



Olympia
Ecosystems

*Protect. Preserve.
Restore.*

Annual Report
2022



Our Mission

Olympia Ecosystems (formerly Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation) was established in 2014 to protect, preserve and restore diverse ecosystems in and around Olympia, Washington. These include the freshwater, shoreline, tidal waters, grasslands and upland forests that are 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, we will work to ensure that these ecosystems remain vital in perpetuity.

Sarah Hamman

OlyEcosystems Board President



President's Note

What a wonderfully busy and productive year it has been! In 2022, we worked with the community to accomplish many of our conservation and restoration goals. Together we planted thousands of native plants in our West Bay Woods sites, removed invasive knotweed from Green Cove Creek, and successfully acquired and began intensive restoration at the recently logged Cooper Crest Forest. Just before the New Year we purchased an ecologically diverse 367-acre parcel along the Deschutes River! None of this would have been possible without your support, and we are so grateful for everything you've shared with us this year.

I want to share some important changes to our organization. Daniel Einstein, one of the founders of OlyEcosystems and Board President for the past eight years, has stepped down from the Board and is now serving as the land conservation director! We have so much gratitude to Daniel and his absolutely tireless devotion to this important work. You'll still see him working out in the forest and representing OlyEcosystems at community meetings (maybe even more than before, if that's possible!). Congratulations and THANK YOU, Daniel!

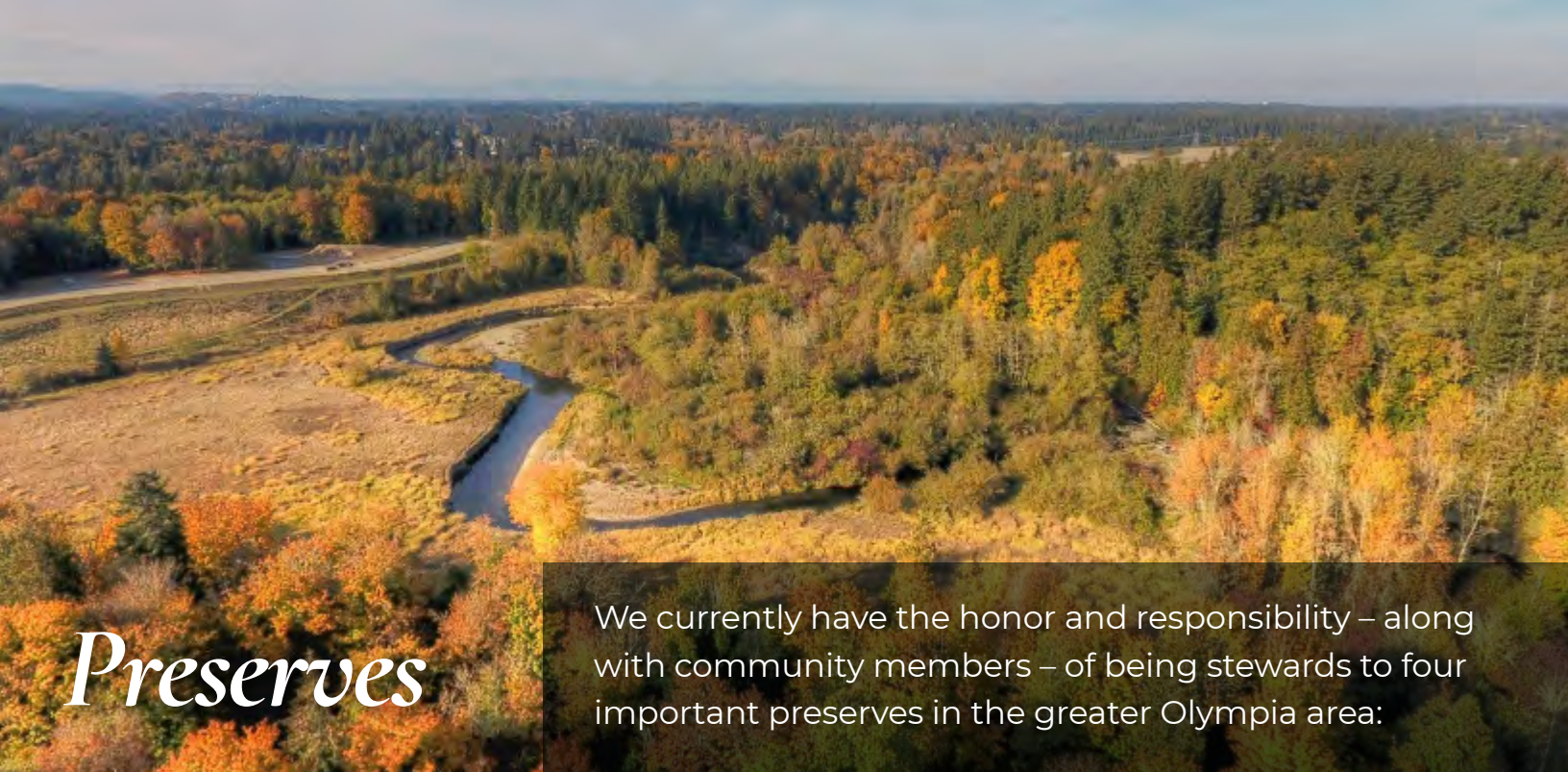


In addition to the change in Daniel's role, other organizational news is that we are looking into hiring paid staff members later this year. This would be a big step, since up to this point everything has been handled by volunteers! But as our property acreage grows, so must we. This transition means we have a new Board of Directors Executive Team working to usher the organization into this new year and this new phase. Sarah, Diane, Heather and Gabe will work with the full Board, volunteers, donors, and potential staff to protect, preserve, and restore habitat for wildlife, clean water for the Puget Sound, and green spaces for people in and around Olympia. Read on to find out more about our 2022 accomplishments.

Another change: We decided that a shorter name for our organization makes sense, so we have officially changed our name from "Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation" to "Olympia Ecosystems." We will continue to use the shorthand "OlyEcosystems."

And last but certainly not least, a HUGE thank you to all the volunteers and donors who have supported our work over this year (and since our inception). Your support and commitment to conservation and restoration is what has made everything possible. With your help, we will continue to restore our urban forests, grasslands, wetlands and shorelines in 2023 and on into the future!

– Sarah Hamman, OlyEcosystems Board President



Preserves

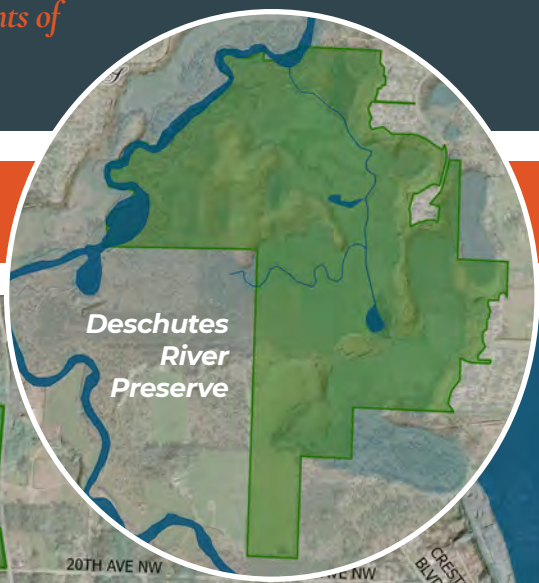
We currently have the honor and responsibility – along with community members – of being stewards to four important preserves in the greater Olympia area:

West Bay Woods • Green Cove Creek Cooper Crest • Deschutes River

On the following pages are highlights of our work in each preserve in 2022

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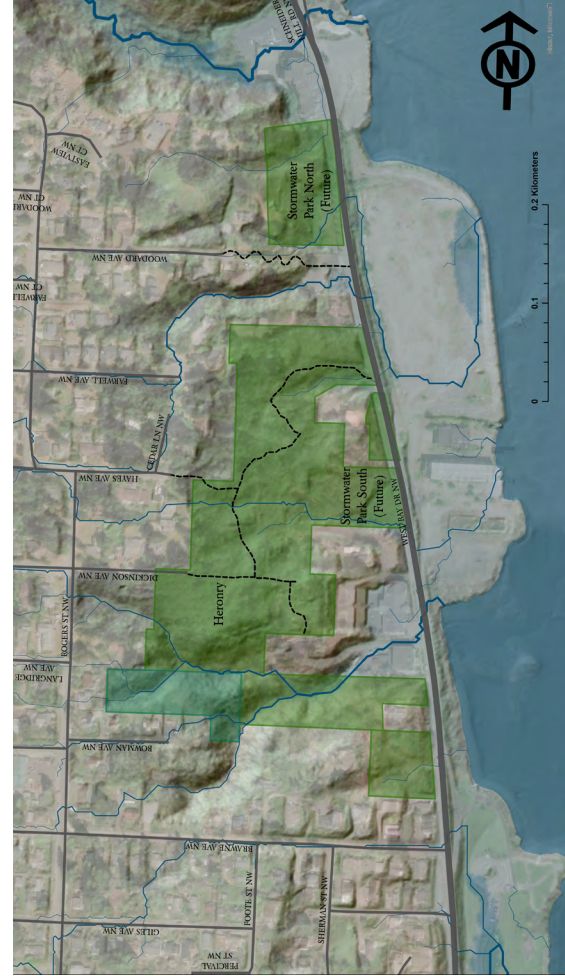
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West Bay Woods Preserve

West Bay (in Budd Inlet) was the early focus of OlyEcosystems. We worked to preserve and restore a Pacific Great Blue Heron rookery, remove English ivy, plant native species, and reduce untreated stormwater entering into Budd Inlet. The area is a sensitive network of environments which includes wetlands, large areas forested with 100-year-old trees (Douglas-fir, Western red cedar, and big-leaf maple), and permanent and seasonal streams. The West Bay Woods are home to many species of wildlife including bald eagles, mountain beaver, coyote, Pacific tree frog, Pacific Great Blue Heron and a robust population of black tailed deer. The vast majority of these woods are protected by OlyEcosystems, now totaling some 20 acres.

Our extensive work in this area over the last few years includes maintaining our trail system: three trailheads and a trail network with three bridges. We developed two stormwater swales, and we are working on the design of two stormwater ponds. Of course, we have also conducted lots and lots and lots of invasive plant removal and planting!



2022 Accomplishments

- Conserved an additional 1.54 acres, connecting the southern and northern West Bay Woods and creating a full forested wildlife corridor along West Bay Drive
- Expanded our restored area by removing English ivy, Himalayan blackberry, tansy ragwort and yellow archangel from the forest
- Planted over 1,500 native shrubs and trees
- Removed thousands of pounds of debris after discovering a concrete staircase, chain link fencing and old roofing materials buried in the forest
- Worked with the City of Olympia and Washington Conservation Corps to revegetate the slope above the retaining wall on West Bay Drive
- Supported a graduate student research project that studied the effects of green infrastructure on water quality.

Green Cove Creek Preserve

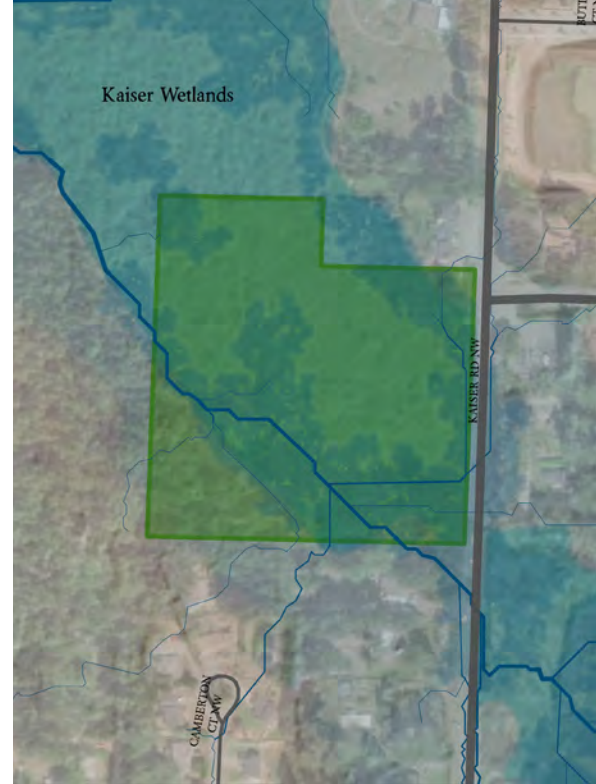
The Green Cove Creek watershed is the largest watershed on Cooper Point. It is designated as an environmentally sensitive area, as it largely consists of critical area wetlands and highly sensitive aquifer areas. The basin includes Green Cove Creek and the Grass Lake wetlands, both of which are relatively intact. In 2020, we conserved 8.5 acres of forested wetlands at the headwaters of Green Cove Creek on Kaiser Road NW, just outside of the city limits.



Because it is comparatively pristine, Green Cove Creek is a priority area for salmon habitat protection measures for both the City of Olympia and Thurston County.

The area consists of mixed conifer and deciduous forest, and dense willow thickets. Many species call this land and water home, including a population of beavers and the threatened Olympic mudminnow. Over 100 bird species and 200 plant species have been sighted in the Grass Lake Nature Park, immediately upstream from our property! The park contains the headwaters of Green Cove Creek and one of the most environmentally intact wetland systems in northern Thurston County.

Our efforts here are to protect and restore. Invasive species are plentiful. We are testing a systematic manual approach for controlling Japanese knotweed, which is growing along the banks of Green Cove Creek.



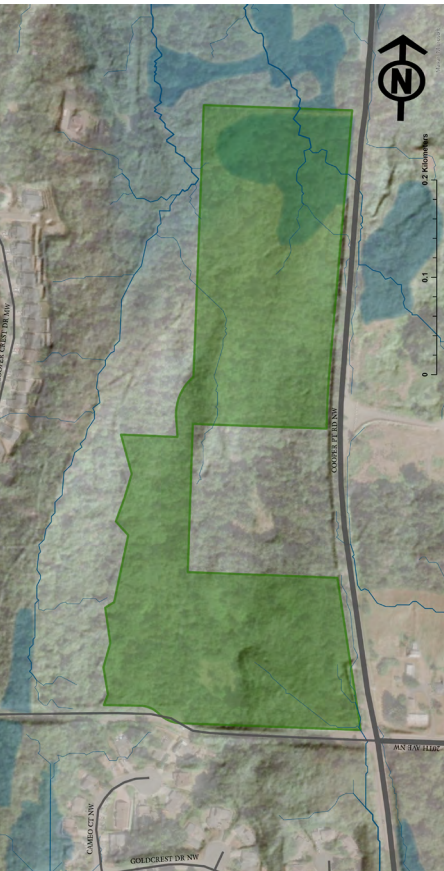
2022 Accomplishments

- **Cut and removed hundreds of pounds of invasive Japanese knotweed – very carefully!**
- **Removed an old tractor tire and other trash found in the wetland**
- **Worked to control English ivy, Himalayan blackberry and English holly.**



Cooper Crest Preserve

Many of you drove down Cooper Point Road last summer and gasped in horror at the destruction of the forested wetland on the highest hill of Olympia. In July 2022, some 22 acres of legacy forest were clearcut at Cooper Point Road NW and 20th Avenue NW. Our efforts – along with many strong community activists – to prevent the clear-cutting were not successful (see Advocacy section), but we purchased the land on August 1, 2022 to restore it and conserve it in perpetuity.



Restoration efforts began immediately. Of particular concern were the risks of flooding and erosion associated with clear-cutting. We committed \$85,000 to mitigation and erosion control measures, racing to complete the work before the winter rains came. With community support, we also started what will be a multi-year project of replanting the forest. We also reconnected the City's Cooper Crest Open Space trail to a new corner-to-corner walking path.

2022 Accomplishments

- Conserved this 25-acre property!
- Deconstructed over 60 house-sized slash piles left from the clear-cut, and mulched many of the piles
- Removed over three tons of trash
- Redistributed mulch and slash to prevent erosion
- Removed scotch broom, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan blackberry and other invasives
- Built a gravel trail system throughout the property
- Installed a culvert at the trail crossing of the seasonal stream
- Planted some 20,000 native shrubs and trees
- Supported two graduate student research projects on GIS mapping and restoration.

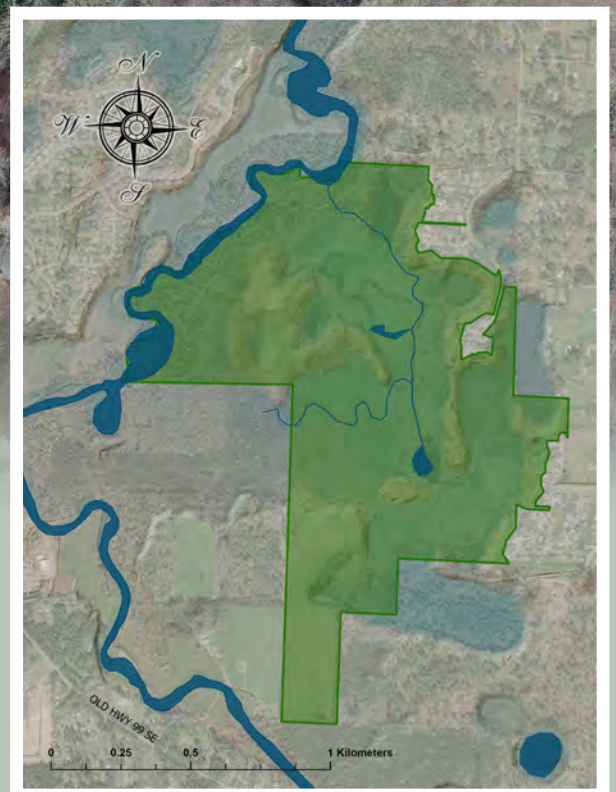
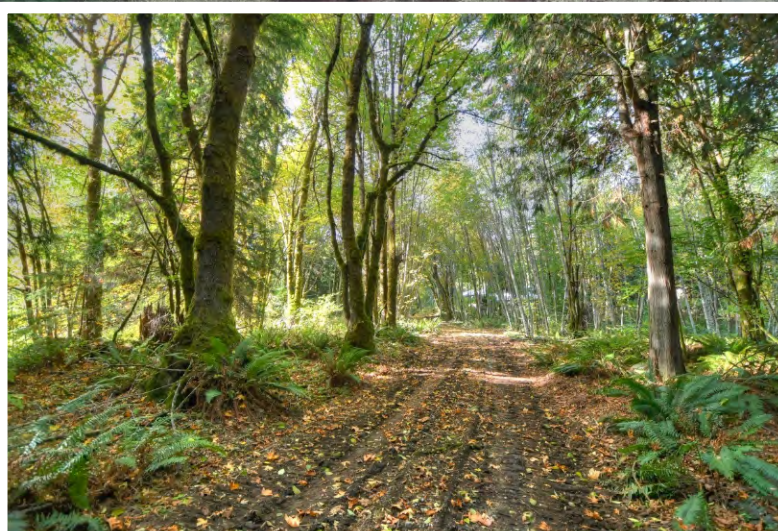
Deschutes River Preserve

On December 30, in a final grand gesture for 2022, we purchased an ecologically diverse 367-acre parcel along the Deschutes River. Located just south of the Tumwater city limits, this property was most recently used as a dairy farm. It includes the headwaters of both Elwanger and Ayers Creeks, as well as a mile-long reach of the Deschutes River. The creeks flow through the property, forming a 140-acre wetland complex.

The property includes Douglas-fir forests, forested wetlands, upland prairie and riparian areas that support a wide range of fish and wildlife species. Within this property are portions of the Deschutes River floodplain, an important aquifer recharge zone for the region. It also connects to neighboring conserved lands, extending protected habitat along the Deschutes River Corridor.

At this new “Deschutes River Preserve” we are developing plans to restore fish passage on Elwanger Creek and hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat.

With this large property come equally large stewardship responsibilities and opportunities for partnerships. Our conservation and restoration efforts at this site begin in 2023, so stay tuned!





Advocacy

Conservation intersects with policy and law. We advocate for ecosystems preservation at the state and local levels. Urban conservation is politically demanding. However, guided by science and community needs, we provide leadership and demonstrate the impact of conservation to the community. Our efforts are often behind-the-scenes. **Here are two recent examples:**

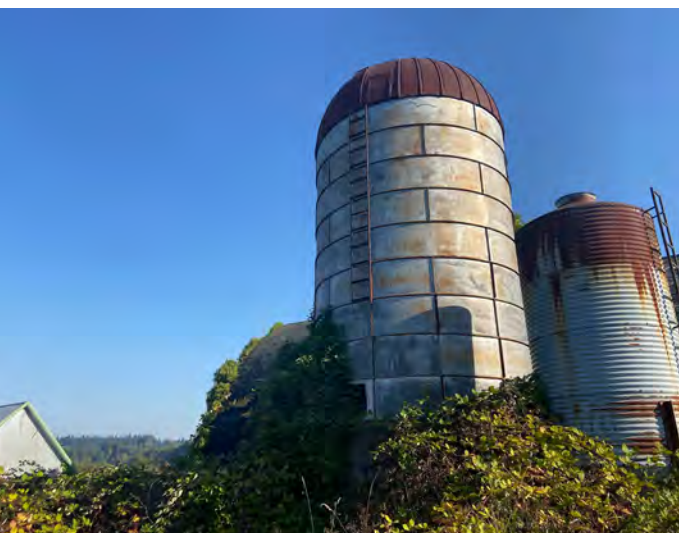


Cooper Crest Preserve

In 2022, we became aware of the logging threat to the Cooper Crest property, which we later conserved. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved a Forest Practices Application, allowing the owner to rapidly log the area with no meaningful chance for appeal and few restrictions.

OlyEcosystems, along with the City of Olympia Urban Forestry and several other community groups, did appeal the decision. The appeal was based on misrepresentations of the site, as presented in the permit application to DNR.

Unfortunately, DNR does not require permittees to wait until the end of the appeals process, or even respond to appeals, before conducting their logging operations. The logging took only a couple of days and the trees were gone. We are still working with other groups to address this broken permitting process, particularly as it applies to sensitive lands within city limits. We hope this experience can be used to inform and improve local, regional and state-level policy.



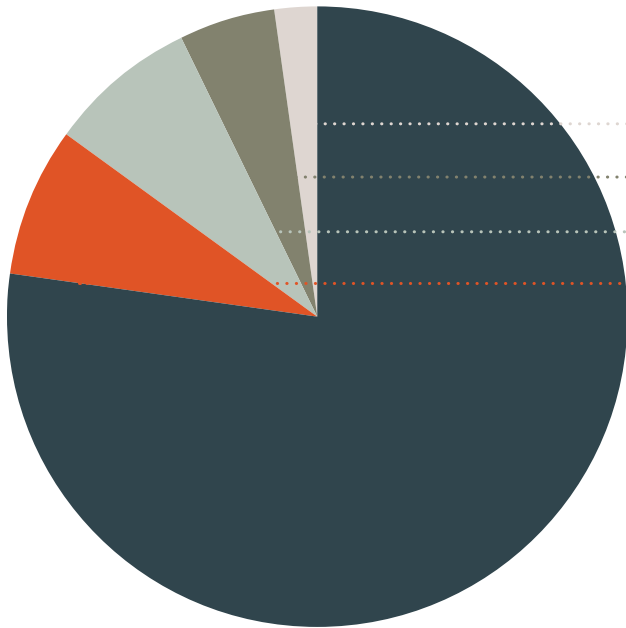
West Bay Yards

In 2020, OlyEcosystems appealed a West Bay Yards development proposal. The proposal would lock in several regulatory and development rights for a then-planned 470-unit mixed use development along the contaminated West Bay shoreline. We believe our appeal process highlighted several significant problems associated with this proposal. We anticipate the developer will have to address these issues during the next phase. We will continue to stay focused on this proposal as it moves forward, and we will keep you posted on next steps and ways you can be involved!



Our Numbers

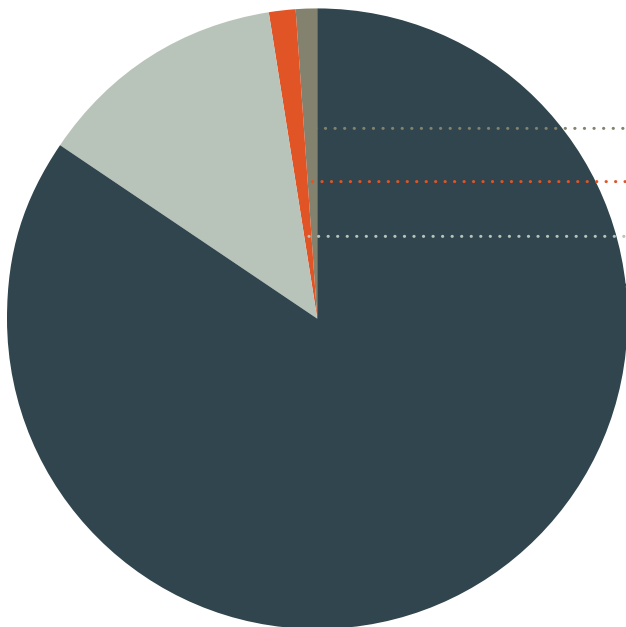
Donor Giving



\$58,866	Stock (2.1%)
\$140,418	Real Estate (5.1%)
\$208,329	Individuals (7.6%)
\$213,695	Government (7.8%)
\$2,128,398	Foundations (77.4%)

\$2,749,706 Total

Stewardship



\$23,778	Administration (1.0%)
\$31,675	Legal (1.4%)
\$294,473	Restoration (12.9%)
\$1,930,000	Land Conservation (84.7%)

\$2,279,926 Total

2023 Board of Directors

Sarah Hamman, Ph.D.

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Diane Carney, M.S.

Vice President

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Secretary and Restoration Committee Chair

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Legal Counsel

Lynne Geller, M.S., M.Ed.

Communications

Marijean Holland, B.F.A.

Founding Treasurer

Anne Van Sweringen, M.E.S.

Environmental Planner and Grant Specialist

**With special thanks to these members
of our 2022 Board:**

Daniel Einstein, Ph.D.

Kevin Hansen, M.S., L.H.G., LEED

Full board member bios are
available on our website:
olyecosystems.org

Major Contributors

Angela J. Bowen Conservancy Foundation

Beverly Postman

Corey White & Nathan Miller

Dawkins Charitable Trust

Laura Schleyer, in memory of her father,
Paul Schleyer

Lowell B. Park

Quamash EcoResearch

Sandra Hoexter

Sierra Club South Sound Group

The Carbon Capture Foundation

The Community Foundation of South Puget Sound

The Rose Foundation

Thurston County Conservation Futures

Washington State Combined Fund Drive

*And thanks to the many large donors
who wish to remain anonymous.*

Special Thanks

Black Hills Audubon Society

Cascadia Law Group

City of Olympia Parks, Arts & Recreation

Cooper Crest Forest Defenders

Friends of Trees

LBA Woods Coalition

Marshall Middle School and the
Citizen Science Institute

Mike Ruth, Evergreen State College

Salix Solutions

Sam Castro, Northwest Natural Resource Group

Streamline Earthworks

Thurston Conservation District

Tri-Element

Washington Conservation Corps

Washington Native Plant Society

*And a special thanks to the numerous
individuals who gave of their time and energy
to support our work – and make it possible!*



Work Parties, and our invaluable Volunteers and Partners



Our work would not be possible without the efforts and support of amazing individuals and groups. This year, volunteers donated over a thousand hours to protect, preserve and restore our precious local ecosystems.

Work parties are held throughout the year, and are a great on-the-ground way (literally!) to help our urban ecosystems. In 2022, our volunteers enjoyed camaraderie while cutting knotweed, removing invasives, planting trees, building fences, and the multitude of other tasks that come with ecosystem restoration. Two work parties of particular note in 2022:

On January 17th, 80+ volunteers participated in our MLK Day Planting Party. We planted over 2,500 native shrubs and trees into an important drainage area of the West Bay Woods. Folks were so efficient that we ran out of plants within about two and a half hours! It was wonderful to see and hear people (especially in COVID times) working together outside to create this functional, biodiverse community forest!

A few days later, on January 21st, OlyEcosystems hosted a work party for 30 Marshall Middle School students. We planted over 700 trees and shrubs around our newly constructed rain garden in the West Bay Woods. We have an ongoing partnership with Marshall Middle School's plant nursery. The students in Natural Resources, Horticulture, and Citizen Science Institute classes grow plants that OlyEcosystems purchases for restoring our preserves. Seventy alder trees that Marshall Middle School students potted and cared for were among the first trees planted at the Cooper Crest Preserve.

We also want to give a shout out to the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews who worked tirelessly for ten weeks this year across our preserves. Among other things, they pulled lots of ivy, placed mulch, built trails and planted plants in the West Bay Woods and Cooper Crest.

*Thank you all for helping to restore diverse,
functional and beautiful forests for our future!*





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olyecosystems.org

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It is you—all our volunteers and donors—that make OlyEcosystems a thriving community-based, urban conservation land trust. Your support and commitment to conservation and restoration is what makes everything possible.

We ended 2022 in good financial standing again, thanks to you! Donations of any size add up and make it possible for us to keep our work moving forward. We are especially pleased to have 120 first-time donors in 2022.

One great way to help is by setting up a recurring donation. It is easy to do (see our website) and once it's set up you have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping with no extra work on your part!

By committing to a recurring donation of any amount to OlyEcosystems each month, you become a sustaining donor. We rely on recurring donations to responsibly plan for the future of our organization, to continue to carry out our mission, and to remain competitive in a challenging real estate environment. Thank you!