

# CMCA Watershed Conservancy Project

Cape Meares, OR



## SITE & PROGRAM

The Cape Meares Water Conservancy Project was established as an urgent call to acquire and preserve some privately held forest land adjacent to the community. The effort expanded the existing contiguous Cape Meares Community Forest, protecting the hydrologic function of the watershed, the water source for the Cape Meares Community, and maintaining recreational access for the community. This also strengthened the connections between waters, landscapes, and lifeways that include Cape Meares Lake and Bayocean Spit.

Cape Meares is an Oregon coastal forest and beach community, located where the Pacific Ocean meets the Tillamook Bay, on the historic lands of the indigenous Tillamook people. Embedded in a rich historical context, Cape Meares features outstanding recreation and wildlife habitat values, with physical connections to the Cape Meares National Wildlife Refuge and Lighthouse, the Cape Meares Community Forest, the Oregon Coast Trail, Lake Meares, and its own distinctive ecosystem, hikes and wildlife.

With much effort between the private owner and Cape Meares Community Association (CMCA), the development and logging of the forest land was halted. Parties voluntarily entered into a mutually beneficial agreement for an equitable transfer, sale and partial donation of the land to CMCA.

The conserved forest land will surround and protect almost the entire southern and eastern boundaries of the Cape Meares community. This is the largest remaining parcel contiguous with the community forest, encompassing

Project Type: Land acquisition, Public park expansion

Project Scope: Land use planning, Community organizing, Permitting, Owner representation, Environmental mapping

Client: Cape Meares Community Association

Size: 226 acres

Cost: \$600,000

Team: Survey, Geotech, Land Trusts, Legal, Landscape

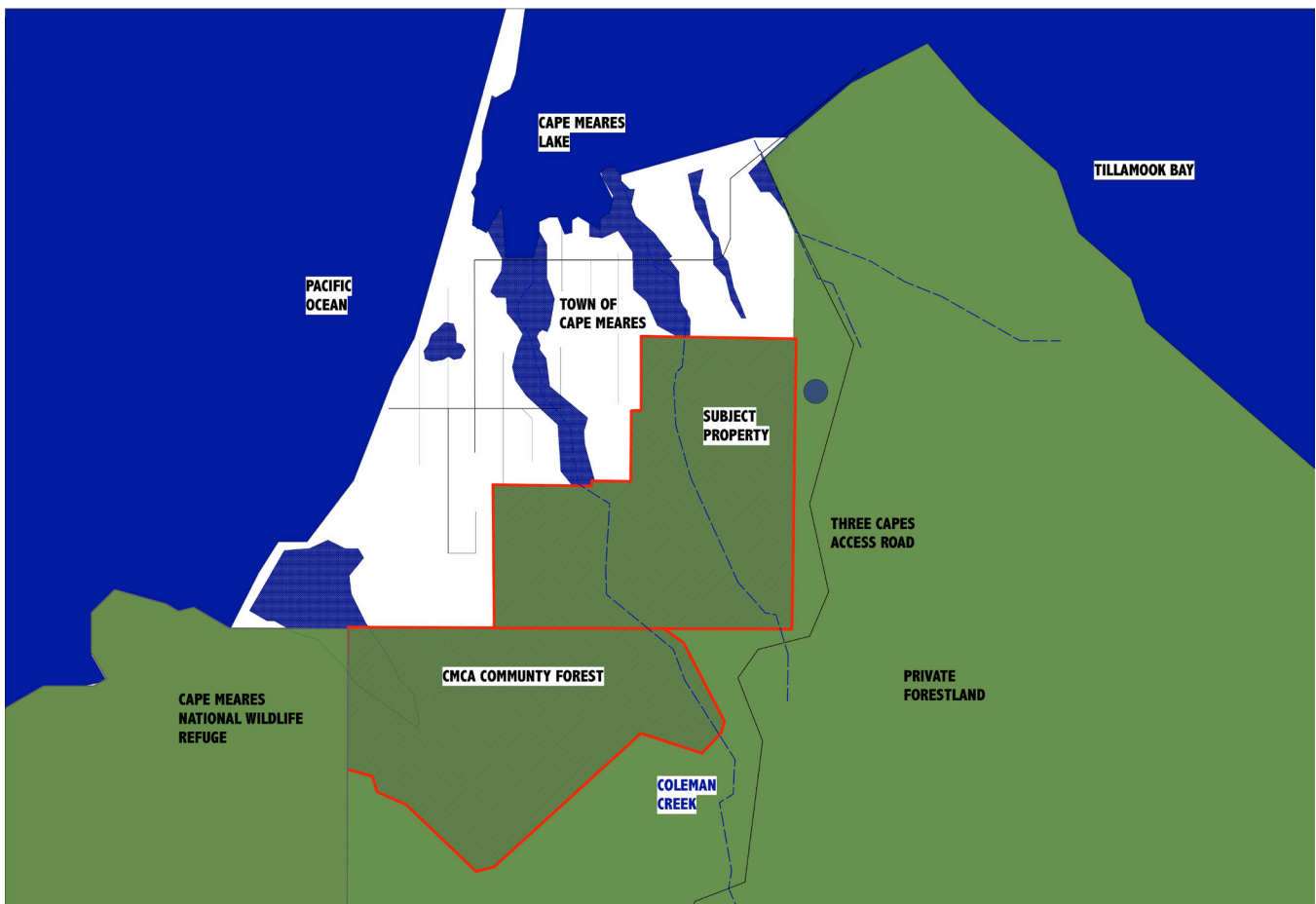
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Coleman Creek. Its acquisition is a rare and momentous step to preserve and safeguard its nature and habitat both now and for future generations. The success of this project sets an example for other communities around the country in their conservation initiatives.

The forested hillsides wrap around the southern and eastern edges of the Cape Meares neighborhood. The trees in the area were last harvested in the early 1970s. Today, the recovered natural landscape features old growth forest characteristics with mature stands of alder, hemlock, and spruce trees and northwest native understory. The harvest of this mature forest acreage would have created gaps in tree canopy and the network of root structures, increase erosion, and further de-stabilize the ground, potentially leading to large-scale flooding and landslides that could adversely impact the hydrologic function of the Watershed.

In addition to the short-term outcome of the land purchase and protection, this project also provides long-term public, County and



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community infrastructure benefits, including building on work already completed to protect community water sources, build community resilience, and provide long term stability and safety for the community.

Near-term project outcomes to preserve the entire Cape Meares Community Forest (CMCA Forest joined with the Subject Property ~ 226 acres) further supports the long-term investments in the new Three Capes Scenic Loop Road, secures public access to the trails system, enhances fish and wildlife protections, and benefits our forest neighbors: Tillamook County Parks, Oregon State Parks, and Cape Meares National Wildlife Refuge.

Constructive Form collaborated with the Cape Meares Community Association, nonprofits, land trusts, local and county government for over three years, providing technical expertise, strategic planning, land use services, and on the ground community organizing.

