

CAPITOL LAND TRUST

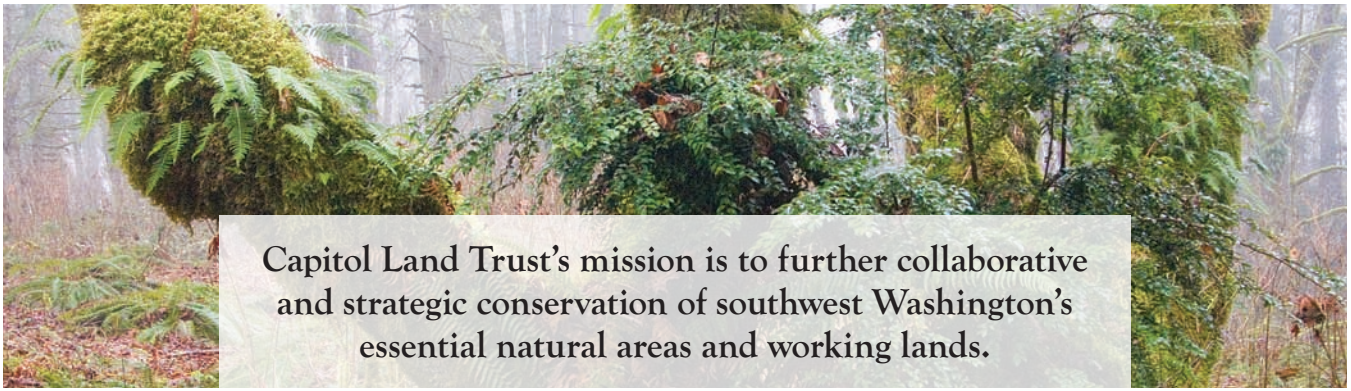
CONSERVATION STRATEGIES



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategic plan was developed with the help of many people who care about the natural world and the working landscapes that connect our communities. We would like to thank the many members of Capitol Land Trust's board of directors, past and present who provided vision, advice and knowledge of southwest Washington's special places. The Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program provided Capitol Land Trust with professional guidance about the important species and habitats of the area. The Nature Conservancy's eco-regional assessment process contributed to the development of the Trust's site selection criteria. We also want to thank those landowners who lent their understanding of the value of our working landscapes and helped shape the goals for the most recent iteration of this plan.





CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

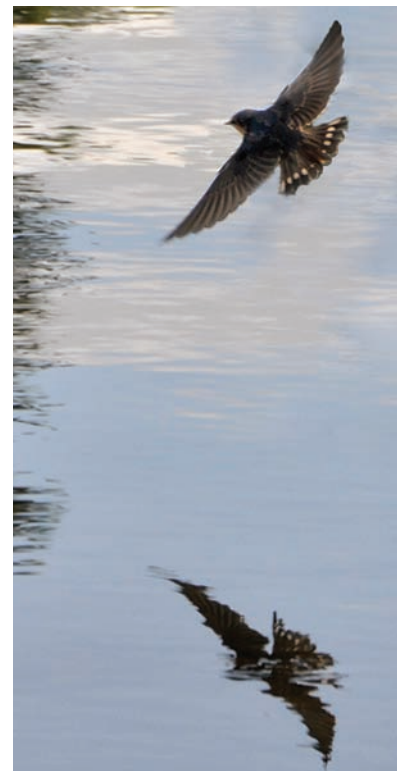
VISION FOR THE FUTURE — By working collaboratively to conserve essential natural areas and working lands, Capitol Land Trust seeks to maintain the coexistence of people, animals and the natural habitats that sustain us all. We live in one of the fastest growing regions of the United States and changes to the landscape are rapidly taking place that will affect our quality of life forever. The window of opportunity is closing. Our work demands a sense of urgency.

Through our conservation work we will help to ensure that southwest Washington is a place with clean water to drink and clean air to breathe; a place with healthy populations of native fish and wildlife; a place where the economy is sustainable and stronger because people want to live and work here; a place where the natural environment inspires curiosity and hope for the people who live here; a place where a diverse coalition of stakeholders work together on issues — avoiding approaches that divide communities; a place that retains its unique character; and a place where thriving urban areas and a healthy rural landscape exist side by side.

Capitol Land Trust is guided by four strategic priorities:

- Conserve marine shorelines and estuaries
- Conserve wetlands, riparian areas, and associated upland forests
- Conserve prairies and oak woodlands
- Conserve working lands

This plan is also a commitment to the long-term stewardship of all conserved lands. Landowners are often more willing to permanently conserve their property when they know that a local, non-governmental partner will help ensure that land uses and habitat values are maintained according to their wishes. Land trusts provide an important value to the communities they serve.



CAPITOL LAND TRUST VALUES — While recognizing and respecting differences that exist, we identify common ground and shared goals, leverage limited funding, emphasize non-regulatory techniques and build partnerships that accomplish these goals. Our work adheres to the highest ethical standards and we will continually strive to improve professionalism, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

We will maximize financial and staff resources by prioritizing projects that:

- are consistent with our mission and conservation goals;
- Capitol Land Trust is the most appropriate organization to lead;
- conserve or restore biological diversity and functioning ecological systems;
- are contiguous with, or in proximity to, already conserved lands;
- are of adequate size to provide habitat and connectivity benefits;
- have higher consideration for conserving intact habitat;
- face imminent threat;
- are identified in one or more conservation or recovery plans;
- are supported by a coalition of stakeholders and partners; and,
- allow us to provide stewardship and legal defense in perpetuity, when we are able and willing, or in limited cases, when a suitable agency or organization has been identified to accept long-term management responsibility.



HABITAT CONSERVATION GOALS

CONSERVE MARINE SHORELINES AND ESTUARIES

— Puget Sound’s estuaries are transition zones where freshwater rivers and streams mix with salt water. Tens of thousands of birds, mammals, fish, and other wildlife rely on estuarine habitats to live, feed, and reproduce. Acre for acre, estuaries are among the most biologically productive ecosystems on Earth. Estuaries filter pollutants and improve water quality. The entire estuarine environment serves as major resting and feeding grounds for thousands of ducks, geese and shorebirds.

Capitol Land Trust is recognized for its leadership of marine and estuarine conservation efforts. In Gull Harbor, one of the southern Puget Sound region’s most spectacular estuaries, conservation agreements have conserved two miles of shoreline and surrounding farmland. Along the eastern shoreline of Henderson Inlet, Capitol Land Trust has conserved three miles of estuarine and upland habitat. In lower Eld Inlet, Capitol Land Trust received the first salmon recovery funding ever awarded for conservation of Puget Sound habitat. In Oakland Bay, acquisition of the Malaney Creek estuary will provide the people of Mason County with a recreational and educational destination unlike any other.



CONSERVE WETLANDS, RIPARIAN AREAS, AND ASSOCIATED UPLAND FORESTS

Wetlands provide habitat for hundreds of species of waterfowl and many other migratory and resident birds, as well as for fish, mammals and insects. Wetlands provide us with clean drinking water by filtering pollutants and refilling aquifers. They reduce the impacts of flooding and erosion by slowing and absorbing storm-water runoff. In addition, wetlands can remove and store greenhouse gases from the Earth's atmosphere, helping to offset global warming.

Riparian areas form strips of land that border creeks, rivers or other bodies of water such as Puget Sound. A healthy, functioning riparian area and associated uplands dramatically increase benefits such as fish and wildlife habitat, erosion control and water quality. Upland forests are essential for ensuring the health of the entire watershed downstream. Forested areas stabilize hillsides, filter sediment and pollution, control flooding, maintain water quality and temperature, and provide habitat and food for many important birds, fish and mammals.



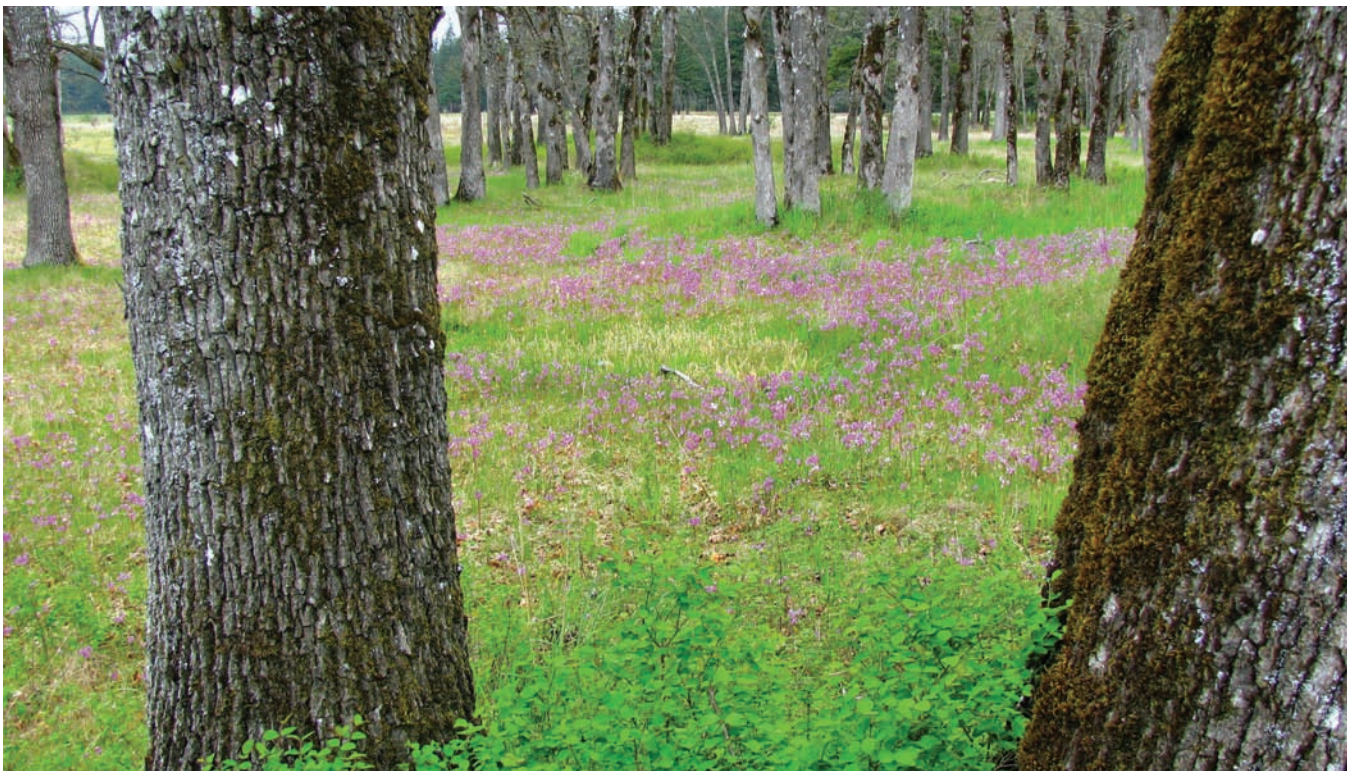
Capitol Land Trust has conserved thousands of acres of wetland, riparian and forested areas in a region spanning from Puget Sound to the Pacific Ocean. Along the Wishkah River in Grays Harbor County, a conservation agreement conserves a farm, old growth Spruce forest and tidal surge plain. Since a dam was removed on Goldsborough Creek in Mason County, tens of thousands of salmon once again return to spawn in and around forested wetlands conserved by Capitol Land Trust. In the Black River watershed, one of Washington's most unique ecosystems, Capitol Land Trust and seven other agency and nonprofit partners have conserved more than 5,000 acres of riparian, wetland and forested habitat. And in the Green Cove Creek Basin near Olympia, a decade of work resulted in the conservation of a strategic 150-acre wetland and forest complex that provides important wildlife habitat and protects neighbors from flooding.



CONSERVE PRAIRIES AND OAK WOODLANDS —

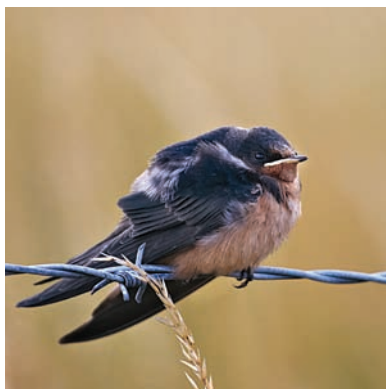
Ten to fifteen thousand years ago retreating glaciers helped form an expanse of prairie and oak savannahs across much of the southern Puget Sound region. Today only two to three percent of southern Puget Sound’s prairies and oak woodlands remain. Prairie plants and flowers sustained Native Americans who occupied the area for centuries before settlers arrived. Home to many unique plant and wildlife species, native prairies are among the most endangered ecological communities in North America.

By facilitating dialogue and cooperation between nonprofit organizations, government agencies and a landowner, Capitol Land Trust helped to conserve the 803-acre West Rocky Prairie property, one of the largest contiguous blocks of prairie habitat remaining in the region.



CONSERVE WORKING LANDS — Southwest Washington’s farms, ranches, timberlands and shellfish beds provide important economic and conservation benefits. Working lands contribute millions of dollars to local economies by producing commodities and providing jobs and a sustained income base while demanding less in services. Working lands also can provide essential habitat for a wide variety of birds, fish and wildlife species. By keeping working lands productive we ensure the sustainability of the region’s rural character, habitat connectivity across the landscape and a critical buffer against suburban sprawl.

A conservation agreement with Tom and Charlene Wynne conserves 355 acres of their beautiful valley on the Mason-Thurston County line. The agreement ensures that the Wynne’s farm will continue to be managed with the same care that has kept it healthy and productive for three generations. Surrounding Gull Harbor on the eastern shores of Budd Inlet, agreements conserve more than two miles of estuarine shoreline while enabling the surrounding uplands to remain in agricultural and timber production. And in the Black River watershed Capitol Land Trust is working to ensure that the watershed’s largest property remains in long-term timber production, providing critical protection for the surrounding river, wetland and prairie landscape.



ENSURE STEWARDSHIP OF CONSERVED LANDS IN PERPETUITY —

Conserving important lands is only the beginning of Capitol Land Trust's responsibilities. As a core aspect of our mission Capitol Land Trust also accepts long-term responsibility for ensuring the maintenance and legal defense of the values for which a property was conserved.

- Ensure Capitol Land Trust is able to fulfill its stewardship obligations in perpetuity by working with landowners and other donors to maintain, expand and responsibly manage a monetary reserve or “stewardship fund.”
- Establish a sustainable volunteer land steward program and coordinate implementation with the Conservation Projects staff and Stewardship Committee.
- Ensure each new transaction has adequate baseline documentation, management plans, monitoring reports, photographs and other records that meet or exceed requirements for Land Trust Accreditation Commission standards.
- Ensure that all previously completed transactions have adequate baseline documentation, management plans, monitoring reports, photographs and other records that meet or exceed Land Trust Accreditation Commission requirements.
- Monitor completed conservation easements to ensure compliance with signed agreements and take prompt action to address violation of easement terms.
- Restore degraded habitats that are most likely to sustain ecosystem functions.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT GOALS

Capitol Land Trust works within the community to foster an environmentally aware and engaged public. Using outreach tools, educational and volunteer opportunities, and collaboration with conservation and community partners, Capitol Land Trust seeks to further collaborative and strategic conservation of southwest Washington's essential natural areas and working lands.

- **Increase awareness of Capitol Land Trust's mission** – Effectively communicating Capitol Land Trust's mission and values will ultimately increase support for conservation. By developing a clear, well-presented message, we seek to engage a broad segment of the community in support of our conservation goals.
- **Increase conservation support through involvement in Capitol Land Trust activities** – By offering a variety of opportunities for direct public engagement, Capitol Land Trust will further increase conservation support at a grass-roots level.
- **Strengthen partnerships and use resources effectively to achieve Capitol Land Trust's mission** – By fostering partnerships and opportunities for collaboration, Capitol Land Trust will most effectively achieve its long-term goals.



DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Strengthen and diversify fundraising efforts.
- Increase internal capacity for land conservation and stewardship.
- Enhance the leadership capacity of the Board of Directors and Advisory Council.



PHOTO CREDITS

Front cover: Looking towards Oakland Bay on Twin Rivers Ranch; Bonnie Liberty

Inside front cover: Black River (taken from the Holm-Rader Farm); Terry Liberty

Page 1: Big leaf maple on Brown Conservation Easement; Ann Rockway

Page 1: Swallow over Oakland Bay (taken on Twin Rivers Ranch); Bonnie Liberty

Page 2: Restoration work at the Green Cove Wetlands Preserve; Caitlin Guthrie

Page 2: Steve Lundin, Peter Reid walking on Lower Eld Inlet Preserve; Kathy Strauss

Page 3: Western grebe; Brad Manchias

Page 3: Looking towards Oakland Bay on Twin Rivers Ranch; Bonnie Liberty

Page 4: Cranberry Creek on Twin Rivers Ranch; Terry Liberty

Page 4: Oyster mushroom on McLane Point; Kay Schultz

Page 4: Great blue heron over Green Cove Wetlands Preserve; Thi Dang

Page 5: Western terrestrial garter snake; Terry Liberty

Page 5: Oregon white oak savannah on Fort Lewis; Joe Rocchio

Page 6: Barn swallow; Thi Dang

Page 6: Tom Wynne on the Wynne Farm conservation easement; Tom Terry

Page 7: Holm-Rader Farm; Bonnie Liberty

Page 8: Mason County conservation award winners Lynda Ring-Erickson, Paul Wing, Patti Case, Mark Golliet at our conservation breakfast; Colleen Easley

Page 8: Stewardship Coordinator Guy Maguire and Ansel Strauss-Reeves planting at the Green Cove Wetlands Preserve; Kathy Strauss

Page 8: Summer gala crowd at Helsing Junction Farm; Terry Liberty

Inside back cover: Harmony Farms (Glover conservation easement); Teresa Gypin

Back cover: Sword fern; Bonnie Liberty

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