



## Dear Land Trust Supporters,

Little did we know what would hit us in 2020. It was a year full of uncertainty and adaptation as we learned to cope with the pandemic. Suddenly phrases like “lock down” and “shelter in place” were the norm. On Vashon Island, we were lucky. We have not been entirely locked down – because we have the great outdoors just beyond our doors. The network of parks and preserves the Land Trust has built over the past 30 years – with your support – has served us well in this crisis.

We flocked outside, we hit the trails and beaches, we watched for salmon, whales, and birds. We let the forests be the escape from being inside. We let the green branches soothe our worries. We went to the places the Land Trust has set aside and opened to the public: Shinglemill Creek, Fisher Pond, Island Center Forest, Judd Creek, Christensen Pond, Dockton Forest, and Frog Holler.

In the past 30 years, your support of the Land Trust has leveraged \$91 million in funding to protect forests, creeks, beaches, farmland, and drinking water. That is a whole lot of leverage! While all that investment was good for the Island and for the planet, little did we know how critical it would be in a time of crisis. Nature sometimes supports us in ways we don't see. Or at least don't see coming.

The crisis we do see coming, though, is climate change. It is critical that we do not lose our momentum preserving the parts of Vashon that will shelter us in the future. Our five-year Conservation Plan is winding to a close this year, so it is time to start building a new plan that will take on the challenges of the future. And that start begins with you.

I invite you to send me comments on what you would like to see included in the next five-year Land Trust Conservation Plan.

- What park or preserve would you most like to see expanded?
- What special piece of wildlife habitat or farmland you would like to see preserved?
- Which types of landscape do you feel are most critical to protect?

I'd like to hear your thoughts. Please contact me directly at [tom@vashonlandtrust.org](mailto:tom@vashonlandtrust.org). If health guidelines allow, we will also plan for some focus groups on these topics in the fall.

On behalf of protecting our island's wild places, I invite you to support this critical work in 2021.

Take good care,

Tom Dean

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Dean', written in a cursive style.

Conservation Director

# TREES – NATURE’S ANSWER TO CLIMATE CHANGE



There has been a lot of talk lately about ramping up the production of giant machines that suck carbon dioxide out of the air and pump it into the ground—to fight climate change. Elon Musk even went so far as to offer a prize of \$100 million for the best design. To that, social media replied—“I wonder how long it will take somebody to invent a forest?”

You can’t invent a forest, but you can plant one. We were honored to be part of King County Executive Dow Constantine’s Million Trees Initiative. Over the last two years, the Land Trust planted 5,225 trees on Vashon and Maury—four species of conifers and eleven deciduous species—as well as several thousand native shrubs.

Of course, trees do more than capture carbon. They shade the creeks to keep the water

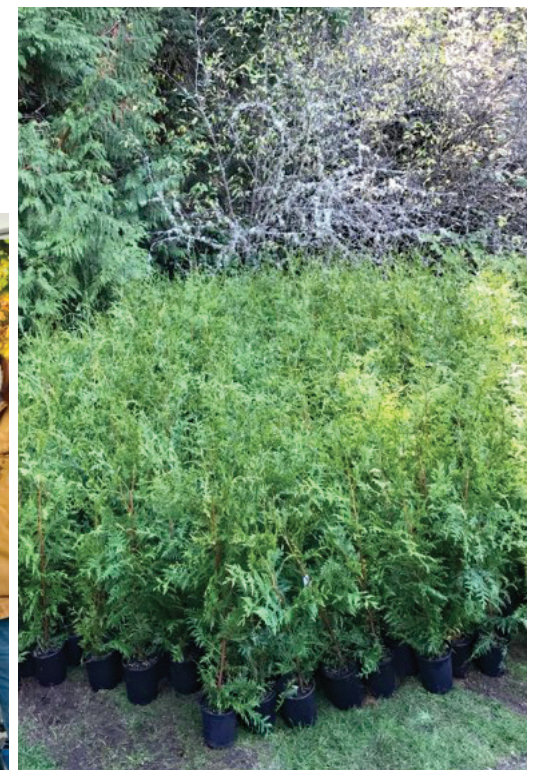
cool, and that’s good for salmon. They slow the rain on its way to the forest floor, and that helps it soak into our drinking water aquifer. They provide food and shelter for birds, squirrels, tree frogs, and lots of others. By increasing the diversity of our forests, we make them more resilient to a changing climate.

We would like to give a shout out to our partners who have assisted in this effort. Vashon Rotary has recruited volunteers for several big planting efforts. Vashon Audubon has inked a partnership with the Land Trust to plant and care for several new project sites along Judd Creek in Paradise Valley. Last but not least, thanks to our steady crew of volunteers who showed up on Tuesday mornings all year and worked their hearts out.

When you see those blue tubes around our trees, imagine a forest there one day. For now, they provide protection from vole browse, which can easily kill a young tree. Think of them as a colorful celebration of your support of the Land Trust and our bold tree planting projects!



(L-R) Hans Youngman, James Freund, Amy Huggins, Morgan Brown



# FOR THE LOVE OF SOIL

*We can either regard land as a productive commodity belonging to us or see land as a community to which we belong. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” – Aldo Leopold*

In 2015 the Land Trust’s conservation efforts grew to include agriculture with the purchase of the last remaining 12 acres of the historic Matsuda Farm. Our vision was to restore and steward the land, keep the legacy of the Mastuda’s alive and grow food for our community. While we understood that forests sequester carbon, we soon learned that farmland also has a great capacity to do so.



It is now widely understood that the practice of tilling soil is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Regenerative agriculture offers a solution: it is no-till, builds soil health, increases organic matter, stores water more effectively, and draws carbon out of the atmosphere.

In 2019 our farm manager, Caitlin Ames, attended a no-till workshop at Singing Frogs Farm. We became convinced that in order to be responsible land stewards, we had to quit the tiller and rebuild soil health. And what makes soil healthy? A thriving ecosystem. Before long, we were planting hedgerows which attracted birds that kept pests at bay. Volunteers installed bird boxes to attract swallows and nesting owls. The Vashon Nature Project planted a pollinator garden to attract beneficial insects. Today, what had been a hay field for over 30 years is teeming with life.

Meanwhile, below the surface the soil was also becoming a thriving ecosystem of mushroom mycelia and microorganisms creating a diverse network to store more carbon, water, and nutrients.

The pandemic was pivotal. Matsuda Farm became a hub of community resilience. Our markets changed; we lost some but gained new ones; more volunteers arrived and, in the end, we met our budget goals, and contributed nearly two tons of food to those in need. We learned diversity creates strength, in ecosystems and human systems alike.

Planning for the 2021 season, Caitlin wrote, “Regenerative agriculture is about more than the soil. A holistic approach to farming considers the triple bottom line: people, planet, and profit. Using this holistic approach is a radical step in the direction of a more equitable food system for all. The shift to no-till practices reflects the Land Trust’s commitment to restoring ecosystems. We regenerate forests, creating habitat that has far reaching impacts. By taking a similar approach in agriculture, we create a path that allows us to step back through time, before agriculture was about mechanization, genetic modification, and pesticides. We reach back to the historical ways that humans have lived.”

As Leopold wrote in 1949, we are called to “see the land as a community to which we belong.” Matsuda Farm’s intent is to extend this philosophy across our whole operation, increasing diversity on all levels: what we plant, how we work, and how we sell our harvest. Regenerative practices are making it possible for us to produce more and better food and to farm with intention for our community, our planet and our future.

*Special thanks for support of Matsuda Farm from the King Conservation District  
Regional Food System Grant Program, HumanLinks Foundation, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.*

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*With our thanks and gratitude...*

*photo by Jim Diers  
Pollinator Garden, Matsuda Farm*

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# 2020 VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers are the heart of the Land Trust. Their work and dedication to our mission makes it possible to steward our forests, creeks, shorelines—and help feed our community. We could not do what we do without them, and 2020 was no exception. First, Matsuda Farm was flooded with volunteers in the spring as the shutdown started—many thanks to the Backbone Campaign for recruitment and coordination. Because of this joint effort, we were able to donate more than five tons of fresh produce to the Food Access Partnership. Second, as folks got a bit cabin-feverish, we were able to provide safe and distanced outdoor opportunities to plant trees as part of King County’s Million Trees initiative. Another special thanks to Vashon Audubon for adopting our habitat restoration projects in Paradise Valley.

- ✦ Martin Adams ✦ Bart Arenson ✦ Mary Ashby ✦ Andrea Avni ✦ Joy Beardsley ✦ Mary Belshaw ✦ Bonny ✦ Lucinda Boyle ✦ Fran Brooks ✦ Joe Bryan ✦ Grace Christie ✦ Oliver Churchill ✦ Alex Craighead ✦ Linda Crayton ✦ Jessica Crouch ✦ Peter Cummings ✦ Jack Cummings ✦ Kincaid Cummings ✦ Susan Damon ✦ Porter Daniels ✦



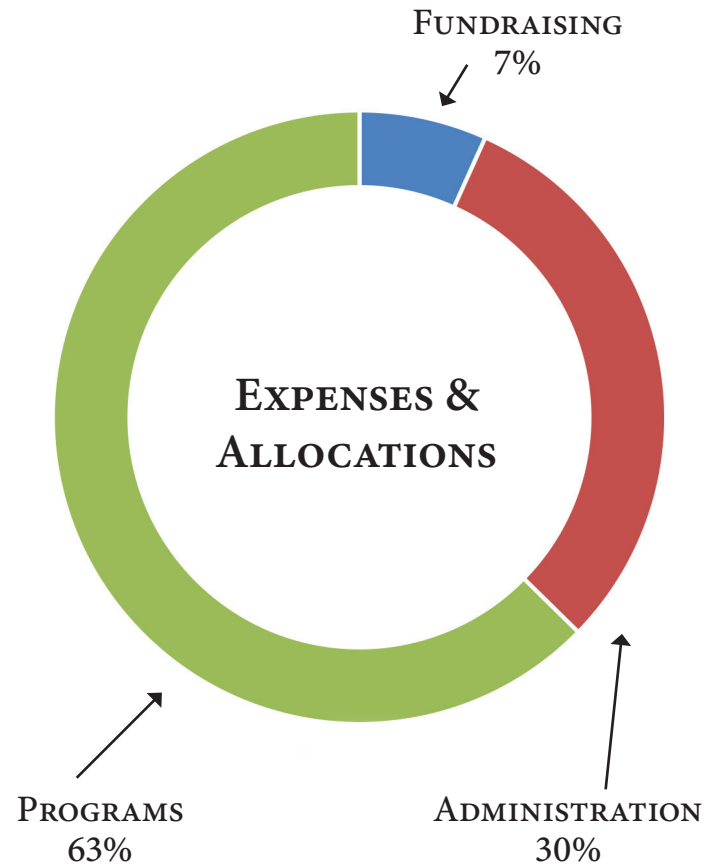
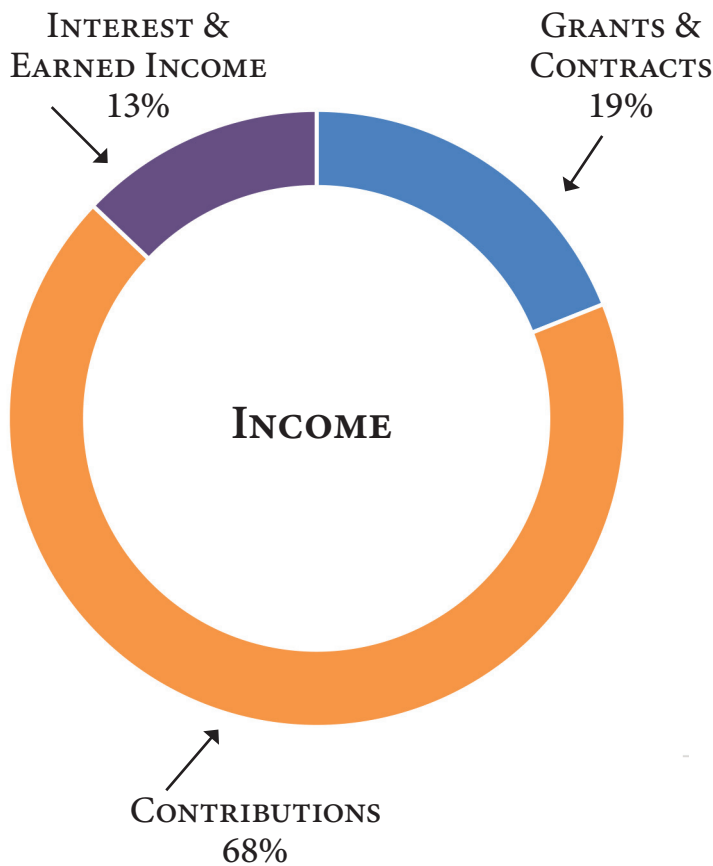
**Backbone Campaign Volunteers Build a Greenhouse**



*all photos by Backbone Campaign*

- Solsoles de Lacy ✦ Allen de Steiguer ✦ Neve DeVoght ✦ Clara Elaine Summers ✦ Thomas Elliott ✦ Martha Enson ✦ Abby Enson ✦ Koribri Enson-Overstreet ✦ Jim Evans ✦ Steve Fogard ✦ Hatcher Freda ✦ Bill Garrison ✦ Christine Gebel ✦ Jean George ✦ Mead Gill ✦ Earl Godt ✦ Pamela Godt ✦ Suzanne Greenberg ✦ Sequoia Gregorich ✦ Ina Gylys Colwell ✦ Patricia Haley ✦ Emalia Hinden-Stevenson ✦ Dana Illo ✦ India ✦ Kim Kambak ✦ Bonny Kelly ✦ Edward King ✦ Susan Kutscher ✦ Kathy Larsdotter ✦ Sue Letsinger ✦ Harris Levinson ✦ Sophie Lipitz ✦ Chau Luong ✦ Maren MacLean ✦ Aram Malinich ✦ Jackson Mallory ✦ Alex McDonald ✦ Ethan McIntyre ✦ Thomas Mehm ✦ Rowan Millett ✦ Arlette Moody ✦ Louisa Moody ✦ John Moore ✦ Mabel Moses ✦ Bill Moyer ✦ Aziza Moyer ✦ Kathryn Nagao & Matsuda Family ✦ Malio Nelson ✦ Jane Neubauer ✦ Cassie Paetkau ✦ Amelia Platt ✦ Eddy Radar ✦ Noah Roselander ✦ Charlie Rosenberry ✦ Eileen Rossignol ✦ Corinne Ryan ✦ Gretchen Ryerson ✦ Jeff Schnelz ✦ Madeleine Schroeder ✦ Rowan Schroeder ✦ Deago Shaw ✦ Tayo Sjoberg ✦ Beverly Skeffington ✦ Therese Sloss ✦ George Spano ✦ Paxtin Spencer ✦ Jill Squires ✦ Shira Stahl ✦ Levi Stahl ✦ Kirk Starr ✦ Calder Stenn ✦ Howard Stenn ✦ Robert Stolk ✦ John Stott ✦ Clara Summers ✦ Mary Jo Svendsen ✦ Sue Trevathan ✦ Beth Tuttle ✦ Judy Twedt ✦ Sara Van Fleet ✦ Nick W ✦ Barbara Wells ✦ Julian White-Davis ✦ Shelly Whitlock ✦ Anthony Winkler ✦ Gina Winkler ✦ Tanner Yelken ✦ Lily Youngmann ✦ And to all the volunteers through the Journeymen on the trails ✦ Food Access Partnership, HumanLinks Foundation ✦ Vashon Wildlife Habitat Team’s *Pollinator Garden*, and Wild Dreams Farm’s *Seed Project* at Matsuda Farm ✦

# 2020 BY THE NUMBERS



## LEAVING A LEGACY

We were lucky enough to “land” on Vashon Island in 1996. It was love at first sight. As the years have gone by our gratitude and sense of responsibility for this special place has only deepened.

We decided to make the Land Trust part of our estate planning because of what this island—with its natural beauty, wildlife and vibrant human community—have come to mean to us. When we asked ourselves how we might give something back, including the Land Trust in our will was a tangible choice. The Land Trust is committed to protecting the very things that drew us to Vashon from the start.

Our gift to the Land Trust helps to ensure that future generations of human and non-human Islanders will benefit from the same natural beauty that we have been fortunate to experience.

*- Sara & Sam VanFleet*



# 2020 Vashon-Maury Island Annual Report

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*It's why we live here.*

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[vashonlandtrust.org](http://vashonlandtrust.org)

**We stand on the traditional homelands  
of the sx̣ẉabaḅš (Swiftwater People)  
who lived here since time immemorial.  
In 1856 they were forcibly moved to  
reservations of many Coast Salish tribes.  
The Vashon Land Trust honors that  
we steward land that remains significant  
to their descendants-especially the  
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, who have  
treaty rights in these waters.**

