



BAINBRIDGE ISLAND LAND TRUST

FALL 2021 · VOL 31 · NO 2

FOR EVERYONE. FOREVER.

COMING EVENTS

Introducing the Friends of Agate Passage Preserve

Zoom Info Session: Nov. 9, 7 to 8 pm

On-site Training Session:

Dec. 4, 10 am to noon

Go to bi-landtrust.org/protected-space/agate-passage-preserve/ for details.

Join to learn about the Preserve's history, why the Land Trust worked to protect it, and the long-term goals of stewarding this special place.

Future dedicated members of Friends of Agate Passage group will help the Land Trust achieve its conservation goals on the ground.

First Wednesday Work Parties

November 3 and December 1, 9 to 11am

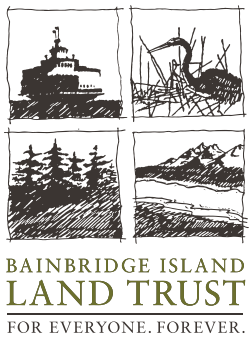
See our website for details and more events: www.bi-landtrust.org/events

Follow us on Instagram & Facebook!



Conservation Success! The Land Trust's 35-acre Rockaway Bluff Preserve has been protected!

The Preserve crowns the bluff south of Bill Point. Its magnificent green canopy of bigleaf maples and Grand fir welcome residents and visitors alike to the Island, and offer superb migratory bird habitat. Photos: Sue Larkin



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NEWS FROM THE BOARD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO PASS THE TORCH

With great appreciation and gratitude, I have decided to step down from my role as Executive Director of the Land Trust. I so value the time we've had together pursuing the excellent work of the Land Trust, and I'm proud of all the gains we've made and the milestones we've reached.

I look forward to passing the torch to the next Executive Director of this incredible community organization toward the end of this year.

The Land Trust's focus on our mission has never been stronger, and thanks to all of you members and volunteers, our staff has the support and commitment from the community to continue their excellent work.

While I'm retiring from my role as Executive Director, I will, of course, continue to be an enthusiastic supporter of the Land Trust. We've achieved so much organizational growth and, most importantly, conservation gains for the Island—its land and waters that nourish us, wildlife who thrive, and impacts that ripple out into the Salish Sea.

I'm excited to see the Land Trust continue its successful role as Bainbridge Island's conservation leader.

Warmest and sincerest thanks to all of you for your past and future support!

THE 2021 NATIVE PLANT SALE WAS A BIG SUCCESS, SELLING NEARLY 2,200 PLANTS!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and joined in this year's event. We saw an expanded event this year, with speakers and partner booths.

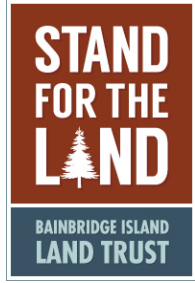
This year's speakers were Azure Boure, Traditional Plant Program Coordinator with the Suquamish Tribe, and John Van Den Meerendonk of the Hardy Fern Foundation. Sustainable Bainbridge and WSU Beach Naturalist Program also provided information and connections for plant sale shoppers.

For more information about the plant sale and planting and care tips visit bi-landtrust.org/get-involved/native-plants



CONSERVATION WORK OF REGIONAL IMPORTANCE

THE LAND TRUST WAS RECENTLY AWARDED STATE AND COUNTY FUNDS TO SUPPORT *STAND FOR THE LAND*.



The multi-year Springbrook Creek Watershed Assessment studied the 999-acre watershed that drains into Fletcher Bay. The assessment identified the most critical priorities for protecting and improving the watershed with assistance from Wild Fish Conservancy, area partners, and over 50 landowners. The watershed has almost five miles of critical habitat for one of our state's most iconic and endangered fish species, steelhead trout, and is one the best fish habitats on the Island for Coho salmon, chum salmon, and cutthroat trout. The 23-acre Springbrook Creek Preserve was identified as a high protection priority and hosts some of the highest quality stream and wetland conditions in the entire watershed. Springbrook Creek flows cold and clear in the preserve and is the only area in the watershed cool enough for salmon year-round.

Because of the preserve's value to these fish, the Land Trust applied for and was recently awarded over \$400,000 in grants from Kitsap County (Conservation Futures) and the State of Washington (Salmon Recovery Funding Board). The health of our creeks and watersheds is a critical priority not just for us but also for the region and state, and the health of the Island's watersheds ripples far beyond the Island. Land Trust Conservation Director, Brenda Padgham, added "Collaborating with regional partners to conserve land makes so much sense, and acquiring this special property simply would not have been possible without their support and funding."

Established by the Washington State Legislature in 1999, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) distributes state and federal money to protect and restore salmon habitat. Honoring the "Washington Way" of ground-up salmon recovery decision-making, the SRFB works closely with local watershed groups to identify projects in need of funding. **They elected to support this project because of its far-reaching effects and granted the Land Trust \$300,000.**

Kitsap County Conservation Futures (KCCF) is a land preservation program that protects, restores, and limits the future use of threatened areas of open space, timberlands, wetlands, habitat areas, culturally significant sites, and agricultural farmlands in Kitsap County. KCCF funds, acquired through a property tax levy, are used to purchase land or the rights to the future development of land. **KCCF granted the Land Trust \$100,000 for Springbrook Creek Preserve and \$100,000 for Rockaway Bluff Preserve.**

Beyond acquiring and protecting the Springbrook Creek Preserve, the Land Trust also has plans to improve habitat. A blocking culvert will be removed, opening a quarter mile of fish-rearing habitat in the stream. Invasive plants will be removed and replaced with native plants. Land Trust crews will plant trees and bushes along the creek to help shade the water, keeping it cool enough for fish. Those plants also drop branches and leaves into the water, providing food for the insects that salmon eat. Roots of plants help keep soil from entering the water, where it can smother fish spawning gravel.

The Land Trust is grateful to our county, state, and federal partners for helping us acquire valuable properties, protect local species and supporting *Stand for the Land*. ■



Salmon Recovery Funding Board

WASHINGTON STATE
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

The health of our creeks and watersheds is a critical priority not just for us but also for the region and state, and the health of the Island's watersheds ripples far beyond the Island.



ISLAND YOUTH VOICES

BRYN TIERNAN, SENIOR AT BHS

“Growing up on our family farm on the Island, I fed sheep, collected eggs, weeded, and helped out in the vegetable gardens. My parents focused on creating a sustainable and safe environment, and most of our produce was given back to the community through our farm store.



“In my Junior year, I took AP Environmental Science. Many of the ideas and practices we learned about related to my experiences on the farm. Our awesome teacher, Mr. (Jason) Uitvlugt, made it fun and exciting to learn about dams, renewable energy sources, and other cultural and environmental issues.

“I had heard about

the Land Trust from my parents and wanted to get involved. I’ve appreciated learning more about the *Stand for the Land* campaign and all the volunteering opportunities for giving back to the community.”

“My biggest concern for the environment is the health of our waters and oceans, which is why I think the work of the Land Trust is so important.” ■

Springbrook Creek flows cold and clear—and is the only area in the watershed cool enough for salmon year-round. It is one of the best fish habitats on the Island and is home to steelhead trout and Coho salmon, chum salmon, and cutthroat trout. Photo: Lindsey Toler



THE SCIENCE CORNER

FOREST STEWARDSHIP UPDATE: Will our forests be resilient enough to handle the anticipated effects of climate change?

Our forests were once full of giant trees and native shrub understory, providing abundant resources to the local indigenous communities. It’s hard to believe the forests we see today have had 100 years or less to recover from clearcutting. Though we see many beautiful mature forest areas now, we also see crowded stands, dying cedars, and other signs of potential trouble. The Land Trust is well aware of the community’s concern about wildfire and changing climate conditions.

As landowners and stewards of over 800 acres on Bainbridge Island, the Land Trust has made a concerted effort to understand our forests better and how to best manage them. We’ve been examining the conditions of our landscapes and options for current and future stewardship toward achieving ecological goals.

In 2020, we convened an 11-member Forest Stewardship Advisory Group (FSAG), composed of Island residents and regional community members with expertise in forestry. Led by Gina King, Land Trust wildlife biologist, the group worked with staff and the Land Trust Stewardship Committee, holding meetings and discussing fire, insects, and disease.

In March, we helped organize the ABC Environmental Conference, *The Future of our Forests: Bainbridge Island and the Climate Crisis*. (See highlights of the conference at <https://islandwood.org/get-involved-with-environmental-steam-education/2021-abc-conference-recap>)

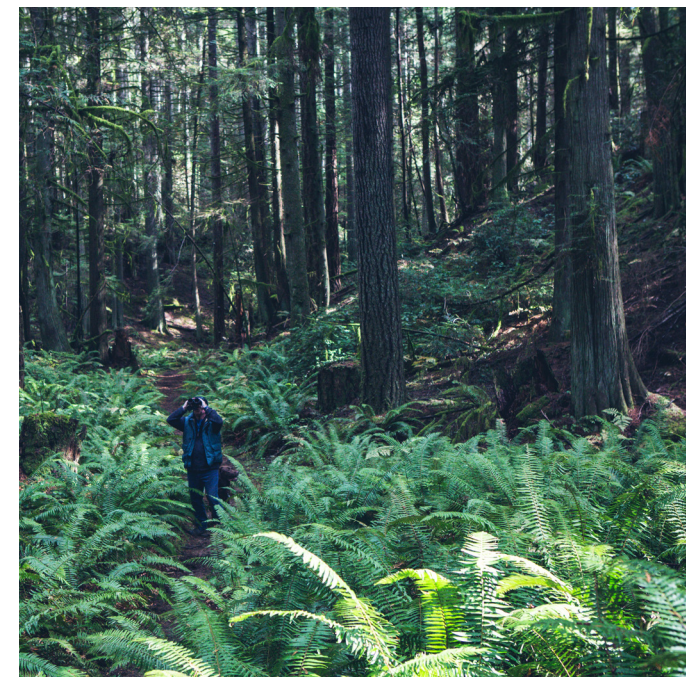
The Land Trust has contracted with Kirk Hanson, an ecological forester with Northwest Natural Resources Group, to assess the condition of our forests and provide management recommendations.

The assessments, forest management plans, and FSAG discussions have raised questions and prompted more discussions on issues such as:

- What forest composition supports wildlife diversity and keeps the stand moving toward old-growth structure (e.g., the density of snags and downed wood versus live trees), and what passive or active steps are needed to meet the goal?
- What actions will help improve resilience to disease and changing conditions? Would reducing stand density be effective?
- Besides using modern forestry practices, how can we incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in our management? How can we learn about indigenous communities’ cultural uses of land, and could some of those traditional practices and uses be restored?
- What are the options for thinning and forest management? Can we experiment with constructing wildlife piles and biochar to utilize the downed wood?
- How can we best reduce the risk of wildfires, especially relative to residential structures close to forested land? Options to consider include breaking up the continuity of ground and ladder fuels and thinning stands in managed forest buffers near structures.
- What financial resources do we need to secure to implement forest management plans?

The Land Trust looks forward to sharing more management plans as they evolve into actions! ■

Looking ahead, we question if the forests we steward are on track to become the old forests we desire. Will they be forests with a good mix of large, healthy trees and scattered snags over layers of native trees, shrubs, and ferns, providing high quality habitat for our wildlife? Will our forests be resilient enough to handle the anticipated effects of climate change?



The Jablonko Preserve.
Photo: Sue Larkin

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Perpetuity:

The state or quality of lasting forever.

Since 1989, the Bainbridge Island Land Trust has been the conservation leader on the Island. Our work has been made possible by members like you. As we look forward, it's reassuring that many of your friends and neighbors have included the Land Trust in their estate plans. These gifts have a lasting impact, will sustain our work into the future, and provide peace of mind for all of us who believe in protecting the Island's natural places for the benefit of all. **Forever.**

Please let us know if you have included the Land Trust in your will or trust. No estate plans yet? Visit our website and use our free tool, FreeWill, to create a free and legal will or to find a planning worksheet to use with your estate attorney.

Encourage relatives and friends to use this free service provided by the Land Trust.

Questions? Please connect with Laura O'Mara — laura@bi-landtrust.org.

To learn more, please visit bi-landtrust.org/donate/legacy-giving.

Left: Our welcoming sign to the 2021 Native Plant Sale featuring photos by Paul Brians.

PROFILES OF LAND TRUST VOLUNTEERS

TRACKING WILDLIFE ON THE ISLAND
THE GILBERT KERN FAMILY

After being “hunkered down for months online,” Alorie Gilbert, her husband Christopher Kern, and their son Lukas decided that the Seattle Urban Carnivore Project (SUCP) sounded like a fantastic opportunity to get out of the house and do something as a family. They have joined the ranks of many Islanders willing to donate their time and energy for Land Trust projects. Lukas, an 11-year-old, was especially intrigued by the technology of running a wildlife camera, collecting the images, and generally preparing the data as part of the long-term project.



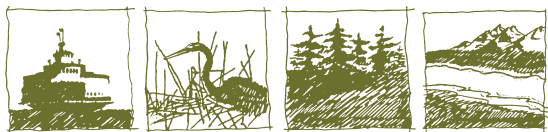
A beautiful coyote in Cougar Creek Preserve's February 2021 snows.

The SUCP is a survey and data gathering program run by Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo. The Land Trust has set up three camera trap stations on the Island as part of a national survey. The Bainbridge Community Foundation also provided funding for the Island to participate in the SUCP, headed up by Gina King, the Land Trust's wildlife biologist.

Along with volunteer Christine Susumi, the Gilbert-Kern family learned how to maintain a wildlife camera trap and collect images of our animal friends in the Land Trust wildlife corridor. The other two traps, run by 11 other volunteers, are within the Rockaway Bluff Preserve and Cougar Creek Preserve, where a cougar was captured on film early this year!

Alorie said their first monthly monitoring and collection visit was very exciting, capturing coyotes and squirrels. From the beginning, the volunteers felt that recording animal behavioral data and increasing our understanding of how we engage and coexist with island wildlife was an important contribution to overall conservation efforts. “It's gotten our whole family talking more deeply about the natural world around us,” said Alorie.

Alorie said that the SUCP is their first Land Trust volunteer experience. “But,” she said, “it will not be our last, and it's about doing things we like, find interesting and important.” ■



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

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A native honeysuckle blossom in the Springbrook Creek Preserve. Photo: Sue Larkin

