

Willamette Habitat Trust

Strategic Direction 2026

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSERVATION

The future of the Willamette Valley will be shaped by the decisions made today. Natural areas, farms, forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitat face increasing pressure from development, fragmentation, and changing land use patterns. Once these places are lost, they are difficult, and often impossible, to restore. Protecting high-quality habitat is essential not only for wildlife, but also for the health, resilience, and quality of life of the communities that depend upon these landscapes. The Willamette Habitat Trust exists for this need.

For many landowners, the land they steward is more than property. It is part of their livelihood, their family history, and their personal values. Private land conservation provides many practical and lasting ways to protect their land while retaining ownership and continuing to live and work on it. Conservation easements allow private landowners to play a meaningful role in conserving Oregon's landscape for future generations.

This work matters because healthy habitat supports healthy communities. Protected lands help sustain clean water, native wildlife, working farms and forests, scenic beauty, and climate resilience throughout the Willamette Valley. They create connected landscapes where plants, wildlife, and people can thrive together. Conservation easements also help maintain the rural character and environmental integrity that define many Oregon communities and contribute to the state's economy and identity.

Permanent conservation requires permanent commitment. Every easement accepted by the Trust creates a long-term responsibility to monitor, steward, and defend the conservation values protected by that agreement. The organization must therefore continue to strengthen its leadership, professional capacity, and stewardship practices to ensure that every commitment made today remains strong decades into the future. Building this organizational capacity is not separate from conservation work. It is essential to it.

This strategic plan reflects both opportunity and responsibility. The plan outlines practical steps to improve conservation, deepen landowner relationships, expand community outreach, and build the organizational systems needed to operate as a permanent and trusted steward of protected lands. It recognizes that successful conservation depends not only on protecting individual properties, but also on building public understanding, strong partnerships, sustainable funding, and active support for habitat protection throughout the region.

Most importantly, this plan reflects optimism about what is possible. The Willamette Valley still contains extraordinary landscapes, committed landholders, and communities that care deeply about the future of Oregon's natural resources. By working collaboratively, investing in long-term stewardship, and focusing on high-quality habitat protection, the Willamette Habitat Trust can continue to play an important role in conserving lands that sustain wildlife, working landscapes, and people.





strategic direction

VISION

We envision a Willamette Valley

where native habitat on natural areas, working farms, and forest lands is permanently protected to support healthy communities of plants, wildlife, and people.

MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve and restore

high-quality wildlife habitat, primarily in the Willamette Valley, through lasting partnerships with landholders.



goals and strategies

1. **CONSERVATION: Protect high-quality habitat land in partnership with private landholders using conservation easements.**
    a. Define conservation priorities and guidelines
    b. Work with landholders to place conservation easements on land they steward
    c. Offer regular communication and support to landholders to ensure easements continue to protect habitat values

2. **COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Promote conservation and protection of high-quality habitat lands**
    a. Promote the concept and value of protecting habitat land to benefit wildlife and people among the interested public
    b. Build and maintain the reputation of the Willamette Habitat Trust

3. **CAPACITY: Build and manage capacity to operate as permanent stewards of protected lands**
    a. Build the capacity of the board as leaders of the land trust
    b. Add professional staffing to support quality and sustainability
    c. Implement Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices
    d. Develop diverse and sustainable revenue sources
    e. Manage fiscal integrity for all land trust resources

