

# THE OLYMPIC AGENDA

## A First Look



*An Emerging Collaboration to Build a Future of Great Communities and Healthy Landscapes on the Olympic Peninsula.*

Cascade Land Conservancy is working with residents of the Peninsula to create The Olympic Agenda, a 100-year vision and immediate action plan for the lands, communities and economy of Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson and Mason Counties. So far, we have had dialogues with more than 500 community leaders, business owners and other residents on issues in these counties. We are expanding the conversation to a region-wide discussion on maintaining our agricultural viability, sustaining our forests, and creating regional growth patterns and practices that suit our unique landscape and quality of life. This process will harness the best thinking of today's leaders to ensure the Olympic Peninsula's working landscapes and rural economy continue to thrive, the communities grow in a sustainable fashion and quality of life is maintained over the next 100 years.

After the first few years of work, we are reporting on where we stand, looking at what we have uncovered so far, and offering a map for how we will move ahead toward that common goal of a vision for the Peninsula. After reading this first look, join us in our continuing work to create the Olympic Agenda.



Keith Lazelle









# Guiding Principles

To guide the conversations, assemble the information and draft this report – The Olympic Agenda: A First Look - we called upon the principles that Cascade Land Conservancy has relied on over the years:

## **FARSIGHTED:**

Looking out 100 years fundamentally changes the debate. There are no villains or heroes, only a community working toward a common hope for our children.

## **URGENT:**

The region can no longer wait. Action must be taken now, or we run the risk of missing the opportunity to learn from the unmanaged sprawl in other regions of the country that leaves people continually searching for yet another place to live.

## **BALANCED:**

Success for the region means carefully balancing our economic, community and environmental needs. We can no longer treat these as rival concerns.

## **FAIR:**

Economically-based conservation strategies will be sustainable because they are fair for all and build on our existing legal framework.

## **COLLABORATIVE:**

Real, lasting solutions will come only from a collaborative big tent approach.

## **INNOVATIVE:**

Protecting our land on a scale never seen before in the region will require smart, market-based conservation strategies and close attention to improving the communities where we live. The Olympic Agenda is dedicated to creativity and innovation.

## **FOCUSED ON CITIES AND TOWNS:**

To protect our working and natural lands, we must stop our unceasing sprawl. On the Olympic Peninsula, our communities must be complete, neighborly as well as vibrant and livable so that people choose to live in them.

# Our Approach

Hundreds of conversations, panel discussions and interviews over the past two years revealed that our first steps must address three main areas of the Peninsula's regional needs:

- The **economy** that nourishes us
- The **communities** that sustain us
- The **landscapes** that inspires us

The recent economic recession hit the Olympic Peninsula as hard as anywhere in our country. One of our citizens best described the situation at an Olympic Agenda meeting when he said, "It's two years on top of 20 years of poor economic development." The Peninsula's economic history shows our residents are among the most resourceful and resilient of any in the nation. However, that history also shows the need to build a sustainable economy that reaches all of our residents and that enhances rather than detracts from the Olympic Peninsula's lifeblood - its lands, waters and wildlife.

From many conversations with residents as we crisscrossed the region we learned the Peninsula continues to hold its own and is full of surprises, which, in many cases, already contains the seeds of future growth:

- From resource-based towns we can learn how to re-create balanced economies that continue traditional livelihoods as they provide laboratories for new industries. With the Olympic Agenda, these new approaches can be made relevant throughout the Peninsula and beyond.
- From private land managers we can learn how to ensure the timber economy remains sustainable by enlarging the economic values from these "wood basket" lands so that they remain economically and environmentally viable. The collective conversation around the Olympic Agenda will help find the solutions to make this a reality.
- From smaller communities we can learn how to harness the power of local action, pride and knowledge so that necessary infrastructure is provided and surrounding lands are conserved. The Olympic Agenda will provide an additional voice to these efforts.
- Nonprofits around the Peninsula are engaged in ground-breaking, sophisticated efforts which can leverage the Olympic Agenda. The Olympic Agenda will enable this work to reach the scale they deserve. The Jefferson Land Trust's work on farmland preservation, the North Olympic Land Trust's work in conserving more than 2,000 acres and the Grays Harbor 2020 Vision reflect the effort already under way.

The conversations, the panel discussions and other information are pulled together into county reports, showing in detail the efforts of the residents of Mason, Clallam, Jefferson and Grays Harbor Counties. The county reports provide the backbone to this report, which will continue to change as the process evolves.

It is undeniable that our direction is influenced by our weathering of this economic storm. Much like in a sail boat, the current economic situation may alter our course a bit, but the overall direction has become manifest. Together, we must build a robust region where our children can find their livelihoods, where they will seek to—and can afford to—live and where we have conserved the landscapes. We must create communities that capture the best of the Olympic Peninsula tradition with conserved landscapes and access to the land. Our new course points to one perhaps surprising conclusion: pursuing a lasting vibrant economy is also the surest route to sustaining our landscapes.

Our first steps are guided by three major themes much as if we were navigating by three distant landmarks, each ineffective without the others, but together providing perspective to keep us headed toward our shared vision.

## **The Economy**

The resource and environmental issues facing the Peninsula are vexing and longstanding, but without jobs there is no success. Our surest route to solving these issues is to address them simultaneously. By adding to the range of economic alternatives available to our families and creating a prosperous new economy, we will also save our environment.

## **Our Communities**

The communities of the Peninsula are located around “The Loop,” draped around the majestic Olympic Mountains. But they are relatively distant from the other. A key to the Peninsula’s future is creating the new Northwest small town for the 21st century - places where we are connected to the larger world, know our neighbors and are connected to the urban cities without having to live in them.

## **Landscape Conservation**

The Peninsula is defined by its lands, waters and wildlife. While much of the Peninsula remains wild, it still faces land conversion issues similar to those in other parts of the state. Rich farmland should continue to maintain a way of life and provide local food sources. Forests should remain working landscapes providing jobs, resources and options for our future generations. Parks, trails and access to rivers, lakes and beaches will keep residents – and visitors – healthy and connected to the natural world. Habitat, wetlands and shorelines will continue to flourish using new market-based approaches to conservation. We share lands with all residents of the Peninsula, including the creatures of hoof, wing and fin.

# Our Shared Perspective



Lois Sage



George Reid



Dani Turner

## Our Cherished Landscapes

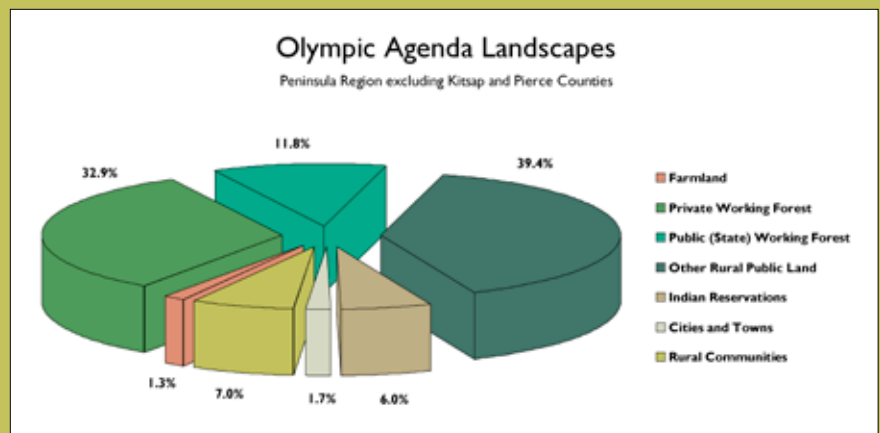
The Olympic Peninsula is a place of great mountains, lush forests, free-flowing rivers and wild ocean beaches. Its rich native cultures have roots that date back to antiquity. The Peninsula is home to nearly a quarter million people who live in the rural landscape and small towns and cities. The Peninsula is remarkably wild and natural and at the same time settled and neighborly. The Peninsula, like many regions in our state, is at a critical moment in its history.

The population of the Peninsula continues to grow while many of our communities struggle. In the past few years, the Great Recession has hit the Peninsula hard, with timber-dependent areas routinely posting double-digit unemployment rates. Unbowed, the Peninsula's citizens continue to reinvent themselves in today's world. As the Olympic Agenda takes these first steps, its mission is to strengthen the Peninsula's quality of life now and create a better future for generations to come.

At the center of the Peninsula is Olympic National Park, nearly a million acres of public lands that range from high alpine wilderness to temperate rain forests drenched with more than 130 inches of rain a year. Around the park and the adjacent national forests is "The Loop", 455 miles of highway with towns and cities dotted along its route. The Loop reveals a challenge that stems from the geography of the Peninsula – it is difficult for cities and towns to cooperate as a cohesive region when most are hours apart.

Nonetheless, the people of the Peninsula are working together to create a collective vision for the region, grounded in the belief that a broad coalition can achieve fundamental change. Two years ago, civic organizations, academic institutions, businesses and government agencies and many community leaders and passionate citizens from Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson and Mason Counties began discussions about creating an Olympic Agenda, the visionary idea to look out 100 years in order to maintain the quality of life enjoyed now for the next 100 years. The Olympic Agenda: A First Look is the first step in the direction of this collective vision. It will be a living document with constant refinement as we learn to work together to strengthen our future.

Participants ranged broadly from farmers, foresters and tribes to timber companies, local businesses and conservation groups – nearly 500 individuals in all. The Cascade Land Conservancy joined with these many groups (see box for full list) to begin the hard work of creating a vision of the future of the Peninsula. The Olympic Agenda looks to our most basic common link: We all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. The Agenda is not just about us, but about our children's children. And it is a recognition that the future starts now.





## Our Shared History

For centuries Native Americans have lived on the Olympic Peninsula, fishing the abundant waters off the coast and along Hood Canal, hunting in the dense forests and foraging the alpine and sub-alpine lands around the Peninsula. From this rich heritage, the tribes are forging new futures for their members.

By the mid-1850s, settlers began coming to the Peninsula, establishing homesteads and coastal communities: beginning to farm, fish and log the abundant resources of the land. By the late-1800s, logging was in full swing; Simpson, Port Blakely, Merrill and Ring and other companies harvested millions of board feet of timber a year. Aberdeen and Hoquiam became major ports and processing centers. Port Townsend was envisioned as the major urban center for the entire Puget Sound-Strait of the Juan de Fuca region. Shelton emerged as an important stopping point, featuring some of the best oysters found anywhere.

In 1897, the Olympic Forest Reserve was designated by President Cleveland. The designation led to the foundation of the Olympic National Park and the Olympic National Forest, which were officially created by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1938.

With the advent of the automobile, tourism began to emerge as a major industry. The new Highway 101 loop around the Peninsula enabled people to experience the majesty of the Olympic Mountains, access the rough waves of the coast and explore the thick canopy of rain forests. The vast reaches of the Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park became more accessible—and more visible—to potential tourists.

Farming, timber production and fisheries throughout the Peninsula have historically formed the center of the economy. Yet each has experienced setbacks in the past few decades—farmland lost to development, declining fish runs, the changing structure of the timber industry and new competition in a global marketplace.

The Peninsula continues to evolve. Port Townsend is now both a mill town and a popular weekend getaway. Sequim has grown from a crossroads to a thriving community of more than 5,000 residents. Hood Canal is lined with retirement or second homes. A failed nuclear power program provides Grays Harbor County with a ready-made, unique industrial park at Satsop. Forks maintains its long-time traditions while welcoming tourists who flock to the area because of a popular book-movie series. There are animated discussions about a proposed biomass plant in Shelton that would generate energy from wood waste from logging operations. These major endeavors demonstrate ways of organizing how the region responds to pressures now threatening the natural and cultural heritage of the Peninsula.



# Our Common Challenges

Historical photos of the city of Hoquiam show the Hoquiam Hotel, an impressive building with gabled windows and turrets. In the 1930s, Seventh Street was a bustling commercial street filled with shops. By the 1980s, however, the sister cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam were beginning to decline, hit hard by changes in the forest products industry. Today, along Seventh Street in Hoquiam, times are changing again. Older buildings along the street are being restored, playing a new role in the city's future. Citizens throughout Grays Harbor County, named for a European explorer in the 18th century, are forging a new identity that stretches beyond logging, milling and fishing.

Such contrasts are part of the life of the Peninsula – and part of the challenges ahead. As we continue the development of the Olympic Agenda, our challenges will come into even better focus.

The Peninsula's challenges are not restricted to the economy, either. Working forests are threatened with the slow, but fundamental, shift to large-lot development. Throughout the Peninsula, salmon runs have declined as a result of many factors and many runs are threatened. Tribal representatives are concerned about elk habitat and the impact on hunting and fishing traditions. Communities strive to remain neighborly. Farmland is disappearing at an alarming rate. Lack of access to educational opportunities often means our children must go elsewhere, especially post-high school.

One common issue is population growth. While much of the Peninsula maintains a rural lifestyle, nearly half the population lives in towns and small cities. Over the past 10 years, population growth has averaged about 9 percent across the four counties of the Olympic Agenda. The population growth is not as visible, perhaps, as it is in large urban centers, but it is here. "I see it in the new driveway cuts" was one observation. One vision of the Olympic Agenda is the creation of the "New Northwest Town," a community that preserves the best of small towns – close knit and neighborly – with the robust commitment to connectivity with the global economy using such tools as high-speed internet.

Another issue is fragmentation. What were once contiguous working forests now are broken up into small, disconnected plots. Farmland is connected in a few areas – such as along the Chehalis River – but less so elsewhere on the Peninsula. This fragmentation does not support the sustainability of the farming industry and increases the likelihood of sprawling large-lot development. There is also economic fragmentation – separate economic development councils, for example, serve their individual counties, but there is no regional unit to coordinate strategies and leverage resources.





The counties of the Peninsula are unique, yet at the same time share important characteristics. Because of the Olympic National Park and the Olympic National Forest, all the counties have a high percentage of public land – Jefferson County, for example, is literally split by public lands, driving from one side of the county to the other requires leaving the county jurisdiction.

As the Olympic Agenda looks forward 100 years, our perspective changes. Planning horizons typically are in the 20-to-40-year range. Borrowing from the Native American practice of considering seven generations into the future brings into focus the fact that we are working for our families, our children, our children's children.

This long-term, collective perspective is what the Olympic Agenda is all about. We are looking ahead at ways to keep the Peninsula flourishing for generations to come, recognizing the similarities as well as the differences among communities and determining how we might solve concerns, shared with communities around Puget Sound.

Like regions across the state of Washington and throughout the country, the Olympic Peninsula is in a state of transition. Conversations held as part of these first steps clearly indicated that we can no longer thrive as isolated communities. What is not as clear is what future we are headed towards. By identifying common challenges and working together to address them, we can better assure our children that our communities will be economically resilient, environmentally sustainable and offer a high quality of life.

These challenges are significant. With the dedication and creativity of our citizens and the advantages provided by our lands, we will create a region that will flourish far into the future. As we take these first steps together with the people of the Olympic Peninsula, we will come to better understand the challenges and recognize innovative solutions that are already coming from our residents and that can be shared across the region.



# Centers of our focus

This First Step document is a draft. This year, leaders from across the Olympic Peninsula representing a great diversity of residents will gather to discuss, come to agreement and commit themselves to confronting our common challenges. Over the past months, wide-ranging discussions yielded many concrete strategies and approaches. Thus far, three main themes have emerged. They will be refined and perhaps changed as we continue this effort.

## I. The Economy that sustains us:

**Goal:** Increase the economic vitality of the region. Diversify the Peninsula economy so that our communities flourish. Facilitate job growth that neither degrades workers nor our lands or waters.

For the Olympic Peninsula it may come down to as simple a statement as this: If we want healthy, robust communities then we have to build a new economy. Forty years ago the economy of the state was built on airplanes, electricity, timber and grain. The state – and the Peninsula – was resource-rich and able to capitalize on those strengths to prosper and grow. Today, across the state we are creating new economies from server farms to biotechnology to alternative energy. It is not easy. It is not without false steps. But it is critical.

The economy of the Peninsula is a complex tapestry of business and industry. Traditional logging and forest products remain, though reduced from their heyday. Farming includes a substantial shellfish farming industry. The visitor industry – catering to hikers, backpackers, bicyclists, beach combers, hunters and fishers – is important throughout the region.

Conservation cannot occur without a strong economy. Our best efforts to protect working and natural lands will not happen without an economy that supports them. We need to build an economy: a diverse, linked, regional economy that serves the entire Peninsula.

## II. The Communities that serve us:

**Goal:** Create sustainable rural communities with a high quality of life. Facilitate the evolution of the New Northwest Town, scaled to the region, where you can still know your neighbor while taking advantage of the benefits of the nearby urban cores.

There are about 230,000 residents on the Olympic Peninsula, about the same number of people in the entire city of Spokane or Tacoma. But the Peninsula is much different. The Peninsula's largest population centers – Port Angeles, Aberdeen, Shelton, Port Townsend, Hoquiam, Sequim, Ocean Shores and Forks – account for about 45 percent of that population, about 105,000 people. Many live in the smaller towns, villages and crossroads areas like Humptulips, Ocean Shores, Forks and Chimacum. And some prefer to literally live in the middle of nowhere.

Great potential exists in the towns of the Peninsula. The new town is emerging with several common characteristics that extend across the Peninsula. Such a place is connected with broadband internet



access and educational and career opportunities throughout the region. It is community-oriented with neighborhood centers, parks and affordable housing. The town attends to the community and cultural needs of its residents and retains its neighborly traditions and warmth.

### **III. The Landscape that inspires us.**

**Goal:** Conserve the benefits that natural and working lands around the peninsula provide

At its heart, the Olympic Agenda is about conservation, about protecting those rivers, creeks, ridges and woodlands that make the Peninsula the wonderful place that it is. With an economy that sustains and communities that serve, we will have the capacity to achieve our conservation vision for working lands, rivers, streams, creeks and estuaries, and those vital, natural special places we love.

Various groups on the Peninsula – Jefferson Land Trust, North Olympic Land Trust, the Hoh River Trust, Capitol Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy to name just a few—have already accomplished significant conservation in the region. The Cascade Land Conservancy itself owns about 6,000 acres of estuary lands on the Peninsula, acquired through a long-time partnership with the Wildlife Forever Fund.

While traditional conservation is important, the Olympic Agenda also needs to pursue various strategies in order to conserve the benefits from a wide range of lands. Working forests and farmlands, for example, should be conserved to provide jobs, income and a way of life. Working forests also provide “ecological services” which translates into emerging markets that recognize the role of forests in ensuring public values such as oxygen production and carbon sequestration.

The mountains are the source of many livelihoods and the habitat for the animals that give meaning to the legends we teach our children. Aware of the importance of our lands, our forebears began the task of preserving the landscape by creating national parks, wilderness areas and national forests. The Peninsula has an incredible legacy – 2.1 million acres already in public hands, much of it open to the public.

Yet, over the past few decades low-density development has eroded the natural legacy of our region. Much of the loss has occurred in the most productive areas, the low-elevation forests and along rivers and shorelines of the region. The Peninsula cannot allow this erosion of our most productive land to continue – as lands are compromised, so is a way of life.

Land is one element of conservation; water is another. On the Peninsula, both lives and the land are shaped by water. The waters of the Pacific Ocean ebb and flood as the tides change. Large lakes – Quinault, Crescent, Ozette – provide recreational opportunities and beautiful scenery. Rivers flow from the high mountains in almost all directions. On the east, Puget Sound and Hood Canal beckon to us. And it rains – 130 inches in the rain forests of the coast, 15 inches in the rain shadow on the Strait. Again there is good news. Conservation partners have conserved many estuaries, rivers, stream and wetlands.

Finally, there is stewardship. We have learned over the years that we have to be careful stewards of the land. Cooperation with public and private landowners is key to keeping what we conserve productive for generations to come.





# Our Cherished Landscapes:

While we are made up of many unique communities, we are one region across a grand scale. One thing seems clear throughout the region: we must work together to advance what binds us together.

Together we can be formidable as we work through our shared aspirations and uncertainties. We recognize that we may weigh our values differently –yet we do still share values and interests. Working together we can bridge our differences by forging practical solutions that work for the land we cherish, the jobs that sustain us and the communities that define us.

To further explore these three centers of focus across our varied landscapes, we put forth these next steps – strategies and approaches to sustain the Olympic Peninsula.

# Agriculture/Aquaculture

**Goal: Keep farms and the business of farming as a relevant part of life on the Olympic Peninsula. Make agriculture more robust through conservation and the growth of the local food economy. Protect water quality to ensure a healthy aquaculture industry.**

The people of the Olympic Peninsula care about farming, about maintaining it as a way of life. Farming here on the Olympic Peninsula also includes traditional operations such as shellfish farming. The diverse benefits of farming include locally grown food, open space, jobs and income. It is not an easy business in which to succeed; today's circumstances mean success has never been harder - loss of markets, urban pressures, a changing society with complex technical regulations.

The Olympic Agenda seeks to stop conversion of farmland in a manner that is fair to farmers and land owners and that keeps local markets robust. We must find space for farming, habitat and housing within the region – it must be all rather than neither. As a provider of shellfish to an increasing worldwide audience, we must maintain and improve water quality to ensure the future of this traditional industry.

While some farming areas are fairly contiguous, there is also the need to develop opportunities for urban agriculture centered on community gardens within the cities and towns of the Peninsula. It is a growing movement around the country already finding a home in parts of the Peninsula.

Peninsula towns are similar to other small towns in many parts of the state—the cost of sprawl makes retaining farmland more economical long-term. Sprawling development is considerably more expensive for small towns to maintain community necessities such as fire protection, police patrols and new water supplies.

There are good examples of what can be accomplished. In 2007, as part of the Jefferson Land Works Collaborative effort to preserve local agricultural lands and production, the Jefferson Land Trust purchased the 23.1-acre Red Dog Farm. This scenic property protects a portion of salmon-bearing Chimacum Creek and is currently being leased for organic row crop and hay production.

Continuing to build on these examples, we can ensure that farmlands, grazing areas and other farm-related land uses will not vanish from our landscape.

## **Goals we can measure:**

- Retain 94% of existing agricultural lands, totaling nearly 48,000 acres.
- Ensure that in the face of a changing climate and growing population the region's water continues to support fish, farms and people.

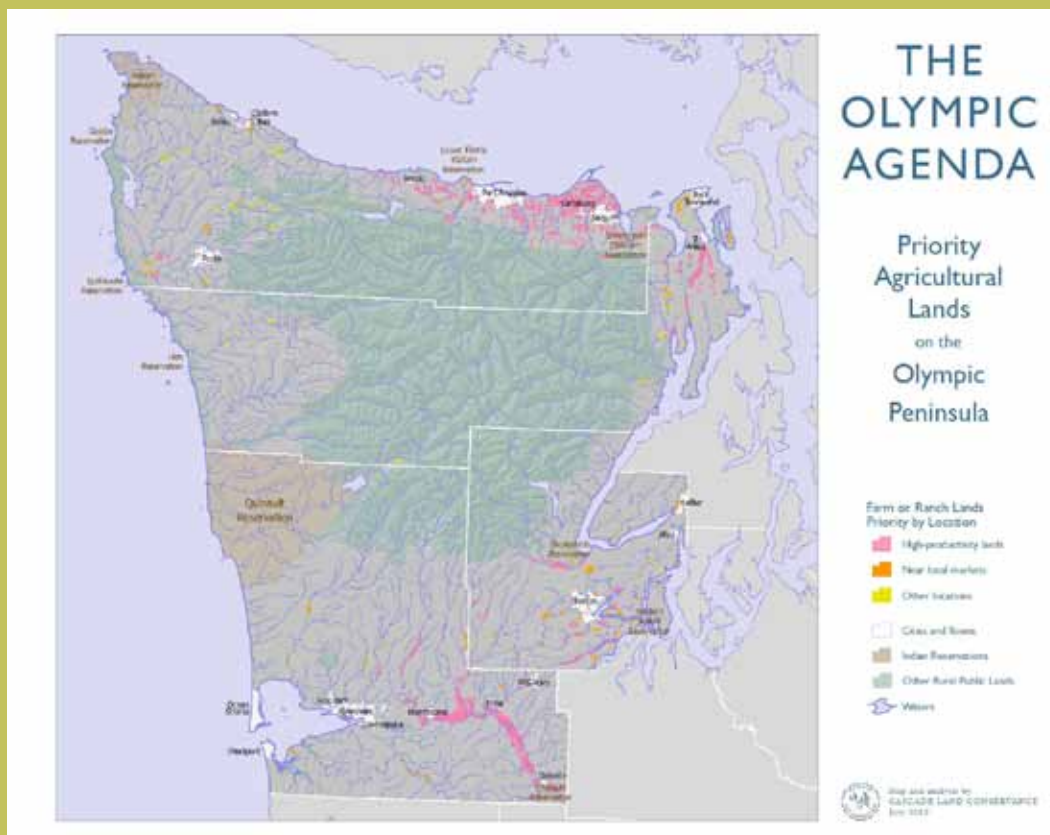


## Agriculture Strategies

- Develop local markets to deliver products efficiently from farmer to consumer.
- Encourage local institutions and cafeterias such as school districts and hospitals to buy local food.
- Develop opportunities for farmers to share resources and knowledge
- Develop a regional network for farmers and residents to access local food, move goods, share resources and create jobs across the Olympic Peninsula and beyond.
- Educate residents on opportunities for new revenue streams
- Utilize farmers' co-ops, EDCs and learning centers to educate residents on emerging markets and help develop business plans.
- Promote small-scale or niche-market operations such as nurseries, flower bulb or seed production.
- Work with regional leaders to secure funding and financing for infrastructure.
- Prioritize conservation of high productivity lands.

## Aquaculture Strategies

- Recognize shellfish beds as a major component of the agriculture and food economy maintain and improve water quality, and ensure compatible land use practices near shellfish beds.



# Forestry

**Goal: Maintain forests around the Peninsula as the source of many livelihoods, a source for clean air and waters, wildlife habitat, and a destination for our recreational endeavors.**

The Olympic Peninsula is dominated by the Olympic National Park and the adjacent national forests, together totaling more than 1.5 million acres.

The mountains and forests of the Peninsula are more than just a stunning backdrop. They comprise the very heart of the Peninsula, cleansing the air we breathe and the water we drink and providing those vistas that stir our spirits.

If there is one constant for the forests and landscapes of the Peninsula, it is the rain. It ranges from 12 feet a year on the westward facing slopes to a little more than a foot a year in the famous rain shadow. The rain influences much of life—from the unique growing conditions on the wet side to the increasing retirement communities in the dry valleys near Sequim.

In each of these areas, however, there is pressure to convert forests and farmland to other uses – each conversion perhaps small or insignificant if standing alone, but collectively changing the landscape forever.

Current maps of the Peninsula's forests reveal the need to focus on two distinct types of forests—the highly productive lands that are removed from population centers and those closer to the population centers, which are under more immediate threat of conversion.

Conserving working forests will help sustain a functioning forest products industry. While that industry is facing challenges, it remains an important part of the Peninsula's current and future economy. New trends, such as the movement toward “local” wood, mean that this important “wood basket” can and should be protected. Tools such as Transfer of Development Rights enable the protection of private property rights in conjunction with conservation.

In discussions around the Peninsula, community forests emerged as one form of forest-land protection with widespread support. Community forestry is a model of working forest management where a community has ownership of and access to a forested area, participates in decisions concerning the forest, and directly benefits from the sociological, economic, and ecological services it provides.

Conserving working forests maintains future options in face of environmental, economic and social uncertainty. It means local government can provide infrastructure more efficiently by avoiding large-lot development with a single residence that still requires fire, police and other protections.

Counties need to align zoning with forestry land use. Overall, nearly 49% of the current working forest land base is zoned for primary uses other than or in addition to resource management. Grays Harbor County zones the vast majority of working forest lands to allow 5-acre lots, corresponding to 694,000 acres or nearly 37% of the regional land base. Mason County zones 93,000 acres or nearly 5% of the regional land base for 10-20 acre lots.

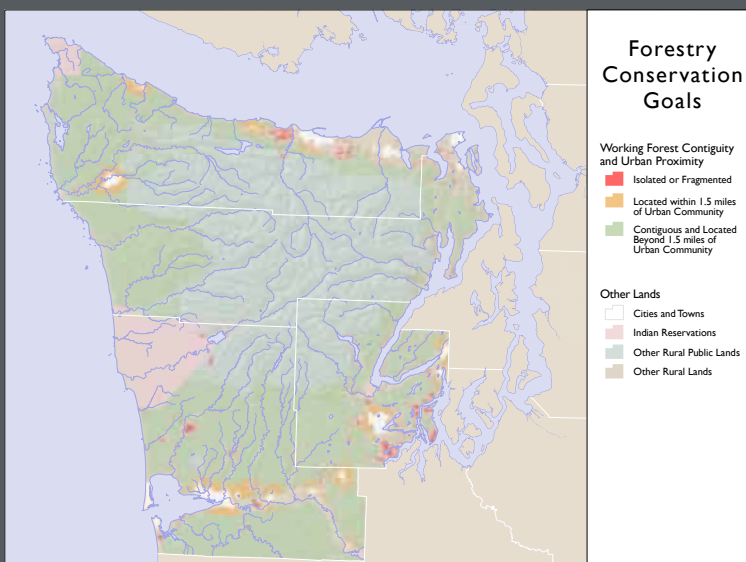
There is new thinking about forests. Climate change puts a premium on conserving species that can take carbon from the air – what better place for that to happen than in the rich, verdant forests of the Peninsula?

Finally, the forestlands of the Peninsula are important for recreation and for the tourism industry. A sizable portion of recreation land is in public ownership, with mandates for public use, but increased use threatens viability of these popular lands as well as remaining private forestlands that are open to the public.

While tribal lands also contribute environmental and timber products to local economy, we did not set Olympic Agenda goals around them in deference to their status as sovereign lands.

## Goals we can measure:

- Retain the majority of our current forest land base to conserve economic productivity, recreation opportunities and ecological values.
- Achieve an optimum balance between lands in production versus those protected for other purposes.
- Forestry Strategies
- Employ a suite of conservation tools to retain forest land base
- Secure low cost financing for forest acquisition such as community forest bonds or local conservation authorities.
- Optimize multiple public benefits provided by private industrial forest lands.
- Support owners' abilities to allow access for hunting, gathering and recreation.
- Maintain regional forest based economy by developing new revenue streams for forests
- Create partnerships to educate small forest landowners on emerging products and markets and help develop business plans.
- Ensure opportunities for sustainable forestry practices at all scales
- Improve regulatory certainty as well as access to markets and infrastructure
- Foster dialogue and seek to develop agreement among stakeholders for the optimum balance of various land uses.
- Prioritize conservation of high-productivity lands separated from population centers as well as those under more immediate threat of conversion to other uses.





# Natural Heritage & Stewardship

**Goal:** Ensure that the Peninsula's natural heritage and iconic species thrive. Maintain the Peninsula's diverse landscapes through sustained stewardship of public lands and partnerships with private landowners.

The rivers of the Peninsula start high in the Olympic Mountains and the Olympic Rain Forest and tumble to the ocean, most unimpeded by dams. The major rivers are a wondrous mixture of names: Humptulips, Quinault, Queets, Quillayute, Bogachiel, Sol Duc, Lyre, Elwha, Dungeness, Dosewallip, Hamma Hamma, Skokomish, Satsop, Wynoochee and Chehalis.

Natural lakes on the Peninsula include Lake Crescent, Lake Ozette, Lake Sutherland, Lake Quinault and Lake Pleasant. Four dammed rivers form the reservoirs of Lake Aldwell, Lake Mills, Lake Cushman and Wynoochee Lake. The landscape is dotted with hundreds of other smaller lakes.

These rivers and lakes are at the heart of the Peninsula, providing the habitat for an array of species while also providing outdoor activities for residents and visitors alike.

Much of the montane and alpine areas are already in public hands through a variety of federal and state agencies. These lands are held in common, requiring only our stewardship and restoration efforts.

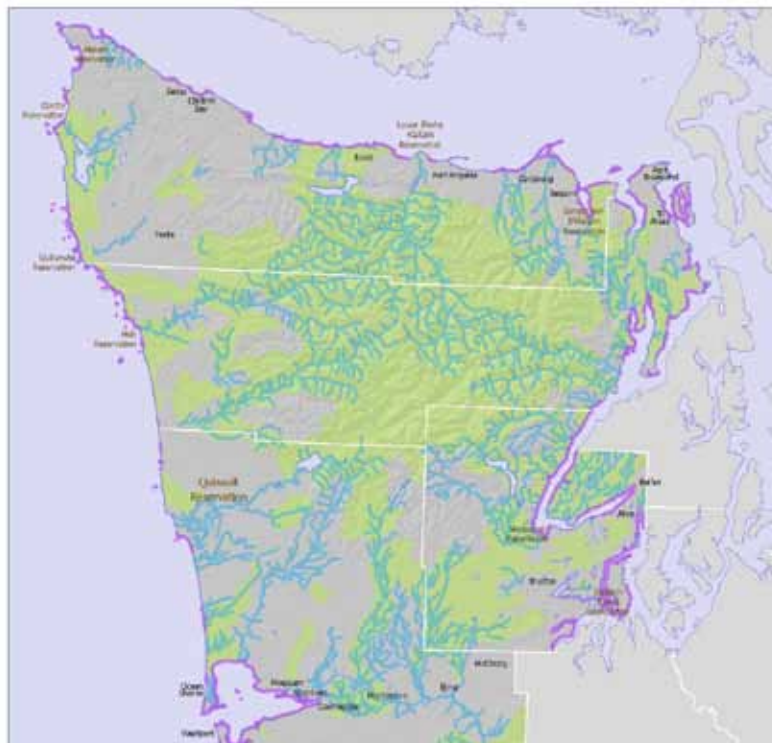
Further research and discussion is needed to achieve consensus among Peninsula residents regarding the optimum balance between ecological preservation and sustainable, multi-use management. Research also shows that remaining unprotected riparian corridors and coastal shorelines are dominated by smaller parcels, which poses a challenge to stewardship and restoration.

## Goals we can measure:

- Steward or restore \_\_\_ acres of riparian corridor to sustain habitat for under-protected lowland species and maintain migration corridors for climate change adaptation.
- Steward or restore \_\_\_ acres within the coastal and near-shore zone to sustain habitat for native species.
- Steward or restore \_\_\_ acres of lowland terrestrial habitat critical for the sustenance of under-protected lowland species.
- Maintain and expand sustainable farmland and forest management practices.

## Natural Heritage and Stewardship Strategies

- On our farms and forests, develop new markets, practices and incentives that protect and steward water quality and wildlife habitat
- Maintain critical habitat
- Support policies that encourage sustainable compact development



## THE OLYMPIC AGENDA

State  
Biodiversity  
Priorities  
on the  
Olympic  
Peninsula

State Biodiversity Priorities  
Northern Habitat  
Aquatic Habitat  
Terrestrial Habitat



# Parks and Recreation

**Goal:** Provide parks and natural areas Peninsula towns in order to attract tourists, link communities by trail systems, retain cultural identity and maintain the quality of life important to the health and future of the Peninsula.

Parks and recreation are intricately linked on the Peninsula. Access to the outdoors is why many people choose to call the Peninsula home. Recreational opportunities – hiking, climbing, skiing, rafting, kayaking, fishing, hunting, riding and biking – are what draw many visitors to the region forming an important part of our local economy.

The heart of the Peninsula is protected in the Olympic National Park, recognized as a World Heritage Site. Within the Olympic National Forest, there are five designated wilderness areas: The Brothers, Buckhorn, Colonel Bob, Mt. Skokomish, and Wonder Mountain. Just off the west coast are the Washington Islands Wilderness and Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. The Peninsula's many state parks are jewels in the crown of the Peninsula, ranging from Anderson Lake to Triton Cove.

Yet for all the existing parklands, work remains. Trails can become an important part of vision of unity on the Peninsula. A number of trails remain unfinished or lack the connectivity needed to constitute a true trail network. Many residents have expressed a desire for existing parks and transportation hubs to be connected linked by trail to encourage recreation and non-motorized transportation.

In the cities and towns of the Peninsula, there is a need for additional active play areas and sports facilities.

Parks, recreation facilities and close to home natural areas are not luxuries that we can somehow do without. They are where we play, exercise and seek solace. They are essential to our health and well-being.



## Goals we can measure:

- Maintain existing county, state and national acreage, focusing on expanding access and range of activities available
- Achieve and maintain national standard of 10 acres of urban parks per thousand residents. Strive for a diversity of uses and activities, including
  - balance between active and passive uses,
  - ecology education and nature interpretation,
  - signature/landmark/centerpiece urban spaces in every community.
- Make waterfront access available to all residents
- Provide balance in opportunities between multiple trail users (hike, horse, bike, motor)

## Parks and Recreation Strategies:

- Increase connectivity across the Peninsula
  - Create a linked system for connecting trail systems, communities, transit centers including ferries, tourist lodging and other recreation destinations such as destination parks and marine shorelines
- Increase the access to community parks
  - Encourage acquisition, restoration and maintenance of green belts and active parks
- Create waterfront parks with diverse recreation opportunities, including water access, that are accessible by trail and transit and within 10 miles of every population center.
- Create waterfront park or access points throughout rural community lands on average every \_\_\_ miles along the shoreline of named rivers, every 20 miles along coastal shorelines, and at least one access point on every lake larger than 25 acres



# Sustainable Communities

**Goal:** Maintain the features of rural life while working to create the new Peninsula town. The New Northwest Town supports neighborhoods and neighborliness, where residents are linked to the global economy and the economic interests of landowners are recognized and respected.

Almost a quarter of a million people call the Olympic Peninsula home. They live in cities like Aberdeen and Hoquiam, or in towns like Forks and Shelton or in small villages. The people of the Peninsula had family here for generations, or are new arrivals, or have lived on tribal lands as their ancestors have done for centuries.

The population of the Peninsula is growing, increasing the need for housing, services, infrastructure and education.

The Peninsula is remote at times – travel between the cities and towns of the region is counted in hours rather than minutes — yet the Peninsula is connected through modern communications and social networking. The Peninsula has transit services, but needs more in order to increase that sense of community and connectedness.

The communities of the Peninsula are no different than other places in the sense that the quality of life in them starts with the ability to provide for ourselves and our families. Conversations around the region revealed the need for work-force development, education and job opportunities in new markets and industries.

## **Goals:**

- The Peninsula will be affordable for all families
- Elevate the Peninsula's distinct regional identity
- All residents will have access to healthy food
- Make the peninsula a great place to live, work and raise our families
- All residents will have access to education at all stages of life

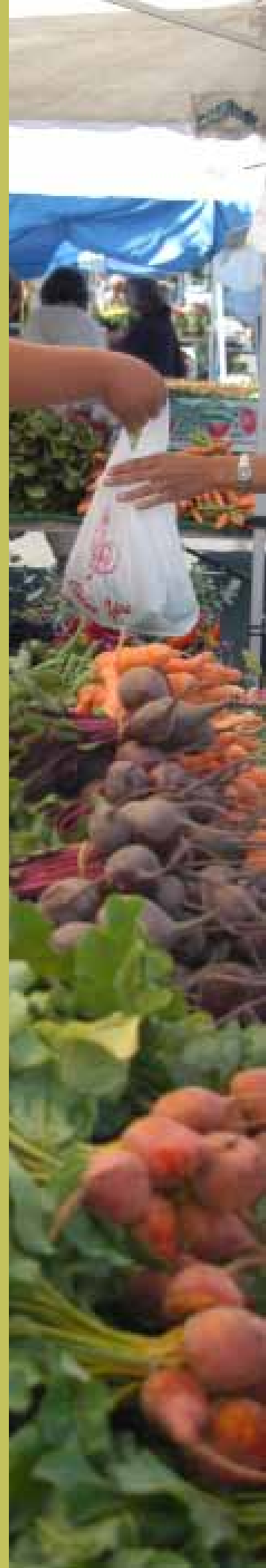
# Sustainable Communities Strategies

## Built Environment:

- Improve walkability and pedestrian safety
  - Bring vibrancy back to Main Street by encouraging development in town centers, improving streetscapes and holding events that get people out on the town.
- Promote healthy, livable communities:
  - Provide access to healthy food with nearby groceries that stock a selection of fresh produce, farmers markets and opportunities for gardening.
  - Create parks and open spaces that provide places to relax and recreate for all ages and abilities
  - Develop opportunities for urban agriculture centered on community gardens
  - Promote a regional network of trails that support a variety of uses from equestrian to bicycle
- Promote efficient, sustainable rural development that maintains our working land base and preserves options for future generations
- Secure funding and financing for infrastructure and public services to support compact, vibrant communities.
- Build a connection between the communities of the Peninsula and the world
  - Expand high speed internet access for all residents
- Create a regional mobility strategy
  - Expand public transportation options
  - Ensure freight mobility through and beyond the peninsula
- Provide opportunities for education, civic engagement and community building
  - Create or enhance community centers to become community hubs that educate residents on the history of the region, provide gathering places and sustain cultural identities.
- Engage, educate and empower residents to take a proactive role in helping their communities plan for a sustainable future
- Encourage collaborative regional planning
  - Create regional planning council

## Economic Development:

- Develop a regional economic prosperity action strategy
  - Focus on supporting existing strong economic sectors and growing emerging sectors. Build on the existing economic cluster analysis and plans that have been established by the county Economic Development Councils.
  - Empower the Olympic Peninsula to become a leader, locally and nationally, in alternative energy.
- Create great places and recreation opportunities that attract tourists to the region
  - Invest in downtown revitalization.
  - Increase pedestrian and bike connectivity with sidewalks and trails.
  - Seek funding and resources from public and private sources to create a promotional strategy for all Olympic Peninsula communities.
- Develop and sustain a life-long learning education system that serves all residents
  - Provide access to community learning centers locally and remotely.





# Waters

Goal: Protect our pristine salt and freshwater ecosystems, maintain our water quality and restore impacted ecosystems.

On the Olympic Peninsula, our lives are shaped by water. It falls from the sky in the rainforests of the west in such quantities it is measured in feet. Rivers and streams are the habitat for salmon and other species. Tidal pools from ocean, strait and sound teem with life and wonder. Waters are the livelihood of many, providing jobs as fishers or growers of shellfish.

Our waters are as complex as the lands they traverse, yet they are connected. Rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, salt marshes, estuaries and groundwater are all interconnected with one another. On the Peninsula, the questions of both water quality and quantity are being raised. Runoff from developed areas is raising concerns about its impact on streams and shorelines. There is grave concern about the low oxygen levels in Hood Canal, and effects of untreated stormwater on fish habitat. Shellfish production is an important economic engine on the Peninsula that exemplifies how the Peninsula is linked to the outside world. Shellfish growers worry about water quality and harvest closures can have large economic impacts.



## Goals we can measure:

- Limit impervious surfaces and encourage development practices that reduce the sources of water pollution
- Maintain and expand sustainable farmland and forest management practices
- Establish a clear downward trend in the rate of shellfish closures due to degraded water quality

## Water Strategies:

- Develop and implement the comprehensive basin flow protection and enhancement programs called for in the recovery plans for Puget Sound Chinook and Hood Canal/ Strait of Juan de Fuca summer chum
  - Implement already developed plans to reduce nutrient and bacterial loads in Hood Canal, causing the dissolved oxygen problem
  - Implement immediate remediation actions to address Hood Canal's low dissolved oxygen concentrations through the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program.
- Establish on-site sewage management utilities to ensure that local health jurisdictions and the Department of Health have the capacity to ensure that new septic systems are correctly installed and existing systems are well maintained. Support policies that retrofit existing systems and encourage sustainable compact development that utilize best water treatment and conservation practices.
- On our farms and forests, develop new markets, practices and incentives that protect and steward water quality and wildlife habitat.



# Tribal Lands

As the original residents of the Olympic Peninsula, the majestic landscape and wealth of resources supplied both physical and spiritual sustenance for generations. Native American Tribes continue as sovereign nations on the Peninsula. It was the ancestors of these tribes that lived throughout the Olympic Peninsula and entered into treaties with the federal government in 1855 and 1856. Tribal citizens now live on reservations and in the communities throughout the Peninsula.

In 2008, when the Tribes and the National Parks Service signed a memorandum of understanding, Fawn Sharp, President of the Quinault Indian Nation said this: "When part of the Olympic Peninsula was designated as a national park in 1938, the United States recognized the value of protecting this remarkable area and the need to honor its treaty commitments to the tribes who had lived here for countless generations. This is our home. We know the mountains, rain, water, air, and all things that walk, swim, crawl, or grow roots. We take care of the land and it takes care of us. There is much work to be done."


The Olympic Agenda recognizes that Native American Tribes have a land base and treaty rights that are part of the regional equation. Because they are sovereign nations, we have not presumed to set goals for their lands. There are many opportunities, however, where we can work together. Be it salmon and elk populations, jobs for our citizens or education for our youth, we have many goals in common.







# Our Opportunities



Five years ago, the people of King, Kittitas, Pierce and Snohomish Counties came together to begin the Cascade Agenda, a 100-year vision to conserve 1.3 million acres of working forests, farmlands and natural areas while simultaneously creating livable communities.

Over the past five years, the Cascade Agenda vision has become a regional force in conservation and in creating the tools modern communities need to manage development, climate change, growing populations and maintaining a high quality of life.

Aligning the Olympic Agenda and Cascade Agenda efforts will strengthen the coalition and better support our economy, communities and conservation. Our first steps conversations on the Olympic Peninsula revealed several areas where the Cascade Agenda and the Olympic Agenda seem to be aligned:

## **CREATE COMMUNITY FORESTS:**

Clallam County specifically identified a community forest concept as a desirable method of conserving working forest lands. Residents envision these lands will be managed similarly to the PUDs or Ports without the high pressure for profits. The Cascade Agenda identified Community Forestry Bonds to help finance the conservation of working forests; such a strategy would benefit the Olympic Peninsula as well.

## **REGULATORY STABILITY AND FLEXIBLE PERMITTING:**

Regulatory instability is a significant barrier to successful long-term forestry, making continued investments risky. Counties also see the need for more consistent land use policies in more developed areas of the Peninsula. The Cascade Agenda formed the Cascade Agenda Cities group to address similar infrastructure issues. This approach can be adapted and employed on the Peninsula where applicable.

## **ADDITIONAL REVENUE STREAMS FOR LANDOWNERS:**

The idea of identifying new revenue streams came up in both forest and farm conversations in both Clallam and Mason Counties. Continuing to explore additional revenue streams such as alternative forest products, agri-tourism, and as the political climate changes, carbon credits and ecosystem service payments would benefit the entire Peninsula. The Cascade Agenda has helped pilot several innovative models, including a recent agreement with the band Pearl Jam to offset the carbon generated on their world tour through restoration of urban forests.



## **INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING:**

Communities on the Peninsula need funding for new infrastructure and for infrastructure maintenance. Much of the infrastructure on the Peninsula was put in place by the federal government in the 1950s as a way to access federal timber revenues. It is not surprising that 60 years later the infrastructure is showing significant signs of age. Unfortunately there is no funding currently available for maintenance or replacement. The Cascade Agenda is working for passage of new pilot legislation to address the infrastructure question in the 2011 Legislative session. Joint support from both the Cascade Agenda and the Olympic Agenda represents a powerful voice in the discussion of how to fund long term infrastructure needs.

## **REGION-WIDE RURAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM:**

The needs of rural communities are unique and consequently regulations geared toward growth management are often not applicable or appropriate. Olympic Peninsula residents identified the need to hold a forum on rural growth. A rural development alternative or clustering model may have potential on the Peninsula, and should be explored at this forum.





# Our Next Steps

“The longest journey begins with a single step.” The famous Chinese proverb seems fitting here as the Olympic Agenda embarks on a journey toward maintaining the quality of life on the Olympic Peninsula for our children and grandchildren’s children. The goals and aspirations identified through conversations over the course of the past two years are clear and knit us together.

It is also apparent that as Peninsula residents we have a strong vision of the future. Looking at a summary of our goals, we get a glimpse at the scope of this effort:

- About 550,000 acres of working forest and farmland will be conserved using market-based tools that maintain private property rights.
- More than x miles trails will be created, connecting communities and the region as never before.
- Habitat for countless species of fish, fowl and hoof will be conserved.
- Communities will see an emergence of the “new Peninsula town” --communities that are at the same time close-knit and connected to the global economy.

The Peninsula provides a great environmental refuge, incredible recreational opportunities, major wood basket and fishery industries and a cherished home to over 230,000 citizens. It is a landscape that at first glance might be seen simply as mountains, low-land forests, rivers, estuaries and shorelines. But when examined a bit more deeply, it is clearly a dazzlingly complex tapestry of communities, cultures, economic opportunities and challenges.

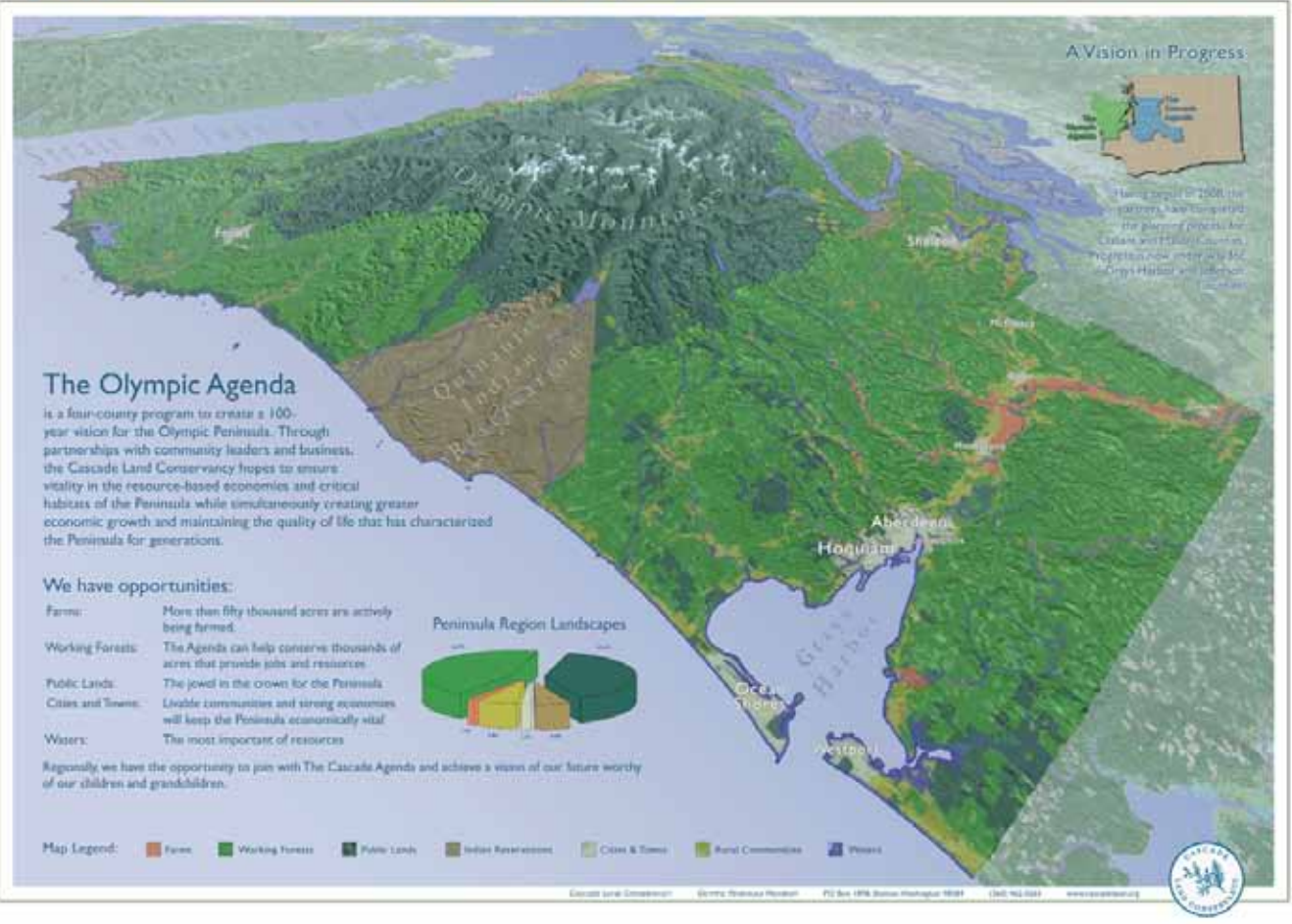
Today we are presenting a vision for the Olympic Peninsula, the Olympic Agenda: A First Look. It is a robust vision with goals, metrics to measure, strategies to pursue. It brings in modern tools such as GIS maps to help us understand the various landscapes. It is different because it is not a stagnant report but a “living document” that will adapt to the changes that we know will occur.

This first step document is the work of the many people of the Peninsula who have met in small meetings, panel discussions and larger community events to talk about how we want the Peninsula to look 100 years from now and how we plan to get there.

Much connects us across the region. Together, the Olympic Agenda and the Cascade Agenda will strengthen our collective voice. At the next level of detail, there are issues that are different between the Peninsula and the Cascade region, if not in kind, certainly in emphasis.

The Olympic Agenda can knit all this together to make sure we have a region that endures and serves us for the next century. We are conveners and bridge builders; if we continue to do it right, together we will have created two documents - The Olympic Agenda together with The Cascade Agenda – that will serve us for generations to come. But we must start today – our families, our children, our children’s children deserve no less.

# THE OLYMPIC AGENDA









# Our Unique Communities



While we are made up of many unique communities, we are one region across a grand scale. One thing seems clear throughout the region: we must work together to advance what binds us together.

Together we can be formidable as we work through our shared aspirations and uncertainties. We recognize that we may weigh our values differently –yet we do still share values and interests. Working together we can bridge our differences by forging practical solutions that work for the land we cherish, the jobs that sustain us and the communities that define us.

The First Look at the Olympic Agenda has started to shape the goals for each of our landscapes.

# Clallam County

## Founded

1854

## Population

69,200

## County Seat

Port Angeles

## Name

Clallam derives from a Klallam word meaning “the strong people.”

## Size

1,765 square miles

## Miles of Shoreline

200

## Average rainfall Forks

117 inches

## Average rainfall Sequim

17 inches

## Largest Employers

Olympic Medical Center

Peninsula College

Port Angeles School District



Clallam County occupies the northern portion of the Olympic Peninsula, extending nearly 100 miles along the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the north and more than 35 miles along the Pacific Coast to the west. The county is composed of the traditional lands of the Klallam (for whom it is named), Makah, and Quileute peoples, who continue to play significant roles in county culture.

Seemingly endless stands of Douglas fir, red cedar, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, and other giant conifers helped make timber the county's economic mainstay for most of its history. Private timberlands are still at the core of Clallam County's economy today. Port Angeles' deep water port and the maritime trades continue to play an important role in the economy. New research in alternative energy shows great potential for the future. The county has a great agricultural heritage and has seen resurgence in interest in the local food economy.

The county contains just three incorporated cities: the county seat of Port Angeles, Sequim at the eastern end of the county and Forks at the far west end.

In recent years, the county has been discovered by retirees and vacation property owners, who have flocked particularly to the Sequim-Dungeness area, where the mild climate and low rainfall are in marked contrast to the remainder of the Peninsula.

# Grays Harbor County

Founded  
1854  
Population  
68,500  
County Seat  
Montesano  
Original Name  
Chehalis County  
Size  
1,910 square miles  
Beaches  
50 miles  
Rainfall  
70 inches  
Largest City  
Aberdeen  
Largest employers  
G.H. Community Hospital  
Westport Shipyard  
Stafford Creek Prison



The Quinault, Hoh, Queets, and Quileute tribes inhabited Grays Harbor prior to 1775 when the first Spaniards arrived. Robert Gray, a Boston sea captain and trader, sailed into Grays Harbor in 1792 after failing to negotiate the entrance two years earlier. The broad, shallow bay that drains five rivers in southwest Washington soon took his name.

Lewis and Clark's 1805 expedition brought attention to the area mainly for the lucrative fur trade, which caused both the U.S. and British governments to lay claim to the area. In order to bolster its claim, the U.S. actively encouraged settlement of the region through the Donation Land Act of 1850.

In the 1880s, the first large lumber mill went on-line and by the 1920s, the area was rich in lumber, manufacturing, pulp & paper, fishing and people. It remained an important tall-ship building center into the 1940s. Timber continued to drive the county's economy well into the 1980s and, although it has declined, timber remains an important economic resource today.

Agriculture and shellfish production, as well as food processing of seafood and crops such as cranberries play a significant role in the county's economy.

The recreational opportunities and natural wonders of Olympic National Park continue to draw tourists to the region. The ocean beaches draw surfers and clam diggers alike and fishing remains a perennial pastime. Recreation, tourism and the health of the environment are entwined.



# Jefferson County

## Founded

1852

## Population

25,953

## County Seat

Port Townsend

## Size

2,184 square miles

## Transportation

The Hood Canal Bridge connects Jefferson and Kitsap County

## Ferries

The Keystone-Port Townsend ferry connects to Whidbey Island

## Geography

It is impossible to travel from one end of the county to the other without leaving the county

## Largest Employer

Port Townsend Paper



Jefferson County is in the heart of the Olympic Peninsula. The Olympic National Park bisects the county's center. At the northeast, the county comes to a point at Port Townsend, a town that has long been the center for the arts community on the peninsula. In the west, the county is covered with temperate rainforest, including the Hoh Rainforest, a very popular destination site within the Olympic National Park. Its western shores consist of the rocky beaches of the Pacific Ocean.

The 1970s saw an influx of people who "discovered" Port Townsend, finding inexpensive homes, a lower cost of living, and a laid-back attitude. The city always had affection for its historic buildings, and many have been preserved and restored. The city now identifies itself as a Victorian seaport and is a popular weekend getaway.

Elsewhere in the county, smaller towns and communities have burgeoned; new residents and vacationers are continually drawn by the temperate climate, the water and friendly neighbors. Port Ludlow, developed in the 1970s, became a popular resort and retirement community.

Rural parts of Jefferson County are supported by the natural resource economy, including forestry, shellfish, agriculture, aquaculture and recreation. For generations the residents of Jefferson County have acted as stewards of these resources and the landscapes that sustain them.

# Mason County

Founded

1854

Population

56,300

Original Name

Sahewamish County

Size

1,052 square miles

Miles of shoreline

230

County Seat and

only Incorporated Area

Shelton

Hamlets

11

Largest Employers

WA State Correction Center

Little Creek Casino

Shelton School District



Bordered by Hood Canal, Puget Sound, the Olympic National Park and the Olympic National Forest, Mason County is a gateway to the Olympic Peninsula. Mason County offers a variety of landscapes ranging from lush forest to rural communities, each with its own distinct identity. It is primarily rural with only one incorporated area, Shelton.

About 56,300 people live in the county; 9,000 in Shelton and 6,000 in and around the Belfair and Allyn area. In addition to forest products, which are still a major economic driver, the shellfish industry has been sustaining tribal and family businesses for generations in Oakland Bay and Hood Canal. Additionally, many residents work outside the county—43% of the work force commutes to jobs in Thurston, Grays Harbor and Kitsap Counties and beyond.

In the 1980s, a number of factors aligned to shift Mason County from logging camps and mill communities to a greater mix of vacationers in second homes and retired citizens.

Two Native American tribes make major contributions to the cultural and economic fabric of Mason County—the Squaxin Island Tribe in the south and the Skokomish Indian Nation at the mouth of the Skokomish River at the Great Bend of Hood Canal.



Cascade Land Conservancy is working with Jefferson Land Trust and the North Olympic Land Trust to complete the Olympic Agenda. We look forward to working together with our community to refine the goals and strategies necessary to protect our quality of life.



Cascade Land Conservancy

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