



OlyEcosystems

Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation

Protect Preserve Restore

2017 Annual Report

OlyEcosystems Mission

The Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation was established in 2014 to protect, preserve, and restore the diverse ecosystems of Olympia, Washington that include the freshwater, shoreline, tidal waters, and upland forests home to the Pacific Great Blue Heron, cutthroat trout, salmon, and companion species. In coordination with community members, local agencies, and other non-profit groups, OlyEcosystems works to ensure that these ecosystems remain vital in perpetuity. OlyEcosystems is organized exclusively for the above purpose under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code or any corresponding section of any future tax code.

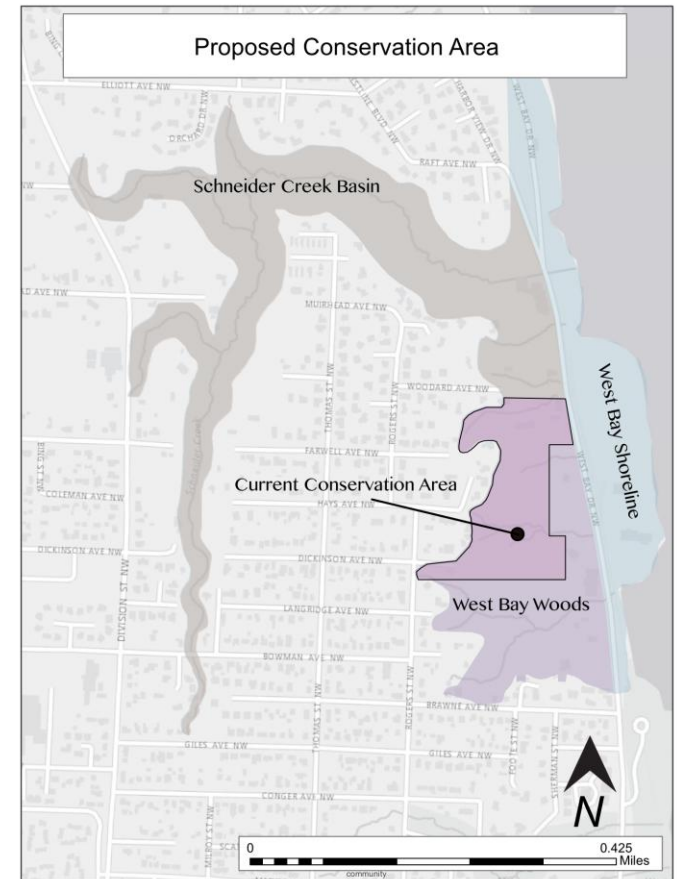
OlyEcosystems Vision

OlyEcosystems is driven by an understanding of the intrinsic value of all creatures in the ecosystem. The organization is united in the value of biodiversity and belief that the community is enriched and defined by its relationship to urban wilderness.

OlyEcosystems is a volunteer-run, community-based urban land trust and advocacy group. Work focuses on urban shoreline and associated watersheds in Olympia. OlyEcosystems recognizes that the health of this ecosystem must be restored in order to reverse the decline in water and habitat quality in Budd Inlet. This decline impacts salmon and many other species, including human inhabitants.

The current focus, West Bay Woods, provides critical ecological functions, serves a refuge for urban wildlife, and is integral to the community's sense of place. In addition to providing heron habitat, West Bay Woods' stormwater filtration role is of heightened importance, as the Woods is located just upland of some of the most contaminated shoreline in Thurston County.

OlyEcosystems is unique among organizations in this region, focusing exclusively on protecting, preserving, and restoring important wild habitat in urban Olympia.



The Organization

Diversity Statement

We, at the Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation, know from nature that diversity is essential to life on Earth. Just as species diversity enhances ecosystem resilience, diversity within our organization expands our strengths, impact, and organizational resilience. OlyEcosystems pursuit of diversity and justice recognizes that environmental burdens and benefits are not distributed equitably, and we seek to address these historic and current disparities so that all individuals can realize and enjoy a healthy, rich, and inspiring world. We welcome, value, and rely on a diversity of people, cultural experiences, and perspectives. We respect, value, and celebrate the unique attributes, characteristics, and perspectives that make each person who they are. We learn from one another. We also believe that bringing together diverse individuals allows us to collectively and more effectively address the issues that face our communities.

In order to more fully accomplish our mission, we strive to make our commitment to diversity and justice evident in our organizational structure, strategies, policies, Board of Directors, staff, partners, donors, goals, and vision. Our desire for savvy and strategic approaches to conservation is better attained through a multitude of cultural and life experiences and communities. We welcome people of all backgrounds, and seek to foster a culture of respect, openness, learning, integrity, and honesty, as well as a sense of fun. Our passion for justice calls on us to be inclusive, transparent, and fair in all that we do. Our commitment to working in partnerships compels us to build relationships where all partners are valued, heard, respected, and empowered. Through our work, we create solutions that promote environmental sustainability rooted in social justice.

OlyEcosystems Structure

Committees support the Board of Directors, with roles and responsibilities delineated and distributed. Volunteers are welcome to join OlyEcosystems for events such as restoration work parties or community tabling. Please let us know if you are interested in joining a committee, or applying to be on the Board of Directors.

Executive Committee

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer

Board Development Committee

Communications Committee

Community Outreach and Education Committee

Conservation Committee

Development Committee

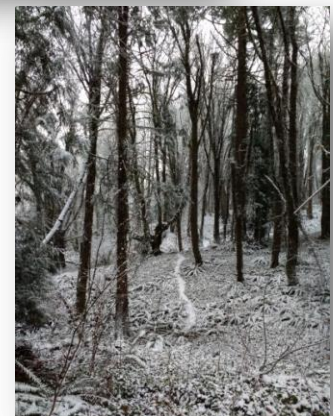
Financial Committee

Partnerships Committee

Restoration Committee

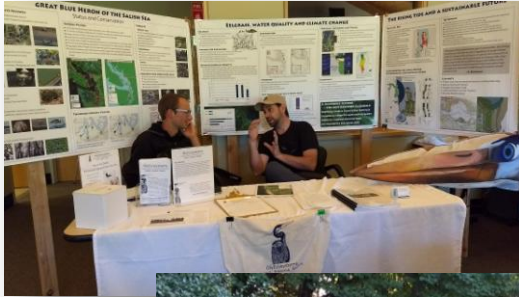
Policy Coordinator

Volunteer Coordinator



OlyEcosystems 2017 Highlights

OlyEcosystems worked to protect, preserve, and restore the upland forest of Budd Inlet through civic engagement, land acquisition, community education, and direct forest restoration.



Protect

This year, the Olympia City Council passed significant amendments to the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). Adopted in two parts, the amendments, initiated by OlyEcosystems, create a mechanism to nominate locally important species for protection consideration under the CAO, and protect the Pacific Great Blue Heron breeding habitat in Olympia. This effort was three years in the making, and required letters, public comment, conversations, and an appointed workgroup that included members from OlyEcosystems, the Black Hills Chapter of the Audubon Society, and other organizations.

Preserve

In 2017, OlyEcosystems acquired two additional land parcels, and announced the opening of West Bay Woods. Through a major award from the Thurston County Conservation Futures Program, support from the community and landowners, and only the second conservation easement in the City of Olympia's 150-year history, an additional 1.5 acres of land now is protected. These land acquisitions and sustaining partnerships ensure that one of the last upland shoreline forests in Olympia's urban core is protected in perpetuity.

OlyEcosystems and the City of Olympia together have conserved over ten contiguous acres, establishing a major urban wildlife corridor in Olympia nearshore. West Bay Woods, Olympia's newest open space and conservation area, plays a critical role in the Budd Inlet ecosystem, protects the Puget Sound's southernmost Pacific Great Blue Heron colony, is home to a wide variety of native plant and animal species, filters stormwater before it reaches Budd Inlet, and provides critical riparian habitat.



OlyEcosystems 2017 Highlights



Restore

Restoration continued in the West Bay Woods, with hundreds of volunteer hours focused on invasive species removal, soil amendment, and native plant and tree species reestablishment. OlyEcosystems is especially pleased to have received two awards in 2017 that support restoration of West Bay Woods. The Rose Foundation awarded \$13,000 for construction of an integrated rain garden and trailhead at the eastern end of Hays Avenue NW. The Dawkins Memorial Trust awarded \$25,000 for restoration of West Bay Woods, and awarded an additional \$25,000 for restoration and operations subject to a dollar-for-dollar match.

Coalition-building to Protect, Preserve, and Restore

In 2017, OlyEcosystems received an award from The Bullitt Foundation to host a single-day scientific and policy symposium entitled Sound Waters: Science-Informed Policy for the Deschutes Estuary. The symposium will bring together, for the first time, the twenty-plus organizations that are engaged in water-related research, advocacy, preservation, policy, and education in the Deschutes Estuary, as well as representatives from non-profits, elected officials, state agencies, and City and County staff. Participants will share approaches, challenges, focus areas, and results, identifying opportunities to build resilience into the Deschutes Estuary-Budd Inlet ecosystem.

In Perpetuity

Supporting organization health and sustainability has been a significant area of focus for OlyEcosystems in 2017, stemming from the commitment to protect conserved properties in perpetuity. OlyEcosystems increased Board of Director capacity; established committees to organize administrative, fundraising, conservation, communication, and restoration work; engaged in diversity training; created a reserve fund; and started to adopt nationally-endorsed standards and practices for similar organizations.



Thank You

A very special thank you to all who have contributed time, funds, artwork, in-kind donations, and other important resources. OlyEcosystems achievements would not be possible without you.

Volunteers

OlyEcosystems is an entirely volunteer-run organization. The dedication and enthusiasm of the Board of Directors creates a solid foundation from which all other accomplishments are possible. Additionally, volunteers serve on committees and at events such as work parties and community tabling. In 2017, at work parties alone, over 150 volunteers contributed over 500 hours of restoration work. A major thank you to you and the many other volunteers who play a critical role in working toward accomplishing OlyEcosystems mission.

Major Contributors

The Bullitt Foundation
The City of Olympia
The Dawkins Memorial Trust
Thurston County Conservation Futures
Earthbound Productions
Anita Montgomery, graphic designer
Christine Gulrajani, musician
Nancy Partlow, photographer

The Charlotte-Martin Foundation
The Community Sustaining Fund of Thurston County
The Rose Foundation
Squaxin Island Tribe
Pacific Stage
Barry Troutman, photographer
Christopher Harbin, musician
The Lumen, musicians

Major Collaborators

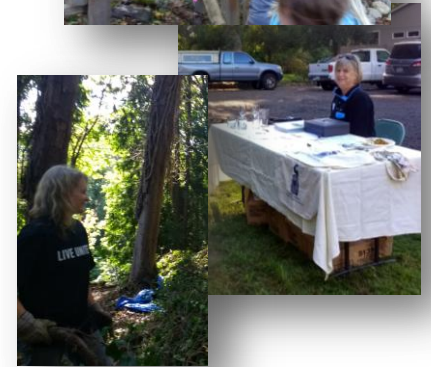
The Black Hills Chapter of the Audubon Society
City of Olympia
Conservation Corps of Washington
The Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team
Encore Chocolates and Teas
Graphic Communications

Native Plant Salvage
The Olympia Food Co-op
Puget Sound Partnership
Sound Native Plants
Stream Team
Thurston County Conservation District

Friends of OlyEcosystems

Help us grow this list for 2018 by becoming a Friend of OlyEcosystems today. Sign up online at www.olyecosystems.org

The beautiful heron photographs in this document are courtesy of Barry Troutman. Thank you!



2017 Award Recipients

Thank you to all volunteers for the invaluable hours spent supporting OlyEcosystems' mission. This year OlyEcosystems recognizes the following people for their extraordinary service.

Joe Rehberger

For his professional expertise and dedication that exceeded expectation and helped the organization through challenging negotiations.

Gabe Taylor

For his creative and technical graphic support, expert ivy pulling, and insightful service on the Restoration Committee.



2017 Board of Directors

Daniel Einstein, Ph.D.

President

Katherine Himes, Ph.D.

Vice President, Development Director,
Science Policy Coordinator

Jennifer Shafer, M.A.

Secretary

Marijean Holland

Treasurer

Sarah Hamman, Ph.D.

Restoration Director

Meghan Hopkins, M.A.

Board Development Director

Noah Jensen

Conservation Director,
Partnership Director

Cynthia Taylor, M.Ed.

Education & Outreach Director,
Volunteer Coordinator

