

2024-25

Impact Report



NORTH OLYMPIC
Land Trust



Farms • Fish • Forests



Farms



Fish



Forests

A Place Worth Protecting

Thirty-five years ago, driven by a shared commitment to safeguard the future of the Olympic Peninsula, a group of visionary community members came together to establish North Olympic Land Trust. Their foresight and dedication helped shape the landscape as we know it today.

We are so proud of what we have collectively accomplished together since: permanently protecting and stewarding thousands of acres of vital farms, forests, and fish and wildlife habitat. This includes working lands that support local agriculture and sustainable forestry as well as natural areas critical for biodiversity and community well-being. Our work is strengthened by enduring partnerships with landowners, local Tribes, and the broader community, all of whom have played a vital role in fostering a lasting culture of stewardship.

This anniversary honors not only the vision and hard work of the organization’s founders, staff, and board members, but also the enduring volunteer and financial support of hundreds of community members and partners who have worked together to ensure that the breathtaking landscapes and rich habitats of Clallam County remain protected for future generations.

Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and optimism for the future of our region’s treasured lands. This year at the Land Trust has been marked by resilience, transition, and remarkable community commitment.

In May 2024, I faced a significant health challenge that required surgery and an extended recovery. Thanks to the foresight embedded in our succession planning, Erika Lindholm, our Board President and a seasoned conservation finance expert, temporarily stepped down from her role on the board and filled in for me as Acting Executive Director. Erika’s guidance during the following six months was nothing short of exceptional. I am deeply grateful to Erika for her leadership during my absence, to Wendy Clark-Getzin for serving as acting Board President during Erika’s absence, and to our entire team and community for their unwavering commitment and support.

Since returning to my role as Executive Director in November 2024, we’ve navigated uncertainties

around Federal funding for upcoming land protection projects while simultaneously developing future conservation projects that will define local land conservation for the years to come. The Land Trust continues to provide the community with free access to astounding places like the Lyre and Elk Creek Conservation Areas, while restoring vanishing prairie habitats, providing opportunities for the community to connect with the landscape in a variety of ways, honoring those who work day in and day out to make our community a better place, and ensuring that the Land Trust maintains all of the permanent conservation promises made across this landscape over the past 35 years.

Though we cannot predict what the future will bring, the unwavering support of folks like you gives me immense hope, inspiration, and confidence. Every day, you choose to love this place through volunteering, voting, and donating to protect our lands and waterways.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to conserve, steward, and connect our community to this extraordinary landscape—seeking to inspire and empower people to protect the places that make the North Olympic Peninsula truly special. With your continued support, we will safeguard the places that sustain our communities, wildlife, and way of life for generations to come.

Thank you,

Tom Sanford
Executive Director



Cover Photo: A goldfinch, our state bird, sitting on common fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*) at the prairie creation project at our Lower Dungeness Conservation Area.

Here we have planted over two dozen native prairie species to work towards returning this near lost ecosystem to the landscape. Among other benefits, many of the seeds of these plants are a food source for various bird species. Photo by Scott Gremel.



The Sequim elk herd frequently visits the fields at Wonderland & the 80, which was permanently conserved by our community in 2019. This area is known to locals as the “Sequim Serengeti.”

Honoring History & the Future

North Olympic Land Trust works to conserve land across Clallam County on the North Olympic Peninsula. This area is the traditional homeland of five Sovereign Tribes – Hoh, Makah, Quileute, Jamestown S’Klallam, and Lower Elwha Klallam – who have lived on this land since time immemorial. A reciprocal relationship with this land – from the mountains to the sea – is the bedrock of each Tribe’s unique culture.

The Land Trust has profound admiration of the Tribes for their enduring fight for our environment and gratitude for sharing with us their principles of reciprocity, care and protection of the North Olympic Peninsula. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices and through our work strive to learn to live on the land and with the land. By doing this, we begin to make amends. *May we heal relationships as we heal the land.*

The Lyre Conservation Area.
Photo by John Gussman.

Where We Work

Since 1990, we have permanently protected nearly 4,400 acres of land across Clallam County.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Erika Lindholm, *President*
Jack Williams, *Vice President*
Jason Bausher, *Treasurer*
Julie Knobel, *Secretary*
Sissi Bruch
Wendy Clark-Getzin
Bobbie Clawson

Diana Erickson
Kim Sager-Fradkin
Anna Swanberg
Richard Tucker
Karen Westwood
Gary Colley, *emeritus*
John Willits, *emeritus/in memoriam*

STAFF

Mike Auger, *Conservation Director*
Annabelle ByrneStrong, *Administrative Assistant*
Angela Bailey, *Operations & Finance Director*
Jesse Greer, *Land Protection Specialist*
Scott Gremel, *Land Manager*

Julie Anne Hopkins, *Conservation Easement Steward*
Tom Sanford, *Executive Director*
Lexi Wagor, *Community Relations Director*
Alex Wilson, *Development Director*

Updated July 1, 2025

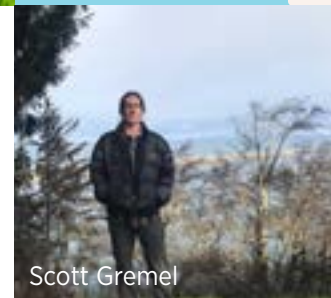
New Faces at the Land Trust

Scott Gremel joined the team in January as our Land Manager. With 30 years of experience as a wildlife biologist at Olympic National Park under his belt, we are so excited to have him oversee the stewardship of the lands under our ownership.

To accommodate Tom’s transition to part-time, our administrative team was restructured into two new positions. In late April, Angela Bailey came on board as our Operations and Finance Director. Her career has spanned education, real estate, and nonprofit leadership, and she’s passionate about building the kind of behind-the-scenes infrastructure that helps teams and

communities thrive. Her background in sustainability, humane education, and business analysis is already strengthening the internal systems that support our mission. Just a few weeks later Annabelle ByrneStrong joined us as our part-time Administrative Assistant. After attending Willamette University and earning her bachelor’s in environmental science and economics, she interned with The Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Whether it’s in the office, out on the land, or virtually, please join us in welcoming them to the Land Trust community!



Scott Gremel



Angela Bailey



Annabelle ByrneStrong



A bird's eye view of No Goat Farm, conserved by our community in early 2024. Photo by John Gussman.



Potatoes Growing at No Goat Farm. Photo by Michele Canale.

The 5-Acre Problem

Balancing Conservation & Development

Over recent decades, increased development and land conversion have disrupted the balance between agriculture, habitat, and community needs. Farmland is among the most threatened landscapes in our region; since the 1940s, more than 80% has been converted to other uses.

Through prior County planning processes, much of our community's prime farmland has been zoned as Agricultural Retention. While this zoning code sets a minimum lot size as 16 acres, a number of key larger farm parcels were grandfathered in with pre-existing 5-acre lots. These lots are typically flat, have prime farmland soils, and provide awe-inspiring views. While they are invaluable farmland, they also are desirable target for housing developments. We call this issue the "5-acre problem."

As our community faces an affordable housing crisis and the accelerated loss of our precious farmlands, we aim to strike a balance and do what we can to maintain Clallam County's last remaining large pieces of rural farmland while encouraging increased population density in areas with existing development.

While education and zoning regulations provide some protection by encouraging thoughtful development, these measures alone are not enough to prevent the continued loss of working lands and habitat. That's why private, voluntary land conservation through the Land Trust empowers landowners to directly shape balanced land use and safeguard these vital landscapes for the future.

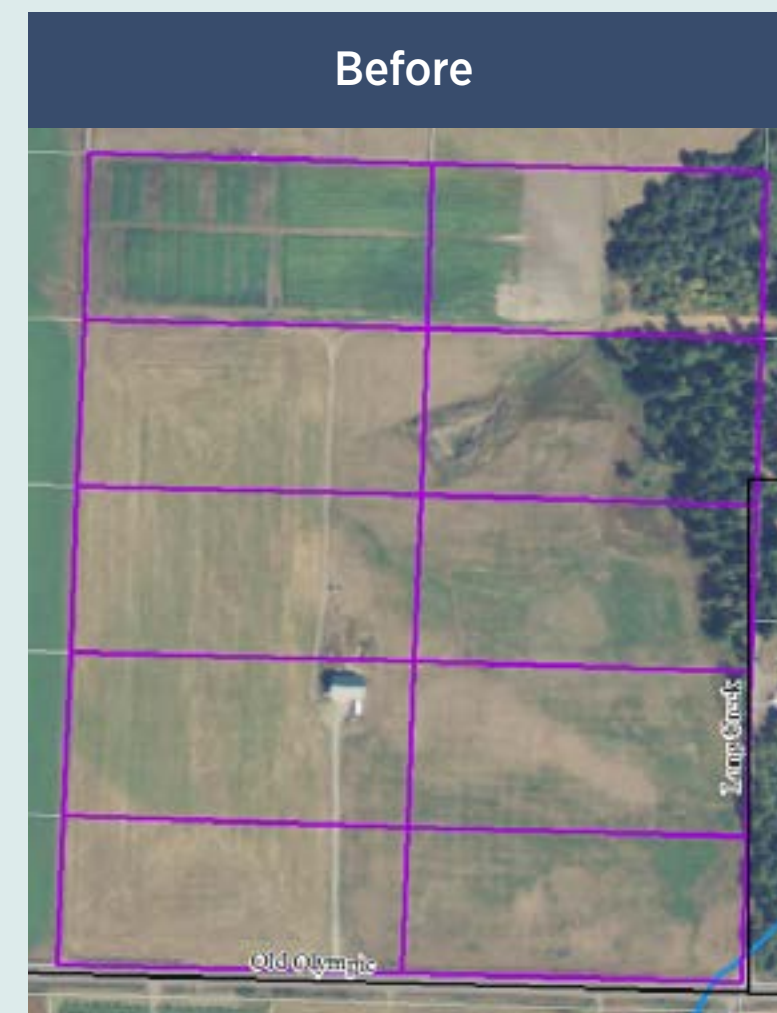
Currently, we are amid several sensitive real estate opportunities with multiple landowners to safeguard some of our region's most iconic and recognizable farmlands. Stay tuned for more details in late 2025!



An aerial view of Wonderland & the 80, conserved by our community in 2019. Photo by John Gussman.

Case Study: Jane's Farm

Driving along Old Olympic Highway, just a little ways northeast of its intersection with Kitchen-Dick Road, is Jane's Farm. The name of the farm honors Jane Willits, the late sister of Land Trust founder John Willits, who has since passed away too. This 50-acre parcel, home to waterfowl habitat as well as prime agricultural soils, once had the ability to be subdivided in ten 5-acre lots. In 2012, the Willits family placed a conservation easement on the land with the Land Trust—ensuring this property will remain whole and protected forever.





Left: The diverse regenerating second growth forest on the donated land. Photo by Scott Gremel.
Right: A northern red-legged frog observed on a site visit. Photo by Courtney Bornsworth.

Modeling Ecological Forest Management on 161 Acres of Donated Land

In November 2024, the Land Trust received the largest land donation in its history—161 acres of vibrant, biodiverse working forestland near Port Angeles. This remarkable landscape is shaped by a rich mix of grand fir, Douglas-fir, western redcedar, and western hemlock, with a lush understory of sword fern, evergreen and red huckleberry, and salal. The property is home to iconic native wildlife such as cougar, bobcat, black bear, and mountain beaver, and has been lovingly cared for by the same family since the 1950s. Inspired by local conservationist John Willits, the previous landowner—who wishes to remain anonymous—donated a conservation easement to the Land Trust in 2010 to ensure the land’s natural capacity and soil health would endure.

Now, we are deeply honored that this generous donor has entrusted the Land Trust with full ownership of the property. As stewards, we will continue to practice active forest management that prioritizes ecosystem health and supports a thriving community of native plants and animals. This approach will also generate income to help cover management costs and further our broader conservation mission. We look forward to sharing our stewardship knowledge and experiences with the community as we move forward. The significance of this gift, and our gratitude for the trust placed in us, cannot be overstated.

Habitat easement expanded at Skerbeck Farm

Nestled just east of Port Angeles, Skerbeck Farm sits atop the bluff overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Olympic Discovery Trail. The Skerbeck family has lovingly cared for this land since 1955, when Dr. Frank and Dorothy Skerbeck purchased the property and raised their 15 children there, instilling in them a deep respect for the land. In late 2014, Pat and Conard Metcalf—Pat being one of the Skerbeck children—donated a conservation easement to North Olympic Land Trust, permanently protecting the 20-acre farm. Pat continues to steward the property, maintaining a vibrant garden that features a stunning collection of rhododendrons, Washington’s state flower.

The Metcalfs’ commitment to conservation was inspired by Pat’s sister, Bobbie, who honored their parents’ legacy by permanently protecting

her own land near the Elwha River with the Land Trust in 2011. When the chance arose to safeguard neighboring land, Pat and Conard eagerly expanded their conservation efforts. In October, they acquired over four acres of adjacent forest, home to mature western red cedar and big leaf maple, and in July 2024, North Olympic Land Trust finalized an agreement to add this forest to their existing easement.

Today, the enduring protection of Skerbeck Farm preserves valuable agricultural and forest land, creates a vital buffer between growing development along Highway 101 and the sensitive bluffs above the Strait, and safeguards the natural character and wildlife corridor provided by the Olympic Discovery Trail—for this generation and those to come.

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The bluff overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Olympic Discovery Trail at Skerbeck Farm. Photo by Patrick Downs.





Coming Together to Safeguard the Place We Love

On November 3rd, 2024, more than 160 Land Trust supporters came together at our annual Friends of the Fields' Harvest Celebration fundraiser, held at the Field Arts & Events Hall on the Port Angeles waterfront, to celebrate our shared achievements and champion ongoing and future farmland, forest, and habitat protection efforts across the Olympic Peninsula. The legacies of Simone Nichols and Bruce Moorhead—both pivotal figures in the Land Trust's early days—remind us that lasting conservation is made possible by a dedicated community. **This harvest season, over 200 households contributed, raising more than \$60,000 to support local conservation.** Thank you for joining us in this cherished tradition of recognizing, honoring, and protecting the lands and waterways that we all hold dear!

Right Top & Bottom: Guests enjoy a local dinner at the Field Hall during the 2024 Harvest Celebration. Photo by Katrina Shelby. **Bottom Left:** Local produce ready to be distributed to the community at the Port Angeles Food Bank.

2024 Farmer of the Year: Port Angeles & Sequim Food Banks

The Land Trust proudly honored the Port Angeles and Sequim Food Banks as joint recipients of the 2024 Farmer of the Year award, celebrating their exceptional efforts to connect local farms with families in need. Since the beginning of the pandemic, these organizations have pioneered innovative partnerships that allow them to purchase fresh, nutrient-rich produce directly from over 35 peninsula farms, distributing it across 18 food banks and access sites—resulting in more than \$150,000 of local food reaching the community in 2024 alone. Their work not only supports struggling farmers and hungry families but also fosters a resilient local food system. When food is no longer suitable for human consumption, it is



donated to livestock farmers, creating a sustainable cycle that benefits the entire agricultural community. The Port Angeles and Sequim Food Banks join a distinguished group of honorees who have made lasting contributions to the vitality and sustainability of Clallam County's farmlands and food security.

2025 Outstanding in the Field Award: North Olympic History Center

We can be better prepared for our future by studying the history of our region. North Olympic History Center was the 2025 recipient of the award for their work to help our community learn to read our landscape through a historical lens.

For over 75 years, the North Olympic History Center—previously known as the Clallam County Historical Society—has been committed to preserving and sharing the rich history of the North Olympic Peninsula. Today, the Center operates a research library, curates an extensive artifact collection, and offers a wide range of educational and outreach programs to engage the community with its heritage.

The History Center has been instrumental in helping the Land Trust and other conservation entities in Clallam County better understand how this incredible landscape was formed, how people have lived on this landscape over thousands of years, and how we can be the best possible stewards to usher in a vibrant future.

Right: David Brownell, History Center *Executive Director*, leads a history walk at the Elk Creek Conservation Area. **Below Left:** David Moskowitz signing books for supporters. **Below Middle:** David Moskowitz on stage. **Below Right:** A full Field Hall theater for Conservation Breakfast. All Conservation Breakfast photos by Katrina Shelby.



Reading the Landscape through Wildlife Tracking

We were delighted to join our community for our 17th annual Conservation Breakfast on April 5th, 2025—an event that has grown into the region's largest celebration of local land conservation.

We were thrilled to welcome David Moskowitz—renowned wildlife tracker and author of *Caribou Rainforest*, *Wolves in the Land of Salmon*, and *Wildlife of the Pacific Northwest*—for an inspiring presentation filled with stunning photographs and captivating stories about the hidden lives of our region's wildlife. He was joined by Sarah Spaeth, Director of Conservation & Strategic Partnerships

at Jefferson Land Trust (a valued partner of North Olympic Land Trust) and a certified Track and Sign Specialist. Sarah shared insights into ongoing wildlife conservation efforts in our area, highlighting how the unique skills of wildlife tracking are being used to protect our region's natural heritage.

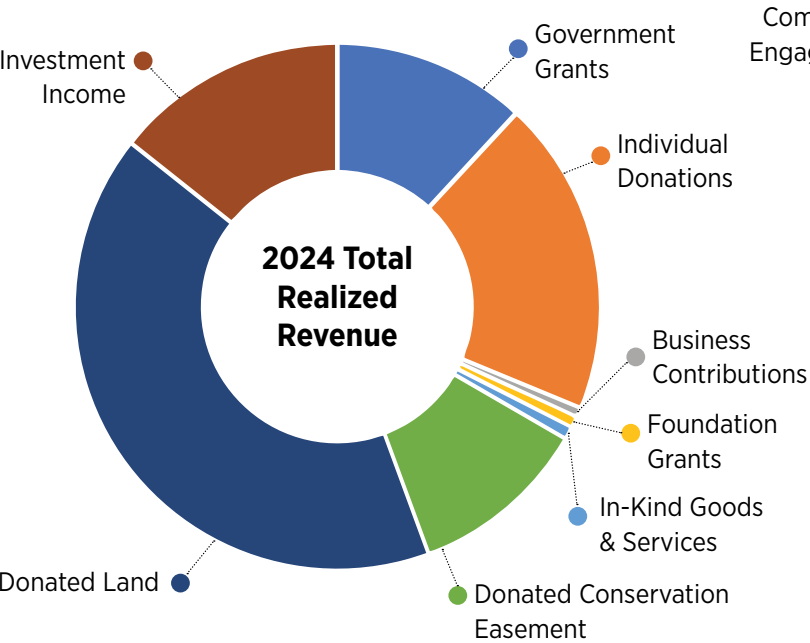
It was truly inspiring to connect with hundreds of conservation-minded community members for a fascinating exploration of how wildlife tracking and sign interpretation can transform the way we see the world. Witnessing the deep care our community holds for the Olympic Peninsula filled us with hope for its future. Thanks to everyone's generosity, we raised over \$20,000 to support the conservation of the lands we cherish—thank you!

2024 Financial Report

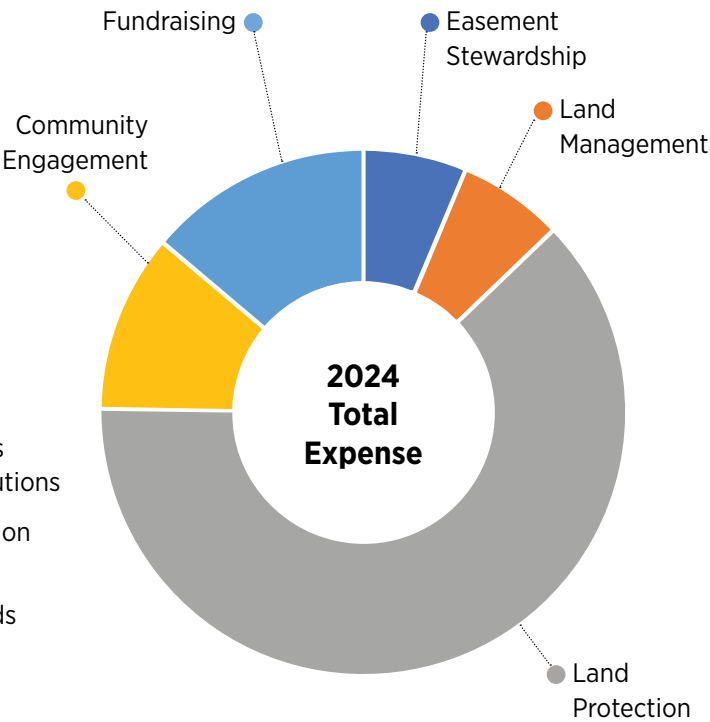
Statement of Financial Position
(Balance Sheet)
as of December 31, 2024

Statement of Activities
(Profit and Loss Statement)

Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	308,992
Receivables (what we are owed)	33,843
Investments	3,387,659
Land	7,320,914
Conservation Easements	84
Value of long-term lease	118,507
Other Assets	21,004
	11,191,003
Liabilities (what we owe)	
Value of future lease pmts	118,507
Accounts Payables	58,415
	176,922
Net Assets (equity)	
Undesignated	1,472,365
Operating Reserve	649,419
Stewardship Fund	1,948,646
Opportunity Fund	929,309
Sustainable Agriculture Fund	134,043
Conservation Lands	5,880,299
	11,014,081
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	11,191,003



Revenue	
Government Grants	371,844
Individual Donations	607,826
Business Contributions	18,123
Foundation Grants	22,000
In-Kind Easements	24,233
In-Kind Goods and Services	345,000
Realized Investment Income	1,295,000
Unrealized Investment Income	447,989
	3,132,015
Expense	
Easement Stewardship	96,665
Land Management	98,547
Land Protection	948,871
Community Engagement	167,112
Fundraising	209,891
	1,521,086
Change in Net Assets	1,610,929



Thank You to Our Supporters

Without you, none of this would be possible. Whether you’ve donated funds or your time, you are the backbone of our organization and community. Together, we will continue to conserve the beautiful North Olympic Peninsula.

Corporation, Business, Nonprofit, and Foundation Contributors:

- Barhop Brewing
 - Bella Italia
 - Botanica
 - The Burning Foundation
 - Camaraderie Cellars
 - Core GIS, LLC
 - Country Aire Natural Food
 - Draper Law
 - Ennis Arbor Farm
 - First Federal Savings & Loan
 - Fogtown Coffee Bar
 - Goodness Teas
 - Horizons Foundation
 - Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe
 - Katrina Shelby Photography
 - Koenig Subaru
 - Land Trust Alliance
 - Life Tree Acupuncture
- Olympic Peninsula Fly Fishers
 - Olympic Peninsula Surveying & Drafting, Inc
 - Olympic View Community Foundation
 - Olympic Wilderness Foundation
 - Port Book & News
 - Red Lion Hotel Port Angeles Harbor
 - Seven Cedars Casino
 - SisterLand Farms
 - Sound Community Bank
 - Stratum Group
 - Sunny Farms Country Store
 - Team McAleer at RE/MAX Prime
 - Wind Rose Cellars

John Willits Legacy Circle

Those who commit to support conservation forever through their estate plans.



Evergreen Donors

Those who support the protection and care of conservation lands through monthly donations.

Above: The entrance to the Legacy Grove Trail at the Lyre Conservation Area. Photo by Courtney Bornsworth.

Your Land Trust by the Numbers



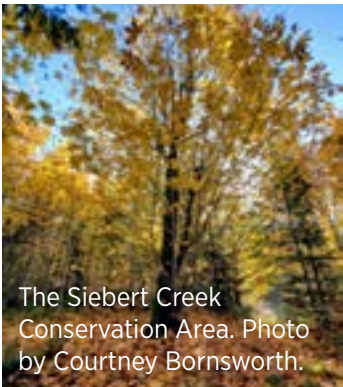
Visitors fishing at the Lyre Conservation Area during a negative tide. Photo by John Gussman.

4
CONSERVATION
AREAS WITH
PUBLIC TRAILS

26
LOCAL FARMS
CONSERVED

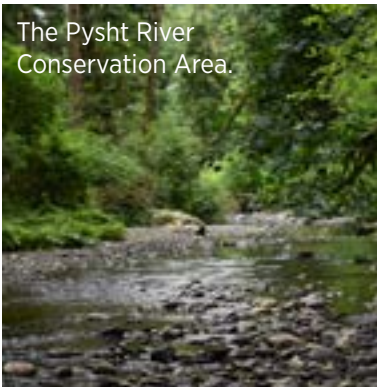


The Sequim elk herd grazes at the Land Trust's Wonderland & the 80 conservation easement. Photo by Julie Anne Hopkins.



The Siebert Creek Conservation Area. Photo by Courtney Bornsworth.

96
PROPERTIES
PERMANENTLY
PROTECTED



The Pysht River Conservation Area.

460
ACRES OF
WORKING
FORESTLAND

85
VOLUNTEERS GAVE OVER
1,000 hours
IN 2024



Students from Peninsula College practice plant identification at the Lower Dungeness Prairie with Courtney Bornsworth (left). Photo by Lexi Wagor.

Mission

To conserve the land and natural resources that continue to be the foundation of our culture, economy, and way of life.

NORTH OLYMPIC
Land Trust



Farms • Fish • Forests



TO LEARN MORE | TO EXPLORE | TO DONATE
northolympiclandtrust.org

Your support today enables our community to continue protecting farmland, forests, and river habitat on the North Olympic Peninsula - **forever.**

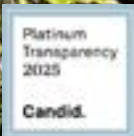
North Olympic Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) organization, tax ID 91-1500378.

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Get Involved

You make local conservation possible. You can support North Olympic Land Trust by:

- Attending our events
- Volunteering with us.
- Visiting our Conservation Areas.
- Signing up for our newsletter.
- Making a donation.



A big leaf maple at the permanently protected Westwind Farm. Photo by Jane Vanderhoof.

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Land Trust



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Camas in bloom in the
native prairie creation
project at the Lower
Dungeness Conservation
Area near Sequim.
Photo by Lexi Wagor

