

# CONSERVING ESSENTIAL LANDS AND WATERS

The Pacific Northwest Resilient Landscapes Initiative



## LAND TRUST PROFILE

# Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

**Founded in:** 1985 · **Service Area:** Chelan & Douglas Counties, WA · **Acres Protected:** 21,000

For more information, visit: [www.cdlandtrust.org](http://www.cdlandtrust.org)

## Connecting the Pieces for Protection

Cascades Modoc Highlands is a 2,100-acre project with diverse and connected habitats at risk from potential development. Approximately 80% of the property borders public lands, including National Forest and lands owned by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Decades ago, the project site was used for limited dryland wheat farming. For the past 25 years, it has been managed for open space and wildlife. In 2019, the owners listed the property for sale, with potential for 100 twenty-acre rural home sites. If developed, this parcel and the surrounding landscape would be irreparably fragmented, with fewer options for plants and wildlife to move.

## A Diverse Landscape

North Central Washington has a wealth of diverse habitats, from open sagebrush shrub-steppe in the lower-elevation Columbia Basin, to lush riparian areas along waterways, to coniferous forests on the eastern slopes of the North Cascades. The Cascades Modoc Highlands property combines this diversity, in which microhabitats in the wetter areas resemble the eastern slopes of the North Cascades and drier areas are more similar to the Columbia Basin.

## Advancing climate resilience

Elevations on the property range from 1,600 to 3,600 feet; the topography is complex, with steep draws and gentle meadows. Across 2,100 acres, the property's varying slopes, elevations, and aspects support climate resilience for both plant and animal species, providing opportunities for species to disperse locally to new locations that meet their requirements for survival. Because it is surrounded by protected public land, the property supports migration and dispersal across more than 20,000 acres.

## Project Highlights

- 2,100-acre acquisition at center of 20,000 acres of protected lands
- Range of elevations and microclimates support species movement to adapt to a changing climate
- Mosaics of varying habitats support diverse plants, birds, and other wildlife
- Landscape structure provides large, unrestricted areas with minimal barriers and disturbances to encourage species movement
- Protects water quality and quantity for local communities by providing natural landscapes to filter rain and ground water, minimizing the amount of impermeable surfaces
- Will help buffer local communities from increasing wildfire risks

## Improvements for the Future

- Plans to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk, in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service
- Noxious weed management through regular monitoring and treatments as needed
- Eventual development of appropriate public access for low-intensity recreation





Vast open space for wildlife to roam.



Open meadows and forested hillsides provide diverse landscapes for plants and wildlife.



Surrounded by protected public land, this property is the missing piece to protecting thousands of contiguous acres.



The only view of civilization.



A deer and her fawn find a safe place to rest.



Spring in the Cascades Modoc Highlands.

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“After a series of devastating wildfires, the people of North Central Washington know the importance of managing our landscapes for climate resilience. By protecting large properties like the Cascades Modoc Highlands and managing them for perpetuity, the land trust and its partners can lead by example and make measurable gains in preparing our region for climate change.”

— Curt Soper, Executive Director, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

All Photos: Chelan-Douglas Land Trust