



## KulshanCLT and Affordable Access to Land for Farming

KulshanCLT has used the CLT strategy to create permanently affordable homeownership opportunities for over 100 households since 2002. Building on that success and strategy, we are now moving forward with creating Affordable Access to Land for Farming (AALF). KulshanCLT's mission includes "...holding land in trust...for other community needs," and affordable land dedicated to farming is clearly a community need.

The first step in this process is creating a working, replicable model that creates long-term, stable land access for farmers and farm businesses. AALF will help decrease the debt burden that acquiring land places on new farmers and existing farmers looking to expand their business.

A few of the models we are looking to for guidance as we develop an innovative and creative program include:

- [The Equity Trust Inc,](#)
- [Lopez Island Community Land Trust,](#)
- [Vermont Housing and Conservation Board,](#)
- [Vermont Land Trust](#)

There is strong public and political support for protecting farmland and farm businesses in Whatcom County. According to a recent survey by the Whatcom Legacy Project, 71% of respondents thought protecting working farmland should be an urgent or high priority. On July 13, 2009, The Bellingham Herald reported that, "On Tuesday, July 7, County Council members voted unanimously to set a target of saving 100,000 acres of farmland in Whatcom County, even as creeping development threatens good farmland. The council also asked county staff to look into tools to help either slow development on farmland or ensure it's built in ways least disruptive to farming."



KulshanCLT has a unique role to play among the many dedicated organizations and bright minds working on farmland and farm business protection. Access to land and water are paramount to the success of new farmers or established farmers looking to expand. By decreasing the debt burden these farmers carry, we can help them succeed and keep that land affordable for generations to come.

As we develop a model to help farmers get long-term, stable access to farmland, we can also help retiring farmers and other landowners create and maintain a legacy of farming on their property. We have a vision of continuing our thriving agricultural history with new farmers taking over some of the best farmland in western Washington and producing fresh, healthy food to be processed and consumed locally at our tables, in our restaurants, in our schools and other institutions.



Part of this vision is being realized in the Whatcom Farm Incubator (WFI). WFI is a land-based project designed to train new farmers and provide them with access to land and farm infrastructure at reasonable rates. This project is a partnership between Sustainable Connections and KulshanCLT. Click here for more information about [Whatcom Farm Incubator](#).

Our story needs to have many voices and while KulshanCLT will focus on affordable access to land for farming we will work with others to create a whole community approach to healthy, local food access, local fair trade, new farmer training, conservation and growth of our local agricultural economy. We understand that our work is intricately linked to foodshed protection, food access, farm workers rights and honoring our heritage as an agricultural county. It is food that connects us to each other and to the land but it is our collective story that keeps us whole.



Creating fair and equitable access to land, and to the food grown on it, for all of the members of our community is perhaps the greater vision. With this vision in mind we will continue to collaborate with other organizations to create and implement a community vision for protecting our rural areas and creating fair and equitable access to land and food.

If you are interested in being involved in AALF, please contact Ann Russell, Special Projects Coordinator, at 360.671.5600, ext. 103 or [AnnRussell@KulshanCLT.org](mailto:AnnRussell@KulshanCLT.org).