



Furthering collaborative and strategic conservation of southwest Washington's essential natural areas and working lands

The Transformation of Allison Springs



Michelle Stevie

Laurence Reeves

Capitol Land Trust Conservation Project Manager Laurence Reeves never imagined that “newt-wrangling” would be part of his job description. But late this summer he found himself among a group of people from the City of Olympia, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, traipsing around catching rough-skinned newts.

The newts were thriving in several artificial ponds that needed to be removed as part of a large-scale restoration project. Owned by the City of Olympia, the Allison Springs property provides drinking water for many of Olympia’s residents. The area is located at the southern end of Eld Inlet and is surrounded by six miles of marine shorelines previously conserved by Capitol Land Trust. Thanks to funding from the

Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Washington Department of Ecology, the property is undergoing a profound transformation. Relocating hundreds of newts was one small but fun step in this Capitol Land Trust restoration project.

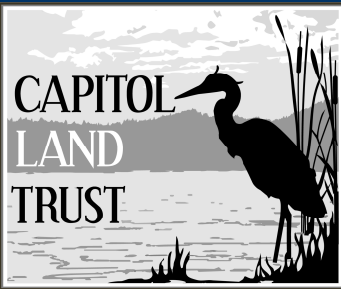
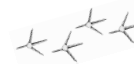
Together with the City of Olympia, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG), People for Puget Sound and many other partners, Capitol

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*Photographs on front cover:
Great Blue Heron and Seagull with Starfish
by Kim Merriman*

Allison Springs continued from page 1



City of Olympia

Newt Wrangling at Allison Springs

Land Trust is restoring estuarine and shoreline function in this strategic complex of shorelines and tide flats, salt marsh, forested freshwater tributaries and springs.

The artificial ponds and other manmade structures, including buildings, culverts, dams, tide gates and weirs, disrupted the natural functioning of the estuary. Fresh spring water couldn't feed the wetlands and flow freely into Puget Sound, fish passage was blocked, and natural tidal exchange processes were impeded.

SPSSEG project manager Brian Combs says, "Our primary objective was to remove the artificial ponds, culverts and fill on the site to enhance the interaction between the springs and the bay. Throughout the process we wanted to minimize disturbance for the wildlife already living there and relocating the newts was part of this effort."

Instead of draining the ponds and leaving the newts to fend for themselves, Brian called on Marc Hayes, an amphibian expert with the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, for help. On Marc's recommendation, project partners developed a plan to rescue the newts and release them into nearby appropriate habitat.

Marc finds rough-skinned newts particularly interesting because, among other things, they are so incredibly toxic. "They have one of the most potent vertebrate toxins known," he says. With few natural predators, they may live as long as 20 years. The bright orange underbelly is nature's way of saying "stay away!" See page three for more details on these fascinating yet poisonous creatures.

The initial attempt to collect the newts didn't go as planned. "When we got to the ponds," recalls Laurence, "the sluice boards in the dam had already been removed and water was streaming out. But there wasn't a newt in sight as we waded in with nets and buckets. We were beginning to wonder if someone had tipped them off and they had already left. However, as the pond drained they started coming up out of the mud en masse. I was getting 2-3 newts in one scoop. We would clear the entire pond bottom of newts, and within 5 minutes there would be 30-40 more crawling up out of the mud."

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Allison Springs continued from page 2

In all, the Great Salamander Snag of 2011 netted more than 700 rough-skinned newts. "All of us newt wranglers agreed it was nice to get out of the office to do something we used to enjoy so much as kids... catching salamanders," says Laurence.

Now that the ponds have been drained and artificial structures removed, water is flowing back into Puget Sound unimpeded. Some re-contouring has taken place to mimic the natural stream flow. Still to be done is reforesting the shoreline, adding large woody debris, and removing invasive plants. You can participate! See our Calendar of Events on page 11 for dates and times of work parties.

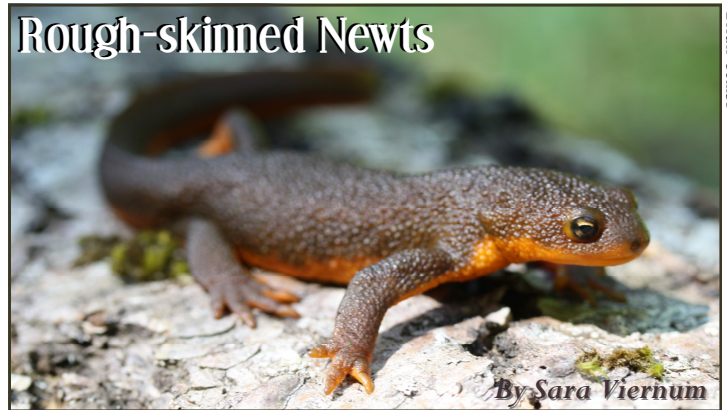
While the newts might be wondering what happened to their old home, a host of other wildlife—including five species of salmon—will be delighted at the changes. Perhaps the happiest benefactor will be the significant Eld Inlet chum run that returns each fall to spawn in McLane Creek. The Allison Springs restoration project will provide vital habitat in spring for young smolts that spend time in the estuary feeding, growing and preparing to migrate to the Pacific Ocean, and for adult salmon waiting in the estuary for high water in the fall so they can swim upstream and spawn.

Ultimately, the Allison Springs restoration project will restore important natural estuarine, near-shore and wetland functions. This project adds to Capitol Land Trust's ongoing conservation work on lower Eld Inlet. More than six miles of estuarine and coastal habitat adjacent to the site has already been conserved. Olympia Mayor Doug Mah says, "This project is another example of Capitol Land Trust working in partnership with the City. Together, we are better able to leverage resources that restore and protect important ecosystems." ☘

Thank You Project Partners:

City of Olympia, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, People for Puget Sound, US Fish & Wildlife Service, WA Dept. of Ecology, Waterfall Engineering, Adesa, Carpenter Drilling

Rough-skinned Newts



Brian Combs

The rough-skinned newt (*Taricha granulosa*) is an orange-bellied, warty skinned salamander found throughout the west coast. It may come as a surprise that this cute, seemingly innocent critter can kill you. Members of the western newt genus *Taricha* all possess a neurotoxin in their skin called tetrodotoxin (TTX) which is hundreds of times deadlier than cyanide. It is also the main ingredient of "zombie powder" and is used in Vodoo rituals because it causes paralysis in low doses. The toxin is produced by symbiotic bacteria that live inside the newts. The newts must be ingested for the toxin to be effective but if an adult human swallowed a rough-skinned newt it could kill him or her. Other organisms that utilize TTX include pufferfish, harlequin frogs (*Atelopus*), blue-ringed octopi, and eastern newts (*Notophthalmus*).

As toxic as western newts are, there is an animal that can eat them and survive. Populations of the common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) found within the ranges of western newts have co-evolved to prey on the newts. The snakes have evolved specialized receptors on their neurons that block TTX from attaching, meaning the snakes are resistant to the toxin. Caddisfly larvae may also be resistant to TTX. Female western newts cover their eggs in TTX to stop aquatic insects and other predators from eating them. However, caddisfly larvae have been observed feeding on the eggs suggesting that they may be resistant.

So the next time you're out for a hike and pick up a rough-skinned newt crossing the trail remember to wash your hands before dinner! ☘

Sara Viernum is a herpetologist with a fondness for amphibians, reptiles and other creepy crawlies. Visit her blog at www.wanderingherpetologist.com.

Coralroot Orchid: Beautiful & Unusual Parasitic Plant

By Guy Maguire

Last spring during a volunteer work party at the McLane Point Preserve on Eld inlet, we came across an unusual and beautiful little flower, a Spotted coralroot orchid, or *Corallorhiza maculata*. I immediately wanted to learn more about this fascinating plant.

The Spotted coralroot orchid is a myco-heterotroph, which means essentially “gaining its nutrients from the roots of mushrooms.” The Northwest is home to over a dozen species of these types of plants. These small orchids and heath family plants are unique because they have lost all their chlorophyll, do not perform photosynthesis, and rely entirely on the roots of certain mushrooms for all their nutrients.

Contrary to popular belief, not all plants are green. In fact, these myco-heterotrophes come in a great variety of colors. Once upon a time they had leaves and were green like most plants, but over time evolved to lose their pigment as they developed associations with specific fungi species. Some of the more common myco-heterotrophes in this area are the Candystick (*Allotropa virgata*), Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*), Spotted coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*), and Striped coralroot (*Corallorhiza striata*).

While ecologists have known for many years that more than 90% of plants associate with fungi, only recently have they learned that specific plant species quite literally act as parasites on these fungi, stealing their nutrients. This may seem like a negative, but the reality is these plants play an important role in the forest’s ecology. These fungi get their energy, in the form of sugars, from the trees around them and in turn provide the trees with nitrogen and other nutrients. The “parasitic” orchids take only a minute fraction of those nutrients for themselves. In turn, they occupy a unique niche and provide more diversity in the forest. These orchids also fill an important link in the forest ecosystem by providing nectar for many species of pollinating insects.

My research on this fascinating organism led me to think about what else have we may have yet to



Spotted Coralroot Orchid

Guy Maguire

discover. Looking deeper into the lives of these plants has illustrated how truly interconnected the forest is.

So the next time you are wandering the woods and in the mountains, keep your eyes peeled! The Northwest is home to a diversity and abundance of these strange, beautiful, perplexing little flowers. ☘

Guy Maguire was Capitol Land Trust’s Stewardship Coordinator in 2010-2011 and now is our Restoration Projects Coordinator.

Focus on Support: Sterling Savings Bank *By Lisa Johnson*

Kim Asay, branch manager of Sterling Savings Bank, had a personal “ah-ha” moment two years ago at a local Chamber of Commerce meeting. She heard a speaker talk about a proposed development that would significantly change a rural landscape into a more urban one. Having grown up in Port Angeles with lots of open space and trees, Kim realized how much she appreciated and valued the importance of natural habitat.

When Kim came to the west Olympia branch four years ago, she was impressed with what she learned about Capitol Land Trust. Today, she works hard to support the Land Trust’s conservation efforts and is also a board member of Olympia Master Builders. Sterling Savings Bank has supported Capitol Land Trust for more than five years.

“All the Capitol Land Trust staff are great. To me, it is where my professional life meets my personal life. Setting up efficient systems to help them with day-to-day operations is one example of how Sterling helps them use their funds wisely,” says Kim. “I also want a legacy of being involved in my community.”

Kim is not the only one at Sterling volunteering in the community. The Bank recognizes and encourages its employees for volunteer efforts. Many of her co-workers are active with Capitol Land Trust and other local organizations.

Kim is gratified to know that Capitol Land Trust has conserved property near her home. The creek on her property in Tenino is part of the watershed feeding the Land Trust’s Tilley Wetlands Preserve. She enjoys hearing the story behind every piece of conserved land, and knowing about the stakeholders involved. “Touring Triple Creek Farm was so interesting; it’s great to see what has been done,” she says.

One of Kim’s favorite events of the year is the Conservation Breakfast. Sterling sponsors the event, and Kim fills a table of prospective donors and Sterling customers. She is inspired by the message she takes from the Breakfast: continue the mission of land conservation, know the opportunities to volunteer, and be grateful for the many accomplish-

Kim Asay



Lisa Johnson

ments of Capitol Land Trust.

Kim is a “Sterling” example of how local business partners help Capitol Land Trust in our efforts to sustain our natural assets. ☼

Lisa Johnson is a family physician and a member of Capitol Land Trust.

Supporting Conservation with your Retirement Account

Capitol Land Trust supporters over the age of 70 are likely familiar with the IRS’ Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) on retirement accounts. Each year the IRS requires that you withdraw, and be taxed on, a certain amount of your retirement plan. During 2011, the IRS will allow you to transfer your RMD directly to a qualified charity such as Capitol Land Trust. By making this transfer directly, your RMD is not reported taxable income. This ability to reduce your taxable income could potentially reduce the taxes due on your other income such as Social Security. The reduction may also lower your adjusted gross income sufficiently to avoid Medicare Means Testing and other income based tests. Most importantly, your donation to Capitol Land Trust will further our mission of conserving essential natural areas and working lands. Please consult a qualified financial planner and/or accountant to learn more about this strategy. ☼

Matthew Jarvis is a partner at Jarvis Financial and actively supports numerous community organizations.



Our Hosts Sue Ujcic & Anna Salafsky



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Helsing Junction's Friendly M



Special Guest Becky Selengut



Xinh Dwelley

Lenny Young pours wine for guests



Kathleen Ackley & Joe Hyer help auction off Mimi Williams' original art



Dorothy Gist & Karen Valenzuela

All images courtesy of Greg Mennegar except where noted.



Neighbors



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Auctioneer Ralph Munro



Sue Ujcic gives a tour of Helsing Junction Farm



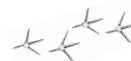
Amazing Appetizers

Jamie Morgan

SUMMER GALA 2011 at HELSING JUNCTION FARM

Our heartfelt thanks to all the people who made this summer's annual Gala a huge success! With more than 350 folks in attendance, this was our biggest Gala ever. We are grateful to everyone who attended the event, volunteered and donated goods, services and just plain cash. The event raised \$53,000 for Capitol Land Trust's conservation work. That doesn't even begin to count the large quantity of in-kind donations we received. From food to wine to auction items to professional help, the sheer number of people and businesses who made generous donations to the Gala is overwhelming. Capitol Land Trust is lucky indeed to have so many friends. Thank you for joining us on this special occasion and for making our work possible. And fun! ☘

Thank you to Sue Ujcic & Jared Snyder and Anna Salafsky & Tom Corwin for hosting us again this year at their beautiful farm.



Thank you to our supporters!

*All contributions were received
between June 28 and Oct. 5, 2011.*

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Welcome Rony Thi

Please join us in welcoming Rony Thi as Capitol Land Trust's new AmeriCorps Stewardship Coordinator. Fresh from Seattle and a bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Washington, Rony is ready to apply all she learned in school and as a forest steward volunteer with the Seattle Urban Parks program in the South Sound.

Growing up in the city, Rony's interaction with nature was limited. Mostly, she spent summers plucking blackberries off thorny bushes that grew in her backyard. It was enough to pique her curiosity and spark an interest in environmental conservation many years later. Imagine her dismay at learning that the berries she so loved as a child turned out to be invasive Himalayan blackberry. The cruel and harsh reality was that her very first connection to nature was the very thing she was now compelled to annihilate. However, the internal struggle raging inside of her quickly dissipated as the number of scratches increased on her arms and legs.

And that's the story of how Rony got involved in ecological restoration. If you want to see who will be victorious in this never ending battle, come and check out one of our many restoration work parties.

You can reach Rony at rony@capitollandtrust.org, (360) 943-3012. ☞



Leaving a Legacy

Melody and I are native Washingtonians and have witnessed the changes to this great place first hand over the years. We moved to Olympia in 1990 after building our home on Henderson Inlet and were soon introduced to Capitol Land Trust by Steve Wells and Cedar Bouta.

Over the past twenty years we have been committed to supporting land conservation and restoration both financially and through our volunteer efforts. As we transition into our retirement years, we expect to continue working to protect and restore the most special places in the South Sound area. The natural progression for us is to include Capitol Land Trust in our estate planning so that we can continue to support the work we believe to be so important when we are no longer here.

I have been serving on Capitol Land Trust's Board of Directors for the past three years. I have been impressed with the strength and commitment to the mission from the other board members, Capitol Land Trust staff, as well as the general membership. This commitment has made us confident that our estate contributions will be used wisely for the greater good of the area. ☞

Thank you Bill, Melody and the many members who have already included Capitol Land Trust in their wills and estate plans. Making a bequest is one of the most powerful ways to leave a personal legacy that will last into perpetuity. For more details visit our website at www.capitollandtrust.org.

CALENDAR of EVENTS



Kathy Strauss

🌿 Habitat Restoration Work Parties 🌿

Join us on any of the dates below to restore fish and wildlife habitat on Mud Bay in Olympia! Volunteers are needed to install native plants and remove invasive vegetation. Groups and individuals are welcome; no experience necessary. Contact Stewardship Coordinator Rony Thi to sign up: rony@capitollandtrust.org, (360) 943-3012. All work parties are on Saturdays, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

October 22nd ❖ November 5th ❖
November 19th ❖ December 3rd ❖ December 10th

🌿 Adventure & Conservation Speaker Series 🌿

Capitol Land Trust is partnering with our local REI to bring a variety of guest speakers to Olympia who will discuss everything from urban foraging to bats! All talks are free and take place at the Olympia REI store. For more information on any of these talks or to register, contact Membership & Outreach Coordinator Kathleen Ackley at kathleen@capitollandtrust.org, (360) 943-3012. Space is limited; reserve your spot early.

Kelli Bush of the Sustainable Prisons Project (SPP) will be presenting on conservation projects involving Oregon spotted frogs, Taylor's Checkerspot butterfly, and native prairie plants. SPP is a unique partnership between the WA State Dept. of Corrections and The Evergreen State College.

Tuesday November 15, 2011, 7:00 to 8:15 PM

Helen Thayer, author and adventurer, presents "Three Among Wolves: A Year of Friendship in the Wild" about the year she and her husband travelled to the Canadian Yukon Territory, above the Arctic Circle, to live within 100 feet of a wild wolf den.

Tuesday, January 17, 2012, 7:00 to 8:15 PM

John Fleckenstein, a zoologist with WA DNR will talk about bats. More than 900 species of bats are known around the world, but none are as cool as the bats you can watch in your backyard. John has given many public tours and talks about bats, not to mention spending plenty of time in the field researching them.

Tuesday December 13, 2011, 7:00 to 8:15 PM

Sarahlee Lawrence, author, athlete, river guide, experiential educator and organic farmer will speak about her book "River House" and how living her dream as guide and advocate, riding and cleaning the arteries of the world, led her back to her dusty beginnings at her family's ranch in central Oregon.

Thursday, February 16, 2012, 7:00 to 8:15 PM

🌿 Harlequin Productions' "Enchanted April" 🌿

As a special thank you for your generous support of Capitol Land Trust's conservation work, we invite you to see this local production—as our guest! This is a final dress rehearsal exclusively for Capitol Land Trust members. Tickets will be available in 2012 and on a first come, first served basis.

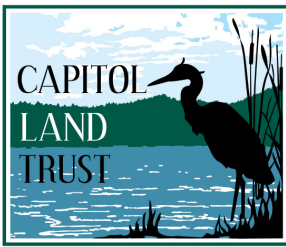
WHEN: March 14, 2012 at 8:00 PM

WHERE: State Theater, downtown Olympia

COST: Free to current Capitol Land Trust members

Tickets available in 2012





209 Fourth Avenue E, #205
Olympia, WA 98501

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #371
Olympia, WA

Seventh Annual CONSERVATION BREAKFAST

Tuesday
February 9, 2012
7:00 - 8:30 AM

Every winter Capitol Land Trust hosts an early morning breakfast at St. Martin's University to celebrate conservation leaders from throughout southwest Washington and to raise vital funds to meet our mission. The 2011 Breakfast was our biggest yet with more than 400 people in attendance and almost \$46,000 raised for our conservation work. Please join us this coming February as we honor community members who have shown exceptional dedication and leadership in conserving our region's essential natural areas and working lands.

You can help us make the 2012 Breakfast our most successful yet by registering now, volunteering, or agreeing to be a table captain! Contact Kathleen Ackley, Membership & Outreach Coordinator, for more details or to register at kathleen@capitollandtrust.org, (360) 943-3012. ☼