

Stewart Oxbow Preserve Childhood experiences spark action now!

Rich Stewart was five years old when he first visited his Aunt Barb and Uncle Pete's dairy farm along the Deschutes River in 1946. It was the beginning of countless visits to the farm that would become his second home and shape the person he would become.

Memories of the farm stayed with him: fishing by moonlight for cutthroat trout as the smell of his Uncle Pete's cigar smoke wafted through the air; chasing mice through the milk barn with help from the wire-haired terriers; checking the crawdad traps and swimming in the river after a long day of haying.

Forty years after that first visit, the effects of surrounding population growth were starting to show on the farm. Rich noticed that there were fewer crawfish, fewer nighthawks in the summer evenings, and the meadow larks were disappearing. Uncle Pete lamented that eventually the entire area would be covered by houses.

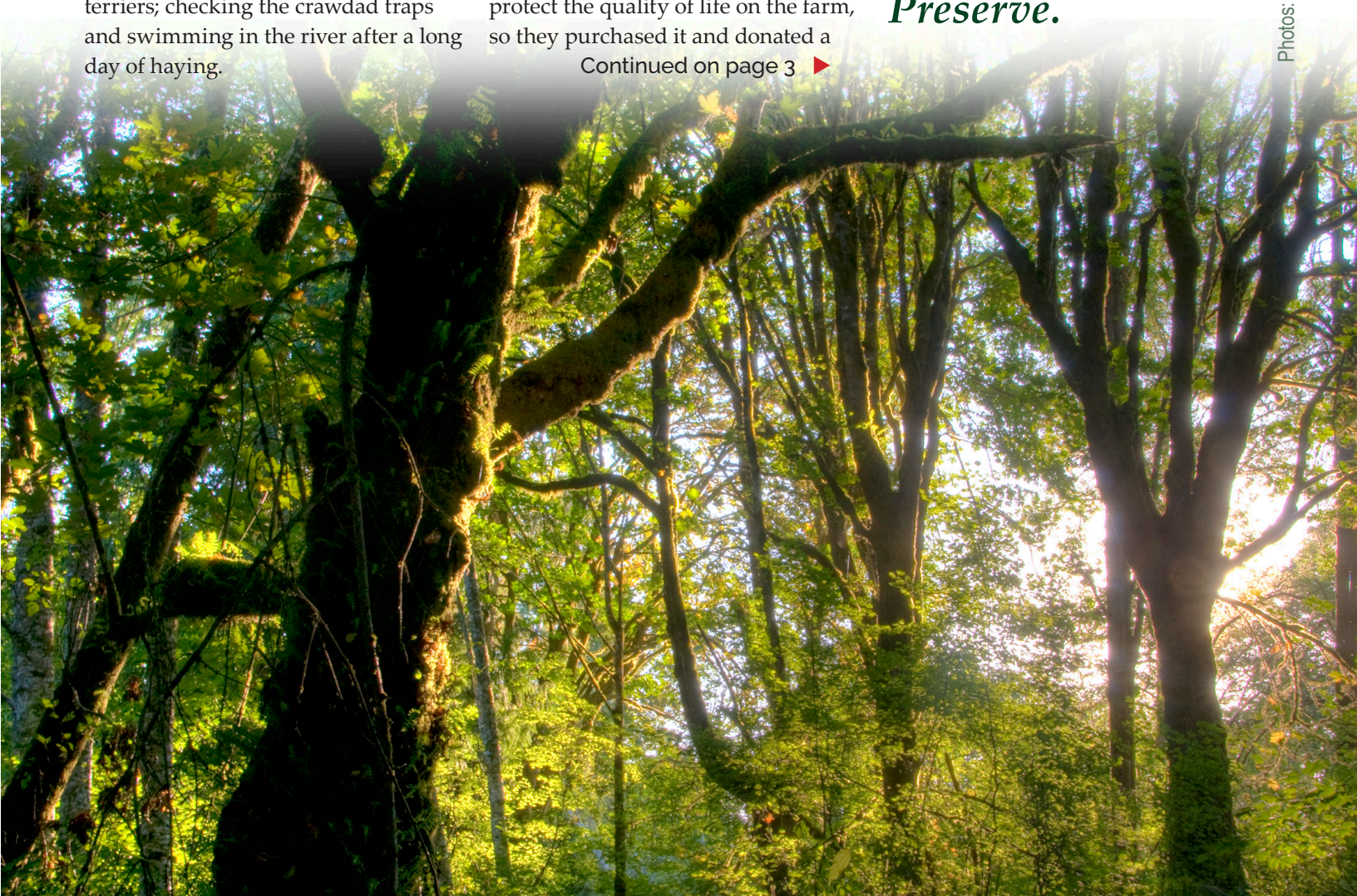
Then 44 acres adjacent to the farm came up for sale. Rich and his wife Sharon saw it as an opportunity to protect the quality of life on the farm, so they purchased it and donated a

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Your contributions, along with Rich & Sharon Stewart and other project partners, helped CLT acquire Stewart Oxbow Preserve.

Photos: Stewart Conservation Easement, Terry Liberty;
Common yellowthroat, Mary Bircham.





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EXCELLENCE RECOGNIZED

Capitol Land Trust (CLT) recently received accreditation renewal from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. To ensure accredited land trusts continue to meet national standards, they must reapply every five years. The process required CLT to provide extensive documentation to the Commission for their review.

"Embracing the rigorous accreditation renewal process is just another example of our ongoing commitment to permanent

land protection," said Dave Winter, CLT Executive Director.

The award recognizes that CLT meets national standards for excellence, upholds public trust, and ensures that conservation efforts are permanent.

Above is the staff with CLT's accreditation certificate, from left: Sierra Jacob, Daron Williams, Mike Leigh, Laurence Reeves, Quita Terrell, Thom Woodruff, Alison Beglin, Mary Birchem, and Dave Winter.

The eyes, ears, and hearts of our public-access preserves

"There are a few reasons why we volunteer as trail stewards at Bayshore Preserve, but it's mainly to do with hope and gratitude. Walking around Bayshore recently with a friend, our conversation turned immediately to those feelings—hope that our wonderful ecosystems can be repaired and respected, and gratitude that there are people who care enough to participate."



Leslie Coulter,
Bayshore Preserve Trail Steward

Being a volunteer Trail Steward is a great way to get outside and keep CLT's four public-access preserves safe and enjoyable for people to connect with the natural world.

Want to get involved? Learn more at
CapitolLandTrust.org/friends

ADOPT A PRESERVE



Help us keep our trails
fun and safe

Stewart Oxbow Preserve

Childhood experiences spark action now!

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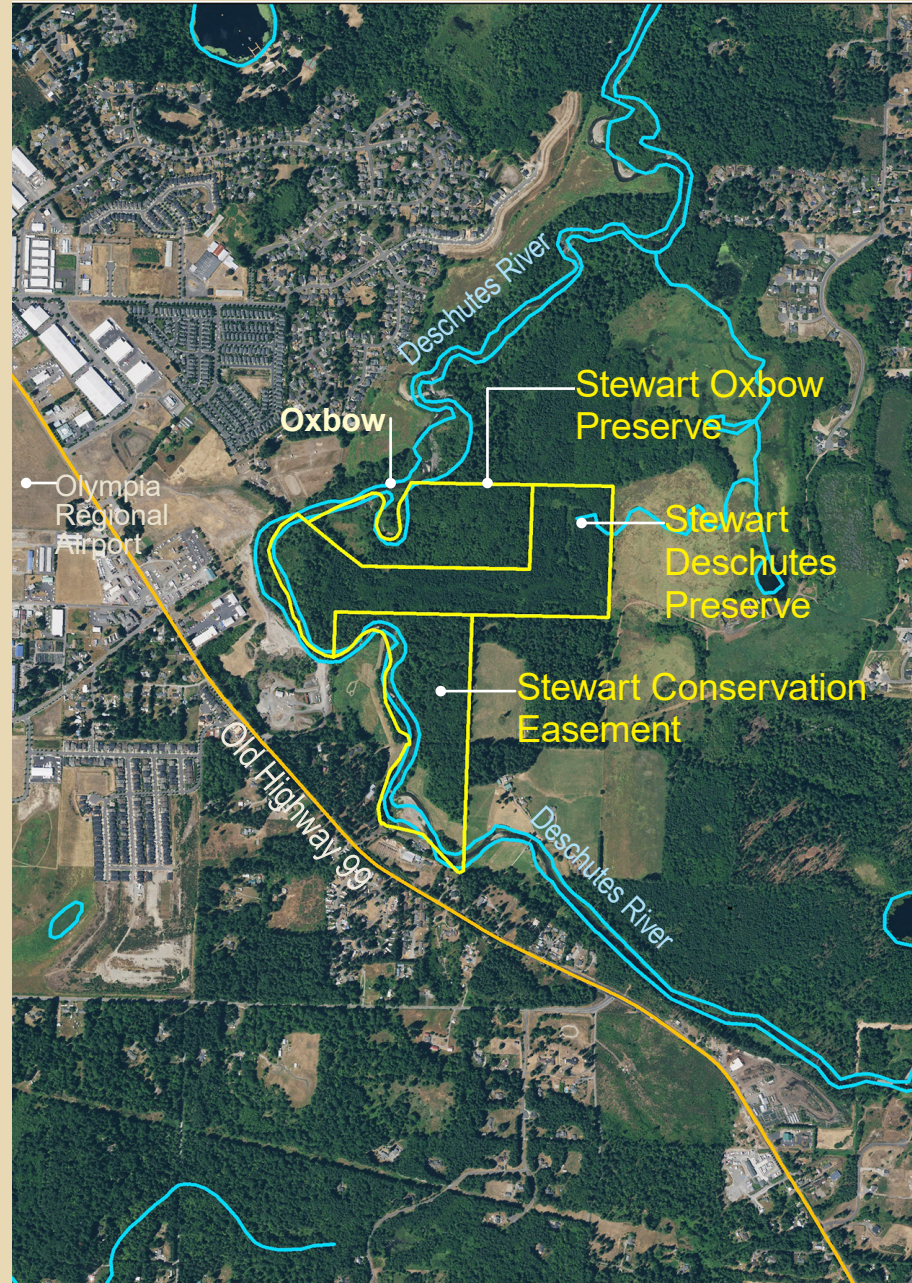
conservation easement to Capitol Land Trust (CLT) in 1994. The property is full of mature forest, and beavers, skunks, coyotes, and other wildlife call it home.

This was the first of three adjacent conservation projects along the Deschutes River that the Stewarts helped bring to fruition. The second came in 2012 with CLT's purchase of the Stewart-Deschutes Preserve and the third just occurred in September with the acquisition of the Stewart Oxbow Preserve. Together, the three conserved lands cover 136 acres along 1.5 miles of the river.

Unfortunately, Rich passed away earlier this year before the Stewart Oxbow Preserve acquisition was completed. As we announce this latest conservation success, we'd like to honor Rich for spearheading conservation along this section of the Deschutes River. We're grateful for his and Sharon's vision and commitment, and hope to continue to build on their legacy.

"Without help from Capitol Land Trust, these fields and forests would be more nondescript tract homes and strip malls. We are fortunate in the South Sound to have a partner like Capitol Land Trust committed to protecting what open spaces remain."

► Dan Wasserman, Rich Stewart's nephew



Its unique large side-channel habitat is scarce along the Deschutes River. By slowing down the flow, the oxbow gives young fish a place to rest, which is very important for fish survival.

Thank you project partners

*Rich & Sharon Stewart,
Dan & Adrienne Wasserman,
The Estate of Michael Wellander,
Jeff Wellander, Margot Marsh, ADESA LLC,
and the Recreation & Conservation Office -
Salmon Recovery Funding Board.*

Inspiring the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

"Being around new people, working under the sun, and living in the dirt for a month may sound unappealing at a glance, but the sounds of a stream, secluded mountain tops on the horizon and adventures every day may change your mind."

► Dillon, 19, Northwest Youth Corps Crew Member

This summer, Northwest Youth Corps assembled crews of teens and young adults who wanted to spend the summer unplugged from their phones, living and working outdoors on projects — from backcountry trail maintenance to habitat restoration. The Residential Camping Program supports Northwest Youth Corps' mission to provide opportunities for young adults to learn, grow, and experience success.

Capitol Land Trust hosted three Northwest Youth Corps crews at the Inspiring Kids Preserve (IKP). Although IKP is not backcountry, its solitude, beauty, and natural wonders provided a perfect setting to welcome these crews onto a conserved land. Giving youth the opportunity to work together while immersed in the natural world fulfilled our vision to connect people to the land and to each other.

Over five weeks, three crews camped and worked on the preserve, preparing it for upcoming school field trips and winter restoration plantings. To add to their experience, Mary Birchem recruited professionals from the conservation community to talk about their area of expertise and careers in conservation.

Many thanks to all the crews, for your hard work to make IKP an even better place to connect with the natural world.

"Spending time at the Inspiring Kids Preserve helped the crew bond as a community. Their time here has shown that nature can bring together people from a diverse set of backgrounds. The outdoors belong to everyone."

► Tom, 22, Crew Leader

"I've learned how much I love nature and how important it is to protect it as well as spend time amongst the trees... a life-changing experience... I would recommend to anyone and everyone."

► Anni, 17, Northwest Youth Corps Crew Member





***Thank you partners and
volunteers for presenting
to Youth Corps' crews at
the Inspiring Kids Preserve!***

**Black Hills Audubon Society
Center for Natural Lands
Management**

**City of Olympia Parks, Arts &
Recreation**

**Dixie Havlak, Mountaineers
Member**

GRuB

Katie Hatam

Thurston County Public Health

The Nature Conservancy

Washington Trails Association

**Thurston Conservation District's
South Sound GREEN program**

Taylor Shellfish

Tom Terry

Wolf Haven

Photos, opposite page: Aerial of IKP cove, Doug Ridenour. Crew members participating in discussions with conservation professionals, Bruce Livingston. Photo this page top: IKP shoreline, Mary Birchem. Photo left: Crew building trail, Bruce Livingston.

RESTORATION IS FOR OPT

Mighty oaks from little acorns grow

It was very cold on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 2017. Led by Mary Bircham, Outreach and Education Coordinator, and Tom Terry, former Board Member, the volunteers at Bayshore Preserve were hoping to get the Oregon white oak seedlings into the ground and on their way. The surface of the soil was frozen and had to be broken up with picks to get to the soft earth below. Each seedling was tucked into its new home with a layer of mulch, and as the volunteers surveyed the results of their efforts, they hoped these tiny trees would someday support birds roosting in their arching boughs.

The planting of the oak seedlings is just one part of Bayshore Preserve's restoration. The site is going through a major transformation from its most recent use as a golf course to a site rich in native plants and animals; one with an expanding salt marsh, new tidal basins to increase habitat diversity, a large grassland area to support native prairie plants, and new freshwater side channels along Johns Creek to enhance fish and other wildlife habitat. Successful restoration is a combination of ecological

expertise, installation knowhow, lots of dirt under your fingernails and a fair amount of faith. So far, on this site, these efforts have seen remarkable returns in increased habitat and wildlife use.

The unique feature that makes planting the Oregon white oak (Washington's only native oak tree) part of the restoration plan is the prairie soils that cover a big portion of the preserve. The large oaks already thriving on the site anchor these plantings, creating ribbons of oak woodlands. One species that will benefit from the increased number of oak trees is the band-tailed pigeon, a native bird that once thrived in our region. This large dove feasts on the oak's acorns and finds nesting sites in nearby conifers.

The existing oak trees have also provided acorns that have been planted by seed at Bayshore Preserve and the Inspiring Kids Preserve along Henderson Inlet.

To ensure the efforts of the MLK Day volunteers weren't wasted, the oak seedlings were hand watered for three years to help them survive the summer droughts. They're now big enough to be on their own.



OPTIMISTS!

“One summer when Tom and I were out watering the oaks at Bayshore Preserve, a little girl came by with her caregiver. She had asked to come visit the oaks she had helped plant.”

Knowing that her time on the land left such an impression that she felt compelled to come check on the young plants gives me hope for the future.”

► Mary Bircham



Tom, Mary and the volunteers that cold January day displayed the kind of optimism that makes Capitol Land Trust such a hopeful organization. It takes optimism to pull out a dike that once held back the tide and expect (and see!) a salt marsh return that is rich in nutrients and resources. It takes vision and faith to plant a tiny seedling in the ground and expect an oak tree — its boughs drooping with acorns — to stand in that same place for decades to come. That's what we expect.



Photos opposite page: Oregon oak seedling, Tom Terry; Mature oak at Bayshore Preserve, Karin Strelhoff.

Photos this page: Top: Young volunteers, Bruce Livingston; Band-tailed pigeon eating acorn at Bayshore Preserve, Mike Melton. Right: Tom Terry (with pickaxe), Martin McCallum and other volunteers plant oaks at Bayshore Preserve.



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Photo: Cedar waxwing, Mary Birchem.



SAVE THE DATE!

Capitol Land Trust's 16th Annual CONSERVATION BREAKFAST

Celebrate Earth Day With Us!

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

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 our community a high priority.

The event is free to attend. A donation will be requested during the program – donations support CLT'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 Sierra Jacob:
sierra@capitollandtrust.org ♦ 360.209.6149