

# Land Trust Secures Preservation of 28-Acre Skookumchuck Forest Preserve

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By The Chronicle Staff



*Skookumchuck River log jams and plantings are pictured on the two properties.*

Capitol Land Trust on Monday announced it and its partners had secured preservation of a 28-acre property brimming with streamside vegetation along the Skookumchuck River, now officially dubbed the Skookumchuck Forest Preserve.

The Skookumchuck River and upland forest provide important habitat for spring and fall Chinook salmon, coho salmon, winter steelhead and a myriad of other species, according to a news release from the land trust. This move also allows for continual extensive restoration work to be done along the river and in aquatic habitats.

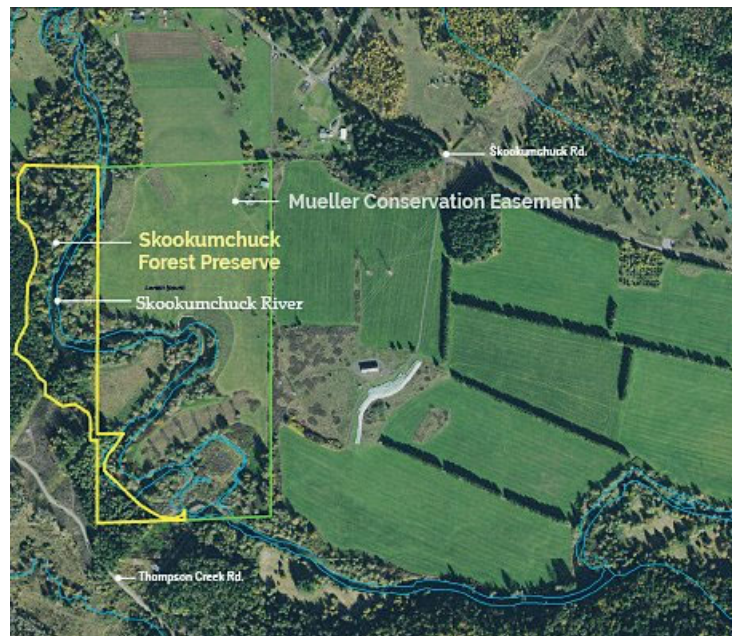
“This 28-acre property, although small by itself, is adjacent to our 74-acre Mueller Conservation Easement, which combined conserves almost 1.5 miles of critical salmon habitat in the Skookumchuck River,” said Conservation Director Laurence Reeves in a statement. “Between the intact riparian forest on the Skookumchuck Forest Preserve, and the restoration work on the Mueller easement shoreline, this will one day be almost three miles of highly functional riparian habitat, benefiting both aquatic and terrestrial species alike.”

The property to form the Skookumchuck Forest Preserve was purchased from the Green Diamond Resource Company. The sale was executed with assistance from the Office of the Chehalis Basin, Forterra and the Washington state Recreation and Conservation Office.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Thurston Conservation District have already started restoration work in the property as thousands of native plants have been added along the riverbanks and logjams have been added in the river to help rebuild its complex ecosystem.

“With the Skookumchuck Dam upstream of the project area, there are few opportunities for natural recruitment of large wood in this section of the river, which is an important element of a healthy ecosystem,” said Celina Abercrombie, Chehalis Basin strategy manager for WDFW. “Through the conservation of the river corridor, construction of engineered logjams and installation of thousands of native riparian and upland plantings, the project supports a healthy stretch of river that will persist for generations.”

The Skookumchuck River makes up a southern portion of the Chehalis Basin — the second-largest basin in Washington state — and flows into the Chehalis River in Centralia. This basin is one of the only remaining in Washington state where salmon species are not listed as threatened or endangered, though it faces significant challenges including flooding and habitat protection.



*The Skookumchuck Forest Preserve’s boundaries are shown in this image provided by the Capitol Land Trust.*

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