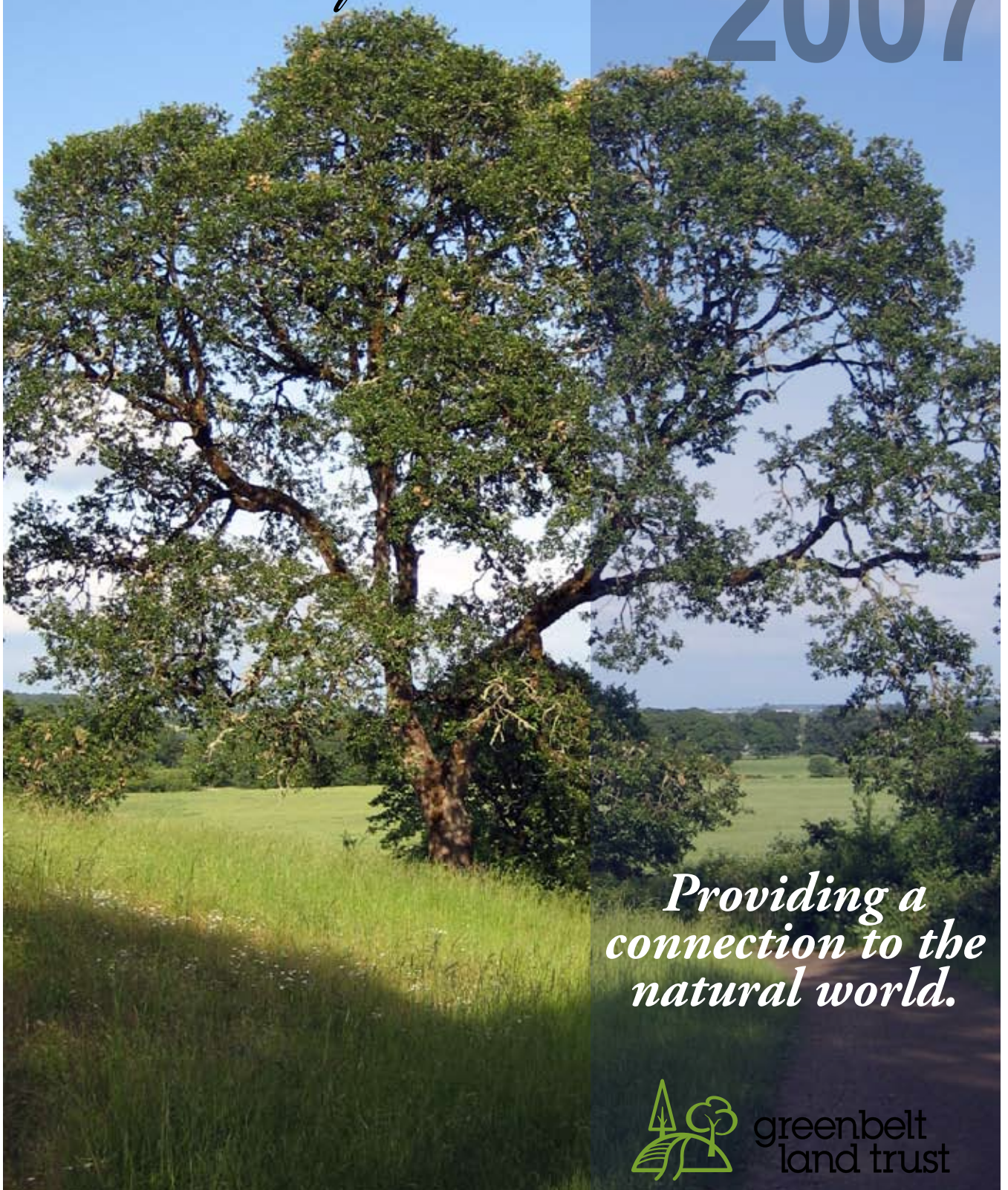


greenbelt land trust

Conservation Plan

Summary

2007



*Providing a
connection to the
natural world.*



greenbelt
land trust

2007 Conservation Plan Executive Summary

Background

The Greenbelt Land Trust (GLT) believes that conservation of natural areas and open space lands is a critical component of creating and maintaining vibrant, healthy, vigorous communities while protecting valued ecosystems and productive farm and forest lands. For nearly two decades the GLT has worked to protect the natural, green backdrop that embraces the cities of Corvallis and Philomath. This has resulted in the protection of more than 1,500 acres in and around Benton County. Because this “greenbelt” system connects to a broader network of ecologically significant lands, the work of the Greenbelt Land Trust has broadened over the past five years. Today we envision a network of natural areas in the mid-Willamette Valley that is a “green infrastructure” serving a variety of ecological, economic, and social purposes. The Greenbelt Land Trust will focus its work within the mid-Willamette region that includes Benton, Linn, Marion, Polk, and part of Yamhill and Lincoln Counties.

This plan documents the accomplishments of the last nine years; includes conservation priorities not yet completed from our 1998 Open Space Plan, areas where we are currently doing work, and identifies a number of high priority habitats and species that will guide our organization over the next five to ten years in our conservation efforts in the mid-Willamette valley. In addition, it identifies specific areas for conservation in and around Benton County. This plan only identifies the potential opportunities in our area and does not prioritize the projects. Therefore as opportunities arise, the GLT will utilize the tools we have developed to assist in prioritizing and evaluating specific projects.

In the development of this plan the GLT solicited input from our members and reviewed a number of documents developed over the last few years for the mid-Willamette Valley. These include wetlands inventories, flood plain maps, existing open space and trail networks, community vision documents, natural features inventories, the Oregon Biodiversity Project 1998 Report, The Oregon Conservation Strategy, The Nature Conservancy Puget Trough Ecoregional Plan, and the Willamette Valley River Basin Atlas.

The Willamette Watershed – Our Ecological Context

The Willamette Valley occupies a 120-mile-long plain up to 40 miles in width that drains north to the Columbia River. The Willamette River watershed encompasses all or portions of Washington, Clackamas, Marion, Yamhill, Polk, Benton, Linn, and Lane counties. The area is bounded on the west by the Coast Range, the Cascade Mountains to the east, and the Calapooia Divide to the south. The Greenbelt Land Trust will focus its work within the mid-Willamette region that includes Benton, Linn, Marion, Polk, and part of Yamhill and Lincoln Counties. The Three Rivers Land Conservancy works in Washington and Clackamas Counties while the McKenzie River Trust works in Lane County and a portion of south Benton County within the watershed of the Long Tom River. Therefore, the work of the Greenbelt will fill a vital gap in mid-Willamette Valley conservation efforts. Other conservation groups including national groups like The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and Trust for Public Land as well as local groups like Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Watershed Councils carry out various conservation activities within their particular geographic areas.

The varied landscape conditions within the basin create a mosaic of diverse ecosystems, or areas where distinct climate and geology determine the collection of native habitats and species. The Valley can be divided into three broad zones. The **Willamette River** and tributaries contain deep, fertile, silty clay soils and support riparian forests and bottomland hardwood forests. These gallery forest areas are surrounded by **Prairie Terrace** systems that cover the wide valley floor. This area supports Oregon white oak, Oregon ash, and Douglas fir. Historically, wet and dry prairie vegetation as well as savannas (grasslands with scattered trees) covered this area. The **Valley Foothills** at the edges of the valley floor support Oregon white oak and madrone on drier sites, with Douglas fir and some western red cedar in areas with more moisture.



Oregon white oak.

The Willamette Valley is now home to more than 70 percent of Oregon's residents and accounts for roughly half of Oregon's agricultural sales. Already supporting a population of more than two million, the basin population is expected to grow by 1.7 million people by 2050. Much of the population is centered in the Portland metropolitan area. Outside the Portland metropolitan area, growth is concentrated around Salem, Corvallis, Albany and Eugene. The challenge that drives our work is how to accommodate this population increase without losing the natural heritage and quality of life that draws many of these residents to the region.

Overview of Greenbelt Conservation Initiatives: 2007 – 2016

Over the next five to ten years, the Greenbelt Land Trust will continue to work on two types of projects - conservation of properties of ecological significance in the mid-Willamette Valley and the protection of properties of community-wide value, particularly scenic properties in and near Corvallis and Philomath. While other activities such as trail development and education will be pursued, they are secondary to our primary mission of protecting ecologically valuable lands in perpetuity.

To a large extent, pursuit of these initiatives will be opportunity driven and require the identification of interested landowners and other partners, the securing of funding for purchase and stewardship and the development of a project action plan. In most cases we have not identified specific properties but rather an area of land that is important to be conserved for its ecological or community value, as a connector between open spaces or for protection of a specific habitat. For the most part, identification of specific parcels for acquisition occurs only when we have obtained the consent of the landowner. We have attempted to portray an overall strategy for land conservation in this region. The ultimate configuration of any natural area network or trail connectors will depend on the willingness of landowners to sell their property or grant easements, and on the financial resources available to the GLT.

Summary of Conservation Initiatives

The list provided below is a brief summary of all the GLT conservation initiatives. These conservation initiatives include projects not yet completed from our 1998 plan, areas where the Greenbelt is currently active, as well as proposed projects obtained through the plan update process. Five of these conservation initiatives (marked with a **) encompass lands within the GLT Tier One base and include lands from our 1998 plan that have not yet been conserved or fully conserved. Some other areas include projects such as Muddy Creek corridor and the Luckiamute Watershed where the GLT is currently working with landowners and funding agencies on conservation projects. These conservation initiatives are not listed in any priority order.

Special Habitats in Mid-Willamette Valley

- Upland Prairies
- Wet Prairies
- Oak Woodlands & Savannahs
- Significant Wetlands
- Riparian Habitats & Bottomland Forests

Property near current protected open space areas

- Additions to Chip Ross Park **
- Additions to Fitton Green,
- Addition to Bald Hill Park (Mulkey Creek)
- View Ridge corridor (between Fitton Green & McDonald Forest)
- +and near Beazell Memorial Forest
- Area near Fort Hoskins

Lands of Community Significance

- Dimple Hill **
- Selected Corvallis and Benton County Natural Features Inventory Properties
- Lands surrounding the City of Philomath
- Corvallis-Philomath Buffer - agriculture and view buffer **
- Newton Creek Wetlands
- Wetland between West Hills and Dunawi Creek
- Hwy 34 corridor between Corvallis and Interstate 5

Oregon State University Lands

- McDonald-Dunn Forest
- Agricultural Lands (including lands around OSU horse barn and sheep barns)

Jackson and Frazier Watershed and North Corvallis

- Jackson-Frazier Wetlands
- Forested hillsides around Crescent Valley
- North Corvallis

Marys River Watershed

- Marys River Corridor from Wren to the Confluence with the Willamette River **
- Rock Creek and its tributaries (in the Corvallis Watershed)
- Woods Creek

Muddy Creek Corridor within Marys River Watershed

- Finley Wildlife Refuge to confluence with Marys River

Farmlands in NE Corvallis **

Willamette River Corridor from Harrisburg to Albany

- Oxbow cutoffs in Benton and Linn County
- Flood plains and wetlands between Harrisburg and Albany
- Dry Creek
- Booneville Channel
- Owl Creek (east of Corvallis)

Willamette River Corridor from Albany to Mission Bottom

- Luckiamute, Santiam, Willamette Confluences
- Oxbow cutoffs in Linn County
- Buena Vista Area (includes old boat landing)
- Flood plains and wetlands

Calapooia River Corridor

- Lake Creek

Adair and Soap Creek, EE Wilson Wildlife Refuge

- Sulfur Springs Area
- Coffin Butte area: oak woodlands; wetlands
- Adair Rifle Range - wetlands
- Soap Creek drainage south of Highway 99 to confluence with Luckiamute River

Luckiamute Watershed

- Kings Valley - Upland Prairie and Oak Savannah and Wetlands
- Riparian areas along main stem and tributaries
- Upper Luckiamute

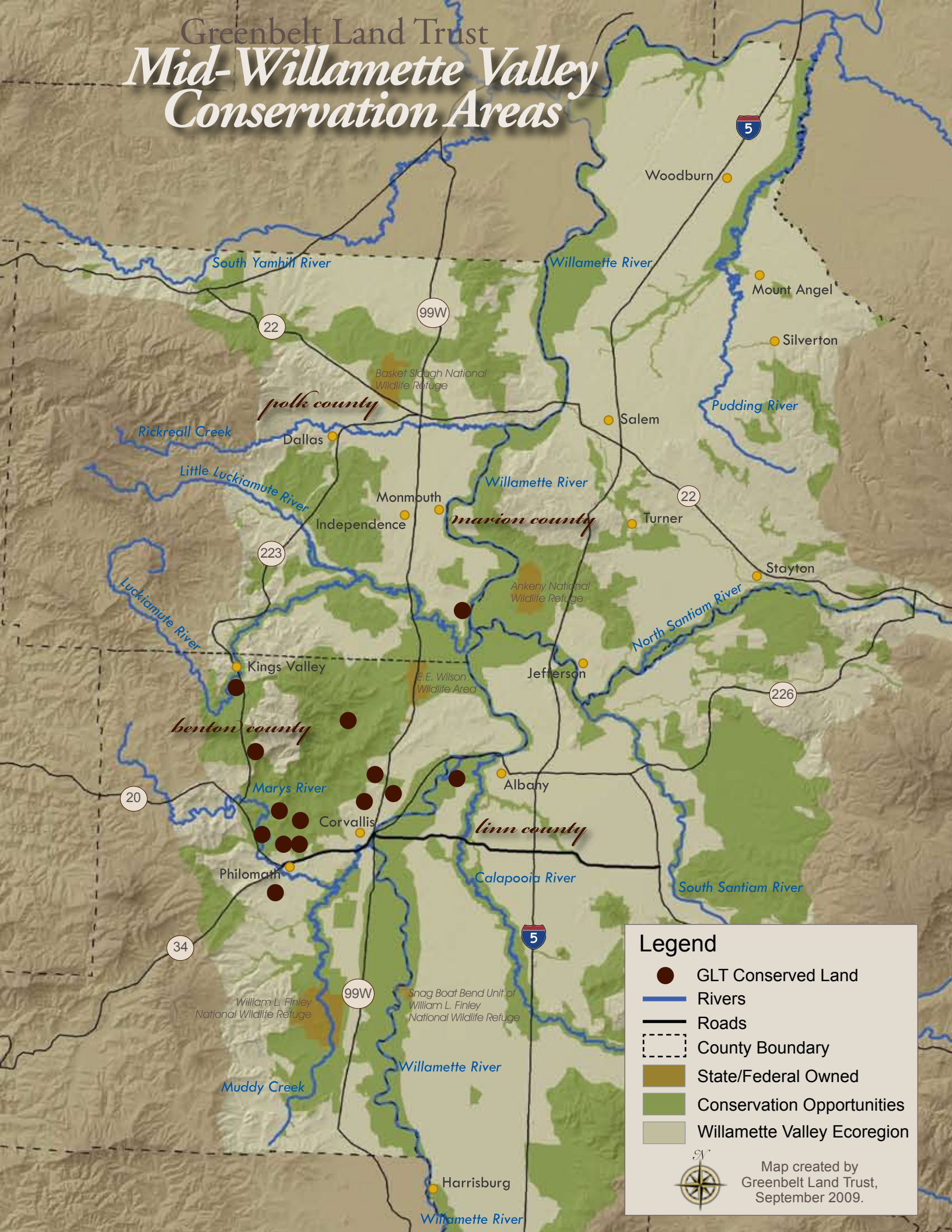
Additions to Other Conserved Areas

- Highlands and wetlands near Baskett Slough
- Additions to Finley Wildlife Refuge
- Additions to Ankeny Refuge

North Albany Area

West Salem Hills (oak woodlands)

Greenbelt Land Trust Mid-Willamette Valley Conservation Areas



Legend

- GLT Conserved Land
- Rivers
- Roads
- County Boundary
- State/Federal Owned
- Conservation Opportunities
- Willamette Valley Ecoregion

Map created by
Greenbelt Land Trust,
September 2009.