



STATE OF THE LANDS

Celebrating the Oregon we love
2020

Staying Connected



Lately, I find myself seeking nature for calm. In hard times, nature brings us together. In a pandemic, we lean to land as a place of healing. In

times of civic divide and racism, we seek the outdoors as a place of peace and hope.

I couldn't be more proud of the work of our member organizations—protecting Oregon's biodiversity and saving the places that bring us together.

Each year this report wraps its arms around the work of Oregon's land trusts and the story of how our members support communities. We continue to do that in evolving times. In this publication, we celebrate the protection of Willowa's East Moraine (page 11), returning ancestral lands to native peoples (page 4), the launch of the Oregon Agricultural Trust and a small monarch butterfly—raised and released in Bend—that flew all the way to California (pages 8-9) and more!

I have missed connecting with you all in person. I look forward to that again one day. Meanwhile, stay safe and healthy and please join me in celebrating this collection of inspiring stories from across the state. ♦

Kelley Beamer

Kelley Beamer, Executive Director,
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

Our Community



Cover photo: Fitton Green Natural Area outside Corvallis, by Nick Wagner

Farmers Get Their Start

Headwaters Provides Affordable Access to Land and Farm Resources



Portland,
Oregon

FEATURED MEMBER

**East Multnomah
Soil and Water
Conservation District**

There's a farm with a red pole barn off a semi-quiet Gresham street. It holds tools. But, maybe more importantly, it houses ingenuity and hope. Headwaters Farm is a 60-acre incubator property and program owned by the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD). They lease land, equipment and other resources to experienced farmers who don't have a direct path into farm business ownership. Currently, 15 farm businesses are enrolled in the 5-year program, with cohorts revolving in regularly. On the property you'll find medicinal herbs, teas, garden vegetables, berries, rabbits, bees and cut flowers.

Emily Cooper, owner of Full Cellar Farm—a CSA program (Community Supported Agriculture) where individuals sign up as members and regularly receive boxes of fresh, seasonal produce—is one of 14 businesses who have graduated. “This program is amazing as it gives farmers with experience and good business ideas a chance,” she said. “I had 5 years to experiment and try things and make mistakes. I really didn't have very much to lose.” Now she's farming on the adjacent property—the 14-acre Mainstem Farm acquired by EMSWCD in 2018, where the District is piloting a program for farmland access to beginning farmers.

Rowan Steele, Headwaters Farm program manager, said Oregon is also losing farmland at an alarming rate and that EMSWCD's working farmland protection program helps protect farmland for the next generation of emerging farmers. This dovetails with the work at Headwaters where the program focuses on sharing resources, ideas, equipment and labor, grounded in a conservation agriculture approach to manage the land's fertility, water, pests and resources in a sustainable way to support healthy communities and the environment. “Headwaters is amazing,” Cooper said. “Everyone should want to start their farm here.” ♦

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District helps people care for land and water. emswcd.org
You can find Full Cellar Farm at fullcellarfarmoregon.com



Above: Emily Cooper, owner of Full Cellar Farm, and aerial view of Mainstem Farm, photos courtesy EMSWCD

Did you know?

Studies say that in **20 years**, **60 percent** of Oregon farmland will transfer hands.



Portland,
Oregon

FEATURED MEMBER

The Nature Conservancy
in Oregon

HONORING HISTORY

Returning Ancestral Lands to Indigenous Peoples

Conservancy Transfers Two Properties to Oregon Tribes

In 2019, the opportunity to do something special arose—twice. The Nature Conservancy in Oregon transferred ancestral lands back to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde in the form of the Dunstan Homestead and Noble Oaks Preserves.

Having cared for this land since time immemorial, both Tribes plan to restore and protect wildlife habitat and manage for conservation.

“TNC considers opportunities to transfer preserves to highly capable and motivated conservation partners where it benefits the long-term management of the preserve, the long-term goals of the partner and organizational goals,” said Derek Johnson, deputy director for operations and communications for The Nature Conservancy in Oregon. “We are excited that such an opportunity has developed with the Tribes for the future of these preserves, to support the goals of the Tribes and their deep connection to the land, and to advance the Conservancy’s vision of a world where nature and people thrive together.” ♦

Story originally appeared in The Nature Conservancy in Oregon’s 2019 annual report and was adapted for this reprint. The Nature Conservancy conserves the lands and waters on which all life depends. [nature.org/oregon](https://www.nature.org/oregon)

Above photos: At left, Middle Fork of the John Day River, photo courtesy The Nature Conservancy in Oregon; at right, Cheryle A. Kennedy, photo courtesy Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde



“The fact that TNC has returned these lands to their original stewards is beyond words. This generosity allows us to step into our role as caretakers and ensure the existence of this habitat, and this place, for generations to come.”

- Cheryle A. Kennedy,
Chairwoman of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde

Did you know?

In Oregon, there are currently **9 federally-recognized Native American Tribes**, which have over 24,000 members, as well as many federally unrecognized tribes.

Cross-Sector Partnership for Universal Access Trails

Partnering for Health and the Outdoors at Owens Farm



FEATURED MEMBER

Greenbelt Land Trust

Not everyone can currently access natural areas and parks. Greenbelt Land Trust is out to change that. Greenbelt is partnering with visionaries and health leaders on a vision for a landscape that is accessible to all—supporting the diversity of needs for mental and physical health and wellbeing, while protecting unique native species and habitats. Owens Farm in Corvallis, a nearly 600-acre conservation area, is the site of the pilot for this partnership. Trails will connect oak woodland and savanna, wetland and upland native prairies, creeks, and forests as well as farmland and historic buildings.

This project will engage the community in critical conversations about diversity, equity, and removing barriers to accessing the outdoors—serving as a template for effective, holistic, cross-sector collaborations for generations to come. Greenbelt’s next steps include neighbor and community engagement, trail planning and fundraising for the project, in addition to ongoing advocacy for the role land trusts can play in increasing the accessibility of nature to all people and improving the overall health of our communities. ♦

Partners in health include: Samaritan Health Services, Benton County Health Department, Benton County Parks and Natural Areas, Willamette Partnership and the City of Corvallis Parks and Recreation. Story originally appeared in Greenbelt Land Trust’s fall 2019 newsletter and was adapted for this reprint. Greenbelt Land Trust protects the places that are most important to you today, before they are lost tomorrow. [greenbeltlandtrust.org](https://www.greenbeltlandtrust.org)

Above photos: At left: Rendering of a universal access boardwalk for Owens Farm by Evan Elderbrock, University of Oregon’s landscape architecture student designer; at right, Mulkey Ridge hikers and elected officials summer tour, photos courtesy of Greenbelt Land Trust



Did you know?

1 in 4 Oregonians has a disability, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Disability & Health U.S. State Profile Data for Oregon.





CONNECTIVITY

Protecting Wildlife Migration Routes

New Land Trust Acquires Critical Sagebrush Properties

Last summer, Helen Harbin took two trips hiking fence lines in Eastern Oregon, assessing if the fences were designed so that pronghorn could cross. This was Helen's idea of vacation. At 70 years-old, she said heading out alone—with her truck and pop-up camper, enjoying the sunset with a can of dry cider after a hike—keeps her out of trouble. It also keeps the pronghorn moving.

Pronghorn antelope thrive in Oregon's sage-scrubbed landscape, with bands seasonally migrating up to 150 miles, many around Oregon's Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and Nevada's Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge—almost a straight shot south.

It's the places between that Brent Fenty cares about. Fenty, the executive director of Oregon Desert Land Trust (ODLT), has prioritized avoiding development in this corridor and, in 2019, the organization purchased about 1,500 acres—butes, sagebrush, meadows and springs along the pronghorn's route—for wildlife connectivity, conservation value, restoration opportunity, cultural preservation and public recreation.

"Pronghorn are the iconic species of the West and their populations and habitats have been fragmented over time," Fenty said. "Privately-owned lands held by local ranches and, now, the land trust, provide important wildlife habitat between large swaths of surrounding public lands. Maintaining these wide open spaces allows species like pronghorn to move freely and persist for the next thousand years."

Harbin agrees. She sits on the board of directors for ODLT and is a long-time volunteer and supporter of partner organization, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA). Her traverse was along this corridor area. "If I were a pronghorn, I'd look at this place as one of the main highways up to Hart Mountain," Harbin said. "It really is an amazing place and neat work. We're out here doing something good for something bigger than ourselves." ♦

Did you know?

Pronghorn are small, tan antelope with white flanks and dark horns. They're one of the fastest land animals—reaching **top speeds of 55 mph.**

Above: Pronghorn, photo courtesy of Oregon Desert Land Trust; at right, Helen Harbin's pop-up camper from her trip in Eastern Oregon, photo courtesy of Helen Harbin



Oregon Desert Land Trust works to preserve the wild character of Oregon's high desert. oregondesertlandtrust.org



Bend,
Oregon

FEATURED MEMBER

Oregon Desert
Land Trust

“Maintaining these wide open spaces allows species like pronghorn to move freely and persist for the next thousand years.”

- Brent Fenty,
Executive Director of Oregon Desert Land Trust

CLIMATE

Wild Rivers Land Trust

Creating Conversation

On the coast, staff at the Wild Rivers Land Trust (WRLT) noticed more and more people had questions about our changing climate. Ann Schmierer, executive director, wanted to do something about it and began hosting informal, free climate talks around the community. She's been answering questions and sharing science and actions people can take to make a difference. The WRLT's worked with numerous libraries, Rotary Clubs, Church of the Brethren Men's Retreat, and regional organizations—and they plan to continue conversations wherever there's interest.



Photo courtesy WRLT



Photo courtesy TPL

FORESTS

Trust for Public Land

Wildfire Protection

Butte Falls, a small town between Ashland and Crater Lake, was identified as a high risk for wildfires. To protect the town and the drinking water source, the community is working with The Trust for Public Land and partners to purchase 430 acres of forest lands that surround the entire town. The town of Butte Falls will own and manage the community forest for wildfire resiliency, education and recreation, while also providing job opportunities to support the local economy.

WELCOME

Oregon Agricultural Trust

New Associate Member

Agricultural and conservation leaders just launched the new Oregon Agricultural Trust (OAT), a statewide land trust to help Oregon farmers and ranchers preserve and pass on their land to the next generation. After two years of planning and assessment, Nellie McAdams, executive director (and fourth-generation Oregon hazelnut farmer), is thrilled to see this working-lands organization come to life to support farm succession planning and Oregon's rural economy and way of life.



Photo courtesy OAT

MIGRATION

Deschutes Land Trust

Monarch's Journey to California

They named the butterfly Flamingo. This monarch was reared, tagged, and released by the Deschutes Land Trust (DLT) in 2019 and made it to Santa Cruz on October 29th, after 45 days of travel. Flamingo traveled at least 493 miles from Bend and was observed flying back and forth between two overwintering sites. Flamingo was spotted by photographer John Dayton who saw the white, circular sticker tag and snapped a photo (see below). They reported the tag number (G1615) to Dr. David James from Washington State University, who keeps long-term records of Western monarch migration and survivorship. DLT's stewardship director Amanda Egertson visited the overwintering grounds in January to look for Flamingo and got to meet James and Dayton there!



SCHOOL

McKenzie River Trust

Students Benefit

Rural students will now benefit from a scholarship fund established from the sale of 47 acres along Blue River, east of Eugene. The McKenzie School District sold the property in December 2019 to the McKenzie River Trust—who will manage the land for conservation and recreation, and the district will use proceeds for scholarships. Project partners include the McKenzie River Community School, Blue River Parks District and generous anonymous donors. Students will name the property in 2020!

ACQUISITION

Western Rivers Conservancy

Access Granted

When access to the beloved Rattray Ranch boating site on the John Day River was threatened, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) purchased the ranch and conveyed it to the Bureau of Land Management, guaranteeing public access forever. In the process, WRC conserved 22,032 acres of sagebrush country, including 10 miles of the main-stem John Day and the lower nine miles of Thirtymile Creek. This area is home to a critical run of spring Chinook salmon, wild summer steelhead and Oregon's largest herd of California bighorn sheep. WRC's efforts also created new recreational access to 78,000 acres of existing public lands that were otherwise impossible to reach without a boat.



VOLUNTEERS

Road Trip

In 2019, nine photographers volunteered their time and talent, traveling across the state to take photos for COLT—and they amassed over 400 new images for our collection. Thank you!



A sincere thanks to Michelle Hancock, who volunteered to manage the photography project and thanks to our generous volunteer photographers Kevin Smith, Kristin Rush, Leon Werdinger, Jay Newman, Sue Newman, Sarah Sommer, Richard Jacquot, Russell Tomlin and Nick Wagner. The project was supported by a Land Trust Alliance Advancing Conservation Excellence grant.

Partnership Raises Millions for Climate-Resilient Lands

The climate fight just got a new ally—funders. In 2019, four organizations—the Oregon Community Foundation, Seattle Foundation, Idaho Community Foundation and the Land Trust Alliance—launched the Pacific Northwest Resilient Landscapes Initiative. It’s an innovative philanthropic partnership to rally and unite donors from around the region to help permanently protect thousands of acres of natural lands in Oregon, Idaho and Washington. Guided by science, it prioritizes investment in places that are the most critical to helping species and habitats persist in the face of a changing climate. The initiative was seeded with a \$5.3 million grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) and the community foundation partners are committed to raising at least \$3m to complement DDCF’s grant and the matching funds brought by land trusts themselves.

Since the initiative’s launch, six COLT member organizations have received grant awards—Columbia Land Trust, Deschutes Land Trust, McKenzie River Trust, North Coast Land Conservancy, Oregon Desert Land Trust and Pacific Forest Trust. The Initiative will offer a second round of grants in late 2020. ♦



At COLT, **we serve and strengthen** the land trust community in Oregon by building connections and advocating for policies that protect our natural world for all people, forever.

Nick Wagner



Above: Wallowa Lake, photo by David Jensen

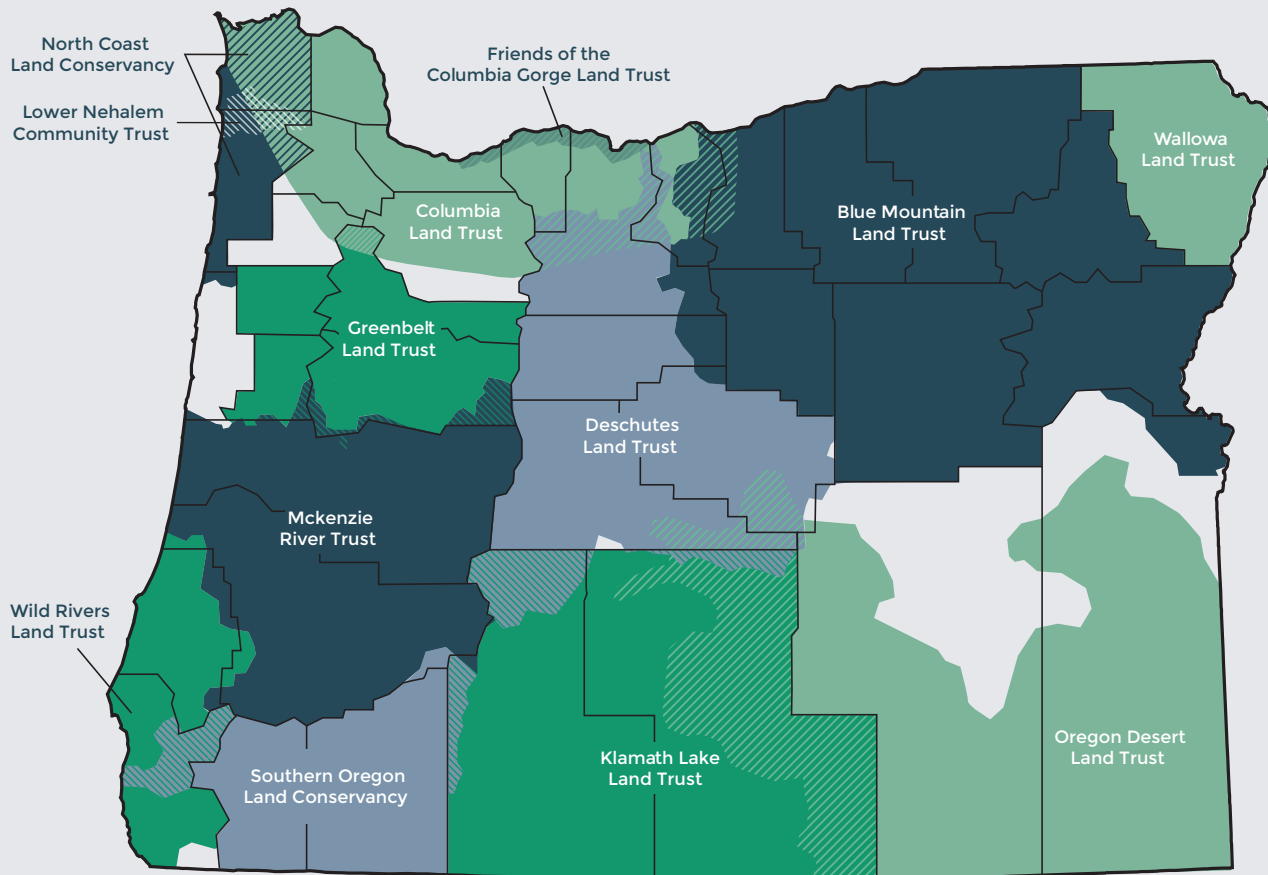
Update: East Moraine Protected

Last year in this report we talked about the East Moraine project and, as of this January, we celebrate it’s success.


We’re thrilled to highlight that Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership, launched by Wallowa Land Trust and others, raised the funds and acquired the nearly 1,800-acre property, transferring ownership to the county and staving off development along Oregon’s iconic lake.

We’ve been there as a community. After a COLT member meeting in 2015, we all met up with our mule train—loaded with Thai take-out food for dinner—and walked up the East Moraine of Wallowa Lake. Once there, we sat in the grass, summer sun getting lower, maps spread around and talked of the vision of one day protecting this place. Now that vision is fulfilled. Congrats to all! ♦

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



Legend

 Overlapping Service Areas



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State of the Lands 2020 is our 2019 annual report and year in review
 Published June, 2020

STATEWIDE WORK

- Center for Natural Lands Management
- Ducks Unlimited
- Northwest Rangeland Trust
- Pacific Forest Trust
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
- The Trust for Public Land
- The Wetlands Conservancy

REGIONAL WORK (see map)

- Blue Mountain Land Trust
- Columbia Land Trust
- Deschutes Land Trust
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
- Greenbelt Land Trust
- Klamath Lake Land Trust
- Lower Nehalem Community Trust
- McKenzie River Trust
- North Coast Land Conservancy
- Oregon Desert Land Trust
- Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
- Wallowa Land Trust
- Wild Rivers Land Trust

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- Clackamas SWCD
- East Multnomah SWCD
- Forest Park Conservancy
- Helvetia Community Association
- Oregon Agricultural Trust
- Tualatin SWCD
- Western Rivers Conservancy
- Yamhill SWCD