



(509) 557-6306
POB 325, Okanogan, WA 98840
info@okanoganlandtrust.org
www.okanoganlandtrust.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kate Miller, Okanogan Land Trust
Phone: (971) 271-3540
Email: kate@okanoganlandtrust.org

Okanogan Land Trust Raising Funds to Save an Ecological Jewel

OKANOGAN COUNTY, WA – March 5, 2026

One of the most unique and environmentally sensitive acreages in the Eastern Washington is available for sale, and the Okanogan Land Trust is organizing a fundraising campaign to preserve it in perpetuity.

The 745-acre tract in the Okanogan Highlands contains a 260-acre peat fen, an ecological gem not only in Washington State, but throughout the world. The peat acts like a natural filter and reservoir, storing excess water during wet periods, then slowly releasing it during dry seasons, helping to prevent both flooding and drought — two critical issues in the West.

Peat fens are also major carbon sinks. Despite covering only about 3 percent of the Earth's surface, peatlands store roughly twice as much carbon as all the world's forests combined. This carbon storage capacity means less in the atmosphere, and more carbon in the ground.

A peat fen supports unique plant and animal communities specially adapted to these conditions – including rare plant species that can't live anywhere else. This thriving wetland attracts mule deer, moose, Canada lynx, Columbia spotted frogs, and a tremendous variety of birds.

OLT has launched a campaign, dubbed *For the Fen*, to raise \$3 million to purchase the property: half from state grants, and half through a public appeal launching in March 2026.

"It's such a unique and special piece of land, both for its ecological significance and its iconic place within our landscape," said Kate Miller, Okanogan Land Trust's Executive Director. "Many members of the highlands community and local naturalists have been waiting for decades for the chance to protect it."

Acting Now for the Long Term

Known locally as Bonaparte Meadows or simply "the bog," the property lies next to Bonaparte Lake, a popular fishing spot. Bonaparte Creek, a tributary of the Okanogan

River, meanders through the wetland and is augmented by groundwater. That groundwater is what makes this wetland a fen (as opposed to a bog, which is fed by rain or runoff). And not just any fen; the limestone substrate makes it a calcareous fen, one of the rarest wetland types in the United States.

Protecting Bonaparte Meadows brings the opportunity to restore parts of the wetland that have been impacted by a history of peat extraction. Peat accumulates incredibly slowly, so rebuilding what has been lost will take generations. However, restoration now will result in rapid improvements in habitat and water storage and reset conditions for peat to re-form.

Several partners have come together to protect and restore the fen along with OLT, including Trout Unlimited, the Okanogan Conservation District, the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

The funds raised will purchase the land, preventing future development and allowing natural processes to re-establish.

To learn more about this historic effort and how you can help, contact Kate Miller at kate@okanoganlandtrust.org.

Okanogan Land Trust is a nonprofit conservation organization serving Okanogan and Ferry Counties.

###