

# Yacolt Forest – Phase 3

The Yacolt Forest Conservation Easement ensures that the largest, intact, private land ownership in Clark County will remain forested in perpetuity.

- ~13,000 acres of permanent forestland protection (34,000 acres total in four phases)
- Permanently protects public access for hunting, fishing, and hiking
- Protects County's timber economy and clean water for communities
- Critical habitat for 5 federally threatened salmonid species
- \$1.1M application to Conservation Futures (\$9,075,000 total)
- 88% match from non-County sources
- Aligns with Clark County Comprehensive Plan and Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Plan

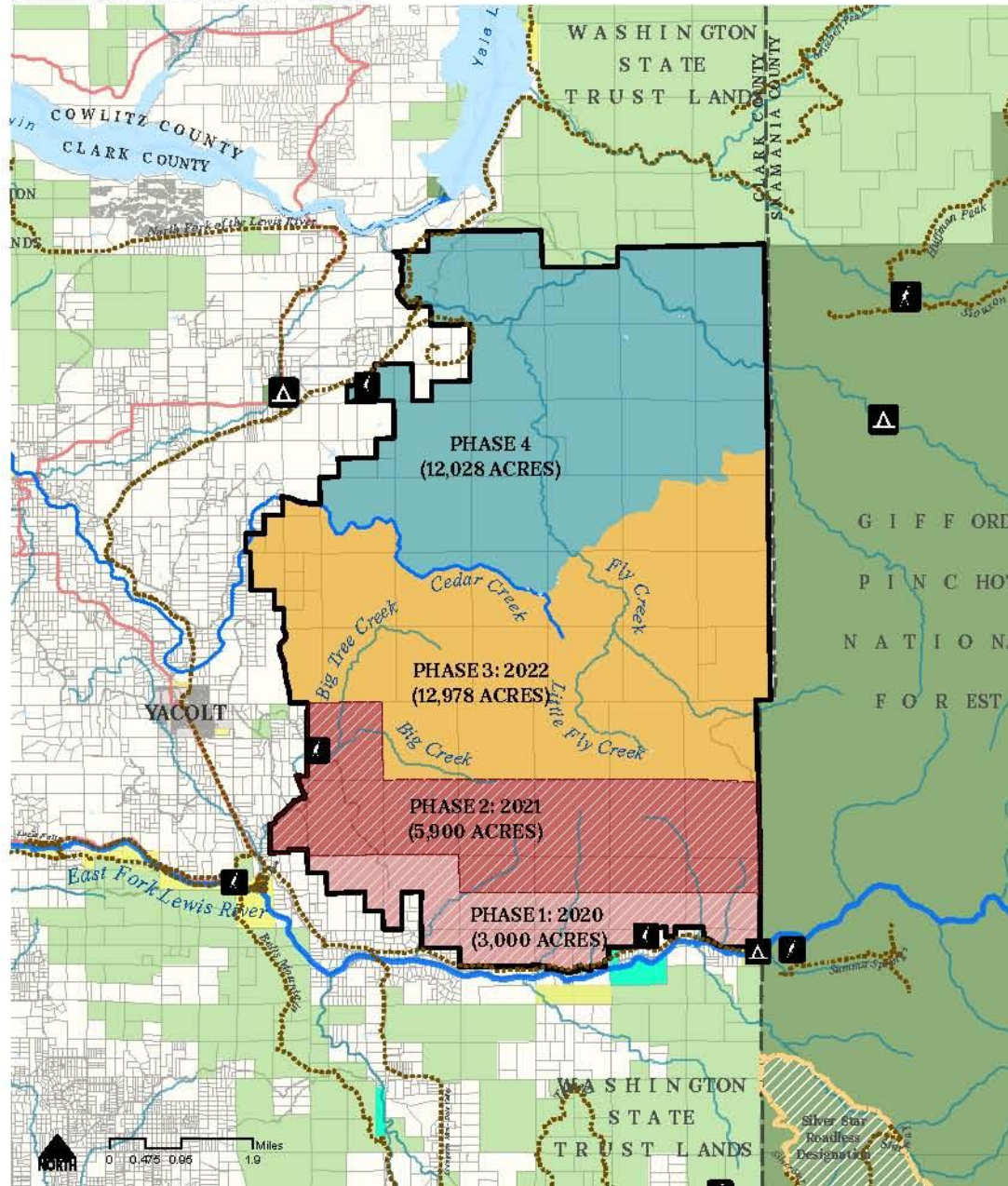




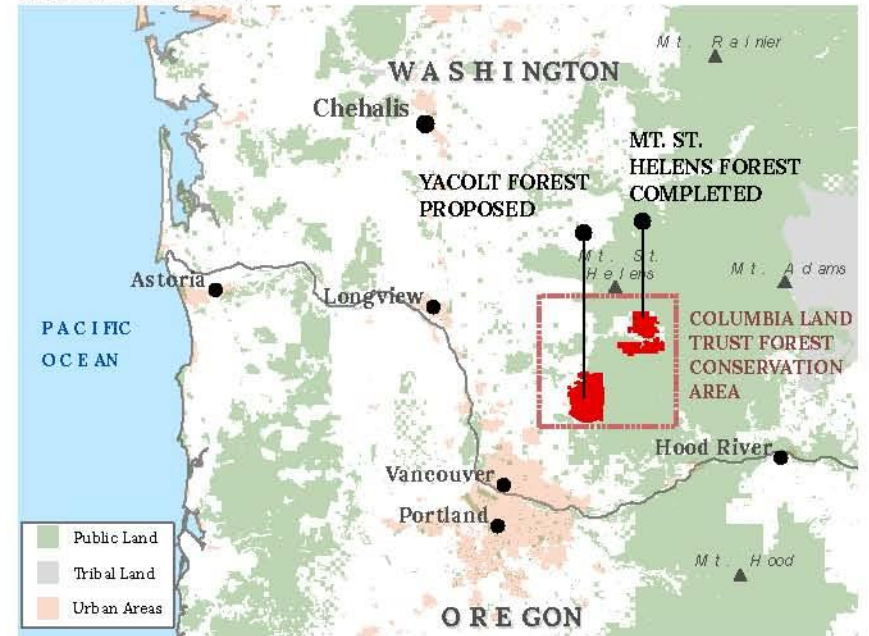
Columbia Land Trust

# FY 2021 Conservation Futures Yacolt Forest Phase 3

## PROJECT OVERVIEW MAP:



## REGIONAL MAP:



Yacolt Forest Conservation Project Area

### Project Phases

- Phase 1 - 3,000 Acres
- Phase 2 - 5,900 Acres
- Phase 3 - Proposed Conservation Futures (12,978 Acres)**
- Phase 4 - Future Phase (12,028 Acres)

### Land Management

- Federal Government
- State Government
- Local Government
- Columbia Land Trust

### Transportation

- Major Roads
- Trails

### Hydrography

- Lakes
- Rivers

Map Date: 10/7/2020  
Data Sources: USGS, DNR, Clark County

DISCLAIMER: This map is not a survey and must not be construed as one. This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for, legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. Users of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the usability of the information.



proud past, promising future

CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

# Conservation Futures Project Application / Summary FUNDING CYCLE 2021

**SUBMITTAL DATE:** 12/31/2020

**PROJECT NAME:** Yacolt Forest – Phase 3

### SPONSOR INFORMATION

Organization Name: Columbia Land Trust

Agency Address: 850 Officers' Row, Vancouver, WA 98661

Agency Jurisdiction: Lower Columbia River region

Contact Name: Nathan Ulrich

Contact Phone: 360-696-0131

Contact E-Mail Address: nulrich@columbialandtrust.org

### PROJECT LOCATION

Property Address(es): N/A

Tax Identification Number(s): 244396-000, 244599-000, 244801-000, 245003-000, 245205-000, 277056-000, 277057-000, 277058-000, 277060-000 (portion), 277264-000, 277267-000, 277268-000, 277269-000, 277270-000, 277271-000, 277272-000, 279670-000, 282391-000 (portion), 283624-000 (portion), 283829000 (portion), 284235-000 (portion), 284440-000 (portion), 284642-000 (portion), 284844-000, 285046-000, 285248-000 (portion), 285451-000 (portion), 285653-000 (portion), 285855-000, 286057-000, 286259-000, 286461-000, 286663-000, 286865-000, 287067-000, 287070-000

Major Street / Intersection Nearest Property Access Point: Eastern terminus of NE Falls Rd

Property Description (type of land use): Timberland

Section: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Township: 4N Range: 4E

Section: 24, 25, 26 Township: 5N Range: 3E

Section: 13, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 Township: 5N Range: 4E

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Number of Parcels: 36

Addition:

Total Project Acres: ~12,978

Zoning Classification(s): FR-80

Existing Structures/Facilities (No. / Type): None

Current use: Designated Forest Land

Watershed Name: East Fork Lewis River (HUC 10) and Lower Lewis River (HUC 10)

Conservation Futures Program – Department of Environmental Service  
1300 Franklin St., PO Box 9810, Vancouver, WA 98666-9810 (360) 397-2121



For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office: **Voice** (360) 397-2322; **Relay** 711 or (800) 833-6388; **Fax** (360) 397-6165; **E-mail** ADA@clark.wa.gov.

- Waterfront Access and type: Numerous tributaries to the East Fork Lewis River and Lower Lewis River (see below). The project provides direct access to all.
- Body of Water: Big Creek (1.2 miles), Big Tree Creek (2.2 miles), Cedar Creek (5.7 miles), Fly Creek (5.0 miles), Little Fly Creek (1.3 miles).
- Shoreline (lineal ft.): See above.
- Historical / Cultural Features: The site is within ceded lands of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and as one of the earliest sustained yield tree farms in the nation, it includes multiple state listed archaeological sites.
- Owner Tidelands/Shorelands:
- Active Agriculture;  Currently leased for agriculture
- Threatened / Endangered species present: Project site includes habitat for five species of federally listed salmonids including Fall Chinook, coho, and chum salmon, and summer and winter steelhead. It also includes land within a Northern Spotted Owl nest circle.
- Utilities on property (list all known):
- Potable water available on site:  Well;  Water Service;  Is there a water right?

**SITE DESCRIPTION** (Discuss physical characteristics of proposed acquisition):

This project will conserve nearly 13,000 acres (Phase 3) of a 34,268-acre forestland conservation site in Clark County (the initial 8,900 acres of the project have been funded by a previous round of Conservation Futures). This property is unique and valuable for conservation because it is the largest, intact, private ownership remaining in our rapidly urbanizing county. The entirety of the project site is categorized as Tier 1 Forest Resource lands (zoned FR-80) under the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, encompassing almost half of the County's Tier 1 lands.

The project site is adjacent to or in close proximity to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Yacolt Multiple Use Area, and Columbia Land Trust's Pine Creek Conservation Area and Copper Creek Conservation Area. The project site is an essential component of a connected landscape of public and private lands that provide valuable conservation to the residents of Clark County including outdoor recreation, surface and ground water resources, views and vistas, and fish and wildlife habitat. These lands provide some of the most important areas in the County for terrestrial wildlife including elk, deer, cougar and bear that are being displaced by population growth. Additionally, the project site contains Fly Creek Falls, a scenic 82-foot waterfall.

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENTS:** None

**PROPOSED USES ON SITE:** Public access, commercial timber operations

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- For purchase, list names: WA Department of Natural Resources
- For use of site, list names:

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**TYPE OF INTEREST:**

Warranty Deed: **No** Easement: **Yes**

Other (please describe):

Project requires relocation of residents:  Yes  No

**PROJECT COST:**

Estimated Total Cost: \$9,075,000

Estimate Based on: Comparable easement sales on timberland adjacent to Mt. St. Helens

Will other agencies/groups contribute to project?  Yes  No

Name of Contributor: USFS Forest Legacy Programs

Amount of Contribution: \$6,900,000 (75% of project cost)

Total Estimated Request from Conservation Futures: \$1,135,000 (12.5% of project cost)

Attach separate sheet with all anticipated:

- Revenues for project, including donations, in-kind services, grants, partnerships, and other contributions
- Expenses for project, including permits, fees, staff time,

**PROJECT MAINTENANCE PLAN** (brief summary of maintenance approach): Project site will be managed by fee owner for forestry values. Columbia Land Trust will perform annual monitoring and on-site inspections to ensure conservation values are protected as described in the conservation easement.





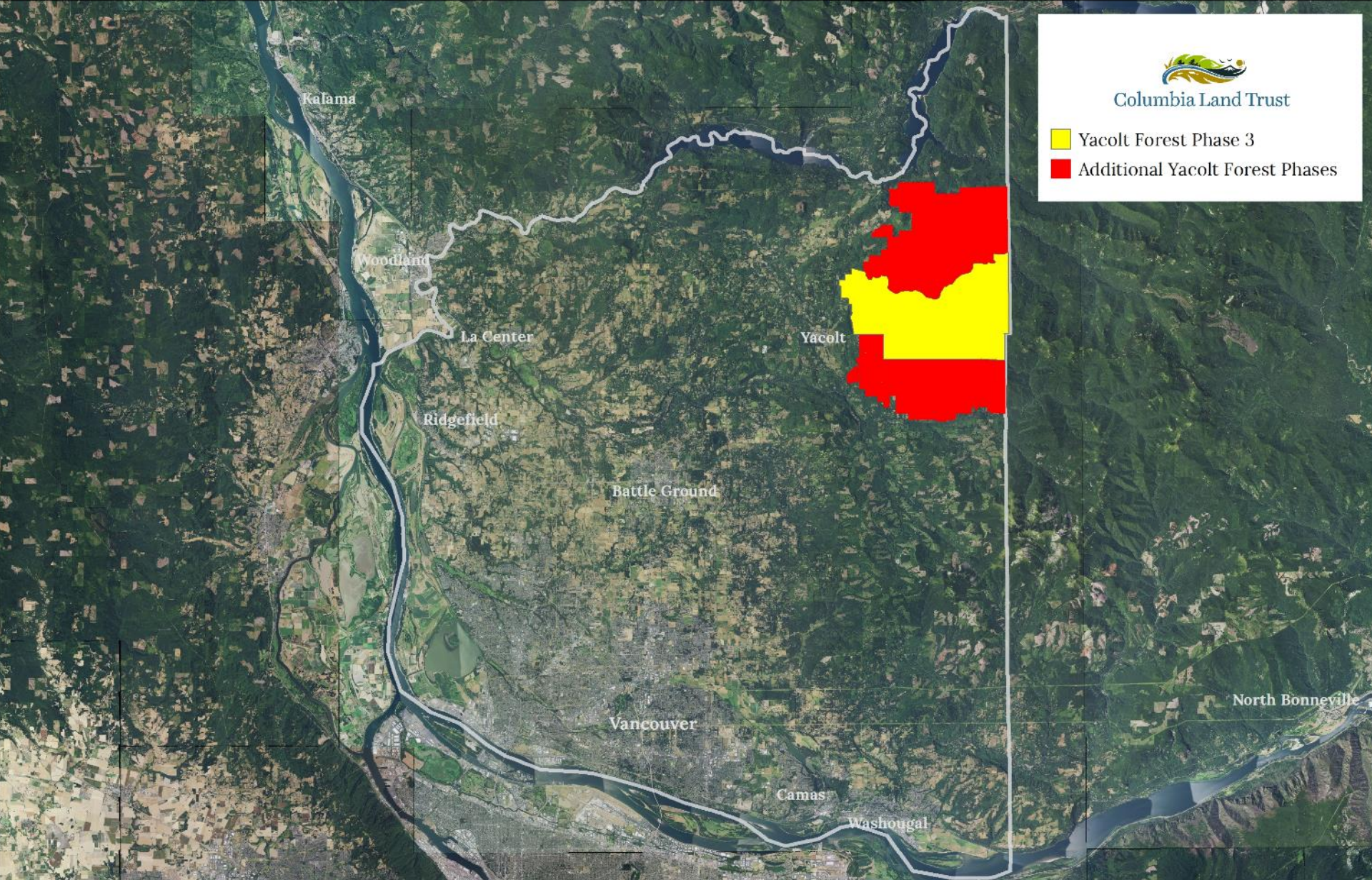
Columbia Land Trust

CONSERVING THE NATURE YOU LOVE

Yacolt Forest - Phase 3  
Clark County Conservation Futures

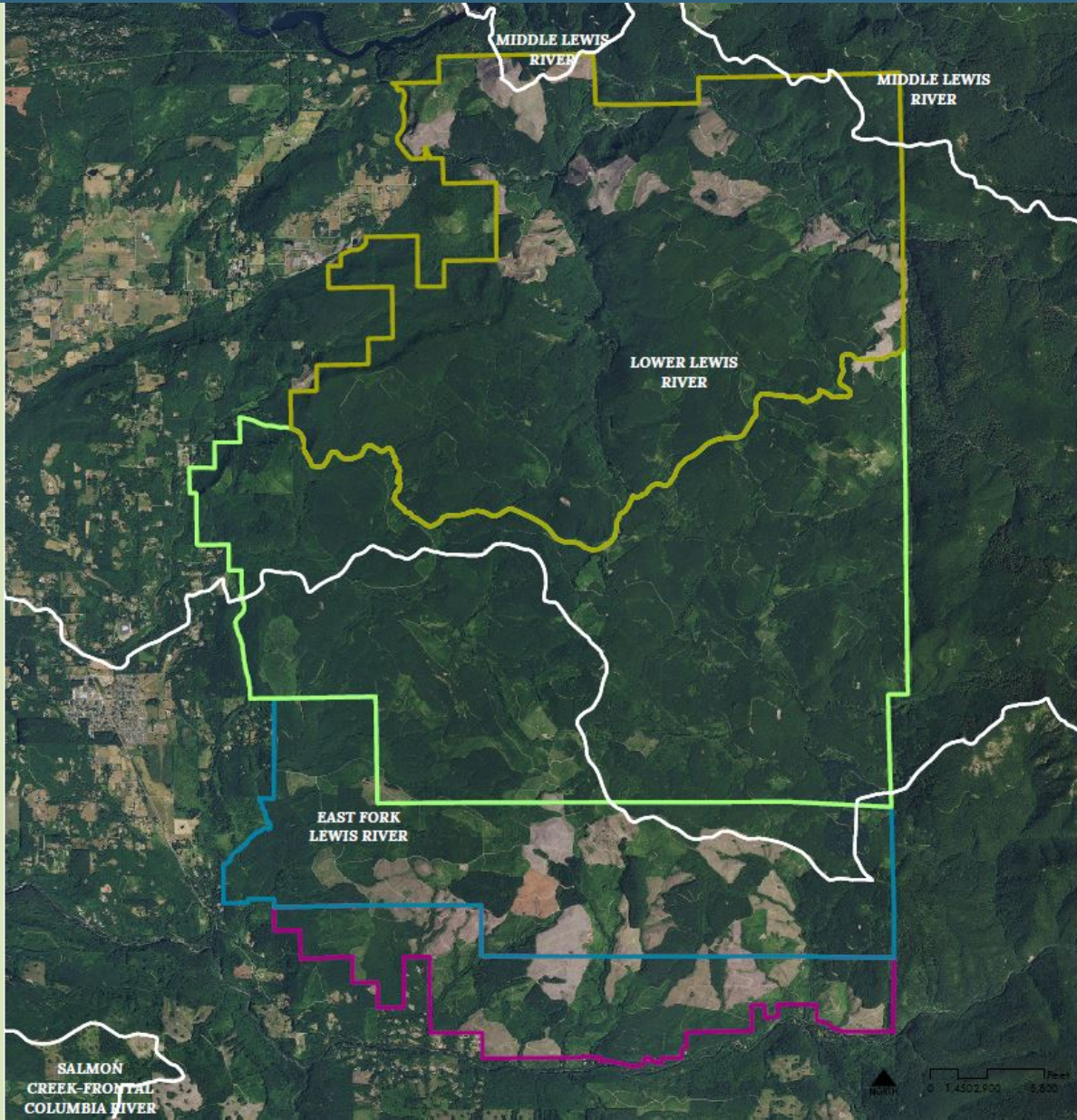


# Yacolt Forest – Phase 3 Locator Map



Columbia Land Trust

- Yacolt Forest Phase 3
- Additional Yacolt Forest Phases







## Goal:

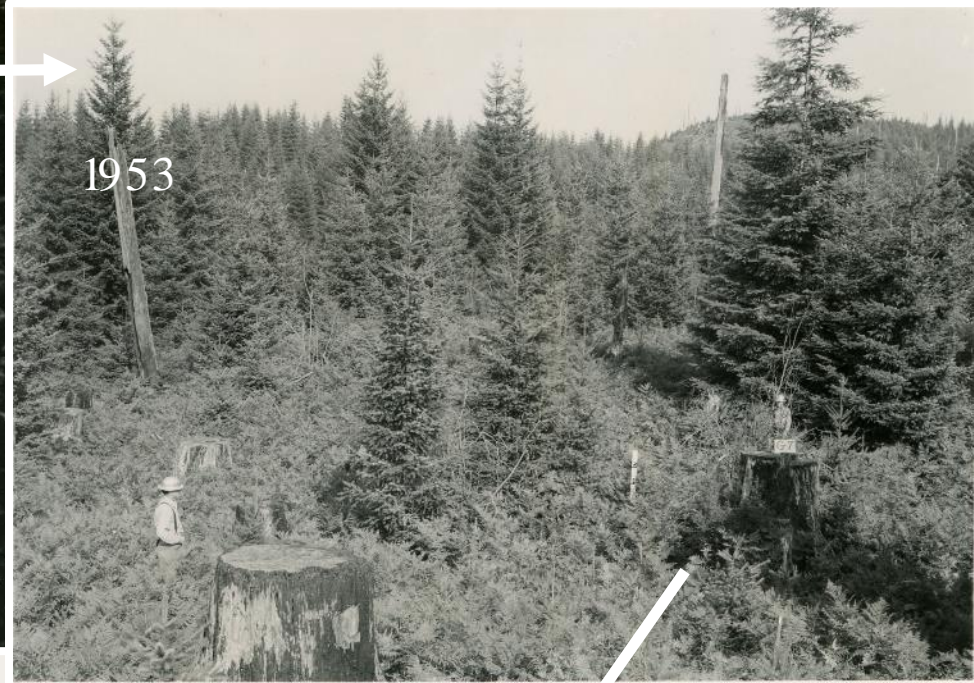
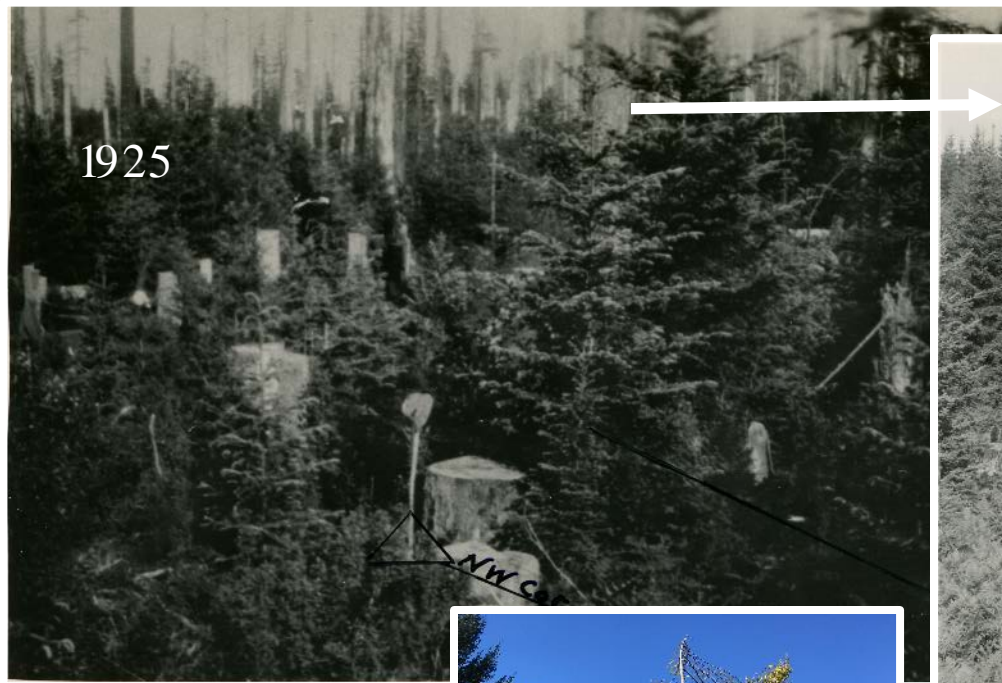
Conserve ~13,000 of highly productive forests using conservation easements.

## Objectives:

1. Ensure that Clark County's working forests remain forests.
2. Provide new public access with connectivity to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.
3. Protect wildlife habitat and drinking water including the headwaters of Cedar, Fly and Big Tree Creeks.



# Yacolt Forest - Phase 3 History







# Yacolt Forest – Phase 3 Public Access





# Yacolt Forest – Phase 3

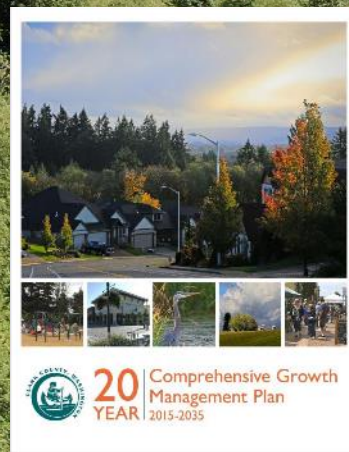
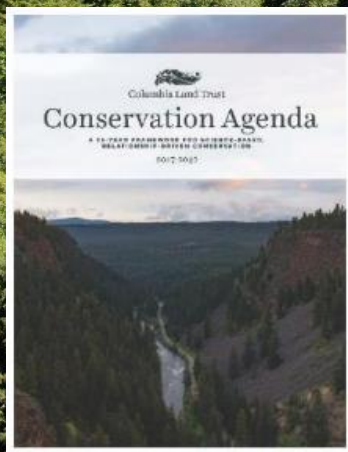
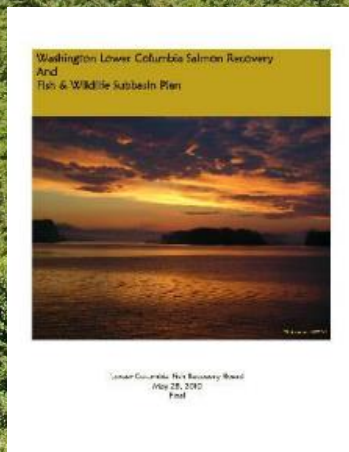
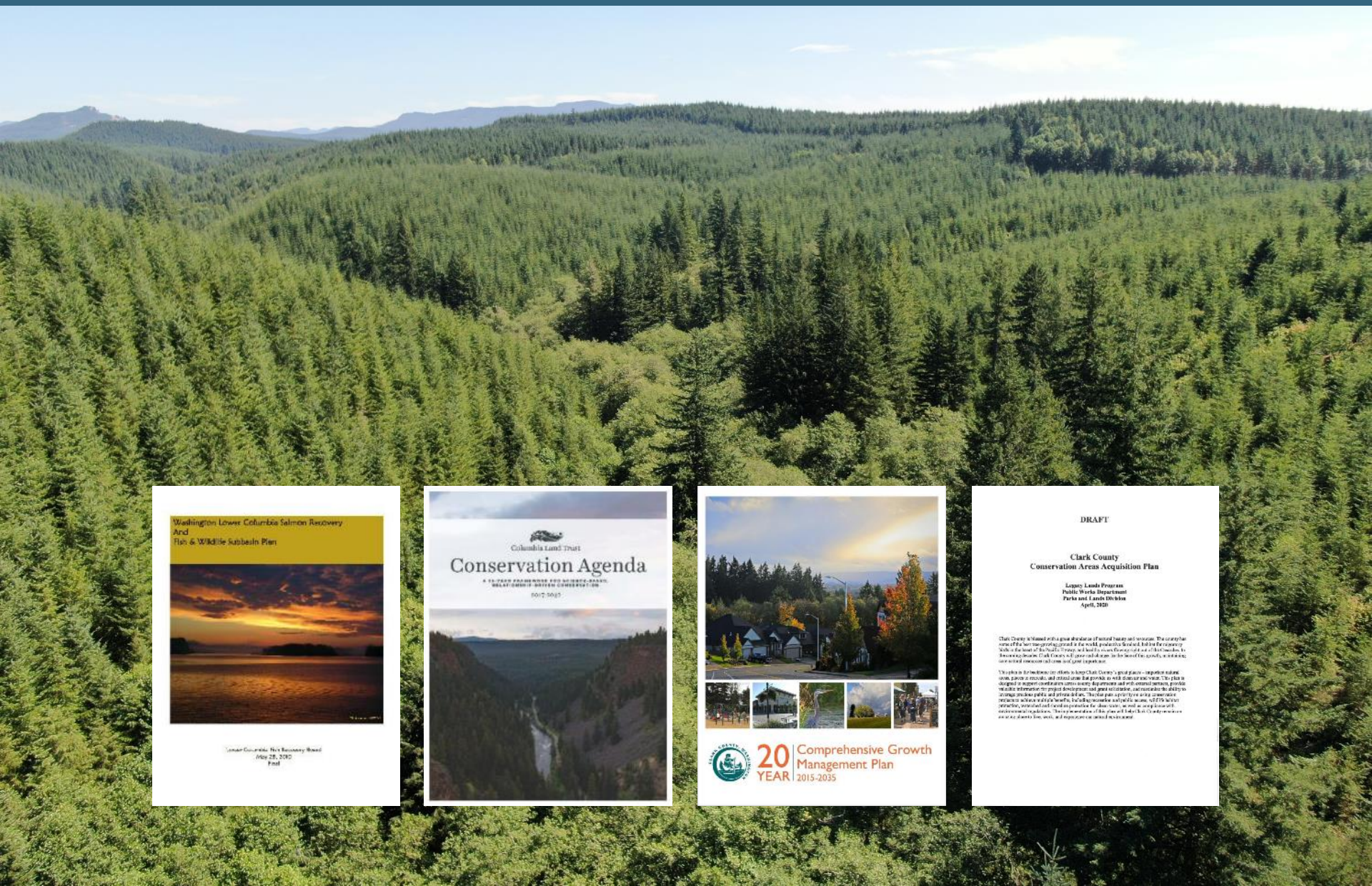
## Wildlife Habitat and Water Quality







# Yacolt Forest – Phase 3 Planning Priority





## Budget:

Conservation Easement:	\$8,580,000
Transaction:	\$ 494,00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$9,074,000</b>

## Funding:

US Forest Service Forest Legacy Program:	\$6,807,000 (applied)
Clark County Conservation Futures:	\$1,100,000 (applied)
Columbia Land Trust:	\$1,167,000

**88% From Partners**





## Clark County Forests Forever





Thank you!  
Questions?





## **Clark County Conservation Futures Scoring Criteria Response**

### **Yacolt Forest - Phase 3 Conservation Easement**

1. This project is aligned with six local, regional and federal planning documents: 1) the Clark County Comprehensive Plan which seeks “no net loss of habitat functions and values within designated habitat areas... for present and future generations...,” the 2). Clark County Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan, 3). the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board’s North Fork Lewis and East Fork Lewis River sub-basin plans, 4). Columbia Land Trust’s Conservation Agenda, 5) the federal species Recovery Plan for Lower Columbia River Coho Salmon, Lower Columbia River Chinook Salmon, Columbia River Chum Salmon, and Lower Columbia River Steelhead, and 6) the federal species recovery plan for the Northern Spotted Owl.
2. The project opens 13,000 acres of forest land to new public access. The area is currently closed to general public access. The public can only access the site by purchasing exclusive rights to a particular area for a year at a time. The project landscape includes 133 miles of hike-able roads and 106 miles of streams.
3. The project site is nested within a landscape that is surrounded by public forests on three sides. Connectivity with existing public land is a core component of the Yacolt Forest conservation effort. It shares a four-mile long border with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest to the east; the larger Yacolt Forest (of which this Phase 3 application is one component) also shares a four-mile border with DNR forestland to the north; and the larger forest has a non-contiguous six-mile border with DNR to the south. The Yacolt forest buffers and enhances these publically-owned forests.
4. The Yacolt Forest is the largest remaining private timber ownership in the County. The forest’s dominant timber species is Douglas-fir, Washington's most valuable timber type. Soils receive 76 inches of rain annually and the low elevation ensures a long and productive growing season. Nearly all soils are deep, well-drained, and classified as prime soils for Douglas-fir. Data from WA Department of Revenue indicates the forest provides more than 26% of the total annual timber volume from private forests in Clark County. Since 2001, the forest has been third-party certified through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Under SFI standards, the forests timber is managed according to a plan that also protects wildlife habitat, water quality, scenic values, and recreational opportunities.
5. The project site hosts habitat for six federally endangered species: headwater spawning habitat for five species of salmon and land within a documented northern spotted owl nest circle. In addition it hosts state and federally protected species including bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and larch mountain salamander.

The forest provides important habitat for game species as well. It provides winter forage for Washington State's largest elk herd, the Mt. St. Helens herd, as well as the space that many iconic species such as bear, cougar, and bobcat need to roam.

6. The project site is located immediately adjacent to the town of Yacolt and is less than an hour drive from most of the County. The increasing popularity of adjacent DNR lands and the East Fork Lewis River recreation area to the south in recent years demonstrates that the site is accessible for those looking for vast landscapes. There are numerous roads leading through the forest for non-motorized access. Motorized access will not be a component of this conservation easement acquisition.

7. The landowner is a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT). It is required to manage forestland as an investment and maximize profits for investors. It has already sold 1,234 acres of the larger Yacolt Forest ownership for development and stated its intent to subdivide a further 1,652 acres on the south and west ends of Phase 3 if it cannot sell an easement. While land sale decisions are made by the landowner on a quarter by quarter basis, the owner employs a three person real estate team and an external broker who are dedicated to identifying and selling timberland for development orientated uses. Ultimately the project site will be listed for residential sale if a conservation easement is not secured.

8. The total anticipated budget for this acquisition is just over \$9 million. The bulk of the funding has been requested from the federal Forest Legacy program which has already committed funding to Phases 1 and 2 (there are four total planned phases to protect the larger 34,000 Yacolt Forest). The \$1.1 million application to Conservation Futures represents just 12% of the total project cost, while the largest share of the gain is for the people and wildlife of Clark County. Given the Forest Legacy program's initial investment in this forest, and it's priority for funding and completing multi-phase projects, we have a high level of confidence that Phase 3 will be announced as a funding priority in 2021. Last, the request is approximately the same as the request that helped fund the first two phases of easement, but it covers 4,000 more acres—more conservation with less funding.

9. The C-Tran #47 bus provides direct access from Vancouver Mall to Yacolt in an hour. From there, the project site is approximately 1-mile east, making it potentially more accessible than other popular forested recreation sites in the county. For many visitors, biking will be the preferred mode of transportation given that vehicle access will be closed but there are over 100 miles of existing roads to travel.

10.

11. The current timeline for completing Phase 1 is anticipated to be the end of 2021. Phase 2 would be completed in mid-2022. This third phase would be completed in late 2022.