



Our Common Ground

Nature Brings Us Together

An election year during a pandemic and at times the country seems more divided than ever. Even on fundamental issues like public health and the validity of science, we have some serious disagreements. Where is our common ground?

At Greenbelt we believe that by protecting and taking care of natural lands, we will all be better off. Our air and water will be cleaner, our fish and wildlife more abundant, our working lands more productive, and our communities, families, and children will be healthier. That's our mission and the vision that we've been making a reality for 31 years in the mid-Willamette Valley.

This past July, that vision was endorsed by an unlikely bipartisan majority in Washington D.C. with passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, a historic piece of legislation that will more than double funding for conservation in the United States and help protect over 30,000 acres of important natural lands in Oregon. The act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, including the backing of every member of Oregon's delegation.

Our air and water will be cleaner, our fish and wildlife more abundant, our working lands more productive, and our communities, families, and children will be healthier.

The Great American Outdoors Act fixes a critical backlog of deferred maintenance at national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests that has severely limited access to public lands, and it guarantees permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, one of the country's most important sources of conservation and recreation funding.



Bald Hill Farm

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FALL 2020

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CONNECTING DURING COVID



Music on the Land with Rob Birdwell



Run for the Hills

Going Remote

Last March we pivoted away from traditional in-person events and learned to connect with you from a distance.

Symphony on the Land became three online performances by local musicians in beautiful settings. Run for the Hills went virtual, with self-reported times (and selfies!). We had a natural dye workshop, a fascinating soils presentation, and two meetings of the Conservation Book Club on Zoom, and a tour of the wildflower bloom at Kingston Prairie live on Facebook.

We hope to return to some limited in-person outdoor events soon. Let us know how you'd like to stay connected and what kind of events you are interested in!

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In an extremely divisive political climate, protecting land brought the country together.

In 2013, after years of planning and with strong support from the community, Greenbelt finalized the purchase of Bald Hill Farm, 587 acres of diverse wildlife habitat and three miles of public trails. The final piece to the protection puzzle was funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The protection of Bald Hill Farm was the realization of decades of community work and a statement of shared belief in the importance of protecting land for nature and for people. It was an expression of the common ground in this community and in this country - *we believe in the land*.

We find common ground in protecting land and water. Could it be that the land we depend on holds the key to consensus?

We believe that people, now more than ever, need connection to nature and access to open space. We believe that nature brings us together.



Masks and Thumbs Up at Bald Hill Farm

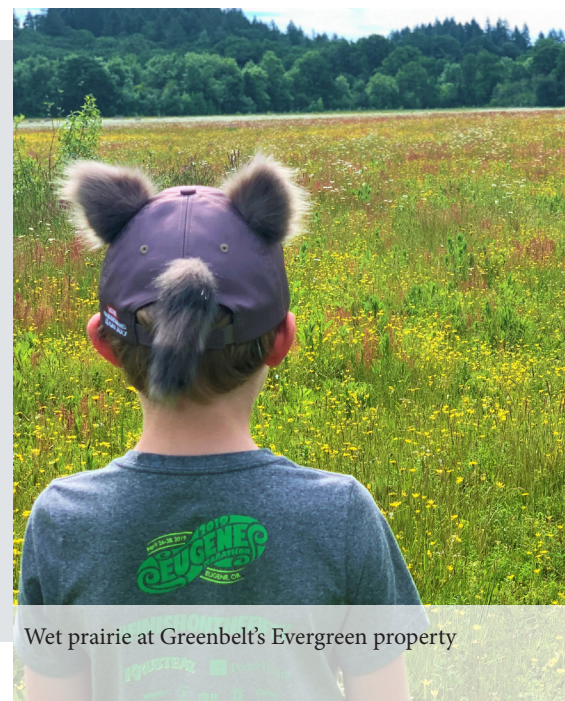
Trusting the Land

Has there ever been a better time to be outside?

Fresh air, a sense of peace, a place to break a sweat or quietly contemplate the world and the times we live in – it can all be found in the great outdoors. In 2020 we have received many messages of thanks for the trails at places like Bald Hill Farm and Fitton Green, as people turned to nature for relief.

A pandemic wasn't on the minds of the Greenbelt founders when they laid out a vision of protecting important natural areas for the community, but we're all feeling gratitude for that vision and those places more intently these days.

Trusting the land to provide for people and for nature is at the heart of our mission. Protecting land is an investment in a healthier future for our community. When we protect land, when we take care of land, it takes care of us.



Wet prairie at Greenbelt's Evergreen property



Nicole Maness



Cameron Montagne

Welcome Aboard New Voices at Greenbelt

We welcomed two new Board members to Greenbelt Land Trust in 2020. Nicole Maness lives in Corvallis and works for Willamette Partnership in conservation planning throughout the Pacific Northwest. Cameron Montagne is a University of Oregon sophomore studying Environmental Science with a minor in Ethnic Studies.

We asked Nicole and Cameron for their thoughts on equity and justice in the conservation movement, the role of land trusts, and where they want to see Greenbelt go in the future.

Nicole:

I am especially excited about how we might rethink and reimagine who we are engaging and how we expand our membership to be more diverse, inclusive and representative of the communities that the organization can and should be serving. The concepts of equity and environmental justice are essential ideas that we need to be understanding, embracing and ideally living through our work at Greenbelt.

The natural spaces managed by land trusts like Greenbelt are invaluable – serving as refuges for both natural and human communities. They house some of the last remaining intact native habitat for species, and are important as places for people to experience what it truly means to be in nature.

Cameron:

I think what is most often misunderstood about the environmental movement is where it began. People like John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and Theodore Roosevelt are often credited with founding environmentalism in the United States, but Indigenous people are the original environmentalists, in the U.S. and all over the world.

Muir and Pinchot's idea of conservation revolved around the settler view of wilderness, which meant that to preserve the land, the Indigenous people that lived there had to be removed. And so our National Parks system was born, and although I value our national parks, I reject the ideals they were built upon and I believe the popular history of environmentalism and conservation needs to be rewritten without the whitewashing.

I think Greenbelt is headed in the right direction as far as reconciling with the racist history of conservation, but I'd like to encourage that movement even further. Another hope that I have for Greenbelt is that we can open more of our properties up for public use because although we are maintaining the land so it can foster healthy ecosystems of plants and wildlife, I want people to enjoy the greenspace too!

Why I Care Member Highlight

Elizabeth Jones moved to Corvallis in 2017 after 25 years in Northern Colorado where she was a professor of German History at Colorado State University. Upon her arrival, she quickly discovered what she describes as “the magical Bald Hill and Fitton Green hiking trails” which put her on the path to falling in love with the Willamette Valley, “I felt instantly attached to the landscape, and comforted by it. We need a new language to describe all the shades of green that surround us. I love the mellow light, the humidity, and the sound of the rain.”

The places that Greenbelt protects offer us all the quiet to breathe deeply and to look.

We all need wonder,
now more than ever.

Elizabeth teaches German language at Deutsche Schule Corvallis, and is a co-founder of It's On Us Corvallis, a project of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Food Action Team.

Why does Elizabeth support Greenbelt Land Trust?

“I grew up in Manhattan and was not raised to appreciate the outdoors or even think about it. We were strictly an indoors family. Time spent in nature lets me forget about things that don't matter and reminds me of what does. Greenbelt's trails helped me build a relationship with nature that has made me a better observer and a better listener, and I believe it does the same for others. The places that Greenbelt protects offer us all the quiet to breathe deeply and to look. We all need wonder, now more than ever.”



Elizabeth Jones



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**2020 OPEN
HOUSE**

THURSDAY, DEC. 17TH 3PM

**2021 ANNUAL
MEETING**

THURSDAY, FEB. 25TH 6PM

We're going virtual for the Open House and Annual Meeting!
Details: www.greenbeltlandtrust.org