

Working Together for Wetland Recovery

Wetlands Coming Back to Life at Blooms Preserve

A quiet transformation is underway at Blooms Preserve.

Located in the Black River watershed, the southern portion of the preserve was once a flat, reed canary grass-dominated pasture. Past land use left it with low plant diversity and shallow seasonal water that dried up too soon for species like the state endangered Oregon spotted frog to thrive. Today, Blooms Preserve is becoming a mosaic of restored wetland, stream, and forest habitat designed to support a rich array of native species.

To achieve that, Capitol Land Trust (CLT) launched a major restoration effort in 2023. Based on groundwater data, six clover-shaped pond clusters were excavated—each made up of four connected ponds designed to hold water year-round. More than 40,000 native plants and large woody debris were installed around the ponds and in Blooms Ditch to outcompete invasives and build habitat structure.

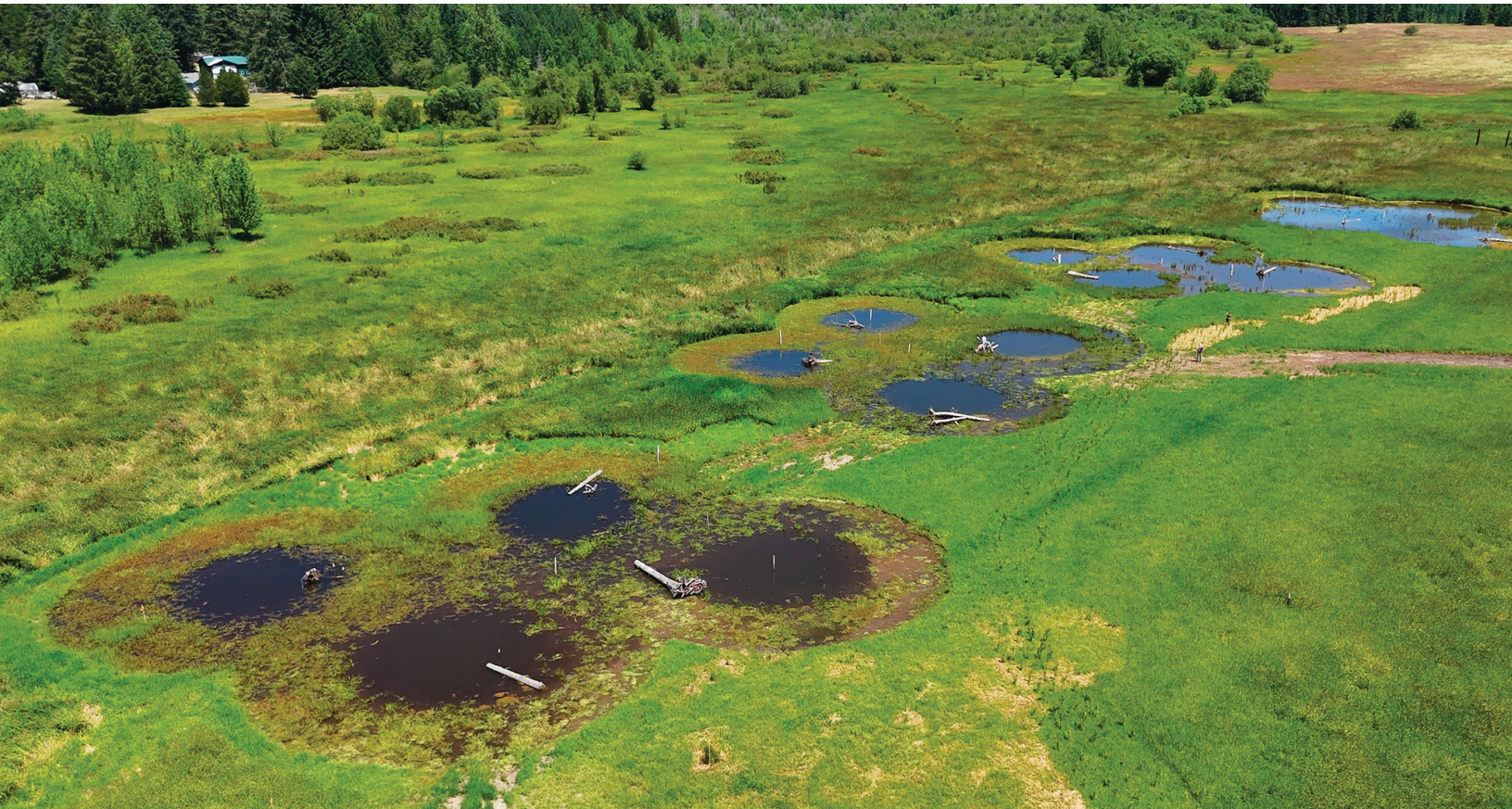
“Drawing on the passion and expertise of agency partners, volunteers, and donors, we’re introducing and enhancing wetland features,” says CLT Conservation Director Alexandra James. “The goal is to support a more resilient wetland where native species like the Oregon spotted frog can thrive again.”



*Signs point
to a wetland
system in
recovery*

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Photo top: Red-legged frogs are among the native species using the new ponds, CLT.
Bottom: New ponds hold water year-round to support diverse species, Mike Melton.





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A Community Effort, A Thriving Habitat in Progress

The transformation at Blooms Preserve is more than ecological—it's a testament to the power of partnership. CLT staff, volunteers, agency partners, and local businesses have worked together to remove invasive bullfrogs, manage reed canary grass, and monitor water and wildlife. It's a shared effort powered by science, stewardship, and community.

Monitoring by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, with support from CLT volunteers, has confirmed Oregon spotted frog eggs and tadpoles near the ponds over the last two spring seasons. While it's still too early gauge long-term population changes, these signs suggest that the habitat is beginning to respond—also supporting species like Olympic mudminnow, coho salmon, northwest salamander, and even black bear.

Beavers also play a role. Their dam-building helps retain water into the dry season. Signs like aquatic insects, bird activity, and growing native vegetation point to a wetland system in recovery.

This work is made possible by the Office of Chehalis Basin and the generosity of CLT's supporters. Together—with public agencies, local contractors, volunteers, and supporters—our community is enhancing Blooms Preserve into a space for wildlife to return, take hold, and thrive.

Wetland Restoration at a Glance

- 6 clover-shaped pond clusters
- 40,000+ native plants installed
- 2 years of endangered Oregon spotted frog eggs at the restoration site
- 300+ invasive bullfrogs removed
- Habitat for coho, Olympic mudminnow, black bear, and more



Healthy Lands, Healthy Communities

CLT preserves do more than protect habitat—they support community health in a variety of inspiring ways.

Local physicians led a wellness walk at Darlin Creek Preserve, bringing health science to the trail. “Spending just two hours a week in nature can lower stress, boost mood, and improve blood pressure,” said Dr. Kim Ha Wadsworth. It was a reminder that time outside is more than just awe-inspiring, it’s healing.

At Inspiring Kids Preserve, guided experiences invited participants to slow down and discover the often-overlooked wonders of the natural world. During a “bug outing” with entomologist Arlo Pelgrin, both kids and adults peeked under logs, inspected dragonfly nymphs, and marveled at spider

webs glowing in the sun. Arlo encouraged everyone to observe before naming—fostering “compassionate curiosity” that moves people’s awareness from a sense of awe to one of stewardship. And families from the Olympia Mountaineers performed upkeep of a restoration plot, proudly identifying familiar plants, building “snail homes,” and deepening their connection to our local landscape through hands-on care.

When people have meaningful access to nature, both communities and ecosystems thrive. It’s transformative moments like these that reinforce what’s at the heart of our mission: connecting people, conserving land.



Photos, opposite page:
Top: Sound Native Plants crew installs native willow and cottonwood trees along Blooms Ditch to increase plant diversity, CLT.

Bottom: CLT Volunteer Doug Ryan gets up close with a chorus frog during a monitoring visit, Tom Terry.

This page, clockwise:
Top left: All smiles after a wellness walk with Conner McCleery and daughter, Dermatologist Katy McCleery, CLT’s Sarah Croston, Dr. Hang Chau, Dr. Tui Laulefue, and Dr. Kim Ha Wadsworth, Stewart Wadsworth.

Top and lower right: Families build their curiosity for nature at a bug outing, CLT.

Lower left: Olympia Mountaineers kids proudly show the snails they discovered while restoring habitat, Dixie Havlak.





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CONNECT WITH LAND CONSERVATION THIS FALL!

Fall Update

Thursday, October 23, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Lacey Community Center, Lacey

Refreshments, time to connect, and a presentation from staff and board.

Salmon Experience

November 8, 9, and 11, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Bayshore Preserve, Shelton

See spawning chum salmon!

Conservation Conversations: Along Oakland Bay

Tuesday, November 18, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

(Online) Zoom

Learn about CLT's land conservation work in the Oakland Bay Watershed.



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