

COLUMBIA LAND TRUST

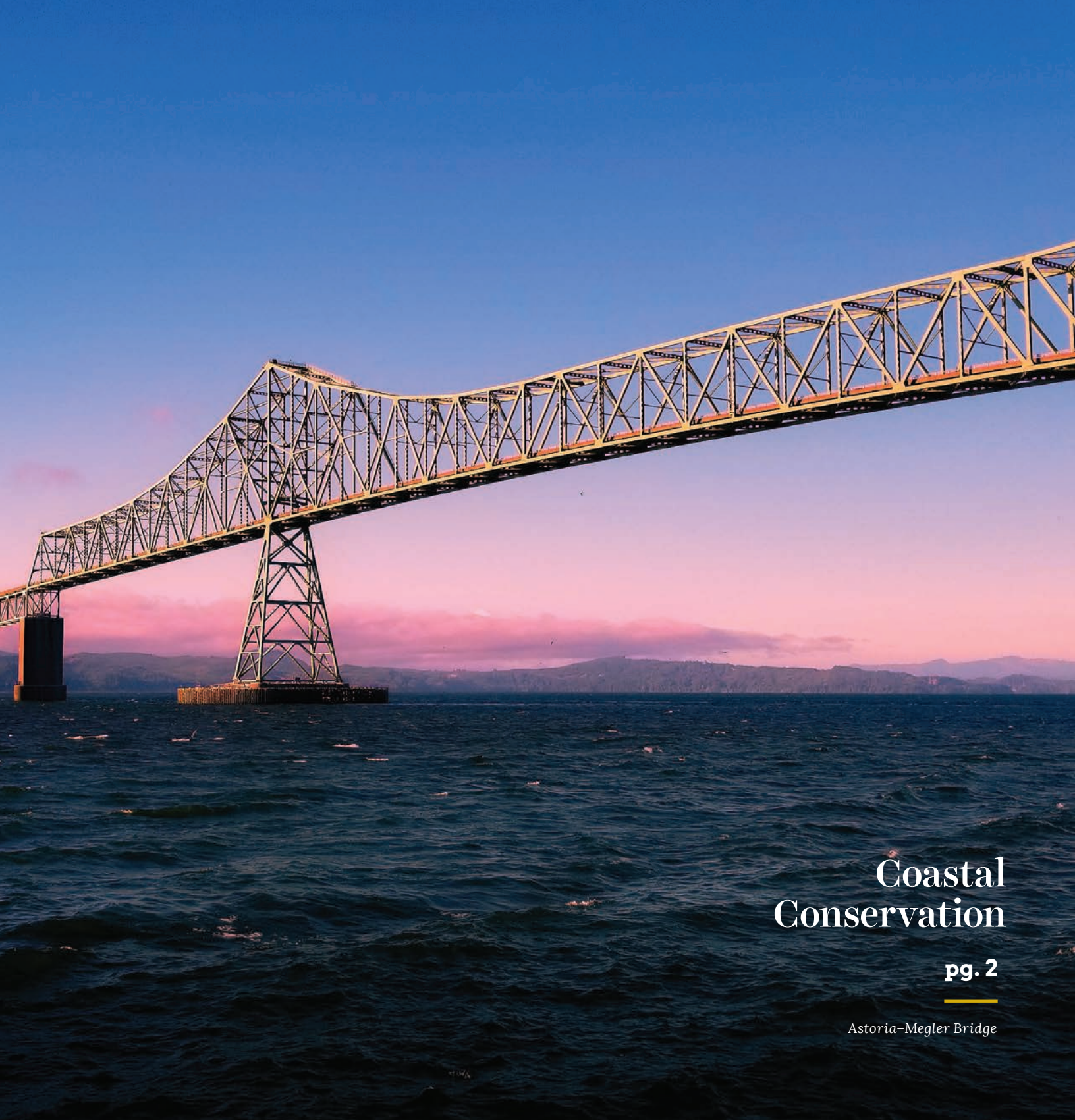
# Fieldbook

SUMMER 2019

VOL 26

ISSUE 02

Conserving and caring for vital lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River region through sound science and strong relationships.



Coastal  
Conservation

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Astoria-Megler Bridge



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Columbia Land Trust conserves and cares for vital lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River region through sound science and strong relationships.

*Cover: Photo by Dale Nibbe on Unsplash*

*Inside cover: Aerial view of the shoreline at South Tongue Point, Astoria, Oregon. Photo by Doug Gorsline*

Columbia Land Trust has earned accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, which recognizes land trusts that adhere to national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust with rigorous ethical standards, and take steps to ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.





## Finding My Place

*In this issue of Fieldbook, Glenn Lamb returns with a reflection on place.*

I grew up a skinny kid running on the not-yet-paved roads of a new subdivision, small iron smudge pots burning single flames of caution along the rough edges of the road. I grew up finding snakes in the soggy grass mats that led to the wooded hillside that was later cleared for yet another subdivision. I grew up planting and digging up carrots in a side-yard garden and playing baseball in the backyard on the day the astronauts walked on the moon.

I grew up looking at the moon while dodging smoke from campfires. I grew up building fires in a fireplace whose mantel was adorned with giant semicircular fungi we had gathered on our walks in the woods. I grew up walking in the woods with my grandfather, who painted rectangular blazes along the trails he had built. I grew up walking on trails because that was what you did on Sunday afternoons. I grew up spending Easter Sundays at the wildlife refuge where thousands of ducks and geese darkened the sky above us.

I grew up the day the sky darkened and, in the same instant, lightning flashed and thunder roared, and I lay flat in the grass as the rain pelted down. I grew up the day, years later, it was raining hard as I drove past the curb where a homeless man sat, surrendering. I grew up the day I surrendered to the truth that nature is glorious and brutal and healing and unfair.

I grew up to embrace the notion that conservation—especially conservation—should concern itself with ensuring that all life mutually thrives, from the smallest insect to the largest mammal and all people no matter their background.

Some people have origin stories that plant them on this continent. Some people migrated here thousands or hundreds of years ago or just last week. We are all intertwined through the gifts of this place: the air, the water, the land. I want to be in a place where we stop and listen to each other's stories, where we recognize these amazing gifts and we give back more than we were given.

I grow every day learning how to be part of such a world. Thank you for helping to show me the way.



“We are all intertwined through the gifts of this place: the air, the water, the land.”

### Glenn Lamb

*Executive Director*



Columbia Land Trust

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# Coastal Conservation for a Coastal Community

Astoria's South Tongue Point Will Provide a Future for Both Habitat and Local Students

BY DEZ RAMIREZ

**“In every aspect of this project, we see a lot of benefits to the students and to the community as well.”**

*Chris Breitmeyer, Clatsop Community College president*

“I’m not much of a morning person,” my volunteer photographer says to me in a low voice as we meet each other for the first time. He’s in good company, because I’m not much of one either.

It’s 8:45 a.m., and photographer Doug Gorsline and I are loading into a small boat with two bags of very expensive photo equipment, getting ready for a morning on the John Day River. We get a brief safety talk from our captain, and Land Trust land steward, Austin Tomlinson, and snap on our life jackets. I immediately regret not bringing a second cup of coffee for the boat ride as I watch Tomlinson take a sip from his Yeti mug. Rookie mistake.

It’s a classic Astoria morning: low grey clouds, ocean-chilled air, and seagulls flying overhead. Our mission today is to get a good look at South Tongue

Point, the Land Trust’s latest project and future home of Clatsop Community College’s “living lab.”

The cold air hits my face as we take off on our boat ride, and I learn quickly from Gorsline that this John Day River has nothing to do with the other John Day River, in Eastern Oregon. South Tongue Point appears in the distance, and we get our cameras ready, Gorsline with his Canon and me with my iPhone. We begin a large half circle around the property, which is chock-full of lush greenery—layers of salt marsh grass, cattail, willow, alder, and cottonwood growing wildly along the intertidal banks. Great blue herons stare back







b |



grateful for the partnership with the Land Trust.

Four years ago the Land Trust and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST) brought South Tongue Point to the college with hopes that we could conserve the land and transfer it to them, and CREST could help restore it. Situated on the main stem of the Columbia River, the 82 acres provide tidal wetlands, riparian area, and habitat for salmon and migratory bird species. The partnership between Columbia Land Trust, CREST, and Clatsop Community College formed with all three groups identifying the potential of the land as well as a cohesive vision for its future.

“My hope for that piece of land is that our students have access to a habitat where they can learn field techniques, experimental design, and those kinds of real-world things that undergrads at a community college wouldn’t normally get,” said Breitmeyer. Students who go through the college’s environmental science program and spend time out at South Tongue Point in the living lab will gain experience in conducting, planning, and executing field research, as well as land management and restoration practices.

In addition to the living lab, the college has plans to build a new campus for its Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station (MERTS) on adjacent land. Breitmeyer has been developing relationships with local environmental groups in order to create job pathways for students coming out of the program with certifications in

environmental science—and the curriculum for this program is also aligned with Oregon State University and Portland State University to create easier transfers for students. Enrollment in Clatsop seems to be on the rise, specifically with local high school graduates, a good sign that regional high school graduation rates also may be on the rise.

Breitmeyer’s big picture looks like a well-traveled and well-defined path with off-ramps into further education at our state schools and placement into local science- and environment-based jobs. “In every aspect of this project, we see a lot of benefits to the students and to the community as well,” he said. The vision is a big one that puts the local community at the center, creating options for future education and job resources.

“This partnership is an embodiment of both our past and present strategies that conserve and restore important wetlands and floodplains in the estuary, as well as an opportunity to inspire and educate the next generation of conservationists,” said Land Trust Conservation Director Dan Roix.

The Land Trust has leveraged its 20 years of experience writing grants, building relationships, and conserving vital wetland habitat along the Columbia River Estuary to secure public funding for the site’s acquisition. Today, the Land Trust is 90 percent of the way toward raising the \$1.41 million needed to purchase South Tongue Point. The remaining \$141,000 represents an opportunity for Astoria and the communities of the North Coast and Lower Columbia to help complete a project that both supports wildlife today and trains the environmental scientists of tomorrow. Pending funding, South Tongue Point is expected to close this October, and students could be using the living lab as soon as winter of 2020. ✨

a | *Aerial view of South Tongue Point.*

b | *Forerunner, Clatsop Community College’s research and training vessel. Photos by Doug Gorsline*

at us as we inch closer toward them, trying to get the perfect shot.

It’s easy to see the vegetation density, habitat potential, and rich biodiversity South Tongue Point offers, an ecological dream for scientists, making its future as a living lab quite fitting. “This is such a rich area for diverse scientific opportunities,” said Clatsop Community College president Chris Breitmeyer. “A living lab at South Tongue Point is a wonderful way to jump-start an environmental science program where students could do some long-term ecological monitoring and gather real-world data that would be of value to the scientific community.” After 20 years of studying, teaching, and being an academic administrator in the environmental sciences, Breitmeyer is clearly passionate and excited about South Tongue Point’s future and

# BEHIND THE LENS

## Cranes' Landing Shares Stories of Migration with Caldera Arts Students

BY DEZ RAMIREZ

Imagine nature—and conservation—allowing people of all ages to redefine art as they see it and know it, to create their own definitions, their own visions. Art can be subjective, after all, right? Columbia Land Trust's engagement program manager Rahul Devaskar saw art in bird migration at Cranes' Landing, our refuge for sandhill cranes in Vancouver, Washington, and an idea was born.

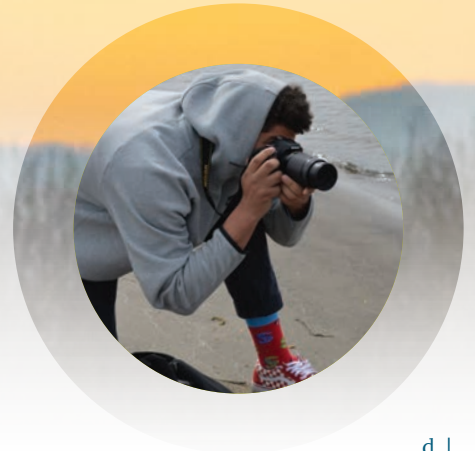
This past April, The Migration Series project emerged from the intersection of art and the environment. "A lot of people see art as one thing and the environment as the other," said Devaskar, "but to me they are woven together seamlessly." A few months prior, Devaskar had met Bryan Ortega, a high school mentor at Caldera Arts, a Portland-based nonprofit providing art programs for youth with limited opportunities while also creating a space to nurture working artists. Together, they developed a nature-based learning experience that illustrated the blend of art and nature to a group of high school students and gave them a chance to document it.

The group met over the course of three Saturdays as the students got comfortable behind the lens of a camera. Photographer Jermaine Ulinwa had been brought on board as the instructor, a perfect fit for the project. "Caldera is being really intentional about hiring artists of color to work with our students," said Ortega. "We want someone that can relate to the students on their level and know where they're coming from."

The partnership with Caldera was a creative one, with Ortega having an arts and anthropology background from Cuernavaca, Mexico, and Ulinwa, an artist, portrait photographer, and software engineer from Miami, Florida.

Out at Cranes' Landing, the group experienced a handful of "wow" moments, including a sunset and visits from an osprey, bald eagle, and of course cranes. Seeing these birds was a first for many in the group, which Ulinwa described as "magic" and "pure joy." Ortega said, "That was a profound moment for the students. Moments like that bring them closer together, and it might be the only thing they remember from that day, but they'll talk about it for a long time to come."

Learning about crane migration, the purpose of the land, and the conservation behind it was new knowledge for most—but the beauty of this project was Devaskar, Ortega, and Ulinwa planting these seeds for the students while also



d |

**"Subconsciously I think everyone is an artist. The beauty of nature is natural design, and there's art in that."**

*Jermaine Ulinwa*

giving them a first-time experience as nature photographers and artists.

"Art is apparent wherever you're walking or working. You're exposed to art on a daily basis, whether you realize it or not," said Ulinwa. "Subconsciously I think everyone is an artist. The beauty of nature is natural design, and there's art in that."

As we wrapped up our conversation, Devaskar left us with an interesting and hilarious question: "So, do you see the bald eagles, ospreys, and cranes as artists?" Ulinwa acknowledged the deep thought with a smile and a laugh. Deconstructing formal concepts of art and reshaping them into what fits the mind's palette and imagination is a beautiful, childlike place to be. 🦅

c | *Sandhill cranes in flight at Cranes' Landing. Photo by Calley Lovett, Scry Eye Photography*

d | *Caldera students get an opportunity to find art in nature at Cranes' Landing. Photo courtesy of Caldera Arts*



# LET'S GO

SIGN UP

ColumbiaLandTrust.org

## Save the Date

### PICNIC AT MOUNT HOOD

**Saturday, July 27**

RED BARN PARK  
PARKDALE, OR

*We invite Columbia Land Trust supporters and their families to our annual membership picnic celebration.*

### WILD SPLENDOR

**Thursday, October 3**

THE LOFT AT 8TH  
PORTLAND, OR

*Join us for our annual fall fundraising gala as we explore a sense of place in the Northwest.*

## Tour

### FARMS & STARS

**Saturday, August 17**

TROUT LAKE, WA

Spend a magical evening under the stars at the base of Mount Adams in Trout Lake. We'll tour Mountain Meadows Dairy, one of Washington's first organic dairies, before we sit down for a farm-style dinner with a stunning view of the mountain. When the sun goes down, we'll view the rural skies with local astronomer Jim White.




"Anna's hummingbird and Western columbine."

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the people, places, and  
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**A SENSE OF PLACE**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3**

The Loft at 8th Avenue  
2010 SE 8th Ave., Portland, OR 97214  
Early Bird Ticket: \$150  
Table of 10: \$1,500

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Register

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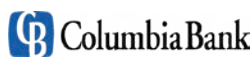


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