



*Aerial view of Lower Chimacum Creek, where Jefferson Land Trust has been working to protect and care for salmon habitat since its founding. Photo by John Gussman courtesy of Jefferson County Conservation Futures Fund program.*



# Jefferson Land Trust

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 2026-2030 Strategic Plan



*The inspiration for our logo, a Pacific rhododendron (rhododendron macrophyllum) in the Quimper Wildlife Corridor. Photo by Wendy Feltham, who volunteers as a Preserve Steward in Quimper West Preserve.*

## About Jefferson Land Trust

Since its founding in 1989, Jefferson Land Trust has helped permanently protect nearly 19,000 acres, securing vital habitat, forests, farms, and open space while raising more than \$45 million in conservation funding.

As development pressure, climate change, and land conversion intensify, the Land Trust's work remains grounded in its core role: protecting priority lands, strengthening habitat connectivity, and keeping working lands working.

Guided by its enduring mission of "helping the community preserve open space, working lands, and habitat forever," and by newly articulated vision and values statements, the Land Trust commits to advancing a future of vibrant, connected, and climate-resilient ecosystems and working landscapes, cared for by an engaged community in a spirit of reciprocity and shared responsibility.

## Introduction

This five-year strategic plan builds upon Jefferson Land Trust's 2010 Conservation Plan, which organizes the organization's work around four core themes – Habitat, Forestry, Agriculture, and Community Conservation – and connects near-term objectives to a 100-year vision for Jefferson County's lands and waters.

A new fifth theme – Organizational Health and Perpetuity – has been added to the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, recognizing that long-term conservation success depends on financial resilience, leadership continuity, and organizational capacity to steward protected lands in perpetuity.

## Habitat and Biodiversity

### 1. Expand and Connect Core Habitat Areas

Protect additional high-priority lands that prevent conversion and strengthen wildlife corridors linking shoreline, riparian, and upland habitats, with emphasis on areas supporting native salmon and other keystone species.

### 2. Integrate Habitat Priorities into Local Planning

Work collaboratively with county and municipal governments to ensure Land Trust conservation priorities are reflected in local planning and growth management efforts that limit sprawl and support ecological connectivity.

### 3. Engage and Educate the Community in Habitat Stewardship

Provide inclusive, land-based learning opportunities and volunteer experiences that build the ecological understanding and stewardship skills that will support long-term care for protected lands, in partnership with Indigenous communities and local partners.

### 4. Enhance Climate-Resilient Stewardship and Monitoring

Update management practices to incorporate climate adaptation strategies, strengthen habitat monitoring using spatial data, and advance restoration projects that support long-term ecological resilience.

# Working Forests

## 1. **Expand Permanent Protection of Working Forests**

Protect additional working forestlands from conversion, maintaining long-term ecological, economic, and community benefits.

## 2. **Strengthen Community Forestry Initiatives**

Advance community forest models near residential areas, promote awareness of their social and ecological value, and explore opportunities for additional community-managed forests while building public understanding of their long-term benefits.

## 3. **Promote Sustainable Forest Products and Local Markets**

Support the development of a local, certified forest-products industry that encourages sustainable management practices and provides market-based incentives for forest conservation.

## 4. **Integrate Climate-Resilient Forest Management**

Incorporate adaptive forest-management practices that enhance carbon storage, watershed health, and wildfire resilience, paired with education and partnerships that support sustainable forest stewardship.



*Chimacum Ridge Community Forest is our biggest and most ambitious project so far. It was purchased in late 2023 after more than a decade of work and community partnership, and is being managed as a community forest for a balance of ecological, economic, and social benefits. Photo by Tegra Stone Nuess.*

# Community Conservation

## 1. **Expand and Connect Open Space and Trail Networks**

Protect and link key greenbelts, wildlife corridors, and trail corridors within and near residential areas to strengthen recreational access, while supporting ecological connectivity across the county.

## 2. **Enhance Community Access and Inclusion in Natural Areas**

Improve public access policies and develop inclusive outdoor spaces and programs that connect people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds with local natural areas, while balancing stewardship capacity and wildlife needs.

## 3. **Promote Conservation Education and Public Awareness**

Offer experiential, place-based education and outreach that build ecological literacy, stewardship skills, and understanding of the health and cultural benefits of conserved lands.

## 4. **Protect Scenic and Cultural Landscapes for Long-Term Resilience**

Conserve lands that preserve the county's wild and scenic character, support climate-resilient trail and recreation planning, and sustain partnerships that integrate conservation with community wellbeing.

# Agricultural Lands

## 1. Expand Protection of Working Farmland

Conserve agricultural lands in and near key population centers and transportation corridors to maintain local food production, rural character, open-space values, and long-term agricultural viability.

## 2. Strengthen Connections Between Farmers and the Community

Promote awareness of local farms and food systems, highlighting the role of farmland conservation in food security, water quality, community resilience, and cultural identity.

## 3. Advance Equitable and Sustainable Farm Ownership

Develop partnerships and innovative programs that improve access to affordable farmland, support farmers from diverse backgrounds, and integrate permanently affordable housing for agricultural workers.

## 4. Promote Climate-Resilient Agricultural Practices

Collaborate with partners to improve water management, soil health, and habitat connectivity on farmland, ensuring long-term productivity and ecological balance.



*Miles of trails wind through the Quimper Wildlife Corridor where Jefferson Land Trust has been working with willing landowners and partners for nearly three decades to protect popular trails, important wetlands, and open space. Photo by Wendy Feltham.*

# Organizational Health and Perpetuity

## 1. Strengthen Financial Stability and Sustainability

Build a diversified and resilient funding base through increased philanthropy, endowment growth, and earned-income initiatives that ensure long-term financial health and flexibility, while supporting stewardship obligations and time-sensitive conservation opportunities.

## 2. Enhance Staff and Institutional Capacity

Develop staffing, professional development, and governance structures that support ongoing organizational effectiveness and leadership continuity.

## 3. Foster Inclusive, Collaborative, and Accountable Governance

Cultivate a diverse and engaged board that reflects community values, strengthens relationships with staff, and represents the Land Trust as a trusted and connected leader in regional conservation.

## 4. Modernize Systems and Strengthen Organizational Integration

Advance technology, data management, and communication tools that improve efficiency, transparency, and collaboration across Jefferson Land Trust and its subsidiaries.