Hi, Friends. It’s been quite a year! In many ways, our worlds were turned upside-down by the pandemic. At the same time, our worlds were clarified by insights that appeared as we hunkered down, helped neighbors and sought refuge in the small things.

Barry Lopez—celebrated local author who passed away in December—wrote, “One must live in the middle of contradiction, because if all contradiction were eliminated at once life would collapse.” This rings true for 2020. A pandemic forced us into isolation, but we leaned on each other more than ever. We watched unprecedented fires burn across Oregon, then we saw our members respond and plant a vision for restoration (page 6).

Each year this report celebrates the diverse work of Oregon’s land trusts. This year, in particular, I honor and celebrate the spirit of all 30 of our members. These are organizations made up of passionate people who work hard to protect lands that are vital to wildlife and people.

Like a family, we at COLT rely on one another to be stronger. While it may look different on a Zoom screen, our coalition continues to gather for meetings, trainings and yes—even that time penguins joined us for a happy hour—from our homes in Eugene, Enterprise, Portland, Klamath Falls, Hood River, Port Orford and more.

I’m grateful for what’s possible together and I hope you enjoy this collection of stories from across the State.

Kelley Beamer, Executive Director, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

ON THE COVER: Since 2008, Western Rivers Conservancy has permanently protected 38,000 acres along Oregon’s lower John Day River, including 26 miles of the main-stem and 12 miles of cold-water tributaries that provide critical spawning habitat for summer steelhead. WRC’s efforts include the creation of Cottonwood Canyon State Park in 2013 and the conservation of two ranches at Thirtymile Creek in 2019. Both projects create new public access at the heart of the Wild and Scenic John Day River. Photo is Oregon’s John Day River, photo by Tom and Pat Leeson.
Tribal Ownership Promotes Community Healing

Nonprofit returns cultural site to tribes

FEATURED MEMBER: North Coast Land Conservancy

FOR YEARS NORTH COAST LAND CONSERVANCY HAS BEEN WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP ON AN IDEA—TO RAISE MONEY AND ACQUIRE LAND TO RETURN IT TO THE CLATSOPE-NHEALEM CONFEDERATED TRIBES. BUT THEN KATIE VOELKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NORTH COAST LAND CONSERVANCY, RECOGNIZED THERE WAS ANOTHER PATH. THE LAND TRUST COULD RETURN THEIR OWN LAND—A PLACE THEY ALREADY OWNED AND DIDN’T NEED TO FUNDRAISE TO ACQUIRE. AND SO THEY DID. “IT’S BEEN ONE OF THE MOST MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE— BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY,” VOELKE SAID.

IN MAY OF 2020, THE NORTH COAST LAND CONSERVANCY RETURNED 18.6 ACRES OF LAND ON THE NECANICUM ESTUARY IN SEASIDE TO THE CLATSOPE-NHEALEM CONFEDERATED TRIBES. THIS LAND, ONCE A VILLAGE SITE KNOWN TO NATIVE PEOPLE AS NE-AH-COXIE, IS THE FIRST PROPERTY THE TRIBES HAVE HELD TITLE TO SINCE SETTLERS BEGAN CLAIMING THEIR LANDS IN THE 1800S. IN AN EDITORIAL IN THE ASTORIAN NEWSPAPER, CHARLOTTE BASCH WROTE ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRANSFER. HERE ARE EXCERPTS, SHARED WITH HER PERMISSION:

“THIS TRANSFER MEANS SO MUCH TO SO MANY PEOPLE: THE ONGOING PRESERVATION OF THE NECANICUM WATERSHED AND SEASIDE ESTUARY, THE STRENGTHENING OF COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNER-
Year in Photos

2020

What a year we have been through—a pandemic, an injustice crisis, fires and more. At COLT, we stand for healthy communities, human rights and the safety of everyday acts, like venturing outside—for everyone. And we champion the ways our members stand up for their communities and continue to bring the healing power of nature to people across our state.

We asked our members to share images from the year and many chose to share ones of resilience, creativity and hope.

1 North Coast Land Conservancy’s Amy Hutmacher on a site visit to the proposed Rainforest Reserve project at the coast—a landscape of epic proportions with basalt cliffs rising high above the rugged shoreline below.

2 Friends of the Columbia Gorge’s land trust team successfully gave 23 Western pond turtles a new home during the pandemic. They worked with partners, including the Oregon Zoo, to bring the importance of conservation to the public. In 2020, they hosted three webinars on wildlife—including one on pond turtles, the threats they face, their important role in our rivers and streams, and how people like Kiara McAdams, a seasonal Forest Service employee pictured here, are collaborating across state lines to help them survive and thrive.
Deschutes Land Trust, in the fall of 2020, partnered with the Museum of Warm Springs, Warm Springs Academy, Buff Elementary in Madras, and the Madras United Methodist Church to create more monarch butterfly gardens in Central Oregon. Elementary students, pictured here, picked up milkweed and other native plants to create their own gardens at home. The Land Trust also packed and gave away more than 14,000 milkweed seeds in 2020!

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District reached a milestone moment through their StreamCare program—planting their 500,000th plant! Senior Rural Conservationist Lucas Nipp and others, pictured here, planted at a site along Johnson Creek.

The Nature Conservancy commissioned local Portland artist, Amaranta Colindres, to add outdoor murals to their office during the pandemic. Amaranta brought boarded up windows to life—including a black panther, which came to her in a dream. She added, “It’s also very much a symbol of the movement for Black Lives Matter, which I think is important. I’m definitely in alignment with supporting the movement and doing it with art and showing that people of color have talents, that we have value, and that we are an asset to the community and all we want to do is share our gifts and talents and to be seen for that.”

The Wetlands Conservancy brought nature to living rooms! In November, they showed the award-winning “The Beaver Believers” documentary film followed by a live discussion with Executive Director Katie Ryan and filmmaker Sarah Koenigsberg.

Greenbelt Land Trust, with Heart of the Valley Runners, made their annual “Run for the Hills” event virtual. Participants could walk or run any route in June, reporting their results—proceeds going to the Greenbelt Trails Fund. About 60 people participated, covering 300+ total miles, including Maureen Puettmann and her trail partner, pictured here.
Responding to Community Crisis

Land trusts organize volunteers and raise money for fire relief

FEATURED MEMBERS:
McKenzie River Trust
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy

Steve Wise accepted a new job in Ashland—just as Southern Oregon was engulfed in crisis. The Almeda Fire, driven by a changing climate, warm wind and dry heat, had torn through Bear Creek and the small town of Talent, where he was staying.

Wise, executive director of Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, encountered what he called an ash and debris-strewn moonscape, orange with smoke. With leadership from the staff, board and members, he led the effort to support the community’s recovery and renewal. SOLC redirected fundraising efforts to fire relief and provided land management and restoration resources to area landowners. Also, SOLC’s office host, GEOS Institute, invited two displaced families to live temporarily in the building’s community room, typically used to host events, while SOLC board members helped house fire refugees.

Dozens of wildfires burned across the West in 2020—the worst in our state’s recent history. In Oregon, 1.2 million acres burned. According to the Oregon Department of Forestry, that’s more than 13 times the average number of acres burned on lands they manage, over the last 10 years.

At the same time in early September—about 200 miles away—the Holiday Farm wildfire roared down the McKenzie River Valley, East of Eugene including land owned by the McKenzie River Trust. The Trust immediately began responding to the emergency—checking the safety of staff and supporters. They soon realized there was a gap in the community response system and began to organize volunteers for relief centers where food and clothing were being gathered for those who evacuated or lost their homes.

The Trust had a brand new digital volunteer system and adapted it as a centralized calendar for community volunteers—where over 1,000 people responded and signed up at refugee stations and sites like the Roosevelt Wildfire Relief Site, managed by United Way of Lane County, St. Vincent de Paul, and Lane County Emergency Services. The Trust also launched a major fundraising relief fund to support communities displaced by fire and are now supporting landowners in assessing and beginning to restore land damaged by fire—like impact mapping, erosion prevention and replanting—through the Pure Water Partners community program.

Top photo: McKenzie River Trust volunteers support partners at the US Forest Service in replanting public lands in the wake of the Holiday Farm Fire. Photo by Elizabeth Goward/MRT. Middle photo: Holiday Farm fire photo by US Forest Service, Pacific NW Region. Bottom photo: Photo courtesy of Southern Oregon Land Conservancy.
When Amanda Martino stayed on Canyon Creek Ranch, Peggy brought her a Dutch apple pie. In fact, Peggy Long is known for her baked goods—giving bags of cookies to the restoration crew, too. But that’s not why Martino, conservation director with Blue Mountain Land Trust (BMLT), was out there (although it certainly could be). She was part of the team working on a 6,783-acre conservation project.

In December of 2020, three years in the making, BMLT acquired the Canyon Creek Ranch easement from landowners Peggy and Terry Long—who’d been stewarding, partnering and restoring their property for years to benefit habitat for wildlife, salmon and more. The ranch is a testament to balanced use. The property will continue to be grazed and areas used for crops, while rangeland and riparian areas are managed for ecological outcomes.

This purchase more than doubles BMLT’s protected acreage portfolio to 13,283 acres. This property, which was poised for development, is near the Painted Hills National Monument. “You look at this place and it could have been RV campgrounds or hotels. Right now, it’s like the wild west—with colorful hillsides and canyons and clear creeks. Knowing that it’s now protected and won’t change is really amazing.”

Directly west, hedgehog cactus—with bright pink flowers—dot the landscape at Priday Ranch. As do nesting golden eagles and a meandering creek, considered a steelhead stronghold for the region. Thanks to Deschutes Land Trust, who acquired the vast 4,500-acre property in December of 2020, the landscape will stay that way.

Annan and Marla Priday worked with the Land Trust to conserve Priday Ranch. “We chose to work with the Land Trust because their goals for the land were similar to ours. The main ranch had been part of our family’s ranching operations for more than 100 years and we wanted to keep it intact,” said Annan Priday.

Located north of Madras, Priday Ranch is also important for climate resilience. Diverse natural features and strong connections to surrounding undeveloped lands mean the property will continue to provide habitat value in the future, as plant and animal species will need to move and adapt in a changing climate.

Priday Ranch is within the lands ceded to the United States by the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation in the 1855 Treaty with the Tribes of Middle Oregon, and the Land Trust will look to involve the Tribes in developing management strategies.

“You look at this place and it could have been RV campgrounds or hotels. Right now, it’s like the wild west—with colorful hillsides and canyons and clear creeks. Knowing that it’s now protected and won’t change is really amazing.”

- Amanda Martino

Blue Mountain Land Trust: The Longs worked in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District on restoration. The acquisition was funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Deschutes Land Trust: The land trust thanks the Priday Family, the Pelton Round Butte Mitigation Fund, the Pacific Northwest Resilient Landscapes Initiative, and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for their support in conserving Priday Ranch forever.

Scenic view of the hillsides surrounding Priday Ranch. Photo from Deschutes Land Trust by Jay Mather.
**ACQUISITION**

**Wild Rivers Land Trust**

**Collaborative Conservation**

Wild Rivers Land Trust (WRLT) worked with The Nature Conservancy to acquire a 100-acre property on the Southern coast and a headland that supports a wind-sculpted shrub community with a diverse mix of species such as crowberry, coast silk tassel, Pacific wax myrtle and more. “We are thrilled to have developed a strong partnership with TNC, and we look forward to working on other regional projects in the future,” said Ann Schmierer, executive director of WRLT.

---

**EDUCATION**

**Forest Park Conservancy**

**School Outdoors**

In February 2020, Forest Park Conservancy (FPC) began a Nature Education Outing Program—a collaboration between FPC, Elevate Oregon, and Vive NW, helping develop the next generation of stewards of Forest Park. The program supports science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) curriculum for students at Parkrose Middle School in NE Portland. The program was planned to have three classroom lessons and one nature outing per month in Forest Park (during COVID, those in-person sessions became remote), where students learn about the park’s natural history, flora and fauna, and restoration activities.

---

**PARTNERSHIP**

**Ducks Unlimited**

**Willamette Valley Partnership**

In 2020, Ducks Unlimited (DU) completed their Willamette Valley Partnership Project—where they served as project coordinator with partner groups on a seven-year undertaking to conserve 2,375 acres of wetlands, working lands, and open spaces in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. The partnership garnered and leveraged more than $6.8 Million in state, federal, local, and philanthropic funding for conservation easements, acquisitions, and restorations activities. Government agencies, private organizations, and nonprofits—including COLT members Greenbelt Land Trust and McKenzie River Trust along with DU—were involved. Successful completion of this partnership sparked a continued opportunity for DU to provide technical and financial support for its partners in the Willamette Valley this year.
The Nature Conservancy in Oregon

Preventing Entanglement

As the climate changes, humpback whales—who typically swim farther out at sea—are moving closer to the Oregon shoreline. In response to this, The Nature Conservancy in Oregon has worked proactively to reduce the dangers these whales will face closer to shore. Because crab pots and fishing gear can be a common source of entanglement for humpback whales, the Conservancy helped inform new regulations on recreational and commercial crab fishing that will help ensure these gentle giants remain safe as they pass by.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Chúush Fund

In fall 2020, eight conservation groups partnered with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, MRG Foundation, and Warm Springs Community Action team to help the people of Warm Springs restore their access to and infrastructure for clean water. The communities of Warm Springs are now in the second year of a devastating water emergency and an estimated 60 percent of residents do not have regular, consistent access to clean water. During the month of November 2020 alone, the effort helped raise $112,733 for the Tribes. Friends of the Columbia Gorge is spearheading this partnership and Deschutes Land Trust, Columbia Land Trust, Blue Mountain Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy in Oregon and COLT are all involved.

Chiloquin Green Schoolyard

Chiloquin, a rural community in southern Oregon, is the ancestral land of the Klamath Tribes. When the Native Nutrition and Fitness Project asked the children of Chiloquin to identify places with transformational potential, students pointed to their schoolyard. The Trust for Public Land is working with Chiloquin Visions in Progress, Oregon Health and Outdoors, the Tribal Council, teachers, students, and Chiloquin families to develop and implement the community’s vision for a vibrant, green, and welcoming schoolyard—like this final concept design illustrates. In 2021, they will restore and convert the 8-acre schoolyard into a safe and healthy place to gather, play and learn together.
Craft Inspired by the Journey

By Laura Preston, Owner & Designer of Vacilando Quilting Co.

The beautiful state of Oregon inspired part of my Vacilando’s Pacific Northwest Collection that launched a year ago. I couldn’t think of a better way to repay that inspiration than to ensure that you’re able to continue protecting the natural beauty of the land.

It was my pleasure to donate to COLT and the best way I could think of to give back and help protect the beautiful Pacific Northwest. I’m eager to get back up there to explore more once it’s safe to do so. As much as I love the hill country of Texas, I miss everything that’s so great about Oregon! The landscapes, the natural beauty, the food, the people.

Vacilando is donating 3% of all sales from their Pacific Northwest Collection to area land trusts.

Laura Preston studied art history and painting before embarking on a road trip adventure. Six years of traveling and two Airstream trailers later, she now calls Texas home. Completely self-taught (with the help of the internet), Laura discovered the medium of quilts and textiles on the road. Vacilandoquilting.co

The Blackberry Quilt, inspired by the joy of picking wild blackberries along roadsides and in campgrounds throughout Oregon. Photo by John Ellis.
About Us

At COLT, we build connections and advance policies that help protect our natural world—our water, wildlife and open space—for all people, forever.

This work helps our coalition members do what they do best: protect wildlife and wild places, defend working farms and forests, provide recreation and parks, drive climate solutions and science, champion clean water for all and engage communities to protect our natural world.

Learn more: oregonlandtrusts.org

POLICY NEWS

Great American Outdoors Act Signed Into Law

It was an exciting morning last summer! On August 4, 2020, we watched President Trump’s signing ceremony when the Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law. This fully funds the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (you probably know it as LWCF)—our nation’s longstanding and most important program for protecting our special lands and waters.

Since its inception in 1964, LWCF has been chronically underfunded, but not any longer! This was a huge victory 10 years in the making, for Oregon land trusts and conservation work nationwide. We are so grateful for everyone’s support and especially Oregon’s delegation.

Top photo: Sunrise on The Nature Conservancy’s 231-acre Tom McCall Preserve. Photo by Michael Horodyski. Right photo: Photo courtesy Dale Nibbe/Unsplash
Our Members

STATEWIDE WORK
Center for Natural Lands Management
Ducks Unlimited
Northwest Rangeland Trust
Oregon Agricultural Trust
Pacific Forest Trust
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
The Trust for Public Land
The Wetlands Conservancy
Western Rivers Conservancy

REGIONAL WORK (see map)
Blue Mountain Land Trust
Columbia Land Trust
Deschutes Land Trust
Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Forest Park Conservancy
Greenbelt Land Trust
Klamath Lake Land Trust
Lower Nehalem Community Trust
McKenzie River Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy
Oregon Desert Land Trust
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
Wallowa Land Trust
Wild Rivers Land Trust

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy
Clackamas SWCD
East Multnomah SWCD
Helvetia Community Association
Tualatin SWCD
Yamhill SWCD

STATE OF THE LANDS 2021 is our 2020 annual report and year in review. Published May, 2021