

# PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

## Group seeks donations to save Tarboo-area forestland

By [Peninsula Daily News](#)

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QUILCENE — The Northwest Watershed Institute is \$49,000 away from protecting 236 acres of forests and streams next to the Tarboo Wildlife Preserve.

With a loan from supporters, the Northwest Watershed Institute bought 78 acres of mature forest in 2011 from ANE Forests Inc., a Danish corporation that was planning to clearcut the property and sell it for development, said Peter Bahls, executive director of the Port Townsend-based nonprofit conservation group, also known as NWI.

Since then, NWI has been raising funds to pay off the loan and allow transfer of a conservation easement to Jefferson Land Trust to permanently shield the land from development.

If the parcel can be successfully funded and conserved, Leopold-Freeman Forests LLC has agreed to donate a conservation easement to the land trust that would permanently safeguard the adjoining 158 acres of forestland for wildlife habitat and sustainable forestry, Bahls said.

The LLC forestland is owned by the Scott and Susan Freeman family, who named the tract in honor of Susan's father, Carl Leopold — a son of conservationist Aldo Leopold.

"We are delighted to be working with NWI and [Jefferson Land Trust] to protect a large tract of forestland in the Tarboo valley," Susan Freeman said in a prepared statement.

With funding in sight to protect the NWI parcel, the LLC is preparing to donate a conservation easement before the end of the year, Freeman said.

Fifty-one private donors and foundations have donated \$237,000 to date, Bahls said.

Jefferson County's Conservation Futures Program has committed \$334,000 toward purchase of a conservation easement on NWI's 78 acres by the land trust.

NWI is now seeking donations from additional local supporters for the last \$49,000 of the \$620,000 it needs before the end of the year.

The project is one of the largest private forestland conservation effort to date in East Jefferson County, Bahls said.

If successful, the parcel — one of the few remaining large tracts of older forest in the Tarboo valley — will be permanently preserved for wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration and sustainable, selective forestry, he added.

Sarah Spaeth, executive director of the land trust, said the project “fits well with the goal of conserving working forests, which was identified by the community as they helped us develop our 100-year-vision conservation plan for Jefferson County.”

During the Tarboo Forest Campaign to raise money for the land, “one of the highlights of fundraising has been walking the forest trails with many people over the past two years in all seasons,” Bahls said.

Bahls plans to give another tour Saturday for potential donors.

He hopes it will also give people a chance to see coho salmon spawning in Yarr Creek, a stream running through the forest and into the Tarboo Wildlife Preserve.

Yarr Creek is named for the late Daniel Yarr, who sold his land to NWI in 2006 to start the preserve.

NWI also hosted a nature photography workshop recently, taught by three professional photographers — Stephen Cunliffe, David Gluckman and Keith Lazelle — who donated their time.

“I’m extremely grateful for the support of many residents of the Tarboo watershed, and people throughout East Jefferson County,” Bahls said.

The 236-acre Tarboo Forest includes seven tributaries to Tarboo Creek, which flows into Tarboo-Dabob Bay 2 miles downstream.

“Conserving these forestlands is key to protecting the water quality for wild coho and chum salmon in Tarboo Creek, as well as the valuable oyster and clam beds of Tarboo-Dabob Bay,” said Judith Rubin, stewardship director for NWI.

To date, more than 500 acres along Tarboo Creek and more than 2,000 acres within the Dabob Bay Natural Area have been protected by a large coalition of conservation organizations, landowners and public agencies.

Donors can learn more about the project, register for Saturday’s tour or donate at [www.nwwatershed.org](http://www.nwwatershed.org) or by contacting Bahls at 360-385-6786 or [peter@nwwatershed.org](mailto:peter@nwwatershed.org).