



Conservation Success: last remaining 5 acres of historic Bush Prairie Farm protected

A small but historic and gopher-rich property east of the Olympia airport is now permanently conserved, protecting agricultural land and critical habitat for the Mazama pocket gopher. The 5-acre Bush Prairie Farm, owned by Mark and Kathleen Clark, is preserved with a conservation easement the Clarks granted to Capitol Land Trust.

"We are so grateful to Capitol Land Trust and Natural Resources Conservation Service for their work with us, in achieving the goal of preserving soil for future generations." – Mark and Kathleen Clark.

Today, the Clarks grow vegetables and flowers as a Community Supported Agriculture farm. But, in 1845 it was homesteaded by early pioneers and first black settlers George and Isabella Bush, who established the first permanent settlement in what would become Washington State (New Market, now, Tumwater).

The Clarks are dedicated to keeping the farm in the community. They are excited about the cultural learning opportunities and to provide healthy, local food to our community through their CSA.

The primary purpose of the conservation easement is to protect agricultural land and was completed in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Preserving this working farm protects our cultural heritage, a healthy colony of threatened Mazama pocket gophers and local food production.



Photo by Mark Clark.



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Taking it back to the old school

Kids are back in school, the rains are returning, and the excitement of summer fades into memory. Yet the buzz of budgets, politics, and protests persists. There's so much going on in the world, and it can be intense and draining.

With this newsletter we've pressed the pause button and are taking you back to the 'old school' with some good stories about traditional land conservation.

Sometimes people ask me, "What's a land trust?" Suddenly, the answer — which seems obvious when you're standing on the shorelines of Bayshore Preserve or deep in the forest at Darlin Creek Preserve — is hard to put into words.

It gets even more complicated when I try to explain that we own land and conservation easements. "What's an easement?", inevitably follows.

Our primary function as a land trust is to hold land and conservation easements in a trust so that they will remain in their natural state — or working state, in the case of farms, ranches and forests — forever.

In these pages you will find examples of conservation easements that we hold in trust, from the newly protected Bush Prairie Farm to Circle Hawk Farm, conserved in 2011.

We hope that through these stories you will find new appreciation for the landowners who gave up some of their property rights to put them in our trust.

And, we hope you gain new awareness of how easement lands contribute to



the health and well-being of our whole community and this place we all call home. These lands provide clean air, safe and abundant water, wildlife habitat, local food and support our natural resource economies like forestry.

In times of uncertainty and angst in our great country, take solace in the permanency of these special places and take pride in knowing you've made a positive impact on your community by helping to conserve these lands and all their values for people and nature.

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Visit the "Conserved Lands" page on our website to explore the 38 conservation easements we hold and stay tuned for our 2018 Outdoor Exploration Series that will take us to some of these special places.

Happy fall.



Capitol Land Trust's Executive Director named one of Business Examiner's 2017 40/40 honorees!

Amanda Reed has been named by the **Business Examiner Media Group's 40 Under Forty Program** as one of the outstanding South Sound business and community leaders under the age of 40. Each year's class of 40/40 represents the diversity and excellence of the South Sound. It includes those with great accomplishments who have made significant contributions to their businesses, industries and communities.

An alumni panel reviews the candidates to provide direction in the selection of the 40.

She and 39 other remarkable members of 2017's 40 Under Forty cohort were honored Wednesday, October 11, at Foss Waterway Seaport in Tacoma.

Summer Gala & Auction raised \$114,000

The 30th anniversary Capitol Land Trust Summer Gala & Auction was held on a lovely August evening at Triple Creek Farm, where folks strolled the grounds, enjoyed music by *Quatro*, and nibbled scrumptious hors d'oeuvres by Xinh Dwelley and Taylor Shellfish Farms, with wine from Waterstreet Café. Guests enjoyed a delicious locavore buffet by Little Creek Casino while bidding on premier bottles of wine and live auction items ranging from Mexican get-aways to truffle hunts.

This year's Fund-a-Need program raised \$66,000 to care for our conserved properties for the next generation and beyond.

A grand total of \$114,000 was raised for Capitol Land Trust's conservation, education, and stewardship programs with this event. Thanks to all who donated, attended and bid to achieve a new record in raising funds for land conservation in our community!



Photo opposite page: Amanda Reed. Dave G. Meyer.

Photos this page, top: Guests watching the tide move in. Bruce Livingston. Above: Bidder participates in live auction. Greg Mennagar. Left: Crowd enjoys live auction fun. Greg Mennagar.

Everyone benefits from saving working farms

Visiting a farm to pick out the best pumpkin, watching cows munch their way across grassy fields, seeing rows of vegetables grow lush over summer, and knowing that local farmers can make a living while nourishing local families — all are such important parts of our community. That's why Capitol Land Trust has prioritized working farms as a key element of our conservation efforts.

Capitol Land Trust's vision is for a southwest Washington where people, animals and natural habitats thrive because the community — private citizens, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies — come together to conserve natural places

and resources. Working farms and forests are a part of this landscape.

When Capitol Land Trust pursues the protection of a working farm, we often work with many partners that provide funding and other resources. But, the land trust's most critical partner is the farmer, or rancher who not only wants to continue their farming operations, but also wants to see the land protected forever.

One example of this partnership is with the Plowman family at Black River Farm and Preserve — 721 acres along the Black River between Littlerock and Rochester. In 2012, Capitol Land Trust and the Plowman family finalized a

conservation easement that protects the 510-acre farm portion of the property. We also worked with Thurston County to purchase the other 211 acres that includes wetlands, wildlife habitat and over one mile of Black River shoreline.

Like other farms that Capitol Land Trust has conserved, Black River Farm includes important ecological values along with its value as a productive dairy farm.



“Since the mid-1950s, Thurston County has lost 75 percent of its working agricultural lands, and in the five years from 2002 to 2007 we lost nearly 50 percent of our remaining working farmland.”

Russ Fox,
South of the Sound
Community Farm Land Trust

Black River Farm is still owned by the Plowmans and continues as one of the area's largest dairy farms. The portion owned by Thurston County is preserved as wildlife habitat—forested with deciduous trees and shrubs, including red alder, Oregon ash, maples, willows, and many types of ferns and wild rose. Both properties support a wide variety of wildlife such as elk, deer, black bear, fox, bobcat, coyote, river otter, beaver, muskrat, mink, and many varieties of birds. The Black River also supports runs of coho, chinook and chum salmon.

The Black River Farm project would not have been possible without the help of many partners that worked with Capitol Land Trust and the Plowman family to protect this important property

and maintain the agricultural production that is still significant to our local economy. Along with the Plowman family, our partners were The Nature Conservancy; Thurston County; WA State Recreation & Conservation Office; WA Wildlife & Recreation Coalition; Natural Resources Conservation Service; US Fish & Wildlife Service; The Chehalis Tribe; WA State Departments of Fish & Wildlife, Parks, and Ecology; South of the Sound Community Farm Land Trust; and PCC Farmland Trust.

Photos, opposite page: Grazing cows at Black River Farm and Black River Farm Celebration. Steve Payne.

Photo below: Wynne Tree Farm, a working forest conserved by Capitol Land Trust.



Working Farms & Forests Conserved by Capitol Land Trust

- Wynne Tree Farm
- Holm-Rader Farm
- Parsons Family Farm
- Cushman Property
- Bayfield Resources Property
- Black River Farm
- Circle Hawk Farm
- Gordon Farm
- Triple Creek Farm
- Appleby Property
- Olli Property
- Bush Prairie Farm
- Harmony Farm



CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

An important tool for land protection

Humans have a unique relationship to land: it is at the same time familial, emotional and legal. Some land is passed down from one generation to the next and represents family history and significance beyond its physical attributes. Some landowners bought their land because of the beautiful setting or the richness of its natural features. Landowners who cherish their land often want to ensure it is managed in a way that maintains what they love about it into the future, including after they're gone. One way to ensure the land is used in line with the owner's wishes is through a conservation easement.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and another party — often a land trust — regarding how the land will be used for years to come. This agreement is recorded by the appropriate government entity and becomes part of the permanent legal description of the land.

Capitol Land Trust has partnered with many landowners to develop these agreements, which can be tailored to the desires of the owner while protecting important ecological values — Capitol Land Trust's goal. Conservation easements also can be employed to maintain working farms and forests ensuring they can continue to produce agricultural or forest products, often for local use.

An easement can identify different uses for distinct parts of a property. For example, land surrounding a stream might be left in its natural state, while a field can be used for growing crops, and yet another area for residential use.

With an easement, the landowner continues to own the land while the land trust agrees to ensure that the land is used in accordance to the agreement. This includes making sure future owners comply with the easement and, if necessary, bring legal action to enforce the agreement.

Capitol Land Trust's first conserved property was protected through a conservation easement. While the trust also has purchased land for conservation purposes, protecting land through conservation easements can be cost-effective and lessens the burden of long-term management on the land trust. With 38 easements in our portfolio, this partnership with private landowners has meant that some of our area's most ecologically significant and important working lands are protected forever.





Where restoration, education and farming meet

"When you have water on a site it becomes really dynamic," says Shelly Bentley. And indeed, there is water at Circle Hawk Farm, one of Capitol Land Trust's conservation easement properties. Spurgeon Creek meanders, wraps around the farm, and links to the four-acre pond and wetland area on the property — creating a very diverse landscape that changes dramatically as storms or dry weather affect the amount of water present.

Her enthusiasm for her 14 acres of land makes her a terrific conservation easement partner.

Shelly is a Landscape Architect for the City of Olympia and she also is a third generation land conservator— with an ethic that began with her grandfather. He protected a large swath of river habitat on his 100-acre farm on the Huron River in Ann Arbor, Michigan; then her father also protected a large creek-side buffer to keep his dairy cows from damaging water quality and to provide wildlife

Circle Hawk Farm

habitat in Minnesota. Shelly officially protected *her* farm in 2011, when we completed a conservation easement that allows the property to be used as a farm and educational facility while protecting it from subdivision and development.

Shelly knows that farming and habitat conservation are very compatible; and her farm is a fine example. She has also worked to restore this stretch of Spurgeon Creek on the farm.

"Circle Hawk Farm is a really magical place, quiet and peaceful despite being not too far from town. It came that way. I didn't create that. It possesses that quality that we appreciate when we go to other special places out of doors," said Shelly.

She takes little credit. She points to the many hands and ideas that have been involved in this journey. In 2012 Capitol Land Trust and partners installed a long driveway bridge to replace a pair of failing culverts that were blocking fish passage in Spurgeon Creek. State Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Wild Fish Conservancy, Thurston Conservation District, Thurston County Stream Team, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group and many others have been essential partners.

Shelly wants to see Circle Hawk farm continue its mission as a hands-on educational facility 'Farm & Folks School,' where people learn about habitat restoration, sustainable agriculture and how ecological systems work and can return to see the landscape change over seasons and time.

She sees herself passing the farm to her children and hopes they will stay or find just the right people to appreciate and respect the land in their long-term care. And the conservation easement with Capitol Land Trust will help make that a reality.

Photo opposite page, upper: Barn at Circle Hawk Farm. Lower: Horses grazing at Holm-Rader Farm on the Black River. Bonnie Liberty.

Left: Capitol Land Trust members on the new bridge at Circle Hawk Farm. Jane Chavey. Above: Plantings at Circle Hawk Farm.





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SAVE THE DATE!

Capitol Land Trust's 14th Annual CONSERVATION BREAKFAST

Tuesday, February 6, 2018

7:00 - 8:30 AM

Marcus Pavilion at
Saint Martin's University

Join Capitol Land Trust for a complimentary breakfast and fabulous program featuring the recognition of conservation leaders, landowners, and supporters, who have made saving the special places in your community a high priority.

A donation will be requested during the program—donations support Capitol Land Trust's mission to further collaborative and strategic conservation of southwest Washington's essential natural areas and working lands.

**Would you like to be a Table Captain and help bring 7 friends to the event?
Please contact Alison Beglin, Events Coordinator:**

alison@capitollandtrust.org ♦ 360.943.3012

Photo by Bruce Livingston.

