

Fire Break Along Taxiway Road

by Nickie McDonald

If you've been up the Taxiway Road recently, you've noticed trees being removed along the roadway. This work is being funded by a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant administered by the San Juan Island Conservation District (SJICD). Kai Hoffman-Krull is the Waldron project manager.

The Waldron project is working with a series of landowners along the Taxiway and Mountain Road to create a fire break that provides road access in case of a fire emergency for residents on the Waldron Mountain and east side of the island.

The goal is to create a fuel and vegetation arrangement that, in the event of a wildfire, reduces fire intensity and rate-of-spread such that it can more easily be controlled or extinguished. It also provides safer access for fire suppression work as well as emergency escape routes.

The project was originally scheduled to be completed by mid-June; the grant deadline has been extended into the fall when burn piles will be drier.

Fire prevention is a matter of education, preparation, and the hope that we will never have a serious event on Waldron.



Spring Greetings from the Community Land Trust of Waldron Island!

by Rebecca Moore

Despite an unusually chilly April, the turn toward longer days, greener fields and forests, blooming bulbs and air thick with pollen all give proof that we are really headed into a new season!

The CLTWI board has been meeting regularly over the winter (mostly in a less satisfying virtual format), and we'd like to share what we've been working on and also invite folks to participate in some of the discussions and projects we have under way.

First off, you are reading the proof that we've decided to resume putting out a regular newsletter to help keep in touch with our members and the broader community. It's been a while since our last edition, so we hope you enjoy this collection of updates and stories and also consider becoming a member or renewing your membership! The board is here to anchor and guide things, but we really welcome participation from members! **(continued, p. 2)**





Waldron Island Brigade Update

by Nickie McDonald

The Waldron Island Brigade continues to focus on educating the community on fire prevention and safety. This spring a hands-on wild land fire training was held on March 26. Fire Chief Jordan Pollack and Lieutenant Kyle Dodd led Waldron participants in practicing best tactics while using our water trailers and tools.

If you missed the March training, there will be a similar training opportunity on June 11. Despite your age or skill level there will be something to learn and a way to help when we have our next fire on Waldron. The Waldron Island Brigade motto is: Neighbors helping neighbors. Participate on June 11 and learn how you can be part of the brigade.

Nina Hutcheson and Sam Shayler have been participating in EMT training provided by San Juan Island Emergency Medical Services. They will complete

(continued, p. 8)

CLTWI Spring Greetings, continued from page 1:

For 2022, in addition to working on basic housekeeping, the board chose several main areas of focus and we hope to stimulate community conversations around these topics. If you are drawn to a particular issue or topic shared here, please reach out to talk with any board member and engage with us as we co-create this organization to support a vibrant year-round community on the island. [Here is a list of things we included in our broad work plan for the year:](#)

Affordable Housing

- Conduct a focus group to learn more and puzzle out good solutions for the island, exploring several ideas/options/questions being put forward, such as:
- CLTWI being a broker between property owners willing to rent their home or allow a tiny home on their property —especially to help existing community members have adequate help with the physicality of life on Waldron as they age.
- How to house established Waldron families who need a full-time affordable residence?
- Learn more about the Rural Cluster density bonus offered in San Juan County as an incentive to and possible option to create more affordable housing on the Commons. **(continued, p. 3)**



Food and Farming Focus Group

- Conduct a focus group around the goal of preserving existing farmland on Waldron.
- Organize and establish a system for saving and sharing seeds on-island, possibly in a physical location where seeds could be stored, but in the meantime, create a shared document where we can list what seeds we have available and build our local seed security.

Enhance the Commons area for community use

- Build a stage for musicians and other performers.

Summer Craft Faire

- Organize the Faire! We can use lots of helpers for this lovely annual event that brings us together on the Commons! Anyone interested in helping with set-up, pizza making, ice cream serving, cleanup, and so on, please email us at waldronlandtrust@gmail.com

Update Website

- Website: waldronclt.org
- Include more content and more photos, some historical background about CLTWI; information about how landowners can work with the CLTWI (and/or the SJC Land Bank or the Preservation Trust) to sell or donate land to keep off the speculative market, and a resources page with links to related groups locally and beyond.

CLTWI Archives

- Review and organize archives into digital format.
- CLTWI will begin to archive the treasure trove of Waldron related documents that Tony Scruton has stewarded these many years. Sometime in May, CLTWI will send

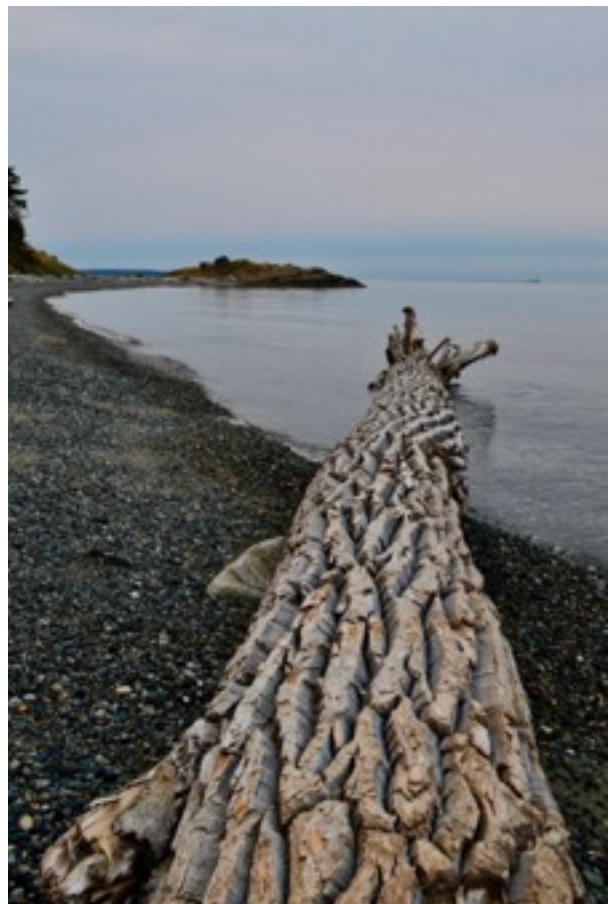
out an announcement that the work is beginning and anyone interested is more than welcome to come help out. The resources have been invaluable to CLTWI members while looking at forestry plans and also studying the evolution of what became the sub-area plan. Contact Litia for more information at litia9@gmail.com.

DNR grant to create fire break

- See related article by Nickie McDonald about a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant administered by the San Juan Island Conservation District (SJICD) to create a fire break on the Commons parcel along Cemetery Road.

Current CLTWI Board Members:

Jeana Bird, Nickie McDonald, Rebecca Moore, Litia Perta, Tony Scruton



Waldron Forestry Group Update

by Cyn Follich

“The Waldron Community will pursue the establishment of a voluntary, island-wide forest management and stewardship plan based on ecosystem forest management and promoting biological diversity in the forests of Waldron.”



To an observer concerned with the above suggestion in the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan, (Chapter 16.36, Waldron Limited Development District SubArea Plan [16.36.060 H. 3]), it might seem as simple as hiring a consultant to create a plan based on established goals and policies of the forestry industry.

The Forestry Group appointed by the Waldron Community Meeting (WCM) discovered, after moving beyond the initial purpose of reassessing the Designated Forest Land (DFL) practices implemented on Waldron during and in response to a contentious logging operation, that developing a “Plan” would be more complicated and deeply felt than its first impression.

Such an endeavor first must address the chapter’s designation of “limited development” in regard to Waldron’s forests. To the majority of the subcommittee working together on the Plan, this means the least “management” and the most “stewardship” of the forests. Then the Plan must respond to the Forestry section’s

policy to encourage DFL or similar tax status which have become, over time, vastly more limited in application—as in favoring commercialized logging operations —as well as addressing definitions of old-growth and heritage trees.

Furthermore, the science of the arboreal biome has hugely expanded to include subsoil interspecies communication, the impact of carbon sequestration on climate change, impacts upon ever-increasing environmentally endangered plant and animal species, and a recognition that the emotional and spiritual content of our human interactions with the forest has become ever more vital.

Finally, toward the goal of reaching an agreement for a “voluntary, island-wide” Plan, the Forestry Group recognizes that our community exhibits a wide range of opinions, from loggers who see the trees as commodities, to homeowners who recognize the necessity of best-use practices in the woods, to outright tree-huggers who espouse a virtually hands-off idealism. **(continued, p 5)**

Waldron Forestry Group Update, cont:

In our work toward implementing these ends, our group meets several times a month, both online and face to face, to craft a document we hope will meet with general approval by the WCM and landowners to eventually be included in the SubArea Plan. Our timeframe is fluid, and we welcome any additional ideas and input.

Subcommittee members include: Jess Arndt, Siri Thorson, Ann Orleman, James Roberts, Tony Scruton, and Cyn Follrich.

Definition of Stewardship:

The responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving. (2nd entry [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com))

Definition of Forest Stewardship:

The wise care and use of forest resources to ensure their health and productivity for years to come. (Penn State Extension)



Alternative Land Access Workshop at the 2022 Agricultural Summit

by Rebecca Moore

In early March 2022 at the 10th annual San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit I attended a session with a focus on Alternative Land Access Models. Panel members included representatives from a range of local and national groups advocating for and participating in strategies to increase access to land for those who may otherwise be denied due to financial or other reasons.

The workshop was full of great information and inspiration, with many tangible examples of the ways we can be



creative in how we think about land ownership and access. As the CLTWI continues to explore its mission to be a resource for and provide access to affordable homes and land for low-income Waldron residents, we have many resources to look to and learn from.

The unique nature of Waldron Island certainly requires a tailored approach that addresses our particular circumstances, and the more we look to what's already out there, the better our chances of finding ways to address current and future challenges as we adapt to a changing world. For those interested in following up to learn more about the speakers or the groups they represent, please see the links below.

Addie Candib, PNW regional director of the American Farmland Trust, was an impassioned speaker and encouraged us to consider that the end goal for the conversation should go beyond the concept of land access to one of land tenure, describing the ideal as something more secure and affordable. Addie painted a picture of what we are faced with here in San Juan County, where the median home price in 2021 was \$889,600 (a 62% increase from 2018), 75% of farms in SJC make less than \$10K a year, and 3.75% of agricultural land in the county was lost to development between 2001 and 2016.

She provided ten different examples of strategies being used around the country to address this unsustainable trend, including several Land Trust models (Easements and Ground Lease models), Incubator Farms such as Viva Farm in Skagit Valley, Municipal Leasing, Parochial Leasing, Agri-Villages, Cooperatives and Collectives, Non-Familial Succession, and Land Returns/Reparations. Time was limited, so she was only able to touch on each of these, but brought up much food for

thought. To learn more about her and the AFT, visit: <https://farmland.org/>

Sandy Bishop, executive Director for the Lopez Community Land Trust, spoke about the Lopez Island Farm Trust, a sub-group of the Lopez Community Land Trust formed in 2016 to develop a comprehensive plan for legal, ethical, and economically viable land access on Lopez island. In order to remove land from the speculative market and keep it in agriculture, they have secured several parcels they own and lease out to farmers, including 48-acre Stonecrest Farm, purchased in 2017, Lopez Sound Farm, a 42-acre farm and forest purchased in 2020 that was originally 118 acres, but the SJC Land Bank purchased 75 acres and also purchased conservation easements on the land owned by LCLT, bringing the purchase price down for the Land Trust and preserving the conservation value.

Sandy described benefits of this model: interrupting the system of market-based farm sales; adding to the total number of farmers; preserving and increasing working farmland; maintaining a focus on relationship and interdependence; keeping land in service to food security; keeping accountability within the community; and moving toward a more regenerative food system. She emphasized that the key ingredient to land tenure is the 99-year lease.

Challenges include being a small nonprofit in an area with very high land prices, making things especially difficult to acquire more land. There are also lots of complex legal relationships to sort through with any of these models where a landowner gives access to a lessee. And, she says, there are just not that many farmers trained to farm larger areas. A lesson learned is that being connected with national and international networks leads to

having more support, and that a focus on outreach helps make the connections and gets more people to apply.

<https://www.lopezclt.org/lopez-island-farm-trust-lift/>



Peggy Bill has played various roles in the Ag community in the San Juans, including being coordinator for Agriculture Resource Committee (ARC) and coordinator of the SJC Ag Guild Farmer to Farmland program started in 2016 with the help of a USDA grant to connect beginning farmers to land for lease or sale in the islands. She has also helped facilitate a grant-funded mentorship program that has connected experienced farmers with new farmers to encourage transfer of knowledge and compensate the mentors for their time invested.

Peggy has done a lot of outreach to develop farmland opportunities in the county and gave her perspective on the

state of things. There appears to be a disconnect between those who are out there wanting to farm and the people with the land. Over the last several years, a focus group formed to look at Alternative Land Access. They met about four different times, with different presentations from groups such as the Agrarian Trust, Viva Farms (an incubator farm in Skagit Valley), Friends of Farm on Bainbridge Island, etc. The group will be mulling over what models will work best for this county. She sees key elements to success as: “realism, vision, knowledge, access to capital, farming skills, grit, determination, a business plan, resourcefulness, and a love of hard work.”

<https://sjiagguild.com/about-the-guild/sji-ag-guild-programs/farmers-to-farmland/>

<https://www.sanjuanco.com/1528/Agriculture-Resource-Committee>

Charlie Behnke, Agriculture Program Coordinator and Field Assistant for the San Juan County Land Bank, described how the SJCLB was formed with a 1990 vote to add a 1% Real Estate Excise Tax to all land purchases in the county to put toward its broad mandate “to preserve in perpetuity areas in the county that have environmental, agricultural, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, historical, scenic, or low-intensity recreational value and to protect existing and future sources of potable water.”

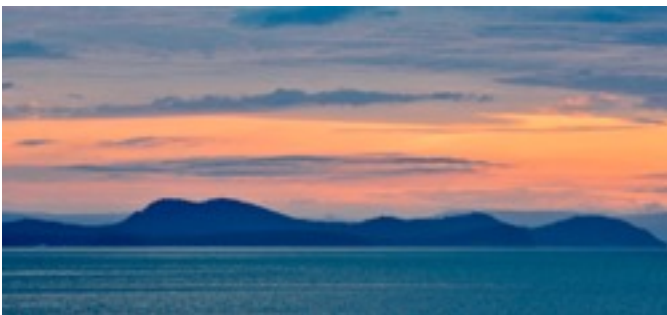
The Land Bank currently owns 1300 acres with 20 farms leasing from them on 10 farmed preserves. Goals for the lease agreements include local food production, long-term leases, an incentive for community and environmental benefits, being a fair market lease, and leading to well managed land.

<https://sjclandbank.org/>

Patrick Bennet of Orcas Island shared stories of the group he is highly involved in, the Orcas Community Participatory Agriculture (OCPA), a unique farming/gardening organization with a focus on education and agriculture and a purpose of empowering people to be the creators of the food that nourishes them, in solidarity with the food sovereignty movement. They grow food on many sites around the island, making arrangements between land hosts, who provide the venue, infrastructure, and capital, and the participants, who actively do the work of growing while learning and re-skilling in a hands-on, engaging program. There are also contributors, who either take on weekly time commitments, give monetary donations, or contribute in other ways. Patrick offered to bring his crew to other farms to help out, as a way to also provide learning experiences. The goal of the group is to create something that has long-term stability for feeding themselves and fosters community resilience.

<https://www.orcascommunityag.org/>

Each of these speakers brought excellent information, ideas, and questions to the table. I encourage anyone interested in learning more about any of these projects to check out the links provided, and let's keep the conversation going among our own community to see where we can bring those ideas home.



Waldron Island Brigade Update, *(continued from p 2)*

their training in May. Congratulations and thank you, Nina and Sam, for increasing your medical skills.

Do you have air ambulance insurance? In case of a medical emergency on Waldron, Airlift Northwest out of Bellingham and Arlington or Life Flight out of Coupeville can send a helicopter and two flight nurses to assist Waldron patients and transport them efficiently to the nearest appropriate facility.

Additionally, Island Air operates a fixed-wing plane out of Friday Harbor. All three of these agencies operate independently and you must be a member of their agency to be covered for their services. Airlift Northwest is the minimum coverage recommended, but having all three is a good idea if you have any medical concerns.

If you have a medical or fire emergency on Waldron, call 911 and make sure you're speaking to San Juan County dispatch. Dispatch can send appropriate resources (air ambulance, Department of Natural Resources, San Juan Fire or Emergency Medical Services via boat) and, if needed, send a group text to Waldron volunteers, who then respond with Waldron fire or medical equipment. Volunteers have basic first aid skills and can help transport a patient to the airstrip or arrange boat transport to Friday Harbor. As a Waldron resident or vacation home owner it's important to educate yourself about basic first aid and know to call 911 for more serious concerns.



Spring and Summer Events

- **Saturday, May 15—Plant Sale**, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at the school. Proceeds to benefit the people of Ukraine. There will be a selection of organizations you can choose to donate to who offer various types of aid to refugees. Bring extra plants to share and small boxes to transport your new acquisitions.
- **Friday, June 10—Spring School Play**, 7:00 pm, outside at the school. No graduates this year, just the play.
- **Saturday, June 11—Firefighter Training**, time TBD. David Way, DNR regional manager, will speak.
- **Sunday, July 3—Summer Craft Faire**, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Commons.
- **Sunday, August 7—Pancake Breakfast and Rummage Sale**, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Proceeds to benefit the Waldron Island Brigade.

CLTWI Membership Appeal

Are you a member of the Community Land Trust of Waldron Island? Annual membership is \$15 per individual per year and runs for the calendar year.

You can donate securely at our website, waldronclt.org, or send a check to PO Box 11, Waldron WA 98297. Checks should be made out to CLTWI, and donations are tax-deductible.

CLTWI members receive emailed copies of board meeting minutes and are welcome to attend these meetings.

The mission of the Community Land Trust of Waldron Island is to be a resource for and provide affordable homes and land for low-income Waldron residents while cultivating economic sustainability and nurturing land stewardship, thus enriching the entire community.

Your contribution, support, and good ideas will help us fulfill our mission. Become a CLTWI member today.

