



# BAINBRIDGE ISLAND LAND TRUST

FALL 2020 • VOL 30 • NO 2

FOR EVERYONE. FOREVER.

## Want to get involved?

If you are interested in supporting the Land Trust's efforts to safeguard this magnificent property—a dazzling conclusion to the *Stand for the Land* Campaign—please contact Development Director Cullen Brady at [cullen@bi-landtrust.org](mailto:cullen@bi-landtrust.org).

## INTRODUCING ROCKAWAY BLUFF PRESERVE, THE FIFTH STAND FOR THE LAND PROPERTY!

The Land Trust is excited to announce a rare opportunity to protect one of the last remaining intact and unprotected parcels of over twenty acres on the Island—but we need your help.

Read more about this conservation opportunity inside!

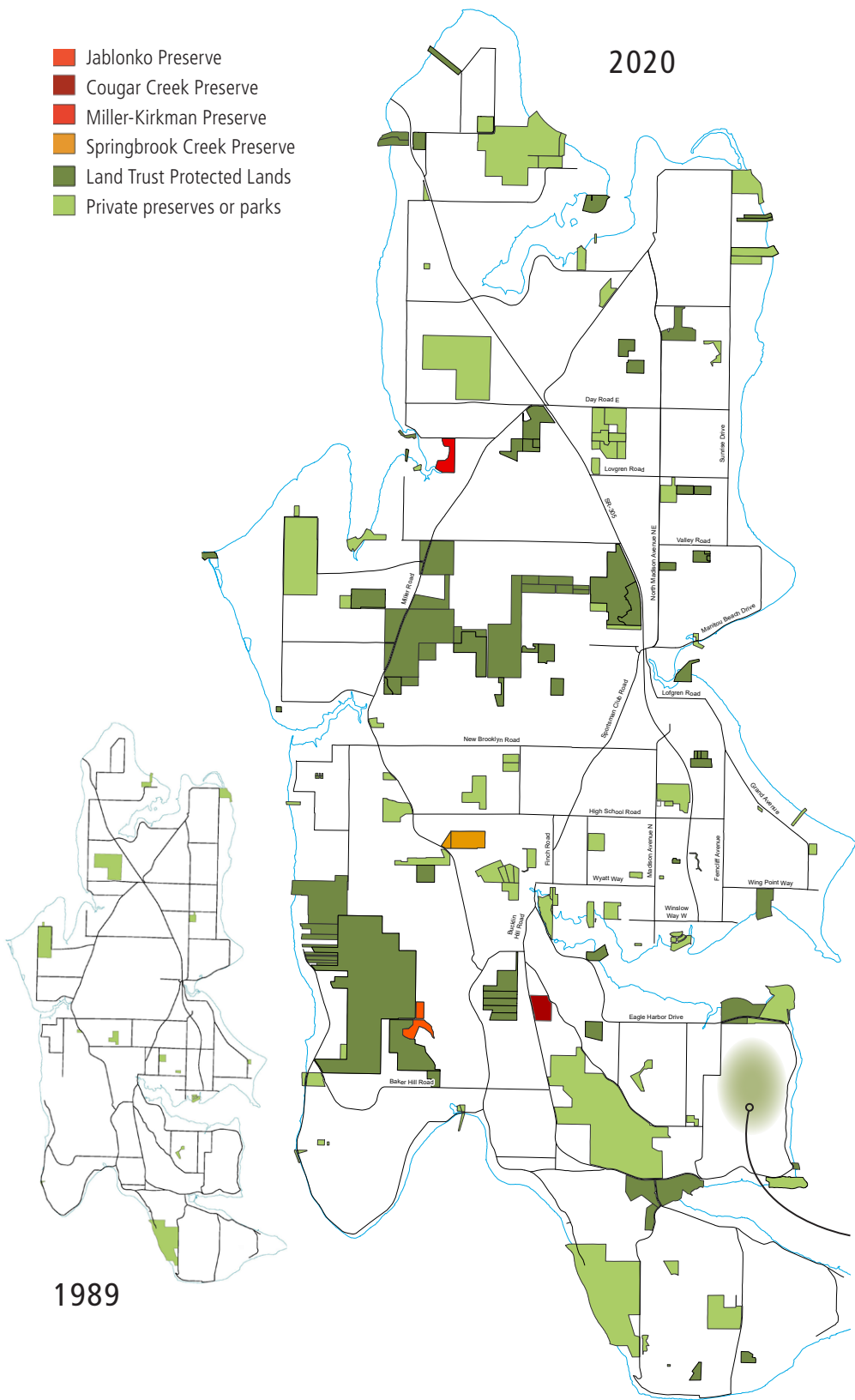


Right: Rockaway Bluff Preserve crowns the bluff south of Bill Point, its magnificent green forest welcoming residents and visitors alike to the Island. Photo: Ben Cowan & Taliesin Black-Brown | Zephyr Visuals  
Top: Initial surveys have documented 82 bird species on the Preserve. Photo: Sue Larkin



BAINBRIDGE ISLAND CONSERVATION LANDS

- Jablonko Preserve
- Cougar Creek Preserve
- Miller-Kirkman Preserve
- Springbrook Creek Preserve
- Land Trust Protected Lands
- Private preserves or parks



Initial surveys have documented 82 bird species in Rockaway Bluff Preserve. Of these, the Audubon Society identified 15 as highly vulnerable to climate change.

Rockaway Bluff lies to the south of Bill Point and Eagle Harbor.  
Above: Snags in the Preserve provide critical nesting habitat for many species. Photo: Sue Larkin

INTRODUCING ROCKAWAY BLUFF PRESERVE, THE FIFTH STAND FOR THE LAND PROPERTY

Stewarded for decades by an Island family, the Preserve forms the core of an extraordinary intact—but currently unprotected—upland forested plateau which provides visitors and residents a striking vista of the Island from the ferry. On a clear day, this iconic forested landscape, with a backdrop of the snow-capped Olympic Mountains, welcomes all to the refuge of the Island.

The Land Trust’s Conservation Values Index tool ranks this property in the top eight high-conservation-value properties on the Island that are not already protected. The Preserve provides critical refuge for many species, specifically birds that have been dislodged from North American Pacific Maritime habitats by development in the Seattle metropolitan area. Initial surveys have documented 82 bird species on the Preserve. The Audubon Society identified 15 of these species as highly vulnerable to climate change. This acquisition is critical for the Land Trust’s continued efforts to build a network of lands resilient to a changing climate.

Snag and Cavity Habitat

Snags and logs are exceedingly scarce on the Island but are plentiful within this unique habitat. These natural features accommodate species such as salamanders, bats, and various other avian and mammal species that rely on large cavities for nesting to thrive. Important local keystone species like pileated woodpeckers and Humboldt’s flying squirrels (recently discovered to be a different species from northern flying squirrels) need contiguous forests with high canopy cover, like the habitat found within this plateau.

Wildlife Habitat Corridor Connection

The Preserve provides a connection with a network of wetlands, streams, protected large forests, and shorelines already conserved in nearby Blakely Harbor Park, IslandWood, Pritchard Park, and the Cougar Creek Preserve. On this bluff, some of the Island’s largest mature grand fir, Douglas-fir, and bigleaf maple tower over Pacific yew, Red alder, Western Red cedar, and cascara. This forest includes a dense and diverse mixed understory featuring over 40 documented native plant species. ■

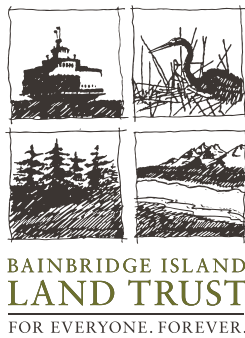


Rockaway Bluff is home to some of the Island’s largest mature grand fir, Douglas fir, and bigleaf maples—which tower over Pacific yew, Red alder, Western Red cedar, and cascara. This forest includes a dense and diverse mixed understory featuring over 40 documented native plant species.

Above: Photo by Sue Larkin  
Below: Photo by Ben Cowan & Taliesin Black-Brown | Zephyr Visuals







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## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE WORK

# THE LAND TRUST'S WORK TO UNDERSTAND WILDLIFE BEHAVIOR IS BOLSTERED BY BAINBRIDGE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT

BY GINA KING AND MATT STEINWURTZEL

In an effort to explore how carnivores live with people across urban and suburban areas in the Seattle region, the Woodland Park Zoo and Seattle University launched the Seattle Urban Carnivore Project (SUCP). Seattle-area residents have been assisting researchers in placing trail cameras and identifying animals in the photos to help understand what attracts species to certain areas and how to foster positive human-carnivore interactions. Last year, the Land Trust partnered with the Zoo to expand the project to include Bainbridge Island. Now, thanks to a grant awarded by the Bainbridge Community Foundation, we have the funding needed to provide our community the opportunity to assist with this exciting initiative. This new program will build off efforts by the Land Trust—since 2015—to better understand the use of our lands on the Island by wildlife by using camera traps to help care for and manage land.

Between 2010 and 2018, the Island's population grew by about eight percent. Population expansion leads to habitat fragmentation, which pushes many wildlife species into more remote areas, or forces them to adapt to higher human densities. On an island, there is only so much room for wildlife migration. This leads to increased wildlife-human conflicts, and more often than not, wildlife are the losers of these conflicts.

In some ways, Bainbridge Island is still a wild place. Intact habitats that the Land Trust and our community have protected over the years support biodiversity, and we must learn how to coexist with the species that also call this Island home.

With this project, Islanders will have the opportunity to help expand our knowledge of local wildlife through camera trap surveys. Over the coming months, the Land Trust and the Woodland Park Zoo will lead training activities (either remote or in-person in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines) for anyone interested in volunteering with the program. Please keep an eye out for more information posted to [www.bi-landtrust.org](http://www.bi-landtrust.org) over the coming weeks. ■



**Why did you purchase a property with an existing conservation easement?**

**"Conservation easements allow for an equilibrium between nature and development that benefits the entire island. The day we moved into the cabin on this ten-acre property, I felt the magic and excitement of knowing that we would be sharing this property with a long list of plant and animal species. Being able to improve the health of the forest, watch patches of vanilla leaf emerge in the spring, and towering bigleaf maples turn gold in the fall has been such a privilege."**

MARYANN KIRKBY

## CONSERVATION EASEMENT LANDOWNER PROFILES

# MEET MARYANN AND RICK KIRKBY

BY ANDREW FRASER

Usually the relationship between the Bainbridge Island Land Trust and its conservation easement landowners begins when landowners place a conservation easement on their property, or purchase a property with one already on it. This was not the case with Maryann and Rick Kirkby.

The Kirkby family first got involved with the Bainbridge Island Land Trust in 2007 when Maryann became the Lead Steward for the Mattson conservation easement. Maryann then served on the Land Trust Board and Stewardship Committee for six years, and was one of the leading champions of the purchase of Agate Passage Preserve. She has developed many of the lists of animals and plants present on various Land Trust preserves and easements. Rick, too, has been active in our organization, providing legal consultation and stewardship assistance in the field.

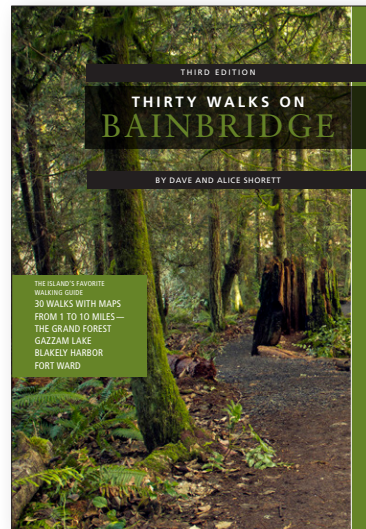
In 2015, they took their dedication to conservation a significant step higher by purchasing an easement formerly known as the von Schrader property. The conservation easement, originally placed by Thomas von Schrader in 1992, protects nearly 7.5 acres of intact and healthy forest and 2.5 acres of grassland. This ecologically diverse property became the site of their newly completed home.

Maryann and Rick are still active within the Land Trust beyond their roles as easement landowners, helping with the Preservation Partners events and Native Plant Sale. Maryann continues to be a Lead Steward and plant identification guru, and is a member of the Projects Committee, helping to find conservation opportunities across the Island. ■



Left: Bat monitoring is part of the Land Trust's ongoing work studying wildlife behavior. In August, Land Trust staff and researchers looked for ideal monitoring sites to record bat activity in the Land Trust's Heart of the Forest property in the Grand Forest. Photo: Staff



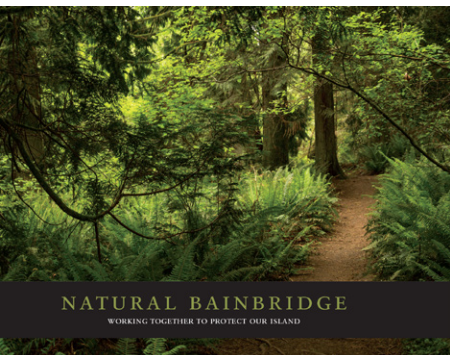


## OUR NEW BOOKS HELP YOU CONNECT WITH NATURE AND EXPLORE OUR SHORELINES, STREAMS, AND FORESTS

The Third Edition of *Walks on Bainbridge*, the Island's favorite guide for exploring the beautiful protected lands of Bainbridge Island is now out—with 30 walks on our over forty miles of trails and our quiet backroads!

This edition has all new color maps (with topo lines!) to plan adventures like the Cross-Island and the Eagle Harbor to Fort Ward routes. Photos show the character of each walk, and side tabs help you quickly find the perfect walk with key walk features like length, difficulty, shore access and more. Maps also clearly show parking areas and toilet facilities.

*Walks on Bainbridge* is available for \$14.95 at Eagle Harbor Book Company, Wilderrest, Bay Hay and Feed, and Dana's Showhouse.



*Natural Bainbridge*, available for \$19.95 at Eagle Harbor Book Co., is perfect for you, your future visitors, and as gifts. An engaging and beautiful book, it beckons us to explore and safeguard our exquisite

preserves, protected spaces, and parks. The 2019 book's pages are packed with original illustrations, work by island photographers, and quotes from local authors.

Both books were produced with all volunteer teams, and their sales support the Land Trust. ■

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE WORK

### CAMERA TRAPS PROVIDE SNAPSHOTS INTO THE ELUSIVE LIVES OF OUR WILDLIFE

BY GINA KING AND MATT STEINWURTZEL

A coyote dashes through your backyard at morning's first light. An owl rushes over your head on your walk through Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve. More often than not, our glimpses into the behaviors of our Island's wildlife are such fleeting experiences that we barely have time to comprehend our observations. This often leaves us with more mystery than understanding of our local wildlife.

But thanks to the use of wildlife camera traps, the Land Trust is increasing our knowledge of the diverse wildlife of Bainbridge Island, and how they depend on the sensitive habitats we work to protect. Our camera trapping efforts have revealed some amazing—and surprising—behaviors of local wildlife, all while providing our community with a window into these otherwise hidden life histories.

Have you heard of a process called *anting*? Well, neither had we until we recorded some peculiar images on one of our camera traps situated in the Miller-Kirkman Preserve. In the photo on page 8, you'll notice a murder of crows gathered on an ant mound. So what was that all about? Our Conservation staff discovered that these crows were engaged in a process known as *anting*. This occurs when birds perch themselves on a thatching ant nest, allowing ants to crawl into their feathers in order to spray formic acid in a defensive behavior. The acid penetrates the bird's feathers, and eliminates lice!

For Islanders interested in learning about more of the captivating behaviors revealed by camera traps, we have some good news. Recently, the Land Trust—in partnership with the Woodland Park Zoo—was granted funding through the Bainbridge Community Foundation to launch a project that engages Islanders and wildlife professionals in a long-term effort to monitor carnivores and other wildlife on the Island, all while contributing to the larger Seattle Urban Carnivore Project. To learn more about this exciting development, see the story on page 2 about the Land Trust's work studying wildlife behavior on its protected properties—for more captivating images and stories of our local wildlife, visit [www.bi-landtrust.org](http://www.bi-landtrust.org). ■

### THE 2020 ANNUAL PRESERVATION PARTNERS EVENT, REIMAGINED: A RECAP

BY MATT OTEPKA AND MATT STEINWURTZEL

Adapt and overcome has been the optimist's mantra during this time, as our community has been forced by the pandemic to make changes in our daily routines and perspectives. The Land Trust has also embodied this motto—and our annual summer fundraiser was proof that adaptation can lead to success!

Over the past decade, our annual Preservation Partners gala has been essential to raising funds for our general operations, but it also enables us flexibility to respond to urgent Land Trust needs.

In recent years, we've hosted the annual event in beautiful settings, out on the land. This year's event, originally planned for July 18, was set to be another stunner. But COVID-19, and ensuing state-mandated guidance and restrictions on gatherings meant that the 400-guest outdoor fundraiser suddenly needed a major redesign.

Fortunately, our dauntless staff and driven volunteers reimagined it as an online virtual event that inspired the community to continue supporting the mission of the Land Trust. Thanks to your contributions, not only did we meet our initial fundraising goal, but we surpassed it, receiving over \$430,000 to keep the Land Trust strong. Over 285 households tuned into the online Summer Celebration!

With the help of Zephyr Visuals, local professional photographer Cameron Karsten, Land Trust board and staff, and other volunteers, the team created a 30-minute online program that provided viewers with captivating landscape and aerial imagery of Land Trust properties interwoven with testimonials from supporters, humor from our emcees Kevin Joyce and Martha Enson, and exciting news from our Executive Director, Jane Stone. The compelling video program launched the effort to protect the fifth property in the Stand for the Land campaign, the incredible Rockaway Bluff Preserve—featured in this newsletter.

To all of you who participated, thank you. You've inspired us to continue to adapt and overcome. ■



We thank all of the stars of our successful 2020 Preservation Partners Summer Celebration — and our partners and our members.



Top: Our always-charming emcees Kevin Joyce and Martha Enson carried on the spirit of in-person Preservation Partners summer events.  
Bottom: Land Trust Board Member Matt Otepka told guests why he volunteers and raises the fern in support of the Land Trust.



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This beautiful, meditative image of kayakers near the Miller-Kirkman Preserve in Little Manzanita estuary was featured on the Preservation Partners Summer Celebration invitation. Photo © Ben Cowan & Taliesin Black-Brown, Zephyr Visuals



## PROFILES OF PRESERVATION PARTNERS

### PETE OLSON OF J. KELLY & ASSOCIATES



**Can you briefly describe yourself, your role at J. Kelly, and some of your personal interests?**

Following careers as a golf professional and an adjunct English college instructor, I ended up in financial services, where I have been for 22 years. I worked for a major Wall Street firm for

over 12 years, and in 2010 was appointed President and Junior Partner of J. Kelly, which provides a niche service to financial services firms. In 2014, I purchased the company in full and became its CEO.

Ironically, I haven't played golf in almost a decade, but I enjoy running, tennis, and finding beautiful places to enjoy with my wife Michelle and daughter Mary.

**How did local giving become a part of who you are and what you do?** When we moved to Bainbridge Island in 2016, I was seeking opportunities to get involved with local organizations that make Bainbridge a better place to live, to raise a family, and ultimately to make the world a better place. I believe in the work we do locally that can be shared with other localities also seeking to improve their own circumstances and preserve that which they hold dear.

**Why has the Land Trust become a local cause that you support?** As a recently trained Climate Reality Leader with Al Gore's Climate Reality Project, it is undeniable that climate change is the existential crisis with which we are all faced. As such, it was important for me to support an organization that seeks to preserve the world's natural and simultaneously beautiful mechanisms—forests, trees, untilled soil—to counter the climate impacts. The Land Trust's mission was in alignment with these sentiments, so it made sense to get involved and give support.

**What would you like the community to know?** While the Land Trust is indeed local and will remain as such, I believe it can and must serve as a model for other municipalities coming to grips with what local steps can be taken to minimize the impacts of the changing environment. While our efforts to preserve the environment are phenomenal for those who live here on Bainbridge, I believe that being an example to and sharing knowledge with other communities is a value that can effectuate positive results around Seattle, Washington, and beyond. ■

### BEN COWAN AND TALIESIN BLACK-BROWN OF ZEPHYR VISUALS

**Can you describe yourselves, what Zephyr Visuals does, and your connections to the Island?**

Tal and Ben are both Island natives, having grown up romping around in the forests near their homes on the south end and graduating from Bainbridge High School. In 2018, Ben and Tal started Zephyr Visuals, a film production company based in Seattle. There is no doubt that growing up on the Island has shaped their appreciation and care for the community and the natural world, and these values carry through in their work.

**How do you use media to tell inspiring stories about people, organizations, places, and other groups?**

Tal and Ben believe in the power of film to move people emotionally, and to inspire them to consider new perspectives. Film provides a means to communicate on every level: emotionally, visually, viscerally, intellectually, and musically. To do this effectively, we bring together the camera nerds, editing wizards, musicians, writers, dreamers, drawers, recorders, and listeners from around the world. Together, we've made commercials and documentaries and most importantly, lasting friendships.

**Why has the Land Trust become a local cause that you support?**

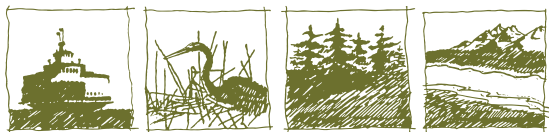
We see incredible importance in protecting wild places, giving respect and dignity to all beings, and allowing them a place in our communities as we continue to grow and develop. Our connection to the Island and to nature—which started in our backyards as youngsters —deeply inspires us creatively. We feel extremely grateful for the opportunity to express our love of the Island through film while also supporting a cause we believe in.

**What would you like the community to know?** If we're going to continue to exist on this planet as a species, we need to shift our consciousness. Away from that individualistic, competitive, fearfulness, toward a realization of our connection to one another and the natural world. We have no clue how to do this either, but we hope that we can all figure it out. ■



Ben Cowan, top, and Taliesin Black-Brown.





## BAINBRIDGE ISLAND LAND TRUST

FOR EVERYONE. FOREVER.

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Your ongoing support is helping to  
expand protected areas on Bainbridge Island.  
Visit [www.bi-landtrust.org](http://www.bi-landtrust.org) to learn more  
about recent land acquisitions  
in the **Stand for the Land** campaign!

### CALENDAR

**Due to the continuing need to reduce person to person contact, scheduling of Land Trust events and property tour dates remains fluid.**

Please check in with us at [www.bi-landtrust.org/news-and-events/events](http://www.bi-landtrust.org/news-and-events/events) for details and more information on property tours and other events!



During monitoring of the Miller-Kirkman Preserve, our Conservation Staff recorded peculiar behavior on our wildlife camera trap. Check out that murder of crows on an ant mound! What's this all about? Well, birds are known to sit on thatching ant nests, allowing ants to crawl into their feathers and spray formic acid, a defensive ant behavior. The acid penetrates the birds' feathers, eliminating bird lice—a process called "anting." Robins, jays, crows, and other songbirds have also been observed anting.

