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Trust adds pocket estuary on Totten Inlet

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The Capitol Land Trust has completed purchase of a 34-acre shoreline property on Totten Inlet about two miles northwest of Gallagher Cove on the Steamboat Island Peninsula.

The site features a small pocket estuary with critical salmon habitat, 1,400 feet of waterfront and several small streams flowing through a mature forest that covers most of the property.

“It’s a relatively small piece of shoreline, but it has enormous biological value that will now be preserved and enhanced,” Capitol Land Trust conservation projects manager Laurence Reeves said.

Grants from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and Salmon Recovery Funding Board financed the \$790,000 project.

The property, known locally as Adams Cove, includes a sand spit and beach used by spawning forage fish, an intertidal salt marsh, a sub-tidal kelp bed and mudflats providing habitat for Puget Sound coho, winter steelhead, chinook, summer chum and coastal sea-run cutthroat.

The undeveloped shoreline includes high bank bluffs and nutrient-rich sediments that support the estuary.

The Totten Inlet coastal shoreline is also a permanent or migratory home to more than 100 bird species, including eagles, owls, ospreys, plovers, sandpipers, woodpeckers and loons. The property has potential as a possible restoration area for the native Olympia oyster, Reeves said.

Reeves credited Gayle Broadbent-Ferris, a South Sound conservationist who died in 2009 after an accident near her Totten Inlet home, with alerting the land trust to the Adams Cove property.

“She, more than anyone, would have been thrilled to know the property is now under conservancy,” Reeves said.

Since 1989, the Capitol Land Trust has helped permanently conserve some 4,000 acres in Thurston, Mason and Grays Harbor counties by accepting donated conservation easements and gifts of land and working with partners to purchase properties from willing sellers.