



*Protect.  
Preserve.  
Restore.*

*Olympia*  
Ecosystems

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



*This past year brought many challenges, but it also underscored the strength of our community. Time and again, you showed up for the lands, waters, and wildlife that sustain our local ecosystems.*

Thanks to our generous donors, volunteers, and several new grants, Olympia Ecosystems was able to acquire two new properties in 2025. In the **West Bay Woods**, we added 0.4 acres adjacent to the existing trailhead on Dickinson Ave, bringing the total conserved land there to 23.4 acres. The house on the property was slowly slipping into the ravine, and the septic system was contributing to poor water quality in the creek below, so we removed it all and graded the slope to improve wildlife habitat and safety. We also added a parcel (5.3 acres of forest with artesian springs) to the **Green Cove Creek Preserve**, bringing our conserved land in that watershed to over 17 acres. This represents an important milestone as we work to protect and restore this vital habitat for future generations of salmon, Olympic mudminnows, over fifty bird species, and people!

In addition to conserving lands, we increased our restoration capacity and expertise by hiring our first Restoration Specialist, supporting additional Work Study

students, and welcoming four essential volunteers: our Volunteer Coordinator, Volunteer Philanthropy Coordinator, Volunteer Graphics Designer, and Volunteer Photographer. These incredible people have really improved and expanded the quality, reach, and impact of our work. This year our community of restorationists (staff, Work Study students, Washington Conservation Corps members, partners, volunteers) planted tens of thousands of trees and live willow stakes at Deschutes River Preserve, collected native seeds, protected young cedars, removed invasive species, and improved trails across our preserves.

One of our biggest restoration accomplishments this year was the completion of Stormwater Park South along West Bay Drive. This massive effort converted an eroded streambed and a compacted old parking lot into a cascading creek that empties into a filtering pond to clean stormwater on its way to the Sound. The pond is now surrounded by native plants that will provide both ecological and cultural value going forward. In conjunction with this restoration effort, we held a special gathering for long-time donors and a symbolic tree planting at the site. The whole system was tested during the heavy December rains, and it performed beautifully.

*(Continued in quote)*



**“We are forever grateful for the support and care this community provides throughout the year. Keep showing up for what you believe in and we can collectively create a safe and healthy future for the land, the wildlife, and the people who call Olympia home.”**

— Sarah Hamman, Board President

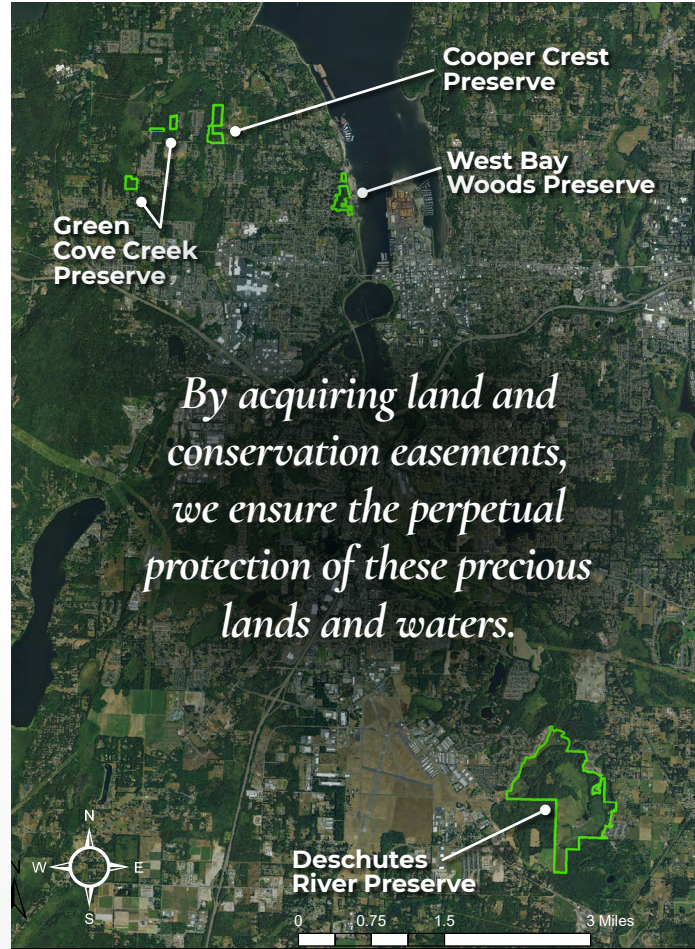
*Scan the QR code to learn more and get involved!*





# Meet the Preserves

West Bay Woods  
Cooper Crest  
Deschutes River  
Green Cove Creek



*By acquiring land and conservation easements, we ensure the perpetual protection of these precious lands and waters.*

## Land conservation is the foundation of all our work.

In 2025, Olympia Ecosystems continued a strategic, relationship-based approach to land protection that balances ecological value, climate resilience, stewardship capacity, and long-term community benefit.

### Throughout the year, our Land Conservation program focused on:

- **Identifying** and evaluating high-priority properties that improve habitat connectivity and watershed health
- **Advancing** acquisitions through careful due diligence, feasibility analysis, and partnership development
- **Monitoring** development pressure in sensitive areas while engaging constructively with agencies, landowners, and community stakeholders
- **Integrating** land protection with restoration planning so conserved lands are actively cared for, not simply set aside

This work requires patience and persistence. Many conservation successes begin years before a property is protected, through trust-building, technical analysis, and steady advocacy. In 2025, these efforts resulted in meaningful progress, including the conservation of new forestland and wetlands, and continued momentum toward future protection opportunities.

## Our Mission

Olympia Ecosystems 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.

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# West Bay Woods Preserve

What began in 2014 as a grassroots effort to protect a one-acre heron rookery has grown into a vital urban forest corridor along West Bay. In 2025, restoration and infrastructure improvements continued alongside careful monitoring of nearby development proposals.

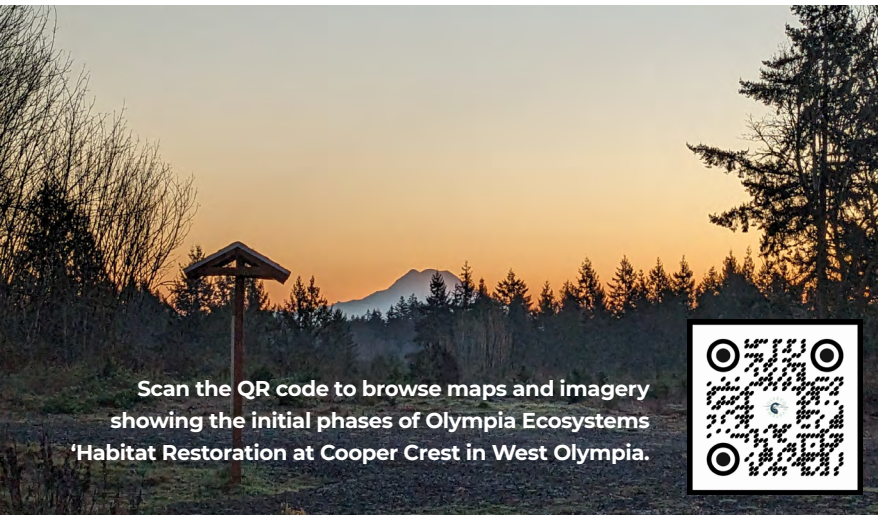
Volunteers from the Washington Trails Association and Work Study students completed a network of trails, added new stairs near the Hays Avenue trailhead and made critical bridge improvements. After years of planning, we completed construction at Stormwater Park South. This transformative project converted an overflow industrial parking area into a stormwater habitat pond and public trailhead. The new pond improves infiltration, treats polluted runoff, stabilizes slopes, enhances wildlife habitat, and expands public access. We also added 0.4 protected acres to the West Bay Woods, by removing a derelict structure that was contributing to poor water quality. That project will enable us to move the Dickinson Ave. trailhead to improve public access to the Woods. Finally, with volunteers from the community and Washington Conservation Corps crews, we removed invasive English ivy from approximately one acre and planted the Bob Barnes Legacy Redwood Grove.

Olympia Ecosystems also continued to track and communicate about proposed developments in the West Bay area, emphasizing the ecological value of the sites and the importance of thoughtful planning that protects water quality and habitat.

## 2025 Accomplishments

- **Partnered with volunteers from the Washington Trails Association and Work Study students to complete a network of trails, added new stairs near the Hays Avenue trailhead and made critical bridge improvements**
- **Completed construction and planting of Stormwater Park South habitat pond and trailhead**
- **Hosted volunteer work parties and partnered with Washington Conservation Corps, Work Study students, and Washington Trails Association**
- **Expanded the conserved area**
- **Added a kiosk & benches through the generosity of Eagle Scouts from Troop 222**
- **Continued advocacy and monitoring related to nearby development proposals**





Scan the QR code to browse maps and imagery showing the initial phases of Olympia Ecosystems 'Habitat Restoration at Cooper Crest in West Olympia.



# Cooper Crest Preserve

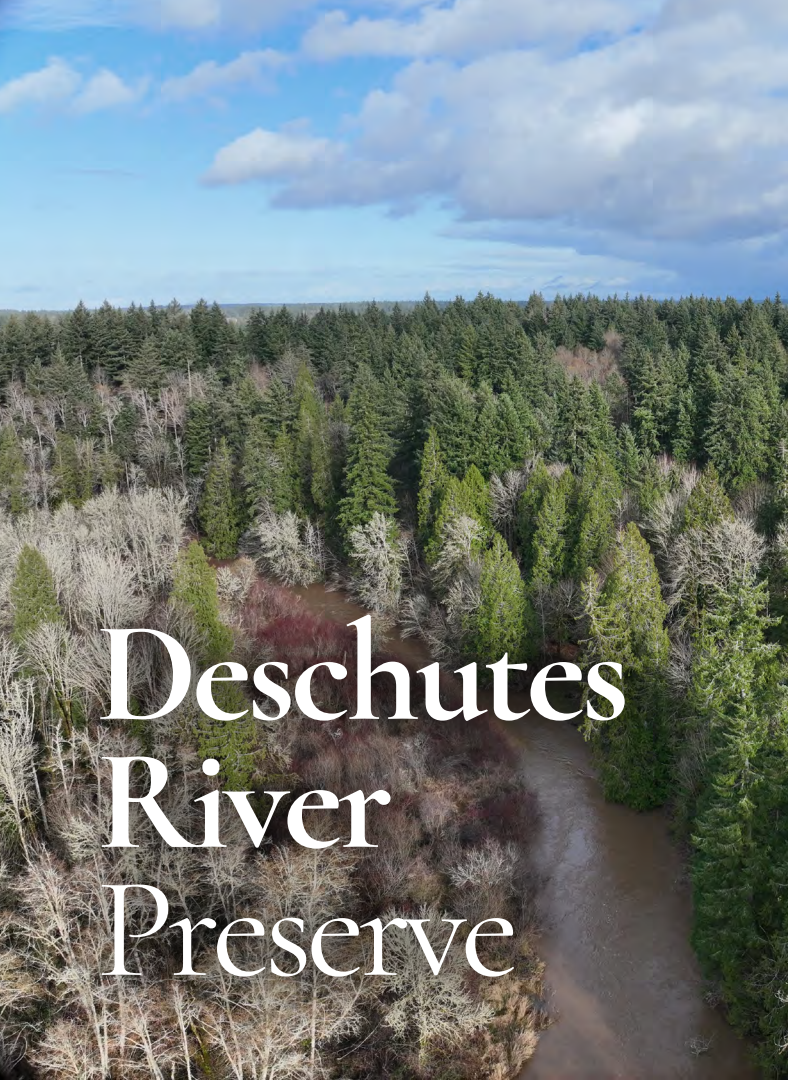
The Cooper Crest Preserve continues its recovery following clearcutting in 2022. Restoration here focuses on re-establishing native forest species while protecting young plantings from browsing pressure.

In 2025, volunteers participated in cedar caging work parties to protect young trees and collected native lupine seeds to support future restoration projects. Ongoing invasive species removal and site maintenance helped prepare the preserve for expanded planting efforts.

## 2025 Accomplishments

- Organized cedar caging volunteer events to protect young trees
- Collected and distributed native lupine seed
- Continued invasive species control and trail stewardship
- Added a kiosk, signage, and mural by Sarah Daly

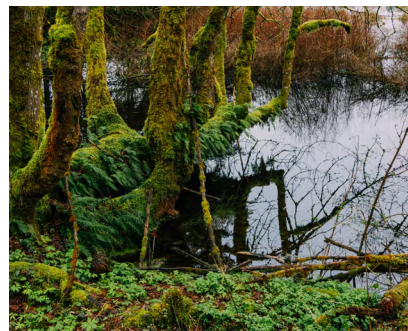




# Deschutes River Preserve

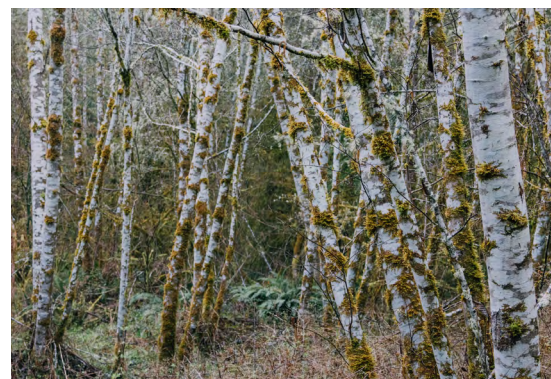
The Deschutes River Preserve remains the largest contiguous conserved natural area in the lower reaches of the river. In 2025, Olympia Ecosystems and partners undertook extensive riparian restoration, planting thousands of live willow stakes, conifers, and hardwoods along Elwanger Creek and a derelict hayfield to stabilize banks, improve water quality, and enhance salmon habitat. We continued invasive plant removal and planned a large-scale planting project for the 2026/2027 planting season.

The organization also began landscape-scale restoration planning for the lower Deschutes River in partnership with Wolf Water Resources, Thurston Conservation District, the Squaxin Island Tribe, Thurston County, Capitol Land Trust, and the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group. Funded by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, this effort will explore restoration alternatives to reduce flood risk, increase summer base flows, reduce fine sediment, and restore multi-channel floodplain habitat. By the end of 2026, partners will select an alternative and begin preliminary design.



## 2025 Accomplishments

- **Planted tens of thousands of willows and native trees for riparian restoration**
- **Continued our partnership with Thurston Conservation District, Washington Conservation Corps, the Squaxin Island Tribe, Wonder Valley Farm, and community volunteers**
- **Initiated reach-scale restoration planning for the lower Deschutes River with partners**





The lower Deschutes River suffers historic and ongoing impacts from urban and former agricultural land uses: dense development, bank erosion, incision, loss of off-channel refugia, stormwater pollution, and reduced summer baseflows from withdrawals. The system is flashy—extreme winter peaks (21 federal flood declarations since 1965) and low summer flows—exacerbating salmon declines and threatening downstream urban areas.

In 2025, Olympia Ecosystems began leading a partnership to implement landscape-scale, nature-based restoration in the lower Deschutes that is centered on the Deschutes River Preserve. In Phase I, with funding from foundations and state and federal grants, the partnership developed a robust understanding of existing conditions, terrain, and river-floodplain-wetland processes across the project site that was critical to identifying site specific restoration needs, opportunities, and treatment types. Based on this Phase I work, we developed restoration concepts that focus on reversing channel incision, maximizing floodplain activation, and increasing juvenile salmon habitat.

The preferred alternative restores floodplain connectivity by lowering select benches and raising channel beds, re-meanders Elwanger Creek, installs large wood and creates salmon rearing habitat, and implements beaver-friendly features (beaver dam analogs) to encourage wetland reactivation and raise water tables. Extensive riparian revegetation, selective thinning, and afforestation will increase shading, habitat complexity, and carbon sequestration. Modeling predicts increased summer groundwater storage of ~500 acre-ft, reduced winter velocities (from ~4-6 ft/s to 1-2 ft/s), increased typical depths by 1-4 ft, and the expansion of quality salmon rearing habitat from ~2.5 to ~32.4 acres. Projected outcomes include improved coho, Chinook, chum, and steelhead rearing habitat and refugia, enhanced wetlands and habitat for birds and amphibians, greater groundwater storage, reduced downstream flood risk, and augmented late-season flows—strengthening ecosystem resilience for changing climate conditions.

This process-based restoration approach—rooted in scientific assessment and modeling, supported by regional planning, and led by strong partnerships—is a template for our future growth. Future conservation and restoration projects for all our Preserves will seek to build on this science- and community-based model.

**With your support, Olympia Ecosystems will continue to lead the way in protecting, preserving and restoring the diverse ecosystems in and around Olympia, Washington.**

— Daniel Einstein, Land Conservation Director



# Green Cove Creek Preserve

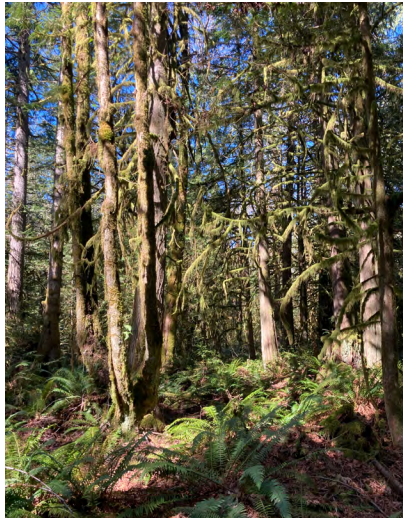
Located downstream from Grass Lake Nature Park, Green Cove Creek Preserve protects sensitive wetlands and aquifers that support salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and the Olympic mudminnow. In 2025, Olympia Ecosystems conserved 5.3 acres of forest and forested wetlands along Green Cove Creek, creating new opportunities for ecological protection and environmental education.

The newly conserved land will help connect nearby schools to wetlands and forest habitat while safeguarding critical water resources. Throughout the year, volunteers and students continued invasive species removal and site preparation to support future restoration.



## 2025 Accomplishments

- Conserved 5.3 acres along Green Cove Creek
- Advanced partnerships to support education and stewardship opportunities
- Continued knotweed, ivy, and blackberry control
- Hosted community work parties and student projects

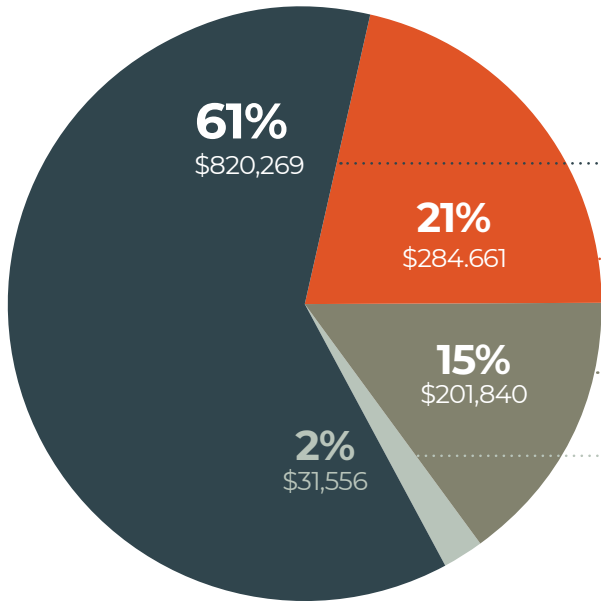




# Olympia Ecosystems

In 2025, we had the fortune of receiving charitable contributions from **240 generous donors**. While acquiring two new properties and completing vast amounts of restoration work, we also strengthened our reserves and improved our financial position. In addition, more than **174 people** donated **1,948 volunteer hours**.

## Income

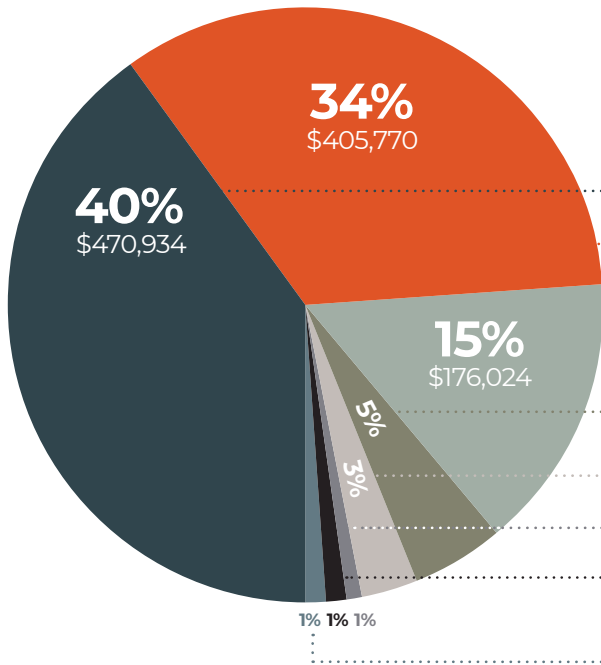


- Individuals and Organizations (61%)**  
\$820,269
- Foundation Grants\* (21%)**  
\$284,661
- Government Grants (15%)**  
\$201,840
- Other (2%)**  
\$31,556

**\$1,338,326** Total

\*Includes January 2025 grant previously reported.

## Expenses



- Restoration (40%)**  
\$470,934
- Property Conservation (34%)**  
\$405,770  
*Two new properties.*
- Personnel (15%)**  
\$176,024  
*Salaries, Wages, Taxes*
- Professional Services (5%)**  
\$58,731
- Office & Operations (3%)**  
\$30,889
- Other (1%)**  
\$14,795
- Insurance, Property Taxes & Licenses (1%)**  
\$12,042
- Equipment (1%)**  
\$8,005

**\$1,177,190** Total

# Financials

# 2026 Board of Directors

**Sarah Hamman**

Ph.D. in Ecology

*Board President  
Conservation Committee Chair*

**Gabriel Taylor**

Licensed Engineering Geologist

*Board Vice President  
Restoration Committee Chair*

**Bryan Heller**

MBA, Finance emphasis

*Board Treasurer  
Finance Committee Chair*

**Rob Penney**

Professional Mechanical Engineer

*Board Secretary  
Communications Committee*

**Diane Carney**

M.S. in Chemistry; M.S. in Psychology

*Board Member  
Finance Committee*

**Heather Grob**

Ph.D. in Economics

*Board Member  
Finance Committee*

**Aimee de Ney**

Ed.D.

*Board Member  
Communications Committee Chair*

## OLYMPIA ecosystems

Your support makes it possible to conserve land, restore habitat, and engage the community in caring for Olympia's ecosystems.

Angela J. Bowen Conservancy Foundation  
Capitol Land Trust

Chris Maynard & Featherfolio

City of Olympia

City of Tumwater

Community Foundation of South Puget Sound

Dawkins Charitable Trust

Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team

HOAs at Deschutes Heights, Deschutes Ridge,

Keanland Park, Cooper Crest

Marshall Middle School and the Citizen

Science Institute

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

OlyFed

Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation (OUUC)

Puget Sound Estuarium

Rose Foundation

South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group

Squaxin Island Tribe

Tenino Stone Carvers Guild

Thurston Conservation District

Thurston County

Unity of Olympia

Washington Conservation Corps

Wolf Water Resources

Wonder Valley Farm

Together with our very generous donors, dedicated volunteers, and partners, we can continue to fulfill our mission to protect, preserve, and restore.

Special thanks to our Essential Volunteers who donate their time above and beyond our regular volunteer work parties:

Fran Kammerer, Volunteer Coordinator

Nancy Riordan, Volunteer Philanthropy Coordinator

Emily Pham, Volunteer Graphic Designer

Wilson Caisley, Volunteer Photographer

Olympia Ecosystems gratefully acknowledges the family of **Charles B. Roe, Jr.** for their kindness in suggesting memorial gifts be made to our mission in 2025. We also acknowledge the loss in 2025 of Olympia Ecosystems supporters **Charles W. "Chuck" Lean** and **Ralph Munro**, legends in environmental law and orca protection who, along with Charlie Roe, left a lasting impact on conservation in Washington.

# Celebrating Restoration



**Maria Ruth**, local author, generous volunteer, and donor shared words of wisdom to those in attendance. "Our collective attention and care are the best way to offset the neglect and misuse of our natural environment." "Even in a teaspoon of preserved land or protected water you can find a myriad signs of a recovering ecosystem."

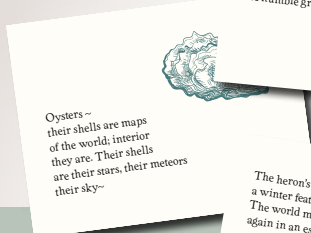
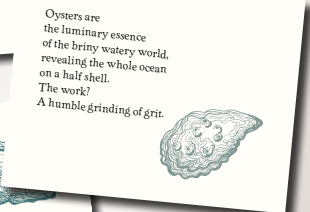
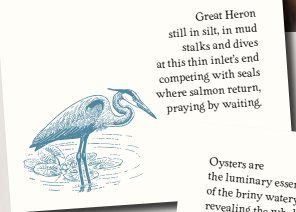
On September 28, 2025, Olympia Ecosystems sponsored a gathering at Anthony's HomePort to acknowledge long-time donors and board members, current and past. In addition to our own speakers, we invited two guests to share words with our donors: Charlene Krise from Squaxin Island Tribe and Maria Mudd Ruth, author, volunteer, and donor. The event was in conjunction with the public opening of Stormwater Park South in the West Bay Woods preserve. Following the program, guests traveled to the beautiful site to see what dedicated people made possible, thanks to thousands of hours of volunteer work and financial contributions. The stormwater pond, converted from a former parking lot for Reliable Steel employees, now provides habitat for native plants and wildlife and it cleans and filters water before it enters Budd Bay.



Gathering at the event, Conservation Director, **Daniel Einstein**, **Bob Barnes**, devoted local conservationist and loyal volunteer, Board President **Sarah Hamman**, and board members **Gabriel Taylor** and **Diane Carney**. Bob Barnes has been engaged with Olympia Ecosystems since its inception. To honor his commitment, the board announced in 2025 that a grove of trees at West Bay Woods preserve will be planted and named in his honor.

Last year, Olympia's 2023-25 poet laureate, **Kathleen Byrd**, generously donated a set of letter press cards for our use in writing thank you notes to donors.

Please enjoy this selection from her 2024 publication, Last Resort.



## I don't know

*how the mud flats  
or how the prairie grasses  
how the garlic scapes or the beet  
greens above the soil. I don't know how the blue  
berries or how the wind picks up and carries on in a maelstrom  
how the night mares or the morning dews.  
I don't know how the river knows its way back to the sea  
but I do know gravity. The weight and heft of the thing  
of living that is. How tenderly you can fall into grass  
and hope, despite all signs otherwise, that the world will turn  
though I don't know how the world turns only*

that it does.



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# Making a Difference for Generations to Come

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Planned giving is often referred to as *Legacy Giving* and can be made during your lifetime or through a will or trust. These contributions are instrumental to the Olympia Ecosystems mission of stewardship in perpetuity. Advanced planning can help direct your contribution to special focus areas or projects, according to your wishes. They are easy to arrange and can be changed at any time. Legacy Gifts can offer tax benefits for you and your estate. In addition to naming Olympia Ecosystems in your will or revocable living trust, the following are common ways to remember Olympia Ecosystems in your estate plan:

**Traditional IRAs and qualifying 401(k) or 403(b) Plans:** Simply fill in the blanks to name Olympia Ecosystems as a primary or contingent beneficiary for all or a portion/percentage of your 401(k) or 403(b) plan.

**For retirees seventy-two and older** who need to take a required minimum distribution (RMD), a portion of or the whole distribution

could be gifted to Olympia Ecosystems. There are tax advantages to donating your RMD as your taxable income is reduced accordingly. Your financial institution/broker/advisor transfers funds directly to the charitable organizations you select.

**Brokerage/Bank Accounts:** Name Olympia Ecosystems as a Payable on Death (POD) or Transfer on Death (TOD) beneficiary of a bank or brokerage account.

As a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, contributions to Olympia Ecosystems are tax-deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Our Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) is **47-1745539**. For further information (and no obligation) on Legacy Gifting please send an e-mail to [treasurer@olyecosystems.org](mailto:treasurer@olyecosystems.org). Our Volunteer Philanthropy Coordinator will reply to you.

## About the Cover Photo

This photo is from Cooper Crest Preserve and represents our small actions having lasting effects for generations to come. All photography from this report was contributed by Olympia Ecosystems Board members, staff, and volunteer photographer Wilson Caisley.

Visit [OlyEcosystems.org](http://OlyEcosystems.org) to learn more  
about how you can support our mission!