

YAMHILL CONSERVATION TRUST



2026-2028

Strategic Plan



Our Vision

We envision a future in which nature and people thrive together.

Our Mission

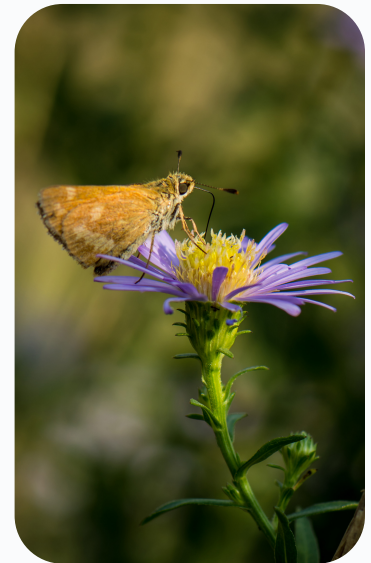
Yamhill Conservation Trust protects and provides stewardship of ecologically significant lands while fostering community engagement.

History

The land trust legacy that Yamhill Conservation Trust (YCT) builds upon, has been growing for more than 25 years. Currently, the Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District (YSWCD) owns or manages conservation easements on over 3,500 acres in Yamhill County. YCT was created to partner with YSWCD to provide flexibility to pursue new opportunities for donations, funding, and long-term protection. This partnership expands opportunities for land conservation, natural resource stewardship, and outdoor community engagement.

By strengthening relationships with other land trusts, government agencies, tribal organizations, and nonprofits with aligned missions, YCT will strive to earn the trust of partners, donors, and the community.

In building YCT, we intend to build capacity for our partners and for the community we serve. We invite you to join us on our journey!



Core Values

Legacy: Build a responsible land trust with strong organizational structure, practices and partnerships that support land protection in perpetuity.

Community Engagement: Involve our diverse local communities in conservation efforts, ensuring everyone has a voice in land protection.

Education: Provide resources and programs which increase public awareness about land conservation and its importance.

Collaboration: Develop strong partnerships with landowners, governmental agencies, nonprofits, and other groups to achieve shared conservation goals.

Inclusivity: Welcome all members of the community, regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or financial standing.

Transparency: Operate in an open and accountable manner to earn the trust and support of the communities we serve, while maintaining confidentiality of private information.

Priority 1: Land Protection & Stewardship

Ensure the long-term health and vitality of Yamhill County landscapes through land protection and effective stewardship.



Goal 1. Partner with the YSWCD Protected Lands Program

Establish and support a framework for co-ownership and management of YSWCD owned lands and conservation easements.

Actions:

- **Protected Lands Restructuring Plan:** Document benefits, challenges, and considerations associated with restructuring each Protected Lands property.
- **Partnership Plan:** Develop and negotiate a plan that outlines stewardship, monitoring and operations responsibilities for each entity.
- **Joint Ownership:** Explore structures for joint ownership of YSWCD owned properties and conservation easements.
- **Management Plans:** Create and update land management plans
- **Conservation Easement Insurance:** Obtain coverage for all conservation easements to ensure affordable legal protection of easements and YCT.



Goal 2. Foster Stewardship Partnerships

Strengthen stewardship outcomes by collaborating with local groups, governmental agencies, and universities to access expert knowledge and resources for land management.

Actions:

- **Grants and Partnerships:** Pursue grants and partnership opportunities that support ongoing stewardship and restoration activities.
- **Capacity Building:** Explore opportunities to increase funding and staff capacity for the joint Protected Lands Program.
- **Operational Efficiencies:** Work with partners to identify efficiencies in property management, including equipment sharing and shared contract services.
- **Landowner Connections and Referrals:** As appropriate, provide information and connect landowners seeking land protection to partner organizations that may better meet their goals, including:
 - Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (www.grandronde.org/government/natural-resources)
 - Greenbelt Land Trust (www.greenbeltlandtrust.org)
 - Oregon Agricultural Trust (www.oregonagtrust.org)
 - Willamette River Preservation Trust (www.wrtrust.org)





Goal 3. Expand Protected Lands Program

Work with interested landowners to preserve their legacy, through land acquisition, conservation easements, and land donations.



Actions:

- **Conservation Easement and Acquisition Policy:** Develop a policy that defines the process for accepting land donations, acquisitions and conservation easements.
- **Priority Lands:** Develop guiding principles and mapping tools to identify high-priority lands based on ecological value, biodiversity, regional priorities, and community benefit.
- **Ranking Criteria:** Establish consistent criteria for screening and prioritizing acquisitions and conservation easements.
- **Landowner Collaboration:** Build relationships with landowners and offer tailored easement terms to meet diverse needs.
- **Acquisition and Easement Funding:** Secure grants, donations, and partnerships to support land acquisition and conservation easements, and streamline processes for review, negotiation, and implementation.
- **Long-Term Stewardship Funding:** Secure funding through governmental and philanthropic support.
- **Estate Planning:** Provide estate planning attorneys with information about YCT and encourage them to share it with their clients.

Priority 2: Community Engagement & Well-Being

Foster an engaged community that is actively involved in and educated about natural resource conservation and stewardship.



Goal 1. Build Community Connections

Establish on-going connections with diverse communities.

Actions:

- **Public Education and Awareness:** Develop educational programs, workshops, and events to raise awareness about local ecosystems, the benefits of conservation, and the role of the land trust.
- **Newsletter:** Develop a community newsletter and digital content to inform the public about projects, land acquisitions, and events.
- **Community Volunteer Program:** Support the current Miller Woods volunteer program and explore opportunities to expand volunteer engagement to other properties.
- **School and University Partnerships:** Continue partnerships with local schools, universities, and youth organizations.
- **Land Trust Partnerships:** Collaborate with neighboring land trusts to learn about past successes and co-host events in Yamhill County which support shared missions and goals.
- **Public Access and Outdoor Experiences:** Create opportunities for the public to visit conserved lands, including guided tours, outdoor education events, and seasonal activities like birdwatching or nature walks.
- **Community Advisory Committee:** Form a community advisory committee to engage residents in decision-making, gather feedback, and strengthen community relationships.

Goal 2. Provide Equitable & Inclusive Access

Collaborate with underrepresented groups and support affordable access for under-resourced communities.

Actions:

- **Connect and Learn:** Engage with organizations experienced in providing equitable and inclusive access.
- **Accessibility Study:** Identify barriers on Protected Lands properties and seek funding to address them.
- **Events:** Host natural resource education events with a focus on special interest and/or socially disadvantaged groups.
- **Indigenous Access:** Work with Indigenous groups to identify activities, access or events that can support shared goals.

Priority 3: Long-Term Organizational & Financial Sustainability

Build a strong, effective, and sustainable nonprofit organization.

Goal 1. Organizational Capacity Building

Strengthen and expand the organization to meet strategic plan goals.

Actions:

- **Business Plan:** Draft a plan outlining daily procedures and operations.
- **Capacity Assessment:** Regularly assess YCT's capacity to meet its goals, identifying strengths, areas of improvement, staffing needs, resource gaps, and operational efficiencies.
- **Staff Development:** When financially feasible, hire staff with expertise in land conservation, fundraising, community engagement, and financial management. Provide ongoing professional development for all staff.
- **Board Development:** Recruit and train a skilled and diverse board of directors who are passionate about land conservation and who can contribute specialized knowledge or skills.
- **Technology and Infrastructure:** Evaluate technology and tools that streamline operations, such as donor management software, land monitoring systems, and communication platforms.
- **Website:** Continuously improve website functionality to enhance access to YCT information and online donations.
- **Memberships:** Evaluate membership benefits and fees for organizations that support YCT's mission, including the Land Trust Alliance, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts and the Nonprofit Association of Oregon.



Goal 2. Provide Sound Financial Management

Establish and maintain protocols for sustainable organizational funding.

Actions:

- **Fundraising Plan:** Develop and implement a robust fundraising plan to ensure long-term financial sustainability.
- **Accounting and Financial Management Policy:** Approve a policy outlining procedures for fiscal management, including establishing an operating reserves, endowments, and stewardship funds.
- **Financial Management Assistance:** Hire firms experienced in tax filings, financial advising, and fund management for nonprofit organizations.
- **Financial Oversight Committee:** Maintain a committee of financially knowledgeable individuals to monitor financial reports, assist with annual budget development, and annually review financial and accounting operations.



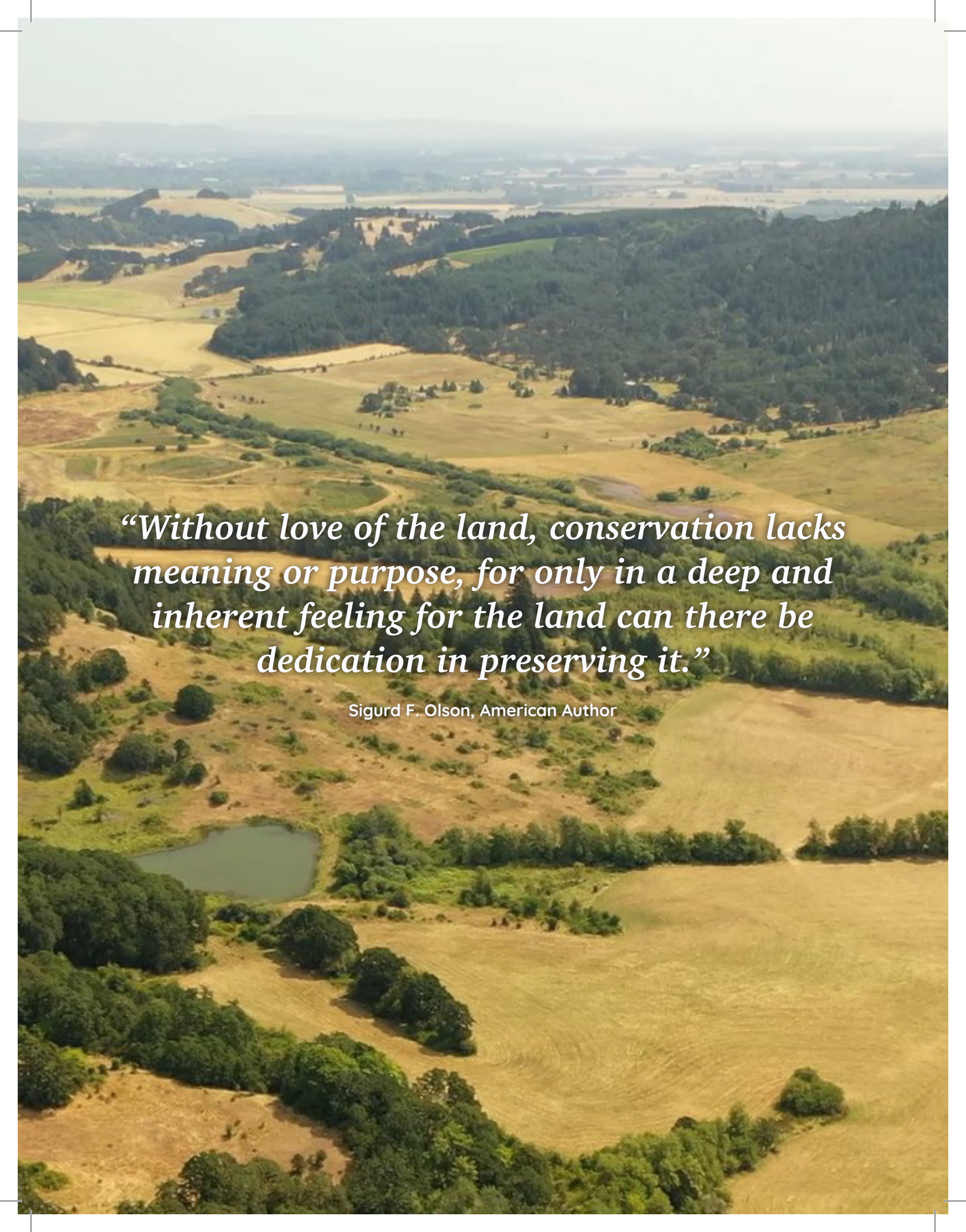
Goal 3. Adhere to National Land Trust Alliance Standards

Demonstrate compliance with Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices to ensure sound finance, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship.

Actions:

- **Land Trust Standards & Practices:** Adopt and adhere to Standards and Practices as outlined by the Land Trust Alliance.
- **Accreditation:** Evaluate the benefits of accreditation and seek funding opportunities for staff time required to pursue it.



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. The foreground shows a mix of green and brown fields, with a small pond. The middle ground features rolling hills covered in dense green forests and scattered fields. The background shows a vast, hazy landscape with distant hills and fields under a clear sky.

“Without love of the land, conservation lacks meaning or purpose, for only in a deep and inherent feeling for the land can there be dedication in preserving it.”

Sigurd F. Olson, American Author



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