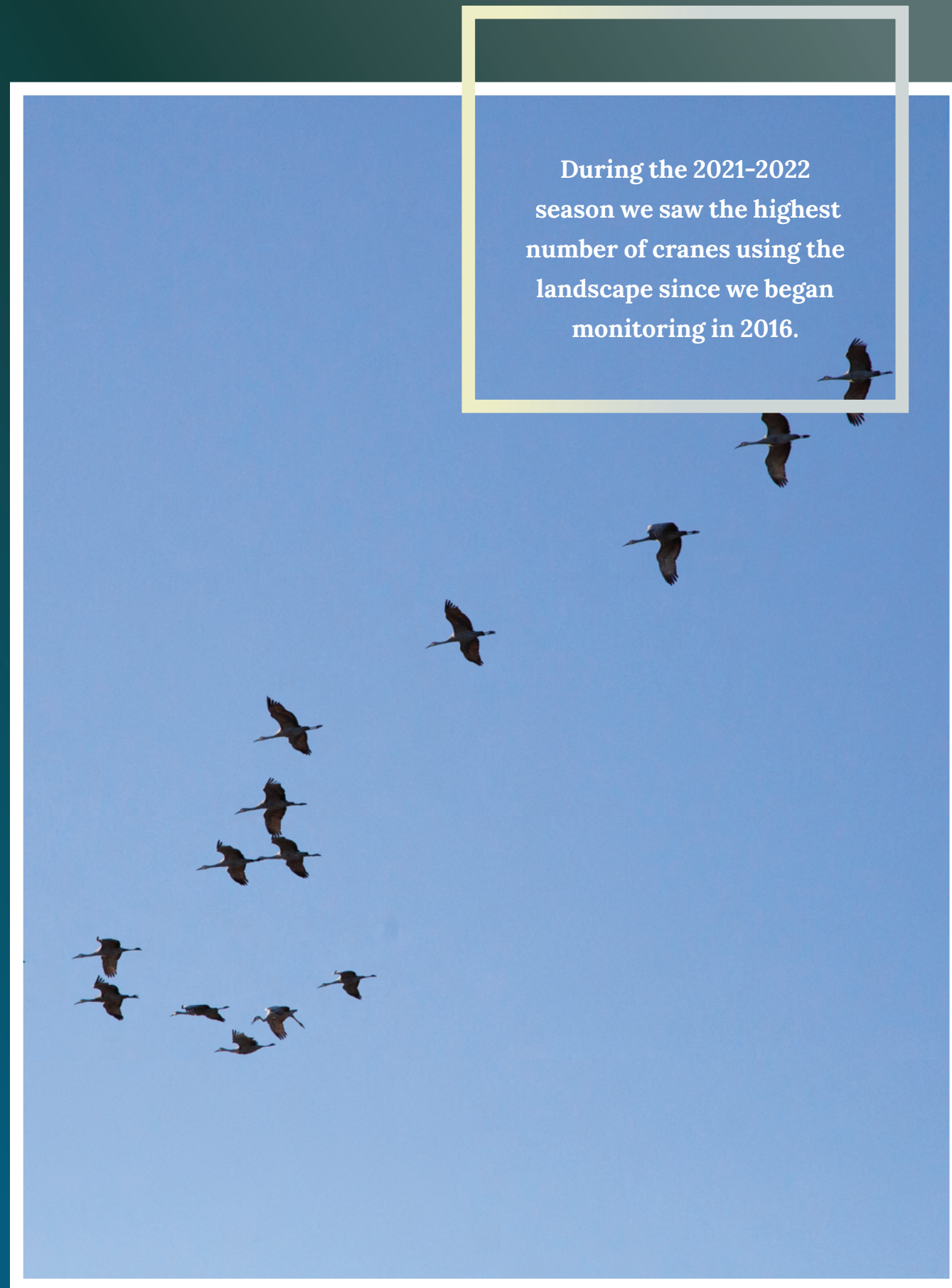
dogwood, and Douglas spirea. This mostly flat site within the Tualatin River floodplain would have historically been a more expansive riparian forest and wet prairie, a landscape type that is difficult to find these days. We are working to improve forest habitat in the remaining strip of riparian forest along the riverbank and hope to eventually restore natural conditions, including a wider band of riparian forest, wet prairie, and oak habitats. After substantial weed removal efforts in prior years, 2023 will bring continued monitoring and weed control to maintain plantings. Staff will be focusing on restoration planning and fundraising this year, and the site will continue to be farmed by a local tenant farmer as a maintenance strategy until bigger restoration efforts can be implemented. Rainbow Farm is also a monitoring site for the Oregon Bee Project, and we will continue to assess which bee species use the site to gain a picture of bee composition here before, during, and after restoration.

Keller Woodlands

Conservation Area: Forest Park
Multnomah County, OR

In June 2022, we concluded a three-year collaborative habitat enhancement project at Keller Woodlands and the adjoining Marquam Nature Park, operated by the City of Portland, and partnered with local workforce development programs to implement some of the project's on-the-ground work. This was mutually beneficial; the Land Trust provided skill-building and environmental education opportunities, while our staff benefited from the opportunity to learn from the diverse perspectives of the work crews. A small but mighty Wisdom Workforce Development crew, a skill-building program for Native American adults, received on-the-job training in vegetation monitoring, including laying out transects, identifying plants, and recording data. After monitoring the vegetation every spring for two years, the crew returned the third year to successfully implement the monitoring on their own. In the spring of 2022, the Land Trust also partnered with the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership to host Central City Concern's Community Volunteer crew, a nonprofit program which helps individuals experiencing homelessness build job skills and self-confidence, for a day of outdoor environmental education and immersion in forest habitat.

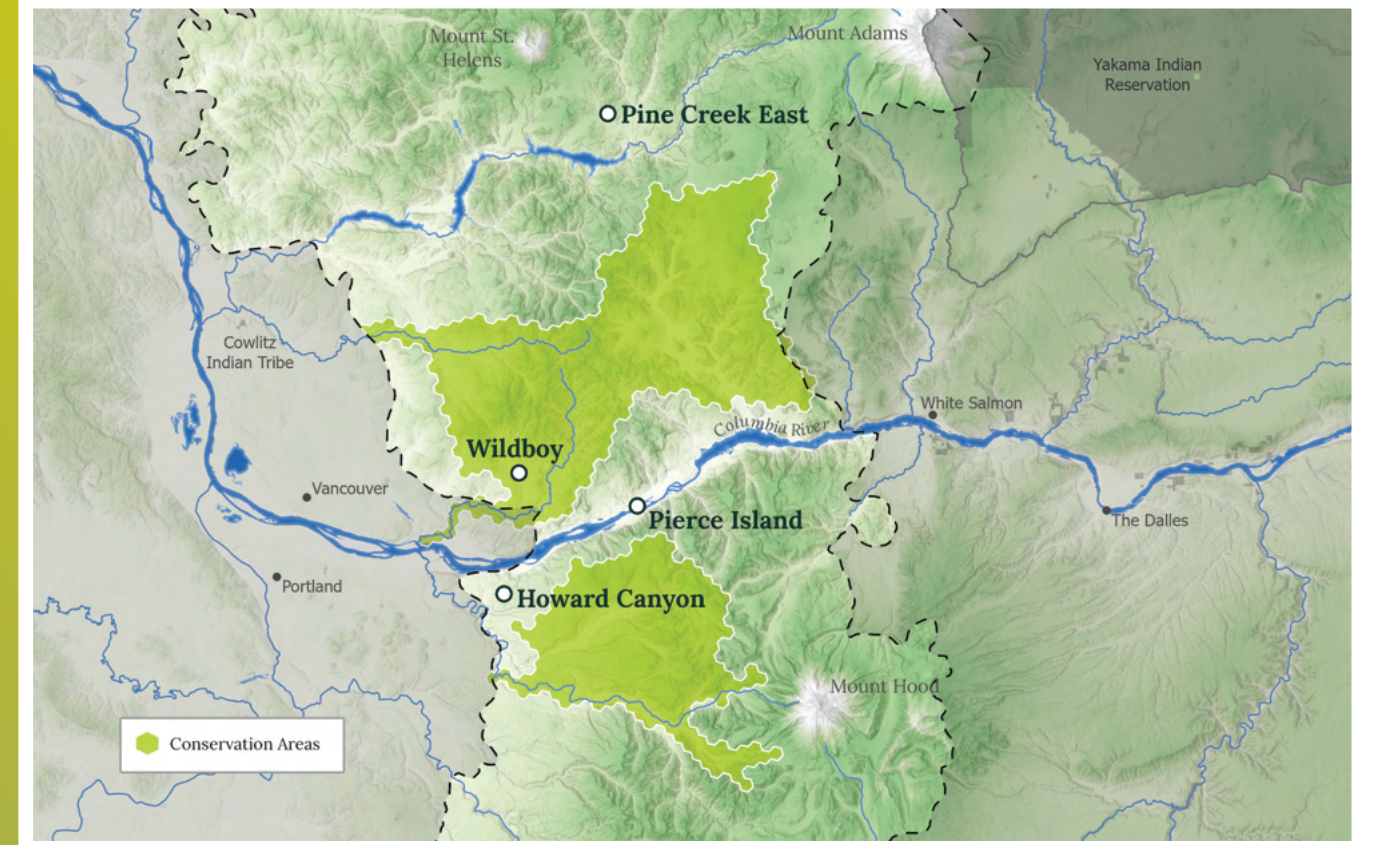
*Above: Rare small-flowered trillium growing at Optimist Club along the Lewis River.
Right: Sandhill cranes in flight during a Wild Splendor tour.*



During the 2021-2022 season we saw the highest number of cranes using the landscape since we began monitoring in 2016.

ECOREGION

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.

Touring a West Cascades site where the Land Trust is using forestry to accelerate habitat development and improve forest conditions.

LAND PROTECTION

820
Acres

Howard Canyon

Conservation Area: N/A
Multnomah County, OR

In 2022, after 20 years of planning and collaboration with the Wiancko family, Columbia Land Trust conserved the 820-acre Nestwood Forest Sanctuary at Ross Mountain. For the Wiancko family, this generous donation lives into a family legacy of conservation. The property was one of the largest remaining pieces of family-owned forestland in Multnomah County, and because it is almost entirely forested, the site provides significant carbon storage. Only 30 minutes from Portland and Vancouver, the location offers exciting potential as a place for local organizations, partners, and members of the public to enjoy the forest while protecting its wildlife habitat and conservation values. The site is now divided into two main sections; a 382-acre conservation easement where the family will continue to live, and the 437-acre Howard Canyon Natural Area, where the Land Trust will develop a public access plan that supports our organizational

equity and community engagement goals. All 820 acres will be managed to encourage old-growth forest characteristics.

Preliminary stewardship work will include initiating weed control and developing a forest prescription to restore priority areas that were most impacted by past land uses.

STEWARDSHIP

Wildboy Creek

Conservation Area: Washougal River
Skamania County, WA

In partnership with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, we began initial construction work to prepare this 1,294-acre site for the removal of the Kwoneesum Dam, which measures 45 feet tall and almost 400 feet wide. Removing the dam will restore access to nearly seven miles of salmonid habitat in the upper West Fork Washougal River watershed. We also installed new gates on a forest access road to protect the site from prohibited motorized use.

Dam removal is currently planned for 2024, and the Tribe is leading the complex permitting and contracting process. Concurrent stewardship projects will include relocating freshwater mussels during construction, as well as strategic forest thinning on the lands surrounding the dam, to expedite older growth forest characteristics and improve habitat.

Pierce Island

Conservation Area: Beacon Rock
Skamania County, WA

The Land Trust partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and local native plant nursery Humble Roots to identify suitable habitat on Pierce Island for the rare plant northern wormwood (*Artemisia campestris* var. *wormskioildii*). This native plant grows only on the Columbia River shoreline and almost all its historic habitat has been destroyed by the construction of dams and development in riparian habitat. In fall 2022, the partners listed above coordinated the planting of 250 northern wormwood



seedlings on Pierce Island, with volunteers from Friends of the Columbia Gorge and boat transportation provided by Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program. Although slightly downstream of the known historic range for this plant species, Pierce Island has protected shoreline habitat that may be able to help this species survive if a population can be established there. We will monitor the success of the plants over the coming years to help us determine next steps.

Pine Creek East

Conservation Area: Mount St. Helens
Skamania County, WA

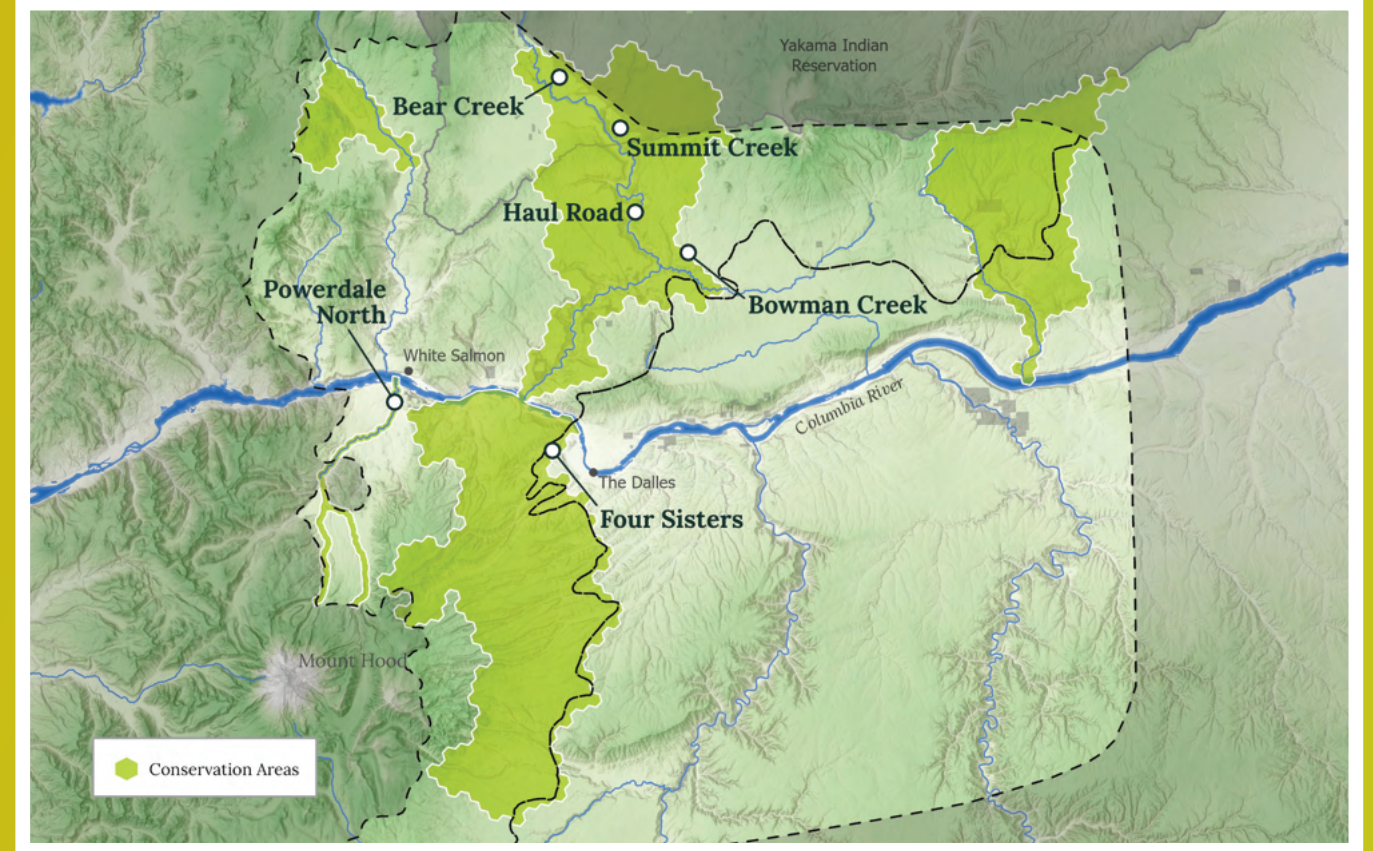
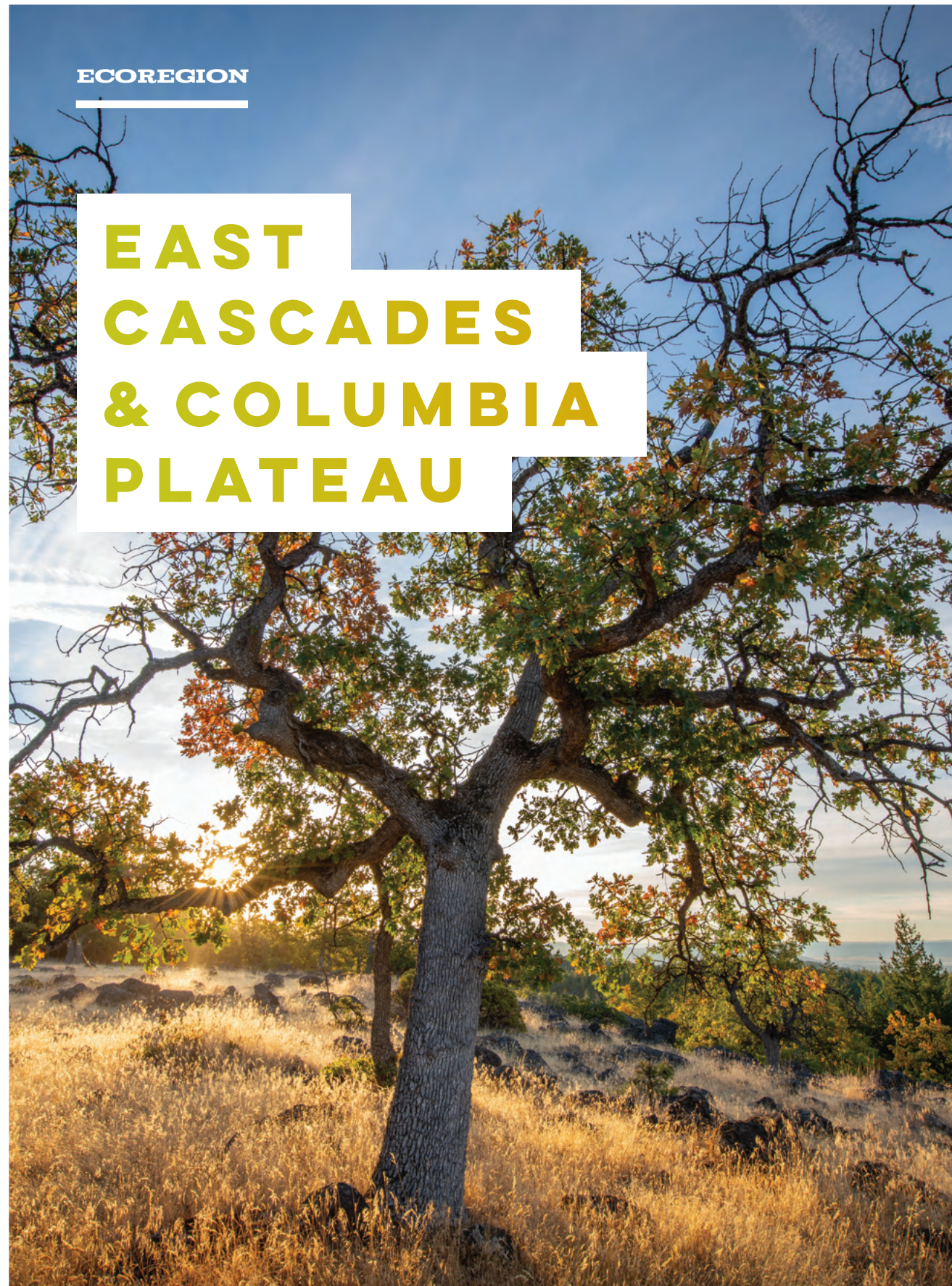
In summer of 2022, we hosted a tour of Pine Creek East for Washington Department of Natural Resources staff and congressional office delegates, highlighting our forestry work and how it supports our long-term conservation and restoration goals while also contributing to the local economy. In 2022, we strategically thinned two timber stands to move this previously industrial-managed forest toward a natural older growth forest structure while also providing key habitat benefits for wildlife, including northern spotted owl and bull trout. This harvest thinned about 28 acres, and revenue from the sale of the timber will be re-invested directly back into the Land Trust's forest stewardship work. The same project also intentionally created an average of two snags (standing dead or dying trees that are important for wildlife habitat) per acre, for a total of more than 50 snags across the site! After the thinning was complete, our team planted about 2,000 Douglas-fir and western hemlock trees that will fill in some of the gaps and create diversity in tree species, age, and size across the forest as they grow.

In 2023, we will monitor these recent plantings and explore potential in-stream restoration plans for Pine Creek, which is a tributary of the Lewis River. Pine Creek is home to important spawning habitat for bull trout, a federally threatened species, in addition to other salmonids that require cold, clean water and complex habitat features like large woody debris and connectivity between spawning grounds, lakes, and river systems to thrive.

Top: Supporters tour Howard Canyon.
Bottom: Kwoneesum Dam (at left) and the warm, stagnant pool it creates.

ECOREGION

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.

An Oregon white oak. By Doug Gorsline.

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.

LAND PROTECTION

.12
Acres

Four Sisters Access

Conservation Area: Chenoweth Creek
Wasco County, OR

This acquisition adjoining our existing Four Sisters Natural Area is now the smallest site ever conserved by Columbia Land Trust, breaking the previous record of .14 acres in 2008! This project ensures better access to the natural area for our stewardship team.

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 and Skamania Counties in Washington;
Hood River and Wasco Counties in Oregon**

Columbia Land Trust is working toward conservation outcomes for 75,000 acres in the eastern Columbia River Gorge in both Oregon and Washington. Thanks to creative collaboration with a national conservation organization and forest industry partners in 2021, the Land Trust has a few years to implement conservation strategies for working forestlands, as well as older forests and Oregon white oak landscapes that are critical to watershed health, wildlife habitat connection, climate resilience, and local recreation. Our goals include preventing conversion to development and protecting sensitive ecosystems and wildlife habitat. In 2022, we worked to secure initial grant funding from a variety of sources and hope to see the first of several properties conserved as part of this large project in 2023.

East Cascades Oak Partnership

Conservation Areas: East Cascades

**Klickitat and Skamania Counties in Washington;
Hood River and Wasco Counties in Oregon**

The East Cascades Oak Partnership, a collaboration of 25 tribes, agencies, and local organizations, as well

as dozens of interested individuals, had a big year in 2022! We successfully secured a \$7.1 million dollar grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to implement high priority strategies in our Oregon white oak conservation plan for the East Cascades. With technical support from the Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program, we completed a draft of a current condition assessment tool that will help users interpret the condition of oak systems and serve as a starting point for management decision making. We built monitoring field kits for partner use and managed a contract crew installing monitoring plots on partner lands where fuels reduction treatments are underway. We also drafted an outreach plan and a framework for delivering better management guidance, helping people become more ecologically thoughtful decision-makers. In addition to these important projects, we also held four quarterly meetings with invited speakers, including Nature of Oaks author Doug Tallamy. We engaged dozens of stakeholders in workshops and tours that focused on core competencies like wildflower and grass identification and utilization of prescribed fire, as well as educational opportunities around wildfire response and fire history. We hired two new staff at the beginning of 2023 and are eager to continue germinating interest in oak conservation!

STEWARDSHIP

Bear Creek

Conservation Area: Klickitat River
Klickitat County, WA

This 3,900-acre natural area links conserved lands on the Yakama Nation Indian Reservation with lands managed by Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources to form an expansive corridor that protects important wildlife habitat and migration routes. The landscape includes deep canyons and talus slopes, in addition to floodplains and rolling hills of pine savanna and oak-pine woodlands. Historically this landscape was shaped by periodic wildfire, but decades of fire suppression and timber harvest have led to an overabundance of young trees and woody shrubs. These thickets of trees and shrubs

East Cascades Oak Partnership participants during a native grass identification workshop.



The East Cascades Oak Partnership engaged dozens of stakeholders in workshops and tours that focused on core competencies like wildflower and grass identification and utilization of prescribed fire, as well as educational opportunities around wildfire response and fire history.





act like fuel ladders that allow surface fires to climb into the crowns of mature trees, increasing risk of high-intensity wildfires that cause increased tree mortality, soil damage, and sediment delivery into salmon-bearing streams. Prescribed burning is one tool that can be used to decrease these threats.

In 2022, stewardship staff worked with the East Cascades Oak Partnership to host a tour of our Bear Creek Natural Area with partners from Washington Department of Natural Resources, Mount Adams Resource Stewards, local forestry contractors, and other members of the public. This group has been exploring cross-boundary management opportunities and visited the site to evaluate its suitability for prescribed burning. In 2023 we will continue to explore site specific burn plans that support our stewardship goals, and plan to train staff to increase our capacity to utilize prescribed fire as a restoration tool.

Looking up the Klickitat watershed. On a clear day this view includes Mt. Adams.

Bowman Creek

Conservation Area: Klickitat River
Klickitat County, WA

Conserved in 2010, Bowman Creek Natural Area is a beautiful stand of oak and pine woodlands that offers high quality habitat to a variety of wildlife. Deer, turkey, cougar, and black bear are known to frequent the property, which also hosts one of the highest concentrations of western gray squirrels in the county. During a site visit in 2022, stewardship staff happened upon a porcupine carcass, which was a rather unexpected wildlife detection. Native to the Klickitat River watershed, porcupines are semi-arboreal rodents known for their spiked quills and an herbivorous diet that includes eating the outer bark of trees. They spend a lot of time in trees and their nocturnal activity patterns can make them hard to detect. We were unable to determine a cause of death, but this encounter



served as a good reminder that porcupines are still present in our ecosystem.

Long term management at Bowman Creek includes ongoing efforts to restore an abandoned field back to an oak and pine woodland and monitoring the western gray squirrel population through community science nest surveys.

Haul Road

Conservation Area: Klickitat River
Klickitat County, WA

A paved, two-lane derelict road formerly ran alongside the Klickitat River, but over the last decade Columbia Land Trust and the Yakama/Klickitat Fisheries Project worked together to remove the road and restore the river system and watershed. In 2022, Columbia Land Trust partnered with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to continue planting work and weed control along the shoreline and restored floodplain.

Powerdale North

Conservation Area: Lower Hood River
Hood River County, OR

In partnership with Hood River Valley Parks & Recreation, and with the help of several volunteers, we extended the Hood River community's beloved 3.8-mile Indian Creek Trail another half-mile onto Land Trust property. This project expanded public access to land that we conserved to provide a buffer of natural habitat between the Hood River and a newly developed residential neighborhood. Offering a few noteworthy viewpoints, the short section of new trail runs along a bluff above the Hood River. Lower down along the river, we completed ongoing weed control and native plant maintenance.

Evidence of beaver along the Klickitat River.



**“Despite the threats nature faces,
I find hope in the resilience of
ecological systems and the holistic
nature of conservation.”**

Dan Roix, Conservation Director

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Our work today will benefit generations to come. We hope you will join us in conserving the nature of the Northwest.



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