



The mission of the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) is to “engage communities in conserving, caring for, and accessing the natural lands and waters that sustain North Central Washington.” In order to remain sustainable, responsive to our members and neighbors, and able to steward the lands in our care in perpetuity, we must expand the communities we engage in this work. This letter outlines why we are investing time and effort to raise our own awareness and to show up in a way that will result in greater impact, and in greater alignment with CDLT’s mission and core values.

Mission Alignment

To fulfill our mission, and honor our vision and guiding principles, we must include all community members. We are expanding our efforts more directly into our Latinx and Native American communities as well as other communities of color. We are engaging younger generations who will inherit natural lands and waters. We are exploring opportunities to work in new habitats and geographies. And we’re aiming to engage neighbors and land use partners not previously involved in our efforts.

We recognize that the well-being of nature and people cannot be separated, and that the history of the human connection to land cannot be ignored. We acknowledge that Indigenous people have been the stewards of the land, water, plants, and animals of this region since time immemorial. The first peoples of this region were the Wenatchi, Entiat, Chelan and Moses/Columbia, many of whom still reside here. During the last 150 years, demographics shifted significantly from Indigenous people to European settlers, to present day with more than 50% of kindergarteners in the Wenatchee School District being Latinx. Currently, CDLT does not fully reflect the wonderful diversity of culture and heritage in the region – and we are working to improve that.

Sustainability of our Work

It’s paramount that we broaden support for conservation to ensure our lands and waters thrive in perpetuity. This requires us to be more culturally and geographically responsive and inclusive. Therefore, we will thoughtfully engage more demographic groups, strengthen connections throughout our service area, work with young people to foster future conservation leaders, and proactively seek people outside the traditional CDLT sphere whose perspectives could improve the outcomes of our work.

Increased Impact and Success

Evidence-based studies reflect that diversity yields greater rigor of thought and innovation. We will be better equipped to tackle conservation challenges in the years ahead if we attract and retain diverse leaders, staff, and communities. This requires that we raise our own awareness, improve our knowledge, and create a welcoming environment for all our community members.

The staff and board of the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our management, business practices, and conservation. We have had some important and successful efforts in recent years, such as our on-the-ground conservation and restoration work with the Yakama Nation and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, series of hikes and events with members of the Latinx community, and agricultural landowner partnerships that led to conservation achievements in new geographies. We're working to increase our engagement with these groups and build connections with other communities that will make our work more impactful and sustainable.

We embark on this journey with humility, knowing that we'll make mistakes along the way. We remain committed to learning from those mistakes. This is not a diversion from our focus of protecting and stewarding natural lands and water. Rather, this is a vital step for us to take to do this work better now and into the future.