

VASHON-MAURY ISLAND PROTECTED LANDS 2013

The following preserves are held in a combination of ownership patterns by the Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust, the Vashon Park District, King County, and private landowners.

PRESERVES	ACRES
Camp Sealth	101
Christensen Pond Preserve	34
Christensen Ravine & Estuary	43
Dockton Forest & Natural Area	408
Ellis Creek Estuary	3
Ellisport Creek Wildlands	23
Fern Cove	14
Fisher Creek Preserve	11
Fisher Pond Preserve	144
Hudson Preserve	5
Inspiration Point	15
Island Center Forest	440
Lost Lake	37
MacLeod Preserve	22
Manzanita	2
Marjorie Stanley Forest	17
Mileta Creek Wildlife Refuge	15
Neil Point	52
Northilla	5
Paradise Valley Preserve	104
Piner Point	7
Point Heyer	36
Raab's Lagoon	18
Shinglemill Creek Preserve	108
Whispering Firs Bog	19
TOTAL	1,683

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2013

- Through the efforts of Senator Sharon Nelson, we received a 2-year, \$4 million WA State Dept. of Ecology grant for conservation acquisitions on Vashon and Maury.
- Added a critical piece to the Paradise Valley Preserve by acquiring 10 acres at the mouth of Judd Creek.
- Ended the fiscal year with a tremendously strong showing from our donors, putting us in the best financial position we've enjoyed since the 2007 heyday prior to the downturn.
- Celebrated the passage of the King County Parks levy, which strengthens one of our key conservation partners on the island.
- Received notice that we would be getting our first-ever bequest in will. We are very grateful to our benefactor, Gertrude Cormier, who passed on July 30, 2013.
- Assisted in King County's purchase of the 40-acre in holding at Dockton Forest, thereby providing permanent protection for the property and the ability to move forward on much-needed restoration of that forest.

2013 LAND TRUST FINANCIAL REPORT

WHERE OUR FUNDS CAME FROM

Grants & Contracts	\$76,328	(22%)
Contributions	\$214,724	(63%)
In-Kind	\$2,117	(1%)
Events	\$14,999	(4%)
Interest & Earned Income	\$32,517	(10%)
TOTAL INCOME	\$340,685*	

*not including \$725,000 in-kind funds from WA Dept. of Ecology for property purchase

WHERE WE SPENT OUR FUNDS

Fundraising	\$41,743	(13%)
Administration (including building)	\$48,038	(16%)
Programs	\$216,493	(70%)
Advocacy	\$1,602	(1%)
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$307,876	



Vashon-Maury Island LAND TRUST

Annual Report 2013

March 2014

Dear Land Trust Members and Friends:

2014 promises to be an exciting year for the Land Trust. Our board and staff have kicked off the year energized and inspired, with wonderful support from the community. Our partnerships with the county and state agencies are strong, and our opportunities are great. In the works are many projects to protect more wildlife habitat and to expand the island's trail networks – opportunities to run, walk, bird, bike and play outside. Our many successes, of course, belong to you – our supporters – and we are very grateful.

The 2008 economic downturn, and the lean years that followed, forced the Land Trust to tighten its belt and think hard about priorities. While one never welcomes such circumstances, they do present the opportunity for reflection on mission and program. Looking back, the board and staff did an excellent job navigating those choppy waters. We faced hard choices, had tough discussions, and made difficult decisions. And now, as a result, we are emerging more focused, effective and efficient than ever.

My high school soccer coach always insisted that “we make our luck” – it is through discipline and persistence that we position ourselves to take advantage of opportunities which arise. 2013 was a pivotal year for the Land Trust, and we were well positioned to take advantage of opportunities – the result of hard work, a successful track record, smart strategy, strong relationships, and support both on and off the island.

It was my good fortune to be leading the organization when we learned that, after many lean years in Olympia, the legislature had appropriated \$300 million for conservation initiatives across the state, including \$4 million directed to Vashon-Maury Island. In close partnership with King County, we are using these funds to protect and acquire priority open space, critical habitat, and park lands on the island.

It was also in 2013 that King County voters overwhelmingly approved the Parks Levy – setting aside \$396 million over six years for trails, maintenance and operations, and acquisitions. The Land Trust was active in this campaign, and our community will benefit by seeing an expanded and well-maintained trail system on the island.

We are honored and humbled by your support and confidence in the Land Trust. We can't do it without you. Thank you so very much.

Joseph Bogaard, Board President, 2013

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It's why we live here.



TAKE A HIKE

What's the difference between a "walk" and a "hike"? Road walkers definitely go for a walk, even if it's a long one, so distance isn't the difference. But if you're on a trail for only half an hour, is that a hike? And if so, is it a meaningful hike?

Such existential questions are good to ponder while you're walking the trails of Vashon. If you haven't noticed, the trails are growing longer, and if you're out there for more than half an hour it's good to have a question to chew on.

And while you're pondering, consider this. Trails don't just happen. The Land Trust builds them, mile upon mile. "We hire young, strong backs," explains Land Steward, Abel Eckhardt. Each summer, the Land Trust hires a crew leader and three crew members to do the hard, outdoor work under Abel's guiding hand. The crew members are typically college students with a background in the natural sciences and the environment.

The 2013 crew (pictured here) began the season with trail maintenance – fixing rough spots, repairing creek crossings, and trimming back the brush that somehow grows through the winter. They also had their hands full keeping thousands of new plantings alive from the past two year's projects – including 4,000 new trees and shrubs on the Paradise Valley Preserve along Singer Road and 111th Avenue. It was a great, fun and hardworking crew.



This year's interns will arrive in June. We look forward to welcoming Sarah Martin from the University of Florida, Melaney Dunn from Loyola University, and Adam Sheirer from California University of Pennsylvania. This crew's big goal for the summer will be building a brand new loop trail in Paradise Valley.

This trail will be accessible from two spots along 111th Avenue. It will cross Judd Creek and meander through meadows in the heart of Paradise Valley. Looking ahead, we hope this loop will become the anchor for an eventual Judd Creek Trail – running the full length of Judd Creek from the old Burton School site, through Paradise Valley, connecting with the Island Center Forest trail network, and continuing right into Vashon town. Coffee in Burton, and lunch in Vashon. Now that sounds like a meaningful hike.

THE LONG RUN

Anyone who's planted an orchard knows it takes time and patience before you get to pick the first apple from a tree. All that deer fencing finally pays off. And the watering. And the pruning. Conserving land is the same process and years can pass before it bears fruit.

A recent purchase by King County in the Shinglemill watershed is a case in point. The County has been an important partner for the Land Trust in numerous preservation projects over the years. In January, the County closed on the purchase of a spectacular 67-acre parcel in the Shinglemill Ravine. If you have hiked the Shinglemill Creek Trail, you have treaded this property. You may have parked on this land at the trailhead on Cedarhurst Road. Along this flat stretch of floodplain, you may have wandered with your children down to the creek's edge looking for a glimpse of fish swimming upstream. This past fall, we had more Coho salmon spawning in this reach than we've seen for many, many years.

It took 13 years to bring that land from commercial timber ownership to ultimately become part of the Shinglemill Preserve. A decade or more isn't unusual in land preservation. In 2003, during the drawn out negotiations to purchase the Glacier mine site, the Land Trust kept an eye on a 40-acre piece of forest adjacent to the mine site. The forest was part of the state school trust fund and we advocated transferring the land to King County. For reasons that were highly political, and had everything to do with the mine, that transfer never happened. Last December, however, the County was finally able to purchase the property.

The vision of the Land Trust is long, by necessity. The very concept of land conservation is to preserve the quality of wildlife habitat, and also the availability of land, water and natural areas for human use, for a very, very long time. The land we've been preserving on Vashon and Maury Islands for the past 25 years is held "in perpetuity" for generations to come. One local conser-



the Water • KEEP Vashon Wild

vation leader calls this “the audacity of perpetuity.”

Implicit in this idea is the responsibility for stewarding the preserved land – insuring that boundaries are secure and that habitat remains protected or is restored. Stewardship is an important part of the Land Trust’s job. For conservation to last, the Land Trust must survive. This means doing everything we can to build a strong, sustainable organization.

We’re doing this by following nationally-established standards and practices, by building our reserve funds, and by investing in what it takes to care for the land – to make our preserves more self-sustaining.

I thought about the sweep of time recently while walking through a 20-acre parcel of mature Douglas fir that is available for conservation. Unlike some Vashon “forest”, where trees have been planted so densely it blocks the natural light and the forest floor is largely barren, these trees were spaced naturally and beneath was a healthy undergrowth of salal and evergreen huckleberry. So thick was the shrub layer that not even the dread weeds English ivy or holly had a chance. This was habitat well poised to last “in perpetuity.”

Perpetuity is a long time. And when you think about it in those terms, a decade or so working on a single land purchase really doesn’t seem that long, does it?



FAREWELL, BUT NOT GOODBYE

Bon voyage to Beth Bordner as she leaves the Land Trust after nine years of service as our Operations Manager. Beth is planning a move to Northern California to be closer to family and in a quest for maybe just a tad more sunshine. So, we may be saying farewell, but we’ll be visiting Beth after she gets settled. San Francisco? Tahoe? Yosemite? Wine country? Did somebody say “road trip!?”

Beth’s tenure at the Land Trust is as deep and wide as the Shinglemill Ravine, which, as it happens, is the location of one of her legacy projects. Her skill and hard work, especially in helping negotiate three easements across private property, made the popular Shinglemill Creek Trail possible. These were the first such easements signed on Vashon. We hope they set a precedent for others to come.

As with all small organizations, no job is just one job and Beth’s responsibilities at the Land Trust covered the waterfront. She was the cheery voice on the telephone and the smiling face that you saw when you came in the office door. She paid the bills, kept an eagle eye on the budget, managed the financial books, and produced the Land Trust’s detailed monthly financial report to the Board. She organized our popular annual native tree sale. And she was the go-to staffer on membership matters.

As the front-office person, Beth handled the constant and countless inquiries with patience, efficiency and grace — including the odd requests totally unrelated to the Land Trust. People have mailed items to the Land Trust with requests to deliver them to someone else unaffiliated with the organization. People often call asking for other Island phone numbers or wondering if we’re selling tickets to the next Drama Dock show. She’s given referrals for everything from dog walkers to caterers. Visitors ask where to find the best scenic view, and for predictions of when and where to spot the local Orca pod. And there were off-the-wall queries: Where can I find a safe place to exercise my disabled ferret? And yes, can you help me find my lost turtle?

We jokingly call this part of her job “Full-Service Land Trust.” Got a question? Call the Land Trust and ask Beth. One woman dropped in to see if the Land Trust would buy out her ex-husband’s half of their house so she could afford to keep living there. It’s all part of the character of the Vashon-Maury community and it’s what Beth tells us that she will miss.

The Land Trust has made huge strides in the last decade and much of that progress is due to the skill and diligence of Beth Bordner. She has been a key player in our small, close-knit Land Trust staff and we are a more professional and efficient organization because of her. We will miss her problem-solving, attention to detail, sunny disposition and good humor. We’re proud of her accomplishments, and all of us — staff, members of the Board, and Land Trust members — wish her the best in her next life chapter.