



Ground- swell

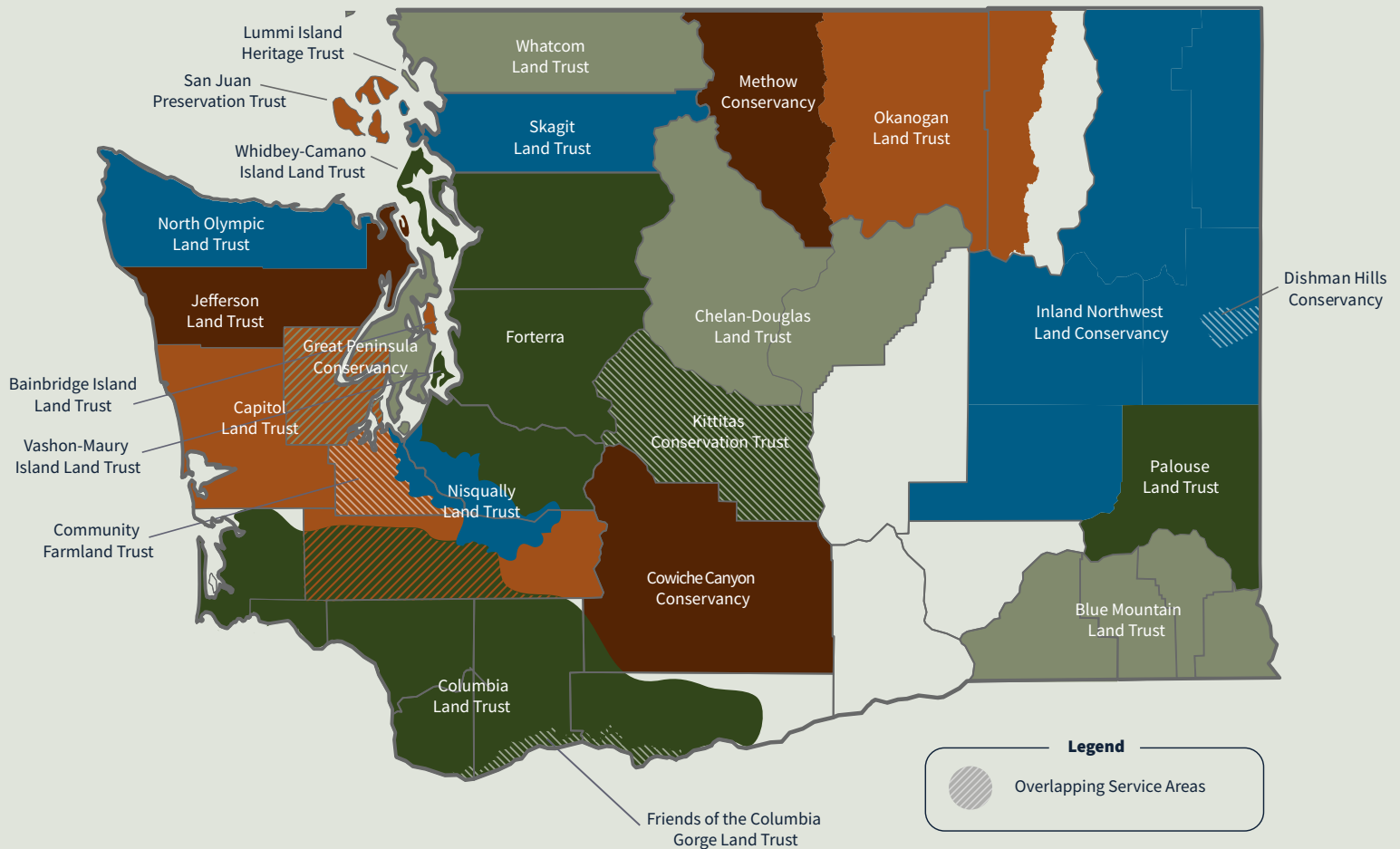
Celebrating Private Land
Conservation in Washington



WASHINGTON
— ASSOCIATION OF —
LAND TRUSTS

2022

WHERE WE ARE



Regional Organizations

Bainbridge Island Land Trust
 Blue Mountain Land Trust
 Capitol Land Trust
 Center for Natural Lands Management
 Chelan-Douglas Land Trust
 Columbia Land Trust
 Community Farmland Trust
 Cowiche Canyon Conservancy
 Dishman Hills Conservancy
 Forterra
 Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
 Great Peninsula Conservancy

Inland Northwest Land Conservancy

Jefferson Land Trust
 Kittitas Conservation Trust
 Lummi Island Heritage Trust
 Methow Conservancy
 Nisqually Land Trust
 North Olympic Land Trust
 Okanogan Land Trust
 Palouse Land Trust
 San Juan Preservation Trust
 Skagit Land Trust
 Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust
 Whatcom Land Trust
 Whidbey Camano Land Trust

Statewide Organizations

American Farmland Trust
 Conservation Fund
 Nature Conservancy of Washington
 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
 Trust for Public Land
 Washington Farmland Trust
 Western Rivers Conservancy

Welcome to Groundswell

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Hey, everyone! My name is Nick Norton, and I have the privilege of working together with over 30 different private land conservation organizations in every corner of our incredible state. Though all our members are a reflection of their local landscapes and communities, we share a common belief in the power of open space to uplift, transform, and empower. Whether it is keeping lands working, protecting clean water, or helping kids get their hands dirty, we make sure Washington's special places keep on giving now and forever.

Every year, I get to hear about all these incredible local successes, and we've always wanted a way to share the special things happening with friends, partners, and everyone who cares about land the way we do. So we're super excited to present this first annual edition of Groundswell, a collection of images and stories to show what we can accomplish when we work together. And boy how the past few years have certainly changed how we work together!

We always love to meet and connect with new people, whether you're from Walla Walla, Spokane, Port Angeles, Olympia, or Vancouver. So no matter where in Washington, reach out and find out what's happening in your "backyard". Be well and happy reading!



NICK NORTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Washington Association of Land Trusts



On the cover: Looking up the Klickitat Canyon towards Mt. Adams on a misty morning. In June of 2020, Columbia Land Trust announced the conservation of 4,900 acres in the Klickitat River Canyon in partnership with SDS Lumber Company. This completed the nearly 11,000-acre Klickitat Canyon Conservation Area, the culmination of 12 years of planning, research, fundraising, and partnership between a culturally diverse group of stakeholders. Photo courtesy of Brian Chambers.



WHO WE ARE

The Washington Association of Land Trusts (WALT) has been the unified hub for Washington's voluntary private land conservation movement since 2007.

Our 33 land trusts have conserved well over a million acres of vital open space, and represent a community of staff, board members, supporters, and volunteers over 60,000 strong.

2021

Photos of the Year

We asked our land trust members to share a photograph that captured a particularly memorable project, moment, or partnership from the past year. Here are some of our favorites!



Justin Wilson, an AmeriCorps member serving with **Forterra**, planting trees in February 2021 at the Patterson Creek Preserve. As part of their Evergreen Carbon Capture Program, Forterra completed 3 acres of forest restoration activities at the site, including invasive plant removal and planting of 1,200 conifers. *Photo courtesy of Nichole Marcotte.*

The **San Juan Preservation Trust** (SJPT) hosted Preschool students creating a hibernaculum at Eureka Preserve. SJPT created partnerships with schools, making several SJPT preserves available as “learning landscapes” that foster the nature-kid connection. Working together with school faculty, the land trust led students on field trips to explore relationships between species in natural systems. *Photo courtesy of Amy Plant.*





The **Chelan-Douglas Land Trust** recently acquired 2,100 acres of high-quality, diverse land near Lake Chelan, creating the Chelan Coulees Reserve. This property bridges the gap between two tracts of publicly owned lands, creating an 8,500-acre block of connected landscape managed for natural resources, climate resiliency and wildlife. *Photo courtesy of Chelan Douglas Land Trust.*

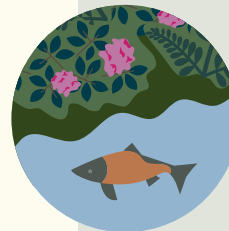


Sarah Skelly, Volunteer Coordinator at **Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust**, collects burn severity data at the organization's Lyle Cherry Orchard Preserve. In July 2021 a wildfire burned 90 acres of the preserve, mostly in rare oak woodland habitat. This data will be used to help inform future restoration efforts. *Photo courtesy of Frances Fischer and Sara Woods.*

Us by the Numbers



33
Organizations



1,000,000+
Acres Protected to Date



425
Miles of Trails Open for Use



854,000
Visits Annually to Publicly Accessible Lands



150,000
People Engaged in Programs

Food &



COLUMBIA LAND TRUST

Trading Forested Places

An innovative pilot program bolsters rural forest economies and furthers conservation of old forests

PARTNERSHIP, POLICY

County lines, state land borders, and other geopolitical boundaries rarely make for the riveting stories. Yet the lines we draw and redraw across the land can determine where we live, how we thrive, and how we care for wildlife and natural resources. It's in these complexities that new opportunities for conservation sometimes arise. Enter Columbia Land Trust (CLT), who is working cooperatively with a geographically and culturally diverse group of stakeholders to address a problem that has long vexed rural timber counties in southern Washington.

Wahkiakum, Pacific, and Skamania counties rely on forestry revenue from state lands managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources to sustain basic public services, support log mills, and provide jobs. Many forestlands that once generated funding for these counties are now encumbered by restrictions on harvests due to Endangered Species Act (ESA) obligations and are no longer able to produce revenue. As a result, these counties

Fiber

Washington state is home to some of the most productive forests and farms in the country, and we'd love to see it stay that way.

rely on legislative funding from the state to pay for essential community services that were once paid for with timber revenue. County commissioners would prefer timber-based revenue instead of the biennial burden of requesting alternative funds.

CLT wanted to find a solution that would both ensure forestry revenues while protecting the old forests, especially for ESA-listed spotted owl and marbled murrelet. That desire for a win-win solution led to a trade proposal: swap encumbered lands for other unencumbered state lands within the counties, essentially ensuring the conservation of older forests while releasing other forestland better-suited for harvest. This trade concept spearheaded by CLT has since grown into a diverse Washington State steering committee. The team has an ambitious legislative strategy that includes a \$28 million budget request as a pilot phase that lays the groundwork for a forever-solution. *Story adapted from a May 10, 2020 article from Columbia Land Trust.*

"These timber-reliant counties have had to ask for financial support every biennium and no one wants that. This group shared a vision that Washington's state-managed forests will benefit communities, economies, and wildlife. With that, we have a creative solution for the legislature."

CHERIE KEARNEY, FOREST CONSERVATION
DIRECTOR, COLUMBIA LAND TRUST

- A) Spruce forest typical of Pacific and Wahkiakum Counties. Photo courtesy of Columbia Land Trust.
- B) Photo courtesy of Okanogan Land Trust.
- C) WFT staff getting together at a colleagues protected farm. Photo courtesy of Kae-Lin Wang.
- D) Photo courtesy of Kodama Farm & Food Forest.



OKANOGAN LAND TRUST

5th Generation Ranch Protected Forever

EASEMENT

In late 2020, after six years of conversations, research, and walking the ground, the

Okanogan Land Trust partnered with the Ellis-Barnes Livestock Co. to conserve nearly 2,700 acres for habitat and ranching forever. Bordered by the iconic Similkameen River to the north, the property has been family owned and operated since 1929. Five generations of the Barnes family have worked the ranch, and three generations are currently living and working there.

The landscape is rich and varied, with eastside shrub-steppe interspersed with aspen and dry mixed conifer forests. Many of these habitat types are considered a high priority by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for their scarcity and importance to native and migratory wildlife. Said Bob Barnes on behalf of Ellis-Barnes Livestock, “we are stewards for a short time, but we believe future generations will benefit from and celebrate land conservation.” *Story adapted from a February 2nd, 2021 article from the Wenatchee World.*



JEFFERSON LAND TRUST

A Small Farm with Big Impact

EASEMENT, RESTORATION

There are few places where you will find a dwarf goat a few feet from salmon, but Kodama Farm & Food Forest is one of them. In 2016, three farmers began leasing the land Kodama sits on. Since 2017, Jefferson Land Trust (JLT) has been working with the North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC) to help them conserve Kodama Farm, now protected earlier this year with a conservation easement. The knowledge that this conservation easement would eventually make it affordable allowed the farmers to purchase the land and add important infrastructure.

“This project may be the best example yet of our important partnership with NOSC. Because of it, Kodama Farm will soon be a place that showcases how conservation, restoration, and productive farmland can work in concert and benefit people and wildlife”, said Sarah Speath, Director of Conservation and Strategic Partnerships at JLT. *Story adapted from a January 25th, 2021 article from Jefferson Land Trust.*



Farm to Farmer Network

In late 2021, the Washington Farmland Trust (WFT) announced the expansion of its Farm to Farmer Program into a statewide Farm to Farmer Network! Started in 2018 to address rising land costs, a lack of succession planning, and systemic land access barriers, Farm to Farmer is an innovative model that offers personalized technical assistance to current and aspiring farmers, helping them find land, expand their incubators, and anything in between. Check it out at www.farmtofarmer.org.

Land & Justice

Across the state, land trusts continue to learn how their time and tools can support Indigenous priorities and address past injustices.



NORTH OLYMPIC LAND TRUST

Down at River's Edge

ACQUISITION, RESTORATION

In spring of 2020, 104-acres of farmland and habitat along the Dungeness River was purchased by the North Olympic Land Trust (NOLT) and the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, as part of a long term project known as River’s Edge.

The Dungeness River flows out of the Olympic mountains, and historically hosted large runs of Chinook salmon, summer chum, bull trout, and steelhead. However, much of the lower stretches of the river were leveed over the years, preventing the river from flowing naturally through the flood-plain. This purchase will allow the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe to move forward with large-scale restoration to set back the levee, re-introduce historical habitat, and place a salmon “deed

of right” on the property which will protect these investments for future generations.

At the same time, NOLT is hard at work to protect the surrounding upland farm ground, the site of the historic Dungeness Creamery, from speculative development and sell to a farmer who can keep its fertile soils in production into the future. Together, this work and partnerships serve as an incredible example of people coming together to balance the needs of Washington’s iconic species while elevating the strong agricultural legacy of the North Olympic Peninsula. *Story adapted from a March 27, 2020 article from North Olympic Land Trust.*

- E) Overhead view of the Dungeness River at River’s Edge as it flows towards the Strait of Juan De Fuca. Photo courtesy of John Gussman.
- F) Spokane tribal elder Pat Moses releases the first of 51 Chinook into the waters of the Little Spokane River. Photo courtesy of Todd Dunfield.
- G) Photo courtesy of San Juan Preservation Trust.



INLAND NORTHWEST LAND CONSERVANCY

Salmon Return to Little Spokane River

PARTNERSHIP

The Little Spokane River in Northeast Washington is ideal salmon habitat because of its shaded banks, and the cool, clear waters that gush from the hillside at Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve and Wildlife Area. However, this 200-acre refuge, collaboratively owned and managed by the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, hadn't hosted a salmon for over 110 years since the Little Falls Dam was constructed.

That all changed in August 2021 with the release of 51 adult Chinook Salmon at the site by Spokane Tribal Fisheries. These waters and their historic fisheries are of deep historical and cultural significance to the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and tribal leaders Monica Tonasket and Pat Moses offered a blessing for both the spirits of the fish and their tribe's ancestors as part of the release. Moving forward, radio trackers attached to the salmon will allow researchers to learn about their movement and behavior to inform future restoration efforts. *Story adapted from an August 11, 2021 article from Inland Northwest Land Conservancy.*



SAN JUAN PRESERVATION TRUST

Record Donation Returns Land to Lummi Nation

ACQUISITION

In the summer of 2020, the San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT) and San Juan County Land Bank announced a 42-acre acquisition on Orcas Island, made possible by a \$5.2 million donation from Malcolm Goodfellow. This is considered the largest cash donation in San Juan County history. Containing rare seaside juniper, brittle prickly-pear cactus, Garry oaks, and the only western fence lizards in San Juan County, 36 acres were added to the existing Turtleback Mountain Preserve. All told, there are now approximately 2,275 contiguous acres of protected lands and a permanent wildlife corridor that reaches all the way across this incredible island.

This area not only possesses unique conservation values, but is also an important part of the ancestral homeland of the Lummi people. As part of the overall transaction, the most culturally important 6 acres of the area, including the iconic Haida Point, was returned to the Lummi Nation to be managed as private property. "The return of our original homeland has deep cultural, historic and spiritual significance to us," said Lummi Nation Chairman Lawrence Solomon. *Story adapted from a July 31st, 2020 article from San Juan Preservation Trust.*



DID YOU KNOW?

Over a 4-year period on just 389 acres, the Mount Adams Community Forest generated over \$600,000 in timber receipts and an estimated \$1.78 million in countywide economic expansion.



H) In 2021, Valley View Forest underwent its first selective timber harvest with help from community members of all ages. Valley View Forest is the gateway to what will eventually become the 918-acre Chimacum Ridge Community Forest, a funded project sponsored by Jefferson Land Trust. Photo courtesy of Tim Lawson.

I) The 3,700-acre Nason Ridge Community Forest, sponsored by Western Rivers Conservancy, would expand recreational opportunities from the adjacent Lake Wenatchee State Park and protect over two miles of Nason Creek (seen here), a vital tributary for salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Photo courtesy of Lee Rentz/Western Rivers Conservancy.

A Victory for Community Forests

In 2021, the Washington legislature provided robust funding for a new program to support acquisition and management of working forests for community benefits.

POLICY

In a state legislative session like no other, 2021 saw the Washington legislature allocate \$16.3 million for the newly created **Community Forests Program** at the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). This program supports the acquisition and development of important working forestlands by cities, counties, Tribes, and nonprofits so they can be managed on behalf of local communities. In centering the needs of local stakeholders, community forests promote active management, restoration, and development that helps to maximize economic, ecological, and social benefits.

Advancing the profile and development of community forests has long been a priority for WALT in collaboration with a number of other partners, including the Northwest Community Forest Coalition and the Washington Environmental Council. This was the culmination of many years of effort: working to understand the demand for community forests across Washington's diverse geographies, demonstrating the economic benefits of innovative forestry at smaller scales, and providing technical assistance to communities wanting to make a community forest of their own.

This funding will support 6 different community forests across the state, from the temperate rainforests of the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas

to the drier pine forests of the eastern Cascades. Collectively, these projects cover over 7,500 acres and will leverage over \$7.5 million in local and federal funds to make these dreams a reality.

Whether opening up unparalleled public access and recreational opportunities, promoting late season flows for important watersheds, cultivating the next generation of foresters, or providing locally sourced wood to talented artisans, these projects demonstrate what is possible when people come together to envision a shared future for Washington's working forestlands.



“Community forests such as ours diversify local economies. Local management and control helps create fire resilient communities, and provides for public access to our outdoor resources and education. Community forests do not just preserve land, but preserve a way of life. A quality of life for communities in Central and Eastern Washington.”

MITCH LONG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE KITTITAS CONSERVATION TRUST,
SPEAKING ABOUT THE PLANNED CLE
ELUM RIDGE COMMUNITY FOREST

Where the Land Meets the Sea

J) Families walk the Eelgrass beds at the Samish Island Conservation Area at low tide. Photo Courtesy of Skagit Land Trust

Whether estuaries, salt marshes, or tidal flats, the dynamic connections between land and sea define life in Washington's Puget Sound.

SKAGIT LAND TRUST

Going Back to the Future at Samish Island

ACQUISITION, RESTORATION

Just before you drive onto Samish Island in Washington's Puget Sound, you pass over a narrow neck of land connecting the forested island to a broad expanse of low agricultural land known as Samish Flats. This strip of land separates Padilla Bay to the south from Samish Bay to the north. Not only is this a beloved "coming home" view-shed for the local community, but is the former site of a large Samish village of tremendous cultural significance to the Samish Indian Nation. In addition, the area has increasingly rare ecological qualities, including freshwater emergent



Great Peninsula Conservancy's new Misery Point Preserve on Hood Canal protects over 20 acres that house a saltwater lagoon and feeder bluffs up to 85 feet tall! The property is accessible by hand-powered boat, and boasts excellent bird watching and views of the Olympics. *Photo courtesy of Anthony Gibbons.*



Hikers walk to the end of John's Creek Estuary Trail at **Capitol Land Trust's** Bayshore Preserve to catch a glimpse of the fall chum salmon run. Every November, the land trust organizes volunteer salmon docents to answer questions; this year, they partnered with the Puget Sound Estuarium to get underwater cameras that live-streamed the action! *Photo courtesy of Leslie Coulter.*



wetlands, a large gravel beach and tidelands, and complex mature forest over 130 years old.

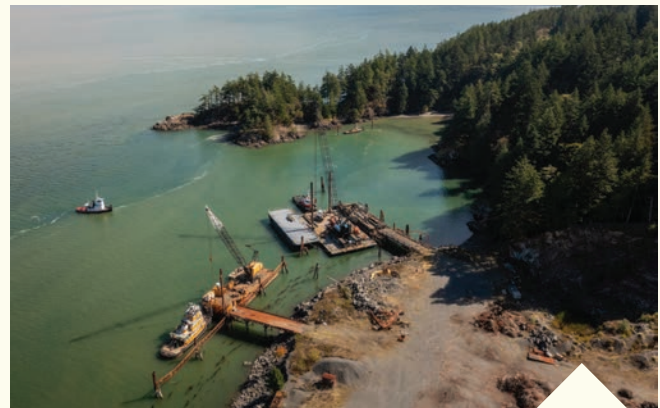
Over the last four years, culminating in the purchase of 50 acres in the spring of 2021, Skagit Land Trust has been hard at work here, creating the Samish Island Conservation Area. These efforts have set the stage for an incredible long-term conservation effort.

Acquiring the property has kicked off an exploration of restoration opportunities with the local community. Prior to human intervention, the current channeled slough was a complex and dynamic salt

marsh environment that once connected two bays, only a tiny ribbon of which remains. Returning part of the conservation area back to this rare ecosystem would create a nursery for fish, protect adjacent lands from storms and rising seas, trap gases like carbon and nitrogen, and even allow for needed road improvements. In the meantime, the area provides an important public access point to Padilla Bay and will be used as a “conservation classroom,” where local youth can learn about nearshore habitats and help with restoration and stewardship activities.



Last year, the **Whidbey Camano Land Trust** expanded its Elger Bay Estuary Preserve, which is one of the few remaining pocket estuaries in Island County. Places like Elger Bay are vitally important for young, wild Chinook Salmon when they leave their natal river and enter the larger Puget Sound early in the year. *Photo courtesy of Washington Department of Ecology.*



A derelict dock, pier, and creosote pilings were removed in the first step of **Lummi Island Heritage Trust's** Aiston Preserve Restoration project. The structures were a source of overwater shading and creosote pollution, so now critical eelgrass and kelp beds can start to make a comeback. The next step of the project will remove the shoreline armoring to increase the amount and quality of nearshore habitat for juvenile salmon and marine birds. *Photo courtesy of Edmund Lowe Photography.*



Out & About

Whether laying trail, getting your feet wet, or just watching the clouds go by, land trusts have something for everyone.



K) A massive bloom of spring wildflowers on the slopes of Cashmere Canyons Preserve, a new publicly accessible natural area in Chelan County. Photo courtesy of Dave Erickson.

L) Blues Crews, Umatilla National Forest employees, and Whitman College Outdoor Program participants work together to move a large log at the North Fork. Photo courtesy of Blue Mountain Land Trust.

M) Students assessed whether the shoreline was habitable for Olympia oysters with GPC's Land Labs team and staff from Puget Sound Restoration Fund. Photo courtesy of Great Peninsula Conservancy.

BLUE MOUNTAIN LAND TRUST

Backcountry in the Blues

STEWARDSHIP

For years, the Blue Mountain Land Trust (BLMT) has coordinated the Blues Crews, a group of volunteers dedicated to improving trails in the John Day Ranger District. However, 2021 brought a new opportunity to forge connections for the next generation of land stewards.

Together, leaders of the Blues Crews, Whitman College's Outdoor Program, and employees from the U.S. Forest Service teamed up to improve 4.5 miles of a beautiful trail system on the North Fork of the John Day River in need of extensive work. The collaborative five-day effort involved bucking logs, brushwork, tread reconstruction, and some exciting river crossings! For many of the students, this was their first wilderness experience.

"Trail work is not only transformative, but serves the greater good. There is great energy that comes from working together towards a common goal," said Linda Herbert, BMLT president and Blues Crews volunteer. "One student asked if it would be possible to arrange a similar trail work party with his fraternity brothers. It always feels good to me when people come away from their first trail experience and are eager to go again." *Story adapted from Blue Mountain Land Trust's Summer 2021 edition of "Blue".*

“Our hope is that 100 years from now, when the population of the valley has doubled or tripled, there will still be places where one can see deer and bear, cougars and coyotes, rattlesnakes and raptors, and on lucky days walk in total solitude surrounded by a sea of wildflowers; where people can be neither above nor separate from nature, but in its midst. If that’s still possible, it won’t be by accident nor the result of ‘business as usual.’ It will happen, or not, because of the conscious choices and investments made by the people and institutions of the Wenatchee Valley today.”

LANDOWNER JABE BLUMENTHAL, SPEAKING ABOUT THE CASHMERE CANYON PRESERVE

CHELAN DOUGLAS LAND TRUST

Connecting People and Wildlife in Cashmere Canyon

EASEMENT

In May of 2021, the Chelan Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) and Hay Canyon Ranch LLC opened the 2,100-acre Cashmere Canyon Preserve to the public. Moving forward, CDLT will hold an easement on the property and manage the 12 miles of trails with jaw-dropping, 360-degree views, and a diverse mosaic of grassland, woodland, and riparian habitat that make this a highly resilient landscape in the face of climate change. *Story adapted from May 19th, 2021 article from Chelan-Douglas Land Trust.*

One for the Future...

In 2018, **Whatcom Land Trust** bought over 52 acres at the mouth of California Creek. In addition to salmon habitat restoration, they made a plan for the California Creek Estuary Park (opening in 2023). Complete with a kayak launch and hiking/biking trails, this will be a key link in an ambitious regional trail initiative to connect Birch Bay State Park with the Peace Arch State Park at the Canadian border! *Illustration courtesy of Kenna Patrick with Natural Systems Design.*



GREAT PENINSULA CONSERVANCY

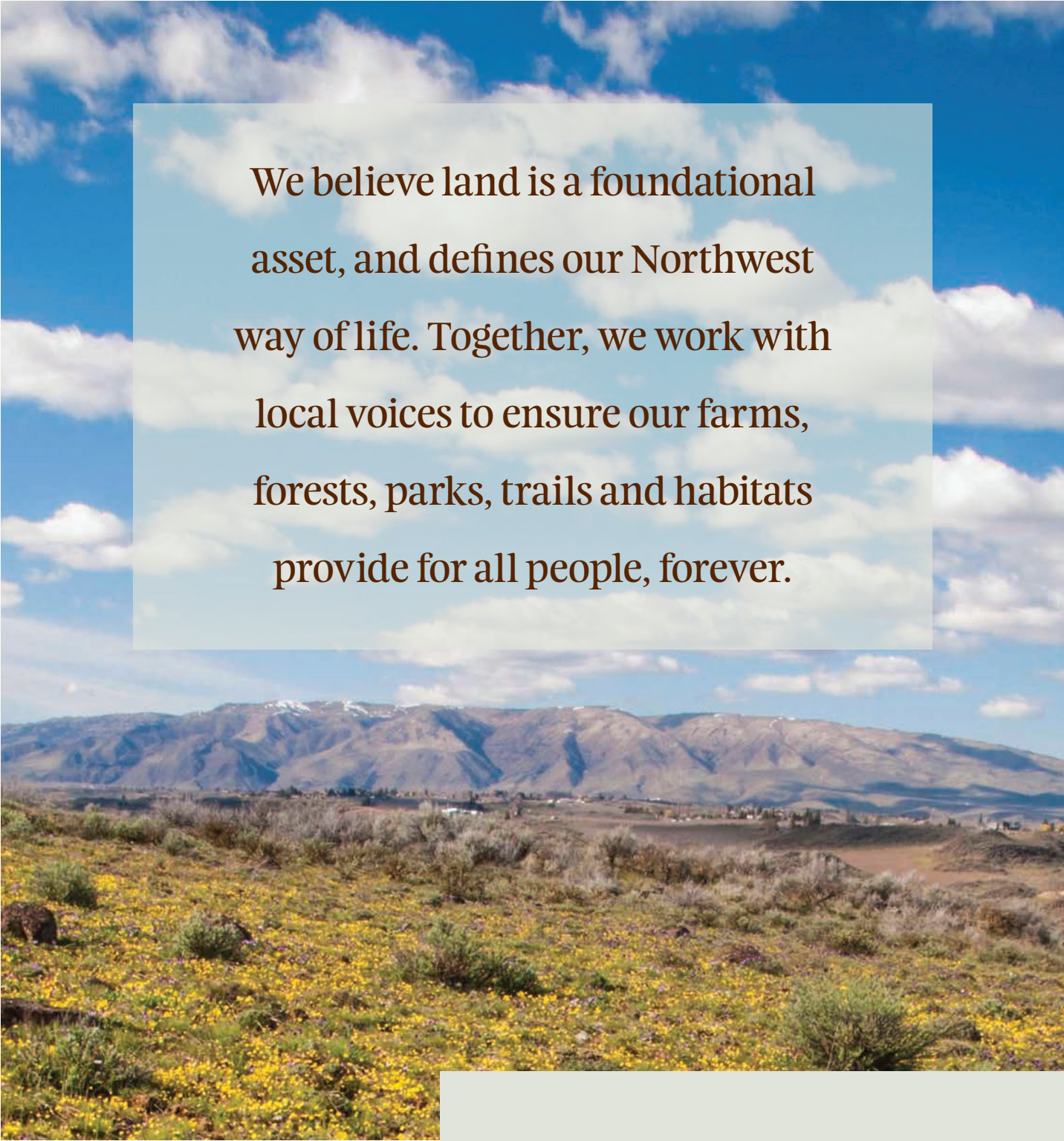
Land Labs for the Next Generation

EDUCATION

Land trusts frequently create educational opportunities for youth, but the Great Peninsula Conservancy has gone all in with the launch of their new Land Labs Program. Driven by the belief that all students deserve the opportunity to develop relationships with the natural world, GPC is focusing on elevating their preserves best suited for public access into community learning hubs, called “Land Labs”. The program includes a variety of formal volunteer opportunities for youth of all ages, including oyster restoration, bioacoustic monitoring, trail building, and more.

On top of this, GPC is building an extensive curriculum library to drive cross-cutting engagement in STEM fields while meeting the requirements of Washington State Science and Learning Standards. This gives local middle school teachers the chance to support experiential place-based education, and students the chance to explore their identities as land stewards, community scientists, and outdoor recreationists.





We believe land is a foundational asset, and defines our Northwest way of life. Together, we work with local voices to ensure our farms, forests, parks, trails and habitats provide for all people, forever.

In 2020, the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy purchased 245 acres of privately owned land in the heart of the Cowiche Canyon Uplands. This land hosts rare plant species, offers 360-degree views of the Yakima Valley, and miles of hiking and biking trails that meander through sagebrush, grasslands, and flowering lithosol seen here in spring bloom. Photo courtesy of David Hagen.



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